



Boğaziçi MUN
Advanced '22

THE ROMAN QUESTION

STUDY GUIDE

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1) Letters

A) Letter From the Secretary-General

Most Esteemed Participants,

On behalf of the Academic and Organization teams of Boğaziçi Model United Nations Advanced 2022 Conference, it is my utmost honor and pleasure to welcome you all as the Secretary-General of the 1st edition of one of the most prestigious conferences in Turkey. We are glad that you have decided to honor us with your presence on May 21-22, 2022 in our beautiful campus in Istanbul, Turkey.

My name is Kaan Ertan. I am currently studying industrial engineering at the Boğaziçi University and have been a part of the Boğaziçi MUN Society since the beginning of my university life. Today, it is my privilege to be serving you as the Secretary-General of our esteemed conference, despite the pandemic and all the misfortunes that we have recently faced. During the two days of our conference, both our Academic and Organization Teams will do their best to provide you with the most fulfilling conference in every possible way.

In order to make our conference as advanced as possible, we have created four marvelous committees that serve the concept that we wanted to cover this year. These will be executed by a group of the finest individuals in the Turkish MUN community. In the preparation of this conference, along with all of our beloved Academic Team, I owe my Deputy-Secretary-General Ms. Şebnem Yaren a huge gratitude for her assistance and cooperation in every aspect of preparing this conference. We hope that you are as excited as we are to have one of the best two days you have ever had in a Model UN conference, together!

With sincere appreciation,

Kaan Ertan

Secretary-General of Boğaziçi MUN Advanced 2022

B) Letter From the Under-Secretaries-General

Esteemed delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you all to Boğaziçi MUN Advanced'22 and to the Roman Question Committee. Our names are Zühtü Anıl Tutar, Ammar Badawy, and Ender Nargız. We will be serving as the secretariat of the Roman Question Committee.

The Roman Question was a 60-year conflict about the political status of the Catholic Church, Vatican, and the Pope. After the unification of Italy, the Kingdom of Italy claimed the territories controlled by the Holy See as a part of the Kingdom of Italy, and Rome its capital. Vatican was opposed to the rule of the Kingdom of Italy over its former territories. This situation led popes to isolate themselves in Vatican, acting as a prisoner. A solution was reached when Mussolini took control of the Italy and started negotiations with Vatican.

In this study guide, you will find the details of the personalities of said historical figures, historical background of the political and religious events, and relationships between the Church and the state that led to a mutual agreement that finally answered the Roman Question.

We would like to remind the representatives that due to the political situation of the Kingdom of Italy at the time, the committee will have to deal with political crises as well as negotiations with the Church. However, the main focus of the committee is to find a solution to the Roman Question.

We kindly request all representatives to review this guide and the committee handbook to understand the key points that will help them resolve the issue and learn their capabilities. We would like to remind you that since you are participating in an advanced conference, some crises may be challenging for you. We advise you to carefully study the study guide to be ready for all the surprises we might put in the way. We are doing our best to make this conference a memorable experience for all our participants. We hope to see you very soon.

Regards,

Zühtü Anıl Tutar

Ammar Badawy

Ender Nargız

Under-Secretaries-General and the Academic Assistant of the Roman Question Committee

2) Brief Overview of the Situation

The modern Italian peninsula as we know it today has gone through many different historical periods before reaching its modern state. During the age of the Roman empire, it consisted of separate city states, which often clashed and battled with each other. Fast forwarding in time, the Italian peninsula was taken over by a series of revolutions which eventually lead to the unification of the Italian kingdom, which is seen as a major step in the formation of modern Italy. With the kingdom of Italy struggling to settle conflict with the remains of the Papal states, it took many attempts to finally be able to normalize relations and maintain peace between what was now Vatican City and Italy through the Lateran treaty. Delegates are expected to take the lead on the timeline during the era of Benito Mussolini to proceed with their own vision of how this period in history takes place.

3) Who is Pope Pius XI

The child who would become Pope Pius XI was born “Ambrogio Damiano Achille Ratti” near Milan in 1857. Though the son of a well-to-do silk factory owner, young Achille decided to embark on a clerical career and became a noted church academic, receiving three separate doctoral degrees. He would later be appointed to various teaching posts and eventually become the prefect of the Vatican Library, where he engaged in a thorough reorganization. After a brief diplomatic career in Poland, where he was acquainted with various public figures and diplomats from Poland, Germany, and Russia, he would be elevated to a cardinal in 1921 by his predecessor, Pope Benedict XV.

Benedict XV would suddenly pass away in 1922, leading to an unexpected and highly contested papal conclave. While Benedict XV had favoured more “liberal” policies¹, his predecessor Pius X was a much harsher man. The conclave was thus divided between supporters of the conservative Rafael Merry del Val and the liberal Pietro Gasparri. After 5 days of diplomatic manoeuvring, Achille Ratti emerged as a compromise candidate. He was initially sponsored by Gasparri but was also found acceptable by the conservatives, leading to his election as Pope Pius XI on the 14th ballot.

¹ This liberalism is of course in relation to the general leanings of the Catholic Church. Benedict XV would doubtlessly be considered a conservative within the political arena of his time.

From the onset of his papacy, Pius XI sought to resolve the Roman Question. This much was obvious from the very first actions he took as pope: According to a possibly apocryphal source, he had remarked that “The Roman question had begun under a Pius and would end under a Pius” when explaining his choice of the papal title Pius XI. He had also ordered that the coat of arms of Pope Pius IX – whose reign had coincided with the Italian takeover of the Papal States – be flown during his initial benedictory address, rather than that of his predecessor Benedict XV. This address was also held in the style of “Urbi et Orbi” – openly addressing both Rome and the World – which was disfavoured pending the resolution of the Roman Question.



The Coat of Arms of Pope Pius IX flown during the address of Pius XI.

Though supported by the liberal faction of Cardinal Gasparri, the newly elected Pius XI was hardly a liberal himself. Whereas Benedict XV had been an innovator – albeit a cautious one – Pius XI would insist on strict adherence to orthodoxy. His initial publications (notably the encyclical “Ubi arcano”) as pope would include matters such as resisting secularization and supporting the Catholic Action movement. This movement would later become a source of controversy between the Pope and the fascist government of Italy, who demanded that it be merged with their own youth organizations. In “Divini illius magistri”, Pius XI made the case for religious education over its secular counterparts and in “Casti connubii” he spoke against contraception and defended Christian family and marriage values.

However, though a conservative in the social and political sense, Pius XI was first and foremost a pragmatic man and was not averse to seeking political compromise to ensure the success of his agenda. His encyclical “Quadragesimo anno”, for example, included repudiations of both socialism and laissez-faire capitalism. This was also the aim of the fascist movement of the time who saw themselves as following a “Third Way” between the left and the right. Indeed, Pius XI’s proposed economic alternatives based on solidarity and subsidiarity were also partially favoured by the fascists – although the latter claim of subsidiarity would be turned completely on its head eventually. Similarly, “Dilectissima Nobis” charts a pragmatic political stance where the church is declared to be “never bound to one form of government more than to another”, a staunch reversal of the previous monarchist sentiments based on the Divine Right

doctrine. This could be interpreted as tacitly seeking compromise with the republican regimes of the time – most notably in France & Spain. Perhaps most interestingly, Pius XI was also a pioneer of radio and became the first pope to be broadcast on radio in 1931.

In terms of his personality, Pius XI was known to be blunt, direct, and somewhat hot-headed. As a former academic, he was very strict and had a low tolerance for failure, but also fascinated by science and technological innovation. He was very attentive to decorum and would not suffer any insults upon the dignity of his office. (A fact that delegates would do well to consider in their interactions with him.) Yet he also had a strong conscience and a deeply-nested concern for humanity. On one occasion he had wrongly issued a harsh punishment on the future Pope John XXIII, only to renege on it and apologize personally when he saw the erroneous nature of his actions. Still, he had delivered the apology under his birth name Achille Ratti, as he also could not stomach the idea of the sanctity and infallibility of the Papal Office being broken.

In all, Pope Pius XI was a very complex and even contradictory person: Conservative yet liberal, stubborn yet pragmatic, aloof yet kind-hearted. But he had a dream: To solve the Roman Question once and for all. And perhaps, in pursuit of that dream, he can be convinced to accept many a deal he would have otherwise balked at...

4) Political Climate in Italy and the Emergence of Fascism

With totalitarianism, Mussolini and the Fascist regime made a cause on progressing Italian culture and society based on ancient Rome, personal dictatorship and some futurist aspects of Italian intellectuals and artists. In Fascism, the definition of the Italian nationality had its basis on military and the Fascist's "ideal man" in which loyal Italians would rid themselves of individualism and autonomy and see themselves as a part of the Italian state and be prepared to sacrifice their lives for it. In this totalitarian society, only people who could be classified as "True Italians" are fascists and to gain "Complete Citizenship", propaganda membership to the fascist party was required and as those who did not swear allegiance to fascism were banished from public life. The Fascist government also communicated with Italians living overseas to promote the Fascist cause and identify with Italy rather than their places of residence. Despite efforts to form a new culture for fascism, Fascist Italy's efforts were not as effective compared to other single party states like Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in creating a new culture.

The Fascist regime used propaganda in newsreels, radio broadcasts and a few feature films deliberately endorsing the Fascist ideology. In 1926, laws were passed to enforce that propaganda in newsreels to be shown before to all feature films in cinemas. Newsreels were much more efficient in influencing the public than propaganda films or radio, as few Italians had access to radio receivers at the time. Fascist propaganda was commonly existent in posters and state-sponsored art. However, artists, writers, and publishers were not thoroughly moderated, only way they would face redaction was if they were openly against the state or the ideology. There was a focus on the masculinity of the new ideal Italian, emphasizing aggression, virility, youth and athleticism. Women were isolated from public affairs and pushed to focus on motherhood.

General elections were held as a referendum on 24 March 1929. By this time, the country was a one-party state and had National Fascist Party (PNF) as the only legally permitted party. Mussolini used a referendum to confirm a fascist single-party list. The list put by Mussolini was approved by 98.43% of voters. Only members of a trade union, soldiers or members of a clergy were eligible for universal male suffrage. As a result, only 9.5 million people were able to vote.

Italian Fascism, generally known directly as Fascism, is the primary fascist ideology originated in Italy. The ideology is associated with the Fascist Revolutionary Party (PFR), founded in 1915 and its successor, National Fascist Party (PNF), in 1921, ruled the Kingdom of Italy under Benito Mussolini. Italian Fascism is deeply rooted in Italian nationalism and the desire to restore and expand Italian territories, is seen as a necessity for the nation to assert its superiority and strength and avoiding the collapse.

The first meeting of the Fasci of Revolutionary Action was held on January 24, 1915, led by Benito Mussolini. In the next few years, the relatively small group was active in various political actions. In 1920, militant strike activity by industrial workers reached its peak in Italy. Mussolini and the Fascists saw the opportunity and took advantage of the situation by siding with industrial businesses and attacking workers and peasants in the name of preserving order and internal peace in Italy.

Fascists identified their primary opponents as socialists on the left who had opposed the intervention in World War I. The Fascists and the Italian political right held common ground: both held Marxism in contempt, discounted class consciousness, and believed in the rule of elites. Fascism began to accommodate Italian conservatives by making major alterations to its

political agenda—abandoning its previous populism, republicanism, and anticlericalism, adopting policies in support of free enterprise, and accepting the Roman Catholic Church and the monarchy as institutions in Italy.

To get the support of Italian conservatives, Fascism created policies such as promoting family values, including policies designed to reduce the number of women in the workforce by limiting the woman's role to that of a mother. The fascists banned literature on birth control and strengthened penalties on abortion, declaring it a crime against the state. Fascism's revolutionary character was still on the table, with likes of Angelo Oliviero Olivetti saying "Fascism would like to be conservative, but it will be by being revolutionary." The Fascists supported revolutionary action and committed to secure law and order to appeal to both conservatives and syndicalists.

5)Who is Benito Mussolini

A) Mussolini's Early life Before Fascism

i) Early Life of Mussolini

Benito Mussolini was born in 29 July 1883 in Predappio, in the province of Forli in Romagna to a Blacksmith father and a catholic schoolteacher mother. Later in his life he took pride in his humble origins while describing himself "man of the people". His father was a socialist. He was named Benito after a liberal Mexican president Benito Juarez. His early political views were heavily influenced by his father, who idolized Italian nationalist figures with humanist influence. His father was also influenced by anarchist figures and military authoritarianism. He was known to be a disobedient, aggressive and very intelligent as a child.

Mussolini emigrated to Switzerland partly to avoid compulsory military service. At that time, he was living day-to-day taking different jobs. During this period of time, he focused himself on reading therefore he was influenced a lot, particularly by Nietzsche, Vilfredo Pareto and Sorel. He became active in Italian socialist movement in Switzerland, working for a socialist paper, organizing meetings and giving speeches to workers and serving as secretary of the Italian workers' union in Lausanne. He was arrested in 1903 for advocating a violent general strike and released after two weeks then attended the University of Lausanne's department of

social science. He went back to Italy following an amnesty for desertion of military and then served 2 years in military.

Around 1909, he left the country once more, to be a secretary of the labor party in Austria-Hungary, in the Italian speaking city of Trento, which is currently in Italy's borders. He also was the editor of local socialist newspapers issued by the labor party. By 1911, he was renowned as one of the most gifted but dangerous young socialists of Italy. In the same year, he participated in a riot led by socialists, against Italian war in Libya. He was arrested and put in jail for 5 months. After being released, he took part in expelling war supporting socialist party members.

ii) Early Political Career

Number of socialist parties initially supported World War I when it began in 1914. Once the war started, Austrian, British, French, and German socialists followed the rising nationalist current by supporting their country's intervention in the war. With the war emerging, Italian nationalism had risen, and war was supported by a variety of political factions. Italian socialists were divided on the matter. Prior to Mussolini taking a position on the war, a number of revolutionary syndicalists had announced their support of intervention. The Italian Socialist Party decided to oppose the war after anti-militarist protestors had been killed, resulting in a general strike called Red Week.

Mussolini officially supported the party's decision, and, in an August 1914 article, Mussolini wrote "Down with the War. We remain neutral." He saw an opportunity in the war, both for his own ambitions as well as those of socialists and Italians. He was influenced by anti-Austrian Italian nationalist sentiments, he believed that the war was the ultimate opportunity for Italians in Austria-Hungary to free themselves from Habsburgs. Eventually he decided to support the war by appealing to the need for socialists to overthrow the Hohenzollern and Habsburg monarchies in Germany and Austria-Hungary who he said had consistently repressed socialism.

Mussolini's support for the intervention was enhanced, he had conflicted with socialist who oppose the war. He agressed the those who did not want war and claimed that proletarians who supported pacifism were detached from the proletarians who had joined the rising interventionist vanguard which was preparing Italy for a revolutionary war. He began to

criticize the Italian Socialist Party and socialism itself for having failed to recognize the national problems that had led to the outbreak of the war. He was expelled from the party for his support of intervention.

iii) Mussolini in World War I

Following his expulsion from the Italian Socialist Party, Mussolini's views changed radically. He ended his support for class conflict and started to support revolutionary nationalism. He formed an interventionist, war supporting newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* and the *Fascio Rivoluzionario d'Azione Internazionalista* ("Revolutionary Fasces of International Action") in October 1914. The goal was to convince socialists and revolutionaries to support the war and they were funded by local armament firms and French socialists who wanted the Italian intervention on France's side.



Mussolini as a Soldier, in 1917

Mussolini continued to promote the need for revolutionary pioneers regardless of social class. Though he denounced orthodox socialism and class conflict, he maintained at the time that he was a nationalist socialist and a supporter of the legacy of nationalist socialists in Italy's history. "These basic political views and principles formed the basis of Mussolini's newly formed political movement, the Fasci d'Azione Rivoluzionaria in 1914, who called themselves Fascisti (Fascists). At this time, the Fascists did not have settled policies and the movement was small, unsuccessful in its attempts to have large scale meetings, and was regularly harassed by government authorities and orthodox socialists."

The conflict between interventionists, including Fascists and anti-interventionist orthodox socialists resulted in violence. The opposition and attacks by the anti-interventionist revolutionary socialists against the Fascists and other interventionists were extremely violent. It was so excessive that even democratic socialists who opposed the war such as Anna Kuliscioff said that the Italian Socialist Party had gone too far to suppress the voices which supported the war. These early hostilities between the Fascists and the revolutionary socialists shaped Mussolini's conception of the nature of Fascism in its support of political violence.

After World War I broke out, like many Italian nationalists, Mussolini volunteered to fight but was put into reserves because of his radical socialism. He took part in second and third Isonzo wars. After getting accidentally wounded in the trench and returned to journalism.

B) Mussolini the Fascist

i) Rise to Power

By the time Mussolini returned from his military service, there was a little left of his socialism. He saw socialism as a doctrine had largely been a failure. In 1917 Mussolini got his start in politics funded by the British security service MI5 with a £100 weekly wage (the equivalent of £7100 as of 2020), to hold anti-war protestors silent and to push pro-war propaganda. This was commanded by Sir Samuel Hoare, who was sent to Italy at a time when Britain feared their ally could be unreliable, and the possibility of the anti-war movement.

The ideological basis for fascism came from various sources. Mussolini utilized works of Plato, Georges Sorel, Nietzsche, and the economic ideas of Vilfredo Pareto, to develop fascism. Mussolini admired Plato's *The Republic*, which he often read for inspiration. *The Republic* gave basis to some ideas that fascism promoted, such as rule by an elite promoting

the state as the ultimate end, opposition to democracy, protecting the class system and promoting class collaboration, rejection of egalitarianism, promoting the militarization of a nation by creating a class of warriors, demanding that citizens perform civic duties in the interest of the state, and utilizing state intervention in education to promote the development of warriors and future rulers of the state. Plato was an idealist, focused on achieving justice and morality, while Mussolini and fascism were realist, focused on achieving political goals.

As early as February 1918, he advocated the emergence of a dictator: “a man who is ruthless and energetic enough to make a clean sweep”, to confront the economic and political crisis which surrounded Italy. Three months later, in a widely reported speech in Bologna, he hinted he might be the right person for the duty. The following year the basis of a party prepared to support his ambitious idea was formed in Milan. In an office in Piazza San Sepolcro, about 200 assorted republicans, anarchists, syndicalists, discontented socialists, restless revolutionaries, and discharged soldiers met to discuss the establishment of a new force in Italian politics. Mussolini called this force the *fasci di combattimento* (“fighting bands”), groups of fighters bound together by ties as close as those that secured the *fascis* of the lictors—the symbols of ancient Roman authority. So, fascism was created and its symbol devised.

The idea behind Mussolini's foreign policy was that of *spazio vitale* (vital space). The concept of *spazio vitale* was first announced in 1919, when the entire Mediterranean, especially so-called Julian March, was redefined to make it seem like a unified region that had belonged to Italy from the times of the ancient Roman province of Italia, and belonged exclusively to Italy. He saw it as their right to colonize Slovene ethnic areas and the Mediterranean, because they were claimed to be less developed people, was justified on the basis that Italy was supposedly suffering from overpopulation.

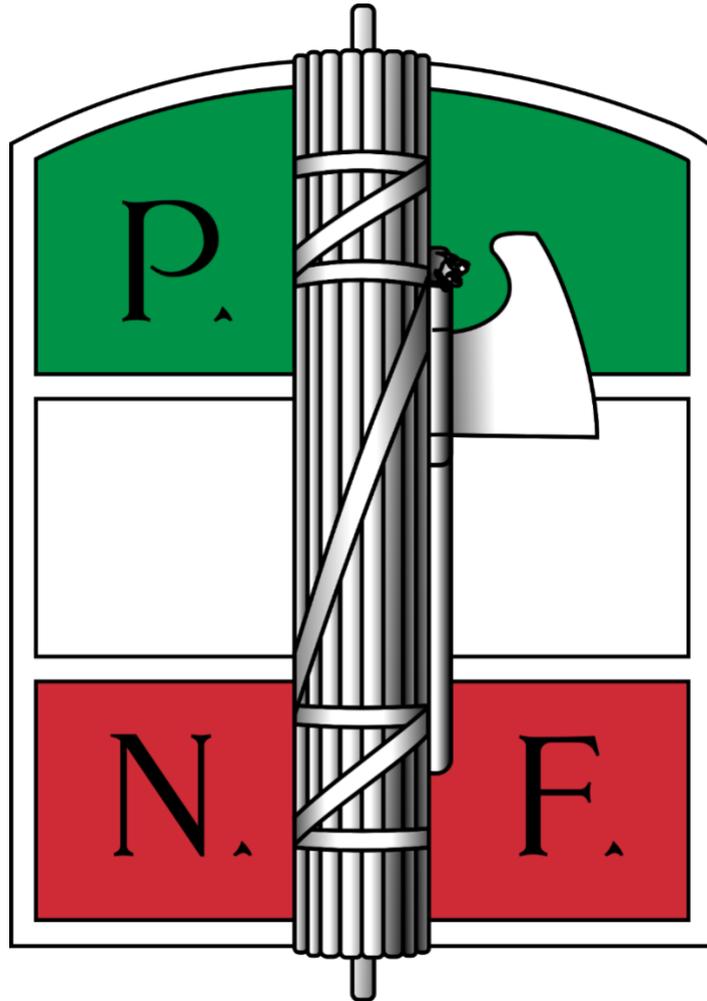


A Vague Depiction of the Italian Borders Aimed by the Spazio Vitale Policy

Biological racism was not as strong as it is in national socialism, still the basis of spazio vitale had a strongly racist basis. Mussolini asserted there was a "natural law" for stronger peoples to subject and dominate "inferior" peoples such as the "barbaric" Slavic peoples of Yugoslavia. He stated in a September 1920 speech:

“When dealing with such a race as Slavic—inferior and barbarian—we must not pursue the carrot, but the stick policy ... We should not be afraid of new victims ... The Italian border should run across the Brenner Pass, Monte Nevoso and the Dinaric Alps ... I would say we can easily sacrifice 500,000 barbaric Slavs for 50,000 Italians ...”

— Benito Mussolini, speech held in Pola, 20 September 1920.



Logo of the Partito Nazionale Fascista (National Fascist Party)

Mussolini and Fascists were successful at being both traditionalist and revolutionist which was distinctively different from anything else at that political climate. It was sometimes described as “The Third Way”. The Fascisti, led by one of Mussolini's close confidants, Dino Grandi, formed armed squads of war veterans called blackshirts (or squadristi) with the goal of restoring order to the streets of Italy with a strong hand. The blackshirts clashed with communists, socialists, and anarchists at parades and demonstrations; all of these factions were also involved in clashes against each other. The Italian government didn't intervene because of an upcoming threat of a communist revolution. The Fascisti grew quite rapidly. In two years, they have transformed to National Fascist Party at the congress of Rome. In 1921, Mussolini won the election to Chamber of Deputies for the first time.

ii) The March on Rome

The National Fascist Party managed to organize a mass demonstration and coup d'état in October 1922, resulting in Mussolini and his party ascending to power. After seeing no reaction to the anti-fascist strike of the Italian government in August 1922, Mussolini established his party as the keepers of order by suppressing the strikes.

With no reaction from the Italian government once again, and having consulted U.S. Ambassador Richard Washburn Child for U.S. government support, Mussolini started planning his rise to rule Italy.

On 24 October 1922, standing in the face of 60,000 militants in Naples, Mussolini declared that: "Our program is simple: we want to rule Italy." He then appointed the Quadrumvirs, Emilio De Bono, Italo Balbo, Michele Bianchi and Cesare Maria de Vecchi to lead the march on Rome the next day and went to Milan. Prime minister of the time, Luigi Facta, was warned about the march, but refused to believe that Mussolini would lead such a movement. He then ordered a state of siege for Rome, which king Victor Emmanuel III refused to sign, surrendering power to Mussolini and his National Fascist Party to reduce bloodshed and out of fear of igniting a civil war.

Mussolini thus managed to be in power, and formed his cabinet on 29 October 1922, marking the official rise of Fascist authorities in Italy.



Black Shirts in front of the Quirinale Palace in Rome



Mussolini and the Fascist Quadrumvirate in March on Rome: Michele Bianchi, Emilio De Bono, Cesare de Vecchi, Benito Mussolini, and Italo Balbo

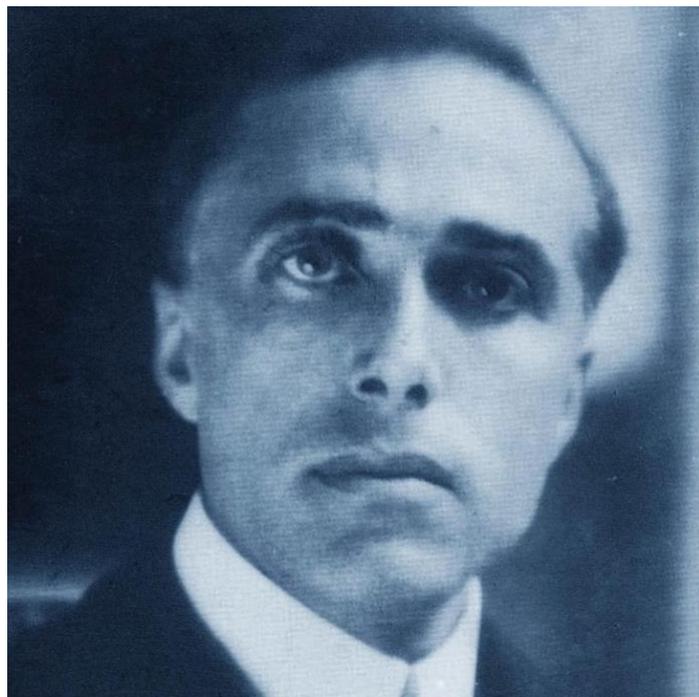
iii) Appointment of Mussolini as the Prime Minister

In his first years as the prime minister, a right-wing coalition government composed of Fascists, nationalists, liberals and two catholic clerics from the People's Party. Mussolini's domestic target was the establishment of a totalitarian state in Italy, with him being the leader. He wanted a complete state authority, with the integration of the Italian Fasces of Combat into the armed forces (the foundation in January 1923 of the Voluntary Militia for National Security) and the advanced the identification of the party with the state.

In 1923, government passed the Acerbo Law, which turned Italy into a single national constituency. It also gave 2/3 of the seats in the parliament to the party or parties that received at least 25% of the votes. The law applied in 1924 elections in which, The National Alliance, consisting of Fascists, most of the old liberals and others, won the election with 64%.

iv) Death of Matteotti

In 1924, Giacomo Matteotti, a socialist Italian politician, requested the election to be annulled because of the irregular nature of the election, was assassinated. Even though Mussolini ordered a cover-up, there were witnesses who saw the car which transported Matteotti's body to his residence, parked outside the residence and the car was linked to Amerigo Dumini, a known fascist. Mussolini later confessed that an event like this could easily alter public opinion and started a coup that would have swept fascism away. Dumini was imprisoned for two years. On his release, Dumini allegedly told other people that Mussolini was responsible, for which he served further prison time.



Giacomo Matteotti

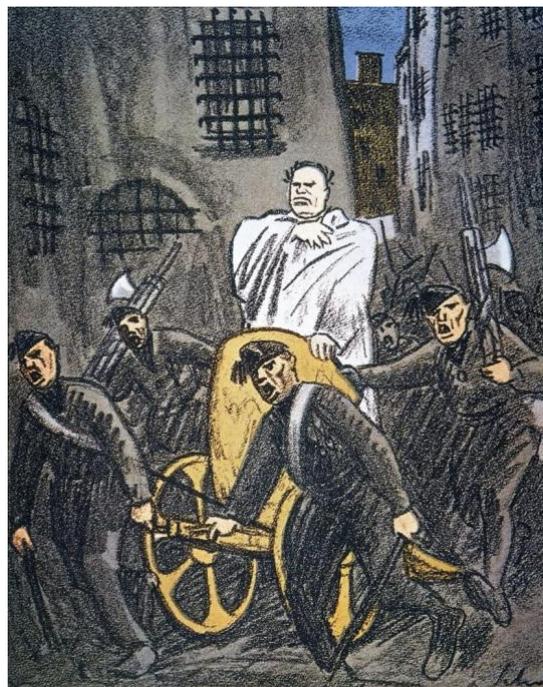
The death of Matteotti sparked widespread criticism of Fascism. A general strike was threatened in retaliation. Since Mussolini's government did not collapse and the King refused to dismiss him, all the anti-fascists (except for the Communist Party of Italy) began to leave the Chamber of Deputies. They retired on the "Aventine Mount", like ancient Roman plebeians. They planned to pressure the King to act against Mussolini, but on the contrary, this strengthened Mussolini. After a few weeks of confusion, Mussolini gained more votes by the Senate of the Kingdom, and tried to calm down the environment with his speech.

Despite the pressure, Victor Emmanuel III refused to dismiss Mussolini, since the Government was supported by a large majority of the Chamber of Deputies and almost all the Senate of the

Kingdom. Furthermore, he feared that forcing Mussolini to resign could be considered a coup d'état, which could lead to a civil war between the Army and the Blackshirts.

But during the summer, the trial against Matteotti's alleged killers and the discovery of the body of Matteotti once again spread rage against Mussolini: newspapers organized ruthless attacks against him and the fascist movement. On 13 September, a right-wing fascist deputy, Armando Casalini, was murdered on a tramway for vengeance for Matteotti's murder by the anti-fascist Giovanni Corvi.

During the autumn of 1924, the extremist wing of the Fascist Party threatened Mussolini with a coup, and dealt with him on the night of San Silvestro of 1924. Mussolini decided to counter this and on 3 January 1925 he gave a famous speech both attacking anti-fascists and confirming that he, and only he, was the leader of Fascism. He challenged the anti-fascists to prosecute him, and claimed proudly that Fascism was the "superb passion of the best youth of Italy" and grimly that "all the violence" was his responsibility, because he had created the climate of violence. Admitting that the murderers were Fascists of "high station", as Hitler later did after the Night of the Long Knives, Mussolini rhetorically claimed fault, stating "I assume, I alone, the political, moral, historical responsibility for everything that has happened. If sentences, more or less maimed, are enough to hang a man, out with the noose!" Mussolini concluded with a warning: Italy needs stability and Fascism would assure stability to Italy in any manner necessary. This speech is considered the very beginning of the dictatorship in Italy.



A Cartoon Depicting Mussolini as a Wannabe Caesar

6) Relationship Between the Church and Mussolini

In his early days, before he joined the Socialist Party, Mussolini was a man that despised religion. He was constantly criticizing the church and claiming that priests were a disaster upon earth. In his first publication “God Does Not Exist” he attacked religion, claiming that religious man was abnormal, and religion is a mass psychic disease. When he first started his fascist movement, the church was one of the targets of the fascists. He urged for seizing the properties of religious organizations and in his newspaper *Il Popolo d'Italia* (The Italian People) the pope was invited to leave the country.

His actions towards Christianity and Catholicism changed drastically when in 1921 he gave his first speech in the parliament. He said that Rome was the spiritual capital of the world for many Catholics and Italy could not ignore this source of strength. He pledged that fascism would restore the Christian society and build a Catholic state befitting a Catholic nation. These words came as a shock to many who knew him. Mussolini, however, knew that if he were to stop the socialists, he would need to remove the opposition which is the Catholic Popular Party. He knew that he would have to convince the Pope that he was a better choice for the church than the Popular Party. Show the Pope that he could help the church much more than the Popular Party ever could.

After the fascist movement formally became the Fascist Party, they adopted a new campaign. Suddenly, all mentions of seizing church property was gone as well as separating church and state. The fascists believed that Popular Party was involved with a large network of Catholic organisations, and they were seeing the Political Party as an obstacle that must be removed. This network included Catholic Action, a group of men and women participating in religious activity under church supervision.

At that time the fascist violence was increasing. In March 1922 a priest sent a letter to government authorities in protests of fascist violence against priests and Catholic activists. Fascist thugs also assaulted Popular Party members, attacked Catholic Action headquarters and young boys leaving Catholic meetings. Many Catholic newspapers were overrun with the news of fascist violence, but they never mentioned Mussolini. However, Mussolini’s message was obvious for the church: he was the only man who could keep the fascists under control.

Pope Pius XI believed that Italy needed a strong man to lead. He shared a common belief with Mussolini that parliamentary system was ineffective. He believed that if Mussolini proves a

trustworthy ally in restoring Christianity, his anticlerical past could be forgiven. He also knew that if he supported Political Party, fascist violence would only increase. The Pope never believed that Mussolini had a change of heart and embraced Christianity, but he was willing to consider a pragmatic deal if Mussolini proved that he would keep his promises. In October 1922, the Vatican secretary of state sent a notice to all Italian bishops, ordering them that priests were not to align with any political party. As fascists gained more and more power, the Pope distanced the church from the Political Party.

The Pope's decision to support Mussolini was not welcome at first. Father Enrico Rosa, the editor of *La Civiltà cattolica*, was among the most disappointed. Before the March on Rome, Father Rosa used the journal to denounce the Fascist movement as one of the biggest enemies of the church. He believed that fascism was anti-Christian and violent and it was led by malicious men. However, he could not publish his writing because he was told by the Pope to discard it.

Father Rosa was not able to see the Pope's change of heart about Mussolini. Even if they were two very different people, Mussolini and the Pope shared some similarities that made the Pope like Mussolini. They both were unsympathetic to the parliamentary democratic system. They both were against the freedom of speech and they both believed that communism is a very big threat. They believed that current political system is unable to save Italy from destruction. After the intervention of the Pope, Father Rosa changed his article. He now wrote that even if a government had questionable acts, after they are elected legitimately, it is the duty of public to support it. Later on, the journal, while still published articles about Fascist violence against church, never mentioned any opposing ideas about Fascism or Mussolini. In fact, it did quite the opposite. It became the Vatican's tool of legitimizing Fascism.

Mussolini was quick to give the church benefits that he promised. He restored the privileges of the church that was lost after the Italian Unification. He ordered a crucifix to be placed in every classroom, hospital, and courtroom. He banned insulting priests or badmouthing Catholicism. Military units were restored with Catholic chaplains. He expanded state allowances for priests and bishops. And to appease the Pope even more, he made the Catholic religion a required course in elementary schools. He gave the Church extensive amounts of money for repairs of churches and Catholic schools that were run by the Church. He encouraged bishops and priests to ask for funds in his visits. And he even baptized his wife and three children.

Since many observers in and out of Italy was unsure of what to think about the new Fascist government led by Mussolini, the approval of Vatican was very important to legitimize the new government.

Mussolini wanted to strengthen the bond between him and Vatican, so he wanted to meet with Cardinal Gasparri, the secretary of state of Vatican. The meeting must be arranged in secret for the Vatican secretary of state could not meet with the prime minister of the Kingdom of Italy, a position, and a state that the Holy See did not recognize. The meeting was arranged by an old friend of Cardinal Gasparri, Carlo Santucci. He was previously a member of the Popular Party, but he later left and started supporting the Fascists.

The concern that was lingering in Cardinal Gasparri's mind was not about whether Vatican will support bringing down the democratic system, for Vatican did not particularly believe in the democratic system. The concern was whether Mussolini was the right person for the job or not, whether he was a person that Vatican could trust, or he was someone unreliable, whether he would keep his promise to restore Catholicism or he would back down from his promises, and most importantly, whether he could succeed with the help of the Church or fail.

For Mussolini, the Church support was a great asset. He believed that if he could be the one that restores the relations between the Church and the state and win the blessing of the Pope, thus ending the conflict inside Italy, he would achieve what those before him could not achieve. He would become the hero of many Catholics all around the world.

Mussolini and Cardinal Gasparri made one agreement that day: a person that both the Pope and Mussolini trusted would be the messenger between Vatican and Mussolini and relay their most important messages. That person was old Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi.

The Pope first met the Jesuit scholar in 1899 when Tacchi Venturi was in Ambrosiana Library due to a research trip. Mussolini heard of Tacchi Venturi from his brother Arnaldo, who became friends with Venturi when he spent some time in Rome during the war. Mussolini met the man some time before the secret meeting when he decided to donate the Chigi Library to Vatican. Vatican responded to Mussolini's offer of donation by sending Venturi to oversee the donation. When Mussolini heard that Venturi was in the building, he invited him to his office to meet him, thus marking the first of many meetings between him and the Jesuit.

However, early discussions between Vatican and Mussolini were not enough to stop the Fascist violence against priests and Catholics that the Fascists were suspecting of supporting Popular

Party. The violence continued for the year 1923 and it was increased in the later years. However, the Vatican newspaper only mentioned the attacks and mourned. There was a new policy of the Catholic newspaper, and it was refraining from using Mussolini's name. They only suggested that these attacks are conducted by extremists outside the control of Mussolini.

The Pope Pius X founded local Catholic Action groups in 1905. It was founded to create a base for the Catholics who were outside of the Church. These Catholic Action groups were among the most targeted by the Fascist attacks. Catholic Action was very important for Pope Pius XI. In fact, he gained a reputation as "the Pope of Catholic Action". There were groups for both men and women and, girls and boys. University students had a unit on their own. Catholic Action was founded to conduct religious and educational activities but for Pope Pius XI, it was much more than that. He believed that the Catholic Action was the army of the Church, dedicated to restoring the Christianity in Italian society.

Naturally, attacks targeting the Catholic Action made the Pope unhappy. However, Mussolini was using force in such a way that he was showing to the Pope that he was the only person who could keep the Fascists under control. News of attacks published in newspapers were ending with respectful pleas to Mussolini. From time to time, when the people were uneasy about the attacks, Mussolini had arrested some people. However, put aside convicting, the perpetrators rarely brought to trial.

Mussolini believed that his strategy was working. Negotiations had started and a deal was starting to form. He was using violence as a tool to get what he wanted, and he did not want to abandon that asset. He refrained from offending the Pope and he kept restoring the Church privileges. In exchange for his actions, he needed the Pope to get rid of the remaining Catholic opposition which is the Popular Party.

Fortunately for Mussolini, the Pope decided to cut the Church support to the Popular Party. Even in the Vatican journal, because of the orders of the Pope, it was stated that because of the efforts of Mussolini on aiding the Church, there was no need for a Catholic Party anymore. Later on, the journal kept praising Mussolini. It acknowledged his efforts on restoring the order. The journal claimed that Fascism was trying to restore the honour of the religion and it was required in their battle against liberalism.

Encouraged by the statements of the Church, Mussolini gave an ultimatum. Unless the Popular Party gave its unconditional support, he would remove the two ministers who were members of the Popular Party. When Don Luigi Sturzo, the founder of the Popular Party, and other party

members refused, Mussolini dismissed the ministers. The Pope was also unhappy about the actions of Don Sturzo. He believed that Don Sturzo should not serve as the head of the Popular Party anymore. *Corriere d'Italia*, the catholic newspaper of Rome, published a plea of a domestic prelate of the Pope, calling Don Sturzo to resign. People assumed that the Pope himself called Sturzo to resign.

Pope Pius XI was in fact, demanding Sturzo resign. However, the man was not submitting to this request. The Pope was getting impatient, so he sent Tacchi Venturi to see Sturzo. Sturzo complained that the Pope was acting unfair, and he was undermining his party. He claimed that the Popular Party was the real Christian party, but the Pope was not impressed by his words. Sturzo unwillingly agreed to resign. Tacchi Venturi later was sent to Mussolini to arrange the removal of Sturzo.

The Pope anticipated the end of fascist violence against the members of the Church after he cut the Church support to the Popular Party, however, the opposite happened. When the Fascist became sure that the Pope was pulling his support from the Popular Party, members became easier targets. Fascist newspapers even claimed that the biggest enemy was not communism, but the Popular Party. Soon the attack was intensified, but as usual, Mussolini blamed everything on “unknown assassins” or “undisciplined comrades” and no one got any punishment, even when the perpetrators was found.

Mussolini made a clear impression: he was the only person who can keep the fascist extremists under control. He also kept showering the Church with money and privileges. He agreed to close down gambling halls, he accepted the Vatican’s demand of giving the Church the right of selection of the books used to teach religion. He passed a law that enabled editors of newspapers to fire any writer who insulted the Pope or the Church. He made the state recognize the Catholic University of Milan, he saved a bank closely related to Vatican, the Bank of Rome, from bankruptcy, and he added Church holidays to the calendars. Crucifixes were back on every classroom. He gave funds to repair the churches that are damaged during the war. He even stated that he was against divorce. But these benefits were just a small price in exchange for the Pope’s support and the Pope was well aware of it.

Following the events after Matteotti’s death, Mussolini’s government was in a dire situation. His opposition was starting to form a coalition against him, and the public was also furious. For the Pope, this was a disaster. After a long time finally, he thought he found a strong Italian leader but now his regime was in danger. The Pope decided to help Mussolini as much as he

can, so he targeted the Popular Party since the party was decided to join the coalition as well. Popular Party was not a part of the Church hierarchy but since they called themselves 'Christian Party', if the Pope openly denounced them, they could not continue to receive the same amount of support. So, the Vatican journals published articles, reminding people to obey the law and protect the government. They stated that good Catholics would not cooperate with socialists and blamed Popular Party. However, this did not stop the Popular Party from working with other parties to unseat Mussolini.

This was not the only effort the Pope put in saving Mussolini. He sent his envoy to Mussolini, Tacchi Venturi, to remind Mussolini that he still has support. In his note Tacchi Venturi wrote: "Excellence, this morning it pleased His Holiness to speak to me of Your Excellency in such terms that I am certain that they will succeed in being especially welcome and comforting." He mentioned that he should meet with Mussolini in person to convey the Pope's thoughts. In Mussolini's darkest days, the Pope's envoy came and conveyed the Pope's support.

Furthermore, the Pope went to Father Rosa for help. He instructed Rosa to prepare an article about the crisis. Cardinal Gasparri himself went and collected the article. For a few days, the draft of the article went back and forth between the Pope and Rosa and finally it was published. The article was beginning with praises to Mussolini for all that he is done for the Church and was suggesting that Mussolini not been involved with the Matteotti Murder. The article was stating that any actions against the government is not justified, even new elections. And once again it was targeting the Popular Party, stating that they could not be forgiven for cooperating with the socialists. The Pope erased all questions about his support to Mussolini when he gave a speech to a group of university students. He lectured the students that Italian Catholics could never work together with socialists.

After he regained the control of the country, Mussolini wanted to strengthen his alliance with Vatican. He had already baptized his wife and children and arranged first communion and confirmation for his children. There was one religious ritual he did not perform yet, so he told Tacchi Venturi that he wanted a religious wedding with his wife Rachele. This wedding would please the Pope, but it was not the easiest since Rachele was strongly opposed to the religion. Mussolini managed to catch his wife by surprise and married her in his house, where the priest performed the ceremony.

The year 1925 was a proud year for the Pope too. He declared that year as a Holy Year. This meant that Catholics all around the world were encouraged to make their pilgrimage to Rome.

Over the course of the year, more than a million pilgrims came to Rome from all over the world. The Pope believed that pilgrimage was one of the most sacred acts one can perform. Every single day hundreds of people waited on their knees in the halls of Apostolic Palace. It was a sight to behold, the Pope in a white robe surrounded by scarlet-gowned cardinals and gendarmes wielding swords. The Holy Year was concluded with the Pope's speech. He said that humanity could be saved if and only if all embraced Roman Catholicism as one true religion.

In the summer of 1924, Mussolini formed a special commission to review the laws affecting the Church. It worked as a body to keep the tension low between the state and the Church. The Pope formally did not recognize the state but with Tacchi Venturi acting as his envoy, he placed three prelates into the commission. As the commission prepared to announce new laws, a letter from the Pope stated that the Church could not approve any law about its power, that is passed by the only votes of the parliament. Direct negotiations between the Holy See and the government was the only way that the Church could agree.

Mussolini was excited as he understood quickly that this letter of the Pope was an offer of a possible agreement. He said that it was time for the negotiations to begin. There were many who were sceptical about Mussolini's Catholic state and Vatican's position if there were an agreement. But Mussolini was not affected by these scepticisms. He had worked hard for years to create a state which is identified by the Catholic Church.

The Pope started the negotiations in 1926. He chose Francesco Pacelli as his representative since he was outside of the clergy. Brother of the future pope Pius XII, Pacelli came from a family closely related to Vatican. Mussolini appointed Domenico Barone as his representative in the talks.

The negotiations were not easy. The biggest issue was the Pope's protection of Catholic Action. Mussolini was not comfortable with having a group that he cannot control. Being an organization with members from masses, Catholic Action often draw the suspicion of Mussolini. Mussolini believed that remaining members of the Popular Party were finding themselves a new place in Catholic Action. However, the Pope was seeing the group as his way of spreading Catholicism to Italian masses.

Tacchi Venturi often calmed the Pope after fascist attacks on Catholic Action. He explained to the Pope that in many cases Catholic Action was working with the Popular Party in a way that

separating the two groups was almost impossible. He gave evidence of Popular Party activists taking parts in Catholic Action groups.

Mussolini was interested with the Catholic Action groups regarding the children much more than he was interested in the adults. He believed that teaching kids to be loyal fascists was very important, so he founded his youth organization Opera Nazionale Balilla. Mussolini believed that youth groups of the Church created competition that Mussolini did not want. He believed that ultimately, controlling the youth was more important than getting on the Pope's good side. He started to remove competition by forbidding the Boy Scout groups. The Pope was angered by this decision of Mussolini, so he sent Tacchi Venturi to warn him.

In the year of 1927, when Mussolini extended the ban of Boy Scouts to include the Catholic Action youth groups, the Pope was very upset, and he suspended the talks. The Pope wanted Catholic Action to be unaffected by the regulations that would limit its activities, for such activities were attracting attention among the young people. He gave an ultimatum to Mussolini: If Mussolini did not stop his actions against the Catholic Action, no deal was going to happen. Afraid of overstepping, Mussolini sent word to his prefects and ordered them to leave Catholic Action groups alone. The Pope was pleased, and he resumed the talks.

The final obstacle in the way of an agreement was the King Victor Emmanuel III. Just as an agreement was about to form, the Pope heard that the King was having second thoughts and might not sign the agreement. The relations between the king and the Pope were not on the best terms. The Pope knew that the king was not friendly towards the papacy. Worried that years of hard work and burden might for be nothing, the Pope decided to find a way to get the kings approval. The main issue bothering the kings mind was further expansion of papal territory, so the Pope decided to give up on his early demand of the gardens of Villa Doria Pamphili to be added to the Vatican territory.

7) The Lateran Treaty

After the Pope and Fascists agreed to settle the Roman Question for good, they engaged in talks which resulted in the Lateran Treaty. At nine a.m. on Monday, February 11, Dino Grandi, undersecretary of foreign affairs, arrived at Mussolini's home. The same day, in Vatican, early in the morning, the cardinal Gasparri and his undersecretary met in the pope's private library to assure the pontiff that everything was in order to sign the treaty. They handed him the text of the treaty, and a map which pointed out the last-minute alterations. After checking the documents carefully, pope gave his approval.



The Signing of the Treaty

The ceremony was in the Lateran Palace, in the Hall of Popes, and nobody was notified there will be a signing of the treaty. The presence of many police and the arrival of the Duce hinted people and journalists and photographers rushed to the scene. Chants of “Long live Pius, our Pope and King!” were rising while others chanted “Viva Mussolini!”, “Viva Italia!”

Until the signing, Catholics who are critical of dictatorship could argue Pope was not supportive of fascist regime. Italian Catholics do not have to think twice about supporting Mussolini as it is following the Pope's wishes.



A Depiction of the Treaty

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March on Rome | Definition, Events, & Facts

March on Rome, the insurrection by which Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy in late October 1922. The March marked the beginning of fascist rule and meant the doom of the

<https://www.britannica.com/event/March-on-Rome>

Siege of Rome | Summary

Siege of Rome, (30 April-1 July 1849). The defense of the short-lived Roman Republic made Giuseppe Garibaldi a hero of Italian nationalists. The republic was overthrown by French forces, and

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Siege-of-Rome-1849>

Italy - Unification

In Piedmont Victor Emmanuel II governed with a parliament whose democratic majority refused to ratify the peace treaty with Austria. This was an exception to the general course of reaction.

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Congress of Vienna | Goals, Significance, Definition, & Map

Congress of Vienna, assembly in 1814-15 that reorganized Europe after the Napoleonic Wars. It began in September 1814, five months after Napoleon I's first abdication and completed its "Final <https://www.britannica.com/event/Congress-of-Vienna>

Law of Guarantees | Italy [1871]

Law of Guarantees, Italian Legge Delle Guarentigie, (May 13, 1871), attempt by the Italian government to settle the question of its relationship with the pope, who had been deprived of his

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