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THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE
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Sec. Research Graduate School Committee
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ERRATA:

Note: for "norm" read "regulation" throughout

- p 15 2nd quotation, line 3: "civilisations. The clash..." (new sentence)
- p 24 1st quotation, line 1: "despite its" for "although its"
- p 25 2nd quotation, line 1: "there was not and could not be" for "there was and could not be"
- last para, line 1: "*des parleurs d'Europe*" for "*dse parlers d'Europe*"
- 3rd-last line: delete dash
- p 26 line 4: "fall victim to the same verdict" for "fall victim of the same verdict"
- line 6: "multilingualism" for "multilinguism"
- p 27 2nd para line 5: footnote no. is 54
- 3rd para line 1: insert footnote no. 55 after "J. Le Goff"
- p 31 last line of quotation: delete "defend". Should read "supporting autonomous models"
- para 4 line 4: "cosmopolitanism" for "cosmopolitism"
- p 34 note 22 line 2: "worldwide" for "worlwide", "the West" for "the Wests"
- note 25 line 1: "Macquarie" for "Macqurie"; line 2: add "it" after "Dictionary",
line 3: space between "comradeship" and "as"
- note 27 last line "to" for "ti"
- p 36 note 52 line 2: insert "a" before "synonym"
- note 60, 2nd last line: "judgement" for "judjement"
- p 39 line 4: "British" for "briish"
- p 45 line 2: delete "it" - should read "and were to be implemented"
- line 6: add full stop after "unconstitutional"
- p 48 para 2 line 8: "divides" for "divide"
- p 54 line 2: "a halt" for "an alt"
- para 2 line 2: "generally in other" for "generally other"
- p 55 delete repeated text: both paras, from "The same" to "their rulers"
- p 61 line 3: "waived" for "waved"
- p 65 last line: add full stop after "another"
- p 75 line 8: "the Society's aim" for "the Society aim"
- para 3 last line: "foreign italophiles" for "foreigners Italianophiles"
- p 76 line 6: "peripheral or distant geographical areas" for "peripherar or fare geographical areas"
- line 8: "fascism" for "fascist"
- para 2 line 5: "51.3%" for "51,3%"
- para 3 line 3: "stigma", still" for "stigma still"
- last para line 2: "perspective: that" for "perspective that"
- p 82 line 1: "such" for "lsuch"
- p 85 para 2 last line: "as well" for "tas well"
- para 3 lines 1-2: "beyond the nation's borders" for "beyond nation's borders of the nation"
- p 90 para 3 line 5: "in a way" for "in way"
- para 4 line 3: delete "i"
- p 97 line 6: "the study of Italian abroad is funded" for "Italian is study abroad funded"
- line 9: delete "ascertainment/"
- line 10: "interest in" for "interest for"
- lines 11-12: insert "a" after "of" - should read "the language of a great culture"
- para 2 lines 1-2: "the relevant government bodies/institutions" for "the government pertinent
bodies/institutions"
- para 3 1st word: "Again" for "Always"
- 2nd-last line: "devise" for "device"
- p 98 line 1: "*Linguaggio*" for "*Liguaggio*"
- p 104 line 1: "years" for "year"
- para 2 line 4: delete "s at stake."
- para 3 line 1: "401/1990" for "401/190"
- p 108 end of 1st para: delete comma after footnote reference no. 94
- final sentence should read: "However the latter, being devised to certify the highest level of competence in
Italian L2, is more likely..."
- p 133 line 2 of indented quote: "foolish" for "foulish"
- p 148 line 3: delete full stop after "1917"
- para 2 line 1: delete single quote after "1994"
- last line: "L2" for "L"
- p 152 line 1: "The Society" for "The Association"
- line 5: space between "Alighieri" and "Society"
- indented quote, line 3: "nostalgic for" for "nostalgic of"; "by now a" for "by now"
- p 158 line 1: space between "on" and "to"
- p 192 para 4 line 2: delete "ed"
- line 5: insert "the" before "Italian" - should read "accepted in the Italian language"
- 2nd-last line: "fight against foreign" for "fight to foreign"
- p 193 para 2 last sentence: "English speaking countries however also appear reluctant to follow the French" for
"Also English speaking countries, however appear reluctant to follow the french"
- p 247 last line: "widespread" for "spread"

- p 248 para 2 line 1: "This critical view is not inconsistent with the opinion of Ozolins, who" for "These critical view is not inconsistent with Ozolins's opinion who"
- 7.7 heading: "policy" for "policyy"
- p 254 para 3 line 1: "maintenance" for "maintainance"
line 3: "appears" for "apperas"
line 5: insert "the" before "Australian"
- last para line 3: "While careful to avoid being prescriptive" for "While carefully avoiding to be prescriptive"
- p 255 line 1: delete "essential"
line 2: delete "t"
line 3: delete first "the" - should read "feature of Lo Bianco's Report"
6th last line: insert colon before "this" - should read "implementation: this is why"
- p 256 line 1: "But only" (new sentence)
- p 285 2nd-last line: "commonplace if" for "commonplacif"; "affirm" for "affirm on"
- p 294 para 2 line 3: "different" for "differnet"
- p 317 para 3 last line: "the" for "to" - should read "the protection of their rights"
- p 339 section 8.14 line 1: "in" for "on" - should read "in May 1987"
- 3rd-last line: "Australian" for "Austalian"
- p 352 add source beneath Figure 1: "(Source: State education authorities)"

**FOREIGN POLICIES FOR THE DIFFUSION OF
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE
IN AUSTRALIA**

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30 January 2001

Fu proverbejo stascianato de la maglia antica, che chi cerca chello che non deve, trova chello che non vole[...] Giambattista Basile *Lo cunto de li cunti*. Napoli 1730

Uno dei proverbi stagionati di antico stampo dice che chi cerca quello che non deve, trova quello che non vuole[...] Giambattista Basile *Il racconto dei racconti*.

Traduzione di R. Guarini (a cura di A. Burani e R. Guarini), Milano 1994

'According to an old-fashioned proverb he who seeks what he should not, finds what he does not want [...]'

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PART 2

ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE POLICIES IN CONTEXT

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SUMMARY

The focus of this investigation is Italian foreign cultural policy, and its inspiration and starting point is the Italian Constitution, approved on 22 December 1947, after twenty years of fascism and a tragic war.

Because of the continuity of its civilization and sustained development ever in time (notwithstanding occasional backslides) Italy, has scarcely an equal in the whole of Europe. Yet, politically it is one of the younger European nations. This combination of ancient cultural traditions and fairly recent political unity makes Italy a particularly fertile ground for inquiry. The Italian language in particular is an area of intricate peculiarities. When Italy became a nation in 1870, the majority of its population was illiterate, and only 2, 5% of Italians were able to actively use the national language. Up to the Second World War the Italian language was used mainly in writing, a dead language to most Italians except for a small privileged, educated minority. Italy started its journey as a democratic State after the approval of the Republican Constitution.

The Constitution, a document of unquestionable ideological relevance, signals a turning point in Italian history, for instance it sanctions the end of language discrimination, in stark contrast to fascism, and takes on precise commitments in relation to all Italian citizens – including those living outside the country's borders - and to linguistic minorities within the nation. In this study the international position of Italy following the end of the war on the one hand, and on the other the phenomenon of internal and external migrations with their stark figures, are singled out for reflection, while the implications of the new constitutional charter for the education and language rights of Italians abroad are analysed. Keeping in mind the specificity of Italy's sociolinguistic context, the relationship between events of a socio-politic nature and issues of language is also examined in order to gain an

understanding of the Italian Government's position and reconstruct its action in the area of foreign cultural policy.

Against the background of socio-economic and political events from the mid-1950s, Italian legislation in the field of culture and language promotion abroad is identified and analysed, and the Italian State's action in this field is weighed up to establish whether or not the concept of language planning may be related to it. The history, structure, role and functions of government institutions responsible for culture and language promotion abroad are then identified and examined within the relevant historical period, with specific attention being paid to the politics of the time. Based on the assumption that any exploration of official history through conventional means can also benefit from the oral testimony of eyewitnesses, or even more from insiders' interpretations of the events being studied, seven interviews on the topic of Italian language and culture promotion abroad have been used as an additional and living document in summing up and further clarifying the issues investigated here, before we proceed to the analysis and evaluation of Italian language and culture diffusion in the context selected as our case study: Australia.

Language policy developments in this country are examined from the post-World War II period, focusing on changes in the education system and in particular on the evolving situation of languages other than English. Community participation in language issues and government's response to this are examined in historical perspective. Australia's current language policy is evaluated for its international significance before its interaction with Italian initiatives in the field is examined.

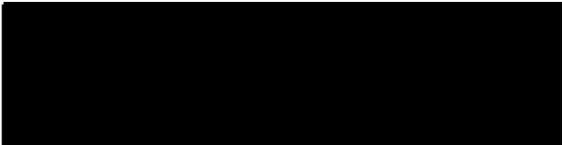
The situation of Italian language in Australia is thus observed and studied by considering Italian legislation in the area of language and culture diffusion abroad as applied to the Australian context. The specific development of the history of the Italian language in this country of immigrants is examined. Factors such as the education system, Australian language policies and socio-political circumstances are taken into account not only to

evaluate the results obtained so far, but also to establish the potential in Australia for implementing Italy's *changing* approach to the promotion of its language abroad.

DECLARATION

This thesis does not contain material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge, no material written or published by other persons is included in this work unless due reference has been made in the text of the thesis. The responsibility for any error appearing in this work is mine alone.

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own and emphases in quoted passages are as they appear in the original text.



Mariella Totaro Genevois

30 January 2001

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In producing this thesis I have become indebted to a many people. First of all I wish to express my deep gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Professor Michael Clyne, who has followed the progress of my writing always patiently, offering both stimulating criticism and steady encouragement. I am also grateful to Professor Alastair Davidson, former supervisor of this research project, for his inspirational comments and unfailing support to my work.

Professor Norberto Bobbio, Professor Sergio Romano, Professor Tullio de Mauro and Professor Vincenzo Cappelletti were extremely generous with their time; they all provided invaluable insights for my research in their interviews, during my visits to Italy in 1995, 1997 and 1998.

Ambassador Massimo Spinetti at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Inspector Dea Pellegrini at the Ministry of Public Education also found time in their busy schedules to discuss at length issues relevant to my topic. Dott.ssa Antonella Deledda at the Servizio Studi, Camera dei Deputati in Rome generously provide hard-to-find reference material.

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I am also grateful to Professor Gianfranco Poggi in Florence for contributing to the initial inspiration of this project, and to Mrs Barbara McGilvray for her invaluable advice on matters of English expression.

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INTRODUCTION

Historians estimate that between 1870, the year Italy's political unification was completed, and 1970 when the phenomenon of its mass emigration ended, about 26 million Italians uprooted themselves and went to live in other countries.

Physical distance from his/her native land is implicit in the emigrant's status, and detachment from raw feelings connected with the society left behind can also be seen - to some extent - as a corollary to this position.

[...]. It is (this) ability to establish a distance between themselves and the rest of reality that allows humans to differentiate reality into conditions within which they must act, goals toward which they opt to act, and means via which they choose to act. In fact they must distance themselves also from the raw sensations and the utterly spontaneous emotions that aspects of reality awaken in them if they are on the one hand to acquire self-hood, on the other to apprehend the significance of those aspects¹.

Emigration, it could then be inferred, with its forced separation from one's native land, may be useful in the investigation of social phenomena: on the one hand the apprehension of reality is enhanced by physical detachment from the facts/events under scrutiny and, on the other hand, the factor of distance is not so great as to anaesthetise the emigrant, transforming him/her into merely a by-stander.

A subliminal bond with the motherland is likely to remain as an inner component of the attitude of the observer, who will look at things from far and yet without being an outsider.

This study then, though mainly prompted by the desire to examine historically and functionally the theme of Italian foreign linguistic policies within the area of cultural relations, is also meant to seize the opportunity, given the expatriate's status of the author, to gain specific insights - when feasible - into the phenomena to be investigated.

How has Italy conveyed its language and culture to the outside world? Where does the Italian experience fit into the wider context and changed reality of Europe after its unification? And finally, what can be learned from the answers to such questions in relation to the Italian experience in Australia?

This thesis seeks to find answers to the questions just outlined. It also endeavours to formulate a hypothesis about the specificity (if any), of the Italian experience in the domain of language and culture policies abroad.

CHAPTER 1

Culture, cultural relations and cultural policies. Preliminary considerations to the issue of Italian language and culture abroad

Will the world's future conflicts mostly consist of clashes of cultures? This intriguing hypothesis, formulated in 1993², seems supported by increasingly recurrent examples of violent events, even wars around us. If the elusiveness and complexity of the very notion of culture is proved by the lack of general agreement on a unanimous definition of it, the concept of cultural relations also seems to suffer of a parallel and similar fate. After identifying cultural relations as a domain of international relations yet to be explored in any depth, this chapter aims to suggest a working definition, *definizione operativa*, of this concept for the purposes of the current research and, in addition, to establish why cultural relations appear important in today's international society. Out of the several facets of cultural relations the focus of the present investigation is defined thus: foreign policies on language and culture. The reason why Italy is the country under investigation will become clear in the context of this and the following future chapters.

1. 1 Understanding the present to anticipate the challenges of the future

Following the events of 1989, changes of scenery on the world stage have been so unpredictable and frantic that even the boldest exponent of futurist avant-garde would not have dared show such occurrences to his audience, even if the aiming were simply to provoke and shock³. The fall of the Iron Curtain has offered people the opportunity to

witness - live - the effects and consequences of the exit from the stage of a major protagonist, USSR. The relentless dismantling of the Berlin Wall is an event still under evaluation, nearly ten years later, for its symbolic and practical consequences. The European Union conglomerate on the one hand, fragmentation and bloody conflicts in Eastern Europe on the other. New actors entering the stage⁴ and new roles being performed. Old enemies - Ireland and Great Britain, black and white South-Africans, Indonesia and East Timor - are finding ground for reconciliation, while other stars of the global show, nation states once willing to live together have moved to even more extreme forms of conflict (e.g. former Yugoslavia, some parts of former USSR)

There is no institutional director to keep violence and turbulence under control on the world's stage, and no available mechanical devices like the *deus ex machina* used by playwrights in ancient Greece to unravel the complexities of the plot. Human history follows patterns and cycles, as it always has. Perhaps the only relevant difference is the existence and proliferation of modern technologies making the global show readily available to all (or almost all). Nowadays Television and the Internet allow the spectators to see in real time events taking place anywhere in the world regardless of the hemisphere they live in. But, while witnessing the ongoing process of history, has our ability to decode and understand current happenings been improved by their artificial closeness in space and time? Does progress in technology in any way affect the public's participation in and understanding of events, beyond an established and crystallised theatrical tradition according to which what happens on stage is just part of a show in which there is no possibility of interference?

In a lecture on the impending end of the millennium the Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio remarked⁵:

While scientific and technical advances constantly arouse our amazement and enthusiasm - albeit mixed with anguish - we continue to be puzzled by evil and

its outcomes, no differently than one thousand or two thousand years ago, and so we go on endlessly asking the same questions.

Bobbio also added:

There is a growing gap between our knowledge as 'cosmic investigators' and our illiteracy on moral issues⁶

The search for answers and understanding is an undeniable peculiarity of mankind, which appeared particularly noticeable at the end of the 20th century⁷. With the approaching conclusion of an era, modern 'cosmic investigators', indagatori del cosmo, to use Bobbio's expression, in other words sociologists, historians, philosophers, perceive the occasion as a deadline requiring careful reflection in the context of the irresistible attempt to look into the future⁸.

Like characters in Umberto Eco's *passeggiate inferenziali*⁹ 'inferential strolls', that is occasions when the reader of fiction, puts aside his/her book and tries to predict further developments in the plot, generally by using as a reference-point his/her own life experience or even pre-existing knowledge of other stories previously read there are some who wish to investigate the outcomes of the events¹⁰, others keen to discover the causes¹¹, some curious to examine and analyse contexts¹², and others still looking at potential relationships between happenings¹³. All, however, seem committed to shedding light on reality around us and wishing to put forward plausible forecasts about what could be happening on the world's stage in the years to come¹⁴.

1.2 Samuel Huntington's hypothesis: no more ideological conflict but clashes of cultures in the next phase of evolution in the world

While contentions such as the following:

Our epoch is apparently distinguished by the lack of a hierarchical concept of culture [...] Though our times are indeed saturated with partly universal, partly competitive hierarchical cultural ideals to an extent perhaps unknown to our ancestors, we reject emphatically the objective (to wit, pre-human) existence of cultural standards¹⁵.

are hardly controversial, the different traits attributed to the concept of culture, are widely used to explain differences between communities of people. In fact, the distinctiveness between other people's habits and our own represents a topic of everyday conversation as well as the focus of erudite studies by scholars in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and so on.

Back in the summer of 1993 a conjecture which is relevant for the aims of this research was formulated and presented to the public. The director of the Institute for Strategic Studies at Harvard University, Samuel P. Huntington, in an article published in the journal *Foreign Affairs*¹⁶, which sparked immediate and widespread debate, predicted a new phase on the political world stage. According to this scholar, while clashes between opposite political and economic systems are fading away, conflicts will involve different civilisations, with their distinct cultures, coming into contact with each other:

Nation states will remain the most powerful players in world affairs, but the principal conflicts in global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilisations, the clash of civilisations will dominate global politics. The fault-lines between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future¹⁷.

Samuel Huntington's argument is fairly consistent with the analysis of the relationship between the West and Islam, previously formulated by another American scholar, Bernard Lewis. He argued that Western unwillingness to grasp the unescapable, significant role played by religion in the Islamic world, could be regarded as a blatant and meaningful example of cultural conflict. Others instead have highlighted the potential for conflict between Islam and Western countries identifying as a cause - in addition to socio-cultural

differences - the imbalance created by the geographical location of the world's energy sources, which are mainly situated in the Middle East¹⁸

The point needing further clarification, however, is what Huntington means by a revival of cultural unrest. What is it likely to constitute represent the Apple of Discord?

Preliminarily, it must be remembered, the term civilisation with the connotations used by Huntington reflects a specific world view.

A civilisation is a cultural entity. Villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity. A culture of a village in Southern Italy may be different from that of a village in Northern Italy, but both will share in a common Italian culture that distinguishes them from German villages. European communities, in turn, will share cultural features that distinguish them from Arab or Chinese communities. Arabs, Chinese and Westerners, however, are not part of any other broader cultural entity. They constitute civilisations¹⁹.

If history, traditions, language, culture, religion, are to be seen as the distinctive features of one civilisation in relation to another, it is the way cultural differences are perceived that in the future will be the cause of conflicts, especially in an historical era when, with the downfall of USSR, other factors of cultural conflict and potential tensions have disappeared. The furthestmost line separating one's own identity from the identity of the other will symbolise a political and cultural boundary, and any attempt to trespass it will represent a potential occasion for conflict. Ironically, the strength and originality of European civilisations being its pluralism, variety, multiplicity of ideologies - as Karl Popper has pointed out - openness in appreciating other civilisations' cultural traits ought also to characterise its approach to other nations.

Interestingly, at the beginning of the 1980s the historian Sergio Romano said, in relation to the issue of the European Union:

A book, recently published in Paris reminds us that during World War II Hitler's Germany pursued cultural policies aiming at the establishment of the 'cultural' boundaries of Europe thus creating a rampart between civilisation and barbarism [...] [a cultural pretext was used [by Germany] to defend its political strategy²⁰

It is not appropriate, here, to enter into an argument about the correctness of Huntington's polarisation of world clashes as chiefly involving Western against non-Western civilisations, nor to dispute the notion that :

Promoting the coherence of the West means both preserving Western culture within the West and defining the limits of the West²¹

It is mainly the conclusion of his argument that seems relevant - in my view - for its wide range of implications²². For instance the need for the West to examine more closely life values/principles (eg philosophical, religious) characterising other civilisations is regarded as a preliminary step to achieve an understanding of how individuals within those civilisations, see their personal and/or collective welfare.

It will require an effort to identify elements of commonality between Western and other civilisations. For the relevant future, there will be no universal civilisation, but instead a world of different civilisations, each of which *will have to learn to coexist with the others*²³

A peaceful coexistence of diverse civilisations, we are told, will mainly depend upon their skill in getting to know each other, coming to reciprocal understanding, find common denominators. Knowledge and understanding of each other's culture, that is of those distinctive traits characterising one civilisation in contrast with another, will be issues of paramount importance for the future.

But how are we to interpret the term 'culture' in this context?

1.3 Polysemy and elusiveness of the term 'culture'

It is of course hardly feasible to identify a universally endorsed definition of the term 'culture'. While admitting on the one hand the existence of as many fascinating definitions as there are scholars - in various fields - who have taken upon themselves the task of defining this concept, on the other it would be presumptuous even to review all the suggested interpretations. Suffice it here to highlight the polysemic connotation of the term 'culture' whose meanings can be broadly divided into three major categories. Firstly the broad anthropological definition:

The term designates those aspects of the total human environment, tangible and intangible, who have been created by men²⁴

Within this vision, any material artefacts and mental constructs are included, as long as they are generated by human action. Secondly, a slightly narrower application of the concept, where culture is defined as a range of mental constructs such as - in particular - 'beliefs and values', norms, laws and customs . An example? Australian culture attaches great importance to 'mateship'²⁵, with expectations of total loyalty and mutual support among individual mates . Italian culture on the other hand enhances a sense of kin and attributes major relevance to family bonds as a source of support in societal living.

There is a third and restrictive meaning of the term culture, when identifying it with a set of self-consciously produced symbolic objects of socially acknowledged intellectual and artistic significance, embodying the higher achievements of mankind. In this case culture is seen as embracing mainly works of art, philosophical speculation, the achievements of sciences and so on.

Looking more closely it is possible to identify at least some common denominators among the above range of definitions. Culture, we understand, is a human phenomenon; it is

passed on from one generation to the next and tends to condition further action by imposing constraints, giving directives etc. Culture varies in space and time. Mankind produces culture, its/their material artefacts and/or mental constructs, however, differ. For example, human beings have religions - not one religion; languages, not language -. In addition cultural outcomes are not universally and uniformly valued, in fact their plurality can determine disagreement and strain from place to place when what is devalued by one is valued by the other (eg. women's independence in most Western countries versus Eastern countries). The variety of cultures is no obstacle to contacts between them, nor does it hinder phenomena of cross-fertilisation which may take place spontaneously, via integration, or forcibly through imposition. In both cases, however, the relations and/or results developed cannot be generalised. If we only think of Latin and its derived products, Romance languages, and nowadays English and its diffusion worldwide, we see examples of conquered cultures and superimposition, albeit, via diverse processes²⁶.

Notwithstanding the inevitable exemplification of the notion of culture taken on so far, the implications of Huntington's theory, from which we took our starting point, are neither plain nor simple. If, on the basis of experience around us, we accept the hypothesis that the world's future is likely to be characterised by clashes and strife among diverse civilisations and that the potential antidote to cultural conflict may be the promotion of reciprocal knowledge and understanding among those whose role is it to facilitate this type of interaction, how do nation states approach issues of a cultural nature, in terms both of acquiring information about other nations and making their own data known to others? What part does language play within the field of cultural relations? And, most importantly, how can the notion of cultural relations be defined?

1. 4 Cultural relations as a domain of international relations

While for concepts such as 'international relations'²⁷, 'foreign policy', 'diplomacy' accurate descriptions can be found in political dictionaries, the notion of 'cultural relations' remains problematic for the lack of an agreed clear definition. Broadly speaking what can be found on the topic is a not very large body of literature²⁸, - some essays, a few books mostly from the disciplines of politics and history - in which, rather than attempting to generate agreement on a single, non-controversial notion of cultural relations, the various authors appear concerned to argue that they exist as an autonomous form of interaction between nations.

James M. Mitchell, author of an in-depth study on the subject of international cultural relations²⁹, insists on the distinction between cultural diplomacy and cultural relations. The former he describes as firmly linked to conventional diplomacy, whose aim is the promotion of the interest of the state, the latter as a wider, looser and freer network of contacts, activities and exchanges among countries, for purposes not necessarily coinciding with those of the state. In the initial pages of his book cultural relations are boldly introduced as 'a little understood branch of international relations'.

This opinion receives forceful backing from another American scholar, C. Coombs who, in relation to the United States, complains that cultural relations are an 'underdeveloped area' of foreign policy³⁰. In order to support the relevance of the 'cultural dimension of international relations' the Italian M. Zagari highlights the very existence within the United Nations of an Organisation for Education, Science and Culture. To the three traditional fields of foreign policy - political, economic and military - he adds a fourth, cultural relations, arguing that it should be given equal importance³¹. Others illustrate the difficulty of giving a meaningful definition of cultural relations because the very presence of the

word 'culture' leads to confusion considering the wide range of its meanings³² In some cases the issue is approached by asking rhetorically: 'Is there a need for a nation to have foreign cultural policies?'

In this instance any implicit affirmative answer serves to highlight the innumerable difficulties that characterise the issue. The conclusion reached is inevitably that cultural relations should indeed be an independent domain within foreign policies³³.

Despite this connotation of uncertainty surrounding the very notion of cultural relations, in younger nations like Canada, while it is acknowledged that: ' [...] it was not until the early sixties that the first semblance of a coherent policy emerged in that area', it also stated that: 'Western Europe provides a fertile source for models: its cultures are part of our heritage and no two countries have evolved their policies in the same way'³⁴.

Thus the existence of relations of a cultural nature among nations is implicitly recognised, which seems to confirm Arnold's assumption that international cultural relations are in fact an established aspect of interaction between nations. Their integration into foreign policy, however, has become more apparent in circumstances relatively closer in time, such as the development of the nation state in Europe. Arnold's conjecture is supported by earlier commentators. In 1923 Giuseppe Prezzolini, an Italian writer and journalist who enjoyed a certain popularity in his time stated: 'A paramount problem for Italian culture is that of its relationships with other cultures'³⁵ Prezzolini's opinion is relevant because - apart from the debatable significance of his work - not only was he deeply involved in the cultural life of early 20th Century, but he also proved to be highly successful in his initiatives.

Moving to more recent times, in a 1996 book concerned with Italian foreign policy between 1947 and 1993, the author, former Italian ambassador and academic L.V. Ferraris, includes an appendix entitled *La cultura come strumento di politica estera*. 'Culture as an instrument of foreign policy'. Its initial paragraph reads:

For a country like Italy culture, with its legacy of the past, and its current wealth, represents and must/should represent an instrument of foreign policy, both for promoting objects of intellectual achievement and for the diffusion of language. This needs to be stated regardless of potential easy comparisons with other countries, who have managed to exploit culture as an instrument of political achievement³⁶.

What we see here is, on the one hand a significant acknowledgment of the existence and value of cultural policies, while on the other they appear inextricably linked to the political objectives of foreign policy. The notion in this case advocates a specific but not independent function for the development of cultural relations. Cultural relations, in this approach, appear to be deprived of self-sufficiency which - according to others³⁷ - in fact represents their very essence: spreading knowledge to foster understanding and communication among diverse nations.

In a matter of fact way, and adopting a rather pragmatic approach, former Italian Ambassador in Moscow and former Director of Cultural Relation within the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sergio Romano, addressed the issue by stating that cultural relations are nothing but a 'necessity', if cultural action of any kind must take place abroad. According to him, whichever aim to be achieved in another country - eg creating a school, sending a teacher to cooperate with a university etc - implies a request to be fulfilled by the foreign country in question and an agreement to be reached among the two parties involved. Thus the need for an international device, *uno strumento internazionale*, an agreement, to conclude a deal of give and take. Institutions such as the *Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali*, Romano added, are established to monitor this type of international relations, which are a special kind of diplomatic relations. As for the issue of how to draw the line between cultural relations as neutral instrument of promoting knowledge and understanding and cultural relations as tools of propaganda Sergio Romano commented with a smile: *Sono tutte parole* 'It is just a matter of words'³⁸.

The existence of and the need for cultural policy, - that is the promotion of culture, as just shown - seems to be recognised with some degree of agreement by both scholars in international law and exponents of diplomacy. However opinions on their specific scope, content and modalities of implementation vary.

The expression 'cultural relations' will be used in the present context to signify the institutional framework within which take place a wide range of actions, aimed at facilitating and promoting a better understanding of a nation's culture abroad, take place. The notion adopted is broad in order to embrace government intervention as well as the initiatives of a large variety of agents³⁹. Such agents tend to be increasingly heterogeneous and numerous as a consequence of new technologies, available worldwide, which facilitate and accelerate communication. While for a number of countries programmes of a cultural nature tend to include any type of interaction/exchanges with other nations, for the majority initiatives in the field of cultural relations are similar in scope and content.

1. 5 Language spread abroad, a domain of cultural relations

No attempt to provide a rigorous definition of 'nation' was made by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg [...] ⁴⁰, but the existence of this complex phenomenon is undeniable, as the history of its development proves beyond doubt. The main elements traditionally included in the concept of 'nation' are: a community of people, an identified geographical territory where such group lives, shared religion, customs, ancestry (or the myth of it⁴¹), historical memories, language. Definitions of the term 'nation' found in modern dictionaries, however, highlight a core element alongside those listed, which is the conviction among the members of these 'imagined communities' that they belong to the same social unit, the nation, as clearly highlighted by Benedict Anderson⁴². It is, in the end, this psychological

factor which determines the behaviour of the individuals, and it is this behaviour in turn, which becomes the symbol of peoples' national identity.

The semantic content/significance of the word nation, although its immense emotional power, remains one of the most vague and uncertain of any political lexicon [...] Its indeterminacy/haziness, with ensuing impossibility to make use of it in political discourse to identify in reality the boundaries of the various national groups has resulted in the negative role that the idea of nation has played in modern history within the field of international relations[...]⁴³

Having acknowledged these considerations, let us briefly consider, as an example one of the most ingrained components of national identity: language. The national language is in itself a dividing line between people. As pointed out perceptively by E. J. Hobsbawm:

[...]in the era before general primary education there was and could not be a spoken 'national language' [...] In other words the actual mother-tongue, ie. the idiom children learned from illiterate mothers and used for everyday situations, was certainly not in any sense a national language⁴⁴.

Italy is a fitting example of this view. There exists a standard Italian, by now appropriately defined as the 'national language', and yet, as its history shows, it was through political action and pressure that the variety of the language spoken in Tuscany was imposed on the rest of the country, characterised at the time by extreme linguistic fragmentation. So much so that linguistic unity proved in fact very hard to achieve, as will be seen in the following chapters of this study. On the other hand Italian speaking Swiss, to give an example, remain citizens of their own nation and do not claim to be Italian just because of the language they speak.

Even if language is not an adequate criterion for unravelling the mysteries of national identity, 'the language shared by the inhabitants of a geographical area is the means by which common identity manifests itself more frequently'⁴⁵

Yet, it is the language spoken by individuals that people automatically associate with being members of a certain nation. Nationality, in turn, suggests well identified cultural traits. In Italian *parlare la stessa lingua* 'speaking the same language' metaphorically suggests mental alignment, shared ideals and convictions. Language thus continues to represent a special bond between its speakers, not merely because communication is easily established through words, but also because of the subliminal, inextricable ties existing between a nation's culture and its language.

Not surprisingly then if cultural relations aim (in the definition adopted in the present context) to facilitate a better understanding among nations of each other's culture, language policies are the embodiment of an indirect form of encouragement to participate in and appreciate more closely the specific values of the culture in question.

The protection of the country's language abroad is a traditional component of every foreign cultural policy ⁴⁶,

Against the background of the notion of cultural relations adopted here, the focus, as already stated, will be on the diffusion of language abroad, which is an integral aspect of cultural policies, that is to say on government's actions and planning in this field.

In his 1992 book entitled *Le souffle de la langue. Voies et destins des parlers d'Europe* ⁴⁷, French linguist Claude Hagège deals with the plurality of European languages within a relatively small geographical space, and approaches the issues of a potential common language for united Europe in the third millennium (as seen in §1.1 the imminence of the year 2000 provided an incentive for a wide range of scholars to anticipate developments in societal events). Through a process of gradual elimination Hagège, using accurate historical analysis, - rejects old and new candidates. Italian, whose European credits are listed as its diffusion in Constantinople in the 12th century, and its role and usage in two former colonies, Ethiopia and Somalia, is discarded in the space of two pages on the basis

of its limited diffusion abroad. To the French, German and English languages the author dedicates one chapter each; these three emerge as strong contenders for their *federatif* connotation, that is an already notable spread beyond the boundaries of their respective nations. In the end, however, all three fall victim of the same verdict. Consistent with Europe's extraordinary linguistic variety, for the linguistic future of Europe, Hagège predicts multilingualism. According to him, the European population of the future will consist of polyglots; the strong role performed by English, French and German, however, is in his view unlikely to change. Hagège's hypothesis does not coincide with U. Eco's opinion⁴⁸ on a very similar topic, as the latter believes in the possibility that one language may in the future become the international *lingua franca*⁴⁹. The importance of language promotion abroad, can be easily be gathered from the detailed analysis and consequent evaluation carried out by Hagège.

The approach to language diffusion abroad varies from one country to another. It is a well known fact, for example, that Great Britain rates education very highly, which is not surprising given that the diffusion of English language is linked to its colonialist origin and thus to a commitment to provide education to the people whose countries are part of the British Commonwealth. Possibly this attitude was not the direct product of altruistic concerns but rather aimed at a practical objective: educating a class of people able to act as interpreters between British colonial powers and the population in their colonies⁵⁰. France on the other hand attaches weight to language as a unique and significant element of the French culture⁵¹ and, as such, irreplaceable in conveying its models and values⁵²⁵³. Language policies, as illustrated by the examples of two empires, reveal crucial differences.

This study will look at Italy, whose language was not and is not a contender for international primacy within Europe, but which is, nevertheless, one of the six original

countries promoting of the idea of European unity . The reason of this choice, apart from motives mentioned in the introduction, will be further illustrated in the next section.

1. 6 A 'case' worthy of attention? Italy

Distinctive elements contribute to stimulating interest in Italy as a case study, probably in most fields of inquiry, but, more conspicuously in relation to matters dealing with the broad concept of culture and even more uniquely with regard to language. Let us look briefly at the first element, culture. According to UNESCO, Italy is the country with the highest concentration of archaeological and artistic treasures in the world⁵⁴⁵⁵. It would be fair to say that even visually, in everyday life, Italians cannot escape their ties with the past: their environment, characterised by innumerable historical landmarks, endlessly acts as a reminder of it.

Historian J. Le Goff has remarked that the hegelian 'burden of history' weighs on Italians' collective consciousness in a tridimensional and yet contradictory way: firstly through the realisation of being ancient as a people, on the assumption that an imaginary thread across the centuries links the Roman Empire to the present Italian nation. Secondly, he explains, Italians perceive the splendour of the past as conflicting with their contemporary situation, considering it comparatively as a decadent phase. Thirdly they are aware of their immaturity as a nation state. These observations, dating back to twenty years ago, appear to some extent still pertinent in the 1990s. In 1996, Italian historian E. Galli della Loggia has argued, for instance, that at the end of WWII a large number of Italians attributed their defeat to the 'moral and ethical weakness' characterising Italy's population as a whole, in other words to the lack of a strong national identity⁵⁶.

As for Italian people of the late 19th century, the kind of self-consciousness described by Le Goff had yet to be gained at that time at least by the majority of the population. The circumstances of political unification and the wide spread illiteracy - 78% according to 1861 Census⁵⁷ - make hard even to imagine such sophisticated historical awareness.

If we focus for a moment on the term 'nation' as it pertains to Italy, specific factors need to be taken into account. Of a wide range of studies focussing on the period of the Risorgimento - from the late 19th Century to the present - one recurring point emerges: when Italy became a nation state, the modalities of the process didn't foster effective amalgamation between geographically, ethnically, and socio-politically distant areas of the country. Liberal leaders of the Risorgimento were a small minority, in fact an élite of patriots and intellectuals. Their ideals, thoughts and convictions remained, somehow, separate and remote from those of the working classes and of the peasants, *ceti popolari* of the time, who remained mostly alien to the vicissitudes leading to the birth of the nation, 'a passive revolution' as Gramsci put it, that is a revolution coming from above.

Historically Italy is a myth created by men of letters starting with Dante and continuing over the centuries, but outside the boundaries of historical phenomena⁵⁸

The assumption of cultural unity in the peninsula was thus more of an ideal goal, an intellectual aspiration, than reality. During a phase of reflection on politics and morality Alessandro Manzoni, in the poem *Marzo* 1821, had given his definition of a modern nation: *una d'arme, di lingua, d'altare/di memorie, di sangue e di cor!*. The political unity achieved, however, could hardly compensate for socio-economic differences and education gaps within the newly formed Italian State. The existence of a so-called *paese reale*, actual country, as distinct from the *paese legale*, legal country has continued to represent a distinctive and puzzling feature of Italy. Historian Galli della Loggia in his

essay on Italian identity highlights the existence of a wide variety of identities within the same geographical space, which result from the inconsistency of political unification itself.

Even Gramsci had pointed out how the historiography of the Risorgimento bears signs of a [...], *insufficienza delle forze intime che pare l'abbiano prodotto*, 'lack of inner strength in the sources which appear to have determined it' [...] *dell'inconsistenza e gelatinosità dell'organismo studiato* 'of the inconsistency and shapelessness of the phenomenon under scrutiny'.⁵⁹

He also suggested that a revival of interest in the subject of the Risorgimento and the modalities of original political unification was likely to occur at any time when socio-political crises emerged, thus tangibly highlighting the alienation between government and people and anticipating some catastrophic consequences for the nation. Gramsci's hypothesis proved correct, for instance, on the occasion of the stormy political events of the 'early 1990s, when the debate about national identity was sparked again. To give a recent example, the Lega Nord, with its separatist centrifugal component, and the degradation of the political system have again attracted attention to the issue of the effective consistency of Italian national identity in space and time⁶⁰.

Now, the very fact that the issue is still at stake, as we approach the year 2000, confirms that assuming the presence of a strong sense of nationhood in Italians as a people in the late 19th century can only be interpreted as wishful thinking or as a device to persuade the Italians of the time to behave as it did exist. As the scholar Eric Hobsbawm has argued, nationalism had a sensible and relevant function in the 19th century Europe, in the sense that nation states served the cause of rising world capitalism⁶¹. Italy, it seems, fits quite well in one of the two forms of the process of nation-building that Hobsbawm hypothesises. Its inhabitants in fact were regarded as, and depicted like a monolithic entity comprising loyal and patriotic citizens, regardless of any existing socio-cultural

differences or divisions. The Italian Risorgimento, however, has traditionally been described as an example of unifying, deeply felt nationalism by those seeking to create a national state⁶².

This theme of course is vast and intellectually exciting, but it is only indirectly part of our sphere of investigation. The point stressed here is that in analysing Italy's socio-cultural reality, one cannot disregard on the one hand the anomalies in the process of its political unification as reflected in the still-controversial notion of national identity⁶³, on the other, and in manifest contradiction, the undisputed, extraordinary cultural heritage which the whole world identifies without hesitation as truly Italian, despite undeniable internal anomalies in the texture of Italian society. Questions such as: is cultural heritage an acknowledged and cherished common denominator, a valid substitute for the lack of other components in national cohesion? Is there a strong sense of national culture? - may generate very different answers. As recently argued by Alberto Asor Rosa with both common sense and remarkable vision:

Italy is the only European country where national identity is not a fixed set of values, but rather an incomplete achievement in continual motion. This imperfect state, weighing on us and frustrating us, has advantages which we should now begin to cherish. Suffice it to think of the narrowness of mind created by excessive national cohesion among the factors constituting an accomplished national identity.[...]When [national cohesion] is too much of a recent acquisition - as in the case of nations born after the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia - it tends to reveal the barbaric trace, *barbarico sentore*, which once characterised the birth of modern nations.[...] In my view the Italian national identity in fact lies in the skill to pursuing interaction among a thousand regional realities, *migliaia di realtà locali* and a unified direction in regard to fundamental issues: it is indeed a constantly moving circle rather than a single exclusive target⁶⁴

Historian Sergio Romano on the other hand, in commenting on events following the conclusion of World War II, suggested that unlike other European countries whose

national cultures had consolidated and expanded, becoming increasingly autonomous, Italian national culture was:

[...] insicura ed eteronoma, perennemente ansiosa di avalli esteri e di confortanti rassicurazioni... 'lacking self-confidence and autonomy, constantly seeking outside approval and comforting reassurances'⁶⁵.

L'Italia costituisce un caso a parte. Le sue istituzioni culturali sono, per ragioni storiche rare e fragili. meno capaci di produrre e difendere modelli autosufficienti. 'Italy is a unique case. For historical reasons, her cultural institutions are inadequate and fragile, less capable of producing and supporting defend autonomous models'⁶⁶.

Consistent with this belief, and, in our view, reinforcing it, was David Forgacs's 1992 in-depth study of Italy's cultural industry which highlighted among its specific characteristics a conspicuous trend towards massive imports of foreign cultural products, spanning over a century, for instance from the United States⁶⁷ The tendency to 'passive cosmopolitanism', especially during the immediate post-war years is acknowledged quite bluntly by Norberto Bobbio too⁶⁸.

Is there room for reconciling such a disparity of views and perceptions? It would be unwise to attempt an answer to this question, Italian governments' cultural policies, however, need to be examined eventually also in the light of the contradictions and complexities outlined so far.

The second element which I believe makes Italy a mystifying subject of inquiry, is its linguistic history. In the 19th Century, it was assumed that religion, language and history characterised the nation-state. At the time of Italy's political unification though, many different dialects/idioms were spoken along the peninsula. Their range and variety represented real and true communication barriers among its people. Knowledge and active use of the Italian language was the privilege of a minority, indeed of an insignificant proportion of the total population: 2.5 % according to the 1963 estimate of linguist Tullio

De Mauro⁶⁹. While in the light of more recent studies an increase in this percentage, bringing it to 9.5%, or even 12%⁷⁰ seems appropriate, the situation, scarcely changes in practical terms.

At a time when other countries were starting to feel the need to enhance their image beyond the national boundaries by promoting the diffusion of their own national languages, Italy was still looking for ways to spread its language within the national territory. An Italian language, of course did exist, but mainly in literary forms. The extraordinarily rich literary tradition spanning from the period of the Middle Ages to the times of unification is evidence of the potential and sophistication of Italian as a linguistic system. Yet, it was not a shared system, not a bonding common denominator.

In conclusion it must be acknowledged that by defining Italy as an *interesting* case to investigate, the adjective's etymology has been stretched to embrace an additional meaning. It is not exclusively the Latin *inter-esse* as in 'to be in a prominent position' that I take into account, but rather and more literally, the state of being *in between* conflicting forces, which appears to be decisive to me.

NOTES

¹ Poggi, G. *Money and the Modern Mind – Georg Simmel's Philosophy of Money*. University of California Press, Berkeley 1993 p 81

² Huntington, S. P. 'The Clash of Civilisations', *Foreign Affairs* Summer 1993 Vol.72, no. 3 pp 22-4

³ This is not to say that current events are more dramatic or worse than in the past centuries, but rather that the collective perception of them is characterised by different modalities. In answer to the question: 'Is there a real fear of the year 2000?' Umberto Eco, in an interview appearing in *Entretiens sur la fin des temps* (Fayard, Paris 1998) said that while with the anxiety created by the end of the first millennium the Catholic Church, as custodian of ideology and memory, managed not to have the topic discussed, the contemporary custodians of ideology and memory, the media, do whatever they can to achieve the opposite result, in other words they spread the feeling that apprehension towards the third millennium exists.

⁴ For instance, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, for a long time deprived of their independence are now reappearing in their revived role of nation states.

⁵ The occasion was the awarding of International Giovanni Agnelli Prize to the philosopher on 7 April 1995 in Turin.

⁶ *La Repubblica* 8 April 1995. For a more detailed account of Bobbio's speech see: Bobbio, N. *Autobiografia* (a cura di A. Papuzzi) Laterza, Bari-Roma 1997. pp 259-263

⁷ In a series of interviews with European intellectuals on the future of Europe, conducted by Italian journalist A. Cavallari, historian Eric J Hobsbawm pointed out that the very effort to create a united Europe is a symptom of the Continent's state of decline. However, he added, with or without euro-centricity Europeans still have a position of leadership in the future. Hans M. Enzenberger, questioned in Monaco on the same subject, stressed the need to achieve an increasingly flexible coexistence in the face of current migration waves. He pointed out that while the economy seems to produce new alliances, it is unlikely that non-European cultures will drastically change or disappear. In France René Remond said that the formation of a new community in Europe indicates that the predicted European decline could turn into a resurrection. The interviews quoted appeared in the article 'Un'Europa da inventare' (*La Repubblica* 28 November 1996) which was part of a series entitled 'Il Duemila nel Mondo'.

⁸ Intrigued by the millennium craze scientist Stephen Gould tackled the issue by questioning - for a start - the basic question of the millennium. When does the millennium begin? Why are people so enthralled by it? The answers, appearing in his book *Questioning the millennium*, offer mathematically based and highly thought provoking material on the theme.

⁹ Eco, U. *Sei passeggiate nei boschi narrativi*. Bompiani, Milano 1994

¹⁰ Even Germaine Greer in her ferocious but daring investigation of women's issues (*The Whole Woman*, Knopf, NY 1999) amid a rather gloomy panorama, made a prediction to gladden the hearts of her female readers: by the third millennium housework will be abolished, seeing it as a kind of obsessive compulsive disorder

¹¹ The philosopher Karl Popper, in an interview published under the title *La lezione di questo secolo* (Tascabili Marsilio, n. 20 Venezia 1994), pointed to the value of peace and freedom within the *Stato di diritto*, and warned against current illusions relying on the idea of total freedom of the market as an aim of globalisation.

¹² Claude Levi-Strauss still on the theme West versus East, highlighted the artificial nature of this separation on the basis of the connections existing in the past between Greek and Roman cultures and the Middle East. See interview in *La Repubblica* 11 December 1996

¹³ Umberto Eco participating in the Conference *Challenges of the Third Millennium*, organised by UNESCO in Valencia (January 1997), used the argument that even the date of the new millennium is controversial: 2000 for the Christians, but not for the Muslim, the Chinese or the Australian Aborigines... It is time, he suggested, that Europeans got used to comparative chronology.

¹⁴ Bonanate, L. *La politica internazionale di fronte al futuro* Franco Angeli, Milano 1991. While explaining and analysing the major changes affecting international society in recent years, the author mentions *la sindrome di fine secolo* 'the of the century syndrome', to illustrate why so many scholars in different disciplines have engaged in reflecting upon the next millennium. pp155-161

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- 15 Bauman, Z. *Culture as Praxis*. Routledge & Kegan, London and Boston 1973.p 15
- 16 Huntington, S. P. op. cit.
- 17 Ibid p 22
- 18 Panebianco, A. *Relazioni internazionali*. Jaca Books, Milano 1992
- 19 Huntington S. P. Op. cit. pp 23-24
- 20 Romano, S. 'Per una politica della cultura europea: limiti e possibilità', *Città e Regione* n.1 febbraio 1982. pp10-19
- 21 Huntington, S. P. 'The West Unique, not Universal' *Foreign Affairs* Volume 75 no. 6 1996. pp 28-46
- 22 While opponents of Huntington's theory on the one hand agree that religion and language represent very important factors in worldwide competition, on the other they strongly deny the possibility that the West is about to lose its leading role. The historian W. H. McNeill, in his *The Rise of the West*, argues that in the long term, the growing interconnections among civilisations will result in a universal kind of cosmopolitanism.
- 23 Huntington, S. P. Op. cit. p 49 (the emphasis is mine). Three years later, with the publication of *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, New York 1996), Huntington strengthened his hypothesis, both graphically and metaphorically, by eliminating the question mark in the title of his 1993 article. The clashes among cultures, he argued, cannot be denied, especially considering that they occur not only between diverse civilisations, but also within single ones. For example Muslims and Orthodox in Islam, Muslims and Hindus in India, Christian and Muslims in Nigeria and so on.
- 24 Kluckhohn, C. 'The Study of Culture' in L. A. Coser and B. Rosenberg (eds.) *Sociological Theory: A Book of Readings* The MacMillan Company, New York 1964.p.40
- 25 The Macquarie Dictionary definition of 'mateship' is: 'a code of conduct among men stressing equality and fellowship', while for the Australian Oxford Dictionary is: 'a bond between equal partners or close friends, comradeship as an ideal'. The inclusion of this word in a draft preamble for the Australian Constitution, in March 1999, aroused controversy on two counts: firstly the masculine connotation of the word in everyday language, and secondly the link of the concept with a distant bush past of Australia rather than with its current modern spirit.
- 26 The Romans did not formally impose the use of Latin on conquered peoples, however contact among the dominant Latin and languages of the subordinated countries determined long-term evolution of the latter. Apart from its diffusion through the British Empire and the victory of English-speaking nations in World War II, English is increasingly gaining ground through globalisation and the diffusion of new technologies, e.g. computers
- 27 It is interesting to note that international relations as an independent field of study is a relatively recent phenomenon: its official birth in the Western world is made to coincide with its recognition as a university subject in Great Britain, in 1919. It was the impact of World War I, however, that made the public opinion sensitive to the issue.
- 28 However, things are likely to change in the future due not only to disparate but increasing works - concentrating on the area of cultural communication - from a range of disciplines, but also because the area of civilisation is becoming very strong in language studies.

- 29 Mitchell, J. M. *International Cultural Relations*. Allen & Unwind, London 1986
- 30 Coombs, C. *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs*. Harper & Row, New York 1964
- 31 Zagari, M. 'La componente culturale' in *Inchiesta sulla politica estera italiana* Lerici Editore, Roma 1970
- 32 Arnold, H. *Foreign Cultural Policy: a Survey from a German Point of View*. Erdmann, London 1979
- 33 Baistrocchi, M. *Elementi di politica culturale estera*. Armando Editore, Roma 1985
- 34 Tovell, F. M. 'A Comparison of Canadian, French, British and German International Cultural Policies' in A. F. Cooper (ed.) *Canadian Culture: International Dimensions*. Canadian Institute of International Affairs, Toronto 1985. pp 69-82
- 35 Prezzolini, G. *La cultura italiana*. Edizioni Corbaccio, Milano 1930 p. 28
- 36 Ferraris, L. V. *Manuale della politica estera italiana: 1947-1993* Laterza, Bari 1993. pp 512-516
- 37 Arnold, H. Op. cit. The author argues that while there is no doubt that the culture of powerful states may be exploited for the politics of power, culture in itself doesn't increase political power; for instance the cultural heritage of the Netherlands has played no role in supporting its foreign interests and aims.
- 38 See Interview with Professor Sergio Romano Appendix p 496
- 39 Arnold, H. Op. cit. A distinction is suggested here: there are cases when planning, implementation and control of all cultural relations fostered by a government are mainly in its care, and cases when control of cultural policies is delegated to other bodies.
- 40 Berberoglou, B. (ed) *The National Question: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict and Self-Determination in the 20th Century*. Zed Books, London 1987 p.105
- 41 For further details on this point see *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Institutions*. Blackwell, New York 1987 pp 379-381
- 42 Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities*. Verso, London-New York (revised edition) 1991. 'The nation is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is the fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imagining.' p 7
- 43 Bobbio, N. et alii *Dizionario di politica*. TEA, Milano 1996 p 676
- 44 Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme. Myth, Reality*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990 pp 54-55
- 45 Salvemini, G. *Scritti sul Risorgimento*. Feltrinelli, Milano 1961 p 485
- 46 Arnold, H. Op. cit. p 45
- 47 Hagège, C. *Le souffle de la langue. Voies et destins des parlars d'Europe* Editions Odile Jacob, Paris 1992(2nd edition) The author successfully synthesises the linguistic history of Europe over the centuries, highlighting core issues and always taking into account, in addition to languages intrinsic qualities,

all the extra linguistic issues contributing to their diffusion. Hagège, for instance points out the relevance of solid cultural policies for the spread of a language outside the country where it originates.

48 Eco, U. *La ricerca della lingua perfetta*. Laterza, Bari-Rome 1993

49 Devoted to the theme 'English only in Europe?' *Sociolinguistica* Vol 8 1994 offers a comprehensive range of scholarly contributions about the notion of *lingua franca*.

50 For a detailed analysis of this issue see: Phillipson, T. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992 pp110-

51 Tamassia, F. 'La politica culturale con l'estero; problemi generali' *Lo spettatore internazionale* anno IV n. 2 1969 pp 175-375. In a minute examination of French cultural policies, presented as a case study, the author mentions the 'clever balance' achieved by this country by teaching the French language while teaching French culture 'enseigner le français et enseigner la France'

52 Mitchell, J. M. Op. cit. The approach of France in regard to language and culture spread is defined here as a 'sacred mission' which is synonym for the well-known French expressions *mission civilisatrice* and *messianism français*

53 Bellezza, G. *La Comunità economica europea*. Editori Riuniti, Roma 1980. The book illustrates and documents the long process preceding the creation and official birth of United Europe. For a more politically oriented analysis of Italian *Europeismo*, see: Romano, S. *Guida alla politica estera italiana*. Rizzoli, Milano 1993 pp 59-65

54 Valuable comments on this topic in De Mauro, T. 'Una, nessuna e centomila', *Ulisse 2000* giugno 1993 pp 64-74

55 Le Goff, J. 'Il peso del passato nella coscienza collettiva degli italiani' in F. L. Cavazza e S. R. Graubard (a cura di) *Il caso italiano*. Garzanti, Milano 1974 pp 534-550

56 Galli della Loggia, E. *La morte della patria*. Laterza, Bari-Roma 1996 The essential thesis of this work is that the *Resistenza* failed to nurture the Italians' love for their fatherland. The author, in line with historian Renzo De Felice, claims that the sense of national identity is weak among his fellow countrymen.

57 De Mauro, T. *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*. Laterza, Bari 1991 (1ma edizione 1963). pp 36-45

58 Raimondi, E. *Letteratura e identità nazionale*. Mondadori, Milano 1998. p 222

59 Gramsci, A. *Il Risorgimento*. Armando Editore, Roma 1979 p 79

60 Romano, S. *Finis Italiae. Declino e morte dell'ideologia risorgimentale*. Three arguments are developed to highlight the lack of a sense of nationhood among Italians. The first is that Italy's political unification was so premature that it compromised all initial attempts even at decentralising its administration; secondly, the catastrophe of World War II crushed the illusions of all those who believed in building a national consciousness with the power of *ferro e fuoco* 'fire and arms'; thirdly in 1945 the majority of Italians accepted government by antifascists 'providing those in power do not ask questions about their own actions in the last twenty years'. With his usual clarity and dialectic skills Romano passes a voluntary negative judgement on Italians' inability to take responsibility for their own actions, that is to behave as one people when socio-political events require them to do so.

61 Hobsbawm, E. 'Some reflections on "The Break-Up of Britain"' *New Left Review* n.105 1977

62 Alter, P. *Nationalism*. Edward Arnold, London 1989. pp 19-23

63 Raimondi, E. Op. cit. In an appendix to the book entitled *Conversazioni sulle virtù degli italiani* there is an interesting notion put forward as a substitute for the idea of nationalism: *patriottismo costituzionale* 'constitutional patriotism', in the sense of that uniquely unifying moment of political agreement and commitment represented by the birth of the Italian Constitution.

64 Asor Rosa, A. *La sinistra alla prova*. Einaudi, Torino 1996 pp 228-229

65 Romano, S. 'Per una politica della cultura europea: limiti e possibilità' Estratto da *Città e Regione* n.1 Febbraio 1982 p 17

66 Ibid p 16

67 Forgacs, D. *L'industrializzazione della cultura italiana 1880-1990*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1992. The author explores the historical developments of Italian cultural production by looking at its receiving end, that is in terms of geographical distribution and 'consumption'. Topics such as publishing houses, newspaper and periodical circulation, cinema and radio are considered against the background of the ongoing process of political and economic change.

68 Bobbio, N. *Saggi su Gramsci*. Feltrinelli, Milano 1990. p 104

69 De Mauro, T. Op. cit. p 43. This work had seminal value at the time of its publication as an in-depth study of the interaction between language evolution and socio-political phenomena in the Italian society.

70 Castellani, A. 'Quanti erano gli italofoeni nel 1861?' *Studi Linguistici Italiani* VIII 1982 pp 3-26

CHAPTER 2

The Italian Constitution and its symbolic bearing on the development of Italian society

This chapter establishes reasons for the time frame of the present research, which is set to cover the period 1947-1997. With the Italian Republic's Constitution approved on 22 December 1947, Italy started officially its journey as a democratic state, having gained in the constitutional charter a new political asset, after twenty years of dictatorship and a tragic war. The Italian Constitution, a document of unquestionable historical and ideological relevance, signals a turning point in the country's history. In particular it sanctions the end of language discrimination, in antithesis to fascism, by undertaking precise commitments towards Italian citizens and linguistic minorities within the nation and in regard to Italians abroad.

2. 1 December 1947-1997 a time frame and the reason for selecting it

Let me begin with a preliminary however brief description of the situation of Italy at the end of the Second World War ended.

Following the liberation of our national territory, all institutions of the State shall be selected by the Italian people, who will elect through universal, direct, secret suffrage a Constitutional Assembly to draw up a new constitution for the State¹

These words signalled the beginning of the institutional changes which were about to take place in Italy at the time. With this first decree-law of the Bonomi Government, the

immediate successor of Badoglio's second Cabinet, a glimmer of light was shed on Italy's immediate future: democracy would be returned at the conclusion of two decades of fascist rule and of war which had ravaged the country. After the Liberation (April 25 1945), the Italian peninsula was still occupied by the British and American Allied forces, its territory dramatically scarred, high inflation and widespread unemployment running hand in hand. The political situation seemed to highlight even more the endemic separation between Centre-North and South. The latter appeared mainly anchored to monarchist and fascist ideologies²; the former, where the Resistance fighting had, for the first time since 1861, united upper, lower and middle classes, firmly oriented towards achieving a democratic renewal of society, which also implied the aspiration towards a Republican regime³.

Ideological divergence between North and South highlighted by the 1946 referendum was added to the phenomenon of geographical unevenness, *disuguaglianza spaziale*⁴, in other words an economic gap existing between industrialised, prosperous Northern regions and underdeveloped Southern ones. There were other contrasts too which maintained a climate of intense political debate at the time. While the Catholic Church joined forces with those in favour of a Western-style democracy (in particular American values and models) communists and some socialists, who had gained 19% and 20.7% respectively of the votes in the elections for the Constitutional Assembly, looked to the USSR as a reference point in their struggle to achieve more radical changes for Italian society.

This is not the place to focus on the division between socialist and communist forces and Catholic and other allied political parties characteristic of the immediate post-war period. What is relevant at this stage is to look a little more closely at the origin of the Italian Constitution, chosen as a starting point for this study because - as highlighted in the following section - it represents the beginning of a new stage in Italian history, a phase in which democratic values were enforced in relation to language, among other things.

2.2 The Italian Constitution as an ideological turning point

A constitution may be roughly described as:

The system or body of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state or body politic is constituted and governed⁵, or: The fundamental law of a State, specifying the selected form of government and the essential rights and duties of the citizens⁶

The Italian Constitution, unlike others born and implemented at the conclusion of a revolutionary process (eg. the French constitution of 1789 or the Russian one of 1936), was conceived and agreed upon after the disintegration of fascism, by the seventy five members of the *Assemblea Costituente*, Constitutional Assembly, elected, as previously mentioned, by the people of Italy through a referendum on June 2 1946⁷.

This date marks the birth of Italian Republic, with 12, 717, 923 Italians voting in favour as against the 10, 719, 284 who gave preference to the monarchy. This historic occasion was shared for the first time by women, to whom the right to vote had eventually been extended.

La Costituzione italiana,[...] fu opera dell' alleanza delle forze politiche antifasciste, che erano concordi nell'abbattimento della dittatura, ma divergevano profondamente intorno al modo di costruire il nuovo Stato

'The Italian Constitution was the fruit of the coalition of anti-fascist political forces, which were in agreement on overthrowing the dictatorship, but were deeply divided on how to build the new Italian State⁸.'

This is to say that the text of the Constitution ideologically reflects the interaction among the major political forces that had shaped Italy's history since its unification: Liberals, Catholics re-organised into a new party, *Democrazia Cristiana*, Christian Democrats (DC), the *Partito Socialista Italiano* (PSI) the Socialist Party and the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI), the Communist Party. Although it is articulated in a variety of ways, the view that

the Italian Constitution was the result of an 'agreement', reached by opposing political forces predominant in Italy at the time seems to be shared by most constitutional commentators.⁹

It was the tension (and potential clash) between opposing ideologies, nurtured by the authors of the Constitution at the time it was being drafted, that makes this historical document unique, in effect a symbol of democratic interaction in the history of Italian politics¹⁰. In other words the State's welfare prevailed, in a relatively short time - eighteen months from the start of the working sessions of the two Commissions - over the opposing convictions of individuals¹¹. The final document produced by *Assemblea Costituente* has at times been branded a 'compromise', a term which may be interpreted in either of two opposite ways. As reported in Bobbio-Pierandrei¹², two distinguished former members of the Constitutional Assembly, the Christian-Democrat jurist Tupini and the head of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), Togliatti, reinforced each other's statements on separate occasions. The former highlighted the steady efforts, by the two Commissions of the *Assemblea Costituente*, to reach agreement and understanding during their working sessions. The latter rejected the criticism of those who were defining the constitutional document a 'compromise' in the negative sense.

Che cosa è un compromesso? [...] Questa parola [...] non ha senso deteriore [...] In realtà noi non abbiamo cercato un compromesso con mezzi deteriori [...] Meglio sarebbe dire che abbiamo cercato di arrivare a un'unità, cioè d'individuare quale poteva esser il terreno comune sul quale potevano confluire correnti ideologiche e politiche diverse

'What is a 'compromise'?[...] This word does not have a derogatory meaning[...] We did not stoop low to seek a compromise by inferior means[...] It would be more appropriate to say that we have tried to achieve unity, in other words we have attempted to identify a common ground where different ideologies and political streams could come together¹³,

A negative judgement was expressed on the other hand by the philosopher Benedetto Croce, who voiced the disappointment of the Liberals by stating that a constitutional deal had been reached only on the surface and that each party had struggled to achieve its own interest. It is a fact, however, that the principles at the core of the 1948 Italian Constitution are novel in relation to those characterising the late XIX century liberal concept of Stato di diritto(?), and political parties, representing the people to whom, ultimately, sovereignty belong. Twenty five years later President Giuseppe Saragat, in his address for the celebration the anniversary of the Italian Republic, summarised the writing of the Constitution with these words:

Si trattò di un confronto di idee che conobbe anche attriti, frizioni, momenti aspri, aperti scontri. Ma da questo travaglio uscì infine la Carta Costituzionale che ci governa e che ha avuto il collaudo, a partire dalla sua promulgazione di ormai più di quattro lustri.

It was a confrontation between opposing ideas which included bitter moments and open hostilities, but out of this travail finally emerged the Constitutional Charter which has governed us for more than twenty years since its enactment.¹⁴

If time is a test for most human experiences - love, friendship, governments, social reforms - the Italian Constitution, now in its 50th year, is no exception. The political elections on 27 March 1994, ignited an explosive process of change, the final result of which remains unpredictable. In an interview with an Italian news magazine historian Renzo De Felice had this to say:

Certo il passaggio dalla prima alla seconda repubblica non poteva scaturire da un'elezione o dal provvisorio cambio di sistema elettorale. Le radici della prima sono più forti di quanto non si pensi. La strada verso la seconda, però è fatta più da stati d'animo d'insoddisfazione per la prima che da un'idea precisa per gli assetti del uturo. Come questo desiderio di cambiamento debba prendere corpo e forma, secondo me, non lo sa sul serio nessuno. Primo esempio: la seconda repubblica non potrà andare avanti con la Costituzione

della prima. E allora che fare? Affidare il compito di rifare ex novo la Costituzione a una nuova costituente eletta dal popolo col sistema proporzionale? Oppure modificarla con alcuni decisivi ritocchi?

‘Certainly the transition from First to the Second Republic could not just arise from the result of an election, or a temporary change in the electoral system. The first Republic roots are stronger than people think. The path to the Second Republic however is predominantly characterised by feelings of resentment towards the First rather than precise plans for the future. How this desire for change will take shape: in my opinion no one yet knows. First example: the second Republic cannot proceed with the Constitution of the first. What is to be done then? Should we charge a new Constitutional Assembly elected by the people using the proportional system with the rewriting of the Constitution *ex novo*? Or instead modify the old one by adding a few crucial refinements¹⁵.’

A parliamentary commission - the so called *bicamerale*¹⁶ - has since 1996 been engaged in specific projects to revise the second part of the Constitution. Its first proposal of reform, presented to the Chamber of Deputies and to the Senate in November 1997, when agreed upon, had to be approved by the people of Italy via a referendum. However, while the issue of whether the 1948 Constitution will meet the challenges of present and future events cannot be disregarded, it is essential to remember that since its inception this document has proved reliable, and in fact an enlightened system of guidance through almost half a century of socio-political changes, not only within Italian society, but also in the international context. The belief that *le costituzioni finché vigono si applicano, non si criticano* ‘Constitutions while in force must be implemented, not criticised¹⁷, - may appear extreme only if we look at them purely as written documents, not if we remember that a constitutional charter represents in itself an ongoing *process* interacting with the ever changing context of the relevant society.

It seems then appropriate, from this point of view, to start by focussing on the general principles section of the Italian Constitution the *principi programmatici*¹⁸. The successful application of these principles in fact depends on the legislator's action and on

governments' ability to implement them. In other words there is no end to their potential application to social reality. More specifically in one case, those out of the general principles which, as Italian linguist Stefano Gensini has put it¹⁹, relate to the cultural and linguistic life of Italians themselves, will constitute the essential object of the following investigation.

2.3 Matters of language within the Italian Constitution

That democracies are political systems aiming to establish conditions of freedom and equality for all citizens before the law is not in question. What is more difficult is to reach agreement about the means to achieve those objectives. The genesis of section no. 3 of the Italian Constitution (henceforth abbreviated in IC), is an example of the above comment. In fact it is commonly referred to as *il principio di uguaglianza*, the equality principle, and its content is of primary interest for the present study. Section no. 3, a cornerstone, *un caposaldo*,²⁰ of the IC appears in Part one of the IC, called *Principi generali* general principles. Its text, consisting of two paragraphs, formally states that all citizens are invested with equal status and are equal before the law: gender, race, *language*, religion, political beliefs, personal and social conditions cannot constitute ground for discrimination against any person. The second paragraph goes further by declaring that it is the responsibility of the Republic to remove obstacles of an economic and social nature which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the individual and the participation of all workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country.²¹

Intense debate has surrounded the interpretation of this text. One month after the newly approved IC became applicable, the then Court of highest jurisdiction in Italy, the *Corte di Cassazione*, brought down a verdict which stated that a distinction had to be made between

constitutional rules of a prescriptive nature, *norme precettizie*, and programmatic rules, *norme programmatiche*. The former had legal status and were it to be implemented accordingly, the latter could only be seen as desirable reference points for future legislation. Because of this ruling the innovative sub-section 2 of Section no. 3, became redundant. In 1956, however, when the newly formed Constitutional Court began functioning, the controversial sentence passed by the *Corte di Cassazione* was abrogated as unconstitutional²² Yet sub-section 2 of Section 3 remained contested in terms of meaning and practical implementation.

To mention just a few interpretations of the doctrine, the view was taken by some that Section 3, in its second sub-section, represented nothing but a *rivoluzione sociale promessa per l'avvenire*, the promise of social revolution in the future²³; others interpreted this norm as a suitable device to smooth the path to socialism²⁴. Often a polemical note has crept into the debate: it has been rather cynically remarked that, after all, a 'promise' is by definition a commitment liable not to be honoured.

Summarising a detailed analysis of the doctrinal arguments, Italian jurist Caravita²⁵ points out that in recent times commentators have agreed in admitting that the debated section of the norm offers guidelines for the interpretation of any other regulations already in place, but it cannot generate any fresh ruling in relation to concrete cases for which express regulations do not yet exist²⁶.

Equality being the presupposition for democracy, it is not surprising that the interpretation of Section no. 3 continues to attract attention.²⁷ In addition, if as stated earlier in this chapter, the Italian Constitution, is characterised (among other factors) by a dynamic element, that is a tendency to promote social transformation and progress, then its implementation can be expected to cause ongoing debate.

It is not my intent or, for that matter within my domain, to add to this literature; my concern is primarily with that aspect of the norm which affirms equal treatment of individuals, by the Italian State, regardless of their *language*. As Tullio De Mauro put it:

[...]la Repubblica italiana non deve solo prendere atto delle disparità linguistiche. Il secondo comma dell'articolo 3 impegna la Repubblica [...] a rimuovere gli ostacoli che limitano di fatto l'uguaglianza dei cittadini [...] Ciò implica che quelle disparità linguistiche le quali costituiscano ostacolo 'sociale' in tal direzione vanno rimosse.

'[...] the Italian Republic needs to do more than just take linguistic differences into account. Sub-section 2 of Section 3 commits the Republic to eliminating the obstacles which limit the equality of citizens[...] This means that differences relating to language which constitute social obstacles must be removed²⁸.'

On the far reaching consequences of the principles stated in Section 3 of the Constitution I shall return later, when examining the commitment of the Italian State to language education for Italians living abroad.

2. 4 The rejection of fascist linguistic policies

The constitutional rulings touched upon so far illustrate, to some extent the concern of the 'constitutional fathers', as the members of the Constitutional Assembly are often called, with avoiding a rebirth of authoritarian impositions in Italy like those of the fascist regime.

As Piero Calamandrei, an Italian jurist and member of the Constitutional Assembly, remarked, the Italian Constitution is in fact polemical in its rejection of anything associated with fascism and in its determination to regenerate Italian society after years of dictatorial government²⁹.

This polemical attitude, which has also been evocatively described as a 'tyrant's complex', *complesso del tiranno*³⁰, can be detected in more than one instance in the text of the constitutional charter. For example, Section 21³¹, establishing in clear terms freedom of speech by all available means, oral and written, emphasises that it would be unacceptable for the Italian democratic State to interfere - as the fascists had done - with the independence both of social institutions such as the press, and/or

Section 6 is another example of the evident intent to fight against a dangerous return to fascist ideological repression³² Using various means fascism had denied the right of linguistic minorities residing in Tirolo, Val d'Aosta, Alto Adige, to use and preserve their own languages³³ The Constitution counteracts these regulations by explicitly stating the Italian Republic's commitment to protecting these minorities³⁴.

As for dialects, they had been opposed by the fascist regime since the end of 1920s in keeping with its nationalist ideology. By implementing dialectophobic policies the education system contributed powerfully over a long period to activating a discrimination mechanism against dialect speakers in schools.³⁵ In a process that is almost the mirror image of this the Constitution includes among its general principles the commitment of the Italian Republic to treat all its citizens fairly, regardless of the language they speak. Thus it implicitly addresses the issue of access to education as a right for all, dialectophones included. This is another illustration of once more, how the Constitution drafters intended to pave the way for future appropriate measures and legislation necessary to guarantee that democracy, which had disintegrated during twenty years of dictatorship, could find a place again in Italian society.

So far I have dwelt on explicit strategies used by the so called *padri costituzionali* in their attempt to prevent that any recurrence of injustices perpetrated during the period of Mussolini's dictatorship.

Whether other subconscious manifestations of anti-fascist feelings can be detected in subsequent government actions relating to language issues will be examined later. Prior to that, two aspects of fascist policies, relevant to the theme of this study, need to be examined a little more closely in order to gain a better perspective into subsequent events. One is the complex relationship between fascism and culture, the other is the issue of Italian language within and beyond the nation's boundaries.

2. 5 A glance at issues of culture during Fascism

Drawing on a distinction made in a seminal 1950 essay by the philosopher Norberto Bobbio we find three different positions characterising the relationship between culture and politics. On the one hand there is *cultura apolitica*, or a culture remaining separate from society and ignoring its issues and problems, on the other *cultura politicizzata*, which obeys directives, planning and pressures imposed by politicians. [...]The third possibility is embodied by the expression *politica della cultura*, or a position of total openness towards any kind of philosophical, ideological and intellectual stance, that is to say the type of politics concerned with whatever unifies rather than divide cultured people/those concerned with culture³⁶.

It was only during its transformation into a totalitarian regime that fascism made initial attempts to draw up a cultural program as part of a wider plan to manufacture a sense of national identity for the masses³⁷. A case then of *cultura politicizzata*. This phenomenon has been described as a direct follow-up from the Risorgimento, when *fare gli italiani* had been recognised as the prime necessity for the newly formed Italian State³⁸. At the same time the debate about clearly identifiable reference-points for a truly fascist culture never achieved unanimous results³⁹.

Two documents, the *Manifesto degli intellettuali fascisti* of 21 April 1925 written by Giovanni Gentile, and the reply to this, penned by the philosopher Benedetto Croce, which appeared on *Il Mondo* of 1 May 1925⁴⁰, are overt examples of opposing views in matters historical. The first draws a proud parallel between the creation of the Italian State in 1860, achieved by a small élite of patriots, and the fascist party entering Parliament in 1921 as a minority political group with a similar religious mission. The second opposes this view by pointing out that the elitism of the *Risorgimento* process had been the weakest factor in the making of the nation, something that the Liberals themselves felt the need to rectify⁴¹

According to the historian Sergio Romano, in the 1925 *Manifesto degli intellettuali del fascismo* Italian intellectuals were offered ground for compromise with the regime: their contribution to national cultural life would be accepted providing they were loyal to fascism, or at least repented of past adverse actions and attitudes.

Il fascismo, in altre parole, ad eccezione di alcune sue pattuglie radicali, chiede soltanto un atto di fedeltà e, se necessario, di contrizione; ma è disposto a tollerare una grande sintesi culturale, un vasto compromesso in cui tutte le componenti della cultura italiana trovino uno spazio conveniente.

In other words fascism, with the exception of a few radical groups is only asking for a declaration of loyalty and of contrition if necessary; however it would be willing to accept a broad cultural integration, a comprehensive compromise in which all components of Italian culture could find their own space⁴².

The case of the *Enciclopedia Treccani*, universally noted as a landmark in Italian cultural life of the time, and the role played by its first director, philosopher Giovanni Gentile, is quoted in support of this view. Its first volume, which appeared in 1929, initially involved the participation of a wide range of intellectuals, mainly because Gentile argued the case of 'universality' of the project, in some instances regardless of the political and ideological

alignment of those called to contribute to it. Mussolini himself, on Gentile's advice, apparently managed to subdue the protests of the more radical sectors of the party⁴³

According to other historians however, the *Enciclopedia Italiana* exemplifies the political exploitation of mass culture, as reflected for instance in Giovanni Gentile's tolerance of Catholic censorship regarding religious or educational matters⁴⁴. The very establishment of the *Istituto dell' Enciclopedia Italiana*, they argue, represented a monument to dictatorship rather than an objective cultural enterprise.⁴⁵

Nevertheless fascism operated as a zealous sponsor of cultural initiatives in innumerable areas, from literary and artistic competitions to theatre or cinema, from architectural projects to the creation of academies and other major institutions. There was only one price to be paid by the beneficiaries: public approval of the regime and obsequiousness to it.

The result of this trend was the fostering of *la vecchia inclinazione dell'intelligentsia italiana alla retorica servile, all'attesa cortegiana di benefici principeschi*, the old inclination of the Italian intelligentsia towards servile rhetoric and the sycophantic expectation of generous benefits⁴⁶.

A harsh view, but one consistent with the concern expressed by those who had personal experience of the fascist dictatorship: for the full twenty years of the regime, in other words, Italian culture was deprived of its function as society's critical filter.

2. 6 Myth and reality in Italian national and linguistic history

Addressing his audience at the inauguration of the premises of the *Società degli Autori* on 1 August 1926, Mussolini stated that it was the duty of writers':

[...] portare all'estero la conoscenza della nuova Italia, così come l'ha fatta la guerra e come la sta facendo la rivoluzione fascista

'[...] to spread abroad information about the new Italy, as shaped by war and by the fascist revolution'⁴⁷,

He also spoke of *imperialismo spirituale*, spiritual imperialism, in relation to how the writers should propagate such knowledge.

Vi sono in Europa e nel mondo molti popoli che sono ancora in uno stadio non molto elevato di civiltà, che non possono vantare i millenni della nostra storia.

'In Europe and in the world there are many peoples who have not yet reached a high degree of civilisation and who cannot boast a millennial history as we can'⁴⁸,

In relation to the promotion of Italian Culture abroad, institutions such as the *Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero* and the *Istituto Interuniversitario Italiano* were created by the State in the same period, with tasks highlighted in Mussolini's speech. Also the *Dante Alighieri Society* with its network of Committees abroad became an instrument of the fascist regime for propaganda outside Italy, imperialist ambitions being at that stage easily superimposed upon the original aims of the society itself. At this stage, Section 1 of the organisation's statute stated that the

[...] Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri è ' [...] un' associazione che diffonde la lingua e la cultura italiana fuori dal Regno e tiene alto dovunque il sentimenti dell'Italianità

[...] the national society Dante Alighieri is an association for the diffusion of Italian culture and language outside the Italian Kingdom, which keeps alive everywhere feelings of Italianness

This was a statement flexible enough to fit the fascist mission of cultural imperialism.

The Dante Alighieri Society, founded in 1889, originated in fact in close interaction with *irredentismo* a political movement that, in the late 19th century, aimed at reclaiming for the new United Kingdom of Italy territories still under Austrian rule⁴⁹. Some time later the Society came to concentrate its efforts on all Italians living away from their homeland⁵⁰. The Dante Alighieri Society's manifesto was written by Giuseppe Chiarini, writer and friend of the Italian nationalist poet Giosuè Carducci (who in fact suggested the name of the newly formed organisation). The manifesto had been published in the summer of 1889 and signed by one hundred and fifty distinguished personalities of the time. Eighty of these were members of Parliament: Republicans, Right-wingers, Radicals, Monarchists, *Garibaldini* that is to say a wide representation of the politics of the time. Its text, addressed to the Italian people, reminded them in vigorous words of the necessity to spread and protect Italian culture and language outside the national boundaries.

*Dovunque suona un accento della lingua nostra, dovunque la civiltà nostra lasciò tradizioni, dovunque sono fratelli nostri, per le condizioni particolari dei luoghi nei quali dimorano, corrono maggior rischi di perdere con la cognizione e l'uso della lingua italiana, la coscienza della patria, tanto noi abbiamo maggior obbligo di accorrere in loro aiuto*⁵¹

'Wherever our language is spoken, wherever our civilisation has left its traditions, wherever our brothers are, the greater the risk that because of particular conditions in the places where they live they may lose not only the knowledge and use of Italian language but also the consciousness of their homeland, the greater is our duty to go to their aid'

The potential loss of the language was presented as a major concern in the document, in fact as a first step towards the alienation from fatherland of those concerned [...] *il rischio di perdere con la cognizione e l'uso della lingua italiana, la coscienza della patria* 'the risk of losing the consciousness of their homeland along with the knowledge and use of their mother tongue.'

It is worthwhile noting that the text dates back to the time immediately following Rome's annexation to the kingdom of the Savoys. Its message seemed to appeal to the inhabitants of Italy on the basis of a widely shared national pride. It also appears to imply that the twenty five million people, who made up the population of the peninsula at the time, were collectively proud of their shared culture and, more importantly, of their language. This was consistent in fact with the notion that speaking the same tongue was somehow a corollary of being members of the same nation. But such notion found no match in the country's real sociolinguistic situation. The majority of the population spoke a wide range of dialects as different from each other as languages can be. While the assumption of a linguistically homogeneous nation was a myth, the authorities of the time appeared unwilling to admit it. They preferred to ignore the fact that those living outside the boundaries of the State might not even know the language they were supposed to be in danger of forgetting.

2. 7 The issue of language during fascism

By the beginning of the 20th century, there was some improvement in Italians' ability to use the national language. Dialects, however, still constituted the most common means of communication for the majority. The expression used to describe the linguistic situation at the time, *italofonia potenziale* - the potential ability to communicate in Italian ⁵² - appropriately describes the situation of those who would just manage, in one way or another, to use Italian, even in the absence of adequate education or formal schooling. From the political unification of Italy to the early decades of the 20th century many factors had contributed to the propagation of the so-called national language along the peninsula, from planned and direct interventions such as an improved and more evenly-spread schooling system to a wide range of unplanned indirect factors such as World War I and to

some extent internal migration, urbanisation and military service. This spontaneous and vigorous process came to an alt when the country fell under the spell of fascism. Even more seriously, the move towards the spread of Italian among Italians tended to turn backwards⁵³.

Fascism, especially from the late 1920s, had begun an active campaign against dialects, both in the education system and generally other institutional contexts of Italian society, for instance the press. Dialects embodied the linguistic 'difference' among the population; they represented obstacles to the *coinizzazione* of the national language. They were, in the official rhetoric a legacy of centuries of division and slavery in the old Italy, *residui dei secoli di divisione e di servitù della vecchia Italia*⁵⁴, and therefore must be eradicated. Education came to fulfil an increasingly punitive role, in the sense that through the banning of dialects, anyone unable to use the standard language at the beginning of their school career was discriminated against in terms of access to the curriculum, as the acquisition of standard Italian was not fostered through *ad hoc* programs.⁵⁵

The same applied to illiteracy, which, according to census of 1901, was the condition of 50% of the population over 6 years of age⁵⁶. To promote the image of Italy as a united, homogeneous nation, fascist administration in the sphere of language resorted to hiding and ignoring reality – illiteracy and linguistic fragmentation – rather than offering effective remedies to the problems⁵⁷. Again consistent with its nationalistic ambitions fascism also aimed to italianise linguistic minorities living within Italy's boundaries, thus abolishing their rights to use their own idioms. Once more the image to project for the glorification of the *madrepatria*, 'motherland', did not allow respect for democratic recognition of 'diversity' wherever present. A ready made mould of *Italianità*, Italian identity – language component included - was being imposed on the masses so that they could be shaped according to the desiderata of their rulers.

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NOTES

¹ Art.1 Decreto Legge Luogotenenziale n.151, 25 giugno 1944 *Gazzetta Ufficiale*. Serie speciale 8 luglio 1944, n .39

² Amendola, G. 'Prime considerazioni sulle elezioni nel Mezzogiorno' *Rinascita* III n. 5-6 1946. The author argues that in the South there had been no significant changes in relation to the past: the social structure reflected a timeless control of the powerful over the population.

³ Since the early 1990s, while the Italian political system and institutions are undergoing a process of sensational change, a fierce debate has raged around the theme of fascism and Resistance and concerning the correct evaluation/interpretation of these historic events. There are some who believe that history needs to be rewritten. The view expressed here in relation to the Resistance is personal, but is shared by innumerable Italians, whose lives have been close enough to the events under discussion for them not to feel the need to engage in a trendy exercise of historical revision.

⁴ Forgacs, D. *L'industrializzazione della cultura italiana (1880-1980.)* Il Mulino, Bologna. 1992. The author's view is that Italy represents the ultimate example, among capitalist societies, of conglomeration of the population in small but wealthy areas of the national territory, with consequent impoverishment and underdevelopment of other areas.

⁵ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* Oxford University Press, London.1967. p. 378.

6 This definition appears in: Neppi Modona, G. *Cultura costituzionale*. Il Saggiatore, Milano 1998 p 535

7 The reference point for the definition of 'constitution' in this study is: Norberto Bobbio, Nicola Matteucci, Gianfranco Pasquino (diretto da) *Dizionario di politica* (II Edizione) TEA, Milano 1990. pp 260-270

8 Bobbio, N. e Pierandrei, F. *Introduzione alla Costituzione*. Laterza, Roma-Bari 1980 p 120

9 On the Italian Constitution there exists an impressively wide and varied range of studies: this complex and engaging theme deserves much more time and space than possible in the present study. In this context the following are relevant:

Armani *La Costituzione italiana*. Garzanti, Milano 1988

Calamandrei - Levi *Commentario sistematico alla Costituzione*. Barbera, Firenze 1950

Ghisalberti, C. *Storia costituzionale d'Italia*. Laterza, Bari 1989

Neppi Modona, G. (a cura di) *Stato della Costituzione*. Il Saggiatore, Milano 1995

Neppi Modona, G. (a cura di) *Cultura Costituzionale*. Il Saggiatore, Milano 1998

Pasquino, G. (a cura di) *La politica italiana-Dizionario critico*. Laterza, Roma-Bari 1995

Scoppola, P. *Gli anni della Costituente tra politica e storia*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1989

10 For a very fine reconstruction of the Italian commentary and studies on the Constitution, spanning now over half a century, see: Fioravanti, M. 'Costituzione, amministrazione e trasformazioni dello Stato.' in A. Schiavone (a cura di) *Stato e cultura giuridica italiana dall'Unità alla Repubblica* Laterza, Roma - Bari 1990 p 50

11 Procedural and substantial aspects of the Italian Constitution are documented in depth by: *La Costituzione della Repubblica italiana nei lavori preparatori dell'Assemblea Costituente* Camera dei Deputati-Segretariato Generale, Roma 1970.

12 Bobbio, N. e Pierandrei, F. *Op.cit.* pp 23-24

13 *Ibid* p. 24

14 Supplemento al n. 10 di *Vita italiana- Documenti e informazioni*. Roma, ottobre 1971. pp 7-18

15 *Panorama* 17 marzo 1995 p 12

16 The Commission was created by : *Legge costituzionale n. 1* 24 gennaio 1997

17 Ragionieri, E. *Storia d'Italia dall'Unità ad oggi*. Einaudi, Torino 1976.p. 289

18 The general principles of the Italian Constitution appear *within* the text of the Constitutional Charter, thus they have a mandatory value, unlike the so-called preambles, whose juridical significance is more difficult to establish. As stated in Neppi Modona 1998 (op. cit) the Constitutional Assembly opted for this clear-cut alternative when the issue was discussed.

19 Gensini, S. *Elementi di storia linguistica italiana*. Minerva italyca, Roma 1982 p 369

20 This definition appears in Bobbio, N. *Verso la seconda Repubblica*. La Stampa, Torino 1997 p 69

21 Italian Republic Constitutional Administration *Italy-documents and notes* n. 3 1975. Presidency of the Council of Ministers Information Service, pp139-179

22 Sassoon, D. *L'Italia contemporanea*. Editori Riuniti, Roma 1988

- 23 Calamandrei, P. e Levi, A. (a cura di) *Commentario sistematico della Costituzione italiana*. Barbera, Firenze. 1950
- 24 Lavagna, C. *Costituzione e socialismo*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1977
- 25 Caravita, B. *Oltre l'eguaglianza - Un'analisi dell'articolo 3, comma 2, della Costituzione*. Cedam, Padova 1984
- 26 Ibid pp 27 - 31
- 27 For a detailed, in-depth analysis of the 3rd section of the Italian Constitution see: Neppi Modona, G. (a cura di) *Op. cit.*
- 28 De Mauro, T. *Scuola e linguaggio. Questioni di educazione linguistica* Editori Riuniti, Roma 1977 pp.116-117
- 29 Calamandrei, P. *Scritti e discorsi politici*. La Nuova Italia, Firenze. 1966
- 30 Armani, G. *La costituzione italiana*. Garzanti, Milano 1988
- 31 *Italian Republic Constitutional Administration* *Op cit.* p. 143
- 32 While Section 3 of the IC ensures that all citizens are equal before the law, regardless of *language*, thus implying that anyone who does not speak the national language will not be discriminated against, Section 6, similarly but more forcefully establishes the commitment of the Republic to its linguistic minorities. The subject of policies regarding linguistic minorities does not appear in this study, which focuses on language policies *abroad* not within the national territory.
- 33 Foresti, F. 'Proposte interpretative e di ricerca su lingua e fascismo: "la politica linguistica"' in E. Leso et alii (a cura di) *La lingua e il fascismo*. Consorzio Provinciale di Pubblica Lettura, Bologna 1977 pp 11-148
- 34 Section 6 reads: The Republic safeguards linguistic minorities by means of special provisions.
- 35 For a detailed analysis of the discrimination against dialect speakers in Italian schools see: Scuola di Barbiana, *Lettere a una professoressa* Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, Firenze 1978 and: De Mauro, T. *Linguaggio e società nell'Italia d'oggi* ERI, Torino 1978
- 36 Bobbio, N. 'Politica culturale e politica della cultura' *Rivista filosofia* Volume XLIII n. 1 Gennaio 1952. pp 61-74
- 37 A very accurate study of the relationship between fascism and schools, reports that during the life-span of the regime circa 3500 draft bills were passed in relation to the education system, in the process of adapting it to the political and socio-economic requirements of the regime Charnitzky, J. *Fascismo e scuola*. La Nuova Italia, Firenze. 1994 pp 5-6
- 38 Romano, S. *L'Italia scappata di mano*. Longanesi, Milano 1993 The author expresses the view that in order to nurture the idea of a national identity, fascism moved along an ideological path similar to that of the *Risorgimento* era. Fascist authorities attempted to promote a sense of nationhood, but with whatever means possible, even the more farcical. pp 137-139
- 39 Manacorda, G. *Letteratura e cultura del periodo fascista*. Principato, Milano 1979 p. 12
- 40 Ibid p 95
- 41 Ibid p 98-100

- 42 Romano, S. 'Storia d'Italia e cultura italiana all'estero: nota di lavoro' *Storia contemporanea*. X n. 2 1979 pp 377-385
- 43 Romano, S. *Giovanni Gentile - La filosofia al potere*. Bompiani, Milano.1990. pp. 211-256
- 44 According to Gentile, however, the Catholic religion is only a myth and as such there is no spiritual or moral practical value attached to it in the life of human beings, teachers of the time were thus invited to instruct their pupils about the historical development of Catholicism in Italian society, rather than teaching the Catholic Church's catechism
- 45 Turi, G. *Giovanni Gentile. Una biografia*. Marsilio Editore, Roma 1995
- 46 Romano, S. Op cit. 1990 p 92
- 47 Scritti e Discorsi di Benito Mussolini 1925-1926 Vol V, 1934 Milano
- 48 Ibid
- 49 Sal'batucci, G. 'Il problema dell'irredentismo e le origini del movimento nazionalista in Italia' *Storia contemporanea*, Anno 1, n.3 settembre 1970 p 471
- 50 Bonghi, R. *Discorso inaugurale al I Congresso*, 24 maggio 1890, Roma.1890
- 51 Società Dante Alighieri. Comitato fiorentino, *Maggio 1989- Maggio 1915*. Firenze 1915
- 52 Gensini, S. Op cit. p 358
- 53 This is the evaluation of, among others, De Mauro 1963 op. cit. and Altieri Biagi, M. L. *Linguistica essenziale*. Garzanti, Milano 1985. pp 141-146. In line with these conclusions Gensini, Op. cit. pp 359-363
- 54 Gensini, Op. cit. The quotation comes from a 1931 *velina* or official press release of the fascist regime, which the press were obliged to publish without modifications. p 361
- 55 An elaborate account and evaluation of the education policies of the fascist regime appears in: Sottocommissione dell' educazione della Commissione Alleata per il Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione *La politica e la legislazione scolastica in Italia dal 1922 al 1943. Con cenni introduttivi sui periodi precedenti e una parte conclusiva sul periodo postfascista (1946)*. Milano 1947
- 56 MAIC, *Censimento della popolazione del Regno d'Italia al 10 febbraio 1901. Numero delle famiglie e numero degli abitanti classificati secondo la qualità della dimora, il luogo di nascita, il sesso, l'età, lo stato civile e l'istruzione*. Vol. I-1890, Roma 1903
- 57 Klein, G. 'La politica linguistica nella scuola fascista: appunti sull'educazione linguistica e sul ruolo della seconda lingua' *Movimento operaio e socialista* VII, 1984, pp 97-106. See also (by the same author): *La politica linguistica del fascismo* Il Mulino, Bologna 1986
- 58 MAIC, *Censimento della popolazione del Regno d'Italia al 10 febbraio 1901. Numero delle famiglie e numero degli abitanti classificati secondo la qualità della dimora, il luogo di nascita, il sesso, l'età, lo stato civile e l'istruzione*. Roma, 1903. Vol I. 189
- 59 Klein, G. 'La politica linguistica nella scuola fascista: appunti sull'educazione linguistica e sul ruolo della seconda lingua' *Movimento operaio e socialista* VII, 1984. 1, pp 97-106
- 60 Klein, G. *La politica linguistica del fascismo* Il Mulino, Bologna 1986.

CHAPTER 3

Democracy on trial: the first twenty years of the Italian Constitution

In this section, within the identified time frame for the topic of the present study, socio-political events of particular significance are investigated at closer range. To gain a basic insight into Italy's foreign policy, its international position following the end of the Second World War is examined in its essential features. At the same time the disturbing phenomenon of internal and external migration, with its stark figures, is singled out for reflection. Millions of Italian emigrants have left their country over the span of a century. After the 1947 Constitution, however, new implications arose for the Italian State in relation to language rights of Italians abroad. The particular nature of Italy's sociolinguistic context is recollected and synthesised for a better understanding of the Italian government's position in relation to the issue.

3. 1 Post war times: aspects of a society in trauma

Not since Napoleonic times had the whole of the peninsula been transformed into a battleground, and the effects in 1943-1944 were infinitely worse than in 1796-1799.¹

Violence and war, ultimately embody extreme forms of political power which characterise the modern state as a social phenomenon². In other words they represent the mightiest means of institutionalised social coercion. The people of Italy twice experienced the real, bitter taste of this theoretical principle: in the first instance within the national boundaries,

when fascism compelled the country to enter the Second World War on 10 June 1940. The second occurrence was in the aftermath of the War, when the victorious allied powers, the United States, France, and Great Britain, eventually in control of the situation, were able to exercise their political strength by imposing the conditions of peace.

While an Italian poet Salvatore Quasimodo in a poem of 1944, expressed the anguish of that period by saying:

*E come potevamo noi cantare/con il piede straniero sopra il cuore/, fra i morti abbandonati nelle piazze/sull'erba dura di ghiaccio, al lamento/d' agnello dei fanciulli, all' urlo nero/della madre che andava incontro al figlio/crocifisso sul palo del telegrafo?{...}*³

Here by contrast are an economist's words to describes the state of Italy' s economic system at the end of the Second World War as:

poco più di un ammasso informe, grandioso e agonizzante. '

'little more than a dying, grand, shapeless mass.'⁴

Before briefly focussing on other circumstances, it may be worth reflecting, more closely than in the brief mention in **Chapter 2**, on the major features of the Italian situation by the time the war was over, once its dramatic consequences started to unfold.

Agriculture, still one of the main sources of income for the population at the time, had been neglected and had deteriorated significantly during the war period. The construction industry, docks, railways and communications showed marked signs of the deep and lasting damage suffered. Schools, houses, public buildings, barely anything had been spared. Natural mineral resources, of which the country had hardly enough before the armed conflict, had also been over-used to provide for war needs.

While desperately lacking raw materials, Italy had no funds to access the international market. Inflation was out of control and unemployment and underemployment at a peak.

Italy also had debts with the Russians, the Greeks and the Albanians for the repayment of war damages. France and Great Britain too were entitled to financial compensation, but they waved their rights in a gesture of conciliation⁵. If this was the general picture, one more factor added to the dramatic state of things: the South, for which government after government had failed to find constructive solutions, had been damaged to the point of prostration by the war, so that the gap separating it from the more industrialised and richer northern areas had widened.

The peace treaty in 1945 settled territorial issues. France took over the previously Italian owned Briga, Tenda and part of Moncenisio. On the other hand unresolved controversy persisted instead in relation to areas on the borders with Yugoslavia. The city of Trieste did not return to Italy until 1954, after having been split in two parts each controlled by different parties: one by the Allied Powers, the other by the Yugoslavs. Incidentally in the case of Bolzano a deal between De Gasperi, then *Presidente del Consiglio*, Prime Minister, and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs Gruber in September 1946 ensured full rights for the German speaking minority living in Bolzano as well as the claim to bilingual schools⁶.

With the treaty Italy was also obliged to renounce its colonial ambitions: African territories conquered under fascist rule. The Italian colonial problem was resolved by the creation of an independent kingdom/federation in Tripoli in December 1951. Somalia only remained under Italian administration for ten years starting from 1950, as a result of intricate political games involving conflicting interests of the Soviet, British and French powers. In the stern words of one historian Italy was :

[...] un paese sconfitto, con forti tensioni sociali e una quinta colonna sovietica annidata nel mezzo del suo sistema politico

a defeated country, troubled by severe social unrest and with a soviet fifth column nestled within its own political system⁷

The victors of the Second World War were quite appreciative of the situation.

3. 2 First steps towards reconstruction: Italy in the mosaic of post-war Western Europe

The late 1940s on the one hand witnessed the beginning of internationalist trends towards the creation of a federation of states in Europe⁸, on the other they represented the beginning of East-West polarisation. Italy became part of both political trends. At the inauguration of the first working session of the European Parliament on 17 July 1979 its members were reminded that European unity was a belief shared - across the continent and over centuries - by many illustrious Europeans, from Dante to Shakespeare, from Voltaire to Marx, from Goethe to De Gaulle⁹. There was in this statement a subtle, hidden admonition: Europe was not merely a geographical term, it not only implied a whole heritage of spiritual values, it symbolised freedom in contrast to the Eastern world, which was seen as the realm of despotism and servitude.

In Italy during the Second World War, the need to create effective formal links among Western European nations had been advocated by some Italian antifascist intellectuals¹⁰. In 1943 a formal movement inspired by the ideology of a united Europe was born in Milan. It soon came to be called *Europeismo* in Italian and its aim was to promote a European Federation of States¹¹. Europeanism, perhaps of a different kind, had certainly been an important factor in Churchill's post war political strategy. France, for its part, supported Europeanism as an effective way to limit Germany's powers in post-war Europe.

Italy's plan, however, was to start re-establishing its presence in the international context. Yet, Italy needed Europe more than Europe needed Italy, *l' Italia aveva bisogno dell'Europa più di quanto l'Europa avesse bisogno dell' Italia*¹²

Parallel with the movement towards the integration of the European States, the internal process of healing after destruction and chaos resulting from years at war begun in Italy, as already mentioned. At the same time the Americans, keen to contain USSR's influence in Europe, and also its further expansion, came to the conclusion that only a strong financial commitment on their part could help restore the economies of nations exhausted by the emergencies of war. The European Recovery Plan (ERP), better known as the Marshall Plan, (so named after the American Secretary of State who announced it in 1947), offered Italy generous financial support to restructure its economy, to accelerate the process of industrialisation and modernisation and to remedy unemployment with appropriate strategies and planning.

The USA, in exchange, envisaged that Italian politics would swing openly against communism, embrace American democratic principles and be committed to the progress of European integration¹³. John L. Harper has written that since Italy's strategic position was of great relevance, its destiny - in the mind of American leaders - was too important to be left to Italians to look after¹⁴.

Historian Sergio Romano suggests that after the acceptance of the Marshall Plan, internal policies, economic policies and international policies in the ensuing years came to be so closely intertwined as to represent facets of the very same reality¹⁵. In a recent comprehensive work on post war Italy another scholar, G. Mammarella, observes¹⁶ that given the extremely difficult situation the country was in the late 1940s, there was really no alternative to the alignment of Italian politics with America. In British historian Paul Ginsborg's 1989 work, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, the American decision to invest in European reconstruction is convincingly illustrated by showing how economic considerations played an important part in the United States' decision: if a European market had not been re-established the American economy would have suffered considerable damage, lacking space for an expansion of its international commercial transactions.

In conclusion, by the time the 1948 political elections took place Italy was heavily subsidised by the Americans, who barely disguised their intentions to make sure the leftist parties - especially the Communist Party - did not achieve significant electoral gains¹⁷ The Christian Democrats (DC) obtained 48.5% of the votes, thus gaining an absolute majority in Parliament. Interestingly, however, the communist Party (PCI), increased the number of its parliamentarians. The socialists (PSI) on the other hand suffered a serious defeat, thus confirming that the Italian left would be chiefly a domain of the Communists alone as from that time.

The events of the immediate post war years, although touched upon to a limited degree so far, have a specific significance in gaining a reasonably clear picture of a new phase in Italian history. From the late 1940s onwards Italian internal and foreign policies would remain closely linked. This practice, as will be shown later in this study, came to be reflected also in policies relating to culture and language diffusion abroad.

3.3 A 'miracle' to believe in: the Italian economic miracle

The expression "economic miracle", *miracolo economico*, identifies a period of rapid economic growth, which took place in Italy over a period of time starting from the early 1950s. A miracle being an extraordinary event, something which contradicts ordinary life and its laws, observers felt this was an appropriate term to describe the events of the period. A country's move from a pre-modern rural economy to a modern industrially-based organisation implied structural, ideological and material changes of complex significance.

The heterogeneity of the process does not allow for generalisations both in depicting the variety of phenomena involved or in evaluating the related outcomes. Some facts, however, deserve mention in order to grasp how matters of language and culture were subsequently dealt with by the Italian governments, following the birth of the Italian

Republican in 1946. As I will be progressively arguing, the connection between cultural/linguistic policies and migration has a particular relevance and needs rigorous and detailed examination.

The first issue of interest here, however, is to point out that, while the economic leap forward brought Italian living standards closer to that of countries where the process of industrialisation and modernisation had started earlier, the rise of *per capita* income was not evenly distributed in terms of geography¹⁸. Discrepancies between wealthy Northern regions and impoverished Southern ones remained unchanged; in fact, as already mentioned, they became even more apparent due to the impact of the war. People left endemically deprived regions in search of better living conditions in places where industrial expansion required more workers.

Migration movements, which fascism had peremptorily opposed, were thus revitalised internally and externally. The direction in the former case appeared to be from the countryside to the cities and from South to North. Externally - with the disintegration of the fascist colonial dream of channelling migration into the Italian empire - Italians began to move towards both European destinations (eg. Germany, Switzerland, Belgium) and countries across the oceans (eg. United States, Canada and Australia).

3. 4 Inner demographic reshuffle as a result of regional migration

Miracles, one could logically argue, are irrational events and as such they are likely to produce unpredictable and far-ranging consequences. The economic miracle in Italy (1953-1968) was no exception. The Italian population became involved in a massive process of unplanned (by the government) geographic resettlement. It has been shown by demographers that from 1955 to the early 1970s close to ten million people shifted from one region to another¹⁹ While a common denominator in the move appeared to be the wish

to abandon the country areas to live and work in the cities, there were variations in the way the North, South and Centre of the Italian peninsula reacted to and were affected by internal migrations.

Understandably North-western areas, in particular the so-called industrial triangle - Milan, Genoa, Turin - acted as a magnetic field, increasingly attracting vast numbers of immigrants in search of work. Prospects of employment in Southern Italy had not improved and in fact were worse than elsewhere in Europe. Parliamentary inquiries into poverty and unemployment during the first years of the Italian Republic had classified the situation of the rural Southern families as miserable and uncomfortable²⁰ Predictably it was from the South that large numbers of individuals moved elsewhere in search of work. In the process complex social outcomes were produced. City populations swelled with consequent accommodation and infrastructures problems and alterations to urban landscapes as well as to the anthropological mix.

Industries were strengthened to such degree that in most cases the supply of work-offers outstripped demand. For the newcomers this meant the taste of money, in other words access to goods and commodities they had seen only in American movies. It was a strong enough incentive to confront the hardships of city life for the thousands of migrants - especially the younger ones - coming from underdeveloped, poor areas of the South.

Of course the phenomenon of internal migrations and the trend to urbanisation also involved other parts of the Italian peninsula. Central regions - especially Lazio, with Rome as major centre of attraction - and Campania with Naples also received large numbers of people arriving either from the same region or regions close to one another. But the modalities and outcomes of this complex social phenomenon varied from place to place, being more conspicuous in the northern regions where the contrast between the life experience of the newcomers and urban environment was more striking.

While the internal demographic reshuffling by itself represents one of the most significant factors contributing to the diffusion of the national language in Italy, there is no doubt that it had high costs. Up to that point in time school education had strongly opposed dialects. In a letter of 25 January 1936 to his son Iulio, Gramsci describes his school days at the end of the 19th century in a small Sardinian country town, where most of the students came from a rural background

[...] most of my classmates could hardly speak Italian; I was consequently in a privileged situation[...] knowing how to speak Italian made everything easier at school[...]²¹

At school or in everyday life dialect speakers would be ashamed (and made to feel so) of their inability to use standard language. I recall my own primary school at the end of the 1940s. My class, *terza elementare*, grade three, was divided in two groups: those who knew Italian and those who did not; the first group of eight-year-olds, including myself, felt definitely superior to *quelli che parlano dialetto*, the dialect speakers. This was in a large city, Naples, my own home town.

In Regions of high migrant intake, tangible problems were experienced by school teachers when confronted with dialectophones. Indeed classrooms could be composed of children coming from different Regions who were unable to understand each other, let alone the teacher. Once more the unsolved linguistic fragmentation characterising the Italian peninsula was highlighted, as the State was approaching the end of its first century of existence. It was just one of the many problematic issues to be faced by the government of the time, confronted with a sudden and accelerated social change which was proving increasingly difficult to monitor.

The education system's inability to cope with the need to provide satisfactory schooling for all children, regardless of their socio-economic and language background, showed how

deficient the State's actions were, notwithstanding the accelerated recovery of the economy. Contrary to the principles of the 1947 Constitution, which stated a commitment to non discrimination on the basis of language, and a pledge to abolish obstacles to the citizens' full realisation of their intellectual potential, the school was far from providing an answer to a society in need of cultural growth (which does not necessarily - or exclusively - coincides with increased income and material possessions).

Lo Stato aveva svolto un ruolo importante nello stimolare il rapido sviluppo economico, ma aveva poi fallito nel gestirne le conseguenze sociali.

'The State had played an important part in stimulating economic development, but it had then failed to deal adequately with the social consequences²².'

3.5 The exodus to foreign countries

If internal migration was a crucial feature of the post war years in Italy, external emigration also gained momentum while people were attempting to come to terms with the deep and traumatic changes occurred in their lives during the war and in the years that followed.

Curiously enough both fascism and socialism had opposed emigration in the past, although for different motives. Fascism began to reject it for ideological reasons. If Italians went away in search of better living conditions, the 'why' of their decision would be ascribed to Government's inability to provide for their needs, thus attracting criticism both internally and abroad. Later, and in addition to this fear of *fare una brutta figura*, appearing to be in the wrong, practical factors intervened, such as the quotas imposed by most countries to which Italians had tended to move: the United States, Canada, Brazil and Australia.

Mussolini turned his face to emigration only after the traditional host societies had shut their doors against Italians²³

It was during the period in which imperialistic policies were developed that fascism had resorted to persuading Italian emigrants to establish themselves in the new African colonies. After all, this would be an ideal solution, allowing the government keeping better control over its migrants, who (important detail) contributed through substantial remittances to Italy's wealth, by sending substantial amounts of money back while living away from their fatherland.

Socialism on the other hand, as explained by Bosworth²⁴, appears to have been slow in developing emigration policies, on the basis of the persuasion that emigrants were in a sense deserting the fight for social justice on the Italian front, when they decided to look elsewhere for better living conditions. Socialism in fact tended to discourage people from embarking too readily in the venture of emigration.

Even theorists such as Gramsci and Togliatti do not appear to have been specifically interested in the subject. Bosworth remarks that both 'were usually silent on the issue'.²⁵

In the post war period, when the possibility of migrating to the former Italian colonies was no longer there, De Gasperi during the 3rd conference of the DC, urged Italians to set off again for destinations abroad, *riprendere di nuovo le vie del mondo*, but he added that a good technical preparation was necessary before leaving. A strong comment made by a politician and scholar, Giustino Fortunato, at the end of the 19th century still seemed appropriate for the conditions of imbalance created by available resources and rural populations in the immediate post-war years. He had compared the large numbers of farmers in the South to a volcano about to explode²⁶. It was a period when the leftist parties accused the government of not having appropriate policies to avoid emigration, although they offered no specific, alternative solutions. Another historian has remarked²⁷ that the left-wing parties focussed more on the protection of emigrants than on the attempt to reduce or stop emigration.

In the immediate post-war period, as mentioned previously in this chapter, Italy had found itself in a position of open alignment with the United States, whose financial support through the Marshall Plan had been highly significant for initiating reconstruction. An immediate consequence of this alliance was the building up of internal tensions against the parties of the left which tended to be critical of too much dependence on American support and the consequent interference in internal politics.

By May 1947 communists and socialists had been expelled from the De Gasperi Cabinet. In the following political elections in 1948 - the first to be held under the new Constitution - the Christian Democrats won by a large margin of votes. This was not unexpected after a fierce electoral campaign in which the Church mobilised itself in the fight against the 'amoral' forces of communism, and open American propaganda in favour of individual freedom and private property rights. What the political panorama offered at the time was:

[...] sindacati relativamente deboli, partiti della sinistra all'opposizione, manodopera in eccesso, salari bassi, impennata della domanda, clima di fiducia tra gli azionisti che avrebbe reso possibile il lungo boom del decennio successivo, che culminò nel 'miracolo economico' degli anni 1958-1963²⁸.

‘[...] relatively weak unions, leftist parties in opposition, a labour surplus of offers, low salaries, rapid growth in market demand and a climate of optimism on the part of investors which led to the lasting boom in the ensuing ten years and culminated in the economic miracle of 1958 to 1963.’

The fact is that emigration both European and overseas destinations soon picked up further strength in the absence of government restrictions. Pre-existing problems, in particular the grave socio-economic difficulties of the South seemed so bad that the Christian Democrats came to look at emigration undoubtedly as a panacea²⁹ The massive escape of Italians restarted, reaching in the period 1955-1961 to 2, 937, 406 million people³⁰ The issue of emigration, it seemed, had remained over a century of political unification an inescapable component of Italian society.

Apparently, however, governments - sometimes for opposite reasons - rather than analysing the implications of the emigration phenomenon in order to address it by monitoring its development and outcomes, came to consider it as a necessity, a device to alleviate the socio-economic disparities and consequent pressures that characterised the country³¹. Emigration from Italy, as demographers point out, took place over a period spanning from the 1870s to the 1970s, that is the first century of existence of the Italian nation state.

Historiography, apparently, does not yet offer a satisfactory complete documentation of the emigration phenomenon³², nor is it our task to evaluate the huge range of studies by economists, demographers, sociologists who have increasingly engaged in analysing the topic. What concerns us specifically is to identify and isolate for further investigation how Italian governments had dealt with the issue of language and language policies, if any, by the time the Constitution came to be implemented.

3. 6 Government's concerns in matters of language in a historical perspective

During the late 19th Century the Italian nation state had come to life without the component of a shared national language among its people. The politicians of the time, were aware of the situation and intervened. Solutions for the problem were suggested by an ad hoc commission headed by Alessandro Manzoni and created by Emilio Broglio, Minister for Education, with a law-decree (14 January 1868) to:

*rendere più universale in tutti gli ordini del popolo la notizia della buona lingua e della buona pronunzia*³³

‘[...] make more widespread in all strata of the population the knowledge of the good Italian language and correct pronunciation.’

As head of the commission, Manzoni, was thus able to contribute officially to the cause of spreading the Italian language through the formulation of a plan ³⁴, which reflected his beliefs. The linguistic situation of Italy, however, was more complex than even Manzoni had anticipated. Manzoni's contemporary the linguist Graziadio Isaia Ascoli vigorously argued that a national language can only develop in tandem with the process of social change³⁵. Linguistic unity did not depend on regulations imposed from above, but on the unpredictable interplay of social, economic and political forces.

Eventually the historical path of national language diffusion was actually a result of combined interaction among many unpredictable social events such as internal and external emigration, urbanisation mainly due to industrialisation and conscription. Later the media, including television – from 1954 - played a primary role.

While Italian had to be learned by those living in Italy, its diffusion outside the nation's boundaries might have been rather premature at the time. Was there any concern on relation to Italians living abroad? We find it mentioned in the inaugural speech of a distinguished member of the famous Manzoni's Commission, Ruggero Bonghi. At the first conference of the newly formed *Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri* in 1890 he said that the aims of the organisation were at that stage far-reaching. They concerned all Italians: those living in areas ethnographically if not politically part of the Italian State, and those residing abroad

*[...] perché hanno scelto di emigrare in altri Stati e di provvedere colà, meglio
he nella loro patria, a lor parere[.]*³⁶

‘because they have chosen to migrate to other nations to look for a living,
believing they can make a better living there than in their fatherland.

Here too, however, in other words according to a former Minister for Education³⁷, the assumption seems to have been that those living abroad spoke the language of their native land. Somehow, while originally the promotion of the Italian language had been intimately

linked to the *irredentismo*³⁸ movement, later it remained as an aim of the Society. The *Dante Alighieri* however was not a government body. Its status was modified a few years later when, in 1893, it became *Ente morale*, that is an independent organisation with specific privileges in terms of taxation and enjoying financial support by the State. Its original independence, however, came under threat with the rise of fascism.

3. 7 Fascism and language issues

The early 20th century had seen the fascist regime gradually moving towards language policies based on two principles. The first was the need to make standard Italian appear as a shared value of the nation, thus reinforcing an image of strength and unity. The second was the necessity of enforcing measures in education which would systematically erase diversity - dialects - and impose one language variety on all. Dialects, in this perspective, came to be perceived as a disgrace³⁹, a national humiliation causing deep embarrassment. One of the remedies consisted of ignoring somehow their existence, or attempting to hide the fact that Italians at that time used them still as the main system means of communication.

Extreme nationalism manifested itself in the late thirties, when fascist linguistic policies banned the use of foreign words: the Italian language, having evolved from Latin, must remain pure, thus exalting its cherished connection with the Roman Empire, one of the myths fascism consistently exploited.

From the mid-1920s the activism of fascism in regard to the diffusion of culture and language abroad increasingly developed and organisations such as the *Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero*, and the *Istituto Interuniversitario* were created for that specific aim. Meanwhile existing institutions remained instruments for the propagation of culture, but according to the regime's wishes and guidelines. In 1923 the *Università per*

Stranieri of Perugia was created and its teaching initiatives attracted special support from the regime, possibly because its older predecessor, the University of Siena, seemed more inclined to independence and less to promoting culture on the basis of a political alignment.

But it was the *Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri* with its network of Committees abroad that attracted attention as an effective propaganda tool. Mussolini's message of 11 January 1924 to the Society reads in part ⁴⁰

Nella difesa della lingua la Dante ha difeso la tradizione italiana, nella difesa della tradizione italiana, la Dante ha difeso la causa dell'unità: l'unità del territorio nazionale per la quale essa ha combattuto fino all'estremo mirabili battaglie e l'unità morale di tutti gli italiani dispersi per il mondo. Noi oggi la consideriamo come una delle nostre istituzioni più care e più gloriose.[.] oggi il suo compito è più vasto...

'By defending the language the Dante Society has protected Italian tradition, by protecting Italian tradition the Dante has defended the cause of unity: the national unity for which it has fought extraordinary battles, and the moral unity of all Italians scattered worldwide. Today we consider the *Dante Alighieri* one of our most treasured institutions [...] Today its tasks are greater...

The backing of the regime implied loss of independence, especially when the Society came to be officially supervised by the *Presidenza del Consiglio*, Council of Ministers. In addition, most of the Dante's schools abroad were taken over by the Fascist party. The promotion of Italian language and culture were thus strictly monitored by the regime so that they could be used as propaganda tools.

The outbreak of the Second World War meant further dramatic changes for this old Institution, including financial difficulties and loss of contacts with most of its overseas affiliated groups and committees. When the war was over, the *Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri* came under scrutiny for its well-known association with the fascist regime and its

earlier connection with *irredentismo*, both of which appeared as conspicuous examples of its ingrained nationalism. It is not surprising then that the decision to de-politicise the organisation was taken at that time. In 1945 the organisation's name was changed from *Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri* to plain *Società Dante Alighieri*. While its constitution was modified to some extent, it has kept intact the first article which states that:

[...] La Società ha lo scopo di tutelare e diffondere la lingua e la cultura italiana nel mondo[...]

[...] the Society aim is to protect and to spread Italian language and culture through the whole world

With the waves of emigration beginning to rise again in post war years, the *Dante Alighieri* eventually returned to its original field of action: the maintenance of links between Italians abroad and Italy, in cooperation with the government of the time, but without ideological impositions⁴¹.

In 1956 Aldo Ferrabino, a professor of Ancient History at Padua University, who had been Senator of the Italian Republic from 1948 to 1953, became president of the Society. In his inaugural speech at the *Dante Alighieri* Conference he expressed confidence that the Society had a *raison d'être*, both in Italy and abroad. However, he stressed, it was a non-political one. He also spoke of an alliance between *Italiani d'Italia, Italiani all'Estero e Italianizzanti stranieri*⁴², 'Italians in Italy, Italians abroad and foreigners Italianophiles'.

Ferrabini seemed to be acknowledging explicitly emigrants as a focus for the cultural activities of the Society. He remained at the helm of the *Società Dante Alighieri* for sixteen years. Whether he and the subsequent presidents, succeeded or not in steering the oldest Italian cultural institution through the troubled waters of the post-war years into the complexities of a rapidly changing world will be examined later.

In any case how relevant was the issue of Italian language abroad to the aims and actions of the newly born Italian Republic?

The Government had no easy task on its hands. Starting in the post war period through a dramatic process of transformation Italy was fast moving from being a rural to an industrialised society. Its population was increasingly abandoning the countryside to live in the cities to search, as we have already discussed, for work and better living conditions. Between the mid 1930s and the mid 1950s the city of Rome attracts 1,400 000 people from peripheral or far geographical areas of the country. The internal migration continues as does the external one. But which was the sociolinguistic situation at that stage? If the school system under fascist had attempted to eradicate dialects, had the 'problem' been in fact resolved?

While data collected in the 1950 by Swiss linguist Ruegg showed that 69% of the population at the time used both Italian and dialects, 13% exclusively dialect and 18% exclusively Italian, a later survey by the Italian Institute of statistics DOXA, using scientifically sound statistics, showed that in 1974 the sociolinguistic situation of the country was changing but 51,3% of Italians still used dialects at home, 23.7% alternated Italian and dialect according to the interlocutor and 25% spoke Italian⁴³.

It can thus be assumed that the sociolinguistic situation of Italy at the time of implementation of its Republican Constitution was still complex with dialects which 'historically represented an isolating socio-cultural stigma⁴⁴, still being an integral part Italians' communication among themselves. The task of internal Italian language spread was thus still current and pressing in that period.

Meanwhile millions of emigrants had left their country of origin; the new Constitution implied a responsibility of the State towards them as well.

As for the promotion of Italian abroad, maybe a less urgent matter at that stage - it implied for a start looking at the issue from a different perspective that of the political propaganda characterising the fascist dictatorship. The typical institutions of language and culture promotion abroad needed to be reorganised or even reformed especially if a comparison

was made with the sophisticated apparatus of organisations representing other countries, such as Germany, France, Great Britain.

The quantity, quality and depth of the problems involved was considerable; especially if the implications of the new Constitution for Italians abroad were to be taken into account.

NOTES

- 1 Ginsborg, P. *A History of Contemporary Italy* Penguin Books, London 1990. p 38
- 2 Poggi, G. *The State, its Nature, Development, and Prospects*. Polity Press, Cambridge 1990
- 3 Quasimodo, S. 'Alle fronde dei salici' in Salino-Borrello, R. (a cura di) *Quasimodo* Mondadori, Milano 1973. p. 72
- 4 Mori, G. 'L'economia italiana tra la fine della seconda guerra mondiale e il "secondo miracolo economico" (1945-58)' in F. Barbagallo et alii (progetto e direzione di) *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana* Einaudi, Torino 1994. Vol. I. pp 12 -143
- 5 Mammarella, G. *L'Italia contemporanea 1943 -1989*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1990
- 6 Ibid
- 7 Romano, S. *Guida alla politica estera italiana*. Rizzoli, Milano 1993. p 34
- 8 The first concrete initiative for a Movement of United Europe was taken, ironically, by Great Britain. Churchill himself was a strong advocate behind it. The Conference of May 1948 in Aja represented the starting point of the plan, involving five Western European countries, from which the European Council was later to develop.
- 9 Bellezza, G. *La comunità economica europea*. Editori Riuniti, Roma 1980 pp 9-11. An elderly French woman, Louise Weiss, gave the inaugural speech.
- 10 From their confinement in the small island of Ventotene three anti-fascists: Ernesto Colomi, Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli wrote the *Manifesto europeo*. After the fall of the fascist regime in 1943 they founded and started promoting from Milan, the Italian Movement for an European Federation.
- 11 Romano, S. *Op. cit* p. 56.
- 12 Ibid p. 61
- 13 Mammarella 1990 *Op cit*.
- 14 Harper, J. L. *L'America e la ricostruzione dell'Italia 1945-1948*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1973. p 317
- 15 Romano 1993. *Op.cit.* pp 59-65
- 16 Ginsborg, P. *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*. Einaudi, Torino 1989 Vol I.
- 17 Gambino, A. *Storia del dopoguerra - Dalla liberazione al potere DC*. Laterza, Bari 1975

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- 18 Colarizi, S. *La seconda guerra mondiale e la Repubblica*. UTET, Torino 1994. pp 664 - 668
- 19 Ginsborg, P. 1989 Op. cit
- 20 Camera dei Deputati *Atti della Commissione Parlamentare d'inchiesta sulla miseria in Italia e sui mezzi per combatterla* Vol.II. Roma 1953. pp 27 e seguenti
- 21 Gramsci, A. *Lettere dal carcere*. Giulio Einaudi, Torino. 1965 p. 852. Of course Sardinian is not a dialect but a Romance related language, at the time, however, the language of instruction in Italy was Italian, irrespective of the linguistic situation of the various Regions
- 22 Ginsborg, P. 1989 Op. cit. p 326.
- 23 Bosworth, R. J. *Italy and the Wider World 1860 - 1960*. Routledge, London and New York. 1995 p 151
- 24 Ibid
- 25 Ibid p 149
- 26 Fortunato, G. *Il Mezzogiorno e lo Stato italiano*. Vallecchi, Firenze 1973
- 27 Lepri, A. *Storia della prima Repubblica*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1993. Another important work by the same author is centred on the historic vicissitudes of South of Italy: *Storia del Mezzogiorno d'Italia* (1986)
- 28 Forgacs, D. Op. cit. p 160
- 29 Bosworth, R. 1995 Op. cit. pp 154-156
- 30 Lepri, A. 1993 Op. cit. p 174
- 31 Rosoli, G. (a cura di) *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana 1876-1976* CSER, Roma 1978
- 32 Franzina, E. 'Emigrazione transoceanica e ricerca storica in Italia: gli ultimi dieci anni (1978-1988)' *Altreitalie* aprile 1989 n.1. pp 6 - 57. The essay, while denouncing the slow awakening of interest in the issue of emigration in Italy, presents a wide-ranging account of the scientific output on the topic since the late 1970s, when the trend has been reversed.
- 33 Serianni, L. (1990) *Il secondo Ottocento: dall' Unità alla prima guerra mondiale*. Il Mulino, Bologna p 41
- 34 Manzoni's submission *Dell'unità della lingua e dei mezzi per diffonderla* was handed to Minister for Education in 1968
- 35 Ascoli 's essay, brief and clear, appeared as a *Proemio* in the first issue of the journal *Archivio glottologico italiano* in the year 1873
- 36 Bonghi, R. *Discorso inaugurale al I Congresso della Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri -24 marzo 1890*, Roma 1890.
- 37 From 1874 to 1876 Ruggero Bonghi, a philosopher, politician and journalist was *Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione* in the newly created Regno d'Italia
- 38 The Regions of Trentino, Friuli and Venezia Giulia had remained under Austrian rule after the Independence War of 1866: the *irredentismo* movement aimed at completing the unification of Italy by having them returned to Italy

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- 39 Flora, F. *Ritratto di un ventennio. Appello al re. Stampa dell'era fascista*. Edizioni Alfa, Bologna 1965
- 40 La Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri, Estratto da *La Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri 1889-1939*. Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri, Firenze 1939. pp 14-15
- 41 Pandini, E. "Il Veltro" 1957-1983. Suo contributo alla conoscenza della civiltà italiana e alle relazioni culturali con l'Estero. Tesi di Laurea in Lettere Moderne. 26/10/1984 Università Cattolica di Milano. pp 2 - 32.
- 42 Ferrabini, A. *Pagine italiane, Il Veltro*, Roma.1969. pp 60-65
- 43 'I dialetti. Quanti parlano in dialetto con i familiari?' *Bollettino della Doxa*, 23-24 (27 dicembre 1974) pp165-174
- 44 Gensini, S. *Elementi di storia linguistica italiana*. Minerva Italica, Roma 1982 p 381

CHAPTER 4

The Italian State's policies on the diffusion of language and culture abroad as inferred in its legislation

This chapter aims to provide an overview of Italian legislation in relation to the diffusion of Italian language and culture abroad. Current definitions of language planning are briefly touched upon in order to verify whether and to what extent the Italian State's action may be seen as fitting the concept of *language planning*. Laws and decrees on the subject of language and culture promotion abroad are also examined in the context of socio-economic and political changes from the mid 1950s.

4. 1. Diffusion of language and culture abroad as a dimension of language planning

'To plan', according to the Oxford English Dictionary, means 'to devise, design, something to be done, or some action to be carried out'. *Planning*, it can be assumed, involves doing things according to prior and deliberate determination of the goal to be achieved and the means necessary to accomplish it. In line with this presupposition, the term *language planning* suggests the idea of a series of interdependent actions - a process - directed at achieving specific aims in relation to the social phenomenon of language, which represents, in our case, the object to act upon. But what does language planning ultimately consist of?

While an answer such as 'decision making in connection with language problems'¹ may seem sibylline at first, it stresses that *language planning* is a universal phenomenon, that the range of situations where *language planning* may take place is very wide and that its dimensions remain basically those identified by Haugen in the 1960s². Subsequent contributions by linguists in order to solve problematic issues concerning language, have been more clearly defined in order to differentiate among specific types of language planning practices. Neustupn'y's theory of language *planning* as explained in Clyne³, includes further distinctions: *language treatment* relates in general to 'organised societal attention to language problems', thus to a wide range of practices; *language planning* on the other hand relates to specific and systematic theoretical types of language treatment⁴. In addition to the consideration that: '[...] Language planning is something all states engage in [...]'⁵, it has also been emphasised, that language planning is not' an idealistic and exclusively linguistic activity, but [...] a political and administrative activity for solving problems in society⁶.

On the basis of these two reference points, the spread of the national language among Italians themselves⁷. – which constituted a major concern for the Italian authorities in the late 19th century - could be seen as an example of language planning as in *status* planning. On the other hand the fascist regime's ban on the use of foreign words in order to avoid pollution of the pure Italian language⁸ represents an example of language planning as in *corpus* planning.⁹, as it is the imposition - during the fascist regime - of a specific language use such as *voi* instead of *Lei* as a form of address. These examples represent cases of the State's intervention at the national level. But as well as addressing language problems internally, nations do include in their foreign policy the issue of language spread and the promotion of their languages.

'The significance of language was understood from the early expansionist phase of imperialism'¹⁰. The strength and diffusion in the world of languages associated with empires of the past - Spanish, French, British - illustrate beyond doubt the validity of this

statement. The existence of Italian schools in countries (such as Ethiopia and Somalia) represents a memory of past Italian ambitions to create an empire, while curiously enough, the presence of large Italian migrant communities in countries such as Australia has never achieved the same result in more modern and democratic times. Perhaps this is a further proof of the argument that migrants' languages are weaker in terms of expansion/diffusion abroad ¹¹.

In this context the Italian State's actions with respect to language spread and maintenance at the international level will be examined to gain insights into this aspect of Italy's foreign policy.

4. 2 Issues of language and culture in Italy between the 1950s and 1960s

One of the most meaningful (and therefore controversial) norms of the Italian Constitution, Section 3, establishes guidelines for achieving equal treatment for all citizens in society. The inclusion in the constitutional charter of an explicit commitment to citizens' social rights, it must be remembered, is not only quite radical in its implications, it also marks the shift from the liberal bourgeois State of the late 19th century to the contemporary welfare state. The text of the article contains a 'programmatic' principle, that is a rule offering guidelines for the future rather than being a straightforward legal precept. Even among supporters of social rights, the inclusion of directives addressing the future democratic state, instead of standard legal regulations was highly controversial.

The nature and foreseeable consequences of the last subsection of Section 3 provoked intense debate among the members of the Constitutional Assembly¹². According to this particular part of the text ¹³ the Italian State and its institutions not only cannot discriminate against individuals in regard to identified issues, but they are also committed to eliminating obstacles and injustices which prevent full participation by citizens in the

socio-economic and political life of the country¹⁴. In compliance with this principle, since 1948 new legislation has been in place for a gradual implementation of general constitutional aims. It is also worth noting that while the Constitution's lack of flexibility has provoked criticism in some instances, eg. in relation to regulations governing electoral procedures apparently unsuitable for dealing with the consequences of the 1992 political crisis, the general principles instead seem to have remained relevant notwithstanding past and current social changes.

The historical framework in which the Constitution is operating has not necessitated any supplementary regulations concerning individual and social rights. The rights listed in the charter have proved, on the whole, to have potential for further expansion, which has in turn allowed new interpretations without any strain¹⁵

As an outcome of the above mentioned constitutional pledge, the government committed itself to providing all Italians, and we may assume this includes also those living abroad, with the same opportunities in relation to culture and language¹⁶.

Similarly to the Italian Constitution's general aims, but twenty years later, a preliminary study by UNESCO on cultural policy, declares - inter alia - that the democratisation of culture implies:

[...] enabling everyone, men and women alike, whatever their social origin, to develop their personality to the full and to participate fully in cultural activities in accordance with their tastes and their needs".¹⁷

UNESCO's initiative to survey how member-countries have developed and implemented cultural policies prompted a series of further individual studies. One of these, published in 1971, involved Italy.¹⁸

Unlike the UNESCO experts, who had avoided giving a definition of the concept of 'culture' in their preliminary document, adopting instead the idea of 'cultural policy'¹⁹, the

1971 Italian study specifies its notion of 'culture', in the introductory remarks, identifying it as follows:

The awareness possessed by a human community of its own historical evolution, by reference to which it tends to assert the continuity of its own being and to ensure its development.²⁰

The text goes on to remark that Italian government action in the cultural sphere is a comparatively new development. A distinction is then made between cultural policy and education policy, education policies being declared outside the sphere of this particular study. There is specific mention of Italy's commitment to pursuing the ideal of justice as enshrined in its Constitution. Nominated as crucial aspects of the government's cultural policy are: freedom in the arts and scientific research and, with respect to teaching, the commitment to promote humanities and science giving them the same priority. Another aspect of Italian cultural policy described as important is the principle of freedom in education, which also implies a recognition of the contribution to the development of culture made by private individuals or groups.

Statistical data are also given to illustrate the ways and means by which the Italian State promotes culture. Its areas of action are said to include: preservation of artistic heritage, schools and universities, cultural foundations, academies, libraries, the arts, state archives, radio and television, theatre, music and so on. The various cultural bodies involved are named and their function indicated. They range from the Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister²¹ to a large number of government bodies, institutions of various kinds, academies etc.

It seems obvious from the text of the document that the issue of cultural policy is looked at strictly in the national context. There is no mention of cultural policies abroad, with one exception. While listing the responsibilities of the various Ministries involved in the field of cultural policy (eg. National Archives come under Ministry of the Interior), the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs is quoted as being in charge of 'a whole series of organisations and projects [...] directed to promoting the dissemination of Italian culture abroad' ²²

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs²³ and its role in matters of culture and language diffusion abroad will be considered later. Given that the Ministry for Education²⁴ is responsible for the State's education policies, its role and involvement in the same issues appear just as relevant and will need to be addressed as well.

First however the Italian legislation dealing with language beyond nation's borders of the nation may offer a valuable source of information about its policy development in this area.

4. 2. 1 Article 6: content, historical precedents, implications

'The Republic safeguards linguistic minorities by means of special provisions.'²⁵

Clearly, the above constitutional norm - Section 6 - relates to matters beyond the subject of this study, which is concerned with policies on language and culture abroad, rather than at home. Nevertheless, a brief examination of its content may help us gain an overall picture of the legislators' intentions concerning language issues; it can also be useful to grasp the significance of Section 3 *within* the text of the Constitution and to illustrate its far-reaching potential applications. As stated initially in this context, the constitutional charter has since its implementation embodied not only the system guiding Italy's journey towards democracy but also a kind of 'prescription' for the healing process after the crippling disease of fascism, which lasted twenty years.

Whereas recognition of ethnic and cultural differences is consistent with local autonomies and bilingualism, Mussolini's policy had not been in favour of such values. Fascism had pursued a massive, oppressive process of italianisation against linguistic minorities in

Italy, but right from the start encountered considerable opposition. Slovenians for instance, who were vocal about the problem of language, more often than other communities were condemned of political crimes (generally labelled 'violations of State's security'²⁶), in some cases with death sentences. The inclusion of the linguistic minorities' protection principle was not without controversy at the time the Constitution was drafted and its interpretation is still debated today.

For instance since Section 3 excludes the possibility of discrimination on the basis of language differences, some have argued that Section 6 was superfluous²⁷. Others disagree saying²⁸ that the exclusion of discrimination would only represent a device for non-intervention, which would not necessarily mean active involvement by the State to protect linguistic minorities and support them developing their own cultures. The connection with Section 3 when it states that: 'It is the responsibility of the Republic to remove all obstacles etc.' offers the key to solving the problem as it creates an obligation to intervene in favour of linguistic minorities.

Section 6 acquires particular significance when interpreted contextually with Section 2 (recognising the inviolable rights of man), Section 9 (promoting cultural development), and Section 21 (regarding freedom of thought and expression).

While in principle the protection of and support for linguistic minorities was seen in 1947 as another clear commitment which in practice would mean the rejection of past fascist policies - and as such was enshrined in the Constitution - its actual implementation has proved a much greater challenge.

In November 1992 a bill concerning the protection of minority languages,²⁹ was introduced in the Chamber of Deputies. Its aim was to implement at last directives of the European Community dating back to 1977, but its content raised many objections. A group of intellectuals³⁰ protested that because some of the minority languages were in fact regional varieties, the proposed legislation was likely to promote disunity and support the

interests of divisive political forces (eg *Lega lombarda*). Linguist Raffaele Simone argued the need to look critically at a bill which aimed to implement guidelines no longer applicable to the changed situation of linguistic minorities in Italy. In addition the Republic had to promote unity and guarantee as an essential point an appropriate common education for all, so fostering local idioms could be seen as an aim to be pursued on an individual level³¹.

In reality, given the absence, even today, of a complete and uniform legislation needed to appropriately implement Section 6, specific provisions apply for Val d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, that is Regions which have *statuti speciali*, in other words having a diverse and more ample autonomy. Other Regions, however have approved specific laws for the protection of their cultural and linguistic heritage and these regulations include issues relevant to linguistic minorities.

For Section 6 as for other regulations coming under the heading of 'Basic Principles' it is important to remember on the one hand that the Italian Constitution must be seen not merely as a political and legal document, but also for its social potential, in other words for its ability to continue guiding society in a process of change heading towards a better democracy. On the other hand and with a touch of French scepticism³² we also need not to bear in mind that in general

La tragedie de democracies modernes est qu' elles ne sont pas reussi a faire la democratie.

The tragedy of modern democracies is that they have not been able to achieve democracy.

4.3 Italian legislation on language and culture prior to the 1948

Constitution

Over the years following 1948, because of delays in passing appropriate legislation to implement the principles of the Constitution on cultural and linguistic rights,³³ previous laws dating back to the time of Fascism remained in place. Consequently it is necessary to consider this older legislation when, as in our case, it represents the only official source of information on these matters until the 1990s.

The key legislative text for us to discuss is Royal Decree No. 740, 12 February 1940, which in turn implemented an earlier Law No. 2179 dated 19/12/1926 regulating Italian educational and cultural initiatives abroad³⁴. Promulgated at a time of imperialistic ambitions³⁵, only four months prior to the declaration of war on Britain and France (10 June 1940), this legislation dealt with Italian schools abroad when they were instrumental to cultural interaction with the newly conquered African colonies.³⁶ This was quickly followed by the 1939 School Charter, which was to provide a means by which the Minister for National Education, Giovanni Bottai, meant to better align the education system with the 'populist rhetoric of Fascism'³⁷.

Royal Decree 740/1940, in the name of Vittorio Emanuele II, King of Italy, King of Albania, Emperor of Ethiopia, is signed by Mussolini himself, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Galeazzo Ciano, the Minister for National Education Giovanni Bottai, and the Minister for Finance Thaon Di Revel. Section 1 reads:

*IL Governo del Re ha la facoltà di fondare, mantenere e sussidiare all'estero scuole e altre istituzioni italiane educative e culturali*³⁸.

The King's Government has the authority to create, maintain and fund schools and other cultural and educational institutions abroad.

The wording *ha la facoltà* illustrates how Italian schools abroad, as could be expected at the time, came into existence by government resolution, rather than through its wish to meet the expectations and rights of the people who would have access to them. No provisions are stated in relation to migrants: in fact the word migrant does not appear anywhere in the entire text of the decree.

Political ideologies, it is worth noting, become explicit in the use of words: in the case of the Royal Decree 740/1940 the King's government *ha la facoltà*, has the authority (if he so wishes) to create schools abroad. In the case of the Constitution (Section 3) it is the responsibility - *è compito* - of the Italian Republic to remove obstacles likely to prevent full development of the individual, because discrimination on the basis of language was to be ruled out.

Decree No. 740, is divided into three parts. The first sets down general principles for example that it is the responsibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAE) to manage and monitor educational institutions overseas, and that as far as the staffing of such institutions is concerned, civil servants of the Ministry for Education (MPI) are to be employed (Section 3). The second part describes how schools abroad are to be managed, and that is *as* those on Italian soil. Issues of funding, administration and recognition of diplomas awarded by such educational institutions are also extensively dealt with (Section 4- 11): eg. the qualifications awarded by them - diplomas, certificates etc.- are deemed to be equivalent to those granted by Italian schools in Italy. We also find here an early reference to a first reference to Italian Institutes of Culture (Section 12), whose creation and management are described to be the province of MAE in cooperation with the MPI and the Ministry of Finance (MF).

The aims of the Institutes of Culture are established in these general terms: 'spreading Italian language and culture abroad and developing intellectual relations with foreign countries'³⁹. The next twenty sections in the third part of Decree 740/1940, which are twice

as long as the previous ones, deal essentially with the recruitment, qualifications, promotion, internal discipline and financial arrangements relating to personnel working abroad.

In the absence of subsequent updating laws, the above guidelines have survived beyond a war and the end of a political era. The fact that Italy, unlike other countries such as France, does not have an independent Ministry in charge of cultural affairs may to some extent explain the prolonged silence ⁴⁰. It is a fact that since the 1940s legislation, language diffusion abroad has remained as in Decree 740/1940 the responsibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministries for Education and Finance. For these large government bodies this area may well be just one of the many they have to manage and to be accountable for.

It is also possible that the interest in the diffusion of language and culture abroad, which was pursued with nationalistic intent under fascism, may have been seen as a sensitive issue in times of political change and hence put aside. This approach however appears at odds with the Constitution, where language rights, as we have seen, not only have a place but are dealt with in way that involves far ranging consequences. In practice the issue remained dormant for over thirty years.

It is difficult to understand the reason why an obsolete law of the previous dictatorial regime was left untouched for so long, the inference being that Italian language diffusion abroad was not a priority for the new Republican State, at least in its initial years. It must be acknowledged though that, not all new democratic ideals permeating the 1948 Constitution came to be adequately and rapidly implemented. In fact, as already discussed and as we will argue again later, some would remain on the waiting list until other powerful social pressures intervened.

4. 4 Waking up to the existence of Italian migrants abroad: Law No. 153, 3 March 1971

Law No 153 of March 3 1971, bears the following title:

*Iniziativa scolastiche, di assistenza scolastica e di formazione e perfezionamento professionali da attuare all'estero a favore dei lavoratori italiani e loro congiunti*⁴¹,

Initiatives relating to schools, education assistance, professional training and development to be implemented abroad for the benefit of Italian emigrant workers and their families.

The text states clearly from the outset that all the provisions it contains represent an integration to the Royal Decree no.740 of 1940 which is still in force.

As stated in the Senate by Aldo Moro, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, looking after the education of the children of Italian workers' abroad and workers own educational and professional needs were matters requiring 'urgent' solutions⁴². The approval of the new law thus, represented the solution to the problem in the form envisaged by the Government. Existing provisions for Italian schools abroad, as previously noted, had been inspired only by colonialist concerns and therefore had not taken emigrants into account. Up to 1911 Italy had lost 35% of its population through the process of migration, but the fascists had preferred to curb the phenomenon rather than face its consequences⁴³.

Law 153/1971 covers five main areas of interest. The first is access to schools in host countries and maintenance of cultural and linguistic bonds with the fatherland for family members of Italian emigrants (Section 2 and 3). The second relates to preparation for or completion of compulsory schooling for the same category of people, in order to upgrade their educational qualifications and secure appropriate formal recognition in Italy. The

third deals with facilitating access to the job market in host countries (Section 3). The fourth concerns the recognition of education qualifications obtained abroad, establishing the requirement of an additional language and culture exam for those who have not regularly attended and successfully completed Italian language and culture courses (Section 5). The fifth addresses the needs of pre-school age children of migrants (Section 2).

In line with what was established in Decree 740/1940 in relation to schools abroad, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is deemed responsible for all the issues mentioned above and hence is given responsibility for the organisation of all necessary courses of instruction (Section 4). Financial support is also made available to educational organisations providing tuition abroad, provided they have aims similar to those set down by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Section 6). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also expected to supply teaching materials and allocate teachers selected from the staff of the Ministry of Education to work and teach abroad (Section 6-10). The financial burden of the implementation of all provisions defined in Law 153/1971 is covered under pre-existing relevant sections of MAE's yearly budget (Section 13).

It will be seen that the above legislation focuses primarily on the educational needs of migrant workers' families. Its aims appear both ambitious and wide-ranging⁴⁴, but its timing in particular deserves a few additional remarks.

The years 1968-1973 have been described as an era of 'collective action'⁴⁵. It was a time when students and workers became protagonists of forceful protests aimed at transforming Italian social structures. In this context, the action of the trade unions appear particularly significant as it was their goal to ensure fundamental rights for workers: for instance, the right to hold meetings during working hours and the right to pursue education within a set limit of 150 fully paid hours per year⁴⁶. While it is true that the latter claim may be seen as

intrinsically implementing an unfulfilled right to culture that was already enshrined in the Constitution (Section 9)⁴⁷, in practice negotiations relating to metalworkers' contracts were what helped to bring about these educational changes.

The 150 hours education scheme was seen not only as a victory for the workers, but also as socially significant for its foreseeable consequences in the field of adult education⁴⁸. If we now reconsider legislation about the education needs of migrant workers abroad as envisaged by Law 153/1971 in light of the above, all the issues raised in the document are placed in context and consistent with a period of attempted minor 'cultural revolution'⁴⁹.

As highlighted in more recent times, during the debate about proposed reforms to Law 153/1971⁵⁰, this piece of legislation was in a sense already obsolete at its inception. In fact it was based on an incorrect perception and evaluation of the emigration data at the time. Emigration in the 1970s, it has been argued, was undergoing conspicuous changes and could not be seen any longer as an influx of underprivileged and under educated peasants from the impoverished South of Italy. The objections raised seem legitimate in the context of this later proposal to up-date⁵¹ Law 153/1971 and adapt it to the changed social needs of the time. A further comment should be made however: the birth of the law under examination had coincided with an era when, - according to historians of migration⁵² - *il gran flusso dell'emigrazione*, the great waves of migration had come to an end. The cultural and linguistic needs of Italian emigrants were thus being looked at by authorities in retrospect rather than for future planning.

As publicly admitted, the implementation of Law 153/1971 has been hindered over time by its congenital defects⁵³. In conclusion, while for the European context guidelines from European Community (CEE) on compulsory, bilingual and bicultural education for the children of migrants⁵⁴ have offered a partial remedy to overcome implementation

problems with Law 153/1971, elsewhere in the world the difficulties remain the object of concern and constant requests of reforms⁵⁵.

Bearing these precedents in mind, it must be acknowledged that the wind of change blowing through Italian society in the late 1960s had the power to call attention to an old and yet neglected phenomenon in Italian society: emigration. Whether Law 153/1971 was a political device by the unions to gain support at least from the Italian workers scattered in Europe, or a good opportunity for the left wing sympathisers to use the issue of migrants to attract attention to the problems of the working class⁵⁶, it is relevant only to a certain extent. The fact remains that legislation was passed concerning education problems and hence language issues for Italians abroad.

If the Constitution represents an ideological turning point in Italian history, the twenty years following its birth illustrate the slow but unceasing consolidation of democracy. The boom in the economy and rising living standards of the population was indicative of the change taking place in the society and by the year 1968, the initial phase of the first Republic could be seen as having ended⁵⁷. Foreign culture and language policies of that period seem to reflect faithfully those internal socio-political transformations. One could argue with some conviction that parallel with the first post-constitutional phase of the Italian Republic the history of culture and language diffusion abroad had also reached the end of a cycle. But this was not the end of the matter

The formal recognition, in legislation, of Italian migrants educational needs was to become a powerful undercurrent influencing the government's moves in its future policies for the diffusion of Italian culture abroad.

4.5 1970s-1980s: Italian language abroad, a new issue on the Italian government agenda

While the absence of language policies on the part of the Government regarding Italian language abroad is acknowledged⁵⁸ in the literature as a feature of Italian foreign policy during the first twenty five years of the Italian Republic, no defined clarification is offered of the phenomenon. In other words there does not seem to be an attempt to investigate why the Italian authorities were inactive in that field over such a long period of time. We shall return to the issue later in this study.

Early in 1970 however, a conference on the teaching of Italian in Italy and abroad was organised by the *Società Linguistica Italiana* (SLI), Italian Linguistic Society. On that occasion the participants formed the clear impression that the learning of Italian was very much alive and popular in the world, and that a growth beyond expectations was taking place in that domain⁵⁹ notwithstanding the apparent indifference of the government institutions.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, specific legislation had been passed one year later to address the issue of language and culture rights of Italian emigrants. Law 153/1971, notwithstanding its late approval by the Italian Parliament, had significant - and possibly unexpected - repercussions for the spread of Italian abroad. In fact it represented a catalyst for a wide range of initiatives: courses for Italian language maintenance, integration classes for learners unable to study the language in mainstream schools, courses for enrolling in Italian schools when returning to Italy from abroad etc.

Most importantly the financial support provided for the emigrants benefit encouraged Italian organisation abroad to intensify their involvement in language related activities. As time went by, the process of change that Italian communities abroad were experiencing

increasingly highlighted the need - and later the urgency - to update the legislation in question. However the lack of agreement on the type and extent of change necessary, gave way increasingly to varied 'interpretations' of Law 153/1971; flexible implementation strategies were adopted, and these would vary according to geographical areas (the case of Australia is the example selected for further analysis of this matter: see **Chapter 8**). The core of the matter is that legislation aimed at emigrants ended up by being used in different areas and for a multitude of aims, which would in fact demand other and specific regulation.

Meanwhile also the internal socio-linguistic situation of Italy was undergoing deep changes, one of which was, for example, the fact that an increasing number of Italians were able to utilise the national standard language. Italian linguists, such as De Mauro⁶⁰, Gensini⁶¹, Lepschy&Lepschy⁶² agree that by the mid-1970s the use of dialects was considerably diminishing. On the one hand they were totally abandoned by a growing percentage of speakers, on the other they were utilised only within the family-circle and with close friends but not in any kind of formal social interaction. The older generations were dialect speakers, with the next generation using dialect with the parents and Italian with their own children, and the younger ones only having a passive knowledge of the dialect but using standard Italian in all situations.

A pattern to some extent comparable to that of Italians abroad, but having the language of the host country, e.g English in the case of Australia, instead of Italian as first language for the third generations, and the second generations - because of socio-economic circumstances - likely to code-switch from /dialect/Italian into English⁶³. This is to note that on the one hand the issue of standard Italian spread was still current internally although socio-economic and political factors were influencing its progress, on the other a different set of problems had to be faced in regard to Italian abroad where a growing number of people - including migrants - appeared keen to learn it.

A significant opportunity to seriously examine the issue of Italian language abroad against the background of on-going socio-cultural changes, was provided by the conference organised in 1982 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (MAE) in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Instruction, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* (MPI). That was the occasion when a most important document was discussed: the global survey on the reasons why Italian is study abroad funded by MAE, and organised by the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana*⁶⁴. Once again, as in the case of the SLI Conference in the 1970s, an important, undisputed ascertainment/notion emerged: notwithstanding the lack of ad hoc policies⁶⁵ the interest for Italian learning in the world was wider than expected, and the predominant motivation for this interest was its being the language of great culture⁶⁶.

De Mauro suggests⁶⁷ that during the above conference for the first time the government pertinent bodies/institutions, in particular the central administration, became finally aware of the growing interest for Italian learning abroad. Vedovelli (in cooperation with De Mauro) also underlines, *la rilevanza storica del convegno del 1982*⁶⁸ the historical significance of the 1982 conference, and also states that the occasion fostered a much needed and new interaction between MAE and MPI - the major policy-promoters - and the institutions in charge of cultural promotion(e.g. IICs, universities).

Always according to these two linguists the 1982 Conference also produced some practical outcomes. For instance, one was the creation of a national commission for the diffusion of Italian language and culture⁶⁹, to be in charge of identifying the specific needs of diverse geographical areas in regard Italian language spread, of activating contacts and cooperation with universities, of organising of international conferences. The second was the decision to device an official national document for the testing of competence in Italian as L2, or *certificazione nazionale ufficiale dell'italiano come L2*; on this occasion the task

was entrusted to the *Dipartimento di Scienze del Linguaggio* of the University of Rome *La Sapienza*, which, as we shall see later, immediately proceeded to work on it.

4. 6 The 'promotion of Italian culture and Italian language' as envisaged by Law no. 401, 22 December 1990

*Onorevoli Senatori. Il presente disegno di legge [...] trova giustificazione nella urgente necessità [...] di modificare sia l'ispirazione teorica sia la strutturazione operativa della politica culturale italiana all'estero*⁷⁰.

'Distinguished Senators, the present bill is justified by the urgent need to change both the theoretical inspiration and the operational framework of Italian cultural policies abroad'

These remarks introduce the amended version of the bill which was later to become Law 401/1990 when it was presented in the Senate for discussion on October 8, 1987. Further on in the text the need to proceed quickly in the approval of the bill is backed up by criticism addressed in general to Italian cultural activities abroad. They are described as 'casual, improvised and incoherent.'⁷¹

In relation to Italian Institutes of Culture, 'operating without the support of a consistent foreign cultural policy'⁷², it is claimed that their management must become more democratic. The issue of their staff's professional qualifications is also raised and said to be in need of sweeping changes. Further, a distinction is made between foreign policy and cultural policy abroad by suggesting that the latter is wider in scope and does not coincide with diplomatic aims⁷³. Cultural programs, it is stated, have to be inspired by higher aims, more meaningful ideologies and more appropriate strategies. The cultural and linguistic

needs of millions of Italians abroad are of paramount importance; social changes and international debate on the production and distribution of knowledge must not be ignored in the Italian context. Hence the urgency to pass the bill under consideration here.

This pungent criticism of and fervent interest in cultural policies, had two precedents. Firstly, during a conference on emigration held in Rome in 1975, representatives of the unions and of left wing political parties had addressed the issue of foreign cultural policy from a new perspective, that of the Italian communities abroad: a large number of individuals whose identity and skills deserved specific attention. Only ad hoc planning could achieve the desired cultural objectives⁷⁴. Most suggestions formulated on this occasion were later incorporated in a single important official document, a ministerial circular addressed to the Directorates General of the pertinent Ministries, Consulates and diplomatic representatives⁷⁵.

Finally on 20 December 1990, the bill on the promotion of Italian language and culture abroad and on reforms regarding Italian Institutes of Culture was approved. It was by then a substantially different version of the original document, incorporating changes suggested by the Chamber of Deputies after various negotiations and long debate in Parliament⁷⁶. The most significant difference among the initial proposal and the final version was the disappearance in the latter of a proposal to create an additional Department for Cultural Cooperation within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with the specific responsibility of pursuing the aims set by the new bill⁷⁷. The long passage of this Law was thus complete and it was ready to be implemented after the customary publication, in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*.⁷⁸

4. 6. 1 Law no. 401/1990: an overview

The new law's title *Riforma degli istituti italiani di cultura e interventi per la promozione della cultura e lingua italiane all'estero*, Reform of the Italian Institutes of Culture and initiatives for the promotion of Italian language and culture abroad' contains an unprecedented commitment. No prior legislative text since the birth of the Italian Republic in 1946 had explicitly mentioned these issues.

Law 401/1990 includes 25 sections and three additional tables. The first six sections deal with the aims of the legislation' (Section 2), the definition of the responsibilities and functions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' (Section 3), creation, composition, tasks and regulation of a national commission for the promotion of Italian culture abroad (Section 4 and 5), and the recognition that associations, foundations and private bodies may pursue the same aims of Law 401, by acting in cooperation with the government bodies concerned (Section 6).

From Section 7 to Section 22 the text of the legislation focuses on Institutes of Culture, their functions, structure, funding, staff recruitment and hierarchy, and the overseas posting and repatriation of staff (Sections 7-13). Specific instructions are given for the nomination of heads of the Institutes, *direttori d'Istituto*, and other specific guidelines are suggested to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for recruiting personnel from Government bodies, other than the Ministry for Foreign Affairs when necessary (Sections 14-19). Section 20 relates to the allocation of additional funds for the promotion of Italian language and culture abroad. Its second and third paragraph list ways in which funds must be distributed. Additional expenses are also authorised for buildings where Institutes or Italian schools are located (Section 21).

Regulations appearing in the following sections relate essentially to technical matters, mostly with the interpretation of Law 401/1990 when previous legislation may be

inconsistent with its text. In such cases, it is stated, Law 401/1990 will prevail over any prior incompatible ruling. Before turning to aspects of Law 401/1990 specifically relevant to Italian language diffusion abroad, it is important to refer briefly to the main innovations and initiatives put forward by this piece of legislation.

The first innovation is the official and unequivocal commitment of the Italian State to promote and propagate Italian language and culture abroad in order to achieve reciprocal knowledge and cultural cooperation with other nations (Section 2)⁷⁹.

The wording used is significant: '*La Repubblica promuove la diffusione all'estero della cultura e lingua italiane*', the Republic promotes the diffusion abroad of Italian culture and language. The present indicative is the tense used in Italian (and other modern languages) to identify actions which have an atemporal connotation. 'the earth rotates around the sun' is a scientific truth; 'the railway lines run along the coast' is, again, a non transient fact, hence the present tense. Expressions such as 'the Republic must promote/will promote/has a duty to promote, *la Repubblica deve promuovere/intende promuovere/ha il compito di promuovere*' could have implied acknowledging a lack of action in the past. The use of the straight present tense, *promuove*, instead achieves two results: it covers present, past and future initiatives and retrieves for the Italian State a still unfulfilled duty implied in the 1946 Constitution itself.

Of course it could be objected that through codification the action of the legislator is crystallised in a kind of atemporal status that is mirrored by the use of the present tense, which is true. In contrast to the wording of Section 3 of the Constitution, however, by pledging the Republic to act for social justice, stating that : *è compito della Repubblica rimuovere gli ostacoli di ordine economico e sociale* ecc. 'it is the responsibility of the Republic to remove all obstacles of an economic and social nature'. - it prompts a reflection on altered historical circumstances. 1948 represented a turning point for the nation and a commitment to establishing new ideological principles, 1990 instead signals a

more practical and case by case approach plainly announcing what the State will do or not do.

The second innovation of Law 401/1990 is the creation of a *Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della cultura italiana all'estero*, a new official body for the promotion and diffusion of language and culture abroad, within the structure of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Section 4). Directions for the promotion and spread of culture and language abroad are identified as the Commission's responsibility. In addition to, or rather directly connected with this primary duty, the Commission has consultative functions in cultural matters, proposals, or projects suggested by other institutions, whether government or private. It is also in charge of proposing initiatives for the benefit of specific geographical areas, especially those where Italian communities are present. The Commission is expected to work in close cooperation with Italian Institutes of Culture in organising regular conferences. Finally the Commission must prepare an annual report to be submitted to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, illustrating and documenting all activities which have taken place.

Section 5 defines the criteria for appointing the twenty five members of the commission, the duration of their mandate (three years) and how the newly formed body will function (eg. setting-up working parties and dividing tasks according to specific needs). General meetings are to take place not less than three times a year. A secretary and an office are allocated to the *Commissione Nazionale per la diffusione della cultura e lingua italiane all'estero* at the Farnesina, the premises of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Rome.

As previously mentioned the third new feature introduced through Law 401/1990 is the reform of Italian Institutes of Culture. We shall have to return to this part of the legislation when examining the institutions delegated to promote Italian language abroad. But it is important to note that it was indeed this reform that caused intense debate and eventually led to votes against the legislation⁸⁰ and abstentions⁸¹ from voting.

The fourth relevant initiative of Law 401/1990 was the allocation of funds specifically for the promotion of language and culture abroad: 7000 million Italian liras in the period 1991-1994 and 10,000 million starting from 1995. If funds are a good measure of the importance attributed by governments to issues of various kinds, we may assume that Italian language and culture diffusion abroad was regarded by the legislator as a priority area at the time.

Completing the present discussion on the relevance of Law 401/1990 for Italian language diffusion and promotion abroad and focusing once more on this topic within the context of the law, some preliminary conclusions may be drawn.

Firstly, language and culture diffusion at the end of 1990, was singled out and recognised as a significant issue, after a long period of neglect⁸². Secondly, the responsibility for it is now delegated to an official body of 'experts', specifically selected to work within and in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is autonomous to the extent of giving advice, developing proposals and, at the same time, acting as a specialised consultative organ in its field of expertise. It is worth noting that this body of experts must (as stated in Section 4, paragraph d) of Law 401/1990) now include two representatives of the *Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all'Estero* (CGIE), a detail to which we shall return later. The implementation of all initiatives planned by the *Commissione Nazionale*, however, remains with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Institutes of Culture are also charged with promoting the learning of Italian and may enlist the help of *Lettori* (whose positions are financed by the Italian Government) attached to universities of the guest country. The Institutes may also obtain support, if necessary, from Italian universities specifically involved in the teaching of Italian. The linguistic requirements of Italian communities abroad are expressly mentioned as in need of attention from the Institutes themselves, again a detail which appears important for the following discussion.

After the above considerations a first set of conclusions may be anticipated. In the year 1922-1940 the focus of attention was the creation of Italian schools abroad in line with nationalistic ambitions which included the spread of the language in African colonies. Cultural initiatives of that period have been described as 'aggressive and potentially imperialistic'⁸³ Once the Italian Republic was established, the old legislation remained in place. Issues of Italian language promotion were set aside, arguably as a reaction to the exploitation of cultural and language promotion for fascist propaganda abroad. The years immediately following the incandescent 1968, notwithstanding the end of the migratory waves, signalled the awakening of a new consciousness: there were millions of Italian workers abroad. They needed educational support for themselves and their families and without appropriate measures they would have no chance to integrate into their host countries while maintaining links with their fatherland, in particular through the maintenance of Italian language. The legislation of that period supports these hypotheses.

In the very late 1980s it appears, the perception seems to have emerged that culture and language diffusion abroad *are* issues relevant to the Nation and to its image on a rapidly changing world scene. An initial attempt was then made to deal with the problems involved through *ad hoc* legislation, s at stake. 1989-1990, it must be noted, had seen a coalition government of five parties - DC, PSI, PRI, PSDI, PLI: the so called *pentapartito*, headed by Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti - formed, dismantled and then returned to power on two separate occasions.

At the time that Law 401/190 was approved the controversial ⁸⁴socialist Gianni De Michelis was Minister for Foreign Affairs. At the first meeting of the *Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della cultura e lingua italiana all'estero*, on the 15th of May 1991, De Michelis gave the inaugural address⁸⁵. At the end of his speech he said:

C'è un ultimo punto di carattere generale. L'ho messo per ultimo ma nel mio pensiero sta in testa a tutti: riguarda la promozione di quel particolare aspetto

della cultura di un Paese che è la lingua.[...]Ho visto che se c'è qualcosa di cui vergognarci è proprio nel campo della lingua [...] Se c'è un settore in cui l'Italia di oggi, l'Italia ricca di oggi, l'Italia forte di oggi, deve vergognarsi, rispetto all'Italietta di cento anni fa, è proprio questo[...] Invece, anche in un'epoca di sovranazionalità, anche nella dimensione europea verso cui noi italiani andiamo, bisogna tenere ferme alcune caratteristiche di identità e la lingua è la principale tra queste.

'There is one last matter of a general nature. I have left it until last but in my thoughts it comes before everything else: it concerns the promotion of that particular aspect of a country's culture called language.[.]. I have realised that if there is anything we have to be ashamed of, it is in the area of language[...] If there is one sector in which today's Italy, today's rich Italy, today's strong Italy, must be ashamed in comparison to the 'little Italy' of a century ago, it is precisely this one (language). [...] moreover even in an era of 'sovranazionalità', even in the European dimension we Italians are heading towards, it is important to retain some features of our identity, and language is the most important of these.'

De Michelis concluded by suggesting that funds must allocated for this purpose as a priority.

Since 1991 turbulent events have destroyed and reshaped the Italian political scene, two general elections have taken place. After the victory of the centre-left coalition on the 21 April 1996, a new government was formed. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, its leader Romano Prodi suggested during the electoral campaign that there was a need to create a new ministry, a Ministry for Culture. His immediate successor and former leader of the *Partito democratico della sinistra* (PDS) Massimo D'Alema, supported by a leftist coalition, is at present the first head of the former Communist Party to be Prime Minister of Italy. Will the political change have consequences in the domain of cultural policies abroad? Will the promised project for a Ministry for Culture become a reality, and what will be the consequences for the destiny of Italian language abroad? Only time will produce answers.

Law 401/1990, however, remains in place. Evaluating its impact, both on the institutions responsible for implementing it and on the situation of Italian language abroad, is the task approached in the continuation of this study.

4.7 *Certificazione dell'italiano come L2 in historical perspective*

The 1982 Conference organised by MAE and MPI, as we have seen, represented the first occasion for serious and systematic reflection on the issue of Italian language and culture abroad. One of its practical outcomes had been the decision to establish an official and national testing mechanism to measure competence in Italian L2, similar to those existing for other languages, in the case of English, for example, the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English which is widely recognised in Great Britain and abroad.

The difficulty for Italy was that while other European countries had gone through years of research and experiment gradually devising reliable testing strategies, there was nothing in place to use as a starting point on the topic of how to test Italian L2 competence. As has rightly been observed:

To formulate a Certificate it is obviously necessary to have a rigorous definition not only of the elementary level of language competence, but also of the more advanced ones, so that specific reference models may be defined for all the others. In fact the establishment of a proficiency certificate presupposes a scientific investigation into the structure of the language in question⁸⁶.

On the other hand officially recognised proficiency certificates, apart from having a highly practical value for people who need to prove their level of competence in the language in question, also constitute a means of orientation for Italian language courses within or outside the education system in the various countries where the language is taught. This

particular function is highly desirable in order to offer objective and homogeneous ways of evaluating Italian language proficiency in diverse situations and geographical areas.⁸⁷

By 1991 the first results of long years of research, debate and experimenting to create an objective model of testing for Italian L2 were released⁸⁸. Meanwhile new legislation had been passed in the Italian Parliament, which significantly restructured and reorganised its two universities for foreigners, respectively in Siena and Perugia, and among the prerogatives attributed to these educational institutions there was the responsibility to issue proficiency certificates in Italian as L2⁸⁹.

By the end of 1992 an agreement between the two *Università per Stranieri* in Siena and Perugia and MAE had established two things: firstly how the Institutes of Culture abroad would administer the proficiency tests, and secondly how the above universities would issue certificates of proficiency.

One year later the Dipartimento di Linguistica of the Terza Università di Roma also signed a parallel agreement with MAE⁹⁰.

If Italy was chronologically behind other European countries in creating its own proficiency testing for Italian as L2, by 1993 it had made up for this gap with not one but three models⁹¹, all of which were implemented worldwide through IICs and universities, that is to say through government institutions. While the initial project envisaged one national certificate, practical circumstances modified this as we have just illustrated.

Vedovelli and De Mauro argue in favour of the current situation:

Firstly there is no single model of language proficiency: diverse testing and evaluation strategies correspond to diverse models of language proficiency; finally, different means of testing language proficiency may correspond to diverse proficiency testing aims⁹².

Raffaele Simone has this wry comment to make:

After decades of silence, ours has turned out to be a country of certificate-issuers. No less than three certificates have been created, by universities differing in both their nature and their characteristics: the University of Rome and the two universities for Foreigners in Siena and Perugia. From nothing at all to plenty the road has been short. However the abundance of certificates is natural: in cases like this, as always happens in market economies, differences develop in the user market base and also in the degree of prestige. This is what we can expect with the Italian Certificates⁹³ :

Others, like the MPI Inspector interviewed in the course of this research, consider the lack of one official model of proficiency testing for Italian L2 as a symptom of malaise, lack of cohesion and poor coordination in the area of language diffusion abroad⁹⁴.

The three current certificates are respectively called: *Certificazione di Italiano come Lingua Straniera* (CILS) for the University of Siena; *Certificato di Lingua Italiana* (CELI) for the University of Perugia and *Italiano alla Terza* (IT) for the Third University of Rome. The three tertiary institutions involved have discussed and clarified the characteristics of their respective documents on more than one occasion.⁹⁵ In the mid-1990s a bill was also introduced in the Italian Parliament suggesting that the certificate of Italian L2 proficiency be recognised as an official education title and acquire legal value.

So far it seems that the CILS of Siena has been administered in more locations than the other certificates, and also it appears to have a growing number of examinees. The CELI of Perugia, however, has attracted more candidates, while the IT of Rome has had - so far - less applicants. However, the latter being devised to certify the highest level of competence in Italian L2 is⁹⁶, more likely to attract a smaller number of candidates.

NOTES

- ¹ Fishman, J. A. (ed.) *Advances in Language Planning* Mouton, The Hague 1974. pp 15 - 33. In the introductory section titled 'Language Planning and Language Planning Research: the State of the Arts', the author summarises the situation of language planning and language planning research at the time. He says that the notions of elaboration and implementation were identified and defined by Haugen in 1966 and 1969, while the concept of cultivation was perfected by Neustupn'y. The latter relates to more advanced aspects of language planning such as 'dealing with stylistic varieties the national standard' p 16
- ² Haugen, E. *Language Planning and Language Conflict*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1966
- ³ Clyne, M. 'Language Planning (Corpus and Status)' in W. Brigh (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. Oxford University Press, New York 1992 pp 84-87. The terminology of language planning is carefully examined to identify the meaning and function of each word and expression associated with this field of study
- ⁴ Phillipson, R. *Linguistic Imperialism* Oxford University Press, Oxford 1992. In reporting about Neustupn'y's theory of *language planning* (1983), the author illustrates its distinctive attributes. The first is the need for the planners to engage in identifying all socio-economic causes and consequences of the problem under discussion. The second is that, in proposing remedies for the concerns addressed, a *language planning* model needs to be informed by a theory of language planning. Such remarks highlight the underlying democratisation of the process
- ⁵ Ibid p 89
- ⁶ Jernudd, B. H., Das Gupta, J 'Towards a Theory of Language Planning' in J. A. Fishman (ed.) *Advances in Language Planning* Mouton, The Hague 1974. pp 195 - 215.
- ⁷ Serianni, L. 'Il primo Ottocento' in F. Bruni (a cura di) *Storia della lingua italiana* Il Mulino, Bologna 1989
- ⁸ Lanuzza, S. *Storia della lingua italiana* Newton Compton Editori, Roma 1994. p. 73. For an in depth study of the linguistic policies of fascism see Klem, G. *La politica linguistica del fascismo* Il Mulino, Bologna 1986.
- ⁹ Clyne, M. Op. cit. We are told that the distinction was made by H. Kloss in his 1969 *Research Possibilities on Group Research on Bilingualism*. 'Corpus Planning' takes place when changes affect the corpus of the language: for instance, spelling changes, morphology modifications etc, while status planning relates to the position/stand of a language in relation to another/others.
- ¹⁰ Phillipson, R. Op. cit. p 110
- ¹¹ Simone, R. 'La diffusione internazionale dell'italiano' *Italiano & oltre*. Anno IV n. 3 1989 pp 105-109
- ¹² In particular one of the members of the *Assemblea Costituente*, Piero Calamandrei, jurist, academic and political writer, in a lucid analysis argued that from a legal point of view, it was incorrect to include programmatic norms within the text of the Constitution, whose principles were in fact

prescriptive/compulsory. For an enlightening account of Calamandrei's argument see: Barile, P. 'La nascita della costituzione: Piero Calamandrei e le libertà' in U. De Siervo (a cura di): *Scelte della Costituente e cultura giuridico* Il Mulino, Bologna 1980

13 Section 3 reads as follows: 'citizens are invested with equal social status and are equal before the law without distinction as to sex, race, language, religion, political opinions or personal and social condition. It is the responsibility of the Republic to remove all obstacles of an economic and social nature which, by limiting the freedom and equality of citizens, prevent the full development of the individual and the participation of workers in the political, economic and social organisation of the country'. in Giancola, R. (ed.) *Italy-documents and notes* Supplement n. 3 1975, Presidency of the Council of Ministers pp 139 - 140

14 Citizens' claims in relation to culture and education fall into the category of social rights which, in turn, are included in the wider class of 'citizenship rights'. *I diritti sociali sono pretese della persona verso lo Stato o piu' in generale l'organizzazione pubblica, dirette al godimento di prestazioni rilevanti per la qualità della vita: ad esempio diritto all'istruzione alla cultura.* Social rights are claims of the individual from the State regarding access to services essential to the quality of life, for example the right to education, culture etc.' For a detailed analysis of the subject see: Roppo, V. 'I diritti civili' in G. Pasquino (a cura di) *La politica italiana - Dizionario critico 1945-1995*. Editori Laterza, Bari 1995 pp 33-34

15 Armani, G. 'I diritti di cittadinanza'. in P. Ginsborg (a cura di) *Stato dell'Italia* (Mondadori 1994). p. 482. The original reads: "Il quadro storico entro cui la Costituzione continua a operare non ha reso necessaria una integrazione delle norme sui diritti individuali e sociali. I diritti elencati nella carta hanno dimostrato, nel loro complesso, una portata espansiva, che ne ha consentito senza forzature espansioni nuove"

16 Palozzi, L. *Nuovo sistema scolastico-culturale italiano all'estero*. Editoriale BM Italiana, Roma 1991. In this comprehensive study of the Italian school system abroad, the commitment of the Italian Republic to its citizens living abroad is stated as follows: *Il compito istituzionale di promuovere la lingua e la cultura italiana nel mondo è previsto dalla nostra costituzione* "The duty of Italy's official institutions to promote Italian language and culture throughout the world is stated in our Constitution." p 15

17 UNESCO 'Cultural policy-A preliminary study' in *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies* UNESCO, Paris 1969. p 8

18 UNESCO *Cultural policy in Italy* UNESCO, Paris 1971. The document was prepared by Professor Vincenzo Cappelletti (then of the University of Perugia) and a Member of the Italian National Commission of UNESCO, in cooperation with a group of experts. He is now Director of the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani*, in Rome.

19 UNESCO's definition of cultural policy reads: 'A body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures which provide a basis for cultural action by the State' Op. cit. p. 9

20 Ibid p 10

21 Italian term: *Presidente del Consiglio*

22 Op. cit. p 24

23 Italian term: *Ministero degli Affari Esteri* (MAE)

24 Italian term: *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* (MPI)

- 25 Giancola, R. (ed.) *Italy-documents and notes* Supplement no. 3 1975 Presidency of the Council of Ministers. p 140.
- 26 Buratti, G. 'Le minoranze linguistiche in Italia' in AA.VV. *La natura del pregiudizio* Regione Piemonte, Torino 1979 pp 55-74
- 27 For an in-depth analysis and evaluation of Section 6 and its current implementation see: Neppi-Modona, G. (a cura di) *Cultura costituzionale* Mondadori, Milano 1998 pp 59 - 62
- 28 Buratti, G. Op cit.
- 29 *Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche* Disegno di Legge n. 612, 20 Novembre 1991
- 30 Valerio Castronove, Gian Enrico Rusconi, Massimo Salvadori, Nicola Tranfaglia and Saverio Vertone. All from the city of Turin.
- 31 Simone, R. 'Minoranze in minoranza' *Italiano & Oltre* Anno VII. n. 3-4 1992 pp 3-4
- 32 Spagnol. E. (a cura di) *Il Dizionario delle citazioni*. A.Vallardi Milano 1994 p 240
- 33 Conserva, G. (a cura di) *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana* Bonacci Editore, Roma 1974. The relevant principles appear in Sections 3, 6, 9, 35. pp 17 - 70
- 34 Palozzi, L. Op. cit. p 15
- 35 Fascism has been described, in relation to Italy, as 'the logical conclusion' of an old pre-existing nationalism' 'Fascism is nothing more than hypertrophied nationalism' T. Nairn, T. 'The Modern Janus' *New Left Review* n. 94. 1975. pp 346-347.
- 36 Manacorda, G. *Letteratura e cultura del periodo fascista* Principato, Milano 1979. p. 113. *Vi sono in Europa e nel mondo molti popoli che sono ancora in uno stadio non molto elevato di civiltà[...] Dobbiamo noi essere i loro educatori, dobbiamo noi conquistarli col fascino della nostra creazione'* Mussolini's words inaugurating the Roman premises of the writers' society illustrate the core of cultural policies at the time.
- 37 De Grand, A. *Italian Fascism - Its Origin and Development*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London. 1989
- 38 *Raccolta ufficiale delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno d'Italia* Anno 1940-XVIII Volume Quarto. pp 3327-3343 Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, Roma p 3328
- 39 *Ibid* *Alla fondazione di Istituti di cultura aventi il fine di favorire la diffusione della lingua e della cultura italiana e lo sviluppo delle relazioni intellettuali dell'Italia con i Paesi stranieri, si provvede mediante decreto del Ministro per gli Affari Esteri di concerto con quelli per l'educazione nazionale e finanze'* Institutes of Culture whose aim is to promote the diffusion of Italian language and culture and the development of Italy's intellectual relations with foreign countries are to be created through a decree of the Minister of Foreign Affairs together with the Minister for Education and the Minister for Finance'. p 3331
- 40 On 11 April 1996, during the campaign for the general elections, the leader of the centre ... coalition, Romano Prodi, stated that, if elected, a Ministry for Culture would be established. '[...] investire in cultura vuole dire investire in credibilità del Paese. Il Paese più bello del mondo non conta oggi più nulla dal punto di vista culturale. La situazione di crisi e di degrado in cui versa la cultura è il risultato di colossali inadeguatezze, imperdonabili leggerezze, interessate dimenticanze.' [...] investing in culture means investing in the country's credibility. The most beautiful country in the world no longer counts in terms of

culture. The [current] crisis and degradation of our culture are the result of huge inadequacies, unforgivable frivolities, selfish neglect. *La Repubblica* 12 April 1996

41 Legge n. 153-3 marzo 1971 *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n.96, 19 aprile 1971 pp 430 - 437

42 Disegno di legge n.1033 - Senato della Repubblica-V Legislatura, 24 dicembre 1969 p 1

43 De Grand, A. Op.cit. pp 66 - 67

44 Camera dei Deputati - V Legislatura - Terza Commissione 3/2/1971 *Discussione del disegno di legge: Iniziative scolastiche, di assistenza scolastica ecc.* M. Pitzalis, opening discussion on the bill, defined its aims '[...]finalità che sono complesse e innovatrici rispetto alla vigente regolamentazione' p 148

45 Ginsborg, P. *A History of Contemporary Italy* Penguin Books, London 1990 The author sums up his rigorous documentation of the period thus: 'From 1968 (wards paralysis from above gave way to movement from below.[...] There followed a most extraordinary period of social ferment, the high season of collective action in the history of the Republic' (p 298). He argues that demanding social changes occurring at the time had not been matched by appropriate government intervention: 'Behind the failure of to achieve more lay the central problem of the state. By the early 1970 it had become clearer that than ever before that the key to reform in society lay with the prior reform of the state(p 345)

46 The right of workers to education/study was achieved with Law n. 300 of 20 May 1970, the *Statuto dei lavoratori*. This legislation recognised workers-students' entitlement to working hours compatible with their study needs and exemption from duties after hours (Section 10). Other relevant studies of this issue include: AA.VV, *Didattica delle 150 ore* Editori Riuniti, Roma 1975. Demetrio, D. *Alfabetizzazione degli adulti e classe operaia* Angeli, Milano 1976. Guerrieri, G. *Tornare a scuola da protagonisti*. Guaraldi, Firenze 1975

47 *Italian Republic Constitutional Administration* Op. cit. p 141

48 De Sanctis, F. M. *L'educazione degli adulti in Italia*. Editori Riuniti, Roma 1978 pp 328-340

49 Ginsborg, P. Op. cit p 322

50 Valitutti, S. 'Relazione sull'eventuale riforma della legge 153/ marzo 1971' in Ministero degli Affari Esteri *Atti del convegno 'La riforma della normativa italiana in materia di scolarizzazione dei figli degli emigrati e suo raccordo con le strutture della scuola e della cultura italiana all'estero'*. Urbino, 1983

51 At the time the conference in Urbino took place the Minister Valitutti was Chairperson of the *Commissione per la riforma della legge 153.*, Commission for the Law Reform 153/1971

52 Italian emigration's figures are carefully analysed in G. Rosoli (a cura di) *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana 1876-1976* CSER, Rome 1978. pp 345 - 377

53 Lazzari, F. 'Decennio dello sviluppo culturale ed emigrazione italiana nel mondo'. *Rassegna quadrimestrale della Commissione Nazionale Italiana per l'UNESCO* Anno XXXVII n. 1-2-3 1990,pp. 21-37. Major problems identified are: a) difficulty in reconciling provisions of Decree 140/1940 with those of Law 153/1971; b) ambitious aims and poor funding to achieve them; c) planning which lacks flexibility and cannot be adapted to specific situations characterising Italian emigration to particular countries.

54 Direttiva della Comunità europea (CE), 25 Luglio 1977, n. 486

55 During the conference organised by the Australian Representatives of CGIE (*Consiglio Generale Italiani all'Estero*), Melbourne, 16-17 December 1995, the need to reform Law 153/1971 was once again

highlighted in view of the forthcoming CGIE Conference on *Scuola - Lingua- Cultura* to be held in Tuscany in March 1996. Preliminary address by G. Martini Piovano, Australia's representative on the *Scuola- Lingua - Cultura* Committee of the CGIE.

56 For Sergio Romano the Italian Left has always considered emigration as 'the historical proof of the Italian State's class-conscious orientation'. For the left wing parties, Romano explains, Italian migrants in the world represent a separate nation in need of reconnection to its fatherland. Hence the necessity to devise appropriate non-elitist cultural policies, capable to reappraising the true ancient values of Italian culture: traditions, dialects, crafts, folklore. See for further thought provoking comments on the topic: Romano, S. *Gli istituti italiani di cultura* Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1983, and also the interview with the author himself in Milan, January 1996 - Appendix p 497

57 Norberto Bobbio remarked in the late 1980s, that two historical phases of approximately equal length may be distinguished in the first forty years of the Italian Republic. Extensive societal changes characterised the first period, while the second (1958-1988) was marked by a shift in the balance of political forces with results yet to be seen. His observations seem to be pertinent in regard to Italy's cultural policies as well. Politics' transformation characterise specific historical phases in this area. For further insights into the transition towards 'una nuova Repubblica' see: Bobbio, N. *Profilo ideologico del Novecento* Garzanti, Milano 1990

58 Vedovelli, M. De Mauro, T. *La diffusione dell'italiano nel mondo e le vie dell'emigrazione; problemi istituzionali e sociolinguistici* Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma 1996. pp 7-41. See also on the topic Interview with Tullio De Mauro Appendix p 456

59 Medici, M. e Simone, R. (a cura di) *L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero* Bulzoni, Roma 1971

60 De Mauro, T. *Linguaggio e società nell'Italia di oggi*. E.R.I. , Torino 1978

61 Gensini, S. *Elementi di storia linguistica italiana* Minerva italiana, Roma 1982

62 Lepschy A. L. and Lepschy, G. *The Italian Language Today*. Hutchinson, London 1977

63 On this matter see: Rubino, A. 'Patterns of language choice and language contact in formal and informal settings' *Rivista di Linguistica* n.3 1991 pp 277-305

64 Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana (ed) *Indagine sulle motivazioni all'apprendimento della lingua italiana nel mondo* Roma 1982

65 The notion that the interest for Italian language abroad may not depend on the action and initiatives of the Italian Government was - however ironically - put forward also by Professor Sergio Romano, a former Italian ambassador and Head of DGRC of MAE. See Interview with Sergio Romano: Appendix p 505

66 Vignuzzi, U 'Le motivazioni dello studio della lingua italiana all'estero' in Ministero degli Affari Esteri e Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione *L'italiano come lingua seconda in Italia e all'estero*. Roma pp 25-46

67 Interview with Tullio De Mauro January 1995 Appendix p 457

68 De Mauro, T. e Vedovelli M. Op. cit

69 Eight years later, with Law n. 401/1990 this commission was replaced by a similar body (Commissione nazionale per la promozione della cultura italiana all'estero)

70 Senato della Repubblica - X Legislatura - 8/10/1987 Disegno di Legge n. 522 Introductory speech pp 521-523

71 Ibid p 522

72 Ibid p 522

73 Likewise J. M. Mitchell (Op cit.) on the autonomy of cultural relations in respect to cultural diplomacy, as discussed and quoted in Chapter 1

74 *L'emigrazione italiana nelle prospettive degli anni Ottanta*, Atti della Conferenza Nazionale dell'Emigrazione. Roma 24 febbraio -1 marzo 1975. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma 1975

75 Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Circolare n. 13 18 maggio 1978

76 The preliminary work for the preparation of the bill on culture and language diffusion abroad was carried out by two parliamentary commissions, *Commissione III - Affari Esteri, Emigrazione* and *Commissione VII - Istruzione pubblica, beni culturali, ricerca scientifica, spettacolo e sport*. The issues debated are documented in the minutes of the joint meetings of the two Commissions, which included representatives of all main political parties. The debate took place during 1990, both in the Senate (18 January 1989; 1, 14 February 1990; 14 March 1990; 5, 17 April 1990; 20 June 1990) and in the Chamber of Deputies (12 July 1990; 4 October 1990; 4, 18, 19, 20 December 1990).

77 Senato della Repubblica - X Legislatura - Disegno di legge n. 522 8 ottobre 1987. Articolo 5 (Istituzione del Dipartimento per la cooperazione culturale) Establishment of the Department for Cultural Cooperation.

78 Legge n. 401 22 Dicembre 1990 *Riforma degli Istituti italiani di cultura e interventi per la promozione della lingua e della cultura italiane all'estero*. Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 302, 29 dicembre 1990

79 Ibid. The text reads : The Republic promotes the diffusion abroad of Italian culture and language, in order to develop reciprocal knowledge and cultural cooperation among peoples, within the frame of its relationships with other countries.

80 Camera dei deputati-X Legislatura-Commissioni riunite III-VII. Seduta 19 dicembre 1990. Documenti allegati. pp. 46 - 64. The Independent Left's (Sinistra indipendente) spokesperson L. Bernocco-Garzanti declared the opposition of her group. Culture, she objected, cannot be considered a domain of the Foreign Affairs Ministry; the proposed reform, in her view, failed to solve the problems involved. Equally opposed were the communists - as shown by the comments of E. Gabbuggiani - on the basis that the reform in its proposed form failed to achieve its aim: to strengthen Italian cultural action in the world leading up to the year 2000. The main objections related to not having created an official structure for the field of culture, independent of MAE. The staff of the Institutes of Culture, being seconded from the Ministry of Public Education, would continue to experience difficulties in interacting with MAE's diplomatic authorities, which, according to the communists, were unable to act as efficient mediators between Cultural Institutes abroad and Italian culture at home. The lack of an appropriate specialist career for those in charge of cultural affairs abroad would be the result of the existing separation between two distinct categories of officials: those operating in the area of culture but not belonging to the hierarchy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at a lower level, and those responsible for issues of diplomacy at the higher one

81 Ibid. The right wing party, Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI), abstained from voting, complaining firstly that there were no provisions in the bill for the reorganisation of Italian schools abroad and secondly

that in the proposed National Commission for Italian Culture and Language there was nobody to represent privately owned television stations (in August 1990 a highly controversial bill - *Legge Mammi* - had been passed allowing the Fininvest Group to become the largest private information group in the country)

82 The *assenza di politica linguistica*, non-existence of language policy, was publicly lamented by Saverio Avveduto, of M.P.I) Atti del Convegno *L'italiano come lingua seconda in Italia e all'estero*, marzo 1982. Roma. Consiglio dei Ministri-Direzione generale dell'Informazione, Roma 1983 p 17

83 Romano, S. *Gli istituti italiani di cultura*. Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1983

84 *Rapporto sull'economia della cultura 1980-1990*. Dipartimento Informazione ed Editoria-Presidenza del Consiglio, Roma 1997. Backed by figures and statistics, a group of specialists coordinated by Carla Bodo denounced waste of public money on dubious cultural initiatives (eg. De Michelis Law on *giacimenti culturali* 'cultural deposits'. This study points unequivocally to the fact that even politicians are becoming aware of the fact that culture is a resource that cannot be neglected without dangerous economic consequences.

85 De Michelis G. 'Il funzionamento e il ruolo della Commissione Nazionale', *Quaderni di vita italiana* n.3/1992. Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri Dipartimento per l'Informazione e l'Editoria, Roma 1992. pp 87-95

86 D'Addio Colosimo, W. 'Un certificato per la conoscenza dell'italiano come L2' *Italiano& oltre I* n.1 1986 pp 34-36

87 Ambroso, S. 'Certificazione della competenza in Italiano L2. Manuale Guida per la Commissione' Dipartimento di Scienze del Linguaggio, Università di Roma *La Sapienza* 1992. See also the proceedings of the 1986 Conference in Perugia, edited by Serena Ambroso. *Scambi culturali* n. 4-6 1986

88 De Mauro, T. e Vedovelli, M. Op. cit. Roma 1996

89 Ibid p 34

90 Ibid p 35

91 See the article entitled 'Tre certificati per l'italiano come lingua straniera' *Lettera dall'Italia* n. 32 Anno VIII 1993 in which the three proficiency certificates for Italian L2 are illustrated by academics representing the three universities involved

92 De Mauro, T. e Vedovelli, M. Op. cit. pp 35-36

93 Simone, R. 'Una patente per l'italiano' *Lettera dall'Italia* VIII, n. 32 1993 p 59

94 See Interview with dea Pellegrini Appendix p 489

95 See the article entitled 'Tre certificati per l'italiano come lingua straniera' *Lettera dall'Italia* n.32 Anno VIII 1993 in which the three proficiency certificates for Italian L2 are each illustrated by academics representing the three universities involved.

CHAPTER 5

Public institutions, private and semi-private organisations responsible for the diffusion of Italian language and culture abroad

From an organisational point of view foreign cultural policy in general presents two facets, the State domain on the one hand, non-governmental agents and their field of operation on the other. As shown in the analysis conducted in the previous chapter, Italian legislation ascribes a protagonist's role to government bodies in the area of language and culture diffusion outside Italy, in terms of both organisational action and financial commitment. This section will primarily focus on the officially designated agents in the domain of Italian culture and language spread, that is, on the government institutions responsible for it. The role of private institutions to which, as we have already seen, the legislation refers¹ unequivocally, will be mentioned only briefly here, as a more thorough investigation on the subject will be undertaken later, within the context of policy implementation.

Policy implementation moreover appears to be linked to factors which vary according to the social context of different countries where Italian language is present, either as a foreign language or as a language of migration, or in both forms. Thus, the role played by private organisations interacting as partners with the Italian government needs to be considered separately in each specific case. Having set these parameters, the tasks to be covered will include:

- 1) initial observations concerning Italian public administration, necessary to contextualize the present topic;

- 2) a brief survey of the historical background and present structure of the institutions involved in promoting Italian language abroad;
- 3) an outline of the role and functions of the offices specifically responsible for the spreading of culture and language abroad;
- 4) a preparatory investigation of the extent to which they interact with each other in pursuing specific common objectives;
- 5) preliminary conclusions.

5. 1 Institutions as a reflection of society

Why is it that in countries such as Australia the existence of a two-party system allows the government in office to implement its political choices within the constitutionally agreed period of time, while in contemporary Italy the number of parties is such that a succession of governments, representing laborious and ever-changing coalitions, occupy the political stage in turn, struggling to implement their plans? An explanation could be found in the fact that Australian citizens have managed to coagulate to two large groups, each having a common ideological denominator, and this common denominator appears more relevant to them than their individual differences. In Italy on the other hand, the electoral system has given so much space to each individual party/ideology that the finding of a shared, unifying ground is constantly hindered. But why is this?

A convincing explanation is that institutions are a by-product of politics within any given society ². For Australia, which directly inherited the British system and where social classes in time were integrated over a period of time into two large aggregates (admittedly not without struggle), the adoption of the British electoral system was determined by historical circumstances, regardless, it seems, of hypothetical present/future differences characterising the social contexts of the two countries. To a certain extent, the practical value of the decision is reflected in the political stability of contemporary Australia³. In Italy, the Constitution of 1948 was agreed upon following a dictatorial regime and a war, by representatives of widely different political forces ⁴. At the time, as seen in **Chapter 3**, it seemed more important above any other consideration to ensure that democracy was restored, hence the choice of a proportional voting system which allows space for a range of parties, and where the head of government⁵ has no special powers over his ministers.

Also in this setting, however, the 'core' ideological opposition, the Left/Right dyad remains, but as the philosopher of law and politics Norberto Bobbio clearly explains:

The distinction between Right and Left doesn't rule out - also in plain language - the configuration of an uninterrupted line from Left to Right, with intermediate parties positioning themselves in the half way mark between the two extremes. This space is called Centre.[...] The disarticulation of the political system is helped by the adoption of a proportional voting system which multiplies the parts creating a multitude of opposites (in the text: multiplication of dyads)⁶.

Coalition governments, like that in Italy, represent the reflection of this more complex political universe (in appearance at least). This form of government, however, presents congenital drawbacks such as the tendency to be particularly slow in decision making and, in addition, coordination within government administrative bodies seems to be consistently hindered because of the variety of sources of power. This negative trait is, in the eyes of the public, specifically applicable to the various Ministries in Rome.

The connection existing between institutions, their individual performance and the socio-political context that produces them, seems to be somehow exemplified by Italian public administration. If that were not the case, we would not see any government of the day concerned about reforming its *modus operandi*. Public administration, *la burocrazia*, like a raw nerve, produces pain not only when touched but also when mentioned. It is not appropriate within the limitations of this chapter, to examine at length the problematic characteristics of Italian administration; but we cannot ignore their existence, because this would restrict our ability to understand how the specific organisations we are interested in function.

Public administration is much older than the complex organisations existing in our society[...]. It may be visualised as a multi-layered structure, where each layer originated in a different historical period and is identified by characteristics and organisational techniques pertaining to the period when it

emerged. Consequently, superimposed over the first pre-industrial, pre-constitutional layer, which is characterised by the hierarchical principle (and by a criterion of non-responsibility towards society), we find superimposed a second layer of technical rules inspired by a presupposition of lawfulness. The resulting structure has proved to be adequate to fulfil the objectives of the 19th century State, rightly defined as 'limited', that is as a law and order State[...]. The crisis of our administration is a consequence of the accumulation of an increasing number of functions that policies of socio-economic intervention have unloaded on to the old structure, while the organisational nucleus/core and technical rules have remained unchanged ⁷.

These assertions by a political scientist in the area of public policy, Giorgio Freddi, are further expanded in his accurate and clinical analysis of Italian public administration⁸. He identifies centralisation, hierarchical structure and generalism as the main traits of Italian administrative governmental bodies. By centralisation Freddi means that all important decisions belong to the top of the structure. He also stresses that departments are organised according to a hierarchal principle where no independent decision making exists within individual sphere of competence because the functions of the subordinate unit are part of the functions of the above, which in turns monitors and approves of the actions of its subordinate. Generalism refers to the personnel' recruiting system, which prescribes qualifications guaranteeing a certain level of general culture rather than specific skills appropriate to specific jobs ⁹.

Consistent with the above critical comments, are those expressed in a 1969 report ¹⁰ on foreign cultural policies of Italy by F. Tamassia, a public servant working precisely in the area of cultural exchanges. His study highlights the bureaucratisation and the ageing characteristic of the Italian institutions with responsibility in this area, the lack of planning in State intervention and a left over tendency to be politicised that is left over from Fascism.

The above comments may or may not be endorsed throughout our investigation; but for a start, they are substantiated by historian, and former ambassador Sergio Romano, in relation to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. His remarks are particularly relevant not only because his study focuses on foreign policies, but also because he was in the 1980s the Head of the Directorate General for Cultural Relations of the same Ministry.

In Italy, alongside the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' policy, there are technical ministerial foreign policies, the political parties' policies, and - in some sectors such as commercial relations and emigration - the over ambitious mini-policies of the Regions. The result is a recurring phenomenon of conflict interfering with diplomacy and detrimental to the image of the country.¹¹

With these cautionary words in mind we shall begin by looking at two key-institutions in charge of Italian language diffusion, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (hereafter: MAE)

¹²and the Ministry of Education (hereafter: MPI)¹³

5. 2 The Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The age of an institution is like a double edge-knife. It can be used to highlight positive attributes such as the value of its traditions and the continuity of its presence or, on the other hand, negative characteristics such as the obsolescence of its structure, its inability to cope with change. MAE seems to have more of the negative than of the positive. It was founded at the time of the unification of Italy in 1861; as it stands, its configuration and organisation derive from a 1967 decree of the President of the Republic¹⁴. This piece of legislation, in turn, was based on a study by a commission of experts published in 1964, as pointed out by E. Serra, Head of the Historical and Documentation Service of MAE, himself a member of the commission¹⁵. But a few years later, in October 1971, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Aldo Moro, felt the need to form a working party to

investigate ways of re-organising his Ministry. The report¹⁶ he received, named after the committee's Chairperson, former ambassador Fornari, was later shelved however. The same fate was reserved for the legislative proposal by the Minister for Foreign Affairs G. De Michelis in 1989, defined in a study by the powerful left-wing union CGIL (*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro*) as : "[...] the only attempt at a slightly coherent reform addressing structural problems [...]"¹⁷.

Until the late 1990s MAE was organised (as for the most of its past, notwithstanding occasional attempts to introduce changes) according to a functional criterion, that is according to areas: political affairs, economic affairs, cultural affairs and so on¹⁸. Its structure¹⁹ is like the shape of a pyramid, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his Cabinet at the top. A variable number of Under-Secretaries in charge of specific areas of expertise (eg. emigration, commercial affairs etc.). The Secretary General occupies the highest post within the bureaucratic apparatus. He acts as a filter between the political arena and the bureaucracy and he is responsible for providing continuity and coordination in terms of administration. It is worth noting that this position was abolished in 1932 by Mussolini, who preferred total independence for his Cabinet rather than interacting with the head of the bureaucracy²⁰. The position was re-established after the fall of Fascism in August 1943.

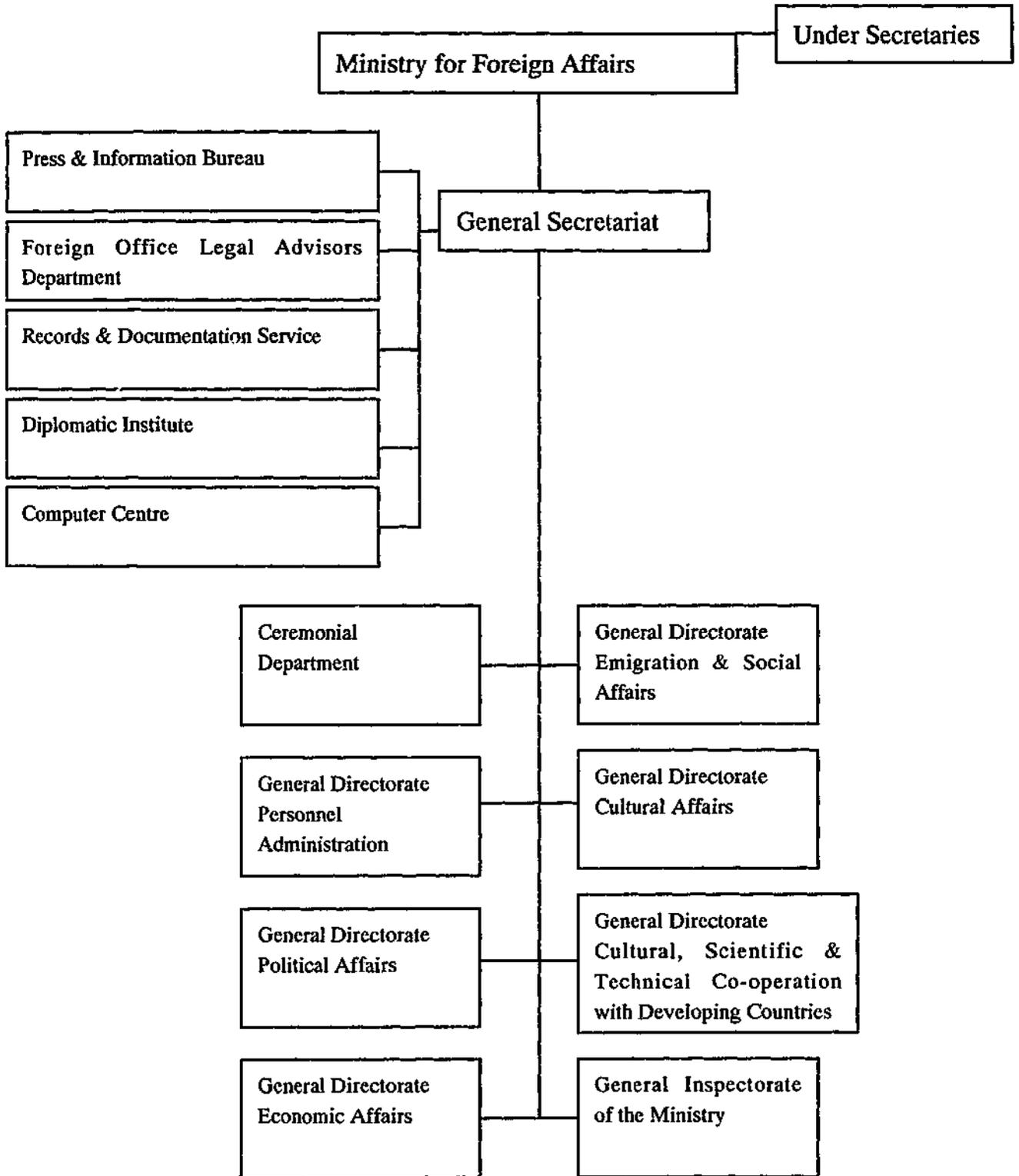
MAE's responsibilities are divided between its organs; specific services are supplied by ad hoc Offices such as, the Service for Diplomatic Disputes, the Service for Information and the Press, the Ceremonial Office. The core functions are carried out by six General Directorates, each in charge of an area (eg. Directorate General for Political Affairs, Directorate General for Economic Affairs)²¹. In the absence of significant updating and changes after the decree of 1967, MAE continues to be criticised mainly in relation to its organisation.²² The need for structural reforms and updating of professional training and development of the personnel is clearly stated, even in official parliamentary documents²³.

In May 1995, just before making way for her successor in the newly formed Prodi government, Lamberto Dini, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Susanna Agnelli, announced that a wide-ranging plan of reforms was ready for implementation. According to the new blueprint MAE was to be re-organised adopting mixed criteria, both functional and geographic. Four general directorates would each be in charge of a geographic area and an additional one would assume responsibility for European integration. Other existing directorates would remain in place, but with slimmer structures enabling them to work more efficiently. Also the consular network would be affected by crucial changes. According to the MAE Secretary General of the time, Italian Consulates which to 1995 had been located according to 'criteria dating back to the beginning of the century', would in future be strategically placed in areas of particular economic interest for Italy²⁴. Reflecting upon the kind of announced reforms, one could infer that at least some of the negative remarks addressed to MAE were justified.

In October 1998 the restructure of the diplomatic career, based on a proposal by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lamberto Dini, has been finally approved by the Council of Ministers. According to the press-release²⁵ illustrating the changes about to take place, the Vattani reform (named after its proposer the Secretary General of MAE) is now being refined and will later drastically reshape the structure of the ministry. Under the new legislation (when approved) the area of professional development and training of the personnel will be fully updated and cultural affairs, a sector identified as in need of urgent attention, because the current personnel appears insufficient to fulfill the needs of Italian communities abroad, will also benefit from the planned changes.

We shall look more closely at the sections within MAE that are directly involved with issues of Italian language and culture diffusion abroad. They are: General Directorate for Cultural Relations (DGRC), General Directorate for Emigration and Social Affairs (DGE), General Directorate for Cooperation with Developing Countries (DGCS)²⁶.

Table 5.2.a



Adapted from CGIL Esteri *'Rapporto preliminare sulle strutture della politica estera Italiana'* 1994

5. 2. 1 The General Directorate for Cultural Relations

At the end of 1946 the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pietro Nenni, established the General Directorate of Cultural Relations²⁷. In 1971 however, following the establishment within it of a Service for Cooperation with Developing Countries, the name of the Directorate changed accordingly²⁸. It became the General Directorate for Cultural, Scientific and Technical Cooperation. But, in 1981 it returned to the original designation, after the Office for Cooperation with Developing Countries was upgraded to an independent directorate.

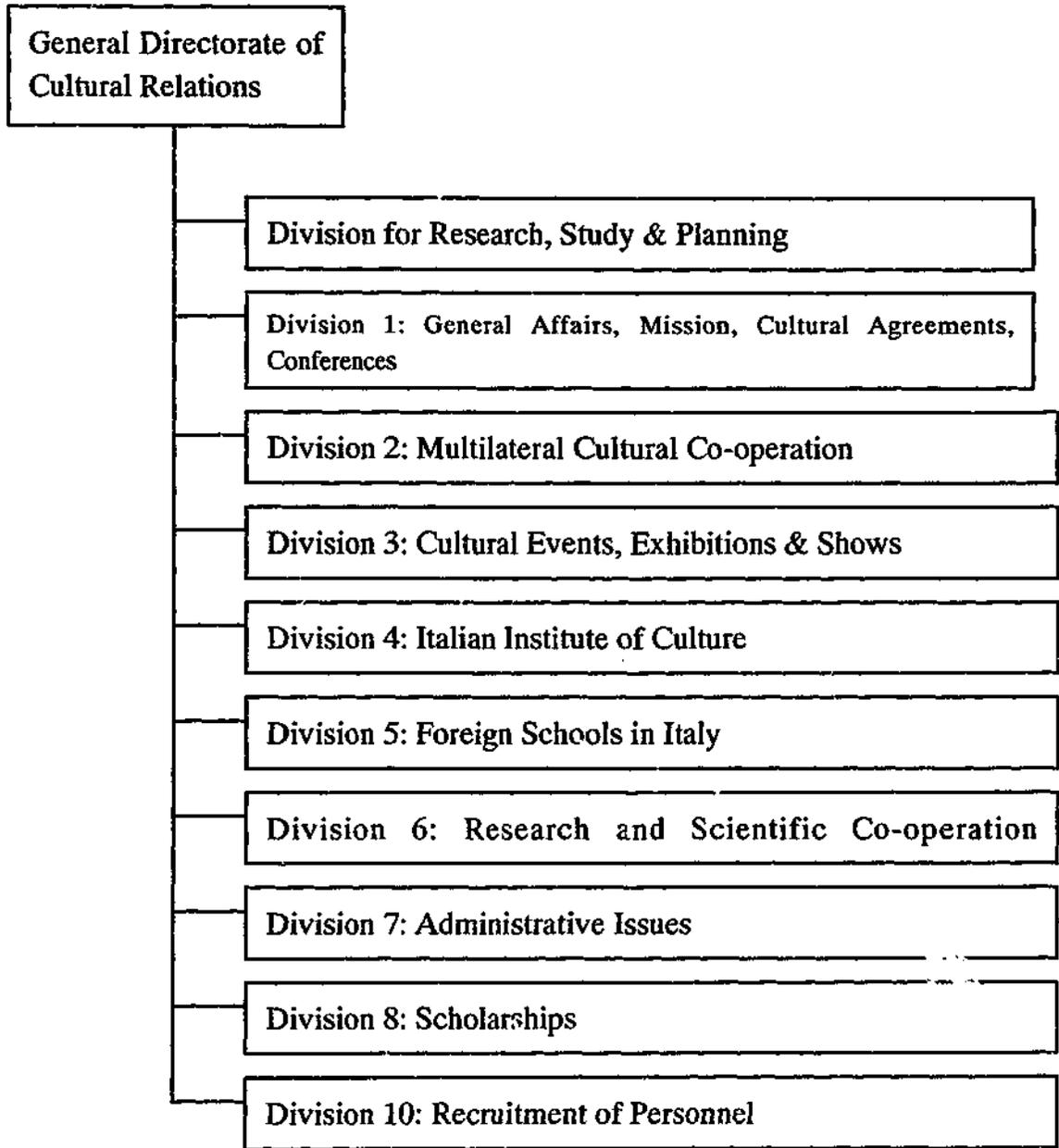
DGRC, covers the whole range of policies in this sector²⁹, to which must be added the coordination of any activities having connected with foreign policy but carried out by other governmental bodies, and financial assistance and monitoring of a large number of private organisations operating³⁰ in the same field abroad. Like all other Directorates it has a Research, Study and Programming Office (RSP). This 'unit' (in Italian: *Ufficio Studi, Ricerca e Programmazione*) is specifically in charge of Italian language spread abroad³¹. The DGRC' chart³² shows in detail how its other ten offices each, look after specific areas. A close reading of DGRC 1990 annual Report³³ shows that of its eleven *Uffici*, those more directly involved with the spread of Italian language abroad are, in addition to the *Ufficio Studi, ricerca e programmazione, Ufficio IV* (Italian Institutes of Culture, Chairs of Italian, "Lettorati" and Courses in Italian), *Ufficio I* (Cultural Agreements), *Ufficio V* (Italian Scholastic Institutions Abroad).

It must be remembered however that with potential interaction among Units, other *Uffici* of the DGRC may become involved with issues directly or indirectly affecting Italian language abroad (*Ufficio IX*, for instance, deals with Italian scholarships for foreigners). It

is noticeable that the functional approach prevailing in the organisation of MAE itself is repeated within this Directorate.

Italian Institutes of Culture as seen above operate under the management of DGRC. Their action and role, however, requires a separate examination.

Table 5.2.1.b



Adapted from CGIL Esteri *'Rapporto preliminare sulle strutture della politica estera Italiana'* 1994

5. 2. 2 Italian Institutes of Culture

Clearly, as the name indicates, Italian Institutes of Culture *Istituti Italiani di Culture* are by definition the official instruments used by Italy to pursue a cultural policy abroad. It is no coincidence that they were introduced during Fascism, whose nationalist ideology came to be integrated in and reflected by its foreign policy.

[Institutes of Culture must] be the open eyes of Italian intellect outside the national territory: Italy's learning centres in foreign countries, which she is always wanting to know better, studying more closely their language, history, spiritual values. To know and to become known: this is the urgent and essential desire of all people who move forward and have faith in the future³⁴

These words are not derived from a UNESCO document, they appear in the speech by the Minister for Public Education, Senator Giovanni Gentile, proposer of the bill³⁵ to establish the Institutes, former, who was and is seen as the official philosopher of the regime. This shows how extrapolating ideas from the context in which they originated may lead the reader to conflicting conclusions. It also supports a contemporary linguist's remark³⁶ in relation to the impossibility of describing political speech as a specialist language, that is a language characterised by distinctive lexical features. Words acquire a different political connotation according to the context and the speaker uttering them.

Later in time, further rules governing the Institutes appear in a Law approved shortly before the breaking of the war³⁷. In this legislative text the aims of the Institutes are identified as follows:

[...] to foster the diffusion of Italian language and culture and the development of intellectual relations between Italy and foreign countries³⁸.

R. D. 12/ 2/1940. n. 740, still current as illustrated in the previous chapter, also sets rules for Italian schools abroad and the career pattern for both Institute personnel and other public servants posted abroad for teaching purposes.

The post-war period in the life of the Institutes appears to be characterised by three factors: first, the re-establishment and expansion of the network³⁹; second, increasingly administrative nature of career paths within them (in contrast to the practice of drawing the staff of the newly founded DGRC from diplomatic cadres); third, the changing nature of Italian cultural action. Historian S. Romano summarises this by saying that the aggressive, almost 'imperialist' style of the previous twenty years has vanished, but the humanistic values characterising the Italian cultural tradition have continued to represent the model for shaping and restoring the image of Italy abroad⁴⁰.

From another angle, but not dissimilar in its conclusion we have the opinion of a British author, J. M. Mitchell:

Italy had to live down the memories of fascism. Indeed the cultural image left by Mussolini has its favourable aspects, because he understood how to turn the grandeur of the past into a popular effect.⁴¹

The Director of a prestigious Italian cultural institution, the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana*, Vincenzo Cappelletti, when interviewed⁴² on the subject argued that what had characterised Italian cultural action was the desire to ensure that Italy would gain international credit not so much on the basis of its literary and artistic achievements, but rather for its modernity and its achievements in science. This implied language protection as well and not because Italian is a language of wider communication but because it is a conveyer of highly relevant intellectual, humanistic and scientific values.

Though these are slightly different angles, the main assumption remains the same: although Italy had lost the war and its international moral standing, the riches of its cultural history continued to embody universal values, and as such, still constituted reference points for the cultural policies of that period.

Legislation between the '50s and '60s⁴³ did not introduce any significant change in the Institutes' functions, but, while the political situation was settling down, the network of Institutes was enlarged.⁴⁴ The central administration however appeared increasingly involved in foreign cultural policies, and finally, in 1978 the Institutes were declared 'cultural offices working under the MAE'⁴⁵. The decade 1968-1978, it must be remembered, had been a time of social struggle and transformation for Italy. Romano suggests that the changed political climate, the growing power of the unions and the socialist party becoming part of the coalition government were crucial in the 're-discovery' by politicians of the old topic of emigration. He remarks, tongue in cheek: 'Political parties always rediscover an *ancient* theme of Italian national life'⁴⁶.

The background for the debate on the issue was provided by the convocation in 1975 of a large conference on emigration in Rome.⁴⁷ The *Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri*, Aldo Moro, said in his opening speech:

The promise of this Government is that emigration will no longer be considered as an incidental, inescapable phenomenon characterising the economic and social development of our Country, a security valve for underdeveloped regions and a source of valuable income for the economy. The Government is committed to consider emigration as a 'national problem'.⁴⁸

Not surprisingly a political-administrative document was released few years later⁴⁹; its relevance is vigorously highlighted by Romano in relation to the new ministerial directives established on that occasion for the Institutes themselves⁵⁰. This circular, signed by Under-Secretary of State Foschi, leaves no possible doubt about the fact that it represents a turning point in the Institutes' history. A few examples from the document under consideration may suffice:

In contrast with past fascist directions taken :

[...] It is hardly necessary to underline the total rejection of any definition of culture as something which is centrally controlled, ideologically conditioned and imposed by the State as the culture of the State.

The appropriate emphasis must fall on the values of the present rather than those of the past:

The specific aim of Institutes of Culture is to present and make known the most significant aspects of Italian culture with particular reference to contemporary ones.

Among the Institutes' clearly defined functions a rather novel task is identified:

[They need] to act, paying attention not to confining their relationships to the *élites*, however gratifying, but endeavouring to respond positively to the growing cultural needs of local communities, and not exclusively in the main centres.

A candid paraphrase of this statement might be: the Italian Institutes of Culture are no longer elitist institutions, they are in place to serve the needs of the Italian communities abroad.

Regarding the spread of the Italian language abroad, again, there are no ambiguities in the message:

[the Institutes' functions include] to organise and promote Italian language courses internally and externally, ensuring that their teaching is in line with the most up to date methods of modern linguistics. [...]The teaching will have to be addressed not only to the local population, but to Italians and their children and to the generations of Italian origin wishing to keep and deepen their knowledge of Italian language.

As a result of these directions new Institutes of Culture were also created at the time in cities with a large concentration of Italians⁵¹. The first Italian Institute of Culture in Sydney, for example, was set up in 1979, nineteen years later than in Melbourne.

There was a further legislative intervention of the government in 1982, aiming at a better definition of employment conditions and career path for personnel teaching abroad. However, it did not achieve the desired results⁵². In a timely and uncompromising evaluation of the Institutes of Culture, Italian linguist Raffaele Simone summarised their situation in the late 1980s as follows: first, recurring financial difficulties; second, staff recruitment procedures affected by delays and incongruence, third, Institute directors selected from among high school teachers in most cases unprepared for their jobs, but strongly protective of their privileges.

The cultural activity of a good proportion of our Institutes resembles that of provincial amateur dramatic societies: repeated, at times foulish lectures by the directors themselves, art exhibitions devoted to little old ladies who happen to be on friendly terms with the Institutes' directors, very few qualified guests, X
few or non-existent contacts with the local cultural world⁵³.

Simone's views stirred many protests, but, in a follow-up to the debate, he added to his previous comments a denunciation of the lack of vision in the diffusion of Italian language and culture on the part of the authorities. However, as with his first article he concluded the second with a series of constructive and intelligent suggestions.

It is interesting to note that some of his recommendations came to be incorporated in the early '90s into the re-organisation of the Italian Institutes of Culture.⁵⁴ In 1990 in fact, as illustrated in **Chapter 4**, a new law was finally passed, which included a significant reform of the Institutes⁵⁵. The content of Law 401/1990 embraces in essence most of the principles found in the previously mentioned circular of 1978, for instance it reiterates the obligations of the Institutes towards the cultural development of Italian communities abroad (Article 8/d). In addition, however, it introduces some new elements, for example establishing for the first time an area of specialisation within MAE for training public servants wishing to work in Institutes abroad.

Often in the past criticism of the Italian Institutes had focused on the lack of specialised personnel, the problem was described as: *un problema di uomini*⁵⁶. The new law regulates minutely also the career path of the personnel involved. Most importantly for our investigation, as already pointed out, it creates a new body within MAE, the National Commission for the Promotion of Italian Culture Abroad, *Commissione Nazionale per la Promozione della Cultura Italiana all'Estero*, giving it the task of planning for, consulting with and advising the government in all matters concerning language and culture diffusion abroad, as well as implementing all related projects.

In mentioning implementation one last issue must be considered, and that is finance. Looking at the Italian State administration's expenses for culture in general, and comparing the allocation of funds to the various ministries, it emerges that between 1987 and 1992 MAE was the ministry most affected by reductions in funding⁵⁷. As Alessandro Vattani, Director General for Cultural Relations pointed out in 1991⁵⁸, the financial allowance for MAE represented at the time only 0.25% of the Italian State budget, and only 11% of it was assigned to the DGRC. According to another of DGRC's senior public servants, financial resources specifically committed to the promotion of Italian culture abroad are in a ratio of 1 to 4 in comparison with France and 1 to 10 in relation to Great Britain⁵⁹.

At the same time it must be noted that the network of Institutes is large; in January 1996 it consisted of eighty-two Institutes and nine Sections (smaller offices performing the functions of Institutes, but located within consulates)⁶⁰. From a cursory appraisal of DGRC's allocated funds⁶¹ and considering figures in relation to the list of functions⁶² to be performed by the Institutes (which represent only one of the initiatives to be supported) it seems that financial resources hardly match the ambitious aims set for these organisations. If one looks more closely at the latest official documents⁶³, the economic limitations are obvious even if they state that, on the whole, funds specifically destined to cultural

relations have been increased after the implementation of Law 401/1990. In fact it appears, from the same official sources, that allocation of funds to this section of DGRC's budget has increased from 15.88% in 1991 to 24.10% in 1992, has slightly decreased in 1992 to 24.09% and in '93, has shrunk considerably to 16.6% in 1994, and increased again from 16.6% in 1994 to 33.05% in 1995. In 1996 funds allocated to DGRC have suffered again a reduction of 1.33%.⁶⁴ Variations can be interpreted as a result of the political crisis ignited in 1992 and the on-going budget restrictions applied ever since to reduce the public debt.

If we focus now on the issue of language, it must be noted that Law 401/1990 (Art. 20) also allocated extra funds for the promotion of culture and language abroad, that is an additional 7 billion Italian *Lire* from 1991 to 1994 and 10 billion Italian *Lire* from '95 onwards. In 1995, in fact, the allocation of funds was more than double that of 1991. These are significant facts for our investigation. We shall return to them later in this study.

This synthetic appraisal of the history of Italian Institutes of Culture has allowed us to retrace and reconstruct the essential tenets and politics behind their establishment. Originally introduced to embody the Italian intellectual presence abroad at a time of strong nationalist feelings, the Institutes were meant to foster a two-way process of learning and understanding between Italy and other countries. They came instead to be exploited as political propaganda instruments by the fascist regime. In post-war times, as pointed out by Sergio Romano⁶⁵, changed international conditions required a sustained effort for healing and reconstructing, consequently those who were in charge of the Institutes had to shed the flamboyantly nationalist connotation that had characterised fascist cultural foreign policy.

Ironically philosopher Giovanni Gentile's words, if taken at face value, would have been more in tune with the post-World War II democratic trends of respect towards all cultures according to the United Nations guidelines, than with the politics of his own time. By the end of the '70s the social struggle to achieve a more democratic society in Italy, came to be

reflected also in the conceptual structure of the Institutes, which thus represented the institutionalisation of another political decision: they had to respond to Italian migrants' educational and cultural needs, not only to promote Italy's image outside the country.

Today in the '90s, the Institutes appear (at least in theory) better integrated and more clearly organised within the structure of MAE. The provisions of Law 401/1990, if appropriately implemented, could offer the opportunity for at least *some* of the constructive results and improvements envisaged by the legislators. An initial evaluation of the 1990 reform appears in an official document of February 1997 covering the period 1992-1995: the *Relazione Istituti di Cultura all'Estero*, prepared by the *Corte dei Conti*, the State body in charge of controlling the financial performance of government institutions⁶⁶.

The paper states that the reform objectives have been partially thwarted because of an excess of bureaucratic regulations that make the running of the Institutes more difficult than before.⁶⁷ The network of Institutes is denounced as inadequate to the prescriptions of Law 401/1990. In addition, lack of appropriate monitoring and control from the central administration is openly blamed for the Institutes shortcomings. The system for professional training of staff is described as inappropriate and finances in general as inadequate in relation to the aims set by the law. Particularly interesting is the point made in the document that most funds seem to be absorbed by Italian schools abroad, while Italian Institutes receive such a small percentage of the money that, they cannot achieve the aims set under Law 401/1990⁶⁸.

As for the *Commissione Nazionale per la diffusione della cultura e lingua italiane*, a stern *insoddisfacente funzionamento*, unsatisfactory performance, denounces the fact that the new organ so far has not fulfilled its mandate. Some obstacles remain. For instance the need to provide appropriate professional training for those assigned to work abroad,

remains unresolved, especially considering the additional duties to be performed by the Institutes. Secondly there is the economic factor, that is availability of adequate funds: but adequate for which goals? This in turn depends on the objectives and the priorities of governments in power. Interestingly, in an unprecedented swift response to the recommendations of the *Corte dei Conti*, a new bill was introduced in March 1997 by Lamberto Dini, Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Prodi Government. It was approved by the Senate on May 1997 and has addressed the problem of inadequacy of funds for the Institutes by authorising the allocation of an additional 3000 million *Lire* for the year 1997, 4, 500 million *Lire* for 1998 and 5000 million *Lire* for 1999 (the latter two to be allocated through the budget)⁶⁹. The bill reads:

[...]to give a better profile and additional depth to the cultural dimension as an essential component of foreign policy, both in regard to promotion and diffusion of the [Italian] cultural and linguistic heritage[...] and in relation to bilateral and multilateral international cooperation" ⁷⁰

So far Italian language and culture promotion abroad, as we have been slowly discovering, has been bound to the issue of emigration by sometimes subliminally hidden threads. The existence of these links has been dealt with differently by the various governments in power. The questions still to be answered, however, are: first, is it possible to identify a clear set of objectives pursued by the State (not the governors) in relation to this issue? Second, do these objectives vary in time and place? If that is the case, how does the implementation of government directives occur?

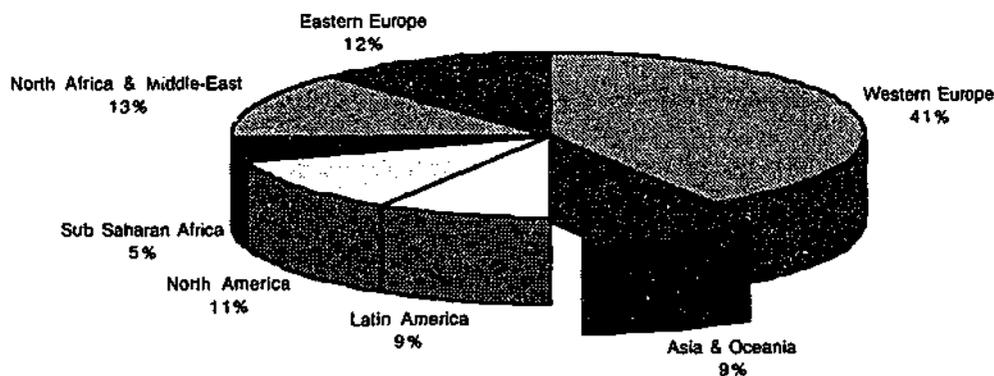
While most people would agree that Italian language is a conveyer of universal intellectual experiences - literary, scientific, philosophical, artistic - principally because it is this connotation that has consolidated its international status and historical role, on the other hand how can those values and the language itself be spread outside Italy, while allowing the people most entitled to them (Italians abroad) to share in the process?

[...]the issue of language maintenance for migrants and their children concerns a sector within the operations of our government cultural organisation which is separate from the one concerned with the diffusion of Italian culture among foreigners in the educated sectors of foreign countries; they are certainly separate activities, but the two problems tend to converge rather than moving apart, because there are millions of foreigners who are children, grandchildren, great grandchildren of emigrants and today they attend universities⁷¹

Italo Calvino's words: *i due problemi tendono ad avvicinarsi anziché ad allontanarsi* 'the two problems tend to converge rather than moving apart', could be premature in the late 1970s, but they appear realistic today.

As we continue our investigation, the issue of Italian language outside Italy, appears increasingly a topical example of this haunting dual challenge.

Italian Institutes of Culture



Data obtained from *Sevizio Studi Camera dei Deputati Rome 1997*

5. 2. 3 General Directorate of Emigration and Social Affairs

In 1946 the General Directorate for Emigration replaced the existing General Directorate of Italians Abroad⁷², a fact highlighting the newly born Republic's determination to distance itself, initially in semantics, from the fascist regime. Once the difficulties resulting from the war experience were gradually addressed, the 1967 re-organisation of MAE took place, and as a consequence of emigrants' inclination to carefully consider in their moves the kind of welfare obtainable abroad, the additional specification of 'social affairs' was added to that of 'emigration', thus expanding this Directorate's sphere of competence. This is the reason why, for instance, consuls' monitoring duties came to embrace the supervision of social workers involved in assisting emigrants⁷³.

The present DGEAS is, of course, primarily concerned with issues of emigration and immigration and related initiatives and projects. Its origin dates back to the Commissariat of Emigration⁷⁴ created in 1901, which illustrates how political interest for issues of emigration precedes by a long period the interest in 'cultural relations' in the modern meaning of the term⁷⁵. The cultural function of DGEAS runs parallel to that of DGRC. It involves the recruitment and employment of teachers working abroad in Italian schools, and initiatives deriving from the implementation of Law 153/1971 in regard to education and scholastic assistance to Italian workers abroad and their families. For instance it allocates funds 'to promote the teaching of the language and culture of the home country, for the acquisition of books and teaching aids, and to Institutions, Associations and Committees involved in educational scholastic assistance to Italian workers abroad'⁷⁶.

Within its structure there is an office specifically in charge of initiatives for cultural educational and recreational activities abroad. In this Directorate of the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs can be found an additional confirmation for our assumption that institutions mirror the politics within societies. In fact the relationship between the

dissemination of culture abroad and emigration, with political implications characteristic of the Italian context, can be observed throughout the history of this Directorate.

In the early stages of the Italian State, under Prime Minister Francesco Crispi, the first Italian law on emigration was passed in 1888⁷⁷; shortly after this Italian Schools abroad also came under official regulation.⁷⁸ Entrusted to them was not only the teaching of Italian language but also the broader task of keeping Italians feeling Italian. That is to say that schools, as dispensers of culture, were conceived as the ultimate means to support the emigrants. Crispi's populist nationalism in fact is illustrated by his conviction that not only did emigrants need protection, they must also be seen as an integral part of Italian colonial policy⁷⁹. This was the period when nationalist feelings ran high following the unification of the country. Not surprisingly, because of the desire to preserve the spirit of nationhood by spreading language and culture, the foundation of the *Società Dante Alighieri* also occurred in 1889, to satisfy (as seen in Chapter 2) that particular urge especially in territories that were *irredenti*, that is to say still under Austrian rule.

From the early 1920s fascism aimed at results similar to Crispi's, but it abolished the Emigration Commissariat, which had been introduced in 1901, and created in 1927 a Directorate General for Italians Abroad⁸⁰, thus emphasising the regime's wish to replace the unsuitable label 'emigrant' with the more glamorous 'Italians abroad'. Whether the human beings behind the words were the same people and in the same life situations did not seem to make a difference. In 1936 the Directorate General for Italians abroad and Schools, *Direzione Generale degli Italiani e delle Scuole all'Estero*, was thus restructured and took on new functions. Schools abroad in fact were no longer charged with simply offering education for Italians, 'they had to provide them with a particular type of education, obviously tied in with the regime's ideology'⁸¹.

In the first half of the 20th century, host countries were generally inclined to apply assimilation policies towards their immigrants, with the consequence that Fascism's aggressive propaganda sparked increasingly negative reactions against Italians such as, the implementation of laws restricting their acceptance⁸². Meanwhile, 'promoted' from *emigranti* to *lavoratori all'estero*, from emigrants to workers abroad, Italians were expected to embrace the fascist credo in the host countries, sustained by the network of *fasci all'estero*, fascies abroad. Later, in 1940⁸³, approaching the end of the fascist era, a substantial regulation of Italian scholastic and cultural institutions abroad was undertaken. As seen in the previous section, where the 1940s legislation was analysed, schools and institutes were mainly conceived as instruments for fostering Italy's 'intellectual' relations with foreign countries. Emigrants in fact were not mentioned in the text of R D 740/1940.

Of course the omission could be seen as consistent with fascist dislike for the word *emigrante*, hence the silence about the existence of such a category of people, who had in any case been renamed *italiani all'estero*. On the other hand '*la presenza culturale dell'Italia all'estero*', Italy's cultural presence abroad, seems to have been linked exclusively to institutions such as schools and Italian Institutes of Culture traditionally representing the embodiment of a high culture. The presence and the needs of the people who had left Italy in search of work, and, as such, were by definition *emigranti*, was not acknowledged at least officially/openly. It must be added that the fascist concern to involve Italians living abroad in the regime's politics succeeded, among other things, in causing internal divisions among Italian communities abroad, where many antifascists were also present.

Later 1938 restrictions to freedom of emigration were implemented through the newly renamed DGIA and signed by Mussolini himself⁸⁴. From protected emigration - *emigrazione tutelata* - to complete rejection of continuing emigration with the motivation

that it represented a loss of human resources for the nation⁸⁵, there was most certainly a change of course. Australian historian Richard Bosworth has remarked:

[...] Mussolini turned his back on migration only after the traditional host countries had shut their doors on Italians⁸⁶.

After the end of World War II the Italian Constitution restored freedom to emigrate⁸⁷ and years later, with the 1967's law which restructured MAE, the General Directorate of Emigration became General Directorate of Emigration and Social Affairs. This new designation once again reflected new trends in Italian society, on the one hand there was the already mentioned need for the democratic state to look after issues of social security concerning Italians abroad and, on the other, the recent phenomenon of immigration which had started converting the traditional Italian pattern of exportation of labour, into a pattern of importation of foreigners willing to work in Italy.

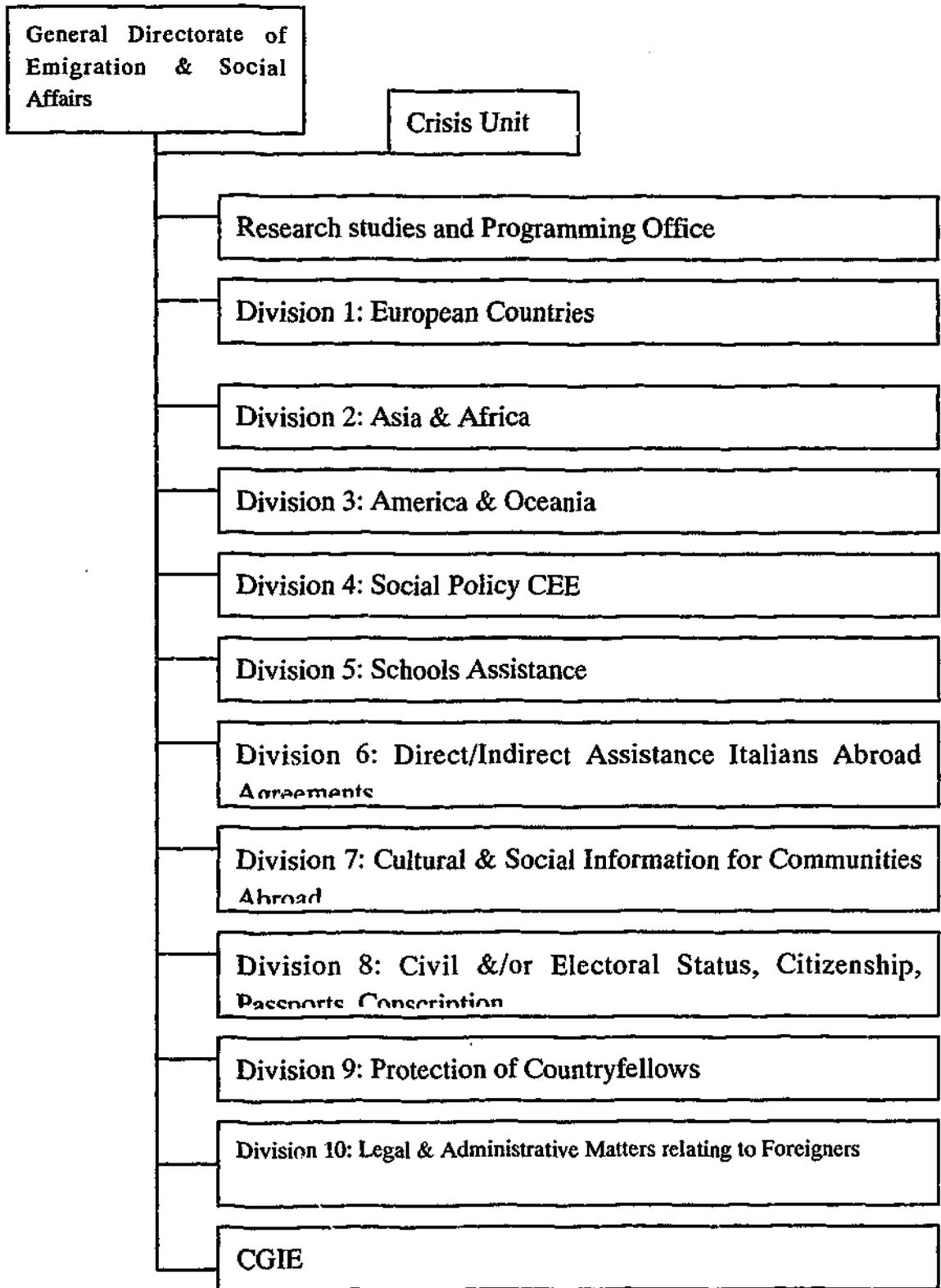
From this brief historical outline of the Emigration Directorate of MAE the correlation between emigration and matters of culture and language starts to emerge in all its relevance and complexity. It also seems that linguists have been the first to perceive the importance of the link. For example, Italian linguist Francesco Sabatini, ironically remarked :

If today, we are paying more attention to migrants' cultural and linguistic vicissitudes, we owe it to the total revision of the concept of culture brought about by anthropological studies. We have also come to the knowledge that were we to evade the claims of our emigrants and of people of Italian origin, the Italian language abroad would have no place other than as a language for opera singers, archaeologists and a handful of literature specialists⁸⁸.

As for the policies adopted in relation to this issue, a better understanding may be achieved by looking, as we will, at how they have been implemented in relevant target countries.

One last fact, however, must be highlighted in regard to the post-war restructuring of MAE: the introduction of the Directorate General of Emigration in place of the former Directorate General for Italians Abroad, occurred at the same time as the creation of the of DGRC⁸⁹. The decision, taken by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, socialist Pietro Nenni, signals that alongside with the preoccupations for emigrants welfare and education, the area of international cultural relations was by then perceived as in need of appropriate and separate attention.

Table 5.2.3.d



Adapted from CGIL Esteri *'Rapporto preliminare sulle strutture della politica estera Italiana' 1994*

5.2.4 Department for Scientific and Technical Cooperation with Developing Countries

Originally introduced as a Service for Technical Cooperation with Developing Countries, within the pre-existing DGRC (which, as we have seen, changed its name accordingly)⁹¹, this Department later became independent and now has the same status as a Directorate General⁹². Through its ten offices it attends to bilateral and multilateral issues of cooperation for development with States and/or with international bodies pursuing the same aims. It has been noted that the very existence of this Directorate is proof of the interdisciplinary nature of political and cultural policy, as cooperation directed towards fostering "economic, social, technical and cultural progress of the pertinent countries according to and consistently with their programs" ⁹³. Bilateral technical assistance consists of: a) scholarships programs for citizens of developing countries; b) Italian experts sent to contribute their expertise for specific projects; c) Italian schools attended by Italians abroad and open also to locals. This last form of collaboration, however, is not universally seen as a form of cooperation unless specific programs are offered for the needs of the local population.

DGCCST also monitors the activities of Italian institutions and organisations operating in this field, and looks after Italian citizens on working contracts in developing countries. Financially it administers special funds, described as 'substantial' in Serra's' description of the Department⁹⁴. The inadequacy of reforms involving this Department has been singled out as one of the causes of the failure to implement the plan to restructure MAE which was announced in 1996⁹⁵

5.3 The Ministry for Education

The Ministry of Education, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* (hereafter: MPI), is the most immediate partner of MAE in the management of culture and language diffusion abroad, on the basis of the already quoted 1940 R.D. 740. The organisation of this Ministry comprises a Directorate General for Cultural Exchanges, which late in 1996, as part of a restructure of the entire body of ministries has been renamed and reshaped into a Department of External and International Relations⁹⁶. Among its wide ranging functions we find the following clearly stated tasks:

[...] coordination and cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the promotion of international agreements, relationships with Italian Institutes of Culture, projects and initiatives to promote and spread Italian culture and language abroad⁹⁷.

If we look⁹⁸ more specifically at initiatives, within the jurisdiction of the Department for External and International Relations, promoted soon after the reform introduced by Law 401/1990, we find the following: a) library assistance to Institutes of Culture; b) organisation of international conferences on the subject of teaching Italian as second language, taking place in various geographical regions and in cooperation with DGRC⁹⁹; c) educational exchanges; d) international correspondence between schools; e) promotion and management of class exchanges; f) study trips abroad; g) teacher exchanges; h) professional development courses for teaching staff serving abroad; i) upgrading courses abroad for Italian teachers of foreign languages in Italy; l) activities relating to the implementation of bilateral agreements, with specific reference to initiatives for the diffusion of Italian language and culture abroad.

Under this heading are included professional development courses for teachers of Italian as a second language in countries sharing cultural agreements with Italy and where Italian is taught in the school system ¹⁰⁰.

5.3.1 Italian Universities for Foreigners

There are two universities specifically catering for foreigners wishing to learn Italian in Italy, as mentioned in **Chapter 4**. They are the *Università per Stranieri di Siena* and the *Università per Stranieri di Perugia*, founded in 1917¹⁰¹ and in 1923 respectively. The second, as can be seen from the year of its establishment, dates back to fascist times, when the government decided to establish it as part of its cultural policy program. We shall see later the connection between the regime and the Dante Alighieri Society's initiatives abroad and have already mentioned the introduction of the National Institute for Cultural Relations Abroad -*Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero* - in 1938, which curiously enough was quite independent from the central administration.¹⁰²

As stated by De Mauro and Vedovelli in their 1994' essay on Italian language diffusion in the world¹⁰³, the University of Perugia was more favoured by the government than the University of Siena, which tended to defend more openly its independence of any political influence.

Both universities have continued to carry out their teaching successfully from their foundation to the present, offering tuition to approximately 10,000 students each year. Being tertiary institutions, they work under the authority of the Ministry for Universities and Scientific Research, but they interact and cooperate with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in matters relating to Italian language diffusion abroad. As illustrated previously both of the above universities have been involved in the elaboration of strategies for the testing of proficiency in Italian as L2 and each issue proficiency certificate in Italian as L.

5.4 The Italian *Regioni* and their role

The autonomy of Italian *Regioni* is a relatively recent phenomenon reflecting a growing trend to decentralise administration. While Regions appear to be increasingly involved in initiatives of a cultural nature, reaching out beyond the nation's boundaries, they still need to act within specific State regulations and submit their projects for the approval of the Council of Ministers if there are international implications for their initiatives. The Regions' commitment to the diffusion abroad of their specific cultural heritage is perceived as positive and legitimate, however it also arises on concern in relation to duplication of initiatives, and difficulties in coordinating projects, unless communication with central authorities is appropriately established¹⁰⁴.

While acknowledging their relevance for and involvement in the issue of Italian language and culture diffusion abroad, they cannot be considered as government's official 'institutions' with identified tasks in this field; hence they will be left out of this study. There is no doubt, however, that the interaction between State and Regions is a topical area of undeniable interest, especially in present-day Italy, troubled - among other things - by the political struggle with the *Lega Nord*.¹⁰⁵

The future dynamics and evolution of State-Region relationships are, in my view, also likely to affect the issue of Italian language diffusion abroad¹⁰⁶; up to this point in time, however it is still too early for us to include this aspect in our investigation. We will return to it (if necessary) when we evaluate the implementation of State policies concerning the countries that we shall use as examples.

5.5 Non-government organisations promoting Italian language and culture abroad

As we have illustrated through our investigation, in republican Italy, the responsibility for cultural policies, including language diffusion abroad, is held essentially by the State. Nevertheless the existence of non-government promoters is a historical fact and their relationship with the official institutions could in itself be a topic worthy of specific inquiry. As this study focuses solely on governmental sources of cultural policies on language, we shall only mention those agents which have been involved in language and culture diffusion over a long period and which, one way or another, have received official recognition and/or financial support from the State in their activities.

Other organisations pursuing cultural aims within and beyond the national boundaries are omitted in this context not because they are not relevant for the cause of cultural relations and the spread of culture, but because our main focus, here, is essentially on language diffusion abroad.

5.5.1 The Dante Alighieri Society

The *Società Dante Alighieri*, generally known as *La Dante*, founded in 1889, is probably the oldest institution of its kind among its international peers. Italy, it seems, was among the first nation states to feel the need for cultural action abroad; there is hardly any doubt that the presence of many Italians abroad was a determining factor, especially at a time when political unification was still very recent. The *Alliance Française* was founded later, in 1893, the *British Council* was established in 1935, the *Goethe Institute for the Promotion of the German Language and Culture Abroad* originated at the time of the

Weimar Republic (1919) and like other German cultural institutions, after World War II continued under the label of an Intermediary Organisation for Cultural Policy¹⁰⁷.

Established not long after the unification of Italy, the *Società Dante Alighieri*, on the one hand provided language classes and cultural activities abroad, keeping alive the connection between Italy and other countries, and on the other, it came to represent a device for promoting the patriotic cause of *irredentismo*. The political function was thus as relevant as the cultural one and initially the Dante Alighieri Society also played a role in assisting Italian migrants¹⁰⁸, as we will see later (Chapter 8) in regard to Australia. Its original involvement in the preservation of the spirit of nationhood was later exploited by the fascist regime which from the early 1920s turned the Society into an instrument of political propaganda. The Dante Alighieri' Committees abroad in fact offered a useful way to promote fascist ideology in the form of cultural activities - lectures, talks, publications - even in countries, like USA, where such political organisations were not permitted.¹⁰⁹ In Mussolini's mind the Dante Alighieri's cause and that of Italian colonial expansionism of the time shared an ideal bond; however, as seen in Chapter 3, the independence of the Society was lost, this being the price of government interest and support. Post-war years were characterised by the attempt to erase the Dante's past political association with nationalist causes. The Constitution of the Society was modified in some parts in 1960, but its original commitment remained the protection and spread of Italian language and culture and the support for the Italian sense of belonging¹¹¹

After the end of the war, from the early 1950s the Dante Alighieri Society leaving aside its old political ideology, tried to concentrate all its efforts in non-political action, offering language courses, cultural activities of different kinds, facilitating the creation of Italian libraries:

[...]The Association planned its network of Committees in Italy and abroad often managing to anticipate the action of Italian Institutes of Culture¹¹³

The process of restructuring and rehabilitation, however, proved to be long and difficult, not to speak of financial and organisational difficulties. With its 450 committees present in 60 countries, the Dante Alighieri Society still represented not only the oldest institution committed to the diffusion of Italian language abroad, but also a support for official government initiatives. In 1973 an agreement¹¹⁵ was reached between the Society and the MAE to improve cooperation and also to upgrade the government's financial support¹¹⁶. We can also now read in the text of Law 401/1990 Section 5, that the President of Dante Alighieri (or his/her representative) is included by regulation among the members of the *Commissione nazionale per la promozione della cultura italiana all'estero*.

The debate relating to the promotion of Italian culture abroad, however, has often been very critical of the Dante Alighieri Society.

[...]The irredentist *Dante* association, relevant in earlier times is allowed to survive because of its past; the *Dante*, a last dignified refuge for our rhetoric, our traditionalists and those who are nostalgic of the past; the *Dante*, by now superfluous duplication of official government bodies."¹¹⁷

This Society however also has strenuous defenders who pay tribute to its resilience in pursuing Italian language and culture propagation throughout the world¹¹⁸. Others, leaving aside sarcasm, realistically point out that the institution's troubles stem from the lack of appropriate internal regulations and from difficulties which also seem inherent in many other organisations committed to Italian language diffusion¹¹⁹. According to the general public the *Società Dante Alighieri* in the 1990s is an out-of-date organisation, lacking material and human resources to compete in the modern age.

5. 5. 2 The Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana

Founded in 1925 by the philosopher and Minister for Education (1922-1924) Giovanni Gentile, the *Istituto Treccani's* ambitious task was to give Italy a national encyclopaedia worthy of its international standing. The project attracted immediate interest both in political circles (as might have been expected at the time) and among intellectuals, not to mention within the powerful Catholic Church. In 1937, with four volumes published every year starting from 1929, the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, was completed under Gentile's direction, of course. It was:

[...] the greatest cultural venture in those years, without doubt the largest survey ever attempted so far in regard to the academic culture of our country[...]"¹²⁰

Today, in the introduction to the manual illustrating the work and commitment of *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* we read:

The Institute gave Italy the first world Encyclopaedia, and remained an island of freedom in the tormented history of those years¹²¹.

But at the same time the scientific independence of the monumental *Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani*, written during the fascist era, still represents a highly controversial issue in Italian cultural history.

The Encyclopaedia was not only a great cultural and political project. It was also a major organisational effort¹²².

It was also a difficult balancing act for Gentile, who strongly believed in and fought for intellectual independence of choice, having as major opponents both the Church and the those members of the party who considered themselves 'purist interpreters' of the fascist ideology. Mussolini, keen to see the project succeed, proved (to a degree) more flexible than some of his party colleagues and let Gentile select the contributors for the

Encyclopaedia on the basis of their intellectual achievements rather than their political affiliation.

In addition to the very few cases in which [the encyclopaedia] was blatantly fascist (the entry 'fascism' for instance) and, most frequently those entries on which it had to come to terms with the Church of Rome, [the encyclopaedia] was national and in some cases nationalist¹²³

This is Roman's answer to the protracted debate. Norberto Bobbio, for his part, states

Except in marginal instances, [the encyclopaedia], is not a fascist work¹²⁴

Yet, according to the press¹²⁵, the '*pax gentiliana*' following the 50th anniversary of Gentile's death in 1994, was again at stake with the recent publication of historian Gabriele Turi's biography of Gentile¹²⁶. This book supports the argument that the *Enciclopedia Italiana* was biased, branding it as a monument to fascist dictatorship.

Controversy, however, has not interfered with the life and achievements of the *Istituto Treccani*, renamed *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* after 1937. In fact democratic and republican Italy has indeed rewarded this prestigious institution. In 1978 a law was passed approving the allocation of State funds so that the Institute could adequately pursue its ambitious projects. This world-renowned cultural institution, as publicly disclosed in its official documents, is financially secure and undoubtedly productive *produce la cultura che pubblica*, it produces the culture it publishes¹²⁷

One of the main contributions of *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* to the promotion of Italian language is the creation and publication of high-quality teaching materials¹²⁸. We are also indebted to it for an in-depth research of worldwide proportions, published in 1981, which revealed both, the number of people studying Italian around the globe and their reasons for doing so¹²⁹.

5. 5. 3 The Agnelli Foundation

It seems appropriate to mention briefly in this context the existence and active involvement in Italian culture and language spread abroad of the *Fondazione Agnelli*. Being a private institution, it should technically be left out of this context; its initiatives, however, chiefly focusing on Italian emigration abroad have on many occasions also embraced language issues. For example, in 1994 the Foundation published a comprehensive survey of Italian language teaching abroad, thus offering a valuable contribution to specific knowledge in this area which is still lacking appropriate systematic and broad specialist studies.

5. 6 Organisations in Italy for teaching Italian to foreigners

An openly critical comment appeared in De Mauro and Vedovelli's 1994 analysis of the situation of the diffusion of Italian in the world. It draws attention to a relatively recent phenomenon. The authors observe that the growing interest in the learning of Italian as a foreign language is demonstrated by the proliferation of language schools in Italy. They estimate the number at around the figure of 150 in the late 1990s.

The argument is put forward that the phenomenon owes its origin to two factors. The first is a rise in the demand for Italian courses by a steadily increasing number of people; the second is, according to these linguists, the absence of clear, well-focused official policies in the area of teaching Italian as a second language(L2). Consequently private organisations have seized the opportunity to intervene by offering what was apparently missing from the authorities. It also appears, on the positive side, that among these schools there is now a trend towards improved efficiency, with more attention also being paid to methodological changes. The effort towards better coordination is also evidenced by the

introduction of an umbrella association, ASILS (Associazione Scuole d'Italiano come Lingua Seconda).

De Mauro and Vedovelli, however, seem keen to draw the line between the quality studies offered by Italian Universities for Foreigners and those pursued at the various Schools for Foreigners scattered around all major and minor cities.

Indeed, the role and quality of the two public Universities come to the fore in comparison with the proliferation of private schools [...] ¹³⁰

No comprehensive surveys have been carried out so far to evaluate students' satisfaction in relation to their learning in different contexts. One would assume that the courses' aims and objectives would vary significantly according to the educational level at which they are provided.

5. 7 Preliminary conclusions on Italian government institutions responsible for culture and language spread abroad

So far we have engaged in a preliminary classification of Italian public Institutions involved in the promotion of language and culture abroad. In fact it would be more appropriate to say we have endeavoured initially to identify all sources of activity and/or involvement by the State's administrative structures. The next step has involved establishing what means are adopted by the Italian institutions to conduct cultural activities directed towards language promotion abroad. To do so, it has proved essential to go through a process of historicisation.

For example, it is certainly true, as Norberto Bobbio observes, that Section 3 of the Italian Constitution

synthesises the results achieved by centuries-old struggles inspired by the ideal of equality.¹³¹

To fully appreciate the current relevance for Italian society of the constitutional principle of non-discrimination where language was concerned, however, one needs to look back at the way dialectophones suffered in the fascist education system.

We have also come to realise that post-war institutional action in the field of Italian language diffusion, must be analysed keeping in mind the often undeclared, but discernible compulsion to erase any fascist residue from the government intervention the one hand, and the necessity for the Italian State to re-establish (or revamp) mechanisms of international interaction on the other.

As Sergio Romano bluntly put it:

No country has a distinct interest in establishing cultural relations. Cultural relations are a necessity. If one wishes to embark on cultural relations, well, one needs to reach some agreement with the government one wants cooperation from. Hence the need for an international mechanism, in other words a pact, or a deal, where whatever you receive is compensated for by what you are prepared to give away.[...] The need arises for a General Directorate to manage and monitor relations of this type[...] for they are diplomatic relations of a particular kind.¹³²

Diplomatic relations of a particular kind. Romano's concept, of course, covers the whole wide domain of international interaction, not exclusively the one focusing on external language promotion, which however, is very much part of it. In the words of another scholar, cultural relations may also be defined as :

The fostering of co-operative relationships between cultural and educational institutions and individuals so that nations can interrelate intellectually, artistically and socially¹³³

It will be our task from now onto select an appropriate and meaningful example of Italy's cultural relations with another country so that action aimed at the promotion of languages can be singled out, examined and qualified.

NOTES

¹ Law n. 401- 22 December 1990, Section 6 envisages and broadly regulates the participation of private organisations in the promotion of Italian language and culture abroad, provided that their aims and objectives are consistent with those of the law itself.

² For a persuasive argument on the relationship between institutions and politics see Giuliano Amato's essay 'Le istituzioni figlie della politica' in G. Urbani (a cura di) *Dentro la politica*. Il Sole 24 Ore Società Editoriale Media Economici, Milano.1992. pp. 177-196. The author, a specialist in Constitutional Law was also Prime Minister, *Presidente del Consiglio* from April 1992 to June 1993, then Treasurer in the D'Alema Government and Prime Minister again when the D'Alema Government came to an end.. After analysing examples of diverse political set-ups, Amato does not suggest that the two party system is preferable, but rather that the choice among different orders must depend on the social context and historical precedents in each case

³ The struggle of the indigenous Australians, the Aborigines, could be seen as the other side of the coin. In a two party system, whoever cannot fit into the Procrustes' bed provided by the party's common values/philosophy, is cut out from the decision-making process.

⁴ As correctly noted by historian Aurelio Lepre in *Storia della prima Repubblica* (Il Mulino, Bologna 1993. p 94), the originality [of the Italian Constitution] consisted of the contribution by the members of the Constituent Assembly, who themselves belonged to the three large mass parties and who did their best to translate into juridical form ideals and aspirations pertaining to their tradition and that were shared at the time by a large number of the people.

⁵ In Italian: *Presidente del Consiglio*, to highlight beyond doubt the break with the Fascist regime's tradition even in terms of word usage.

⁶ Bobbio, N., *Destra e sinistra*. Donzelli Editore, Roma 1994 pp 7 - 9. Bobbio illustrates his argument with a visual image. In a circular lecture theatre, he says, where the various political positions are arranged from one end to the other, the criterion of separation for the various parliamentarians remains the left-right opposition

⁷ Freddi, G. 'La pubblica amministrazione: perché funziona in modo così deludente'. in G. Urbani *Dentro la politica*. Il Sole 24 Ore-Società Editoriale Media Economici, Milano. 1992 pp 218 - 219

⁸ Ibid. pp 215 - 239

⁹ One example, experienced in Melbourne, is the case of some Directors of the Italian Institute of Culture with very limited knowledge of English, who have been assigned to Australia, an English speaking country. Foreign language competence counted for only 40% in the evaluation of examinations that give

access to a career in MAE, as reported by De Benedetti, F. 'Il Ministero degli Affari Esteri'. in Bonanni (a cura di) *La politica estera della Repubblica italiana*. Edizioni di Comunità, Milano 1967

¹⁰ Tamassia, F. 'La politica culturale con l'estero: rapporto sull'Italia' *Lo Spettatore Internazionale*. Anno IV n. 2, 1969 pp 695-758

¹¹ Romano, S. 'Per una storia istituzionale della diplomazia italiana'. in A. Migliazza e E. De Cleva (a cura di) *Diplomazia e storia delle relazioni internazionali*. Giuffrè Editore, Milano.1992. pp 633 - 644

¹² Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Italian acronym MAE

¹³ Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Italian acronym MPI

¹⁴ Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica (DPR) 5 gennaio 1967 n.18 - Gazzetta Ufficiale n. 44, 18 February 1967

¹⁵ Serra, E. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In: *The Times Survey of Foreign Ministries of the World*. Times Books, London 1982. The study offers a detailed account of the genesis and structure of the MAE from its inception to the early 1980s. While pointing out that the D.P.R. of 1967 and successive legislative integrations represent the basis of the reorganisation of the Ministry, the author does not indicate to what extent the reform undertaken has confronted and resolved problems of efficiency and updating in relation to the past asset. Serra, in fact, approaches the topic more as a historical chronicle and does not involve himself in a critical analysis of the Institution. This is perfectly plausible given the context of his essay.

¹⁶ Ministero degli Affari Esteri *Rapporto del Gruppo di Lavoro per lo studio della riorganizzazione strutturale del MAE* 3 novembre 1971. Modulario AE 10

¹⁷ CGIL-Esteri Osservatorio permanente sulle strutture della politica estera italiana. *Rapporto preliminare sulle strutture della politica estera italiana*. Effepi Editrice, Roma. 1994. p 37

¹⁸ Attinà, F. *Diplomazia e politica estera*. Franco Angeli Editore, Milano 1979.

¹⁹ Serra, E. *La diplomazia in Italia*. Franco Angeli, Milano 1984 pp 51 - 57

²⁰ Regio Decreto (RD) 25 agosto 1932 n. 1086, quoted in Serra (1982) Op. cit.

²¹ For a detailed description of the various offices within MAE see: *Annuario diplomatico* (Edizione 1965) published by MAE

²² In 1994 the already-quoted report published by the branch of CGIL Union within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accurately listed all cases when reforms of MAE had been aborted, which had the effect of keeping the organisation in a state of chronic and disastrous immobility. For more details see: *Rapporto preliminare sulle strutture della politica estera italiana*. Op. cit.

²³ Senato della Repubblica. X Legislatura -Disegno di Legge n. 2025 21 Dicembre 1989

²⁴ '[la rete estera] dei consolati [...] distribuiti nel mondo con criteri di fine secolo' so spoke Mr Boris Biancheri, Secretary General of MAE, announcing changes to the distribution of Italian Consulates in the world. Quoted in *la Repubblica* of 9/5/1996

²⁵ *La Repubblica* 3 Ottobre 1998

²⁶ Respectively: *Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali*, *Direzione Generale dell' Emigrazione e degli Affari Sociali*. *Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo*

²⁷ Serra, E. Op. cit. p. 314

- 28 Legge 15 dicembre 1971, n. 1222
- 29 In summary, according to the *Relazione Annuale* of MAE's DGRC -1990, we can identify the areas of responsibility of the DGRC as follows: 1. Cultural agreements; cooperation with universities; conventions, archaeological expeditions etc. 2. Multilateral cooperation; 3. Cultural events, exhibitions etc. 4. Italian Institutes of Culture and related matters; 5. Italian Schools abroad; 6. Foreign schools in Italy; enrolments of foreign students in Italian universities; equivalence of educational qualifications and so on; 7. Bilateral scientific cooperation; 8. Administrative matters; 9. Italian scholarships for foreigners; foreign scholarships for Italians; 10. Employment of tenured staff etc.
- 30 Examples of such institutions are: *Istituto per l'Oriente, Istituto di Studi Italo-Latino-Americani, Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia Classica, Società Italiana per l'Organizzazione Internazionale(SIOI)*. For more details on this subject see: Gori, U. *La diplomazia multilaterale culturale dell'Italia*. Edizioni Bizzarri, Roma 1970
- 31 As prescribed under Section 20 *Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica* (D.P.R.) n. 18 - 5 gennaio 1967 Op. Cit.
- 32 Serra, E. Op. cit. (1982) p 322
- 33 Ministero degli Affari Esteri, DGRC, *Relazione annuale 1990*. Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma 1991. The practice of publishing these reports was interrupted after that year.
- 34 Romano, S. 'Gli Istituti Italiani di Cultura' Estratto da *Eurydice 1982. L'anno nell' educazione e nella formazione* Istituto dell' Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma. 1983 pp 52-81
- 35 Legge 19 Dicembre 1926
- 36 Beccaria, G. L. 'Linguaggi settoriali e lingua comune' in G .L. Beccaria (a cura di): *I linguaggi settoriali in Italia*. Bompiani, Milano 1978 pp 7-59
- 37 Regio Decreto 12 Febbraio 1940, n. 740. *Raccolta Ufficiale delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno d'Italia*. Anno 1940-XVIII Vol. IV
- 38 Ibid p 3331
- 39 Ministero Affari Esteri *Informazioni culturali* n. 3, Roma 1959
- 40 Romano, S. (1983) Op. cit. pp 56 - 5
- 41 Mitchell, J. M. *International Cultural Relations*. Allen and Unwin, London 1986 p 63
- 42 Interview with Professor Vincenzo Cappelletti , 3 February 1995, Rome. Appendix p 447
- 43 Decreto Ministeriale (DM) 24 June 1950, n. 2707 reiterates the functions to be performed by the Institutes, one of which is: 'to organise and promote Italian language and culture courses'. Circolare Ministeriale 21 June 1955 n. 42 states that the Institutes' directors, if academics, do not need to be involved in creative production themselves, they only need to be able to foster contacts for those who are.
- 44 Foschi, F. *Sugli Istituti Italiani di Cultura*. Vallecchi , Firenze 1994 The author stresses the relevance of a Ministerial Circular of 21 June 1955 where the aims and objectives of the Institutes are more clearly specified in relation to the 1940 legislation.
- 45 Ferraris, L. V. *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*. Editori Laterza, Bari 1996 p 513

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- 46 The issue of emigration, according to Romano, has two facets. The political side consists of the potential votes of Italians abroad, the cultural one is a product of the leftist conviction that the very phenomenon of emigration is the living proof of Italy being a society based on class distinctions: *società classista*. Op. cit. pp 58 - 60
- 47 *L'emigrazione italiana nelle prospettive degli anni Ottanta*, Atti della Conferenza Nazionale dell'Emigrazione. Roma, 24 febbraio -1 marzo 1975. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Roma 1975.
- 48 Ibid p 17
- 49 Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Circolare n. 13, 18 maggio 1978
- 50 Romano, S. (1983) Op. cit.
- 51 Ferraris, L. V. Op cit. p 514
- 52 Ibid. p 515
- 53 Simone, R. 'La cultura e la lingua sotto le bombe (e sotto l'incuria)' *Italiano & oltre* Anno IV n. 3 1989 pp 103-104
- 54 Simone, R. 'Modeste proposte per gli Istituti di cultura', *Italiano & oltre* n. 5 Anno IV, 1989. pp 199-200
- 55 Legge 22 dicembre 1990 n. 401. Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana 29/12/1990. Serie generale n. 302. pp 8-18
- 56 Zagari, M. 'La componente culturale', in Del Bo et alii *Inchiesta sulla politica estera italiana*. Lerici Editore, Roma 1970
- 57 Bodo, C. e Iannilli, S. 'La spesa statale per la cultura in Italia (1987-1992)'. *Documenti di lavoro n. 11/94* ISPE, Roma. 1994 pp 26-29
- 58 Vattani A. 'Risorse e strutture' *Quaderni di vita italiana* n. 3 1992. Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri - Dipartimento per l'Informazione e l'Editoria pp 12-14
- 59 Ibid. Diplomatic Adviser M. Bova's speech during the debate p 2
- 60 Relazione presentata dal Ministro degli Affari Esteri. *Atti Parlamentari - XIII Legislatura*. Camera dei Deputati Doc. LXXX - n. 1
- 61 Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Direzione Generale Relazioni Culturali *Relazione Annuale 1972, 1973, 1975, 1978, 1979 1980, 1981, 1983*. In all of the quoted available Reports, mostly under the heading *Considerazioni generali*, but also in other sections of these documents, including the one entitled *Istituti di Cultura*, we find explicit, recurring complaints about the inadequacy of funds in proportion to the commitments of DGRC.
- 62 Legge 29 dicembre 1990 n. 401, Art. 8
- 63 *Relazioni sull'attività svolta per la riforma degli istituti italiani di cultura e gli interventi per la promozione della cultura e della lingua italiane all'estero* (Anni: 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995). *Atti Parlamentari*: XI Legislatura, Doc CXXII.N.1; XII Legislatura Doc LXXX N. 2; XIII Legislatura, Doc LXXX N.1, XIII Legislatura Doc LXXX N.1. Camera dei Deputati.

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- 64 Ministero degli Affari Esteri DGRC Relazione sull'attività svolta nel 1996 ai sensi della legge 401 del 22/dicembre 1990 in *Dossier Provvedimento* Camera dei Deputati, Servizio Studi XIII Legislatura - Giugno 1997 p 65 (13)
- 65 Romano, S. (1983) Op.cit.
- 66 Corte dei Conti Sezione del Controllo - II Collegio *Relazione Istituti di Cultura all'estero*. n. 59, 7 febbraio 1997
- 67 Ibid pp 8-10
- 68 Ibid p 7
- 69 Camera dei Deputati - Servizio Studi *Dossier Provvedimento Integrazione del finanziamento agli Istituti di Cultura* n.412 XIII Legislatura - Giugno 1997 p 3
- 70 Senato della Repubblica - XIII Legislatura - *Disegno di Legge* n. 2197 6 marzo 1997. p 3. The Minister's introductory speech in the Senate continues to highlight the need for an integrated approach among institutions, organisations and individuals interested in promoting Italian culture abroad, so that the aim of revamping Italian cultural policy can be achieved. Financial resources additional to those allocated in the previous budget are set aside for: a) Italian Institutes of Culture abroad; b) scholarships ; c) acquisition, improvements and restructuring of buildings where Institutes are located (for the Institute of Culture in Melbourne an amount of 800,000,000 Italian *Lire* has been allocated to restructure the hall, library and guest quarters)
- 71 Calvino, I. 'Riflessioni di uno scrittore italiano all'estero' in Bartole (a cura di) *Immagine culturale dell'Italia all'estero*. Il Veltro, Roma. 1980.
- 72 Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Decreto Ministeriale 26 dicembre 1946.
- 73 Ministero degli Affari Esteri. Circolare interna 25 marzo 1968, n. 8
- 74 In Italian: *Commissariato per l' Emigrazion*
- 75 'Cultural relations are a refinement that is more appropriate to open societies in an age of rapid communication and universal education[...] Although this mode has been practised among advanced countries [...] for centuries it was not in this spirit that the nineteenth-century nation state first spoke beyond its boundaries' Mitchell, J. M. *International Cultural Relations*. Allen and Unwin, London. 1986 p 22
- 76 Baistrocchi, M. *Elementi di politica culturale estera*. Armando Editore, Roma. 1985. pp 31 - 3
- 77 *Legge* 30 dicembre 1888. *Storia d'Italia* Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara 1991
- 78 *Regio Decreto* 8 dicembre 1889
- 79 In a speech given in Palermo in 1889 Crispi said: 'Today's Italy is asserting itself and going ahead.[...] In the most distant countries, in our reformed schools, thousands of our children and children of other races, are learning to bless in our language this lay, industrious, peace-loving Italy, which moves ahead giving freedom to slaves and being respectful of traditions. Tomorrow, when [these children] are men, they will also be instruments of our wealth' Quoted in Romano, S. *Crispi*. Bompiani, Milano 1986
- 80 *Regio Decreto* 29 aprile 1927
- 81 Serra, E. 'Diplomazia e cultura: il caso francese (1861-1915)' *Affari Esteri*, Anno XVIII- n. 70. 1981, pp 257 - 267

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- ⁸² De Felice, R. (a cura di) 'Gli studi sull'emigrazione cinque anni dopo' *Affari sociali internazionali* VI 1978
- ⁸³ *Regio Decreto*. 12 February 1940, n. 740
- ⁸⁴ Serra, E. 'Il Ministero degli Affari Esteri e il problema dell' emigrazione'. *Affari Sociali Internazionali* Anno XI- n. 2 1983 pp 5-23
- ⁸⁵ De Felice, R. *Mussolini il fascista (1925-29)*. Einaudi, Torino, 1968
- ⁸⁶ Bosworth, R. *Italy and the Wider World 1860-1960*. Routledge, New York. 1995
- ⁸⁷ Section n. 3, Paragraph 4 of the Italian Constitution reads: '[The Republic] admits freedom to emigrate, save for such limitations as are prescribed by the law in the general interests, and for the protection of Italian Labour abroad [...]'
- ⁸⁸ Sabatini, F. 'Intervento' in Bartole (a cura di) *Immagine culturale dell'Italia Il Veltro*, Roma 1980 pp 149 - 151.
- ⁸⁹ Serra, E. 1982 Op. cit.
- ⁹¹ *Decreto Legge*. 15 dicembre 1971 n. 1222. Articolo 7
- ⁹² Legge 9 Febbraio 1979. n. 38. Section 1 states: "[.] Cooperation with developing countries is an integral part of all international economic relations promoted by Italy within the framework of the interdependence of development of all States".
- ⁹³ Baistrocchi, M. (1985) Op. cit. pp 26 - 30
- ⁹⁴ Serra, E. (1984) Op. cit.
- ⁹⁵ Correspondence between the author and *Servizio Studi Dipartimento Internazionale - Camera dei Deputati*. Op. cit.
- ⁹⁶ Ministero Pubblica Istruzione-Direzione Generale Scambi Culturali-Regolamento di : *Ridefinizione degli Uffici del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione 26/8/1996* (This document was obtained from Dott.ssa L. Pellegrini, Inspector with MPI, when the proposed restructuring was still waiting for definitive approval.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Section 4. p 3
- ⁹⁸ Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale degli Scambi Culturali. *Le ragioni di scambio*. 1993
- ⁹⁹ Conferences were held in Ottawa and New York (1984) Melbourne (1985), Buenos Aires (1986), Cairo and Amsterdam (1988). It is interesting to note that following the regulations introduced by Law 401/1990, rather than intensifying conference organising, there has been no new initiative in that regard, notwithstanding the existence of the Commission for the Diffusion of Language and Culture, which, presumably should be the sponsor of such events.
- ¹⁰⁰ For a more detailed list of the activities of DGSC, see note no.71, quoting MAE-DGR's publication *Le ragioni di scambio*
- ¹⁰¹ Peccianti, M. C. 'Le origini e lo sviluppo dei corsi per stranieri a Siena 1917-1975', *Archivio Storico e Annuario Accademico 1917-1975*. 5-20, Scuola di Lingua e Cultura Italiana per Stranieri, Siena 1985
- ¹⁰² Gori, U. *La diplomazia multilaterale culturale dell'Italia*. Edizioni Bizzarri, Roma 1970 p 3

- 103 De Mauro T. e Vedovelli M. La diffusione dell'italiano nel mondo : problemi istituzionali e sociolinguistici.: *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. n. 107-1994 pp 25-3
- 104 Ainis, M. e Torchia, L. (a cura di) *La promozione della cultura: Interventi pubblici e legislazione regionale* Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche-Istituto di Studi sulle Regioni, Roma. 1988
- 105 *Lega Nord*, Northern League is by now described as a 'new political actor'. For an exhaustive treatment of the topic see: Diamanti, I. *La Lega. Geografia, storia e sociologia di un nuovo soggetto politico*. Donzelli, Roma 1993
- 106 Ibid. pp 25 - 39
- 107 Arnold, H. *Politica estera e cultura* Editore Armando, Roma 1980
- 108 *La Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri 1889-1939*. Opuscolo della Società Dante Alighieri, 1939 p
- 109 Tamassia, F. 'La politica culturale con l'estero: rapporto sull'Italia' *Lo Spettatore Internazionale*. Anno I, n. 2 1969
- 111 Pandini, E. 'Il Velcro 1957-1983. Suo contributo alla conoscenza della civiltà italiana e alle relazioni culturali con l'estero.' Tesi di laurea in Lettere Moderne. 26 ottobre 1984, Università Cattolica di Milano p 30
- 113 Ibid p 31
- 115 Programma di collaborazione tra il Ministero degli Esteri e la Dante Alighieri. *Il Velcro*. Anno XVII, n.1 pp 3-5
- 116 The Italian State supports financially the Dante Alighieri Society with an yearly contribution of 600 million liras approximately.
- 117 Tamassia, F. 'La politica culturale con l'estero: rapporto sull'Italia' *Lo Spettatore Internazionale* Anno IV n.2, 1969. pp 695-758 (p 721
- 118 Ibid. pp 721-732
- 119 De Mauro T. e Vedovelli, M. (1994) Op. cit
- 120 Bobbio, N. 'Fascismo e cultura' in G. Quazza (a cura di) *Fascismo e società italiana*. Einaudi, Torino 1973
- 121 *Istituto dell' Enciclopedia Italiana*. Ufficio Stampa e Pubblicità, Roma 1989
- 122 Romano, S. *Giovanni Gentile-La filosofia al potere*. Bompiani, Milano. 1990 p. 218. This is an in-depth and appealing biography of the Italian intellectual, philosopher and politician Giovanni Gentile. He was the 'ideologue' of fascism and yet deeply disliked by the fascists. Romano's work succeeds - in our view - in reconstructing Gentile's character for the reader. His thorough and yet original investigation covering Gentile's work, actions, personality, relationships and goals are, an attempt to have the man judged on historical facts rather than by political censure.
- 123 Ibid p 218
- 124 Bobbio, N. (1973) Op. cit. pp 211 - 246
- 125 *Panorama* 21/9/1995. pp 80-84
- 126 Turi, G. *Giovanni Gentile. Una biografia*. Giunti, Milano 1995

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- 127 *Istituto dell' Enciclopedia Italiana. Ufficio Stampa e Pubblicità, Roma 1989 p*
- 128 To mention some examples: *Viaggio nell'italiano*, a multimedia Course on Language and Culture skilfully linking past and present aspects of Italian society; *Tra noi* a multimedia course for teaching Italian to children at primary level. The magazine *Lettera dall' Italia* which addressed teachers and educators abroad and provides quality-cultural information about contemporary Italy
- 129 Ministero degli Affari Esteri *Indagine sulle motivazioni allo apprendimento della lingua italiana nel mondo. Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1981*
- 130 De Mauro, T. e Vedovelli, M. (1994) Op. cit.
- 131 Bobbio, N. Op. cit. p 7
- 132 Romano, S. *Interview Milan, 30 January 1995 Appendix p 496*
- 133 Mitchell, J.M. Op. cit. p. 81

CHAPTER 6

Memory and history: the living experience of Italian language policies abroad

This study deals with a recent past, a time that can still be remembered by most members of Italian society, being part of their living experience. The consideration of individuals' accounts of facts and incidents regarding cultural policies abroad seems particularly relevant here for two reasons. The first is that the promotion of language and culture abroad falls within an often publicly debated issue: the image of Italy in the international context. The second is the assumption that any exploration of official history through conventional means - laws, institutional records, books, chronicles - can also benefit from the oral testimony¹ of eyewitnesses or even more from the interpretations of those who were directly involved in the events being examined.

This chapter then is based on interviews on topics that are relevant within the framework of the study. The autobiographical element integral to the responses of the interviewees, as well as the subjectivity of those answers, represent an additional and valuable dimension in assessing and clarifying the subject being investigated. After illustrating the reasons behind the choice of the interviewees and the context of each conversation, the sections that follow deal with identified issues filtered through the subjects' experience. Occasionally, however, some of the comments made in the interviews have also been quoted in the context of the previous chapters.

Because some subject areas appear to cut across the topics selected for each sub-section, the interviews are thematically organised rather than reported separately and individually. However, the full, unabridged transcriptions of the tapes are included in the appendix.

6. 1 Introducing the speakers

The choice of people to interview was based on the need to strike a balance between the desirability of questioning individuals whose expertise was significant for the purpose of this discussion, and the practicalities of the operation, such as obtaining the desired appointments or reaching the interested parties in different areas of the country, within the tight schedule of research trips to Italy which were never long enough. The seven conversations which constitute the raw material of this section took place over a period of 3-4 years²; they represent a stimulating part of this research³ partly because of the 'human' interaction involved, but mainly because of the enticing perspectives that surface in the course the dialogues.

There are no doubt many other individuals who might have contributed new insights to this study, but, as is often the case in life, contingent limitations and time restrictions were a fairly substantial factor to be dealt with in the circumstances of the present research work.

The guests on these pages are introduced in alphabetical order.

6. 1. 2 Norberto Bobbio or ' the moral conscience of our time '

The distinguished academic career of Norberto Bobbio, born in Turin in 1909, is just one of the facets of his long and extraordinary life⁴ His first academic appointment was in

1935 (later in the same year, he was arrested for being a member of the antifascist group *Giustizia e libertà*). He continued teaching the philosophy of law and politics for the next 44 years, working in various prestigious tertiary institutions. It was at the university of his hometown, however, that he spent the longest period of time (1948-1979). The legacy of Bobbio 'the teacher'⁶ is the large number of today's distinguished scholars – legal experts, sociologists, economists, philosophers – who are former students of his. After his retirement from the academic profession, Bobbio was nominated a life member of the Italian Senate, in 1984 by the then President of the Republic Sandro Pertini. This is a title which, according to the Constitution⁷, may be conferred on those who have brought honour to the Nation through exceptional merit in social, scientific, artistic and literary fields. Bobbio has received eight degrees *honoris causae*, has been awarded a prestigious prize for his life-long studies on democracy⁸, and has also received the Agnelli Foundation International Prize for his works on the ethical dimension in contemporary society. To say that Bobbio's academic body of work is impressively large is an understatement⁹. His writings have been translated into 19 languages, however, as recently remarked by Davidson 'it is only in the last five years that we have had the belated discovery in the English-speaking world of Norberto Bobbio, the most significant living Italian representative of liberal socialism[...]'¹⁰ Davidson adds that Bobbio's articles and books now appearing in English are illustrative of his most politically provocative production rather than the most scholarly one.

Bobbio was approached for the benefit of this study not only for the intellectual achievements that make him an outstanding scholar, but also because he witnessed the foundation of the Italian Republic, after having experienced himself that *lamentabile regime* 'deplorable regime', fascism, and has been an unceasing participant in the life of his country. Two more specific reasons, however, are worth noting. Firstly, in a collection of essays *Politica e cultura*¹¹ published in the 1950s, which also made his name well-

known outside academic circles, one of the themes developed was the rejection of any ideological system which implies the denial of *dialogue* among human beings. There is one and only one mission for the man of culture, he suggests, and that is to foster *dialogue* among people, especially in times of fanaticism or war.

L'assunzione programmatica di una verità assoluta e il rifiuto altrettanto programmatico dell'opinione altrui, considerata come errore, pone in essere una delle condizioni meno favorevoli allo sviluppo della cultura

[...] the *a priori* assumption that there is an absolute truth and the equally automatic rejection of others' opinion as wrong, establishes one of the least favourable contexts for the development of culture.'

¹²Bobbio of course was not concerned here with issues specific to cultural policies abroad. But his insistence on the value of debate as against a method of arguing the existence of one prophetic truth as opposed to a crusading ideology, *politica del dialogo* vis a vis *politica della crociata*, represents a precedent for the policy of respect for all beliefs promoted by international organisations such as UNESCO, or by social movements such as multiculturalism in Australia.

Another aspect of this Italian intellectual's life¹³ relevant to the present study is his public spirit, *senso civico* as shown for instance, by his writing over decades for *La Stampa*, a major Italian newspaper, commenting – with clarity, in his usual cautious and unassuming style - on issues of a theoretical nature such as political ideologies as well as on current practical politics.

The brief but meaningful conversation with Bobbio took place in Turin, at his home, in November 1998. Sitting on a plain and well-worn armchair, in a study dominated by books, with the muffled noise of the traffic rising from the busy Via Sacchi below, the eighty-nine year old philosopher of law engaged promptly and generously in the conversation with his visitor from Australia. His sharp memory, his ability to listen with

total concentration and the always understated tone of his answers were in themselves a learning experience.

6. 1. 3 Riccardo Campa, Head of a newly-established *Commissione Nazionale*

Riccardo Campa is a professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Rome, *La Sapienza*, Head of the Library at the *Istituto Italo-Latino Americano*, former Director of the Italian Institute of Culture in Buenos Aires, and most importantly Vice-President of the *Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della lingua e cultura italiane all'estero*

As discussed previously the establishment of the *Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della lingua e cultura italiane all'estero* was a novel part of the legislation passed on 22 December 1990. Its main task, according to the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Gianni de Michelis, was to constitute: 'a think-tank which could identify priority issues and appropriate strategies [...] in regard to specific planning for the promotion of Italy's image abroad, [...] and competent to give suggestions to and act as a consultative body for all government institutions in charge of implementing the 1990 bill of law'¹⁴.

This is to say that the Vice-President of the Commission, being responsible for its work and performance, had a new and significant role to play, a direct responsibility to the Minister and a specific program to prepare following the legislation's guidelines.

Requesting an interview with Professor Campa, was thus not only pertinent but somehow an obligation within the aims of this research .

The interview took place in Rome, in an imposing building in the EUR district, which had been for many years the premises of the *Istituto Italo-Latino-Americano*. This cultural institution was at that stage in the process of moving to a different address. Professor

Campa then explained that he was the only person in the building on that day thus the conversation was frequently interrupted by a buzzer corresponding to an outside door, and by several telephone calls all of which he answered with great courtesy, notwithstanding the difficulty of picking up the thread of his thought while engaged in the interview.

6. 1. 4 Vincenzo Cappelletti, Director, *Istituto dell' Enciclopedia Italiana*

Established in 1925, the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana*¹⁵ is by now a highly respected and prestigious cultural body in Italy. As Giovanni Spadolini, historian and President of the VII Commission of the Senate remarked in 1978, it is the only cultural institution in Italian history which has managed to achieve cultural output of the highest value while maintaining a steadily successful financial management. More than a publishing house, it is described as *un laboratorio concettuale*, an intellectual laboratory, where all technical and financial activities of the publishing trade have a role and a space in addition to an openly publicised policy of 'being leaders in the field'. A quick glance at the catalogue of works published by the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* may offer a realistic testimony to its ongoing commitment to culture. In 1980 the *Enciclopedia Italiana* was included in the list of cultural institutions of national interest.

When Nobel Prize winner Rita Levi Montalcini became its president in 1993, she stated that the value of the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* was 'fundamental' for anybody studying or undergoing professional training in the present world, its publications being *strumenti fondamentali di formazione e di orientamento nel mondo in cui viviamo*.

Vincenzo Cappelletti, professor of the History of Sciences at the University of Rome, *La Sapienza* has been in charge of the organisation since the 1970s. He is also managing editor of a journal *Il Veltro* (founded in 1957), whose main objective is making Italian cultural heritage known and shared internationally. Its monographic issues, in fact, focus on the

relationships between Italy and other countries. *Il Velcro* also actively cooperates with UNESCO and with the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAE).

Professor Cappelletti, as well as being a distinguished personality within the cultural establishment, is a long standing member of a network of intellectuals extending far beyond the Italian context.

He was interviewed in his study, on the premises of the *Istituto*, the XVI century *palazzo Mattei*, in the historic centre of Rome among exquisite antiques, precious paintings, astonishingly well preserved frescoes and wonderful period floors, with no intruding noise from outside traffic, had it not been for the rustling of the cassette recorder and our modern clothes, the atmosphere epitomised what in Italian is referred to as *alta cultura*, in its most strikingly secular manifestation and yet not unworthy of respect.

6. 1. 5. Tullio De Mauro, the 'linguistic consciousness of Italy'

Tullio de Mauro, Professor of Philosophy of Language at the University of Roma *La Sapienza* at the time of the interview, became later Minister for Public Instruction. 1963 was the year of publication of De Mauro's *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*¹⁶ a book which has now become a classic. In this seminal work the process of change in the sociolinguistic situation of Italy was not only explored and analysed in depth over the span of a century, it was also addressed in a political framework. The Italian language, once known and used by a minority and privileged group of people was in the process of becoming a *shared* communication system. But De Mauro did not limit his investigation to the historical and/or linguistic significance of this crucial phenomenon, he perceived it as a timely opportunity to start readdressing the *questione della lingua – mutatis mutandis* - in the current Italian sociolinguistic situation.

From then on De Mauro has swiftly moved from theory to practice, that is to action and planning. His indefatigable involvement in education is witnessed by his several publications on *educazione linguistica*¹⁷, his cooperation with school teachers and his engagement in experimental educational projects, his participation in initiatives and programs of public and private educational institutions¹⁸. Last but not least De Mauro has recently published in cooperation with others and with the support of the IBM Foundation Italy, *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato*. This significant project illustrates the existence of a *national* Italian lexicon, that is to say that the national language is by now a shared commodity all along the peninsula.

Many of De Mauro's ideas have been integrated into the 1979 junior secondary school reforms, eg. the relevance of dialects, the rights of ethnolinguistic minorities, the importance of the variety of language usage. To illustrate why talking to De Mauro was particularly relevant for this research it is worth mentioning along with his curriculum vitae the consistency and balance between the ideals he professes and his action and commitment in the pursuit of them which make his views particularly valuable. Since the time of the interview considered here De Mauro has become Minister for Education.

The appointment with Professor De Mauro was at *Villa Giulia*, a venue used by the University in a different part of Rome to *La Sapienza*. The dialogue took place in a small, bare room, across a wide desk, with the rays of a typical Roman sunset attempting to penetrate from a tall, dusty window overlooking the garden.

6. 1. 6 Dea Pellegrini, Inspector, Direzione degli Scambi Culturali, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione

As effectively explained by this interviewee, the role of the technical inspectors in the field of education, came into existence with legislation of the early 1970s, which was a period of reforms in the school sector. Most innovations dating back to those years were integral to a process which aimed to make the school system more modern, more efficient and, above all, more democratic in order to satisfy the ever-changing needs of Italian society. Since then inspectors have begun working in all areas of the curriculum in accordance with the legislation's guidelines. Their role was that of advisers and counsellors rather than involving the traditional duties of inspecting and checking as suggested by the Latin etymology of *inspicere*.

Dottor Dea Pellegrini's area of specialisation is linguistics, and for many years she was involved in the professional development of teachers of Italian as a foreign language. At the beginning of her career she worked as a teacher in education, later becoming a headmistress and then in 1982, was appointed an inspector and put in charge of the training and professional development of language teachers. After an initial period spent working for organisations run by the Regions, she moved to the central administration, that is to the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*. Since 1987 she has worked abroad. Dea Pellegrini had originally applied to operate in Australia, but was sent instead to South America because, as she explained, in that geographical area there was a need for someone with her qualifications.

Kind, efficient and outspoken, Dea Pellegrini volunteered many interesting insights on the subject of Italian language diffusion abroad. Because of her direct involvement in the field over a long period of time, she was in a position to offer a well informed opinion on this topic and thus give a valuable contribution to the discussion.

The interview took place in Rome, in Via Ippolito Nievo at one of the additional decentralised offices of the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, which occupies an imposing nearby palace.

6.2.6 Sergio Romano, Professor of *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*

Currently Sergio Romano's main commitment is to his students at the Bocconi University in Milan; however, he contributes regular articles to Italian newspapers such as *La Stampa* and *Il Corriere della sera*¹⁹ and to the weekly magazine *Epoca*. This of course is in addition to being a prolific and successful writer with a particular interest in historical subjects and with a distinct preference for historical characters whose life and role have been (or still are) highly controversial²⁰.

A distinguished and versatile scholar, Sergio Romano belongs to a category of Italian intellectuals who are actively involved in the life of the nation and use the media as a means to convey their views to a wider public, thus often being seen as influential opinion makers.

Sergio Romano has been Head of the *Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali*, at the *Ministero degli Esteri*. Subsequently he was posted to Brussels as Ambassador for NATO and soon after served as Ambassador for Italy in Moscow, a post he held until 1989. After his resignation from the diplomatic service he went back to his academic work and to writing. Sergio Romano visited Australia on two occasions, to take part in international conferences organised at the University of Sydney.

Following arrangements made on the phone from Rome, our appointment was fixed for Milan, at Professor Romano's home. Notwithstanding his demanding professional commitments there was time to talk at length, in a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. In

addition to this scholar's competence in the field of international relations, what made the conversation particularly significant was his rich range of experiences, his knowledge of issues from the *inside*, and last but not least a gift for clearly highlighting the main issues in problematic areas and objectively illustrating the contradictions of Italy's national culture.

6. 2. 7 Massimo Spinetti, Assistant Director, *Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali, Ministero degli Esteri*

Unlike academics, writers, or generally speaking individuals whose professional duties entail interaction with the public, members of the Italian bureaucracy are more likely to be sheltered from everyday communication with people outside their working environment. On the other hand contacting them involves difficulties of varying degrees for an outsider.

The *Palazzo della Farnesina* is vast, it houses the many departments of the MAE, innumerable offices and secretariats along interminable corridors monitored by suspicious *uscieri*, whose cooperation is essential for reaching the desired door.

Once formalities and routines were over, the conversation took place in the large, austere office of *Ministro* Massimo Spinetti²¹. As he was Assistant Director of DGRC, in other words an official representative of a government institution, the time allowed for the interview was fixed, the format of the answers formal and it seemed to reflect internal guidelines rather than offering open comments which might be seen as controversial or critical of official DGRC policies.

6.3 Voices from inside in the light of present-day facts

As will appear in the continuation of this chapter much of the debate about the topic of Italian cultural policies abroad is characterised by a profound pessimism. This pervasive sense of gloom, one would infer, might be just the reflection of a wide range of objective problems rather than the result of individuals negative opinions. On the other hand it is also the case to recall that Italians have an extraordinary gift for the art of censuring their own country. It is a skill perfected over the centuries, which has allowed a unique dissection of the Italy through a variety of media: essays, books, films, television. Already at the beginning of Italy's life as a nation, a protagonist of Risorgimento, historian Carlo Cattaneo gave a word of warning while describing this tendency among his fellow citizens in his own time. He said:

[...] e al cospetto degli stranieri non si rinnoverà l'esempio di quel vizio tutto italiano di dir male del suo paese quasi per una escandescenza di amor patrio²²

'[...] in the presence of foreigners one should abstain from that typically Italian bad habit to speak ill of their own country almost out of excessive love for it.'

One may agree or disagree on the opportunity to avoid or practise - and with whom - the delicate skill of exacerbated self-criticism, but the existence of this national trait cannot be totally disregarded in the evaluation of facts.

Let us examine more closely now the content of the interviews.

6. 4 Political rights of Italians abroad: the terms of an ongoing debate

(Bobbio, Romano)

The right to vote is explicitly provided for by the Italian Constitution under the title *Rapporti politici*, Political Relations. To vote is a civic duty, which can be by-passed only in cases specifically indicated by the law.²³

The topic of voting rights for Italians residing abroad has been approached by the various governments in power over a period of fifty years, in fact the issue was discussed at length even by the Constitutional Assembly in 1947. Although its members appeared to be in agreement on the right to vote from abroad, it was decided not to include it explicitly in the text of the Constitution for essentially practical reasons²⁴.

No appropriate solution has yet been found. On the basis of the Maastricht Treaty and with the establishment of European citizenship, citizens from other member-states living in Italy may vote in the administrative elections of their residential area; as for Italian citizens living in Europe, but outside Italy, they have a right to return home and vote at the place where they are enrolled for elections.

Before passing an immediate negative judgement on the authorities' inability to solve the problem, the uniqueness of the Italian situation must also be acknowledged. If about 26 million Italians have left the country between 1860 and the 1970s, it is hardly surprising that no easy solutions have been readily available to the legislators.

Three main issues need to be considered: the first is the difficulty of identifying who is entitled to vote by keeping updated records of millions of citizens scattered over five continents; the second is the material organisation of the voting; the third relates to establishing what kind of electoral/political representation to adopt. Is it appropriate to allow voting for local representatives of each geographical area, even if the Italians abroad

might never have lived in it, or is it advisable to modify the Constitution by allowing *ad hoc* representation of Italians abroad?

In addition to the highlighted difficulties the unforeseen consequences of the impact that a massive vote from abroad could have on national elections appears to be another fundamental cause for concern.

As one can see, the issue has more than one aspect and lends itself to debate from opposing positions. If the Italian Constitution establishes a principle of equality of treatment of all of its citizens, is it acceptable that some of them are deprived of the most important political right, political vote, for reasons other than those identified by the law? On the other hand is it fair that a large number of individuals might influence the State's affairs without being part of Italian society?

Norberto Bobbio's opinion on the subject was unequivocal: denying the right to vote to Italians abroad on the basis of the fact that they live out of their country is a form of discrimination.

Ma io sono convinto che quelli che sono rimasti cittadini avranno diritto di votare, perché è contrario a... è una forma di discriminazione. E' giusto il termine discriminazione perché il fatto di risiedere in un luogo piuttosto che in un altro non è una differenza rilevante²⁵

'I am convinced that those who have kept their Italian citizenship will have the right to vote...because it is against...[...] it is a form of discrimination. The term discrimination is appropriate because the fact that one lives in one place rather than another it is not a meaningful factor.'

The case of voting rights for Italians abroad, Bobbio added, was mainly argued by the right-wing party of fascist origin, the MSI²⁶ now Alleanza Nazionale: in fact it is one of the few subjects pursued consistently over time by that party and with a degree of determination. The Christian Democrats during the many years in government, paid hardly any attention to it. In addition, he commented, there is also a widespread 'belief' that the majority of Italians abroad are predominantly right wing.

It was obvious that in mentioning this last point Bobbio was reporting a public rumour, which may or may not be true and would in any case need to be evaluated in relation to different places.

Sergio Romano also suggested that the issue of voting rights for emigrants had been predominantly a concern for the Right, *un tema sollevato dalla destra* (he did not say the fascists). The cautious attitude of the Left, *delle Sinistre*, he specified, had to do with the perception that emigrants overseas, outside Europe, would be aligned with the right-wing parties.

This is the reason why this issue has never been resolved. It is also my impression that it is unlikely that it will ever be, partly because there are too many Italians abroad[...] There could be two or three million.[...] Three million people living away from Italy and not sharing the consequences of their voting, perhaps not paying taxes, and who are not sufficiently informed... This is indeed the source of many queries to which not many are prepared to give an answer. [...] The problem concerning information implies the need to conduct an electoral campaign where [Italians] live.... Some countries, however, are not very happy to have electoral campaigns run on their own territory.²⁷

It was apparent that Bobbio focussed on the issue by looking at the contradiction between the text of the Constitution and its failed implementation which is in itself a denial of democratic principles. Sergio Romano, on his part seemed more concerned with the realistic execution and consequences of allowing Italians abroad to vote.

For the philosopher of law the denial of political rights such as the right to vote is an act of discrimination against Italians abroad. For the diplomat and specialist in international relations, the implications of allowing that very right are so complex and unpredictable that the issue is likely to remain unresolved in the future as it has been in the past.

Is it a situation where the practice of democracy has found its unsurmountable limit?

6.5 Enduring shadows of the past over culture and language policies abroad (Bobbio, Cappelletti, Romano)

As Mussolini himself suggested²⁸, cultural policy represented the test for Italian society. The establishment of a Ministry of Popular Culture, soon to be known as *Minculpop*, was one of the initiatives within fascism's management of culture in Italy. Its principal aim was to exercise censorship in relation to the press and to the publishing industry. With the breaking of the war, the power of *Minculpop* was extended to embrace the additional function of wartime propaganda.

When Bobbio, who does not see himself as a detached witness to Italian history of the 1930s²⁹, was asked in the course of the interview whether the wording *politica culturale*, cultural policy, could mean something different from *politica fatta dagli uomini politici per fini politici* 'politicians' policies only aimed at political purposes', he hesitated, then rephrased the expression before acknowledging that it could be used in a positive sense as a procedure to promote culture for the sake of culture. It was obvious that for an intellectual of his generation memories from the fascist regime put him instinctively on guard.

In his view, the fact that Italy does not have a Ministry for Culture, but does have a Ministry of Cultural Property, is indicative of the persistent fear of repeating the tragic errors of the past. He also attributed the persistent lack of interest in the concept of nation in Italy to the rejection of the exaggerated nationalism of fascist times.

Romano pointed out that, while the initial stages of an Italian foreign cultural policy date back to the post-WWI period, the fascist regime with its rigid nationalist ideologies, no doubt had its own foreign cultural policy: 'Fascism did have a foreign cultural policy [...] and an interest in appropriating the heritage of ancient Rome'

De Mauro, on the other hand, was totally negative about language promotion abroad within cultural policies of the past. He has highlighted elsewhere³⁰ that during fascism language promotion abroad had been an instrument of propaganda; in his view even in regard to Italy's former colonies there had been no consistency or continuity of action, nothing that could be defined as 'language policy' he insisted.

Cappelletti however focused on the struggle to protect the autonomy of Italian culture at the end of WWII which in his view represented the most meaningful turning point for the defeated Italy in her journey towards democracy

The country has managed to get back its cultural autonomy after the period of Anglo-American influence³¹

It seems that, according to the scholars questioned, the experience of the past dictatorship is still imprinted in the collective memory to the point of obstructing even initiatives of a non-political nature. An example specifically relating to language policy will be considered.

6. 6 Italian language promotion abroad as seen from within the *Ministero degli Esteri* and the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*. (Campa, Pellegrini)

The Head of the *Commissione Nazionale per la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiane nel mondo*, Professor Riccardo Campa, appeared mainly concerned with the need to advocate his own brand of language policy.

While being aware of the tasks set for the *Commissione Nazionale*, as laid down in Law No. 401 of 22/12/1990³², he illustrated at length.³³ his notion of an appropriate international role for the Italian language. In his view Italian is not and has never been a *lingua franca*, nor it could fulfil the function that English has in today's world. Italy, he

insisted, does not have a linguistic commonwealth on which to rely for large scale initiatives, such as those France or Spain can boast of. The fragmentation of the demand from abroad for Italian language is an obstacle interfering with the appropriate allocation of financial resources. Often the economic effort required to satisfy these sparse and heterogeneous needs is hardly defensible from a practical point of view.

The only solution to the problem would be to promote the Italian language in a different way, as a kind of universal cultural denominator, embracing the function once enjoyed by Latin: that of being a communication system suited for critical analysis, reflection, study.

Italian is a language that has reached universality because of its close continuing relationship with Latin

[...] può rappresentare una lingua concettuale, una lingua mentale, una lingua virtuale che deve presiedere alla operatività delle lingue veicolari.³⁴

‘[...] it is a conceptual language, a language of the mind, a virtual language able to remain above and monitor all other communication languages’

The abstractness of Campa's reasoning in relation to the promotion and role of the Italian language abroad became even more conspicuous when compared with the views of the technical inspector from the *Direzione Scambi Culturali* of the MPI. This latter Ministry, as shown previously in this context, works in close cooperation with the MAE.

Doctor Dea Pellegrini, whose experience in the field of Italian language diffusion abroad and specific professional duties added significance to her remarks, argued the issue from a different perspective.³⁵

Three main problems were identified and highlighted in her interview. The first difficulty is a consequence of changes in government – unfortunately frequent – which disrupt the normal path of legislation in the field: any bill presented within the period of office of one government may have expired by the time its successor is in power. Hence the need to put forward a new proposal and the consequent inevitable delays.

The second problem is the lack of specific formal provisions for establishing the role of *addetti linguistici*, language specialists able to perform as teachers-trainers and provide adequate professional development for teachers of Italian abroad. It would be both more realistic and economical to offer support to local teachers rather than sending teaching staff from Italy to work in foreign countries.

The third problem, according to Pellegrini is that since the establishment of the European Union, there had been a lack of initiative by the Italian government to ensure that the Italian language becomes part of mainstream school curricula, especially in areas where large Italian communities live. She indicated when the problem had started and why

The Council of Europe issued a set of rules giving various suggestions in relation to languages, for instance the threshold level, as well as in regard to integration policies among states and integration in terms of educational policies. There was a need to think about [these issues] already at that stage; Italy should have been stronger in its negotiations with other states, it should have demanded that Italian language be part of the school system wherever there was an Italian community.³⁶

The difficulties were the same in regard to transoceanic migrant communities, Pellegrini indicated.

It was clear that, according to this staff official of MPI, the inability of Italian government authorities to obtain the inclusion of Italian language into mainstream school curricula abroad had been a serious mistake.

She also suggested that fostering Italian identity and cultural heritage through *ad hoc* initiatives, separate from the local education systems, had brought negative outcomes: it had socially isolated Italian migrant children. If the specific language usage of Italian migrant communities were to be taken into account³⁷, the emphasis ought to have been on

integrating the teaching of Italian in the local school systems rather than relying on family input.

Of course it is still a fact that the allocation of funds is predominantly monitored by the Department of Emigration and Social Affairs of the MAE, which offers good support to local institutions abroad for the promotion of Italian culture and language. The aim however should continue to be making Italian part of the mainstream curricula. The network of institutions currently using the funds made available by the Italian government could slowly change into a system of support organisations for the education system. Even the staff within the IICs and the *lettori* within the universities, could be better utilised by establishing a specific role for language specialists trained to cooperate with schools and universities.

It is clear that for Pellegrini the main issues in the field of Italian language diffusion abroad were practical and realistic. Her views, as she stressed on more than one occasion, are shared by many linguists who are aware of the need to better respond to the still growing demand for Italian language learning coming from abroad. There is by now a compelling necessity to rationalise and improve government responses to it.

In summary for the high profile exponent of the bureaucracy, Assistant Director General of the DGRC, MAE, a language policy does exist firstly because it is a component of a recognised domain of cultural policy, and secondly because procedures of an administrative nature are systematically observed in order to implement initiatives in that field.

The Head of the *Commissione Nazionale per la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiane all'estero* on the other hand, expressed strong reservations about the current system. He suggested a radical change of policy on the basis of the role he envisaged for Italian language in the international context.

The representative of the MPI, Inspector Pellegrini, for her part, confined her comments to offering constructive criticism of the policies in place, and concentrated quite deliberately on facts of a practical nature rather than elaborating a theory on the future of Italian language diffusion abroad. She also commented on the *Commissione Nazionale*'s yet unfulfilled duty to devise new plans for Italian language promotion abroad and hand them to the Minister of Foreign Affairs³⁸ in order to reach specific conclusions.

A comparison between the position of these three interviewees shows up notable differences. Establishing common ground for a dialogue among the parties in question appears no easier here than in any other field of Italian politics, which is in itself a considerable obstacle for progress in this area.

6.7 The policy of "non-policy" as applied to the promotion of the Italian language abroad (De Mauro, Romano, Cappelletti)

Anyone who engages in interviewing people may, at one stage or another, realise how difficult it is to formulate questions that are on the one hand neutral and on the other able to stimulate verbal interaction. Nevertheless during this stage of the present research one query, when expressed directly and addressed to almost all the participants, seemed to provoke the most passionate and intriguing responses.

Does an Italian language and culture policy exist? If it does, what are its objectives?

There was no hesitation in Minister Spinetti's (DGRC, MAE) answer to the question:

'Of course. According to current legislation every year a program must be handed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. According to the legislative decree No 29 of 1993 it is the responsibility of each managing director to prepare a plan which includes all projects for the year [...]. The Director General of DGRC devises a program obviously based on general criteria, on political

guidelines, for the promotion of language and culture [abroad]. Policies thus are updated every year, clearly every year the focus may vary, but it still follows a traditional blueprint ; in particular it keeps into account geographical priorities and Italian foreign policy³⁹

When asked whether the changes of government influence cultural policies, if yes to what extent and whether there had been any significant contradictions in relation to foreign cultural policies, Spinetti answered that in his view foreign cultural policy is a domain of foreign policy itself, consequently the former is affected by the latter. Historical events play a role in foreign policy, shifting the focus of attention from relations with one country to those with another. The core of cultural policies however remain untouched in a proportion of at least 80% of its essential content.⁴⁰

What about implementation? Who devises strategies to execute the plans?

We are the ones in charge of enforcing our own policies; [apart from us] only the IICs are entitled to implement directives from the centre in an autonomous manner [...], this is to encourage flexibility in relation to local needs.⁴¹

Max Weber argued that the two prerequisites legitimising bureaucratic power are abstract rules binding both power-holders and addressees of those same norms plus an administrative apparatus⁴² similarly, in the opinion of the Deputy-Director General of the DGRC, current legislation on the subject of culture and language promotion abroad - with related practices, resources and personnel in the field - are the manifestation of government involvement in and commitment to it. Not only an administrative apparatus is in place but it has also been expanded through new institutions that will enable culture and language promotion abroad to be pursued more specifically. The established *Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della cultura e lingua italiane all'estero*, Ministro Spinetti emphasised, is by now the leading body responsible for that aspect of foreign policy.

But what are the identified objectives of the current Italian cultural policies?

In the absence of a straight forward answer, what could be inferred from the reported conversation is that, in the eyes of officialdom, cultural policies are to be evaluated not in themselves but rather by an act of trust, in other words by accepting that set rules in that domain apply and that they are implemented through the on-going action of an *ad hoc* administrative apparatus.

De Mauro's answer not only covered the present, it also included a dismissive appraisal of the past, when the Italian State, which prided itself on its colonial ambitions, had an explicit language policy in place. According to this linguist, however, that was not the case: language policy implied initiatives that were never incorporated in the fascist government's action; for instance there was no attempt at language integration involving the population of the former colonies, nor were there coherent plans for the spread of the Italian language abroad. True, there was an institution for the promotion of Italian, the *Dante Alighieri*, De Mauro acknowledged this fact, but, at the same time he dismissed its action with a statement spiced by unambiguous irony:

Yes, its [the *Dante Alighieri*'s] history could be reconstructed. I am not sure, however, whether it would be too generous or too ungenerous to compare the *Dante Alighieri* with the British Council, or with the Goethe Institute, or with the Spanish Alliance.⁴³

While acknowledging the existence of the *Dante Alighieri* as an historical institution having the official aim to promote Italian language abroad, De Mauro also denounced its inability to achieve that task.

In De Mauro's opinion it was only in the 1970s that the Italian government became aware of the issue of Italian language abroad and, he added, later in the 1980s the MPI also became involved, especially from the time Sergio Romano became Head of the DGRC. However, the lack of appropriate infrastructures for example a centralised organisation able to provide information worldwide about Italian teaching in crucial areas such as

curricula, evaluation criteria, standards, methodologies and so on, proves the neglect still affecting this domain of cultural policy.

A language policy? What language policy? The non-language policy! Isn't it? Of course in Italy we are Machiavelli's children to such an extent that we also realise that a non-language-policy is in any case some sort of policy in the sense that some choices are made one way or another.⁴⁴

Romano's response to the same question seemed to support De Mauro's polemical stand.

A policy is inevitably in place also when there is no policy or a bad one is produced. [...] This policy happens to vary according to the government in power. The main critical remark about Italian foreign cultural policy is that it has not managed to identify its own goals and devise appropriate strategies to achieve them⁴⁵

Romano further expanded his view by indicating three potential aims for cultural policy. The first would demand a focus on the development of relationships with cultural elites abroad so that the results could be extended to the general public. In this case IICs ought to be run by academics, or by personnel who are highly qualified and thus able to interact at the same level with their local counterparts.

The second required concentrating on language promotion abroad, with the need in this case to invest capital in: a) creating well-organised (infra)structures, similar to the British Council; b) training staff to competently provide specialised teaching.

The third hypothesis consisted of fostering and maintaining cultural bonds between Italians abroad and their country of origin. This operation would require intensive work in the area of cultural information and language teaching. This might be done in a similar fashion to the initiatives addressed to foreign learners of Italian, but while for the latter it was essential that teachers knew well the first language of their students, for the former such bilingual competence on the part of the teachers would not be essential. Then he added:

Three targets? Well, three different strategies must be used.[...] We have demanded too many things from a small institution: the Italian Institute of Culture. [...] we have tried to fulfill too many obligations and taken too many just so so, according to the different circumstances... There is no doubt we have missed [those targets] and when burdened by financial difficulty, then we have resorted to implementing the policy requested for by the louder voices.⁴⁶

Cappelletti, leader of the previously mentioned illustrious cultural organisation mainly concerned with publishing in the various disciplines for the promotion of Italian culture within and outside Italy, answered from his own angle of observation. He said that an Italian cultural policy does exist, notwithstanding its contradictions and indecision. For him Italy's position internationally depended on promoting its 'modern' face, by highlighting its contribution to the contemporary world. He concluded by stating:

Language policy has supplemented the policy aimed at promoting culture in this sense.⁴⁷

His point of view was more optimistic than those of the two other scholars, which can be explained by taking into account that Cappelletti focussed on one specific aspect of Italian culture promotion and from a particular and privileged position.

The most disturbing comment, however, came from Romano:

[...] Taking everything into account I have often asked myself – but this happens only at times of extreme scepticism – whether there is such a difference between the amount of Italian learned in the world because of the initiatives financed by the Italian State and what the number of learners would be without government language services and support.... There is the chance that the reduction in demand would only be of 0, 01 %.⁴⁸

Gramsci once said:

*Occorre violentemente attirare l'attenzione sul presente così com'è, se si vuole trasformarlo. Pessimismo dell'intelligenza, ottimismo della volontà.*⁴⁹

One must forcibly attract attention on the present as it is, if one wishes to change it. Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will.

Romano's writings, his actions while he was the head of the DGRC and his present stand on the subject of the spread of Italian language and culture abroad, seem to suggest a similar approach, thus moderating the shock that his statement might generate at first glance. Whether in difficult circumstances or in prosperous times it is a healthy practice for public institutions to appraise their own function in terms of leadership, correctness of action and productivity: Romano appears to have consistently subscribed to this principle.

6.8 Is there a need to protect Italian from the influence of other languages? (Romano, Cappelletti, De Mauro, Bobbio)

On April 2 1993 , at a Conference promoted by the IBM Foundation and the University of Rome, *La Sapienza* , there was the official launch of LIP, *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato*⁵⁰, which represents the final result of an important study carried out by De Mauro and other researchers with the cooperation of the IBM-Italy Foundation, using as its sample four main Italian cities: Milan, Florence, Rome and Naples. This work portrays and documents the spoken lexicon of the Italian language; it reveals the existence at present of a linguistic common denominator for all people along the Italian peninsula, with 99.7% of the terms registered being 'deeply rooted in Italian soil' and the remaining 0.3% being latinisms or anglicisms⁵¹:

While commenting on these findings De Mauro also pointed out that today the guardians of the Italian language are millions of people: 'There is no dictatorship or authority able to replace them'⁵³ His words reflect on the one hand his 'political emotion' in commenting

on the sociolinguistic situation of Italy one hundred and thirty-four years after it became a nation, on the other they show his detached attitude in relation to the presence of foreign words in the language spoken by Italians in general. Linguists, it must be remembered, tend to register linguistic phenomena rather than taking a critical stand about them.

Yet, the presence of foreign words in the Italian language is often debated and criticised in many public forums including by columns in the national press, where at the same time the use of foreign words is particularly conspicuous.

During the interview with Cappelletti the subject of *forestierismi* came up. Taking as a starting point a publication of the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* that had just been just released - the four volume *Vocabolario della lingua italiana Treccani* - Cappelletti proudly observed:

'It is an example of how to make a dictionary[...] [it contains] 200,000 words, of which 2000 are foreign terms; this is an acceptable percentage. Maybe it is also good that there is an exchange: our world is not made of closed compartments, it is a world without frontiers.⁵⁴

When the topic of foreign words as a frequent occurrence in Italian language usage (English words in particular) was discussed ed with Bobbio, he said that safeguarding the Italian language was important but – in his opinion - not common practice in Italy. Unlike the French who relentlessly defend their national language from the intrusion of foreign words, *forestierismi* are readily accepted in Italian language. He agreed that this *laissez faire* attitude may be explained as a rejection of the impositions of the past fascist regime whose language policy formally banned the use of all foreign words.⁵⁵

Cappelletti on his part had stated that fascism with its fight to foreign words had made a fool of itself. For Italy, he insisted, it is important to be realistic by acknowledging the

value of interacting with and depending on other nations; Italians' acceptance of foreign words reflects this position⁵⁶.

Romano was more critical and sharper in his comments on the lack of official protection of the Italian language. The *Haut Commissariat de la Langue*, which exists in France, he remarked, not only safeguards the language, it also contributes to highlighting its value and defending its purity. While it is true that institutions like this may appear linguistically bigotted at times, it must be remembered that their function also includes promoting the language and keeping alive people's interest in and awareness of their national language. In Italy the idea of establishing a government organisation on the model of the French one has always been regarded with suspicion, he added, because of its perceived fascist connotations.⁵⁷ Also English speaking countries, however appear reluctant to follow the french example though there is no fascist tradition to remember in their case.

In Italy, it seems, the past continues to cast a shadow over the present, thus inhibiting initiatives which other democratic European nations do not hesitate to foster in relation to their own national languages.

6.9 Concluding remarks

A country does not need to have a formal written policy statement in order to have a language policy. All nations engage in some kind of language planning, even if it is only in ensuring that a particular language is employed in administration, education, the media, and other public domains or by not providing public information in other languages.⁵⁸

This statement is significant in assessing the outcomes of the interviews reported and examined in this chapter, as it is important to remember that foreign language policy is a specific domain of language planning.

The interviewees, representatives of Italian academia, bureaucracy and diplomacy, appeared at least quite consistent, if not unanimous, in their criticism of Italian government initiatives in the field of language promotion abroad. Their comments, however, varied in both scope and strength.

Ministro Massimo Spinetti, Assistant Director of the DGRC – thus a high rank public servant – maintained that the existence of language and culture policies today is proved by current administrative practices: for instance, the preparation of a specific plan on the subject by the Director General of the DGRC, who submits it every year to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. This plan must be consistent with foreign policy in general and has to take into account the geographical priorities usually established by the government in power.

Thus it could be inferred that the formal implementation of the law rather than the results achieved by its enforcement is what counts for the administrative system.

Opposite in approach to the subject was the linguist, who seemed to base his appraisal essentially on the results of language policies (or lack of results). His ironical remark: '*una politica linguistica? Quale politica linguistica? La non-politica linguistica*' 'A language policy? What language policy? The non-language policy!' left no doubt about his assessment of the matter. 'Facts count' not words he maintained resolutely, but conceded that a slow change in language policy matters could be noticed from the late 1980s on; the past negative record, however, and some still unsolved problems demand caution rather than optimism in evaluating Italian language policies abroad. His comment on Italians' machiavellian skills fomenting the perception that a non-policy may in itself constitute a policy may appear harsh/impertinent, yet it found support in a similar observation by the diplomat and historian who suggested that in Italy even when there is no formal policy or a bad policy is in place, a policy is in any case formally operational.

While Professor Sergio Romano, former ambassador and DGRC Director General only mentioned that cultural policies vary according to the different governments in power, Dott.ssa Dea Pellegrini, MPI Technical Inspector, focused on the consequences of frequent changes of government which result in delayed to decision-making. In some cases, she insisted, it has been necessary to start out again, especially when bills already introduced for approval by Parliament become obsolete when a new government comes to power.

She also identified areas where legislative intervention is still needed to amend current practices, especially in regard to the improvement and rationalisation of the position and duties of staff teaching Italian abroad.

Issues of neglect affecting Italian language promotion abroad were accurately and openly identified and because of her expertise in Italian teaching abroad, this MPI staff member chose to approach the theme from that angle, suggesting practical ways to solve problems rather than engaging in theoretical arguments on the role of Italian language on the international scene.

A strong contrast was apparent here between the reasoned opinion of the inspector and the highly personal and rather obscure views expressed by the Head of the *Commissione Nazionale*. He sounded dismissive of all current practices in the area of language and culture diffusion abroad and chose to illustrate instead what in his view should be the desirable way to promote Italian internationally. He suggested that the main function and role on the Italian language in modern society should become the one that once belonged to Latin, 'a language for the mind, a conceptual language' able to offer a better access to the cultural sedimentations of the past.

Another intriguing insight was the realisation that, again according to this important member of the *Commissione Nazionale per la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiane all'estero*, the outcomes of Italian language promotion abroad are not worth the financial effort required of the taxpayers.

Such a negative attitude appears at odds with any legitimate expectation that whoever is in charge of this new and significant institution, established specifically to promote Italian culture, would at least believe in the role and initiatives of his own organisation. The divergence between the aims of the *Commissione Nazionale* as established by law and its chairperson's beliefs could not be more apparent. Similarly discordant were the views of the MPI representative and those of the Vice-President of the MAE Commission: the former was aiming at problem solving within the system, the latter objected to the system as a whole.

While minor disagreements among individuals working in the same area may be seen as part of the human condition – conflict can be resolved through negotiation – differences involving basic issues, such as whether the whole of the government's action in the field is justified or not, have the potential to undermine and/or destabilise government policies.

Interestingly, a similar and disturbing comment came from the former ambassador and Director General of the DGRC, when he suggested that without government support for language promotion abroad the situation of Italian might change only insignificantly.

This statement nevertheless was later mitigated by his own admission that such an hypothesis resulted from occasional pessimistic reflections rather than from an ongoing conviction. In his previous accurate analysis of Italy's foreign cultural policy he had identified its main fault over the years. He suggested that Italian cultural policy had failed to identify and define its own aims, with a consequent inability to devise appropriate strategies to achieve those aims. This point will be reconsidered later in this chapter.

The position of Professor Vincenzo Cappelletti, Director of the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana*, the already mentioned highly successful cultural institution, appears unequivocal and slightly detached. The broad view he put forward was that the promotion of Italian language is a corollary of a wider field of action aimed at nurturing the presence of Italian culture on the international map. While there is no doubt that the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia*

Italiana actively contributes to this cause, it is also a fact that its involvement in the field concentrates on publishing matters, research issues, and initiatives revolving around universities. It is also a fact that the *Istituto*, because of its legal status and historical precedents, cooperates with the government, but it is to a considerable extent independent from government direct intervention; thus it pursues its objectives as it sees fit rather than being

There were two subjects where agreement prevailed. The first was the admission that the memory of fascism still endures in Italian society; it casts a shadow over some fields of government action and it interferes with the public's awareness of particular issues. As the philosopher of law pointed out there is a deep-rooted and widespread avoidance of debate, for instance, in relation to the concept of nationhood and its significance for the Italian people. Abuses perpetrated by fascism in the name of nationalism caused two distinct reactions, while on the one hand areas where fascist intervention was particularly noticeable, for instance in legislation against the use of foreign words, came to be totally ignored, on the other the fear of being labelled fascist acted as a deterrent in regard to initiatives that are commonplace in other countries, such as the establishment of a ministry for culture.

What is ironical in this situation is that the implementation of the Constitution, which represents the main reference point in the development of Italian democracy, is slowed down by fear of those very aberrations that it was (and is) meant to obliterate. The unsolved problem of voting rights for Italians abroad is the most conspicuous example of this attitude.

The second issue where consensus prevailed was the evaluation of the IICs performance. Bobbio remarked with subdued irony:

'[...]there exist Institutes of Culture, but if one were to be brutally frank - they leave much to be desired... I used to visit overseas centres sometimes, and, I

must say, I have found the directors of those Institutes a little strange... not up to their role. But I also remember, however, that in Portugal there was one of the most important Italian writers, Tabucchi, as Director of that Italian Institute, so there are exceptions. But other Institutes.....^{59,}

The Assistant Director of the DGRC, Spinetti, refrained from making comments and highlighted instead the freedom that IICs have in devising their cultural programs. He admitted, however, that these organisations still suffer because of the the lack of adequate staffing and mentioned that future more generous funding by the government had recently been approved.⁶⁰

Romano's appraisal focused on the unrealistic expectations of IICs; he argued that in the absence of clearly identified aims for Italian cultural policy, IICs had always been expected to perform too many roles at once, which resulted in things being done badly in varying degrees.⁶¹

Tullio De Mauro recalled a conversation he had had in the 1970s, in Stockholm, with the director of the local IIC, who excluded⁶² the possibility that Italian migrants in that city could be users of that Institute. For De Mauro the anecdote was a proof of the inadequacy of the cultural policies he had argued against in the interview, it also demonstrated that the lack of attention to and connection with Italian communities abroad was unfortunately as bad as he had suggested⁶³

Professor Campa on the other hand pointed out that what IICs can do about language is very little:

Our Institutes organise exhibitions, invites scientists, do lots of things, consequently the initiatives regarding language are very limited and are also not adequate to foster [language promotion] at the level I have in mind.⁶⁴

Finally Inspector Dea Pellegrini appeared totally in agreement with Romano, in stating that IICs cannot cope with the range of duties they are expected to perform:

There can be Institutes managed by one person only [...] and as usual the poor devil is expected to be a walking encyclopaedia, he/she must be able to do everything: manage funds, raise funds, interact with local authorities, implement culture and language policies, and perhaps teach as well...⁶⁵

She concluded rather colourfully by remarking

E questo veramente mi sembra fare le nozze con li fichi secchi per essere proprio espliciti...

'To be honest that seems to me trying to do too much with too little'

Questioning a sample of prominent Italians who work (or have worked) in the field of culture and language promotion abroad has contributed to assess more realistically what governments in power have achieved so far.

It has also helped me identifying aspects of the legislation which, according to the direct experience of the people questioned have proved defective and in need to be rectified. Peculiarities of the Italian political system negatively affecting the area of language inter alia, have also been highlighted, signalling that major policy questions in the field are still to be resolved.

Potential conflicts of ideas and contrasting ways to approach issues of Italian language policy abroad have also surfaced, thus suggesting the presence of a further obstacle in the planning of policies: the lack of cohesion and coordination among government organisations and/or officials in charge.

Overall, the insights gained through the interviews have reinforced the findings of this study, rather than contradicting them. In most cases the issues discussed, as we shall see later, have been further clarified by the comments of the interviewees.

What remains to be seen is whether and how policies of Italian language and culture investigated so far interact with societies abroad. We will select one case study for a specific analysis.

NOTES

¹ 'For historians, despite the longstanding existence of oral testimony within traditional written records, the emergence of oral history as a new methodology since the 1960s is central to understanding the emergence of social memory as a topic of study [...] the practice of oral history changed the relationship between past and present in historical research. Oral history did not 'fix' the past in the way many sources generated at the time did.' Hamilton, P. 'The Knife Edge: Debates about Memory and History' in K. Darian-Smith and P. Hamilton (eds.) *Memory and History in the Twentieth-Century Australia*. Oxford University Press, Melbourne 1994 p 14

² The first set of interviews took place in 1995, the second set in 1997 and the third in 1998.

³ Isolation is, according to most of those involved, a corollary of research work. There are of course ways to overcome the problem, but they are left to the initiative, energy and good will of the interested party, a situation similar - in a way - to learning to swim by being thrown into deep water.

⁴ Papuzzi, A. (a cura di) *Norberto Bobbio - Autobiografia*. Laterza, Roma-Bari 1997

⁶ Bobbio does not rate himself as an excellent teacher, his classes were always crowded, he says: 'only because I taught a subject that every first year student was taking' *La Stampa* 17 October 1999

⁷ *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana* Articolo 59

⁸ Bobbio's main contribution to political science concerns democracy, as recently highlighted by one of his former disciples, political scientist Gianfranco Pasquino. One of Bobbio's most translated books *Il futuro della democrazia* (Einaudi, Torino 1984), critically argues the persistence in present-day society of 'democracy's unkept promises', that is the inability of this political system, widely spread throughout the world, to implement basic principles such as transparency of government action.

⁹ The Internet site <http://www.erasmo.it/bobbio> lists 4000 titles, representing the intellectual output of the philosopher.

¹⁰ Davidson, A. 'Norberto Bobbio, Liberal Socialism and the Problem of Language' *Citizenship Studies*, Vol.2, n.2 1998 pp 223-224

¹¹ Bobbio, N. *Politica e cultura*. Einaudi, Torino 1974 (First edition 1955)

¹² *Ibid.* p 73

¹³ According to feminist writer Rossana Rossanda, Bobbio symbolises an increasingly rare character in Italian society: that of the intellectual politically and morally committed to watch over freedom.

¹⁴ De Michelis, G. 'Il funzionamento e il ruolo della Commissione Nazionale' *Quaderni di vita italiana* n. 3 1992 Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma pp 87-95

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- 15 The genesis and development of the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* has been illustrated in Chapter 5
- 16 De Mauro, T. *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*. Laterza, Bari 1991 (First edition 1963)
- 17 See in this subject area *Parlare italiano* Laterza, Bari 1973, *Le parole e i fatti* Editori Riuniti, Roma 1978, *Lingue e dialetti* (with Mario Lodi) Editori Riuniti, Roma 1979
- 18 De Mauro has been the editor of 'I libri di base', a series of books published by Editori Riuniti, which aim at using the contributions of experts in the various fields to offer knowledge in a way that is accessible to a wide public using clear, plain language. Tullio De Mauro himself has written *Guida all'uso delle parole* for this series.
- 19 *La Stampa* (founded in 1867) and *Il Corriere della sera* (founded in 1876) are two of the most respected Italian newspapers, the second in particular has a wide circulation all over Italy
- 20 The following titles are relevant examples of Romano's choices: *Giuseppe Volpi, industria e finanza da Giolitti a Mussolini* (1979); *Crispi* (1986); *Giolitti* (1988); *Giovanni Gentile, la filosofia al potere* (1984)
- 21 Massimo Spinetti, then Assistant Director of the DGRC is now the Italian Ambassador in Panama
- 22 Cattaneo, C. *Su la Scienza nuova di Vico* quoted in N. Bobbio (a cura di) *Scritti filosofici*. Firenze Le Monnier, 1960 p 134
- 23 *Costituzione della Repubblica Italiana*. Articolo 48
- 24 Atti dell'Assemblea Costituente. Sedute 20, 21, 23 Maggio 1947
- 25 Interview with Norberto Bobbio Appendix p 418
- 26 Movimento Sociale Italiano
- 27 Interview with Sergio Romano Appendix p 499
- 28 Discorso 28 ottobre 1925
- 29 Bobbio, N. 'Fascismo e cultura' in G. Quazza (a cura di) *Fascismo e società italiana*. Einaudi, Torino. 1973. pp.211-24. The philosopher in the introduction to his essay declares: '[...] the author of this text does not presume to be detached from the events narrated to the point of being regarded an impartial bystander or an unbiased judge' p 211
- 30 De Mauro, T. e Vedovelli, M. *La diffusione dell'italiano nel mondo e le vie dell'emigrazione* Centro Studi Emigrazione, Roma 1996
- 31 Interview with Vincenzo Cappelletti Appendix p 445
- 32 See in particular Section 4 of Law n. 401/1990
- 33 Interview with Riccardo Campa, Appendix p 423
- 34 Interview with Riccardo Campa, Appendix p 423
- 35 Interview with Dea Pellegrini, Appendix p 474
- 36 Ibid p

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- 37 The sociolinguistic situation of Italians abroad has been discussed previously (Chapter 3); suffice it to say that the percentage of dialect speakers until the 1970s, when Italian migration almost ceased was even higher than today, when still 62% of Italians still uses predominantly a dialect for communication (De Mauro 'Lingua e dialetti' in P. Ginsborg (a cura di) *Stato dell'Italia* Mondadori, Milano 1994 pp 61-66
- 38 Interview with Dea Pellegrini. Appendix p 478
- 39 Interview with Massimo Spinetti Appendix p 509
- 40 Ibid p 510
- 41 Ibid pp 510
- 42 Weber, M. *Economia e società* (1922). Comunità, Milano. 1961. The author deals with the concept of bureaucracy within the analysis of social power and its manifestations; he identifies two elements as typical of that notion: legitimacy and administration.
- 43 Interview with Tullio De Mauro 20 January 1995 p 456
- 44 Ibid p 458
- 45 Interview with Sergio Romano Appendix p 500
- 46 Ibid pp 500
- 47 Interview with Vincenzo Cappelletti Appendix p 445
- 48 Interview with Sergio Romano Appendix p 506
- 49 Gramsci, A. *Passato e presente*. Editori Riuniti, Roma 1977
- 50 De Mauro, T. et alii *Lessico di frequenza dell'italiano parlato* Etas Libri, Milano. 1993
- 51 Ibid p XXXIII
- 52 Ibid
- 53 Ibid p XXXIII
- 54 Interview with Vicenzo Cappelletti. Appendix p 445
- 55 Interview with Norberto Bobbio. Appendix p 413
- 56 Interview with Vincenzo Cappelletti. Appendix p 445
- 57 Interview with Sergio Romano. Appendix p 505
- 58 Clyne, M. 'Australia language policies are we going backwards?' *Current Affairs Bulletin* November 1991 p.13
- 59 Interview with Norberto Bobbio Appendix p 413
- 60 Interview with Massimo Spinetti Appendix p 513
- 61 Interview with Sergio Romano Appendix p 500
- 62 Interview with Tullio De Mauro Appendix p 459
- 63 Dea Pellegrini, from *Direzione Scambi Culturali* of MAE, also commented on the lack of systematic initiatives in favour of Italian migrants in relation to language and culture, when illustrating her work and experience in Argentina

64 Interview with Riccardo Campa Appendix p 441

65 Interview with Dea Pellegrini Appendix p 480

PART 2

Italian language and culture diffusion policies in context

Introduction

Does Italy perceive the diffusion of language and culture abroad as component of its foreign policy? The existence of legislation on this issue (Chapter 4), of government bodies, institutions old and new, organisations public and private (Chapter 5), specifically set up for and clearly entrusted with, pursuing the goals identified by the Italian State in this specific domain of international relations proves that the answer must be in the affirmative. A variety of sources, both official documents and references in the literature, also bear witness to an early interest in this area by government authorities.¹ Nowadays the relevance of the cultural dimension as an established and fundamental component² of Italian foreign policy is endorsed by the highest representatives of the government, such as the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In the last two chapters, however, we have seen how official intervention in this domain of foreign policy has tended to depend on the political views of the government in office. Most of the authorities' initiatives have also been determined and shaped by contingent circumstances rather than being integral to a consistent plan of action identified by the State. That is to say, the Italian legislators have proceeded by stepping in as a result of the need to face up to incidental social and political pressure, rather than following a clearly drawn ideological path. For instance, the issue of Italian migrants' language maintenance and educational rights came

to be regulated by Law 153 /1971. As argued in Chapter 4 – after Italy's social unrest, with the working-class struggle intensifying from the 1960s onwards, it became impossible for the government to postpone further the issue of language and culture right for Italians abroad. The waves of emigration, however, had already subsided by that time.

Another meaningful example is the goals set for Italian Institutes of Culture. These organisations were established in 1926, but became responsible for the fulfilment of the cultural needs of Italian communities abroad only from the late 1970s.³

In view of these circumstances, rather than to further pursue the topic separately from its consequences for and tangible results in real situations, I will select a significant example from foreign countries where the spread of Italian language and culture can be investigated and examined *in context*.

By scrutinising how Italian legislation has affected culture and language promotion in selected country, how cultural relations have developed, what consequences there have been for Italian emigrants living there, it should be possible to draw some conclusions about Italy's cultural policies in the last fifty years.

The present investigation will focus on Australia, a new nation, in an old land. The reason for this choice will be explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

Language policy developments in Australia from 1948 to 1998

Large-scale migration since the Second World War markedly transformed the composition of the Australian population, with the result that the increasing presence of immigrants with little or no English language competence became an additional component in the tensions between monolingualism and multilingualism which had existed in this country since the initial stages of white settlement⁴. As a consequence, Australia, notwithstanding its relative youth as a nation has had considerable experience in the field of language policies. Government legislation in this domain is investigated in this chapter over the period 1948-1998. The main focus, however, is on the education system and in particular on the evolving situation of languages in that context. Community participation in language-related issues and government response to it are also examined in historical perspective.

Finally, Australia's current language policies are evaluated for their international significance and we examine the way they have interacted with Italian language policies in that context.

7. 1. Australia and its people

At the time the Commonwealth of Australia was born, in 1901, the Census had given the white population as 3 773 801 with Aborigines excluded from the count. By 1996 Census the Australian population had grown to of 17 892 423⁵. One quarter of these people were first or second generation Australians; thus the present definition of the country as a 'nation of

immigrants' not only is very appropriate but may be seen as a further development of the comment made by Australian historian Manning Clark in the early 1960s:

So far there have been two cultures in Australia - one Aboriginal and the other European⁶.

With this statement appearing in the most comprehensive history of Australia ever written, Manning Clark had subtly acknowledged on the one hand that the presupposition of the continent as *terra nullius* was historical nonsense, and on the other that there were tensions implicit in the ethnolinguistic diversity which had characterised Australian society from the beginning.

While the immigrants' baggage undergoes strict scrutiny before its owners enter the host country, their non-material reserve of cultural experiences, beliefs, mental attitudes and mother-tongues is not subject to control. It is this elusive, indefinable load of resources brought by each individual and group that has contributed, beyond the authorities' powers of intervention, to mould Australian society into its present shape as a multicultural nation, a nation where different cultures and diverse ethnic groups live together in greater harmony than other multicultural societies in the world. This is the result of a long – and still unfinished - journey characterised by contradictions and prolonged debate, but also by gradual progress against prejudice.

The original population of the penal colony founded by the British government was augmented by immigrants of non-British extraction soon after the discovery of gold in the 1850s. The newly arrived settlers included large numbers of Chinese, Germans, New Zealanders, Poles, Italians and Americans. It was the Chinese who aroused initial suspicion, possibly because apart from being different in looks, they appeared to have a certain propensity to put up with higher rates of exploitation than other workers, thus suggesting that

they could be easily used by the employers as cheap labour. With the Chinese Restriction Act of 1854 the phenomenon of White Australia had its first manifestation in Victoria⁷, and soon after it spread to all the other colonies and from then on it continued to affect the life of the country for over a century.

The birth of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 did not alter the situation. In contrast to other Federations, for instance the United States and Canada, Australia's Constitution does not incorporate a Bill of Rights, possibly because of the assumption that Australian society at the time already offered to its citizens sufficient fundamental freedoms and democratic rights. Hence preference was given to the British model 'which relied upon the self-restraint and democratic spirit of its Parliament to safeguard individual freedom'⁸. It is a fact, however, that equality before the law did not extend to all the population, for example to the Chinese minorities already established in Australia or to its indigenous people, whose existence was yet to be acknowledged, as proved by their exclusion from the first Australian census.

Soon after the creation of the Federal Parliament, one of its first actions was to pass the *Immigration Restriction Act*, which allowed immigration to Australia only for those able to take a dictation test of 50 words administered in a European language other than English. As Whitlam remarks the aim of the Federal Parliament was: 'to exclude migrants who were not Europeans.[...]'. He adds : 'Some provisions existed for the temporary entry of non-Europeans, such as visitors, students, merchants and assistants in Asian business'⁹

To our modern eyes this move appears as an act of racial discrimination, however, while it is pointless to apportion blame close to one hundred years later, one cannot help noticing how easily language - any language - can be exploited to perpetrate injustice.

As time went by Britons continued to be financially assisted to come to Australia, and up to the late 1930s this practice was not extended to people of other nationalities. Following World

War II, however, the perception was born that Australia, for strategic and economic reasons, needed to increase the size of its population. In July 1945 the first Australian Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, set out to increase the country's population through an extensive immigration program. Calwell openly favoured emigrants from Britain, but their available number was still insufficient to fulfil Australian demand. Preference was then shifted to Europeans who had been displaced because of the Second World War. A specific scheme aimed at recruiting displaced persons started to operate in 1948, soon followed by a series of assisted-passage agreements signed with various European countries.¹⁰

As a result of this plan, over a period of three years about 170 000 immigrants from different parts of Europe took advantage of the transport arrangements and financial assistance offered by Australian authorities and settled in Australia. Calwell, however, was also a very strong supporter of the White Australia Policy, which was still in place and continued to be implemented until the late 1960s. While its main aim was to curb Asian immigration, its philosophy affected all non-British migrants. In particular it came to provide loose guidelines for measuring their ability to fit the 'Australian way of life'¹¹, a concept used to foster homogeneity among migrants by promoting their assimilation in Australian society. The post-World War II period had brought migrants from all parts of Europe, but there was hardly any consideration of their diverse backgrounds or their personal skills, what appeared then relevant to the Federal Government at the time was their ability and willingness to join the workforce. Responsibilities such as housing, health and education services were left to the States, a financial burden hard to sustain without federal commitment and contribution. Racism and xenophobia were deeply ingrained in the immigration policies of the time, and on both sides of the political spectrum, although there were some dissenting voices within the parliamentary ranks of the Labor Party¹².

It was only as late as 1970 that, at a Citizen Convention, Gough Whitlam attracted public attention to the fact that the benefits of migration were not only enjoyed by the migrants but also by Australia as a nation. Migrants, he argued, could not be expected to continue settling for second rate social welfare and urban services, especially when these increasingly appeared to be of an inferior quality in comparison to those of the very countries migrants were coming from.¹³

The 1971 census data showed a population of 12.8 million, of which 80% were Australian-born¹⁴, 8% British Isles-born and 12% other overseas-born; this last figure was four times higher than the one shown in the 1947 census. It should also be noted that three quarters of this category was born in non-English-speaking countries.

When elected to government in December 1972, the new Prime Minister Gough Whitlam set out to liberalise Australian immigration laws, putting an end to the White Australia policy and laying the foundations for the development of Australia as a multicultural nation. It was in this period that the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, already adopted by the UN General Assembly in March 1966, was finally ratified by Australia, following the passing of the Bill outlawing racial discrimination (31 October 1975)¹⁵. As Whitlam himself stated :

The new Act writes it firmly into the law that Australia is in reality a multicultural nation, in which the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Aboriginal people and of the peoples from all parts of the world can find an honoured place. Programs of community education and development flowing from the Act will ensure this reality is translated into practical measures affecting all areas of our national life.¹⁶

The implications of these events for language issues within the area of social justice will be examined later in this study.

7.2 Issues of culture, identity and language in Australia

Cultural diversity following to the gold rushes of the 1850s gave Australia an early taste of the changing composition of its population: immigrants had come from European countries other than Britain as well as Asia and the Americas, and languages other than English had entered the country with them. In fact, even prior to that period, in non-penal colonies¹⁷: such as Victoria and South Australia 'bi-and multilingual traditions' flourished due to the existence of German-speaking enclaves and presence of intellectuals coming from European countries affected by the 1848 revolutions.

Predictably questions of Australian national identity and character begun to be debated very early in the life of this antepodean British settlement

It is clear that in the nineteenth century the Australian colonies had a political and cultural identity, that, it was thought, could be distinguished from Britain's. For the most part though, this identity was not considered to be peculiar to Australia. It was an identity that Australia gained by virtue of the fact that it was a new society, politically democratic, culturally materialistic. In this, it was not creating anything distinctive, but simply following in the footsteps of the archetypal new society, the United States, footsteps which the older societies were also following in the nineteenth century.¹⁸

Ties with Britain, however, were not only strong but undisputed at the time. As highlighted by Ozolins¹⁹, these ties were further strengthened during World War I, with the consequence that in the early 1900s Australian society appeared more British oriented than at the end of the previous century. This disposition was reflected, as we shall see, in legislation establishing English language as the only compulsory medium of communication in the education systems of the various colonies. By the end of the Second World War and in its aftermath, however,

there was a further rearrangement in the composition of the population brought about by a massive influx of immigrants, a phenomenon that will be examined more closely later in this chapter. The impact of these newcomers is being felt even now in this country, and there is no doubt it has profoundly influenced the ongoing debate about Australian society and its history and about the modern notion of Australian national identity which of course embraces the language issue.

It has been argued that 'a national identity is an invention', and that 'there is no point in asking whether one version of this essential Australia is truer than another because they are all intellectual constructs'²⁰, but the issue remains alive and widely discussed by the general public, while writers, historians, artists and journalists continue in their task to clarify the origins of Australian identity and what is distinctive about this continent. In the middle 1960s, for example, the historian Geoffrey Blainey²¹ identified the element of *distance* as a crucial influence on Australian history, distance not only between Southern and Northern hemispheres, but also among the components of the Australian nation, its States, and between cities and countryside. Later the writer David Malouf in the 1998 ABC Boyer lectures explored another aspect of distance by contemplating the complexities of living in one environment while the antecedents of Australian society's culture derive from another. Malouf in his explanation singled out one specific phenomenon as part of Australian identity; he spoke of *tension*

[...] tension, between environment or place on the one hand, and on the other all the complex associations of an inherited culture... [Australian] uniqueness might lie just here, in the *tension* between environment and culture rather than in what we can salvage by insisting either on the one or the other'²²

Of course in mentioning some of the various sources which contribute to moulding the ideas about Australian identity, groups holding economic power cannot be disregarded: they always

have their own definition of the 'Australian way of life' to justify their claim to be acting in the national interest²³.

If it is true that the very concept of national identity may be regarded as a product of Western European thought, and as such integral to the cultural baggage that Europeans have brought to their new host country, it is also true that even today this topic arouses wide interest not only in but outside Europe, both as a concern of individuals and on the collective level. An explanation might be found in the fact that technological progress, market instability and the loosening up of sexual boundaries help to blur the definitions of professional identity, and globalisation (in addition to dramatic political changes such as the fall of the Berlin Wall) increase the uncertainty in the areas of belonging and boundaries. At the same time national, ethnic and even religious identity have conspicuously resurfaced after the events of 1989, notwithstanding the fact that globalisation tends to wear out those very same values. Is it surprising then that everywhere in the world groups as well as individuals feel compelled to ask themselves who they are, where they belong, what are they there for?

Australia is no exception within this generalised phenomenon of - among other things revisiting its history²⁴ - but has an additional trait: its relative youth as a nation and hence that national identity is still only partially formed²⁵.

In older countries like Italy, for example, the debate about national identity involves the need to atone for the past and its still unresolved contradictions in the attempt to break free from it. For example during the nearly fifty years of the Italian Republic, in the re-examination of the Resistance official hagiography has found its pendant in post-fascist revisionism²⁶, that is to say the Resistance and anti-fascism, rather than representing *the* central reference points for the national identity and consciousness, have become instead the centre of intense debate and unproductive sterile controversy²⁷.

In younger nations such as Australia the study of and reflection on the past is in no way less relevant for an understanding of what the nation is today, but while governments in office try to impose their evaluation of historical events in order to justify their actions, other insuppressible voices in the community keep cautioning against the dangers of any single, unilateral account of past incidents²⁸. However, the wish to define what being Australian means today and people's eagerness to delineate their own identity remain current. Both phenomena could be regarded as part of a natural growing process, not unlike the human experience during adolescence (or, as some would wryly remark throughout their life). It is, after all, an engaging exercise, congenial to a society whose main advantage is, presumably, the curiosity and flexibility of youth. Somehow, the very fact that Australians show such persistent obsession with their own identity is in itself a sign of flexibility, that remarkable capacity to change and adapt, which is particularly significant for surviving in a fast-changing social environment and which demands first of all that we learn to live without security. On the other hand, it is worth noting, the ability to adapt appears to be also among the fundamental characteristics of the local migrant population, as vividly pointed out in one of the most recent works on the history of Australia²⁹.

The way Australians view themselves has of course been constantly changing over time, parallel with social transformations and political influences. There is, however, an underlying inherent characteristic which most Australians identify with, a basic concept of justice which comes to the surface quite spontaneously – and not necessarily as a result of manipulation by politicians - but in times of real challenge. It is the idea of anyone having the right to 'have a fair go' in Australian society. The expression, formulated in a political context has later turned into a myth for Australian culture, a concept to which it is easy to relate to and identify with. Writer Donald Horne argued³⁰ that a fair go for all citizens and that is equality of opportunities

and rights - not strict economic equality – is an essential unifying concept for all Australians. For instance, it has been remarked that the 1967 referendum which ‘was about giving the Aborigines a fair go’, in spite of the original theoretical goodwill, has ³¹ not managed to translate into delivering what it was believed it could. In other words Aboriginal people have been deprived of an entitlement that all Australians feel to qualify for and that is: a fair go.

Another manifestation/display of Australians’ propensity for the ‘fair go’ is that in the aftermath of multicultural politics, there was an inclination to take into account and to provide for the specific needs of the country’s diverse population in the effort to redress past injustices in education – in particular in regard to language rights – to provide equity in social welfare, to offer assistance to community arts.

The 1990s on the other hand witnessed the spread of the painful perception that relations between white and black Australians are in need of formal review³² if egalitarianism, a virtue cherished in Australian society, is to apply to Aboriginal citizens as well³³. French writer Anatole France remarked once that the very statement that one has no prejudice is in itself a great prejudice³⁴: contemporary Australia is starting to question openly the relationship between black and white people represents a step forward and gives reason for hope.

It is also worth noting that along with this process of change and evolving social attitudes the very concept of Australian-ness has begun to appear more autonomous and that is to say more independent from imported foreign models; the phenomenon is apparent in more than one field: cinema, music, literature, the visual arts. And, more importantly, as time goes by Australians not only show not to be afraid of national sentiment, but appear increasingly willing to achieve a truthful understanding of their history. The Tasmanian writer and Oxford scholar Peter Conrad recently returned to Australia, after a long stay abroad. He has pointed

out to the 'decolonialisation' of his country and to Australia being in the process of 'reclaiming its history and implanting a home grown culture'³⁵

Last but not least it must be acknowledged that this still not quite clearly defined but sought after concept of Australian national identity encourages a certain open-mindedness to new ideas and a willingness to experiment which, as i will be shown later, has been particularly valuable in the field of language policy development.

But before focusing on these specific issues, let us briefly consider some preliminary elements in the history of languages in Australia.

7.3 Questions of monolingualism and multilingualism in Australia

Although linguistic diversity characterised Australia even before European settlement, from the late 18th century the advent of white Anglo-Celtic settlers determined both the establishment of English as the dominant language of the newly formed colonies, later to become the Commonwealth of Australia, and the beginning of the suppression of indigenous culture and languages. There was nothing really new in this process, as indicated by Crystal³⁶: British colonisation, exploration and conquest created the conditions for two thirds of the globe to accept English as the language of power and thus the language to learn and use.

By examining the history of language policies in Australia, according to Clyne, it is possible to single out four phases, each characterised by the disposition of the government of the time in regard to multilingualism. During the first 100 years of white settlement, while English was de facto the official language, no specific restrictions (or encouragement) applied to the use of other languages present in the community. During the second period extending to the early 1900s, the tolerance for languages other than English met some limitations: the newly created

primary state- school system offered monolingual education, and the teaching of languages other than English in schools was restricted in terms of hours of instruction. Clyne³⁷ speaks of a 'rejecting' phase from 1914 to 1970, a time when the use of English became (almost) compulsory in a society that was strongly British oriented and the use of other languages was firmly discouraged. Such an attitude to languages on the part of the authorities was indeed consistent with the fact that once the aim of having a predominantly British population proved unattainable, immigration policies were envisaged with the aim of achieving a 'complete social and cultural assimilation, so that immigrants would become indistinguishable from the Anglo-Australian population'³⁸.

The fourth period, still following Clyne's formulation, began in the early 1970s; this stage saw increasing acceptance and even the fostering of languages other than English, by this time considered complementary to it, and even seen as a desirable attribute of Australian identity.

Lo Bianco makes further distinctions in relation to this latter phase³⁹; he points to the different elements underlining political discourse concerning languages other than English in that period, with the focus being firstly on disadvantage, then ethnicity and finally on national self interest. The different government approaches in relation to languages in time will be examined in further detail later in this chapter.

The reality now is that in Australia English maintains its undisputed supremacy. However, 240 languages other than English (LOTE)⁴⁰ were currently spoken at home as 1996 census data showed⁴¹. This figure included 44 indigenous ones. 2 487 167 people or 14, 6 % of the population used a LOTE in the home.

If, as already mentioned, linguistic diversity was a distinct characteristic of Australia even before European settlement because of its multilingual indigenous peoples,⁴² successive

changes in the composition of the total population have subsequently helped to reinforce and increase this original trait. The contemporary novelty, however, lies in the way this phenomenon has been confronted by Australian governments⁴³, in the evolution of social attitudes towards it and in the policies explicitly formulated to deal with it⁴⁴.

In a dantesque *contrappasso* multilingualism seems to have prevailed - at least in everyday life - as a component of Australian national identity. From initial disregard for the ancient languages of the indigenous population and the imposition of monolingualism on the new post-war immigrants, Australia has moved quite a long way: as we shall discuss later in this chapter the multiplicity of ethnic languages present in the country is now officially acknowledged and provided for.

Far from seeing multilingualism as disruptive to national unity, Australia has chosen a policy to make multilingualism a cornerstone for a greater national compatibility⁴⁵

Italian is one of the tesserae in the linguist mosaic of the nation: its place and role will be the focus of the investigation which follows.

7.4 General remarks on the Australian education system(s)

The life of all the colonies that later became the Commonwealth of Australia was troubled from the beginning by argument over education.⁴⁶ By the middle of the 19th century the method which had allowed the various religious denominations to be in charge of educating the young had proved only partially successful and, in addition, it had contributed to aggravating sectarianism. The introduction of a system of state public schools was then considered as a feasible alternative, with the presupposition that only religious opinions and

not religious doctrine would be taught in them; but neither the Anglicans nor the Catholics agreed to the proposal⁴⁷. New South Wales and South Australia, however, reached their own conclusions and became the first colonies to introduce a dual system of education. On the one hand the needs of the denominational sector were assessed by a denominational board which also allocated state funds, on the other a national board was given the responsibility of looking after the state schools. This solution however did not achieve peace among the different religious groups and bitter protests against the principle of teaching religion without doctrine continued. Meanwhile the evolving education system permitted the development of three types of schools: denominational, non-denominational and state. The allocation of funds, however, was and still is a very controversial issue⁴⁸. This structure of the Australian education system, originally modelled on the British one, has remained in place, with some modifications of course, for almost 150 years. It has been seen by some as being characterised by:

[...] early dependence on Churches, decentralisation and a paternalistic two layer provision for the common and their betters...' ⁴⁹

From 1872 to 1880 Education Acts were passed in the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. As a result there was appropriation of primary education (though not always total) by the States and the creation of centralised education departments in each of the States. In fact, as according to the federal system Education is a prerogative of the States and Territories, since the birth of the Commonwealth, education policies have had two reference points, the State and Territory governments and the Commonwealth itself; in other words there exist eight separate and heterogeneous education systems in Australia. In fact the figure would be higher if we were to regard each sector – State, Catholic and Independent - as a system. New initiatives to create common national denominators for the school curricula are a fairly recent an circumscribed phenomenon as we will see later.

While all States and Territories remain jealously in charge of their own education policies, for both the primary and secondary school sectors, it is the Commonwealth which provides the financial means - through tax revenue collection - to implement their programs, that is to say the Federal Government can only regulate by budget. This arrangement by which the States are deprived of economic independence does not however escape criticism. It has been vividly described as an 'in limbo' situation ⁵⁰. Another recurring comment is that the Australian education system '[...] has grown in a piecemeal fashion with each segment planning what is best for it with only minor reference to any other segment of the pattern' ⁵¹.

Certainly this has been the case until the late 1980s. Some significant changes have taken place since 1989 when State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education endorsed 'common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia'. Over the following years, a Curriculum and Standards Framework (CSF) has been developed on the initiative of the Australian Education Council. Statements and profiles in eight key areas of learning for Secondary schools and in the four areas for Primary, have been developed to provide a specific reference point and a national common denominator for all courses offered to students in the subjects. The profiles, as clearly indicated in all relevant documents, are specifically designed to assist in the improvement of teaching and learning and, of course, to provide a 'common means of discussing curriculum provision' ⁵².

This recent initiative has been particularly important in relation to secondary schooling, which, having been originally in the care of non-public institutions, operated according to their principles and quite separately from the influence of government authorities. In the past, when it became necessary to connect primary to secondary level and the latter to the tertiary level, the establishment of examinations provided the bridging device. In fact, the secondary sector being elitist in origin, access to higher education was its ultimate goal. As a result the whole

curriculum was shaped essentially according to examinations set for admission to university, and in time the relationship between the various education sectors appeared mainly characterised by a top-to-bottom approach⁵¹, the rules being created and applied accordingly. In fact the very way language studies were introduced in some secondary school curricula⁵⁴ illustrates this phenomenon. In particular, the case of Italian language in New South Wales offers a significant example of this debatable approach.⁵⁵

Today, it is worth noting, new developments in education policies may be seen as the result of a crisis that hit Australia at the beginning of the 1990s. Malaise and pessimism were recorded⁵⁶ as characterising the attitude of middle class Australians in that period. In particular school curricula were singled out as being in a state of alarming confusion. As the concern about education manifested itself at a time of economic crisis, it stimulated the interest of federal politicians who, along with their state counterparts, became increasingly vocal and active in this field.

The phenomenon, seen as 'a new feature in educational policy'⁵⁷, brought about a trend towards increasing political involvement in matters related to the curriculum particularly in relation to those subjects deemed significant to the economy⁵⁸. As previously noted, the interventions came from above, but this time from the political sphere: government, both Commonwealth and state. Language policies, as we will see later, did not escape the pressures of political manipulation.

7.5 Languages within the Australian education system in historical perspective (1950s-1970s)

Historical and linguistic evidence shows, as highlighted previously, that in origin Australia was multilingual. As for the education system, the lack of homogeneity characteristic of the Australian context finds a further example in the field of language teaching. It appears that around 1880, modern languages 'crept' into New South Wales school curricula 'almost unnoticed'⁵⁹. They were represented essentially by French and German added, according to British practice, to the traditional study of Latin.

Apart from the schools in five rural German settlements in New South Wales, there is little indication of bilingual education in that colony'⁶⁰.

In Victoria and South Australia on the other hand, language teaching appears to have been valued, as the presence of numerous bilingual schools at the turn of the century illustrates; thus ethnic minorities in these two states were able to better maintain bilingualism in their communities. Education Acts in all States, however, intervened to establish monolingual teaching as the rule for all public schools. From the 19th century the status of languages other than English presented regional variations, with Queensland showing less interest and maintenance of LOTES⁶¹, Western Australia and Tasmania appearing initially less inclined to foster multilingualism and New South Wales being slower in developing language policies especially in comparison with Victoria and South Australia. These last two states were from the beginning fairly advanced in their response to the language needs of the population⁶².and have continued to show considerable leadership in their language education policies. Of course there have been further developments over time in most of the other states as we shall

see later, but the above precedents are a valuable benchmark for a better understanding of the present situation of languages in each Australian state.

From the beginning of the 20th century, despite the increasing presence of non-English speaking people in the country, the various education systems appeared to take it for granted that children would fit in, regardless of their mother tongue.

In the period spanning from 1945 to the early 1970s immigrants were immersed in Australian society in line with the belief that any special provision for them was likely to hinder their osmosis/absorption/ into the new environment. We have seen that this period was described as a phase of rejection of foreign languages, in terms of language policies. It was a time when English was the only medium allowed, in communication, education and even in the press, to the point that information leaflets for newcomers were written in English, regardless of the fact that their readers were unable to understand that language.⁶³ Assimilation was the rule for immigrants and :

One of the most conspicuous indices of [this] assimilation was language⁶⁴

Lo Bianco classifies the years up to 1969 as a period of total inertia on the part of the government, thus of non intervention either in relation to language maintenance or to second language acquisition for non-English speaking children ⁶⁵.

Totaro, using New South Wales as a case study, refers to that period as 'prehistory' of community languages considering in particular the evanescence of the Italian language presence in the Australian education system.⁶⁶

Di Biase et alii.⁶⁷ emphasising the lack of attention authorities showed in regard to LOTEs (including Italian), uses the term 'assimilation' in line with Clyne. Eltis, by stating that in those

years languages other than English were regarded as 'a problem' also highlights the dismissive attitude of education authorities towards migrant communities and their idioms⁶⁸.

Because of mass migration the years following the Second World War were a time of considerable change in Australian society. The official policy on immigrants, however, in the education system as in other areas remained firmly based on assimilation. While ex-servicemen were given a lot of attention and encouraged to complete (or undertake) university education, the need for reforms was also evident as the number of students at primary and secondary levels grew steadily from the 1950s in all parts of the Commonwealth. In a paper tabled in Parliament in November 1962, Prime Minister Robert Menzies acknowledged a 65% increase in school enrolments. However, he also insisted that the responsibility for that sector rested with the States rather than the Commonwealth, which is of course technically right on the basis of the Constitution.

Meanwhile on the other side of the political spectrum, but nine years earlier, Gough Whitlam in his first speech on education in the House of Representatives in October 1953 had already initiated his long quest to achieve equality of education at all levels. In his words:

Everybody in Australia is entitled[...] to the same educational facilities whether it be in respect of education at the kindergarten or tertiary stage or the post-graduate stage⁶⁹.

Almost twenty years went by before improvements in education by his government, in power between 1972 and 1975, succeeded in raising the community's expectations about equal opportunities in education and fairer treatment of immigrants, including their language maintenance rights.

In fact, up to the early 1970s, regardless of the changing composition of the population' state schools had persisted in offering mainly French and to a lesser extent German in their

curricula, while Latin remained the choice for few gifted enthusiasts. In Victoria, for example all students at the so called central schools took French or Latin. These two languages were also predominantly taught in most Catholic schools. Clyne stresses that:

If 'migrant languages' were taught or examined they were offered largely in schools where the appropriate group was not represented⁷⁰.

It is also worth mentioning the example of Italian, a 'migrant language'. In New South Wales, in the period between 1936 and 1956, this language was examined at junior and senior high school level, but was not even listed among the subjects available for study in the curricula of public schools⁷¹, that is to say that there were no public schools teaching it. Only a few Catholic schools attempted to offer it to their pupils, although the only evidence available in regard to this is anecdotal.

As for the tertiary sector, not surprisingly:

[...] at the end of the War, the only modern languages taught widely at universities were French and German; there was also Russian in Queensland and then Melbourne, Dutch in several universities, Italian at Sydney, and the very beginning of teaching Asian languages at the University College in Canberra'⁷².

Opinions on the impact of the Whitlam period of Labor government, opinions on its impact on Australian society are divided; no one would deny, however, that many of the reforms that provoked controversy in those three years have since become accepted on both sides of politics. The removal of race as a criterion for immigration, laws granting land rights to Aborigines in the Northern Territory, and the very concept of multiculturalism with all its implications are the most obvious examples of the lasting changes to which a large majority of the Australian people have progressively adapted.

Multiculturalism and social justice, it must be noted, implied taking into account issues of language and language rights for a sizeable part of the population for which English was not the first language. The needs of these people had to be ascertained and satisfied in several areas, not only in regard to education as will be shown in the examination that follows.

7. 6 Languages other than English in the rise of multiculturalism

Was it the recognition of Australia's cultural diversity on the part of the authorities that automatically encouraged migrant communities to become more vocal in their demands, or viceversa? So far it has not been unequivocally established whether the push to obtain action by the government in response to their specific needs has always been genuinely initiated by the migrants themselves or whether it was orchestrated by the governments in power in order to ensure the political support of the ethnic minorities. A possible interpretation of the overall phenomenon is that a clear cut answer is unlikely and that in this as in other social occurrences a large number of factors interact and intertwine to the point where they become inextricable. According to a Federal Government document looking at the problems related to migration :

It is established beyond doubt that the single greatest barrier to successful settlement in Australia is the lack of English,⁷³

Language issues are of course overwhelmingly important for migrants at all stages, while on the one hand the first impact when arriving in a new country is of communication difficulties created by language barriers, on the other hand the desire to maintain the home-country idiom is tied to the preservation of individual identity⁷⁴. Migrant activism in regard to language issues has thus continued to spread since the government policy on immigration changed in the early 1970s. Ethnic Communities Councils (ECC) were established in Melbourne and

Sydney in 1974-75 and the first Migrant Workers Conference was held in Melbourne in October 1973⁷⁵.

The topics discussed on that occasion included not only questions of wages and conditions in the work-place, but also issues such as language maintenance for migrant communities and, at the same time, better provisions for the learning of English. The two latter questions were argued for as complementary to each other rather than in opposition; in fact they were considered part of a wider discourse involving recognition for the various cultures present in Australia.. A further conference was convened in 1974, with the aim of summarising, clarifying and putting forward precise recommendations on the cultural and linguistic rights of migrants and their descendants. For example the lack of opportunities to study migrant languages in the schools was singled out as a specific disadvantage for migrant children; the extensive use of migrants' own languages was recommended for the work place; the recognition of overseas qualifications for teachers of migrant background was strongly suggested⁷⁶.As a result of the 1974 conference, a number of people particularly concerned with following up education matters in association with some other interested groups⁷⁷ formed the Migrant Education Action Committee (MEA), which continued its political work in regard to languages and received sustained support from Italians. Six hundred people from all the Australian states attended the Migrant Education Action Conference where, consistently with its policies, four community languages in addition to English were officially used during its sessions. The efforts to reconcile the education system with the language rights of the ethnic minorities were thus continuing to mobilise language professionals and activists from all the various language groups. After the conference MEA continued to be active in promoting the cause of migrant languages in Australian society, and in influencing the various policies in multicultural education through sustained initiatives.⁷⁸

It is a fact that inadequate provision of education for migrants was also central also to Labor immigration policies during the Whitlam period. After a record win in the elections for the Federal seat of Riverina (NSW) in 1969, Al Grassby had become Minister for Immigration in 1972. He was soon widely respected for his achievements in that portfolio by both sides of the Parliament, and evoked 'the emotion and adulation' of all migrants in Australia. In August 1973 the Grassby had introduced the Immigration (Education) Act which provided supplementary classroom accommodation for schools with education programs for migrant children. At the same time migrant education centres were established in all state capitals. Throughout the mid-1970s the actual concept of 'migrant education' began to evolve, becoming broader and more specific⁷⁹, in the sense that its components - community language maintenance, bilingual education, multicultural education as well as the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) were clearly identified. Meanwhile in many States *ad hoc* education initiatives witnessed the will of institutions to respond to the particular needs of the migrant population.

Developments in all States in the 1970s followed a similar pattern, with conferences on bilingual education, official research projects, the establishment of advisory and curriculum committees and some experimentation with language programs⁸⁰.

South Australia initiated some multilingual programs enhancing the value for young people of retaining their ethnic identity without neglecting the need to become integrated into Australian life. In Victoria the issue of training teachers for bilingual education programs was also seriously approached and debated. In New South Wales the Ethnic Affairs Commission Report *Participation* stated in early 1978:

In a multicultural society every child should be given the opportunity to gain an awareness of the culturally plural nature of that society. Further, every child

should have the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to interact successfully within society. Community language programs should therefore, not only be available for ethnic minorities, but should be an option for every child, regardless of ethnic background, to develop communication skills in a language of the society. Such programs, which encourage appreciation of each other's language and culture, have the added advantage of creating an improved climate of toleration and understanding.⁸¹

These ideas and recommendations were somehow progressive at the time, especially if one takes into account the fact that in New South Wales no primary schools taught languages until the mid-1970s, in addition, the recommendations put forward appeared in a document approved by the State Parliament, thus officially signalling the willingness of authorities to promote the desired changes. Similar concepts had also been formulated in other reports commissioned by the Federal Government, for instance the one prepared by the Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in Schools (CTMLS) which assessed resources and needs in that sector and, most importantly based its recommendations on data collected in its investigation. The Committee suggested that intercultural and language studies were advisable for *all* children as a means of better understanding Australian society and its evolution. In fact the value of cultural studies was stressed also in relation to secondary schooling, with the aim of enhancing sensitivity to and understanding of people from different backgrounds.

Bilingual education was also argued for especially in relation to children of non-English speaking background reaching school age; 15% of primary school children was in this category, according to the findings of CTMLS, but only 1.4% studied their first language at school. The status of language learning at secondary level was also assessed by the same Committee, and its findings highlighted broad constraints and considerable limitations in this field. For instance, French was taught in most schools regardless of the students' home

language, while few migrant languages were present in the secondary curriculum; among these Italian fared better than others with 12% of secondary schools teaching it.

While the CTMLS was established by the Labor Government (November 1974), its report was released after the return to power of the Liberals and due to a series of circumstances⁸², received hardly any attention at the time. The lamented inaction of the Fraser Government on the recommendations of CTMLS caused widespread protest. MEA for example voiced its concern and criticism in a public conference, in Melbourne⁸³. Finally the protest reached Federal Parliament where Whitlam, by then Leader of the Opposition, strongly condemned the Federal Government's lack of response to the state of migrant languages in the school system⁸⁴.

Ideologies can undergo modifications and evolution too, as noted by Djité⁸⁵: while in the early 1970s the premise of the fight had been equal educational opportunity for children of non-English speaking background. However, during this first phase migrant communities succeeded in participating in the decision making process on language issues: a coalition of interests formed using a particular emphasis perhaps for political expediency. In the mid-1970s, after the return to power of a Liberal Government the 'equality' argument was replaced by the concept of social harmony and enrichment to be derived from the ethnic diversity in Australian society; in a way it was the issue of 'needs' vs numbers⁸⁶.

The fact is that with a subtle modification in approach, reforms initiated by the Whitlam Government in the area of immigration, remained relevant when the Liberal coalition came to power, partly due to the persistent involvement and initiatives of the various migrant groups and organisations already existing and active at this stage.

In particular, language education policy issues became part of the field of inquiry delegated to the Galbally Committee by the Fraser Liberal Government in August 1977. Its report⁸⁷, published a year later, successfully argued the necessity for the federal Government to respond to the needs arising from the presence of large numbers of immigrants in Australia and pointed out the dangers of forced assimilation. The Galbally Report embraced a wide range of issues concerning the social welfare of migrants in all relevant fields: health, information and counselling for new arrivals, communication (telephone interpreter services), legal aid, industrial relations, multicultural education, the ethnic media. It offered specific recommendations, including the suggestion that there was a need to consult with the existing ethnic organisations when policies were prepared. The Report asked for ad hoc funding⁸⁸. The document obtained not only the approval of the Government *and* the Opposition but wholehearted support from the various ethnic communities because of its far-reaching enlightened conclusions.

The consistent degree of consensus with which the Galbally report was received may appear extraordinary, however, it is less surprising if we take into account two factors. Firstly, when the Minister for Immigration Grassby, about five years earlier had tackled the problems of migrants in Australia, the ideologies inspiring his actions were not very different from those embraced by the Galbally document, but Australia was barely starting to acquire the perception of its own demographic composition and had just left behind the White Australia Policy. Grassby promoted ideas that were still too new and far-reaching for the majority of the population.

In those five years the very fabric of Australian society had undergone a process of change; the concept of multiculturalism had become more acceptable and meaningful, kept alive by the initiatives and involvement of many committed people who believed in and worked towards

its ideals, and this situation could not be ignored by any side of the political spectrum. That is to say a considerable proportion of the policies originated with the Whitlam Government power were far less controversial by the time the next government came to power, hence more acceptable to the wider public and strongly supported by one section of the population: the migrants, who had by then acquired a political voice.

Indeed official attitudes of acceptance and interest in regard to the languages and cultures of immigrants have continued to evolve, gradually acquiring a more secure hold and surviving successive changes in government. This is not to say multiculturalism has been without controversy⁸⁹, but rather a recognition that efforts towards policies consistent with its approach have been gradually understood and adopted by most Australians, especially by the younger generations.⁹⁰

Before proceeding to further examination of languages-in-education policies, some other language issues have to be identified and discussed in this context because of their relevance for and impact on the various ethnic groups present in Australia.

7. 6. 1 Services in LOTEs : radio and television

In Australia, broadcasting in foreign languages originated before the Second World War, on commercial stations, where time on air was bought by interested individuals who would use bilingual advertising to finance their programs. For instance in the late 1930s Sydney radio station 2SM had a 15 minute program in Italian which continued for almost three years⁹¹. The war put a stop to broadcasting in 'foreign' languages, which was resumed around the 1950s. Although broadcasting in Italian began again in that period, it was restricted both in terms of air-time and language use according to the ruling of the Broadcasting and Television Act.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, during the most intense period of immigration to Australia, severe restrictions applied to the use of foreign languages in keeping with policies aiming at the assimilation of the newcomers. In fact any special provisions for migrants were seen as an impediment to their immersion in the host society. Now language being one of the first markers of an individual's diversity, no special provisions were in place for non-English speakers. Thus also radio broadcasting could not include in the total of weekly transmission time more than 2.5% of material in a language other than English, and in addition translations had to be provided. For instance, broadcasting in Italian which had begun again in the 1950s, was restricted both in terms of air-time and language use according to the ruling of the Broadcasting and Television Act. Stations 2CH and 3XY in Melbourne, however, received 'dispensations'.

The situation described remained unchanged for almost thirty years. As Clyne has acutely noted, not only were non-English speakers deprived of access to radio information, but monolingual broadcasting also fostered the belief among the second generation that the home languages were inferior to English.⁹²

My Government's efforts to reform broadcasting and the other media in Australia met with predictable resistance, but our record of achievement was substantial [...]⁹³

Whitlam's words appearing in a retrospective evaluation of his years as Prime Minister reflect quite objectively the process of change which took place from 1972 and which, most importantly, continued regardless of the change of the government in power.

In February 1974 the Minister for Immigration Al Grassby set up a broadcasting sub-committee of the Migrant Task Force of New South Wales, with the aim of reporting to the

Commonwealth on the merit of introducing broadcasting in foreign languages in Australia and suggesting guidelines for doing it.

The first licences were granted to Stations 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne. 2EA started broadcasting on 9 June 1975 in seven languages, and 3EA on the 23rd of the same month with programs in eight languages. The initial licences were issued for a period of twelve weeks and financed with a grant administered by the Attorney General's Department; they were later extended to March 1976. In September 1975, however, the Government had been urged service by its own National Ethnic Radio Experiment Committee, established earlier in the year, to permanently establish the ethnic broadcasting service. After the return to power of the Liberal National Coalition Party in December 1975, the Commonwealth Government continued supporting ethnic radio but initiated an investigation into its structure and funding.

The prevailing opinion was that ethnic radio should be funded by the government and a statutory body established to manage it. Ethnic community leaders opposed commercial funding, they saw it as a potential means of discrimination against economically disadvantaged groups. There was a first attempt by the Federal Government to have the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) take charge of ethnic radio by October 1976⁹⁴, but the decision was deferred because the ABC postponed its decision. Two months later the ABC accepted on condition that appropriate funds would be allocated by the Commonwealth to run the Ethnic Radio Stations 2EA and 3EA. In the following March it was announced by the Government that the ABC would be in charge of ethnic radio from the following July. This move was interpreted by a large majority of people as a rejection by the Government of the responsibility for ethnic radio. Finally on 1 July 1977 the Federal Government decided to establish a Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) to run ethnic radio⁹⁵. The disappearance of the word 'ethnic' for

the title highlights the fact that other broadcasting services could be offered if necessary, including programs for Aboriginal communities. By 1978, as remarked by Ozolins:

[...] broadcasting maintained its place as one of the most volatile of all policy areas, but increasingly it was not the issue of *languages* that dominated the debate: that LOTEs could and should be broadcast became very generally accepted and non controversial⁹⁶

The crucial need of non-English speakers to have access to information was thus satisfied in line with the principles of a democratic society. But three more functions of migrant languages broadcasting are worth mentioning if we focus on language access per se. The first, as indicated earlier, is the psychological value for Australian-born children of non-English-speaking background in hearing their home languages used on the radio as an official means of communication. The second is that the older generations (who are generally less or not at all fluent in English) may feel less lonely and estranged⁹⁷ if they tune into radio programs that they can understand. The third is that access to radio broadcasts is very valuable in teaching languages: it offers a wide range of applications for class use and an authentic connection with the culture of the various countries. As for the issue of television for the migrant communities the topic was first debated only in the late 1970s, in other words almost twenty years after television was introduced in Australia. During the election campaign in 1977, the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, announced that an ethnic television station would be created, a statement later confirmed by the Minister for Post and Telecommunications. However, three years went by before the promise was fulfilled.

During this period intense debate invested not only the role that SBS would play in the establishment of an ethnic public television service, but a whole range of politically connected issues⁹⁸. The most controversial was of course funding; but the suggestion of financing the service through commercial sponsorship was swiftly defeated in the Senate. In October 1980

SBS launched the new 'multicultural' television service. The change from ethnic to multicultural was not just a question of semantics, it reflected the Fraser Government's preferred interpretation of multiculturalism.

While the Whitlam Government had been concerned with abolishing discrimination in immigration policies and improving the education and welfare systems so they could respond to the needs of the Australian multi-ethnic society, the Fraser Government accepted the principle of multiculturalism but modified it to 'fit its neo-liberal agenda'.

Multiculturalism was now said to mean that Australian institutions should adapt to the diverse composition of the population, while ethnic groups should be allowed to retain their languages, traditions and cultural identity as long as they were loyal to the overarching values of Australian society. Until mainstream services could be made culturally appropriate for diverse ethnic groups, social services were to be provided through ethnic community organisations supported by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA) (Galbally 1978). Other institutions and services included the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, the Multicultural Education Program, the Adult Migrant Education Service and the Special Broadcasting and Television Service (SBS)⁹⁹

But what did 'multicultural' rather than 'ethnic' imply in relation to the Special Broadcasting Service?

Looking at the later developments in this area, television programs have come to reflect the principle that this service is not specifically tied to the use of community languages, in fact an increasing proportion of broadcasting is in English. It has been argued that the concept of multiculturalism has changed; it has become non-language specific in the process of being integrated into 'the mainstream'. That is to say that the interests of migrant communities are less dominant in the face of the cultural pluralist vision of multiculturalism.

The Special Broadcasting Service by now reaches most of the nation (although a special antenna is required to tune into its band). More than thirty languages are used in its programs subtitled in English, thus attracting an audience not necessarily familiar with the languages in use but interested in their multicultural content and the quality of the material presented.

The 1997-appointed managing director of SBS, Nigel Milan, summarised his view of the institution he had become responsible for thus:

I made an effort. I got around and tried to be accessible to different communities. That's important because the genesis of SBS came from a couple of ethnic radio stations and the communities which built on that are still our core stakeholders. They deserve courtesy and respect. The public criticism of SBS is minimal, compared to acclaim. [...] There may be infighting between the ethnic communities, as in mainstream politics. But everyone wants SBS to succeed¹⁰⁰.

SBS TV's weekly following is small compared with commercial broadcasters 'The average number of weekly viewers sat at 6.2 million on September 4 [1999] compared with just 4.85 million as measured at the end of 1996'¹⁰¹

As for the viewers for whom the service was originally planned, the migrants, there is hardly a need to stress the impact of television as a medium continues to have. While the older members of the various communities are relieved to hear their first languages which enhances for them the immediate appeal of information, the incentive to watch TV programs is also very high for the younger generations as this medium is an integral part of their everyday life. Tuning into a radio broadcasting on the other hand requires a better level of language competence in the absence of the visual component to support and assist comprehension. The linguistic benefit for the adults non-English speakers is exposure to the modern up-to-date language as spoken in the countries of origin and in great variety of domains. With younger people the appeal of the programs' content – sport, pop music, films - is a more powerful

incentive than any other for them to remain in touch with their families languages and cultures.

In addition TV broadcasting is also a great opportunity/bonus for those who learn those LOTEs to practice them in a non-contrived stimulating context

As many language teachers often acknowledge, the study of languages in Australia has contributed to create opportunities for achieving better results in the development of the four language skills necessary to achieve language competence since the introductions of SBS.

Most importantly, there is also widespread consensus that the popularity of SBS has contributed to the 'sharing' of cultures in Australia. The network, as its current director has observed is by now 'cemented in the national psyche'.

7. 6. 2 Print media in LOTEs

The presence of foreign language press in Australia dates back to the 19th century, with the first German newspaper published in Adelaide in 1848¹⁰² and the first Italian-language paper printed in Sydney in 1885¹⁰³. From the outbreak of World War I, the interest of the authorities in controlling the local foreign press became apparent and specific regulations were approved to this end. In addition to complying with specific restrictions (for example, nothing conflicting with the government's policy of assimilation could be published), a quarter of the newspaper had to be in English and before distribution a copy of each publication had to be sent to the Department of Immigration and to security agencies.¹⁰⁴ These rules remained in force until the 1950s; it is interesting to note that during the fascist era in Italy the press came under comparable restrictions¹⁰⁵ to those applied in democratic Australia in the same period.

After the end of the Second World War only a small number of ethnic newspapers still survived, but the post-war immigration program had brought more immigrants to Australia than never before. The newcomers' language rights, in a period when the maintenance of home-country languages was considered detrimental to assimilation, were conspicuously neglected. Thus for government officials the desirability of a foreign language press was linked to only one predominant function: helping newcomers to better understand their host country. Gilson and Zubrzycki report the findings of a government committee¹⁰⁶ established in 1958 with the purpose of evaluating whether foreign language newspapers were effective in this role and its conclusion was positive.

At that stage the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council had already recommended to the government the deregulation of the sector. This advice was accepted, and it was implemented in two stages: in 1954 the rule that a quarter of the material in the foreign newspapers had to be written in English was repealed, and in 1956 the licencing requirement was removed.

Leaving aside the highly political concerns troubling the post-World War II governments in power, concerns mainly inspired by their immigration policies, the ethnic press has survived many difficulties in that period and acquired new momentum later in more favourable social circumstances. It has in any case continued to perform its essential functions: informing readers about homeland and international events, presenting local news with an emphasis on issues particularly relevant for the communities concerned and at times reprinting articles from overseas sources.

There is no doubt that the ethnic press – contrary to the initial wish of the Australian authorities - is not a-political¹⁰⁷. Nor is the English language press, and in a democratic society

such as contemporary Australia, freedom of expression - within the limits established by the laws - is at last enjoyed by all, irrespective of the language used.

There is of course a large variety of ethnic newspapers, each characterised by attributes which tend to reflect the requirements and tastes of the various communities. If a common denominator exists among this wide range of publications addressed to the many ethnic groups present in Australia, it is cultural and linguistic maintenance, a function generally fostered and cherished also by most governments in the homelands. However, it is not uncommon even within the interested communities to hear critical comments regarding the selection of news items or the quality of writing in the ethnic press, notwithstanding, as remarked by Clyne¹⁰⁸, some newspaper editors feel very much the guardians of language standards and tend to enforce them within their editorial offices.

Since the mid-1990s several of these newspapers have tended to include items in English, especially when a section of the paper is addressed to the younger members of the various ethnic groups. In order to encourage this category of reader, articles have to be written in the language they are more familiar with - English. This phenomenon may appear ironical considering that the main reason behind the existence of the ethnic press was the necessity to offer information to non-English speakers, however as time goes by the new needs of the upcoming generations must be taken into account if the bond with the culture of origin is to be kept alive also beyond language competence.

There are more than 100 ethnic newspapers in Australia¹⁰⁹, but this figure is susceptible to unpredictable variations: often papers may scale or even cease publication depending on the situation and settlement conditions of the community in question.

7. 6. 3 Additional services in languages other than English (LOTEs)

Reading helps to reinforce the community language in the first generation, especially in domains in which it is not employed in Australia. It promotes revitalization of a language which has fallen in disuse. [...] Through reading, members of the second generation are exposed to structures and functions and a register that are not usually encountered in the social domain. It enables them to develop their community language to express those matters that interest them[...]¹¹⁰

The value of reading is forcefully highlighted here in relation to community languages. Over time collections of books in LOTEs have been a valuable resource within Australian public libraries, which have tried to increase their size and scope in order to meet the needs of a multilingual population.

Not all languages offer the same resources in terms of books available. There is a relationship between the degree of settlement of each community and books in its specific language kept in the local libraries. Some groups appear better serviced than others. Variations can also be observed in LOTE library resources according to different geographical areas: such differences do not depend necessarily on the size of the ethnic groups, but on other factors such as degree of literacy of it, migration vintage, homogeneity etc. For instance the number of Spanish books in New South Wales public libraries is higher than the number of Greek books, notwithstanding there are more residents from Greece than from Latin America (from which most Spanish speakers in that State come from ¹¹¹). A similar phenomenon can be observed in university libraries, where the number of books in languages taught over longer periods surpasses by far that of languages more recently introduced into the curriculum¹¹².

The establishment in Australia of organisations aiming to promote the cultures of various foreign countries has also increased the range and number of books available in the respective

languages. The Italian Institutes of Culture in Melbourne and Sydney, for example, are endowed with libraries regularly enriched by books donated by the Italian Government. This provision applies also to locally based educational and/or welfare institutions such as CoAsIt, where libraries now offer a wide range of texts specifically aimed at the teaching and learning of Italian.

Australian cities now have numerous bookshops which stock books in LOTEs as well as newspapers, magazines and journals.

From the late 1990s access to the Internet over a cup of coffee has been on the offer in many café in the capital cities, thus allowing anyone interested not only to read newspapers published abroad on the screen, but because of the Australian time zone also to access information printed in Italy on the same day and only 8 to 9 hours later.

7. 6. 4 Interpreting and translating services

While in other continents, such as Europe for instance, inter-national contacts implied the need to use a variety of languages, for the initial period of its history Australia had no immediate necessity to communicate with non-English speaking peoples. As for language studies in the education system their introduction occurred at random, with conspicuous differences between the former Australian colonies which would later become the Commonwealth of Australia and hence with a variety of developments in each of the States that constitute it. As we have seen historical international events later influenced Australian governments' attitudes towards the use and study of languages. Over a century these demonstrated an obstinate emphasis on English-language speaking considered a major component of national identity and later a measure of the new settlers' loyalty to and integration in Australian society.

With the post-Second World War arrival of large numbers of non-English speaking migrants, the need to establish communication with this section of the population became evident and pressing. As is often the case in the area of social welfare a critical situation has to occur before remedial action is taken.

The need for interpreters, born out of emergency situations, remained without appropriate answers until the late 1960s: limited services had been available mainly from private organisations or through the initiative of individuals motivated by the needs of their communities or who spontaneously offered to help when the occasion demanded it. This also explains why many people with some bilingual skills became involved in translating and interpreting without formal qualifications. As pointed out by Ozolins¹¹³, this improvised form of interpreting constituted a device to improve the status of the people involved in the workplace, and represented on the other hand a cheap way out for the authorities who had no particular provisions in place for monitoring these activities.

In the 1950s the Good Neighbour Council, established by the Department of Immigration, used to provide interpreters for hospitals or in emergency situations.

Interpreters most of the time [were] not qualified, they were often partially bilingual people who learned the techniques of interpreting in the work place.[..]There was of course no control on the quality of the service¹¹⁴

The first serious inquiry into the area of interpreting services was conducted on behalf of a welfare organisation, the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) and resulted in a comprehensive report published in 1974¹¹⁵. One year earlier however the Whitlam Government, which was openly committed to the assistance of migrants initiated on the decision of the then Minister for Immigration Al Grassby, a survey of the needs for interpreter services within government departments. As a result the first Emergency Telephone

Interpreting Service was established and started operating in 1973, initially in Melbourne and Sydney and later in other cities and areas. The need for interpreter services in hospitals and courts was also detected and later addressed with the allocation of specific grants. In 1991 the above service changed its name to Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS); it operates on a national level, over 24 hours, and offers a wide range of language services in addition to free of charge telephone interpreting for migrants. This service is recognised worldwide as unique to Australia.

Meanwhile a Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ), established to inquire about the issue of overseas training and qualifications accepted a report by its working party on interpreting which recommended, among other things, a national categorisation of five levels of competence for interpreters and translators; it also suggested that appropriate courses be offered in educational institutions¹¹⁶ and suitable ways of accreditation established¹¹⁷.

In 1977 the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) was initially created by the Commonwealth Government as a statutory authority primary responsible to the Ministry of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. Since 1 July 1983 it has become an independent body jointly funded by the Commonwealth, the States and the Territories. Its aims, updated in the mid-1990, can be now summarised as follows:

- 1 to establish professional standards for interpreters and translators;
- 2 to develop the means by which interpreters and translators can be accredited at various levels;
- 3 to develop and implement a national system of registration and licensing¹¹⁸ ..

During the first year of its existence NAATI established the five levels of accreditation regarded as appropriate for the Australian context. It decided to adopt a single system designed to meet the special conditions prevailing in Australia, while also establishing standards that would be internationally acceptable¹¹⁹.

The release of the Galbally Report, where the inadequacy of interpreting services especially in the legal and medical areas was clearly highlighted, resulted in further funding for and subsequent expansion of the newly formed NAATI. Ethnic Affairs Commissions in various states became involved in supporting and actively pursuing improvements in the field of interpreting and translating. For instance in New South Wales the Ethnic Affairs Commission Report of June 1978 put forward precise recommendations to that State's Government aiming at the establishment and/or improvement of language services within government departments. Its suggestions were later implemented with consequent improvements in that area. Hence in the period approaching the 1980s there was considerable consolidation and expansion in this specific domain of language services.

NAATI, however, faced a wide range of problems in its task of 'professionalising' the interpreting and translating in Australia. Some difficulties, for instance, arose in relation to the need to be accepted as the main authority in the field by the large number of practitioners who, having worked over a long time without any type of formal control, were annoyed at what they saw as an interference by the newly created institution. A compromise was reached by granting recognition at Level 2 (the sub-professional level)to already established interpreters. Other problems derived from the lack of practitioners in certain languages, in particular those pertaining to communities recently arrived in Australia, and to the lack of a career structure for interpreters. The shortage of training facilities and appropriate courses for individuals aiming

at the higher levels of accreditation has also been identified as a problem still in need of adequate solutions.

As discussed earlier, NAATI was born primarily to address the needs of non-English speaking settlers, and has evolved in time essentially with the objective to meet the community oriented conditions prevailing in Australia. As a result training courses for translators and interpreters cannot be shaped on the basis of those offered in Europe where the prevailing needs relate to international conferences and commerce-linked situations. Teachers in the field of interpreting and translating in Australia must consequently rely purely on their own resources for their class materials and in a context still lacking sufficient research.

Since its foundation, however, NAATI has managed to establish a national system of accreditation for interpreter and translators in Australia; it has created and conducted examinations for accreditation in these two areas of language specialisation (at present NAATI is in the process of reviewing its test formats, and has established a working party to this aim); it has established guidelines for and evaluated courses to prepare professional interpreters and translators; it has fostered the establishment of a national professional association ((however this appears to be still a contentious issue).

In conclusion the assertion¹²⁰ that Australia may be regarded as an impressive example for its community oriented interpreting and translating services overall seems warranted, notwithstanding numerous obstacles confronted by NAATI during the years of its consolidation and the current need to update its accreditation system in the light of the changes in immigration policies and the later developments in multicultural policies.

On the other hand some professional interpreters and translators forcefully argue that their profession has been severely held back by the low level funding provided by Commonwealth and State Governments both initially and subsequently. These people point to a spread view

among their colleagues that languages continue to be a low government priority, and that restricted funding has meant inter alia that people of fairly low calibre are running NAATI and not addressing several important key areas in the original charter¹²¹.

This critical view is not inconsistent with Ozolins's opinion who has suggested that issues remain problematic in regard to the still low professional status of practitioners, and recurring funding threats¹²². He also argues that further and better utilisation of interpreting and translating services is a possibility, providing Australians themselves come to realise the full potential of this resource in the field of business.

7.7 Moving towards a national language policy (1980s)

As illustrated earlier in this chapter, the late 1970s are of particular interest for the question of multicultural education in Australia including the specific area of migrant languages. In this country's rapidly changing society, issues such as the language maintenance rights of ethnic minorities and, at the same time, the need for better provision for the learning of English were both fought for, while the principle of recognition of the various cultures present in Australia was acquiring increasing relevance. All of these issues, it must be noted, happened to intersect with the crisis in language studies in schools. A series of national surveys¹²³ on the teaching of languages at the three levels of the education system became intertwined with other studies on migrant-related questions, especially language maintenance rights. The declining participation in language studies at secondary level had resulted from a report published in 1977¹²⁴. Following the postwar reforms¹²⁵ languages in fact had become elective subjects in the school curricula and, between the late 1950s and early 1960s, they had also been abandoned as a university entrance prerequisite (except for the University of Melbourne¹²⁶).

The above decision appeared consistent with Great Britain's approach where the Standing Conference on University Entrance had decided in late 1965 that only English was to be compulsory¹³¹. A report¹²⁷ commissioned by the Federal Government showed the percentage of language students in matriculation exams at the end of 1975 had dropped from 35.8% to 14.7% of the whole candidature nationwide; examinees in French, the most widely taught foreign language, had contracted from 27.3% in 1967 to 8.7% in 1975.

Facts and figures started to put the issue into a realistic context, enabling many activists, linguists, teachers and community leaders involved in the cause to draw from a growing body of significant data. Looking in retrospect at those initial years of consolidation of multiculturalism, and leaving aside the many negatives littering the route, the final result of that period was beneficial: a vigorous debate invested the field of education and its curricula. It alerted political parties to the need to include provision for language and culture maintenance in their agenda. It stimulated school authorities to revise curricular offerings and make them more responsive to the composition and needs of the student population. It attracted constructive criticism about language teaching methodologies and language teachers' training and professional development.

However, there was a major obstacle to achieving the desired results: the numerous initiatives for the implementation of language policies were not part of a single consistent plan. The need for coordination, consistency and clarification of aims in regard to language policies over the years determined the decision by a large number of professionals and organisations in the field to join forces in pressing the government to formulate a national language policy. The Professional Language Associations for a National Language Policy (PLANLangPol)¹²⁸ was thus formed in 1981 to prepare a submission to the Prime Minister so that an inquiry could be begun into the need for a national language policy. Clyne points out¹²⁹ that the submission put

forward by this group - one of the first to be presented - was important in the sense that it covered the widest range of language issues not just migrant languages, and it significantly contributed to moulding the inquiry.

The newly formed organisation also promoted a follow-up through workshops on language policy matters in various States, and established cooperation with the Ethnic Communities Councils who were also in favour of a national language policy. Ozolins emphasises¹³⁰ the double function covered by PLANLangPol, its lobby activity on the one hand and on the other the forum it provided for the deliberations of language professionals and for the expression of ideas by language interest groups. Djité suggests instead that:

Although language professional associations were by now having some influence in the language policy debate, organised ethnic community lobbying was the main factor influencing the government to take action.¹³¹

The same author indicates that after the 1982 conference held by the Federal Association of Ethnic Communities Councils (FECCA) 'pressure for a coordinated approach to language policy [...]stimulated the government to respond by setting up a Senate inquiry into the matter.'

In that same year the Federal Government had also received from its own Department of Education a report entitled *Towards a National Language Policy*, which offered the Ministers preliminary advice on the topic. This publication, defined as 'seminal ' by Ozolins, 'reflected the broad terms of reference of the Senate inquiry which was getting under way at the same time'¹³²

The main merits of the document in question were that it set precise points of reference in relation to a wide range of language issues, it highlighted the need for coordination in setting up priorities within the hoped for language policy and, in regard to LOTES, it took into

account the question of language maintenance rights, a core concern for migrant communities. With the Liberals still in power, the Fraser Government finally took action and in May 1982 gave the bipartisan Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts the brief to investigate the specific need for a coherent, co-ordinated national language policy for Australia.

7.8 The Senate Standing Committee Report

The Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts (SSCEA) inquiry lasted from September 1982 to October 1983, during which time public hearings took place in all States and Territories, witnesses gave evidence and submissions were received from individuals, government and professional groups including the previously quoted Federal Department of Education, FECCA, PLANLangPol¹³³. Initiated under a Liberal Government and originally chaired by Liberal Senator Baden Teague, the inquiry was completed in 1983 after a change of Government, during which Bob Hawke became Prime Minister of Australia and Labor Senator Mal Colston Chair of the SSCEA

The task of the inquiry was to set guidelines for a national language policy by considering the widest possible range of language issues. Interestingly the terminology 'languages other than English' LOTEs, used in the submission by FECCA to emphasise that language policies in the context of a multicultural society concerned all members of that society and not just the ethnic communities, was adopted in the Senate Report. Indeed, rather than promoting the specific interests of particular languages, the Committee preferred a comprehensive approach towards investigating the nation's language needs both on the domestic level and in regard to the international scene. In fact the SSCEA appeared quite firm in avoiding the trap of

sectarianism. Its final document was tabled in December 1984. The conclusions reached confirmed the need to develop a coordinated National Language Policy and gave guidelines for addressing the following fundamental areas:

- 1 Competence in English.
- 2 Maintenance and development of languages other than English.
- 3 Provision of services in languages other than English.
- 4 Opportunities for learning a second language.

The Senate Report, although having assembled relevant and comprehensive information, as stressed by Clyne, was not in itself a national language policy, and notwithstanding its comprehensiveness ' it is given a tentative character by cautionary clauses and very frequent recommendations for surveys or exploration rather than action'¹³⁴

In addition the document did not include clear indications concerning who was going to implement its recommendations or what procedures should be adopted for their implementation to do so. The Government, for its part did not react promptly to the release of the Report, thus arousing increasing concern among individuals and organisations who had actively co-operated in the investigations of the SSCEA.

Meanwhile in some of the Australian States local language policies were already addressing in practice some of the issues approached by the Senate inquiry. Both Victoria and South Australia, for instance, as illustrated by documentation from the respective Education Departments¹³⁵ were already in the process of implementing initiatives aiming to give all children the opportunity to acquire a second language or maintain it. In the lull that followed the Senate Report, the Victorian Ministerial Advisory Committee on Multicultural and Migrant Education, chaired by Joseph Lo Bianco developed language policies, which, as will

be seen later, provided a basis for the subsequent National Language Policy. However in other states the need to have in place a *national* language policy to which to relate remained strong and as yet unfulfilled.

At Federal Government level following pressure by some language activists and by the former Chairperson of the SSCEA Baden Teague, who were asking for action on the SSCEA Report, this document was finally passed to the person responsible for language policy, the Minister for Education Susan Ryan.

The task of transforming it into a practical plan of implementation was eventually entrusted by the Minister to Joseph Lo Bianco¹³⁶ in July 1986.

7.9 A National Policy on Languages (the Lo Bianco Report)

Lo Bianco's Report was completed by November 1986, that is to say in just five months. The swiftness with which the document - titled *A National Policy on Languages*¹³⁷ - was produced may be explained by a number of concomitant factors: firstly a considerable amount of research, surveys, reports and inquiries carried out in previous years all over Australia, and covering most aspects of language policy issues, offered a substantial base on which to build. Secondly the comprehensive 1984 Senate Report had established precise guidelines, thirdly the professional background of its author¹³⁸, and his hands-on experience in the field contributed to sharpen the focus of his assignment and make its arguments stronger.

Unlike the Senate Report on which it was based, Lo Bianco's Report contained clear implementation goals with precise budgetary recommendations and identified new and relevant objectives in language policy. The *National Policy on Languages* advocates the

elimination of social injustice and discrimination on language grounds, it argues for second language learning as conducive to cultural enrichment and intercultural understanding, as enabling the achievement of economic benefits and as advantageous for international relations. The Report focuses heavily on languages in education thus asserting the need to upgrade their teaching and to make second language learning compulsory for diplomacy and trade. It advocates language learning for all Australian students in regular schooling programs. It proposes second language competence as a requirement for tertiary education admission and upholds the importance of bilingualism as something to be achieved and/or maintained.

The primacy of English in Australian society is clearly stated:

This policy declares the English language to be the national language of Australia and affirms the legitimacy and importance of the functions which are fulfilled by English¹³⁹.

In the context of LOTEs Lo Bianco's Report argues for the maintenance of languages already used in Australian society. According to Di Biase and Dyson, however, the NPL fails to address specifically and effectively the issue of language maintenance as it appears to ignore those cases when languages taught 'may be the first languages of 20% of the student population[...], the two authors also argue that funding allocation for Australian Second Language Learning Program is inadequate for its goals¹⁴⁰.

The Lo Bianco report listed nine languages 'of wider teaching': Arabic, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Indonesian, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, 'on an indicative base'. While carefully avoiding to be prescriptive, it meant to stimulate schools to choose languages for their curricula taking into account already existing resources. The identification of languages of 'wider teaching' has been criticised too as fostering the presupposition that languages not included in the list may be considered of 'lesser standing' while, on the

contrary, they are vital/essential for local communities such as, for example, the Turkish one.

¹⁴¹

A significant feature of the Lo Bianco's Report is that while on the one hand it takes into account the views of the various States and Territories, on the other it never loses sight of its underlying objective: to provide the foundations for a national policy. In addition to the features illustrated so far this document clearly emphasises the relevance of languages for Australian economy and trade:

There is substantial evidence that Australian economic activities, particularly in competitive situations requiring market penetration, would benefit from the skilled use of the host countries' languages and active knowledge and appreciation of cultural values and behaviours.¹⁴²n

To ensure that the diverse elements of language considered in the policy were integrated and co-ordinated the NPL recommended the founding of an advisory council on Australia's language policy. It was on the basis of this proposal that the Government established the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME) and later, in 1989, the National Languages Institute of Australia (NLIA)¹⁴³. The implementation of key programs of NLP started soon after. As suggested some years later :

The NLP [...] started the most important process of turning language policy making into language planning implementation this is why it is universally perceived as a cornerstone of language policy planning in Australia.¹⁴⁴

X ?

On 14 February 1987 the *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial had noted ironically:

'A national language policy is a long way off, if only because the States won't take up an idea from the Federal Government unless it is compellingly in their interests or is being paid for by Canberra'.

but only three months later - and that is in May of the same year - the Prime Minister announced the approval of Lo Bianco's document.

A decade later the following assessment has appeared in the national daily newspaper *The Australian*:

[The National Policy on Languages] preached the message of bilingualism and multilingualism to a cast of largely monophone policy makers. The message not only got through, it became a bipartisan strategy that has seen the proportion of secondary students taking a foreign language rise steadily since the late 1980s¹⁴⁵

This assessment reflects two significant changes. The first is the new position of languages in the education system, the second is the shift in attitude of Australian society as personified by its political representatives. As will be discussed later, other factors have also played a role in the evaluation of language-learning in Australia: in the late 1990s, for instance, concerns regarding the economy and its problems have attracted interest in the potential that language resources may offer. People's views have thus continued to depend upon the practical and often transient needs of their environment.

7. 10 Languages in education after the National Policy on Languages

As mentioned earlier in this chapter the NPL was drawn up on behalf of the Federal Minister for Education. In keeping with this precedent matters relating to languages in education were given specific attention within the above document and its implementation became the responsibility of the newly established ACCLAME. Through this organisation States and/or schools began receiving support and funds for the educational aims identified by the NPL (e.g.

curriculum development, professional development for teachers, new language programs, increase in the range of languages offered etc.).

While these arrangements were being implemented, the value of studying languages was acknowledged by all Australian States and Territories, which began to address the implementation of LOTE programs as a matter of priority in their strategic planning. Indeed in some cases, States even preceded the NPL by promoting initiatives anticipating its recommendations. In Victoria, for instance the language policy paper *The Place of Languages other than English in Victorian Schools*, dating back to 1985, offered guidelines for an action plan aimed at integrating LOTEs into the school curricula and making the study of a second language available to all students. In fact the number and specificity of policy papers¹⁴⁶ produced within the Ministry of Education in Victoria from the late 1980s which successively dealt with the many aspects of language-in-education, demonstrates the commitment of this State to the development of appropriate strategies for mainstreaming the study of LOTEs.

Since the release of the NPL all Australian States and Territories have developed their own language policies and have selected from the suggested list¹⁴⁷ the priority languages considered appropriate for their particular needs. In most cases, however, there has also been an effort to satisfy diverse local needs by promoting other lower demand languages at the same time.

Victoria and South Australia with their long and strong tradition in fostering community languages may be seen as particularly advanced in their language planning. In Victoria, for example, apart from the 20 languages taught in the mainstream secondary school system, 39 LOTEs are provided through the Victorian School of Languages to students unable to learn the language of their choice in mainstream school system¹⁴⁸. Ethnic Schools provide teaching for others which are not included in the previous grouping but are classified as particularly

significant for the community. Languages other than English are available to all primary school children. As envisaged by the 1993 *LOTE Strategy Plan*, prepared by the Directorate of School Education, all students in secondary schools have to be given the opportunity to study a language offered in their curriculum from Year 7 to Year 10, with the aim of at least 25% of senior school pupils doing so by the year 2000.

In South Australia too the diffusion of LOTEs has gradually increased both in the primary sector with a minimum allocated time of 90 minutes per week, and in secondary schools with 3 to 4 hours per week allocated to language learning¹⁴⁹. The study of languages starts at the beginning of primary school and continues to Year 7. At least one language must be studied up to Year 10, when compulsory schooling ends. In addition a 1990 document produced by the South Australian Institute of Languages and entitled *The Language Challenge: Tertiary Languages Planning - A Policy for South Australia* has incorporated the principles of the NPL into that State's policy from the perspective of needs specific to South Australia¹⁵⁰

In New South Wales, where by the 1960s the decline¹⁵¹ in language studies appeared significant, strong recommendations in favour of the teaching of community languages were made by the Ethnic Affairs Commission in its Report *Participation*, published in 1978

[...] a stated objective of the Department of Education [ought to] be the provision of facilities within schools for the study of community languages and culture by all children who desire such study from the earliest years of primary school¹⁵²

Eleven years later the New South Wales Department of Education reiterated the Government's earlier suggestion requiring that secondary students at junior level learn a language for two years at least, and that larger numbers of senior students be encouraged to continue pursuing their language study¹⁵³. A few years later another official document prioritised¹⁵⁴ twelve languages for the school curricula, with the recommendation that six¹⁵⁵ of these receive

specific support because of two reasons: a) particular relevance of the languages in question for economic purposes b) the above mentioned languages seemed inadequately catered for in the schools system.

By the year 1996 the School Certificate required the study of a language for at least 100 hours, that is one year, to be increased to 200 hours in the following years. The target of 25% of Year 12 students taking a LOTE was set for the year 2000.

Queensland's language policies are aimed at allowing all students to study LOTEs over a continuous period of six years (Year 5 to Year 10) with a target of 20% of Year 12 candidates taking a LOTE by the year 2000¹⁵⁶. Twelve languages are taught in this State.

In Western Australia, LOTEs have been progressively introduced in primary schools and their availability expanded at secondary level in order to improve and encourage their study in accordance with this State's language policy of 1990¹⁵⁷. Out of the 20 languages taught in this State, 10 feature on the official list of priority languages.

Tasmania's Language Policy of 1987 aims at having as many students as possible studying LOTEs during the period of compulsory schooling, the plan being to increase the teaching of languages at senior school level as the resources (i.e. teachers' expertise etc) become available. Six priority languages are available for study at secondary junior level and five others are taught at senior secondary level.

Both Australian Territories have language policies in place. In the Australian Capital Territory 21 languages are taught in and outside the mainstream, of which eight are classified as priority ones¹⁵⁸.

The 1987 Northern Territory Policy on Languages other than English established that 43 languages can be studied in the Territory within and outside the mainstream from Year 6 to Year 12. Eight languages have been given priority status.

As discussed so far, all Australian State and Territory education systems have made considerable efforts to comply with the guidelines established by the NPL of 1987, and are continuing to address the implementation of LOTE programs as a matter of priority. The outcomes of this process however not only are long term, they also depend on a series of variables such as the particular historical situation of each language within the education system considered, the attitude of State and Federal governments in power and their willingness to inject appropriate funds especially in regard to the training of teachers, the shifting economic factors and even international interaction at various levels, to mention just a few.

While an in-depth evaluation of the total situation of language-in-education in Australia has not yet been undertaken, possibly because it still seems premature, it is important to acknowledge the significance of the changes that occurred between the late 1970s and 1990s.

In May 1990, however, the Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education (AACLAME) presented a first progress report to the Minister for Employment Education and Training, J S Dawkins. As stated in its introduction the document covered the first two years of operation of the NPL, it provided an overview of the NPL implementation programs, it presented a case for extension of funding beyond 1991, it identified possible future developments of its programs¹⁵⁹.

From the decline in the study of languages within Australian schools registered in 1975 and 1983 by Commonwealth Department of Education surveys in 1975 and 1983¹⁶⁰ and further drop in LOTE studies registered at year 12 level - from 16.2% in 1982 to 10.9% in 1992 -¹⁶¹

to the current reappraisal of language learning, language maintenance in the school systems and language skills in many areas of societal interaction (business, international relationships, tourism etc), the transformation which has taken place in Australia can be classified as significant in terms both of ideology and practical outcomes.

If this were not the case there would be no international recognition¹⁶² of the achievements which have taken place so far, nor any incentive to persevere with pursuing the aims set in the NPL, especially when governments have attempted to substitute their own 'philosophy' in the interpretation of or the method of implementing its recommendations.

In the last fifteen years Australia has gone through regular democratic changes of government, but over time its hard worked for language policy has been spared significant changes and/or modifications. This is an achievement to be attributed – at least in part – to the stability provided by the Commonwealth of Australia, the institution which allows continuity: governments are made up of people, elected people who come and go, while the outcomes of democratic legislation need to be protected in order to avoid unjustified political interference.

Recent shifts of balance in the language policies, (eg change of balance and change in motivation), will be discussed later, but it is reasonable to have expectations for ad hoc refinements of language planning especially in a field so critical for the nation's future as that of education. As discussed previously each State is in charge of implementing its own language policies, consequently diverse outcomes may be expected in time, with the possibility of a wider range of experiences to compare, share and critically evaluate for future educational benefit at the national level.

7. 11 Language policies and the political priorities of the 1990s

As in other areas of societal development, changes in governments' directions and pressures deriving from specific socio-economic factors have caused modifications and shifts also in regard to language policies as identified, developed and implemented in Australia since 1987 according to the NPL.

During the economic slump of the early 1990s in Australia, the need arose to review the country's position within the Asian Region because of the growing financial power of the latter and consequent awareness of its relevance in terms of Australian international trade and external affairs.

The anxious attempt to create a new Asian identity and hitch the Australian wagon to the Asian economic boom, or the Pacific Rim boom or whatever seems to be the going thing at the given moment, is the work of politicians and journalists. That is how deep it is ¹⁶³.

There is undoubtedly a touch of bitter irony in these remarks by Australian writer Peter Robb, nevertheless in relation to language policies it would be hard to deny that the awakening to the relevance of Asian languages occurred mainly in view of short-term utilitarian prospects. The status of Asian languages had been identified more than twenty years earlier¹⁶⁴ as an issue to be addressed not only in the field of education but also in terms of changing the private sector's reluctance to accept the importance of competence in those languages in regard to prospective employees. However, no specific or significant measures had been taken at that stage.

It was in the 1990s, when Commonwealth and State Governments were struggling with the issue of unemployment, that the focus of attention turned to schooling and on the policies

needed to make education more relevant in terms of people's future employment. The importance of language learning was thus officially acknowledged once again, but with the stress on those languages that appeared particularly relevant for immediate economic goals.

Of the two papers released by the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training (DEET)¹⁶⁵ J. L. Dawkins, the first one, published in 1990, entitled *The Language of Australia: a Discussion Paper on an Australian Literacy and Language Policy for the 1990s* (also called *The Green Paper*) was meant to generate feedback and discussion. This provisional document appeared to restrict the scope of the NPL by ignoring one of its four goals. In fact the issue of language services' provision was entirely excluded and language maintenance was incorporated into language learning. Predictably this preliminary paper attracted widespread criticism, was branded as 'instrumental' and described as 'in search of quick solutions'¹⁶⁶.

One year later a policy information paper, *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (or White Paper) (ALLP)* - also known as Dawkins Report - ¹⁶⁷ was released. As all funding under the NPL had stopped in 1990, the Dawkins Report became the reference point for implementation of language policies. This latter document heavily stressed the relevance of literacy in English, in fact - as perceptively pointed out by Clyne¹⁶⁸ - it introduced the dichotomy of language/literacy with 'literacy' being restricted to English, thus destroying the unity of language policies in Australia. The Dawkins Report also envisaged language maintenance as second to second language learning and language competence was identified as important essentially for job seeking purposes. Unlike the NPL, the Dawkins document strongly advocated the significance of language knowledge for economic benefits, thus reserving its forceful support for Asian languages. Fourteen languages¹⁶⁹ were explicitly prioritised for the States and Territories to choose from and include in their school curricula; the presupposition, however was that the choice would be made by keeping into account the

need to make Australia able to deal with countries economically relevant to her. Extra funding was allocated to States to strengthen languages studied in Years 11 and 12, dependent on their prioritisation of up to 8 of the languages in question. The ALLP also mainstreamed the Ethnic School Program funds, including insertion classes ones, a move criticised by Di Biase et al. as having the potential to undermine positive results achieved in the 1980s in this area¹⁷⁰.

Another important initiative of the ALLP was the allocation of extra Commonwealth funds to schools, on a pro capita basis, for Year 12 students who in the previous year had completed their study of one of the eight languages prioritised in the given list.¹⁷¹ While declaring that the decision was inspired by the worrying decrease in the number of students at this level, the document implicitly continued in its promotion of languages of 'broader national interest to Australia'¹⁷²

[...] there have been few attempts to integrate language study with other vocational training[...]. Yet the vocational relevance of languages is an increasingly important motivation for language study.¹⁷³

The documents just discussed have been described in some cases as an integral part of the reviewing mechanism envisaged by the NPL itself¹⁷⁴, while, on the other hand David Ingram suggested instead that 'there was no significant and ongoing policy development mechanism built into that policy'. The same author has remarked that the Dawkins Report does not give sufficient relevance to the multicultural goals pursued by the NPL¹⁷⁵, and that it only concentrates on language-in-education policies. For other language professionals its most obvious fault was the excessive emphasis given to the economic significance of language learning.

Kipp et al.¹⁷⁶ indicate that while the NPL balanced economic concerns with attention to social justice issues, in the ALLP languages are considered mainly on the basis of potential

economic benefits. Clyne however suggested that notwithstanding a in change in balance detectable in the ALLP when compared to the NPL, the latter may still be considered undiminished/intact¹⁷⁷.

Studies on Asian languages, in particular the Rudd Report released in February 1994 ,¹⁷⁸ underlined the potential significance of these languages for improving the Australian economy. This document, which opened declaring that its brief was to only look at four particular Asian languages, remained all the way consistent with its preamble. It described Australia's economic characteristics and linked them to particular languages. With this presupposition it proposed to strengthen the learning of four identified Asian languages through ad hoc strategies. Thus the opportunity was created for the Federal Government to allocate targeted funds to school programs aiming at encouraging, encreasing and coordinating the study of those languages, and also providing professional development for teachers in that area.

The project, which envisaged 2, 5 hours of Modern Standard Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean language instruction weekly, from Years 3-10, was part of an overall strategy aiming, in the long run, to have 25% of LOTEs learners concentrating on those selected languages. Now, the choice of the languages speaks for it self: Australia's economic and geographical connections represented, at that stage, the determinant factor for the decision. The results of this plan are long term and cannot be evaluated yet, but a first consequence to be noticed is that not all languages present in the school system appear of equal learning value and this presupposition is, in the least, misguided.

Other studies¹⁷⁹ have singled out additional problematic issues within the field of international trade such as the unfounded belief that the knowledge of English is sufficient for conducting

successful business deals, or the prevailing notion in the business community that only Asian language skills may be of value.

As shown in Kipp et al.¹⁸⁰ determining which languages are crucial for the benefit of Australian society may prove difficult, in fact the evaluation of needs itself varies according to the field in question.

While market penetration is the target - and the focus of attention so far has been mainly on the Asian sector - it appears that the situation in relation to the European Union and Latin America is still unsatisfactorily assessed and addressed. When tourism is considered to determine which languages are more in demand in that industry, surveys show that the recent growth in international markets dwarfs the domestic scene with significant (and still unassessed) consequences - among other things -for the recruitment of personnel in that area.

Still in relation to this developing industry, it has been insightfully remarked that while there is a growing awareness that language skills are advantageous in this sector, especially in regard to Japanese, the potential use of Australians of non-English speaking background is still insufficiently taken into account and/or exploited. As for Australian political and strategic needs, research highlights that appropriate policies are still needed to provide for the current lack of language proficiency among diplomatic staff abroad, not to speak of increasing demands in the Region resulting from globalisation. The science and technology field, to cite another example, is still insufficiently catered for in terms of foreign language learning provisions, although the need to make languages part of the curriculum in tandem with scientific subjects is being increasingly acknowledged¹⁸¹, tertiary students in science, politics and economics courses for example, are now able to include language studies within their subject selection. The importance of integrating languages in these existing tertiary courses had been advocated by Ingleson since 1989¹⁸².

As can be clearly seen from even a cursory examination, the range of areas for which languages are relevant is not only wide, it has the potential to change as time goes by, with contacts between Australia and other countries becoming more frequent, relationships and exchanges more demanding, and communication technologies continuing to short circuit humans' traditional ways of interacting across cultures and space.

7.12 Concluding remarks

The National Policy on Languages of 1987 not only represents, as we have seen, the successful culmination of many previous initiatives, but more importantly it has sensitised both the community and authorities to the significance of languages other than English in Australian society.

In the period following its release, language planning has steadily progressed in all Australian States and Territories, a process testifying not only the effectiveness of the guidelines provided in this document, but also its potential for further – though at times unforeseeable – developments. For instance, the Lo Bianco Report had highlighted the link between language skills and economic outcomes, and when by the early 1990s this economic perspective prevailed over the others, the focus of attention often shifted from one area to another of the social context with the notions of language learning and language skills being interpreted – or exploited – in different ways and for different purposes. Essentially, at Government level there was an attempt 'rationalise' language planning on the basis of socio-economic needs. As previously discussed this contingent reassessment of the function of languages has had an impact also in the education system; in addition there is the chance of potential mismatches

between Commonwealth and State and Territories policies with consequences still to be assessed.

Languages other than English however cannot be dealt with in isolation, as separate from the ethnic communities who use them in Australia. They have been fought for as components of living cultures and still represent an overarching value within the accepted notion of multiculturalism in this country. While language policies may be subjected to the ephemeral blows or tortuous alterations that political pressures exert on them, they must always be considered in connection with the vital link that connects LOTEs with the people to whom they 'belong'.

This connection may no doubt have a negative side when it expresses group interests alone, on the other hand it also offers a protective mechanism against the volatility and opportunism of strictly political interventions. Ozolins has correctly pointed out the correlation between ethnically directed language interests and language policy domains which are totally independent of this link, and suggests that:

Any viable broadly based strategy of language policy will have to bring both ethnic and non ethnic interests into play, and will only be assured of any success if the interests can accommodate each other's strengths and limits¹⁸³.

Ozolins also argues that the value of multilingualism ought to be promoted as an end in itself, and that is as independent of its historical liaison with the ideology of multiculturalism.

Most language professionals as well as members of the general public would no doubt agree with this view. Whether or not this far-reaching goal is already achievable or perhaps still premature in the Australian context as we pass the threshold of the 21st century is a matter for discussion, if not in principle at least in terms of appropriate timing.

Clyne, who has indefatigably argued that Australian linguistic diversity is an exceptional resource and one that has the potential to be enhanced through deliberate, intelligent maintenance of community languages, has also pointed to an interesting aspect of the Australian situation: while non-English speaking countries are currently concentrating their efforts on promoting English-language acquisition because of the international relevance of the language, in Australia the range of languages to learn is free from this kind of constraints. This is an advantage not to be disregarded: in other countries, for example in Italy, the teaching of English has replaced that of other foreign languages (e.g. French or German) in most cases where practical constraints impose a choice on schools, so that the importance of English as a language of global communication has become the determining factor in the selection of what to teach, regardless of other considerations of a broader educational nature. The wide range of languages taught in Australian secondary and tertiary institutions is by now a fact and it must be seen as a remarkable achievement for Australian language policy.

While the spread of LOTEs in the curricula must be acknowledged as an important achievement, the management of it, as pointed out by Djité, is not easy and cannot be governed by economics only. It also appears that the issue of language maintenance has not been extensively monitored after the shift in language policies determined by the implementation of the White Paper.

Looking at the present situation of language policy Kipp & al¹⁸⁴ insist that the original principles of the NPL - competence in English, maintenance and development of LOTES, opportunities for learning second languages, provision of services in languages other than English - ought to be maintained in the future.

Clyne's belief is that the national language policy 'remains a strong basis on which to build in better times¹⁸⁵.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that as the NPL is by now a consolidated achievement, although in the period of more than a decade since it was released, its implementation has shown variations in focus and - one can forecast - other potential adjustments are likely to occur in the future. For instance, we have yet to see what developments in education will result from the push given to Asian languages with budgetary allocation of funds from 1994 to 1998, nor it can be predicted yet what results the impact of computer technologies and fast communication will have on language learning and maintenance.

Like any other piece of legislation, the NPL needs to be appraised not only in terms of the immediate outcomes derived from its implementation, but also by taking into account potential for further developments. In addition policies issued by the States and Territories as a direct result of NPL and consequences of the ALLP also come will need to be taken into consideration.

As argued by Rubin and Jernudd¹⁸⁶ and also confirmed and illustrated in the context of this chapter, language policy implementation takes place in complex societal circumstances, which involve not only a varying number of negotiating parties but also intricate political interests, economic factors and even emotional considerations. There exist in other words a series of unpredictable factors influencing beyond control the developments of any given language policy and achievement of its goals.

According to the results of a national project conducted by NLLIA in 1991¹⁸⁷ the situation of second language learning in the Australian education system can be defined as healthy. Achieving a systematic spread of LOTEs in the schools and universities is not an easy target, but the process has started on a positive note.

However, it was still too early for the above project to register the consequences determined by the Dawkins Report (White Paper) also released in 1991, and which increasingly diverted

funds to Asian languages in schools and universities. The rationale for doing so was unrelated to multiculturalism and/or language maintenance, and the outcomes of this shift in the Commonwealth agenda in regard to languages other than those targeted are still to be appraised, the Italian case of course being part of of the latter group of languages.

Thus if 'fine tuning' in the field of language planning is to a certain extent a realistic hope for Australia, because of the strength of the foundations that the NPL has managed to provide, and because of the achievements during its implementation so far, successive language policy shifts show how easily strictly material considerations can influence the setting of goals.

At present the question to confront seems to be: is the NPL what is being implemented, or is it simply the four guiding principles or not even that? Currently the States are doing most of the policy development through languages-in education policies, e.g. on literacy, low-candidature languages, Asian languages etc; very divergent policies are also emerging in the various States, New South Wales and Victoria for example. But, do we still have a coherent,coordinated national language policy?

It has been said that Australia has emerged as a leader in language policy and most of the facts examined so far support this view. What is to be hoped for now is that the country will continue to be worthy of this status in the years to come.

NOTES

¹ The Dante Alighieri Society, founded in 1889, stands as an ancestor in the family of European cultural institutions. The fact that it is only partially funded by the Italian Government does not interfere with the symbolic relevance of the organisation's establishment.

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- ² Dossier Provvedimento (A.C. 3727) n. 412, XIII Legislatura-giugno 1997. Introductory speech in the Senate on 6 March 1997, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lamberto Dini, presenting the bill for the allocation of additional finances for the Italian Institutes of Culture. pp. 13-15
- ³ MAE, Circolare n. 13, 18 maggio 1978 (Signed by Under-Secretary of State F. Foschi)
- ⁴ Michael Clyne suggests that the tension between English monolingualism as a symbol of British tradition, English monolingualism as a sign of Australian national identity and multilingualism as an integral component of a multicultural society had existed in Australia even before Federation in 1901. On this topic see: *Community Languages The Australian Experience* Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1991a. Lo Bianco too stresses that linguistic diversity characterised Australia even before white settlement: '[...] Traditional Aboriginal and Islanders Society was multilingual with between 200 and 250 distinct languages.' *National Policy on Languages* AGPS, Canberra 1987. p.
- ⁵ *ABS Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.1997
- ⁶ Clark M. *A Short History of Australia*. New American Library, New Jersey 1980 (Second Edition) p.13
- ⁷ With the *Chinese Restriction Act* (1854) the Victorian Government established limits to the number of Chinese people permitted to move to Victoria.
- ⁸ For an interesting overview of this point see: *Individual and Democratic Rights* Report of the Advisory Committee to the Constitutional Commission Canberra Publishing and Printing Co., ACT 1987
- ⁹ Whitlam, G. *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*. Viking, Ringwood 1985 p 486
- ¹⁰ The agreement with Italy was signed in 1951.
- ¹¹ White, Richard 'The Australian Way of Life' *Historical Studies* 18 (73) October 1979 pp 528-529
- ¹² Don Dunstan, Jim Cairns and Gough Whitlam were prevented from making public their opposition to the policy of racial discrimination of their own party, in fact in that occasion they came close to expulsion from the ALP.
- ¹³ An extensive and bold account of the political treatment of immigration in Australia can be found in Whitlam, G. Op.cit
- ¹⁴ It is important to remember, however, that 'Australian-born' did not equate with 'Anglo', also if it was sometimes interpreted that way.
- ¹⁵ Whitlam, G. Op. cit. pp 485-507
- ¹⁶ Ibid. p. 506
- ¹⁷ Clyne, M. 1991a pp 4-8
- ¹⁸ White, R. *Inventing Australia*. Ullen& Unwin, Sydney 1981 p 62
- ¹⁹ Ozolins, U. *The Politics of Language in Australia*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993
- ²⁰ White, R. Ibid. p. viii
- ²¹ Blainey, G. *The Tyranny of Distance*. Sun Books, Melbourne 1966

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- 22 Malouf, D. *A spirit of play*. ABC Books, Sydney 1998 pp 32-33
- 23 For the manufacturers the 'Australian way of life' is often synonymous with consumerism so that advertising campaigns promote a wide range of commodities – from cars to household appliances – using their 'Australianness' as a device to encourage and persuade potential buyers.
- 24 A moving, engaging account of a personal search for the truth about Australian past history is offered by Reynolds, H. *Why weren't we told?* Penguin Books, Victoria 1999
- 25 Social commentator Hugh Mackay in an article entitled 'Let's enjoy our national identity' (*Sydney Morning Herald* 26 January 2000) argues that the absence of a clearly defined national identity is a valuable resource that enables Australians to face the challenges of the future with greater flexibility
- 26 See on this topic the thought-provoking re-examination of the Resistance by Pavone, C. *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità della Resistenza*. Bollati Boringheri, Torino.1991.
- 27 Massari, O. 'La Resistenza' in G. Pasquino *La politica italiana - Dizionario critico 1945-95*. Editori Laterza, Roma-Bari 1995 pp 507-519
- 28 A forceful recent commentary on the unsolved issues of race relations in Australia is offered by Australian historian Clendinnen, I. *True Stories*. ABC Books, Sydney 1999
- 29 Macintyre, S. *A Concise History of Australia*. Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1999
- 30 Horne, D. *The Avenue of the Fair Go: a group tour of Australian political thought* Harper Collins, New York 1997. This is an original, intriguing book looking ahead and trying to work out a 'political formula' for Australia's future.
- 31 For a thought-provoking, sharp analysis of race politics in Australia since the 1967 Referendum see David Marr's article 'Betrayal' *The Sydney Morning Herald* 20 May 2000
- 32 The expression comes originally from Prime Minister Bob Hawke's policy speech of 1987. Ironically, it was later adopted – apparently accidentally - as a slogan by the Liberal Party Advertisers in 1989; since then it has been very much part of political rethoric on both sides of the political spectrum. An Italian proverb says: *I proverbi sono la saggezza dei popoli*, 'Proverbs embody peoples' wisdom', in contemporary world, one could assume, slogans have replaced proverbs.
- 33 The ongoing debate on native title and the momentum acquired by the reconciliation movement in the late 1990s bear witness to the futility of looking at Aborigines as a race to be 'civilised' meaning on the western image so they will not perish. A convincing exploration of the doomed race theory can be found in: Mc Gregor R. *Imagined Destinies* MUP[?] 1997
- 34 France, A. *Il delitto di Sylvestre Bonnard*
- 35 Conrad, P. 'New New World' (*Granta* 70, Summer (Winter in Australia) 2000, New York 2000 pp 11-
- 37
- 36 Crystal, D. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998.
- 37 Clyne, M. 1991 Op. cit.

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- 38 Castles, S. 'Migration and Settlement since 1945' In S Castle & al (eds) *Australia's Italians*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1992 p 51
- 39 Lo Bianco, J. 'Multiculturalism and the National Policy on Languages' *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 9 1988 pp 25-37
- 40 The term LOTE is now the most widely used 'to avoid categorisation' as explained in Clyne, M. (1991) *Op. cit.* pp 230-232
- 41 *ABS Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.1997
- 42 Dixon, R. M.W. *The Languages of Australia*. Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1980
- 43 For an exhaustive treatment of the topic see Clyne, M. *Op. cit.* 1991
- 44 Ozolins, U. (1993) *Op.cit.*
- 45 Marshall, D.F. and Gonzales, R.D. 'Una lingua? Una Patria? Is Monolingualism beneficial or harmful to a nation's unity?' in K.L. Adams and D.T. Brink (eds.) *The Campaign for English as the Official Language of USA*. Mouton de Gruyter, New York 1990 pp 29-51
- 46 Clark, M. (1963) *Op cit.* pp. 102-118
- 47 O'Farrell, P. *The Catholic Church in Australia*. Nelson, Sydney 1968
- 48 Even today, government financial support of non-state schools is a highly sensitive political issue. While figures released on 21 January 2000 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed an increase in enrolments in non-government schools of 2.1% in the previous year, in government schools the increase was 0.4%. As private schools increase their share of students Federal Government funding to state public schools will be slashed under the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment. As reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 22/1/2000, the president of the Australian Education Union,, estimating cuts for the year 2000, said the Federal Government was again 'stealing money from public schools.
- 49 Partridge, P. *Society, School and Progress in Australia* Oxford University Press, Oxford 1969
- 50 Bessant, B. 'The Emergence of State Secondary Education' in J. Cleverley and J. Lawry (eds.) *Australian Education in the Twentieth Century*. Melbourne 1973 pp. 124-143
- 51 Connell, W. F. 'Myths and Traditions in Australian Education' *Australian Journal of Education* n. 14 1972 pp. 253-264
- 52 See in relation to languages in education: Australian Education Council *A statement on Languages other than English for Australian School* Curriculum Corporation, Carlton Victoria 1994. The plan, as stated in the *Foreword* of this document, represents the most significant collaborative curriculum development project in the history of Australian education.
- 53 For a detailed examination of the topic of the development of the Australian education system see Chapter 3 of Totaro, M. *L'insegnamento dell'italiano nello Stato del New South Wales: 1935- 1987*. M.A. Honours unpublished thesis. University of Sydney, 1988.

- 54 Hick, D. *A History of Modern Language Teaching in the Public Schools of New South Wales*. M. Ed. unpublished thesis, University of Sydney, 1964.
- 55 Totaro, M. (1988) Op. cit. Chapter 4
- 56 Mackay, H. 'The Australian Dream' *The Sydney Morning Herald* 28 July 1990
- 57 Barcan, A. *Sociological Theory and Educational Reality -Education in Australia since 1949*. NSW University Press, Kensington NSW 1993. For an thorough analysis of schools and education in the 1990s see Chapter 10 pp 308-371
- 58 Ibid p. 309
- 59 Hick, D. (1964) Op cit. p. 7
- 60 Clyne, M. 1991 Op cit. p 9
- 61 While the lack of interest for LOTEs has been persistent in Queensland since the 19th century, it must also be remembered that Brisbane had a far smaller proportion of non-English postwar migrants than any other mainland capital
- 62 For thought-provoking insights into the historical reasons behind the diverse attitudes to multilingualism in the various states of Australia see Clyne, M. Ibid pp 25-27
- 63 Collins, J. *Migrant Hands in a Distant Land: Australia's Post-War Immigration* Pluto Press, Sydney 1988
- 64 Clyne, M. 1991 b Op.cit. p 16
- 65 Lo Bianco J. 'Making Language Policy: Australia's Experience', in R.B. Baldauf and A. Luke (eds.) *Language planning and Education in Australasia and the South Pacific*. Clevedon Multilingual Matters, 1990 pp. 47-79.
- 66 Totaro, M. Op. cit. 1988 Chapters 4 and 5
- 67 Di Biase, B. et al. *Unlocking Australia's Language Potential: Profiles of 9 Key Languages in Australia. Vol 6-Italian*. The National Languages and Literacy Institute, Canberra. 1994
- 68 Eltis, K. 'Shaping the future with languages: Meeting the challenges.' *Babel*, Vol. 26, n. 2, 1991 pp 4-13
- 69 Whitlam G. (1985) Op. cit. p. 293
- 70 Clyne, M. 'Australia's Language Policies Are We Going Backwards?' *Current Affairs Bulletin* November 1991 b pp13-20
- 71 Department of Education of New South Wales *Distribution of Studies: High and Secondary Schools, and Secondary Pupils at Central Schools 1936-1956*
- 72 Ozolins, U. (1993) Op cit. p. 16
- 73 Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs *Multiculturalism for all Australians: our Developing Nationhood* AGPS, Canberra 1982. p. 21(quoted in: McGilvray, B. *L'italiano e la NAATI nel New*

South Waies unpublished final essay for the Master of Arts course in Italian Language. University of Sydney, February 1992)

74 Ibid. pp 118-121

75 The second Migrant Workers Conference followed in 1975 and provided further educational recommendations on the rights of the so-called new Australians to retain and develop their own cultures within the evolving Australian society.

76 *Migrant Workers Conference* Melbourne: Conference Committee and the Neighbour Council 1974.

77 Ecumenical Migration Centre, Greek Welfare, CoAsIt

78 For a detailed account of discussions on multiculturalism and policies in education see Clyne, M. *Multilingual Australia* River Seine Publications, Melbourne 1982

79 Martin, J. I. *The Migrant Presence in Sydney*. Allen and Unwin, Sydney 1978.

80 Ozolins, U. Op. cit p.129

81 The Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales *Participation - Report to the Premier* Sydney 1978 pp 67-68

82 See Ozolins, U. (1993) Op. cit. pp139-140

83 The 1977 Conference title was: Migrant languages – Many Promises, No Action.

84 Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives V. 105

85 Djité, P. G. From Language Policy to Language Planning NLLIA, ACT 1994

86 For a comprehensive examination of the role of migrant communities in the 1970s agitation for to take part in language policy see: Ozolins U. Op cit pp 118-121

87 Review of Post-Arrival Services and Programs to Migrants ('Galbally Report') Canberra AGPS, 1978

88 In total \$49.68 million were required to implement the Report's recommendations, \$5 million of which were to be invested in multicultural education.

89 Leading academic Geoffrey Blainey, in his 1984 work *All for Australia?* provoked widespread debate by denouncing as dangerous and sinister any social and ethnic diversity in Australian society. In his view, Australia should remain 'one' and unaffected by its own historical make up. Federal MP Pauline Hanson, in 1996, started a political party advocating the need to keep Australia free from Asian presence/influence and to eliminate privileges for Aborigines.

90 Reports in the press have clearly illustrated that students at secondary and tertiary level opposed Pauline Hanson's One Nation party. They have on many occasions managed to block or cancel her public appearances. For a detailed account of Pauline Hanson's 1998 election campaign see: Kingston, M. *Off the Rails*. Allen & Unwin Sydney 1999

91 Alcorso, C. et al 'Community Networks and Institutions' in S. Castles et al. (eds.) *Australia's Italians* Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1992. pp 106-124

92 Clyne (1991a) Op. cit.

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- 93 Whitlam Ibid p. 576
- 94 *The Sydney Morning Herald* 14 October 1976
- 95 The *Broadcasting and Television Amendment Act*, 10 November 1977, establishes that SBS must: a) provide multilingual broadcasting and [when authorised] television services; b) provide broadcasting and television services for such special purposes as prescribed
- 96 Ozolins, U. (1993) Ibid p.164
- 97 The Italians, for example, are an ageing community with a growing number of members in retirement villages and increasing problems to solve in regard to their welfare.
- 98 See on this topic: Leong, K. 'The Emergence of Multicultural Television in Australia' *The Australian Journal of Communication* n. 4 1983. For a detailed analysis focusing on the political battles over broadcasting in LOTES see: Ozolins Ibid pp. 164-174
- 99 Castles, S. Op. cit p53
- 100 *The Australian* 28 October 1999
- 101 Ibid
- 102 Gilson, M., Zubrzycki, J. *The Foreign Language Press in Australia*. Australian National University Press, Canberra 1967
- 103 *L'Italo-Australiano-Organo degli Italiani Sparsi nelle Terre Oceaniche* This monthly paper was edited by an Italian socialist, Francesco Sceusa; it aimed at informing Italian migrants about local and Italian events and at improving their working situation. Its publication lasted only six months.
- 104 War Precautions Act 1920-1928
- 105 For an accurate and concise description of the relationship between Fascism and the press see: De Bernardi, A., Guarracino, S. (a cura di) *Il fascismo* Mondadori, Milano 1998 pp. 535-538
- 106 Gilson, M., Zubrzycki, J. Ibid pp. 41-42 It was the Committee to Review Foreign Language Newspapers, established in 1958 by the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council.
- 107 Even a superficial glimpse at the development of Italian language newspapers in Australia shows up to a variety of political connections, from the socialist *L'Avanguardia Libertaria* (1932) and the fascist *Il Corriere degli Italiani in Australia* (1928), to the current national weeklies *Il Globo* and *La Fiamma*, both conservative and connected to centre-right politics.
- 108 Clyne, M. (1991a) Op.cit. pp.145-146
- 109 *The Age* 7 October 1996
- 110 Clyne, M. Ibid pp153-154
- 111 33.3% of the Spanish speakers has formal educational qualifications compared to 23.2% of the Greek population; for more information on this topic see: Kipp, S et al *Immigration and Australia's Language Resources* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1995. pp 49-66

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- 112 The collection of books in Italian in the Fisher Library, at the University of Sydney, where the first Chair of Italian was established in 1963 surpasses by far that of, for instance Monash University, where the study of Italian was introduced about twenty years later.
- 113 Ozolins, U. *Interpreting and Translating and Language Policy: Report to the Language and Society Centre*, National Languages Institute of Australia, Melbourne 1991
- 114 McGilvray, B. *L'italiano e la NAATI nel New South Wales*. Unpublished final essay for the Master of Arts course in Italian Language. University of Sydney, February 1992
- 115 Ozolins *ibid.* p. 147
- 116 Some tertiary institutions involved in the preparation of interpreters/translators have been: Canberra University, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (now University of Technology), Deakin University, University of Wollongong, University of Western Sydney, University of Queensland and TAFES in various States. Unfortunately because of financial restrictions and difficulties in recruiting a viable number of students at the higher levels, often these courses struggle to survive or disappear altogether.
- 117 Blewett, J. and Gentile, A. 'The Provision of Interpreter/Translator Services in Australia, 1983' *The Australian Review of Applied Linguistics* Series 5, no.1 1984 pp. 45-62
- 118 National Accreditation Authority for Translator and Interpreters (NAATI) *Candidates' Manual* NAATI Canberra 1994. p.1
- 119 National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) *Levels of accreditation for translators and interpreters* AGPS, Canberra 1978 p 7
- 120 Blewett, J. *Interpreting and Translating in Australia. A Celebration of Ten Years* Paper given at the 8th World Congress of Applied Linguistics Sydney 1987
- 121 Interviews with senior practitioners Barbara McGilvray and Terry Chesher, Sydney, December 1999
- 122 Ozolins, U. 'Features of non-educational language policy in Australia' *Workshop on Community Language Policy in Australia and Europe* Melbourne, Monash University 26 November 1999
- 123 See Totaro M. (1988) *Op. cit.* pp. 97-102 for a detailed investigation of the topic.
- 124 Commonwealth Department of Education Research Report No. 3 *The Teaching of Modern Languages in Australian Schools:1975*. Canberra 1977.
- 125 Of particular interest is the case of the 1960 Wyndham Scheme in N.S.W. which, among a wide range of reforms, determined the exclusion of foreign languages from compulsory subjects in the curriculum
- 126 Wykes, O. *The Teaching of French in New South Wales and Victoria 1950-1958* M.Ed. Unpublished thesis 1958, University of Melbourne.
- 127 Committee on the Teaching of Migrant Languages in the Schools *Report* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1976
- 128 The associations represented were: Applied Linguistics Association of Australia; Australian Linguistic Society; Aboriginal Languages Association; Australian Association for the Teaching of English; Australian

Federation of Modern Languages Teachers Association and Australasian Universities Languages and Literature Association.

129 Clyne, M. (1991) Op. cit. pp 218-220

130 Ozolins, U. (1993) Op cit. p. 211

131 Djité P. G. (1994) Op. cit. p.16

132 Ozolins Ibid p. 212

133 The list of witnesses, number and names of the authors of the submissions appear in the Report by SSCEA *A National Language Policy* AGPS, Canberra 1984 pp. 235-246

134 Clyne, M. (1991) Op. cit. pp 220-223

135 See for South Australia: South Australia Education Department Languages Policy Working Party. Adelaide 1983 *Voices for the Future* and *Languages Policy* 1985. For Victoria : State Board of Education *The Place of Languages other than English in Victorian Schools* Melbourne 1985

136 It is worth mentioning in this context a few biographical notes about Joseph Lo Bianco. His case, in fact, seems to offer a meaningful close-up of the Italian community 'portrait' to appear in Chapter 8. J. Lo Bianco was born in 1954, of Calabrian parents and raised in rural North-Eastern Victoria. Like most Italo-Australians of his generation he spoke a dialect at home and learned English at school. He graduated in Economics and Politics at Monash University (Melbourne), where he also completed a Graduate Diploma of Migrant Studies, specialising in Bilingualism and Sociolinguistics. His Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics was done at the University of Melbourne. At the time when he was given the task of working out policies for the implementation of a language policy, he had been a member of Schools Commission and Adviser to the Ministry of Education in Victoria and had worked for the Victorian Department of Immigration and Ethnic Studies. Now he is chief executive of Language Australia Institute, at the Australian National University in Canberra, and visiting professor at the University of Wollongong.

137 Lo Bianco, J. *National Policy on Languages* AGPS, Canberra 1987

138 In typical Australian style a colleague of Lo Bianco commented on his efficiency in this as in other occasions by saying: 'Oh, he is a workoholic, a bloody good bloke, very bright, and, I suspect, he never sleeps.'

139 Lo Bianco, J. Ibid p.71

140 Di Biase, B. Dyson B. *Language Rights and the School* Filef, Sydney 1988 p32

141 Ibid p 31

142 Ibid p 49

143 To support research and initiatives relating to languages, four centres were established: for language and society Monash University; for language testing the University of Melbourne; for language acquisition the University of Sydney; and for language and Technology the University of Queensland.

144 Djité, P. Op. cit. p 20

145 *The Australian* September 10, 1997

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- 146 Victoria State Board of Education *The Place of Community Languages in Victorian Schools* 1984; *The Place of Languages other than English in Victorian Schools*. 1985
- 147 See next sub-chapter for further discussion of this point
- 148 Ministerial Advisory Council on Languages other than *English LOTE Report to the Minister Directorate of School Education, Melbourne* 1994 p 39
- 149 South Australian Department of Education *Linking People through Languages: Languages other than English in our Schools* S.A. Department of Education Adelaide.1990. Two other important documents defining the language policy of South Australia are: *Languages Policy: Educating for the 21st Century* and *System-Wide Management for the Provision of Languages other than English*
- 150 South Australian Institute of Languages *The Language Challenge: Tertiary Languages Planning - A Policy for South Australia* Adelaide 1990
- 151 Croft, K. Macpherson, R.J.S. 'The evolution of languages administrative policies in New South Wales: 1980-86' *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, Series S, no. 8, pp.89-108
- 152 Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales Op.cit. p76
- 153 New South Wales Department of Education and Youth Affairs *Excellence and Equity* Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs Sydney 1989
- 154 Board of Studies of New South Wales *Curriculum Requirements for NSW Schools* Sydney 1991
- 155 The six languages in question were: Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Spanish.
- 156 P-10 Language Education Framework 1989
- 157 LOTE Strategic Plan 1991
- 158 Languages other than English in ACT Government Schools 1990-2000
- 159 AACLAME *Report to the Minister for Employment Reducation and Training*, Canberra May 1990
- 160 Commonwealth Department of Education Research Branch Report no.3 *The Teaching of Modern Languages in Australian Schools: 1975*. AGPS, Canberra 1977; Commonwealth Department of Education *National Survey of Language Learning in Australian Schools:1983* AGPS, Canberra 1986
- 161 These percentages are quoted in Kipp et al *Immigration and Australia's Language Resources* AGPS Canberra 1995. p 7
- 162 Clyne, M. 'Australia's Language Policies are we going backwards?' *Current Affairs Bulletin* no. 8 November 1991. Two examples of international praise for Australia's record in language policies are quoted: Joshua Fishman identifying Australia's language policy as an example for the USA, and Europe's desire to look at Australia as the resolution of language problems within the European Union.
- 163 'Conversazione con Peter Robb' appears in the literary magazine *Nuovi Argomenti* n. 10 aprile-giugno 2000. The quotation is taken from the original English text, translated into Italian for the publisher Mondadori by the author of this thesis in collaboration with B. Mc Gilvray.

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- 164 Commonwealth Advisory Committee on the Teaching of Asian Languages and Culture in Australia
Report AGPS Canberra.1970
- 165 Department of Employment Education and Training *The Language of Australia* ('Green Paper') AGPS,
Canberra 1990
- 166 For a critical analysis of the *Green Paper* see: Moore, H. 'Enchantments and Displacements:
Multiculturalism, Language Policy and Dawkins-Speak'. *Melbourne Studies in Education* 1991. pp 45-85
- 167 Department of Employment Education and Training *Australia's Language* ('White Paper') AGPS,
Canberra 1991
- 168 The topic was discussed during conversations between Professor M. Clyne and the author in 2000.
- 169 The languages prioritised are: Aboriginal languages, Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Indonesian,
Italian, Japanese, Korean, Modern Greek, Russian Spanish, Thai and Vietnamese.
- 170 Di Biase, B. et al Op.cit
- 171 A critical analysis of the White Paper is offered by Clyne 1991(b) pp13-20
- 172 Department of Employment Education and Training *The Language of Australia* ('Green Paper') AGPS,
Canberra 1990 p15
- 173 Ibid p. 62
- 174 Djité, P.G Op. cit p.68
- 174 Ingram, D. Language Policy in the Context of Realising Human Rights and Maximising National
Development. *Language and Language Education: Working Papers of the National Languages and Literacy
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CHAPTER 8

Italian language and culture at the altro polo or the Australian experience

This chapter deals with the situation of Italian language in Australia. The selection of Australia as a focus has been determined by concomitant factors.

Firstly, while the appearance of the Italian language in some of the Australian education systems dates back to the 1930s, its presence becomes noticeable only from the post-Second World War period, on which this work focuses, and which also coincides with the bulk of Italian emigration to this country.

Secondly, Australia is one of the few immigrant nations in the world which has an explicit language policy that has earned international praise in recent years, a detail that makes the situation of Italian in this location unique in comparison to other places.

The third reason is practical: the writer of this thesis resides in Australia and over the years has worked extensively in the field of Italian studies.

While this position has widened the range of experiences and the availability of information, it has also been a compelling and powerful incentive to carry out a closer investigation of the topic.

8. 1 Italians: from typical emigrants to *excellent immigrants*

Italy's image as a country of emigrants remains deeply rooted in people's minds notwithstanding the fact that almost thirty years have passed since emigration stopped. The fact is that by the end of the Second World War, in addition to the twenty million people who had already departed, a further six million Italians uprooted themselves to settle away from their native land. Living proof of this extraordinary phenomenon are all Italians who are now established residents of other continents.

It is not surprising then that a reputation earned so conspicuously may persist even when denied by societal changes. On the other hand, because of the size and complexity of the emigration flux, Italy's relationship with other nations in the world continues to intersect with emigration-related issues inherited from the past, despite the fact that a full consciousness of the role emigration played in its history has been slow to develop. As convincingly pointed out and documented by an Italian scholar¹, only since the 1970s has the issue begun to produce appropriate scientific documentation. In addition, as Australian historian Richard Bosworth argues², Italian scholarship in the field, has remained 'with some honourable exceptions' disappointingly unable to free itself from the pressures of contemporary politics.

While historiography in this field may be seen as still deficient, some of the crucial questions about Italian emigrants can prove even harder to answer rigorously. For instance, to what extent have these million peoples' basic rights been fulfilled by the Italian State? One example may suffice, at least in regard to political participation: the claim to a vote for Italians living outside Europe has continued to be a topic of debate for the last fifty years³ and is still an unresolved dilemma⁴. That being the case, it is no surprise that issues such as language and culture access for Italian communities abroad have remained intertwined with foreign policy

matters; in fact they may be seen as a particularly complex aspect of it. In the past, though, anything related to emigrants seemed to pertain to a sphere of its own (see **Chapter 5**) and was confronted accordingly by successive Liberal and Fascist regimes. That is until the 1948 Constitution (as previously discussed) established a criterion of equality of treatment for all Italian citizens, implicitly including those residing away from their motherland. Alternating political coalitions in government, on the other hand, have been very slow in implementing those very democratic principles on which the Italian Republic is based.

Issues of the spread of Italian language have consequently come to be considered from a twofold perspective: on the one hand as related in general to Italian emigrants living abroad, on the other as part of a different domain of Italy's relationships with foreign countries, an area involving the need to foster and facilitate cultural interaction too, but on a different level and as a separate task. The presence of Italian communities in most continents, however, could not be ignored and the balancing of the two spheres has continued to represent not only a worldwide issue, but one in need of diversified solutions. Because time and stage of settlement of these communities in different parts of the world play a role too, each situation appears distinct from the others. The case of Australia thus needs to be looked at in its own right, focusing in the first instance, on Italians who live in this country.

In September 1996 John Howard, Liberal Prime Minister of Australia, addressing participants at a Conference in Perth⁵, stated that Italians must be regarded as models of multiculturalism: they are good citizens, he proclaimed, who however have successfully kept their identity and culture. His words paraphrased what the Labor Minister for Immigration, Senator Nick Bolkus, had said two years earlier⁶. Let us decode these flattering remarks, which might almost be considered a commonplacif politicians on opposite sides affirm on the same concepts. What follows is only an 'identikit' of Italians in Australia, based on the data

available⁷. This group picture, simply attempts to identify the main characteristics of the community as a whole, at the same time highlighting those aspects that are particularly relevant for the scope of this work. In fact there is by now a substantial body of studies⁸ on the topic of Italian residents of this country on which to draw for detailed knowledge of specific issues.

Since the 1950s Italians have been the largest group of non Anglo-Celtic origin populating the country. This explains the politicians' interest in their behaviour. Their presence peaked in 1971 and has decreased ever since. According to the 1996 Census, Italy-born people⁹ number is 238, 300. They are now outnumbered by the second generations 334, 000, that is by those born in Australia who have one or both parents born in Italy and third generation having one or more grandparents born there too (but census 1996 does not include information about this latter group). Officially the Italian community of Australia thus includes 572 300 individuals, if the first and second generations only are included in the count¹⁰.

A next stage in the history of the community is now beginning: that of the third generation or those having at least one grandparent born in Italy. Among Italians the rate of acquired citizenship appears higher among those who have lived in Australia over a longer period, in other words there is a direct connection between the period of residence and loyalty to the host country. According to the 1996 Census the rate of Australian citizenship for the Italy-born was 77.9%, but 79% for those with a period of residence above 15 years. It is not the highest rate registered among non-English speaking immigrant groups, but sufficient to please those in government.

Italians' average income is lower than that of the Australian population, however the percentage of those owning their own house is much higher than that of Australians (1991 Census 72.4% versus 41%). As for employment, the highest number of Italo-Australians work

in the services sector, with a high employment rate if the group close to retirement is excluded from the calculation. In fact in 1996 the proportion of unemployed among Italians was notably lower than that of all overseas-born people. In comparison to the average for all Australians, however, the latest data show a higher rate of unemployment in the 45-64 age group - men and women included - possibly as a result of retrenchment suffered by blue collar workers, among which they were mostly represented during the period of economic changes in Australia. This is just one of the consequences that the aging of people of Italian origin is having on their situation within Australian society.

One more point deserves comment, again on the basis of census data. Although in 1996 only 4.8% of Italy-born migrants hold a university degree in comparison with 16.7% of the Australian population, 43% of second generation Italians had attained formal or professional qualifications, up from 37% in 1991. The second generation continues to improve its educational qualifications, as proved by the fact that the percentage of the original emigrants from Italy having some form of educational or occupational qualifications was 26.4% in 1996.

Italians *as a group* not only are appreciative of what the host country offers them, but have earned their reputation as hard workers. While not among the wealthiest people in Australia, they appear to value solid investments: a home for their family and education for their children. In fact the second generation is better trained and showing upward mobility (thus heading to a better future) than the previous one. In a consumer society like ours, it is refreshing that politicians show an inclination to praise a group of settlers characterised by tenacity and frugality and who are by now a well established and active component of multicultural Australia.

As the current Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Philip Ruddock, reiterated recently:

It is well known that the Italy-born community has contributed enormously to Australia since many of them arrived in the 1950s and the 1960s. Most had little formal education or skills but worked long hours in blue-collar occupations.[...]The first generation has paved the way for their children, who have been upwardly mobile in both education and employment¹¹.

In the late 19th century when the first emigrants started to travel from Italy to the southern hemisphere, they were greeted as follows:

The Italians have come to this country, not at the instance (sic) of this Government, but owing to adverse circumstances beyond their own control. Seeing the distress to which they were reduced, the Government offered them shelter and food for a short time [...]the only object being to assist them in their misfortunes. [...]They need for their own welfare to get some knowledge of the English language and learn the way of the English people[...]¹²,

In the late 1990s they were singled out by Australian Government officials as a model for all newcomers to the country: Italians have come a long way. Their achievements and failures can, of course, be evaluated in different ways according to the terms of comparison. But if it is true that emigration is also a learning process, *una scuola dell'intelligenza*, Italians in Australia, especially if we remember their undeniably humble starting point, seem on the whole to have learnt their lesson.

8. 2 Factual /actual aspects of the integration of the Italian community in Australia

If we take as a starting point the discovery of gold in Australia which attracted enough Italians to the goldfields of Victoria to form a small community in that State, the process of integration of Italians into Australian society has now reached by now the respectable age of one and half

centuries. However, it would probably be more reasonable to adopt as a reference point the Australian Census of 1901 for an official record of the Italian presence in Australia, the figure being 5678 Italian-born. Other calculations referring to the same year, however, also take into account Italians who had not registered and the people born at the time to Italy-born parents, thus indicating a higher but approximate number of 7000. According to this second calculation, the Italian settlement is about one hundred years old.

On the other hand the bulk of the Italian emigration to Australia took place later, in the period following the Second World War, and continued until the 1970s. From this viewpoint the Italian presence in this country becomes noticeable only at that later stage, as does its interaction with the host country. These considerations are not irrelevant if we want to understand and evaluate the Italian community's process of settlement into and current standing in today's Australian society.

It is a fact that Italians are still the second largest group of former immigrants in Australia, after the settlers of British background; by now they are no longer newcomers and are regarded as an integral component of the political, cultural and economic texture of Australian society. The issue of integration however remains current, in the sense that it still needs monitoring in the presence of factors such as globalisation, faster communication systems, professional mobility, the demands of which continue to influence the entire population. In fact the very issue of cultural identity within a multiethnic society such as Australia can be affected by contemporary societal evolution in the global context and consequently continues to need revision. In addition, as the second generation of Italo-Australians reaches adulthood, values, needs, experiences, and hence attitudes to life change in comparison to those of the first Italy-born settlers. New patterns of behaviour may be observed among the members¹³ of

this group, who are starting to show a different orientation to life and, most importantly, to have diverse expectations for their future.

It has been remarked that the movement away from 'traditional Italian culture' is evident in regard to second generation Italo-Australians and is likely to increase for those of the third generation. The question is, however, which traditional Italian culture are we referring to? That of the migrants who left Italy fifty years ago? In this case the same observation could apply to the intergenerational differences characterising Italians in Italy. The type of and shift in mentality and lifestyle of young people of Italian origin appears worthy of more accurate investigation, especially – as far as the Italian Government is concerned- in regard to these people's attitude to and interest in the culture and language of their parents' homeland.

The process of transformation that the Italian community in Australia is experiencing, however, is being slowly but increasingly acknowledged by local organisations representing Italians abroad, such as the *Comitato Generale degli Italiani all'Estero* (CGIE) Australia. Implications and consequences of this evolving approach in relation to culture and language promotion and other aspects of cultural relations will be examined in detail later.

But how have relations between Italy and Australia proceeded so far, especially in fields of particular interest for the Italian immigrants?

International cooperation between Australia and Italy, according to official documents¹⁴, appears to have progressed reasonably well over time, especially in the areas of social security, health and cultural cooperation. However one of the issues, for which improvement and further collaboration is sought between the Italian and Australian authorities, is the management of the section of the Italian community which has reached retirement age, a group of almost 100.000 people¹⁵.

To take an example from the foreseeable difficulties, it appears that the proportion of individuals (especially women) aged 65 and over with a low level of English competence is as high as 62%, with an additional 12 % unable to *communicate* in English¹⁶. The issue of community services having to provide home care in a not too distant future becomes particularly complex in regard to potential beneficiaries unable to communicate adequately in English. The data acquires even more social significance if we consider that the majority of Italy born people have a lower income than other overseas born persons as well as Australians in general¹⁷. Notwithstanding the considerable achievements in the field of language services of the last twenty years in Australia, there are still critical issues in need of careful monitoring.

In regard to social security it is expected that the next bilateral agreement will be implemented within the first half of the year 2000. Among the issues it will cover there is still the controversial recognition of educational and professional qualifications which is still prominent and in need of solutions.

Meanwhile the field of professional development and vocational training is regulated by ad hoc Italian legislation¹⁸: specific updated proposals for Italians in Australia are formulated within the annual reports of CGIE to the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs¹⁹.

In regard to trade with Australia, Italy is third after Great Britain and Germany among importing nations from the European Union, while it occupies the 11th position when all other countries are taken into account. In terms of exports to Australia, Italy is 13th worldwide and second after Britain within the European Union.

From this panoramic picture focusing on some of the major and relevant aspects, , it is fair to conclude that while the process of integration of the Italian community in Australia is well

under way, there still is ample space for further development, or more precisely for continuing to update government intervention to suit current but still changing needs.

As for the particular issue of language and culture rights, temporarily left aside while examining other aspects of the integration of Italians in Australia, because of its major relevance within this study it will be dealt with in further detail later.

8.3 Australia's Italians and their language(s)

Currently Italian is the most widely used community language in Australia. The 1996 Census shows that 2.3% of the entire population of Australia speaks Italian at home as against 1.6 % speaking Greek and 1.2% Cantonese.²⁰ Data from the 1996 Census later analysed in the publication *Community Profiles Italy-born* show that the percentage of Italy-born people speaking Italian at home fell from 87.7% in 1991 to 83.7% in 1996. As for the second generation, 57.9% within this group reported speaking English only at home (in 1991 the figure was 49.6%).

Overall, fewer Italian-born people and second generation Italo-Australians speak their community language at home than in 1991²¹. This is not surprising: the first generation is ageing and thus numerically decreasing, while at the same time the shift to English is increasing considerably and irreversibly among the Australian born group²².

As would be expected, the Italian language is spoken more widely in States where the Italian communities are larger. As reported in *Community Profile 1996 Census* Italian is most likely to be spoken in Victoria 86% by Italy- born, followed by South Australia (85.2%), New South

Wales (82.7%), Western Australia (82.4%), Australian Capital Territory (76.9%), Queensland (74.6%), Northern Territory (71.3%) and Tasmania (68.5%).

But what has been the relationship between Italians in Australia and the language of their country of origin?

From 1947 until the early 1970s the number of Italian immigrants in Australia has steadily grown, peaking in 1971. For statistical purposes no distinction is made between standard language, regional varieties and dialects; consequently in answering official surveys all Italy-born people nominate²³ Italian as their mother tongue. The reality however is more complex. As recently as 1950, it must be remembered, the percentage of Italians in Italy using the standard language exclusively was only 18%²⁴. Twenty years later, the proportion of home dialect speakers was still 51.3%²⁵. It is also a fact that the majority of Italian-born people in Australia left school before the age of 16.²⁶ Keeping in mind the sociolinguistic situation of Italy from the postwar years to the 1970s - that is when emigration was at its highest peak - there is little doubt that its immigrants to Australia spoke essentially dialects²⁷ or regional varieties of the standard language at home. The consequences of this situation for Italian teaching in schools will be looked at later.

Because of these specific circumstances Italian language maintenance has been particularly problematic in terms of the gap existing between home variety and standard Italian taught in the education system. In addition, as shown by some researchers, the negative attitude of Italians themselves towards linguistic varieties used within the community is not conducive to language maintenance²⁸. As time goes by and the numbers in the generations of those born in Italy diminish, Italian speaking in the community is bound to decrease even further as Census data are in fact showing.

The 'community language' definition in reference to the Italian language in Australia, however, is likely to persist for longer than social customs would justify. It is, after all, a reflection of the image of Italian as a language of migration, and images endure in the collective consciousness regardless of statistics. Two doctoral theses, the first by Antonia Rubino at the University of Sydney in 1993, the second by Francesco Cavallaro at Monash University in 1997, and a 1996 study by Bettoni and Rubino²⁹, although coming from different angles, all point to an inevitable decrease of Italian language usage within the community. That this phenomenon represents a liability for Italian language survival in Australia can be inferred - even leaving aside theoretical investigations - on the basis of the everyday experience in families of Italian origin, the writer's family being an example³⁰.

In addition, it appears that as recent studies show, language shift is a universal phenomenon rather than being ethnically determined³¹. The diminishing usage of Italian among the Italian communities - but at different paces and in different ways - may be largely explained as part of the role played by the dominant culture. Preserving Italian for the future in the Australian context may depend on other issues³² and on strategies other than those aimed at its preservation as a 'community language'. Adequate policies, both local³³ and originated by the Italian Government, are consequently a factor of paramount importance in this situation.

8. 4 The Italian Government and Italian language issues in Australia

First of all it should be remembered that it was following the implementation of Italian legislation on migrants' educational rights (L153/1971: **Chapter 4**) that most activities of Italian community-based language organisations came to be financed by the Italian Government from the early 1970s. The need to provide language maintenance to children of

Italian background, however, was felt at a much earlier stage among the members of the Italian community in Australia themselves. It appears that in Melbourne as early as 1928-29 a hall called *Circolo Cavour* provided the first venue for teaching Italian to immigrant children.

The lack of a similar resource in Sydney delayed the beginning of any similar initiative until March 1932, when a group of volunteers passionately committed to the cause of preserving and transmitting Italian language and culture to the younger generation, managed to persuade the parish priest of Saint Columba's Church in Woolloomooloo to allow the use of the church hall to be used for Italian courses³⁴, as reported in a poignant account of the time by an eyewitness, Enoe Di Stefano, who later became secretary and president of Italian Co.As.It. in Sydney from 1968 to 1983

It is not easy to describe how inconvenient it was to attend classes, or how determined one had to be as a pupil or even as a teacher or organiser [of these courses]. There were hardly any textbooks, and in most cases two or three children had to follow the lessons reading from the same book. In the Saint Columba's Hall there were no desks and not enough chairs, so that children had to sit on the floor. Teachers had to work without pay because the Italian Consulate had no subsidy available for such initiatives. [...] In 1934 courses were moved to the venue of the Associazione Isole Eolie, at Wharf 1 Circular Quay. [...] One could not say that there was a teaching program...children were divided into two groups according to their language competence. Teachers in those days had no training [...], most of them had just an Italian primary school certificate, but largely because of their inclination and/or inspiration they spoke the Italian language correctly and passed it onto their pupils³⁵.

The outbreak of World War II in 1940 put an abrupt end to all Italian initiatives in the field of language and culture maintenance. Italians in fact became officially 'enemies' on Australian ground and swiftly came to experience the consequences of that status. As many Italo-Australians who were young in the 1940s have pointed out, they were deprived in two ways of access to the language and culture of their country of origin, firstly as a result of the war and

secondly as a direct result of the White Australia Policy during that whole period when authorities chose to remain insensitive to migrants' needs.

For the years following the end of the Second World War there is no official record of Italian language classes for migrant children along the lines of those started between the early 1920s and early 1930s.

As by Di Stefano³⁶ again accurately reports prior to the establishment of CoAsIt in the late 1960s, Italian language and culture courses appeared sporadically in some Catholic Schools in Sydney, in areas with a high density of Italian migrants, for instance one Leichhardt in 1962 and soon after another in Paddington. Later these Italian classes spread to other suburbs where Italians were living. In most cases parents were the initiators, Catholic orders such as the *Cappuccini*, the *Scalabriniani* and the *Benedettini* became involved in running them because through the school system they were alerted to the fact that migrant children were unable to learn their own home language. These religious orders thus attempted to provide some continuity and guidance for initiatives offering Italian language tuition outside school hours. Classes were held weekly on Saturday mornings or afternoons in several Catholic schools and in Italian clubs or private halls.

The difficulties cited for the pioneering courses of the early 1930s were still current, and the lack of assistance by Italian consular authorities increased the dependence on the good will of a relatively small number of motivated individuals, so that the survival of these community initiatives was constantly in doubt and subject to unexpected and , undesirable changes whenever one of their supporters had to give up his/her voluntary commitment to the cause for personal reasons³⁷.

In Melbourne in the early 1960s the *Lega Italo-Australiana* had tried to establish Italian teaching for primary level children in Brunswick and a few years later, following the *Primo*

Congresso dei Docenti d'Italiano in Australia held at the Italian Embassy in Canberra in 1967, the need to arrange a teaching program for children of Italian migrants was formally discussed at a Dante Alighieri Society meeting³⁸. Shortly afterwards Italian classes outside school hours were initiated by this organisation in Ascot Vale, Clayton and Werribee. By 1969 they had become very successful and were attracting a growing number of children. In 1971 the Dante Alighieri Society, encouraged by the success of this initiative conducted a new experiment by offering courses of Italian as part of the curriculum at primary level during school hours³⁹. These classes, called insertion courses, *Corsi d'inserimento*, started to be subsidised by the Italian Government under the previously quoted Legge 151/1971; their success and rapid spread in Victoria, especially in the Catholic schools, had an important consequence:

By the mid 1970s, [...] the Dante had emerged as by far the largest provider, and received a lion's share of Italian Government subsidies in Australia⁴⁰

In fact as funds had began to flow on a regular basis from the Directorate General of Emigration of MAE to Italian welfare organisations in Australia, to offer 'scholastic assistance' for Italians in Australia, the Melbourne Dante Alighieri Society had found itself in the ideal position to become a recipient for this financial support.

Meanwhile, under the patronage of the Italian government, the *Comitati Assistenza Italiani* (Co.As.It.), Committees of Welfare for Italians, had been established between 1967 and 1968 in Melbourne and in Sydney. These organisations too began to organise free Saturday morning Italian language classes for the benefit of Italian migrant children⁴¹, and consequently to bid for the funds that had become available.

This is crucial to an understanding of why Co.As.It. was able to provide an already established network when community languages entered the primary school sector within the Ethnic Schools Program on the wave of multicultural policies. Since the early 1970s Italian

Government financial contribution together with other forms of support for the Italian teaching in Australia has continued steadily, as we shall see later. Let us now consider more closely the role played by CoAsIt, which administers approximately two thirds of the Italian funds for the promotion of Italian language teaching in Australia.

8.5 Comitato Assistenza Italiani (CoAsIt): genesis and role

The establishment in Australia of welfare and educational committees, *Comitati Assistenza Italiani* (CoAsIt), for Italian migrants occurred in the late 1960s; these institutions, however, already existed in most European countries where Italian emigrants had settled in large numbers. It has been suggested⁴² that the catalyst for their establishment in Australia was the visit, in September 1967, by Giuseppe Saragat, then President of the Italian Republic. It was a novel event for the Italian community and a welcome one too, as no Italian Head of State had ever visited Australia before. On that occasion an informal agreement between Italy and Australia was signed in Canberra, with the aim of starting to improve the integration of Italians who had migrated here.

Others sources quote⁴³ as the main reason behind the foundation of CoAsIts in Australia, an Italian Law of 1967 that allowed consular authorities to encourage the creation of associations of mutual support. It is feasible however to suggest that both factors provided an incentive for the establishment of Co.As.It. organisations in Melbourne and Sydney and soon after in other States. It also appears that Co.As.It. in Melbourne managed to become less dependent on the Italian Government than its counterpart in Sydney. The Melbourne organisation in fact succeeded in developing a network of contacts with local authorities, possibly because in that

city some high profile members of the large Italian community⁴⁴ took on themselves voluntary responsibilities in the organisation and helped to establish contacts.

Late in the 1970s Co.As.It. initiated formal links with the Italian Socialist Trade Union Federation, *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* (UIL) and with private foundations in Australia which contributed financially to its activities. Australian Government funds were also soon obtained in addition to those provided by the Italian Government although in smaller proportions, and fund raising activities among the communities of local Italians helped substantially to sustain the operations of the organisation especially at the beginning.

As has been rightly observed, Co.As.It.'s approach in its operations is inspired by two main principles the first being that it is important to preserve social cohesion, and secondly that 'pragmatically it is more cost-effective for the Australian government to fund semi-voluntary organisations than deliver welfare services itself'⁴⁵

From the original welfare assistance and teaching of the Italian language to Italian-background children, the operations of Co.As.It. gradually expanded⁴⁶ to become both more diversified and more specific in their aims. Consequently the organisation has succeeded in attracting further and steady financial support from the Australian Federal and State Governments, possibly also because of its moderate and traditional approach to work and related issues. In addition it has continued to attract funds from the Italian Government to provide educational assistance to Italian workers and their families, as required by the legislation of March 1971 mentioned above.

One of the two main areas⁴⁷ of expansion (and influence) of Co.As.It. has been and still is that of Italian language teaching, an activity which is worthy of detailed discussion for the purposes of this study.

As illustrated earlier (Chapter 7), after the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in late 1975, the philosophy of multiculturalism was embraced by the Fraser Government, but it was somehow reshaped with the concept of cultural pluralism becoming prominent and being directly and indirectly promoted. The shift from policies oriented towards ethnic minorities rights and demands to that of promoting multicultural education for the benefit of the whole population saw language maintenance becoming part of the wider aim of advancing cultural understanding and respect for all the various cultures present in Australia, rather than being pursued in itself as an issue of social justice. When the Ethnic Schools Program was established⁴⁸ it supported ethnic organisations in the task of providing language maintenance opportunities but through operations outside the school system. While on the one hand language maintenance for migrant children was acknowledged as a core element of multicultural education, on the other its implementation was relegated to a place outside mainstream school programs.

This move was seen and later criticised by some as a failure 'to recognise the central role of the day school system in catering for language maintenance'⁴⁹. In fact, at the time, the Commonwealth Schools Commission insisted that language maintenance activities be offered after school hours essentially because particular migrant groups would benefit from it rather than entire Australian community.

Australians, we have suggested previously, strongly support the ethic of the 'fair go', which covers two distinct meanings. The first is explicit: everybody in society ought to be offered a chance to do well in life. The second is less apparent but is a corollary of the first: fairness does not allow giving special privileges to anybody. So, it can be inferred, while it appeared appropriate to accept and even retain the languages and cultures of the 'new Australians', the whole idea had to be kept within the accepted notion that no special treatment would be given

to that section of the population. Nowadays a similar attitude prevails among the majority of Australians in regard to what ought to be done/not done for the Aborigines. Strict limitations seem to apply especially when public money is involved, regardless of any other consideration (e.g. past unfair actions causing current problems), and governments are sensitive to and tend to comply with their electorate's mood.

In the case of the Ethnic Schools Programme, however, not all those involved in it agreed with its prevailing philosophy and, in particular, the major Italian institutions involved in the issue of Italian language teaching had developed a rather different conviction.

It must be remembered that since its establishment in Victoria, Co.As.It had been involved in organising Italian language and culture classes following the example set by the Dante Alighieri Society, which at that stage was still responsible for migrants' education⁵⁰. After Italian legislation in favour of Italian migrants came to be implemented in 1972, financial support for migrants' education was allocated on a regular basis to the institutions involved in it, thus allowing a gradual expansion of their field of action. By the middle 1970s the Dante Alighieri had already managed to initiate a few Italian classes during school hours in a small number of Melbourne schools, for example at Camberwell Primary School, in addition to after-hours courses.

In December 1978 the Dante Alighieri ceased its activities relating to Italian language promotion in the schools and remained involved only in Italian teaching for adults. The move was the result of a decision of the Society's Council. After protracted debate deeply involving its members it was decided that 'owing to the unsatisfactory financing⁵¹ of the scheme by the Italian Government, and the hostility towards the Dante's role among Italian Community organisations' the *Corsi d'inserimento* and after-school children's classes would be transferred to the newly formed Italo-Australian Education Foundation. This Foundation was a non profit

company directed by an Italian lawyer, Luciano Bini, former treasurer and future president of the Dante, together with Carlo Valmorbida and Justice James Gobbo. The foundation later merged with Co.As.It. . When in the early 1980s the Head of the Institute of the Australian Multicultural Affairs, Petro Giorgio initiated negotiations with the Federal Government to have funds allocated to language maintenance initiatives, i.e. to use ethnic school funding for insertion classes in mainstream schools, the fact that there were some already established Italian language courses within school hours was brought to his attention by Co.As.It. . In 1971 the Dante Alighieri Society, had conducted a new experiment by introducing courses of Italian as part of the curriculum at primary level during school hours, in St Gabriel Catholic School in Reservoir. The success of the program and thus its expansion had allowed the Dante Alighieri to bid successfully for Italian Government funds and support, and thus to become the first provider of 'the first such Italian Government sponsored programme of educational outreach in a migrant community'⁵²

The initiative of the Dante Alighieri proved to be exemplary for Co.As.It., and the notion that teaching Italian during school hours was by far preferable to after-school courses became prevalent within the organisation. In regard to this issue Sir James Gobbo, President of Co.As.It. at the time, stated:

As President of Co.As.It in Victoria, I have had the opportunity to be closely involved in the Ethnic Schools Programme. When that programme started the Commonwealth Schools Commission wanted to have the teaching of ethnic or community languages relegated entirely to an after-hours activity. It saw the programme primarily as directed to language maintenance for particular migrant groups, with a secondary but limited role of improving community relations. At CoAsIt we took the strong view that it would be narrow and retrogressive for the programme to be confined purely to after-hours teaching. It would have separated out the children of Italian migrants and resulted in many ways in a poorer programme, both educationally and certainly in terms of improving community relations. In spite of the opposition of the bureaucrats, we were able to persuade the Government of the day that it would be in the best

interests of all Australians if the programme could be used for what were called insertion classes, which would form part of the ordinary curriculum of the school. As a result we saw much greater growth in the teaching of Italian, but more particularly, we saw it as a community language that was available to all⁵³.

Gobbo's account of the events that determined the decision and subsequent success of Co.As.It. in promoting insertion classes in mainstream schools, rather than Saturday schools is corroborated by declarations of the current Co.As.It. Director, Giancarlo Martini-Piovano, who in 1981 was himself a member of the Co.As.It. Committee overseeing the matter under discussion⁵⁴.

Once the Federal Government had agreed to allocate funds⁵⁵ for insertion classes in addition to the funding for after-hours teaching, recalls Martini-Piovano, Co.As.It. boldly decided to write to all schools suggesting they include Italian in their daytime school hours programmes *for free*. It was a risky venture, *correvamo un grosso rischio*, he said, but Co.As.It. had come to the conclusion that the money allocated would be sufficient to proceed with the plan, even if it was not yet clear whether or not the Government would put a ceiling on its promised funding. That decision, as we will see, would result in Italian becoming the most widely taught language in Catholic schools as well as in State Primary Schools.

Co.As.It. addressed the schools directly, ignoring any caution and without consulting, for instance, the Catholic Education Office (CEO). This latest move did not exactly please the CEO, who objected to the initiative in principle, mainly because there was not a sufficient number of qualified teachers to carry out with the project. Co.As.It. then promised to take upon itself the responsibility of organising teachers' qualifications within four to five years maximum and thus the consent of the CEO, a most important partner in the enterprise, given that a large majority of Italian children attend Catholic schools.

From 1982 onward various agreements with Victorian universities have resulted in the provision of qualifying courses⁵⁶ for teachers of Italian. Meanwhile the Department of Education has become also involved in the professional development of this group of teachers. According to the Director of Melbourne Co.As.It. only qualified teachers may now be employed by his organisation, unlike in the initial years of the insertion classes program⁵⁷. This policy has been accepted and implemented by the Sydney Co.As.It. too, so that at present the teachers employed by the organisation have the qualifications required by the NSW Department of Education⁵⁸.

The Melbourne Co.As.It. insertion classes initiative was followed by similar schemes in other States, but not without difficulties. New South Wales in particular appeared reluctant initially and negotiations required the intervention and mediation of an Italian Member of the Upper House, the Hon. Franca Arena, to overcome objections and avoid dangerous divisions within the Co.As.Its in the various States⁵⁹.

In addition, the Department of Education in NSW in the first place objected to insertion classes on the assumption that other ethnic groups might ask for similar provisions, so its officials had to be gradually persuaded that different groups do not necessarily share the same approach to the issue of language maintenance. Some sections of the Greek community, for instance, have proved keen to keep language maintenance under the patronage of their religious organisations, so there was no reason to be concerned about the new initiative. At present 50% of the funding of the Ethnic Schools Programme, which is based on a per capita calculation, still goes to Italian tuition in Co.As.It. run courses. As for the Italian Government's funding, two thirds of it goes to Co.As.It. for the same purpose.

Insertion classes have been also criticised for not having a substantial teaching program to offer and thus often ended up by constituting a stop-gap device for the schools involved.

Resources and teaching materials were scarce especially in the beginning, and this problem combined with the fact that teachers of Italian - many of which originally had insufficient qualifications - spent a very limited amount of time in the schools running insertion courses, contributed to marginalising the whole program. While the issue of teachers qualifications has been consistently addressed and improvements have occurred in the area of teaching materials, the issue was and still is controversial: time allocation for insertion classes. Hours for studying Italian in these courses vary from a maximum of two hours thirty minutes (mainly in State schools) to a minimum of one hour (in most Catholic schools). Other

According to 1998 data⁶⁰, there were 140, 943 students of Italian in Victorian primary schools at the time. For other Australian States, the total enrolments are respectively:

44, 813 in NSW, 23, 667 in Queensland, 26, 152 in South Australia, 44, 147 in Western Australia, 3696 in ACT, 1357 in the NT⁶¹.

Italian Government funding since 1972, however, was originally directed towards fulfilling the educational needs of Italian workers abroad and their families, *assistenza scolastica per lavoratori italiani all'estero e loro congiunti*. As discussed earlier (See Chapter 4) the legislation had been passed at a stage when Italian migration had already ceased and new needs, problems and issues were by then developing among Italian communities abroad.

Law 153/1971, however 'born obsolete', kept funds flowing for the benefit of Italians abroad.

[...]a major factor should be taken into account in evaluating the particular case of Italian as a community language in Australia: that is the very considerable assistance provided by the Italian Government [...]for both the teaching of Italian in Australia and Italian cultural programmes generally.[...] the Ethnic Schools Programme funding would never have sufficed but for the limited but indispensable funding provided by the Italian Government⁶².

Co.As.It.'s strategy of pushing for insertion classes managed to please the Australian Government of the time as the initiative was consistent with its brand of multiculturalism (and was also supported by money from Italy). On the other hand it satisfied the Italian Government which was eager above all else to have Italian language included in the school curricula rather than relegated outside that domain.

Did any of the two parties anticipate future developments of that decision? Did the Australian authorities envisage the extraordinary increase in the number of primary school children participating in Italian insertion classes and consequently the extent of their commitment? Was the Italian Government aware of the fact that the exponential growth of Italian teaching at primary level was linked to a shift from being language maintenance-orientated tuition to classes which would only foster familiarisation with and awareness of the language and culture?

We are unlikely to find an objective answer to this question as both sides would defend the positive outcomes of the phenomenon rather than focusing on negative consequences. From a management point of view, Co.As.It.'s commitment to expanding its insertion courses, regardless of criticism from various sources originated from the fact that more students meant steady government funds allocated both by the Italian⁶³ and the Australian authorities. As highlighted by Di Biase and Dyson:

Despite the inherent weakness of the insertion classes mode, this is the only element of the multicultural education budget that increased dramatically during the first half of the eighties[...]⁶⁴

Fifteen years later Italian insertion courses are still in place on the basis of the original approach which saw them started. Some of the problems regarding the whole of the initiative have been progressively addressed, for example teacher training. Others remain untackled, for

example the insufficient time allocated to language learning, or the consequences for background Italian speakers of being taught with pure beginners, and - as it will be discussed later - the poor student retention rates from primary to secondary.

As openly suggested by Co.As.It.'s present Melbourne Director⁶⁵, nowadays the criticism addressed to the manner in which funds are allocated by the 1971 Italian Law is as unwavering as before. However, in the absence of the desired law reform, a very broad interpretation of the wording of that law is accepted, allowing its financial provisions to be used for a variety of scopes ranging from 'adult Italian language education in Washington to insertion classes in Melbourne....'⁶⁶. In fact while the majority of students in insertion classes (80%) are not of Italian background⁶⁷ and thus money originally destined to migrants provides Italian classes for children of any origin; neither the Italian nor the Australian Government objects to this specific point, although their reasons for this not necessarily coincide.

Co.As.It. members also say that depending on geographical area there may be variations in the activities of the organisation. For instance Sydney's Co.As.It., according to its current president, emphasises the importance of team work and is less hierarchically structured than its Melbourne counterpart⁶⁸. Also the Co.As.It.'s interaction with the respective State Governments and Educational Institutions may vary, but the issue of insertion classes is, unanimously accepted everywhere by all parties involved.

Late in 1988 the Sydney President of Co.As.It. described its approach over the previous two decades as 'directed to ensuring that the well being, aspirations and rights of the individuals that make up the Italian community are accepted and recognised within the broader framework of Australian society [in a] new, dynamic multicultural Australia'⁶⁹.

Ten years later the Sydney Co.As.It.'s latest Annual Report in fact lists three major areas of involvement:

- a) Community Services (including a variety of programs for the aged, youth programs, drug programs, mental health, a grief project etc)
- b) Education (teaching activities, professional development for teachers of Italian, Italian multimedia resource centre etc)
- c) The Italian Heritage Program, aiming to raise community interest in research, to collect and preserve information relating to Italians in NSW

Meanwhile the 1999 Annual Report of Melbourne Co.As.It. in addition to documenting its work and commitments also states that the organisation's aims include:

- reinforcing its role as a service provider in respect of Italian language and culture;
- becoming the coordinating agency for the linguistic and cultural investment of both Italy and Australia;
- becoming a training provider in new areas;
- assisting the Italian Australian Community in developing new skills and new links with Italy and the European Union⁷⁰.

By comparing the above parallel reports it is reasonable to infer that Co.As.It. in Melbourne sets for itself precise and ambitious goals for the future, while no explicit official statement on the subject of future aims is released in the Sydney Co.As.It.'s document.

There is nothing in these annual reports which could be considered contradictory to the original aims of the association, however, they illustrate the way the two largest Co.As.Its in Australia have evolved over time, as a reflection of the process of change characterising the

Italian community itself as supported by the analysis of census data provided in the volume *Community Profiles- 1996 Census-Italy Born*.

Whether the current transformation of Co.As.It. means that past inadequacies in the work of the organisation have been fully addressed or present problems resolved is not within the scope of this study. In fact an efficient monitoring of this Italo-Australian organisation may prove fairly difficult in practice.

In 1999 Luigi Scalfaro, then President of the Italian Republic, visited the premises of Co.As.It. in Melbourne.

Of particular interest was the fact that the President was greeted on the footpath outside Co.As.It. by a group of children from Elsternwick Primary School waving Italian flags. So far as we know, none of them had any particular Italian connection other than that they were studying Italian at school with a Co.As.It. teacher. The President expressed delight at a group of Australian children singing the Italian national anthem under a sunny Australian sky⁷¹.

The situation described somehow symbolises the current state of this Italian institution in multicultural Australia on the threshold of the new millennium. Co.As.It., locally based and delivering ethno-specific services to Australians of Italian origin, stands out because of its successful activities. It represents a well established reference point for the Italian authorities from the other hemisphere because its work is carried out in accordance with the formal structure of Italy's legislation on cultural cooperation with foreign countries.

The scene is charming and bathed in bright sunlight, young Australian children singing a patriotic Italian hymn, and smiling people crowding around a delighted visiting Head of State. As in any sunny picture hardly any shadows are detectable, regardless of their potential existence in physical reality.

But let us now examine more closely some other significant events that have interacted with the situation illustrated above, especially in regard to Italian language spread in Australian society.

8.6 The first Cultural Agreement between Italy and Australia

In its pursuit of cultural cooperation Italy has stipulated bilateral cultural agreements with a large number of countries. All these pacts date back to the years following World War II, the period when:

[...]cultural relations were providing too significant an element of foreign policy for foreign officers not to become involved⁷².

The oldest cultural agreement on the MAE record is that with Belgium on 12 July 1949 and the most recent is with Singapore on 6 March 1996.

The first bilateral agreement of cultural cooperation between Australia and Italy was signed in Rome on 8 January 1975 by Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam and Aldo Moro. Its implementation began on May 28 1975.

The document opens by saying: 'Inspired by a common desire to promote and develop closer social and cultural relations in the future and recognising the contribution of the Italian migrant community to the diversity of life in Australia⁷³'. Soon after it defines in its 8 articles a series of wide-ranging tasks that the two countries 'shall endeavour to encourage'. There is no explicit reference to the Italian language. Article 2, however, refers to 'the possibility of establishing chairs, lectureships and courses in the language, literature and culture of the other [...] at universities and other educational institutions'.

The text focuses on the needs of universities; there are no references to the situation of Italian in the school system. In the same article co-operation is envisaged for the exchange of teachers 'to facilitate [...] the integration of Italian children into the Australian community, while maintaining their cultural ties with their country of origin'.

Since 1975 Cultural Cooperation Programs, *Protocolli applicativi*, for the implementation of the original Cultural Agreement have been following at 4-5 year intervals. Language issues covered by these documents will be looked at later in this study.

8.7 The Italian Institutes of Culture in Australia

There are two Italian Institutes of Culture, *Istituti Italiani di Cultura* (IIC) in Australia, the first established in Melbourne in 1963, the second created in Sydney in 1977, not long after the stipulation of the 1975 Bilateral Cultural Agreement between Australia and Italy. As their name unequivocally proclaims these organisations' task is the promotion of Italian culture; they are agencies of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MAE) and work within the guidance of the General Directorate for Cultural Relations (DGRC)⁷⁴. Earlier in this work the genesis and evolution of these institutions has been analysed in all its specificity (Chapter 5). However it seems appropriate to recapitulate some fundamental aspects of their history in order to better understand their operations in Australia.

According to the original concept of their founder, the fascist theoretician and Minister for Public Education Giovanni Gentile, Italian Institutes of Culture had to be 'the open eyes of the Italian intellect outside the national territory' and their essential objective was: 'to know and to become known' in regard to culture/s. According to the wording of the 1926 Act with which they were established, the Institutes were required to spread Italian language and culture and

to foster intellectual relations between Italy and foreign countries⁷⁵. Between the 1920s and the 1940s the IICs came to be used as propagators and promoters of fascist nationalist ideologies, and were entrusted with showing to the world how Italian culture, being the legitimate heir of the Roman Empire, was in its own right *the* model for other civilisations.

With the 1940 Act remaining in place even after the end of WWII, IICs continued for almost half a century to pursue their aims as generically envisaged by that document, while from time to time administrative procedures were used by the Italian government to update⁷⁶, the Institutes' management, however partially. No significant changes were introduced to their original structure. Only in 1978 (prior to the establishment of the Sydney IIC, the second in Australia), did a political-administrative circular of MAE, signed by Under-Secretary of State Foschi, unambiguously signal a turning point by declaring - among other things - that IICs could no longer be elitist institutions, they had to start meeting the needs of Italian communities abroad. The same document also stated that the teaching of Italian carried out by the IICs had to address not only the local population in foreign countries but also Italians and their children who had migrated there⁷⁷.

When an ad hoc reform was finally agreed upon through specific legislation in 1990, with the intention of drastically improving the IICs' situation⁷⁸, the obligation of the IICs towards the cultural development of Italian communities abroad was clearly reiterated in the text of the new Law.

As a result the Institutes' duties were further stretched to cover the expectations of the *comunità italiane all'estero*, Italian communities abroad.

The new definition reflected the Italian Government's recognition that a new social reality was developing from the old phenomenon of migration and this reality had to be addressed.

However, while legislation passed in 1990 envisaged a substantial increase in the Institutes' funding with a figure of 142 billion over a triennium, the economic slump experienced in Italy at the end of the 1980s dictated a drastic reduction of this budget. Only 7 billion liras per year was allocated to the project and consequently the implementation of the 1990 reform was severely curtailed. Further financial restrictions were imposed on the Institutes in the 1993 budget⁷⁹.

These are the socio-economic circumstances in which Italian Institutes of Culture have been operating.

It is not surprising then that substantial criticism⁸⁰ has been constantly addressed to these institutions both abroad and in Italy⁸¹; given the specialised and varied functions⁸² that they are expected to perform, the lack of appropriate finance often translates into a few individuals having to cover too many areas of expertise and thus being unable to deliver the desired results⁸³. One Australian example is that in Melbourne the Institute, established in 1963, has a library of books which up to 1999 had never been appropriately catalogued due to the lack of personnel able to perform this task, with consequent restricted functioning of this important resource.

In Sydney the Italian Institute of Culture shut down in 1982 and was reopened four years later; the reason for its closure was never fully disclosed to the community. In this city the Institute now has its premises on the 45th floor of an elegant city building, enjoying stunning views of the harbour, but the cost of renting is such that the Institute's cultural programs suffer severe financial restrictions because of it⁸⁴.

The building housing the Melbourne IIC on the other hand has been owned by the Italian Government since 1974, so the IIC here is, from this point of view, in a more stable situation.

However in 1994 its status was changed to that of a section of the Sydney Institute described as the *Polo culturale per tutta l'Australia*⁸⁵. Fortunately four years later the Melbourne IIC was returned to its former independent status.

It is beyond the purpose of this study to closely scrutinise the quantity and quality of cultural activities promoted by these two Italian institutions. In the experience of the writer of this work, over a period of thirty years the two Italian Institutes of Culture have expanded their collaboration with Australian institutions and strengthened their link with the local universities with consequent benefit for their programs. For example the period between 1976 and 1986 saw a close collaboration between the Sydney IIC and the Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies at the University of Sydney, particularly for events such as the Foundation's major international conferences in 1978, 1982, and 1986.

These events proved beneficial on two counts: they brought to Australia distinguished intellectuals of international reputation - for example historian Renzo De Felice; semiotica and writer Umberto Eco, sociologist Francesco Alberoni, writer and literary critic Alberto Asor Rosa and many others - so that contacts were facilitated and interaction with Australian based scholars blossomed. Secondly they highlighted the existence and strength of Australia on the international map of Italian studies.

From a cursory examination of the yearly programs offered by the two Cultural Institutes, it can be assumed that they work quite independently from each other in the two States. In some cases the lack of coordination between them has been seen as a restricting factor, which reinforces one of the negative clichés about Italians in Australia as elsewhere: that they are too individualistic to establish successful cooperation for the common good. This criticism, however is not readily accepted by the interested parties.

As already pointed out the Sydney and Melbourne IICs were established in Australia at a stage of Italy's history when its governments were awakening to the existence, needs, and dignity of Italian migrants abroad as demonstrated by legislation passed from the early 1970s onwards.

Even before the reform of the IICs, as we have seen, they had been singled out as responsible for the cultural development of Italian communities abroad and for fostering the cultural relationship between the communities and their country of origin. As from 1992 IICs in Australia – as in other countries - become responsible for administering proficiency tests for Italian L2, according to the guidelines established by MAE.

It would be unfair in the financial circumstances that surrounded the 1990 legislation to evaluate which concrete steps have been taken in this direction in Australia. When asked for an opinion on this point the Director of the Sydney IIC stated that in her opinion including the Italian communities abroad in the list of responsibilities of the IICs reflects more than anything else the changed perception of these social groups: they are no longer migrants in need of assistance, but 'resources' abroad for their own mother country.

Yes, but how is this reflected in the programs of the IIC? Is anything being done to make them more accessible, give them more appeal for the first or second generation Italians in Australia?

'We never seek to lower our sights *'non cerchiamo mai di scendere in basso'*, and this is not out of snobbishness'.

The same question was put to the Melbourne IIC's Director in order to establish whether, according to him, the spirit of law 401/1990 had begun to produce a shift in the Institute's work and planning for the future.

The answer of the Director was quick and unequivocal: Italian Institutes of Culture abroad have a different public, their activities must target the people of the host countries, *not* Italian migrants.

And to the objection: 'But what about the law and its prescriptions on this matter?' His answer was: 'The law? The law is one thing, but its implementation always depends on people's interpretation....'

Very true.

As Nelson Mandela recently remarked⁸⁶, the difficulty is not so much in changing societies, the main obstacle is changing ourselves as individuals.

The microcosm of IICs in Australia illustrates how hard this challenge may prove.

8.8 Federazione Italiana lavoratori emigrati e famiglie (FILEF) and its role in Italian language and culture issues

The establishment of the above organisation in Australia in the early 1970s followed its creation in Italy in 1967, on the initiative of writer and painter Carlo Levi, at the time an independent left-wing senator in the Italian Parliament. Emigration in the late 1960s was not only a serious social problem but also a highly controversial issue. Levi, an anti-fascist who had lived in confinement in small villages in under-developed Lucania, in the South of Italy in 1935-1936⁸⁷, regarded it as a damaging social phenomenon, largely ignored by political parties. Levi's conviction that sovereignty belongs to the peoples, and that 'all forms of social life' are a valuable expression of this principle was consistent with his proposal to the Senate⁸⁸. He was adamant that Italian migrants deserved help in whatever country they had

settled in. The newly formed organisation was intended to work with workers abroad, to support and nurture their cultural development and devise ways to overcome their social isolation.

FILEF was established in Melbourne in 1971⁸⁹, Giovanni Sgro, its secretary, saw this initiative as a chance to prove to the Australian Labor Party the existence and strength of an Italian group of workers in Australia who were aligned with its politics. The Sydney FILEF was established one year later.

The organisation prospered in both cities (and later in Adelaide and Perth) as its establishment fell in the years of the progressive Whitlam Government. It attracted funding from the Federal Government and from Italian sources which included the communist council of trade unions in Italy, *Confederazione Generale Italiana Lavoro* (CGIL). It was this particular political link that alarmed the Australian Government and saw the *Melbourne Age* publish an article entitled 'Italian communists move in - Grassby did not know of link'⁹⁰. Unscathed by this episode, other controversies and recurrent accusations by its opponents of being a subversive organisation, FILEF continued to work for the benefit of Italian workers in Australia, having as its main aim to protection of their rights⁹¹.

The Melbourne FILEF appears to have focused essentially on liaising with organisations that shared its objectives, including trade unions, on defending work-place rights for labourers and organising educational activities to inform and explain relevant social issues and new legislation to Italian migrants. The organisation also carries out regular welfare work. An Italian journalist and former correspondent for the Italian newspaper *L'Unità*, Antonio Salemi headed the Melbourne FILEF in the 1970s; he had previously worked with Italian emigrants in Germany, France and Canada. But in 1976 he was deported following a High Court decision

that sparked wide controversy and saw the direct involvement of the Liberal Minister for Immigration at the time, Michael Mackellar.

While the educational needs of Italians in Australia have been consistently addressed by FILEF in all States of Australia, the Sydney organisation has been particularly active in pursuing issues of language maintenance and bilingual education, not only by providing a variety of language and culture courses for Italy-born migrants and the second generation, but also by actively participating over the years in public debate about community languages and being constantly involved in language policy initiatives of both Federal and State Governments.

This particular commitment of the Sydney FILEF to language policies is witnessed also by several publications dealing with issues of Italian language in Australia⁹². The Sydney FILEF's stance on the issue of language maintenance has often been a point of discord with Co.As.It. FILEF - as many other interested professionals - objected to the fact that insertion classes were funded on the same basis as ethnic schools but did not address language maintenance and it also argued that most insertion courses had limited value for language learning

In 1974 FILEF started publishing its own fortnightly magazine *Nuovo Paese*; since 1986 it has been a monthly bilingual publication, distributed nationally and also through union shop stewards in factories. The magazine aims to 'provide news and views, alternative to those promoted by monopoly-media'; and this goal - quite courageous in a society dominated by rich media tycoons - has been pursued by *Nuovo Paese* with honesty and intelligence, notwithstanding the obvious financial pressures and its small editorial staff.

On FILEF's role in Australia it has been remarked that:

It is interesting to see how an organisation that started out as a completely working-class developed its own more or less solid intellectual framework thanks to an accurate perception of the relevant aspects of contemporary Italy, a perception which was almost absent among young Italo-Australians. From the late 1970s on, Filef began to attract a special type of newcomer: no longer a typical emigrant[...]but the solitary person usually with a university degree[...]who for a variety of reasons[...] had decided to leave Italy. These newcomers were essential in maintaining and expanding existing ties with Italian culture⁹³.

These observations by academic Joseph Halevi, an economist who has often contributed to Sydney FILEF's initiatives, were based on the presupposition that, in his view, the majority of second generation Italo-Australians had themselves been prevented from appreciating 'the positive experimental character of labour movement achievements in Italy'⁹⁴, essentially because of a process of linguistic de-culturalisation to which they had been subjected in Australia.

While these younger Italo-Australians have to some extent experienced the difficulties highlighted by Halevi, it can be assumed that for the next generation, which has been given better opportunities in terms schooling and enjoyed the benefits of a more affluent social environment, the attitude to and interest in contemporary Italian culture will be more informed and thus more accurate in its perception. It is interesting to note that Giovanni Sgro, a FILEF leader became Labor member of State Parliament in Victoria. Umberto Martinengo, one of FILEF representatives is now doing the News Program on SBS Radio in Melbourne and is the Co-ordinator of the Education Program of Co.As.It, and Marco Fedi another FILEF former representative is the Manager of Multimedia and Television Studio also for Co.As.It in Melbourne.

In addition, after historical events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the continuing change affecting all societies in the world including Australia, the role and agenda of FILEF too, can

be expected to adjust to the evolving needs of Italians in this country. If the organisation's own magazine accurately reflects its ideology, this kind of evolution is already occurring :

Globally migration has never been greater than today as people in poor areas chase work and survival in richer areas. [...] The magazine's editorial content will therefore be guided by its commitment to greater socio-economic equality, respect for individuals and cultures and environmentally sustainable economy.⁹⁵

8.9 The Dante Alighieri Society in Australia

The Dante Alighieri Society was founded in Italy in 1889 with the aim of promoting Italian language and culture abroad. Its origin, development and vicissitudes have been discussed earlier in this study (see Chapter 5).

As an Italian international cultural organisation pursuing goals approved by the Italian State, the Dante Alighieri receives some financial support⁹⁶ for its activities, and it is up to its committees, made up of voluntary members, to plan and manage the activities of the society.

In Australia there are Dante Alighieri Committees not only in all capital cities, but also in smaller towns such as Wollongong and Mount Isa.

The various branches of the Dante Alighieri Society traditionally provide Italian language and culture courses for adults, and in some cases offer courses for secondary students who are taking Italian as a subject for their school leaving examinations. This activity was particularly relevant, for example in NSW, over the period when Italian language was hardly present in the school curricula but was listed among examinable subjects for the Higher School Certificate.

The Dante Alighieri in Sydney was founded by Tommaso Fiaschi, a medical doctor from Florence, who arrived Australia in the late 19th century and worked at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. He was also the first president of the society from its establishment until 1927.

According to information material of the Sydney branch of this organisation, the Dante Alighieri Society 'is a language school (sic) originally established in Rome last century'⁹⁷ and the Sydney branch was founded 'in the early 1890s' (but historian Gianfranco Cresciani puts the date forward to 1901⁹⁸). The staffing resources of the Dante Alighieri Society must be somewhat limited if its Pitt Street premises have no organised record of the Society's past activities nor an accessible library⁹⁹. However, the Dante here as in the past offers language courses ranging from 'absolute beginners' to 'corporate training packages' and also 'cultural and social activities with an Italian flavour'. The Sydney Dante Alighieri Society information material also states: 'The Society offers the ideal setting for those wishing to experience the culture and heritage of Italy'. The premises, programs, organisation and type of activities on offer seem to suggest differently. Tullio De Mauro's comment¹⁰⁰ on the Dante Alighieri performance in the world is not contradicted by the Sydney case.

The case of the Melbourne Dante Alighieri Society, on the other hand appears to be different and, most importantly, well documented. This branch was founded in 1896 and has thus recently celebrated its first centenary, celebrating the occasion with the publication of a book on the history of the Society in that city.

Written by a Melbourne University historian, Alan Mayne, it is a comprehensive work, which accurately and interestingly reconstructs the history of the institution, illustrating its longstanding commitment to Italian culture and language over one hundred years and its educational initiatives and social activities in Victoria. The lively involvement of its Australian and Italian members, the political implications of the often intricate interaction

between the Dante and other Italian local organisations are thoroughly documented over the whole period of the Society's life. The unfading enthusiasm permeating the past and present work of its members is also highlighted, illustrating a constructive interaction among members of the Italian community and the Australian lovers of Italian culture, including academics, such as the late Professor Colin Mc Cormick. Most importantly the book argues that the Dante Alighieri in Melbourne promoted the significance of cultural diversity in Australia at a time when this concept was not embraced by Australian society at large, and that 'its existence forms an important strand in the history of Italian influence in Australia'¹⁰¹.

We have found particularly relevant the early involvement of the Melbourne Dante Alighieri in matters of language maintenance for Italian children, and of great significance the fact that the idea of insertion classes was in fact pioneered by this Society and later inherited by CoAsIt, which developed it to become its most cherished achievement.

The Dante Alighieri's experience in Victoria seems to support our view that in this State the importance of Italian as the language of the Italian community in Australia was first highlighted, respected and fought for ahead of time, in fact even before the changes brought about by multiculturalism.

8. 10 Italian-language media in Australia

The publication of the first Italian language newspaper in Australia dates back to 1885¹⁰², an historical testimony of/to the fact that migration from Italy started soon after the completion of its political unification in 1870, and that already in the 19th century a substantial number¹⁰³ of Italians had moved to Australia. After dramatic disruption brought about by the Second World War, with the few Italo-Australian newspapers that had been in existence disappearing from

the local scene, people who worked for those publications were forcibly sent to internment camps, regardless of their political beliefs.

Once the war was over and the progressive and pro-Labor paper *Il Risveglio*, whose publication had begun in 1944, was also forced to close down in 1950, two other newspapers were established, one based in Sydney and the other in Melbourne came to be established. It was to counterbalance the pernicious leftist influence of *Il Risveglio* that on April 15 1947 the first issue of *La Fiamma* was published in Sydney, on the initiative of the Capuchin Fathers¹⁰⁴. Since then *La Fiamma* has continued to be regularly printed, originally fortnightly, then twice a week until the very recent turning point: in late August 2000 it became a daily paper. It is, so far the only daily paper in a community language other than Chinese.

The other Italian-language newspaper *Il Globo* originated in Melbourne in 1959, again sponsored by a religious order: the Scalabrinian Fathers. Neither of the two newspapers can be described as 'religious', however their affiliation, for a reader who is well informed about Italian politics, appears to have mainly been with the former Christian Democrat Party (DC) in Italy. Both newspapers have had minimal financial support from the Italian Government: a few thousand dollars yearly for paper supplies and free but limited access to *Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata* (ANSA), the main Italian news service. *La Fiamma* has a current national circulation that swings between 23, 000 ('when Italy plays in world soccer Games', says its Sydney Director tongue-in-cheek) and 18, 000.¹⁰⁵ *Il Globo* reaches 35 000 readers.

After a number of ups and downs¹⁰⁶ *La Fiamma* was bought in May 1978 by the same Melbourne publishing group which owns *Il Globo*. Since 1994 the *Gruppo Editoriale Fiamma/Globo* also had in its stables the radio station *Rete Italia*.

It can thus be inferred that the contemporary phenomenon of media ownership concentration in a few hands has not spared even the microcosm of Italian media in Australia.

But, what role have these Italian language print media played over the years, and has their performance evolved in line with the changes affecting their readers, the Italian communities in Australia?

With regard to content *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* are very similar, with a slight emphasis on Italian politics in the latter, in the sense that they are given more space and detail. The political issues the publications focus on, however, are generally seen through rather conservative lenses, especially by *Il Globo*. This paper, since August 2000, offers – like *La Fiamma* – the current issue of the Italian *La Repubblica* (considered in Italy a left-oriented newspaper). Topics of relevance for Italo-Australians have been understandably dominant, but the readers seem to be approached as if they were a single crystallised species, in other words the older first-generation immigrants.

Now it is true of course that care must still be taken of this group, which includes a percentage of individuals who had to work hard and in difficult conditions and thus had few opportunities to improve their education and – especially the women – to learn English beyond survival skills. However, it is also true that there is no evidence, looking at the content of these publications, that a concerted attempt has ever been made to help the readers educate themselves by stimulating their interest and involvement in a broader range of social and political issues apart from welfare, immigration and language maintenance.

A different approach characterises FILEF's magazine *Nuovo Paese*, which has steadily fostered active involvement and participation of Italian migrants by explaining to and informing them about social and political affairs pertaining to Australia. In *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* some areas of news receive particular attention: crime in Italy is well represented, sport constitutes one of the main attractions for the younger generation¹⁰⁷, together with reporting on famous Italian singers and their personal affairs. It would be difficult, however, to infer

from these newspapers' overall presentation of news during the last forty years at least, that their current readers are in any way different from those of fifty years ago¹⁰⁸.

This is not to deny the historical relevance of the Italian-language print media for the Italian immigrants, nor the social and psychological contribution of the publications in providing them with information in their own language, especially in times when Australian government policies were aimed specifically at the assimilation of newcomers. Access to news that allowed contact with Italy and also treated local issues directly affecting migrants has undoubtedly been invaluable for the first Italian settlers. Nor should it be forgotten that not only *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* (and various other minor Italian-language magazines published in other Australian cities) contribute to alleviating the first Italian migrants' isolation in their new foreign environment, they also fought for their rights, for instance reforms regarding pensions, work-rights, the teaching of English on the workplace etc. Not surprisingly therefore, it is likely that an emotional attachment still binds a significant number of Italo-Australians, especially in the older generation, to these local Italian newspapers.

It has been observed that Italian language media services, in particular the print media, 'have generally reflected the politically conservative nature of the Italo-Australian community'¹⁰⁹. With the exception of the magazine *Nuovo Paese*, even a cursory examination of the content of these newspapers would find ample backing for this view.

As discussed earlier in this study one of the reasons behind the unsolved problem of voting rights for Italians living in non-European countries is the concern of the Italian legislators that migrants living on the other side of the oceans are in the main aligned with right-wing political forces and that their vote could unbalance any internal overall electoral results in Italian elections¹¹⁰.

This assumption although questionable as an excuse for denying the right to vote to Italian citizens abroad, would appear correct in regard to the political orientation of Italy-born people residing in Australia.

But does half a century not make some difference in a society, especially in democratic societies which are characterised by inexorable change?

And if this change is reflected, among other things, in the way the members of such societies are addressed by mass media, the ethno-specific press too ought to be part of this process of transformation.

It is also significant that one of the first signs of modification in fact concerns language: Italian-language newspapers have started publishing articles, or even entire weekly pages, in English, with the aim of attracting younger readers. This is not surprisingly though, if one considers that Australian Censuses continue to record a diminishing number of Italy-born residents while their statistics on language use enable estimate the relentless language shift¹¹¹ affecting second generation Australians of Italian parentage.

In a swing of the pendulum, Italian print media originally established to fulfill the needs of the non-English speaking migrants are now required to use English in order to be read by the majority of their descendents. This is a social phenomenon not without consequences, not only in terms of highlighting the irreversible shift to the dominant language, but also in regard to foreseeable variations in readers' interest in the kind of information appearing in the local Italian press.

As time goes by and the use of Italian rather than fulfilling the material need to provide information for non-English speaking people, responds to other cultural demands of the readers, a reassessment of the role and aims of the Italian-language newspapers is likely to

become not only necessary¹¹² but crucial for these institutions to maintain a lively function and an active role in the Australian society.

Other media, such as radio and television, broadcasting in Italian language have already been dealt with in the previous chapter, illustrating and analysing the historical genesis of LOTE media, the social context in which they developed and the language policies influencing their establishment and growth.

Suffice it to mention that Italian language radio broadcasting has dramatically increased over the last twenty-five years in terms of stations, hours of broadcasting and variety of programs. There is, for instance, *Rete Italia* (New South Wales, Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, South Australia and Queensland) which broadcasts 24 hours a day on twelve different AM frequencies. The hours of broadcasting of other private commercial radio stations, as can be expected, vary according to geographical area, increasing in places where the Italian communities are larger.

While radio programs in Italian language generally do not suffer because of restrictions deriving from the broadcasting needs of other languages, Italian television programs on the government-funded SBS have an allocated regular broadcasting time of six to eight hours per week. Italian programs, produced in and bought from Italy, are subtitled in English and thus accessible to the general public, in accordance with the multicultural policies discussed in the previous chapter.

8. 11 Italian in the Australian education system prior to the 1970s

By the end of the Second World War, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, Italians in Australia had started to look into the issue of Italian language maintenance for the children in their

community. They struggled to organise classes and courses, mainly on a voluntary basis, without any financial support from either the Australian or Italian Government, having on their side only the Catholic education exponents as facilitators who allowed, for instance, the use of their school premises outside school hours for Italian teaching. The lack of provision for non-English speakers at that period invested of course all ethnic groups present in Australia, not only Italians. The negative side of this situation was not just that these people were denied the right to retain their first languages, it also meant that on the whole the learning of English was also affected because of the dependence of second language acquisition on first language competence¹¹³.

The specifically detrimental effect of this situation is illustrated by the case of the Italian language in the New South Wales school system between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s¹¹⁴.

One characteristic of the Italian language, however, made its status slightly different from that of most other LOTEs, not unlike Latin once present in the Australian secondary and tertiary education system for its historical relevance, Italian appeared in the curriculum of the University of Sydney as early as 1935 with a lectureship in Italian established that same year. A preliminary course was thus offered by the Faculty of Arts and it followed by two courses - Italian 1 and 2 - it counted as a qualifying course for the Bachelor of Arts¹¹⁵.

The University of Sydney was also the first university in the southern hemisphere to establish a Chair of Italian, in 1963.

Notwithstanding its formal introduction into the tertiary studies curriculum and at secondary school level, Italian remained at the very margin of the mainstream education system for over twenty five years, that is until policy changes introduced under multiculturalism made

languages other than English slowly emerge as an important component of the overall political program of the new government brought to power in late November 1975.

8.12 The status of Italian language in Australian education between 1975 and 1987

The return to government of the Liberal and Country Party coalition in 1975 did not alter the trend towards support for community languages, which later came to attract half of the funds allocated to the Multicultural Education Program established as a result of the Galbally Report. Incidentally, the practice of identifying as 'Community Languages' all those languages existing, in other words alive and used, within the Australian community dates back roughly to 1975. Prior to that the term 'foreign' had identified all languages other than English in Australia, but with a negative connotation. The terms 'migrant'; and 'ethnic' were used to distinguish the languages of migrants from those of Australian-born people or individuals who had been in Australia since their early childhood. As indicated by Michael Clync¹¹⁶ the term 'Community Languages' was first employed as a synonym for migrant languages in a 1974 report of the first Migrant Education Action Conference.

The position of Italian language at this stage was strengthened essentially at primary level because of concurrent causes. The first, as we have seen, was the changing attitude of the Italian State towards its emigrants, with an ensuing commitment both moral and economic to the welfare and educational rights of its migrant workers abroad and their children. This approach translated into a steady allocation of funds for 'scholastic assistance', *assistenza scolastica*, to any organisation in Australia that qualified for it.¹¹⁷

These organisations consolidated their stand and started to expand their activities, but most importantly, they attempted to move their Italian teaching activities into mainstream schools. As discussed earlier in this chapter, they succeeded also because the above resources represented a solid stepping stone to finance this new initiative. Melbourne Co.As.It.'s bold view 'that it would be narrow and retrogressive for the programme to be confined only to after hours activity' was accordingly followed up. It was a turning point for Italian language diffusion in this country; thanks to the particular social circumstances of the time the intersecting game between emigration questions and culture promotion issues had fertile ground on which to prosper: the demand - still unmet - for the provision of LOTEs at primary school level.

Italy's dual commitment to language diffusion abroad seemed in this case to have found an ideal solution, however unplanned and - as we shall see - difficult to manage. The Italian language in Australia had been marginalised if not ignored over more than half a century, despite the fact that the oldest and most prestigious universities had acknowledged its significance by introducing its study into their curricula. However a community based organisation taking advantage of Italian legislation in favour of migrants and the Federal Government's policy of support for language maintenance initiatives succeeded in carving out access into the mainstream primary education system for the Italian language in Australia. Once this was achieved, the consequences - for better or worse - had to be faced and the result achieved became open to scrutiny.

Ozolins' 1993 study on Australian language policy¹¹⁸ suggests a dilemma concerning on the one hand federal education policy on languages between the late 1970s and early 1980s looked at ethnic schools as 'indicators of vitality and[...] commitment to multicultural Australia'. On the other hand for most ethnic communities the struggle to obtain language maintenance rights

appeared more oriented towards their own gains than towards multicultural achievements for the nation. The Italian case provides a fitting example for this argument.

A step forward in the development of multicultural education guidelines was made with the 1982 review of multicultural education programs *Evaluation of Post Arrival Programs and Services*. This report put forward the concept that multicultural education should become a normal responsibility of the school system rather than depending on specifically funded federal programs.¹¹⁹

The Ethnic Schools Program strengthened the Italian cause¹²⁰. By the early 1980s links had been established between ethnic and mainstream schools for the provision of classes in community languages¹²¹. While an allocation of \$30 per student per annum had been suggested¹²² for all ethnic schools, CoAsIt was persistent in exerting pressure to obtain funds for regular courses within the school system. At that stage, other Italian organisations involved in Italian language teaching (for instance the Dante Alighieri Society in Melbourne) already benefited from Italian Government financial support. In addition CoAsIt had established a network of teachers recruited from the Italian community, both first and second generations. Although few of these teachers had appropriate qualifications¹²³, they worked extremely hard to make the CoAsIt programs possible. Thus the campaign to promote Italian continued successfully overwhelmingly at primary level.

The plan envisaged by CoAsIt, as analysed earlier in this chapter, was aiming to have Italian teaching included in regular school hours at all costs. Its next objective was to improve teachers' qualifications and training year by year, as well as to achieve an increase from the minimal one hour per week language and culture tuition to a more substantial time allocation.

In the decade 1978-1987 CoAsIt strategies resulted in a spectacular growth of Italian teaching at primary level. In fact by 1987 70% of students of Italian were in that sector¹²⁴. Before we examine more closely this particular aspect of Italian language diffusion, it is important to look at the overall developments in this language's history within the Australian context.

8. 13 Focusing on the history of Italian in Australia

It is worth noting that the history of Italian in Australia offers a variegated picture resulting from diverse situations within each State, rather than a uniform phenomenon characterised by consistent national features. In earlier research work ¹²⁵ I suggested, for instance, that the history of the Italian language in NSW may be divided into three distinct phases. Each phase seems to be characterised by emphasis on a feature conventionally attributed to the language rather than on a serious appraisal of its relevance for both the education system and the needs of the Italian communities'.

Because of its prestigious image as a *lingua di cultura*, Italian entered the education system of NSW in 1935 at university level. Its subsequent appearance in the school curriculum was little more than a formality. Until 1965 in fact, there were hardly any facilities to teach it appropriately in the school system. Like Latin, learning Italian was reserved for a small élite, but its spread in the education system – due to curriculum characteristics and examination requirements - happened to be discouraged rather than increased. The minimal number of candidates at matriculation level in that period is proof of this phenomenon. In the expression *lingua di cultura*, the term *cultura* was obviously used in its restrictive sense: it only embraced what was perceived as the higher expression of human achievement - literature, art, philosophy, history - rather than being used in its broad anthropological definition.

This helps explain why in the period between 1965 and 1975 contradictions and tensions characterised the history of Italian teaching in NSW. In the schools and even at tertiary level the notion that Italian equals *lingua di cultura* in the sense described above seems to have been firmly ingrained. For over a decade curricula and examinations remained oriented towards the promotion and testing - in English - of literary knowledge, while in terms of language teaching methodologies, no provisions were made to ensure that the rich Italian cultural heritage was accessible to all learners.¹²⁶ In fact the majority of these students not only were dialect speakers¹²⁷, but were also lagging behind in their acquisition of English, the language of instruction in their own schools.

Hence between 1965 and 1975 the situation of Italian language in NSW would be appropriately described as having conflicting images: *lingua di cultura vs lingua comunitaria*.

Just as the education system in Italy had humiliated dialect speakers for over a century, failing to provide them with adequate means of education, the same mistake was repeated in Australia, albeit in good faith and with the best intentions.

From 1975 onward multicultural policy in NSW began favouring and supporting the teaching of community languages, including Italian, and in 1981 a permanent program was introduced in primary schools with a minimum of two hours per week allocated to it. CoAsIt insertion courses, initiated in that period, following the lead of Melbourne CoAsIt, produced an extraordinary growth in Italian language classes at elementary level: from 2852 students in 1978 to 45,000 circa in 1987¹²⁸.

In the secondary schools too Italian experienced a rise in student numbers. However, while the growth was no doubt positively influenced by the community language policies of the New South Wales Department of Education in those years, more than by a 'clients' demand, as has

been suggested¹²⁹ the interest in Italian was sparked by significant up-dating of the Italian syllabus both at junior and senior secondary level and the relevant examination papers, these changes made the study of Italian more accessible and fair to its students.¹³⁰ In addition, the introduction in Year 11 of a course of Italian specifically tailored for learners who had had no opportunity to study it earlier in their school career, saw the Italian language candidature for the Higher School Certificate in that course quadrupled in five years¹³¹.

This was the period when Italian also grew at tertiary level in New South Wales, relationships with the Italian Government improved and expanded, and the very notion of *lingua-cultura* was redefined in a more modern way¹³².

Victoria, where the percentage of Italian immigrants is higher than in any other state, offers a different picture. As early as 1859 the Professorial Board of Melbourne University had this to say:

It appears desirable that the university take some step to encourage the study of modern languages in the school of the colony, [...] firstly on the ground that these languages are valuable in themselves.[.], secondly on the ground that they are valuable means of communication with a large foreign population found in Victoria.¹³³[...].

In the mid-1930s Victorian education authorities established the Saturday School of Modern Languages, where secondary school children were able to learn specific languages - Italian included - that were not available within the school system. Later, in 1946, the study of Italian was introduced to the curriculum of the Arts Faculty at the University of Melbourne and taught in the Department of French¹³⁴, although not as a credit subject; it was formally established at that university by 1959. Colin Mc Cormick¹³⁵, who was to be appointed foundation professor of Italian at the same University in 1975, forcefully embraced the cause

of Italian language maintenance, arguing as early as 1951 that it justified the teaching of the language at secondary level. As noted by Ozolins¹³⁶, McCormick's approach was novel at the time in the sense of 'identifying the Italian community as a group with an interest in the issue'. McCormick's argument, in any case, appears consistent with the emphasis placed by Michael Clyne on the relevance of mother-tongue learning for the successful integration of immigrant children¹³⁷

It is clear that in Victoria the shift from assimilation to integration of migrants, later advocated in accordance with multicultural ideology, was already being anticipated, contrary to what has been suggested by Di Biase et al.¹³⁸, who state that: 'Victoria's experience with policy and initiatives in languages very much parallels that of NSW.'

A less 'elitist' image of Italian language was in fact identified as the valid motivation for its learning and diffusion: that of a language of immigrants, an aspect undoubtedly neglected - at least until the early 1980s - in NSW.

In Victoria, as in New South Wales, the Multicultural Education Program was further reinforced by State-funded initiatives promoting community-language teaching in primary schools. By 1985 there were 47 Italian community language programs, one of which was a bilingual English-Italian program; the CoAsIt's role in promoting Italian teaching at primary level in the very early 1980s has already been discussed. In any case, consistently with its commitment to multiculturalism and bilingual education, Victoria had begun supporting community language learning as early as 1984¹³⁹ and, as seen in Chapter 7, continued to promote consistently the notion that language learning ought to be part of the curriculum for all students, even before the NPL made it a national goal.

In other Australian States significant developments relating to Italian are more recent. As stated in Di Biase and Dyson¹⁴⁰ in the beginning teaching of community languages was not readily accepted in Western Australia.

While reservations about the language maintenance programs were expressed in the *1981 Policy Statement on Multicultural Education*, since 1983 there has been a change of attitude, which is reflected in the increase in community language programs. Briguglio reports¹⁴¹ in relation to Western Australia that the growth of Italian began in the late 1970s and increased significantly between 1985 and 1989. Demographical data show that in this State the percentage of the Italy-born population is 10.6. As in other States and Territories there have been no changes in the distribution of Italy-born people between 1991 and 1996, however Western Australia (like Queensland) appears to have a larger number of second generation Italian residents than other states¹⁴².

In Western Australia's *LOTE Strategic Plan* of 1991 it is stated that, through the introduction of LOTE programs in primary and secondary schools, by 1999 all students were supposed to have access to appropriate education in LOTES. In keeping with this, in that same year two primary schools introduced the teaching of Italian through the normal classroom curriculum. Italian has since become the most studied language in the Western Australian education system after French, and Italian numbers exceed the total of the next four migrant languages. A study published in 1994 by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia (NLLIA) confirms that 'Western Australia is the fastest growing State in the teaching of Italian both in primary and secondary school'¹⁴³.

Languages in South Australia (SA) have been part of mainstream teaching over a long period of time, but bilingual schools which existed there since the early 19th century, were eliminated like elsewhere in Australia in 1916-7. The number of children learning a language at primary

level was impressive as early as the mid-1970s, but reservations about the quality of the learning were expressed, for instance, in relation to Italian.¹⁴⁴ The high percentage of Italian students in some State and Catholic schools was the catalyst for developing and experimenting with transitional bilingual programs for Italian teaching. Bilingual and maintenance programs were thus produced and tested. By now SA, with its long record in the field of language teaching, has produced many relevant documents - also appreciated in other States - and is committed to continuing to implement its plan to have all children learning languages in primary school with opportunities to continue their language studies at secondary level. While the situation of Italian in South Australia is described by researchers in a NSW book of 1994 as healthy and likely to improve¹⁴⁵, only two years earlier work published in Adelaide by Rubichi et al.¹⁴⁶ had expressed reservations and concerns. The study of Italian, the authors argued, was still in need of consolidation. It was not appropriate to speak of expansion if one looked carefully at data pertaining to the secondary school sector, where 32.7% of the Italian learners were in Catholic schools, but only 2.5% in State schools and none in Independent schools. The same authors also suggested that the situation of Italian in tertiary studies was unsatisfactory, and anticipated a decrease in the number of Italian students in the future, especially in relation to the figures for the early 1990s. Their hypothesis has proved correct: tertiary students numbers for Italian in SA have dropped from 655 in 1995 to 409 in 1998¹⁴⁷.

In Queensland the teaching of Italian in primary schools was initiated within the Commonwealth Multicultural Education Program of 1983 and was on the increase until the early 1990s, while in secondary schools it seems to be in the process of diminishing.¹⁴⁸ In fact, for the primary sector 1998 Italian Embassy statistics¹⁴⁹ record 23, 667 primary students of Italian in this State, while the figure for 1991 was approximately 13, 000¹⁵⁰. The Queensland Government took a long time to prioritise Italian after the 1991 ALLP. According

to Di Biase et al¹⁵¹. the future of Italian in Queensland will be affected by Government policies which emphasise trade as a main goal for language learning, with consequent prioritisation of Chinese, Indonesian and Japanese plus two 'foreign' languages: French and German not Italian. The authors however report the wish expressed by the Queensland Government to develop 'equitable policies on community languages', of which Italian is one. They also remark ironically: 'In Queensland, LOTE means business [...]'¹⁵², and business, does not seem to be identified with things Italian. 1998 statistics relating to Italian in the Queensland education system show 3647 students of Italian at secondary level and 516 outside the mainstream. Numbers in the Universities have also decreased: from 266 in 1995 to 184 in 1998¹⁵³.

The percentage of Italy born people in Tasmania is 0.5, yet this State too has included Italian in the list of its priority languages. 1998 data show that there were 2271 primary school learners of Italian, 139 at secondary level, 99 outside the mainstream. There appears to be no record of students of Italian at tertiary level in 1998.

The Department of Education of the Australian Capital Territory published its language policy document in 1990¹⁵⁴, and the importance of learning LOTES is clearly stated, however it has been noted that there is no reference in it to language maintenance needs in the ACT schools. Italian is listed among the priority languages of this Territory. Its 1998 numbers were: 3696 in primary schools, 871 in secondary schools, 75 outside the mainstream, 90 at tertiary level¹⁵⁵.

In the Northern Territory the number of Italy-born people is the lowest in Australia. Given the high proportion of Aborigines living in this area of the continent, bilingual programs in Aboriginal languages have been endorsed there since the early 1970s. Italian, however, is one of the seven languages prioritised by the Territory's Government in its LOTEs Implementation Strategy of 1991¹⁵⁶. Records for Italian in the Northern Territory show that in 1998 there were 1357 learners in primary, 358 in secondary, and 28 outside the mainstream. No tertiary students of Italian are recorded there¹⁵⁷.

We shall discuss in further detail other issues concerning Italian language in the education system after considering the *National Policy on Languages*, its situation and status and its implications for Italian to date.

8. 14 The *National Policy on Languages* from the Italian perspective

As mentioned previously (§7.9), on May 1987 - two years prior to the signing of the Italian Cultural Program examined above Australia had seen the release of Joseph Lo Bianco's Report *A National Policy on Languages*.¹⁵⁸ Envisaged originally as an implementation document of the previous Senate Report of 1984, the NPL, as we have highlighted, constitutes an impressive synthesis of earlier studies and documents in the field. For instance, the four guiding principles (English for all, opportunities for learning second languages, maintenance and development of LOTEs, provision of services in LOTEs) appeared originally in the Senate Report. Lo Bianco used Australian and overseas research to develop the policy, gave budgetary estimates, argued for social equity, cultural enrichment, economic strategies and external needs as motives for multilingualism, emphasised the need for ongoing research, and used a

federalist basis to ensure that the States strengthen L2 teaching. The NPL also represents a point of arrival¹⁵⁹ in a long journey started twenty years earlier by a large number of people committed to the promotion of language learning and/or language maintenance in Australian society, which included of course representatives of the Italian communities. Four main goals were convincingly argued for by Lo Bianco¹⁶⁰; most of them considered also from an implementation angle, with detailed strategies suggested in order to achieve specific results.

Italian, like most other LOTEs benefited on two counts, the first being the relevance of language learning as advocated by Lo Bianco, the second the recognition of its Australian status, as being a language spoken by a large community of immigrants in the country and thus in need of preservation. Italian, along with other languages was also classified as worthy of 'special attention', and hence of specific assistance. Between 1988-1992 Italian was financially supported within the Australian Second Languages Learning Program which handed out \$23.4 million¹⁶¹. For instance funds were allocated to Italian to promote projects of various kind and scope (e.g. provisions for professional development for teachers of Italian in Victorian schools, the creation of Italian teaching materials for Victorian, South Australian and ACT non-government schools, bilingual programs in Western Australia and Victoria etc

¹⁶²)

The Lo Bianco Report, in addition to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages and including language handicap issues, identified languages of 'wider teaching' with the aim of strengthening their already established position in school curricula, rather than attributing more merit to the teaching of the chosen languages in relation to others¹⁶³. Italian, as we have indicated, was included in the list.

The perception that the NPL 'has done little directly to promote the maintenance of Italian in the Australian context'¹⁶⁴ in our view is not tenable. In regard to this question three factors must be kept into account: a) the particular socio-linguistic situation of the Italian community in Australia, where dialects have been predominantly the home languages; b) the period by which Italian migration peaked and subsided, so that by 1987 most ethnic background students of Italian were second generation or even third generation and thus used different patterns of language at home; c) the unavailability of adequate language-teaching strategies suitable for these so called 'native speakers' a notion proved of limited significance for the variety of its meanings and potential interpretations¹⁶⁵. The concept of 'maintenance' in regard to Italian hence is very complex and because of its specificity could not be resolved by the NPL.

As Clyne suggests, while dialect usage decline, standard Italian is acquired by later generations and 'the arena of language maintenance increasingly transfers from home to the school'¹⁶⁶. Thus if anything the NPL gave a boost to the image of Italian in the education system as not only a community language, but a language prioritised for reasons that all learners, not only children of Italian background could identify with: its cultural strength, its belonging to a country that is economically and industrially powerful. The improved status of Italian in the education system, the attention given to it soon after the NPL, the money spent on funded initiatives would have - indirectly - helped and not impaired language maintenance¹⁶⁷.

This is not to say that the issue of background speakers of Italian has been satisfactorily solved, in fact as accurately indicated by Clyne et al, commenting on the whole of the Australian situation '[...] until now the "problem" of background speakers has been largely treated in a vacuum - without specific knowledge of the practice.'¹⁶⁸. As far as Italian is concerned, the issue was also complicated by the dichotomy standard Italian/dialects : on the

one hand home dialect use could not reinforce what was learned at school, on the other hand there was no chance to build on the students' home language because teachers were not trained to and had no available resources for that task . As reported by a resercher¹⁶⁹, even in the late 1990s students of Italian speaking a dialect at home perceive the influence of the latter as a nuisance, something to apologise for.

The most appropriate place to specifically address the issue of maintenance, with all the complexities relating to Italian language, should have been the primary sector, within CoAsIt's initiatives supported also by Italian Government funds, books and teaching materials.

In the early 1980s, however, Co.As.It. had decided to take advantage of political circumstances which enabled the mainstreaming of Italian teaching into the school system, which was also the goal of the Italian Government. In the absence of appropriate practices enabling differentiated learning strategies for students of diverse ethnic background, language maintenance was somehow put aside and priority given to the spread of Italian in the education system. This fact is not readily acknowledged by Co.As.It. officialdom, who point to the existence of outside mainstream Italian courses for background speakers. However, and most importantly, the Italian authorities at home have come to endorse the situation. This shift in approach may be explained as a natural consequence of the changed status (and new definition) of Italian migrants. They are now a new category of people evolving from the first migrants and they might be better served by mainstreaming their language than by segregating its teaching.

In conclusion it doesn't seem entirely appropriate to blame the NPL for having emphasised the importance of second language learning at the expenses of language maintenance, or at least not in the case of Italian .

In addition, as perceptively highlighted by Ozolins¹⁷⁰, the list of languages of 'wider teaching' not only reflected political factors and local needs, as in the case of Italian and Greek, but also took into account the international standing of some languages (e.g. Spanish and Arabic), the educational role traditionally covered in Australia by some others (such as French and German), the geopolitical relevance of others again (Japanese, Chinese and Indonesian).

A wider perspective transcending contingent considerations in relation to language policies was thus created for the Australian context to which Italian, after all, also belongs.

Five years after the release of the NPL the Centenary Federation Advisory Committee (CFAC), reviewing Australia's achievements in education, commented as follows:

Australia's education and training system has also responded to the changing ethnic composition of our population. A system of language training was put in place to provide migrants with access. Community languages were integrated into school curricula and became an important national resource. In 1987 the Federal Government adopted a National Policy on Languages, becoming the first English speaking country to have such a policy and the first in the world to have a multilingual languages policy¹⁷¹.

But after a decade, against the background of changed societal circumstances, the original positive assessments have been replaced by a more cautious and less optimistic approach.

Political and economic factors in the early 1990s have not only influenced but also interfered with the implementation of the NPL, slowly and yet significantly modifying its language-focused strategies. For instance, the establishment of an Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education clearly linked language issues to ethnic affairs, thus twisting Lo Bianco's recommendation to create an Advisory Council on Australia's Language Policy. Even more importantly, Lo Bianco's cautious indication that language proficiency was

likely to enhance trading practices was swiftly translated into a more focused promotion of Asian languages: in the eyes of the government they appeared as a profitable avenue for improving Australian competitiveness at a time of economic recession¹⁷². In fact the NPL had come under the supervision of the Federal Department for Employment, Education and Training, so renamed by Minister John Dawkins who had replaced former Education Minister Susan Ryan after the 1987 election.

At this stage the notion of multiculturalism lent itself to yet another opportunity to be highlighted and/or exploited by politicians: using the diversity of Australia's population as a useful resource to support the troubled national economy. According to Prime Minister Paul Keating it was a case of 'productive diversity'. Putting Italian into this context Lo Bianco sharply observed:

In this discourse Italian changes a little and starts to have added commercial value but only for servicing a multilingual population within Australia¹⁷³

We have discussed in **Chapter 7** how language policies developed by the Commonwealth Government moved away from some of the goals set by the NPL and how it has chosen - in most instances - to give its own interpretation to Lo Bianco's recommendations¹⁷⁴.

Some quiet progress, however, has taken place in the area of second language learning within the education system as the growth in the number of students now taking a LOTE now proves. As already discussed, this phenomenon is the result, of the concerted and targeted efforts by all Australian States and Territories to comply with the guidelines of NPL.

In the case of Italian learning in the education system, the number of students from primary to tertiary level which was 260.000 in 1988¹⁷⁵, became 382 435 in 1998, ten years after the release of the NPL.

Before looking at some specific aspects of this growth however, it seems appropriate to also consider some other Italian language issues as they developed in the mid-1990s

8. 15 Italian language in Australia in the era of economic rationalism

In November 1988 a timely workshop, organised by the Sydney University-based Frederick May Foundation, 'set out to update our knowledge and image of Italy from an Australian perspective'¹⁷⁶. The participants at the gathering were required to discuss the future of Italian studies in Australia, reflecting on the changed needs of this country and on Italy's' present-day conditions, as

'the anticipated economic realities of the '90s make it imperative [...] to see Italy as a trading partner. Accordingly its language needs a new image: no longer that of a language studied only for humanistic reasons, but also that of a practical tool which can be combined with training and qualifications in professional and technical fields.'¹⁷⁷

The publication that came out of the above initiative reflects the variety of views and the liveliness of the discussion stimulated on that occasion. Most interestingly however it reflects the relevance of societal developments for the survival and consolidation of a transplanted language such as Italian in a host country. While with the implementation of the NPL its status within the education system had been officially recognised, its relevance for Australian society at large still needed to be proved and supported.

Italian government action in this period shows increased investments: financial resources for Italian organisations in charge of scholastic assistance - *enti gestori*- rose from 1 billion 100 million liras in 1987 to 2 billion 200 million in 1991.¹⁷⁸

In quoting these figures during the final session of a conference in Canberra in December 1990, the Italian Ambassador Francesco Cardi appeared keen to highlight that language courses in the primary sector were also open to children of non-Italian origin, with consequent advantages for local schools and their pupils, a fact that Australian authorities had to acknowledge. The promotion of Italian language in Australia, he said:

[...] initiated as a duty of the Italian State towards its emigrants, has evolved in time, becoming an investment for the future, which, however, goes beyond [...] assistance to Italian emigrants and their children, in view of increasing and improving collaboration between our two countries'.

Senator Ivo Butini, then Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who was also present at the conference, emphasised in his speech the distinction existing between the linguistic needs of the Italian community - a case for language maintenance - and Italian language status in regard to cultural and economic exigencies in the host country. According to Senator Butini the need to integrate and satisfy the two requirements was still current and it implied on the one hand rejecting the welfare approach and on the other ensuring that Italian teaching became part of the mainstream education system.

More than two decades after migration came to a halt¹⁷⁹, the old dichotomy between Italian language as a repository of culture and as the communication system/medium for the many groups of migrants abroad continues to represent an underlying cause of concern for the Italian State.

This is also proved by recurring requests to update existing regulations - L153/1971 (see Chapter 4) - on all occasions when the diffusion of the Italian language abroad is discussed. The core of the problem is in fact the obsolescence of the above mentioned legislative text and its inadequacy for the current needs and requirements of Italians abroad in regard to language and culture access.

In Australia, however, funding for the educational activities of CoAsIts, representing the largest investment by the Italian State, is still governed by the above regulations. Of course subsequent reforms focusing on Italian Institutes of Culture show the first signs of a conscious attempt by the Italian State to integrate Italian migrants' cultural needs within the broader issue of cultural policies, rather than isolating them in a separate domain.¹⁸⁰

An example of this change in approach was the interesting experiment of 1991. Six specialist teachers - Italian language advisers - were sent to Australia by the MAE and were successfully integrated into the various Education Departments of each State. Their tasks included: a) assistance to teachers of Italian at primary and secondary level, b) drafting language program revisions, c) cooperating with schools in upgrading resources and improving curricular activities. This enterprise was seen as overdue in the field of Italian studies: over the years sending resource teachers to work in Australia had been a common practice followed by many other governments, to support foreign language teaching in the local schools.

The Italian experiment proved successful, in some places more than others, possibly depending on the personal professional skills and commitment of the people involved. To the dismay of Italian teachers in Australia, however, at the end of 1994 all Italian language advisers were abruptly called back to Italy. The reason was a bureaucratic obstacle: in the absence of any legal regulation defining the role, duties and rights of the apparently new (for the Italian system) category of 'Language Adviser' the entire initiative was wiped out.

It was no doubt an expensive experiment for the Italian Ministries involved (MAE and MPI) and even more obviously a disappointment for those schools which had just started benefiting from the support and expertise of the language advisers from Italy. The initiative had been envisaged by the *IX Program of Cultural Cooperation*., other aspects of which will be considered in detail in the next section.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, the need to target language learning in the final years of schooling (an issue particularly relevant for Italian at secondary level) and to improve students' proficiency levels was explicitly addressed in 1991 by the *Australia's Languages: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy* (ALLP). A special Commonwealth contribution of \$300 to the States for each student studying one of the priority languages in Year 12 was envisaged by this document ¹⁸¹. On the one hand this is an example of constructive interaction between federal multicultural education incentives and the school system, in other words a case when federal intervention rather than being an occasional incident has been integrated into the ongoing operations of the schools. On the other hand it must be noted that the ALLP had also clearly indicated which were 'languages of broader national interest to Australia', thus indirectly pushing the cause of four Asian languages and directing school students towards the selected ones.

The ALLP of 1991 and the 1994 *Asian Languages and Australia's Economic Future* (also known as the Rudd Report) with their open support for Asian languages, are unlikely to have benefited the cause of Italian in the final years of schooling, as we shall illustrate later. In addition, the ALLP had not given specific ¹⁸² support for language maintenance in the budget, and for Italian as for other LOTEs the implications in this respect ought to be negative. However, the overall growth of Italian in the education system appears to contradict this concern.

In fact to better appraise the situation of Italian language in the Australian education system at the end of the 1990s, it is essential to look at the number of candidates for Italian in Year 12 examinations, in other words at the end of their school career. The interest shown by the Federal Government in this particular stage of LOTE learning confirms the validity of our assessment criterion.

8.16 The *Italian Cultural Cooperation Programs* for the implementation of the Cultural Agreement between Australia and Italy(1990-1993 and 1994-1998)

The two parties note with deep satisfaction the considerable interest shown in learning Italian, which involves more than 200,000 primary school pupils[...]through regular school classes and additional classes funded under the Commonwealth Ethnic Schools Program. In view of this interest and the increasing demand for Italian language teaching, and to build on the foundation provided at primary school, the two parties will favour the development of programs for teaching Italian throughout secondary schools.

So reads the *IX Cultural Cooperation Program 1990-1993* for the implementation of the 1975 Cultural Agreement between Italy and Australia. The statement relates to the teaching of Italian in Australia in the years 1986-1989. It represents a positive and optimistic evaluation of the situation based on figures such as those quoted and of an estimated total of 60, 000 students of Italian distributed between secondary and tertiary levels in the period under examination. A closer analysis, however, reveals unmentioned factors and details likely to cast a shadow on an otherwise bright picture.

Firstly, the insertion courses attended by the majority of primary children, because of time constrains, class sizes and the varied language backgrounds of the pupils, did not qualify - objectively - as more than a 'language experience'¹⁸³, in other words they represented only a short-lived encounter with the language, with the consequence that non-continuity in the study of Italian at secondary level was and still is a widespread occurrence, thus raising doubts about the accountability of the whole practice.

As for the secondary sector the imbalance between the number of students of Italian in the junior school and those in the final years highlights a dramatically poor retention from one level to the other, the consequence being that only 2% of those learning Italian in the school system continues to study Italian at university¹⁸⁴. While the problem was already apparent at the time of the 1989 Cultural Agreement Program, the overall tone of the document seems inspired by the desire of the two parties to please each other by looking at generic outcomes without being too particular. The very title of the document, in fact, implies the idea of a plan of action, but the text only states that certain goals are desirable rather than setting out ways to achieve them.

The subsequent *1995-1998 X Program for the Implementation of the Cultural Agreement between Australia and Italy* was signed in Canberra on November 11 1994 by representatives of the two Governments. Its text is worth some scrutiny. Section III of the document carries the title *Insegnamento delle lingue*, The Teaching of Languages. It is interesting to note the use of the plural *delle lingue* rather than *dell'italiano in Australia*¹⁸⁵ as in the previous *Program for 1990-1993*.¹⁸⁶ Article 16 in the same Section explicitly acknowledges the existence of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia as a strategic centre for the implementation of the NPL, among whose aims is the improvement of language teaching in Australia, including Italian.

This may seem an irrelevant detail, but it is a signal of a change in approach. It suggests that Italian is looked at as part of an integrated system rather than as a case on its own. Article 17 in the same Section confirms this belief when it reports the two Governments' deep satisfaction in acknowledging the inclusion of Italian language teaching, *with that of other community languages*, in the mainstream curriculum, at both primary and secondary levels, as established in the Dawkins Report released by the Department of Employment, Education and

Training in 1991. Clearly the situation of Italian in Australia is now seen in the wider perspective created by the NPL and not in isolation or for the needs of the Italian community alone.

Apart from the commitment to intensifying contacts between the relevant representatives of the two countries and further encouraging exchanges of teachers and students, the tone and wording of the *Program* suggest on the whole that - according to the two Governments - the situation of Italian in Australia is healthy and that the authorities endorse not only current initiatives but also past and future ones.

In fact on the subject of Italian language in Australia, the *Program* again seems to be focused on acknowledging the state of things from an optimistic angle, rather than stating future goals and practical ways to achieve them. For instance, Article 18 confirms that there are 200,000 students of Italian at primary level, a fact proving that in Australia the interest in this language is great. The text continues:

[...]the two parties express the wish that Italian will continue to be taught in all schools and universities[...]

le due Parti auspicano che l'italiano continui ad essere insegnato nelle scuole di ogni ordine e nelle università[...]

The verb *auspicare*, literally 'to wish well'¹⁸⁷ seems in this case both appropriate and ironic. In fact a closer study of data relating to Year 12 Italian examinations over a period of nine years¹⁸⁸, in all States of the Commonwealth sums up better than any other considerations the situation of Italian learning in the school system. The candidates in these examinations are the ones who have persevered over the years in their study of the language. They also represent an important point of reference for the strength of Italian studies at tertiary level, as they should be better equipped for further pursuing their knowledge of the language. The number of these

students in each Australian State has clearly decreased over the period under consideration (Figure 1), thus suggesting an overall national decline in the study of Italian as illustrated by the combined data of Figure 2. The trend of the two graphs may suggest, if anything, a possible stabilisation for the future, but not expansion¹⁸⁹. This is a phenomenon to be taken seriously, in fact one in need of monitoring on the part of the Italian authorities.

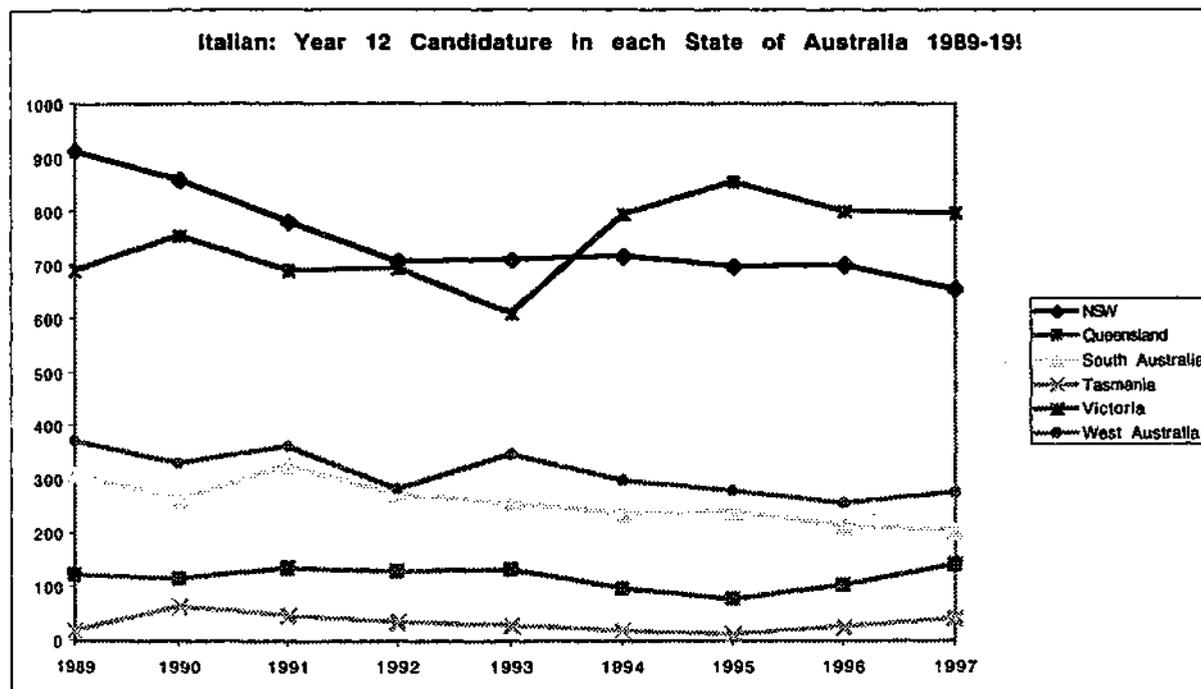


Figure 1 (Source:)

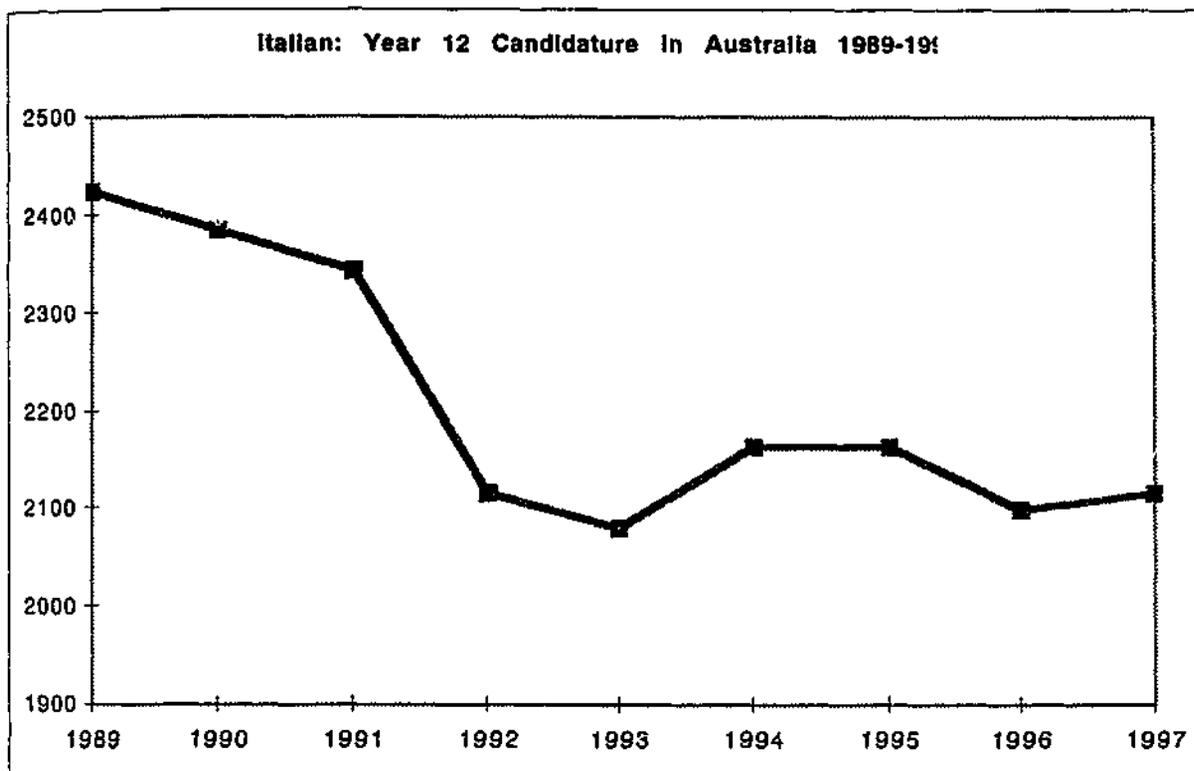


Figure 2 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

Another consideration may be added while considering **Figure 1**: there is evidence in it that the situation of Italian language learning in the various Australian States, as highlighted previously, is not uniform, so that a drop in student number in one place does not imply the same occurrence in another.

This situation seems to support the idea that Italian language could be better served by an approach whereby the Italian Government tailored initiatives and funding to the diversified needs of each Australian State (and Territories where applicable), rather than offering indiscriminate support on the basis of old legislation.

Another factor worthy of attention is that the interest in Italian studies regrettably fades along the way, so that the tertiary level attracts a minimal percentage of the Italian language learners as already reported in a 1990s study¹⁹⁰.

Data on the situation of Italian language in the education system at the end of 1998¹⁹¹ show the presence in Australia of 382, 435 students of Italian – an increase of over the decade. These learners are distributed consistently with the geographical presence of Italian communities (Figure 3), with the single exception of South Australia, where 11.4% of the Italy-born reside, but where there are fewer learners of Italian than in Western Australia with its 10.6% of Italy-born. However, Western Australia, apparently registers a higher number of second-generation Italians among its residents¹⁹², which might explain of the anomaly.

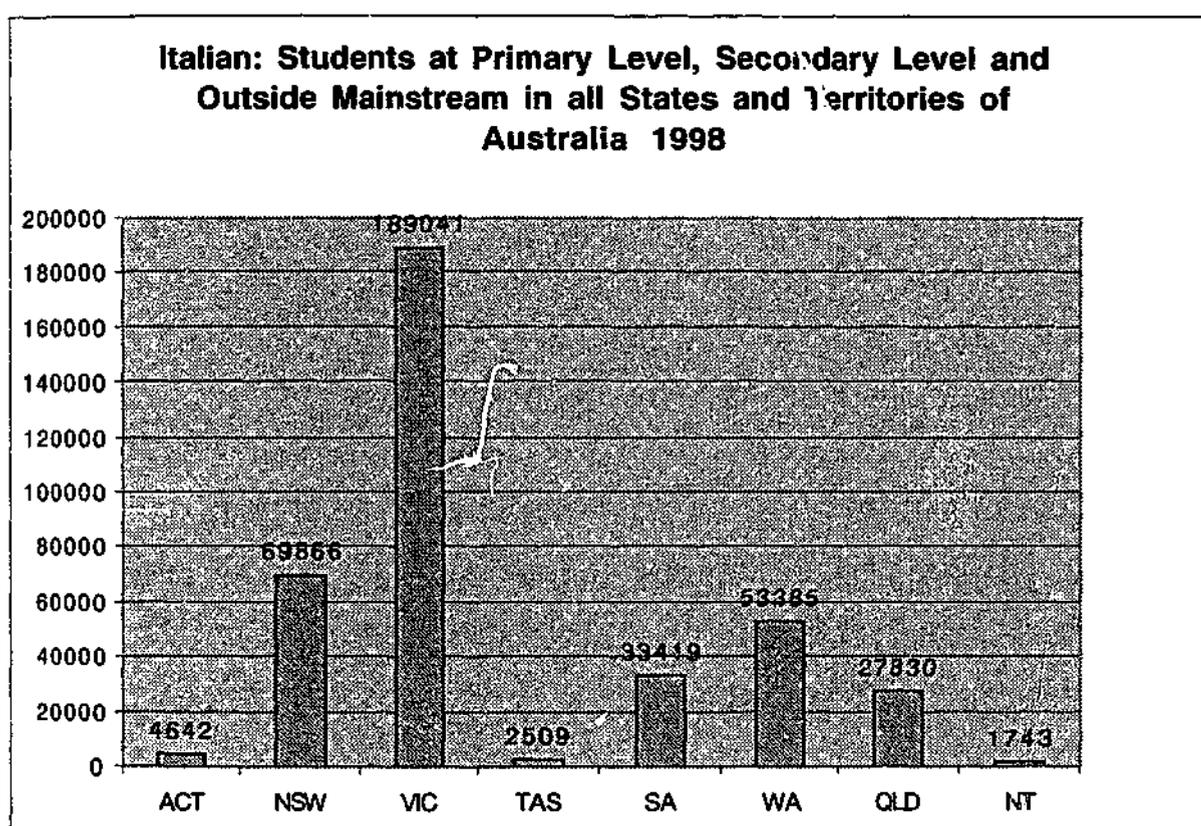


Figure 3 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

By focusing on Figure 4 it is apparent that Victoria has by far the greatest number of school students of Italian, but the retention from primary to secondary level here is lower (33.3%) than in New South Wales with 41.7% (Figure 5). In other States the retention of Italian students is: South Australia 24.2% (Figure 6), Western Australia 18.7% (Figure 7),

Queensland 15.4% (Figure 8), Tasmania 6.1% (Figure 9), ACT 23.5% (Figure 10), Northern Territory 26.3% (Figure 11).

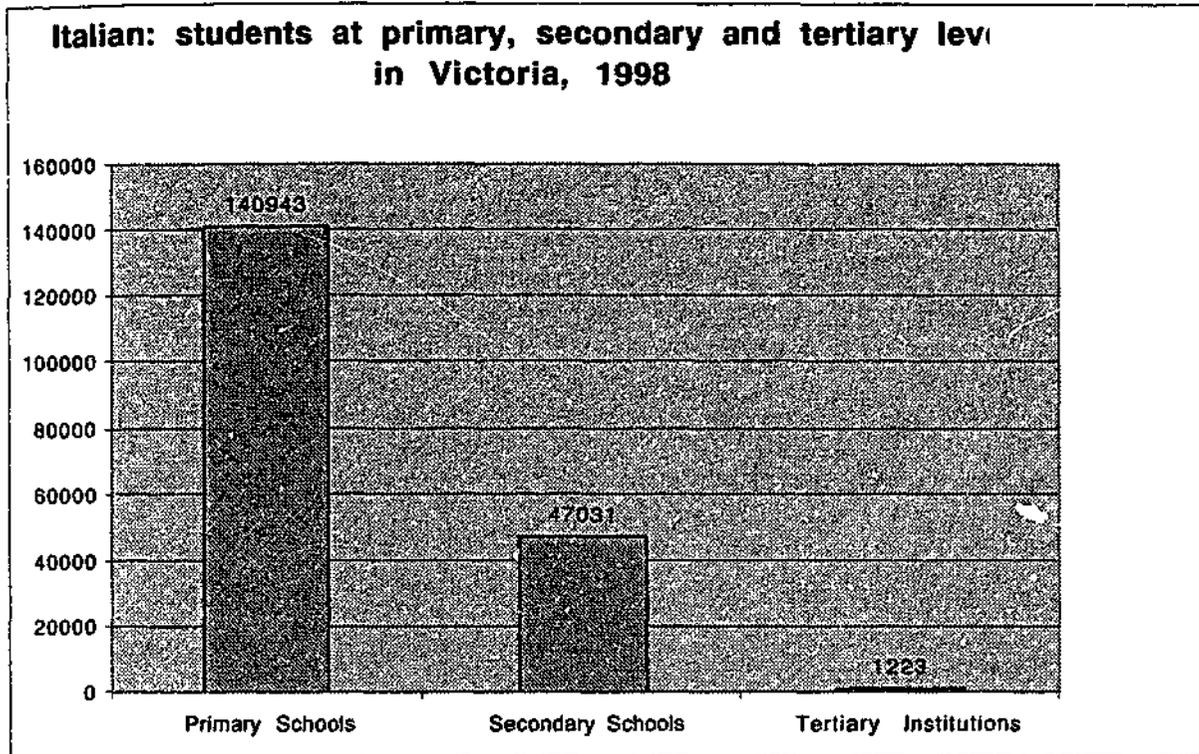


Figure 4 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

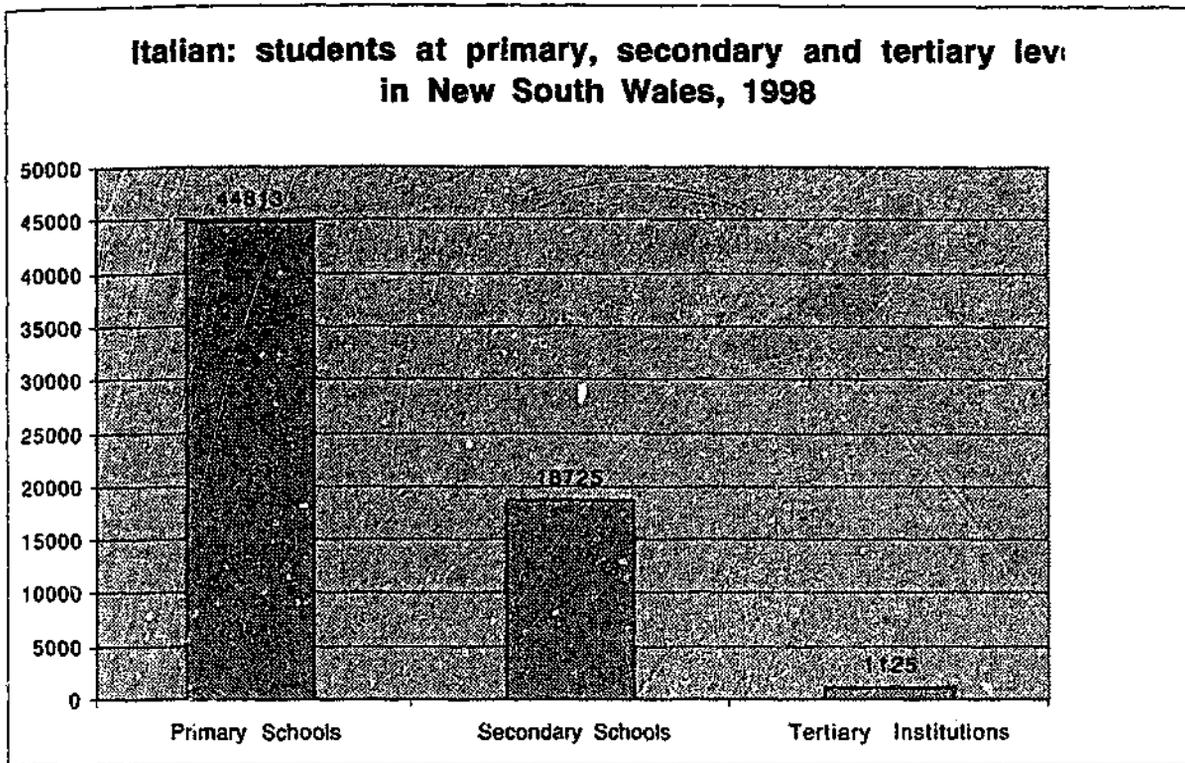


Figure 5

(Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

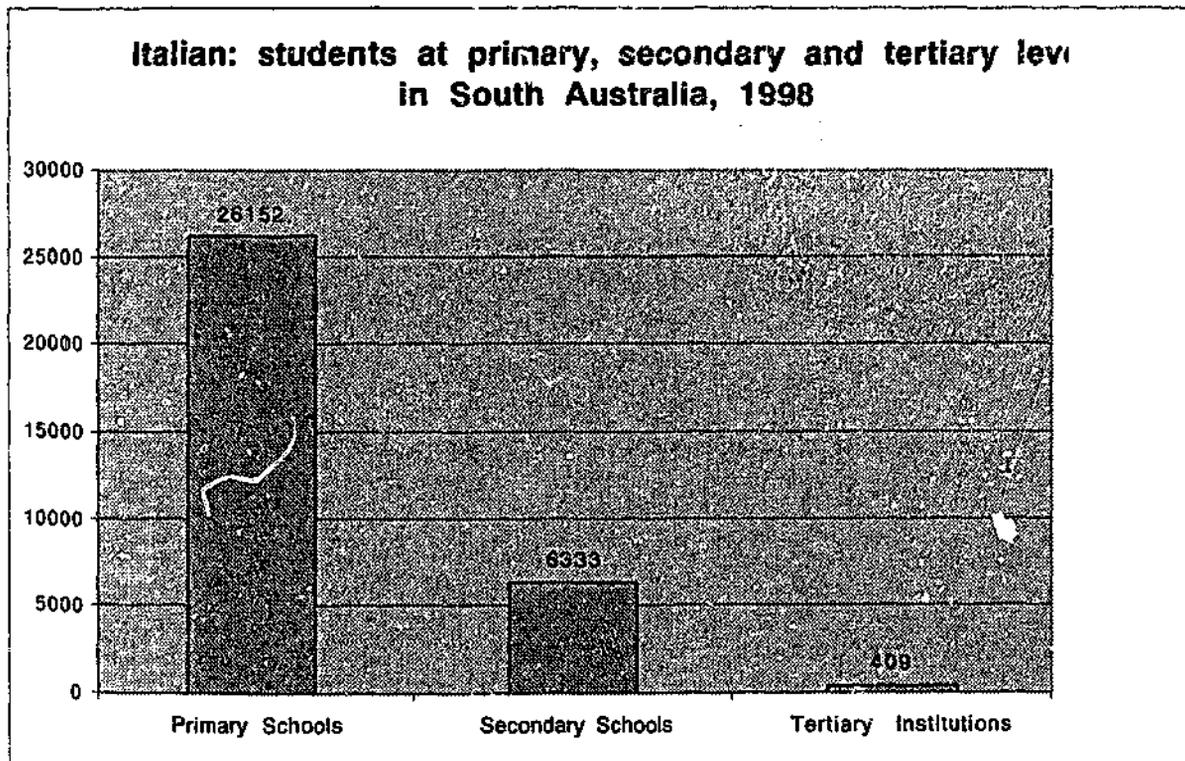


Figure 6 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

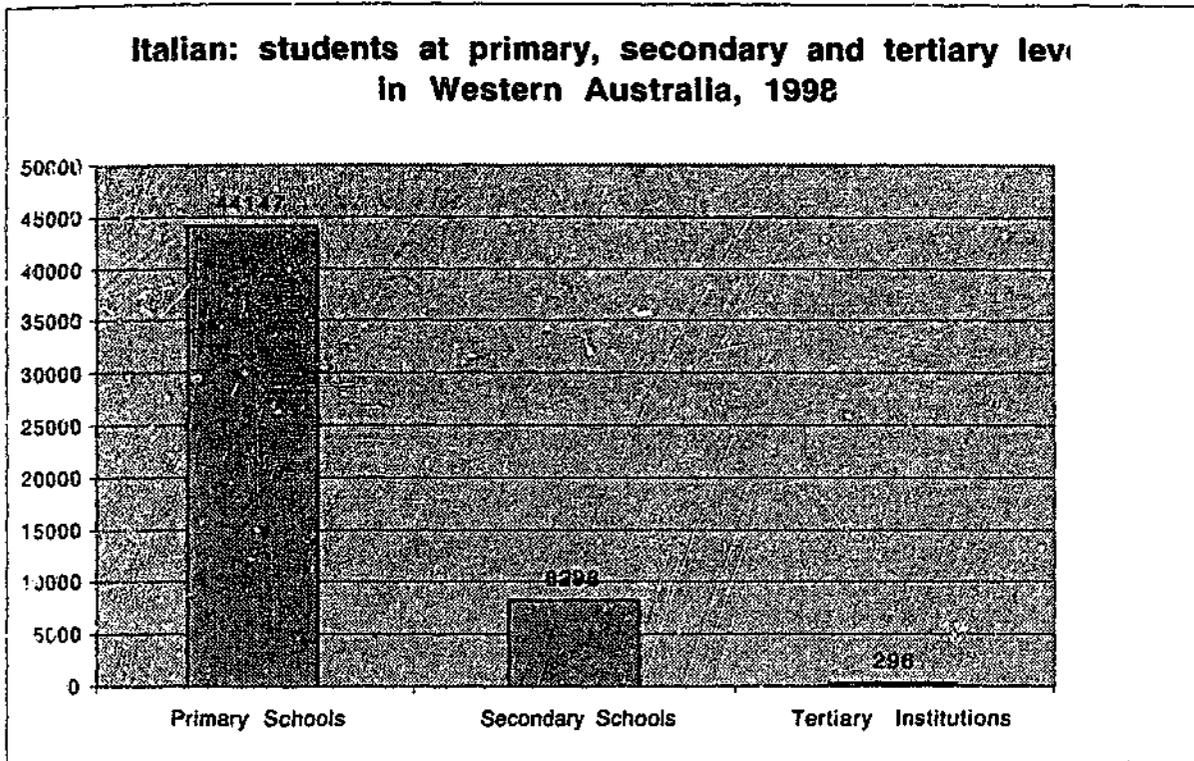
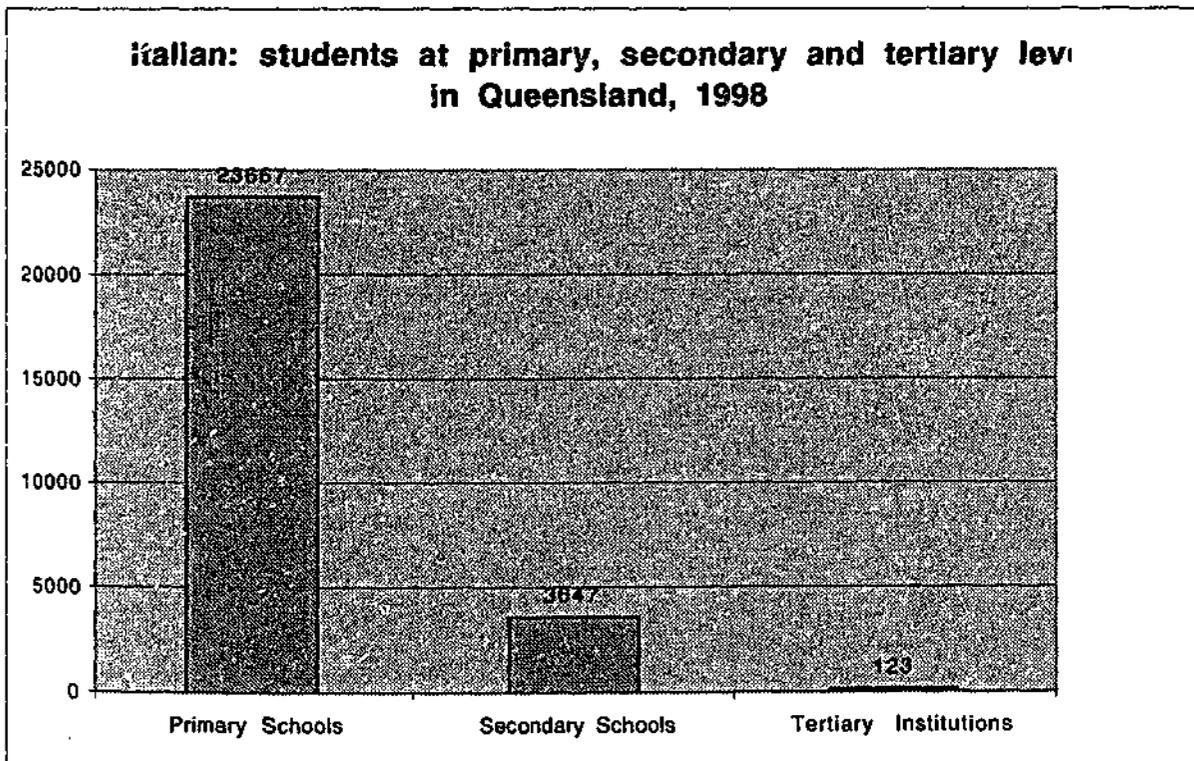


Figure 7 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)



Figure

Figure 8 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

**Italian: students at primary, secondary and tertiary level
in Tasmania, 1998**

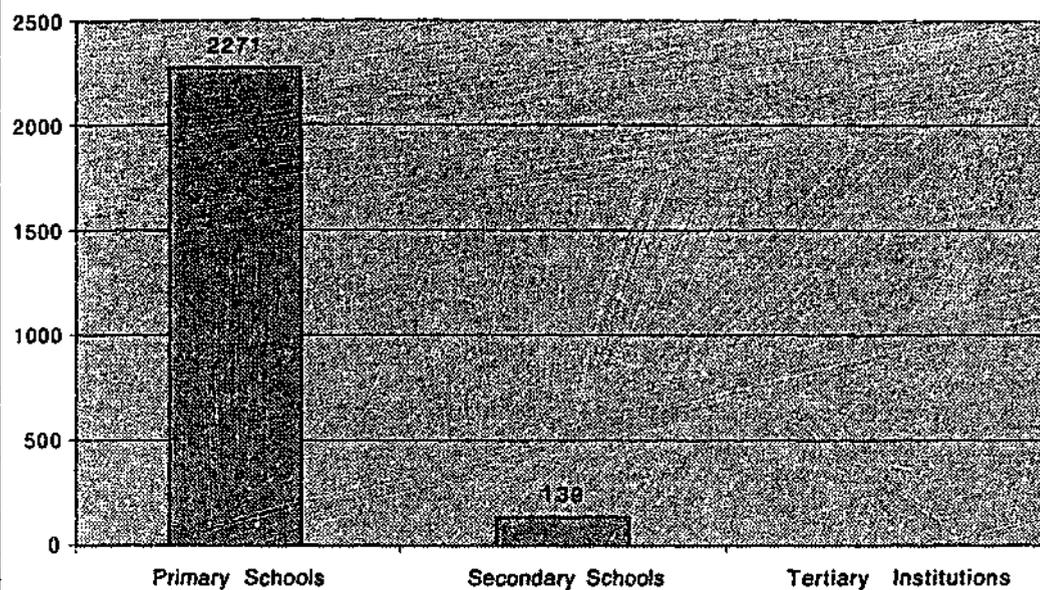


Figure 9 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

**Italian: students at primary, secondary and tertiary level
in Australian Capital Territory, 1998**

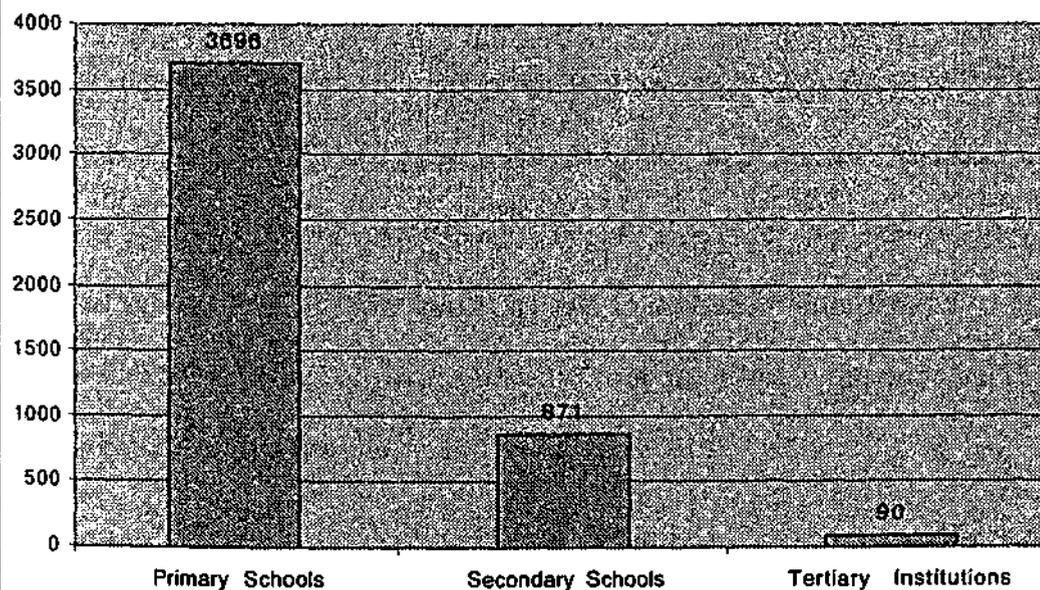


Figure 10 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

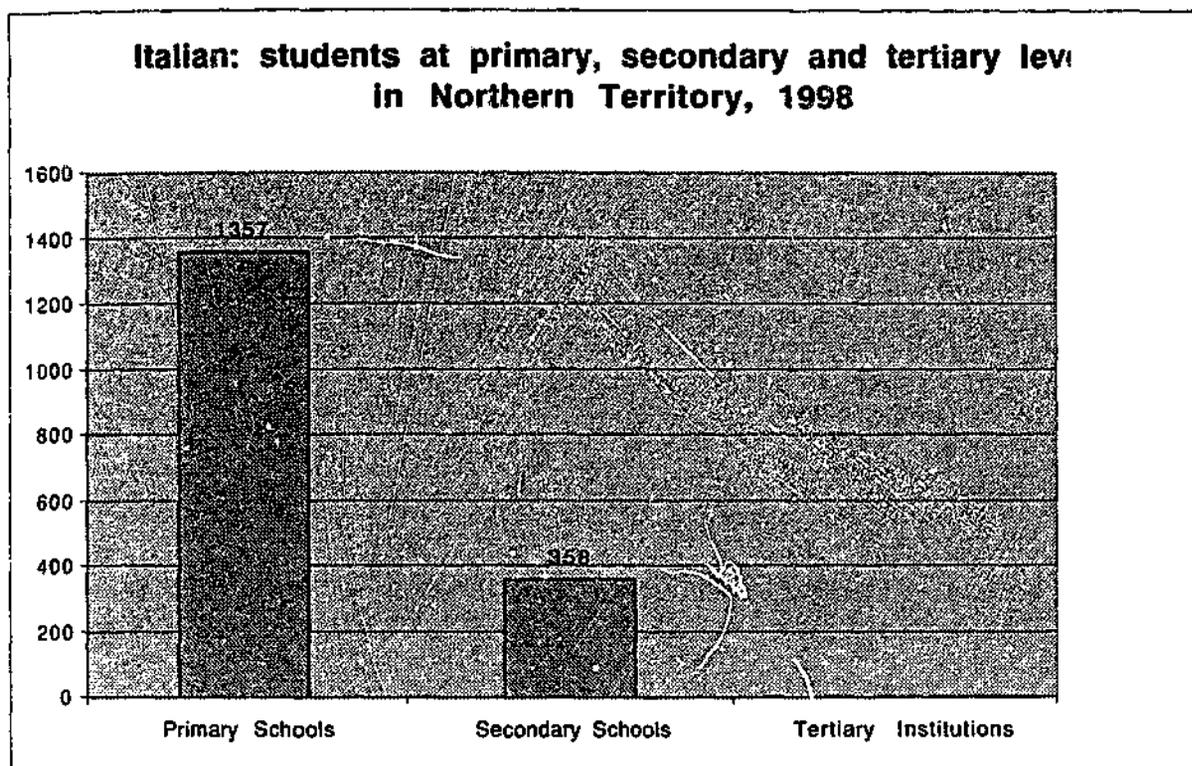


Figure 11 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

In 1998 the total number of students of Italian at tertiary level was 3381; their distribution nationally is shown by **Figure 12**. Focusing on students' distribution by levels (**Figure 13**), the proportion of students in the universities is approximately 0.9% of the total of 382, 435 in the schools. Close to 24% of Italian students are found in secondary schools, and about 75% in the primary sector. Hence it appears that the disparity between the starting point of the education system and the finishing line has increased in comparison to the past¹⁹³, and the problem identified earlier of poor retention from one level to the next is still unsolved - in fact is exacerbated - after a decade.

Returning to universities it is evident that in the last five years student numbers in Italian in universities have decreased in all Australian States with the exception of New South Wales and the ACT. (**Table 8.1**)

Italian: distribution of tertiary level students by Australian States and Territories, 1998

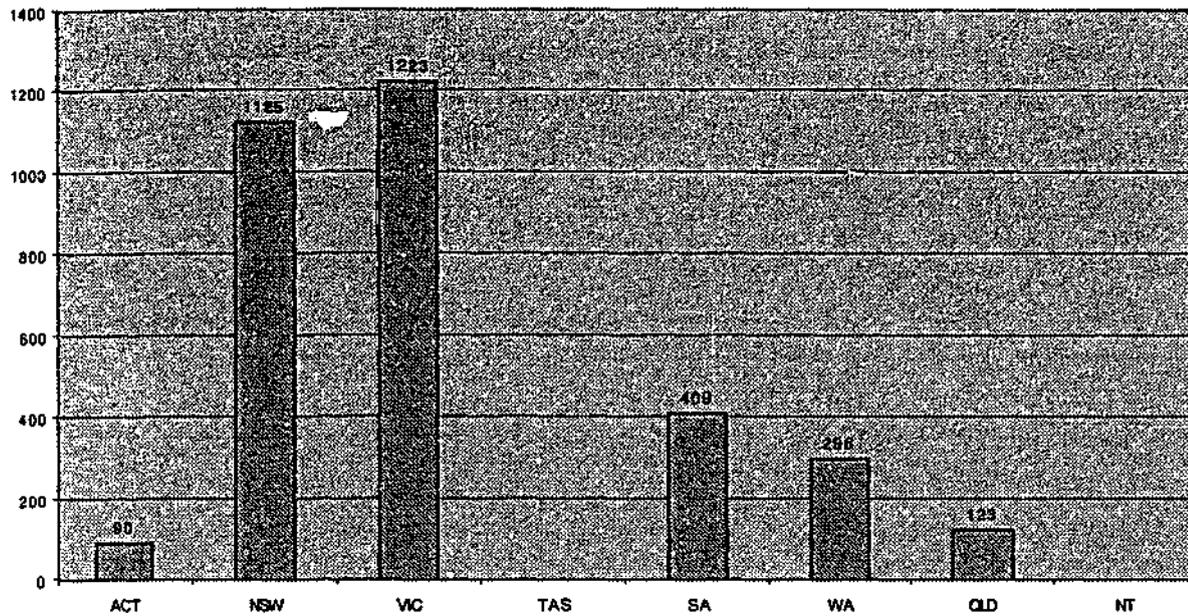
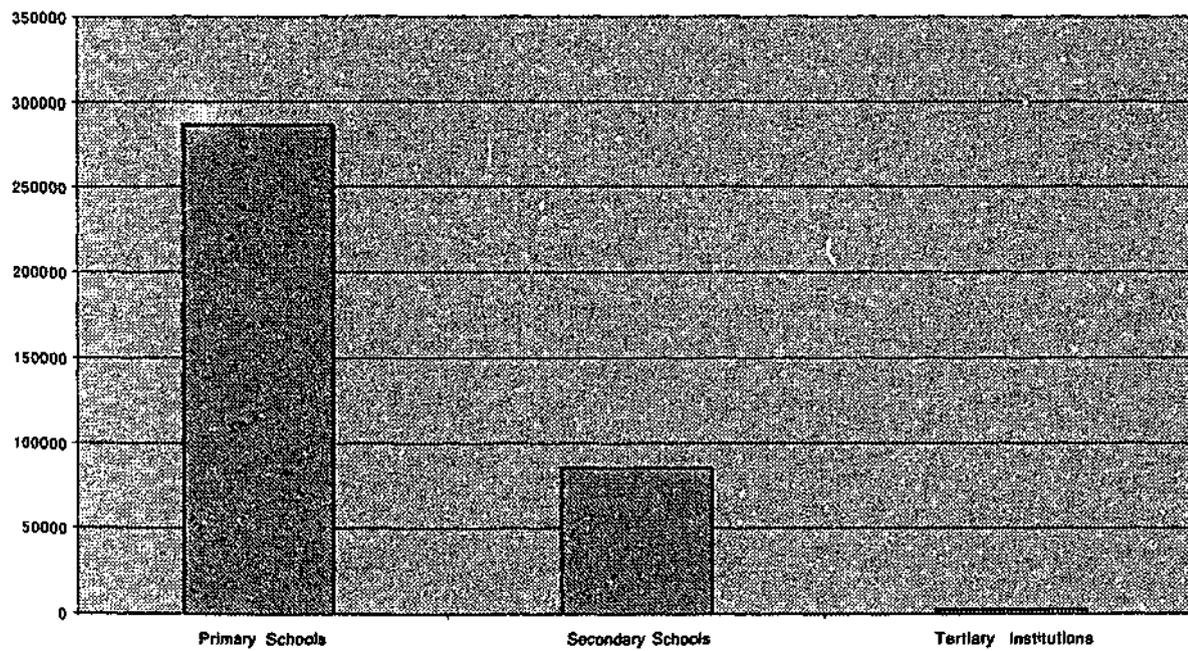


Figure 12 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

Italian: students at primary, secondary and tertiary level in Australia, 1998



Figure

Figure 13 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

Students of Italian at Tertiary Level in Australia 1995-2000

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students	Students
ACT	90	94	80	90	154	144
NSW	736	792	884	1 125	1 206	
VIC	1 261	1 097	1 073	1 223	1 159	
TAS	/	79	/	/	/	
SA	655	426	426	409	494	
WA	459	355	283	296	184	
QLD	266	361	251	123	184	
NT	/	/	/	/	/	
TOTAL	3 476	3 204	2 997	3 266	3 381	

Table 8.1 (Source: Italian Embassy, Canberra, Australia 2000)

In summary, the interest in and study of Italian within the Australian education system overall has not faded, in fact it appears stronger ten years after the NPL was released and notwithstanding the subsequent change of balance in language policies of the AALP.

However, a closer look at statistics indicates that there are peculiarities in the numerical growth of Italian and that problems detected previously have not yet been solved, not to speak of identifying and addressing the diverse needs of the various geographical areas.

If the education system is indeed as far as the Italian Government is concerned *the* main target for the spread of Italian language and culture in Australia, an analytical re-evaluation of the above figures would appear essential, especially if we consider that the comprehensive language policies successfully in place since 1987 have, so far, been an enabling factor for the strengthening of Italian language and culture in Australia .

In conclusion, the situation of Italian in Australia is not as rosy in substance as officialdom seems to depict it by merely relying on numbers. While this point has been reiterated on more than one occasion¹⁹⁴, the fact that it is not mentioned in or addressed by the *X Program for the implementation of the Cultural Agreement* suggests two possible explanations.

The first is ignorance of relevant facts, statistics, and literature on the part of the authorities charged with organising a deal for the implementation of the Cultural Agreement of 1976.

The second is that silence is preferable on issues likely to create the need for closer analysis and/or criticism of the present state of things, so that financial support from the Italian Government may remain at the same level as that offered so far and/or will not be allocated according to different criteria.

Whatever the explanation, the issue remains critically unaddressed and hence unsolved.

8. 17 The 1996 CGIE Convention on Italian Language Diffusion and Teaching abroad

On March 26-28 1996 a large convention organised by the MAE, the CGIE¹⁹⁵ and the Tuscan Region took place at Montecatini. The theme was: *Iniziativa per l'insegnamento e la diffusione dell'italiano all'estero nel quadro della promozione culturale e della cooperazione*

internazionale' : 'Initiatives for the teaching and spread of Italian language abroad as part of cultural promotion and international cooperation'. It was a gathering of 300 delegates representing 31 countries.

Prior to and in preparation for the Montecatini convention, in December 1995, a national meeting organised by CGIE Australia was held in Melbourne. From this gathering 13 representatives went to Italy to report on the conclusions reached in their relation to Australia. We shall look later at the proposals put forward on this occasion.

The final resolution ¹⁹⁶ reached at the Montecatini Convention must be considered first, as it is significant in more than one way. Firstly, by focusing on the *rights* of Italians abroad and highlighting the fact that they are enshrined in the Constitution, protected by European Union regulations and international agreements, it reflects a clear will to shift from the concept of the emigrant as a victim in need of assistance to that of a citizen abroad having a current active role in regard to his/her motherland, Italy. Emigrants, it is stressed, embody values such as freedom, solidarity and industriousness. They use and generate culture. They contribute to the interaction between their host countries and Italy, they are part of important social phenomena such as bilingualism and multiculturalism and they facilitate economic interaction and cooperation.

This preliminary declaration supports the following statement issued by the convention:

{...} in order to break with the welfare approach in relation to the world of migrants, the Convention argues that a systematic program must become an integral component of Italy's cultural policy[...]. The new¹⁹⁷ Government and the new Parliament are thus requested to acknowledge that [...]the best investment for Italy is promoting and spreading its linguistic and cultural heritage which is unique in the world.

A second relevant point in the same document is the formal adoption of recommendations put forward by working groups participating in the conference which suggested that specific guidelines pertaining to the various geographical areas are to be implemented within the proposed *progetto organico di politica culturale* (systematic cultural policy plan). According to the above statement it can be inferred that Italian authorities are now required to act on the basis of input received by representatives of Italian communities abroad. Clearly linked to this is a third point: the final resolution endorsed by the Convention entrusts to the CGIE the task of implementing all decisions and proposals agreed upon.

As Walter Gardini, State Under Secretary of the MAE, concluded at the end of the Montecatini Convention:

The socio-historical conditions inspiring L 153/1971 are out of date.[...] New legislation is needed to take into account the new and established state of things.[...]A plurality of management models must be accepted. Providing that there is efficiency and transparency and that there are appropriate evaluating mechanisms in place, all institutions and organisations in charge of language and culture promotion abroad must be allowed independence[...]. The main task of our linguistic and cultural policies for the future appears to be the integration of Italian teaching into the mainstream education systems abroad, by appropriately adapting our strategies for action.[...]The teaching and diffusion of Italian language remain and will remain in the future, our cornerstone for the strategic implementation of the varied potential of our culture [...]. Italian communities abroad are crucial players in this action."¹⁹⁸

The document examined so far shows that a long democratisation' process spanning across almost a century has reached its culmination (at least on paper). As we can see, the 1901 definition of 'migrant' as 'third class traveller'¹⁹⁹ has been replaced by that of 'Italians abroad'²⁰⁰ with rights clearly identified by both Italian and international legislation. It would seem then that the conflicting obligations on the one hand to meet emigrants' cultural and language

entitlements, on the other to promote Italian language and culture, *now tend to converge*. This symbolic and ideological change is still currently seeping into the collective consciousness as it is being faced for the first time by the Government, with a consequent need for new solutions and strategies to be pursued.

Taking into account that during the 1996 gathering it was officially stated that different geographical areas require ad hoc strategies, rather than a single generalised approach to the promotion of Italian language and culture abroad, we may need to examine more closely the Australian situation as highlighted by its representatives at the Convention.

8. 17. 1 CGIE recommendations by the Australian delegation at the 1996 Convention

This document ²⁰¹, resulting from the preliminary meeting of December 1995 in Melbourne, looks at the Australian context mainly from the viewpoint of needs and requirements. It examines a wide range of issues, some in detail, and at times it also offers practical suggestions. We will concentrate here on issues regarding Italian language and culture diffusion.

In regard to socio-cultural changes and the continuous evolution of Italo-Australian communities the document stresses the need for updated information about Italy, if possible bilingual: the establishment of a Documentation Office in Canberra is seen as highly desirable to achieve this aim.

In order to strengthen the promotion of the Italian language, it is suggested that a national program, *programma nazionale*, be developed with the cooperation of all States. The program

should on the one hand target parents, arguing the relevance of second language learning, and on the other it should address young people by projecting a stimulating and modern image of Italy.

As for technology in education, a plea is made for more and better access to audiovisuals and u-to-date informative material and for the establishment, via the Internet, of an Italian copyright-free service for the diffusion of cultural materials to be used in teaching²⁰². The establishment of an Italian home page is proposed as a valuable means to facilitate learners' exposure to a wide variety of teaching methodologies and learning materials. It is also suggested that a small amount of funding from the Publishing Department of the *Presidenza del Consiglio* could be used to support local projects, in order to demonstrate the creative skills of Italians abroad.

On matters of legislation, it is once more recommended that L153/1971 and the 1994 Art. 636 TU 2974 intended to update it, be appropriately revised to be consistent with the unanimously recognised need to replace the obsolete welfare/philanthropic/charitable approach towards Italians abroad with new cultural policies able to address their current needs. It is also requested that the functions of the IIC and other organisations in charge of language and culture promotion be clearly differentiated.

There is a specific request for more information about the work done by the *Commissione nazionale per la promozione della cultura italiana all'estero* (CNPCIE)²⁰³. It is also firmly suggested that academics and experts responsible for professional development for teachers of Italian in Australia should be invited by local organisations on the basis of their own judgement rather than sent by Italian authorities without consultation.

The Regions and the Central Government - the document continues - ought to coordinate better respective initiatives for the promotion of language and culture. The custom of each

Region of restricting participation in cultural projects to the people from their own geographical area must simply be discarded: all young people, irrespective of their regional origin, should be able to participate in all initiatives.

A series of recommendations in regard to Italian teaching in the education system, concern the importance of cooperating with and supporting Australian school authorities. The need for constant updating of teaching methodologies is also stressed. Local organisations in charge of language and culture promotion are asked to be ready to modify their present managerial role and prepare to function as support and consulting bodies for Australian educational institutions. This latter statement appears in line with possible changes in allocating funds, if the desired and overdue updating of L153/1971 occurs.

The next funding allocated to Australia should aim at improving program quality, which in turn implies increasing teaching hours (the reference here is clearly to insertion classes). In addition there is a proposal to create a limited number of "bi-national schools" which would be modelled on the French School in Canberra. They would have Italian as the language of instruction, classes covering kindergarten to Year 12 curricula and teaching staff trained both in Italy and in Australia.

Establishing and institutionalising the practice of sending to Australia both language advisors and language assistants, it is argued, will also contribute to the envisaged improvement of language programs.

There is a reference to the need to ensure continuity between primary and secondary levels.

The document also mentions the need for coordination and cooperation within Australia²⁰⁴ and the need for a data bank relating to the teaching of Italian.

The section relating to universities in Australia looks at a detailed series of issues of a practical nature.²⁰⁵ The worrying widespread drop in tertiary student enrolments in Italian studies, is mentioned here as well as the concern about the existing gap between learner numbers in primary school and at secondary and tertiary levels. It is regrettable, the document states, that financial support allocated by the Italian Government only relates to the compulsory school years.

On the whole, the Australian position appears consistent with all the general principles formulated in the *Risoluzione finale* reached at the 1996 Convention.²⁰⁶ Its specific suggestions regarding to future action in the domain of Italian culture and language promotion policies for Australia are in many ways echoed by the wording²⁰⁷ of the document itself. Besides (as we have seen), these recommendations officially constitute an integral part of this document along with the suggestions made by the delegations of other countries, and thus represent a firm reference point for future developments in the Italian language situation in Australia.

8. 18 Italian language and culture at the 'altro polo': the Italian perspective

The previous chapters have charted the way for us to begin drawing conclusions, however tentative, about Italian language and cultural policies, focusing on Australia as a case study. The main difficulty in an attempt to frame the situation theoretically, however, still consists in separating the ethnospecific component of Italian foreign policy action from other broader issues in the domain of cultural policies. The present work has consistently highlighted how the Italian State has attempted since 1948 to move away from the customary separation between the domain of 'high culture', implying the promotion of Italian as an internationally

valued language, and that of emigrants who, on the other hand, have a 'lived' association with their idiom/idioms, not to mention a right enshrined in the country's Constitution to access its priceless culture.

Bridging the gap between these two fields has proved a challenge for the Italian Government in everything that concerns policies of language and culture diffusion abroad. Moves in this direction, examined previously in the present thesis, confirm this assumption. While the tortuous journey of legislation regarding Italian language abroad, with its at times contradictory policies, is far from being completed, we trust the Australian case is being looked at by Italian authorities not only with great interest, but also as a possible model for future application in other places. Let us briefly examine why.

An interesting peculiarity of Australia, for instance, is that Italians in this country²⁰⁸ appear more inclined to study the language for 'affective reasons' than in any other part of the world (15.1 % against an average of 8.6% elsewhere). According to linguist Ugo Vignuzzi this incidence, registered in a worldwide survey funded by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana* during 1979-1980, may be explained as follows:

[...] the increase of 'affective reasons' to 15% in Australia can be closely enough synchronised with the presence of a larger group of fairly recent immigrants²⁰⁹.

A new project *Italiano 2000 Indagine sulle motivazioni e sui pubblici dell'italiano diffuso fra stranieri* has now been commissioned by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs to Tullio De Mauro and Massimo Vedovelli 'in order to draw out a policy for the spread of our language [Italian], which in order to be effective and in step with what is happening with the other major 'languages of culture' must take account existing experiences and changes that have taken place in recent years in other languages²¹⁰.' It will be interesting to see if the features characterising Italian learners in Australia in the late 1980s are still current. However 1995

research carried out in Victoria, appears to confirm that the attachment to the language because of family ties is still felt among the many Italo-Australian teachers of Italian²¹¹, notwithstanding the documented shift towards English registered in census data analyses. In addition, the appeal of Italy seems to motivate the travel of these second and third generation Italo-Australians, who increasingly embark on direct exploration of the Italian cultural context.²¹²

Meeting the demands of these young people may represent a new challenge for the Italian Government, and one possibly easier to satisfy nowadays, because of faster communication and modern technologies. At the same time the potential positive consequences for language-related issues of this frequent and direct interaction with Italy on the part of the young are still unexplored. What seems particularly significant here is how clearly the combination of the ethnic and cultural functions of the language is exemplified

Most importantly, however, the handling of language issues in Australia has in more than one way anticipated what the Italian Government considers its priority and that is the promotion of Italian language abroad by achieving its integration in mainstream education systems. The Italian Government has obviously focused on this type of action in accordance with the definition of languages-in-education planning²¹³ as all co-ordinated activities and ventures which aim to promote the learning of a language thus expanding its speakers. But in addition it also supports and encourages initiatives consistent with the current concept of *Italians abroad*, rather than the notion of assistance to these former *emigrati* as a separate subculture. In addition to the above observations, there are other relevant factors likely to reinforce the perception of Australia as a fertile ground for the further spread of Italian language and culture.

Firstly, the Italian community in Australia is well established and tends to be seen by governments as an example of good integration. Secondly, according to the Italian Embassy in Canberra - leaving aside reservations about a perspective based on purely quantity - the number of students of Italian continues to be large: 382, 435 in 1998, primary to tertiary level, including 9987 more learners in non-mainstream courses (e.g. adult Saturday morning classes)²¹⁴ Thirdly, Italian was officially identified as a priority language in the 1991 Federal Government policy document *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP)* and this rank has been endorsed by each State and Territory of the Commonwealth. Fourthly, the ethnolinguistic vitality of the Italian community is proved by the large number of its organisations: there are CoAsIts(or equivalent) in all states with a large population of Italian origin. These bodies, it must be added, have expanded and consolidated their field of operation. From purely welfare associations they are gradually evolving into organisations with a diversified sphere of operations. For instance the Co.As.It.s in Melbourne and Sydney are now the main providers of professional development courses for teachers of Italian in Victoria.²¹⁵ Its million dollar resources include a multi-media centre, television studios and a high-tech theatre in addition to an ever expanding library, computer laboratory and a wide range of audio and video materials relevant to Italian teaching at both primary and secondary levels.

Functions that were once performed by the IIC are very often successfully taken over by CoAsIt organisations²¹⁶ For example in 1997 CoAsIt co-sponsored the visit of the distinguished historian, professor Paul Ginsborg, for an international conference at the University of Melbourne²¹⁷.

In Sydney Co.As.It is sponsoring a project aiming at comparing the Italian language acquisition of various groups of primary students in collaboration with the Education and

Language Department of the University of Western Sydney, the Language Acquisition Research Centre and Australian Research Council.

This illustrates the organisation's increasing relevance as a *cultural agent* rather than a *welfare group*, consistent with the current change in approach to cultural policies in favour of Italians abroad. Socio-economic mobility within the Italian community and the end of emigration from Italy are of course determining factors in this process.

Il quadro di riferimento è mutato, occorre che cambino le coordinate del progetto su insegnamento e collettività italiane.

The context has changed, and so must all reference points of the project in relation to Italian teaching and Italian communities [abroad].²¹⁸

With these words the President of the European Centre for Education in Venice, summarised in his address the importance of keeping up with the evolution of the situation of Italians abroad.

In view of these facts it is not surprising that funds allocated from Italy to Italian communities abroad have been steadily flowing to support CoAsIt's initiatives. In the eyes of government authorities CoAsIt seems to represent increasingly *the* reliable reference point for the implementation of language and culture diffusion policies.

However, there are also negative sides to this otherwise promising situation. Isn't it hazardous to concentrate resources²¹⁹ in a single agency when funds must be allocated in keeping with a variety of needs? Experience shows that the managements of most organisations' will act exclusively within the boundaries and scopes of their group rather than share resources with other interested parties through cooperation and consultation.²²⁰ One example may suffice: the teaching of Italian in primary schools is presented as a success story and looked at with pride

by CoAsIt officialdom, but repeated warnings from various sources²²¹ have highlighted that it is not the number of pupils that matters but the way they learn, and their progression after primary school.

The loss of students of Italian between one sector and the next, it has been remarked²²², cannot even be considered as an example of attrition because: 'all these insertion programs in Catholic schools and those that have been continued in State primary schools are not officially language programs²²³, the reason being that they do not meet the criteria for serious language courses as established by the 1995 Victorian LOTE Policy of 1995.

It is worrying, however, that in keeping with the above document successive policies of the Education Department of this State, have initiated a project, Primary Access to Languages via Satellite (PALS) based on interactive television in the form of twice-weekly, 30 minutes student broadcasts²²⁴. In this context Victoria produced the Italian Program, which was then shown in both States. In fact PALS Year 5-6 Italian has been one of the first produced in the experimental stages, however no evaluation of this program is yet available²²⁵.

But who is conveying these warnings to central Italian authorities? Who is contextualising the numerical data? Who draws the line between facts and appearances?

And, most importantly, wouldn't the appraisal of policies and programs for the spread of Italian language benefit if it were carried out by officials other than those who are in charge of their implementation?

Statistics are deceptive, particularly if looked at from the other hemisphere by officials of the bureaucracy likely to base their decisions on the wording of documents such as the *Cultural Agreement Implementation Programs* examined earlier in this chapter. Discrepancies between official discourse and actual needs may often be inferred by what is *not* written in these

documents. For instance the above *93 Program* doesn't report that Italian studies at tertiary level have been experiencing serious hardships, including a decrease in enrolments since the early 1990s.²²⁶ Recent calculations confirm the existence of the problem putting the number of universities where Italian may be studied at no more than twenty-two.²²⁷

Italian Year 12 examination data may be interpreted optimistically as a stabilisation of Italian language studies in that sector, but they may also represent zero growth for the future. One way or another the issue is not being addressed.

On this matter we cannot share the optimism recently expressed by Bettoni in assessing the Australian situation. Of course it may be true that 'the explosion of life Italian style'²²⁸ of the 1990s represents a promising indication of the new understanding of Italian cultural resources among the younger generation. However, the weakening of Italian studies in the Australian education system disguised by the deceptive overall growth in the number of learners, cannot be explained as an instance of quality versus quantity, as suggested. On the contrary, it is a warning to be taken seriously if whatever has been achieved so far in Italian language diffusion in Australia is to be preserved.

While there is no doubt that historical and socio-political factors have created a fertile ground in this nation to start effectively implementing Italy's updated objectives in cultural policies (mainly in the sense of bridging the gap between the elitist promotion of language and culture and the paternalistic fostering of the welfare of Italians abroad), the current risk is that this opportunity may be missed. Monitoring and assessing *independently* and *scientifically* Italian language and culture diffusion requires ad hoc provisions, not to mention better coordination of and interaction between Italian authorities and local public and private cultural agents: universities, schools, CoAsIt organisations, Comites, Italian Cultural Institutes, CGIE etc.

There is a need for cooperation not only on formal occasions/in formal settings such as the CGIE Conference (the document produced collectively shows that there is no lack of awareness of the problems or of ability to put forward interesting solutions), but in everyday life issues and problems.

For the Italian Government it is not only a question of sensibly implementing its slowly evolving legislation. Achieving viable and broadly-based strategies in the spread of Italian language and culture in Australia demands independent, regular monitoring of programs and consistent team work on the part of the various cultural agents in Australia.

It also implies accepting that going beyond the diversity of particular interests is, in the end, the only way to ensure real collective participation in and contribution to Italian language policy development that is realistically suited to the Australian context.

NOTES

¹ A comprehensive panorama of the studies on Italian emigration is offered by Franzina, E. 'Emigrazione transoceanica e ricerca storica in Italia: gli ultimi dieci anni (1978-1988)' *altre italie* aprile 1989, n.1 pp 6-56

² Bosworth, R.J. *Italy and the Wider World 1860-1960*. Routledge, London 1994

³ A thorough analysis of the issue is contained in: Deledda, A. *Il diritto di voto dei cittadini italiani all'estero: le trasformazioni di un'ipotesi legislativa* Servizio Studi Dipartimento Internazionale. Camera dei Deputati, Roma. Marzo 1997 (Unpublished internal paper, courtesy of the author)

⁴ As reported in *Nuovo Paese* n.7 August 1998, the proposed amendments to the Constitution necessary to allow Italians abroad to vote, were rejected in the *Camera dei Deputati*: only 12 more votes were needed to achieve the necessary quorum. However in October 2000 there has been a first constructive move to resolve the problem : section 12 and 57 of the Italian Constitution have been amended in order to include 12 additional members for the *Camera dei Deputati* and 6 senators as representatives of Italians abroad; further legislation will follow to establish how Italians abroad will actually vote.

⁵ Prime Minister J. Howard's statement was reported by ABC FM News Broadcast at 7 am on October 1 and by *The Age* on October 4 1996. p. 15.

⁶ The occasion was the launching of the study *Community Profiles 1991 Census: Italy-born*. Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, ACT 1994.

⁷ *ABS Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra. 1997

⁸ For historical studies see R. Bosworth, G. Cresciani, Desmond O'Connor, G. Rosoli to name only few. Castles S. et al. *Italians* (1992) offers a valuable synthesis on the topic, drawing on the contribution of experts in different fields. For language-related issues see M. Clyne, C. Bettoni, G. Rando, A. Rubino (again mentioning only works which are essential for an understanding of the topic).

⁹ For a detailed analysis of the current situation of Italians in Australia see: McDonald, P. *Community Profiles 1996 Census Italy Born DIMA* Canberra 1999.

¹⁰ The Australian Census does not take into account the ethnic origin after the second generation. An approximate estimate of third and fourth generation Italians would suggest that in Australia they number more than one million.

¹¹ McDonald, P. Op.cit. Foreword. The terminology 'Italy-born' is used in this study to identify people born in Italy (or having parents born in Italy) and living in Australia, as distinguished from Italian-born relating to people of Italian heritage born anywhere in the world, as explained on p.42

¹² Address to the Italian Immigrants 21 April 1881, a leaflet published by the NSW Government. In Cresciani, G. *Migrants or Mates - Italian Life in Australia* Knockmore Enterprises, Sydney 1988. p. 20

¹³ New patterns of behaviour have been highlighted, for instance, in relation to the younger women of Italian background who are not subjected to cultural coercion as their mothers were, thus being able to participate more actively in the life of the community. See: Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. and Skrbis, Z. 'Authority, compliance and rebellion in second generation cultural minorities' *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, Vol.30, n. 3, November 1994. Quoted in McDonald P. 1999 *Ibid*.

¹⁴ Commissione Continentale dei Paesi Anglofoni - Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all' Estero Relazione annuale sullo stato di integrazione della comunità italiana in Australia ai sensi dell'art. 8 ter comma 4 legge istitutiva il CGIE. May 7 2000

¹⁵ See *ibid*. pp. 2-3 for a detailed list of suggestions relating to aging Italians within the Australian community.

¹⁶ *Ibid*. p. 28

¹⁷ McDonald, P. Op. cit. p. 26

¹⁸ Legge 21 dicembre 1978, n. 845 art. 18

¹⁹ CGIE Relazione annuale op cit. pp. 6-7

²⁰ *Ibid* p. 1

²¹ Michael Clyne's analyses of Census data, since 1976 confirm the shift to English in the Italian community. See, for instance : *Multilingual Australia* River Seine Publications, Melbourne 1982

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- 22 For specific studies on the topic see: Bettoni, C. and Rubino, A. *Emigrazione e comportamento linguistico* Congedo Editore, Galatina, 1996. The two authors - through different means of analysis- reach the same conclusions about the relentless shift to English among second and third Italo-Australian generations.
- 22 For specific studies on the topic see: Bettoni, C. and Rubino, A. *Emigrazione e comportamento linguistico* Congedo Editore, Galatina, 1996. The two authors - through different means of analysis- reach the same conclusions about the relentless shift to English among second and third Italo-Australian generations.
- 23 Or else their choice is processed this way. The word Italian is always printed on the Census form as one of the options.
- 24 De Mauro, T. *Scuola e linguaggio*. Editori Riuniti, Roma. 1981
- 25 Coveri, L. 'Chi parla dialetto in Italia?' *Italiano & oltre* n. 5, 1986 pp198-202
- 26 *Community Profiles 1991 Census: Italy-born*. Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, ACT 1994.
- 27 Rando, G. and Leoni, F. 'The Italian language in Australia: sociolinguistics aspects.' In : Castles, S. et alii (edited by) *Australia's Italians*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1992 pp 169-183
- 28 Bettoni, C. and Gibbons, J. 'Linguistic purism and language shift: a guise-voice study of the Italian community in Sydney' *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* Vol.72, pp15- 35
- 29 Bettoni, C. Rubino, A. *Emigrazione e comportamento linguistico* Congedo Editore, Galatina 1996
- 30 Language shift within my family presents the following pattern: parents (born in Italy) with standard Italian as mother tongue; children (the first born in Italy, the second in Australia) had Italian as L1 until pre-school age, then English replaced Italian as their favoured means of communication. Although able to use Italian, when addressed within the family environment they would answer in English. Now, as young adults and professionals, both with monolingual English-speaking Australian partners, my two children consider English to be their first language. Italian is used only in exceptional circumstances (eg for confidential comments, politeness towards non-English speaking guests, to please their parents). Their children, born in Australia, are learning a little Italian at school, they understand the language more than one would expect, but *do not speak Italian at home*, unless they are 'pretending' to speak, singing songs learnt at school, or showing off their (supposed) knowledge of the Italian language for the benefit of italophone family members.
- 31 Van Avermaet, P. *Social determinants of language shift amongst ethnic minority groups. The role of self assessment of L2 proficiency*' Seminar Paper 11 July 1998 Department of Linguistics, Monash University
- 32 Totaro Genevois, M. 'Shaping an identity under new stars: Italian at the 'altro polo' *Italian towards 2000* Proceedings of the International Conference 22-24 September 1994. Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne. pp.171-179
- 33 Clyne, M. 'The future of Italian in multicultural Australia' *Italian towards 2000* Proceedings of the International Conference 22-24 September 1994. Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne. The author anticipates that the Italian language will continue to be present in Australia, notwithstanding its substantial decline in home use[...] and that the success of [Italian language] transmission or maintenance is governed by the same factors as those influencing second language acquisition. This notion seems to support the idea that

education systems have a fundamental role in addressing the needs of 'a continuum of backgrounds of Italian speakers in Australia'. pp124 - 132

34 Taped interview with Enoe Di Stefano Sydney, February 1985

35 Di Stefano E. 'Lingua e cultura italiana a livello elementare in Australia: gli eventi storici che ne decisero le sorti' in G. Rando (ed.) *Language and Cultural Identity* Dante Alighieri Society, Wollongong. 1990.pp. 57-58

36 Ibid pp 62-64

37 See on this subject the experience of an employee of the Italian Consulate in Sydney in the mid-1960s, Tina Asher Remondini, whose contribution to the cause of Italian language teaching was supported by the then Italian Consul, Guido Carnevali. Ibid 63

38 Dante Alighieri Society Minutes of Council 6 December 1967

39 Mayne, A. *Reluctant Italians? One hundred years of the Dante Alighieri Society in Melbourne 1896-1996* Dante Alighieri Society, Melbourne 1997 pp 140-142

40 Ibid p. 142

41 Co.As.It. *Avviso del consiglio esecutivo scolastico e culturale 8 Febbraio 1968*. According to this internal document, 16 NSW schools, had agreed by that time to let Italian classes be offered on their premises on Saturday mornings. During the initial phase of the Co.As.It. initiative, the money paid by children's parents was used to cover teachers' salaries. A *Co.As.It Information Leaflet 1977* lists among the aims of the organisation, 'establishing language programmes within the community[...] to assist in the settlement process of [...]Italians'

42 Di Stefano, E. op cit. pp. 64-66

43 Alcorso, C. et al. 'Community networks and institutions' in S. Castles (ed.) *Italians* Allen&Unwin Sydney 1992. p.113

44 The most obvious example of the active role taken by influential Victorian-Italo Australians is that of Sir James Gobbo A.C. a judge of Venetian background, who was president of Co.As.It in the 1980s, Chairman of the Australian Council of Multicultural Affairs and Governor of Victoria (1997-2000)

45 Alcorso, C. et al. Op. cit. p114

46 The following areas of activity are reported in the Melbourne CoAsIt *Annual Report 99: Welfare Services, Aged Services Programs, Employment services, Child Care Centres, Education Services*.

47 The other is Aged Services Programs, a field whose importance is growing: most Italian migrants settled in Australia as young adults, so that the median age 54 of the Italy-born is higher than that - 42 - of other overseas-born groups present in Australia. For further detail see: McDonald, P. op.cit.

48 The Commonwealth established its Ethnic Schools Programme in 1981, subsequent to the *Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education* by the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA, Melbourne 1980)

49 Di Biase, B. Dyson, B. *Language Rights and the School* FILEF, Sydney 1988. p. 20

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- 50 For further detail see: Mayne, A. Op. cit p.142
- 51 It should be noted that the Italian Government generally keeps its commitments and makes the promised payments, however they tend to be chronically late, thus causing some problems for the recipients of the funding. The fact that the financial year in Italy ends in December and does not coincide with the Australian one explains, at least in part, the lamented delays.
- 52 Mayne, A. Ibid p. 142
- 53 Gobbo, J. 'Italian as a community language in a multicultural Australia' In: C. Bettoni and J. Lo Bianco (eds.) *Understanding Italy* F. May Foundation for Italian Studies, Sydney 1989. p.183
- 54 Taped Interview with Melbourne Co.As.It's Director Giancarlo Martini-Piovano, Melbourne, August 14 2000. In regard to establishing whose idea insertion courses were, the interviewee jokingly commented that whoever was asked - at this stage - would claim it was his/hers. He stressed also that Melbourne Co.As.It was the initiator and real promoter of the initiative and that the intervention of Petro Georgiou in arguing in the same occasion the cause of after-hours language classes and of insertion classes was crucial for Co.As.It. However, according to academic Alan Mayne, author of the already quoted history of the Dante Alighieri Society in Melbourne, it was this association that pioneered the teaching of Italian during school hours through its *Corso d'inserimento* at St Gabriel's Catholic School in Reservoir.
- 55 Initially \$28 p.a.per person for one hour tuition per week. Later the amount increased to \$35p.a. per capita. Ibid.
- 56 Teachers qualifications involve specialisation in LOTEs during their University training or having a Diploma of Education, which includes LOTE subjects or equivalent qualifications.
- 57 The CoAsIt *Annual Report* 1989 shows that while in 1982 63% of its teachers had the required qualifications, in 1989 the percentage had risen to 80.
- 58 Taped Interview with Pino Migliorino, President of the Sydney Co.As.It. October 2000.
- 59 Taped Interview with G. Martini-Piovano. Ibid.
- 60 Statistics obtained from the Schools Office of the Italian Consulate General in Melbourne: *Ufficio Scolastico- Consolato Generale*
- 61 Figures provided by the Italian Embassy in Canberra
- 62 Gobbo, J. Ibid p.183
- 63 Italian Government funds are not allocated on a per capita basis and the amount that the various Italian organisations receive may vary from one year to the next.
- 64 Di Biase, B. Dyson, B. Ibid p. 21
- 65 Martini-Piovano taped interview. Ibid
- 66 Martini-Piovano Ibid.
- 67 Annual Report 1989 Co.As.It., Melbourne 1990 pp13-14
- 68 Taped interview with Pino Migliorino, President of the Sydney Co.As.It., October 2000.

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- 69 Quoted in Alcorso, C. et al Op.cit. p. 114
- 70 Annual Report 1999 Co.As.It, Melbourne 2000
- 71 The quote is from the President of Co.As.It Bernard D. Bongiorno QC 'Report' in CoAsIt *Annual Report* 1999 pp.10-11
- 72 Freeman M. Tovell 'A comparison of Canadian, French, British, and German International Cultural Policies' in A. F. Cooper (ed.) *Canadian Culture: International Dimensions* Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, 1985 University of Waterloo. pp 69-82
- 73 Department of Foreign Affairs *Agreement of Cultural Cooperation between Australia and Italy Treaty Series* 1975 n. 20 Canberra ACT
- 74 Following the recente reform of the *Ministero degli Esteri* (D.P. R. n. 267 11/5 1999 and D. M. 10/9/1999) the former *Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali* has been renamed: *Direzione Generale per la Promozione e la Cooperazione Culturale*
- 75 Legge n. 2179, 19 dicembre 1926. The R. D. n.740 of 17 febbraio 1940 came to include all previous legislation concerning the teaching of Italian abroad and the regulations of Italian Institutes of Culture.
- 76 For example, DM 24 giugno 1950 clarifies the duties of IICs and allows them to employ personnel locally when necessary. C. M. n. 42 21 giugno 1955 specifies that Institutes' directors recruited from universities do not need to be from the creative literary or artistic world and also that they are independent of consular and diplomatic authorities
- 77 Circolare Amministrativa Ministero Affari Esteri, 18 maggio 1978
- 78 Legge n. 401/ it 22 dicembre 1990 Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana 29/12/1990. Serie generale n.302.pp. 199-200
- 79 Legge finanziaria n. 243 Dicembre 1993 and Legge finanziaria n. 537 Dicembre 1993
- 80 See Chapter 5 under the subtitle 'Italian Institutes of Culture' comments about IICs by linguist Professor Raffaele Simone, and in Chapter 6 the biting analysis of the situation of IICs by historian and former Director of DGRC Professor Sergio Romano.
- 81 Between April and May 1995 (2 April- 26 May) the Italian newspaper *Il giornale* published a series of articles on the *scandalosa situazione*, shocking situation of identified IICs in various part of the world. It was a scathing but factual attack which provoked wide debate. One major criticism in the articles was the fact that three quarters of the IICs' budget is allocated to staff salaries and only one quarter to cultural promotion.
- 82 A detailed comment on the 1990 reform of Italian Institutes of Culture, with a list of their duties as defined by Law n.401/1990 can be found in Ferraris, L.V. *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993* Editori Laterza, Roma 1996 pp 511-516
- 83 See on this matter the interview with Inspector Dea Pellegrini from the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione Chapter 6
- 84 Taped Interview with Giovanna Iatropelli, Director of the IIC in Sydney,14 October 2000: the location of the Italian Consulate and IIC in Sydney (they share the 45th floor of the same building) was decided in 1992 '

at a time when appearances and image were still coveted by the government in power'. The present Government has ordered a change of venue, so the financial burden will be reduced, however there is a 10-year contract to comply with and moving before the expiry date of the lease would mean a worse financial loss.

85 Butti, G. 'La promozione della cultura italiana all'estero: Il ruolo degli Istituti Italiani di Cultura' *Italian towards 2000* Proceedings of the International Conference 22-24 September 1994 Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne. pp180-183

86 Taped Interview with Dottor Giorgio Campanaro, Director of the Melbourne Institute of Culture, 15 August 2000.

87 During his internment Carlo Levi lived firstly in the small village of Grassano, then in the even more remote community of Aliano. Almost ten years went by before Levi, inspired by his experience, analytically recounted and elaborated it in his *Cristo si è fermato ad Eboli*.

88 Particularly interesting on the topic among Carlo Levi's speeches and articles: 'Non più cose ma protagonisti' Editorial in the first issue of *Emigrazione-Filef* n.1 11/8/1969; 'Emigrazione e struttura' Speech to the Italian Senate 9 April 1970. 'Una nuova politica, una nuova cultura' Lecture at the conclusion of FILEF 3rd Conference Bari 29 December 1971

89 In Cresciani, G. *Migrants or Mates* Knockmore Enterprises, Sydney 1988, the dates of establishment of FILEF are recorded as 1973 for Melbourne and 1975 for Sydney

90 *The Age* April 26 1975

91 For additional details on the activities of FILEF see: Alcorso, C. et al.' Community networks and institutions' Op cit. pp114-116

92 Sydney FILEF publications include, for example: B. Di Biase and B. Paltridge (eds) *Italian in Australia - Language or dialect in schools?* FILEF, Sydney 1985; Di Biase, B. Dyson, B. *Language Rights in the schools* FILEF, Sydney 1988; Bettoni, C. *Tra lingua, dialetto e inglese: Il trilinguismo degli italiani in Australia* FILEF, Sydney 1985

93 Halevi, J. 'FILEF' In: C. Bettoni and J. Lo Bianco (eds) *Understanding Italy* Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, University of Sydney 1989. pp. 222-225

94 Ibid p. 225

95 *Nuovo Paese* November 1998 p.1

96 It has proved difficult to establish exactly how much money the various branches of the Dante Society receive from the Italian Government. A former Secretary of the Sydney Branch, Anna Carbogno, put the figure at around \$ 20.000 per year in the late 1980s

97 Dante Alighieri Society Information Leaflet for the year 2000

98 Cresciani, G. Op. cit. p 272

99 Interview with Giorgio Marcuzzi, President of the Sydney branch of the Dante Alighieri, October 2000.

100 See Appendix Interview with Tullio De Mauro, who stated that comparing the Dante Alighieri with similar Institutions like the French Alliance Francaise or the German Goethe Institute, would be perhaps both

'too generous and too un-generous', suggesting sarcastically that the terms of the comparison were too different and that the comparison would prove totally detrimental to the Dante.

101 Mayne, A Op. cit. p. 6

102 See Chapter 7 under the subtitle *Print media in LOTES*

103 It is only from 1876 that statistical data on Italians in Australia have been properly recorded.

104 Page 1 of the first issue of *La Fiamma* presented three articles. The first, signed by Cardinal Salotti, was entitled *Resurrezione*, Resurrection; the second was *I trionfi di Roma cattolica*/ The triumphs of Catholic Rome, and the third, in English, reads: *Italy's New Constitution and the Lateran Pacts*. It was indeed the year of the implementation of the Italian Constitution, but in all of this historical event Italians in Australia were asked to focus on the controversial inclusion in the Constitution of the 1929 Lateran Pacts.

105 Interview with the Director of *La Fiamma*, Giuliano Montagna, Sydney 6 October 2000

106 See the introductory article by U. Larobina in the special issue of *La Fiamma* entitled *La Fiamma - I primi cinquantanni 1947-1997*

107 Giuliano Montagna, Director of Sydney's *La Fiamma*, remarked that recently local Italian readers appear more discerning about the quality of news; there are occasions when they ring the newspaper to make comments. This phenomenon, he added, may be due to the increased availability of information, e.g Italian radio, SBS Italian news, as well as the fact that being members of an aging community, they seem to have more time to read or listen to broadcasts. (Taped Interview 6 October 2000, Sydney)

108 That the Italian language-newspapers must start catering for the different needs of second and soon third generation - Italians in Australia was acknowledged in the previously quoted interview with the Sydney Director of *La Fiamma* (see note above).

109 Further accurate information about the Italo-Australian media can be found in Alcorso, C. et al. 'Community Networks and Institutions' in S. Castles et al.(eds.) *Australia's Italians* Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1992 pp 106-124 (p.121)

110 On the topic of voting rights for Italians abroad the *Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all'Estero* (CGIE) and the *Ministero degli Esteri* have organised several international conferences including those in New York, March 1994; San Paolo, December 1994; Berlin, June 1995; Milan, December 1996.

111 In the 1991 Australian Census 380,000 second generation Italians declared that they spoke Italian at home. In the 1996 Census the number had decreased to 333, 000.

112 From August 2000 the issues of *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo* started to include a copy of the Italian major newspaper *La Repubblica* of the previous day. Soon after in a surprise decision the two papers have become daily; both contain a copy of *La Repubblica* which, thanks to modern technology, is sent directly from its Italian editorial offices to the Australian editorial offices of *La Fiamma* and *Il Globo*.

113 Skutnabb- Kangas, T. *Bilingualism or not: the Education of Minorities* Clevendon, Avon 1981

114 The issue will be examined later in this chapter, but for an in-depth analysis see: Totaro, M. *L'insegnamento dell'italiano nello Stato del New South Wales: 1935-1987* M.A Honours unpublished thesis University of Sydney, 1988. pp.41-82

- 115 University of Sydney *Calendar 1935*
- 116 For more details on the notion of 'Community Languages' see: Clyne, M. *Multilingual Australia* River Seine Publications, Melbourne 1982 p 133.
- 117 The Co.As.Its in Sydney and Melbourne were established almost at the same time (1967-1968) possibly as a result of Italian legislation. Also FILEF was founded in 1967 in Italy and established later in Australia: 1971 in Melbourne and in 1972 Sydney. In addition to Co.As.It and FILEF there is in Australia a very large number of clubs and associations of various kinds, all having specific recreational, sport or cultural aims. The Club Marconi founded in 1958, used to provide Italian classes for children in Sydney long before CoAsIt came into existence. For a more detailed account of Italian community organisations see Alcorso, C. et al 'Community networks and institutions' in: S. Castles et al.(eds.) 1992. Op. cit. pp 106-124.
- 118 Ozolins, U. Op. cit. 1993
- 119 Ibid. p. 177
- 120 Inaugural address by G. Martini Piovano, Director of CoAsIt, to the Victorian Association of Teachers of Italian (VATTI), Melbourne University, 22 March 1997.
- 121 See: 8.5 Comitato Assistenza Italiani (Co.As.It.): genesis and role
- 122 Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs *Review of Multicultural and Migrant Education* Melbourne: the Institute 1980.
- 123 G. Martini Piovano Op. cit.
- 124 Bettoni, C. Di Biase, B. 'L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Australia' in *L'insegnamento della lingua o italiana all'estero*. Edizioni della Fondazione Agnelli, Torino.1992 pp 315-341
- 125 Totaro, M. 1988. Op. cit. Chapter 4
- 126 Totaro, M. ibid pp 154-171
- 127 Totaro, M. 'Who studies Italian?' ALAA Conference, La Trobe University, August 1980.
- 128 Data obtained from Mr G. Fin, President CoAsIt School Committee September 1985
- 129 Croft, K. & MacPherson, R. J. S. 'Client demand, policy research and lobbying: major sources of languages administrative policies in New South Wales' *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, S 8, 1991a. pp. 89-108
- 130 For an exhaustive analysis of the topic see: Totaro, M. *L'insegnamento dell'italiano nello stato del New South Wales 1935-1987* M.A. Honours Thesis (unpublished) University of Sydney 1988
- 131 The Italian 2Unit Z Course became available to students in 1979 and was examined for the first time in 1981. It was designed for learners who had not sat for Italian in the School Certificate in Year 10. The syllabus for this course focused on the study of the language, there was no literature component. From 1981 to 1987 the number of Year 12 candidates for Italian went from 122 to 429.
- 132 Ibid Chapter 7 pp. 112-171

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- 133 This extract, from the minutes of a meeting of the Professorial Board in 1856 was quoted in 'Language at the University - Tensions Past and Present' Farwell Lecture by Professor Ivan Barko, University of Melbourne. 1 June 1994.
- 134 Ibid Professor Barko pointed out, in relation to developments in modern language teaching at the University of Melbourne, that apart from Latin, Classical Greek, French and German, no other language was part of University degree courses until after the end of the Second World War.
- 135 Colin McCormick was born and educated in Britain. During the Second World War, as an army intelligence officer he operated in Italy alongside Italian partisans. He moved to Australia to become a lecturer in Italian at the University of Sydney in 1950, and in 1959 took up an appointment as Senior Lecturer at the University of Melbourne.
- 136 Ozolins, U. Op. cit. 1993 p. 94
- 137 See: Clyne, M. 'Migrant Languages in Schools' *Babel* n. 27, October 1964 and McCormick, C. 'Italian and Assimilation' *Babel* no. 26 1964
- 138 Di Biase B. et al Op. cit. 1994 p. 148
- 139 Victoria Department of Education *The Place of Community Languages in Victorian Schools* 1984
- 140 Di Biase, B. Dyson, B. *Language Rights and the School* FILEF Italo-Australian Publications, Sydney 1988
- 141 Briguglio C. L'insegnamento dell'italiano nelle scuole australiane perché e come? In Antonio Moreno e L. Nardi-Ford *Italiano anni Novanta in Australia: emergenza o prospettive di sviluppo* CIAC Inc, Canberra 1992. pp 94-112
- 142 McDonald, P. Op. cit. pp 6-7 and p.34
- 143 Di Biase et al Op.cit. p 59
- 144 Wiseman, R. *The Childhood of an idea: Italian in South Australian Primary Schools* South Australian College of Advanced Education, Adelaide 1985
- 145 Di Biase et al. Ibid
- 146 Rubichi, R. et al. *The Teaching of Italian in South Australia* S.A.I.L., Adelaide 1992
- 147 Data provided by the Italian Embassy in Canberra
- 148 Di Biase et al. Op.cit. pp. 58-60
- 149 Co.As.It Melbourne Internal Document 1998, obtained during the interview with Melbourne Co.As.It Director G. Martini Piovano on 14 August 2000.
- 150 Marletta, C. *Italian insertion classes and after hours classes in state primary schools 1991:A survey* Queensland LOTE Centre, Brisbane.1991
- 151 Di Biase et al. Ibid pp162-164
- 152 Ibid p.162

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- 153 Data provided by the Italian Embassy in Canberra
- 154 Australian Capital Territory Department of Education *Languages other than English in ACT Schools 1990-2000*. ACT Department of Education, Canberra 1990
- 155 Data provided by the Italian Embassy in Canberra
- 156 Australian Northern Territory Department of Education *The Ten Year LOTE Implementation Strategy* (school circular) 1988
- 157 Data provided by the Italian Embassy in Canberra
- 158 Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts *A National Language Policy* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1984
- 159 Clyne M. 1991 Op. cit.
- 160 In summary Lo Bianco suggested that: literacy in English was needed for all citizens of Australia; language maintenance had to be fostered for non-anglophones; learning a second language was essential within the education system; adequate language services were a requirement for the Australian social context. The relevance of learning a second language was supported by four main factors: personal enrichment, economic advantages, equality and external needs. Nine languages identified as of wider teaching in the education system - but not prioritised ahead of others in terms of importance - were targeted to receive support for their consolidation in school curricula.
- 161 Dixon, M. and Martin, A. *A Review of the Australian Second Language Learning Program Occasional Papers No 4*, AACLAME, Canberra 1990
- 162 Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education *The National Policy on Languages 1987-1990* AACLAME, Canberra 1990.
- 163 Department of Education, Joseph Lo Bianco *A National Policy on Languages* Canberra AGPS 1987 Pag.125
- 164 Di Biase et al. Op. cit . p. 144
- 165 Davies, A. *The Native Speaker in Applied Linguistics* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1991
- 166 Clyne, M. 'The future of Italian in Multicultural Australia' *Proceedings of Italian Towards 2000* International Conference 22-24 September 1994 Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne 1994 pp 124-133
- 167 Ibid p.131
- 168 Clyne, M. , Fernandez, S. , Chen, I.Y, Summo-O'Connell, R. *Background Speakers: Diversity and its Management in LOTE Programs* Language Australia, Melbourne 1997. p. 3. This is a valuable study addressing an issue that most language teachers in Australia have been dealing with in their classrooms (without appropriate knowledge or support): the diverse language background of thire students. In the case of Italian the diversity is even more pronounced because of the variety of dialects spoken in Italy.

- 169 Ibid p92 In regard to second generation Italo-Australian informants in the above study it was also remarked that no appropriate support exists in the school curriculum or resources to facilitate the transition from dialect to standard Italian.
- 170 Ibid p 246
- 171 Centenary of Federation Advisory Committee 2001: *A Report from Australia* A Report to the Council of Australian Governments AGPS, Canberra 1994. p. 29
- 172 Two documents released by the Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training - *The Language of Australia (The Green Paper)* Canberra AGPS 1990 and *Australia's Language: the Australian Language and Literacy Policy (The White Paper)* Canberra AGPS 1991- represent a reshaping, or more precisely a narrowing of the previous NPL. The latter document however is a modified version of the former and remains closer in scope to the NPL
- 173 Lo Bianco, J. 'Italian, the most taught language: how much Italian is learned?' *Proceedings Italian Towards 2000 International Conference 22-24 September 1994* Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne. p.164
- 174 For a detailed analysis of the way politicians have used the NPL to further specific aims see Ozolin (ibid) pp 242-249.
- 175 Bettoni, C. and Di Biase, B. Op. cit. p. 325
- 176 From Prime Minister R. Hawke's *Foreword* in C. Bettoni, C. and J. Lo Bianco (eds.) *Understanding Italy* Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, University of Sydney. 1989
- 177 Ibid. Editors' Introduction. pp 1-5
- 178 Moreno, A. and Nardi-Ford L. (eds) *Italiano anni Novanta in Australia: emergenza o prospettive di sviluppo?* C.I.A.C. Inc, Canberra. 1992
- 179 The Italy born population dropped from a peak of 289, 500 in 1971 to 238, 300 in 1996, hardly any movement has been registered since the 1970s and a number of settlers have returned to Italy. For more detail see McDonald, P. Op. cit.
- 180 See **Chapter 4** for a detailed analysis of L 401/1990 on the promotion of Italian culture and language abroad. Particularly relevant on the matter: Section 8, Sub-section d).
- 181 Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) *Australia's Language: The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (Dawkins Report)* AGPS, Canberra 1991. Volume 2 of this report however argued in favour of language maintenance on the basis submissions received after the release of the previously quoted Green Paper.
- 182 See Di Biase et al. Op. cit. for detailed criticism on the contradictions present in the ALLP in regard to language maintenance pp 145-146
- 183 Already in 1982 M. Norst's *Ethnic Schools Survey* criticised the practice of the so-called insertion classes. Limitations in teaching hours were such that, according to her, there was a danger of marginalising language learning rather than enhancing its potential. These remarks were made with particular reference to

Italian in Victoria. In 1994, Joseph Lo Bianco, speaking at the Victoria University of Technology Conference *Italian towards 2000*, had this to say in relation to the issue: 'People talk almost in an incantational way about the numbers of students doing Italian as if it is an icon of achievement. It isn't [...], when you look at the quality of those programs, they are not good.'

184 Bettoni, C. Di Biase, B. 'L'insegnamento dell'italiano in Australia'. In: *Insegnamento della lingua italiana all'estero* Edizioni della Fondazione Agnelli, 1992. Torino. pp 315-341

185 *X Programma di cooperazione culturale in applicazione dell'accordo culturale tra il Governo del Commonwealth of Australia ed il Governo della Repubblica Italiana per gli anni 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998.* Sezione III

186 *IX Program of Cultural Cooperation between the Government of the Italian Republic and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia* Section 2

187 *Ibid.* *Auspicare* in Latin indicated predicting the future by observing birds flying, thus later in Italian *augurare, auspicare* : to augur/wish

188 1989 has been chosen because it is the year when nationally the number of Year 12 students of Italian peaked.

189 Data collected through the Boards of Secondary School Studies in the various States. (The names of these Education bodies may vary eg. Board of Senior School Studies in NSW, Senior Secondary Studies Assessment Board in SA, Board of Studies in Victoria etc.)

190 The imbalance in the distribution of students between levels has been calculated as follows : 70% Primary, 28% Secondary, 2% Tertiary in 1987. See Bettoni and Di Biase 1992 op.cit. p. 325

191 Statistical data have been obtained from the Ufficio Scolastico-Ambasciata Italiana, Canberra October 2000

192 McDonald, P. Op. cit. p. 34

193 Bettoni C. and Di Biase, B. *Ibid*

194 See Totaro Genevois M. 1994 Op cit.

195 *Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all' Estero.* The General Council of Italians Abroad has advisory powers. It offers consultative advice to the Government on issues and problems regarding Italian communities abroad. Of its 94 members, 65 are elected by the members of ComItEs- *Comitati Italiani all' Estero*- which in turn represent Italians in the various countries. The remaining 29 members are nominated by the Italian Government. Peculiar to Australia and Canada is the fact that the members of ComItEs, unlike other countries, are nominated by the Italian Consul rather than being democratically elected

196 Ministero degli Affari Esteri e Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione *Convegno sulle iniziative per l'insegnamento e la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiana all'estero nel quadro della promozione culturale e della cooperazione internazionale* Atti del Convegno Volume primo. Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1996. Roma pp 229-230

197 'New' relates to the elections due on 18 April 1996

- 198 Ibid. p. 232-233
- 199 Legge n. 23 -31 gennaio 1901. Art. n. 6. Gazzetta Ufficiale 4 febbraio 1901
- 200 As already mentioned the Legge n. 368 6 novembre 1989 established the CGIE *Consiglio generale degli italiani all'estero*
- 201 'La posizione australiana' in Atti del Convegno *L'insegnamento e la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiana all'estero nel quadro della promozione culturale e della cooperazione internazionale* Secondo Volume Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma 1996 pp39-73
- 202 Initiatives such as that of the international arm of the Italian national radio - RAI International - to produce TV courses for Italian teaching are seen as unsuitable. RAI, it is interesting to note, has recently set up a home page which can function as a virtual Department of Italian.
- 203 The wording of the Australian delegates' query about CNPLCIE is very polite: 'Agents abroad request information about the work done by the *Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della lingua e cultura italiana all'estero*'. The fact that they ask for information, not for *more* information, however, suggests two possibilities: a) unjustified absence of news about what is being done or b) that there is nothing to be informed about. Both interpretations seem to support criticism addressed to this Commission, as seen in **Chapter 5**.
- 204 It is suggested that establishing a group such as a 'National Italian Language Education Council' would help in achieving the desired coordination of initiatives and facilitate data collection. Ibid p 59
- 205 Ibid. Topics addressed range from the relevance for Departments of Italian of Language Assistants, *Lettori*, to student exchanges, scholarships, cooperation with ComItEs, bureaucratic obstacles to avoid, relationships with Italian Consulates etc. See pp 65-70
- 206 A voice of dissent: Professor Giovanni Carsaniga lamented the lack of attention to the needs of tertiary institutions in comparison to emigrant issues.
- 207 Ibid. See in particular p. 230
- 208 Ministero degli Esteri *Indagine sulle motivazioni all'apprendimento della lingua italiana nel mondo* Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma. 1981.
- 209 Vignuzzi, U. 'Why study Italian?' in C. Bettoni (ed) *Altro Polo* 'Italian abroad' Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, University of Sydney 1986. p.185
- 210 Questionario *'Italiano 2000 Indagine sulle motivazioni e sui pubblici dell'italiano diffuso tra stranieri* Centro di Certificazione CILS Università per Stranieri di Siena.
- 211 A 1994-1995 research project of VATI, Melbourne showed that in the primary sector 78.4% of teachers of Italian were background speakers who had chosen Italian for that reason. A. Rizzo *Report: VATI PD Needs Research Report* February 1995 (Unpublished)
- 212 Desmond O'Connor 'A Change of Image: the Impact of Italy on Second Generation Italians in South Australia' *Studi Emigrazione* Anno XXXI no. 1994 The author vividly illustrates a current social change. In the past personal identity for second/third generation young Italo-Australians was the result of negotiating between traditional family values and the Anglo-Saxon environment. Nowadays travel and contacts with Italy have

become increasingly easier, so that these young people are now in a position to look at Italy for themselves in order to identify cultural values and reflect on their meanings.

213 Cooper, R. L. *Language Planning and Social Change* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989. The author calls it 'acquisition planning' and after illustrating with precision the notions of corpus and status planning he also adds this third term to identify the type of language promotion carried out by organisations such as the Alliance Francaise

214 Data released by the Italian Embassy and Consulates in 1996

215 Co.As.It. Resource Centre's monthly newsletters offer regular information about its wide range of cultural initiatives: exhibitions, lectures, talks and regular professional development courses. These appear to be organised in cooperation with the *Direzione didattica* of the local Italian Consulate and relevant Departments of Education. Unlike in the past these activities now have a regular frequency as demonstrated by Melbourne Co.As.It. Resource Centre Newsletter (January-February, March, April, May, June, July, August 1998).

216 At the 1996 International Conference in Montecatini, the need to clarify the spheres of action of IIC and CoAsIt organisations was explicitly stated by the Australian delegation.

217 Paul Ginsborg, Professor of History at the University of Florence, keynote speaker at the Conference held at Melbourne University on 4-6 July 1997, also gave a lecture on 'The Italian Crisis 1992- 1994' at the Co.As.It Centre. The theatre was packed and the speaker answered numerous questions from the audience. Interestingly, on this occasion Professor Ginsborg, a fluent speaker of Italian, was asked to present his talk in English. Presumably Co.As.It believed the lecture should be addressed to an audience wider than just the Italian community members. The occasion was a cultural event that needed to be accessible to all members of the public as could be the case on the premises of any Italian Institute of Culture abroad.

218 Margiotta, U. 'Insegnamento e collettività italiana' Atti del Covegno Convegno sulle iniziative per l'insegnamento e la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiana all'estero nel quadro della promozione culturale e della cooperazione internazionale Montecatini 26-28 marzo 1996. Primo volume. Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato Roma 1996. p. 64

219 Bettoni and Di Biase 1992 Op. cit. report that two thirds of Italian government financial support is allocated to Co.As.It. organisations and the rest to teaching staff within the Embassy and Consulates, professional development courses, scholarships etc.

220 From off-the record conversations held in 1997 and 1998 with the directors of both Melbourne and Sydney IIC, it can be assumed that funds allocation favours Co.As.It. organisations. The IICs, having very high public relations expenses, find it difficult to adequately finance their cultural programs.

221 See presentations by Lo Bianco, Totaro-Genevois and Clyne in the panel discussion of 23/9/1994. *Proceedings of Italian Towards 2000 International Conference* 22 to 24 September 1994. Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne.

222 Ibid. See Clyne's statement on p. 194

223 Bettoni C. 'L'insegnamento dell'italiano nelle università australiane'. in A. Moreno and L. Nardi-Ford (a cura di) *Italiano anni Novanta in Australia: emergenza o prospettive di sviluppo?* C.I.A.C. Canberra 1992. Bettoni argues that the situation of Italian studies in Australian universities is weakened by the lack of complete

sequences in the courses offered, resulting in small enrolment numbers at postgraduate levels. The teaching staff in most departments offering Italian were recruited in the early eighties and at junior level positions, rather than by establishing chairs of Italian, which would have carried more authority in shaping their departments. pp 45-68

²²⁴ 'In addition to twice-weekly, 30-minute student broadcasts, the program provides a monthly broadcast of one hour to teachers in the target language to enable them to gain basic language skills' So reads the document *LOTE Ministerial Advisory Council on Languages other than English Report to the Minister for Education Directorate of School Education, Melbourne 1994*. p. 40

²²⁵ In Victoria, in the mid-1990s there was a large scale evaluation of the PALS Project (four languages were involved) but the report was never released.

²²⁶ MAE-CGIE Op.cit. Vol 2 p. 46. Also Di Biase, B. in 'L'italiano in Australia' *S. I. & N. A.* Anno 2 n. 2 Dicembre 1997 suggests that Italian at tertiary level hasn't kept the early promises of the early 1990s however, he states that it is still in good shape with its 15 degree courses in Arts, Education or Language. p 8

²²⁷ In his survey of Italian teaching at tertiary level in Victoria (VATI State Conference of March 1998) Dino Bressan, Lecturer in Italian at the University of Melbourne, stated that while in the mid-1980s there were nine tertiary institutions offering Italian, in 1998 there were five. Italian has also disappeared from James Cook University (Townsville) in 1992, and in 1996 there was an attempt to eliminate it at La Trobe University.

²²⁸ Bettoni, C. 'Un ottimismo giustificato' *S.I. & N. A.* anno III-n.1 giugno 1998 p14

CONCLUSION

With the establishment of democracy in Italy in 1947, the new constitutional charter provided for issues of justice in language rights to become part of the Government agenda. If discrimination based on language was to be eradicated in accordance with Section 3 of the Constitution, the whole of the education system had to be reviewed in order to confront the presence and usage of dialects by Italians and constructively tackle the resulting problems in the school population.(Chapter 2)

It is an established fact that while in the early 1950s two thirds of Italians still alternated between standard Italian and dialects in everyday communication and 13% spoke only a dialect¹, today's statistical data show that standard Italian is now used by about 90% of the population². This change has taken place over half a century and is the result of composite factors, not just schooling. Its significance however still needs evaluation for potential reverberations in several areas, including, we believe, the area of future language policies for the promotion of Italian language abroad.

Looking back, in particular at the first fifty years since the enactment of the Constitution, it is possible to identify three phases. The first, from 1947 to 1967, represents a period of readjustment for Italian society. As Bobbio has pointed out, this was 'a time marked by the uninterrupted growth of Italian society, in regard to both politics and the economy, while democracy was strengthened'³. It was an era of profound social change which included – among other phenomena – the last and most impressive wave of external and internal migration, as discussed earlier in this study (Chapter 3). At the same time with the outbreak of the Cold War in the international field, crucial decisions had to be taken in the domain of

foreign affairs. They included 'the extent of Italy's participation in America's global military strategy, the degree of her autonomy in evolving foreign policy, the amount of independence she could exert in major economic issues such as the use of the Marshall funds.' Matters of language promotion abroad, we have seen, were hardly a concern in this phase (or indeed a concern at all). Nor was the welfare of migrants a priority⁴ during the long period in which Christian Democrats dominated the political scene.

At this time Italy's foreign policy was characterised by features⁵ which according to most scholars in the field⁶, have remained unchanged since its political unification: firstly the fact that it was regarded as '*l'ultima delle grandi potenze e la prima delle piccole potenze*' 'the last of the big powers and the first of the small ones', determined a perpetual ambiguity of action in the international arena⁷. Secondly this ambivalent status foreshadowed the tendency to become involved in a variety of initiatives rather than focusing on a well defined plan of action. Thirdly, the dependence of Italian foreign policies on internal politics, or even more specifically on the interests of the parties in power has over time become an historical trait, *una costante storica*

Italian foreign policy, especially from 1945 onwards, has never been independent of its internal politics. In fact it has emerged only as a faded and peripheral copy of them⁸

Against this background in a rapidly changing country where democratic institutions were still in the tasting stage, there is no evidence of cultural and language issues being part of the Italian foreign policies agenda for the first twenty years following the end of the World War II. While fascism had exploited cultural policies to promote its zealous nationalism abroad, after the enactment of the 1947 Constitution silence prevailed in regard to Italian language diffusion abroad. The lack of attention to matters of foreign cultural policy in this phase is partly a consequence of the overall socio-political and economic situation and partly, we

believe, due to an almost subliminal need to keep clear of any initiative that could be seen as deriving or developing from fascist policies. Such was the urge to establish democracy that, we can assume, not much thought was given to developing cultural policies within the troubled foreign policies of the time.

It is in this context that legislation – R.D. no. 740/1940, which ironically enough originated from the fascist regime (see **Chapter 4**) - continued to be the main reference point for the management of Italian schools abroad. The same law regulated the running of IICs, which from the late 1940s had the task of re-establishing the image of Italy on the international scene while the country still struggled to pull itself out of the devastation of war and the traumas of a dictatorship which had lasted two decades(**Chapter 2**).

Let us consider the situation in Australia at the time. The first phase in our reconstruction and analysis of Italian foreign cultural policies corresponds to a time when xenophobia prevailed in Australia although mass migration was growing rapidly in the aftermath of World War II. It was the migrant who had to fit in with the needs and customs of its host country in exchange for hospitality and work, not the reverse. The situation of Italian in this period was no different from that of most other migrant language⁹ in a society still imposing monolingualism as a tool of assimilation. Italian however had features that made its status somehow ambiguous, but contributed to its survival.

On the one hand it was recognised as the language of a major Western civilisation and as such had been offered as a subject to students at the University of Sydney, the oldest tertiary institution in Australia as early as the 1930s, which meant also that Italian could be taken as a subject in the Leaving examinations in New South Wales¹⁰. Another example of Italian's high profile was that a branch of the oldest Italian cultural society, the Dante Alighieri, had been successfully operating in Melbourne since 1896 - the first in the English-speaking world . The

Society's formal inauguration took place 'at a gala event attended by many of the city's social elite'¹¹ soon after the first Italian Consul General arrived in Melbourne. On the other hand Italian migrants, who were coming to Australia 'not at the instance of this [current Australian] Government, but owing to adverse circumstances beyond their control'¹², were becoming the largest group of non-English speaking settlers.

The dichotomy characterising Italian language comprised a *lingua di cultura* and a *lingua d'emigrazione*. But were these two features reconcilable when even in the homeland the gap separating the majority of the population from its own language was yet to be filled? Until the late 1960s the answer was no, and in Australia the struggle of the individuals or associations that were attempting to keep migrant children in touch with the language of Italy is an eloquent proof of this fact. Another example of the failure to make Italian accessible to its own community are the NSW school curriculum and exams which penalised the learners rather than encouraging them, as examination results show between the late 1940s and the end of the 1960s (Chapter 8).

The Italian Government's lack of cultural policies abroad between 1948 and 1968 is matched in Australia by the bare survival of the Italian language in some States' education systems, fortunately at the same time there was no shortage of enthusiasm among the lovers of Italian culture scattered over the country. Meanwhile Italian communities struggled on two fronts: that of coping with the ordeal of Australian assimilation policies and lacking assistance from their own country of origin.

The case of Australia thus supports the notion outlined so far of distinct stages of Italian foreign cultural policies. The silent phase of 1947-1967 when fascist legislation perpetuated the status quo exemplifies well the presupposition that 'there is a policy even when one does not have a policy or has a bad one in place'¹³. 1948-1968 was the period when the survival of

Italian language in Australia depended to some degree on its traditional reputation within the humanities. Meanwhile and separately, the growing presence of Italian migrants made it the most spoken language after English. But this potential strength was undermined by an anomaly: Italian migrants spoke dialects, many different dialects, not the Florentine dialect of Dante and Lorenzo de' Medici. In the Italian legislation of those years, however, there were no provisions to accommodate the particular needs of the still unmentioned *emigranti*. In an unplanned and tacit agreement the silence of Italy about its emigrants reinforced the harsh attitude of Australia to its immigrants.

The next post-Constitutional phase, the period spanning from 1968 to the late 1980s is marked by political and economic transformation, tumultuous rebellion among the younger generations - the students - and intense labour unrest. The whole of Italian society was shaken by ferment and its structure and organisation at all levels faced a most powerful challenge. After the students' and workers' movement of 1968-1973, with its strong impact on society but meagre practical results, the nation went through the terrorist violence of the 1970s; but democracy survived. While historians, sociologists, and political scientists continue to analyse the circumstances of the period, the first interpretations of those events are now becoming available. Norberto Bobbio sees this particular era of Italian history as a period of laborious and still unpredictable transition from one type of balance among the political forces to another which might even result in a reform of the Constitution¹⁴.

The power gained within the government by the left-wing parties, in particular by the socialists, is seen by British historian Paul Ginsborg as the catalyst for some of the reforms of the late 1960s and early 1970s, but he also points out that agreement to the reforms was not based on any systematic plan. Some of the achievements of the workers, however, such as the famous *150 ore* agreement are quoted as a particularly relevant example where cultural

objectives were taken into account, not only economic goals. On the other hand Italian historian Sergio Romano suggests that in this period, because of the newly acquired strength of those parties in the Italian Parliament, attention was turned to the Italian communities abroad in a populist exercise characteristic of the Left.

Arguing in favour of Italian communities abroad is tantamount to arguing against the government, in other words emphasising that the migrants had to leave their ungrateful, capitalist, bourgeois motherland. [...] This is the left-wing-parties' dominant assumption, and they manage to have it included in Italian cultural policy¹⁵

Romano backs up his argument by quoting the subsequent national emigration conferences organised by MAE in which issues of language and culture became a significant part of the agenda¹⁶, and the Ministry's growing involvement in monitoring migration related issues. Of course, if one looks at a more distant past, the subject of language and culture spread appeared in the proceedings of the first and second conferences of Italians abroad (1908 and 1911), but from the perspective of the colonial ambitions of that era¹⁷.

What is significant is that in 1971 legislation was finally passed to cover the educational rights of Italian *migrant* workers and their families, *lavoratori italiani e loro congiunti emigrati*. The presence of the word 'emigrati' is crucial as no previous legislative text had used it before; it signals – we can assume - a late acknowledgment on the part of the Italian Government of its responsibilities towards its citizens abroad. This event occurred, consistently, during 'the era of collective action', when the trade unions were fully engaged in redressing the condition of Italian workers at home, with foreseeable outcomes also for those abroad. Interestingly the consequences of that overdue legislation of 1971 continued and expanded over a long period of time. Over a thirty year period its influence invested areas -

such as the spread of Italian culture and language - not of specific benefit for Italian migrants, which was what the legislators originally envisaged (**Chapter 8**).

Five years later the Italian Government established the *Comitato interministeriale dell'emigrazione*; and in 1977, on the basis of European Community agreements, learning the Italian language became a right for the children of migrants within Europe.¹⁸

Before these developments occurred, however, the interest in Italian communities abroad had become central to the national emigration conferences, where a new set of policies was gradually being outlined. In 1971 the *Comitato consultivo degli italiani all'estero* (CCIE) had established four separate commissions representing corresponding geographical areas, which were charged with organising the first conference on emigration of 1975.

Prior to this event, in September 1974, the Italian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Granelli declared in Montreal:

The Constitution must apply also to our fellow Italians abroad. Policies can be considered valuable only as far as they allow emigrants to rediscover their cultural identity[...]¹⁹

The main idea behind all this was that millions of Italians abroad were an estranged part of the nation, and retrieving these people, in the sense of activating their interest in their homeland, required broader strategies than the previous traditional and elitist promotion of humanistic subjects such as history, literature and the visual arts. A whole range of other facets of culture, from dialects to the various expressions of popular folklore were identified as relevant and most importantly, as a valuable resource for a better understanding of the reality of contemporary Italian society. In addition, while Italian migration was coming to a standstill, the protagonists of this long-neglected social phenomenon were becoming aware of their rights.

Following the 1975 conference on emigration, proof of the changed perspective in government foreign policy concerning cultural objectives appeared in a political-administrative circular of 1978²⁰, which, interestingly, anticipated the content of legislation passed twelve years later.

With regard to IICs it urged for instance that:

IICs take the initiative to look after and/or contribute to organising cultural events as required by the Italian communities abroad, in relation to both the socio-cultural needs of these communities in the host country and their relationship with the motherland²¹.

In a similar spirit the 1990 legislation stated:

IICs support all initiatives aimed at the cultural development of Italian communities abroad to foster both their integration in the host country and their relationship with their motherland²²

On the subject of language diffusion abroad, as highlighted by Tullio De Mauro²³, the realisation of the interest in and liveliness of Italian language studies around the world occurred at an international conference of the Italian Linguistics Society (SLI) in 1970, but it took close to ten years to be registered by the Government's central administration for example MAE and MPI. A survey of learners' motivations for studying Italian all over the world, was carried out by the *Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana*, and the results were released at the 1982 international conference organised by the MAE and MPI. They supported the unexpected: the demand for Italian learning worldwide was strong and growing, notwithstanding the absence of initiatives aimed at encouraging such an interest, that is to say the lack of specific policies for the promotion of Italian language abroad.

De Mauro and Vedovelli comment on this episode by labelling it, tongue in cheek, *una sorpresa all'italiana*²⁴, an Italian style surprise. The 1982 conference led to the establishment of the first national commission to promote Italian language and culture abroad²⁵

The focus of attention on Italian language abroad also helped to bring to the fore a whole range of related problems such as the need to create official proficiency testing for Italian L2, the urgency of updating the management of IICs and their duties-guidelines, the problematic professional development of teachers of Italian abroad and so on. Most importantly it was felt that better ways had to be found to rationalise the use of government financial input and to improve relationships with the many cultural agents abroad, including the various foreign tertiary institutions offering Italian in their curricula.

Thus in the 1980s leaving aside the so-called *finanziamenti a pioggia*, funds allocated at random to individual projects and/or requests from overseas, the Government central administration, began to revise its intervention and sponsor a wider spectrum of cultural initiative. Among the new IICs being established in new locations were those in Moscow, Cordoba (Argentina), Frankfurt, Lausanne and Nantes. Particularly interesting was the experiment of a new IIC opened in the German industrial town of Wolfsburg, where Volkswagen plants employed large numbers of Italian workers: these humble members of the local Italian community responded with such enthusiasm to the cultural initiatives promoted by the IIC that its establishment was deemed a success.²⁶

In Italian internal politics the national elections of 1983 brought a serious defeat for the Christian Democrats (DC)²⁷; the Communists lost a significant percentage of votes and the coalition government formed as a result of the elections was headed by a socialist, for the first time in Italian history. This was also the period when data released by the organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Europe confirmed that Italy had

overtaken Great Britain to become the fifth capitalist power in the world. However, in 1987 public debt had reached 92% of the GDP. Statistics, it has been said²⁸, are not a reliable basis for reaching a realistic evaluation of social phenomena in progress.

In the field of foreign cultural policies the problematic consequences of legislation passed in the early 1982 concerning the staff of the IICs²⁹ led the Italian Government to draft another bill in 1986 with the aim of updating the previous regulations and strengthening the funding system in the field of culture and language diffusion abroad, but the envisaged reform³⁰ had to be shelved because that government's term of office came to an end³¹.

From the above overview it appears that, from 1968 to 1988, changes began to take shape in the area of Italian foreign cultural policy. Firstly there was the slow but undeniable evolution of the government's stand in relation to emigrants, as evidenced by the continuing debate on emigration-related issues (ranging from Italian language teaching in the host countries to voting rights), a process initiated by the national emigration conferences. The legislation concerning migrants' educational and language rights passed in 1971 also confirms this view. Other significant events such as the establishment in 1985 of *Comitati dell'emigrazione italiana* (COEMIT)³², later renamed *Comitati degli italiani all'estero* (COMITES), and the institution³³ of the *Consiglio generale degli italiani all'estero* (CGIE), a new consultative body to advise the government on issues pertaining to Italians abroad, confirm this hypothesis beyond doubt.

The other novelty was that Italian as a second language became an issue of international relevance and an area of fast-growing demand as a result of a wide public attracted to the study of Italian culture; it was also an expanding field of research and studies worldwide. Conferences³⁴ held over time in various countries after the 1970 SLI Convention provide a

tangible proof of the importance the spread of Italian around the world had acquired. From the early 1980s with a slow but much needed response the State institutions MAE and MPI also became involved in a situation universally recognised as in need of government intervention.

The Italian Government awakening on the one hand to migration issues and on the other to the relevance of Italian language abroad, could be described as - during this stage - , recycling an intriguing political metaphor coined in those years by former Prime Minister Aldo Moro: a case of *convergenze parallele*, 'converging parallels'. The contradiction implicit in this expression, associating two irreconcilable geometrical concepts, becomes rhetorically meaningful when interpreted as illustrating the possibility of - or potential for - unexpected developments within a given situation. In other words for the first time there seems to be a possibility that the dichotomy and consequently the ambiguity inherent to the Italian Government's foreign policy domain of cultural policies - migration with its requirements of *assistance* as opposed to Italian culture diffusion abroad which has separate demands - might be constructively addressed.

In Australia testimony to the transformation taking place was provided by the first visit of an Italian Head of State (President Giuseppe Saragat), the establishment and consolidation of Co.As.It., the founding and development of FILEF organisations, and the installation of IICs in Melbourne and Sydney. In 1975 the first cultural agreement between Australia and Italy was signed. By the early 1980s the strengthening of Italian community organisations now supported by Italian Government funds, enabled them to negotiate with local education authorities for the inclusion of Italian in the primary school curriculum (**Chapter 8**).

Meanwhile - but most significantly from the early 1970s - Australia itself was involved in a process of profound social change and painstaking but exciting redefinition of its identity (**Chapter 7**). With multiculturalism, the notion of diversity embodied in migrants' cultures in

this country was accepted and turned into a national asset rather than a feature to be annihilated. As for community languages, the main symbols of that diversity, they became a significant issue in the campaign for ethnic rights. The demands relating to languages were varied and not restricted to educational issues, and thus progress was achieved in a variety of fields (Chapter 7). Meanwhile, recommendations about language issues deriving from reports, surveys and studies commissioned by the Federal Government were becoming available, so that the push by the campaigners to have the Government formulate a national policy was supported by solid reference points. Tangible progress was finally achieved with the completion of a comprehensive report - *A National Language Policy* - which resulted from a Senate inquiry conducted between September 1982 and March 1984. Three years later the release of the *Lo Bianco National Policy on Languages* gave Australia its long awaited and fought for language policy (Chapter 7).

The liveliness of cultural relations between Italy and Australia in these years, consistent with emerging values of a multicultural society, is further illustrated by activities being sponsored by the DGRC of MAE, such as the international conferences of the Frederick May Foundation of 1978, 1982 and 1986 (Chapter 8). In 1985 MAE and MPI organised an international congress on *L'Italiano in Australia* in Melbourne. In the political arena important agreements in the areas of social security and agriculture were also signed between the two countries, and in April 1986 Prime Minister Bob Hawke went on an official visit to Italy.

As for the field of education, Italian as the language of the largest community of non-English background migrants, was listed among the languages of wider teaching in Australia in the 1987 *National Policy on Languages*, and was later prioritised in all States' and Territories' languages policies. Meanwhile, due to the strategies followed by Co.As.It., helped by the

socio-political circumstances of this period in Australia, Italian became the most widely taught language at primary level nationwide.

If we look at both these instances, intriguingly it is the *migrant* language attribute of Italian that appears crucial. For the *National Policy on Languages* Italian was the language of the largest ethnic group in Australia and as such one to be maintained through appropriate strategies, and in Co.As.It.'s initiatives it was because of the Italian legislation on the education and cultural needs of Italian migrants that funds could be obtained to expand Italian learning in the education system.

The 1969-1989 phase of Italian foreign cultural policies, that period of awakening, brought unforeseen developments in Australia: for instance, the experiment of dealing with migrants' educational and language rights issues in combination with language and culture promotion per se. As we have just seen, Italian language was allowed into the primary schools thanks to the presence of children of Italian background, and the hold thus gained in the sector later enabled it to spread to the school population at large. If this happened however, it was not because of an ad hoc plan devised by authorities in Rome, but rather on the initiative of local agents. While on the one hand they managed to devise strategies accommodating the Italian authorities' goal to have Italian language learning mainstreamed, on the other they worked towards that goal within the political and social requirements of the host country and in close cooperation with the Australian education institutions.

Meanwhile, in other sectors of the Australian education system - the secondary and tertiary levels - Italian benefited from the attention given to issues of the world diffusion of Italian. Teacher training began to improve due to greatly increased opportunities for professional development, often organised in cooperation with MAE and MPI³⁵. Developments in applied linguistics encouraged experimenting with new methodologies, and a systematic dismantling

of old prejudices such as *purismo linguistico* and the elitist inclination to favour the literary model in language teaching, influenced the updating of the secondary and tertiary curricula and examinations. Development of the functional-communicative approach was reflected in a whole new range of teaching materials for Italian produced in Australia and favourably reviewed in Europe³⁶. In this period Italian was the most researched LOTE in Australia³⁷.

The overall situation described so far suggests that in Australia a correlation had been established between the two themes of Italian cultural policy – migrants' cultural rights and culture promotion per se – which until the 1980s had been parallel and kept separate. But emigration had stopped and while the life of Italians abroad continued to evolve, the potential for intersection of the two elements had increased. How could Italian language be promoted in Australia, for instance, without taking into account the Italian communities on this continent? How too could the needs of children of Italian background be responded to without considering Italian language learning in the local education system? What kind of public did IICs need to target in Melbourne and Sydney, was it only the English-speaking locals? What about the large number of Italian residents? Did they classify as legitimate members of that public and if so with what consequences?

The Australian experience is an example of interaction between two areas once mutually exclusive. This Italian cultural policies of this period, we may conclude, are characterised by changing values, and the context of Australia significantly illustrates the phenomenon.

By 1989 – to return to our initial metaphor - while on the world stage the disintegration of communist regimes signalled by the emblematic fall of the Berlin Wall continued (Chapter 1), sensational new events had started to unfold in Italian society too.

Soon after the 1992 elections, Italy was confronted by its own internal many-faceted crisis³⁸, which would continue to develop over the following years with results still uncertain at the

end of the 20th century. It is not within the scope of this study to attempt an evaluation of those circumstances, however they cannot be ignored when considering issues such as the lagging implementation of Italian legislation, the delays in meeting financial commitments, or administrative decisions dragging on and on. The envisaged reforms concerning culture spread abroad for example, which had been on hold since the mid-1980s were brought to a halt by the above political and economic controversies and guidelines provided by an MAE internal administrative memo of 1978 filled the unexpected legislative void of that period³⁹.

In December 1990 the law entitled *Riforma degli Istituti di cultura e interventi per la promozione della cultura e della lingua italiana all'estero* was finally passed. This signalled the start of a third phase in the history of Italian foreign cultural policies, a time when Italian language promotion abroad was officially and explicitly integrated into these policies, when a specific sector for cultural promotion abroad was established in MAE (**Chapter 4**) and when Italian communities abroad were clearly identified as legitimate beneficiaries of and participants in those policies.

The passing of the 1990 legislation, we believe, opened a new era for Italian foreign cultural policies. The most important novelty is that Law 401/1990 explicitly addressed the issue of Italian language and culture spread abroad through a set of specific rules and allocated substantial funds to it (**Chapter 4**). The second meaningful innovation was that the new duties set down for IICs included responsibility for – among other things – the cultural development of Italian communities abroad. It seems that by 1990 the concern that language policies could be perceived as deriving from past fascist politics was dispelled, and the Italian State finally took charge of the spread of its national language outside the nation's boundaries.

As for the mention of Italian communities abroad, firstly the expression used indicates an official acknowledgement of the fact that the notion of 'migrant' is obsolete: a new social

reality exists and must be dealt with; secondly, unlike in the past, the oldest and traditional institutions propagating Italian culture abroad also became responsible for their cultural needs. This decision, leaving aside the complexity of implementing it, this decision represents a turning point in the politics of the Italian State.

The 1990s phase of Italian foreign cultural policy, we have said, opened a new era, but the statement is somehow pretentious if measured against the modest results achieved so far in the many areas of cultural interaction. However, the notion of novelty is warranted if one takes into account that the dual status of Italian language as *lingua di cultura* and *lingua di emigrazione*, an unresolved dilemma causing protracted confusion in setting the aims of foreign cultural policy, has begun to be dealt with by addressing Italian migrants' needs within the legislation on language and culture spread abroad.

If we focus on the Australian case, Italian cultural policies examined in this context prompt some interesting observations. For instance, the Italian community seems well integrated into Australian society (Chapter 8), but this successful integration, which also depended on developing English language competence, has been paralleled by a continual language shift which increases generation after generation. At the same time, multiculturalism meant that young Italo-Australians were implicitly encouraged to develop an interest in the country and language of their families, a fact also helped by the relevance of LOTE learning established by the Australian NPL. From the perspective of young Italo-Australians, if studying Italian by the 1990s implied the acquisition of a second language rather than the maintenance of their family's language, their learning experience had another inherent quality: it fostered an understanding of their own cultural roots and thus contributed to shaping their cultural identity.

Notwithstanding the undeniable flaws affecting the status of Italian in the Australian education system (Chapter 8), the flexible implementation of the 1971 legislation allowed the mainstreaming of Italian teaching at primary level and made possible some initiatives benefiting Italian in secondary schools as well.

On the other hand the inclusion of the Italian communities among the beneficiaries of 1990s policies strengthened the role of organisations such as CGIE, a crucial intermediary between Italians in Australia and Italian Government institutions. The contribution of the Australian delegation of CGIE to the Montecatini Convention of 1996 (Chapter 8) is a meaningful example of Italian language policy development in Australia: the specificity of local needs was clearly outlined and incorporated in the recommendations put forward on that occasion.

The evolution of Italian cultural policies during the 1990s is also illustrated by other happenings in Australia. For example Co.As.It., whose very name is a reminder of its origin as a migrant welfare agency, has turned into an organisation with an ambitious agenda embracing wide educational and cultural aims and, most significantly, having a fundamental role in the development of Italian language policies in Australia. Meanwhile the former promoters of 'elitist' Italian culture abroad, the IICs, are now required to look after the cultural needs of Italian communities. Some University language departments include 'Italian emigration studies' in their curricula, the local Italian press inserts freshly printed copies of the wider circulation Italian dailies in their newspapers, primary students of all backgrounds are exposed to Italian language learning in their classrooms, to mention just the main aspects of the evolution deriving from or consistent with current Italian foreign cultural policies.

Let us shift our analysis one last time to the education domain of the spread of the Italian language in Australia, considering that education is an area of paramount importance for the Italian authorities. The Australian experience indicates that in looking for a balance between

achievements and faults, what seems to be missing so far is an impartial mechanism to enable the monitoring and evaluation of the overall status of Italian language learning in this country, regardless of and beyond the direct interest of the parties involved. Time and resources would be well spent if invested in detecting also the flaws, the areas of fragility, the shadows in the picture rather than focusing only on its pleasing details while ignoring their relationship with the whole.

Overall, this study indicates that since the 1990s Italian foreign cultural policies, as observed in the Australian context, are characterised by ongoing *interaction* between initiatives covering the cultural needs of the Italian communities in this country and culture and language promotion initiatives. While this process takes place, obsolete prejudice classifying 'migrants' as a separate sub-category has not been entirely dispelled, even among Italian institutions in egalitarian Australia; nor has the image of Italian as a migrant language been modified in peoples' minds.

However, with the 1990s, Italian legislation set to restore the rights and dignity of its former *migrants*, now *Italians abroad*, there is now a legitimate expectation that the process of integration will develop further.

From the silent mode of post-war years through the awakening stage of the late 1980s to the new challenges of the 1990s, Italian foreign cultural policy has moved forward. The most significant stage of the journey was the acknowledgement that the long neglected responsibilities towards millions of migrants/ former migrants had to be addressed. The next stage was identifying Italian language abroad as an issue in need of intervention both as an integral component of culture promotion and for the benefit of the Italian communities outside their country. The Australian experience shows successes and failures in the treatment of these

main themes of Italian cultural policies, but most importantly it shows the potential for addressing them through integration rather than separation.

What remains to be seen is whether this initial process will evolve even further and whether its positive values will consolidate and acquire permanence in the future.

NOTES

- 1 De Mauro, T. *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*. Laterza, Roma-Bari 1991 p.135 (1a edizione 1963)
- 2 De Mauro, T. 'Lingua e dialetti' in P. Ginsborg (a cura di) *Stato dell'Italia* Mondadori, Milano 1994. pp.61-66
- 3 Bobbio, N. *Profilo ideologico del Novecento*. Garzanti, Milano 1990 p. 208
- 4 See interview with Norberto Bobbio, Appendix p. 418
- 5 Vigezzi, B. *Politica estera e opinione pubblica in Italia dall'unità ai giorni nostri* Edizioni universitarie Jaca, Milano 1991. The author highlights for example, the difficulty Italian foreign policy has always encountered in defining its role, achieving stability and most importantly establishing a positive relationship with public opinion
- 6 An accurate analysis of Italian foreign policy during the post-Second World War period is found in Cacace, P. *Venti anni di politica estera italiana (1943-1963)*. Bonacci Editore, Roma 1986. For a sharp, concise appraisal of Italian foreign policy between 1943 and 1989 see: Romano, S. *Guida alla politica estera italiana*. Rizzoli, Milano 1993
- 7 Santoro, C. M. *La politica estera di una media potenza. L'Italia dall'unità ad oggi*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1991
- 8 Santoro, C. M. 'La politica estera' in P. Ginsborg (a cura di) *Stato dell'Italia*. Mondadori, Milano 1994 p.634
- 9 The situation of Russian and German was slightly different in the sense that German, for instance, was taught in some private schools and Russian was becoming important internationally in the post World War II period
- 10 In his book *Community Languages The Australian Experience* (op. cit) Clyne reports that in the the 19th century some secondary schools offered Italian in their curriculum. p. 10
- 11 Mayne, A. *Reluctant Italians?* Dante Alighieri Society, Melbourne 1997 p.19
- 12 See Chapter 8 Section 8.1

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- 13 See Interview with Sergio Romano, Appendix p 500
- 14 Bobbio, N. 1990. Op.cit.
- 15 Interview with Sergio Romano, Appendix p 497
- 16 See: a) Ministero degli Affari Esteri e Direzione Generale Emigrazione Affari Sociali, Atti della Conferenza Nazionale dell'Emigrazione *L'emigrazione italiana nelle prospettive degli anni Ottanta*. Roma 24 febbraio -1 marzo 1975; b) Ministero degli Affari Esteri e Direzione Generale Emigrazione Affari Sociali, *Atti della Seconda Conferenza Nazionale dell'Emigrazione*. Roma, 28 novembre-3 dicembre 1988
- 17 Istituto Coloniale Italiano *Atti del Secondo Congresso degli Italiani all'Estero Roma (11-20 giugno) 1911*. Vol. II Tipografia editrice nazionale, Roma 1911. For example we read: [The Conference votes that] 'a healthy and peaceful national propaganda encourages Italians at home and those abroad to be aware of the magnificent progress of the new Italy [...] so that promoting Italian language, culture, ideas may become a duty for all, and Italy may climb back to its past level as a civilisation model for all peoples'. p 562
- 18 Direttiva n. 486 25 luglio 1977
- 19 Quoted in Bettini, E. *Comunità internazionale* 1975 p.271
- 20 MAE Circolare amministrativa 18 maggio 1978. The document defines and illustrates the functions of IICs according to the new ministerial policies, and stresses the notion that the integration of Italian communities abroad has to be fostered by IICs, with a clear focus on interaction with the host countries rather than mere promotion of the Italian culture. Clearly the intent is that of updating the 1940 legislation which generically put IICs in charge of developing 'intellectual relationships' between Italy and its foreign counterparts.
- 21 Ibid Section 3(b)
- 22 Legge 22 dicembre 1990, n. 401 Section 8(d)
- 23 Interview with Tullio De Mauro Appendix p 456
- 24 De Mauro, T. and Vedovelli, M. Op. cit. p 12
- 25 *Commissione nazionale per la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiana*, created in 1982 and later replaced by a similar government body instituted with Law 401/1990
- 26 The episode is reported in Ferraris, L. V. *Manuale di politica estera italiana 1943-1993* Laterza 1994. This is one of the few works to date on Italian foreign policy which dedicates a whole chapter to issues of cultural policies.
- 27 The *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC) obtained 32.9% of the votes in the *Camera dei Deputati* and the Communist Party (PCI) went down to 29.9%. In the 1983 political elections a little known new political party, the *Liga Veneta*, obtained 4% of the votes in the Veneto Region, interestingly, not much attention was paid at that stage to its strong anti-Southern Italy attitude.
- 28 Lepri, A. *Storia della prima Repubblica*. Il Mulino, Bologna 1993. The author observes that the material living standard of Italians is much higher than in the past: 'But the average cultural level has not improved significantly' p 312

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- ²⁹ For a detailed examination of law no. 604/1982 and its consequences in regard to the recruitment of personnel to work in IICs see: Ferraris, L. V. Op. cit. pp 514-515
- ³⁰ According to the legislation drafted in 1986 funds to be allocated to Italian language promotion abroad should have increased from 25 billion liras in 1987 to 59 billion liras in 1989.
- ³¹ For problems related to frequent changes of governments, typical of the Italian political scene, see Interview with Dea Pellegrini, Appendix p 469
- ³² Legge n. 205, 8 maggio 1985; Legge n. 530, 16 agosto 1986. The first establishes that the above mentioned committees must be elected at/care of the Italian consulate wherever there is a community of 3000 Italians or over. The second regulates the election of the committees' members
- ³³ Legge n. 368, 6 novembre 1989
- ³⁴ In 1974 there was a conference convened in Trieste by 'Centro studio per l'insegnamento dell'italiano all'estero'; other conventions were organised by the Associazione Nazionale dei Professori d'Italiano in Brussels (1975), S. Felice del Benaco (1976) and Brescia (1981). After the already mentioned international conference organised by MAE and MPI in 1982, other conferences followed in Ottawa(1984), New York (1984), Melbourne (1985), Buenos Aires (1986). Proceedings of these conferences have been duly published in Italy.
- ³⁵ For an account of the positive changes in the teaching of Italian as L2 in this period see: Bettoni, C. 'L'italiano all'estero' SLI *La linguistica italiana degli anni 1976-1986*. Bulzoni, Roma. pp129-141
- ³⁶ Texts intended for teenagers by Guarnuccio and Sedunary, Melbourne 1982; for adult learners Marmini and Vicentini, Sydney 1986; for primary students Totaro and Marmini, Sydney 1987; for adult students Totaro and Marmini Sydney 1987.
- ³⁷ Bettoni, C. 'Other community languages' in M. Clyne (ed) *Linguistics in Australia: Trends in research*. Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra 1991 pp 75-90
- ³⁸ Explanations of the Italian crisis of 1992 have been offered from many view points by scholars of various disciplines: by historians Massimo S. Salvadori in his *Storia d'Italia e crisi di regime* Il Mulino, Bologna 1994; Paul Ginsborg op.cit., Aurelio Lepri op. cit. and many others
- ³⁹ A similar view is expressed in Ferraris V. L. op.cit. p 514

APPENDIX

Interview with Professor Norberto Bobbio

Torino, 23 novembre 1998

MTG

Ecco Professor Bobbio vorrei approfittare dell'occasione di essere qui con Lei per porle un paio di domande d'interesse per la mia personale ricerca sul tema della politica culturale e linguistica dell'Italia all'estero [...] Rileggevo il secondo saggio di *Politica e cultura*, e mi ci ricollego per porle la prima domanda....

Bobbio

Ma, dico la lingua non era ...

MTG

Certo non era parte del tema elaborato in quel saggio, ma adesso provo a spiegare qual è la mia domanda e come ci si ricollega. Nell'affrontare i rapporti tra politica e cultura, lei fa una distinzione tra *politica della cultura*, cito: "politica degli uomini di cultura in difesa delle condizioni di esistenza e di sviluppo della cultura". Poi dice "*politica culturale* (cioè) pianificazione della cultura da parte dei politici, la politica fatta dagli uomini politici per fini politici" E' una distinzione chiarissima e che si innesta anche in un periodo particolare di crescita della democrazia in Italia e di reazione a ciò che il fascismo aveva procurato. Ora guardando al settore della politica estera e ad un'area di questa che si riconosce ormai ed ha

una sua specificità, è diretta cioè a far conoscere la cultura del Paese, promuoverne la lingua, che tipo di terminologia usare? Se non la si chiama politica culturale, come definirla? Insomma se non la si chiama politica culturale, ed è una cosa diversa dalla politica della cultura, come va chiamata?

Bobbio

Oddio, certo sì, in senso positivo, certo non politica culturale in quel senso, il senso negativo... ma c'è anche un senso positivo di politica culturale... tanto è vero che esiste persino un Ministero, quello in cui è stato Veltroni, per tanto tempo...

MTG

... però non è un Ministero della Cultura quello italiano, è un Ministero dei Beni Culturali, no?

Bobbio

Sì, lo so, dei beni culturali, però certo di fatto si è più volte fatta la proposta di un Ministero della Cultura... ma si è sempre rifiutato perché questo può dare l'impressione che la cultura sia imposta e si ricorda sempre che questo lo faceva il fascismo e c'era quel famoso Min Cul Pop. Il Ministero della Cultura è stato proposto, ma è sempre stato messo da parte...

MTG

Ricordo che Prodi, poco prima di venire eletto, immediatamente prima delle elezioni aveva detto che se fosse stato eletto si sarebbe creato un Ministero *della* poi si corresse e cambiando preposizione completò dicendo *per* la cultura.

Bobbio

Ah ecco, per la cultura, per la diffusione della cultura in Italia... Lei sa benissimo che esistono gli Istituti di Cultura, ma per dire così, un po' malignamente, lasciano a desiderare[...] Io andavo a volte in sedi estere, e devo ho dire che ho trovato questi direttori degli istituti di cultura un po' strani.... non all'altezza [...] Ricordo anche però che in Portogallo, a Lisbona

c'era come presidente dell'Istituto di Cultura uno dei maggiori scrittori italiani, Tabucchi, che era il direttore dell'Istituto, quindi ci sono delle eccezioni, ma ci sono degli altri Istituti di cultura che sono (risatina)....

MTG

D'altra parte gli Istituti di Cultura sono stati per lungo tempo governati da una legge che risaliva al 1940; e solo nel '90 c'è stata una riforma quando era ancora al governo Craxi e De Michelis era agli Esteri.... Certo sono problemi enormi.

Bobbio

Per molto tempo è stato al Ministero degli Esteri, quello che si è occupato dei rapporti culturali, l'ex ambasciatore Sergio Romano.

MTG

Si infatti l' ho anche intervistato per la mia tesi [...]

Bobbio

Ma davvero, e dove l'ha trovato?

MTG

A Milano[...] E' stato molto disponibile e generoso nel dedicarmi del tempo

Bobbio

Immagino, è in effetti bravissimo

MTG

Molto generoso anche sul piano delle informazioni..... Comunque Romano appare molto critico della politica cosiddetta culturale italiana.... feroce quasi, direi.

A me interessa specificamente l'aspetto della 'lingua' e così mi riproponevo di chiedere anche a Lei Professor Bobbio, come vede la questione lingua all'interno della politica culturale – in senso positivo - di un Paese?

Bobbio

Mba', la questione della lingua e della difesa è indubbiamente molto importante... lei sa che la Francia..... rispetto alla Francia noi siamo molto indietro, siamo molto indietro perché la difesa della lingua italiana è molto debole, tanto è vero

MTG

Ma esiste secondo lei una difesa della lingua italiana?

Bobbio

No... non so.... Penso che se ne occupano i linguisti, ma non è che se ne occupino le istituzioni... [interruzione] La difesa della lingua viene fatta naturalmente dai linguisti

MTG

Be' io dicevo fuori dall'Italia, la promozione della lingua

Bobbio

Naturalmente lei sa che esiste un'associazione, l'associazione Dante Alighieri....

MTG

Sì, certo

Bobbio

Ma che cosa abbia fatto la Dante Alighieri non lo so. Non ne so nulla.... E non credo che abbia una gran rilevanza, credo anzi che abbia perso un po'.... e probabilmente col fascismo faceva di più di quello che faccia ora.... Tanto è vero che la corruzione della lingua italiana è molto avanzata rispetto a quella francese. I francesi difendono accanitamente la propria lingua,

e gli italiani no.... In italiano si accetta la parola straniera con molta maggiore facilità. Per esempio, l'esempio classico è che noi diciamo 'computer' e i francesi dicono 'elaborateur'; i francesi non hanno accettato la parola, in italiano non viene neanche in mente di pensare ad una parola italiana per computer....

MTG

Ma lei pensa che ci sia un rifiuto emotivo.... Che dopo il fascismo il rigetto della sua politica linguistica abbia fatto cadere un silenzio

Bobbio

Non c'è dubbio. Durante il fascismo per esempio, tutti i termini sportivi sono stati tradotti in italiano, ai nostri tempi si diceva football non si diceva calcio.... Il gioco del calcio... quello che adesso si chiama fuori-gioco si chiamava offset, ai nostri tempi 'angolo' si diceva corner. E credo che questo è avvenuto durante il fascismo

MTG

Si certo, col fascismo c'erano proibizioni esplicite riguardo alle parole straniere

Bobbio

Indubbiamente l'assorbimento delle parole straniere in italiano è molto facile e non c'è nessuno, e non c'è nessuno che se ne preoccupi. Se ne preoccupano i linguisti forse..... certo non sono informato e non posso fare citazioni, ma ho l'impressione che nessuno degli enti governativi si occupi di questa questione...forse andrebbe chiesto a De Mauro, che lo sa certamente...

MTG

I linguisti però registrano i fenomeni piuttosto che esprimere critiche o auspicare divieti... Però sul confronto tra questi due Paesi così vicini come l'Italia e la Francia, che hanno un comportamento così diverso nei confronti della lingua forse è interessante la ricostruzione

storica del 'laissez faire' italiano, che possa spiegarsi come una derivazione, che si è poi protratta nel tempo al di là del necessario, [del rigetto] della politica linguistica del fascismo?

Bobbio

Be' un po'... certo perché allora hanno tradotto tutto, e molte traduzioni del fascismo sono rimaste; il fascismo se n'è occupato, della lingua. Credo che la discussione sul concetto di nazione in Italia e si è detto, a ragione, che è diminuito l'interesse per la nazione italiana in contrapposto all'eccessiva ingerenza del fascismo..... per cui appunto anche della lingua italiana ci preoccupiamo poco. Nei nostri dizionari, se lei va a vedere i dizionari nelle loro ultime edizioni molte di queste parole, soprattutto inglesi, sono registrate come parole italiane. Certo su questo io non ho informazioni in modo preciso, naturalmente questo può darsi che sia dovuto anche alla televisione, ma non credo che esista un controllo linguistico della televisione. Perché effettivamente la televisione facilmente usa queste espressioni, senza nessuna difficoltà

MTG

Vero, perché da un lato come giustamente De Mauro sostiene, la televisione è stata maestra di lingua per gli italiani, perché ha costituito per i dialettofoni un modello orale, un modello facile, quindi ha avuto un ruolo importante, dall'altro lato c'è l'aspetto negativo...

Bobbio

Certo ha avuto quella funzione, dall'altro lato quella della televisione corrente è e rimane una lingua povera

MTG

Avrei comunque un'altra domanda, di natura più politica: nei paesi d'oltreoceano ai cittadini italiani ancora non è consentito di votare, non hanno diritto di voto. E questo non è in contrasto con l'articolo 3 della Costituzione?

Bobbio

Discriminazione? Sì è discriminazione. Sono convinto che... è uno dei pochi argomenti sostenuti fortemente da Alleanza Nazionale, dai fascisti, sono loro soprattutto che lo difendono, ma che non è mai stato accolto dalla Democrazia Cristiana durante tutti i cinquant'anni del suo dominio. E anche adesso c'è molta, molta difficoltà perché, la ragione è che... lei lo sa benissimo, ci vuole un'organizzazione, bisogna che i consolati si prestino... E poi c'è un po' la convinzione che gli italiani all'estero siano di destra perché... perché effettivamente vedono che in Italia la protezione degli italiani all'estero non è un tema... ma io sono convinto che quelli che sono rimasti cittadini avranno il diritto di votare, perché è contrario a... lei ha ragione, è una forma di discriminazione. E' giusto il termine discriminazione perché il fatto di risiedere in un luogo piuttosto che in un altro non è una differenza rilevante

MTG

... e se, come dice la Costituzione, la Repubblica deve rimuovere gli ostacoli...

Bobbio

Certo, uno non perde i diritti politici andando all'estero, questo è chiaro... si capisce che se uno va all'estero e torna in Italia a votare, va benissimo, ma se uno risiede all'estero ha ancora diritto a votare.

MTG

Io non so come ringraziarla della sua disponibilità.

Interview with Professor Riccardo Campa

Roma, febbraio 1997

La domanda [cancellata causa imperfezione del nastro all'inizio della cassetta] era se la diffusione della lingua italiana nel mondo sia stata una priorità nel lavoro della Commissione Nazionale nei suoi primi cinque anni di vita

R. Campa

Personalmente credo - e siccome ci ho riflettuto abbastanza su questo argomento perché ci devo lavorare anche istituzionalmente - ecco, io trovo che, fermo restando il fatto che se c'è la necessità di fare un posto di lingua per esempio se, come a Colonia [?], c'è la necessità di creare un corso di lingua per cantanti d'opera (perché come lei sa, dalla Callas alla Tebaldi è chiaro che hanno avuto bisogno di questo per la lirica ecc.), il Metropolitan di New York la stessa cosa ecc. Però sono venticinque cantanti, che però danno una nobiltàè come si ci fosse uno studioso, non so, di lingue semitiche che è certamente importante per gli studi di letterature antiche antiche, del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento... Però, insomma ci ritroviamo ecco fra un sinedrio di tre-quattro persone.... e questo forse non risponde ad un mondo come questo attuale, insidiato.... a un mondo competitivo anche fra le lingue. Quindi se noi non spieghiamo che.... in altre parole vorrei dire è una rivoluzione da conservatori. Io purtroppo sono un pessimo conservatore, però in questa circostanza ho dovuto scoprire che a volte la rivoluzione sta nella conservazione. Cioè se noi riuscissimo a rinverdire e a rivendicare in qualche modo, ecco gli apporti che in varie epoche la lingua come la nostra ha saputo dare...

MTG

Cioè se noi riuscissimo a rivendicare precisamente cosa?

R. Campa

... queste caratteristiche storiche della nostra lingua, cioè vorrei dire, scusi le rubo proprio tre secondi perché vorrei sintetizzare così: ci sono dei Paesi che hanno un destino... L'Italia ha appunto questo destino, di essere un Paese con cento capitali, con cento potenziali, virtuali e reali culture regionali, che però stranamente non sono mai approdate alle grandi trasformazioni epocali sul piano scientifico e concettuale. Ma, la stessa Italia, è un mosaico di realtà [...interruzione...] sul piano storico; a fianco a questi processi di differenziazione linguistica, c'è stata anche la carenza di un potere centrale organico, che o è diventato fascismo, o è diventato regionalismo il più sbandato possibile. Questi due fenomeni hanno indotto gli italiani in genere a creare un'altra Italia all'estero. Siamo sessanta milioni in Italia e forse sessantacinque all'estero, più o meno legati all'Italia, ora non voglio dire oltre... Questo grande processo biblico che il Paese ha subito negli anni, stranamente ha solo salvato una sorta di (lingua?). E' come l'hiddish dei... dei... hanno dato il premio Nobel a [?] perché è riuscito attraverso l'hiddish – e stava, viveva negli Stati Uniti – a scrivere un'opera importante, perché con l'inglese, anzi l'americano non sarebbe riuscito ad arrivarci. Ecco noi in altre parole dobbiamo trovare anche questi addentellati storici, dobbiamo creare dei pannelli storici, non basta dire: io voglio questo, bisogna giustificarlo; e la giustificazione storica e sul piano scientifico è l'aspetto più determinante. L'Italia ha avuto questo grande flusso biblico, però poi stranamente si è come condensato nelle mani di alcuni studiosi che vanno da Giambattista Vico sino a Fermi e delle visioni globali del mondo, è diventato un laboratorio di osservazione del mondo e di perpetuazione di una funzione storica della memoria dell'Occidente, almeno di quella parte dell'Occidente che arriva fino alla Riforma, cioè è meno connessa con l'empirismo, col pragmatismo e così via, che però appartiene ai grandi processi e problemi e

problematiche che si è fatta l'umanità. Allora, se il mondo moderno, e quindi la cultura moderna intende valersi di una lingua che sia il condotto più adeguato per queste ragioni storiche che ho premesso, delle lingue classiche, considerando che ormai non esiste più neppure in Italia lo studio del greco e del latino cioè delle lingue classiche, per cui probabilmente un giorno perderemo memoria di che cosa è.... già oggi se lei domanda a un ragazzo chi è Socrate credo che dica che è il centravanti del Milan. Insomma se vogliamo che questo si perda perché si pensa che l'umanità abbia cambiato pelle, che c'è stata una mutazione genetica per cui l'umanità non debba fare più riferimento al passato e quindi non deve leggere Croce, non deve leggere Musil, non deve leggere nulla di tutto questo.... Secondo me è molto meglio che gli italiani da ora in poi, per legge, dalla culla alla tomba imparino l'inglese e non se ne parla più e si fa la grande pax universale... Se invece però, tenuto conto che anche nell'impero latino, ci sono stati nella periferia dei sobbalzi, studiati fra l'altro da un inglese, un grande storico, per cui le periferie hanno il compito di sommuovere la staticità che si crea inevitabilmente anche nei grandi imperi anche in quelli linguistici, allora forse l'Italia, voglio dire la lingua italiana può avere un ruolo, che anziché essere traumatico, impositivo come era fatto prima, cioè con strutture politiche, amministrative, con guerre con conflitti, oggi potrebbe essere invece un surrogato per la cultura di tutte quelle persone che anziché limitarsi ad una sola area concettuale, ne condividano almeno due, quindi di monolinguisimo – perché anche il monolinguisimo inglese è fonte di conflitti – Anche a fronte di questo monolinguisimo inglese noi intendiamo dare un bilinguisimo in cui almeno un'altra lingua sia una lingua di riflessione, una lingua critica, o, come si dice in senso vago, una lingua di cultura che interagisca nella preparazione di diversi soggetti, indipendentemente dall'area di attività professionale che scelgono. Tanto è vero che le università nel senso tradizionale e classico della parola, dovevano comunque avere una universalità di vedute/lingue. E' impossibile essere letterati.... Musil ha scritto un'opera immortale però uno

degli elementi fondamentali è il numero 'I', cioè il numero immaginario, una delle grandi costruzioni del cervello matematico è stata espressa poi in un'opera di grande rilievo letterario che è l'opera di Musil, che era un ingegnere fra l'altro, come era un ingegnere Dostoievski...

MTG

... ma questa valenza dell'italiano che lei mette in rilievo come determinante e come giustificazione del suo valore universale, non è solo ricollegata al passato? O lei la ritiene valida anche per il presente?

R. Campa

No io dico che l'italiano, proprio per questa sua particolarità è la lingua che riesce a recepire meglio... No, guardi che Einstein, che era amico di Pessoa, come lei sa, ha dichiarato che l'unico Paese nel quale era possibile, in un momento nel quale soltanto cinque persone, diceva lui, riescono a capire la relatività generale e io stesso, diceva lui stesso, ho qualche perplessità a capirla, era proprio l'italiano, nel senso di una lingua che si è universalizzata perché è stata più allegra, più attaccata, al latino di quanto non siano state le altre, per cui può rappresentare una lingua concettuale, una lingua mentale, una lingua virtuale che deve presiedere alla operatività delle lingue veicolari, in primis l'inglese, che non può essere al tempo stesso veicolare e concettuale, perché più si estende e [più] perde d'intensità [?], tanto è vero che l'inglese che è parlato in America è una cosa già diversa dall'inglese che è parlato in Italia e da quello che è parlato in Australia e così via... Quindi, fra l'altro quali sono gli apporti innovativi che l'inglese di Oxford o Cambridge può dare a...a...a... Melbourne? Non lo so, è molto difficile... Quindi la letteratura di quel Paese che usa l'inglese e la letteratura dell'Inghilterra in inglese hanno probabilmente, anzi indubbiamente delle fenomenologie completamente diverse. Questa diversità è uno scontro tra lo stesso sistema linguistico, non è un incontro. Stranamente ci sono più differenze tra Dos Passos, Steinbeck, e... e... e non so, e

la cultura inglese... insomma dico Hemingway era molto più vicino infatti nella sua affabulazione al mondo europeo e mediterraneo (tanto è vero che molte delle sue opere importanti sono ambientate in Spagna) di quanto non fossero in relazione all'America. Bisogna spiegare queste cose... Vede il mondo inglese purtroppo, vuole semplificare tutto... forse questa è una mia... ma vuole semplificare tutto, anche il problema di Dio, infatti ha semplificato Dio [...] quindi un dio nazionalista è il contrario di tutta la definizione di dio, questa è la realtà; quindi bisogna vedere un attimo se l'umanità così com'è è nel migliore dei mondi possibili...

MTG

Questa visione... uhm, forse ci arrivo parzialmente... Ma, concretamente in che rapporto è questa sua visione con le finalità dell'istituzione per cui lei opera? C'è possibilità di uno spazio di interazione?

R. Campa

L'istituzione, cioè la Commissione Nazionale è fatta anche da persone, alcuni sono stati miei maestri, li ritengo tali indipendentemente ora dal problema generazionale, non so, un Ezio Raimondi che tra l'altro ha insegnato per anni nelle università americane, è un mio grande sostenitore, e più o meno io non trovo, le devo confessare, ma senza iattanza perché poi tra l'altro, come le ho detto io sono professore di filosofia politica (?). ... mi occupo di questo problema perché ho un mio interesse, ma in realtà lo faccio a livello istituzionale perché se non saprei fare altro che migliorare il più possibile il corso d'italiano a Kuala Lumpur, il corso d'italiano a Treviri (?) e così via ...però poi gli esiti, i risultati che ho potuto vedere dal mio punto di osservazione ministeriale in questo cinque anni non sono tali da giustificare i sacrifici che commette il contribuente italiano. Cioè la spesa per tenere in piedi questa struttura non è tale da

MTG

La struttura attuale?

R. Campa

La struttura attuale, però noi spendiamo un sacco di miliardi, poi il nostro Paese è quello che è... è una potenza mediana che ha bisogno di trovare anche dei mercati, perché noi siamo un paese che facciamo la raffinazione del petrolio di tutta l'area del Mediterraneo, ma di petrolio noi non ne abbiamo una goccia; e vendiamo il cosiddetto.... la classe, lo stile italiano, cioè vendiamo tutto quello che è il più immaginario possibile. Vorrei aggiungere a questi piccoli immaginari un immaginario complessivo in maniera, per fare questo credo che le nostre risorse sole non bastino. Non bastano prima per una semplice ragione, cosa vuole per quanto sia... la Commissione è una Commissione Nazionale che opera finché può operare. Bisognerebbe creare invece una 'entente cordiale' a livello mondiale, ma non a livello mondiale nel senso...

MTG

Cioè, lei intende un gruppo? Un gruppo di pressione....

R. Campa

Sì un gruppo, un gruppo di intellettuali come lei, che dica: va be' in Australia, vediamo un attimo se non è necessario di mettere insieme, che so - e non è necessario che siano quaranta - mettiamo tre intellettuali, una televisione, cinque professori universitari, un ministro, cioè delle persone che a vario titolo possano a loro volta influire nei vari condotti, nei vari canali in cui hanno ingerenza; perché questo lo possiamo fare. Ed eventualmente fare qualche cosa anche sulla stampa in maniera organica, sistematica, non sempre con il glamour come se portassimo le attrici nude a spasso... e questo farlo in aree, per esempio l'Australia è certamente, tra l'altro è un terminale della nostra emigrazione, poi è un paese di grande

raffinatezza anche civile, istituzionale. E la stessa cosa dobbiamo fare in Europa, noi abbiamo un problema a livello europeo perché i tedeschi dicono: noi siamo 90 milioni di persone... i francesi son 58, gli italiani sono circa 60. Noi poi dobbiamo mettere anche il cantone svizzero dove è vero che la Svizzera non fa parte dell'Unione Europea, però è anche vero che per un rapporto di cointeressenza lavorativa, c'è molta gente che va da Milano a Lugano, e che da Lugano va a Milano, quindi il cantone italiano fa parte dell'Italia linguistica, poi lasciamo perdere il resto... Abbiamo delle enclave, in Germania lavorano circa 3 milioni di italiani, a vario titolo, perché sa, poi si sono sposati, hanno figli, quindi noi dobbiamo tenere conto che siamo in minoranza - la Francia, l'Italia e l'Inghilterra - noi siamo in minoranza rispetto alla Germania, nell'Unione Europea, a livello quantitativo. Questi problemi, che poi si interconnettono...

MTG

Però, 90 milioni di tedeschi d'accordo, però la diffusione dell'inglese o del francese all'estero sono superiori a quella del tedesco, no?

R. Campa

Be' sì'.... (interruzione) Ma in Australia, cominciamo con l'essere pratici e concreti, lei come vede questa cosa? Io... la mia curiosità è che normalmente quando queste cose io le enuncio, in definitiva sono inoppugnabili sul piano dei principi... perché, cosa vuole, non si può... queste cose non le ho inventate io, queste cose esistono già e sul piano invece dell'azione pratica, questo comporta un tipo di impegno diverso...

MTG

Sì indubbiamente è complesso. Lo vedrei come un progetto di non facile realizzazione, anche perché l'accento, in Australia, come credo anche in molti altri paesi, è un po' sul valore pratico delle lingue e quindi all'interno di un sistema educativo come quello australiano, in cui

esiste una politica linguistica dichiarata, cioè c'è una legislazione in relazione alle lingue dal 1987, si è visto in questo decennio uno spostamento da una tendenza all'altra, un passaggio dal mettere in risalto la valenza delle lingue come parte dei diritti delle comunità immigrate, poi lentamente l'importanza delle lingue anche sul piano cognitivo nel sistema scolastico; però le preoccupazioni economiche, l'importanza dei contatti con i paesi che sono i maggiori partner commerciali come, per esempio per l'Australia può essere il Giappone, ha determinato una preferenza più o meno esplicita per certe lingue piuttosto che per altre

R. Campa

Ecco. Per esempio, le lingue classiche vengono o non vengono insegnate?

MTG

Le lingue classiche vengono insegnate (ma il greco classico non a scuola), il latino è stato insegnato nelle scuole come retaggio del sistema scolastico inglese, perché l'Australia è stata colonizzata dagli inglesi. Oggigiorno le persone che studiano il latino sono in ogni caso una piccolissima minoranza.

R. Campa

Il mio è un progetto alternativo... perché vede da una parte sembra ambizioso, difficilmente realizzabile, dall'altra però tenuto conto delle nostre esigenze – lei forse ha sentito prima la conversazione da Parigi: - noi abbiamo avuto questa specie di riunione latina per risparmiare che so due miliardi, tre miliardi all'anno. Quando noi programiamo una sorta di attività più a tappeto ma più modesta, più a basso regime, ma che sia in grado di assicurare una competenza linguistica, sia pure ridotta, ma tale da consentire, per esempio, a un ragazzo di venire qui, di potere scrivere una lettera sia pure commerciale, di avere un rapporto, di esprimersi in maniera da intendersi ecc. no?.. ma che superi l'intendimento che uno ha di chiedere all'aeroporto se l'aereo è arrivato o no, va benissimo, ma ho qualche perplessità e d'altro canto non posso che

esprimerla perché io ho questo compito, dico, dubito che sia possibile uniformare i nostri interventi. Perché vede l'italiano a differenza per esempio, non so, dello spagnolo che ha un commonwealth linguistico bello e accreditato e che, guardi caso, io mi sono preoccupato di questo qua, ma le dico questo perché lei... cinque stati americani hanno lo spagnolo... Però questo ambito linguistico è per così dire facilitato dalla presenza di una popolazione che si sposta da un contesto verso l'altro, fino a Marcos, sa era questo dittatore... di origine spagnola, la parola Marcos non poteva essere di origine irlandese....

Lui, per ragioni.... ha abolito lo spagnolo, come lei sa le Filippine erano un paese dove esiste addirittura un'accademia spagnola. Ora il governo spagnolo, per ragioni economiche, per ragioni strategiche non ha ritenuto di insistere nel rivendicare lo spagnolo in una realtà che ha parlato lo spagnolo per tre secoli, non per trent'anni... L'Italia che non ha nessuno.... l'Italia ha invece una sorta di 'fuochi', per dirla con una parola di che Guevara, lì c'è uno che vuole imparare l'italiano... in uno scenario stranamente più ampio di quello della Francia e della Spagna perché la Francia e la Spagna hanno scenari compositi, hanno cioè entità, hanno l'Algeria, il Marocco... Noi invece abbiamo trenta persone che parlano italiano, non so in Algeria... cinquecento in Albania, ventiquattro in Lituania, sessantacinque, mi diceva l'ambasciatore nostro a Lubiana: 'Professore bisogna che si occupi...', perché sa ogni ambasciatore mica deve essere concreto. Ci sono 64 persone che parlano l'italiano? Allora dovremmo tutti accorrere come se avessimo queste possibilità. Ed ecco la difficoltà che le dicevo prima... se noi avessimo le risorse economiche per assecondare questi focherelli, voglio dire potremmo benissimo fare un programma meno ambizioso e più aderente alle circostanze locali, ma questo non ci è possibile. Perché se noi avessimo un livello dignitoso di presenza a livello didattico... ma questo non è possibile

MTG

Quindi uno degli ostacoli più rilevanti che lei identifica è quello della mancanza di un personale...

R. Campa...

...di un personale e di una molteplicità di strutture e la distribuzione sullo scenario delle richieste, che anche questo è importante, perché lei capisce che... per esempio se lei ha uno scenario come è per la Francia l'Algeria o il Marocco, è uno scenario unitario dove l'interazione è più facile, perché già quello parla in francese, più o meno hanno rapporti, forse politicamente anche un po' distonici, ma culturalmente identici - Albert Camus è nato lì - per noi invece, fare un corso d'italiano, che so.. a Shangai, a Hong Kong, a Zagabria, a Dubrovnic è un'impresa, perché il contesto linguisticamente ci è addirittura estraneo, è addirittura completamente diverso dal nostro. E poi questa piccola enclave, chiamiamola così, che noi dovremmo coltivare costa moltissimo perché se a un piccolo gruppo noi possiamo aggiungere, non so, se a un gruppo di cento persone possiamo pensare che aumenti a centodieci non possiamo pensare che aumenti a duemila a ventimila, invece l'apprendimento del francese in un contesto nel quale ci sono già le premesse proprio politiche...

MTG

Sì certo, lo so, capisco. D'altra parte l'Italia non è stata un impero, non ha colonizzato... I precedenti storici sono quelli che sono e quindi le difficoltà, i problemi, il contesto le esigenze sono diversi....

R. Campa

Lei ha detto bene ed è per questo che io ho identificato un tipo di programma che faccia astrazione di questi elementi che oggi sono anche negativi per i paesi che devono dichiarare in anteprima di avere cambiato mentalità... Mentre noi invece possiamo andare in Somalia, dove

anzi se vogliamo siamo favoriti, perché in quell'epoca abbiamo fatto più scuole e più strade lì che qui, e quindi non abbiamo questo problema. Però a fianco a questo, ecco mi domando se un'opera un po' più ambiziosa, da riferire quanto meno ad alcuni personaggi dei vari paesi perché non dico ora cambino la legislazione perché è molto difficile tutto questo. Però sa nelle nuove generazioni ...

MTG

Quello che mi chiedevo è se lei, all'interno di quest'attività che ha svolto finora, vede delle possibilità di attuazione, per esempio guardando questa relazione della commissione riferita al 1995, vede delle possibilità di attuazione delle direttive che indicava.

R. Campa

Sul piano delle iniziative culturali devo dire la mia... sono abbastanza soddisfatto, cioè la nostra presenza all'estero, che va dal mondo scientifico al mondo letterario al mondo artistico, è pregnante, devo dire...

MTG

Be' io parlavo più specificamente della lingua

R. Campa

Ecco questo è il problema, la lingua per ora offre due aspetti, come dire, positivi: una crescente richiesta, documentata vera... abbiamo delle statistiche che sono confortanti, dall'altra un'aspettativa connessa con la certificazione, perché questo significa che la gente che vuole apprendere l'italiano può poi avere un riconoscimento ufficiale e usarlo come meglio crede. Contestualmente però devo rilevare che esistono delle disparità, come le dicevo prima, nell'ambito della modellistica... del modello...

MTG

Quindi lei vede questo come un problema da affrontare

R. Campa

E' un problema da affrontare, perché poi esiste anche un altro aspetto, che devo dire ha anche una sua importanza decisiva: noi abbiamo ora queste due università dalle quali si esce con un diploma specializzato, per l'insegnamento dell'italiano come lingua seconda, ecco se noi potessimo anche incrementare questa presenza dei giovani che escono con questa abilitazione sistematica, organica sarebbe certamente rilevante e positivo per il futuro. Poi abbiamo anche delle iniziative che sono positive, non so, dei programmi che sta realizzando la RAI-Televisione, un programma che ha messo in opera il Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, attraverso la Direzione degli Scambi Culturali e che può essere utilizzato per gli insegnanti d'italiano...Ecco l'unica perplessità che le dicevo, è soprattutto in alcuni paesi, in alcune aree che sono inserite nell'area latino americana, dove le persone che studiano l'italiano e che lo approfondiscono e che si laureano e che si addottorano da noi, aspirerebbero ad avere non dico proprio uno sbocco professionale, ma almeno un minimo di accredito nel loro paese, se l'italiano non fosse espunto dalle scuole e se ci fossero almeno un minimo di cattedre in grado di perpetuare in quel contesto l'italiano perché è impensabile che tutti i professori d'italiano possano o debbano andare all'estero per creare i professori locali ed è necessario vedere un attimo di potenziare questa presenza; ecco per fare in modo che questo avvenga e cioè che i vari governi dicano: va bene, mettiamo l'italiano sia pure come una lingua ottativa all'interno dei vari curricula degli studenti, è necessario anche che nelle università ci si attrezzi per creare dei dipartimenti e delle possibilità di lauree di lingua e cultura italiana, perché senno' come si fa a pensare di chiedere a un Paese...

MTG

Lei si riferisce in questo caso sempre all'estero, cioè lei pensa ai paesi dell'Unione Europea

R. Campa

Vede nell'Unione Europea le cose forse hanno una loro maggiore immediatezza, nel senso cioè che, mettiamo che in Germania ci siano più richieste, queste hanno già per così dire se non proprio una destinazione una sollecitazione precisa: l'allargamento dei mercati, l'interazione dell'industrie italiane e così via . All'estero, più ampio è il raggio di diffusione e più è condizionato dalla capacità ricettiva dello stesso paese, sia pure in misura ridotta, non dico che di seicento o seimila persone che studiano italiano poi tutte troveranno un posto nell'ordinamento, però che ci sia una cattedra d'italiano nelle scuole e che questa cattedra possa essere tenuta da una persona locale che si laurei è anche importante, perché sarà sempre un piccolo fertilizio, ma lo è.

MTG

Quindi uno degli obiettivi sarebbe quello d'incoraggiare e di appoggiare queste iniziative. Però mi sembra che questo che più o meno venga anche fatto....

R. Campa

Certo, certo, lo facciamo, però la mia iniziale era un'altra idea. Per esempio trovo che... nello studio di questi cinque anni della curva [dell'apprendimento] dell'italiano all'estero], lei non può immaginare come si possa vedere il fenomeno anche per l'inglese e anche per il francese, per il tedesco per lo spagnolo... come sia... come si modifichi. Prima per creare una modifica in questa tendenza, per esempio la riduzione del francese, aveva un andamento più lento, ci volevano anni....

MTG

Invece adesso è più rapido? E lei parla di statistiche sulla diffusione dell'italiano fuori dall'Italia?

R. Campa

Si fuori dall'Italia. Be' in Italia abbiamo queste università a Roma e a Firenze. Però gli stranieri che vengono qui sono già motivati, vengono qui per fare un corso di due anni, due mesi o venticinque anni (come Berenson) e allora sta qua. Però all'estero il rapporto è più connesso con le attività pratiche nel contesto locale, poi è gente tra l'altro che non si può permettere il lusso di venire in Italia. C'è una proposta, perché, anche nel mondo anglosassone, il quale tra l'altro, è stato il mondo... pensi per esempio a cosa ha fatto Oxford o Cambridge, i classici greci, latini l'hanno curati loro con uno sforzo sovrumano tanto è vero che si sono creati addirittura delle isole, dei monasteri, perché l'inglese era un lingua un po' meno adeguata ad un approfondimento concettuale di queste lingue classiche e proprio quelli meno idonei, sono stati poi gli intellettuali che hanno dato il maggiore apporto. Per dirne una, la filosofia, la storia romana, la filosofia del diritto, l'archeologia in un paese come il nostro è stata sempre curata da tedeschi o da inglesi. Pensi ad un tedesco, il Rolphs ha scritto la storia della lingua e dei dialetti italiani. Cioè non l'hanno scritta gli italiani, i linguisti italiani perché erano troppo contaminati dall'esigenza di essere aggiornati.

MTG

Ma forse ... non pensa che questo processo si stia attenuando in Italia?

R. Campa

Ma perché anche nei paesi tradizionalmente interessati come la Germania e l'Inghilterra, rispettivamente per quanto concerne l'archeologia, e la storia romana e per quanto concerne i classici latini e greci devono fare il conto con una realtà internazionale, mondiale che è meno sensibile al raccordo memoria col mondo... Capisce il computer ha reso evidente un fatto essenziale. Io trovo proprio dalle generazioni moderne, c'è una maggiore intesa tra le persone meno acculturate e il computer. Vorrei dire con una battuta, tra la barbarie e la post modernità

c'è una maggiore intesa di quanto non ce ne sia tra le fasce intermedie. Per farle un esempio, ecco, il magistrato Di Pietro è certamente uno che parla malissimo l'italiano, ma che è riuscito a fare tutto quello che ha fatto perché ha un rapporto direi quasi incestuoso con con il computer. Ha scoperto tutto con il computer...

MTG

C'è da dire però, riguardo a Di Pietro che, come lei osserva parla male l'italiano, colpisce il fatto che lui non si sia fatto intimidire o ostacolare dal non saper parlare l'italiano...

R. Campa.

E' questo il problema grave... grave, io uso termini forti, perché Di Pietro riesce a risolvere... Perché quando la riforma interrompe questo tipo di cultura aprioristica della cultura dell'Occidente, questo carattere aprioristico della interpretazione della realtà ... la realtà è fonte di una verità che prima invece apparteneva al soggetto, all'individuo; il soggetto e l'individuo che quindi ha la responsabilità della memoria storica di quello che fa con tutte le grandi difficoltà che ha avuto la cultura dell'Occidente a mantenere in piedi nel tempo questo apriorismo, questa prima e necessaria necessità che prima una cosa è nel cervello, e poi noi la vediamo nella realtà. Pensi per esempio ad una grande rivoluzione che fa l'Italia con la prospettiva, Paolo Uccello e Piero della Francesca le fanno vedere le dimensioni di un dito o di un braccio e poi si arriva fino alla proiezione per cui io sono in grado di vedere qui quello che lei vede lì, che è uno dei grandi processi che crea l'Italia, queste sono le cose che vanno dette, il resto sono tutte fesserie, che poi l'aggettivo il verbo sì, sono tecniche... la macchina è un organismo che diventa organico perché si muove, ha un suo metabolismo. Ecco questa è la cosa importante, che poi ci sia una quantità di ferro di azoto, questa è una cosa naturalmente importante però l'idea fondamentale [...] lo è di più. Quella conta. E' possibile dar vita ad una proposta che convinca i centri di cultura, perché bene o male ci sono, in maniera che questa

nostra presenza sia non dispotica, né contraria all'avvio, al (?). ma al contrario dia un apporto storico in quanto memoria di cose... Oggi per esempio io in tanti anni che frequento l'università, se domanda a un giovane, è molto meno accreditato proprio sul piano della memoria delle cose, è capace di pensare che l'acqua calda l'ha scoperta lui mentre apriva il rubinetto a casa sua. Non si fa un processo storico. Io non so se l'umanità possa sopravvivere bene, limitando neuronicamente la memoria o se invece è opportuno che attraverso le lingue che sintetizzano il percorso dei popoli, non sia in grado l'umanità anche di farsi carico sia pure in maniera sintetica e operativa di una memoria che è un passato forse ineludibile della condizione umana. Questa è praticamente la tesi che io sottopongo. Parto però già dalla premessa che il mondo così com'è non si può disattenderlo, però è anche vero che non possiamo celebrarlo come il modo più edificante della condizione umana. Si capisce che viviamo di più e forse viviamo meglio, però ci sono anche delle discrasie nel mondo, dovute proprio a dei processi, a delle teorie, a delle dottrine che vengono formulate e che probabilmente non tengono conto di una realtà interiore che, a mio modesto avviso, cioè dall'interno della letteratura, non può essere rilevato se non attraverso la memoria, se lei pensa a *La ricerca del tempo perduto* di Proust, un'opera con tutti i riferimenti che fa in un'epoca di grande trasformazione, sull'Italia. L'Italia è una costante, in tutte le cose che fa, proprio un francese, voglio dire uno dei più grandi artefici pennellatori di un'epoca, fa riferimento costante all'Italia.

MTG

Nel lavoro della Commissione, di cui lei è a capo, c'è una programmazione e una promozione. La distinzione implica due corpi separati? In che cosa consiste l'una e come differisce dall'altra?

R. Campa

La programmazione significa tenere conto delle varie proposte che avvengono in Italia ai vari livelli, nazionale, regionale, locale; per esempio c'è il centenario di Goldoni o di Marconi, c'è una fondazione che si adopera per creare le strutture, per creare un programma. Allora la ricognizione di quello che già succede nel nostro paese è compito di questo gruppo di lavoro.

MTG

Ricognizione nel senso di stabilire che cosa sta succedendo o anche di determinare quali cose scegliere?

R. Campa

No quello avviene nella promozione. Nella promozione noi teniamo conto di tutto, ma anche in base ad un altro adempimento che la legge stabilisce e che è quello delle conferenze per aree. L'anno scorso c'è stato una conferenza sul Mediterraneo e hanno pubblicato poi gli Atti...

MTG

Sì...

R. Campa

C'è poi l'altro gruppo invece, che stabilisce quali sono le modalità di rappresentazione e di programmazione delle iniziative nazionali, tenuto conto anche delle aspettative delle varie aree, ma anche dei vari paesi nelle varie aree, perché un conto è la Francia e un altro il Belgio o la Svizzera francese. Quindi noi dobbiamo tenere conto di questi elementi, di questi fattori per dare il nostro placet ad alcune iniziative che nascono sul territorio nazionale o che addirittura noi stessi in base alle richieste che ci vengono rivolte dall'estero cerchiamo di attualizzare.

MTG

Gli organi veicolo essenziali, rimangono pur sempre gli Istituti di Cultura?

R. Campa

Be' non solo gli Istituti di Cultura. Gli Istituti di Cultura, come lei sa, ormai hanno un personale funzionale, quindi solo funzionario. Possono essere invece dei centri culturali, noi abbiamo accordi culturali, come lei, sa e anche accordi scientifici. Quindi se un'università in un paese, decide che in base ai protocolli che ogni tre anni vengono sottoscritti da ambo le parti, di dare vita ad iniziative particolari, la Commissione naturalmente attiva gli enti nazionali che sono in grado di contribuire, di rispondere a quelle esigenze.

MTG

Per quel che riguarda la diffusione della lingua di per sé, l'azione degli Istituti di Cultura è - io naturalmente parlo solo in base alla mia esperienza - a quello che ho visto o letto - piuttosto limitata

R. Campa

Sì, perché vede che cosa è successo: abbiamo dato per ragioni di sopravvivenza istituzionale agli Istituti il compito di attivare i corsi di italiano, che con questo beneficio anche formale che si chiama la certificazione. In realtà gli Istituti sono tenuti in piedi ormai da funzionari, mentre prima i direttori degli Istituti erano professori, ora in realtà la legge stabilisce che hanno una funzione tipicamente amministrativa, di manager...

MTG

Ma non è cambiato il reclutamento del personale?

R. Campa

Il regolamento è cambiato ma non è ancora attivato il nuovo reclutamento, cioè il reclutamento che è attualmente operante è praticamente quello del passato.

MTG

E' quello della Legge 401?

R. Campa

E' solo che il personale attualmente in servizio è quello che è passato con un colloquio, con una specie di sanatoria da uno status giuridico a un altro. Però la legge prevede che ci siano adesso i concorsi, che stiamo appunto predeterminando in maniera che ci sia tutta una nuova generazione che si avventura in questo tipo di attività...

MTG

E attraverso la regolamentazione nuova di questi concorsi ci saranno dei cambiamenti nel reclutamento, per esempio nei requisiti richiesti ?

R. Campa

Certo dei requisiti, delle qualifiche e poi anche sotto il profilo generazionale, perché insomma nel bene e nel male è necessario che il Paese sia rappresentato anche da quelle generazioni che a livello nazionale hanno in qualche modo unificato la Weltanschauung, cosa che invece le antiche generazioni non sono in grado di fare...

MTG

E la nuova normativa dei concorsi da chi è formulata? Per esempio per avere un nuovo tipo di persone, una nuova ondata, chi fa la regolamentazione, chi e determina il tipo di esami? Lo fa la Commissione Nazionale?

R. Campa

L'ha già fatto

MTG

Esclusivamente la Commissione Nazionale o (il suo programma) deve poi essere approvato e rettificato da altri, e da chi? Dalla DGRC?

R. Campa

No, va direttamente all'funzione pubblica. Il direttore generale delle Relazioni Culturali è un membro della Commissione Nazionale

MTG

Ah, già... quindi c'è un anello di congiunzione

R. Campa

Il Direttore Generale delle Relazioni Culturali è capo dell'Amministrazione, però in quanto membro (tra l'altro non può essere eletto vice-presidente). La legge prevede che soltanto gli intellettuali, soltanto alcune categorie possono essere elette come vice-presidente; lui non può essere eletto, lui deve poi applicare questa norma in base a dei principi dello statuto giuridico degli impiegati civili dello Stato, ma le caratteristiche e il programma a cui deve corrispondere il concorso è formulato dalla Commissione Nazionale e viene mandato al Ministero della Funzione Pubblica, che lo approva e d'intesa con i Ministeri competenti.

MTG

E questo rappresenta una novità rispetto al passato?

R. Campa

Sì certo, prima non era così. Prima (i funzionari degli Istituti) venivano reclutati dalla scuola, in genere dalla scuola media, facevano un colloquio al Ministero e il Ministero stabiliva se mandarli con un grado o con un altro nelle varie sedi. E questo sin dal dopoguerra, perché inizialmente - gli Istituti sono stati fondati nel 1926 - hanno avuto una traiettoria anche nobile per così dire durante il fascismo, entro certi limiti, anche se poi la propaganda era per gli altri rispetto alla funzione, ma poi l'assetto repubblicano non ha mai preso di mira questo fatto. Per quanto riguarda invece, come dicevo, la lingua, che a lei interessa. Perché vede la lingua, oggi poi è un condotto molto più essenzializzato di quanto non fosse cinquant'anni fa, perché noi

riusciamo per esempio ad arrivare con la televisione in molti paesi dell'Africa e così via, però, come dire? Pubblichiamo la partita di calcio... l'intrattenimento della televisione.... e io non sono molto convinto, a differenza della signora Buttiglione che è la rappresentante della RAI, perché c'è una rappresentante della RAI nella Commissione. Alcuni, dicevo, impressionati da una realtà post-modernizzante considerano che trasmettendo dei programmi della RAI, nell'area latino-americana, o in Africa, o insomma dove riusciamo ad arrivare.... Sostengono che la gente impara...

MTG

Be', un po' dappertutto, perché per esempio in Australia c'è il telegiornale in diretta via satellite

R. Campa

...certo, però io non sono molto convinto, in base appunto alla teoria, alla dottrina che avevo enunciato, prima di tutto perché gli italiani parlano già molto male avendo la televisione in casa, quindi basterebbe dire questo; se gli italiani a livello nazionale parlano un italiano approssimato con la televisione in casa, perché dovremmo ipotizzare che gli italiani o gli stranieri che stanno all'estero, sulla base di un telegiornale o di un programma di intrattenimento, tra l'altro detto in un cattivo italiano, dovrebbero poi imparare l'italiano... Tenuto conto che l'italiano non essendo una lingua veicolare o competitiva, non può pensare che - mettiamo che siano sessanta, settanta o cento milioni quelli che in qualche modo possono impararlo - io non credo che questo tipo di realtà sociale possa modificare le sorti dell'italiano, perché addirittura potrebbe crearsi una sorta di ghetto, sia pure ampliato, di aficionados che non darebbero molto vigore alla funzione dell'italiano, che probabilmente potrebbe essere invece uno strumento di riflessione operativa all'interno di altri circuiti linguistici. In altre parole quello che io vorrei è che la gente pensasse un attimo in italiano

anche se poi si esprime in inglese. Proprio tenuto conto di questa grande esperienza che ha già fatto l'Italia... che gente come i grandi economisti che abbiamo in America o fisici ecc. che ormai parlano anche l'italiano con inflessioni americane però rimangono vincolati concettualmente alla struttura mentale, morfologica, dell'italiano e quindi pensano in italiano e siamo in grado quasi subliminalmente...

MTG

... però se mi permette un'osservazione a questo proposito, lei qui parla in termini di elite

R. Campa

Pero, sì, perdoni ha ragione, ma le avevo detto prima è un'elite anche in Italia, però anche qui chi scrive in italiano (?) se non è popolare qui, perché dovremmo pensare di renderla popolare all'estero? Però se noi riuscissimo a fare in modo che l'italiano non diventi una lingua nazionale emigrata all'estero, ma invece come più o meno è il latino, una lingua universalizzata, anche se nella città del Vaticano viene parlata forse in misura propellente, non per questo il latino è la lingua del Vaticano, nessuno pensa che il latino sia la lingua del Vaticano, mentre si considera che il latino sia una lingua ormai universalizzata. Non vedo altra strategia, tranne quella dei piccoli (ugualmente compresente) centri, del piccolo nucleo, dei ragazzi che vogliono studiarla... Insomma abbiamo speso miliardi credo per fare dei corsi per ragazzi che impararono un po' di italiano per venire qui, come lei sa, insomma la nostra generazione e così, vanno a Rimini, a Riccione incontrano le ragazze o i ragazzi, dicono quelle cinquanta parole che servono insomma per un'atmosfera sentimentale e però io non vedo delle prospettive economiche e sociali utili per la lingua, perché una delle preoccupazioni è naturalmente, di cui devo almeno finora far carico, oltre che di quelle come studioso, voglio dire se lo Stato si preoccupa di creare dei meccanismi è chiaro che si debba preoccupare anche di trovare degli esiti a questi meccanismi, che possono essere anche morali, ma che si presume

siano anche contingenti, economici, commerciali, istituzionali e così via. Concreti, detto in una parola. Come si fa a pensare di mettere in moto con le risorse economiche molto limitate che abbiamo, economiche ma anche di strumenti, di mezzi, di persone.... Vede l'Alliance Francaise, oppure il Goethe oppure il Cervantes , sono degli organismi stranamente in paesi a grande centralità amministrativa come la Francia, invece questi organismi sono più elastici perché non sono statali. Sono enti pubblici, svolgono una loro funzione precisa: la lingua. Cioè l'Alliance Francaise, il British Council si occupano solo di insegnare la lingua. Il nostro Istituto fa le mostre, invita gli scienziati, fa una serie infinita di cose, quindi l'attività destinata alla lingua in genere è un'attività – per ovvie ragioni operative – molto limitata e per giunta non in grado di assecondare quel livello a cui io facevo riferimento.

MTG

Quindi secondo lei gli Istituti di Cultura non sono sufficientemente focalizzati sulla lingua per considerarsi strumenti ottimali per la sua diffusione... Ma se lei guarda istituzioni come il British Council o il Goethe Institute sono enti finanziati pur sempre dallo Stato.

R. Campa

Be' fino a un certo punto, perché sono intanto negli stati federali, per quanto riguarda il Goethe, per l'Alliance Francaise è come la Dante, per quanto riguarda il British Council in parte

MTG

Ecco per esempio la Dante e l'Alliance hanno fisionomie molto diverse, no?

R. Campa

Molto diverse per un po' di deformazione nostra perché in realtà la Dante avrebbe dovuto perseguire proprio questo intento, ma non lo può fare perché è nata con un carattere volontaristico, si sono creati 531 comitati all'estero. Ne abbiamo tre in Cina per esempio però

a livello volontaristico, che è la nobiltà degli italiani, è l'unica grande nobiltà cioè gli italiani che sono andati all'estero, una volta che hanno superato attraverso le società di mutuo soccorso.

Interview with Professor Vincenzo Cappelletti

Roma, febbraio 1995

MTG

Forse la prima domanda, la domanda fondamentale per me è questa: a suo avviso, dal vivo della sua enorme esperienza nel campo della cultura, esiste o è possibile definire una politica culturale dell'Italia per l'estero? Se esiste, ha degli obiettivi specifici? Se ci sono degli obiettivi specifici, come potrebbero essere descritti e identificati?

V. Cappelletti

Indubbiamente esiste una politica culturale italiana all'estero, pur passata attraverso incertezze e contraddizioni. Mi pare che la linea più importante, la finalità principale di questa politica sia stata accreditare l'Italia come un soggetto storico non solo importante ma imprescindibile della modernità; si è cercato di ovviare al rischio che l'Italia venisse considerata soltanto il terreno della classicità e oltre la classicità la sede di una vasta creazione letteraria e artistica ma senza quelle altre componenti che individuano la coscienza moderna, in primo luogo la componente scientifica. È stato fatto uno sforzo, devo dire, per accreditare l'Italia come un soggetto storico moderno, sede di pensiero scientifico e anzi spazio e teatro di avvenimenti fondamentali nel campo della scienza moderna. Si è dato corso alla difesa di una lingua che era una lingua sede di esperienze intellettuali fondamentali, non tanto lingua veicolare quanto lingua vettrice di contenuti intellettuali fondamentali. Quindi difesa dell'Italia come soggetto storico, difesa della lingua - non in competizione con le grandi lingue veicolari - ma come lingua che reca contenuti intellettuali, umanistici e scientifici dai quali non si può prescindere.

Queste, direi sono state pur fra tante incertezze e contraddizioni, le linee portanti della politica culturale italiana all'estero, con un riscatto progressivo e devo dire non enfatico dalla pesante, ma circoscritta soggezione alla cultura di origine, di stampo anglo-americano che l'Italia ha subito dopo la fine della guerra. Per un paese ricco di collegamenti con le culture francese e tedesca, dopo la guerra l'Italia è stata invasa dalla letteratura, dalla lingua, dagli studi di provenienza anglo-americana. Il progressivo arginamento di questa invasione, la riconduzione dell' invasione a un corretto rapporto di dialettica e di confronto è stata la cornice di quello che si è fatto per ricordare [che l'Italia] è un soggetto storico imprescindibile e che la lingua italiana oltre ad essere una creazione fonetica e strutturale di altissimo valore, di altissima bellezza sul piano fonetico e alto significato sul piano strutturale, veicola dei contenuti non solo di Dante al quale tutti hanno fatto spazio, ma di Galilei, ma di Spallanzani sul piano della scienza, ma di... dei grandi Volta, di Fermi, di Marconi. Ecco, e di una filosofia che ha Vico come punto alto nel '700 fino a Rosmini e Gioberti come punti di grande spicco nell'800 ed ha Croce e Gentile e Gramsci. Ecco anche la letteratura si è fatto ogni sforzo per portarla agli esiti contemporanei dove si parte certamente dal sublime di Dante ma si arriva ad una elevata e significativa letteratura, ai contemporanei che tutti conosciamo. Anche in campo letterario si è detto attenzione perché si arriva a scrittori d'oggi, a poeti di oggi... ai Luzi, ai Bufalino, ai Moravia, ai poeti da cui non si può prescindere. L'Italia è un soggetto storico moderno e vivo cioè contemporaneo, e questa presa di coscienza fondamentale ha orientato pur tra contraddizioni e scarsezza di mezzi la politica estera italiana, parlo della politica culturale dell'Italia all'estero. La politica per la lingua è stata un complemento di questa politica per la cultura e questo ha fatto sì che l'uscita di un'opera paradigmatica, è vero, il vocabolario della lingua italiana pubblicato dall'Enciclopedia Italiana, finito l'anno scorso, venga oggi considerato come un modello di vocabolario anche dai lessicografi inglesi e francesi. Dai francesi ce lo siamo sentito dire la seconda domenica prima di oggi, a Parigi sul terreno di

Expo-Langue, a chiare lettere: il vocabolario della lingua italiana della Treccani è un esempio del modo di fare un vocabolario. [?] con 200.000 vocaboli, 2000 dei quali forestierismi, è una percentuale accettabile. Forse è anche bello che ci sia uno scambio; non è questo nostro un mondo a compartimenti chiusi, è un mondo a frontiere aperte.

MTG

Sì, lo faremo ordinare dalla nostra biblioteca... Mi è venuto a mente che Sergio Romano lo ha definito un'opera 'splendida'.

V. Cappelletti

Sì, sì, vede Collega, una cosa che io non ho fatto ancora moltiplicare è un film: *l'italiano parola del mondo*. Per lei sarebbe uno zuccherino, fatto da regista Corrado Farina. Il titolo però è mio. E quindi non so glielo faremo avere... Io vorrei farne fare un certo uso...

MTG

Per noi sarebbe fantastico anche perché quando si iscrivono gli studenti - ci sono delle giornate dedicate solo alle iscrizioni - in cui lo spazio del Dipartimento è a disposizione di questo gruppo di giovani che arriva... eventualmente anche con genitori che vengono in anticipo a informarsi: 'Ma insomma, l'italiano, perché studiarlo, a che cosa serve, che cos'è? Vorrei studiarlo ma... 'Dare una documentazione anche eventualmente nata in Italia sarebbe un ottimo strumento di ...' public relation'!

V. Cappelletti

Ecco sì, è cosa graziosa, ecco di trenta, trentacinque minuti, non di più. Io ora passo a riprodurlo e gliene faccio avere una copia, gliene mandiamo una copia, sì, sì...

MTG

Gliene sarò molto grata. Dunque c'è una cosa che mi ha colpita nel suo discorso, lei ha messo molto l'accento -in relazione alla lingua- lei ha usato la parola 'difesa', non ha usato la parola 'diffusione'. Mi sembra che dietro questa scelta di termine ci sia un pensiero...

V. Cappelletti

Sì, ora dovrei dire... dovrei ritornare al discorso che stavo facendo, perché c'è stata anche una difesa, difesa anche dentro i confini, si è provveduto a raccogliere le forze di quelli che credevano nell'italiano sentivano che potevano rendersi testimoni del valore e del significato della lingua italiana. All'estero c'è stata una difesa prima, ma poi dopo c'è stata una diffusione, perché gli Istituti Italiani sono pieni di persone che studiano l'italiano... fanno difficoltà, ad accettare tutte le iscrizioni. Quindi le due cose così come all'inizio c'è stata una difesa della cultura italiana, questo oggi è largamente superato. Che l'Italia sia un interlocutore intellettuale nessuno lo mette più in discussione, il Paese ha operato sul piano culturale un riscatto... diciamo la verità anche nel corso degli anni '60, sono gli anni 70 e soprattutto gli anni '80 che realizzano una diastole culturale italiana, una capacità d'interloquire, d'intervenire, di manifestare. Quindi direi le due cose, forse non sarebbe neppure esatto dire ci siamo sbagliati, non era 'difesa' era 'diffusione'; no, in un primo tempo c'è stata una difesa. L'Italia è un Paese che ha perso una tragica guerra e la sorte dei vinti è una sorte pesante, perché non dirlo? Perché non riconoscerlo? E' la verità è sopra il capo di tutti quanti noi; ma il Paese in un certo modo poi ha anche vinto una guerra, una guerra sociale, una guerra contro la propria minorità economica, contro la larga diffusione di classi[?] minoritarie, è vero, nei vivere civile [?]e una sua guerra per la libertà, contro la negazione della libertà. L'Italia ha ospitato il più grande paese comunista dell'Europa occidentale e il più grande partito comunista, è vero, tra i paesi dell'Europa occidentale, il partito comunista che militava per una sua libertà, non certo libertà civile e democratica nel senso occidentale ma libertà rivissuta

all'insegna di valori di giustizia che ora non voglio qui analizzare. Quindi in fondo anche qui se guardiamo bene le cose, l'Italia ha perso la guerra agli inizi... L'ha persa né la novità della Resistenza, alla quale io vivamente credo... nell'aver combattuto anche nell'ultima parte a fianco delle potenze antifasciste, antinaziste può riscattare il fatto della sconfitta. Però è anche vero che ha vinto una grossa guerra: la disparità sociale, la minorità sociale e civile e una guerra per la libertà. La guerra per la libertà a distanza di decenni è stata vinta. Si è detto con non poco fondamento di ragione che la Germania ha dovuto aspettare cinquant'anni per vincere un '45, per vincere la seconda guerra mondiale. E' vero la forza economica della Germania fa sì che essa abbia avuto per altra strada e superando una tragica vicenda quello che cercava attraverso la... - forse anche questo cercava - nella seconda guerra mondiale e forse anche nella prima. L'Italia ha vinto la sua guerra e quindi ci dobbiamo porre con serenità davanti a un Paese che è il quinto paese industrializzato del mondo.

MTG

Quindi tornando alla questione della difesa, perché si ricollega in un certo senso anche a questo, in Francia esiste un'organizzazione che si preoccupa di difendere il francese dalle influenze delle altre lingue e fondamentalmente dall'inglese. E, almeno da ciò che si legge, mi sembra che ci sia una certa reticenza in Italia ad accettare qualcosa di simile... Mi chiedevo se sia un fenomeno collegato a ciò che il fascismo aveva fatto in termini di politica linguistica e quindi al timore che desti una certa preoccupazione riprendere in mano... Come vede lei questa questione?

V. Cappelletti

C'è una soluzione di continuità, c'è una frattura... Il fascismo si era, se pur cosiddetto secondo fascismo, si era coperto di ridicolo, diciamo la verità, la lotta ai forestierismi... Tutto questo l'Italia con una giusta valutazione, direi, di quello che il Paese, un Paese che ha avuto più

miracoli economici e civili e tuttavia un Paese che non è né il primo, né il secondo, né il terzo del mondo, un Paese per tanti versi appoggiato a integrazioni sovranazionali, è vero, quindi la difesa e la diffusione della lingua è stata diciamo la verità, realistica, mentre la Francia vuole bloccare i forestierismi, l'Italia li ha ammessi con tutto il vantaggio che questi duemila forestierismi, stanno là, indicano una situazione reale di nostra di interazione. Per alcuni versi di dipendenza da altri grandi paesi del mondo soprattutto dall'area anglo-americana e dicendo anglo-americana direi dall'area americana. È uno specchio reale, non è meglio avere - dico io - immagini reali che immagini artefatte? Probabilmente è meglio, quindi le abbiamo avute, senza i decreti sulla gazzetta ufficiale, che con un paese fatto come l'Italia, con una società fortissima, puisante alcune volte anarchica, non sarebbero stati osservati da nessuno. E peraltro larga parte della terminologia scientifica, che è la più pericolosa è stata tradotta; la biomedicina è stata tradotta, un po' meno è stata tradotta la fisica, un po' meno ancora l'economia, però c'è una larga tradizione di...

MTG

E l'informatica?

V. Cappelletti

L'informatica anch'essa in parte sì e in parte no. I francesi per la loro gazzetta ufficiale hanno potuto sancire l'equivalente francese di software, logiciel, l'Italia ha provato a varare un logocale e la gente non l'ha recepito, ci ha un po' rinunciato, vero? Se avessimo dei poteri forti, potremmo forse provare per lo meno la soluzione francese. Questi poteri non ci sono, è noto a tutti che abbiamo avuto geniali governi e presidenti del consiglio..... Si deve all'Italia se Spagna e Portogallo hanno completato il mosaico di un'Europa che sarebbe stata molto falsata con la sua riduzione a Europa anglo-tedescaCi sono stati momenti di grandi coalizioni che hanno salvato la solidarietà negli anni del terrorismo, ma la forza di imporre le parole sulla

gazzetta ufficiale in Italia non c'è. Tanto vale stabilire un rapporto idrodinamico concreto tra flussi d'entrata e flussi d'uscita. Mi pare che l'italiano di oggi è una lingua bellissima, ha purgato tutta la retorica dei costrutti per diventare una lingua asciutta. Per altro c'erano stati anche in passato gli italiani asciutti. L'italiano di Galileo non è un italiano bembesco, è vero, l'italiano di Leopardi, l'italiano dello Zibaldone è un italiano bellissimo, come l'italiano di Manzoni, non è vero? Tutto sommato è una lingua altamente bella, altamente bella sul piano fonetico... Io credo che l'italiano sia la lingua più vicina alla musica, e poiché la musica costeggia, diciamo così, l'espressione verbale raccogliendo i residui ancora inespressi e forse inesprimibili del pensiero e traducendoli in musica, l'italiano è la lingua dove il confine con la musica è più naturale, più immediato, più dolce a marcarsi insomma.

MTG

Son d'accordo con lei... anche per il mestiere che faccio. Comunque un'altra domanda molto più concreta in un certo senso. Nell'esame dei bilanci dello Stato e se si considerano i finanziamenti destinati al Ministero degli Esteri in paragone a quelli degli altri ministeri e poi, all'interno del ministero degli Esteri, se si guardano le varie voci delle varie Direzioni in effetti - la mia analisi non è ancora sufficientemente documentata - ma a primo colpo, anche in base alle analisi che hanno fatto altri, per esempio nell'ISPE, la voce cultura è poco finanziata; riceve dei finanziamenti abbastanza ridotti almeno in paragone agli altri ministeri e agli altri Paesi. E mi chiedevo, ecco, in relazione a questo impegno finanziario, nella lunga esperienza del suo lavoro, ci sono delle variazioni tra un governo e l'altro? Come vanno le cose?

V. Cappelletti

Male, male, male. La spesa per la cultura italiana nel mondo è misera. La lingua si alimenta da sé perché, lei lo saprà, i nostri Istituti di Cultura ricevono anziché dare per l'insegnamento della lingua. Chi vuole studiare l'italiano paga, come è giusto che sia, una quota per potere

seguire il corso e gli Istituti di Cultura questo fanno insomma, in parte vivono anche con i corsi di lingua. Lo stanziamento per la cultura, sia in sede Esteri che in sede Beni Culturali, è di una scandalosa esiguità. In un Paese che ha un indotto economico da cultura - visita alla cappella Sistina o al Foro romano o a quello che lei vuole- enorme; è di una scandalosa esiguità. La vivacità economica del Paese ha tuttavia permesso che il Colosseo venga restaurato da una grande banca, una delle maggiori banche italiane, la banca di Roma, cioè ha permesso l'intervento dei privati, pur non essendo ancora approvato il regolamento per la detrazione dalle imposte, e quindi sono molte le anomalie, sa, e intanto quando difendiamo dei valori, dobbiamo prendere atto del torpore, della poca sensibilità, del disinteresse o quanto meno della non volontà di andare a fondo di un Paese che certo ha avuto una spesa sociale molto elevata e che ha accumulato un debito pubblico di tutto rispetto....

MTG

Ma in questa contraddizione tra l'Italia che è un po' la quintessenza della cultura, lo è per il suo patrimonio, e questo anomalo disinteresse a farla conoscere, c'è una interpretazione? Lei ha una spiegazione del fenomeno o è solo una questione di trascuratezza....

V. Cappelletti

Ma vede dovrei andare nello psicoanalitico....un po' nel sottile.... Secondo me per difendere una civiltà bisogna sentirsene degni, altrimenti si resta un po' attoniti talvolta di fronte alla grandezza della civiltà greca o di quella latina anche, di fronte alla metafisica di Aristotele, di fronte all'Eneide uno sente qualcosa che lo soverchia, è vero... Qui poi subentra l'uomo, l'honet homme, il quale fa poi ossequio a queste cose e il non-onesto uomo il quale volge le spalle... Quindi c'è un po' il soverchiamento dell'uomo italiano da parte di questo scenario mediterraneo della cultura antica... medioevale, per noi, e protomoderna fino alla via delle Indie, fino alla scoperta dell'America... Questo soverchiamento, questo volere ristabilire uno

stacco, questo volere dire 'stabiliamo uno stacco, per dire siamo tutti più all'altezza di noi stessi...' Ieri sera mi accadeva di parlare in uno degli scenari più straordinari, affacciati sul Foro romano, dalla Basilica di S. Cosma e Damiano, è vero, mi accadeva di parlare sul concetto di Roma agli europarlamentari - per poter parlare ci ho dovuto ripensare, rimeditare - alla grandezza immensa, per esempio, di questa città dove viviamo, che si sia all'altezza di Roma da parte di chi di Roma si occupa, alcune volte sarà stato, altre volte però certamente non è stato; ricordo con commozione Giulio Carlo Argan, sindaco comunista di una parte politica che non è la mia, o l'ho definito sul *Corriere della sera* il più grande sindaco del dopoguerra che Roma abbia avuto... Non è nemmeno questione di parte politica...

MTG

Un'ultima cosa. In questo momento di svolta per l'Italia, qual è la sua percezione? Ha una proiezione ottimistica? Cambierà qualcosa sempre in relazione al tema della cultura...della difesa della cultura... È ottimista o pessimista?

V. Cappelletti

Non glielo saprei dire.... Non glielo saprei dire, sono in attesa, cara amica, sono in attesa di un segnale di nostro ricongiungimento intellettuale e morale con quella civiltà che qui è cominciata con i greci, con gli etruschi, poi è diventata latina ed è durata certamente a livello europeo fino a Galilei con imprese anche dopo mirabili.... Ecco, sono in attesa che quelli di destra o quelli di sinistra si sentano questo coraggio; non le nascondo che nel parlare ieri sera agli europarlamentari di Roma io in quel momento, io il coraggio di ricongiungermi me lo sono sentito... Poi forse adesso ritornando tra le carte e le beghe della giornata... ma in quel momento mi sono sentito all'altezza di questa grande tradizione romana, ma per altro verso italiana... Roma non esaurisce l'Italia... Se ci sentiremo uomini del poco, rispetto a uomini del molto o del moltissimo, i soldi, la mano al portafoglio non la metteremo. Stia tranquilla che

poi è un mettere la mano al portafoglio per piccole somme, nemmeno per grandi somme. Solo se sentiremo noi un'urgenza intellettuale e morale del tipo che le ho rappresentato tra la prima Grecia, ma la grande Grecia, la Magna Grecia... Se non saremo capaci di questo, molto bene alle vestigia non gliene vorremo.

Ω

Interview with Professor Tullio De Mauro

Roma, 20 gennaio 1995

De Mauro

Con Massimo Vedovelli abbiamo fatto un lavoro [.....] sulla diffusione dell'italiano all'estero, nella rivista internazionale di sociologia, diretta da Fishman, il numero speciale, uscito l'anno scorso, nel '94, sulle politiche degli stati che ebbero colonie. Allora, lei può trovare in quell'articolo un po' di bibliografia relativamente specifica. Poco e poco specifica. Perché? Perché ehhh..... l'oggetto stesso della sua tesi è oggettivamente evanescente. In questo senso, che..... Infatti è un po' buffa la collocazione dell'Italia tra le grandi potenze che ebbero colonie. E' vero, non si può negare che l'Italia ha avuto anche.... è stata anche nel novero di Paesi che hanno avuto colonie. Un po' buffa perché in generale sono Paesi che hanno avuto una politica linguistica, anche più d'una. Cioè hanno cercato di avere l'idea dei problemi d'integrazione e... d'integrazione linguistica con la popolazione, o comunque di promozione e diffusione sistematica, pianificata della lingua del Paese. Ora questo in Italia... in sostanza in Italia non c'è mai stato. Non c'è mai stato seriamente. Non c'è mai stato con continuità. La sola cosa che è esistita di specifico è la Dante Alighieri.

E si può ricostruire la storia della Dante Alighieri..... Ma sarebbe non so se troppo generoso o troppo ingeneroso, confrontare la Dante Alighieri con il British , con il Centre culturel, col Goethe o con l'Alliance Espagnole...

Da parte delle autorità di governo l'attenzione è rimasta modestissima fino a tutti gli anni '70. Noi abbiamo scoperto, artigianalmente, nella società di linguistica, in uno dei nostri primi congressi... Abbiamo scoperto per caso dall'affluenza che registrammo di italianisti - - siamo

nel 1970 - quando abbiamo fatto il convegno- i cui atti sono usciti l'anno dopo, sull'insegnamento dell'italiano in Italia e all'estero. E per l'estero fu, per me che gestivo allora la società di linguistica, una vera scommessa e perchè per scrupolo era stato aggiunto. E arrivarono, arrivarono dall'Australia, dalla Germania, dalla Svezia, dal Brasile, dall'Argentina, dal Canada italianisti stranieri, a loro spese ovviamente. La società era poverissima ed è restata, per fortuna, sempre abbastanza povera, a raccontarci... dei loro problemi che erano legati a problemi di diffusione non solo di livello universitario, ma nelle scuole, di corsi ecc. Della di diffusione e del bisogno di apprendimento dell'italiano. Questa fu una sorpresa, noi lo segnalammo, ad alta voce...

MTG

Questo convegno a cui lei fa riferimento era del '70?

De Mauro

Sì. Sì... i due volumi di atti con un titolo comune *-L'insegnamento dell'italiano all'estero-* sono il terzo e quarto volume della serie di volumi della Società di Linguistica Italiana, che lei certamente trova in una biblioteca straniera e anche alla Nazionale.

E... e una percezione da parte dell'apparato amministrativo centrale dello Stato di questa espansione dell'italiano si è avuta soltanto all'inizio degli anni '80. E... e da allora in poi c'è stata una qualche attenzione, soprattutto nel periodo in cui fu Direttore Generale Sergio Romano. C'è stata una qualche attenzione che si è poi estesa al Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Ma tutto finiva qui. Per esempio la cosa più ovvia [...] la prima cosa da fare, cioè creare un centro nazionale. Una stanza.... una sala... un posto, a cui gli insegnanti d'italiano sparsi nel mondo possano riferirsi unitariamente per sapere: quali sono i materiali didattici disponibili, i criteri di valutazione, gli standard, i livelli, i percorsi didattici... in che Paese

qualcuno ha già insegnato, come ha insegnato... Questa centralizzazione, banale, delle informazioni ancora non esiste.

MTG

O è estremamente frammentaria...

De Mauro

Certo. E' chiaro...lei deve sapere che non è che io posso dirle: 'cara signora ma perché viene da me per queste cose? Vada a via tal dei tali, trova una sede del Ministero degli Esteri o dell'Istruzione o di tutt'e due, dove lei trova una biblioteca aggiornata con le riviste del settore.' No? Glielo posso dire questo? No. Io le posso dire vada da Renzo Titone o da Arcaini, vada.. Cerchi Romano che forse si ricorda qualcosa di questo...

MTG

... a cui ho appena parlato

De Mauro

Allora in queste condizioni....quando lei dice "la politica linguistica", ma quale politica linguistica? La *non-politica* linguistica... No? Naturalmente, siamo abbastanza figli di Machiavelli in Italia per sapere che una *non-politica* poi è una qualche politica, cioè passano delle scelte. Ehhhh, per esempio, a mio avviso per lungo tempo è stato avvertito come elemento negativo, con la prospettiva problematica, in qualche caso ciò era a livello cosciente, con la prospettiva problematica (?) il fatto che, fare degli Istituti Italiani di Cultura, per esempio, un centro di raccordo [dell'area] e di promozione dell'insegnamento dell'italiano, cosa che di fatto ora si fa, di fatto lo fanno in qualche area...

MTG

Lo dichiarano sulla carta?

De Mauro

...o lo dichiarano sulla carta. Questo poneva in molti Paesi del mondo un problema di rinnovato rapporto con le comunità emigrate italiane. Rapporto che, per varie motivazioni, non era desiderato. Perché [gli italiani all'estero] o erano fascisti o erano comunisti. Perché era, come mi disse con molto candore la direttrice dell'Istituto italiano *E.C.Lerici* uno dei più belli [...], l'Istituto italiano di cultura a Stoccolma. Con molto candore la direttrice dell'Istituto italiano negli anni '70, disse [...] a me che insistevo [dicendo]: 'Ma, non so, qui ci sarebbe una massa d'urto, importante, a Stoccolma, di italiani, che con qualche piccolo aggiustamento diventerebbero i frequentatori, darebbero forza all'attività dell'Istituto...' E lei mi disse: 'Quelli no!' Ed io: 'Ma perché *quelli* no?' Risposta: 'Perché sporchi'. E certamente un Paese come l'Italia, diversamente - io penso - da altri, dagli altri Paesi che hanno una loro politica coerente, avrebbe il problema di raccordare la sua politica di promozione linguistica con una politica più generale e complessa di raccordo con le prime, seconde, terze generazioni. E questo è più scottante, è più complicato, pone problemi diversi.... Richiederebbe una gestione molto attenta. Questo si deve dire a onor del vero.

Ehhh, ma io poi guardi sono per guardare in faccia alle cose; questo è soltanto un piccolo aspetto della questione, evidentemente è una piccola attenuante... almeno per quanto, per come la penso io, del fatto che non c'è stata una politica linguistica. E questo non esserci della politica linguistica certamente ha favorito, come dire, una sorta di scollamento tra comunità al di là di tutte le retoriche, che però sono anche recenti come retoriche.... Adesso per esempio il Presidente della Repubblica. magari si ricorda.[...] di salutare, come anche il fascismo.... gli italiani nel mondo, ma insomma poi è una questione di [...] un legame organico, e non c'è ricerca di un legame organico. Ecco è passato uno scollamento tra le comunità emigrate del nostro Paese.....

MTG

In base alla mia esperienza in Australia.....a me è sembrato che... si cominci a percepire, in un certo senso, l'esistenza di una comunità italiana, forse dopo il '68. E a investire.....

De Mauro

Localmente?

MTG

... da parte del governo italiano, a registrare la rilevanza di questa comunità e quindi a destinare dei fondi....e poi come questi fondi vengano gestiti o con quale criterio è un altro conto. Ma certamente non prima di allora e forse proprio in relazione al valore degli emigrati economicamente....

De Mauro

Certo, sì, sì certo, è probabile che forse, che possa esserci stato qualche piccolo aggiustamento della *non-politica*... però, di fatto una vera politica linguistica non comincia se non comincia... [se non] cominciano a crearsi delle condizioni. Per esempio con, adesso in questi ultimi mesi, dal 1994 con la definizione di certi progetti di certificazione, con lo sforzo di mettere insieme i due o tre progetti che sono stati elaborati e metterli in serie, diciamo, come progetti relativi a livelli diversi. Questo comincia a creare... a dire che c'è nella amministrazione e [forse] nell'Istruzione un'ombra di preoccupazione, ecco un'ombra di cura del tema...

Ehhhhh?Il Ministero dell'Istruzione ha preso molto a cuore quest'iniziativa dell'IRRSAE Liguria di creare dei pacchetti di libri e degli strumenti multimediali per la formazione degli insegnanti d'italiano all'estero, che spesso sono un personale così, un po'... reclutato in modo un po' occasionale. E questo è un altro segno, diciamo, di attenzione.... Quindi, diciamo, la precedente *non-politica* comincia a essere incrinata da alcune falle nel muro della

disattenzione attraverso cui cominciano a manifestarsi i segni di attenzione. Siamo però ancora lontani da poter parlare di una politica linguistica e culturale italiana....

E quindi poi la bibliografia... è la bibliografia di una vita delle comunità italiane, e[...] , lei la rintraccia partendo be', dai lavori della Bettoni... anche seguendo la pista della piccola bibliografia Vedovelli-De Mauro, di questo lavoro in Fishman, si arriva a ricostruire un po' la presenza italiana nel mondo, c'è il lavoro dell'Enciclopedia...

MTG

È interessante come per esempio in Paesi come la Somalia esistano delle scuole italiane che seguono programmi italiani, che vengono poi praticamente amministrati a locali, e che, a come mi sembra di capire, adesso diventano quasi uno status symbol, una speranza d'inserimento ecc.

De Mauro

...d'inserimento e di caos... Adesso queste scuole italiane in un posto come la Somalia sono un po' un residuo di un passato coloniale in un certo senso...[...]...[sono segni) anche del reingresso.....Be' più che di un passato coloniale del reingresso dell'Italia nel rapporto privilegiato con la Somalia favorito dall' ONU negli anni '60 Eh?

MTG

Pero' in Paesi come l'Australia, dove la comunità italiana è numericamente sostanziosa, e in un contesto di istituzioni democratiche, invece le scuole italiane non esistono per niente. Cioè l'italiano è studiato e ormai inserito in parecchie scuole, ma non c'è una scuola italiana....

De Mauro

I lavori dell'Enciclopedia italiana le danno un discreto quadro di questo tipo... Anche per l'Est Europeo per esempio in Ungheria ci sono le scuole d'italiano nelle elementari...

MTG

... anche in Australia l'italiano è inserito nelle elementari, anzi è la fascia in cui è più diffuso... Come, poi è un altro conto...

De Mauro

Per quanto riguarda lingua e nazione... dunque che le posso dire - ma un po' svergognatamente - io le posso dire che qualche anno fa io ho scritto un libro che si chiama *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita.....*

MTG

...lo conosco bene, i miei studenti lo usano attualmente

De Mauro

Lì dentro lei lo sa, trova questa pista, una delle piste che le indicavo....Si sono aggiunte cose, certamente, cose d'insieme che valgono, insomma...decisive... Mah, qualche cosa di aggiuntivo altrui, lei trova citato in una raccolta che chiama *l'Italia delle Italie*. Lei trova lì un po' di riferimenti ad altri, trova un po' di notizie aggiornate sulla mancata attuazione dell'articolo 3, no, dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione, anche dell'articolo 3 a dire la verità. Ecco troverà, per esempio la questione delle minoranze[...]Adesso noi stiamo preparando per.... il Dipartimento abbiamo già creato un piccolo archivio delle minoranze linguistiche italiane raccogliendo, sia regalando[...] raccogliendo tutti i libri relativi a testimonianze, traduzioni, sulle minoranze linguistiche italiane....sia regalando le carte che avevo accumulato negli anni.. e poi raccogliendo le carte di Gaetano Arfè, che è stato parlamentare europeo per varie legislature e che è autore, il parlamentare che ha firmato per dir così, quella che è chiamata in gergo 'la carta Arfè', la carta dei diritti delle minoranze, comunicata (?) al Parlamento europeo alla fine degli anni '80 e quindi lui ci ha dato tutto il suo archivio, che stiamo ordinando, lo stesso ha fatto Piero Ardigò....che era direttore della sezione italiana del Bureau Europe,

Allora ci accingiamo a pubblicare...abbiamo costituito una base di dati, un dischetto....che metteremo a disposizione di chi possa dare i [?] fondi per la pubblicazione....E pubblichiamo in *Libri e Riviste d'Italia*, la rivista datata gennaio 1995. E' un utile strumento [?] serve largamente al suo scopo.... che poi quel poco che c'è riesce a doppiarsi. In qualche modo *Lettera dall'Italia* è un doppione di questa [] *Libri e Riviste*. *Lettera dall'Italia* è più allegra, *Libri e Riviste* è più seria, è più da topo di biblioteca vecchio stampo, diciamo.

Per l'Italia con i miei allievi pubblichiamo il materiale bibliografico proprio, grezzo che noi abbiamo ordinato un po' per argomenti e poi in lavoro d'insieme lo stato degli studi sulle minoranze linguistiche in Italia....

Volevo anche aggiungere che anche verso le minoranze si può parlare di una politica linguistica pensata ? A mio avviso è arduo farlo....

Interview with Inspector Dea Pellegrini

Roma, 3 febbraio 1997

MTG

Visto il ruolo che la Dottoressa Pellegrini svolge nell'ambito di questa Direzione, forse come prima domanda vorrei sapere in che cosa consistono le mansioni di un Ispettore

Pellegrini

Bisogna chiarire innanzi tutto che la figura dell'ispettore tecnico, cioè del tecnico dell'educazione, è nata con il processo di democratizzazione della scuola, quindi è nata con i decreti delegati del 1974. Quando le varie forze sono entrate nella scuola: il consiglio di classe, il collegio dei docenti, il consiglio d'istituto, il distretto scolastico insomma fa parte di un processo di democratizzazione della scuola, di ammodernamento della scuola e di professionalizzazione del profilo del docente. Gli ispettori tecnici appartengono ai vari settori disciplinari, quindi più che 'inspicere' nel senso tradizionale della parola, nel senso fiscale, gli ispettori tecnici sono dei consulenti 'counselors', più che ispettori e professionisti. Io personalmente appartengo all'area linguistica, vengo dal campo della formazione del personale docente, mi sono sempre occupata di formazione, prima come docente, poi come preside, poi come Ispettore della formazione dei docenti di lingue, delle lingue straniere in Italia o dell'italiano come lingua straniera all'estero. Sono diventata ispettore nell'82, ho lavorato negli enti regionali prima, al centro, nel ministero poi e dall'87 all'estero.

MTG

Quindi già dieci anni di esperienza nel settore estero

Pellegrini

Si dieci anni di esperienza nel settore dell'estero perché sono andata nell'87, ho vinto un concorso per l'estero, e la cosa curiosa è che io avevo fatto la domanda per l'Australia... E invece mi hanno dirottata in America latina, perché in America latina c'era grande urgenza di avere un ispettore con un profilo più o meno corrispondente al mio curriculum, al mio profilo professionale e la sede era Buenos Ayres, e mi sono occupata delle problematiche dell'insegnamento dell'italiano come lingua straniera in tutta l'America latina e in parte anche negli Stati Uniti. L'esperienza è stata particolarmente interessante ed utile, un momento di crescita per me e anche di utilità per l'utente

MTG

In che cosa ha consistito questo tuo lavoro?

Pellegrini

Quando io sono arrivata in Argentina, tra '87 e '88 sono arrivata in un momento particolarmente importante, perché era il momento della caduta del governo militare e dell'ascesa al potere di Alfonsine, e quindi di grande apertura all'Europa, nel momento che si avviava un difficile processo di democratizzazione del Paese, di ripresa dei rapporti con l'Europa, un momento felice per l'Italia che era uscita da tutta la sua crisi e si avviava a diventare una grande potenza commerciale, industriale, quindi da un punto di vista anche economico, e mi sono interessata collaborando molto strettamente con le autorità diplomatiche di accordi con le autorità argentine per l'inserimento della lingua italiana nelle istituzioni scolastiche argentine, nel momento in cui l'Argentina si avviava a rivedere il suo sistema scolastico e dell'insegnamento delle lingue.

L'italiano è entrato a pari dignità con le altre lingue nella scuola secondaria argentina; a questo punto nasceva il problema della formazione dei docenti. In Argentina esistono due sole università in cui è presente la lingua italiana, quella di Cordoba e quella di Buenos Ayres.

Esistono infinite proliferazioni di cosiddette Dante Alighieri, di comitati, di società di mutuo soccorso ecc. e poi l'insegnamento dell'italiano a livelli più o meno privati o privatistici era sempre esistito. Però stranamente l'Italia non aveva mai fatto, ha fatto pochissimo voglio dire, una politica di assistenza, di difesa di supporto della lingua e dei bisogni culturali e linguistici dei nostri emigrati. Sì, ha fatto alcune cose, ma insomma non in una maniera sistematica.

MTG

E questo nonostante che negli Atti dei Congressi sull' Emigrazione, per esempio nel congresso del '75, poi quello dell'82, ci sia un'area specifica dedicata ai bisogni culturali educativi degli italiani emigrati....

Pellegrini

Certo, c'era una scuola, c'era un liceo, c'erano alcune scuole elementari, una Mendoza una a La Plata, due a Buenos Ayres, c'era e c'è una grossa scuola che porta il nome Scuola Dante Alighieri ma è una grossa istituzione a Rosario, però sono tutte istituzioni, diciamo così private, che poi hanno avuto a partire dal '71 l'assistenza in parte dello Stato, traendo vantaggio dalla legge che era stata approvata dal governo italiano

MTG

La legge 153?

Pellegrini

La 153. Esattamente.

MTG

E questo supporto è consistito di un aiuto economico o anche altre forme di assistenza?

Pellegrini

Abbiamo fatto anche un accordo con la università di Roma La Sapienza, allora non c'era ancora la terza università e con l'Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, con il governo argentino e con l'Istituto del Profesorado che è il Magistero, diciamo così, di Buenos Ayres per la formazione a distanza de docenti argentini di lingua italiana, per dargli un diploma di abilitazione. Perché c'erano varie persone che insegnavano l'italiano ma non avevano una vera e propria formazione accademica e non avevano un titolo di studio specifico. Così attraverso un corso biennale, semi-residenziale perché facevamo delle riunioni, due volte al mese, di un giorno intero e studiavano sul materiale...

MTG

Questo nell'ambito di quale istituzione, dell'Università?

Pellegrini

Sì nell'ambito dell'università locale, in collaborazione con l'Istituto di Magistero locale abbiamo fatto questo corso in collaborazione con *La Sapienza* di Roma per la formazione dei docenti. Ed è stato molto utile. Purtroppo il discorso è rimasto un po' in sospeso, sospeso a metà, perché a questo corso doveva poi succedere la creazione di cattedre di lingua italiana presso varie università, oltre le due presistenti. Purtroppo le vicende politiche italiane sono sempre abbastanza contraddittorie... Nel frattempo è venuta la crisi economica, le difficoltà, il governo italiano ha avuto motivi di difficoltà anche interni... I ministri si sono succeduti uno dopo l'altro per cui il discorso praticamente è rimasto sospeso. Questo discorso ha interessato fondamentalmente l'Argentina, però ha interessato anche altri paesi dell'America latina: il materiale prodotto di tipo cartaceo, multimediale è stato utilizzato anche in Cile, in Brasile, in Uruguay...

MTG

Posso fare una domanda, lasciando da parte un momento l'Argentina a cui poi vorrei tornare. Nel sistema politico italiano in questo avvicendamento di governi che è stato particolarmente pesante, anche ultimamente, una iniziativa che venga, non so, incominciata dal governo X, poi cade questo governo e ne viene un altro, casomai c'è un altro ministro e via dicendo..... C'è un minimo di continuità o tutto quello che è stato fatto fino a quel momento decade?

Pellegrini

A livello di ministri c'è continuità, cioè se cade un ministro e ne viene un altro si può continuare il discorso. Il problema è il Parlamento; infatti c'è un disegno di legge di riordino delle istituzioni scolastiche all'estero che va avanti e indietro dal Parlamento da circa sette-otto anni praticamente.... È stato persino approvato da uno dei due rami del Parlamento però nel frattempo il Parlamento è stato sciolto

MTG

Cioè a quando ci riferiamo?

Pellegrini

All'ultima legislatura e non è stato ripresentato con diritto di priorità, sono scaduti i termini, per cui si deve ricominciare da zero. Per cui non è tanto il fatto che cada un ministro, che purtuttavia è molto grave perché rappresenta una linea politica, poi bisogna ricominciare il discorso daccapo con il nuovo ministro ecc.. ma è proprio anche l'avvicendamento

MTG

Scusa, per l'ultima legislatura intendi Dini?

Pellegrini

No, il precedente

MTG

Cioè, chi c'era?

Pellegrini

C'era... Credo che sia stato durante il periodo di Andreatta. Comunque lo possiamo rintracciare questo disegno di legge, forse c'è da qualche parte....

MTG

Ma ormai è scaduto, no?

Pellegrini

Eh sì... ormai è scaduto. Bisogna ricominciare daccapo, di nuovo. Poi è cambiata completamente la situazione politica, il quadro politico italiano è cambiato completamente. C'erano alcuni difetti di fondo in questo disegno di legge, per esempio non veniva chiarita la figura del formatore... Noi abbiamo questo contingente di personale che mandiamo all'estero, no? Io ho una mia visione delle cose, naturalmente, questo è un mio punto di vista. Però è una mia visione condivisa da molti linguisti....Noi mandiamo questo personale, con una funzione di docente... ora se facciamo il caso di Paesi extra-europei.... l'Argentina... il Venezuela, gli Stati Uniti o persino europei (come la Germania). Noi a fronte di un docente italiano abbiamo trenta docenti locali, per dire, no? Che siano trenta o quindici... comunque, una quantità di docenti locali. Ora io non credo che sia ben spesa questa presenza, mettendolo in classe, cioè noi dobbiamo preparare delle persone che siano in grado di fare da teacher-trainer e possano essere utilizzate sul territorio come madrelingua di assistenza e di supporto a questi docenti locali, ma.... non ha senso di mandare un docente in una classe, al lato di altre trenta classi che sono con docenti locali....

MTG

Non so se mi è chiaro Cioè quando tu parli di formatori, intendi dire persone che dovrebbero coadiuvare gli insegnanti d'italiano locali nel ravvivare, migliorare le loro conoscenze, competenze....

Pellegrini

Esatto e nel fare da anello di collegamento con l'Italia, col materiale didattico

MTG

La tua obiezione è che...

Pellegrini

... che noi non mandiamo un docente a fare questo lavoro, magari mandiamo un docente a insegnare

MTG

Ah, ho capito.... Ma allora non si tratta più di formatori

Pellegrini

Non è più un formatore, esatto. Questo è il difetto della legge, che per proteggere in un certo senso questo contingente non si è ben delineata. L'Italia non ha mai avuto il coraggio di fare l'operazione che gli inglesi hanno fatto, che i francesi hanno fatto, che altri Paesi che hanno una politica coerente in difesa della propria lingua hanno fatto da tempo, cioè creare la figura dell'addetto linguistico. Noi dovremmo avere una serie di addetti linguistici molto diffusa, una rete molto diffusa di addetti linguistici invece di avere docenti all'estero, se non eccezionalmente.

MTG

Ma quell'iniziativa di circa cinque anni fa, in cui un gruppo di consulenti linguistici fu mandato in varie sedi estere, forse in tutto il mondo e certo vennero anche in Australia

Pellegrini

Ecco, appunto rientrava nel ... come io li ho utilizzati in Argentina....

MTG

Sì ne fu mandato uno in ogni Stato, lavoravano nei Department of Education dei rispettivi Stati come consulenti

Pellegrini

Certo, ma questo andava formalizzato, perché non c'è una legge, il problema è che non c'è una legge

MTG

Quindi è questo quello che tu avevi in mente quando parlavi dell'interruzione

Pellegrini

Certo è stato fatto quel passo e poi non ha potuto avere seguito perché giuridicamente di fatto nella legge non è prevista questa figura. Nella normativa italiana esistente non c'è la figura del formatore

MTG

E quindi mancando le regole per provvedere alla sua identità non si poteva tenerne in vita il ruolo

Pellegrini

Esatto, e la legge, il disegno di legge che era stato approntato, secondo me aveva questa lacuna di non chiarire bene questo obiettivo e di non chiarire bene questa figura, che era la cosa più importante.

MTG

Questo disegno di legge a cui hai fatto riferimento, era diretto ad aggiornare la Legge 153?

Pellegrini

Si sia della legge 740 del 1940 che della 153

MTG

Quindi ancora siamo lì.

Pellegrini

Si ancora siamo lì. Si spera che questa legislatura possa affrontare questo problema dando una normativa adeguata

MTG

Quindi dovrà essere ripreso in pieno, ciò occorrerà un nuovo disegno di legge?

Pellegrini

Rifare tutto l'iter: un nuovo disegno di legge

MTG

Ma da chi parte di solito l'iniziativa, qual è l'organo competente a fare la prima mossa?

Pellegrini

Possono essere varie le forme di iniziativa della presentazione di un disegno di legge. Può essere di iniziativa parlamentare, di iniziativa governativa, e quindi l'iniziativa anche dei due Ministeri per esempio il Ministero degli Esteri o quello della Pubblica Istruzione al quale l'altro poi si aggrega e la integra e così via. Si può anche trattare però di iniziativa parlamentare

MTG

Tornando alla legge 153, così copriamo gli argomenti che mi stavano a cuore. Nella normativa che poi non è andata avanti, hai accennato al fatto che questa particolare figura del formatore che sarebbe essenziale per migliorare la situazione dell'italiano all'estero

Pellegrini

... spendendo gli stessi soldi e ottenendo il triplo dei risultati. Per essere proprio brutali, dal mio punto di vista, ma che non è solo il mio punto di vista.....

MTG

Comunque l'aggiornamento di questa famosa legge(153), tanto discussa, per cui, se ben ricordo, anni fa ci fu perfino un convegno a riguardo

Pellegrini

Sì a Urbino.... È tutto cominciato lì; è cominciato con Valitutti, che pur essendo un liberale è stato il ministro... l'unico ministro non democristiano in tutta questa, in tutto questi decenni (e speriamo che con l'Ulivo ora cominci una nuova era). Valitutti aveva una visione molto illuminata delle cose, era un uomo straordinariamente intelligente e dalla visione straordinariamente aperta. E' stato lui per esempio che ha realizzato il concorso per gli ispettori, cioè che ha visto l'utilità di questa figura di tecnici all'interno dell'amministrazione, che pur essendo stata prevista dal '74 fino all'80 la legge non aveva trovato mai attuazione. Ed è stato lui che ha promosso ad Urbino questo convegno sulla legge 153 vedendone gli aspetti, diciamo così, problematici, se non li vogliamo chiamare negativi e la necessità di una revisione proprio profonda di questa normativa per adeguarla ai tempi.

MTG

Io ricordo la sua critica: che era una legge obsoleta

Pellegrini

E' nata obsoleta perché praticamente è nata nel '71 per sanare una situazione che si era già costituita nel tempo e che effettivamente andava vista in un'altra ottica perché nel frattempo era nato il Consiglio d'Europa, era nata l'Europa unita, si andava verso l'unificazione.... Il Consiglio d'Europa aveva emanato una serie di normative e aveva fatto anche in campo

linguistico una serie di proposte, tipo il livello soglia, e quindi anche una politica d'integrazione tra gli stati e di integrazione di politica educativa. Perciò bisognava forse pensare già da allora, l'Italia doveva forse avere più forza contrattuale con gli altri stati e chiedere anche l'inserimento delle lingua italiana là dove c'era una comunità d'origine italiana o di italiani nelle istituzioni scolastiche locali. Però c'era questa tendenza dell'emigrazione o dell'illuso rientro, perché poi di fatto di tutti coloro che sono andati in Germania, il 90% sono rimasti in Germania.

MTG

E suppongo ancora di più per quel che riguarda l'emigrazione transoceanica

Pellegrini

...nell'emigrazione transoceanica ancora di più, quindi questa difesa delle radici e dell'identità all'interno dello stato ospitante, era una visione forse troppo moderna per noi italiani.

MTG

Forse più impegnativa e complessa da realizzare...

Pellegrini

Sì, forse era più semplice fare questi piccoli corsi nell'illusione poi che questa gente sarebbe rientrata in Italia e si poteva inserire più facilmente di nuovo in Italia. Poi di fatto, con la normativa europea il problema non esiste ... perché qualsiasi bambino che passa da uno stato all'altro ha diritto a essere inserito nella classe corrispondente alla sua età, quindi avendo dei corsi intensivi in lingua materna ecc.

MTG

Quindi il problema di fondo che tu identifichi riguardo alla legge 153, oltre al fatto che era una legge già in un certo vecchio rispetto ai tempi, era che ghettizzava l'italiano, lo separava dal mainstream, come si dice in inglese.

Pellegrini

Cioè non facilitava la socializzazione, non facilitava l'inserimento del bambino nella società locale. Se noi consideriamo una cosa, che i nostri emigranti non parlavano l'italiano, le famiglie avevano un'estrazione sociale e culturale molto bassa e il lessico era limitato a qualche parola, alle parole della comunicazione quotidiana e della sopravvivenza, quindi non c'era ricchezza di lessico, parlavano pochissimo l'italiano, parlavano il dialetto, questi bambini si sono trovati quindi isolati dal contesto sociale in cui venivano inseriti e quindi non messi nella condizione di arricchire se stessi attraverso il contatto con la società ospitante. Non apprendevano bene il tedesco/francese/inglese ecc. perché rimanevano isolati apprendevano anche poco l'italiano perché le ore non erano sufficientemente adeguate e poi in fondo non lo parlavano né a scuola né in casa, lo parlavano a scuola, però poi a casa ritornavano ad essere immersi nel dialetto. Quindi, questa è un'analisi più sociale che linguistica

MTG

Sul piano finanziario, come funzionava tutto questo ?

Pellegrini

Sul piano finanziario veniva mandati dall'Italia dei docenti o reclutati in loco tra gli italiani, perché poi l'altro risvolto penoso e pesante è che questa legge è venuta a sanare una situazione già di fatto di docenti che non erano docenti, che magari si trovavano lì chissà per quale motivo e che si sono messi a insegnare l'italiano poi sono diventati di ruolo. Addirittura quindi non abbiamo neanche nemmeno reclutato dei docenti di qualità. Sì li pagava lo stato italiano,

mandava i libri lo stato italiano, mandava dei libri che poi si sono improvvisati in un certo senso perché non c'era né una tradizione, né una ricerca di livello didattico o metodologico adeguata per l'insegnamento dell'italiano come lingua straniera. Noi dobbiamo anche considerare che l'italiano è diventata lingua parlata dopo la televisione, o con la televisione, questo è un merito che alla televisione bisogna dare.

MTG

Si anzi dopo un certo numero di anni della televisione

Pellegrini

Questo è un fatto che in altri paesi magari non si è verificato, che forse non è facilmente percepibile fuori, però è così. Noi parlavamo un italiano letterario, quelli che in famiglia avevano dei libri, avevano delle persone che avevano frequentato la scuola e che avevano una certa istruzione, e poi eravamo... Tutti parlavamo il dialetto. Siamo un popolo bilingue, parliamo ancora il dialetto... e questi poveri bambini in Germania, in Svizzera in Belgio, in Inghilterra o in Australia o negli Stati Uniti si trovavano con delle famiglie che parlavano il dialetto, un dialetto estremamente povero, perché fosse stato un dialetto molto ricco tipo il dialetto napoletano o altri dialetti che hanno una grande ricchezza lessicale e una struttura linguistica forte.... Magari invece le famiglia parlavano anche il dialetto napoletano, ma un dialetto povero, non era il dialetto napoletano della commedia, non era il dialetto culturale, letterario, che ha una sua letteratura.... Quindi in casa dialetto, nella società locale non si inserivano, apprendevano questo italiano che era a sua volta poco e povero

MTG

E i finanziamenti per questi corsi venivano gestiti da..

Pellegrini

Erano gestiti attraverso l'Emigrazione, attraverso l'Ufficio V (Ministero degli Esteri, Direzione generale dell'Emigrazione e degli Affari Sociali), sotto la forma di assistenza e di sostegno della lingua e attraverso Enti locali che esistevano o che si sono costituiti ad hoc, voglio dire. E continuano ad essere erogati da questi enti salvo nei casi in cui, specialmente in Europa, ma anche all'estero, si è cercato d'inserire i corsi nelle istituzioni scolastiche locali, trasformandoli in assistenza all'insegnamento dell'italiano quale lingua straniera inserita a fini curricolari nelle istituzioni scolastiche locali, che è un salto di qualità che si sta cercando di fare adesso...

MTG

Quindi in un certo senso la situazione dell'Australia, nonostante ci siano anche lì dei problemi, è in un certo senso privilegiata rispetto ad altri paesi, anzi addirittura rispetto a paesi europei perché c'è stato questo inserimento dell'italiano attraverso la scuola locale, regolare ufficiale a prescindere dai corsi in extra, fuori dall'orario scolastico delle lezioni.

Pellegrini

Certo, proprio così. Questo si sta verificando anche ora in Europa, proprio perché fa parte della nuova politica europea ... ecco, della difesa delle lingue...

MTG

Questo nel senso di favorire l'inserimento (dell'insegnamento della lingua italiana) piuttosto che di una separazione di settori....

Pellegrini

Infatti si chiamano attualmente corsi integrati e la proposta, il disegno di legge che non è andato in porto per le vicende interne dell'Italia ecco, sosteneva questa ipotesi, andava in questa direzione.... Però , certo ora c'è anche tutto il discorso dei comitati... insomma il

discorso è diventato molto complesso e delicato, no?... Perché ci sono tutte queste istituzioni che ormai si sono formate, si sono anche per certi versi specializzate... è difficile mettere ordine

MTG

Quindi sia comitati che enti locali, per esempio il CGIE che hanno anche queste finalità

Pellegrini

Sì e bisognerebbe adesso fare un passo ulteriore, di maggiore qualità, proprio di accordo con gli stati interessati per l'inserimento ai fini curricolari, proprio nella scuola. Perché anche se più limitato nel tempo, ha un'altra valenza

MTG

Ma, mi sembra abbastanza complesso, una volta che si sia già creata una certa struttura portante....

Pellegrini

E sì certo perché si è consolidata una struttura che ha delle incrostazioni all'interno della società stessa, no? Cioè adesso è difficile trasformare... però io credo che queste (associazioni) potrebbero essere riciclate in senso positivo; dobbiamo sempre vedere cosa possiamo trarre di buono dall'esistente. Ecco queste potrebbero essere associazioni culturali di supporto all'attività delle autorità locali...

MTG

E per la gestione dei fondi?

Pellegrini

La gestione dei fondi potrebbe essere fatta in collaborazione con le autorità locali, di supporto, non so di acquisto dei libri da usare, di corsi di aggiornamento da fare per i docenti locali... Si possono trovare delle forme che vadano in questa linea, lasciando uno spazio di gestione a

questi enti, ma che dovrebbero marciare tutti nella direzione del fiume principale, della corrente di base

MTG

Ora passando a parlare di eventi più recenti, degli anni Novanta e della legge 401 con la ristrutturazione degli Istituti di Cultura, che è poi anche la prima volta in cui una legge nomina la diffusione della lingua italiana di per sé, all'interno della normativa, mi chiedevo se c'è qualche cambiamento specifico, se c'è una svolta percepibile dal di dentro... Insomma è cambiato qualcosa, e che cosa?

Pellegrini

Alcune cose sono cambiate, molto poco perché nel frattempo i finanziamenti si sono ridotti molto per gli Istituti di Cultura, con la crisi economica dell'Italia, c'è stato questo taglio ai capitoli di spesa, ai fondi. E poi la legge è rimasta incompleta nel senso che ha attribuito delle funzioni senza dare le competenze, perché le competenze si danno dando strutture, dando mezzi e dando specialisti, no? Come si fa a fare la diffusione della lingua italiana senza avere degli specialisti in questo settore. Magari c'è un'Istituto di Cultura che ha una sola persona o un direttore o un addetto e, come sempre, il povero disgraziato deve essere enciclopedico, deve saper fare di tutto: deve saper gestire i fondi, deve trovare i soldi, deve fare i contatti con le autorità locali, deve fare una politica culturale e in più deve fare una politica linguistica e possibilmente insegnare. E questo veramente, mi sembra fare le nozze con i fichi secchi per essere proprio espliciti..... E' rimasta anche per aria una figura che è quella del lettore per esempio, no? Era stata configurata in questa nuova legge, proprio la 401, la figura dell'addetto linguistico, come membro interno degli Istituti di Cultura. Che sarebbe stata una cosa ottima, avere uno specialista per la lingua italiana. La cosa poi non è andata avanti... Ma tornando indietro nel tempo, per potere continuare un po' questo profilo storico: dall' 85-86 sono stati

inviati all'estero sempre a proposito della legge 153, per il coordinamento di queste iniziative, degli ispettori tecnici per settore linguistico, che però sono stati appoggiati presso le ambasciate, e avrebbero potuto fare un eccellente lavoro se le varie iniziative fossero state raccordate. Nel frattempo è stata fatta la riforma degli Istituti di Cultura, è stata prevista in nuce questa figura dell'addetto linguistico, che però non si è realizzata, non esiste praticamente. Ne erano stati nominati due, poi sono rientrati, insomma

MTG

In altre parole nel disegno di legge della 401 era prevista questa figura, e poi nella stesura definitiva, invece...

D.Pellegrini

Nella realizzazione pratica, nel bando del concorso è stato bandito una volta sola, è stato nominato in un solo bando, nel primo bando, non c'è stato molto esito perché non era ben delineata la figura, non si sapeva chi poteva partecipare a questo concorso ... per cui questa figura ha abortito, è stato un aborto naturale, dannoso, perché nel frattempo queste competenze sono state attribuite dalla legge agli Istituti di cultura, però non gli è stato dato il supporto tecnico, che è costituito da varie cose, soprattutto anche da un esperto, no? L'esperto non c'è. Ora però all'estero continuano a stare una serie di lettori son duecento e non so quanti, i quali sono docenti di scuola media, provenienti dalla carriera di Lettere e Lingue, che hanno fatto questo concorso per l'estero come assistenti linguistici presso le università. Cioè dovrebbero essere la persona di appoggio in lingua madre, di appoggio al docente, al cattedratico locale, che ha la cattedra d'italiano e che si avvale della competenza di questo docente italianamente il lor ruolo si è andato sempre più trasformando, deviando, per cui in posti dove non c'è una cattedra, un cattedratico, un docente d'italiano, non c'è il dipartimento d'italiano, esiste invece questo lettore che fa corsi d'italiano presso l'università, i corsi d'italiano come ci sono di

tedesco ecc. , per i ragazzi, gli studenti di altre facoltà che vogliono imparare l'italiano. E' una cosa meritoria, per carità, che però ci ha messo in una situazione di difficoltà in un certo senso perché è una figura anomala all'interno stesso dell'università, ecco... Queste persone, molte delle quali nel frattempo hanno acquisito una competenza non possono essere formalmente collocate come docenti universitari perché non lo sono e quindi molte università straniere ce lo contestano. Non sono collocati presso gli Istituti di Cultura perché la legge non lo prevede, sono collocati a volte presso i consolati e a volte si appoggiano informalmente agli Istituti di Cultura, a volte alle Ambasciate.... Di fatto andrebbe rivista questa legge sugli Istituti di Cultura e questi lettori collocati presso gli Istituti, dandogli una formazione adeguata, potrebbero essere i famosi addetti linguistici che in origine erano stati previsti e che non ci sono.

MTG

Ma questo non li sottrarrebbe alla collaborazione con i dipartimenti d'italiano delle università?

Pellegrini

Potrebbe sottrarli in parte, ma darebbe loro una collocazione, darebbe una qualità ai corsi d'italiano che fanno gli Istituti, potrebbe creare un dipartimento d'italianistica... di lingua italiana all'interno dell'Istituto di Cultura, essere un punto di riferimento e nello stesso tempo collaborare, questo addetto linguistico, con l'università.

MTG

Per quello che so io, i lettori attuali lavorano essenzialmente presso l'università e in alcuni casi gli è richiesto di dare alcune ore agli Istituti di Cultura, cosa che molto spesso non riescono a fare perché sono completamente assorbiti dal lavoro all'interno dell'università che è ben lieta di sollevare il proprio carico didattico attraverso l'aiuto di questi lettori che però non hanno più modo di collaborare con gli Istituti di Cultura

Pellegrini

Andrebbe anche rivisto l'organico, questo organico di 1200 persone che esiste a disposizione del Ministero degli Esteri, distaccati dalla propria carriera per l'insegnamento all'estero, una parte potrebbero essere assorbiti dalle scuole dove c'è bisogno del docente di matematica di scienze, d'italiano, da scuole legalmente riconosciute con un curriculum multiculturale e bilingue dove, l'insegnamento di alcune discipline in italiano o dell'italiano stesso è di una consistenza tale per cui è consigliabile la presenza di un docente italiano, però in parte potrebbe essere rivisto, tutto questo discorso e comunque io appoggierei queste persone che non hanno un curriculum universitario presso gli istituti come assistenti linguistici anche all'università, ma coordinando tutto il discorso all'interno dell'istituto, dando una qualificazione e un profilo all'Istituto.

MTG

Questi lettori attualmente vengono a richiesta

Pellegrini

Ci sono accordi bilaterali fra gli Stati, vengono assegnati in base ad accordi bilaterali.

MTG

Ma reclutati in Italia attraverso il MPI

Pellegrini

Dal Ministero degli Esteri nei ruoli dei docenti di scuola secondaria italiana

MTG

Quindi il MAE fa una richiesta al MPI?

Pellegrini

Bandisce un concorso per tot posti a cui hanno accesso quelli che hanno le qualifiche per l'insegnamento all'estero... Mentre invece dovrebbero essere facilitati e promossi e

incoraggiati scambi con le università, in modo tale da dare ai ricercatori, ai docenti di prima fascia occasioni di scambio tra le università, che sarebbe una cosa più normale, più funzionale più rapportata al ruolo, il lettore potrebbe fare l'assistente linguistico, il lavoro che fa già però poi dovrebbero essere incoraggiati degli scambi di docenti tra le università, ma di carattere universitario, in modo tale che docenti, che so, australiani, possano venire in Italia a fare un Master d'italiano presso un'università italiana, o docenti di lingua inglese o francese fare dei corsi di specializzazione, dei master, o un anno di lavoro presso un'università straniera collaborando con i dipartimenti... anche di letteratura, non solo di lingua. Perché in questo modo ci sarebbe un'osmosi tra le varie università e ci sarebbe una crescita di livello di qualità dei dipartimenti d'italianistica all'estero.....

MTG

La domanda che mi ponevo è questa: mettiamo che tu abbia un dipartimento d'italianistica all'interno di una università... mettiamo in America, il docente d'italiano che venga qui, ci verrebbe per scopi di ricerca perché se dovesse eventualmente insegnare in un dipartimento d'italianistica cosa potrebbe...

Pellegrini

Potrebbe anche insegnare inglese o linguistica o altre cose. Cioè è il dipartimento di lingue moderne, all'interno di un dipartimento di lingue moderne si dovrebbero trovare delle forme di scambio per i giovani laureati anche per un breve periodo di tre mesi, non so, di docenti di ruolo italiani che vanno fuori, come visiting professor come li hanno gli anglosassoni

MTG

L'ultima cosa che mi chiedevo era la distinzione tra le iniziative che sono direttamente focalizzate sull'insegnamento dell'italiano per emigrati o di origine italiana e quelle iniziative che cadono invece nella sfera della pura promozione dell'italiano all'estero

Pellegrini

Della lingua italiana tout court, indipendentemente dall'origine degli utenti..... io credo che la gente di origine italiana possa sempre essere una base. Ormai noi non abbiamo più un'emigrazione così consistente da dover dire che ... noi dobbiamo parlare di cittadini americani, argentini, cileni, australiani di seconda o terza generazione. Questo deve essere sempre tenuto in grande attenzione perché è una risorsa importante, è una risorsa è un punto di riferimento....Però a questo va unito l'altro discorso ormai le differenze tra i due discorsi sono limitate secondo me, questo gruppo, questi possibili utenti, diciamo così, che vicini o lontani hanno delle affinità profonde con l'Italia, hanno anche un'identità delle radici culturale, devono rappresentare - come dire - il nocciolo di tutto il discorso, che però poi dev'essere allargato. La lingua italiana è una lingua di grande cultura, è una lingua portatrice di grandi valori ... e quindi è di valore di per sé....

MTG

Ma la coscienza di questo cambiamento, che è un nodo indubbiamente rilevante sul tema del nostro discorso, è un fenomeno che si svilupperà nel tempo... non so forse la 401 potrebbe contribuire in questo senso. Ma per ora, ti risulta che si manifesti in qualche modo una coscienza, anche se embrionale, di questo cambiamento?

Pellegrini

C'è una maggiore sensibilità... perché il problema di fondo è questo, che noi italiani siamo stati i primi a non credere in questa politica... L'Italia è un paese giovane, è un paese che ha avuto dei grossi problemi di ripiegamento su se stesso, di costruzione dell'unità nazionale, e tuttora ce l'ha. La lingua italiana è diventata una lingua parlata, una lingua delle quattro abilità nel tempo, ora noi cominciamo ad affacciarci, secondo me i giovani italiani cominciano ora ad affacciarsi sul resto del mondo e quindi io sono fiduciosa che a parte questa normativa, questo

disegno di legge che giace sotto ceneri, ma che dovrebbe riemergere e dare compattezza a tutto il discorso. Era stata istituita la figura dell'ispettore all'estero, che avrebbe dovuto essere l'addetto educativo e che era staccato, ma secondo me va rivista tutta la normativa e vanno collegate le iniziative; l'addetto culturale si preoccupa di più del discorso culturale, l'addetto educativo potrebbe collaborare validamente con l'addetto culturale avendo un insieme di forze che possono essere i formatori o essere l'addetto linguistico o possono essere i raccordi con le università, con le scuole, cioè va creata una struttura che in questo momento ancora non c'è ma che potrebbe esserci perché ci sono le forze in Italia

MTG

Ecco era quello che mi chiedevo, cioè se la struttura non c'è o se manca la coesione nelle componenti di questa struttura

Pellegrini

Manca la coesione e manca l'ammodernamento, cioè l'adeguamento che la renda funzionale. Attualmente non è funzionale, perché sono tanti compartimenti stagni; è simbolicamente evidente questo nella contraddizione, nel fatto che c'è una Direzione delle relazioni culturali, una Direzione dell'emigrazione e una Direzione degli scambi culturali, poi c'è il Comitato degli italiani all'estero, ci sono tremila enti, investiamo una quantità indescrivibile di soldi però non abbiamo una politica omogenea. Poi quando ci si ritrova all'estero, ci si trova ad avere una serie di forze che a volte possono entrare stupidamente in conflitto tra di loro, quando invece dovrebbero essere tutte convergenti in un unico obiettivo che è quello della diffusione e presentazione della nostra lingua e della nostra cultura. Questo disegno di legge secondo me è molto importante... va rivista tutta la struttura, va rivista la figura dell'ispettore all'estero, va rivisto il discorso dell'addetto linguistico, va rivista la figura dell'addetto culturale. Va integrato il tutto, e io non vedo nessuna contraddizione per esempio a un grosso corpo, del

resto s'era pensato di collegare questi Istituti di Cultura alla Presidenza del Consiglio che poi ha una serie di competenza per la produzione del materiale ecc. Però adesso, che sia Presidenza del Consiglio o MAE, non è questo il problema, andrebbe creato un Bureau come ce l'hanno altri paesi. Tutte queste strutture andrebbero integrate funzionalmente e dovrebbero esistere dei progetti -paese, che non abbiamo...

MTG

Che guardino alla specificità geografica?

Pellegrini

Cioè progetti di aree, di aree geografiche, perché poi la diffusione dell'italiano in paesi come la Cina o il Medio Oriente, di lingua araba per esempio, hanno delle problematiche diverse da quella dell'insegnamento dell'italiano in un'area espanofona o anglofona... Allora per grandi aree geografiche e poi per Paesi andrebbe fatto un discorso di questo tipo, raccordando adeguatamente. Però è inutile presentare sul territorio il consolato, l'ispettore tecnico, il direttore didattico, il presidente, il lettore, il direttore dell'Istituto di Cultura che poi si fanno la guerra tra loro: diventa una guerra tra poveri, perdiamo la battaglia e gli interessi dell'italiano vanno a rotoli in questo senso....

MTG

Il disegno di legge a cui hai fatto costantemente riferimento come documento importante esiste ancora?

Pellegrini

Si è perduto nei meandri del ministero, andrebbe rivisto...

MTG

Di quale Ministero?

Pellegrini

Era la Commissione Cultura e Esteri del Parlamento che lo esaminava, ma adesso andrebbe rivisto completamente perché nel frattempo sta cambiando tutta la struttura della scuola italiana. Quindi bisognerebbe approfittare del fatto che la scuola italiana sta cambiando tutta la sua configurazione, e quindi dovrà portarla all'estero questa trasformazione, no? E approfittare del fatto che con Maastricht si è parlato in Europa di integrazione dei sistemi educativi, e approfittare del fatto che – bene o male - esiste all'interno della Comunità Europea una difesa delle lingue comunitarie e avere un progetto, avere un progetto della lingua italiana. Questa commissione che si è creata (la Commissione Nazionale per la diffusione della lingua e cultura italiana all'estero) non ha prodotto nessuna proposta, avrebbe dovuto produrre un documento programmatico. Una piattaforma programmatica

MTG

Questo organo, questo comitato potrebbe avere una funzione propositiva?

Pellegrini

Certo dovrebbe averla. Dovrebbe avere questa funzione propositiva... Stamattina ho proprio parlato con Campa e ho appunto detto che è necessario riprendere le file del discorso e portarlo da qualche parte. In questo momento c'è una fortissima richiesta di lingua italiana che non riusciamo a soddisfare. Per esempio l'Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, che è una grossa istituzione culturale si è completamente alienata dalla politica di diffusione della lingua italiana all'estero o è stata alienata, non lo so insomma, però è assente ora. Le università hanno difficoltà a proporsi per le loro difficoltà interne ed organizzative e poi non hanno un referente. Basta il fatto che non siamo riusciti a metterci d'accordo su un modello unico di certificazione. Questo è sintomatico della disgregazione, no? Tutti i paesi hanno una certificazione, la Spagna, l'Inghilterra...

MTG

Se non sbaglio l'Italia ne ha tre...

Pellegrini

L'Italia ne ha tre. E nessuna con il crisma dell'ufficialità totale. E' un problema grave. E' sintomo di malessere e di disgregazione e della mancanza di un filo conduttore. Questa anzi ne è la prova dichiarata, purtroppo.

MTG

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Interview with Professor Sergio Romano

Milano, 30 gennaio 1995

Romano

Allora riprendiamo, due cose forse le dovrei segnalare, un intervento che feci a Los Angeles in occasione di un convegno organizzato da Fredi-Chiappelli per il 400° anniversario della Crusca. Quell'intervento fu poi pubblicato nella rivista di Folena, che mi pare si chiami *Lingua viva*, non ricordo, qualcosa del genere. Comunque lei se ha la collana della rivista di Folena, lo potrebbe trovare. E poi feci una cosa all'Università di Heifa(?), nell'ambito di un seminario, e quello fu poi pubblicato. Erano testi in lingua inglese furono poi pubblicati da un editore americano, mi pare Bright, o qualcosa del genere. Sono passati parecchi anni quindi ho un ricordo anche abbastanza vago...Quello che cercavo di spiegare è che vi è sempre stato un bilinguismo italiano naturalmente, col dialetto e che l'Italia ha imparato l'italiano a partire dalla seconda metà dell'Ottocento.... Questo apprendimento dell'italiano da parte degli italiani che prima non lo sapevano, grosso modo valgono le statistiche del De Mauro nella storia della lingua italiana....8%...12%.. quello che vuole... insomma è difficile

MTG

Romano

Naturalmente [questi fattori] avevano avuto una notevole importanza nello sviluppo della cultura, della lingua, e comunque questo andava in qualche modo tenuto presente. Insomma questo è un paese che ha diffuso all'estero la lingua che non era parlata al suo interno, capito?

Questo è uno dei dati di cui bisogna tenere conto e, tenga presente che siamo ancora al 18% di dialettofoni in Italia, qualcosa del genere... cioè gente che parla soltanto in dialetto per non parlare di quelli che invece passano dalla lingua al dialetto a seconda delle circostanze...Quindi è un grosso problema diffondere la propria lingua all'estero per un Paese che ha imparato a parlarla tardi e che ha ancora grossi problemi di diffusione della lingua all'interno... Detto questo, le troverò questo materiale....o almeno le troverò tutto quello che riesco a trovare e quello glielo mando volentieri

MTG

Al di là di questo fenomeno... che poi mi sembra particolarmente rilevante perchè la diffusione della lingua italiana è stata originariamente focalizzata sulle esigenze delle comunità emigrate, in teoria, e poi invece, nella pratica la diffusione della lingua italiana oppure i soldi che sono stati investiti in quella direzione hanno finito ora per promuovere la lingua italiana non unicamente a vantaggio dei figli degli emigrati, ma piuttosto di quelli che volevano imparare l'italiano... Quindi una situazione in un certo senso articolata ma contraddittoria da molti punti di vista....

Romano

Non necessariamente contraddittoria... Credo che per capire quello che è accaduto lei dovrebbe tenere conto di questa [...] di questa storicizzazione: all'inizio, cioè nei primi trenta, quarant'anni dell'Italia unitaria il governo non fa una politica di irradimento, di diffusione della lingua e della cultura italiana all'estero, non la fa per la semplice ragione che esiste già una domanda di lingua e cultura italiana abbastanza consolidata negli atenei e nelle università straniere.... cattedra d'italiano al politecnico di Zurigo, tanto per intenderci con De Santis a Zurigo, esistono lettori, esistono centri dove si studiano la lingua e la cultura italiane; esiste

una domanda a cui in qualche modo il mondo italiano della cultura risponde mandando i propri studiosi, ma non esiste una politica programmata e coordinata, quella che esiste, comincia a esistere con Crispi. È una politica di mantenimento dei legami linguistici e culturali con le comunità emigrate, là dove sono particolarmente forti, naturalmente in funzione della politica estera del governo italiano. Quindi Crispi fa questa politica che è fondamentalmente una politica scolastica, nel Mediterraneo, nel nord Africa, in Tunisia, naturalmente, qualcosa accade in Egitto.... Poi a mano a mano che cominciano a nascere delle comunità italiane in America latina il problema si pone anche per quelle aree. Ma voglio dire, questa è la politica del governo italiano fino alla prima [guerra mondiale]. La prima guerra mondiale è una netta divisione. Perché la prima guerra mondiale è un netta a divisione? Perché la prima guerra mondiale è una guerra ideologica, anche se, voglio dire i caratteri ideologici in qualche modo vengono sovrapposti dall'esterno e sono sovrastrutture rispetto alla realtà del conflitto ma sta di fatto che molto rapidamente tutti i combattenti dichiarano di combattere per certi valori... i valori della democrazia liberale contro l'autoritarismo degli imperi centrali, questo è il tema dominante della propaganda occidentale, da parte tedesca la solidità della kultur contro la cultura libertina o contro la cultura delle democrazie occidentali... E allora che cosa succede, succede che durante la prima guerra mondiale si [...] gli Istituti di Cultura. Gli Istituti di Cultura nascono durante la guerra molto spesso in funzione di questo lavoro di propaganda culturale, che fa da sostegno e da fiancheggiamento della guerra. Primo centro culturale italiano in Francia nasce a Parigi durante la guerra, mi sembra proprio, e nasce per una specie di congiunzione di sforzi governativi, di mobilitazione di gruppi, di associazioni, come sempre accade in questi casi... E questo rimane, se lei va a vedere, lei constata che tutti i paesi europei cominciano a darsi una politica estera culturale con la prima guerra mondiale.

MTG

In effetti anche guardando alla storia del British Council...

Romano

Certo, certo....

MTG

Stesso le origini della Dante Alighieri avevano poi....

Romano

Be' la Dante Alighieri...

MTG

Be' precedente perché risale alla fine dell'800, ma anche lì insomma era l'irredentismo inizialmente che l'aveva ispirata

Romano

Certo, certo... e questo naturalmente è già un aspetto molto tipicamente italiano, perché ci sono delle province irredente per le quali occorre valorizzare il dato linguistico e culturale....
Comunque le segnalo che qualche anno fa, all'Ecole française de Rome che, come lei sa, è questa istituzione francese a Roma...

MTG

Confesso no, non ne so molto, c'è un Centre français de...

Romano

No, è un'altra cosa...L'Ecole è una istituzione di terzo ciclo(?), fondamentale, perché è nata nel 1873, ha sede a Palazzo Farnese, a Piazza Navona, e si compone di pensionnaires...
cioè di persone.... è nata sul modello dell'école d'Athene; esisteva prima l'Ecole d'Athene e poi l'Ecole de Rome. L'Ecole d'Athene con l'obiettivo di studiare il mondo greco antico, l'Ecole de Rome con l'obiettivo di studiare il mondo latino, più tutto ciò che aveva attinenza con la storia della Chiesa... Dopodiché col passare del tempo le funzioni dell'Ecole de Rome si sono allargate alla storia contemporanea e a tutto ciò che coinvolge l'Italia. Quindi l'Ecole de

Rome fece nella fine degli anni '70, primi anni '80, tre grandi colloqui...un anno dopo l'altro, su 'opinione pubblica e politica estera' Io credo di avere partecipato a due su tre, o addirittura a tre su tre, e se trovo naturalmente gli estratti, le manderò anche gli estratti dei miei interventi... Il problema naturalmente è che quando si discute di opinione pubblica e politica estera vengono sempre in discussione questi temi della cultura...della diffusione della cultura, dell'importanza che il Paese annette alla propria immagine culturale, e siccome gli studiosi erano di molti Paesi, alcuni parlarono del modo in cui il ministero degli Esteri dei loro Paesi si erano organizzati in funzione di questa nuova politica - la politica culturale - a partire da una certa data e lei scopre che questa data è quasi sempre la prima guerra mondiale. E durante la prima guerra mondiale che la politica culturale entra nella politica estera degli Stati. Lei poi se ne accorge andando a vedere quale è la data di nascita delle Direzioni Generali per le Relazioni Culturali che poi assumono nomi diversi. In Italia si dà il caso che la Direzione Generale nasce con Sforza dopo la seconda guerra mondiale. Però esisteva prima....

MTG

Con un altro nome, mi pare

Romano

Sì, un Istituto, un Istituto esterno, sotto la direzione della... del Ministero degli Esteri. Qualche cosa lei troverà nel mio libro su Giovanni Gentile....Sì, è un libro su Gentile che è uscito da Bompiani e si chiama: *Giovanni Gentile, la filosofia al potere*. E Gentile fu molto attivo nella creazione di Istituti di cultura. Siccome Gentile era senatore, fu Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione dal '22 al '24... Ma comunque come senatore fu spesso relatore di disegni di legge relativi alla creazione di questo o quello... Ma comunque, il meccanismo è quello, è a partire dalla prima guerra mondiale che comincia questa.... Naturalmente poi tra l'altro la caratterizzazione ideologica degli scontri europei, le due guerre e dopo la seconda guerra

mondiale naturalmente rendono sempre più necessaria una politica estera... Insomma il fascismo ha una politica estera culturale, ce l'ha perché oltre a tutto ha un certo interesse a... - essendo un movimento nazionalista, ma con una forte caratterizzazione ideologica - ha un interesse a farsi erede di una tradizione, di un retaggio... la romanità come dato positivo... quindi naturalmente tutte queste cose finiscono inevitabilmente nella politica estera. E poi il confronto con il comunismo da un lato, con altri valori culturali.... la democrazia, parlamentare... Soprattutto questo accentua, il bisogno di agenti culturali.

MTG

(Sottolinea la difficoltà della definizione di relazioni culturali ecc.ecc.)

Romano

C'è il libro, pubblicato da Armando, se non sbaglio, di un ambasciatore tedesco che fu a Roma come ambasciatore nei primi anni '80, fine anni '70... si chiama Arnold.

MTG

Ho visto l'edizione inglese, ma non sapevo che fosse stato anche tradotto...

Romano

Sì, sì e credo che effettivamente valga la pena di dare un'occhiata. Se lei mi pone il problema delle relazioni culturali, be', il problema è molto semplice: nessun Paese ha uno spiccato interesse a fare relazioni culturali... le relazioni culturali sono una necessità, cioè se lei vuole una azione culturale all'estero, be' bisogna che lei si vada a mettere d'accordo con il governo di cui le chiede la collaborazione e l'ospitalità e nel momento in cui lei chiede qualche cosa, deve essere naturalmente pronto a dare qualcosa, cioè se lei vuole avere ad un certo punto avere una presenza culturale in Francia, Germania molto spesso lei si trova di fronte a degli interlocutori pubblici... Vuole aprire una scuola? E va be', lei deve pure chiedere l'autorizzazione a qualcuno... Vuole mandare un insegnante retribuito da lei in una università

straniera, e be' bisogna pure che lei si metta d'accordo in qualche modo... E allora molto rapidamente emerge la necessità di uno strumento internazionale, che poi è un trattato, un accordo semplicemente, con cui ciò che le serve viene compensato in qualche modo da ciò che lei è pronto a dare all'altro stato, allora lei ha degli accordi culturali italo francesi, italo-inglesi, italo-tedeschi, italo-sovietici... Sono destinati semplicemente a... a concedersi reciprocamente determinate facilitazioni e determinate garanzie... A questo momento lei per forza ha bisogno di una Direzione Generale che gestisca questo tipo di rapporti, capisce? Diventa semplicemente un rapporto internazionale, un rapporto diplomatico di tipo diplomatico di tipo particolare, che va, in qualche modo amministrato.

MTG

Sì...Suppongo ma un'altra difficoltà è che... be' leggendo opere non italiane si fa la distinzione tra propaganda culturale e relazioni culturali, nel senso della reciprocità a cui lei accennava, ma non solo quello, anche proprio al concetto del farsi conoscere ma non necessariamente per vendere la propria immagine...

Romano

Sono tutte parole... Naturale, ciascuno ha poi interesse a presentare la propria immagine nel miglior modo. Naturalmente se lo chiama propaganda rischia di averla svalutata la merce ancor prima di cominciare a venderla. Se fa della propaganda troppo chiassosa e troppo banale e troppo vistosa, va be', si auto-squalifica... Quindi molto rapidamente gli agenti culturali di ogni paese all'estero imparano che per fare buona propaganda o bisogna farne il meno possibile o farla intelligentemente, o comunque essere anche pronti a rappresentare il proprio Paese non sempre nella luce migliore, invitare il dibattito... Capisce? Ostentare franchezza... Va bene, sono cose... sono cose che fanno parte del mestiere insomma... Invece quello che bisogna...che credo lei ricordi, ci fu poi una svolta importante nella politica culturale italiana

all'estero. Questa svolta coincide, grosso modo, con gli anni successivi al centro-sinistra... Quando con l'arrivo al governo, o comunque nell'area di governo dei partiti di sinistra, rientra in gioco il tema delle comunità italiane all'Estero. Le comunità italiane all'Estero sono sempre state un grande tema dei movimenti politici nazional-populisti, tutto il nazionalpopulismo italiano ha sempre giocato molto la carta di nazionalismo di Corradini, lo stesso nazionalismo popolare - perché il nazionalismo di Crispi era un nazionalismo popolare. Quando le sinistre cominciano, alla fine degli anni '60 ad avere una forte presenza anche culturale nella società politica italiana, allora rimettono in gioco questo tema delle comunità italiane all'Estero. L'assunto voglio dire... l'argomento su cui si basa la valorizzazione delle comunità italiane all'Estero è fondamentalmente un argomento antigovernativo, cioè quelli sono gli emigrati, quelli sono stati costretti ad andarsene dalla patria ingrata, dalla patria capitalista, dalla patria borghese.... Capito? Questo è il tema dominante delle sinistre, e le sinistre riescono in qualche modo a mettere questo tema all'ordine del giorno della politica culturale dell'Italia. I governi devono recepire questo tema così come in qualche modo, offerta presentata dalle sinistre e ci sono infatti due o tre, adesso non ricordo...due, tre, quattro conferenze grandi conferenze delle emigrazione. Lei vedrà, quelle conferenze per l'emigrazione pongono tra i problemi da risolvere: quello dell'insegnamento della lingua italiana agli italiani all'estero. E, a partire dagli anni '70 questo insegnamento della lingua italiana alle comunità viene integrato per così dire nella politica estera del Ministero degli Esteri... il quale viene anche attraverso una legge, che non mi ricordo di quando sia potrebbe essere '73, dotato degli strumenti. Gli strumenti cosa sono? I soldi per andare ad assumere personale e vengono assunte 2000-2500 persone in tutto il mondo, che poi porranno anche col passare del tempo problemi di carattere sindacale, di carattere giuridico. All'inizio sono del personale avventizio, scelto per insegnare dei corsi, tenga presente che poi questi corsi vengono molto spesso insegnati all'interno delle scuole locali, ed è quella un'altra ragione per cui lei ha bisogno di uno strumento di lavoro, no? Di

uno strumento internazionale... Sennò come fa, no? Lei non può mica presentarsi all'interno di una scuola locale e dire: 'Adesso mi date due ore!' Deve pur sempre esserci un quadro legislativo in tutto questo, un quadro internazionale di accordo in cui questo avviene. Ma questo è abbastanza importante perché è a partire da quegli anni che la politica culturale dell'Italia all'estero riassume, come in epoca crispina, una direzione molto fortemente diretta verso le comunità italiane.

MTG

(Domanda sulla questione del voto agli emigrati: nei convegni era venuta in discussione o no?)

Romano

Anche se era affiorata siccome non ero io a doverlo trattare, in generale se il convegno, voglio dire, verteva su temi di cui io avevo competenza, be' io non potevo occuparmi di cose di cui io non avevo competenza, immagino che se qualcuno mi avesse posto una domanda avrei detto: chiedetelo a un altro, non sono io la persona a cui dovete rivolgervi. Il tema è sempre stato anche lì un tema sollevato dalla destra [laburista] o dalla sinistra, con una certa riluttanza da parte delle sinistre tradizionali più che con riluttanza con una certa reticenza perché le sinistre sapevano perfettamente che in alcune zone questo avrebbe giovato a loro, in altre zone ne sarebbero state danneggiate; probabilmente grosso modo l'idea allora - adesso saranno magari anche cambiate le cose - era che il voto in Europa sarebbe stato un voto abbastanza fortemente per la sinistra classica e il partito comunista, e il voto invece transoceanico sarebbe stati un voto missino, democristiano... Questa era un po' l'idea, che è poi la ragione per cui questa cosa non si è mai fatta... E la mia impressione è che si farà molta fatica a farla... anche per una ragione fondamentale cioè che sono troppi... Sono troppi... sono circa... potrebbero esser due milioni o tre... E allora sa, tre milioni di persone che non vivono in Italia, che non condividono le conseguenze del loro voto, al limite che non pagano neppure le tasse... e che non sono

sufficientemente informati, e questo veramente pone tutta una serie di interrogativi a cui credo che molti esiteranno a dare una risposta. Tenga poi presente che, certo, il problema dell'informazione lei lo può benissimo risolvere, ma quando lei cerca di risolvere il problema dell'informazione lei inevitabilmente si vede nella situazione di dovere andare a fare campagna elettorale là dove vivono loro... In alcuni Paesi non sono affatto contenti che lei vada a fare campagna elettorale a casa loro, capisce? Ma questo ripeto non era un problema di quell'ambito, era un un aspetto collaterale della politica verso le comunità italiane

MTG

(Domanda in sintesi: si può parlare di una politica cultura una politica culturale dell'Italia oppure no?)

Romano

C'è sempre una politica anche quando lei non la fa o la fa male. E' inevitabile. Nel caso specifico poi una politica c'era, magari mal fatta, magari non sufficientemente elaborata, ma una politica c'era e credo che se lei se ne vuole occupare o ha proprio interesse a storicizzarla, a periodicizzarla... perché questa politica assume caratteri diversi a seconda dei governi, a seconda degli obiettivi. Quello che credo si debba rimproverare alla politica estera culturale italiana è che non ha mai saputo individuare i suoi obiettivi e creare strumenti diversi in funzione degli obiettivi. Se lei vuole raggiungere gli ambienti culturali stranieri di buon livello perché lei ritiene che fondamentalmente la cosa importante è mirare su delle élite e lasciare che siano queste élite in qualche modo a far rimbalzare, no? Allora lei deve avere delle istituzioni in grado di dialogare con queste elite, quindi degli istituti che siano composti da persone di pari livello, no? Quindi che abbiano un grado di cultura accademico, che è poi quello che hanno fatto i francesi, i tedeschi, in molte circostanze. Se lei invece vuole fare della diffusione a tappeto, cioè insegnare la lingua italiana a gruppi sociali abbastanza vasti, tra

l'altro perché lei ritiene che questo possa essere utile all'immagine del Paese, ma anche al turismo, per esempio... Allora a questo punto lei ha bisogno di istituti modellati un po' sul British Council, o il Goethe, in cui l'insegnamento della lingua sia molto ben strutturato, indirizzato a stranieri, naturalmente... allora lei deve mobilitare delle risorse, per creare dei quadri che siano linguisticamente attrezzati per fare questo lavoro. Se lei vuole puntare sul mantenimento dei vincoli culturali con la comunità italiana, allora lei ha un altro lavoro da fare, molto diverso, molto più linguistico-informativo, capisce? Magari non fondamentalmente, radicalmente diverso da quello che lei fa per i ceti sociali stranieri... però bisogna angolarlo in un modo diverso. E poi comunque lei ha bisogno di un personale docente diverso... perché se lei vuole mettere in piedi una struttura didattica per studenti stranieri in Inghilterra, in Germania, in Francia... lei ha certamente bisogno di personale che parli bene la lingua straniera.... Non ha altrettanto bisogno di personale docente che parli bene la lingua straniera se lei deve rivolgersi alle comunità. Allora, grosso modo tre obiettivi, e questi tre obiettivi hanno bisogno di tre strumenti diversi, capito? Invece noi abbiamo messo un po' tutto in uno stesso contenitore che era un piccolo contenitore: l'istituto di cultura.....

MTG

Quando lei dice "piccolo contenitore" fa anche riferimento ai finanziamenti?

Romano

...finanziamenti, qualità accademico-intellettuale... strutture... certo sono piccoli contenitori, quindi praticamente abbiamo assunto troppi obblighi e troppe responsabilità rispetto al mezzo utilizzato. Il risultato naturalmente è che abbiamo fatto quasi tutto male, o maluccio, a seconda delle circostanze... Qualche volta meglio, qualche volta peggio... Le cose non vanno mai... i disastri non esistono in senso assoluto. Ma indubbiamente non c'è stata questa capacità o se non ci sono stati i mezzi si è finita per fare la politica culturale che in quel momento era

richiesta a più alta voce... Per questo le dicevo stia attenta perché a partire dagli anni '70, arriva una richiesta di politica culturale per le comunità italiane all'estero... Questa politica culturale viene molto vistosamente reclamata... E allora naturalmente si fa.

MTG

(In sintesi: risveglio interesse per comunità italiana in Australia sembra confermare questa data del '70. De Mauro invece la sposta più avanti nel tempo.)

Romano

Credo che lei abbia interesse a rivedere gli atti delle conferenze nazionali sull'emigrazione. Di cui, se non sbaglio, la prima si tenne nella prima metà degli anni Settanta... E forse addirittura agli inizi degli anni '70. Vedrà che le viene fuori una cronologia in qualche modo...

MTG

E l'accesso a questi atti?

Romano

Sia la Direzione Generale per le Relazioni Culturali, soprattutto nel caso delle Conferenze Nazionali dell'Emigrazione, sia presso la Direzione Generale per l'Emigrazione, che esiste come lei sa, nella Direzione Generali. Lì dovrebbero essere in grado di dargliele

MTG

(In sintesi: nella situazione attuale c'è una svolta per l'Italia di notevoli dimensioni, attuali e per il futuro . E poi la prospettiva europea? Cambiamenti? Come sarà il futuro della politica culturale italiana? Cambierà qualche cosa?

Romano

Innanzitutto bisogna che lei tenga conto di un aspetto di cui non abbiamo parlato. Ad un certo punto dopo la seconda guerra mondiale, il problema della lingua, il problema della diffusione della lingua nazionale, il problema della difesa della lingua nazionale, si è in qualche modo

arricchito di una componente nuova.... Cioè la diplomazia multilaterale. La diplomazia multilaterale e comunque il declino del francese come lingua di comunicazioni diplomatiche internazionali. Che cosa è accaduto? E' accaduto che si sono moltiplicate le sedi multilaterali in cui si pone inevitabilmente il problema della lingua, che lingua parlare. Era chiaro che il francese stava gradualmente declinando, era chiaro che l'inglese stava diventando lingua di comunicazione internazionale. Però ogniqualvolta lei crea una di queste istituzioni, lei pone il problema delle lingue ufficiali... E se pone il problema delle lingue ufficiali, lei inevitabilmente si deve porre il problema se lei desidera che la sua lingua venga inserita tra quelle ufficiali... Si dà il caso che quando si è creato i primi organismi europei, non c'è stato nessun problema, tutti i Paesi avevano diritto a che la loro lingua fosse ufficiale: comunità europea per il carbone e per l'acciaio, mercato comune e così via. Però quando si è riusciti ad ottenere che la propria lingua sia ufficiale, lei non ha vinto una battaglia, si è dato tutt'al più le condizioni per combatterla, capisce quello che voglio dire? E quella battaglia noi l'abbiamo persa, completamente.

MTG

Già persa? Quali sono i segnali?

Romano

I segnali sono che vada dove vuole non lo parlano...è inutile che ci provi [a parlare italiano]... Cioè negli organismi europei in cui l'italiano è teoricamente lingua ufficiale l'importanza dell'inglese, l'importanza sia pur residua del francese, il forte peso economico dietro la Germania hanno fatto sì che le lingue sono nell'ordine: inglese frances e tedesco. E ancora il tedesco fa molta fatica. Sì e no lei può parlare italiano al Parlamento di Strasburgo, perché c'è una tale batteria di interpreti che lei può parlare anche gaelico, probabilmnte... Ma sono quelle occasioni.... non operative. Le lingue hanno una vita diversa, insomma se lei vuole negoziare,

cantare, discutere, conversare ecc.ecc. E va be', lei lo deve fare in un'altra lingua. Non lo so se c'erano le condizioni perché l'italiano fosse difendibile....Perché non bisogna dimenticare che l'inglese camminava su delle gambe, no?

MTG

Eh, quelle di un impero.....

Romano

Ma però, forse qualcosa di più si sarebbe potuto fare....

MTG

Il fatto che l'Italia non abbia mai voluto difendere, così come i francesi tuttora stanno facendo anzi stanno facendo ancora di più attualmente....Io mi sono chiesta se è proprio costituzionale alla natura degli italiani di non combattere questo tipo di battaglie, oppure se è una sorta di residuo, di reazione a quella che era stata la politica linguistica del fascismo

Romano

Può darsi che ci sia una specie di pendolo: il pendolo era andato troppo in là, poi ad un certo punto va da quest'altra parte. Però torniamo al discorso che facevamo prima, insomma questo è un Paese che l'italiano non l'ha mai parlato, è inutile star lì a girarci attorno, siccome non l'ha mai parlato è difficile che abbia questa coscienza nazionale della lingua nazionale come dato costitutivo dell'identità. L'italiano non è dato costitutivo dell'identità per un numero molto molto forte degli abitanti di questa penisola. Non lo è stato per lungo tempo in passato, lo è da troppo poco tempo adesso; non è certamente, non ha il ruolo morale politico psicologico che ha il francese nella costituzione dell'identità nazionale francese, o nemmeno il tedesco. Il problema è che il tedesco è fondamentalmente legato alla nascita di una coscienza nazionale religiosa, e l'italiano non ha quelle caratteristiche. Il francese è legato alla crescita di uno stato nazionale portatore di valori da diffondere, di un mondo di valori, di idee ecc. ecc. ,

quindi questo non è invece tipico della situazione italiana. Insomma quante volte ci siamo posti il problema se valeva o non valeva la pena di fare l'alto commissariato della lingua? Sì certo lo sapevamo benissimo che il giorno in cui lei facesse l'alto commissariato della lingua.....

MTG

Cioè?

Romano

Esiste in Francia, è esistito, non so se esiste ancora, l'alto Commissariato della lingua che è un organo che difende, protegge, afferma i valori della lingua e ne difende anche la purezza....In Italia la cosa si è sempre scontrata con il fatto che a difendere la purezza della lingua era stato il fascismo, quindi lei rischiava di dire cose sgradite agli orecchi di molti. Poi naturalmente, già l'esempio francese dimostra che nel momento in cui lei ha un organismo di quel genere lei rischia di avere un organismo bacchettone, bigotto linguisticamente, che le dice: 'Ah no, parola straniera...neologismo...Sì, no, ecc. ecc.' Come fanno i francesi che ogni tanto pubblicano l'elenco delle parole messe al bando. Però il Commissariato della lingua può fare tante altre cose utili... non fa mica soltanto quello. Può anche contribuire alla diffusione della lingua, risvegliarne la consapevolezza. Ma in Italia questo problema in realtà non ha mai fatto molta strada perché non ha mai trovato un terreno fertile, abbastanza [appoggio] per procedere. Vede è un Paese questo in cui la lingua straniera si diffonde all'estero, ma tutto sommato io mi sono spesso chiesto - ma questo lei se lo chiede nei momenti di scetticismo estremo, perché poi non ha molto senso - se ci sia una forte differenza tra la quantità di italiano appreso in giro nel mondo a seguito di un'offerta di servizi linguistici da parte dello stato italiano, e quello che verrebbe appreso se non ci fosse quest'offerta di servizi linguistici.

Ciò se lei chiude tutto... potrebbe anche trovarsi in una situazione in cui la domanda di italiano all'estero è scesa dello 0,1 per cento.....

MTG

Be' anch'io ho spesso pensato che un buono studente non è mai rovinato da metodologie sbagliate. (Risata di Romano) Richiesta di suggerimenti su chi intervistare sull'argomento: politica culturale italiana.

Romano

Cappelletti? Poi tra l'altro adesso ho visto proprio oggi sui giornali che stanno presentando a Parigi il nuovo vocabolario della lingua italiana, quello in cinque volumi... quattro volumi, cinque tomi, dell'Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana che è uno splendido dizionario.... Non so se lei l'ha visto...L'ha guardato? E' un bellissimo dizionario....

Mentre il Battaglia della UTET sta andando avanti, credo chge dovrebbe essere ormai prossimo a finire...Il Battaglia credo che nel frattempo sia anche morto. No? Il Devoto -Oli lo ha presente? Devoto è morto, naturalmente, ma Oli, coautore, è tuttora vivo, è stato direttore di un Istituto di cultura, a Caracas....

MTG

Ma all'interno del Ministero invece.... C'è qualcuno?

Romano

Col Ministero io ho perso molto il contatto... Sono passati parecchi anni da quando facevo il Direttore Generale... Ne sono passati anche abbastanza da quando mi sono dimesso, quindi....

MTG

Quanti?

Romano

Da quando mi son dimesso? Cinque... Queste cose si sanno meglio quando si è in contatto, si continuano a vedere i giovani, le persone che emergono... che prendono posizioni di responsabilità....

MTG

Il Direttore Generale della Relazioni Culturali?

Romano

Certo.

Interview with Doctor Massimo Spinetti

Roma, 6 febbraio 1995

MTG

E' possibile dire che esiste una politica culturale e linguistica dell'Italia con degli obiettivi ben identificati?

Spinetti

Certo, del resto questa politica dev'essere formalizzata ogni anno sulla base delle leggi vigenti. Il decreto legislativo n. 29 del '93, no, del '94 impone ad ogni dirigente generale di sottoporre al ministro una proposta per progetti da effettuare nel corso dell'anno. Quindi sulla base di questo, il direttore generale delle relazioni culturali predispone un programma che chiaramente si basa su criteri generali, quindi su una linea politica, e di politica proprio culturale e di promozione della lingua. Quindi è una politica che viene rinnovata ogni anno, chiaramente ogni anno c'è qualche diversità di accenti, ma che segue un filone tradizionale; specialmente tiene conto delle priorità geografiche e di politica estera italiana. Tiene conto appunto del Mediterraneo, dell'Est europeo e dei Paesi con una larga presenza di comunità italiane

MTG

Quindi in relazione a questi obiettivi che sono parte dei piani presentati ogni anno, vengono identificate delle strategie, anno per anno? E queste strategie variano o è lasciato unicamente agli organi esecutivi di attuare le direttive generali?

Spinetti

Guardi, in realtà una parte degli organi esecutivi siamo noi stessi, quindi in questo caso coincide, in altri casi, se si tratta.... gli unici che non siamo noi stessi ad agire sono gli Istituti di Cultura. Per loro la legge assegna un'autonomia operativa e finanziaria, proprio allo scopo di consentire un'attività promossa sul posto sulla base di quelle che vengono avvertite come esigenze locali. Questo mi sembra un ottimo contemperamento delle due esigenze, quindi una parte dell'attività gestita sulla base delle direttive che provengono dal centro e una parte promossa spontaneamente dagli Istituti di Cultura sulla base degli impulsi che arrivano dal mondo esterno. Quando parlavo di priorità non ho citato l'Europa occidentale, perché essendo Comunità è naturalmente, anche al di fuori di qualsiasi volontà, in prima istanza nelle nostre istituzioni culturali, non c'è bisogno, diciamo così, di una volontà politica particolare, è il corso naturale...

MTG

Nel formulare queste proposte annuali, si fa mai riferimento alla politica culturale di altri paesi?

Spinetti

Dunque ogni anno, anzi due volte all'anno, c'è un incontro informale dei direttori generali delle Relazioni Culturali dei Paesi della Comunità europea, in quel caso accade uno scambio di opinioni su quali debbano essere le linee programmatiche da seguire nei confronti di determinati paesi, di determinati settori. Chiaramente poi ogni Paese è libero di adottarlo o di non adottarlo, però non c'è dubbio che questo costituisca un ottimo modo per scambiarsi idee e per potere elaborare anche linee che poi vengono seguite anche dagli Stati ...

MTG

E sul piano concreto dei finanziamenti, come si paragona l'Italia, per esempio, con i suoi vicini come la Francia e la Germania? C'è un tipo di finanziamenti che siano paragonabili ?

Spinetti

Questo purtroppo non glielo so dire... So che l'Italia investe poco rispetto agli altri Paesi, però le grandezze non glielo so dire, quelle lei le può rilevare dal bilancio. C'è un centro che ha fatto di recente uno studio in materia. Se n'è interessata la Professoressa Bodo.

MTG

Sì certo, quello studio però riguarda la politica culturale in genere, non la politica culturale come settore della politica estera. Un'altra domanda è quella se sia possibile identificare a seconda del variare dei governi delle linee, delle direttive diverse. Nella sua esperienza, in questi anni passati, col succedersi di un governo dopo l'altro, ci sono stati dei punti contrastanti, delle svolte significative, delle contraddizioni per quello che concerne la politica culturale estera?

Spinetti

Direi che la politica culturale è una delle componenti della politica estera e le variazioni di accenti che ci sono state, sono state le stesse che si sono verificate nella politica estera.... C'è stato un periodo in cui anche sulla base di eventi storici, si è dato un particolare accento alle relazioni con i paesi dell'Europa orientale rispetto al passato, ed altri in cui l'accento è stato dato più al Mediterraneo. C'è stato un momento di particolare interessamento verso l'Albania. Dipende sempre da eventi storici. Comunque si tratta sempre di variazioni di accento ma che non cambiano la politica sostanziale che costituisce il cuore della politica culturale che rimane una componente fissa, diciamo l'80%, e un 20% che può essere considerata variabile e dipende dalla situazione del momento.

MTG

Mi chiedo, sempre a proposito di lingua se esiste ancora il comitato formato nel 1981, se ne parla in un numero de *Il Velcro* dedicata proprio al DGRC. C'è un rapporto tra questo comitato che era stato formato negli anni Ottanta, quindi già parecchio tempo fa ed i comitati formati in base alla normativa della legge 401?

Spinetti

Io sono al corrente di un comitato che operava nel settore della lingua, non so se è quello a cui lei si riferisce. Si trattava di un comitato per la diffusione dell'italiano come lingua seconda, che ha svolto un'opera molto utile e ha lasciato anche dei documenti di base da tenere presente in relazione alla diffusione della lingua italiana. Dal '91 esiste peraltro esiste la Commissione Nazionale per la promozione della lingua e cultura italiana all'estero, che essendo istituita per legge ha, diciamo così, superato tutti gli altri, tutte le altre commissioni che erano state istituite con fonti normative secondarie... Quindi quel comitato di linguisti ha cessato di avere vigore, di esistere, ed esiste questa Commissione Nazionale che ha al proprio interno un gruppo di lavoro che si occupa di diffusione della lingua...

MTG

Questa Commissione Nazionale è diversa dagli altri comitati previsti dalla legge 401?

Spinetti

I comitati istituiti dalla legge 401 sono comitati istituiti presso ogni singolo istituto quindi orientano l'attività dell'istituto, la Commissione orienta l'attività dell'amministrazione centrale. La Commissione ha una segreteria tecnica. Questa Commissione redige ogni anno un rapporto che sottopone ministro e poi al ministro che la presenta al parlamento. Quindi per gli anni scorsi esiste un rapporto presentato al Parlamento.

MTG

E per concludere, in relazione al futuro, lei pensa ce si verificherà qualcosa di nuovo

Spinetti

Per il futuro c'è stato un segnale interessante: il Parlamento ha aumentato i fondi da destinare agli Istituti di Cultura in misura significativa. Purtroppo però abbiamo ancora delle strozzature, nel senso che non possiamo assumere nuovo personale presso gli Istituti. Quindi gli Istituti sono attualmente dotati di poco personale, ma la normativa non ci consente di aumentare le dotazioni organiche. Noi speriamo che questo nuovo segnale che è un segno di attenzione per la promozione della cultura italiana all'estero, consenta di superare in futuro anche queste limitazioni e di assumere anche nuovo personale

MTG

E questo è avvenuto successivamente al periodo in cui molti Istituti di Cultura all'estero sono stati compressi, ridotti?

Spinetti

E' avvenuto con la legge del bilancio approvata il 20 dicembre del 1994.

MTG

Quindi all'interno del bilancio relativo al MAE dovrebbe risultare un rialzo dei fondi. E quindi in base a queste disposizioni lei prevede che in futuro gli Istituti saranno potenziati?

Spinetti

Lo speriamo con viva aspettativa.

MTG

Io la ringrazio molto del tempo messo a mia disposizione, dottor Spinetti.

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