

**ITALY AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS:
NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM, 1922-1935**

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Thesis: Italy and the League of Nations: nationalism and internationalism, 1922-1935
Candidate: Elisabetta Tollardo, Balliol College
Degree: DPhil in History
Term: Trinity Term 2014

SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the relationship between Fascist Italy and the League of Nations (LoN) during the interwar period, with a particular focus on the years from 1922 to 1935. This relationship was contradictory, shifting from moments of active collaboration to moments of open disagreement. The existing historiography on the Italian membership of the League has not reflected this oscillation in policy, focusing disproportionately on the crises Italy caused at the League. However, Fascist Italy remained in the League for more than 15 years, ranking as the third-largest power, and was fully engaged in the institution's work. This dissertation investigates the dynamics that developed between Fascist Italy and the LoN through a systematic study of the Italians involved. In so doing, it contributes to the historiography of the LoN and of the Italian foreign policy in the interwar period. The thesis argues that there was more to the Italian membership of the LoN than the Ethiopian crisis. It reveals the extent of the Italian presence and activity in the institution from the beginning, and demonstrates that the organization was more important to the Italian government than previously recognized. Membership of the League was essential to guarantee Italy international legitimation and recognition. Through an active appropriation of internationalism, the Italian government hoped to obtain practical benefits in the colonial sphere. The thesis uncovers the depth and variety of interactions between nationalism and internationalism in the case of Italy and the League, establishing that they did not oppose each other but rather interacted. This dissertation illustrates the complexity of being an Italian working in the League, as well as the grey areas between nationalism and internationalism evident within individual experiences. Finally, it shows the continuity of actors and expertise in Italy's international cooperation between the interwar and the post-1945 period.

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LONG ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the relationship between Fascist Italy and the League of Nations (LoN) during the interwar period, with a particular focus on the years from 1922 to 1935. Italy was one of the founding members of the League of Nations. The liberal government which led the country in 1919 joined the organization less out of sympathy with its liberal internationalist principles and more because it wanted to please President Woodrow Wilson and obtain his support to secure the territories agreed upon with the Triple Entente in the secret Treaty of London in 1915.¹ When Italy's territorial claims in the Adriatic area were not fully accepted at the Paris Peace Conference, for many Italians the League became the symbol of the 'mutilated victory' and the bastion of the preservation of an unwanted status quo.² The revisionist claims, which grew from the disappointment with the outcome of the 1919 conference, were embraced by Mussolini. They became integral to the populist rhetoric which motivated his supporters and, in 1922, led to his accession to power.³ The relationship between Italy and the League during the Fascist period was contradictory, shifting from moments of active collaboration to moments of open disagreement.

¹ Garzia, I., *L'Italia e le origini della Società delle Nazioni* (Rome, 1995)

² Garzia, *op.cit.*; Di Nolfo, E., *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)* (Padua, 1960); Costa Bona, E., *L'Italia e la Società delle Nazioni* (Padua, 2004)

³ Di Nolfo, *op.cit.*, pp.2-3

The existing historiography and narrative of the Italian membership of the LoN have not reflected this oscillation in policy. Instead, attention has been focused disproportionately on the problems that Italy caused for the League in the 1920s with the Corfu crisis, and on the powerful impact that the Ethiopian crisis (1934-1936) had in weakening this international organization and its reputation. Fascist Italy, however, remained at the League for more than 15 years. The country, which ranked as the third-largest power within the League, was an active member of the organization, with many Italians holding key positions, and was fully involved in the League's work. Yet, this relationship with the League has not been systematically studied.

The dissertation investigates the dynamics that developed between Fascist Italy and the League of Nations through the study of the Italians involved, civil servants as well as experts and delegates. The thesis uses the relationship between Italy and the League to increase our understanding of the dynamics between nationalism and internationalism in the interwar years. Through the careful analysis of the Italians interacting with and working for the League, the thesis seeks to answer the following questions: how did nationalism and internationalism relate to and influence one another in Geneva? What was the nature of Italian agency in the League? How did a Fascist dictatorship fit into an organization that espoused principles of liberal internationalism? Why did Italy remain a member of the League for 17 years? What was the impact of Fascism and internationalism on the work and lives of the Italian civil servants at the League? In examining these issues, the thesis does not offer a systematic coverage of all aspects of the Italian membership of the League, in particular, it does not analyse the well-known Italo-Ethiopian crisis, which remains beyond the scope of this study. Instead it concentrates on the period when the seeds of

the Ethiopian crisis were planted, allowing us to comprehend why the relationship between Italy and the League evolved into a conflict.

The originality of my research is not only the unexplored topic it investigates, but also its approach. The direction of my investigation is from the League outwards, rather than from Italy outwards. This allows us to understand internationalism in its own context, as well as to deconstruct the relationship between the League and Italy. Moreover, my dissertation focuses on the people involved in the relationship between Italy and the League as the means through which to overcome the limitations of nation-state centred history. Through an analysis of the individuals rather than the states, we can read the League – its existence, its aims, its work – and the relationship with Italy, in a different way, and contribute to a broader literature on internationalism and transnationalism in the interwar period.

The dissertation is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 identifies the Italians who worked for the LoN Secretariat. The Secretariat was the real novelty in the League's structure: the first international bureaucracy and institutionalised attempt to coordinate international expertise. After introducing how it was organized, this chapter presents a prosopographical study of the Italian officials working for it, with a focus on the civil servants of the First Division, which included the higher-ranking positions. This is the first study of the Italian officials in the League and it is essential to clarify the inner dynamics of this institution. The chapter investigates their geographical and social origins, their education and previous employment, their war experience, when they joined the League and for which tasks, and why they left. It reveals that Italians were present and active in almost every section of the League for

the whole length of Italy's membership. The chapter shows the different and multiple identities of the Italians working in the Secretariat. It also introduces the fact that their work and lives in Geneva were highly influenced by who was the Italian Under Secretary-General at the time.

The political identities of the Italian civil servants and the wider topic of the relationship between the Italian officials and Fascism are investigated in Chapter 2. By presenting the first instances of pressure from Italian Fascism on the Italians working for the League, this chapter examines the conflicts that arose through the presence of Fascist Italians within the organization. It explores the ways in which Fascism was present in the Secretariat and how it influenced the Italian civil servants working there through a process of 'Fascistization.' It analyses the institutional and diplomatic problems this activity caused for the League and its international, national and local consequences. This chapter also recovers the local dimension of the Fascist presence in the League, presenting the tensions between Geneva's Italian anti-Fascists and Italian Fascists, many of whom were League officials. Through the analysis of the Plainpalais brawl and of Giuseppe Rocca's decision to leave his post, this chapter reveals the extent of the 'Fascistization' process in the League's administration. What emerges from this chapter is that Fascist Italy was an element of serious disturbance for the Secretariat as early as in 1926. These episodes also show how the Secretary-General was forced to bear these disruptions in order not to upset the third most powerful state within the institution.

After having analysed the lives and work of the Italian civil servants at the League's Secretariat, Chapter 3 concerns the Italian experts working for the Council. In

particular, it examines the cases of Manfredi Gravina, High Commissioner for Danzig (1929-1932) and Alberto Theodoli, Chairman of the Mandates Permanent Commission (1921-1937), who were appointed to their posts with the support of Rome. For this reason, while working as experts for projects promoted by the League, they had a tight connection to the Italian government. The chapter considers the level of independence from Rome in their work for the League, searching for initiatives in favour and against the institution, as well as for unexpected commitment to this international organization. The experiences of Gravina and Theodoli exemplify the Italian presence in the League at a level higher than the Secretariat. They show how, until the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis, the Italian expertise was highly appreciated within the institution. This chapter also demonstrates that the Italians at the League cannot be unilaterally defined as 'Fascists,' but possessed multiple identities. Both cases reveal the complexity of the interaction between nationalism and internationalism at the personal level and how there were many grey areas between being a nationalist or an internationalist at the League.

Chapter 4 investigates the relationship between the Italian state and the League. It focuses on the reasons behind the long Italian membership of the League, as well as the process that led to its end. By analysing the Fascist government's appropriation of internationalism through its support to the Rome-based international institutes, and the commitment to disarmament, this chapter shows how the League was more important to Italian foreign policy than previously recognized. Membership of the League was essential to guarantee Italy an international status, and the legitimation and recognition of the Fascist regime. The active Italian presence in the institution made this dictatorship a commonly accepted form of government and this facilitated

the country's diplomatic relations. Far from being an obstructive member from the beginning, at the political level, Italy was not considered as a particularly problematic member until the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis. By developing a positive reputation as a country committed to international cooperation, the Italian government hoped to obtain practical benefits, especially in the colonial sphere. When, at the end of 1932, it became clear that these could not be achieved through the League, Mussolini explored alternatives to it, which led to the Ethiopian crisis, and then in 1937 to the withdrawal from the organization.

It is with the reaction to Italy's withdrawal of the Italians working in the League that Chapter 5 begins. This chapter considers the experience of three Italian civil servants (Pietro Stoppani, Massimo Pilotti and Alberto Berio) who were in Geneva when Italy exited the institution. It investigates the impact that the League's experience had on their lives and work after they left the organization. It considers how internationalism influenced them and in which direction, exploring whether, after leaving Geneva, they remained involved in international activities or returned to Italy as if nothing had happened. What emerges is a continuity of expertise in Italy's international cooperation between the interwar years and the period after the Second World War. The dissertation therefore demonstrates that 1945 was not the 'year zero' of Italy's contemporary international relations. Italy made use of the international socialization of its nationals during the Fascist years to return to the international scene after the Second World War.

In drawing together the findings of these chapters we see that there was more to the Italian membership of the League of Nations than the Ethiopian crisis. By

investigating the nature of the Italian agency at the League, this dissertation reveals the extent of the Italian presence and activity in this institution, and the complexity of the relationship between the two. In no way was Italy a nominal member of the League. This study also uncovers the depth and variety of interactions between nationalism and internationalism in the case of Italy at the League. Perhaps most importantly, it contributes to recent scholarship establishing that there can be no dichotomous separation between the two, but rather interaction. This is true also for the personal experiences of the Italians in the League. The national and the international dimensions of their lives and work coexisted. This led to conflicts of loyalties when the aims of the Fascist government were in contrast with those of the League, but it also resulted in cooperation and unexpected contributions to the work of the institution. The dissertation illustrates the complexity of being an Italian working in the League, as well as the grey areas between nationalism and internationalism evident within individual experiences. My research increases our understanding of key aspects of the multifaceted nature of this complex international organization and its historical significance. At the same time, it sheds new light upon the role played by the League in Italian foreign policy. The Italian membership of the League leads us to a better understanding of the dynamics that can arise between an international organization and an undemocratic regime.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Italy
MI	<i>Ministero degli Interni</i>
DGPS	<i>Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza</i>
POL POL	<i>Divisione Polizia Politica</i>
PMC	<i>Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri</i>
SPD	<i>Segreteria Particolare del Duce</i>
CR	<i>Carteggio Riservato</i>
ADF	Archives Diplomatiques de France, La Courneuve
SdNFra	<i>Service française de la Société des Nations</i>
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Forlì, Italy
GPdC	Private papers of Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone
ASMAE	Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy
BIS	Bank for International Settlements
CLNAI	<i>Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia</i>
Costa Bona	Costa Bona, E., <i>L'Italia e la Società Delle Nazioni</i> (Padua, 2004)
DDI	<i>Documenti Diplomatici Italiani</i>
DDS	<i>Documents Diplomatiques Suisses</i>
DGS	Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Nations
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EPU	European Payments Union
FCC	Fondazione Camillo Caetani, Rome, Italy
AGB	<i>Archivio Giustiniani Bandini</i>
FO	British Foreign Office
HAEU	Historical Archives of the European Union, EUI, Italy
ICE	International Educational Cinematographic Institute
ICIC	International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IIA	International Institute of Agriculture
ILO	International Labour Organization
LoN	League of Nations
LoN Archives	League of Nations Archives, Geneva, Switzerland
LoN OJ	League of Nations Official Journal
MAE	<i>Ministero degli Affari Esteri</i> (Italian Foreign Ministry)
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i>
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Cooperation
PAC	Permanent Advisory Commission on Military, Naval and Air Questions (LoN)
PCIJ	Permanent Court of International Justice
PMC	Permanent Mandates Commission of the League
PNF	<i>Partito Nazionale Fascista</i> (Fascist National Party)

Ranshofen-Wertheimer	Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E., <i>The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration</i> (Washington D.C., 1945)
RH	Rhodes House Library, Oxford, UK
SdN	<i>Société des Nations/Società delle Nazioni</i>
SG	Secretary-General of the League of Nations
TFE	Archivio Storico della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Turin, Italy
TNA	The British National Archives, Kew, London
UNIDROIT	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law
UN/UNO	United Nations/United Nations Organization
UNOG	United Nations Organization, Geneva Office
USG	Under Secretary-General of the League of Nations
Walters	Walters, F.P., <i>A History of the League of Nations</i> (London, 1952)

INTRODUCTION

On 11 December 1937 a roaring crowd gathered in Piazza Venezia in Rome to welcome Benito Mussolini's long-awaited announcement about Italy withdrawing from the League of Nations (LoN). In Geneva, the Italian employees of the organization were ordered to leave their posts and return to their country. On 20 December 1937, at the Italian Foreign Ministry which was monitoring their resignations, officials started to wonder why they had not yet received news from one of the most senior Italian employees in the League: the Director of the Economic Relations Section, Pietro Stoppani.¹ While all his fellow nationals who held a high-ranking position in the institution had given their notices in the days immediately following Mussolini's announcement, nothing was heard from Stoppani until early 1938. News of Stoppani's refusal to leave his successful career in the first international bureaucracy was totally unexpected when it reached Rome. In his letter to Mussolini, communicating his intention to disobey the order, Stoppani emphasised that, since he had been 'shaped or misshaped' for 20 years by the Geneva environment, despite his unshakeable love for Italy, he could only be of some use in an international environment.² Hence, he was going to remain at the League.

Stoppani's behaviour introduces us to the complex interaction between Fascist Italy and the League of Nations. The Italian Director was influenced by the international environment in which he worked to the extent of deciding to ignore Mussolini's orders in order to maintain his post at the League, with the risk of Fascist retaliations

¹ Leonardo Vitetti to Renato Bova Scoppa, 20 Dec. 1937, in Società delle Nazioni (hereafter SdN) b.16, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy (hereafter ASMAE)

² Pietro Stoppani to Benito Mussolini, 4 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

and of remaining a stateless person. While the reasons behind this choice are examined in detail in Chapter 5, Stoppani's episode offers a glimpse of the practical problems that individuals had to face when attempting to balance between nationalism and internationalism at the League. And it is through the study of individuals, namely the Italians working in the League, that this dissertation seeks to refine our understanding of the relationship between nationalism and internationalism at the League. My research aims to shed new light upon the role played by Fascist Italy in interwar international cooperation, as well as upon the multifaceted nature of the League and its historical significance.

The League of Nations was established by the 1919 Peace Conference to maintain the newly agreed status quo and guarantee collective security. The League was born as a liberal institution and embodied the principles of enforced peace and mutual defence.³ It was structured around: a Secretariat, dealing with administrative needs; an Assembly, in which every member state could be represented by up to three delegates; and a Council, the main deliberative body of the institution, in which permanent members (initially Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan) and non-permanent ones would discuss the most important problems the League had to face. The organization was intended to provide an international forum for a new, open and multilateral diplomacy, in contrast to the secret diplomacy that was considered to have been one of the causes of the Great War. The League ceased to exist only in 1946 and during its existence it had up to 63 member states.⁴ The United States,

³ Egerton, G.W., 'Great Britain and the League of Nations: collective security as myth and history' in UN Library & Geneva Institute of, I.S (eds.), *The League of Nations in Retrospect: Proceedings of the Symposium* (Berlin, 1983), p.98

⁴ For a list of the member states see: Walters, F.P., *A History of the League of Nations* (London, 1952), pp.64-65

despite playing a key role in establishing the institution, never joined it, but American experts became actively involved in the technical work of the organization.⁵

Italy was one of the founding countries of the League of Nations and remained a member for 17 years. The liberal government which led the country in 1919 joined the organization less out of sympathy with its liberal internationalist principles and more because it wanted to please President Woodrow Wilson and obtain his support to secure the territories agreed upon with the Triple Entente in the secret Treaty of London in 1915.⁶ When Italy's territorial claims in the Adriatic area were not fully accepted at the Paris Peace Conference, for many Italians the League became the symbol of the 'mutilated victory' and the bastion of the preservation of an unwanted status quo.⁷ The revisionist claims, which grew from the disappointment with the outcome of the 1919 conference, were embraced by Mussolini and became integral to the populist rhetoric which motivated his supporters and, in 1922, led to his accession to power.⁸ Despite Mussolini's populist anti-League rhetoric, however, under his leadership the Italian membership of the League was not subject to a sudden shift of direction, but maintained the same features of the so-called liberal period. Continuity was guaranteed also by the Italian delegation in Geneva, whose members remained the same.

The relationship between Italy and the League during the Fascist period was contradictory, shifting from moments of active collaboration to moments of open

⁵ The main comprehensive account of the League of Nations' history is Walters, F.P., *A History of the League of Nations* (London, 1952)

⁶ Garzia, I., *L'Italia e le origini della Società delle Nazioni* (Rome, 1995)

⁷ Garzia, *op. cit.*; Di Nolfo, E., *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)* (Padua, 1960); Costa Bona, E., *L'Italia e la Società delle Nazioni* (Padua, 2004)

⁸ Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, pp.2-3

disagreement. The existing historiography and narrative of the Italian membership of the LoN has not reflected this oscillation in policy. Instead, attention has been focused disproportionately on the problems which Italy caused for the League in the 1920s (the Corfu crisis) and the 1930s (the Italo-Ethiopian conflict). In this way, the Italian membership is presented as a failed one and its importance is limited to the negative impact it had on the organization.⁹

In particular, the Corfu episode had often been considered as revealing of the ‘true nature’ of the Italian membership.¹⁰ The Corfu dispute (August-September 1923) developed following the murder of General Enrico Tellini and three other Italians on 27 August 1923 in an ambush in Greek territory, near the Greek-Albanian border. They were involved in an international expedition organized by the Conference of Ambassadors aiming at the delimitation of Albania’s frontiers.¹¹ Mussolini interpreted the episode as an offence to the national honour and claimed immediate reparations from Greece.¹² The Italian requests to Greece included demands that could not be met by a sovereign state. For this reason, Greece did not fulfil them.¹³ The Italian

⁹ Barros, J., *The Corfu Incident of 1923: Mussolini and the League of Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 1965) and *Britain, Greece, and the Politics of Sanctions: Ethiopia, 1935-1936* (London: Atlantic Highland, NJ, 1982); Baer, G.W., *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, Mass, 1967) and *Test Case. Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations* (Stanford, 1976). As well as more general works: Walters; Scott, G., *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (London, 1973); Henig, R.B., *The League of Nations* (Edinburgh, 1973); Bendiner, E. *A Time for Angels. The Tragicomic history of the League of Nations* (London, 1975); Joyce, J. A., *Broken Star. The Story of the League of Nations (1919-1939)* (Swansea, 1978); Northedge, F.S., *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920-1946* (Leicester, 1986)

¹⁰ For instance Cassels, A., *Mussolini’s Early Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ, 1970); Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, p.97

¹¹ Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, p.15. The Conference of Ambassadors was an international organ made of the winning powers of the Great War, aiming at solving the technical questions which arose out of the peace treaties of the Paris Peace Conference and other unresolved international issues.

¹² Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, p.34

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.40, 56-60; Cassels, *Mussolini’s Early Diplomacy*, p.104

retaliation against this Greek rejection came on 31 August 1923 in the form of the military attack and occupation of the island of Corfu.¹⁴

The League of Nations was immediately brought into the quarrel. On 1 September 1923 Greece appealed to the League's Council on the basis of Articles 12 and 15 of the Covenant, covering disputes between member states likely to become a threat to peace.¹⁵ However, the Italian government insisted that the question was under the jurisdiction of the Conference of Ambassadors. It succeeded in this claim thanks to the support of France, which was fearful that, if the Corfu issue could come before the League's Council, so too could the Ruhr occupation, which France conducted in January 1923.¹⁶ Eventually, a solution was found to the Corfu crisis through the mediation of the Conference of Ambassadors, a traditional Great Powers forum which coexisted with the League until 1931, catalysed by the threat of an Anglo-Italian conflict if Italy did not leave the island.¹⁷

The fact that the League, despite heavily debating the question at the Council and the Assembly, had been relegated to a marginal role in a matter which was indeed under its jurisdiction, was perceived as a defeat for the institution. Referring to the recent events, Secretary-General Eric Drummond wrote in September 1923 that the Corfu crisis had 'done much to weaken both the moral authority of the Council and the general confidence that the precise obligations of the Covenant will be universally

¹⁴ Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, p.71

¹⁵ Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, p.107; Articles 12 and 15, LoN Covenant available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

¹⁶ Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, p.110; Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, p.88; Walters, p.247

¹⁷ Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, pp.114-123; Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, pp.157-169; 241-242; 254-258

accepted and carried on.’¹⁸ He added that it was generally believed that Italy successfully refused ‘to carry out its treaty obligations under the Covenant, and has succeeded in doing so with impunity, some might even say, with an increase of prestige.’¹⁹ The Corfu episode revealed how Mussolini interpreted the Italian membership of the League as neither legally nor morally binding. It also showed how the organization worked only if its member states were willing to make it work.

Alan Cassels described the Corfu crisis as a ‘veritable dress rehearsal’ of the Ethiopian crisis in the 1930s.²⁰ Italian membership of the League has been commonly associated with the powerful impact that the Ethiopian crisis (1934-1936) had in weakening this international organization and its reputation.²¹ Italian colonial ambitions, left dissatisfied by the Peace Conference in 1919, were partially fulfilled with the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Italy’s interest in this country was not new: at the end of the 19th century, Italy had attempted to obtain a protectorate in the area and occupied Ethiopia, only to be defeated by the Ethiopian army in the Battle of Aduwa in 1896.²² The Italians never forgot this episode and the fact that in the 1920s Ethiopia was still independent and the neighbouring country of the Italian colonies of Somaliland and Eritrea, made it a natural target of Fascist colonial aspirations. In December 1934, taking as an excuse a frontier quarrel at the oasis of Wal-Wal, Italy started a dispute with Ethiopia which led to the military invasion of the country on 3 October 1935 and its annexation to the Italian Empire on 9 May 1936.

¹⁸ Eric Drummond, 14 Sept. 1923, cit. in Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, p.254

¹⁹ Eric Drummond, 14 Sept. 1923, cit. in Barros, *The Corfu Incident of 1923*, pp.254, 318

²⁰ Cassels, *Mussolini’s Early Diplomacy*, p.126

²¹ See Scott, G., *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (London, 1973); Henig, R.B., *The League of Nations* (Edinburgh, 1973); Bendiner, E., *A Time for Angels: The Tragicomic History of the League of Nations* (London, 1975); Joyce, J. A., *Broken Star. The Story of the League of Nations (1919-1939)* (Swansea, 1978); Northedge, F.S., *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920-1946* (Leicester, 1986)

²² Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, pp.2-4

The action taken by Italy, an influential European member of the League, not only to attack another member but further to deploy poison gases, outraged public opinion and prompted the League to find a quick solution in order to maintain its credibility. The institution, however, immediately encountered difficulties in organizing a coherent collective response to the Italian threats. The embargo and the sanctions, which the League enforced on Italy, were unsuccessful. Instead they fuelled the Fascist anti-League rhetoric, which was very successful in convincing the Italian population of a British-Geneva conspiracy at the expense of Italy.²³ The League's inability to deal with the matter not only prompted widespread indignation in public opinion, which started seeing the League as a failed institution, but also showed the limit of the League as an agent of collective security, accelerating its collapse.²⁴ The unilateral action of the Fascist regime uncovered in an irreparable way the institutional weaknesses of this organization, which being already in its decline did not manage to recover.

The Italian attitude to the League was not limited, however, to these two instances of conflict. Throughout the later 1920s and the early 1930s, there were contradictory features in Italy's behaviour. Seen from Mussolini's point of view this institution seemed to be of little use but, as he argued in 1924, in the League:

*Bisogna restarci non fosse altro perché ci sono gli altri, i quali, se ce ne andassimo sarebbero contentissimi; farebbero i loro affari, tutelerebbero i loro interessi senza di noi, e magari contro di noi.*²⁵

²³ Collotti, E., *Fascismo e Politica di Potenza. Politica Estera 1922-1939* (Milan, 2000), p.266

²⁴ Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, p.126; Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, p.vii

²⁵ Please note: in this dissertation quotes from primary sources in French or Italian have been translated into English either directly in the text or in the footnotes. Trans. 'We need to stay, if nothing else, because the others are there. The others, which if we would leave, would be very happy; they would

While, Dino Grandi, Foreign Minister from 1929 to 1932, participated in person in the meetings of the LoN, presenting an enthusiastic and cooperative attitude that was often in contrast to Mussolini's aggressive home rhetoric.²⁶ Scholars of Fascist foreign policy see this period as abnormal and believe that Grandi's behaviour can be explained only as an alternative means to implement Mussolini's expansionistic policy.²⁷ When Grandi's attitude, considered by many members of the Fascist Party as 'too sympathetic' towards the League, brought no concrete results to Italy, Mussolini did not hesitate to fire him on 19 July 1932.²⁸

According to the existing literature on Italian foreign policy, the contrasting attitudes of Mussolini and Grandi do not change the reasons behind the Italian membership, which are to be found in the desire to undermine it.²⁹ However, this is too cursory a judgement. Fascist Italy remained at the League for more than 15 years. Italy, which ranked as the third-largest power within the League, was an active member of the organization, with many Italians holding key positions, and was fully involved in the League's work. Yet, this relationship with the League has not been systematically studied. In particular, a deeper analysis of the motivations behind the membership of this Fascist state is greatly desirable.

make their business, safeguarding their interests without us, and maybe even against us.' Mussolini cit. in Costa Bona, p.32

²⁶ See Mussolini's speeches: *Discorso di Firenze* (17 May 1930); *Il bastone del Comando* (Milan, 22 May 1930) in Susmel, E. and D. (eds.), *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini* (Florence, 1958), vol. XXIV, pp.235-236; p.244

²⁷ Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, p.284

²⁸ Costa Bona, pp.103-104

²⁹ Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*

Historiography

The originality of my research becomes clear by surveying the existing literature on the relationship between Italy and the League of Nations. Scholars have seldom considered the relationship between Italy and the League of Nations as a main subject of research. Historians writing on the League have traditionally focused on Italy only when analysing its moments of crisis with the organization.³⁰ For more than 50 years after the institution ceased to exist, the League attracted the attention of historians and political scientists who, inexorably influenced by the dichotomised Cold War world in which they lived, analysed this organization from a ‘realist’ perspective, emphasising its failures and the basic faults of its creators.³¹ Despite some isolated attempts to acknowledge the League’s importance as a ‘evolutionary enterprise’, the ‘realist’ approach, spotlighting the failure of the League as a security system, remained the main feature of the literature on the League until recently.³² In this context, the relationship between Italy and this international organization received consideration

³⁰ Barros, J., *The Corfu Incident of 1923: Mussolini and the League of Nations* (Princeton, NJ, 1965) and *Britain, Greece, and the Politics of Sanctions: Ethiopia, 1935-1936* (London: Atlantic Highland, NJ, 1982); Baer, G.W., *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, Mass, 1967) and *Test Case. Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations* (Stanford, 1976). As well as more general works: Walters; Scott, G., *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (London, 1973); Henig, R.B., *The League of Nations* (Edinburgh, 1973); Bendiner, E. *A Time for Angels. The Tragicomic history of the League of Nations* (London, 1975); Joyce, J. A., *Broken Star. The Story of the League of Nations (1919-1939)* (Swansea, 1978); Northedge, F.S., *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920-1946* (Leicester, 1986)

³¹ Giraud, E. *La nullité de la politique internationale des grandes démocraties (1919-39)* (Paris, 1948); Shotwell, J.Y., and Salvin, M., *Lessons on Security and Disarmament from the history of the League of Nations* (New York, 1949); Scott, G., *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (London, 1973); Henig, R.B., *The League of Nations* (Edinburgh, 1973); Bendiner, E. *A Time for Angels. The Tragicomic history of the League of Nations* (London, 1975); Northedge, F.S., *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920-1946* (Leicester, 1986), Marks, S., *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933* (Basingstoke, 2003), 2nd ed.

³² Cit. from Joyce, *Broken Star*, p.16, which presents a more positive assessment of the League, together with: UN Library & Geneva Institute of, I.S (ed.), *The League of Nations in Retrospect: Proceedings of the Symposium* (Berlin, 1983); Dubin, M.D., ‘Transgovernmental Processes in the League of Nations’, in *International Organization* 37, no. 3 (1983), pp. 469–493

only in so far as Italy contributed to the League's failure, but no real effort has been made to understand this complex relationship.

Also, historians of Italian foreign policy in the Fascist period have only superficially investigated the contradictory attitude of Italy towards the League.³³ The main aim of their research was not to evaluate the relationship between Italy and the League as an independent subject, but to relate the League to Mussolini's foreign policy. They concluded that the organization, based on principles incompatible with Fascism, was not particularly significant, supporting the notion that Mussolini hated this institution and that the League played no relevant role in determining Italian foreign policy in the interwar period.³⁴ Even the most recent publications examining Italy and the League, such as Enrica Costa Bona's pioneering work, are limited to the Italian Foreign Ministry's perspective, or investigate only peripheral aspects of their relationship.³⁵

³³ Villari, L., *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini* (New York, 1956); Di Nolfo, E., *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)* (Padua, 1960); Torre, A., *La Politica Estera Italiana dal 1914 al 1943* (Turin, 1963); D'Amoia, F. *Declino e prima crisi dell'Europa di Versailles. Studio sulla diplomazia italiana ed europea (1931-33)* (Milan, 1967); Quaroni, P. 'L'Italia dal 1914 al 1945' in *Nuove Questioni di Storia Contemporanea* (Milan, 1968) vol. 2, pp. 1191-1256; Carocci, G., *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia Fascista (1925-1928)* (Bari, 1969); Cassels, A., *Mussolini's early diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ, 1970); Macartney, M.H.H., and Cremona, P., *Italy's foreign and colonial policy, 1914-1937* (New York, 1972); Lowe, C. J., and Marzari, F., *Italian foreign policy, 1870-1940* (London, 1975); Burgwyn, H.J., *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period 1918-1940* (Westport, CT, 1997); Collotti, E., *Fascismo e Politica di Potenza. Politica Estera 1922-1939* (Milan, 2000)

³⁴ See Di Nolfo, E., *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)* (Padua, 1960); Cassels, A., *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ, 1970); Burgwyn, H.J. *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period 1918-1940* (Westport, CT, 1997). Moreover, the following works on Italian foreign policy ignore the existence of the League: Bosworth, R.J.B., and Romano, S., (eds.), *La politica estera italiana (1860-1985)* (Bologna, 1991); Rumi, G., *Alle origini della politica estera fascista (1918-1923)* (Bari, 1968)

³⁵ Costa Bona, E., *L'Italia e la Società delle Nazioni* (Padua, 2004) is the only work so far entirely focused on the relationship between Italy and the League. Studies of some aspects of this relationship are: Tosi, L., *Alle Origini della FAO. Le Relazioni tra l' Istituto Internazionale di Agricoltura e la Società delle Nazioni* (Milan, 1989); Garzia, I., *L'Italia e le origini della Società delle Nazioni* (Rome, 1995); Tosi, L., (ed.) *L'Italia e le organizzazioni internazionali. Diplomazia multilaterale nel Novecento* (Padua, 1999); Santagata, S., *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi, il fascismo e la Società delle Nazioni* (Milan, 2007)

Recently, there has been a renewed interest in the study of the League, with a specific focus on its historical contribution to international organizations in the post-1945 period, and to transnational and global matters which developed at the League, including personal networks.³⁶ Influenced by a new wave of globalization, these studies present the League in a global and transnational framework, recovering its imperial dimension as well as the personal networks at the sub-national level.³⁷ Scholars concentrate on the origins of international cooperation within the League and on researching the importance of this organization in its historical context. They resurrected the importance of individuals as political actors, the complexity of the organization, the long-lasting contributions of its technical work and the continuity of the League's expertise in post-1945 international cooperation.³⁸ The new scholarship

³⁶ For an account on this emerging literature, see Pedersen, S., 'Back to the League of Nations' in *American Historical Review*, October 2007, pp. 1091-1117.

³⁷ On the transnational approach and the importance of networks: Clavin, P., 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 14, 4 (2005), pp. 421-439; Clavin, P., 'Europe and the League of Nations', in Gerwarth (ed.), *Twisted Paths. Europe 1914-1945* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 325-354; Clavin, P., 'Defining Human Security: Roads to War and Peace, 1918-45' in Szejnmann (ed.) *Rethinking History, Dictatorship and War* (London, 2009), pp. 70-83; Conrad, S. and Sachsenmaier, D. (eds.), *Competing Visions of the World Order. Global Moments and Movements, 1880s-1930s* (Basingstoke, 2007)

³⁸ Among others: Weindling, P. (ed.), *International Health Organisations and Movements, 1918-1939* (Cambridge, 1995); Renoliet, J-J., *L'UNESCO oubliée: La Société des Nations et la coopération intellectuelle (1919-1946)* (Paris, 1999); Metzger, B. 'The League of Nations and Human Rights: From Practice to Theory' (Thesis (Ph.D.)--University of Cambridge (2001) and 'Towards an International Human Rights Regime during the Inter-War Years: The League of Nations' Combat of Traffic in Women and Children', in Grant, K., et al. (eds.), *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, c.1880-1950* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp.54-79; Clavin, P. and Wessels, J-W. 'Transnationalism and League of Nations: Understanding the Work of Its Economic and Financial Organisation' in *Contemporary European History*, 14, 4 (2005), pp. 465-492; Clavin, P., 'Europe and the League of Nations', in Gerwarth, R., (ed.), *Twisted Paths. Europe 1914-1945* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 325-354; Clavin, P., *Securing the World Economy: the reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (Oxford, 2013); Webster, A., 'The Transnational Dream: Politicians, Diplomats and Soldiers in the League of Nations' Pursuit of International Disarmament, 1920-1938' in *Contemporary European History*, 14, 4 (2005), pp. 493-518; Pedersen, S., 'Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations' in Elkins, C., and Pedersen, S., (eds.), *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: London, 2005), pp.113-134 and Pedersen, S., 'Samoa on the World Stage: Petitions and Peoples before the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations' in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 2012, 40:2, pp.231-261; Davies, T. R., *The possibilities of Transnational Activism. The Campaign for Disarmament between the Two World Wars* (Leiden and Boston, 2007); Knab, C. and Ribi Forclaz, A., 'Transnational Co-Operation in Food, Agriculture, Environment and Health in Historical Perspective: Introduction' in *Contemporary European History*, 20, 3 (2011), pp. 247-255; Laqua, D., 'Transnational intellectual cooperation, the League of Nations, and the problem of order' in *Journal of Global History* (2011) 6, pp. 223-247; Fakhri, M., 'The 1937 International Sugar Agreement: Neo-Colonial Cuba and Economic Aspects of the League of Nations', *Leiden Journal of*

also reconsidered the relationship between nationalism and internationalism in the context of the League.³⁹ The work of these historians presents a new understanding of the organization's significance and has the merit of having rescued an important institution of 20th- century history from oblivion, lent it historiographical dignity and highlighted its achievements as well as its shortcomings.

In this new literature too, however, the place of Italy at the League has been little studied. In particular, while recently some attention has been paid to the role of certain Italian delegates to the League, there is currently no comprehensive research on the Italians in the League's Secretariat.⁴⁰ My dissertation proposes to cover this gap in the literature and to make a substantial contribution to the historiography of League of Nations and that of the Italian foreign policy in the interwar period.

Research Questions

This dissertation aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the dynamics that developed between Italy and the League of Nations, through a systematic study of the Italians involved, civil servants as well as experts and delegates. On the one hand, this thesis seeks to reassess the role of the League in Italian foreign policy, reconsidering the importance of the organization in the interwar period, not just in terms of its

International Law, 89, Vol. 24, No. 4, (2011); Richard, A-I., 'Competition and complementarity: civil society networks and the question of decentralizing the League of Nations' in *Journal of Global History* (2012), 7, pp. 233-256; Lagendijk, V., "'To Consolidate Peace'? The International Electro-technical Community and the Grid for the United States of Europe' in *Journal of Contemporary History* (2012) 47, pp. 402-426. The recent works of Mark Mazower and Zara Steiner, while dealing with some aspects of the League, maintain the attitude of the failure narrative.

³⁹ Sluga, G., *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (Philadelphia, PA, 2013);

Manela, E., *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007)

⁴⁰ Costa Bona, E., *L'Italia e la Società delle Nazioni* (Padua, 2004); Santagata, S., *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi, il Fascismo e la Società delle Nazioni* (Milan, 2007); Tassani, G., *Diplomatico tra due Guerre. Vita di Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone* (Firenze, 2012)

contribution to transnational matters but also as a political actor in relation to its member states. On the other hand, it seeks to reassess the role of Italy in the history of the League, both in terms of institutional destabilization and in terms of unexpected contributions. In this way, my dissertation argues that Italy was much more interested and involved in the League than currently believed. The thesis uses the relationship between Italy and the League to increase our understanding of the dynamics between nationalism and internationalism in the interwar years. Through the careful study of the Italians interacting with and working for the League, my research answers the following questions: how did nationalism and internationalism relate to and influence one another in Geneva? What was the nature of Italian agency in the League? How did a Fascist dictatorship fit into an organization that espoused principles of liberal internationalism? Why did Italy remain a member of the League for 17 years? What was the impact of Fascism and internationalism on the work and lives of the Italian civil servants at the League? Answering these questions will not only shed new light upon the complex relationship between the League of Nations and Fascist Italy, but will also significantly contribute to our knowledge of what Susan Pedersen has defined as a ‘much-misunderstood international organization.’⁴¹

In investigating these issues, my research concentrates primarily on the period between 1922 and 1935. These specific time boundaries have been chosen because it was in 1922 that Mussolini came to power in Italy, while in 1935 Italy embarked on the occupation of Ethiopia, in violation of the League’s Covenant. However, the discussion does not ignore relevant processes and dynamics which developed beyond these dates. The years under examination are when the seeds of the Ethiopian crisis

⁴¹ Pedersen, ‘Back to the League of Nations’, p.1092

were planted, allowing us to understand why the relationship between Italy and the League evolved into a conflict. This dissertation, in fact, rather than focusing on the Ethiopian war itself, which has been extensively examined by the literature, is interested in what led to it. Thus, the Italo-Ethiopian conflict remains beyond the scope of this study. At the same time, this thesis does not seek to provide an in-depth investigation of Italy's bilateral diplomatic relations in the interwar period, but instead it concentrates on those aspects of them which are relevant in relation to Italy's membership of the League. Finally, while recognising the need to know more about the relationship between Italy and the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was associated with the League, this institution is excluded from the analysis.

Methodology and structure

The novelty of my research is not only the unexplored topic it investigates, but also its approach. The direction of my investigation is from the League outwards, rather than from Italy outwards. This allows us to understand internationalism in its own context, as well as to deconstruct the relationship between the League and Italy. Following the constructivist theory, my dissertation assumes that states are not the only actors in international organizations.⁴² This is the reason why my dissertation focuses on the people involved in the relationship between Italy and the League, as the means through which to overcome the limitations of nation-state centred history. By privileging the personal over the institutional dimension, we can touch on the different levels of the interaction between this organization and Italy, from

⁴² On constructivism in international relations see: Finnemore, M., *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, NY: London, 1996); Katzenstein, P.J. (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York, 1996); Wendt, A., *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, 1999)

international to transnational, and from national to local. Through an analysis of the individuals rather than the states, we can read the League – its existence, its aims, its work – and the relationship with Italy in a different way, and contribute to a broader literature on internationalism and transnationalism in the interwar period. Moreover, the study of individuals at different levels of interaction with the League, rather than just diplomatic representatives introduces us to the variety of behaviours and identities which characterized the complexity of this relationship. While I am not an historian of Italian Fascism, this study recovers some of the complexity of how Fascist Italy related to the League.

This dissertation takes as its central focus an investigation of nationalism and internationalism in the case of Fascist Italy and the League of Nations. It is therefore necessary to define these two concepts. The League originated from liberal internationalism, and it is in this sense that the term is used here. This type of internationalism had its roots in 18th- century political thought, with Jeremy Bentham's 'international law' and Immanuel Kant's idea of a permanent peace among nations.⁴³ Liberal internationalism was bourgeois and anti-communist and, unlike proletarian internationalism, with which it coexisted, it did not oppose nationalism but embraced the concept of nation.⁴⁴ In fact, at the Paris Peace Conference the idea of international cooperation embodied in the League coexisted with the principle of nationality.⁴⁵ Both reinforced the sovereignty of the state, which was safeguarded in the Covenant.⁴⁶ In this context, the League was an experiment in institutional internationalism, which aimed to settle disputes between states through arbitration and

⁴³ Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, pp.3-4; Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, p.8

⁴⁴ Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, pp.4-5

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.49; Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, p.7

prevent war. It represented not just the values of liberal democracy but also those of liberal imperialism.⁴⁷ As well as promoting international cooperation and erecting a new international system, the Covenant provided for control of some aspects of state sovereignty, namely the administration of former colonies through the mandates, the protection of minorities, and the administration of international territories.⁴⁸ The institution itself aspired to nurture internationality and foster international mindedness.⁴⁹ Moreover, the League coexisted and interacted also with other types of internationalism, found in transnational movements, such as women's internationalism or religious internationalism.⁵⁰ Internationalism as implemented at the League can be recognized in the promotion of certain policies, from free trade to open governance, but in general it was associated with the commitment to international cooperation. It is in this sense that in this dissertation 'internationalism' and the League of Nations are equated.

Defining nationalism has proven a challenging intellectual activity for scholars. There is no ultimate definition. Nations have been interpreted as 'imagined' and 'invented' communities, based on common criteria such as territory, language or history.⁵¹ This dissertation does not aim to contribute to this debate. Assuming that nationalism can be described as the sense of belonging to a particular community, my thesis concentrates on how people negotiated between their perceived 'national' identity and

⁴⁷ Sluga, G., 'Was the Twentieth Century the Great Age of Internationalism?', Hancock Lecture 2009, in *The Australian Academy of the Humanities, Proceedings 2009*, p.164

⁴⁸ Walters, p.32; LoN Covenant, available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed on 30 July 2014)

⁴⁹ Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism*, pp.56-57

⁵⁰ For a recent history of women's transnational activism see De Haan, F. *et al.* (eds.), *Women's Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present* (Oxford, 2013)

On religious internationalism see: Green, A. and Viaene, V., *Religious internationals in the modern world: globalization and faith communities since 1750* (Basingstoke, 2012)

⁵¹ Among others: Gellner, E., *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1983), Smith, A.D., *Theories of Nationalism* (London, 1983) 2nd ed., Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities* (London: New York, 1983), Hobsbawm, E.J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990)

internationalism, the latter term denoting an openness to international cooperation. Thus, rather than offering a pre-determined definition of nationalism, this dissertation uses the experience of Italians at the League, individually and collectively, to explore how they interpreted their national identity in the context of their relations with this institution.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to distinguish nationalism in this wider concept and the specific meaning that the term acquired in early 20th- century Italy. In 1910, the Italian Nationalist Association (ANI) was created, born as a reaction to the disappointment with the work of the so-called liberal government, considered weak and corrupt.⁵² The members of this movement were anti-socialist and advocated authoritarianism and imperialism. In 1923, the ANI merged with the Fascist Party, in which the nationalists saw potential for a fulfilment of their imperial aims, in particular the establishment of Italy as a fully recognised Great Power. The foreign-policy goals of the nationalists became those of the Fascist regime. The merger also shows that Fascism was made of different factions, with the nationalists being only one. The Fascist movement, which as such was dynamic and not coherent, was made of *squadristi* (Blackshirts), as well as former liberals, monarchists, Futurists, conservative Catholics and many others. While acknowledging the specific meaning that the term nationalism acquires in the context of Italian Fascism, and recognising the fact that the ANI's nationalism might fit with many of the existing definitions of the concept, when studied in relation to the liberal internationalism of the League in this dissertation, 'nationalism' refers more widely to the idea of belonging to a nation state rather than to an international community.

⁵² For a history of the ANI see De Grand, A.J., *The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism in Italy* (Lincoln: London, 1978)

My dissertation draws upon a diverse body of primary sources from several European archives: from the League of Nations Archives in Geneva to the Italian diplomatic and central archives (*Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri* and *Archivio Centrale dello Stato*), passing through the French Diplomatic Archives housed at La Courneuve, Paris, and the British National Archives in Kew. Due to the key role that individuals play in this thesis, my research also makes extensive use of personal papers, many of which have rarely been used in association with the history of the League of Nations. By taking advantage of multi-archival research, this dissertation seeks to overcome the limits of nation-state centred history as well as the practical problems of a research on this topic. In fact, while archival research has proven successful in many ways, it is also necessary to point out that it has often been frustrating work. Inaccessible, un-catalogued or fragmented collections, together with the disappearance of personal papers, missing files and limited opening hours await any scholar embarking on a research project on Italy and the League of Nations. This is especially the case for archives located on Italian soil. The practical implication of this situation is that, once further material from the Italian archives becomes available, it will be possible to examine further aspects of the relationship between Italy and the League, and through the lenses of additional Italians involved in this international organization.

The dissertation is structured around five chapters, moving from the League outwards. After presenting in Chapter 1 who the Italians in the League were, the dissertation analyses the relations between Italy and this institution through the experience of Italian individuals at different hierarchical levels: from the civil servants in Chapter 2,

to the experts in Chapter 3, to the Italian government in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 leads us to the end of the Italian membership of the League and Chapter 5 examines the reactions of the Italians working for the Secretariat when Italy left Geneva, assessing the impact that the League's experience had on them. It also provides an analysis of the long-term effects of the Italian presence in Geneva on Italy's post-1945 international cooperation. Analysing the relationship between Italians and the League at various degrees allows the different levels of interaction between nationalism and internationalism to emerge throughout the dissertation.

The first chapter aims to identify the Italians who worked for the first international bureaucracy and, as such, were expected to be loyal to this institution and share its values. After introducing the organization of the League's bureaucracy, this chapter presents a prosopographical study of the Italian officials working for it, with a focus on the civil servants of the First Division, which included the higher-ranking positions. The chapter investigates their geographical and social origins, their education and previous employment, their war experience, when they joined the League and for which tasks, and why they left. This is the first study of the Italian officials in the League and it seeks to detect existing connections within the Italian community at the Secretariat, which are essential to clarify the inner dynamics of this institution.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the analysis of those particular moments in time when the repercussions of the pressure of Italian Fascism on the Italians working for the League were more pronounced. It examines the conflicts that arose through the presence of Fascist Italians within the League. This chapter explores the ways in which Fascism

was present in the League's Secretariat and how it influenced the Italian civil servants working there through a process of 'Fascistization.' It analyses the institutional and diplomatic problems this process caused for the League and its international, national and local consequences. In fact, this chapter recovers the local dimension of the Fascist presence in the League, presenting the tensions between Geneva's Italian anti-Fascists and Italian Fascists, many of whom were League officials.

Chapter 3 seeks to exemplify the presence of the Italians in the League also in unexpected fields. It focuses on the cases of Manfredi Gravina, High Commissioner for Danzig (1929-1932) and Alberto Theodoli, Chairman of the Mandates Permanent Commission (1921-1937). The chapter answers questions related to the degree of involvement of these Italians in the League's projects on which they worked. It considers whether they limited themselves to their tasks or took initiatives beyond them, and explores how their work was evaluated in Geneva. The two Italians examined in this chapter were appointed to their League's posts with the support of Rome. For this reason, while working as experts for projects promoted by the League, they had a tight connection to the Italian government. The chapter considers the level of independence from Rome of their work for the League, searching for initiatives in favour or against the institution, as well as for some unexpected commitment to this international organization.

Chapter 4 examines the Italian government's interest in the organization and aims to make sense of the 17-year Italian presence in the League. It exemplifies the reasons behind Italy's membership of the League through the analysis of the use the Fascist government made of the Rome-based international institutes, and its commitment to

the disarmament question, with a focus on the Disarmament Conference (1932-1934). This chapter analyses how the regime sought to utilize the League, and the reactions of the Italian leadership to what was perceived as the increasing inconclusiveness of the organization.

The last chapter investigates the impact of the League on the lives and career of the Italians who worked there, after they left the organization. It considers how internationalism influenced them and in which direction. The chapter explores the extent to which they felt members of this international bureaucracy and embraced a new international identity. It considers whether after leaving Geneva, they remained involved in international activities or returned to Italy as if nothing had happened. In particular, this chapter focuses on the experience of three Italian civil servants who worked for the Secretariat when Italy withdrew from the organization.

CHAPTER 1: **Italian Civil Servants in the League of Nations' Secretariat**

This chapter analyses who the Italian civil servants in the League of Nations' Secretariat were. Italy was a member of the League of Nations (LoN) from 1920 until 1937. During this time more than 170 Italians worked for the Secretariat, 37 of them in senior positions. So far the literature, although offering some isolated portraits, has neglected them as a group and there is no comprehensive evaluation of the Italian officials in the League.⁵³ A thorough study of them is essential in order to unlock a key facet of the Italian presence in this international organization. After introducing the structure of the Secretariat's bureaucracy, the chapter identifies the Italian officials working for it, concentrating on those holding the higher-ranking positions. It presents the portraits of the four Italian Under Secretaries-General, followed by a prosopographical analysis of the 33 Italians employed in the First Division of the Secretariat for more than one year in the period 1920-1937. This study explores their origins, whether or not they belonged to a privileged élite, their education and previous employment, when they were recruited and for which tasks, how long they stayed in Geneva, and why they left. The chapter aims to reconstruct the Italian connections existing in the Secretariat, which are key to understanding the relationship between Italian civil servants, the League and the Fascist regime, a central question of this dissertation.

⁵³ Existing portraits of former Italian officials at the League including, to some extent, their Geneva experience are: Tassani, G., *Diplomatico tra due Guerre. Vita di Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone* (Florence, 2012); Losito, L.A. (ed.) *Bernardo Attolico* (Fasano di Brindisi, 1994); Borzoni, G., *Renato Prunas diplomatico (1892-1951)* (Soveria Mannelli, CZ, 2004); a few Italian officials are also mentioned in Costa Bona, E., *L'Italia e la Società Delle Nazioni* (Padua, 2004)

The people working for the League's Secretariat were 'civil servants' or 'officials', and they distinguished themselves from the 'delegates', who were the member states' representatives to the Assembly and the Council, and who responded to their states' foreign ministries. The civil servants were hired and paid by the Secretariat and contributed to the workings of this institution. Other individuals interacting with the League's Secretariat can be classified as 'experts', hired for a short amount of time and to deal with specific problems faced by the organization. There were also the members of specialised commissions and technical organizations created by the Council to deal with tasks of the League which required expert input for an extended period, for instance the Permanent Mandates Commission or the Economic and Financial Organization. These experts were suggested by their member states, but also came from non-members such as the USA. They were paid an indemnity by the League to cover their expenses, but were not the League's employees and served in a private capacity, being also not direct representatives of their states of origin.

The League of Nations' Secretariat and its Employees

Article 6 of the Covenant of the League of Nations provided for the establishment of a permanent Secretariat comprising 'a Secretary-General and such secretaries and staff as may be required.'⁵⁴ The Secretariat was the institutional pillar of the League and the body in charge of putting the Covenant into practice. The Secretariat offered the necessary support for the Council and Assembly to meet and work. It coordinated the various bodies so that the League's tasks, as described in the Covenant, could be

⁵⁴ Art.6, League of Nations Covenant available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

brought to completion.⁵⁵ The Secretariat also served as a link between the organization and its member states and ensured continuity and coherence within the League.⁵⁶ However, there is a debate whether the Secretariat was merely an executive body or one with political functions.⁵⁷ Antonio Salandra, former Prime Minister (1914-1916) and Italian representative at the League in the early 1920s, noted that, despite maintaining a discrete presence behind the various European politicians, it was the heads of the Secretariat who determined international politics at the LoN.⁵⁸ The minority report of the Committee of Thirteen, surveying the institution in 1930, recognised that the work of this part of the League constantly required judgements of political nature.⁵⁹ This is valid in particular for the tasks faced by the Secretary-General.⁶⁰ However, the question remains to what extent the Secretariat had a will of its own, autonomous from the sum of its member states, and to what extent it complemented or competed with the agenda set by Council and Assembly.

The League of Nations' Secretariat was the first international bureaucracy with employees from over 30 countries.⁶¹ It was where internationalism was put into practice. The expenses of the Secretariat, located in London until November 1920, were paid by the member states in a fixed proportion decided by the Assembly.⁶² These countries soon questioned the costs of this growing institution and tried, on

⁵⁵ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E.F., *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration* (Washington D.C., 1945), pp.18-19

⁵⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.19

⁵⁷ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.18-19, 391-401; Siotis, J., *Essai sur le Secrétariat International* (Geneva, 1963), pp.77-78

⁵⁸ Salandra, A., *Memorie Politiche (1916-1925)* (Milan, 1951), p.85

⁵⁹ Excerpts in Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.18

⁶⁰ Barros, J., *Office without Power: Secretary-General Sir Eric Drummond, 1919-1933* (Oxford: New York, 1979) and *Betrayal from within: Joseph Avenol, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, 1933-1940* (New Haven, CT: London, 1969)

⁶¹ Walters, p.76

⁶² Art. 6, Par.5, League of Nations Covenant available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

more than one occasion, to decrease the organization's budget.⁶³ As for the League as a whole, the first years of the Secretariat were experimental, characterised more by the attempt to put the Covenant into practice than by bureaucratic efficiency. The Secretariat was heavily shaped by the administrative ideas of its first Secretary-General, Eric Drummond (1919-1933).⁶⁴ Drummond, who had been working for 19 years for the British Foreign Office before joining the League in 1919, is commonly remembered as a capable leader, who created an efficient institution out of the Covenant's words.⁶⁵ When in 1933 he left Geneva to become British Ambassador to Rome, his successor was Joseph Avenol (1933-1940), a Frenchman who had been the Deputy Secretary-General from 1923.⁶⁶ Both his contemporaries and subsequently historians highly criticised Avenol's conduct as Secretary-General.⁶⁷ The third and last LoN Secretary-General was an Irishman, Sean Lester (1940-1946), who headed the remains of the League through the Second World War and oversaw the institution towards its dissolution in April 1946.⁶⁸

The Secretariat was divided into different sections concerned with the distinct tasks laid upon the League by the Covenant.⁶⁹ These sections, some of which emerged later and many of which changed over time, were: the Political Section, assisting the Council in dealing with disputes; the Economic and Financial, the Minorities

⁶³ Walters, pp.129-131, 378

⁶⁴ Walters, pp.75-78

⁶⁵ Walters, pp.558-559; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.80-83; for an analysis of his mandate: Barros, J., *Office without Power* (Oxford: New York, 1979)

⁶⁶ About Drummond's experience in Rome see: Rotunda, D.T., 'The Rome Embassy of Sir Eric Drummond, 16th Earl of Perth, 1933-1939' (Thesis (doctoral) – University of London, LSE, 1972); Walters, p.557

⁶⁷ The limits of Avenol's mandate and his collusion with Nazi-Fascism have been denounced in particular by James Barros's *Betrayal from within* (New Haven, CT: London, 1969); see Walters, pp.560, 809-810 and more recently Clavin, P., *Securing the World Economy: the reinvention of the League of Nations, 1920-1946* (Oxford, 2013), pp.258-266

⁶⁸ Walters, p.810

⁶⁹ Walters, p.77

Questions and the Communications and Transit Sections. There was a Social Questions, and Opium Traffic Section, engaged in such problems as the trafficking of drugs and women, and a Health Section. The Mandates Section was the Secretariat of the Permanent Mandates Commission and performed secretariat duties also for the anti-slavery committee. The Legal Section registered and published all treaties and advised the League on international law matters. The Information Section was responsible for maintaining good relations with the press and coordinating the League's liaison offices in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and Tokyo.⁷⁰ The Disarmament Section was added in 1920 and assisted various LoN bodies, including the Permanent Advisory Commission (PAC) and the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, concerned with the disarmament tasks of the League.⁷¹ At the beginning, there was also an International Bureaux, in charge of the relations with existing international bodies, which was incorporated in the Intellectual Cooperation Section when this was created in 1928.⁷² Included in the LoN Secretariat was also the secretariat of the Permanent Central Opium Board, established in 1929, collecting data on drugs' use and trade.⁷³ The sections were made of 'Members of Section' at different employment levels (A or B), 'the backbone' of the Secretariat, and led by 'Chiefs of Section' and/or 'Directors of Section.'⁷⁴ During its membership of the League, Italy had three Directors: Bernardo Attolico, Director of the Transit and Communication Section (1919-1923) and of the Disarmament Section (1921-1926), Pietro Stoppani, Director of the Economic Relations Section (1931-1939), and Vito Catastini, Director of the Mandates Section (1929-1935).

⁷⁰ Walters, pp.77-78; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.90-95

⁷¹ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.128-130; Walters, pp.77-78

⁷² Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.86; Walters, p.77

⁷³ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.123-125

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.281-282

Organizational Chart of the League's Secretariat in year 1930

[Image omitted due to absence of permission from copyright holder]

Source: Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E.F., *The International Secretariat* (Washington, D.C., 1945)

The importance of the sections varied. According to the Italian Foreign Ministry, the most politically relevant were Disarmament, Mandates, Minorities and the Information Section.⁷⁵ The Political Section was considered secondary, as the three main political activities of the League (mandates, minorities and disarmament) had their own specific section.⁷⁶ Italy tried to influence directly the work of the sections perceived as closer to its national concerns, in contrast to what it saw as more technical sections, such as the Economic and Financial, or the Health Section, where the topics examined were considered matters for experts only. That said, Italian officials were present in all sections, with the exception of the Minorities and the Social Questions ones.

The Secretariat was not only characterised by different sections, but was also divided into three hierarchical divisions ranked ‘according to the nature of the official’s duties.’⁷⁷ The First Division comprised officials performing political and technical tasks. It included the highest educated employees, and also the better paid ones. The top of the First Division was composed of the High Directorate, made up of the Secretary-General and his Deputy or Deputies, the Under Secretaries-General (USGs), the Directors of Section and, later, the Legal Adviser and the Treasurer.⁷⁸ The Second Division consisted of personnel performing strictly clerical and routine administrative duties (secretaries, clerks).⁷⁹ Divisions and sections were interconnected, so that in all sections there were members of the First Division and

⁷⁵ Report by Massimo Pilotti ‘*Distribuzione degli Uffici nel Segretariato della SdN*’, 6 Sept. 1936 in Società delle Nazioni (hereafter SdN) b.10, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy (hereafter ASMAE)

⁷⁶ Untitled report, starting with “Sezione delle Commissioni Amministrative”, (underlined), undated but most likely 1933, in folder ‘*Segretariato Generale della SdN. Ordinamento delle varie sezioni*’, SdN b.10, ASMAE

⁷⁷ Art.8 of the Staff Regulations, in Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.279

⁷⁸ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.53

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.279

support staff of the Second Division. Nevertheless, many employees of the Second Division did not work for a specific section but for one of the Internal Services of the Secretariat, which included an accounting branch, the treasury, the library, the registry, the précis-writing and publication department, the interpreting and translating services, the duplicating service and the distribution one.⁸⁰ Since the official languages of the League were English and French, native speakers of these languages occupied the majority of the Second Division.⁸¹ Therefore, Italy's presence in the Second Division was not comparable with that of Britain and France: in April 1927 there were 14 Italians in this division versus 125 British and 81 French.⁸² Finally, there was a Third Division, which consisted of workers engaged in manual tasks, such as drivers, office keepers, chauffeurs, messengers and couriers. The members of the Third Division for practical reasons were locally recruited and were mainly Swiss.⁸³

The Secretariat's posts were 'open equally to men and women.'⁸⁴ Nevertheless, in the League's history there was no woman in the High Directorate and only a few in the First Division.⁸⁵ Women of all nationalities were instead the majority in the Second Division. Many of them were highly educated, with university degrees.⁸⁶ However, there were a few women who did also perform work of responsibility, for instance: Dame Rachel Crowdy carried out the tasks of Chief for the Social Questions Section

⁸⁰ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.134-143

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.97-98

⁸² 'List of Nationalities represented on the Secretariat', Apr. 1927, Personnel Office, S. 696, in League of Nations (LoN) Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

⁸³ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.284

⁸⁴ Art.7, Par.3, League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁸⁵ 22 according to Miller who however counted also translators and interpreters. Miller, C.A., 'Lobbying the League: Women's International Organizations and the League of Nations' (Thesis (D.Phil.)--University of Oxford, 1992), p.80. Chapter 3 in particular is about 'Women in the League Secretariat'.

⁸⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.407-408

(1919-1930) but was never promoted to the post of Director; and Nancy Williams was the *de facto* chef of the personnel office from 1926.⁸⁷ These were positions dealing with questions considered particularly suitable for women. In the Italian case, the only woman to hold a prestigious post at the LoN Secretariat, even though she was officially employed in the Second Division, was the private secretary to Under Secretary-General Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli: Princess Maria Cristina Giustiniani-Bandini (1866-1959). She was member of an influential Roman aristocratic family linked to the Vatican and, in her youth, she had been a nun. In addition to being an important adviser to Paulucci, she was well-known among women's Catholic internationalism as the former President-General of the Italian Catholic Women Union and a member of the *Union Internationale des Ligues Féminines Catholiques*.⁸⁸

Secretariat and Member States

According to the Covenant (Art.6/Par.3), all Secretariat staff were to be appointed by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council.⁸⁹ In order to have a truly international service, it was important that the appointment of the officials came from the international authority, even though some interference from the Great Powers was expected.⁹⁰ The Secretary-General did his best to ensure that the civil servants were

⁸⁷ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.367; Miller, C.A., 'Lobbying the League: Women's International Organizations and the League of Nations' (Thesis (D.Phil.)--University of Oxford, 1992), pp.79-80; Pedersen, S., 'Metaphors of the Schoolroom: Women Working the Mandates System of the League of Nations', *History Workshop Journal*, 66 (2008), pp.188-207

⁸⁸ Maria Cristina Giustiniani-Bandini Papers, Archivio Generale dell'Ordine dei Frati Predicatori, Santa Sabina, Rome, Italy

⁸⁹ Art.6, League of Nations Covenant available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁹⁰ Walters, p.76

not only qualified but also committed to the aims of the League.⁹¹ The personnel were recruited through open competitions, but there was a sense of national representation involved, limiting posts to nationals of a specific country.⁹² The member states sought to indirectly influence the recruiting process of the most senior officials, and it was in the interest of the Secretary-General to compose the First Division of the administration ‘in such a manner as to secure a maximum of good-will on the part of the members.’⁹³ This was particularly true for Deputy and Under Secretaries-General, positions produced by a compromise between political necessities and administrative needs.⁹⁴ For instance, Alexander Loveday, Director of the Financial Section (1931-1946), later complained that the Italian government, while not interfering with junior appointments, ‘did insist and was allowed to insist’ that the Assistant Secretary-General should be a government nominee and a member of the Fascist Party.⁹⁵

There was also an unwritten rule that if the Under Secretary-General was of a certain nationality, his successor would be from the same country. Therefore a Frenchman was succeeded by a Frenchman, a German by a German and an Italian by an Italian.⁹⁶ For the Directors of Section, who were considered international officials rather than national representatives, an effort was made to appoint people from as many countries as possible.⁹⁷ In practice, however, the nationalities represented were mainly those of the Great Powers, which felt entitled to have a higher presence in key positions of the Secretariat because of their greater contribution to the League budget and because

⁹¹ Walters, pp.76-77

⁹² Purves, C., *International Establishments* (London, 1945), p.12

⁹³ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.326

⁹⁴ Siotis, *Essai sur le Secrétariat International*, p.102

⁹⁵ Loveday, A., *Reflections on International Administration* (Oxford, 1956), p.123

⁹⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.62; Walters, p.556. In addition to the Italian USGs, there was a Japanese USG, Inazo Nitobe followed in 1927 by Yotaro Sugimura; and a French Deputy Secretary-General, first Jean Monnet and then from 1923 Joseph Avenol. After Germany entered the League in 1926, a German USG was appointed: Albert Dufour-Feronce.

⁹⁷ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.60

they thought they bore a major responsibility for carrying out the League's decisions.⁹⁸ In the case of employees ranking as Members of Section, it was common for the Secretary-General to ask to the national representatives for possible candidates, especially when the need arose of substituting an employee of the same nationality.

The influence of the member states in the Secretariat was present not only at the recruiting stage. In some cases it continued afterwards, especially because some First Division's civil servants were not just working for the League, but still formally employed in the administration of their countries. This particular condition of 'double-employment' was frequent for Italian, German and Japanese officials at the League.⁹⁹ These countries, in fact, wanted a stronger control of their nationals in Geneva and wanted to make sure they maintained a link to their state of origins, symbolically but also practically, when information was needed. These civil servants with two employers were indistinguishable in status from their colleagues at the League, as they remained on the staff lists of their national departments without the official knowledge of the LoN Secretary-General.¹⁰⁰ According to Egon Ranshofen-Wertheimer, former LoN official and scholar of international administration:

Toleration of this practice by the authorities was a constant source of danger to the League services ...[in fact] these officials fulfilled their League duties with one eye constantly on the pleasure of their governments, with the result that they never fully entered into the spirit of their international employment.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Walters, p.556; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.353

⁹⁹ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.343

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Double-employment was common also for some Scandinavian diplomats, but since the politics of these countries never clashed with the League's aims, the dual belonging of these officials was never perceived as a problem.¹⁰² The problem emerged instead for those officials who had to deal with the discrepancies arising between their two employers.

The first international bureaucracy, therefore, soon had to deal with the question of loyalty. According to Loveday's retrospective reflections, the ideal employee for an international organization would possess not just blind loyalty, but one which derived from understanding and sharing the ultimate value of the work and purposes of that institution.¹⁰³ There was, therefore, the idea that LoN employees should be committed to the ideals of the organization. Loveday also stated that 'no individual can in conscience and sanity be possessed of opposed loyalties. But there is no sort of reason why he should not have a dual loyalty.'¹⁰⁴ Having dual loyalties was the most common situation for LoN officials and it was never a problem when the League and individual member states shared common objectives. In the case of Italian civil servants, this divergence soon started to be a problem as their loyalty to the aims and values of the LoN had to face the revisionist ideas and the anti-League rhetoric growing within the Fascist regime.

In the 1930s, the Secretariat made an effort to institutionalise loyalty to the League. From 1932, before assuming office, all future officials of the Secretariat, for all divisions, were asked to deliver and sign the following declaration of loyalty:

¹⁰² Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.344

¹⁰³ Loveday, *Reflections on International Administration*, p.32

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.114

I solemnly undertake to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions that have been entrusted to me as an official of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, to discharge my functions and to regulate my conduct with the interests of the League alone in view and not to seek or receive instructions from any Government or other authority external to the Secretariat of the League of Nations.¹⁰⁵

The ability of the Italians to follow this indication was hindered by the increasingly direct influence of the Fascist regime on them. In practice the international loyalty of the Italians was a farce.¹⁰⁶ LoN official Alberto Berio described his loyalty oath in 1934 as an unnatural effort to create a new mentality and a new figure: that of the ‘international civil servant who aims only at the general interest and forget about his country.’¹⁰⁷ The effort of the League to secure the loyalty of employees who were not already committed to internationalism was unconvincing.

In 1932 the LoN Assembly, in addition to instituting the declaration of fidelity, promoted a series of measures aimed at limiting the member states’ power in the Secretariat, that is to say the presence in the institution of Britain, France and, to a lesser extent, Italy.¹⁰⁸ This was a significant achievement for the smaller powers that had been complaining for years about the marginality of their role in the Secretariat, and their exclusion from the most senior posts. In October 1932, the Assembly decided that there should be a Secretary-General and two Deputy Secretaries-General, instead of just one, and that one of these three people should be from a non-permanent

¹⁰⁵ ‘Question of the Principal Officers of the Secretariat and Cognate Questions: resolutions proposed by the Fourth Committee’, 12th Meeting, 17 Oct. 1932 in ‘Records of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly’ in League of Nations, *Official Journal* (Geneva, 1932) (hereafter *LoN OJ*), p.97; Art.3, par.1, Staff Regulations (1932); Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.245

¹⁰⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.245

¹⁰⁷ Berio, A., *Dalle Ande all’Himalaya. Ricordi di un diplomatico* (Naples, 1961), p.75

¹⁰⁸ ‘Question of the Principal Officers of the Secretariat and Cognate Questions: resolutions proposed by the Fourth Committee’, 12th Meeting, 17 Oct. 1932 in ‘Records of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly’, *LoN OJ*, pp.96-98

member of the Council.¹⁰⁹ There should also be three Under Secretaries-General.¹¹⁰ However, the offices of both the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretaries-General should not include more than one Member of Section of the same nationality of the holder of these posts. The Under Secretaries-General were no longer allowed a private secretary and were entitled to have among the officials of the section they directed only one Member of Section of their own nationality. Moreover, the Assembly decided that no more than two nationals from the same state could hold posts of the High Directorate (Secretary-General, his Deputies, Under Secretaries-General, the Legal Adviser and Directors of Section).¹¹¹ Italy, which in 1932 had two Directors (Catastini and Stoppani) in addition to an Under Secretary-General, felt undermined by this decision. However, since the Assembly specified that the existing contracts remained unchanged, the practical consequences of these measures took time to come into effect. They were seen among the Italian officials of the High Directorate only in 1935, when Catastini's contract terminated and was not renewed.¹¹² The results for the office of the Italian USG were more immediate: Emanuele Schininà's post was suppressed in December 1932.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Walters, p.557

¹¹⁰ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.63-64

¹¹¹ For the exact wording of the decisions: 'Question of the Principal Officers of the Secretariat and Cognate Questions: resolutions proposed by the Fourth Committee', 12th Meeting, 17 Oct. 1932 in 'Records of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly', *LoN OJ*, pp.96-98

¹¹² Joseph Avenol to Catastini, 26 Nov. 1935 in Personal file 'Vito Catastini', Personnel Office, S.736, LoN Archives

¹¹³ Eric Drummond to Schininà, 22 Dec. 1932 in Personal file 'Emanuele Schininà', Personnel Office, S.876, LoN Archives

The Italian Under Secretaries-General



Dionisio Anzilotti (1920-21)



Bernardo Attolico (1922-27)



Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli (1927-32)



Massimo Pilotti (1932-37)

Source and Copyright: LoN Photo Archive, UNOG Library, League of Nations Archives, Geneva

Note the *fascio*'s pin on Paulucci's jacket

During the lifetime of its membership of the League, Italy was always represented in the Secretariat by an Under Secretary-General (USG). Each of these men left a distinctive mark during his mandate at the League. They had a strong influence, in different ways, on the work and the lives of the other Italian civil servants in Geneva. For these reasons, when evaluating the role of any Italian who worked at the Secretariat, it is important to bear in mind the presiding Italian USG at the time. The Italians who held this post need to be examined in detail: Dionisio Anzilotti (January 1920-December 1921), followed by Bernardo Attolico (January 1922-March 1927) and by Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone (March 1927-November 1932). In December 1932, Massimo Pilotti took up the job, which, in July 1933, following the implementation of the decisions of the LoN Assembly in 1932, had been modified to Deputy Secretary-General in charge of assisting the new Secretary-General Joseph Avenol. After Italy's withdrawal from the League in December 1937, Pilotti resigned and was not replaced.

The position of USG was highly political and, even though it was up to the LoN Council to make the final appointment, the candidates were put forward directly by the Italian government. Dionisio Anzilotti, an eminent jurist, was a natural choice for Rome, and was proposed to the LoN Secretary-General by Ambassador Guglielmo Imperiali during the Paris Peace Conference.¹¹⁴ When Anzilotti left, the 'still liberal' Italian government suggested that Bernardo Attolico, at the time Director of the Transit and Communications and the Disarmament Sections, take the vacant post. Attolico's work at the League was not immediately affected by Mussolini's coming to

¹¹⁴ Guglielmo Imperiali to Drummond, 16 Jun. 1919 in Personal file 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

power, but the strengthening of the Fascist regime led to an inevitable 'Fascist shift' also for the Italians in Geneva's institutions. This resulted in the removal of Attolico from the League and his 'promotion' to be Italian Ambassador in Rio de Janeiro. In his place, Mussolini sent to Geneva Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone, who had been his Chef de Cabinet since 1922. At the League, Paulucci promoted the Fascistization of the Italian employees, which will be investigated in detail in the next chapter. In November 1932 Paulucci left the League as part of Foreign Ministry changes following Dino Grandi's removal as Foreign Minister. As his successor, Mussolini chose Giacinto Auriti, the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, but the appointment failed.

Mussolini had signalled to Drummond his desire to have Auriti as successor to Paulucci in September 1932. However, the Secretary-General did not initiate the hiring process because he wanted to wait for the outcome of the Assembly's debate on the reform of the High Directorate. He also intended to discuss the matter in person with Mussolini during his visit to Italy in October 1932.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, however, the appointment of Auriti was advertised by Rome, creating a diplomatic problem. In fact, Article 6 of the Covenant required that employees of the Secretariat be appointed by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council.¹¹⁶ According to the French diplomatic service, in his meeting with Mussolini in October 1932, Drummond told the Italian Prime Minister that it was not the Italian government but

¹¹⁵ Drummond to Benito Mussolini, 17 Sept. 1932; Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli to Mussolini, 19 Sept. 1932 in Gabinetto (1923-43), b.429 (Carte Aloisi), ASMAE; '*Le Président du Conseil Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à M. de Beaumarchais, Ambassadeur de France à Rome*', 23 Sept. 1932 in Service française de la Société des Nations (1917-1940) (hereafter SdNFra), b.163, Archives Diplomatiques de France, La Courneuve (ADF)

¹¹⁶ Telegram 946-947 by Renè Massigli, 7 Nov. 1932, SdNFra b.163, ADF; League of Nations Covenant available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

the Secretary-General of the League who had the right to designate his collaborators. The fact that the appointment of Auriti was announced by Rome without preliminary agreement with Geneva and before any official proclamation from the League, had made him an unacceptable candidate for the post.¹¹⁷ Any other outcome would have undermined the authority of the Secretary-General and questioned the entire hiring system of the League.

This episode shows that in 1932 the Secretary-General resisted the imposition of an Italian candidate when the basic rules of appointment at the League were not respected. By enforcing his rights in the recruiting process, Drummond did not hesitate to oppose Mussolini's decision, even though this risked a deterioration of the relationship between the LoN and one of its key member states. An important contribution to Drummond's decision to oppose Auriti's appointment was the Secretary-General's already tense relationship with the previous USG, Paulucci, who was fully dependant upon the Fascist regime. Drummond feared the appointment of another official obedient only to Mussolini. This episode also shows that, surprisingly, Mussolini did not insist on the matter by threatening the League, but accepted another candidate suggested by Drummond: Massimo Pilotti, a legal expert with experience in international cooperation, though perhaps not the most fervent of the Fascists.

¹¹⁷ Telegram 946-947 by Massigli, 7 Nov. 1932, SdNFra b.163, ADF

Dionisio Anzilotti (1920-1921)

The first Italian Under Secretary-General (USG) was Dionisio Anzilotti, who held the post from January 1920 to December 1921. He was born in Pescia (Tuscany) in 1867 and in 1919 he was at the height of a prosperous career as jurist and esteemed professor of law at the University of Rome.¹¹⁸ Anzilotti had developed a particular interest in international law and was a member of the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague.¹¹⁹ He was part of the Italian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference and, in June 1919, was proposed to Eric Drummond as the Italian candidate for the post of Under Secretary-General.¹²⁰ His candidature was put forward by Marquis Guglielmo Imperiali, Ambassador at the Peace Conference, and was supported by Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando and Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino.¹²¹ In the correspondence between Anzilotti and Drummond it emerged that Anzilotti was rather keen on joining the Secretariat. However, due to his legal expertise and interests, rather than becoming Under Secretary-General, Anzilotti expected to obtain the directorship of the Legal Section. This, however, had been already given to the Dutch jurist Joost van Hamel. For this reason Anzilotti initially

¹¹⁸ Please note: his birth date in the LoN personal file is 20 Feb.1869, but any other reliable source reports 1867. Personal file 'Dionisio Anzilotti', Personnel Office, S.702bis/703, LoN Archives; Italian Encyclopaedia:

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/dionisio-anzilotti_\(Dizionario_Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/dionisio-anzilotti_(Dizionario_Biografico)/) (last accessed 30 July 2014); Tanca, A. (ed.), 'Dionisio Anzilotti (1867-1950). Biographical Note with Bibliography', *European Journal of International Law (EJIL)*, Issue Vol. 3 (1992) No. 1, pp.156-162. See also the other articles in the same *EJIL* issue on the special topic: 'The European Tradition in International Law: Dionisio Anzilotti'

¹¹⁹ Imperiali to Drummond, 16 Jun. 1919, Personal file 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

¹²⁰ Drummond to Imperiali, 12 Jun. 1919; Imperiali to Drummond, 16 June 1919, Personal file 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives; Drummond to Anzilotti, 10 Jul. 1919, Personal file 'Dionisio Anzilotti', Personnel Office, S.702bis/703, LoN Archives

¹²¹ Imperiali to Drummond, 16 Jun. 1919, Personal file 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

refused Drummond's offer to join the League.¹²² Aside from his personal preferences, his negative reply was most likely also driven by the uncertainty related to the role of USG, whose competencies in 1919 were still unclear.¹²³

In the correspondence with the Secretary-General, which continued after the initial refusal, Anzilotti was relaxed about whether or not to take up the position at the League. He was at the peak of a successful career and could afford to court a job in his field of expertise: international law. When writing to Drummond, Anzilotti hinted at the replacement of Van Hamel or the need to find an alternative solution enabling him to deal with questions of international law, as the necessary condition for him to agree to work for the Secretariat.¹²⁴ Only in February 1920 Anzilotti officially accepted the post of Under Secretary-General in charge of Legal Affairs.¹²⁵

Anzilotti had the opportunity to put into practice his interest in international law by getting involved in the creation of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ). This institution was provided for by Article 14 of the Covenant to deal with disputes of international character submitted to it and to advise Council and Assembly on international disputes.¹²⁶ At the end of December 1921, Anzilotti left the League to

¹²² Anzilotti to Drummond, 23 Aug. 1919, Personal file 'Dionisio Anzilotti', Personnel Office, S.702bis/703, LoN Archives

¹²³ Anzilotti to Drummond, 5 Oct. 1919, Personal file 'Dionisio Anzilotti', Personnel Office, S.702bis/703, LoN Archives

¹²⁴ Anzilotti to Drummond, 23 Aug. 1919 and 5 Oct. 1919, Personal file 'Dionisio Anzilotti', Personnel Office, S.702bis/703, LoN Archives

¹²⁵ However the appointment dated from 11 January 1920. Anzilotti to Drummond, 2 and 3 Feb. 1920, Personal file 'Dionisio Anzilotti', Personnel Office, S.702bis/703, LoN Archives; Ruda, M.J., 'The Opinions of Judge Dionisio Anzilotti at the Permanent Court of International Justice', *European Journal of International Law (EJIL)*, Issue Vol. 3 (1992) No. 1, p.101

¹²⁶ League of Nations Covenant, Articles 13 and 14, available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

become judge at this Court.¹²⁷ He was at the PCIJ from 1922 until 1939, serving as a President from 1928 to 1930, and remained officially part of it until 1946, when the Court was dismantled, in favour of the new International Court of Justice. He died in 1950.¹²⁸

At the League Anzilotti was a representative of liberal Italy and like the liberal government, his approach to the institution was sceptical. However, in Geneva he was not a political emissary, but a legal expert committed to the creation of a court of international law. For chronological reasons the Fascist government did not have a chance to influence directly his mandate as Under Secretary-General. However, the fact that Anzilotti could remain judge of the PCIJ long into the Fascist years, suggests that his international post was considered a national achievement and that Anzilotti himself was compliant.

Bernardo Attolico (1922-1927)

The successor to Anzilotti was Bernardo Attolico, who, like Anzilotti, owed his introduction to the LoN environment to his international engagements during and immediately after the Great War. The nomination of Attolico to a post at the League was discussed at the same time as Anzilotti's, in June 1919. Following the approval of the Italian government, Drummond offered to Attolico the position of Director of the Transit and Communications Section starting in July 1919.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Report dated 10 Jan. 1922 in Anzilotti's folder, SdNFra b.163, ADF; Tanca, A. (ed.), 'Dionisio Anzilotti (1867-1950)', pp.156-162

¹²⁸ Ruda, 'The Opinions of Judge Dionisio Anzilotti at the Permanent Court of International Justice', pp.100-122; Tanca, A. (ed.), 'Dionisio Anzilotti (1867-1950)', pp.156-162

¹²⁹ Drummond to Imperiali, 12 Jun. 1919; Imperiali to Drummond, 16 Jun. 1919; Drummond to Attolico, 20 Jun. 1919 in Personal File 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

Attolico was born in Canneto di Bari (Adelfia, Apulia) in 1880, to a family of limited means. After obtaining a degree in law, he became Commissioner for Emigration in New York (1907-1915), a position dependent on the Italian Foreign Ministry.¹³⁰ During and after the Great War, he was involved in several inter-allied cooperation bodies: he was Italian delegate to the Inter-Allied Supplies Commission (1915-1917), head of the Italian civil delegation in London (1917-1919), delegate to the Wheat Executive, the Food Council Executive and the War Purchasing Commission in London (1918).¹³¹ In 1919 he was member of the Supreme Economic Council in Paris.¹³² Of particular importance to his subsequent international career was Attolico's service as member of the Executive Committee of the Allied Maritime Transport Council, where he had the opportunity to work with other future officials of the League, namely Jean Monnet and Arthur Salter.¹³³ Inter-allied cooperation was crucial to the development of that international expertise on which the Secretariat relied in its first years.

Attolico, like Anzilotti, was part of the Italian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. In Italy, Attolico enjoyed the support of Prime Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti, who endorsed his appointment to the League and who, in November

¹³⁰ Losito, L.A. (ed.) *Bernardo Attolico* (Fasano di Brindisi, 1994), p.25

¹³¹ 'Liste du Personnel permanente du Secrétariat', 1920, p.9, LoN Archives; Serra, E., *Professione: Ambasciatore d'Italia* (Milan, 1999), vol.1, p.22; Losito, *Bernardo Attolico*, p.25; Decorzant, Y., *La Société des Nations et la naissance d'une conception de la régulation économique internationale* (Brussels, 2011), pp.130-131

¹³² Serra, *Professione: Ambasciatore d'Italia*, vol.1, p.23; Decorzant, Y., 'Internationalism in the Economic and Financial Organisation of the League of Nations' in Laqua, D. (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured. Transnational Ideas and Movements between the World Wars* (London: New York, 2011), p.117

¹³³ 'Inter-Allied Economic Organizations in the course of the World War of 1914-1918', *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, Vol.16, Issue 1, January 1940, pp. 8-20; Decorzant, Y., 'Internationalism in the Economic and Financial Organisation' in Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism Reconfigured*, p.117

1919, made him ‘minister plenipotentiary’, admitting him to the Italian diplomatic service by decree rather than via the normal diplomatic competition.¹³⁴ His international experiences together with his political connections in Rome led Attolico to join the League from the start. Initially Drummond wanted to propose him for the directorship of the Economic Bureaux, but in July 1919 he was hired as Director of the Transit and Communications Section instead.¹³⁵ However, Attolico did not hold this post for long because in 1919 the Italian government sent him to the USA as Inter-Allied General Commissioner for economic and financial affairs.¹³⁶

When he came back to Europe in July 1920, Drummond asked him to take an ultimate decision regarding the possibility of returning to direct the Section.¹³⁷ As a result Attolico went back to the League and, in December 1920, he was sent to Danzig as temporary High Commissioner of the League: a position he held for five weeks.¹³⁸ Afterwards he took over in Geneva the directorship of both the Transit and Communications Section and the newly created Disarmament Section.¹³⁹ When Anzilotti was elected judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice in September 1921, the Italian government supported the candidacy of Attolico as his successor. Drummond, who had thought of Attolico as a possible alternative in August 1919 when Anzilotti initially refused to become the first Italian USG, finally

¹³⁴ Serra, *Professione: Ambasciatore d'Italia*, vol.1, p.23; ‘L’ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera. Da socialista democratico a “Barone.” *Lo spionaggio di Ginevra*’ by Francesco Saverio Nitti in *La Libertà, Giornale della Concentrazione Antifascista*, 21 Oct. 1930 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra* (1927-32), b.50, Personal Papers of Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone (hereafter GPdC), Archivio di Stato di Forlì, Italy (hereafter ASF)

¹³⁵ Drummond to Imperiali, 12 Jun. 1919; Drummond to Attolico, 20 Jun. 1919 in Personal File ‘Bernardo Attolico’, Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

¹³⁶ Attolico to Drummond, 19 Jul. 1920, Personal File ‘Bernardo Attolico’, Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives; Serra, *Professione: Ambasciatore d'Italia*, vol.1, p.23

¹³⁷ Drummond to Attolico, 4 Aug 1920, Personal File ‘Bernardo Attolico’, Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

¹³⁸ McNamara P., *Sean Lester, Poland and the Nazi Takeover of Danzig* (Dublin, 2009), pp.5n, 16

¹³⁹ Attolico to Herbert Ames, 26 Jan. 1922, Personal File ‘Bernardo Attolico’, Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

appointed him Under Secretary-General in January 1922.¹⁴⁰ He was in charge of the Secretariat's Internal Administration from August 1922. While serving as USG, Attolico remained Director of the Transit and Communications Section until 1923, when he was succeeded by Arthur Salter, and of the Disarmament Section until the end of 1926.¹⁴¹

Attolico's appointment to the League and promotion to Under Secretary-General occurred before Mussolini came to power. Considered by many a liberal, Attolico soon had to face the rising pressure of the Fascist government on his work and that of his Italian colleagues at the League.¹⁴² His compromises and problematic experience are analysed in Chapter 2. He remained in Geneva until January 1927 when, a few days after accepting the renewal of his contract, he told Drummond that he was obliged to leave the League in March 1927. In fact, he had been recalled by the Italian Foreign Ministry, where he remained an employee, to take up the post of Ambassador to Brazil.¹⁴³ Whether this change in Attolico's career is to be interpreted as a promotion or a punishment remains unclear. However, after Brazil, Attolico moved on to become Italian Ambassador in Moscow in 1930 and in Berlin in 1935, possibly the most important diplomatic seat at the time. His last appointment was Ambassador to the Holy See in 1940, where he died in office in 1942.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Drummond to Attolico, 2 Sept. 1919, "not sent"; Secretary-General (SG) to Attolico, 20 Jan. 1922; Drummond to Attolico, 29 Aug. 1922 in Personal File 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

¹⁴¹ Personal Record in Personal File 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives; League of Nations, *Staff List of the Secretariat* (Geneva, 1922, 1923, 1927)

¹⁴² De Madariaga, S., *Morning without Noon. Memoirs* (Farnborough, Eng., 1973), p.20

¹⁴³ Attolico to Drummond, 14 Jan. 1927; Attolico to Drummond, 22 Jan. 1927 in Personal File 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

¹⁴⁴ Losito, *Bernardo Attolico*; Serra, *Professione: Ambasciatore d'Italia*, vol.1, pp.27-40; an account of Attolico's time as Ambassador to the Holy See can be found in Casella, M., *Gli Ambasciatori d'Italia presso la Santa Sede dal 1929 al 1943* (Galatina, Lecce, 2009). Considering Attolico's career path, a thorough investigation of his diplomatic experience in key locations for interwar international relations would be beneficial to the study of the Italian foreign policy in this period.

Attolico's career in inter-allied institutions was a successful case of Italy's involvement in international cooperation. Attolico was also the Italian example of the continuity between the international officials produced by these bodies and those used by the League in its first years. However, as we shall analyse in detail in the next chapter, once the Fascist regime became interested in the Geneva institutions, Attolico also became the symbol of that process of Fascistization which led many former liberals to become loyal servants of the regime.

Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone Russo (1927-1932)

The next Italian Under Secretary-General at the League from March 1927 until November 1932 was Marquis Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone Russo.

*Non è Barone, non è Russo, non è marchese e non è neppure Paulucci di Calboli!*¹⁴⁵

At the time this joke, attributed to Mussolini, did the rounds at the Italian Foreign Ministry.¹⁴⁶ Paulucci was born Giacomo Barone Russo in Caltagirone (Sicily) in 1887 to a family with no noble titles. He was soon orphaned but was helped to achieve an education by his uncles. In 1909 he graduated in law at the University of Rome and in 1915 he joined the diplomatic service.¹⁴⁷ His first assignment was in Bern, where

¹⁴⁵ Trans. 'He is not Barone (a Baron), nor Russo (Russian), nor a Marquis and not even Paulucci di Calboli!' Cit. in Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, p.9

¹⁴⁶ Important note on Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre. Vita di Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone* (Florence, 2012). While offering the first in depth analysis of Giacomo Paulucci, this new book fails to provide an accurate reference to the documents in Paulucci's Personal Papers, collected by the author and donated to the Forlì State Archive. As a result it is impossible for other scholars to find and therefore verify the documents cited by the author. This is an important challenge to any claim of historical accuracy in the book.

¹⁴⁷ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.9-13

Raniero Paulucci di Calboli, member of an old aristocratic family, led the Embassy.¹⁴⁸ In 1920, Barone Russo married di Calboli's daughter Camilla, who, after the death of the brother, was the only heir of the Paulucci family.¹⁴⁹ In order to keep the family name, otherwise extinct, Raniero gave it to his son-in-law Barone Russo, who in 1924 thanks to a 'Royal Decree', became 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone.'¹⁵⁰ After participating in the Paris Peace Conference, Paulucci joined his father-in-law at the Tokyo Embassy, but he remained there only a few months.¹⁵¹ In November 1922, shortly after Mussolini had come to power, Paulucci was appointed by the Fascist leader as his Chef de Cabinet at the Foreign Ministry.¹⁵² A monarchist attracted to Fascism, Paulucci, who joined the Fascist Party in the summer of 1923, created immediately a good relationship with Mussolini.¹⁵³ However, he also had powerful enemies within the party, notably Dino Grandi but also Giuseppe Bottai, who disliked him personally.¹⁵⁴ The changing interests of Italian foreign politics influenced Mussolini's decision to substitute Attolico for Paulucci in 1927.

In March 1927 Paulucci became Under Secretary-General in charge of Internal Administration.¹⁵⁵ While at the League, Paulucci, a man with direct access to Mussolini, led the Fascistization of the Italian civil servants, in a process that aimed to increase and control the loyalty of the Italian officials to the Fascist regime. The Fascistization promoted by Paulucci and more generally the relationship between Fascism and Italian civil servants at the LoN are investigated in Chapter 2. However,

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.14

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.24

¹⁵⁰ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.46-47

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp.22-28

¹⁵² Ibid., p.35

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.50

¹⁵⁴ Bottai, G., *Diario 1935-1944* (Milan, 1982), p.295, 20 Jan. 1942 and pp.473-474, 16 Oct. 1943

¹⁵⁵ Personal Record in Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

it is relevant here to recognize that Paulucci was an active Fascist while in Geneva: he also wore the *fascio*, the symbol of Fascist Party, which did not increase the already low esteem that his international colleagues had of him. They saw him as a servant of Mussolini.¹⁵⁶ Drummond, in particular, tried several times to get rid of him, but unsuccessfully.¹⁵⁷ His time as USG was characterised by a growing tension with Foreign Minister Grandi on his interpretation of the League and its relationship with Fascist Italy.

In the summer of 1932 Paulucci was recalled to Rome and he left the League in November 1932.¹⁵⁸ Mussolini's request was related to the removal of Grandi from Foreign Minister in July 1932. After his return to Rome, Paulucci was temporarily retired from the diplomatic service, allegedly due to Grandi's influence.¹⁵⁹ However, the career of Paulucci continued successfully in August 1933 with the appointment as President and General Director of LUCE Institute, the most important propaganda body of the Fascist regime, which he had helped to found in 1924.¹⁶⁰ Paulucci returned to active diplomatic service in March 1940 as Ambassador to Brussels, a short experience due to the German occupation. Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Foreign Minister since 1936, however, did not consider his work in Belgium satisfactory and Paulucci managed to secure another diplomatic assignment, this time as Ambassador to Madrid, only after Ciano left his post in February 1943.¹⁶¹ There, in September 1943, Paulucci, a monarchist, refused the offer of Mussolini to become Foreign

¹⁵⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.408

¹⁵⁷ Meeting with Eric Drummond, 19 April 1931, Grandi's Diary, Aprile 1931, Carte Grandi, b.22, f.90, sf. 33, Quaderno 33, ASMAE

¹⁵⁸ Personal Record in Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

¹⁵⁹ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.227-230

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.244-245

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp.372-400

Minister of the newly created Italian Social Republic.¹⁶² He came back to Italy only in 1946, but did not return to the Foreign Ministry. He died in 1961.¹⁶³

Paulucci brought novelty to the Italian presence in the League's Secretariat. He was the first Under Secretary-General with a personal political agenda and with direct access to Mussolini. As we shall explore in the next chapter, Paulucci interpreted his permanence in Geneva as a 'Fascistizing' mission. This was also the way his international colleagues at the League perceived his mandate.

Massimo Pilotti (1932-1937)

Following the failed candidacy of Auriti, the new Italian Under Secretary-General after Paulucci's departure became Massimo Pilotti. Born in Rome in 1879, Pilotti was a jurist with a specialization in international law. By the time he was appointed USG at the League in December 1932, he had already enjoyed a successful career as legal expert at home and abroad. In Italy, he had entered the judicial path in 1901.¹⁶⁴ He worked as legal expert for the Italian Foreign Ministry on several occasions, including the Paris Peace Conference (1919) and the Conferences of Spa and Brussels (1920). From 1920 he was juridical adviser to the Reparations Commission and the Conference of Ambassadors. He participated in the reparations conferences in London (1924) and The Hague (1929-1930), and was member of the Italian delegation to the Conference of Locarno (1925), the Naval Conference of London (1930) and the Lausanne Conference (1932). Pilotti was also involved in international arbitration as president of the Arbitration Commission of Koblenz on the Rhineland question since

¹⁶² Ibid., pp.431-432

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp.478-480, 495

¹⁶⁴ Personal Record in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

1925.¹⁶⁵ In parallel, Pilotti developed his career in Italy becoming judge of the Court of Cassation and member of the Council for the *Contenzioso Diplomatico* (diplomatic disputes) in 1926.¹⁶⁶ In 1930 he also nominated First President of the Court of Appeal, a post he maintained while working for the League.¹⁶⁷

Pilotti had extensive dealings with the League before joining its Secretariat. He was deputy Italian delegate to the LoN Assembly from 1924 until 1932, and deputy Italian delegate to the LoN Council in 1932.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, from 1929 he was member, and in 1931 the president, of the Permanent Legal Committee of the Technical Consultative Commission for Communications and Transit.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore until December 1932, he was part of the Italian delegation to the Disarmament Conference, where he held the post of president of the Special Committee on Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons.¹⁷⁰

The name of Pilotti as a possible Italian USG emerged during Drummond's visit to Italy in October 1932.¹⁷¹ The visit, promoted by the Secretary-General, aimed to solve among other issues the problem of the succession to Paulucci.¹⁷² Drummond, who according to the French, proposed Pilotti, approved of him because of 'his perfect knowledge of the environment (and) the prestige he enjoys within the Secretariat and

¹⁶⁵ CV in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁶⁶ CV in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁶⁷ Personal Record and CV in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives; Alberto Berio to MAE Personnel Office, 24 Dec.1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁶⁸ CV in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives; Bruccoleri, G., *L'Opera Dei Delegati Italiani Nella Società Delle Nazioni* (Rome, 1935)

¹⁶⁹ CV in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁷⁰ Pompeo Aloisi to Secretary-General (SG), 8 Dec. 1932; CV in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁷¹ *Telegramma Sottosegretario di Stato to Augusto Rosso*, 1 Nov. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁷² Aloisi to MAE, 26 Sept. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

in Geneva.¹⁷³ Also the Italian Foreign Ministry considered him a good candidate, partially because he was favourably known in the League environment.¹⁷⁴ After Mussolini's approval, on 7 December 1932 Pilotti accepted the post.¹⁷⁵

Pilotti was Under Secretary-General from December 1932 until July 1933, when his post was modified to become Deputy Secretary-General, following the Assembly's reorganization of the Secretariat in 1932.¹⁷⁶ From 1933, he was in charge of International Bureaux and Intellectual Cooperation. Pilotti was at the League at a period of high tension between Italy and the institution and played a key role in the presenting the Italian case during the Ethiopian crisis.¹⁷⁷ He remained at the League until December 1937, when following Italy's withdrawal from the organization, he left the institution.¹⁷⁸

However, his resignation in December 1937 was not his first. In July 1936, Pilotti had already resigned from his post at the request of the new Italian Foreign Minister, Galeazzo Ciano, who reorganized the Italian Foreign Ministry and wanted Pilotti in it to direct the juridical services.¹⁷⁹ Ciano intended to replace Pilotti with the diplomat Guido Rocco, whose experience in international cooperation was rather limited.¹⁸⁰ However, this substitution was intended to happen only when the relations between

¹⁷³ Telegram 946-947 by Massigli, 7 Nov. 1932, SdNFra b.163, ADF; cit. from Rosso to MAE, 2 Nov. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁷⁴ Telegram 946-947 by Massigli, 7 Nov. 1932, SdNFra b.163, ADF; Telegramma Sottosegretario di Stato to Rosso, 1 Nov. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁷⁵ Pilotti to Drummond, 7 Dec. 1932, Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁷⁶ Personal Record in Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁷⁷ Barros, *Betrayal from within*, p.55

¹⁷⁸ Berio to Avenol, 12 Dec. 1937, Personal file 'Pilotti Massimo', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives

¹⁷⁹ Telegram by Pilotti, 29 Jul. 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE; Ciano to Pilotti, 21 Jul. 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁸⁰ Ciano to Pilotti, 21 Jul 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

Italy and the League resumed, after they had been interrupted during the Ethiopian crisis.¹⁸¹ Secretary-General Joseph Avenol travelled to Italy in September 1936 to meet Mussolini to discuss the prospect of Italy's return to League activities and the question of Pilotti's resignation.¹⁸² In his meeting with Ciano in Rome on 7 September 1936, the Secretary-General expressed his regret about the recall of Pilotti, describing it as a 'severe loss' for the League.¹⁸³ Avenol claimed that Pilotti was the best of his officials. In his report to Mussolini, Ciano commented that this statement convinced him even further of the necessity to remove Pilotti from Geneva.¹⁸⁴ This suggests that Pilotti's return to Rome was a promotion, rather than a punishment. In the meeting with Avenol, Ciano agreed, if Mussolini's authorized it, that Pilotti could stay in Geneva until March 1937.¹⁸⁵ According to the Fascist political police, although a source of limited reliability, Pilotti tried to maintain his prestigious and well-paid position at the League by lobbying to remain in Geneva in several of Rome's places of influence.¹⁸⁶ Whether or not this was the case, Pilotti remained at the League until December 1937, when Italy withdrew from the organization altogether.

Unlike Paulucci, Pilotti was an expert rather than a politically active Under Secretary-General. Nevertheless, he was asked to put into practice his expertise when the crisis between Italy and the institution peaked as a result of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict. As we shall see in the last chapter, which also explores Pilotti's life and successful career

¹⁸¹ *Appunto per sua Eccellenza il Ministro*, 3 Sept. 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁸² Avenol to Aloisi, 27 Jul. 1936; *Appunto per sua Eccellenza il Ministro*, 3 Sept. 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁸³ *Colloquio Ciano-Avenol*, 7 Sept. 1936, in *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (hereafter DDI), Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.5, doc.26, p.23

¹⁸⁴ *Colloquio Ciano-Avenol*, 7 Sept. 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.5, doc.26, p.23

¹⁸⁵ *Colloquio Ciano-Avenol*, 7 Sept. 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.5, doc.26, p.23

¹⁸⁶ Report 'Roma, 11 Settembre 1936' in Ministero degli Interni (MI), Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (hereafter DGPS), Polizia Politica (hereafter POL POL), Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti' in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Italy (hereafter ACS)

after the League, his approach to the organization and to internationalism was opportunistic and his relationship with Fascism ambiguous.

The Italian Under Secretaries-General introduced in this chapter were very different men and had different attitudes towards the LoN. This also partially reflected the evolution of the relationship between Italy and this international organization: Anzilotti and the scepticism of the liberal era were followed by Attolico, who had to face the challenge of a change of regime and decide how to face the increasing Fascist infiltrations; then Paulucci and the Fascistization of the Italian officials, in the period of greatest attention of Italy for the League; and finally Pilotti, the legal expert, in Geneva at a time when Italy became much less interested in the organization and during the Ethiopian crisis. However, the Under Secretaries-General's attitude to the League was highly influenced also by the different phases of the League itself: the experimental stage in the early 1920s, characterised by enthusiasm and the presence of the most important European politicians as delegates to Geneva, was followed by years of decline in the 1930s, when the League was left mainly to its bureaucrats.¹⁸⁷

The four Italian Under Secretaries-General reveal different ways of being Italian at the League as well as different ways of relating to Fascism. They are a glimpse of the variety of Italians at the League, who cannot and should not be easily categorised into Fascists or nationalists.

¹⁸⁷ Walters, pp.558-560

Italians in the First Division: a Prosopography

The chapter will now analyse the Italian civil servants working for the First Division of the LoN Secretariat in the period from 1920 to 1937. This analysis will be done with the help of a prosopographical study, but will not be limited to it. The prosopographical approach is well-suited to the study of a clearly identified group of people about which only limited data is available.¹⁸⁸ In the case of the Italian civil servants, while each of them possessed personnel files at the Secretariat, additional information relative to their period of employment at the League is scarce or unavailable altogether. For a few individuals it is possible to derive more details from other archival sources, but this alone would not be sufficient to increase our knowledge of the group dynamics of Italian civil servants. ‘Prosopography’ is here intended as the collective study of a specific group of ‘common’ people, not extraordinary ones, based on a systematic organization of the scarce data available on them, in a way that these data ‘acquire additional significance by revealing connections and patterns influencing historical processes.’¹⁸⁹ One of the typical research objectives of a prosopography is to help understand the functioning of institutions, as well as a better knowledge of the contacts between people, in other words their social connections.¹⁹⁰ This is what makes a prosopographical study ideal for investigating the group dynamics of the Italian civil servants in the LoN Secretariat as well as their multiple identities, maximising the use of the information

¹⁸⁸ On the prosopographical method see: Stone, L., ‘Prosopography’, *Daedalus*, Vol.100, n.1, Winter, 1971, pp.46-79; Carney, T.F., ‘Prosopography: Payoffs and Pitfalls’, *Phoenix*, Vol.27, n.2, Summer 1973, pp.156-179; Keats-Rohan, K.S.B. (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications* (Oxford, 2007); for a general guide to prosopography see: <http://prosopography.modhist.ox.ac.uk/index.htm> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

¹⁸⁹ Verboven, K. *et al.* ‘A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography’ in Keats-Rohan, (ed.), p.37

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.41, 46

available and offering an overview of a group of actors who were neglected so far by the literature.

It is necessary to acknowledge that a prosopography has some limits, in this case in relation to establishing the political identities of this group of officials. In fact, no information on the matter can be found in the League's personnel files. Moreover, the question is indeed too complex to be dealt with in a prosopography, especially when investigating the Fascist period, when individuals' political preferences were even more difficult to categorise. The complicated relationship between Italian civil servants and Fascism will be analysed specifically in the next chapter. Despite its limits, however, this prosopographical study is indeed a pioneering work, as it is the first to focus on civil servants of the same nationality working in the Secretariat. This means that it could not benefit from what would have been an enriching comparison with the situation of the British or French officials in Geneva for example, which remains an opportunity for future research.¹⁹¹

My analysis is limited to the 33 Italians working for the LoN Secretariat in different years within the period from 1920 to 1937 and for the First Division only. During the 17 years under examination there was an average of ten Italians civil servants in this division. The coming of Fascism in 1922 did not have a negative impact on the number of Italians hired at the Secretariat, which reached a peak in 1932 with 13 employees. However, by 1934, the number of Italians in the First Division had fallen to 11, as a consequence of the 1932 Assembly decision regarding national quotas and of the declining interest of the Fascist regime in the work of the League. From 1934,

¹⁹¹ Despite the attractive title, the following book examines the members of the French permanent delegation at the League, not the French officials in the LoN Secretariat: Manigand, C., *Les Français au service de la Société des Nations* (Bern, 2003)

Italian officials retiring or moving back to the national service were not replaced with new ones. By the time Italy withdrew from the League in December 1937, only seven Italian officials were left in the First Division of the League's Secretariat.¹⁹²

Not all the Italians who appeared in the files of the First Division in the League's Personnel Office are included in this prosopographical study. The employees who had temporary contracts for less than a year are excluded. The Secretariat often offered such contracts for tasks requiring a limited amount of time on specific projects. Examples include Corrado Gini, renowned statistician, hired twice between 1921 and 1922 to produce a report on raw materials; Felice Vinci assisting Gini's research for a short period in 1921; Fulvio Zugaro employed for research on military statistics for a few months in 1922; and Giuseppe Druetti hired for a project on health statistics at the Health Section in 1923-1924.¹⁹³ Moreover, on the payroll of the League were people from different member states keen on spending some weeks in Geneva to learn about the activity and the functioning of the organization. The program, which started in 1926, was promoted by the Information Section and financed by the League. Every year Italian nationals, mainly journalists, were invited to Geneva through the League's Rome Office for this purpose.¹⁹⁴ Even though the League possessed personnel files for some of these participants, they were not employees of the Secretariat and they are excluded from our investigation.

Finally, my prosopographical analysis leaves out the Italian employees working at the Rome Office of the League's Information Section. The Rome Office, sister office of

¹⁹² League of Nations, *Staff List of the Secretariat*, October 1937, (Geneva, 1937)

¹⁹³ Personal file 'Corrado Gini', Personnel Office, S.778bis/S.779; Personal file 'Felice Vinci', Personnel Office, S.900bis/S.901; Personal file 'Fulvio Zugaro', Personnel Office, S.912; Personal file 'Giuseppe Druetti', Personnel Office, S.760, LoN Archives

¹⁹⁴ Report by Adrian Pelt to SG, 11 Apr. 1934 and lists of participants in R.5162, LoN Archives

those in London, Paris, Berlin and Tokyo, was a press bureau financed by the League for the purpose of providing information on the work of the League to the press and those interested.¹⁹⁵ It was active from 1921 to 1934, when it was closed, together with the offices of Paris and London, as part of a savings campaign promoted by the League.¹⁹⁶ The Rome Office was small and included a maximum of three administrative officers and a correspondent, who served as the liaison officer with Geneva. The correspondents were journalists and they did not hold the post for more than a few months, with the exception of Antonio Casulli (1929-1934), and Giuseppe Bruccoleri (1921-1923) who then moved to the Information Section in Geneva. Because they remained in their national setting, the Rome correspondents are excluded from the analysis.

There is one group of Italian officials, whose inclusion in this study as members of the Secretariat could be questioned but who are worthy of consideration due to the key importance of their work for the Fascist regime: the employees of the secretariat of the Permanent Advisory Commission on Military, Naval and Air Questions (PAC). The Secretariat of the PAC was part of the Disarmament Section and assisted the Commission, constituted following Article 9 of the Covenant and in charge of advising the Council on military, naval and air questions. The secretariat consisted of three joint secretaries: one military, one naval and one air expert. The Italian member of the PAC, who changed periodically, was always the secretary of the Air Sub-Committee. Due to the particularity of the subject, the experts were on the active list of their national armed services.¹⁹⁷ For the same reason, these individuals were not

¹⁹⁵ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations 1930* (Geneva, 1930), p.118

¹⁹⁶ 'Report on the working of the liaison office of the LoN in Rome for the Year 1921-22' by Bruccoleri, R.1338, LoN Archives; Fulvio Suvich to Achille Starace, 31 Jan. 1935, SdN b.10, ASMAE

¹⁹⁷ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.128-130

proposed to the LoN Secretariat by member states, but rather imposed. The officials remained at the League for a maximum period of three years, and while their expenses were borne by their government, they were subject to the authority of the Secretary-General.¹⁹⁸ Even though their situation as officials in the Secretariat was peculiar, considering the importance of disarmament in Fascist relations to the League, they are included in this study.

The information used in the prosopographical analysis is derived from the files kept by the Personnel Office of the LoN Secretariat. They commonly included personal data, career and employment's information (contract, stipend, sick leave, relocation expenses) and in some cases CVs, letters of recommendation and problems that arose with the Swiss authorities.¹⁹⁹ For some officials, such as Pietromarchi, Paulucci and Berio, it is possible to compensate missing information with details from personal memoirs or other archival sources. This study of Italian civil servants considers two types of factors: those of a personal nature, independent from the experience at the League, and those related to their work at the League. The first type comprises elements that allow us to determine the existence of pre-existing personal connections. It includes: the geographical origin of the civil servants, which was very important in Italy, a newly-founded Catholic state with a significant cultural and linguistic variation; an analysis of their social origins and the familial milieu (including marriage); war experience together with education, knowledge of languages and previous professional experiences. While religion could also be a revealing aspect, the absence of information on the matter prevents us from

¹⁹⁸ Walters, p.171; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.130

¹⁹⁹ All information used in the prosopography, unless otherwise specified, is from the employees' personal files of the Personnel Office of the League of Nations Archives: Section files from S.699 to S.912 in alphabetical order.

establishing whether there were religious identities different from Catholicism among the Italians at the Secretariat. Factors related to the employment at the League include: when and at what age the officials joined the Secretariat; the length of their post; the evaluations of the superiors; and their reasons for leaving the League.

ITALIAN CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE LEAGUE'S SECRETARIAT FIRST DIVISION (1920-1937)

Surname	Name	Date and Place of Birth	Dates at the LoN	Role
ANZILOTTI	Dionisio	20 Feb. 1867 in Pescia (Tuscany)	11 Jan. 1920-31 Dec.1921	Under Secretary-General (USG)
ARCOLEO	Felice	24 Feb. 1892 in Naples	1 Feb. 1928-31 Mar. 1932	Member of Section, Legal Section
ATTOLICO	Bernardo	17 Jan. 1880 in Canneto di Bari (Adelfia, Apulia)	July 1919-1923 with interruptions 1921-1926 Dec. 1920- Jan. 1921 1 Jan. 1922 - 1 Aug. 1922-26 Mar.1927	Director of the Transit and Communications Section Director of the Disarmament Section Temporary High Commissioner of the LoN in Danzig Under Secretary-General (USG) Under Secretary-General in charge of Internal Administration
AVERARDI	Franco Bruno	22 Dec. 1897 in Turin	29 May 1922-31 Dec.1922 1 Jan. 1923-1 Nov. 1923 1 Nov. 1923-1 Apr. 1924	Member of Section, Disarmament section Member of Section, Information Section Information Section, Rome Office
BERIO	Alberto	3 Mar. 1900 in Rome	12 Nov. 1934-13 Dec. 1937	Member of the Office of DSG Pilotti
BOLDRINI	Marcello	9 Feb. 1890 in Matelica (Macerata, Marche)	18 Apr. 1921-2 Feb. 1922 3 Feb. 1922-2 Oct. 1922	Member of Section, Economic and Financial Section Member of Section, Disarmament Section
BRIVONESI (Commander)	Bruno	16 Jul. 1886 in Ancona (Marche)	1 Feb. 1924-30 Oct.1925 1 Oct. 1926-31 Dec. 1929 (on leave 1 Jan. 1930 to 30 Jun. 1931)	Secretary, Air Sub-Committee of the Permanent Advisory Commission on Military, Naval and Air Questions (PAC) (Disarmament Section)
BRUCCOLERI	Giuseppe	6 Nov. 1872 in Ferrara (Emilia-Romagna)	15 Jul. 1921-30 Oct. 1923 1 Nov. 1923-12 Mar. 1937	Information Section, Rome Office Member of Section, Information Section
CATASTINI	Vito	20 Nov. 1879 in Rome	11 Aug. 1921-31 Dec. 1924 1 Jan. 1925-31 Dec. 1928 1 Jan. 1929-30 Nov. 1935 1 Dec. 1935-30 Nov. 1937	Member of Section, Mandates Section Chief of Section, Mandates Section Director of the Mandates Section Expert on Mandates questions
CHIAPPELLI (Colonel)	Luigi	30 Oct. 1889 in Turin	17 Aug. 1931-28 Feb. 1933	Secretary, Air Sub-Committee of the PAC (Disarmament Section)
CROLLA	Guido	14 Feb. 1897 in Beirut	12 Jan. 1931-31 Dec. 1932 1 Jan. 1933-4 Nov. 1934	Member of the Office of USG Paulucci Member of Section, Political Section
CROSARA	Aldo	25 Mar. 1899 in Vicenza (Veneto)	3 Jan. 1922-31 Oct. 1923	Member of Section, Economic and Financial Section
FIER (Lieutenant)	Giulio	29 Sept. 1883 in Rovigo (Veneto)	1 Feb. 1935-13 Dec. 1937	Secretary, Air Sub-Committee of the PAC (Disarmament Section)
GENTILE	Benedetto	10 Jul. 1908 in Palermo	6 Jul. 1931-31 Dec. 1934	Member of Section, Legal Section
LEONE (Captain)	Ugo	10 Feb. 1893 in Catanzaro (Calabria)	16 Oct. 1920-30 Sept. 1924 1 Nov. 1925-31 Oct. 1926	Secretary, Air Sub-Committee of the PAC (Disarmament Section)
MARCHESI (Major)	Vittorio	4 Apr. 1895 in Vicenza (Veneto)	1 Jan. 1930-31 Aug. 1931	Secretary, Air Sub-Committee of the PAC (Disarmament Section)
MATRICARDI (Colonel)	Attilio	1 Mar. 1892 in Macerata (Marche)	1 Mar. 1933-31 Jan. 1935	Secretary, Air Sub-Committee of the PAC (Disarmament Section)
PAMPANA	Emilio	9 Nov. 1895 in Florence	15 Jun. 1931-14 Jun. 1933 15 Jun. 1933-13 Jun. 1938	Expert, Health Section Member of Section, Health Section
PANTALEONI	Massimo	25 Jan. 1888 in Bari (Apulia)	1 Mar. 1925-31 Dec. 1933	Member of Section, Health Section
PAULUCCI DI CALBOLI BARONE RUSSO	Giacomo	12 Oct. 1887 in Caltagirone (Sicily)	28 Mar. 1927-8 Nov. 1932	Under Secretary-General in charge of Internal Administration
PIETROMARCHI	Luca	8 Mar. 1895 in Rome	19 Dec. 1923-18 Dec. 1930	Member of the Office of USG (Attolico, Paulucci)
PILOTTI	Massimo	1 Aug. 1879 in Rome	14 Dec. 1932-30 Jun. 1933 1 Jul. 1933-13 Dec. 1937	Under Secretary-General in charge of Internal Administration Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) in charge of International Bureaux and Intellectual Cooperation
PRUNAS	Renato	21 Jun. 1892 in Cagliari (Sardinia)	8 Nov. 1934-28 Nov. 1936	Member of Section, Political Section
RIGHETTI	Giuseppe	6 Aug. 1890 in Verona (Veneto)	10 Sept. 1924-10 Sept. 1927	Member of the Office of USG (Attolico)
ROCCA	Giuseppe	1 Aug. 1888 in Turin	5 Nov. 1923-6 Jun. 1927	Member of Section, Economic and Financial Section
RODDOLO	Marcello	6 Jan 1884 in Antrodoco (Lazio)	27 Aug. 1923- 31 Dec. 1932 1 Jan. 1933-30 Sept. 1934	Member of Section, Political Section Member of the Office of USG/ DSG Pilotti
SCHININA'	Emanuele	30 Aug. 1892 in Ragusa (Sicily)	5 Dec. 1927-31 Dec. 1932	Member of the Office of USG Paulucci
SPINGARDI	Camillo	24 Oct. 1892 in Turin	6 Jun. 1920-30 Jun. 1921	Member of Section, Information Section
STOPPANI	Pietro Angelo	6 Mar. 1879 in Milan	18 Feb. 1923-31 Dec. 1928 1 Jan. 1929-31 Mar. 1931 1 Apr. 1931-6 Mar. 1939 7 Mar. 1939-15 Oct. 1939	Member of Section, Economic and Financial Section Chief of Section, Economic and Financial Section Director of the Economic Relations Section Expert in Economic Relations
TANI	Giuseppe	16 Feb. 1887 in Rome	1 Feb. 1928-31 Dec. 1930 1 Jan. 1931-31 Dec.1937	Member of Section, Economic and Financial Section Member of Section, Economic Relations Section
THEODOLI	Ugo	25 Aug. 1886 in Tivoli, Rome	1 Jul. 1929-31 Dec. 1937	Secretary, Permanent Opium Central Board
VARE'	Daniele	12 Jan. 1880 in Rome	7 Jul. 1920-14 May 1923	Member of Section, Political Section
VILLARI	Luigi	21 Nov. 1876 in Florence	26 Feb. 1920-31 Dec. 1922 1 Jan. 1923-2 Oct. 1923	Member of Section, Information Section Assistant to Attolico/USG Office

Geographical Origin

The Italian officials working at the League originated from all over the Italian Peninsula, with no prominence of one area over the others. They did not all come from the industrial North, or from Rome, the bureaucratic centre of the country, but they were from almost every Italian region, including the islands, Sicily and Sardinia. Ten officials came from the North and four of them from Turin (Averardi, Chiappelli, Rocca, Spingardi). Fourteen of them were born in the centre, half of them in Rome (Berio, Catastini, Pietromarchi, Pilotti, Tani, Theodoli, Varé). Eight came from the South and the Islands, three of them from Sicily (Gentile, Paulucci and Schininà). Only one official was born abroad: Guido Crolla born in Beirut from parents native of Piedmont.²⁰⁰

Social and Familial Milieu

The requirements to become officials at the First Division of the League were good educational levels, preferably a university degree, the knowledge of foreign languages (at least French or English), and, ideally, a specific form of expertise. This implied that only people from a certain social background and with a certain wealth could fulfil the criteria. For this reason, it is not surprising to find among the Italian officials at the League five members of the aristocracy: Marquis Emanuele Schininà di S.Elia, Count Camillo Spingardi, Marquis Ugo Theodoli, Count Luca Pietromarchi and Marquis Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli, who, as we have seen, became noble by marriage. The families of Pietromarchi and Theodoli were both part of the Rome

²⁰⁰ Paulucci to SG, 27 Nov. 1930, Personal file 'Guido Crolla', Personnel Office, S.748bis/749, LoN Archives

nobility and the two officials entertained a friendly correspondence, proving the interconnectedness of their social milieux, of which also Bernardo Attolico became a member.²⁰¹ In fact, Attolico entered the aristocracy by marrying Pietromarchi's sister Eleonora in the early 1920s, though he was born to a family of tenant-farmers.²⁰² He was the only Italian official in the First Division of the League to be born in a lower class. Attolico was an important exception not just among the Italians but also at the League, where members of the lower social classes were usually employed in the Second and Third Divisions. There was no real difference between Italy under a Fascist regime and the liberal democracies, with respect to this factor. The division of the League's employees according to social and, thus educational, lines mirrored the contemporary European societies.

Important for the social status of the Italian officials were also family ties with influential politicians and personalities of the time. There were seven officials who were close relatives of politicians. Felice Arcoleo's father Giorgio was a Member of Parliament from 1882 until 1900 and a Senator from 1902. He had been elected in the constituency of Caltagirone, where Paulucci was from.²⁰³ Benedetto Gentile's father Giovanni was not just a Senator from 1922, but also 'the court philosopher of Fascism.'²⁰⁴ Massimo Pantaleoni was the son of Maffeo, a member of the Chamber of

²⁰¹ Carte Luca Pietromarchi (Personal papers), sez.2 (correspondence), 'Ugo Theodoli' Archivio Storico della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Turin, Italy (hereafter TFE)

²⁰² Losito (ed.) *Bernardo Attolico*, p.129

²⁰³ 'Curriculum Vitae de M. Arcoleo' in Personal file 'Felice Arcoleo', Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives; about Giorgio Arcoleo, from the Historical Archives of Camera (Italian Lower Chamber) and Senato (Senate): <http://storia.camera.it/deputato/giorgio-arcoleo-18500815#nav> and <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/5bc690c66eeab5f2c125785d0054c11b/f51c0f6a003703d54125646f005861b9?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

²⁰⁴ Cit. from Ledeen, M.A., *Universal Fascism; the theory and practice of the Fascist International, 1928-1936* (New York, 1972), p. xv; Personal Record in Personal file 'Benedetto Gentile', Personnel Office, S.776bis/777, LoN Archives; about Giovanni Gentile, from the Senato's Archive and the Italian Encyclopaedia: <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/592f3a2113f3300fc125785d005993dd/042456ea674ec8a741>

Deputies (1897-1904) and Senator from 1923. In addition from being an important exponent of the Italian Nationalist Association, he was also a prominent economist and worked with the League on its efforts to reconstruct Austria.²⁰⁵ Camillo Spingardi was the son of Paolo, former Italian War Minister from 1909 to 1914 and during the colonial campaign in Libya, Member of Parliament in 1904 and then Senator from 1909, and as such recommended to Drummond by Maggiorino Ferraris, delegate to the League's Council in 1920.²⁰⁶ Ugo Theodoli was the brother of Alberto Theodoli, Chairman of the League's Mandates Permanent Commission from 1921 to 1937, but also Member of Parliament (1913-1919) and Senator from 1934.²⁰⁷ Finally, Daniele Varè was the son of Giovanni Battista Varè, Venetian patriot and Member of Parliament in the period 1865-1886.²⁰⁸ Luigi Villari, who after the League became one of the main Fascist propagandists to the English-speaking world, was the son of Pasquale, renowned historian and intellectual, who was Member of Parliament from 1867-1882 and Senator from 1884.²⁰⁹ Family ties to politics were present in officials hired at the League in both the liberal and the Fascist period.

25646f005c1b04?OpenDocument and [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-gentile_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-gentile_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (last accessed 30 July 2014)

²⁰⁵ About Maffeo Pantaleoni from the Camera and Senato's Archives:

<http://storia.camera.it/deputato/maffeo-pantaleoni-18570702#nav> and

<http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/9a29a2e73f195df7c125785d0059b96c/076d230f99b7a66f4125646f005e242e?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

De Grand, A.J., *The Italian Nationalist Association and the Rise of Fascism in Italy* (Lincoln: London, 1978)

²⁰⁶ Maggiorino Ferraris to Eric Drummond, 18 Dec. 1920 in Personal file 'Camillo Spingardi',

Personnel Office, S.885, LoN Archives; About Paolo Spingardi, from the

Senato: <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/a52b2f6040cae29dc125785d0059c4c9/47ba926d41719ccb4125646f0060c3c1?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

²⁰⁷ Rachel Crowdy to SG, 2 Oct. 1928 in Personal file 'Ugo Theodoli', Personnel Office, S.892, LoN Archives; about Alberto Theodoli from Camera and Senato's archives:

<http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/6106035726b5462fc125785d0059c8d5/633d1bb39311706b4125646f00610052?OpenDocument> and <http://storia.camera.it/deputato/alberto-theodoli-di-sambuci-18731124#nav> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

²⁰⁸ About Giovanni Battista Varè, see Camera's Archive: <http://storia.camera.it/deputato/giovanni-battista-francesco-vare-18170912/#nav> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

²⁰⁹ About Pasquale Villari, see Camera's Archive: <http://storia.camera.it/deputato/pasquale-villari-18271003#nav> and

<http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/c574f79267a972f1c125785e0055549b/db3fa856df3946aa4125646f00617cc8?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014) Among Luigi Villari's very prolific

Information on the family also allows us to determine the extent to which Italian officials were open to international contacts. For passport reasons, the employees of the First Division were asked information about their families, including the place of birth of the wife. While this data is not a sure determinant of the nationality of these women before marriage, it is rather accurate. In fact, in the case of Italian women born abroad, this was specified in the form.²¹⁰ It is important to remember that in this period married women lost their nationality and took on that of their husbands. Did Italian officials at the League wed foreign women? There were six Italian civil servants with a spouse from a different country: Bruccoleri, Brivonesi and Varè were married to British women; Stoppani and Roddolo to French ones; and Pantaleoni to a Russian who was closely watched by the Fascist political police, suspecting her to be a spy, once the couple relocated to Rome in 1934.²¹¹ Bruccoleri met his wife Kathleen at the LoN, where she worked as librarian.²¹² Marriages between officials of the two divisions were frequent.²¹³ In addition to these international marriages, there were two officials with close family bonds in the UK: the mothers of Varè and Villari were both born British. Family connections to people from other countries were a common feature of employees of all nationalities working for the League, showing that human relations during the interwar period were much more globalised than normally assumed.

literary production: *The awakening of Italy: the fascist regeneration* (London, 1924); *The fascist experiment* (London, 1926); *Italy, Abyssinia and the League* (Rome, 1936). On Villari's propaganda activity in the UK, see also his letters to *The Economist* in Santagata, S., *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi, il fascismo e la Società delle Nazioni* (Milan, 2007), pp.206-210

²¹⁰ This is the case of Paulucci's wife, Camilla, born in London but "of Italian nationality" as specified in 'Memorandum on Marquis Paulucci di Calboli Barone', 29 Mar. 1927 in Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

²¹¹ 'Levtchenk Anna in Pantaleoni' in report by the 'Regia Questura di Roma', 19 Jun. 1935 in "Pantaleoni Massimo fu Maffeo" in MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.950, ACS

²¹² Personal file 'Kathleen Bruccoleri, née Wilks', Personnel Office, S.730, LoN Archives

²¹³ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.408

War Experience

In certain countries, war veterans played an important role in the development of internationalism and in promoting the pacifist idea.²¹⁴ In Italy the connection between veterans and international pacifism was complicated by the fact that the war experience became an integral part of the Fascist rhetoric, which was everything but pacifist.²¹⁵ However, while the Fascist movement attempted to monopolize the veterans' experience, not all war veterans became Fascist warmongers. Were there war veterans among the Italian officials in the League? The fact that there were several of them in the League's Secretariat suggests that the relationship between Italian veterans and internationalism is more complex than previously recognized. In addition to the future members of the PAC, eight Italian civil servants fought in the war: Crosara, Pietromarchi, Righetti, Rocca, Schininà, Spingardi, Stoppani, Ugo Theodoli.²¹⁶ Some obtained military recognitions, such as Righetti, who joined the war as a volunteer, was disabled and obtained four medals to military valour.²¹⁷ Also Schininà and Pietromarchi obtained military honours, even though Pietromarchi left the front in 1916 to join the civil administration of the Italian colony in Eritrea, a safer destination for the nationalist member of an important Roman family.²¹⁸ Others

²¹⁴ See Eichenberg, J. and Newman, J.P. (eds.), *The Great War and Veterans' Internationalism* (Basingstoke, 2013)

²¹⁵ Salvante, M., 'The Italian Associazione Nazionale Mutilati e Invalidi di Guerra and its International Liaisons in the Post Great War Era' in Eichenberg and Newman (eds.), *The Great War and Veterans' Internationalism*, pp.162-183

²¹⁶ In Crosara's personal file there is no mention of the war, but we know he fought from his correspondence with Luigi Einaudi: Crosara to Einaudi, 11 Jul. 1925 in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Aldo Crosara", at TFE

²¹⁷ 'Monsieur Giuseppe RIGHETTI', CV in Personal file 'Giuseppe Righetti', Personnel Office, S.867, LoN Archives

²¹⁸ CV in Personal file 'Emanuele Schininà', Personnel Office, S.876, LoN Archives; 'Renseignements concernant le Comte Luca PIETROMARCHI', Personal file 'Luca Pietromarchi', Personnel Office, S.855, LoN Archives

(Rocca, Stoppani, Spingardi, Ugo Theodoli) stressed their war experience in the curricula they presented to the League. Italian war veterans in the League had very different relations with Fascism. In fact, while after the war Righetti became a strong supporter of Fascism, both Stoppani and Rocca were later accused of not showing sufficient loyalty to the regime while working for the League.

Italian officials were active also in supporting roles. Rocca was Lieutenant of Infantry in Italy and Macedonia in 1915-1917, but then left the action to join the War Statistics Office directed by Corrado Gini, an influential statistician.²¹⁹ Attolico was involved in inter-allied supply organizations in London, Felice Arcoleo served in the Italian Red Cross and Dr. Pantaleoni was Chief Surgeon in a military hospital.²²⁰ Many others, because of their age and status, were not directly involved in the conflict: this is the case with three of the future Italian Under Secretaries-General (Anzilotti, Paulucci, Pilotti).

Education

Candidates for appointment in the First Division had to possess educational levels ‘corresponding to what is required for admission to the higher grades of the Civil Service of their respective countries.’²²¹ All Italian members of the First Division had a degree, most of them in law (19 out of 33) and mainly from the University of Rome

²¹⁹ “*Curriculum Vitae*”, Personal file ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S.869, LoN Archives; for an account of Gini see Cassata, F., *Il Fascismo razionale. Corrado Gini fra scienza e politica* (Rome, 2006)

²²⁰ Losito (ed.), *Bernardo Attolico; ‘Liste du Personnel permanente du Secrétariat’*, 1920, p.9, LoN Archives; ‘*Curriculum Vitae de M. Arcoleo*’, Personal file ‘Felice Arcoleo’, Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives; Personal Notes in Personal file ‘Massimo Pantaleoni’, Personnel Office, S.848, LoN Archives

²²¹ Staff Regulations cit. in Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.327

(10). Officials studying law in Rome at the same time were Paulucci, Ugo Theodoli and Tani and they all entered the League in the late 1920s. Catastini and Pilotti were also at the University of Rome in the same period, but joined the League in different moments: Catastini in 1921, Pilotti in 1932. Pietromarchi and Crolla both graduated in 1920 in Rome, and Crolla took up Pietromarchi's post once he left it in 1930 to return to Rome. Lawyers were also educated in Turin (Averardi and Rocca), in Pisa (Anzilotti and Bruccoleri) and in Padua (Righetti and Crosara).²²² Arcoleo and Schininà studied law in Naples during the same years and joined the League within two months one from the other. The predominance of law degrees among the Italians was in line with the general trend in the Secretariat.²²³ The Italian statisticians at the League all shared a connection to Corrado Gini, an influential academic close to the Fascist regime, who was Chair of Statistics at Padua's University and, from 1923, at the University of Rome. Boldrini was a member of Gini's department before and after joining the League. Crosara studied under Professor Gini in Padua and Rocca met Gini at the War Statistics Office. Both Crosara and Rocca, despite their law degrees, successfully specialised in statistics. All four statisticians were also connected to Luigi Einaudi, an influential liberal economist and intellectual, as well as the Italian correspondent for *The Economist*.²²⁴

Languages

The employees in the First Division of the League had to possess a proficient knowledge of one of the official languages of the League (English and French) and a

²²² Information about Crosara's education in Crosara to Einaudi, 11 Jul. 1925 in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Aldo Crosara", TFE

²²³ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.406

²²⁴ Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), TFE; Santagata, *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi*

working knowledge of the other.²²⁵ The officials were free to choose the language in which to work but, depending on the nationality of the Director, some sections used mainly one language: for example, the Political Section worked mainly in French, while the Opium Traffic Section used mainly English.²²⁶ Work at the League was practically bilingual and this meant that the employees whose mother tongue was neither French nor English had to make an additional effort.²²⁷ Almost all Italian officials had an excellent knowledge of French, however only half of them could use English, limiting the possibility of interaction with other League officials and with the large numbers of Americans who were associated with the League. For instance, the Director of the Mandates Section, Vito Catastini, spoke no English (he just read it) and in his work of support to the Permanent Mandates Commission he had to deal with people such as Lord Lugard, who had no understanding of French.²²⁸ Translators and interpreters could not make up for the missed opportunities for individuals to network or avoid misunderstandings due to the poor knowledge of a key language at a critical time. The nine Italians who were fluent in English were highly valued by their English-speaking colleagues: Attolico, Averardi, Brivonesi, Pampana, Spingardi, Stoppani, Ugo Theodoli, Varè and Villari.

There were only a few Italian officials who had such poor knowledge of both official languages to be criticised for it. Major Marchesi of the PAC had such an insufficient understanding of both French and English that Drummond asked Minister Grandi to replace him with someone who truly had the language skills he declared, in

²²⁵ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.329

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.98, 328-329

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.329

²²⁸ 'Note sur mon entrevue avec M.Catastini' by William R. Rappard, 14 Jun. 1921, in Personal file 'Vito Catastini', Personnel Office, S.736, LoN Archives; Lugard to Rappard, 10 Aug. 1936, Box 119/8, Lugard Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford (hereafter RH)

preparation for the Disarmament Conference.²²⁹ Unfortunately also his successor, Colonel Chiappelli proved to be inept with languages.²³⁰ Arcoleo's limited ability to draft in French was a constraint to his work at the Legal Section.²³¹ Pilotti, while being very qualified in law, also had poor language skills, which however were compensated by the members of staff, assisting him in various LoN matters.

Previous Employment

The first Italians employed by the League in the early 1920s had relevant experience in international cooperation. In particular Anzilotti, Attolico, Catastini, Paulucci, Pilotti and Stoppani had all been members of the Italian Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Some of them had been working for the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission before joining the League, including Berio (1920-1924), Pilotti (since 1920), Catastini (1920-1921), Righetti (1920-1924) and Stoppani (1919-1922). In many cases it was through contacts with the allied delegations that the first hiring connections at the League were made, as was the case for Anzilotti and Attolico. The inter-allied administration that developed during the Great War became the type of international cooperation on which the technical work of the League was then based. Another institution employing Italians then working for the League was the Emigration Commissariat of the Italian Foreign Ministry, for which Attolico worked from 1907 to 1915, Villari before 1920 and after leaving the League, Pietromarchi in 1922 and Schininà as secretary of the legal department in 1925-1927. Many Italian officials came from the diplomatic service, from which they were on leave in order to

²²⁹ Drummond to Dino Grandi, 19 Jun. 1931, Personal file 'Colonel Luigi Chiappelli', Personnel Office, S.742, LoN Archives

²³⁰ Crolla to Paulucci, 25 June (no year), Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), b.55, GPdC, ASF

²³¹ MacKinnon Wood to Secretary-General (SG), 15 Apr. 1931, Personal file 'Felice Arcoleo', Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives

take up their posts in Geneva in either the Political Section (Varé, Roddolo, Prunas) or the Office of the Italian Under Secretary-General (Pietromarchi, Crolla, Berio). Paulucci and Attolico were also diplomats.

Different sections required different expertise. For this reason the two Italian members of the Health Section were both medical doctors and had a long experience in their field: Pampana in malaria and Pantaleoni in epidemiology.²³² Another highly qualified Italian was Ugo Theodoli who had worked for 22 years at Chinese Customs before joining the secretariat of the Permanent Central Opium Board at the League.²³³ As we have seen, there was also a small group of trained statisticians (Boldrini, Crosara and Rocca) and two renowned international jurists (Anzilotti and Pilotti). The Information Section required journalistic skills (Bruccoleri and Villari), while the secretaries of the Air Sub-Committee of the PAC (Leone, Brivonesi, Marchesi, Chiappelli, Matricardi and Fier) were all military officials of the Italian armed forces, but not necessarily from aviation: Leone was a captain of infantry and Brivonesi was a navy officer.²³⁴

Only two Italian officials had limited work experience and no international experience before joining the League, prompting the question of whether they were suggested to the Secretariat more for their personal connections than for their qualifications. Before joining the League, Felice Arcoleo, was an employee in a bank, the *Credito Italiano* in Naples, which he left to undertake ‘individual study’ before joining the

²³² Personal file ‘Emilio Pampana’, Personnel Office, S.848, LoN Archives; Personal file ‘Massimo Pantaleoni’, Personnel Office, S.848, LoN Archives

²³³ ‘Curriculum Vitae of M. Ugo THEODOLI’ in Personal file ‘Ugo Theodoli’, Personnel Office, S.892, LoN Archives

²³⁴ Personal file ‘Captain Ugo Leone’, Personnel Office, S.816, LoN Archives; Personal file ‘Commander Bruno Brivonesi’, Personnel Office, S.729bis, LoN Archives

Legal Section of the League in 1928.²³⁵ His successor, Benedetto Gentile, had been working at the Senate's library and had collaborated on the Italian Encyclopaedia at the institute directed by his father Giovanni: not exactly a relevant job for a future member of the Legal Section.²³⁶

Age at Joining the League

The officials' previous work experience strongly correlated to the age at which they joined the League. Whether the candidates put forward by Rome were mature and experienced or young and inexperienced adds to our understanding of the relationship between Rome and the League. To what extent was Rome concerned with having prestigious representatives at the institution? The age of entry to the Secretariat of the Italian officials can be divided into three groups: 23 of the officials who joined the League were between 30 and 50 years old; four of them were over 50 and six under 30 years of age. Anzilotti (53 years old) and Pilotti (53) were among the oldest but their post was prestigious and required experience. Bruccoleri joined the League at age 51, bringing more than 15 years of practical knowledge in journalism.²³⁷ Fier (52), instead, was recalled from retirement in order to serve as the last Italian representative at the PAC, prompting the question of whether or not sending retired officials to the League was a sign of decreased interest of Italy in the League.²³⁸

²³⁵ *Curriculum Vitae de M. Arcoleo* in Personal file 'Felice Arcoleo', Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives

²³⁶ Personal Report and Note: 'Benedetto Gentile', undated, Personal file 'Benedetto Gentile', Personnel Office, S.776bis/777, LoN Archives and from Senato's Archive: <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/592f3a2113f3300fc125785d005993dd/042456ea674ec8a74125646f005c1b04?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

²³⁷ CV in Personal file 'Giuseppe Bruccoleri', Personnel Office, S.730, LoN Archives

²³⁸ Renato Bova Scoppa to Minister Foreign Affairs, 23 Dec. 1937, SdN b.16, ASMAE

Five out of six youngest officials joined the League before 1923. Averardi (25), Crosara (23) and Spingardi (28) stayed at the League for just more than one year. They received positive evaluations from their colleagues, but they were insufficiently experienced to obtain a permanent contract at the Secretariat, especially in the years when the institution was still at an experimental stage. Pietromarchi (28), by contrast, started a successful career at the League in 1923, where he remained until 1930. Captain Leone (27) was a very young Air-Secretary at the PAC. When the preparation work for the Disarmament Conference became more intense, the Italian government sent more experienced officials. The only young civil servant hired in the 1930s was Gentile (23), who despite his youth was considered a big improvement compared to his Italian predecessor, Arcoleo.²³⁹

Length of Appointment and why they left

How long did the Italian officials remain at the League? Of those included in this survey, four of them, all of whom joined the League before the Fascist regime took interest in the organization, worked in Geneva for more than a decade: Catastini was at the League from 1921 to 1937, Stoppani from 1923 to 1939, Bruccoleri from 1923 to 1937 and Roddolo from 1923 to 1934. But why did the others stay for a shorter period? Were their contracts terminated or were there other reasons to leave the League? Most Italians resigned from their posts at the League because they were recalled to Rome. This was especially the case of the employees of the Foreign Ministry, such as Attolico, Crolla, Pietromarchi, Prunas, Roddolo and Varé. Others resigned because they were offered tempting alternatives: Arcoleo joined the

²³⁹ H. McKinnon Wood to Pablo de Azcarate, 7 Dec. 1934, Personal file 'Benedetto Gentile', Personnel Office, S.776bis/777, LoN Archives

International Institute of Agriculture; Boldrini obtained a chair at the Catholic University of Milan; Crosara was offered a position at Padua University's statistics department; Pantaleoni a post at the newly created Rome's Institute of Public Health; and Villari returned to the Emigration Commissariat.²⁴⁰ Averardi and Gentile resigned to dedicate themselves to personal study, while Anzilotti became judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice.²⁴¹ In other cases, Italians left the League because their posts were discontinued following bouts of international reorganization or cost cutting. This was the case for Spingardi, whose post was made redundant alongside that of Villari, and Schininà, who was a victim of the 1932 Assembly's decision to reduce to one the officials of particular nationalities in the USG Office.²⁴² Bruccoleri died in office in 1937.²⁴³ The PAC secretaries could remain at the League only for a limited time: one year of probation, followed by a six-month extension until reaching a maximum of three years.²⁴⁴ The stories of the seven Italian officials in the League when Italy withdrew in December 1937 and the peculiar situations of Righetti and Rocca are described in more detail in the next chapters.

²⁴⁰ Giuseppe De Michelis to SG, 1 Apr. 1932, Personal file 'Felice Arcoleo', Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives; Attolico to SG, 26 Jan 1922, Personal file 'Marcello Boldrini', Personnel Office, S.723bis, LoN Archives and Boldrini to Einaudi, 24 May 1930, in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Marcello Boldrini", TFE; Cassata, *Il fascismo razionale*, p.126; Rocca to Crosara, 11 Feb. 1925, Personal file 'Aldo Crosara', Personnel Office, S.748bis/749, LoN Archives; Frank G. Boudreau to Basile, 19 Jan. 1934, Personal file 'Massimo Pantaleoni', Personnel Office, S.848, LoN Archives

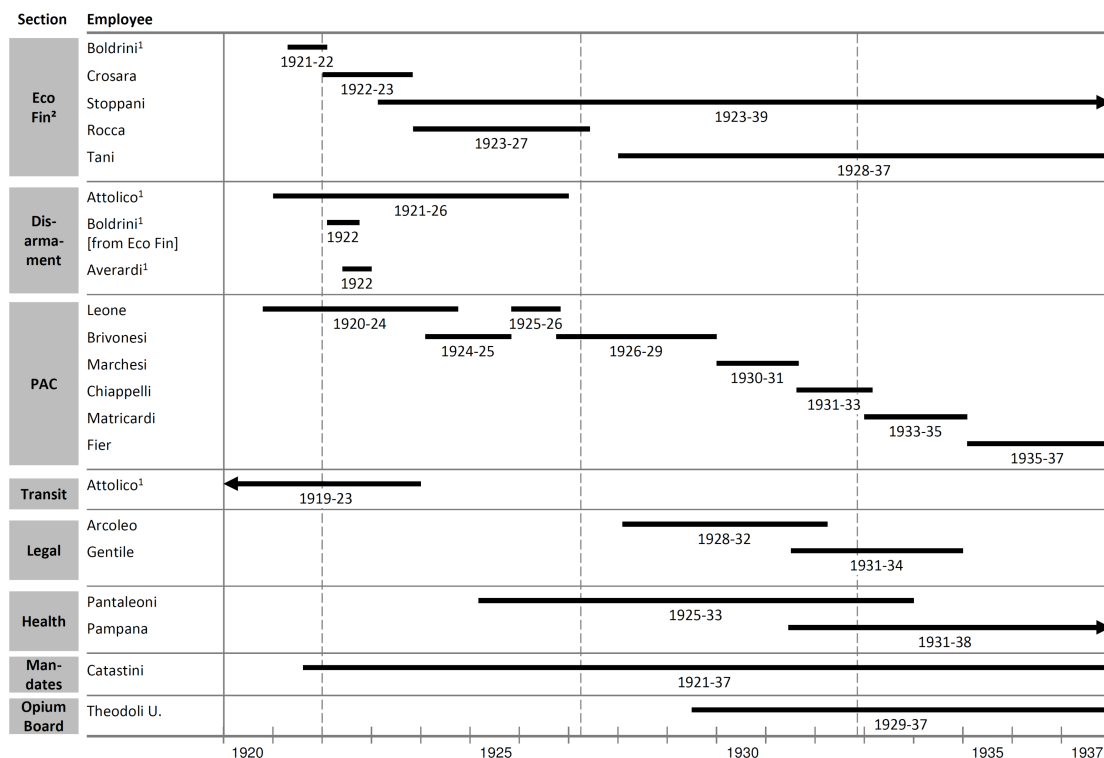
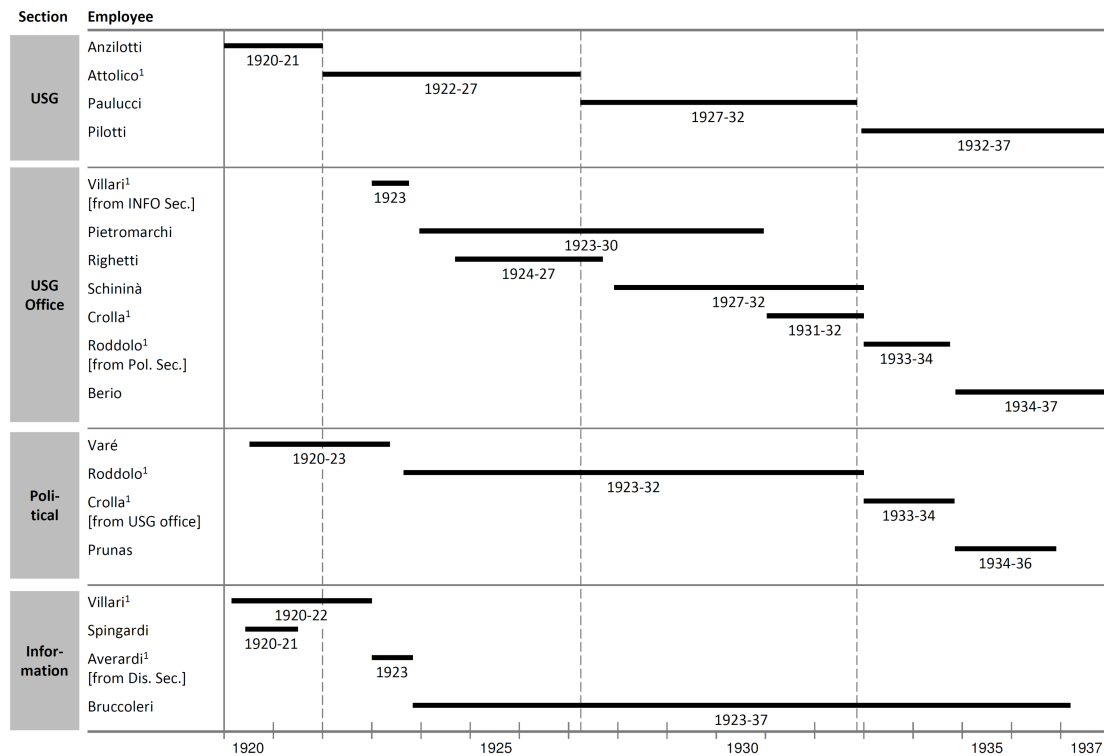
²⁴¹ Averardi to M. le Ministre, 26 Feb. 1924, Personal file 'Franco Bruno Averardi', Personnel Office, S.707, LoN Archives; Avenol to Gentile, 17 Dec. 1934, Personal file 'Benedetto Gentile', Personnel Office, S.776bis/777, LoN Archives; Tanca, A.(ed.), 'Dionisio Anzilotti (1867-1950)' in *EJIL*, Issue Vol. 3 (1992) No. 1, pp.156-162

²⁴² 'Changes in the Information Section' by Pierre Comert, 20 Dec. 1920, Personal file 'Camillo Spingardi', Personnel Office, S.885, LoN Archives; Secretary General to Schininà, 22 Dec. 1932, Personal file 'Emanuele Schininà', Personnel Office, S.876, LoN Archives; 'Question of the Principal Officers of the Secretariat and Cognate Questions: resolutions proposed by the Fourth Committee', 12th Meeting, 17 Oct. 1932 in 'Records of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly' in *LoN OJ*, pp.96-98

²⁴³ Personal file 'Giuseppe Bruccoleri', Personnel Office, S.730, LoN Archives

²⁴⁴ Drummond to Leone, 24 Jan. 1924, 'Captain Ugo Leone', Personnel Office, S.816, LoN Archives

ITALIANS IN THE LoN SECRETARIAT – PER SECTION (1920-1937)



1 Worked in more than one Section

2 In 1931 the Economic and Financial Section was split in two

Table 1:
Overlaps of employment periods in relation to terms in office of the Italian USGs

League's Evaluations

In certain cases, there were discrepancies between the official League's evaluations of Italian officials and what might be regarded as an historical evaluation of effective work performances. The Secretariat's personnel files included evaluations of the performance of the employees of the League written by a higher-ranking official, normally the Director of Section. Positive assessments during the probationary period led to a confirmation of the contract, while those at the end of a temporary contract were offered a renewal. In addition, there were the 'certificates as to grant of annual increment', in which a positive evaluation resulted in an increase in stipend. In these certificates all Italian officials received positive comments. The fact that some of them were not efficient employees, as we can derive from other documents, raises the question of whether League officials had the habit of writing positive comments regardless of an individual's performance. This is especially striking in the case of Arcoleo of the Legal Section, who received positive assessments by both Juan Antonio Buero and Hugh MacKinnon Wood, which allowed him to obtain two promotions and in 1931, aged 39, a permanent contract until he reached the age limit for retirement.²⁴⁵ In other documents, McKinnon Wood described him as 'frankly no good whatever to the Section.'²⁴⁶ McKinnon Wood also complained that 'the fact that he is not very capable as a French draughtsman prevents him from being very useful for all the purposes for which a junior member would naturally be employed.'²⁴⁷ Similarly, there is the case of Major Marchesi, who, as we have seen, had an

²⁴⁵ 'Copy of Certificate as to grant of annual increment' by MacKinnon Wood, 29 January 1931; Buero to Paulucci, 13 Feb. 1930 and form completed by Buero 4 Jan. 1929; Personal Record in Personal file 'Felice Arcoleo', Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives

²⁴⁶ McKinnon Wood to Azcarate, 7 Dec. 1934, Personal file 'Benedetto Gentile', Personnel Office, S.776bis/777, LoN Archives

²⁴⁷ MacKinnon Wood to SG, 15 April 1931, Personal file 'Felice Arcoleo', Personnel Office, S.703bis/704, LoN Archives

insufficient knowledge of languages which, according to the Secretary-General, limited his working abilities.²⁴⁸ Colban's evaluation of Marchesi was nevertheless 'satisfactory.'²⁴⁹ Most likely these discrepancies were driven by the fear that the substitute for an incompetent official could be even more incompetent and Fascist than the current employee.

Not surprisingly, many of the Italians' evaluations were especially favourable when written by another Italian. This is particularly the case of the members of the Italian USG Office, such as Righetti working for Attolico, Schininà and Crolla who worked for Paulucci or Berio who was in the service of Pilotti. When assessing Righetti, Attolico stressed that 'belonging to the Governmental party in Italy, he [Righetti] has gladly put himself at the service of the League's ideas' and that, thanks to his personal influence on the staff of the *Popolo d'Italia*, many good leading articles on the League had appeared in the Italian press.²⁵⁰ In other words, it was Righetti's connection to the Fascist Party, rather than his work at the League, which lay behind Attolico's judgement. As we shall see in Chapter 2, Attolico felt threatened by Righetti's direct contacts with the Fascist Party and Paulucci sent him back to Rome. Crolla, praised by Paulucci for 'his big understanding [*sic*] and commitment to the international interests', was evaluated in more modest terms by Frank Walters, his new director at the Political Section.²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Drummond to Grandi, 19 Jun. 1931, Personal file 'Colonel Luigi Chiappelli', Personnel Office, S.742, LoN Archives

²⁴⁹ Report on probation period by Erik Colban, 31 May 1930, Personal file 'Major Vittorio Marchesi', Personnel Office, S.826, LoN Archives

²⁵⁰ Confidential form completed by Attolico, undated, in Personal file 'Giuseppe Righetti', Personnel Office, S.867, LoN Archives

²⁵¹ 'Copy of Certificate as to grant of annual increment' by Paulucci, 3 Nov.1932 and 'Copy of Certificate as to grant of annual increment' by Walters, 16 Oct. 1933, Personal file 'Guido Crolla', Personnel Office, S.748bis/749, LoN Archives

It is important to stress that incapable Italians were more an exception than the rule. Many Italians received genuinely positive evaluations by their superiors from other countries. According to Yotaro Sugimura, USG in charge of the Political Section, in 1931 Roddolo was *'l'élément le plus important du secrétariat de la S.D.N.'*²⁵² The previous year, perhaps exaggerating, Sugimura underlined how Roddolo was a model for international officials.²⁵³ Bruccoleri, who worked in the Information Section, was considered by Director Adrian Pelt as an indispensable man, especially for his liaison work with Italy.²⁵⁴ But it was Pierre Comert who insisted in 1932 that Bruccoleri's contract be extended beyond the age limit of 60 through a one-year renewable contract.²⁵⁵ The expertise of Pampana, Rocca and Ugo Theodoli was also highly valued by their superiors.²⁵⁶ These experiences taken together with the fact that officials such as Catastini and Stoppani remained at the League as experts after the end of their contracts, exemplify that the work of many Italians was truly appreciated at the League's Secretariat.

The Recruiting Process

The prosopographical analysis allows us to draw some conclusions about the influence of personal connections on the hiring process at the League. We saw that

²⁵² 'Copy of Annual Record' by Sugimura, 12 Aug. 1931, Personal file 'Marcello Roddolo', Personnel Office, S.869, LoN Archives

²⁵³ 'Copy of Annual Record' by Sugimura, 7 Aug. 1930, Personal file 'Marcello Roddolo', Personnel Office, S.869, LoN Archives

²⁵⁴ Pelt to Bureau du Personnel, 26 Sept. 1934 and 17 Oct 1935, Personal file 'Giuseppe Bruccoleri', Personnel Office, S.730, LoN Archives

²⁵⁵ Comert to the Chairman of the Appointments Committee, 18 Mar 1932; Drummond to Bruccoleri, 21 Mar. 1932, Personal file 'Giuseppe Bruccoleri', Personnel Office, S.730, LoN Archives

²⁵⁶ Note by Arthur Salter, dated 11 Aug. 1925; Loveday to Leon Dufour, 6 May 1924 in Personal file 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S.869, LoN Archives; 'Copy of Certificate as to grant of annual increment' by Ludwik Rajchman, Reports 1934-37, Personal file 'Emilio Pampana', Personnel Office, S.848, LoN Archives; President of the Permanent Central Opium Board to SG, 1 Sept. 1930, Personal file 'Ugo Theodoli', Personnel Office, S.892, LoN Archives

officially the League's employees were appointed by the Secretary-General with the approval of the Council.²⁵⁷ However, in practice, it was the Italian Under Secretaries-General, or sometimes more directly, the Italian government that proposed candidates to the Secretary-General. He, in turn, rarely turned them down. The fact that people belonging to the same social environment were hired at the League at the same time was not coincidental. In particular, by examining when the Italian officials were hired, the length of their stay and their evaluations it is possible to note certain patterns.

<u>Italian officials' hiring period</u>
<p><u>During Anzilotti's post (11 Jan. 1920 –31 Dec. 1921) (7)</u> Attolico, Boldrini, Catastini, Leone, Spingardi, Varé, Villari</p>
<p><u>During Attolico's post (1 Jan. 1922 – 26 Mar. 1927) (10)</u> Averardi, Brivonesi, Bruccoleri, Crosara, Pantaleoni, Pietromarchi, Righetti, Rocca, Roddolo, Stoppani</p>
<p><u>During Paulucci's post (28 Mar. 1927 – 8 Nov. 1932) (8)</u> Arcoleo, Chiappelli, Crolla, Gentile, Marchesi, Schininà, Tani, Ugo Theodoli</p>
<p><u>During Pilotti's post (14 Dec. 1932 –13 Dec. 1937) (5)</u> Berio, Fier, Matricardi, Pampana, Prunas</p>

Table 2:

Overview of when Italian civil servants were hired in the Secretariat in relation to who was the Italian Under Secretary-General at the League

For instance, when Paulucci was the Under Secretary-General in charge of Internal Administration (1927-1932), officials with limited qualifications were hired: both Arcoleo and Gentile had little legal experience and no international experience before joining the League. Arcoleo had also a poor knowledge of languages. However, they were both very close to Paulucci: Arcoleo was the member of an influential family

²⁵⁷ Art.6, LoN Covenant available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

from Caltagirone, where Paulucci was born, and his father Giorgio had been a close friend of the Italian Under Secretary-General.²⁵⁸ Gentile was the son of one of the most important Italian intellectuals of Fascism. Their poor qualifications together with their important relatives suggest that Paulucci, USG in charge of Internal Administration, hired them as a personal favour to their families, thereby importing the classic practices of Italian clientelism into Geneva. It is worth questioning whether these two were isolated cases or whether the principle can be applied to other officials appointed when Paulucci was in charge of the Secretariat's internal administration. In particular, Schininà, a Sicilian like Paulucci and Gentile, and a friend of Arcoleo, was also hired in this period and remained at the League some months more than Paulucci. From Paulucci's papers, we learn that the Italian Under Secretary-General was so fond of Schininà that in 1928 he recommended him to the president of the commission for the Foreign Ministry competition to enter the consular career, which he then successfully passed.²⁵⁹ The same documents confirm the friendly relations between the USG and these three officials.²⁶⁰ Finally, the fact that Major Marchesi, a member of the PAC with poor knowledge of languages, was in Geneva when Paulucci was USG seems to suggest that all the incompetent Italians were hired during Paulucci's time.

It was common practice for Italian experts with a good international reputation to recommend other Italian officials for LoN posts. For example, Luigi Einaudi had suggested Rocca to Attolico as an economic expert and Corrado Gini was involved in

²⁵⁸ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.12-13

²⁵⁹ Paulucci to Bodrero, 18 Apr. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b.74, GPdC, ASF; Personal file 'Emanuele Schininà di S. Elia' in *Archivi Personale*, Serie I, b.84, ASMAE

²⁶⁰ *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b. 50 (Arcoleo), b.58 (Gentile), b.66 (Schininà), GPdC, ASF

the hiring process of both Crosara and Boldrini.²⁶¹ However, there is a noticeable shift from a merit-based system in the first years of Italian membership to one based on clientelism and mediocrity after Paulucci's arrival. This divide did not happen between the liberal and the Fascist period, but it developed along the different mandates of the Italian Under Secretaries-General. This suggests that the most important factor in determining the career trajectory of Italian civil servants in the Secretariat was not who was in power in Rome, but who held the post of Italian Under-Secretary at the League. A good example is also the change of career of Crolla and Roddolo, as a result of Paulucci's departure from Geneva. In fact, when taking up his post as new Italian USG, Pilotti requested to Drummond that Crolla, hired during Paulucci's time, was moved out of the USG Office to the Political Section, in exchange for Roddolo, whom he preferred as an assistant.²⁶²

Assessments of the different Italian USGs intimated their distinctive impacts on the working environment of the other Italian civil servants at the League, and as the prosopographical analysis has revealed, they also had an impact on recruitment. During Anzilotti's period (1920-1921), the Italian civil servants hired at the League had been involved in the peace negotiations or in inter-allied organizations. They constituted a natural pool of League candidates, as they offered to experts and bureaucrats from different countries the possibility to appreciate the benefits of an international work environment. Anzilotti's time at the League was when the Secretariat started to take shape from the Covenant. The relatively small dimension of

²⁶¹ Attolico to Luigi Einaudi, 9, 24 and 30 Jun. 1922 in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Bernardo Attolico", TFE; Loveday to Nixon, 12 Dec. 1921, Personal file 'Aldo Crosara', Personnel Office, S.748bis/749, LoN Archives; Loveday to Miss Dudgeon, 9 Apr. 1921, Personal file 'Marcello Boldrini', Personnel Office, S.723bis, LoN Archives

²⁶² 'Extract from a letter from the SG to Pilotti dated 13 Dec. 1932' in Personal file 'Guido Crolla', Personnel Office, S.748bis/749, LoN Archives

the Secretariat, together with the pressing needs of a newly born international bureaucracy, might explain why the officials hired in the first years of the League developed the longest relationships with the institution.

The experimental nature of the institution characterised also the first years of Attolico's post as USG (1922-1927). There was no immediate change in the recruitment system or in the conditions of the Italian officials at the League after Mussolini came to power in 1922. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, by 1926 the first 'Fascist incidents' occurred at the Secretariat and Attolico and the Italian officials faced the first pressure from the Fascist regime on their work. There was the increasing expectation in Rome that the Italians at the League show commitment and loyalty to the regime. Paulucci's period (1927-1932) was distinguished by a systematic process of Fascistization and control of the Italians working for the League. It was also a period when Italian civil servants were hired not so much for their qualifications, but because they met Paulucci's sympathy and that of the regime. Among the Italian Under Secretaries-General, Paulucci was the one who left the strongest personal mark at the Secretariat. Pilotti's period (1932-1937) was characterised by a decreasing interest on the part of Italy in the League: many Italians leaving their posts were not replaced with new candidates, leading Italy to lose its presence in the Legal Section in 1934, in the Political Section in 1936 and in the Information Section in early 1937. There were only seven Italian officials left in the First Division of the LoN Secretariat in December 1937, when Italy withdrew from the League.

This prosopographical analysis and the profiles of the four Italian Under Secretaries-General showed us the different and multiple identities of the Italians working for the League's Secretariat, determined by the variety of their geographical and social origins, but also of their war experiences, their education and previous employments. The prosopography presented a cross-section of the Italian élite involved in Italian foreign policy at the time, showing its diversity. This study, which is the first analysis of the Italian officials at the League, reveals that Italians were actively present in almost every section of the Secretariat, holding important positions. Moreover, they were at the League for the whole period of the Italian membership: even when, during the Ethiopian crisis, Rome stopped being involved in the activities of Council and Assembly, Italian officials in the Secretariat remained present and working. With few exceptions, Italian civil servants were competent employees, educated and experts in their field. The main problems the Italian employees encountered while in the Secretariat were not related to their assignments, but to the management of their relationships with the Fascist regime while serving in the world's first international bureaucracy. In fact, while we have seen that there were different ways of 'being Italian' at the League, the experiences of the Under Secretaries-General also showed that there were different ways of relating to Fascism. The political identities of the Italian civil servants at the League, together with the influence of Fascism on their work and lives, is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: Italian Civil Servants and Fascism in Geneva

On 25 June 1926, five Italians working for the League of Nations (LoN) Secretariat received a letter from their Secretary-General, Eric Drummond. In it he called their attention to their involvement in the 'Plainpalais Incident', which occurred on 11 June. What the *Journal de Genève* called '*la bagarre de Plainpalais*' saw a group of anti-Fascists and Fascists, which included League of Nations officials, involved in a fight in a local meeting hall. A year later, another incident highlighted the ambiguous position of the Italians in the League. It involved Giuseppe Rocca, a model LoN Italian employee, who fled to America in an attempt to escape Fascist pressures on his life. These two episodes have been only partially examined by scholars: the Plainpalais incident has been considered within the literature on Italian anti-Fascism abroad, but the reactions of the League of Nations to it have not been analysed.²⁶³ Giuseppe Rocca's case is not known to historians, with the exception of a partial, and largely incorrect, reference to it in Tassani's recent book on the Italian Under Secretary-General, Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli.²⁶⁴

These two episodes open a debate on the relationship between an international organization and those member states whose government was authoritarian and undemocratic. Moreover, they offer an insight into the effects that Fascist interference with Italian civil servants had on the administration of the Secretariat and the relationship between Italy and the League of Nations from the early years. The

²⁶³ Cerutti, M., 'Les Italiens à Genève à l'époque du fascisme et de la Société des Nations', in Kahn-Laginestra, A., (ed.), *Genève et l'Italie. Mélanges publiés à l'occasion du 75^e anniversaire de la Société genevoise d'études italiennes* (Geneva, 1994), pp.101-116; Mari, G., 'La contesa politica nella colonia italiana di Ginevra, 1923-1930' in *Italia contemporanea*, sett.-dic. 2000, n.220-221, pp.463-483

²⁶⁴ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.134-135

Plainpalais incident and Rocca's sudden departure from the League introduce the problems encountered by Italian civil servants working for the Secretariat when Fascism started to interfere with their work and lives in Geneva. The last part of the chapter analyses the impact on the Secretariat and its Italian employees of Paulucci's mandate and the strengthening of Fascistization at the League. In the context of this study, 'Fascistization' refers to a process of control and influence promoted by the Fascist regime aimed to guarantee the loyalty to Fascism of all Italian officials in Geneva's international organizations. This involved the recruitment of new civil servants, who were members of the Fascist Party, and it entailed the implementation of actions aimed at 'convincing' existing officials of the necessity of becoming loyal Fascists.

It is commonly acknowledged by former LoN civil servants writing after the Second World War that the shift of Italy towards a Fascist regime brought new challenges to the Secretariat administration.²⁶⁵ Initially, according to Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 'as the Fascist government professed its adherence to the spirit and the letter of the Covenant there was no visible incompatibility ... between the Fascist Officials and their international duties.'²⁶⁶ In addition, 'the feeling was general at that period [in the 1920s], that Italy had been unfairly treated at the Peace Conference and that Fascism was chiefly a matter for home consumption.'²⁶⁷ However, according to Ranshofen-Wertheimer, difficulties started to arise when Italian foreign policy became openly dynamic and began to back up German revisionist aims. This discrepancy would

²⁶⁵Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E., *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration* (Washington D.C., 1945); Loveday, A., *Reflections on International Administration* (Oxford, 1956)

²⁶⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.250

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

reach its peak in 1935 when Italy broke the Covenant by attacking Ethiopia.²⁶⁸ Archival evidence and the episodes presented in this chapter clearly suggest that the process of Fascistization of the Italian officials at the LoN was strongly implemented already in the middle of the 1920s, much earlier than expected.

For many LoN officials hired when Italy was led by a 'liberal' government, the pressure to show loyalty to the Fascist regime while working for an international organization, produced conflicting loyalties. As we saw in Chapter 1, dual loyalty characterised all League employees who were simultaneously nationals of a country and part of the first international bureaucracy. However, when a divergence arose between the goals of the League and those of their state, the Italian civil servants faced a conflict that was difficult to conciliate. When introducing the Italians in the Secretariat in the previous chapter, we did not consider their political identity. The political beliefs of these officials are complex to assess: the shades between being an ardent Fascist and being an anti-Fascist were many. For instance, at the League there were nationalists who viewed Fascism with sympathy as it embraced nationalist goals (Ugo Theodoli) as well as moderate liberals (Stoppani and Rocca). Although there were some clear cases of Fascist enthusiasts, such as Paulucci, Pietromarchi and Righetti, most of the Italian civil servants in Geneva, rather than animated by Fascist enthusiasm, were concerned with finding a way to coexist with the regime, especially when it started to influence directly their lives and careers at the League.

For the League, the problem with having officials who were Fascists was that they considered themselves to be national representatives, 'Fascist propagandists within

²⁶⁸ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.250

the Secretariat.²⁶⁹ This was a negative development for men such as Drummond, who wanted the League's Secretariat to be an internationalist body. It reached a critical point in 1927 with the appointment of Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli as the new Italian Under Secretary-General, replacing Bernardo Attolico. Paulucci broke all Secretariat traditions and rules by establishing himself as the 'boss' of all Italian officials, disregarding the needs of the different sections of the administration.²⁷⁰ In doing so, he challenged the authority of the Secretary-General, who was confronted by the dilemma of how to administer his Secretariat effectively and restate his authority without offending a powerful member state.²⁷¹ The interference of Fascism in the lives and work of the Italian civil servants in the LoN was a serious problem for the Secretary-General.

In June 1927, the level of control of the Fascist regime over the political preferences of the Italian civil servants within international organizations was reinforced in law. A law was approved (Legge 16 giugno 1927, n.1170, *Norme sull'assunzione di impieghi da parte di cittadini italiani all'estero*), forcing Italian citizens who were hired or wished to be hired by foreign states or international organizations to receive permission from the Italian government, which reserved the right to order the officials to resign from that service. The consequences for refusing to comply with the law and the maintenance/acceptance of international employment against the wishes of the Italian authorities ranged from a monetary fine to up to one year of prison and the loss of citizenship.²⁷² Drummond protested to Paulucci about the introduction of such a law as early as in March 1927, when the news regarding its drafting reached

²⁶⁹ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.251

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Legge 16 giugno 1927, n. 1170 (in *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, 16 luglio 1927, n. 163) *Norme sull'assunzione di impieghi da parte di cittadini italiani all'estero*

Geneva.²⁷³ He complained that this law gave the impression that Italy wanted to openly exercise control over international organizations. Paulucci replied to Drummond that the aim of the law was only to prevent some officials abroad from losing the exact notion of their '*incancellabili doveri*' (unforgettable duties) towards their country.²⁷⁴ The law openly challenged the role of the Secretary-General in the recruitment process and presented an obvious problem of interference of the Italian officials.²⁷⁵ This threatened the conventions of the League and the institution itself, as well as challenging individual loyalties.

The law was part of the attempt to extend the Fascistization process promoted in Italy to Italians outside the country. The increased control over Italian civil servants abroad was part of a series of measures gradually undertaken by the Italian government after 1925 with the rise of the dictatorship, and strengthened after three failed attempts on the life of Mussolini in 1926. Tough laws were implemented, bringing opponents of the Fascist Party to jail or forcing them to flee the country. The *leggi fascistissime*, as they are known, forced the dissolution of parties, instituted the *confino di polizia* (internal exile) and abolished all anti-Fascist press. They also established the *Tribunale Speciale per la difesa dello Stato* (Special Court for the Defence of the State), targeting political crimes.²⁷⁶ The degree of repression of the anti-Fascist movement increased dramatically and many decided to avoid arrest – Antonio

²⁷³ Giacomo Paulucci to Ministry Foreign Affairs in Rome, *Telegramma N. 2046/69*, 30 Mar. 1927, in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b.70, Personal Papers of Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone (hereafter GPdC), Archivio di Stato di Forlì, Italy (hereafter ASF)

²⁷⁴ Paulucci to Ministry Foreign Affairs in Rome, *Telegramma N. 2046/69*, 30 Mar. 1927, in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b.70, GPdC, ASF

²⁷⁵ Loveday, *Reflections on International Administration*, pp.122-123; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.245-246

²⁷⁶ See *Testo unico delle leggi di pubblica sicurezza* Regio-Decreto 6 novembre 1926, n.1848; *Provvedimenti per la Difesa dello Stato*, Legge 25 novembre 1926, n.2008

Gramsci was imprisoned on 8 November 1926 – by going into exile, mainly to France or Switzerland.²⁷⁷

This is the context in which the following episodes involving Italian officials in the LoN Secretariat and the Fascist regime developed. The first case, the Plainpalais incident in 1926, exemplifies the consequences of the successful Fascistization of some Italians at the Secretariat. Their loyalty to the Fascist Party was so strong as to encourage them to engage in a brawl against local anti-Fascists, regardless of the consequences of such an action for the international organization for which they worked and to which they were meant to be loyal. The second case involves Giuseppe Rocca and shows the consequence of Fascistization in the life of an Italian official who decided to oppose it. Both episodes exemplify the problem of dual and conflicting loyalties for the Italian civil servants at the League and the challenges that the Secretariat encountered in handling a dictatorship committed to keeping its citizens under control.

11 June 1926: *La Bagarre de Plainpalais*

Interwar Geneva enjoyed a lively political life. Historically known as ‘*cit  de refuge*’, open to religious and political refugees for many centuries, Geneva in the interwar period attracted exiles also for its international relevance as the host city of new international organizations (LoN and ILO).²⁷⁸ When the *fuoriusciti* (Italian anti-Fascist refugees) arrived in Geneva as a consequence of the hardening of the Fascist

²⁷⁷ Garosci, A., *Storia dei fuoriusciti* (Bari, 1953)

²⁷⁸ Zanetti, A., ‘L’Esilio Ginevrino’ in Ingusci P., De Donno A. *et al.* (eds.), *Egidio Reale e il suo Tempo* (Florence, 1961), p.109

regime in 1925-1926, they found an already significant Italian colony, the result of years of political and economic migration. The historical Italian community in Geneva had its own cultural institutions: Italian schools and the cultural association *Società Dante Alighieri*. The Fascist regime, through the local *fascio* (Fascist association abroad), constituted in 1923 and named after the ‘Fascist martyr’ Tito Menichetti, had tried to Fascistize the Italians in Geneva. However, it had little success due to the anti-Fascist efforts of people like Giuseppe Chiostergi, a republican and former Secretary-General of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Geneva; Egidio Reale, a republican lawyer; Armando Zanetti, member of the Italian Liberal Party; and Carlo A Prato, a journalist. Relevant anti-Fascist members of this community also included international officials at the International Labour Organization (ILO) such as Olindo Gorni, member of the Social Economic Service from 1924, and Manlio Sancisi, who was also an active member of the local section of the *Ligue italienne des droits de l’homme* (LIDU).²⁷⁹ In addition, the city hosted Italian socialists such as Giovanni Battista Bertoglio and his sons, and Carlo Pedroni.²⁸⁰ It is important to note that the anti-Fascists in Geneva were not only Italians. Geneva hosted an active local Socialist Party, led by Federal Councillor Léon Nicole, and a large anarchist movement.²⁸¹

Each year, Italian and non-Italian anti-Fascist groups observed the anniversary of the murder of socialist Member of Parliament, Giacomo Matteotti. He was killed by a squad of Blackshirts on 10 June 1924 after denouncing the electoral frauds that enabled Mussolini to win more than 60% of the votes in the elections of April 1924. In Geneva the local Socialist Party, led by Charles Burklin and Léon Nicole, together

²⁷⁹ Zanetti, ‘L’Esilio Ginevrino’ in Ingusci *et al.* (eds.), pp.111-115

²⁸⁰ Cerutti, ‘Les Italiens à Genève’ in Kahn-Laginestra (ed.), p.109

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.101-116

with the anarchist group '*Le Reveil*', led by Luigi Bertoni (a Swiss from Ticino), and the Italian *fuoriusciti*, represented by Pedroni, organized a Matteotti commemoration, to take place in the *Salle Communale* of Plainpalais (a neighbourhood of Geneva) on 11 June 1926. The Geneva *fascio*, led by Italian vice-Consul and president of the Italian Section of the Red Cross, Count Guido Vinci, accompanied by Ulrico Aillaud, member of the General Information Section at the ILO, and several others, decided to intervene. The outcome was unsurprising. During Pedroni's speech, at the cry '*Mussolini est un assassin*', the Fascists in the audience replied '*Vive Mussolini!*' and a fight broke out. In a hall filled with about 600 people, chairs flew and a gun was fired.²⁸² While no one died, some were wounded and many more were arrested. Aside from the anarchist Lucien Tronchet, who had threatened a policeman with a gun, the Swiss police arrested 17 Fascists, including LoN official Luca Pietromarchi, who was accused of injuring a policeman but immediately released.²⁸³

The LoN civil servants involved in this incident were all Italians, five of them members of the First Division: Vito Catastini (Mandates Section), Luca Pietromarchi and Giuseppe Righetti (Office of the Under Secretary-General), Massimo Pantaleoni (Health Section) and Captain Ugo Leone (Disarmament Section). Three of them (Catastini, Pietromarchi and Leone) were employees of the League, while at the same time being employed by the Italian national service. Righetti and Pantaleoni also had strong links with the Italian government, both having worked for it: the former as a legal delegate to diplomatic missions and the latter as epidemiologist researching

²⁸² '*Bagarre au meeting antifasciste*' in *Journal de Genève*, 12 June 1926, p.12

²⁸³ Bernardo Attolico to Prime Minister, 24 Nov. 1926 Archivio Personale. Serie I, pos. B18, b.277, 'Luca Pietromarchi', in Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy (hereafter ASMAE)

malaria. They were all members of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) and of the *Geneva fascio*.

Luca Pietromarchi was the assistant to Bernardo Attolico and, after March 1927 he worked with the new Italian Under Secretary-General, Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli. He had joined the League of Nations in 1923, taking leave from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he returned in 1930 and became a prominent exponent of Fascist diplomacy, coordinating Italian activities in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).²⁸⁴ Giuseppe Righetti worked in the same Section as Pietromarchi from 1924. According to the French, Righetti was the head of a Fascist surveillance service at the LoN and at the ILO: he was spying with the help of some collaborators on anti-Fascist activities of the Italian civil servants in Geneva.²⁸⁵ Righetti resigned from the League on 10 September 1927, after disagreements with Paulucci.²⁸⁶ After being employed in consular activities, Righetti was elected to the Chamber of Deputies where he remained from 1929 to 1934, when he was appointed Secretary-General of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law in Rome.²⁸⁷ Ugo Leone was a Captain of the Italian army and at the League he worked as secretary of the Air Sub-Committee of the Permanent Advisory Commission (PAC) of the Disarmament Section from 1920 to 1924, and then again from November 1925 until the end of October 1926, as a replacement for Commander Bruno Brivonesi. Massimo

²⁸⁴ See Carte Luca Pietromarchi (Personal Papers), sez.2.3 (correspondence), Commissione Centrale di Epurazione (1944) in Archivio Storico della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Turin, Italy (hereafter TFE)

²⁸⁵ *Note sur l'activité profasciste au sein de la Société des Nations, Le Ministre Plenipotentiaire Chargé du Consulat General de France à Genève à son excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Paris*, Geneva, 31 Aug. 1927 in Service française de la Société des Nations (1917-1940) (hereafter SdNFra), b.163, Archives Diplomatiques de France, La Courneuve (hereafter ADF)

²⁸⁶ *Note. Monsieur Ame-Leroy Chargé du Consulat General de France à Genève à son excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Paris*, Geneva, 27 Dec. 1927 in SdNFra b.163, ADF

²⁸⁷ From the historical archive of the Chamber of Deputies: <http://storia.camera.it/deputato/giuseppe-righetti-18900806/leg-regno-XXVIII#nav> (last accessed 30 July 2014); Peters, L., *International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 2011), p.21

Pantaleoni, an epidemiologist, was a member of the Health Section from 1925 until 1933, when he returned to Rome to work for the Institute of Public Health. Vito Catastini was the highest-ranking Italian involved in the Plainpalais incident. He had joined the Mandates Section in 1921, while remaining an employee of the Italian Ministry of Colonies, and he was Chief of Section from January 1925. He became Director in 1929 and remained in the League until November 1937.²⁸⁸ They were all examples of successfully 'Fascistized' Italian civil servants at the LoN Secretariat.

The Plainpalais incident, which involved these Italian civil servants working for the League's Secretariat, had international, national and local repercussions. It provoked an internal investigation at the League, as well as an investigation at the Swiss Council. It created a strained correspondence between the Secretariat and the Swiss government over diplomatic conventions and immunities.²⁸⁹ Additionally, it caused tensions in the relations between Italy and Switzerland, accused by the Italian press of not preventing such events from disturbing the serenity of the delegates involved in the ILO conference taking place at that time.²⁹⁰ Fascistization and, as a consequence, conflicting loyalties had a negative influence on the correct functioning of the League.

The immediate consequences of the incident for the League was an internal investigation on the matter, requested on 15 June 1926 by the very Italian civil

²⁸⁸ Personal file 'Luca Pietromarchi', Personnel Office, S.855; Personal file 'Giuseppe Righetti', Personnel Office, S.867; Personal file 'Captain Ugo Leone', Personnel Office, S.816; Personal file 'Massimo Pantaleoni', Personnel Office, S.848; Personal file 'Vito Catastini', Personnel Office, S.736 in League of Nations (LoN) Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

²⁸⁹ *Participation of certain members of the Secretariat in the 'Plainpalais incident' June 1926* in Dossier 19/52477/52477, R. 1297, LoN Archives

²⁹⁰ 'La bagarre de Plainpalais' in *Journal de Genève*, 16 June 1926, p.3

servants involved.²⁹¹ Secretary-General Eric Drummond asked the Advisory Committee on Disciplinary and Analogous Questions to evaluate whether the involvement of the Italian civil servants in the Plainpalais brawl was a violation of the Secretariat's Staff Regulations.²⁹² There was the suspected infringement of Special Circular 18/1925, which stressed the need for LoN officials to abstain from 'any action which might have the consequences of involving them in any kind of political controversy.'²⁹³ The rationale behind this request was diplomatic immunity. In fact, the highest officials of the League of Nations were guaranteed immunities from civil and criminal justice, as well as taxes, on the basis of Art.7/par. 4 of the Covenant. In exchange for these privileges, moderate behaviour was required, especially when engaging in political activities.

The chairman of the Advisory Committee was Under Secretary-General (USG) Attolico, who decided to step down from the position before the investigation started.²⁹⁴ Drummond attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince Attolico to reconsider his resignation, because he wanted the USG in charge of Internal Administration to preside over the committee.²⁹⁵ Attolico's choice was motivated by the conflict of loyalties arising in this case: it was difficult to conciliate the duty of neutral judgement requested by the League with the loyalty required by the Fascist regime.

²⁹¹ Catastini, Righetti, Leone, Pietromarchi and Pantaleoni to Eric Drummond, 15 Jun. 1926, S.917, LoN Archives. The records of the Advisory Committee's investigation are found in the folder *Participation à une manifestation politique (1926)*, S.917, LoN Archives

²⁹² Drummond to Chairman of the Committee (Attolico), 15 Jun. 1926; Report: *Presence de certains membres du Secretariat à la Reunion publique tenue le 11 juin à la Salle Communale de Plainpalais*, 22 Jun. 1926, S.917, LoN Archives

²⁹³ Special Circular 18/1925 (replacing Special Circular 273 of 9 March 1923): 'Publications, Lectures and Speeches by members of the secretariat: Abstention from Political Activities', 30 Apr. 1925, S.918, LoN Archives

²⁹⁴ Attolico to Drummond, 15 Jun. 1926 in Personal file 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

²⁹⁵ Drummond to Attolico, 15 Jun. 1926; Attolico to Drummond, 16 Jun. 1926 in Personal file 'Bernardo Attolico', Personnel Office, S.706, LoN Archives

The remaining members of the Committee were John Palmer, Robert Haas, Hugh McKinnon Wood, Pablo de Azcarate and Pietro Stoppani.²⁹⁶ Stoppani, while participating in the investigation, abstained from signing its final report.²⁹⁷ He did not want to be associated with the investigation's results in Geneva or in Rome. Stoppani, who was not a Fascist, was most likely trying not to attract unwanted attention to his activities at the League.

The Committee listened to the Italians' version of the facts. From the depositions it emerged that the officials justified their presence at the Plainpalais meeting on the basis of the need to protect Italy's national interest and defend the national honour from the insults of the anti-Fascists. In fact, in the previous year, during Matteotti's commemoration, anti-Fascists had insulted the Italian King and the head of the government (i.e. Mussolini).²⁹⁸ The issue of dual loyalty also arose from the statements of the Italian civil servants. Captain Leone declared that before participating in the Plainpalais meeting he had asked himself whether it was appropriate for a LoN official, particularly one working on matters of conciliation and disarmament, to attend such an event. He believed it was, motivated by the idea that international solidarity as promoted by the League did not imply the abolition of the idea of nation.²⁹⁹ Leone expressed the uneasiness of having been torn between his duties as an international official and his sense of solidarity towards the Fascists

²⁹⁶ Report: '*Presence de certaines membres du Secretariat à la Reunion publique tenue le 11 juin à la Salle Communale de Plainpalais*', 22 Jun. 1926, S.917, LoN Archives

²⁹⁷ John Palmer (Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Disciplinary and Analogous Questions) to Drummond, 22 Jun. 1926 (accompanying the report), S.917, LoN Archives

²⁹⁸ '*Presence de certaines membres du Secretariat à la Reunion publique tenue le 11 juin à la Salle Communale de Plainpalais*', 22 Jun. 1926 and the officials' depositions attached, S.917, LoN Archives. Pantaleoni was not heard because absent.

²⁹⁹ '*Declaration de M. Leone*' attached to the report '*Presence de certaines membres...*' in S.917, LoN Archives

attending the meeting. This case clearly shows how dual loyalties at the League could become conflicting loyalties and carry negative repercussions for the organization.

Catastini, the most senior of the Italian officials implicated, was addressed by Stoppani as ‘the calmest of all Italians involved.’ He declared that Attolico, together with his wife (Pietromarchi’s sister), was preparing to enter the building where the meeting was being held, just as the first people who were wounded were leaving it. This is an additional reason behind Attolico’s decision not to chair the investigating committee.³⁰⁰ It is important to note that Catastini’s participation in the Plainpalais case is not present in his personnel file at the League nor in any but one of the reports on the matter.³⁰¹ It is unknown whether this is due to an active epuration of the records in the years following the event, or a matter of chance.

The Advisory Committee concluded that there was a reasonable expectation that the meeting would end in violence and, therefore, the participation of the LoN members was not in accordance with the moderate behaviour required from LoN officials. It constituted a serious imprudence and an infringement of Circular 18/1925. However, while concluding that a violation had taken place, the Committee also recognised that, at the meeting, the Italian officials found themselves in a ‘psychological situation of exceptional nature’ and that they did not intend to make Fascist propaganda but to protest against attacks to the honour of their country and its institutions, embodied in

³⁰⁰ ‘*Declaration de M. Catastini*’ attached to the report ‘*Presence de certaines membres...*’ in S.917, LoN Archives

³⁰¹ He is present only in the very important (and reliable) report of the investigating committee: ‘*Presence de certaines membres du Secretariat à la Reunion publique tenue le 11 juin à la Salle Communale de Plainpalais*’, 22 Jun. 1926, S.917, LoN Archives

the person of Mussolini.³⁰² The Committee showed a certain understanding of the actions of these civil servants and, while admitting they had violated internal regulations, the Committee did not suggest any specific sanction or punishment to be meted out to the Italian officials. The final report of the Advisory Committee, which Stoppani did not sign, concluded with a formal reprimand of the Italian officials involved, but with no disciplinary measures.

Drummond's tone in his delivery of the results of the investigation to these civil servants was also surprisingly mild, considering the facts and their political consequences for the LoN:

I fear I must agree with the Committee that your conduct has certainly been imprudent, and I trust you will be extremely careful in the future with regard to matters of this kind, though I hope that circumstances of a similar character will not recur.³⁰³

It seems that the Secretary-General was more concerned with safeguarding good relations with member states than defending the correct functioning of the LoN and its public image. In the case of the League, reputation was particularly important because of the moral responsibility that the Secretary-General bore towards its host country.³⁰⁴

The Plainpalais episode exemplifies how the dual loyalties of the officials working for the LoN Secretariat generated serious tensions between the institution and the host

³⁰² Report: *'Presence de certaines membres du Secretariat à la Reunion publique tenue le 11 juin à la Salle Communale de Plainpalais'*, 22 Jun. 1926, S.917, LoN Archives

³⁰³ Drummond to Pietromarchi, 25 Jun. 1926, Personal file 'Luca Pietromarchi', Personnel Office, S.855; Drummond to Leone, 25 Jun. 1926, Personal file 'Captain Ugo Leone', Personnel Office, S.816; Drummond to Righetti, 25 Jun. 1926, Personal file 'Giuseppe Righetti', Personnel Office, S.867; Drummond to Pantaleoni, 25 Jun. 1926, Personal file 'Massimo Pantaleoni', Personnel Office, S.848, LoN Archives

³⁰⁴ Loveday, *Reflections on International Administration*, pp.115-116

state, Switzerland.³⁰⁵ The Swiss Federal Council strongly deplored the participation of LoN Secretariat members in the Plainpalais brawl, because these officials benefited from diplomatic immunity.³⁰⁶ On June 23, Giuseppe Motta, the Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Political Department, answered an interpellation by the socialist Councillor Léon Nicole regarding the recent incident. While the account of the facts given by Nicole was in favour of the anti-Fascists, the one given by Motta to the Swiss Council was rather the opposite, blaming the anti-Fascists for causing the fight.³⁰⁷ Motta criticized how the meeting was organized with the aim of attacking the Italian Fascist government, ‘*le régime légal de l’Italie*’ (the official government of Italy), while a session of the ILO was taking place.³⁰⁸ However, Motta, who entertained cordial relations with Italian Fascism, had strong words against the Fascist intervention, and he was very critical of the behaviour of the LoN civil servants protected by immunity. He stated that:

*L'intervention des fascistes à la réunion de Plainpalais avait été d'autant plus fâcheuse que parmi eux se trouvaient des fonctionnaires du Secrétariat de la S.d.N. et du B.I.T., tenus, semble-t-il, plus que d'autres à cette réserve et à cette prudence qui leur sont commandées par leur qualité d'agents jouissant de l'immunité diplomatique.*³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ Correspondence between Joseph Avenol and Hugh MacKinnon Wood, 2 Jun. 1926, continuing a debate developed with Bernardo Attolico on 19 May 1926 and earlier with Eric Drummond (letters dated 2 and 3 Dec. 1925) in Papiers d'Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.8, ADF

³⁰⁶ ‘*Liberté de réunion et Société des Nations*’ in *Journal de Genève*, 24 June 1926, p.1

³⁰⁷ ‘*L’Interpellation de M.Nicole*’ in *Journal de Genève*, 24 June 1926, p.4; ‘*Liberté de réunion et Société des Nations*’ in *Journal de Genève*, 24 June 1926, p.1

³⁰⁸ ‘*Liberté de réunion et Société des Nations*’ in *Journal de Genève*, 24 June 1926, p.1

³⁰⁹ Trans. ‘the intervention of the Fascists to the Plainpalais meeting has been all the more deplorable because among them there were officials of the Secretariat of the LoN and of the ILO, obliged, it seems, more than others to that discretion and that prudence required to them as officials benefitting from diplomatic immunity.’ In ‘*Liberté de réunion et Société des Nations*’ in *Journal de Genève*, 24 June 1926, p.1

The speech triggered a lively correspondence between Drummond and Motta, covering certain aspects of the coexistence of international organizations with their host countries and the diplomatic duties of the members of those organizations.³¹⁰

In fact, just as the Plainpalais incident occurred, the League was in the process of negotiating with Switzerland immunities and privileges for its employees.³¹¹ In order for the immunity provided for in the Covenant to be implemented, the Secretariat had reached a so-called ‘*modus vivendi* agreement’ with Switzerland in 1921, which the two parties aimed at updating in 1926.³¹² A new, final agreement on the matter was eventually approved by the LoN Council on 20 September 1926.³¹³ It is necessary to specify that in order to discourage its abuse, immunity was subject to a waiver exercised at the discretion of the Secretary-General. The participation of international personnel, subject to diplomatic immunity, in a political episode of violent nature such as the Plainpalais incident, was a serious threat to these negotiations. However, the LoN judicial bodies did not consider the episode as requiring the imposition of disciplinary measures on the participants, nor did the Secretary-General reprimand them in strong terms.

In Italy, the episode was the occasion for the Fascist newspaper *Il Popolo d’Italia* (founded by Mussolini in 1914) to debate the desirability of having the seat of the League of Nations in Geneva. Journalist Piero Parini claimed that the organization

³¹⁰ Drummond to Giuseppe Motta 24 Jun. 1926 and 5 Jul. 1926; Motta to Drummond 2 Jul. 1926 and 8 Jul. 1926 in *Participation of certain members of the Secretariat in the ‘Plainpalais incident’ June 1926* in Dossier 19/52477/52477, R. 1297, LoN Archives

³¹¹ Correspondence between Avenol and MacKinnon Wood, 2 Jun. 1926, continuing a debate developed with Attolico on 19 May 1926 and earlier with Drummond (letters dated 2 and 3 Dec. 1925) in Papiers d’Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.8, ADF

³¹² Hill, M., *Immunities and Privileges of International Officials. The experience of the League of Nations* (Washington D.C., 1947), pp.15,19,138

³¹³ LoN Council, 20 Sept.1926, League of Nations, *Official Journal* (hereafter *LoN OJ*), October 1926, pp. 1422-1424

was subject to the influence of ‘international Freemasonry, Protestantism and intellectual anarchy.’³¹⁴ According to the Swiss Ambassador in Rome, Georges Wagnière, private circles in Rome showed little interest in the episode.³¹⁵ However, the Italian government, through the Italian Ambassador to Bern, Carlo Garbasso, threatened to stop sending Italian diplomatic delegations to Geneva if incidents like the one at Plainpalais were not prevented by the Swiss police.³¹⁶ This complaint, however, went to the Swiss government not to the League. For the Fascist government, the Plainpalais episode provided the perfect example of the perilous nature of the anti-Fascists which Switzerland was hosting and tolerating. The episode offered the Fascist regime the opportunity to complain about the soft policy that the Swiss authorities were exercising in the containment of the subversive threat of the anti-Fascist movement. The regime was very proud of the Fascists who intervened to defend the honour of the country and the Duce. At least one of the civil servants involved, Pietromarchi, was awarded the ‘*squadrista all'estero* honour’ (member of the Fascist squads abroad) in 1939, for participating and having been wounded in the Plainpalais incident.³¹⁷

The Plainpalais brawl had an impact not only on the national and international spheres but also practical repercussions for Geneva. As a consequence of the debate following this incident, the Swiss Federal Council decided to limit the freedom of assembly in Geneva: all public meetings criticizing a foreign government represented in the

³¹⁴ ‘*Ginevra non è societaria*’ by Pietro Parini in *Il Popolo d’Italia*, 15 June 1926

³¹⁵ Lettre E 2001(B) 7/19: Georges Wagnière to Giuseppe Motta cit. in ‘*Protokoll der Sitzung des Bundesrates vom 18.Juni 1926. (1000) Incidents à l’occasion de la manifestation en la mémoire du député italien Matteotti, à Genève*’ in Documents Diplomatiques Suisses (hereafter DDS), 1848-1945, v.9 (1925-1929) (Bern, 1980), doc. 195, pp.334-337

³¹⁶ ‘*Protokoll der Sitzung ...*’ in DDS, 1848-1945, v.9 (1925-1929) (Bern, 1980), doc. 195, pp.334-337

³¹⁷ Pietromarchi to Massimo Pilotti, undated (1944?), in Carte Luca Pietromarchi, sez.2.3, ‘Commissione Centrale di Epurazione’, TFE

Geneva institutions were forbidden during the sessions of the LoN Assembly and other international conferences.³¹⁸ Political activities and meetings occurring while Geneva was hosting the diplomatic delegations of foreign countries were perceived as particularly negative because they could encourage attacks on foreign representatives, which Switzerland, in charge for their security, could not afford.

The relevance of the Plainpalais brawl lies on the fact that it happened early in the relationship between Fascist Italy and the League. It shows us the consequences of Fascistization for the loyalties of the Italian officials at the League and the Secretariat, already in 1926, when the Italian USG was still Bernardo Attolico. Attolico, who opted not to chair the Advisory Committee, is a good example of how dual loyalties could become conflicting loyalties. The Plainpalais episode exemplifies the consequence of having Italian civil servants working for the LoN Secretariat successfully Fascistized and, as such, disregarding the conduct required by their employer, the League of Nations. In this case the direct implication of the Plainpalais incident for the League was an increased tension in the relations with the Swiss government. However the Secretary-General decided not to take action against the open influence of Fascism on LoN civil servants and avoided confrontation, no matter how negative the consequences for the Secretariat. In fact, no member state was interested in the Secretariat having the power to sanction their citizens working for the League. The Secretariat bore the negative consequences of the Fascist interference in order not to upset the third most powerful state within the League. This episode also reveals that both the Secretariat and the Swiss authorities showed a certain understanding for the motivations behind the Fascist action at the meeting, thus

³¹⁸ Cerutti, 'Les Italiens à Genève' in Kahn-Laginestra (ed.), p.105

allowing us to note that before the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis the attitude of the international community towards the Fascist regime was one of acceptance. Italian Fascism, in fact, was the '*régime légal de l'Italie.*' It was more stable than previous governments and was often associated positively with patriotism and anti-communism. The Plainpalais episode, in addition to showing the consequences of Fascistization for the League, presents the multiple dimensions of the interaction between Fascism, anti-Fascism and the League in the Geneva context.

Threatened by Fascists, Fled to America: Giuseppe Rocca

Having examined some of the consequences for the LoN of the successful Fascistization of some of its Italian employees, this chapter presents the case of a failed Fascistization and what happened to the Italian civil servant who opposed it. Dual loyalty was a challenge for the Secretariat and the incursion of Fascism into the work and private lives of Italian civil servants working for the Secretariat made such loyalties especially problematic. For the Italian officials, it became increasingly difficult to deal with the discrepancies between their nation-state's revisionist foreign policy and the international organization they were working for, which was in charge of maintaining the Versailles status quo. The situation was worsened by the nature of the loyalty required by the Fascist regime: loyalty not only to the Italian nation-state, but also to the Fascist Party. The following case of Giuseppe Rocca exemplifies the practical outcome of such a dilemma by showing the consequences of his reaction to the pressure of Fascistization, aimed at ensuring his loyalty and obedience to the regime.

Giuseppe Rocca (1888-1944) was an Italian civil servant who had been working for the League's Economic and Financial Section since 5 November 1923.³¹⁹ Within the Section, he was responsible for preparing the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, one of the most important documents published by the League. Rocca was born in Turin on 1 August 1888 and had strong connections to important Italian personalities such as the economist Luigi Einaudi (1874-1961) and the statistician Corrado Gini (1884-1965), whom he met while working in the War Statistics Office. After a short period at the International Labour Organization, Rocca joined the League, highly recommended by Einaudi and Angelo Di Nola.³²⁰ At the League he worked under the guidance of Alexander Loveday, who, together with the Head of Section, Arthur Salter, always submitted positive reports on his work. He had a 21-year international contract, but in March 1927, the Italian Ministry of National Economy, of which he was an employee on leave, decided to recall him to Rome because of 'administrative necessities.'³²¹ The Secretary-General received his resignation letter on 15 March.³²² As agreed between the Secretariat and Dino Grandi, Under-Secretary of the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time, Rocca was expected to finish his work at the League at the end of June 1927. In July he would have started his new job at the Central Statistical Institute in Rome, established in 1926 by Mussolini and led by Gini.³²³ The Italian Under Secretary-General, Attolico, made several attempts to shorten Rocca's stay at the

³¹⁹ Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²⁰ Luigi Einaudi to Bernardo Attolico, 18 Jun. 1922; Angelo Di Nola to Bernardo Attolico, 2 Jul. 1922 in Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives; Attolico to Luigi Einaudi, 9 and 24 Jun. 1922 in Carte Luigi Einaudi (Personal papers), sez.2 (correspondence), "Bernardo Attolico", TFE

³²¹ Attolico to Drummond, 21 Mar. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²² Rocca to Drummond, 15 Mar. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²³ Drummond to Dino Grandi, 24 Mar. 1927; Grandi to Drummond, 20 Apr. 1927 in Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

League and equal efforts were made by Loveday to enable Rocca to stay until October, but neither man achieved his aim.³²⁴

The majority of the senior civil servants and experts working in the LoN Secretariat were qualified professionals and it was not unexpected that the member states would recall them to work for the national administration. In addition, as we have seen, it was also not unusual for some civil servants to be employees of the LoN while at the same time being on leave as employees of their national service, even if this situation was not acknowledged officially. Thus, in theory at least, there was nothing exceptional with Rocca resigning to return to Rome and work for the Italian government. Initially, the only negative reaction to his resignation within the Secretariat seemed to relate to its bad timing. As Loveday stated to Salter, ‘Mr. Rocca’s resignation could not possibly have occurred at a more inappropriate moment.’³²⁵ In early 1927, the section was organizing the International Economic Conference taking place in Geneva in May 1927, and no one had time to look after the *Bulletin* until the conference was over. For this reason, Loveday wrote that if Rocca had to leave before June, ‘the existence of the Bulletin itself would be seriously imperilled.’³²⁶

The fact that Rocca’s resignation was more complicated than expected became clear at the end of May 1927, when, after leaving Geneva for a week on a permit, from 31 May to 6 June 1927, Giuseppe Rocca did not come back to work. On 4 June 1927,

³²⁴ Attolico to Drummond, 23 Mar. 1927; Alexander Loveday to Arthur Salter, 22 Mar. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²⁵ Loveday to Salter, 22 Mar. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²⁶ Loveday to Salter, 22 Mar. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

Loveday received a letter from the harbour of Cherbourg, in which Rocca wrote to Loveday that he was leaving for Northern America and he was not going to return to his work anytime soon. He also announced that he would shortly send an official letter to the Secretariat explaining his reasons and he justified to Loveday the sudden decision for his departure with the imminent expiration of his passport.³²⁷ Loveday forwarded the content of this communication to Drummond, who, without waiting for any further explanation, on 8 June 1927 wrote to Hugh McKinnon Wood, at the LoN Legal Section, declaring that ‘in such an exceptional case’ the contract of Rocca should be terminated without the necessity of calling together the LoN Advisory Committee on Disciplinary and Analogous Questions.³²⁸ On 11 June, Salter wrote to Paulucci to inform him of Rocca’s departure for America and the consequent termination of his contract.³²⁹

Rocca’s official letter explaining the motivations for the sudden departure from his LoN duties was written only on 24 June 1927, and reached the Secretariat on 13 July 1927.³³⁰ From Toronto, Rocca explained how the Fascists extorted from him his resignation with threats and how his desire was to re-join the Secretariat and resume his old job, from which he had been forced to stand down. As proof of his willingness

³²⁷ ‘Mr Loveday, I must apologise for not coming back punctually to the Office; I will explain later the reasons of the delay in official letters to you and to the S.G.; I sincerely hope that you will understand that it was absolutely impossible for me to do otherwise, because my passport will elapse June 18th and to say nothing to you before leaving, as I did not wish to make you in the slightest degree responsible for what I am doing. I have still 8 more days holidays due to me. You said recently to Mr. *Regens* (?) that I was a loyal worker. I sincerely hope that you will not change your mind owing to this letter. Confidentially I inform you that I go today to America in the hope to do something for the Toronto University. I deeply regret the necessity for the deception.’ [His underlining] Handwritten letter from Rocca to Loveday, 2 Jun. 1927 in Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²⁸ Drummond to McKinnon Wood, 8 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³²⁹ Salter to Paulucci, 11 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³³⁰ Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

to remain in Geneva and work for the League, Rocca claimed that he had resigned in January 1927 from that Ministry of National Economy, who wanted him back in Rome, even though the bureaucratic procedure was blocked due to formal reasons.³³¹ After reminding Drummond of his excellent state of service and of his choice not to be actively involved in politics, Rocca explained how Attolico had pushed all Italian civil servants at the LoN to join the Fascist Party.³³² He had refused and, in addition, he was implicated in the following episode, which precipitated the Fascist persecution against him. Rocca wrote to Drummond that, in September 1926, in Geneva, he met Orestes Ferrara, Cuban delegate to the League and Cuban Ambassador to the USA of Italian origins. Ferrara convinced him to join him for an informal visit to former Italian Prime Minister Francesco Saverio Nitti, in exile in France. When back from Aix-les-Bains, Ferrara ‘while speaking with Minister Attolico and other persons...incidentally referred to it [the visit].’³³³ The consequence of the diffusion of this information was that Rocca was accused by Attolico of political misbehaviour and ordered to go back to Rome to explain himself.³³⁴ Since he refused, Rocca claimed, Attolico started to threaten him, his colleagues and his family.³³⁵ Finally, on March 15, after a violent discussion, Gini, who was visiting Geneva, gave him a letter to sign that aimed at ending his dispute with the regime. Rocca claimed to Drummond that he had signed the letter without reading it. When he added his signature, all he

³³¹ Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p.7

³³² ‘... M. Attolico, vice secrétaire-adjoint [sic] de la SdN prétendait que les fonctionnaires italiens de la SdN se groupaient en associations fascistes et prenaient part à des manifestations fascistes et surtout à des actions de violence contre les antifascistes. Il a déclaré [sic] dans au [sic] discours au “fascio” de Genève que tous les fonctionnaires absolument devaient être fascistes...’ In Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927 in Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p.2

³³³ Transcript of the letter from Orestes Ferrara to Eric Drummond on 10 Jan. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p.3

³³⁴ Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p.3

³³⁵ Rocca to Eric Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p. 4

wanted was to stop the regime applying pressure to him. As it turned out, the letter was his resignation.³³⁶ Rocca also provided documents proving *'que la violence exercée contre moi a simplement été le résultat du zèle frénétique de M. Attolico et de M. Gini'*, but added that he did not think that they were obeying orders from above.³³⁷ These documents included a copy of a letter of Attolico to Gini defining the resignation of Rocca as the only honourable way to deal with his situation and to avoid *'conseguenze dolorose'* (painful consequences).³³⁸

Up to now, we have been presenting the events according to how Rocca described them to Drummond. While Rocca's version of the facts was consistent in the following correspondence with the Secretariat, new aspects of the story can be discovered by analysing his private correspondence and the diplomatic documents, both Italian and French, which deal with the episode. In particular, it is possible to add that by the end of 1926 Rocca was already a victim of threats, and that he had attempted to resign from the Ministry of National Economy in January 1927 in protest against the pressure of the Fascist regime.³³⁹ Rocca sent a letter to Paulucci on 19 February 1927, hoping that the future Under Secretary-General (Paulucci moved to Geneva only in March 1927) would help him eliminate the accusations of misbehaviour to which he had been subject.³⁴⁰ Rocca's letter reached Paulucci together with a letter by another Italian official working in the League: Giuseppe

³³⁶ Giuseppe Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p. 5

³³⁷ Trans. 'that the violence exerted against me has simply been the result of the frenzied zeal of Mr. Attolico and Mr. Gini' in Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p. 6

³³⁸ Copy of a letter of Bernardo Attolico to Corrado Gini, 19 Mar. 1927. Annex to letter Giuseppe Rocca to Nancy Williams, 28 Jun. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³³⁹ Righetti to Paulucci, Geneva, 23 Feb. 1927 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Giuseppe Righetti' b.65, GPdC, ASF

³⁴⁰ Rocca to Paulucci, Geneva, 19 Feb. 1927 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Giuseppe Rocca' b.65, GPdC, ASF

Righetti, who had been involved in the Plainpalais incident the year before. The name ‘Righetti’ never appears in any of Rocca’s available writings. However, Righetti’s correspondence with Paulucci speaks clearly about his involvement in the case, as Righetti admitted that:

*Gli parlai ripetutamente procurando di persuaderlo, nel suo stesso interesse, ad assumere un atteggiamento più conciliante. Gli prospettai, da un lato, tutte le conseguenze a cui sarebbe andato incontro fatalmente qualora avesse a proseguire in un atteggiamento di resistenza.*³⁴¹

Righetti is mentioned also in the correspondence of the French diplomatic service in Geneva as a key figure in threatening Rocca.³⁴² The same source confirms that the event which acted as catalyst in Rocca’s persecution was his encounter with Nitti, which had been reported to the Italian authorities also by the Geneva *fascio*, detecting anti-Fascist activities in the area.³⁴³ It is necessary to specify that Rocca already knew Nitti and that this visit was not the first one he made to the former Italian Prime Minister in exile: in 1925 he had visited Nitti in Zurich.³⁴⁴ However, they both claimed that the nature of their contact was intellectual rather than political.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ Trans. ‘I talked to him [Rocca] several times, trying to persuade him that it was in his own interest to take on a more conciliatory position. In addition, I presented him with all the consequences he would have fatally encountered [or ‘he was destined to encounter’—deliberate double meaning in Italian] in case he insisted in maintaining a resistant attitude.’ Righetti to Paulucci, 23 Feb. 1927 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Giuseppe Righetti’ b.65, GPdC, ASF; Note: at this date Paulucci was still working in Rome as Mussolini’s Chef de Cabinet

³⁴² *Note transmit par M. Ami-Leroy*, 17 Feb. 1928 in SdNFra, b.173, ADF

³⁴³ Guido Vinci to Renzo Ferrata, 30 Sept. 1926; Vinci to Ferrata, 8 Oct. 1926 in Ministero dell’Interno (MI), *Pubblica Sicurezza (PS)*, serie annuale 1926, b.102 “C2: Movimento Antifascista-Svizzera”, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Italy (hereafter ACS)

³⁴⁴ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 30 Jan. 1925, in *Carte Luigi Einaudi*, sez.2 (correspondence), “Rocca Giuseppe”, 1925, TFE

³⁴⁵ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 30 Jan. 1925, in *Carte Luigi Einaudi*, sez.2 (correspondence), “Rocca Giuseppe”, 1925, TFE; Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p.3; ‘L’ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera. Da socialista democratico a “Barone”. *Lo spionaggio di Ginevra*’ by Francesco Saverio Nitti in *La Libertà, Giornale della Concentrazione Antifascista*, 21 Oct. 1930 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Bernardo Attolico’ b.50, GPdC, ASF

The French documents help us to shed new light upon the role of the Secretariat in this episode. From Rocca's writings, it seems that the Secretary-General was not aware of Rocca's problems until he received his letter in July 1927.³⁴⁶ However, Joseph Avenol's papers report a different version of the facts. They show that the Secretary-General and his Deputy were already aware of Rocca's issues on 23 February 1927. The gravity of Rocca's situation was acknowledged and Drummond recommended that Avenol, who at the time was Deputy Secretary-General, keep the matter confidential, 'as the slightest publicity might do incalculable harm.'³⁴⁷ Moreover, Drummond blamed Avenol for having shared this information with Salter.³⁴⁸ Avenol replied to the Secretary-General that he did not feel comfortable hiding the situation from the Head of Rocca's Section.³⁴⁹ The Fascist pressure on Rocca and the frustration of this LoN employee were thus clearly known to his superiors, who, despite this, decided not to act in his support.

There is an additional version of Rocca's story available to us: that of Nitti, who wrote about it in 1930 in an article published by the Brazilian newspaper *O Estado de São-Paulo* and then reprinted in *La Libertà*, the journal of the anti-Fascist *Concentrazione*.³⁵⁰ The primary aim of the article was to criticise Italian Under Secretary-General Attolico. In his article, Nitti presented Attolico as both the object and the perpetuator of a Fascistization process. Attolico's diplomatic career owed

³⁴⁶ Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁴⁷ Drummond to Avenol (personal & confidential), 23 Feb. 1927 in Papiers d'Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.35, ADF

³⁴⁸ Drummond to Avenol (personal & confidential), 23 Feb. 1927 in Papiers d'Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.35, ADF

³⁴⁹ Avenol to Drummond (personal & confidential), 26 Feb. 1927 in Papiers d'Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.35, ADF

³⁵⁰ *L'ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera. Da socialista democratico a "Barone."* *Lo spionaggio di Ginevra* by Francesco Saverio Nitti in *La Libertà, Giornale della Concentrazione Antifascista*, 21 Oct. 1930 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Bernardo Attolico' b.50, GPdC, ASF

much of its success to Prime Minister Nitti, who claimed he had assigned Attolico to the League of Nations.³⁵¹ According to Nitti, at the time during which he was Prime Minister, Attolico showed support for ideas of democracy and freedom, but after Mussolini took power, *‘per entrare nelle grazie dei fascisti, organizzava bande di “squadristi” in territorio svizzero e compiva opera di spionaggio.’*³⁵² His actions were those of a man who had forgotten he was a diplomat and a high official of the League. Nitti confirmed that the persecution of Rocca, perpetuated by Attolico and Gini, started after Rocca visited him in the company of the Cuban delegate. According to Nitti, Attolico did not join Fascism enthusiastically at the beginning, because he thought that the phenomenon was temporary, and it was only when he realised that the fact of not being sufficiently Fascist might damage him, that he engaged in activities such as the persecution of Rocca.³⁵³ The Fascistization process, therefore, had a strong impact on the international behaviour of former liberals such as Attolico.

Attolico’s position changed significantly during his term at the League: from being the object of Fascistization, to become the promoter of it. Attolico started his career in international cooperation as a liberal, a position confirmed by his colleague Salvador de Madariaga, but, with the strengthening of Fascism, his position became very difficult, partly because he was considered ‘a Nitti man.’³⁵⁴ In order to get rid of this label, he had to present himself as more Fascist than the Fascists. The close attentions of Righetti, a Fascist spy with direct contacts to Rome, only served to increase the

³⁵¹ *‘L’ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera.’ op. cit.*; Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927 in Personal File ‘Giuseppe Rocca’, Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁵² Trans. ‘in order to be in the Fascists’ good graces, he organized Blackshirts squads in Swiss territory and conducted spying actions.’ In *‘L’ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera.’ op.cit.*

³⁵³ *‘L’ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera.’ op. cit.*

³⁵⁴ De Madariaga, S., *Morning without Noon. Memoirs* (Farnborough, Eng., 1973), p.20; Serra, E., *Professione: Ambasciatore d’Italia* (Milan, 1999), vol.1, p.22

pressure on him.³⁵⁵ When dealing with Rocca's case, Attolico was faced with conflicting loyalties, working against the interests of the League in order to fulfil his loyalty to the Fascist regime. However, this intervention was not sufficient to save Attolico from being recalled to Rome and sent as Ambassador to Brazil, a high ranking post but hardly a promotion.

The other person involved in Rocca's persecution, Corrado Gini, was an internationally-known statistician and economist. He worked as an expert for the League in 1921 and 1922, producing for the Economic and Financial Section the 'Gini report' on the unequal distribution of raw materials between the different countries. In his article, Nitti defined him as 'a famous forger of Fascist statistics' and 'a man without scruple.'³⁵⁶ Gini went from being a supporter of Rocca to become, in Rocca's eyes, his tormentor. A supporter of Fascism, Gini's career benefited greatly from the regime, to which he contributed by providing scientific grounds to the demographic and racist campaigns of Mussolini's government.³⁵⁷ Rocca's claim that Attolico and Gini were not obeying orders from above did not mean that the Italian government was unaware of the situation: in March 1927, Grandi asked Paulucci to try to solve the 'Rocca issue' if possible. He stressed that if Rocca was able to clear himself from the accusations against him, 'no one will harm him and he will be treated like all other State officials.'³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ *Note sur l'activité profasciste au sein de la Société des Nations, Le Ministre Plenipotentiaire Chargé du Consulat General de France à Genève à son excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Paris*, Geneva, 31 Aug. 1927 in SdNFra b.163, ADF

³⁵⁶ 'L'ambasciatore Attolico e la sua opera.' *op.cit.*

³⁵⁷ Cassata, F., *Il fascismo razionale: Corrado Gini fra scienza e politica* (Rome, 2006); Prévost, J-G, *A Total Science: Statistics in Liberal and Fascist Italy* (Montreal, 2009)

³⁵⁸ Trans. in Grandi to Paulucci di Calboli, 4 Mar. 1927 in *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (hereafter DDI), Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.47

An important source of information regarding Rocca's experience as a victim of Fascism at the League is Rocca's correspondence with Luigi Einaudi and Luigi's son Mario. In 1927, Luigi Einaudi was already an eminent economist of international reputation and a liberal intellectual. He was the Italian correspondent for *The Economist* and had been appointed Senator of the Italian Kingdom by Nitti in 1919. Einaudi had taught Rocca in Turin and Rocca had cooperated with him on some articles in the economic journal *La Riforma Sociale* as early as in 1910.³⁵⁹ The private correspondence between the two spans more than two decades and while their friendship was intimate, Rocca always maintained a deferent and respectful attitude towards his former professor. The friendship with Luigi Einaudi opened to Rocca the doors to a friendly relation also with his son Mario, who, in the interwar period, started his international career as scholar of political theory. In his letters to Luigi and Mario Einaudi, Rocca articulated a feeling of impotence about his future. Initially, it seemed to him that nothing could be done to avoid his return to Italy and his future employment in Rome under the supervision of Gini, whom he despised.³⁶⁰ When still at the League, he had hoped for some help from his superiors, but he seemed resigned to the fact that he would no longer work for the League. He decided not to discuss with the Secretariat the resignation forced upon him as he feared further threats.³⁶¹ In early May 1927, when presenting to Luigi Einaudi his decision to flee, he referred to it as the only respectable solution.³⁶²

³⁵⁹ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 27 Dec. 1910 in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1909-1910, TFE

³⁶⁰ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 28 Mar. 1927 (undated) in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1933-s.d, TFE. Please note: many letters in the Rocca-Einaudi correspondence have been catalogued as 'undated', however, thanks to my knowledge of the facts, I could reconstruct the correct chronology of many of them. These letters are cited with the assumed date and the official undated label in brackets.

³⁶¹ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 9 Apr. 1927 in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1927, TFE

³⁶² Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 4 May 1927 (undated) in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1933-s.d., TFE

When Rocca arrived in Northern America, he was helped by Luigi Einaudi's letters of recommendation and contacts to find temporary teaching positions at local universities.³⁶³ Rocca was very much in need of a job, since, as we know from the documents of the French service, the Fascist persecution of the former LoN official continued on the other side of the Atlantic: Rocca lost his first employment in a bank in Chicago because he was denounced by the Fascists to the Immigration Office in Washington D.C. for having crossed the US border from Canada without regular authorisation from the American authorities.³⁶⁴ Rocca was not very successful in hunting jobs in academia, and he soon became an employee of the same Orestes Ferrara, who accompanied him to Nitti in autumn 1926. Ferrara offered him employment as his personal assistant, researching on Pan-Americanism and sugar trade.³⁶⁵ As Cuban delegate to the LoN Economic and Financial Conference in London in 1933, Ferrara brought Rocca with him as his personal secretary. Thus, we can see that Rocca's interaction with the League did not end in 1927.³⁶⁶ During his exile, he kept exchanging letters with Prof. Adrien Neville of Geneva University and with several former colleagues, in particular with Gregory Frumkin, who in 1944 communicated Rocca's death to the Personnel Office of the League. In his letter to the Secretariat, Frumkin declared to have been probably the only one in the Section to

³⁶³ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 21 Jun. 1927 in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1927, TFE

³⁶⁴ *Note transmit par M. Ami-Leroy*, 17 Feb.1928 in SdNFra b.173, ADF; for the interest of the Fascists on the life of Rocca in America see also: *Telegramma in arrivo n.177*, Rome 16 July 1927 and *Telegramma in partenza n.237*, Geneva, 19 July 1927 in Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), b.70, GPdC, ASF

³⁶⁵ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 29 Mar. 1932 and 13 Jul. 1933 (undated), in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1932 and s.d.1, TFE

³⁶⁶ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 6 Jun. 1933, in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1933, TFE

know why Rocca left the League very suddenly to depart for America: to avoid the pressure exercised by representatives of the Italian regime on his life choices.³⁶⁷

What does this episode reveal about Rocca himself? Rocca was not an active anti-Fascist. His name is not found in association with any of the Geneva Italian *fuoriusciti* and he did not participate in anti-Fascist meetings in Geneva. His profile is not of a politically-active intellectual hostile to the regime. As he described himself to Drummond, he never dealt with politics and always maintained a low profile.³⁶⁸ In his letter on 24 June 1927, Rocca explained that when he became a member of the League he thought it was his duty to abstain from all political demonstrations and political actions:

*Citoyen et fonctionnaire italien, étant passé au service de la Société des Nations, j'ai pensé que mon devoir était de m'abstenir non seulement de toute manifestation, mais aussi de toute action politique. L'Italie est divisée maintenant entre fascistes et antifascistes: j'ai pensé qu'en qualité de fonctionnaire d'une institution internationale comme la Société des Nations, je devais m'abstenir de toute activité d'ordre politique. Je n'ai été ni fasciste ni antifasciste. [...] Bien que libre d'appartenir à un parti ou à l'autre, je n'ai jamais voulu vivre à l'étranger et au service d'une institution internationale, manifester même des sympathies ou des antipathies politiques.*³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ '...Je crois avoir été, à ce moment là, la seule personne de la Section qu'il eut [sic] informé des circonstances dans lesquelles il avait donné sa démission et s'était décidé à quitter l'Europe. C'est en effet à la suite d'une très forte pression exercée sur lui par certains représentants de son pays qu'il avait donné sa démission, laquelle, par conséquent, n'avait pas été librement consentie par lui, et c'est pour se soustraire à la continuation de cette pression qu'il était décidé à partir pour les Etats-Unis. M. Rocca, avec lequel je suis resté en relations, m'a laissé un très bon souvenir comme excellent camarade et homme de caractère généreux et intègre.' In Gregory Frumkin to Valentin Joseph Stencek (Director of Personnel), 14 Sept. 1944 in Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives; also Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 19 Aug. 1927 and 22 May 1928, in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1927-1928, TFE

³⁶⁸ Rocca to Drummond, 27 Jan. 1928, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁶⁹ Trans. 'As an Italian citizen and official, when I transferred to the service of the LoN, I had thought that it was my duty to abstain not only from all demonstrations, but also from all political actions. Italy is now divided into Fascists and anti-Fascists: I thought that as official of an international organization like the LoN, I had to abstain from all activities of political nature. I have been neither Fascist nor anti-Fascist [...]. Although I was free to belong to one side or the other, I never wanted, since I was living abroad and at the service of an international institution, to manifest not even political sympathies or

Rocca's view of the responsibilities of an international official at the League and the duty of concealing political sympathies is in strong contrast to the behaviour of those civil servants who engaged in a brawl at Plainpalais in June 1926, and of those who sought to exert political pressure on him. Rocca actively resisted the influence on him of Italian Fascism because, in addition to not being sympathetic to the regime, he saw himself as a loyal employee of the League with the duty of maintaining a politically neutral profile.

Because of his loyalty to the League and his respect for the institution, he expected the League to act according to its rules and submitted his case for judgement to the appropriate bodies. In his letter on 24 June 1927, he asked Drummond to submit his case to the Appointment Committee, appealing to Articles 16 and 19 of the Staff Regulations according to which the Secretary-General would not terminate a contract without serious reasons.³⁷⁰ However, it is clear from his letters to Luigi Einaudi that he had little confidence in a positive outcome.³⁷¹ In fact, the Secretariat refused to reconsider his case. Avenol communicated to him in a strongly-worded letter dated 20 July 1927, that it was not possible to reopen the question of his resignation from the Secretariat, and that there was no vacancy for the post which he occupied, because other arrangements had been made for carrying on the tasks he performed.³⁷² Rocca

antipathies.' In Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927 in Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, pp.1-2

³⁷⁰ Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives, p. 7

³⁷¹ Rocca to Luigi Einaudi, 17 Jun. 1927 (undated) in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", s.d.1, TFE

³⁷² 'Dear Mr. Rocca, In reply to your letter of June 8th 1927, I have to inform you that it is not possible to re-open the question of your resignation from the Secretariat. The request contained in your letter of March 15th that you should be released from the service of the Secretariat so soon as administrative exigencies might permit, was met by arranging that you should leave the service at the end of June. Your action in leaving for Canada, without obtaining the previous consent of the Administration, at a

continued writing to the Secretariat asking for the intervention of the Judicial Committee several times in the period 1927-1928.³⁷³ He insisted in appealing to Drummond *'parce que j'estimais, que vous ne pouvez pas permettre, qu'on offense les droits de la personnalité [sic] humaine dans l'un de vos fonctionnaires'* and he refused to receive any payment due to him from the League until the question was settled.³⁷⁴ Many times Rocca stressed the fact that he avoided applying to the Council or to the international press about his case because he was confident that there would be justice.³⁷⁵ But the outcome did not change.

When the League in 1927 created a new body, the Administrative Tribunal, with the specific aim of dealing with tensions that could occur between the League (and the ILO) and its employees, Rocca believed he had a chance to have his case re-examined. The Assembly approved the Statute establishing the Tribunal on 26 September 1927. The Tribunal consisted of three judges and three deputy judges, all of different nationalities, appointed by the LoN Council for three years. The decisions were taken by a majority vote and the judgements were final and without appeal. The Tribunal was meant to have one ordinary session each year and its first session took place on 2 February 1928.³⁷⁶ The three judges nominated by the Council on 9 December 1927 were Raffaele Montagna from Italy, Albert Devèze from Belgium,

time when you had merely been granted a week's leave and were due to return to work on June 7th, made it necessary to regard your employment as finally terminated on June 6th, and a formal letter to that effect was sent to you on June 8th. There is no vacancy in the post which you occupied, arrangements having been definitely made for carrying on the work which you performed.' Avenol to Rocca, 20 Jul. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁷³ Rocca to Watterson on 15 Aug. 1927; Rocca to Drummond, 27 Jan. 1928 in Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁷⁴ Trans. 'because I considered that you could not allow that the rights of the human personality (human dignity?) of one of your officials would be offended.' In Rocca to Drummond, 27 Jan. 1928, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁷⁵ Rocca to Drummond, 24 Jun. 1927, p.6; Rocca to Drummond, 27 Jan. 1928 in Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁷⁶ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp.260-261

and Walther Frölich from Germany.³⁷⁷ Rocca decided to submit his case to this new body and to be represented by Frédéric de Rabours, a lawyer and National Councillor of the Geneva Canton. At the Tribunal, Rocca asked to be reinstated to his job in the Economic and Financial Section or to settle for a large indemnity. According to the French, the case produced much interest at the League.³⁷⁸ However, since the jurisdiction power of the body began only on 1 January 1928, any decision taken by the League Secretariat or by the ILO with regard to their employees before that date could not be received by the Tribunal.³⁷⁹ These legal caveats meant that Rocca's case fell at the first hurdle.³⁸⁰

Rocca was not the only victim of Fascist pressure, nor the only Italian civil servant at the LoN to be subjected to a Fascistization process. Why, then, is Rocca's case the only one to which repeated reference is made in the records of the League as well as in the Italian and French Foreign Ministries? What made Rocca's case unique within the LoN was his reaction to the Fascist regime: he resisted. Rocca's case, unlike that of Attolico, is an example of failed Fascistization: he remained loyal to the League and failed to show loyalty to the Fascist regime and accept to return to Rome. When the Fascists accused him of anti-Fascist behaviour on the basis of his visit to Nitti in 1926, Rocca reacted by protesting and tried to resign from the Ministry of National Economy.³⁸¹ This attempt at resistance, characterised also by some attempts at mediation with Paulucci, was followed by his more questionable choice to leave

³⁷⁷ *LoN, Section d'Information, Note n.2932*, 17 Feb. 1928, in SdNFra b.173, ADF

³⁷⁸ *Note transmit par M. Ami-Leroy*, 17 Feb. 1928 in SdNFra b.173, ADF

³⁷⁹ *LoN, Section d'Information, Note n. 4142*, 22 Jan. 1930, in SdNFra b.173, ADF; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.260

³⁸⁰ We can assume a negative outcome of the claim based on the fact that in his extensive correspondence with Luigi Einaudi, Rocca does not mention the Administrative Tribunal nor any positive legal outcome regarding his reintegration at the League. See Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Rocca Giuseppe", 1927-1928, TFE

³⁸¹ Righetti to Paulucci, Geneva, 23 Feb. 1927 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Giuseppe Righetti' b.65, GPdC, ASF

Geneva and Europe for a new continent. Rocca's act of resistance was not strong, and we do not know whether his decisions were fully driven by his convictions or by mere misfortune, but it was still the only active attempt (at least until 1937) of an Italian official of the League to disobey the Fascist regime. Rocca's case, also reported in vague terms by Loveday, shows the consequences of opposition to Fascist interference in the lives and work of Italian civil servants.³⁸²

How can we interpret the behaviour of the Secretariat in Rocca's case? The senior officials of the LoN Secretariat knew that Rocca was the object of Fascist threats and that his resignation from the Secretariat was not voluntary. However, in light of the documents available and considering the outcome of the story, it seems that the Secretary-General and his Deputy decided not to interfere in any way in a dispute involving Fascist LoN officials behaving like national representatives (Attolico, Paulucci and Righetti), on the one side, and an Italian international official, Rocca, on the other. The correspondence between the Secretariat and Rocca after he fled Europe confirms that the Secretariat was eager to close the case. Drummond's letter announcing the termination of Rocca's contract was issued before any formal justification from him was received.³⁸³ Rocca's requests for a legal settlement of the matter were consistently turned down.³⁸⁴ The reason for this behaviour resides in the limited power of the Secretariat in dealing with highly politicised employees of a state which actively aimed at having full control of its nationals abroad. The Secretariat did not have sufficient legal and political power to oppose the behaviour of a powerful

³⁸² Loveday acknowledged that the Italian government did 'bring political pressure to bear on League officials as a result of which at least one resigned and emigrated to the United States' in Loveday, *Reflections on International Administration*, p.123

³⁸³ Drummond to McKinnon Wood, 8 Jun. 1927, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

³⁸⁴ Rocca to Watterson on 15 Aug. 1927; Rocca to Drummond, 27 Jan. 1928, Personal File 'Giuseppe Rocca', Personnel Office, S. 869, LoN Archives

member state, especially when the matter in question was strictly connected to internal politics. No member state of the League would have accepted the interference of the Secretariat in the decisions taken by the central government, or its legitimate representatives, on the future careers of its nationals. Moreover, the Secretary-General had not yet understood the impact that the Fascistization process could have on the functioning of the Secretariat.

Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli in Geneva

The Fascistization process promoted by the Fascist regime became systematic when Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli arrived in Geneva as the new Italian Under Secretary-General in March 1927. We presented a portrait of Paulucci in the previous chapter, where we also discussed his influence on the recruitment process of the Italians at the League. This chapter investigates in more depth the impact on the Secretariat of his presence at the League during the period between 28 March 1927 and 8 November 1932. Before moving to Geneva, Paulucci obtained instructions from the Italian Foreign Ministry. On 4 March 1927 Dino Grandi wrote him the guidelines approved by Mussolini.³⁸⁵ Paulucci was required to keep in contact with Rome in order to remain informed of the government's opinion on League's matters. Grandi suggested that until the issue of Italian personnel was solved, hinting at their full Fascistization, Paulucci should not isolate the officials who were against Fascism, but he should rather 'draw them closer to keep a closer watch' on them.³⁸⁶ These guidelines remind us that Paulucci was a means of Fascistization in Geneva, but was not the vital force

³⁸⁵ Grandi to Paulucci di Calboli, 4 Mar. 1927, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.47

³⁸⁶ Trans. Grandi to Paulucci di Calboli, 4 Mar. 1927, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.47

behind it: it was the Fascist government in Rome which required Italian civil servants abroad to be loyal to the regime.

Although Grandi's directives suggest a moderate approach to non-Fascist Italians in Geneva, during Paulucci's time at the League attempts at Fascistization reached a peak, with a growing membership of the Fascist Party and an increased participation in Fascist demonstrations in Geneva. Moreover, Paulucci demanded a higher Fascist presence in the League, which he obtained by supporting the promotion of existing officials (e.g. Catastini to Director of Section) and by hiring more Italians.³⁸⁷ The new employees, some substituting old civil servants, others taking up newly created posts, were all members of the Fascist Party (Arcoleo, Chiappelli, Crolla, Gentile, Marchesi, Schininà, Tani and Ugo Theodoli).

In 1932, before leaving the League, Paulucci presented to Mussolini a report detailing the great results of his Fascist missionary expedition to Geneva. When he arrived at the League in March 1927, out of the 24 Italian civil servants (First and Second Divisions) only six were members of the Fascist Party (PNF). When he left in 1932, the Fascists numbered 20 out of 43.³⁸⁸ If we have a closer look at this report, the success of Paulucci in the First Division, the most important one, was significant: in 1927 only half of the officials in the First Division were party members, five out of ten, while in 1932, it was 11 out of 13. Paulucci listed the following as members of the PNF in 1927: Attolico, Catastini, Righetti, Pantaleoni and Pietromarchi. As we saw, all of them had been involved to some extent in the Plainpalais episode in 1926. The

³⁸⁷ *L'Elemento Italiano del Segretariato della SDN. Situazione del Comm. Catastini.* Paulucci to Ministero Affari Esteri, 24 Mar. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b.74, GPdC, ASF

³⁸⁸ Report *'Funzionari Italiani del Segretariato'* by Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone to Mussolini, 8 Oct. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

Italian officials of the First Division listed as not being members of the Fascist Party were instead: Brivonesi, Bruccoleri, Rocca, Roddolo and Stoppani.³⁸⁹ We have presented Rocca's story, but what was the impact of Paulucci on the other four civil servants who were not officially Fascists?

The pressure to join the Fascist Party had affected Giuseppe Bruccoleri, member of the Information Section and liaison officer between Italy and Geneva, before Paulucci joined the League. Paulucci was nevertheless involved in the matter as Chef de Cabinet of Mussolini. In June 1926, after the Plainpalais incident, Bruccoleri wrote him to seek advice for a '*caso di coscienza*' (a case of conscience).³⁹⁰ Bruccoleri was in doubt as to whether or not he should officially join the Fascist Party. After reminding Paulucci of his involvement with Fascism from its early years (1917), Bruccoleri summarised the good service he did for Italy while in Geneva: he provided confidential information to the government during the Corfu crisis, he positively influenced foreign newspapers on the topic of Fascism, and moderated the views of his international colleagues on the participation of Italian officials in the Plainpalais brawl. Bruccoleri stressed the fact that he could do such a service to his country because he had the trust of the Secretary-General and of his colleagues: a trust based on his political neutrality. However, Bruccoleri was in doubt as to whether he should give up that trust by officially joining the PNF. In fact, even though he enjoyed a neutral status among his international colleagues, among the Italians suspicion against him was growing due to the fact that he was not affiliated to the Fascist Party. For these reasons, Bruccoleri contacted Paulucci, who knew him well and who, due to his

³⁸⁹ Report '*Funzionari Italiani del Segretariato*' by Paulucci to Mussolini, 8 Oct. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

³⁹⁰ Giuseppe Bruccoleri to Paulucci, 30 Jun. 1926, in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Giuseppe Bruccoleri' b.51, GPdC, ASF

close relations with Mussolini, was the best person to offer to Bruccoleri advice on ‘how to interpret the Prime Minister’s directives and thoughts on such a matter.’³⁹¹ The fact that Bruccoleri was concerned about ‘legalising his position’ in relation to the Fascist Party in 1926 shows that in Geneva he was subject to active pressure to Fascistize. There is no further record on this matter, but when going back to Paulucci’s report, we can see that in 1932 Bruccoleri was still not listed as a PNF member, suggesting that Rome had come to accept that maintaining a neutral political image while in Geneva was a way for him to serve better the regime.

Marcello Roddolo was also reported as not being member of the Fascist Party in 1927.³⁹² Paulucci took personal care of his case and in April 1928 he wrote to Grandi on the matter. First of all, he complimented Grandi for his success in convincing all officials of the Italian Foreign Ministry to join the party, emphasising how they must have finally understood that ‘today more than ever Party and Nation constitute an indissoluble whole.’³⁹³ Then, however, he noted that there were officials living abroad who had had no chance yet to sign up for membership. In particular, this was the case of Marcello Roddolo.³⁹⁴ Roddolo was a member of the Political Section from 1923 to 1932, and had been part of Carlo Sforza’s cabinet in the liberal years. He was also a good friend of Giuseppe Rocca, with whom he stayed in contact during exile in the USA.³⁹⁵ Righetti, a Fascist spy, believed that Roddolo was an agent of international

³⁹¹ Bruccoleri to Paulucci, 30 Jun. 1926, in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Giuseppe Bruccoleri’ b.51, GPdC, ASF

³⁹² Report ‘*Funzionari Italiani del Segretariato*’ by Paulucci to Mussolini, 8 Oct. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

³⁹³ Trans. Paulucci to Grandi, 2 Apr. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Dino Grandi’ b.58, GPdC, ASF

³⁹⁴ Paulucci to Grandi, 2 Apr. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Dino Grandi’ b.58, GPdC, ASF

³⁹⁵ Rocca to Mario Einaudi, 22 May (undated) in *Carte Mario Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence)*, “Rocca Giuseppe”, TFE

Freemasonry at the League.³⁹⁶ However, Paulucci, who knew Roddolo from pre-Fascist times, after getting rid of Righetti in September 1927, made sure that his friend was protected from further threats and officially presented his situation to Grandi. Despite his liberal past, Roddolo, unlike Rocca could count on his friendship with Paulucci to justify his position and react to the pressure to join the PNF.³⁹⁷ Paulucci explained to Grandi that Roddolo had not joined the Fascist Party yet and had agreed with him to maintain a neutral image at the League *‘perchè mi faceva troppo comodo di potermi servire di persona fidata, senza etichetta fascista nell’ambiente di Ginevra.’*³⁹⁸ The reason for maintaining neutrality at the League was the same given by Bruccoleri: to retain his credibility in an international environment. However, the Italian Under Secretary-General was afraid that the lack of Fascist membership could harm Roddolo’s career back in Italy and for this reason he wanted to make sure that Grandi was aware of the situation.³⁹⁹ In Paulucci’s report in 1932, Roddolo appeared as member of the PNF, hence a successful example of Fascistization. Roddolo’s story suggests that the Fascistization process was implemented to a different degree depending on one’s ranking within the League and personal contacts: personal friends of Paulucci had less to fear from Fascist pressures.

Giuseppe Righetti, who played such an important role in persecuting Rocca, accusing Roddolo, and threatening non-Fascists at the League, did not have a long life in Geneva after the arrival of Paulucci: he left the Secretariat in September 1927. The

³⁹⁶ *Note sur l’activité profasciste au sein de la Société des Nations, Le Ministre Plenipotentiaire Chargé du Consulat General de France à Genève à son excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Paris*, Geneva, 31 Aug. 1927 in SdNFra b.163, ADF

³⁹⁷ Marcello Roddolo to Paulucci, 2 Nov. (undated), in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Marcello Roddolo’ b.65, GPdC, ASF

³⁹⁸ Trans. ‘because it was very convenient to have the possibility to make use of a trustworthy person, someone without Fascist label, in the Geneva context.’ Paulucci to Grandi, 2 Apr. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Dino Grandi’ b.58, GPdC, ASF

³⁹⁹ Paulucci to Grandi, 2 Apr. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Dino Grandi’ b.58, GPdC, ASF

same French diplomatic service which reported him as a Fascist spy sheds some light on the motivations behind his resignation.⁴⁰⁰ Paulucci, who was aware that Righetti played a role in causing Attolico's departure, found some of his confidential correspondence with Mussolini on Righetti's desk and learned that Righetti was leading a campaign in Rome accusing him of not defending with sufficient energy the interest of Fascism in Geneva.⁴⁰¹ Paulucci, who did not want a spy in his office, and who, unlike Attolico, had an established Fascist record and powerful friends, decided to get rid of him as soon as he could.

Of the remaining Italian officials of the First Division whom Paulucci reported as not being members of the Fascist Party in 1927, we know that Commander Brivonesi (Secretary of the PAC) joined the party in 1930.⁴⁰² Brivonesi's reasons for not doing so earlier were related to his concerns about respecting existing rules, which forbade military officials in active service membership of a political party. However, he then decided to join the PNF because he 'could not consider Fascism like the other political parties, since it incarnated the very essence of the mother land.'⁴⁰³ Finally there was Pietro Stoppani, who in Paulucci's report appeared as 'not converted' as late as 1932.⁴⁰⁴ As we shall see in Chapter 5, Stoppani, a liberal who in 1931 had been appointed Director of the Economic Relations Section, managed to coexist with Fascism by creating a good personal relationship with Paulucci⁴⁰⁵ Stoppani, helped

⁴⁰⁰ *Note sur l'activité profasciste au sein de la Société des Nations...*, Geneva, 31 Aug. 1927; *Note. Monsieur Ame-Leroy Chargé du Consulat General de France à Genève à son excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à Paris*, Geneva, 27 Dec. 1927 in SdNFra b.163, ADF

⁴⁰¹ *Note. Monsieur Ame-Leroy Chargé du Consulat General de France..*, 27 Dec. 1927 in SdNFra b.163, ADF

⁴⁰² Bruno Brivonesi to Paulucci, 9 May 1930 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b. 74, GPdC, ASF

⁴⁰³ Brivonesi to Guido Vinci, 14 Apr. 1929; Paulucci to Vinci, 2 Apr. 1930 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, b. 74, GPdC, ASF

⁴⁰⁴ Report '*Funzionari Italiani del Segretariato*' by Paulucci to Mussolini, 8 Oct. 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

⁴⁰⁵ *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Pietro Stoppani' b. 66, GPdC, ASF

also by the technical nature of his economic work, succeeded in winning the trust of the regime without ever becoming a member of the PNF.

When we look at the Italians in the First Division listed in Paulucci's report as Fascists in 1932, we find the following names: Paulucci; Catastini and Pantaleoni, certified as Fascists already in 1927; Roddolo, a successful example of Fascistization; Crolla, Chiappelli, Gentile, Schininà, Tani, Ugo Theodoli and Pampana as new Fascist employees, strengthening the assumption that all new Italians recruited in Paulucci's time were sympathetic to the regime.⁴⁰⁶ Bruccoleri and Stoppani remained the only outsiders.

Paulucci's Fascist approach was immediately noticed at the League. It was not just the promotion of the Fascistization of the Italian employees, but also the introduction of clear political symbols in the Secretariat, such as the pin of the Fascist Party, and most importantly his involvement in cases attracting the attention of the local anti-Fascist press.⁴⁰⁷ The most significant episode was the one involving Paulucci's driver, Clemente Thomasset. According to the socialist newspaper *Le Travail*, Thomasset was very qualified but '*il s'obstinait à porter des chemises de toutes les couleurs de l'arc-en-ciel, LE NOIR EXCEPTÉ.*'⁴⁰⁸ His refusal to wear the black shirt led to him being fired. According to the press, a dispute arose about the salary still owed to the driver and in order to get rid of Thomasset, Paulucci, together with the Italian

⁴⁰⁶ Report '*Funzionari Italiani del Segretariato*' by Paulucci to Mussolini, 8 October 1932, SdN b.11, ASMAE

⁴⁰⁷ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.408

⁴⁰⁸ Uppercase in the original. Trans. 'He persisted in wearing shirts of all the colours of the rainbow, but black ones' in 'La police d'Edmond Ier aux ordres de M. le Marquis' in *Le Travail*, 16 Jul. 1928 in Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives; the fact that the driver was fired because anti-Fascist is confirmed by the Fascist political police: Report 21 Jul. 1928, in Ministero degli Interni (MI), Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (DGPS), Polizia Politica (POL POL), Persone, b.953 'Paolucci de Calboli Giacomo', ACS

Consulate and the local police, tried to force him on a train back to Italy. However, when the journalists of *Le Travail* heard about the story, they intervened, together with Léon Nicole, and Thomasset remained in Geneva.⁴⁰⁹ The press coverage of the event was the subject of a debate at the Secretariat, after Paulucci complained to the Swiss authorities about the articles.⁴¹⁰ Interestingly, he thought he could control the Swiss press in ways that the Fascist regime attempted in Italy. In fact, Paulucci argued that he had dismissed Thomasset on moral grounds, because the latter had had an illicit relationship with a woman, and that the local newspapers offered an untrue account of the facts.⁴¹¹ The Swiss authorities replied to Paulucci that Switzerland's constitutional guarantees allowed *Le Travail* to express its version of the events.⁴¹² The case, involving Paulucci and the Swiss authorities, reached the attention of the Secretariat because it concerned the potential damage to the reputation of a high-ranking LoN official.⁴¹³ This episode is significant as it sets Paulucci in the Geneva scene, showing us that he was recognised by the local community as an emissary of Mussolini. During his permanence in Geneva, Paulucci was actively involved in supporting the activities of the Geneva *fascio*, which was also a means of pressure to convince the Italian civil servants in the League to join the Fascist Party.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁹ 'La police d'Edmond Ier aux ordre de M. le Marquis' in *Le Travail*, 16 Jul. 1928; 'Corrispondenze. Da Ginevra. Stile fascista' in *Avvenire del Oratore*, undated, reporting the article from *Le Travail*; 'Après une tentative ratée d'expulsion. Les désillusions de M. le Marquis' *Le Travail*, 19 Jul. 1928, Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

⁴¹⁰ Paulucci to M. Dinichert (*Chef de la Division des Affaires Etrangères, Département Politique Fédéral, Berne*) 16 and 20 Jul. 1928; McKinnon Wood to Avenol, 25 Jul. 1928, Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

⁴¹¹ Paulucci to Turrettini (*Chief du Département de Justice et Police, Genève*), 12 Jul. 1928, Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

⁴¹² Dinichert to Paulucci, 21 Jul. 1928, Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

⁴¹³ McKinnon Wood to Avenol, 25 Jul. 1928, Personal file 'Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone', Personnel Office, S.851, LoN Archives

⁴¹⁴ Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Guido Vinci' b.68, GPdC, ASF

How was the Fascist presence of Paulucci perceived by international delegates and civil servants at the League? Paulucci displayed behaviour that was considered unacceptable by many, such as giving ovations to Fascist ministers speaking at the International Labour Organization.⁴¹⁵ The Norwegian delegate to the League, Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, in a speech in September 1928, complained that certain states seemed to consider their nationals working for the League as representatives of their own particular interests and political aims.⁴¹⁶ While Mowinckel did not explicitly mention Italy, all the press clearly understood a reference to it at the time.⁴¹⁷ In April 1928, Paulucci had already been formally reminded by Eric Drummond about his duties as an international civil servant. Referring to Paulucci's recent public meetings with Mussolini and Grandi in Milan, the Secretary-General advised him to avoid giving the impression of being an ambassador of his own government at the Secretariat rather than an international official.⁴¹⁸ Paulucci was disloyal to the League and depended entirely on his Fascist beliefs and Rome's directives. Moreover, Paulucci's attitude as 'boss' of all Italian civil servants was seen as disruptive by his international colleagues and, in particular, by the Secretary-General.⁴¹⁹

Drummond, who had borne without complaint all previous disruptions to the League created by the Fascistization process, could not stand any longer Paulucci's threats to the Secretariat's working environment. The Secretary-General was so annoyed by Paulucci's behaviour that, in April 1931, he met with Foreign Minister Grandi in

⁴¹⁵ *M. Ame-Leroy, Consul General de France à Genève à M. le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères*, Geneva, 13 Jun. 1928 in SdNFra b.2122, ADF

⁴¹⁶ *Il fascismo e la burocrazia della Società delle Nazioni*, Agenzia Stefani, Geneva, 11 Sept. 1928 in Ginevra-Società delle Nazioni (1927-1932), b. 155, GPdC, ASF

⁴¹⁷ See *La Prensa* (Argentina) and *Worwaerts* in *Il fascismo e la burocrazia della Società delle Nazioni*, Agenzia Stefani, Geneva, 11 Sept. 1928; Excerpt titled *Presse Argentine, Les fonctionnaires de la Société des Nations* (undated) in Ginevra-Società delle Nazioni (1927-1932), b. 155, GPdC, ASF

⁴¹⁸ Riassunto del colloquio con Drummond by Paulucci, 23 Apr. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra* (1927-32), 'Eric Drummond' b.56, GPdC, ASF

⁴¹⁹ Ranshofen-Wertheimer, p.251

Rome in order to secure Paulucci's resignation.⁴²⁰ Drummond told Grandi that he did not intend to renew Paulucci's contract, due to terminate at the end of 1931.

According to the Secretary-General,

*egli non ha dato prova di possedere le doti necessarie per il lavoro delicato a cui la Società delle Nazioni e il Governo Italiano l'avevano preposto tre anni or sono. Egli ha suscitato attorno a sè un ambiente di antipatia, di irritazione, per cui il suo lavoro finisce con l'essere praticamente negativo, ed ha procurato al Segretariato numerosi imbarazzi.*⁴²¹

Drummond insisted that it was in Italy's interest to have a different Under Secretary-General at the League. He declared to Grandi that because his early warnings had brought no change in Paulucci's attitude, with much regret, he was no longer willing to employ Paulucci.⁴²² Grandi replied that this was an embarrassing situation for his country, and asked Drummond to agree to prolong the presence of Paulucci in the League for the Disarmament Conference, until June 1932. The Secretary-General tried to convince Grandi that the duration of the Conference was unknown and that it was in Italy's interest to remove Paulucci as soon as possible, but he finally agreed to the renewal 'in order to disembarass the Italian government.'⁴²³ Writing on his diary about this meeting, Grandi commented that Drummond's request for Paulucci's

⁴²⁰ Meeting with Eric Drummond, 19 Apr. 1931, Grandi's Diary, Aprile 1931 in Carte Grandi, b.22/90/33, ASMAE

⁴²¹ Trans. 'He did not demonstrate that he had the necessary qualifications required for the delicate job to which the League of Nations and the Italian government appointed him three years ago. He created around himself an environment characterised by antipathy and irritation, so that his work results in negative outcomes, and has caused many embarrassments to the Secretariat.' Report in Italian of the meeting with Eric Drummond, 19 Apr. 1931, Grandi's Diary, Aprile 1931 in Carte Grandi, b.22/90/33, ASMAE

⁴²² Meeting with Eric Drummond, 19 Apr. 1931, Grandi's Diary, Aprile 1931 in Carte Grandi, b.22/90/33, ASMAE

⁴²³ Meeting with Eric Drummond, 19 Apr. 1931, Grandi's Diary, Aprile 1931 in Carte Grandi, b.22/90/33, ASMAE

removal was understandable: ‘Paulucci è oltrechè uno sleale servitore del suo paese, un faiseur d’embarras. Ci ha fatto molto male a Ginevra.’⁴²⁴

In fact, even though Paulucci was positively involved in bringing Fascism to the LoN Secretariat, he made a personal enemy of Grandi, whose vision of the League differed greatly from his. Grandi, Italian Foreign Minister since September 1929, started an active cooperation with the institution, motivated by his belief that by observing the League’s rules, Italy had much to gain.⁴²⁵ Paulucci, instead, believed that Grandi was deviating from Mussolini’s directions and disagreed with what he believed was a too LoN-friendly attitude of Italy in Geneva.⁴²⁶ In December 1930, Grandi wrote how Paulucci’s presence at the League had harmed the country’s interests more than if there had been a Yugoslavian in his place, a reference to the tense relations at the time between Italy and that state. He called Paulucci ‘nothing more than a crazy egoist.’⁴²⁷ When Grandi was fired from his post in July 1932, he believed that the negative coverage of his management of Italian foreign policy given by Paulucci to Mussolini had played an important role in his dismissal. Grandi wrote to Mussolini that Paulucci was behind the negative coverage given by the *Journal de Genève* on his conduct at the League, stressing how in order to hurt Grandi, Paulucci had not hesitated to damage Italy’s reputation as well.⁴²⁸ Grandi also suggested to the Italian Prime Minister that the false information on his conduct at the Disarmament Conference

⁴²⁴ Trans. ‘Paulucci, besides being a disloyal servant of his country, is also a troublemaker. He harmed us greatly in Geneva.’ “22 aprile mercoledì”, Grandi’s Diary, Aprile 1931 in Carte Grandi, b.22/90/33, ASMAE

⁴²⁵ 30 Mar. 1930 and 13 Apr. 1930, Grandi’s Diary, Marzo-Aprile 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.15/90/15; 13 Sept. 1930, Grandi’s Diary, Agosto-Settembre 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.17/90/21, ASMAE

⁴²⁶ Paulucci di Calboli to Mussolini, 21 Jul.1932, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.12, doc.168; Scarano, F., *Mussolini e la Repubblica di Weimar. Le relazioni diplomatiche tra Italia e Germania dal 1927 al 1933* (Naples, 1996), p.453

⁴²⁷ Trans. in “4 giovedì”, Dicembre 1930, Grandi’s Diary, in Carte Grandi, b.19/90/24, ASMAE

⁴²⁸ Grandi to Mussolini, 22 Jul. 1932, in Segreteria Particolare del Duce (SPD), Carteggio Riservato (CR), b.14, ACS

contained in the article ‘*Disarmo Ginevrino*’ written by Air Minister Italo Balbo, also originated from Paulucci.⁴²⁹ In his diary, Grandi wrote that ‘the hunchback of Caltagirone’ worked against him in Rome, sending to Mussolini letters criticizing his behaviour in Geneva.⁴³⁰

Paulucci was recalled to Rome as part of the diplomatic movement following Grandi’s dismissal. However, as we know from the meeting between Drummond and Grandi in April 1931, Paulucci’s removal was not just led by manoeuvres within the Fascist Party, but by a long-term uneasiness of the LoN Secretariat with the Italian Under Secretary-General’s conduct in Geneva. Paulucci returned to Rome in November 1932, but instead of being promoted, he was retired temporarily from the diplomatic service. This measure bewildered the Geneva Fascists, who could not understand why the regime was so ungrateful given Paulucci’s five years of faithful commitment to Fascistization in Geneva.⁴³¹ The fact that Paulucci fell out of Mussolini’s good graces suggests that the complaints by Grandi, still an influential member of the party, had an effect in determining the temporary halt in Paulucci’s diplomatic career.⁴³² However, Paulucci did not remain excluded from the regime’s activities for long: in August 1933 he was appointed president and general director of the LUCE Institute, the key propaganda body of Italian Fascism.⁴³³

Paulucci’s time at the League was the peak of the Fascist presence in Geneva. It partially coincided with Grandi’s mandate as Italian Foreign Minister, but while

⁴²⁹ Grandi to Mussolini, 4 Aug. 1932, in SPD, CR, b.14, ACS; Luglio 1932, Grandi’s Diary, Quaderno n.2 in Carte Grandi, b.25/90/40, ASMAE

⁴³⁰ Luglio 1932, Grandi’s Diary, Quaderno n.2 in Carte Grandi, b.25/90/40, ASMAE

⁴³¹ Memorandum (undated) in SPD, CR, b.104 ‘Paulucci de’ Calboli Barone Marchese Giacomo’, ACS

⁴³² Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.227-230

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, pp.244-245

Grandi influenced the Italian presence in the Council and the Assembly, it was Paulucci who left a mark on the Secretariat. For the Italian civil servants this meant a ‘conversion’ to Fascism and the hiring of new colleagues faithful to the regime. For the Secretary-General and his international colleagues, Paulucci’s presence implied the forced acceptance of Fascism in the Secretariat and of Italian officials behaving not just as national but Fascist Party representatives in Geneva. If in the cases of Plainpalais and Rocca the Secretary-General did not intervene on the Fascistization of the Italians at the League, the atmosphere in the Secretariat during Paulucci’s years was so tense that Drummond did not refrain from risking upsetting Rome in the attempt to get rid of him. Paulucci challenged the authority of the Secretary-General as no one before him. In this sense, my account of Paulucci’s time at the League is far from the positive evaluation given by Tassani in his recent book.⁴³⁴

This chapter presented early episodes of tensions involving Italian civil servants and the LoN Secretariat in the late 1920s. The Fascistization process targeting Italian employees at the League produced public incidents, such as the Plainpalais brawl, in which Fascist officials felt supported sufficiently by their own country to ignore the basic rules of good international conduct. It also created problems for those civil servants of non-Fascist persuasion who had to deal with conflicting loyalties and the Fascist interference in their life choices. The majority decided it was more convenient to follow the instructions from Rome and applied for membership to the Fascist Party. Even Italian Under Secretary-General Attolico went from being the object of Fascistization to a perpetuator of it. Giuseppe Rocca, instead, decided actively to resist in his own way the threats from the Fascists and fled to America, where he kept

⁴³⁴ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*

being persecuted, and did not receive the support or any sign of sympathy from the Geneva institutions. The Plainpalais episode and Rocca's story show us how Fascist Italy was an element of serious disturbance at the institutional level of the League's Secretariat as early as in 1926.

These episodes also exemplify the difficult situation that the LoN Secretariat had to face when dealing with employees of an undemocratic state, like Italy after 1922. The direct interference of Fascism in the recruitment process of League and on the lives of the Italian officials had negative consequences on the functioning of this institution, on its international reputation and on its international relations, especially on those with the host country (Switzerland). However, initially, the Secretary-General decided to bear with these disruptions in order not to upset the third most powerful member state within the League. Within the Secretariat there was also a certain understanding of the Fascist action at Plainpalais and Rocca's problematic case. In fact, before the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis, the attitude of the international community in Geneva towards the Fascist regime was that of acceptance: after all it was Italy's legitimate government. However, when Paulucci strengthened the Fascistization of the Italian civil servants, disrupting the ethos of the Secretariat and making the work environment in Geneva uncomfortable for everyone, Drummond did not hesitate to ask Grandi for his removal, even though that inconvenienced the regime. The stories presented in this chapter offer an excellent example of how the tensions between nationalism and internationalism conditioned the relationship between Italy and the League of Nations not only in the 1930s, as commonly acknowledged, but from the early years of the Fascist regime.

CHAPTER 3: Italian Expertise and the League of Nations

It is often assumed that the Italians at the League of Nations (LoN), excluding perhaps the civil servants, were little involved in the work and the mission of this organization. They are usually portrayed as Fascists holding mainly peripheral posts, and mostly concentrated on sabotaging the institution.⁴³⁵ These views will be challenged in this chapter, which presents Italians working for the League in key positions. They held offices with more overt power than Secretariat members. Many Italians held key positions at the organization, such as Maffeo Pantaleoni, President of the Committee for the Reconstruction of Austria from 1922 to 1924, or Count Luigi Aldrovandi-Marescotti, who was member of the Lytton Commission for the Manchurian crisis in 1932 and of the Commission for the Chaco dispute in 1933. This chapter focuses on two such figures: Manfredi Gravina (1883-1932), High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig from 1929 to 1932, and Alberto Theodoli (1873-1955), President of the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) from 1921 to 1937. The former represents an Italian working in an unexpected field, while the latter was involved in matters in which Italy had a direct interest.

These men, unlike the Italian civil servants, were not direct employees of the League. They were also not national representatives, nor delegates. They were self-made experts who, officially, served the League in a private capacity. However, they were appointed to their posts with the support of Rome, and for this reason, while working for projects promoted by the organization, they had a tight connection to the Italian

⁴³⁵ Barros, J., *Betrayal from within* (New Haven, CT: London, 1969); Ranshofen-Wertheimer, E.F., *The International Secretariat: A Great Experiment in International Administration* (Washington D.C., 1945). Scott, G., *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (London, 1973); Henig, R.B., *The League of Nations* (Edinburgh, 1973); Northedge, F.S., *The League of Nations: Its Life and Times, 1920-1946* (Leicester, 1986). More often, however, the literature totally ignores the Italians at the League.

government. The chapter investigates how Gravina and Theodoli came to be hired and how their work was evaluated at the League. It clarifies the extent to which they were dependent on directives from Rome, searching for positive involvement as well as negative behaviour, and testing their commitment to the LoN projects in which they were involved: the administration of the Free City of Danzig and the mandates. This chapter also evaluates whether Gravina and Theodoli limited themselves to following the instructions given to them by the League, or whether they demonstrated their own initiative in favour of these projects. It seeks to determine whether they contributed to the League's work or they obstructed it. This chapter is about how their expertise interacted with nationalism and internationalism at the League. Both Gravina and Theodoli present us with the complexity of personal identities in the Fascist period – within Italy and in Italy's presence in the wider world – and the difficulties individuals encountered in dealing with the national and international dimensions of personal and state relations.

Manfredi Gravina, High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig

In 1919, the Versailles Treaty established the Free City of Danzig, and it put it under the protection of the League of Nations.⁴³⁶ Danzig was one of the most important ports of the Baltic. Historically, it had been an independent member of the Hanseatic League, holding strong economic ties with Poland, and then, in the 19th century, it had become the capital of West Prussia.⁴³⁷ In the aftermath of the First World War, the

⁴³⁶ Art.102, Section XI, Versailles Treaty, 28 June 1919, available at:

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/versailles_menu.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁴³⁷ McNamara, P., *Sean Lester, Poland and the Nazi Takeover of Danzig* (Dublin, 2009), p.8. On the centuries-long dispute over Danzig/Gdańsk see Davies, N., *God's Playground. A history of Poland* (Oxford, 1981), 2 vols; Zamoyski, A., *Poland: a History* (London, 2009)

Poles claimed Danzig as a vital part of the new Poland, but the city was inhabited by a German ethnic majority.⁴³⁸ President Woodrow Wilson, in his thirteenth point, had stated that the new Polish state ‘should be assured a free and secure access to the sea.’⁴³⁹ In Paris, the peacemakers took the view that Danzig was the best harbour for this purpose. After several consultations and animated debates, on 3 April 1919 the Supreme Council at the Peace Conference decided in favour of the proposal presented by the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, and endorsed by President Wilson: the creation of a Free City of Danzig, under the protection of the League of Nations.⁴⁴⁰ This solution would guarantee Poland access to the sea and the population of Danzig, 96% of which declared itself German, would not be subject to Polish rule.⁴⁴¹ The Free City, which came formally into existence on 15 November 1920, was an area of 1,892 km² with a population of over 356,000.⁴⁴² Danzig was independent for its internal administration, which was regulated by a Constitution adopted in August 1920. However, the city was included in the Polish customs frontier and its foreign relations depended on Poland, represented in the city by a Commissioner General.⁴⁴³ The relations between the two parties on both foreign policy and commercial matters were further regulated by the Paris Convention (November 1920) and by the Warsaw Agreement (October 1921). Although the inhabitants of Danzig belonged to many different ethnic groups and held different ideas, the term Danzigers is used here to represent the opinion and the behaviour of the German majority of the city.

⁴³⁸ McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.9; Kimmich, C.M., *The Free City. Danzig and German Foreign Policy, 1919-1943* (New Haven, CT: London, 1968), p.2

⁴³⁹ President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, 8 Jan.1918, available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁴⁴⁰ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.8; Levine, H.S., *Hitler’s free city. A history of the Nazi Party in Danzig, 1925-39* (Chicago, IL: London, 1973), p.9

⁴⁴¹ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.2

⁴⁴² McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.13

⁴⁴³ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.30

Formally, the role of the League in Danzig was: to protect the territorial integrity and political independence of the Free City; to ensure that the inhabitants had the opportunity of maintaining their national character; to guarantee the Constitution of the Free City; to promote smooth relations between Danzig and Poland, and to take under its auspices the rights extended to either party.⁴⁴⁴ In order to handle these matters, the Versailles Treaty established the post of ‘High Commissioner of the League at Danzig’, appointed by the LoN Council. The Commissioner had ‘the duty of dealing in the first instance with all differences arising between Poland and the Free City of Danzig.’⁴⁴⁵ In addition to the functions of mediation and arbitration, he was also the symbol of the League’s presence in the Free City. The Commissioner was in constant communication with the Council, to which he sent periodical reports, and took advantage of the technical advice offered by the League’s Secretariat.⁴⁴⁶ The salary and the expenses for this post were shared between Danzig and Poland until 1937, when the League became responsible for them.⁴⁴⁷

Between 1920 and 1929, there had been several League of Nations’ High Commissioners in Danzig, many of whom were British. General Richard Haking (1921-1923) followed Reginald Tower (1920), separated only by the short appearance (five weeks) of the Italian Bernardo Attolico at the end of 1920. The strong British presence, confirmed by the consequent appointment of Mervyn MacDonnell (1923-1926), was not accidental, since Britain had played an important role in the creation

⁴⁴⁴ Report of the High Commissioner of the LoN in Danzig to the Council of the LoN, Feb. 1928, p.2 in FO 371/13302, Poland, 1928, the National Archives, Kew, London, UK (hereafter TNA)

⁴⁴⁵ Art.103, Section XI, Versailles Treaty, 28 June 1919, available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/versailles_menu.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁴⁴⁶ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.31

⁴⁴⁷ Walters, p.131

of the Free City and was interested in promoting British commercial interests in this area.⁴⁴⁸ But the Poles were dissatisfied with the British High Commissioners, believing them to be too much on the side of the ethnic Germans in Danzig.⁴⁴⁹ The Danzigers, by contrast, highly valued their presence as a proof of British concern for the Free City, and as a guarantee against an attempt of forced incorporation by Poland.⁴⁵⁰ The exception was MacDonnell, who was strongly disliked by both Poles and Danzigers, as both sides considered him weak and incompetent.⁴⁵¹ His appointment as the last British Commissioner exemplified Britain's decreasing interest in the area.⁴⁵² The next High Commissioner was Joost van Hamel, a Dutchman who had been the Director of the Legal Section of the League's Secretariat (1919-1925) and actively involved in the division of Upper Silesia in 1922, and thus considered a Germanophobe.⁴⁵³ The Germans deeply disliked his work as High Commissioner, perceiving him as too biased in favour of Poland, and when Berlin had a chance to act against his re-appointment, it did. At the first opportunity, in September 1928, the LoN Council appointed Manfredi Gravina as the new High Commissioner.

⁴⁴⁸ McNamara, *Sean Lester*, pp.10-16; Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.24

⁴⁴⁹ McNamara, *Sean Lester*, pp.16-17

⁴⁵⁰ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.54

⁴⁵¹ McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.16; Kimmich, *The Free City*, pp.64-65

⁴⁵² McNamara, *Sean Lester*, pp.17-18

⁴⁵³ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.96

Manfredi Gravina

PHOTO OF GRAVINA

[Image omitted due to absence of permission from copyright holder]

Source: Sillani, T. (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina* (Rome, 1935)

Count Manfredi Gravina di Ramacca (1883-1932) was born in Palermo in 1883 as the son of Biagio Gravina, a Sicilian Count, and Blandine, née von Bülow (1863-1941), the daughter of Cosima Wagner (1837-1930) and her first husband, Hans von Bülow (1830-1894). Cosima then married famous composer Richard Wagner. However, despite the link with such a distinguished German family, Gravina considered himself Italian and, politically, a nationalist.⁴⁵⁴ After a small interlude as Italian Consul in Shanghai in 1906, Gravina, who started a career in the Italian Royal Navy in 1900, participated enthusiastically in the Italian colonial campaign in Libya in 1911-1912.⁴⁵⁵ During the First World War, he took part in several battles in the Adriatic and developed close ties with Gabriele D'Annunzio, the nationalist writer celebrated by

⁴⁵⁴ Luigi Federzoni in Sillani, T. (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina* (Rome, 1935), p.ix

⁴⁵⁵ Ercolani, A., *Carteggio D'Annunzio-Gravina (1915-1924)* (Rome, 1993), p.41

Fascism, with whom Gravina enjoyed an animated correspondence.⁴⁵⁶ In 1919, Gravina strongly supported and encouraged D'Annunzio's *Impresa di Fiume* (known in English as the Fiume Exploit), when the writer occupied the city of Fiume with his troops fearing that the territory, perceived by them as Italian, would be given to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.⁴⁵⁷

After the war, Gravina became involved in several international activities. Firstly, he made a short appearance in the Italian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference.⁴⁵⁸ Subsequently, in April 1919, he went to Stockholm as the Italian 'naval and air attaché' to the Scandinavian and Baltic states. He returned to Italy in June 1922, after marrying Maria Sofia Giustiniani Bandini, member of the Roman aristocracy, a woman who was close to the Vatican and who was the niece of Paulucci's personal secretary Maria Cristina. Gravina left the Navy in 1923.⁴⁵⁹ In the same year, following the merger of the Italian Nationalist Association into the Fascist Party, Gravina, who was a supporter of the nationalist leader Enrico Corradini, joined the PNF. Luigi Federzoni, a leading nationalist who was president of the Italian Senate from 1929 to 1939, writing about Gravina in 1935, stated that the future High Commissioner, 'after leaving the Navy's active service, due to his Fascist vocation and temper, found himself to be naturally among the most fervent and convinced supporters of Benito Mussolini.'⁴⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Gravina remained primarily a nationalist before being a Fascist.

⁴⁵⁶ 'Lettere autografe di Gabriele D'Annunzio a Manfredi Gravina (1907-1916)' in b.1030, fasc. 11-14 in Archivio dell'Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, Rome, Italy (MCR); Ercolani, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵⁷ Gravina to D'Annunzio, 8 Apr. 1919; Gravina to D'Annunzio, 27 Jan. 1921, in Ercolani, *op. cit.*, pp.163-165

⁴⁵⁸ Gravina to D'Annunzio, 11 Feb. 1919 and 8 Apr. 1919 in Ercolani, *op. cit.*, pp.162-163

⁴⁵⁹ Ercolani, *op. cit.*, p.59

⁴⁶⁰ Trans. Federzoni in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, pp.ix-x

Gravina had the chance to experience the League before being appointed High Commissioner. His passion for international politics and his membership of the Fascist Party, made him an excellent candidate to be part of the Italian delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations, a position he subsequently held between 1924 and 1928.⁴⁶¹ In addition to this politically-determined appointment, thanks to his technical knowledge as former navy captain and as military attaché in the Baltic area, he was also hired by the League in October 1925 as an expert to judge the issue of the Westerplatte, the Polish depot of ammunitions in Danzig's harbour.⁴⁶² From the outset, Gravina's experience was characterised by an interest in nationalism as well as in international politics.

His contact with the League prompted Gravina to write several articles for Italian newspapers and journals, which allow us to understand what he thought about the organization before becoming part of it as High Commissioner. In the 1920s, Gravina showed his appreciation for the League of Nations as a forum where influential international actors could meet, cooperate and make direct agreements.⁴⁶³ He also praised the practical work of the institution, aiming for the general well-being of the peoples in various fields (such as its anti-slavery crusade or the protection of women and children).⁴⁶⁴ Concerning the role of the League in preventing war, Gravina wrote in 1924 that:

⁴⁶¹ Bruccoleri, G., *L'Opera Dei Delegati Italiani Nella Società Delle Nazioni* (Rome, 1935) (vols.1-2)

⁴⁶² See folders 'Polish munitions depot in Danzig' in R.146, League of Nations Archives (LoN), Geneva, Switzerland

⁴⁶³ Gravina, M., 'La VIII Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni' 16 Oct. 1927, in Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 796, p.529, Archivio Giustiniani Bandini (hereafter AGB), Fondazione Camillo Caetani, Rome, Italy (hereafter FCC)

⁴⁶⁴ Gravina, M., 'La V Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni a Ginevra' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1924, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 794/2, p.6, AGB, FCC

*nessun altro istituto fuorchè la Società delle Nazioni ... può salvare l'umanità dal flagello di nuove immani lotte; e ciò non tanto col disarmare i popoli, quanto con l'eliminare le cause che potranno spingere alcuni paesi all'esasperazione e, quindi, a lottare per la propria esistenza.*⁴⁶⁵

Gravina argued that he saw the League as an opportunity for peace but he believed that disarmament was not the means by which it could be achieved. In his opinion, war could be prevented only by overcoming those moral and political conflicts that derived from the Great War and the Versailles Treaty.⁴⁶⁶ In fact, Gravina was of the opinion that 'a people, induced by economic exasperation or by a deeply offended national honour' would prefer to engage in war rather than to endure a wounded honour. War was justified within a revisionist discourse. Thus, according to Gravina, only the elimination of the causes of tensions between states and a more equal distribution of natural resources and raw materials could effectively prevent a war.⁴⁶⁷ When writing, he had in mind the Italian case and a revision of 1919 Peace Treaties to meet Italy's needs. His political thought was clearly revisionist.

Disarmament was not only described by Gravina as pointless, but as a project associated with imperialism. Gravina interpreted disarmament as the means by which 'the strong powers would strengthen themselves and the weak states would be

⁴⁶⁵ Trans. 'no other institution but the League of Nations...can save humanity from the plague of new appalling fights; and this not as much by disarming peoples, as with eliminating the causes which could bring some countries to exasperation and, thus, to fight for their own existence.' Gravina, M., 'La V Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni a Ginevra' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1924, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 794/2, p.17, AGB, FCC

⁴⁶⁶ Gravina, M., 'La V Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni a Ginevra' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1924, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 794/2, pp.17-18, AGB, FCC

⁴⁶⁷ Gravina, M., 'La V Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni a Ginevra' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1924, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 794/2, pp.8-9, AGB, FCC; Gravina, M., 'Sulla Riduzione degli Armamenti Navali o "Disarmo Navale"' in *Gerarchia*, June 1929 in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, p.127

rendered perpetually weaker.⁴⁶⁸ In particular, he associated Britain's enthusiastic promotion of disarmament at the League with British imperial needs. Through disarmament, this country could eliminate all competitors in continental Europe and finally focus on its imperial projects.⁴⁶⁹ This organization was a space for cooperation, but, according to Gravina, it was first and foremost an instrument of national foreign policy. For this reason, if the Fascist regime wanted to fulfil its foreign-policy aspirations, it had to maintain a 'realistic' position and concentrate on the defence of its own interests at the League.⁴⁷⁰ Gravina encouraged the Italian government to participate actively and watchfully in the institution, and to use internationalism in order to achieve national interests, as the other states were doing.⁴⁷¹ In Gravina's mind, the League was a valuable institution, but only if it could provide Italy with what the country needed. In particular, he believed that the League should focus on the revision of the Peace Treaties. In Gravina's thought revisionism and the League coexisted.

Gravina's Appointment as High Commissioner in Danzig

Manfredi Gravina was officially appointed the new High Commissioner of the LoN in Danzig on 21 September 1928, after several meetings of the League's Council in

⁴⁶⁸ Gravina, M., 'Potenziale Bellico e Politica Estera' in *Annuario di Politica Estera della Università di Pavia*, 1927 in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, pp.268-269

⁴⁶⁹ Gravina, M., 'La Nuova Controversia Ginevrina. Considerazioni di Realismo Politico' in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina* (article dated 5 Mar. 1927), pp.232-233

⁴⁷⁰ Gravina, M., 'La V Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni a Ginevra' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1924, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 794/2, p.16, AGB, FCC; Gravina, M., 'La Nuova Controversia Ginevrina. Considerazioni di Realismo Politico' in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina* (article dated 5 Mar. 1927), p.233

⁴⁷¹ Gravina, M., 'La IX Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1928, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 796, p.127, AGB, FCC; Gravina, M., 'La Nuova Controversia Ginevrina. Considerazioni di Realismo Politico' in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina* (article dated 5 Mar. 1927), p.231; Gravina's article in *Corriere della Sera*, 30 Oct. 1926, trans. in FO 371/11889, League of Nations, 1926, TNA

which, under strong German pressure, the contract of van Hamel was not renewed.⁴⁷² The name of Gravina was put forward by Enrique Villegas, the representative of Chile and Rapporteur to the Council for Danzig questions, and, since no other candidate was suggested, the Council agreed in his favour.⁴⁷³ Villegas had proposed Gravina, but who was behind this candidature? Historians agree that Gravina was a German choice.⁴⁷⁴ However, his selection was not straightforward and it was more the result of an agreement between the parties involved, Danzigers and Poles, than a diktat from Berlin.

Initially, the Danzig delegate to Berlin had proposed the Danish Consul in Danzig, Harald Koch. However, while Danzig and Berlin had no objections, the Danish government had not been favourable.⁴⁷⁵ Then, supported by the Italian government, the name of Gravina emerged. Carl von Schubert, German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, told Eric Drummond that Gravina was not his candidate. The LoN Secretary-General replied that he was not his choice either, but that he ‘understood that those immediately concerned had agreed to support him before the Council.’⁴⁷⁶ August Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, was favourable to Gravina’s nomination, even if Henryk Strasburger, Polish Commissioner General in Danzig, was sceptical about a Fascist with German familial links.⁴⁷⁷ Also among the Danzigers there were people not enthusiastic about an acknowledged Italian Fascist as the future High

⁴⁷² Appointment of League’s High Commissioner in Danzig, 19 Sept 1928; Appointment of League’s High Commissioner in Danzig, 24 Sept. 1928: Record of two secret meetings of the Council held on 14th and 19th September 1928, FO 371/13302, Poland, 1928, TNA

⁴⁷³ Appointment of League’s High Commissioner in Danzig, 24 Sept. 1928: Record of two secret meetings of the Council held on 14th and 19th September 1928, FO 371/13302, Poland, 1928, TNA

⁴⁷⁴ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.98; McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.23; Ramonat, W., *Der Völkerbund und die Freie Stadt Danzig, 1920-1934* (Osnabrück, 1979), p.111

⁴⁷⁵ Ramonat, *op. cit.*, p.112

⁴⁷⁶ Record of interview with Carl von Schubert by Eric Drummond, 17 Sept. 1928 in Papiers D’Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.27, Archives Diplomatiques de France, La Courneuve (hereafter ADF)

⁴⁷⁷ Deodato, E., ‘Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica. Brevi Note’ in *Annali della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche- Materiali di Storia* (Perugia, 1985), p.41

Commissioner: it was the case of Senator Bernhard Kamnitzer (Danzig's Social Democratic Party), who had lobbied in vain in Geneva to avoid an Italian candidature.⁴⁷⁸ At the end, Germany supported Gravina's candidature at the Council, reassured by Gravina's family origins.⁴⁷⁹ The role of France and Britain in Gravina's appointment, by contrast, was negligible.

The first reactions of the British to Gravina's appointment included the observation: 'let us hope Count Gravina will be more of a success than Dr. van Hamel,' followed by the note 'I cannot believe that a Sicilian can be a suitable selection for this post.'⁴⁸⁰ In an effort to find out more about him, the Foreign Office contacted the British Embassy in Rome.⁴⁸¹ On 28 September 1928, William Kidston McClure, press attaché, described Gravina as:

a well read man, with a passion for foreign politics... He is often considered a bore... I find him interesting, for he holds definite opinions and expresses them frankly to people he trusts. Personally I like him very much.⁴⁸²

It is clear that the British Foreign Office was much less interested than in former years in who should hold the post of High Commissioner in Danzig. This new position was due to the more relaxed attitude towards Germany, following the signature of the Locarno Treaty in 1925 and its admission to the League in 1926.

⁴⁷⁸ Ramonat, *op. cit.*, p.111

⁴⁷⁹ Manfredi Gravina to Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli, 29 Jan. 1930 and report attached 'Mie conversazioni a Berlino' in Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, Personal Papers of Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone (hereafter GPdC), Archivio di Stato di Forlì, Italy (hereafter ASF)

⁴⁸⁰ Notes by Laurence Collier and unknown on the cover of the file, dated 25 Sept. Appointment of League's High Commissioner in Danzig, 24 Sept. 1928, FO 371/13302, Poland, 1928, TNA

⁴⁸¹ Foreign Office to Sir Ronald Graham in Appointment of League's High Commissioner in Danzig, 24 Sept. 1928, FO 371/13302, Poland, 1928, TNA

⁴⁸² Summary of the report by William Kidston McClure, 28 September 1928 in Appointment of League's High Commissioner in Danzig, 24 Sept. 1928, FO 371/13302, Poland, 1928, TNA

In France, by contrast, the political right and parts of the press, such as *Le Temps*, reacted to Gravina's appointment with suspicion. After the publication of his article in April 1929, '*L'Italia come alleata*', on the role of Germany during the Great War, the French right accused Gravina of being a Germanophile and lacking the impartiality needed to be High Commissioner.⁴⁸³ The fears of French nationalists seemed to be confirmed at Gravina's first press conference, when he acknowledged the importance of cooperation between Danzig and Poland for their common benefit but pointed out, quoting Mussolini, that 'no treaty was eternal.'⁴⁸⁴ Gravina also told Heinrich Sahn, President of the Danzig Senate, that he expected to be Danzig's penultimate if not final High Commissioner.⁴⁸⁵ These statements were immediately interpreted by the German press as an encouragement to revisionism, and prompted a quick denial by Gravina.⁴⁸⁶

Gravina's family in Germany reacted to the news of his appointment positively. In October 1928, his aunt Daniela von Bülow wrote that Gravina's qualities and sympathy for German nature and for Germany's misfortune, would have given him the possibility to help 'our poor North.'⁴⁸⁷ Was this the reason behind Gravina's acceptance of this post? Why did Gravina, a revisionist and a Fascist, want to be High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig? Even though Gravina had a

⁴⁸³ Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, pp.xviii-xix; Gravina, M., '*L'Italia come Alleata*' in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, pp. 281-292 (originally published in *Rassegna Italiana*, April 1929)

⁴⁸⁴ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.98; Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', pp.42-43

⁴⁸⁵ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.98

⁴⁸⁶ 'Un démenti du Haut Commissaire à Dantzig' in *Messenger Polonais*, 16 Jul. 1929, S.322, LoN Archives; Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', pp.43-44

⁴⁸⁷ Tante Lulu (Daniela von Bülow) to Manfredi Gravina, 27 Oct. 1928, Busta 27 Appendice, Fascicolo 774, AGB, FCC

sincere interest in international affairs and an expertise in the Baltic area, as it is clear from his writings, he was not much of a League enthusiast. While he surely did not disdain a promotion, his words when reporting the news of his appointment shed some light on how he interpreted his new role. Gravina wrote that '*All'unanimità, il nuovo Consiglio ha quindi assegnato all'Italia il posto di Alto Commissariato per lo Stato Libero di Danzica, finora occupato dall'Olanda.*'⁴⁸⁸ This wording suggests that Gravina, strong nationalist and faithful to the Fascist regime, saw his mission to Danzig as a post meant to represent Italy, and not the League, in Danzig. This statement is confirmed also by the recollection of Luigi Federzoni, according to whom, Gravina liked to present himself as the '*sentinella sul Baltico*' (sentinel in the Baltic) on behalf of Italy and Fascism.⁴⁸⁹ Thus, it is clear that Gravina looked to Rome, rather than to Berlin for directions on how to manage policy matters in the Free City.

Gravina's Work as High Commissioner in Danzig (1929-1932)

Gravina's appointment in Danzig commenced in June 1929. The new High Commissioner had a very pessimistic view of the situation in the Free City, and from the outset, he had an equally bad opinion of both Danzigers and Poles.⁴⁹⁰ In September 1929, he described the two parties as such:

The Poles are, in connection with Dantzig [*sic*], extremely invading and provoking, but very able, and very correct in behalf of the High

⁴⁸⁸ Trans. 'Unanimously, the new Council has given to Italy the post of High Commissioner for the Free State [*sic*] of Danzig, ... held so far by the Netherlands'

Gravina, M., 'La IX Assemblea Generale della Società delle Nazioni' in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 Nov. 1928, Busta 28 Appendice, Fascicolo 796, p.126, AGB, FCC

⁴⁸⁹ Federzoni in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, p.viii

⁴⁹⁰ Gravina to Alexander Cadogan, 30 Sept 1929 in FO 371/14026, Poland, 1929, TNA

Commissioner, whilst [*sic*] the Dantzico-germans [*sic*] are indisposing to the utmost, very unable in diplomacy, destitute of tact, and endeavouring to undermine, however possible to them, the prestige and the authority of the High Commissioner, whose institution they abhor as every other institution deriving from the Versailles Treaty.⁴⁹¹

He was particularly critical of the Danzigers' 'silly' contempt for the only institution – the League – which could protect them from a Polish invasion.⁴⁹² In September 1931, he confirmed this opinion writing to the Italian Ambassador in Berlin that the nationalist government of Danzig had done so far only 'stupid things.'⁴⁹³

Yet, despite his private scepticism towards both the Danzigers and the Polish government, from his very first months in office, Gravina was accused of partiality by the Poles, which made him assume a defensive attitude towards them. In September 1929, he wrote to Alexander Cadogan, head of the LoN Section of the British Foreign Office, reacting to the Polish accusation that he was pro-German:

I am on good personal terms with the Danzig authorities, but have been very energetic and even disagreeable whenever it seemed necessary to me in the interest of the mission entrusted to me... As for myself I may with good conscience state that not only [I] try to be, but also "feel" absolutely impartial, and that my only aim is to correspond to the confidence of the Council of the League in carrying out to the best this interesting, but difficult mission entrusted to me.⁴⁹⁴

He stressed his impartiality also when talking to Paul von Hindenburg in January 1930. The German President, who was a friend of the Wagner family, congratulated him on his appointment, but Gravina replied that he did not intend to nurse excessive

⁴⁹¹ Gravina to Cadogan, 30 Sept 1929 in FO 371/14026, Poland, 1929, TNA

⁴⁹² Gravina to Cadogan, 30 Sept 1929 in FO 371/14026, Poland, 1929, TNA

⁴⁹³ Gravina to Luca Orsini Baroni (Italian Ambassador in Berlin), 8 Sept. 1931, in Gabinetto (1923-43), b.841, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy (hereafter ASMAE)

⁴⁹⁴ Gravina to Cadogan, 30 Sept. 1929 in FO 371/14026, Poland, 1929, TNA

illusions in Germany about a solution of the Danzig question. The only assurance he could give was that of his absolute impartiality in demanding and defending the rights of Danzig.⁴⁹⁵ In practice, during his mandate he developed cordial relations with people from all parties involved, including Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, and Ernst Ziehm, President of the Danzig Senate.⁴⁹⁶ At the same time, he also encountered the hostility of both sides, which in Drummond's opinion was to be interpreted as a compliment to his impartiality.⁴⁹⁷

Gravina's negative impression of the situation in Danzig remained constant in his reports and his correspondence over the years, regardless of his interlocutors. In October 1930, he complained to Paulucci that 'the situation worsens in a very worrying way': the Poles seemed decided to reduce the Danzigers to misery, because they refused to be 'Polonised', while the Danzigers 'have been stupid, perhaps, to adopt such a negative attitude from the beginning, with their innate hatred and contempt for the Poles, fomented by Berlin's politics.'⁴⁹⁸ These words are particularly valuable because Gravina, when writing to Paulucci, a close friend and a Fascist, had no reason not to present freely his opinion on the situation. In March 1931, he wrote to Foreign Minister Grandi, that the state of affairs in Danzig was hopeless and that the alternatives were either a compromise (i.e. a revision of the Treaties) or a conflict, which sooner or later would inevitably explode between Poland and Germany.⁴⁹⁹ In April 1931, he reported that the situation was that of a 'progressive worsening' due to

⁴⁹⁵ Gravina to Paulucci, 29 Jan. 1930 and attachment in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, GPdC, ASF

⁴⁹⁶ Gravina to Paulucci, 29 Jan. 1930 and attachment in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, GPdC, ASF; McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.28

⁴⁹⁷ Drummond to Gravina, 27 Oct. 1931, S.332, LoN Archives; Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', pp.55, 62

⁴⁹⁸ Trans. Gravina to Paulucci, 8 Oct. 1930 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, GPdC, ASF

⁴⁹⁹ Gravina to Dino Grandi, 1 Mar. 1931, in *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (thereafter DDI), Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.11, doc.261

the action in Danzig of German nationalists supported by the Reich, who took advantage of the economic crisis to blame Poland for all the problems. The nationalists were helped in their campaign by the economic policy promoted by Strasburger, the Polish Commissioner General, who aimed to impoverish the city.⁵⁰⁰ In November 1931, Gravina wrote to Cadogan that it was a matter of fact that the situation created by the Peace Treaties in Danzig had proved to be a great failure.⁵⁰¹

During his mandate as High Commissioner in Danzig, Gravina dealt with serious threats to the future of the Free City: from the menace of the Polish nationalists to the rise of the Nazi movement in Danzig, and the consequent episodes of violence. Closely connected to these political issues were the economic problems of the Free City, due to the advent of the economic crisis after 1929 and the rising competition, underway since the early 1920s, from the port of Gdynia, 21 km away, in the Polish Corridor.

The issue of Gdynia was a matter to which Gravina devoted much energy. In the early 1920s, the Poles, dissatisfied with the relationship with the port of Danzig, began to transform the small fishing village of Gdynia into a large artificial harbour with the help of French capital.⁵⁰² In the late 1920s the import-export figures of Gdynia grew exponentially, making it an important competitor to Danzig.⁵⁰³ In 1930, the Danzigers embarked on a never-ending quarrel on the matter, involving the High Commissioner

⁵⁰⁰ Gravina to Paulucci, 3 Apr. 1931 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, GPdC, ASF

⁵⁰¹ Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 and comments of the Foreign Office on the front of the file, in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA

⁵⁰² McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.29

⁵⁰³ McNamara, *Sean Lester*, p.25

and the League.⁵⁰⁴ On the one hand, the Danzigers claimed, with the backing of Germany, that Poland was bound to make full use of the port of Danzig since the reason for which Danzig had been detached from Germany was to serve as a port of Poland: if the Polish trade went elsewhere, why should Danzig not be restored to Germany?⁵⁰⁵ Poland, on the other hand, claimed to need both harbours.⁵⁰⁶ Since the parties involved could not reach an agreement, Gravina, in October 1931, requested a legal opinion from the League. Following the advice of the jurists, on 26 October 1931, Gravina announced that, ‘though Danzig held no monopoly on Polish trade, the Poles were obliged to make full use of the Danzig harbour and were not privileged to prefer other installations.’⁵⁰⁷ Both parties were dissatisfied with Gravina’s decision and appealed to the League’s Council, which, however, supported the High Commissioner’s interpretation.⁵⁰⁸ Poland continued to prefer Gdynia and this unsolved issue, together with the worsening of the economic situation, exacerbated the Danzigers’ hostility. Anti-Polish feelings, which had always been present, grew, together with urban violence and the support for nationalist parties such as the local branch of Hitler’s *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP).

What was Gravina’s relationship to the Nazi Party? Paul McNamara claimed that one of the factors helping the development of the NSDAP in Danzig was the presence of a ‘compliant High Commissioner’, and that Albert Forster, a prominent Nazi in Danzig, had a very close relationship with Gravina.⁵⁰⁹ The Polish historiography also is very

⁵⁰⁴ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.112

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.111; Walters, p.455

⁵⁰⁶ Walters, p.455

⁵⁰⁷ Kimmich, *The Free City*, p.113

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.113-115

⁵⁰⁹ McNamara, *Sean Lester*, pp. 28,70

critical of Gravina's relationship with the Nazi Party in Danzig.⁵¹⁰ In 1932, the Poles started a vehement anti-Gravina press campaign accusing him of being a personal friend of the Nazi leaders.⁵¹¹ They complained to Drummond that Gravina did not act sufficiently firmly against the German nationalist agitations in Danzig and the Polish government felt that 'he was inclined to over-favour Danzig nationalism.'⁵¹²

In order to clarify Gravina's position towards the German nationalists, it is necessary to distinguish between the Nazi Party in Germany and its branch in Danzig. On the one hand, there is no doubt that Gravina shared his German family's noted admiration for Hitler.⁵¹³ Gravina met Hitler on several occasions and was actively involved in encouraging contacts between the Italian Fascist Party and German National Socialism, which he believed was 'the only party which has sympathy and a sincere admiration for Italy and our regime.'⁵¹⁴ On the other hand, Gravina showed disdain for the "mass version" of Nazism, which he saw increasingly at work in Danzig and which, with its mindless violence, made his job as High Commissioner difficult.⁵¹⁵ Gravina complained about the German nationalists in Danzig several times and also to Berlin: in January 1930, in a meeting with Carl von Schubert, Gravina manifested a strong antipathy towards the nationalist, pan-German, anti-Polish manifestations in

⁵¹⁰ See also Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', pp.39-40; Stepniak, H., *Ludność polska w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku, 1920-1939* (Gdańsk, 1991) and *Polska i Wolne Miasto Gdańsk (1920-1939)* (Gdańsk, 2004). Please note: McNamara, Sean Lester, pp.23, 28 refers in particular to Mikos, S., *Wolne Miasto Gdańsk a Liga Narodów 1920-1939* (Gdańsk, 1979). However, McNamara's interpretation of Mikos's view on Gravina is highly debatable.

⁵¹¹ Cit. in Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', p.57

⁵¹² Record of conversation between Drummond and Gwiazdowski, 9 Apr. 1932 in Papiers D'Agents, Joseph Avenol, b.27, ADF

⁵¹³ Tante Lulu (Daniela von Bülow) to Gravina, 27 Oct. 1928, Busta 27 Appendice, Fascicolo 774, AGB, FCC

⁵¹⁴ Trans. Gravina to Grandi, 16 Sept. 1930, doc.256; also Orsini Baroni to Grandi, 28 Jul. 1930, doc.180 in DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9

⁵¹⁵ Attachment 'Mie conversazioni a Berlino', Gravina to Paulucci, 29 Jan. 1930 in Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, GPdC, ASF

Danzig, which he thought were inopportune and intolerable.⁵¹⁶ He denounced the excesses of the Danzig Nazis to the League several times.⁵¹⁷ Therefore, if as a nationalist and a Fascist, Gravina was enthusiastic about Hitler as the ideal German interlocutor for Fascism, as the High Commissioner of the League of Nations in Danzig, he saw the local branch of the NSDAP as dangerous and despised it.

How was the work of Gravina as High Commissioner perceived by the League Secretariat and by the organization's member states? His task in Danzig was recognised as difficult by the League's Council and by the League's Secretary-General, who always defended Gravina from the allegations of bias of one side or the other.⁵¹⁸ In April 1932, Drummond replied to a Polish representative that he 'had the utmost confidence in the entire impartiality of the High Commissioner.'⁵¹⁹ Also Walters, in his history of the League written after the Second World War, remembers Gravina in positive terms, as a 'quiet and sensible High Commissioner.'⁵²⁰ Drummond always supported Gravina, especially in 1932, when the accusations and the negative press campaign against the High Commissioner reached their peak.⁵²¹ The positive impressions of Geneva were shared by the British: Cadogan, after a visit to Danzig in 1930, stated that Gravina had been 'a very good selection.'⁵²²

⁵¹⁶ Gravina to Paulucci, 29 Jan. 1930 and attachment, in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, 'Manfredi Gravina' b.58, GPdC, ASF; Gravina complaining to the British: Erskine to Arthur Henderson, 27 Apr. 1931 in FO 371/15578, Poland, 1931, TNA

⁵¹⁷ Gravina to Drummond, 17 Aug. 1929, S.332, LoN Archives; Record of conversation between Drummond and Gwiazdowski, 9 Apr. 1932 in *Papiers D'Agents*, Joseph Avenol, b.27, ADF

⁵¹⁸ Record of conversation between Drummond and Gwiazdowski, 9 Apr. 1932 in *Papiers D'Agents*, Joseph Avenol, b.27, ADF; Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', p.57

⁵¹⁹ Record of conversation between Drummond and Gwiazdowski, 9 Apr. 1932 in *Papiers D'Agents*, Joseph Avenol, b.27, ADF

⁵²⁰ Walters, p.454

⁵²¹ Deodato, 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', p.64

⁵²² Memorandum on Danzig by Alexander Cadogan after his visit to Danzig, 6 Jun. 1930 in FO 371/14825, Poland, 1930, TNA

He is a man of varied experience...and more than average intelligence. He has the great and (in Danzig) necessary gift of a sense of humour; he is unassuming and yet sure of himself, and is not (for his race) excitable. He seems to have quite the right view of the limitations of his post.⁵²³

This evaluation of Gravina, even if it reflects patronizing stereotypes of Italians, was confirmed by the British Consul in Danzig, John A. Cameron. Commenting on how Gravina handled the tensions between the parties in May 1931, he wrote that: ‘while Count Gravina appears always to have commanded the respect of both sides, he has come out of the recent crisis stronger than ever.’⁵²⁴ In general, Gravina’s conduct in Danzig was positively considered at the League and it was not surprising that, in May 1931, he was reconfirmed for a second mandate as High Commissioner in Danzig.⁵²⁵

Manfredi Gravina: an Evaluation

During his time in office, Gravina did not limit himself to observing the situation in Danzig and complaining about it to Geneva and to the European capitals. He also investigated possible solutions and he did so considering the role of the League as central. His opinion was that the improvement of the Danzig situation depended on the revision of the Versailles Treaty. In December 1930, he wrote to Grandi that 11 years of existence of the Free City had clearly shown that,

*essendo completamente fallita la possibilità di fattiva collaborazione, almeno nel campo economico, fra tedeschi e polacchi...una revisione dei trattati (artt.100-108 Versailles) si impone.*⁵²⁶

⁵²³ Memorandum on Danzig by Cadogan after his visit to Danzig, 6 Jun. 1930 in FO 371/14825, Poland, 1930, TNA

⁵²⁴ Consul Cameron to Henderson, 13 May 1931 in FO 371/15578, Poland, 1931, TNA

⁵²⁵ Third Meeting, 63rd Session of the Council of the LoN, 20 May 1931, in League of Nations *Official Journal* (hereafter *LoN OJ*), Vol.12, Issue 7 (July 1931), p.1113

⁵²⁶ Trans. ‘since any possibility of effective collaboration between Germans and Poles, at least in the economic field, has completely failed, ... a *revision* of the treaties (arts. 100-108 Versailles) becomes

However, since nobody was prepared for a discussion on Treaty revision and conflict appeared to be close, Gravina elaborated a proposal, which he thought could lead to an improvement.⁵²⁷ In November 1931, Gravina formally submitted his plan to Drummond, Cadogan, Grandi and Viscount Cecil.⁵²⁸ The plan provided for an enlargement of the territory of the Free City westwards, creating a Free State of Danzig. This expansion would include the northern part of the Polish Corridor, incorporating railway lines connecting the Reich to East Prussia, but it would exclude a Polish enclave comprising Gdynia and the coastal territories surrounding it. Thus, Germany would not be separated from Eastern Prussia by a Polish territory, but by a Free State of German nationality, guaranteeing the connection between the two German parts. At the same time, Poland would be assured free trade through Danzig and communication with Gdynia. With the new arrangement, communications vital for both states would pass through a new neutral Free State of Danzig. This new State, with full control over its own foreign affairs, railways and customs, was to be placed once again under the protection of the League and the High Commissioner.⁵²⁹ His idea was not new, and in the opinion of the British Foreign Office, not particularly original either, but, during his mandate, Gravina endorsed it with energy.⁵³⁰ Gravina was well aware that at the time neither Poland nor Danzig would accept his plan, but he believed that this was the only available option and that the League should impose

necessary.’ ‘Revisione’ in *Italic* in the original. Gravina to Raffaele Guariglia, 2 Dec.1930, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9, doc.432

⁵²⁷ Gravina to Grandi, 1 Nov. 1931, in b.429, Gabinetto 1923-43, ASMAE; Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA

⁵²⁸ Gravina to Grandi, 1 Nov. 1931, in Gabinetto (1923-43), b.429, ASMAE; Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA

⁵²⁹ Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 and comments of the Foreign Office on the front of the file, in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA; Gravina to Grandi, 1 Nov. 1931, in Gabinetto (1923-43), b.429, ASMAE

⁵³⁰ Gravina to Cadogan, 30 Sept 1929 in FO 371/14026, Poland, 1929, TNA; Comments of the Foreign Office on the front of the file, in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA

it.⁵³¹ Gravina wrote to Cadogan that his compromise will have prevented a conflict and would have greatly contributed to the prestige of the League.⁵³²

The map of Gravina's plan originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright.

Source and Copyright: *Letter from Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, The National Archives, Kew*

The promotion of this project, which brought no practical results, offers us an example of how revisionism and the League of Nations coexisted in Gravina's mind.

⁵³¹ Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA; Gravina to Grandi, 1 Nov. 1931, in Gabinetto (1923-43), b.429, ASMAE

⁵³² Gravina to Cadogan, 15 Nov. 1931 and comments of the Foreign Office on the front of the file, in FO 371/15579, Poland, 1931, TNA

Before joining the League as High Commissioner in Danzig, Gravina wrote that the international organization represented an opportunity for maintaining peace as long as it assumed a revisionist role and helped overcoming the moral and political conflicts derived from the Peace Treaties. Gravina believed in a revisionist League, to which nationalism could appeal to settle disputes and prevent war. In his plan for the enlargement of the Free City, which exemplifies his commitment to nationalism as a core political value, Gravina presented the League as an actor of revision and improvement rather than as the guardian of an unbearable status quo. This plan also demonstrates that Gravina did not limit himself to the basic tasks of the High Commissioner but made an effort to elaborate and promote a solution to Danzig's problems and did so through the League. Gravina took his work seriously and tried to propose a solution according to his understanding of world politics.

In his early writings, Gravina argued that the Italian government should use the League to fulfil its foreign-policy aspirations, taking advantage of internationalism for its own national interest. We shall now analyse what Gravina thought Italy could gain by having him as High Commissioner in Danzig, and how dependent on Rome his work was. Mussolini's government had welcomed Gravina's appointment as High Commissioner, which it presented as the assertion of Fascist authority at the League. Regarding the use that Italy could make of this post, it was Gravina himself in 1930 who clarified that in Danzig: *'l'Italia non ha interesse alcuno, ma ... indirettamente può tanto rompere le scatole ad altri, che vi hanno invece notevoli interessi.'*⁵³³ Thus, even if Italy did not have direct interests in the Baltic, Gravina was convinced that his post could bring advantages to Italian foreign policy as a bargaining tool in the

⁵³³ Trans. 'Italy has no interest at all, but...indirectly, it can bother others, who instead do have big interests [in Danzig].' Gravina to Guariglia, 2 Dec.1930, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9, doc.432

relations with Germany and other states concerned with the area. Gravina also made clear to Grandi that he was available to follow Rome's directions should a matter relevant to national interest occur.⁵³⁴ In December 1930, he solicited Rome's opinion about his plan for treaty revision as the only solution to Danzig's problems.⁵³⁵

He did not only ask for instructions, but he also tried to encourage the Italian Foreign Ministry to take advantage of his post to develop its own strategic plan. He stressed that 'no one would ever believe that Italian politics, which has a reputation for ability, ...did not make use of the opportunity represented by an Italian High Commissioner.'⁵³⁶ More specifically, Gravina suggested that, knowing that the High Commissioner was going to present a report in favour of a revision of the Treaty, Italy should bargain advantages with the parties involved, in exchange for its 'indirect influence' on him as High Commissioner.⁵³⁷ However, the Foreign Ministry told Gravina that, at the moment, it was not convenient for Italy if he offered to Germany 'the service' of talking about revision in his report, as this service would have been for free.⁵³⁸ In general, Gravina's expectations for instructions from Rome were disappointed because of the little interest shown by Rome in his views or what he regarded as the opportunities presented by his post. Only in July 1932, did the Italian Foreign Ministry give Gravina a clear direction, asking him to assume an attitude more favourable towards Poland: '*Cerca di fare quanto necessario perchè i giornali polacchi cantino un po' le tue lodi! E che ti siano un po' ostili i giornali tedeschi.*'⁵³⁹

⁵³⁴ Gravina to Grandi, 16 Sept. 1930, doc.256; Gravina to Guariglia, 2 Dec.1930, doc.432, in DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9

⁵³⁵ Gravina to Guariglia, 2 Dec.1930, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9, doc.432

⁵³⁶ Gravina to Guariglia, 2 Dec.1930, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9, doc.432

⁵³⁷ Gravina to Guariglia, 2 Dec.1930, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9, doc.432

⁵³⁸ Trans. Guariglia to Gravina, 20 Dec. 1930, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.9, doc.467

⁵³⁹ Trans. 'Try to do what is necessary so that the Polish newspapers will sing your praises and that the German newspapers will be more hostile to you' Guariglia to Gravina, 18 July 1932, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.12, doc.157

In fact, in 1932, Fascist Italy was preoccupied with Germany's assertion of its authority on its eastern frontier and feared a German-Austrian *Anschluss*, and for these reasons it was trying to improve its relations with Poland.⁵⁴⁰ Gravina encouraged the Italian Foreign Ministry to take advantage of his position at Danzig, but in practice Rome showed little interest in this possibility and therefore, the work of Gravina was not subject to close Italian guidance.⁵⁴¹

By 1932, Gravina's attitude towards the League had become more negative. He wrote that, if the League would insist in 'crystallising history', it would be doomed to failure.⁵⁴² The role which he envisioned for the League was instead that of facilitating inevitable historical changes through agreements and international compromises, rather than, as in the past, through bloody wars.⁵⁴³ However, in 1932 Gravina believed that the League had proven unable so far to facilitate Italy's revisionist aspirations. In particular, it was incapable of facilitating Italian claims directed towards unfulfilled colonial ambitions.⁵⁴⁴ Therefore, in 1932 Gravina wrote to Paulucci that, if Italy wanted to achieve its legitimate ambitions, '*Bisogna cercare di distruggere quell'Istituto, a noi nefasto.*'⁵⁴⁵ He stressed how, realistically, 'it is pointless...to persist with international conferences and internationalism in general' and only 'national' efforts could bring prosperous development.⁵⁴⁶ These strong words against the League were the result of Gravina's frustration with the institution but also his

⁵⁴⁰ Leonardo Vitetti to Mussolini, dated 10-11 July 1932, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.12, doc.147

⁵⁴¹ Deodato, E., 'Manfredi Gravina Alto Commissario della Società delle Nazioni a Danzica', p.46

⁵⁴² Gravina, M., 'La Collaborazione Internazionale nell'Utopia e nella Realtà' in *Nuova Antologia*, 16 Mar. 1932 in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, p.297

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.298

⁵⁴⁴ Gravina, M., 'La Collaborazione Internazionale nell'Utopia e nella Realtà' in *Nuova Antologia*, 16 Mar. 1932 in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*

⁵⁴⁵ Trans. 'we need to destroy that institution, unpropitious to us' Letter from Gravina to Paulucci di Calboli, 7 Jan. 1932, cit. in Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, p.212

⁵⁴⁶ Trans. Letter from Gravina to Paulucci, 7 Jan. 1932, cit. in Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, p.212

reaction to the League-friendly attitude promoted by Grandi. Gravina strongly disagreed with what he considered ‘*una deviazione, sia pure inconsapevole, dell’indirizzo mussoliniano.*’⁵⁴⁷ He thought that Grandi’s attitude towards the organization was too oriented to the maintenance of the status quo rather than to the sort of revision Gravina had in mind.

Therefore, the attitude of Gravina towards the League, during his period as High Commissioner was characterised by two contrasting tendencies. On the one hand, as an Italian nationalist and a Fascist, Gravina changed from thinking that the League could facilitate the achievement of Italy’s international aspirations to the realization that the League was inevitably committed to the maintenance of the status quo. As such, it was an obstacle to Italy’s national interests and must be dismantled. On the other hand, as High Commissioner in Danzig, Gravina was well aware that any peaceful outcome for the Free City needed the League’s commitment, and that the disappearance of this institution would bring war. His contradictory view of the League was confirmed by the proposal he made to Paulucci in August 1932. Gravina suggested that he should take up Paulucci’s post as the Italian Under Secretary-General at the League, which was due to become vacant: a central position in the institution that he deemed harmful to Italy’s interests.⁵⁴⁸ However, his ambitions in this direction were blocked by his sudden death in office on 19 September 1932.

Despite his untimely demise, the experience of Manfredi Gravina as High Commissioner of the LoN in Danzig offers us an important example of the Italian

⁵⁴⁷ Trans. ‘a deviation, even though unconscious, from Mussolini’s guidelines’ Gravina to Federzoni, 25 Feb. 1932 in Sillani (ed.), *Scritti di Manfredi Gravina*, p.x; see also letter from Gravina to Paulucci, 7 Jan. 1932, cit. in Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, p.212

⁵⁴⁸ Gravina to Paulucci, 9 Aug. 1932 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32)*, ‘Manfredi Gravina’ b.58, GPdC, ASF

presence and involvement in the work of the League at a layer higher than the Secretariat. It also helps us to understand more about the relationship between internationalism and nationalism. As High Commissioner in Danzig, Gravina did not just fulfil the requirements of the role demanded by the League, but he also took personal initiative. He suggested and promoted a plan for the creation of a Free State of Danzig to be placed once again under the protection of this international organization. This proposal was the concretization of his beliefs on the role that the LoN could have played in international relations, which was a role of mediation for a peaceful revision of the Peace Treaties and the elimination of the causes of tensions between states. In Gravina's thought, revisionism and the League could coexist. As High Commissioner, his work had been highly criticized from the Polish perspective, however the League's Council and Secretary-General expressed a positive assessment of his efforts to handle such a delicate situation as the Danzig one. The British Foreign Office also reported favourably on Gravina's conduct as High Commissioner.

However, as an Italian nationalist and a Fascist, Gravina perceived his position in Danzig as a post representing the Italian government and he consistently sought guidance from the Italian Foreign Ministry as to how he could be useful to the national interests. He was so convinced that his post could be effectively used as a bargaining tool in Italy's foreign policy that he approached the Foreign Ministry with concrete suggestions, but his overtures failed to bring a response. The limited interest of Rome in Gravina's post encouraged him to take personal initiatives in Danzig, but also motivated him to maintain a professional attitude towards his employer, the League of Nations.

In general, Gravina's involvement in the work of the League is a good example of how internationalism and nationalism interacted, often in contradictory ways. While remaining above all a nationalist, Gravina held an international post as part of an international organization, based on an arrangement of treaties that he wanted to revise. Gravina never took internationalism as a faith and perceived his mandate in Danzig as a national representation, looking to Rome for instructions. However, at the same time, he developed a strong sense of duty towards his role and the League's Council, to which he responded, and he committed himself to the mission of the League in Danzig. Gravina with his multiple identities was genuinely engaged in the attempt to find a solution to the Danzig question based on his understanding on international politics, i.e. by using the League as an agent of revision. Gravina's case well illustrates the complicated relationship between Fascist Italy and the League of Nations, showing how nationalism and internationalism were not separated in a dichotomous way, but interacted with and influenced each other.

Alberto Theodoli and the League of Nations' Mandates

Gravina was not the only Italian holding a prominent position at the League of Nations. Alberto Theodoli (1873-1955) was President of the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) from 1921 to 1937. Theodoli allows us to add an additional dimension to the presence of the Italians in the League and enables us to analyse a LoN question that, unlike Danzig, really interested the Italian Foreign Ministry. The mandates were a very important matter for Italian policy at the League, since they were directly connected to the colonial aspirations of the country, which the Fascist regime initially hoped to fulfil without recourse to war. Moreover, Theodoli held his position for almost the whole duration of Italian membership of the League and this allows us to follow the evolution of the relationship between Italy and this organization over a long period of time. Theodoli represents another category of Italians interacting with the League, that of the representatives to specialist committees. As in Gravina's case, Theodoli embodied multiple identities that illustrate the complex interaction of nationalism and internationalism.

The League of Nations' Mandates

At the end of the First World War, the overseas territories, which belonged to the countries that had lost the war, became 'mandates' under the supervision of the LoN. Woodrow Wilson, who envisioned a 'new' colonialism, had promoted the mandates' idea, which aimed to restrain European imperialism by subjecting it to international

accountability.⁵⁴⁹ Article 22 of the LoN Covenant dictated that to those countries ‘inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world’ should be applied ‘the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation.’⁵⁵⁰ These peoples should be safeguarded by ‘advanced nations’, the mandatory powers, ‘on behalf of the League.’⁵⁵¹

The territories concerned were classified in three groups according to their degree of development, as evaluated by the League. The former Turkish Empire territories (Group A) were recognised as being at a high stage of development and capable of becoming independent nations soon. In this case, the Mandatories were meant to provide administrative advice and assistance until the territories were able to stand alone.⁵⁵² Iraq, Palestine, Transjordan were subject to supervision by Britain, and Lebanon and Syria by France. The second group (Group B) included the Central Africa territories, in which the stage of development was such as to require the mandatory power to administer the area as a separate territory and to make sure that personal freedoms were respected and public order maintained.⁵⁵³ Togoland and the Cameroons were administered by Britain and France, Tanganyika by Britain, and Ruanda-Urundi by Belgium. Finally, the territories of South West Africa and certain South Pacific Islands (Group C), due to ‘the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness,’ or ‘their geographical continuity’ with the mandatory

⁵⁴⁹ Callahan, M.D., *Mandates and Empire. The League of Nations and Africa, 1914-1931* (Brighton, 1999), pp.30-31

⁵⁵⁰ Art.22 (par.1), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁵⁵¹ Art.22 (par.2), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁵⁵² Art.22 (par.4), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁵⁵³ Art.22 (par.5), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

power, were believed to be better off as directly administered under the laws of the Mandatories as integral part of their territories.⁵⁵⁴ South West Africa was given to the Union of South Africa and the Pacific islands were divided between Japan, New Zealand, Australia and the British Empire. All Mandatories had to produce a detailed report to the Council on the mandate's activity every year.⁵⁵⁵ The distribution of the mandates was settled at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919 and the San Remo Conference in 1920, but some mandates (Syria and Palestine) came into effect only in 1923.⁵⁵⁶

Article 22 of the LoN Covenant also provided for the creation of a Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) 'to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.'⁵⁵⁷ The Commission, which was formally constituted in February 1921, was a consultative body with the task of overseeing the mandatory powers, making sure that the institution of the mandates was respected, that the indigenous peoples were protected and that the equality between the Mandatory and all the LoN members in the commercial relations with the mandated territories was guaranteed.⁵⁵⁸ The Commission met once a year (until 1925, and then twice a year thereafter) to debate the annual reports and to question the representatives of the mandatory powers on their content, before submitting observations to the Council.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁴ Art.22 (par.6), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁵⁵⁵ Art.22 (par.7), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁵⁵⁶ Walters, pp.121, 213

⁵⁵⁷ Art.22 (par.9), League of Nations Covenant available at:
http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁵⁵⁸ Walters, p.171; Monnier, V., *William E. Rappard* (Geneva, 1995), p.319

⁵⁵⁹ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations*, 1928 (Geneva, 1928), p.124

The Commission also received petitions from the inhabitants of the mandates about the administration of these areas. However, these petitions could not reach the PMC directly, but instead had to reach Geneva through the mandatory power responsible for that area, which was meant to comment on them. Petitions of residents in the mandates received in other ways were not considered.⁵⁶⁰ People not living in the mandated territories could also submit petitions. In this case, the requests were first analysed by the PMC President who, if considered receivable, would give them to the Mandatories for comments. The PMC would then review all valid petitions and forward them to the Council and the League member states.⁵⁶¹ Inevitably, the fact that the Commission could not receive petitions directly from the inhabitants of the mandates, together with the fact that the PMC decided not to send missions of inquiry to the mandated territories was a significant limitation to the correct functioning of the mandates system. According to Neta Crawford, these limits were motivated by the PMC's fear of undermining the confidence and authority of the Mandatories and of putting the Commission in the position of being a judicial body, rather than an advisory one.⁵⁶²

The Commission, which met for the first time in October 1921, was made up of nine members (ten from 1927, with the admission of a German expert) appointed by the LoN Council on the basis of 'their personal merits and competence' for an undetermined period.⁵⁶³ The former directors of the Mandates Section, and an assessor from the International Labour Office in charge of analysing the labour

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² Crawford, N.C., *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization, and Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge, 2002), p.269

⁵⁶³ 'Constitution of the Permanent Mandates Commission', 29 Nov. 1920, in Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, pp.199-200

conditions in the mandated territories, were also part of the Commission.⁵⁶⁴ Because they needed to be free to question the Mandatories, the members of the Commission were meant not to represent their country of origins but to be sitting as experts in a private capacity and ‘no one who was in any way dependent on his government was eligible for nomination.’⁵⁶⁵ For the same reason the majority of the members came from countries that were not Mandatories.⁵⁶⁶ Nevertheless, these experts were normally actively suggested by their states. The League did not pay the PMC members for their expertise but reimbursed them the costs of attending the Commission’s sessions and granted a small indemnity.⁵⁶⁷ The PMC elected a president and a vice-president for one year.⁵⁶⁸ The President decided the relevance of the petitions not coming from the mandated territories and approved the agenda of the PMC. Moreover, if there was a tie when voting, the vote of the president was preponderant.⁵⁶⁹

The President of the Commission from 1921 to 1937 was Alberto Theodoli, former Italian under-secretary for the Ministry of Colonies. The Vice-President was the Dutch Daniel F.W. van Rees, former secretary-general of the Netherlands East Indies Government, who died in office in 1934, and was then replaced by Frederick. M. van Asbeck, also from the Netherlands. The German member, admitted in 1927, was Ludwig Kastl, a former colonial official in German South West Africa, until 1930, when he was substituted by Julius Ruppel, former official in Cameroon. After Edward

⁵⁶⁴ Walters, p.171

⁵⁶⁵ Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics*, p.266; Walters, p.171

⁵⁶⁶ ‘Constitution of the Permanent Mandates Commission’, 29 Nov. 1920, in Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, pp.199-200

⁵⁶⁷ ‘Constitution of the Permanent Mandates Commission’, 29 Nov. 1920, in Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, pp.199-200

⁵⁶⁸ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations, 1928* (Geneva, 1928), p.123

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.124

Keith-Roach and William Ormsby-Gore, from 1923 the British member was Sir Frederick Lugard (former governor-general of Nigeria and author of the influential book *The Dual Mandate*) who resigned in 1936 in favour of Malcom Hailey, followed in turn by Lord Hankey.⁵⁷⁰ The French member was Jean-Baptiste Paul Beau, replaced by the Henri Merlin (former governor-general of several French colonies) from 1926 to 1935, and then by François Manceron (former resident-general in Tunisia) and Augustin Giraud. The Scandinavian member was the Swedish Anne Bugge-Wicksell until 1928, when Valentine Dannevig, Norwegian, took her place. In 1929, the Portuguese Count De Penha-Garcia followed Alfredo Freire D'Andrade. The Belgian member was Pierre Orts and the Spanish was Leopoldo Palacios, who had succeeded Ramon Pina and Count de Ballobar. The Japanese member was Kunio Yanagita, substituted by Chiyuki Yamanaka in 1924, and Nobumiehi Sakenobe in 1928. William E. Rappard was present as extraordinary member from 1924 and Vito Catastini from 1936.⁵⁷¹ Most of the members had some sort of colonial experience and many were well-known advocates of their country's imperial past, present and future.⁵⁷²

The League also constituted a Mandates Section, which performed the duties of secretariat for the PMC. The Section was in charge of the preparation of the work and the documents of the PMC, as well as those of Council and Assembly in relation to mandates and slavery issues.⁵⁷³ In fact, the Mandates Section became also the

⁵⁷⁰ Lugard, F.D., *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh, 1922)

⁵⁷¹ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations* (Geneva 1920-1936)

⁵⁷² For further details see: Callahan, M.D., *A Sacred Trust. The League of Nations and Africa, 1929-1946* (Brighton, 2004), pp.19-20

⁵⁷³ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations, 1928* (Geneva, 1928), p.124

secretariat of the Temporary Committee on Slavery, when it was created in March 1924.⁵⁷⁴ The Section had the important task of preparing the agenda for the PMC.⁵⁷⁵ It also gathered statistics and prepared reports for the PMC on the press coverage on the mandates.⁵⁷⁶ It was responsible for drafting the questionnaire to be submitted to the Mandatories as a guideline for their annual report, and was involved in sorting out petitions.⁵⁷⁷ Furthermore, it provided other institutions dependent on the LoN with what they needed in relation to the mandates.⁵⁷⁸ The Section was the main link between the PMC, the LoN Council, the Assembly and the mandatory powers and it was the means by which contact with the members of the PMC was maintained between the sessions.⁵⁷⁹

The connection between the Director of the Mandates Section and the President of the PMC in their work was tight. The President took decisions on petitions on the advice of the Section, and the Section would assist the President in drafting speeches. The agenda of the PMC sessions was prepared in consultation between the two.⁵⁸⁰ The Director of the Mandates Section joined the LoN Secretary-General at the Council sessions in which mandates were debated.⁵⁸¹ The first Director of the Section was William E. Rappard, who believed he was hired because, as a Swiss, he appeared impartial.⁵⁸² Rappard left the post in 1924 and was succeeded by Vito Catastini, as ‘chief of section charged with the direction of the Section’ and then as Director only from 1929. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Catastini was involved in the

⁵⁷⁴ Monnier, V., *William E. Rappard* (Geneva, 1995), p.320

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.325

⁵⁷⁶ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations, 1930* (Geneva, 1930), p.115; Monnier, *op. cit.*, p.324

⁵⁷⁷ Monnier, *op. cit.*, pp.323-325

⁵⁷⁸ Monnier, *op. cit.*, p.319

⁵⁷⁹ Hall, H.D., *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship* (London, 1948), p.166

⁵⁸⁰ Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*, pp.167,184

⁵⁸¹ Monnier, *op. cit.*, p.319

⁵⁸² Monnier, *op. cit.*, p.318

Plainpalais incident in 1926 and was a member of the Fascist party since 1919. As Director, Catastini created a successful long-term cooperation with the Italian President of the PMC, who described him as ‘a loyal and intelligent friend.’⁵⁸³

The Permanent Mandates Commission, November 1929



Second row, from the left: Sakenobe, Kastl, Weaver (ILO), Merlin, Rappard, De Penha-Garcia, Catastini, Palacios.

Front row, from the left: Lugard, Dannevig, Theodoli, Van Rees, Orts

Source: *BOX 122/1, Lugard Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford*

⁵⁸³ Theodoli, A., *A cavallo di due secoli* (Rome, 1950), p.100

Italy and the Mandates

The colonial aspirations of Italy were a constant concern of the Fascist government. Italy had been disappointed with the partition of the colonies in the aftermath of the First World War, which was perceived as determined by France and Britain to Italy's disadvantage. The latter saw the creation of the mandates with suspicion and the disappointment of having been left out, even though it was partially compensated with the presidency of the PMC.⁵⁸⁴ Many Italians believed that Article 9 of the secret Treaty of London (1915) implied that Italy would have gained a 'just' part of the Ottoman Empire. However, already in 1916, France and Britain conducted negotiations without Italy, which resulted into the Sykes-Picot agreement as the basis for the mandates system.⁵⁸⁵ When this was discussed in 1919, the Italian government, which hoped to obtain a mandate, sustained the legal argument that it was the League of Nations who had to nominate the Mandatories, but found itself presented with a *fait accompli*.⁵⁸⁶ By the end of 1920, the Italian government had surrendered to the fact that the only action left was to promote a vigilant control of the mandates system and the Mandatories' management.⁵⁸⁷

For the whole duration of its membership of the League, the Italian government was actively interested in the mandates. There was no difference between the attitude towards the mandates system in the liberal and in the Fascist years.⁵⁸⁸ The interest of the Italian government in Geneva with respect to the mandates was twofold. On the

⁵⁸⁴ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, p.70

⁵⁸⁵ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.81-83

⁵⁸⁶ 'Applicazione dell'art.22 del Patto della Società delle Nazioni' by Ferdinando Nobili Messner, 20 Nov. 1920 in Carte Schanzer, b.8, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Italy (ACS)

⁵⁸⁷ 'Relazione sull'opera della delegazione italiana alla prima assemblea della SdN' by Carlo Schanzer, 30 Dec. 1920, in Carte Schanzer, b.8/35/6, in ACS

⁵⁸⁸ Costa Bona, pp.187,189,195

one hand, Italy was particularly concerned with safeguarding the principle that the sovereignty of the mandates (Groups A and B) laid with the mandated territory and not with the mandatory powers. It was also committed to making sure that the Mandatories did not take too much advantage of those lands, presenting the Italian government as the defender of the indigenous populations.⁵⁸⁹ Obviously Italy's interest in the rights of the mandated peoples was not driven by a 'Fascist humanitarian concern.' Instead, it was determined by the willingness to make sure that if Italy could not take advantage of the mandates' resources in a traditional colonial sense, nor would other states. The Italian government was quick to call attention to any violations of the mandates in order to embarrass the Mandatories and to remind them of Italy's imperial frustrations.⁵⁹⁰ The essential aim of the Italian action at the PMC was to create difficulties for the Mandatories, or at best not acting to bolster their position.⁵⁹¹ However, especially in the early 1930s, this attitude of Italy as 'protector of the mandates' became negotiable: if Britain or France wanted Italy's support to change the nature of the mandates in their favour, the Italian government offered to reconsider its position provided it received the appropriate, territorial or commercial, compensation.⁵⁹²

At the same time, the Italian government requested a redistribution of the mandates several times, especially in bilateral negotiations with France and Britain, with the hope of obtaining some territory.⁵⁹³ According to Grandi, in order to secure a

⁵⁸⁹ Costa Bona, pp.187,189,195

⁵⁹⁰ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, p.67

⁵⁹¹ Note by Raffaele Guariglia, 17 Jul. 1928, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.6, doc. 486; also in Costa Bona, p.194

⁵⁹² See Note 2, pp.16-17, Dino Grandi to Benito Mussolini (undated, 1927?), DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.18; Conclusions from Meeting 5 Jan. 1931, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.10, doc.5

⁵⁹³ Giuseppe De Michelis to Grandi, 9 Jul. 1931, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.10, doc.385; Costa Bona, p.190

mandate, Italy had to make sure that the existing mandates did not become colonies. It was necessary to avoid that: 'the *tenancy* agreement becomes a *property* one' otherwise the landlord (the League) would be unable to give a mandate to Italy.⁵⁹⁴ The territories to which the Fascist regime was attracted in 1927 were Tanganyika and Syria.⁵⁹⁵ Regarding the Presidency of the PMC, in 1927 Grandi stated that this post had been a weakness for Italy so far, a '*morfina presidenziale*': while the others obtained the mandates, Italy was only given the post.⁵⁹⁶ These words reflected the regime's bitterness towards what was perceived as an injustice. But the presidency of the PMC was both highly valued and an important tool for the Italian Foreign Ministry, as we shall see later.

⁵⁹⁴ Trans. Italic in original, Grandi to Mussolini (undated-1927), Note 2, pp.16-17, in DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.18, also cit. in Costa Bona, p.193

⁵⁹⁵ '*Promemoria*' (undated but given to Grandi on 15 June 1927), DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.275, also cit. in Costa Bona, p.196

⁵⁹⁶ Trans. 'presidential morphine.' Grandi to Mussolini (undated, 1927?), Note 2, pp.16-17, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.5, doc.18; Costa Bona, p.187

Alberto Theodoli



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Marquis Alberto Theodoli di Sambuci (1873-1955), the first President of the PMC, was a member of Roman nobility. More precisely, his family was part of the ‘black aristocracy’, that is of the families that in the aftermath of the incorporation of the Church State territories in the newly born Italian state in 1870 remained faithful to the Pope.⁵⁹⁷ Theodoli was very attached to the Vatican but also well connected to the European aristocracy, of which he was a frequent guest. He studied engineering at

⁵⁹⁷ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.39; Pollard, J.F., *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy. Financing the Vatican, 1850-1950* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 48,100

Lausanne University and subsequently worked for an engineering company in Belgium and Bulgaria.⁵⁹⁸ He was highly educated and spoke several languages. Theodoli was appreciated at the Vatican and this helped him to get involved in diplomatic missions for the Banco di Roma, of whose Board he was member from 1902 to 1917.⁵⁹⁹ The Banco di Roma was the largest financial institution with which the Vatican dealt in the early 1900 and it was managed by Roman members of the black aristocracy. The president was Ernesto Pacelli, the investment banker of Pope Leo XIII and the Vatican's link with the Italian government in the early 1900.⁶⁰⁰ The Banco was also an agent of Italian imperialism in the Ottoman Empire, especially when Tommaso Tittoni was Italian Foreign Minister, since his brother was among the directors of the Banco.⁶⁰¹

In 1905, thanks to Pacelli, Alberto Theodoli was nominated by the Rome Chamber of Commerce as the Italian delegate to the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt, which was the organization protecting the interests of the creditors of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁰² Theodoli dealt mainly with trying to ease the Italian penetration of the Empire, obtaining financial participation in the main projects of the time, e.g. the Bagdad Railway.⁶⁰³ In his journeys across the Middle East, he met Mathilde Sursock

⁵⁹⁸ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.25-27

⁵⁹⁹ Bosworth, R.J.B, 'Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire' in Kent, M. (ed.), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1984), p.55; Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.36; Alberto Theodoli's official profile at the Italian Senate, available at: <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/4038162380009750c125703d004eed42/633d1bb39311706b4125646f00610052?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁶⁰⁰ Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, pp.70,101,213

⁶⁰¹ Bosworth, 'Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire', pp.51-72; Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, p.99

⁶⁰² Lai, B., *Finanze e Finanziari Vaticani tra l'Ottocento e il Novecento* (Milan, 1979), p.250; Bosworth, 'Italy and the End of the Ottoman Empire', p.55; Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, p.101

⁶⁰³ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.47,54; Theodoli, A., 'La preparazione dell'impresa di Tripoli. Ricordi di una missione in Turchia' in *Nuova Antologia*, anno 69, Fasc.1496, 16 Jul. 1934, p.239

and they got married on 12 September 1906.⁶⁰⁴ The Surssock family was a very wealthy Christian merchant family, native of Lebanon, influential within the Ottoman Empire and admitted to the highest circles of Ottoman and European high society.⁶⁰⁵ The relation with the Surssocks is relevant because this family owned extensive land in Palestine, and, as reported by John Hope Simpson in 1930, they sold these territories to the Jews, with little consideration for the Arabs living in them, while openly denouncing the establishment of a Jews National Home.⁶⁰⁶ It is believed that this family connection played a role in determining Theodoli's anti-Zionism.⁶⁰⁷

Theodoli was in Istanbul in September 1911, when Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire. During the war he performed an unofficial diplomatic task on behalf of the Sultan, bringing to Rome the terms of a diplomatic agreement, which the Turks believed could end the conflict. However, the Italian government refused the proposal.⁶⁰⁸ Due to his role in the war negotiations, Theodoli became 'undesirable' in Turkey and was forced to leave his office at the Debt Council in 1912.⁶⁰⁹ When he returned to Italy, Theodoli was persuaded to start a political career and presented himself as a candidate to the *Camera dei Deputati* (Parliament's Lower Chamber) at the 1913 election. He remained a member of the Chamber until 1919.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁴ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.46-47

⁶⁰⁵ Tarazi Fawaz, L., *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), p.93

⁶⁰⁶ Tarazi Fawaz, *op.cit.*, p.93; 'Palestine. Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development' by Sir John Hope Simpson, 1 Oct. 1930, Cmd.3686; Pedersen, S., 'The Impact of League Oversight on British Policy in Palestine' in Miller, R. (ed.), *Britain, Palestine and Empire: The Mandate Years* (Farnham, 2010), p.43

⁶⁰⁷ Pedersen, 'The Impact of League Oversight on British Policy in Palestine' in Miller (ed.), p.43

⁶⁰⁸ For a detailed record see: Theodoli, 'La preparazione dell'impresa di Tripoli. Ricordi di una missione in Turchia', pp.239-49

⁶⁰⁹ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.67-68

⁶¹⁰ Alberto Theodoli's official profile at the Italian Senate, available at: <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/4038162380009750c125703d004eed42/633d1bb39311706b4125646f00610052?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

In the First World War, Theodoli was an interventionist and volunteered to serve in the Engineers Corps. He was also involved in inter-allied missions in France and Britain, and continued attending the Parliament's sessions in Rome when necessary.⁶¹¹ In 1919, Theodoli was seriously worried about the rise of social tensions in Italy and warned the government involved in the peace negotiations in Paris to avoid polarization on the Fiume question and concentrate instead on what, he thought, Italy needed the most: mandates, raw materials and markets.⁶¹² During Nitti's government (June 1919- May 1920), thanks to Foreign Minister Tittoni, an old friend, Theodoli became first under-secretary of Foreign Affairs, and then moved to the Ministry of Colonies.⁶¹³ During the peace negotiations in Paris, in 1919, Theodoli assisted the delegation on colonial questions.⁶¹⁴ This experience, together with his knowledge of the Middle East and his political connections, made him an excellent candidate as the Italian expert at the newly born Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in 1921.

In his memoirs, Theodoli did show a little sympathy for the undeveloped potential of the League but showed no enthusiasm for Woodrow Wilson. He wrote that Wilson 'knew little and understood nothing' of European problems and allowed a lot of bad things to be done to Italy.⁶¹⁵ According to Theodoli, the League could have led to great outcomes, but its always-nervous Assembly concluded nothing, because all was decided instead in the living rooms of Geneva's hotels. Moreover, he believed, the League was populated by 'many worthless politicians' who were both duplicitous and

⁶¹¹ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp. 51,74-75

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, p.93

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.93-94

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.99

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.37

hypocritical.⁶¹⁶ The criticism for the Wilsonian project and the connection Theodoli made between the League and the maintenance of the Versailles status quo at the expense of Italy's unfulfilled territorial claims were typical of Theodoli's generation of conservative nationalists in the so-called liberal era of Italian politics. These beliefs were then promoted by Fascism, but were shared by a wider part of the Italian political élite.

But what was Theodoli's relationship to Fascism? In his memoirs, he described himself as 'monarchic-liberal-Catholic-independent.'⁶¹⁷ Theodoli obtained the post at the League in 1921, during the liberal era, and remained the Italian representative until 1937. The fact that Theodoli maintained his post at the PMC, a role of strategic importance to Fascism, proves that he was accepted by the regime. In his writings, which however were published in 1950, when many people involved in Italian politics tried to justify their conduct in the Fascist years, Theodoli did not present himself as a Fascist, even though he was clearly a sympathiser. The fact that he, together with many Catholic conservatives, supported the nationalistic programme of Fascism is not surprising, since it was the same proposed by the nationalists before the Great War.⁶¹⁸ In general, Theodoli seemed to be a nationalist man belonging to a conservative family, who did support Fascism without appreciating its excesses, and who viewed it mainly as a way to counter socialism and communism, which he saw as the real threat in the aftermath of the war. Nevertheless, Theodoli's origins, noble and Catholic, made him also part of those 'old parasites' that the early Fascism aimed to extirpate, but had to bargain with, in order to govern. For this reason the reciprocal relationship

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., pp.167-168

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., p.103

⁶¹⁸ Pollard, J., 'Conservative Catholics and Italian fascism: the Clerico-Fascists' in Blinkhorn, M. (ed.), *Fascists and Conservatives* (London, 1990),p.37

between Catholic conservatives and Fascists was less of respect, and more of coexistence. Theodoli does not, unlike others, seem to have been fascinated by the personality of Mussolini, whom he considered as coming from an inferior social class and who, until the Lateran Pacts were approved in 1929, he saw as a threat to the Pope.⁶¹⁹ The lack of mutual sympathy is confirmed by the fact that Theodoli's deep desire to be nominated Senator was not fulfilled until 1934, even though he had been suggested for the post several times in the 1920s.⁶²⁰ According to Mussolini, Theodoli was '*tropo strafottente*' ('too impertinent').⁶²¹ The Fascist political police also reported that Theodoli was double-faced, showing loyalty to Fascism in public but not in private.⁶²² Nevertheless, in 1934, Theodoli not only became Senator but also received the Fascist Party membership card from Mussolini.⁶²³

The improvement in relations was short-lived. His membership card was withdrawn in 1937 under instructions from Galeazzo Ciano, Foreign Minister from 1936 to 1943.⁶²⁴ Theodoli claimed that this happened without him knowing the reason. But rumours registered by the Fascist political police indicated that the cause had been a wire-tap in which Theodoli expressed negative judgements about Mussolini and Fascism in relation to the *Anschluss*, an event that the Vatican also feared.⁶²⁵ In his memoirs, Theodoli confirmed his antipathy for Hitler and Nazism.⁶²⁶ One of the most

⁶¹⁹ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.118,132

⁶²⁰ "1 Novembre 1929", Grandi's Diary, Ottobre-Novembre 1929, in Carte Grandi, b.13/90/9, ASMAE; Alberto Theodoli's official profile at the Italian Senate, available at: <http://notes9.senato.it/Web/senregno.NSF/4038162380009750c125703d004eed42/633d1bb39311706b4125646f00610052?OpenDocument> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁶²¹ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.171

⁶²² 'Rome, 5 October 1928' in Ministero degli Interni (MI), Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (DGPS), Polizia Politica (POL POL), Serie A, b.98/A, 'Alberto Theodoli', in ACS

⁶²³ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.172

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.172; Messages 'Rome, 14 April 1938' and 'Rome, 5 April 1938' in MI, DGPS, POL POL, Serie A, b.98/A, Alberto Theodoli, ACS

⁶²⁶ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.145

important reasons behind Theodoli's 'expulsion' from the Fascist Party was his tense relationship with Ciano.⁶²⁷ When Ciano became Foreign Minister, in June 1936, he asked Theodoli to desist from getting involved in foreign policy. However, he was forced to reconsider the situation at the end of that same year, when he wanted Theodoli to meet with Drummond, now serving as British Ambassador in Rome, with the ambition of improving Italo-British relations, damaged by the Ethiopian conflict. According to Theodoli, this meeting resulted in the 'Gentleman's Agreement' regulating the British-Italian relations in the Mediterranean.⁶²⁸

The political career of Theodoli in Italy also ended in 1937, when on 27 May, after a journey to Ethiopia, he reported to the Senate on the Italian administration of the newly acquired Ethiopian colony. Theodoli did not refrain from criticising the Fascist policy in Ethiopia, in particular the imposition of a direct government, the economic and monetary system adopted and the incapable people who were given important administrative positions. As a consequence he was invited by Mussolini to resign from all state and parastatal posts.⁶²⁹ The episode is registered also by the Fascist political police, whose sources described Theodoli's speech at the Senate as 'very unfortunate' and an attempt of Theodoli, who had praised the colonial management of other countries and was 'suffering from xenophilia', to '*immortalarsi*' ('make his fame everlasting').⁶³⁰ Ironically, Theodoli's expert opinion on colonial management in Italy rather than at the League, contributed to the end of his political career.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., p.177

⁶²⁸ Ibid., pp.179-184

⁶²⁹ Ibid., pp.177-178

⁶³⁰ Message 'Rome, 27 June 1937' in MI, DGPS, POL POL, Serie A, b.98/A, Alberto Theodoli, ACS. Unfortunately, the search for Theodoli's speech at the Senate has proven unsuccessful.

When looking at Theodoli's life and relationship with Fascism, we can see the difficulty of labelling him solely as a 'Fascist.' Theodoli, like many of his contemporaries, possessed multiple identities, some of them apparently contrasting. He was very close to the Vatican, but at the same time a fervid Italian nationalist, who had accepted and supported Fascism as this endorsed nationalist aims. He was also a representative of the Catholic aristocracy and, as such, he judged with contempt and social superiority many aspects of Fascism. Moreover, Theodoli had a 19th- century vision of diplomacy and his understanding of colonialism belonged more to the liberal era than to the Fascist one.

Alberto Theodoli between Geneva and Rome: an Evaluation

Theodoli was elected President of the Permanent Mandates Commission (PMC) in 1921, when he was presented as the Italian expert by Rome. His presidency was renewed annually and Theodoli was reconfirmed every year until 1937.⁶³¹ In June 1936, Theodoli walked out of the PMC after having condemned Britain and France for their decision to include in the LoN sanctions against Italy their mandated territories. He did not return but refused to give up his post until May 1937 and officially resigned only after Italy's withdrawal in December 1937.⁶³² From French sources, we now know that Theodoli did not want to give up his post at the PMC, but he had to, as a consequence of an official order of the Fascist government.⁶³³ During his time at the PMC, Theodoli dealt with all the key questions related to the mandates which occupied the LoN agenda, such as the conflict between Jews and Arabs in

⁶³¹ Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, p.113

⁶³² Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*, pp.98-99

⁶³³ "L'Italie et la Société des nations" by Marcel Hoden, 11 May 1937, in Service française de la Société des Nations (1917-1940) (hereafter SdNFra), b.2123, ADF

Palestine, the independence of Iraq, the Closer Union etc. This chapter will now analyse Theodoli's attitude in dealing with these key issues, with the aim to evaluate his work at the Commission, the degree to which he fulfilled his duties, whether he took initiative in favour or against the LoN mission with regard to mandates, and to what extent he was dependent on Rome.

As President of the PMC, Theodoli was not only expected to approve the agenda, evaluate petitions and deal with all bureaucratic tasks of his role, he was also meant to chair the PMC meeting sessions, ensuring the maximum cooperation between its members and the respect of Article 22 of the Covenant, which safeguarded the good functioning of the mandates system. Did Theodoli fulfil his duties as PMC President? Did he act in his work protecting and implementing Article 22 of the Covenant? The response of the PMC to the Bondelswarts rebellion episode in 1923, would suggest a positive answer. The Bondelswarts 'rebellion' was a clash between indigenous people, the Bondelswarts, in South West Africa, and the army of the mandatory power, the Union of South Africa, which left many natives dead in May 1922. At the origins of the clash lay the apparent refusal of the indigenous tribe to pay a tax levied on dog-owners.⁶³⁴ The Union of South Africa administered its mandate as if it had sovereignty on the territory: it implemented a native reserve system and imposed high taxes, which forced the natives to work in white farms.⁶³⁵ The PMC called for an investigation of the incident, but it could read the Mandatory's report on the matter and question the South African representatives only in 1923.⁶³⁶ At the end of its Third Session (July-August 1923), the PMC sent a report to the Council concluding with a negative judgement of the South African conduct, before, during and after the

⁶³⁴ Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics*, p.276

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.273-274

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.277-278

rebellion.⁶³⁷ It specifically reported the negative relations between races, oriented at the exploitation of the natives. Underlining the fact that ‘the principle that the well-being and the development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization’ (Article 22, Covenant) applied also to South West Africa, the majority of the PMC deplored the Mandatory for the way the natives were treated.⁶³⁸

Together with the report there was a statement made by the Chairman of the PMC, Alberto Theodoli, which was even more unfavourable.⁶³⁹ Theodoli wrote that the principles the mandatory power had to apply were those of a mandate, not of a colony, that is it had to concentrate on the defence of ‘the well-being and development of less-advanced people’, not on protecting the interests of the white minority. In the case under examination, the Mandatory had ‘pursued a policy of force rather than of persuasion’ in the interest of the colonists rather than the natives.⁶⁴⁰ When the other members of the PMC criticised him for his strong statements, Theodoli stressed his belief that:

the spirit of the mandates required as a fundamental principle the material and moral progress of the natives; the white population ought only to be considered in so far as it assisted in achieving this progress.⁶⁴¹

Even Susan Pedersen, who is overall rather critical of Theodoli, agrees that in these circumstances he took quite a strong position in defence of the mandate principles.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷ ‘Report on the Bondelzwarts Rebellion’, in PMC, *Minutes of the Third Session*, 1923, pp.290-296; Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics*, p.279

⁶³⁸ ‘Report on the Bondelzwarts Rebellion’, in PMC, *Minutes of the Third Session*, 1923, pp.290-296

⁶³⁹ ‘Statement made by the Chairman, Marquis Alberto Theodoli’, in PMC, *Minutes of the Third Session*, 1923

⁶⁴⁰ ‘Statement made by the Chairman, Marquis Alberto Theodoli’, in PMC, *Minutes of the Third Session*, 1923, p.296; Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics*, p.280

⁶⁴¹ 32nd Meeting, 9 Aug. 1923, in PMC, *Minutes of the Third Session*, 1923, pp.206-207

⁶⁴² Pedersen, S., ‘Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations’ in Elkins, C., and Pedersen, S., (eds.), *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: London, 2005), p.119

As a consequence of the reports, the Council passed a resolution censoring South Africa's behaviour on the matter and expressing the hope of an improvement in the Bondelswarts' conditions.⁶⁴³ Theodoli's statement shows a commitment to the principles of the mandates system and can be considered as an example of Theodoli fulfilling his duties as President of the PMC, championing the mandates principles and reprehending a mandatory power which had gone too far. This episode, however, occurred in the early 1920s, when the Fascist government had just taken power in Italy and had not yet started to interest itself in the doings of the League.

Did Theodoli take initiatives in Geneva in favour of the League's mission with regard to mandates? The report of Theodoli on the Bondelswarts case already suggests that he took a positive initiative in favour of the mandates system and this impression is confirmed by an analysis of Theodoli's attitude towards the British proposal in 1929 to make Iraq (mandate A) an independent state and a new member of the League. What motivated the British choice was the huge amount of resources that the administration of this territory required and the fact that the British public opinion wanted to get rid of it.⁶⁴⁴ Theodoli was worried about the treatment of Christian minorities in Iraq, especially the Assyrians, a concern shared by many at the League, and highly justified, considering their massacre in 1933.⁶⁴⁵ Theodoli also showed scepticism about the real ability of Iraq to function as an independent state, another common concern at the PMC.⁶⁴⁶ He made sure that the LoN Council was aware of the limited information to which the PMC had access regarding the real degree of development and ability of self-government of Iraq, since the relevant data were

⁶⁴³ Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics*, pp.280-281

⁶⁴⁴ Walters, pp.563, 574

⁶⁴⁵ Pedersen, S., 'Getting Out of Iraq – in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood' in *The American Historical Review*, vol.115, No. 4 (October 2010), pp.995, 999

⁶⁴⁶ Pedersen, 'Getting Out of Iraq', p.983

delivered by the Mandatory. Theodoli opposed a strong resistance to this evolution of the mandates, safeguarding the tenets of the mandates system.⁶⁴⁷ The same attitude, hostile to change and worried about the interests of the natives is to be found in Theodoli's approach to the British proposal for a Closer Union: the creation of a large administrative entity unifying a mandated territory, Tanganyika, and its neighbours, Kenya and Uganda.⁶⁴⁸

It is, however, necessary to investigate the motivations behind this attitude, which might suggest such an attachment to the principles of the mandates system and 'the sacred trust' to make him actively exceed his duties as President of the PMC. Theodoli was led by the fear of creating a 'precedent.'⁶⁴⁹ While aware that mandates A and B were temporary, Theodoli explained to Grandi in 1930 that if Iraq became independent but connected to the former mandatory power by advantageous commercial agreements, it would have been more convenient for Italy to maintain the status quo, which, at least in theory, guaranteed equal commercial rights to all the members of the LoN. For this reason he had followed the directives from Rome, which opposed the change.⁶⁵⁰ The Italian government was especially afraid that France could follow Britain and promote the independence of Syria. For this reason, the Italian representatives to the Council made it clear, when debating Iraq's independence, that they were discussing the situation of a unique state.⁶⁵¹ Theodoli also underlined that in the past years he had promoted a development of a strict

⁶⁴⁷ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

⁶⁴⁸ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE; Also in "*La politique italienne à la Commission des Mandates*", by Robert de Caix, 4 Sept. 1934 in SdNFra b.549, ADF

⁶⁴⁹ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

⁶⁵⁰ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

⁶⁵¹ Pedersen, 'Getting Out of Iraq', p.990; Also in "*La politique italienne à la Commission des Mandates*", by Robert de Caix, 4 Sept. 1934 in SdNFra b.549, ADF

interpretation of the legal principles of the mandates, and that more than once he pushed the Commission to exceed its tasks, assigning itself nearly deliberative functions. However, the PMC remained a technical body and therefore for any Italian action on the mandates to be efficient, this needed to be coordinated between Theodoli and the Italian delegation to the LoN Council.⁶⁵²

Theodoli was of the opinion that the most convenient action for Italy was a strong enforcement of the Covenant. He believed that ‘the interests of Italy coincide with the rights of the Commission and with the principles of the LoN Pact.’⁶⁵³ Therefore, by defending the mandates system, he promoted the mission of the LoN, while at the same time pursuing Italy’s interests, which were the maintenance of the mandates system and the obtaining of an Italian mandate. This is an important finding, since, it is often wrongly assumed that Italy spent its time as a member of the LoN sabotaging the institution and countering the Covenant. Strengthening the role of the PMC was an interesting choice of action for Italy, which presented itself as a revisionist power, hoping for a redistribution of the mandates. Protection of the status quo and revisionism were flexible positions, according to the evolution of the national interests in the wider, changing geopolitical context.

When reporting the situation to Grandi in December 1930, Theodoli did not limit himself to asking the Foreign Minister for directives, but he made active proposals, which remind us of Gravina’s attitude.⁶⁵⁴ Theodoli, too, believed that the Fascist government could take advantage of his post at the League to fulfil Italy’s foreign-policy aspirations. Theodoli told Grandi that Italy could continue to oppose the

⁶⁵² Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

⁶⁵³ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

⁶⁵⁴ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

change, but this was not a strategy which would work in the long term, especially since mandates A and B were meant to be transitory and were expected to evolve. Moreover, there was the risk of Italy alienating the mandated people. In other words of appearing ‘guilty’ of delaying the end of their mandates. As an alternative to maintaining this ‘retarding’ strategy, Theodoli proposed that Italy use its position on the matter (and its vote at the Council) as an exchange currency to obtain advantages, from both Britain and France.⁶⁵⁵ This proposal was taken into serious consideration in early 1931, at a meeting of the Italian Foreign Ministry, in which Theodoli and Catastini participated. On this occasion, the Italian Foreign Ministry admitted that there was an opportunity to discuss with Britain about Italy withdrawing from its position of opposition to Iraq’s independence, in exchange for advantages related to Italy’s oil interests in Iraq or to the regulation of Libya’s southern boundaries.⁶⁵⁶ Other possible compensations could include an agreement on Albanian oil.⁶⁵⁷ However, when the offer was officially made to the British, they did not seem to be interested in ‘this generous Italian offer.’⁶⁵⁸ In fact, much to British incredulity, Italy, a state that the Colonial Office believed not to have relevant interests in Iraq, now threatened to become a major obstruction to the British plans for Iraq’s independence. After admitting that it was ‘unpleasant to submit to blackmail’, the Colonial Office proceeded by giving a concession to the British Oil Development Company, in which Italy held major stakes.⁶⁵⁹ In 1932, Italy joined all other states in voting in favour of Iraq’s independence and its membership of the League.

⁶⁵⁵ Report by Theodoli to Grandi, 19 Dec. 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.21/90/31, ASMAE

⁶⁵⁶ ‘Conclusions from Meeting 5 Jan. 1931’, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.10 doc.5

⁶⁵⁷ Guariglia to Antonio Chiamonte Bordonaro, 9 Mar. 1931, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.10, doc.122

⁶⁵⁸ Grandi to Bordonaro, 16 Jul.1931, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.10, doc.405; Note 1, Guariglia to Grandi, 16 Jul. 1931, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.10, doc.405

⁶⁵⁹ Pedersen, ‘Getting Out of Iraq’, p.989

Thus, while it seemed that Theodoli took the initiative in defence of the mandates system from the self-interested proposals of the Mandatory, we can see that his motivation was not so much a sincere concern for the unprepared local administration or for the destiny of local minorities, but was led primarily by Italian political interests. What emerges here is that Theodoli did not wait passively for indications on what to do from Rome, but that he proposed to the Foreign Ministry initiatives for the benefit of Italy. The actions he took to protect the mandates system and the status quo, steps exceeding the power of his rank, were not driven by a particular attachment to the LoN mission but by the accidental overlapping of Italian interests and the Covenant. When change in the mandates status became inevitable, such as in the Iraq case, Theodoli suggested to the Italian government to negotiate its vote in favour of territorial and commercial advantages. The fact that Theodoli promoted Italy's interests at the PMC, was not that different from what other members of the Commission were doing for their national governments, leading interest groups and the colonial administration.⁶⁶⁰ However, it became a problem when the interests of Italy started to contradict those of the League.

Were there instances of Theodoli undertaking activities aimed at damaging the mandates system? Is there evidence of anti-League behaviour by Theodoli? As we have seen, Theodoli was linked with the Surssocks, who, like many Christians in the Middle East, opposed Jewish migration to Palestine. It has been suggested by Pedersen that this family tie, together with 'his government's scepticism about the Zionist project in general' made Theodoli a supporter of the Arabs' claims, when

⁶⁶⁰ Callahan, *Mandates and Empire*, p.69

discussing the Palestine mandate at the PMC.⁶⁶¹ This hostility to Zionism could be regarded as an example of Theodoli's biases and his lack of commitment to the principles of the PMC. Certainly, Theodoli was critical of the Zionist project in Palestine. In particular, he disapproved of the fact that Britain granted preferential treatment to Jewish immigration at the expense of other immigrants. Theodoli thought that the Jewish immigration had to be controlled and limited for reasons of public and social order.⁶⁶² Theodoli was recognised as anti-Zionist by Zionists and by other people with whom he dealt about Palestine while in Geneva. Chaim Weizmann later wrote that Theodoli was always among those who would veto every proposal in favour of Zionism and he was 'the most treacherous of the enemies of Zionism in Geneva.'⁶⁶³ Despite this statement, however, it is necessary to stress that by 1935 there were friendly relations between Weizmann and Theodoli.⁶⁶⁴ Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner for Palestine, also admitted that Theodoli showed 'a little hostile bias' to the Zionist cause.⁶⁶⁵ Lugard described Theodoli as a pro-Arab and reported how he had difficulties accepting the disagreement of other members of the PMC on the Palestinian matter, to the point of losing his temper and behaving 'in an extraordinary way.'⁶⁶⁶ However, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of a contrasting evaluation of Theodoli. Some scholars, such as J. Gribetz and A. Bianco, state that Theodoli just did his job and was not actively engaged in anti-Zionism.

⁶⁶¹ Pedersen, 'The Impact of League Oversight on British Policy in Palestine' in Miller (ed.), pp.43,56

⁶⁶² Theodoli, *A cavallo di due secoli*, pp.135-136

⁶⁶³ Weizmann cit. in De Felice, R., *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo* (Turin, 1988), 4th ed., p.162; Weizmann cit. in Freundlich, Y., 'The First Debate on Palestine in the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations' in *Studies in Zionism*, 5, Spring 1982, p.121

⁶⁶⁴ Pedersen, 'Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations' in Elkins and Pedersen (eds.), p.126

⁶⁶⁵ Freundlich, 'The First Debate on Palestine', p.121

⁶⁶⁶ Underlined in the original. Extracts of Lugard's correspondence with his wife, 11 Jun. 1930 and 21 Jun. 1930, in Box 119/4, Lugard Papers, Rhodes House Library, Oxford (hereafter RH)

These statements are supported by evidence of Theodoli's professionalism and of his good relations with members of Italian Zionism, such as Isacco Sciaky.⁶⁶⁷

However, Theodoli's beliefs were not so much based on the anti-Zionism of the Fascist government, as suggested by Pedersen, but more on his connections to the Vatican. In the early 1930s, Mussolini seemed to be rather 'benevolent' towards the Zionist movement, as proven by a meeting which Theodoli organized between the Duce and Weizmann in 1934.⁶⁶⁸ On this occasion, Mussolini declared that Palestine was necessary and useful to Italy, as long as it was not dependent on London. Mussolini's benevolence was due to his belief that Zionism would help Italy's policy in the Mediterranean by creating obstacles for Britain.⁶⁶⁹ Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Fascism condemned the participation of Italians in the Zionist movement and promoted anti-Semitism.⁶⁷⁰ However, the most anti-Zionist organization in Italy in the early 1930s was the Catholic Church, rather than the Fascist state, as demonstrated by the Catholic press coverage on the Arabs/Jews tensions in 1929, and the Vatican's fears for the *Luoghi Santi*.⁶⁷¹ When Theodoli was President of the PMC, many Italian Catholic conservatives hoped to obtain a re-assignment of the Palestinian Mandate to Italy and the *Unione Cattolica pro Luoghi Santi* lobbied in Geneva against Zionism, afraid of the consequences of the Jewish immigration for Palestine.⁶⁷² Catholic internationalism saw Zionism as a threat to the Holy Land. Weizmann recalled that, at the PMC, Theodoli posed as defender of the Arab rights

⁶⁶⁷ Gribetz, J., 'The Question of Palestine Before the International Community, 1924: a Methodological Inquiry into the Charge of "Bias"' in *Israel Studies*, Vol.17, n.1, Spring 2012, pp.50-77; Bianco, A., 'Les sionistes révisionnistes et l'Italie' in *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem*, 13, 2003, pp.22-45; Sciaky, I., *Il Salonicchiota in Nero* (Livorno, 2009)

⁶⁶⁸ De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, pp.93-94,160

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.160

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.95n; Meir, M., *Mussolini and the Jews* (Oxford, 1978)

⁶⁷¹ De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, p.111; Cammarata, M., *La Palestina del Mandato nell'editoria italiana 1918-1939* (Trieste, 2010), p.29

⁶⁷² De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, pp.92, 160; Freundlich, 'The First Debate on Palestine', p.123

but also of the Catholic Church.⁶⁷³ This, together with Theodoli's background, leads us to conclude that his criticism of the Zionist project was prompted more by his Catholic beliefs and the connections to the Vatican, rather than by his relations to Fascism.

What counts, for the purpose of this chapter, is whether Theodoli's approach to Zionism was against the provisions of the mandates system and thus damaged the League. This is highly debatable. While Article 2 of the Palestinian Mandate provided for the creation of the conditions which could 'secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home', it also made the Mandatory responsible for 'the development of self-governing institutions, and safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.'⁶⁷⁴ The intricacy of the problem that the PMC and Britain had to face in the administration of Palestine is exemplified by a dialogue between the pro-Zionist Rappard and Theodoli at the 17th Session of the PMC in June 1930.⁶⁷⁵ Rappard believed that it was the duty of the mandatory power to establish the National Jewish Home, as prescribed by Article 2, and to develop self-governing institutions so far as it was compatible with such establishment. He believed that if the Arabs were accorded complete self-government, they would obviously ignore the obligation to establish a National Home for the Jews.⁶⁷⁶ Theodoli, instead, insisted that the requirement to facilitate the 'national home' was subordinated to the broader obligation common to all mandates, as per Article 22 of the Covenant, to protect the development and welfare of the inhabitants

⁶⁷³ Weizmann, C., *Trial and Error: the autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (Westport, CT, 1949), p.458

⁶⁷⁴ Art.2, *The Palestine Mandate*, available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/palmanda.asp (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁶⁷⁵ PMC, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (Extraordinary) Session*, 1930, pp.49-50

⁶⁷⁶ PMC, *Minutes of the Seventeenth (Extraordinary) Session*, 1930, pp.49-50

Pedersen, 'The Impact of League Oversight on British Policy in Palestine' in Miller (ed.), p.51

of the mandated territory.⁶⁷⁷ No agreement was ever reached at the PMC on this matter. In order for Theodoli's criticism of the Zionist project to be considered as standing in contrast to the principles of the Mandate, he should have opposed the settlement of the Jewish National Home *per se*, which was a legal requirement of the Palestinian Mandate. The documents currently available do not allow us to determine whether or not this was the case. Therefore, Theodoli's conduct on the Palestinian question does not prove he acted against the interests of the mandate principles and the League.

Instead, an example of Theodoli's involvement in activities aiming to damage the League was his conduct in the Ethiopian crisis. On this occasion, he used his post as President of the PMC to favour Italy in the conflict, at the expense of the League. Before the Ethiopian war exploded, Theodoli had already been actively involved in negotiating with France and Britain a colonial solution for Italy, performing a task which was not exactly an example of that independence from the national government, which was required of all PMC members.⁶⁷⁸ In late 1931 and early 1932 Theodoli was sent by the Italian government to Paris to negotiate informally with Philippe Berthelot the possibility of obtaining a colony or territories from France, but no agreement was reached.⁶⁷⁹ Apparently the use of Theodoli as a diplomatic link had been specifically required by the French who preferred him to the Italian Ambassador in Paris. Berthelot had asked to Theodoli '*Vous n'êtes pas fasciste, n'est-ce-pas?*' thinking he was talking to someone who had good relations to the Fascist

⁶⁷⁷ Pedersen, S., 'Settler Colonialism at the Bar of the League of Nations' in Elkins and Pedersen (eds.), p.127; 'Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question. Communication from the United Kingdom Delegation to the United Nations' A/AC.14/8, UN General Assembly, 2 Oct. 1947

⁶⁷⁸ Theodoli to Fulvio Suvich, 23 Oct. 1934, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.16, doc.84; Theodoli to Suvich, 14 Dec. 1934, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.16, doc.296; Theodoli to Suvich, 18 Feb. 1935, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.16, doc.614

⁶⁷⁹ Guariglia, R., *Ricordi 1922-1946* (Naples, 1950), pp.140-141, 161

government, but was not a member of the movement.⁶⁸⁰ The direct use of Theodoli by the Italian government for diplomatic missions, taking advantage of his reputation in Geneva and its international connections was not scandalous, because Theodoli was not an employee of the League. However, it is debatable the extent to which this went against that idea of the members of the PMC not being directly connected to their governments.

The connection between the Italian government and Theodoli became particularly detrimental when Italy used his position as President of the PMC to its advantage during the Ethiopian crisis. In fact, when the diplomatic efforts did not achieve concrete results, Mussolini decided that Italy had to obtain its colonial territories through the use of force. Italy's exclusion from the distribution of the mandates was used by the Italian press to legitimate the attack on Ethiopia.⁶⁸¹ Theodoli thought that Italy should try to control the PMC before taking action against Ethiopia, because the PMC was likely to directly or indirectly intervene on the matters relating to it.⁶⁸² Thus, Theodoli promoted actions aiming to obtain an attitude sympathetic to Italy from the PMC's most influential members. For instance, he invited Orts, Penha Garcia and Rappard to the Tripoli International Colonial Fair in early 1935 to show them the progress made by Italy 'developing' Libya. Theodoli believed that this would be useful to show the spirit animating the Italian colonial policy.⁶⁸³ The PMC members declined the invitation.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., p.150

⁶⁸¹ Excerpts of newspapers articles in S.287, LoN Archives

⁶⁸² Theodoli to Pompeo Aloisi, March 1935, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.16, doc.840; Costa Bona, p.205

⁶⁸³ Costa Bona, p.205; Theodoli to Aloisi, March 1935, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.16, doc.840

⁶⁸⁴ Catastini to Ministero Colonie, 26 Mar. 1935, S.1626, LoN Archives

Theodoli was also heavily involved in the bilateral negotiations related to the crisis. In February 1935, he met Drummond, who insisted that Italy solve the Ethiopian quarrel within the League. Theodoli suggested that the Italian government could consider settling the matter in Geneva, first of all, by proving that Ethiopia was unworthy to be a member of the League, due to its weak central administration and its slavery problems. Having achieved this aim, Italy would have then required Britain's support to obtain a mandate to administer Ethiopia on the bases of the League's principles.⁶⁸⁵ The idea of an Italian mandate over Ethiopia was proposed again by the Italian representative to the LoN, Pompeo Aloisi to the British Foreign Office in June 1935, which did not rule it out immediately.⁶⁸⁶ In fact, such a solution, which implied that parts of Ethiopia would become a B mandate under Italy's administration, would have avoided a direct violation of the Covenant, extended the 'sacred trust' in Africa and fastened Italy closer to the League.⁶⁸⁷ The idea was also explored in relations to France, as proven by a meeting between Theodoli and Joseph Avenol, LoN Secretary-General, in June 1935. On this occasion, Avenol stressed how, in order to place France in the position to support Italy, it was necessary to change the direction of British public opinion, by accepting the League's arbitration on the Wal-Wal episode and by presenting a strong case against Ethiopia's membership. According to Avenol, this would have then allowed France to reach an agreement with Britain, and give to Italy the (colonial) satisfaction it wanted.⁶⁸⁸ At the end, the idea of an Italian mandate in Ethiopia was aborted as Italy had already occupied the country and any retroactive offer would have looked as a cover-up by members of the LoN.⁶⁸⁹

⁶⁸⁵ Theodoli to Suvich, 18 Feb. 1935, DDI, Serie VII (1922-1935), Vol.16, doc.614

⁶⁸⁶ Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*, pp.79-80

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.7, 83

⁶⁸⁸ Guariglia, *Ricordi 1922-1946*, pp.241-242; see also Barros, *Betrayal from within*, pp.77-79

⁶⁸⁹ Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*, p.86

Theodoli's diplomatic activities in relation to the Ethiopian crisis became evident at the PMC only at its First Session of 1936. At the peak of the tensions between Italy and the League, the Italian Foreign Ministry debated the wisdom of Theodoli joining this meeting.⁶⁹⁰ In fact, the Italian delegations already deserted Geneva in autumn 1935 and some, including the under-secretary for Foreign Affairs Fulvio Suvich, believed that Theodoli should not attend the PMC session. Others in the Foreign Ministry, instead, stressed the importance of Italian participation. Theodoli's presence was indispensable in order to maintain the function of control that Italy had there, in appearance based on the interpretation of the mandates' principles, but instead aiming to safeguard its political interests, especially in the Mediterranean. Moreover, Theodoli's absence would have implied the loss of the PMC chairmanship which Italy held since the First Session.⁶⁹¹ All this contributed to Mussolini's decision in favour of Theodoli's participation.⁶⁹²

Following the approval of sanctions against Italy in 1935 and 1936, the Mandatory states had decided that these should be implemented also by their mandated territories.⁶⁹³ Before leaving for Geneva, Theodoli received indications from the Foreign Ministry to start a discussion on this matter at the PMC, contesting the legitimacy of this decision.⁶⁹⁴ In fact, even though Theodoli's position was likely to remain isolated, it was important for Italy to obtain a deliberation of the Commission on the matter so that the question would remain open to debate in other LoN

⁶⁹⁰ Guarnaschelli to Mussolini, 18 May 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.4, doc.74; Costa Bona, pp.205-206

⁶⁹¹ Guarnaschelli to Mussolini, 18 May 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.4 doc.74

⁶⁹² Guarnaschelli to Mussolini, 18 May 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.4, doc.74

⁶⁹³ Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*, p.69

⁶⁹⁴ Guarnaschelli to Mussolini, 18 May 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.4, doc.74; Costa Bona, pp.205-206

bodies.⁶⁹⁵ At the 29th Session of the PMC, in June 1936, Theodoli argued that the application of the sanctions went against Article 22 of the Covenant, specifically the clause of the economic equality in the mandated territories of all LoN members. He also claimed that the mandates had suffered from the measure, due to the trade they lost with Italy.⁶⁹⁶ The meeting terminated with Theodoli walking out in disagreement with the decision of Britain and France to include their mandated territories in the sanctions against Italy. Theodoli's colleagues, who before the meeting had showed doubt about the appropriateness of renewing the chairmanship to the Italian, were indignant at his behaviour.⁶⁹⁷

On 10 May 1936, Valentine Dannevig, the Norwegian member of the PMC, wrote to Lugard expressing her reluctance in re-electing Theodoli because:

it seems to me that after the Italians have so openly broken the pact of the League of Nations, especially §22, it is undesirable to have an Italian who agrees with fascist views as leader of an institution to promote "the sacred trust of civilization towards backwards races."⁶⁹⁸

She proposed instead to give her vote to Pierre Orts.⁶⁹⁹ Lugard replied by stating that he did not believe that a member of the PMC 'can be assumed necessarily to participate in or approve the policy of the Government of which he is a National' and that, so far as he was aware, Theodoli 'had not given any public expression of approval to the Italian attack upon Ethiopia, or the use of poison gas.'⁷⁰⁰ However, while he had 'no positive grounds for assuming that he supports the policy of Italy',

⁶⁹⁵ Suvich to Theodoli, 26 May 1936, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.4, doc.110

⁶⁹⁶ PMC, *Minutes of the Twenty-ninth session*, 1936; Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship*, p.69

⁶⁹⁷ Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*, pp.98-99

⁶⁹⁸ Dannevig to Lugard, 10 May 1936, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

⁶⁹⁹ Dannevig to Lugard, 10 May 1936, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

⁷⁰⁰ Lugard to Dannevig, 15 May 1936, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

Lugard believed that Theodoli did so, providing as an example ‘his ambiguous attitude in the Bondelswarts case.’⁷⁰¹ Lugard concluded that he would ‘find it difficult to vote for him as President’ also because his re-election would be ‘misunderstood by the general public.’⁷⁰²

Here Lugard presented the Bondelswarts case as an example of Theodoli’s ‘support for the policy of Italy’. However, we have seen that the statement of Theodoli on the matter was in favour of the natives and that the episode was discussed in a period (1922-1923) when Fascism was more concerned with Mediterranean and European problems, rather than African ones. The major worry for Lugard in 1936 was the reaction of the general public to the re-election of an Italian to such a key position, considering the evolution of the Ethiopian events, and, in particular, the strong anti-Italian attitude of British public opinion. For this reason, the PMC members started to see the man, whom Lady Lugard in 1923 described as ‘a distinguished Italian who devoted himself to the work ... and is universally accepted as an admirable Chairman’, as the symbol of Italian Fascism abroad.⁷⁰³ This is not to say that Lugard was wrong: after all, Theodoli had walked out of the PMC session in June 1936, but to show that the sudden change in the evaluation of Theodoli which occurred at the PMC in 1936, was motivated also by external factors. In particular, by the military attack on Ethiopia, which is when the democratic world suddenly decided that Italian Fascism was no longer that tolerable a dictatorship.

⁷⁰¹ Lugard to Dannevig, 15 May 1936, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

⁷⁰² Lugard to Dannevig, 15 May 1936, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

⁷⁰³ Lady Lugard’s Papers, ‘Geneva, 22 July 1923’ in Box 119/4, Lugard Papers, RH

Theodoli's conduct during the June 1936 session, in which he had been nevertheless re-elected President, really upset the members of the PMC.⁷⁰⁴ The episode prompted Lugard to believe that Italy was undermining the reputation of the Commission, destroying the prestige, impartiality and usefulness of this body. He told Ormsby-Gore that he was unwilling to serve under the chairmanship of Theodoli, who was 'a mere politician playing for Mussolini and his own career.'⁷⁰⁵ According to M.D. Callahan, these thoughts had an important role in Lugard's decision in late 1936 to resign from the PMC.⁷⁰⁶ The discussion of Theodoli's re-election continued into 1937. Orts, who in 1937 was Vice-President and aspired to the Chairmanship, wrote to Lugard that he was going to suggest Theodoli to step back from his post, since the Commission had no intention of re-electing him.⁷⁰⁷ In fact, Theodoli's attitude towards the British mandates in the PMC session in June 1936, in which the Italian showed a behaviour '*apparemment dictée par une influence extérieure*', had found the disapproval of his colleagues.⁷⁰⁸ Lugard stressed that 'it would be very difficult for a British member to sit under Theodoli's presidency' as he had 'no control at all over his temper.'⁷⁰⁹ Theodoli did not return to the Commission in 1937 and officially resigned from the PMC following the Italian withdrawal from the League in December 1937.

From the documents of the French Foreign Ministry, we know that in 1937 Theodoli was still willing to participate in the PMC activities and still hoped to be re-elected President. Even though the relations between Italy and the League had kept

⁷⁰⁴ See for example: Lugard to Pierre Orts, 6 Aug. 1936; Orts to Lugard, 19 Aug. 1936; in Box 119/8, Lugard Papers, RH

⁷⁰⁵ Callahan, *A Sacred Trust*, p.99

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.98

⁷⁰⁷ Orts to Lugard, 18 May 1937, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

⁷⁰⁸ Orts to Lugard, 18 May 1937, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

⁷⁰⁹ Lugard to Lord Hailey, 19 May 1937, in Box 122/2, Lugard Papers, RH

worsening, he was still a strong advocate of Italy's membership of the League.⁷¹⁰ During a visit of Nahum Goldmann, permanent delegate of the Zionist Agency in Geneva, to Rome in May 1937, Theodoli asked him to insist during his upcoming meeting with Foreign Minister Ciano on the necessity of Italy being represented at the PMC.⁷¹¹ Theodoli explained to Goldmann that it was in the interest of the Jews that Italy maintained the presidency of the Commission. Theodoli assured him of his support against the British and stressed how he always sustained the Jews in the past and wanted to in the future. During the meeting, Ciano, while assuring Goldmann of the sympathy of the Italian government for the Zionist cause, expressed his doubt about Theodoli's participation in the next PMC session and about Italy's return to the LoN activities. According to Theodoli, whom Goldmann met after the meeting, Ciano's doubts were the result of the recent visit of Konstantin von Neurath. In fact, the German Foreign Minister had come to Rome to make sure that the Italian government did not take back its place in Geneva.⁷¹² This shows a personal attachment of Theodoli to his post at the LoN, independent from the Italian directives.

When evaluating his work at the League, we can conclude that Theodoli, who was a Catholic conservative sympathetic to Fascism and enthusiastic about its colonial policy, had for several years been the competent and appreciated President of the PMC. He fulfilled his duties towards the post and even exceeded them in his zeal towards the protection of the spirit and the letter of Article 22 of the Covenant. His role at the PMC was as important as those of more recognized figures, such as Lugard or Rappard. He was an important Italian presence in the League. The extent to which

⁷¹⁰ *"L'Italie et la Société des nations"* by Marcel Hoden, 11 May 1937, in SdNFra b.2123, ADF

⁷¹¹ Hoden wrote about 'M. Goldman', who most likely was Nahum Goldmann. *"L'Italie et la Société des nations"* by Marcel Hoden, 11 May 1937, in SdNFra b.2123, ADF

⁷¹² *"L'Italie et la Société des nations"* by Marcel Hoden, 11 May 1937, in SdNFra b.2123, ADF

his zeal was driven by personal commitment to the League or by Italy's national interests changed in relation to the evolution of Italy's relationship with the organization. Following the intensified interaction between Italy and the League and the raising of dissatisfaction with the colonial question in Italy, Theodoli faced increasing interference in his work. The worsening of relations prompted him to follow Rome's directives against the League. However, Theodoli did not just wait for instructions, but actively proposed policies, which he thought would promote Italy's interests at the League. What emerges from our analysis is that Theodoli was well respected by his colleagues until the Ethiopian crisis, which put the League in a very uncomfortable position and pushed Italy inevitably on the side of the wrong. When the world realized the threat to peace embodied by Fascist Italy, the members of the PMC started to see Theodoli in a different way, questioning his role in the Committee. Theodoli's work also showed that the interwar period was characterised by different types of internationalism, not just the one of the League: there was an old-fashioned, aristocratic internationalism, as well as a religious internationalism, demonstrated here by the Catholic and Jewish attempts to sort out territorial matters in Palestine.

The experiences of Theodoli and Gravina, investigated in this chapter, exemplify the Italian presence in the League at a level higher than the Secretariat, revealing how Italians were involved in different aspects of the League's work and, at least until the Ethiopian crisis, they were considered as capable experts and appreciated for their contributions. This chapter has also demonstrated that the Italians at the League cannot be unilaterally defined as 'Fascists.' They possessed multiple identities and their complex careers were characterised by grey areas, made of 'rights and wrongs',

which distinguished the lives and the work of many individuals in the interwar years. As we have seen, Gravina was a nationalist and a Fascist, as well as a sympathizer of Hitler. At the same time, he held an important international post for which he was highly valued in Geneva. Theodoli's identity was made up of nationalism, Fascism and Catholicism, but also reflected his background as an aristocrat. These multiple identities remind us that Italian politics in this period was not characterised just by the opposition between liberals and Fascists, but that there were other forces involved, such as the conservative aristocracy and the Vatican. Both Theodoli and Gravina offer a study of Fascism in practice, showing how this oscillated between nationalism, the practical realism of the least of the Great Powers, the Vatican and other social forces within Italy that it had not revolutionised. At the same time, these two Italians demonstrate the variety of the Italian presence in the League: they were both nationalists and supporters of the Fascist regime, but at the same time international experts. The Italians in this institution were not just Fascists or internationalists. Nationalism and internationalism coexisted and interacted with one another and the experiences of the Italians in the League were influenced by both.

CHAPTER 4: The Italian State and the League of Nations

This chapter is dedicated to the relationship between the Italian state and the League of Nations (LoN). In the previous chapters we have seen the interaction between various categories of Italians and the League. The focus of this chapter is instead on the Italian government and this international organization. In particular, the chapter aims to investigate some of the reasons behind Italy's 17-year long membership. It does not seek to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between Italy and this organization, nor does it present an in depth investigation of the Ethiopian question. The chapter instead focuses on two aspects of Italy's interest in the League: those related to the international status of the regime, and those connected to the practical benefits which the Italian government hoped to achieve through its membership of the institution. They will be exemplified through an analysis of the regime's appropriation of international institutes and Italy's commitment to disarmament as promoted by the League. This chapter follows the evolution of the relationship between Italy and the League, which shifted from an active interaction between nationalism and internationalism to an increasing preference for nationalism to pursue its goals independently. It examines how the Italian government lost interest in the organization after 1932, in a process that led to the Ethiopian crisis and finally to the withdrawal from Geneva.

So far we have investigated the dynamics between Italians and the League, but it is now necessary to insert them in the wider framework of Fascist Italy's foreign policy. By analysing individuals, we had the opportunity to appreciate the heterogeneity of the Italian presence at the League, ranging from fervent Fascist Righetti, to ex-liberal

Attolico and nationalist Gravina. When exploring the Italian leadership in foreign policy in this period, one should take into consideration the same level of diversity, distinguishing between Mussolini, the Fascist government, the Fascist Party, the Foreign Ministry and all others involved in the elaboration of Italy's foreign relations. However, despite acknowledging the limits of the use of the term 'Italy' to identify the driving forces behind Fascist foreign policy, this chapter nevertheless uses it as a synonym for Italian government and as representing the approach of the Italian Foreign Minister.

This post was held by Mussolini from October 1922 until September 1929 and then again from July 1932 until June 1936, when his son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano replaced him. From September 1929 to July 1932, Dino Grandi was the head of the Foreign Ministry. Grandi was a 'Fascist of the first hour' who had participated in the March on Rome.⁷¹³ As Foreign Minister, Grandi sought to implement *Realpolitik* through diplomacy and started to participate in person in the meetings of the LoN, presenting an enthusiastic rhetoric and inserting Italian foreign policy within a cooperative discourse.⁷¹⁴ Within the Fascist government, however, there were conflicting opinions on the approach to this international organization. At the one end of the spectrum, we find Grandi, eager to take advantage of the opportunities the League presented for the fulfilment of Italy's foreign-policy aspirations. At the other end, there were Fascist hierarchs, such as Italo Balbo (Air Minister, 1929-1933), who was very critical of Grandi's sympathetic attitude, perceived as a potential limitation to Italy's international ambitions. It is difficult to be certain about Mussolini's opinion of the

⁷¹³ On the early years of Grandi and Fascism see Nello, P., *Dino Grandi* (Bologna, 2003); Bosworth, R.J.B., *Mussolini's Italy. Life under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (London, 2005), pp.132-135

⁷¹⁴ Burgwyn, H.J., *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period 1918-1940* (Westport, CT, 1997), pp.57-58

League, but the fact that he fired Grandi on 19 July 1932, at the end of the first phase of the Disarmament Conference, where the Italian Foreign Minister had been a vigorous and internationally appreciated speaker, suggests that he had become deeply critical of Grandi's approach to Geneva.⁷¹⁵ These contrasting views have hitherto made it difficult to evaluate the Italian attitude towards the League. It remains a puzzle why Italy remained in the organization for so long: from the creation of the institution until 11 December 1937, 19 months after the proclamation of the annexation of Ethiopia.

Italy's Interest in the League of Nations

It is often assumed that the Italian state was a reluctant member of the League of Nations and a troublesome one. As we saw in the introduction, the historiography of the League of Nations tends to reduce the Italian membership of the organization to destabilising episodes such as the Corfu and the Ethiopian crises. In this sense, Italy is presented as one of the member states that contributed the least to the productive work of the organization and the most to the failure of the institution. However, without downplaying the impact that the Ethiopian crisis had on the relationship between Italy and the League, it would be overly reductive to consider the period of coexistence between the Fascist regime and this institution preceding the conflict, that is the years from 1922 to 1935, as merely the calm before the storm.

Until the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis, at the political level, Italy was not considered as a particularly problematic member of the League. Even though

⁷¹⁵ Costa Bona, pp.103-104

Mussolini's domestic speeches periodically induced the world to question Italy's pacific nature, suggesting an aggressive side to Italian foreign policy, at the League, many observers, especially the British, considered the Fascist regime an improvement upon Italy's previous liberal governments: it was stable, anti-communist and patriotic.⁷¹⁶ For many British conservatives, including figures as diverse as Austen Chamberlain and Winston Churchill, Fascism was the best rule for Italy, a country of 'sturdy beggars.'⁷¹⁷ This was partly motivated by the fact that they saw Fascism as a strictly Italian phenomenon, as declared by Mussolini in 1928 'not for export.'⁷¹⁸ According to A.J.P. Taylor, in the earlier years in power, even Ramsay MacDonald praised Mussolini.⁷¹⁹ With respect to foreign policy, the British conservative press in the late 1920s described Mussolini as a 'uncompromising realist', a patriot who had 'an honourable record' on peace and disarmament.⁷²⁰ Even Walter Layton, the liberal editor of *The Economist*, in 1931 declared himself convinced that Mussolini was 'innerly pacifist.'⁷²¹ This idealized perception of Italian Fascism held by many British intellectuals dissipated only after Hitler's accession to power in 1933.⁷²² For more

⁷¹⁶ Mussolini's aggressive rhetoric is well-exemplified by the following speeches: *Discorso di Firenze* (17 May 1930); *Il bastone del Comando* (Milan, 22 May 1930) in Susmel, E. and D. (eds.), *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini* (Florence, 1958), vol. XXIV, pp.235-236;p.244

⁷¹⁷ Bosworth, R.J.B, 'The British Press, the Conservatives, and Mussolini, 1920-34', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.5, n.2 (1970), p.165; Adler, F.H., *Italian industrialists from liberalism to fascism: the political development of the industrial bourgeoisie, 1906-1934* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.284-228; about Chamberlain's appreciation for Mussolini see also Seton-Watson, C., *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925* (London, 1967), pp.691-692; for *The Times*'s positive coverage of Mussolini and the Fascist regime, see Santagata, S., *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi, il fascismo e la Società delle Nazioni* (Milan, 2007), pp.77, 95

⁷¹⁸ Edwards, P.G., 'The Foreign Office and Fascism, 1924-1929' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.5, n.2 (1970), pp.156-157

⁷¹⁹ Cit. in Adler, *Italian industrialists*, p.284. It has been difficult to determine the opinion of Mussolini that other members of the British Labour Party or liberal politicians held. In fact, they tended to consider the Italian dictator only in relation to the Corfu and the Ethiopian crises, giving no indication of what they thought of Mussolini the rest of the time.

⁷²⁰ *The Telegraph* (10 Dec.1928) in Bosworth, R.J.B, 'The British Press, the Conservatives, and Mussolini, 1920-34', p.170

⁷²¹ Santagata, *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi*, p.215

⁷²² Bosworth, R.J.B, 'The British Press, the Conservatives, and Mussolini, 1920-34', pp.178-179

than a decade, British and French politicians reuniting at the League were eager to discuss European matters with Mussolini in person in Geneva.⁷²³

Even the Corfu crisis, which is presented in some studies as containing all premonitory signs of the upcoming Ethiopian crisis, did not have a long-term negative impact on the relationship between Italy and the League.⁷²⁴ When Drummond visited Rome in October 1923, some weeks after the first clash between the Fascist regime and the League was settled, he found a cooperative Mussolini. Indeed, the Italian Prime Minister had decided on the necessity for a bigger presence and involvement of Italy in the League, in order to counter what he perceived as the Anglo-French monopoly of the institution.⁷²⁵ He also offered to host a session of the LoN Council in Rome in December 1924 and this was accepted.⁷²⁶ There are different opinions on the reasons behind Mussolini's sudden enthusiasm for the League. According to Ennio Di Nolfo, the Italian Prime Minister was driven by internal concerns, such as the upcoming elections and the consequences of Matteotti's murder, which required a more relaxed situation in foreign politics.⁷²⁷ According to Costa Bona, the best explanation for the new Fascist approach to the League can be derived from Mussolini's speech at the Italian *Camera dei Deputati* (Chamber of Deputies) on 7 June 1924, in which he underlined that what counted was not to be excluded from Geneva, as this would empower other countries to damage Italy's interests.⁷²⁸ As we shall see, the decision of the Fascist government to be present at the League was not

⁷²³ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, p.59

⁷²⁴ About Corfu as a dangerous precedent see: Cassels, A., *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy* (Princeton, NJ, 1970), p.126; Di Nolfo, E., *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)* (Padua, 1960), p.97

⁷²⁵ 'Italia e Società delle Nazioni' in Mussolini, B., *La Politica Estera* (Rome, 1937), pp.98-101; Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, pp.250-251; Costa Bona, p.33

⁷²⁶ Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, p.251

⁷²⁷ Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, p.104

⁷²⁸ Mussolini cit. in Costa Bona, p.32

just driven by the fear of absence, but was an active attempt to pursue national interests through international negotiations.

The Corfu crisis, therefore, while shaking momentarily the organization, did not inaugurate a decade of Italian attempts to undermine the League. Instead, it was situated at the beginning of a period of cordial relations on the political level between the League and the Italian state. As we saw in Chapter 2, the situation at the institutional level of the League's Secretariat was already becoming problematic, due to the Fascistization process. However, the fact that Italy disrupted the ethos of the Secretariat had few direct consequences on how the Italian membership was seen by the Great Powers.

Italy's presence and activity suggest a real commitment to the work of the institution, rather than a preconceived intention to undermine the League from within. Until the outbreak of the Ethiopian conflict, Italy was involved in the work of the LoN to the same degree as France and Britain. It was the third most present state in the Secretariat, and Italian experts, nominated by Rome, were members of the technical organizations and the permanent commissions advising Assembly and Council on technical matters. Italy was represented at the Economic Committee of the Economic and Financial Organization, by Alberto Pirelli, director of the Pirelli industries, and Angelo Di Nola, General Director of the Ministry of Trade. The Italian delegates to the Financial Committee were Giuseppe Bianchini, President of the Fascist banks association and Fulvio Suvich, then Under Secretary of the Minister of Finance, with short appearances of Alberto Beneduce, future President of the Institute for Industrial reconstruction (IRI), and Guido Jung, Minister of Finance from 1932 to 1935. The

Italian member of the League's Health Commission and president of the Malaria Commission was Alberto Lutrario, one of the world experts on the subject, while Minister of Justice Alfredo Rocco was the Italian delegate to the Commission for Intellectual Cooperation.⁷²⁹ These individuals were the most knowledgeable and well respected experts Italy had to offer. The choice of national representatives of this calibre and the active participation in the technical activities promoted by the League proves that Italy was interested in being present in the organization and involved in its work. Partially, this was due to a genuine interest in technical aspects discussed at the League, from the League's early involvement in the reconstruction of Austria, in which Italy had a major stake, to the mandates. But this strong Italian representation was also due to the regime's desire to assert its international importance.

Italy's interest was also directed to the diplomatic activities of the League. The country actively participated in all Assembly and Council meetings, at least until autumn 1935, when its delegations boycotted Geneva in protest against the application of sanctions following the aggression to Ethiopia.⁷³⁰ As we can derive from the four volumes of speeches made by the Italian delegates to the League and collected by the Italian member of the Information Section, Giuseppe Bruccoleri, before the Ethiopian crisis, the political action of the Italian government in Geneva was cooperative, rather than obstructive. It covered all aspects of international cooperation promoted by the League, including all major political questions of the time, notably those relating to disarmament and the economic depression.⁷³¹

⁷²⁹ League of Nations, *Annuaire de la Société des Nations* (Geneva, 1920-1937)

⁷³⁰ Costa Bona, p.327

⁷³¹ Bruccoleri, G., *L'Opera dei Delegati Italiani Nella Società Delle Nazioni* (Rome, 1935-1937), 4 vols.

The most esteemed member of the Italian delegation was Senator Vittorio Scialoja (1856-1933). He served on the Assembly from 1921 to 1932, and on the Council from 1925 to 1932.⁷³² Scialoja was Professor of Law at the University of Rome and the former Italian Foreign Minister in the years 1919-1920. He belonged to the liberal era, but was well respected by the Fascists and by Mussolini, who maintained him in the government's service until his death.⁷³³ Scialoja was equally appreciated in Geneva.⁷³⁴ Salter described him as 'an able lawyer...with a likeable form of friendly cynical realism...[and] with an engaging form of humour.'⁷³⁵ Walters wrote that Scialoja, who was among the drafters of the Covenant, 'was both learned and witty: he was genuinely devoted to the League.'⁷³⁶ Scialoja represented the view of the Italian state at the League until Grandi acknowledged the importance of a higher political representation for Italy, along with those of France and Britain.⁷³⁷

As Foreign Minister Mussolini never participated directly in the League's meetings, despite frequent requests from France and Britain.⁷³⁸ But this changed with the new Foreign Minister, Grandi, who in 1930 chose to head the Italian delegation to the Council. This decision was evidence of his personal interest in the League, which characterised the so-called 'Grandi Period' between 1929 and 1932 of the relationship between Italy and the organization, depicted by Costa Bona as 'idyllic.'⁷³⁹ Grandi's

⁷³² For a collection of his speeches: Scialoja, V., *Discorsi Alla Società Della Nazioni* (Rome, 1932)

⁷³³ See for instance Mussolini's praise of Scialoja in *L'Italia nel Mondo* (Speech to the Senate, 5 June 1928) in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIII, p.184

⁷³⁴ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.141,147

⁷³⁵ Salter, A., *Memoirs of a Public Servant* (London, 1961), p.204

⁷³⁶ Walters, p.340

⁷³⁷ Grandi revealed the intention to represent Italy in person to the next LoN Council during Drummond's visit to Rome in October 1929, see '*Appunto n.8*', written by Eric Drummond, 29 Oct. 1929; Diary Entries 29 and 31 Ottobre 1929, in Grandi's Diary, Ottobre- Novembre 1929 in Carte Grandi, b.13/90/9, in Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy (hereafter ASMAE)

⁷³⁸ Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, p.59

⁷³⁹ Costa Bona, p.75

attitude was driven by a sincere belief that cooperative behaviour at the League would increase the chances of success for, what he called, a '*peso determinante*' ('decisive weight') strategy: Italy as Europe's ultimate arbiter of war and diplomacy, as the pendulum in the European balance, a position which was believed would lead to the achievement of Italy's interests.⁷⁴⁰ In particular, Grandi believed that Italian Fascism had the opportunity to use Geneva, what he called a '*megafono mondiale*,' to have its needs heard to by the rest of the world.⁷⁴¹ He thought that Geneva was going to represent 20 years of European politics and would collapse at the outbreak of the next European war, but before then, it would be the forum in which the new equilibrium would be determined: it was therefore vital that Italy should be there.⁷⁴² The Italian presence would not only ensure that Italy's interests were protected, but would help Italy to pursue its foreign-policy goals.⁷⁴³ In fact, by complying with the international norms and demonstrating a commitment to international cooperation, Italy had a chance to get its colonial needs acknowledged by the international community.

The League offered to Fascist Italy the opportunity to be recognised as a Great Power and to be legitimised by the international community of the time. The importance of maintaining a positive image of Fascism in Geneva was a goal of its own and, during the Grandi years, it was implemented through an exaggeration of the commitment to the League's objectives, in what I called 'international exhibitionism' and is exemplified later in the chapter. However, as suggested by Grandi's ideas, this cooperative attitude was motivated also by practical gains.

⁷⁴⁰ Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, p.58

⁷⁴¹ 13 Aprile 1930, Grandi's Diary, Marzo-Aprile 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.15/90/15, ASMAE

⁷⁴² 30 Marzo 1930, Grandi's Diary, Marzo-Aprile 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.15/90/15, ASMAE

⁷⁴³ 30 Marzo 1930, Grandi's Diary, Marzo-Aprile 1930 in Carte Grandi, b.15/90/15, ASMAE; Costa Bona, pp.331-332

The Fascist regime desired a revision of the Paris Peace Treaties, as provided for by Article 19 of the Covenant, which implied that the Assembly could ask the member states to reconsider treaties ‘which have become inapplicable and ...international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world.’⁷⁴⁴ The regime hoped that such a revision could bring to the fulfilment of its colonial needs, which the regime desired on economic grounds: Italy had a limited range of raw materials and what it believed was a population surplus. In this sense, Gini’s report on foodstuffs and raw materials, prepared for the Economic and Financial Section of the League in 1921 and endorsed at the time by the liberal government, was instrumental to Italy’s colonial claims during the Fascist years.⁷⁴⁵ Recognizing the League’s imperial scope, Italy sought to achieve its colonial aims through it. For instance, as we saw in Chapter 3, Italy aspired to obtain a mandate. The League was the ideal place for these requests also because it was a key forum for European politics: the arena where the most important issues were debated by the most powerful states, represented by first-class politicians. It offered an opportunity to pursue these foreign-policy goals in addition to bilateral negotiations. What Grandi understood, and Mussolini only partially accepted, was that a more cooperative attitude in Geneva could actively bring practical advantages to Italy.

The action of Italy in all bodies of the League and in the official meetings of the Assembly and Council gave the country the possibility of behaving as a Great Power and promoting the regime’s political interests in the organization. This Italian

⁷⁴⁴ *L’Italia nel Mondo* (Speech to the Senate, 5 June 1928) in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIII, p.176

⁷⁴⁵ About the political use of the report by the Italian liberal government see the debate at the LoN Council, 15th Session, Third Meeting, 17 November 1921, in R.357; Corrado Gini’s ‘Report on certain aspects of the raw materials problem’, December 1921, and statistical data can be found respectively in R.357 and R.358, in League of Nations (LoN) Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

presence is the most important evidence of the fact that the Italian state, until the early 1930s, was interested in the organization and worked in Geneva along with the democratic powers. Unlike Germany, Italy was not an obstructive member from the beginning. Fascist Italy sought to cooperate on the different issues the League dealt with, from economic cooperation to disarmament. Ultimately, however, the aims and objectives of the Fascist regime did not coincide with the interests of the League and the principles it promoted. Italy was a revisionist power and the inability to change the status quo sufficiently led to Italy's break from the League. We shall now proceed with the analysis of two case studies exemplifying the Italian interests in the League: the appropriation of international institutions, and the involvement in the disarmament efforts promoted by the League.

The International Institutes in Rome

When analysing Italy's interests in the League, it may seem surprising that the Italian regime attempted to pursue its national interests by promoting international institutions under the auspices of the League. This is especially true if we consider Mussolini's aggressive rhetoric at home, and the incompatibility from the beginning between Italy's revisionist aims in foreign policy and the purpose of the League. In the 1920s, before Grandi became Foreign Minister, Italy committed itself to the foundation of two new international institutes to become auxiliary organs of the League of Nations: the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (ICE) and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (known today as

UNIDROIT).⁷⁴⁶ In addition to promoting the creation of these institutions, the Fascist regime attempted to have the already existing International Institute of Agriculture (IIA) recognised by the League as its advisory organ in agricultural matters.⁷⁴⁷ This chapter presents the first analysis of all three of them in the context of Italy's relations with the League.

The regime invested energy, people and resources in these international institutes. It did so in order to obtain international prestige and legitimation. Acting in favour of these institutions gave Italy the opportunity to promote a positive image of Fascism abroad. The active standing of the Fascist regime in favour of these international bodies helped to support the idea that Fascism shared internationally-agreed norms and values. It was part of the country's efforts of 'international exhibitionism' and aimed to present Italy as a Great Power committed to international cooperation and peace. In a speech to the Italian Senate in 1928, Mussolini used the example of the creation of these institutes as the best evidence of the real attitude of Italy towards the League, one of active cooperation. He stressed that even though Italy did not attribute to the institution '*virtù quasi mitologiche*' (almost mythological virtues), as idealists did, it was worth participating in the work of the League because the organization had

⁷⁴⁶ To be precise the abbreviation UNIDROIT was not used before the Second World War and it does not appear in the League's documents. However, for practical reasons, this text adopts this more modern appellation of the institute as a synonym of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law also for the interwar years.

⁷⁴⁷ The first, pioneering work on the ICE has been done by Christel Taillibert, a scholar of history of cinema: *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif. Regards sur le rôle du cinéma éducatif dans la politique internationale du fascisme italien* (Paris, 1999); a more recent work, in the area of film studies, is Druick, Z., 'The International Educational Cinematograph Institute, Reactionary Modernism, and the Formation of Film Studies' in *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, vol.16,1, Spring 2007, pp.80-97. UNIDROIT, instead, attracted the attention mainly of jurists, interested in the legal work of the organization rather than in its origins: the most recent contribution is Peters, L., *International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 2011), whose historical account, however, is largely based on a history of the institute published in 1948 by Massimo Pilotti: 'Activity of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (1926-1946)' in *Unification of Law* (Rome, 1948). The relationship between IIA and the League has been investigated by Luciano Tosi's *Alle origini della FAO: le relazioni tra l'Istituto Internazionale di Agricoltura e la Società delle Nazioni* (Milan, 1989)

been useful in many circumstances and could still be.⁷⁴⁸ The regime's appropriation of international institutions offers us an additional dimension of Italy's interest in the League in the period before the Ethiopian crisis. It shows how Fascist Italy was not just an active member of the institution, but also appropriated the internationalist language of the League and promoted new ways of international cooperation. Whether or not the reasons behind these initiatives were genuine is debatable, but certainly the Italian commitment to the Rome-based institutes brought to the regime benefits not just in terms of image, but also concrete ones.

The Italian government proposed an International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) in 1924. The promoter was Vittorio Scialoja, who in addition to being Italian delegate to the League, was also a distinguished jurist.⁷⁴⁹ In 1926, Italy reiterated to the LoN Council its interest 'to found and maintain' such an institute, which was then created in the same year.⁷⁵⁰ The institution was to be located in Rome and financed entirely by the Italian government. The initial undertaking was for seven years, renewable.⁷⁵¹ According to its statute, 'the object of the Institute is to study methods for the assimilation and co-ordination of private law as between States or groups of States, and to prepare for a gradual adoption by the various States of

⁷⁴⁸ *L'Italia nel Mondo* (Speech to the Senate, 5 June 1928) in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIII, pp.184-185

⁷⁴⁹ Pilotti, 'Activity of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (1926-1946)', p.1. The version of this article that I obtained from UNIDROIT was without page numbers. For this reason, the page indicated in my references is the number from the first page, rather than the one within the journal, which could not be determined.

⁷⁵⁰ 'International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. Offer from the Italian Government', with a 'Letter from the Italian government to the President of the Council of the League' dated 31 Mar. 1926, in League of Nations, *Official Journal* (hereafter *LoN OJ*), Vol. 7, Issue 6 (June 1926), pp.812-815; Pilotti, 'Activity of the International Institute', p.2

⁷⁵¹ Points 4 and 11, 'Letter from the Italian government to the President of the Council of the League', 31 Mar. 1926 in 'International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. Offer from the Italian Government', *LoN OJ*, Vol. 7, Issue 6 (June 1926), p.813

uniform private law legislation.’⁷⁵² The institution was administrated by a governing body, appointed by the League’s Council, and the Italian member was *ipso facto* president.⁷⁵³ The first president was Scialoja himself, a post he held until his death in 1933, when he was substituted by Mariano D’Amelio (1934-1943) and then by former LoN Deputy Secretary-General Massimo Pilotti (1944-1959). There was also a Secretary-General: Pietro De Francisci (1928-1932), followed by an old acquaintance of ours, Giuseppe Righetti (1934-1937), who died as a soldier in the Ethiopian war while on temporary leave from his work at the institute.⁷⁵⁴

Legally, UNIDROIT, as well as the ICE, was a subsidiary organ of the League. Like the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation inaugurated in Paris in 1926, and later the Nansen International Office for Refugees, the Rome-based institutes were associated with the organization by the provision of Article 24 of the Covenant, which aimed to place all international bureaux under the direction of the League.⁷⁵⁵ They were auxiliary organs of the League. The states participating in their activities were members of the League, but were joined by the USA and the Soviet Union. When Germany and Japan withdrew from the League, they left the institutes as well.

In 1927, when questioned by the British Foreign Office on the use of UNIDROIT, the LoN Secretary-General, Eric Drummond, replied that ‘its creation is undoubtedly little more than a piece of Italian propaganda as a rejoinder to the French foundation

⁷⁵² Art.2, ‘Statutes of the Institute’ in ‘International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. Offer from the Italian Government’, in *LoN OJ*, Vol.7, Issue 6 (June 1926), pp.813-814

⁷⁵³ Art.4, ‘Statutes of the Institute’ in ‘International Institute for the Unification of Private Law. Offer from the Italian Government’, in *LoN OJ*, Vol.7, Issue 6 (June 1926), pp.813-814

⁷⁵⁴ Peters, *International Institute for the Unification of Private Law*, p.21; ‘Death of Mr. Giuseppe Righetti, Secretary General of the Institute, January 26, 1937’ in R.3967, LoN Archives

⁷⁵⁵ Art.24 of the Covenant, available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed on 30 July 2014); Peters, *op. cit.*, p.14

of the Institute of Intellectual Cooperation in Paris', but he thought that it had the potential to be useful to the work of the Financial and Economic Commissions of the League.⁷⁵⁶ Drummond was not naïve about the aims of the Fascist regime, but he saw in the new institute potential to deliver positive outcomes for the League as well. Italy sought to use the League to pursue its national interests, but the League too attempted to use these institutes and the Italian membership to its advantage: they were a means of developing further international cooperation and legitimising its own existence.

In fact, the institute, inaugurated on 30 May 1928 at Villa Aldobrandini in Rome, worked in close association with the Economic and Legal Sections of the League. In particular, it offered advice to the League on matters such as the unification of law on bills of exchange and cheques, the legal status of women and copyright matters.⁷⁵⁷ It prepared a draft for the unification of the law of sales, including the stipulation of international commercial contracts; it investigated patrimonial questions; and drafted, among others, a uniform law on the liability of innkeepers and a study on the civil liability and compulsory insurance of motorists.⁷⁵⁸ When Italy left the League, the institute's status was altered: it was given a new constitution, which reasserted the international nature of the body but was no longer associated with Geneva, even though some elements of cooperation with the League continued until the outbreak of the war.⁷⁵⁹ After the Second World War, the institution, whose premises were still intact, maintained the form determined by the new 1940 statute: that of 'an

⁷⁵⁶ Note by Cecil Hurst, 23 Feb. 1927, on the cover of the folder 'International Institute for the Unification of Private Law', FO 371/12683, League of Nations, 1927, the National Archives, Kew, London, UK

⁷⁵⁷ H.C.G.[utteridge], 'The Institute for the Unification of Private Law' in 'Notes', (1946), 28 (3rd ser.), *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, pp.122-123; Pilotti, 'Activity of the International Institute', pp.15-18

⁷⁵⁸ Pilotti, 'Activity of the International Institute', pp.4-15

⁷⁵⁹ H.C.G.[utteridge], 'The Institute for the Unification of Private Law', pp.122-123

international body responsible to the participating Governments.’⁷⁶⁰ UNIDROIT continues its work on the unification of private law to the present day. Independently from the political reasons that led the Fascist regime to support its creation, in the post-1945 period the institute was still valued and its practical work recognised. This prompted people not to question its past.

The Fascist regime’s contribution to international cooperation continued with the establishment of a second institute in Rome: the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (ICE). The proposal for its creation was made by the Italian delegation at the LoN Assembly in September 1927 and the Council approved its statute in August 1928.⁷⁶¹ The object of the institute was ‘to encourage the production, distribution and exchange between the various countries of educational films.’⁷⁶² Like UNIDROIT, the ICE was an auxiliary organ of the League, financed by the Italian government. During its existence, however, the institute received additional funds from governments close to the Fascist regime, such as Romania, Hungary and Poland, and from Switzerland and France.⁷⁶³ The governing body, nominated by the LoN Council, included three members of the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation (ICIC) and was presided over by the Italian member.⁷⁶⁴ The first president of the ICE was the Italian Minister of Justice, Alfredo Rocco. Among the first members of the governing body, which, as for UNIDROIT, aimed to be international, were the inventor of the cinematograph, Louis Lumière, and

⁷⁶⁰ Art.2, Statute of UNIDROIT, 1940, available at:

<http://www.unidroit.org/english/presentation/statute.pdf> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁷⁶¹ Taillibert, *L’Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.68-69; 74-75

⁷⁶² Art. 2, ‘Final Text of the Organic Statutes of the Institute’, Annex 1052a, *LoN OJ*, Vol.9, Issue 10 (October 1928), pp.1512-1513

⁷⁶³ Taillibert, *L’Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.135-137

⁷⁶⁴ Art. 5, ‘Final Text of the Organic Statutes of the Institute’, Annex 1052a, *LoN OJ*, Vol.9, Issue 10 (October 1928), pp.1512-1513

Carl E. Milliken, secretary of the ‘Motion Picture Producers of America.’⁷⁶⁵ The United States, while not a member of the League, was an active member of the ICE.

The Fascist regime had a genuine interest in educational cinematography. In 1924, it had created *L’Unione Cinematografica Educativa*, known as the LUCE Institute, which became a major means of Fascist propaganda through the production of fiction movies and of the *Giornale Luce* (a newsreel).⁷⁶⁶ The reference to ‘education’ in the name, underlines the importance that cinema as an educational tool had for the Fascist regime. The direct interest of the Italian government in the work of the ICE is proven by the fact that its first (and only) Director was Luciano De Feo (1894-1974). De Feo, together with Paulucci, was one of the founders of LUCE. He was also the director of this institution from 1924 until he took up the new job at the ICE.⁷⁶⁷ De Feo was a fervent Fascist, who, with the outbreak of the Ethiopian war, was temporarily substituted at his ICE post by Paulucci, while he went as a volunteer to Asmara to direct the LUCE cinematographic mission in East Africa.⁷⁶⁸ De Feo and Paulucci, who entertained a friendly relationship, were among the most powerful men of Italian cinema in the interwar years.⁷⁶⁹ Paulucci was Italian Under Secretary-General at the League when the ICE project was proposed in Geneva and strongly advocated it.⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁵ Taillibert, *L’Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.148-149

⁷⁶⁶ On the LUCE Institute and cinema and Fascism see: Laura, E.G., *Le Stagioni dell’Aquila. Storia dell’Istituto LUCE* (Rome, 2000); Manetti, D., ‘Un’arma poderosissima’. *Industria cinematografica e Stato durante il fascismo, 1922-1943* (Milan, 2012); Brunetta, G.P., *Storia del cinema italiano, 1895-1945* (Rome, 1979)

⁷⁶⁷ De Feo, L., ‘Come nacque l’Istituto Nazionale “Luce”’ in *Lo Schermo*, 1936, fasc.7, pp.20-22; Laura, *op. cit.*, pp.15-19

⁷⁶⁸ Taillibert, *L’Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.339-340; Laura, *op. cit.*, pp.131-132

⁷⁶⁹ Laura, *op. cit.*, p.128

⁷⁷⁰ About Paulucci’s support to the ICE project see Tassani, *Diplomatico tra due Guerre*, pp.142-143, 156-157

According to Taillibert, the Fascist regime supported the creation of the ICE as a means to establish Italian supremacy on the matter of educational cinematography, which was a topic in which many countries, notably France, Switzerland and Germany, were interested at the time.⁷⁷¹ The idea of international cooperation in this field was not new. The establishment of the ICE was met with hostility from many institutions already dealing with educational cinema in the early 1920s: in particular the *Internationale Lehrfilmkammer* in Basel, Switzerland, directed by Gottlieb Imhof, and the International Organisation of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris, which planned to found an international organ on educational cinema led by France.⁷⁷² Thus, the decision of the Italian government to propose to the League the creation of the ICE and offer to fully finance it, brought not only the moral advantage of showing again the country's commitment to international cooperation, but also the practical benefit of putting Italy in the forefront of the emerging field of educational cinematography.

The ICE was inaugurated on 5 November 1928 in the prestigious Villa Falconieri in Frascati, which had been expropriated from Germany as a compensation for the Great War.⁷⁷³ The Italian King and Mussolini were present, together with important personalities of the Fascist Party. Such a display was intended to show Italian commitment to the institute and to international cooperation, which contrasted with the aggressive nationalist rhetoric of Mussolini at home.⁷⁷⁴ The practical work of the ICE was performed instead in an annex of Villa Torlonia, the residence in Rome of

⁷⁷¹ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.70-71

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, pp.70-73

⁷⁷³ As Grandi proudly recalled in his diary: 30 Ottobre 1929, in Grandi's Diary, October-November 1929 in Carte Grandi, b.13/90/9, ASMAE; on the matter, including the quarrel with the Germans see folder '*Istituto per il cinema educativo. Villa Falconieri*', in Società delle Nazioni (hereafter SdN) b.141, ASMAE

⁷⁷⁴ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.69-70, 78-79

Mussolini and his family. The short geographical distance between the ICE and the Prime Minister suggests, according to Taillibert, Mussolini's interest in the institution, seen as a way to improve the image of Fascism abroad.⁷⁷⁵ The ICE was instrumental to Mussolini's attempt to promote in the world an image of openness and tolerance of the Fascist regime.⁷⁷⁶

But the ICE was not just a cosmetic body: the institute actively cooperated with the League and the technical work of many of its sections. For instance, working together with the Health Section it contributed to the creation of educational films aiming to prevent diseases.⁷⁷⁷ Moreover, with the Economic Relations Section, the ICE promoted the establishment of a 'Convention for facilitating the international circulation of films of an educational character' (1933) exempting them from custom duties.⁷⁷⁸ The institute also advised the League on the movies that the organization wanted to make to advertise its work.⁷⁷⁹ The ICE was then involved in investigating different aspects of educational cinematography, from the influence of cinema on the minds of the youth to the use of cinema in schools.⁷⁸⁰ In addition to organizing conferences and publishing periodicals in five languages, the ICE was involved in the creation of the first 'Encyclopaedia of Cinematography.' The ambitious project was coordinated by Corrado Pavolini and the German Jewish 'refugee' Rudolf Arnheim, and saw the contribution of the major international experts on cinema of the time. The

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.94-102

⁷⁷⁶ Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano, 1895-1945*, p.311

⁷⁷⁷ 'International Institute of Educational Cinematography. Collaboration with the Health Section of the Secretariat of the LoN', various correspondence 1929-1932, in R.2203, LoN Archives

⁷⁷⁸ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.240-249; for the correspondence between ICE and LoN see R.2246, LoN Archives; 'Convention for facilitating the international circulation of films of an educational character', 11 Oct.1933, R.3980, LoN Archives

⁷⁷⁹ 'International Institute of Educational Cinematography. Production of League Films. Collaboration with the League Secretariat', various correspondence 1929, in R.2203, LoN Archives

⁷⁸⁰ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.171-193

first volume is said to have been published in 1937 but there is no existing copy available.⁷⁸¹

De Feo stated that, among the first aims of the ICE, was the promotion of the creation in other states of national institutes such as the Italian LUCE, presented as the example to follow. In fact, such institutions emerged in the following years.⁷⁸² Thus, the ICE also served to obtain international recognition for the cultural policy of Fascism.⁷⁸³ Instrumental to this purpose was also the foundation of the international film festival of Venice in 1932. De Feo, with the ICE, played a key role as creator and organizer of this event.⁷⁸⁴ The ICE was responsible for the technical management of the festival, and its established networks in the cinematographic world convinced many important producers to attend, guaranteeing an international outlook to the festival. De Feo also selected the films participating in the first edition, which were from nine states, including the Soviet Union, with which the ICE had started a period of profitable relations.⁷⁸⁵ The successful creation of this international festival was an important achievement for the regime and brought international prestige to Italy. By taking advantage of the international network of the ICE and its international reputation, the regime created an important means of Fascist propaganda. For the ICE,

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., pp.340-348. The publishing house Hoepli claims that the encyclopaedia went lost during the Second World War due to Allied bombing. However, it is not clear whether the publication was ever completed. On its fate there are also some conspiracy theories, with Antonio Sassone suggesting a strong correlation between this missing work and the publishing, starting from 1954 of the 'Encyclopaedia of Performing Arts' edited by Silvio D'Amico. However, no evidence supports this claim.

⁷⁸² Laura, *Le Stagioni dell'Aquila. Storia dell'Istituto LUCE*, pp.56-57

⁷⁸³ Manetti, D., 'Un'arma poderosissima'. *Industria cinematografica e Stato durante il fascismo, 1922-1943* (Milan, 2012), p.59

⁷⁸⁴ Manetti, *op. cit.*, pp.119, 125; Bono, F., 'La Mostra del cinema di Venezia: nascita e sviluppo nell'anteguerra (1932-1939)' in *Storia Contemporanea*, XXII, n.3, June 1991, pp.516-518

⁷⁸⁵ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.258-265. On the Soviet Union and ICE: Pisu, S., 'L'Unione Sovietica alla Mostra internazionale d'arte cinematografica di Venezia (1932-1953)' (Tesi di dottorato di ricerca in Storia Moderna e Contemporanea, XX ciclo, Università di Cagliari, 2008)

the contribution to the creation of the festival meant an incursion upon the realm of fiction movies, with which the institute started to deal from 1934.⁷⁸⁶

In late 1935, with the increasing tension between Italy and the League over the Ethiopian question, the ICE, unlike the other Rome-based institutes, ended contact with Geneva, and did not convene its governing body in the years 1936-1937.⁷⁸⁷ On 31 December 1937 the ICE was dissolved.⁷⁸⁸ Its archives, including all existing material on the encyclopaedia, instead of being returned to the League, to which they belonged, remained in Rome and were lost during the war.⁷⁸⁹ The fact that, unlike UNIDROIT, the ICE was dismantled when the relationship between Italy and the League reached an end, leads us to conclude that the nature of the institute, under the powerful Fascist lead of De Feo, was overwhelmingly political. When it was clear that a commitment to international cooperation could no longer bring advantages to the Fascist regime, there was no hesitation to cease the ICE's existence. All functions relating to educational cinema were absorbed by the LUCE Institute, which in 1937 was directed by Paulucci.

The creation of ICE and UNIDROIT presented Fascist Italy to the world as a country keen to contribute to international cooperation, presenting a positive image of Fascism.⁷⁹⁰ Both institutes contributed to legitimise the Fascist regime. However, they were not bogus institutions, but both answered the need felt, at the time, for international collaboration in their respective fields. Their work and the active

⁷⁸⁶ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.258, 303

⁷⁸⁷ Luciano De Feo to Leonardo Vitetti, 1 Oct. 1937, in SdN b.141, ASMAE

⁷⁸⁸ 'Letter dated December 27th, 1937, from the Italian government to the Secretary-General' and attached letter from Balbino Giuliano in *LoN OJ*, Vol.19, Issue 1 (January 1938), p.14

⁷⁸⁹ On the rights of the LoN on the ICE archives see Memorandum by Emile Giraud, 2 Oct. 1946 in R.3982, LoN Archives

⁷⁹⁰ Taillibert, *L'Institut International du cinématographe éducatif*, pp.69-70

partnership with the League were appreciated. Their existence did not just bring symbolic advantages to the Fascist regime, which could present itself as committed to international cooperation, but also concrete benefits. In particular, the ICE offered to the Fascist regime the opportunity to claim a prominent role in educational cinematography, a matter in which France and Germany already competed for a prominent position. The ICE gave Italy the possibility of being at the forefront in this field and of obtaining abroad recognition for Fascist cultural policy. The creation of the first Venice film festival, in which the ICE played an essential role, contributed to the promotion of a charming image of Italy and the Fascist cinematographic culture overseas.

Italy's interest in the appropriation of international institutions was not limited to the creation of new bodies, but also to existing ones. This was the case regarding a third international institute already present in Rome: the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA). The Italian King established it in 1905 for the purpose of collecting, studying and circulating agricultural statistics, information on plants' diseases, on insurance and credits in agriculture. It also aimed to propose to governments the adoption of measures for the protection of the common interests of the agricultural workers and the improvement of their conditions.⁷⁹¹ In 1919, it had more than 50 member states, including independent colonies.⁷⁹² With the creation of the League, the IIA encountered the problem of how to relate to it, because they had some overlapping aims. An initial debate in 1919 on the possible inclusion of the IIA under Article 24 of the Covenant, which would have made of it an auxiliary organ of

⁷⁹¹ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, p.32. For an overview of the structure of the IIA and its shortcomings see Hobson, A., *The International Institute of Agriculture* (Berkeley, CA, 1931)

⁷⁹² Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, p.35; Speech of Scialoja in 'Relations between the League of Nations and Institutes or Bodies set up under its Authority', Fifteenth Session of the Council, Fifth Meeting, 7 June 1928, *LoN OJ*, Vol.9, Issue 7 (July 1928), pp.901-902

the League, was unsuccessful. The failure was due partially to the negative evaluation of Arthur Salter, Director of the Economic and Financial Section of the League, who criticised the lack of efficiency and internationality of the institution, and partially to the desire of the IIA to remain autonomous and be regarded as holding the same status as the LoN.⁷⁹³ In the early 1920s, while awaiting an institutionalisation of their relations, the LoN and the IIA only entertained occasional collaborations.⁷⁹⁴ However, once Fascism came to power, solving the question of the international status of this Italian-born organization became more compelling.

The Fascist regime was very interested in the work of the IIA, which could be instrumental in propagandising abroad the regime's achievements in agriculture, as well as Fascist economic policies, notably corporatism, and more generally Italy's role in international economic relations.⁷⁹⁵ For Fascist Italy, the IIA was a great opportunity to show once again the importance of the country in international cooperation. Mussolini believed that a valorisation of the IIA could bring prestige to Italy, and for this reason the Fascist government increased financial subsidies to the institute and in 1925 nominated as new President of the institution Giuseppe De Michelis (1925-1933), also Italian delegate to the ILO and President of the LUCE Institute (1924-1926).⁷⁹⁶ In addition, Italy increased its colonial representation at the IIA Permanent Committee and convinced minor powers to be represented by Italy, increasing the votes at its disposal in the decisional body of the institution. At the same time, President De Michelis centralised the powers in his hands, to the

⁷⁹³ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.44-47; 52-53

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.59

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.100; Ribi Forclaz, A., 'A New Target for International Social Reform: The International Labour Organization and Working and Living Conditions in Agriculture in the Inter-War Years' in *Contemporary European History*, 20, 3 (2011), p.321

⁷⁹⁶ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, p.100; Ribi Forclaz, 'A New Target for International Social Reform', p.321

disadvantage of the IIA's Secretary-General.⁷⁹⁷ The staff of the institute remained overwhelmingly Italian, as it had been since its origins.⁷⁹⁸

With Grandi at the Foreign Ministry, the international attempts to clarify the status of the IIA in relation to the League intensified. Grandi believed that all efforts should be made to obtain international recognition of the role of the IIA as the exclusive technical organ of the League on agricultural matters.⁷⁹⁹ At the 1927 World Economic Conference organized by the League the necessity emerged for increased international cooperation in the field of agriculture, but the fact that the IIA should be the instrument for it was not taken for granted.⁸⁰⁰ Of the three Rome-based institutes, the IIA was the one of higher importance for Geneva. Agriculture was a key issue in international economic discussions at the time, because of the economic problems related to the tariffs and the pressure on agricultural prices, especially since the return to the gold standard.⁸⁰¹ The League needed a specialised body dealing with agriculture and even contemplated creating its own.⁸⁰² In fact, because the IIA was considered inefficient, agricultural leaders and governments increasingly insisted that the League dealt with agricultural problems independently.⁸⁰³ However, given the League's own limited resources, it was more convenient to take advantage of the already existing IIA. According to Salter, there were two possibilities: closing down the IIA and transferring its prerogatives to the League, or establishing an official connection to the League, most likely under Article 24 of the Covenant, provided the

⁷⁹⁷ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.101-102

⁷⁹⁸ Hobson, *The International Institute of Agriculture*, pp.170-194

⁷⁹⁹ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.107, 132

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.122; Hobson, *The International Institute of Agriculture*, pp.286-289

⁸⁰¹ Clavin, P. and Patel, K.K., 'The Role of International Organizations in Europeanization: The case of the League of Nations and the European Economic Community' in Conway, M. and Patel, K. K. (eds.), *Europeanization in the twentieth century: historical approaches* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp.110-131

⁸⁰² Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.154-168

⁸⁰³ Hobson, *The International Institute of Agriculture*, pp.286, 289-291

institute was willing to increase its efficiency and internationality.⁸⁰⁴ Therefore, an official connection of IIA to the League became for Italy not just a diplomatic priority, but also the only way to legitimise the institute's existence. Once again it was not only Italy trying to pursue its interests through these international institutes, but also the League using them for its practical purposes.

The combined action of De Michelis at the IIA and Grandi at the League led to an agreement, approved by the LoN Council on 3 October 1932.⁸⁰⁵ By supporting the resolution, the Council recognised the IIA as 'the international institution best qualified to act as the League's advisory organ in agricultural matters.'⁸⁰⁶ In addition to being nominated as the exclusive agricultural organ of the LoN, the IIA maintained its autonomy and avoided any unwanted change to its operational and institutional structure, in which the Fascist leadership remained strong.⁸⁰⁷ Italy obtained the international recognition of an Italian-born and Fascist-led international institution and this was a success for Italy's diplomacy and the prestige of the country.

However, it is necessary to note that the potential of the IIA remained underdeveloped. In ICE and UNIDROIT, even though the presidency remained anchored to Italians close to the regime, the Italian government put an emphasis on international representation, in order to gain legitimization for the bodies. By contrast the IIA remained Italo-centric. If the IIA had implemented the measures requested by the League, which included a more international and competent personnel, this would

⁸⁰⁴ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.125-128

⁸⁰⁵ 'Relations between the League of Nations and the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome', Eight Session of the Council, Fourth Meeting, *LoN OJ*, Vol.13, Issue 11 (November 1932), pp.1752-55

⁸⁰⁶ 'Relations between the League of Nations and the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome', *LoN OJ*, Eight Session of the Council, Fourth Meeting, Vol.13, Issue 11 (November 1932), pp.1752-55

⁸⁰⁷ More on the intricate negotiations between De Michelis, the IIA and the League: Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.185-191

have been an asset in the hands of the Fascists. In fact, a greater efficiency of the IIA recognised by the international community would have increased further the regime's reputation and the image of a country committed to international cooperation, together with bringing more practical benefits to the regime. It is legitimate to ask why the Fascist government, despite the efforts of De Michelis, was unable to internationalise the IIA to the level required by the LoN, and hence have the institute recognised before, as well as widen the use that the regime could make of it. One hypothesis would be that the institution, which had a pre-Fascist structure and a long-established network of personal interests, was too conservative to be changed even by Fascism.

The IIA, which was still active during the Second World War, was liquidated in 1946 on the basis of its collusion with Fascism and its redundancy following the formation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which in 1949 was relocated to Rome.⁸⁰⁸ Despite the common location, the new organization developed with a focus on food security rather than agriculture, and shared more with the former League's Economic and Financial Organization than with the IIA both in terms of continuity of experts and purposes.⁸⁰⁹

The recognition of the IIA as the League's official advisory organ in agriculture, together with the creation of UNIDROIT and ICE, helped Fascist Italy to develop a reputation as a country committed to international cooperation, legitimising the Fascist regime and elevating it closer to the status of Great Power. The regime's appropriation of international institutions for concrete and image-related purposes is

⁸⁰⁸ Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.276, 279

⁸⁰⁹ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, p.346. For an account of the debate on the future of the IIA during the Second World War, see Tosi, *Alle origini della FAO*, pp.233-276.

evidence that Italy's interest in the League was not limited to being present in the political and the technical work of the organization in Geneva. Italy actively supported the creation of international institutes legitimised by the League, appropriating the language of liberal internationalism to promote the image of a country committed to international cooperation and peace. But this was not just an aim in itself. Madeleine Herren argued that this was a way used by the Fascist regime to undermine the League from within.⁸¹⁰ But as we have seen, the ultimate purpose of the promotion of a positive image of Italian Fascism was to achieve colonial goals, to be obtained through reassuring Britain and France within the strategy endorsed by Grandi. Moreover, it is important to remember that these institutes, with the partial exception of the IIA, were fully functioning organizations, which did not just perform an image-promoting role for the Fascist regime, but also held practical purposes, such as establishing an Italian leadership in the field of educational cinematography.

If we assume that the purpose of the League was to serve its own member states, then Italy used the League in the way it was meant to: that is, it sought to pursue national interests through it. There was no point for Italy to undermine the organization: the Fascist regime wanted to use it, as did the democratic countries. All member states had their own agenda at the League: France desired the maintenance of the status quo, Britain was open to a limited revision of the peace settlement, while Italy wanted a more radical revision of the Treaties. Initially, Italy tried to solve its security concerns and fulfil its colonial aspirations through international negotiations under the auspices of the League. It is in this context that the Fascist government supported the creation of UNIDROIT and the ICE and the League's recognition of the IIA. Fascist Italy's

⁸¹⁰ Herren, M., and Zala, S., *Netzwerk Aussenpolitik* (Zurich, 2002), pp.151-165; Herren, M., *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt, 2009), pp.77-78

appropriation of the international institutes illustrates the complexity of the Italian interests in the League, which ranged from pursuing the image of a country committed to international cooperation to the practical benefits that Italy hoped to achieve through it. These institutes projected the image of a country not only eager to cooperate within the existing framework, but also to propose new issues of cooperation that would widen that framework. In addition, what emerges is that this process originated before Grandi was appointed as Foreign Minister, suggesting a wider engagement of the Fascist regime in this matter.

Italy and the Disarmament Question

Another case exemplifying Italy's interests in the League is the Fascist government's involvement in the disarmament efforts promoted by the League. Disarmament dominated the energies and resources of the League of Nations for the majority of its existence. Convinced that rearmament had played a key role in bringing Europe to the catastrophe of the Great War, the creators of the League promoted Article 8 of the Covenant, which prescribed that the LoN Council should formulate plans for 'the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety.'⁸¹¹ Public opinion and the member states evaluated the credibility and the level of success of this organization based on its achievements in this field.⁸¹² For these reasons, from its first days, the League created specific bodies dealing with the question, such as the Temporary Mixed Commission (1921), and a Disarmament Section. Some member states, such as France and its allies in Eastern Europe (i.e.

⁸¹¹ Art.8 of the Covenant, available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp (last accessed on 30 July 2014)

⁸¹² Walters, p.217

Poland), saw armaments as the result rather than the cause of insecurity, and required more guarantees before agreeing to disarm. Hence, the League also promoted a system of security supplementary to the Covenant, which included the Treaty of Mutual Assistance (1923), the Geneva Protocol (1924) and the more successful Locarno Treaties (1925).⁸¹³

However, the main effort of the League in favour of disarmament was the organization of the World Disarmament Conference, which took place in Geneva for discontinuous periods from February 1932 to June 1934, when it was re-adjourned *sine die*.⁸¹⁴ The Conference was a watershed for the League: if successful, it had the potential to strengthen the organization; if it failed, it would endanger its existence. This chapter offers neither an exhaustive study of the disarmament discourse in the interwar period nor a detailed analysis of the Disarmament Conference. Instead it seeks to use Italy's attitude towards disarmament as promoted by the League, to exemplify Italy's interest in the political work of this organization, by reading events such as the Disarmament Conference through the lens of the Italian membership of the League.

⁸¹³ For a detailed description of these measures see Walters, pp.221-226, 272-276, 283-294

⁸¹⁴ Various aspects of the Disarmament Conference are analysed in: Kitching, C.J., *Britain and the Problem of International Disarmament, 1919-1934* (London: New York, 1999) and *Britain and the Geneva Disarmament Conference* (Basingstoke, 2003); Webster, A., "The disenchantment conference": Frustration and humour at the world disarmament conference, 1932' in *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, vol.11, n.3 (Nov. 2000), pp.72-80, 'The Transnational Dream: Politicians, Diplomats and Soldiers in the League of Nations' Pursuit of International Disarmament, 1920-1938' in *Contemporary European History*, 2005, vol.14 (4), pp.493-518; Davies, T. R., *The possibilities of Transnational Activism. The Campaign for Disarmament between the Two World Wars* (Leiden: Boston, MA, 2007). In the interwar period disarmament was pursued also outside the League of Nations, as proven by the Washington Naval Conference (1921-1922) and the London Naval Conference (1930). On the many forms of interwar disarmament, see for instance: Webster, A., 'From Versailles to Geneva: The many forms of interwar disarmament', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2006), 29:02, pp.225-246

Italy was interested in disarmament on practical and image grounds. The Italian state's participation in the disarmament discussions promoted by the League was led by three main practical concerns. Firstly, the fear of exclusion: any decision of the international community on the matter could potentially bring limitations to its national defence, which had been historically a monopoly of the state. For this reason, the Fascist government wanted to be present together with the Great Powers to make sure that its national interests were not damaged and that other states did not gain from its absence.⁸¹⁵ Secondly, Italy was interested in the disarmament debate because of strategic considerations. In particular, it feared the rearmament of Germany, and according to Mussolini, the only way to avoid it was to disarm everyone.⁸¹⁶ Italy also desired 'parity with the most armed continental nation', France.⁸¹⁷ Partly this was a way to achieve more international recognition, partly an attempt to play a more influential role on the continent. Thirdly, the Fascist government was worried about the increasing costs of rearmament. An armaments race was expensive and, as well as all other states involved in the disarmament negotiations, Italy was affected by the economic crisis and would have greatly benefited from any collective agreement eliminating for everyone the most expensive weapons. The attempt to reach an agreement on disarmament was therefore led also by serious economic concerns.⁸¹⁸

The Italian delegation clarified its position at the World Disarmament Conference on 10 February 1932, in front of the delegations of more than 60 states. In his speech, Grandi stressed how the Italian government believed in the principle of 'disarmament

⁸¹⁵ Mussolini cit. in Costa Bona, p.32

⁸¹⁶ Mussolini in 'Intervista Lange' (assumed date Sept. 1932), in Gabinetto (1923-43), b.430, ASMAE

⁸¹⁷ Trans. *L'Italia nel Mondo* (Speech to the Senate, 5 June 1928) in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXIII, p.184

⁸¹⁸ Bongiorno, J.A., *Fascist Italy and the disarmament question, 1928-1934* (New York: London, 1991), pp.147-148, p.179

before security', in opposition to France, but in agreement with Britain, Germany and the USA.⁸¹⁹ He then presented the two cornerstones of Italian policy at the Conference: 'equality of rights for all states and equalization of the armed forces to minimum levels.'⁸²⁰ With regard to how to disarm, Grandi proposed qualitative disarmament, starting with the elimination of the most offensive weapons such as capital ships, submarines and bombing aircraft.⁸²¹ There was a genuine interest from the Italian government in qualitative disarmament: offensive weapons were expensive and Italy did not have the economic (and maybe even technical) abilities to keep pace with the other powers. According to the scholar Joseph A. Bongiorno, in February 1932 Mussolini presented a positive attitude towards qualitative disarmament and its consequent savings.⁸²² Such a reduction would have allowed a poorly-equipped Italy to increase its advantage over France, the best-armed power in continental Europe and the state that would have been affected the most by a reduction of offensive weapons. In case of a subsequent quantitative limitation, Italy would have then insisted on parity with France. Italy's attitude towards Germany at the Conference was instead in favour of its request for equality of rights, which was seen as the first recognition of the decline of the clauses of the Versailles Treaties, hence revisionism.⁸²³ Italy was

⁸¹⁹ Speech at the Disarmament Conference on 10 February 1932, in Grandi, D., *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia Dal 1929 Al 1932* (Rome, 1985), Vol.2, p.651. This book, which collects some of the most important speeches of Grandi while Foreign Minister, has been object of criticism from scholars based on the fact that some of the speeches have been altered. The changes, however, do not concern the speeches cited in this thesis. See Knox, M., 'I testi "aggiustati" dei discorsi segreti di Grandi' in *Passato e Presente*, XIII, Genn.-Apr 1987; Nello, P., 'A proposito dei discorsi segreti di Dino Grandi' in *Passato e Presente*, XVI, Genn.-Apr 1988

⁸²⁰ Trans. Speech at the Disarmament Conference on 10 February 1932, in Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, p.661

⁸²¹ Speech at the Disarmament Conference on 10 February 1932, in Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, pp.663-664

⁸²² Bongiorno, *Fascist Italy and the disarmament question*, pp.147-148

⁸²³ "Conversazioni a cinque", report by Pompeo Aloisi, 13 Dec. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

aware that the problem of German equality was a problem of deferring the inevitable German rearmament.⁸²⁴

At the Conference's technical subcommittees, the Fascist government showed particular interest in naval and air disarmament, as well as in the question of the 'effectives', that was the attempt to decrease the number of soldiers in active service in the various countries. In particular, the regime wanted to avoid any decision made at the expense of the Blackshirts, and the military forces employed in the colonies.⁸²⁵

In his directives to the Italian delegation in September 1932, Mussolini stated that regarding naval disarmament, the priority of Italy was the abolition of expensive armaments. With respect to air disarmament, Italy opposed the internationalisation of the aviation proposed by France and any project implying a real control of the national aviation by a third party. On the subject of air bombing, Mussolini clarified that he supported an extended ban to bombing civil population, but he encouraged the Italian delegation to accept any proposal admitting, as an exception to the ban, the use of bombing in colonial territories.⁸²⁶

These directives given by Mussolini show how at the Conference the Italian government hoped for the achievement of concrete measures, leading to a reduction of the military expenses and affecting those armaments in which the Italian army was in disadvantage in relation to the other powers. At the same time, Italy opposed limitations in the fields in which the Italian military was more advanced, such as aviation. Italy had serious practical interests in some aspects of disarmament, and

⁸²⁴ Report by Aloisi to Mussolini, 3 Oct. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

⁸²⁵ Report by Augusto Rosso to Mussolini, 1 Nov. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

⁸²⁶ *Appunto sulle direttive impartite da S.E. il Capo del Governo in tema di disarmo* (17 Sept. 1932) in *Gabinetto* (1923-43), b.430, ASMAE

participated with an active role in the disarmament negotiations, both in order to protect its national interests and to be considered at the same level as the Great Powers.

However, Italy's interest in disarmament was not just practical, but was connected to presenting a positive international image of the regime. By being at the centre of the disarmament conversations, Italy increased its international prestige, appearing as a supporter of the League and its most important project. Presenting itself as committed to international cooperation and eager to maintain peace in Europe, Italy aimed to convince the real Great Powers, France and Britain, to fulfil Italy's foreign-policy desires. As we saw, the main supporter of this idea was Grandi. In particular, such a positive image would help to obtain the support of the British Labour government in obtaining military parity with France, as well as colonial concessions.⁸²⁷ In this sense, Italy's positive attitude to disarmament was part of the same logic which led to the Fascist appropriation of the international institutes in Rome: the attempt of charming the Great Powers in order to make foreign-policy gains. For these reasons, Italy was a protagonist in the disarmament discussions and actively participated in all LoN commissions on disarmament. In addition, it played the role of guarantor in the Locarno Treaties (1925) and signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact in 1928, which aimed to outlaw war.

Even before the Conference started, Grandi stressed Italy's eager commitment to a successful agreement on disarmament. At the LoN Council Session in January 1931, when the report of the Conference's Preparatory Commission was presented,

⁸²⁷ Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, pp.58-59; Account on his mandate as Foreign Minister, Grandi's Diary, "n.2", Luglio-Agosto 1932 in Carte Grandi, b.25/90/40, ASMAE

Grandi warned the governments represented in Geneva about their political and historical responsibility. In fact, in his opinion, a failure of the Conference could have consequences, not only for the prestige of the League, but also for its existence: if the Conference failed or reached only trivial results, the effectiveness and the life of the Covenant would receive a death-blow.⁸²⁸ At the LoN Assembly in September 1931, words met with action and Grandi proposed an armaments truce, which consisted in a request to all governments to refrain from increasing their armaments for 12 months, starting in November 1931. Grandi's proposal obtained enthusiastic reactions and was finally endorsed.⁸²⁹

The image of Fascist Italy that Grandi promoted at the Conference was that of a country actively committed to disarmament and peace, a country open to mediate between other states in order to reach an agreement on disarmament. The concrete proposals for the elimination of the most offensive weapons presented by Grandi in his speech on 10 February 1932, together with the exhortation to the participants in the Conference to the moral necessity to find an agreement, obtained the appreciation of many, in particular the British liberal press.⁸³⁰ The following day, *The Manchester Guardian* wrote that 'Englishmen may well be pardoned for feeling envy and regret because the speech made by Signor Grandi...was not made by a representative of the British Commonwealth.'⁸³¹

⁸²⁸ Speech to the LoN Council, 19 January 1931 in Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, pp.641-642

⁸²⁹ Walters, p.444; Santagata, *Gli opinionmakers liberali inglesi*, p.309

⁸³⁰ Speech at the Disarmament Conference on 10 February 1932, in Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, pp.664-666; Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, p.301

⁸³¹ 'Italy's Lead for Disarmament. Notable Speech at Geneva. A Radical Policy' in *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)*, 11 Feb. 1932, p.9

Grandi's unconditional approval for Hoover's proposals some months later also indicated the Foreign Minister's desire to present Italy as strongly committed to disarmament. The American plan, which suggested a reduction of the land, sea and air armaments of the world 'by nearly one-third,' was presented on 22 June 1932.⁸³² It was made after four months of fruitless discussions on several proposals, which showed how each country desired a successful reduction of armaments, but no country was really willing to sacrifice its strategic interests for this purpose. This trend was confirmed by the reaction to Hoover's plan. The project in fact met with opposition from Britain, scepticism from France and Japan, and only a cold welcome from Germany and the Soviet Union.⁸³³ Grandi instead proclaimed that Italy accepted it in all its parts and that this acceptance was unconditional. It is true that many of the measures suggested by the plan coincided with the proposal advanced by the Italian delegation in February 1932.⁸³⁴ However, the Italian Foreign Minister was also motivated by the desire to show Italy's real commitment to the aims of the Conference, as opposed to that of the other countries, and to exclude Italy from any blame of being responsible for the Conference's failure. Addressing the delegates on 22 June 1932, Grandi stressed the important sacrifices that Italy was willing to make, convinced that the peaceful coexistence between nations required them. He also reminded everyone that 'the peoples will judge our work. It is necessary to insist and decide whether we really want the peace and the political and economic recovery of the world.'⁸³⁵ Grandi's speech aroused the enthusiastic approval of many who were present, including journalists and public, and prompted great praise from the

⁸³² Hoover cit. in Kitching, *Britain and the Geneva Disarmament Conference*, p.78. For details on the plan see pp.77-79.

⁸³³ Kitching, *Britain and the Geneva Disarmament Conference*, pp.79-80

⁸³⁴ Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, p.701; Grandi to Mussolini, 22 Aug. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

⁸³⁵ Speech at the Disarmament Conference on 22 June 1932, in Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, p.702

American delegation.⁸³⁶ But Grandi had spoken without previous consultation with Mussolini, who was irritated by the initiative until he realized that Grandi's step had struck a chord and had been a propaganda success.⁸³⁷ Italy managed to promote successfully the image of a country committed to disarmament and peace, and a protagonist in the Disarmament Conference.

Illuminating on Grandi's purpose in presenting this positive image of Italy at the Disarmament Conference is a letter he wrote to Mussolini on 20 August 1932, after he had been fired by the Prime Minister due also to the scarce practical results of a too LoN-friendly foreign policy.⁸³⁸ Grandi, referring to the fact that the first phase of the Conference concluded without agreements, wrote that 'the Disarmament Conference has been a failure. A failure for all but Italy.'⁸³⁹ The responsibility for this failure was laid on France, Britain and the USA. He continued by stressing that he had never believed that the Disarmament Conference could be successful. The Italian position in Geneva 'was an exclusively tactical, preparatory, dialectic and polemic position, which only aimed to show the bad faith of the others... and give us a strong position of advantage for the future necessary action of counterattack.'⁸⁴⁰ Grandi's argument here seems to suggest that the failure of the Conference was the best outcome that Italy could hope for, as this gave the opportunity to strengthen the international position of Italy, while showing the lack of serious commitment in the other Great Powers.

⁸³⁶ Bongiorno, *Fascist Italy and the disarmament question*, p.156; Scarano, F., *Mussolini e la Repubblica di Weimar. Le relazioni diplomatiche tra Italia e Germania dal 1927 al 1933* (Naples, 1996), pp.397-398; Grandi, *La Politica Estera Dell'Italia*, Vol.2, p.702

⁸³⁷ Grandi, D., *Dino Grandi Racconta* (Venice, 1945), pp.12-13; Costa Bona, p.239; Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, p.304

⁸³⁸ Grandi to Mussolini, 20 Aug. 1932, in Segreteria Particolare del Duce (hereafter SPD), Carteggio Riservato (hereafter CR), b.14 in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome (hereafter ACS)

⁸³⁹ Trans. from Grandi to Mussolini, 20 Aug. 1932, SPD, CR, b.14, ACS

⁸⁴⁰ Trans. from Grandi to Mussolini, 20 Aug. 1932, SPD, CR, b.14, ACS

However, from these words we should not derive what Di Nolfo did, that is to say that Italy could afford to present itself as ‘the champion of the most sincere pacifism’ because it was never seriously committed to disarmament.⁸⁴¹ What Grandi’s words prove instead, is that Italy had an interest in showing a positive attitude as a way to maintain its international status as a country committed to prevention of war. It was a public relations effort which allowed Italy to play the role of the Great Power on the international stage, presenting the country as an essential international mediator led by those ideals of peace which brought to the organization of the Conference. But this does not necessarily imply that the Italian state would have not benefitted from the achievement of a disarmament agreement at the Conference. As we have seen, the Italian government held a concrete interest in disarmament. Moreover, Grandi’s attitude towards the matter was driven by a sincere belief that a cooperative behaviour at the Conference would increase the chances of success of his ‘decisive weight’ strategy.⁸⁴² In his diary, Grandi wrote that he was convinced that his cooperative attitude could lead to an agreement with France, which would have resulted in the obtaining of the mandate of Cameroun and some rights in Ethiopia.⁸⁴³

When Grandi was fired by Mussolini in July 1932, Italy’s attitude towards disarmament seemed unchanged: under Mussolini’s lead Italy still tried to protect national interests while showing itself open to negotiations and committed to peace. In September 1932, Mussolini released an interview to Robert Lange, a French leftist journalist, which aimed to reassure the French public of the pacifist attitude of the

⁸⁴¹ Di Nolfo, *Mussolini e La Politica Estera Italiana (1919-1933)*, p.302

⁸⁴² Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, p.58

⁸⁴³ Account on his mandate as Foreign Minister, Grandi’s Diary, “n.2”, Luglio-Agosto 1932 in Carte Grandi, b.25/90/40, ASMAE

Fascist regime, questioned as a consequence of Grandi's removal. Mussolini stated that he did not believe, based on past experiences, that perpetual peace could be guaranteed, but that between disarmament and the rearmament of nations, he chose disarmament: '*Je dis qu'il faut essayer de faire la Paix, travailler encore pour la Paix, et toujours pour la Paix.*'⁸⁴⁴ He concluded by stating that Fascism was going to commit all its forces to maintain peace as long as possible.⁸⁴⁵ In October 1932, talking in Turin, Mussolini stressed once again the peaceful aims of his country and the genuine intentions of Italy's proposals on disarmament as well as the intention to remain in the League 'especially today that it is extraordinarily sick.'⁸⁴⁶ The concept was stressed by Pompeo Aloisi, the head of the Italian delegation, at the League's Assembly, on 29 September 1932, where he confirmed Italy's commitment to make any effort to save the world from the current difficulties.⁸⁴⁷

With Mussolini back in the Foreign Ministry, Italy continued to promote the image of a country dedicated to international cooperation. What changed was that the promotion of a cooperative image of Italy was increasingly an aim in itself. The firing of Grandi marked a change in Italy's attitude towards the League, even though this was not a major rupture with the institution as proven by the appointment as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Fulvio Suvich, former member of the League's Financial Committee (1928-1932), and in his own words 'surely not less *societario* than Grandi had been.'⁸⁴⁸ Mussolini did not wish to give up *in toto* the previous policy, but he grew increasingly disillusioned with the ability to achieve his

⁸⁴⁴ Trans. 'I say we must try to make peace, to work again for peace and always for peace.' Mussolini in '*Intervista Lange*' (assumed date Sept. 1932), in *Gabinetto* (1923-43), b.430, ASMAE

⁸⁴⁵ Mussolini in '*Intervista Lange*' (assumed date Sept. 1932), in *Gabinetto* (1923-43), b.430, ASMAE

⁸⁴⁶ *Al Popolo di Torino* (23 Oct. 1932), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXV, pp.142-3

⁸⁴⁷ Speech of Aloisi to the LoN Assembly, 29 Sept. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

⁸⁴⁸ Cit. in Suvich, F., *Memorie 1932-1936* (Milan, 1984), p.4. Scarano, *Mussolini e la Repubblica di Weimar*, p.456

international ambitions through the League and, as we shall see, started to look for alternatives.

Mussolini's rhetoric, aiming to reassure France and Britain, was accompanied in practice by active mediation efforts of the Italian delegation to convince Germany to return to the Conference. In fact, the Germans had walked out of the negotiations at the end of July 1932 on the question of the equality of rights.⁸⁴⁹ The Italian government presented itself as in favour of recognising Germany's parity and tried to convince France to accept its legal concept, so that Germany would return to the Conference and a common effort could be made to control its rearmament. Mussolini saw German rearmament as inevitable but he stressed the need for it to be restrained by stages and agreed upon by all states concerned.⁸⁵⁰ In Aloisi's opinion, it was necessary to make sure that the rearmament of Germany would be gradual and slow, in order to give the opportunity to Italy to be politically and militarily ready for any eventuality.⁸⁵¹ In exchange for its support to France on the issue of German rearmament, the Fascist government sought to obtain a reward in terms of mandates and colonies.⁸⁵² Equality of rights for Germany was recognised on 11 December 1932 and Germany came back to the Conference, even though this did not prevent its final withdrawal from it and the League in October 1933.⁸⁵³ Italy played an important role in reaching this outcome and Italy's diplomatic efforts, according to Aloisi, confirmed 'the continuation of the tradition of Italy as an essential element of every European mediation, [and] the merit, in front of the world public opinion, to have contributed to

⁸⁴⁹ Walters, p.512

⁸⁵⁰ *Parità di Diritto*, article in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 13 Sept. 1932, in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXV, p.123

⁸⁵¹ Report by Aloisi to Mussolini, 3 Oct. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

⁸⁵² Report by Aloisi to Mussolini, 3 Oct. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

⁸⁵³ Bongiorno, *Fascist Italy and the disarmament question*, p.178

save the Conference.’⁸⁵⁴ Now that Grandi had been removed from his post, his strategy had started to have some effects: on this matter, Italy seemed to have become the ‘decisive weight’ of European diplomacy.

What emerges from analysing Italy’s behaviour in relation to the disarmament question is that the country was seriously interested in the political issues debated under the auspices of the League. Significant practical concerns led Italy’s attitude towards disarmament. The Italian government endorsed disarmament as a way to decrease military expenditures in a moment of financial hardship, even though any cut clearly had to comply with its national interests. The Fascist regime also pushed for an agreement on disarmament as a way of obtaining parity with France, and control on Germany’s rearmament. Moreover, Italy’s participation in disarmament discussions guaranteed the possibility of preventing the damage of its interests which could have derived from its absence. This conduct was not peculiar to the Fascist regime. It was the behaviour of a sovereign state and in this sense Italy’s attitude towards the Conference, and the LoN principles it embodied, was not different from those of the other, democratic, countries.

Towards Italy’s Withdrawal from the League

The practical failure of the Disarmament Conference by 1934, which came after that of the World Economic and Monetary Conference in 1933, left the international community with the impression that the League was incapable of providing a successful forum where challenges to security could be solved collectively. The

⁸⁵⁴ Trans. “*Conversazioni a cinque*”, report by Aloisi, 13 Dec. 1932, SdN b.166, ASMAE

member states left these conferences with the belief that all important issues could only be seriously discussed and solved through more established patterns of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. As a result, the reason for the League's existence started to be seriously questioned. The negative outcomes of these conferences, in fact, were the latest of a series of factors marking the decline of the institution, that reflected the declining ability of its member states to cooperate for the prevention of war. In fact, while discussing disarmament in Europe, the League had also proven unable to react efficiently to the Japanese invasion of the Manchurian region of China in September 1931, a clear violation of the Covenant. Moreover, in 1933 Japan, first, and Germany, after, had left the League. The disillusionment with large-scale international cooperation and the inability of this to deliver the results that the regime had hoped for, led to a decreased interest of the Italian state in the organization. The reaction of the Fascist regime to the decline of the League was to seek alternative ways to achieve those foreign-policy goals that Italy had originally entrusted to the Geneva-based institution. The Four-Power Pact and the military invasion of Ethiopia were two such alternatives.

The failure of the Disarmament Conference from its first stages in dealing with the country's security concerns pushed Mussolini to conceive an alternative to the League: the Four-Power Pact.⁸⁵⁵ The first mention of the idea of creating a directorate of Great Powers to deal with Europe's problems emerged in October 1932 during Mussolini's speech in Turin. On this occasion, the Italian Prime Minister stressed that,

⁸⁵⁵ For a history of the Four-Power Pact see: Giordano, G., *Storia Diplomatica del Patto a Quattro* (Milan, 2000) and Jarausch, K.H., *The Four Power Pact 1933* (Madison, WI, 1965)

even though Italy would remain a member of the organization, the League was too universalistic.⁸⁵⁶ He stated that:

If tomorrow... the necessary and sufficient conditions for a cooperation between the four Western Great Powers would be met, Europe would be calm from a political point of view and, maybe, the economic crisis afflicting us would begin to draw to a close.⁸⁵⁷

Mussolini's proposal was a pact between Italy, France, Britain and Germany, binding these countries: to cooperate for the maintenance of peace; to accept and carry out the principle of treaty revision within the framework of the League; to permit Germany to reach effective equality of rights, by stages; and to act together in all economic and political affairs, and, Mussolini hoped, also in the colonial sphere.⁸⁵⁸ The agreement provided for the discussion within the Pact of all disarmament matters left unsolved by the Disarmament Conference, as well as solutions for the economic restoration of Europe.⁸⁵⁹ It also established Italy's status as a Great Power. Mussolini's project was officially presented to Ramsay MacDonald and John Simon on their way to Rome on 18 March 1933.⁸⁶⁰ An amended and reworked version was agreed by the four states in Rome on 7 June 1933 and officially signed on 15 July.⁸⁶¹

Despite the fact that the Pact claimed to act 'within the framework of the League of Nations', the very purpose of this project was to solve European problems within the

⁸⁵⁶ *Al Popolo di Torino* (23 Oct. 1932), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXV, p.143

⁸⁵⁷ Trans. in *Al Popolo di Torino* (23 Oct. 1932), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXV, p.143

⁸⁵⁸ Walters, pp.544-545. The different drafts of the Pact can be found in Jarausch, *The Four Power Pact 1933*, pp.230-241

⁸⁵⁹ Articles 3 and 4 of the Pact, in Giordano, *Storia Diplomatica del Patto a Quattro*, p.194

⁸⁶⁰ Jarausch, *op. cit.*, p.54

⁸⁶¹ Jarausch, *op. cit.*, p.185. However, the Pact was not ratified by France before Germany's withdrawal from the League in October 1933, hence it never went into effect.

Great Powers and outside what was perceived as the inefficiency of the LoN.⁸⁶² In Mussolini's desires, the Great Powers would deal with the direction of Europe's future, prevent an expensive arms race, settle disputes before they became war, and favour the achievement of Italy's foreign-policy goals even beyond Europe. It was the alternative to the League of Nations.⁸⁶³ It exemplified a return to bilateral negotiations in European diplomacy and a step back from collective to old-style diplomacy. The Four-Power Pact had a revisionist aim and Mussolini saw it as the logical and necessary development of the Locarno Treaties.⁸⁶⁴ It was a *Realpolitik* effort to promote a revision of the Peace Treaties outside the League and Mussolini intended to use it to satisfy his dreams of an African empire.⁸⁶⁵

The Four-Power Pact was conceived as an alternative forum to the League, where Italy could discuss security concerns and pursue its colonial desires within an old-style alliance. Nevertheless, Mussolini tried to sell it as compatible with and respectful of the League and its values. Speaking to the Italian Senate in June 1933, the Italian Prime Minister claimed that the Four-Power Pact,

refers to all principles consecrated in the Pact of the League of Nations and in the pacts which followed it...It aims to re-establish the equilibrium between all articles of the Covenant, which is necessary if we want to do a constructive and long-lasting work.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶² Cit. from Article 1 of the Pact. Bongiorno, *Fascist Italy and the disarmament question*, p.185

⁸⁶³ Baer, G.W., *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), p.26; Jarausch, *op. cit.*, p.50

⁸⁶⁴ *Il Patto a Quattro* (Speech to the Italian Senate, 7 June 1933), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXV, p.240

⁸⁶⁵ Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, pp.80-81

⁸⁶⁶ Trans. *Il Patto a Quattro* (Speech to the Italian Senate, 7 June 1933), in *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, vol. XXV, p.241

Mussolini stated also that the Pact, which was to be enacted within the LoN framework, was in agreement with the spirit of peace of the League. He claimed that the Four Powers could only facilitate the work of the institution.⁸⁶⁷ One month later, however, acknowledging the inconclusiveness of both the Disarmament and the World Economic Conferences, Mussolini wrote that luckily there was the Four-Power Pact, thanks to which there was already a sense of *détente* in all Europe and even the first signs of economic recovery. He argued that the Pact had foreseen the possible failure of the two conferences and that decision-making was only efficient when made by the most relevant states, legitimizing further the agreement. He concluded by suggesting that for some years there should be an embargo on conferences.⁸⁶⁸

This rhetorical attempt to reconcile the Four-Power Pact with the League shows that even if the League was in decline, Mussolini continued to take it into account as an institution to which any international initiative had to relate. The League could not be ignored. However, the Four-Power Pact was evidence that a first breach between Fascist Italy and the League had occurred. The Pact revealed that despite the solidarity with the League and the apparent continuity in Italy's cooperative attitude, in autumn 1932 Mussolini was already sufficiently unhappy with collective diplomacy within the League to consider alternatives to it. However, the withdrawal of Germany from the League on 14 October 1933 marked not only the end of the Disarmament Conference but also of the Four-Power Pact, bringing to an end Mussolini's active efforts to pursue Italy's interests in a multilateral way.

⁸⁶⁷ Mussolini in untitled and undated (but 1933) document, stamped as document n. 074739 to 074744, in SPD, CR, b.31, ACS

⁸⁶⁸ 'Fallimento della Conferenza di Londra' in Mussolini, B., *La Politica Estera* (Rome, 1937), pp.215-219

The inability of Italy to fulfil its colonial claims first through the League and then through the Four-Power Pact, confirmed to Mussolini that the only way to fulfil his colonial desires was by unilateral action.⁸⁶⁹ The negative impact of the economic depression made the obtaining of colonies more urgent. In fact, there was the popular belief that a territorial expansion could help the economy to recover.⁸⁷⁰ In particular, colonies were seen as a solution to the economic weaknesses of the country: scarce raw materials and a growing population. Following years of unsuccessful diplomatic attempts to obtain the approval of Britain and France for its colonial desires and after the failure of conference diplomacy, Italy prepared for military action in Ethiopia, a fellow League member, which had already been object of Italian colonialist aspirations during the liberal period.⁸⁷¹ The Italian conduct during the Ethiopian crisis reveals that Italy actively decided to go against the League's Covenant, but not before attempting to settle the matter, through bilateral negotiations with the Great Powers and within the League. Moreover, once Ethiopia was conquered, Italy sought the recognition of this conquest in Geneva. Therefore, before, during and after the Italo-Ethiopian conflict Italy relied on the League for the legitimization of its foreign policy.

The Italian-Ethiopian dispute began in December 1934, when Italy used the excuse of a frontier quarrel at the oasis of Wal-Wal to violate Ethiopia's sovereignty. Ethiopia, fearing a military escalation, immediately tried to bring the question to the attention of the League. However, Italy, while preparing for military action, managed to keep the LoN Council out of the matter by suggesting a bilateral procedure of conciliation

⁸⁶⁹ Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, pp.27-28

⁸⁷⁰ The view was maintained by the Italian government also after the conquest of Ethiopia, which was believed had acted as stimulus to production. Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, p.155

⁸⁷¹ Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, pp.27-28

as an alternative to a League settlement.⁸⁷² As we have seen with Theodoli in Chapter 3, for the whole length of 1935, Italy debated the Ethiopian issue in bilateral negotiations with France and Britain, through which Mussolini hoped to obtain the consent to his colonial conquest.⁸⁷³ France and Britain, as neighbours of Italy in East Africa, also welcomed the possibility of solving the problem outside Geneva.⁸⁷⁴ The question was fully debated at the Council only in September 1935. On this occasion, Italy tried to justify its action by establishing itself as a civilising country and presenting Ethiopia as barbarous and based on slavery, and hence unworthy to remain a member of the League.⁸⁷⁵ Thus, Italy attempted to use the League's antislavery agenda as a means to legitimise the invasion of Ethiopia.⁸⁷⁶ The Italian military invasion of Ethiopia started on 3 October 1935 based on the preliminary plans commissioned by Mussolini to General Emilio De Bono already at the end of 1932.⁸⁷⁷

The military occupation of Ethiopia by Italian troops was not like the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931. On that occasion the geographical distance and the limited interest of a Eurocentric League made the reaction of the institution weak. The Ethiopian crisis was different: it involved a European power, and Ethiopia neighboured French and British colonial territories. The attack against Ethiopia not only violated the values and terms of the League's membership, but was also an instance of a clash between liberal internationalism, nationalism and imperialism involving a European country. These factors brought the issue to the centre of public

⁸⁷² Costa Bona, pp.130-132; Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, pp.87-88; 106-108

⁸⁷³ Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, pp.115-121; Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, pp.80; 88-90

⁸⁷⁴ Walters, p.628

⁸⁷⁵ Costa Bona, pp.136; Walters, pp.641-643

⁸⁷⁶ See Ribí A., 'Humanitarian imperialism: the politics of anti-slavery activism in the interwar years' (Thesis (D.Phil.), University of Oxford, 2008)

⁸⁷⁷ Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, pp.101-102

opinion, which feared that if the Covenant could be violated, unpunished, in Africa, it was not going to safeguard security in Europe.⁸⁷⁸ However, the League did not prove much more effective than in the Manchurian case. From the beginning, the members of the League found it difficult to reach an agreement on how to react to the Italian aggression. Moreover, once an agreement on sanctions and an arms embargo was reached, the impact and implementation of these measures was only partial.⁸⁷⁹ These were more efficient in fuelling the anti-League rhetoric of the regime, which, in protest, withdrew the Italian delegation from Geneva.

At the same time, Britain and France, instead of upholding the LoN Covenant, began to pursue a policy of appeasement towards Italy, which led to the Hoare-Laval Plan in December 1935.⁸⁸⁰ This attitude was driven by the desire to find a way to please Italy in order to keep it in the League and away from an increasingly aggressive Germany.⁸⁸¹ The Hoare-Laval Plan was born from these concerns. The plan provided for the cession of extensive territories from Ethiopia to Italy, in exchange for an outlet to the sea; and the establishment of a 'zone of economic expansion and settlement reserved to Italy' in the southern half of Ethiopia, even though the area would remain nominally under Ethiopian sovereignty and administration.⁸⁸² However, before Mussolini could reject it, it was made public and received the outraged reaction of the world public opinion, which had mobilised in mass against the Italian attack on Ethiopia. Pleasing Italy, in fact, would have meant some sort of recognition of the Italian annexation of Ethiopia. While the Great Powers considered giving up an

⁸⁷⁸ Walters, p.635

⁸⁷⁹ Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, pp.125-126

⁸⁸⁰ Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War*, p.vii

⁸⁸¹ Walters, p.678; Goldman, A.L., 'Sir Robert Vansittart's Search for Italian Cooperation against Hitler, 1933-36' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Jul., 1974), pp.93-130

⁸⁸² Walters, p.669; Burgwyn, *Italian foreign policy in the interwar period*, pp.128-129

uncivilised African state preferable to souring relations with Italy, they still had to find a way to conciliate such a clear violation of the Covenant with the existence of the League. Moreover these conciliatory efforts, once revealed, contributed only to discredit the League without satisfying Mussolini, who continued with his colonial plans.⁸⁸³ The behaviour of the Great Powers and the League's inability to deal with the matter prompted wide indignation in public opinion and weakened further the credibility of the institution.

Once Mussolini announced the annexation of Ethiopia to the Italian Empire on 9 May 1936, the Fascist government tried to have the League recognise it. For the Fascist regime, this recognition was the condition on which its full return to the activities of the organization depended. Italy demanded that the Great Powers refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of the presence of an Ethiopian delegation at the League's Assembly, and in doing so acknowledged Italy's sovereignty over the newly-acquired territory. For this purpose, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Fascist government made use of the Italian Deputy Secretary-General of the League, Massimo Pilotti, with the complicity of Fascist-friendly Secretary-General Avenol.⁸⁸⁴ The negotiations between Italy, the League and the Great Powers over the recognition of the Empire show how, even after having violated the norms and the spirit of the League, Fascist Italy was still interested in obtaining the approval of Geneva. In the pursuit of it, Italy, in fact, remained a member of the organization for 19 months after the proclamation of the Empire.

⁸⁸³ Baer, G.W., *Test Case. Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations* (Stanford, CA, 1976), p.xiv

⁸⁸⁴ Barros, *Betrayal from within*, pp.127,134-140

Why did Italy remain in the League for so long? And why did it finally decide to withdraw? One of the most suggestive answers to these questions emerges from the diary of Ciano, who had become Foreign Minister in June 1936. According to Ciano, the Fascist government believed that the eventuality of the League's recognition of the Empire was not remote. It was not seen as a utopian idea. In August 1937 the Italian Foreign Minister still considered it a possibility.⁸⁸⁵ The recognition was instrumental to Italy's return to the LoN Council and Assembly as a fully active member, as well as to be acknowledged once again as an essential European power, belonging to a respectable international community. In order to increase Italy's chances, in preparation for the Council's meeting in September 1937, where the matter was to be discussed, Ciano decided to delay the shipping of further materials and troops to Spain to avoid offering further arguments to the opponents to the recognition of the annexation of Ethiopia.⁸⁸⁶ In this period, in fact, the Fascist regime supported the Spanish Nationalists, led by General Francisco Franco, fighting against the democratically elected Republican government, with troops and weapons.⁸⁸⁷ Even though this delay was just symbolic, it shows that Fascist Italy cared about obtaining the approval of Geneva, which, however, did not eventuate.

Surely the failed attempt to have the Empire recognized had a strong impact on the Fascist government's decision about the future of the Italian membership.⁸⁸⁸ However, what emerges from Ciano's diary is that a final decision on the matter was not taken until mid-October 1937. He first mentioned that Italy would withdraw from the League on 25 October 1937, five days after Mussolini had received from Berlin

⁸⁸⁵ 30 Agosto 1937, Ciano, G., *Diario 1937-1943* (Milan, 1980), p.30

⁸⁸⁶ 3 Settembre 1937, Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, p.33

⁸⁸⁷ For an analysis of the Italian participation to the Spanish Civil War see: Coverdale, J.F., *I Fascisti Italiani alla Guerra di Spagna* (Rome: Bari, 1977)

⁸⁸⁸ Costa Bona, p.153

the proposal to join the Anti-Comintern Pact, already uniting Nazi Germany and Japan against communism.⁸⁸⁹ Mussolini's decision finally to withdraw from the organization seemed an act of self-confidence, following the signing of this agreement on 6 November 1937, a first step to the Pact of Steel. Ciano proudly wrote that 'Italy has broken isolation: it is now at the centre of the most formidable political and military combination which ever existed.'⁸⁹⁰ With Italy no longer isolated from the international community, there was no longer the need to maintain a half-membership of the League. The hypothesis that the Anti-Comintern Pact, rather than the failed recognition, was the ultimate reason behind Mussolini's choice would be supported by the fact that despite the withdrawal, Italy remained actively involved in bilateral negotiations with France and Britain trying to obtain the recognition of the Empire.⁸⁹¹

Italy's withdrawal from the League did not come as a sudden move. We have seen that a first step in Italy's rupture from the organization was the creation of the Four-Power Pact in 1933. This was followed in 1935 by the military attack on a fellow member state, when the tension between Fascist Italy and the League reached a peak. However, the final decision leading to the termination of the Italian membership emerged only in the last months of 1937. While both the failed bid for the League's recognition of the Empire and the creation of the new alliance with Germany and Japan were important elements, there is more to be analysed in relation to the decision-making in the last months of the Italian membership. In particular, while it is evident that Germany played an active role in convincing Mussolini to withdraw, the

⁸⁸⁹ 25 Ottobre 1937, Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, p.49

⁸⁹⁰ 6 Novembre 1937, Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, p.54

⁸⁹¹ See for instance 1 and 4 Febbraio 1938, in Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, pp.92,94

benefits for Germany of Italy's exit from the League are clear, but those for Italy are not. Further investigation of the matter, which would shed new light on the situation, is however beyond the scope of this thesis.

This chapter presented various dimensions of Italy's interest in the League. Italy's membership of the League was motivated by the desire to be recognised as a Great Power and to obtain the legitimisation of the Fascist regime from the international community. However, being active and present at the League was not just a matter of international prestige. Particularly during Grandi's period, it was believed that a cooperative attitude in Geneva would lead to the achievement through diplomacy of Italy's foreign-policy goals, in particular the colonial ones. Italy had also practical concerns to which the League could offer a solution. As we have seen, Italy's commitment to disarmament was not just an occasion for 'international exhibitionism', but was also led by security considerations and the desire to make economic savings. This chapter revealed that Italy's foreign policy towards the League was subtler than normally thought: the Fascist regime did not ignore the organization, nor did it try to undermine it from within. Instead it made active use of it to promote its own national interests, as all other members did.

While partially confirming some of Costa Bona's conclusions, this chapter presents the key discovery that Italy was not just a present member of the League, but by supporting the creation of the Rome-based international institutes, the Fascist regime actively appropriated the language of the League and promoted new ways of doing international cooperation. This too was part of Italy's 'international exhibitionism', aiming at gains in international status and practical advantages. This chapter revealed

the seductive capacity of the Fascist Italy, whose membership of the League was useful not just to Italy's interests, but also to the legitimization of the League. When it started to be clear that the institution was in decline and that Italy's foreign-policy goals could not be achieved through it, the interest in the League decreased and Mussolini undertook alternative ways of pursuing his goals. The rupture with the League, which reached its peak with the Ethiopian crisis, had started with the disappointment with conference diplomacy and Grandi's international strategy. The Ethiopian crisis, while embodying an important breaking point for the credibility of the League, seen from the perspective of the Italian membership was neither the beginning of the rupture with the organization nor the end of its relationship with it. As we have seen, it took 19 months to Italy to withdraw from the League after the annexation of Ethiopia. While the reasons behind this 'delay' need further examination, it is clear that the League was relevant for Italy's foreign policy in the interwar years. The Italian membership of the League was far more rich and complex than described so far in the literature and its unexpected impact on Italy's post-1945 international relations will be analysed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: The ‘Internationalisation’ of the Italians in the League

It was the evening of 11 December 1937 when Mussolini announced that a historical decision had been taken: the withdrawal from the League of Nations. In his speech to the Italian population, Mussolini presented the choice as the inevitable consequence of the refusal of the League to compensate Italy with the recognition of the annexation of Ethiopia to the Italian Empire after strangling its economy with sanctions.⁸⁹² Since Mussolini came to power, threats to withdraw from the League had been numerous, but were never realized. However, what Mussolini perceived as the aloof attitude and lack of understanding shown by France and Britain during the Ethiopian crisis, along with the imposition of sanctions, the increasing inefficacy of the League, and the changing focus of Italy’s foreign policy finally brought about the withdrawal from Geneva in December 1937.

This chapter investigates the reactions to the withdrawal of the Italians working for the League. It considers whether after leaving Geneva, they remained involved in international activities or returned to Italy as if nothing had happened. The chapter analyses the influences of the League’s environment on the Italian civil servants in the League, questioning whether there were any ‘true’ internationalists among them. It examines the impact of the League’s internationalism on their careers and personal lives after Geneva. It investigates how internationalism influenced them and in which direction. This chapter also considers whether, in the Italian case, there was continuity in international cooperation between the interwar and the post-1945 period.

⁸⁹² Mussolini Speech on 11 December 1937 (anno XVI), Agenzia Stefani, n.28 in Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (1937-1939) (hereafter PCM), b. 15.1.3492, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Italy (hereafter ACS)

The first part of this chapter presents an overview of the practical consequences of this withdrawal on the Italians working for the LoN Secretariat and associated-bodies. The second part explores the impact of internationalism on three civil servants working at the League when Italy left the organization: Pietro Stoppani, Director of the Economic Relations Section; Massimo Pilotti, Deputy Secretary-General; and Alberto Berio, the assistant to Pilotti and a diplomat.

Italy's Withdrawal: the Reactions of the Italians in the League

Following the official communication of Italy's withdrawal from the League and from the ILO, the Fascist regime issued a directive ordering all Italians employed by these organizations to resign from their posts.⁸⁹³ The order of Rome was extended to all Italian members of League's committees. Mussolini was committed to eliminate any degree of Italian presence in international cooperation. What was the response of the Italian civil servants to the withdrawal and to Rome's requests?

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the interest of the Italian government in the League decreased starting in late 1932. The unsatisfactory outcome of the Disarmament Conference together with the disappointment due to the League's inability to fulfil Italy's colonial desires, pushed the Fascist regime away from international diplomatic channels, encouraged unilateral action, and ultimately led to

⁸⁹³ Galeazzo Ciano to League of Nations' Secretariat, 11 Dec.1937, in *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (hereafter DDI), Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.7, doc.688; Ciano to International Labour Organization's Secretariat, 15 Dec. 1937, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.7, doc.707; folder '*Uscita dell'Italia dalla Società delle Nazioni*', PCM, b. 15.1.3492, ACS

the Ethiopian war (1935-1936). During the crisis, Italy decided not to attend the Council and the Assembly of the League to express disapproval for how the institution was (mis-)treating the case. The impact on the LoN Secretariat of the declining interest of the Fascist regime, and the increasing tension in the relationship with the League was that from 1934 Italian officials whose contracts were due to come to a natural end were not replaced with new Italian employees. This happened even though the Secretariat explicitly asked the Italian government to put forward some candidates.⁸⁹⁴ Following this practice, Italy lost its presence in the Legal Section in 1934, in the Political Section in November 1936, in the Information Section, after the death of Giuseppe Bruccoleri in March 1937, and the directorship of the Mandates Section subsequent to Catastini's reaching retirement age in November 1935. This lack of substitutions, adding to a general reduction of personnel promoted by the League due to financial constraints, led in December 1937 to Italy having only seven nationals in the First Division, 14 in the Second Division (administrative staff) and eight in the Third Division (manual workers).⁸⁹⁵ Mussolini's decreasing interest in the League was reflected in the composition of the LoN Secretariat.

There were different reactions to Rome's orders to leave Geneva among the Italians in the League. In the First Division, Fascist sympathisers or supporters, such as Alberto Berio (Office of the Deputy Secretary-General), Lieutenant Giulio Fier (Air Subcommittee, Disarmament Section), Massimo Pilotti (Deputy Secretary-General) and Ugo Theodoli (Secretary of the Opium Central Board) promptly resigned with a letter

⁸⁹⁴ Berio to Ministero degli Affari Esteri (MAE), 18 Jan. 1937 in Società delle Nazioni (hereafter SdN) b.11, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome, Italy (hereafter ASMAE)

⁸⁹⁵ League of Nations, *Staff List of the Secretariat, October 1937* (Geneva, 1937). Vito Catastini appears in the October list but he left the League on 30 November 1937 at the end of his expert's contract, being unaffected by the withdrawal.

to Secretary-General Joseph Avenol the day after.⁸⁹⁶ Giuseppe (Ippolito) Tani (Economic Relations Section) and Emilio Pampana (Health Section) duly resigned in the following days.⁸⁹⁷ The only official of the First Division to refuse to leave the League was Pietro Stoppani, Director of the Economic Relations Section since 1931. His exceptional story will be analysed in detail later in this chapter.

The Italians leaving the First Division immediately found an alternative employment thanks to the solicitude of the Italian Foreign Ministry. Mussolini had ordered ‘not to create victims’ from the Italian withdrawal, making sure that those who had supported their government by resigning from the League would be given a satisfactory alternative.⁸⁹⁸ Some returned to the ministry from which they were on leave: Berio went back to the Foreign Ministry, to become counsellor at the Italian Embassy in Ankara.⁸⁹⁹ Tani returned to the Ministry of Finance, even though he aspired to a position at *Confindustria* (Confederation of Industrials) and asked the Foreign Ministry for a recommendation.⁹⁰⁰ Pilotti, who had never formally relinquished his post as Judge at the Court of Appeal, went back to the Ministry of Justice. Lieutenant Fier, who had been recalled to active service to take up his position at the League, was proposed for a decoration or an honorary post to show the government’s appreciation for his loyalty.⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁶ Report by Renato Bova Scoppa, 31 Dec. 1937, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁸⁹⁷ However, Pampana left the League only in April 1938, with his contract terminated officially on 13 June 1938. The additional months were due to the period of notice. Personal file ‘Emilio Pampana’, Personnel Office, S.848, League of Nations (LoN) Archives, Geneva, Switzerland

⁸⁹⁸ Report on Tommaso Cortis, undated; Galeazzo Ciano to Giuseppe Bottai, 3 Feb. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁸⁹⁹ *Ambasciate e Legazioni del Regno d’Italia all’Estero* in DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.8, p.644

⁹⁰⁰ Ciano to Carlo Thaon de Revel, 12 Mar. 1938; Alberto Pirelli to Leonardo Vitetti (MAE), 27 May 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹⁰¹ Bova Scoppa to Minister Foreign Affairs, 23 Dec. 1937, SdN b.16, ASMAE

Both Ugo Theodoli and Pampana, after going back to Rome in compliance with the regime's requests, found themselves involved again in international cooperation after 1945. In 1947, Ugo Theodoli, who spent the war years in Lisbon, became Secretary General of the Italian branch of the International Refugee Organization, an agency of the freshly born United Nations Organization (UNO). His appointment was suggested by the British Foreign Office, where the Permanent Under-Secretary of State remembered him from his League years.⁹⁰² Pampana, on the other hand, after Geneva spent most of his time at the Malaria institute in Rome, and in 1943, was appointed Director of the Health and Relief Bureau of the League of Red Cross Societies in Geneva.⁹⁰³ From 1947 to 1959 he was the director of the malaria division of the World Health Organization, a UN agency.⁹⁰⁴ After the Second World War, Pampana became one of the most internationally-renowned malariologists, and his textbook on the eradication of malaria one of the most relevant in the field.⁹⁰⁵ His career after the League surely shows a strong commitment to humanitarian internationalism.

Unlike their colleagues in the First Division, lower-ranking Italians engaged in administrative or manual jobs at the League, were less confident that their proven loyalty to the regime would secure them a bright future in Italy. They were often immigrants already in Switzerland and their choice of joining the League was motivated by a pressing need for employment rather than ideology. So were their decisions following Italy's withdrawal. They could either choose to leave their well-

⁹⁰² It is not clear if this was Orme Sargent or William Strang. Ugo Theodoli to Livio Theodoli, 18 Nov. 1947, Carte Luca Pietromarchi (Personal papers), sez.2 (correspondence), 'Ugo Theodoli' Archivio Storico della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, Turin, Italy (hereafter TFE)

⁹⁰³ Report 'Funzionari Gruppo A', undated, SdN b.16, ASMAE; 'E. Pampana: 40 years against Malaria' in *World Health*, 13, n.2 (1960), pp.26-29; Einaudi, L., *Diario dell'esilio, 1943-1944* (Turin, 1997), p.145

⁹⁰⁴ 'Pampana, Emilio J.' in Lee, K. and Lang, J. (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of the World Health Organization* (Lanham, MD, 2013), 2nd ed., p.277

⁹⁰⁵ Pampana, E., *A Textbook of Malaria Eradication* (London: New York, 1963)

paid jobs and return to their country, as the regime requested, or attempt to quickly find another post in Switzerland, which would allow them to maintain their work permits. In 1937 the Italian economy was in recession. The employees of the Second and Third Divisions had lower job prospects than their colleagues in the First Division. Thus, practical concerns rather than loyalty to the Fascist regime played an important role in determining their choices after Italy left the League.

Some of them wrote back to Rome asking explicitly for a new employment in exchange for complying with the directive. Their call was heard in Rome, where the Foreign Ministry embarked on a mission to reinstate former LoN employees, sympathetic to Fascism, into different Italian administrative bodies.⁹⁰⁶ Many ended up at the newly created *Istituto per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero*.⁹⁰⁷ In all cases, the Foreign Ministry did its best to guarantee approximately the same remuneration as a way of showing to the Italians who remained in Geneva that there were no disadvantages to working for the Fascist government.⁹⁰⁸ Yet, some Italians in the lower divisions decided to oppose the directive from Rome. Most of them were workers with close family ties to Geneva and who, despite their nationality, had few connections to Italy.⁹⁰⁹ This was especially pronounced in the case of women, like Berthe Albanesi, a shorthand typist, who became Italian by marriage and who wrote to the Italian authorities explaining that she knew nothing of the country of her husband, not even the language, and that therefore saw no point in giving up her job.⁹¹⁰ Others were not in the economic position to leave their employment, as they

⁹⁰⁶ Ciano to Bottai, 3 Feb. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹⁰⁷ *Telespresso* n.216819, 3 Jun. 1939, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹⁰⁸ 'Personale italiano dimissionario dalla Lega' by Bova Scoppa, 11 Apr.1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹⁰⁹ Ernesto Ottavio Charrère to Bova Scoppa, 30 Dec. 1937; Elena Zanoni to Bova Scoppa, 30 Dec. 1937, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹¹⁰ Berthe Albanesi to Italian Consul, 26 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

had serious family or health problems. This was the case of Amedée Cantini but also of Armand Pilon, who then became a naturalised Swiss in 1939.⁹¹¹ These circumstances were recognised by Renato Bova Scoppa, Italian liaison officer in Geneva, whose recommendation to Rome was to not insist on their resignation.⁹¹²

There were also Italians who left the League without being asked to do so. This was the case of Carlo Broggi, architect and general director of the construction works for the new LoN building, and Carlo Beltramo, the manager of the League's bar and restaurant.⁹¹³ Neither was employed by the League, but rather, worked for the institution through a private contract. As such, Rome did not expect them to leave.

Nevertheless, they decided to do so, partially, on the basis of their personal ideological convictions and partially with the hope to receive a reward from the Italian government for their decision.

The order to leave Geneva was not limited to Italian civil servants but was also directed to (and obeyed by) all those experts and national representatives who were part of the League's committees, such as Angelo Di Nola at the Economic Committee and Alberto Theodoli at the Permanent Mandates Commission. The directive was valid also for those employed in the institutions related to the League, such as the ILO. In this organization, where the level of politicization was higher, the degree of disobedience of Italian civil servants was greater than at the League. Italian officials in the ILO included prominent members of the local anti-Fascist groups, such as the socialist Olindo Gorni and the republican Manlio Sancisi. Together with Elena

⁹¹¹ Armand Pilon to Italian Consul, 23 Dec. 1937; Amedée Cantini to Italian Consul, undated, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹¹² Report by Bova Scoppa to Vitetti, 2(or 11) Feb. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹¹³ Carlo Broggi to Ciano, 15 Dec. 1937; Communication of Giuseppe Bastianini to MAE, undated, SdN b.16, ASMAE

Chiostergi, wife of anti-Fascist Giuseppe Chiostergi, they refused to resign. Overall, the response of the Italian civil servants to Mussolini's order was positive and only a small number of them remained in Geneva. Among them was Pietro Stoppani.

The Internationalist: Pietro Stoppani



Pietro Stoppani

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Pietro Angelo Stoppani (1879-1968), Director of the Economic Relations Section from 1931, was the only official of the LoN First Division not to resign following Rome's orders. Stoppani was born on 6 March 1879, in Milan. We do not know much

about his personal life, but it is clear that in his youth he migrated to the United States and returned in 1915 to fight as a volunteer for Italy in the First World War.⁹¹⁴ After the conflict, he participated in the Paris Peace Conference as part of the Italian delegation and worked for the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Budapest (1919-1922).⁹¹⁵ On 18 February 1923, Stoppani joined the Economic and Financial Section of the League as Member of Section and in January 1929 he was promoted Chief of Section.⁹¹⁶ Stoppani became Director of the Economic Relations Section of the League in 1931, after Arthur Salter resigned from the League and when, due to British pressure, the Section was split into two, with the British Alexander Loveday leading the newly created Financial Section and Economic Intelligence Service.⁹¹⁷

Stoppani's reaction to the request of the Fascist regime to leave his post in December 1937 can be found in his letter to Mussolini dated 4 January 1938.⁹¹⁸ Stoppani stressed his determination not to move from Geneva. He justified his decision to maintain his job at the League based on the fact that his work was purely technical and that, if he remained there, the importance and significance of Mussolini's decision to withdraw from the League would not be diminished. Moreover, Stoppani, who had not been in Italy for 30 years and was not a member of the Fascist Party, expressed his belief that he had no reasonable chances to find an equivalent post in Italy, which would allow him to satisfy his duties towards his family. Stoppani

⁹¹⁴ Pietro Stoppani to Benito Mussolini, 4 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹¹⁵ Stoppani to Paulucci, 19 Aug. 1928 in *Corrispondenza Ginevra* (1927-32), 'Pietro Stoppani' b.66, Personal Papers of Giacomo Paulucci di Calboli Barone (hereafter GPdC), Archivio di Stato di Forlì, Italy (hereafter ASF); '*Promemoria relativo al Dottor Pietro Stoppani*', part of the correspondence relative to the *Centro di Studi per la Ricostruzione Italiana*, Nov. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi (Personal papers), sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹¹⁶ Employment Record, Personal file 'Pietro Stoppani', Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

⁹¹⁷ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, pp.34-35

⁹¹⁸ Stoppani to Mussolini, 4 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

continued by suggesting that, since he was used ‘to think and act in complete independence’ and he had been shaped by the Geneva environment for 20 years, despite his unshakeable love for Italy, he ‘could be of some use only in an international environment.’⁹¹⁹ The tone of Stoppani’s letter was cordial, but not submissive. In the end, the facts did not change: he had no intention of leaving the League.

The reasons behind Stoppani’s opposition can be found in several elements, which only partially emerged from his letter to Mussolini. In Geneva, Stoppani was a well-respected international civil servant with a network of friends and a well-paid job. In Italy, Stoppani, who had never been a fervent Fascist and had lived abroad for many years, was a nobody. His social status and prestige in Italy would have been much lower and, more practically, he would have encountered difficulties in obtaining a new employment. In December 1937, Stoppani was 58 years old and only two years away (March 1939) from a generous retirement pension.⁹²⁰ The fact that this date was so close was a strong incentive for Stoppani to remain. Another motivation was his genuine interest in his work, proven by the fact that he stayed at the League, working as an economic expert until October 1939, months after his official retirement date. Stoppani had developed an attachment to the League and its environment. This served as a safety net for Stoppani, who felt confident enough about the support of his colleagues and the League to defy Mussolini’s orders.

While at the League, Stoppani had demonstrated a strong commitment to the economic mission of the institution. He had been involved in several key projects,

⁹¹⁹ Trans. Stoppani to Mussolini, 4 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹²⁰ Joseph Avenol to Stoppani, 11 Nov. 1937, Personal file ‘Pietro Stoppani’, Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

including the organization of the two most important economic conferences of the time: the World Economic Conference in Geneva in 1927 and the World Economic and Financial Conference in London in 1933.⁹²¹ Stoppani did not only limit himself to his duties, but also actively promoted free trade initiatives, such as the abolition of customs restrictions and the development of equal trade conditions among nations.⁹²² He was also one of the supporters of a tariff truce in 1933.⁹²³ Moreover, Stoppani played a key role in developing the notion of unconditional ‘most-favoured-nation’ status, and in convincing the French about it. After the Italo-Ethiopian crisis shook the League, Stoppani developed a rescue project for the international economy and, with it, of the political relations. He wanted the League to promote an international economic agreement between the USA, Britain, France, Italy and Germany, based on the stabilization of currencies and the relaxation or abolition of exchange controls and quotas.⁹²⁴ While not as assertive in his reports and statements as his colleague from the Financial Section, Loveday, Stoppani nevertheless showed cleverness and a genuine attachment to his work and to economic internationalism.

Stoppani was well respected at the League. His chief for many years, Arthur Salter, held him in high regard as ‘an indispensable member of the Secretariat.’⁹²⁵ Once he decided to leave his post as Director of Section, Salter favoured Stoppani taking his place. In 1930, the French Delegation to the League considered Stoppani ‘*un Italien de mérite*’ to which Salter could have left the lead of the Section if it wasn’t for British pressure to have a British Director and, the general fear of giving an excessive

⁹²¹ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, pp.88-89; 111-112

⁹²² Augé-Laribé, M., *La Politique Agricole de la France de 1880 à 1940* (Paris, 1950), p.407

⁹²³ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, pp.103-105

⁹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.148-151; folder “Geneva 1936-Stoppani’s crusade’ in T188/148, in the National Archives, Kew, London, UK (hereafter TNA)

⁹²⁵ Arthur Salter to Secretary General, 9 Jan. 1930, Personal file ‘Pietro Stoppani’, Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

preponderance to Italy in the highest posts at the Secretariat.⁹²⁶ The fact that Stoppani was a capable employee is confirmed also by Salvador De Madariaga, Director of the Disarmament Section in 1927, who described Stoppani as ‘the ablest of the Italians at the League’s Secretariat.’⁹²⁷ Therefore, in the international environment of Geneva, Stoppani felt at ease, investigating issues of his interest, and had found personal recognition.

However, before the break in relations in 1937, Stoppani had also enjoyed a positive relationship with Rome. He had been involved in cooperation projects with Italy as part of his work at the League. Rather than actively seeking instruction from the Fascist government, as the Italian officials most loyal to Fascism did, in Stoppani’s case, it was the regime who got in touch with him, asking for his expertise. Unlike Catastini at the Mandates Section, Stoppani rarely received direct requests from Rome, mainly because he was engaged in very technical work, often of not clearly-recognisable political value.⁹²⁸ For instance, in 1932, Stoppani was contacted by the Fascist leadership of the LoN-affiliated International Educational Cinematographic Institute, to promote a free trade agreement for the abolition of customs duties on educational films.⁹²⁹ Stoppani’s active engagement in the matter led to the approval of a convention in October 1933.⁹³⁰ This commitment was not the result of a sense of duty towards Fascist Italy, which, as we saw, actively controlled the work of the Institute, but more the consequence of the fact that free trade was one of the key principles promoted by Stoppani.

⁹²⁶ ‘*Note pour le Ministre*’, 29 Apr. 1930 in Service française de la Société des Nations (1917-1940) (hereafter SdNFra) b.164, Archives Diplomatiques de France, La Courneuve (hereafter ADF)

⁹²⁷ De Madariaga, *Morning without Noon*, p.20

⁹²⁸ Alberto Theodoli to Suvich, 15 Oct. 1934, Personal File of Vito Catastini, SdN b.11, ASMAE

⁹²⁹ See correspondence between Stoppani and Luciano De Feo in early 1932 in R.2246, LoN Archives

⁹³⁰ ‘Convention for facilitating the international circulation of films of an educational character’, 11 Oct.1933, R.3980, LoN Archives

In the late 1920s, Stoppani managed to win the trust of the Fascist regime. When Paulucci became Under Secretary-General, Stoppani developed a very cordial relationship with him, to the point of requesting personal favours.⁹³¹ For instance, in 1928, he asked Paulucci to help him to terminate a legal procedure against him and some relatives in Milan, charged with hiding undeclared weapons. These weapons, discovered in a warehouse, belonged to Stoppani, who had collected them during the Great War.⁹³² Their good relations also led in 1928 to a job offer from Giuseppe De Michelis, President of the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), who asked him to become the new Secretary General of the institution.⁹³³ The offer arrived in the period when the League subordinated an increasing cooperation with the IIA to a reform of its executive and to the appointment of a capable secretary general.⁹³⁴ De Michelis made his offer to Stoppani because of his international credibility and good relations with Salter who, as we saw in the previous chapter, was a key person in determining whether the IIA could be officially connected to the LoN system. At the same time, however, he chose Stoppani because he was acceptable to the Fascist regime, also on the basis of his good relationship with the former Chef de Cabinet of Mussolini. Despite this fact, Stoppani refused the post, stating that the IIA's executive was currently an obstacle to the reorganization and reformation of the Institute, the reason for which De Michelis claimed to want him in Rome. By praising the independence of the League's Secretariat, in contrast, Stoppani proposed to continue

⁹³¹ Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Pietro Stoppani' b.66, GPdC, ASF

⁹³² Stoppani to Paulucci, 19 Aug. 1928, Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Pietro Stoppani' b.66, GPdC, ASF

⁹³³ Stoppani to Paulucci, 5 Nov. 1928 and attached Stoppani to Giuseppe De Michelis, 5 Nov. 1928, Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Pietro Stoppani' b.66, GPdC, ASF

⁹³⁴ Tosi, *Alle Origini della FAO*, pp.125-128

the external cooperation between the League and the Institute.⁹³⁵ The fact that Stoppani valued the independence of the League's Secretariat, as opposed to the Fascist-infiltrated one of the IIA, is exemplified by the fact that he spoke openly with both Drummond and Salter about De Michelis's proposal. His appreciation of the cooperative way of working at the League underlines the internationalist nature of Stoppani. At the same time, the De Michelis's offer shows us that in the late 1920s, the Fascist regime trusted Stoppani sufficiently to keep him in mind for the role, mistakenly so.

How did Stoppani cope with his Italian identity during his period at the League? The fact that Stoppani had lived abroad for many years and was not a Fascist, while at the same time he was recognised by the international community as an Italian, led Stoppani to question his identity. The Fascistization process at the Secretariat promoted by the Fascist regime led Stoppani to question whether he was Italian enough to avoid unwanted Fascist attention. As we can see from his letter to Mussolini, Stoppani stressed the fact that he was Italian based on his participation in the Great War.⁹³⁶ This sense of vulnerability led Stoppani to behave like other, more Fascist civil servants, even when this behaviour stood in contrast to his commitment to the League. This was the case with his participation in the gold collection, promoted by the Fascists in December 1935 to finance the Ethiopian war.⁹³⁷ All Italian officials at the League took part in this 'Fascist' effort. According to Gianluca Borzoni, the gold bar that the Italian members of the League sent to Mussolini 'to help symbolically to rebuild the gold reservoir of the country' was an external sign of

⁹³⁵ Stoppani to De Michelis, 5 Nov. 1928, Corrispondenza Ginevra (1927-32), 'Pietro Stoppani' b.66, GPdC, ASF

⁹³⁶ Stoppani to Mussolini, 4 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹³⁷ List of participants, in letter to Mussolini, 14 Dec. 1935, SdN b.11, ASMAE

belonging, required by the regime, especially of those working for the League, which after the introduction of the sanctions had been depicted to the Italian public opinion as a much-hated organization.⁹³⁸ Stoppani could not refuse to participate in this initiative, which provoked the reaction also of many non-Fascists, moved by patriotism.⁹³⁹ Stoppani was not a Fascist, but he decided not to take any risks, as long as his life and career were not directly challenged by Fascism. When this happened, in December 1937, Stoppani decided that his attachment to the League's internationalist project and the respect he enjoyed in Geneva were sufficient to break with Fascist Italy. With this resolution, Stoppani chose to turn his back on any chance of returning to Italy, with the risk of remaining a stateless person. Only his comparatively weak sense of Italian identity and his genuine commitment to the internationalist project of the League can help us to explain his decision.

From Stoppani's portrait in the 1920s and early 1930s, characterised by cordial relations with various Fascists, there is no indication of the fact that in 1937 he would refuse to obey Mussolini's order. In fact, Stoppani's disobedience came as a surprise to the Italian Foreign Ministry, where on 20 December, officials still wondered why he had not resigned.⁹⁴⁰ There were no warning signs of the fact that he would behave in an unexpected way. The fact that Stoppani's disloyalty was not taken for granted is proven also by the fact that Stoppani felt the need to explain his behaviour to Mussolini.⁹⁴¹ Once it was clear that the Italian Director had no intention of leaving Geneva, there were limited ways in which the Fascist regime could take revenge, since Italy was no longer a League member. However, there were attempts to obstruct

⁹³⁸ Borzoni, *Renato Prunas Diplomatico (1892-1951)*, pp.63-64

⁹³⁹ Baer, *Test Case*, pp.159-161

⁹⁴⁰ Vitetti to Bova Scoppa, 20 Dec. 1937, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹⁴¹ Stoppani to Mussolini, 4 Jan. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

his work for the League, as proven by the warnings that the Italian consulate delivered to the Bulgarian authorities in 1938, when Stoppani was sent to Sofia on a mission as LoN expert on rural areas. The Italian Foreign Ministry made sure that the Bulgarian government, filo-Fascist, knew that Stoppani was '*persona assolutamente sgradita*' (very unwelcome person) to the Italian regime and therefore deserved less cooperation.⁹⁴² While such attempts had a limited impact on Stoppani's life and international career, nevertheless, unlike stated by his colleague Alberto Berio, Stoppani was subject to them.⁹⁴³

Stoppani after the League: the Swiss Period

Stoppani worked for the League until 15 October 1939.⁹⁴⁴ He remained the Director of the Economic Relations Section until March 1939, when he reached the retirement age of 60, after which he was then offered a contract as an expert in charge of organizing the European Rural Life Conference.⁹⁴⁵ However, once the Conference was postponed to an indefinite date following the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, Avenol terminated Stoppani's contract.⁹⁴⁶ It was the end of Stoppani's time at the League. Stoppani, who had expressed the desire to move permanently to Versailles, where his French wife H el ene and his daughter had already moved in late 1938, with the outbreak of the war, encountered severe limits to his personal mobility.⁹⁴⁷ By the time he was ready to leave Geneva, according to James

⁹⁴² Telegram MAE to R. Legazione Sofia, 9 Nov. 1938, SdN b.16, ASMAE

⁹⁴³ Berio, A., *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya* (Naples, 1961), p.111

⁹⁴⁴ Employment Record, in Personal file 'Pietro Stoppani', Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

⁹⁴⁵ About the conference see: Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, pp.193-197

⁹⁴⁶ Avenol to Stoppani, 19 Sept. 1939, Personal file 'Pietro Stoppani', Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

⁹⁴⁷ Stoppani to Arnal, 27 Feb. 1939, SdNFra b.164, ADF; Stoppani to M. Roulet, 25 Nov. 1938, Personal file 'Pietro Stoppani', Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

Barros, Stoppani was denied a visa to return to France.⁹⁴⁸ It was probably this refusal, together with the worrying developments of the conflict, which convinced Stoppani to remain in Switzerland.⁹⁴⁹

It was in the Swiss Confederation that Stoppani had the opportunity to meet important Italian personalities, who had moved there into exile. A key encounter for his future was a long overdue one: on 28 January 1944, Stoppani for the first time met Luigi Einaudi, liberal intellectual and influential economist.⁹⁵⁰ We have seen the important role that Einaudi had in Rocca's episode, his personal connections to the statisticians at the League, and in general the central position this man held in the network of international liberal economists during the interwar period. Stoppani met Einaudi on several occasions during his exile in Switzerland and the two developed an important friendship for the years to come.⁹⁵¹ In the same period, Stoppani also met Gustavo Colonnetti, a distinguished Italian academic who had moved to Switzerland in 1943, and who, in 1944, created and led the Italian University Campus for internees (*Campo d'internamento universitario*) in Lausanne, aiming to help young Italians to continue their studies.⁹⁵² Both Einaudi and Stoppani were involved in the project.⁹⁵³

Colonnetti also founded the *Centro di Studi in Svizzera per la Ricostruzione Italiana* (Centre for the Italian Reconstruction), of which Stoppani was vice-president in

⁹⁴⁸ Barros, *Betrayal from within*, p.239

⁹⁴⁹ During the war, he was in Geneva, Lausanne and in a chalet at 1.300 m (Chesières, Canton Vaud). It is not clear when exactly, after the Second World War, he moved to Italy. Address of Stoppani, 13 Sept. 1940, Personal file 'Pietro Stoppani', Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives; 28 Gennaio 1944, Einaudi, *Diario dell'esilio, 1943-1944*, p.87; Stoppani to Einaudi, 6 Apr. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁵⁰ 28 Gennaio 1944, Einaudi, *Diario dell'esilio, 1943-1944*, p.87

⁹⁵¹ Einaudi, *Diario dell'esilio, 1943-1944*

⁹⁵² Colonnetti, G., *Pensieri e Fatti dall'Esilio (18 settembre 1943- 7 dicembre 1944)* (Rome, 1973)

⁹⁵³ 4 Maggio 1944, Einaudi, *Diario dell'esilio, 1943-1944*, pp.133-4,

1944.⁹⁵⁴ The aim of the Centre was to encourage Swiss contribution to the Italian post-war reconstruction, in the form of investments of Swiss capital and through the direct involvement of Swiss companies. The institution was created to compensate for the lack of a commercial office at the Italian Embassy in Bern.⁹⁵⁵ In practice, the Centre, which had two collaborators in addition to Colonnetti and Stoppani, established contacts with Swiss industry, making a survey of the businesses interested in the project.⁹⁵⁶ In addition, Stoppani developed connections to the committee created by the Swiss Federation to investigate the matter, and with the British Embassy, which had shown interest in the Centre's activities.⁹⁵⁷ Colonnetti flew back to Rome together with Einaudi in early December 1944 under the request of the new Italian government, an anti-Fascist coalition led by Ivanoe Bonomi.⁹⁵⁸ After they left, the Centre continued to function thanks to Stoppani and in early 1945, it was aggregated to the *Centro interministeriale per la ricostruzione* (Inter-ministerial Centre for Reconstruction).⁹⁵⁹

Stoppani believed that, at the end of the war, it would have been convenient for both Italy and Switzerland to cooperate: Italy would need capital and industrial equipment, while Switzerland could find in this market work opportunities to enable the maintenance of its occupational levels.⁹⁶⁰ Under his guidance, the Centre formulated

⁹⁵⁴ 'Promemoria per il Presidente Professor Colonnetti' by Stoppani, 28 Nov. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁵⁵ 'Promemoria per il Presidente Professor Colonnetti' by Stoppani, 28 Nov. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁵⁶ 'Promemoria per sua Ecc. il Prof. Gustavo Colonnetti', 27 Nov. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁵⁷ Colonnetti to Massimo Magistrati, 4 Nov. 1944 and 'Promemoria per il Presidente Professor Colonnetti' by Stoppani, 28 Nov. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁵⁸ 7 e 10 Dicembre 1944, in Einaudi, *Diario dell'esilio, 1943-1944*, pp.216-219; Signori, E., *La Svizzera e i Fuoriusciti Italiani* (Milan, 1983), p.39

⁹⁵⁹ Signori, *op. cit.*, p.245

⁹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.243

two proposals for assisting the reconstruction: the exportation of Swiss goods and industrial products to Italy under a Swiss warranty compensating companies against risks, and the investment of Swiss capital in the Italian industry, assured through property stakes. His experience at the League taught Stoppani that when a state was interested in foreign intervention to put its situation right, it was better to have the highest possible number of foreign capitalists (and states) involved, because in a moment of crisis: *‘un paese più creditori ha e più medici ha interessati alla sua guarigione’* (the more creditors a country has, the more doctors interested in its recovery).⁹⁶¹

Stoppani’s contribution to Italy’s future was not limited to the Centre. In order to give direct support, he was willing to return to his country after many years. When Einaudi organized his return to Italy in late 1944, Stoppani asked to be kept in consideration in case the new Italian government would deem a man of his kind useful. Stoppani stressed that he did not need a job, but he believed that he could be helpful.⁹⁶² In particular, Stoppani proposed himself as adviser or liaison officer with British and American Allies, with a preference for economic and reconstruction matters.⁹⁶³ He believed he was qualified, having participated in the financial reconstruction efforts promoted by the League to the advantage of Austria, Hungary and other Eastern European countries in the interwar period. He enjoyed the esteem and trust of many foreigners with whom he worked at the League, because of his conscientiousness and

⁹⁶¹ Ibid., p.245

⁹⁶² Stoppani to Einaudi, 3 Nov. 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), “Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947”, TFE

⁹⁶³ *‘Promemoria relativo al Dottor Pietro Stoppani’*, part of the correspondence relative to the Centro di Studi per la Ricostruzione Italiana, November 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), “Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947”, TFE

impartiality as an international official.⁹⁶⁴ As referees, he listed the following personalities: Lord Perth (i.e. Eric Drummond); Sir Frederick Leith-Ross (Chief Economic Adviser to the UK government); Otto Niemeyer (Director of the Bank of England); Walter Layton (Chairman of *The Economist*); Henry F. Grady (in 1944 vice president of the economic section of the Allied Control Commission for Italy). On the Italian side, he mentioned Renato Prunas, who in 1944 was Secretary General of the Italian Foreign Ministry and Angelo Di Nola, General Director of the Economic Affairs of the same Ministry.⁹⁶⁵ This list reveals that during the 16 years that Stoppani spent at the League, he developed important personal relations with influential international colleagues, some of whom played a key role in the post-war European reconstruction.

While cooperating with Einaudi and Colonnetti for the Italian reconstruction, Stoppani also showed a commitment to the European federalist project, as intended by the European Federalist Movement, led by Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, with whom Stoppani was in contact. Ernesto Rossi, one of the leaders of the liberal-socialist movement *Giustizia e Libertà* and one of Einaudi's favourite students, was in Geneva in 1944-1945.⁹⁶⁶ Stoppani's engagement in the federalist idea emerges in his correspondence with Rossi. While the Dumbarton Oaks Conference was taking place, Stoppani sent a telegram to Leo Pasvolosky, main adviser of US Secretary of State Edward Stettinius and a friend from the LoN years, stressing how:

⁹⁶⁴ *Promemoria relativo al Dottor Pietro Stoppani*, part of the correspondence relative to the Centro di Studi per la Ricostruzione Italiana, November 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁶⁵ *Promemoria relativo al Dottor Pietro Stoppani*, part of the correspondence relative to the Centro di Studi per la Ricostruzione Italiana, November 1944, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947", TFE

⁹⁶⁶ Pinder, J. (ed.), *Altiero Spinelli and the British Federalists* (London, 1998)

no world organisation however clever will resist internal splitting and last beyond [the] usual twenty years unless substantially based on some sort [of] European federation and custom union.⁹⁶⁷

Stoppani added that the experts and politicians reunited in Dumbarton Oaks should not ignore that the economic reconstruction was a good occasion to pave the way to a European federation.⁹⁶⁸ Rossi was really enthusiastic about this telegram and asked Stoppani to make it public, but he refused.⁹⁶⁹ Stoppani also cooperated with Rossi in publishing in Italian a lecture given by Walter Layton in Oxford on 3 March 1944, titled 'The British Commonwealth and the World Order.'⁹⁷⁰ In his speech, Layton stressed the need for the creation of a European federation as a necessity for lasting peace.⁹⁷¹ However, the fact that Layton's federation excluded Great Britain and the Soviet Union was strongly criticised by Rossi, who was convinced that a federation without the British would have been 'an abortion like the LoN.'⁹⁷² Disagreeing with Stoppani, Rossi insisted in publishing the lecture only with a comment explaining the divergent opinion of the Federalist Movement on the scope of the federation proposed by the author.⁹⁷³

⁹⁶⁷ Stoppani to Pasvolsky, 7 Oct. 1944, Fond Ernesto Rossi, Correspondance (1943-1945), 'Correspondance Ernesto Rossi avec des militants fédéralistes (initiales G - W)': 'Pietro Stoppani', ER 21, in Historical Archives of the European Union at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy (hereafter HAEU)

⁹⁶⁸ Stoppani to Leo Pasvolsky, 7 Oct. 1944, Fond Ernesto Rossi, Correspondance (1943-1945), 'Pietro Stoppani', ER 21, HAEU

⁹⁶⁹ Rossi to Stoppani, 9 Oct 1944; Stoppani to Rossi, 12 Oct. 1944, Fond Ernesto Rossi, Correspondance (1943-1945), 'Pietro Stoppani', ER 21, HAEU

⁹⁷⁰ Layton, W., *The British Commonwealth and World Order* (London, 1944) (Sidney Ball Lecture, 3rd March 1944); Rossi to Stoppani, 15 Oct. 1944, Fond Ernesto Rossi, Correspondance (1943-1945), 'Pietro Stoppani', ER 21, HAEU

⁹⁷¹ Layton, *The British Commonwealth and World Order*, p.13

⁹⁷² Trans. Rossi to Stoppani, 21 Oct. 1944, Fond Ernesto Rossi, Correspondance (1943-1945), 'Pietro Stoppani', ER 21, HAEU

⁹⁷³ Rossi to Stoppani, 21 Oct. 1944, Fond Ernesto Rossi, Correspondance (1943-1945), 'Pietro Stoppani', ER 21, HAEU. The speech was eventually published in 1944, translated in Italian by Elena Colonnetti, the sixteen-year old daughter of Gustavo: *Il Commonwealth Britannico e l'ordine nel mondo: Conferenza di Walter Layton* (Lausanne, 1944)

Both during the League's period and in the following years, 'national' and 'international' were coexisting and co-penetrating concepts for Stoppani, rather than dichotomous ones. In the early 1940s, he was concerned about Italy's reconstruction and desired to return to liberated Italy to make his contribution in the negotiations with the Allies. But he was also convinced that the establishment of long-lasting peace needed international cooperation, this time in the form of a European federation. The idea of a federalist Europe had been put in second place in favour of the League of Nations in 1919, but in the aftermath of the Second World War, it was revived. Stoppani's interest in federalism was connected to his long-term commitment to free trade and the idea that a custom union could help create and maintain peace. However, Stoppani's contribution to the federalist project is not recognised by the relevant literature: he remains a forgotten figure in post-war Italy.⁹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Stoppani was genuinely committed to international cooperation and to the federalist idea, which in his eyes had a potential that the LoN had been unable to develop.

Stoppani after the League: Return to International Cooperation

The relationship that Stoppani developed with Einaudi helped him return to the service of international cooperation. In 1945, Luigi Einaudi, freshly nominated Governor of the Bank of Italy, appointed Stoppani as his deputy at the Board of Directors of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Basel.⁹⁷⁵ The BIS was created in 1930 in the context of the Young Plan, to deal with German war reparations

⁹⁷⁴ The only exception: 'Stoppani, Pietro' in *Dizionario Biografico*, 'L'Europa di Domani', project 'Memoria delle Alpi': <http://www.memoriadellealpi.net/download/GRUPPO01~CD-Federalismo/Dizionario%20biografico-S-T-U-V-W.pdf> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

⁹⁷⁵ Bank for International Settlements, 39th Annual Report (Basel, 1969), p.179

and to reunite central banks with the aim of fostering international monetary and financial cooperation.⁹⁷⁶ The BIS was one of the few international institutions born during the interwar period (and the only financial one) to survive the Second World War, even if the connivance with Nazi Germany before and during the war had put its reputation at stake to the point that at Bretton Woods there had been talk of closing it down.⁹⁷⁷ At the BIS, Stoppani met several former colleagues and acquaintances from the League's days, including: Otto Niemeyer, Vice-Chairman of the BIS Board from 1946 to 1964; Maurice Frère, whom Stoppani met in relation to the reconstruction of Austria, and who was BIS President from 1948 to 1958; Edouard Janssen, Member of the Financial Committee of the League (1921-1940), president of the LoN Commission for the study of the Gold Question (1929-1933) and then member of the BIS Board from 1948 to 1952; and Per Jacobsson, who was member of the Economic and Financial Section of the League in the 1920s, economic adviser for the BIS from 1931 and then Head of the BIS Monetary and Economic Department from 1946 to 1956.⁹⁷⁸ The BIS sustained the continuity in international financial and banking expertise from the interwar to the post-war period.

In the Italian case, this continuity was not as clear as it was for other nations, but it was present thanks to people like Einaudi, Stoppani, and Raffaele Pilotti, Secretary General of the BIS from 1930 to 1951.⁹⁷⁹ Stoppani was a member of this institution for more than 20 years: in 1948, he replaced Einaudi as one of two Italian Directors on the Board, remaining a full member until 1960. Thereafter, and up to the time of

⁹⁷⁶ For a history of the BIS: Baffi, P., *Le Origini della Cooperazione tra le Banche Centrali. L'Istituzione della Banca dei Regolamenti Internazionali* (Bari, 2002); Toniolo, G., *Central Bank Cooperation at the Bank for International Settlements, 1930-1973* (Cambridge, 2005)

⁹⁷⁷ Toniolo, *op. cit.*, pp.256-259; Reinalda, B., *Routledge History of International Organizations: from 1815 to the present day* (London, 2009), p.258

⁹⁷⁸ Toniolo, *op. cit.*, pp.702-703, 706

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.706-707; 697

his death, on 21 November 1968, he was an alternate member in the absence of Paolo Baffi, Director General of the Bank of Italy.⁹⁸⁰ Such a long and persistent presence in an international institution demonstrates Stoppani's commitment to his work and to international cooperation. Moreover, the prestigious post he held, working in close contact with the Governors of the Bank of Italy (after Einaudi, there were Donato Menichella and Guido Carli) who agreed in having him as their deputy, shows that he was well considered in the Italian banking environment.

Parallel to the participation in the BIS, Stoppani remained engaged in the national reconstruction process. In August 1946, Stoppani discussed with Einaudi the possibility of obtaining a mandate to start informal talks at the Paris Conference (July-October 1946), where the details of the peace treaty with Italy were being negotiated. Stoppani believed that it was necessary to debate Italy's problems not at a conference, where nation was pitched against nation, but within an international institute for the reconstruction of the country, in which the victors were represented. In Stoppani's opinion this would lead to a foreign financial control on Italy. However, as had happened with the reconstruction of Austria during the interwar period, the foreign delegates would become engaged in the mission of safeguarding the country and would try to find the best possible solutions for Italy.⁹⁸¹ Thus, in the post-war years, Stoppani looked to the systems promoted by the League as a model to solve Italy's current economic problems and this shows how the LoN experience shaped his understanding of the world.

⁹⁸⁰ Bank for International Settlements, 39th Annual Report (Basel, 1969), p.179; see also Annual Reports 15th and 18th

⁹⁸¹ 15 Agosto 1946, in Einaudi, L., *Diario 1945-1947* (Turin, 1993), pp.701-702

With the development of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, Stoppani made a renewed effort to return to fixed employment in international cooperation. The membership of the BIS Board implied a limited time commitment and paid only limited expenses. In his search for an additional international post in 1946, Stoppani was motivated partly by a genuine belief that with his expertise he could still contribute to international cooperation but also by economic need, since his LoN pension had been badly affected by inflation.⁹⁸² In November 1946, seven months after the League had been dissolved, Stoppani wrote to Sean Lester, the last Secretary-General, asking for his help in obtaining a post at the UN. Stoppani was aware that now aged 67 and the fact that Italy was not a member of the organization prevented him from obtaining a permanent position, but he was open to other arrangements. He was interested in resuming his old activity and stated that he preferred to do so by serving ‘an independent international organization [rather] than any Government, my own included.’⁹⁸³

Stoppani also wrote to Maximilien Suetens, whom he knew from the League years and who in late 1946 was presiding over the ‘Preparatory Conference for the International Trade Organization’ in London. Stoppani asked him whether there was the possibility to join the preparatory work as an adviser on the basis of his long experience in international trade.⁹⁸⁴ He stressed the importance of continuity between the League and the new economic international organizations, stating that it did not make sense for the new bodies to disregard the good and useful work done by the

⁹⁸² Stoppani to Lester, 23 Nov. 1946; Stoppani to Maximilien Suetens (misspelled as Suitens in the original), 9 Nov. 1946, Personal file ‘Pietro Stoppani’, Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

⁹⁸³ Stoppani to Lester, 23 Nov. 1946, Personal file ‘Pietro Stoppani’, Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

⁹⁸⁴ Stoppani to Maximilien Suetens (misspelled as Suitens in the original), 9 Nov. 1946, Personal file ‘Pietro Stoppani’, Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

experts of LoN Economic Relations Section and start everything *ex novo*. He proposed that he be hired as an expert and to prepare a summary of the work done at the League on international trade. Also with Suetens, Stoppani underlined his preference for serving a cause rather than a government, stressing that he was an ‘outsider’ in the Italian administration.⁹⁸⁵ From this correspondence we learn that Stoppani was nostalgic for the LoN world. He wanted to be involved once again in international cooperation on economic matters, and had a strong preference for doing so as member of an international organization rather than as an employee of the Italian government. He also believed that he could be more successful in obtaining a post using the international network he developed in Geneva, rather than national channels. However, all attempts in this sense failed.

Stoppani was left with the second best alternative, which was that of being a member of national delegations to international conferences and organizations, and to do so as an expert. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore Stoppani’s late career in depth, it is important to note that Stoppani became member of the Italian delegation to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), managing and distributing the Marshall aid, and to the Conference for the European Defence Community in 1951, which aimed for the creation of a European army.⁹⁸⁶ He was part of the Italian delegation to the Conference on European Economic Cooperation (Conference of the Sixteen), which took place in Paris in July-September

⁹⁸⁵ Stoppani to Suetens, 9 Nov. 1946, Personal file ‘Pietro Stoppani’, Personnel Office, S.888, LoN Archives

⁹⁸⁶ Correspondence with “Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947” in Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), TFE; Spinelli, A., *Diario Europeo, 1948-49* (Milan, 1989), vol.1, p.103; Preda, D., *Storia di una Speranza. La battaglia per la CED e la Federazione Europea nelle carte della Delegazione Europea (1950-52)* (Milan, 1990), p.82

1947, and led to the establishment of the OEEC in April 1948.⁹⁸⁷ At the Conference, Stoppani was engaged in discussions with William Clayton, US Under Secretary-General for economic affairs, and with his old friend Hervé Alphand, Director-General of Economic and Financial Affairs at the French Foreign Ministry.⁹⁸⁸ These conversations, which are also the only evidence of the existence of Stoppani in the whole *Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* publication, show the important role that Stoppani played in the Italian delegation.

In December 1949, as financial expert of the Italian delegation to the OEEC, Stoppani participated in the negotiations discussing the transferability of European currencies, which led to the creation of the European Payments Union (EPU) in July 1950.⁹⁸⁹ The bases of this project were schemes developed in the 1930s at the League, with the contribution of Stoppani, to unblock the world economy.⁹⁹⁰ Stoppani was rather optimistic about the plan for a new system of inter-European payments and was also a supporter of the regional project involving (initially) France, Italy and the Benelux, called FRITALUX, aiming to liberalise capital and trade within the group: a first step towards an economic union.⁹⁹¹ In his correspondence with Einaudi, who in 1948 had become the first President of the Italian Republic, Stoppani, stressed the need for the FRITALUX countries to push for the quick implementation of the most advanced

⁹⁸⁷ Stoppani to Einaudi, 16 Aug. 1947, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), “Pietro Stoppani, 1944-1947”, TFE

⁹⁸⁸ Pietro Quaroni to Carlo Sforza, 24 July 1947, doc.216; Campilli to Sforza, 9 Aug. 1947, doc.294 in DDI, Serie IX (1939-1943), Vol.6

⁹⁸⁹ Stoppani to Antonio D’Aroma, 30 Dec. 1949; Stoppani to Einaudi, 3 Jan. 1950, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), “Pietro Stoppani, 1949-1950”, TFE

⁹⁹⁰ Clavin, *Securing the World Economy*, p.347

⁹⁹¹ Stoppani to Einaudi, 3 Jan. 1950, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), “Pietro Stoppani, 1949-1950”, TFE. The Fritalux negotiations were also known as ‘Finebel’, ‘Benefit’, or ‘Little European payments union’ negotiations, see: Griffiths, R.T and Lynch, F.M.B., *The FRITALUX/FINEBEL Negotiations 1949-1950* (Badia Fiesolana, Florence, 1984); Hogan, M.J., *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947-1952* (Cambridge: New York, 1987), pp.267-268; 279-282; Milward, A.S., *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51* (Berkeley: Los Angeles, CA, 1984), pp.306-316

financial aspects of their project, relative to the liberalization of payments and capital and the circulation of banknotes.⁹⁹² However, the FRITALUX negotiations in 1949-1950, which in economic terms offered a more radical plan than the Schuman one presented in May 1950, eventually failed.⁹⁹³ Stoppani found himself involved in all these partially interconnected attempts of financial and economic cooperation promoted in the post-war period and based on projects of international collaboration conceived in the League years.

Stoppani also had the chance to take part in a more federalist project, directed at creating a European army. He was the financial expert of the Italian delegation to the Conference for the European Defence Community (EDC) in 1951.⁹⁹⁴ The Financial Committee of the Conference dealt with the delicate issue of how to finance a European army, in particular on how to approve the budget and how to determine the amount of the members' contributions.⁹⁹⁵ The financial questions of the EDC proved very controversial: there was the problem for the member states of how to reconcile a common defence project with a non-existing common policy. In August 1951, Stoppani wrote to his federalist friend Ernesto Rossi that it was absurd that the Council and Assembly of the EDC, without constitutional basis, would have the possibility to approve a budget so large that it could damage the prerogatives of the national parliaments. According to Stoppani, the situation made the creation of a European Parliament inevitable: an institution capable to legislate for all citizens, but having, for the moment, a competence limited to military matters.⁹⁹⁶ Stoppani was

⁹⁹² Stoppani to Einaudi, 3 Jan. 1950, Carte Luigi Einaudi, sez.2 (correspondence), "Pietro Stoppani, 1949-1950", TFE

⁹⁹³ Griffiths and Lynch, *The FRITALUX/FINEBEL Negotiations 1949-1950*, pp.3-4

⁹⁹⁴ Preda, *Storia di una Speranza*, p.82

⁹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.75

⁹⁹⁶ Stoppani to Rossi, 25 Aug. 1951 in Preda, *Storia di una Speranza*, pp.101-102

convinced of the necessity of a quick and strong support to the initiative for a European army because it could (ironically) lead to the first concrete manifestation of unity in Western Europe.⁹⁹⁷

In December 1951, Stoppani wrote to Einaudi asking the Italian government to take a clear stance on the matter.⁹⁹⁸ In fact, the Italian delegation had supported the idea of the creation of a European assembly, but when discussing the budget, it had aligned with the obstructionist group (Belgium and the Netherlands), which wanted to manage the budget on national bases, hence making the European army nothing more than a coalition or alliance army, like NATO.⁹⁹⁹ Stoppani wondered whether Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi was aware of the situation: on the one hand, Italy brought the flag of a European federation, on the other hand, it pushed back on the financial question.¹⁰⁰⁰ Stoppani's presence in the Financial Committee of the Conference put him in a key position in the crucial moments of these negotiations. The failed attempt to create a European army was the first real effort towards a European federation. Thus, while Stoppani did not succeed in becoming member once again of an international organization after the League, thanks to his expertise, he was engaged as national delegate in the negotiations debating key projects for European cooperation and integration: from the FRITALUX to the EDC.

⁹⁹⁷ Preda, *Storia di una Speranza*, p.102

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.156, 169; Stoppani to Antonio D'Aroma (Einaudi's personal secretary), 8 Dec. 1951, Fond Ivan Matteo Lombardo, Communauté européenne de Défense (CED), IML 18 'Négotiations diplomatiques (07/1951 - 09/1954)', HAEU

⁹⁹⁹ Stoppani to Antonio D'Aroma (Einaudi's personal secretary), 8 Dec. 1951, Fond Ivan Matteo Lombardo, Communauté européenne de Défense (CED), IML 18, HAEU

¹⁰⁰⁰ Stoppani to Antonio D'Aroma (Einaudi's personal secretary), 8 Dec. 1951, Fond Ivan Matteo Lombardo, Communauté européenne de Défense (CED), IML 18, HAEU; cit. also in Preda, *Storia di una Speranza*, p.169

Stoppani was the only ‘true’ internationalist among the Italian civil servants in the League. Not only was he the only high-ranking employee to refuse to leave the organization when Mussolini ordered Italian members to do so, but he was also the only official to show a consistent and energetic commitment to international cooperation throughout his entire life. In Stoppani, we can see how continuity of expertise between the interwar and the second post-war period was valid also in the Italian case. His dedication to international economic cooperation during the League years continued uninterrupted during the Second World War and after it. Stoppani was influenced very much by internationalism and he remained committed to the international dimension of solving problems, even though in the post-1945 period this dimension became more a European than a universal one. He thought that international economic cooperation and freer trade were key to maintaining peace in Europe, and devoted himself to the federalist project. He did not believe that the League had been a failure and thought that the hard work of the Economic and Financial sections should be used by the new international organizations. He was nostalgic for the League’s world and his thought was heavily influenced by the League, which he used as a model for interpreting the post-1945 world. In this context, he associated the reconstruction of Italy with that of Austria some years before.

Stoppani’s experience in Geneva can be read within the recent debate on the relationship between national and international identities, and cosmopolitanism at the League.¹⁰⁰¹ According to Herren, with the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris there was

¹⁰⁰¹ On the question of international identities at the League see the traditional approach by Ranshofen-Wertheimer, pp. 239-255, and, more recently, the discussion in Herren, M., *et al.* (eds.), *Transcultural History: Theories, Methods, Sources* (Berlin: Heidelberg, 2012) and Herren’s chapter ‘Shifting Identities and Cosmopolitan Machineries: A New World Imagined at the 1919 Peace

the construction of a new cosmopolitan community. The League became the ideal environment for ‘transcultural entanglement and cosmopolitan freedom’, as exemplified by the transcultural biographies of many civil servants at the Secretariat, including Ranshofen-Wertheimer.¹⁰⁰² However, due to the absence of Stoppani’s private papers, it is not possible to determine the extent to which we can refer to his experience at the League as ‘cosmopolitan.’

The League’s influence extended not only to Stoppani’s beliefs, but also to his sense of identity: in Geneva he stopped seeing himself as an Italian and started seeing himself as the member of the first international bureaucracy. Even though, while at the League, he had to find a way to coexist with inevitable nationalist pressure coming from the Fascist regime, his way of interpreting the world was not nation-based, but expertise-based. And it was at the League that he made invaluable friendships, which he maintained all his life, with what would then become key actors of European reconstruction. Even though his difficult return to the international sphere happened through national channels, the fact that he wanted to remain actively engaged in international cooperation past retirement age and until his death is the best proof that he was a true internationalist.

Conference in Paris’, in Brosius, C., and Wenzlhuemer, R. (eds.), *Transcultural Turbulences. Towards a Multi-Sited Reading of Image Flows* (Berlin, 2011), pp. 67-82

¹⁰⁰² Herren, M., *et al.* (eds.), *Transcultural History*, p.64; see pp. 61-63 for transcultural biographies.

The Opportunist: Massimo Pilotti



Massimo Pilotti

Source and Copyright: *LoN Photo Archive, UNOG Library, League of Nations Archives, Geneva*

In Chapter 1, we saw how Massimo Pilotti (1879-1962), Italian Under Secretary-General at the LoN in 1932-33 and then Deputy Secretary-General until 1937, was a prestigious legal expert of international law. We also saw that he had not been Mussolini's first choice for this post, but he was nominated only after Auriti's candidacy failed. Nevertheless, by June 1936, when Galeazzo Ciano became the new Italian Foreign Minister, he was considered valuable enough to be recalled to Rome to

direct all juridical services of the Foreign Ministry.¹⁰⁰³ For reasons unknown to us, this did not happen and Pilotti remained at the League until Italy's withdrawal: his resignation reached the League through Berio on 12 December.¹⁰⁰⁴

Pilotti's attitude towards the Italian choice to leave the organization is not clear. According to the British Ambassador in Rome, Pilotti supported a group at the Italian Foreign Ministry, led by Giuseppe Bastianini, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which was strongly opposed to Italy exiting the League.¹⁰⁰⁵ Minister Ciano was aware of Pilotti being allegedly involved with the British, together with Bastianini, to avoid Italy's withdrawal from the League, but he did not believe the story. About Bastianini, he wrote that: '*E' un fesso, ma è fedele*' (he is a muggins, but he is loyal).¹⁰⁰⁶ There is no trace of his opinion on Pilotti. British documents also suggest that Pilotti's behaviour in this crucial period was being closely watched by the Fascist regime.¹⁰⁰⁷ This is confirmed by the records of the Fascist political police, which however is a limitedly reliable source. Following Italy's withdrawal, the Italian police issued an order to all borders, harbours and airports to block the possible expatriation of Pilotti, who on 11 December 1937 was in Rome.¹⁰⁰⁸ However, the directive lasted only for two days (16-17 December) and was cancelled following Mussolini's order.¹⁰⁰⁹ This leaves a doubt as to whether the regime had reasons to believe that Pilotti's escape was a realistic threat or whether the whole incident was a

¹⁰⁰³ Meeting Ciano-Avenol, 7 Sept. 1936 in DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.5, doc.26

¹⁰⁰⁴ Personal File 'Massimo Pilotti', Personnel Office, S.855bis, LoN Archives; Earl of Perth to Foreign Office, 10 Dec. 1937, T188/155, TNA

¹⁰⁰⁵ Earl of Perth to Foreign Office (FO), 10 Dec. 1937, T188/155, TNA

¹⁰⁰⁶ '16 Dicembre 1937' in Ciano, *Diario 1937-1943*, p.68

¹⁰⁰⁷ Earl of Perth to FO, 10 Dec. 1937, T188/155, TNA

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Dispaccio Telegrafico* signed by Bocchini (Head of Police), 16 Dec. 1937 in Ministero degli Interni (MI), Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza (hereafter DGPS), Polizia Politica (hereafter POL POL), Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

¹⁰⁰⁹ It is unclear, however, where Pilotti would aim to relocate. *Dispaccio Telegrafico* signed by Bocchini (Head of Police), 18 Dec. 1937; Handwritten note dated 18 December 1937, MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

mistake of an overly zealous police. In those two days Pilotti was shadowed by the police, which found that he spent most of his time at the Italian Foreign Ministry.¹⁰¹⁰ On 18 December, his telephone was put under surveillance.¹⁰¹¹ British sources and the measures taken by the Fascist police suggest that Pilotti's loyalty to the regime was questioned during this period. However, eventually Pilotti did what was expected from him: he resigned from his post and remained permanently in Rome.

In Geneva, Pilotti was perceived as a moderate, who 'had made his peace with Fascism, but was by temperament utterly opposed to its aggressive and bombastic character.'¹⁰¹² He was regarded as an improvement with respect to his predecessor (Paulucci).¹⁰¹³ His legal expertise was highly valued: Walters described him as 'a lawyer of profound learning.'¹⁰¹⁴ However, he found himself in the difficult situation of being the Deputy Secretary-General of the organization at the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis (1934-1936). His post was a highly political one and Pilotti, even though a moderate, followed the directives from Rome. According to Walters, 'Pilotti did his best to reason with his former chiefs: but he could do little to change their purposes.'¹⁰¹⁵ In Barros's opinion, it is unclear whether Pilotti was a Fascist or someone who 'had made his peace with Fascism' though being opposed to it. However, it is clear from his involvement in the Ethiopian negotiations that he was considered by Rome to be a loyal and indispensable member of the team defending Italy in Geneva.¹⁰¹⁶ Thus, while we do not know the extent to which Pilotti was

¹⁰¹⁰ 'Relazione di pedinamento del 17-12-1937' and 'Relazione Pedinamento', dated 16 Dec. 1937, MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

¹⁰¹¹ De Bernardis, Servizio Speciale Riservato to Head of Police, 18 Dec. 1937, MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

¹⁰¹² Walters, p.558

¹⁰¹³ De Madariaga, *Morning without Noon*, p.282

¹⁰¹⁴ Walters, p.558

¹⁰¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁶ Barros, *Betrayal from within*, p.55

committed to Fascism, we are aware that he was respected by the regime and that he obeyed its orders.

In fact, with the development of the Ethiopian crisis, Pilotti's role became that of using his juridical expertise to present the Italian case at the League.¹⁰¹⁷ Barros claims that Pilotti, helped by Avenol, constructed arguments against the claims Ethiopia presented to the League.¹⁰¹⁸ Berio, Pilotti's assistant, confirmed that the Italian Deputy Secretary-General did his best to play a moderating and conciliatory role between Rome and the League, but the situation was made difficult by the fact that any recommendation for moderation given to Rome was considered with suspicion.¹⁰¹⁹ During the discussions on the Hoare-Laval plan, Pilotti was engaged in meetings with various League personalities, assuring a link between Rome and the negotiations.¹⁰²⁰ He sincerely believed that the Hoare-Laval proposal could bring a peaceful settlement, providing Italy with its 'spot in the sun,' without the uncertainties that a military victory would bring to the international status of his country. Hence he lived in fear that the plan would fail.¹⁰²¹ During the months following the conquest of Ethiopia, it seemed that Italy would consider a full return to the League's activities, provided that the Italian Empire was recognised. Instead, if the Ethiopian delegation was accepted to the Assembly in September 1936, Italy threatened to leave the League forever.¹⁰²² Avenol, with Pilotti, promoted and arranged a plan to exclude the Ethiopian delegation, based on having the Assembly's 'Committee on Credentials of Delegates' turning the Ethiopians down. However, the manoeuvre did not work and

¹⁰¹⁷ Pompeo Aloisi to Mussolini, 18 Sept. 1935, DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.2, doc.134

¹⁰¹⁸ Barros, *Betrayal from within*, p.55

¹⁰¹⁹ Berio, A., 'L' "affaire" etiopico' in *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, Aprile-Giugno 1958, p.190

¹⁰²⁰ Borzoni, *Renato Prunas Diplomatico (1892-1951)*, pp.63-64

¹⁰²¹ Berio, 'L' "affaire" etiopico', p.207

¹⁰²² *Ibid.*, pp.213-124

Italy did not return to the League.¹⁰²³ According to Pilotti and Berio, it was the Soviet Union which pushed for the recognition of the Ethiopian delegation, in order to make sure that Italy was not in Geneva when discussing the question of the Spanish civil war.¹⁰²⁴

Geneva's anti-Fascist press, such as *Le Travail*, strongly criticised Pilotti's conduct during the Ethiopian crisis, in particular his presence at the local *fascio* for the celebrations for the annexation of the country in May 1936.¹⁰²⁵ According to the newspaper, during the conflict, Italy had smartly decided to be 'absent' from Geneva, but had left its people in the Secretariat to manipulate the organization.¹⁰²⁶ *Le Travail* also claimed that Pilotti, Avenol's deputy, had been behind the Hoare-Laval plan and the attempts to exclude the Ethiopian delegation from the Assembly. In addition it was believed that Pilotti worked to avoid adding the Spanish question to the League's agenda.¹⁰²⁷ As we have seen these accusations were well-founded. Pilotti might have been a moderate, but he was still the highest Italian official in the League, in a post of clear political nature and he used his expertise to obey the orders from Rome. The post at the League was an opportunity for his career rather than a heartfelt choice, and he tried to stay there as long as possible. He had no real commitment to the League's internationalism. His approach to the institution was opportunistic and this is proven by the fact that, unlike Stoppani, his concern was not how to stay in the League but how to make sure that Italy remained a member of the organization, because that was the condition *sine qua non* he could retain his post. When Italy left, he acknowledged that there was nothing else he could do in Geneva, and left without regrets.

¹⁰²³ Ibid., pp.214-216; Barros, *Betrayal from within*, pp.127, 134-140

¹⁰²⁴ Costa Bona, p.157; Berio, 'L' "affaire" etiopico', p.216

¹⁰²⁵ 'A la S.d.N- question à M. Avenol', *Le Travail*, 7 May 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁰²⁶ 'A la S.d.N.- L'étrange politique du secrétariat', *Le Travail*, 27 Aug. 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁰²⁷ 'A la S.d.N.- L'étrange politique du secrétariat', *Le Travail*, 27 Aug. 1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

Pilotti after the League: National and International Career

It is not clear what Pilotti did after leaving the League, in the period between 1938 and 1944. The documents of the Fascist political police, which at best have limited reliability, suggest that when Grandi moved back from London, where he had been Italian Ambassador since 1932, to take on the post of Minister of Justice in July 1939, he nominated Pilotti as his Chief of the Cabinet.¹⁰²⁸ The police's report on this appointment, commented that even if Pilotti was not a workaholic, he was '*meritevole della più completa fiducia morale*' (worthy of the highest moral confidence).¹⁰²⁹ However, there is no other evidence of Pilotti working for Grandi and we lose his tracks until September 1944, when he re-emerged in an unexpected position: as prosecutor of Fascists. The years 1938-1943 do not appear in any of Pilotti's official biographies.¹⁰³⁰ We can read this absence in two ways: either that Pilotti, allegedly chosen by Grandi as personal assistant, was in this period highly engaged in the Fascist regime's reformation of justice and decided to cover his traces once Mussolini's government was over; or as the sign that Pilotti, a pragmatic person, realised that this was not the period of Italian history in which it was convenient to be a prominent figure in the regime's institutions and decided to stay away from the public scene. Further documentation must first come to light for the issue to be resolved one way or another.

¹⁰²⁸ Note '*Roma, 21 luglio 1939*', MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

¹⁰²⁹ Note '*Roma, 21 luglio 1939*', MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

¹⁰³⁰ For example his portraits at the ECJ: http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7014/ or in the Italian Encyclopedia: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/massimo-pilotti_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/massimo-pilotti_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/) (last accessed 30 July 2014)

With the end of Mussolini's government in July 1943, the armistice in September 1943 and the liberation of southern Italy from the Germans, the new government, led by the different factions of the anti-Fascist movement, established the first juridical measures to prosecute Fascism and its crimes. The most important of these measures was the '*Decreto Legislativo Luogotenenziale (DLL) of 27 July 1944, n.159*', which included: criminal penalties against Fascist crimes; administrative sanctions to de-Fascistize the public administration; and economic sanctions, intended to recover illicit earnings made by Fascists during the regime. The fourth major task envisioned by the decree was the liquidation of Fascist goods.¹⁰³¹ In order to proceed with the administrative part of the sanctions (i.e. the purge), investigating commissions for each Ministry were created.¹⁰³² It is in this context that we find Pilotti again: not as subject to the purge, but as one of the prosecutors. In September 1944, he was the president of the commission in charge of purging the personnel of the Foreign Ministry: the *Commissione giudicatrice per l'epurazione del personale del Ministero degli Affari Esteri*.¹⁰³³ He was responsible for judging the conduct of diplomats during the Fascist period, based on their enthusiasm for Fascism, the active engagement in the Fascist movement and the benefits they derived from it.¹⁰³⁴ Some of them, such as Luca Pietromarchi, were former Italian civil servants at the League. Pilotti had the chance to meet Pietromarchi several times during his years in Geneva, and in 1936 he even commented, rather positively, on the first volume of Pietromarchi's racist *Storia*

¹⁰³¹ DLL 27 Jul.1944, n.159, in Sforza, C., *Le Sanzioni contro il Fascismo* (Rome, 1944)

¹⁰³² Art.18, DLL 27 Jul.1944, n.159, in Sforza, *Le Sanzioni contro il Fascismo*

¹⁰³³ Session 19 Sept. 1944, with Pilotti as President in Fondo Ugo La Malfa, Serie II Attività Politica, Fascicolo 1. Epurazioni, Sottofascicolo "1.5. Rosso Augusto - Buti Gino", ACS

¹⁰³⁴ DLL 27 Jul.1944, n.159, titolo II, in Sforza, *Le Sanzioni contro il Fascismo*, Arts.12-15; Fondo Ugo La Malfa, Serie II Attività Politica, Fascicolo 1. Epurazioni, Sottofascicolo "1.5. Rosso Augusto - Buti Gino", ACS

di Abissinia.¹⁰³⁵ The same book was used by the Commission of investigation led by Pilotti in 1944 as evidence for the charges against Pietromarchi.¹⁰³⁶

However, the final decision regarding Pietromarchi's case happened only after Pilotti left his post. The resignation letter, acknowledged by Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi 'with regret' on 1 November 1944, stated that the atmosphere in which Pilotti was working at the Foreign Ministry was threatening. For example, he had been accused by the press (in particular *Il Tempo*) of attempting, together with Renato Prunas (Foreign Ministry's Secretary General) and Alberto Marchetti (Head of Cabinet), to 'minimise' the purge at the Foreign Ministry. Pilotti denied the accusations, stressing the objective difficulties he encountered in his function in a climate of high internal pressure, which was incompatible with the work of any judiciary body.¹⁰³⁷ Pilotti's argument for his resignation stressed his professionalism and was based on the fact that the political atmosphere was damaging his ability to do the work for which he had been selected.

What is important to note about Pilotti's brief appearance in the purging commission of the Foreign Ministry is that someone, whom the Fascist police believed 'worthy of the highest moral confidence' in 1939, became in 1944 a prosecutor of Fascists.¹⁰³⁸ All of a sudden, Pilotti, who held key positions during the Fascist regime, was considered anti-Fascist enough to be able to purge the Fascist administration at the Foreign Ministry. This situation can be better understood if we consider that before

¹⁰³⁵ Pilotti to Pietromarchi, 29 Apr. 1936, Carte Luca Pietromarchi, sez.2 Corrispondence, 'Massimo Pilotti', TFE. The book was published with an alias in 1938: Dei Sabelli, L., *Storia di Abissinia* (Rome, 1938), 4 vols.

¹⁰³⁶ Pietromarchi to Pilotti, 14 Oct. 1944, Carte Luca Pietromarchi, sez.2 Corrispondence, 'Massimo Pilotti', TFE

¹⁰³⁷ Borzoni, *Renato Prunas Diplomatico (1892-1951)*, pp.439-440

¹⁰³⁸ Note 'Roma, 21 luglio 1939', MI, DGPS, POL POL, Persone, b.1023 'Massimo Pilotti', ACS

applying the sanctions against Fascism, the judiciary was not purged. Moreover, there were efforts to promote the idea that the magistrature had been anti-Fascist from the beginning.¹⁰³⁹ This initial mistake and the progressive weakening of the leftist part of the anti-Fascist coalition contributed to the general failure of the sanctions against Fascism. The criminal penalties were implemented only in a limited manner, due to the controversial juridical interpretations, mainly by the Court of Cassation, and any effort of prosecution ended in 1946, when an amnesty made sure that the most brutal Fascist crimes were left unpunished.¹⁰⁴⁰ The same happened to the purge of the public administration, which according to Achille Battaglia *'fallì clamorosamente'* (failed clamorously).¹⁰⁴¹ The Courts accepted many requests for review and the matter was finally settled by two decrees in 1948 and 1949, which revoked purge ordinances.¹⁰⁴² In practice, this meant that people such as Pietromarchi, who coordinated the Italian intervention in the Spanish civil war (1936-1939) and headed the economic war office at the Foreign Ministry (1939-1940), could successfully continue their diplomatic career in the post-war period.¹⁰⁴³

In addition to the appointment as president of the commission in charge of purging the Foreign Ministry, the year 1944 brought additional achievements in Pilotti's career. In August 1944 he was nominated Principal State Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation (*Procuratore Generale della Corte di Cassazione*), a position that he

¹⁰³⁹ Pavone, C., *Alle origini della Repubblica* (Turin, 1995), p.130; Battaglia, A., 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia, A., *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955* (Bari, 1955), pp.317-408

¹⁰⁴⁰ Pavone, *Alle origini della Repubblica*, pp.132-140; Battaglia, 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955*, pp.346-351

¹⁰⁴¹ Battaglia, A., 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955*, p.335

¹⁰⁴² DL 7 Feb.1948 and Legge 14 May 1949, n.326 in Pavone, *Alle origini della Repubblica*, p.143

¹⁰⁴³ Nattermann, R. (ed.), *I diari e le agende di Luca Pietromarchi (1938-1940). Politica estera del fascismo e vita quotidiana di un diplomatico romano del '900* (Rome, 2009), p.529

maintained until May 1948, when he became first honorary president.¹⁰⁴⁴ Moreover, on 26 August 1944 he also obtained the post of President of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT), which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was created within the LoN framework but re-established in 1940 as an independent intergovernmental institution.¹⁰⁴⁵ He maintained this position until 1959.

The attempted purge of the public administration was not the only crucial moment of Italy's post-war history which saw Pilotti as a protagonist. In 1946, as Principal State Prosecutor at the Court of Cassation, he was involved in deciding the outcome of the referendum on Italy's form of state. In fact, on 1-2 June 1946, the Italians voted to decide whether the country would remain a monarchy or become a republic. The Court of Cassation was called to proclaim the final result of the referendum and then to decide over an interpretation regarding what kind of majority was to be considered in order to read this result. The debate was about whether the Court had to count the will of 'the majority of the voters' (which meant that in order to win one side had to achieve half plus one of the preferences of all voters) or 'the majority of the valid votes', thus excluding from the count spoiled votes.¹⁰⁴⁶ Because there were many spoiled votes, and because it seemed that the republic had won by a small margin, the monarchists lodged a complaint to the Court in favour of considering the will of the majority of the voters.¹⁰⁴⁷ The decision of the Court was due on 18 June 1946.¹⁰⁴⁸ On

¹⁰⁴⁴<http://www.cortedicassazione.it/ProcuraGenerale/Documentazione/Procuratori/Procuratori.asp> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

¹⁰⁴⁵ [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/massimo-pilotti_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/massimo-pilotti_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/); Statute of UNIDROIT, 1940, available at: <http://www.unidroit.org/english/presentation/statute.pdf> (last accessed 30 July 2014)

¹⁰⁴⁶ Battaglia, A., 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955*, pp.322-323

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.324

¹⁰⁴⁸ Mola, A.A., *Declino e Crollo della Monarchia in Italia* (Milan, 2006), p.70

17 June, Pilotti, as Principal State Prosecutor, submitted his interpretation of the matter, which went in the direction of the monarchists, and considered as winning the preference of the majority of the voters.¹⁰⁴⁹ In practice, no matter which type of majority was considered, the republic had won anyway. However, Pilotti's interpretation implied that it had done so by a very small margin (ca. 250.000 votes) and this would have called for further checks on the uncertain electoral registers, the uncounted polling stations, those entitled to vote who did not get their electoral certificates, etc. calling for a new vote, in a period of uncertainty.¹⁰⁵⁰ As suggested by Aldo Mola, Pilotti's interpretation was '*giuridicamente...ineccepibile*' but '*politicamente...irricevibile*' (legally impeccable, but politically inadmissible).¹⁰⁵¹ In June 1946, the situation in Italy required leadership: the social and political tensions were high and the need to vote again would have brought unwanted consequences.

When the Court met on 18 June, only six judges, including the Court's President Giuseppe Pagano, voted in favour of Pilotti's position: the other 12 decided to consider only the valid votes for determining the majority. Pilotti himself did not have voting rights. The final decision of the judges was partly due to their own legal interpretation, but was highly influenced by the current political situation.¹⁰⁵²

¹⁰⁴⁹ Rodolico, N. and Prunas-Tola, V. (eds.), *Libro Azzurro sul "Referendum" 1946* (Turin, 1953), pp.123-131

¹⁰⁵⁰ Mola, *Declino e Crollo della Monarchia in Italia*, pp.134-5; Numbers are slightly different (245.000) in Battaglia, 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955*, p.325. According to the other interpretation, which was then adopted, the republic had won over the monarchy of more than 1.800.000 votes (the final numbers still diverge).

¹⁰⁵¹ Mola, *Declino e Crollo della Monarchia in Italia*, p.33

¹⁰⁵² *Ibid.*, p.134; Battaglia, 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955*, pp.326-327

Pilotti's stand on the matter was seen by the republicans as a clear sign of him being a monarchist.¹⁰⁵³ At the same time, according to the monarchists, Pilotti did not do enough to plead the monarchic cause and to counter the political pressure from the anti-Fascist government.¹⁰⁵⁴ Pilotti's interpretation was legally correct, and even if he was indeed a monarchist, there is no doubt about his expert's approach to the referendum question.

In the post-war period Pilotti's career flourished not just in the national context, but also in the international one. By the late 1940s, Pilotti was back in the international community as a renowned international jurist. The continuity with the interwar, Fascist years went unnoticed. In August 1947, the Italian Minister of Justice, Giuseppe Grassi, wrote to the Foreign Ministry about the possibility of nominating an Italian candidate as judge to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the successor of the League's Permanent Court of International Justice. He proposed Pilotti for the post because of his competence in international law due to the positions he had held, his knowledge of the international environment and the prestige he enjoyed.¹⁰⁵⁵ In the new republican government, Pilotti's international experience at the League of Nations provided an assurance of his international qualifications. Unfortunately, since Italy was not yet a member of the UN and had not adhered to the ICJ charter, it could not propose candidates. What the Foreign Ministry offered as an alternative, was the nomination of Pilotti as Italian judge at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, to which Italy had adhered, and from whose pool the UN elected judges for

¹⁰⁵³ Battaglia, 'Giustizia e politica nella giurisprudenza', in Battaglia *et al.*, *Dieci Anni Dopo, 1945-1955*, p.326; Montanelli, I. & Cervi, M., *L'Italia della Repubblica (2 giugno 1946 – 18 aprile 1948)* (Milan, 1985), pp.44-45

¹⁰⁵⁴ Lucifero, F., *L'Ultimo Re. I Diari del Ministro della Real Casa 1944-1946* (Milan, 2002)

¹⁰⁵⁵ Giuseppe Grassi to MAE, 20 Aug. 1947 in Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia, Gabinetto, b. 23, "Corte di giustizia internazionale. Dott. Massimo Pilotti", ACS

the ICJ.¹⁰⁵⁶ The Ministry of Justice sustained the idea and Pilotti became member of the Court of Arbitration in 1949.¹⁰⁵⁷ Pilotti's attempts to return to the international stage encountered the same practical obstacles that Stoppani found, namely Italy's exclusion from the UN institutions. However, thanks to the support of the republican government, which after Pilotti's work for the purge commission no longer questioned his Fascist past, he succeeded.

The membership of the Court of Arbitration was just a first achievement. It was followed in 1952 by his nomination as the first president of the newly created Court of Justice of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The Court was established by the Treaty of Paris in 1951, with the aim to guarantee the application of this Treaty and to solve controversies emerging between the six ECSC members (Italy, France, West Germany and the Benelux countries). In 1957, with the Rome Treaties, it then became the Court of Justice of the European Communities.¹⁰⁵⁸ Pilotti was called to serve in this position by the member states, thanks to the support of the Italian government, legitimised by his international competences. Obtaining this post was a significant personal achievement for Pilotti, but also a national success in a period when Italy was trying to make its return to the international community. In 1955 Pilotti was reconfirmed president for another three years and he stayed at the Court of Justice until 1958.¹⁰⁵⁹ He died in 1962.¹⁰⁶⁰

¹⁰⁵⁶ MAE to Justice Ministry, 4 Sept. 1947 in Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia, Gabinetto, busta 23, "Corte di giustizia internazionale. Dott. Massimo Pilotti" ACS

¹⁰⁵⁷ Grassi to MAE, 10 Sept. 1947 in Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia, Gabinetto, b.23, "Corte di giustizia internazionale. Dott. Massimo Pilotti" ACS; http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7014/ (last accessed 30 July 2014)

¹⁰⁵⁸ McCormick, J., *European Union Politics* (Basingstoke, 2011), pp.221-223

¹⁰⁵⁹ 'Information à la presse', 1 Dec. 1955, Fond CECA Haute Autorité – CEAB01 Service Juridique, CEAB01 - 1064 'Cour de Justice de la CECA: élection de Massimo PILOTTI, Président, nomination des membres, composition des chambres (1953-1956)', HAEU

¹⁰⁶⁰ http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/jcms/Jo2_7014/ (last accessed 30 July 2014)

At the League, Pilotti had held a political post, that of Italian Under Secretary-General (then Deputy Secretary-General), which became all the more political during the Ethiopian crisis. However, Pilotti, unlike Paulucci before him, was not a politician. He was an internationally recognised legal expert. Nevertheless, while not the most fervent Fascist, at the League he did what was expected from him and used his legal expertise to defend the Italian case in front of the world, obeying Mussolini's orders. Pilotti was interested in international law, but he was not particularly impressed with the internationalist project of the League, or committed to it. For him, internationalism was a stepping-stone for career advancement, and League values were readily discarded when inopportune.

The prestigious position that Pilotti held in Geneva in the 1930s seemed forgotten by the end of the Fascist regime, when he was appointed to judge his former colleagues at the League, as if he were the most anti-Fascist of all. This was due partially to the peculiarity of the historical moment, but also to the fact that Pilotti's legal expertise was recognised as more relevant than his dubious political allegiances. His behaviour with the purge and the referendum showed a professional attitude. The League experience seemed to have had little influence on the life of Pilotti, but it was taken in great consideration in post-1945 Italy as a qualification for nominating him to international courts. In this sense, Pilotti is an example of Italian continuity of expertise from the interwar to the second post-war period. But, unlike Stoppani, in Pilotti there was no commitment to international cooperation. The factor of continuity in Pilotti's life was his expertise and his professionalism: Pilotti made of his legal expertise his life, and 'national' or 'international' were just the contexts in which to

practice it. He used one or the other according to what was more convenient to his career. In this sense his relationship with internationalism was just opportunistic.

The Diplomat: Alberto Berio

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So far, we have seen the impact of the League of Nations on the lives and careers of two experts: a real internationalist, Pietro Stoppani, and an opportunist, Massimo Pilotti. However, another category of Italians in the Secretariat was that of the professional diplomats, suggested by Rome for a post in the League, and who worked in Geneva while on leave from the Italian Foreign Ministry. These diplomats included Alberto Berio, Daniele Varé, Bernardo Attolico, Luca Pietromarchi, Marcello Roddolo, Guido Crolla, and Renato Prunas. In order to be part of the diplomatic

service, these individuals had shown a particular commitment to their nation, however not necessarily to the Fascist party. What was the impact of the League's internationalism on their lives and careers? To what extent and in what ways do their experience as diplomats differ from that of the experts? In order to answer these questions, this chapter analyses the experience of the last Italian diplomat serving in the League's Secretariat in 1937: Alberto Berio.¹⁰⁶¹

Alberto Berio (1900-1984), assistant to the Deputy Secretary-General Massimo Pilotti from 12 November 1934, was the person who brought Ciano's telegram announcing Italy's withdrawal to Avenol in December 1937.¹⁰⁶² Subsequently, having submitted his resignation to the Secretary-General, Berio returned to Rome.¹⁰⁶³ Even if Berio, in the late 1950s, described the moment as sad and painful, Italy's exit from the League came as great relief to him.¹⁰⁶⁴ In fact, he had long been complaining about his job in Geneva, initially for financial reasons, but with the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis, also because he objected to the League on what he called 'moral grounds'. Together with Prunas, Berio complained continuously about the stipend he received at the League, which he believed was insufficient to guarantee him and his family a respectable life.¹⁰⁶⁵ He expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that his predecessors received an indemnity and that certain civil servants at the League, for instance Pilotti and Fier, still benefited from a stipend from the Italian Ministries while they were on

¹⁰⁶¹ In the post-war period, Berio, like many other diplomats and politicians who served during Fascism, felt the need to justify his behaviour in such difficult times and published his memoirs: Berio, A., *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya* (Naples, 1961)

¹⁰⁶² Berio, 'L' "affare" etiopico', p.218

¹⁰⁶³ Berio, *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya*, pp.110-111

¹⁰⁶⁴ Berio, A., 'Società delle Nazioni e Nazioni Unite' in *Nuova Antologia*, vol.476, 1959, p.3

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ciano to Count Thaon de Revel, 25 Jan. 1937; Berio to MAE Personnel Office, 24 Dec.1936; Note sent to Mussolini, December 1935, SdN b.11, ASMAE

leave from their positions there.¹⁰⁶⁶ In late 1936, in addition to the economic factor, he underlined the rise of moral reasons for not wanting to be at the League. Berio wrote to Ciano that he would have welcomed with joy and enthusiasm the possibility of being recalled to Rome. In fact, even though the League's sanctions against Italy had ceased, Berio found unbearable 'the heavy moral sacrifice that a Fascist official has to face when having to transform himself into a League's civil servant.'¹⁰⁶⁷ Reconciling his loyalty to the regime with the duties towards his employer became increasingly frustrating.

Before joining the League, Berio, as all other Italian diplomats working for the institution, had already had extensive international experience. In 1920, before starting a career at the Italian Foreign Ministry, Berio worked for the financial service of the Italian delegation to the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission in Paris, the international cooperation body that employed many future LoN civil servants, including Stoppani.¹⁰⁶⁸ After entering the Italian diplomatic service in 1924, Berio served at the Italian Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria.¹⁰⁶⁹ In 1927, he returned to Rome to work for the League of Nations Office of the Foreign Ministry, which gave him the chance to be at the heart of the Italian relations with Geneva, years before obtaining a post at the Secretariat.¹⁰⁷⁰ Berio remembered this period as one of optimism at the League, which had become the political and diplomatic centre of the world.¹⁰⁷¹ Regarding Italy's position at the League, Berio believed that, even if it was the only

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ciano to Count Thaon de Revel, 25 Jan. 1937; Berio to MAE Personnel Office, 24 Dec.1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁰⁶⁷ Trans. Berio to Signor Ministro (Ciano), 9 Nov. 1936, SdN b.10; Berio to MAE Personnel Office, 24 Dec.1936, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁰⁶⁸ Berio, *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya*, pp.24-25

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.40

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.52

¹⁰⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.49

state with political tendencies different from those prevailing in the organization, the contrast was only superficial, since the Fascist regime was really concerned about *'fare bella figura'* (making a good impression) in Geneva.¹⁰⁷² In the early 1930s, however, the divergence between the League and Italian Fascism started to increase. The changes were reflected in the removal of Grandi from Foreign Minister in July 1932, a sign that the anti-League forces of the regime started to prevail. As part of the re-shuffling of the Foreign Ministry connected to Grandi's departure, Berio was sent to Prague.¹⁰⁷³

However, Berio's pause from dealing with League business lasted only for a short period. In November 1934, he was sent to the League's Secretariat to take the place of Marcello Roddolo as personal assistant to Pilotti.¹⁰⁷⁴ In addition to helping Pilotti manage the work of the institution in the field of intellectual cooperation, Berio was the liaison officer between Geneva and Rome.¹⁰⁷⁵ But in 1934, the atmosphere in the League was different from how Berio left it two years before: Germany and Japan had left and the divergence between the interests of the League and those of Italy had increased. Moreover, with the rise of anti-League feelings in Rome, the government looked with suspicion at those working for this international organization.¹⁰⁷⁶ Together with Pilotti, Berio was in Geneva during the highest moment of tension between Italy and this institution: the Ethiopian crisis. In Barros's opinion, Berio was also part of that team of loyal and indispensable people defending Italy's case at the

¹⁰⁷² Berio, *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya*, p.60

¹⁰⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.50-51

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.70-71

¹⁰⁷⁵ Berio, 'L' "affare" etiopico', p.182; Ciano to Count Thaon de Revel, 25 Jan. 1937, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁰⁷⁶ Berio, 'L' "affare" etiopico', p.181

League in the Ethiopian dispute.¹⁰⁷⁷ This doesn't necessarily make him a fervent supporter of the Fascist regime. In fact, Berio was not a member of the PNF and had not been involved in actions that would suggest a particularly intense Fascist faith. The regime, however, considered him a faithful servant.¹⁰⁷⁸ Berio, who was a conservative and a nationalist, connived with the regime and benefited from it, as did many other Italians.

Berio's memoirs described the period of the Ethiopian crisis as very difficult for the Italian civil servants in Geneva. They were caught between a rock and a hard place: any recommendation for moderation made to Rome was interpreted as lack of enthusiasm for Fascism. At the same time, international co-workers in the League would not trust the Italians in the Secretariat and, unsurprisingly, they were excluded from the committees dealing with sanctions to Italy.¹⁰⁷⁹ Berio had high hopes that the Hoare-Laval negotiations would bring a peaceful settlement of the matter and was disappointed when they failed.¹⁰⁸⁰ However, in his communications with Rome, Berio showed increasing irritability at the behaviour of the League. For example, when debating with Vladimir Sokoline from the Soviet delegation in Geneva in April 1937 the likelihood of Italy's return to the League once the Ethiopian issue was settled, at Sokoline's suggestion that there should be preliminary agreements, Berio replied that it was out of place to ask Italy for guarantees. It was the League that had burned its bridges and it should be the League to make a conciliatory gesture towards Italy.¹⁰⁸¹

¹⁰⁷⁷ Barros, *Betrayal from within*, p.55

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ciano to Count Thaon de Revel, 25 Jan. 1937, SdN b.11, ASMAE

¹⁰⁷⁹ Berio, A., 'L' "affaire" etiopico', p.190

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.207

¹⁰⁸¹ Pilotti to Ciano, 24 Apr.1937, in DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), Vol.6, doc.504

Berio also held a very negative opinion of Avenol. According to Berio, the LoN Secretary-General did not do enough to solve the quarrel between Italy and the organization.¹⁰⁸² Berio's unhappiness with his post in the League increased after Italy refused to go back to Geneva, following the recognition of the Ethiopian delegation to the LoN Assembly in September 1936. When trying to keep Rome informed about the League's activities, Berio felt almost reprimanded for sending unwanted memos about matters that, only for the fact being dealt with at the League, were considered unpleasant.¹⁰⁸³

Berio's experience with the League's internationalism was made difficult by the increasingly tense climate in the relationship between Italy and the institution. However, in Geneva, Berio never really worked for the League. Firstly, because he remained an employee of the Italian Foreign Ministry and secondly, because he interpreted his post as serving more the needs of his country than those of the organization. In fact, while in Geneva, Berio did not show an understanding of the aims of the League and instead of sharing its internationalist values, he remained in his diplomatic bubble, characterised by a national attitude to the events he had to face. But did his short experience in Geneva have any long-lasting impact on his life and career?

Berio after the League: Towards the Return to the *Palais des Nations*

Unsurprisingly, once he left the League, Berio took back his post at the Foreign Ministry from which he had been on leave. On 2 March 1938 he was nominated

¹⁰⁸² Berio to Signor Ministro (Ciano), 9 Nov. 1936, SdN b.10, ASMAE

¹⁰⁸³ Berio, A., 'L' "affaire" etiopico', p.217

diplomatic counsellor to the Italian Embassy in Ankara and remained there until December 1942, when he returned to Rome as Vice-Director of the Balkans' questions office, part of the 'Armistice and Peace Bureau' led by Pietromarchi.¹⁰⁸⁴ As the other diplomats temporarily serving the League of Nations, his life after the League went back to the national sphere, to serve the country, following the normal career path within the Ministry.

Berio found himself playing an important role in the days following the end of Mussolini's government. After 25 July 1943, with the establishment of Pietro Badoglio's administration, he was asked by his former chef in Ankara, Raffaele Guariglia, now the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, to take the place of Badoglio's son Mario in Tangier as Consul General.¹⁰⁸⁵ The task, which Berio recalled as a secret mission, was to make a first contact with the Allies, to explain the Italian situation as seen from the inside, presenting the necessary premises for a possible armistice. In particular, Berio was meant to convince Alvary Gascoigne, the British representative in Tangier, that in order for Italy to cooperate with the Allies, it was necessary to relieve the pressure of the German forces on the country, possibly through a new landing. Moreover, decreasing bombardments would have helped the Italian government to maintain the internal front.¹⁰⁸⁶ When hearing about the mission, Berio

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ambasciate e Legazioni del Regno d'Italia all'Estero in DDI, Serie VIII (1935-1939), vol.8, p.644; Berio, *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya*, p.129; Nattermann (ed.), *I diari e le agende di Luca Pietromarchi (1938-1940)*, p.530

¹⁰⁸⁵ Berio, *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya*, p.129; Berio, A., *Missione segreta. Tangeri: Agosto 1943* (Milan, 1947), pp.34-35; Guariglia, R., *Ricordi 1922-1946* (Naples, 1950), p.600; Berio to Prunas, 19 Apr. 1944 in DDI,

Serie IX (1939-1943), Vol.10, Annex 2, pp.942-945

¹⁰⁸⁶ Berio, *Missione segreta*, pp.35-37; 41; 46; Guariglia, *Ricordi 1922-1946*, pp.601-602; Berio to Prunas, 19 Apr. 1944 in DDI, Serie IX (1939-1943), Vol.10, Annex 2, pp.942-945

found it astonishing that the new Italian government had no idea of how to make contacts with the Allies, days after the departure of Mussolini.¹⁰⁸⁷

The role of peace negotiator in Tangier described by Berio is confirmed by Winston Churchill. He wrote that the Allies, after having been contacted on 4 August 1943 in Lisbon by Marquis d'Ayeta about saving Italy from the Germans, received the first official request to open peace negotiations from Berio on 6 August 1943 in Tangier.¹⁰⁸⁸ The British, with the support of the Americans, replied that they required an unconditional surrender of Italy, but that they desired that 'in due course Italy should occupy a respected place in New Europe.'¹⁰⁸⁹ Some days later the negotiations for the armistice continued with Giuseppe Castellano in Lisbon and brought to the signature of the Armistice of Cassibile (Sicily) on 3 September, made public on 8 September 1943.¹⁰⁹⁰

Why was Berio selected for such a sensitive mission? Berio stated that Badoglio and Guariglia simply scrolled down the personnel list and stopped at his name, which was considered reliable. He was picked by chance.¹⁰⁹¹ However, the choice of Berio for this delicate task showed that Badoglio's government, which also originated from the Fascist years, believed that he had the capability and the professionalism required for this secret mission. Berio was considered trustworthy and sufficiently distant from Mussolini and the Fascist Party officials, to be able to contact the Allies about the termination of Italy's alliance with the Nazis and, with it, of Fascism itself. At the end of Mussolini's regime, Berio remained loyal and committed to the nation, not to the

¹⁰⁸⁷ Berio, *Missione segreta*, p.47

¹⁰⁸⁸ Churchill, W., *The Second World War* (London, 1952), vol.5, pp.88-92

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.92; Berio, *Missione segreta*, p.73

¹⁰⁹⁰ Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol.5, pp.92-99

¹⁰⁹¹ Berio, *Missione segreta*, pp.45-46

ideology. The same was true for Prunas, who had joined the League at the same time as Berio and who played a key role as secretary general of the Italian Foreign Ministry after the end of Mussolini's government, helping Italy to re-establish diplomatic relations after the armistice.¹⁰⁹² Berio, together with Prunas, served the new Badoglio government during the difficult years of transition. The situation of other diplomats who had been working for the League was different: Pietromarchi, for instance, who held a leading position within the regime, chose to hide himself from October 1943.¹⁰⁹³

Berio's diplomatic work under the transitional government, following Mussolini's forced departure from Rome, was not limited to the Tangier mission. After a failed attempt to take up a diplomatic post in Argentina, in December 1944, Berio was sent to Switzerland, which he reached on the same plane that then on the way back brought Einaudi and Colonnetti to Rome.¹⁰⁹⁴ Switzerland was of key importance for Italy during the complicated months after the armistice, when Italy was split into two parts with the Allies in the South and the Germans in the North. In fact, it hosted thousands of Italian exiles, including key actors of the Italian post-Fascist reconstruction and leaders of the resistance. It also hosted members of the Italian aristocracy, including part of the Italian royal family and key personalities of the Fascist period, trying to escape prosecution, such as Giuseppe Bastianiani and Dino Alfieri.¹⁰⁹⁵ As chargé d'affaires in Bern from 1944 until January 1947, Berio dealt

¹⁰⁹² Borzoni, *Renato Prunas Diplomatico (1892-1951)*

¹⁰⁹³ Nattermann (ed.), *I diari e le agende di Luca Pietromarchi (1938-1940)*, p.19

¹⁰⁹⁴ Berio, *Dalle Ande all'Himalaya*, pp.132-4

¹⁰⁹⁵ Berio, A., 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera' in *Nuova Antologia*, vol.475, Feb. 1959, pp.184; 187

with different aspects of the Italian anti-Fascist movement abroad and with the difficulties of the thousands internees of very different political colours.¹⁰⁹⁶

Berio was in charge of contacts with the CLNAI, the Liberation Committee for Northern Italy (Lugano Section), which had the task to help the resistance in Italy and maintain connections between the Italian refugees in Switzerland.¹⁰⁹⁷ Berio's role was to mediate between the CLNAI and the new Italian government, and to liaise between these two and the representatives of the Allies in Switzerland.¹⁰⁹⁸ Moreover, Berio had to deal with the problems of the Italian internees in the country, including resistance fighters.¹⁰⁹⁹ In particular, Berio managed to obtain from the Swiss authorities the status of military internees (who enjoyed better conditions), for the resistance fighters of the Val d'Ossola (Garibaldi Division) confined at Lac Noir and unlike other resistance divisions, considered as civilians.¹¹⁰⁰ The Swiss soldiers treated them as criminals and the conditions of the camp, close to detention, were so negative that the 'hosts' promoted a hunger strike.¹¹⁰¹ Berio played an active role in the improvement of the situation and his role in the settlement of the Lac Noir dispute with the Swiss government is widely recognised by the anti-Fascists and their literature.¹¹⁰² Moreover, in the last months of the war, Berio provided support to the CLNAI to avoid the expatriation to Switzerland of Fascists from Italy, in particular those of the Salò Republic.¹¹⁰³ Berio went from being part of the Fascist team

¹⁰⁹⁶ DDI, Serie X (1943-1948), Vol.1, p.647; DDI, Serie X (1943-1948), Vol. 4, p.859; Berio, 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera', p.186

¹⁰⁹⁷ Berio, 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera', p.187

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.188-189

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid., p.189

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp.188-189; Castro, S., *Egidio Reale tra Italia, Svizzera e Europa* (Milan, 2011), pp.237-238; Signori, *La Svizzera e i Fuoriusciti Italiani*, p.60

¹¹⁰¹ Signori, *op. cit.*, p.60

¹¹⁰² Berio, A., 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera', p.189; Signori, *op. cit.*, pp.60-61; Musso, C., *Diplomazia Partigiana* (Milan, 1983), p.227

¹¹⁰³ Musso, *op. cit.*, pp.230-232

defending Italy in Geneva during the Ethiopian crisis, to being the contact of anti-Fascist exiles and Italian resistance leaders in Switzerland.

In his writings, Berio presented himself as benefactor of the Italian resistance fighters refugees in Switzerland and he stressed the friendships he made with the members of the CLNAI.¹¹⁰⁴ The anti-Fascist forces in Switzerland, however, while recognising an improvement in the relations with the Italian Embassy after the substitution of Massimo Magistrati with Berio, maintained an attitude of suspicion with the Italian representation in Switzerland, which kept within its ranks many equivocal characters from the Fascist days.¹¹⁰⁵ The CLNAI delegates had a chance to express their disappointment when the first member of the new Italian government, parachuting himself to Northern Italy, reached Switzerland in April 1945. In the presence of Aldobrando Medici Tornaquinci, Under-Secretary for the Occupied Territories, and of Berio, the communists of the CLNAI delegation launched a strong attack against the lack of renewal in the officials representing Italy, who were very much part of the same Fascist entourage that the resistance was fighting.¹¹⁰⁶ The anti-Fascists in Switzerland were disappointed with the fact that those pretending to be the representatives of the new transitional government were instead ultra-Fascists who had accepted the change of regime just for opportunism. Moreover, some of them kept friendly contacts with the German secret services, or, like the military attaché Tancredi Bianchi, engaged in the preparation of subversive groups meant to become

¹¹⁰⁴ Berio, 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera', pp.188-190

¹¹⁰⁵ Signori, *op. cit.*, p.39; Musso, *op. cit.*, pp.191-192

¹¹⁰⁶ Berio, 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera', pp.191-192

the vanguard of a future Italian Fascism.¹¹⁰⁷ Even if Berio suspended Bianchi, the situation only saw limited improvement and no real purge took place.¹¹⁰⁸

When the president of the CLNAI delegation first met Berio, he had the impression that the diplomat was eager to bring change to the Italian representation in Switzerland. However, he concluded that Berio was unlikely to go too much in depth against an environment from which he originated.¹¹⁰⁹ The episode with Tornaquinci described above is reported by Berio, who obviously portrayed the allegations as unfair and exaggerated.¹¹¹⁰ But Berio himself was not free of blame. Even though, when in Switzerland, Berio did his best not to attract the opposition from the CLNAI and to improve the conditions of the internees, he was never an anti-Fascist. Berio was and remained a result of the Fascist years. As we have seen with the Tangier mission, Berio was loyal to the nation rather than the party, but nevertheless it was thanks to the Fascist regime which trusted him, that he developed his diplomatic career. When Berio left the post in 1947, his replacement, Egidio Reale, who had been an anti-Fascist exile in Geneva from 1927, gave that novelty to the Italian diplomatic presence in Switzerland, that Berio had been unable to provide.¹¹¹¹

After Switzerland, Berio returned to the Foreign Ministry in Rome as the head of the '*Servizio Economico Trattati*', a position he held until August 1948, when he became the Director General of Personnel at the Foreign Ministry.¹¹¹² Soon, however, he was considered for international posts and in October 1950, he became Italian

¹¹⁰⁷ Ignazio Silone cit. in Mercuri, L., *L'epurazione in Italia 1943-1948* (Cuneo, 1988), p.157n; Signori, *op. cit.*, p.89

¹¹⁰⁸ Signori, *op. cit.*, p.90

¹¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.90-91

¹¹¹⁰ Berio, A., 'Esuli e Partigiani Italiani in Svizzera', pp.191-192

¹¹¹¹ Castro, S., *Egidio Reale tra Italia, Svizzera e Europa* (Milan, 2011)

¹¹¹² DDI, Serie XI (1948-1953), Vol. 1, pp.1188, 1195

Ambassador to Chile. In 1950, Berio was not the only diplomat to receive a further international posting: it was also the case of Prunas, new Ambassador to Egypt and Pietromarchi, whose removal from the Ministry during the purge had been revoked with the amnesty and who, became Ambassador to Turkey, before being appointed Ambassador to Moscow in 1958.¹¹¹³ In 1953, Berio was sent to New Delhi, and in 1956, to Addis Abeba for two years.¹¹¹⁴ While in Ethiopia, a country he knew from the interwar crisis with Italy, Berio signed a treaty for the re-establishment of Italo-Ethiopian relations: the agreement concerning the settlement of economic and financial matters issuing from the Treaty of Peace.¹¹¹⁵ Therefore, following Italy's withdrawal from the League, Berio returned to his national sphere and, even though, as a diplomat, he had the opportunity to work in several foreign countries, there is no sign that the League's internationalism left long-lasting effects on him.

Berio had a chance to reconsider his interwar experience and the role of the League in international cooperation in 1958, when he was appointed as Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations Organization, Geneva Office (UNOG). Together with Pampana, the malariologist, Berio was the only Italian civil servant in the League to return to Geneva as part of the UN system. However, his international experience differed from that of the experts, in that Berio returned as a national representative, a political post with predominantly national perspective.

¹¹¹³ Borzoni, *Renato Prunas Diplomatico (1892-1951)*, p.569n

¹¹¹⁴ Serra, E., *Professione: Ambasciatore d'Italia. (Volume secondo)* (Milan, 2001), p.32

¹¹¹⁵ 'Agreement concerning the settlement of economic and financial matters issuing from the Treaty of Peace and economic collaboration. Signed at Addis Abeba, on 5 March 1956' registered at the UN as Treaty no. 3844, 1957

Berio's return to Geneva prompted within him a reflection on the changes in international cooperation from the League of Nations to the United Nations.¹¹¹⁶ Writing in 1959, he commented on the differences between the two organizations. The biggest of them was their scope. In his opinion, the League was a European organization, based in Geneva. It was the domain of European powers and non-European states were peripheral. The UN, instead, was truly global and in it, the European states were the minority.¹¹¹⁷ The UN apparatus was much bigger than that of the League and, according to Berio, the increased dimension of the UN was a sign of the increasing need of the states to interact with each other and to entrust to international organizations the safeguarding of common interests.¹¹¹⁸ What Berio also found striking about the new organization was that colonial discourse was very much present within it.¹¹¹⁹ The League was a circle of European powers debating European problems, in which the colonies were taken for granted (or highly desired), and there was no space for colonized people.¹¹²⁰ In the UN, the European countries were on the defensive, as the principle of nationality had crossed the European boundaries starting anti-colonialist revolutions worldwide.¹¹²¹ An important difference between the two organizations was the governments' attitude towards them: unlike the League, which encountered the scepticism of many states from the very beginning, the UN met the enthusiasm of all the new states created from decolonisation, which were eager to join. According to Berio, this behaviour showed that the international system tended to identify itself with the UN Charter.¹¹²² Berio, however, did not believe that

¹¹¹⁶ Berio, A., 'Società delle Nazioni e Nazioni Unite' in *Nuova Antologia*, vol.476, Maggio-Agosto 1959, pp.3-16

¹¹¹⁷ Berio, 'Società delle Nazioni e Nazioni Unite', p.4

¹¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.10

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6

¹¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.8

¹¹²² *Ibid.*, p.10

the UN was an improvement on all fronts: the universality of the new organization meant that it was more difficult to reach detailed agreements.¹¹²³ Moreover, the political activity of the LoN had looked much more encouraging than that of the UN: the states within the League were not positioned on two sides, like at the UN, but the political positions were much more variegated and the League could intervene when needed. At the UN there was less space for political manoeuvres.¹¹²⁴ Looking back at the League, Berio believed that it had been ‘useless but necessary’: an experiment that failed in order to allow a more successful second attempt.¹¹²⁵

In reading Berio’s comments on the League and the UN in the 1950s, one has the impression that Berio had always supported international cooperation. But from the historical record uncovered here, we know that he had mainly a national approach to these organizations. Berio found himself uneasy in the 1930s in Geneva. As a diplomat he never had an international perspective of international cooperation, and this was true when he was civil servant at the Secretariat as well as when he became Italian representative at the UNOG. Berio saw only states as actors in international relations and saw little additional value in international organizations.

The League had a limited impact on the life and career of Berio. He dealt with the League not because he was committed to its internationalist project, but because, as an employee of the Italian Foreign Ministry, he was required to do so. While Berio was positively impressed by the ‘Locarno spirit’ and the international diplomatic contacts in the good years of the League, he considered it mainly as a diplomatic forum and ignored the technical work of its Secretariat, of which he was an employee.

¹¹²³ Berio, ‘Società delle Nazioni e Nazioni Unite’, p.11

¹¹²⁴ Ibid., p.12

¹¹²⁵ Ibid., pp.12; 14

As member of the Italian diplomatic service, Berio was requested to be loyal to his nation and its government. Changes in government, such as from Mussolini's to Badoglio's, implied limited career shifts but his loyalty to the state, often associated with the royal family, remained unaffected. Berio's career continued without interruptions after the League. Berio, as a diplomat, was the representative of Italy abroad, and as such his understanding of the League's internationalism was limited. In the late 1950s, he was favourably impressed by the development of the UN, which allowed him to re-elaborate his interwar experience and conclude that the League was 'a failure but a necessity.' However, this statement is also clear evidence that he had a poor understanding of the phenomenon.

Berio's life and career during and after the League can be used to make some generalisations about a well-represented category of Italian civil servants working in the Secretariat: members of the diplomatic service temporarily on leave from the Foreign Ministry. These diplomats included Daniele Varé, Marcello Roddolo, Bernardo Attolico, Luca Pietromarchi, Guido Crolla and Renato Prunas. They were characterised by a strong attachment to the nation and, partially as a consequence, the absence of a commitment to the League's internationalism. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the situation of Attolico was slightly different, as he was appointed to the diplomatic service and he had had a successful experience with international cooperation before joining the League. However, after the League he behaved like the other diplomats. For them, the League was a political forum and an instrument for national policy in addition to the normal diplomatic negotiations. There was a major difference on the understanding of the League and of international cooperation possessed by these diplomats if compared with that of experts like Stoppani.

We have seen how Italy's withdrawal from the League and Mussolini's order to resign from LoN-related posts received a variety of responses from the Italian civil servants in Geneva. However, the outcome was a general compliance with Mussolini's desires. With the exception of some more politicised members of the ILO, the only high-ranking Italian civil servant in Geneva to oppose the directive was, unexpectedly for Rome, Pietro Stoppani. We have seen that Stoppani was strongly influenced by his experience at the League: he embraced internationalism and he committed to international cooperation until the end of his days. Contrary to what the literature so far suggests, there was a continuity of expertise in international cooperation between the interwar and post-war period valid also for the Italian case: of the seven Italian civil servants left in the First Division of the League in December 1937, four (Stoppani, Pilotti, Ugo Theodoli and Pampana) found ways of putting their international expertise into practice in the post-1945 years. The international recognition of their expertise survived the Fascist regime.

The impact of the League's internationalism on the lives and careers of the Italians at the League was manifold. In the case of the experts, the understanding and attachment to the mission of the League differed greatly: Stoppani was a passionate advocate of international cooperation as the solution for guaranteeing world peace; Pilotti was self-oriented and indifferent to the LoN message. The diplomats, mainly because of their profession, had a national outlook to international relations. The League had no immediate influence on their understanding of the world, but was more of a stopover in a wider diplomatic career. In general, it is important to note that the Italians working as civil servants in the League, who have rarely been considered as

interesting people by the historians, were present and active in key moments in Italian history, from the armistice to the referendum on the monarchy, in the post-Fascist international relations, and in post-1945 European reconstruction.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has examined the relationship between Italy and the League of Nations, starting from the experiences of the Italian civil servants, characterised by conflicting loyalties and Fascistization, and continuing with that of the Italian experts, who were highly valued in Geneva. After analysing the interests of the Italian state in the organization, the thesis concluded by assessing the consequences of this relationship beyond the specific issue of the Italian membership, in the post-1945 world. In which ways therefore has this study led to a reconsideration of the relationship between Fascist Italy and the League of Nations?

In the first place, this dissertation has provided evidence that there was more to the Italian membership of the League of Nations than the Ethiopian crisis. Instead it has revealed the extent of the Italian presence and activity in this institution, and the complexity of the relationship between the two. To start with, we saw that Italy, which ranked as the third-largest power within the League, was a key member of the organization, and was fully involved in the League's work. Italy's presence was not limited to its diligent participation in the workings of Council and Assembly, but was wider and at all levels. By recovering the Secretariat as a place of interaction and through the prosopographical study, which revealed for the first time who the Italian officials were, we have been able to establish that Italy was active in almost every section and that Italians occupied key positions, such as Stoppani and Catastini, both of whom were Directors. For the whole duration of its membership Italy was engaged in all aspects of the technical work of the institution both at the Secretariat and through the expertise of more politicised figures such as Theodoli and Gravina.

Finally, in addition to playing an active role in the cooperation efforts promoted by the League, in particular with respect to disarmament, Italy in the 1920s successfully proposed the creation of two Rome-based international institutes to be placed under the auspices of the organization. One of them, UNIDROIT, survives until today. In no way, therefore, was Italy a nominal member of the League.

Secondly, this thesis has sought to contribute to a reassessment of rather simplistic judgements that Fascist Italy was a troublesome member of the League. Until the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis, Italy was a problematic member mainly at the institutional level of the League's Secretariat, but this was not the case at the political level. Fascist Italy did have a negative impact on the League's Secretariat, by actively interfering with the administrative dynamics of the institution through a process of Fascistization. The extent of this negative influence has been proven to be wider and more systematic than previously recognised. In fact, all Italian civil servants in Geneva were obliged to cope with Fascist influences on their work and lives. This process was underway long before the Italo-Ethiopian conflict and it originated before Paulucci's appointment to Under Secretary-General. By actively interfering with the administrative dynamics of the LoN Secretariat, Italy contributed to a weakening of the institution.

In contrast, at the political level, Italy was not regarded as a particularly problematic member state until the outbreak of the Ethiopian crisis. Instead, France and Britain considered Italy to be an important interlocutor on matters such as disarmament, and collective security in relation to the German situation. Unlike Germany, Italy did not unduly disrupt the work of the League from the beginning to the end of its

membership. The behaviour of Italy on the various matters of political and technical nature discussed at the institution was not obstructive but cooperative, for instance in the economic field or in the reduction of armaments. The reasons behind Italy's collaborative approach are connected to the purpose of the organization as seen by the Fascist regime: an international forum designed to prevent war through international negotiations. Geneva was the place where the Fascist government, provided it presented itself in the appropriate manner, believed that it could obtain satisfaction for its security and colonial needs.

This dissertation also prompts a reconsideration of the role that the League of Nations played in Italy's foreign policy, arguing that this institution was more important to the Italian government than previously recognized. Italy's membership of the League was essential to guarantee international status and legitimation to the Fascist regime. Unlike in the 'real' world, at the League, Italy ranked as the third most powerful state: an important achievement for the least of the Great Powers. The Italian presence in the League made this Fascist dictatorship a commonly accepted form of government and this facilitated Italy's diplomatic relations, as well as the achievement of international agreements. The membership of the League was vital for Italy to be at the centre of the political stage and for developing a favourable reputation. While partially confirming some of Costa Bona's conclusions, by working from the League towards Italy, my dissertation revealed other aspects of this relationship, together with the complexity of the Italian membership. In particular, it showed that, owing to what I have called 'international exhibitionism', the Fascist regime not only actively promoted a positive image of itself, but also appropriated internationalism by promoting the creation of the Rome-based international institutes. Presenting itself as

a country committed to international cooperation, Italy aimed not only at increasing its international prestige, but also at obtaining practical benefits. In fact, until the early 1930s, part of the Fascist government saw the membership of the LoN as an opportunity to solve the Italian colonial question and legally obtain a territory, in the form of a mandate. Italy's cooperative attitude was driven by the desire to use the League to fulfil its own national interests. It did not try to undermine the organization from the beginning, but to take advantage of it.

This thesis therefore argues that it is not possible to write a history of Italian foreign policy during the Fascist years by claiming that the Fascist regime simply ignored the League of Nations: it could not and did not. For Italy, the League was an important forum for obtaining the approval of the Great Powers. Mussolini's foreign-policy decisions were influenced by this organization, as proven by the fact that he conceived the Four-Power Pact as an alternative to it. Also, the fact that when it came to its claims on Ethiopia Italy decided to go against the Covenant, but not before attempting to settle the matter within the League, exemplifies the point that Italy took this institution into account. Equally, once Ethiopia was conquered, Italy actively sought to have its new Empire recognised by Geneva. In short, Fascist Italy sought approval from Geneva.

In addition to contributing to the historiography of the League of Nations and that of Italy's foreign policy, this dissertation also uncovered the depth and variety of interactions between nationalism and internationalism in the case of Italy at the League. Perhaps most importantly, it contributes to recent scholarship establishing that there can be no dichotomous separation between the two, but rather interaction.

This study therefore argues that internationalism reinforced nationalism. Italy used the League of Nations, defined as both the institution and the engagement in it of the Italian experts, as a means for legitimising itself on the international stage, and as a way to internationalise its national interests. Moreover, by offering an international forum in which Italy could pursue its foreign-policy aspirations and complain about the unfairness of the Peace Treaties, the League allowed the Italian colonial question to acquire greater international importance than it otherwise would have done in bilateral negotiations. Internationalism legitimised Italian nationalism as well as reinforcing Fascist colonial claims.

At the same time, however, the Fascist regime had to accept compromises with the League. With the hope of obtaining foreign-policy benefits from its membership, Italy presented itself as committed to the prevention of war, and eagerly cooperated with the organization. In this sense, the League helped to moderate Fascist Italy, which for more than a decade attempted to obtain its foreign-policy goals through the League rather than directly through a unilateral action. Only when it was clear that these aims could not be achieved did the equilibrium break.

Moreover, nationalism reinforced internationalism. The League needed Italy as a member state in order to increase its prestige and legitimise its existence. How credible could the League have been as an organization aiming for international cooperation and preventing war by having only Britain, France and small states as its members? The League, which did not include the USA and the Soviet Union (which joined only in 1934), needed Fascist Italy as a member even more after Germany left the institution in 1933. At the same time, however, the League had to find a way of

handling the problematic aspects of having nationalist and undemocratic governments as member states and, as we saw with the Plainpalais and the Rocca cases, it had to find compromises. These compromises were essential in order for the League to pursue its agenda and continue to function. The Italian membership of the League therefore underlines the complexity of international cooperation in the interwar period, demonstrating in line with recent historiography that it cannot be reduced to a simple tale of success and failure.

This dissertation's stress on the role of individuals has also revealed new aspects of the dynamics that developed between Italy and the League. The thesis presented the first thorough study of the Italians in the League's Secretariat: the role of Italians as opposed to that of Italy. The different people analysed in this dissertation showed that the Italians in the League were not a monolithic representation of Italian Fascism abroad. Their diversity reflected the multifaceted nature of Fascism as a political movement: we met fervent Fascists, such as Righetti and Pietromarchi; as well as nationalists, such as Gravina; conservative Catholics, such as Theodoli; and liberals who were required to find a compromise with the regime, such as Stoppani and Rocca. The Plainpalais case also illustrated how the internal divisions of Italy were projected abroad. But the variety of identities embodied in the Italians in the League also demonstrated how interwar Italian politics was not characterised only by the opposition between liberals and Fascists. Other forces, such as the Vatican and the aristocracy, were also involved.

The multiple identities of the Italians in the League, which this dissertation has uncovered, need to be put in relation to their international experience. In Geneva, the

national and the international dimensions of the lives and work of these individuals coexisted and interacted. This led to conflicts of loyalties, when the aims of the Fascist government were in contrast to those of the League, but it also resulted in cooperation and unexpected contributions to the work of the institution. This dissertation has illustrated the complexity of being an Italian working in the League, as well as the grey areas between nationalism and internationalism evident within individual experiences. The literature hitherto never considered these individuals and the information they bring with them about the relationship between member states and the League. Thus, future research on these dynamics and how far they were true of officials of other nationalities is highly recommended.

The experience of the Italians in the League helped us to overcome some common misconceptions about Italian Fascism, starting with the idea that Italy's post-1945 international cooperation had nothing to do with the Fascist years. As we have seen, there was not only the continuity of expertise provided by Stoppani, Pilotti and Pampana, but also continuity within the Italian Foreign Ministry, through the roles of Prunas, Pietromarchi and Berio. This dissertation has therefore demonstrated that 1945 was not the 'year zero' of Italy's contemporary international relations. Moreover it challenges the notion that Italy returned to the international scene after the war by overcoming its Fascist past. As we saw, Italy made use of the international socialization of its nationals during the Fascist years to return to the international scene. Thus, Italy, one of the states that contributed the most to the end of the League, made its role felt in the international community in the post-1945 period with many of the same people whom it did in the League years. Once again, this demonstrates the highly relative nature of the frontier of 1945 in European international history.

Conversely, the thesis has demonstrated that Fascism did not reject internationalism. The Fascist government not only developed the image of a state eager to cooperate, but also actively appropriated internationalism by supporting the international institutes in Rome. Italy had much more of an international presence than is often thought. Finally, the idea that Italian foreign policy in the Fascist years was always aggressive is also not entirely correct. While no one can ignore the Corfu and the Ethiopian crises, for about a decade Italy, by exhibiting a positive image, succeeded in convincing the Great Powers as to its good faith and commitment in the accepted norms of international relations embodied in the League.

This dissertation not only offers a new reading of the relationship between Italy and the League, it also increases our understanding of key aspects of the nature of this complex international organization. In fact, by analysing the League through the prism of the Italians, we can present new answers to some of the most relevant questions about the institution: what the League of Nations was, why it is worth studying, whether or not its existence made any difference to interwar politics, and what its contribution was to international cooperation after 1945.

The League of Nations was a key international forum for interwar politics and became a central hub for diplomatic relations. Especially in the 1920s, the League was the meeting place of the most prominent politicians of the time, and we have seen how Grandi understood the importance of his presence there. For Italy, active participation in the League's activities was a way to broaden its international presence in addition to the usual methods of diplomacy through embassies and consulates, and a means of

increasing its chances to fulfil its foreign-policy aims. Italy was not alone in this respect. In fact, the League of Nations was a means for many member states to pursue their national interests. This was not only the case with Fascist Italy, but also with democratic countries. However, while for states like Britain or France national interests often equated with the aims and objectives of the institution, this was not the case for Italy.

The dissertation also confirms that, despite claiming to be an international organization constituted by states from every continent, the nature of the League remained largely European. European nations were its leading members. Adding complexity to the organization, many of them were also empires. Therefore the League had to cope also with an imperial dimension. Fascist Italy aspired to achieve such a dimension and in this sense it was much closer to the liberal democracies than it is normally thought. Italy recognised the League's imperial scope and sought to achieve its colonial claims through this institution.

What emerges is also that the League was not a monolithic entity. At its different levels of activity (Secretariat, Council, Assembly), different dynamics between the institution and the member states developed. We saw how Italy was considered troublesome in the Secretariat, but not so much so in the Council. The real novelty of the League's structure was the Secretariat where internationalism was put into practice: staff from different nationalities cooperated for the common good and were dependent on a body *super partes*. It was an institutionalised attempt to coordinate international expertise and in this respect provided a basis for the more systematic and integrated work of other bureaucracies during and after the Second World War. The

League was instrumental to the creation of international networks which were then at the basis of international cooperation during the second post-war period. The League served as an incubator for the methods of international organizations of the post-1945 era. It created not only the experts but also the expertise, through reports, publications and know-how on which subsequent institutions were based. This was exemplified by the EPU project, promoted by Stoppani during the interwar period and put into practice in the 1950s.

The Italian membership of the League, uncovered in this dissertation, leads us to a better understanding of the dynamics which can arise between an international organization and an undemocratic regime. Today, undemocratic states still seek to be part of international organizations for the same reasons: to obtain legitimacy and to achieve practical solutions to current crises. In the face of these contemporary challenges, the history of Italy and the League of Nations demonstrates that a narrative of success and failure of international organizations has its limits. The challenge is to interpret and appreciate the grey areas and the multiple dimensions in which states, individuals and international organizations relate to each other in the modern world.

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