

# **The Rockefeller Foundation Fellows and Grants in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1924-1970: Renewing Social Sciences, Reshaping Academic Disciplines, and the Making of a Transnational Network in Italy**

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The first part of my research at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) involved a collective project that intended to create a large database of Rockefeller Foundation (RF) social science fellows between the two wars. The second part of my work focused on Italian fellows in the humanities and social sciences from 1929 to the 1960s and can be seen as an illustration of the collective project.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from the first part of the research since it represents only twenty percent of a collective work among five other researchers who also received a RAC Grant-in-Aid.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless these temporary findings will be analyzed in this report based on the detailed information contained in the fellowship cards consulted at the RAC. The Italian case offers a very interesting observation point for anyone who would like to analyze the actual RF's general policy towards Europe and in particular towards countries in which academic training and research were generally considered backward in the social sciences and economically. Efforts to renew the social sciences and reshape academic disciplines is likely to impact these countries, sometimes successfully.

## **I. The Transnational Network of Rockefeller Foundation Fellows between the Two Wars, Some Partial Findings**

### **a) Major RF Targets**

Fellowship cards and files were consulted for two hundred twenty-five fellows.<sup>2</sup> It clearly appears that, unsurprisingly, the majority came from the U.S. The other fellows were split into three balanced groups, namely, in order of importance: Northern and Western Continental Europe; the United Kingdom and Commonwealth (the only other English speaking group); and Eastern Europe. Only a few came from other parts of the world, such as Latin America (4.45%, some of which occurred during academic training in the U.S.), the Near East and the Far East Asia (only five fellows) and two were appointed from the League of Nations.<sup>3</sup>

The predominance of the RF's foreign network in Europe was expected since the majority of Asian nations and almost the whole of Africa were included in European Empires (British, French, Portuguese, and Dutch). However, the explanation is not entirely satisfying. There were no Spanish or Portuguese fellows in my sample and the lack of South American fellows shows that it was foremost a matter of academic level and institutions. Universities in these states were considered inadequate. According to general RF policy, the goal was to make the peaks higher: but in these countries it was thought that the peaks barely existed in the social sciences. On the other hand, it is noteworthy how the RF promptly invested in the newly independent Central European nations, such as Poland or Czechoslovakia and also helped develop academic research in former WW I enemies such as Germany and Austria. The RF thought that Central Europe, as well as Western and Northern Europe could take great advantage of the fellowships' principal purpose: bringing together, as close as possible, European and U.S. high academic training and research in the social sciences.

#### **b) Favorite academic fields**

To better understand RF policy, it is useful to select the fellows who were awarded more than one fellowship and who sometimes received other grants-in-aid before or after WW II and to then compile statistics from the academic fields supported. From the sample of

two hundred twenty-five fellows, it appears that twenty-three percent of them specialized in economics and, what is more interesting, eighty percent were not U.S. citizens. Two reasons can account for these statistics.

The first one is the context of the world economic crisis and its social consequences. William Lancelot Holland, an Australian fellow, studied the cause and impact of the world economic depression on the Far East. Arthur Gayer, from the United Kingdom, was interested in unemployment problems; as was Walther Hoffman (Germany), who analyzed the methods of stabilizing the economy in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The second reason for the RF's large interest in economics was the rise of this academic field in several European countries, where until WW I, the study of the economy was only a minor part of a more general training in law, as it was, for example, in France. Of course, the world crisis stimulated the development of academic training in economics, beyond the depression, and economics became an important part of the RF's general policy as demonstrated by the RF's grants to the London School of Economics. It is no coincidence that some of the fellows were encouraged to spend a year at the London School of Economics (LSE). Kasim Gülek, a Turkish fellow, studied modern monetary and financial theories as they applied to conditions in backward countries<sup>5</sup>. Gülek's case shows how the RF was concerned about modernizing economic studies in backward countries through the introduction of present U.S. economic policy as the suggested model. Thus Einar Jensen, a Danish fellow, received two fellowships to study American methods in economical statistics, and Miczyslaw Hontzako, a Polish researcher, went to the U.S. on a fellowship to watch the effects of economic planning.<sup>6</sup> The examples above demonstrate how foundations influenced the growth of European social sciences.

Two other academic fields are noteworthy: the development of area studies and radio studies. In both disciplines the political context is crucial. Even before war began in Europe

and later involved the U.S., American foreign policy had to deal with the Far Eastern problem, and particularly Japan's aggressive policy in China and the Pacific.

Only two fellows in my sample were involved in Far Eastern studies, from nineteen in the database. It might appear insignificant, but it is important to say that most of the fellowships were awarded at the beginning of the 1940's and that the U.S. government employed some of them. A particular case is Stanley Gerr, a U.S. citizen with two fellowships and whose project on a Chinese-Japanese-English technical dictionary obviously interested the U.S. army.<sup>7</sup>

Concerning the field of mass media, in particular the radio program, seventeen fellows, all from my sample, were awarded fellowships that clearly met Professor Lazarsfeld's program—incidentally a former RF Austrian fellow—to enroll a group of researchers to work on the “methods of research in radio listening” and “methods of planning and producing radio program.”<sup>8</sup> The political and propagandist aspects are quite obviously the reasons for the sudden and wide interest in radio programs. Alexander L. George, a U.S. fellow, dedicated his research to wartime communication and professed an interest in the “field of public opinion, propaganda and psychology of politics.” Alan L. Geller, according to a report he sent to the RF, “has been exploring the general field of propaganda analysis and preparing some material on the importance of the non-linguistic influences in propaganda programs.”<sup>9</sup>

From these case studies, an obvious question arises: The fellowship cards show that RF was aware of the U.S. Government's interest in enlisting some former RF fellows who specialized in area studies or the radio program, but did that knowledge really influence the RF's general policy in awarding fellowships in these specific fields? In other words, what is the exact relation between the RF, its interests, national interests and U.S. Government

policy? Our collective work in analyzing our database might be able to answer this crucial question. The Italian case may partially answer it.

## **II. The Rockefeller Foundation and Italy from 1929 to 1945**

The Italian case can be used to demonstrate the general RF policy towards fellowships. A majority of Italian fellows between the two wars were working in economics and some of them were involved during the war, after becoming U.S. citizens, in the radio program or cultural diplomacy. The initial network of Italian fellows before World War II was used to develop a new general policy toward Italy.

### **a) The first Italian Fellows between the Two Wars**

Of the eighteen Italian fellows between the two wars,<sup>10</sup> fourteen of them had a degree in economics. There are two reasons for the high number of economists. The first and more important one is that the well-known economic professor, Luigi Einaudi from Turin University, was an advisor to the RF since 1926. In 1931, John Van Sickle, Assistant Director of the RF Social Sciences division noted that “without [Einaudi’s] advice and counsel it would have been impossible to accomplish what was accomplished during the period of study.”<sup>11</sup> Beyond advice and counsel given to the RF in selecting the Italian fellows, Einaudi was also the principal, and perhaps unique, source of information about Italian academic social sciences. Because of the fascist regime and the increasing totalitarian control of Italian society and cultural, scientific and academic institutions, the Italian situation became alarming. This led to the second reason for the preference for economics: the dead-end situation of the social sciences in Italy. In awarding a grant-in-aid to *Riforma sociale*, an economics journal edited by Einaudi, RF officers noted the State’s complete control over the “doctrines of the professors” and concluded that “opportunities for supporting research

institutes capable of independent and objective research have been even more difficult to discover.”<sup>12</sup>

Nevertheless, thanks to Einaudi, the RF succeeded in making a small but efficient network of economists, some of them later getting important academic or political positions.<sup>13</sup> In assessing the state of economics and the social sciences in Italy just a few months before the end of the war, a former RF fellow, the renowned economist Albert O. Hirschman stated that “there [was] a lot of talent in Italy ... The contact with Anglo-Saxon economic thought ... was never entirely lost and there was never the childish resentment and hostility against Anglo-Saxon superiority in this field that has so handicapped both French and German economists.”<sup>14</sup> Another demonstration of the relative success of the RF policy towards economics in Italy is the enlargement of career prospects for the former Italian fellows: not only universities, but also private organizations hired some of them. For example, Banca Commerciale Italiana, one of the key financial institutions in Italy, appointed Antonello Gerbi, an RF fellow from 1929-1931.

#### **b.) Italian Fellows in the 1940s**

The general situation in Italy changed in 1938 when Mussolini launched his anti-Semitic plan, the so-called racial decrees that drove out Jewish academics and teachers from their appointments. Already some years before, the RF was concerned about the expulsion of German Jews and, more occasionally, about the heavy conditions placed on the small group of Italian academics who refused in 1932 to take an oath to Fascism. Max Ascoli, a former Italian RF fellow was one. The New School of Social Research created by Alvin Johnson, which welcomed many refugee scholars, appointed him, as it did Mario Einaudi, Luigi's elder son.

After the racial decrees, other Jewish Italian scholars also found protection in the U.S. thanks to the New School and the RF, i.e., Bruno Foa a brilliant philosopher forced to leave

Italy in 1938. After an appointment to the National Institute of Economic Research with Professor Noel Hall, Foa joined the staff of the BBC in 1939 when war broke out in Europe. Married to a German citizen and afraid that she could be sent to a prison camp, Foa applied for an U.S. visa and was in the U.S. when he received a fellowship in the radio program. Foa is an example of adaptation to a changing political context: first a philosopher, he became an economist—the fashion field in Italy as it was said—then as a specialist in radio communication, became involved in war propaganda and cultural diplomacy. He became an U.S. citizen in 1940, just as Max Ascoli had done. It is not a coincidence that the two men worked together under the auspices of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, directed by Nelson A. Rockefeller (NAR). The cases of Ascoli and Foa, as well as the more academic Mario Einaudi, highlight the other aspect of the RF fellowship policy described above: radio propaganda and international relations.<sup>15</sup>

The network is not yet complete. After the war, the cultural diplomacy of the U.S. government appointed a number of former RF fellows. Some of them went to Italy. Lloyd Free, who worked on radio (methods of planning and producing radio programs in Europe and in the U.S.) during the war, became a Public Affairs Officer in the U.S. embassy in Rome. James Mocerì, who served in the U.S. army, received an RF fellowship to study history in Naples and then was appointed by the United States Information Service (USIS) Florence.<sup>16</sup> Once more, the U.S. government used the skills of former RF fellows to advance its foreign policy agenda. RF officers, especially Edward D'Arms, also regularly consulted Mocerì, who was in contact with many Italian academics.<sup>17</sup>

This network, and the improved political situation in Italy, allowed the RF to apply its new policy towards Italy, as well as other European nations. By looking at post-war Italian fellows, it appears that an Italian School of Economy—if such a school ever existed—was again greatly supported by the RF. Of thirty-one fellows listed, nineteen were economists.

However, something had changed, not only because Einaudi was no longer the unique advisor to the RF. In fact some economists now specialized in the economy of growth, for example, Augusto Graziani (1955), who studied at the LSE, Harvard and the MIT.<sup>18</sup> Another important matter concerned the RF's general policy.

Since fascist Italy fell, the RF was able to establish a basis for the development of the social sciences in Italy. Through the recommendation of Bruno Foa, the Institute of Historical Studies, founded by the antifascist philosopher Benedetto Croce in Naples, drew the interest of the RF humanities division. Through the Institute the RF gave several fellowships and grants-in-aid to young and promising historians who were alumni of the Neapolitan Institute.<sup>19</sup> The humanities division also deemed it important to further American studies in Italy thus it recommended to reward a few fellows specialized in American literature and art.<sup>20</sup>

However, the real new initiative sought to develop political science which was in its infancy in Italy. As Mario Einaudi suggested, Turin may be “the logical centre for the growth of a genuine center of political science in Italy.”<sup>21</sup> Actually, a former RF fellow, Passerin d'Entrèves came from Turin University and was concerned about the RF grant-in-aid given to the Faculty of Political Science directed by Norberto Bobbio.<sup>22</sup> That it was part of a more ambitious plan was proved by an RF grant-in-aid to the Faculty of Political Science of Florence led by professor Sartori as well as several other grants to Italian academics committed to research in political science.

My future research will deal precisely with the possible success of RF policy and grants in reshaping academic disciplines in Italy, particularly the social sciences.



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## ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Justine Faure, Isabella Löhr, Marie Scot, and Ludovic Tournès who is in charge of the project.

<sup>2</sup> Each researcher in the collective project would research approximately two hundred twenty fellows classified in alphabetical order. My work focused on two hundred twenty-five fellows from East (U.S.) to Jutila (Finland). The archives consulted were in the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), Record Group (RG) 10.2 for the cards and in RF, RG 10.1 for the files.

<sup>3</sup> The country indicated is the country the fellow was appointed from, not necessarily their citizenship, birth or nationality country. Nevertheless in most cases, the country of appointment is the same as the country of nationality and citizenship. The exact figures and specific countries are: 27.7% from the U.S.; 23.3% from Western Europe (17.8% from Germany, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland); 22.8% from the U.K.; 12.9% from Ireland (two fellows); from the Commonwealth of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, 8.9%; 17.8% from Central and Eastern Europe, included one from Greece and one from Turkey; Poland and Austria came first, with ten fellows from each country, followed by Czechoslovakia with six, Rumania with four and Hungary and Bulgaria with two each.

<sup>4</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship cards, William Lancelot Holland, Arthur Gayer, and Walther Hoffman.

<sup>5</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship card, Kasim Gülek.

<sup>6</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship cards, Einar Jensen and Miczyslaw Hontzako.

<sup>7</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship card, Stanley Gerr.

<sup>8</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship cards, Harold Hennig, Llyod A. Free, and Robert B. Hudson.

<sup>9</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship cards, Alex Gorge and Alan Geller.

<sup>10</sup> In listing the Italian fellows, I only considered those who actually were Italian—including Bruno Foa, and took no account of three who were classified on Italian fellowships because they were in Italy when they were awarded fellowships.

<sup>11</sup> John V. Van Sickle to E.E. Day, November 30, 1931 in RF 1. 1, 751 S, Reel 7 (Microfilm: formerly Box 8, Folder 93), Einaudi Luigi.

<sup>12</sup> Research aid grants, May 9, 1963, p. 2 in RF 1. 1, 751 S, Reel 7, Einaudi Luigi. 1931, 1933-1936.

<sup>13</sup> Francesco Vito (fellow in 1933) became President of the Catholic university of Milan; Giovanni Demaria (1930 and 1931) was after the war director of the Institute of Economy of the Bocconi (Milan), the most prestigious Italian University in Economy and Business Administration; Ezio Vanoni (1928-1930), minister of Finance of the Italian Republic (1948-1954), gave his name to the well-known Vanoni plan, an ambitious economic program intended to develop the Italian economy, specifically the depressed southern areas.

<sup>14</sup> Alberto O. Hirschman to Joseph H. Willits, February 3, 1945, quoted in Giuliana Gemelli, "Un imprenditore scientifico e le sue reti internazionali: Luigi Einaudi, la Fondazione Rockefeller e la professionalizzazione della ricerca economica in Italia," (An Entrepreneur Science and its International Networks: Luigi Einaudi, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Professionalization of Economic Research in Italy) *Le carte e la storia*, (Cards and History) 1995, n. 1, p. 194.

<sup>15</sup> All this information is derived from RF, RG 10.2, fellowship card, Bruno Foa.

<sup>16</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship cards, Lloyd A. Free and James Mocerri.

<sup>17</sup> Edward D'Arms officer's diary in RF, RG 12, Box 13, Florence, April 15, 1956.

<sup>18</sup> RF, RG 10.2, fellowship card, Augusto Graziani, and RG 10 Fellowship, Box 35, Graziani Augusto.

<sup>19</sup> RF, RG 1.1, 751 R, Italy, Italian Institute of Historical Studies, Naples, Box 13; RG 10, fellowship cards: Vittorio De Caprariis, Giuseppe Giarrizzo, Paolo Rossi, Guido Verucci, Brunello Vigezzi, and Roberto Vivarelli. The history of the Institute was the subject of an article based on previous research in the RAC (Frédéric Attal, "L'Institut Croce, la revue, 'Nord e Sud' et la diplomatie culturelle des fondations américaines (1946-1964): Histoire, sciences sociales et 'guerre froide culturelle' dans le Mezzogiorno italien." In *Storiografia. Rivista annuale di storia. Anno XIV*, 14 (2010), pp. 9-178.

<sup>20</sup> RF, RG 10, fellowship cards: Gabriele Baldini and Antonio Russi.

<sup>21</sup> RF, RG 10, fellowship card: Mario Einaudi.

<sup>22</sup> RF, RG 1.2, 751 Italy, Box 17, Folder 196, University of Turin' RF, RG 1.2, 751 Italy, Box 15, Folder 178, University of Florence.