

Within the Gates

THE Italian consul general in New York, Gaetano Vecchiotti, declared not long ago: "Il Duce has condensed the duty of the Italians into these few words: 'Work and arm.' For us, Italians living abroad, the word 'arm' should signify a continuous, stubborn propaganda among the people of other races." Signor Vecchiotti's frank statement revealed nothing new; it is no secret that the Italian government is carrying on verbal warfare against democracy. But it is not so well known that our public schools are being used by Italian propagandists for this purpose.

The propagandists are particularly active in schools which have classes conducted in Italian for children of immigrants who speak Italian in the home. In the textbooks used in these schools the Fascist point of view is openly expressed. This literal translation of an extract from an elementary reader entitled "Andiamo in Italia" is typical:

Fascism has remade the Italy which the parties and the politicians, all of whom were solicitous for their own interests, had reduced to slight importance. . . . Italy was a disorderly and disorganized country in which all wanted to talk louder without listening to the voice of the ruler. Now this voice which commands is well heard by all and order has been reestablished as by a miracle. The future will tell how much Italy owes to its present chief and to the state organization that he personifies.

Another textbook, "Vita Italiana," in a foreword frankly acknowledges its debt to the Italian Tourist Information Office, an Italian government agency. Both these books were put out by a reputable publishing firm (Henry Holt and Company) and have been approved by public officials—facts which greatly increase their propaganda value. And what is very important to the impoverished Italian government, they cost it nothing. In fact, the books are paid for either by the parents of the pupils or by the city, and the authors collect royalties from the publishing houses.

In New York, and to a lesser degree in other cities having a large Italian population, the public-school buildings have been used frequently as meeting places by Fascist organizations. On May 24 last the National United Italian Association, an organization formed for the purpose of coordinating the activities of Italian-American groups, held a meeting in