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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,—I cannot understand how Mr. D. A. Traversi in his recent article on *Catholicism and the New Order in Italy* (BLACKFRIARS, October, 1941) could have completely ignored the following facts:

(1). That in January, 1919 (ten years before the Lateran Treaty), the Italian Popular Party was constituted, led by a priest, with a Christian-Democratic programme.

(2). That Benedict XV in November, 1919, ordered the rescinding of the *non expedit*, which forbade Catholics to take part in parliamentary elections either as voters or as candidates.

(3). That in that same November, 1919, the Italian Popular Party won one-fifth of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies at the General Elections—99 to be exact, a figure which in 1921 was raised to 107, all the newly-elected Deputies being practising Catholics and many of them members or former leaders of Catholic Action.

(4). That the mass of Catholic workers was registered in the Christian Unions (supported by the Popular Party), forming a Confederation of 1,200,000 members (the Socialists and Communists combined numbered 1,500,000).

(5). That the Italian Popular Party was dissolved by Royal Decree in November, 1926, and the Confederation of Workers in 1927, as a result of the law on the Fascist syndicates.

In view of all this, how could Mr. Traversi write that 'Italian Catholicism tended at times to become an affair of the Sanctuary divorced from some of the healthier elements of national life' (p. 532), and, still worse, how can he ascribe to Fascism a '*sincere collaboration offered to the Church*'? Collaboration could have no basis without freedom, and Fascism was robbing Italian life, political and religious, of all true and real freedom.

LUIGI STURZO,

Founder of the Italian Popular Party.

Jacksonville, Florida,

December 8th, 1941.

ERRATUM.—In the last issue (January, 1942), page 43, third line from the bottom, for *Diniffe* read *Deniffe*.

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