Beiträge zur
Marx-Engels-Forschung
Neue Folge 2007

Geld – Kapital – Wert

Zum 150. Jahrestag der Niederschrift von Marx' ökonomischen Manuskripten 1857/58 *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*

Der Anfang und die Methode

Zum Übergang vom Geld ins Kapital in den *Grundrissen*, im *Urtext* und im *Kapital*

Zur dialektischen Darstellung ökonomischer Kategorien in den *Grundrissen*

Zum Gesamtprozess der Kapitalreproduktion

Gesamtkapitalreproduktion und keynesische Interpretation von Marx

Zur Übersetzung des Marx'schen Begriffs *Wert* ins Russische

Argument

Vor 150 Jahren, im Oktober 1857, begann Marx mit der Niederschrift eines Manuskripts, das viel später – nämlich bei seiner Erstveröffentlichung 1939 – den redaktionellen Titel *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* erhielt.

Nach dem Neudruck der *Grundrisse* im Karl-Marx-Jahr 1953 wurde ihnen vor allem seit den 1960er Jahren breiter Raum in der Rezeption der Marx'schen ökonomischen Theorie und seiner dialektischen Methode eingeräumt. Dass diese Debatten nicht abgeflaut sind, sondern mit erneuter Frische geführt werden, davon legen die hier versammelten Aufsätze beredtes Zeugnis ab.

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Emilio Gianni

The Diffusion of Marxism in Italy from 1848 to 1926



This essay, written with our *Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung. Neue Folge* readers in view, is an excerpt from our work *Diffusione, popolarizzazione e volgarizzazione del marxismo in Italia. Scritti di Marx ed Engels pubblicati in italiano dal 1848 al 1926*, published by "edizioni Pantarei", Milan, 2004, and edited by the Genoa's "Istituto di Studi sul Capitalismo". With this study we mean to fill in a gap in this kind of research which went back to the early 1960s in Italy. For this work, based on the careful examination of almost all the Marx-Engels' books, pamphlets and articles published in Italian – also re-proposed under catalogue-form in the book –, the time limit of 1926 was set, since, as the year of the consolidation of the Fascist dictatorship in Italy and of the advent and beginning of the entrenchment of the Stalinist counter-revolution in Russia, it well lent itself to being a historic watershed.

The years of the bourgeois revolutions and of national unification

1848–1871 encapsulates an entire historical phase, that of bourgeois revolutions and national wars. The proletariat, that with the 1848 *Manifesto* achieved its political passage from utopia to science, closed that phase by attempting the first of its "assault to the sky" with the 1871 Paris "Commune". This is also the historical period in which Italy was unified: a long, troubled period that started in 1848 and ended 22 years later with the capture of Rome in 1870. To the beating of the time of the other European capitals, and conditioned by its many delays, it burnt up an entire generation in its attempt to realize its dream.

This is one of the main causes of the delay and slowness of the arrival in the peninsula of Socialism in general and of Marxism in particular. Engels explains this to Kautsky in a letter of February 7th 1882, where he makes an

interesting comparison between German and Italian workers' movements: «Now it is historically impossible for a great people to discuss this or that internal question in any way seriously so long as national independence is lacking. Prior to 1859 there was no question of socialism in Italy; even the republicans were few in number, although they constituted the most vigorous element. Not until 1861 did the republicans begin to expand, subsequently yielding their best elements to the socialism. Similarly in Germany. [...] It was not until 1866, the year that actually decided Little Germany's Greater Prussian unity, that both the Lassallean and the so-called Eisenach parties acquired any significance, and it was not until 1870, when Bonapartist urged to interfere had been eliminated for good, that the cause gathered momentum».[1]

Hence, if before the unification of Italy, it was not possible to speak seriously of Socialism, it was even more difficult to do so in Marxist terms. It was not that the Italy of that time lacked either a socialist literature or a literature on socialism. What it lacked, more precisely, were publications that mentioned, referred or reproduced Marx's thought. In fact for the whole 1850s we have just a few quotations from Marx-Engels' theoretic work, while the first two unabridged reproductions of their writings appeared in 1848. Apart from Marx's well-known and frequently quoted letter to the editor of the democratic Florentine newspaper *L'Alba* of June 1848, the first writing to be published entirely as such was Engels' *Il principio della fine in Austria*, which, published anonymously in the *Deutsche-Brüsseler Zeitung*, was republished in two instalments in the February 25th and March 5th issues of Lucca's democratic newspaper, *La Riforma*. This article, strongly anti-Austrian and pro-Italian, was an expression of the vaster political battle being fought in those months by Marx and Engels in the tradition of the revolutionary strategy they had elaborated for the European 1848. Just a few days later, on March 23rd, the First War of Italian Independence broke out. It is because for its specific content, and certainly not because for its strategic background, that Engels' article could actually be published in an organ of the Italian Risorgimental democracy. Hence, this leads to a first consideration that can be drawn from the material of Marx and Engels published in Italy in those years: it was the bourgeois democracy, and not the proletariat – not yet politically organized – that first published and used instrumentally the Marxist writings.

After the parenthesis of the 1850s, during which Italy experienced the ups and downs of the emancipation, in the following decade, when the country

[1] Marx-Engels, *Lettere 1881–1883*, Genoa, Istituto di Studi sul Capitalismo, privately circulated edition, 2001, 219.

was going through the last stages of this process, the Italian workers' movement took its first steps towards getting organized. Yet again it was the currents of the bourgeois democracy that set the ball rolling. However their hegemony was already under question. The alternative came from outside. The constitution of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA) in 1864 represented a fixed reference point. The organization of the Società Operaie Italiane (SOI), promoted previously by democratic-Mazzinian exponents, could not avoid comparing itself with it. It is precisely their organs of propaganda, often to differentiate themselves or to criticize them, or because they were beginning to fall under their influence, that first published the International's documents. Its *Inaugural Address* of 1864 and its *General Rules* of 1864 and 1866 were published numerous times in the decade in question. The Statutes though often through «bad»[2] translations, as Engels observed in a letter to Theodor Cuno date January 24th 1874, or just in their preamble to the *Considering* are the documents of the IWMA and of Marx, who was their drafter – though often not openly professed –, that were most published in Italy also in the subsequent decades up to 1926.

During the course of the 1860s, another three newspaper published Marx's writings or speeches, always generally presented as resolutions of the IWMA. The most important was the one published by *Libertà e Giustizia* because it termed itself the first "socialist" Italian newspaper. Founded in Naples in 1867, it stands out as being the first Italian newspaper to publish part of the foreword to the first book of Marx's *Capital* in the same year as its first edition in Hamburg. «Hence, in the course of the 1860s, there had been published some of the fundamental documents of Marxist reflection, born of the encounter with that real movement of which the International had been the outlet and which from the International had been received stimuli for new developments. This does not at all means that those outlines were the point of reference for the variegated world of the workers' organization or for that, just as variegated, of the social-democratic universe. The appearance of texts, even important ones, in periodical publications that do not make them the motive of programmatic and continuous re-proposition, in a media context that is widely dispersed in the thousand rivulets of "generic socialism", is not sufficient for this».[3] It was not sufficient in 1860s and it would not sufficient af-

[2] Giuseppe Del Bo, *Marx e Engels. Corrispondenze con italiani*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1964, 139.

[3] Paolo Favilli, *Storia del marxismo italiano. Dalle origini alla grande guerra*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1996, 37.

terwards, when the writings of Marx and Engels were re-proposed much more abundantly.

The years of International in Italy

These years begins with the Paris "Commune" of 1871 and end with the last congresses of the two branches into which the First International had split in Italy. The anarchic current, embodied by the Federazione Italiana dell'Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori (FIAIL), was born in 1872 and ended its experience in 1878 when, shortly, Andrea Costa[4] shift toward socialism would mature among its ranks. The other current, the socialist-evolutionist, that saw the light in 1876 as the Federazione Alta Italia dell'Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori (FAIAIL), expired in 1880. This was the same year when there germinated in Milan the first elements of that experience that would give birth to the labourite-socialist current of the Partito Operaio Italiano (POI) and with which the most eminent exponents of the FAIAIL itself would merge.

These are also the years of the first real penetration of the writings of Marx and Engels into Italy. It was the "Commune" that made it possible. It was a watershed. With it and with Giuseppe Mazzini who opposed it, the hegemony of the democratic-bourgeois currents over the workers' movement was put under strain. It was a fact of international politics that brought this about. The "Commune" forced people to chose sides, and the International, which raised its banner, became the bulwark with which to side or against which to fight. Hence, its documents and news of its activity appeared more and more frequently in the Italian press. As regards publications, there were two periods of great concentration: first, until 1872 and then from 1877 onwards. These were practically the same phases of Engels' direct action in Italy, both as the Italian secretary of the International and as the London correspondent of *La Plebe* of Lodi. The organs interest in this activity were a few dozen. They were the expression of an extreme variety of political position and, unlike the 1860s, were printed in various town, by now representative of the whole Italian peninsula. This is an index of the echo that had now reached Italy from International. However, nearly all of them published just in the two-year period from 1871 to 1872, and again mainly edited above all the *General Rules*.

The 1870s are also the period in which the writing of Marx and Engels appeared for the first time in book- or pamphlet-form, or were extensively

[4] Andrea Costa (1851–1910), leader of the Italian anarchic movement and then of the socialist one.

quoted in the works of other authors. The *General Rules,* however, used almost exclusively in their opening preamble to the *Considering* were used also by the anarchic current, which placed alongside them, its local or regional "Statutes", inspired by its own principles. The relationship with Marx' texts, established in these years by Italian sections of International or by the newspaper linked with them, is therefore characterized by its use as a tool. This was made possible by the breakaway of the anarchists, who would shortly became the leading current in the peninsula, from the other currents. Moreover, as Roberto Michels pointed out, it was precisely this political rift that «was prejudicial also to the scientific knowledge»[5] of Marx in Italy. Not even the direct intervention of Engels, as *La Plebe*'s London correspondent, was able to do more than slightly counter this trend.

Between 1871 and first months of 1872 Marx and Engels had already intervened personally and on various occasions in the Italian debate, both in the controversies with the anarchists and against Mazzini's attacks. In this intervention of theirs they could avail of the support of such persons as Bignami[6] in Lodi, or, above all, Cafiero[7] in Naples, until, after connections with the IWMA's General Council had been broken off, he passed definitively in the anarchic ranks in June 1872. When *La Plebe* thus ended up as the only «pied-à-terre»[8] on which Engels could count in Italy, he began to collaborate with it directly. Engels' relationship with *La Plebe* dated back to the summer-autumn 1871, but the first correspondence appeared only in April of the following year. Known as the *Lettere londinesi*, eight of them were published up to December of the same year. The whole collection of the correspondence written by Engels for the Lodi organ, including the aforementioned letters and those sent subsequently, is of considerable importance: we could say it forms a sort of *Anti-Dühring* for Italy. As in the latter, also in the former Engels' criticism was directed at the «sublime stupidity» of those who wish to reform Socialism. The «new socialist theory»[9] that was spreading all over Italy under the anarchic guise personified by Bakunin, actually re-proposed all typical errors (utopianism, subjectivism, voluntarism and "Garibaldinism") inherited from

5 Roberto Michels, *Storia del marxismo in Italia*, Rome, Libreria Editrice Luigi Mongini, 1909, 26.

6 Enrico Bignami (1844–1921). Garibaldian-Mazzinian, then Socialist. Founder and editor of *La Plebe* (1868–1884)

7 Carlo Cafiero (1846–1892). One of the leaders of Italian anarchism.

8 Letter from Engels to F.A. Sorge dated January 4th 1873 in *Marx Engels Opere* (MEO), Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1972–1990, vol. XLIV, 579.

9 F. Engels' foreword of June 11th 1878 to *Anti-Duhring*, Milan, Edizioni Lotta Comunista, 2003, 13–16.

the political cycle of the Risorgimento. Through *La Plebe*, Engels tried to rid the Italian political sphere of precisely these impurities. This was necessary so that a modern class organization could arise in Italy too. These were months of intense activity enriched, the following year, by the publication of Marx's *Dell'Autorità* and Engels' *L'indifferenza in materia politica* in the "Almanacco della Plebe". These are significant examples of literature because «they present themselves to the Italian workers' movement as the test stand of its maturity».[10] This first test was a failure and Engels realized it. It was a failure, in general, on the part of the Italian internationalist circles that «intended in future only to conspire»,[11] but not even those connected with *La Plebe* passed the test, held back as they were by still «on mediation»[12] with the former. Engels thus broke off his collaboration with *La Plebe* and would resume it only in February 1877.

The definitive break with the anarchists and the foundation of the FAIAIL in the previous October were decisive factors in his choice. Engels explain this to Marx in a letter of February 23rd: «Thus the stronghold of lawyers, literati and dilettanti in Italy has been breached [...]. Indeed, a bogus working men's movement could not have survived long in an industrial city like Milan. And Northern Italy is decisive not only strategically, but also to the working men's movement throughout the whole length of the agrarian peninsula».[13] Then, on March 16th, he repeated it in public too, in an article published anonymously in *Vorwärts*, in which he clearly revealed he envisaged «the Italian workers' movement as an integral part of the international workers' movement».[14] This envisaging of the Italian workers' movement in international terms is a constant of Marxism. Moreover, it is how Marx and Engels constantly envisaged the proletariat of every country. If, in 1864, the center of gravity of workers' movement had been England, now, when Engels was writing these observations, the epicenter had moved to Germany. Yesterday, with Cartism as its foundations, the IWMA had been able to arise, now, after the formation of the big national markets had reached completion and uneven capitalist development had brought Germany to the fore, the latter became the

[10] Gianni Bosio, *K.Marx, F. Engels. Scritti Italiani*, Rome, Edizioni Samonà e Savelli, 1972, 71.

[11] Letter from Engels to F.A. Sorge dated September 12th 1874, in Marx-Engels, *Lettere 1874–1879*, Milan, Edizioni Lotta Comunista, 2006, 36.

[12] Letter from Engels to F.A. Sorge dated November 25th 1873, in *MEO*, vol XLIV, 639.

[13] Marx-Engels, *Lettere 1874–1879*, 166.

[14] Ernesto Ragionieri, *Socialdemocrazia tedesca e socialisti italiani. L'influenza della socialdemocrazia tedesca sulla formazione del Partito Socialista Italiano. 1875/1895*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1976, 58.

tool to use. However, the forms could not longer be the same. In Germany, the workers' movement had already reached political unity, achieved at Gotha in 1875, and had already chalked up its first important success in the 1877 polls. In a letter written three years earlier, Engels shows he had already prefigured this scenario: «the *old* International is entirely wound up and at an end anyhow. Ant that is good thing. [...] I think the next International – after Marx's writings have been at work for some years – will be directly Communist and will openly proclaim our principles»[15]. By that time, the workers' movement was widely diffused and had one if its strong points in Germany, to which the proletariat of the other countries were now looking. Italy did so too, and the F.A.I.A.I.L. «the [had] taken its stance on the common ground of the major European workers' movement»,[16] was again deserving of Engels' support. His correspondence with *La Plebe* therefore resumed.

Until March 1879, when they ceased once and for all, six letters would be published. All of them dealt with the main themes of the international workers' movement. In the same year, *La Plebe* published a section of *Il Capitale* in four instalments, and Bignami edited its first *Compendio* (signed by Cafiero). This seem a prolific period for the publication of Marx's and Engels' writings in Italy. Both in *La Plebe* and as a publisher, Bignami was practically their sole agent during those three years. The Socialism of which he made himself the interpreter and which was coming to fruition was, however, quite far from the Marxist themes and texts, even though he was contributing to their publication. Of course, he could look to Germany as his point of reference, but [even so] he did not grasp the essence of the theoretical debate that had been rending its workers' movement for years. This was the shortcoming of all Bignami's circle. One of his own articles on *Le origini del socialismo in Germania*, published in *La Plebe*, in the autumn 1878, clearly demonstrated this: «The Marxist had more theoretical, broader and more humanitarian views; the Lassallians were more experimental, more cautious and more nationalist. However, Socialism was not totally embodied in either the former or the latter, but was both the former and the latter. This means that Marx and Lassalle were – as the language of science would say – nothing but *specialists*; each of them had his specialty».[17] These were the theoretical bases of this

[15] Letter from Engels to F.A. Sorge dated September 12th 1874, in Marx-Engels, *Lettere 1874–1879*, 35.

[16] N. Riasanoff, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Internationale Zwei unbekannte Artikel von Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx*, in *Die Neue Zeit*, Stuttgart, 1913–1914, XXXII/I, 13.

[17] *La Plebe*, Milan, year XI, nos. 41, 42, 43 and 44, October 23rd, November 1st, 9th and 16th 1878, quoted by E. Ragionieri, *Socialdemocrazia tedesca e socialisti italiani.*

group. They were weak and «not very original».[18] All together, these were the reasons that contributed to drawing Engels away from *La Plebe*, and *La Plebe* away from Marxism. If Bignami's activity had the merit of anchoring it «to the evolutionist and anti-anarchic positions and of setting up an important premise for the development of labourism, it obstructed», however, «the decisive passage to the Marxist line».[19] This generation was not able to assimilate Engels' strategic teaching, remaining a prisoner of the concepts that had dominated the political cycle characterized by the diffusion of sects and of pre-Marxist Socialism: a cycle that had ended with the Paris "Commune".

Another reason why the 1870s are important is because it was then that the first *Compendio* of *Il Capitale* was published. However, there had already been knowledge of this work of Marx's some years before.

Il Capitale and its abridged editions

Two very different circles – anarchic and academic – contributed to *Il Capitale*'s success in Italy. In other countries too, the fate of Marx's and Engels' works often depended on their divulgation by the anarchists. This was the case with *Il Capitale*, as it would also be for the first Italian edition of the *Manifesto*. The publication of the 1867 *Foreword* was due to them. The Neapolitan group of *Libertà e Giustizia*, influenced by Bakunin, published a part of it on October 27th; and also the first news of *Il Capitale* and its first abridged editions are always due to these circles. The anarchists Covelli[20] and Cafiero were the ones that saw to all this. The former, linked to Cafiero also by his tragic life, refers to Marx's work in two of his critical studies in 1871–72 and 1874. To the latter, instead, we owe the first real and most famous, *Compendio* of this work of Marx's. Despite breaking off relations with Marx and Engels in 1872 and his passing over to the anarchics' ranks, Cafiero still held the two German thinkers in the highest esteem. After the repression following the failed uprising of the "Banda del Matese" in April 1877, in which he had taken part, Cafiero was jailed for over a year. While in prison he read and summarized the copy of *Il Capitale* given to him by Guillaume in Roy's French version. This work, ready in the spring of 1879, was printed in early summer by Bignami in his "Biblioteca Socialista" with the title *Il Capitale di*

L'influenza della socialdemocrazia tedesca sulla formazione del Partito Socialista Italiano. 1875/1895, 64.

[18] Renato Zangheri, *Storia del Socialismo Italiano*, Volume II, *Dalle prime lotte nella Valle Padana ai fasci siciliani*, Turin, Einaudi, 1977, 315.

[19] Bosio, *K. Marx, F. Engels. Scritti italiani*, 80.

[20] Emilio Covelli (1846–1915). Exponent of Italian anarchism.

Carlo Marx brevemente compendiato da Carlo Cafiero. This *Compendio*, highly thought of by Marx too, was quite a best-seller and was reprinted various times until the 1920s.

Marx's *Il Capitale*, quoted everywhere but hardly ever read firsthand, is the work that has benefited the most from its abridgements. Besides Cafiero's, starting with 1890s, there were another three. The first was by Gabriel Déville: *Il Capitale riassunto da Gabriel Déville e preceduto da brevi cenni sul socialismo scientifico*. This work, which came out in Paris in 1883, was published ten years later by the Cremona-based *L'Eco del Popolo*, and was then reprinted in 1926 by the Milan-based Casa Editrice Sociale. One year after the publication of this work, Paul Lafargue's came out. His book, *Il Capitale. Estratti di Paolo Lafargue*, printed in 1893 in Paris, was brought out by the Palermo-based publisher Remo Sandron with three new edition in 1895, 1896 and 1899. The third and last abridged edition that came out in Italy, was by the Siena's socialist E. Fabietti.[21] The volume was brought out in 1902 by the Florentine publisher G. Nerbini[22] who, at the beginning of the century and a long time before ending his controversial career as a publisher among Fascist ranks, made a name for himself also for the publication of the *Manifesto* and *Socialismo utopistico e socialismo scientifico. Il Capitale volgarizzato da Ettore Fabietti* was reprinted no fewer than six time until 1921, always by the same publisher house. Even earlier than Cafiero's *Compendio*, and always during 1870s, there were also the first critical studies and the first summary of *Il Capitale*, various attempts to translate it, and, in 1879, the first unabridged publication of one of its section (*Genesi del capitalista industriale*) always thanks to *La Plebe*. This consolidated a practice regarding the publication of the IWMA, that was already widespread in the early 1870s. More than the translation and diffusion of new writings, the rule was that of reprinting the same thing various time, both in newspaper and as pamphlets. If this makes sense as regards the propagation of the fundamental works, especially if they are connected to a strategic-organizational system of propaganda and political formation – a not peculiar conception, moreover, in the case of Italian Socialism –, a different attitude is noted, instead, towards all the other writings: the reprint from one newspaper to another, but also from one publisher to another, of things already published. This attitude, typical of the journalism and workers' publishing of that time, show how much the divulgation of Marx's and Engels' works was occasional and often ritual, if not instrumental.

[21] Ettore Fabietti (1876–1962). Reformist Socialist.
[22] Giuseppe Nerbini (1867–1934). Socialist publisher, and then supporter of Fascism.

Before taking a look at the unabridged translations of *Il Capitale* published in Italy, it is necessary to go back to its echoes in the peninsula. Alongside the anarchists, it is in academic circles that it is necessary to look in order to glimpse the first knowledge of this work, even if often just at second hand. Among the first to speak of it was the liberalist economist Tullio Martello in 1873 and then again in 1883, when the author wrote to Marx to give him as a present a complimentary copy of his work and to inform him he had begun to read *Il Capitale* while it was being printed in instalments on behalf of the *Biblioteca dell'Economista*. It was in this way that Marx found out about this Italian translation. Engels, instead, would find out it only a few years later. In the same 1873, another liberalist economist, the Palermitan Giuseppe Di Menza, revealed his interest in *Il Capitale* in one of his writings, while one year later it was Francesco Ferrara, the former finance minister in 1867, that expressed his opinion on Marx's work, carrying on a controversy with Socialist and the "professorial Socialists". Alongside the exponents of this liberalist economic current, also those who were, in one way or another, influenced by "professorial Socialism" and who had as their point of reference the famous periodical, the *Giornale degli Economisti*, published in Padua since 1875, took an interest in Marx's work. Among the members of this school who took a particular interest in Marx's writings, mention must be surely made of the professor of political economy at the University of Palermo, Vito Cusumano, who, in a volume of 1875, provided for the first time an extensive résumé of both *Il Capitale* and *Manifesto*. There were other exponents of this field that, as serious scholars of Marx's work, could be mentioned, e.g. Fedele Lampertico, an economist from Vicenza, and the Milanese Luigi Cossa. However, the first translation would not come out until the 1880s.

The person responsible for this achievement was Gerolamo Boccardo from Genoa. A professor of political economy at the Ligurian university and a liberalist politician, he became the editor-in-chief of the prestigious *Biblioteca dell'economista* published in Turin by the Unione Tipografico-Editrice, and, one year later, was made senator of the realm. In the third series of the "Biblioteca", which he directed until 1892, he published the works of the most important exponents of international economic thought, among which Marx's *Il Capitale*. This work, begun towards the end of 1870s on the basis of Roy's French version and first published in instalments between 1882 and 1884, was then bound in a single volume in 1886. For thirty years, this was the only unabridged version of Marx's work at the Italian public's disposal, and was published in various new editions until the years after the Second World War.

Marx, who had found out about the translation through Tullio Martello, had no occasion to tell Engels about it. When the latter was apprised of it by F. Turati,[23] he then expressed a generally positive opinion about the work. A second unabridged translation of *Il Capitale* would not come out until 1915. This time, however, the translation was from German and the work in question was the popular edition edited and published the previous year by Kautsky, on behalf of Dietz. Its author was Ettore Marchioli and it came out on the initiative of the Società editrice Avanti! The volume forms part (as the VII volume) of the *Opere di Marx, Engels e Lassalle*, which had meanwhile been brought out by the Socialist publishing house. The fruit of the assemblage of the publications that had already come out between 1899 an 1911 thanks to the Mongini publishing house, apart from the aforementioned *Il Capitale* and the *Manifesto* included in Volume I, its first edition in eight volumes would come out between 1914 and 1916, and it would be reprinted in 1921–1922. With this work, our review of all Italian versions of *Il Capitale* and its abridged editions come to an end. The debate that would ensue on the themes posed by Marx's work is another thing. We shall speak of one of its main artificers, Achille Loria, later.

The 1880s and the role of Martignetti

It is in the course of this decade that there are the first important publications of the works of Marx and Engels. Besides *Il Capitale*, published by U.T.E.T., two other fundamental books see the light for the first time in this publishing form: *L'evoluzione del socialismo dall'utopia alla scienza* and *L'origine della famiglia, della proprietà privata e dello Stato* in 1885 both by Engels. If we leave out the writings published in newspapers, these are the very first books by Marx and Engels to circulate in Italy. They are important editions that were, however, of an incidental nature, because they were not promoted by organized Socialist circles. Their sole interpreter was the Socialist Pasquale Martignetti from Benevento. If we exclude the role played by this exponent, the state of the diffusion and penetration of Marxism into Italian Socialism in these early 1880s was almost zero. The Milanese evolutionist current, after its rift with the anarchists, had certainly drawn closer to Socialism, but more through the reading of Malon than of Marx. What caught on in Italy in those years was «a Socialism without any knowledge of Marx», and the autochthonous Socialist literary production of the epoch confirms this. It was «petty beyond measure» and revealed it had not «yet experienced the salutary influence

[23] Filippo Turati (1857–1932). Founder and reformist leader of the Italian Socialist Party.

of Marx at all».[24] This kind of interpretation of Marxism and its episodic and individual diffusion began to change their nature in the second half of the 1880s. Only in 1886 did the spreading of Marx's and Engels' thought, through the translation and publication of their writings, «starts to cross the limits of personal interests and to touch, instead, the interest of [clearly defined] political groups».[25] Some cases in point are the Romagna group, gathered round Imola-Lugo's *Rivista Italiana del Socialismo*, the Cremona group, gathered round *L'Eco del Popolo*, and the Milanese-Lombard group formed within the ambit of the periodical *Cuore e Critica*, which, in its subsequent transformation in *Critica Sociale* would take on a clearer physiognomy. If just a few other newspapers names are added to these organs, we also have the complete picture of the newspapers the published some of Marx's and Engels' writings, even if just sporadically, during the 1880s.

Apart the Cremona group that published the *Manifesto* and the Romagna one that, from November 1886 to January 1888, published in its periodical Engels' foreword to American edition of *Condizioni della classe operaia in Inghilterra*, an extract from Marx's *Miseria della filosofia* and, always from Marx, *La Guerra civile in Francia*, published in seven instalments, the most interesting group is that of the periodical *Cuore e Critica*. Founded in 1887 and open to the collaboration of those radical-socialist circles that were bringing the passage of Socialism to maturity, it would be taken over in 1891 by Turati, who would change its name to *Critica Sociale*. It is during this phase, in this slow change in direction that, straddling 1888–1889, the periodical published Engels' writing *Libero scambio e protezionismo*.

Hence, until the mid-1880s and these organs' taking the field, the diffusion of Marx's and Engels' writings lived through the solitary work of Pasquale Martignetti. Many pages have been written about this figure – generally and duly beautiful, because they describe an emblematic case, both because of how he came to Socialism and for the position he argued he should hold in it. In the Italian Socialist tradition, often overcrowded with "professors" of Socialism who believed it would be impossible to emancipate the working class without popularizing its theory, an experience like one Martignetti went through is atypical and, at that time, even embarrassing. Martignetti, a man of humble origins who was born and lived his whole life long in a little provincial town like Benevento, came to Socialism precisely through its theory. He tells Engels this in a letter date January 21st 1887: «Before becoming a Social-

[24] Michels, *Storia del Marxismo in Italia*, 73 and 76.
[25] Bosio, *K.Marx, F. Engels. Scritti italiani*, 251.

ist, I was a state employee [...] The study of the French translation of Marx's *Il Capitale* converted me to Socialism».[26] Conversion and consequent commitments were immediately one and the same. In a letter date January 6th 1890 he explains this to the editorial staff of *La Giustizia*, motivating his request to have his translations published with the following words: «A nation can and must draw a lesson from the history of another nation, says Marx in his foreword to *Il Capitale.* It is my deeply-felt conviction that the Socialists of Italy can learn a lot from the more advanced and disciplined Socialists of Germany, fortunate in having had at the head of their movement giants of human thought of the stature of Marx and Engels».[27] This is the cardinal idea the would accompany his work throughout his lifetime. In this work «he turns out to have been the most precise and quantitatively most productive translator and "importer" on Marx-Engels' writings into Italy» and «also the only Italian that, even before the foundation of the Socialist Party and during its first years of life, coherently insisted on the spreading of the writings of the two "teachers" as a "political commitment". This is certainly more than that Filippo Turati did, despite his being intellectually and culturally superior to the "provincial" Martignetti»,[28] and who, to this end, had at his disposal such a tool as *Critica Sociale*. Martignetti's was a frenetic commitment. His translations were often ready shortly after the original editions. Unfortunately, however, his commitment did not meet with its just reward. Martignetti was left to cope by himself, without anyone to give him an helping hand. The reason for this indifference are to be found in the backwardness of the workers' movement first of all and then in the lack of a sound theoretical base on the part of the leaders of the Socialist Party. During the 1880s, it was the Milanese labourite circles that revealed their indifference to him. During 1890s, and especially after Engels' death, Martignetti could not write even in the columns of *Critica Sociale*. To the superciliousness and malevolent forbearance the Turati's periodical had always reserved for him, «there was added also the no longer dissimulated indifference that Turati flaunted towards matters of doctrine and the diffusion and penetration of Marxism in Italy».[29] Hence, what thwarted much of Martignetti's work was, «first of all, the leaders of Partito Operaio's lack of understanding of theoretical matters, and then Turati's op-

[26] Del Bo, *Marx e Engels. Corrispondenza con italiani*, 318.
[27] Letter quoted ad nomen in Franco Andreucci, Tommaso Detti, *Il movimento operaio italiano. Dizionario biografico*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1975–1979, vol. III, 326.
[28] Bravo, *Marx ed Engels in Italia*, 74.
[29] Ragionieri, *Socialdemocrazia tedesca e socialisti italiani*, 449.

portunism». These were attitudes and actions that certainly «succeeded in delaying the knowledge of Marxism in Italy».[30]

During his militancy Martignetti translated numerous works by various authors and entered into correspondence with the most important exponents of Italian and international Socialism. It was with Engels, however, that he corresponded the most and longest, both an a political and on a human plane. After Engels' death Martignetti chose Kautsky as his main correspondent. However, in the post-war period, after supporting the internationalists' positions on the outbreak of the world war, he did non hesitate to break off every relationship with him when he learnt he was denigrating the Russian Revolution. With firmness, dignity and a steadfastness of mind and principles that is rarely met with, he thus motivated his choice to his German interlocutor: «Dear friends, I learnt from *Neue Zeit* to know and appreciate the great intellectual merit of Trotsky, Radek and other followers of Lenin [...] when I received *Terrorismo* – "Terrorismus und Kommunismus", the book Kautsky had written against the Bolsheviks – which I could not translate without contradicting myself»; if there is repentance on your part and if our differences of opinion cease, concludes Martignetti, «I would be delighted to continue to be your modest but faithful translator».[31] One month later, on March 16th 1920, Martignetti died of pneumonia in Benevento.

The *Manifesto*

In the 1880s the first Italian edition of the *Manifesto* also came out. The delay with which this work arrived in Italy is almost remarkable. By the end of 1889 there were already 21 editions of the *Manifesto* in German (the first printed in 1848), 12 in Russian (1869), 11 in French (1872), 8 in English (1850), 4 in Spanish (1872), 3 in Danish (1884), 2 in Swedish (1848), and in Serbian (1871), and 1 respectively in Portuguese (1873), Czech (1882), Polish (1883), Norwegian (1886) and Yiddish (1889).[32]

In the same years and for the first time, also a political use of it is registered in Socialist circles. There thus begun a praiseworthy work of propaganda, at the hands, however, of educators that were often not trained. For them, i. e. for these first Socialist intellectuals and organizers, Marx, Engels, Schläffle, or Malon, were all in the same level, i. e. all, equally, the expression of a sin-

[30] Ibidem, 202.

[31] Letter from Martignetti to Karl and Luise Kautsky, dated February 14th 1920, quoted in Ragionieri, *Socialdemocrazia tedesca e socialisti italiani*, 456.

[32] Cfr. Karl Marx – Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto del partito comunista*, Milan, Edizioni Lotta Comunista, 1998.

gle Socialist family, all exponents of that "modern scientific Socialism", which, in order to be such, would not necessarily have to be incarnated in a single theory, but which could be expressed through the cohabitation of the most diverse and varied tendencies, shades and doctrines.

Hence, the first Italian translation of the *Manifesto* appeared in 1889, thanks to the Cremona newspaper *L'Eco del Popolo*, the same organ that, spurred on by L. Bissolati,[33] four years later would also publish the edition of Deville's abridged version of *Il Capitale*. However, this first Italian edition of the *Manifesto*, which was not reprinted, revealed many deficiencies. It did not have Marx's and Engels' foreword and was mutilated in various points. Though he did not wish to draw a general conclusion about the Cremona Socialist circles or the Socialist workers' movement in general from these cuts made to the *Manifesto*, Gianni Bosio underlined how revealing they were, because they remained «as a very clear warning to whoever might wish to overestimate the importance of Marxism or, in any case, overestimate the programmatic intransigence of the workers' movement at its birth, which was, potentially, and would afterwards show itself more and more openly to be theoretically weak and hence eclectic»,[34] while on the political plane it remained, and would always remain, suspended between maximalism and reformism.

Mention had already been made of the *Manifesto* before the Cremona edition. Excerpts, quotations or references to the *Manifesto* appeared in various books by several authors. In newspapers, too, it became more and more the fashion to use brief quotations from it, especially as mottoes or maxims. The second edition of the *Manifesto*, translated by the anarchist P. Gori[35] and published by F. Fantuzzi,[36] came out just two years after the version edited by *L'Eco del Popolo* and anticipated by one year the version brought out thanks to Turati's personal interest. With the year 1892 and the third Italian edition of the *Manifesto*, it is possible to establish, from a philological point of view, «the beginning of the formation of a Italian Marxist terminology».[37] This seems to be underlined by *Lotta di classe* which, in open disagreement with Gori's edition, spoke of its version as the «first and only Italian *translation* of

[33] Leonida Bissolati (1857–1920). Socialist leader expelled from the PSI in 1912 because his social-chauvinist positions.

[34] Bosio, *K.Marx, F. Engels. Scritti italiani*, 235.

[35] Pietro Gori (1865–1911). One of the leader of Italian anarchism.

[36] Flaminio Fantuzzi (1858–1906). Socialist printer and publisher.

[37] Michele A. Cortellazzo, *La diffusione del* Manifesto *in Italia alla fine dell'Ottocento e la traduzione di Labriola*, in *Cultura neolatina*, 1981, issues 1–2, 98.

the *Manifesto* that is not a *betrayal*».[38] This work, translated by P. Bettini,[39] came out as a pamphlet only the following year, also because it was necessary to wait for the foreword Engels promised Turati. Meanwhile, it was published in instalments by the Milanese newspaper of the newborn Socialist Party, from September to December 1892. This version, revised by Turati and Anna Kuliscioff, was based on the 1882 German edition. When, in 1893, it was re-published as a volume, it also contained the specially provided *Proemio al lettore italiano*, written by Engels on that occasion, and the 1872, 1883, and 1890 forewords, translated by Turati. From this date until 1926, the work translated by Bettini would go through numerous new editions, while Gori's was not printed again.

Before recalling these editions, however, it is necessary to mention three other editions that, although anonymous, were certainly inspired by Bettini's work.

The first and most interesting edition was promoted in 1897 at Diano Marina on behalf of the "Biblioteca" of the Genoa-based socialist newspaper *Era Nuova*. The second and third edition, surely derived from Bettini's translation on the contrary, were brought out by the Florentine publisher Nerbini in 1901 and by the Milanese Editrice Operaia in 1910. Starting with 1914 the Società e/o Libreria Editrice Avanti then published numerous reprints of the *Manifesto*: two in 1914, two in 1918, including the addition of the 14 point of the Kienthal Conference and the manifesto of the Zimmerwald Conference, one in 1920, and two in 1922. Bettini's translation was used also by the newborn publishing house of the Communist Party of Italy. In 1920 and 1923 the Triestine communist organ *Il Lavoratore* edited two versions: first as a pamphlet, on behalf of the Editrice L'Internazionale, and then also in instalments in the newspaper itself. In 1924, this second version was used by the Neapolitan Edizioni Prometeo, and in 1926 it was finally published by the Milanese S.E.U.M..

The last translation of the *Manifesto* is the one by A. Labriola, who had publicly dealt with the *Manifesto* already in winter of 1890–1891, during the philosophy of history course held by him al the University of Rome. He wrote about this to Engels in February 1891: «At the university [...] I have been developing the *materialistic theory of history* for the past four months. The doctrines of *Il Capitale* are too abstruse for insufficiently prepared youths; and so I began by reading and commenting the *Communist Manifesto*, a work that is

[38] *Lotta di Classe*, Milan, year I, September 17th – 18th 1892, No. 8.
[39] Pompeo Bettini (1862–1896) Socialist journalist and poet.

unsurpassed for density of thought in simplicity of form».[40] This activity gave Labriola the idea of a vaster work: «I am preparing a work that may not be displeasing to you»,[41] he wrote to Engels in August 1892; and in September he started he hoped «to conclude it by December».[42]

His forecast was way out; the work would be ready for publication only three years later. In March 1893 Labriola gave Engels the following explanation for this delay: «The real problem lies in the lack of previous national literary precedents to which to refer, even if they are flawed or even wrong, and in the lack of previous national conditions [...]. How to fill in the gap of a hundred years of history? How to present in a rapid sketch facts, persons, theories etc. that are so many phases and so many moments neither experienced nor known by Italy?»[43] According to Labriola, the reasons for the delay of his work were to be found in this explanation, a sort of overview of the theoretical-practical delays of the Italian workers' movement. *In memoria del Manifesto dei Comunisti*, the first of the three *Saggi sulla concezione materialistica della Storia*, came out in the spring of the 1895, both in Paris in the columns of *Le Devenir social*, and in Milan on behalf of the editorial board of *Critica Sociale*. A second edition would be brought out by the Milanese publishing house in the autumn, but it was only with the third edition, edited by Ermanno Loescher & Co. in Rome in 1902, that the work would also be accompanied by Labriola's version of the *Manifesto*.

Despite being more accurate, the translation, based on the German edition of 1890, could not, however, oust that of «Bettini from the role of official translation until our post-world war II period».[44] If the publishing history of this translation is considered, this judgment seems confirmed: not even all the publishers of Communist Party of Italy would re-propose it. The only ones who would republish Labriola's translation would be the Communist Party's Libreria Editrice and *Lo Stato Operaio*, both of them in 1925: the former as a pamphlet, and the latter in the columns of the newspaper.

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[40] Letter from Labriola to Engels dated February 21th 1891, in Del Bo, *Marx e Engels. Corrispondenza con italiani*, 369. Antonio Labriola (1843–1904). Precursor of Marxism in Italy.

[41] Letter dated August 3rd 1892, ibidem, 442.

[42] Letter dated September 2nd 1892, ibidem, 450.

[43] Letter dated March 12th 1893, ibidem, 475–476.

[44] Cortellazzo, *La diffusione del "Manifesto" in Italia alla fine dell'Ottocento e la traduzione di Labriola*, 104.

The Role of *Critica Sociale* and Labriola's Criticism in the Nineties

E.J. Hobsbawn, who does not believe there is any relation between the number of publications of Marxist texts and «the interest in Marxism among the members of the Socialist parties», (considered in any case «scant»[45]), on comparing the increase in the number of Marx's and Engels' publications in Germany, France and Italy, concludes that, in all three countries, there were two peak periods in the publication of their writings: «approximately in the mid-1890s and the early years of the new century»[46] – to be more precise, «before 1900» in the case of Italy. This is the date by which almost «the entire corpus – as chosen by Engels (excluding the final volumes of *Il Capitale*) – and the writings of Marx, Engels and Lassalle, published by Ciccotti[47] from 1899 onwards»[48] had been printed. In both the essays quoted, Hobsbawm never taken these last writings into account. This is particularly strange because it is a omission that leads to a mistaken estimation. There is no doubt there was a notable increase in the translation and publications of Marxist texts during the 1890s, just as there is no doubt that first the constitution of the Socialist Party and then its consolidation, including that of its publishing and press structures, contributed to this end. However, the 1890s cannot be considered the peak of Marx's and Engels' publications in Italy. Besides, another overestimation is generally connected to this, i. e. the role played in this by the Milanese group of *Critica Sociale*. If it is obvious that, at the core of this publication drive, there was the group of Turati, who had been the main political catalyst of the whole process, it is not so obvious that the Milanese publishing house played an exclusive role in editing Marx-Engels' writings. A review of the organs and publishing houses involved in the matter confirms this.

Let us take the newspapers first of all. Among those that, besides *Critica Sociale*, published some of Marx's and Engels' writings there were no fewer than 25 newspapers during 1890s and 14 in the following decade, when the Milanese periodical no longer published anything by Marx or Engels. In the two decades in consideration the publishing houses were respectively, 12 and 6. These are quite a few and, above all, they played a not secondary role with

[45] E. J. Hobsbawn, *La diffusione del marxismo (1890–1905)*, in *Studi Storici*, year XV, April–June 1974, No. 2, 257.

[46] Ibidem, 257.

[47] Ettore Cicciotti (1863–1939). Socialist and translator of Marx's works: he then became an interventionist and a Fascist.

[48] E. J. Hobsbawn, *La fortuna delle edizioni di Marx ad Engels*, in various authors, *Storia del marxismo*, Turin, Einaudi, 1978, vol. I, 361.

respect to the Milanese publishing house, in the publication of that corpus of Marx's and Engels' works we have spoken about. If we look at their production over time, we are bound to conclude that the real «leap forward in the quality of the Marx-Engels editions occurred from 1899 onwards», «And this time it was the most important attempt made until then to provide Socialism and Italian culture with most of the works by Marx and Engels available at that time».[49] It is the publisher Luigi Mongini who deserves the credit for this.

The part played by *Critica Sociale* in the spreading of Marx and Engels's thought is emblematic: first of all propulsive, then contradictorily censorious, and, finally, silent. In this evolution lasting just the few years from the gestation, foundation and first consolidation of the Italian Socialist Party up to Engels' death, it is as if there were the reflection of Turati's approach to Marxism and of his way of being "Marxist". The typical exponent of a generation strongly marked by the prevalent positivist culture of the period, even in 1920, on the occasion of the death of Roberto Ardigò, one of the greatest teachers of this current of thought, Turati confirmed in an obituary written for *Critica Sociale* how it was precisely Ardigò's writings that had left «their mark on our existence».[50] However, it was precisely Turati that would become the main federative interpreter of those forces that would shortly give birth to the Italian Socialist Party. *Critica Sociale*, with this purpose in mind, became its periodical. Taken over from A. Ghisleri in January 1891, the original newspaper name of *Cuore e Critica* was changed. Between explanations Turati offered Ghisleri of how he would like to change the nature of the periodical and those offered to Labriola when he asked him to collaborate in the enterprise there is a certain discrepancy. «Of course – he said to the former – in my hands, the social element, which is already present in the newspaper, would be ever more strongly stressed, [...] but not in such a way as to distort it» by transforming it into «a real Socialist periodical».[51] In the case of Labriola, instead, despite repeating the he had no intention of «making it lose that wide-ranging, eclectic character that is now one of this strengths», Turati stressed that the periodical had however to «become more decidedly one of

[49] Favilli, *Storia del marxismo italiano*, 256–257.

[50] Filippo Turati, *Uomini della politica e della cultura*, edited by Alessandro Schiavi, Bari, Laterza, 1949, 69.

[51] Letter from F. Turati to A. Ghisleri dated October 29th 1890, in Maurizio Punzo (edited by), *I carteggi Turati-Ghisleri (1876–1926)*, Manduria, Lacaita, 2000, 715–716. Arcangelo Ghisleri (1885–1938). Democratic-republican freelance journalist.

our organs, I mean of Italian scientific Socialism».[52] Apart from the different shades of meaning in the intentions explained to his two interlocutors, the salient feature that would characterize *Critica Sociale* over time would be much closer to the one proposed to Ghisleri than to the one promised to Labriola. The latter did not refuse his collaboration, but neither did he promise it or put it into practice: «If it were a war bulletin – Labriola wrote to Turati in January – or a party organ, I might feel myself obliged to promise my work and to keep my promise, but as it is a matter of free *discussion*, give me time to feel like discussing [...]. You see the matter differently from me. You want to spread propaganda among the middle class, you want to make Socialism congenial to them: may god help you in this philanthropic enterprise. As for me, I believe the middle class are only fit to be hanged».[53] This was also the crucial period that would lead to the formation of the Socialist Party. This is certainly not the right place to express an opinion on the whole of Labriola's work or on the disagreement that set him against the entire leadership of the Italian Socialist Party and, significantly, against Turati. What is certain, argues E. Ragionieri, is that «This clash of opinions was not [...] between one philosophy and one policy, but between two policies, or between two philosophies».[54] Turati's, above all Turati's as editor-in-chief of *Critica Sociale* and popularizer of Marxism, would end up in «its vulgarization», «a vulgarization within the doctrine itself» and in its «yet more sterile and barbarized» use in the field of the analysis of contemporary society.[55]

For the popularization and birth of an autochthonous Marxism in Italy in would be necessary to wait until 1895, the year in which the first of three essays written by Labriola on the materialistic interpretation of history were published, first of all in instalments in the columns of Parisian *Devenir Social* edited by Georges Sorel. The title of this essays is *In memoria del Manifesto dei Comunisti*. The second essay, *Del materialismo storico. Delucidazione preliminare*, came out the following year; while the third, *Discorrendo di socialismo e di filosofia*, was published in 1897. Benedetto Croce, at that time one of the Labriola's students, was the editor of the Italian edition. Croce, re-

[52] Letter from F. Turati to A. Labriola date December 8th 1890, in *Il carteggio di Antonio Labriola conservato nel Fondo Dal Pane*, (edited by) Stefano Miccolis, in *Archivio storico per le province napoletane*, CVIII–CIX (1990–1991), Naples, Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, 1992, 631.

[53] Letter from A. Labriola to F. Turati dated January 18th 1891, in various authors, *Antonio Labriola. Epistolario 1861–1904*, vol. II, 319.

[54] Ragionieri, *Socialdemocrazia tedesca e socialisti italiani*, 336–337.

[55] Franco Andreucci, *Il marxismo collettivo. Socialismo, marxismo e circolazione delle idee dalla Seconda alla Terza Internazionale*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1986, 88–89.

calling this occasione in a essay of 1937 entitled *Come nacque e morì il marxismo teorico in Italia*, speaks, even if by then as a "philosopher of the spirit", of the publication of the first essay written by Labriola, who was no a «man of action», as of the date that marked the «birth of theoretical Marxism in Italy».[56] «With Labriola, Italian Socialism, which, after Pisacane, had remained almost devoid of theory, had a theoretician at last.»[57]

Socialist publishers and features of Socialist Propaganda in Italy

Until the first years of the twentieth century there were not many examples of publishing by political parties. Germany was a particular case. Already at the time of the exile, during the period of the anti-socialist laws, German Social-Democracy had provided itself with a publishing house of its own, the "Volksbuchhandlung", which then became "German cooperative publishing" after it moved to London in 1888. It published the *Sozialdemokrat* and 34 titles in the "Sozialdemokratische Bibliothek" series until 1890. In this year, with the party's return to legality, the inheritance passed to Berlin-based "Buchhandlung Vorwärts". If we add to the activity of this publishing house that of the publisher J. H. W. Dietz (1.653.000 copies of books the former and 2.000.000 the latter in 1911–1912),[58] we can get an idea of the levels reached in this field by German Social-Democracy. Also the history of Austrian social-democratic publishing follows the German model. An emulous of Dietz in Vienna, Ignaz Brand, founded the "Wiener Volksbuchhandlung" in 1894. In 1908 the firm became the official property of Social-Democratic Party and published 297 titles until 1914. Apart from these examples and the Belgian one, where the Brussels-based "Englatine" was also a party publishing house, in the other countries the publishers involved in the publication of Marxist and Socialist texts were independent: "Swam Sonnenschein & Co." in Londra, "Giard et Brière" in Paris, and also "Charles H. Kerr & Co." in Chicago, one of the most important Socialist publishers in the world. The publishing of Russian Social-Democracy deserves to be treated separately. Restricted throughout almost its history by conditions of illegality at home and

[56] In Benedetto Croce, *Materialismo storico ed economia marxista*, Bari, Laterza, 1941, 265. Benedetto Croce (1866–1952). Philosopher and historian. Liberalist senator and minister.

[57] Roberto Michels, *Storia critica del movimento socialista italiano fino al 1911*, [Florence, Società An. Editrice "La Voce", 1926], Rome, Il Poligono, 1979, 119.

[58] Ernest Drahm, *Zur Entwicklung und Geschichte des sozialistischen Buchhandels und der Arbeitpresse*, in *Sozialer Fortschritt*, n. 472/76, Felix Dietrich, Gautzsch (Leipzig), 1913, 62–65.

by the continuous and recurrent struggles among its currents, it alternated and combined various forms of publishing, from the "Editions of the Russian Social-Democratic Working Men's Party" of the end of the 1890s to the "Bonc-Bruévic and Lenin Editions" of 1904, up to the employment of "bourgeois" publishers for printing and work of a "legal" nature.

In Italy the Socialist Party would not have a publishing house of its own until the summer of 1911, when the "Società Editrice Avanti!" was founded in Milan. Hence, publishing remained the prerogative of individual publishing houses born of the main Socialist organs. Alongside these, other independent Socialist publishing houses were at work too: in Milan as in Florence, in Rome as in Palermo or Genoa. However, it was the publisher Luigi Mongini, whose activity we shall analyze later on, that came to play a leading role in the panorama of the "Socialist" publishers at the turn of the nineteenth century, rising virtually to the rank of "official" publisher of the Socialist Party itself. These were publishing houses that brought out a good few on Marx's and Engels' works even if, invariably and always, alongside and at the same time as authors and texts of the most varied kinds and types. This is emblematic because it was a feature of all these publishers, starting precisely with those like the "Uffici della Critica Sociale" whose main concern should have been to play the role of clear programmatic and strategic orientation. For these publishers there was no contradiction in proposing at one and the same time Marx and the anarchists, continuously republished, or, above all, Marx and the Socialist literature of the Tolstoj or De Amicis genre. However, even more than the publishers, it was precisely the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party that envisaged the propaganda of Socialism in this way. Apropos of this, their body of reference books on theory is significant. In a book consecrated to this purpose, *L'arte della propaganda socialista*, O. Morgari thus suggests the necessary reading matter for the formation of a good propagandist: «first of all, any summary of the theories of Darwin and Spencer, which will show the student the direction in which modern scientific thought is moving.; Marx will complete the formidable triad with his world-famous and indispensable *Il Capitale*, the gospel of contemporary Socialists. In Ferri's recent volume *Socialismo e scienza positiva*, the student will see the concord among the three colossi, who round each other off. He will find a complete view of the past, present and a little of the future of our movement in Benedetto Malon's *Socialismo integrale* [...]. He should not forget *La quintessenza del socialismo* by Schafferl [...]. Let him also read Bellamy's *L'anno 2000* [...]; the moral

side of Socialism is admirable presented there.»[59] In this hotchpotch of titles, authors, lines and schools of thought so different as regard their orientations and qualities, meant, let us remember it, mainly for those that had to educate, and not for their students, is condensed the average kind of "Marxism" absorbed and produced by Italian Socialism. Apropos of this, commented Michels: in his «minor writings, and sometimes also in his major ones, Marx's critical spirit was forced, if I may be allowed to use this expression, to submit to many unnatural act of intercourse with an infinity of other totally disparate systems, often poles apart from his method and results». «It followed that Marx' theories were continually falsified and that a hybrid, indigestible eclecticism was the result.»[60]

As the concept of theory as a tool for action was alien to their mentality, for a long time the leaders of Italian Socialism debased propaganda to a mere tool of electoral proselytism. To this end, making a distinction between "cultured" and "mass-appeal" propaganda, they placed, in the latter case, on geniality and "preaching". The à la Prampolini "evangelical" propaganda was the highest incarnation of this approach: thousands of copies of "penny-a-piece pamphlets" were circulated and continuously reprinted, as in the case of *Come avverrà il Socialismo* by C. Prampolini[61] and of *Bertoldo contadino* by L. Bissolati. When Turati explained what must be understood by Socialist propaganda, it was precisely these two pamphlets that he quoted as being among the «best»[62] example of the mass-appeal approach. Curiously, because he was thinking of these two works in particular, when he motivated the need to distinguish between "cultured" and "mass-appeal" propaganda, he stated that the latter must be distinguished by "a more meticulous" doctrinal "rigour", while the former, for men and women of learning capable of discernment, can and must be of a non-confessional nature. This is a theme that would frequently crop up again in the Socialist Party's debate and internal controversies. However, they would always stem from specific tactical needs and not from a serious reflection on the role theory should play in the strategy and tactics of a party that claimed to be revolutionary.

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[59] Oddino Morgari, *L'arte della propaganda socialista*, Milan, Editrice Lotta di Classe, 1896, 14–15. Oddino Morgari (1865–1944). Reformist Socialist and a leading exponent of the PSI.

[60] Michels, *Storia critica del movimento socialista italiano fino al 1911*, 136.

[61] Camillo Prampolini (1857–1930). Reformist Socialist and one of the founder of the PSI.

[62] Filippo Turati, *Il legato Edoardo Mattia per la propaganda socialista*, in *Critica Sociale*, year VI, January 1st 1896, No. 1, 7.

Loria, a critic of Marx and the attempted editions of the other books of *Il Capitale*

Stigmatizing the nature of certain Italian intellectual circles, A. Gramsci, in his *Quaderni del carcere*, uses the term *Lorianism* to define these authors. However, if Loria «is not an individual teratological case», but rather «the most polished and accomplished example of the «positivist intellectuals»[63] of his time, then who was this man and what had he done to deserve such renown? A professor of political economy in Siena, Padua and then for thirty years in Turin, he had graduated in law in Bologna in 1877 together with his friend and contemporary Filippo Turati. A master of flattery, he continuously combined it with criticism of the interlocutor he wished to outdo. Engels, refractory to and irritated by this style, but submerged in it by Loria, until the very end, compared «our Sgaranelle» to «Balaam, who came to curse but whose lips bubbled forth "words of blessing and love"».[64] However, Loria's success in Italy stemmed precisely from this way of behaving: «singularly beloved by the Socialist Party, which [...] considered him almost the Italian theoretician of Socialism» and «at the same time, the author on whom the "gran premio reale" had been conferred by the Accademia dei Lincei». The secret of this «twofold contrasting success» argued Croce, pressed by Labriola, lasted until it was revealed by Engels in his *Foreword* to the third volume of *Il Capitale*: «Ably concealing it, Loria has plagiarized Marx's fundamental socio-economic ideas in such a way that it sometimes seems a correction, and sometimes a confutation». If this shame has lasted fifteen years, Croce concluded, it is due, however, to two factors that «leveled the ground for this well-played game»: «the paucity of knowledge of Marx, usual among our official economists, and the doctrinal confusion in which the Socialism movement (which is at the very beginning in Italy) is floundering».[65] The work that slandered Marx, in the form of «bragging»,[66] dates back to the first years of Loria's literary career. In his *Karl Marx*, published in 1883 on the occasion of Marx's death, Loria pinpointed in Marx's "widely-known soph-

[63] Antonio Gramsci, *Gli intellettuali e l'organizzazione della cultura*, Turin, Einaudi, 1949, 179. Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). Leader and one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party in 1921.

[64] F. Engels, *Considerazioni supplementari*, in Karl Marx, *Il Capitale. Critica dell'economia politica. Terzo volume*, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1993, 33.

[65] Benedetto Croce,", (September 1896), in *Le Devenir social*, year II, Novembre 1896 and in Italian, Naples, Giannini, 1897; here in Croce, *Materialismo storico ed economia marxista*, 21 and 22.

[66] "Braggart" is one of the many disparaging terms used by Engels to define Loria, see Engel's letter to Karl Kautsky, datet March 17th 1891, in "MEO", vol. II, 57.

ism", i. e. Marx's awareness of the erroneousness of his theory of value, what then always be Loria's basic thesis. Engels replied with a very harsh letter, which he also had published in the columns of the organ of German Social-Democracy, the *Sozialdemokrat*, and which he would then also include in 1894 *Foreword* to the third volume of *Capital*: to the «soul of a dwarf» that confuses profit with surplus value, that speaks of Marx's «bad faith», while «if there were *bad faith*» it was wholly «on your part».[67] Loria's position with regard to Marxism and Engels' with regard to him was clear and public from the early 1880s. Nevertheless, still various years later when *Cuore e Critica* was about to change into *Critica Sociale*, it was Loria that Turati sought as the periodical's most eminent collaborator. In his letter to his «very dear friend», «armored scientifically much more than we poor donkeys», Turati explained his plan in this way: «I think you would feel comfortable – indeed, very comfortable – among the *regular* forces of *Critica Sociale*, and that you would be one of those that *fit in* best». «Why then – concludes Turati – should Achille Loria not join us? Is he not the most Socialist, the most Marxist, in a certain sense (rising above certain minute distinctions that count a lot for the scientist and little for the public) of Italian economists?»[68] Turati, who was not aware of the contradiction as he dislikes controversies about theory and as he too was "Marxist in a certain sense", spoke to Engels in person and still in 1891 of «his friend» Loria as «one of the rare figures of worth holding a professorship in political economy in an Italian university».[69] Just a few years later Engels would settle the matter once and for all. In April 1894 he informed Turati of the forthcoming publication of the third volume of *Il Capitale*, to the «great pleasure» of the «charlatan»[70] Loria. Almost as though anticipating the book, from July onwards a lively debate broke out in the columns of *Critica Sociale* over the interpretation of the theory of value. Among the critics and supporters of Loria the discussion flared up for several months.

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[67] Letter from Engels to Loria dated May 20th 1883 (see Del Bo, *Marx e Engels. Corrispondenze con italiani*, 296, had already been included by the former in the article *Zum Tode van Karl-Marx*, published in *Der Sozialdemokrat*, May 17th 1883, No. 21 (see *Marx-Engels Werke*, band XIX, seiten 343–347) and in the Hungarian newspaper *Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik*, June 3rd 1883, No. 22.

[68] Letter from F. Turati to A. Loria, dated December 26th 1890 is to be found in the appendix, *Lettere di Filippo Turati ad Achille Loria (1882–1895)*, in Paolo Favilli, *Il socialismo italiano e la teoria economica di Marx (1897–1902)*, Naples, Bibliopolis, 1980, 181–182.

[69] Letter from Turati to Engels dated February 23rd 1891, in Del Bo, *Marx e Engels. Corrispondenze con italiani*, 371.

[70] Letter from Engels to Turati dated April 12th 1894, ibidem, 531.

Just as this discussion was starting, on July 11th and 18th the *Neue Zeit* published two chapters of the third volume of *Il Capitale*. Immediately translated by Martignetti, they were sent to Turati who, however, did not publish them. Engels' *Prefazione* met with the same fate. After the proofs had been passed on October 4th, Engels sent it to Turati through Anna Kuliscioff at the beginning of December. Within the same month Turati also received its translation, always by Martignetti, but did not publish it this time either. Hence, Engels' *Prefazione* came out only in January–February 1895, published, thanks to Labriola's intervention, in the «ultra-bourgeois»[71] Neapolitan periodical *La Rassegna*. Loria's response was immediate and it was he himself, in fact, that put an end to the long polemic that had begun the previous July in the columns of *Critica Sociale*, with the writing *Due parole di anticritica*, published in March 1895. By allowing Loria to end the debate, and in not keeping his promise of a final recapitulation, Turati thus revealed all his limitations: not only theoretical on the themes in question, but also political, practically placing Italian Socialism's most important periodical under the influence of bourgeois economic theories.

Moreover, by then Loria's theories were being openly defended also by other eminent exponents of Italian Socialism. Only Labriola would answer firmly and publicly in the columns of a German Socialist newspaper: «All of this corresponds to the situation of the Italian proletariat, which had not yet reached the point where the doctrine of the communist manifesto becomes self-affirming. This immaturity may also excuse the predilection the Italian Socialist press, and above all *Critica Sociale*, has shown till now for the writings and doctrines of professor Loria, the notorious annihilator of Marx. And this same immaturity may also explain how the press itself has not yet said one word about the tongue-lashing Engels gave to Mr. Loria in his foreword to the third volume of *Il Capitale*. And it is already a long time since that foreword has been available in Italian».[72] Turati's reply to Labriola's article revealed his irritation. However, by attempting to justify why he had not wanted to publish Engels' anti-Loria, Turati ended up bearing out those theses that censured his opportunistic behavior. In the and, it lay with Engels to say

[71] So called by Labriola in his letter to Victor Adler dated March 5th 1895, in various authors, *Antonio Labriola. Epistolario 1861–1904*, 568.

[72] xyo (pseud of Antonio Labriola), [*La situazione del partito socialista italiano*], in *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, Leipzig, year II, May 7th 1895, No. 104, in *Quattordici articoli sconosciuti di Antonio Labriola*, appendix to Ragionieri, *Socialdemocrazia tedesca e socialisti italiani. L'influenza della socialdemocrazia tedesca sulla formazione del Partito Socialista Italiano. 1875/1895*, 445.

the last word, even if it was posthumously. His *Complementi ed aggiunte al III libro del Capitale*, published in September by the *Neue Zeit* and once again immediately translated by Martignetti, were, on this occasion, published – at long last – in *Critica Sociale* too.

After so many polemics and Turati's promises that he would read Marx's works before resuming them, it would have been logical to expect publishing initiatives leading to the translation and publication of Marx's work. However, this was not the case. Hence, in order to read the second and third volume of *Il Capitale* it would be necessary to wait until after the Second World War. Actually, during the course of 1908–1909, one attempt – the most serious one in this regard – was made. Its artificer was the Rome-based publisher Luigi Mongini. Committed for years to the ambitious project of publishing *all* the works of Marx, Engels and Lassalle in instalments, in 1908 he embarked on the publication of the second book of *Il Capitale* and then, the following year, on that of the first part of the third. It was Ettore Ciccotti, the editor of all of Mongini's publication, that translated it. This fact, already mentioned by us in another book,[73] and previously never observed, is of the greatest importance. At that time, Marx's *Il Capitale*, in the entirety of all of its three volumes, existed only in German, Russian, French and, precisely in 1909, in English too. Mongini's attempt was made in the same years as the one undertaken by the American Socialist publisher C. H. Kerr. Mongini's death broke off this enterprise however. Ciccotti, who had shared in it as editor and translator, did not carry on with the work. The Socialist Party could have undertaken it, but did not. It simply promised to do so. The new translation of the first volume, edited by Ettore Marchioli, actually came out the following year. On the contrary, the translation of the second and third volume would never be done – or rather, apart from the first instalment of the second volume, published in 1908, just another three instalments would came out in 1910 and 1913, and then nothing more. The first part of the third volume, instead, did not go beyond the first and only instalment published in 1909. Apart from this, a few years later another attempt was made to bring out an edition, this time regarding the second part of the third volume. However, this work too, translated by E. Leone,[74] did not go beyond the first five instalments, all published in the course of 1913. This review of the editions begun, but never concluded, of Marx's fundamental work would not be complete if we did not also

[73] Emilio Gianni, *L'editore Luigi Mongini e la diffusione del marxismo in Italia (Catalogo storico 1899–1911)*, Milan, Pantarei, 2001.

[74] Enrico Leone (1875–1940). Revolutionary syndicalist, then Socialist, and finally a supporter of the communist International.

take into consideration the attempts made to publish the fourth volume of *Il Capitale*. The *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, brought out between 1905 and 1910 in Stuttgart on behalf of the publisher Dietz and edited by Kautsky, was immediately considered for publication in Italy. Is was the Roman revolutionary syndicalist organ *Il divenire sociale*, that saw to it, publishing some parts between August and December 1906 and between December 1907 and May 1908.

The "crisis" of Marxism and the role of Mongini at the beginning of the twentieth century

The debate on revisionism, the so-called "Bernstein debate" that flared up at the start of the century, not only in Germany, where it originated, but also within the main European Socialist parties, did not have much resonance in Italy. There were reasons for this. One was the marginality of Italian Socialism in the field of theory and, hence, a certain extraneousness to the debates on doctrine that animated international Socialism. Then there was certainly the fact that Bernstein's ideas, seen by him as already in act within German Social-Democracy, even though officially banned, were, instead, the evidence and recognized practice of the Italian Socialists. Hence, instead of being amazed, they were, on the contrary, «amazed that the German were amazed at this».[75] Singularly, they saw their indifference to this debate almost as grounds for superiority. G. Lerda, in the foreword of his book of 1902, gave the following reason: «in my opinion, there is no crisis in Italy, simply because the Italian Socialists, save for a few exceptions, have never sworn on Marx's book or books as the Mazzinians did on Mazzini's. Italian Socialism has certainly been inspired by the mighty thought of the great German, and has accepted some of its postulates; but broad-minded and less dogmatic nature of our national spirit and our repugnance for too subtle and one-sided analyses or our tendency to make more rapid syntheses embracing a greater complexity of phenomena mean that, in Italy, Marx's work remained a patrimony for scientists to study, did not have such a great influence as many believe on the constitution of the patrimony of our Socialist thought [...]. To put it simply, this means that Socialism is not wholly contained within the sphere of Marx's theories, and that, to be a Socialist, it is not ad absolute necessity to be a Marxist».[76] Lack of principles: this is the true national spirit we need to

[75] Michels, *Storia del marxismo in Italia*, 116.

[76] Giovanni Lerda, *Il socialismo e la sua tattica*, Genoa, Libreria Moderna, 1902, 9–10. Giovanni Lerda (1853–1927). Publisher and Socialist leader who was in favour of intervening in World War I.

recall in justification of such theses – just as disarming in their exposition as they are contradictory and incoherent in their content. O. Morgari, more outspoken in his admissions, clearly expressed his thought in Socialist Party Congress in 1906 in these works: «We declare that no one is a Marxist, that the Italian Socialist Party has never been Marxist, because, though accepting from Karl Marx the basic criterion of class struggle, it has always rejected, de facto, the rest of his pessimistic doctrine [...], which prophesies [...] catastrophe».[77] Though he was referring to a doctrine he had not really grasped, when he refused something Morgani showed he knew what to reject: not the theory of class struggle, which, though, is not even Marx's, and this is his, the theory of class struggle resulting in the dictatorship of proletariat. It is in his refusal of this theory, the basic principle of Marxism, showed he was a "Socialist" and, quite rightly, that he was speaking in the name of the entire Italian Socialist movement.

Turati virtually kept out of this debate. With the dawn of the new century and the reformist prospects that were opening up with the advent of Giolittism, the marginalization of theoretical questions became a fact for him. Some years later Turati was even more explicit: «the truth is that all our propaganda is permeated by more or less Bersteian revisionism: and, if we remain Marxists after a fashion, it is rather in the broad outline, in the general spirit of the doctrine, in the concept and practice of class struggle and economic materialism; not at all in the special theories on which experience and scientific progress have cast doubt, which are not needed by us at all and which are never evoked – and this has been so far quite sometimes now – in our propaganda and in our action. [...]. The collection of *Critica* itself – and part of its "Biblioteca di propaganda" – are a mine of "revisionism" of Marxist doctrines».[78] How it is possible to vindicate the "spirit" of Marxism by proposing at the same time a revisionist propaganda, is something difficult to explain; or extremely ease, in the case of "Marxists after a fashion".

If, during 1890s, the international Marxist school could number among its ranks also an Italian exponent in the person of Labriola, the Giolittian era, instead, was a «period of stagnation and decay for Marxist thought».[79] How-

[77] *Atti della Direzione del Partito Socialista Italiano. Resoconto stenografico del IX congresso nazionale (Roma, 7, 8, 9, 10 Ottobre 1906)*, Rome, Luigi Mongini Editore, 1907, 270.

[78] *La Critica* [F. Turati] , [note on the artiche by] Angelo Crespi, *Intorno alla crisi attuale del Partito Socialista Italiano (Pensieri di un amante eretico)*, in *Critica Sociale*, year XVI, October 1st 1906, No. 19, 294.

[79] Santarelli, *La revisione del marxismo in Italia*, 22.

ever, it was during this phase that most of the translations and editions of Marx's and Engels' books were published in Italy. Let us say immediately that this is only apparently contradictory, and that the explanation was already to be found in the observation made by Labriola in 1897, when in his *Discorrendo di socialismo e filosofia* (which we have already mentioned), he reflected on the need for a party publishing house. Only in the presence of a Marxist party and of a consequently Marxist publishing house could a Marxist school develop also in the first decade of the twentieth century. Instead, in the reality of a universe of Socialist publishers, most of whom independent of the party, the writings of Marx and Engels that they published did not leave much of a mark. Their intention and outlook consisted merely in spreading "ideas", and not in making these a tool for struggle. The need for this qualitative leap was never understood. Failing to keep this appointment with theory, since "without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement", the party ended up a prisoner, trapped between "reformism" and "maximalism".

Actually, with the new century, the Socialist publishers and newspapers involved in the publication of Marx's and Engels' texts diminished. If they were 12 and 26 respectively during the 1890s, in the first decade of the new century, they dropped to 6 and 14. It was the position held by *Critica Sociale* that had the greatest influence. Nothing more by Marx and Engels would appear in its columns, while, as a publishing house, it would bring out only Engels' *L'origine della famiglia* in 1901. Nevertheless, in comparison with the 30 editions of the 1890s, Marx's and Engels' writings totaled 39. This figure, which refers only to books and pamphlets, can be explained mainly trough the work of a single publisher: Luigi Mongini. Operating in Rome since 1899, just with that year's production he accounted for almost a quarter of all the editions of Marx's and Engels' writings published throughout the 1890s. in the first decade of the twentieth century he would, instead, account for almost three quarters.

Inexplicably, very little was know about Mongini until our time. A work devoted to him[80] now allows us to focus on his role with greater precision. Coming from a well-off family in the province of Alessandria, he went through most of the same stages that characterized all the youths of his generation who, like him, would then convert to Socialism. Publishing was his passion and in 1899, in Rome, where he had settle, could at last realize his dream. After *Il diciotto brumaio di Luigi Bonaparte*, published in 1896, in 1899 his most ambitious project took shape: that of publishing *all* the works

[80] Gianni, *L'editore Luigi Mongini e la diffusione del marxismo in Italia (Catologo storico 1899–1911)*.

written by Marx, Engels and Lassalle. Thus the Mongini that made his debut in publishing was different from the other Socialist-oriented publishers of those years. If the latter published everything, from socio-political essays to Socialist novels, but above all pamphlets of simple popular propaganda, the former devoted himself almost exclusively to this project until almost 1902. By that time, his activity had expanded and he had become the party's almost official publisher, so he too started to publish every kind of work. Nevertheless, throughout the whole of his activity as a publisher he devoted himself to the diffusion of Marx's and Engels' works, also embarking upon the publication of the second and third volumes of *Il Capitale* shortly before he died. His death interrupted this undertaking, abandoned also by Ciccotti, editor for almost a decade of the entire project. Although the Mongini-Ciccotti edition of Marx's and Engels' writings was not at all «systematic», nevertheless it remained «the only extensive and "political" proposal for the editions of Marx officially put forward by the Left up to the twenties – which is tantamount to saying»: «until the years after the Second War World».[81]

The Socialist and Communist Publishing Houses between the War and Post-War Period

After Mongini's death, the activity of his publishing house still continued for a few years. Then, in 1911, his legacy finally merged with the newly created Società Editrice Avanti. With this initiative the Italian Socialist Party now had its own real publishing house. When it first opened, the publishing house expressed its intention to bring the publication of Marx's, Engels' and Lassalle's works to completion. However, little was done to realize this intention. Between 1910 and 1911 Marx's *Il signor Vogt* was published, while Engels' *Anti-Dühring* came out between 1911 and 1914: then nothing else. We have already seen the fate of the unabridged edition of *Il Capitale*. In 1914–1916 the Socialist publishing house would restrict itself to binding these instalments in volumes and, adding the *Manifesto* and the first book of *Il Capitale* to them, would publish this material as *Opere di Marx-Engels-Lassalle* in eight volumes, which would then be reprinted in 1921–1922. Against the backdrop of both these editions, and until 1925, most of these writings were also reprinted individually in pamphlet-form. Apart from a possible publishing competition with the new communist publishing houses on the part of the "maximalist" Socialist Party in the twenties, a political assessment of these publishing operations is hard to find.

[81] Bravo, *Marx ed Engels in Italia*, 79.

Typical of these years, before and after the Great War, is not the translation of writings still unpublished in Italian, but the re-proposal of what had already been translated and published in the previous years. This was the prerogative not only of the Socialist publishing house but also of the other publishing houses, including the communist ones. The divulgation of anything new was not due to the publishing houses but to the newspapers. Of the 40 newspapers that published Marx' and Engels' writings from 1910 to 1926, several, above all the communist ones, but not only they, published something new. Their correspondence, for example, published to coincide with its first editions in the original language in Germany, appeared in these newspapers before the war and immediately after the foundation of the Communist Party of Italy, thanks to its organs.

After the counterblows sustained during the war, the Società Editrice Avanti took off again, launching new series and publishing new titles which also followed the polemics between the party's maximalist leadership and the constituent communist fraction. The controversy regarded the lack of publications referring to the Third International and the Russian Revolution, while «pamphlets of no importance or writings to spread concepts and opinions from the Second International [kept on] being published».[82] As a consequence of this, Lenin's *Stato e rivoluzione*, alongside Kautsky's *La dittatura proletaria* however, would inaugurate the new series "Problemi della rivoluzione", which would then be followed by those on the "Documenti della rivoluzione" and on the "Atti della rivoluzione".

With the scission of 1921 and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy, the Libreria Editrice Comunista was founded in Rome in summer. Urged on by the events and by pressing political and organizational requirements, its activity was characterized by the application of the congresses' provisions, aimed at guaranteeing «the translation of the most important writings of foreign communists and the acts of the International, on the one hand, and, on the other, the publication of Italian writings, both as studies and as propagandistic pamphlets».[83] Consequently of Marx and Engels' work only the *Manifesto* was published. The problem of the divulgation of Marxism and hence of spreading its fundamentals texts, plus the need to make both of these the theoretical foundation of the new party's cadres and militants, was strongly felt.

[82] [A. Gramsci], *Per un rinnovamento del Partito Socialista*, in *L'Ordine Nuovo*, year II, May 8th 1920, N° 1.

[83] *Secondo congresso nazionale" (Roma, 20–24 marzo 1922). Relazione del Comitato centrale ed allegati*, in *Il primo anno di vita del Partito Comunista d'Italia*, Milan, Edizioni del Gallo, 1966, 289.

The failure experienced on this point during the years of Socialist militancy still smarted and acted as a warning. Gramsci thus summed it up in 1925: «In Italy, Marxism (except for Antonio Labriola) has been studied more by bourgeois intellectuals in order to distort it and turn it to the ends of bourgeois politics, than by revolutionaries. We have therefore seen the most diverse factions cohabiting peacefully in the Socialist Party, we have seen the most contradictory concepts becoming the Party's official opinions. Never did the Party's leaders imagine that, in order to fight bourgeois ideology, i.e. to free the masses from the influence of capitalism, it would first be necessary to spread the Marxist doctrine within the Party itself and that it would be necessary to defend it from every adulteration. At least this tradition has not been interrupted systematically, and is still strongly active. It is said, however, the Marxism has known a great success in Italy and, in a certain case, this is true»; in the sense «that it acted as a parsley in all the indigestible sauces that the most impudent opportunistic writers have wished to put on the market. [...] In order to fight the confusion that has been growing because of this situation, the Party needs to step up and systematize its activity in the ideological field, to make the knowledge of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine – at least in its more general terms – a duty of its militants».[84] To this end, the Communist Party of Italy lavished quite a bit of energy; actually, a great deal, if the climate on which it found itself operating after the advent of Fascism is borne in mind. Alongside the main communist publishing house there were also other communist publishing houses at work, for instance the Milan-based S.E.U.M. and the Neapolitan Edizioni Prometeo. However, the Italian workers' movement could not do more than this and, as everyone knows, shortly afterwards it was also battered by the blows of the Stalinist counter-revolution.

«Socialism has not transplanted Marx to Italy; instead it has often corrupted itself through parliamentaristic and bureaucratic practices»,[85] observed Piero Gobetti in 1923. There is some truth in these words. If "Socialism", or the many interpretations if it that coexist in Italy between nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not entrench Marx either in the Socialist movement, or, even less, in the Italian working class – this was not, however, in their inten-

[84] A. Gramsci, *Necessità di una preparazione ideologica di massa*, in *Stato operaio*, March–April 1931. The article written in May 1925, is now included in Antonio Gramsci, *Scritti politici*, (edited by) Paolo Spriano, Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1967, 600–602.

[85] P. Gobetti, *La nostra cultura politica*, in *La rivoluzione liberale*, year II, March 8th and 15th 1923, Nos. 5 and 6, now in Piero Gobetti, *Scritti politici*, (edited by) Paolo Spriano, Turin, Einaudi, 1979, 187–188.

tion –, Stalinism, on the contrary, would always spare no efforts to inculcate its rank and file and the working class with its own distorted version of Marx's thought.

An analysis of the divulgation of Marxism, even just from the purely quantitative aspect of the diffusion of its writings, that disregard this conclusion would be misleading. This is because the problem is not so much quantitative as qualitative and consists in demonstrating that birth of an endogenous theoretical, strategic and political Marxist thought, and in determining the position this thought hold in the reality of the workers' movement and in the history of each country. And also because a work that limited itself to the «number of quotations from the works of Marx and Engels», or even to the «editions» of their writings, would be simply «a labour of Sisyphus».[86]

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[86] Hans-Josef Steinberg, *Il partito e la formazione dell'ortodossia marxista*, in various authors, *Storia del marxismo*, second volume, *Il marxismo nell'età della Seconda Internazionale*, Turin, Einaudi, 1979, 187–188.