

LUIGI EINAUDI, HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS (1943-1954)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to briefly analyse Luigi Einaudi's autobiographical writings, which will be republished as part of the National Edition of Luigi Einaudi's writings, in such a way as to give them the unity they bear in tracing the Piedmontese economist's public formation. They consist of three sections: the *Diario dell'Esilio* (*Exile Diary* 1943-1944); the *Diario 1945-1947* (*Diary of the Bank of Italy*), both edited by Paolo Soddu respectively in 1993 e 1997 and reviewed on this occasion; the notes of the Presidency of the Republic (1948-1954). In particular, the notes drafted during the presidency of the Republic, and until now almost completely unpublished, are of inestimable importance for historical analysis, as they contain valuable information on the management of government crises by the head of state, who noted down meetings with the various political delegations during consultations.

Keywords: Diaries, Exile, Switzerland, Bank of Italy, Constituent Assembly, President of the Republic.

INTRODUCTION

The economic, political and, in the broadest sense of the term, cultural thought that Luigi Einaudi elaborated during his lifetime is encapsulated not only in the impressive bulk of his scientific and journalistic writings, but also in the traces he left behind as a political decision-maker. It came to maturity in the last phase of his life and it is witnessed in its shaping by the autobiographical writings that he began to collect from September 1943 onwards.

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These writings encompass a vast collection of texts referring to the period during in which Einaudi's public and institutional role took shape. This era includes his tenure as rector of the University of Turin, which concluded with his departure from Italy and subsequent exile in Switzerland. Upon his return to a liberated Italy in December 1944, his career expanded further, marked by his appointment as Governor of the Bank of Italy, his participation in the Constituent Assembly and the work of the second sub-committee, his role as Minister of the Budget, and his position as Vice President of the Council of Ministers, culminating in his rise to the Quirinal.

Each of these phases is recounted by Einaudi in diaries and notes written between 1943 and 1954.

The diaries relating to the period spanning from 1943 to 1947 have already been published in two volumes, both edited by Paolo Soddu.¹ The notes written during the presidency of the Republic (1948-1954), have all remained unpublished until now, except for those recorded during his approaching to Quirinal's² election. Both the edited and unpublished will soon be published in the volume on autobiographical writings of the National Edition, edited by Paolo Soddu and me as co-editor. In this new edition, it will be our intention to connect writings that have appeared separately and unconnected to this day. Examining them in chronological order has convinced us of the existence of a common thread that connects these writings. It is an irrefutable fact that Einaudi wrote about himself. He kept a personal diary and drafted unconventional notes during the early stages in which his increasingly important public role was shaping.

EXILE DIARY

The writing of the diaries shows, whether one likes it or not, the edification of the public figure. The economist from the University of Turin, from the beginning of the 20th century to the advent of the fascist dictatorship had been a true opinion maker, primarily in the pages of *La Stampa* and then as a fundamental collaborator of Luigi Albertini's *Corriere*, from 1919 appointed by Nitti as Senator of the Kingdom.³ Initially sympathetic to the fascist solution to the post-World War I crisis, clearly distanced himself from it during the Matteotti's kidnapping and assassination. He abandoned

¹ EINAUDI 1993, 1997.

² EINAUDI 2001: 411-420.

³ FAUCCI 1986.

the “via Solferino” newspaper after the expulsion of the Albertini family – which was part of the more general work of fascistisation of the *Fourth Estate*⁴ – to concentrate during the dictatorship on teaching and on the *Riforma Sociale* and, closed by the regime, on the *Rivista di Storia Economica*. With the ruinous end of fascism, his appointment as rector of the University of Turin – and the *Diario dell’esilio* (*Diary of Exile*) gives an account of the actual path he had travelled – marked Einaudi’s entry into the ruling classes that would lead the country towards what would be the path to democracy,⁵ first indicated by Gaetano Salvemini⁶ and then, with the final crisis of the dictatorship, adopted by the liberal ruling classes as a whole and therefore by Einaudi.

He had therefore been, from the Matteotti crime onwards, a critical voice against the Mussolini regime and the new fascist-corporatist-technical state, as he had defined it in 1924.⁷ It was precisely the exile in Switzerland that had represented the material and symbolic fulfilment and culmination of Einaudi’s anti-fascism. In the convulsive, extremely harsh and traumatic months that followed Mussolini’s ousting by the Grand Council of Fascism and after September 8, 1943, Einaudi found himself in the crosshairs of the Nazi-fascist repression raging in the occupied part of the peninsula and thus also in the Turin where he worked. As mentioned, he was part of the shortlist of anti-fascist chancellors appointed by Badoglio, but he had far too short of a time to hold and exercise that office. He was fully and materially aware of this on the morning of September 22, 1943, when he went to Turin from Dogliani with his wife Ida – as he had been obliged to do so once a week to attend to the rectorate’s business – and near the palace in Via Po, having spotted the black shirts lurking there, he wondered who they were waiting for. Since he was, according to the occupying regime, a Badoglio authority, he there he realised that he was the one to be ousted. In fact, the news of the manhunt carried out in the subalpine capital by the *Milizia* had been picked up by his wife Ida during the journey from Dogliani to Turin by train, a place where information was quickly spread.⁸ He then immediately took the decision to leave the country and realised that he had to do so as soon as possible. He was part, together with his wife, of that “flight of the people from the barbarian”⁹

⁴ FORNO 2006.

⁵ SODDU 2017.

⁶ BUCCHI 2023.

⁷ EINAUDI 1924.

⁸ MAGGI 2017.

⁹ EINAUDI 1997: 16.

which he himself witnessed during the journey to Lausanne on October 1, 1943.

These agitated pages opened the *Diary of Exile*, with his departure from Turin with his wife Ida to the Aosta Valley, and from there across the border into the Swiss Confederation. The extemporaneousness and turmoil of that journey is rendered by Ida Pellegrini's outward and return journey from Aosta to Dogliani, where she had to rush to retrieve essential personal belongings: "Ida decides at 11:00 to leave at 11:50 to Dogliani".¹⁰ Einaudi even noted the purchase of a toothbrush he had forgotten at home, also quoting the price in Swiss francs.

The journey to Switzerland was bumpy and by no means comfortable: Einaudi was approaching his seventies and was limping, due to the consequences of a fall, while his wife was nearly sixty. The pages of the Swiss diary also revealed a deep need to write a vivid expression of the desire to preserve the memory of encounters with people, situations, and unfamiliar realities. They also portrayed the pain and suffering caused by the forced abandonment of his homeland, the anxiety over the distance of his son Mario in the United States with whom communication was very difficult, and the apprehension over the condition of his other two sons, Roberto and Giulio – the first one active in clandestine anti-fascism in occupied Italy; the latter, after his staying in Switzerland, an active participant in the Resistance in Valle d'Aosta.

Once they arrived at their destination, amidst multiple journeys on as many vehicles, makeshift or otherwise, they met up with Giulio, also exiled.¹¹ His presence in Switzerland was an emotionally soothing balm for the parents, who could dispose of, among other things, a remnant of family affection. A bond pervaded by a kind of adoring parental admiration seemed to emerge, as when Giulio rescued his parents at the Orphelinat refugee centre "from the straw on which the others sleep, providing the two of us with a bed in the infirmary".¹² At times, alongside his concern for broader, immediate circumstances, there emerged a characteristically parental anxiety over seemingly minor issues such as the worry he expressed when noting that his son Giulio was often "without a coat",¹³ and his concern about whether his son's behavior was "good"¹⁴ or not. A powerful example of this more personal, intimate side of Einaudi's family life appears in the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 8.

¹¹ BARBERIS 2012.

¹² EINAUDI 1997: 17.

¹³ *Ibid.*: 62.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Swiss diary: a heartfelt letter he wrote to his son when the latter decided to join the Resistance in Val d'Aosta.

Now, that the thing we always feared has happened, may that blessing be with you that a mother and father can give to the son who leaves them to do what he believes to be his duty [...]. Your father, who has followed you with affection and pride, awaits with your mother your news with eager anxiety, says to you: always be what you were in the past and the dear women who gave you the strength to go into danger will pray that you may still for long years educate your children well.¹⁵

From the same pages of the diary, it is in fact also possible to glean some information about Einaudi's personal relationship with his publisher son in relation to political issues. Giulio Einaudi was very close to communist ambientes and in contact with *azionisti* circles, so hostile to his father that the former terrified him and the latter annoyed him. Einaudi saw in the Partito d'Azione a political strategy aimed at initiating a radical and wide-ranging renewal of the country, on the basis of which he could put himself forward as the only credible alternative to those who were moving within the traditional circles of Italian liberalism. The Piedmontese economist saw a true transfiguration of the diabolical¹⁶ in the *azionista* politics. The youngest son, specularly, feared that *azionista* politics could replace the communist party to the left. In his view, the communists lacked a genuine revolutionary spirit and had failed to establish a solid base among the working class. Father and son, in essence, shared a similar vision of the Partito d'Azione. However, their perspectives stemmed from clearly divergent assumptions something evident in the strikingly similar arguments they each used to support their opposing views.¹⁷ Luigi Einaudi, on the contrary, identified in the 'intellectualoids'¹⁸ *azionisti* the tendency to make themselves mere outriders of intentions in his revolutionary eyes with respect to the order of Italian society. In fact, among other things, the conflict on the institutional question was decisive, given the impossible recomposition between Einaudi in favour of safeguarding the monarchy and 'those of the Partito d'Azione', tenacious supporters of the republican prejudice. Moreover, the concern of the elderly pre-fascist liberal emerged clearly about the possible affirmation of new parties, which were emerging with mass character and which could have conquered the post-war political

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 172 ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: xii.

¹⁷ SODDU 2015: 90.

¹⁸ EINAUDI 1997: 40.

scene, believing that they were “the nation alone”¹⁹ What is certain is that he was distressed that his son might fall under the spell of communist ideology, so much so that in the quoted letter he paternally urged him to preserve his conscience as a free man:

I have already told you why I believe you deserved to have created something: you did not bow to the mighty ones of the day and followed the path of truth. No one knows what the real truth is; we only know that it is not what is commanded. Whatever the constitution of our society may be in the future, see to it by your work today that you preserve, in letter and spirit, in the inspiring ideas and in the legal and economic conditions of the implementation of those ideas, the supreme good of freedom to deny the official truth.²⁰

The period in Switzerland was exceptionally rich in contacts, meetings, dinners and teas with the most diverse exponents of Italian and non-Italian fuoriuscitismo and local society. This allowed the future governor of the Bank of Italy, from a privileged vantage point, to reflect on the present and future conditions of Italy and Europe, on which he was defining his thinking. The meeting with some of the main architects of the future construction of the European “edifice” such as Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli stimulated Einaudi’s reflection on the geopolitical and economic issues of the old continent, on which he had been reflecting, indeed, at least since 1897.²¹ Moreover, exile allowed Einaudi to accredit and refine his anti-fascist profile and thus fully participate in the ruling classes that would guide the national rebirth after the nationalism that had risked killing the nation, marking the characteristics and forms of the Italian path to democracy. This was witnessed on January 15, 1945 by Marcello Soleri, speaking at the installation ceremony of the new governor of the via Nazionale Institute. The Minister of the Treasury, in recognizing the qualities that enabled Einaudi to take the helm of Via Nazionale, highlighted his “willingness to endure personal sacrifice rather than compromise his principles even if that meant distancing himself first from the academic world, the vocation and banner of his life, and ultimately from his homeland, living in exile in a foreign yet friendly land”.²² Einaudi would not forget the attention given to him by Soleri, with whom a human relationship built over time had further strengthened. It was no coincidence that when he wrote the preface to Soleri’s *Memorie*, Einaudi,

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 45.

²⁰ EINAUDI 1997: 174.

²¹ EINAUDI 1897.

²² EINAUDI 1993: 10.

at that time President of the Republic, emphasised that the Piedmontese politician belonged to the “best part of the political class that governed Italy during the Giolittian period”.²³

In addition to consolidating the clear anti-fascist profile of the economist from Dogliani, the Swiss exile was of fundamental importance thanks to the numerous intellectual stimuli offered by a vibrant environment enriched by the presence of multiple generations of anti-fascists. The relationship with the new generations of Italians who had taken refuge in Switzerland was decisive, as shown by the teaching he gave to students between the autumn of 1943 and the spring of the following year, from which sprang the *Lezioni di Politica Sociale*, the most important text that Einaudi produced in this period. Indeed, one can perceive in them the refinement and systematisation of the most recent acquisitions in economic science, which proved to be of fundamental importance in the actions of the professor at the University of Turin after the Second World War.

The *Diary of Exile* was written by him by hand, on large, loose sheets, duly numbered. The descriptions, meticulous, continuous in time, punctuated the extraordinariness of that ordinary daily life. Nonetheless, it was also fragmented writing, not always methodical and linear by the author's own admission, who, upon returning to Rome after his exile, expressed to himself the need to “continue the diary every evening to remember the speeches that one hears”,²⁴ an observation that reveals his regret at not always being able to realise this intention. In short, he was more than aware of the extraordinariness of the hour and also of the role he assumed. Directly involved as he was in the direction of such a decisive phase, enlivened by the transition that from the rubble left by the dying dictatorship led to the construction of the foundations on which to lay the foundations of a new collective home for Italians. The acquisition of information, the most disparate, around a rich and still confused phase is remarkable. The accumulation of news concerning several dates on a specific following day gives us an idea of how often, as mentioned above, he could not always write directly about what was happening. It was, however, a new kind of writing, unprecedented for the economist who was used to writing essays, scientific and journalistic articles, but not to pouring his emotions, feelings and sensations into a personal diary.

²³ SOLERI 1949.

²⁴ EINAUDI 1997: 224.

BANK DIARY

The governorship experience represented a radical change of life for the Piedmontese economist, who had never, before that time, held any important public office, nor performed any functions connected with the political direction of the country or the work of the executive. This lack of experience was most recently highlighted by Federico Fubini in his *L'Oro e la Patria*.²⁵

Of course, Einaudi had to become familiar with the role, the tasks and the world into which he had immersed himself directly from the top and which he would help shape by consolidating new practices, as in the case of the *Final Considerations*. It was also necessary to acclimatise with the people who inhabited that environment and to establish relations of mutual trust, as happened to him, for example, with Paolo Baffi, who considered him, throughout his professional life, a true master. In fact, their intense relationship began at the Bank where Einaudi chose the future governor as head of the Studies Office. They had begun to collaborate on the work of the Annual Reports and the “Soleri loan”²⁶ and from the diary that Einaudi wrote during his time at Palazzo Koch, it is possible to measure his growing appreciation for Paolo Baffi’s moral stature and the quality of his economic and professional culture. The governor assiduously received the young economist with whom he dialogued on the most diverse topics. Of this growing esteem was an indication of the regret that Einaudi expressed on March 29, 1945, noting his agreement to Baffi’s request to travel to the North for about three weeks to assist the *Office of Strategic Services*. Einaudi was disappointed to note that time would be further prolonged, so much so that he wrote – “it would end up being at least two months”.²⁷

The need to understand an unknown universe is thus clearly reflected in the dense writing of the Diary, which simultaneously serves as an indispensable source for grasping the vision Einaudi was developing regarding the transition from totalitarian dictatorship to pluralist democracy. He was acutely aware that, just as in the party system, the economic, financial, and industrial structure, as well as the organization of culture, were all shaped by the lingering influences of the recent past an impact that not only affected the present but also the construction of the future. In any case, material construction prevailed: it was in constant flux, as emerges from the pages of the diary that record its strength and

²⁵ FUBINI 2024.

²⁶ BAFFI 1990.

²⁷ EINAUDI 1993: 233.

intensity. It affected industries, constructions and all fields of human activity including the hotel industry, considered by Einaudi to be “of great importance”²⁸ for the country’s future prospects.

It was from his appointment as governor that his political presence also grew. It would manifest itself firstly with his appointment as national councillor, then with his election to the Constituent Assembly, and his intense participation in the work of the Commission of 75, and lastly as Vice-President of the Council and Minister of the Budget, a department specifically designed for his role in the 4th De Gasperi government. He was then an ex-office senator in the first republican legislature, until he was elected, with the votes of the government majority, President of the Republic on May 11, 1948. It was a clear example of the dynamic development and reconfiguration of political cultures at the turn of the century that it was, in fact, a staunch and loyal monarchist – whose writings and numerous conversations with Princess Maria José of Savoy²⁹ attest to this – who presided over and safeguarded the republican institution he had opposed during the electoral campaign for the institutional referendum. However, he was fully aware of this paradox, and it was in his inaugural speech in Parliament that he sought to dispel any potential ambiguity. Speaking of himself in the third person he claimed:

Whoever succeeded him [De Nicola] used, before June 2, 1946, repeatedly of his right to express an opinion, rooted in tradition and in his countrymen’s feelings, on the choice of the best regime to give to Italy: but as he had promised himself and his electors, he then gave the new republican regime desired by the people something more than mere adhesion.³⁰

A renewed monarchical institution in Italy would, in his opinion, necessarily have to follow the centuries-old English model. He showed a certain difficulty in understanding the fact that mass politics or, at any rate, the progressive integration of social forces into public space had in the twentieth century in Italy taken on an unmistakable monarchic-fascist configuration. His wish that a monarchical form of state could be configured as a power “placed above the parties”, of which “in England it is said that it is never spoken of, was therefore unlikely to be realised”.³¹ In Italy, in fact, the king had endorsed dictatorship and its choices. Einaudi feared the concomitant fall of the monarchy and the dictatorship, so

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 103.

²⁹ EINAUDI 1997.

³⁰ EINAUDI 1956.

³¹ EINAUDI 1946.

much so that in his diary he expressed his aversion to the hypothesis of a constituent assembly, which he still considered in March 1945 as a great mistake to have envisaged.³² He was concerned that the convocation of a constituent assembly, like the possible choice in favour of the republic, might favour the prevalence of the dictatorship of the majority. He believed, in this regard, that in order to entrust the country once again to a few “acrobats”, it was sufficient to let “the centralised machine” of Napoleonic influence “survive” and have “this and the committees elect a constituent assembly”.³³ At the same time, however, a political and cultural rethink had been taking shape in him for some time – and the diaries give us a trace of this –. In *Via il Prefetto (Away the Prefect)* of the summer of 1944, he had emphasised the bottom-up reconstruction of national cohabitation as the founding value of the Resistance and of the forthcoming formation of a new political class. Liberal method and culture were in his vision deeply imbued with personalism rather than individualism. A vision that did not only derive from the times during which Einaudi had matured his political culture, but was also an expression of his sensitivity and vision.

The beginning of the diary written during his stay in Via Nazionale is in almost perfect continuity with Einaudi’s previous autobiographical narrative. The Piedmontese economist had already been taken into consideration by the first governments of national unity as a leading exponent of the new political course. In fact, both Badoglio and Bonomi as Prime Ministers had long worked for his return from Switzerland, which had been postponed several times as it was not without risk. However, when the flight from Lyons (where the Italian exiles for whom the return Rome had been reorganised had been flown) brought him back to the materially and morally destroyed capital, Einaudi was shot through with “vast disillusionment”.³⁴ He had already made the choice to go to the governorship of the Bank of Italy, an option he preferred over the alternative proposal to take over responsibility for the Italian embassy in Washington, which was then entrusted to Alberto Tarchiani. On the other hand, the few days spent in the capital city after returning to Switzerland were already weighing on the Einaudi couple who, having “their pockets full”,³⁵ seemed to aspire to return to the San Giacomo estate.

Two diaries in different respects, therefore, the one relating to the exile in Switzerland and the one relating to the governorship of the Bank

³² EINAUDI 1993: 224.

³³ EINAUDI 1944.

³⁴ EINAUDI 1997: 218.

³⁵ *Ibid.*: 128.

of Italy, but which were in perfect chronological and semantic continuity. The former is evidenced by the fact that the chronological gap between the conclusion of the first and the beginning of the second diary is just under a month; the reasons for the latter lie, on the other hand, in the evident sense that the author consciously or unconsciously gave to his writing: the testimony of the making of his public and political self. The diary that reconstructs a large part of the period of the governorship seemed, in fact, not only to keep track of the many meetings, conversations and visits, but also to want to consolidate the characteristics of a practice of governing public affairs that was gradually becoming more refined. It was the writing of a man fully immersed in a political dimension such as that of post-World War II Italy: tormented, full of expectations as well as pitfalls.

The obvious difference in the writing of Einaudi's second diary is also rendered by the way it was entrusted to paper. It seems plausible to assume that Einaudi jotted down events, meetings, dialogues and whatever else he considered noteworthy on flyers, and then dictated them to Carolina Benedetti, an employee of the Bank of Italy and member of its special secretariat.³⁶ This certainly leads one to believe that there was, unlike the diary of the exile, a rehash of his own notes taken *in itinere* and this, therefore, probably resulted in changes that a handwritten and unredacted version could have rendered more icastically. It is also certain, however, that Einaudi did not provide either a preliminary draft or an overall and systematic revision of the final draft, as shown by the colloquial tone, the inaccuracies that punctuate the transcription of names, and other errors, which were certainly the result of a mix-up, for example, Vienna for Biella.³⁷ Like the diary of the exile, the many anachronisms or the crowding of events referring to several different days, give an idea of how, in this case, the dictation of the diary was not always continuous and direct, but carried out in scraps of time, when it was possible.

The Bank's massive and dense diary, as mentioned, is therefore almost entirely typewritten, up to August 15, 1946. From December 2, when it resumed, to the end, March 16, 1947, the diary is manuscript. This is clearly discernible from the evolution of the writing in the making of the diary, which in the final part, and even more so in the handwritten part, increasingly took the form of a notebook of rapid and concise notes, thus giving the text a decidedly irregular rhythm, characterised by a clearly less assiduousness than in the part pertaining to 1945.

³⁶ EINAUDI 1993.

³⁷ *Ibid.*: 464.

The first long pause, from March 23 to June 5, coincided with the first electoral campaign in democratic Italy, the one for the Constituent Assembly and the institutional referendum, in which he himself participated and which unfortunately deprives us of his view of the first and last electoral competition in post-war Italy in which he would have participated.

The second came with the start of the work of the Constituent Assembly, in which he participated assiduously, taking up much of his time. Writing had clearly become more sparse since July and ceased entirely on August 15, 1946, only to resume intermittently from December onwards. The diary thus came to an end on the eve of the two-year period that saw Einaudi most intensely involved in directing the country's economic policy at the start of the restart, i.e. March 16, 1947.

The Bank's diary thus constitutes a remarkably interesting testimony to the period of liberation, monetary recovery and the start of reconstruction. It also contains a not inconsiderable autobiographical implication, which testifies to the governor's varied interests, his many meetings and conversations on the most diverse topics of public interest with exponents of culture, anti-fascism, business, banking and information.

What clearly emerges is his visceral attachment and passion for the land, agriculture and the farming industry, which had always been his most important occupation. Many of the Sundays noted in his diary were in fact dedicated to trips in the Lazio countryside, always accompanied by his wife Ida, his friends and colleagues such as Giuseppe Medici, Manlio Rossi Doria and Manlio Brosio. What is striking is the wealth of detail he felt the need to report, from cattle breeds to irrigation systems to the 'heads of lettuce, artichokes and the various species of legumes',³⁸ which were clearly visible thanks to the care taken in removing weeds on one of the many farms he visited. In some of his annotations, Einaudi's all-nineteenth-century vision of the relationship between the masses and the land as the full satisfaction and natural occupation of the former clearly emerged. From his numerous writings, his articles, his correspondence and his autobiographical writings, in fact, it is not difficult to discern a certain duality, his being both conservative and innovator. He was in fact a strenuous defender of agricultural labour and small and medium property, seen as the preservation of social order and a limitation to the unbridled industrial degeneration that had begun to characterise the landscape and ways of life between the two centuries. One often read in Einaudi a *horror vacui* towards the working conditions imposed by the first industrial concentrations. He pitied workers forced into gruelling hours in the new cathedrals of alienating labour, extolling

³⁸ EINAUDI 1993: 196.

the virtues of agricultural work and the autonomy in being able to manage their own time that this employment allowed. One of his notes from a Sunday outing at the Cavasola's La Cipriana farm is illuminating in this regard:

Civilised people don't want to hurt their hands attending to farm work. On these three hectares, I have the impression that the owner could, while spending the money to do big spading jobs, make an honest living independently. Instead, everyone thinks about getting a job in the city and then having to sell the land. Even if they do time.³⁹

DIARY NOTES

The diary notes and the Quirinale notes, substantially different in their writing and purpose, constitute the main novelty of the republication of the autobiographical writings, as they are largely unpublished and allow us to witness above all Einaudi's management of government crises, bringing back duly revised writings, almost as if to fully grasp their meaning, the conversations with party representatives and institutional figures. It was in fact Einaudi himself who strongly desired the publication, in 1956, of *Lo Scrittorio del Presidente* (*The President's Notebook*), another vivid testimony of the flowing development of the Quirinal experience, which necessarily, however, does not render the immediacy of the natural evolution of the *Appunti di diario*,⁴⁰ not explicitly ordered and selected for editorial publication.

Einaudi's election to the presidency of the Republic began the laborious construction of the institutions envisaged by the Constitution. His approach was a fully conscious effort to gradually build the constitutional mechanism of which only the democratic Parliament, the Presidency of the Republic and of course the executive power were then fully realised. It was only in the following decades that fundamental institutions such as the Constitutional Court, the Superior Council of the Magistracy, the ordinary statute regions and the constitutional law on the referendum would be realised.

The unprecedented president⁴¹ inaugurated a *modus operandi* often taken up by his successors, fully expressed in ensuring the functioning of the machine, proactively activating himself in the event that it became

³⁹ *Ibid.*: 208.

⁴⁰ EINAUDI 1956.

⁴¹ PERTICI 2022.

blocked.⁴² Einaudi also made much use of the previous experience of Enrico De Nicola, not by chance often listened to during government crises, including but not limited to the organisation of consultation practices. He had in fact been able to appreciate the ‘scrupulous impartiality’ that had characterised the mandate of ‘that distinguished man’⁴³ who had been his predecessor. The figure of the ‘republican sovereign’ had in fact already been impersonated by the Neapolitan lawyer who, however, had operated within a climate of national unity. Einaudi transposed the ‘republican sovereign’, understood precisely as the voice of the country’s general interest, into a profoundly different situation. His seven-year term took place in a context dominated by the most acute phase of the Cold War with the resulting internal tensions: from the assassination attempt on Togliatti to the Korean War.

His notes refer to different periods, interspersed with more or less long silences. The first goes from April 28 to May 11, 1948. The text, already published in the “Annals of the Luigi Einaudi Foundation”, helps us to reconstruct how the then governor of the Bank of Italy, Minister of the Budget and Vice-President of the Council interpreted the evolution of the race for the Quirinal that saw him among the favourites. The diary-like writing focused on the fallout of the political situation in the aftermath of the Republic’s first election. A new president had to be elected and Einaudi confided in the conflicts and moods of the protagonists of those tense days. It was exemplary to learn from De Gasperi that De Nicola “On the days [of the] vote, Sunday and Monday, [he] did not [sleep], [he] asked for news until as late as 1 a.m. after midnight”.

Einaudi’s account of the days leading up to his election portrayed the agitation that fuelled the realisation of new practices in real time, the shaping of ways of choosing a president that inevitably also contained a judgement on the names circulating. Einaudi was among them and his name, from the very beginning of the voting, was among the possible candidates. From his notes emerges the search for a broad consensus among the De Gasperi majority, which it was possible to reach on his name and not that of De Gasperi’s actual candidate, who was Carlo Sforza. The economist returned in his notes the progressive realisation that he could actually be elected. He noted on the 10: “Grassi [the Liberal Chancellor] detains me as I leave [the] courtroom. [There is a] desire [to] put [my] name forward. But [the] designation [of] De Nicola [is] too repeated not to be believed. Now Sforza cannot be abandoned. At the fourth I will finish with

⁴² SODDU 2017: 74.

⁴³ EINAUDI 1956.

a majority". In the afternoon of the following day, after a first morning vote and having noted that: "In the meeting, at 11 o'clock Medici [*sic*] phoned to ask me if I accepted. They would reconsider. At 2 a.m. [they] phoned again announcing [the] withdrawal [of] Sforza", Einaudi was elected President of the Republic with 518 votes, while Orlando, supported by the left, received 320.

The next notes are more than a year later, dated October 26, 1949. The writing was no longer assiduous and continuous in time, as he only kept track of specific situations, essentially government crises. The notes concerned, as mentioned, consultations, hearings and talks for the formation of the new government following the elections of April 18. For Einaudi, it was his first such engagement, whereas for De Gasperi it was a matter of drawing all the consequences of the vote. On May 21, for example, receiving the Prime Minister in charge, Einaudi made his intent clear: "I call for haste", obviously referring to his request that the process of forming the new executive be as rapid as possible. It was, however, a very complex situation, marked by tensions as emerged from the Christian Democrat leader's words towards Saragat who had opposed Sforza. On the contrary, De Gasperi expressed a positive judgement on Pacciardi, who as Einaudi wrote 'behaved well'. To exacerbate the worries, the attitude of the right wing was added, so much so that the statesman from Trento stressed that it was necessary "not to give subject matter to monarchical agitation".

In the summer of that year, more specifically in August, Einaudi's successor was chosen with the appointment of Donato Menichella as governor of the via Nazionale issuing institution. The President of the Republic and the Prime Minister were in full agreement on this fundamentally important choice, so much so that, in a conversation on August 5, the Prime Minister explicitly confided that he had a 'very high opinion' of Menichella.

The third period recorded by Einaudi in the Quirinal starting from January 12, 1950, was centered around resolving a fundamental dilemma faced by the centrist governments: the issue of reforms. The new executive, the VI De Gasperi who was sworn in on January 27, saw the Liberals outside the government precisely on the decisive and burning issue of agrarian reform. In prospect, this government crisis, so carefully noted by Einaudi, revealed the first evident stages of the crumbling of the centre alliance, which was torn between reformers and conservatives. However, the fact that the Liberals did not participate directly in the government did not mean that they were indifferent to the structure of the executive to which they did not, after all, fail to give their votes, and so they showed their appreciation of Gonella's persistence in Public Education because he

'obeyed if necessary'. Einaudi's notes fully rendered, on closer inspection, the tumultuous nature of the political situation even in the years of centrism, hindered as was natural by the opposition forces but also, and this was a problem, by a dissent that ran through the coalition and the parties that took part in it, starting with the majority party. within the coalition and within the majority party itself, such as the Dossettians dissenting against the Trentino leader's line.⁴⁴

The crisis of the VI De Gasperi government in July 1951 would mark the transition to the 'third period' of the Trentino Christian Democrat statesman. From the quadripartite party we had soon passed to the tripartite party and now we were confined to a two-coloured DC-PRI. That government was responsible for structural reforms and the start of the attempt to create the European Defence Community. This realising force was accompanied, however, by a sort of initial swan-song of the political centrality of De Gasperi and centrism. The anxieties and difficulties of the auroral phase of the democratic experience fully emerged: Einaudi's analytical notes, a sort of script that showed the real condition from different points of view, may even appear repetitive to the point of displaying an apparent sense of the ridiculous. In reality, it reflected a deep struggle within the contemporary political landscape – torn between the stabilizing ideals of Degasperian centrism and a more radical vision for reform. It was the first sign of how difficult it had become to clearly separate the concepts of societal reform and preservation during a time of profound change. This moment would go on to define the entire era of the party-based Republic, which – while supporting the country's modernization – still bore the weight of two decades under a dictatorship. That regime had not only suppressed public debate, stifled by the enforced conformity of authoritarian rule, but had also reinforced the rigid, outdated structures of Italian society

The notes on the government's end with Einaudi's notes from January 27 to 30, 1954, when the leading role of the DC had to be re-established after De Gasperi's exit from the scene and the rapid exhaustion of the first president's government of the republican affair, chaired by Giuseppe Pella. However, the time was not yet ripe as the failure of the Christian Democrat monocolour led by the rising leader, Amintore Fanfani, showed. It was again a man from De Gasperi's season, his Interior Minister, Mario Scelba, who tried to revitalise the exhausted centrism, now devoid of the presence of the Republicans. In reality, the Scelba-Saragat government definitively closed that season.

⁴⁴ CRAVERI 2016.

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