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"WE WILL MAKE EUROPE THERE": ITALIAN INTELLECTUALS IN SEARCH OF EUROPE AND AMERICA IN HITLER'S GERMANY*

DONATELLA GERMANESE
Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin
E-mail: dgermanese@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

In the early 1940s, Felice Balbo and Giaime Pintor judged and re-envisioned Europe from a shared observation point in Turin with two institutional settings: the publishing house Giulio Einaudi Editore and the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France. Their privileged perspective—so far little known outside Italy—offers interesting clues about forms of opposition to Fascism and National Socialism by a generation that grew up under dictatorship. Drawing on unpublished sources and memoirs, this essay retraces a dialogue among friends, showing how young members of the Italian intelligentsia designed eccentric scenarios to overcome a nazified Europe. An overly enthusiastic reception of American culture, illusions about impending insurrections in Germany, and a general attraction to German culture helped Balbo and Pintor in becoming active antifascists.

European history offers numerous instances of remarkable intellectual friendship among men who shared similar political as well as philosophical and aesthetic preferences and interests. Circles composed of like-minded individuals produced collective works such as manifestos, journals, and book series; friends inside the circle turned into characters within literary works or were mentioned in dedications; topics discussed in private correspondence reappeared in published works. In some historical epochs, intellectual friendship often kept a "strange balance between a 'logic' will of political effectiveness and an 'ethical' desire

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of acknowledgment among friends."[1] In twentieth-century Italy, the group of people associated with the publishing house Giulio Einaudi Editore formed a circle of this kind, constituting the primary context for the intellectual friendship between Felice Balbo (1913–64) and Giaime Pintor (1919–43).

This essay presents unpublished documents to introduce the international readership to Balbo and Pintor's original analysis of the political situation in Europe in the early 1940s. The emergence of the Resistance movement in Italy is explored by examining letters, diaries, and essays written by both Balbo and Pintor, as well as by other members of the Einaudi circle. Retracing a dialogue among friends, the current study relates the efforts of these intellectuals to find ways out of Fascism and Nazism to some aspects of US American culture and to the European Federalist Movement.

Balbo and Pintor served in the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France, hence their knowledge about the military and historical situation was based on first-hand experience, including official trips to Germany, access to classified materials, and underground contacts. Intellectuals with wide literary and philosophical interests and open to popular culture, such as American movies, these enthusiastic young men slowly but steadily moved toward militant antifascism.

In the following analysis, I sketch out the history of the Einaudi publishing house from its foundation in 1933 until 1945, introducing Balbo and Pintor as members of the Einaudi entourage as well as of the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France, both located in Turin. Discussion of a letter by Balbo to Pintor of 10 July 1943 and of Balbo's notebook of 1941 is at the core of this essay. These two documents offer the opportunity to sound out Balbo's political views about Italy and Europe in crucial moments of recent history, taking him as representative of a generation of young intellectuals grown up in Fascist Italy who had the chance—and grasped it—of developing their own ideas and activities despite censorship, propaganda, and repression. For Balbo's historical–philosophical background I refer to works published in the 1930s by Benedetto Croce, Johan Huizinga, and Oswald Spengler. In a further section of this essay, Balbo's interest in German oppositional circles to National Socialism is connected to Pintor's and Elio Vittorini's participation in the European Writers' Congress called by Joseph Goebbels in 1942, while the last section places Balbo's desire of "making Europe" into the context of the underground Europeanist movement.

[1] In the words of Philippe-Joseph Salazar about the French Republic of Letters of the seventeenth century. Philippe-Joseph Salazar, "The Society of Friends," *XVIIe siècle*, 51/4, (1999), 581–92, at 592.

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THE EINAUDI CIRCLE

Giulio Einaudi (1912–99), the youngest son of the liberal professor of economics at Turin University, Luigi Einaudi (1874–1961),[2] started his editorial activities by taking over the political-economic review *La Riforma sociale* from his father. Expanding his activities in 1933, the middle of the Fascist era, he launched the publishing house Giulio Einaudi Editore in Turin with the help of Leone Ginzburg (1909–44). Cesare Pavese (1908–50) soon joined them. All three were alumni of the Massimo D'Azeglio school, an intellectual breeding ground with openly antifascist leanings.[3] Pavese was a novelist and a translator of English works, Ginzburg a scholar, translator, and lecturer on Russian literature. Their office happened to be in the same building in which Antonio Gramsci had edited the socialist weekly *L'Ordine nuovo* in the period from 1919 to 1920.[4]

Einaudi and his publishing house soon ran into trouble with state censorship. In May 1935, the publisher and his closest partners were arrested and accused of being members of the antifascist movement Giustizia e Libertà, organized by the Rosselli brothers, Carlo and Nello, Italian refugees in Paris. The Rossellis were killed in French exile in 1937 by order of the Italian Fascist intelligence. "Imprisonment was a painful experience for all of us," Einaudi wrote in his memoirs years later.[5] Pavese was interned for one year; Einaudi was set free but put under surveillance until 1942; Ginzburg, who was considered the head of Giustizia e Libertà in Turin, had already been in prison since March 1934.[6] Einaudi kept the publishing house afloat until 1936, when Ginzburg and Pavese returned to Turin, by publishing books welcomed by Mussolini—for example, volumes on military history.[7]

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2 Luigi Einaudi, a regular contributor to the influential daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, was "Senatore del Regno d'Italia" from 1919 on, opposing the new Fascist rulers after the murder of the socialist politician Giacomo Matteotti in 1924. After his exile in Switzerland (Oct. 1943–Dec. 1944) he became governor of the Bank of Italy in 1945 and president of the Italian Republic in 1948.

3 See www.liceomassimodazeglio.it/storia.html, accessed 8 March 2014. For an accurate portrait of Turin from the 1920s until the 1960s, centered on the Giulio Einaudi publishing house, see Maike Albath, *Der Geist von Turin: Pavese, Ginzburg, Einaudi und die Wiedergeburt Italiens nach 1943* (Berlin, 2010).

4 Giulio Einaudi, *Frammenti di memoria* (Rome, 2009), 20.

5 Ibid., 22.

6 Gabriele Turi, *Casa Einaudi: Libri uomini idee oltre il fascismo* (Bologna, 1990), 69. See also Gianni Sofri, "Leone Ginzburg," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani Treccani* (2001), www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leone-ginzburg_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29, accessed 28 Oct. 2014.

7 Luisa Mangoni, *Pensare i libri: La casa editrice Einaudi dagli anni trenta agli anni sessanta* (Turin, 1999), 20–21. See also Guido Bonsaver, "Culture and Intellectuals," in R. J. B. Bosworth, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Fascism* (Oxford, 2009), 118.

From 1936 to 1938, a number of new series came into being: Foreign Writers in Translation, New Collection of Italian Classic Works, and Essays, all conceived and developed by Ginzburg and Pavese. The Library of Scientific Culture series started in 1938, edited by Ludovico Geymonat (1908–91).[8] When Italy declared war on France and Great Britain in 1940, Ginzburg was interned in a small village in southern Italy as a *sorvegliato speciale* (person under special surveillance); moreover, as a Jewish Russian émigré, he had lost his Italian citizenship in 1938 by dictate of the race laws. Ginzburg kept in contact with Einaudi and continued his work despite many obstacles, but his influence on editorial decisions diminished. The publisher moved toward a policy of moderate appeasement with the Fascist power in order to bring books through censorship and, in wartime, to receive rationed paper on which to print them. Einaudi even hired a young literary critic, Mario Alicata (1918–66), and assigned him the task of maintaining a direct connection to the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Popular Culture who decided on such matters.[9] The opposition of his publishing house to the Fascist regime could only be read between the lines, in prefaces to historical works and in the very choice of volumes on the history of Europe, of England, and of the Russian Revolution.

In 1941, Einaudi opened a branch office in Rome and began planning the Universal Library, based on a list of four hundred works by foreign and Italian authors. In 1945, a new branch office in Milan was put under the responsibility of Elio Vittorini (1908–66), who had previously been a consultant for Einaudi while working for the publisher Bompiani. The publishing house played a pivotal role in the reconstruction of the country after the Second World War by providing a range of cultural tools for both elites and the general public.[10]

PLOTTING FRIENDS

Felice Balbo and Giaime Pintor met in Turin in the summer of 1941 at the publishing house. Balbo was born in Turin, scion of a noble, impoverished, liberal-leaning Piedmont family. One of his ancestors, Cesare Balbo (1789–1853), had played an important role in Italy's national unification movement. Like the founders of the publishing house, Balbo had been a student at the Massimo D'Azeglio grammar school in Turin. In portraits by such contemporaries as Natalia Ginzburg (1916–91) and partisan fellows, Balbo was judged to be a

8 Mangoni, *Pensare i libri*, 34. Turi highlights a further series, Library of Historical Culture, which had been set up by Ginzburg and began in 1935. See Turi, *Casa Einaudi*, 75–9.

9 Turi, *Casa Einaudi*, 113 and 124; Mangoni, *Pensare i libri*, 113–15.

10 The Einaudi publishing house numbered in its editorial staff writers with an international reputation like Italo Calvino, Natalia Ginzburg, Cesare Pavese, and Elio Vittorini.

"clever and pensive young man,"[11] of "keen and lively intuition,"[12] with "great thoughtfulness of others and lively curiosity."[13] As a sergeant of the Italian Alpine troops, Balbo took part in the invasion of France in June 1940 and was then sent to Albania to prepare for the campaign against Greece (Albania had been part of the colonial Italian Empire since 1939). Balbo there contracted amoebiasis and almost died. During his long convalescence he re-embraced Catholicism and engaged in theological readings and writings. Back in Turin in the summer of 1941, still on sick leave, he joined the publishing house Giulio Einaudi Editore, becoming one of its most valued advisers.

Giaime Pintor was a young expert in German literature, a translator of Rilke but also of Goethe, Kleist, Hofmannsthal, Trakl, and Jünger.[14] Descended from a Sardinian family of high state officials, Pintor graduated with a law degree from Rome in June 1940, but put much more effort into studying philosophy and philology, attending classes in history of science by the mathematician Federigo Enriques, and writing essays and book reviews. In 1939, Pintor became an army officer after a few months of military training. Waiting for a posting during the summer and autumn of 1940, he served in Perugia. There he became acquainted with a German student, Ilse Bessell (1920–70), whose close friendship came to represent a further tie with Germany. Pintor was not sent to the front but, probably in connection with the death of his uncle, General Pietro Pintor, was appointed instead to the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France (Commissione Italiana di Armistizio con la Francia), "the masterpiece of bureaucratic–military organization" located in Turin.[15] There "soldiers in white gloves" occupied "sumptuous offices"; this organization "covered, like Hamlet's world, many more

[11] Luigi Capriolo, *Dalla clandestinità alla lotta armata: Diario di Luigi Capriolo, dirigente comunista (26 luglio–16 ottobre 1943)*, ed. Aldo Agosti and Giulio Sapelli, (Turin, 1976), 55.

[12] Words of Natalia Ginzburg, member of the Einaudi group and close friend of Balbo; she was Leone Ginzburg's wife and mother of the historian Carlo Ginzburg. Natalia Ginzburg, *The Things We Used To Say*, trans. Judith Woolf (Manchester, 1997), 189; Ginzburg , *Lessico famigliare* (Turin, 1963), 203.

[13] From an interview with Ernesto Baroni, a physician who met Balbo in 1943 and was convinced by him to join the resistance. Ernesto Baroni and Giorgio Rivolta, *Libertà personale e bene comune* (Milan, 2011), 411.

[14] From 1939 Pintor worked as the literary critic responsible for German literature for the magazine *Oggi* and additionally, from 1940, for the journal *Primato*.

[15] Giaime Pintor, *Doppio diario, 1936–1943*, ed. Mirella Serri (Turin, 1978), 84. A second, complete, and amended edition of Pintor's notebook is definitely required, as Maria Cecilia Calabri claims. See Maria Cecilia Calabri, "Della dissimulazione onesta. Giaime Pintor tra amici e censori," in Giovanni Falaschi, ed., *Giaime Pintor e la sua generazione* (Rome, 2005), 141–209, at 188–9. Note that General Pietro Pintor had been the first president of the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France. See Romain H. Rainero,

things than philosophers could see."[16] The German Committee for the Armistice with France (Waffenstillstandskommission) had its headquarters in Wiesbaden, and the two sites each housed a delegation of the other country. In Turin, Pintor very soon joined the Einaudi circle. Years later Einaudi portrayed Pintor in the following words:

> A Royal Army officer, with a general as uncle, lover of life, of literature, of women, always in a good mood, even in the most difficult periods, which were, however, those that he was most passionate about. As an officer involved in the committee for the armistice with France, touring the world (the world at that time) between Turin and Vichy and Rome with frequent brief stays in Germany, which he loved. He liked plotting, and held high-level contacts with generals, representatives of illegal parties, and young intellectuals who were interested in slightly insurgent magazines.[17]

Pintor would die on 1 December 1943, killed by a land mine in a partisan mission on the front line near Naples and becoming a celebrated symbol of the Italian Resistance, in Italy and abroad.[18] In 1947, Jean-Paul Sartre printed, for instance, in his monthly review *Les temps modernes*, a French translation of Pintor's last letter of 28 November 1943 as "revealing the state of mind in which young Italian intellectuals moved from a cultural and moral 'antifascist resistance' to a physical 'resistance', weapons in hand."[19]

Beside their relationship with Einaudi's publishing house, Pintor and Balbo ended up also working together at the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France when Balbo was called to service there in 1942. They became close friends. In his autobiographical sketches Pintor would testify that Balbo had a crucial

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La commission italienne d'armistice avec la France: Les rapports entre la France de Vichy et l'Italie de Mussolini. 10 juin 1940–8 septembre 1943 (Saint-Maixent-l'Ecole, 1995), 53.

16 Pintor, *Doppio diario, 1936–1943*, 84–5. Pintor alludes to the observation that Shakespeare's Hamlet makes to Horatio at the end of Act One: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

17 Einaudi, *Frammenti di memoria*, 57.

18 See Pietro Secchia and Filippo Frassati, *Storia della Resistenza: La guerra di liberazione in Italia 1943–1945*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1965), 1: 286–8.

19 "Lettre de Giaime Pintor à son frère," *Les temps modernes*, 3, 23–4 (Aug.–Sept. 1947), special issue on Italy, 327–30, at 327. Giaime Pintor, "L'ultima lettera," in Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa, 1939–1943*, ed. Valentino Gerratana, 2nd edn (Turin, 1966), 185–8. In 1979 the leftist intellectual Franco Fortini highlighted Pintor's membership in the upper middle class, an identity that had become evident through the publication of Pintor's diary a few months before, discrediting his supposed antifascist reputation. Fortini's opinions launched a controversy persisting until quite recently. Franco Fortini, *Insistenze: Cinquanta scritti 1976–1984* (Milan, 1985), 162–71.

influence on his way of thinking, while Balbo saw in Pintor the exemplary "man without myths" and in 1945 dedicated his book of that title to Pintor's memory.[20]

Their friendship also embraced a German employee working at the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France, the art historian and literary critic Werner Haftmann (1912–99), who had been working for the German Institute of Art History (Deutsches Kunsthistorisches Institut) in Florence, maintaining contact with antifascist artistic circles.[21] Through Pintor's mediation, Haftmann met Einaudi and his staff. He was the first to translate into German Elio Vittorini's *Conversazione in Sicilia* (Conversations in Sicily), which appeared in neutral Switzerland in 1943 under the title *Tränen im Wein*; Haftmann also helped Vittorini to hide from German persecutors during the German occupation.[22]

BALBO'S LETTER OF 10 JULY 1943

A letter that Balbo wrote to Pintor in July 1943 gives interesting insight into Balbo's concrete search within Hitler's Germany for allies for political change, dreaming of a Europe other than a nazified continent. It is worth reproducing long passages of this letter, including the hints about its material circumstances, for a better understanding of its message and of Balbo's social background and personality:

10 July

Dearest Giaime,

Preamble:

As you see I don't know how to use this writing paper, it is difficult for me ... small abstract furies snake through my writing hand. It is my destiny; since I was born I have never had the right writing paper for me ...

Body:

This part entitled "body" should have, in order to worthily continue the metaphor, the further specification of "snake," i.e. of the animal that has the longest body.

In fact, as you have imagined, I attempted to condense into four days the whole possible Germany. The non-man, reduced to a single night out of four of actual sleep, took revenge

[20] Pintor, *Doppio diario, 1936–1943*, 111 and 151. Felice Balbo, *L'uomo senza miti* (Turin, 1945).

[21] Monica Biasiolo, *Giaime Pintor und die deutsche Kultur: Auf der Suche nach komplementären Stimmen* (Heidelberg, 2010), 402–5.

[22] Vittorini once hid under Haftmann's bed in the Hotel Principi di Piemonte in Turin. The episode was related by Haftmann's wife, Evelyn Haftmann, during an interview of 21 Sept. 2007 with Monica Biasiolo. Ibid., 488.

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and made me experience the technical expertise of a Wiesbaden dentist. It doesn't matter. I achieved a great deal in those four days and perhaps it will also be important. I better understand your "Comment on a German Soldier";[23] we must discuss this again because it seems to me a very important path (I am writing everything a little crookedly because I am in bed with a touch of angina but I am already feeling better). It would take too long to identify everyone I met and with whom I managed to speak despite my shaky German vocabulary. But I must tell you, at least, that my impression is essentially a positive one: among those people I have found Pablo and Hemingway, the lack of books did not make them turn stupid at all but has only made them humble and ready to receive and recognize the truth; they may be at great risk only if we stop. And only if *we* do not stop can we give them more than Chianti and sunshine. I have realized that they are ready to welcome the Man with the same impetus with which, if we become traitors, they would become wild beasts—tanned by our sun and drunk on our Chianti. And then there are the women. The women that I had already spoken to you about and that were also for me a wonderful surprise . . .

I have seen various other girls in the cafés and I am convinced, in conclusion, that we have an america [*sic*] in Europe and I visited it during those four days and wish I had been there longer. Sooner or later we must find a way to stay there at least for a few years. We will make Europe there.

Coda

I still don't know anything about Gap because I am in bed.

Soon I will be on leave. Write to me.

Yours,

Cicino[24]

Summarizing with enthusiasm a sort of reconnaissance expedition through Germany, the letter conveys the sense of urgency of *political* action combined with a moral renewal. The phrase "they may be at great risk only if we stop" suggests the interpretation of "they" as German conspiratorial groups plotting against Hitler. Was Balbo on an underground political mission on behalf of antifascist groups? Or did some military officers, in preparation for the *coup d'état* against Mussolini, send Balbo to Germany to survey the lay of the land in anticipation of such a case? Or both at once? Balbo had started to cooperate with the underground Italian

[23] Balbo refers to Pintor's essay "Commento a un soldato tedesco," *Primato*, 2/3 (Feb. 1941), 5–6; repr. in Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa, 1939–1943*, 73–8.

[24] Letter by Felice Balbo, signed with his nickname "Cicino," to Giaime Pintor, 10 July [1943], Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Archivio Giaime Pintor (AGP), Busta 2, Fasc. 63, original emphasis. This letter has been partially published in a footnote in Maria Cecilia Calabri, *Il costante piacere di vivere: Vita di Giaime Pintor* (Turin, 2007), 587. Despite a remark on his own modest German-language skills, Balbo could probably speak German. See Pintor's letter of 29 August 1942 to General Gelich, in Pintor, *Doppio diario*, 172.

Communist Party after coming back from Albania, presumably through contacts with communist cells at Fiat, the large automobile company in Turin where he had been employed as a manager in 1939.[25] In December 1945, he declared, "As soon as I converted [to Catholicism] and still before I got in touch with the Catholic Communist Movement, I joined the PC [Communist Party] and worked with them."[26] In late 1942, Balbo met in Rome an underground group of Catholic communists, and joined the movement. The Cattolici Comunisti relied on both Christian social traditions and on Marxism as tools for fighting injustice.[27] In spring 1943, Balbo avoided arrest at a meeting of the Catholic communists' group only because he happened to be out of town on that occasion.[28] In March 1943, workers went on mass strike at several plants in and near Turin, Fiat included.[29] After the defeats in all military theatres of operations, the homeland strikes were a clear sign that the Fascist regime had definitively lost the support of the population. The underground Italian Communist Party numbered only about five thousand to seven thousand members in 1943.[30]

Before Mussolini was overthrown on 25 July of that year, the communist leadership decided to build small action groups called GAP—*gruppi d'azione patriottica* (groups for patriotic action)—and set their organizational structure and name. The communist leader Giorgio Amendola later posted a circular of May 1943, formulated by Antonio Roasio, with the instruction of building "patriots' action groups" (*gruppi di azione dei patrioti*).[31] On 10 June 1943, the

[25] Giovanni Invitto, *Felice Balbo: Il superamento delle ideologie* (Rome, 1988), 10.

[26] Ibid.

[27] See Nicola Ricci, *Cattolici e marxismo: Filosofia e politica in Augusto del Noce, Felice Balbo e Franco Rodano* (Milan, 2008); Carlo Felice Casula, *Cattolici-comunisti e sinistra cristiana (1938–1945)* (Bologna, 1976); Giovanni Invitto, *Le idee di Felice Balbo: Una filosofia pragmatica dello sviluppo* (Bologna, 1979). See also Daniela Saresella, "The Dialogue between Catholics and Communists in Italy during the 1960s," *Journal of the history of Ideas*, 75/3 (July 2014), 493–512.

[28] For biographical information see Felice Balbo, *Opere 1945–1964* (Turin, 1966), xiv–xviii; Invitto, *Felice Balbo*; Turbanti, "Felice Balbo."

[29] See Nicola Gallerano *et al.*, "Crisi di regime e crisi sociale," in Gianfranco Bertolo *et al.*, ed., *Operai e contadini nella crisi italiana del 1943–1944* (Milan, 1974), 3–78; Tim Mason, "The Turin Strikes of March 1943," in Mason, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class*, ed. Jane Caplan (Cambridge, 1995), 274–94.

[30] Marcello Flores and Nicola Gallerano, *Sul PCI: Un'interpretazione storica* (Bologna, 1992), 60–61.

[31] Giorgio Amendola, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano 1921–1943* (Rome, 1978), 550. See also Ernesto Ragionieri, "Il partito comunista," in Leo Valiani, Gianfranco Bianchi, and Ernesto Ragionieri, *Azionisti cattolici e comunisti nella resistenza* (Milan, 1971), 301–431, at 329; Pietro Secchia and Filippo Frassati, *Storia della Resistenza: La guerra di liberazione in Italia 1943–1945*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1965), 1: 62 and 391–3; Mario Giovana, "I Gruppi di

underground newspaper of the Italian Communist Party, *l'Unità*, appealed to the citizens: "Let's build the squads of patriotic action!" ("Formiamo le squadre d'azione patriottica!"), with the declared aim of defending the population against the Fascist squads by force of arms.[32] When they were actually formed, each GAP was usually a group of three to five persons pursuing urban terrorism.[33] In his novel *Uomini e no* (Men and Not Men), Vittorini gave impressive insights into the psychology and activities of GAPs in Milan during the German occupation, also describing atrocities by the German SS and Gestapo.[34] The first GAPs were put together in Friuli, the north-eastern region on the border of Yugoslavia. At the same time, Italian and Yugoslavian partisans there constituted the nucleus of the first Garibaldi partisan brigade.

Balbo's enigmatic words at the end of his letter of 10 July 1943 to Pintor—"I still don't know anything about Gap because I am in bed"—can plausibly be interpreted as referring to such new developments in the antifascist opposition. Less plausible—but not to be excluded unless new documents come to light—is the hypothesis that Balbo simply referred to a nickname, or to the small French town of Gap in the region of Hautes-Alpes, the buffer zone between the French territories occupied by the Italians and those occupied by the Germans.[35] In my conjecture, the precise fact that Italian troops were billeted in the town of Gap could offer Balbo a safe protection in writing down the acronym in case his correspondence was checked.

As for Pintor, at that time he was involved in plans for a *coup d'état* against Mussolini by members of the aristocracy—or he was at least well informed about them.[36] In the essay he wrote in October 1943 one reads,

> In the autumn of 1942 ... members of the royal family contacted directly, or through mediators, representatives of the opposition. A whole network of inquiries was established in order to identify the forces in favour of an initiative by the King to eliminate Mussolini

Azione Patriottica: caratteri e sviluppi di uno strumento di guerriglia urbana," in *La guerra partigiana in Italia e in Europa* (Brescia, 2001), 201–15, at 201; Claudio Pavone, *Una guerra civile: Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Turin, 1991), 493–505.

32 About the rhetoric of "patriots" Philip E. Cooke writes, "The concept of the nation was at the core of the partisan press, with frequent reference to past glories, above all the Risorgimento." Philip E. Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (New York, 2011), 29.

33 Pavone, *Una guerra civile*, 493–4. See also the homepage of the Italian National Partisan Association, ANPI: www.anpi.it/gap, accessed 28 Oct. 2014.

34 Elio Vittorini, *Uomini e no* (Turin, 1945).

35 According to the map attached to the armistice document of 24 June 1940, Gap lies in the region under Italian responsibility for the control of military equipment of the non-occupied French territory. Rainero, *La commission italienne d'armistice avec la France*, Tables 2, 5, 7, at 400–1.

36 See Calabri, *Il costante piacere di vivere*, 392–5.

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and reach the end of the war, and to evaluate the chances of success of such a plan ... In the spring of 1943 the idea of a *coup d'état* passed from the stage of a hypothesis to that of a project.[37]

WHICH EUROPE?

For Balbo and Pintor's idea of Europe, the reference point was the United States of America, as portrayed in Pavese's and Vittorini's essays and translations, as well as in American movies, which were highly popular in Italy, to the Fascists' annoyance. "America" was the symbol of freedom and vitality. Commenting, for example, on the works of the Armenian American writer William Saroyan, Vittorini had highlighted Saroyan's faith in each human being and in humanity in general against the background of multiethnic America; in 1947, Balbo referred to Saroyan's "racial and universal men" as examples of spontaneous, natural men without myths.[38] Surprising nonetheless is Balbo's quite daring comparison between National Socialist Germany and America. Presumably he considered Germany such a *tabula rasa* after ten years of Hitler's dictatorship that people there, deprived of freedom and intellectual tools but not turned "stupid" ("the lack of books did not make them turn stupid at all"), would be ready for a new beginning after the demise of National Socialist hegemony. To better understand this comparison it is useful to take a look at Pintor's essay on Vittorini's anthology of American writers, *Americana*.[39] Pintor wrote his essay in the early months of 1943, dedicating it to Balbo.[40] In their continuous, multilayered conversation,

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37 Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 167–8.

38 Felice Balbo, "Il laboratorio dell'uomo," in Balbo, *Opere 1945–1964*, 105–200, at 171. Vittorini, *Diario in pubblico*, 98–9. For a detailed treatment of the subject see Gamal Morsi, "*America ist immer woanders*": *Die Rezeption des American Dream in Italien* (Marburg, 2001). On Balbo's transition from Americanism to anti-Americanism in the late 1940s see Invitto, *Le idee di Felice Balbo*, 30–34. In the 1930s, Vittorini had the translator Lucia Morpurgo Rodocanachi produce several literal translations of texts by American writers that he then elaborated and published under his own name without any mention of the collaboration—often even without paying the contracted fee. See Andrea Aveto, "Traduzioni d'autore e no: Elio Vittorini e la 'segreta' collaborazione con Lucia Rodocanachi," in Franco Contorbia, ed., *Lucia Rodocanachi: Le carte, la vita* (Florence, 2006), 153–92.

39 Elio Vittorini, ed., *Americana: Raccolta di narratori dalle origini ai nostri giorni*, with an introduction by Emilio Cecchi (Milan, 1942). On the censored edition of 1941 see Vittorini, *Diario in pubblico*, 119; Edoardo Esposito, "Per la storia di *Americana*," in Esposito, ed., *Il dèmone dell'anticipazione: Cultura, letteratura, editoria in Elio Vittorini* (Milan, 2009), 31–44.

40 The essay "Americana" was published only after Pintor's death; now in Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 148–59. See Calabri, *Il costante piacere di vivere*, 363–8.

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Balbo's letter of 10 July 1943 was a kind of response to thoughts on America by Pintor, who had highlighted the overall positive attitude to life (*positività*) of the American people, despite problems and mistakes. For Pintor, Ernest Hemingway had given, in his *A Farewell to Arms*, the "first, sure example of man being capable of getting rid of customs no longer valid, and of freeing himself from the ambushes of history by means of his own strength."[41] Hemingway, who had been an American war correspondent during the Spanish Civil War, overtly sympathizing with the Republicans, had become a symbol of the struggle for liberation. Alluding to antifascists he had just met in Germany, Balbo used this symbol while writing his letter of 10 July 1943: "my impression is essentially a positive one: among those people I have found Pablo and Hemingway." Pablo—Joe in the original—was a character in an American movie by Howard Hawks, *Only Angels Have Wings*, shown in Italy under the title *Avventurieri dell'aria*.[42] Balbo wrote about the emblematic character in his book *Il laboratorio dell'uomo* of 1946.[43]

Balbo's comparison between Germany and America ("we have an america in Europe and I visited it during those four days")[44] was already present in Pintor's essay. Paradoxically, Germany seemed to Pintor both the "natural antithesis" of America and, at the same time, as a young country, "its mirror image" in Europe.[45] Corruption and purity were frighteningly contiguous, "an enduring madness leading the Germans astray, forcing them into adventures inhumane and difficult."[46] America represented for Pintor an ideal, possibly disconnected from the "historical phenomenon USA and its current forms," but internalized and imagined as in the dreams of the first emigrants and of "whoever has decided to defend at the price of pains and error the dignity of the human condition."[47]

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41 Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 151. Donald Heiney has published his own translation of Pintor's essay "Americana" in the appendix to his volume. Donald Heiney, *America in Modern Italian Literature* (New Brunswick, 1964), 234–45.

42 Howard Hawks, *Only Angels Have Wings* (Columbia Pictures, 1939). On the popularity of American movies in Italy see Lorenzo Quaglietti, *Ecco i Nostri: L'invasione del cinema americano in Italia* (Turin, 1991). On Hawks see Robert B. Pippin, *Hollywood Westerns and American Myth: The Importance of Howard Hawks and John Ford for Political Philosophy* (New Haven and London, 2010).

43 Balbo, *Opere 1945–1964*, 170–75. See also Giovanni Turbanti, "Felice Balbo: Il cristianesimo nella sfida della 'modernità'," in *Storia e Futuro*, 19 (2009), 9, at http://storiaefuturo.eu/felice-balbo-cristianesimo-sfida-modernita, accessed 10 Dec. 2014.

44 Note that Balbo does not capitalize "america," presumably in order not to attract the censor's attention.

45 Cf. Christof Mauch and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *The United States and Germany during the Twentieth Century: Competition and Convergence* (Washington, DC zand New York, 2010).

46 Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 154.

47 Ibid., 159; translation by Donald Heiney in *America in Modern Italian Literature*, 245.

RISKY THOUGHTS

Balbo's views on the political situation in Europe can be extensively traced in a notebook he used in May 1941 at the military hospital in Bari, southern Italy, where he was recovering from the serious bout of amoebiasis contracted in Albania. The invasion of Greece by the Italian army in October 1940 had failed; the Italians were pushed back by the Greek army so that the German ally intervened, occupying Greece (without Crete) and Yugoslavia by the end of April 1941. At this time, the Third Reich demonstrated overwhelming military power. On the Continent, it controlled France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Norway in the west; and Austria, Czechoslovakia, and west Poland in the east. German economists were already developing the idea of a European economic community based on a "greater economic zone" (*Großraumwirtschaft*) under the leadership of the "Axis" powers.[48]

In a small notebook of graph paper with a brown cloth cover, Balbo, still convalescent, wrote down his philosophical thoughts in paragraphs numbered from 1 to 70.[49] This preliminary work was to constitute the backbone of his book *L'uomo senza miti* (Man without Myths), published in 1945 by Einaudi. If one turns the notebook, now stored in an archive in Bologna, upside down and rotates it 180 degrees, a page with addresses is followed by further paragraphs in the same handwriting dealing with politics—presumably less accessible to the eyes of curious potential informers. The text on this hidden side of the notebook starts with the sentence "Let's fight against the Pharisee and the beast," a biblical reference to the Pharisees, attacked by Jesus as hypocritical observers of the Law (Matthew 23), and to the Beast of the Apocalypse, a powerful, corrupting idol (Revelations 13–20).[50] After denouncing the "present, deep moral crisis" that

[48] See, for example, Josef Winschuh, *Der Unternehmer im neuen Europa* (Berlin and Charlottenburg, 1941); Alfred Oesterheld, *Wirtschaftsraum Europa* (Oldenburg/Berlin, 1942).

[49] Felice Balbo's literary estate is held in the archive Fondo Felice Balbo (FFB) of the Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII, Bologna. The unpublished notebook mentioned has the archival code Serie B, B1, 13.

[50] Ibid. Balbo will come back to these images in *L'uomo senza miti* and *Il laboratorio dell'uomo* (Turin, 1946). The opposition of many Italian Catholics to the alliance with National Socialist Germany, concentrated in the image of the beast, appears in an informer's report of 29 August 1939 about the opinion expressed inside the Azione Cattolica Italiana, a major lay Catholic movement, quoted in Renato Moro, "Die italienischen Katholiken und der Krieg der 'Achse'," in Lutz Klinkhammer, Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi, and Thomas Schlemmer, eds., *Die "Achse" im Krieg: Politik, Ideologie und Kriegführung, 1939–1945* (Paderborn, 2010), 273–90, at 283. The evocative image of the beasts, recurrent in Balbo's unpublished notebooks, is also reminiscent of Hitler's epithet in the Anglo-Saxon world, for example in the 1939 movie "Hitler: Beast of Berlin." This movie was produced in the

entails the urgent need for "rebuilding man … the entire man … the man in freedom. Who will have in himself *his* authority," Balbo got down to details:

> If forms of Nazism and Fascism exist, it is because humanity embraces them and in fact has created them. They are not imposed from an outward perspective, but it is man himself that imposes them. It is, however, true that within man there appears to be a resistant force as well: England fights against forms of Nazism and Fascism. One has to wonder if it is really fighting Nazism and Fascism or rather the countries that pose a threat to its existence. I don't consider that the English intellectual tone continues to be as moral or liberal as it once was in Old England. The targets and ideals of the war had to be changed in order to convince the people. In Britain, the liberal system no longer inspires much trust as the Beast has also infiltrated it, albeit with greater, hypocritical, human spoils. Man is wolf to his fellow man: this is the point that we have reached today where the beasts are attacking each other. And so this, unfortunately, is the reality of the war where, as long as the forms of Fascism did not prove to be frightening *because of weapons*, they were allowed to carry on, the Europeans too concerned about that "comfort" that has epidemically invaded all countries.
>
> Who knows if the English, placed in Sweden, would have behaved like the detested Swedes, or placed in France, as the French? In other words England wasn't that interested in adoring God until it found out that Hell existed. Similarly, this was how it was for the entire militant antifascist movement.[51]

When Balbo was writing of Fascism and Nazism in the plural form in 1941, he took into account not only their specific national characteristics in different countries,[52] but also observed them more generally from a historical and philosophical distance. They became phenomena that could be generalized and analysed. Implicit in Balbo's thoughts is an intellectual and political opposition that looks to Great Britain—but with disillusion, as, in Balbo's view, liberalism has lost part of the population's support there.[53] He believes that hypocritical idealistic motives conceal the true motivation: nationalistic self-defence, which made, in his eyes, the British not better than French collaborationists or laxly neutral Swedes. Implicitly following Oswald Spengler's diagnosis of Western decay—a commonplace at this time—Balbo blamed the "Europeans" for seeking

USA in 1939 by Producers Distributing Corporation, telling the story of anti-Nazi activists, based on the novel *Goose Step* by Shepard Traube. The movie soon had to change its title to *Beasts of Berlin* and eventually to *Hell's Devils*.

51 Balbo, unpublished notebook, 1941, FFB, 5–7, reverse side, original emphasis.

52 See Enzo Collotti, *Fascismo, fascismi* (Florence, 1989)—with a large bibliography. For Italy see Patrick Bernhard, "Renarrating Italian Fascism: New Directions in the Historiography of a European Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History*, 23/1 (2014), 151–63.

53 See Thomas Linehan, *British Fascism 1918–39: Parties, Ideology and Culture* (Manchester, 2000).

only "comfort," thereby losing moral strength. In 1931, Spengler (1880–1936) had criticized Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism:

> Its ideal was *utility*, and utility only. Whatever was useful to "humanity" was a legitimate element of Culture, *was* in fact Culture. The rest was luxury, superstition, or barbarism.
>
> Now, this utility was utility conducive to the "happiness of the greatest number," and this happiness consisted in not-doing—for such, in the last analysis, is the doctrine of Bentham, Spencer, and Mill. The aim of mankind was held to consist in relieving the individual of as much of the work as possible and putting the burden on the machine.[54]

Balbo went on in his notes, "Men sensing an absence of true living forces turned to a remedy of the state, the state's intervention in the economy, etc. But neither democratic nor corporate system will ever restore what these men have lost: humanity."[55] Similarly, another contemporary philosopher referenced on the issue of the modern crisis is Johan Huizinga (1872–1945), a Dutch antifascist. His book *In de schaduwen van morgen* of 1935 had been courageously published by Einaudi in Italian translation under the title *La crisi della civiltà* in 1937.[56] Huizinga critically quoted Spengler's *The Hour of Decision* and *Man and Technics* and pleaded for "the new ethics in which the opposition between collectivism and individualism will have been dissolved."[57] Ethics was crucial for Balbo and Huizinga—not so for Spengler.

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54 Oswald Spengler, *Man and Technics: A Contribution to a Philosophy of Life*, trans. C. F. Atkinson (New York, 1932), 5–6, original emphasis. See Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge and New York, 1984). For Spengler building his theses on Nietzsche see Mario Bosincu, "Immaginario antiprogressista e mito politico in 'Der Mensch und die Technik' di Oswald Spengler', *Giornale Critico di Storia delle Idee*, 2/3 (2010), 127–40. Spengler's *Der Mensch und die Technik* was published in Germany in 1931 and translated into Italian the same year (by Corbaccio in Milan). His *Jahre der Entscheidung* (The Hour of Decision) was published in Germany in 1933 and in Italy in 1934 (by Bompiani in Milan). On Spengler's reception in Italy see Michael Thöndl, *Oswald Spengler in Italien* (Leipzig, 2010).

55 Balbo, unpublished notebook, 1941, FFB, 10, reverse side.

56 Historian of science George Sarton did not know of the Einaudi translation in the making when he wrote, "It is a great pity, by the way, that this book will hardly be available in the countries where national hallucinations are cultivated with the greatest intensity, and where its reading would be most profitable." George Sarton, "Review of Jan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of To-morrow*," *Isis*, 26 (1937), 487–9, at 489. See also Guido Bonsaver, *Censorship and Literature in Fascist Italy* (Toronto, 2007), 246–7.

57 Johan Huizinga, *In the Shadow of To-morrow*, trans. J. H. Huizinga (London and Toronto, 1936), 216. Norberto Bobbio, philosopher and member of the Einaudi team, remembered some decades later that Italian readers had interpreted Huizinga's book as antifascist and as an "antidote to Spengler." See Norberto Bobbio, *Trent'anni di storia della cultura a Torino (1920–1950)* (Turin, 1977), 76.

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The Italian philosopher to whom Balbo, especially in his youth, owed most, was Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), who had, indeed, an enormous influence on generations of Italians.[58] In his *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (1932), dedicated to Thomas Mann,[59] Croce gave a dialectical interpretation of history as a continuous struggle for liberty, implying liberty as expression of the spirit and "moral ideal."[60] Even after the bloody First World War, he saw everywhere in Europe signs of a European "new consciousness, of a new nationality" in a "process of European union" conceived as the dialectical synthesis of all particular European nationalisms.[61]

Balbo, writing in the hidden side of his notebook in May 1941, after a few pessimistic thoughts on the masses, counterbalanced by the emphasis on the pedagogical role of the intellectuals, came to his final remark on Europe:

> If, as seems likely, the continent of Europe will be Germany, Italy will have the chance to play a crucial role. "Graecia capta etc." A *moral action* has therefore all the greater value and importance. In order to save Italy, to save Germany, to offer the only vital contribution we can give for now.[62]

Balbo's quoting the famous sentence from Horace's letter to Augustus—"Greece, the captive, made her savage victor captive, and brought the arts into rustic Latium"[63] ("Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes / intulit agresti Latio")—indicates that Balbo believed in the civilizing influence of cultivated Italy (in the role of Graecia) upon savage Germany (in the role of ancient Latium),

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58 Giovanni Invitto identifies in Balbo's philosophy a connection between his "juvenile *crocianesimo* and the American philosophical culture represented by J. Dewey's pragmatism." Invitto, *Le idee di Felice Balbo*, 22. See also Francesco De Bartolomeis, "L'uomo senza miti" (review), *Il Ponte*, 1/9 (1945), 848–50; Ginzburg, *The Things We Used to Say*, 122–4. Balbo overcame his *crocianesimo* when he opted for Catholic communism. On Croce's influence see also Nello Ajello, *Intellettuali e PCI: 1944–1958* (Bari, 1979), 3–23; Luisa Mangoni, "Prefazione," in Leone Ginzburg, *Scritti*, ed. Domenico Zucàro (Turin, 2000), xi–xlvi, at xiv–xv.

59 Benedetto Croce, *Storia d'Europa nel secolo decimonono* (Bari, 1932); Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Henry Furst (New York, 1933). Croce placed under the dedication to Thomas Mann an epigraph from Dante's *Divine Comedy* featuring the spiritual affinity between Vergil and Dante.

60 Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 10.

61 Ibid., 360.

62 Balbo, unpublished notebook, 1941, FFB, 13, reverse side, original emphasis. It is noteworthy that this passage, introduced by an asterisk, is lacking in the typewritten version of the notebook kept in the same archival box, perhaps as a sign of later disillusion.

63 Horace, *Satires, Epistles, Ars Poetica*, trans. H. R. Fairclough, the Loeb Classical Library 194 (Cambridge, MA and London, 1991), 409.

following Croce, who saw *Romanità* as the historical foundation of Europe and rejected the Germanic racist theories.[64]

The dispute about the primacy of *Germanesimo* or *Romanità* had immediate political and cultural consequences, and Mussolini's government was aware of this. In January 1941, the Italian minister Bottai published in the journal he directed—which had the programmatic name *Primato*—an article exhorting both Italians and Germans "to look at each other with new eyes," after admitting a widespread lack of mutual understanding despite the traditional *germanofilia* of Italian scholars, technicians, army members, and politicians.[65] He went on in his attempt to equilibrate the two ideologies, noticeably making use of Croce's concept of consciousness: "We need to rediscover *Germanesimo* and *Romanità*, to feel them again as facts of our consciousness . . . as factors of the entire ancient and modern civilization of our continent, and therefore of the world itself."[66] Fascism's imperialistic and Eurocentric view could not be clearer. But the fears that hid behind such a vision become evident in the closing words of the essay, which tried to exorcize the danger of being swallowed up by the stronger ally:

> These two worlds that we want to bind in an alliance of spirits are two distinct worlds. And this distinction of values, of characters, of functions should always be considered if, from mutual integration, we seek to enter not into a dangerous and provisional confusion but into a sustainable organic fusion of intent and action.[67]

In his private notes of May 1941, Balbo seems to share the anxiety of the establishment about the future of Europe under National Socialist Germany. In this context, it is useful to remember how shocked Italian public opinion had been by the Wehrmacht's invasion of France in 1940: barbarians winning over the exquisite, albeit decadent, French culture. Through the alliance with Germany, and with some admittedly not very successful battles, Italy had come to be the winning side, and a massive Fascist propaganda underlined this fact.[68] But the

64 Croce, *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 50.

65 Giuseppe Bottai, "Latinità e germanesimo," *Primato*, 2/1 (Jan. 1941), 2–3.

66 Ibid., 3.

67 Ibid. Being unsuccessful in his endeavours, Bottai turned to the Italian German philosopher Ernesto Grassi, who presented Mussolini a paper in September 1941 and founded an Italian cultural institute in Berlin in December 1942. See the chapter "*Deutschtum* or *Romanità:* The Humanism Debate and the Fate of the Latin–Germanic Synthesis," in Benjamin G. Martin, "A New Order for European Culture: The German–Italian Axis and the Reordering of International Cultural Exchange, 1936–1943" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 2006, UMI no 3213563), 304–60.

68 For several examples of triumphalism in the Fascist press about the victory over France see Rainero, *La commission italienne d'armistice avec la France*, 39–44. In contrast, Rainero quotes also Italo Calvino's down-to-earth short story "Gli avanguardisti a Mentone" of 1953. Ibid., 44–5.

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German ally was proving very mighty: this boded no good. Germany's rapid conquests showed that *hers* was the true continental power, and that, seemingly, "the continent of Europe will be Germany," in Balbo's words. The opinion that "after all Hitler has united the Continent and that Germany is Europe" was shared by US isolationists, as reported by the alarmed German exile writer Erika Mann (1905–69) at the Congress of the International PEN Club in London in September 1941.[69]

Meanwhile, the alliance between Germany and Italy lost support among the Italian population as the war spread and dragged on.[70] The Germans were aware of this; for example, a weekly report of the German delegation to the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France, sent on 23 January 1941 to the headquarters in Wiesbaden, reads, "in case of further setbacks the [Italian] inner political system is in danger."[71] Nevertheless, they saw the main responsibility for the crisis lying in the Italian Fascist leadership and in the regime's misleading propaganda based on Roman heritage:

> Instead of holding up to the [Italian] people a mirror of their failings, sweeping away misgovernment in Party, Army, and State with an iron broom, newspapers and posters on walls have been daily proclaiming for eighteen years that nothing comparable to today's fascist Italy has been seen since ancient Rome.[72]

In this judgement was implicit the self-confident assumption that the German way, "with an iron broom," was proving to be the right one. Balbo's aversion to ideologies and rhetoric—what he calls "myths"—had its origin in this omnipresent Fascist propaganda.[73]

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69 Erika Mann, [Address to the Congress], in Hermon Ould, ed., *Writers in Freedom: A Symposium, Based on the XVII International Congress of the P.E.N. Club held in London in September 1941* (Port Washington, NY, 1941), 84. The International PEN (Poets, Essayists, and Novelists) Club was founded in London in 1921.

70 See Simona Colarizi, *L'opinione degli italiani sotto il regime* (Rome, 1991); Lutz Klinkhammer, Amedeo O. Guerrazzi, and Thomas Schlemmer, "Der Krieg der 'Achse': zur Einführung," in Klinkhammer, Guerrazzi, and Schlemmer, *Die "Achse" im Krieg*, 11–31, at 12. On the opposition of Catholic circles to the war see Moro, "Die italienischen Katholiken und der Krieg der 'Achse'."

71 Bundesarchiv–Militärarchiv Freiburg (BArch-MA), RW 34/10/265–270, Deutsche Verbindungsdelegation bei der Ital. Waffenstillstandskommission, "Bericht ueber die Woche 16.1.–23.1.1941," Turin, 23 Jan. 1941.

72 BArch-MA, RW 34/10/269.

73 On myth in fascism see Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London, 1991); Claudio Fogu, *The Historic Imaginary* (Toronto, 2003). On the convergences and divergences between Fascism and Italian Catholicism concerning the myth of Rome see Valerio De Cesaris, "The Catholic Church and Italian Fascism at the Breaking Point: A Cultural Perspective," *Telos*, 164 (2013), 151–69.

Writing in his notebook the words "Italy will have the chance to play a crucial role," Balbo seemed to share the general attitude of Italian intellectuals in cultivating political "illusions," as historian Luisa Mangoni puts it: "firstly, in believing the war would be avoided; then, that it would be short; and finally, that Italy would have the chance to play in it a prominent cultural and political role."[74] But for Balbo, what was needed was a *moral* action originating from Italy to save Europe. It is remarkable that Balbo's salvation plans through ethical renewal involved Germany as well, relying on those Germans who—like the anonymous ones he contacted on his travels in July 1943—would welcome a political change and plot for it. These could be members of military or diplomatic oppositional circles, since Balbo's contacts could have result from his service at the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France, which offered him at least the opportunity of his reconnaissance mission. In fact he mentioned Wiesbaden—where the headquarters of the German Committee for the Armistice with France was located—in his letter of July 1943. His sadly visionary words about the reaction of the German army in the case of the termination of the Axis Alliance by Italy seem to confirm this hypothesis. In expressionist apocalyptical style, Balbo described to Pintor the consequences of such a step: "I have realized that they are ready to welcome the Man with the same impetus with which, if we become traitors, they would become wild beasts—tanned by our sun and drunk on our Chianti," and urged action. In October 1943, Pintor wrote down the chronicle of the *coup d'état* against Mussolini, maintaining that during its far too long preparation "the absurd theory that the Germans would spontaneously withdraw was still credited."[75] Balbo told him that such a theory was definitely absurd.

MULTIPURPOSE JOURNEYS

Because of his position on the Italian Committee for the Armistice with France, Pintor, too, made frequent trips to Wiesbaden. He travelled by train and usually had the simple but sensitive task of delivering documents. Waiting for hours or days for German responses to bring back to Italy, he was allowed to leave Wiesbaden only in civilian clothes, if he had them with him.[76] On behalf of Einaudi's publishing house, he negotiated with the philosopher Karl Jaspers, unpopular with the National Socialists, during one such trip.[77]

74 Luisa Mangoni, "Introduzione," in Mangoni, ed., "*Primato*" *1940–1943: Antologia* (Bari, 1977), 29–51, at 33.

75 Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 169.

76 Pintor, *Doppio diario*, 92.

77 Mangoni, *Pensare i libri*, 99–100.

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In the autumn of 1942, Pintor was invited to participate as an official member of the Italian delegation to the European Writers' Congress organized by the National Socialist regime. That congress, the third meeting of this kind, took place in Weimar from 7 to 11 October 1942, bringing together writers representative of Axis-friendly and neutral states with the aim of creating a European cultural and literary common ground.[78] Countries participating were Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal (probably), Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.[79] The European Writers' Union had just been founded in March 1942 in Weimar, as a National Socialist alternative to the International PEN Club, which had held in London its seventeenth congress in September 1941, "a gathering of the free spirits in the world's capital, all fighting for democracy," in the characterization of Erika Mann.[80] For the National Socialist European Writers' Congress all the funding came from the German Propaganda Ministry, which tried to keep its sponsorship secret.[81] The German Embassy in Rome proposed inviting Pintor and Vittorini, along with nine other Italian writers.

Vittorini was the only one the Department of Education, led by Minister Bottai, tried to take off the list.[82] The publication of Vittorini's novels *Il garofano rosso* and *Conversazione in Sicilia*, as well as his anthology of American writers, *Americana*, had run into problems with the censors. In 1947, Vittorini explained the reasons for the censorship of *Il garofano rosso* as follows:

> the book was not authorized because the censorship of '35–'36 (like that of '33–'34 before) did not want the slightest hint of motives for being fascist other than the official ones, nor of the youthful enthusiasm for the criminal aspects that fascism had actually exhibited (and now was about to exhibit in Ethiopia and Spain). It was about fascism with its

78 Benjamin G. Martin, "'European Literature' in the Nazi New Order: The Cultural Politics of the European Writers' Union, 1941–3," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48/3 (July 2013), 486–508; Frank-Rutger Hausmann, "Kollaborierende Intellektuelle in Weimar: Die 'Europäische Schriftsteller-Vereinigung' als 'Anti-P.E.N.-Club'," in Hellmut Th. Seemann, ed., *Europa in Weimar: Visionen eines Kontinents* (Göttingen, 2008), 399–422; François Dufay, *Le voyage d'automne: Octobre 1941, des écrivains français en Allemagne* (Paris, 2000); Mirella Serri, *Il breve viaggio: Giaime Pintor nella Weimar nazista* (Venice, 2002), 141–75 (with a large Appendix containing Italian government documents on this initiative, at 197–246); for an informed response to Serri see Calabri, "Della dissimulazione onesta," 141–83, esp. 176–81. See also Pintor, *Doppio diario*, 124 and 173–4; Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, xvii–xviii; 133–8.

79 See Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *"Dichte Dichter, tage nicht!" Die europäische Schriftsteller-Vereinigung in Weimar, 1941–1948* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004), 38–9, 238.

80 Mann, [Address to the Congress], 84.

81 Hausmann, "Kollaborierende Intellektuelle in Weimar," 405.

82 See the note of 28 Sept. 1942 written by the Sottosegretario di Stato L. Russo for Mussolini, published in transcription in Serri, *Il breve viaggio*, 230–31.

bloodthirsty, violent aspects, or its noisily defiant appearance, which, in the eyes of us boys, unfortunately meant a vibrant appearance.[83]

Vittorini, a brilliant and innovative writer, editor, and typographer, as well as self-taught translator from English, had supported fascism in his youth as a revolutionary social movement, though he later criticized Mussolini's backing of Franco in the Spanish Civil War. From 1936 on, he moved from a so-called *fascismo di sinistra* (left-wing fascism) to communism, taking part in underground opposition groups as early as 1942.[84] Nevertheless, his membership in the National Fascist Party (Partito Nazionale Fascista) has given rise to many, even recent, disputes since the Second World War, as Vittorini became a leading personality of the Italian Communist Party during the Resistance and after. Upon receiving the invitation to the Weimar congress, Vittorini asked his underground group leader whether or not he should participate, receiving an affirmative answer.[85] The Italian government, on the other hand, did not want to create a diplomatic controversy over just one writer, so Vittorini was allowed to attend.

In October 1942, the National Socialists began to realize that victory over the Soviet Union would not come as easily as had been thought; Stalingrad had not been conquered, and the winter would soon begin. The German hosts at the congress in Weimar were visibly nervous, the official talks long, the meals simple, and uncertainty about the future palpable—a very different situation compared with the first European Writers' Congress, which had started in October 1941 with a two-and-half-week-long tour through Germany for the

[83] Elio Vittorini, "Prefazione alla prima edizione del 'Garofano rosso'," in Vittorini, *Le opere narrative*, ed. Maria Corti, vol. 1 (Milan, 1974), 423–50, at 447. For a detailed summary of Vittorini's problems with censorship see Bonsaver, *Censorship and Literature in Fascist Italy*, 140–49, 241–51; Bonsaver, "*Conversazione in Sicilia* e la censura fascista," in Esposito, *Il dèmone dell'anticipazione*, 13–29. See also David Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era, 1880–1980: Cultural Industries, Politics and the Public* (Manchester and New York, 1990), 86–7. For a new approach to the subject see Marisa Abby Escolar, "Contaminating Conversions: Narrating Censorship, Translation, Fascism" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Berkeley, 2011, UMI no 3469259).

[84] Michele Rago, "Vittorini e la politica culturale della sinistra," *Menabò*, 10 (1967), 113–27, esp. 116–18; anonymous [Oreste del Buono?], "Diario in pubblico: Il tempo, la società," in Vittorini, *Diario in pubblico*, v–xxiv; Raffaele Crovi, *Il lungo viaggio di Vittorini: Una biografia critica* (Venice, 1998), 209–19.

[85] Vittorini documented this episode in a letter of 29 Jan. 1950 to Valentino Gerratana, the editor of the posthumous collection of Pintor's essays *Il sangue d'Europa*. Elio Vittorini, *Gli anni del "Politecnico": Lettere 1945–1951*, ed. Carlo Minoia (Turin, 1977), 295–6. In later testimony, Vittorini provided additional information in a letter of 26 Nov. 1962 to Donald Heiney. See Crovi, *Il lungo viaggio di Vittorini*, 202.

guests.[86] Both the Italian and the German governments smuggled in informers. It was reported that the Italian delegation had not greeted the German national anthem with the Roman salute and that some high officials of the German Propaganda Department judged that the war would go on for another two or three years.[87]

Pintor wrote a report for the journal *Primato*, which was not published. Although the article did not include sentences like "the congress [was] without results" or "the European writers, who were meeting in Weimar, were the largest numbers of cretins I have ever seen"—assessments he expressed privately—it still contained some clear criticism.[88] On Goebbels's speech and on the aftermath of the event one reads,

> The most important part of the speech was the controversial aspect: in Germany writers who write for aesthetic purposes are despised, the writer who remains outside or behind the times has no right to exist. The minister therefore welcomed the large number of books and other published writings on the war ... The day was again taken up with meetings and concerts, but the morning after I stayed alone in Weimar with Vittorini, and in the city empty of guests and devoid of flags, the symbols of the crisis appeared more evident and obvious. Goethe and Schiller were hidden beneath a hovel of bricks, fake books were displayed in the windows and the women walked alone in the old park in Weimar. With Vittorini, who knows "the offended world", it was easy to talk about those topics that a European literature congress is unable to address; about literature as an honest vocation, and especially about Europe: something that seemed to us too large and uncertain and afflicted, impossible for three hundred gentlemen gathered in Weimar in October 1942 to speak in its name.[89]

Such a "defeatist" view could not be tolerated, even by the editors of *Primato*, and the article was handed back to Pintor.

In it Pintor had also featured Vittorini, who was considered by many contemporaries to be a literary and political alternative to the writers "on command" put forward by the regimes. His *Conversazione in Sicilia* had become legendary in antifascist groups; single phrases like "abstract furies" and "the

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86 On the *Deutschlandrundreise* that took place from 5 to 23 Oct. 1941 see Hausmann, "*Dichte Dichter, tage nicht!*", 107–41. Hausmann remarks that the foreign writers did not notice the presence of the concentration camp Buchenwald close to Weimar—either because they could not have been aware of it, or because they deliberately did not want to. Ibid., 409. On Buchenwald see Jorge Semprún, *Quel beau dimanche* (Paris, 1980).

87 See Serri, *Il breve viaggio*, 237–46.

88 The first sentence is in a note, dated 21 Oct. 1942, written by Pintor for *Primato*'s editors and attached to the article he was submitting. Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 133. The second quotation is from a letter of Pintor's to his family, dated 16 Oct. 1942. Pintor, *Doppio diario*, 173.

89 Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 138.

offended world," and characters like "Gran Lombardo," were popular and immediately recognizable.[90] At the end of the war, it would be no random choice for Einaudi to make Vittorini editor of the innovative weekly newspaper *Il Politecnico*, the most challenging of the publishing house's projects at the time.

Vittorini took the opportunity to prolong his German journey in October 1942. He travelled from Weimar to the Rhineland, investigating reactions to the Allies' bombing. In a letter of 3 November 1942, Pintor asked him about the outcome of this journey, about "Germany as Sicily" (conspiratorial) after experiencing "Germany as Germany" (official). Vittorini answered that he would tell him in person about his "recent impressions of Germany."[91]

EUROPEANISTS AT WORK

Pintor had concluded his report by mentioning the uncertain future of Europe and denying that the Writers' Congress would play any role in it. Some months later, Balbo, too, wrote about the future of Europe. "We will make Europe there"—Italians would establish a different Europe in Germany, an idea not further specified in the letter, which echoed the federalist project expressed in Altiero Spinelli's and Ernesto Rossi's *Manifesto di Ventotene* of 1941, "Per un'Europa libera e unita" ("For a free and united Europe"), as well as the ideas of Christian Europeanist groups.[92] The Einaudi circle was involved in the Europeanist movement in so far as Ginzburg took part in meetings of the European Federalist Movement as soon as he got out of internment.[93] In addition, the Einaudi family was well acquainted with Rossi; Luigi Einaudi, father of Giulio, the publisher, became a member of the movement, contributing to shaping the European federalist program during his exile in Geneva, Switzerland, from September 1943 to December 1944.[94] In August 1943, Pintor had suggested that Einaudi publish "a text, so far clandestine, by Spinelli about European unity,"[95]

[90] For evidence of the immediate popularity of the novel see Crovi, *Il lungo viaggio di Vittorini*, 187–8.

[91] See Crovi, *Il lungo viaggio di Vittorini*, 201–2. Before leaving for Weimar, Vittorini had expressed the wish to visit Munich and Nuremberg as well. Elio Vittorini, *I libri, la città, il mondo: Lettere 1933–1943*, ed. Carlo Minoia (Turin, 1985), 223 and 232.

[92] Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi, *Il manifesto di Ventotene*, with an essay by Norberto Bobbio (Bologna, 1991); Gianfranco Bianchi, "I cattolici," in Leo Valiani *et al.*, *Azionisti cattolici e comunisti nella Resistenza*, 149–300, esp. 162–4.

[93] Klaus Voigt, "Die Genfer Föderalistentreffen im Frühjahr 1944," *Risorgimento*, 1/1 (1980), 59–72, at 60 on Ginzburg .

[94] Ibid., 63–7. See also Einaudi, *Frammenti di memoria*, 17–19; and Luigi Einaudi, *La guerra e l'unità europea* (Bologna, 1986).

[95] Pintor's letter to Einaudi of 7 Aug. 1943 from Rome in Pintor, *Doppio diario*, 193.

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but the proposal did not meet with success, presumably because of the ongoing negotiations over the European federalist program. The so-called *Manifesto di Ventotene* was printed on a secret press in Rome in January 1944, edited by Eugenio Colorni and Leone Ginzburg.[96]

Working on the prescient assumption of Germany's defeat even back in 1941, Spinelli and Rossi envisioned there a post-war Europe facing great difficulties in each country and incessant power struggles unless national sovereign states gave way to a United States of Europe on the basis of republican constitutions, aiming at social justice in the sense of a moderate, non-dogmatic socialism. Moreover, the Polish and the first French resistance groups acting since the German invasions conceived of a future European federal union of free nations or regions. French communist partisan groups, on the other hand, aimed at cooperation with the Soviet Union, envisioning a federal European union just like the USSR; they did not become active in the Resistance until Hitler's military attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941.[97]

In his 1942 essay "Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa e le varie tendenze politiche" (The United States of Europe and Different Political Trends), Spinelli pleaded once more for a federalist Europe and against the restoration of independent national democratic states, stipulating Germany as "the central problem of European life" ("caso tedesco, che costituisce il problema centrale della vita europea").[98] As a result of its geographical position, historical and social factors, Germany would soon initiate new wars, regardless of the kind of political rule. Spinelli was against plans, already circulating in 1942, to split Germany into small states after the defeat of the National Socialist regime.[99] He preferred instead the construction of a democratic European federalist union that would include Germany.[100] Until 1944, antifascist leaders like Luigi Sturzo, Benedetto Croce, and Ernesto Rossi

[96] A.S. [Altiero Spinelli] and E.R. [Ernesto Rossi], *Problemi della Federazione Europea* (Rome, 1944). Ginzburg's participation in this edition is mentioned by Spinelli in a letter to Rossi of 20 Nov. 1944. See Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli, *"Empirico" e "Pantagruel": Per un'Europa diversa. Carteggio 1943–1945*, ed. Piero S. Graglia (Milan, 2012), 252.

[97] The Europeanist visions of the oppositional groups in the large countries of France and Poland are reported and commented on by Tadeusz Wyrwa in his book *L'idée europeenne dans la Résistance a travers la presse clandestine en France et en Pologne 1939–1945* (Paris, 1987). See also Veronika Heyde, *De l'esprit de la Résistance jusqu'à l'idée de l'Europe: Projets européens et américains pour l'Europe de l'après-guerre, 1940–1950* (Brussels, 2010), esp. 47–172; Walter Lipgens and Wilfried Loth, *Documents on the History of European Integration* (Berlin, 1985); Voigt, "Die Genfer Föderalistentreffen"; Walter Lipgens, "European Federation in the Political Thought of Resistance Movements during World War II," *Central European History*, 1, 1 (1968), 5–19.

[98] Spinelli and Rossi, *Il manifesto di Ventotene*, 71.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., 100.

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also objected to the perspective of radical punitive measures against the German population. For years, they had been distinguishing between National Socialists and the German population, considering the latter not responsible for politics and crimes of the dictator and his helpers. This view was tightly linked with a hope of a German insurgence against Hitler and collapsed when such a hope failed to materialize and the dimensions of the Holocaust and further mass murder became apparent in 1944–5.[101] Balbo's and Vittorini's reconnaissance trips through Germany in 1942 and 1943 must be seen in this perspective.

CONCLUSION

Balbo's documents of 1941 and 1943, published in this essay for the first time, complement Pintor's well-known cultural and political analysis and allow us to reconstruct a more coherent picture of young intellectuals' views on European politics from inside Fascist Italy, followed by their turn to active opposition. Balbo's later definition of the intellectual as someone "who expresses in words universal values in the historical moment or discloses them through example" is appropriate for his and Pintor's activities in the early 1940s, which had evolved from political statements into militant action.[102] In the last letter to his brother, Pintor urged the political role of artists and writers, who should "renounce their privileges in order to contribute to the liberation of all."[103] Balbo wrote down his thoughts against Fascism and Nazism in 1941 and joined underground oppositional groups beginning that same year; Pintor was involved in secret diplomacy for a *coup d'état* against Mussolini from the end of 1942 on and died on his first partisan mission one year later.

In particular, Balbo's letter of 10 July 1943 is, in my opinion, an important historical source, likely documenting the early stage of armed resistance in Italy (GAPs) and of Balbo's own role in a reconnaissance expedition through Germany. In his encoded message to Pintor, Balbo pointed up the dilemma of Italian politics in the uneasy partnership with National Socialist Germany, addressing the impending problem of "treason." His apparent connections to German oppositional circles are noteworthy in view of the few groups of German

[101] In Italy the attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944 was considered an episode inside the National Socialist power system. Filippo Focardi, "Deutschland und die deutsche Frage aus der Sicht Italiens (1943–1945)," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 75 (1995), 445–80; Jens Petersen, "Der deutsche Widerstand im Urteil Italiens," in Walther L. Bernecker and Volker Dotterweich, eds., *Deutschland in den Internationalen Beziehungen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1996), 235–46; Peter Hoffmann, *German Resistance to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA, 1988).

[102] Balbo, *Opere*, 565.

[103] Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 187.

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Widerstand (resistance) and of their secrecy. Further research could identify some of Balbo's contacts.

The dialogue between Balbo and Pintor about Fascism, Nazism, and resistance that originated within the circle of intellectuals at the Einaudi publishing house demonstrably converged on the crucial value of humanity, a concept that loses its vagueness and takes on a clear shape in the face of experienced inhumanity. Benedetto Croce, the leading Italian philosopher of the twentieth century and master of this generation, had emphasized the concept of "shared humanity" back in 1935, while writing against the Nazi persecution of the Jews.[104] Balbo and Pintor found humanity best exemplified in an ideal America, represented by its "universal men" (Balbo) and defenders of the "dignity of the human condition" (Pintor).[105] The Europe they wished to build was meant to resemble this America. In summer 1943, as Balbo met people in Germany who shared his values and efforts, he espied promising "American" traits in Germany, of all countries. It was on this basis that he dreamt of "making Europe" there.

[104] Benedetto Croce, "L'ibrida 'germanicità' della scienza e cultura tedesca," in Lavinia Jollos-Mazzucchetti, ed., *Die andere Achse: Italienische Resistenza und geistiges Deutschland*, with postscript by Alfred Andersch (Hamburg, 1964), 40–41, at 41.

[105] Balbo, *Opere*, 171; Pintor, *Il sangue d'Europa*, 159.

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