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Abstracts

FRANCESCO LEFEBVRE D'OVIDIO, Dino Grandi, la «carriera» e la «fascistizzazione» del Ministero degli Esteri

Dino Grandi was appointed Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs on May 15, 1925 and was subsequently to take over from Mussolini as Foreign Secretary on September 12, 1929. The purpose of the appointment was to establish a stronger political control over the bureaucratic structure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which during the first two and a half years of Mussolini's government was dominated by Salvatore Contarini, the permanent General Secretary, together with key top-level officers, as Giacomo Paolucci de' Calboli Barone, head of the Minister's cabinet, and Vincenzo Lojacono, director of the Personnel Department. After a few months following Grandi's appointment, Contarini resigned. The resignation has generally been considered as a result of a contrast between Contarini's political views and Mussolini's foreign policy. However, the author believes that the issue behind the resignation consisted mainly in the power structure within the Ministry and the clash of personal power between Contarini and Grandi. After the latter prevailed and Contarini resigned, a new group of top officers gathered around Grandi: particularly Raffaele Guariglia, Augusto Rosso and Pellegrino Ghigi. During the following years Grandi carried through a reorganization of the structure of the Ministry and of the «carriera», the procedure for the access to the consular and the diplomatic services, which included the possibility (but only for one single enrollment) to enter the consular service on political merits. However, although a certain number of employees entered the Ministry for political reasons, an analysis of the structure of the diplomatic service and, particularly, of the appointments to the most important positions shows that fascist political control over the political orientation within the Ministry was limited. The main political orientation of the «carriera» remained – until Galeazzo Ciano's appointment as Foreign Secretary in 1936 – the nationalist ideology of the Italian National Association and, more generally, the «national-liberal» orientation which prevailed among diplomats since before the First World War, and which was shared by most of the top-level diplomats, such as Contarini himself, Guariglia and many others who had entered the «carriera» before Mussolini's government took office.