

FROM ACADEMIA TO SOCIETY:
BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS AND THE PRESS

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the importance that Luigi Einaudi attributes to scientific, cultural, academic institutions, and to the press, understood as a vector of development and modernization of Italian society at the beginning of the century. In particular, for the economist, scientific research, statistical surveys, the training of economists and technicians contribute to the development of national economic policies. It is a complex program that Einaudi attempts to develop with the aim of training a competent and adequate ruling class to provide solutions to an industrial society in continuous evolution and to enhance the knowledge of economic facts, as a factor of freedom and decision for citizens. Einaudi's participation in public life has always been characterized by seriousness and concreteness. The principles of competence and rigour are the distinctive feature of his existence as an intellectual and politician, in the various roles of teacher, cultural organizer and commentator in the columns of the main daily and periodical newspapers.

Keywords: Information, Public Opinion, Democracy, Ruling Class, Education, Publishing.

1. "KNOWING TO DECIDE"

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when Luigi Einaudi began his university career,¹ Turin was going through a phase of industrial and social transformation, in which the expectations of modernity of its ruling

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¹ Einaudi's teaching activity is diversified in various locations. In 1901 he becomes a professor of Financial Science at the University of Turin and in the same year he takes on the teaching of Industrial Economics and Legislation at the Royal Industrial Museum of Turin. In 1904 he begins his collaboration as a lecturer in Financial Science and State Accounting at Bocconi. ACCORNERO 2024: XLI.

class clashed with a complex reality both in terms of industrial relations and in terms of persuasion and the search for consensus.

A literary source offers a starting point for describing this early-century situation involving the Piedmontese capital. A representation of Turin society and the city, described as a place of contrasting ferments and social tensions, is offered by the novel *Gli ammonitori* published in 1904 by the poet Giovanni Cena, in which the existential events of a self-taught typographer unfold, set in the attics of the suburb of San Donato. The work has a precise social purpose and, according to Italo Calvino, bears witness to “that cauldron of humanitarian, miserable, scientist ferments”,² which characterizes the positivist Turin of the late nineteenth century. In the novel, in fact, some elements emerge that refer to the milieu frequented by Luigi Einaudi: publishing, printing, the relationship between industrialization and society, the environment of Turin’s social reformers. In the novel, particular attention is paid to Turin’s newspapers, to the world of typography work with its evolving techniques. In fact, there is no lack of reference to the technological innovation concerning the introduction of the linotype machine, described by Cena as a monster, with an ‘insect mouth’ and terrifying jaws that worry the workers “worried and sad, as if something of their life was swallowed up, disappeared inside”.³ Another element, present in the novel, concerns a character, the philanthropist doctor Eva, inspired by the figure of Gina Lombroso, known not only for being the daughter of Cesare Lombroso but also the author of a sociological investigation, regarding the living and food conditions of the working classes of Turin (*On the social and economic conditions of workers in a suburb of Turin*), published in *La Riforma Sociale* in 1896.⁴

This literary reference helps us understand the complexity in which Einaudi’s action and thought are placed, a careful observer of the present time. In his numerous writings and during his activity as a university professor, his interest in contemporaneity is accentuated, in particular in the relationship between industrialization and society between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Einaudi captures the crucial aspects of change: the evolution of working methods, the transformation of workers’ work, the conflict between technological progress and craftsmanship, the role of the press and publishing in the slow process of democratization of the country.

In the handouts collected by his engineering students, relating to the course in economics and industrial legislation at the Polytechnic of Turin

² CALVINO 1976.

³ CENA 1976: 130.

⁴ LOMBROSO 1896: 310-330.

in the early 1910s, Einaudi dedicates some reflections to the universe of printing, both in terms of technical innovation and representation, paying particular attention to the case of the Typographic Association, considered the most powerful workers' association in the country, creator of training institutes and so influential as to impose that "each factory could accept among its workers only those who had obtained a certificate of suitability from this school or who were obliged to attend it".⁵ His reading of contemporaneity is focused on industrial progress, on the figure of the modern entrepreneur, on the invention of machines and on the ways of persuading workers to accept technological innovation.

As is well known, his interest in the living conditions of workers was precocious. His investigation for *La Stampa* in 1897, coinciding with Gina Lombroso's study and taken up by Einaudi in *Le lotte del lavoro* in 1924, describes the strike and the hard work of the textile workers in *Val Sessera* and *Val Mosso*.⁶ This fervor of investigations and sociological inquiries, in which Einaudi and Gina Lombroso were engaged, must be placed in the context of Turin's positive culture, in particular, in the *Laboratorio di Economia politica*, a scientific institution that represents that movement of reformers, the so-called 'reformist nebula' of the beginning of the century, committed to studying, investigating and defining the problems arising from industrial development and the methods for solving them. Founded in 1893 by Salvatore Cognetti De Martiis, professor of Political Economy at the University of Turin and lecturer in Industrial Economy at the Royal Industrial Museum,⁷ the *Laboratorio* was born as an experimental site for the objective study of the phenomena of economic life based on a non-speculative approach but on the principle of empirical inquiry, on concrete data.⁸ The *Laboratorio*, with an annexed rich library and open not only to law and industrial engineering students but also to politicians, entrepreneurs and scholars of economic science, became one of the most active intellectual centres in the cultural panorama of Turin, committed to promoting social investigations, public debates and maintaining close relationships with the city institutions, workers' societies and widely circulated newspapers.⁹ In this cultural and scientific climate, it is necessary to remember the birth of the magazine *La Riforma Sociale*, founded in 1894 by Francesco Saverio Nitti and Luigi Roux and subsequently directed by

⁵ EINAUDI 2024: 243.

⁶ EINAUDI 1897: 1, 1924: 44.

⁷ ACCORNERO 2001.

⁸ BECCHIO and MARCHIONATTI 2005.

⁹ POGLIANO 1976: 151.

Einaudi, from 1908 to 1935.¹⁰ The periodical supported the *Laboratorio* both through the exchange of collaborators and through the sharing of scientific, cultural and political ideals, which were inspired by positivist principles, such as ‘knowing in order to administer’ or ‘to reform’, later taken up by Einaudi with the well-known expression “First know, then discuss, then deliberate”, which appeared in *Prediche inutili* in 1956.

It is evident how much the *Laboratorio* and the magazine influenced Einaudi’s cultural and scientific development. It is in this context that the economist is formed as a scholar and intellectual and that he begins to acquire the role of cultural organizer and to become aware of the importance of disseminating economic knowledge and of starting a program of training a new ruling class.

Between 1893 and the First World War, Einaudi held various roles: teacher, magazine director, commentator for various daily and periodical newspapers (*La Stampa*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Economist*, *Critica sociale*), member of municipal commissions,¹¹ consultant to scientific institutions such as the *Società Umanitaria* of Milan¹² or the Permanent Exhibition of Industrial Hygiene of the Polytechnic,¹³ and later advisor to the Rockefeller Foundation. He therefore operates within a network of reformers, on a local, national and international scale, made up of different milieus, personalities, enlightened notables, scientists, technicians, with different and opposing political inclinations but who work to ‘reform’ society.¹⁴

2. THE TURIN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND THE PRESS: THE ART OF GOVERNMENT THE CITY AND PUBLIC OPINION

Einaudi doesn’t remain tied to the role of scholar and teacher, as a simple observer of society, but enters into public life, reveals a particular inclination towards commitment in society, a characteristic shared by other liberal economists, his contemporaries, such as Attilio Cabiati, Giuseppe Prato and Alberto Geisser, representatives of the first generation of the so-called Turin School of Economics.¹⁵

¹⁰ MALANDRINO 2000.

¹¹ Einaudi actively participates in the Commission for the study of the industrial problem, in particular the question of industrial credit. CITTÀ DI TORINO 1908.

¹² ACCORNERO 2010.

¹³ ACCORNERO 2009b.

¹⁴ TOPALOV 1999: 11-58.

¹⁵ ACCORNERO 2011.

In 1908 Luigi Einaudi accepted the post of editor of the magazine *La Riforma Sociale*, supported by a board of directors composed of Giuseppe Prato and Alberto Geisser. With the change of director, the periodical inaugurated a new phase of studies constituting the liberalist turning point of the publishing group, which gradually abandoned the debate on the social question.¹⁶ This working relationship, based on common interests and ideals and on an intense friendship, was born a few years earlier in the context of the *Laboratorio di Economia politica* and focused attention on the defense of free enterprise against all forms of protectionism and statism and on themes of Anglo-Saxon origin, such as representation, suffrage, democracy, freedom.¹⁷ One element that united the activity of these representatives of the liberal world of Turin concerns the commitment to the production of scientific studies and high-level dissemination through the publication of monographs, pamphlets and articles published by national newspapers, such as *La Stampa* and *Corriere della Sera*. Journalism becomes a tool for spreading ideas and informing the electorate, aimed at creating a public opinion on city issues, to counter the political program of the socialists¹⁸ and oriented towards the creation of a movement of opinion aimed at putting pressure on and influencing the local and national decision-making process. This ambition to form a public conscience in the context of local issues is realized in the participation in municipal commissions as in the case of Einaudi (on rents and industrial credit) and in the political action of the *Unione liberale monarchica* which establishes a study group on the new tax on building areas of which Prato is called to be a part.¹⁹ On the one hand, Einaudi and Prato, university professors, are called in as experts, on the other Geisser takes on the commitment of spreading economic knowledge and promoting new intervention policies, within the framework of his various activities, both as a company director and as a city councillor from 1906 to 1919.²⁰ The diversification of the roles of this group of social reformers allows them to intervene on different issues and with different approaches. In the case of Geisser, the activity of municipal councillor allows to transfer the theoretical elaboration, promoted by the *Laboratorio* and the magazine, into the experience of the municipal institution: the municipal council becomes the occasion to influence the

¹⁶ MALANDRINO 2000: 34.

¹⁷ PICHETTO 2000.

¹⁸ GEISSER 1909a.

¹⁹ Archivio Fondazione Luigi Einaudi (AFLE), Giuseppe Prato, Correspondence, 5 November 1911.

²⁰ ACCORNERO 2009a.

local decision-making process in favour of the liberal policy opposed, for example, to the municipalization of public services. On this theme Einaudi and Prato defend private initiative through editorials in newspapers and articles in magazines, while Geisser fights against the municipal policy of public companies, debating in the municipal council and distributing some of his pamphlets on the subject.²¹ The central point of the thought of the three economists concerns the specificity of 'modern democracies', that concerning the ability to administer public goods: a good administrator must satisfy the greatest needs of collective order and demonstrate that he conceives a development plan through a real capacity for forecasting. At a local scale, faced with the continuous increase of urban agglomerations, the art of government takes on a relevant role because the results of municipal policy influence the economic and social development of the nation. What it means to govern a city at the beginning of the twentieth century mean for the editorial group of *La Riforma Sociale*? Einaudi, Geisser and Prato analyse the Italian reality of the beginning of the century, characterized by transformations that distort the urban physiognomy, highlighting the lack of rules capable of managing land income and the tax system of the duty, two central elements of the renewal of cities. On issues such as urbanization and the organization of space, the analysis of the three economists does not focus on the causes produced by the development of industries but on the solution of some nodes of municipal urban policies: the tax on building areas, the expansion of the customs wall, local finance in relation to public works.

On the issue of the value of building land, both Einaudi and Geisser focus on the need to regulate speculation on building land. In fact, they believe that modern urban transformations must be controlled by national legislation and by a local government capable of protecting the interests of the community. At the beginning of the century, Einaudi published an essay on the *La Riforma Sociale* that takes up the reflections set out in a work published in the periodical *Devenir social* in 1898.²² He judges the issue of 'land rent' as an emergency that belongs precisely to the tasks of social reformers to find a tool or a remedy to combat social injustice. In the wake of the economic doctrines of Stuart Mill and Leon Walras, the economic concept of the function of society in increasing the value of land through demographic growth, business, and the intensity of services is reaffirmed and only with the taxation of building land is it possible to return to the entire community what is due to it. Einaudi refers to the

²¹ GEISSER 1909b.

²² EINAUDI 1900: 757, 1898.

economic law according to which urban areas tend to increase in value by giving the example of the Economic History of a quarter Acre in Chicago from 1830 to 1894, whose value rises in relation to population growth. The economist agrees with the remedy proposed by social reformers that aims at the redistribution of wealth: the introduction of the land tax plays an ethical and political function. This instrument broadens its scope because it redefines and renews the role of the local authority. In fact, the tax is part of the

complex of social and tax policy measures that are intended to transform the modern Municipality, based on consumption duties and private monopolistic enterprises, into the New Municipality, in which all citizens will participate in common life, will exercise, like a large company of shareholders, numerous public services and will collect in common, by means of taxes, the income due to the work of the entire society.²³

It can certainly be said that for Einaudi 'the art of government' of the city lies in the ability of municipalities to modernize urban areas with a network of services that favours the construction of land and, at the same time, to ensure that part of the surplus value coming from the growth of the city and from the measures carried out by the municipal body. Geisser takes the same position, interpreting municipal land policy as an act of vindication to the community of "what is the effect and fruit of its work and of the taxpayers' money" and as an action of sensitization of the public conscience of the nation:

the Municipalities of Milan, after the moderate party came to power, and that of Turin have implemented, in the last two or three years, several important measures informed by this order of ideas. For which we want to give full and just praise to the administrations of Senator Secondo Frola and Senator Ambrogio Ponti.²⁴

Within the municipal council, Geisser tries to promote this policy of administrative renewal. Taking part in the debate on the 1908 master plan, he insists on the importance of applying the 'improvement contribution' which landowners benefit from thanks to the increase in income, due to the execution of public works such as roads, lighting, paving. Furthermore, this revenue constitutes a rich income for the municipal treasury. On this theme, Geisser supports the importance of municipal land policy which also carries out the task of curbing the increase in the surplus value of the

²³ EINAUDI 1900: 787.

²⁴ GEISSER 1908: 46.

areas subject to transformation.²⁵ In fact, he captures a fundamental aspect regarding the function of the municipal body. Greater control of the areas by the municipal authority through the grabbing of free land becomes the criterion for limiting building surplus values. In this regard, Geisser chooses the San Paolo district as an example of the increase in prices of building land from 1880 to 1906: if the Municipality had supported a land policy in that territory, it would have obtained considerable profits. Above all, such an act would have constituted the premise for implementing a policy of general interest, as it would have been able to more easily regulate construction in that district. In this criticism of the administration, guilty of not having activated a serious land policy, the author wants to highlight the disorder that reigns in the Turin planning action:

with the current regime it happens that large factories come to close and infest, as we have seen in Turin, the most pleasant places intended to adorn the city, to entertain the public, such as the banks of the Po, the Valentino park. The noisy and smoking factories, disproportionately tall buildings or densely populated by those categories of people that the English call undesirable tenants, come, to the detriment of individuals and the community, to spoil the attractions of a neighbourhood intended for buildings with gardens, for elegant and quiet homes.²⁶

Geisser praises the model of German municipalities that “have been able to regulate with discriminatory criteria and purposes, but with an overall harmonious and satisfactory result, the development of individual districts in their respective cities”.²⁷ From this explicit reference it is evident that the author places the logic of the social division of space as a device for the collective interest before free urban growth (“excessive with respect to the freedom, or rather to the fleeting interests and views, often short or selfish, of individuals”).²⁸ The themes of the division of the territory and the common good are constant in future discussions on urban planning starting from the barriers of the customs.

In 1909 the debate on the customs wall constituted a moment of strong conflict within the city council to the point of causing the fall of the Frola council, whose proposal aimed to strengthen municipal revenues through the consumption tax and building development by implementing the master plan. On the subject Einaudi, Geisser and Prato contributed

²⁵ AFLE, Archivio Geisser, *Per una politica terriera dei grandi municipii*, typescript.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 10.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

to creating a movement of opinion aimed at putting pressure on political and productive circles in opposition to the socialist program that envisaged the total demolition of the customs walls. Geisser published a pamphlet on the question of the duty expressing his favourable opinion on the municipal project because for the purpose of organizing the space he saw the opportunity to implement "a rational building development of the city, for reasons of justice towards the owners of areas restricted by the master plan and expansion and subject to taxation, for an equalization of advantages and burdens between the outside and the inside of the walls".²⁹ On the subject of building rationalization, Einaudi emphasizes, in an article published in the *Corriere della Sera*, how the reform that enlarges the surface of the urban area within the walls allows for "the complete implementation of the master plan, which would otherwise be hindered, who knows for how long, by the existence of the wall and the surrounding roads, by the areas restricted by customs surveillance and by the thousand obstacles that the lack of continuity creates for circulation and commerce".³⁰

From this comes the need for the transformation of the urban layout: the rationality of the road system and of the building development benefits from the absence of empty areas inside the walls and from a smaller agglomeration outside the customs wall: "the building progress will become more normal and less costly, for the city treasury, than it is now with the sporadic flourishing of so many peripheral towns".³¹ In 1910, re-proposing the topic with an article published in the Milanese newspaper, Einaudi proposes a reflection on the importance of concentrating industries outside the city in order to hinder growing urbanism.³²

Giuseppe Prato also expressed the same opinions in a pamphlet whose aim was to shed light on the 'sophisms' that feed "the economic illiteracy of the immense majority of public opinion".³³ According to Prato, the expansion of the walls was an instrument of 'equalizing justice' and a work of "building arrangement, tending to intensify construction in the large strip of empty land that the duty created and maintained between the main urban nucleus and the new city that developed beyond the walls".³⁴ It should be remembered that both Prato and Einaudi expressed a negative opinion on the phenomenon of municipal duty protectionism that contradicted the

²⁹ GEISSER 1909c: 57.

³⁰ EINAUDI 1959 [1909]: 650.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² EINAUDI 1959: 20.

³³ PRATO 1912: 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

function of the municipality aimed at working for the good of the entire community and not for the privileges of a few. This theme is connected to what the group of scholars in those years claimed in the name of a 'democratic finance'.³⁵ The municipal problems linked to the tax issue are connected to the relationship between state and local finance. On the one hand, it is the task of the national parliament to dictate the rules that regulate exchange relationships with a view to making the political and economic unity of the nation coexist; on the other, the local government must encourage competition in the city market and not favour the interests of a few. In this framework, a modern vision of the administrative function of the municipality emerges, which is responsible for managing municipal enterprises, urban redevelopment expenses and school buildings.³⁶ The interest in public administration is at the centre of the attention of the three scholars. In the correspondence between Prato and Geisser, there is a program of the *Premier congrès international des Sciences Administratives*, organized during the Universal Exhibition in Brussels in 1910. In this document there is an underlining that highlights the *Services industriels des villes et des communes*.

The three economists propose a liberal model of city in which political institutions interpret the general progress of the community, develop municipal services, manage a 'strong and elastic' municipal budget,³⁷ and do not impose a vexatious and unequal tax system. The linchpin of these policies is a "democratic finance" that contributes to demographic, industrial and commercial growth through a "wise coordination of private initiative and collective rights and interests".³⁸

However, Einaudi, Geisser and Prato are aware that the real break of modernity at the beginning of the century, with respect to the traditional societies of the old regime, lies in the recognition of a new urban model: the city is no longer a place of symbolic strategies of a few, but a terrain in which the urban community can find its own representation and where, on the basis of the direct or indirect participation of citizens in urban transformations and the expansion of the electorate, liberal and reformist politics can obtain consensus and apply its instruments of control. In the context of urban organization, all this is realized in the social division of space as moral and social regeneration: building expansion, the construction of new neighbourhoods determines the social renewal of the city.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ EINAUDI and GEISSER 1913.

³⁷ GEISSER 1909c: 56.

³⁸ GEISSER 1909b: 130.

3. TRAINING THE RULING CLASS BETWEEN ECONOMICS AND TECHNOLOGY

In the previous paragraph it has clearly emerged how Einaudi and the milieu of the School of Economics are bearers of an idea of modernity and development that contributes to the formation of a new urban bourgeoisie. Even in the field of education and the business world, Einaudi is committed to disseminating this project of society. As a professor, he is committed to carrying forward a project of modernization of the national university system and to putting it in relation to the transformations of society, pushing for the renewal of scientific education for technicians and professional training for workers and, in the footsteps of his teacher Cognetti, promoting the interdisciplinary approach in the field of social sciences and technology. Under the direction of Cognetti, the *Laboratorio di Economia politica* promotes a new way of interpreting reality through the redefinition “of political economy itself as a social and historical science, which embraces sociology, anthropology, technology and which needs the law and history of institutions”.³⁹ After Cognetti’s death, Einaudi continued the educational and scientific project developed by his teacher and, above all, took charge of the continuity of the transmission of knowledge from the *Laboratorio*, in the city’s academic and institutional settings. Einaudi continued Cognetti’s legacy and method also in the context of technical and specialist teaching. Einaudi continued Cognetti’s legacy and method also in the context of technical and specialist teaching. The collaboration between the *Laboratorio* and the Industrial Museum (later the Polytechnic) is an event that corresponds to a season, albeit brief and unrepeatable, of an interdisciplinary and innovative conception of technical-scientific knowledge. This idea of knowledge production is accompanied by a modern and international vision of Einaudi’s intellectual and educational activity. The *Laboratorio* and the magazine *La Riforma Sociale* constitute an intellectual, research and study environment that fully belongs to that world of reformers, social scientists and politicians that between the 19th and 20th centuries was active within prestigious scientific and academic institutions, part of a European and overseas network of exchanges and interactions. Einaudi realized the importance of placing the *Laboratorio* in this international system of qualified locations, such as the *Musée Social* in Paris. In 1898 Luigi Einaudi published an article on the Parisian institute in *La Stampa*.⁴⁰ Upon hearing the news of the death of its founder, Count Adalberto of Chambrun, Einaudi took the opportunity to describe the

³⁹ FAUCCI 1995: 600.

⁴⁰ EINAUDI 1899: 1-2.

activity of the French institution and make a comparison with other countries and Italy in particular. Chambrun founded

a scientific institute intended to gather information on all phenomena and organizations that can improve the moral and material conditions of workers. The Social Museum has the purpose of pointing out to Governments, philanthropists and the workers themselves what must be done to come to the aid or to help the autonomous and progressive elevation of the various social classes. The cure of social ills is a true science and the Social Museum is for France the sanctuary of this science. The Social Museum keeps itself far from all political and religious discussion.⁴¹

Einaudi emphasizes the wealth of the library consisting of economic and workers' magazines, statutes of workers' societies, cooperatives and associations, popular banks. The Museum offers services and advice on all workers' issues: "One of the most singular characteristics of the Museum are the commissions, composed of competent people sent to study social problems of special importance inside and outside".⁴² In the case of Italy, the French institution has started an investigation into the Cooperative Associations. All workers' congresses have a report in the Museum's circulars. "In the rooms of the Museum there is also a permanent exhibition of social economy, where the most notable facts of contemporary economic life are reproduced in a graphic form, of intuitive evidence and accessible to all intelligences".⁴³ Einaudi concludes as follows:

It is to be hoped that the illustrious example of enlightened philanthropy given by the Count of Chambrun will be widely imitated in Italy too; by enlightening minds, not always, but sometimes one can also calm hearts and dampen the poisonous conflicts between social classes.⁴⁴

Its ambition is to transform the public education system, especially the technical and scientific one. Taking inspiration from foreign models, Einaudi hopes for a change in mentality on the part of the Italian wealthy class, which traditionally directs its charitable activity towards education linked to 'classicism', the cornerstone of the entire public education system:

the innumerable scholarships for young people attending gymnasiums and lyceums and university classical faculties, scholarships which are often a source

⁴¹ EINAUDI 1898.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

of more harm than good, because they serve to increase the immense flock of lawyers without causes, of doctors on holiday and of professors without pupils.

According to Einaudi, generosity in favour of educational institutions must have “an elasticity of forms and a multiplicity of attitudes”. His role models are represented by personalities who, thanks to the financial success due to commercial and industrial activities, have used their fortunes to increase the intellectual heritage of future generations, such as the donations of John D. Rockefeller for the establishment of the University of Chicago, Leland Stanford for a university and an astronomical observatory in California, “numerous founders of technical and commercial institutes, and Mr. Wharton founder of a School of Social Sciences”. Einaudi elaborates an innovative project of technical and scientific education, which does not remain on the margins but participates directly in the construction of a new ruling class and enhances the industrial vocation of the country. In the role of cultural organizer and publicist, in fact, he sets himself the goal of informing the business and commercial world, with a view to making industrialists aware of their production reality and the need to be updated on the dynamics of international markets. Einaudi considers the contribution of economists to be essential in the construction of public opinion and sets himself the goal of overcoming distrust towards economic science:

In general, our science is not – it must be said – in great favour with the public, especially with politicians, industrialists, and merchants, and it is not so because too much is expected of it, more than it can give.⁴⁵

For these reasons, Einaudi understood the importance of the role of scientific institutions and the press in providing correct information to the industrial world in the process of transformation and in need of being constantly updated on market conditions, technological innovations, the dynamics of industrial relations, and labor conflicts. On the institutional level, in 1902, Einaudi, together with his student of Biella origins, the economist Emanuele Sella, proposed the creation of an economic observatory within the *Laboratorio di Economia politica*, whose function was informative and educational, based on the collection of statistical data relating to the world of commerce, industry, and exports.⁴⁶ It was a consultative board, born from the need to give structure to a dispersive information situation. Einaudi did not fail to address a direct criticism of the negligence of the state administration which, for example, did not offer a service capable of

⁴⁵ EINAUDI 2024: 4.

⁴⁶ EINAUDI and SELLA 1902: 2.

recording the variations in values in the various markets. In the face of a State 'overloaded with functions', Einaudi reiterates that it is up to private individuals to deploy new forces. However, the observatory project does not come to fruition but, through his commitment to the *Laboratorio* and his work as a commentator in the daily newspapers, Einaudi continues the program of forging an 'industrial conscience' in the entrepreneurial classes. As Giuseppe Berta underlines in his book *Il governo degli interesse*, the economist's influence on the Industrial League, in its first seven years of life, from 1906 to 1913, is so decisive, thanks to the articles published in the *Corriere della Sera*, that it can be considered the 'Einaudi phase' of the League.⁴⁷

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Einaudi's optimistic vision of the country's industrialization coincides with an ideal of a modern entrepreneur, described as "the hidden engine of modern production, of large-scale commerce", like an army general who "determines the plan of operations, organizes the means and supervises their execution".⁴⁸

It is worth noting how Einaudi applies the same reflection to his youthful passion, to the world of the press and editorial offices. In describing the modern entrepreneur who decides as if he were a monarch, Einaudi uses a comparison that evidently comes from his youthful experiences in the editorial office of the daily newspaper *La Stampa*:

The printers of the Times do not determine what shall be printed, and the writers do not fix the subjects to be treated. All is fixed by the Editor. He makes the Times from day to day: the prosperity and power of the paper depend upon the editor's power to strike the mind and fancy of the public: everything depends upon his power to give the public what the public wants: the rest, the rotary presses, the types, and all the editors and compositors, skillful though many of them are, are merely instruments in his hands.⁴⁹

CONCLUSIONS

Scientific, cultural, academic institutions and the press are interpreted by Einaudi as a vector of development and modernization of Italian society at the beginning of the century. In particular, scientific research,

⁴⁷ BERTA 1996: 10.

⁴⁸ On the figure of the modern entrepreneur Einaudi refers to the description of Walter Bagehot, known for his versatility and for being a prolific opinion maker in Victorian England. Banker, political analyst and economist, he was editor of the newspaper *The Economist* (1860-1877). EINAUDI 2024: 106-107.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: 107.

statistical surveys, the training of economists and technicians contribute to the development of national economic policies. It is a complex program that has as its objectives the preparation of a competent and adequate ruling class to provide solutions to an industrial society in continuous evolution and the valorization of the knowledge of economic facts, as a factor of freedom and decision for citizens. As has emerged in the previous paragraphs, the government of the city and the effects of industrialization, technical and professional education, commercial and market information are also implemented through the construction of a public opinion and the formation of consensus. Einaudi captures an essential aspect of the years between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that derives from the technological innovations of publishing, the modernization of the distribution and sale of newspapers and the development of literacy:

It was newspapers above all that gave a whole new meaning to mass education. The politics and social issues of the last hundred years remain incomprehensible without taking into account the great quantity of newspapers read by the people and the opportunities acquired by the groups in power to influence public opinion.⁵⁰

The question of the formation of public opinion is accompanied by a relevant aspect of his popularization activity: innovation must be understood not only by the ruling classes but also by the masses. Einaudi grasps the importance of the relationship between education and industrial development and demonstrates it through his articles, in which he explains the role of education as an essential factor in the modernity of the country. However, it is not so obvious that a high and immediate productive progress, which occurred with the second industrial revolution, directly corresponds to a high level of education. The Italian case offers a varied picture: the nationalization of the masses, the progressive investment in schooling, the complexity of the relationship between education and industrial development. In this context, in the role of opinion maker, Einaudi tries to decipher modernity by analyzing the dynamics and discontinuous processes that characterize industrialization and society at the beginning of the twentieth century. Einaudi's participation in public life has always been characterized by seriousness and concreteness. The principles of competence and rigour are the distinctive feature of his existence as an intellectual and politician, in his various roles as a teacher, cultural organizer and commentator in the columns of the main daily and periodical newspapers.

⁵⁰ CIPOLLA 2002: 119.

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