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**SAILING THE ATLANTIC TO STUDY ECONOMICS
ROCKEFELLER PHILANTHROPY AND PIONEERING OF
SPECIALIZATION IN THE USA**

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Sailing the Atlantic to study Economics
Rockefeller philanthropy and pioneering of specialization in the USA*

1. Introductory remarks.

This paper is part of the wider interest that contemporary historiography devotes to the role North American economic literature played for Italian researchers in the first half of the twentieth century¹, and presents the initial results of ongoing research aimed at answering the following three main questions:

1. why were some young Italian economists financed by the *Rockefeller* organizations, from the 1920s until the beginning of the Thirties, to specifically study in the United States?;
2. which curriculum features might reasonably explain the selection of these young economists?;
3. what kind of expectations about the various aspects of their academic experience abroad did they sail the Atlantic with, and what kind of store of knowledge to share with the Italian scientific community did they come back with? One might even wonder whether their activity, after their stay in the United States, led the *Rockefeller* organizations to consider the aims these economists had been granted for had been reached.

The main goal set by the *Rockefeller* organizations was to favour conditions for the pro-research cultural evolution of the academical activities.

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¹ See: G. Gemelli, ed., *The "Unacceptables"*, 2000; P.F. Asso and L. Fiorito, *Dalla Periferia al Nuovo Mondo*, 2001; G. Gemelli and R. McLeod, *American Foundations in Europe*, 2003; G. Pavanelli, *Aspetti della teoria neoclassica in Italia*, 2003; G. Gemelli, *American Foundations*, 2004a; G. Gemelli, *Un imprenditore scientifico*, 2004b; D. Parisi, *An economist and his book and notes*, in "Storia del pensiero economico", 2004 [forthcoming].

Such a study-abroad experience in the United States prompted interaction between elements of economic thought preexisting in the Italian scientific panorama, and those learnt in the new contexts the young economists came to live in. That they could learn and retain these novelties was favoured by their previously matured receptiveness; their positive and receptive attitude towards these differences was thus creating favorable conditions both for scientific notions acquired in their Italian universities of origin to mature, and for novelties in contents and methods to be inserted into their native milieus. This is a very interesting aspect of the issue of cultural 'endogenization' scientific debate is nowadays so interested in².

This research aims at collecting elements to investigate whether this endogenization did really occur thanks to the opportunities offered by the *Rockefeller* organizations. In case of positive response, then, further issues may emerge: one may indeed highlight how this phenomenon took place, the changes it prompted in the Italian scientific context (university courses contents, curricula, a new - international - perspective according to which academic didactics and research were redesigned) and their actual pace.

Current research results show that at least two of the three economists that benefited from Rockefeller organizations' grants, and came back to Italy as university professors, were pioneers in the fullest sense of the term. This is why the word *pioneering* appears in the title of this paper.

Their students had then the possibility to fully reap the innovative aspect of their professors' experience. These students understood, above all, that if they conformed to the new 'norm' of studying abroad, and not only in Europe, this would enrich their ability in analysing the system³. They imitated, therefore, their professors in being flexible and reactive towards these new circumstances, put them to good use in their theoretical systems and transformed them into cultural data to be transferred through didactics.

A further and equally interesting aspect of this particular tessera in the history of twentieth century economic thought is the fact that it reflects what science had begun to investigate in the years when these pioneers prepared to go overseas to study social sciences⁴.

² Current bibliography is rich on this issue; a sample thereof is provided by literature backboning J. Henrich's initial essay and comments thereon, in B. Rosser, *Special Issue: Evolution and altruism*, 2004. In particular, the essays by H. Gintis (pp. 57-67) and by E.L. Khalil (pp. 89-92). On endogenization as *inclusion* or *digestion*, see R. Bague, *Eccentric Culture*, 2002.

³ See *infra*, note 35, on this issue. De Simone's inability in fulfilling his function was mainly due to his pre-WWII biographical status, as suggested below, paragraph 3.

⁴ The key-reference sources are here Ronald Aylmer Fisher's theorization of statistical methodology and his *Genetic theory of natural selection* (The Clarendon Press, Oxford 1930), in particular.

2. The Rockefeller Programs and the Social Sciences in the Twenties.

The 1920s acted as a real 'lab period' for economics: there emerged new mature criticism to orthodoxy, new issues, new tools for the analysis of the economic phenomenon, newly defined and theorized notions; even the perspective of a theoretical counter-formulation.

In that decade, novelty in theoretics was also accompanied by institutional novelty pervading studies and research in economics. As far as the Italian reality is concerned, for instance, beside royal universities, two 'free' universities, the Bocconi and the Catholic University⁵, emerged which, although significantly different in origin, aims and education policies, were programmatically devoted to the preparation of scientific and professional competences in the economic field.

The events I am considering here focus on the *Rockefeller* organizations and their philanthropy towards scholars in Economics. One of these institutional events transcended the Italian reality, despite engaging it directly, although timidly, in the first part of the twentieth century, and with greater incisiveness from the second postwar period onwards.

Many philanthropic institutions entitled to the Rockefeller family operated in North America and in Europe; in 1929 they were consolidated into a single *Rockefeller Foundation*. In 1924 the *Rockefeller* organizations with their headquarters in New York⁶ had inaugurated a scholarship program preferentially reserved for young social sciences researchers depending from private institutions⁷.

In launching this program the American corporations held by the Rockefellers, which were traditionally involved in *charity* projects developing in manifold directions and addressing different scientific disciplines, expressly chose to accompany well-established grant programs for university institutions and research centres with new grant programs for specialization dedicated to young individual researchers, «well-trained social scientists», destined to become «a future generation of teachers»⁸.

This decision signalled the wish to undertake programs that might emancipate young researchers from old-generation scholars, and that might stir the «speculative inertia» that was thought to connote North American and European social sciences⁹.

⁵ On these universities, see: M. Cattini, *Storia di una libera università*, 1997; Corso di aggiornamento culturale dell'Università cattolica, *L'Università Cattolica*, 1998; E. Resti, *L'Università Bocconi*, 2000; M. Bocci, *Agostino Gemelli*, 2003.

⁶ On the connection between financing entities and research centres, see J. Herbst's website.

⁷ The precise term in corresponding documentation is «independent institutions» (E. Craver, *Patronage*, 1986).

⁸ This emerges from the original project; discussion thereof began in 1922 (Ibidem, p. 209).

⁹ Ibidem, p.208.

It was determined to assign 40 scholarships per year; of all 494 scholarships between 1924 and 1934, 35% was awarded to «fellows in economics and statistics»¹⁰, and half thereof cautiously assigned to European graduates selected by «national advisers», eminent professors of prestigious European universities. These promising economists were granted the chance to continue their formative path specializing in the United States and - from 1925 onwards - in other countries too.

The plan was to finance economists' formative completion in prestigious universities with the declared aim of allowing them to enter a solid academic career in their universities of origin.

In 1929 the project received new boost under the direction of Edmund E. Day who, being specifically devoted to activity in the social sciences sector, significantly developed the role played by the Paris *social sciences division* presided over by John Van Sickle¹¹. Three crucial research issues would absorb funds in the following two years: «industrial hazards», «economic stabilization» and «the causes of cyclical fluctuations»¹².

Projects for scholarships abroad were evaluated according to a 'policy effectiveness/theoretical research' ratio, considering that society would benefit from academic social research as «... through the social sciences might come more intelligent measures of social control that would reduce some irrationalities as are represented by poverty, class conflict, and war between nations»¹³.

Undoubtedly, the relevance research projects attributed to the «advocacy of social policy» and to the tension towards «the professional norm of objectivity» reflected the general orientation of many North American economists and of top-management economic culture which «developed a taste for an economics that was 'useful'»¹⁴.

3. New specialization paths in Economics

These decisions by the *Rockefeller* organizations prompted not very noticeable, but definitely pioneering, changes in the itineraries of study-abroad specializations for Italian graduates in economic disciplines, which traditionally took place in German-speaking universities under the lead of economists and finance scientists, and were now to comprise new destinations.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 214.

¹¹ In 1934 his position was assigned to Tracy B. Kittredge.

¹² Ibidem, pp. 210-211. In particular, for some decades economists had already been focusing on the business cycles phenomenon as being «generated by economic organization itself» and on the need of devising proper tools to measure them (M.A. Bernstein, *A Perilous Progress*, 2004, chapter two); it was in the mid-1930s that the Rockefeller Foundation's business cycles program started (G. Gemelli, *American Foundations*, 2004a, cit., p. 57 ff.).

¹³ D.M. Grossman, *American Foundations*, 1982.

¹⁴ M.A. Bernstein, *A Perilous Progress*, 2004, chapter two.

Which differences from the European scientific panorama would students find in the United States? An influential author on this issue wrote that:

After World War I, American economists undoubtedly enjoyed clear advantages over their European counterparts. The higher education sector was much larger, grew more rapidly and was far more affluent in the United States than in Europe. New institutions, schools and departments were being formed, and academic curricula were proliferating in directions favourable to the social sciences in general, and to economic and business studies in particular. [...] Despite the size of the country, intellectual communications were good - internationally as well as domestically - and there were numerous and expanding scientific and scholarly publications outlets, and a sustained public interest in economic affairs. Moreover the numbers were sufficient to provide the critical mass necessary to support new research projects, the formation of academic societies, the launching of new journals and the maintenance of contacts with other scholars in the various disciplines which were proliferating as a result of the growing specialization and division of scholarly labour.¹⁵

These were years of intense development for economic studies. Data show an increase in both publications and dissertations on economic subjects, a wider distribution of economists in different fields of specific competence, and growing interest in issues of «business economics and the special problems of organization and control arising from the current political-economic situation»¹⁶.

In 1925, «the rank order in economics was: Harvard, Chicago, Columbia, Wisconsin, Yale, Hopkins, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Cornell»¹⁷; in these universities «some of the leading pre-war personalities (e.g. J.B. Clark, J.R. Commons, R.T. Ely, F.W. Fetter, I. Fisher, F.W. Taussig, E.R.A. Seligman)»¹⁸ were still active and influential, but there were also younger economists and the youngest generation. In 1922 Rexford Guy Tugwell (1891-1979), Assistant professor of Economics at Columbia University, called for contributions «about the subject that seemed to him of supreme importance» for a volume on «what the trend of economic science is».

¹⁵ A.W. Coats, *On the History of Economic Thought*, 1992, vol. I, ch. 21 (*Economics in the United States, 1920-70*), p. 417.

¹⁶ *Id.*, p. 445.

¹⁷ *Id.*, pp. 413-415. Among Seligman's works, *Studi sulle finanze pubbliche* was published in Italy, translated by G. Borgatta e E. D'Albergo, in the "Nuova Collana di economisti italiani e stranieri" in 1932. To this list of authors, I wish to add Thomas Nixon Carter, Professor of Economics at Oberlin College and at Harvard University, and Henry Ludwell Moore, authors of *Theory of Wages* and *Laws of Wages*, respectively, translated into Italian in "Nuova Collana di economisti italiani e stranieri", in 1936.

¹⁸ *Id.*, p. 419.

Many personalities responded: the most important American economist of the time, Wesley Clair Mitchell (1874-1948)¹⁹ and other professors at Columbia: Frederich Celic Mills (1892-1964), Associate Professor of Business Statistics, Robert Lee Hale (1884-1969), Professor of Legal Economics, and William Ernest Weld (b. 1881), Professor of Principles of Economics, Introduction to Contemporary Civilization, Comparative Economic Organizations; some economists at Chicago, such as John Maurice Clark (1884-1963), Professor of Political Economy²⁰, Frank Hyneman Knight (1885-1972), Professor of Industrial Relations, and Paul Howard Douglas (b.1892), Professor of Industrial Relations; moreover, Morris Albert Copeland, (b. 1895) and Sumner Hubert Slichter (1892-1959) of Cornell University; Raymond Taylor Bye (b. 1892) of the University of Pennsylvania, George Soule (1887-1970), Director of the Labor Bureau, and Albert Benedict Wolfe (b. 1876) of Ohio State University also contributed to the volume.

In general terms, these authors considered economics as a theoretical discipline that deals with the genuine issues of a society which is undergoing deep and rapid transformations. Economics was conceived as a science of «mass behavior and of institutional factors», of «the widely prevalent, highly standardized social habits»²¹; this even led to state that the laws of economics are strictly related to institutional situations²². The main novelty in system structure consisted in cumulative changes accompanying the presence of huge organizations of production, and in the emergence of new types of inefficiency, mainly due to the presence of bureaucratic control in organizations' top management.

The system began to show signs of deep differentiation in comparison to the still predominant model, and such a difference emerged, above all, in the tangled net of issues concerning welfare, now intended as «not merely an abundant supply of serviceable goods, but also a satisfactory working life filled with interesting activities»²³.

The notion was spreading that the growing interest in economics may develop on a scientific level only by improving a realistic analysis of this set of present day economic facts, only by collecting statistical compilations and elaborating quantitative methods on a data basis. The new tools,

¹⁹ The introductory chapter in Mitchell's *Business Cycles* was translated into Italian by Paolo Baffi, with the title *Fenomeni e fattori dei cicli economici*, and collected in "Nuova Collana di economisti italiani e stranieri" in 1932.

²⁰ His *Economics of Overhead Costs* was translated and abridged by G. Demaria and A. Piana and collected in "Nuova Collana di economisti italiani e stranieri" in 1932.

²¹ These expressions are taken from Frederick Cecil Mills's (*On Measurement in Economics*) and Wesley Charles Mitchell's (*The Prospects of Economics*) essays in: R.G. Tugwell, ed., *The Trend of Economics*, 1924.

²² F.H. Knight, *The Limitations*, 1924, p. 259.

[...] represent a fundamental change in the whole matter of looking at the problem of causal relationship, and an attitude toward natural and social laws which is so far removed from the traditional view as to constitute almost a revolution in thought²⁴.

Transition had been prompted by the theories of Karl Pearson, Clerk Maxwell, Josiah Royce, of Henry L. Moore, who «has not only clearly described the essential characteristics of statistical laws but has demonstrated the fruitfulness of the concept when applied to economic problems»²⁵. It also had to do with what pragmatists were stating in those years; although approaching the issue from a different perspective, they considered

[...] generalizations as "not fixed rules... but instrumentalities for... investigation, methods by which the net value of past experience is rendered available for present scrutiny of new perplexities.... They are hypotheses to be tested and revised by their further working...[because] nature is not an unchangeable order... it is an indefinite congeries of changes,... are convenient formulations of selected portions of change followed through a shorter or longer period of time, and then registered in statistical forms that are amenable to mathematical manipulation."²⁶

Data collection and elaboration could obviously bring about a generalization which may in turn provide science with a, by then, unexpected full range of results. But, in any case, one had to consider both the fact that «man's relations with his fellow men are on a totally different footing from his relations with the objects of physical nature»²⁷, and the continuous relevance of the notion of «creative conjecture» in social sciences which Thornstein Veblen's *The Engineers and the Price System* (Huebsch, 1921) had focused on²⁸.

In the first decades of the twentieth century economic science was exactly at the point where scholars required that «theory derives its concepts from the observational technique, and in turn theory influences the observational technique»²⁹. It seemed unacceptable that «the work on the theoretical front in economics» and «the work on the outer descriptive front» were not led to

²³ W.C. Mitchell, *The Prospects*, 1924, p. 31.

²⁴ F.C. Mills, *On Measurement*, 1924, pp. 44-45.

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 45.

²⁶ Here Mills is quoting John Dewey.

²⁷ F.H. Knight, *cit.*, p. 267. This remark led Knight to abandon the notion of pursuing «a naïve project of carrying over a technique which has been successful in the one set of problems and using it to solve another set of a categorically different kind».

²⁸ J.M. Clark, *The Socializing*, 1924. It all centered on avoiding the risk of turning to the fruitless formal practice that Frisch would call *playometrics* (R. Frisch, *From the Utopian Theory*, 1981).

²⁹ This is what Ragnar Frisch wrote sixty years later, recalling his own scientific experience (see, *infra*, note 28).

converge, and that they were not practiced in mutual support in order to bring forth a data-founded theory and a set of collected and processed observations to be used in theoretical investigation.

Indeed, the aim was to figure out how to quantify the economic concepts grounding theory, both when it deals with individual events and aggregates of events, «which may be described in terms of averages, of typical characteristics»; how to investigate the system in terms of «association and correlation» of factors interacting within it, and of «probability and approximation» of results, abandoning the notions of causation - in Dewey's sense of a direct and perfect relationship between phenomena - and of certainty³⁰.

In this way, results could reveal to be significant in leading the economy toward selected objectives, identifying economic policies that may account for the interaction of the different forces within the system.

Thus, economists were very interested in the general picture of human welfare, and they were turning to induction, privileging the use of statistic tools aimed at explaining the complexity of economic life³¹.

One can realistically imagine, therefore, that Paris *Rockefeller Foundation* headquarters were about to select candidates that might study these new traits of the system along the above mentioned methodological guidelines.

Italian social scientists, stemming primarily from juridical faculties, were aware of the importance of institutional factors in the economic phenomenon. Nonetheless, their preparation lacked familiarity with quantitative studies and interest in the verification of theoretical results through statistic observation.

Statistics, which had been subject to lively attention in Italian universities since the beginning of the nineteenth century, lacked tools, and economists' studies formulation provided for the empirical verification of propositions in few cases only. One was well aware that this was a path to pursue: in Italian-language economic tradition, data had never been excluded from the analysis of the system, and perhaps also for this reason, American pragmatic and statistical views were clearly highlighting such gaps, making them no longer tolerable.

The opportunity to study in the United States was positively grasped, as the American reality evidently presented characteristics similar to those observed in some European regions; besides, over there, science seemed to be faster in producing and spreading stimuli for the investigation of 'the new'.

It was not, however, enough to state that facts speak clearly: to avoid being naïve, one had to question facts appropriately, founding issues on a solid theoretical formulation of the system, and

³⁰ F.C. Mills, *On Measurement*, 1924, p. 45.

using tools that might precisely give voice to theories through the elaboration of data from actual observation.

Interest in American economic thought was aroused by its «wish for deeper realism» and its intention to «find a point of equilibrium between formal rigor and pragmatism» -- which in economic analysis leads to never overlooking the role of institutions and to always referring back to empirical data --; by its research on market structure and economic fluctuations, and the importance attributed to phenomena measurement tools; by wealth and heterogeneity of phenomena, which turn it into a scientific 'laboratory', and also by both its «pluralism of approaches» and «individual eclecticism» which did not resolve in frontal clashes³².

In North American universities, Chicago and Columbia in particular, all these characteristics were present together with close reference to institutions and values; they were all pursued in research and 'spread' through classes and seminars, in a net of academic activities developed through «comprehensive programs for research based on the new experimentalism», following the perspective according to which «Education joined to research is ideal education»³³.

Sources and historiography signal that, in the decade between the Twenties and the Thirties, three young Italian economists were selected for this new pioneer experience³⁴. They were Luigi de Simone, Giovanni Demaria and Francesco Vito³⁵. Only three economists were judged to be promising: a limited number, indeed, which was

due to the lack of suitable positions for the fellows on their return (...) only occasionally will it be possible to find a qualified candidate with university prospects. Opportunities for

³¹ W.E. Weld, *Regional Comparison*, 1924.

³² P.F. Asso e L. Fiorito, *Dalla periferia*, 2001; D. Cavalieri and R. Faucci, *Italian Style*, 1994.

³³ R.G. Tugwell, *Experimental Economics*, 1924.

³⁴ Visiting or staying at American universities for study purposes had not been common until then. A plan existed for Maffeo Pantaleoni only (University of Naples) to stay at Chicago University as visiting professor in 1896, but it never became reality (W.J. Barber, *Breaking the Academic Mould*, 1988, chap. 10). In this sense, Vito and Demaria were rightly described as outstanding protagonists in the Italian panorama as far as the international scope of their studies was concerned. (P.L. Porta, *La cultura economica*, 1994). For the following span of time, see: G. Gemelli, *Isole senza arcipelago*, 1993).

³⁵ The Rockefeller Foundation, *Directory*, 1972.

Celebrations in honour of Giovanni Demaria, together with editorial initiatives involving Francesco Vito and the former, notably enrich our biographical knowledge. See: T. Bagiotti and G. Franco, *Pioneering economics*, 1978; G. Demaria, G. Pavanelli e P.L. Porta, *La formazione intellettuale*, 1995; A. Quadrio Curzio, *Forum*, 1990; Università commerciale Luigi Bocconi. Istituto di economia politica, *Giovanni Demaria*, 1999; A. Caloia, *L'economia politica*, 1998; D. Parisi and C. Rotondi, eds., *Francesco Vito*, 2003. Brief biographical notes on de Simone are in the *Annuari* of the Istituto Navale of Naples (AUP) in the editions spanning from 1948 to 1965-1966, and in the folder "Luigi de Simone" filed in the Archives of the same university.

supporting research institutes capable of independent and objective research have been even more difficult to discover³⁶.

In those years the *Rockefeller Foundation* granted other Italian economists, too, with aims that differed, however, from improving scholarly research and financing promising economists in order to allow them to enter a solid academic career. Preserved documentation acknowledges the two well-known cases of Luigi Einaudi and Ezio Vanoni.

Einaudi was assigned a grant-in-aid because of his «very uncertain» position, in the climate of the dictatorship that «is slowly but surely crushing out the last vestige of personal liberty»³⁷.

In 1933 Vanoni sent Paris headquarters a request for a grant «to permit him to encourage research and publication in the field of Economic Planning and Control and International Relations, by payment of honoraria to contributors to *La Riforma Sociale*»³⁸; he was assigned a grant on May 9, 1933, and two supplementary ones, on September 18, 1934 and on December 17, 1934³⁹. He had been a *Social Sciences Fellow* of the Foundation in 1928-1930 and had spent these years in Germany studying «the bearing of economic principles on the interpretation of tax system and tax laws»⁴⁰. The grant he received in June 1933 was «to complete his research».

Another *Rockefeller Foundation* fund granted Mario De Bernardi (b.1906) a fruitful experience, too: he had graduated in Turin in 1928, and his stays in England and France to study Political Science were financed in 1931-1932. He is deservingly mentioned in this paper as those studies allowed him to refine his competence in the History of Economic Thought⁴¹, and to publish *De l'utilité et de sa mesure* by Jules Dupuit, together with his translation of *New Frontiers* by Henry A. Wallace and the Harvard Economic Group volume on the *New Deal* edited by Joseph A. Schumpeter and Edwin H. Chamberlin⁴².

³⁶ As Einaudi himself writes (Folder 91-92, box 8, series 1.1, projects 751 Italy, 751 S – Einaudi, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC).

³⁷ JVS (John van Sickle) to Day (Edmund E. Day), April 11, 1933, in Idem.

In the same Box we found materials related to Mario Einaudi fellowship in *Political Science* (1933-1935).

³⁸ Folder 91-95, box 8, series 751 Italy, RG projects 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

³⁹ The journal was suppressed in May 1935, but the terminating date of the last grant was extended to November 30, 1936.

⁴⁰ RAC, Idem.

⁴¹ M. De Bernardi, *Il concetto di ragion di stato, 1929*; Id., *Appunti bibliografici, 1930*; Id., *Giovanni Botero economista*, Istituto Giuridico dell'Università, Torino 1931; Id., *Monetaristi e mercantilisti, 1934*; Id., *Botero, Giovanni*, in "Encyclopaedia of the Social Science" by Seligman and Johnson, vol. I, Macmillan, New York 1949 (D. Parisi, *Alcune riflessioni su Giovanni Botero teorico della popolazione*, 1987).

⁴² J. Dupuit, *De l'utilité et de sa mesure-écrits choisis et republiés par M. De Bernardi*, in "Collezione di scritti inediti o rari di economisti", II, *La Riforma Sociale*, Turin 1933; H.A. Wallace, *New Frontiers*, 1934; J.A. Schumpeter and E.H. Chamberlin, *Il piano Roosevelt*, Einaudi, Turin 1935.

From the Rockefeller Foundation Archives (Mario Einaudi to John Van Sickle, Cambridge, Ma., October 7, 1934) emerges that Wallace's *America must choose* had been published: «The translation of Wallace's America must choose, had a very unexpected retentissement in Italy. Mussolini himself wrote a three

His personal experience is registered in the *Rockefeller Foundation Archives* which also report that

[he] has encountered serious political difficulties in attempting to enter the academic career. He has so far been refused the membership card in the Fascist Party required of all Candidates for University positions. This seems to be due to an open letter he signed in 1929 with many other Turin students, addressed to Benedetto Croce, approving the latter's stand on the problem of the relations between Church and State in Italy [...]⁴³

Material preserved at the *Rockefeller Archive Center* proves that during 1934 various documents were collected to gather impressions from Italy, on its political situation and its academic panorama.

Mario De Bernardi was awarded a grant; on the contrary, Marcello Boldrini, Professor of Statistics in Milan, both at the Bocconi and at the Catholic University⁴⁴, was not granted the same treatment, and reports inform that Boldrini:

[...] has an Institute in the latter place [Cattolica], with adequate mechanical equipment, statistical library, etc....., three paid assistants.

His research for the moment is chiefly in demographical questions....said to be one of the two or three leading statistician in Italy (Einaudi, Mortara, Del Vecchio). He has studied in England with Pearson and Bowley and speaks fluent English Professor Schulz in Chicago recently spent some time with him in Milan», and he «would be glad to have the opportunity of going for a six months period in 1935, to acquaint himself with statistical materials, methods and problems in the USA. He is personally well known in the USA.

Kittredge, on his part, recommended a *Special Fellowship* appointment for him, but in the *Rockefeller Archives* we could not find any formal application submitted by him in order to obtain a grant. In the same year, three other documents on Italy were filed which reveal to be historically relevant.

The first document is part of a letter dated April 27, 1934 «which Professor Henry Schultz had occasion to send to a friend» during his stay in Italy. In these two dense pages entitled

column, front-page editorial ... in which, ... he said how glad he was to see that fascism was spreading to the United States...». The editorial by Benito Mussolini is in: Folder 91-95, box 8, series 751 Italy, RG projects 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

⁴³ TBK (Tracy B. Kittredge), Interview with M. de B. (Mario de Bernardi), Turin, November 29, 1934 (Folder 846, box GC, series 751 Italy, RG 2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC).

⁴⁴ The day after he interviewed De Bernardi, Kittredge met Marcello Boldrini in Milan. See: TBK Interview with Marcello Boldrini, Sp. Fell. Candidate, Milan, November 30, 1934 (Folder 846, series GC 751 S Italy, RG 2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC).

Impressions of Italy Schultz registers observations that he defines «disjointed and disconnected remarks» and that we find nowadays particularly close to the Italian situation at that time:

You ask me for "impressions as to the general state of the transatlantic world". This is a big order. Let me, however, tell you something of my impressions of Italy while they are fresh in my mind.

On the surface, everything is quite normal in Italy. The trains turn on time, there is little or no begging in the streets, the sanitary conditions are quite good, and there are none of the discomforts and irritations which, so I am told, used to make Italians travel so disagreeable to Western tourists. True, the times are bad; but they are also bad in our countries. When, however, you have lived for some time in that country and gained the confidence of representative people, you begin to realize that beneath that surface of orderliness and contentment there are oppressions and tyranny and the rumblings of revolt.

I visited the universities of Genoa, Rome, Naples, Florence, Bologna, Padua, Venice, Milan and Turin, and I could find but three unmuzzled men. They are the philosopher, Prof. Benedetto Croce, of Naples, the economist, Luigi Einaudi, and the economist Attilio Cabiati of Turin; and these three men are wondering how long they will be permitted to enjoy their freedom. All other academic men have found it advantageous to join the party, and carry the party button in their lapels.[.....]

The censorship of the Press is, of course, nothing new in Fascist Italy. Newspaper editors are told each day what to print, and how much space to devote to the various topics. This often leads to humorous situations.[.....]

The Terror works in various ways. Men are still mysteriously disappearing from the streets; arrests are made for no known reason; the mail of suspected persons is opened and photographic copies of the contents sent to Rome: the telephones of the same persons are being tapped. Cabiati, [...], wished to go to London to attend the International Statistical Congress, but the Government would not to give him a passport... Some time ago, a son of Senator Einaudi ...[...] A son of Prof. Giuseppe Levi, the great comparative anatomist, of Turin, was discovered handing out leaflets asking the citizens not to vote [...]

Prof. Croce (...) was one of the few men who raised his voice against the signing of the Concordat, and he made a speech in the senate against it [...]

On the economic plane an interesting struggle is going on between the rich and powerful industrialists who financed the party in its formative period, and the present head of the Government, whose origin and sympathies rebel against the attempts of these gentlemen to reduce labour to a state of peonage. It appears that he is trying to please both capital and labor. As an illustration of his policy, I might cite the fact that new industries are not permitted to establish themselves in Italy without the approval of a committee, the members of which

generally drawn from the very industries which would be affected by the competition. Thus the Ford Motor Company of Great Britain was not permitted to open a plant in Italy.

On the other hand, the workers are also assisted in various ways. Attempts are being made to organise their leisure time. Free trips (or nearly free trips) are being given to Rome and other places of interest. An extensive program of public work is being prosecuted with vigor. Yet the mass of the workers are very far from satisfied with their present condition[...]

I do not wish to convey the impression that the Italian brand of Fascism is as brutal, as senseless and as dangerous to civilization as is the Germany variety. The difference between the two movements has been well stated by a young Fascist: "Perhaps we are doing the same thing as the Germans are doing, but we do them with Latin grace"⁴⁵.

The second item filed in the same year is a set of informative materials exchanged between Filippo Ravizza, head of the *International Thrift Institute*, with its main office in Milan, via Monte di Pietà 11, and Norma S. Thomson, Secretary of the *Rockefeller Foundation*⁴⁶.

The third document is the *Memorandum on Forms of Intervention of the Italian State in Economic Life* written by Antonello Gerbi, undoubtedly after October, 6 1934. It is a 13-page folder on *Control of industrial enterprises in behalf of the State (I.R.I.)* where Gerbi makes a distinction between the chief forms of control: the forms of direct State intervention and the forms of control by indirect action. The conclusions are in the direction of recalling

[...] that Mussolini, in his speech at Milan on October 6, 1934, has rejected energetically the policy which would consist in bringing under the direction of the State the whole economy of the nation. He declared that this was a solution that he rejected and indicated he had no intention of multiplying the already too great number of State activities [...]⁴⁷

My research project focuses, however, on the first three scholars mentioned above - de Simone, Demaria and Vito - who were judged to be promising academic economists: they sailed the Ocean because in North America their studies were considered to be significant for their future involvement in the Italian academic milieu as researchers and professors; their scientific formation, based on a definition of social sciences as useful sciences, as theoretical knowledge which may bear fruits in the mediation of economic policies, was furthermore held in high esteem.

⁴⁵ H. Schultz, *Impressions of Italy*, April 27, 1934 (Folder 846, series GC 751 Italy, RG 2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC).

⁴⁶ F. Ravizza to Rockefeller Foundation, Milan 6 July 1934; N.S. Thompson to F. Ravizza, July 19, 1934 (folder 846, sub-series 751 Italy, series GC, RG 2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC).

On this *International Thrift Institute*, see, *infra*, pp. 19-20.

The initial part of this research project is devoted to Luigi de Simone.

4. From the University of Naples to the Istituto Navale, through the United States and the International Labor Office in Geneva: Luigi de Simone's itinerary.

Luigi de Simone⁴⁸, 1921 graduate in Law in Naples, vigorously began his activity as researcher publishing a monograph on bank crediting⁴⁹, three brief essays -- one on the State as shareholder, the second on the Banco di Napoli, and the third on salary and fiscal system⁵⁰--, and a ponderous volume of *Lezioni di economia e legislazione sociale*⁵¹, all in five years.

In that period he taught *Marine and Port Labor Law* in Naples and in Perugia, and was appointed as editor of the Milanese review "Economia finanziaria".

He was granted a scholarship by the *Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial* on May 26, 1927⁵². He stayed in the United States from September 13, 1927 to December 12, 1929⁵³. He arrived there just in time for registering for the Winter Session, which at *Columbia* was due to begin

⁴⁷ A. Gerbi, *Memorandum*, Milan 1934 (Folder 846, series GC 751 S Italy, RG 2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC)

⁴⁸ De Simone's biographical data are mostly taken from: The Rockefeller Foundation, *Directory*, 1972; and from "Organisation and Rendement", publication mensuelle de la Commission Romande de rationalisation, n. 6 (the text is reprinted in: L. de Simone, *Progrès technique – Rythme des Affaires*, Commission Romande de rationalisation, Genève 1937), and from the Archives of the *Università Parthenope* of Naples. He was born in Naples on January 2, 1899.

On the *Rockefeller*-granted period, see: *Excerpt from: Report on Paris Office Grant-in-Aid-Social Sciences, to end of 1932*, (folder 92, box 8, series 751, RG 1.1, RF, RAC).

⁴⁹ L. de Simone, *La fede di credito*, Libreria Detken, Naples 1922.

The Italian professors mentioned in his bibliography are Augusto Graziani, Angelo Fraccacreta and Pasquale Boninsegni to whom he sent copies of his publications. On February 28, 1951 de Simone presided over Fraccacreta commemoration ceremony.

⁵⁰ L. de Simone, *Lo Stato azionista: nuova formula d'organizzazione economica*, in "L'Italia d'oggi", a. IV, 1923, pp. 16; Id., *L'imposta sui salari*, in "L'Italia oggi", Naples 1924; Id., *Il Banco di Napoli e l'economia meridionale*, in "Rivista economica", n. 12, 1924, p. 8.

⁵¹ *Lezioni di Economia e legislazione sociale* (Lorenzo Alvano Libraio editore, Napoli, 1925) collects the 32 lessons of his course in Economics in 238 manuscript pages; from the seventeenth lesson onwards, they deal with labour market, labour law, contracts, emigration, legislation, insurance, unemployment, institutions in charge of applying labour laws, and with international labour legislation. Significantly, in 1950 he returns to some of these issues in a substantially comparative legal-toned paper, «alla memoria del Prof. Augusto Graziani», on trade-union freedom and collective bargaining.

⁵² «Fellowship program in the social sciences was continued by the Foundation, after the consolidation of the two organizations in 1929» (The Rockefeller Foundation, 1972, *Directory*, p. XI).

⁵³ On de Simone's *Rockefeller*-granted period, see: *Excerpt from: Report on Paris Office Grant-in-Aid-Social Sciences, to end of 1932*, (folder 92, box 8, series 751, RG 1.1, RF, RAC).

on Wednesday, September 28, that year. One month later, on October 12, the Casa Italiana opened: a banquet had been held in honor of senator Guglielmo Marconi at three p.m., October 11, 1927⁵⁴.

He landed with a precise Research Subject, agreed upon with the *Rockefeller Foundation*: his studies would focus on the *Influence of 'time factor' in Economic Analysis, as demonstrated in Cotton Trade*, an issue that does not appear to be directly connected with his previous interests.

At the end of this experience he could not settle back in Italy «because of his violent dislike of the Fascist regime», «on account of his political view»⁵⁵. He went to Berlin, where he stayed for one and a half years at the *Institut fur Finanz Wissenschaft*, as *research worker*⁵⁶, studying the same issue as before, and then he moved to Paris where he stayed from October 1931 to 1934.

In the *Report on Paris office grant-in-aid Social Science, to end of 1932* there seems to emerge that *Rockefeller Foundation* officials considered his conditions of life unequivocally desperate: he lived on a modest job in a typography and on a collaboration with the Bruxelles periodical *Res Publica*.

He had almost completed – he argued – the research he had carried out in the United States, but his manuscript, about 300 pages, would have no chance to be published without some financial support⁵⁷. These considerations convinced the *Rockefeller Foundation* to grant him «a maximum

⁵⁴ «Giuseppe Prezzolini, who was a Visiting professor of Italian in 1929-1930, was appointed Director of the Casa Italiana.... Professor Harry Morgan Ayres was appointed Director on November 1940» (R. Howson, 1941, *Historical Survey*). The *Casa Italiana Subject Files* (Columbia University Archives and Columbian Library) provides several indications on the case of the Casa Italiana in New York and on the Italian heritage in America (see, *infra*, References-2)

⁵⁵ I cannot go into deeper detail about the causes and the conditions that led to the impossibility, due to political reasons, of his return to Italy. According to the few pieces of information available at present, I might assume that he again tried to come back to Italy in 1937; it is true indeed that his relations with Italian “circles” intensified in that year (see his 1937 publications). The 1937 “Rivista del Lavoro” opening his article on *Disarmonie economiche* defines him as a «camerata», leading the survey on «machinery in modern world» carried out by the ILO and research to be completed on the same issue for the “Confederazione fascista dei Lavoratori dell’Industria”. Studies should have been carried out according to the following scheme, closely resembling surveys already completed by the ILO: rhythm of technical progress and labour market; technical progress, price mechanism rigidity, curtailment of consumption, unemployment; technical progress and corporative economic system; technical progress, creation of new activities, quantitative and qualitative variations in labor demand.

Political and spiritual hindrances (de Simone was known as “a free mind” and intolerant of any constraint) are testified by a letter preserved in the AUP (A. Graziani to C. Venditti, Naples, July 26, 1946).

⁵⁶ Grants are dated September 13, 1927 and December 12, 1929

⁵⁷ The basic guidelines of this research constituted the content of: L. de Simone, *Disarmonie economiche*, in “Rivista del Lavoro”, 1937 (see, *infra*, note 55). In the April 1937 issue of “Rivista del Lavoro” he published another article (*Gli economisti e il pubblico*) in which, after examining new realities (evolution of technique, changes in consumers’ tastes and habits, research and application of new labour organization, creation of monopolies), he delves into the increasing political interventions and the role of economists in interpreting such a new reality.

fellowship appointment» amounting to \$450 (in monthly \$75 payments) on December 1, 1931, and subsequent «grants-in-aid»⁵⁸.

Since 1934 de Simone lived in Geneva, working at the *Unemployment Division* of the *International Labor Office* for a few years. In this span of time he reestablished his contacts with the *Social Sciences* sector of the Paris *Rockefeller Foundation* centre, in particular with its top management, John Van Sickle first and then his successor Tracy B. Kittredge. Had he only had the possibility to publish his *Conseguenze della razionalizzazione in diversi paesi, con particolare riferimento alle conseguenze sul lavoro*⁵⁹, this would have granted him a more relevant role in the ILO.

Kittredge made him acquainted with the difficulties of this decision, even if, in the report drawn after their meeting, he underlined that the ILO held de Simone in high regard: the office staff agreed on sustaining that

his permanent employment would depend largely upon evidences he might give of his own technical capacities apart from his routine work with the Office. The fact that he is of Italian nationality but is not assured of his backing of the Italian Government makes his permanent employment somewhat difficult. The publication of a manuscript of definitive importance would therefore unquestionably strengthen his chances for permanent employment in Geneva. If the opinion expressed on his manuscript by von Haan is favorable, there would appear to be ample justification for making deS a further grant-in-aid⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ This is when he collaborated to the French edition of Saverio Nitti's two volumes on *La Démocratie* (t. 1: *La formation des démocraties modernes et les nouveaux aspects de la réaction antidémocratique*; t. 2: *L'Antidémocratie et les problèmes des nouvelles sociétés démocratiques*).

⁵⁹ In June 1935 he actually took part in a series of conferences (Université de Lausanne, June, 7; Université de Lausanne, June 14; Université de Genève, June, 17). His papers were published in French, some by the Société des Nations (*La mécanisation et la classe ouvrière*, 1935; *La transformation industrielle de Londres*, 1935); others by the Librairie Payot in Geneva (*Le chômage technologique dans d'industrie allemande*, 1935; *La voix des chômeurs*, 1935; *L'avenir du machinisme*, 1935); a paper was published by the Commission Romande de Rationalisation (*Les transferts d'emplois aux Etats-Unis*, 1935); another paper was published in Montreux (*Les sans-travail*, 1937, IV ed.). The first two papers mentioned above were published in English too, again by the League of Nations (*Mechanisation and the Working Class*, 1935; *The Industrial Transformation of London*, 1935).

Those papers had to be collected in the volume he defines "En préparation"; its title should have been *Inharmonies économiques-Progrès technique et Chômage*, as he writes on the back cover of *L'avenir*, cit., 1935; *La voix*, cit., 1935; *Le chômage*, cit., 1935.

It must be noted that its numerically limited hints at economic literature refer to German and English authors; no US economist is therein mentioned.

⁶⁰ Interview – TBK [Tracy B. Kittredge] with Dr. L. de Simone, Italian Former Fellow, Geneva, August 28, 1934 (in: RAC. Idem).

On his part, Van Sickle was not satisfied with the contacts he had had with de Simone, and shared his doubts about further disbursement for de Simone's research publication with the offices in Paris. Two motivations backed his decision: first of all, de Simone intended to publish works that only indirectly descended from research conducted while financed by the *Rockefeller Foundation*; moreover, these works were of a theoretical nature like the publication to be completed with the previous grant⁶¹.

De Simone didn't desist; on February 1, 1935 he again forwarded Kittredge his publication project accompanied by letters of recommendation signed by Henri Fuss, Chief of the Unemployment Section at the ILO, Liebman Hersch (1882-1955), of the University of Geneva, and Eugène Dérobert, expert of the secretariat of the *League of Nations*, all declaring their wish to encourage de Simone to continue his studies. However, de Simone forgot to enclose a formal request of financial support; as a result, decisions were deferred until April, when the *Rockefeller Foundation* Board of Trustees met in New York and resolved not to fulfill his request for the time being⁶².

On August 7, 1935, concluding his 1934-1935 fruitless relations, De Simone sent Kittredge his essay on technical progress; Kittredge forwarded it to J.B. Condliffe of the *Economic Financial Section* of the *League of Nations*, and then also to the *International Institute for the Intellectual Cooperation*⁶³. The latter seemed notably interested in issues connected with the «influence of machinism on workman» and, in particular, in workers' psychology; it was moreover planning a conference in Moscow for the following summer⁶⁴: provided some *Rockefeller Foundation* financial support, the institute was willing to employ de Simone for a limited period of six months which were necessary for the organization of the conference; the corresponding *Memorandum*, however, carried Kittredge's decisive manuscript note: «no grant approved».

De Simone stayed in Geneva, and, finally, in 1946⁶⁵, he came back to Italy, called by the *Istituto Navale* in Naples as Professor and expert in *labor relations*. In May 1950 he was granted another scholarship⁶⁶. Twice - in 1953 and in 1956 - did he express his desire «that he and other

⁶¹ *TBK Memo of Interview August 28, 1934*, New York, Sept. 21, 1934, JVS [John van Sickle] to TBK [Tracy B. Kittredge], in RAC, Idem.

⁶² *Application for grant-in-aid: Luigi de Simone*, Geneva, (TBK to JVS, Paris, February 4, 1935); TBK to deS, Paris, February 4, 1935; JVS to TBK, Paris, February 13, 1935; TBK to deS, Paris, May 14, 1935; TBK to deS, Paris, August 12, 1935), in RAC, Idem.

⁶³ On the decision of “promoting the international understanding”, giving support to agencies of the League of Nations, see: E. Craver, *Patronage*, 1986.

⁶⁴ De Simone could have been hired to organize the congress.

⁶⁵ He held this course from November 1, 1946 to October 31, 1965.

⁶⁶ «He would like to get back into some such international work and would be glad to work for the RF», as emerges in Norman S. Buchanan Diary, December 3-6, 1948 (folder 2893, box 749, GC, RF, RAC). His

former fellows could hold reunions in the United States to revisit the country and exchange ideas»⁶⁷; in both cases, though, his offer was declined⁶⁸.

5. De Simone's experience abroad and the goals set by the Rockefeller organization: a crosscheck.

Within this biographical itinerary, my focus lies now on reporting some details in de Simone's life that may document the direction and the quality of his involvement in North American economic science; whether he could embed it in his scientific works, and, finally, whether this operation had any impact on the Italian scientific milieu.

First of all, in the faculty of Law of the University of Naples he had developed a sound interest in the analysis of bank savings, as testified by his 1922 and 1924 essays, in which he also deals with the «collection, protection and transmission» of savings generated by American policies aimed at keeping immigrants' savings. In the economic debate of the time particular historical relevance is attributed to the *Primo Congresso Internazionale del Risparmio* held in Milan in 1924⁶⁹, the organization of which had been led by Filippo Ravizza, Propaganda Adviser at the “Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde”.

Ravizza had moved to the United States to carry out ample research studies on the *Propaganda del Risparmio*, on key-elements in the organization of a savings institute that may promote and facilitate savings, so that they could draw the attention of citizens of all ages and ranks⁷⁰. Among the 354 participants in that meeting, there were the US Consul, Carrigan Clarence, I.I. Irvin (senior Vice-president of the First Trust and Savings Bank), C. D. Nelson (YMCA) and A. Miller, leading figure of the *American Bank Association* and of the *Association of Mutual Savings Bank* who was then elected as one of the four vicepresidents of the Congress.

One may assume that de Simone widened and intensified his knowledge of bank issues attending Henry Parker Willis's courses; the latter had graduated and obtained his PhD in Chicago in 1897, and was then teaching *Banking and Banking Systems* at Columbia. As far as issues of factory system, labor legislation, proposed solutions of labor problems and of the future of the wage

somehow sustained contacts with the Foundation's representative in Europe is testified also by a document in the AUP (Carlo Venditti to L. de Simone, Naples, December 4, 1948).

⁶⁷ R.F., Excerpt from: FLC [Frederic C. Lane] Diary, April 27, 1953 (folder 293, box 45, GC, RF, RAC). On this issue Costantino Bresciani Turrone was interviewed too (Excerpt from FLC Diary, May 16, 1953).

⁶⁸ Letter FLC to JHW, June 1, 1953: "I have no real basis for judging him deserving of help and little inclination to recommend anything" (folder 293, box 45, GC, RF, RAC).

⁶⁹ Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde, *Primo Congresso*, 1925.

⁷⁰ F. Ravizza, *Propaganda*, 1925.

system are concerned, it is likely that de Simone attended Henry R. Seager's classes, and perhaps also the *Seminar in labor problems and policies abroad*, organized in 1928-1929 by Eveline M. Burns, who had graduated and obtained her PhD in London, and was now at Columbia as a Lecturer in Economics⁷¹. In addition, it is worth noticing that «One of the most innovative of the Council [Social Science Research Council] early activities was a series of annual summer meetings...» and that the meetings featured also talks on “Labor Policies and Industrial Output” and on “Problems Involved in Studying the mechanization of Industry⁷²”.

These are only hypotheses, as no documentary evidence records his attendance.

In Naples, under Fraccacreta's teaching⁷³, he had approached a second issue: the feedback technical progress may have on the industrial system. The repercussions of technical progress on the industrial system clearly emerge as a topic in his 1935-1937 publications; its basic notions are to be found in two studies, dated March 2, 1935, drawn for the *League of Nations*.

The first study is about the *Industrial transformation of London* - one of the cradles of modern industrialism - as a result of technical progress. He states «the extreme difficulty of sorting out the multiple ways in which technical progress may affect industrial life» and the possibility of distinguishing between the modification of the manufacturing processes in every industry and the daily springing up of new industries for the production, and of new organizations for the distribution of hitherto unknown commodities, «due partly to the creation of new needs by rapid changes in the standard of living of various classes, and partly to scientific inventions which not only satisfy these needs, but often arouse, stimulate and even forestall them» (pp 3-4).

These novelties, de Simone writes, directly or indirectly prompt changes in the industrial organization, and quantitative and qualitative variations in the labor market (think of the different positions about male/female and worker/clerical ratio in the labor market, about the evolution of the commercial sector and of advertising), as argued in the second 1935 essay, also written for the *League of Nations*.

This study is rich in bibliographical references, the most relevant of which are on technological progress, invention and discovery, the effects of machinery upon workers and upon return, unemployment, occupational obsolescence⁷⁴.

⁷¹ Columbia University, *Bulletin of Information*, 1927; Id, 1928. Single feeble evidence of this stay is given by the quotation of his 1922 book in the Butler Library Catalogue.

⁷² K.W. Worchester, *An Introduction of the Social Science*, n.d., p. 8.

⁷³ A. Fraccacreta, *La trasformazione degli impieghi di intrapresa*, Luigi Pierro, Naples 1920.

⁷⁴ Among quoted works: *Machinery and its effects upon workers*, 1924, in “American Academy of Political Science Annals”, Nov., vol. CXVI, p. 40; I. Lubin, *The absorption of unemployment by American industry*, The Brooking Institution Pamphlet Series, Washington, vol. I, n. 3, July; W.F. Ogburn, 1930, *Social changes*

De Simone juxtaposes works by Mentor Bounatian⁷⁵, by Emil Lederer⁷⁶, and Joseph A. Schumpeter⁷⁷, as they focus on the role of the rhythm of technical progress on the labor market: its influence depends on decisions for machines replacement, on demand changes, on wages differentiation according to professional qualification, on a perception of insecurity, in particular by skilled workers. All three above mentioned authors agree on stating that the rhythm of technical progress marks the phases of the economic cycle, that is, it is more intense in periods of development and slower in periods of depression.

From de Simone's biography it is not clear whether his Italian academic life provided him the chance to directly engage the specific sensitivity for issues concerning technical progress and labour market he had acquired during his American sojourn and mastered in Geneva during the Thirties. It must be acknowledged, however, that the materials published by the *League of Nations* had wide and prompt diffusion in their English and French versions; moreover, one could even assume de Simone's not marginal influence on the textbook on *Organizzazione Industriale* (Angelo Signorelli Editore, Rome, pp. 238), dealing with the scientific organization of work and its economic and social effects on the industrial organizational system, published by Antonio De Majo in 1937, with an introduction by Luigi de Simone himself.

This volume systematically investigates the problems connected with productive system adaptation to technical progress, as they descend from the analysis of Henry Ford's system in which

in 1928, in "The American Journal of Sociology", Allen C.C., Chicago; *Labor transference and unemployment*, in "Economic Journal", June 1931, pp. 242-248; *The Theory of Occupational Obsolescence*, in "The Political Science Quarterly", June 1931, vol. XLVI, pp 171-227; A.H. Hansen, 1931, *Institutional Frictions and Technological Unemployment*, in "Quarterly Journal of Economics", August, pp 684-697; A.H. Hansen, 1932, *The Theory of Technological Progress and the Dislocation of Employment*, in "American Economic Review", suppl. 22 March, pp 25-31; N. Kaldor, 1932, *A Case against Technical Progress*, in "Economica", n. 26, May, pp 180-196; W.F. Ogburn and S.C. Gillfillan, 1934, *The Influence of Invention and Discovery*, in "Recent Social Trends", vol. I, New York; G.T. Jones, 1933, *Increasing Return*, Cambridge.

⁷⁵ Bounatian, former professor at the "Institut Polytechnique" in Tiflis, was professor at the "Institut russe de droit et d'économie" of the University of Paris. At that time several works by Bounatian were well-known, such as *Wirtschaftskrisen und Ueberkapitalisation* (Munich, 1908), *Les crises économiques*, translated from its Russian first edition (1915) by J. Bernard, in "Bibliothèque Internationale d'Economie Politique", Paris 1922, and *Le progrès technique et le chômage*, in "Revue International du Travail", vol. XXVII, n. 3, March 1933, pp. 3.

⁷⁶ E. Lederer, *Technischer Fortschritt und Arbeitslosigkeit*, 1931; Id., *Le progrès technique et le chômage*, in "Revue internationale du travail", vol. XXVIII, n. 1, July 1933, pp. 1-26. On this topic, the *International Labor Conference*, held in Geneva, June 8-30, 1933 was significantly relevant.

⁷⁷ An abridged version of Schumpeter's *Theorie der Wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung* (1911) was published in Italy; following its author's advice it is a vigorously reduced version, entitled *La teoria dello sviluppo economico*, published in "Nuova Collana di Economisti italiani e stranieri", edited by G. Demaria, vol. 12-Dinamica economica, Utet, Turin 1932, pp. 17-182.

machines, facilitating activities, contribute to improving and to increasing production⁷⁸. Main sources are in this case Fredrick Winslow Taylor's works⁷⁹ and the papers presented at the six congresses organized by the International Labor Organization to discuss on systems of work rationalization and scientific organization. To these main references the following may be added: works by Edwin F. Gay, expert in profit sharing and stock ownership for employees, and Pierre Solly about the analysis of the companies' leading positions; by John F. Fraser (*America at Work*, 1903) about organizational methodology; and by Baird (*Industrial Management*) on mass production, and products and materials standardization.

In April 1937 Antonio de Majo sent his book, with Luigi de Simone's preface, to the rector of the Catholic University, Father Agostino Gemelli, leading figure in labour psychology studies in Italy, and founder of the *Laboratorio di psicologia sperimentale* in Milan in 1921 for the study of «aptitude selection» and of «man at workplace».

6. Some partial, concluding remarks.

At this point, thanks to the investigation of Luigi de Simone's American experience and of his return to Europe, it is possible to provide some partial answers to the three questions posed in the Introductory Remarks of this paper.

In chronological terms he was the first Italian economist to be awarded a *Rockefeller* scholarship in Economics and, like the other two economists granted with the same honour in closely following years, Francesco Vito e Giovanni Demaria, he was chosen first of all because the *Rockefeller* organizations had changed their financing policy in the first half of the Twenties, privileging funds for individual scholars rather than for universities.

They were also selected among others because their university curricula included studies on economic issues that might benefit from a stay in the United States. Their formative paths significantly display deep interest in 'novelties' pervading the history of economic thought in the

⁷⁸ In Italy the strategy adopted for the development of Fiat at the beginning of the century was "doing like Ford" (G. Volpato, *Grande crisi*, 1978).

⁷⁹ *The Principles of Scientific Management* by Taylor had been presented at the *American Society of Mechanical Engineers* in November 1909 and issued in instalments in "The American Magazine" in March, April and May 1912 (First ed. It., 1915, Athenaeum, Roma). A survey on the diffusion of Taylor's message in Italy through Gino Olivetti, Maurizio Candeloro, and the quick repartee between Lino Celli and Luigi Einaudi, is reported in C. Rotondi, *L'organizzazione si fa scienza*, 1994. In the interwar period Gramsci's analysis is particularly revealing on the changes accompanying the rationalization of labour and industrial world (A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Ed. critica dell'Istituto Gramsci a cura di V. Gerratana, Einaudi, Torino 1975, Quaderno 15, 1933). Such radical changes manifest as they directly invest society as a whole, shaping new awareness in the working class and creating a new institutional structure in more advanced industrial societies (M. Guidi and T. Maccabelli, *Americanismo, fordismo, post-fordismo*, 1999).

Twenties and the Thirties, and demonstrate how far this trend was integral to research in some important Italian academic milieus.

As far as Luigi de Simone is concerned, his expertise in the analysis of bank savings and in the relationship between technical progress and economic cycles had acquired sound foundations at the University of Naples where he had enrolled as a student in Law. His specialization abroad widened and intensified his knowledge of these issues and let him bring in different elements somehow connected with his previous formative path.

His expectations of a brilliant academic career, nurtured as he left for the United States in 1927, went undoubtedly unfulfilled. On the one hand, archive documents report the impossibility of his coming back to Italy for political reasons; on the other hand, his contacts with the Italian academy, though strenuously pursued, did not positively impact his chances of homecoming in the short run, except twenty years afterwards.

His appointment at the ILO was obviously a fruitful experience to concretely practice previous theoretical studies, as testified by his publications in those years. Nonetheless, he could not complete and publish the book he had begun writing in his American stay, and which he kept referring to in later years: though its Table of Contents appeared in the “*Rivista del Lavoro*” in 1937, it is not documented in his bibliography.

Furthermore, choosing de Simone turned out to be a partial flop for the financing organization as well. As the main goal set by the *Rockefeller* organizations was to favour conditions for the pro-research cultural evolution of the academical activities, in de Simone’s case they only partially reached their aims.

As a matter of fact, he certainly transferred his *Rockefeller*-granted competence into his activity at the ILO; it is also clear that he participated in the design and draft of the book on industrial organization published by Antonio De Majo in 1937, presumably adopted as textbook for his university courses. Besides, students attending his courses at the Istituto Universitario Navale in Naples after 1946 were no doubt likely to profit from teachings imparted by such a widely and sufferingly experienced professor.

His homecoming to Naples does not seem to open up a significant period of his life, both in terms of professional and scientific recognition by the circle of economists. The conditions he lived in by that time remain wholly unknown, apart from some elements that are documented in his bibliography, and in the papers collected at the *Rockefeller Archive Center*; thus, we have no elements yet, to ground his difficulty in interacting with and emerging in such a milieu. He was certainly not unprepared in the scientific area he had mainly focused on, that is the relation between economic system and technical advancement.

Research on the other two economists is currently being carried out.

Giovanni Demaria sailed off to the United States in 1931, four years after de Simone, his same-age Neapolitan colleague. Demaria had obtained his first degree at the *Istituto Superiore di Studi Commerciali* in Turin in 1920, with a dissertation on *La confisca dei sovraprofiti di guerra*, while he was holding an «infernal job» at the Credito Italiano and teaching law and economics at the *Istituto tecnico* in Biella, then in Mantua; in 1927 he had obtained his second degree under Gustavo De Vecchio's supervision with a dissertation on *Le teorie monetarie e il ritorno all'oro*, published in 1928.

In his 1995 autobiographic conversation⁸⁰, he recalls his 'masters': Filadelfo Insolera, the mathematician; Giovanni Pacchioni, Luigi Abello, Nino Tamassia and Vincenzo Manzini, the jurists; Giuseppe Prato, the historian of economic facts and thought; Vincenzo Porri and Alfonso De Pietri Tonelli, the economists; Vincenzo Vianello and Vittorio Valletta, the business economists; Marcello Boldrini, the statistician. In his formation he attributes a fundamental role to the group of Turinese intellectuals who opposed fascism, to French and Russian literature, from which he drew inspiration for his observations, and to his first contacts with the economists that were beginning to direct research towards monetary issues: Attilio Cabiati, Giulio Alessio and Luigi Einaudi.

The latter «gave him a hand» for his first article published, in “La Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali” of the Catholic University of Milan in 1928⁸¹.

In 1928 he was appointed as a professor of Political Economy: the chair had been held by Luigi Amoroso, and in 1929 he began teaching at the *Istituto Superiore* in Bari, inaugurating the academic year on October 20, 1930 with a proclusion on *Il principio del benessere organico e il contratto collettivo di lavoro*. The rector himself, the mathematician Carlo Bonferroni, had insisted on calling Demaria for that post.

In examining his scientific figure in recent times, Demaria's «basic detachment from dominant economic theory» ever since those initial years emerges:

The economic world, ..., was dominated by continuous transformation [...] the equilibrium inexorably demonstrates a position of rest. This is on the contrary ignored by the economic reality [...] real history [...] is the history of the accidental facts produced by man's errors, by the novelty of facts, by simple chance⁸².

⁸⁰ G. Pavanelli and P.L. Porta, *La formazione intellettuale*, 1995.

⁸¹ In the same journal Demaria published an essay in 1929, and in 1930 he also published a series of lessons on *Dinamica economica* presented at the Catholic University of Milan, at Boldrini's invitation. Father Gemelli's initiative of calling him to teach at this university, Faculty of Law, in 1930, was not successful; nor was an article Demaria had sent to the «Rivista» in 1934 ever published.

The young Demaria underlines that the climate in which the system evolves is far from definite: it is characterized by indecision, as the factors influencing it are not fully known, economic theory analyzes economic factors only, and reached results are quickly overtaken and modified by new events. Nonlinearity in economic phenomena reveals the impossibility of applying strongly deterministic linear models in economic analysis, as the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, as well as the principle of Eisenberg, compel us to acknowledge. In the end, one cannot avoid conceding that reality is shaped also by extraeconomic and metaeconomic categories⁸³.

Demaria's interest in economic dynamics reveals Del Vecchio's and Pantaleoni's teachings: ethics, laws, habits and customs, changes in female behavior and migratory movements make economic phenomena dynamic; as historical phenomena, they are hardly analyzable as static phenomena⁸⁴.

His detachment from the dominant framework is clear in his first works published in the periodical of the *Catholic University*, as well as in the entries for *Cournot* (1931), *Profitto* (1935), and *Rischio* (1936) written for the "Enciclopedia Italiana", in his edition of the volume on "Dinamica economica" in the Utet Collection (1932), and in his 1934 and 1935 essays. His American specialization developed within this scope.

As for Francesco Vito, the third young economist granted a *Rockefeller* fellowship in the decade 1925-1935, from the province of Caserta he moved to Naples to attend university, then to Milan to specialize in Economics, and then to Monaco, Berlin, London, Chicago and New York to improve his preparation. In his thirties he settled in Milan, near the Catholic University where he taught Economics for thirty years. In those years he also had the chance to repeat his American experience, with a different role and different objectives now, maintaining continuous relations with the *Rockefeller Foundation*.

As these data state, and current research proves, in the cases of Demaria and Vito, the main aim of the project, which was to valorize the teaching of social sciences in Italian universities, was fully accomplished; both economists are in fact acknowledged as the undisputed 'masters' of generations of Italian university students.

⁸² A. Graziani, *Giovanni Demaria*, 1999 (transl. by the author)

⁸³ S. Zamagni, *Giovanni Demaria*, 1999; A. Montesano, *La logica dell'economia*, 1999; N. Bellanca, *La radice dell'indeterminazione*, 1999.

⁸⁴ M. Finioia, *Giovanni Demaria*, 1999.

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