

# Preface

The book you are about to read examines the relations between economic thought, proposals of reform of political institutions and civil society in the Italian and French tradition during the “long” nineteenth century, from the ascent to power of Napoleone Bonaparte to the eve of the First World War. In Italy, this time span covers the long process of setting the foundations for the Italian state (*Risorgimento*, with the considerable French support provided to Italy during this process), its subsequent rise on the international stage leading up to the role played by the state in the Great War 1914–1918. At the same time, in France, we have the long-lasting post-revolutionary struggle of republican, progressive social forces against the conservative monarchism, with the ascent of the bourgeoisie in the era of Louis-Philippe and Napoleon III, the dramatic events that accompanied the war against Prussia and the birth of the Third Republic. Together with the institutional establishment, or evolution, of the two States, we have the budding development of economic thought: namely, liberalism, socialism, industrial utopia, egalitarianism in France; and, in Italy, considerations on the link between liberalism, public administration and republicanism, and the evolution of the Catholic social doctrine. Italian Liberalism developed alongside the pursuit of independence and the establishment of the new State. At the same time, the nineteenth century marks the rise of Socialism in Italy, from the humanitarian solidarity of the republican instances to the birth of organized groups of workers following the unity and the end of the State of the Church. When Rome became capital of Italy (1870–71), the Catholic Church exerted a strong opposition to the new State, as expressed in the official decree *Non expedit*, which prohibited Catholics from participating in political life. However, the Church continued to be deeply involved in civil society through the provision of education and social care in favour of the poor. Popular claims for equity and justice were addressed through the gradual establishment of the new Catholic social doctrine, which would give rise to Catholic Corporatism.

In France, the first half of the period sees the transition from monarchy to republic. We have the monarchy *censitaire* of Louis XVIII and Charles X during the *Restauration*, which «restored» public finances, and the July constitutional monarchy between 1830 and 1848, with its policy aimed at economic development,

transport infrastructure and education (railways, schools) and colonial expansion; however the public balance remained in surplus for most of the period. The transition to the Second Republic (1848) places Paris at the centre of European revolutionary forces, followed by the Second Empire (1852), with its financial prosperity owing to the fast growth of the economy, when the utopian thought of Saint-Simon seems definitely closer to being achieved, as proved by de Lesseps' realization of the Suez Canal, and the signature of the free trade agreement with the UK (1860), important result of the liberalism of Louis-Napoléon. An institutional change of paramount importance is the Constitution of the Third Republic of 1875, established *sans éclat* : the very peculiar case of a Republican Constitution written by an assembly with a monarchist majority, following the revolution of 1871, repressed by Thiers, and the catastrophic war against Prussia. The Republic will last and grow as a major regional power, with vast colonial domains. French society is becoming more democratic, secular, educated and egalitarian, and the great bourgeoisie of finance and industry is now republican. The mission of Saint-Simon, i.e., the successful outcome of a French Revolution, is finally achieved with the help of Gambetta, who understands the position and interests of the emerging middle class and is able to obtain the consensus of farmers and peasants. From 1876, workers' organizations are reinstated, after the repression of the *Commune*. There are very few of these outside of Paris; however, in the country, workers and artisans mostly support republicans and radicals. Ten years later, these organizations would become widespread and juxtaposed to the moderate majority.

The book expounds several key points of the processes just mentioned.

The first section examines the issues of identity, justice and liberty, which were prominent both in the establishment of the Italian state and in the complex institutional evolution of France, from monarchy to republic. At the same time, they lie at the root of the debate on Italian and French political economy. Italian and French authors involved in the *Risorgimento* and in the mid-century social turmoils are discussed. Romagnosi was the inspiration for generations of Italian politicians and economists, amongst whom Cattaneo, who coupled political action with intellectual reflection on the national identity of Italy and on the influence of the public administration on growth and social justice. An alternative perspective is given in the paper on slavery, which denies human identity, justice and liberty.

The five papers of the second section are devoted to the relationship between political and economic freedom and its effect on equity. A few classical Italian and French authors who discuss these issues, and their reception in Italy and France, are at the core of the papers. Economic freedom and equity are examined in Sismondi, a francophone author who spent an important period of his life in Tuscany, and one paper deals with the reception of List in Italy and France for the purposes of free trade, protectionism and social fairness. The section provides fresh insight, which even puts a new perspective on the reflections of well-known scholars, like Jean-Baptiste Say, according to whom economic freedom and social justice are strictly connected, and Pellegrino Rossi, his successor as professor of political economy in Paris. The last paper highlights the relationship between the

aforementioned concepts from the point of view of the pursuit of social equity through the reforms propounded during the unification of Italy.

The intellectual and political conflict between the social vision of Liberalism and Socialism in some of their various forms is the main topic of the four papers of the third section, in which different streams of Socialism are discussed. Particular reference is made to Saint-Simon and his followers. An alternative approach to the French utopian socialism is examined in a paper that modifies the interpretation provided by Sombart and Durkheim. Finally, the almost unknown economic thought of a group of prominent French intellectuals between the end of the nineteenth century and the First World War is examined, highlighting the link between the attitude towards economy and the political choices of Halévy, Alain and Maurois.

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