April 19, 1927.

Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer,
9 West 10th Street,
New York City.

Dear Mrs. Van Rensselaer:

I have been disturbed since our talk on Sunday lest you were getting the idea that I, in my effort to straighten out in my own mind what has happened in Italy and what kind of a creature this man Mussolini real y is, had been giving you the impression that I subscribed to the Machiavellian philosophy and was a convert to government by dictatorship! Nothing in the World could be farther from the truth.

If it is a fact, as I believe it to be, that there is more or less Machiavellianism in the practice of all government I hold it utterly wrong and in the end it costs dearer than pure justice and pure humanity would believe Moreover, I was never so convinced that democracy is the best form of government. I do not mean democracy as we are getting it just now, but as I am sure the world will as we go on to a better sense of values and learn how better to control ourselves. That is, I abominate as much as you do the Machiavellian features of the Facisti philosophy and the violent methods used in government but there are other things in the philosophy and violence is not the only method. If they succeed in establishing their new State I am convinced that Machiavelli will take less and less place, that violence will be less and less tolerated and that democratic proceedures will increase. It is not because Mussolini claims this that I think this is so, but I cannot see continued life for them unless it is so and I am sure their new state cannot establish itself, unless it is so.

Whether they will be able to work it out I would be the last to say. It looks to me now as about an even balance. But they will only come to stability in proportion, I am convinced, as they drop their violence and increase in democratic practices. I do not see the so-called Corporate State as necessarily hostile to democracy or as dependent upon a dictator. The dictator will go, along with Machiavelli and suppressions and all the rest of the detestable features as the States comes into form, begins really to function, but it strikes me as being a long way from that.

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Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer.

As a matter of fact, I have been watching the Italian situation as nearly as possible as a disinterested observer, trying to find out what really is happening and how it come about. Of course, the moment that one appears to be objective in a situation of this sort he lays himself open to the suspicion that he has no ideals of his own. I am always getting myself into trouble by trying to find out just how things are. It lays one open, of course, to the suspicion of being luke warm, simply having a greedy curiosity about men and events and I do not like to appear, at least to my friends, in that way. Really I am quite willing to fight when I am convinced. For instance, I would like this moment to go out and fight for a new trial for Sacco and Venzetti. It seems to me a more dangerous thing could hardly happen in this Republic than to allow the execution of those two persons without a thorough resifting of the evidence.

Forgive me for sending you such a long letter. I would not want you, of all people, to think that I am in sympathy with everything that is going on in Italy or that I regard this man Mussolini as a hero and a prophet, even if I do regard him as a very extraordinary and interesting individual and even if I do believe that their proposed new state is worth studying.

Always affectionately,

IMT BWK.

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