

Candidate Marks Report

Series : M17 2017

This candidate's script has been assessed using On-Screen Marking. The marks are therefore not shown on the script itself, but are summarised in the table below.

Assessment Code : HISTORY
INTERNAL
ASSESSMENT in
ENGLISH
Component Code : IN(ENG)TZ0

In the table below 'Total Mark' records the mark scored by this candidate.
'Max Mark' records the Maximum Mark available for the question.

Paper:	M17histxBINE0XXXX
Paper Total:	22 / 25
Question	Total / Max Mark Mark
Criterion A	5 / 6
Criterion B	14 / 15
Criterion C	3 / 4

"Mussolini and Matteotti:

To what extent was the weakness of the opposition parties the most significant factor that led to the establishment of an authoritarian state in Italy after 1924?"

History Internal Assessment

Word Count: 2,162



SEEN

The picture on the title page represents the Socialist Deputy Giacomo Matteotti on the left and the Fascist leader Benito Mussolini on the right.

Source: <http://popoffquotidiano.it/2014/12/01/grillo-e-petacco-alla-ricerca-del-mussolini-buono/>

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Section A: Identification and evaluation of sources

The aim of this investigation is to explore the question: **"Mussolini and Matteotti: To what extent was the weakness of the opposition parties the most significant factor that led to the establishment of an authoritarian state in Italy after 1924?"**.

To answer this question I have used several printed sources as well as some online sources.

The first source I will analyse in depth is the book "Mussolini" written in English by Laura Fermi. She was an Italian writer and pacifist of Jewish origin, who left Fascist Italy for the US in 1938 with her husband, the physics Nobel Prize Enrico Fermi. "Mussolini" is a collection of episodes that "illustrate Mussolini's character, his achievements and failures".¹ Its purpose is to give a better understanding of the leader and of the elements that favoured his rise to power as a dictator.² It is a valuable source, as Fermi was a direct witness of Fascism, which gives to the book an insightful point of view on the period considered. Nevertheless, this also represents a limitation, as the fact that she was Jewish has probably influenced her. Her commitment to remain objective and the help received by historians like Luigi Salvatorelli and Denis Mack Smith in her research make the source valuable. However saying that she has "let imagination help (her) reconstruct a scene or piece of conversation (...)"³ reveals the subjectivity of the book, as memory and imagination are often unreliable. Finally, its purpose makes this source especially relevant for this investigation, as it aims to explain Mussolini's rise to power. On the other hand, being written for a general reader it could be less analytical and rather descriptive, focusing on episodes that could appeal to the American audience and using emotional language with terms such as "bloodthirsty"⁴ and "barbarians".⁵

date of publication? place?

¹ Laura Fermi, *Mussolini* (Chicago: The university of Chicago press, 1961),vi.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, 2

⁵ Ibid.

The second source I will analyse is a speech⁶ given by Mussolini on the 22nd of July 1924 to the Grand Council of Fascism. In particular I have taken into account the sections that show the leader's attitude towards the other political groups and the extremist wing of the Fascist party. The purpose of this speech is to reassure the highest Fascist exponents of the weakness of the opposition and of the strength of the Fascist party. This source cannot be used alone to gain a complete understanding of the situation, as it is strongly characterized by Mussolini's point of view. Nevertheless it is a valuable source, as it allows an insight into his feelings at that time and points out his instructions to the members of the party. Moreover, it is particularly relevant for this investigation, as it shows Mussolini's awareness of the lack of action by the opposition parties, which gave him security and confidence. On the other hand, according to several historians, Mussolini was concerned about the unrest that followed Matteotti's murder, thus the impression of control that he shows in this speech could be a way to manipulate the high ranks of his party.

⁶ Benito Mussolini , "Indietro non si torna" ("It is not possible to go back") (speech, Rome, Italy, July 22, 1924), Benito Mussolini: le opere, i discorsi, gli scritti, <http://www.adamoli.org/benito-mussolini/pag0265-.htm>

Section B: Investigation

The murder of the socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti on the 10th of June 1924, together with Mussolini's speech of the 3rd of January 1925, is one of the most important events of Mussolini's rise to power.⁷ The politician Palmiro Togliatti, founder and secretary of the Italian Communist Party, considers this murder as a "watershed" that divides the time when the Fascist rule was not yet totalitarian (1922 to 1925) from the period of the Fascist dictatorship.⁸ Different factors led to the establishment of an authoritarian state by Mussolini. One of these is the weakness of the opposition parties, which were divided and unable to confront the leader of the Fascists. Nevertheless there are also other elements such as the role of the *ras* and the influence of the King to take into account to answer the question

"Mussolini and Matteotti: To what extent was the weakness of the opposition parties the most significant factor that led to the establishment of an authoritarian state in Italy after 1924?"

The importance of the weakness of the opposition parties in Mussolini's rise to power can be analysed if the Aventine secession is considered. On the 27th of June 1924, 135 members of the opposition left the Chamber of Deputies as a protest against the murder of the socialist Deputy Giacomo Matteotti, who had accused the Fascists of using illegal practices in the elections of the 6th of April 1924. With this move, denominated the "Aventine secession" recalling the episode of Roman history, they were asking for the dismantling of the Fascist armed force and respect of the law by the Fascists,⁹ considered responsible for the murder of Matteotti. These events caused public unrest as the press campaign of the left wing parties

⁷ Even if Mussolini became Prime Minister in 1922 it was not until December 1925 that he gained full power with the "Leggi fascistissime" (Fascist laws). This is why I refer to the events of 1924 and early 1925 as Mussolini's rise to power.

⁸ Renzo De Felice, *Le interpretazioni del fascismo (The interpretations of Fascism)* (Bari: Laterza, 1986), 217

⁹ Federico Chabod, *L' Italia contemporanea (1918-1948) (Contemporary Italy)* (Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 1961), 76

against the Fascist leader was becoming stronger¹⁰ on main national newspapers, which were still selling more copies than Fascist ones in January 1925.¹¹ Because of the climate of uncertainty, the fall of Mussolini seemed close and the journalist Ugo Ojetti, affirmed: "There are two dead men: Matteotti and Mussolini".¹² Nevertheless the Secession did not determine the downfall of the Fascist leader; on the contrary it led to a dictatorship. One reason for this is that the opposition was divided and did not have a common vision. It was in fact composed of several groups: "liberal-constitutional, *popolari*, unitary socialists, maximalist socialists, social democrats and republicans (...)".¹³ The impossibility to find an agreement, evident already before the elections,¹⁴ appeared even clearer during the Secession, which was abandoned by the communists after a few days because the other political groups did not agree on starting a general strike.¹⁵ A second reason is the lack of action by the opposition parties. According to the historian Federico Chabod they should have adopted a stronger strategy to challenge the Fascists rather than creating only a moral division between the ideals of Fascism and liberty.¹⁶ Although a well-known historian, Chabod also lived under Fascism so his analysis may not be completely objective. It is important to know that Mussolini was aware of both the division and passivity of his opponents. Speaking at the Grand Council of Fascists on the 22nd of July 1924 he stated that there were seventeen political groups against the Fascists¹⁷ and the opposition had "too many faces and too many

¹⁰ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 236-237

¹¹ Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 87

¹² Fermi, *Mussolini*, 237-238

¹³ Elio D' Auria, "Aventino" ("Aventine"), *Biblioteca Liberale*, accessed February 2, 2016, <http://www.bibliotecaliberale.it/glossario/a/aventino/> ("liberali-costituzionali, popolari, socialisti unitari, socialisti massimalisti, democratici sociali e repubblicani (...)")


¹⁴ Ariane Landuyt, *Le elezioni del 1924 - Le sinistre dell' astensionismo e della partecipazione (The elections of 1924- The Left of abstensionism and particiaption)* (Italy: [S. l. : s. n.], 1969), 47, http://www.italia-resistenza.it/wp-content/uploads/ic/RAV0068570_1969_94-97_14.pdf

¹⁵ Paolo Alatri, *Le origini del fascismo (The origins of fascism)* (Roma: Editori riuniti, 1977), 262

¹⁶ Chabod, *L' Italia contemporanea (1918-1948)(Contemporary Italy)*, 77

¹⁷ Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), 80

souls".¹⁸ He believed they "could not even think of overthrowing the fascist government"¹⁹ as they were not "calling strikes, (...) manifestations, (...) or armed revolts"²⁰, but pursuing a press campaign that could be easily blocked.²¹

Another factor to consider was the cooperation of the non-Fascists  no remained in the Parliament. According Denis Mack Smith, a specialist in Italian history, although the Secession speeded up the establishment of an authoritarian state, fascist success was based on the support given by the liberals,²² a view shared by Fermi, who considers it more important than the lack of action of the oppositions.²³ In fact, on the 26th of June 1924, the day before the Aventine Secession, a vote of confidence on Mussolini took place.²⁴ According to Mack Smith, the liberals backed him, as they feared a government led by the Socialists or by a more radical Fascist exponent.²⁵ Moreover according to the historian, the philosopher Benedetto Croce, a leading exponent of the liberal party with the former primer ministers Giolitti, Salandra and Orlando, supported Mussolini in the vote of confidence as he thought that they could dismiss him when they wanted.²⁶ Even if these liberals later joined the opposition,²⁷ their popularity and their endorsement of Mussolini made possible for him to have the majority of votes in the Senate, which prevented the king to take legal measures against the leader.²⁸ This shows that,

¹⁸ Benito Mussolini, "Indietro non si torna" ("It is not possible to go back") (speech, Rome, Italy, July 22, 1924), Benito Mussolini: le opere, i discorsi, gli scritti, <http://www.adamoli.org/benito-mussolini/pag0265-.htm>

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 88

²³ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 241

²⁴ "XXVII Legislatura del Regno d'Italia" ("XXVII Legislation of the Italian Reign"), *Camera dei Deputati*, accessed February 6, 2017, <http://storia.camera.it/cronologia/leg-regno-XXVII/elenco>.

²⁵ Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 81

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 241

²⁸ Ibid.

as for Hitler and Stalin, the underestimation of Mussolini's ability contributed to his rise to power and the establishment of an authoritarian state in Italy.

A further point is the behaviour of the provincial leaders of the fascist party, the *ras*, after the murder of Matteotti and the Aventine secession. They represented the most extremist wing of the Fascist party and they were responsible of several crimes, but they benefited from immunity as long as the Fascist party remained in power.²⁹ For this reason, according to Fermi, the *ras* started organizing rallies to show the strength of the Fascist party both to the country and to Mussolini himself.³⁰ He recognized it, as in his speech of the 22nd of July 1924 he stated: "Fascism (...) has shown to be still powerful and invincible with its regional gatherings."³¹ According to the Mack Smith, Mussolini had an ambiguous behaviour towards the *ras*, as he sometimes dismissed them to keep quiet the liberals and the more moderate wing of his party.³² Nevertheless he confirmed the violent character of his rule with the rallies called on December 31st 1924 that responded to accusations by the former Fascist Cesare Rossi, who blamed him for the establishment of the secret police³³ and of Fascist ruthless actions.³⁴ After three days Mussolini took responsibility for the crimes of Fascism with a speech at the Chamber of Deputies and on the 6th of January he started the persecution of his opponents.³⁵ As this is considered the beginning of the dictatorship in Italy,³⁶ it is clear that the support of the violent extremist wing of the party was necessary for the establishment of an authoritarian State.

²⁹ Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 81

³⁰ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 242

³¹ Benito Mussolini, "Indietro non si torna" (It is not possible to go back") (speech, Rome, Italy, July 22, 1924), Benito Mussolini: le opere, i discorsi, gli scritti, <http://www.adamoli.org/benito-mussolini/pag0265-.htm>

³² Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, 82

³³ This would be the OVRA from 1927

³⁴ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 244

³⁵ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 245-246

³⁶ Fermi, *Mussolini*, 246

The last element to consider is the responsibility of the monarchy. It was King Victor Emmanuel III who had appointed Mussolini Prime Minister in October 1922, fearing a civil war between the army of the kingdom and the Fascist militia.³⁷ The King had also the power to dismiss Mussolini, so his inaction is usually seen as a means that favoured the Fascist leader. The reasons for this are matter of debate, for example, Chabod points out that the King was afraid that his cousin, the Duke of Aosta, might take his place with the help of Mussolini.³⁸ A contrasting point is that of Mack Smith, who underlines that the ratification on the 10th of July 1924 of a King's decree made possible for Mussolini to confiscate the newspapers of the oppositions.³⁹ This move of the King favoured the establishment of a dictatorship by Mussolini, as it started the process that led to the legalization of censorship.

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In conclusion, if the impossibility to cooperate, the lack of action and their division are considered as weaknesses of the opposition parties, then their responsibility in the establishment of a Fascist authoritarian state is considerable, as they gave Mussolini a feeling of security. Nevertheless this cannot be seen the sole factor, representing only one side of the situation. In fact, elements like the cooperation of important liberal exponents and the support of the *ras* are also relevant, as they put him in a condition of superiority. Moreover, the lack of opposition if not the approval of the king was another factor that contributed to Mussolini's scope.

³⁷ Chabod, *L' Italia contemporanea (1918-1948) (Contemporary Italy)*, 70-71

³⁸ Chabod, *L' Italia contemporanea (1918-1948) (Contemporary Italy)*, 72

³⁹ Denis Mack Smith, *I Savoia re d'Italia (The Savoy kings of Italy)*, (Milano: Rizzoli, 1990), e-book <https://books.google.it/books?id=yygKk164ldAC&pg=PT426&lpg=PT426&dq=i+savoia+re+d%27italia+%22un+decreto+reale+del+10+luglio+1924%22&source=bl&ots=YNkIr0M5jH&sig=5xxXbQAQGvep-36Iu1Tnp0fYpRo&hl=it&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjJserlhPzRAhWLBQKHXLIafYQ6AEIHTAA#v=onepage&q=i%20savoia%20re%20d'italia%20%22un%20decreto%20reale%20del%2010%20luglio%201924%22&f=false>

Section C: Reflection

During this investigation I was able to experience **the methods used by historians**: I first read around my topic to construct a base for my work, then I tried to understand the views of historians by reading their books and finally I analysed primary sources such as Mussolini's speeches to form my own opinion on the events. One of the challenges was the lack of primary sources, especially of newspaper articles, which I had a limited access to as they were difficult to find on the Internet and that would have helped me in gaining information on the popular response to the murder of Matteotti. This showed me that, although the Internet is a very important tool for historic exploration, research in archives is still necessary. Moreover, **another challenge** was the assessment of my sources. For example, I enjoyed reading "Mussolini" by Laura Fermi, but I had to keep in mind that she was writing for a general audience, thus I reflected on the fact that its purpose is as important as its origin when evaluating a source. Knowing that the author was not an historian encouraged me to reflect on the nature of knowledge in modern society and on whether all the opinions are equally valuable when it is not possible to reach ultimate truth, as in history. Furthermore, it was difficult to arrive at a certain conclusion in the analysis of the causes of Mussolini's establishment of an authoritarian state. In fact, there were many elements and often they inter-acted so it was difficult to decide which was the most important. Moreover, given that history concerns the actions of people, it is not possible to state with certainty their exact causes as it happens in the natural sciences. In fact, there might be other unknown factors that influenced Mussolini's choices, so our understanding is limited by the amount of information available. Finally, I can say that this investigation has increased my understanding of the work of the historians and of the challenges they face, as well as trained me for future research and improved my methods of historical analysis.

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Appendix

"Indietro non si torna"⁴⁰

(22 luglio 1924- Estratti del discorso di Mussolini al Gran Consiglio del Fascismo)

Le *dramatis personae* degli avvenimenti di queste ultime settimane sono da individuare come segue.

Cominciamo, per cavalleria, dalle opposizioni. Fu già detto che in Italia c'erano troppe opposizioni per esserci una opposizione degna di questo, nome. L'opposizione ha troppe facce e troppe anime. Si avvertono già delle insofferenze a cagione dell'eccessiva promiscuità. (...)

La verità è che i parlamentari non possono fare altro che passivamente attendere, ed i non parlamentari non possono che votare degli ordini del giorno coi quali ingannano a loro volta l'attesa. Né gli uni né gli altri sono in grado nemmeno di pensare di rovesciare il Governo fascista. Voto parlamentare ed insurrezione antifascista sono entrambi impossibili.

Eventuali ulteriori secessioni non sposterebbero i termini della situazione. Più l'opposizione si gonfia, più diventa idropica ed impotente, più si acutizzano le nausee della promiscuità prolungata.

Che il mucchio dell'opposizione possa apparire vastissimo non vi è dubbio. Ben dieci sono in Italia i Partiti e sei o sette i gruppi antifascisti. Elenchiamoli in fila indiana. Forse qualcuno comincerà a vergognarsi di trovarsi in tanto numerosa compagnia... (...)

Ebbene, io penso che sia il massimo titolo di orgoglio pel Fascismo italiano l'aver schierate innanzi a sé così numerose falangi di nemici. Il Fascismo deve rappresentare l'elemento di assoluta originalità nella vita italiana, se viene fatto oggetto di così imponenti ostilità.

(...) Io mi guardo bene dal dimenticare che i liberali di destra hanno tenuto un contegno di perfetta, amichevole lealtà verso i fascisti, tanto da meritare l'appellativo di fascisti onorari; ed hanno quindi diritto da parte dei fascisti alla più cordiale reciprocità di trattamento (...)

Non bisogna nascondersi che il delitto Matteotti ha prodotto una profonda oscillazione morale nella massa del popolo italiano. Le ragioni di ciò sono evidenti. Anzitutto la soppressione di una vita umana; poi il modo assolutamente barbaro e bestiale; poi il tempo, poiché nessuno aspettava un delitto del genere all'indomani di un discorso pacificatore che aveva raggiunto lo scopo o poteva raggiungerlo. Infine i protagonisti o presunti tali. (...)

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⁴⁰ Benito Mussolini, "Indietro non si torna" (speech, Rome, Italy, July 22, 1924), Benito Mussolini: le opere, i discorsi, gli scritti, <http://www.adamoli.org/benito-mussolini/pag0265-.htm>

C'è stata anche una speculazione e questa ci ha giovato. Certe esagerazioni, certe notizie fantastiche, le conseguenti smentite, il piano assurdo di allargamento all'infinito delle responsabilità morali, tutto ciò ha, dopo alcune settimane, prodotto una nuova oscillazione, in favore del Fascismo, che intanto, colle sue adunate regionali, dimostrava d'essere ancora potente ed invincibile.

Le adunate sono state grandiose, e si sono svolte nella massima disciplina. Il Direttorio provvisorio le ha sospese e ha bene operato. Non bisogna stancheggiare le nostre schiere con troppe parate. Allo stato degli atti non c'è bisogno di tenere mobilitate le nostre forze, come se pericoli reali e gravi minacciassero il Governo fascista.

In fondo, che cosa fanno le opposizioni? Fanno degli scioperi generali o parziali? delle manifestazioni di piazza? o tentativi di rivolta armata? Niente di tutto ciò. Le opposizioni svolgono un'attività puramente di polemica giornalistica. Non possono fare altro. Per evitare che anche la semplice polemica possa turbare gli animi con ripercussioni sull'opinione pubblica non c'è bisogno di ondate sproporzionate allo scopo. Bastano i decreti sulla stampa. Non si mobilita un esercito per sfondar pochi fogli di carta. (...)

Così stando le cose, il Fascismo può restare tranquillissimo, colle armi al piede. (...)

Il Partito fascista è il più forte e può quindi attendere con minori preoccupazioni, minori impazienze dei suoi avversari. «Mani in tasca» potrebbe essere la parola d'ordine del momento attuale. (...)

Quanto all'estremismo fascista, esso non esiste, se non come stato d'animo. Si tratta di uno stato vicino alla gelosia. C'è sempre qualcuno che teme, che sospetta, che trepida, che sta continuamente sul «chi vive». (...)

Il Partito può battere l'opposizione anche semplicemente ignorandola. (...)

La volontà ci guidi, io ho detto, ed ho precisato anche verso quali mete siano diretti i nostri sforzi. Ma gli eventi sono condizionati anche da coloro che ci osteggiano. Una battaglia politica non è un monologo. (...)

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"It is not possible to go back"

(22nd July 1924- extracts from Mussolini's speech at the Grand Council of Fascism)

My own translation

The *dramatis personae* of the events of the last weeks are the following.

Let's start from the oppositions for chivalry. It has already been said that in Italy there are too many oppositions for them to be an opposition worthy of this name. The opposition has too many faces and too many souls. There is already some intolerance due to the excessive promiscuity. (...) The truth is that the members of the Parliament cannot do anything but wait passively, and those who are not members of the Parliament cannot do anything but voting agendas to kill the time. Neither of them can even think of overthrowing the fascist government. A vote in the Parliament and an antifascist insurrection are both impossible. Other possible secessions would not move the terms of the situation. The more the opposition swells, the more it becomes hydropic and impotent, the more acute the sickness of the prolonged promiscuity.

There is no doubt that the group of opposition could appear very vast.

There are at least ten antifascist parties and six or seven antifascist groups in Italy. Let's list them in a row. Maybe someone will start to feel ashamed to be in such a numerous company... Anarchists, communists, maximalists, unitarists, republicans, populists, social democrats, constitutional democrats, the peasants, the Sardinian Action party and the Lucan one. (...) Well I think that it is the greatest title of pride for the Italian Fascist party to have so many phalanges of enemies arrayed before us. Fascism must represent the element of absolute originality in the Italian life if it is object of such massive hostility. (...)

I don't forget that the right-wing liberals have had such behaviour of perfect, friendly loyalty with the fascist to deserve the name of honorary Fascists; hence they have the right to be treated with the most cordiality by the Fascists. (...)

We should not hide that the murder of Matteotti has produced a deep moral oscillation in the mass of the Italian people. The reasons for this are evident. First of all the suppression of a human life; then the barbaric and beastly way; then the timing, as none would expect such a crime after a peacemaker speech that had or could have reached its aim. (...)

There has also been some speculation and this benefited us. Some exaggerations, some imaginative news, the following denials, the absurd plan of infinite enlargement of the moral responsibilities, all of this, after some weeks, has produced another oscillation, in favour of Fascism, which in the meanwhile has shown to be still powerful and invincible with its

regional gatherings. The gatherings have been great, they have happened with the greatest discipline. The provisional Directorate has suspended them and it has acted correctly. We should not tire our hosts with too many parades. At the current moment there is no need to keep our forces mobilised as some real and grave dangers were menacing the Fascist government. All in all what are the opposition doing? Are they calling general or partial strikes? Are they calling manifestation in the squares? Are they planning any attempt of armed revolt? None of these. The oppositions are doing purely journalistic polemics. They cannot do anything else. To avoid that this simple polemic could upset the people and have repercussions on the public opinion there is no need for disproportionate waves. Decrees about the press are enough. There is no need to mobilize an army to break through some papers. (...)

If the things stay like this, Fascism can stay extremely secure, with its weapons at its feet. (...)

The Fascist party is the strongest; hence it can wait with less worry and preoccupation than its opponents. <<Hands in your pockets>> could be the slogan of the current moment. (...)

About the fascist extremism, it does not exist, if not as a mood. It is a mood close to jealousy.

There has always been someone who is afraid, who suspects, who is anxious, who stays constantly on the alert (...). The party can beat the opposition even simply ignoring it. (...)

I have said, let the will guide us, and I have made clear the aims of our efforts. But the events are also influenced by those who oppose us. A political battle is not a monologue. (...)

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