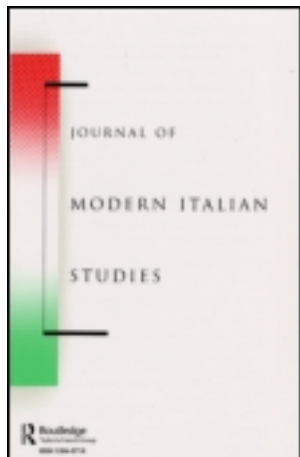


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## Journal of Modern Italian Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmis20>

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Version of record first published: 02 Dec 2010.

**To cite this article:** Stefano Santoro (2003): The cultural penetration of Fascist Italy abroad and in eastern Europe, Journal of Modern Italian Studies, 8:1, 36-66

**To link to this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1354571022000036227>

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## The cultural penetration of Fascist Italy abroad and in eastern Europe

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### Abstract

This article studies the creation and evolution of the system of Italian cultural penetration abroad during the Fascist regime, and focuses in particular on its use in eastern Europe, an area that Italy considered to be of the highest importance in its bid to become a great power. After the First World War Italy developed its cultural and political interests in Eastern Europe. The collaboration among cultural figures and diplomats of the regime allowed for the development of increasingly close relations between the *intelligencija* sympathetic to Italy and to Fascism. In this way a 'parallel diplomacy' of culture developed alongside traditional diplomacy, intent on guaranteeing Italy a hegemonic role in those countries. Fascist Italy's weakness and unrealistic ambitions regarding the political and economic penetration of eastern Europe led to the total failure of the strategy of Italian cultural diplomacy. By the end of the 1930s Italy found itself in a position of progressive subordination to Nazi Germany's initiatives throughout eastern Europe.

### Keywords

Eastern Europe, Fascism, propaganda, diplomacy, institutes of culture, Slavists.

### 1 Italy and eastern Europe after the First World War

The first signs of a revival of interest in eastern Europe among Italian intellectuals can be traced back to the Risorgimento, to Mazzini's *Lettere slave*, to Tommaseo and, in the nineteenth–twentieth centuries, to the Slavonic studies of Domenico Ciampoli and Federico Verdinois (Cronia 1933: 56–128; 1958: 384–427, 507–71; Lo Gatto 1927: 455–68). Only at the end of the First World War, however, was there a full awareness of the great importance of the geographic area spreading from Italy's newly established eastern borders as far as largely unknown Russia in the midst of its Soviet revolution. In particular central Europe and the Balkan–Danube area, its boundaries radically remodelled and its people's equilibrium altered by war, offered the great victorious powers of France, Great Britain and Italy an opportunity to replace Austrian and German influence. Immediately after the war primarily France, but also defeated Germany and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain combined a policy of political and economic penetration with a vast effort of cultural propaganda. Although Italian diplomats asked their government to act likewise and compete

with the other powers, Italy was slow in responding: poor political sensitivity on this matter resulted in the lack of precise instructions.<sup>1</sup>

Early initiatives in this direction came not from the government but from academia, namely the newly created scientific Slavic studies in Italy and the intellectual circles connected with Mazzinian Europeanism. Ettore Lo Gatto, who established modern Italian Slavic studies with the creation of the review *Russia* in the autumn of 1920, Umberto Zanotti-Bianco, who in 1916 promoted the series of volumes *La giovane Europa* and in April 1918 the review *La Voce dei Popoli*, and Amedeo Giannini, head of the press office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were key figures. Through their efforts the Istituto per l'Europa orientale (IPEO) was founded in Rome in January 1921. The objective of the Istituto was 'to study the various countries of eastern Europe, to establish political, literary and commercial relations with them, to offer Italians an opportunity to find out about peoples with whom Italy had to make friends for the supreme interests of its moral and economic expansion in the world'.<sup>2</sup>

Amedeo Giannini, as head of the Foreign Affairs Press Office, was keenly interested in eastern Europe. His role within the IPEO, which he chaired for many years, and his continuous collaboration with the IPEO's journal *L'Europa Orientale*, allowed him close contact with Italian intellectuals in the field and with foreign pro-Italian cultural and political circles. Furthermore, his familiarity with the diplomatic set and particularly with Salvatore Contarini, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the early 1920s, led to his involvement in efforts to strengthen Italian influence in eastern Europe through collaboration with the inheritor countries of the Habsburg empire and with the Entente's allies. In Giannini's view, foreign policy and cultural policy were two inseparable elements. He began publishing his studies of diplomatic history, mostly concerning eastern Europe, in the early 1920s (Monzali 1994: 493–525).

In this climate of 'anti-Habsburg solidarity' favoured by Contarini and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlo Sforza, Italy and Yugoslavia signed the treaty of Rapallo in November 1920. An anti-Habsburg convention was appended to the treaty, which was then extended to Czechoslovakia with the Sforza–Beneš diplomatic note of 8 February 1921. Moreover, a series of economic and commercial agreements were reached with Czechoslovakia, leading to the signing, on 5 July 1924, of an Italian–Czech anti-revisionist collaboration agreement (Melchionni 1969: 558–70; 1972: 224–64, 374–417).<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these diplomatic activities, Giannini was also involved in the foundation of the Istituto di cultura italiana in Prague, the first of numerous such *istituti* created between the two world wars in central and eastern Europe. Founding such an institute in the capital of the young republic was the idea of the Italian ambassador in Prague, Antonio Chiamonte Bordonaro. Considering the political and cultural propaganda France was carrying out at that time through the Institut français de Prague and the *Revue Française de Prague*, journal of the Fédération des sections de l'Alliance française en Tchécoslovaquie,<sup>4</sup>

Bordonaro decided to launch similar initiatives. During a stay in Rome, he illustrated to Giannini and Ciro Trabalza, general director of Italian schools abroad, his project to create an Istituto di cultura italiana in Prague, 'which was to be the centre of cultural relations between Italy and Czechoslovakia and the most useful instrument for the diffusion of Italian language and culture in this country'. Having received a positive answer, on 19 February 1922 Bordonaro summoned to the Italian legation pro-Italy Czech notables and a large delegation from the small Italian colony. On that occasion, an organizing committee of fifteen members, five of whom were Italians, was appointed. The committee was chaired by Senator Zavoral; the vice-chairmen were the Triestine writer Giani Stuparich, at that time an assistant in Italian literature at the Charles University of Prague,<sup>5</sup> and Professor Tille, dean of the literature department of the university. The secretary-general was Giovanni Riccoboni, director of the Italian press agency in Prague. Among the members were representatives of the local Italian financial world: Egidio Richetti, former director of the local office of Assicurazioni Generali, and Vinternitz, director of the local office of Riunione adriatica di sicurtà.<sup>6</sup> Due to budget constraints the Italian government did not promise regular financing:<sup>7</sup> a sum of 15,000 lire was granted once by the General Directorate of Italian Schools Abroad. The Czech government contributed, and economic support was at any rate provided by founding members such as the institute Lloyd Triestino.<sup>8</sup>

In the early 1920s Italian political and cultural propaganda in Czechoslovakia was located within the rather limited circles of the small Italian colony there and those connected with the Czech legions in Italy. Laska, the major of the Italian legions, was appointed secretary of an Italian–Czech League founded in Prague in 1921 through the initiative of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Czech legation of Rome. A similar Italian–Czech League was constituted in Rome. The objective of both leagues was 'the diffusion of the knowledge of Italian culture, economy and politics in Czechoslovakia'.<sup>9</sup>

Although these first initiatives of cultural penetration were addressed to limited circles and suffered from a perpetual shortage of funds, they were nevertheless part of a slow but steady trend that fuelled the Italian government's interest in expanding national influence abroad through the instrument of culture. An early indication of this interest was the establishment in January 1919 of a section for foreign intellectual relations within the executive committee of the Superior Council of Public Education. The task of this section was to study and suggest to the Ministry of Education 'all those initiatives which could be useful to promote the intellectual relations of Italy with foreign countries'.<sup>10</sup> In his report to the council of ministers of October 1918, Berenini, Minister of Education under the Orlando government, acknowledged the importance of the role played by the diffusion of culture abroad immediately after the war:

War . . . demonstrated among other things the necessity to strengthen intellectual relations with the allied countries so as to have them as collaborators in peace as much as they had been neutral collaborators in war. Italy has always had education institutes and scholars of literature and science worthy of its noble traditions, but it has not encouraged up to now (or has not done so enough) intellectual expansion beyond its boundaries; it has not observed what other countries, as advanced as it is, have been doing in this field with increasing success.<sup>11</sup>

However, the time for such an initiative was not yet ripe: probably due to budget requirements, the foreign relations section was closed in December 1920.<sup>12</sup>

Three years later, it was again Amedeo Giannini who took the initiative in the area of cultural expansion abroad, this time focusing his attention on universities. On 17 March 1923 the Istituto interuniversitario italiano was founded with professors and scholars promoted by Giannini and chaired by Giovanni Gentile, then Minister of Education of the Mussolini government. Its objective was to coordinate and develop the role of high national culture through the diffusion of the Italian language, history, art and thought among foreign students coming to Italy for educational purposes. Gentile served as the Istituto's president, Giannini its vice-president. The board members included: Pietro Fedele, Minister of Public Education from January 1925; Roberto Cao-Pinna of the Ministry of Public Education; Ernesto Codignola, director of the R. Istituto superiore di magistero of Florence; Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice of the R. Istituto superiore di magistero of Rome; Emilio Re of the R. National Archives of Rome; and Ciro Trabalza, General Director of Italian Schools Abroad. As indicated in its statute, the Istituto had the objective to 'promote university relations between Italy and other countries by creating courses of culture for foreigners and fellow citizens and by coordinating and supporting already existing courses'.<sup>13</sup> *Il Conalio*, founded in 1923, became in January 1924 the journal of the Istituto interuniversitario. Among its collaborators were Amedeo Giannini, Bindo Chiurlo, an assistant in Italian at the Charles University of Prague,<sup>14</sup> Ettore Lo Gatto and the Romanian scholar Alexandru Marcu.<sup>15</sup> The review aimed 'above all at becoming, in harmony with the programmed action of the III [Istituto interuniversitario italiano], a sound instrument of promotion of our culture abroad and of exchange with the cultures of the various countries which are constantly in contact with ours'.<sup>16</sup>

Up to the mid-1920s, Italy continued to privilege relations of cultural cooperation with the former allied countries. Along with Czechoslovakia, Romania was also included in such cultural exchange. This strategy continued during the first years of Fascism, above all through Contarini's influence, which was truly remarkable in the period of transition from the liberal state to the Fascist regime (Carocci 1969: 18–31). All initiatives that favoured more intense intellectual and political exchanges between the two nations were encouraged.

The first step in this direction came in 1920, with the establishment of an Italian–Romanian committee, chaired by Duke Colonna di Cesarò, who was assisted by the Romanian ambassador in Rome Lahovary and the Italian ambassador in Bucharest Alberto Martin Franklin. The objective of the committee was ‘to intensify the exchanges, both cultural and economic, between the two countries’:

Thanks to a lucky coincidence, Italian and Romanian products, far from being in competition, make up a whole and complement one another. Thus the entente between the two countries appears easy and profitable. On the other hand, we must not delay in reaching such an entente. In effect, in view of the sympathy between the two peoples, bound by ethnic, historical and cultural ties, Italy must, now, at once, take the place that once belonged to the Central Empires in the Romanian market and must, in turn, open her markets to Romanian trade.<sup>17</sup>

Behind such cultural initiatives, there were evident political and economic objectives. Colonna di Cesarò, promoter of an Italian–Arab committee and a – much more important – Istituto per l’Oriente founded in March 1921, had been looking for years for the right instruments to develop Italian commercial expansion towards eastern Europe and the east. In June 1920, di Cesarò was appointed vice-president of the Italian League for the Protection of National Interests. One of its objectives was ‘Italian economic and commercial propaganda abroad and the diffusion, in Italy, of the knowledge of the foreign countries where Italian activity has long been carried out or can develop profitably’ (Giro 1986: 1140–2; Fabiano 1985: 203–50). Giannini continued to supervise all these political-cultural activities, which were encouraged and protected by him in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He strongly believed that it was necessary for Italy to develop and direct the study of countries that could become ‘fields of expansion’ for Italian interests.

Based on this assumption, an Accademia di Romania was founded in Rome in 1922 (Valota Cavallotti 1977: 147); it housed historical-archaeological, literary and fine arts sections as well as a rich Romanian and generally eastern library open to the Italian public. The Accademia published a bulletin in Italian and promoted lectures on history and archaeology in order to ‘promote, as seriously as possible, the knowledge of the development of Romanian civilization at the mouth of the Danube’.<sup>18</sup> It also published two series of volumes: the *Ephemeris Dacoromana* and the *Diplomatarium Italicum*.<sup>19</sup> The basic theory of the first director of the Accademia, archaeologist and vice-chairman of the Romanian Academy of Bucharest Vasile Pârvan, was that ‘the mother-idea of the entire Romanian culture is the *Roman idea*. Our national culture, a creative one, unlike the very ancient popular Daco-Romanian ethnographic vegetative civilization, begins with the discovery of Rome’ (Vulpe 1927: 252).

The foundation on 24 May 1923 of the Istituto italo-romeno in Rome was further indication of Italy’s commitment to cultural expansion. A similar

institute was inaugurated in Bucharest in June of the same year. Both were open to Italians and Romanians, 'aware of the fact the Latin kinship between the two peoples is a historical truth'. The Istituto had as its objective 'to maintain and further develop, in loving and active harmony, the shared Latin culture in every field: civil, political, spiritual, literary, scientific, artistic, industrial, commercial, etc.'<sup>20</sup> Other institutions and Italian–Romanian political and cultural groups operating in Rome in those years were the academic society 'Dacia Traiana', the History and Art Union, the Italian Students Group, the Romanian Academics in Rome and the Ex-Romanian Legionnaires in Italy.<sup>21</sup>

Intellectual relations with Romania were established very soon, mainly on an academic level. They were based on ideological patterns shared by both parties, from the *latinità* of the two peoples, the Risorgimento and the irredentist experience, to the First World War, fought by both nations on behalf of 'oppressed peoples'. Italy's privileged referee in the Romanian intellectual community was the eminent historian Nicolae Iorga. Committed from the beginning of the century to political activity and the leading representative of Romanian nationalism, he supported a 'populist', conservative-oriented policy. Not only did the programme of the national party he founded in 1908 endorse universal suffrage and the expropriation of latifundia in favour of farmers, but it also provided for the creation of the corporative state (Vernacchia-Galli 1985: 217). His scholarly passion for the Roman and the Byzantine empires and their role in the civilization of south-eastern European peoples led him to regard Italy with sympathy and respect (Valota Cavallotti 1977; Berza 1971: 390–416). In November 1921 Iorga was invited by the Istituto per l'Europa orientale to give a lecture at the Università La Sapienza of Rome<sup>22</sup> and, in the following years, he collaborated on the IPEO's journal *L'Europa Orientale*.

## 2 Italy and two 'revisionist' countries: Hungary and Bulgaria

Italian policy towards the defeated countries underwent a remarkable change in the late 1920s and early 1930s, when Mussolini's revisionist offensive towards Balkan–Danube Europe aimed at aggregating these countries in a united bloc against France and the Little Entente. A strategy of Italian cultural penetration in Hungary and Bulgaria had already started in the first post-war period, however. Italy opened a channel of collaboration with Hungary in May 1920 with the foundation in Budapest of the 'Mattia Corvino' Society through the initiative of the Italian high commissar in Hungary, Vittorio Cerruti. He had been encouraged by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to establish in the capital a circle 'in which Italians and Hungarian friends of Italy could meet'. It had been observed, however, that it would be 'more advisable to think about an association of a cultural kind, which could effectively help develop intellectual relations between the two countries'. Cerruti decided to act so that the 'initiative be started by a group of Hungarian gentlemen who can really represent the intellectual circles of the country'. Thus he invited the President of the

Hungarian Royal Academy of Sciences, Albert Berzeviczy, to participate. On 3 May 1920, Cerruti held a meeting for the constitution of the association at the Academy of Sciences. In attendance were Count Albert Apponyi, Baron Sztérényi, the Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Public Education Pekar and several professors, top civil servants, financiers and diplomats.<sup>23</sup> The 'Mattia Corvino', chaired by Albert Berzeviczy, published the review *Corvina*, founded by the same Berzeviczy and edited by Tibor Gerevich and L. Zambra. The statute declared Hungarian and Italian the society's official languages, granted it the power to institute sections in the Hungarian provinces and in Italy, and defined its goal 'to cultivate and develop scientific, literary, artistic and social relations between Hungary and Italy'.<sup>24</sup>

Berzeviczy, the founder of the 'Mattia Corvino', a Magyar historian and politician with deep scholarly interest in Italy, was regarded as the 'forerunner of the resumption of Italian–Hungarian cultural contacts' after the war. His theory was based on the idea that 'Magyar civilization drew from Roman culture the life-blood for the development of its individuality and it must resume relations with Roman culture to return with full strength to the mission entrusted to it in the Danube basin'.<sup>25</sup> Like many other pro-Italians of eastern Europe, he had first been a follower of 'liberal–national' currents and, after the march on Rome, became an admirer of Mussolini and of his regime. Berzeviczy was convinced that only close collaboration between his country and Fascist Italy could lead to a revision of the situation imposed by the Trianon treaty (Gerevich 1936: 3–5).

The objective of the new 'Mattia Corvino' Society – to achieve reconciliation between Italy and Hungary – was clearly stated in the speech Berzeviczy delivered in the preliminary session of 2 May 1920:

I am convinced that the great and holy shared memories which have joined our countries for many centuries cannot be eliminated from the minds of the two nations by the unfortunate war which kept us apart against our will.

We see it proved by the fact that Italy was first among the formerly enemy countries to protect with its missions our fellow patriots against the harshness of the enemy occupation and of Bolshevik tyranny. It was the first to open its boundaries to trade with our country, to return to us our war prisoners and to develop charitable action to mitigate the penury that has come about in our country. We also saw it raising its valiant voice in favour of conciliation in peace treaties.<sup>26</sup>

There was a close connection between cultural and political propaganda and the attempt by Italian commercial and financial circles to replace Austrian–German hegemony in the Balkan–Danube area. Significant in this respect was the support Mussolini gave to a journey by Italian journalists, businessmen and deputies 'to intensify commercial relations between Hungary and Italy'. The journey was promoted in November 1922 by the active Circle of Economic Studies of Trieste, chaired by Professor Livi, consul of Hungary in



Trieste, and by the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Society, chaired by Count Apponyi. The 'Mattia Corvino' welcomed the group in Budapest.<sup>27</sup>

The Reale Accademia di Ungheria of Rome was the central body entrusted with the task of directing cultural relations between the two countries in Italy. The origins of the Accademia di Ungheria date back to 1895, when the bishop of Arbe, Guglielmo Fraknói, a historian interested in Italian studies, founded the Hungarian Historical Institute in Rome at his own expense. In 1913 he donated it to the Hungarian government. In 1923 the Italian government returned to the Magyar government the Institute's premises which had been confiscated during the war. The Historical Institute resumed its activity the following year under the direction of Professor Tibor Gerevich of Budapest University with funds allocated in the ordinary state budget. In 1927, the year of the signing of the Italian–Hungarian friendship agreement, the Hungarian government bought the Palazzo Falconieri for the Reale Accademia di Ungheria, and relocated the Hungarian Historical Institute there. In addition to the Historical Institute, the Accademia di Ungheria comprised a home for artists, a 'Domus Pia' designed for the education of Hungarian Roman Catholic priests, and a boarding school, the Collegium Hungaricum, for candidate professors and university students specializing in Italian literature and language. The Reale Accademia di Ungheria began working regularly in the 1928–9 academic year (Nagy 1936: 12–14).

Italian political-cultural penetration in Bulgaria was slow to develop, owing to the geographical distance between the two countries and the absence of a deeply rooted friendship such as that between Italy and Hungary. It was above all through Ambassador Piacentini, in Sofia since August 1926, that Italy tried to develop strategies to counter the dominant French presence in the cultural as well as political-economic fields in Bulgaria. One of Piacentini's first aims was to monitor the actual state of 'Italian intellectual and spiritual penetration into Bulgaria', to gain a 'general view of Italy's situation as regards the diffusion and the penetration among the various Bulgarian social classes of what can synthetically be called Italianity'. Although, according to Piacentini, Italy had 'remarkably improved and strengthened her "position" in Bulgaria', particularly in the last few years, the activity of France in the field of cultural penetration was far more effective and had also the peculiarity of associating French with Catholic propaganda. French diplomatic authorities had thus taken the role of 'protectors'<sup>28</sup> of Catholic missions in Bulgaria'. For example in Sofia alone three French religious institutions were operating: the Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, a primary, business and grammar school with 700 students; the Sœurs de St Joseph, a boarding school with thirteen classes and 1,000 students; and the Pères augustins, an institute of advanced studies. The Alliance française was also very active in organizing literature courses, lectures and other activities and had a central office in Sofia as well as affiliated branches in various provincial centres.

The clear consequences of this multifaceted and intelligent activity are the primacy of the French language in Bulgaria and the increasingly widespread

diffusion of French culture and way of thinking among the upper classes, in victorious competition with German culture, which has always been strong in Bulgaria, but static and with no considerable hint of progress. . . .

Against this real political-cultural-spiritual French presence, which influences over 5,000 youths, and against analogous wide-ranging and well financed activities carried out by Germany (three institutes with about 1,000 students), by America (a boarding school already existing and a new boarding school projected at a cost of \$1 million) and even by Czechoslovakia and Hungary, we only have deployed our School and the 'Opera pro Oriente'.<sup>29</sup>

The Opera pro Oriente was cultural-propagandistic in character. Founded in Italy in the biennium 1922–3 through a series of charitable institutions, in the following years it started cultural and social initiatives in Bulgarian centres such as Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas.<sup>30</sup> The Rev. Francesco Galloni, military chaplain, served as director. Having seen 'the state of desolation' in which Bulgaria had been thrown by war, he was swayed by 'the desire to relieve the miseries he had observed, thus taking the opportunity to establish relations of gratitude between those regions and Italy'.<sup>31</sup>

The programme of Rev. Galloni was vague and accompanied by a considerable dose of rhetoric: the Opera, having as its objective 'national work, thought and reality exalted and understood as a vocation and a function of universal civilization', intended to:

rebuild, based on the historical view of Romanity, the organic routes of our expansion. . . . Follow them with the integrity of our ideal and practical heritage. . . . Make the beauty, the holiness of work, the joyful and lively richness of our culture, the providential strength and honesty of our race, the brotherly and generous impulse of our character, the vastness and loftiness of our thought, the genius of our attitudes, the grace and lightness of our art, the sweetness and soundness of our family, the smile, the peace and the innocence of our land known, loved and lived.<sup>32</sup>

In point of fact, Rev. Galloni seems to have achieved very little and, as suggested by the Associazione nazionale per soccorrere i missionari italiani, the General Directorate of Italian Schools Abroad never gave any substantial support to the Opera pro Oriente until the late 1920s.<sup>33</sup> It was at that time that Mussolini's 'revisionist' policy became more marked, leading to increased attention towards potential allies of Fascist Italy against the order given to the Balkan-Danube area by the peace treaties of Paris. Bulgaria therefore acquired greater importance as part of the so-called 'Quadruple' of Italy, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, an anti-French alliance dreamt of by the Duce (Burgwyn 1979: 101–15). In 1928 Mussolini himself acted in favour of the hitherto forgotten Opera pro Oriente. Upon his request, the secretary of the National Fascist Party (PNF) Augusto Turati invited the General Director of Italian Schools Abroad, Ciro Trabalza, to support Rev. Galloni's initiatives.<sup>34</sup>

Authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Piacentini assigned the Opera pro Oriente the task of instituting and running the first Italian junior high school in the Bulgarian capital; it opened in autumn 1928 and comprised a classical and a business course.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, an Istituto Italo-Orientale was created at the Opera, which included a classics and business high school, a hostel for secondary school and university students, a women's hostel, after-school assistance, a university library, a gym, a cinema and an art school.<sup>36</sup>

### 3 The second stage of Italian penetration east: between expansion and uncertainty

From the end of the 1920s, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the direction of Dino Grandi pursued a strategy of support for the development of Italian institutions abroad. Although not fully defined, its general policy revealed a more mature awareness of the need to organize Italian cultural penetration abroad in a less casual and more systematic way. The first important step in this direction, however, was based on an approach that still regarded propaganda merely as political agitation in favour of the regime. On 30–31 October 1925 the first congress of Italian *fasci* abroad and in the colonies was held in Rome. Five resolutions were passed, indicating an attempt to coordinate Italian political and cultural action abroad:

- 1 Since historical, ethnic, economic and geographic factors have assigned Italy a role of necessary expansion, foreign policy is the backbone of the Fascist regime.
- 2 Fascism must have in its hands, abroad as it already has in our country, the means and instruments necessary to favour, develop and protect the policy of the government.
- 3 In order that this may be achieved, it is necessary to coordinate the different initiatives, eliminating useless duplication, negative competition and uncontrolled or uncontrollable institutions.
- 4 A national foreign news and information agency must be created to free Italian policy from the slavery of foreign agencies.
- 5 The diffusion abroad of technical, scientific and artistic books and reviews, chosen on sound principles according to the new spirit which enlivens the intellectual life of Italy, must be organized.<sup>37</sup>

Under Giuseppe Bastianini's direction Italian *fasci* abroad sought hegemony over the pre-existing Italian political and cultural organizations, arrogating the function of main representatives and defenders of *italianità*. The *fasci*'s propaganda was developing within an ideological framework characterized by a syncretism of the ideal heritage of Latinity, Romanity and Catholicism: the 'imperial myth' that would accompany the whole course of Italian expansion abroad. It was Dino Grandi, appointed Foreign Affairs Under-Secretary on 15 May 1925, who took the first steps to reduce the agitator activity of *fasci* abroad.

## Articles

Accordingly, he opposed Bastianini's project of assigning the *fasci* the role of political representatives of Italy abroad which was based on the idea that the Fascist organizations abroad should predominate over the ordinary diplomatic system. Grandi's approach prevailed and the *fasci's* activity was eventually subordinated to diplomatic and consular authority. As a result, the organization of the *fasci* was integrated into the Foreign Affairs Ministry and they gradually lost their primary role in cultural propaganda abroad (Gentile 1995: 897–956).

As early as 1926, however, a new element was introduced: the Istituti di cultura italiana all'estero. These institutes would come to play a leading role in the expansion of Italian influence abroad. According to an Act of 19 December 1926, Istituti di cultura italiana were to promote, along with the already existing school institutions abroad, a 'work of diffusion of the Italian language and culture abroad and of development of intellectual relations with foreign countries'. Two kinds of *istituti* were provided for: exclusively Italian (type A) and mixed (type B), the latter consisting of an Italian and a foreign section. The Italian sections of both types of *istituto* had the twofold objective of 'diffusing Italian culture and acquiring and proving the knowledge of foreign culture' as follows:

- 1 by means of courses and lecture cycles;
- 2 by the publication of studies regarding Italy and the foreign country's history, thought and art, as well as of a review or bulletin in which, along with the illustration of features and events of Italian and foreign cultures, extensive reports and news digests should also be provided on economic and industrial affairs;
- 3 by favouring the translation of Italian works;
- 4 by supplying information and encouraging research regarding the above issues;
- 5 by promoting intellectual exchanges and agreements between Italy and foreign countries.

To direct the *istituti* 'renowned scholars, preferably of university level' were appointed, with the collaboration of 'at least another ... university or high school scholar, possibly qualified as a lecturer'. Collaboration with Italian graduates and teachers with specialized scholarship abroad was also encouraged. For the organization of practical Italian language courses 'preparatory to higher courses', the *istituti* used the local staff of Italian schools or teachers made available by the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The Foreign Affairs Ministry together with the Finance Ministry promoted the founding of Istituti di cultura. They were if possible to be affiliated to Italian universities, and subsequently integrated with them; in this case their foundation would be promoted jointly by the Ministry of Public Education and by private organizations whose objective was the establishment of cultural relations with foreign countries. Each institute was to set its own statute or regulation, subject to the opinion of diplomatic representation abroad, and to obtain approval of the Foreign Affairs, Finance and

Public Education ministers. Every year, the institute director, through a diplomatic representative, was to report on its work to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would inform the Public Education Ministry and the founding organization. The contribution from the state would be proportionate to the sums paid by the founding organization to create and run the *istituto*. All staff appointments to institutes abroad had to be approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>38</sup>

However, up to the mid-1930s, the Istituti di cultura italiana abroad were very few in number, with only two in eastern-central Europe, in Prague and in Bucharest. The latter was founded in 1923 through the initiative of Ramiro Ortiz, a scholar of neo-Latin literatures and in particular of Romanian literature, a professor of Italian literature at the University of Bucharest for twenty-four years. A speech by Nicolae Iorga marked its official inauguration in 1925.<sup>39</sup>

For this entire period, the main body entrusted with the task of coordinating initiatives of cultural penetration abroad remained the Istituto interuniversitario italiano. In 1927, the government also assigned it the functions of the Italian National Committee for Intellectual Cooperation at the League of Nations and its subsidiary, the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation of Paris.<sup>40</sup> On 26 July 1928, in a circular letter to diplomatic and consular offices abroad, Mussolini himself illustrated the initiatives of the Istituto interuniversitario and requested the collaboration of diplomatic officials. In particular he emphasized that ‘art, culture, language and music courses for foreigners’ would be given in Italy under its patronage and with the government’s support. This promotion was quite deserved ‘as the cultural and patriotic objectives pursued by the Istituto are within the framework of the national propaganda programme. Its implementation abroad today is the most important, if not the first task the Fascist government has entrusted to diplomatic and consular representatives’. Mussolini wrote:

It is therefore necessary that Your Excellency . . . support and assist the work of the Istituto, making its objectives, programmes and activities known in the form and by the means which you deem most suitable, through a profitable and fruitful work of propaganda.

For the above purposes, I suggest that Your Excellency . . ., in agreement with the Istituto interuniversitario . . . appoint a Representative of the same Institute in that jurisdiction, in the person whom Your Excellency . . . will prefer to choose among those most qualified in terms of culture and patriotic feelings, to carry out a disinterested and fruitful activity in favour of the Institution and of the initiative promoted by it.<sup>41</sup>

The attempt to involve diplomatic representatives directly proved disappointing: in certain countries not even one Institute representative had been appointed as late as May 1930.<sup>42</sup> This was true in particular in central-eastern Europe: in Czechoslovakia there were no representatives at all, while Bulgaria and Hungary had a small number of representatives.<sup>43</sup> By the

early 1930s the Institute was in great difficulty as government financing was curtailed due to budget constraints within the general context of the world economic depression.<sup>44</sup>

In this uncertain scenario, where innovative expansion alternated with disorganization and poor financial support, the propaganda strategies of Fascism still inclined towards the fragmentation and dispersal of activities. They were often left to the good will of individuals or groups with no government coordination. The activity of Italian and foreign intellectuals in the early 1930s in eastern Europe was particularly intense. Fascism had by then focused its attention on this area as it was regarded as the 'natural' field of expansion for Italy.

Bulgaria, in a perennial state of tension with Yugoslavia over the Macedonian issue, continued to serve as a reference point for Italy in south-eastern Europe. Enrico Damiani, professor of Italian language and literature at the University of Sofia from 1928 to 1935, carried out political-cultural propaganda aimed at rapprochement between Italy and Bulgaria. On 13 April 1931 he founded the Associazione italo-bulgara of Rome, to 'favour the development of cultural relations between Italy and Bulgaria'. The association organized Bulgarian language courses at the Istituto per l'Europa orientale of Rome, lectures on Bulgarian culture, concerts and shows. Damiani directed the *Rivista Italo-Bulgara di Letteratura, Storia, Arte*, published in Sofia from 1931 to 1937 and the *Malka Italiana Biblioteka* ('Small Italian library') also published in the Bulgarian capital, which edited Italian-Bulgarian works, including volumes of the *Biblioteka Italiana Kultura* ('Italian culture library').<sup>45</sup> In addition, under the initiative of Italy's ambassador to Bulgaria, Sapuppo, an Istituto di cultura italiana was founded in Sofia in 1936.<sup>46</sup>

In the same years some propaganda initiatives were carried out towards Romania. Mussolini believed he could rely on the pro-Fascist General Averescu, who was in power in 1926–7, to achieve an anti-French agreement. However, in spite of the declarations of friendship with Italy, neither during the Averescu government nor during the government of Iorga (1931–2) did Romania abandon its traditional loyalty to France and the Little Entente. The gestures that Iorga, an admirer of the Duce and of Italian Fascism, made towards Italy had a fairly symbolic significance but their political weight was substantially limited. Among other things, Iorga gave a series of lectures at the University of Bucharest, of which he was the rector, on the history of the Italian people and Fascism,<sup>47</sup> and attended the inauguration of the Libreria italiana in Bucharest, together with the Italian ambassador Preziosi, the secretary consul of the *fascio*, and representatives of the Italian colony and of Romanian intellectual circles.<sup>48</sup>

#### **4 The third stage: the centralization of the direction of propaganda**

The need to lay new foundations for Italian propaganda was perceived in the early 1930s, above all in view of the determination with which Nazi Germany

had centralized and coordinated every activity of this type. The Reichministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, created in March 1933, unified the organization of culture and propaganda into a single administrative structure.<sup>49</sup> Italy restructured the press office of the premier (Ufficio stampa della presidenza del consiglio) which since 1925 had served as press office of the head of the government (Ufficio stampa del capo del governo). In 1933 a new autonomous section was created to carry out systematic propaganda on *romanità*, *italianità* and the regime. In September 1934 fear of the ideological competition of Nazism prompted Mussolini to institute and directly supervise the office of Under-Secretary of State for Press and Propaganda. Galeazzo Ciano was appointed director of this new office, which inherited the functions of the former press office (Ferrara and Giannetto 1992: 25–9).

In the same period, propaganda initiatives to affirm the originality and primacy of Fascist ideology began. In July 1933, on Mussolini's initiative and along the path traced by Asvero Gravelli, the Comitati di azione per l'universalità di Roma (CAUR) were created, under the chairmanship of Eugenio Coselschi. The CAUR were intended to coordinate European pro-Fascist movements and sympathetic intellectuals around Italian Fascism and the myth of *latinità*. Gravelli, together with other active Italian and foreign propagandists, founded the reviews *Antieuropa* and *Ottobre*, in 1928 and 1932 respectively, with the aim of organizing an international Fascist movement under Italian leadership and developing propaganda more appropriate to the foreign objectives of the regime (Borejsza 1981: 139–65; Ledeen 1973: 139–73).

In April 1933 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to form an office for the Istituti di cultura italiana all'estero within the General Directorate of Italian Schools Abroad. Its function was to 'coordinate and promote with an increasingly united approach' the work of the Istituti di cultura italiana all'estero 'for the diffusion of our language and our culture in foreign countries and for the development of intellectual relations between Italy and other nations'. The centralizing role of the office was clear: its task was 'not only to supervise every technical and administrative detail of the organization of each Institute, but also and above all, to direct their cultural activity in general and overall issues'. The office favoured the development of *istituti* 'fully reflecting the highest intellectual and spiritual life of contemporary Italy', but also 'according to the particular natural and historical conditions of the place where each institute carries out its work'. The institutes were to 'refer only to the mentioned office, through the Italian diplomatic missions'. Every year the diplomatic missions would send the office 'a full and detailed report' on the activity carried out by the institutes. Before the beginning of each academic year, the office would call a consulting committee, to be attended by the directors of the institutes, the director of the Istituto nazionale fascista di cultura, a member of each class of the Royal Academy of Italy, a member of the Royal Institute of Archaeology and Art History and representatives of the promoting organizations of the Istituti di cultura italiana all'estero. Committee meetings, held in Rome and chaired by

the General Director of Italian Schools Abroad, would examine the problems encountered by the institutes and prepare programmes for the coming academic year.<sup>50</sup>

Ciano, appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in June 1936, brought with him the same ideas about cultural and political propaganda that had characterized his direction of press and propaganda. Aware of the great importance that cultural institutions operating abroad had acquired, he strengthened and coordinated their activity, focusing especially on the *Istituti di cultura italiana*. Ciano gave the following outline of his thoughts on the relation between culture and politics and the role that *Istituti di cultura* and other Italian cultural institutions would play under his direction:

The issue has interested me since when I was Minister of Press and Propaganda and at that time I wanted it to be dealt with on a wide-ranging basis, and then, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I wanted it to fall within the regular, daily work of our diplomacy. But since then I have considered and consider this work to be more than mere diffusion of our language and our literature.

The idea that Italian culture should be presented abroad as an overall synthesis of the 'Italian spirit', the need to make known not only 'our artistic and literary tradition' but also 'our political and social organizations', that is the achievements of 'modern Italy': all these elements became part of an organic approach in which political and intellectual power fulfilled a complementary function.

Nobody is interested in a state in decay or in a country that has nothing to say. It is a country's vitality, energy and capacity for achievements that arouses the interest of foreigners, who, while investigating the secrets of its vitality, are fatally attracted to studying the conditions and the strength of its civilization and therefore its intellectual activities. This is the charm that the political power arouses in the field of culture, a power that at any rate is inseparable from a high intellectual level; that binomial 'book and musket' which is one of the first laws of the Fascist custom dictated by the Duce.<sup>51</sup>

Rhetoric aside, Ciano endeavoured to create a system in order to determine the action of the *Istituti di cultura*. After years of cuts in allocations, in 1936–7 their allowance for specific items of expenditure was increased by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The institutes in Prague, Budapest, Sofia and Athens, strategically placed in eastern Europe, were strengthened, as were the more 'peripheral' ones in Warsaw and Tallinn.<sup>52</sup> In January 1937, Ciano reminded Italian diplomatic offices abroad of the need to aim at 'coordinating the functions of the *Istituti*, avoiding any dispersal of efforts and energies and making their activity increasingly intense and fruitful'. He outlined the strategic guidelines for the action of Italian officers as follows:

The *Istituti di cultura italiana all'estero* have by now proved to be easy and effective instruments of our cultural and linguistic propaganda. They respond



and will respond increasingly to that concept of diffusion of the Latin and Roman idea that has acquired, in the Fascist era and in the climate of the Empire, a sense of renewed and vaster universality.

... The *istituti*, schools of high culture, thus need to serve two functions; first, the constant execution of well-determined programmes and, second – a more varied and, in a sense, more popular and practical function – artistic events and lectures, naturally limited to trustworthy names and persons who can be certain not to fall prey to the appeal of easy amateurism.

Ciano thus confirmed his key idea regarding the function of culture in respect of politics and ideology. Literary and artistic issues were to be accompanied by the ‘subjects and topics of living Italy, the achievements of Fascism, the legal provisions of the regime: in a word, everything representing the grand social and universal construction due to Mussolini’s genius’. In addition to the Istituti di cultura, he attributed great importance to Italian assistantships in foreign universities, ‘the only instrument available to us for penetration into the high culture of foreign countries’. Ciano stressed the radical change in dealing with cultural institutions generally. He wrote that many of them had ‘up to yesterday’ been affected by ‘the influence of political remainders [*residuati politica*] which have providentially disappeared from the scene today’ and had moreover worked in an uncoordinated and at times competitive manner, being utilized ‘too often for the satisfaction of little colonial vanities’.

If these societies and institutions could have, and indeed had, a not quite useless function in a determined historical phase – (when the state was uninvolved and propaganda relied only on the willing but inorganic initiative of private individuals)<sup>53</sup> – today this propaganda must be founded on the activity, the energy and tact of those whom the Fascist, linear and totalitarian state entrusts with precise tasks and duties.

The teachers at the institutes as well as the language assistants and professors would therefore have to keep ‘intense and cordial contacts’ with local scholars, ‘always showing great moderation and strict respect of other people’s susceptibility’. News would be published on information media ‘which can be expected to sympathize with us or at least to understand Fascist Italy’. The task of Italian diplomatic representatives was to

closely monitor the work of these teachers and make sure that they are worthy not only in the spirit with which today’s Italians must serve the country and Fascism in the integrity of their private lives, but also in the fervour and tone of their work, both in and outside school.

A further recommendation was made as regards the Istituto interuniversitario italiano. It would have its own offices, provided by the Istituti di cultura or, should there be none, by the Case d’Italia. Wherever it was not possible to

establish Istituti di cultura, courses for foreigners would be placed under the aegis of the Istituto interuniversitario itself.<sup>54</sup>

According to these guidelines, intellectuals abroad, above all during the 1930s, were progressively compelled to adapt their work to the requirements of Fascism's expansionist policy and to adapt themselves, with more or less conviction, to the role of intellectual *funzionari* (Isnenghi 1979). The ideological content that increasingly characterized the Istituti di cultura italiana under Ciano in the second half of the decade and their function as promoters of Fascist propaganda abroad were clear. In effect the institution was

the only one that, due to its character as a high cultural institution, was able to bring about the widest diffusion and affirmation of Italian thought and, at the same time, to rebut Communist propaganda, which, because of its doctrinal and scientific form, tends to penetrate more deeply into intellectual circles.

In these most sensitive and dangerous circles, Fascism cannot act using ordinary means of propaganda, but must instead, in its turn, illuminate its truth through a scientific and doctrinal method.

This can only be done by the Istituti di cultura.<sup>55</sup>

The ideological aspect of the *istituti*'s cultural activity received special attention in eastern European countries. Beginning with the 1936–7 academic year, each *istituto* had to 'increasingly diffuse the principles of Italian corporative order', by organizing, along with their advanced and high culture classes, a regular course 'completely dedicated to economy and to corporative law', and a lecture series 'to be entrusted to the best Italian corporativism scholars'.<sup>56</sup>

In the same period several Istituti di cultura were founded in eastern Europe; those of Budapest and Sofia – founded in 1935–6 – were particularly important. In Romania the activity of the Istituto of Bucharest was stepped up, while many sections were founded in provincial towns in all three countries. The foundation of the Istituto di cultura italiana of Budapest took place within the framework of the Italian–Hungarian cultural agreement of 1935 and marked a change in Italian propagandistic and cultural activity. The agreement, signed by Mussolini and the Hungarian Minister of Public Education Bálint Hóman on 16 February in the Palazzo Venezia, included many measures aimed at 'increasingly developing scientific, literary and artistic relations between Italy and Hungary'. Among them were the creation of an Istituto di cultura italiana in Budapest and the preservation of the Istituto ungherese in Rome run by the Hungarian government (Nagy 1936: 40–5). The moving spirit behind the Istituto di cultura of Budapest and the teacher of most of its courses was Rodolfo Mosca, full professor of Italian civilization at the University of Budapest. The Institute's programme was designed to represent Fascism as the direct continuation of Italian cultural tradition and the historical heritage of the Risorgimento. With centres in Debrecen, Pécs and Szeged, the Institute functioned as a bookshop and also distributed Italian books to Hungarian bookshops. Despite such

activities, the results in this field were poor if compared to those obtained by countries such as France and Germany (Petracchi 1995: 377–402).

In 1936, the Istituto di cultura italiana of Bucharest, under the direction of Bruno Manzone, an Italian language and literature assistant at Bucharest University and former vice-secretary general of the Società nazionale Dante Alighieri,<sup>57</sup> began expanding its activity considerably. In constant cooperation with the Italian legation in Romania, it maintained relations with representatives of Romanian intellectual circles and played an authentic role of ‘parallel diplomacy’<sup>58</sup> in a country whose official position towards Italy was characterized by diffidence. But it was above all from 1938, when King Carol II initiated the period of ‘monarchic Fascism’ and formed a national unity government with the participation of men such as Averescu, Antonescu and Iorga himself (Borejsza 1981: 81), that the Istituto di cultura italiana became the coordination centre for all activities of Italian political and cultural propaganda in Romania. In June 1939, the General Director of Italian Schools Abroad, Attilio De Cicco, while praising Manzone under whose guidance the Institute had become an ‘effective instrument of Italian cultural penetration’, provided guidelines for strengthening this type of work. All Italian cultural activities in Romania and all teachers of the Italian mission – except the colonial junior high schools and primary schools and their staff – would be directed by the Istituto. Under the supervision of the Italian ambassador, the Istituto would ‘didactically’ coordinate ‘the work of the centre and that of the provinces’. Furthermore, the Dante Alighieri society in Romania was to be reorganized by the mission professors in the provinces, together with the director of the Istituto di cultura who would serve as its chairman.<sup>59</sup>

The Istituto di cultura italiana of Sofia, directed by Mario Marcazzan, a teacher of Italian literature with an annual appointment at the city’s university, sponsored lectures celebrating Italian history and particularly Fascist Italy. Such occasions served to emphasize the historical and spiritual relations between Italy and Bulgaria and their continuation in the contemporary age. Enrico Damiani was the most active lecturer on these subjects, with such eloquent titles as: ‘Common expressions in the spiritual and cultural history of Italy and Bulgaria’, ‘Spiritual relations between Italy and Bulgaria in the present and in the past’, ‘Cultural parallelisms: Italy and Bulgaria’.<sup>60</sup> According to Damiani the two nations had been indissolubly bound since the Risorgimento:

how many episodes, moments, personalities of striking similarity are revealed by the history of the two peoples above all in the period of their Risorgimento! It is sufficient to mention the two names Mameli and Botev, hero-poets so close, so similar in all expressions of the spirit, in literary work, in life events, in death, that the latter – Botev, born when Mameli died – almost appeared to be a direct reincarnation of the former in another land and for identical purposes.

The opportunities for reciprocal understanding and the main elements of

ideal affinity between the Bulgarians and the Italians, against the background of their civil life, are to be looked for essentially on the basis of these foundations.

(Damiani 1939: 126)

In June 1939 the Bulgarian Premier Georgi K'osev'nov and the Italian ambassador Giuseppe Talamo Atenolfi signed a cultural agreement between Bulgaria and Italy in Sofia. Its most important element concerned the teaching of Italian, which became a basic subject in Bulgarian schools. In addition, the University of Sofia continued to offer a course and an assistantship in Italian literature. The chair of Bulgarian language and literature, which had been held by Enrico Damiani for a decade, was retained by the University of Rome, which also had a Bulgarian assistantship, entrusted to Ivàn Petkànov some months earlier.<sup>61</sup> Significantly, both Damiani and Petkànov belonged to political and cultural Fascist organizations such as the CAUR and the Institute 'Europa giovane'. Founded in 1937 by Pietro Gorgolini, this institute was connected with the PNF's Istituto nazionale di cultura fascista, its object being to 'make intellectuals more aware of the great civilization of the west, essentially *Graeco-Roman, Catholic and Fascist*' (Borejsza 1981: 145, 198).<sup>62</sup> Damiani was also the editor-in-chief of *Bulgaria* – the journal of the Associazione italo-bulgara of Rome – founded in June 1939 and directed by Eugenio Morelli. Petkànov was a member of its editorial committee, together with well-known Slavists such as Ettore Lo Gatto, Giovanni Maver and Arturo Cronia. Intended for scholars as well as the general public, the journal aspired

to make the literature, history, art, philosophy, scientific life and economic life [of Bulgaria] known ... in one word Bulgarian culture and ... Italian-Bulgarian culture, that is spiritual relations, considered from every point of view, between Bulgaria and Italy.

(Morelli 1939: 5–6)

## 5 From further centralization to failure

In May 1937 Mussolini turned the Ministry for the Press and Propaganda, directed by Dino Alfieri, into the Ministry for Popular Culture (Cannistraro 1970: 273–98). This ministry began to centralize all cultural initiatives both in Italy and abroad, where it endeavoured to promote the Fascist ideology. To this end new institutions were created to work alongside existing ones such as the Istituti di cultura italiana and committees abroad of the Dante Alighieri Society – which, under a new statute of 1931 was subordinated to the ministry and to the party (Borejsza 1981: 197–8). In 1938, after Italy left the League of Nations, many cultural institutions linked with the latter were dissolved, among them the Istituto interuniversitario italiano and the Commissione nazionale di cooperazione intellettuale, which were replaced by the Istituto nazionale per le relazioni culturali con l'estero (IRCE). Alessandro Pavolini was chairman and

Luciano de Feo director.<sup>63</sup> The objective of the IRCE was to 'promote scientific, artistic and social relations between Italy and foreign countries' as a means of spreading Italian culture. The Istituto came under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, jointly with the ministries of National Education, of Corporations and of Popular Culture.<sup>64</sup> Very soon, however, the IRCE was drawn within the orbit of the Ministry of Popular Culture. In December 1939, Pavolini, who in October had become Minister of Popular Culture in Alfieri's place, took measures to improve the ministry's performance by making its propaganda more effective (Candeloro 1993: 26). Writing to Ciano, Pavolini observed that, in view of 'the close relations existing between my Ministry and the IRCE' and considering that 'the tasks entrusted to the General Directorate for Propaganda and the objectives pursued by IRCE partially coincide', it would be advisable 'that this situation, created by chance, be made definitive by a new law making the Minister of Popular Culture by right the President of the Institute'.<sup>65</sup> Later on, a criterion was introduced for subdividing tasks between the IRCE and the General Directorate for Propaganda of the Ministry of Popular Culture. Koch, who was the chief of the latter, suggested that Pavolini assign 'all guidelines and political functions' to the General Directorate and leave the IRCE 'the more strictly executive ones'.<sup>66</sup>

The IRCE gradually began to involve the Istituti di cultura italiana all'estero in the organization of political and ideological propaganda: a cycle of lectures on the corporative system was scheduled for autumn 1938 in Belgrade, Budapest and Bucharest. The lectures were to take place under IRCE's direction in the Istituti di cultura italiana 'in agreement with the major local university or academic agencies'.<sup>67</sup> And in effect, from 1936, the activity of the Istituti di cultura was very intense especially in Budapest and Bucharest and aimed with increased determination at the 'diffusion abroad of the principles of the Italian corporative system'.<sup>68</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs supervised the activity of the Istituti di cultura italiana through the General Directorate of Italian Schools Abroad, acting in parallel with the Ministry of Popular Culture. In some cases the two ministries had overlapping functions. In the second half of the 1930s, Ciano issued detailed regulations for the Istituti di cultura's programmes and courses and for the scrupulous control of teachers. It was left up to Italian legations to supervise lecturers sent over from Italy, writing 'an objective and detailed report of their success, the effectiveness of their lecturing and their quality as disseminators of Italian thought so that the Ministry may gradually select those best suited to take our culture throughout the world'. Furthermore, Italian diplomatic missions would have to

send their own summary report on the activity of the *istituti*, with helpful comments on possible gaps and suggestions for improving these bodies of cultural diffusion.

They will also make a full report on directors and all the personnel of the

Istituto, clearly specifying whether or not each manager, teacher or employee is considered up to the task assigned to him.<sup>69</sup>

As soon as they arrived abroad, Italian teachers in foreign schools and in the Italian language courses promoted by the Istituti di cultura, the *fasci*, the Dante Alighieri or other similar institutions had to 'visit the office holder of the *R. Ufficio* abroad [the diplomatic mission] and to ask him for instructions before reporting to the foreign authorities in charge of the universities and schools to which they are assigned and beginning their activity as scholars'. Every teacher was required to submit periodically to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a detailed report on the activity carried out abroad, while the directors of the Istituti di cultura were to report on their own work. It was again stressed that:

The main task of university teachers on the permanent staff, qualified lecturers and high school teachers appointed language assistants in foreign universities is and remains to endeavour with all possible care to promote the diffusion of Italian culture by collecting as many enrolments as possible and by encouraging foreign students with suitable means to learn our language and to study the life and civilization of our country.<sup>70</sup>

The Istituti di cultura's marked ideological characterization as mediators between foreign institutions and Fascist Italy and as bearers of a hybrid message of *italianità*, *latinità* and corporative ideology led them more and more frequently to introduce foreigners into the peripheral units of the Fascist *Federazioni* abroad.<sup>71</sup> Thus the division between cultural work and political and propaganda work completely disappeared.

For several years the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already entrusted Italian diplomatic offices with the task of controlling the activity 'of propaganda ... carried out by foreign countries in academic and non-academic settings':

In particular we will appreciate knowing, for each university, the activity carried out both by local and foreign elements as regards the teaching of modern languages (French, English, German, Spanish, Russian, Czech, etc.) along with the number of professorships, assistantships, qualification or practice institutes, the names of their holders, the number of students for each language, if special libraries are provided and any other information that reflects the exact situation of the diffusion of foreign cultures in those universities or centres of higher education. We also appreciate knowing as exhaustively as possible the political attitudes and opinions on Fascist Italy of professors and of the most significant elements of foreign propaganda.<sup>72</sup>

Italian propaganda institutions had been virtually absent from Yugoslavia for almost the whole Fascist *ventennio* because of the continuous tension between the two countries. However, they began to develop during the last part of the Stojadinović government and the Cvetković government, when the country increasingly came under the influence of the Axis (Pirjevec 1995: 50–1). In April

1940 the Istituto di cultura italiana of Ljubljana was inaugurated. Although the political elite of the day attended the inauguration, participation by important representatives of Slovenian culture and science was markedly thinner, a sign of the eminently political function of the Istituto. Up to the outbreak of war, the Istituto was under the direction of Professor Evaldo Gasparini, who organized Italian language courses and public conferences by Italian academics such as Balbino Giuliano, Giacomo Devoto, Matteo Bartoli, Giovanni Maver and Enrico Damiani. After the Italian occupation in April 1941, the constitution of the so-called Provincia di Lubiana meant a radical change in the role played by the Istituto. Professor Attilio Budrovich became director and activity increased considerably as the Istituto was charged with coordinating Italian cultural policy and Italianizing the 'Province'. During the occupation, the Istituto worked under the direct supervision of the high commissar Emilio Grazioli, to whom it submitted its programme of activity, while also maintaining relations with the Ministry of Popular Culture. The main objective of the Istituto was to establish communication between the Italian occupation authorities and Slovenian intellectuals.

This strategy of cultural penetration was based on the assumption that the Catholic and 'Latin' origin of Slovenians and Croats would lead to their gradual assimilation by Italy. The fundamental guidelines were outlined on the eve of war in a study of the IRCE. On 18 April 1941, the IRCE's director Luciano de Feo explained to Koch, general director of propaganda at the Ministry of Popular Culture, how to exploit the shared cultural elements of the Italians, Slovenians and Croats for propaganda purposes by highlighting the Italian inspiration of literary figures such as Valvasor, Prešeren and Žiga Zois and by underlining the common Catholic tradition which 'completely separated these peoples from the Orthodox world'<sup>73</sup> (Godeša 1999: 137–43).

On 23 February 1940 the Minister of National Education Bottai inaugurated the Istituto di cultura italiana of Zagreb with a speech on 'The Italianness and universality of Mussolini' delivered to the Ban, the archbishop, scientists, academicians and students. The chairmanship of the Istituto was assigned to Giovanni Maver, while the direction went to Paolo Mix.

The Istituto di cultura italiana of Belgrade, which started its activity in October 1939, was inaugurated on 22 February 1940 in the presence of the Prince Regent Paul, Princess Olga and many government members, including the Yugoslav Minister of Public Education E. Bosidor Maksimović. At the inauguration Bottai delivered a speech on 'New humanism and education'. The Istituto organized courses on culture and lectures on corporativism by Balbino Giuliano, Giovanni Maver and Enrico Damiani.<sup>74</sup>

However, by the end of the 1930s Italian penetration into central-eastern Europe had to contend with the increasingly obstructive presence of the allied Third Reich. With sound financial and economic resources for its political and ideological expansion, the Third Reich was rapidly taking the place of Fascist Italy as leader of pro-Fascist groups and revisionist governments of eastern Europe.

The last years of the Istituto di cultura italiana of Prague are emblematic of the crisis of Italian policy as a great power towards eastern Europe. After a period of financial difficulty, in part due to the General Directorate of Italian Schools Abroad's increased expenses for the founding of new *istituti* in the mid-1930s, the Istituto of Prague came under Ettore Lo Gatto's direction.<sup>75</sup> The well-known Slavist who directed the Istituto from 1938 to 1941<sup>76</sup> was appointed professor of Italian literature at the Charles University in 1936 and therefore was in close contact with Prague intellectual circles. He guided the Istituto through the difficult time of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the creation of the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939. Lo Gatto, working in agreement with Italian diplomatic authorities, tried to establish good relations with the new Nazi institutions while simultaneously maintaining good relations with local elements.<sup>77</sup>

The fact that Lo Gatto was the first Slavist appointed director of the Istituto was noted positively in Czech circles. The nationalist *Národní Listy* of Prague of 19 November 1938 stated:

Mussolini's promise that, once the crisis of nationalities was overcome, Czechoslovakia would be able to rely on the sincere friendship of Italy, is now fulfilled with this first nice gesture by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has appointed for the first time a Slavist, Professor Ettore Lo Gatto, Director of the Istituto di cultura italiana in Prague. . . . This appointment fulfils an old desire of ours, as Prof. Lo Gatto is a Slavist in heart and soul. . . . for his propagandistic achievements towards Czechoslovakia he was awarded the Order of the White Lion. As new Director of the Istituto di cultura italiana, Prof. Lo Gatto is preparing a rich programme of activities to encourage friendly relations and actively promote cultural and scientific cooperation between the two nations.<sup>78</sup>

A 1938 letter to Lo Gatto by Karel Stloukal, president of the Czech historical society, full professor of history at the Charles University of Prague and a member of the Czech Academy, confirms the great esteem in which Czech intellectuals held the Italian Slavist. Stloukal considered Lo Gatto's appointment as director of the Istituto di cultura

an important event in the development of Italian–Czech cultural relations. Thanks to your hard work and knowledge of things, we can expect a new direction in the exchange of cultural values between our peoples, which has been poor in the last few years due to political conditions. However, now there are all the preconditions for a fruitful cooperation, useful for both our countries. I am convinced that we Czechs especially can receive new inspiration from you Italians. I have been affirming for many years that post-war Italian culture has gained a vitality that will bring it once again to world leadership as during the Renaissance and baroque eras.<sup>79</sup>

It was precisely Lo Gatto's ability to win local popularity and approval that



aroused the suspicion of the German occupation authorities. In particular, it appears that German concerns were linked to the fact that Lo Gatto was a Slavist, which – even in the opinion of the general consul of Italy Caruso – would inevitably expose him to the influence of the Czech society in which he worked, and ‘to becoming, more or less reservedly and cautiously, its partisan in the present situation’.<sup>80</sup> To mitigate the hardly concealed hostility of the Germans towards the Istituto, Caruso designed a new statute that provided for its transformation from an Italian–Czech institution – ‘which could no longer exist in view of Italian–German relations’ – into an exclusively Italian institution like the one in Vienna. Significantly, the statute was ‘drawn up in the most generic terms, to avoid any complication, to the point of never using the expression “Protectorate”, nor was any reference made to Czech, German or any other nationality’s members or students’. The fact that the Germans replied neither to this project nor to a memorandum of Caruso’s ‘that should lay the foundation for negotiations on the arrangement of all the cultural issues in which we are interested within the Protectorate’, combined with ‘the gratifying success achieved by the Istituto’, led the general consul to observe that ‘our cultural activity in the Protectorate, which I always tried to dissimulate as much as I could, is not quite appreciated by the authorities of the Reich’. Caruso’s opinion was that such issues should ‘be clarified as soon as possible, in the highest spirit of understanding and loyalty, so as to avoid unpleasant misunderstandings’.<sup>81</sup>

The efforts of the general consul were in vain, however: in the end, all the Germans allowed was the final financing of the Istituto di cultura, ‘in spite of the general rule according to which no financing can be granted to foreign institutes out of the Protectorate’s funds’.<sup>82</sup>

Lo Gatto’s direction of the Istituto of Prague came to an end in December 1941. It marked symbolically the definitive surrender of Italian diplomacy to overwhelming German power, even in the field of cultural propaganda. The preponderant political, economic and military power of Nazi Germany soon revealed the subordinate position of Italy in all of eastern Europe, in spite of the activities of the Ministry of Popular Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>83</sup> Throughout the 1930s Italy had managed to maintain contact with some political and cultural elements of rival countries, such as Hungary and Romania, by financing pro-Fascist reviews or supporting organizations such as the Amici dell’Ungheria and the Amici della Romania in Italy.<sup>84</sup> That Italy was no longer able to mediate – as an alleged arbiter – between the opposing forces in the Danube–Balkan area made way for German initiative. A final attempt to boost the Italian political presence in the Balkans, in competition with Germany, was the signing, on 8 April 1943, of a cultural agreement with Romania, led by the pro-Fascist Antonescu.<sup>85</sup> This was the last of a long series of such agreements between Italy and east European countries. A strengthening of propaganda institutions such as the Centro italo-romeno di Studi corporativi, working since 1942 at the Istituto di cultura italiana of Bucharest, was

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expected.<sup>86</sup> However, these late initiatives became completely ineffective as Romania moved definitively into the German orbit.

As in the transition from 'parallel war' to 'subordinate war' (R agonieri 1976: 2290–9), the decline of the cultural penetration of Fascism during the Second World War shows the limits of the great-power ambitions of Mussolini's Italy's and highlights the fact that the continuous 'Latin' and 'Catholic' propaganda of Italian intellectuals was not able to compensate for the weakness and over-ambition of the Italian political-diplomatic and economic-financial initiative towards eastern Europe during the *ventennio*.

## Notes

- 1 The chargé d'affaires in Bucharest Auriti to the Ministero della pubblica istruzione, 16 June 1919; Ministero degli esteri, Direzione generale degli affari commerciali, 8 November 1919; Baccelli to the Ministero degli esteri, Direzione generale degli affari commerciali, 2 December 1919, in Archivio centrale dello Stato, Rome, Ministero della pubblica istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione superiore (hereinafter ACS, MPI, DGIS), b. 7, fasc. 'Relazioni intellettuali con l'estero', sf. 'Scambi intellettuali. Accordi con Paesi esteri per lo scambio di studenti'. On western great powers' cultural penetration in eastern Europe between the two world wars, see Santoro (2002).
- 2 The IPEO's vice-president Carlo Calisse to the Minister of Esteri Schanzer, 1 October 1922, in Archivio storico del Ministero degli Affari esteri, Rome, Ministero della Cultura popolare (hereinafter ASMAE, MCP), b. 304, fasc. 'Istituto per l'Europa Orientale', 1921–4. On the IPEO, see Santoro (1999).
- 3 See 'Elenco cronologico dei trattati interstatali conclusi fra la Cecoslovacchia e l'Italia dal 1918 al 1924', *L'Europa Orientale* 4(8–11)(1924): 590–2; 'Documenti. Pacte de collaboration cordiale entre le Royaume d'Italie et la République Tchecoslovaque', *ibid.* p. 589. See also Lederer (1966: 324–56) and Cassels (1970: 175–84).
- 4 ASMAE, Ambasciata Praga (hereinafter AP) 1919–39, b. 10, fasc. V c, sf. 'Istituto di cultura italiana a Praga (lavori preparatori)', 1922.
- 5 Giannini had involved Stuparich in the work of Italian cultural penetration in Czechoslovakia. See his testimony in Stuparich (1947: 137–8).
- 6 No sender (but Bordonaro) to the Minister of Esteri, no place (but Prague), 6 March 1922, in ASMAE, AP 1919–39, b. 10, fasc. V c, sf. 'Istituto cultura', 1922.
- 7 Giannini to Bordonaro, Rome, 18 September 1922, *ibid.*
- 8 Società di navigazione a vapore del Lloyd Triestino. Ispettorato generale commerciale di Praga to Bordonaro, Prague, 30 October 1922, *ibid.*
- 9 Rapporto del Segretario della Lega cecoslovacco-italiana a Praga pel 1921, *ibid.* fasc. V c.
- 10 DLL, n. 82, *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, 12 February 1919, n. 36.
- 11 Relazione per il consiglio dei ministri, in ACS, MPI, DGIS, b. 7, fasc. 'Relazioni intellettuali con l'estero', sf. 'Scambi intellettuali. Accordi con Paesi esteri per lo scambio di studenti'.
- 12 RDL, 5 December 1920, n. 1929, which abrogates DLL, 5 January 1919, n. 82, *ibid.*

- 13 *Annuario dell'Istituto Internuniversitario Italiana Comitato nazionale italiano per la cooperazione intellettuale per la Società delle Nazioni*, anno 1925, Garroni, Rome, 1926, in ASMAE, Archivio Scuole (hereinafter AS) 1923–8, b. 692, fasc. 'Istituto interuniversitario italiano'.
- 14 Chiurlo was then professor at the same university until 1930, vice-chairman and director of the Istituto di cultura italiana for which he published the review *Bollettino* and, with Jan B. Novák – director of the National Archives of Bohemia and of the Czechoslovak Historical Institute – the *Rivista Italiana di Praga*. He intended to gather a circle of Italianists and make the reciprocal influences between Italian and Czechoslovak cultures known. See the entry 'Chiurlo Bindo', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1981), vol. 25; *Chi è? Dizionario degli italiani d'oggi* (Rome: Formigginì, 1928); *Chi è? Dizionario degli italiani d'oggi* (Rome: Cenacolo, 1940); *Rivista di Letterature Slave* 2(4)(1927): 616–17.
- 15 Marcu was an important referent for the organization of Italian propaganda in Romania: a professor of Italian at the University of Bucharest, he was also director of the review *Roma* (later *Studii Italiene*) from 1935 to 1942 and, in 1942, Under-Secretary of State for Propaganda: see the document 'Romanian personalities. Italians working in Romania', in ACS, MCP Gabinetto, b. 320, fasc. Report 121.
- 16 'Nota editoriale', *Il Conàlio* 2(1)(1924): 1–2.
- 17 Commissione organizzatrice del Comitato italo-romeno, Rome, 1 September 1920, in ASMAE, MCP, b. 304, fasc. 'Comitato Italo-Romeno', 1920.
- 18 *Il Conàlio* 1(2)(1923): 159.
- 19 *Romana* 6(1942): 740.
- 20 Statuto dell'Istituto italo-romeno, in ASMAE, MCP, b. 299, fasc. 'Istituto italo-romeno', 1924.
- 21 Relazione dell'opera svolta dall'Istituto italo-romeno durante il mese di gennaio 1924 e programma dei lavori da svolgere durante i prossimi mesi, in ASMAE, AS 1923–8, b. 692, fasc. 'Istituto italo-romeno'.
- 22 'Atti dell'"Istituto per l'Europa Orientale". Prima assemblea generale dei soci (5 febbraio 1922)', *L'Europa Orientale* 2(1922): 248.
- 23 Cerruti to the Minister of Esteri, Budapest, 4 May 1920, in ASMAE, Archivio degli Affari commerciali (hereinafter AAC) 1919–23, b. 'Ungheria', fasc. 'Missioni scientifiche ed amministrative, scuole, studenti', sf. 'Società "Mattia Corvino" di Budapest'.
- 24 'Statuto della Società Mattia Corvino', *Covina* 1(1)(1921): 125.
- 25 Speech given by the Italian ambassador in Budapest, Don Ascanio dei Principi Colonna, honorary president of the Società 'Mattia Corvino', in the commemoration session for Albert Berzeviczy on 15 May 1936, *Covina* 16(1936): 1.
- 26 *Bollettino della Società 'Mattia Corvino'*. Discorso di S. E. Alberto Berzeviczy, *Covina* 1(1)(1921): 115.
- 27 Telegram from Castagneto to the Ministero degli esteri, Budapest, 20 November 1922, in ASMAE, AAC 1919–23, b. 'Ungheria', fasc. 'Missioni scientifiche ed amministrative, scuole, studenti', sf. 'Viaggio in Ungheria di deputati, commercianti e giornalisti italiani'; 'Rapporto sull'attività svolta dalla "Mattia Corvino" nel suo primo decennio di vita, presentato dal Segretario della Società nella seduta commemorativa del 2 maggio 1930', *Covina* 10(1)(1930): 273.
- 28 Underlined in the original text.

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- 29 Piacentini to the Ministero degli esteri, Sofia, 4 September 1926, in ASMAE, AS 1923–8, b. 692, fasc. ‘Opera Cardinal Ferrari’.
- 30 L’Opera Italiana Pro Oriente dal Novembre 1924 all’Ottobre 1925, *ibid.*, fasc. ‘Opera Italiana pro Oriente. Milano’.
- 31 Associazione Nazionale per soccorrere i missionari italiani – Presidenza Generale (copia), Turin, 23 January 1926, *ibid.*
- 32 Opera Italiana ‘Pro Oriente’. Relazione a S. E. Benito Mussolini, Capo del Governo, Amatrix, Milan, a. VI E. F. [1927–8], *ibid.*
- 33 Associazione nazionale per soccorrere i missionari italiani; note of Grandi on Trabalza’s memorandum for the Capo di Gabinetto of S.E. il ministro, Rome, 4 February 1926; Trabalza to the general presidency of the Associazione nazionale per soccorrere i missionari italiani, Rome, 20 March 1926; Trabalza’s memorandum for the Capo di Gabinetto, 18 September 1926, *ibid.*
- 34 Turati to Trabalza, 6 January 1928, in ASMAE, AS 1929–35, b. 1019, fasc. ‘Opera Italiana “Pro Oriente”’. Milano’.
- 35 Piacentini to the Ministero degli esteri, Sofia, 23 August 1928, *ibid.*; Piacentini to the Ministero degli esteri, Sofia, 1 September 1928, *ibid.*
- 36 Piacentini to the Ministero degli esteri, Sofia, 9 November 1928, *ibid.*
- 37 *Il Legionario* 2(44–45)(1925): 27.
- 38 *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d’Italia*, 30 December 1926, n. 300: 5668–9.
- 39 Ortiz to Trabalza, Bucharest, undated but December 1923; Trabalza to Ortiz, 10 January 1924, in ASMAE, AS 1923–8, b. 654, fasc. ‘Romania’; ‘L’Istituto di cultura italiana di Bucarest (discorso letto dal prof. Ramiro Ortiz il giorno della sua inaugurazione)’, *L’Europa Orientale* 5(12)(1925): 833.
- 40 Gentile to the Minister of Esteri, 15 July 1927, in ASMAE, AS 1929–35, b. 1020, fasc. ‘Istituto interuniversitario italiano’.
- 41 Mussolini to the R.R. Uffici all’Estero, 26 July 1928, *ibid.*
- 42 Fani to the R.R. Uffici all’Estero, 27 May 1930, *ibid.*
- 43 Report of the Istituto interuniversitario italiano, undated, but probably 1930, *ibid.*
- 44 Parini to the presidency of the Istituto interuniversitario italiano, 13 June 1929, *ibid.*
- 45 *Bulgaria* 1(1–2)(1939): 91–2. Among the volumes edited by the Associazione italo-bulgara were N. Dònčev, *L’Italia e le sue influenze nella letteratura bulgara* and E. Damiani, *La fortuna della lingua italiana in Bulgaria*.
- 46 Sapuppo to the R. Ministero degli Affari esteri and, for information, to the R. Ministero per la Stampa e la Propaganda, Sofia, 11 February 1936, in ACS, MCP, Direzione Generale per i Servizi della Propaganda (hereinafter DGSP), b. 38, fasc. ‘Istituto italiano di Cultura di Sofia’, 1936.
- 47 Marchini, Ufficio stampa in Bucharest, to Stefani and, for information, to the Ministero degli esteri, Bucharest, 14 March 1931, in ASMAE, Serie Affari Politici 1931–45, Romania 1931, b. 1, fasc. ‘Rapporti politici (I semestre)’.
- 48 Marchini to Stefani and, for information, to the Ministero degli esteri, Bucharest, 31 March 1931, *ibid.*
- 49 On the structures for propaganda and cultural penetration carried out by Germany in the 1930s, see Borejsza (1981: 172–88) and Zeman (1964: 54–75).
- 50 Costituzione dell’Ufficio per gli Istituti di cultura italiana all’estero e sua funzione, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 61, fasc. ‘Istituto italiano di cultura in Praga – Parte generale’, 1935–6.

- 51 *Il Libro Italiano nel Mondo* 1(2)(1940): 46–8.
- 52 Appunto di De Cicco per il comm. Fioretti, 14 April and 23 July 1937, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 24.
- 53 Parentheses in the original text.
- 54 Ciano to the Regie Ambasciate and the Regie Legazioni, 12 January 1937, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 24.
- 55 Ciano to Thaon di Revel, 27 January 1937, *ibid.*
- 56 Istituti italiani di cultura all'estero (Anni Accademici 1936–37 e 1937–38). Lezioni e conferenze concernenti l'ordinamento corporativo italiano, *ibid.*, b. 22.
- 57 The Società nazionale Dante Alighieri, founded in 1889, organized courses of Italian culture abroad with the intention of keeping the national feelings of Italian emigrants alive as well as binding foreign groups to Italy: see Pisa (1995) and Salvetti (1995). See the entry 'Manzone Bruno', *Chi è? Dizionario degli italiani d'oggi* (Rome: Formiggini, 1936).
- 58 On the concept of 'diplomazia parallela', see De Felice (1974: 346–7).
- 59 De Cicco to the R. Legazione d'Italia in Bucharest, 15 June 1939, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 40.
- 60 'Manifestazioni di cultura italiana in Bulgaria', *Bulgaria* 1(1–2)(1939): 97–101.
- 61 'La convenzione culturale tra l'Italia e la Bulgaria', *Bulgaria* 1(1–2)(1939): 96.
- 62 *Istituto scientifico-letterario 'Europa Giovane'. Programma, attività, adesioni 1937–38–39*, Rome, 1939, in ACS, MCP Gab., b. 74.
- 63 Ciano to the Ministeri dell'Educazione nazionale, della Cultura popolare, delle Corporazioni e delle Finanze, 23 December 1937, in ACS, MCP Gab., b. 321, fasc. 1, sf. 1. I (1938–40).
- 64 RDL, 27 January 1938, n. 48. Costituzione dell'Istituto nazionale per le Relazioni culturali con l'estero, *Gazzetta Ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, 22 February 1938, n. 43.
- 65 Pavolini to Ciano, undated but probably December 1939, in ACS, MCP Gab., b. 321, fasc. 1.
- 66 Koch to Pavolini, 31 October 1940, *ibid.*
- 67 Pavolini to Ciano, 14 July 1938, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 22, fasc. 'Viaggi e conferenze all'estero. Concerti', 1937–40.
- 68 Ciano to Pavolini, 16 August 1938, *ibid.*
- 69 Ciano to the RR. Legazioni d'Italia, 15 June 1939, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Scuole. Istituto di cultura italiano. Attività varie', 1938–40.
- 70 Ciano to the Regie Rappresentanze Diplomatiche e Consolari, 13 December 1939, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Scuole. Norme regolamentari sulle attività dei docenti italiani', 1939–40.
- 71 Casertano, direttorio nazionale del Partito nazionale fascista, to De Cicco, 19 May 1939, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Scuole. Istituto di cultura italiano. Attività varie', 1938–40.
- 72 Suvich to the Regie Rappresentanze diplomatiche and the Regi Consolati Generali, 13 March 1936, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Viaggi e conferenze all'estero. Concerti', 1937–40.
- 73 De Feo to Koch, 18 April 1941, in ACS, MCP, DGSP, b. 150 bis, 'Iugoslavia. Parte generale', fasc. 'Programmi di propaganda in Croazia e a Lubiana'.
- 74 *Romana* 4(1940): 317–18, 581–5.
- 75 Parini to the R. Legazione d'Italia in Prague, 14 August 1935; Parini to the R. Legazione d'Italia in Prague, 24 August 1934, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 61, fasc. 'Istituto italiano di cultura in Praga – Gestione finanziaria', 1935–6, sf. 'Istituto di

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- 76 De Cicco to Lo Gatto, 22 October 1938, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 60, fasc. 'Istituto di cultura italiana Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale: Praga. Personale addetto', sf. 'Istituto di cultura italiana in Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale – Praga. Personale'; De Cicco to Lo Gatto, 18 December 1941, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Istituto di cultura italiana Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale: Praga. Conferenze'.
- 77 L'Istituto italiano di cultura nel protettorato di Boemia e Moravia. Dalla relazione finale 1938/ 39, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 61, fasc. 'Istituto italiano di cultura in Praga – Personale direttivo', 1935.
- 78 'Lo slavista Prof. Ettore Lo Gatto direttore dell'Istituto di cultura italiana a Praga', *Národní Listy*, Praga, 19 November 1938, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Istituto di cultura italiana Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale: Praga. Personale addetto', 1941.
- 79 Stloukal to Lo Gatto, undated but end of 1938, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 60, fasc. 'Istituto di cultura italiana Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale: Praga. Parte generale', 1941.
- 80 Caruso to the Ministero degli esteri and, for information, to the R. Ambasciata d'Italia in Berlin, Prague, 7 March 1940, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Istituto di cultura italiana Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale: Praga. Personale addetto', 1941.
- 81 Caruso to the Ministero degli esteri and, for information, to the R. Ambasciata d'Italia in Berlin, Prague, 14 November 1940, *ibid.*, fasc. 'Istituto di cultura italiana Boemia e Moravia. Sede centrale: Praga. Parte Generale', 1941.
- 82 Il Reichsprotector in Boemia e Moravia, Rappresentante dell'Auswärtiges Amt, to the R. Consolato Generale d'Italia a Praga, Prague, 19 June 1941, *ibid.*
- 83 The Ministero degli esteri to the RR. Ambasciate and Legazioni, 14 February 1942; Mussolini to all the ministries, 15 May 1943, in ACS, MCP Gab., b. 139, fasc. 'Rapporti con stati, enti e personalità straniere'.
- 84 ACS, MCP Gab., b. 59, fasc. 371, 'Associazione Nazionale "Amici dell'Ungheria"', sf. 1385 I, 'Assoc. Nazionale "Amici dell'Ungheria"'.
- 85 *Trattati e convenzioni. Accordo culturale fra il Regno d'Italia e il Regno di Romania (Bucarest, 8 aprile 1943)*, Rome, 1943, in ASMAE, AS 1925–45, b. 40, fasc. 'Accordo culturale italo-romeno', sf. 'Accordo culturale italo-romeno'.
- 86 *Ibid.*, fasc. 'Centro Italo Romeno di Studi Corporativi presso l'Istituto di cultura italiana in Romania'.

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