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Fascist Italy in the Wireless World: Transnational Networks, 'Spiritual Imperialism' and Soft Power

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List of Abbreviations

Archives

ACS – Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Rome)

ASMAE – Archivio Storico Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Rome)

Magazines and Programmes

RC – Radiocorriere

RT – Radio Times (BBC)

RV – Radio Verdad

RVIS – Radio Verdad Italo Spagnolo

WR – World Radio (BBC)

Departments, Bodies and Institutions

ANI – Associazione Nazionalista Italiana

CAUR – Comitati d'azione per l'universalità di Roma

CNF – Consiglio Nazionale della Falange

CNR – Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche

DGP - Direzione generale della propaganda

EIAR – Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche

EUR – Esposizione Universale di Roma

IRCE – Istituto relazioni culturali con l'estero

IRT – Ispettorato della radio e della televisione

ISR – Istituto Studi Romani

MAE – Ministero degli Affari Esteri

MAR – Mostra Augustea della Romanità

MC – Ministero delle Communicazioni

MCP – Ministero della Cultura Popolare

MMIS – Missione Militare Italiano in Spagna

MSP – Ministero della Stampa e della Propaganda

PNF – Partito Nazionale Fascista

PSI – Partito Socialista Italiano

SDA – Società Dante Alighieri

SIAE – Società Italiana degli Autori ed Editori

SSSP – Sottosegretariato di Stato per la Stampa e la Propaganda

URI

- Unione Radiofonica Italiana
- Università Radiofonica Italiana

USP (of the MMIS) – Ufficio Stampa e Propaganda

Short Abstract

This thesis explores the Fascist regime's management of the radio as an international medium. First of all, this research reveals the regime's attempts to mediate Italians' contact with an increasingly international and transnational mass culture. Through an analysis of the official EIAR magazine, *Radiocorriere*, and the popular *Le Cronache del regime* broadcasts, this study probes the tensions and negotiations at play as Italian listeners were increasingly exposed to foreign languages and cultures. Secondly, it brings into relief the Fascist use of the radio as a tool for soft power through original archival research conducted at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS) and the Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASMAE). Charting the growth of Fascist international broadcasting uncovers the regime's use of the medium to reach listeners all over the wireless world. Equally, exploring the tactics used to gain access to these foreign listeners brings into relief how the regime made use of the radio's transnational nature in establishing networks, exchanges and collaborations. An extended case study on the *Radio Verdad* (Radio Truth) bulletins during the Spanish Civil War, allows for an exploration of radio's use in times of war as well as allowing us to probe its transnationalising effect on international news narratives. The research assesses the regime's deployment of the radio as a tool of *spiritual imperialism*, questioning what can be learnt of the regime's soft power project by mapping the wireless world onto the real world. In this vein, the research culminates in an analysis of *romanità* as a theme for international radio propaganda. It examines how the myth of Rome was used to draw a global hierarchy of peoples and how, in turn, this hierarchy was expounded as a means of shaping the nascent second Roman Empire. Ultimately, this thesis reconstructs the Fascist engagement with a medium which shrunk the earth and gave disparate peoples direct access to each other.

Long Abstract

This thesis explores the Fascist regime's management of the radio as an international medium. First of all, this research reveals the regime's attempts to mediate Italians' contact with an increasingly international and transnational mass culture. Through an analysis of the official EIAR magazine, *Radiocorriere*, and the popular *Le Cronache del regime* broadcasts, this study probes the tensions and negotiations at play as Italian listeners were increasingly exposed to foreign languages and cultures. Secondly, it brings into relief the Fascist use of the radio as a tool for soft power through original archival research conducted at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS) and the Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASMAE). Charting the growth of Fascist international broadcasting uncovers the regime's use of the medium to reach listeners all over the wireless world. Equally, exploring the tactics used to gain access to these foreign listeners brings into relief how the regime made use of the radio's transnational nature in establishing networks, exchanges and collaborations. The research assesses the regime's deployment of the radio as a tool of *spiritual imperialism*, questioning what can be learnt of the regime's soft power project by mapping the wireless world onto the real world. Ultimately, this thesis reconstructs the Fascist engagement with a medium which shrunk the earth and gave disparate peoples direct access to each other.

Existing institutional histories of the Italian radio during the Fascist years pay scant attention to international broadcasting and the international dimension of Italian radio culture.[1] Furthermore, they tend towards searching for monolithic policies in radio

[1] Alberto Monticone, *Il fascismo al microfono. Radio e politica in Italia (1924-1945)* (Edizioni Studium, 1978); Franco Monteleone, *La Radio italiana nel period fascista. Studio e documenti* (Marsilio, 1976); Antonio Papa, *Storia politica della radio in Italia* (2 vols) (Guida Editori, 1978).

production which are then judged by a binary success-failure analysis. Such an approach blocks us from appreciating the interconnectedness inherent in international broadcasting and the transnational networks necessary for its production. While Marzano's recent study in the context of Arabic-language broadcasts from Radio Bari teases out such connectivity as well as the tensions, difficulties and failures it involved, this thesis widens the net to explore these themes in a variety of contexts.[2] This research as a whole takes its cue from the shift which may best be characterised by the change in thinking of the space radio occupied from the 'ether' to that of the 'wireless world'. The ether (derived from the Ancient Greek *aithēr* meaning 'upper air') was commonly believed to be the physical (and mystical) substance through which radio waves passed. True to this sense of other-worldly mysticism, Potter outlines how the 'relatively short-lived interwar imagery of the ether' resulted in a 'vision of radio as a straightforward and benign globalizing force that is often associated with the utopian rhetoric of the electrical sublime'.[3] The 'wireless world', an 'idea that recurred repeatedly in contemporary thinking about international broadcasting across the twentieth century', allows historians to avoid thinking of radio in 'limitless, mystical, and almost supernatural terms' while, instead, endeavouring to write a 'histoire croisée' which accounts for the extent to which 'approaches to broadcasting propaganda were often thickly entangled across borders'.[4]

This thesis explores both the domestic and international aspects because, as will become clear, a neat distinction between the two is not possible. Any such attempt at separating the two would ignore the deeply interconnected, entangled and international nature of the wireless world. An assessment of the regime's attempted negotiation of Italian

[2] Arturo Marzano, *Onde fasciste. La propaganda araba di Radio Bari (1934-43)* (Carocci editore, 2016).
[3] Simon J. Potter, 'Out of the Ether: The Wireless World and New Histories of International Radio Broadcasting' in *The Wireless World: Global Histories of International Radio Broadcasting*, ed. by Simon J. Potter (Oxford University Press, 2022), p.5.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp.3-5.

listeners' contact with foreign cultures probes the ways in which it sought to armour an imperial people on their travels through the wireless world. This internationalism at the heart of Italian radio culture was reinforced by the Italian radio broadcasting in foreign languages. Apart from stations which produced broadcasts exclusively for foreign listeners (such as Santa Palomba, Prato Smeraldo and Radio Bari), the vast majority of foreign language broadcasts were transmitted from the same stations as was domestic programming. This meant that Italian-language broadcasts would be interrupted by bulletins in foreign languages. Rather than discouraging contact with foreign cultures and languages, the radio was employed as a means of mediating this very contact.

On the other side of the coin, this thesis explores how such foreign-language broadcasting was used as a tool in the Fascist soft power project. As defined by Nye, soft power 'co-opts people rather than coerces them' by focussing on 'getting others to want the outcomes that you want'.[5] Employing persuasion and 'observable but intangible attraction' rather than threats and force, soft power 'rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others'.[6] Probing the use of radio as a soft power tool entails bringing into relief the networks (for example, technical, journalistic, political and diplomatic) that allowed access to foreign listeners as well as textual analysis of the broadcasts targeted at foreign listeners. As such, this thesis highlights key themes of broadcasts across a variety of geographical contexts both in peace time and during war.

The research is organised into four chapters which, taken together, aim to retrace Fascist navigations through the wireless world:

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[5] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (PublicAffairs, 2009), p.17.
[6] *Ibid*.

Chapter 1 - *Negotiating Radio's Transnational Nature: Italian Radio Culture and Travels through the Wireless World*

In the context of a radio production which was becoming increasingly varied due to the attempt to cater to different national audiences, this chapter, in the first instance, brings into relief the intensely international feel to Italian radio culture. Distant listening was an ever-present aspect of the radio listener's experience from the medium's genesis and, as we will show, was arguably the most appealing aspect of tuning into the wireless world. Through an analysis of the EIAR's official magazine, *Radiocorriere*, and Roberto Forges Davanzati's *Cronache del regime* broadcasts, we will explore the ways in which the regime attempted to mediate, counteract and even encourage the internationally-minded Italian travellers through the wireless world. Rather than taking as a *point de départ* the assumption that the apparent cosmopolitanism of the radio was inherently at odds with the regime's ultra-nationalistic and autarkic search for totalitarian control over Italian national culture, this chapter asks how the regime tried to incorporate and benefit from the international aspects of radio culture. Removing the assumption that such aspects must be antithetical to the Fascist cultural ethos, this chapter asks how the radio's modernity was seen as an opportunity for the regime to teach Italians about their superiority on the international stage and how to exercise it.

Chapter 2 - *Exporting Fascism to the Wireless World: International Broadcasting, Interconnectedness and Negotiating Transnational Networks*

International radio scholarship has, in recent years, sought to highlight the transnational networks at play in a wireless world which is increasingly understood in terms of exchange, collaboration and interconnectedness. The focus of this research has largely fallen on the liberal democracies and on projects organised through the International

Broadcasting Union (IBU), based in Geneva and associated with the League of Nations. Such exchanges predominantly entailed projects which included all IBU members and were largely music-based. The dictatorships, largely due to their preference for bilateral cultural exchanges and their being at odds with the League's internationalism, are mostly absent from this line of enquiry. While showing how the regime flagrantly ignored IBU regulations and did not take seriously its collaborative spirit, this chapter exhibits how Fascist international broadcasting still required leverage of transnational networks, exchange and collaboration. While its international broadcasting technology in the 1930s was one of the best in the world, reaching foreign audiences required thickly entangled webs of journalists, translators, diplomats, foreign broadcasters, foreign politicians, and foreign newspaper editors. Starting at the origins of Fascist foreign-language broadcasting, this chapter explores the ways in which Fascist Italy sought to grow its soft power across the wireless world.

Chapter 3 - *A Pre-Emptive Defence of the Fascist Revolution in Europe:* Radio Verdad *and the Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War*

This chapter reconstructs the Fascist regime's propaganda intervention in the Spanish Civil War via the clandestine broadcasts produced under the name of the fictitious station *Radio Verdad* (Radio Truth). *Radio Verdad* (*RV*) claimed to be a pro-Nationalist Spanish station while, in fact, being broadcasted from Italy. These broadcasts were a genuine effort to aid the cause of Franco's Nationalists and represented an innovative use of the medium in the context of war. Despite governments, national broadcasters and newspapers discovering (and reporting) that these broadcasts were, in fact, emanating from Italy, many radio listeners were not aware of their true provenance. Relying on a combination of ministerial correspondence and listeners' letters, this chapter corrects the historiographical confusion surrounding *RV*'s genesis, organisation and intentions as well as uncovering its impact in Spain and its international reach. The Spanish Civil War was a significant testbed

for the radio propaganda that would be so central to World War II and this research affords Fascist Italy new centrality in our understanding of the development of the radio as a tool in the context of war.

Chapter 4*: Mapping the New Roman Empire onto the Wireless World:* Romanità *between shared heritage, values and civilising conquest*

Recent scholarship has highlighted the centrality of the *myth of Rome* in Fascist ideology and propaganda, stressing its potency as a cornerstone of Fascist modernity. As the modern embodiment of ancient Rome, Fascist Italy would erase the errors of liberal Rome and bring Italy the glory its privileged relationship with history demanded. The *romani della modernità* (Romans of modernity) would also, therefore, take up Rome's imperial civilising mission. Despite focus on the significance of *romanità* in the domestic sphere, scholarship is lacking on the role of *romanità* both as a tool for constructing an international hierarchy of peoples and as an international tool for Italy's soft power. This chapter seeks to understand how *romanità* over the radio depicts the Fascist understanding of the (wireless) world and equally explores how *romanità* was used as the most central theme in its pursuit of *spiritual imperialism*. In so doing, this chapter considers a variety of geographical contexts to explore the polyvalence and malleability of *romanità* as a propaganda theme based on the target audience's ancestry (whether they belonged to the Latin brotherhood of nations) and values (whether they subscribed to fascism as the modern ideological embodiment of ancient Rome).

Through these four chapters, the thesis offers an exploration of the Fascist regime's imperialistic navigations through the wireless world. In turn, this exploration contributes to our understanding of the negotiations and tensions at play in the Fascist management of a

growing mass culture which increasingly necessitated transnational networks and entanglements as well as our understanding of the regime's soft power project.

Introduction: Radio, Soft Power and the Fascist management of international culture

1.1 Marconi's Obelisk: Rome at the Beating Heart of the Wireless World

The EUR district in Rome was constructed specially for the 1942 World Fair which ultimately never took place due to the war. At its heart, in the Piazza Guglielmo Marconi (formerly the Piazza Imperiale), stands an obelisk in honour of the Italian physicist whose name is synonymous with radio broadcasting. The monument evokes at once victory columns in the ancient Egyptian and Roman style and, at the same time, resembles a towering radio mast, embodying Fascism's desired fusion of antiquity and modernity which the EUR district was designed to display. The '150-foot-tall faux-Egyptian obelisk covered in panels depicting scenes from the life of the inventor' was commissioned by Mussolini in 1937 but only completed in 1960 in time for the Rome Olympics.[7] This ancient radio mast looks over the streets of the EUR district, all of which are named after places from all four corners of the globe as well as the names of famous writers and composers.



Figure 1: Obelisco Marconi (EUR, Rome)[8]

[7] Marc Raboy, *Marconi: The Man who Networked the World* (Oxford University Press, 2016), p.550.
[8] Wikipedia creative commons license: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Obelisco_Guglielmo_Marconi.JPG.

There are the Via dell'Oceano Atlantico, the Via dell'Oceano Pacifico, the Viale Europa, the Via Australia, the Via Nepal and the Viale Iran. Beethoven, Chopin and Stendhal all have their roads and there is even a Viale dell'Esperanto (a language in which the Italian radio offered lessons). The street names of the EUR district (and Rome as a whole) offered a symbolic map of Italy's global influence, be that direct imperial rule or spiritual, cultural and political influence. In a broadcast E.M. Gray warns, 'le nostre città sono ricche di piazze e di strade da intitolare a nuovi nomi di gloria: se vi saremo costretti' (our cities are rich with piazzas and streets to which to give new names of glory: if we are forced to) highlighting the practice of symbolically incorporating the vanquished into the new Roman Empire.[9] Fascist imperialism was defined in the *Dottrina del fascismo* as not being only 'un'espressione territoriale o militare o mercantile, ma spirituale o morale' (a territorial, military or mercantile expression but a spiritual and moral one).[10] It is stressed that 'si può pensare a un impero, cioè a una nazione che direttamente o indirettamente guida altre nazioni, senza bisogno di conquistare un solo chilometro quadrato di territorio' (one can think of an empire, that is to say a nation which directly or indirectly guides other nations, without the need to conquer even one square kilometre of territory).[11] If the naming of the streets in the shadow of Marconi's ancient radio mast makes physical this spiritual and moral influence which did not require the conquest of any territory, it also offers a cartography of an imagined space which the regime sought to conquer kilometre by kilometre: the wireless world. More than any other medium, the radio offers an image of this spiritual and moral imperialism by mapping its activity onto the symbolic territory of the wireless world. A crucial tool in what noted propagandist and prominent Fascist Franco Ciarlantini termed

[9] Ezio Maria Gray, *L'Italia ha sempre ragione* (Mondadori, 1938), p.159.
[10] The *Dottrina del fascismo* was co-authored by Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini and published as part of the entry under 'Fascismo', in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Treccani,1932). Accessible online at: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/fascismo_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/
[11] *Ibid*.

spiritual imperialism, Marconi's invention gave birth to a wireless world which Fascist Italy would have to navigate, negotiate and, ultimately, try to dominate. The streets in the transmission radius of Marconi's obelisk highlight another crucial fact of the radio: just as the eternal Italic genius embodied by Marconi brought all of these places into the reach of Fascist Italy's microphones it also brought their voices to Italy. The border-defying nature of the radio resulted in an international and cosmopolitan space populated by endless cultures and languages. This was a space which necessarily entailed exchange and collaboration and which regularly risked offence and conflict. The term itself, *spiritual imperialism*, captures the essence of what Joseph Nye termed 'soft power' (as opposed to 'hard power') in the context of the USA's influence beyond its borders.[12]

As defined by Nye, soft power 'co-opts people rather than coerces them' by focussing on 'getting others to want the outcomes that you want'.[13] Employing persuasion and 'observable but intangible attraction' rather than threats and force, soft power 'rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others'.[14] According to Nye, a country's soft power draws primarily on three resources: 'its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)'.[15] This research encounters the radio's propagation of and engagement with all three of these resources. Coined by Nye and entering into political discourse in the 1980s, the term 'soft power' is most commonly used in political science to refer to modern America's influence abroad as well as being applied to the international influence of other modern countries. The concept's application in

[12] See Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Book, 1991); and Nye, *Soft Power.*
[13] Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power,* p.17.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] *Ibid.*, p.20.

historical studies whose focus predates the term's invention is also common.[16] Such studies apply the essence of soft power as 'the ability to shape others' preferences through persuasion and attraction rather than through economic or military coercion' to many nations and their governments and institutions. This scholarship also remains true to the assertion, present in Nye's formulation, that 'the exercise of soft power can only be effective […] among parties sharing […] a system of common values, ideals, and aspirations'.[17] This 'attraction to shared values and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values' is particularly stark, as we will see in Chapter 4, in the insistence on the theme of *romanità* which aimed at creating a union based on shared heritage and values, all while attempting to command what Nye terms 'power by myths of invincibility or inevitability'.[18] Nye stresses that 'whereas leaders in authoritarian countries can use coercion and issue commands, politicians in democracies have to rely more on a combination of inducement and attraction'.[19] Whilst a dictatorship certainly allows for such coercion and commands, it is also true that Fascist domestic propaganda employed inducement and attraction. This thesis will explore the ways such tactics were employed to mediate Italians' contact with foreign cultures. Furthermore, coercion and commands were not possible with foreign listeners. In this instance, inducements and attraction were mobilised in Fascist Italy's soft power project. Franco Ciarlantini's term *spiritual imperialism* denotes the idiosyncratically

[16] For some important examples of soft power incorporation into historical discourses see Rosario Napolitano, 'Fascist soft power propaganda in the Baltic states during the interwar period: the case of Latvia', *Journal of Baltic Studies,* 54.2 (2023), pp243-59.; Aleksandr O. Naumov, 'The 1936 Berlin Olympics as an element of Nazi Germany's soft power strategy', *Voprosy Istorii*, 4 (2021), pp.76-84.; John D Alexander's chapter 'The Pre-war Church of England and Nazi Germany: Uses and Limits of Soft Power' in his monograph, *The Church of England and the Second World War* (Brill, 2025); Frank Lorenz Müller and Heidi Mehrkens (eds.), *Royal Heirs and the Uses of Soft Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Susan E. Hiner, 'Fashion's Soft Power in Nineteenth-Century France', *Dix-Neuf*, 26.4 (2022), pp.187-91.; Clause Hauser and François Vallotton, 'Entre *soft power*, competition économique et divertissement de masse: les expositions internationals aux XIXe et XXe siècles', *Relations internationales*, 164 (2015), pp.3-8.; Carolina Armenteros (ed.), *Inventing the Modern Papacy: Vol 2: From Feudal Kingdom to Global Soft Power (1789-1914)* (Brill, 2025).
[17] Alexander, *The Church of England*, p.81.
[18] Nye, *Soft Power*, p.27
[19] *Ibid*., p.17.

Fascist interpretation and practice of *soft power*. The notion of spirituality indicates Fascism's status as the antidote to the materialism expounded by Communism and Liberalism in its extreme (American) form while encapsulating its unique mythic response to modernity by virtue of which 'a strong culture could once again emerge' capable of maintaining spiritual integrity 'in the age of technology and the masses that liberalism had failed to deliver'.[20] The theme of *romanità* was arguably the most essential component of this spiritualism and its 'reservoir of revitalizing myths needed to construct an alternative modernity for Italy'.[21] On this note, the notion of imperialism denotes the inherent sense of cultural superiority at the heart of Fascist experiments in soft power. This study, therefore, serves as a contribution to the wider historical picture of soft power by giving the Fascist regime new centrality in our understanding of the tactics employed by states to use media as a means of gaining cultural and, therefore, political pre-eminence abroad.

1.2 New Approaches to International Broadcasting

The first attempts at writing the history of the radio broadcasting of the Fascist *ventennio* came in the context of the cultural turn of the 1970s and 1980s.[22] The intense interest in the history of radio after 1975 must doubtless also be ascribed to the law (n. 103) of 14 April 1975 which took radio control out of the hands of the executive and placed it under the control of the parliament, completely changing the relationship between radio and power in Italy. Three key studies (which fulfil essentially the same function and cover more-or-less the same ground) offer an in-depth institutional history of the Italian state broadcaster and allow us to consider 'acquisita quella parte documentaria che riguarda la struttura, le leggi e i regolamenti della società radiofonica, i rapporti con il potere politico' (acquired the

[20] Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Hitler and Mussolini* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.108.
[21] *Ibid.*, p.201.
[22] The three key monographic studies from this period are: Monteleone, *La Radio italiana*.; Monticone, *Il fascismo al microfono*.; and Papa, *Storia politica.*

documentary aspect that relates to the structure, laws and regulations of the radio broadcaster and its links to political power).[23] If Cavarocchi highlights that while 'gli studiosi che si sono occupati dei servizi radiofonici nel ventennio abbiano sottolineato la rilevanza della programmazione riservata ai paesi esteri, mancano lavori dettagliati sul tema' (scholars who have dealt with radio services during the *ventennio* have highlighted the relevance of programming aimed at foreign countries, detailed studies on the topic are lacking), it should be contended that, not only are detailed works lacking in this field, even the relevance of foreign-language programming is vastly under-appreciated in the existing scholarship.[24] Furthermore, the general tendency towards searching for monolithic policies in radio production which are then judged by a binary success-failure analysis is particularly counter-productive where international broadcasting is concerned. Such an approach blocks us from appreciating the interconnectedness inherent in international broadcasting and the transnational networks necessary for its production. While Marzano's recent study in the context of Arabic-language broadcasts from Radio Bari teases out such connectivity as well as the tensions, difficulties and failures it involved, this thesis widens the net to explore these themes in a variety of contexts.[25]

Recent developments in the scholarly approach to international broadcasting allow for a revaluation of Fascist Italy's role in the wireless world. This revaluation takes its cue from the shift which may best be characterised by the change in thinking of the space radio occupied from the 'ether' to that of the 'wireless world'. The ether (derived from the Ancient Greek *aithēr* meaning 'upper air') was commonly believed to be the physical (and mystical) substance through which radio waves passed. True to this sense of other-worldly mysticism,

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[23] Anna Lucia Natale, *Gli anni della radio (1924-1954). Contributo ad una storia sociale dei media in Italia* (Liguori Editore, 1990), p.49.
[24] Francesca Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie dello spirito. Il fascismo e la propaganda all'estero* (Carocci, 2010) ,p.175.
[25] Arturo Marzano, *Onde fasciste. La propaganda araba di Radio Bari (1934-43)* (Carocci editore, 2016).

Potter outlines how the 'relatively short-lived interwar imagery of the ether' resulted in a 'vision of radio as a straightforward and benign globalizing force that is often associated with the utopian rhetoric of the electrical sublime'.[26] The 'wireless world', an 'idea that recurred repeatedly in contemporary thinking about international broadcasting across the twentieth century', allows historians to avoid thinking of radio in 'limitless, mystical, and almost supernatural terms' while, instead, endeavouring to write a 'histoire croisée' which accounts for the extent to which 'approaches to broadcasting propaganda were often thickly entangled across borders'.[27] Badenoch and Föllmer highlight how 'over the course of the last decade, radio scholars have increasingly demonstrated that radio has long been entwined in networks and relationships beyond those framed by nations – and that even the national structures of radio were formed in transnational processes'.[28] One consequence of this transnational approach to radio broadcasting has been a focus on internationalist, cosmopolitan and, therefore, liberal projects of cooperation which contain the tacit assumption that the totalitarian dictatorships acted as lone wolves not involved in the thickly-entangled encounters that typified the humanitarian mission of the wireless world.

While 'scholars of international relations have long ignored the importance of transborder communication', this research acknowledges the extent to which 'propaganda was becoming an acknowledged part of inter-state relations'.[29] This acknowledgment means bringing into relief both the 'more deeply felt sense of national belonging among listeners' and the 'new forms of transnational identity'.[30] If, as Williams contends, 'literature on

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[26] Simon J. Potter, 'Out of the Ether: The Wireless World and New Histories of International Radio Broadcasting', in *The Wireless World: Global Histories of International Radio Broadcasting*, ed. by Simon J. Potter (Oxford University Press, 2022), p.5.
[27] *Ibid.*, pp.3-5.
[28] Alexander Badenoch and Golo Föllmer (eds.), *Transnationalizing Radio Research New Encounters with an Old Medium* (Transcript, 2018), p.11.
[29] Nelson Ribeiro and Stephanie Seul, 'Revisiting Transnational Broadcasting: The BBC'S foreign-language services during the Second World War', *Media History*, 21.4 (2015), pp. 365-77 (p.365).
[30] Simon Potter, *Wireless Internationalism and Distant Listening: Britain, Propaganda, and the Invention of Global Radio, 1920-1939* (Oxford University Press, 2020), p.2.

Fascist Italy has paid scant attention to the use of propaganda as an instrument to further the international ambitions of Mussolini's regime, focusing instead on the role of Italian Fascist propaganda in the domestic political arena', an exploration of the international dimension of radio broadcasting brings into relief both the international and domestic arenas.[31] In maintaining a 'view of radio as a rich ecology entwined on multiple scales, through which a number of relationships can be traced', it must be asked how a regime with imperial ambitions (both spiritual and martial) negotiated, tolerated and manipulated such relationships and networks. While the scholarship focusing on the internationalist, cosmopolitan and humanitarian impulses of international broadcasting stresses how the medium 'could allow political and cultural differences between states and peoples to be explained, understood, and overcome' it must also be asked how such differences could be fomented, exaggerated and encouraged. Of course, the culture of cosmopolitanism at the heart of radio broadcasting was not one which stopped at Italy's borders. Radio's defiance of borders made it 'from the start a transnational phenomenon' and for 'distant listeners', 'picking up international broadcasts from far-off radio stations often seemed like an adventure, a courageous voyage to another land'.[32] With radio's transnational power, it is not an exaggeration to speak of 'a globe connected both in imagination and reality, by radio'.[33] This work questions how Fascist radio policies and the Fascist radio culture engaged with this element of the medium.

1.3 Growth of the Radio: From marginal medium to overt politicisation

When considering the growth of radio broadcasting in Italy, an important distinction must be made between the number of subscribers and the growth of the network. The number

[31] Manuela Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad: Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940* (Routledge, 2006), p.110.
[32] Potter, 'Out of the Ether', p.1.
[33] Potter, 'Preface', in *The Wireless World*, p.v-vi.

of radio subscribers in Italy was always drastically behind European counterparts France, Britain and Germany as well as the United States. In 1926, while England and Germany had 1,230,000 and 1,022,000 subscribers respectively, Italy had a measly 26,850. This disparity never changed. Even in 1939, Italy had 1,170,000 subscribers (out of a population of 43,000,000), whereas Germany had 12,500,000. While the gap between Italy and other nations is startling, radio's reach within Italy must not be undervalued. First of all, it must be stressed that radio exceeded 'per numero di abbonati, e di gran lunga, la tiratura del più diffuso quotidiano italiano, raggiungendo località e ceti sociali che non erano in grado o non avevano interesse ad avvicinarsi alla stampa' (in terms of numbers of subscriptions, and for a long time, the circulation of the most read Italian newspaper, reaching places and social classes that were not able to or were not interested in using the press).[34] If as Tannenbaum calculates, 'one should multiply these figures by five to get the number of habitual listeners' due to the number of people listening per set (both domestically and thanks to public loudspeakers installed up and down the country), the radio had a significant listenership. Furthermore, if one considers that the EIAR subscription fee entitled a listener to a copy of the *Radiocorriere*, the EIAR's official magazine reached a significant reading public. We will soon discuss further the make-up of the domestic audience and its relevance for this study. What is most significant in the context of this study, however, is not the number of subscribers rather the growth of the network. The number of radio subscribers in Italy was always far inferior to neighbouring countries. The growth of its network, however, was not. In the 1920s, one could more properly speak of regional rather than national radio until the local stations were linked eventually into three distinct programmes made up of stations throughout Italian territory.[35] Its *Centro Radio Imperiale* in Rome, particularly the short-

[34] Nicola Tranfaglia, 'Radio e fascismo: il caso di "Radio Orario"', in *E poi venne la radio. Radio Orario 1925-1929*, ed. by Luigi Parola (RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1999), p.38.
[35] The 'Primo Programma' was broadcasted by Roma I, Bari I, Bologna, Bolzano, Napoli II, Milano III, Torino III and Tripoli; the 'Secondo Programma' by Milano I, Torino I, Genova I, Trieste, Palermo, Catania,

wave Prato Smeraldo (planned in 1928 and completed in 1930), meant that its technical capacity could rival that of Britain, France and Germany and, it has been argued, even surpass it.[36] Furthermore, Radio Bari (broadcasting primarily to North Africa and the Middle East) was a powerful station with a large reach.[37] Therefore, while the regime did not have the largest national audience, its technical capacity meant that it could reach the listeners of other countries (including those with much higher listenerships). With this in mind, this research reveals the Fascist conception of foreign radio audiences which aspires at times to reach the masses and, at others, focusses instead on reaching specific listeners.

The radio as a medium was born under the Fascist dictatorship, a fact which, according to Cannistraro, 'made it relatively easy for Mussolini to bring this important medium under his full control during the very years in which he consolidated his political power over the Italian state'.[38] Indeed, the regime immediately exerted political control over the newly-instituted state broadcaster through the compulsory appointment of four Fascist representatives to its board of directors. As Cannistraro highlights, 'real totalitarian control of radio services was hindered until 1935 because several ministries and government agencies shared control over various sectors of the medium'.[39] Through a series of centralising moves, including passing the ultimate responsibility from the Ministero delle Communicazioni to the then Ministero della Stampa e Propaganda (MSP), the regime ultimately concentrated the organisation of the radio under the Ispettorato per la radiodiffusione e la television (IRT), a body created in April 1937 at Mussolini's behest.

Padova, Ancona, Firenze II, and Roma II; the 'Terza Programma' by Firenze I, Napoli I, Roma III, Bari II, Milano II, Torino II, and Genova II. See the programme listings in *Radiocorriere*, N.35 (27 Aug – 2 Sep 1939), p.21.

[36] Monteleone, *Radio italiana*, pp.80-1.

[37] See Arturo Marzano, *Onde fasciste*; and Marzano, 'La «guerra delle onde»: La risposta inglese e francese a Radio Bari (1938-1939)', *Contemporanea,* 15.1 (2012), pp.3-24.

[38] Philip V. Cannistraro, 'The Radio in Fascist Italy', *Journal of European Studies,* 2.2 (1972), pp.127-54 (p.127).

[39] *Ibid.*, p.139.

This move meant that the Ministero della Cultura Popolare took direct control of the EIAR, ending, in theory, the competition and rivalry between various stakeholders. As head of the new IRT, Mussolini appointed Giuseppe Pession who was a 'retired admiral, pioneer in radio electronics, and acknowledged specialist in all aspects of radio technology'.[40] The new appointee's 'personal influence over what was broadcast on Italian radio was never very great and he usually allowed lower bureaucrats within his office to administer the Inspectorate'.[41] Not until responsibility for radio broadcasting was transferred to the MSP could the 'processo di piena integrazione del mezzo nell'organizzazione fascista del consenso' (process of full integration of the media within the Fascist organisation of consensus) be said to be fully underway.[42] In fact, 'solo dal 1935 in poi le strategie della dirigenza Eiar vengano concretamente ad intrecciarsi con le strategie politiche di ricerca del consenso' (only from 1935 onward did the strategies of the EIAR leadership come to cross over concretely with the political strategies for the search for consensus) at a time when the overt politicisation of the broadcaster's output increased noticeably. This markedly increased politicisation of the medium was best signified by the launching of the *Cronache del regime* broadcasts which, along with their main speaker, Roberto Forges Davanzati, will form a crucial part of Chapters 1 and 4. Their intense focus on foreign affairs offers an essential case study in understanding how the regime aimed to mediate between the medium's international nature and domestic audiences. This increased political interest in the medium as well as the technological advances throughout the 1930s (particularly in short-wave technology for long-distance broadcasting) means that the predominant focus of this study lies in the radio of the 1930s and 1940s, given that 'per tutti gli anni Venti la propaganda radiofonica fosse un fatto del tutto marginale' (for all of the 1920s radio propaganda was a

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40 *Ibid.*, p.141.
41 *Ibid.*
42 Natale, *Gli anni della radio*, p.71.

completely marginal fact).[43] While the 1930s was the moment of increased politicisation of the radio and the technological developments necessary for widespread international broadcasting, the period also corresponds to the moment in which Mussolini was free to turn his attention to the exportation of Fascist culture after weathering the domestic storms necessary for the establishment of the dictatorship and the securing of consensus (including the Matteotti crisis, the Lateran Accords, the negotiation of reduced war debts with America, the currency crisis and the financial crisis). The study does not, by the same token, account for the years of the Reppublica Sociale Italiana (RSI). The move to Salò meant the abandonment of the peninsula's most powerful radio installations and the RSI's policy and propaganda were dictated by the Nazis rather than being a continuation of the Fascist regime's approach. In fact, the Germans dismantled 'stations in Rome to take them to Busto Arsizio (to use them for activities completely under their control)' and even initiated broadcasts in Italian 'in aperto contrasto con le autorità di Salò' (in open contrast with the Salò authorities) under the title 'Radio Fante'.[44] While some studies of Fascist propaganda opt to stop at 1939 'because the entry into war led to discontinuity in objectives and practice', this research asks how the demands of war impacted the medium's management and the theme's treated over the airwaves.[45] The research, as a consequence, explores radio production in times of peace and war (the latter including not just WWII but the paradigm-shifting Fascist contribution to the Spanish Civil War which was a seminal historical moment for the growth of broadcasting as an international battlefield).

[43] Francesco di Legge, *L'aquila e il littorio: direttive, strutture e strumenti della propaganda fascista negli Stati Uniti d'America (1922-1941)* (Edizioni dell'Orso, 2015), p.196.
[44] Monticone, *Fascismo al microfono*, p.201.
[45] Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie*, p.21.

1.4 Audiences: Domestic factors and automatic access to the wireless world

Considering the developments of the radio domestically, a complicated picture of the Italian listenership remains. If Tannenbaum claims that the radio became a mass medium in the 1930s, he also claims that even when the peasantry was 'forced to listen to Mussolini on the radio in the village square, his words went over their heads, leaving no trace'.[46] Even in 1938, a 'radio di discreta qualità' (radio of discrete quality) cost around 1200-1300 lire while 'lo stipendio annuo di un funzionario direttivo dello stato, è invece, di 1300-1500 lire e quello di un funzionario esecutivo di 1000 lire' (the annual salary of a managerial state functionary was between 1300-1500 lire and that of an executive functionary 1000 lire).[47] Even with the production of the Radio Marelli (600 lire) and the Radio Balilla (430 lire) 'la diffusione degli abbonati non riesce a superare il limite della piccola borghesia' (the number of subscribers never managed to go above the threshold of the petite bourgeoisie).[48] It was supposed that the stripped-back-bare-bones nature of the German *Volksempfanger* would not do for the refined tastes of the Italian market, however the reality was that low rates of radio set ownership were attributable to low incomes.[49] While a truly affordable, mass market radio set was never produced to rival the German *Volksempfanger*, communal listening in squares and at *dopolavoro* centres arguably meant that the radio 'broadened the political and cultural awareness of many Italians who otherwise might have remained isolated and cut off from modern life'.[50] As we will see in Chapter 1, the radio public was varied and so, therefore, was the programming. The image of the listenership is, therefore, 'di un pubblico potenzialmente vasto e differenziato, dalle tendenze e dai gusti più variegati e non del tutto

[46] Edward Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience: Italian Society and Culture, 1922-1945* (Basic Books, 1972), p.214.
[47] Natale, *Gli anni della radio*, p.84.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] Monteleone, *Radio Italiana*, p.83.
[50] Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, p.154.

prevedibile' (of a potentially vast and diverse public, varied in habits and tastes and not at all predictable).[51] If, as Menduni expresses it, going to the cinema is like buying a bottle of mineral water and tuning into the radio is like turning on the tap, then any given listener at any given time was unlikely to know what would exit the faucet.[52] The radio, therefore, had the task of appealing to both the 'masse popolari' (popular masses) and the bourgeoisie which 'ne costituiva la più sicura base sociale' (constituted the most secure social base).[53] Appealing to the latter was complicated by the fact that 'pur difendendo la borghesia industriale e produttiva, detestavano la borghesia come mentalità e costume' (even when defending the industrial and productive bourgeoisie, they hated the bourgeoisie as mentality and habits).[54] As Tannenbaum has highlighted, 'on the one hand Fascist propaganda used chauvinism to help overcome feelings of inferiority among the conformist petty-bourgeois masses, while on the other hand, it often took a militantly antibourgeois tack in an effort to glorify "the people"'.[55] These tensions are, indeed, at play in domestic broadcasting. As we will see in Chapter 1, the juxtaposition of ultra-nationalism and seeming international cosmopolitanism can be particularly jarring. As has been established, ownership of a radio set was a luxury of the middle and upper classes due to financial restraints. The radio in rural communities fulfilled a different function than for the petite bourgeoisie. Through initiatives such as the *Ente Radio Rurale* (ERR), the regime aimed to export the radio to the provinces by installing sets in town squares, *dopolavoro* centres, local party headquarters and schools.[56] Seeking to 'use the radio to narrow the cultural gap between city and country'

[51] Natale, *Gli anni della radio*, p.64.
[52] Enrico Menduni, *I linguaggi della radio e della televisione. Teorie, tecniche, formati* (Editori Laterza, 2004), p.32.
[53] Monteleone, *Radio Italiana*, p.113.
[54] Emilio Gentile, *Storia del fascismo* (Editori Laterza, 2022), p.195.
[55] Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, p.218.
[56] ERR was created on 15 June 1933. Initially under the control of the Ministero delle Communicazioni but responsibility for the institution was transferred to the PNF in November 1934. Eventually, in 1939, ERR was transferred to the MCP and its production was fully incorporated into the EIAR.

given that it had 'become all but a monopoly of urban centres', ERR aimed to 'contribuire alla elevazione morale e culturale delle popolazioni rurali' (contribute to the moral and cultural elevation of the rural populations).[57] The ERR produced its own programmes (largely based on agricultural topics and school classes) as well as working towards the production and marketing of an affordable radio set (the aforementioned Radio Balilla which was not priced low enough to allow radio to catch up with European subscription figures). The focus of radio as a tool in the Italian provinces was decidedly one of nationalisation or, in the terms of Carlo Levi, 'la colonizzazione interna' (internal colonisation).[58] The radio, as a solution to the *questione della lingua*, was employed to teach Italian to those who still used dialect as their first (and often only) language. As such, the radio was a crucial modern means of connecting the periphery to the centre. When it came to the international dimension of radio broadcasting, however, the audience in question was predominantly the upper and middle classes. If 'il pubblico, cui inizialmente riferisce, è chiaramente colto, benestante, con grande passione per le tecnologie e molto attento a quello che avviene negli altri paesi' (the public at which it is initially targeted is clearly cultivated, well off and with a great passion for technologies and very attentive to events in other countries), the international dimension of surfing the radio waves continued to appeal to a class of listeners who were interested in foreign cultures and often spoke foreign languages.[59] Furthermore, this study draws on the EIAR's magazine, *Radiocorriere*, which was sent to radio subscribers (and was less likely, therefore, to cater to the tastes of communal listeners than to listeners who owned their own sets). In this context, Chapter 1 seeks to understand both the international nature of Italian radio culture during the Fascist *ventennio* as well as the tactics by which the regime's propagandists sought to negotiate and mediate this dimension.

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[57] Cannistraro, 'The Radio in Fascist Italy', p.136.
[58] Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli* (George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd, 1965), p.250
[59] Luigi Parola, 'Introduzione', in *E poi venne la radio,* p.8.

The Futurist Filippo Tomasso Marinetti (who was a regular contributor to the Italian radio) wrote that the radio was 'immensificazione dello spazio' (immensification of space), stressing that 'non più visibile né incorniciabile la scena diventa universale e cosmica' (no longer visible or frameable the scene becomes universal and cosmic).[60] The radio caused at once an 'immensificazione' and a 'shrinkage' of space. Marinetti's image of the frame deftly highlights the fluidity of a medium which cannot be constrained by borders and which cannot be captured and rendered fixed. This apparent impossibility of framing the radio presents a methodological challenge which must be considered when writing its history. The practice of writing history necessarily entails multiple acts of delineation and organisation which are akin to capturing and framing the events being observed. This study may set a boundary between that which 'entered' Italy and that which 'left' Italy, however in 'framing' Fascist Italy's activity in the wireless world, this boundary is not so rigid as to ignore the inherent flexibility at the medium's heart. By focussing on programme exchanges, relays, collaborations, bilingual broadcasts as well as the diplomatic and journalistic networks at the heart of international broadcasting, this study endeavours to highlight radio's inherent *incorniciabilità*. It must also be acknowledged that the regime understood the 'universale e cosmica' nature of the radio.[61] It was clear, as Martin highlights, that 'telegraph, radio, and the movies made a mockery of national borders', meaning that 'cultural consumers, offered new choices, were revealing a taste for things foreign'.[62] Such developments 'raised difficult questions about the place of national cultural identities and traditions in a Europe shaken by simultaneous and overlapping processes of both nationalization and internationalization'.[63] And, as Gagliardi has stressed, any 'new technology that allowed such wide dissemination

[60] Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, 'La Radia', in *Teoria e invenzione futurista* (Mondadori, 1968), p.208.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] Martin, Benjamin G., *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2016), p.2.
[63] *Ibid.*, p.3.

of propaganda meant that such propaganda was competing with cultural content from other sources'.[64] If 'l'EIAR nel suo programma propagandistico cercò di sfruttare innanzitutto l'abbinamento psicologico fra radio e modernità' (the EIAR, in its propagandistic programme, looked to profit above all from the psychological association between radio and modernity), the radio's modernity was inextricably entangled with its international dimension.[65] As previously mentioned, mediating this element in the management of national radio culture was necessary. At the same time, however, it offered an opportunity to make contact with the world beyond: a universal medium for a universal message.

Accordingly, the first quality that 'il capo fascista apprezzò nel nuovo mezzo di comunicazione fu la possibilità che esso aveva di offrirgli una platea internazionale' (the Fascist leader appreciated in the new communication medium was the opportunity it offered to serve him an international platform).[66] Whereas scholarship on foreign policy has typically paid attention to political aspects within the dynamic and instable strategies of Fascist international affairs, recent scholarship has begun the process of incorporating culture into this matrix. The monographic works of Cavarocchi and Garzarelli in particular have provided the scholarship with a foothold in understanding the importance attributed to and the organisation of culture abroad under the Fascist dictatorship.[67] While awareness is steadily growing of the need to explore Fascist cultural exportation, systematic studies (especially those centred on particular media) are still lacking. In order to assess the Fascist conception and use of the radio as a tool for international influence, this study provides crucial background on the infrastructure and networks that made such production possible.

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[64] Alessio Gagliardi, 'To Educate or to Entertain? Propaganda, Mass Media, and Mass Culture', in *Rethinking the History of Italian Fascism*, ed. by Giulia Albanese (Routledge, 2022), p.247.
[65] Gianni Isola, *Abbassa la tua radio, per favore. Storia dell'ascolto radiofonico nell'Italia fascista* (La Nuova Italia, 1990), p.39.
[66] Papa, *Storia politica*, p.124.
[67] Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie*; and Benedetta Garzarelli, *"Parleremo al mondo intero". La propaganda del fascismo all'estero* (Edizioni dell'Orso, 2004).

Given that 'international broadcasting required a commitment to massive and ongoing investment in infrastructure' and that 'transmitters were expensive and complex, consumed huge amounts of power, and over time became obsolete and required replacement', the regime's ongoing commitment to being a global leader in international broadcasting shows just how central it was to its international propaganda.[68] This study exhibits a regime that was acutely aware of the growing international propaganda war. Whilst foreign interest in Fascism was high and the regime insisted that 'non si indirizzava un'azione propagandistica verso altri paesi, bensì si rispondeva a una domanda di conoscenza proveniente da essi' (it was not about aiming propagandistic action at other countries, rather about responding to a demand to learn about Fascism coming from these countries) and that it needed to correct falsehoods told about Fascism abroad, this study reveals a propagandistic approach that is more often than not front-footed and, especially before World War II, at the vanguard of the international use of the medium. Rather than using the radio as a purely reactive means to defend the regime's reputation abroad, the medium was an increasingly central pillar of its search for soft power. This research can also be placed in the increasingly transnational understanding of Fascism as a 'single transnational and global phenomenon that violently expanded throughout Europe and beyond by processes of transfer, mutual inspiration, hybridisation, interaction, entanglement and cross-border exchange'.[69] This indicates a particular arena of the Fascist soft power project in which it would convince fascistic governments and movements of its inherent superiority and divine right to lead. We will explore the ways in which the radio facilitated such processes of transfer, exchange and hybridisation by promoting Italian Fascism as a global leader.

[68] Nelson Ribiero, 'Institutions, States and International Broadcasting', in *The Wireless World*, p.70.
[69] Garzarelli, *"Parleremo al mondo intero"*, p.43.

1.5 Romanità*: Riding the waves of the wireless world imperialistically*

A key theme that was ever-present in Fascist radio production (both domestic and foreign) and, therefore, central to this study is that of *romanità* (the spirit of Rome) also referred to commonly as *the myth of Rome*. Fascism believed itself to be and promoted itself as the modern embodiment of the spirit of ancient Rome. In line with Theodor Mommsen's line that 'one cannot stay in Rome without a universal idea', Fascism believed itself to be driven by the same mystical and eternal force that drove the universality of both the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church.[70] The ideological centrality and propagandistic expression of *romanità* domestically was geared towards the creation of the new Fascist man, the *cittadino-soldato* (citizen soldier) who was to be the modern-day incarnation of the fearless Roman legionary driven by devotion to Rome and a belief in his civilisation's superiority. Regarding *romanità*'s centrality to the regime, it is no overstatement to claim, as Emilio Gentile does, that 'non si comprende il fascismo e la storia del fascismo […] se non si comprende l'origine e la natura del mito fascista della *romanità* e dell'impero' (one cannot understand Fascism and the history of Fascism without understanding the origin and nature of the Fascist myth of *romanità* and the empire).[71] Scholarship has increasingly explored the domestic significance of the myth of Rome and has begun correcting, in the words of Joshua Arthurs, the 'notion that romanità amounted to little more than bombast' and **'**empty posturing, or even nostalgia for a distant golden age'.[72] Such scholarship is pushing back against the historiographical tendency to dismiss *romanità* as **'**null'altro che l'espressione grottesca della fabbrica fascista del vuoto ideologico, una vacua esibizione retorica delle velleità imperiali del duce, la prova manifesta della natura antimoderna del fascismo'

[70] Aristotle Kallis, *The Third Rome (1922-1943): The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.76.
[71] Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Editore Laterza, 2010), p.v.
[72] Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy* (Cornell University Press, 2012), p.2.

(nothing other than the grotesque expression of the Fascist construction of an ideological void, a vacuous rhetorical exhibition of the imperial desire of the *Duce*, the obvious proof of the anti-modern nature of Fascism).[73] Instead *romanità* is being increasingly understood 'as a revolutionary project for modernity, a coherent language with which to articulate aspirations for the contemporary world'.[74] Domestically, *romanità* as a cornerstone of the regime's propagandistic image-making was expedient thanks to 'the long-standing familiarity of Italians with the myth of Rome', allowing the myth 'to affirm itself as the expression of a national tradition'.[75] It should also be stressed that as 'an aesthetic and a location with infinite possibilities and identities', the idea of Rome 'was flexible and shifting', appearing 'in Fascist culture to support both nationalism and internationalism, peace and war, stasis and change, patrician and popular'.[76] *Romanità* polyvalence and malleability will be brought to the fore throughout this study both domestically and, especially, in the international arena. Domestically, the study will assess the ways in which *romanità* was mobilised to mediate the international dimension of Italian radio culture. This provides a crucial example of how the insistence on *romanità* was not driven by some anachronistic sense of nostalgia, rather as part of the regime's project for an 'alternative modernity'.[77] Just as 'Napoleon's invocation of Rome's imperial precedent brought with it cosmopolitan aspirations', Chapter 1 asks how the idea of Rome was used to negotiate Fascist Italy's contact with other languages and cultures.

At the same time, this study asks how the notion of *romanità* was used to create a hierarchical spiritual, cultural and political map of the (wireless) world and how it was used

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[73] *Ibid.*, p.vii.
[74] Joshua Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity,* p.2.
[75] Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (University of California Press, 2000), p.92.
[76] Marla Stone, 'A flexible Rome: Fascism and the cult of *romanità',* in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Cultture, 1789-1945*, ed. by Catharine Edwards (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.206.
[77] Griffin, *Modernism*, p.201.

as a propaganda theme both to draw foreign peoples' into Fascism's orbit and to bar them from entry to the new Roman Empire. *Romanità* as a theme of international propaganda has been all but ignored so far by the scholarship barring some tentative attempts to explore exchanges along the lines of the Latin spirit.[78] Given Fascism's belief that it was driven by the same Roman spirit that universalised both the Empire and the Church, we may return to the very Catholic origins of the word 'propaganda'. In 1622, Pope Gregory XV established the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Holy Congregation for Propagating the Catholic Faith), designed to bring about the reconquering of countries lost to Protestantism and promoting Catholicism among the pagan populations of the New World.[79] Accordingly, this study assesses the treatment of peoples deemed to be part of the brotherhood of Rome through heritage and who have either stayed true to their privileged lineage or have betrayed it (namely the liberal democracies and, in particular, France). Equally, it explores the myth's use in propagating Fascist (Roman) superiority among 'pagan' audiences who were never graced with the benign civilisation influence of the Roman Empire. Just as *romanità*'s expediency in domestic propaganda lay, in part, in the fact of the Italian people's familiarity with the image of ancient Rome, so too was it hoped that the regime's propaganda could capitalise on Rome's ubiquity beyond Italian borders. To borrow from Gustave Le Bon (whose work Mussolini read and admired) the insistence on Rome internationally could be read as an attempt to promote Fascism from the category of ideas seen as 'accidentelles et passagères' (accidental and temporary) (such as a political doctrine) to those that are 'fondamentales' (fundamental) (such as heredity).[80] If it is 'surtout par les élements inconscient qui forment l'âme d'une race' (above all the unconscious elements which form the soul of a race), it was believed that Rome (in all its ubiquity) was one of the 'caractères

[78] Maximiliano Fuentes Codera and Patrizia Dogliani (eds.), *Continental Transfers: Cultural and Political Exchange among Spain, Italy and Argentina, 1914-1945* (Berghahn, 2022).
[79] See Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad*, p.4.
[80] Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologies des Foules* (UltraLetters Publishig, 2013), p.43.

fundamentaux de la race' (fundamental characters of the race) everywhere its presence had been felt.[81] Mussolini's Italy was the main inheritor of the Roman Empire and Rome's global influence created a debt with foreign nations 'not as fraternal equals but as parent and child'.[82] *Romanità*, especially with the arrival of Nazi Germany, was to be the key feature in defining the new civilisation which had, in the latest iteration of the historical trend, been born in Rome and exported from Rome. As Fascism intended to be 'the spiritual vanguard of European civilisation', this study explores the centrality of the myth of Rome in the exportation of its culture by mapping the new Roman Empire onto the wireless world.

1.6 Mussolini and Marconi: Between Absence and Omnipresence

Before outlining this study's methodological approach, it is important to address two key figures whose presence in the work is minimal yet might otherwise be expected. These are Guglielmo Marconi and, first of all, Benito Mussolini. Scholars and students of the period will be accustomed to the Duce's centrality in studies of Fascist cultural policy. Indeed, Mussolini had an extremely active role in his regime's cultural policy and, it must be said, the autodidact had a vast (if not superficial) knowledge of and engagement with the culture of his country (and, indeed, of others). Whilst some have argued that, 'like the Italians under the regime itself, historians have often become transfixed by the figure of Benito Mussolini', in the field of cultural policy this presence is justified even if the scholarship would benefit from renewing its approach.[83] Mussolini's centrality in the management of film, journalism, literary censorship, theatre and music have all been documented and, in most cases, the subject of monographic studies.[84] Such a book-length

[81] *Ibid.*, p.20.
[82] Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p.131.
[83] John Foot, *Blood and Power: The Rise and Fall of Italian Fascism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), p.3.
[84] For instance, Patricia Gaborik, *Mussolini's Theatre: Fascist Experiments in Art and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); Stefano Biguzzi, *L'Orchestra del duce. Mussolini, la musica e il mito del capo* (UTET Università, 2003); and Guido Bonsaver, *Mussolini il censore* (Editori Laterza, 2013).

publication on Mussolini's role in the management of the radio would not, however, be feasible. Mussolini was said to be initially unenthusiastic about the new medium and much has been made in the existing scholarship of the first experiment in broadcasting one of his public speeches. On 25 March 1924, he was convinced by Costanzo Ciano (then minister of Poste and Telegrafi) to broadcast his address at the Costanzi theatre in Rome. The experiment 'fu un disastro' (was a disaster) as 'la trasmissione fu interrotta dopo che problemi tecnici avevano reso incomprensibile l'intervento del duce' (the transmission was stopped after technical problems had made the Duce's speech incomprehensible).[85] Whilst it may be true that 'questo sfortunato episodio influì non poco nell'iniziale scetticismo di Mussolini verso questo mezzo di comunicazione' (this unfortunate episode influenced more than a little Mussolini's initial scepticism towards the communication medium), the sense that it 'sarebbe rimasto a lungo […] causa di diffidenza del dittatore verso la radio' (would long remain a cause of the dictator's diffidence towards the medium) is perhaps exaggerated.[86] Nonetheless, Mussolini's interest in the radio cannot be said to rival his passion for cinema ('l'arma più forte dello stato' – the state's strongest weapon) and journalism (his profession and first channel for his political ideas and ambitions). While 'si andavano avvicinando al microfono tutti o quasi i personaggi di primo piano del regime' (all or close to all the most central regime figures were speaking at the microphone), Mussolini never instituted radio addresses akin to the 'Fireside Chats' of Franklin Delano Roosevelt or the broadcasts of French Prime Minister Gaston Doumergue (which we will discuss in Chapter 1).[87] This has been accredited to the sense that Mussolini needed to be seen as well as heard for the full effect of his oratory to hold sway.[88] However, he did order to have EIAR

[85] Di Legge, *L'aquila e il littorio*, p.195.
[86] Franco Monteleone and Peppino Ortoleva, 'La macchina dei suoni', in *La Radio. Storia di sessant'anni* (Edizioni RAI, 1984), p.26.
[87] Papa, *Storia Politica* (vol.1), p.141.
[88] Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, p.256.

microphones present at his public speeches, he liked, according to Denis Mack Smith, to 'choose the announcers for the radio', and the radio was certainly mobilised in various ways to contribute to the cult of the Duce.[89] The 1936 Premio Cremona painting competition issued the prompt of 'Ascoltando un discorso del duce alla radio' (Listening to a speech by the Duce on the radio) signifying not only the 'importanza che la radio sta acquisendo nella vita nazionale, e del ruolo politico, concreto e simbolico, che il fascismo le attribuisce' (importance that the radio is acquiring in national life and the political, concrete and symbolic, role that Fascism attributes it) but Mussolini's association with the modern medium supposedly bringing the country together.[90] Indeed, the entries to this competition reaffirm the variety of listenerships with some depicting families listening to the radio in the comfort of their *salotto* (living room) and others listening communally in town squares. Mussolini has not been purposefully omitted from this study (driven by a desire to make comment on wider debates between intentionalism and structuralism, for instance), rather his presence is noted where it is felt and only when it intersects with our research questions centring around the medium's international dimension.

The other figure whose name must be mentioned in any study of the Italian radio of the Fascist years is Guglielmo Marconi, senator and 'the most prominent Fascist scientist'.[91] Just as with Mussolini, while his presence is not overt throughout the material covered in the following chapters, it is, in one way, present in the background due to his significance both to the medium and the country. He was celebrated on the air and in *Radiocorriere* (especially on his birthday, 25 April, ironically the day of Italian liberation in 1945) as the very embodiment of Italic genius which, in the case of the radio, gave Fascist Italy a wireless

[89] Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (Granada Editions, 1983), p.325.
[90] Monteleone and Ortoleva, 'Macchina dei suoni', p.27.
[91] Valeria Deplano, 'From the Colonies to the Empire: Africa and the National Fascist Project', in *Rethinking the History*, p.164.

world to navigate and, ultimately, conquer. In fact, Marconi felt acutely radio's international and humanitarian potential. Indeed, he expressed his belief that 'broadcasting, properly handled, will make a material contribution towards greater understanding and amity between Nations'.[92] As a 'European and truly internationally oriented personality', he held a sincere belief that 'his invention would lead to peace, mutual understanding, and to the creation of societies'.[93] Accordingly, he 'did not see a dichotomy between the national and the international, adopting what one nowadays would call a transnational approach' and one which lends itself to the imagery of the wireless world which this study proposes as the best to encapsulate the transfers and exchanges that made the radio the international medium *par excellence*.[94] Marconi, as a figure who was both Italian and international, was of much symbolic use to Mussolini and, as a result, he became 'one of the most influential figures in Mussolini's Italy'.[95] Marconi was appointed head of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) a move which was 'clearly strategic' as 'part of a propaganda effort to improve his international image'.[96] The CNR, under Marconi's tutelage, was to play an intensely political role in mediating between the regime and scientific research as 'no official scientific delegation could go abroad, no scientific congress could be held in Italy, no Italian scholar could propose an international meeting unless formally authorized by Mussolini himself, on recommendation of the CNR'.[97] While Marconi's initial belief may have been that 'broadcasting could facilitate international peace and understanding', the regime's grasp of the scope of his invention ultimately led to the incorporation of its international potential

[92] Suzanne Lommers, *Europe - On Air: Interwar Projects for Radio Broadcasting* (Amsterdam University Press, 2012), p.21.
[93] *Ibid.*
[94] *Ibid.*, p.42.
[95] Raboy, *Marconi*, p.552.
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] *Ibid.*, p.556.

into a project of insistent propagandising with the aim less of peace and understanding as of disruption and spiritual imperialism.

1.6 Methodological Challenges: Archives, Broadcasts and the Radiocorriere

Writing the history of the radio (and particularly its international dimensions) creates various methodological challenges. Furthermore, these challenges have contributed, in no small part, to biases in the focuses of existing research, biases which recent scholarship has begun to highlight and rectify. The first methodological challenge is, simply put, that 'ben poco di quanto la Radio ha trasmesso è stato conservato' (very little of what the radio broadcasted has been conserved).[98] It can be said that 'programmes seldom seem to interest historians of international broadcasting' which is partly explained by the fact that 'survival rates for recorded radio programmes are generally poor, especially for those made during the first half of the twentieth century, and more generally for programmes intended for foreign listeners'.[99] As Potter has suggested, a further reason for this neglect of broadcasts is 'the assumption that the key work of international broadcasting was to transmit news, and that other material was thus thin on the ground even before archives were culled, and generally of at best limited importance'.[100] While the prevalence of music in international (as well as domestic) broadcasting is not debated, our understanding of the use of commentary, drama, narrative and conversation is, as Potter highlights, thin on the ground. Equally, it can be said that 'historians of international broadcasting have primarily been interested in the internal institutional histories of broadcasting organizations, and the relationships between these organizations and state authorities'.[101] The resulting focus of (international and national) radio histories has been on the '"high politics" of propaganda

[98] Monteleone and Ortoleva, 'Macchina dei suoni', p.21.
[99] Simon J. Potter, 'Programmes, Soft Power, and Public Diplomacy', in *The Wireless World*, p.167.
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] *Ibid*.

making'.[102] This study aims to move away from the tendency to write 'purely institutional and political histories' and answers the call to 'pay more attention to programmes [and] listeners', to fill the 'assenza di studi di base su programmi particolari o su figure determinate' (absence of studies based on particular programmes or individual figures), and to answer the question of 'chi materialmente faceva la radio' (who materially made the radio).[103] As radio (and, similarly television) are 'opere collettive, e non d'autore' (collective works and not of an author), this does not simply involve uncovering the figures of radio presenters but also developing an awareness of the networks of functionaries, diplomats, journalists, translators, stenographers and politicians that made broadcasting (both international and domestic) possible.[104]

The lack of archival material presents a particularly acute challenge in the case of the radio of Fascist Italy. As Claudio Maria Mancini's detailed archival essay on the ASMAE's collections from the MCP highlights, the documents of the division responsible for foreign-language broadcasting is simply missing altogether.[105] It is true, in some sense, that researching the radio can be somewhat like researching literature before the advent of writing: 'è possible studiarl[a], ma con molte lacune, ricorrendo a fonti indirette' (it is possible to study it but with many gaps, resorting to indirect sources).[106] It is possible that the lack of a unitary source which contains all of the relevant documents pertaining to the regime's international broadcasting is a key reason why the study of the field has lagged behind so drastically. Frankly, this fact is not true only of international broadcasting, rather of the Italian radio more broadly. We have already acknowledged the complex and sprawling

[102] *Ibid.*
[103] Isola, *Abbassa la tua radio*, p.xix.
[104] Enrico Menduni, *I linguaggi,* p.6.
[105] Claudio Maria Mancini, 'L'Archivio della Direzione Generale per la Stampa Estera del Ministero della Cultura Popolare nell'Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del MAE. Appunti di una prima ricerca' (Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, 2022).
[106] *Ibid.*

networks necessary for international broadcasting as well as the intense interest in (and indeed power struggles over) the radio from all government ministries, diplomats and so on and so forth. These complex and sprawling networks are reflected in the archival presence of the radio. Foreign radio was not produced uniquely by this section. The discussion of objectives, the approval of transcripts, speakers and journalists, the payment of personnel, the reliance on diplomatic networks and correspondence with foreign newspaper editors and broadcasters involved an intricate web which is traceable in the archives. This may present a methodological challenge to historians of international broadcasting but the collections at the ACS and the ASMAE hold vast amounts of transcripts, listener letters as well as ministerial and diplomatic correspondence and meeting notes that offer more than enough evidence for the answering of this study's research questions and the questions which the scholarship will formulate in the future.

An invaluable source for historians of the Fascist radio is the EIAR's official magazine, *Radiocorriere* (originally *Radiorario*) which is still lacking a complete history of its own.[107] When the first few years of the *Radiorario* were digitised it prompted a collaborative study of its material which, among other observations, highlighted the publication's interest in foreign cultures. In fact, 'c'era una grande attenzione a tutto ciò che succedeva all'estero' which painted an overall picture of 'un'esterofilia dichiarata' (a patent xenophilia).[108] The 'tentativo di integrazione perseguito dal settimanale tra la parola scritta e quella parlata' (magazine's attempt to integrate the written word with the spoken word) was a crucial means for the growth of the medium. The RC was particularly useful 'per far conoscere i personaggi, o per meglio dire per aiutare a diventare personaggi le varie persone o artisti che si alternavano al microfono' (to raise the profile of the characters, or to put it

[107] Isola, *Abbassa la tua radio*, p.xv.
[108] Luigi Parola, 'Introduzione', p.11.

better to help the various persons at the microphone to become characters).[109] By the same token, the RC was a means of making permanent and tangible that which was ephemeral and intangible. As such, transcripts of broadcasts were reproduced for listeners who may have missed them or, indeed, simply wished to read it again. Listeners often wrote to the EIAR or directly to radio personalities requesting transcripts in order to immortalise the broadcast they so enjoyed. Such was the case of Eugenio Coselschi whose broadcasts about *romanità* prompted requests for transcripts from listeners both Italian and foreign. This was particularly common for Italian listeners abroad who wished to show the transcripts (which they would themselves translate) to their foreign friends as supporting arguments for the validity and strength of Italian Fascism and Italian tradition. As we will see in Chapter 1, the RC also facilitated contact between Italian listeners and foreign radio stations and cultures as well as materials which accompanied radio broadcasts (such as exercises for foreign-language tuition). Whilst the RC and equivalent magazines in other countries 'provide a rich, unparalleled source for the history of radio reception and audience response', they have 'been explored only to a limited extent by historians of domestic wireless broadcasting, and almost entirely ignored by those working on international radio'.[110] The RC's intensely international feel provides an excellent opportunity to understand the manner in which Italian radio culture incorporated and negotiated the medium's cosmopolitanism.

1.7 Our Map of the Wireless World

This study is organised into four chapters. Drawing on the EIAR's official magazine, the *Radiocorriere*, and the period's most popular spoken programme, *Le Cronache del regime*, delivered by its most popular speaker, Roberto Forges Davanzati, Chapter 1 brings into relief the strongly international dimension of contemporary Italian radio culture. This

[109] Tranfaglia, 'Radio e fascismo', p.38.
[110] Potter, 'Introduction', in *Wireless Internationalism*, p.7.

allows for an exploration of the manner in which the regime negotiated this international tendency by encouraging Italians to learn about the outside world imperialistically, its attempts to exhibit the way that Fascist policies (including its very conception and use of the radio) were influencing foreign countries, and its attempt to reframe the news and commentary entering the country thanks to the wireless. Chapter 2 explores the regime's attempts to transmit its cultural and political message to the wireless world. This research uncovers the overlapping transnational networks that were necessary (and which the regime cultivated, adapted and sometimes tolerated) in order to pursue its project of international broadcasting. It draws on extensive archival material that traces the sometimes complicated correspondence networks between the EIAR (in Italy and abroad), various ministries (mostly the MCP and the MAE), diplomatic representatives abroad, foreign newspapers, magazines and broadcasters. Chapter 3 is an in-depth case study of Fascist radio propaganda during the Spanish Civil War. Seven months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War the Italian regime launched *Radio Verdad*, a fictious pro-Nationalist Spanish station which was in fact controlled entirely by and broadcasted from Rome. Relying on notes from ministerial meetings as well as ministerial and diplomatic correspondence, this chapter rectifies some of the key misinterpretations of previous scholarship about the project's genesis and purpose. Furthermore, thanks to the discussion based on a collection of listener letters that have never been analysed, this research allows us to trace *Radio Verdad*'s impact both within Spain and internationally. In so doing, this chapter highlights both the power of radio to conceal its origin from listeners (thus appearing national not transnational) and, in turn, its power to convert automatically an ostensibly national fact into an international phenomenon (making it a useful case study for our understanding of a conflict which was at once a civil war and an international ideological battleground). Finally, Chapter 4, drawing predominantly on transcripts of broadcasts directed at various foreign audiences (including Spanish, Russian,

and Slovenian, as well as returning to the Italian-language *Cronache del regime*), explores the use of the theme of *romanità* as a tool of inclusion and exclusion in the vision for a new Europe. The myth of Rome (in its international, imperial guise) was mobilised in order to praise countries for extolling and embodying the virtues deserving of the grandeur of Rome and creating a brotherhood in which Italy kept possession of the *maggiorasco* (the elder brother's inheritance). This chapter theorises the mapping of the new Roman Empire onto the (wireless) world by imagining two axes: heritage and ideology. Through these four chapters, the thesis offers an exploration of the Fascist regime's imperialistic navigations through the wireless world. This exploration contributes to our understanding of the negotiations and tensions at play in the Fascist management of a growing mass culture which increasingly necessitated transnational networks. In turn, this study contributes to our understanding of Fascist soft power by bringing into relief the most naturally international medium at the regime's disposal.

Chapter 1 - Negotiating Radio's Transnational Nature: Italian Radio Culture and Travels through the Wireless World

Abstract:

In the context of a radio production which was becoming increasingly varied due to the attempt to cater for the medium's different national audiences, this chapter, in the first instance, brings into relief the intensely international feel to Italian radio culture. Distant listening was an ever-present aspect of the radio listener's experience from the medium's genesis and, as we will show, was arguably the most appealing aspect of tuning into the wireless world. Through an analysis of the EIAR's official magazine, *Radiocorriere*, and Roberto Forges Davanzati's *Cronache del regime* broadcasts, we will explore the ways in which the regime attempted to mediate, counteract and even encourage the internationally-minded Italian travellers through the wireless world. Rather than taking as a *point de départ* the assumption that the apparent cosmopolitanism of the radio was inherently at odds with the regime's ultra-nationalistic and autarkic search for totalitarian control over Italian national culture, this chapter asks how the regime tried to incorporate and benefit from the international aspects of radio culture. Removing the assumption that such aspects must be antithetical to the Fascist cultural ethos, this chapter asks how radio's modernity was an opportunity for the regime to teach Italians about their superiority on the international stage and how to exercise it.

1.1 Introduction: The Interface between the Fascist cultural management and the Wireless World

There is an inherent difficulty in defining Fascist Italy's national radio culture which was understood acutely by propagandists even at the time: its output and its audiences were

not at all cohesive. This lack of cohesion itself was, indeed, considered to be one of the best ways of defining the medium. The EIAR's *Annuario* from 1929 stated that 'devesi notare che il pubblico radiofonico non è un pubblico speciale, limitato, come sarebbe il pubblico di un libro, di un giornale, di un teatro, ma è tutto il pubblico' (it must be noted that the radio's audience is not a special, limited one such as that of a book, a newspaper, a theatre, rather it is the entire public).[111] The implication was that

> Chi compra un giornale od un libro, chi va ad un teatro ha già' fatto una scelta preventiva, e, in un certo senso, generalmente sa quel che gli tocca; la Radiofonia invece è il giornale unico, il libro unico, il teatro unico per un pubblico svariatissimo, che ha gusti opposti.[112]
>
> (Whoever buys a newspaper or a book, whoever goes to a theatre has already made a prearranged choice and, in a certain sense, generally knows what to expect; radio broadcasting, however, is the only newspaper, the only book, the only theatre for an incredibly diverse public with conflicting tastes).

This acknowledgement came with a warning: the radio 'non può essere tutta per tutti' (cannot be everything for everyone).[113] This warning extended to those listeners who expected to turn on their radio and be met immediately with the sounds that most satisfied their tastes and were frustrated when this was not the case. The Italian radio, therefore, had the task of catering to all tastes and constantly risked the displeasure of listeners who thought its output skewed too heavily away from their own expectations. This was, in large part, the logic behind the EIAR referenda which ranked types of programmes by national preference and, as such, informed programming decisions. The result was a varied soundscape in which listeners received state-sponsored broadcasts as well as broadcasts from abroad; broadcasts which championed ruralism and cultural broadcasts which lent themselves to an urban cosmopolitanism. Some listeners tuned in from their lounge while others listened communally in bars or town squares. There were lessons teaching the Italian language and

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[111] 'I programmi radiofonici' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario* (1929), p.34.
[112] *Ibid.*
[113] *Ibid.*

courses for foreign languages; medieval music played on ancient instruments, 19th-century opera, and the recent craze for jazz and swing. Holding this varied soundscape together was the belief that every point on the radio set's dial pointed in one direction: the modernity of the medium. As Isola highlights, the regime, across all EIAR programming, 'cercò di sfruttare innanzitutto l'abbinamento psicologico fra radio e modernità' (sought to profit above all else from the psychological equation between radio and modernity).[114] The message was that 'senza radio non si vive modernamente' (without the radio a modern life is not possible).[115] The modernising power of the radio extended, therefore, both to its domestic role in unifying (fascistising) the nation and the fact it 'supera[va] gli spazi' (overcame space) allowing Italians to travel through the wireless world.[116]

More widely, the increased consumption of electricity during the *ventennio* was seen as a key indicator of modernity. Electricity was 'the basis of one of the distinctive traits of Fascist political "modernity", namely the means of communication, of which the regime took control'.[117] In this context, 'Mussolini's project of promoting the spread of radios – the call for a 'radio in every village' – took form'.[118] This spread of the radio to the provinces was to be 'the symbol of the "spread of modernity" but it was also meant to realise the "Fascist utopia" of breaking the imbalance between town and country, bringing advanced technology into the heart of rural backwardness'.[119] As part of the desired modernisation of the country, this promotion of the radio was central in the desire to bring subscription figures in line with those of the likes of Germany and Great Britain with whom a significant disparity existed as we saw in this thesis's introduction. At the same time, in urban centres

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[114] Gianni Isola, *Abbassa la tua radio,* p.39.
[115] 'Il secondo convegno dei pionieri a Roma' (unsigned), *RC,* N.43 (24-30 Oct. 1937), p.4.
[116] G.C. Govoni, 'Un dittatore al microfono. Le grottesche utopie di un Nababbo', *RC,* N.1 (2-9 Jan. 1932), p.9.
[117] Bruno Settis, 'Fascism and the Economy: Private Powers and Public Intervention, between Development and Crisis', in *Rethinking the History,* p.117.
[118] *Ibid.*
[119] *Ibid.*

'the contours of a new structure of consumption and everyday life took shape'.[120] As Settis has suggested, 'this partly exceeded the control of the regime and its propaganda message' – a theme which has 'as yet, little stirred the curiosity of historians of fascism'.[121] The radio responded, on one hand, to 'European elites' demands for stronger national cultural identity' as part of a new post-WW1 'world order built on national self-determination'.[122] As Martin points out, 'telegraph, radio, and the movies made a mockery of national borders; cultural consumers, offered new choices, were revealing a taste for things foreign'.[123] It is within the context of 'simultaneous and overlapping processes of both nationalization and internationalization' that our analysis of Fascist radio must be grounded.[124]

This chapter focuses primarily on the second of these two processes highlighted by Martin. However, as the two moved on parallel tracks, a sense of the former's presence in the culture of radio broadcasting is crucial context. Carlo Levi, in his autobiographical novel based on his time in internal exile, *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, discusses the everyday items sent to residents from family members in America (such as scissors, knives, and razors). Grateful for these modern implements, the residents also feel acutely, according to Levi, that 'da Roma non arriva nulla. Non era mai arrivato nulla, se non […] i discorsi della radio' (from Rome nothing arrives. Nothing had ever arrived apart from the speeches over the radio).[125] Levi's flippant remark paints an image of EIAR broadcasts as empty and impractical compared to the concrete evidence of modernity arriving in the post from America. His comment does, however, highlight the radio's ability to go where no other medium can and captures the regime's attempts to mobilise the radio to unify the nation and

[120] *Ibid.*
[121] *Ibid.*
[122] Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order,* p.2.
[123] *Ibid.*
[124] *Ibid.*, p.3.
[125] Carlo Levi, *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli,* p.149

achieve what Levi later terms 'la colonizzazione interna' (internal colonisation) where 'tutta l'Italia, non solo il mezzogiorno, diventerebbe una colonia' (all of Italy, not only the south, would become a colony).[126] Radio propagandists, indeed, considered the medium a 'strumento di preordinata, attiva ed insistente propaganda di italianità' (instrument of predetermined, active and insistent propaganda of *italianità*).[127] The power of the radio meant that 'certi villaggi sperduti' (certain isolated villages) where there were no telephones, no electric light, no cars and where newspapers only ever arrive two days late, no longer had to be 'separati dal resto del mondo' (cut off from the rest of the world) because the radio allowed them to be 'immediatamente riuniti ai centri di vita pulsante del Paese' (immediately reunited with the centres of the country's vital life).[128] Projects directed at rural agricultural communities (notably the Ente Radio Rurale under the complete control of the Party Secretary Achille Starace) saw themselves as 'un'arma nella lotta contro l'urbanesimo' (a weapon in the fight against urbanity) seeing agriculture as 'la base più naturale della ricchezza italiana' (the most natural foundation of Italian prosperity).[129] While this may have been the driving force behind such endeavours, as this chapter will show, such anti-urban currents coexisted with strongly pro-urban and particularly international trends. It was also considered that such programming aimed at rural listeners, raising their 'livello medio di cultura' (average level of culture), would lead the listening public to appreciate 'trasmissioni di carattere più elevato' (broadcasts of a more elevated character).[130] Ultimately, radio was viewed as embodying a syncretism which no other medium had. It was understood, as Natale has explained, as a 'possibile tramite tra l'individuo e la massa, la sfera pubblica e quella privata, la città e la campagna, e dunque come strumento di unificazione del paese' (possible

[126] *Ibid.*, p.250.
[127] 'Conferenze – Lezioni – Conversazioni – Discorsi' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario* (1929), p.45.
[128] *Ibid.*, p49.
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] *Ibid*., p.59.

path between the individual and the masses, the public and private spheres, the city and the countryside and, therefore, as a tool for the unification of the country).[131] One aspect of radio culture which its supposed syncretism was forced to attempt to resolve was its fundamentally global nature which posed a challenge to Fascism's ultra-nationalism and particularly the more strictly xenophobic impulses of elements within the movement.

The radio's international nature was a key part of its much celebrated modernity. As a technology which delivered messages quickly across long distances, able to 'supera[re] gli spazi' (overcome space) it was a symbol of a great technological leap forward which the regime both embraced and promoted. This extended to bringing rural communities into contact with the life of the nation as well as putting listeners in contact with a wider wireless world. The radio was appreciated for its ability to allow humanity to 'parlarsi attraverso le montagne, gli oceani e i continenti in un vasto dialogo multilingue ma disciplinato' (communicate over mountains, oceans and continents in a sprawling dialogue which is multilingual but disciplined).[132] This study does not aim to establish how many Italian listeners regularly listened to foreign-language programmes (be they music or talk) – on this point one must sensibly admit that 'non lo sapremo mai' (we will never know).[133] The chapter aims, instead, to exhibit the international nature of official radio culture which, in turn, displays the importance of radio's global dimension to the wider listening public. This will allow us to explore the ways in which the regime adapted to the medium's international nature and the 'senso di universalità' (sense of universality) apparent in international broadcasting. The chapter asks, therefore, how official radio culture negotiated listeners' contact with foreign cultures. We will treat Italian listeners as 'not just audience members

[131] Natale, *Gli anni della radio*, p.63.
[132] 'Il *Radiocorriere*' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1935),* p.377.
[133] Angelo Sferrazza, 'Parigi Torre Eiffel…La radio degli altri' in *E poi venne la radio*, p.97.This volume was published on the back of the digitisation of the magazine's editions from 1925-1929 for the first time.

or extras in the spectacular "cult of the *Littorio*"', rather as travellers in the wireless world – travel which the regime allowed (and even encouraged) but increasingly sought to mediate.[134] Even with the production of the Radio Marelli (600 lire) and the Radio Balilla (430 lire) the regime never managed to stimulate industry towards the production of a truly affordable radio set accessible to the masses. This might lead us to conclude that 'la diffusione degli abbonati non riesce a superare il limite della piccola borghesia' (the growth of subscribers is unable to go beyond the threshold of the petite bourgeoisie).[135] Particularly in the context of distant listening we might, therefore, also restrict the field of our analysis to educated middle classes (particularly those who might already speak foreign languages). In his 1990 *Corriere della sera* article 'Libertà d'ascolto per l'Italia che non sa le lingue' (Freedom to listen for an Italy that doesn't know foreign languages), Gaetano Tumiati proposed that the regime's relaxed stance on distant listening was largely due to the low number of foreign-language speakers in Italy.[136] Gianni Isola points out, first of all, that this position may contain an unfair assumption, highlighting that 'in Italia non erano pochi i lavoratori, anche stagionali, che dai forzati periodi all'estero avevano imparato a comprendere, senza poter dire di conoscere, varie lingue' (in Italy not insignificant numbers of workers, even seasonal workers, had learned to understand, without necessarily fully speaking, various languages thanks to forced periods spent abroad).[137] Second of all, Isola rightly points out that, even if Tumiati's supposition regarding foreign languages is true, there still existed a general attitude among Italian listeners that tended heavily towards the foreign, towards seeing themselves as international listeners rather than purely Italian

[134] Joshua Arthurs, 'Alltagsgeschichte Italian Style? New Perspectives on Everyday Life in Fascist Italy' in *Rethinking the History,* p.229.
[135] Natale, *Gli anni della radio,* p.84.
[136] Gaetano Tumiati, 'Libertà d'ascolto per l'Italia che non sa le lingue', *Corriere della sera*, 21 agosto 1990.
[137] Isola, *Abbassa la tua radio*, p.223.

ones.[138] We must also not discount the fifty thousand or so 'apparecchi destinati all'ascolto di gruppo' (receivers used for communal listening) at the end of the 1930s.[139] Equally, as we will discuss later in this chapter, the EIAR produced language classes with the intention of aiding Italian *pescatori d'onde* who, in turn, were encouraged to listen to foreign stations as a practical means of improving their language skills. This tendency is, indeed, traceable from the beginning of the radio's life in Italy until the end of WWII. Ironically, the Italian listener's comfort and familiarity with listening to and trusting foreign stations arguably contributed to the vast popularity of foreign stations during the war (most notably the Italian-language broadcasts from the BBC and the *Voice of America* transmissions).Taking its cue from Isola, therefore, this chapter assesses the general attitude towards foreign broadcasts, studying the Fascist management of radio culture as an ambitious attempt to modernise Italy and shape Italian culture in relation to the world beyond her borders.

In Section 1, as a means of exploring the regime's official radio culture our analysis will focus on the EIAR's magazine, *Radiocorriere* (originally *Radiorario*). The scholarship is still lacking a complete history of the EIAR's official publication.[140] The volume edited by Luigi Parola, *E poi venne la radio. RadiOrario 1925-1929*, covers the first four years of the magazine's existence and offers a useful analysis of these early years. The volume's various essays accurately capture an image of an audience which is 'chiaramente colto, benestante, con grande passione per le tecnologie e molto attento a quello che avviene negli altri paesi' (clearly cultured, well off, highly passionate about technology and very attentive to events in other countries).[141] These tastes reflect the largely educated, middle-to-upper-

[138] One thinks, for instance, of the listener who wrote to the magazine for technical advice on how to block out Italian stations in order to receive foreign ones more clearly. See 'Vecchio abbonato di Bologna' in 'La parola ai lettori', *RC,* N.38 (13-19 Sep. 1936), p.46.
[139] Antonio Papa*, Storia politica,* p.38.
[140] *Ibid.,* p.xv.
[141] Luigi Parola, 'Introduction', in *E poi venne la radio*, p.8.

class make-up of the radio's early audience, explained especially by the financial implications of purchasing a radio set. As we saw in this study's Introduction, radio subscription figures in Italy lagged drastically behind its European neighbours, never coming even close to the number of radio sets owned in Germany, Britain and France. While subscription and communal listener figures were high enough for some historians to classify the radio a 'mass medium', its limited growth meant that catering for the tastes of Italy's upper middle classes remained a priority. We have also seen how the radio faced the challenge of catering to an intensely diverse audience, looking to use the medium to bring the periphery (the countryside) into contact with the centre (the newly resurgent Rome). In looking at the international dimension of the radio, however, this chapter allows an insight into how the regime attempted to mediate the contact of an audience that was 'chiaramente colto [e] benestante' with the outside world. The intensely international slant to *Radiocorriere* (including the extensive listing of foreign broadcasts) lead one contributor in the above-mentioned volume to posit, 'l'Europa, ci si può chiedere, era più Europa allora che oggi?' (was Europe, one might ask, more Europe then than now?).[142] The international nature of the magazine extended to publishing 'lettere di soddisfazione, di plauso, di incitamento, inviate da ascoltatori stranieri, dalla Svezia alla Tunisia, dagli Stati Uniti alla Cecoslovacchia' (letters expressing satisfaction, plaudits, encouragement, sent by foreign listeners, from Sweden to Tunisia, from the USA to Czechoslovakia).[143] In fact, the magazine saw itself as tending 'sempre più a dare alla radio una visione panoramica e mondiale' (evermore to give the radio a panoramic and global vision) and gave the impression of a medium that was 'una invenzione destinata a modificare profondamente i rapporti culturali tra paese e paese, tra Stato e Stato' (an invention destined to modify

[142] Sferrazza, 'Parigi Torre Eiffel', p.87.
[143] *Ibid.*

profoundly the cultural relations between country and country, between state and state).[144] There was, therefore, a clear sense that 'il nuovo popolo della radio è una grande famiglia, una setta quasi esoterica' (the new radio population is a big family, an almost esoteric sect).[145] Leaning into the powerful force of modernity at the medium's heart, the regime presented its official radio magazine as a 'giornale d'avanguardia' (avant-gard paper) with the monumental task of being 'il biografo e lo storico' (the biographer and the historian) of the microphone which 'come un individuo, si cerca, si definisce, si controlla, si costruisce, per così dire, una personalità frutto di incessanti esperienze' (like an individual, searches for, defines, controls and constructs, so to speak, a personality which is the fruit of endless experiences).[146]

Yambo, the protagonist of Umberto Eco's *La misteriosa fiamma della Regina Loana*, having lost all of his autobiographical memory returns to his childhood home in search of cultural material which will allow him to reconstitute his self. His childhood having been lived through the Fascist years, Yambo plays records of the era, taking his cue from *Radiocorriere* editions in his possession. This, he reasons, is the next best thing given he is unable simply to tune into the radio of those years. What perplexes Yambo is the juxtaposition of Fascist anthems of national glory and popular songs with bourgeois messages which often paint idyllic pictures of foreign lands. On one hand, Yambo hears the imperialistic Fascist hymn, *Mediterraneo*, about the inherited of the Mediterranean (and Italy's right to its territories) while, on the other, he listens to the Trio Lescano's 'Tulipan', a charming ditty all about Dutch tulips which paints a peaceful picture of life in the Netherlands. All the while, Yambo tries to imagine the 'io diviso' (the divided *id*) of a child

[144] 'Il *Radiocorriere*' (unsigned), *EIAR Annuario (1935),* p.375.
[145] Sferrazza, 'Parigi Torre Eiffel', p.87.
[146] 'Il *Radiocorriere*' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1935),* p.377.

pulled between these opposing poles.[147] The tension between a strictly imperialist view of the world beyond and an almost cosmopolitan internationalism was only one such circle which Fascist radio had the challenge of squaring. There was also the challenge of mediating between a 'cultura di élite e [una] cultura di massa' (elite culture and mass culture), the need to appeal to the 'masse popolari' (popular masses) and the bourgeoisie 'che ne costituiva la più sicura base sociale' (which constituted the most solid social base), the coexistence (and attempted fusing) of nationalistic and populistic discourses as highlighted by Tannembaum, and the presumed 'tensione fra la modernità del suo apparato mediatico e il tradizionalismo del suo sistema di valori' (tension between the modernity of its mediatic apparatus and the traditionalism of its value system) suggested by Sangiovanni.[148] Seeing the international nature of radio as a fact of the medium, this chapter shows how it was incorporated into the regime's official radio culture and how the regime attempted to resolve the tension between its brand of ultra-nationalism and the radio's global nature. Ultimately, this chapter asks how the regime guided Italians' travels through the wireless world and how the medium's international nature was interpreted in order to incorporate the medium fully into the regime's vision of modernity and, most importantly, its role in the world beyond Italy's borders.

Before commencing such an assessment, we must first briefly establish a framework for understanding the relationship between cultural media (and specifically the radio) and the regime. Following Bonsaver and Gordon, there are two assumptions which need to be challenged. First, there is the 'bipolar' assumption which 'takes it as read that state and culture are essentially separate spheres, with autonomous rules and practices, which interact

[147] Umberto Eco, *La misteriosa fiamma della Regina Loana* (Bompiani, 2004), pp.170-5.
[148] Monteleone, *La Radio italiana,* p.59; *ibid.*, p.113; see Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, p. 218; Andrea Sangiovanni, *Le Parole e le figure. Storia dei media in Italia dall'età liberale alla seconda guerra mondiale* (Donzelli, 2012), p.270.

at a particular interface, but otherwise maintain monolithic, distinct identities'.[149] Second is the 'top-down' assumption which 'suggests that, at that interface where state and culture do meet, power and agency essentially reside with the state, and culture is shaped and modelled by state intervention which is, therefore, demonstrably either a success or a failure'.[150] Understanding the balance of power at play at such an interface is crucial to any exploration of culture during the Fascist period. Scholars are increasingly seeing it as 'difficult to accept interpretations – of the sort chiefly predominant in earlier scholarship – that suggest a one-way relationship between the authorities and society, based on a mainly passive mode of reception and which thus consider propaganda as capable of "manufacturing" consent', following Cannistraro's famous formula.[151] An analysis of any cultural medium must establish the elements which lay beyond the regime's control, being aware that 'Fascist cultural policy always operated in an arena where other powerful forces were in play'.[152] As Gagliardi has pointed out, the new technology that allowed such wide dissemination of propaganda meant that such propaganda was competing with cultural content from other sources.[153] Importantly, this natural competition meant that 'the media and mass culture […] promoted openness to other cultures' and it is precisely this opening up of the world by the power of radio broadcasting that this chapter acknowledges.[154] In doing so, the chapter acknowledges the assumption that, thanks to foreign broadcasts, 'the fact that the Fascist radio did not operate in a vacuum must have limited the effectiveness of propaganda distributed through it'.[155] The radio was an undoubtedly international and transnational

[149] Guido Bonsaver and Robert S.C. Gordon, 'State, Culture, Censorship: An Introduction', in *Culture, Censorship and the State in Twentieth-Century Italy* ed. by Bonsaver and Gordon (MHRA and Maney Publishing, 2005), p.1.
[150] *Ibid.*
[151] Alessio Gagliardi, 'To Educate or to Entertain?, p.257.
[152] David A. Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War* (Indiana University Press), p.23.
[153] Gagliardi, 'To Educate or to Entertain?', p247.
[154] *Ibid.*, p250.
[155] Philip V. Cannistraro, 'The Radio in Fascist Italy', *Journal of European Studies,* 2 (1972), pp.127-154 (p. 147).

medium whose international producers and listeners saw it as having a humanitarian mission to bring peoples closer together. This was certainly beyond the control of the Fascist government. Given this fact, however, what is important is assessing how the regime negotiated the radio's nature at the interface where the two met. We cannot accept a stance which argues that the regime was essentially helpless to the medium's nature and, unable to combat it, failed in its radio policy. After all, the regime had full control of the state broadcaster (and therefore its magazine, *Radiocorriere*), making it 'il giornale parlato d'Italia, strumento potente di propaganda a disposizione del Governo' (Italy's spoken newspaper, a powerful propaganda tool at the Government's disposal).[156] Rather than assessing the success or failure of the regime's radio output based on assumptions about its aims (never clearly and coherently expressed), we will assess the choices made in the official radio culture at the interface between Fascism and the wider wireless world. The material explored below all finds itself at this very interface. In Section 2 we will see the crucial ways in which Roberto Forges Davanzati, in his discourses, set about mediating Italians' contact with the wireless world. And, now, we turn our focus to *Radiocorriere* where we will explore three key areas: reporting on foreign radio news, advertisements, and language teaching (both Italian and foreign). In turn, these three elements represent the filtering of the wireless world, the contact between industry, regime and listeners, as well as the efforts to arm listeners for their (ideally imperialistic) travels through the wireless world.

[156] 'I programmi radiofonici' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario* (1929), p.41.

1.2 International Radio Culture in Radiocorriere*: Foreign radio news, advertisements and language learning*

1.2.1 Bringing the Wireless World to Italian listeners

Front and centre at what we have just termed the interface between Fascism and the wireless world is the EIAR's official magazine, *Radiocorriere*. It is through an analysis of *Radiocorriere* that we may bring into relief the regime's management of international radio culture and the negotiations and tensions at play. Far from discouraging Italian distant listeners, *Radiocorriere* provided an extensive schedule of foreign stations' broadcasts as well as keeping subscribers informed on radio-related news from all over the world. From the very first edition of the *Radiorario*, 'si intravede la convinzione che il nuovo popolo della radio è una grande famiglia' (one glimpses the conviction that the new people of the radio is one big family) as well as a clear 'senso di universalità' (sense of universality).[157] Perhaps responding to 'un non mai represso desiderio degli italiani di guardare all'estero' (a never repressed desire of Italians to look abroad), the prevalence of news about foreign radio cultures indicates the medium's international *raison d'être*.[158] In order to probe the role and status of foreign radios in the Italian regime's official radio culture, this section will look at the systematic reporting on news relating to foreign broadcasters. Throughout *Radiocorriere*'s history it contained a regular column reporting on radio news from across the wireless world. Originally named 'Notizie Radio' (Radio News), this column became known from 22 October 1927 as 'Per il rotto della cuffia' – a play on the headset (cuffia) needed to receive foreign broadcasts and the Italian expression meaning 'by the skin of one's teeth' or 'in the nick of time', depending on context. While offering a neat play on words, the rubric's title also suggests some sense of risk involved in the adventuring of the

[157] Sferrazza, 'Parigi Torre Eiffel', p.87.
[158] *Ibid.*

globetrotting radio listener. The column's name was later changed to the simple title 'Cronache'. In all of its incarnations, the rubric reported on international radio news including technological developments, exchanges and relays between countries, the construction of new international stations, key personalities, political uses of the radio, and, most of all, on the artistic and cultural achievements of foreign radio broadcasters. Many of the news items were taken directly from foreign radio magazines with a heavy reliance, in particular, on the BBC's *World Radio* publication. Usually a-political, the contents of the column stressed the internationalism and interconnectivity of the wireless world. A cartoon (Fig. 1) taken from the French *Radio Magazine* and reproduced in the Italian publication depicts radio not only as international but even potentially inter-planetary. In the foreground is a radio set atop a planet with the speech bubble 'Hello!...Hello! Paris here' with the same response coming from the Dog Star, Mars and Venus. Radio is the technology which 'supera gli spazi' (overcomes space) and such capacity is central to the way the medium is understood both by the Italian state broadcaster and Italian listeners.

(Figure 2)[159]



Anticiparioni radiofoniche (Radio Magazine)

[159] 'Radiofantasie' in *Radiorario,* N.8 (26 Feb. - 4 Mar. 1928), p.3. (Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence).

The column's consistent reporting on the cultural and artistic achievements of the medium reveals an attitude to the wireless world based on exchange and reception (both technical and in terms of appreciation and criticism). The engagement with foreign radio culture was far-reaching and multi-directional – that is to say that reports focussed on reception of foreign programmes, foreign reception of Italian broadcasts as well as foreign stations' broadcasts engaging with the cultures of other countries (including music, theatre and, prevalently, foreign language courses). Far from seeking to confirm the prevailing tastes of Italian listeners, *Radiocorriere*'s focus on foreign radio broadcasting sought to expose audiences to new cultures. A case in point is the report on an organ concert broadcasted from a church in Rotterdam. The article highlights that 'l'organo in Italia, anzi in tutti i paesi latini, non è popolare' (the organ in Italy, in fact in all Latin countries, is not popular) before going on to defend the instrument and flying the banner for the promotion and growth of the instrument in Italy.[160] In this way, encounters in the wireless world were presented as the potential catalyst for the birth of new traditions. Such reporting extended even to countries deemed as suspicious or even as outright enemies of the Fascist state. Chief among them was Russia. While, as we will soon see, *Radiocorriere* reports on the Soviet radio were frequently political in nature, on other occasions coverage of the Soviet radio was a-political and bordered even on the complimentary. One such 1935 report told of the folklore broadcasts produced for all the peoples of the Soviet Union.[161] At the same time, therefore, as Fascist propagandists across all media (including the radio) were working hard to paint the Russian state as tyrannical, anti-cultural and, crucially, anti-Latin, *Radiocorriere* was dispassionately reporting the bloc's broadcasting and literary achievements.

[160] 'La radio nel mondo', *RC*, N.29 (12-18 July 1936), p.10.
[161] 'Trasmissioni folcloristiche russe', *RC*, N.1 (30 Dec. 1934 – 5 Jan. 1935), p.12.

By virtue of the wireless world's interconnectivity, it was not only the Italian reception of foreign broadcasts that were of interest but also the reception of Italian broadcasts abroad. *Radiocorriere* reported the EIAR's impact abroad with pride as proof of the broadcaster's technical and cultural progress. Where Italian programmes were advertised (notably in the BBC's *World Radio* magazine) this was highlighted as evidence of the Italian radio's reach.[162] One 'Per il rotto della cuffia' entry revealed how the Polish radio magazine *Antenna Polska* published 'un articolo scritto in italiano per segnalare agli 'amici all'estero' i progressi compiuti dalla radiofonia polacca' (an article written in Italian to signal to their 'friends abroad' the progress made by Polish radio broadcasting).[163] Such an article (and its subsequent reporting in the Italian magazine) is indicative of the spirit at the heart of radio culture from the medium's very genesis: the medium itself was the star. The Polish magazine acted on the impulse to inform the world of its broadcasting progress and the Italian magazine, in turn, acted on the impulse to know about foreign radio cultures. This theme of international reception pervaded much of the magazine's output and often focussed on the reception of Italy and Italian culture abroad beyond the narrow scope of the radio. In this way, *Radiocorriere* repeatedly and insistently asked two questions: what should we think of the world beyond? and what does the world beyond think of us? Foreign impressions on Italy (from Stendhal's supposed conviction that Corsica was Italian to Shakespeare's apparent belief in the eternal Roman state) were printed as a means of reinforcing Fascism's creation of the myths of *italianità* and *romanità*.[164] During the period of sanctions (and Italy's counter-sanctions) this type of report was frequently used to highlight historical biases against Italy particularly on the part of Britain and France.[165] A case in point was

[162] 'Per il rotto della cuffia', *RC*, N.3 (15-22 Jan. 1928), p.10.
[163] 'Per il rotto della cuffia', *RC*, N.8 (19-26 Feb. 1928), p.12.
[164] Examples include: 'Platen e l'Italia', *RC,* N.50 (8-14 Dec. 1935), p.4; 'Le controsanzioni nel campo dell'arte', *ibid.*, p.5.
[165] The League of Nations approved the economic sanctions on Italy in response to her invasion of Ethiopia. They ran from 18 Nov. 1935 until 14 July 1936.

Narciso Quintavalle's piece entitled 'Verdi e la Vecchia critica inglese' (Verdi and the old English critics) in which the author outlines his amazement at how unfavourably the English newspaper critics received Verdi's works one hundred years previous.[166] Asserting that 'da quella razza curiosa che è l'inglese possiamo aspettarci tutte le sorprese' (from that curious race that is the English we can expect every possible surprise), Quintavelle concludes that 'devono aver avuto un qualche fatto personale con l'insigne musicista italiano' (they must have had some personal issue with the Italian musician).[167] He posits, in this vein, that it was likely due to the operas' 'profumo pattriotico che esaltava le folle' (patriotic air which exalted the masses) when, to the critics' envy, 'tali elementi mancavano in Inghilterra' (such elements were lacking in England).[168] In this way, *Radiocorriere* had two key modes of covering the reception of Italian culture abroad: one stressed the positive reception as evidence of Italian superiority; the other highlighted a plot against Italy which would deny her cultural and political superiority.

Reports on foreign radio news in *Radiocorriere* were often used to stage a discourse on the interaction of modernity and tradition (both cultural and political) over the airwaves. The very existence of the radio necessitated a reimagining of public spaces and the so-called 'battaglia contro i rumori' (battle against noise).[169] In a dialogue entitled 'Susurri dell'etere' (whispers in the ether), one interlocutor expresses his view that 'la vita moderna ha reso [i nostri sensi] ottusi' (modern life has rendered our senses dull).[170] Whereas a century previous people danced to the sound of a spinetta and a violin, now people need 'il tonante frastuono di un jazz rinforzato' (the thundering racket of a crowded jazz band) and rather than the harpsicord and eight musicians of old melodrama, people need 'la sonorità di cento

[166] 'Verdi e la vecchia critica inglese', *RC*, N.26 (21-27 June 1936), p.43.
[167] *Ibid.*
[168] *Ibid*.
[169] G. Sommi Picenardi, 'Susurri dell'etere', *RC*, N.1 (2-9 Jan. 1932), p.14.
[170] *Ibid.*

strumenti' (the fullness of one hundred instruments).[171] The apex of this issue is presented as the invasion of foreign sound into the public space. The aggrieved interlocutor asks, 'ti pare possibile che sia permesso, quasi non bastasse il chiasso infernale delle nostre strade, di rovesciarvi anche quello di Londra?' (does it seem right to you that it is allowed, as if the infernal racket of our streets wasn't enough, to dump on us that of London?'.[172] This dialogue typifies the tightrope between modernity and tradition which the radio is seen to walk in reports on foreign radios – reports which helped stage the domestic debate over radio's modernity. Radio broadcasting, as a powerful technology that eradicates space and sends messages instantaneously fitted perfectly the Fascist embracing and championing of modernity. Indeed, we will see later the ways in which the radio's modernity matched the Fascist world view, in particular the relationship between state and people. Along with this appreciation of modernity came both the view of radio as typical of ancient Italic genius (being invented by Guglielmo Marconi) and its potential to recover and promote Italian culture from Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance times that would previously have been lost to modern audiences.

The valorisation of the radio as a tool for the recovery of traditional, native cultures was frequently played out in reports on foreign radios. This was particularly stressed in radio's ability to bring regional, countryside musical and theatrical cultures to life. A 1940 *Le Cronache* report outlined a Spanish programme dedicated to 'la canzone popolare' (popular song), described as 'l'anima stessa della musicalità spagnola, ricchissima di elementi folcloristici' (the very soul of Spanish musicality which is highly rich in folkloristic elements).[173] The piece claims that 'la civiltà democratica del XIX secolo ha inaridito la vena della vera canzone nel popolo della città' (19th-century democratic civilisation has

[171] *Ibid.*
[172] *Ibid.*
[173] 'Le Cronache', *RC*, N.2 (7-13 Jan. 1940), p.8.

dried out the vein of the true song of the city people) forcing the 'vera canzone' (true song) to seek refuge in the countryside where it continued to thrive.[174] Through the use of the modern medium of radio, Spaniards in cities were able to make contact once again with the traditional songs that never died in the countryside. In other words, the radio is able to reinstate what the Spanish intellectual Marcelino Menéndez y Pelago defined as the 'coscienza della razza' (conscience of the race).[175] A 1937 *Le Cronache* report claimed a similar victory for tradition in France.[176] The elections to decide the new members of the board overseeing the radio's management in France saw listeners presented with two lists: Radio-Famille against Radio-Liberté. The former represented the 'partiti moderati' (moderate parties), whereas the latter supposedly represented the Popular Front (an alliance of left-wing parties including the French Communist Party). Said to be more representative than the 'ludi cartacei parlamentare' (parliamentary paper game, the long-standing dismissive Fascist name for democratic elections), this election asked 'se meglio si adattassero alla mentalità del Paese i programmi di Radio-Famille, programmi ligi alle grandi tradizioni storiche, culturali, religiosi della "vielle France" o se fossero più graditi e consoni allo spirito dei tempi quelli di Radio-Liberté con tendenze estremamente democratiche ed un tantino di falce e martello nello sfondo' (if the programmes of Radio-Famille, programmes which are faithful to the great historical, cultural and religious traditions of "old France" were better adapted to the country's mentality or whether those of Radio-Liberté, with its extremely democratic tendencies and a touch of hammer and sickle at its heart were preferred and more suitable to the spirit of the times). The France represented 'dalle sue famiglie, dai suoi focolari, dalle sue tradizioni' (by its families, its folklore, its traditions) opted for a national radio that kept its people in touch with tradition

[174] *Ibid.*
[175] *Ibid.*
[176] 'Radiofonia in Francia' in 'Cronache', *RC*, N.11 (14-20 Mar. 1937), p.8.

– that is to say a pre-democratic tradition represented by values which the radio was to help revive.

Indeed, a state's management of the radio was presented in *Radiocorriere* as a key metric for the country's degree and rate of modernisation. A country subject to praise along these lines was Turkey. On 29 October 1933 an international broadcast was made from Turkey to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the establishment of its Republic founded by Kemal Pacha.[177] The pre-Republic Turkey is descried as 'tenacemente abbarbicato al passato, […] nemico di ogni modernismo, d'ogni novità, avverso per principio […] a tutto ciò che puzzava d'europeismo' (tenaciously rooted to the past, opposed to any modernism, any novelty, averse by principle to anything that stunk of Europeanism).[178] The article then asks rhetorically, 'ed ora?' (and now?), responding 'ed ora ad Angora si sta installando una stazione radiofonica di 250 kilowatt' (and now in Angora a 250kW radio station is being installed).[179] The solution to Turkey's backwardness was opening herself up to Europe and the key indicator of the society's advancement was the presence of a powerful radio station. On the other hand, Russia's radio policy was presented as backwards and uncivilised. A *Radiocorriere* article by G. Sommi Picenardi entitled 'Due Propagande' drew a comparison between the state art policy of Ancient Chinese Emperors (where composers were turned into functionaries and all music was state-sponsored) and that of the USSR which was searching to bring all art and culture within the state. Picenardi contrasts the dream that radio broadcasting would allow Russian musicians to 'rivoluzionare […] l'estetica musicale del vecchio mondo e di fare della radio uno strumento di penetrazione e di dominio politico sociale' (revolutionise the musical aesthetic of the old world and to make radio into an instrument of penetration and of political and social domination) with the harsh reality that

[177] Galar, 'La Radio nel mondo. Impressioni d'un pescatore d'onde', *RC*, N.45 (5-12 Nov. 1933), p.33.
[178] *Ibid.*
[179] *Ibid.*

the stifling cultural policy had left Russian radio transmitting 'un materiale abbastanza mediocre' (basically mediocre content).[180] The result, Picenardi claimed, was that the tired, old threat of 'sta attenta, Vecchia Europa, tu danzi sopra un volcano!' (beware, old Europe, you are dancing on a volcano!) had lost all potency.[181] The comparison to Ancient Chinese Emperors clearly indicates an antiquated use of a modern medium which robs it of all of its modernising potency, especially its ability to connect a country with the world beyond which provides the opportunity to exert international cultural influence.

1.2.2 Advertisements and listeners' preference for distant listening

Testimony to the prevalence of distant listening and even the preference for tuning into foreign stations over local ones are the adverts for radio receivers and associated accessories in *Radiocorriere*.[182] An assessment of the products targeted at Italian listeners in *Radiocorriere* adverts allows for a picture of consumer preferences based on their listening habits and, when taken together, an essential image of Italian radio culture. As we will see, many of the adverts were for products manufactured by foreign companies which held a far superior market share for both luxury and budget goods. As a means of exhibiting the manner in which official radio culture negotiated the medium's inherent internationalism, we will also see a key example of an Italian product advertised in *Radiocorriere*. These adverts confirm and complement the understanding of the Italian radio's international focus explored above. The products and their marketing at once responded to pre-existing habits and preferences as well as perpetuating and enhancing them, making them a useful case study in our attempt to assess the international nature of radio and how this was negotiated in the official culture. In the previous section, we explored the ways in which *Radiocorriere*

[180] G. Sommi Picenardi, 'Due Propagande', *RC*, N.1 (1-7 Jan. 1939), p.4.
[181] *Ibid.*
[182] Adverts also appeared on the air as the EIAR operated under a hybrid model taking both subscription fees and publicity revenue. The number of adverts on the air was a source of dislike and frustration for listeners.

mediated the relationship between Italian listeners and foreign radios by reporting on broadcasting developments abroad. Here, we will bring into relief the products marketed to Italian listeners to help them make direct contact with such foreign radio stations. Overall, such adverts from a variety of companies (both Italian and foreign) stress the radio set's capacity to receive foreign stations with the field of commercial competition being how reliably and how far the product extends the user's reach through the wireless world. The market displays the importance to listeners of being able to 'cavalcare le onde dell'etere' (ride the waves of the ether) in 'ricerca dei suoni lontani' (search of distant sounds).[183] One such advert was published in *Radiocorriere* by the French company Radio L.L. for its Sincrodina radio receiver (Figure 3). The advert invites the globetrotting radio enthusiast by asserting, 'l'Europa passa docilmente fra le vostre dita con una Sincrodina Radio LL' (Europe passes docilely through your fingers with a Sincrodina Radio LL).[184] This slogan is accompanied by two images. The first displays a forefinger and thumb gripping a globe while the second displays a smaller forefinger and thumb manipulating the single dial of the new Sincrodina radio set. The imagery tells *Radiocorriere* readers that by adjusting the set's dial (its only button for a straight-forward globetrotting experience) they can turn the world on its axis and bend its position to their will.

[183] Sangiovanni, *Le Parole e le figure*, p.129.
[184] Sincordia Radio LL Advert in *RC*, N.3 (15-22 Jan. 1928), p.40.



Figure 3[185]

Similarly, respective adverts for the German Telefunken40 and Ultrafunk radio sets appeal to radio users with the slogans 'i concerti di tutta europa sono anche per voi!' (all of Europe's concerts for your ears too!) and 'tutti i teatri d'Europa in casa Vostra' (all of Europe's theatres in your home).[186] The latter goes further in highlighting listener priorities by stressing that it 'elimina anche le stazioni locali' (even blocks out local stations).[187] An advert for the Superla Mod.647 uses similar imagery to the Radio L.L. Sincordia in evoking a comparison of scale between the setting of radio listening and the enormity of the world it captures with the tag line 'anche nella più piccola casa si rivive il più grande mondo' (even in the smallest of homes you can receive the biggest of worlds).[188]

[185] *Ibid.* (Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence).
[186] Telefunken40 Advert in *RO*, N.43 (20 Oct. 1929), p.21.
[187] Ultrafunk advert in *RC*, N.1 (2-9 Jan. 1932), p.36.
[188] Radio Superla Mod.647 advert in *RC*, N.1 (1-7 Jan. 1939), p.39.

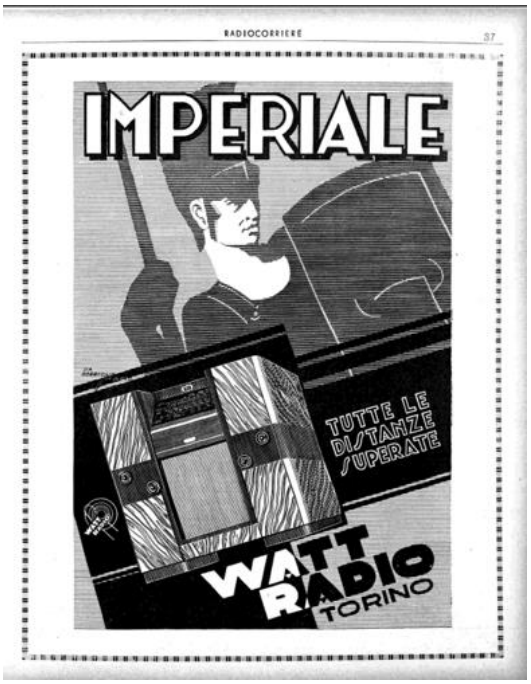
Until the technology allowed otherwise, the standard way to receive long-distance broadcasts was not through a loudspeaker but rather through a headset (*cuffia)* through which the reception was 'più chiara e più facilmente esente da disturbi' (clearer and more easily free of disturbances).[189] Adverts would stress this distinction such as that of Ytras which states that it 'riceve in Altoparlante la stazione locale e meravigliosamente in cuffia molte stazioni estere' (receives the local station on loudspeaker and many foreign stations marvellously through the headset).[190] Clearly aware of the extensive interest in distant listening, industry sought to cater for such needs by providing more comfort to the experience of picking up foreign stations. One clear example of this was the *cuscinetto di radio* (little radio cushion). Billed as the 'ultima e più geniale novità in materia di Radio' (latest and most ingenious advance in Radio products), the *cuscinetto di radio* meant 'non più cuffie pesanti, ma soltanto cuscinetti di riposo' (no more heavy headsets but only restful little cushions). The mini-speaker built into the cushion would allow the listener to 'udire la radio di tutti i paesi senza sottoporsi alla spiacevoli operazione di stringere la cuffia sulle orecchie' (hear the radio of every country without subjecting themselves to the unpleasant operation of gripping the headset to their ears).[191] As technology advanced, a key selling point for radio sets became their capacity to receive distant broadcasts without need of a headset or a *cuscinetto di radio*, such as the Autoultra which boasted the ability to pick up all European stations on loudspeaker.[192] This technical advancement, of course, allowed distant listening to become a communal rather than a purely private experience.

As is clear from the adverts exhibited and discussed in this section, the presence of commercial industry in the regime's official radio magazine reveals a predilection on the

[189] 'Conferenze – Lezioni – Conversazioni – Discorsi' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1929),* p.52.
[190] YTRAS advert in *RO*, N.1 (1-8 Jan. 1928), p.17.
[191] 'L'ultima e più geniale novità in materia di Radio' in *RO*, N.3 (15-22 Jan. 1928), p.12.
[192] Autoultra advert in *ibid.*, p.28.

part of Italian radio listeners for surfing the airwaves in search of distant voices. In this chapter our focus is the ways in which official radio culture at times encouraged, discouraged and negotiated Italian listeners' contact with foreign radios, languages and cultures. Remaining with adverts in *Radiocorriere*, one placed by the Turin-based company Watt Radio offers an early example of the mediation which will later be explored in full. The advert (Figure 4) contains a similarly inviting tag line as the other adverts: 'tutte le distanze superate' (all distances overcome). Only, whereas the adverts from foreign companies played on the global reach of their respective radio sets to establish an internationalist tone, the message of this Italian advert is decidedly imperialistic. In large lettering that seems to combine the Roman and the modern, the radio set's name (Imperiale) is accompanied by the image of a Roman legionary who dominates the page. Rather than pacifically negotiating the world (by gently turning a dial) the Italian listener is now cast in the role of warrior and conqueror. Instead of all the theatres of the world being brought into the Italian's living room, the Fascist legionary is encouraged to go out into the world and bring back the parts that suit. The implication is that the good Fascist engages with the (wireless) world but does so imperialistically.

Figure 4[193]



1.2.3. Language Teaching between the National, International and Imperial

> *la Radio è naturalmente la scuola più efficace della lingua di una nazione*[194]
>
> (the radio is naturally the most effective school for a nation's language)

Through the rapid improvement of short-wave broadcasting and the technological advances in the radio sets that facilitated distant listening, Italians had a greater and more immediate contact with the outside world than ever before. In addition, Italian listeners were part of an official culture which encouraged and mediated their contact with foreign stations. Able to tune in to any number of foreign stations, listeners had a passport and free reign to

[193] 'Watt Radio Imperiale' advert in *RC,* N.39 (23-29 Sep. 1934), p.37. (Courtesy of Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence).
[194] Giovanni Bellotti, 'Cambiare voce e pronunzia*', La Nazione*, 15-16 agosto 1943.

travel through a wireless world overflowing with foreign languages and the Italian radio accompanied them on their travels. The radio was used as a means of teaching Italians foreign languages as well as improving the standard of Italian among those Italians for whom the national language was still not their mother tongue. In this way, language teaching over the radio offers us an understanding of the medium's polyvalence – in this case, as a tool in the promotion of both national and international cultural and linguistic currents. As is the case throughout this chapter, we will see the ways in which the regime attempted to negotiate and reconcile these two currents. Our attention will fall, first, on the teaching of the Italian language to Italians. The history of the regime's linguistic policy revolves around three 'filoni' (branches) as categorised by Gabriella Klein.[195] First of all, there was the hostility towards dialects and 'ogni regionalismo nella lingua comune' (any regionalism in the common language). While the Italian radio celebrated folkloristic cultures abroad and while Fascist culture did not completely expel all signs of regionalism, as Ben-Ghiat has posited, 'in relegating regional culture to the realm of the carnival, the occasional festival, and the museum, the government wished to bracket it as something exceptional that was no longer to form part of the continuum of daily life'.[196] The second branch constituted the hostility, displayed from the beginning, towards the 'lingue delle minoranze' (languages of minorities) of the Italian populations at the country's border (such as German in Alto Adige). And, finally, there was the 'xenofobia tesa a eliminare qualsiasi elemento linguistico straniero'

[195] Gabriella Klein, *La Politica linguistica del fascismo* (Il Mulino, 1986), p.22.
[196] Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 'Language and the construction of National Identity in Fascist Italy', *The European Legacy*, 2.3 (1997), pp.438-43 (p.440). The mission to Italianise Italy linguistically also took the form of renaming cities to highlight their Greco-Roman origins. As such Basilicata became Lucania (1932), Girgenti became Agrigento (1927), Castrogiovanni became Enna (1927), and Borgo San Donnino became Fidenza (1927). See Patrizia Dogliani, 'Lingua/dialetti', in *Dizionario del fascismo* (vol. 2) ed. by Victoria de Grazia and Sergio Luzatto (Einaudi, 2002), p.54. The regime's language policy became increasingly totaitarian, culminating in the *Campagna contro il Lei* under the reasoning that the third-person singular polite form was 'una deformazione dell'ispanismo *Usted*, introdotto in quelli che il nazionalismo storico-culturale considerava i "secoli bui" della dominazione spagnola in Italia' (a contortion of the Spanish *Usted*, introduced in the years that historical-cultural nationalism considered the "dark centuries" of Spanish domination in Italy). This even went to the extent of forcing the women's magazine 'Lei' (Her) to change its name. See *ibid.*, p.55.

(xenophobia anxious to eliminate any foreign linguistic element).[197] All three of these approaches were pursued in service of the search for 'una unificazione linguistica che, all'epoca, non si era ancora realizzata' (a linguistic unification which, at the time, had still not been realised) and which was considered an 'essential coefficient of national identity'.[198] On the question of dialects and regionalisms, the regime's first approach in school tuition, while aiming ultimately for their elimination, saw them as a useful tool in moving the population away from dialects and towards standardised Italian. This was the central principle at the heart of Giovanni Gentile's approach to the teaching of the Italian language in his 1923 school reform. The students' dialect was used as a starting point for learning Italian through translations between their regional mother tongue and the national language that it was their duty to acquire. Successive reforms by Ercole and then Bottai took a much harder line against dialects, banishing them from the classroom. Furthermore, in July 1932, the use of dialects in the press was prohibited.[199]

The radio was to be used as a key instrument in the mission to provide Italy with linguistic unification. This was sought first of all through the standardisation of the language used at the EIAR microphones. It was not uncommon for listener letters commenting on and criticising a given announcer's pronunciation to be published in the *Radicorriere*.[200] These criticisms served to exhibit the vast differences in pronunciation across the kingdom. The EIAR 'cercò di disciplinare il parlato italiano delle sue trasmissioni' (sought to discipline the spoken Italian in its broadcasts).[201] This effort took place along two tracks: 'quello dell'elaborazione d'una sintassi e d'un vocabolario, che fossero confacenti alla peculiarità

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[197] Klein, *La Politica linguistica,* p.22.
[198] *Ibid.*, p.23.
[199] The circular banning dialects was not, however, fully implemented by all periodicals, some of which continued to print occasional poems in dialect.
185 'Per la difesa della lingua' (unsigned), *RC*, N2 (9-15 Jan. 1938), p.3.
[201] Sergio Raffaeli, 'La norma linguistica alla radio nel periodo fascista', in *Gli italiani trasmessi. La Radio, Incontri del Centro di studi di grammatica italiana* (Accademia della Crusca, 1997), p.45.

della radio, e quello dell'adozione d'una pronuncia microfonica unitaria' (that of elaborating a syntax and a vocabulary which would be suitable to the peculiarity of the radio, and that of adopting a unitary pronunciation at the microphone).[202] Further to this push for standardisation, the radio was employed in service of linguistic unification in a more active project when in 1938 the education minister Bottai commissioned a regular broadcast entitled 'La lingua d'Italia'. A collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Accademia d'Italia, the programme was led by the linguists Giulio Bertolini, Alfredo Panzini and Francesco Alessandro Ugolini (at the time a student of Bertolini) and was first broadcasted on 10 March 1938. Adopting a 'tono amabile, non cattedratico' (an amiable tone and not that of a university professor) and being 'ostile ai forestierismi, ai dialetti e alle difformità di pronuncia 'fra persone colte'' (hostile to foreign terms, dialects and deformities in pronunciation 'among cultured people'), the lessons were aimed at listeners of all social classes.[203] After each lesson, time was dedicated to responding to listener letters, answering their questions. The lessons along with the question-and-answer session would subsequently be published in *Radiocorriere*.[204] The article (entitled 'Per la difesa della lingua' - For the defence of the language, January 1938) announcing the upcoming programme stressed how the education of the masses was now 'protetta, assecondata, agevolata, assistita in tutti i campi dello scibile dalla Radio' (protected, supported, facilitated and assisted in all fields of learning by the radio), the great 'enciclopedia parlata' (spoken encyclopedia).[205] Crucially, this assistance was visible also in the increasing use of the radio in school classrooms as championed by Bottai. The primary focus of the 'Lingua d'Italia' broadcasts was decidedly pronunciation, accepting radio's responsibility in the modern Fascist state to 'risolvere i

[202] *Ibid.*
[203] 'Per la difesa della lingua' (unsigned), *RC*, N2 (9-15 Jan. 1938), p.3.
[204] These Q&As were printed from October 1938 under the title 'La lingua d'Italia. Risposte date a quesiti sottoposti dai radioascoltatori'.
[205] 'Per la difesa della lingua' (unsigned), *RC*, N2 (9-15 Jan. 1938), p.3.

dubbi e di fissare l'esatta pronuncia' (resolve doubts and to establish the exact pronunciation).[206] The programme's popular approach included 'gustose scenette tra corretta pronuncia ed influsso dialettale con relative discussioni ortofoniche tra i rappresentanti delle diverse regioni d'Italia, citati davanti ad un competente giudice che alla fine darà il giusto verdetto ortofonico' (entertaining sketches between correct pronunciation and dialectal influence with related discussions on pronunciation between representatives of the various Italian regions, delivered before a competent judge who, at the end, will give his verdict on the correct pronunciation).[207]

A crucial theme of the broadcasts' promulgation of a standard and correct national pronunciation was the competing models of Florentine and Roman variants. Modern-day Italian, of course, has long taken for its primary model the medieval Florentine vernacular of Dante's *Divina Commedia* and of Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* (for which the novelist lived in Florence to *risciaquare i panni in Arno* – rinse his clothes in the Arno - in order to revise the tome from his native Milanese into literary Florentine precisely to provide a linguistic model across the peninsula). With this linguistic Florentine heritage in mind, Bertoni initially admitted in March 1938 that Florentine pronunciation was the most accurate and correct and, therefore, the best model for standardisation. Rome emerged as a rival linguistically since 'è divenuta il maggior centro della vita politica e morale d'Italia' (it has become the greatest centre of Italy's political and moral life) and if it did not immediately replace Florence as the basis for the national language, that basis at least 'si è sdoppiata' (has been split in two).[208] Ultimately, however, towards the end of 1938 Bertoni 'suggerì di concedere la priorità alla pronuncia romana' (suggested ceding priority to Roman pronunciation), consistent with the mission to remake Italy and Italians in the image of the

[206] *Ibid.*
[207] *Ibid*.
[208] Giulio Bertoni, 'La Lingua d'Italia', *RC*, N.12 (20-26 Mar. 1938), p.4.

newly resurgent spirit of Ancient Rome embodied by the modernising force of the Fascist state.[209] On the matter of the Roman linguistic model, Giovanni Bellotti summed the decision up perfectly in his 1943 *La Nazione* article ('Cambiare voce e pronunzia' – Changing voice and pronunciation), writing, 'il problema linguistico va portato sul piano dell'Impero – Roma, centro dell'Impero, deve essere anche il centro linguistico italiano, la fucina della lingua attuale' (the linguistic problem must be considered on the plane of the Empire – Rome, centre of the Empire, should also be the Italian linguistic centre, the forge of today's language).[210] His statement that 'la Radio è naturalmente la scuola più efficace della lingua di una nazione' (the radio is naturally the most effective school for a nation's language) mirrored a sentiment that had been expressed for many years. The enacting of this sentiment, as we have seen, followed theoretically the three lines of attack in the search for a standardised Italian language: dialects, minority languages, and foreign terms. It is on this last line of attack that our enquiry will now fall. The radio may have been 'la scuola più efficace della lingua della nazione' (the most effective school for a nation's language), but the question was whether its fundamentally internationalist nature aided or obstructed, complimented or contradicted the regime's language policies. We must also question whether, in the case of the former, the radio's internationalism and nationalism may be reconciled.

As we have seen, the search for linguistic unity entailed purifying the language of dialectal and foreign influences. This was part of a 'wider impulse to "purify" Italian culture from within while simultaneously defending it from "internationalism"'.[211] The international dimension was perhaps the main defining feature of the radio in Fascist Italy just as anywhere else in the world and foreign languages were part and parcel of the wireless

[209] See Giulio Bertoni, 'La Lingua e la radio', *RC*, N.29 (16-22 July 1939), p.5.
[210] Giovanni Bellotti, 'Cambiare voce e pronunzia'.
[211] Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 'Language and the Construction of National Identity', p.441.

world in which Italian subjects and their state broadcaster acted. Given the lack of linguistic unity and low literacy rates, the tuition of foreign languages in schools was far from a priority. In fact, Bottai took the measure of abolishing the teaching of foreign languages in schools until the teaching of Italian and Latin was brought up to scratch.[212] In 1940 a law was passed prohibiting the use of foreign terms in company names and advertisements and a Commission was established to produce lists of foreign words readily used in Italian and their proposed Italian replacement.[213] Such policy decisions responded to certain 'segments of Fascist culture' (including 'cultural traditionalists and radical squadrists of the provinces') who had 'always been intensely xenophobic' and 'had fought since the beginning of fascism for the exclusion of foreign influence from the peninsula'.[214] At a time when speakers of Slovenian, for instance, were being threatened with (and subjected to) violence for not speaking in Italian, the early days of official Italian radio culture embraced enthusiasts' linguistic internationalism. The first radio enthusiasts in Italy were referred to as 'sanfilisti' and many of them 'si preoccuparono di trovare una lingua internazionale di comunicazione' (were concerned with finding an international language of communication) with Esperanto being favoured by many both in Italy and across Europe.[215] The sense of an international community, indeed, manifested itself precisely through the use of Esperanto in the context of radio. One listener from Bucarest, for instance, wrote to the EIAR in Esperanto to express his pleasure on hearing 'la Nova Himno de la Laboro' (the new Hymn of Labour) on the occasion of his visit to Venice. The letter was published in *Radiocorriere* without any accompanying translation.[216] By the same token, many of the terms used in the lexical field of broadcasting defied the xenophobic resistance to foreignness and internationalism. One

[212] Klein, *La Politica linguistica*, p.52.
[213] Ben-Ghiat, 'Language and the construction of National identity', p.441.
[214] *Ibid.*
[215] Raffaeli, 'La norma linguistica', p.32.
[216] Letter from Sigmund Prager in 'Il *Canto del Lavoro* al Teatro Lirico di Milano', *RC*, N.7 (12-19 Feb. 1928), p.3.

article from 20 May 1924 in the *Radiofonia* magazine displayed this conflict in its earliest stage. Bemoaning the purists who are unhappy about the use of English terms, the article argues that the language of the radio necessarily has to be a 'linguaggio cosmopolita e libero come sono libere e cosmopolite le onde da cui deriva' (cosmopolitan and free language just as the waves from which it derives are cosmopolitan and free).[217] In other words, an internationalist, cosmopolitan medium demands an internationalist, cosmopolitan language to match. Dictionaries of radio terms (such as the *Dizionarietto enciclopedico* by Umberto Tucci serialised in *Radiocorriere* in 1930) exhibit this assimilation of foreign terms.[218] As the attempted replacement of foreign terms gathered force, the radio was not immune and the industry was asked for a list of foreign words and proposed replacements. As such 'antifading' became 'anti-evanescenza' and 'volume control' became 'regolatore di volume'.[219] However, while individual terms were hunted into an aspired non-existence, one crucial sign of linguistic internationalism persisted: foreign-language radio courses.

At the same time as pursuing a 'politica volta a rendere la lingua italiana l'unica ufficialmente in uso sul territrio nazionale' (policy geared towards making the Italian language the only one officially in use in national territory), the radio was turned to teaching foreign languages to Italian listeners.[220] This speaks not only of a movement making Italy less provincial and more national but also of one which would make it more European.[221] Lessons of French, English and German began on 7 March 1927 with the three languages

[217] Raffaeli, 'La norma linguistica', p.32.
[218] Tucci's dictionary was serialised between N.23 (8-14 June 1930) and N.52 (27 Dec 1930 – 3 Jan 1931) of the *RC*.
[219] Raffaeli, 'La norma linguistica', p.33.
[220] Dogliani, 'Lingua/dialetti', p.53.
[221] On this note, the novelist Corrado Alvaro noted in his diary that Fascism seemed less a nationalistic movement than 'an attempt to Europeanize Italy[,] . . . to conform to other countries[,] . . . to open a window on Europe, but in a provincial way. It is the manifestation of the inferiority complex of the Italian middle class'. See Corrado Alvaro*, Quasi una vita* (Bompiani, 1950), p.105. By the same token, it has been posited that a policy of openness was employed in order to 'expose Italian intellectuals to the latest foreign trends, allowing them to fashion a modern culture that could be exported to other countries'. See Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* (University of California Press, 2001), p.34.

alternating on a three day cycle. Exercises relating to the lessons were printed in an appendix at the end of *Radiocorriere*. Language lessons 'furono sempre molto richiesti dai radioabbonati […] sia nei primordi sia negli anni Trenta' (were always highly requested by radio subscribers both at the beginning and in the 1930s).[222] In fact, in the last large-scale EIAR referendum in 1940, language lessons, listed as the final option in the list of preferences, proved highly popular among listeners.[223] The results of this referendum were taken into consideration by the head of the EUR42's press office, factoring in that 'i corsi di lezioni maggiormente richiesti sono quelli di lingue estere' (the courses of lessons most requested are those of foreign languages) when it came to organising domestic propaganda for the world fair which, had it gone ahead, would have brought countless foreign languages to the capital thanks to international visitors.[224] Given that the EUR's propaganda activity was to 'riflettersi principalmente sull'estero o quanto meno sui viaggiatori stranieri che verranno in Italia' (focus primarily on foreign countries or, at least, on the foreign travellers coming to Italy), the Italian radio was likely to be even more of a polyglot than it already was with broadcasts in innumerable languages.[225] In such a way, an appreciation of Fascism's universalist mission would be infinitely aided by some knowledge of foreign languages. The very spread of Fascism (especially in the case of the radio) was dependent on Italy speaking foreign languages. If Fascist political and cultural doctrine was to be translated and adapted to foreign countries, it would need willing translators. If Fascist Italy was to become truly imperial it would need to speak the language of others.

The imperialistic imperative to acquire a foreign language was most evident in the case of dominated peoples. After the successful invasion of Ethiopia, Italy 'finally had her

[222] *Ibid.*, p.35.
[223] *Ibid*.
[224] Note from the head of EUR42's propaganda office in ACS, Archivi di Enti Pubblici, Privati e Società (1886-1994), Ente Autonomo Esposizione Universale di Roma (1937-1940), B.1258, F.10906.
[225] *Ibid.*

empire', an empire which needed governing and a people that still needed conquering. This 'intensa e potente politica di espansione imperiale' (intense and powerful politics of imperial expansion) prompted the beginning of Amharic (the language of Ethiopia) lessons on the EIAR, a language which was 'tanto necessario a chi si propon[eva] di portare il suo lavoro nelle terre dell'Impero' (highly necessary for whosoever intended to take their work to the lands of the Empire).[226] This logic was also expanded to European languages. While, for the above-stated reasons, language teaching was not a priority in schools, there were 'iniziative prese fuori scuola per incentivare l'apprendimento delle lingue straniere' (initiatives run outside of school to incentivise the learning of foreign languages) which had by now acquired 'decisamente un ruolo politico' (decidedly a political role). Radio, with its mass appeal, was perhaps the strongest arm in this push. Language lessons were not the only means available to Italian listeners wishing to improve their competency in a given foreign language. After all, at the twist of a dial they were able to master time and space and bring the world into their home. Unlike in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, Italian listeners were not prohibited from listening to foreign stations (apart from 'red' stations during the Spanish Civil War and enemy stations once Italy entered WWII). The titles of foreign programmes (including Soviet broadcasts) were translated into Italian and included in every *Radiocorriere* edition. Not only were Italian listeners not discouraged from listening to foreign stations, but they were also often encouraged to use the modernising force of the radio to shrink the globe into their living room and, importantly, to improve their foreign language skills. A 1930 article from *Radiocorriere*'s Paris correspondent, Ruffino Ruffini, details emphatically the utility of the radio as a tool for the 'perfezionarsi delle lingue straniere' (perfecting of foreign languages).[227] Ruffini asks what greater pleasure there can

[226] 'Lezioni di lingue straniere' in 'Le Cronache', *RC,* N.26 (25 June – 1 July 1939), p.12.
[227] Ruffino Ruffini, 'Poliglottismo Radiofonico (Lettera dal nostro corrispondente parigino)' in 'Nei Cieli d'Europe', *RC*, N.17 (27 Apr. – 3 May 1930), p5.

be than listening to a broadcast in a foreign language. He suggests, for those whose language skills are not up to the task, listening to foreign news bulletins having already scoured the newspaper (or Italian radio) for the events being announced, thus making it easier to follow. Ruffini goes on to tell the story of an Italian colleague of his in London who perfected his English by attending Protestant church services to hear the preacher's sermons. Had the radio been around then, he could have saved himself all that trouble and learned from the comfort of his own home (the implication being that it would have saved him the trouble of suffering Anglican services). Ruffini further stresses the absolute reliability of the radio as a pedagogic tool because of the perfect punctuality of foreign stations' programmes (asserting that one could set one's watch by Daventry). The wonder of the radio is that it brings you into contact with foreign languages, sparking a desire to learn that would otherwise never have been ignited. On this note, Ruffini states that he knows many Frenchmen 'ai quali è venuta voglia di imparare l'italiano, talmente sono entusiasti della pronunzia delle nostre signorine annunziatrici' (who have developed the desire to learn Italian such is their enthusiasm for the pronunciation of our young female announcers).[228] Crucially, here, this exportation of the Italian language is a natural occurrence that falls within a reciprocal trend: in short, Italians should also learn foreign languages in order best to participate in the wireless world and the cultural and political world it imitates and influences.

In this way, the radio was used to achieve two distinct linguistic goals. On the one hand, it was employed as a crucial tool in the unification of the Italian language. This unification (achieved through the banishing of dialectal and foreign terms and the standardisation of pronunciation) was, in turn, thought of as necessary for the exportation of the Italian language. Separate to this mission was the teaching of foreign languages. To a degree, the prevalence of foreign language courses may be explained by the popularity (recorded in the

[228] *Ibid.*

EIAR referenda) among a listenership of 'piccolo-borghesi o popolani istruiti in città' (petit bourgeois or educated commoners in the city).[229] It could simply be stated that the radio was a fundamentally cosmopolitan medium and the Fascist state allowed such internationalism to predominate through some degree of disinterest. Certainly, Mussolini's supposed disinterest in the medium has been used to explain the state of the radio during the *ventennio*. However, the fact remains that radio broadcasting was under state control and, as the evidence exhibited throughout this thesis shows, the medium's organisation was far from the result of neglectful and casual decision making. The medium's inherent internationalism was not simply an element to be withstood and tolerated: it was used as a tool in the battle to make new Italians and change habits. Foreign language learning was no less a part of this than was the epuration of foreign terms from the Italian language. This is precisely because the two responded to separate missions. The Italian language needed to remain pure of foreign influence (also to improve its exportability as part of a wider Italian culture). That is not to say, however, that Italians were not to learn foreign languages. As Gioacchino Volpe argued in a parliamentary debate in November 1924,

> La così detta penetrazione all'estero solo in questa maniera si può fare: cioè studiando noi le questioni degli altri. Perciò la parola d'ordine nostra dovrebbe essere: conoscere il mondo, studiare il mondo
>
> (the so-called penetration abroad can only be achieved in this manner: that is to say, by us studying the questions of other peoples. As such our watchword should be: know the world, study the world).[230]

Volpe's stance captures perfectly the imperialistic imperative not only of exporting one's culture and language but also of learning the culture and language of the peoples which one wishes to influence. In fact, as Volpe stresses, the latter is essential in achieving the former. Just as the radio set advert showing a battle-ready Roman legionary instructs the Italian listener to act imperialistically in the wireless world, the encouragement to learn foreign

[229] Raffaeli, 'La norma linguistica', p.35.
[230] See Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie*, p. 64.

languages can be seen as a way of taking what was previously a habit typical of cosmopolitan internationalism and pivoting it towards Fascism's own brand of imperialism. The Italian radio was itself a shining endorsement of polyglotism with much of its stations' output being increasingly in foreign languages. As the EIAR's foreign language bulletins and conversations were, for the most part, broadcasted from the same stations as domestic broadcasts, Italian listeners would regularly be faced with their government speaking foreign languages. Mussolini was himself a keen linguist. Having qualified to be a French teacher in his younger years, he fancied himself quite the polyglot. As we will see in subsequent chapters, speeches he gave over the radio and on foreign visits in foreign languages were lauded as being linguistically perfect. Denis Mack Smith contends that Mussolini's belief in his German, for instance, led him to refuse an interpreter when meeting with Adolf Hitler. His German was, of course, not up to scratch and, as a result, Mussolini was forced to sit and listen to Hitler rant uninterrupted for hours on end.[231]

One language which was conspicuous in its absence from the Italian radio was Latin. While the themes of *latinità* and *romanità* were constantly present, Latin itself was scarcely a feature on the radio as it was in other propagandistic contexts.[232] Bottai believed that the apparent decline in national education pre-Fascism had been down to the decline in the teaching of Latin. The ancient language, for Bottai, was an essential element of the formation of new elites. 'Il latino,' he contended, 'è per gli eletti' (Latin is for the chosen ones).[233] It was, in short, the 'lingua di dotti, di pochi' (language of the erudite, the few).[234] The scholarly focus on the Latin language during the *ventennio* has, until recently, been on those

[231] Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, p.214.
[232] For the popular propagandistic use of Latin see Han Lamers and Bettina Reitz-Joosse, 'Spectacular Latin: The Role of the Latin Language in Political Spectacles under Italian Fascism', *Fascism,* 12.2 (2023), pp.279-305.
[233] See Klein, *La Politica linguistica*, p.62.
[234] *Ibid.*

'with a high degree of expertise in the language: academics, teachers, and clerics well-versed in the Latin literary tradition and in the composition and reading of Latin texts'. The focus had not, therefore, been on 'large and diverse audiences'.[235] The radio, as a mass medium which used and taught foreign language and had a strong pedagogical focus, would presumably have been the ideal forum for the promulgation of Latin. Indeed, many radio conferences focused on the history and heritage of Ancient Rome and the notion of using Latin 'come oggetto d'insegnamento per costruire un modello linguistico' (as a focus of teaching for constructing a linguistic model) for the teaching of Italian was prominent at the time.[236] Furthermore, at a time when radio enthusiasts were searching for an international language (and the EIAR was broadcasting in Esperanto) 'the regime had been attempting to promote the Latin language as an international language of universal understanding between different (like-minded) nationals and citizens, and tried to stimulate its reintroduction as the lingua franca of academic research'.[237] Yet, the state broadcaster did not produce Latin language courses and did not (unlike Vatican Radio) broadcast in Latin.

A notable mention of Latin in *Radiocorriere* came in the longform article 'Dal latino alla latinità' (From Latin to Latinity) which was printed directly next to an advert for foreign language courses. The article calls for Mussolini's speeches on the birth of the empire to be translated into Latin, stressing that a side-by-side comparison would 'rilevare come il ritmo dell'argomentazione, la plasticità dell'espressione nell'una lingua e nell'altra appariscano della stessa tempra, tempra della sostanza e della forma romana' (reveal how the rhythm of argumentation, the plasticity of expression in one language are of the same temperament, the temperament of Roman substance and form).[238] Of all the translations of Mussolini's speeches, the article contends, the Latin one would be 'la più aderente, la più esatta, la più

[235] Lamers and Reitz-Joose, 'Spectacular Latin', p.281.
[236] Klein, *La Politica linguistica*, p.62.
[237] Lamers and Reitz-Joose, 'Spectacular Latin', p.287.
[238] G. Sommi Picenardi, 'Dal latino alla latinità', *RC* (9-15 Jan. 1938, N.2), p.4.

viva' (the most accurate, the most precise, the most alive) because 'l'italiano è il latino moderno, così come il latino è l'Italiano antico' (Italian is the modern Latin just as Latin is the ancient Italian).[239] Following the popular equation that the Fascists were the 'romani della modernità' (Romans of modernity), rendering Mussolini's speech into Latin would be another embodiment of the fusion that Fascism had achieved between past and present in its propelling of Italy and the wider world towards a modern and revolutionary future. This mirroring would, according to the article, be perfectly captured by translating Mussolini's speeches in Latin in order to promote Italy's imperial achievement to an a-temporal realm where its happening was already present in ancient past, revolutionary present and glorious future. The discussion moves on to the international role of Latin as part of the wider civilising mission of the Italian (Roman) people over the centuries. The article reminds the reader of how 'tutte le Nazioni d'Europa, nessuna eccettuata, nordiche e meridionali, latine e non latine hanno fatto la propria educazione in latino' (all European nations, without exception, both Nordic and Southern, Latin and non-Latin have conducted their education in Latin).[240] As a consequence, if all peoples are not 'latine per natura, tutte lo sono per educazione, la formazione intellettuale e per la civiltà' (Latin by nature, they are all Latin by education, intellectual formation and civilisation).[241] For all of contemporary Europe 'il rinnovamento delle intelligenze e dei costumi, la primavera spirituale vennero da Roma per il tramite della sua lingua' (the renewal of the intellect and of customs, the spiritual spring came from Rome through its language) and the implication is that this linguistic connection should be employed as part of the new renewal of knowledge and customs that Fascist Italy was affecting across the globe.[242] The article concludes with lengthy quotes from former British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin about how much Britain owes to Rome. In sum, the

[239] *Ibid.*
[240] *Ibid*.
[241] *Ibid.*
[242] *Ibid.*

article uses the historical international significance of Latin to cast Fascist Italy (as the propaganda so consistently and relentlessly did) as the direct descendant of ancient Rome and, therefore, responsible for 'the difesa dell'Occidente, dei suol valori storici, politici, intellettuali, e morali' (the defence of the West, of its historical, political, intellectual and moral values). However, the radio (a space where the theme of *romanità* was so prominent and important) never took on the use of Latin as a means of bringing about the rebirth of ancient Rome.

What we can say about the nature of the radio in the Fascist imaginary points helpfully to an explanation of this omission. The radio was championed as a modern and modernising force which would serve as further proof, in fact, of Fascism's modernity. The favouring, therefore, of modern languages over dead languages is of little surprise. The interest in foreign languages, as we have noted, may well be traced largely to the middle and upper classes with Fascism trying to negotiate the tension with such apparent internationalism through calls to imperialism. However, the radio was understood as a mass medium. While having to cater for different tastes, the wireless world was envisaged as a space where the nation would meet unified. In this optic, Latin courses would have been considered as far too elitist and would have excluded all but the most educated in society. Finally, as we will see more clearly in Chapter 4, the myth of Rome as played out over the airwaves functioned by using simple historical and cultural formulae which avoided over-complication. The myth, in short, did not require anything as complicated as the knowledge of Latin. It was intended as a unifying myth essentially for all peoples and, despite its continued academic significance for a small elite in each country, a focus on Latin would likely have been more alienating than inviting both for listeners in Italy and abroad.

1.3 – Roberto Forges Davanzati's Le Cronache del Regime

1.3.1 Roberto Forges Davanzati and the birth of Italy's favourite spoken programme

In order best to assess the manner in which the regime's official radio culture negotiated the medium's inherent internationalism, we turn now to an analysis of the most popular spoken programme of its day: *Le Cronache del regime* written and delivered by Roberto Forges Davanzati. The broadcasts, proposed by Galeazzo Ciano and approved by Mussolini, responded to the 'bisogno di essere continuamente illuminati sui grandi problemi di politica interna ed estera […] sentito dagli italiani di ogni classe e di ogni condizione' (need to be continuously illuminated about the big problems of internal and external politics felt by Italians of every class and condition).[243] They responded also to the new international wireless world within which Italian listeners moved. The *Cronache del regime* were an opportunity for the regime to combat foreign news reports, emphasise its increasingly important role in foreign affairs as well as its prominence within the new wireless world. The *Cronache* were described as a 'documentario parlato, cronistoria continuata della costante ascesa italiana e fascista in ogni campo dello scibile e del fattibile' (a spoken documentary, continuous chronicle of the constant Italian and Fascist ascent in every field both intellectual and practical).[244] Delivered 'con tono pacato, con parola chiara, sobria, incisiva, inequivocabile' (in a calm tone, through clear, simple, incisive and unambiguous language), these broadcasts were supposed to 'interpreta[re] il sentimento collettivo' (interpret the collective mood) and promote, therefore, social and spiritual unity.[245] The *Cronache* became a forum for many prominent regime figures to deliver guest address.[246] However, the main speaker was Roberto Forges Davanzati until his premature death in June

[243] 'Le Cronache del Regime' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1935)*, p.283.
[244] *Ibid.*, p.300.
[245] *Ibid.*, p.283.
[246] These included *ad hoc* appearances from Italo Balbo, Giuseppe Bottai, Achille Starace and Francesco Ercole. For a list of speakers see *ibid*., p.284.

1936.[247] Such was the popularity of his broadcasts that their transcripts were published in a three volume edition by Mondadori in 1936.[248] It is from these printed materials that this section's analysis draws.

Born in Naples in February 1880 into an aristocratic family, Forges Davanzati would go on to occupy an important place in the cultural and political life of the Fascist regime. [249] Studying for his degree in the *Lettere* faculty at the University of Naples, he developed a keen interest in ancient history and archaeology, studying both Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece. During his studies, Forges Davanzati was attracted by the initiatives of the Partito Socialistà Italiano (PSI) which, in those years in Naples, was oriented towards syndicalism, antiparliamentarianism and anti-reformism. Like many socialists (Mussolini *in primis*), he was more and more attracted to the nationalistic narrative as compared to the internationalist stance of the PSI. Through contact with the group surrounding Enrico Corradini which would form the Associazione Nazionalista Italiana (ANI) in 1910. Forges Davanzati was an early and important proponent of a union between revolutionary syndicalists and the nationalists, securing a place on the editing committee of the nationalist newspaper *L'Idea Nazionale*, founded in 1911. His columns in this paper, of which he became director in 1914, showed a particular interest in foreign politics and colonial expansion. Forges Davanzati took up arms in World War I, receiving a bronze medal for valour. After the war, he continued his journalistic activities and was a close ally of D'Annunzio during the Reggenza del

[247] The unexpected and untimely passing of the EIAR's most popular and influential speaker caused immense disruption to the running of *Le Cronache del regime*. After a hiatus and after decided that no one speaker could replace such a revered and loved figure, the programmes' topics were divided and assigned to multiple speakers. Foreign politics was assigned to Virginio Gayda, Ugo d'Andrea, and Ezio Maria Gray; national politics was given to Giuseppe Bottai, Luigi Federzoni, and Alessandro Pavolini; social politics was entrusted to Giuseppe Bottai and Nello Quilici; Giuseppe Bevione took care of financial politics; while military politics was to be the domain of the generals Francesco Saverio Grazioli and Ambroglio Bollati as well Aldo Vallori.
[248] Roberto Forges Davanzati, *Le Cronache del regime* (3 vols.) (Mondadori, 1936).
[249] Biographical information is taken from Silvana Casmirri's entry on Forges Davanzati in the *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani* (vol. 48) (Treccani, 1997). Find online here: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/roberto-forges-davanzati_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

Carnaro, helping to set up the Ufficio per gli Affari Esteri (Office for Foreign Affairs) in occupied Fiume.

After the March on Rome, he would become a key figure in the political fusion between the Fascists and the Nationalists, achieved in February 1923. This earned Davanzati early favour reflected in his nomination by the Gran Consiglio to the directorate of the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF) in 1924. Based on Mussolini's comments reported by De Begnac in the *Taccuini Mussoliniani*, the Duce held Forges Davanzati in high esteem, referring to him as 'il mio amico' (my friend) and as 'moralmente e materialmente incorruttibile' (morally and materially incorruptible).[250] Mussolini clearly trusted Forges Davanzati, asserting that 'tutto quel che Forges Davanzati compiva, era realizzato con lealtà e buona fede' (everything Forges Davanzati did was done with loyalty and in good faith).[251] The Duce also commended Forges Davanzati for his revolutionary spirit and acknowledged the validity of his opinions and many pieces of advice. His importance would be recognised with appointments to roles within key cultural institutions. He was placed on the directors committee of the Società Dante Alighieri (SDA), nominated president of the Società Italiana degli Autori ed Editori (SIAE) in 1929, and made a senator in 1934.[252] Davanzati's political and journalistic profile made him the perfect fit for broadcasts reporting and interpreting foreign affairs. In 1916, he had been called upon by the minister without portfolio Vittorio Scialoja to produce a report on the use of press and propaganda in support of Italian intervention in WWI. He published heavily on foreign affairs and often presented at conferences, both within Italy and abroad, on the subject of foreign politics. On several occasions, the regime even commissioned him to write up political reports on the attitudes of foreign populations towards the Fascist regime, notably in Albania (1928) and in

[250] Yvon De Begnac, *Taccuini mussoliniani* (Il Mulino, 1990), p. 239 and p. 257, respectively.
[251] *Ibid.,* p. 240.
[252] Year of nomination to SDA board unknown.

Germany (1930 and 1932). Antonio Papa asserts that Forges Davanzati 'era considerato uno dei maggiori esponenti dell'apparato culturale del partito e, in particolare, di quell'insieme di combinazioni ideologiche che costituì il sociologismo fascista' (was considered one of the biggest exponents of the cultural and political set-up of the party and, in particular, of that combination of ideological stances which constituted Fascist sociologism).[253] He was certainly trusted with the responsibility of providing the regime's official version of events and, more importantly, formulating a conceptual framework through which to understand the (wireless) word fascistically. The *Cronache* broadcasts were between ten and fifteen minutes in length. His disquisitions seemed to 'scaturire da un discorso quasi improvvisato' (spring from an almost improvised discourse), while 'dietro l'apparente occasionalità dei commenti si nascondeva una programmazione accurata degli argomenti' (behind the apparent casualness of the comments hid a precise plan for the subject matter).[254] Highly trusted by the regime to the point that 'non fu mai costretto a rettifiche' (he was never subjected to amendments), he possessed 'grande capacità di sintonizzarsi o addirittura di prevedere le decisioni dei vertici politici' (a great capacity to synthethise or indeed forsee the decisions from the top of the political hierarchy).[255] This 'carattere di confidenziale ufficialità' (character of confidential officialness) was enhanced by the fact that 'non personalizzava mai il suo discorso' (he never personalised his discourse), making use 'del tono della voce, delle pause, dell'uso del sonore' (of tone of voice, pauses, the use of sound) and a 'voce maschia e accenti "vibranti"' (masculine voice and "trembling" inflections) to achieve a *stile littorio* that was both inviting and authoritative.[256] Davanzati's broadcasts quickly became 'il numero più interessante della Radiofonia italiana' (the most interesting element of Italian radio) while the Neapolitan journalist 'acquistò infatti una popolarità

[253] Antonio Papa, *Storia politica (vol. 1)*, p. 160.
[254] *Ibid.*, p.161.
[255] *Ibid.*, p.162.
[256] *Ibid.*, p.163.

senza precedenti nella storia della radiofonia italiana' (earned a popularity without precedent in the history of Italian radio broadcasting).[257] These broadcasts, being both official and popular and focussing as they do so heavily on Italy's role in the wider world, make for an essential case study in understanding how the regime mediated Italians' contact with the wireless world.

1.3.2. The Democratic crisis and the natural spread of Fascist principles

A crucial way in which Davanzati interprets the outside world is through the lens of the spread of Fascism as the new great universal. The broadcasts focus, thus, on supposed examples of foreign countries beginning to look towards Fascist Italy for political and cultural inspiration when, in the past, this had happened the other way around. The focus on Fascism's relevance on the international stage is typical of old-fashioned nationalist rhetoric and is an example of the regime's propagandistic appeal to 'chauvinism to help overcome feelings of inferiority among the conformist petty-bourgeois masses'.[258] Speaking in the chamber in May 1926, then Undersecretary of the Interior and future Foreign Minister Dino Grandi quoted an article written by Forges Davanzati in *Gerarchia*, entitled 'Cultura e politica estera nazionale', saying:

> Basta con gli universali ideologici dedotti secondo le formule più o meno scientifiche della vecchia cultura prebellica. C'è finalmente, col fascismo, un universale creato dall'Italia.[259]
>
> (Enough is enough with these universal ideologies derived using the more or less scientific formulas of the old pre-war culture. There is, finally, thanks to Fascism, a universal ideal created by Italians)

The old pre-war culture to which Grandi refers included liberal Italy – an Italy which, in Fascist eyes, was weak, imitative of and subservient to the Great Powers. Now, however,

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[257] Isola, *Abbassa la tua radio*, p.189.
[258] Tannenbaum, *The Fascist Experience*, p.218.
[259] Camera dei deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Legisl. XXVII, prima sessione, *Discussioni,* 19/05/1926. For the original article by Forges Davanzati see 'Cultura e politica estera nazionale'*, Gerarchia*, 4 (1925), pp.230-1. This is quoted in Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie,* pp.66-7.

Italy was said to have a revolutionary ideology worthy of its Roman heritage – an ideology which supposedly had true claims to universality, compared both to the liberal democracies and German National Socialism. Due to Italy's recent rejection of its liberal past, Davanzati's criticisms of liberal democracy are often double-edged: they compare Fascist Italy to the foreign democracies as well as to liberal era Italy. This contributes to the overall sense that fascism is the natural solution to the crisis faced by democracy, as though it were historically inevitable. When reporting on foreign democracies - predominantly France and Britain and, to a lesser extent, the U.S.A – the prevailing message is not simply that they are in crisis but that, without openly admitting it, they are looking to Fascist Italy for inspiration. The notion that Fascist values were emerging naturally in other countries runs counter to the supposed driving force which we will see behind radio propaganda aimed at foreign listeners. Franco Ciarlantini, a strong voice in the early debate around Fascist cultural expansionism, stressed in a parliamentary debate in March 1927 that the regime could not wait for the moment that Fascist 'valori culturali ed artistici si facciano strada da sé, per la misteriosa virtù espansiva dei valori ritenuti universali' (cultural and artistic values carve out a path for themselves through the mysterious expansion of so-called universal values).[260] How and to what extent the regime tried to forge a path abroad for their cultural values will be evaluated in subsequent chapters. What is striking is that these domestic broadcasts propose the opposite of what Ciarlantini asserted: Fascist ideas are, indeed, supposedly spreading as if through 'la misteriosa virtù espansiva dei valori ritenuti universali'.

Before turning our attention to how this theme was explored in the *Cronache* broadcasts themselves, it is important to address its wider context. Foreign interest in Italian Fascism was on the rise in the early 1930s, presenting the regime with an opportunity. It is

[260] Camera dei deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Legisl. XXVII, prima sessione, *Discussioni,* 30/03/1927, p.7368. Found in Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie,* p.68.

true that not all of the regime's propaganda abroad was unsolicited. The regime, in turn, would stress that its output abroad was not propaganda rather *information* which responded to a genuine demand. The Wall Street crash of 1929 and the subsequent economic fallout presented Fascism with an opportunity to capitalise on the perceived failings of liberal democracy and did spark a genuine interest in the alternative offered by Fascism. Indeed, the economic crisis of the early thirties could be seen as a key factor in prompting this increased interest in promoting the regime abroad and the focus on a 'propaganda delle realizzazioni del regime' (propaganda promoting the achievements of the regime).[261] This valorisation of the regime's achievements was also in the spirit of the celebrations in 1932 marking the ten-year anniversary of the March on Rome. This interest abroad in Italian Fascism most frequently manifested itself in a request for materials, such as books and pamphlets, on the regime. One documented case involved books being sent to two libraries in the small French town of Châlons-sur-Marne at the request of one Frenchman who admired the regime and listened to the French-language Fascist radio broadcasts which began in April 1934.[262] The Direzione generale della propaganda (DGP) would send materials abroad in response to requests sent to the Sottosegretariato di Stato per la Stampa e la Propaganda (SSSP), diplomats on the ground or even, in some cases, directly to the French EIAR announcer. In May 1937, it was estimated that over 260,000 pamphlets were sent abroad in response to explicit requests from radio listeners. In 1935 alone, 60,000 letters were sent by listeners and 24,000 requests were supposedly made for publications about Fascism and about the war in Ethiopia. [263] This genuine interest in Fascism was exaggerated by the regime and cannot, of course, be said to explain fully the surge in foreign propaganda. The effort to display such an interest through its official propaganda is present also in these

[261] Garzarelli, *Parleremo*, p.4.
[262] *Ibid.*, p.77.
[263] *Ibid.,* p.50.

broadcasts. However, rather than suggesting that Fascist ideals are flourishing amongst the peoples of foreign countries, it is suggested that they are seeping into the corridors of power.

Significant airtime is committed in this period to painting the picture of democratic instability – a bona fide 'crisi di regime' (regime crisis).[264] It is emphasised that the crisis in the liberal democracies is not simply economic. It is not simply a momentary recalibration after the hardship of the financial crash. It is, in fact, a cultural and spiritual crisis which lies at the very heart of the political system. The inefficiency of the parliamentary democracies of Britain and France is stressed, focusing on the incohesive nature of their coalition cabinets and the fact that, in order to achieve anything, it is seemingly always necessary for the parliament to be prorogued seeing as 'quando la Nazione attraversa tempi difficili, il Parlamento non riesce a dar forza al Governo' (when the nation goes through difficult times, the parliament cannot give support to the government).[265] The current state of the democracies is seen as a danger by Forges Davanzati on the basis that, for the sake of international cooperation and prosperity, national stability is paramount. Given the supposed state of crisis, it is presented as only natural that France and Britain would experiment with more autocratic approaches, as pioneered by Fascist Italy, and that anti-democratic tendencies should begin to emerge. Regular reminders that Italy found herself, in recent memory, in a similar democratic crisis contributes to the sense that Fascism is a natural stage in the life of a nation, a stage which Italy has reached first and which will too be reached by others.

A principal way in which France and Britain supposedly looked to Fascist Italy for inspiration was through embryonic imitation of the corporative state. Progress on the establishment of the Fascist corporations was heavily reported by Forges Davanzati in the

[264] This phrase is frequently repeated by Forges Davanzati in the *Cronache*.
[265] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p.342.

Cronache broadcasts and was always presented as a political development with international significance, proving Fascism's true originality in comparison to other nations. Forges Davanzati reported, on 16 February 1935, that the French parliament was discussing a project which would regulate the production of individual industries. The French were supposedly at pains to stress that this project in no way resembled Fascist corporatism. However, as Forges Davanzati saw it, if it did not constitute a divergence from the principles of liberal economic policy then 'tutte queste preoccupate negazioni non avrebbero ragion d'essere' (there would be no need for all of these worried denials).[266] The analysis of the discussion culminates in the conclusion, therefore, that the French president, Flandin, 'annuncia, sull'esempio dell'Italia mussoliniana, un primo assaggio di questa nuova esperienza creata dalla Rivoluzione fascista' (is announcing, following the example of Mussolini's Italy, a first taste of this new experience created by the Fascist Revolution).[267] The same was said to be occurring in Great Britain, notably in a broadcast from 28 January 1935 entitled 'Realtà corporativa e programmatica britannica' (Corporative and programmatic reality in Britain).[268] It was stressed in this broadcast that whilst Britain, as well as other countries, was 'ancora alla vigilia programmatica…' (still in the early planning stage), this planning stage was always 'tutta più o meno orientata verso l'esempio fascista' (all more or less pointing towards the Fascist exemplum).[269] The claim that the British secretary of state for employment was favourable towards reducing the working week (a policy championed by Forges Davaznati in the *Cronache*), was used as yet more evidence that Fascist Italy was a source of policy inspiration abroad.[270]

[266] *Ibid.,* p.266.
[267] *Ibid.,* p.199.
[268] *Ibid.,* p.228.
[269] *Ibid.*
[270] *Ibid.*

It was also suggested that Fascist ideas of state and society were spreading in more tangible ways, notably in the new Polish constitution which gave more powers to the head of government, thus ensuring greater stability. Poland, in the words of Forges Davanzati, 'ha ritrovato intatte grandi tradizioni nazionali, di carattere latino e cattolico' (has rediscovered intact important national traditions of a Latin and Catholic character) made possible by eschewing its 'breve e fallimentare esperienza demoparlamentare' (short and unsuccessful demo-parliamentary experience).[271] In being true to her Latin, Catholic heritage by supposedly moving towards a more authoritarian conception of the state, Poland has managed to ensure her 'volontà nazionale' (national will).[272] Indeed, it is the acknowledgment of the instability of the liberal democratic model which is so often emphasised by Forges Davanzati as a sign of the necessary change which is dawning on other nations. Particular attention is paid, in a broadcast on 1 March 1935, to an interview given to the Parisian newspaper *Le Temps* in defence of parliamentarianism by the then Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, Sir John Simon. According to Forges Davanzati, the very fact that a British parliamentarian was called upon to explain the merits of the system shows that 'si sentiva il bisogno di una difesa del sistema, il quale non può più contare sulla presunzione della sua quasi infallibilità; presunzione della quale godeva prima della Rivoluzione fascista' (they felt the need for a defence of the system which can no longer count on the assumption of its infallibility – an assumption which it enjoyed prior to the Fascist Revolution).[273] The message is simple: democracy is failing and now there is an alternative to take its place, an alternative which genuinely concerns the defenders of liberal democracy. The awareness amongst the ruling elites of the dangers of instability is a key point emphasised. In fact, much is made by Forges Davanzati of the fact that Simon, in

[271] *Ibid.,* p.325.
[272] *Ibid.*
[273] *Ibid.,* p.298.

defending democracy, seems, actually, to criticise the French system: 'quella del regime frazionato dei partiti e dei gruppi, e toglie stabilità ai governi che possono mutare fra una elezione e l'altra' (that of the divided regime of parties and groups which takes stability away from governments which change from one election to another).[274]

1.3.3 Radio as the Fascist medium par excellence *and French imitation*

It was the democratic crisis in France which gave birth to the most significant and consistent claim that Fascist values were making headway amongst the ruling classes of the neighbouring democracies. In this instance, the claim directly regarded the conception of the medium of the radio itself. In a broadcast on 19 November 1934, Forges Davanzati claimed boldly that 'la democrazia, almeno quella francese, vuole condannare la radio' (Democracy - at least the French democracy - wants to condemn the radio).[275] The claim that radio, as a medium, was feared by the democracies stemmed from the controversy caused, in France, by a series of *causeries* broadcasted by the then French Prime Minister Gaston Doumergue.[276] Doumergue had served as President from 1924 to 1931 before retiring from public life. He interrupted this retirement in February 1934 when he accepted calls to take up the post of Prime Minister. He took office at a moment of high political tension, with the parliament in a state of deadlock and in the immediate aftermath of the 6 February crisis in which demonstrations by far-right leagues led to riots in the Place de la Concorde. Separating the Radicals from the Socialists, Doumergue formed a centre-right 'government of truce'. Due to the circumstances which prompted the formation of this *union nationale*, 'the Doumergue government was widely regarded on the Left, as 'pre-fascist''.[277]

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[274] *Ibid.,* p.299.
[275] *Ibid.,* p.59.
[276] Doumergue was known to have an interest in the radio as a medium for communication long before becoming Prime Minister. See the New York Times article, 'Doumergue Keen Radio Fan; Has Set in Old Royal Caste' from September 5, 1926.
[277] Brian Jenkins and Chris Millington, *France and Fascism: February 1934 and the Dynamics of Political Crisis*, (Routledge, 2015), p.3.

In order to pass economic reforms, the parliament was dissolved and, starting on 24 March 1934, Doumergue gave a series of radio addresses to the French public, 'passant ainsi par-dessus le Parlement' (going over the parliament's head).[278] These broadcasts were subsequently collected in a published volume with a preface written by Doumergue himself. In this preface, the former Prime Minister's tone is that of a man who believes himself to have been unfairly treated, claiming that the right to address the people directly existed for those who wished to attack him but not for his own defence. He stresses that his usurpation of this right served as the pretext for his ousting as Prime Minister. [279] Despite the grave consequences for his political career, Doumergue stresses that he does not regret addressing the French public over the radio. In telling the truth to the people, 'parfois un peu vivement' (sometimes a little harshly), Doumergue felt (without evidence) that the vast majority of listeners supported him and that they suffered together due to the difficult truth being revealed.[280]

It is, of course, beyond the scope of this study on Italian Fascist propaganda to probe the existence of a genuine threat to French democracy in this period, however it is useful for us to evaluate the aspects of the broadcasts which allowed Fascist propagandists to turn them to their own advantage. Over the course of the broadcasts, Doumergue impresses on the listening public not only the need for economic reform but the need to redress the balance of power between the government and the parliament. His conviction is that 'sans autorité au gouvernement, l'anarchie est proche' (without authority in the government, anarchy is

[278] Jean-Yves Mollier and Jocelyne George, *La Plus longue des Républiques (1870-1940)* (Fayard, 1994), p.620. More research is required on Doumergue's broadcasts, the resulting fallout in French politics, and the inspiration taken from Roosevelt's 'fireside chats' which began on March 12, 1933 (just eight days after his inauguration). Doumergue's appreciation of the radio as a medium was later reported in *Radiocorriere*, as he was quoted as describing the way in which he made his style more welcoming and, therefore, more convincing and how, eventually, he felt that he was really speaking directly to the nation. See 'L'arte di parlare al microfono' in 'Le Cronache' in *RC* (30 Dec 1934 – 6 Jan 1935, N.1), p.12.
[279] Gaston Doumergue, *Mes causeries avec le peuple français* (Raboul et fils, 1934), p.7.
[280] *Ibid.,* p.39.

close-by) and that 'l'anarchie conduit à la guerre civile et, la guerre civile, à l'invasion étrangère' (anarchy leads to civil war and civil war, in turn, to foreign invasion).[281] The need for national unity and strong leadership under the supposed threat of foreign dominion is a common trope of nationalist and authoritarian propaganda. In his assertions of the need for greater governmental authority, Doumergue repeats his conviction that the 'immense majorité' (huge majority) of the French people are behind him - this is an assumption given that he offers no evidence for such support.[282] Through giving these broadcasts, the Prime Minister acknowledges with great pleasure the fact that 'une communication directe s'établit entre vous tous et [lui]' (a direct line of communication is being established between all of you and [him])[283] – a communication which completely bypasses the parliament at a time when its suspension meant that it had no role in law making. Doumergue stresses that, in order to function and to survive, a government in a parliamentary democracy needs 'une majorité cohérente, disciplinée, dont tous les éléments consentent à accepter les responsabilités du pouvoir, surtout quand celles-ci sont lourdes' (a coherent, disciplined majority in which all the elements consent to accepting the responsibilities of power, especially when they are heavy.) He goes on to stress the consequences if such conditions are not met: 'les gouvernements ont la solidité de châteaux de cartes que le moindre souffle renverse' (governments have the stability of a house of cards which the slightest breeze would knock over).[284] Doumergue professes to be a great lover of liberty and highlights that the need to give the government more power and authority is born of a desire to protect democracy – it is when parliamentary democracy is unstable that it is most vulnerable to the threat of dictatorship. This element is, as one can imagine, completely side-lined in Forges Davanzati's coverage of the fallout from Doumergue's broadcasts. The aftermath of the

[281] *Ibid.,* p.26.
[282] *Ibid.*
[283] *Ibid.,* p.52.
[284] *Ibid.,* p.39.

broadcasts is leveraged in the *Cronache* to drive home two points. First of all, the inefficiency of parliamentary democracy is forcing leaders to call upon more drastic measures which resemble those used in Fascist Italy.[285] Second of all, the Italian listening public is privileged because radio is used, without controversy, to its full potential under Fascism – as a way to go 'towards the people' unobstructed by party political concerns.

Forges Davanzati's interpretation of events is reinforced, as per a technique often employed in these programmes, by quoting Doumergue before emphasising that the point is not being made by the Fascists, rather by a politician in the liberal democratic country itself. Forges Davanzati quotes Doumergue as having said that his 'caduta è stata decisa da comitati e consigli segreti e potenti' (his fall was decided by powerful, secret committees and councils), before asserting that:

> 'La democrazia, che garantisce, com'essa dice, il potere del popolo alla luce del sole, è, invece, mancipia della Massoneria, che s'impone agli stessi governi. Questa volta non lo diciamo noi, ma lo dice il signor Dourmergue. E bisogna credergli.'[286]
>
> (Democracy, which guarantees, as it claims, the power of the people in the sunlight, is, instead, the slave of Masonry, which forces itself upon those self-same governments. This time it is not us saying it, but rather Mr. Doumergue. And he must be believed).

The irony that Doumergue was himself a freemason seems lost here on Forges Davaznati. The argument that radio was a tool feared by the democracies and an ideal medium for the Fascist regime to reach its subjects is indicative of the wider treatment of the cultural media in the *Cronache*. It is also claimed, for instance, that 'la polizia francese ha disposto che non appaiono più sullo schermo delle sale cinematografiche le immagini di uomini politici,

[285] There is evidence to suggest that Italian broadcasting was considered a model to which to aspire amongst right-wing French politicians and radio critics. *Radio-Magazine* also ran a regular 'Chronique d'Italie' during the 1930s, reporting on the expansion of broadcasting in Italy. See Rebecca Scales, *Radio and the Politics of Sound in Interwar France, 1921–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp.162-5 for this and a general background on the political and cultural debates surrounding radio as a mass medium in France in the 1930s.
[286] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache* (vol. 1), p.139.

perché queste provocano manifestazioni da parte del pubblico' (the French police has ordered that images of politicians will no longer appear in cinemas because they prompt protests from the people).[287] The conclusion drawn from this and the controversy caused by Doumergue's broadcasts is that 'la democrazia ha paura del popolo' (democracy fears the people).[288] The other great irony in Davanzati's claim that Fascist mediatic principles were spreading through the wireless world was that Mussolini never gave domestic radio addresses. His voice did appear frequently over the radio but only thanks to EIAR microphones being placed at his public speeches. Otherwise, it would have 'diluito, frantumato la sua presenza radiofonica in un rapporto non emozionale con il pubblico' (diluted and shattered his radiophonic presence in a non-emotional relationship with the audience).[289] Davanzati's assessment of this mediatic crisis faced by the democracies (and the embracing of the new media by the dictatorships) is echoed by Walter Benjamin. The renowned anti-fascist first highlighted that 'democracies exhibit the leader directly, in person, before elected representatives as "the parliament is his public"'.[290] However, 'innovations in recording equipment now enable the speaker to be heard by an unlimited number of people while he is speaking, and to be seen by an unlimited number shortly afterwards' meaning that 'priority is given to presenting the politician before the recording equipment'.[291] As a consequence, Benjamin asserts, 'parliaments are becoming depopulated at the same time as theatres' resulting in a 'new form of selection – selection before an apparatus – from which the star and the dictator emerge as victors'.[292] In the words of Paxton, the growth of mass media like the radio 'made it harder […] for the liberal

[287] *Ibid.,* p.87.
[288] *Ibid.*
[289] Antonio Papa, 'Le Origini politiche della radio in Italia (1924-1926)', *Belfagor,* 30.1 (1975), pp.45-66 (p.64).
[290] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Reproducibility' in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vol. 4, 1938-1940* (Harvard University Press, 2003), p.277.
[291] *Ibid.*
[292] *Ibid.*

intelligentsia to perpetuate the traditional intellectual and cultural order', opening the way for fascism to develop 'new propaganda skills along with a new shamelessness about using them'.[293]

1.4. Conclusion: Italians Travelling through the Wireless World between Freedom and Strict Warnings

> *[…] tutti i contenenti sono rappresentati con istituti propri; significa non rinunziare a se stessi, ma incontrarsi a Roma, che è crocevia di civiltà, ed affermarsi allo stesso titolo degli altri.*[294]
>
> (every continent is represented by its own institute; it means not renouncing oneself, rather meeting in Rome, which is the crossroads of civilisations, and establishing oneself on the same level as others)

These words are from one of Roberto Forges Davanzati's *Le Cronache* broadcasts and were spoken in the context of the speaker's celebration of the opening of a new Austrian cultural institute in the Italian capital. The opening of this new institute reinforced the common *latinità* of Austria and Italy at a time where the former was at the heart of a propagandistic tug of war between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In Section 1 of this chapter, we explored the international nature of radio as a medium. We saw how, through product advertisements, engagement with foreign radio cultures and the teaching of foreign languages, official Fascist radio culture accepted and encouraged this inevitably international dimension. At the interface between Fascism and the wireless world, these three elements allow for an understanding of the tensions and negotiations at play between the regime and an increasingly international mass culture. The reporting of foreign radio news allowed listeners to feel like citizens of the wireless world which constituted an essentially cosmopolitan (rootless) citizenship while, increasingly with the passing of time, having this very contact mediated by the regime's understanding of the radio as part of its

[293] Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (Penguin, 2005), pp.79-80.
[294] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p.243.

wider vision of global civilisation. Advertisements display not only the intense foreign domination of the industry but also reflect and encourage the primary focus of listeners on distant listening. Language teaching, in turn, displayed at once a desire to spread the Italian language across the peninsula and a desire to equip its legionaries with foreign languages essential for their imperialistic travels through the wireless world. In Section 2, we conducted a case study of probably the regime's most popular spoken programme of the *ventennio*: *Le Cronache del regime* written and delivered by the trusted Roberto Forges Davanzati. Through their intense focus on foreign affairs, Davanzati's broadcasts constituted a concerted effort to bring the wireless world to Italian listeners in a vision heavily mediated by the official regime world view. In the obituary of Franco Ciarlantini, he was praised for his joint mission of 'far conoscere agli italiani […] il mondo nel quale l'Italia deve vivere; e far conoscere agli stranieri questa Italia della Rivoluzione' (making known to Italians the world in which Italy must live; and making known to foreigners this Italy of the revolution).[295] We will explore the second part of this mission in subsequent chapters, however it must also be remembered that the radio gave Italian listeners access to precisely that 'mondo nel quale l'Italia deve vivere' (world in which Italy must live). With its mediation between this world and the Italian listening public, Davanzati's *Cronache* can be read as a kind of instruction manual for how to travel through the wireless world. It is possible, in this way, to map the physical space of Rome (where every country is represented by its own institute) onto the map of the wireless world. We said in the thesis' introduction that Marconi's obelisk towers over streets named after places all over the world, resembling a radio mast and that, equally, the radio brought all of those self-same places to Rome. Here, Davanzati, in highlighting Rome's status as the 'crocevia di civiltà' (crossroads of civilisations), welcomes Italy's connection with the outside world allowed by the radio but

[295] 'Ricordo di Franco Ciarlantini' (unsigned), *RC* (18-24 Feb 1940, N.8), p.4.

gives some simple warnings about such engagements and entanglements. It must be stressed, as we will discover in detail in Chapter 4, that Davanzati's vision of *romanità* in these broadcasts is one of inclusivity and universality (contrary to the exclusivity of Nazism's pan-Aryan racism). In keeping with Prime Minister Camillo di Cavour's assertion in his speech to parliament on the day that Rome was declared Italy's capital that 'Rome is the only city in Italy not to have exclusively local memories', Davanzati presents his listeners with a Rome that is necessarily international.[296] Crucially, however, these foreign cultures, languages and traditions are collected in Rome where civilisations meet. They are not experienced in their original environment, rather they are all experienced through the prism of Rome, refracted, reinterpreted and modified. The 'vasto e permanente scambio di idee tra nazioni e continenti' (vast and permanent exchange of ideas between nations and continents) allowed by the radio must be done in keeping with Roman universalism's mission of 'assimilating, coordinating, promoting and unifying all people in a common civilization'.[297] In this mapping of the wireless world, by consistently highlighting the *romanità* of foreign countries' culture, language and history, bonds were established 'not as fraternal equals but as parent and child' and in which 'Europe's common Roman heritage underpinned Italian claims to cultural pre-eminence and, the regime hoped, would one day provide the foundation for a new international community'.[298]

The other warning in Davanzati's *Le Cronache* for travellers in the wireless world regarded the trustworthiness of news reports. Apart from in the context of war, the regime did not ban distant listening. In fact, all foreign broadcasts (including from the USSR) were

[296] Conte Camillo di Cavour, 'Discussioni intorno all'interpellanza del deputato Audinot al presidente del consiglio dei ministri sulla questione romana' in *Camera dei deputati italiana* (E. Botta, 1861), p.19.
[297] 'Dieci anni di 'radio' in Italia' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1935)*, p.18; Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity,* p.43.
[298] *Ibid.*

advertised and foreign radio news was reported (usually in an apolitical manner) in *Radiocorriere*. Instead of banning distant listening, the regime committed effort to negotiating the tensions at play between their version of events and those entering the country over the airwaves. For instance, Davanzati objected to the reporting on the question of Austrian independence abroad. This was the case particularly with regard to the Nazi propaganda campaign against Austria. The focus, in this case, is placed on the unfavourable Austrian response to such material.

> Il commissario federale per la propaganda del fronte patriottico austriaco ha denunziato alla radio una nuova campagna nazista antiaustriaca e, s'intende, anche antiitaliana.[299]
>
> (The federal commissioner for the propaganda of the Austrian patriotic front has condemned, over the radio, a new anti-Austrian and, by implication, anti-Italian Nazi campaign).

Davanzati claimed that, despite the undoubtable significance of the ongoing questions of Danzig and the Saar basin, the Nazi press focused heavily – and negatively – on the French-Italian agreement (which was valorised by Forges Davanzati as proof of Rome's leading role in European relations).[300] This focus on Italian diplomacy is seen as indicative of the 'non voler ammettere che la Roma di Mussolini sia un centro di gravitazione europea, anche se questa ammissione c'era quando il nazismo aveva bisogno di consensi per conquistare il potere e ottenere un viatico internazionale' (not wanting to admit that Mussolini's Rome is a European centre of gravitation, even if this admission was made when the Nazis needed consensus and international support to take power).[301]

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[299] See also the broadcast from 22 May 1935 (vol. 2, p.46) in which Forges Davanzati claims that Austrian independence 'è stata minacciata, dopo che dal socialismo, dal nazismo, la cui propaganda anche oggi è, comunque mascherata, un intervento deviatore' (has been threatened, not just by socialism but now also by Nazism whose propaganda even today is, even if disguised, a diverting intervention).
[300] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p. 202.
[301] *Ibid.*

It is also claimed that there was a 'manovra iniziata da alcuni importanti giornali britannici, con qualche fiancheggiamento francese' (an operation started by some important British newspapers with the odd French supporter) to claim that Austrian independence was a uniquely Italian problem, whilst Mussolini was keen to stress that it was a European one. In fact, there is a general paranoia on display in these broadcasts concerning the control that France and, particularly, Britain exercised over the press in foreign countries. This is indicative of a growing awareness of the importance of international opinion at the outbreak of the conflict in Ethiopia. Forges Davanzati appears perplexed, for example, by the fact that the Japanese press 'ci si abbandona a manifestazioni antiitaliane e filoabissine' (is surrendering to anti-Italian and pro-Abyssinian messages), despite claims that the Japanese ambassador to Italy had personally assured Mussolini that Japan had no opinion on or interest in the matter.[302] Britain is said to 'manovra tutto il notiziario giapponese in Europa e molto notiziario europeo in Giappone' (manipulate all reporting on Japan in Europe and a good part of the reporting on Europe in Japan).[303] On the question of international news, the prominent anti-Fascist Gaetanno Salvemmini wrote:

> in Italia non vi ha persona mediocremente colta che non legga il francese. Perciò tutto ciò che si scrive in francese è immediatamente e largamente conosciuto in Italia. È naturale quindi che gli articoli dei giornali francesi di sinistra mettano Mussolini ed i suoi amici in uno stato di esasperazione frenetica.[304]
>
> (In Italy every person who is even slightly educated speaks French. Therefore, everything written in French is immediately and widely known in Italy. It is

[302] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 2)*, p.135.
[303] *Ibid.* Whilst the BBC's Radio London started in 1923, it broadcasted exclusively in English until the British government requested foreign-language services in 1938, initially due to concerns about pro-Nazi sentiment in countries such as Argentina and India. It is likely, therefore, that British influence over foreign news is due less to its own output, rather to the reach of the powerful British news agency Reuters. The suggestion that Britain's extensive international news network and powerful news agency allowed it to manipulate foreign news was a common trope also during WWI, particularly in Germany as pointed out in Heidi J.S. Tworek, *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900-1945* (Harvard University Press, 2019), p.17. For an overview of Radio London's genesis and early years see Mario Bussoni, *Radio Londra: Voci della Libertà*, (Archivio Storia, 2017), pp.15-25.
[304] Gaetano Salvemini, *Mussolini diplomatico* (Editions Contemporaines,1932), pp.42-43. The French version was *Mussolini diplomate* (Grasset, 1932).

> natural, therefore, that articles in French left-wing newspapers send Mussolini and his friends into a state of frenzied exasperation)

Be it through the 'giornali stranieri che entrano liberamente in Italia, e che non pochi italiani comperano per un residuo snobismo esotico di conoscitori di lingue, per una certa riserva di controllo' (these […] foreign newspapers […] enter freely into Italy, and […] not an insignificant number of Italians buy them due to a residual exotic snobbery of the foreign language speaker and due to a certain nostalgic control) or through travels in the wireless world, Italians came into contact with foreign news.[305] The task was to convert the cosmopolitan 'snobismo esotico di conoscitori di lingue' into a Fascistic and imperialistic approach to the wireless world. Crucially this did not mean discouraging learning foreign languages or learning about foreign cultures. In the words of Ezio Maria Gray (who took over foreign affairs commentary in the *Cronache* after Davanzati's death), it was essential to explore 'le culture straniere per riconoscerle e raffrontarle e che tale studio li aveva immunizzati dal duplice pericolo di negarle per ignoranza e di accordarvisi per snobistica pigrizia' (foreign cultures in order to recognise and compare them and that such a study immunised them from the double danger of discounting them through ignorance and agreeing with them through snobbish laziness).[306]

The advent of radio in the 1920s and its growth throughout the 1930s meant direct contact between Italians and foreign cultures (mostly in the form of state-run foreign radio broadcasters). This chapter, in the first instance, has sought to give a taste of the international nature of official Italian radio culture through an analysis of the state broadcaster's magazine, *Radiocorriere* (originally *Radiorario*). Much of this international culture might initially appear antithetical to the xenophobic and ultra-nationalistic impulses of Fascist cultural policies. Such is the case of foreign languages where policies were committed to

[305] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 2),* broadcast of 16 Oct. 1935, p.268.
[306] Ezio Maria Gray, *L'Italia ha sempre ragione* (Mondadori, 1938), p.275.

ridding Italian of foreign terms yet the radio continued teaching foreign languages and encouraging listeners to improve their language skills by tuning into foreign stations. In this instance, a distinction must be made between the occurrence of foreign terms in Italian and the learning of a foreign language. The former was seen to have a disunifying and corrupting influence on the Italian language and, therefore, its people. Whereas the latter, in the context of the radio, was intended better to equip an imperial listener when engaging with the (wireless) world 'nel quale l'Italia deve vivere' (in which Italy must live). Taking Paxton's line (regarding political coalitions, for example, with conservatives) that 'we must see fascist rule as a never-ending struggle for pre-eminence within a coalition' it might be tempting to assume that the unificatory nationalist use of the radio represents the truly Fascist approach which exists in an uncomfortable coalition with the international aspects of radio which are the progeny of some irresistible and unavoidable offshoot of the medium's natural cosmopolitan internationalism.[307] We might, therefore, be given to considering this strong international dimension as a failure in 'establishing monolithic cultural homogeneity'.[308] If cultural life under the regime 'remained a complex patchwork of official activities, spontaneous activities that the regimes tolerated, and even some illicit ones', the material we have covered here belongs firmly to the first category as 'la voce diretta del regime' (the direct voice of the regime).[309] The regime had control of the EIAR and, therefore, its *Radiocorriere* magazine. It cannot be said to have merely tolerated the heavily international dimension of the radio in the strictest sense. If truly intolerant of this dimension the regime could have taken steps to fight it head-on (banning distant listening, not advertising foreign stations, not reporting foreign radio news, and not teaching foreign languages on the radio). Nor can we make the argument (as the scholarship repeatedly has and as we saw in the

[307] Paxton, *Anatomy of Fascism*, p.121; *ibid.*, p.144.
[308] *Ibid.*
[309] *Ibid.*

Introduction) that the radio, a cosmopolitan medium, was left to its own devices because Mussolini was himself essentially disinterested after one failed broadcast at the medium's genesis in Italy.

Ruth Ben-Ghiat has outlined that in the process of nationalisation 'the nation may be considered an ideological construct that occupies a symbolic rather than territorial space. This imaginary nation becomes a Utopian site within which gender, race, class, and regional inequities are often masked or effaced in the interest of an ideology of community'.[310] Taking the wireless world as this symbolic space reveals a fertile site for the 'scambio di idee tra nazioni e continenti' (exchange of ideas between nations and continents).[311] This exchange, however, had to be mediated in order for it to conform to the 'Utopian site' of which Ben-Ghiat writes and in order to be used in service of the regime's 'ideology of community'. As typified in Davanzati's attempts to mediate Italian listeners' engagement with the wireless world, this 'ideology of community' incorporated a fundamentally international dimension thanks to the ever-present myth of Rome. Just as foreign cultural institutes were amassing in the eternal city and just as the ancient Romans discovered, adapted and adopted foreign customs, it was only natural that an imperial people, the direct descendants of the Roman Empire, would be willing to engage with the foreign cultures brought to Rome through the Italic genius of Marconi's great invention. It was crucial that Italians engaged with the 'mondo nel quale l'Italia deve vivere' (world in which Italy must live), that they studied the 'questioni degli altri' (questions of others), providing they remained aware of the rampant international media bias against Fascist Italy and providing they did not travel aimlessly, rather sailed the wireless world with the aim of conquering as an imperial people.[312] As is clear from the coverage of the Doumergue episode, it was

[310] Ben-Ghiat, 'Language and the construction of National identity', p.438.
[311] 'Dieci anni di 'radio' in Italia' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1935)*, p.18.
[312] 'Ricordo di Franco Ciarlantini', *RC*, N.8 (18-24 Feb. 1940), p.4.

important also for listeners to see themselves as travelling confidently through an increasing Fascist wireless world in which the mediatic, political and cultural ethos of their national spiritual credo was in the ascendancy and destined to define the medium.

Chapter 2 - Exporting Fascism to the Wireless World: International Broadcasting, Interconnectedness and Negotiating Transnational Networks

Abstract:

International radio scholarship has, in recent years, sought to highlight the transnational networks at play in a wireless world which is increasingly understood in terms of exchange, collaboration and interconnectedness. The focus of this research has largely fallen on the liberal democracies and on projects organised through the International Broadcasting Union (IBU), based in Geneva and associated with the League of Nations. Such exchanges predominantly entail projects which included all IBU members and were largely music-based. The dictatorships, largely due to their preference for bilateral cultural exchanges and their being at odds with the League's internationalism, are largely absent from this line of enquiry. While showing how the regime flagrantly ignored IBU regulations and did not take seriously its collaborative spirit, this chapter exhibits how Fascist international broadcasting still required leverage of transnational networks, exchange and collaboration. While its international broadcasting technology in the 1930s was perhaps the best in the world, reaching foreign audiences required thickly entangled webs of journalists, translators, diplomats, foreign broadcasters, foreign politicians, and foreign newspaper editors. Starting at the origins of Fascist foreign-language broadcasting, this chapter explores the ways in which Fascist Italy sought to grow its soft power across the wireless world.

2.1. Introduction: Fascist Italy Starts to Speak to the Wireless World

Marconi's first successful transatlantic wireless signal was sent on December 12, 1901. Radio was, by nature, a medium able to 'supera[re] gli spazi' (overcome space) and, as Wasburn puts it, 'wireless across the sea meant the very shrinkage of the earth', providing

'nations that were far distant from one another socially, culturally and politically as well as geographically with a new means for immediate, direct, and extensive communication'.[313] Marconi's humanitarian dream was of a medium 'which might encourage mutual understanding, trust, and peace among nations'.[314] The preponderant international response to the border-defying nature of radio was, however, one of caution. Such caution is traceable as early as the Treaty of Versailles where, as Sommerville highlights, a clause was included stipulating a 'three-month ban on a number of small German radio stations and a block on the construction by the German government of new stations'.[315] This was at once 'early recognition that radio would have a major role to play in mass communications and propaganda and inter-state relations' and a clear sign of old-school diplomacy's suspicion of the medium and its impulse to regulate its usage.[316] Given the transnational nature of the radio, the Fascist management of the medium acknowledged that the problems it posed 'non po[tevano] essere risolti che in sede internazionale' (could only be resolved by an international organisation).[317] And so, as the number of radio transmitters and their strength increased, it was decided to found the International Broadcasting Union (IBU) in March 1925 at a meeting in London between the political representatives of eight countries. By 1934, the IBU had representatives from 25 countries and its function was considered to be that of 'policing the ether' and promoting 'that good understanding between nations which is one of broadcasting's most valuable contributions to national life'.[318] Great Britain was strongly represented in the organisation's management as, from the outset, the president of

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[313] G.C. Govini, 'Un dittatore al microfono. Le Grotesche utopie di un Nababbo', *RC*, N.1 (2-9 Jan. 1932), p.9.; Philo C. Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda: International Radio Broadcasting and the Construction of Political Reality* (Praeger, 1992), p.xvii.
[314] *Ibid.,* p.xviii.
[315] Keith Somerville, *Radio Propaganda and the Broadcasting of Hatred: Historical Developments and Definitions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.33.
[316] *Ibid.*
[317] 'L'Ente internazionale della radiodiffusione. Il problema delle lunghezze d'onda' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario* (1935), p.97.
[318] 'International Broadcasting Union' (unsigned), *Nature* 133 (June 16 1934), p.903.

the council was Sir Charles Carpendale (one of the controllers of the BBC) and the secretary general was Mr. A. R. Burrows ('a pioneer of British broadcasting').[319] The IBU was officially instituted in April 1925 with its headquarters in the seat of European internationalism, Geneva. In 1927, at the IBU's Washington Conference, wavelengths were divided up and attributed to national services in order to prevent competition for the very ether all nations shared. Aiming to mould the radio into the medium of international cooperation *par excellence*, the IBU had to contend with the very feature that allowed nations to talk unto other nations: that is to say, the fact that 'per le onde radiofoniche non esistano frontiere' (for radiowaves borders do not exist).[320] An IBU resolution of 1926 stipulated that 'les émissions nationales ne comportent, dans le domaine politique, confessionnel, économique, intellectuel, artistique, aucune atteinte à l'esprit de coopération et de bonne entente internationale' (national broadcasts should not contain, in the political, denominational, economic, intellectual, and artistic domains any breach of the spirit of international co-operation and harmony) along with the suggestion that broadcasters should refrain from reporting on recent international relations that could upset other countries involved.[321] As the resolution states, the focus here is on 'les émissions nationales' (national broadcasts) which could be received in other countries even if aimed at a solely national listening public. This was primarily an issue where neighbouring countries shared a native tongue.

One such notable example was the offensive material broadcasted from Nazi microphones aimed at Austrian listeners. When the Germans began broadcasting material 'designed to rouse the Austrian population to revolt against their government' from the radio

[319] *Ibid.*
[320] *Ibid.*
[321] A.R. Burrows' contribution in *Broadcasting and Peace: Studies and Projects in the Matter of International Agreements*, Intellectual Co-operation Series (League of Nations, 1933), p.99.

station Reichssender München, 'sometimes the reception was even better than that of Austrian stations'.[322] Countering Austrian claims that purposefully offensive propaganda was being directed at Austrians, Germany claimed it was 'merely informing its domestic audiences about Austrian political developments'.[323] As per IBU recommendations, Austria requested advance sight of transcripts – a request which, Germany, naturally, refused. In fact, Italy, along with France and Britain, was one of the governments that applied pressure on Germany to abide by regulations (in no small part, presumably, due to Austria falling into Italy's desired sphere of influence). In the early years after the IBU's foundation, Italian delegates made prominent contributions to its development, both at conferences and in its official publications. In his contribution to the volume *Broadcasting and Peace: Studies and Projects in the Matter of International Agreements* (published in 1933 as part of the League of Nations' Intellectual Co-operation series), Commander Gino Montefinale (Chief of the Radio Division at the Italian Ministry of Communications) outlined how the Italian radio's organisation worked to avoid international offence. He described 'matter likely to compromise friendly relations between peoples' as 'evil' and stressed that 'Italian broadcasting is a national service in every sense of the expression'.[324] The way the Italian radio avoided injurious broadcasts and the way it abided by the internationalist view of radio was precisely through its being a uniquely national service. This means, as Montefinale outlined, that the service was run by the national government meaning that stations only broadcasted that which the regime authorised, and any material pertaining to 'political, economic and financial news' had to be submitted to the government first for approval.[325] In this way, the centralisation of radio production which would later allow the regime to target propaganda at foreign listeners all over the world was presented to the IBU precisely as a

[322] Lommers, *Europe - On Air,* p.219.
[323] *Ibid.*
[324] Gino Montefinale contribution in *Broadcasting and Peace,* pp.144-8.
[325] *Ibid.,* p.148.

mode of organisation that would allow for the promotion of peace and understanding between nations.

This internationalist resistance to and suspicion of cross-border broadcasting was tested as national governments and their broadcasting companies looked to capitalise on the space-shrinking potential of the medium. For the European colonial nations, radio offered a tool to 'help maintain and strengthen their lucrative ties with overseas possessions'.[326] The Netherlands began broadcasting to the East Indies in 1927, France to its colonies in 1931, the Belgians to the Congo in 1931 and the BBC Empire service was begun in 1932.[327] Initially, these colonial broadcasts were intended exclusively for European settlers and were produced in the European nation's native language. As in the Dutch case where 'virtually no consideration was given to the possibility that colonial people who had some understanding of the Dutch language also might listen to the broadcasts', these services were designed to keep settlers in touch with their home nation.[328] After the declaration of the Italian Empire the use of the radio to prepare future settlers (especially with language tuition) and to keep them close to their *patria* became a recurrent theme and was used as a means of reinforcing the prestige of Italy finally having her empire. On the European stage, it was a different, newer kind of imperialism which saw the first targeted foreign-language broadcasts. Vladimir Lenin displayed a deep understanding for radio's international potential, seeing it 'as a way to spread the message of communism not only throughout Russia, but throughout the world'.[329] Communism, conceived as it was to be an inherently international movement, would benefit immensely from preaching its gospel in multiple languages. Between 1927 and 1929, 'radio broadcasting specifically designed for foreign countries was initiated', in

[326] Wasburn, *Broadcasting Propaganda*, p.xviii.
[327] *Ibid*., p.5.
[328] *Ibid*., p.7.
[329] *Ibid*., p.2.

1929 'a department for broadcasting in foreign languages was created within the Soviet broadcasting system' and in October 1929, Radio Moscow was officially founded.[330] By 1930, Radio Moscow broadcasted daily programmes in Russian, French, German, and English with Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Portuguese added within the next three years.[331] Radio Moscow's early programming was committed to 'depicting the accomplishments of the revolution and the path of social development that Russia was following' and contained 'few explicit attacks on opposing ideologies'. A more overt ideological thrust would, however, become increasingly evident as the years passed.[332]

As we saw in this thesis' Introduction, the growth of the radio as a mass medium within Italy was slow compared to Great Britain, France, Germany and the USA. Subscription figures were consistently lower than in these countries, largely due to lower disposable income levels and the failure of the market to produce a truly affordable radio set. Further to this, one must factor in Mussolini's supposed disinterest in the medium after the technical failure of his first live broadcast, his life-long activity as a print journalist and editor, his active involvement in other media such as film, theatre and book censorship, and the general impression that the *Duce* had to be seen not just heard. When it came to international propaganda in the 1920s, Mussolini's attention was fixed firmly elsewhere while he was still steadfastly committed to the line that Fascism was a uniquely Italian phenomenon and not an article for export. After the seizure of power with the March on Rome in October 1922, Mussolini had to ride grave crises in order to build domestic consensus, overturning the liberal state and establishing the new regime. Significant energies were designated to quelling internal ruptures within the party, calming the revolutionary impulses of the intransigents led by the Cremona *ras* Roberto Farincci. The murder in cold

[330] *Ibid*., p.5.
[331] *Ibid.*
[332] *Ibid.*

blood of socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti seemed to spell the death knoll of Mussolini's time as head of government. By accepting full responsibility for everything that had happened since the foundation of his movement (because he created its culture and revolutionary spirit), Mussolini rode this storm too and set about establishing the single-party state and eliminating opposition through the promulgation of the *leggi eccezionali* between 1925-1926. Mussolini's attention was also on *la battaglia per la lira* (the battle for the lira) which was, ultimately, deemed a success with the Italian currency's exchange rate becoming stronger; negotiating the reduction of war debts to America by promising access to Italian markets; riding out the economic crisis sparked by the Wall Street Crash; and, perhaps most notably, negotiating the Lateran Accords with the Catholic Church which mended the fracture there since the new Italian nation annexed Rome and the rest of the papal states in 1870. Allowing the church a greater role in the education of Italian children and promoting Catholicism to the status of state religion was an enormous coup for domestic consensus and, while frictions remained between the Vatican and the secular religion of Fascism, it was a landmark moment so much so that the Accords are still in place today.

All of this is to highlight that Mussolini's focus was not on promoting Fascism abroad as an international movement with universalist applications. Indeed, Mussolini was very cautious about transmitting such a message and, in a bid to maintain strong diplomatic relations with the democracies, did not want Fascism to be seen as a threat, be it direct or indirect. That is not to say, however, that Mussolini did not see Fascism as a modern solution to modern problems and superior to liberal democracy. It also does not mean that there were not significant currents within the Fascist party hierarchy that were studying and encouraging the possibility of exporting Fascist politics and culture. Much of this impulse was prompted by the genuine interest in the regime abroad. As Giulia Albanese has convincingly highlighted, 'the issue of how to exploit the transnational success of Fascism

was a significant concern for the Fascist ruling class already in the 1920s'.[333] As such, 'propaganda abroad was […] an important element in the image developed by the regime's upper echelons from the outset, although this kind of activity was only just beginning to be organised'.[334] Franco Ciarlantini, a strong voice in the early debate around Fascist cultural expansionism, stressed in a parliamentary debate in March 1927 that the regime could not wait for the moment that Fascist 'valori culturali ed artistici si facciano strada da sé, per la misteriosa virtù espansiva dei valori ritenuti universali' (cultural and artistic values carve out a path for themselves through the mysterious expansion of so-called universal values).[335] The title of Ciarlantini's 1925 essay *Imperialismo spirituale* (Spiritual Imperalism) captured the nascent philosophy behind Fascist political and cultural expansionism. The notion of spiritual imperialism is at the heart of Giovanni Gentile's and Mussolini's *Dottrina del Fascismo* (Doctrine of Fascism) (first published in 1932 in the Treccani *Enciclopedia Italiana* as part of the length entry under 'Fascismo') which stresses, with frequent uses of the adjectives 'spirituale' (spiritual) and 'spiritualistca' (spiritualistic), that:

> nella dottrina del fascismo l'impero non è soltanto un'espressione territoriale o militare o mercantile, ma spirituale o morale. Si può pensare a un impero, cioè a una nazione che direttamente o indirettamente guida altre nazioni, senza bisogno di conquistare un solo chilometro quadrato di territorio.[336]
>
> (in the doctrine of Fascism, empire is not only a territorial, military, or mercantile expression, but spiritual or moral. One can think of an empire, that is to say of a nation that directly or indirectly guides other nations, without the need to conquer even a square kilometre of territory)

This formalisation of the doctrine of Fascism came at a point in the *ventennio* at which attention was turned more concretely to promoting Fascism abroad. However, even in

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[333] Giulia Albanese, 'The Fascist Model Abroad, Not Just Propaganda (1922-1935)' in *Rethinking the History,* p.298.
[334] *Ibid.*
[335] Camera dei deputati, Atti Parlamentari, Legisl. XXVII, prima sessione, *Discussioni,* 30/03/1927, p.7368.
[336] Gentile and Mussolini, *Dottrina del Fascismo*, p.13.

Mussolini's speeches during the 1920s this impulse was in evidence. Speaking, for instance, at the inauguration of the new offices of the Società italiana autori ed editori (SIAE) in 1926, Mussolini encouraged Fascist intellectuals to be missionaries for the kind of spiritual imperialism Ciarlantini outlined, showing an awareness that

> Ci sono delle nazioni che da cinquanta anni si affaticano nel conservare il loro dominio spirituale. Getto un colpo d'occhio al panorama universale: trovo che noi siamo ancora ai primi passi e forse in certi campi stiamo perdendo terreno.[337]
>
> (There are nations which for fifty years have been struggling to retain their spiritual dominion. With one quick glance at the global landscape, I can see that we are taking but the first steps and, perhaps, in some fields we are losing ground).

The beginning of the 1930s saw a confluence of factors that meant the political will and opportunity were ripe for an organised approach to international propaganda. The key factors were interest in Fascism abroad, the rise of German National Socialism as a competitor (and model), and, as in the case of the radio, technological advancements that allowed clearer, more reliable long-distance broadcasting. In the case of Nazi Germany, Garau has stressed that 'Hitler's growing success and later seizure of power convinced Mussolini that the arrival of a potentially competitive model of fascism made it imperative for Italy to reaffirm its identity as first among fascisms and, even more ambitiously, to claim for itself a pivotal role in both culture and politics in the Western world'.[338] Furthermore, fear was expressed at the 1933 Milan conference on foreign propaganda that Nazi Germany was about to launch its own large-scale propaganda campaign beyond its own borders which caused concern partly because of what Garzarelli describes as the 'presenza nel Reich di una corrente che mirava a presentare il fenomeno nazionalsocialista completamente indipendente da quello fascista' (presence in the Reich of a current which aimed at presenting Nazism as completely

[337] 'Scrittori e fascismo'*, Bibliografia fascista*, June 1926, p.1. The *Bibliografia fascista* was a monthly review curated by the Confederazione nazionale dei sindacati fascisti professionisti e artisti.
[338] Salvatore Garau, 'The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism in the face of German National Socialism and its impact on the British Union of Fascists', *Politics, Religion & Ideology,* 15.1 (2014), pp.45-63 (p.51).

independent from Fascism).[339] The combination of interest from foreign countries, Nazi competition, and the resolution of the aforementioned domestic crises, meant the birth of new governmental bodies to organise international propaganda. In 1934, Galeazzo Ciano as head of the SSSP and as a keen admirer of the model provided by Joseph Goebbels' Reichsministry, founded the Direzione generale della propaganda (DGP) within his department. This DGP was in charge of coordinating propaganda directed at foreign countries in all media and all languages. Giorgio Nelson Page, who would be placed in charge of international radio broadcasting, reported Ciano's description of the Direzione in his 1950 memoire *L'Americano di Roma*. He quotes Ciano as saying, 'fra breve nascerà qui un'organizzazione che diventerà la prima in Italia […] Tutto passerà attraverso le mie mani, parleremo al mondo intero. Faremo conoscere l'Italia da signori a tutti gli altri paesi' (soon there will be born an organisation which will be the first of its kind in Italy. Everything will go through my hands. We will speak to the whole world. We will familiarise all countries with the noble Italy).[340] Within this new framework, 'la programmazione radiofonica rivolta ai paesi stranieri rivestì fin dai primi anni trenta un'importanza crescente' (radio programming directed at foreign countries was afforded growing importance from the very beginning of the 1930s).[341] The growing importance of radio and its particular administrative demands meant that in April 1937 responsibility for international broadcasting was taken away from the DGP and subsumed into the newly founded Ispettorato per la radiodiffusione e la television (IRT). This new inspectorate would be responsible for the entire sector of radio broadcasting, both domestic and international as well as intercepting foreign broadcasts.

[339] Benedetta Garzarelli, *Parleremo,* p.24.
[340] Giorgio Nelson Page*, L'Americano di Roma*, (Longanesi, 1950), p.437.
[341] Di Legge, *L'aquila e il littorio*, p.197.

The desire for the voice of Italy to reach beyond its borders was a key impulse behind the rapid growth of the nation's network in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s. This impulse informed the geographical placement of new radio transmitters. For example, the inauguration of the new Bolzano station in 1936 was seen as another crucial step in ensuring that 'si sparge nel mondo la voce d'Italia' (Italy's voice spreads throughout the world), especially as it was 'la più settentrionale' (the most northern) and therefore able to help the voice of Fascism penetrate to the north.[342] Furthermore, the construction of medium-wave (Santa Palomba) and then short-wave (Prato Smeraldo) stations showed a clear will to expand the reach of Rome's voice. Plans for the construction of the short-wave Prato Smeraldo were begun in 1928. It was projected for completion in 1929 but was only inaugurated in 1930. These transmitters would be rebranded the 'Centro Radio Imperiale' after the conquest of Ethiopia and the declaration of Empire. Prato Smeraldo's technical capacity was continually updated and improved which allowed ever new 'possibilità di irradiazione in tutti i Continenti del pensiero politico, dell'arte e della cultura dell'Italia Fascista' (possibilities for broadcasting to every continent the political thought, art and culture of Fascist Italy) and to 'rendere sempre più intensa e proficua la penetrazione spirituale italiana' (to make evermore intense and productive Italy's spiritual penetration).[343] Prato Smeraldo produced broadcasts to Latin America, North America, the Middle and Far East, Arabic-speaking countries, Turkey, Greece and Italy's African possessions.[344] Rome's imperial radio network was seen to create 'un'immensità di spazi e di orrizonti, una ridda di paralleli' (an immense quantity of spaces and horizons, a whirlwind of parallels) on all of which 'corre[va], fulmineo e limpido, il pensiero di Roma, eterna datrice di civilità' (ran, lightening quick and clear, the thought of Rome, that eternal donor of civilisations).[345] The

[342] 'La inaugurazione della nuova trasmittente di Bolzano' (unsigned), *RC*, 17-23 May 1936 (f.21), p.7.
[343] 'Consuntivo dell'anno XVI' (unsigned), *RC*, N.43 (23-29 Oct. 1938), p.3.
[344] See 'Dalla Prima Stazione alle ultrapotenti in costruzione' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario* (1935), p.59.
[345] 'Il centro radio imperiale di Roma' (unsigned), *RC*, N.44 (30 Oct. -5 Nov. 1938), p.5.

conviction that Prato Smeraldo was 'il più poderoso e perfezionato centro di emissioni ad onde corte del mondo' (the most powerful and perfect centre for short wave broadcasts in the world) was certainly not exaggerated as Italy, motivated by a desire to amplify its voice, was very advanced in long-distance broadcasting. Taking into account also the construction of Radio Bari in 1932 which broadcasted throughout the Mediterranean (significantly beginning Arabic-language broadcasts in 1934), the Italian network had technical reach and broadcasted in a vast number of foreign languages.

In July 1939 the Radiocorriere published an article which picked up on a piece in the Munich-based *Munchner Neueste Nachrichtera* which highlighted how 'la radio italiana [era] la più poliglotta del mondo' (the Italian radio was the most polyglot in the world), with regular broadcasts in 15 languages every day.[346] In actual fact, if the *Cronache del turismo* in Dutch, Hebrew and Esperanto are factored in, the Italian radio had been broadcasting in 18 languages regularly since 1935.[347] As a measure of the impact of these foreign-language broadcasts, one may consider listener engagement. In 1935 alone listeners abroad sent a total of 59,085 letters to various EIAR announcers and personalities, while also sending 24,008 requests for publications about Fascism and the invasion of Ethiopia. This last request was met by the sending of 124,546 such publications abroad.[348] As the 1930s rolled on and especially with the general increase in imperialistic rhetoric after the conquest of Ethiopia, the role of the radio was increasingly described in terms familiar to those of Ciarlantini's spiritual imperialism. The transmitters at Santa Palomba and Prato Smeraldo were considered the 'centri davvero imperiali di Roma' (the truly imperial centres of Rome) which had equal standing next to those 'grandiose moli architettoniche dei Fori Imperiali'

[346] *Ibid*.
[347] The other languages were Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Arabic, German, Hungarian, English, Croatian, French, Greek, Spanish, Portughese, Japonese, Mandarin, Hindustani. See 'I compiti e lo sviluppo della radio italiana' (unsigned), *RC*, N.21 (17-23 May 1936), p.8.
[348] *Ibid.*

(grandiose and imposing architecture of the Imperial Fora).[349] Containing an eternal 'pensiero indistruttibile' (indestructible thought), the new Roman architecture of the radio mast allowed the modern embodiment of Imperial Rome to 'far sentire ai popoli più lontani e diversi la voce della latinità' (make the voice of Latinity heard to the furthest and most diverse peoples).[350] We will explore in depth the theme of *romanità* in the radio's use as a tool for exportation in Chapter 4. Here, however, the important point to stress is that central to the Fascist understanding of the radio was its use, in the words of EIAR director general Roaul Chiodelli, in the 'diffusione nel mondo delle idee e delle opere dell'Italia fascista' (spreading through the world of the ideas and the achievements of Fascist Italy).[351]

The methodological approach to exploring how this 'diffusione nel mondo delle idee e delle opere dell'Italia fascista' (spreading through the world of the ideas and the achievements of Fascist Italy) was planned, managed and executed is informed by the recent developments in the growing scholarship on international broadcasting. This research as a whole takes its cue from the shift which may best be characterised by the change in thinking of the space radio occupied from the 'ether' to that of the 'wireless world'. The ether (derived from the Ancient Greek *aithēr* meaning 'upper air') was commonly believed to be the physical (and mystical) substance through which radio waves passed. True to this sense of other-worldly mysticism, Potter outlines how the 'relatively short-lived interwar imagery of the ether' resulted in a 'vision of radio as a straightforward and benign globalizing force that is often associated with the utopian rhetoric of the electrical sublime'.[352] The 'wireless world', an 'idea that recurred repeatedly in contemporary thinking about international broadcasting across the twentieth century', allows historians to avoid thinking of radio in

[349] 'Il Secondo convegno dei pionieri di Roma' (unsigned), *RC*, N.48 (24-30 Oct. 1937), p.4.
[350] *Ibid.*
[351] Raoul Chiodelli, 'Dieci Anni di "Radio" in Italia', in *EIAR Annuario* (1935), p.36.
[352] Simon J. Potter, 'Out of the Ether', p.5.

'limitless, mystical, and almost supernatural terms' while, instead, endeavouring to write a 'histoire croisée' which accounts for the extent to which 'approaches to broadcasting propaganda were often thickly entangled across borders'.[353] The other methodological bottleneck in researching the wireless world is the historiographical tendency to write the 'history of international broadcasting as the projection of the experience of one or two countries onto the entire wireless world'.[354] As Potter stresses, 'British and American broadcasters have dominated the existing historiography, but they were far from the only voices on the world's airwaves during the twentieth century, and were certainly not always the loudest or most appealing to listeners'.[355] There has been an equal historiographical tendency towards establishing a clear-cut antithesis between the democratic and authoritarian management of international radio broadcasting. This depicts the former as aiming 'to enlighten publics by telling them the truth' and the latter as using 'lies to mislead audiences'.[356] Furthermore, the first group is seen to embody perfectly the internationalist values of collaboration and mutual understanding and members of the latter are seen as lone rangers unilaterally forcing their worldview on unsuspecting listeners. This tendency to define the authoritarian management of the radio as such is most likely a result of a historiographical bias towards researching German National Socialist international propaganda which, indeed, constituted a formidable machine in the hands of Reichsminister Goebbels. Certainly, the pages dedicated to international broadcasting in the three lengthy institutional histories of Italian Fascist radio take a similar approach. Their tendency is decidedly towards considering Fascist broadcasting as the product of monolithic policies, taking the approach of deducing a clear objective (most often the reductive assumption that

[353] *Ibid.*, pp.3-5.
[354] *Ibid.*, p.30.
[355] *Ibid.*, p.20.
[356] Vincent Kuitenbrouwer, 'Radio Wars: Histories of Cross-Border Radio Propaganda' in *The Wireless World*, p.105.

international broadcasting was designed to combat anti-fascist propaganda abroad) before assessing the given objective's success (almost invariably negatively). Taking a vision of the wireless world as 'a densely populated and thickly entangled space, whose inhabitants competed and co-operated with, and emulated, one another', this chapter seeks to bring into relief the interconnectivity and entanglements behind the Italian Fascist management of international broadcasting.[357] To probe the Fascist engagement with radio broadcasting's interconnectivity, it is vital to explore the various networks at play (as well as the advantages and tensions they created) in the regime's management of the medium. These networks (all necessarily transnational) include the people required to produce broadcasts, the diplomatic networks mobilised to promote the programmes to foreign audiences, and the relationships established with foreign broadcasters and governments in order to ensure the (not always reciprocal) exchange of programmes and broadcast relays. By removing the assumption that the regime's propaganda machine was always aiming at being monolithic and drawing focus to the ways in which it engaged with the transnational nature of the radio, this chapter aims to provide a nuanced picture of Fascist Italy's varied contribution to the wireless world.

2.2. Polyglot Radio: Peopling the Wireless World

Any project designed to reach foreign listeners necessarily required broadcasting in foreign languages. This presented the regime with the challenge of codifying the requirements for the EIAR's speakers and the journalists working on compiling and translating transcripts to be delivered on air. Fascist Italy populated the airwaves with a combination of invited foreign speakers (either regular or on an *ad hoc* basis) and Italians who were well versed in the necessary foreign language. Most of the regular announcers in foreign languages were women who usually applied in response to adverts in the

[357] Potter, 'Out of the Ether', p.5.

Radiocorriere magazine. This was for two key reasons. First of all, it was thought that a female voice would be gentler and more inviting. Second of all, women generally had a better grasp of foreign languages on the whole. Traditionally, men were more likely to attend the *liceo classico* where the focus was primarily on Latin and Ancient Greek with some tuition in French. Educated women, on the other hand, were more commonly introduced to the study of foreign languages, largely through, in the concerned words of the *Idea Nazionale,* the 'educazione ricevuta da precettrici inglesi e della frequenza di corsi di studio che rischiavano di consolidare l'«anglofilia» e la mancanza di senso patriottico delle fanciulle di buona famiglia' (education received from English private tutors and the frequency of study courses which risked consolidating 'anglophilia' and a lack of a sense of patriotism among young girls from good families).[358] One such prominent example of a female announcer was Elisa Maria Alice Sergio, daughter of the Tuscan baron Agostino Sergio and Marguerite Fitzgerald, descendant of a wealthy Maryland family. From adolescence she was raised in Italy and privately educated, gaining a command of both English and French.[359] Once hired, the announcers' training in the Centro di Preparazione Radiofonica consisted largely in reading 'notizie politiche, articoli e resoconti, sia in italiano che in lingue estere' (political bulletins, articles or reports, either in Italian or in foreign languages).[360] Further to the recruitment of Italians with a strong grasp of foreign languages, native speakers of foreign languages were also employed. Such recruitment either came about on the recommendation of local diplomatic representation or from individuals writing to either the EIAR or the MCP to offer their services. In some cases, such individuals were half Italian such as the half French woman in Genova recruited in September 1939.[361] In other instances, it was through political affinity with the regime that they offered their

[358] *Ibid.*
[359] *Ibid.*
[360] 'Il Centro di Preparazione Radiofonica' (unsigned), *RC*, N.11 (14-20 Mar. 1937), p.4.
[361] 'Appunto per S.E. Il Ministro N.7946.', ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.33, F.96.

services.[362] In the latter case, it was common for foreign spouses of Italians to offer their service, as was the case of Signora Sperni (the English wife of an Italian) who contributed a series of conversations about how the masses lived in Italy compared to Britain (on topics such as food prices) and Mrs. Jemma (an American married to the Italian Enzo Jemma) who contributed 'amichevoli conversazioni sugli usi e i costume e sulla cucina italiana' (friendly conversations on habits and customs and on Italian cuisine).[363]

Other regular native speakers who contributed broadcasts were prominent personalities in their own right.[364] One of the most prominent, along with Ezra Pound, was the Englishman Major James Strachey Barnes who dubbed himself 'the Italian Lord Haw Haw'. The son of Sir Hugh Shakespear Barnes and Winifred Strachey, Barnes was raised in Italy by his maternal grandparents after his mother's premature death. Serving his country in the First World War and reaching the rank of Major, it was, however, his love for Italy that would dominate the rest of his life. It was through this love of Italy and, in part, his conversion to Catholicism in 1914 that he came to admire and, ultimately, to proselytise the nascent Fascist regime.[365] In 1928, he published *Universal Aspects of Fascism* which appeared with a preface from Mussolini, promoting Fascism as the essential 're-establishment of a political and social order, based upon the main current of traditions that have formed our European civilisation, traditions created by Rome, first by the Empire and

[362] Such was the case when Husaini Al-Hindi offered his contribution to the Arabic-language service for the production of anti-British propaganda. 'Appunto per il Capo di Gabinetto dell'Ecc. Il Ministro' (18 June 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96 ('Ispettorato per la radio e televisione), F.6., SF.5.
[363] Details of Mrs. Sperni's contriutions are found in 'Appunto per il Capo di Gabinetto dell'Eccellenza Il Ministro' (25 Aug. 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96, F.6., SF.6; On Mrs Jemma see 'Al Gr. Uff. Dott. Carlo Pareschi' (17 Sep. 1939), ACS, MCP, 'Ente Autonomo Esposizione Universale di Roma', F.10907.
[364] The use of prominent figures extended also to musical broadcasts. For instance the noted Greek soprano Clava Stamu 'canta[va] ogni venerdì canzoni del suo paese durante le trasmissioni speciali della stazione di Bari e nei programmi per i greci all'estero della stazione 2RO ad onde corte' (every Friday sang songs from her country during the special broadcasts from the Bari station and in the programmes for Greeks abroad from the Roma 2 short-wave station). See 'Cronache' (unsigned), *RC*, N.1 (2-8 Jan. 1938).
[365] For a more in-depth discussion of Barnes's brand of Fascism and the influence of his Catholic conversion see Paul Jackson, 'James Strachey Barnes and the fascist revolution: Catholicism, anti-Semitism and the International New Order', *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse*, 8 (2014), pp.187-205.

subsequently by the Catholic Church'.[366] Barnes returned to Italy in early 1939 as tensions in Europe grew. In 1940, he moved to Rome and commenced work as an English-language radio propagandist, a role he accepted 'with unbridled zeal'.[367] As Bradshaw and Smith point out, 'unlike Pound— who always claimed that his broadcasts were not treasonous as they did not incite Americans to revolt against their country's war effort—there is little doubting the nature of Barnes' broadcasts'.[368] As 'a very clever propagandist and through […] his knowledge of the British government personalities he was able to produce some very vicious attacks on leading members of the government such as Churchill and Eden', with his broadcasts 'inciting the English people to revolt against their Government'.[369] Despite misgivings about the reports of food shortages, Major Barnes' wife and child joined him in Rome during the war. Then, after the liberation, the three of them moved north where Barnes continued his propagandistic activities for the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI). Mrs. Barnes and their son stayed in Salò, put up by the MCP. Whereas Barnes spent most of his time in Milan whence he delivered his broadcasts.[370]

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[366] James Strachey Barnes, *The Universal Aspect of Fascism* (Williams and Norgate, 1928), p.35.
[367] David Bradshaw and James Smith, 'Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ('The Italian Lord Haw-Haw') and Italian Fascism', *The Review of English Studies* 64.266 (2013), pp.672-693 (p.678).
[368] *Ibid.,* p.679.
[369] A list of titles of Barnes' broadcasts from 1941: 'Gleanings from the British Press' (5 Aug. 1941); 'Thank God for the Blunders of our Enemies' (18 July 1941); 'What are Respectable People Thinking in England' (30 July 1941); 'Pride Cometh before a Fall' (19 July 1941); 'India's Real Masters' (25 July 1941); 'The Saving of European Civilisation' (17 July 1941); 'Gt. Britain's War Aims' (2 Apr. 1941); 'The Logic of Churchill's Inner Thoughts' (10 Jan. 1941); 'The British Plutocracy' (24 Jan. 1941); 'Resist or Die' (31 Jan. 1941); 'On Lies' (2 Feb. 1941); 'The Answer to de Gaulle – Traitor' (5 Feb. 1941); 'Short-lived Lies' (9 Feb. 1941); and 'An Answer to Churchill' (10 Feb. 1941). Unsigned Military Intelligence Report on James Strachey Barnes, 27 Nov. 1944, TNA, WO 204/12841. 'British Renegades – Interim Report/James Strachey Barnes', 26 Jan. 1945, TNA, WO 204/12841. Found in Bradshaw and Smith, 'Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes', *RES*, p.678-9.
[370] Their letters reveal the difficult of life under the RSI. Their son, in fact, ran away from their new home with the son of one of the ministers (unnamed). Their letters are to be found in ACS, MCP, B259. Additionally, his war diary has recently been transcribed and published: *A British Fascist in the Second World War (A Modern History of Politics and Violence): The Italian War Diary of James Strachey Barnes, 1943-45*, ed. by Claudia Baldoli and Brendan Fleming (Bloomsbury, 2014). After the end of WWII, Barnes settled in Italy where he eventually died in 1955. See Paul Jackson, 'James Strachey Barnes and the fascist revolution', p.1.

Another significant method of recruiting voices to the EIAR microphones which was 'largamente sperimentata' (widely tested) was the inviting of personalities well-known abroad to speak on the occasion of their visit to Italy.[371] Such collaborations were born three different ways: the visitor offered their services, the visitor was asked to collaborate during their visit, or the MCP requested an express visit for the purpose of a broadcast. Fernando Fernandez de Cordoba (who was a Spanish radio announcer) visited Italy in 1940 to attend a film set and offered to contribute a broadcast in Spanish which would discuss his meeting with Mussolini.[372] It was likely due to his profession as a radio announcer that it occurred to him to offer such a service. More commonly, however, requests were made of prominent foreign politicians and journalists who happened to be visiting Italy. The resulting broadcasts were regularly referred to as the 'impressioni romane' (Roman impressions) of foreign figures and included the Portuguese-language broadcasts to Brazilian listeners respectively by Brazilian journalist Marì Teresa Cavalcanti Lenterner and Portuguese journalist Urbano Rodriguez as well as the Romanian-language broadcasts of Romanian Minister Sidorovici which Romanian stations retransmitted in relay with Italian stations, and Romanian propaganda minister Costantino Giurescu.[373] These broadcasts were meant, simply, to inspire 'sentimenti di amicizia per l'Italia' (friendly feelings towards Italy) and were most commonly based around 'calde espressioni di esaltazione per le superbe realizzazioni del Regime in ogni settore dell'attività nazionale' (warm expressions of exaltation for the superb achievements of the regime in every aspect of national activity).[374] In some cases the MCP had to lean on visitors for comment let alone full broadcasts. Such was the case of Sumner

[371] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Eccellenza il Ministro', ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B96 (Ispettorato per la radio e televisione), F.6, SF.6.
[372] 'Appunto per S.E. il capo di gabinetto' (29 Jan. 1940)., in *ibid.,* SF.1.
[373] 'Appunto per S.E. il Capo Gabinetto' (11 Jan. 1940), *ibid*. SF.2; 'Appunto per il capo di S.E. il Ministro' (16 Feb. 1940), *ibid.*; 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto' (20 Feb. 1940), *ibid*.; 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'eccellenza il ministro' (15 Apr. 1940), *ibid*.,
[374] *Ibid.*; 'Appunto per S.E. il Capo Gabinetto', *ibid*.

Welles (Under Secretary of State in the Roosevelt administration, 1936-1943). Initially refusing to comment on the EUR42 project as he had refused to do to the press of all other countries, Welles reluctantly said he was impressed by it. His (apparently enthusiastic) approval of the EUR42 as well as his breaking his rule of offering no comment were reported in the Giornale Radio Roma broadcast of 16 March 1940. After the interviewer expressed his understanding at Welles' reluctance to comment, according to the report the American volunteered, 'però vi assicuro che questa è la volta che mi rifiuto con maggior dispiacere, perché mai avrei risposto con tanto entusiasmo. L'E42 è veramente tra le cose che più mi hanno colpito' (however, I can assure you that this is the time I am refusing with the greatest displeasure, because never would I have replied with such enthusiasm. The EUR42 is truly among the things which have most impressed me). [375] A keener visitor, on the other hand, was another radio broadcaster, the French journalist Mr. Antoine. It is unclear from the documentation whether his visit to Italy was made expressly to conduct a French-language broadcast. Although, what is stated is that a microphone was primed and waiting for when his plane landed. His discourse focused on the marvels of radio as a means of connecting peoples, the importance of Rome in global affairs, and his joy at Italy and France being 'nuovamente unite per il bene della latinità, dell'Europa e del mondo intero' (recently united for the good of Latinity, Europe and the entire world).[376] One arrangement which was definitely made on the initiative of the MCP was the visit of 'una missione radiofonica spagnola' (Spanish radio broadcasting mission).[377] This first took place in 1939 and its success prompted a repeat the following year. The objective was both to make Italian news and political initiatives known in Spain and to 'dare alla Spagna la sensazione che l'Italia si interessa vivamente alle sue manifestazioni' (give to Spain the feeling that Italy is

[375] 'EIAR Giornale Radio Roma del 16 Marzo 1940 XVIII', ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96, F.6., SF.2.
[376] 'La radiocronaca francese dell'incontro a Roma' in 'Cronache', *RC*, N. 3 (13-19 Jan. 1935), p.10.
[377] 'Appunto per il dottor Telesio' (15 Apr. 1940), ACS, MCP, B.96, F.6, SF.3 (Apr. 1940).

profoundly interested in Spanish events).[378] The consequence of the networks involved in recruiting speakers meant that the Italian contribution to peopling the wireless world was one typified by variety. In the case of invited guest speakers visiting Italy (usually Rome) it was common practice to conduct joint broadcasts in which statements from an Italian representative and from a foreign visitor were reciprocally translated in order to create a truly international (bilateral) broadcast that provided contact with national and foreign cultures to each audience.

2.3 Radio Bulletins as a source for foreign news outlets: Radio Giornale di Roma *and Ciano's Circolare 0009*

An important feature of the Fascist approach to the radio which must be acknowledged lies beyond its attempts to reach listeners and is one which sees the medium as a means of securing a place for Italian news in foreign news outlets. This was done through the cultivation of a network between Rome, diplomatic representatives abroad and their local news outlets. On 14 September 1933, Ciano (newly appointed head of the Ufficio Stampa) sent to all Italian embassies, legations and consulates a circular (Circolare 0009) detailing the new foreign-language news bulletins to be transmitted both through the medium of radiotelegraphy and radio broadcasting.[379] The radio bulletins appeared under the title 'Radio Giornale di Roma' and were broadcasted in Italian, English and German. Whereas the telegraph bulletins appeared under the name 'Radio Nazionale' in Italian, English, German and French.[380] Ciano's intention was for Italian diplomatic representatives

[378] *Ibid*.
[379] Ciano's Circolare 0009 and the responses from Italian diplomats are to be found in ASMAE, MCP, B.163, 'Trasmissione bollettini Radiofonia e Radiotelegrafia: Circolare 0009'.
[380] The Radio Nazionale bulletin, transmitted from the station at Coltano, was already in operation but only in Italian. For evidence of Radio Nazionale's early years in the 1920s, including its relationship with the Agenzia Stefani see ACS, Pres. Con., Aff. Gen., [1934-1936], F.13.1.2057.

to use the news transmitted through these new channels as a source of propaganda in their host countries. He writes:

> 'Porto quanto precede a conoscenza di codesto Ufficio, perché l'E.V (S.V) possa opportunamente servirsi di un materiale giornalistico recente e adatto per un'azione di propaganda a vantaggio del nostro Paese, non tralasciando altresì occasione per diffondere le notizie in quelle agenzie giornalistiche, giornali e periodici in genere, che potessero avere interesse ad usufruire delle informazioni così fornite'.[381]
>
> (I am bringing the following to the attention of this Office, such that Your Excellency may conveniently make use of recent journalistic material that is suitable for propagandistic activity advantageous to our country, equally not neglecting the opportunity to spread the news to those journalistic agencies, newspapers and periodicals in general which could be interested in benefiting from the news from such channels).

As we will soon see, the ideation of both radio telegraph and radio broadcasting bulletins began before Ciano's appointment. However, his focus on the relentless promotion of these news sources was undoubtedly driven by his admiration (and imitation) of the propaganda machine rapidly established in Nazi Germany by Joseph Goebbels. The approach behind these broadcasts is indicative of an understanding of the radio's international propagandistic potential which is traceable throughout the regime - that is to say a vision in which radio propaganda was a source for international news outlets. An internal 1929 report, for instance, highlighted that stations in Europe and America broadcasted 'un notiziario molto esteso sui fatti politici che si riferiscono tanto alla nazione della stazione radio trasmettitrice, che a tutta Europa' (a very long bulletin on political events relevant both to the radio station's nation and to all of Europe), whereas Italy's short bulletins taken from PNF press office communiqués offered 'notizie quasi esclusivamente di valore locale' (news of an almost exclusively local value). The need to change this was keenly motivated by the acknowledgment that 'il notiziario di politica […] non acquista solo

[381] 'Circolare 0009: Trasmissione di bollettini radio-fonici e radio-telegrafici' (14 Sep. 1933), ASMAE, MCP, B.163.

importanza per i radio-amatori, ma in ispecie per le redazioni dei giornali che si servono di quelle trasmissioni' (the political bulletin is not valued only by radio enthusiasts, but particularly for the newspaper newsrooms who use the broadcasts).[382] In other words, it was not necessarily a question of how many listeners as it was *which* listeners. By encouraging Italian diplomats to share the frequencies of these broadcasts with local news outlets, Ciano's hope was to reach a listenership which would retransmit official regime news (both on domestic and international affairs) either through incorporating it into their own reports or, as was the case in some outlets, by starting columns expressly dedicated to news from Italy.

In fact, Radio Giornale di Roma was not originally the main focus of the plan for a more expansive propaganda beyond Italian borders. The Ufficio Stampa (still under the control of Gaetano Polverelli before Ciano's arrival) had initially placed most importance on the possibility of producing the 'Radio Nazionale' telegraph bulletins which 'avrebbe avuto il vantaggio di giungere anche in Paesi lontani senza quei disturbi che si verificano nelle trasmissioni radiofoniche' (would have had the advantage of reaching far-away countries without those atmospheric disturbances that happen with radio transmissions).[383] The Ufficio Stampa consulted Giuseppe Pession, Direttore Generale delle Poste e Telegrafi and telegraphy expert, on the viability of the project. He highlighted that the principal obstacle to this plan was a financial one. In order for Radio Nazionale to have the desired wide-spread impact, Italian diplomatic representatives abroad would have needed the appropriate equipment to receive the telegraph as well as a radio operator capable of deciphering and transcribing the bulletins. The cost of equipment and the salary of a radio operator would have amounted to 'una spesa veramente rilevante' (a truly significant cost) and, so, the Ufficio Stampa turned its attention to radio as a more economically viable

[382] 'Servizio stampa e trasmissioni radiofoniche' (8 Apr. 1929), ACS, Pres. Con., Aff. Gen. [1934-1936], F.13.1.2057.
[383] 'Appunto per l'On Polverelli' (Undated), ASMAE, MCP, B.163., p.2.

alternative. The other conundrum raised by the telegraph bulletins related to their copyright. Pession highlights the fact that 'i giornali locali, a norma delle leggi vigenti, come pure delle convenzioni internazionali, non potrebbero riprodurre tale bollettino poiché rischierebbero gravi sanzioni da parte dei rispettivi governi' (local newspapers, in compliance with the laws in force, as is true in international conventions, could not reproduce such a bulletin as they would risk grave sanctions from their respective governments).[384] The question of copyright over the use of these telegraph bulletins would continue to be a thorny one. The Ambassador in Santiago de Chile pointed out that the bulletins would have been 'lanciati all'aria senza "Copyright"' (launched into the air without 'copyright') and, therefore, 'nessun giornale serio potrà pubblicarli senza darvi una paternità' (no serious newspaper would be able to publish them without attributing them to a source) and that it could not 'darvi la paternità della Stefani poiché essa è qui rappresentata dalla Havas sulla base di un regolare contratto' (attribute them to the Stefani seeing as here it is represented by Havas according to a regular contract).[385] He suggested imitating the German model of the Transozean news agency by using a legally autonomous body (under the control of the Embassy) such as the Istituto di Cultura Italiana to receive the bulletins, transcribe and disseminate them. For his own part, the Ambassador had also set up a Press Agency within the Embassy. From here he would send out news in Spanish to figures in politics and finance as well as intellectuals and military men. Disseminated in this way, the bulletins from Rome would be copyrighted to the autonomous news agency (based at the Embassy).

In response to the dissatisfaction of reports from international news agencies, a plan was formulated to overcome these obstacles in the search to 'controbattere le campagne di stampa create ai nostri danni da agenzie straniere' (combat the press campaigns run to our

[384] 'Appunto per l'On Polverelli' (Undated), ASMAE, MCP, B.163.
[385] 'Propaganda Radiofonica e radiotelegrafica. 13604/625' (1 Dec. 1933), *ibid.,* p.4.

detriment by foreign news agencies).[386] This general concern that the international narrative surrounding Fascist Italy was driven by foreign news agencies was incapsulated perfectly by the Italian Legation in Bangkok who wrote to then Foreign Minister Dino Grandi expressly requesting an English-language telegraph bulletin to service papers such as The Bangkok Times, The Daily News and The Bangkok Observer.[387] He stressed that these newspapers received their news almost exclusively by telegram from foreign news agencies who did not limit themselves to reporting on their own national affairs; they also reported on foreign affairs 'naturalmente con quella intonazione che può ad ognuna fare comodo' (naturally with that intonation that suits whoever is speaking).[388] The legation cited examples of recent reports on Italy, which apparently come almost exclusively from German and French sources, to illustrate the problem of other nations controlling the international narrative surrounding the country. The first was a report on illiteracy rates in Italy. He asserted that, on one hand, it was a comfort to the people of Thailand (where 'l'istruzione pubblica è alquanto arretrata' – public education is rather behind) to learn that 'vi sono degli analfabeti tra i discendenti di Roma' (there are illiterate people among the descendants of Rome).[389] However, the choice of news item did not present Italy in the best light. The legation asked, 'fra tutto quanto era accaduto in quei giorni in Italia è mai possibile che vi fosse stato altro che la pubblicazione della statistica degli ignoranti?' (with all the events in those days in Italy is it not at all possible that there was nothing other than the publication of statistics about ignorant people?).[390] Shortly following this came a report originating from

[386] 'Appunto per l'On Polverelli' (Undated), ASMAE, MCP, B.163.
[387] The only record of the legation's name is a signature which is difficult to discern accurately. It appears to be Lanzelioni, but this cannot be confirmed with any degree of certainty.
[388] 'Legazione di S.M. il Re d'Italia nel Siam. N.421-133.', (20 May 1932), ASMAE, MCP, B.163. pp.1-2. The key foreign news sources he cites are the British Official Wireless, the French Indo Pacific Radio, the German Transocean Wireless Service, and the Japanese Rengo Imperial Service.
[389] *Ibid.*, p.2.
[390] *Ibid.*

Indo Pacific Radio on an important mafia trial.[391] Stressing that while the information on the sentencing and number of defendants was true, the legation asked, 'se proprio si doveva parlare al mondo della mafia, come di una piaga italiana, non sarebbe stato giusto, ed in fondo anche di maggiore interesse generale, il fare in qualche modo risaltare la civile opera epuratrice del Governo Nazionale ed il fatto che questo malanno va totalmente scomparendo o è scomparso?' (if it was really necessary to speak to the world about the mafia as an Italian scourge. Would it not have been correct, and ultimately of higher general interest, somehow to bring to the world's attention the civil work of the National Government to uproot the mafia and the fact that this sickness is completely disappearing or is already disappeared?).[392] Finally, he cited a report on the assassination of the French President, Paul Doumer, which claimed that the Russian emigré responsible for the killing was the founder of 'un certo partito "fascista democratico nazionale russo"' (a certain "Russian democratic national fascist" party).[393] In the Thai press, it was the first descriptor ('fascista') which drew the most attention and 'in una ignoranza comprensibile in questo paese' (in an ignorance which is comprehensible in this country) the majority of people did not question this association.[394] In this case, the concern was not simply about controlling the international narrative about the Italian Fascist regime but extended also to controlling the definition of fascism considered as an increasingly international and transnational phenomenon. While there was a strong sense of necessity in catching up with the control exerted by foreign news agencies, there was also a sense of opportunity. The ambassador in Santiago de Chile noted that local newspapers were entirely reliant on United Press (UP) or Havas or both seeing as they could not afford to have foreign correspondents. He claimed that many of them were dissatisfied: the UP relied too heavily on air courier rather than telegraphing and it was

[391] *Ibid.*
[392] *Ibid.*
[393] *Ibid*.
[394] *Ibid.*

deemed too 'egoisticamente commerciale' (egotistically commercial); and Havas was too partisan, seeing everything 'sotto la visuale strettamente francese' (through a strictly French lens).[395] So, dictated by a 'senso di particolare opportunità politica' (a sense of particular political opportunity), these bulletins, then, were intended to compete with foreign news agencies, chief among them Havas and UP, for control of international news narratives. In an attempt to catch up with international news agencies, Fascist Italy would, ultimately, take the lead in foreign-language radio broadcasting.

The calls for an international telegraphic news service were also prompted, at least in part, by the general climate of interest in Italy and Italian Fascism abroad. On 9 September 1929, the Italian Consul in Batavia, Prof. Monti, had already communicated interest from the Dutch news agency Aneta (based in Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies) in receiving news directly from Italy.[396] The Aneta director Mr. Berretty stressed that the agency was eager to receive news from Italy. The issue, however, was that the Radio Nazionale telegraph bulletins were, at that time, transmitted exclusively in Italian which demanded a high level of time and work to translate them, time and work which would be avoided were they to be written in English, French or German. The Legation in Bangkok, already taking a keen interest in these questions in 1929, was present at the meeting between Mr. Berretty and Prof. Monti and was copied into the latter's communication to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He stressed that the bulletin would mean that 'una parte […] molto cospicua del mondo asiatico in evoluzione potranno giornalmente seguire il dinamismo della rigenerata vita Italiana in tutte le sue multiformi attività e guardare a Roma come ad un faro di civiltà rinnovata' (a highly conspicuous part of the developing Oriental world will be able daily to follow the dynamism of regenerated Italian life in all of its manifold activities and

[395] 'Propaganda Radiofonica e radiotelegrafica. 13604/625' (1 Dec. 1933), ASMAE, MCP, B.163, p.2.
85 'Agenzia "Aneta"' (4 Apr. 1929), ASMAE, MCP, B.163. Aneta stands for *Algemeen Nieuws- en Telegraaf-Agentschap* (General News and Telegraph Agency).

to look to Rome as a beacon of renewed civilisation).[397] In turn, he supposed, this news presence would then translate into an 'influenza culturale ed economica' (cultural and economic influence) which Italy could count on when 'l'Asia, per forza di eventi, otterrà quell'indipendenza a cui ardamente aspira' (Asia, through the inevitability of events, wins that independence to which it so ardently aspires) which would occur with help from looking towards Rome 'come ad un faro di civilità rinnovata' (as towards a beacon of renewed civilisation).[398] It was an entire three years later that foreign-language telegraph services were instituted by the regime.

Given the financial obstacles of telegraph bulletins, Pession proposed the radio as an alternative. Pession highlighted that the technical capacities of the Italian radio network (especially the Rome and Milan stations) were such as to enable broadcasts to reach 'in ottime condizioni tutte le città europee' (every European city with great clarity).[399] The shortwave transmitter at Prato Smeraldo was enlisted to ensure maximum reach. Pession also confidently pointed out that, given that the popularity of live musical broadcasts already meant that 'un enorme numero di ascoltatori ricerchi con particolare interesse le stazioni italiane' (a huge number of listeners seek out Italian stations with particular interest), the bulletins, if well executed, could tap into an audience of millions of people, 'in prima linea' (chief) among them would be the Italian 'rappresentanze all'estero che potrebbero captarlo, stenografarlo e servirsene' (diplomatic personnel abroad who could receive them, transcribe them and make use of them).[400] It was decided, nonetheless, to produce the Radio Nazionale telegraph bulletins and to purchase equipment and pay radio operators as a means of experimentation in a select few embassies where reception of the radio broadcasts might be

[397] Communication (30 Sep. 1929), *ibid.*, p.2.
[398] *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.
[399] 'Appunto per l'On Polverelli' (Undated), ASMAE, MCP, B.163., p.2.
[400] *Ibid.*

problematic (namely Washington, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and Shanghai).[401] And so, Radio Giornale di Roma was launched broadcasting news bulletins in Italian, English and German in the evening. As planned, the bulletins, in order to compete with international news agencies, included favourable reports on the work of the Fascist government in Italy as well as news on international affairs, naturally always dictated by a 'senso di particolare opportunità politica' (a sense of particular political opportunity).[402] The responses to Ciano's instructions in his Circolare 0009 provide a picture of the difficulties encountered by this early attempt at foreign-language broadcasting. Every response accepts the responsibility of promoting the broadcasts among local news outlets, in line with the understanding of their use as a means of influencing news production globally. Some responses even detail the success already witnessed in such an endeavour, such as in Liverpool where the consul secured publication of the English-language bulletin's existence in both the Liverpool Echo and the Yorkshire Observer.[403] Reports were also included in three national English papers: Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Daily Express. The delegate in Munich attached a copy of the notice he sent to every Bavarian newspaper and the ambassador to Germany notified the ministry that he had contacted the Reich's press office 'con preghiera di portare subito la notizia a connoscenza degli ambienti interessati' (with the request to bring the news immediately to the attention of the interested parties) as well as contacting an extensive list of news outlets.[404] While reception of the broadcasts within Europe seems to have been good, most responses from diplomatic representatives outside of Europe reported poor reception. This was either due to sheer distance, geographical conditions (such as the obstacle of the Andes in Chile) or a scarcity of suitably advanced radio receivers to capture

[401] *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.
[402] *Ibid*., p.2.
[403] 'Trasmissione di bollettini radio-fonici e radio-telegrafici' (1 Dec. 1933), *ibid.*. *The Liverpool Echo* article appeared on 6 Nov. 1933 and the *Yorkshire Observer* (Bradford) article appeared on 9 Oct. 1933.
[404] 'Bollettini radio-fonici e radio-telegrafici' (20 Oct. 1933), *ibid.*; 'Agenzia Stefani – Bollettini in lingua francese' (31 Oct. 1933), *ibid*..

the short-wave broadcasts emanating from Prato Smeraldo. It was reported from Nairobi that this was in fact the case for all broadcasts from Europe, with the notable exception of those emanating from London.[405] Representatives outside of Europe also raised the point that, due to time differences, the Radio Giornale di Roma bulletins were broadcasted at inconvenient times locally. Given that Georgia, for example, was three hours ahead, the delegate in Tiflis stressed that the bulletin was, by that point, 'inutilizzabile agli effetti giornalistici' (unusable for journalistic purposes), arriving too late to go to press.[406] The Georgia delegate also highlighted that, with the German language bulletin broadcasted at 19:30 and the Italian one at 21:30, the former reached a larger listenership in Georgia – a fact which was unhelpful as German was barely spoken there. At least, he stressed, the Italian language was 'compresa appena' (just about understood). On this note, the delegate also queried (and with good reason) why the radio bulletins were not broadcasted also in French, a language much more widely used globally. The response from Rome was clear: there would be no accommodations as the current schedule allowed for the best possible reception in Central Europe.[407]

The Georgia delegate was not the only person to respond with a query over the selection of languages for the Radio Giornale di Roma bulletins. The ambassador in Chile responded to Ciano's Circolare 0009 in great detail. As it happens, he had already been studying independently the question of international radio propaganda (both radiotelegraphy and radio broadcasting). After highlighting the not insignificant flaws in the ministry's plans for the foreign-language Radio Nazionale bulletins, the ambassador turned his attention to the question of the flagship Radio Giornale di Roma bulletins. In a similar vein to other extra-European responses, he stressed that the bulletins were heard in the middle of the day

[405] 'Trasmissione di bollettini radio-fonici e radio-telegrafici' (16 Dec. 1933), *ibid.*.
[406] 'Notiziario politico radio' (3 Oct. 1933), *ibid.*.
[407] 'Notiziario politico radio' (23 Oct. 1933), *ibid.*.

in Chile, when atmospheric interference was at its worst. He then stressed that an enormous opportunity was being missed by omitting to broadcast in Spanish (a language which had 90 million native speakers), especially if 'il Regio Governo ritiene, come è ovvio, che il nuovo largo respiro dell'Italia fascista esiga una penetrazione spirituale in profondità presso le classi dirigenti di tutti i Paesi del mondo' (His Majesty's Government believes, as is obvious, that the new vast reach of Fascist Italy demands a deep spiritual penetration of the ruling classes of all the world's countries).[408] This assessment of the propagandistic potential of radio broadcasting is further evidence of an understanding of the medium as a tool not so much for reaching the masses as much as for influencing the 'classi dirigenti' (ruling classes) in foreign nations. The Ambassador stressed that these 'classi dirigenti' (ruling classes) in South and Central America had been 'da tempo abituati a tenere gli occhi bambinescamente fissi su Parigi' (for the longest time used to fixing their gaze childishly on Paris).[409] In his opinion, Fascist Italy must capitalise on the 'crescente fervore di interesse per l'Italia fascista' (increasingly intense interest in Fascist Italy) in order to 'cambiare questa corrente spirituale' (shift this spiritual current).[410] In his estimation, the broadcasts of Paris Colonial were easily superable in quality.[411]

The broadcasts made an immediate impact in certain quarters of the foreign press. If Pession had raised the question of copyright and international law concerning the telegraph bulletins, what the Radio Giornale di Roma plans never accounted for was the risk of contravening IBU regulations on international broadcasting. On 20 November 1933, Galeazzo Ciano wrote worriedly to his father Costanzo (Ministro per le Comunicazioni) about a report on the English-language bulletin in the Daily Express. The newspaper

[408] 'Propaganda radiofonica e radiotelegrafica' (1 Dec. 1933), *ibid.* pp.1-10.
[409] *Ibid.*, p.8.
[410] *Ibid*.
[411] *Ibid.*

provided a summary of the Italian bulletin as well as insisting 'nuovamente sul fatto che la Conferenza di Lucerna ha stabilito che col 15 gennaio 1934 nessun Paese può trasmettere commenti ufficiali per radio in una lingua diversa dalla propria' (once again on the fact that the Lucerne Conference established that, from 15 January 1934, no country may broadcast official comments over the radio in a language other than its own).[412] Ciano's concern is evident as he worries that, if this is the case, 'verrebbe a modificare tutto quello che deve essere il nostro programma di propaganda radiofonica' (it would mean altering everything about our programme for radio propaganda), displaying clear caution not to contravene international convention as well as the startling institutional incompetence (of both himself and his predecessor who initiated the project) in not having checked the viability of the project before investing such time and resources into it.[413] Ciano sought clarification from the director general of the EIAR, Raoul Chiodelli, who had, in fact, represented Italy at the IBU conference in Lucerne. The conference had resulted in the Lucerne Plan which allocated wavelengths to national broadcasters as well as 'imposing power limitations on transmitters to curtail their cross-border reach'.[414] Chiodelli included in his response to Ciano, extracts of the relevant articles from the Lucerne plan, claiming to be unaware of any such convention prohibiting stations from broadcasting in foreign languages. He first stated the purpose of the conference's assigning of wavelengths as being to 'assicurare un servizio nazionale di una qualità soddisfacente' (ensure a national service of sufficient quality) and adds the protocol's clarification that 'in principio, la potenza delle stazioni di radiodiffusione non deve sorpassare il valore che permetta di assicurare […] un servizio nazionale efficace e di buona qualità nei limiti del Paese considerato' (in principle, the strength of a radio station should not exceed the reach which allows it to ensure […] an efficient national service of

[412] Letter from Galeazzo Ciano to Costanzo Ciano (20 Nov. 1933). *Ibid.*.
[413] *Ibid.*.
[414] Potter, *Wireless Internationalism*, p.55.

good quality within the borders of the country in question).[415] Stressing that the Lucerne Plan regulated purely technical issues, Chiodelli wrote that the Daily Express 'confonde le questioni' (mixes up the debates).[416] Whilst the Radio Giornale di Roma bulletins may not have contravened the letter of the Lucerne Plan they clearly went against the spirit as in no reasonable way could broadcasts of Italian origin in English and German be said to contribute to the provision of a *national* service. If Chiodelli's and Ciano's interpretation of the Lucerne Plan was disingenuous, they completely ignored the substance of the outcomes of the IBU meeting in Lucerne on 13 May 1933, which Chiodelli cited at length in his communiqué. Chiodelli chose to focus solely on the insistence that broadcasts should not be 'offensive o ingiuriose per altri Paesi' (offensive or injurious to other countries), citing the case of German broadcasts which were 'offensive e ingiuriose per l'Austria' (offensive and injurious towards Austria).[417] This was stressed by the IBU for precisely such contexts in which a *national* broadcast (in this case German) cannot reasonably be contained to German territory because of the border-defying nature of the medium. As German and Austria shared a common language as well as a border, it was evident that German broadcasts could be received in Austria and, in order to keep international peace, offence was to be avoided. Italy producing broadcasts in English and German is an entirely different question altogether and Chiodelli even cited the relevant IBU regulation from the May meeting:

> La diffusion systématique de programmes ou de communications destinés spécialement aux auditeurs d'un autre pays et qui feraient l'objet d'une protestation de la part de ou des organismes de radiodiffusion de ce pays, constitue un acte inadmissible du point de vue des bonnes relations internationales.[418]
>
> (The systematic broadcasting of programmes or communications targeted specially at listeners of another country and which would be the subject of

[415] 'Promemoria per S.E. il Ministro. Radiodiffusione di bollettini di notizie in lingue estere' (24 Nov. 1933), ASMAE, MCP, B.163, pp.1-3 (p.1). The underlining is in the original.
[416] *Ibid*., p.2.
[417] *Ibid.*, p.2.
[418] *Ibid.* This resolution is also reported in the BBC's *World Radio* magazine, 'Meeting of the U.I.R.', *WR*, 26 May 1933.

> protestations on the part of broadcasters of that country, constitutes an inadmissible act as far as good international relations are concerned).

It should be noted briefly that the international approach of the IBU that sought cooperation and mutual understanding was not without its points of contention even among the liberal nations. Spohrer outlines the nature of the 'frequency battles' that dominated negotiations over the division of the airspace at Lucerne.[419] However, if Dr. Arnold Raestad (director of the Norwegian Broadcasting Company) insisted that 'whoever says Hertzian waves, says interdependence, says need for cooperation', the liberal states, in-spite of their own occasional contravening of newly-formed and often-impractical regulations, were committed to co-operation with a view to maintaining peace in the wireless world. Whereas the liberal states committed to reforming and constructing the new medium in this international context, the Fascist radio, while contributing to negotiations and even IBU publications, flagrantly ignored the rules. While liberal states were concerned with offence caused by strictly national broadcasts, Fascist Italy was already pursuing foreign-language broadcasts aimed directly at listeners abroad. While the wireless internationalism of the IBU was being constructed along strictly national lines, where broadcasters had to limit their reach to their own national audiences, the Fascist propagandistic conception and use of the radio as a tool for international reach and soft power was taking shape.

2.4. Building a Network of Cultural and Historical Ties

[419] See Jennifer Spohrer, 'Ruling the Airwaves: Radio Luxembourg and the Origins of European National Broadcasting, 1929-1950' (Doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2008), pp.93-157.

While Ciano's aim for foreign-language bulletins to become a source for foreign news outlets represented an indirect use of the medium, a much more direct contact with foreign listeners was sought in the pedagogical programming that aimed to expose foreign listeners to Italian language and culture. This extended to exposing foreign listeners to Italian music (both modern and recreations of music as far back as medieval times) as well as lectures on literature, theatre, art, archaeology, as well as Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern History. The earliest evidence of this pedagogical impulse in foreign-language programming came in 1927 with a series of English-language conferences produced by the Sezione Scuola lingue estere at the Comitato di Cultura, di propaganda e di beneficenza (CCPB). These lectures, ideated, written and delivered by Prof. Luigi Tombolini, were about Archaeological History and were judged to be 'senza dubbio una efficacissima propaganda pel Nostro Paese all'Estero' (without doubt a most effective form of propaganda for our country abroad).[420] Once the first four transcripts were written they were passed around multiple departments. Having received the programmes from the CCPB, the Ministero delle Communicazioni (MC) forwarded them to the MAE for approval, seeing as they were directed at a foreign audience. It was judged that the material was suitable but that the English needed improving. These edits were made by the MAE and once they were 'linguisticamente perfette' (linguistically perfect) approval was granted.[421] It was made clear by the MAE that so long as the broadcasts treated matters relating to History, the Comitato and Prof. Tombolini were completely free in matters of content but, as soon as the material related in any way to current and foreign affairs the transcripts would have to be subject to

[420] Note to Ministero degli Esteri from Secretary of Comitato di Cultura (6 Apr. 1927), ASMAE, MCP, B3, 'Affari Generali 1927'. Tombolini would go on to publish a book entitled *Il Primato preistorico e storico della civiltà occidentale. Dal Paleolitico al dominio latino* (Tipografia Pol., 1950).
[421] 'Conferenze in lingua inglese della U.R.I.' (14 Mar. 1927), ASMAE, MCP, B.3, 'Affari Generali 1927'. The eventual broadcasting of the programmes was delayed due to a communication breakdown between the two ministries which led the MdC to believe the MAE had rejected them.

its censorship.[422] Whereas, in this instance, the treatment of historical topics are seen as separate to matters relating to present-day foreign affairs, as the infrastructure for foreign-language radio propaganda grew, they became increasingly intertwined.

As the technical capacity of the Italian radio improved and the regime's propagandistic focus fell increasingly on foreign audiences, attempts to spread Italian culture and history abroad became evermore formalised. In 1935 Italian language courses were initiated aimed at England, France, Germany, Austria, Spain, Hungary, Greece and (from 1936) at Bulgaria and Romania.[423] In November 1938 this initiative was expanded under the banner of the new Università Radiofonica Italiana (URI) 'allo scopo di diffondere, per mezzo della radio, la lingua e la cultura italiana in tutti i Paesi del mondo' (with the goal of spreading, through the radio, Italian language and culture to every country in the world).[424] In 1939, responsibility for the management of the URI was passed to the newly-founded Istituto per le relazioni culturali con l'estero (IRCE). This new body was created by the MAE and, therefore, reported solely to the MAE, signalling the ministry's increasing role in propaganda for abroad. The IRCE acted as a 'duplicato della Direzione per la propaganda, ma più efficace e rivestito di un'aura culturale' (duplicate of the Direzione per la propaganda, but more effective and clothed in a cultural aura).[425] The inevitable conflict between the IRCE and the MCP was eased significantly when the head of the IRCE, Alessandro Pavolini, was also made Minister for Popular Culture in October 1939. In fact, Pavolini attempted to bring the IRCE under the control of the MCP but to no avail.[426] The URI courses aligned with the academic calendar such that students subscribed at the beginning of the academic year and sat a final exam which they posted to the IRCE. The top

[422] 'Conferenze in lingua inglese' (14 Apr. 1927), *ibid*..
[423] Francesca Cavarocchi, *Avanguardie*, p.203.
[424] 'L'Università Radiofonica' in 'Cronache, *RC*, N.28 (9-15 July 1939), p.12.
[425] Garzarelli, *Parleremo,* p.233.
[426] *Ibid*., p.234.

of the class would receive a prize of an all-expenses-paid fortnight trip to Italy and smaller prizes included a half price voucher to Rome's art museums should the student choose to visit.[427] The courses were separated by level (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and included language lessons and cultural lectures (on topics including literature, art and history). As early as December 1938, the URI had 18,000 subscribers from various foreign countries and its popularity continued to grow as it further established itself. Further to language lessons and cultural lectures, the URI produced the *Cronache turistiche* which discussed touring in Italy as a means of enticing travellers by familiarising them with the country's attractions presented in all their glory.

The URI's output was characterised as potentially masking the 'sinister side' of Italian radio in the Toronto *Evening Telegram*.[428] The URI's mission was certainly in keeping with the general mission of the regime's foreign-language broadcasting which, in the words of Monteleone, was to 'dare agli ascoltatori stranieri l'idea della indiscussa superiorità dell'Italia nello sviluppo storico degli stati europei' (give foreign listeners a sense of the indubitable superiority of Italy in the historical development of European states).[429] Italian culture and history were certainly regularly presented by the invited speakers, as Monticone stresses, 'nella veste fascista, romana ed imperiale' (under their Fascist, Roman and Imperial guise), however, it must also be stressed that the treatment of historical and cultural themes in such broadcasts was often more nuanced than the simple expression of superiority.[430] We will explore in Chapter 4 the way in which the themes of *romanità* and imperialism were used in order to include and exclude foreign nations from the project for a new Fascist Europe. For our present purposes, however, an awareness of the historical and cultural

[427] 'L'Università Radiofonica' in 'Cronache, *RC*, N.28 (9-15 July 1939), p.12.
[428] 'Radios Teach Italian Arts to Thousands' (31 January 1939), ACS, MCP, B34 (Reports 1922-1945).
[429] Franco Monteleone, *La Radio italiana,* p.139
[430] Monticone, *Il fascismo,* p.160.

relationship between Italy and foreign countries is important to an understanding of how such broadcasts intended to foster ties with foreign peoples and encourage sympathy with the regime. A case in point are the broadcasts to countries in the Far East, far removed from the European context. Through open channels of communication with both Italian diplomatic representatives and the local politicians, the regime was able to design its radio propaganda to fit the local audience. The Prime Minister of Thailand stressed that the mere fact that a foreign nation broadcasted in Thai, helping to keep the language alive, and took an interest in the country strengthened the ties between the two nations. He stressed that before the war the only nation that had done so was Germany. When it came to the broadcasts' content, the Thai Prime Minister stressed that his country was one aiming at growth and modernisation and, therefore, they were keen to avoid reminders of its debt to Western nations 'fra le quali figura in prima linea l'Italia' (amongst which Italy features in the front row).[431] The advice regarding broadcasts for China stressed that they should be kept general in character and avoid the overtly political. The solution, it was decided, was to focus on culture. The same was decided about programmes for Japan where it was feared that political material would risk the Japanese broadcasters refusing to retransmit them. Not only was the focus in the Chinese broadcasts cultural and historical but, avoiding a message of superiority against which the Thai Prime Minister had warned, the broadcasts focused on historical relations between Italy and China through missionaries and travellers. Proposed broadcast titles included: 'Relazioni tra Ceylon e l'Impero Romano (ambasceria singalese a Roma sotto l'imperatore Claudio)' (Relations between Ceylon and the Roman Empire – the Sinhalese embassy under Emperor Claudius); 'Navigatori italiani in Oriente' (Italian navigators in the East); 'La flotta mercantile italiana in Oriente' (the Italian mercantile fleet

[431] 'Radiotrasmissioni per l'Oriente. Telespresso di V.E. N. 370/C' (19 March 1940), ACS, MCP, B7, f67 'Propaganda in Middle and Far East', p.2.

in the East); and 'Storia delle Missioni italiane in Ceylon' (History of the Italian missions in Ceylon).[432] Similarly, Prof. Pietro d'Acchiardi of the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma contributed a lecture which proposed a nuanced account of artistic similarities and differences entitled, 'Accordi e dissidi tra Oriente e Occidente nell'arte medioevale italiana' (Similarities and differences between East and West in medieval Italian art).[433] In this way, as we will see further in Chapter 4, the focus on cultural themes was often not a simple display of historical and cultural superiority, rather an attempt to build ties in the present day through reminding foreign listeners of the historical ties between the two countries. A sense of superiority, usually present to some degree, was often (but not always) hinted at and teased out rather than used as a club with which to beat foreign listeners. It was understood that, otherwise, the broadcasters in foreign countries might refuse to retransmit and advertise the EIAR's programmes and that, in harming national pride, they might simply alienate listeners. As such, even the direct contact between Rome and foreign listeners in pedagogical broadcasts was governed by networks based on principles of reciprocity and which required strong diplomatic relations. These networks were cultivated and leveraged in order to build ties between Italy and foreign peoples in relationships that would, naturally, afford Fascist Italy a role of cultural superiority. It is this question of reciprocity which will be examined in the next section.

[432] 'Radiotrasmissioni per l'Oriente' (20 Feb. 1940), *ibid*.
[433] 'Trasmissioni Speciali: Per l'Estremo Oriente', *RC*, N.26 (21-27 June 1936), p.13.

2.5. Relays, Exchanges and Collaborations

> *'Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore'.*
> *Book of Micah, 4:3.*

It is from this Bible verse that the BBC motto 'nation shall speak unto nation' was derived. Both the bible verse and the BBC motto herald a seismic shift in human history towards a lasting peace between nations. The internationalist view saw radio as an instrument for mutual understanding between nations. However, as we saw in the introduction to this chapter, the border-defying nature of radio broadcasting caused not only immense excitement but considerable anxiety as well. 'Presented and understood in the context of wireless internationalism', simultaneous broadcasting (or *relais* in both the French and Italian parlance) responded, in part, to this excitement and anxiety.[434] As a means of connecting nations with each other, relays responded to the technical restrictions of reception quality in the 1920s and early 1930s before the wide-scale advent of short-wave transmitters. Through both collective and bilateral agreements, broadcasters were able to reach other national audiences through both relays and exchanges of programmes. The BBC played 'a key role in pioneering international relay work in the 1920s, creating connections with stations in Europe, the US, and further afield'.[435] The IBU also coordinated 'National Evenings' which involved 'participating stations broadcasting material from or about a single member country, as far as possible simultaneously'.[436] On the question of broadcast-related anxieties, Gino Montefinale, Chief of the Radio Division at the Italian Ministry of Communications, wrote in his contribution to a 1933 League of Nations edited volume on broadcasting and peace that:

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[434] Potter, *Wireless Internationalism*, p.31.
[435] *Ibid.*, p30.
[436] *Ibid.*, p.39.

> all bilateral relations between countries have always been established as the result of mutual *ententes*, but the development of broadcasting is characterised by the invasion of the territory of adjoining countries by wireless sound-waves without any previous agreement, whether these countries are or are not interested in their reception.[437]

The inference of Montefinale's contribution is that, as with all matters of diplomacy, the question of offensive broadcasts from foreign transmitters would be best resolved through mutual *ententes*. Similarly, A.R Burrows, the Secretary General of the International Broadcasting Union, wrote in his essay that, in the case of relays, reciprocity would relieve 'a certain amount of anxiety'.[438]

For the Italian broadcaster, as far as relays were concerned, in 1929 the priority remained connecting the stations within the country. In the 1929 EIAR *Annuario* it is stressed that the development of radio broadcasting in other countries (Italy still being in a position of inferiority compared to Great Britain, France and Germany) 'si deve ricercare appunto nei collegamenti fra le stazioni' (is explained precisely by the connections between stations).[439] The ability to broadcast the same programme simultaneously was highlighted as a central feature in any 'moderna organizzazione di radiodiffusione' (modern radio organisation).[440] Beyond national relays, the Italian network could only look on at foreign countries where 'si sono già fatte, mediante l'aiuto dei rispettivi governi e con esito soddisfacente, delle prove di collegamento fra le stazioni dei vari paesi, per lo scambio dei programmi' (through the help of the respective governments and with a satisfying outcome, experiments connecting stations from various countries have been done in order to exchange programmes).[441] By 1935, however, Italy had made inroads into making permanent agreements with foreign stations in order to facilitate the regular transmission of Italian

[437] Montefinale in *Broadcasting and Peace*, p.139.
[438] Burrows in *ibid.,* p.116.
[439] 'Trasmissioni fatte a mezzo di collegamenti' (unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1929)*, p.79.
[440] 'Collegamenti nazionali e "relais" internazionali'(unsigned), in *EIAR Annuario (1935)*, p.75.
[441]'Trasmissioni fatte', in *Annuario (1929)*, p.81.

programmes to foreign countries. The 1935 EIAR *Annuario* confirmed that 'l'Italia è collegata alle reti estere, verso ovest via Tarvisio, verso il nord con un cavo Milano-Zurigo, e verso est con un cavo Torino-Modano che viene ultimato nel 1935' (Italy is connected to foreign networks, towards the east via Tarvisio, towards the north with a cable between Milan and Zurich, and towards the east with a cable between Turin and Modano which was finished in 1935) and that 'attraverso questi cavi le nostre Stazioni possono collegarsi con le più lontane Stazioni d'Europa, che ricevono spesso programmi dall'Italia' (through these cables our stations can connect with the most distant European stations which will regularly receive programmes from Italy).[442] It was further stressed that transatlantic relays 'si sono moltiplicati e perfezionati' (have grown in number and been perfected) after the watershed moment of Mussolini's radio message to the Americans on New Year's Day 1931.[443] As we move now to uncover some of the most significant relays and exchanges, we will see how, along with Fascist initiative, many were born through requests from abroad motivated by a genuine interest in the Fascist regime.

While the EIAR was involved in Europe-wide relays such as the Concerto Europeo Italiano on 18 October 1937, these were usually entirely related to the exchange of musical programmes with music, as the universal language, deemed safe as far as offence was concerned.[444] Where spoken elements were included, typically in these National Nights, 'the showcased countries not only highlighted their national characteristics, but also explicitly positioned themselves in the greater context of European society'. Italy, while giving a '"romantic" impression of its country, geography, and life', did too stress its social, cultural, artistic, technological and material links with the rest of Europe.[445] The exchange of spoken

[442] 'Collegamenti nazionali', in *Annuario (1935)*, p.82.
[443] *Ibid.*
[444] 'Carta d'Europa', *RC*, N.43 (24 -30 Oct.), p.8.
[445] Lommers, *Europe – On Air*, p.278.

programmes was, however, born more frequently of bilateral exchanges which were, in any case, much favoured by Fascist diplomacy. These bilateral exchanges were highly prominent in the war years particularly as a means of fostering close relations between nations allied with or under the direct control of the Axis powers. Cultural exchanges particularly between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were formalised in 1938 which allowed for a platform for regular and *ad hoc* exchanges between Axis powers during the war. One such example was the regular exchanges with the Slovakian radio. Established in 1939, the Slovak State was a one-party client state of Nazi Germany. In July 1942, the Slovakian broadcaster dedicated a special issue of their official weekly radio magazine to the EIAR's activity, having already published an equivalent edition covering the German radio's production. The objective was to provide 'un quadro completo della multiforme attività del […] ente radiofonico [italiano]' (a complete portrait of the manifold activities of the Italian radio broadcaster) and a brief message was requested from Minister of Popular Culture Pavolini to be included in the edition.[446] In fact, there was already in place a regular exchange established between the two governments and their respective broadcasters. The EIAR sent an hour-long programme in Slovakian which appeared on the Slovakian radio under the title 'Italian Hour' and, in turn, received a programme in Italian broadcasted in a regular 'Ora Slovacca' (Slovakian Hour) spot. When the Slovakian ambassador in Rome requested this exchange be increased with a view to 'sviluppare i rapporti culturali fra l'Italia e la Slovacchia' (strengthen the cultural relations between Italy and Slovakia), the Italian concession was to increase the Slovakian Hour to two monthly programmes and the Italian Hour on Slovakian radio to four broadcasts per month.[447] Further to these regular exchanges, *ad hoc* offers and requests were made, especially by the Slovakian broadcaster. In September 1942, the director of the Slovakian

[446] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Eccellenza il Ministro N. 5582', ACS, MCP, B6, F53 'Italian Relations with Slovakia'.
[447] Telespresso 013389 from A. Tosti, *ibid.*

radio, Adalberto Tilkovski, offered an Italian-language programme about the Slovakian participation in the Biennale di Venezia and, more significantly, the Slovakian radio ran an Italian week from its national stations between 9 and 15 August 1942. For this, the Slovakian broadcaster requested a series of spoken programmes and provided a list of subjects to be covered. This list was largely ignored in favour of the regime's propagandistic priorities with the eventual programmes focussing heavily and overwhelmingly on the eternal city.[448] Nonetheless, the Italian week was considered a success, being reported on favourably in Slovakian newspapers.[449]

While the Italian Week programmes focussed heavily on proselytising the glories of Fascist Italy and Ancient Rome, it did include, as per the original request, one programme about the historical links between the two nations and one about the Italian influence on Slovakian art (the latter suggesting a position of Italian superiority and paternalistic guidance as was common).[450] The strengthening of bonds between the two nations was the most common objective of these radio exchanges and, more often than not, the structure of the programmes embodied the spirit of reciprocity. The 'Programma Speciale di Scambio con la Jugoslavia' (Special Exchange Programme with Yugoslavia) on 25 March 1940 exhibits the symmetry that was achieved in these broadcasts. The broadcast was planned to commemorate the three-year anniversary of the signing of the Belgrade Accord between the two countries in 1937. The programme was transmitted from Rome and relayed by the Yugoslavian radio. Beginning with both national anthems followed by the announcer's introduction, the programme proceeded with a brief address from Gaetano Polverelli

[448] Broadcast titles included: 'La missione della guerra', 'Roma eterna', 'Le fontane di Roma', 'La Radio italiana e la guerra', 'Vagabondaggio in Italia', 'Roma, eterna fonte d'arte', 'Realtà, classicismo e universalità', 'Guerra e radio', 'La città eterna', 'Tiberio ritorna'. See 'Settimana italiana alla radio slovacca', *ibid*.
[449] *Ibid.*
[450] 'Rapporti storici italo-slovacchi', 'Influenze italiane nell'arte slovacca'. See *ibid*.

(spoken first in Italian and then translated into Serbian). After this came a message from the respective foreign ministers each translated for the comprehension of both audiences. The announcer's opening remarks stressed that the Italian radio contributed to the friendship expressed by the Belgrade Accord every day 'col suono di una voce amica che quasi sembra abolire le distanze, giungendo, diretta ed immediata, ai cuori ed alle anime' (with the sound of a friendly voice which almost seems to abolish distance, reaching, direct and immediate, hearts and souls) before stressing the exchange's goal as that of 'rendere più efficace l'espressione dei sentimenti quali sono nutriti da tutti gli Italiani e certamente ricambiati da tutti gli Jugoslavi' (rendering more effective the expression of the sentiments that are nurtuted by all Italians and are certainly returned by all Yugoslavians).[451] The broadcast was concluded with both Italian music and 'musica dei serbi, dei croati e degli sloveni con carattere di evocazione nazionale, sulla base di canti e danze tradizionali' (music of the Serbians, the Croatians and the Slovenians evoking national sentiment through traditional chants and dances) before the playing again of the respective national anthems.[452] In this way, the Fascist regime used the internationalist technique of programme relays and exchanges as a means of fostering friendship and understanding between two nationalist regimes, embodying what Benjamin Martin has termed 'inter-nationalism'.[453]

When it came to the wireless internationalism at the heart of relays and exchanges, the continued requests made by the BBC to the EIAR signal a lasting internationalism in the face of geo-politics. Requests were made often for Italian music programmes as late as May 1940.[454] Requests for spoken programmes were also not uncommon, for example the request

[451] 'Presentazione detta dall'annunciatore di Radio Roma' (25 Mar. 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen, B96, F6, SF2.
[452] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto di S.E. il ministro' (23 Mar. 1940), *ibid*.
[453] Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order,* pp.109-48.
[454] 'Appunto per il gabinetto dell'Eccellenza il Ministro' (20 May 1940), ACS, MCP, B7, F70 'British Broadcasting Corporation'. This folder contains the traces of many such requests from the BBC.

for a broadcast from Rome on Christmas day 1938 to include comment from one inhabitant of Vatican City (such as a guard) and one Roman citizen.[455] It was also not uncommon for third parties (mostly journalists) to attempt to broker an exchange between broadcasters. In the case of the BBC, an example came in the form of the journalist Mr. Munro who proposed a programme about the daily events in Italy done from the EIAR studios to be rebroadcasted by the BBC.[456] No trace of this latter programme is to be found in the archival sources, therefore whether it came to fruition is unknown. The BBC also offered the EIAR programmes, such as a speech by Chamberlain in September 1938. In this case, the EIAR and the Italian government tried to find a way of diplomatically rejecting the offer, in the end responding that they intended to broadcast a translation at a later date (which, of course, never came to fruition).[457] This lasting internationalism likely comes down to the debate present in the 1933 League of Nations volume, *Broadcasting and Peace*, considered above: whether agreements should be made between broadcasters or governments. With the BBC enjoying more freedom from the British government than her Italian counterpart, their requests for exchanges reveal a belief in the right for broadcasters to negotiate between themselves. On the other hand, the Italian broadcaster was increasingly dominated by the directives and whims of the Italian government when it came to international broadcasting.

While the BBC continued to submit exchange requests to the EIAR, the Italian government's rapprochement with Nazi Germany was bringing about noticeable change to radio collaborations between the two nations as well as with Japan. On 23 November 1938, Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano and German ambassador Hans Georg von Mackensen signed an 'ambitious, large-scale cultural treaty' which among other things, 'obligated both regimes to inform the other country's foreign ministry about all cultural

[455] 'Appunto per l'ispettorato per la radiodiffusione' (15 Nov. 1938), *ibid.*
[456] 'Appunto per S.E. il Ministro. 5192' (undated), *ibid.*
[457] 'Appunto per S.E. il Ministro' (27 Sep 1938), *ibid.*

events, and allowed each state to select the teachers of their language in the other country'.[458] We will see in Chapter 4 how this cultural accord set about achieving what Fioravanzo has termed 'un'opera di revisione culturale ad ampio raggio in entrambi i paesi, quasi una sorta di invenzione (a ritroso) della tradizione' (a work of cultural revision on a large scale in both countries, almost a kind of invention (in reverse) of tradition), particularly with regard to the reimagining of the myth of Rome in order to incorporate Nazi Germany.[459] For now, however, we will focus on the echoes of this watershed cultural agreement in the cooperation in the field of radio broadcasting. This new cultural accord is indicative of the increasing rapprochement between the two regimes and, in particular the Fascist regime's adoption of philo-Nazi (and increasingly totalitarian) policies in 1938 such as the (anti-American) nationalisation of film distribution, the *campagna contro il Lei* and the *leggi razziali*. Contrary to the state of play in Fascist Italy (as we saw in Chapter 1), Nazi radio policy displayed a fervent jealousy over its national audience, banning the listening of foreign broadcasts. For our purposes, it is important to note that this fact did not change with the advent of the 1938 cultural agreement. In July 1940, a suggestion was made by the Primo Aiutante del Capo Generale di S.A.R il Principe di Piemonte (Umberto II di Savoia, next in line to the throne) that the nobleman Alfredo de Baldass should be commissioned to contribute 'alcune conferenze progagandistiche in lingua tedesca' (some propagandistic conferences in German). The response came from the IRT, reminding him that 'in Germania è proibito l'ascolto di stazioni estere, anche italiane' (in Germany listening to foreign stations, even Italian ones, is prohibited).[460] Because of this fact, the EIAR was limited to transmitting just one fifteen-minute news bulletin per day that avoided any propagandistic

[458] Martin, *Nazi-Fascist New Order*, pp.110-1.
[459] Monica Fioravanzo, *L'Europa fascista. Dal "primato" italiano all'asservimento al Reich (1932-1943)* (Franco Angeli, 2022), p.111.
[460] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Eccellenzail Ministro' (23 July 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96 'Ispettorato per la radio e televisione', F.6, SF.6.

material in order to avoid the ire of the German authorities. This was justified under the pretext that the bulletin could well have been intended for German migrants in Italian territory, a pretext allowed by radio's fundamentally transnational nature.[461] Similarly, on 8 June 1940, the German broadcaster began extensive programming for the around 100,000 Italian migrants who moved there between 1938-39.[462] Even when the director of the German radio, Dr. Heinrick Glasmeyer, expressed that he would be 'lieto di collaborare con l'Esposizione di Roma per tutto ciò che si riferirà alla propaganda radiofonica in Germania' (happy to collaborate with the Esposizione di Roma for everything that regarded radio propaganda in Germany), the willingness to collaborate also revealed a desire to control broadcasts for German listeners.[463] While the propagandistic focus for the EUR42 was intended to 'riflettersi principalmente sull'estero o quanto meno sui viaggiatori stranieri che verranno in Italia nel periodo precedente l'Esposizione' (fall principally on foreign countries or, at least, on foreign visitors to Italy in the period leading up to the Exposition), this active Nazi collaboration doubtless took some control from the regime's propagandists.[464]

While the new German-Italian agreement, as reported in *World Radio*, was intended to bring about an 'exchange of musical transmission, talks, and descriptive broadcasts of tours in the two countries' in the hope of giving 'Germans and Italians a better understanding of each other', the reality ended up being quite different.[465] The most significant exchanges between the two countries came more so through direct collaborations on shared broadcasts usually for audiences in other countries rather than independently produced broadcasts for the respective national audiences. In fact, after the formation of the Axis the number of

[461] *Ibid.*
[462] Alberto Monticone, 'La radio italiana e l'emigrazione dal fascismo alla democrazia: appunti per una ricerca', *Studi Emigrazione,* 16 (1980), pp.285-303 (pp.291-6).
[463] 'Al capo delle segreteria generale' (16 Oct. 1941), ACS, Esposizione Universale di Roma, B.1114, F.10910.
[464] *Ibid.*, F.10906.
[465] 'A New German-Italian Agreement' in 'The World of Radio', *WR*, 9 Dec. 1938, p.5.

Italian-language Nazi broadcasts went down rather than up. This agreement was reached between the two governments to address the 'sproporzione esistente tra sei trasmissioni giornalieri della Germania in lingua italiana e una sola in lingua tedesca effettuata da Roma' (current disproportion between six daily broadcasts from Germany and only one in German coming from Rome).[466] This limited the German broadcaster to the above-mentioned broadcasts for Italian workers in Germany, transmitted from Leipzig. Collaboration on radio broadcasting also took the form of express requests from one Axis power regarding the other's independent transmissions, usually to third countries. For instance, as the German radio intended to 'riprendere dalla radiostazione di Paris Mondial regolari trasmissioni in lingua magrebina' (restart from the Paris Mondial station regular transmissions in Maghrebi) in September 1940, a request was sent to the IRT for 'istruzioni, consigli, suggerimenti, informazioni' (instructions, advice, suggestions, information) given that the targeted countries (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco) fell within the Italian sphere of influence.[467] Direct collaborations on broadcasts to third countries included a joint broadcast to America which constituted 'un programma non proveniente da Roma o da Berlino, bensì dall'Asse' (a programme not coming from Rome or Berlin, rather from the Axis). These broadcasts, as a 'dialogo tra elementi italiani e tedeschi' (dialogue between Italian and German elements), were intended to illustrate the 'stretta collaborazione esistente in ogni campo fra Roma e Berlino' (the close collaboration in every field between Rome and Berlin).[468] Similarly, another regular broadcast from occupied Paris in both Italian and German was intended as

[466] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Ecc. il Ministro' (4 Aug. 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96 'Ispettorato per la radio e televisione', F.6, SF.6.
[467] 'Appunto per S.E. il Ministro' (22 Oct. 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96 'Ispettorato per la radio e televisione', F.6, SF.7, p.1.
[468] 'Pro Memoria per l'Eccellenza il Ministro' (undated), ACS, MCP, B.6, F.52 'Radiotransmissions to and from America', pp.1-2.

an 'espressione di cameratismo fra soldati italiani e soldati tedeschi' (expression of camaraderie between Italian soldiers and German soldiers).[469]

A significant collaboration came on the second anniversary of the Tripartite Pact in September 1942. After a German proposal for an exchange of telegrams between the heads of state, heads of governments and foreign ministers, the Italian suggestion came that 'vengano radiotrasmessi dei brevissimi messaggi degli 8 ministri degli Affari Esteri delle Potenze Tripartite' (there should be broadcasted brief messages from the 8 ministers of foreign affairs of the Tripartite Powers) under the proposed name 'Le Potenze del Patto Tripartito salutano il mondo' (The Powers of the Tripartite Pact salute the world).[470] The broadcast was conducted concurrently on 26 September from German and Italian stations. In the German broadcast, Ciano's speech was second in the running order followed by the foreign ministers of Japan, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia, and Bulgaria. For the EIAR broadcast the running order was changed to have Ciano's address first. The broadcast was subsequently translated into all languages and broadcasted for foreign listeners. Beyond such *ad hoc* agreements to align with key anniversaries, the IRT also established a bilateral exchange with fellow Axis power Japan. Such exchanges were brought about by technical necessity as, in order to reach each other's audience from so far afield retransmission was essential. In fact, the formal exchange was brought about because the EIAR's regular programme for Japan was incomprehensible, whereas those from Berlin, New York, London, Moscow and Buenos Aires were all perfectly well received in Japan.[471] This exchange also took the form of scripts being sent and then translated for the respective national audiences which offered 'notizie e commenti sul Giappone e sull'Italia, ma non di

[469] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Ecc. il Ministro' (3 Oct. 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96 'Ispettorato per la radio e televisione', F.6, SF.7, p.1.
[470] 'La progettata trasmissione' (23 Sep. 1942), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.136, 'Patto Tripartito'.
[471] 'Appunto per il capo della Div. I' (28 June 1943), ACS, MCP, B.7, F.67 'Propaganda in Middle and Far East'.

notizie e commenti italiani o giapponesi su terzi Paesi' (news and comment on Japan and on Italy, but not Italian and Japanese news and comment on third countries).[472] The spirit of collaboration did, however, have its limits, especially when the EIAR's Persian-language broadcasts advertised the time and wavelength of Tokyo's broadcasts in the same language. When the Capo del reparto, M. Lucidi, heard of this he stressed that it was inappropriate as it was not done in a context of complete reciprocity between all three Axis powers. Seeing as 'non risulta che la Germania faccia altrettanto' (Germany does not do the same), the proposal from Rome came that once or twice a week during the respective Persian-language broadcasts, each respective power would indicate the times and frequencies of their allies' transmissions in that language.[473] Otherwise, no advertising should take place.

2.6. Beaming Italy to the New World: Exchanges with American Broadcasters

While exchanges demanded a considerable degree of collaboration and reciprocity, it was a format which, as we will see, could be (sometimes artfully, sometimes blatantly) manipulated to serve the regime's international propagandistic purposes. Such was the case with collaborations with American broadcasters. The existing scholarship on Italian broadcasting to the USA has focussed largely on the Italian American audience and, therefore, on transmissions in Italian.[474] In a May 1930 *Radiocorriere* article, Enrico Corradini (the leader of Italy's nationalist party before it merged with the PNF in 1923) stressed that the radio, as a 'strumento di espansione universale' (tool for universal expansion), was a crucial tool in the goal to 'affrettare l'unità spirituale di tutti gli italiani che sono nel mondo, per fare di tutti questi italiani le avanguardie e i legionari della grande Italia che darà alle genti una nuova forza di civiltà' (hasten the spiritual unity of all Italians

[472] *Ibid*.
[473] 'Appunto per il capo della Divisione I' (9 March 1943) *ibid.*
[474] Stefano Luconi, 'The Voice of the Motherland: Pro-Fascist Broadcasts for the Italian-American Communities in the United States', *Journal of Radio Studies* 8.1 (2001), pp.61-80.; Monticone, 'La radio italiana e l'emigrazione'.; di Legge, *L'aquila e il littorio*.

across the globe so as to make all these Italians the vanguard and the legionaries of the great Italy which will give a new strength of civilisation to all peoples).[475] There were almost five million such potential legionaries of Italian birth or parentage in the USA in 1933 and the regime employed two principal methods to reach them by radio: direct and indirect.[476] The first method extended to regular broadcasts for Italian Americans which, as Monticone contends, lacked any apparent consideration for the listeners' context and, during the war years, consisted of the same news bulletin broadcasted to all listeners in all languages.[477] The latter can be placed as part of 'an ambitious project of indirect propaganda through culture in 1930s America' and was born of a desire, in the words of Ambassador Rosso, to evade the 'stato d'animo americano, esageratamente sospettoso di qualsiasi propaganda ufficiale straniera' (American state of mind, excessively suspicious of any official foreign propaganda).[478] In his 1934 report, Ambassador Rosso highlighted radio as a fertile field for such indirect propaganda. The regime would purchase slots on local stations which were, in turn, 'vendute a intermediari, molti dei quali erano giornalisti di chiaro orientamento fascista che organizzavano il programma e si occupavano di vendere gli spazi pubblicitari a ditte italo-americane' (sold to intermediaries, many of whom were journalists with clear Fascist leanings who organised the programme and dealt with selling the publicity spots to Italo-American companies).[479] These slots, named 'Italian Hour', were free of any manifestation of anti-Fascism because the companies involved did not wish to 'irritare il governo di Roma e vedersi negare le licenze di esportazione' (irritate the government in Rome and have their

[475] Enrico Corradini, 'La radiofonia strumento di espansione universale', *RC,* N.20 (17-23 May 1930), p.5.
[476] Figure according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1933, as reported in Luconi, 'The Voice of the Motherland', p.62.
[477] Monticone, 'La radio italiana e l'emigrazione', p.292.
[478] Roberto Vezzani, 'Fascist Indirect Propaganda in 1930s America: The Distribution and Exhibition of Italian Fiction Films', *The Italianist* 38.2 (2018), pp.156-73 (p.156).; Augusto Rosso, 'Propaganda straniera negli Stati Uniti' (19 Oct.), ACS, MCP, DGSP, PPSE, B.218 'Propaganda straniera negli Stati Uniti'. Found in Vezzani, 'Fascist Indirect Propaganda', p.160.
[479] Di Legge, *L'aquila e il littorio*, p.203.

export licenses denied).[480] Indeed, a 1941 study on radio adverts of foreign products, including Italian ones, found the adverts to 'have highly nationalistic implications'.[481] Galeazzo Ciano also instructed the 'Dante Alighieri' society with its 'carattere eminentemente culturale' (eminently cultural nature) (and not overtly political) to 'intensificare la sua azione in America' (intensify its activity in America) in terms of both cinema and radio propaganda.[482] On top of these 'Italian Hour' slots, many Italian newspapers had their own programmes, such as San Francisco's 'L'Italia' whose owner, Ettore Patrizi, presented a 'Voce d'Italia' hour which opened to the sound of the Fascist hymn 'Giovinezza'.[483] Since many Italians read no English and preferred the spoken word these 'regional-minded foreign language broadcasts became their major source of information'.[484]

Our purpose in this forum, however, is to bring into relief the radio exchanges and collaborations between the regime and private American networks which have, thus far, received no serious attention. Two early collaborations came through broadcasts in which Mussolini addressed the American public and, in particular, Italian Americans. The first such address came in 1926 by virtue of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* which requested a speech be recorded on a disc to be subsequently broadcasted from the WGN radio station. In this pre-recorded address, the Duce expressed 'una sincera stima per la civiltà americana e aveva invitato i milioni di connazionali emigrati a essere devoti cittadini del paese che li ospitava' (a sincere regard for American civilisation and invited the millions of emigrated compatriots to be devoted citizens in the country that hosted them), a message which provoked a 'grande

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[480] *Ibid.*
[481] Rudolf Arnheim and Martha Collins Bayne, 'Introduction', in *Radio Research 1941,* ed. by Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), p.viii.
[482] G. Ciano dispatch (9 Nov. 1934), ACS, MCP, DGSP, PPSE, B.218. Found in Vezzani, 'Fascist Indirect Propaganda', p.160.
[483] John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton University Press, 1972), p.85.
[484] *Ibid*.

apprezzamento dalla stampa locale che insisteva sul valore internazionale della figura di Mussolini' (great appreciation from the local press which insisted on the international value of the figure of Mussolini).[485] The Duce again addressed the American listening public on the occasion of New Year celebrations in 1931. This time his message was delivered live from Palazzo Venezia and broadcasted in relay by several American radio stations. Subsequently Fox not only requested a recording of the broadcast but asked if Mussolini would be prepared to record the message in Italian, French and German in addition to the original English version.[486] This interest on the part of American broadcasters in collaborating with the Fascist regime was a feature of the 1930s right up until Italy's entry into World War II. In fact, before Italy's entry into the war such collaborations were very frequent and conferred upon Italy the privileged position of being the only non-belligerent from whom the American public heard directly.[487] When war broke out, France, Britain and Germany began daily programmes to the USA. Such broadcasts were thought to add 'enormamente al prestigio di una Nazione' (massively to the prestige of a nation).[488] Eager to gain such prestige for itself, the regime, therefore, capitalised on the interest from American broadcasters to strike up agreements. Being broadcasted in relay by prominent American radio stations meant the broadcasts were heard by millions of listeners.[489] It bears mentioning that these collaborations took place after the promulgation of the racial laws in 1938. While one agreement for an Italian-language course on American radio was broken by the broadcaster in objection to the laws (only for Rome subsequently to strike an alternative accord with the Jesuit University JCU), prominent American broadcasters hosted

[485] Di Legge, *L'aquila e il littorio*, p.196.
[486] The request was sent by Mr. Miggins of Fox Movietone. See 'Appunto per S.E. il Capo del Governo' (17 Dec. 1931), ACS, Pres. Con., [1928-1930], 13.1.11801,
[487] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto di S.E. il Ministro' (undated), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96 'Ispettorato per la radio e televisione', F.6, SF.2, p.1.
[488] *Ibid.*
[489] *Ibid*.

Italian broadcasts even after the *leggi razziali* (racial laws).[490] The American station which most regularly requested broadcasts was NBC. Its 'espressione collaborazionistica' (collaborationist expression) took the form of requests for particular journalists (both American and Italian) to deliver speeches from Rome which would be broadcasted in relay by American radio stations.[491] Such broadcasts were generally around ten minutes long and the speaker in Rome was watched over by 'un incaricato di fiducia, che controlla l'aderenza ad un testo, già sottoposto allo scrivente' (a trusted member of staff who ensured adherence to the text which had already been given to its supposed author).[492] In this way, the regime was able to broadcast an official message supposedly written and delivered freely by an independent foreign journalist. The fact that American stations eagerly sent their correspondents to Rome for such broadcasts provided the regime with the opportunity to 'attirare in Italia i corrispondenti delle grandi organizzazioni radiofoniche estere e di controllare l'attività perché essa si svolga a nostro vantaggio' (attract to Italy the correspondents of the great foreign radio organisations and to control their activity such that it is done to our advantage).[493] Through this 'sorveglianza dei servizi che i vari corrispondenti delle organizzazioni radiofoniche estere e particolarmente americane effettuano dall'Italia' (surveillance over the services that the various correspondents from foreign radio organisations broadcast from Italy), the Italian government considered the broadcasts to be 'sotto il [loro] controllo' (under their control).[494] It was supposed, therefore, that with the prestige conferred by having prominent American correspondents broadcast

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[490] 'Corsi di lingua italiana alla radio di Cleveland Ohio' (22 Dec. 1938), ACS, MCP, B.6, F.52 'Radiotransmissions to and from America'
[491] 'Appunto per S.E. il Ministro' (27 Oct. 1939), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96, F.6. SF.1 'Ispettorato per la Radiodiffusione all'estero'. Regular Italian contributors were Dott. Virginio Gayda and Marchesa Cristina Marconi, Guglielmo Marconi's second wife and accredited journalists from American broadcasters included Phillip Mackenzie, Cecil B. Brown, and Bill Hillman.
[492] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto di S.E. il Ministro' (undated), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96, F.6, SF.2.
[493] 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Eccellenza il ministro' (31 May 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96, F.6, SF.4
[494]'Ispettorato per la Radiodiffusione e la Televisione' (undated), *ibid.*.; 'Appunto per il capo di gabinetto dell'Ecc. il Ministro' (17 May 1940), *ibid*.

from Italian microphones, they could attract similarly prominent journalists from other countries and exert a level of control over their eventual broadcasts. In fact, because they were transmitted from Rome 'le trasmissioni americane venissero attribuite alla radio italiana' (the American transmissions were attributed to the Italian radio), a fact which was seen as an inconvenience because it negated the prestige afforded by friendly comments from supposedly impartial foreign observers.[495] As Denis Mack Smith noted, the subjecting of foreign editors to 'stringent rules' as a precondition for their keeping foreign correspondents in Italy was not uncommon.[496] A number of coercive tactics (and blatant threats) were employed to 'convince many people abroad that [Mussolini] has saved Europe from bolshevism and that fascism had a social philosophy worthy of serious consideration'.[497] Foreign correspondents who played by the (unwritten) rules were 'given privileged information and allowed to send their news without payment through the official telegraph services', while 'some of them were bribed with a monthly cheque from the press office and the more amenable were exempted from paying taxes'.[498]

The broadcasts focussed heavily on the ongoing war with Mussolini cast in the role of peacemaker as, under his guide, 'Italy continue[d] her progressive and peaceful advance in the world'.[499] Philip R. Mackenzie lauded the Duce's diplomatic power, stressing that 'it [wa]s exclusively due to him that Italy keeps out of the war' and that it was his doing that 'war ha[d] not spread either to the Mediterranean or to the Balkans'.[500] Along with the confidence that Italy would remain neutral, the overall tone of Mackenzie's broadcasts are

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[495] ''Appunto per il capo di gabinetto di S.E. il Ministro' (28 March 1940). ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.96, F.6, SF.2.
[496] Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, p.106.
[497] *Ibid.*
[498] *Ibid.*
[499] 'National Broadcasting Company from Eiar, Rome' (31 Dec. 1939), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96, F.6, SF.1.
[500] 'National Broadcasting Company from Eiar, Rome' (13 Jan. 1940), *ibid*. This is a claim which Mackenzie made in nearly identical terms in the above-cited broadcast from 31 December 1939, *ibid*.

decidedly optimistic, citing for instance 'the increase of Italian exports to foreign countries in spite of the successful campaign for self-sufficiency'.[501] In a similarly positive vein, Mackenzie highlighted Italy's union with Albania and the visit of newly-elected Pope Pius XII whose 'recent visit to the Quirinal […] set the seal to the union of the Catholic Church with the new Italian Empire, thus repeating history'.[502] In such a way, the broadcasts aggrandised Italy's role on the global stage and mimicked the trope of Fascism's universal mission ever-present in official propaganda. The image of Mussolini the peacemaker was also juxtaposed, in an American broadcast done by Virginio Gayda, with the reminder that Italy was militarily prepared along with the warning that if faced with a project to install Communism in the Balkan countries, Italy 'reagirebbe, così come ha reagito in Spagna, per le stesse finalità e per le stesse misure di preservazione europea' (would react, just as she reacted in Spain, for the same goals and the same measures for European preservation).[503] In legitimising military force in response to a perceived Communist threat, the comparison to Spain offers an understanding of Italian intervention which is highly favourable to the Fascist regime. In this way, it was reiterated clearly that Italy considered the Mediterranean and the Balkans its sphere of influence and that 'pone al disopra di ogni altro interesse quello che la civiltà mediterranea sia sotto ogni forma e in ogni rispetto difesa e conservata' (she places above any other interest that of defending and conserving the Mediterranean in all ways and respects).[504] In this way, the broadcasts at once stressed Mussolini's commitment to peace and Italy's divine right to protect the Mediterranean civilisation of which it had nominated itself spiritual leader. Furthermore, notwithstanding Italy's allegiance with Nazi Germany, in the broadcasts for America, Papa highights that 'era particolarmente rimarcata l'affinità che esisteva fra il sistema corporativo e il *new deal* rooseveltiano' (it was

[501] *Ibid.*, p.2.
[502] *Ibid.*, p.1.
[503] 'Appunto per S.E. capo di gabinetto' (18 Oct. 1939), *ibid.*
[504] *Ibid.*

particulalry noticeable the affinity which existed between the corporative system and Roosevelt's New Deal) and a 'richiamo alle comuni tradizioni' (a call to common traditions).[505] This comparison was a long-standing theme which was thought to confer significant prestige on the Fascist regime due to the idea that the 'American president had learnt profound lessons from Mussolini's regime' with repeated comparisons between the two leaders common in Fascist publications.[506]

2.8. Radio in Occupied Territories: The Case of Ljubljana

The inherent challenges in catering for foreign audiences were typified and amplified in the case of the management of radio propaganda for audiences in newly conquered territories. In these instances, Fascist propaganda was not reaching listeners as the voice of a potential ally eager to grow its cultural influence, rather as that of an occupying force keen to establish its cultural dominance. It also meant the acquisition of local stations and the need to incorporate them into the existing network. The corollary of this fact was that a part of the Italian radio network was now abroad and, therefore, far from the powers that be in Rome. Whereas Italian radio production was previously transnational due to the extensive, overlapping international networks at play, its very infrastructure now spread across borders. By studying the challenges created in the micro-management of Radio Lubiana, we will reveal the difficulties in balancing the radio's decentralising effect with the will to control its output centrally. After the invasion of Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, the Slovene lands were divided largely between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Fascist Italy, as part of the partition, acquired the territory of Ljubljana. Here Mussolini appointed a high commissioner

[505] Antonio Papa, *Storia politica* (vol.2.), p.24.
[506] Roosevelt's *Looking Forward* was quickly translated into Italian, published by Bompiani with a foreword from Mussolini who also reviewed it positively in *Il Popolo* d'Italia. Guido Bonsaver, *America in Italian Culture: The Rise of a New Model of Modernity, 1861-1943* (Oxford University Press, 2023), p.175.

with an advisory Slovenian council to assist him in governing the territory.[507] As was the case after the invasion of Albania in 1939, the attempt to create 'new economic, social and political institutions' and, specifically to 'introduce corporatist institutions' was clear. Indeed, Italy, as Costa Pinto has highlighted, had 'reasonable success in their attempt to spread Fascism's mass organizations into Ljubljana' with 'conservative political Catholicism pav[ing] the way towards collaboration'.[508] As part of this institutional control over Ljubljana, the local radio had to be brought within the orbit of the Fascist regime. However, the successful running of Radio Lubiana proved a more complicated matter than anticipated with a lack of clarity over who had the ultimate authority to commission and produce programmes, infighting, and friction between representatives of the MCP and the EIAR. In May 1941, Prof. Umberto Nani was sent by the MCP to coordinate matters pertaining to popular culture in Lubiana. Prior to his arrival, Dott. Casolini (in charge of composing bulletins to be translated into Slovenian), the stenographer Dott. Carmelo Rigano (who had a reputation for embellishing intercepted broadcasts in his transcripts) and Prof. Gregoric (a Slovenian translator) had already begun broadcasts from the Radio Lubiana station.[509] In his first report to the MCP, sent on 12 August 1941, Prof. Nani informed the ministry that, despite the recall of Dott. Casolini, he had begun the reorganisation of the radio service 'con la cooperazione dei funzionari rimasti' (with the cooperation of the remaining functionaries).[510] This new programme consisted of six elements: five daily Slovenian-language news bulletins; thrice-weekly Italian language lesson for Slovenians; conversations on agriculture on Sundays and national holidays; explanations on the New

[507] António Costa Pinto, 'Building the European "New Order" Corporatism and Dictatorship under Axis Rule', *Fascism* 12.1 (2023), pp.27-54 (p.51).
[508] *Ibid.*
[509] For evidence of Rigano's being cautioned for adding 'aggettivi superlativi' and not being faithful to the 'testo della trasmissione' see Untitled Document (27 Feb. 1940), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.96, F.6., SF.2.
[510] 'All'Eccellenza il Prefetto Celso Luciano' (12 Aug. 1941), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.136, F.837, SF.107907 'Trasmissione di musica alla radio di Lubiana', pp.1-6.

Testament every Sunday; a daily bulletin on Italy's war in Slovenian; and four daily Italian-language news bulletins.[511] A later promemoria from Prof. Nani also reported friction between Dott. Rigano and Dott. Madori of the EIAR caused by the 'fatto che l'EIAR in genere resiste a qualsiasi controllo da parte della autorità' (fact that the EIAR in general resists any control on the part of the authorities).[512]

Prior to this report, the MCP had, in fact, sent a functionary (whose name is not recorded in the extant documents) to Ljubljana to provide an update on propaganda activities in the new Fascist territory. In his report, the functionary also acknowledged the friction between the EIAR and the MCP representatives. However, the failing in the 'collaborazione, indispensabile di fronte all'elemento locale, fra il personale dell'E.I.A.R. e quello ministeriale' (collaboration, which is indispensable when facing the local element, between the EIAR staff and the ministerial staff) was blamed on Prof. Nani's leadership and organisation.[513] More damning was the report's representation of Dott. Rigano's role in Radio Lubiana. The report states that when Dott. Casolini left Ljubljana, the duty of compiling the news bulletins was passed on to the stenographer Rigano. Not only did Rigano take over the news bulletins but he 'trovò subito la maniera di assumere il ruolo di controllore del servizio della radio, richiedendo la presentazione dei programmi e assumendosi l'incarico di compilare giornalmente un commento ai fatti del giorno' (immediately found a way of taking over the role of controlling the radio service, requesting a presentation on programming and taking over the responsibility for compiling every day a comment on the day's events).[514] These political comments, according to the report, constituted 'grossolane ingiurie contro i dirigenti della politica inglese, americana e russa'

[511] *Ibid.*, p.4.
[512] 'Appunto per l'ispettore Generale Franco' (undated), *ibid*.
[513] 'Relazione al capo di gabinetto' (undated), *ibid.*, pp.1-10.
[514] *Ibid*., p.4.

(vulgar insults against the leading English, American and Russian politicians).[515] Instead of receiving the Giornale Radio bulletin by telephone from Rome, Rigano compiled the broadcast using the Stefani bulletin which he acquired from the journalist at a local newspaper called 'Jutro'. Occasionally, a summary of these broadcasts appeared in local Slovenian-language dailies and signed with the pseudonym 'Nogari'.[516] Deploring Rigano's behaviour towards the head of the Lubiana EIAR office and in light of his assuming control beyond his station, the functionary, on the authority of the MCP, instructed Rigano to return to Rome.

Having received his marching orders, Rigano sent two detailed reports in his defence to Gaspare Franco (Ispettore Generale del Ministero della Cultura Popolare) – both of which further illuminate the tensions at the heart of the situation. In Rigano's version of events, he and Prof Nani were summoned by the Alto Commissario Emilio Grazioli when Dott. Casolini left Ljubljana. Grazioli lamented the state of the Slovenian-language broadcasts from the EIAR-run Radio Lubiana. Despite Rigano's protestations that he was merely a stenographer and not authorised to increase such programming, the Alto Commissario passed full responsibility for Radio Lubiana on to him, stressing that when in Ljubljana he was to follow his orders. Rigano outlined his initiative of commissioning a 'ciclo di conversazioni culturali politiche' (cycle of cultural-political conversations) written by prominent Italian journalists and academics, the themes of which were decided by Prof. Nani. He defended the necessity of this project by stressing that, previously, 'il popolo sloveno sconosceva completamente le condizioni di vita dell'Italia fascista' (the Slovenian people were completely unaware of the conditions of life in Fascist Italy).[517] Equally, he defended his focus on anti-British sentiment. First of all, he stressed that this theme was

[515] *Ibid*.
[516] 'Rapporto informativo per il Gr. Uff. Gaspare Franco' (4 Aug. 1941) in *ibid.*, pp.1-4.
[517] *Ibid*.

motivated, in large part, by the press instructions received every day from the Direzione Gernerale della Stampa Italiana. Second of all, because there existed an attachment to liberalism, he believed that criticising Britain allowed for proceeding with caution in charting a path towards the 'inoculare in seno a tutte le famiglie il germe vivificatore del Fascismo' (injecting in the heart of every family the life-giving antidote of Fascism), especially in the face of anti-Fascist propaganda in the region produced largely by the Serbs.[518] Furthermore, he stressed the need to play on two themes important in Slovenian society: family and clericalism.

In the construction of his defence, Rigano constantly reminded Gaspare Franco of Prof. Nani's role as his superior, stressing repeatedly that he acted 'sempre d'accordo con il Prof. Nani' (always in agreement with Prof. Nani) and that he was 'incoraggiato e seguito passo per passo dal Prof. Nani' (encouraged and followed every step of the way by Prof. Nani).[519] On top of this, he stressed the positive feedback given to him by Alto Commissario Grazioli. Rigano outlined to Gaspare Franco the hostile treatment to which the pair were subjected in Ljubljana. Rigano asserted that Prof. Nani and he 'veniva[no] considerati come degli elementi estranei che si voleva eliminare' (were considered to be outside elements they wanted to eliminate).[520] Prof. Nani, in his efforts to bring under his control the Fascist propaganda machine in Slovenia, came up against resistance from individuals whom Rigano does not name but he does indicate that Franco was already aware of the persons in question. It seems, at least, that two of these individuals came from within the Alto Commissario's press office – Comm. Tigoli and Prof Urbani. Rigano stated that Prof. Nani was not even afforded a desk and, therefore, did not have a postal address, meaning that Rigano had to receive his post on his behalf at Radio Lubiana. Comm. Tigoli and Prof. Urbani would then

[518] *Ibid*.; To this end a new centro radio-distrubante was established in Ljubljana to disturb propaganda in Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian. See 'Entrata in funzione del centro r.t. disturbante di Lubiana' in *ibid*.
[519] 'Rapporto informativo per il Gr. Uff. Gaspare Franco' (4 Aug. 1941) in *ibid.*,
[520] 'Appunto per il Comm. Franco' (4 Aug. 1941), *ibid*., pp.1-4.

call Rigano frustrated that they could not get hold of Prof. Nani and Rigano would have to trapse round the cafés of Ljubljana where Nani would work in search of his colleague. Furthermore, he reported that the two of them were not invited to meetings. It was clear to Rigano that the individuals in question aimed to 'provocare un suo richiamo a Roma' (bring about his recall to Rome), doing their best to sabotage Nani at every turn.[521] Rigano also strongly highlights the difficult working relations with the EIAR station manager, urging that the MCP 'salvaguardi la posizione e la dignità dei propri funzionari di fronte ad un ente privato, che ha un interesse prettamente commerciale nel campo radiofonico' (should protect the position and dignity of its functionaries against a private company whose interests are essentially commercial in the field of radio broadcasting).[522] He closed the report by requesting the Ministry make the remit of its staff clear regarding radio broadcasting compared to that of the EIAR and, finally, stressed that the Alto Commissario Grazioli knew nothing of the above-recounted events.[523]

Even after Rigano's eventual recall to Rome, the history of Radio Lubiana was punctuated by debates over responsibility, broadcast content and direction. In response to the confusion and chaos of the Rigano affair, the MCP decided the EIAR would have official control of broadcasting in the territory. However, this control was seemingly only nominal as it was decided that an extra news bulletin would be compiled in Rome. This resulted in the complicated situation of having one news bulletin controlled by the EIAR in Ljubljana (under the responsibility of the journalist Carlo Tigoli) and one controlled by the MCP in Rome. Initially, the stated reason for this was the 'difficoltà di trovare sul posto dei collaboratori idonei allo scopo' (difficulty finding suitable collaborators on the ground) in

[521] *Ibid*.
[522] *Ibid.*
[523] *Ibid.*

Ljubljana.[524] However, the personnel was eventually found in Slovenia and, in turn, brought over to Rome.[525] There the transcripts were written and translated before being broadcasted from the transmitter in Ljubljana, making it easy for the MCP to control their content.[526] In August 1941, Gaspare Franco made an express trip to Ljubljana in order to establish a new convention which would 'disciplinare' (discipline) the Slovenian-language service.[527] The objection to the MCP decision came, in due course, from the Assocazione Stampa Presso Alto Commissariato in September 1941. The complaint was that Radio Lubiana had the same status as all regional Italian stations for whom the Giornale Radio service was not controlled from Rome. As such, the MCP had no right to assume control of Radio Lubiana either. The complaint, of course, fell on deaf ears.

Another key area in which disagreement was rife was the musical output of Radio Lubiana and, in this regard, Radio Lubiana illustrates two diametrically opposed understandings of the utility of Fascist radio produced for foreign audiences. In this instance these two views were represented by the Alto Commissario Grazioli, on one hand, and the PNF Segreteria Politica, on the other. From the latter the complaint came in January 1941 that most of the concerts organised by Radio Lubiana and musical associations in Lubiana were by Slavic composers.[528] Italian music, however, was kept to a bare minimum as not to contravene the 'vigenti norme in materia' (regulations in place on the matter).[529] He stressed

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[524] 'All'Ispettorato per la radiodiffusione e la televisione' (9 Oct. 1941), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.136, F.837, SF. 'Giornale Radio Sloveno'.
[525] On 17 Jan. 1942 travel permits were issued to Krasevec Stanislao, Gregorio Paolo, and Vozelj Annetta and their spouses to leave Ljubljana and enter Rome. See 'Al Ministero dell'Interno' (17 Jan. 1942), *ibid*.
[526] 'Giornale Radio sloveno' (3 Oct. 1941), *ibid.* Many diplomatic representatives urged the MCP to use organisations and individuals with specific links to the countries targeted to write the bulletins. While collaborations were rife, control was rarely relinquished unless to a trusted body with clear Fascist sympathies. The Italian Ambassador to Japan, for instance, suggested the Società Amici del Giappone or the Istituto per il Medio e l'Estremo Oriente. For his suggestion see 'Radiotrasmissioni per l'Oriente' (3 Apr. 1940), ACS, MCP, B.7, F.67 'Propaganda in Middle and Far East'.
[527] 'Ispettorato per la radiodiffusione e la televisione' (16 Aug. 1941), ACS, MCP, Aff.Gen., B.136, F.837, SF. 'Giornale Radio Sloveno'.
[528] 'Al ministro della cultura popolare' (9 Jan. 1943), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.136, F.837, SF.'Trasmissione di musica alla radio di Lubiana'.
[529] *Ibid.*

that 'nel quadro dei provvedimenti per la sempre più intensa propaganda e diffusione della nostra cultura in quella nuova provincia, alla musica italiana debba esser dato quel posto che le spetta' (in the context of the provisions for the evermore intense propaganda and spread of our culture in this new province, Italian music should be afforded the space which it demands).[530] On the other hand, the Alto Commissario had the exact opposite complaint. When considering all music taken together, roughly 70% of that broadcasted on Radio Lubiana was Italian and for large parts of the day the station broadcasted relays of Italian stations. In light of this, Grazioli's strongly recommended they play Slovenian music to make the radio more popular and, therefore, to make their propaganda more effective. This episode highlights the tightrope being walked in finding a balance between the exportation of Italian (Fascist) culture and politics and satisfying the national tastes and customs of foreign countries, be they occupied or not.

2.9. Conclusion: Overlapping Networks and the Fascist Contribution to the Interconnected Wireless World

As explored in Chapter 1, the wireless world was a complex, varied and often chaotic space. National programmes were diverse in order to cater to a wide range of audiences. National broadcasts, despite the best efforts of the IBU, spilled over borders and could be received by distant listeners. With the rise of short-wave broadcasting, national broadcasters (with Fascist Italy at the vanguard) began actively seeking out foreign listeners by broadcasting in foreign languages. This chapter has tried to bring into relief the approach employed by the Fascist propaganda machine to reach foreign audiences working within the parameters of such an interconnected wireless world. The wireless world in which Fascist radio propagandists acted was one characterised, above all, by a deep-rooted interconnectedness. Furthermore, the management of radio broadcasts for foreign listeners

[530] *Ibid*.

necessarily involved many players and many moving parts. This interconnectedness and these moving parts presented at once obstacles and opportunities for the regime. Equally, in the absence of a clear, unified plan for the *modus operandi* of foreign-language broadcasting, operating in this context brought forth conflicting approaches, disagreements and potential mismanagement. Ultimately, the Fascist regime's management of foreign-language radio broadcasting has to be placed firmly in the context of the medium's nature. As we saw in Chapter 1, it would be straight-forward to hypothesise over the ways in which Fascist propagandists would have preferred the medium to be different. Did the regime embrace (or tolerate) radio's internationalist cosmopolitanism domestically simply because it could not be avoided? That may be the case, but, ultimately, it did engage with it. Therefore, it falls on the historian to ask precisely *how* did they engage with it? What tensions were at play? And how did they use it to their advantage? At the same time that it is important to assess the innovative ways in which the regime used the medium, it must be acknowledged that the medium had its advantages and limitations. What this chapter has tried to do is to display the ways in which the regime's attempts to reach foreign radio listeners navigated the medium's nature. Typical of Fascist diplomacy, the regime was less interested in wide-scale relays involving many countries (though that is not to say that they never partook in them) than it was in bilateral exchanges of the types outlines above. Such exchanges were often born of the technical limitations of the medium and were often brought about by requests from foreign broadcasters, displaying a genuine interest in the regime abroad. The existing institutional histories of Italian radio during the Fascist period (focussing as they do mostly on domestic broadcasting), overall, portray the regime's international broadcasting as a kind of propagandistic one-way street. This one-way street involved the regime reaching out into the ether to infect the minds and hearts of listeners in foreign countries. It must be said that this one-way street, of course, typifies a large portion of the regime's regular radio

propaganda. Indeed, we will explore some of its most important results in Chapters 3 and 4 (focussing on both their content and listenership to bring the sounds and people of the wireless world into relief). Here, however, by bringing attention to the networks that were necessary to people the airwaves with voices, to reach far-away audiences, to highlight cultural and historical ties, we have seen the ways in which Fascist radio propagandists manipulated the wireless world's interconnectedness and navigated the often-unruly, shifting relationship between physical space and the wireless world. And even in those instances where the regime's radio production may at first appear a one way street (and is recurrently presented as such by the scholarship) rarely was broadcasting for foreign listeners possible without some degree of international collaboration.

The radio's interconnectedness pervaded the regime's engagement with the medium and in order to pursue its propagandistic aims, this interconnectedness had to be embraced and, where appropriate, enhanced. What this chapter has exhibited (as does every chapter of this thesis in different ways) is that the radio broadcasting endeavour is best typified by the construction, maintenance and expansion of many different (mostly complementary, sometimes competing) networks. In the first instance, there is the technological network: the series of interconnected Italian stations, studios and masts organised into the three regular programmes. In the international arena this network was expanded through relays and exchanges (sometimes regular, often *ad hoc*) especially where technical capacity did not allow for reaching a far-away audience. Beyond the technical network required to transmit radio waves to target audiences, the Fascist organisation of cross-border broadcasting required an extensive and transnational network of journalists, newspapers, governments, diplomats, foreign radio corporations, technicians and radio announcers. With this in mind, we can understand Fascist radio policy as a constant and evolving attempt to harness and master this transnational interconnectivity. One of Ciano's very first actions when placed in

charge of the Fascist propaganda machine was to demand Italy's diplomatic representatives abroad promote the new foreign-language broadcasts among newspaper editors. Ciano, a keen observer of Goebbels' organisation of his equivalent ministry in the new Reich (an organisation which he assiduously and openly adapted to the Italian context), understood that such a network could allow Italian radio bulletins to become news sources abroad, with the German news agency model in mind where 'sometimes, even newspaper editors did not know they were printing news from Germany'.[531] The attempt to construct such a network between the Italian radio, Italian diplomats, and foreign journalists and editors was prompted in large part by a desire to compete with and correct the supposedly erroneous and biased claims of prominent news agencies (such as Havas and United Press). The mastering of these interconnected networks also took the form of attempts to control and censor even ostensibly collaborative ventures. Such was the case with the American exchanges where journalists were subjected to intense censorship in Rome and were watched over during the transmission to ensure they adhered to the script. The interconnected wireless world involved many moving parts and, despite attempts to control and organise, the chaos created by these moving parts was not easy to manage, especially when the radio's novelty meant that propagandists and politicians were having to constantly adapt to new scenarios and demands. One such novel context was the running of radio stations in newly occupied territories, as we have seen in the case of Radio Lubiana. Here the Fascist propaganda machine was, in our terms, overwhelmed by the interconnected network necessary for the running of the station to the extent that the activity of the various players in newly-acquired Ljubljana slipped beyond the reach of the MCP in Rome. This troubling scenario had to be

[531] Tworek, *News from Germany*, p.7. Just as this research has tried to uncover the networks at play behind radio production, Tworek stresses that 'because historians so often use newspapers as evidence, they have missed how the networks behind the news moulded what newspapers reported'. Her study reveals how 'news from Germany was not labelled as such', being printed and broadcasted in foreign languages and 'often disseminated through businesses or technological networks that disguised their German connections'. See *ibid*.

redressed in essence by reducing the extent of the interconnected network by, on the one hand, finding Slovenians to compose bulletins but by bringing them to Rome in order to control the activity more centrally.

The Fascist propaganda machine worked to mobilise and instrumentalise these overlapping networks at the heart of broadcasting in service of the aim of constructing a wider, symbolic network of cultural and political ties designed to increase the influence of Fascist Italy. We saw in this chapter how the URI's foundation was crucial in the coordination and formalisation of attempts to spread Italian culture (in its Fascist guise), offering courses in Italian language and culture (including history, art and literature) with final exams submitted by mail and prizes for the top-performing students. Overall, we have seen how the construction of this network of cultural and political influence, needing to rely as it did on transnational networks of cooperation, was achieved through negotiation and required the cultivation of friendly relationships with desired allies. This often meant adherence to the principle of reciprocity (meaning that an activity that reached listeners of a foreign country, in turn, entailed allowing the radio of that self-same country direct contact with the Italian listening public). In other cases (particularly as the *ventennio* progressed) such reciprocity was diminished (though rarely discarded altogether) as Italian superiority was enforced. In Chapter 4 we will see how this symbolic network of cultural and political influence was forged through the insistence on the theme of *romanità* as a guide for the international hierarchisation of peoples. Now, however, we will turn our attention to the context of the Spanish Civil War during which, following our line of enquiry in this chapter, the transnational interconnectedness of radio broadcasting was actively hidden in order to mask what was a fundamentally Italian activity targeting Spanish listeners as an ostensibly Spanish (national) station. We will see, however, how the interconnectedness of the radio (at

the fore in this chapter) ensured that the *Radio Verdad* project retained an intensely transnational dimension through its international listenership.

Chapter 3 - A Pre-Emptive Defence of the Fascist Revolution in Europe: *Radio Verdad* and the Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War

Abstract:

This chapter reconstructs the Fascist regime's propaganda intervention in the Spanish Civil War via the clandestine broadcasts produced under the name of the fictitious station *Radio Verdad* (Radio Truth). *Radio Verdad* (*RV*) claimed to be a pro-Nationalist Spanish station while, in fact, being broadcasted from Italy. These broadcasts were a genuine effort to aid the cause of Franco's Nationalists and represented an innovative use of the medium in the context of war. Despite governments, national broadcasters and newspapers discovering (and reporting) that these broadcasts were, in fact, emanating from Italy, many radio listeners were not aware of their true provenance. Relying on a combination of ministerial correspondence and listeners' letters, this chapter corrects the historiographical confusion surrounding *RV*'s genesis, organisation and intentions as well as uncovering its impact in Spain and its international reach. The Spanish Civil War was a significant testbed for the radio propaganda that would be so central to World War II and this research affords Fascist Italy new centrality in our understanding of the development of the radio as a tool in the context of war.

3.1 Introduction: Origins, Organisation and Motivations

On 18 February 1937, almost an entire seven months after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the first news bulletin coming from the so-called *Radio Verdad* station was broadcasted. *RV* was ostensibly an independent station run by pro-Nationalist Spaniards and transmitted from within Nationalist territory. In actual fact, *RV* was a completely fictitious station with its broadcasts emanating from Italian stations (Rome, Milan, Florence

and Genova) and the announcers speaking from microphones in Palazzo Balestra, Rome.[532] This fictitious station broadcasted news bulletins every evening (when the atmospheric conditions were optimal for short-wave international broadcasting) from 19:45 to 20:00 (in Castilian) and then again from 23:00 to 23:50 (in Catalan) Spanish time throughout the course of the Spanish Civil War.[533] These bulletins, which gave military updates and reports on life in the Nationalist zone, were compiled in Rome using, primarily, information sent by the Ufficio Stampa e Propaganda (USP) of the Missione Militare Italiana in Spagna (MMIS) whose Salamanca address was broadcasted as the location of *RV*'s transmitter for eventual correspondence with listeners.[534] According to Peñalba Sottorio, the USP's propaganda mission had two aims: 'fascistise Spain and win the war'.[535] Whilst always remaining under complete Italian control, the *Verdad* bulletins were compiled using cablegrams sent from the Nationalist interior ministry in Burgos and a channel of communication also existed between the Spanish ambassador in Rome and Giorgio Nelson Page, head of the IRT, for the transmission of information to be included in the bulletins.[536] For the running of the new *Verdad* service, the MSP employed Mr. Giorgi (whose first name does not appear in the

[532] The Palazzao Balestra, also commonly known as the Palazzo Muti, is located in the Piazza dei Santi Apostoli.
[533] This was 20:45 to 21:00 and 00:00 to 00:50 Italian time, as until 1940 Spain (with the exception of the Canary Islands) used GMT while Italy used CET. The first prorgamme was broadcasted simultaneously on the following wavelengths: 304, 368,420 and 49I metres. The second programme was broadcasted simultaneously on 368 and 491 metres. See the transcript of *RV*'s first broadcast (18.02.1937) in ASMAE, GAB (1923-1943) 1242. Bulletins increased by 5 minutes in October 1937. See 'Appunto per il Ministro Pietromacchi' (13 Oct. 1937) in *ibid.*
[534] We will soon discuss *RV* in the context of the wider Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War, but for an in-depth history of the MMIS and the Italian military intervention more generally see: Paul Preston, 'Italy and Spain in Civil War and World War, 1936-1943', in *Spain and the Great Powers in the Twentieth Century,* ed. by Sebastian Balfour and Paul Preston (Routledge, 1999), pp.151-84; Ismael Saz Campos and Javier Tusell Gómez (eds.), *Fascistas en España: la intervención italiana en al guerra civil a través de los telegramas de la "Missione Militare Italiana in Spagna" (15 diciembre 1936-31 marzo 1937)* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1981); Saz Campos, *Mussolini contra la II República: hostilidad, conspiraciones, intervención (1931-1936)* (Ediciones Alfons el Magnànim, 1986); and Ángel Viñas, *¿Quién quiso la guerra civil? Historia de una conspiración* (Crítica, 2019).
[535] Plans for the establishment of the USP of the MMIS began after Italy's recognition of the Franco government in late 1936. The office was not fully set up in Salamanca until January 1937 with Guglielmo Danzi, close friend of foreign minister Galeazzo Ciano, appointed as its head. See Mercedes Peñalba Sottorío, 'Cultural Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: A Comparative Analysis of Nazi and Fascist Propaganda', *Journal of Cotemporary History*, 58.1 (2023), pp. 26-49 (p.7).
[536] 'Radio Verdad' (Delfino Escolà, 22 Feb. 1939), ACS, Aff. Gen., B.6, F.49.

archival documents), an Italian citizen previously serving as secretary to the consul in Barcelona, and the Spanish lawyer Delfino Escolà who had previously fled Spain for Italy and who came highly recommended by the Istituto Interuniversitario Italiano and by the Spanish Ambassador to King Vittorio Emmanuele III.[537]

The news items to be included in *Verdad* bulletins were initially sent via telegram from Salamanca to the IRT in Rome, always in Spanish and carefully avoiding any reference to *RV* as not to reveal the broadcasts' true origin.[538] Due to frequent delays in the transmission of these telegrams caused by local Spanish technical difficulties, the USP began relaying the transcripts by telephone, ensuring the *Verdad* bulletins contained up-to-date information. A USP worker would make the 470km journey over the French border to Hendaye every day to use the telephone of the train station's restaurant. The phone call would last ten minutes and was made to the editor of a newspaper in order to appear as made by a regular correspondent of an Italian daily and to mask the government's involvement in *RV* from the French authorities who regularly intercepted the telephone calls and attempted to interfere with the eventual broadcasts if their content was considered disagreeable. The transcripts were then delivered by the announcers (often praised in listener letters for their delivery but whose names are absent from the documentary sources) from Palazzo Balestra. Two minutes before the start of the nightly bulletin the stations Rome I, Milan I, Florence I and Genoa I for the first broadcasts and Milan I and Florence I for the second stopped broadcasting on their regular wavelength before connecting to each other on a new frequency for the *Verdad* broadcasts.[539] Importantly, as the EIAR's daily schedule was organised around three separate 'programmes', each of which was simultaneously

[537] Memorandum from 'Direzione Generale per i servizi della propaganda' (16 Feb. 1937), ASMAE, Gab. 1242.
[538] 'Riservatissimo-Urgente' (Geisser Celesia, 24 Apr. 1937), ACS, MCP, B.6, F.49.82.
[539] Notes from 16 Feb. 1937 meeting, *ibid.,* F.60.48.

broadcasted by a series of stations connected to each other in relay, these four stations disconnecting from their respective programmes (Rome I from Programme I, Milan I and Genoa I from Programme II, and Florence I from Programme III) did not mean a pause in the EIAR's official broadcasts. While these stations were pulled from their regular network, the schedule would be honoured on all other stations in the respective 'programmes'. The attempt to conceal the Italian origin of *Verdad* also included ensuring there was no Italian announcement of the programme over the air and that newspapers and magazines (including the *Radiocorriere)* did not publicise its programme nor even its existence.[540] Furthermore, the EIAR's regular Spanish-language news bulletin (at 23:30) continued broadcasting. In exceptional circumstances, the regime found ways of acknowledging *RV*'s existence all while seeking to avoid blowing their cover. For instance, on the occasion of Hitler's visit to Italy on 3 May 1938, *RV* was completely suspended in favour of a nation-wide broadcast reporting on the visit starting at 20:30. In an attempt to avoid arousing suspicion, Giorgio Nelson Page at the IRT instructed that, in the pre-programme announcement, *RV* be added to the list of stations relaying the broadcast. This was intended to explain the lack of broadcast from *RV* that evening as well as granting *RV* 'maggior prestigio per il fatto del suo preteso collegamento internazionale' (greater prestige because of its supposed international connection).[541] It must also be said that adding the successful and well-liked *RV* station to the list of participating broadcasters afforded the Italian radio and regime a level of prestige in turn.

The broadcasting of *RV* commenced despite strong initial objections from the EIAR president, Giancarlo Vallauri, who felt that another foreign-language programme would not be in the interests of the national audience and, as such, harm subscription figures. With the

[540] A warning was sent to various Roman newspapers after they publicised the existence of *RV*. See 'Notiziari radiofonici in spagnolo e catalano', ACS, MCP, B.6, F.60.59.
[541] 'Fonogramma in partenza N. 3704' (29 Apr. 1938), MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6 F.49.98

evening programmes of the four stations to transmit *RV* (Rome, Milan, Florence and Genova) already broadcasting foreign-language news bulletins followed by *Giornale Radio* and *Cronache del Regime*, Vallauri stressed that the 'anzidette stazioni verrebbero a trasmettere due ore ininterrotte di programma parlata di cui solo 40 minuti destinati agli ascoltatori italiani' (the above-stated stations would broadcast two uninterrupted hours of spoken programmes of which only 40 minutes would be directed at Italian listeners).[542] Whilst *RV*, as clandestine propaganda responding to the immediate demands of an ongoing conflict, constitutes an exceptional use of the radio, it is, equally, indicative of the regime's increasing use of the radio as a medium meant for international purposes – a shift in focus which is typified by the institutional complaints that the mission of reaching the wireless world was interfering with national programming. It is the increasing appreciation and manipulation of radio's transnational potential which lies at the heart of the regime's decision to launch the *RV* project. It was precisely this transnational potential which offered Fascist propagandists the opportunity to contribute to what contemporary historian Guglielmo Ferrero termed the regime's 'guerra clandestina' (clandestine war) by creating an ostensibly Spanish fact.[543] In attempting to conceal the Italian origin of the broadcasts Fascist propagandists gave themselves a hand in influencing Franco's war effort (and, in turn, the growth of the Spanish Nationalist movement) from within. In this way, the intentions and reception of *RV* make for an intriguing case study in the context of debates around what Aristotle Kallis has termed 'hybridisation' and inter-national exchange in the development of inter-war fascist movements and regimes.[544]

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[542] 'Espresso 013171' (Turin, 16 Feb. 1937), *ibid.*
[543] Translation of newspaper article in El Diluvio (Barcelona). 'Il Proclama di Generale Bastico' (Undated). General Bastico writes, 'il grande storiografo italiano Guglielmo Ferrero ha detto che i fascisti hanno inventato ed esperimentato in Spagna qualcosa che non si era mai visto; cioè "la guerra clandestina".' See ASMAE, Gab.1241.
[544] See Aristotle Kallis, 'The "Fascist Effect": On the Dynamics of Political Hybridization in Inter-War Europe', in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* ed. by Costa Pinto and Kallis (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp.13-41.

The prevailing opinion that emerges from the existing scholarship on the *RV* broadcasts treats the propagandistic action primarily as a defensive response to anti-fascist Italian-language broadcasts emanating from Spain and produced primarily by anti-fascist Italian *fuorusciti*. It is, therefore, accepted that 'più che alla causa nazionalista […] l'azione di 'Radio Verdad' è consacrata agli obiettivi politici e propagandistici dell'Italia fascista' (rather than to the Nationalist cause, the *RV* venture is committed to the political and propaganda objectives of Fascist Italy) as if, somehow, the two did not overlap[545]. Monticone stresses that *RV* 'mirava […] in primo luogo a controbattere la polemica delle radio rosse contro l'Italia fascista e solo in seconda istanza a sostenere immediatamente la lotta in corso in terra spagnola' (aimed, first and foremost, at counteracting the criticism of Fascist Italy by the red radio stations and, only as a secondary motive, to support the ongoing conflict on Spanish soil). By the same token, Quintero claims that '*Radio Verdad* seguía una línea política no necesariamente de acuerdo con los franquistas' (*Radio Verdad* followed a political line that was not necessarily in agreement with the Francoists)[546]. Primarily through an analysis of the correspondence between the USP of the MMIS in Salamanca and the MCP and the MAE and by placing the beginning of the *RV* broadcasts in the context of Italy's drastically increased military intervention at the time of *Verdad*'s genesis, this chapter aims to reconsider its motivations (3.2.1) as well as seeking to assess the extent of the rebels' collaboration and appreciation (3.2.2). Focus will then turn to assessing the impact of the broadcasts both within Spain (3.3.1) and internationally (3.3.2) through an analysis of the summaries of listener letters sent by the USP of the MMIS in Salamanca to both the IRT at the MCP and to the MAE. In Chapter 4, we will turn our attention to the rebranding of the

[545] Stefano de Tomasso, *Voci dalla Spagna. La radio antifascista e l'Italia (1936-1939)* (Istituto di Studi Storici Gaetano Salvemini, 2016), p.109.
[546] Monticone, *Fascismo al microfono,* p.157; Alejandro Pizarroso Quintero, 'La propaganda radiofónica italiana en la guerra civil española', in *Haciendo Historia. Homenaje al profesor Carlos Seco Serrano* ed. by Martínez de Saz (Editorial de la Universidad Complutense, 1989), p.568.

station at the end of the Spanish Civil War as *Radio Verdad Italo-Spagnolo (RVIS)*, a supposedly collaborative venture which aimed at strengthening the cultural and political ties between the two countries by focussing heavily on their common *romanità*, anti-bolshevism and by insisting on Italian Fascist corporatism as a model for imitation. Such a discussion will contribute to a greater understanding of how the Italian Fascist voice in the wireless world contributed to the regime's project of moulding European civilisation along Fascist lines by, in this instance, bringing Spain 'into the sphere of Roman Latinity'.[547] We will assess the focus on *romanità* in the *RVIS* broadcasts in Chapter 4 as part of a wider investigation into the theme's use in a variety of contexts rather than including it here where the goal is to assess *RV*'s objectives and impact as a black propaganda project in the context of an ongoing conflict that had both national and international dimensions. Previous scholarship, as we will see, has confused matters by citing *RV*'s supposed focus on *romanità* as evidence for the broadcasts' objective for promoting Italian Fascism. Making clear the boundary between the war-time *RV* and the post-war *RVIS* (analysed in Chapter 4) allows for an analysis which appreciates their distinctly separate goals and approaches. This chapter will also probe the question of how the radio's international nature influenced the impact of *RV* both within Spain and beyond her borders. In a wider context, the *RV* broadcasts constitute an important historical precedent also when considering the clandestine radio broadcasts that were such a feature of the airwaves in World War II. What is unique about the *Verdad* broadcasts, in this context, is that they involve one nation pretending to be its ally rather than imitating its enemy. The decision to initiate a propaganda project on behalf of the rebels points to an intriguing power dynamic. At the outbreak of the civil war, Nazi Germany's initial aid provisions included the requisite material to establish the National radio network. Whilst the USP collaborated with National radio stations on bulletins in

[547] Peñalba Sottorío, 'Cultural Intervention', p.10.

Italian, Spanish, French and English, *RV* as an Italian solo venture, driven by an urgency to bring about a lightening victory, should be seen as an effort to assert Italian superiority in this field which, in turn, was hoped to pave the way for Italian industrial involvement in the radio network of the new Spain come the conflict's end. A detailed analysis of how Italy's intervention took shape over the airwaves contributes to our understanding of the regime's propagandistic use of the radio as a weapon in times of conflict, as a means of forging internationalist ties and shaping the emerging fascist Europe in its image.

3.2 Defensive Counterpropaganda? The motivations behind Radio Verdad

3.2.1 Radio Verdad *as the propaganda arm of a massively increased intervention*

The decision to launch the *RV* broadcasts was taken in an inter-ministerial meeting on 4 February 1937. In a memorandum referring to the meeting's conclusions, the enterprise was grouped together with other plans as part of a wider 'azione di contropropaganda nei confronti delle stazioni radiofoniche rosse spagnole che in lingua italiana ed in altre lingue lanciano regolarmente notiziari e conferenze antifasciste' (counterpropaganda operation against the red Spanish radio stations who in Italian and other languages regularly launch antifascist bulletins and speeches)[548]. This labelling of *RV* as a counterpropaganda activity has led scholars to view it as an effort to defend the reputation of Italian Fascism, damaged primarily by the Italian-language broadcasts emanating from Spain. Monticone asserts, 'con lo scoppio della guerra civile spagnola [la radio italiana] è costretta ad assumere un atteggiamento di difesa e di reazione ai sempre più frequenti attacchi delle emittenti antifasciste' (with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War the Italian radio is forced to take up a defensive and reactive attitude towards the evermore frequent attacks from anti-fascist stations).[549] Drastic measures were taken to protect internal consensus from these

[548] 'Appunto per S.E il Ministro' (Undated), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen. B.6. F.60.64.
[549] Monticone, *Fascismo al microfono*, p.154.

broadcasts. Along with the sequestering of radio sets and the issuing of fines, these measures included paying a Polish radio station to disturb the broadcasts as well as the plan (not carried out as far as the archival evidence suggests) to bomb some of the stations in question.[550] The measures to counter the potentially damaging impact of the Italian-language broadcasts also included the treatment of the Spanish Civil War in Ezio Maria Gray's *Cronache del regime* which will be analysed in Chapter 4. Above all else, it should go without saying that, broadcasting exclusively in Castilian and Catalan, *Verdad* was not designed with the protection of internal consensus in mind; its immediate battlefield was Spain. The ally-written note appended to one of the folders pertaining to *RV* in the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome, ironically reads 'Italian Non-Intervention in Spain'. Indicating clearly that the first readers of the material saw the venture definitively as part of the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War.[551] Equally, the extensive effort involved in concealing *RV*'s origins, as well as the overwhelming evidence of the listener letters we will later analyse, suggest that protecting the reputation of Italian Fascism in Spain was not the objective either. An exploration of the motivations behind *RV* will, therefore, necessarily involve a new understanding of the terms 'counterpropaganda' and 'antifascist' as used in the documents. However, before exploring the motivations behind *RV*, it must be placed in the wider context of the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War.

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[550] Once it was discovered that the Lviv (modern-day Ukraine) station operated on the same frequency as that from Barcelona, an approach was made to the Polish station to entice them (through payment) to extend their broadcasting hours until 2:15am in order to interfere with the anti-fascist broadcasts. Ordinary programming was extended rather than transmitting 'suoni disturbatori' such as to avoid drawing the attention of the IBU. Broadcasts were extended only until 1am as not to arouse suspicion. The subsidy was paid to the Lviv station from May to July 1937. ASMAE, Gabinetto del Ministro e Segreteria Generale (1923-1943). B.1241., F.2 'Radio Rossa Barcellona e alter radio rosse', 'Telespresso 904549'. Plans were made in response to the anti-fascist Italian-language transmissions to broadcast on the same frequency in Italian such as to disturb the 'red' stations. It is this practice which further enforced confusion around *RV*'s intentions in Monteleone's case. See Monteleone, *La Radio italiana*, p.153-4. For a discussion on the repression of listening to these anti-fascist broadcasts in Italy see De Tomasso, *Voci dalla Spagna,* pp.113-30. Once the provenance of Radio Milano was discovered to be Pozuelo del Rey an initial plan was to inform the Nationalist forces who could, in turn, bomb the transmitter. See the notes from the interministerial meeting (9 Mar. 1937) in ASMAE, Gab. 1241.

[551] 'Italian "Non-Intervention" in Spain', ACS, Aff. Gen., B.6, F.49.2.

The assertion that *RV* was a purely defensive action may, in part, be explained by the 'historiographical quasi-consensus', authoritatively challenged and rejected by Rodrigo, that considers the motivations for Italy's very intervention to be purely defensive and geo-strategic.[552] As Rodrigo contends, this has led to the intervention being reduced to 'just another element in the analysis of Mussolini's foreign policy' and a disproportionate historiographical focus on the initial coup d'état of 1936, with the rest dismissed as 'only details'.[553] Instead, Rodrigo places emphasis on the escalation of the Italian involvement in the winter of 1936-37 stressing that it should not be considered a 'mere continuation of the original strategy but the result of its failure'.[554] With the decision to move from simply sending equipment and instructors to putting boots on the ground, the Italian intervention changed drastically in nature – Italy became a belligerent in the conflict with almost forty-nine thousand troops fighting in Spain by the time *RV* began broadcasting on 18 February 1937.[555] Coverdale's account of the decision to send troops (officially in the form of 'volunteers') is illuminating particularly with regard to Italy's collaboration and competition with Nazi Germany in the intervention. At the outset of the Nationalist uprising, Nazi Germany was the first of the two dictatorships to intervene. Having formally offered mixed brigades to Franco on December 9, Italy fundamentally changed the nature of her assistance to the Nationalist cause. In Mussolini's subsequent meeting with Göring, the latter did not acquiesce to the Duce's request to join him in sending troops. At this moment, Italy became the intervening foreign power with the most stock in a rebel victory. Indeed, Germany's refusal constitutes an acknowledgment that if Italy had the highest interest in the state of play in the Mediterranean then it should bear the greatest risk. By equal measure, Mussolini's

[552] Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy,* p.44.
[553] *Ibid.,* p.3.
[554] *Ibid.,* p.4.
[555] John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton University Press, 1975), p.175.

failure to press Göring on German commitments in their meeting was likely born of his wariness of increased German influence in the Mediterranean.[556] By putting Italian boots on the ground, Mussolini tied the outcome of the civil war very closely to the prestige of his regime. Given the close association made, particularly by anti-fascists, between Italian Fascism and the rebels along with this increased military involvement, a loss for the Nationalists in Spain would have been damaging for fascism, considered in its increasingly universal and transnational sense. The Spanish Civil War now had a strong international dimension and, for Italian Fascism, the stakes were high. *RV*'s genesis aligns with this massive escalation in military intervention in the conflict.

Whilst the above-mentioned ministerial note groups *RV* in with a wider 'azione di contrapropaganda nei confronti delle stazioni radiofoniche rosse spagnole' (counterpropaganda operation against the red Spanish radio stations), the documentary evidence points definitively to its purpose being that of aiding Franco to victory, rather than defending the reputation of Italian Fascism. As a crucial part of the propaganda arm of the intervention, *Verdad* was an 'emissione spagnola di guerra' (Spanish war bulletin) which 'non ha avuto altro obbiettivo che quello di scoraggiare e demoralizzare il nemico' (has had no objective other than disheartening and demoralising the enemy).[557] Its bulletins, using information sent by the Nationalists, gave military updates and reported on life in the Nationalist zones with the primary goal of convincing listeners in Republican Spain that 'en toda la España nacional, reina el orden más absoluto' (in all of National Spain, the most absolute order reigns).[558] A German-language bulletin emanating from Moscow confirms the message of the Nationalist zones' 'calma più assoluta' (most absolute calm) in *Verdad*'s Catalan-language bulletins and perceives the *Verdad* broadcasts, known to be emanating

[556] *Ibid.,* p173.
[557] 'Contropropaganda' (20 Mar. 1937), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.60.5.
[558] 'Del Suroeste de Madrid' (Undated, p.6), ASMAE, Gab. 1242.

from Italy, as 'una propaganda di guerra' (war propaganda) and, more widely, as part of the attempt to 'distruggere la resistenza dei governanti ed assicurare la vittoria agli insorti' (destroy the resistance of those in power and ensure the victory of the insurgents).[559] A contributing factor to the historiographical conviction that *Verdad* was geared towards defending the reputation of Italian Fascism is its supposed focus on *romanità*.[560] *Verdad* did eventually make *romanità* a prominent theme of the broadcasts but, crucially, only once the war was won and attention turned to moulding the nascent dictatorship by bringing it into the Italian sphere of influence. This was also negotiated by Fascist Italy being ostensibly invited to join *Radio Verdad* as a collaborative venture, renamed *Radio Verdad Italo-Spagnolo (RVIS)*. This was part of fundamental changes to the venture which converted it from military to cultural propaganda. Rather than focussing on common ties of *romanità* during the conflict, *Verdad* promoted Spanish Nationalism, broadcasting Nationalist hymns and, all the while, ensuring that this praise 'non ferisc[a] la suscettibilità di questa o quella tendenza politica nazionalista spagnola' (should not offend the sensibilities of any political tendencies among the Spanish Nationalists).[561] In this way, *Radio Verdad* promoted a brand of Spanish Nationalism which aimed to avoid favouring any of the competing nationalisms within Spain at the time of the civil war, promoting unity among them in the hope of seeing them brought together in a single party and in the hopes of encouraging their successful cooperation during the conflict. When, in this chapter, reference is made to Spanish Nationalism on *Radio Verdad,* it is this non-partisan Fascist conception which is indicated. This approach by Fascist propagandists is consistent with a project of fascistisation that 'envisioned […] every country to have its own fascism specific to its own historical, political and cultural context, all belonging to a fascist Europe under the spiritual patronage of

[559] For the intercepted and translated transcript of the broadcast see 'Stazione Mosca (in tedesco)' (26 Feb. 1937), ASMAE, Gab. 1241, F.2.
[560] Monticone, *Fascismo al microfono*, p.158.
[561] 'Trasmissioni "Radio Verdad"' (4 June 1937), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen, B.6. F.49.87.

Mussolini's Italy'.[562] As Rodrigo has established, key to this in the context of the Spanish Civil War was the avoidance of 'explicitly taking the side of any political faction' such that 'Franco could move forward in creating the single party'.[563] We will see in Chapter 4 how, after the Spanish Civil War, attention was turned to influencing this Spanish Nationalism along fascist lines.

If then, as is clear, *RV* was produced in service of the rebels' cause, the significance of its being grouped together as part of a wider 'azione di propaganda' (propaganda action) against 'antifascist' broadcasts must be probed. The historiographical conviction that *Verdad* was prompted by the threat posed by antifascist broadcasts to the 'gestione fascista del consenso attraverso la radio' (Fascist management of consensus through the radio) relies on the assumption that 'antifascismo' can only have meant 'anti-Fascism' (that is to say against Italian Fascism) and not 'anti-fascism' (against fascism understood as an international, transnational phenomenon) and that it could only refer to damage to Italian Fascism's reputation rather than its international project and the reputation of international fascism. While *Verdad*'s immediate battlefield was Spain, its classification as 'counterpropaganda' against the 'stazioni radiofoniche rosse spagnole che in lingua italiana ed in altre lingue lanciano regolarmente notiziari e conferenze antifasciste' (red Spanish radio stations who in Italian and other languages regularly launch antifascist bulletins and speeches) signals it out as part of a wider international battlefield – that of the wireless world. While reporting living conditions in Fascist Italy and the regime's illegal involvement in the Spanish Civil War, the antifascist broadcasts also painted a clear picture of the fight in Spain as a manifestation of a wider fight against fascism. Carlo Rosselli's broadcast from Barcelona on 13 November 1936 sent the warning 'oggi in Spagna, domani in Italia' (today in Spain, tomorrow in Italy),

[562] Joseph Kelly, 'New Perspectives on Italian Fascism', *Modern Language Review* 119.2 (2024), pp.211-21 (p.214).
[563] Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy*, p.113.

since immortalised as an international anti-fascist call to arms. On the question of the very intervention being defensive in nature, Coverdale certainly makes a compelling case for the genuine conviction that Communist influence within the Republican rearguard represented an existential threat for the Fascist regime. There was certainly a concern that 'il marxismo internazionale tragga spunti dalla guerra civile spagnola per tentare di provocare disordini in tutta Europa e dividere il continente in due campi politici opposti che dovrebbero lottare senza tregua' (international Marxism is taking cues from the Spanish Civil War in an attempt to provoke disorder across Europe and to divide the continent into two opposing political camps set up to fight each other non-stop).[564] And Rosselli's call-to-arms embodies the belief that the fight against fascism would soon spread beyond Spanish territory. This famous slogan echoes Mussolini's formula in his messaggio per l'anno IX (the ninth year of the Fascist reign) when he stressed that 'l'antifascismo non è morto. Soltanto, il terreno della lotta si è dilatato; ieri era l'Italia, oggi è il Mondo' (anti-fascism is not dead. The battlefield has simply expanded; yesterday it was Italy, today it is the world).[565] Seeing the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War, and by extension *RV*, as defensive requires accepting the regime's own framing of its foreign policy: a 'pre-emptive defence' of the project of constructing a new fascist Europe.[566] *RV* is counterpropaganda in so much as it protected the project for a fascist Europe by aiding Franco towards victory and helped to control the narrative of the Spanish Civil War both within Spain and internationally, as we will see in section 2. *RV*, produced in service of Franco's overthrowing of the Republican government, was not a defensive move to protect the reputation of Italian Fascism; it was an offensive

[564] See De Tomasso, *Voci dalla Spagna*, p.40.
[565] Ezio Maria Gray cites this address, bringing into the context of the Spanish Civil War and the transnational spread of fascism, in a *Cronache del regime* broadcast entitled 'Il secolo – questo secolo – è nostro'. See Maria Gray, *L'Italia ha sempre ragione,* p.264-5.
[566] Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy*, p.45.

one made in support of the construction of a new fascist Europe by supporting the victory of Franco's forces.

3.2.2. Appreciation and Collaboration

The impression that the content of the *RV* broadcasts was at odds with Franco's objectives is further disproved by strong evidence of appreciation for *Verdad*'s efficacy on the part of the Nationalists as well as evidence of collaboration in the form of suggestions and feedback. The assumption of *Verdad*'s inefficacy may be seen as part of a wider impression, dismissed convincingly by Rodrigo, that the Italian intervention in the war was not a significant factor in the rebel's eventual victory and that it was, in some cases, more of a hindrance than a help.[567] This plays into a wider narrative summed up in 'the old calumny that *italiani sunt imbelles* (the Italians can't fight)'.[568] What Rodrigo has termed *Guadalajara syndrome* (the reducing of the Italian intervention to the disastrous losses in the battle of Guadalajara) is further fuelled by an embarrassing (but, nonetheless, isolated) error by a *Verdad* broadcast from July 1937 in which the details of a rebel attack on Madrid were reported before it had even taken place, giving Republican forces time to prepare their defence.[569] A similar mistake is attributed to *Verdad* in August 1937 with details of an upcoming attack on Santander being broadcasted. However, these details were, contrary to the assertions of the existing scholarship, broadcasted on the Italian-language Giornale Radio not *RV*.[570] Whilst these mistakes certainly cannot have been appreciated by Franco, the evidence suggests that he was not as infuriated by this blunder as one might initially

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[567] See Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy*, p.8.
[568] John Gooch, *Mussolini's War: Fascist Italy from Triumph to Collapse (1935-1943)* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2020), p.5.
[569] This event is reported in Monticone, *Fascismo al microfono*, p.158.
[570] The mistake occurred, in both instances, supposedly because the telegrams sent in those weeks by the Italian press office in Salamanca lacked almost any military updates, forcing the bulletins to be compiled using news from the Agenzia Stefani and the bulletins of a National station that the MCP listened in on. See Note from 5 Sep. 1937, ASMAE, Gab. 1242. The news relating to the Santander front came from the EIAR's Paris correspondent, Mr. Mirko Gobbe. See 'Urgente' (12 Aug. 1937), ACS, MCP, B.6, F.49.91.

expect, with the relieved Italian report coming that he did not seem to 'attribuire alla predetta trasmissione eccessiva importanza' (attribute excessive importance to the above-mentioned broadcast) and reminding that upmost care must be taken in the future.[571] After the embarrassment caused by this misstep, all bulletins had to be signed off by the commander of the Corpo Legionario.[572] The assumption that *RV* 'seguía una línea política no necesariamente de acuerdo con los franquistas' (followed a political line not necessarily in harmony with the Francoists) may also be based, in part, on the acknowledgment of the ideological affinity between Fascism and Falangism.[573] Whilst this may have been the case, *RV* was conducted in keeping with an increasingly collaborative intervention which steered clear of favouring any particular faction among the rebels. Mussolini may have preferred an uprising led by the Falange, however the Falange was in no position for such a role and a practical approach was taken in backing Franco with the aspiration of a single party being formed and, in turn, Spain's own fascism born in the bloody context of war. It was, however, considered that the Falange would play a crucial role in bringing the proletariat within the new state once it had been constructed.[574] As will be seen in Chapter 4, this more active engagement along ideological lines with Falangist ideas became apparent once the war was won and the attention of *RV* (and the Fascist diplomacy more widely) turned its attention more concretely to influencing the New Spain.

RV was far from being the result of a close (and equal) collaboration between the Italian government and the Nationalists. Responsibility for its production remained firmly

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[571] The *telespresso* sent from the Ministero degli Affari Esteri to the Ispettorato per la Radio e la Televisione states: 'Il Generalissimo Franco, pur non mostrando di attribuire alla predetta trasmissione eccessiva importanza, mi prega di segnalare l'inconveniente perché in avvenire siano usate le maggiori cautele'. ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.60.12.
[572] See Telegram from 13 Aug. 1937, *ibid.,* F.49.92.
[573] Quintero, 'La propaganda radiofónica', p.568. On the cultural and political exchange between Spain and Italy during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship see Rubén Domínguez Méndez, *Mussolini y la exportación de la cultura italiana a España* (Arco Libros, 2012), pp.21-33.
[574] Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy*, p.110.

in the control of the Fascist regime and it was always transmitted by the EIAR from Italian stations, despite a request from the rebels for the operation to be moved entirely to Salamanca which would have involved compiling the bulletins there and relocating the speakers in order for *Verdad* to broadcasts from a local station and be retransmitted by the Italian network.[575] This is not to say, however, that there was no collaborative element to the broadcasts' organisation. Channels of communication certainly existed between the rebels and the USP of the MMIS, and, crucially, the bulletins were written 'utilizzando i cablogrammi inviat[i] dal Ministero dell'Interno di Burgos' (using the cablegrams sent from the Ministry of the Interior in Burgos).[576] The communications made via these channels point overwhelmingly to appreciation on the part of the rebels and reaffirm the station's success, with the Delegación del Estado para Prensa y Propaganda (DEPP) even insistently requesting the broadcasts be extended by fifteen minutes.[577]

Far from simply communicating appreciation for *Verdad*'s success, the Nationalists offered advice on content, style and objectives, including sending information via the Spanish ambassador to Rome to be included in *Verdad* broadcasts.[578] In a communication sent from the DEPP to the USP in April 1937 entitled 'Impresiones recogidas en Barcelona sobre los resultados de la propaganda de Radio Verdad' (Impressions gathered in Barcelona on the results of Radio Verdad's propaganda), the Nationalists highlighted the potential to undermine Republican support in Catalonia.[579] According to the assessment made in the

[575] The request from the Nationalists to extend the programme by 15 minutes (showing how useful they considered it) was also refused on the basis that this would cut into the time allocated to Giornale Radio and the Cronache del Regime. ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.49.83 and F.49.86.
[576] 'Radio Verdad' (22 Feb. 1939), *Ibid.* F.49.31 Bulletins sent every evening by the Quartiere Generale del Generalissimo were also used for the EIAR's nightly South America programme. See 'Bollettino della Guerra in Spagna nei programmi radiofonici per l'America' (21 Mar. 1938), ASMAE, Gab. 1242.
[577] 'Salamanca 19 Maggio 1937', ASMAE, GAB 1242. The MCP advised the foreign office not to push the EIAR on the matter as it would mean significant disturbance to *Giornale Radio* and *Le Cronache del regime*. See 'Trasmissioni "Radio Verdad"' (2 June 1937), *ibid.*
[578] Telegram from Italian Embassy in Spain to Giorgio Nelson Page at the IRT, ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.49.23.
[579] 'Impresiones recogidas en Barcelona sobre los resultados de la propaganda de Radio Verdad', ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.60.9.

report, there were three groups of people in Catalonia: one (representing 35% of the population) which supported Franco; another (50%) which was 'contrario a la situacion actual […] pero indiferente a nuestro movimiento, y sera de quien venga' (against the current situation but indifferent to our movement and will support whoever takes power); and a third (15%) 'es el que sostiene a las organizaciones que dominan alli por el terror' (are those who support the organisations which rule by terror there)[580]. The report recommends that *RV* focus its energies on the third group, aiming to 'procurar la division entre los diferentes partidos que alli luchan' (ensure division between the different parties fighting there).[581] Based on the reception of broadcasts by General Queipo de Llano, the report advises *RV* to

> llamar la atención pública sobre las inmoralidades que se cometen, e insistir en que mientras unos combaten y sufren en los frentes, otros con la excusa de misiones, no hacen sino viajar por Francia y divertirse especialmente en Paris, donde viven en perpetua juerga frecuentando los más lujosos cabarets acompañados de mujeres lujosas[582].
>
> (draw public attention to the immoral acts being committed and repeat the fact that, while some fight and suffer at the front, others with the excuse of conducting missions do nothing but travel to France to enjoy themselves especially in Paris where they live in a state of constant revelry, attending the most luxurious cabarets with luxurious women)

The Catalan-language broadcasts were a direct translation of the Castilian transcripts and, therefore, featured no differentiation in message. It was, however, the simple fact of broadcasting in Catalan which gained a propagandistic advantage for the rebels. These broadcasts supposedly achieved a positive impact as far as Franco's cause was concerned, particularly in helping to 'sfatare la leggenda della furiosa catalanofobia dei dirigenti della Spagna Nazionale messa in circolazione dai rossi' (debunk the myth of the furious Catalanophobia of National Spain's leaders circulated by the reds).[583] One report on Catalan-

[580] *Ibid.*
[581] *Ibid.*
[582] *Ibid.*
[583] 'Direzione Generale per I Servizi della Propaganda', ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.49.14-15

language *Verdad* broadcasts in the communist Catalan newspaper *La Batalla* states the conviction that the broadcasts were part of the Nationalist propaganda emanating from Salamanca because 'parlare in catalano corretto ci costava fatica il credere che si trattasse di una stazione radiotrasmittente fascista' (its speaking proper Catalan made it difficult for us to believe it was a Fascist radio station).[584] The report in question refers to a broadcast aimed at defending the 'contadini' (peasants) of La Faterella in their clashes with 'gruppi di anarchici e di trotzkisti' (groups of anarchists and Trotskyists) in order to 'fomentare i dissidi già esistenti tra i partiti rossi catalani e di suscitare tra di essi una polemica che avesse avuto ripercussioni anche nella stampa' (fuel the already-existing tensions between the red Catalan parties and to spark a disagreement between them that would also have ramifications in the press).[585] After the fact, the Direzione Generale per i Servizi della Propaganda report on this particular episode asserted that, by aiming to cause a polemic which made it to the press, the broadcast also 'intendeva ottenere indirettamente che i giornali rossi rendessero pubblica la notizia dell'esistenza di una stazione radio filonazionale che trasmetteva anche un notiziario in catalano' (meant to prompt indirectly the red newspapers to make public the news that there is a pro-Nationalist radio station broadcasting a bulletin also in Catalan).[586] Through its success, Catalan on *RV* 'ha servito […] per gridare la prima volta attraverso il microfono 'Arriba España'' (was used to shout 'Arriba España' for the first time over the air), promoting Spanish Nationalism and *ispanità* in Catalonia.[587] One listener, while writing to express his admiration for the broadcasts, did, however, highlight that the station's languages should be listed as 'Castilian and Catalan' rather than 'Spanish and Catalan' because the latter categorisation might suggest that Catalan was not, in fact, a Spanish language.[588]

[584] *Ibid.*
[585] *Ibid.*
[586] *Ibid.*
[587] Report from Feb. 1939, ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.49.31.
[588] Letter from Luis Roca (La Coruna, Spain), ASMAE, Gab. 1242. This set of summaries was sent on 10 May 1937. The broadcasting in Catalan also responded to a regional(ist) desire to protect the language. A

Nonetheless, on the whole, the Nationalists were pleased with the effect of the Catalan-language broadcasts which paid particular attention to developments in the region.

This sense of collaboration was not present only through official channels with the Nationalists with advice and feedback also being accepted from informants in the Republican zones. After explaining how risky it had become to listen to Nationalist radio stations in Republican zones, one such informant in July 1938 stressed the need for passion in the delivery of the broadcasts, given that 'gli spagnoli sono meridionali – non c'è da dimenticarlo' (Spaniards are southerners – it must not be forgotten).[589] The informant continued to implore that the speaker's arguments 'vadano diretti al cuore e non al cervello' (should speak directly to the heart and not the head) and advises 'che urli, che pianga, che rida. Dovrà tenere presente la tragedia che si vive, o meglio dovrà vivere la tragedia, non parlare con una tonalità da professore di matematica' (that he shout, cry, laugh. He must keep in mind the tragedy being lived through or, better, he should live the tragedy and not speak with the tone of a Maths professor).[590] The informant's report was based, according to the telegram sent from the MAE to the MCP on 'la radio nazionale, e quindi anche […] Radio Verdad' (National radio and therefore also Radio Verdad), reinforcing the idea that *Verdad* was thought of as a Nationalist station very much at the heart of Franco's campaign. As will be seen with the engagement with listener letters in the next section, the transmitting of this report sought from an informant shows the readiness to listen to feedback in order to improve *Verdad*'s efficacy as a Nationalist propaganda tool, and one which took account of the *ispanità* of its audience.

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contemporary article, brought to the attention of the MCP, in the *Journal de Barcelone* entitled 'Notre Belle Langue: La grand'honte de parler catalan' (9 Feb. 1937) expressed the will to tackle the snobbery which would consign Catalan linguistic heritage to history. In ASMAE, Gab. 1241.

[589] *Ibid.* F.49.27-28.

[590] *Ibid.*

The collaboration on *RV* broadcasts displays the power dynamic at the heart of the project, with the aim of guaranteeing the 'controllo quasi totale della Radio Nazionale Spagnola di Salamanca che è affidata, purtroppo a tecnici tedeschi' (almost complete control of Radio Nazionale Spagnola in Salamanca which is entrusted, unfortunately, to German technicians).[591] Such an ambition to dominate the Nationalist radio propaganda is driven, in no small part, by a negative assessment of the Nationalists' capacities in this department and a belief that they would have to do for themselves that of which the Spanish were not capable.[592] *RV*, therefore, displays at once the regime's assertion of superiority as well as its understanding for the need of collaboration in aiding the Nationalist war effort. On this note, *RV* must also be viewed in the context of the wider collaboration between the Italians and the Nationalists in the formation of a transnational network of stations broadcasting in different languages to win the international war of words. There was extensive collaboration between the USP and Nationalist radio stations, with the USP being responsible for compiling news bulletins in Italian, French and English.[593] Of particular significance were the Italian-language programmes on *Radio Falange* (broadcasted from Valladolid) which reached a duration of forty minutes a day with a special weekly broadcast of one hour. The broadcasts were 'dedicat[e] alle famiglie dei lavoratori italiani' (dedicated to the families of Italian workers) and were spoken by Alfonso Banda Morez, a Falangist who had spent time living in Italy and had been militantly involved in Fascist youth organisations. Morez spoke perfect Italian with the occasional Spanish inflexion which served to convince Italian listeners further still of the truth behind his addresses.[594] Whereas *RV* was distinctly a part

[591] 'Radio Verdad' (16 July 1938), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6, F.49.27-28.
[592] Telegram from 19.03.37, ASMAE, Gab. (1923-1943), B.1241, F2. Frustration with Nationalist radio production was shared also by the Nazi. There was a strong sense that they lacked experts in production. See Armand Balsebre, *Historia de la radio en España. (1874-1939)* (vol. 1) (Cátedra, 2001), p.389.
[593] Such collaborations included those with *Radio Nacional* (Salamanca), *Union Radio* (Seville), *Radio Requeté* and *Radio Falange* (Valladolid). For an outline of the wider remit in the field of radio propaganda of the USP see Quintero, 'La propaganda radiofonica', pp.569-70.
[594] Quintero, 'La propaganda radiofónica', pp.569-70

of the Italian intervention, collaborations such as this were designed to combat the Italian-language anti-Fascist propaganda emanating from Republican Spain. The collaboration with rebel radio stations was geared towards fighting a propaganda war on all fronts, with not only the compiling of broadcasts in multiple languages but the active involvement of the USP in arranging for foreign correspondents to speak from their microphones such as those from *The Journal* and *The Daily Mail* over Radio Salamanca.[595] There was also collaboration on the disturbing of anti-fascist programmes produced in Spain and directed at Italian listeners, such propaganda being seen as a joint threat.[596] On top of this, there is also evidence of later collaboration on Arabic-language broadcasts and use made of Spanish officials speaking on Italian radio (to be discussed in Chapter 4).[597] Whilst the evident appreciation and collaboration might seemingly point to the Fascists' change 'from thinking of themselves as a belligerent country to placing themselves in Franco's service in order to achieve total victory over the enemy' during the course of 1937, in maintaining full control of the operation of *RV* the Fascists displayed an intriguing power dynamic – one in which they were open to collaboration but in which the rebels would remain dependent on Italian support.[598] This can also be seen as a key part of the strategy to gain influence (both cultural and industrial) in the development of the Spanish radio network come the end of the conflict, particularly in the context of competition with Nazi Germany which had been instrumental in establishing the Nationalist radio network at the outset of the war.[599] This strategy involved a combination of independent action designed to earn gratitude as well as intense collaboration to build ties that would last beyond the conflict's end. Ultimately, *RV* remained an Italian venture aimed at imposing her will on the Spanish Civil War. At the same time, its

[595] Telegram 'Per il Duce' (21 Mar. 1937), ASMAE, Gab. 1241.
[596] *Radio Seville* and *Radio Salamanca*, for instance, agreed to help disturb the antifascist Italian-language *Radio Libertad* broadcasts. ASMAE, Gab. (1923-1943). B.1241., F.2. Telegram from 7.4.1937.
[597] 'Radiotrasmissioni in lingua araba' (21 Apr. 1941), ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.60.13.
[598] Rodrigo, *Fascist Italy*, p.97.
[599] See Balsebre, *Historia de la radio en España*, pp.386-90.

objective never strayed from that of bringing about a Francoist victory and, as such, lines of communication were constantly active with the Nationalists for up-to-date news and advice. As we have seen, this cooperation is further confirmed by the wider context of collaboration between the propaganda arms (and radio stations) of the Italian regime and Franco's forces.

3.3 Radio Verdad's *national and international audience*

> *Se al fronte ci sono le prime e le seconde linee, anche nella retrovia c'è la prima linea: ed in questa si deve situare l'annunciatore di 'Radio Verdad'. Perché la verità meritoria in tempo di pace, lo è ancor più in tempo di guerra. La verità che è il Patriottismo elevato della nostra causa. La verità che è ordine, rispetto e carità dei nostri principi.*[600]
>
> *(If at the front there are the first and second lines, also in the rearguard there is the first line: and this is where the Radio Verdad announcer must be situated. Because the truth which is commendable in times of peace is even more so in times of war. The truth that is the elevated patriotism of our cause. The truth which is order, respect and virtue of our principles)*

The fictitious *Verdad* station broadcasted its correspondence address as that of the USP in Salamanca and, by February 1939, had already received over 30,000 letters from listeners.[601] Summaries (in Italian and, occasionally, in Spanish) of these letters were sent by the USP to both the Ministero degli Affari Esteri and the IRT (at the MCP). The 30,000 letters (and the addresses of the correspondents) were retained at the end of the civil war, largely in case the regime wished to send targeted printed propaganda. The letters themselves are not to be found and are likely contained in the missing documents of the IRT's foreign-language broadcasting section which we discussed in the thesis's

[600] Letter sent from Elias Dreno (Caceres, Spain). Summary sent the IRT and the MAE on 10 May 1937. ASMAE, Gab. 1242, 'Spoglio Corrispondenza Radio Verdad'.
[601] The address was Plaza de los Bandos 8, Salamanca. The figure of 30,000 letters is according to a report (Feb. 1939) in ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., F.49.31.

Introduction. This chapter, therefore, relies on the summaries of these letters produced by the USP. The high number of letters addressed to the *Verdad* station prompted the USP to begin, in April 1937, dedicating five minutes of every transmission to responding to listener letters selected by the IRT.[602] On top of this, the USP endeavoured to respond by post to every listener who contacted the station, often responding to requests for propaganda materials on National Spain, giving the enterprise a high level of listener engagement.[603] Listeners wrote to the station for a variety of reasons: some were responding to the listener competition begun in March 1937; some requested printed propaganda materials on Franco and the Civil War; others requested information on how to enrol to fight on the Nationalist side; most simply wrote with adoration and gratitude; and in some cases listeners enclosed money with their letters by way of a donation to the rebel cause.[604] The provenance of the letters is equally important in evaluating the impact of *RV* and the implications of radio propaganda in the context of a conflict with both domestic and international dimensions. The letters analysed in this section will be treated as belonging to two separate categories: those sent from within Spanish territory; and those sent from abroad (be they from Spanish emigrants or non-Spaniards). This dual analysis will help to show how the nature of the radio as a medium led to the internationalisation of what was created (by the Italians) as an ostensibly Spanish phenomenon. The analysis of this section is based on summaries of

[602] Responding to listener letters was a common feature of Italian international broadcasting, such as was the case in the *American Hour* broadcasts. See Potter, 'Programmes, Soft Power, and Public Diplomacy', in *The Wireless World*, p.177.
[603] ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6. F.49.84. Come the end of the conflict, the USP had a record of 17,966 names and addresses of listeners who had written to the address. The breakdown of addresses per country was as follows:
Spain: 9,500; Italy: 2,612; Germany: 2,554; France: 1,200; Other countries: 2,100.
[604] The competition consisted of the speaker saying 'Concurso' followed by the name of a Spanish city and 'concurso' again. Listeners then had to write in with the city name and the time and date it was spoken. It was hoped this would affirm listeners' nationalist tendencies and that writing in would be an 'atto di fede' (act of faith). See 'Radio Verdad' (1 Mar. 1937), *ibid.* F.49.7-8.

listener letters dating from March 1937 to April 1939, thus running from the beginning of *RV* until the end of the Spanish Civil War.[605]

3.3.1 Listeners in Spain: Radio Verdad *and Spanish Patriotism*

> *De la España que va a desaparecer gracias al sacrificio de las Legiones de patriotas que luchan con heroísmo para echar de ella para siempre a las hordas bolcheviques y anarquistas surgirá la nueva España corporativa, la auténtica que haré sentir nuevamente a todo español el orgullo de serlo.*[606]
>
> (From the Spain which will disappear thanks to the sacrifice of the Legions of patriots who fight heroically to remove forever the Bolshevik and anarchist hordes will rise the new corporativist Spain, the authentic Spain which will make every Spaniard once again proud to be Spanish).

The letters sent to *RV* from within Spanish territory, overall, display a clear conviction on the part of the listeners that the broadcasts were of Spanish origin as well as the expression of great affection and gratitude for their contribution to the Nationalist cause.[607] They attest to the good technical reception of the broadcasts as well as to the positive reception of their content and, as one might expect, they represent a listening public entirely sympathetic to Franco's uprising. The provenance of the letter summaries is overwhelmingly in favour of listeners from Nationalist zones. There are, however, summaries of letters penned by individuals from Republican territories (including

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[605] Summaries of the letters are to be found in ASMAE, Gab. 1242.
[606] A Spaniard listening from Budapest confirms the good reception of the transmission and includes this quote that he transcribed from the broadcast. *Ibid.*
[607] International reports immediately uncovered *RV*'s Italian origin. Such reports included those in *Tunis Soir*, by the BBC and various British newspapers, and a report on RV in the newspaper *Solidaridad Obrera*. The listener letters, however, show that many listeners were either unaware of its origin or, indeed, disbelieved reports when they encountered them. For the *Tunis Soir* report (27 Feb. 1937) see 'Radio Verdad' (8 Mar. 1937), ACS, MCP, B.6, F.49.70 and 'Radio Veritas' (27 Feb. 1937), *ibid.,* F.60.60. For the British reporting on *RV*'s origin see 'British Broadcasting Corporation e stazione Radio Verdad' (11 Mar. 1937) in *ibid.*. For the *Solidaridad Obrera* report (24 Feb. 1937) see 'Radio Verdad es pura mentira' in ASMAE, Gab. 1242. Pro-Nationalist papers reported appreciation for *RV* and confirmed its high quality reception. See, for instance, news of *La Gaceta Regional*'s reporting in 'Radio Verdad' (23 Feb. 1937), *ibid.* Many Nationalist newspapers began daily columns sharing the *RV* reports. See ACS, MCP, B.6, F.49.7-8. Just as we saw in Chapter 2, the local diplomatic representatives did their utmost to promote *RV* among local newspapers. The consul in Seville, for instance, promoted the *RV* station to the editors of *ABC, Correo de Andalucia, Falange Española,* and *Union.* See 'Trasmissioni Radio' (3 Mar. 1937) in ASMAE, Gab. 1242.

Barcelona, Sant Pere de Riudebitlles, Valencia, Alicante and Teruel – sent in May 1937 before the Nationalists captured it).[608] Both Republican and National Spain had separate postal services and no regular post between the two was possible. It is, therefore, most likely that the presence of Republican city names next to correspondents' names (in the few cases where this occurs) was due to the correspondent being a native of a Republican city but not sending the letter from there. Having moved to National Spain (either before or during the conflict) whence they must have sent the letter, they most likely included the autobiographical fact of their city of origin either in the letter's sign off or in the body of the text as relevant information regarding their political affiliation and personal connection to the ongoing conflict. Some letters were also sent by listeners living just outside Republican Spain (such as from Madrona and Talavera de la Reina and Huesca) who requested information about loved ones still in the 'red' territories. While both Fascist and Nationalist sources attest to the overall success of *Verdad* in Republican zones, because of the risks associated with writing to the station pointed out by one listener, the letters do not allow for a complete appraisal of Verdad's reception in Republican Spain. Overall, the letters from Spanish supporters of the rebels exhibit the strong influence of *RV* as a propaganda tool locally, with one even hypothesising that 'se *Radio Verdad* ci fosse stata prima, forse oggi non ci sarebbe la guerra' (if Radio Verdad had been here before, maybe there would not be a war today).[609] In fact, many listeners asserted that *RV* was the Nationalist station with the strongest reception and the best news updates. One listener went as far as to claim that the information broadcasted by *Verdad* was the best 'in paragone a tutte le altre stazioni del mondo intero' (of all the stations in the world).[610] For this listener, as for many others, the

[608] The provenance of letters from within the Nationalist Zones included: Oviedo, Cadiz, León, Caceres, Zamora, Zaragozza, Pontevedra, Astorga, San Sebastian, Burgos, Malaga, A Coruña, Pamplona, Seville, Madrona, Palencia, Talavera de la Reina, Granada, Huesca, and Valladolid.
[609] Letter from Tomas Espartero (Avila, Spagna). *Ibid*. Summaries from 10 May 1937.
[610] Letter from A. Cidon (and sons) (Zamora, Spain). *Ibid.*.

high quality of the *Verdad* station was a point of patriotic pride and a cause to congratulate 'quei buoni Spagnoli che con tanto valore hanno diretto e dirigono *Radio Verdad*' (those good Spaniards who, with so much honour, have run and continue to run Radio Verdad).[611] In this way, the clandestine broadcasts, entirely under the control of the Italian authorities, became a prominent fact of the Spanish Civil War and even a cause for Spanish nationalist pride.

Expressing this pride, another listener wrote to offer his opinion that *RV* was equalled only by the quality in programming and reception of broadcasts from Rome.[612] Of course, given that *RV* was emanating from Rome, the similarity in quality of reception and style of broadcast comes as no surprise. That the listener should make this comparison is, however, revealing on several fronts. First of all, it serves as yet more evidence that, whilst the provenance of the *Verdad* broadcasts was not kept universally secret, many listeners were convinced of its Spanish origin, not suspecting Italian involvement.[613] On this point, it should be stressed that those listeners living in the Nationalist zones would have been incredibly unlikely to encounter a newspaper report accusing *RV* of being of Italian origin. Second of all, it attests to the positive reception of the EIAR's official Spanish-language news bulletin. Regrettably, the available sources do not allow for a full appraisal of how the clandestine and official propaganda in Spain differed and the extent to which one flanked the other.[614] However, this letter does indicate the sentiment that Italian broadcasts were seen as representing a standard to which to aspire. It also points to a sympathy, present in some of the letters, towards Italy and Mussolini. This interest in Italy is typified by one listener

[611] *Ibid.*
[612] Letter from Cecilio Lopez Navarro (Zaragoza, Spain), *ibid.*
[613] One Spanish listener (anonymous from Zamora) claims that many are curious to know the station's location, however this is not contained in any expression of doubt that *Radio Verdad* is a Spanish phenomenon and is followed by a poem dedicated to the station. *Ibid*.
[614] Such an analysis is, however, possible for the Russian-language programmes in Chapter 4.

who requests 'opuscoli di propaganda' (propaganda pamphlets) on both Franco (to whom they refer as the 'Duce spagnolo') and on the Italian Fascist regime. The summary of the letter states that the listener 'afferma che ogni spagnolo è molto grato all'Italia per il favore che le sta facendo' (asserts that every Spaniard is grateful to Italy for the favour she is doing for Spain).[615] The correspondent, a school teacher, also stresses his and his family's pre-existing sympathy for Italian Fascism, stressing that 'i suoi bambini già conoscono ed apprezzano l'Italia attraverso l'Impresa abissina' (his children already know and appreciate Italy through the Abyssinian invasion).[616] The fact this letter references the Italian military aid suggests that the *Verdad* bulletins included updates on Italian operations, aimed at promoting close ties and, importantly gratitude. It must be stressed, on this note, that any aggrandisement of the Italian military contribution was clearly not so blatant as to have alerted most listeners to *RV*'s origins, nor should it divert our understanding of the broadcasts' purpose as being to support the Nationalist cause. It should also be considered that Spanish interest in Italian Fascism was also likely to have been prompted by the official EIAR broadcasts more so than by these military bulletins.

The overwhelming sense of the letters is that the broadcasts inspired patriotism among Spanish listeners of Nationalist persuasions. Many Spanish listeners, on top of this, display an understanding of the Nationalist cause as part of a wider, international battle – a battle fought by various nationalisms across the continent – and an appreciation of the support offered by foreign fascist or fascistic regimes in Spain. The main themes of these letters – the affection felt for *RV*, the gratitude for its help in the conflict, and the patriotic resolve it inspired - are encapsulated in a poem written by one listener.[617]

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[615] Letter from Virgilio Padille (Palancia, Spain). ASMAE, Gab. 1242. Summaries from 4 May 1937.
[616] *Ibid.*
[617] This was not the only poem sent to *Radio Verdad*. One listener, for example, sent two poems in Spanish, one of which was intended to be set to the tune of the Italian Fascist hymn 'Faccetta Nera'. *Ibid.*

A RADIO VERDAD:

Radio Verdad que nos alientas
con tus noticias impregnadas de valor
te saludo delirante de entusiasmo
y que sigas mitigándome al dolor

Cuando te oigo con tu voz tan tendenciosa
tan pletórica de dulce alegría
pienso en FRANCO que es el que nos guía
para de una vez librarnos de las HORDAS

Las palabras que a diario nos dedicas
Voy juntándolas in limpísimo papel
Aunque más limpia ha de quedar España
Cuando acaben los soldados de barrer

VIVA FRANCO Y MUSSOLINI
Y OLIVEIRA SALAZAR
VIVA EL FURER Y ALEMANIA
Y VIVA LA RADIO VERDAD[618]

The first three stanzas of the poem refer specifically to *RV*'s influence on the individual listener and are limited to allusions to the Spanish context and to the glory of General Franco and his soldiers, fighting for Spain's future. From the opening lines, *RV*'s role is limited to these personal and local contexts: its broadcasts spur the listener on and

[618] 'To Radio Verdad/Radio Verdad you spur us on/ with your news steeped in valour/ I salute you delirious with enthusiasm/ and you carry on relieving me of my pain//When I hear you with your voice so biased/so full of sweet joy/ I think of Franco the one who guides us/to liberate us once and for all from those mobs// The words which you dedicate to us daily/ I collect them on clean paper/Which is not as clean as Spain will be/When the soldiers finish sweeping it/ Long live Franco and Mussolini/ and Oliveira Salazar/ Long live the Fuhrer and Germany/and long live *Radio Verdad'*. Letter from anonymous listener (Zamora, Spain), *Ibid.* The suggestion that the poet-listener writes down the news heard over *Radio Verdad* is not the only one of its kind even in this collection of letters. Many listeners described how they transcribed broadcasts in order to maintain a physical copy.

focus his mind on the fight for Spain. In the final stanza, however, the focus switches abruptly to the international context: the ode to *RV* is linked to the praise for foreign dictators (as well as for Franco). In this way, *RV*, is presented as an agent at once in the Spanish cause and a wider international cause. If the call of 'long live Radio Verdad' appears alongside the same call for Mussolini, Hitler and Salazar, it would appear that the station was seen as fighting for a common cause. It is through Spanish Nationalism, nurtured and encouraged by *RV*, that the listener-poet arrives at his expression of support also for Mussolini, Salazar and Hitler.[619] Listeners adduce *RV*'s 'patriottismo elevato della [loro] causa' (elevated patriotism of their cause) as well as the expression of the 'ordine, rispetto e carità dei [loro] principi' (order, respect and virtue of our principles) – principles which, due to the Italian intervention on their side, Fascism would appear to share.[620] It seems that, rather than *RV* paying attention to proselytising Italian Fascism, the broadcasts provided encouragement and sustenance to Nationalists fearful of the destruction of their values who, in turn, found comfort in the fact that others, who shared such values, from different nations were fighting alongside them.

3.3.2. The reception of RV *outside Spain*

> *Vi assicuro che tutti gli studenti Italiani […] seguono e seguiranno con il più fraterno amore la lotta che voi conducete, vedendo in voi i continuatori di quella Rivoluzione che da Roma prese l'inizio, ma che non volle limitarsi al cerchio augusto ma angusto dei confini della Penisola, perché la Rivoluzione fascista è civiltà, e solo Dio può mettere confini, gli uomini, mai.*[621]
>
> *(I assure you that all Italian students […] are following and will continue to follow the war you are waging with the most fraternal love, seeing in you the continuers of that Revolution that started in Rome but which did not want to confine itself to the august but narrow borders of the Peninsula, because the Fascist Revolution is civilisation and only God can put down borders and never men).*

[619] Some of the letters end with praise for Italy and Mussolini.
[620] Letter sent from Elias Dreno (Caceres, Spain), *Ibid.*
[621] Letter from Giuseppe Biscossa (Lugano, 18 Apr. 1937), *ibid*.

There is no documentary evidence to suggest that the *Verdad* broadcasts were designed or expected to have an impact on non-Spanish listeners beyond Spanish territory. In fact, quite the opposite seems true with clear expressions (as discussed in section 1) that the main objective was to demoralise Republicans and embolden Nationalists.[622] There is certainly no indication that the broadcasts were intended to influence Italian audiences, especially given that they were never listed in the *programmi esteri* section of *Radiocorriere*. Furthermore, requests made by the Nationalists to the MCP for *RV* to deliver the bulletin also in French and English as a means of focussing directly on the international public opinion were not accepted – *RV* would become an international fact through the radio's broadcasting its Spanishness.[623] However, the summaries of listener letters show that, irrespective of intention, the *Verdad* broadcasts had a reach that expanded far beyond Spanish territory. *RV* was created to appear as a Spanish phenomenon, and the nature of the radio meant that this project automatically assumed an international dimension. If the broadcasts managed to inspire patriotic sentiment in the listeners within Spain, they also played a part in the international perception of the conflict. Letters from abroad were sent by both Spanish emigrants and non-Spaniards (from countries including France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland and Italy). Letters from Spanish emigrants followed mostly the same themes as those sent from within Spanish territory but functioned additionally as a channel through which to enquire about the safety of family members still on Spanish soil.[624] As was the case with the listener letters addressed to Eugenio Coselschi (discussed in this study's Introduction), these broadcasts gave Spanish

[622] 'Nota di rigore per tutti i riparti', ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.60.5.
[623] The USP's propaganda efforts in these languages were concentrated instead on their contributions to the news bulletins of Spanish broadcasters, as discussed in Section 1.
[624] Equally, Nationalists involved in the conflict asked *Radio Verdad* to publicise that they were safe in order to bring comfort to their family members. Such was the case of General Antonio Aranda who wished to inform his parents of his wellbeing. This request for the message to be included in at least two transmissions was communicated via a representative of the Nationalist press and propaganda ministry. See Note from the USP Italo-Spagnolo (6 June 1937), ASMAE, Gab. 1242.

Nationalists abroad support for their views when discussing the events of the war with non-Spaniards. Some such listeners encouraged non-Spanish acquaintances to listen and, in one recorded instance, translated the broadcasts into the language of their host country (French) in order to disseminate it among friends.[625] Foreign listeners (that is to say, non-Spaniards) tuned into *RV* for various reasons: some had previously lived in Spain and fled after the outbreak of war; some simply had an interest in the events and persevered without a high level of Spanish comprehension; and others were students of the Spanish language using their radio set as a means of contact with the language, culture and current affairs of Spain. The letters from this group of listeners display, on the whole, an affinity with the rebellion due to the shared values it claimed to protect and reference the common cause of the Nationalists and similar movements in their respective countries. Letters from both Spanish and non-Spanish listeners abroad confirm the common view that *RV* was the best received station from Nationalist Spain and, barring the occasional query, that listeners were convinced of its Spanish origin.

The letters sent by Spanish emigrants confirm the affection and gratitude felt for *RV* amongst rebel sympathisers as well as showing that the broadcasts played a significant role in connecting them to their homeland. This connection was both practical and sentimental: practical in terms of the military updates and the requests made by listeners for news of specific places and specific people; and sentimental in terms of the hope they provided of a Nationalist victory and the patriotic pride they inspired. For Spaniards living abroad this patriotic pride risked being dented by those who insisted that *RV* was of Italian provenance. One listener declared himself to be 'lieto di sapere che questa stazione si trova in territorio Nazionale, perché gli avevano detto si trattasse della stazione di Roma, Milano, Napoli ecc., e ciò lo umiliava un poco nel suo orgoglio di Spagnolo' (happy to know that this station is

[625] Letter from Jose Castro, ASMAE, Gab. 1242, Listener Summaries from 10 May 1937.

in National territory because they had told him that it was, in fact, from the stations in Rome, Milan, Naples etc. and that humiliated him a little in his pride as a Spaniard).[626] Given that *Verdad*'s Italian provenance was a poorly kept secret, it is highly likely that many distant listeners encountered reports (by newspapers or other radio bulletins) of such claims. This letter, along with many others, is further proof that such reports, even when encountered, did not automatically convince listeners as many dismissed them as conspiratorial. For the listener in question, the very thought that the broadcasts emanated from Italy harmed his patriotic pride. Once again, it was the Spanish quality of *Verdad* and the 'consolazione' it offered which gave it its potency as propaganda. Proud of *RV* as a symbol of Spanish (that is to say, Nationalist) resilience and fortitude in the face of dishonest 'red' propaganda, Spanish emigrants could then rely on its bulletins as a source of evidence in debate with friends of different nationalities. In some cases, Spaniards abroad requested for the bulletins to be broadcast also in other languages (namely French and English) to combat anti-fascist propaganda. One listener stressed that fellow Spanish fugitives in Paris appreciated the broadcasts but that 'la propaganda di *Radio Verdad* sarebbe molto più utile se fosse fatta in francese' (*RV's* propaganda would be much more useful if it was done in French) to combat the Republican sympathies of their new environment.[627]

Distant listeners (that is to say those outside of Spain) of the *Verdad* broadcasts discovered them for a variety of reasons. The majority were actively seeking updates on the Spanish Civil War and sought reports from Spain rather than trusting the coverage in their home country or other international news sources. Some listeners had spent time living in Spain or had family and friends there, giving them a strong personal connection to the

[626] Letter from A. Colòn (Haute Loire, France). ASMAE, Gab. 1242, 'Desiderata espresso dai radioascoltatori di Radio Verdad', Summaries from 22 Apr. 1937.
[627] Letter from J. Clavier (Paris, France), *ibid.,* Summaries from 10 May 1937. See also letter from W.G. Phillips Pension Eden (Genua, Italy) in *ibid*.

country. Many who followed for news updates did so in spite of a weak grasp of Castilian and Catalan, while many listened in the first place precisely because they were students of the Castilian language. Just as the *Verdad* broadcasts reinforced and encouraged the patriotic sentiment of Spanish listeners, they engendered a link between listeners sympathetic to the rebel cause and National Spain itself. This link was, of course, in any practical sense non-existent, given that the listeners who were so moved to write to the Salamanca address were, in fact, unknowingly entering into correspondence with an organ of the Italian state. Ideologically and sentimentally, however, this link was very much real and was based on the recognition, in the Nationalist cause, of common, universal values. The various motivations for these distant listeners to write to the *Verdad* station offer an insight into both the potential of the radio as an internationalising medium and the specific impact of *RV* in fostering international sympathy and support for the rebel cause in Spain. Some listeners wrote in search of practical information of loved ones living in Spain, such as the German who had not heard from his wife and child in Bilbao for many months or the nun who wrote from Sheffield in the hope of an update on her sisters in the Durango convent which had been bombed.[628] There were many instances of Italians writing to *RV* in search of updates on family members who were a part of the Corpo Truppe Volontarie (CTV). The vast majority of those who wrote to the broadcaster's published address did so in order to express their gratitude to the station for keeping them abreast of events and for protecting Spain against the supposed Communist threat. An English woman who had lived in Spain for 19 years before fleeing in August 1936 wrote from Brighton to say that she had purchased a radio set for the express purpose of listening to Spanish stations. Unable to receive any (including Salamanca, Seville, and Madrid), she happened upon *RV* by chance and was 'entusiasta della sua purezza e della sua forza che le fa sembrare essere il locutore in casa sua' (enthusiastic

[628] Letter from unnamed nun (Sheffield, England), *ibid.,* Summaries from 22 Apr. 1937.

about its purity and its strength which make it seem like the speaker was in her home).[629] From that first evening onwards she did not miss a single broadcast as the quality and reliability of the transmissions earned her loyalty as a listener. Due to a close personal connection, Mrs Hatfield wanted to stay in contact with Spain, desiring updates on the events of the Civil War directly from Spanish sources. She attempted to tune into Nationalist (Salamanca and Seville) as well as Republican radios (Madrid), showing perhaps an initial disinterest in the political leanings of the reports. It was, in this case as in many others, the superior technical reception of *RV* beyond Spanish borders that permitted it to be in the conversation of being the foremost Spanish radio of the Civil War. The summary of Mrs Hatfield's letter does not show any strong ideological sympathies with the rebels, rather gratitude to *RV* for keeping her up to date with events. In this way, the technical superiority of *RV* allowed for the controlling of the narrative around the Civil War beyond Spanish territory.

Letters from other listeners who had previously lived in Spain show much more overt ideological sympathies with the rebels and express gratitude for the service *RV* rendered in shaping public opinion and contributing to the war effort. An Italian listener had such positive memories of her time living in Spain during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera she hoped that 'sorga il trionfo dell'idea falangista' (the triumph of the Falangist idea would rise up) after the rebel's eventual victory.[630] When the war was won, a German wrote to celebrate the 'tan ansiada victoria final de la España que siempre he amado, en la que he vivido hace mucho años ya' (much anticipated final victory of the Spain he has always loved and in which he has been living for many years), enclosing with his letter 'un periódico con el discurso del Fuhrer […] sobre la liberación de España sobre el bolchevismo' (a newspaper

[629] Letter from Mrs Elena Hatfield (Brighton, England) in *ibid.,* Summaries from 10 May 1937.
[630] Letter from Luisa De Andreis (Genua, Italy), *ibid.*

containing the Fuhrer's speech on the liberation of Spain from Bolschevism).[631] In both cases, the listener's connection to Spain was distinctly political and the broadcasts were associated with the attempt to save the Spain that they loved. This ideological connection is also, particularly in the second example, associated with a wider set of values and linked directly with the listener's home nation. The German listener's sending of a copy of Hitler's speech is a sign of inter-national solidarity, the rebel's victory serving to fuse his native and adoptive cultures – a victory for both and for the values which unite them. This connection between the two countries and cultures is, in other cases, born also of contact with Spanish migrants. For instance, one letter tells of how *RV* was much listened to in Alassio, Liguria because of a sizeable contingent of Spanish 'rifugiati' and Italians who used to winter in Spain.[632] The letter summary suggests that the presence of these 'rifugiati' increased the interest in the events of the war amongst the local population. As foreign observers of the Spanish Civil War, they show an awareness of the nature and importance of the international propaganda war surrounding it. They suggest, along with many other listeners, that *RV* broadcast also in French and English to combat the 'red' propaganda in these languages. This repeated request suggests that listeners with an interest in the events of the Civil War would listen to broadcasts in many languages, often regardless of their level of comprehension. Their investment in the Nationalist cause led them, in turn, to encourage *RV* to broadcast in more languages, with one listener even offering to act as the German-language announcer.[633]

In fact, many distant listeners of *RV* confessed their lack of fluency in either Castilian or Catalan which did not hold them back from listening due to their interest in the events

[631] Letter from Julius Frank (Braunschweig, Germany) in 'Resumen de cartas recibidas en "Radio Verdad"' (29 Apr. 1939), *ibid.*
[632] Letter from W.G. Phillips Pension Eden (Genoa, Italy) in *ibid.,* Summaries from 10 May 1937.
[633] Letter from Junita Kronig (Hamburg, Germany), *ibid.*

and their support for General Franco. For many, this language barrier was not perceived as a negative. Rather it was *RV*'s Spanishness which appealed, as they hoped to receive news from the source. This was particularly the case for students of Spanish language and culture, such as the fourteen-year-old German boy who followed the broadcasts in excited anticipation of the Nationalists seizing Madrid.[634] A group of Italians learning Spanish wrote to explain how they listened to the broadcasts with the same anxiety with which they listened to radio bulletins on the Italian conquest of Ethiopia.[635] This supposedly direct contact with *National* Spain served to strengthen the sympathy felt for the rebel cause amongst those of nationalist and fascist political persuasion. Many letters from distant listeners expressed ideological and spiritual affinities along national lines. Italians expressed their support for their 'popolo fratello' (fraternal people), one Frenchman wrote to dedicate his 'tessera di Croix de Feu a *Radio Verdad*' (Croix de Feu membership card to *Radio Verdad*) and many listeners of different nationalities signed their letters off with a 'brazo en alto' (fascist salute), showing their support for the Nationalist cause in Spain as part of the wider fight for a new fascist Europe.[636] Adopting the rebel cause as their own, many distant listeners requested to hear Nationalist hymns played over *RV*. Others asked for memorabilia of the war. One listener asked for stamps from *National* Spain for his son who was a collector.[637] Similarly, an Irishman (writing to express his deep satisfaction as a Catholic at the rebel victory) asked for 'una bandérilla con los colores de España o una medalla falangista como recuerdo de la gran victoria española sobre los rojos' (a flag of the Spanish colours or a Falangist medal as a souvenir of the great Spanish victory over the reds).[638]

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[634] Letter from Rodolfo Baum (Manheim, Germany), *ibid.*
[635] Letter from E. Calichiopulo ('a nome suo e di molti altri') (Verona, Italy), *ibid.*
[636] *Ibid*.
[637] Letter from Ramon Colomer (Lecce, Italy) in *ibid.,* Summaries from 22 Apr. 1937.
[638] Letter from Aidan J. Pendeo (Dublin, Ireland) in *ibid.,* Summaries from 29 Apr. 1939.

3.4 Conclusion: Radio Verdad*'s successful intervention in the Spanish Civil War and bringing National Spain to the Wireless World*

'guerra difficile a combattersi, per la quale le armi non bastano' (a difficult war to fight, one for which weapons are not enough)

Benito Mussolini[639]

The character of *RV* was eventually changed drastically. After the end of the Civil War, it was presented as a collaborative venture between Spain and Italy (with Italy ostensibly being invited to collaborate on the previously Spanish programme). On 10 June 1939 *RVIS* was begun, closing the chapter on the *RV* military bulletin which we have analysed here. Broadcasting from Roma I and Bologna from 20:30 every evening and lasting for thirty minutes, each *RVIS* broadcast consisted of fifteen minutes of both Italian and Spanish orchestra music followed by a fifteen-minute bulletin containing both Spanish and Italian news. The article in the *Radiocorriere* announcing the new programme stressed that it was organised 'allo scopo di cementare sempre più i rapporti culturali tra l'Italia e la Spagna che hanno assieme versato il sangue dei loro figli per la causa dell'ordine e della civiltà contro il bolscevismo' (with the aim of cementing even more the cultural relations between Italy and Spain who, together, have spilled the blood of their sons for the cause of order and civilisation against Bolschevism).[640] The new programme was inaugurated with the speeches of Dino Alfieri (Italian Minister of Popular Culture), Serrano Suñer (Spanish Minister of the Interior) and General Gambara, the 'eroico comandante dei nostri Legionari'

[639] Yvon De Begnac, *Taccuini*, p.562.
[640] 'Radio Verdad', *RC*, N.25 (18-24 June 1939), p.5.

(heroic commander of our Legionaries).[641] All three speeches were geared towards lauding the common struggle of the forces during the Spanish Civil War and highlighting the parallels between the two peoples and their respective strongmen leaders. Expressing his pride in having Italy by Spain's side, Suñer stressed, 'non dimenticheremo mai quale significata nella nostra comune crociata abbia assunto il nostro incontro colla Gran Madre, Roma' (we will never forget the significance in our common crusade assumed by our meeting with the Great Mother, Rome) before pronouncing 'questo duplice grido di guerra e di trionfo: 'Viva l'Italia! Arriba Espana' (this double triumphant war cry: 'Long live Italy! Long live Spain!).[642] In this vein, *RVIS* became a 'terreno prevalentemente celebrativo e rievocativo delle reciproche benemerenze fasciste con uno sfruttamento […] di personaggi venuti alla ribalta nella guerra civile' (a ground predominantly for the celebration and commemoration of the reciprocal fascist commendations making use of individuals who came to prominence during the civil war) as well as a forum for cultural exchange between the two countries.[643] As the propagandistic demands of WWII drew attention to other geo-political contexts (Spain remaining neutral in the conflict), the prominence and attention afforded *RVIS* gradually petered out.[644]

We will soon turn our attention in Chapter 4 to the manner in which *RV* (as the war was drawing to a close) and *RVIS* (after the war) was used to influence the formation of the new Spanish state by stressing the fraternity born of the two nations' common *romanità* (a fraternity in which Italian Fascism, to borrow a phrase from the contemporary anti-Fascist

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[641] *Ibid.*
[642] *Ibid.*
[643] Monticone, *Il Fascismo*, p.159. Some titles of RVIS broadcasts included: 'Prefazione all'edizione italiana degli scritti del cardinale primate di Spagna' (Guido Manacorda); 'Italia y nosotros' (Dr. Hector Bernardo); 'I problemi della Spagna di Franco' (Concetto Pettinato); 'Impresiones de Roma: Hé hablado con el duce' (Fernando Fernàndez de Còrdoba); 'Roma, meca del cinema' (de Còrdoba); 'La medaglia d'oro capitan Carlos de Haya, gloria della Aviación española' (Tenente Colonello Vincenzo Lioy). See Telegram from Pavolini to General Gambara in ACS, MCP, B.162, F.17.
[644] The final mention of *RVIS* in the *Radiocorriere* comes in the 25 Feb. 1940 edition before Italy's entry into the war.

historian Guglielmo Ferrero, possessed the 'maggiorasco' – the eldest son's inheritance).[645] Our purpose in this chapter, however, has been to assess *RV* as a black propaganda project producing military bulletins in the context of a conflict – a conflict which was at once national (as a civil war) and international (given the foreign powers and foreign volunteers involved as well as the international ideological battleground occupied by liberal democracy, communism and fascism). Our assessment of *RV*'s organisation, objectives, and impact has been revelatory in multiple key ways in the wider context of our exploration of Fascist Italy's role in the wireless world. In the first instance, bringing the realities of the *RV* project into relief aids our understanding of the Italian intervention more broadly. Contrary to the assertions of the existing scholarship, *RV* was not intended to counter the reputational damage inflicted on Italian Fascism by the Italian-language broadcasts emanating from Spain. Instead, *RV*'s military bulletins were intended to embolden Nationalist supporters and dishearten Republicans with a view to supporting General Franco's campaign. In Mussolini's words after the end of the civil war, 'il nostro aiuto al generalissimo Franco costituisce un contributo alla vera pace in Europa e nel mondo' (the help we gave to Generalissimo Franco constitutes a contribution to true peace in Europe and in the world).[646] Winning the war was the ultimate protection of Italy's geo-political goals and *RV* was produced in service of that end. The overall success of these bulletins (evidenced by their use as a news source in newspapers, their high listener engagement and the documented appreciation of the Nationalist hierarchy) runs counter to the wider longstanding historiographical assumption that the Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War did more harm than good to Franco's cause. As such, the existing scholarship assumes *RV* to fit this apparent trend and, frankly, does not even investigate the possibility of its success. This

[645] Guglielmo Ferrero, *Roma nella cultura moderna* (Treves, 1910), p.54.
[646] Yvon De Begnac, *Taccuini,* p.554.

chapter, instead, has outlined the success of its message which focussed heavily on promoting a vision of *ispanità* to its listenership (primarily national but, as a secondary consequence of the radio's nature, also international). Uncovering *RV*'s message and focus allows for an understanding of the implications of the radio's border-defying nature on the regime's mission to influence foreign affairs. By having the Italian radio masquerade as an independent National station, the regime's propaganda machine was able to influence not only national and international public opinion but also help shape the direction of the Nationalist movement from within. Rather than attempting overtly to stamp Fascist Italy's authority and outward leadership on *RV*'s content, instead it focussed on helping Spain develop its own (hopefully) fascistic movement born in blood. Mussolini highlighted the centrality of *ispanità* in the *Taccuini Mussoliniani.* Praising Franco for assuming the role of 'legittimista dell'ispanità' (legitimiser of *ispanità*), the Duce stressed, 'siamo immersi fino al collo' (we are immersed up to our neck) in the Spanish Civil War 'perché il trionfo dell'ispanità unitariamente franchista ci serve per non finire domani assediati nel nostro mare' (because the triumph of a singularly Francoist *ispanità* helps us not to end up beseiged in our own sea tomorrow).[647] The triumph of an authoritarian nationalism particular to the Spanish context was essential to Fascism's objectives. Mussolini says, 'guardiamoli in faccia, a uno a uno, i nemici che fronteggiano Franco e noi' (let's face up to them, one by one, the enemies facing Franco and us).[648] Fascist Italy and National Spain shared the same enemies and it is the destruction of opposition through violent action that is the crucial cornerstone of any national fascistic movement. As the war drew to a close, attention indeed turned to influencing this movement and bringing it into the Italian sphere of influence. However, before this could happen, the movement had to win power precisely as a national

[647] *Ibid.,* p.553: *ibid.*, p562.
[648] *Ibid.,* p.552.

movement through the destruction of fundamentally anti-fascist forces (liberalism and communism). As Italy was the foreign power with the most invested in a Franco victory and according to Mussolini's belief that it was a 'guerra difficile a combattersi, per la quale le armi non bastano' (difficult war to fight, one for which weapons are not enough), *RV* was the main propaganda arm in bringing about a victory).[649] Therefore, by aiding Franco in victory, *RV* helped bring a movement to power which would help protect Italy's interests in the Mediterranean and which could be integrated into the growing inter-nationalist network of nations over which Fascism competed for political and cultural predominance.

RV, as an Italian programme masquerading as Spanish broadcasts, reveals crucial features of the contemporary wireless world. The existing scholarship assumed *RV*'s failure thanks to the fact that its provenance was immediately discovered by national governments and broadcasters. We have seen, however, how this revelation did not automatically mean that listeners were aware of its true origin or, indeed, if they were that they believed the reports. Summaries of the approximately 30,000 listener letters sent to *RV*'s pseudo-headquarters in Salamanca reveal that many listeners firmly believed that *RV* was an independent pro-Nationalist Spanish station broadcasting from within National territory. Therefore, through this novel use of the medium in the context of war, Fascist Italy demonstrated the ways in which the wireless world (viewed by many in its internationalist, humanitarian light) could be manipulated and destabilised in order to serve the ends of deception and distinct political goals. The project also demonstrates how the wireless world can be navigated in order to interfere in foreign political affairs without consequence. In addition, just as we saw in Chapter 2, *RV* displays the Fascist propagandists' ability to engage with, manipulate and create the networks that both allow and are born of the interconnectedness of the wireless world. Diplomatic networks were essential for feedback

[649] *Ibid.,* p.562.

on the programme's running. Whilst *RV* was an Italian venture, its military bulletins were written with up-to-date information sent by the Nationalists who also provided feedback (and expressed their appreciation). The biggest network at the heart of the broadcasts, however, was that between the fictitious station and its listeners. The listener letters sent to the press office in Salamanca, coming not only from within National territory but also from abroad, exhibit the internationalising impact of the radio. *RV,* created as an ostensibly Spanish fact with the aim of bringing about a Nationalist victory, once launched into the wireless world instantly became a transnational phenomenon which informed distant listeners on the conflict's developments and, in turn, promoted and strengthened ideological ties between Franco's cause and other nationalistic and fascistic movements and regimes. As we saw in Chapter 2, the regime was accustomed to receiving and responding to letters from foreign listeners. Indeed, it was forthcoming in responding to these letters, especially with the sending of printed propaganda materials. The same practices were employed with the *RV* correspondence. In this instance, however, responses were drafted from the supposedly independent Spanish *RV* station, with the Italians further adopting the role of a Spanish Nationalist organisation. Once *RV*'s reach (both within and outside of Spain) became clear, *RV* focussed heavily on increasing listener engagement further still by dedicating five minutes of each broadcast to responding to listener letters and by instituting a competition (the prize for which was a trip to a great European country – Italy). Mussolini said of the Spanish Civil War, 'non abbiamo vinto soltanto sul fronte della guerra. Abbiamo vinto anche la battaglia ideologica contro il nuovo bolscevismo del signor Stalin' (we have not won only on the battlefield. We have also won the ideological battle against the new Bolshevism of Mr. Stalin).[650] Ultimately, *RV* played a crucial part in both of these victories. As part of the massive increase in the Italian intervention, *RV* played an important role in

[650] *Ibid.,* p.564.

bolstering the morale of Nationalist supporters and soldiers as well as disheartening Republicans. Furthermore, thanks to the inherently transnational nature of the wireless world, the ostensibly national broadcaster was able to contribute to the international ideological battle that so strongly typified the Spanish Civil War and, indeed, motivated Fascist Italy's very involvement in it. *RV*'s message elicited messages of support from supporters of Mussolini, Hitler and Salazaar and emboldened their support not just for their national regimes or movements but strengthened their belief in a wider movement towards a fascist Europe born in the struggle of battle against the common enemies. Many of these letters were written to give heart to those fighting for Franco and to let them know that they were part of an ulterior, meaningful universal struggle and, by engaging with these letters on air, *RV* no doubt aimed to consolidate this message of solidarity. In the next chapter, we will see the ways in which the regime's propagandists aimed to convert the military character of *RV* into a means of influencing fascistically the formation of the new single-party state born out of the civil war.

Chapter 4 - Mapping the New Roman Empire onto the Wireless World: *Romanità* between shared heritage, values and civilising conquest

Abstract

Recent scholarship has uncovered the centrality of the *myth of Rome* in Fascist ideology and propaganda, stressing its potency as a cornerstone of Fascist modernity. As the modern embodiment of ancient Rome, Fascist Italy would erase the errors of liberal Rome and bring Italy the glory its privileged relationship with history demanded. The *romani della modernità* (Romans of modernity) would also, therefore, take up Rome's imperial civilising mission. Despite focus on the significance of *romanità* in the domestic sphere, scholarship is lacking on the role of *romanità* both as a tool for constructing an international hierarchy of peoples and as an international tool for Italy's soft power. This chapter seeks to understand how *romanità* over the radio depicts the Fascist understanding of the (wireless) world and equally explores how *romanità* was used as the most central propaganda theme in its pursuit of *spiritual imperialism*. In so doing, this chapter considers a variety of geographical contexts to explore the polyvalence and malleability of *romanità* as a theme based on the target audience's ancestry (whether they belonged to the Latin brotherhood of nations) and values (whether they subscribed to fascism as the modern ideological embodiment of Rome).

4.1. Introduction - Back to the Future: The 'Etherisation' of Romanità*, the Eternal Present and Italian International Primacy*

'We are all, in so far as we inherit the civilisation of Europe, still citizens of the Roman Empire'[651]

\- T.S. Eliot, *Virgil and the Christian World*

Among the myths propagated by the Fascist propaganda machine none were more central than the myth of Rome. Evocations of *romanità* (the spirit of Rome) pervaded the culture of the *ventennio*, being used to bolster images of Italian greatness, as a key component in the myth of the new Fascist man, and as a crucial determining factor in the regime's view of Italy's role internationally. Fascist *romanità* has been something of a fault line in the historiographical understanding of both Fascist ideology and propaganda. While there was previously a tendency to consider images of ancient Roman grandeur and glory as little more than low-hanging fruit and, as such, testament to the regime's ideological vacuity, recent scholarship has dedicated significant effort to assessing *romanità*'s significance both to Fascist ideology and the regime's cultural policy. Rather than seeing Fascist *romanità* as 'null'altro che l'espressione grottesca della fabbrica fascista del vuoto ideologico' (nothing more than the grotesque expression of the Fascist production of an ideological void) and as 'being of merely rhetorical and symbolic value', recent scholarship has come to appreciate the myth of Rome as 'a revolutionary project for modernity, a coherent language with which to articulate aspirations for the contemporary world'.[652] Instead of accepting the 'notion that *romanità* amounted to little more than bombast', the scholarship increasingly understands and accepts *romanità* as 'a program to be actualized, a history not to be venerated but to be

[651] T.S. Eliot, 'Virgil and the Christian World' was initially delivered as a radio address on the BBC in 1951 before being subsequently reproduced in the BBC's weekly magazine, *The Listener*.
[652] Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra* (Editori Laterza, 2010), p.vii.

made'.[653] The approach to Fascist *romanità* has been further elucidated by the study of the Fascist conception of history, led by Claudio Fogu and his notion of the *historic imaginary*.[654] The distinction which Fogu stresses between the 'historical' and the 'historic' is essential to a nuanced understanding of the Fascist myth of Rome and is one which recurs throughout this chapter. Fogu explains that this distinction between the two adjectives began in the eighteenth century with historians 'assigning to the former the meaning of "belonging to the past" and to the latter that of "forming an important part or item of history; noted or celebrated in history"'.[655] The Fascist conception of Rome was not, in these terms, merely historical; it was the cornerstone of the regime's conception of its historic mission. It was employed not merely as a hollow nostalgic longing for the past, rather as the driving force behind its history making. As Aristotle Kallis has phrased it, 'Fascist temporality was rooted in an 'eternal present', intersecting with the 'time-less presence' of *romanità* as its 'ineliminable essence'.[656] If 'behind the facade of the seemingly opportunistic use of 'Roman' fetishes and catchwords, there existed a coherent doctrinal (fascist) perspective on history', it was a history which was being lived through, which was fused with the history of ancient Rome by the eternal *romanità* of the Italic race: an eternal history; an eternal present. Or, as Freud wrote, using Rome as an analogy for the human mind, 'an entity […] in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one'.[657] Equally, it is thanks to this sense of eternal present that, as Joshua Arthurs has expertly established, Italy's ancient past was a key component of the Fascist concept of modernity.[658]

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[653] Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p.27.
[654] Claudio Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary: Politics of History in Fascist Italy* (University of Toronto Press, 2003).
[655] *Ibid.,* p.33.
[656] Aristotle Kallis, *The Third Rome, 1922-1943: The Making of the Fascist Capital* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.75.
[657] Sigmund Freud, *Civilisation, Society and Religion* (Penguin, 1991), p.257.
[658] Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity.*

One justification for the delegitimising of *romanità*'s significance within the Fascist project has undoubtedly been the fact that the theme had been (and continues to be) one drawn on by a multitude of political and cultural actors. Historian Pier Giorgio Zunino describes *romanità* as 'a sea in which anyone could go fishing, for any occasion' and 'an inexhaustible hunting ground'.[659] Indeed, important collaborative studies have displayed the extent to which what Nolte termed the search for 'distant models' is common across time and space.[660] This chapter outlines how this ubiquity of ancient Rome was central to its rampant use as a propaganda theme on the radio. However, first, it is important to address the relevance of this ubiquity in the context of our investigations and to establish the context in which the Fascist myth of Rome first blossomed both within Italy and internationally. It is important to remember, as Visser stresses, that Fascism 'did not invent the cultic approach of the Roman past' while also endeavouring to assess the particularities of its understanding and use of the myth. Visser reminds us that the myth of Rome 'flourished already in the context of the ardent colonialism of the Italian bourgeoisie from the late nineteenth century onwards'.[661] Furthermore, the idea of Rome was evoked during the Risorgimento. Giuseppe Mazzini's vision of a *Terza Roma* (after the Rome of the Empire and the Rome of the popes) relied both on the 'idea that Italy was the heir to Rome' and 'the idea that Italy had a civilizing mission'.[662] This appeal to Rome by those wishing to form a united Italy was driven by the idea that ancient Rome was the only other time in history that the Italian lands and peoples had been united under the same banner. Internationally, France was decidedly

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[659] Pier Giorgio Zunino, *L'ideologia del fascismo: Miti, credenze e valori nella stabilizzazione del regime* (il Mulino, 1985), p.72. Within the Italian context, one might think, for example, of the group of liberal anti-Fascist deputies who left the parliament in objection to Fascist tactics naming themselves the Aventine Succession as an indication of the habit of drawing on images of ancient Rome as common to all political persuasions.
[660] Catharine Edwards, *Roman Presences*; Helen Roche and Kyriakos N. Demetriou (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Classics: Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Brill, 2017).
[661] Romke Visser, 'Fascist Doctrine and the Cult of the Romanita', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 27.1 (1992), pp. 5-22 (p.6.).
[662] Fuentes Codera and Dogliani (eds.), *Continental Transfers.*

the axis around which ideas about Latin civilisation revolved even if 'the late nineteenth-century competition in the Mediterranean between France and Italy had by the beginning of the new century turned into a "fraternité latine" led by intellectual circles'.[663]

One such intellectual was the historian and novelist Guglielmo Ferrero, noted among many other works for his five-volume history of ancient Rome. One of the most prominent intellectual figures of liberal Italy (and a committed anti-Fascist from the beginning) and one of international renown, Ferrero co-edited the *Rivista delle nazioni latine* (between 1916 and 1919) which promoted unity between Latin cultures with the emphasis heavily on France and Italy as the guiding nations. In order to display how the idea of Rome was seen even in pre-Fascist Italy as an opportunity to gain international standing for Italy, we may turn to the speech delivered by Ferrero on the *Natale di Roma* (the mythic anniversary of the foundation of Rome) in 1910 at the Campidoglio displays how the idea of Rome was seen even in pre-Fascist Italy as an opportunity to gain international standing for the nation. Ferrero proposes that in an age which is 'profondamente materialista' (profoundly materialist) and in which 'si va suddividendo in tanti popoli e lingue e culture diverse' (we are subdividing into many different peoples, languages and cultures), the world feels more than ever the need for 'una cultura comune' (a common culture).[664] Crucially, if this common culture is derived from the shared inheritance of ancient Roman civilisation, Ferrero asserts, 'noi figli di Roma goderemo come di un maggiorasco intellettuale nel mondo' (we sons of Rome will profit from the eldest son's intellectual inheritance throughout the world).[665] As such, Ferrero envisages a scenario in which Italians could 'mantener tutti i popoli […] tributari in qualche parte alla nostra cultura' (keep all peoples as tributaries of our culture in

[663] *Ibid.,* p.4.
[664] Guglielmo Ferrero, *Roma nella cultura moderna*, p.52.
[665] *Ibid.*, p.54.

some way).[666] Ferrero, here, highlights succinctly the key notion assessed in this chapter: belonging. Ferrero tells the crowds at Campidoglio that Latin culture belongs to the Italians, they are the main inheritor of Rome and it is beholden upon them to share this culture with other peoples who will remain minor partners in the great Latin estate. Evocations of Rome and the eternal Roman spirit were also prominent during the campaigns for Italy to join WW1. Italy's very entry into the war was depicted as an opportunity to join her Latin brothers in the fight against German barbarism. Gabriele D'Annunzio made frequent recourse to this image, calling for Latin civilisation to be 'collegata contro le barberie' (united again barbarisms) in a speech made in Rome during the *maggio radioso*.[667] He stressed, furthermore, the divinity of the Italian cause by saying that 'Iddio creò schiava di Roma la Vittoria' (God made Victory Rome's slave) and that 'è romano vincere e vivere nella vita eterna della Patria' (it is Roman to win and to live in the eternal life of the Fatherland).[668]

The prevalence of various myths of Rome in all Latin countries, the pre-existing notion within Italy that it should inform both the sense of *italianità* and Italy's cultural and political role internationally all informed the centrality of *romanità* in Fascist Italy. It must also be acknowledged how images of Rome came to be woven into the fabric of the culture of Fascist Italy. Multiple historians have agreed that the idea of Rome was not 'disseminated "from above" by the regime's political and ideological elite'.[669] Rather, it was 'articulated, elaborated, and promoted primarily from "below" by a dedicated group of historians, classicists, archaeologists, and other cultural producers'.[670] While this chapter explores the

[666] *Ibid.*
[667] Gabriele D'Annunzio, 'Arringa al Popolo di Roma Accalcato nelle vie e acclamante, La sera del XII Maggio MCMXV', in *Prose di Ricerca I* (Mondadori, 2005), p.41.
[668] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.
[669] Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p.6.
[670] *Ibid.*

official use of *romanità* as a means of drawing up a hierarchy of peoples and as a propagandistic theme, it is important to note just how independently the myth of Rome survived and spread in Italy and beyond. It is the very fact of its natural popularity that made Rome a viable unifying myth in the minds of the regime's propagandists. Rome was placed at the heart of the first Fascist attempts to secure Italian leadership among the burgeoning international fascist movements. The name of the international movement which the regime established did not carry the name either of Italy nor Fascism and was, instead, called the Comitati d'azione per l'universalità di Roma (CAUR – Action Committees for the Universality of Rome).[671] Here Rome and Italian Fascism were coterminous. The strategic advantage of centring the new movement around the idea of Rome was that it made clear Italian centrality and cemented key guiding principles at the heart of the international movement. Crucially, it also emphasised the exclusion of Nazi Germany which will soon be explored in depth. The centrality of Rome did respond to an international current which understood Roman civilisation as central to fascism. James Strachey Barnes, whom we encountered in Chapter 2, for instance, defined fascism 'as a political and social movement having as its objective the re-establishment of a political and social order, based upon the main current of traditions that have formed our European civilisation, traditions created by Rome, first by the Empire and subsequently by the Catholic Church'.[672] The CAUR's activity was plagued by continual disagreements by the participating nations (including over the centrality of the universality of Rome) and with the growing alliance with Nazi Germany the organisation's *raison d'être* ceased and, in turn, its activity stopped. The collapse of the CAUR 'did not entail Fascism's complete abandonment of a discourse based on the "idea of

[671] On the CAUR see Marco Cuzzi, *L'Internazionale delle Camicie Nere. I CAUR 1933-1939* (Mursia, 2005) and Aristotle Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR: Italian Fascism, the "myth of Rome" and the pursuit of international primacy', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 50.4-5 (2016), pp.359-377.
[672] Strachey Barnes, *Universal Aspect*, p.35.

Rome", rather 'it resulted in its recalibration as a cultural weapon of Italian primacy, but now with a much wider global remit'.[673]

The existing scholarship has, so far, done little to conduct a systematic assessment of *romanità* (used interchangeably with *latinità* in international propaganda and, therefore, so too in this chapter) as a theme for Fascist international propaganda. Tentative steps have been made to look at *romanità* through a more international lens including contributions in the edited volume *Costruire la nuova Italia* and a recent effort was made to uncover exchanges based on Latinity made between Spain, Italy and Argentina(not exclusively during the Fascist years) in the edited volume *Continental Transfers*.[674] More work is needed, in particular, on the Istituto di relazioni culturali per l'estero (IRCE – Institute for cultural relations with foreign countries) whose 'mandate was to broadcast Italian culture abroad and to highlight the foreign cultures' debt to the universal, hegemonic traditions of Rome' and the civilising impulse and centrality of Rome was present in Cinecittà's original motto and mission statement: 'perchè l'Italia Fascista diffonda nel mondo più rapida la luce della civiltà romana' (for Fascist Italy to spread in the quickest time the light of Roman civilisation).[675] This chapter assesses the theme of *romanità* in the context of two crucial aspects of the Fascist international vision: transnationalism and hierarchy. The branch of scholarship that considers fascism as an international phenomenon has brought into relief the exchanges, transfers and imitations that took place between fascist and fascistic regimes and movements in the inter-war period. Aristotle Kallis, who has done much to elucidate the nature of 'fascistisation' and coined the term 'hybridization', stresses how 'every new entanglement, interpretation, selective reading, and "hybrid" experiment created new points

[673] Kallis, 'From CAUR to EUR', p.373.
[674] Fabrizio Oppedisano, Paola S. Salvatori, and Federico Santangelo (eds.), *Costruire la nuova Italia. Miti di Roma e fascismo* (Viella, 2023); Fuentes Codera and Dogliani (eds.), *Continental Transfers.*
[675] Vezzani, 'Fascist Indirect Propaganda', p.161.

of reference for others'.[676] Just as was the case politically with the CAUR, this chapter explores how *romanità* was proposed as a reference point which could be refracted and adopted by each movement and each national listenership. If Paxton asserts that 'the language and symbols of a fascist movement have to be familiar and reassuring to the people of that country', the myth of Rome was considered one which could be adapted by every national movement. This, in turn, allowed for a hierarchisation of nations. As Martin tells us, 'it was the hierarchical aspects of international cultural life that commanded the attention of Nazis and Italian Fascists in the 1930s'.[677] The premise behind the *romanità* expounded in these broadcasts is that 'Europe's common Roman heritage underpinned Italian claims to cultural pre-eminence' and that this pre-eminence meant a 'debt' which 'created a bond between […] nations, not as fraternal equals but as parent and child'.[678] From the evidence of this chapter follows an assessment of the image of a Rome which, according to Mussolini, 'quando i popoli riconoscevano la sua superiorità, li accoglieva nel suo grembo; li faceva cittadini della sua città' (when peoples recognised her superiority, she welcomed them into her bosom; she made them citizens of her city), in turn assessing the mechanisms of belonging at the heart of the myth of Rome.[679]

With 'le ambizioni radiofoniche di Mussolini […] rivolte soprattutto verso l'estero' (Mussolini's radio broadcasting ambitions aimed above all at foreign countries), the theme of *romanità* was a common central theme in broadcasts in all languages and belonging to the resurgent Roman empire was determined along two key axes: heritage and ideology.[680] That is to say, those who shared in the inheritance of Rome and those who embodied the

[676] Aristotle Kallis, 'The "Fascist Effect"', p.20.
[677] Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order*, p.3.
[678] Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity*, p.131.
[679] Benito Mussolini, *Opera Omnia* (vol. XX) (Florence, 1956), p.305 (4 June 1924).
[680] Laura Branciforte, *Donne in onda nel ventennio fascista. Tra modernità e tradizione (1924-1939)* (Rubbettino, 2018), p.40.

spirit of Rome and accepted the superiority of Roman civilisation. This chapter will assess the interplay between these two elements and how their representation functioned in radio propaganda. Whereas Emilio Gentile writes of the 'pietrificazione del mito fascista della romanità' (petrification of the Fascist myth of *romanità*), rendering and capturing the Fascist vision of Rome into stone, our investigation deals with what might, along the same lines, be termed the 'etherisation' of Rome.[681] The radio broadcasts examined in this chapter take the material evidence of Roman civilisation and turn it into something as ethereal as the wireless world itself; they attempt to capture the ever-lasting spirit of Rome that pervades, in the Fascist view, all of western civilisation. Galeazzo Ciano stressed the 'fratellanza latina' (Latin brotherhood) to Latin American listeners.[682] Badoglio reminded Brazilians that 'l'Italia ascrive a suo vanto l'aver gittato il seme della vita e della civiltà latina sul suolo brasiliano' (Italy takes pride in having sowed the seed of Latin life and civilisation in Brazilian soil) and warned them that 'l'Italia, ricca di millenaria esperienza, sa che le amicizie si vagliano nelle difficoltà, e non dimentica' (Italy, rich with a thousand-year history, knows that friendships become clear in moments of difficulty, and does not forget).[683] Bontempelli told Uruguyans that 'paesi che hanno tale comunanza di storia e di gloria non possono staccarsi nella solidarietà che li stringe per avversità di eventi o perversità di uomini' (countries that have such commonalities of history and glory cannot breakaway because of adversity of events or perversity of men from the solidarity that binds them) and Federzioni reminded Latin America of Colombo's role in its discovery, of course claiming the explorer's Italianness.[684] In all such instances, and in those that follow, the Fascist regime used the radio to communicate a feeling which could be evoked, certainly, by buildings and

[681] Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra*, p.vii.
[682] Galeazzo Ciano's speech on 19 Apr. 1935 was to inaugurate the beginning of special programmes to Latin America. See Monticone, 'La radio italiana', pp.287-8.
[683] Pietro Badoglio, *RC*, N.38 (13-19 Sep. 1936), p.5.
[684] Massimo Bontempelli, 'Gloria Latina', *ibid.*; Luigi Federzoni, 'Colombo e l'America Latina', *RC*, N.42 (17-23 Oct. 1937), p.3.

monuments but which had to live in the hearts of its listeners, something which could not be pinned down, just like the waves on which the message was delivered. With the conviction that 'non si comprende il fascismo e la storia del fascismo […] se non si comprende l'origine e la natura del mito fascista della romanità e dell'impero' (one cannot understand Fascism and the history of Fascism without understanding the origin and the nature of the Fascist myth of *romanità* and the Empire) and that 'Fascist propaganda and rhetoric cannot be fully understood without reference to the regime's growing obsession with ancient Rome', this chapter explores the theme of *romanità* both as an essential component in understanding the regime's activity in the wireless world and as a means of understanding how the theme was used in international propaganda.[685] In line with an understanding of a Fascist myth of Rome which was 'flexible and shifting' and with 'infinite possibilities and identities', this chapter aims to assess the malleability of *romanità* as a tool for international propaganda.

Before discussing the treatment of *romanità* over the radio, a brief introduction to the temporal and geographical distribution of the chosen case studies is required. As discussed in the Introduction, the focus of this study lies predominantly in the 1930s for two crucial reasons. First of all, Mussolini's attention in the 1920s was absorbed by domestic politics as he sought to establish and stabilise his dictatorship. Whilst there were prominent currents close to the regime which were planning (and acting towards) the growth of Fascist soft power (or *spiritual imperialism* in the terminology of Franco Ciarliantini), Mussolini was (publicly, at least) steadfastly committed to the line that Fascism was an Italian phenomenon and, therefore, not an article for export. A crucial turning point in the resources committed to building Fascist soft power was the advent of German National Socialism. On one hand, the association of Hitler's ideology with Fascism risked damaging the widely favourable

[685] Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra*, p.v.; John Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester University Press, 1995), p.85.

view of Fascism even in the liberal democracies. On the other, Nazi Germany posed a threat when it came to the leadership of the many global fascistic and nationalistic movements. This rivalry was central in the intense propagandistic focus on *romanità* in the international context as it provided an opportunity to assert Fascist cultural, historical and, therefore, political superiority. The second motive for the focus on the 1930s in this study is simply the growth in radio technology which permitted systematic and wide-ranging international broadcasting. The establishment of the Centro Radio Imperiale (Imperial Radio Centre) as well as the construction of the Radio Bari stations meant that, through short and medium wave transmitters, the Italian network's international reach allowed access to listeners throughout the wireless world. As seen in Chapter 2, this consistent growth in the network was accompanied by an increasing attention given to the techniques behind making radio a tool for soft power, including the forging of transnational networks and collaborative exchanges. With these reasons in mind, this chapter begins by assessing *romanità* in the context of the rise of Nazi Germany. This will allow for the grounding of the chapter in an understanding of Fascism's claim of a privileged relationship with history and will exhibit the key mechanism by which peoples were either welcomed into or dismissed from the light of its civilisation. Furthermore, through an analysis of the treatment of Austria, this focus will allow us to exhibit the cultural and spiritual tug of war which *romanità* was mobilised to win. The analysis will then turn to tracking the international propagandistic use of *romanità* in a variety of contexts to test its malleability and polyvalence: the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, occupied Ljubljana, and Soviet Russia.

The *myth of Rome* was central to Fascism from its rise to power. Disdainful of the liberal Rome that was decadent, corrupt and unfit for power, Fascism was meant to be the reincarnation of the ancient spirit which would restore order and glory to the city that was born to rule the world. Roman values would help forge the new *cittadino-soldato* (citizen

soldier), the modern-day legionary that would defend Italy's interests. The fasces (an axe encased in a bundle of sticks carried before Roman magistrates) was a symbol of the justice and order restored by the Fascist regime. As others have established, *romanità* was a myth written 'from below' which perhaps best characterises the Fascist mobilisation of the masses. Rather than stunning the populace into passivity, the myth of Rome was meant to engage and mobilise the Italian people into activity which would create a bond with the regime. In this way, the myth developed throughout the 1920s followed by a growing number of state-sponsored projects promoting *romanità* including the work done by the *Istituto di studi romani* (founded in 1925), radio lectures on antiquity (such as the series by C. A. Blanche entitled 'Sui Margini delle Storia'), the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (MAR, 1937-1938), and, eventually the *Esposizione Univerale di Roma* (EUR42, which never took place due to World War II). While the myth of Rome was absent from Fascism's 1919 programme, by 1921 it was already 'la principale fisionomia simbolica del fascismo' (the main symbolic physiognomy of Fascism) and the regime's rhetoric brought about the 'fusione della romanità con l'italianismo' (fusion of Romanity with Italianness).[686] According to Gentile, the myth of Rome was further considered a means of uniting the party's disparate heterogenous elements which were frequently riven with disputes. If in the 1920s the idea of ancient Rome was an 'ideal model for present revolutionary action, for the organization of combat, and for the promotion of Italian unity', by the 1930s *romanità* was a distinctly imperial idea (both spiritually and militarily, both in terms of soft and hard power). As early as 1921, Mussolini quoted Mommsen's dictum that 'one does not remain in Rome without a universal idea', typifying the belief that the Roman spirit at the heart of Fascism would bring about its global spread.[687] It was the advent of long-distance

[686] Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra*, p.43.
[687] Mussolini quoted Mommsen's line in a parliamentary address. See Gabriele Rigano, 'Fascism and Religion: A Religious Creed for the Imperial Nation' in *Rethinking the History*, pp.132-154 (p.139).

broadcasting technology, however, which allowed the regime to harness the universalist power of the myth of Rome and to make it perhaps the most central and most oft-repeated theme of its international propaganda campaign.

4.2 Romanità *and German National Socialism: History, Racism and Rome's inclusivity*

'L'unità fascista non conosce, anzi ripudia le pregiudiziali razziste. La missione del popolo italiano non è affatto esclusivista e arrogante; perché l'universalità mediterranea è comprensiva e accogliente.'[688]

(Fascist unity does not recognise, in fact it shuns racist prejudges. The mission of the Italian people is not at all exclusivist or arrogant because Mediterranean universality is comprehensive and welcoming)

4.2.1 Romanità *and Fascism's privileged relationship with History*

Understood as the most crucial metric for defining civilisation, the Fascist idea of *romanità* was used to establish and justify any given people's belonging to the fraternity of eternal glory it generated. In these terms of belonging, this chapter will bring into relief how the myth of Rome was mobilised to welcome, exclude or excommunicate nations and movements from the Latin brotherhood, either on the grounds of their heritage, ideology or both. On these grounds, a crucial case study is how Nazi Germany was considered through the lens of *romanità*. Whilst Mussolini was, indeed, pleased to have gained a 'junior partner' on the international stage, the coming of Nazism also posed a significant dilemma.[689] The international association of Nazism with Fascism risked the favourable reputation that Mussolini had enjoyed among the political leadership of liberal countries and, at the same time, created a competitor for the leadership of the growing number of fascistic movements globally. For both purposes, it may be said that 'Mussolini needed the world to believe that

[688] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1)*, broadcast of 29 Oct. 1934, p. 3.
[689] Aristotle Kallis, *The Third Rome,* p. 230.

Italy was a civilised nation fighting a barbarous one'.[690] Recent scholarship has emphasised the impact that Hitler's rise had on the Fascist push towards the internationalisation of the regime, with Nazism seen as a competitor in the race to lead other nationalistic movements around the world.[691] Up until the outbreak of the war in Ethiopia (when Nazi Germany became a necessary ally) the treatment of National Socialism in the *Cronache* broadcasts was harsh and dismissive. The focus of Forges Davanzati's invective was Nazi racism and competing claims of universality. The claim was that the universality of Fascism, based on the 'myth of Rome', was an undeniable truth, whereas any such claims made by the Nazis completely lacked the weight of history. In addition to this, Forges Davanzati stressed that Nazi racialist ideology revealed its exclusivity, whilst *romanità* was at the heart of an inclusive historical universality which relied, nonetheless, on Italian guidance.

The historical justification of Fascism as a revival of Ancient Rome and its universal appeal are recurrent themes of the *Cronache* broadcasts. According to Forges Davanzati, Italian history is 'per realtà di secoli e non per presunzione dottrinaria, una storia di valore universale' (through the reality of centuries of history and not through doctrinaire presumption, a history of universal value).[692] The universal value of Fascism was in direct contrast to the anti-historical claims of the Nazis. On one hand, there was 'la universalità di fatto, secolarmente ripresa, della storia italiana' (the universality of Italian history (renewed in every century)) which constitutes the 'premessa del dovere italiano, fascista, di mantenere viva e attiva la coscienza di essa' (premiss of the Italian (and Fascist) duty to keep the awareness of that same universality alive and active) and which was, therefore, 'la conoscenza di essa come missione di popolo' (the awareness of universalism as the people's

[690] Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, p.232.
[691] In particular see Salvatore Garau, 'The Internationalisation of Italian Fascism'.
[692] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p. 79.

mission).[693] Directly opposed to this was the 'dottrinarismo razzista, che presume di affermare un universalismo non realizzato, e che pretende per ciò di ridare anche alla storia passata un corso che non ha avuto, è una manifestazione profondamente anti-storica, sia come interpretazione del passato, sia come conquista dell'avvenire' (racist doctrinarism, which affirms a universality that has not been achieved, and which insists on giving history a path which it did not take, is a profoundly anti-historical manifestation, whether as an interpretation of the past or as a conquest of the future).[694] Here, again, the Fascist conception of history as the force which connects the past, present and future is exhibited in an a-temporal present in which all three are constantly actualised. The values of Rome determined this eternal present and Nazi Germany's claims of superiority had no such basis in the reality of this historical and historic continuum. In fact, belittling German history was not an uncommon trope of these years. In a speech given in Bari on 6 September 1934, Mussolini himself asserted the inferiority of German cultural heritage, describing the Germans as a people that 'ignorava la scrittura […] nel tempo in cui Roma aveva Cesare, Virgilio e Augusto' (did not know how to write at the time when Rome had Caesar, Virgil and Augustus).[695] The direct comparison between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in terms of universal value seems a direct response to fears that Hitler's National Socialists could challenge the Fascists for international influence. In the fight for such influence, Forges Davanzati's broadcasts reveal an attempt to make the battleground that of historical greatness. These critiques come in the context of the first fascist international meeting in Montreux between the 16-17 December 1934, from which the National Socialists were excluded.[696]

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[693] *Ibid.*
[694] *Ibid.*
[695] Found in Luigi Preti, *Impero Fascista Africani ed ebrei* (Mursia, 1968), p. 45.
[696] For a recent study on the attempts to form a fascist International see Martin, *The Nazi-fascist New Order.*

On various occasions, Forges Davanzati even expressed grievances that the Germans were trying to deny the significance of Italian cultural history. In one case, he referenced a theory that Dante Alighieri was, in fact, German, claiming that Nazi racism 'deve accettare la potenza italianissima, romana e cattolica, di Dante, che esso rinnega insieme con tutta la civiltà mediterranea' (needs to accept the Italian, Roman and Catholic power of Dante that they deny along with all Mediterranean civilisation).[697] In fact, much of the talk of universality seems directed at reclaiming Roman heritage and controlling the narrative around it. In a broadcast from 11 February 1935, Forges Davanzati detailed Mussolini's instructions given to Carlo Galassi, the president of the Istituto di Studi Romani (ISR). The projects desired by Mussolini included a thirty-volume history of Rome written exclusively by Italian scholars. The contention was that 'fino a ieri, si può dire, gli studi su Roma erano divenuti un monopolio di stranieri, e fra essi la *Kultur* germanica si era addirittura attribuita una potestà esclusiva ed arrogante' (until now, one might say, studies on Rome had become a foreign monopoly, and amongst these German *Kultur* had claimed an exclusive and arrogant jurisdiction).[698] It is likely that Forges Davanzati was referring especially to Mommsen's history of Rome which he had previously criticised in a speech at the University of Pisa in 1926. In his opinion Mommsen's study was typical of 'una razza che desiderava di riaffermare, perfino nel passato, la potenza di quelli che erano stati i vinti di Roma' (a race that wanted to reaffirm, even in the past, the power of those who had been defeated by Rome).[699] There is a strong sense, both in the broadcasts and in Forges Davanzati's other speeches, that universality is not simply a question of asserting the dominance of historical Rome but also of asserting Italy's right to be the only legitimate gatekeeper of that very heritage. He called on every Italian not to be 'latino secondo un'ultima moda francese e

[697] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p. 221.
[698] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1)*, p.254.
[699] Forges Davanzati, *Fascismo e cultura*, p. 34.

demomassonica' (Latin according to a recent French and demo-masonic fashion) or to accept the German appropriation of Latin culture and history.[700] It was not merely a case of wrestling the right to define Latin civilisation away from other Latin nations but also a need to fight a defensive war against the forces which were fervently anti-Latin. This will also be seen later in the cases of liberalism and communism, however, here it is German culture which is presented in the role of willing destroyer of Rome's heritage. Forges Davanzati asserts:

> Quando noi sentivamo che la cultura germanica si impossessava di tutta la nostra storia romana e di tutto il nostro classicismo, non sentivamo anche che in questo possesso c'era il desiderio di uno studio, ma anche il bisogno di una demolizione, di una parziale denigrazione, e soprattutto il desiderio di dimostrare che, se mai un'eredità imperiale da raccogliere del passato c'era, questa eredità spettava alla Germania.
>
> (When we felt that German culture was appropriating all of our Roman history and all of our classicism, we did not feel that in this appropriation there was the desire to study, rather to demolish, to denigrate in some way, and, above all, to show that if there was ever an imperial heritage uncovered by looking at the past, it belonged to Germany)

In a wider context, this highlights a crucial aspect of the international propagandistic projection of *romanità* which needs stressing. Just as was the case domestically, the theme related to a resurgent Rome that had laid dormant for centuries and, shamefully, during Italy's liberal era. Italy and other 'Latin' nations were, therefore, at once powered by Rome's eternal glory as well as being 'young' nations fighting an uphill battle against anti-Latin forces that would deny Rome's millenarian glory.

[700] *Ibid.,* p. 13.

4.2.2 Austria, Germany and Italy: Ties of Nationality and Ties of Latinity

Alongside the invective against German claims of universality ran the commentary on the sovereignty of neighbouring Austria. Nazi designs on Austria were a threat to the Italian Fascist sphere of influence, particularly given the annexation of the South Tyrol to Italy as part of the Treaty of Versailles. Forges Davanzati quotes Mussolini's assertion that Italy had no desire to impose a protectorate on Austria and bemoans the fact that 'fuori della politica italiana, o non si fa niente per l'indipendenza dell'Austria o si lavora contro questa indipendenza' (beyond Italian politics, either nothing is done for Austrian independence or it is sabotaged).[701] Every attempt was made in the *Cronache* to downplay the German dream of a newfound *Grossdeutschland.* Ample airtime was afforded to the Saar basin referendum as well as the elections of the Free City of Danzig in January and April 1935 respectively. The reunification of the Saar basin to Germany and the resounding victory of the Nazis in Danzig were both attributed by Forges Davanzati to the simple fact of nationhood, rather than prevailing support for National Socialist ideology. He warns:

> Non bisogna […] sopravalutare quello che sarà il risultato del plebiscito in confronto del nazismo. Votare per il ritorno alla Germania è stato un fatto di patriottismo, al quale il nazismo non ha aggiunto molto di proprio. Qualunque altro governo in Germania avrebbe fatto altrettanto.[702]
>
> (The result of the referendum should not be overvalued as far as Nazism is concerned. Voting to return to Germany was a patriotic fact, to which Nazism made little contribution of its own. Any other German government would have done the same)

When it comes to Austria, the *Cronache* stressed that the cultural and historical ties between her and Italy ran much deeper than mere racial ones. This connection between the two nations was emphasised on the occasion of Kurt Schuschnigg's visit to Italy. The Austrian

[701] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p. 45.
[702] *Ibid.,* p.196.

Chancellor's political party, the Fatherland Front, was nationalistic, supporting independence from Germany. It was also a proponent of corporatism and was aligned with the Catholic Church. The visit was reported in a series of broadcasts between 16 and 19 November 1934. The fact that the Austrian Chancellor 'si è incontrato *già* col Capo del Governo' (has *already* met with the Head of Government) contributed to the narrative of Fascist Italy's importance on the international stage as well as suggesting an ideological alignment between the two governments.[703] Schuschnigg is quoted as having closed his 'brindisi' (toast) with effusive praise for 'il pensiero civilizzatore della latinità al quale noi ci sentiamo uniti' (the civilising thought of Latinness to which we are united).[704] Forges Davanzati stressed this represented an 'incontro spirituale, che ha oggi il suo massimo valore, poiché serve anche a stabilire differenze opportune, del resto già fissate della storia, da alcuni accaparramenti oltranzisti della funzione della civiltà tedesca' (spiritual meeting which today has its maximum value given that it serves to establish opportune differences – already established by history - from certain extremist acquisitions made by German civilisation) which 'si vorrebbe bloccata nell'assurda pregiudiziale di rinnegare la civiltà altrui e soprattutto la civiltà latina mediterranea' (some would like to see trapped in the absurd precondition of denying the civilisations of others and, above all, Latin and Mediterranean civilisation).[705]

By stressing again the Nazi denial of Latin cultural heritage and reproposing the importance of history and spirit in determining allegiances, Forges Davanzati highlighted the need for 'spiritual encounters' in strengthening the resolve of Latin peoples against the forces which would deny them their Latinity. The argument that the Austrian people were more closely connected to Italians falls within a wider one made in the *Cronache* that

[703] *Ibid.,* p. 44. Italics are my own.
[704] *Ibid.,* p. 50.
[705] *Ibid.*

cultural relations were the most important aspect in 'una collaborazione di civiltà' (a collaboration between civilisations).[706] As such the Austrian 'personalità e singolarità di arte […] la differenzia nella stessa gente tedesca' (personality and artistic singularity […] differentiates it within the German people) and makes Rome a natural ally.[707] This was reinforced by the cultural agreement signed by the two countries, reported on 4 February 1935. Part of this agreement was the decision to found the Istituto austriaco in Rome where, in Forges Davanzati's words, 'tutti i contenenti sono rappresentati con istituti propri; significa non rinunziare a se stessi, ma incontrarsi a Roma, che è crocevia di civiltà, ed affermarsi allo stesso titolo degli altri' (every continent is represented by its own institute. It is not about giving up their own self, rather all meeting in Rome, that crossroads of civilisations, and establishing themselves as being on the same level as the others).[708] This wider context of Rome as the site of cultural exchange is a key element of the Fascist conception of universalism. The Fascist concept of universalism is, according to Forges Davanzati, therefore, less about effacing otherness as it is reinterpreting that otherness through the prism of Rome, the ultimate cultural and spiritual guide for all civilisations. Thanks to Fascism, Italians were once again able to embrace and experience the spirit of Rome which they rightly inherited. This heritage, however, was one which brought with it a responsibility to incorporate other peoples, both Latinising them and welcoming their cultures into an ever-expanding Roman empire. Nazi Germany was, in the first instance, therefore, barred from the Roman community because of its exclusivism along racial grounds. Whereas for Hitler, 'l'umanità era divisa in razze biologicamente definite e non era possibile per un appartenente a una specifica razza traslare in un'altra' (humanity was divided in biologically well-defined races and it was not possible for somebody belonging

[706] *Ibid.,* p. 154.
[707] *Ibid.* p. 243.
[708] *Ibid.*

to one race to change to another), for Mussolini, 'la natura umana era malleabile e mentre vi erano differenze tra i popoli, un giusto governo poteva plasmarli' (human nature was malleable a while there were differences between peoples, a just government could moud them).[709] It was through appeals to *romanità* that the regime hoped to *plasmarli* and the Nazi claims to racial and cultural superiority ran directly counter to the idea of a common culture between nations. In the second instance, therefore, Nazi claims of superiority were judged along the axis of heritage. While Fascist Italy could be said to embody the glory of ancient Rome, Nazi Germany's claims of racial superiority were said to be based on nothing but delusional arrogance which, by ignoring the progress made by Rome (the empire, the church and the new regime) risked 'un balzo indietro di duemila anni' (a leap backwards of two thousand years).[710] Moving from Nazi Germany to Franco's Spain, we will now see the ways in which commonality of heritage was mobilised to bring a nation into Fascist Italy's cultural and political orbit.

4.3 Spain and the Latin Brotherhood

Before turning our attention to the propagandistic use of *romanità* in Spain, some brief context of the history of ideas of Latinity in Spain is necessary. During WWI, 'Latinism and Hispanism were harshly confronted' in Spain's political discourse, with the former associated, as one might expect, with support for the Allies and the latter adopted by supporters of the German war effort.[711] After the war's end, however, 'the sharp confrontation between Latinist Aliadophiles and Hispanicist Germanophiles ceased to be a fault line' and the Spanish right 'would move from the confrontation between Hispanism and Latinism to a synthesis'.[712] During the Spanish Civil War 'a Hispanism that included a

[709] Cuzzi, *L'Internazionale*, p.7.
[710] Forges Davanzati, *Le Cronache*, p.165.
[711] Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, 'Latinism and Hispanism in the Hispano-American Right in Interwar Spain and Argentina', *Fascism,* 12.1 (2023), pp.55-80 (p.55).
[712] *Ibid.*, p.61.

Latinist dimension was projected' in National Spain within the wider context in which 'Latinism was an essential piece in the wide transnational space of the right-wing that included from authoritarian conservatism to fascism'.[713] We saw in Chapter 3 how *Radio Verdad*, a supposedly Spanish station, focused on Spanishness as a means of promoting Spanish Nationalism and, in turn, supporting Franco's war effort. The efforts, which we will now see, to pivot this discourse towards Latinity fall in the context of the 'Spanish reactionary and Falangist right' showing that 'Hispanism and Latinism could complement each other to shape a new discourse that was simultaneously specific and transnational'.[714] Hoping to emphasise the weight given to Latinity, 'it was not until after the Civil War had begun that Fascist Italy committed ideas, men and economic resources to establishing a steady cultural relationship with nationalist Spain, on the basis of a plan for pan-Latin fascism and with hegemonic ambition'.[715] Such efforts, which as yet remain understudied, included 'the exchanges of copies of Roman statues as symbolic gestures, to substantiate their claims to a shared classical heritage of "imperial greatness"' which, in fact, began before the civil war in 1933 and ended in 1943.[716] After the civil war, 'Hispanidad became a central element in [National Spain's] supranational projection' but Fascist propaganda was mobilised with the aim of ensuring that Franco's Spain felt the spirit of Rome.[717]

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[713] *Ibid.*, p.55.
[714] Dogliani and Fuentes Codera, 'Introduction' in *Continental Transfers*, p.6.
[715] Dogliani, 'Italian Fascist Cultural Intervention in the Spanish World' in *ibid.,* p.142.
[716] Plantzos and Balaskas, 'Reinventing Romanitas Exchanges of Classical Antiquities as Symbolic Gifts between Italy and Spain (1933–1943)', p.254. A similar donation was made by Mussolini when he contributed 'an ancient Roman column taken from Ostia' as part of a monument erected in honour of Italo Balbo in Chicago after his triumphant flight over the city on the occasion of its Century of Progress International Exposition in 1933. See Bonsaver, *American in Italian Culture*, p.227.
[717] Fuentes Codera, 'Latinism and Hispanism', p.74.

4.3.1 Radio Verdad Italo-Spagnola: From Ispanità *to* Latinità

As the Spanish Civil War drew to a close, attention turned to how best to capitalise on the popularity that *RV* had earned. We saw in Chapter 3 how, contrary to its depiction in the existing scholarship, *Radio Verdad*'s primary objective was to support Franco's war effort by concealing its Italian origin to listeners and, crucially, by promoting Spanish patriotism and Spanish Nationalism. It aimed to avoid upsetting the sensibilities of different affiliations within the Nationalist support and defined *ispanità* along Nationalist lines. In this context, *ispanità* was incorporated into a wider narrative of *latinità/romanità.* With the immediate demands of war gone, however, the programme's military character was no longer necessary and a new cultural focus, aimed at having a 'profonda influenza […] sul pubblico spagnolo' (profound impact on the Spanish audience), was adopted.[718] As we saw in Chapter 3, *RV* was relaunched on 4 June 1939 in the same time slot as an ostensibly collaborative station between Italy and Spain called *Radio Verdad Italo-Spagnolo (RVIS)*.[719] Consisting of Italian and Spanish orchestral music and a bulletin of both Spanish and Italian news, *RVIS* was produced 'allo scopo di cementare sempre più i rapporti culturali tra l'Italia e la Spagna che hanno assieme versato il sangue dei loro figli per la causa dell'ordine e della civiltà contro il bolscevismo' (with the aim of cementing even more the cultural relations between Italy and Spain who, together, have spilled the blood of their sons for the cause of order and civilisation against Bolschevism) with Serrano Suñer stressing, in its first broadcast, 'non dimenticheremo mai quale significata nella nostra comune crociata abbia assunto il nostro incontro colla Gran Madre, Roma' (we will never forget the significance in our common crusade assumed by our meeting with the Great Mother, Rome).[720] The new

[718] ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.49.33.
[719] *Ibid.*, F.49.47.
[720] 'RADIO VERDAD' in *RC*, N.25 (18-24 June 1939), p.5.

incarnation of *RV* stopped the Catalan-language broadcasts which in war time were designed to combat the supposed *catalanofobia* of the Nationalists and the competition prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to a great European nation (Italy) was downgraded to a Spanish-Italian propaganda publication focussing on figures of Spanish youth (including Carmencita Franco, the Caudillo's daughter) during the Civil War[721]. The list of names and addresses of listeners who had entered into correspondence with the fictious *Verdad* station were kept on file in case they could be of future use.[722] No longer aimed at demoralising Republican forces and supporters, this new version of *Verdad* intended to forge strong bonds between Franco's Spain and Mussolini's Italy through a project 'fondato sulla valorizzazione dei principi politici, scientifici ed artistici che la Spagna ha ereditato dalla tradizione romana' (founded on the valorisation of the political, scientific and artistic principles that Spain inherited from the Roman tradition)[723]. In this new focus (on the themes of *romanità* and corporativism especially) the organisers of *Verdad* in no small part took their cue from political currents identified amongst the leaders of the New Spain and were concerned with ensuring that the transformation of *Verdad* be 'bene accettata tanto alle autorità che al pubblico spagnolo in genere' (well accepted both by the authorities and the Spanish audience in general)[724]. In the plans for the transformation of *Radio Verdad,* it was stressed that Franco had recently elevated by decree the Spanish writer Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo to the status of doctrinaire in the New Spain and 'Maestro del Movimento Nazionale Spagnolo' (leader of the Spanish national movement)[725]. Furthermore, it is highlighted that

> le dichiarazioni ed i discorsi di Franco, di Serrano Suñer, di Fernandez Cuesta e delle maggiori personalità spagnole, sono ispirate alla dottrina

[721] ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.49.41.
[722] *Ibid.*, F.49.45.
[723] *Ibid.*
[724] *Ibid.*
[725] *Ibid.*

> dello stesso Menedez y Pelago che proclamò la Romanità della Spagna[726].
>
> (the declarations and speeches of Franco, Serrano Suñer, Fernanzez Cuesta and of the most prominent Spanish figures are inspired by the doctrine of the very same Menendez y Pelago who proclaimed Spain's *romanità*

The new-look *Verdad*, then, would 'segu[ire] e confront[are] il risorgente spirito della romanità negli spagnoli…' (follow and confront the resurgent spirit of *romanità* among the Spanish).[727] Given the common spirit defined by *romanità*, the belief was that the political and ideological influence of Fascist Italy through *Radio Verdad* would be well received, given that 'da questo fondamento dottrinario deriva che tutte le realizzazioni corporativo-fasciste, non saranno per gli spagnoli quelle di un regime straniero, ma costituiranno l'esempio di seguirsi come la realizzazione pratica di un comune presupposto ideologico' (from this doctrinal bedrock it follows that all of the corporative-fascist achievements will not be for the Spanish those of a foreign regime but they will constitute the example to follow as the practical realisation of a common ideological premise).[728] Here *romanità* is considered in ideological terms as the very 'fondamento dottrinario' of fascism itself, a 'fondamento dottrinario' which is held in common between the Italians (the main inheritors of the Roman tradition) and all other Latin peoples. Fascism was depicted as a fundamentally Roman idea, making it highly exportable to other countries where the Roman tradition was strong and, crucially, appreciated, as is supposedly the case here. As the first incarnation of *Verdad* drew to its close, it was to this Roman affinity that its success was attributed. After the fact, it was stressed that, while presenting *Verdad* as a Spanish phenomenon, the broadcasts had always offered the 'punto di vista romano' (Roman point of view)[729]. It might be considered then that the overt promotion of *ispanità* in the broadcasts

[726] *Ibid.*
[727] *Ibid.*
[728] *Ibid.*
[729] ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.49.31.

was considered also a promotion of *romanità* given the latter's centrality in the former. The propagandistic focus during the Spanish Civil War was primarily aiding Franco's victory in order to help Spain establish its own fascistic movement born in blood. *Romanità*, thereafter, was seen as a tool for uniting this fascistic regime with Fascist Italy, keeping the latter in a position of superiority. If every nation was to have its own fascism with its own palingenetic myth then *romanità* was a means of uniting these into one common palingenetic myth: the resurgence of ancient Rome. In this context, it must also be considered that, by claiming corporativism as a fundamentally Roman idea, the Fascists were doubtless attempting to exert their ideological primacy over Nazi Germany and draw the Spanish into their orbit through a concerted 'opera di fraternità'[730]. This new focus on corporativism in the *Verdad* broadcasts was also pursued confidently due to the acknowledgment that the Consiglio Nazionale della Falange (CNF) was studying the basis for a similar organisation of the Spanish state. The new *Verdad* broadcasts would be designed to 'orientare, per quanto possible, i membri del Comitato verso l'adozione del nostro sistema, a preferenza di quello di altri paesi' (direct, as much as possible, the members of the committee towards the adoption of our system over that of other countries), further highlighting the project as a tool for competing for influence against Nazi Germany. [731] The attention paid to picking up on political currents within the emergent Spanish state also displays a move away from avoiding support for any given rebel faction in order to serve the immediate exigences of war. Instead, the ideological preference for the Falange as the ideal vehicle for fascistic change once again becomes clear.

[730] *Ibid.*
[731] ACS, MCP, Aff. Gen., B.6., F.60.23.

4.3.2 The Spread of Romanità*: Exchange, Betrayal and Belonging*

This spirit of cultural exchange and similarity between the two countries (present in other fields such as film production and in the exchange of Ancient-Roman-style statues) was palpable also in domestic programming.[732] From the coverage of the Spanish Civil War in Ezio Maria Gray's *Cronache del regime* with its focus on Latin brotherhood to the eventual mythologising of the conflict as a victory for 'la civiltà latina' (Latin civilisation), a concerted effort was made to present Spain as belonging to a wider resurgent Roman tradition.[733] The alliance (both historic and historical) between the two countries is cemented on the Italian radio by a heavy focus on Spain and its close relations with Italy. Papa wrote of the 'clima iberico' (Iberian atmosphere) which dominated Italian radio during and immediately after the Spanish Civil War, citing, for instance, the performance of a radio drama entitled *Una notte a Barcellona*.[734] *RVIS*, with its broadcasting of Spanish music every evening went a long way towards establishing such a 'clima iberico'. On top of this, many broadcasts as well as articles in the *Radiocorriere* on Spanish culture, theatre and history suggest an overt attempt to familiarise Italy with its Latin brother. This exposure is in keeping with the status of the radio as a natural meeting place of cultures, a space which the regime attempted to manage such that it match its own cultural vision both of Italy and of the world beyond. If the radio as a medium offered the regime the potential not just to 'far conoscere agli stranieri questa Italia della Rivoluzione' (make foreigners aware of this Italy of the revolution) but also to 'far conoscere agli italiani […] il mondo nel quale l'Italia deve vivere' (make Italians aware of the world in which Italy must live) then the Italian

[732] See Valeria Camporesi, '"Whose fims are these?" Italian-Spanish Co-Productions of the Early 1940s', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 34.2 (2014); and Plantzos and Balaskas, 'Reinventing Romanitas'.
[733] See *RC*, N.8 (18-24 Feb. 1940), p3.
[734] Papa, *Storia politica* (vol. 2), p.73.

radio's engagement with Spain (both regarding the civil war and more generally) depicts a world increasingly centred around a resurgent Rome.[735]

In keeping with the long-standing use of foreign figures speaking over the Italian radio on the occasion of a visit to Rome, in March 1942 a special broadcast (in a mixture of Italian and Spanish) was recorded featuring the Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican (Yanguas Messia), the general secretary of the Italian Dopolavoro (Celso Maria Garatti), the head of the Spanish Obra Educacion y Descanso (Aureo Gutierrez Churruca), and the diplomat Edoardo Groizard**.** The broadcast was recorded in order for it to be replayed on the Spanish radio at a later date with a full Italian translation of the speeches broadcasted from EIAR stations. Yanguas Messia stressed that in such a critical moment 'le due nazioni latine per eccellenza […] portano sulle lore spalle un compito e una responsabilità comune…' (the two Latin nations *par excellence* carry on their shoulders a common mission and responsibility) indicating not only the strength of the common bond but also a distinct hierarchy between Latin peoples.[736] He went on to say that the visit of the Spanish Obra Educacion y Descanso to Rome had reinforced the conviction that 'la civiltà latina e cristiana avrà, per il bene delle civiltà latina e cristiana, il suo posto d'onore nel mondo del domani che si avvicina' (Latin and Christian civilisation will have, for the good of Latin and Christian civilisation, its place of honour in the world of tomorrow which is coming closer)[737]. Celso Maria Garatti stressed the importance of collaboration between Italy and her 'consorella spagnola' (Spanish sister) and did not miss an opportunity to express the stance that Mussolini was the first to face up to and resolve the issue of workers' free time for their physical and moral betterment and that the new Spain would benefit from the privilege of such experience.[738] Aureo Gutierrez

[735] 'Ricordo di Franco Ciarlantini' (unsigned), *RC*, N.8 (18-24 Feb. 1940), p.4.
[736] ACS, MCP, B6, F60.41-45.
[737] *Ibid.*
[738] *Ibid.*

Churruca hailed the 'fratellanza falangista e fascista' (Falangist and Fascist brotherhood), before Edoardo Groizard thanked the Italian radio for the 'tanti grandi e inestimabili servizi rese alla nostra cara Patria durante la guerra di Liberazione' (many great and inestimable services rendered to our dear Fatherland during the war of liberation) (recognising the success of *Radio Verdad* without naming it).[739] As we saw in Chapter 2, this type of bilateral and often multilingual exchange was made possible by the radio more so than any other medium. With representatives of two nations launching their message of solidarity into the wireless world together, the sense of brotherhood (as intangible and ethereal a concept as it is) was brought to life, displaying historical ties in a show of modernity.

One stark instance in which the Latin brotherhood was emphasised came in a *Radiocorriere* article entitled 'Ricordi spagnoli a Roma' (Spanish memories in Rome) written by the notable *romanista* Cecarius.[740] The article plots a map of Spanish traces in the Italian capital, stressing the Spanish contributions to the eternal city. Cecarius begins by stressing the Spanish origin of multiple notable Roman figures such as Seneca, Lucan, Martial and the emperor Theodosius, before turning his attention to 'monumenti e persone di epoche più recenti' (monuments and people from more recent epochs).[741] Stressing the extent of cultural cross-germination between the two cultures, Cecarius cites examples of many churches, monuments, works of art, tombs of prominent historical figures as well as referencing testimonies from artists of their sojourns in Rome as proof of the '[antica] influenza esercitata dall'arte italiana sugli spagnoli' (ancient influence exerted by Italian art on the Spanish).[742] In this way, the article evokes the image of Rome depicted by Forges Davanzati as the 'crocevia di civiltà' (crossroads of civilisations) in which national cultures

[739] *Ibid.*
[740] Cecarius was the pen name of the prominent journalist Giuseppe Ceccarelli (1889-1972). See Francesca Socrate, 'Giuseppe Ceccarelli' in *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani*, vol.23 (1979).
[741] Ceccarius, 'Ricordi spagnoli a Roma', *RC*, N.29 (16-22 July 1939), p.7.
[742] *Ibid.*

do not have to 'rinunziare a se stessi' (renounce themselves) rather simply 'incontrarsi a Roma' (meet in Rome).[743] Rome is presented as a common heritage on which all Latin peoples have left their mark, as not just simply a culture to be exported but one which incorporates others. Spain's mark on Rome is detected also in some of its streets' names. Recent additions to the via Iberica, via degli Spagnoli and via Catalana had been made, such as streets bearing the names of Guadalajara, Bilbao and Santander, which 'tramanderanno nei secoli il contributo dato dall'Italia fascista alla crociata antibolscevica' (will hand down through the centuries the contribution of Fascist Italy to the anti-Bolshevik crusade).[744] This is typical of the presentation of Franco's victory as reinforcing the two nations' 'solidarietà di razza, di fede, di pensiero' (solidarity of race, faith, and thought).[745] The nature of the coverage in the months following the end of the civil war promote it as a victory for 'tutta l'Europa civile' (all of civilised Europe) and the extent of coverage on the returning 'volunteers' leaves no room for doubt over the perceived significance of Italy's role in repelling 'il bolscevismo antilatino, anticattolico ed anticivile' (anti-Latin, anti-Catholic and anti-civil Bolshevism).[746] In short, victory protected the new fascist European order and its supposedly Roman character.

In Ezio Maria Gray's *Cronache del regime,* latinità was promoted as the key interpretative model for understanding the events of the Spanish Civil War and the trajectory of world history.[747] Gray presented the conflict within the 'quadro complesso e totale dell'offensiva bolscevica contro l'unità spirituale di tutta la civiltà europea' (complete and

[743] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p.243.
[744] Ceccarius, 'Ricordi spagnoli a Roma', p.7.
[745] 'L'Inviato del Duce nella Spagna trionfante' in *RC*, N29 (16-22 July 1939), p.3.

[746] *Ibid.*
[747] Before WWI, Gray was a noted writer and prominent nationalist. He was a founding member of the *fascio* in Novara and, therefore, credited with wrestling the Piedmontese province away from 'the reds'. A speaker of foreign languages and president of the Istituto Italo-giapponese in Rome, he was seen as a natural fit to assume responsibility for the foreign affairs instalments of *Le Cronache* when they were relaunched after the death of Roberto Forges Davanzati. See 'Notizie Biografiche', ASMAE, MCP, B.3, Aff. Gen.

total picture of the Bolshevik offensive against the spiritual unity of all of European civilisation), splitting nations into those fighting for the maintenance of European (Roman) civilisation and those working towards its destruction.[748] Poland is singled out on multiple occasions (as was the case in Forges Davanzati's *Cronache*) for being 'il baluardo spirituale e guerriero d'Europa contro quella Moscovia che […] resta l'avversaria implacabile della Civiltà occidentale' (Europe's spiritual and warrior-like stronghold against that Moscow which remains the implacable adversary of western civilisation).[749] Poland 'nelle armi e nello spirito, s'intitola a Roma' (in arms and in spirit, is named after Rome) thanks to 'una divinazione misteriosa di saggezza e di salvezza [che] la induce a staccarsi […] dal tronco slavo e a proiettarsi irresistibilmente verso il mondo latino, verso ciò che è latino in quanto è forza superstite del mondo romano' (a mysterious divination of wisdom and deliverance which induced her to separate herself from the Slavic bloc and to project herself irresistibly towards the Latin world, towards that which is Latin in so much as it is the surviving strength of the Roman world).[750] Ultimately, Gray stressed that 'fu e sarà destino che […] sia sempre Roma a salvare l'Europa' (it was and will be destiny that it should always be Rome to save Europe) – Rome, the spiritual guide under which nations defending European civilisation must unite. Gray presents this Roman cause as being pursued against nations who, through ties of history, might otherwise be expected to act in accordance with the supposed 'fraternità latina' (Latin brotherhood), namely France.[751]

Gray stresses that 'da quando le legioni di Cesare le impressarono il segno di Roma, la Francia aveva luminosamente operato nel quadro della nostra civiltà arricchendola nello spirito e difendendola con le armi anche fuori di Europa' (from when Cesaer's legions left

[748] E.M. Gray, *L'Italia ha sempre ragione*, p.57.
[749] *Ibid.*, p.262.
[750] *Ibid.*
[751] *Ibid.*, p.24.

on her the sign of Rome, France had brilliantly operated within the bounds of our civilisation, enriching it in spirit and defending it in arms even outside of Europe).[752] Gray asserts, however, that 'da Versaglia a Ginevra fino alla guerra di Spagna […] la buona sorella latina fu contro di noi nello spirito e nell'azione' (from Versailles to Geneva right up to the war in Spain the good Latin sister has been against us in spirit and in action).[753] Gray, indeed, charges France with attempting to pacify Italy by herself leveraging the 'logoro screditato motivo della fraternità latina che soltanto l'Italia intese e praticò come solidarietà spirituale e come soccorso eroico' (worn-out and discredited motive of Latin fraternity which only Italy understood and practised as spiritual solidarity and as a heroic act of rescue).[754] This rejection of the latinità so prevalent during WWI is indicative of Fascist Italy asserting its right to be the chief interpreter of the Roman legacy and, therefore, of European civilisation. Gray goes further and claims that, in France, 'al disotto […] del cosiddetto Paese legale […] vi è tutto un Paese reale che le sue tradizioni di lavoro, di religione, di famiglia, di cultura mantengono orgogliosamente fedele alla morale della nostra civiltà' (underneath the so-called legal country there is a real country whose traditions of work, religion, family, and culture keep them proudly faithful to our civilisation).[755] While there may be displeasure that the government is betraying its Roman roots, particularly in the French countryside, there is no guarantee that this underbelly will step up to defend 'la sua civiltà millenaria e la sua pur offuscata latinità' (its thousand-year-old civilisation and its (nonetheless dimmed) Latinity).[756] The appeal that is, in other broadcasts, made to France to side with civilisation is made here directly to this section of the French people as Gray claims, 'se la Francia dovrà

[752] *Ibid.*, p.139.
[753] *Ibid.*, p.290.
[754] *Ibid.*, p.139.
[755] *Ibid.*, p.145.
[756] *Ibid.*

salvarsi, la campagna la salverà. Non altro e non altri' (if France is to save herself, the countryside will save her. Nothing else and no others).[757]

As much as allegiances in the Spanish Civil War were seen as cause to revoke France's membership of the Latin brotherhood, they also prompted the expansion of the myth of Rome to incorporate Nazi Germany. Whereas France was betraying her Roman roots, Nazi Germany was proving herself a suitable embodiment of the Fascist idea of Rome. This expansion of the Fascist idea of Rome which shifts from excluding to including Nazi Germany is nowhere more evident than in a speech delivered in German by Mussolini in Berlin, broadcasted over the radio and reported at length by Gray in his *Cronache*.[758] Much like the polyglot Italian radio, Mussolini is presented as being able to communicate clearly and passionately in a foreign tongue in order to 'raggiungere lo spirito ed il cuore' (reach the spirit and the heart).[759] Thanks to his command of the German language ('imprimendo pur sempre il sigillo di una originalità tutta italiana di eloquio' – leaving all the while the stamp of an entirely Italian originality of eloquence) allowed him to 'scavlca[re] barriere di razza e di mentalità' (leap over barriers of race and mentality).[760] Further obliterating these barriers was Mussolini's expression of all which the two peoples held in common:

> l'accenno alla dignità imperitura delle tradizioni pur nella necessaria novità della vita moderna; la dura condanna del materialismo storico, come politica e come filosofia; la esaltazione del lavoro e della gioventù; la risurrezione dell'Impero di Roma, come fatto spirituale prima che come fatto economico; il volontarismo legionario in Spagna come suprema operante offerta votiva per la salvezza della civiltà occidentale….[761]
>
> (the reference to the eternal dignity of traditions even with the necessary novelty of modern life; the harsh condemnation of historical materialism politically and philosophically; the exaltation of work and youth; the resurrection of the Roman Empire as a spiritual fact before

[757] *Ibid.*, p.151.
[758] *Ibid.*, p.167.
[759] *Ibid.*, p.168.
[760] *Ibid.*
[761] *Ibid.*, p.170.

> an economic fact; the legions of volunteers in Spain as a supreme practical votive offer for the salvation of Western civilisation).

This spiritual resurrection of the Roman Empire is driven not only by ties of history (embodied by the Latin fraternity with Spain and ignored by France which is now 'praticamente avversaria della nostra civiltà' – practically an adversary of our civilisation) but by the ideological embodiment of the Fascist understanding of Rome. In listening to the broadcast of Mussolini's speech, 'grandi massi d'occidente hanno […] ascoltato con intima invidiante commozione la voce stessa della loro Storia' (huge masses in the West listened with intimate and envious emotion to the very voice of their History) – the Roman voice communicating the history of the world past, present and future.[762]

4.4 Ljubljana and the Second Roman Empire: the Etherisation and Militarisation of Romanità

The voice of Rome brought word of its political and cultural resurgence in the modern world, acting as a beacon for all of western civilisation, inviting all peoples to share in its eternal glory. Once Italy joined WW2, however, it was not simply the radio bringing Rome's message but, once again, its legionaries. As a case study on *romanità* as a theme in radio broadcasts in an occupied territory, Radio Lubiana contributes to an understanding of how the theme was used to bridge Fascist soft and hard power. Indeed, the shift to incorporating Nazi Germany into the *myth of Rome,* as we saw above, was an important step in keeping *romanità* as the central *raison d'être* of both its soft and hard power and it was through the military alliance with Nazi Germany that Fascist Italy was supposedly establishing the second Roman Empire. As we saw in Chapter 2, the management of the radio in the newly occupied territory of Ljubljana was shrouded in confusion over where ultimate responsibility for the service lay. Failing to control Radio Lubiana's organisation

[762] *Ibid.*, p.171.

and output centrally, the MCP in Rome was, for a significant period, unaware of the tensions existing between its staff on the ground, the local EIAR and the Alto Commissario of the region, Emilio Grazioli. After the departure of Dott. Casolini (who was responsible for writing the bulletins), Dott. Carmelo Rigano (the stenographer) was granted the duty of composing the texts to be broadcasted by the Alto Commissario. He did so relying on the daily Agenzia Stefani news bulletins and, as he stressed in his defence, always with the approval of Grazioli and Prof. Nani (the MCP functionary on the ground in charge of the service's running). Once Rome became aware of the situation in Ljubljana, the Ispettore Generale of the MCP recalled Rigano and established a new staff in Rome which would compose and translate the news bulletins ultimately to be broadcasted from the transmitter in Ljubljana. This created a dual organisation given that the EIAR in Ljubljana continued broadcasting its own official bulletin. The transcripts composed by Rigano, which are the focus of this section, therefore occupy an interesting space as a historical source. Given the approval granted to Rigano and each transcript by Prof. Nani (an MCP employee) and the Alto Commissario Grazioli, it would be improper to suggest that they do not represent official Fascist cultural output. At the same time, given that permission for Rigano to manage the broadcasts was not granted by Rome and that the series of conversations he initiated did not follow direct MCP directives, his work maintains a somewhat unofficial feel. When it comes to our analysis of the theme of *romanità*, this toeing of the line between official and unofficial allows us to acknowledge an important fact. As is clear in the existing scholarship, the myth of Rome was extremely pervasive in official Fascist culture and our analyses point at how prevalent it was in propaganda aimed at foreign audiences. *Romanità*, as Joshua Arthurs has displayed, was not confined simply to 'the state's "top-down" discourse' but worked also 'from below'.[763] As suggested in the Chapter's introduction, the very choice of

[763] Arthurs, *Excavating Modernity,* p.32.

romanità as a central theme of Fascist propaganda was its ever-presence in Italian culture and, as previously stressed, crucially, in the cultures of other countries. This prevalence in the Fascist cultural vision meant that, when promoted from stenographer to propagandist, Rigano intuitively knew that *romanità* must be central to his arguments. Furthermore, and more importantly for our purposes, Rigano was aware of the hierarchical, social, historic and historical function that *romanità* served in the Fascist understanding of global civilisation. It is this use of the myth of Rome as a global civilising force which this section brings into relief. This includes the image of the Slovenian people's place in the new Roman empire, the teaching of the history of Latin civilisation, the nature of the so-called Second Roman Empire, and the ways in which *romanità* was the only antidote to both British imperialism and Soviet Communism.

Radio Lubiana provides a case study of the treatment of the theme of *romanità* over the radio in the context of a territory officially occupied by Fascist Italy. The cultural significance of the myth of Rome aimed at listeners throughout the wireless world is, therefore, enhanced by the political reality of Italian domination. In his broadcasts, Rigano is keen to outline the new territory's status and he does this, primarily through reference to Rome. Rigano classifies Ljubljana as the 'più giovane […] provincia d'Italia' (youngest Italian province) which is on a 'piano egualitario con le altre provincie italiane, all'ombra del vessillo italico, affiancato dalle scure di Roma e dal Fascismo Littorio' (equal plane with the other Italian provinces, in the shadow of the Italic banner, by the side of the axes of Rome and of Littoral Fascism) .[764] Rigano draws on the speech delivered by the Alto Commissario Grazioli which was intended to outline the 'pensiero del Governo di Roma nei confronti del popolo sloveno' (thinking of the government in Rome regarding the Slovenian

[764] Carmelo Rigano (14 July 1941), MCP, Aff. Gen., B.136, F.837, SF. 'Trasmissione di musica alla radio di Lubiana', p.4.

people), a people which should feel 'l'imperioso orgoglio di appartenere alla grande famiglia del II Impero di Roma, deve sentire tutta la fierezza d'essere stato chiamato a partecipare del grande e luminoso destino di Roma Imperiale' (the imperious pride of belonging to the great family of the Second Roman Empire, should feel all the pride of being called to participate in the great and brilliant destiny of Imperial Rome).[765] According to Grazioli, this belonging to the second Roman empire came with the same respect for local traditions and language as was the case during the first Roman Empire. The Alto Commissario said explicitly, 'l'Italia rispetterà la vostra lingua, i vostri costumi, la vostra cultura, la vostra religione che è la nostra religione' (Italy will respect your language, your customs, your culture, your religion which is our religion).[766] Grazioli stressed, 'noi siano uniti soprattutto dalla religione' (we are united above all by religion).[767] This last point was essential from a propagandistic point of view. It was identified that Slovenia's deeply-rooted Catholicism was an important site of similarity between the two peoples and that Rome's status as the 'centro del mondo cristiano' (centre of the Christian world) and the 'culla della civiltà e della cristianità' (cradle of civilisation and Christianity) was essential in promoting feelings of brotherhood.[768] Summarising the spirit of Grazioli's speech, Rigano asserts that 'la civiltà di Roma tramandata nei secoli dalla potenza imperiale mostra oggi tutti i suoi segni in quell'ordine nuovo che l'Italia fascista intende instaurare tra i popoli per una vita sana, illuminata dalla giustizia, sorretta dalla liberta, animata dalla religione' (the civilisation of Rome passed down through the centuries by imperial power is today displayed entirely in the new order that Fascist Italy intends to establish among peoples for a life that is healthy, illuminated by justice, sustained by liberty, animated by religion).[769] Here Rigano

[765] Alto Commissario Grazioli (13 July 1941), *ibid.*, pp.1-3.
[766] *Ibid.*
[767] *Ibid.*
[768] *Ibid.*
[769] *Ibid.*

establishes the synthesis between the glory of Ancient Rome and Fascist Italy which is intended to justify the latter's territorial expansion. Fascist Italy, the direct descendant and perfect modern embodiment of the Roman Empire, it is suggested, will smile benevolently on all peoples within its dominion and the Slovenians, therefore, should be grateful for the historic birth of this second Roman Empire.

A crucial means by which this synthesis between Ancient and modern was achieved in Rigano's broadcasts was offering a history of Latin civilisation, focussing on how it 'nacque nei Paesi mediterranei da cui si sviluppò e si diffusò per il mondo' (was born in the Mediterranean countries from which it grew and spread throughout the world).[770] One such broadcast focussed heavily on Italic maritime dominance in the Mediterranean with Rigano asserting that 'il periodo del più elevato splendore della civiltà latina, corrisponde proprio al periodo in cui la potenza marinara italica dominava l'intero Mediterraneo' (the period of most intense splendour of Latin civilisation corresponds exactly with the period in which the Italic maritime power dominated the entire Mediterranean).[771] Rigano acknowledges that it was the Italian peninsula's geographical advantages that afforded the Romans 'ampie e sicure possibilità di raggiungere facilmente tutti i punti del Mediterraneo' (ample and certain opportunities to reach easily every point of the Mediterranean) and that, equally, with respect to Africa, they found themselves in 'una situazione di privilegio nei confronti degli altri popoli' (in a privileged position in relation to other peoples).[772] From this privileged geographical launchpad and with its maritime strength, 'poté così la stirpe italiana diffondere in tutto il mondo allora conosciuto la civiltà latina che ebbe origine sulle italiche sponde' (in this way, the Italian race was able to spread Latin civilisation which was born on the Italic

[770] Rigano (15 June 1941), *ibid*.
[771] *Ibid*.
[772] *Ibid.*

shores to the entire known world).[773] Rigano's historical account (which makes sweeping generalisations and jumps through the centuries with little sense of historical continuity) outlines that the discovery of the New World shifted trade onto the oceans giving nations like Britain and Spain distinct advantages and bringing about a stagnation in Mediterranean civilisation. This new marittime world order meant that 'il Mediterraneo diventava per l'Inghilterra, che era la prima potenza navale del mondo, un mare di vitale importanza per l'intero Impero inglese. Bisognava allora che l'Inghilterra portasse la civiltà e la libertà britannica nel Mediterraneo e quindi in tutti i Paesi mediterranei' (the Mediterranean became for England, which was the foremost global naval power, a sea of vital importance for the entire British empire. England needed, therefore, to bring British civilisation and liberty to the Mediterranean and, therefore, to all Mediterranean countries).[774] As such England began a campaign for the 'diffusione della civiltà britannica nel Mediterraneo' (dissemination of British civilisation in the Mediterranean), a civilisation which is consistently presented by Rigano as the direct opponent of its Latin counterpart.[775] It is against British cultural, mercantile and military domination in the Mediterranean which Fascist Italy, as the modern embodiment of Latin civilisation, fights. With Latin civilisation being 'così prostituita ed inquinata dalle vele di un popolo di pirati e di predoni dei mari' (in this way prostituted and contaminated by the sails of a people of pirates and marauders of the sea), the superior Latin spirit fought back through the 'potente flotta italiana costituita e voluta romanamente' (powerful Italian fleet that was constructed and desired by Roman will).[776] This military response was presented as the latest episode in the revival of Latin civilisation in the Mediterranean and beyond. Rigano stresses the historical right of this civilisation's superiority realised by the Fascist revolution, writing that 'quando un popolo che ha una

[773] *Ibid.*
[774] *Ibid*.
[775] *Ibid.*
[776] Rigano (10 June 1941), *ibid.*

storia di 40 secoli, intessuta da uno splendore di civiltà che guidò e illuminò il mondo, un popolo come quello italiano, non poteva non domandare il suo posto al sole' (when a people has a history of forty centuries, woven by the splendour of a civilisation that guided and illuminated the world, a people like the Italian one could not not demand its place in the sun).[777] The Italian people, in summary, was simply claiming the leading role that 'Iddio gli assegnò fra i popoli' (God assigned for it among peoples).[778] This divinely granted authority is understood 'in un vero senso universale' (in a truly universal sense) meaning that it extends to 'i vari popoli del mondo' (the various peoples of the world).[779] Furthermore, it is taken for granted that 'nessuno ebbe mai a lamentarsi della civiltà di Roma, nessuno ha da dire su quella che è la civiltà della Roma Mussoliniana, dell'Italia Fascista, delle Legioni di Roma' (nobody has ever had cause to complain about Roman civilisation, nobody has anything to say about that which is the civilisation of Mussolini's Rome, about Fascist Italy, about Rome's legions).[780] This historical account, then, paints a picture of Fascist Italy as destined to lead other peoples, if necessary, through force and 'con virilità romana' (with Roman virility).[781] Whereas in the cases of Spain and the Latin American countries the focus was on promoting the Latin brotherhood as a means of bringing countries into the Italian sphere of influence, here Rigano states Italy's birthright due to the eternal superiority of Latin civilisation.

This distinction between Latinity as something to be chosen by foreign peoples and something to be enforced is clear also in Rigano's treatment of Greece in his broadcasts. In the case of Greece (as we have seen with France), Rigano displays how even a people with strong Latin heritage can foolishly reject the privileged place in which history has placed it

[777] Rigano (15 June 1941), *ibid*.
[778] *Ibid*.
[779] *Ibid*.
[780] *Ibid*.
[781] *Ibid*.

by shining on it the light of Roman civilisation. In such instances, the rejection of Latin civilisation must be remedied with its enforcement, if necessary, by means of military intervention. Greece entered World War II in October 1940, prompting the Italian invasion. The Italian forces were pushed back with the help of the British, necessitating German intervention in order to conquer Greece and Crete by July 1941. Greece's designs to strike against Italy, 'istigata e mossa dal genio malefico britannico' (instigated and created by the evil genius of the British), were presented as a betrayal of Greece's cultural and historical belonging to the Latin brotherhood of peoples.[782] Rigano claims that Greece's aggression was 'animata da un odio ingiustificato ed antistorico verso gli italiani, apportatori di civilta e di giustizia, segnacolo […] di quella cultura latina che superò i secoli e le barriere dei popoli' (animated by an unjustified and anti-historical hatred towards Italians, the standard-bearers of civilisation and justice, symbol of that Latin culture which spanned centuries and leapt over the barriers of peoples).[783] In siding with Britain, Greece opted, by association, to work in the interests of the barbarians against 'l'intero continente europeo' (the entire European continent) with Europe understood, as ever, as Roman in nature and spirit.[784] The apparent British hegemony in Greece (and more widely throughout the Mediterranean) is seen as an insidious manipulation over a long period of time. Given that Crete was a Greek territory, Rigano claims, 'bisognava britannizzare la Grecia e avere così la possibilità […] di potere usare del suo territorio e delle sue basi' (Britain needed to Britanise Greece and, as such, have the opportunity of using its territory and its bases) and to make Greece a 'possedimento inglese' (English possession).[785] This perversion of the natural order of civilisations could not stand and it was through divine intervention, according to Rigano, that it was restored when 'Iddio diede […] all'Italia MUSSOLINI' (God gave Italy

[782] Rigano (11 June 1941), *ibid.*
[783] *Ibid.*
[784] *Ibid.*
[785] Rigano (16 June 1941), *ibid.*

Mussolini).[786] Thanks to Mussolini making Italy the modern embodiment of the spirit of Latin civilisation, 'la potenza imperiale di Roma, ancora una volta, è tornata a mostrare i suoi segni nell'Ellade' (the imperial power of Rome, once again, has returned to show its signs in Hellas).[787] After centuries of the essentially foreign influence of the British, the new naval power of Italy meant that the 'civiltà di Roma poteva tornare ad essere consociuta dai popoli mediterranei' (civilisation of Rome could return to being known by Mediterranean peoples).[788] Rigano's insistence on the return of Latin cultural, political, and military dominion in Greece and the Mediterranean here must be seen in the context of the message being broadcasted over Radio Lubiana to a people newly under the yoke of the so-called Second Roman Empire. Such a discourse serves as a warning to the Slovenian people, themselves blessed with a privileged position in history through contact with both the Roman Empire and Fascist Italy, to respect and embrace Rome and all that it stands for. In fact, as we saw in Chapter 2, Rigano's insistence on criticising Britain was motivated by a desire to delegitimise the Slovenian attachment to liberalism, seen as incongruous with the Fascist understanding of Latinity.

In this way, the myth of Rome was used as a key battleground on which to discredit Britain, its imperial greed, and its rotten liberalism. It was hoped, therefore, that by drawing on the centuries of interest, cultural deep-rootedness of and admiration for Ancient Rome that peoples such as the Slovenians could be convinced of Fascist Italy's superiority and benevolence. Referencing a Mussolini speech which was broadcasted over the radio, Rigano encapsulates this contest. The Duce's words of warning were that 'nella battaglia fra l'oro e il sangue l'Iddio giusto che vive nell'animo dei giovani popoli ha scelto' (in the battle between gold and blood, the just God who lives in the soul of the young peoples has

[786] *Ibid.* Capitalisation is in the original.
[787] Rigano (11 June 1941), *ibid.*
[788] Rigano (16 June 1941), *ibid.*

chosen).[789] Here, Mussolini repeats a phrase common in Rigano's transcripts: 'Iddio ha scelto' (God has chosen).[790] The battle, in Mussolini's imagery, is between gold and blood. Gold here symbolises a temporary earthly fortune, wealth gained through greed, selfishness, theft and corruption. Blood, on the other hand, points to something much more permanent: it indicates heritage, spirit and passion. The blood coursing through Latin veins is handed down from Roman legionaries, priests and emperors. It is blood that *i romani della modernità* are willing to spill in defence of its *civiltà millenaria*. Gold pales in comparison next to the blood pumped by Latin hearts. Through recourse to the image of Roman heritage, Rigano paints the British, by contrast, as a people driven not by solid values that have stood the test of time, rather by blatant self-interest. Put simply, 'la civiltà britannica consiste nel fare tutto quello che gli inglesi vogliono' (British civilisation consists in doing everything that the English want to do).[791] Latinity, on the other hand, whilst guided by the Italian race (as the main inheritor of the tradition of Ancient Rome), was presented as being geared towards the maintenance and promotion of a well-defined civilisation which, through faithfulness to its values, works for the betterment of all people within its sphere of influence. As we have repeatedly seen, the myth of Rome in the international sphere was used as a tool for determining (and justifying) which nations belonged and did not belong to the newly resurrected spirit of Rome. In the case of Britain (a country in which traces of the Roman Empire are ever-present to this day), its actions were enough to prompt its excommunication from the brotherhood of Latin nations. Rigano stresses simply that 'l'Inghilterra non è più una nazione europea' (England is no longer a European nation) where Europe is understood, as ever, as synonymous with Rome.[792]

[789] Rigano (11 June 1941), *ibid.*
[790] *Ibid.*
[791] Rigano (21 June 1941), *ibid.*
[792] Rigano (22 June 1941), *ibid.*

These broadcasts were, then, a golden opportunity to communicate to the people of the newly-occupied territory a picture of the so-called Second Roman Empire to which they now belonged. While, as was clear in the comparison with Britain, Rigano stressed the heritage of Latin civilisation, he also claimed that 'tutto il mondo sa che le Armate italiane, i legionari del II Impero di Roma, sono apportatori di una civiltà nuova, di un ordine nuovo, di una nuova tranquillità nell'ordine' (the entire world knows that the Italian army, the legionaries of the Second Roman Empire, are carriers of a new civilisation, of a new order, of a new tranquillity in order).[793] This sense of modernity and novelty is ever-present in the Radio Lubiana broadcasts. The resurgent Rome is seen as the catalyst for rebirth as 'là dove i segni di Roma lasciano la loro impronta un nuovo ordine di vita sorge e si perpetua' (where the signs of Rome leave their mark a new order of life springs forth and multiples) and as Fascist Italy gifts the world 'una nuova concezione di vita che in atto rappresenta quella civiltà latina i cui splendori tutt'ora durano' (a new conception of life underway that represents that Latin civilisation whose splendours still last today).[794] The Slovenian listeners were reminded, therefore, that the myth of Rome was not a simple reactionary harking back to a time of splendour and glory. Fascist Italy and Mussolini, embodying the eternal spirit of Rome passed down through the centuries, had developed and continued to develop modern solutions to modern problems. Furthermore, Rigano stressed that these solutions were not made solely to serve Italian interests or, rather, Italians also worked tirelessly for the wellbeing of all Latin peoples 'in quanto desiderano che la civiltà europea, la civiltà latina e fascista viva e duri nei secoli con gli uomini e per gli uomini' (in as much as they want European civilisation, Latin and Fascist civilisation to life and to last centuries with men and for men).[795] As the Alto Commissario stressed in his address to the Slovenian

[793] Rigano (11 June 1941), *ibid.* 'Apportatori di civilità' is a phrase which Rigano regularly repeats in his broadcasts.
[794] Rigano (15 June 1941), *ibid.*
[795] Rigano (30 June 1941), *ibid.*

people, Rome's purpose was said to be the maintenance and encouragement of local languages, cultures and traditions. The inter-nationalism embraced by Fascist Italy apparently meant that 'i popoli hanno acquistato il senso di una propria dignità nazionale' (peoples have acquired the sense of their own national dignity).[796] Rigano continued to stress that these peoples had also earned the 'responsabilità di sentirsi liberi e sicuri in terre che hanno già conosciuto la civiltà cristiana, latina, fascista' (responsibility to feel free and secure in lands which have already known Christian, Latin, and Fascist civilisation).[797] In this way, the people of occupied Ljubljana was reassured that Fascist Italy had a historic and historical mandate to protect the Slovenian people by virtue of its historical contact with Latin and Christian civilisation which qualified it for membership of the brotherhood defined by *romanità*.

A crucial benefit to membership of the Second Roman Empire was the protection it offered against the evils of Soviet Communism. Just as *romanità* was presented as the antidote to British selfishness, Latin civilisation is painted as the polar opposite of Communism and its spiritual superiority meant that 'il popolo sloveno non può quindi essere toccato dal comunismo' (the Slovenian people cannot, therefore, be touched by Communism).[798] The Slovenian people was reassured that it was 'sorretto da una cultura che è in perfetto contrasto con l'ignoranza dal comunismo sostenuta, è animato da impulsi spirituali' (supported by a culture which is in perfect contrast to the ignorance sustained by Communism, and one which is animated by spiritual impulses), which stand in direct contrast to Communist materialism.[799] The culture which supports and sustains the Slovenian people is Latin culture. This cultural support contains two distinct but connected

[796] Rigano (11 June 1941), *ibid.*
[797] *Ibid.*
[798] Rigano (14 July 1941), *ibid*.
[799] *Ibid*.

implications: the Slovenian people is supported by millennia of *latinità* thanks to its historical involvement in the Roman Empire; and, second of all, it is supported by the modern culture determined and championed by Fascist Italy which allows the survival of the eternal Latin culture. Communism is not only depicted as being antithetical to Latin civilisation but, because of this fundamental opposition, Rigano highlights that 'il bolscevismo era costretto a stringere la rete attorno al Mediterraneo, dominare le rotte mediterranee per inquinare e quindi far morire quella civiltà latina di cui i popoli europei ne vanno orgogliosamente fieri' (Bolshevism was forced to tighten the net around the Mediterranean, dominate trade routes to contaminate and to kill that Latin civilisation of which European peoples are so proud).[800] The warning is sounded to the people of Ljubljana that 'il paradiso sovietico in Europa significherebbe la morte della civiltà latina, della Religione di Cristo e del suo universale Rappresentante nella vita terrena' (Soviet paradise in Europe would mean the death of Latin civilisation, of the religion of Christ and of his universal representative in earthly life).[801]

Rigano's mission was to highlight that the aspects of life (such as Christianity) that Slovenians held so dear and which are a direct descendant of Ancient Rome are under threat from Communism. Fortunately for Latin civilisation, 'proprio nel centro del Mediterraneo, culla della civiltà latina, Iddio mandava in MUSSOLINI il vero DUCE del popolo italiano' (right in the middle of the Mediterranean God sent in Mussolini the true DUCE of the Italian people).[802] As the 'espressione più scintillante di quella civiltà latina' (most brilliant expression of that Latin civilisation), Mussolini, first of all, 'riuscì a rimettere l'Italia, che era stata Madre e Maestra di Civiltà, sulla vera strada della civiltà mediterranea' (managed to put Italy, which had been the mother and guide of civilisation, back on the true track of

[800] Rigano (30 June 1941), *ibid.*
[801] Rigano (3 July 1941), *ibid*.
[802] Rigano (27 June 1941), *ibid.* The capitalisation is in the original.

Mediterranean civilisation).[803] Understanding the danger of Bolschevism to Latin civilisation, he 'lanciò per il primo nel mondo il grido dell'antibolscevismo' (was the first in the world to launch the anti-Bolshevik battle cry) – an act which was necessary not just for the survival of Italy but for the entirety of Europe.[804] Shoulder to shoulder with Fascist Italy in the crusade against Soviet Communism was, of course, German National Socialism. It is in this context that Rigano accounts for Nazi Germany (a distinctly un-Latin people) in the vision of Latinity. He writes, 'il Fascismo ed il Nazionalsocialismo rappresentano la civiltà cristiana, latina ed ariana. Tanto l'uno che l'altro sono nati per combattere il comunismo, la internazionale ebraica' (Fascism and National Socialism represent Christian, Latin and Arian civilisation. Both were born to combat Communism and the Jewish international).[805] It is by virtue of their joint mission to combat the destructive forces of Communism that Rigano links the two movements. This connection, however, in these broadcasts is one in which the two are depicted as side by side rather than a relationship whereby one incorporates the other. As far as National Socialism is concerned, we have so far seen examples of Fascist propaganda stressing that Nazism was alien to the spirit (and heritage) of Ancient Rome as well as the later attempt to welcome Nazi Germany into the brotherhood of *romanità* due to its ideological convictions. Here, however, a third approach is taken: Latin and Christian civilisation is separate to but allied with Arian civilisation. Together 'le forze che rappresentano oggi la civiltà latina, cristiana e ariana, che rappresentano, oggi la vera Europa, quell'Europa che fu culla della civiltà latina, che ha sorpassata i secoli e che dura malgrado le forze distruttrici del male' (the forces that represent today Latin, Christian and Arian civilisation, who represent today the true Europe, that Europe which was the cradle of Latin civilisation, which survived the centuries and that lasts despite the distractive

[803] *Ibid.*
[804] *Ibid.*
[805] Rigano (28 June 1941), *ibid.*

powers of evil) were confident of bringing about the spiritual and political regeneration of Europe.[806] This last statement does, however, still reveal the natural bias towards Latin civilisation compared to its Arian counterpart as one which has survived and thrived for much longer throughout history. What this connection between the two achieves is, on one hand, reinforcing to the listening public the political strength of Fascist Italy given its allies and, at the same time, highlights the natural spheres of influences which suggested that peoples of Latin heritage where likely to fall under the authority and influence of Latin Fascist Italy rather than the Teutonic Nazi Germany.

4.5 Romanità *and Russia: The irresistible weight of history*

This image of Latin civilisation as standing in direct opposition to Bolshevism is the central preoccupation of the regime's official broadcasts in Russian. The Russian section of the IRT (established in 1937) was managed by Prof Antonio Pagliaro (head of the Centro di studi anticommunisti and historical linguistics expert). This section was not only intensely productive in terms of numbers of broadcasts but also notably innovative. Beyond the official broadcasts which will be examined in this section, it was also responsible for the highly original *Radio Mosca* project. With its first broadcast on 26 March 1938, *Radio Mosca* (similar to *Radio Verdad*) claimed to be a clandestine station run by Russians in Soviet territory. Interestingly, however, the station's politics were not pro-Fascist or even anti-Communist. In fact, the station's broadcasts were pro-Communist. However, they campaigned for a form of Communism inspired by Lenin and which was decidedly anti-Stalin, with the incorporation of some Fascist ideas. The station was said to be the responsibility of an 'immaginario partito illegale' (imaginary illegal party) and had the 'evidente intento di indebolire dall'interno il partito comunista sovietico' (evident objective

[806] Rigano (26 June 1941), *ibid.*

of weakening the Soviet communist party from the inside).[807] The fictitious party's primary focus was on a youthful listenership. The broadcasts even coined a new Russian word, 'Lensomolzy', which meant 'Lenin's youth'.[808] The station's broadcasts were suspended upon the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in August 1939 and brought back in February 1940 when the focus shifting entirely away from interest in USSR politics and towards foreign policy.[809] While it is impossible to trace the number of Russians who listened to the broadcasts, Monticone shows evidence that the Russian government was certainly aware of them, as well as of reports of listeners being arrested for tuning into *Radio Mosca* and it being heard in vast areas of the USSR. It is unknown, however, whether the Italian origin of *Radio Mosca* was ever discovered. While Monticone offers a brief history of the *Radio Mosca* project, scholarship is yet to bring into relief the nature of regular Fascist broadcasting in Russian. The regular languages in which the EIAR broadcasted never included Russian. That is to say that regular news bulletins (nor *Cronache del turismo* broadcasts) were produced in Russian. Starting in March 1938, however, the Ufficio Russia at the IRT was charged with the responsibility for producing conversations in Russian. These conversations included news updates (both national and international), political comment as well as discussions on history and culture. As part of our investigation into the way *romanità* was used to establish a global hierarchy of peoples and, in turn, its propagandistic use in foreign-language broadcasts, the focus of this section will be the recourse to idealised images of Latin civilisation, particularly in contrast to barbarian Communism.

It must, first of all, be acknowledged that these broadcasts, written principally by Manlio Barberito, made a distinction between Russian history and the aberration of Communism. The latter was said to have reduced 'un popolo d'alta civiltà verso la barbarie'

[807] Monticone, *Fascismo al microfono*, pp.160-1.
[808] Monticone, *Fascismo,* p.163.
[809] *Ibid.*

(a people of high civilisation against barbarism).[810] Barberito bemoans the 'tragico livello di vita spirituale e materiale nel quale il bolscevismo ha costretto il popolo russo' (tragic level of spiritual and material life in which Bolshevism has trapped the Russian people).[811] In so doing, these broadcasts attempted to establish Bolshevism as something historically, culturally and spiritually alien to the once great Russian people and to the entirety of (especially Western) civilisation. Communism, just as Nazism was presented in Forges Davanzati's *Cronache*, is seen as anti-historical. Furthermore, the broadcasts were intended to show the Russian people 'la solidarietà umana del popolo Italiano' (the human solidarity of the Italian people).[812] The timbre of his message, therefore, must be seen, in the first instance as one of hope for a renewal of Russian society. This hope is placed primarily on the Russian youth (as was the case in the *Radio Mosca* project) which, according to Barberito, possesses 'il senso della patria e il desiderio della grandezza della propria nazione, senso di grandezza che il popolo russo ha preso non certamente dal bolscevismo ma dai suoi lunghi secoli di storia gloriosa e nella quale è stata uno degli elementi vivi della civiltà umana' (the sense of the Fatherland and the desire for the nation's greatness, a sense of greatness that the Russian people has certainly not taken from Bolshevism but from its long centuries of glorious history and in which it has been one of the living elements of human civilisation).[813] The cure to Communist materialism is the Fascist 'dottrina profondamente spirituale' (profoundly spiritual doctrine) and the antidote to its a-historical ideology which 'rappresenta un ritorno a fasi inferiori della umanità' (represents a return to inferior phases of humanity) is eternal Rome which 'torna ad essere il centro verso il quale si svolgono le Nazioni' (is once again the centre towards which nations turn), once again Europe's 'centro

[810] Barberito, 'La maternità e l'infanzia in Italia' (13 Mar. 1938), ASMAE, MCP, B.323.
[811] Barberito, 'La vera democrazia' (20 May 1938), *ibid.*
[812] Barberito, 'Testimonianze' (4 Aug. 1938), *ibid.*
[813] Barberito, 'La vera democazia' (20 May 1938), *ibid.*

spirituale e politico' (spiritual and political centre).[814] While Bolshevism had supposedly returned the Russian people to a long-forgotten past, the Fascist harking back to the distant model of Rome is presented not as a return but as a renewal. Fascist/Roman civilisation is seen as both ancient and modern. The 'nuova Europa' (new Europe) is 'l'Europa antica ed eterna' (ancient and eternal Europe), a Europe which is 'millenaria e fanciulla' (a thousand years old and a young maiden).[815] In this way, Barberito's broadcasts consistently stress that the weight of history is behind Fascist Italy's vision for a new Europe and the barbarian inferiority of Bolshevism (both with respect to Fascism and the previous Russian civilisation) points to its inevitable defeat. Drawing on ancient Roman wisdom to consolidate this inevitability, Barberito cites a Latin proverb which states that 'Iddio manda la fortuna sul capo di coloro che vuol perdere' (God sends fortune to the leader of the people whom he wants to lose).[816]

Italian Fascism, as the modern embodiment of ancient Rome, when observing the threat to Western civilisation has, in Barberito's words, 'la maggiore responsabilità, poiche ad essa ha dato il maggiore contributo' (the greatest responsibility, seeing as she has given the greatest contribution).[817] In order to exhibit the superiority of Roman genius compared to Bolshevik barbarism, Barberito exposes the failings of the Soviet state (in terms of employment, agriculture, and living standards) while giving examples of the civilising mission of Fascist Italy both domestically and overseas. A key example is the Fascist impact in Albania. Barberito highlights the impact of Roman civilisation in Albania through the parallel building of roads: first of all, by acknowledging that 'la civiltà romana aveva largamente sviluppato una rete stradale in Albania' (Roman civilisation had largely

[814] Barberito, 'Il Fascismo contro il comunismo' (23 Mar. 1938), *ibid.*
[815] Barberito, 'Ritorno dell'Europa' (undated), *ibid*.
[816] Barberito, 'Nota politica' (30 May 1938), *ibid.*
[817] Barberito, 'Il Fascismo contro il comunismo' (23 Mar. 1938), *ibid.*

developed a road network in Albania) and then, again by the benevolent occupying Italians after the invasion in April 1939. The broadcasts stress the immense benefit of the new Roman Empire shining on a country and its people. Rome, in its 'modo svelto, prepotente e amoroso' (quick, aggressive and loving way) succeeds in giving 'coscienza e dignità ai popoli che la eleggono loro maestra come a quelli che cedono alla superiorità delle sue armi' (conscience and dignity to the peoples who elect her leader just as with those who cede to the superiority of her arms).[818] As we saw in the case of *Radio Lubiana* the authority of Rome can either be accepted (through willing acknowledgment of its divine right and intrinsic goodness) or it can be enforced. Just as all Albanians 'capiscono tutto questo o per istinto […] oppure per intelligenza' (understand all of this by instinct or by intelligence), Russian listeners are told that, whether accepted or enforced, Rome's glory will be appreciated by all it touches and it will inspire 'la certezza della giustizia fra coloro che le si donano' (the certainty of justice among those who give themselves over to her).[819]

It is thanks to the 'figura europea di Mussolini' (European figure of Mussolini) whose mission is the rejuvenation of Western civilisation (for which Italy is mainly responsible) that, according to Barberito, 'tornano a fiorire anche sulle sponde del Mediterraneo occidentale quei grandi principi della civiltà nostra che hanno fatto la storia d'Europa e con essa la storia del mondo' (once again on the shores of the Western Mediterranean flourish those great principles of our civilisation which made the history of Europe and with it the history of the world).[820] The message of these broadcasts is simple: Latin civilisation (in the figure of Mussolini and his Italy) is on the march and Bolshevism's days are numbered. Railing against the cooperation and internationalism of the League of Nations, Fascism was bringing about its 'concezione dell'Europa come gerarchia di nazioni'

[818] Barberito, 'I nuovi rapporti Italo-albanesi' (undated), *ibid*.
[819] *Ibid*.
[820] Barberito, 'Nota politica settimanale' (27 June 1938), *ibid*.

(conception of Europe as a hierarchy of nations).[821] This hierarchy, as we have seen not only in broadcasts in Russian, was drawn up in terms of the membership to the Latin brotherhood in which Fascist Italy retained full leadership as its birthright. The myth of Rome seen in these hierarchical terms makes its propagandistic use in the regime's Russian broadcasts intriguing. On one hand, the broadcasts are clearly designed to drive a wedge between the Russian people and Communism. Equally, the criticisms of Bolshevism are accompanied by praise for the Russian society which preceded it and which the Soviets reduced to rubble by taking it back to a time pre-civilisation. At the same time, the insistence on the divine Roman right to rule and on a hierarchy of nations raises the question of the Russian people's status in the Fascist world view. Unlike the instances of Spain, Slovenia, Albania and the Latin American countries, Russia was not part of the Roman Empire and, therefore, the seeds of the Latin genius were never planted there. The Russian people, as a consequence, did not share ancient Roman heritage. Nonetheless, as we have seen, admittance to the Latin brotherhood can be earned either through accepting the Roman right to rule or by submitting to Rome's military force. Certainly, the intense insistence on *romanità* in these broadcasts is geared towards convincing Russian listeners of Rome's glory. Nonetheless, the implication of its depiction is the foretelling of Roman dominance. In this way, the broadcasts' propaganda prepares the ground for future Roman influence in Europe and throughout the USSR and aims to convince listeners that such leadership will restore hope, civilisation and justice through the complete destruction of Communism.

[821] Barberito, 'Ritorno dell'Europa' (undated), *ibid*.

4.6 Conclusion - Romanità *in International Broadcasting: Simplicity, Malleability, and Polyvalence*

The Fascist regime saw its radio output as creating 'un'immensità di spazi e di orizzonti, una ridda di paralleli' (an immense quantity of spaces and horizons, a whirlwind of parallels) and on which 'corre[va], fulmineo e limpido, il pensiero di Roma, eterna datrice di civiltà' (ran, lightening quick and clear, the thought of Rome, that eternal donor of civilisations).[822] The space of the wireless world was considered imperialistically, a space to be invaded and occupied, and a space which had to be moulded by the political and cultural ideals of the modern embodiment of the eternal spirit of Rome. In fact, the wireless world, it was repeatedly stressed, was the creation of that very Roman spirit channelled through the Italic genius of Guglielmo Marconi whose invention allowed Fascist Italy to reassert Roman superiority and revive Latin civilisation globally. This most modern of media was the perfect instrument through which to convince global listeners that *romanità* (understood Fascistically) was legitimised both by its antiquity and its ultra-modernity. The medium itself embodied the Roman genius's eternal ability to find modern solutions to modern problems and gave Fascist Italy the perfect channel through which to remind the world of Rome's lasting contributions to western civilisation. This chapter has brought into relief the two crucial aspects of the Fascist myth of Rome in the context of the wireless world. First of all, we have seen the ways in which the ideal of *romanità* (the crucial tool for the definition of civilisation) was used to determine a hierarchy of peoples. *Romanità,* with its two axes of heritage and values, was the key to creating a binary of belonging/not-belonging

[822] 'Il centro radio imperiale di Roma' (unsigned), *RC*, N.44 (30 Oct -5 Nov. 1938), p.5.

to the new world order. Second of all, we have seen the ways in which *romanità* was employed as a propagandistic tool based on the hierarchy it created.

As a propagandistic tool, *romanità* was used to promote close cultural and political ties with other nations through appealing to common Latin heritage and/or ideological ties; to exclude peoples and ideologies from the new world order; and, ultimately, to justify the occupation of territories and to convince their peoples of Roman benevolence. Overall, the evidence of *romanità* on the Italian radio exhibited and analysed in this chapter points to a simple conception of the theme which allowed for its manipulation to suit a variety of contexts. The theme's simplicity lay in the basic equation of Rome with vague notions of civilisation, justice, modernity, and culture. Just as Zunino dismisses Fascist *romanità* because he sees Rome as a sea in which anybody may fish for symbols, the Fascist myth of Rome relied on foreign listeners to bring their own symbols and impressions of Rome to the broadcasts they received. Equally, the propagandistic use of Rome preferenced these usually vague associations over complicated, in-depth explorations of ancient Roman history and culture. For propagandists and listeners alike, 'intuition was held to be more important than erudition'.[823] In such a way, whilst conceptually very simple, the theme of *romanità* contained a polyvalence which made it malleable enough to service the propagandistic demands of the radio service in any given language. This malleability also allowed for the inclusion or exclusion of any given nation based on the political imperative of the time. Ultimately, in this way, the myth's simplicity lay in the indisputable fact that Fascist Italy remained the sole interpreter and gatekeeper of *romanità* and, therefore, of civilisation itself (past, present, and future).

[823] Visser, 'Fascist Doctrine', p.17.

The myth's malleability is perhaps most visible in its use to establish a hierarchy of nations based on the degree to which each people was touched by the glory of the Roman Empire and the degree to which it remained true to Roman values. Belonging was determined along two key axes: heritage and ideology. Countries which bore the imprint of the Roman Empire were seen as part of the Latin brotherhood. Ties of culture, history, philosophy, art, literature and (Latinate) languages meant that a bond through time and space existed with Fascist Italy. This bond was consistently emphasised with the conviction that seeing Fascist Italy as the modern (and most powerful) embodiment of a cultural heritage that was so central to the given people's sense of national self would earn the regime both soft power and concrete allies. The expediency of the theme of *romanità*, especially towards this group of listeners, lay in the fact that it allowed Fascist propaganda to piggyback on centuries of myth-making surrounding ancient Rome in any given country and globally. In other words, such propaganda was able to mobilise images of Rome which were ever-present in cultures all over the world. The myth of Rome, therefore, did not simply promote a straight-forward message of Italian dominance: it was able to valorise key components of a country's national identity. Through a narrative proposing that Latin civilisation (particularly in the Mediterranean) had lain dormant thanks to the illegalities and immoralities of British imperialism, Fascist broadcasts proposed a resurgent Latinity as a sign not only of a nation's claim to ancient greatness but also its youth and vigour. These nations had underdog status and were asked to trust Mussolini in his quest to restore Latin civilisation.

One country that joined other Latin peoples along the heritage axis was France. However, its democratic, parliamentary and internationalist political ideals meant that it was excommunicated from the present-day brotherhood. Broadcasts often acknowledged French contributions to Latin civilisation throughout the centuries in order to highlight the shame of its refusal to acknowledge and support the true embodiment of the Roman spirit. In this

way, it was arguably the axis of ideals and values which was the greatest determinant of a people's belonging to the spirit of Rome and the new civilisation it was forging. As Roberto Forges Davanzati repeatedly and emphatically stressed in his *Cronache*, Rome (in ancient times and Fascist times) was conceived as an inclusive culture to which anybody may adhere and be welcomed. In Davanzati's words, Rome itself was a 'crocevia di civiltà' (crossroads of civilisations) and the wireless world was similarly conceived. Broadcasts promoting the authority of Rome were also at pains to stress Rome's commitment to the maintenance of national languages, cultures and traditions.[824] These national traditions were intended then to fall under the banner of Rome. Therefore, while encouraging the growth of national myths and regional nationalistic and fascistic movements, *romanità* was proposed to foreign listeners as a palingenetic myth that incorporated all those subscribing to the resurgent Latin civilisation with Fascist Italy as its leader. As in the case of France, it is those nations who refuse to accept the superiority of Rome and its civilisation that are excommunicated from this palingenetic myth. As we have seen, it is the very rejection of the notion of inclusivity (coupled with its lack of shared heritage) which warranted Nazi Germany's exclusion from the spirit of Rome. It is, in fact, the case of Nazi Germany which exhibits the malleability of the myth of Rome in its international application: as Fascist Italy aligned herself with Nazi Germany, the latter was welcomed into the picture of modern Rome on the grounds that, ideologically, it embodied *romanità*.

After Italy's entry into the Second World War, the voluntary aspect of a nation's submitting herself to the cultural and political authority of Rome became less and less central, being replaced by an image of modern Rome that was far more overtly imperial and much more defined by dominance. In this context, the theme of *romanità* was used to justify the occupation of territories with Latin roots (like Greece, Albania and, as we saw in depth,

[824] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p.243.

Ljubljana). On one hand, these broadcasts were geared towards encouraging the occupied peoples to accept the benevolence of the occupiers. On the other, their insistence on the cultural and political superiority of Fascist Italy as the modern embodiment of Rome warned that the people's ascent did not matter in the grand scheme of history. The broadcasts asserted that the peoples of the new Italian provinces would come to see Rome's influence as extremely positive but, whether by voluntary consent or by military subjugation, Rome would take back control of the provinces that God had entrusted to her for the second time in history. This message of dominance was directed also at peoples who shared in none of the Roman heritage and those under the yoke of an ideology that was antithetical to Roman values, namely Soviet Communism. In Russian-language broadcasts the historical and historic superiority of the Roman spirit was discussed almost as a taunt to a people who could only ever experience its glory if through occupation. In fact, *romanità* is always presented as the ultimate antidote to the danger of Communism. Whereas Communism has materialism, *romanità* represents the spiritual. Whereas Communism is anti-historical, Fascism draws its legitimacy from millennia of Roman greatness.

Overall, the evidence explored in this chapter displays the centrality of *romanità* as a means of conceiving the wireless world imperialistically and as perhaps the most central theme of Fascist foreign-language radio propaganda. As we saw in the introduction, recent scholarship has tentatively begun to explore the international applications of the theme of *romanità* through such channels as the exchange of Roman-style monuments.[825] This scholarship has started to attempt an appraisal of the (mainly) bilateral collaborations and international political and cultural connections forged with the theme of Latinity at their root. The radio, however, offers an entirely different type of case study and represented, arguably, the ideal medium for the Fascist promotion of *romanità* as a unifying global force.

[825] Plantzos and Balaskas, 'Reinventing Romanitas'.

The marriage of medium and theme was made ideal by the fact that the radio produced a space, the wireless world, which could be mapped onto the real world. This 'immensità di spazi e di orizzonti' created exchanges and encounters with other cultures and languages to rival those of the seafaring ancient Romans. Driven in all that she did by the spirit of Rome, Fascist Italy saw in the radio a means to fulfil this need for adventure, exportation and ultimately imperialist dominance. With a simple broadcast, Rome could be delivered to peoples all over the globe. The very medium of the radio, invented by an Italian, was evidence of the hegemonic presence of Rome and her contribution to civilisation and modernity. This modern medium allowed Fascist Italy not simply to map the wireless world onto the real world but to map the ancient world onto the modern world. Just as the radio brought the modern political and cultural message of Fascist Italy, listeners were reminded of that which the Roman ships brought to foreign shores. Each one legitimised the other as Rome was presented as the eternal definition of civilisation, justice and culture with the radio a faithful legionary benevolently blessing foreign listeners with knowledge of Rome's glory.

Conclusion - Fascism in the Wireless World: Between the Ethereal and the Eternal

In Chapter 4, we introduced the idea of the *etherisation* of Rome as a counterpart to the notion of 'pietrificazione' coined by Emilio Gentile. According to Gentile, the regime's architectural projects aimed at the 'pietrificazione del mito fascista della romanità' (petrification of the Fascist myth of *romanità*).[826] This allowed for the transformation of the intangible and spiritual essence of Fascism to take physical shape and, in turn, inspire and renew that very intangible and spiritual essence. The casting of Fascism in stone embodied its claims to eternal glory and provided concrete evidence of its successes. The radio, on the other hand, presents an entirely different proposition: instead of turning to stone that which was intangible, it etherised Fascism to connect with listeners across the wireless world. These two processes fed into one another in the same way that the regime's material and spiritual elements coexisted. A case in which the interplay between etherisation and 'pietrificazione' is most manifest can be found in the Marconi obelisk in the EUR district which was discussed in the Introduction. Resembling at once a radio mast and an ancient monument, the obelisk captures Fascism's attempt to blend modernity and antiquity, the immaterial and the material, aspiring to an all-powerful a-temporality. Looking over streets named after countries from all over the world which are physical evidence of the wireless world, the obelisk stands for the radio's power to reach all four corners of the earth and, in turn, to bring those same cultures and languages to Italy. Indeed, the extremely large radio masts of the period stood as physical evidence of the regime's reach, a visible 'pietrificazione' of Fascism's soft power project. Nonetheless, the radio as a medium is centred around the intangible. This fact, it should be stressed, stands as much for those

[826] Gentile, *Fascismo di pietra*, p.vii.

producing radio as it does for the historians studying it. On one hand, the wireless world offered the regime an opportunity to translate its tangible and eternal *realizazzioni* into something ethereal which could travel, turning stone into ether. By the same token, the radio offered the perfect medium to capture those aspects of Fascism which defied *pietrificazione*, the aspects which could never truly be pinned down or set in stone, that is to say its spiritual elements. This etherisation of Fascism presented an opportunity to prove how far and wide its culture and politics could travel or, in other words, to exhibit its universality. As we have seen, through the insistence on the myth of Rome as the interpretative key for global politics and culture, the voice of Rome was intended to be both ethereal and eternal, the voice of the past, present and future, outside of space and time. The magic of the radio (gifted to the world by Marconi's Italic genius) was the perfect medium through which to communicate the inexplicable eternal glory contained within Fascism.

In focussing on the international aspects of the radio during the Fascist *ventennio*, this thesis responds to a distinct gap in the scholarship on Fascist radio as well as answering the call of recent international broadcasting scholarship for an increased focus on specific programmes, the people who materially made the radio, and listener engagement. It also constitutes an attempt to incorporate Fascist Italy within this latter scholarship which has focussed predominantly on liberal projects of wireless internationalism. An examination of both the international dimensions of Italian radio culture and its use to reach foreign audiences has brought into relief the interconnectedness of the wireless world and the Fascist engagement with it. The former contributes to our understanding of the Fascist management of an increasingly international and transnational mass culture, while the latter provides an important insight into the regime's project for developing its soft power. The radio was a new medium, born under the dictatorship and developed under its supervision. The Fascist regime, along with every other state, was not following an established rule book for the

medium's management; they were writing the rules as they went. They were not engaging with a medium whose uses and nature were clearly defined; they were defining the radio through their engagement with it. The radio, an Italian invention, was understood by the regime to be essentially Fascist in nature. Its international dimension, therefore, was celebrated as a crucial means of bringing about a fascist international order. As we saw in Forges Davanzati's coverage of the Prime Minister Doumergue broadcasts controversy in France, the regime considered the radio to be a fundamentally anti-democratic tool which was built to mobilise peoples and establish the dynamic relationship between the masses and their governments at which Fascism aimed. Radio embodied the Fascist thirst for modernity, speed, and technological prowess, as well as being proof that the Italic genius was eternal, living on through the *romani della modernità*. Fascist navigations through the wireless world not only indicate the regime's conception of the medium but provide evidence of how they attempted to enforce this conception internationally. The radio, in turn, was a crucial vehicle in the attempt to imprint the Fascist conception of culture, politics and history on listeners from every corner of the wireless world.

Any mapping of the wireless world must account for the complexity and interconnectedness which governs it. Retracing Fascist navigations through this wireless world has allowed the uncovering of the regime's engagement with such complexity and interconnectedness. The wireless world was run through a complex (and at times chaotic) web of transfers, exchanges and collaborations. Given Fascism's totalitarian aspirations and its manifest sense of international superiority, one might expect a monolithic approach to the wireless world in which the regime attempted to bypass these networks of transfers, exchanges and collaborations. However, throughout this study we have seen its engagement with this complex web and the ways in which it actively created and nurtured such transnational networks. In order for the regime to pursue its international broadcasting goals

it drew on networks of journalists, diplomats, foreign politicians, as well as foreign broadcasters. Individuals were sought and hired from foreign countries to work as writers, presenters, translators, stenographers, and radio monitors. Programme exchanges were initiated with foreign broadcasters, particularly in instances where the Italian radio transmitters could not reliably reach far-off countries. Often strategic planning for the radio may seem lacking, however it must be considered that most projects (whether considered a success or a failure) were by definition innovative. Projects were often fuelled by experimentation, *ad hoc* arrangements, and trial and error. Sometimes the initiative came centrally from ministers, other times they were prompted by less prominent figures such as diplomats or members of cultural institutes. The task of this research has been to distil these navigations in order to characterise the Fascist approach to the radio. Such a task requires an acute awareness of the medium's nature and an assessment of the Fascist engagement with it.

Given the interconnected nature of the wireless world, the medium's use as a tool for soft power cannot be considered without attention also to domestic Italian radio culture in the context of the medium's inherently international nature. As we highlighted with Marconi's obelisk, the radio brought Italy to the world but it also brought the world to Italy. If culture more widely had been tending evermore towards the transnational (such as foreign films and translated fiction), the radio might well have been seen as Pandora's box for anybody who wished to safeguard Italian culture from foreign trends, cultures and languages. As established in Chapter 1, the overwhelmingly prominent appeal of the radio to listeners was its allowing them to travel the world from the comfort of their own home. The hours of national programming grew and grew, however the *programmi esteri* (foreign programmes) listings would dwarf the EIAR's output, containing as it did the schedules of every broadcaster in the world (including, until the outbreak of WWII, those of the Soviet

Union). Far from discouraging engagement with foreign stations, the EIAR's magazine, *Radiocorriere*, reported on international radio news and the Italian radio offered foreign-language courses (with related exercises printed in the *RC*). In the context of a strand of thought within the Fascist regime that learning about other cultures and 'taking the best that other peoples had to offer was one step on the road to conquering them', this study has revealed how the international dimension of radio culture was negotiated by the regime and, in turn, how this informs our understanding of its engagement with an increasingly international and transnational mass culture. The juxtaposition of nationalistic messages and international cosmopolitanism on the radio and in the pages of the *RC* are initially startling, as 'admonitions to "keep Italy Italian" coexisted with incitements to adopt an "imperial" consciousness founded on a belief in fascism as a universal rather than a national phenomenon'.[827] The latter required an engagement with and an understanding of the world beyond. An Italy closed off to the world beyond could never give birth to the second Roman Empire which Mussolini sought. To understand a foreign people and to speak its language was to create the opportunity to bring them into the Fascist sphere of influence (just as Fascist foreign-language broadcasting sought to do). By treating the domestic and international aspects together this research highlights the wireless world as a multi-cultural and multilingual environment. In such a space, the Italian radio could not very well discourage foreign-language learning when it was itself broadcasting in multiple languages every day. Leading by example, the polyglot Italian radio itself inspired the learning of foreign languages. International broadcasting and domestic broadcasting were not occurring entirely separately. Certainly, particular stations were designated for particular audiences (Radio Bari for the Middle East, for instance), however programmes in the regular three Italian *programmi* were peppered with foreign-language bulletins such that an Italian

[827] Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, p.11.

audience listening to an opera, for instance, might hear a French-language EIAR bulletin in the interval.

On one hand, we might interpret this 'cultural "openness" as part of an effort to 'expose Italian intellectuals to the latest foreign trends, allowing them to fashion a modern culture that could be exported to other countries'.[828] In the case of the radio, the international nature of its culture prompted a response geared towards the inculcation of imperialistic values and attitudes among the Italian listening public. As the politicisation of programming increased in the mid-1930s, instead of an autarkic approach to radio culture, the focus became instructing listeners in how to travel the wireless world imperialistically. Warnings were issued about the rampant international media bias against Fascist Italy and the tactics employed to discredit the Fascist Revolution. The myth of Rome (particularly in Forges Davanzati's *Cronache del regime*) was expounded to provide Italians with a key to understanding the hierarchy of peoples and its privileged place at its summit. In the same way as the proliferation of foreign cultural institutes in Rome was meant to reinforce the image of the city as the 'crocevia di civiltà' (crossroads of civilisations), the radio presented an opportunity for Italians to interpret the world through the prism of Rome and to reaffirm Italy's global pre-eminence.[829] We might see the decision against fighting the radio's international nature and the resulting attempts to negotiate it in the context of the Fascist 'desire to mobilize – not paralyze – the masses'.[830] As Paxton has said, 'authoritarians would rather leave the population demobilised and passive, while fascists want to engage and excite the public'.[831] Whilst tensions were certainly born of radio culture's international dimension, working to ban it would have constituted an attempt to leave Italians 'demobilised and

[828] *Ibid.*, p.33.
[829] Forges Davanzati, *Cronache (vol. 1),* p.243.
[830] Gaborik, *Mussolini's Theatre*, p.240.
[831] Paxton, *The Anatomy*, p.216.

passive', whereas using it as a springboard for an imperialistic message offered the opportunity to engage, excite and mobilise listeners. Ironically, this openness to the wireless world would prove a serious problem during WWII as the allies (through the *Voice of America* and *Radio Londra*) gained high popularity with Italian listeners. As Mack Smith reports, Mussolini would bemoan that 'the Russians were winning the war despite - or, more likely, because of - the fact that they had just a single newspaper and a single radio programme'.[832] The plurality which was prevalent in peace time became a barrier to the desired totalitarian management of radio in times of war, despite bans, fines and imprisonment for listening to enemy stations.

By bringing into relief the propagandistic uses of 'attraction' and 'persuasion' as the central tactics of soft power, the exploration of Fascist international broadcasting has contributed to the scholarly picture of the Fascist project to gain influence overseas. Fascist soft power – or *spiritual imperialism* to use a contemporary phrase – is increasingly drawing scholarly attention. However, systematic studies on particular media and which go beyond isolated geographical case studies are still lacking. The study of the radio, in particular, as a medium of soft power is useful because it provides case studies over a high number of geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts. The radio serves as an insightful measure of the Fascist soft power project because of its border-defying nature, reaching limitless listenerships in any number of languages from one centre. The technological advances of medium and short-wave transmission meant that Fascist airwaves could invade countries at will. The Fascist use of this power shows a rampant project for contacting and influencing foreign peoples, media, and governments. Adapting to the new medium in real time, the regime's propagandists sought to achieve this goal through the radio in many innovative ways and these methods may serve as starting points for future lines of enquiry regarding

[832] Mack Smith, *Mussolini*, p.235.

Fascist soft power through other media. Analysis of both domestic radio culture and radio as a tool for Fascist soft power has revealed, first of all, an integrated mediatic approach into which the radio was to take its place. The radio was perhaps the medium where this integration was most evident. Whilst this thesis has focussed predominantly on talk radio, the medium was a meeting place for musicians, dramatists, poets as well as journalists, professors and politicians. We have focussed extensively on the EIAR's official magazine, *Radiocorriere*, which was supposed to be the radio's personal *historian*, eternalising the ethereal. We have also drawn on printed materials – collected radio addresses which were considered so popular that to lose them to the ether would be a shame. This acute understanding of media integration extended also to the radio's use as a medium for soft power. As examined in Chapter 2, the institution of the EIAR's first ever foreign-language broadcasts, the *Radio Giornale di Roma*, was followed by Ciano's Circolare 0009 sent to all Italian diplomatic representatives abroad. This circular and its responses show that the initial logic behind foreign-language broadcasts was less to do with reaching masses of foreign listeners as it was driven by a desire to make the bulletins an international news source. Akin to news agencies, these bulletins would be captured by foreign newspaper editors and become a source for news, helping Italy to control international news narratives.

In this vein, the willingness and adeptness of the Fascist propaganda machine to collaborate and create networks in the service of its goal of *spiritual imperialism* has been made clear. Whilst the border-defying nature of radio broadcasting allowed the regime to reach foreign audiences without the need for permission, this does not tell the whole story of the regime's international broadcasting project. Collaborations and exchanges were crucial in reaching foreign listeners. Just as Fuentes Codera and Dogliani's recent edited volume, *Continental Transfers*, focusses on transnational exchange, the collaboration seen in international broadcasting further opens the door to a scholarship which sees soft power

less as a monolithic process and more as one of exchange and negotiation and which requires the construction of interconnected networks. The growth of the Italian network throughout the 1930s (particularly with the construction of its *Centro Radio Imperiale* and the Radio Bari stations) put it at the vanguard of long-distance broadcasting. Furthermore, the Italian radio was ahead of the game when it came to broadcasting in foreign languages. However, even with such technological prowess reaching foreign listeners was never a fully unilateral business and satisfying the impulse to reach foreign listeners required some degree of collaboration. In the case of truly long-distance broadcasts, the clarity of reception could not be guaranteed even by the most advanced short-wave transmitters. This meant that retransmission by local stations was required, meaning, in turn, that access to a given listenership was determined by local stations and local governments. Such was the case in Thailand and China. The Thai Prime Minister even warned the MCP that material casting his country in a relationship of cultural and historical inferiority would not be welcomed while also expressing gratitude that a great European nation was broadcasting in Thai. The general spirit of reciprocity also meant that gaining access to foreign audiences meant granting foreign access to Italian audiences. Such was the case with radio exchanges with the Slovakian radio. In this instance, and wherever possible, the Italian radio offered a degree of reciprocity but rarely true parity. Furthermore, responses to programme requests were always seen as a vehicle to focus on the propaganda themes of the regime's choosing. In the case of collaborations with American broadcasts (most prominently NBC), the regime adeptly manipulated the practicalities of long-distance radio collaborations in order to control the American broadcaster's output. Journalists from the American broadcasters would deliver their address from the EIAR microphones in Rome. The broadcasts would then be retransmitted by the American stations. The journalists' presence in Rome gave the regime's propaganda machine the perfect opportunity to exert control over the broadcasts

which was not permitted by their contractual agreements with the American broadcasters. Providing the journalists with copy written by the Italians and standing over them to ensure it was read correctly, the regime succeeded in producing broadcasts entirely favourable to its own ends which appeared for all the world to be the honest opinions of dispassionate foreign observers.

Just as Nye stresses in his definition of soft power, such networks focussed intently on highlighting similarities and historical ties with the target audience, all the while establishing a hierarchical relationship which placed Fascist Italy in a position of superiority.[833] The thematic cornerstone of this approach was the theme of *romanità*. The myth of Rome, whilst well-studied and debated as both a tool for domestic consensus building and as a means of understanding Fascism's very *raison d'être*, has received almost no attention as a tool for Fascist soft power. The very notion of *spiritual imperialism* indicates a universalist mission which derives its impetus from Fascism's inheritance of the eternal Roman spirit. The radio serves as a useful case study in our understanding of *romanità* as an international propaganda theme. With the regime broadcasting in many languages, the radio provides a solid platform for a comparative analysis of the theme's use in a variety of different contexts. The transposing of the physical world onto the wireless world (as Fascism attempted to mould both) means that studying the Fascist mapping of the latter provides a useful guide to its understanding of the former. The concept of *romanità* was central to this process. Chapter 4, in particular, has revealed how *romanità* was the ideological tenet of Fascism's elaboration of its own ideology and identity with respect to both domestic and international radio propaganda. We have understood its hierarchisation in terms of two axes: heritage and values. As a tool for international propaganda, therefore, *romanità* functioned through a sliding scale of inclusivity and exclusivity. Ties of language,

[833] Nye, *Soft Power*, p.27.

history and ideology were stressed wherever possible to bring peoples into the orbit of the nascent second Roman Empire. And where fundamental incompatibilities were perceived (such as with Soviet Russia) the audience was taunted with professions of Fascist Italy's divine superiority which made them destined to define the future of global civilisation. The picture of *romanità* which emerges from this research is one of both simplicity and malleability. The propagandistic use of the theme on the radio (as a mass medium), while relying on global familiarity with the grandeur of Rome as a symbol of civilisation, did not require a classicist's knowledge of antiquity – nor did it require any knowledge of Latin which was entirely absent from the Fascist radio, be it international or domestic. While many broadcasts were dedicated to specific aspects of ancient Rome (emperors, philosophers, artists, poets, battles), most commonly the theme functioned as a simple correspondence between Rome and civilisation. It was stressed that the Fascists were the *romani della modernità*, that, as the inheritors of Rome, they were producing modern solutions to modern problems, and that close ties with Italy meant being on the side of history. The theme was, equally, malleable and allowed the regime's radio propagandists to include or exclude any given people according to political expediency. We saw how Nazi Germany was ridiculed consistently in Forges Davanzati's *Le Cronache del regime* broadcasts because their racist exclusivity was deemed to run contrary to the inclusivity of the truly universal Romans. Once the two countries were allied, however, the myth of Rome was adapted to include Nazi Germany which was now said to embody perfectly the Roman spirit.

More widely, this study has sought to avoid a success-failure binary in the uncovering of Fascist policies. Instead, it has teased out the tensions at play between the regime and the ever-growing new medium of radio. This is not to say that some projects cannot be deemed as successes or failures. Overall, the *Radio Verdad* broadcasts were extremely useful in support of Franco's war effort. By the same token, it can be said without

controversy that Italian international broadcasting during WWII was unable to compete with that of the Allies and was nowhere near as efficient as that of Nazi Germany. For too long, the Fascist radio has been dismissed as a field of study because its domestic subscription figures were low, because Mussolini was less interested in it than he was the press and the cinema, and perhaps also because its inherent internationalism ran counter to Fascism's perceived cultural nationalism. When it comes to domestic radio culture, it might be tempting to think that the regime 'failed' if we assume that it would have preferred a totalitarian approach which eliminated the medium's cosmopolitan international feel. Such an assumption, however, stops us from asking how the regime actually engaged with the medium. As it happens, the regime made no such totalitarian attempt to regulate the airwaves (until WWII) and its engagement with the medium's cosmopolitan internationalism is extremely revealing of its nuanced and ongoing management of an increasingly international mass culture. In the international arena, there are metrics we can use to judge whether foreign-language broadcasting was successful. A considerable number of letters arrived from listeners abroad and Chapter 3 offered an in-depth analysis of listener letters sent to the fictious *Radio Verdad* station. We have also seen instances in which Fascist broadcasts were reported in foreign newspapers and examples of foreign figures (including politicians) praising the Italian radio for its output. These metrics reveal distinct successes in the Fascist search for contact with foreign listeners and reveal a developing understanding of the medium. Whilst it is, indeed, important to acknowledge successes and failures, it has been far more revealing for our wider understanding of Fascist propaganda to probe the methods that were used in order to mobilise the medium as a tool for domestic and international propaganda. Producing an accurate number of Italians who listened to foreign broadcasts or foreigners who listened to Italian broadcasts is not possible. A complete survey of the reception of all long-distance Italian broadcasts is equally infeasible. Equally, we do not

have every transcript of every broadcast ever aired. If we cast the Fascist propaganda machine's objective as something so grandiose as *manufacturing consent*, the ultimate judgement will always be one of failure. If we took as our *point de départ* the production of broadcasts in foreign languages which rivalled local stations for popularity and reached the masses abroad, we would be destined to consign the Fascist broadcasting project to failure. This research has showed, however, that by being attentive to the tensions and negotiations at play, we can advance our understanding of the regime's adaptability in pursuing its propagandistic aims. By the same token, this research has shown that the lack of a defined, pre-determined programmatic vision for a medium's management does not necessarily mean that it lacked cohesion. As a medium, the radio drew interest from many stakeholders, including ministers, members of parliament, diplomats, journalists, artists and intellectuals. Whilst suggestions for programmes came from many sources, permission to speak at the EIAR microphones was granted by the government and, from the beginning, any broadcasts in foreign languages were monitored closely and final authorisation was needed from the MAE. Whilst there may not have been a single codified vision for international broadcasting, our survey reveals consistent trends towards, on one hand, collaboration and exchange and, on the other, flagrant disregard for international regulations.

The outcomes of this research, in turn, raise questions to be pursued by future research, both in the fields of Fascist cultural studies and international radio history. We have seen the transnationalising power of the radio. Nowhere is this exhibited more clearly than in the case of *Radio Verdad*. The radio offered Fascist Italy the opportunity to conceal the broadcasts' origin, creating, therefore, an ostensibly Spanish fact. This supposedly national station was then transformed into a transnational phenomenon by the radio's border-defying nature. Interest in the Spanish Civil War was so strong globally that distant listeners sought out news directly from the source, not knowing that they were actually listening to

broadcasts of Italian origin. This transnationalism helped to foster inter-nationalist sympathies between listeners of all nationalities and National Spain. This blurring of the lines between the national and the transnational is something which is present elsewhere in the study, particularly when it came to collaborative broadcasts done in multiple languages. By focussing on the international reception of individual programmes, the scholarship may add further texture to our mapping of the wireless world. Furthermore, this research has focussed heavily on individual projects which had international exchange at their heart. So far, the scholarship has revealed the projects at the heart of what it terms *wireless internationalism*. This has, so far, predominantly entailed detailed reconstructions of the IBU-sponsored collaborations driven by the spirit of internationalism whose heart was to be found in Geneva. The dictatorships are largely absent, therefore, from our understanding of international exchange, leading to an image of Fascist Italy as a lone wolf enacting unilateral projects for international domination. Just as this project dispels this impression, incorporating Fascist Italy into the interconnectedness of the wireless world in its own idiosyncratic way, future research could do more to uncover bilateral exchanges, involving both liberal countries and dictatorships. Just as this research uncovered the management of Radio Lubiana, more systematic work could be done in future to form an understanding of the running of radio stations in newly-acquired territories and their incorporation into the national networks of the occupier.

In terms of the Italian Fascist radio, an in-depth case study of the Università Radiofonica Italiana (URI) would contribute to our understanding of Italian language and culture as vehicles of Fascist propaganda. As radio scholarship pays increasing attention to programmes and listener engagement, it would be especially revelatory to analyse not only the lessons but also the students' exam scripts, if the extant documents allow. On this note, a study focussed entirely on the Istituto per le relazioni culturali con l'estero would be a

crucial means of advancing our understanding of Fascist soft power, with a particular focus on the exchanges and networks that allowed access to foreign publics. In a similar vein, the foreign cultural institutes in Rome require further attention. Forges Davanzati cited these institutes as evidence that Rome was the *crossroads of civilisations*. We saw how this was part of an attempt to foster an imperialistic contact with foreign cultures which would interpret them all through the prism of Rome. Chapter 1 explored how the radio was an interface between Italians and foreign cultures. At this interface, Italians were encouraged to engage but only imperialistically, incorporating those parts which suited and disregarding those that did not. Institutional histories of these very institutes, their engagement with the Italian public and the Fascist government, would greatly further this line of enquiry.

In conclusion, this thesis has retraced Fascist Italy's imperialistic navigations through the wireless world. It has brought into relief a spiritual imperialism which sought to bring foreign peoples into Fascist Italy's orbit both culturally and politically. The radio was used both to contact foreign peoples and mediate Italians' contact with foreign cultures in an uncomfortable perversion of the liberal dream of a humanitarian medium which would foster understanding between nations. If, as we have seen, the *Dottrina del fascismo* stressed that a people could be truly imperial without the need of conquering a single square mile of territory, the wireless world offers a way of visualising this imaginary map to be conquered.[834] Domestically, the radio's international nature meant that contact with foreign languages and cultures expanded enormously with the medium's advent. The regime attempted to use this contact as a means of training its new legionaries in relating themselves imperialistically to the world beyond. Just as the Roman Empire incorporated and adapted foreign cultures and traditions, so too were the *romani della modernità* to learn about the

[834] 'Fascismo', in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Treccani,1932). Accessible online at: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/fascismo_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/

world beyond and incorporate their findings into the paradigm of Roman superiority. Instead of a spirit of cosmopolitan (rootless) internationalism, the radio was to inculcate an understanding of international culture whose roots were firmly planted in Rome, the eternal source of civilisation. Understanding foreign peoples was a crucial step towards dominating them and the Italian radio exhibited this importance first hand through its rampant production of broadcasts in foreign languages. Be they regular news bulletins, special cultural programmes, political comments, the URI lessons on Italian language, culture and history, the Italian radio made direct contact with foreign audiences through a radio network which was among the most technologically advanced in the world. We have seen that in pursuing these soft power goals, the regime used the radio as a form of public diplomacy. Much of the EIAR's output was done unilaterally – in some cases taking the sensibilities of local governments into account and in others disregarding them entirely. However, the medium's nature meant that exchanges, relays, retransmissions, and collaborations were necessary in accessing foreign audiences.

The regime's international broadcasting projects reveal the Fascist contribution to the creation of a truly transnational wireless world. This transnationalism, however, was distinctly different to the wireless internationalism of the IBU and the liberal states. It prioritised bilateral exchanges with politically sympathetic countries and employed the principle of reciprocity only to the extent that it was necessary to reach its own propagandistic ends. We have employed the image of Marconi's obelisk in the EUR district to depict the channels which his invention created. Not only did the radio reach all of the countries whose names are represented on the surrounding streets, but it brought those countries to Rome. In our final analysis, we must complicate this image ever so slightly. These channels did indeed exist; however, they were not parallel, never interacting, channels each moving constantly in opposite directions. Marconi's obelisk stands as the only

transmitter towering over the streets representing the wireless world. In reality, Fascist international broadcasting was not so centralised and unilateral. This thesis has uncovered the Fascist creation of networks with foreign broadcasters, governments, and newspapers which allowed access to these nations' listeners. International broadcasting inherently entailed a dialogue with the rest of the wireless world, a dialogue in which the Fascist radio engaged. For Fascist Italy, the radio was an imperialistic medium. The regime embraced and manipulated its transnationalism in its mission to establish its soft power. Connecting disparate peoples through invisible airwaves, the radio was an ethereal medium through which the regime spread its message of eternal Roman (and, therefore, Fascist) glory. Fostering these connections to bring foreign peoples within its orbit, Fascist Italy sought to bring the new Roman Empire to life in the wireless world.

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