

PATHFINDER

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Bambini



Italy, Wanting More Young Squads Like the Above, Has Called Again for More Babies

ITALY: Dictator Mussolini has long called for more bambini to wear the blackshirt and be enrolled in the Sons of the She Wolf, thus insuring Italy man power for her future wars. He wants a population of 60,000,000 by 1950. In January, 1933, however, Italy had a population of only 41,806,000, and since then both births and deaths have declined, leaving the population at a near standstill in spite of Il Duce's bachelor taxes, subsidies for large families and high-pressure propaganda.

In fact, since 1922 Italy's marriage rate has fallen to 7.2 per 1,000 of population, her birth rate to 22.2 per 1,000 and her excess of births over deaths to 8.7 per 1,000. Before the World war these rates were 7.4, 31.7 and 12.2 respectively. The newspaper Il Popolo d'Italia of Milan has estimated that the steady decline in the birth rate has deprived Il Duce of 15 army divisions.

To combat this population tendency, the Fascist Grand Council last week approved a sweeping seven-point program to increase Italy's "military power" and provide "a secure future for the empire." All sorts of threats and cajoleries, including bigger marriage loans, state dowries for brides, big family loans and the like, were ordered. Most important of these were: (1) provisions that priority in employment and in promotion be given to fathers of big families; (2) fixing salaries for families rather than for individuals; and (3) placing further heavy economic burdens on bachelors and childless husbands.