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S.'s VIEWPOINT ON GENERAL SITUATION

*March 22, 1943*

Italian government or committee abroad

Tripoli. Socialist attitude is that North Africa belongs to the Arabs.

Any government set up abroad could not really be representative. Some of the parties which are strong in Italy have<sup>n</sup> representation abroad, for example, the Catholic Party is very strong in Italy, but only representative abroad is Don Sturzo. On the other hand, the Republican Party, to which Cianca, Tarchiani, etc., belong, is quite strong abroad, but apparently has no real following in Italy. These men had some importance in the country 20 years ago, but have since lost touch. Governments in exile of other countries were either chosen before the war, or have some symbolic value, like the King of Norway. They have some armed force, fleet, etc. The Italians would have nothing.

Armistice must be signed by the people who made the war, the Fascist leaders and generals; whatever opprobrium may be attached by the Italian people to the surrender must be attributed to these leaders so that there can be no doubt about their responsibility. If a free Italian government were in existence it could have nothing to do with military surrender. Shadow of defeat must not fall on forces which are to rebuild Italy.

Socialists can never accept power or office through intermediary of foreign power. They can conceive of setting up a free government only in sections of the national territory which they might succeed in winning over from the Fascist cause by their own strength.

A step in this direction which might conceivably be useful would be the publication, and distribution in Italy (from planes and through underground) of exchange of letters between, for example, Roosevelt and a prominent member of the Italian opposition, on the generic basic terms which Italy might expect from the Allies. This exchange of letters would have a semi-official nature. It would in practise, amount to an investiture of the Italian concerned as the leader of the opposition. Such an action would be a real peace offensive. (Note. S. was quite keen on the exchange of letters.)

The Allies can make propaganda to the masses but with political leaders they must talk politics. The opposition leaders in Italy are hesitant about separate peace as long as they are doubtful what the terms of such a peace might be. As far as the Socialists are concerned they would never accept any mutilation of national territory. They would never, for example, agree to the loss of Trieste. Such a loss would imply the war of 1914-18 was fought for nothing and would mean war again in ten years to get it back. (Note. City of Trieste is Italian, surrounding country Slovene.)