

*Italian Institute of
Historical Studies*

INTERVIEWS: EFD

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Benedetto Croce

Naples

April 26, 1948

Through the kindness of Bruno Foa, New York, and his brother, C. Foa of Naples, EFD saw Croce who has just recovered from a lengthy illness and is still under close medical surveillance. Croce is now 82 years of age and rather frail. He has a discoloration of the skin, particularly on his hands as a result of his recent illness. In spite of this, he is very alert and keen mentally but with the privilege of the old, prefers to talk of himself and his current interests rather than in more general terms. He started to give EFD a sketch of current intellectual affairs in Italy and commented briefly and objectively on the plight of intellectuals under Fascism. As a tendency of scholarship everywhere but particularly in Italy, Croce also referred to research as more German than the Germans. It is this positivistic trend in research which Croce is trying to combat in both his historical and philosophical studies and he insisted on the importance of the esthetic-moral approach to these subjects as developed in his own works. His enthusiasm for this topic soon led him to show EFD through his house which is an ancient palazzo, once occupied by G. Vico. The third floor of the palace which Croce occupies has approximately 20 large rooms of pleasing proportions, all filled with bookshelves containing Croce's own books in double rows. Perhaps the most interesting single room was that which contains one bookcase filled with Croce's own writings with editions of all the various translations of them which have appeared. Another bookcase contains at least 20 volumes labeled "Writings about B. Croce." Croce explained that these volumes contain chiefly attacks on him by Mussolini and the Fascists. They are being preserved not out of vanity but out of an appreciation of the significance which they will have for the future historian of Fascism.

Croce has turned over most of these rooms to his Historical Institute. Because of the arrival of a delegation from the Bulgarian Embassy, Croce arranged for EFD to see Professor Federico Chabod, the Director of the Institute, the next morning for a complete description of the Institute and its activities.

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