

**Carlo Cristiano**

Università di Pisa  
[carlo.cristiano@unipi.it](mailto:carlo.cristiano@unipi.it)

**Massimo Di Matteo**

Università di Siena  
[massimo.dimatteo@unisi.it](mailto:massimo.dimatteo@unisi.it)

## **Abstract**

### **Series of economics and encyclopedias**

The first part of the paper (by M. Di Matteo) concerns the series of economics with a particular attention to the *Nuova Collana di economisti stranieri ed italiani*. After a very brief introduction of the features of the fascist cultural policy, the paper separates the fascist culture from the culture of the fascist period designating with the first the expressions that wholeheartedly supported the fascist political regime and with the second those that showed a certain (very often limited) distance from the regime itself. Within the first group our attention is dedicated first to the publications of Sansoni (a publisher owned by Giovanni Gentile) that include several interesting volumes on the theory and practice of the corporativism in Italy as well as abroad. In addition to Sansoni we review other publishers such Augustea, Cya and Hoepli that issued several volumes by distinguished economic authors together with works of a lesser importance. Among the other publisher which published works both close to the fascist regime and works of a purely scientific character we find Bocca, Zanichelli, Treves, Cedom. A peculiar position is occupied by Vita e Pensiero, the publishing house of the Catholic University in Milan that sought to reconcile corporativism with the social doctrine of the Church. The following section of the first part is dedicated to the series by Laterza and Einaudi, two publishing houses that had Benedetto Croce and Luigi Einaudi as their inspirators. Here we notice a particular attention to themes of actual economic policies written by renowned economists very often relatively distant from the regime such as Cabiati, De Viti de Marco, Ricci and Bresciani Turrone and by well known foreign scholars such as Pigou and Robbins. The last section of the first part is dedicated to an analysis of the *Nuova Collana* edited by Bottai and Arena that resumes the Italian tradition of the *Biblioteca dell'economista*. After a brief description of the works of the foreign and Italian authors included in the 12 volumes, we outline its features that appear to be rather different from the previous series edited by Jannaccone under several respects. First of all the attention is mainly on foreign economists, secondly there is an overwhelming prevalence of works of mainstream economists, third the aim was that of producing an organic complex of works, a sort of treatise of economics, finally there are first translations in Italian of major works such as Pigou's and Edgeworth's. The second part considers the way in which economics and related issues were treated in the encyclopedias. The most relevant sources are the *Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani* (EI), the first great Italian general encyclopedia, the *Dizionario di Politica* (DP), a spin-off of the EI that fell under stricter control of the regime and was eventually published by the Fascist Party, and the *Enciclopedia Bancaria* (EB), promoted by the Sperling & Kupfer publishing house. Many economists, from the academia as well as from other economic institutions, took part in the preparation of these works, and a preliminary task of this part of our chapter is to give an outline of the economists involved and of their contributions. As we try to show, even more than in the case of the series on economics, the co-existence within the same project of people promoting a newly produced fascist economic culture with others who were exclusively interested in the economic culture of their time, created some tension and contradiction. The EI, in particular, saw the participation of liberal/non-fascist economists like Del Vecchio or Demaria (among many others) together with more ideologically oriented contributors like De' Stefani or Ugo Spirito. We single out the influence of Ugo Spirito as especially relevant, because Spirito had an agenda of his own in popularizing the idea that fascism was having a path-breaking influence on economics. As we show, while a large number of entries on specific issues could be drafted without taking part in any dispute, some contradictions emerged, as for instance in the case of such an important entry like 'Economia politica' (by Spirito), which was in stark contrast with many of the contents of the entries 'Capitale' and 'Capitalismo' (by Augusto Graziani). It was in the DP that the Fascist Party succeeded, at least in part, in favouring a more fascist-oriented presentation of economic issues. However, it would be very difficult to argue that the leading economists of the DP project (and, in particular, de Francisci Gerbino) were able to deliver a self-contained and coherent presentation of any clearly stated 'fascist economics', and there are examples of entries and contributors in the DP that had actually nothing to do with fascism. Moreover, an analysis of the contributions by some economists who took active part in the preparation of both the DP and the EB (e.g. F. Vito), shows a more politically detached attitude in drafting the EB entries.