

MUSSOLINI AND THE BOY

Again Mussolini has been avenged. The 18-year-old youth who attempted to shoot "Il Duce" a few days ago, was stabbed and beaten to death by an avenging mob.

An official statement from "Il Duce" issued soon after the incident, merely says that "the first gesture of justice has been accomplished."

A fairly new Italian law makes it a capital crime to attack the premier. It was the multitude that demanded this law, the multitude which looks to Mussolini as its savior and tells of the shoes on children's feet and the schooling given those who once were not taught to read and write.

It is a bit hard to reconcile this Mussolini who is enshrined in the heart of the masses with a Mussolini who merely looked on, grim and tight-lipped, as a slip of a boy was pounded to pulp by a mob.

Attempts to murder anyone, premiers included, should be severely punished, of course. But there are limits. It is hard to conceive of any country countenancing mob law in these days, no matter how grave the offense.

One would imagine Mussolini would want to question that boy, wonder about the mental and emotional processes in his being, gain more insight into the hearts and minds of his enemies, before vengeance was done.

Still, precedents must be established. It is not likely that any of those teeming thousands who saw the boy killed will fire at the premier or hurl a gleaming stiletto at him.