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**"Anti-Americanism in XXth Century Europe"**

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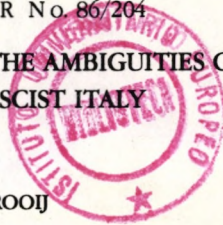
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**PROGRESS WITHOUT CHANGE THE AMBIGUITIES OF  
MODERNIZATION IN FASCIST ITALY**

**by**

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PROGRESS WITHOUT CHANGE

THE AMBIGUITIES OF MODERNIZATION IN FASCIST ITALY

Henry Ford as an old man  
is a passionate antiquarian  
(...)

When he bought the Wayside Inn near  
Sudbury, Massachusetts, he had the  
new highway where the newmodel cars  
roared and slithered and hissed  
oilily past (the new noise of the  
automobile)

moved away from the door  
put back the old bad road  
so that everything might be  
the way it used to be,  
in the days of horses and buggies.

John Dos Passos, The big money (1936)

In a recent book on the ideology and political mythology of the Fascist regime, the Italian historian Pier Giorgio Zunino has emphasized the importance of Fascist anti-Americanism as a key to the understanding of the value system which was at the base of dictatorship (1). Even though he stresses the important economic and diplomatic ties which linked Italy to the United States of America in the twenties and early thirties, Zunino is convinced that the isolated Fascist expressions of appreciation for America, the American people and its leaders are of no importance when compared with the general mood of contempt for almost all aspects of American society. He is certainly right when he argues that the pro-American attitude of a small minority of young intellectuals --among whom at least Cesare Pavese, Elio Vittorini and Giaime Pintor should be mentioned (2) -- does not counterbalance the

overall rejection of the so-called American model in the Fascist press, but the analysis of the Fascist attitude towards the United States should not stop at this rather obvious observation. In fact, denying the existence of a sincere Fascist pro-Americanism Zunino does not take into full consideration the underlying tensions within Italian society and as a result he is unable to recognize some of the more interesting aspects of the problem.

The existence in Fascist Italy of both pro-Americanism and anti-Americanism indicates the tendency of the Fascist state to incorporate the pre-existing contradictions of Italian society while at the same time transforming them through the pressure of political constraints. Thus we find both advocastes of industrialization and of ruralization, pro-Americans and anti-Americans, fierce opponents of mass-society, but also some upholders of the advantages of mass-society.

It is precisely through this multitude of contrasting elements that the American image in Italy reflects Fascists views on the past, opinions about the present and hopes and fears for the future. In this way the study of anti-Americanism offers a possibility to gain new insights into the defence mechanisms of Italian national consciousness. By imputing unwanted changes in the social and moral order to American influence, the anti-Americans relieved the Italian nation from the fear that these changes were inherent in the development of society, and created a utopian ideal of progress without change. As we will see the anti-Americans often accepted the necessity of modernization in the production process but refused any change in the traditional order

of society. The specific criticism which they directed against America shows that this form of anti-Americanism was linked to the transformation of rural society and constituted a reaction against the consequences of industrial development. At the same time, however, the attempt to make a distinction between the modernization of production and its undesired 'American' corollary of gradually disappearing traditional social privileges, urbanization and the rise of new social classes, shows that the fascists were unable --or maybe unwilling-- to make a straightforward choice between modernization and conservatism. This incapacity --or unwillingness-- was the result of the compromise between Southern landowners and North Italian industrialists on which fascist rule was based (3).

In the first part of this short essay I will discuss the identification of the concept of modernity with the image of America; a form of identification which existed already before World War I and survives even today to a surprisingly large extent. This introduction leads us to our main theme: the role of the American 'model' in the Fascist attempt to speed up the pace of modernization without modifying the framework of traditional society. The final part of this essay will be devoted to the failure of this attempt and to the rise of more vulgar forms of anti-American propaganda.

1. 'Ista florida novitas mundi'

Since its discovery the New World has excited the curiosity of Europeans and provoked a great number of negative judgments which were often based on mere prejudice and on a complete lack of information (4). Only in the second half of the nineteenth century a more rational and politically more significant form of anti-Americanism came into being as a negative consequence of the improvement of means of communication, the increase in travel from and to the United States and above all the growth in the American export of agricultural products to Europe. In addition to economic competition Europeans began to feel the force of some American ideas: constitutional rights and the republican form of State were odious to reactionaries and monarchists, while Catholics, especially in Italy and France, were opposed to the separation of Church and State. In their opinion Americanism was connected with the modernist fight against the secular power of the Church (5).

Anti-Americanism remained linked to relatively small groups until the American victory against Spain in 1898, when the United States of America, without any particular effort, occupied its place among the main political powers. The conquest of the Philippines made America a dangerous competitor on the rich markets of the Far East. In the same period the Europeans lost most of their influence in South America (6).

Of course the reactions to this new situation differed in correspondence with the specific situation of the European

countries. In Spain, which had lost its colonial possessions as a result of the Paris peace treaty of 10 December 1898, the defeat was at the base of a profound crisis in the national consciousness. According to Damian Isern the defeat had been the result of the failings of the Latin race: the supremacy of imagination and intuition over rationality and judgment (7). During the war count Agenor Goluchowski, minister of foreign affairs of Austria-Hungary --which for dynastical reasons was close to Spain-- had tried without success to mediate between the belligerent states. When his attempts failed he could however only appeal through diplomatic channels to the humane feelings of McKinley (8). America's main European opponent in the first decade of the twentieth century was the German Empire which experienced a period of rapid industrial development and needed new markets. The Americans feared German ambitions in Latin America and Theodore Roosevelt, who for other reasons was a sincere admirer of German genius, indicated Germany as a potential threat to the power, security and prosperity of the United States. The growing hostility between the German and American navy confirmed his opinion (9). Even in France, which traditionally had good relations with the United States, there were warnings against the danger of American supremacy, which became louder when American capital began to substitute French capital in its sphere of influence (10).

In Great Britain the growing consciousness of American power led to different conclusions. The advantages of Anglo-American

friendship were underlined and voices were raised in favour of even narrower forms of collaboration:

Unless I am altogether mistaken, we have an opportunity - probably the last which is to be offered to us - of retaining our place as the first of world-powers. If we neglect it, we shall descend slowly but irresistibly to the position of Holland and of Belgium. No one who contemplates with an impartial mind the array of facts now submitted to his attention, will deny that I have at least made out a very strong prima facie case in support of my contention that unless we can succeed in merging the British Empire in the English-speaking United States of the World, the disintegration of our Empire and our definite displacement from the position of commercial and financial primacy is only a matter of time, and probably a very short time (11).

In Italy the great material achievements of the United States and its imperious rise in political, economic and diplomatic power were judged with a mixture of admiration and apprehension (12). Already in 1899 Carlo Bruno, reviewing Théry's Europe et Etats-Unis d'Amérique in the Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali, warned that the United States would not stop its expansion after the victory against Spain and aspired to conquer the markets of the world (13). The United States offered a first impression of the new balance of power in 1902 when it threatened to intervene against the naval blockade with which Germany, England and Italy tried to force Venezuela to render her customs duties in order to pay back outstanding loans. A year later Luigi Luzzatti, Chancellor of the Exchequer, complained that the United States required the status of most favoured nation without conceding any corresponding advantages. He recognized however that the European nations were in no position to raise opposition because they



urgently needed American raw material and machinery. Consequently, Luzzatti refused to adhere to the proposal, forwarded by German and Hungarian landowners on the occasion of the international agricultural congress in Rome in 1903, to create a common defence against the invasion of American products. The success of such a mobilization of the economic forces of Europe against America was not only unlikely in view of Europe's profound internal divisions, but what is more, it did not take into account the force of this young giant:

E invero le forze degli Stati Uniti hanno qualcosa di nativamente incoercibile come le forze primitive e non esauribili della stessa natura; essi sono potenzialmente forti come l'Europa; nè ci vorrebbe meno, perchè la minaccia di fronteggiarli fosse seria, di una lega europea! (...) E' la fiorente gioventù del mondo e della vita, di cui parlava Lucrezio, che si annunzia e sorge: Ista florida novitas mundi! (14)

Thus America constituted a threat to Europe's economic predominance, but at the same time it could be used as a model of progress. In a scientific way the commercial university Luigi Bocconi, founded in 1902 and inspired by the example of the great American business schools, tried to diffuse new techniques of management calculated for a rationalization of labour within the enterprise and a new international scale of commerce (15). The Italian journalist Ugo Ojetti, however, warned his readers in the Corriere della sera that the real force of the American people resided in its self-confidence and optimism (16). It was therefore useless to imitate American educational methods or style of life; Italians and Frenchmen should on the contrary defend their own

form of civilization and rediscover the merits of the Latin race. The obsession with America which had spread over Europe after the American victory against Spain could only undermine the remaining forces of the Old World (17).

In 1906/1907 and 1908 the sociologist and historian Guglielmo Ferrero (1871-1942) made two visits to North and South America which served as a base for a number of books in which he wrote down his American impressions (18). Ferrero's ideas about America and American-European relations are not always original and do not correspond to high academic standards but his work is of interest to the student of Italian anti-Americanism precisely because it summarizes some of the commonplaces of the period before World War I (19).

In his books Ferrero raises two related questions: that of the exact nature of progress and the more concrete question whether the New and the Old World would develop along parallel or divergent lines. Ferrero makes a distinction between the American and European definition of progress:

The worshippers of the present and the admirers of America argue, more or less consciously, from a definition of progress which would identify it with the increase of the power and of the speed of machines, of riches, and of our control over nature, however much that control may involve the frenzied squandering of the resources of the earth, which, while immense are not inexhaustible(...) But the opposite school indignantly denies that men (...) are contributing nothing to the improvement and progress of the world when they strive to unbellish it or to instruct it (...)According to these, our age, intent only on making money, ought to be ashamed when it compares itself with the past. Machines are the barbarians of modern times, which have destroyed the fairest works of ancient civilisations. History will show the discovery of America to have been little less than a calamity (20).

Ferrero immediatly recognized that the sharp distinction between these two models existed only in theory; Europeans were in reality eager to sacrifice some of their cultural traditions in exchange for an improvement of the standard of living. In fact Europe was becoming americanized because the American idea of progress --understood to mean the increase of wealth and the perfecting of the instruments of production-- was penetrating European society. Ferrero even went so far as to say that this American idea of progress was the only idea that had sunk deep into the minds of the masses of Europe in the last fifty years (21). Americans on the other hand were much less materialistic and practical than often had been supposed: after her material achievements America was being induced to europeanize herself, and to develop her cultural life.

Ferrero was therefore convinced that the future would see the Old and New World draw together: the cultural decline which characterized this period of quantitative growth would only be temporary because a high material standard of living would in the end require an equally high quality of living. Thus if modern America could be compared with ancient Rome, modern Europe could act like Athens and refine the manners of the uneducated young giant.

## 2. Educating industry

It has often been noted that World War I constitutes a watershed in the history of American-European relations in general and in the relations between Italy and the United States in particular (22). America had been a distant point of reference for the ruling classes in Italy in previous years, when the rumour of her fabulous wealth had already reached the rural masses for whom emigration was often the only alternative to a life of misery. After the war the United States firmly occupied a position among world's greatest powers and had a predominant role in the economic and political life of Europe as her main creditor (23). The success of American industry and its high level of productivity roused the interest for new production methods among Europeans who faced the problem of postwar reconstruction.

Even before 1914 the production system elaborated by Frederick W. Taylor (1856-1915), which was characterized by a scientific approach to the problems of organization and a intensive exploitation of the labour force, had drawn the attention of industrialists (24). The war gave a strong impulse to the introduction of some aspects of this system, especially in mechanical industry. The urgent need for large amounts of war material made it necessary to reorganize industry; production was put under military control and this implied the immediate suppression of trade union activities. In order to maintain the level of production notwithstanding the call to arms of many

workers, women, minors and agricultural workers began to be employed in industry. This transformation of the industrial labour force was possible thanks to a standardization of production which made up for the lack of experience and craftsmanship of the new workers but led at the same time to a dequalification of labour (25).

Refusing to identify politically with either Right or Left, the Fascists came to power in Italy in 1922 with a programme which combined the demand for modernization in economy and the desire of a rejuvenation of political life. Fascists pointed to the absence of preconceptions in their ideology, to their practical sense of life and familiarity with new technology in an attempt to justify their claim to express the interests of producers --a concept which was meant to embrace both workers and employers (26). In practice, however, the Fascist proposal to promote the participation of technicians in the political leadership did not work out very well and government remained firmly in the hands of politicians. The Gruppi di competenza which according to the party constitution were supposed to provide expert advice on all political, social and economic questions, remained an instrument at the discretion of the political leaders (27). The experiment was interrupted after Massimo Rocca, who had been among the most convinced supporters of a technocratical development of the Fascist regime, had been expelled.

The failure of the Gruppi di competenza was at least in part the result of the Fascist's distrust of intellectuals. Unable to choose between competence and revolutionary faith the Fascists

opted for a compromise solution which satisfied neither the revolutionaries nor the technocrats but permitted a form of collaboration with the members of the past administration, and provided some degree of continuity (28). This compromise was accepted by the so-called revisionisti --who gathered around Giuseppe Bottai and his periodical Critica fascista-- as a temporary measure valid until a new class of Fascist experts who would guarantee both competence and a revolutionary conviction, would have been formed. This absence of technicians from the political leadership did not indicate a lack of interest in the rationalization of production which received a new impulse in the first years of Fascist rule.

Italy shared the renewed interest in the problems of scientific management with other European nations where national committees had been founded. An international network was created on the occasion of the international conferences of Prague (1924), Brussels (1925), Rome (1927), Paris (1929), Amsterdam (1932), London (1935) and Washington (1938). In 1926 an International Committee for Scientific Management was founded, which received assistance from the International Labour Office set up in Geneva in 1927 with the financial support of the American XXth Century Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation. The International Committee set itself the task of coordinating the efforts of the National Committees directed at the introduction of American methods of scientific management or their adaption to the specific circumstances of the national economies. Francesco Mauro, who was president of the International Committee, president of the board

of directors of the Geneva Office, as well as president of the Italian Society for the Scientific Organization of Labour (Enios) --founded on the initiative of the national Italian organization of industrialists-- described the activities of the Italian Committee as follows:

L'Enios ha saputo per l'impulso del suo segretario generale On. Olivetti, realizzare una efficace azione di propaganda mediante una rivista mensile illustrata diffusa in quindicimila esemplari; la pubblicazione della traduzione italiana di importanti opere estere e di volumi originali così di studio di problemi concreti come di volgarizzazione; la organizzazione infine di lezioni presso scuole superiori e professionali, associazioni di industriali e di tecnici, istituti di cultura popolare. Ha organizzato sul piano nazionale la messa a disposizione di qualsiasi interessato di una documentazione continuamente crescente e si è rivolto a suscitare l'interessamento e la emulazione degli industriali (29).

The Enios had strong links with the American organizations for scientific management and the Taylor Society, and all its publications expressed without reserve a sincere admiration for the American model. The authors were in fact convinced that a analysis of the American experience could be of great help for the promotion of a similar development in Italy. They indicated Henry Ford, Herbert Hoover and the publicity expert Claude C. Hopkins as their points of reference (30). Francesco Mauro, who belonged to the more liberal wing of the employers' organization, has written down his impressions about America in a book which testifies to the existence of pro-Americanism in Fascist Italy (31).

In his description of American industry Mauro strongly emphasizes the aspects of class collaboration and consensus. In

his view the authority of management in the United States depended basically on three conditions: their technical competence, the egalitarian structure of American society in which the distinctions between the classes were almost absent, and the large measure of social mobility which guaranteed that leadership was the result of a competition open to all. High salaries and a fair chance for promotion compensated the efforts of the workers.

It is clear that we are dealing here with a rather idyllic description of American society, but what is perhaps more interesting is the contrast between Mauro's description of America and developments in Fascist Italy. In fact, while Mauro suggested to limit state intervention in economy to a minimum, proposing a sort of 'deregulation' and confining the role of the state to that of educating the public, big industry in Italy depended to a growing extent on state demand, particularly when the consequences of the 1929 crisis came to be felt in Italy. Moreover, Italian employers did not try to take the construction of consent or the coercion of the labour force in their own hands but preferred the mediation of the state (32). As a result industrial development was ever more closely linked to political decisions and the distinction between public and private enterprise was blurred. The movement in favour of scientific management lost its momentum because it was subject to the compromises of political leadership. Industrialists had however no option but to rely on state intervention as they refused to follow the American example of high salaries.



Though they were well aware of the fact that the introduction of the Taylor system would meet the opposition of the workers, who would not accept without resistance the high pressure of piece-wages, precise timelimits for every single action and accurate descriptions of all movements (33), Italian employers were not willing to pay the price that Henry Ford had indicated. The specific conditions of the Italian economy where capital was scarce, machinery expensive, the domestic market limited, and, above all, labour cheap and abundant, advised against such a solution. According to Alberto Pirelli, industrialist and president of the international committee Europe - United States, the solution of the wage problem depended on productivity and not on a redistribution of wealth. Consequently higher wages could only be the result of an increased productivity and not an incentive to accept rationalization (34).

As the introduction of more scientific methods of production would not lead to an improvement of the spending capacity of the working class --at least not in the near future-- it was almost impossible for the Enios to convince the workers of its advantages. Even Mauro had to admit that rationalization and the increased exploitation of the labour force were often to the exclusive advantage of employers (35). In fact, the combination of cost cutting measures and increased productivity allowed a number of Italian industrial enterprises to survive notwithstanding fierce competition as in the case of the Terni metallurgical plant (36). The Fascist state guaranteed the maintenance of these favourable conditions not only by suppressing an autonomous labour

movement but also by setting up a limited but effective system of social welfare.

However minimal the costs of this system were, it led to the protests of the more radical opponents of state intervention who accused the Fascist government of subordinating general economic interests to the more particular interests of the lower classes. According to Umberto Notari (1878-1950), who had been among the first to finance the fascist movement and was a very successful writer and publisher, this mistake was at the base of Europe's economic inferiority to America. Notari expressed his ideas in Il turbante violetto, a book dedicated to Mussolini:

Economia democratica, economia socialista; l'economia che si muove intorno alle classi meno abbienti, subordinatamente ad essi; comprime lo sforzo dell'individuo pretendendo contemporaneamente di accrescere la forza della collettività (...) ecco l'economia della vetusta Europa! E' l'economia che insegna all'uomo di essere un nullatenente perchè la proprietà è un furto, che detesta la ricchezza, che la odia, la sevizia (...) la spoglia per ridurre tutti a un'uguale indigenza (...) Insensibilmente questa forma mentis europea (...) ha debilitato tutte le razze dell'antico e glorioso Continente (...) La Grande Guerra ha accelerato il processo di sfibramento, mentre il Nuovo Continente (...) lasciando libero sbocco all'istinto dell'uomo che ricerca la ricchezza e non la povertà, veniva formando il principio economico opposto.

Oggi i due principi sono di fronte; le due economie hanno preso contatto (...) i primi scontri non lasciano dubbi sull'esito della lotta, se pure lotta possa dirsi, in quanto l'Europa è ridotta a implorare essa medesima l'intervento dell'oro americano che la riduce in servitù (37)

Notari's singular form of anti-Americanism based on the desire to imitate and compete with the American model did not find many followers among the Fascists who, on the contrary, began to fear the changes in the social order of society and in its moral

codes which, in their opinion, were a result of industrialization (38). In this context it is significant to note that while in previous years the modernizing efforts of the Fascist revolution had been compared with Ford's innovations (39), already towards the end of the 1920's big industry began to be criticized as opposed to the tradition and the characteristics of the Italian people. Even in L'organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, the periodical published by the Enios, there was growing support for the thesis according to which Italian conditions were unfit for big industry, and which emphasized the values of craftsmen, small and medium industry, underlining the scarcity of capital, which excluded great investments in machinery (40). Rationalization was now more limited to the introduction of time-sparing measures in administration. In another periodical which had set itself the task of promoting rationalization in production and service industries, L'Ufficio moderno, Piero Caleffi stressed the need to follow the American example in modernizing the organizational framework of industry and business in general. He took however care to accentuate his rejection of any form of Americanism that could constitute a threat to the 'Latin spirit' characterized, among others by an artistical taste, high sensibility and individualism (41).

This rejection of Americanization, which did not necessarily lead to political opposition against the United States of America or to the refusal to introduce American production methods, was very common in Italy during Fascism. At its base was the conviction that Italy was becoming americanized not only in the

field of production, but, what is more important, also where the moral and social foundations of the traditional way of living were concerned. The basic question of the discussion thus became that of the relationship between the modernization of the production process and the americanization of Italian society.

The more radical opponents of modernization had no doubts about the impossibility of making a distinction: in the imaginary diary of Gog, Giovanni Papini (1881-1956) noted that the excessive power of machines inevitably led to a decay of civilization (42). Even more pessimistic was Gina Lombroso, daughter of the famous criminologist and wife of Guglielmo Ferrero whom she had accompanied on his journeys to America. According to Gina Lombroso the illusions of progress could only lead to tragedy: not only did industrial development create a form of material wealth which was only imaginary because based on the exploitation of raw materials which would soon be exhausted, but, what is worse, it led to the moral and intellectual decadence of society:

Ma a parte l'influenza intellettuale, infinite altre cause convergono oggi alla decadenza morale; la distruzione della famiglia, l'obbligo alla donna di uscire dalla casa, la monotonia del lavoro, l'addensamento della popolazione in città sempre più immense, in cui uomini e donne sono accatastati gli uni accanto agli altri senza alcuna ragione o ideale, il rimescolio continuo delle classi, ceti e sessi, e soprattutto la distruzione di ogni ideale, peggio la imposizione degli ideali più immorali. Quali infatti gli ideali logici dell'industrialismo moderno? Quello di aumentare al massimo i consumi e di ridurre al minimo i produttori umani, sostituendoli quanto più è possibile con delle macchine (...) Da qui lo sprezzo per virtù morali che possono condurre alla povertà, cioè a diminuire i consumi, l'ammirazione per i vizi che possono essere coronati dal denaro (43).

The advocates of modernization responded to these attacks in two different manners. Vito Magliocco, engineer and publicity expert, accused Duhamel, Shaw, Chesterton and other anti-Americans of ignoring the reality of the new production process and commercial methods. Their opposition against mass-production and standardization indicated arrogance and an elitist sense of life because it was precisely thanks to the new ways of production and distribution that vast masses of persons could now be dressed -- though perhaps not elegantly-- and fed (44). Irene di Robilant denied that the changes which were the result of industrialization were always negative and underlined the strength of intellectual development in the United States of America (45). In one of his most optimistic books the philosopher Adriano Tilgher --certainly no unconditional supporter of industrialization-- went even further and acknowledged that the development of the industrial system could in the end liberate the worker from the slavery of machinery (46). More often, however, the advocates of rationalization accepted the negative judgment about the Americanization of the traditional way of living and tried to distinguish between the two. According to them the future civilization should combine the advantages of modern industry and the values of traditional society (47).

The question whether a change in the quantitative level of production and the new production methods which were linked to this change led to a change and a deterioration of the quality of life remained basically unsolved in Fascist Italy. Margherita Sarfatti clearly indicated the dilemma when she wrote:

Soprattutto l'equazione 'civiltà uguale macchina' ancora ci lascia incerti, i due termini non si risolvono e identificano pienamente l'uno nell'altro, senza residui. Sapremo noi crescere di statura morale per adeguarci ai giganteschi giocattoli, nostre creature; per saperli dominare; per non cadere in loro schiavitù (48).

### 3. The internal enemy

Contemporary Italian observers were very late in recognizing the real dimensions of the Wall Street crash of 1929. Even in 1931 they still thought of the great depression as a temporary crisis caused by incautious stock-jobbing and the effects of the international redistribution of gold-reserves (49). The advocates of rationalization in industry did not lose their confidence in the American production system and denied that the crisis was the result of structural errors, describing it more or less as an accident. As can be expected, the critics of Americanism conceived the crisis on the contrary as evidence of the fact that they had been right in denouncing the illusions of material wealth and the devastating effects of industrialization. Franco Ciarlantini wrote on his return from New York:

La crisi, che ha sconvolto i piani diabolici dell'industrialismo americano costringendolo a soste improviste, ha dimostrato, fra l'altro, la poca stabilità delle metropoli moderne che erano ritenute, dall'ingenuo spettatore, la più alta sintesi della civilizzazione. La stessa sorte dell'industrialismo, colpito soprattutto dalla sovrapproduzione, attende le città che hanno costruito troppo, assorbendo una popolazione enorme (50).

It was thought that the crisis might have a salubrious effect on the Americans and induce them to return to traditional ways of living and restore the authority of the pater familias and the sanctity of matrimony (51).

In the years 1933-1934, when the economic crisis hit Italy hardest, the Fascist leaders followed for a while the anti-industrialist trend, using it as a lightning-rod for the protests against the unpopular economic measures that had been introduced. Of more importance, however, was the Fascist attempt to reorganize social relations along the lines of the corporative model which was elaborated in these years. The corporations --in which both workers and employers were represented and which, in theory at least, exercised some form of supervision over the production process and labour relations-- were created with the deliberate aim of promoting a new climate of class collaboration favourable to modernization (52). Differences and similarities between the Fascist economic policy and Roosevelt's New Deal have been analyzed by Maurizio Vaudagna, who has indicated as a common characteristic the attempt to reorganize capitalist economy through state intervention and underlined the reformatory aspects of the New Deal and the attempts to raise the level of consumption, which were lacking in Fascist policy which was more directed towards the recovery of private enterprise (53). The scholarly work of Vaudagna allows me to confine myself to one, rather obvious remark. The interest which many Fascists showed for the New Deal and their attempts to find similarities with the corporative policy indicates that at least among the advocates of

modernization the United States continued to be an important point of reference. In some ways the New Deal had restored their confidence in the American model after the 1929 crisis (54).

In the years following the invasion of Ethiopia there was a growing tension between the principles of modernization and the political, social and ideological development of Fascist society. The war and the economic sanctions decided by the League of Nations as a sign of protest against the Italian aggression had isolated the Fascist state and accelerated the process of ideological and political rapprochement to Nazi Germany. An important part of the industrial bourgeoisie was opposed to this process not in the last place because --as a result of the new balance of power-- they met strong German competition on the markets of South-East Europe where Italian economic influence traditionally had been important. This opposition was certainly one of the causes of the anti-bourgeois campaign organized by the Fascist party in 1938-1939 (55).

The bourgeoisie was accused of recognizing only material wealth while ignoring spiritual values. It completely lacked a sense of national pride and gave preference to foreign products over Italian, and such was its mania for foreign things that even where culture and civilization were concerned it nursed ideas and opinions which were hostile to tradition. A foremost characteristic of the bourgeoisie was, according to Fascist propaganda, its love of ease and reluctance to sacrifice. Bourgeois couples thought it better to limit the number of children who otherwise would have constituted a financial burden



and an obstacle to social engagements. Refusing to take care of children and the household, and adopting a 'masculine' way of living, bourgeois women contributed to the crisis of the family which, in turn, debilitated the state (56). Moreover the bourgeoisie rejected the idea of struggle as a necessary condition for a real improvement of life and desired instead a life of comfort.

It is interesting to note that similar accusations had been directed by the Fascists against America and the American way of living. In fact, notwithstanding its demagogic character, the campaign against the bourgeois spirit testifies to the process of Americanization which was taking place in Italy and to the failure of the Fascist attempt to promote progress without change. The violent attacks directed during the war against the moral decay of America therefore missed their target (57). In a certain sense the enemy had become internal.

The Fascists, however, feared a crisis in their relationship with the industrial bourgeoisie because they needed its collaboration in the preparation for war. For this reason Fascist propaganda took care to distinguish between the bourgeois spirit and the bourgeoisie as a social class which was never under direct attack (58). Nevertheless the political and military development had as a result a growing alienation between the regime and the ruling classes. Thus, while the modernizers continued even during the war to propagate new commercial techniques and models for the organization of production without hiding their admiration for the American model (59), in 1943 a minister of the Fascist government,

Raffaele Riccardi, forwarded a proposal for the reorganization of European economy, suggesting the reconversion of Italian economy to agriculture (60). Fascism finally had given up the illusion of an Italian way toward modernization.

Bruno P.F.Wanrooij

**Footnotes**

- 1 Pier Giorgio Zunino, L'ideologia del fascismo. Miti, credenze e valori nella stabilizzazione del regime (Bologna, 1985), 322-332.
- 2 See on the effects of the American myth on young intellectuals Nicola Carducci, Gli intellettuali e l'ideologia americana nell'Italia letteraria degli anni trenta (Manduria, 1973) and Dominique Fernandez, Il mito dell'America negli intellettuali italiani dal 1930-1950 (Caltanissetta-Rome, 1969). The thesis according to which the Interest in America indicated a form of anti-Fascism is refuted in Gabriele Turi, Il fascismo e il consenso degli intellettuali (Bologna, 1981), 246-247.
- 3 See on the relationship between Fascism and industry Roland Sarti, Fascism and the industrial leadership in Italy 1919-1940 (Berkeley, 1971). Cf. Nicos Poulantzas, Fascisme et dictature (Paris, 1970). Poulantzas' thesis is critically analyzed in Jane Caplan, 'Theories of Fascism: Nicos Poulantzas as historian', History Workshop, 3 (1977), 83-101. See also Piero Melograni, Gli industriali e Mussolini. Rapporti tra Confindustria e fascismo dal 1919 al 1929 (Milan, 1972); more recently Melograni has resumed the thesis about a radical opposition of Fascism against the principles of the industrial revolution in his introduction to Fascismo, comunismo e rivoluzione industriale (Rome-Bari, 1984). Much information can be found in the catalogue of the exhibition on Fascist economy organized by the city of Rome in 1984 L'economia italiana tra le due guerre: 1919-1939 (Milan, 1984).
- 4 See on the early discussion about America the thorough and detailed study of Antonello Gerbi, La disputa del nuovo mondo. Storia di una polemica 1750-1900, Nuova edizione a cura di Sandro Gerbi (Milan-Naples, 1983). Cf. Manfred Henningsen, Der Fall Amerika. Zur Sozial- und Bewusstseinsgeschichte einer Verdrängung. Das Amerika der Europäer (München, 1974).
- 5 Cf. Ornella Confessori, L'americanismo cattolico in Italia (Rome, 1984).
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- 7 Damian Isern, Del desastre nacional y sus causas (Madrid, 1899), 4-5. Cf. Miguel Martínez Cuadrado, La burguesia conservadora (1874-1931), Historia de Espana Alfaguara, VI (Madrid, 1983), 541-542.

- 8 F.R.Bridge, From Sadowa to Sarajevo. The foreign policy of Austria-Hungary 1866-1914 (London-Boston, 1972), 211-213 and 246-247.
- 9 See on German-American relations in the first years of this century Melvin Small, 'The United States and the German "threat" to the hemisphere 1905-1914', Americas, 28 (1972), 252-270. Cf. Alfred Vagts, 'Hopes and fears of an American-German war 1870-1915', Political science quarterly, LIV, 4 (1939), 514-535; LV, 1 (1940), 53-76 and Gertrud Deicke, Das Amerikabild der deutschen öffentlichen Meinung von 1898-1914, Dissertation (Hamburg, 1956).
- 10 J.Frederic MacDonald, 'Jules Cambon et la menace de l'impérialisme américain (1898-1899)', Revue d'histoire diplomatique, 86 (1972), 247-255. Cf. Leslie F.Manigat, La substitution de la prépondérance américaine à la prépondérance française en Haïti au début du XX siècle: la conjuncture de 1910-1911', Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, 14 (1967), 321-355.
- 11 W.T.Stead, The americanisation of the world or the trend of the twentieth century (London, 1902), 5. Cf. Richard L.Rapson, Britons view America. Travel commentary 1860-1935 (Seattle-London, 1971), 181-182.
- 12 Alberto Aquarone, Le origini dell'imperialismo americano. Da McKinley a Taft (Bologna, 1973), 201-202.
- 13 Carlo Bruno, 'La marina mercantile degli Stati Uniti. Un nuovo pericolo per l'Europa', Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali, settembre 1899, 3-4. Cf. G.Are and L.Giusti, 'La scoperta dell'imperialismo nella cultura italiana del primo Novecento (II)', Nuova rivista storica, 1 (1975), 120-126.
- 14 Luigi Luzzatti, 'Le relazioni economiche degli Stati Uniti con l'Italia', Nuova antologia, CVII (September 16, 1903), 177-187. This article appeared earlier in the North American review.
- 15 Cf. Didier Musiedlak, 'La création de l'Université Luigi Bocconi et le développement de l'enseignement supérieur commercial en Europe (1896-1914)', Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, 92, 2 (1980), 627-637.
- 16 Ugo Ojetti, L'America vittoriosa (Milan, 1899), 328-329.
- 17 Idem, L'America e l'avvenire (Milan, 1905), 15-16.
- 18 Guglielmo Ferrero, Fra i due mondi (Milan, 1913); Ancient Rome and modern America. A comparative study of morals and manners (New York-London, 1914); La vecchia Europa e la nuova. Saggi e discorsi (Milan, 1918).

- 19 Gramsci speaks of Ferrero's Fra i due mondi as "la bibbia di una seria di banalità delle più trite e volgari" and calls Ferrero the inventor of many commonplaces about America. Antonio Gramsci, Quaderni del carcere (Turin, 1975), 2180.
- 20 Guglielmo Ferrero, Ancient Rome and modern America (cit.), 5-6. Cf. Gennaro Sasso, Tramonto di un mito. L'idea di "progresso" fra Ottocento e Novecento (Bologna, 1984), 61-62.
- 21 Guglielmo Ferrero, Ancient and modern America (cit.), 161 and 240-242.
- 22 Cf. Walter Sommer, Die Weltmacht USA im Urteil der französischen Publizistik 1924-1939 (Tübingen, 1967), 106-107 and Giorgio Spini, Prefazione, in Giorgio Spini (et alii), Italia e America dalla grande guerra a oggi (Rome, 1976), 9.
- 23 See on the economic relations between Italy and the United States Gian Giacomo Migone, Gli Stati Uniti e il fascismo. Alle origini dell'egemonia americana in Italia (Milan, 1980).
- 24 See on the 'discovery' of Taylorism by Italian industrialists Valerio Castronovo, Giovanni Agnelli. La Fiat dal 1899 al 1945 (Turin, 1977), 46-49.
- 25 Cf. on the formation of the labour force during World War I Alessandro Camarda and Sandro Peli, L'altro esercito. La classe operaia durante la prima guerra mondiale (Milan, 1980), 21-64 and on the new role of women Anna Bravo, 'Donne contadine e prima guerra mondiale', Società e storia, III, 10 (1980), 843-862. Cf. more in general also Luigi Einaudi, La condotta economica e gli effetti sociali della guerra italiana (Bari-New Haven, 1933), 100-105.
- 26 Cf. Roland Sarti, 'Fascist modernization in Italy: traditional or revolutionary', American historical review, LXXV (1970), 1029 and Charles S. Maier, 'Between Taylorism and technocracy. European ideologies and the vision of industrial productivity in the 1920's', Journal of contemporary history, V, 2 (1970), 40-43. In 1921 Ernesto Rossi, who was later to become a firm opponent of Fascism, proposed to substitute the Italian parlement with a Chamber of expert technicians. Ernesto Rossi, 'Considerazioni sulla competenza', Il Popolo d'Italia, VII, 105 (1921), 4. The futurist poet Marinetti forwarded a similar proposal when he asked for a government of technicians without parlement, stimulated by groups of young people. F.T. Marinetti, Al di là del comunismo (1920), now in idem, Teoria ed invenzione futurista (Verona, 1968).
- 27 The text of the party constitution can be found in Camillo Pellizzi, Una rivoluzione mancata (Milan, 1949). Cf. Alberto Aquarone, 'Aspirazioni tecnocratiche del primo fascismo', Nord e Sud, XI, 52 (1964), 109-128.

- 28 See on the conflict between political faith and technical competence Antonio Bruers, 'Intellettualità, tecnica, moralità nell'Italia presente', Gerarchia, III, 6 (1924), 353-358.
- 29 Francesco Mauro, 'La razionalizzazione in Europa', L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, IV, 12 (1929), 698. Cf. Paul Devinat, Scientific management in Europe, Studies and reports, Ser. B, No. 17, International Labour Office (Geneva, 1934). See on the introduction of scientific management in Italy also Paola Fiorentini, 'Ristrutturazione capitalistica e sfruttamento operaio in Italia negli anni '20', Rivista storica del socialismo, 10, 30 (1967), 134-154 and Giulio Sapelli, 'Organizzazione "scientifica" del lavoro e innovazione tecnologica durante il fascismo', Italia contemporanea, 28, 125 (1976), 3-28.
- 30 D.Civita, 'Il significato di un dono', L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, II, 5 (1927), 341-344. See also Ugo Minelli, 'Prefazione', in Claude C.Hopkins, I miei successi in pubblicità (Rome, 1932).
- 31 Francesco Mauro, Gli Stati Uniti d'America visti da un ingegnere (Milan, 1945). The first edition of this book was published in 1928 and reprinted the same year. See also L.A.Sylvester, 'I sei fattori della elevata produttività negli Stati Uniti', L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, II, 5 (1927), 388-393.
- 32 See on the problem of the Fascist attempts to organize consent among the working classes the excellent analysis in Victoria de Grazia, The culture of consent. Massorganization of leisure in Fascist Italy (Cambridge etc., 1981), 1-23 and 92-93. Cf. more in general Renzo De Felice, Mussolini il duce, I, Gli anni del consenso 1929-1936 (Turin, 1974). See for a different valuation of consensus Luciano Casali, 'E se fosse dissenso di massa? Elementi per una analisi della "conflittualità politica" durante il fascismo', Italia contemporanea, 33, 144 (1981), 101-116.
- 33 Carlo Tarlarini, 'Necessità italiane e insegnamenti stranieri nel campo della o.s.d.l.', L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, I, 1 (1926), 16-17.
- 34 Alberto Pirelli, Discorso tenuto nella seduta plenaria del 5 maggio 1931 del Comitato Europa - Stati Uniti (Rome, 1931). It should however be noted that the industrialists' decision not to follow a strategy of high salaries met some opposition as is testified by the discussion which followed Giovanni Agnelli's proposal of June 1932 to introduce keynesian measures of higher wages and a corresponding diminution of working hours. Cf. Valerio Castronovo, Giovanni Agnelli (cit.), 374-382.

- 35 Francesco Mauro, 'La razionalizzazione in Europa' (art. cit.), 696.
- 36 Cf. Charles S.Maier, 'Between Taylorism and productivity' (art. cit.), 56-59. See for a concrete example the history of the Terni metallurgical plant. Franco Bonelli, Lo sviluppo di una grande impresa in Italia. La Terni dal 1884 al 1962 (Turin, 1975), 237-240.
- 37 Umberto Notari, Il turbante violetto. Saggio di economia politica (Milan, 1929), 36-40. See for a portrait of Notari, F.T.Marinetti in Gazzetta del Popolo, cit. in Umberto Notari, Bàsia (Milan, 1929), III-IX.
- 38 Cf. Bruno P.F.Wanrooij, The American 'model' in the moral education of Fascist Italy, EUI working paper, No. 85/166 (Florence, 1985).
- 39 "(...)Il governo di Mussolini è caratterizzato dal dispregio in cui egli tiene ogni tradizione ingombrante, dalla facilità con la quale egli spezza le barriere di fronte alle quali altri erano abituati ad arrestarsi. E il fatto di chiamare giovani nuovi a cariche importanti e a compiti molto delicati trova il corrispettivo nell'azione rinnovatrice di Ford. Forse e l'uno e l'altro vedrebbero il nostro paese, liberato dalla schiavitù abitudinaria, incamminarsi sulla stessa via." Carlo Alberto Ferrari, 'Vantaggi e danni dell'abitudine nell'organizzazione razionale del lavoro', L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, II, 2 (1927), 149-151.
- 40 Cesare Serono, 'Come si può organizzare una media industria', L'Organizzazione scientifica del lavoro, IV, 1 (1929), 9-14. In reality the number of large firms employing 250 or more persons increased between 1927 and 1938 from 1.724 with altogether 1.067.863 employees to 2.153 with 1.522.671 employees. In 1938 20 % of the total industrial labour force was employed in firms with more than 1.000 employees (1927: 9 %). Cf. Victoria de Grazia, The culture of consent (cit), 262-263, footnote 10.
- 41 "E' bene intendersi su questo punto. Se l'"americanismo" minacciasse di snaturare od anche solo di inaridire quanto costituisce il nostro "spirito latino" (gusto estetico ed artistico, sensibilità superiore ed anche ipersensibilità, individualismo dell'intelligenza ecc. ecc.) credo che un "fronte unico antiamericanista" si costituirebbe automaticamente, senza clangor di trombe o grida d'allarme." Piero Caleffi, 'Americanismo, macchine e compagnie di assicurazione', L'Ufficio moderno, II, 10 (1927), 421-430.
- 42 Giovanni Papini, Gog (Florence, 1931), 257-260.

- 43 Gina Lombroso Ferrero, Le tragedie del progresso. Origini, ostacoli, trionfi, sconquassi del macchinismo (Turin, 1930), 241-243.
- 44 Vito Magliocco, La pubblicità in America (Rome, 1932), 157-160.
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- 47 Armodio, 'Europa o America?', L'Ufficio moderno, III, 3 (1928), 139.
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- 49 Valerio Castronovo, La storia economica, Storia d'Italia, IV, Dall'Unità a oggi, 1 (Turin, 1975), 293-295.
- 50 Franco Ciarlantini, Roma - Nuova York e ritorno. Tragedie dell'americanismo (Milan, 1934), 38.
- 51 Beniamino De Ritis, Mente puritana in corpo pagana (Florence, 1934), 56-58.
- 52 See on corporative ideology Gianpasquale Santomassimo, 'Ugo Spirito e il corporativismo', Studi storici, 1 (1973), 61-113; Silvio Lanaro, 'Appunti sul fascismo "di sinistra". La dottrina corporativa di Ugo Spirito', Belfagor, September 31, 1971, 567-599. See on the activities of Bottai as minister of corporations Sabino Cassese, 'Un programmatore degli anni trenta: Giuseppe Bottai', Politica del diritto, I, 3 (1970), 403-439, and more in general Alexander De Grand, Bottai e la cultura fascista (Rome-Bari, 1978).
- 53 Maurizio Vaudagna, Corporativismo e New Deal. Integrazione e conflitto sociale negli Stati Uniti (1933-1941) (Turin, 1981), 197-228, and idem, 'New Deal e corporativismo nelle riviste politiche ed economiche italiane', in Giorgio Spini (et alii), Italia e America (cit.), 101-140.
- 54 Cf. on Agnelli's admiration for the results of the New Deal Valerio Castrovo, Giovanni Agnelli (cit.), 418-419.
- 55 See on the anti-bourgeois campaign Renzo De Felice, Mussolini il duce, II, Lo stato totalitario 1936-1940 (Turin, 1981), 96-103.
- 56 See for an example of the Fascists arguments against a change in the position of women Simone Ariano, 'Gli obblighi della donna verso la razza', Il Bò, V, 6 (1939): "Come potrà una donna che si sente intelligente e istruita, capace di



guadagnarsi da vivere, una donna che ha provato la gioia dell'indipendenza, essere sottomessa all'uomo, sentire che lui è il sostegno della sua vita, sentire il desiderio del suo appoggio ed ammirazione per la sua forza." Cf. Ilva Vaccari, La donna nel ventennio fascista (Milan, 1978).

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- 59 Cf. Francesco Mauro, Il capo nell'azienda industriale (Milan, 1941); Piero G. Pozzan, L'arte del produttore (Rome, 1941); Arrigo Minello, La pubblicità nel campo dell'economia aziendale e nazionale (Milan, 1940).
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