

ZIONALE) in opposition to the Mazzini Society (q.v.). He taught at a number of American colleges and in 1945 returned to Italy and became director of the Communist publishing house L'Unità. He was ambassador to Poland from 1949 to 1954, a member of the party's central committee, and president of the Istituto Gramsci and of the Editori Riuniti.

For further information see: EAR (1); MOI (2).

PVC

**DOPOLAVORO.** The Dopolavoro, or Fascist after-work organization, was the principal means by which Mussolini's regime regulated the leisure hours of the adult working population. Cutting across all sectors of the society, its activities comprised virtually everything that in the 1920s and 1930s was defined as "mass culture," from bocce games to movies and radio listening. Exploiting social roles and needs outside of the workplace, the Dopolavoro circles built up a huge membership by the late 1930s, appealing especially to workers, peasants, and salaried employees who, because of their previous organizational traditions and bad economic treatment under Fascism, were not easily persuaded to support the regime by an explicitly political appeal.

The idea of a special institution for managing worker spare time had technocratic origins in the philanthropic projects of Mario Giani (d. 1930), a Turinese industrial engineer and former director of Italian Westinghouse, who claimed contemporary United States social engineering projects as the inspiration behind his plans to study and resolve the problem of worker leisure. The first "circles for worker uplift" were set up by the Fascist syndicalists in 1923-24 to compete with still surviving Socialist recreational and cultural circles. On May 1, 1925, these were removed from syndicalist control and unified under the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (OND), a semiautonomous state agency supervised by the Ministry of the National Economy and temporarily under the presidency of the duke of Aosta (see SAVOIA, AMEDEO DI, DUKE OF AOSTA). From May 1927, when the PNF seized control of the OND, replacing Giani with party stalwart Enrico Beretta, the network of local groups was gradually extended nationwide. During the early depression years, under Achille Starace's (q.v.) attentive leadership, the OND's local operations were vastly expanded as a way of undercutting the Fascist unions and to reinforce the party's own influence over social groups outside of its own middle-class constituency. By 1939 the OND supervised a total of twenty-three thousand local groups, about a third of which were pre-Fascist in origin, including many former Socialist mutual aid and cooperative societies. The others consisted of Dopolavoro Aziendali or enterprise Dopolavoro managed by private employers, several hundred well-equipped centers for civil servants, and the numerous municipal and village clubhouses built directly for the OND under the auspices of the provincial PNF (Partito Nazionale Fascista) (q.v.) federations. With a May 24, 1937 law designed to tighten central control over this far-flung organization, the government incorporated the whole structure into the national state administra-

tion. Although the PNF continued to supervise operations until the fall of the regime—except for a brief period of syndicalist control in 1939-1940—the legal status of the OND as a state institution, together with its functions as a social service agency, allowed it to survive with greatly reduced powers under the postwar Italian Republic as the Ente Nazionale Assistenza-Lavoratori (ENAL).

Intervention in the domain of leisure time allowed the Fascist regime to contact and, in so far as possible, to “remake” the working population on at least three levels. First, the hierarchically organized national bureaucracy took over the forms of working-class associational life so closely associated with the Socialist and democratic labor movements of the pre-Fascist era. All recreational pastimes identified as popular and potentially subversive—from choral singing to plebian bocce—were subjected to the scrutiny of “technical consultants” in the bureaus of the OND’s national office in the old Chamber of Labor in Rome, their social purposes assessed in light of a new national interest, and their specific practice brought into line with an overall national directive. This appropriation of formerly class-specific activities by means of incessant publicity, promotional efforts to engage groups in Fascist events outside of the neighborhood, and the imposition of new rules and regulations on previously spontaneous activities, broke down group solidarity and opened the way for groups to be influenced by the goals of the national state. Second, by vigorously promoting new mass leisure habits—movie-going, radio-listening, mass sports, and outings, as well as small-scale installment buying—the Dopolavoro circles conveyed the impression that the wants being stimulated by an emerging consumer market were actually being satisfied by benign government intervention. In this way the regime partially compensated for its own severe compression of wages, satisfying demands for radios and other consumer durables that if left unfulfilled would have deprived it of an important vehicle of propaganda and social communication. Finally, the Dopolavoro circles were centers for the dissemination of a Fascist “low culture”—the so-called *cultura dopolavoristica*. This was a mix of petty bourgeois social images, popular and folk rituals, and populist political motifs whose content was escapist rather than overtly propagandistic.

Fostering pastimes of suprising blandness and eschewing overtly ideological appeals, the regime thus managed to bring within the ranks of its leisure organization over 3.5 million Italians by 1939: a majority of the salaried employees in the nation; nearly 40 percent of the industrial workforce; a quarter of the eligible peasants. In the late 1930s some Fascists would be increasingly critical of the unwieldiness of this capillary organization and of its depoliticizing effects, especially as it became apparent that the military preparedness of Italian citizens was not at all commensurate with the regime’s imperialist ambitions. Nevertheless, the initial aims of the regime, that of eliminating the oppositional Socialist “state within a state,” bringing the working population into the organizational purview of the modern state, and blunting social tensions in a period of intense economic crisis, were largely achieved by such organizational policies.