

The story of various events of our history are those which
have always touched our hearts most deeply. For generations
as, had we not
VICTORY OF THE SPIRIT
of our sudden collapse there existed in parts from the same
social and political conditions which in a similar state

The outcome of the French elections comforts and cheers us as if it were our victory. The order and decorum with which the elections were held, the very high percentage of votes cast, the decisive predominance of the Left, and above all the will to rebuild which produced this victory -- which, without need of a violent revolution, marks the rise to power of the new ruling class, tempered in the struggle for liberation -- for Italy, all this seems to us not just an example but an omen.

Certainly the victory of the British Labor Party has had and will have wider repercussions of a practical nature. Even for our own future, this has marked a turning point. But it is difficult for us to think of the political struggle which is taking place in England or America as a type which can directly serve as a precedent for our rebirth. The English and American democratic institutions are based on traditions and experiences quite different from ours and on a political education which we at present do not possess. We may envy them, but we feel that they are far from our immediate possibilities. We may look to them as a remote ideal, but not as something we can achieve tomorrow.

But France is close -- of all the democracies in the world it is the one we feel best equipped to copy. What France can do, we feel that we too can do. The humanist and universal ideals for which France was the protagonist

the most glorious moments of her history are those which have always touched our hearts most deeply. Her weaknesses, her errors, her disorders are also ours. At the basis of her sudden collapse there existed in acute form the same moral and social disintegration which in a chronic state was evident in Italy under fascism. France's recovery must necessarily also be ours.

Perhaps the French do not know and will never know sufficiently well how much Italy suffered for their misfortune, in part because a sense of propriety and discretion will restrain us from ever saying much about it. They will not believe that after the great tribulations which our country had endured, never were the Italians so near desperation as in that tragic June when it seemed that France was lost, and that only when it seemed that France no longer existed did we begin to believe that our Italy also no longer existed.

For 20 years, as long as there was a France, we could delude ourselves. Our trusted spiritual patria still offered us refuge. There still reached us the dear awaited books which continued to speak the language of men who had remained free.

Then came that terrible afternoon of June 10 the radio was broadcasting the dying voice of France, struck in the back by a brother's hand. At a certain point the record broke, and started repeating the same phrase a dozen times without being able to finish it; it was like the gasping of a dying person who has something more to say and can no longer speak. One listened, holding back his ...

Il Jorna, November, 1945.

his breath and his tears, with the same heavy pain with which one strains to hear the final murmurings of a dear person about to die and one feels that with his last breath even our most inmost life will be jarred. All the world will be colorless and empty because she was the unconscious premise of all our feelings; because unknown to us she lived in so many secret places of our spirit and only by the void which her absence creates for us do we perceive how much her presence meant. Sweet, lovable, human France; what tenderness and what shame was yours.

But now France resumes her place in our thought; we can begin to rebuild because we have within us again that European premise, that common measure of Western civilization. The world has regained its meaning also for us from the time that a new France resumed her place with this victory which, taken from the title of one of the reviews guiding the youth resistance movement, has the universal name, "Esprit."

Today, we too have faith in our tomorrow: "We who have loved you, O France, we who love you still."

Il Ponte, November, 1945.