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## Go home Erpinotto! Propagandistic booklets reserved for young people and children in the Italy of the Marshall Plan

### Go home Erpinotto! Opuscoli propagandistici riservati a giovani e bambini nell'Italia del Piano Marshall

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**Abstract.** The article deals with the cultural propaganda programme implemented by the United States in Italy during the years of the Marshall Plan, with particular attention to publications and brochures aimed at young people, children and students, who were considered a target group for the objectives of Usis (United States Information Service) and the Information Division of the Eca (Economic Cooperation Administration). Taking into consideration the contents of atlases, comics, games and shows envisaged by the American mission and by operation “Bambi”, the research highlights the messages of growth, modernisation and productivity that were typical of the *American way of life*, also highlighting how much the economic development and aid programme for the populations was an integral part of the American policy of containing and fighting Communism.

**Keywords:** United States, Marshall Plan, Usis, propaganda.

**Riassunto.** L'articolo ha per oggetto il programma di propaganda culturale messo in atto dagli Stati Uniti in Italia negli anni del Piano Marshall, con un'attenzione particolare a pubblicazioni ed opuscoli indirizzati a giovani, bambini e studenti, considerati un gruppo-bersaglio per gli obiettivi dell'Usis (United States Information Service) e della Divisione informazione dell'Eca (Economic Cooperation Administration). Prendendo in considerazione i contenuti di atlanti, fumetti, giochi e spettacoli previsti dalla missione americana e dall'operazione “Bambi”, la ricerca ne evidenzia i messaggi di crescita, modernizzazione e produttività propri dell'*American way of life* facendo emergere anche quanto il programma di sviluppo economico e di aiuto alle popolazioni fosse parte integrante della politica americana del contenimento e di lotta al Comunismo.

**Keywords:** Stati Uniti, Piano Marshall, Usis, propaganda

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROPAGANDA  
PROMOTING THE MARSHALL PLAN

Between 1947 and 1951, 16 European countries, including Italy, participated in the European Recovery Programme (Erp), the US plan for reconstruction after the Second World War, also known as the Marshall Plan. A powerful economic development programme to bring aid to the affected populations that, being an integral part of the American policy of containing and fighting Communism, was accompanied by an intense and complex information and propaganda operations. In fact, loans, gifts and investments would not have been enough to create consensus around Washington's foreign policy objectives and to develop respect for the ideals of modernisation that America itself embodied. With an apparently simple message «You too can be like us» (Ellwood, 1998), the work of Americanisation immediately forced the US to unleash its enormous arsenal of consumer goods, cultural policies and propaganda techniques to translate the American myth into a model, bringing, together with dollars and goods, a particular language that promised a different standard of living thanks to the principles of freedom, productivity and cooperation between European countries.

In this perspective, an Information Division was set up at each mission of the Economic Cooperation Administration (Eca) – based on a series of bilateral agreements<sup>1</sup> – tasked with informing people about the arrival of aid and publicising American models and concepts. The result was what David Ellwood called the greatest international propaganda offensive ever carried out in peacetime (Ellwood, 1985, 1998). The supporters of Erp, right from the outset, worked in close cooperation with the vast network of Usis offices that had been formed in all European countries already during the conflict; through this network and with the resources at its disposal, they set to work so that nothing of their

operations would go unnoticed, publicising its successes on each occasion<sup>2</sup>.

A massive economic development plan, and obviously propagandistic, which was implemented throughout Europe, but which was carried out in a particular way in Italy, namely, in the country that was witnessing a deepening ideological clash between the Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party, one of the strongest in the Western Europe (Tobia, 2009):

It was necessary to convince the Italians that the primary objective of American foreign policy was peace and that to keep that peace, the world would have to remain as united as possible under NATO. Neutrality should also be discouraged, destroying communist myths and explaining that Soviet interests were contrary to those of Italy (Tobia, 2009, p. 146)<sup>3</sup>.

Thus began a real escalation of the role of the Italian Usis and the information services of the Marshall Plan. Starting from 1948, with the appointment of the journalist Andrew Berding as Head of the Information Division (Tobia, 2009; Ellwood 1985), the American Mission in Italy made contact with radio, cinema, press and information agencies; it created exhibitions, brochures, postcards and photographs; it produced documentaries, numerous films, screenings and shows (Liberati, 2018). As Ellwood recalled, no project seemed too ambitious or too daring for the Information Programme in Italy in its heyday: «in Italy, besides the traditional media, there were Erp concerts, and Erp essay contests, Erp art competitions, and Erp variety shows on radio, Erp trains and Erp ceremonials. There were calendar, cartoon strips, postage stamps and atlases». The basic push, therefore, went in the direction of a true mass programme, using every possible method: «to carry the message of the Marshall Plan to the people. Carry it to

<sup>1</sup> *L'Unità* of 29 June 1948 headlines: «Great offense to Parliament and Italian independence. Sforza signed the unfair Erp agreement without waiting for the approval of the chambers»: «The stubbornness of the step taken by the De Gasperi government, with the signing and immediate release of the bilateral agreements for the Marshall plan, cannot be escaped. It did not escape the government itself, which forty-eight hours ago tried to mask its signature and its complete capitulation to Washington» (Translation by the author). «Grande offesa al Parlamento e all'indipendenza italiana. Sforza firma l' accordo capestro dell'Erp senza attendere l'approvazione delle camere»: «La gravità del passo compiuto dal governo De Gasperi, con la firma e l'immediata messa in esecuzione degli accordi bilaterali per il piano Marshall, non può sfuggire. Non è sfuggita allo stesso governo, il quale ancora quarantott'ore fa tentava di mascherare la firma imminente e la sua capitolazione completa di fronte a Washington».

<sup>2</sup> Emblematic, in this regard, are some videos of the Incom week proposed by the Istituto Luce, by way of example: «American solidarity. The 400th AUSA ship arrives» date: 12/03/1948. «The caption reads Wheat, cotton and oil are the aid that the United States will send to Italy in line with what is indicated by the Marshall Plan; from the interview with Prof. Ronchi it is clear that American aid, especially wheat, will cover 40% of national needs. Three ships will arrive daily» (Translation by the author). «Solidarietà americana. Arriva la 400<sup>a</sup> nave AUSA», data: 12/03/1948. «Grano, cotone e petrolio sono gli aiuti che gli Stati Uniti invieranno all'Italia in sintonia con quanto indicato dal piano Marshall; dall'intervista al prof. Ronchi si evince che gli aiuti americani, soprattutto grano, andranno a coprire il 40% del fabbisogno nazionale. Sarà previsto l'arrivo giornaliero di tre navi».

<sup>3</sup> Translation by the author: «Occorreva convincere gli italiani che l'obiettivo primario della politica estera americana era la pace e che per mantenerla il mondo libero avrebbe dovuto rimanere il più possibile unito sotto il simbolo della Nato. Bisognava altresì scoraggiare gli atteggiamenti neutrali, distruggendo i miti comunisti e spiegando che gli interessi sovietici erano contrari a quelli dell'Italia».

them directly [...]. And give it to them so that they can understand it [...]. To reach Giuseppe in the factory and Giovanni in the fields» (Ellwood, 1998, p.35).

The re-education of the Italian people<sup>4</sup> had already been established as the main objective by the officials of the ACC (Allied Control Commission) in the immediate post-war period when, going beyond the limited school environment, they decided to involve the entire Italian population in an educational programme regarding the concepts of democracy and international collaboration (Piazza, 2013). In this way, the subcommittee for education ended up exerting notable influence on all fields of Italian life, also thanks to the work of the American pedagogue Carleton Washburne. The reorganiser of educational activities in Italy was, in fact, convinced that he was living in a crucial moment for the future of the Western world, which was being forced to choose between democracy and totalitarianism, and for this reason, he immediately took part in the fight against Communism inherent in the Marshall Plan. With particular reference to young people and the new generations, in his work “The World’s Good”, we read:

Anyone who was in Europe in the period between 1947 and 1948 knows how effective the Marshall Plan (and prior to it UNRRRA), was in stemming revolution in Italy and France. Our young people must grow up with realisation in Italy and France. Our young people must grow up with the realisation that it is through helping other countries to help themselves to a decent way of life for all people that revolution can be successfully prevented. [...] That the Marshall plan, I repeat, however subject it may be to the criticism that it was a form of American imperialism, saved Western Europe from Communism is obvious to any of us who saw the situation first hand [...]. It is the responsibility of education to help our boys and girls to reach a determination to find solutions to our social and economic problems in our own country. Yet that is not enough. We must help them to realise that the problems of other countries, if unsolved, will sooner or later hit us, and that we must therefore co-operate with every country in its attempt to solve its problems in its own way. It must be helped to see that opposition to socialism by war is futile and brings more evils than it cures, while opposition through constructive measures at home and abroad to meet needs of the people is the one way to bring about a peaceful and better world (Washburne, 1954, p.90).

<sup>4</sup> The title of an article by Ellwood (2019) is emblematic: “From Re-education to the Selling of the Marshall Plan in Italy”. In “The Political Re-Education of Germany and her Allies” (pp. 219-240). An expression of this “pedagogical” attitude in the war period was the publication of a magazine in Italian, *Nuovo mondo*, an attempt to set up a cultural policy and a favourable attitude towards the United States (Rizzo, 1976).

Emblematic words, since Washburne continued to play an active role in the work of propaganda and re-education of the Italian people with his subsequent appointment as President of the Italian section of the Information Service:

When the Minister of Education learned that I was about to be sent back to the United States, he asked the newly appointed American ambassador (it was in early 1946) to send me back as a civilian to continue my educational work. Presumably it was as a result of this request that the Department of State asked me to return to Italy as Director of the United States Information Service for Northern Italy, under the Consul General of Milan. [...] In Milan my main job was, of course, helping Italians understand the United States. [...] I had to carry out my educational activity for Italians as an aside from my official job. However, at that time, I was well-known enough to be consulted often, to be asked to lecture, and to be able to carry out some of the projects I had initiated (Washburne, 1970, p. 275)<sup>5</sup>.

In Italy the Usis offices had arrived with the troops in 1943 and after the liberation they had begun to act autonomously from the Office of War Information (OWI) and the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB), which had managed the press and radio in the Peninsula in the period of the allied administration. The main task of Usis, which developed as a centre of documentation and ideological propaganda for the dissemination of American culture, according to what Washburne himself said, «was to help Italians understand the United States» (Piazza, 2009 p.85). In other words, it was a question of convincing Italians that the main objective of US policies was, above all, peace firmly rooted in security and freedom, and of evoking attitudes and triggering actions, of the people and the government, who were supportive of the policies, goals and interests of the United States. A real border line of the information structure that was being built in Washington, with offices in Rome, Milan and Florence, Naples and Palermo and later, between 1950 and 1952, Turin, Bologna, Venice and Bari.

<sup>5</sup> Translation by the author: «Quando il Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione seppe che stavo per essere rinvio negli Stati Uniti, chiese all'ambasciatore americano da poco stabilito (fu all'inizio del '46) di mandarmi di nuovo come civile a continuare il mio lavoro educativo. Presubilmente fu come risultato di questa richiesta che il dipartimento di Stato mi chiese di tornare in Italia in qualità di Direttore dell'United States Information Service per l'Italia settentrionale, alle dipendenze del console generale di Milano. [...] A Milano il mio principale lavoro fu, naturalmente, aiutare gli italiani a capire gli Stati Uniti. [...] Dovetti svolgere la mia attività educativa per gli italiani sottobanco al mio ufficiale lavoro. Ma a quel tempo ero abbastanza conosciuto per essere consultato spesso, per essere richiesto di tenere conferenze, e per essere in grado di condurre avanti qualcuno dei progetti cui avevo dato inizio».

The Information Services were divided into various sections: there were libraries and cultural institutes (Grifoni, 2021; Venturi, 2015), the Press and Publications Service dedicated to the press and the publication of the *Notiziario quotidiano Usis* (Bruti Liberati, 2004, pp.100-105), the Motion Picture Section that produced and distributed films and documentaries, the radio section that broadcast *Voice of America* programmes<sup>6</sup>, and the section dedicated to cultural exchanges (Bruti Liberati, 2004, pp. 16-25).

Their goal was to convey to Italian citizens a climate of trust, esteem and friendship between Italy and the United States, also supporting the Information Division in sponsoring the message inherent in the Marshall Plan, productivity and anti-communism: «the productivity message is everywhere: it is the leitmotiv of the entire operation, which should never be seen as simply or solely anti-communist» (Ellwood, 1981, p.275). The function of the American information apparatus was, therefore, understood as public relations of an educational nature, producing and disseminating materials that were not to have an overtly political nature and content, customising the message of “Erp literature” based on the target groups of the propaganda: «to different groups variants of the theme were presented, in an effort to show how they personally, collectively and as individuals, benefited from Marshall help» (Ellwood, 1981, p. 281). Printed materials such as magazines, brochures, leaflets, low-cost books, educational brochures on the *American way of life* were directed and distributed essentially to workers and in areas where there was a strong communist vote (Bruti Liberati, 2004)<sup>7</sup>. Films and radio broadcasts were also directed to the mass of Italian citizens (many still illiterate), while libraries, conferences, exhibitions, publications and translations of American works, subsidies for publishing, cultural exchanges and technical cooperation programmes and scientific research were aimed at intellectuals and a cultured and selected public<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> For further information: Tobia, S. (2013). The Italian hour of the *Voice of America* on Thursdays from 21.30 to 22.15 was broadcasting *Mondo dei Ragazzi* as Tobia documents in “Advertising America” (2008, p.295).

<sup>7</sup> Particularly interesting is the case of the “freedom flights” organised with the help of the American Postal Service and Trans World Airlines (TWA). They were carrying letters and gifts collected on the “Friendship Train” tour of the United States. In addition, the Italian-American community launched a private campaign in which tens of millions of letters were written from America to relatives and friends in Italy begging them not to vote for the Communists. In this regard, see the critical response to this initiative in an article published on *L’Unità*: “Yellow letters from the White House but the Italians respond W Garibaldi!” 4 April 1948 (Translation by the author: “Lettere gialle dalla Casa Bianca ma gli italiani rispondono W Garibaldi!”).

<sup>8</sup> In this sense, the work of the American Ambassador Clare Boothe

As Ellwood (1985 p. 163) reported in January 1950 Berding had listed the operational principles that governed his work. This included paying special attention to fundamental “target groups”, and in particular to organised workers, communists and the like; agricultural workers; housewives as producers of the “family economy”; leaders of commerce and industry «in whose hands the indicators of productivity resided», and finally children, following the example of the Church, which «has always affirmed that the best way to persuade and convert followers is to get them when they are young» (Ellwood, 1985, p.164). The target groups were periodically reviewed on the basis of specific contingencies (Tobia, 2009), but the category of labour, the unemployed and their families, always remained the top priority. This data agrees with the observations of recent historiography (Del Pero, 2001; Guasconi, 1999) on the importance given by the Americans to trade unions, and to work in general, in the fight against communist expansion in our country: it was necessary to focus on workers because they made up the majority of the voters and were the most easily taken in by the flattery of the PCI, through the mediation of the trade unions (Tobia, 2009).

Workers, employees and farmers, however, also had to be reached indirectly, not only through the local cultural elites and “opinion moulders” but also through teachers and students: the former had the power to influence their students and to some extent their families; the latter represented the future and could carry the American message to their parents, especially if they were illiterate or poorly literate:

School Teachers: primary attention upon school teachers so situated as to wield potential influence upon and through children belonging to the groups mentioned under Labour, as well as upon young people in general. Students and youth group: Particularly among university students. Fascism, as well as Communism, is a serious threat to the Italy of tomorrow (Tobia, 2008, p. 148)<sup>9</sup>.

In this regard, a document from 1950, “A review of the activities and performance of the Information Division of the Special mission to Italy from June, 1948 to December, 31, 1950, with particular emphasis on the last six months of 1950”<sup>10</sup>, which examined the target

Luce was important, also documented by Tobia in “Advertising America” (Ch: “Seducing the intellectuals”, pp. 223-286).

<sup>9</sup> NARA (National Archives and records Administration), RG 59, Lot office files, entry 1559, IIA, 1938-1953, box 41, Department of State International Information and Education exchange program, Country paper for Italy, 16 August 1950.

<sup>10</sup> In NA, RG 286, Eca Washington, Office of Information, Office of Director, Informational country file (W303), ‘Italy’ sub-file, published by Ellwood in E. Krippendorff (ed.) *The Role of the United States in the*

category of students to whom the Marshall Plan message «went in a form intended to awaken his interest in cooperative effort for the preservation of those freedoms that will enable him to have a peaceful and prosperous future» (Ellwood, 1981, p.274):

While information efforts were concentrated on bringing the message to workers of all industrial and agricultural groups the other categories received due attention. The broad message was brought to all, but special categories, such as housewives and students received special attention. The housewife is a voter and the student the voter of tomorrow. But because the student in families of illiterate or semi-literate elders often wields great influence, he became a primary target.

The dissemination of a specific comic book<sup>11</sup>, *History of America*, was reserved for them:

Much information about American financial assistance to Italy, Europe, and Free World was woven into History of America in the essays appearing on the front and back inside covers<sup>12</sup> and in the actual text. The intention was to use the widely diffused publication in question as a vehicle for Erp information and to build up among the target group involved a background of understanding of American motives. This could not be better accomplished, it was felt, than by increasing the knowledge of American History among students and through them in families not reachable by any but the simplest of media, and the simplest possible language.

In the report, an important document that describes in detail the constant and impressive American persuasion effort between 1948 and 1950, the propaganda reserved for young people and children for which calendars, comics, stamps and atlases, storytellers and shows were also taken into consideration. This was the “Operation Bambi”, conducted in agreement with the Ministry of Education at the end of the 1950s and defined by Ellwood as “remarkable” because it “stands out as marking a new level of American persuasion in Italy” (1981, p. 291). Indeed, it «was equipped with a puppet thea-

tre and with an exhibit especially designed to bring the Marshall Plan message ostensibly to children but actually through the children to those semi-literate or illiterate adults which comprise 14% of the population of this country». A way of hitting multiple target groups at the same time, considered by its supporters to be particularly effective «in the way of results measured in understanding of and sympathy for the United States and Western objectives» because:

“Bambi” teaches children simply, in terms of their own understanding, the scope and results of the Erp in Italy and in Europe. It teaches them what nations can do and are doing together to restore their economies and to strengthen themselves sufficiently to ensure peace. Even at this stage of the experiment, it is possible to say that no single activity undertaken by this mission can do more to cement Italo- American relations and this is why: “Bambi” does not bring the children statistic or international economics. It brings them entertainment they have never seen before and educates them with modern techniques.

The operation specifically involved puppet shows to be held at selected schools:

A schedule is drawn up in agreement with the Ministry of Education for a two weeks period featuring two performances daily in the schools of towns and villages with a specified province. The schedule emphasises centres that are off the beaten track. On a schedule day, the Bambi mobile unit drives into the village square with the loudspeakers pouring forth melodious songs, and who has not seen the rigorous living conditions of remote Italian village and towns.

Among the characters there was a young American, Erpinotto, who arrived to help the Italian people in the work of Reconstruction:

Pulcinella greets the children, jokes with them and introduces his old friend Erpinotto. A traditional Italian puppet is Pinotto. Erpinotto is a small fry American counterpart who tells Pulcinella about the American ships that cross the Atlantic to Italy carrying coal, wheat, machinery and other materials to provide work for the Italian people, and help them in the reconstruction of their country and in creating democratic institutions.

The show «serves principally to introduce the basic facts about Erp in an entertaining way» and was followed by the screening of an ECA documentary “Story of a Rescue” produced by the Osr (Special Represent-

*Reconstruction of Italy and West Germany, 1943-1949* (Berlin, 1981) pp.274-302.

<sup>11</sup> Full of Americanist and anti-Soviet propaganda were *L'italo americano illustrato*, which published comics in English with Italian captions and the adventures of Johnny Hazard, a comic created in 1944 by Frank Robbins (Meda, 2013; Giovannoli, 1991)

<sup>12</sup> On the first page of *History of America* n. 39 (Fig.1), whose cover was dedicated to George Marshall, you can read an excerpt from the speech of 5 June 1947 announcing the European Reconstruction Program together with some reflections: «Our policy is not directed against a given country or against a given doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, despair and chaos. Our aims must be to favour the return to the world of an economic environment that allows free institutions to survive».

ative-Information Division)<sup>13</sup>. Watching the film also included a lecture with the involvement of teachers who, according to the report, welcomed both the distribution of basic booklets and school competitions on American aid<sup>14</sup> (Fig. 2), as well as the organisation of Erp Day to explain the objectives of the American plan:

Then a conference with local teacher is held and ECA lays the foundation of a lasting feeling of friendliness for the United States and its programme of financial assistance to Italy and Europe. At such a conference Communist propaganda is met face to face and frank answers given to frank questions. [...] There was some resistance at first on the part of teachers who felt that ECA had come merely to add to already heavy work schedules, but when their problems as well as those of ECA are discussed, the teachers never fail to express willingness to cooperate. It comes out that they are a neglected group, rarely consulted. They welcome basic pamphlets telling the Marshall plan story and any other literature. The teachers so far have invariably agreed to have an Erp Day in the classrooms during which children will be taught Marshall plan objectives and operations to serve as the basis for an essay contest on the children's understanding of the recovery programme. Even Communist teachers (two cases on record) have cooperated.

Finally, there was also the use of games such as Monopoly and the distribution of Atlases and brochures:

The children are also supplied with a game patterned after Monopoly, which teaches the mechanics of American economic aid to Italy and Europe. This, too, becomes something more than a game and is eagerly participated in by the family. It is described more fully separately. [...] The mission developed, edited and published a 50- page Atlas giving the History of Italy's 18 Regions with full-colour maps. The Atlas is being distributed through the Ministry of Education to those 73,394 students in the last

two years of elementary school and the first three years of high school who were selected as class readers during 1950. It is also being distributed to each school visited by the Bambi mobile unit.

This operation, documented by Ellwood, although it represents a small piece compared to the most important propaganda effort implemented by the United States, nevertheless manages to effectively highlight the exceptional nature of this commitment that did not spare the Italian youth and that was made even more intense with the outbreak of the War in Korea that: «demanded a transformation of the American effort in Italy, from reconstruction to rearmament, and provoked a great deal of soul-searching and re-thinking among the organisers of propaganda » (Ellwood, 2019, p. 224). As we will see in the documents examined in the second paragraph, many already established stereotypes - abundance, energy, the space of economic freedom - were “nationalised” by the propaganda of the Marshall Plan, designed for young people and children and amplified to be used as weapons against long-standing enemies: underdevelopment, economic conservatism, Communism and the “aggressive” tendencies of the Soviet Union. Traits common, according to Dina Rinaldi (director, with Gianni Rodari, of the children's magazine *Il Pioniere*<sup>15</sup>), to the children's press in all the countries involved in the Marshall Plan: «comic strips and film novels based on violence, racial hatred, servility to the rich and the powerful, glorification of war»<sup>16</sup> (Pruneri, 2014, p. 111).

#### «GET THEM WHEN THEY ARE YOUNG». ERPINOTTO AND OTHER PROPAGANDISTIC BOOKLETS

A first emblematic example resulting from the American propaganda of the Marshall Plan as a gift of the American mission for ERP in Italy, was undoubtedly “Atlante delle Regioni Italiane” of 1951, one of the publications of the publishing house Allulli Crea (Centre for artistic publishing achievements). In it, the Regions «torn by destruction but already touched by the caress of reconstruction» are represented by maps drawn by the illustrator Vsevolode Nicouline and accompanied by

<sup>13</sup> A clear message emerges in all the films: all problems can be solved with Erp aid, the Marshall Plan and the intervention of the United States. The construction of the aqueduct solves the water problem of a town in southern Italy; a desperate unemployed person in Trieste is hired by the Aquila refinery, rebuilt thanks to the money and machinery sent by the United States through the Eca; a child, after a long time saving up the earnings of his work, can buy himself a music box (Carucci, 2007; MacCann 1955).

<sup>14</sup> An undated poster invites school children to contact their teachers to participate in the “Do you like drawing?” competition aimed at collecting drawings on the changes and benefits of the Marshall Plan: «Do you like drawing? This is a competition open to boys and girls up to fifteen years of age, extended to twelve European countries. The world needs peace [...]. That is why a generous idea was born in America. [...] This was the principle of the Marshall Plan [...]» (Fig. 2). Vi piace disegnare? Questo è un concorso aperto a ragazzi e ragazze fino a quindici anni di età, esteso a dodici paesi d'Europa. Il mondo ha bisogno di pace [...]. Ecco perché nacque in America un'idea generosa. [...] Questo era il principio del Piano Marshall [...]».

<sup>15</sup> The famous weekly magazine of API, Association of Italian Pioneers, which is part of the communist publications for childrens with *Pattuglia* and *Gioventù nuova*. The first issue came out on 3 September 1950 (Meda, 2013; Franchini 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Translation by the author: «fumetti e cineromanzi basati sulla violenza, sull'odio razziale, sul servilismo verso il ricco ed il potente, sull'esaltazione della guerra» in D. Rinaldi, *Il nuovo giornale dei ragazzi, Gioventù nuova*, n. 6-7, 1950, p. 20.

some brief information (historical notes, territory, main cities, economic life), which also include a note on the contribution made by the Marshall Plan, loans to industries and allocations to the Lire fund (Aresu, 2020). The description of the Regions is preceded by an introduction containing a strong ideological message embodied by Jack, an American Boy Scout who, in the form of a letter, addresses the «Dear Italian Friend»:

I am your friend even if you do not know me, maybe you do not remember, but we have already met: I cannot tell you in which precise point of your beautiful Italy but I know I met you". Maybe it was in Azio, in front of the War Cemetery<sup>17</sup>.

The first thing that Jack points out to his young recipient is the sacrifice of American soldiers, recounting the story of his friend Joe of the American 5th Army, who died to save Italy. Emotional words to which Jack adds a note on material aid:

In the text, which accompanies and comments on the figures drawn in colour, you will find some mention of what we Americans have done to help you heal the wounds of war. Do not think, however, that this was done to boast of what has been done - and not only to Italy - with a keen sense of human solidarity and Christian brotherhood. [...] It seemed to us that we were paying a debt of gratitude to this Italy of yours and ours, which for so many centuries, with the Rome of Caesar and with the Rome of Christ, was the generous bestower of every civilisation. [...] This is the meaning of the aid figures that you will find marked for each single Region<sup>18</sup>.

These raw figures will be regularly recalled throughout the publication: «As happens in every great work of propaganda, their greatness is both remembered and diminished, with respect to a broader cultural and spiritual significance» (Aresu 2020, p. 146)<sup>19</sup>. The young Amer-

ican is working alongside his Italian friend for the material reconstruction of houses, factories and cities, but also to forget the past, to say that the resources of Washington have been mobilised so that «a new self-confidence, a new will to defend your works of peace may arise and that you may you grow as free citizens in a world of free men». Jack's letter is immediately followed by a preamble entitled "L'Italia è lavoro" (Italy is work), a further pretext to mention again what the Americans have done. In the aftermath of the Second World War, «Italy saw the terrible tragedy of famine take shape» with «buildings and factories destroyed, raw materials lacking, workers lost and deprived of work, ports and communication routes almost impracticable, capital almost non-existent». A drama that did not leave indifferent «the American people who without hesitation, renouncing all rights deriving from their military victory in the conflict»<sup>20</sup> began their work of material aid:

[...] It was necessary to restore the confidence of people and revive things. [...] Here comes an encouragement and an invitation from the American people who, in a single aid programme for all of Europe, gave Italian industries raw materials, coal, fuels, machinery, money to rebuild factories and to build houses for workers, to build roads and new railway tracks, to erect power plants and set up schools for training workers. A contribution globally estimated at approximately 600 billion lire<sup>21</sup>.

Like Jack, ERPinotto also writes to Italian children, illustrating construction and reconstruction games. This is a character that circulates in various brochures and illustrated albums also published by the Information Division of the Erp Mission in Italy with the collaboration of the Publisher Set Apollon. In a 1951 pamphlet entitled "Erpinotto ricostruttore" (Erpinotto the reconstructor) (Fig. 3), the young American does his best to explain the progress made by Italy thanks to the arrival of the Marshall Plan. The intentions of the album are clarified in the opening pages:

<sup>17</sup> «Ti sono amico anche se tu non mi conosci, forse non te ne ricordi, ma noi ci siamo già incontrati: non ti sono dire in quale punto preciso della tua bellissima Italia ma so bene ti avverti incontrato. Forse deve essere stato ad Azio, davanti al Cimitero di Guerra» (p. 5).

<sup>18</sup> «Nel testo, che accompagna e commenta le tavole disegnate a colori, troverai qualche accenno a quello che si è fatto da noi Americani per aiutarvi a sanare le piaghe della guerra. Non pensare però che con ciò si sia voluto menar vanto di un beneficio che è stato fatto- e non all'Italia soltanto- con vivo senso di umana solidarietà e fratellanza cristiana. [...] Ci è parso di pagare un debito di riconoscenza a questa vostra e nostra Italia che per tanti secoli, con la Roma di Cesare e con la Roma di Cristo, è stata la generosa dispensatrice di ogni civiltà. [...] Questo vuole essere il significato delle cifre degli aiuti prestati che troverai segnate per ogni singola Regione» (p. 6).

<sup>19</sup> As Richard Crossman puts it «the best way to do good propaganda is to never make it appear that propaganda is being done» (Stoner Saunders, 2004, p. 7).

<sup>20</sup> «L'Italia ha visto delinearsi il dramma terribile della carestia» con «edifici e fabbriche distrutte, materie prime mancanti, maestranze disperse e private di lavoro, porti e via di comunicazione pressoché impraticabili, capitali quasi inesistenti». Un dramma che non ha lasciato indifferente «il popolo americano che senza esitazioni, rinunciando ad ogni diritto derivante dalla sua vittoria militare nel conflitto» ha cominciato la sua opera di aiuti materiali.

<sup>21</sup> «[...] Era necessario restituire fiducia agli uomini e ridare vita alle cose. [...] Ecco giungere un incoraggiamento e un invito dal popolo americano che in un programma unico di aiuti a tutta l'Europa dava alle industrie italiane materie prime, carbone, carburanti, macchinari, denaro per riedificare le fabbriche e per costruire case per i lavoratori, per aprire strade e stendere nuovi binari, per erigere centrali elettriche e istituire scuole di addestramento per le maestranze. Un contributo globalmente valutato in circa 600 miliardi di lire» p. 9.

To give young people an illustrated idea of what ERP is and the material benefits it has brought to Italian workers and to the entire population. [...] Erp marks a turning point in the civil history of the world, because it affirms, in contrast to the principle of isolation and struggle, the principle of collaboration between free peoples as an effective formula for achieving true well-being and achieving true progress. The countries affected by the war could not get back on their feet. Help was needed from the richest and most economically advanced country: the United States of America [...]. It is now a question of reaping the fruits of this work: persevering in the work and applying sound criteria of PRODUCTIVITY wherever possible<sup>22</sup>.

Moreover, it is precisely to underline the positive implications of these criteria and the beneficial effects of the American work in the most varied sectors that in the pages of the brochure, Erpinotto becomes a railway worker, bricklayer, farmer, metalworker:

With help from overseas  
people are getting back to work  
with great joy everyone sees  
that the country is already coming back to life  
The tireless Erpinotto  
He goes up he goes down  
He encourages and suggests  
While everyone rebuilds

Having arrived on a very modern convoy, the enterprising boy who embodies the American dream, rebuilds bridges, buildings, hospitals, renovates agriculture and crops, distributes food and brings with him progress and “generous aid”, finding new jobs also for the unemployed:

and the worker with a wage  
cheerfully comes home  
Erpinotto has beaten everything:  
hunger, woe, misery and grief<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> «Dare ai più giovani un'idea illustrata di quello che è l'Erp e dei vantaggi materiali che esso ha procurato ai lavoratori italiani ed al popolo tutto. [...] Erp segna una svolta nella storia civile del mondo, perché afferma, in contrasto al principio dell'isolamento e della lotta, il principio della collaborazione fra i popoli liberi, come formula efficace per raggiungere il vero benessere e realizzare il vero progresso. I paesi colpiti dalla guerra non potevano rimettersi in piedi da sé. Occorreva l'aiuto del paese più ricco ed economicamente progredito: gli stati Uniti d'America [...] Si tratta ora di raccogliere i frutti di quest'opera: perseverando nel lavoro ed applicando ovunque sia possibile dei sani criteri di produttività».

<sup>23</sup> «Con gli aiuti d'oltre mare /si riprende a lavorare /con gran gioia ognuno scorge /che il paese già risorge/L'instancabile Erpinotto/Va di sopra va di sotto/Incoraggia e suggerisce/ Mentre ognuno ricostruisce. /ed a casa l'operaio /col salario torno gaio/ Erpinotto ha vinto tutti/fame, guai miserie e lutti».

The same thing happens in the comic entitled “Erpinotto Aviatore” (Erpinotto the Aviator), where the young American offers his Italian friends, Gino and Marietta, a helicopter flight so that they can admire the progress made by Italy from above. But not only, he goes to the border with France to demonstrate how important a united Europe is, without borders or customs, under American influence (Fig. 4):

Peace will be more secure when Europe is united: because all European peoples will work in harmony and friendship, and together they will constitute a powerful bloc that no one in the world will dare to harass. And believe me, being strong is still the only means of defending peace: what happens among individuals happens among peoples, namely: if someone has the build of an athlete and the stature of a grenadier, no one ever thinks of harassing them<sup>24</sup>.

A reminder of the need for the free circulation of goods, free access to sources of production, a Union with common rules of trade, emblematic of how important it was to underline the crucial role of the Western alliance, based on the concepts of lasting peace and democracy and work, and the stabilising effects that these would also have on the economic situation within Italy and Europe. A principle also affirmed in the game for girls “Girotondo dell'amicizia”, a set of dolls to be constructed depicting the countries adhering to the Atlantic Pact, distributed in the countries that joined the Marshall Plan, where Erpinotto, addressing the “Italian sisters” (Alle sorelle italiane, 1951), says:

Imagine these dolls dressed in real clothes. Erp sends tons and tons of cotton and wool every month and brand new machinery to make lots of clothes for you and your parents. Look, each doll has a different dress, one for Italy, one for America and one for each country participating in the Erp, which resurrects with the Erp, to make Europe free and strong<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> «La pace sarà più sicura quando l'Europa sarà unita: perché ogni popolo europeo lavorerà in concordia ed amicizia con altri popoli fratelli e tutti assieme costituiranno un blocco potente che nessuno al mondo oserà molestare. E credetemi esser forti è ancora l'unico mezzo di difendere la pace: avviene tra i popoli quello che avviene tra gli uomini cioè: che se uno ha una corporatura da atleta e una statura da granatiere a nessuno salta in mente di molestarlo».

<sup>25</sup> «Immaginiamo anche che queste bambole siano rivestite con abiti veri. L'Erp invia ogni mese tonnellate e tonnellate di cotone e lana e macchinari nuovissimi per fabbricare tanti vestiti a voi e ai vostri genitori. Guardate, ogni bambola ha un vestitino diverso, uno per l'Italia, uno per l'America e uno per ogni paese che partecipa all'Erp, che con l'Erp risorge, per fare l'Europa libera e forte».

But not only that, as Ellwood recalled, Erpinotto also entered Italian schools during the days dedicated to the Marshall Plan, the “Erp day in classrooms”:

Before leaving town, Bambi distributes coloured plaster-board cut-outs to each school child in two large envelopes addressed “To my Dear Italian Friend from Erpinotto, via Veneto 62, Rome”. These cut-outs are an important teaching aid in a country where such aids are rare indeed. The cut-outs are brightly coloured ships, houses, hydroelectric plants, bridges and public buildings such as those constructed with Erp assistance. The elements when cut out, pasted and assembled, constitute a village. Thus the children are taught cooperation and are provided visual three-dimensional evidence of reconstruction. Many parents have been seen laboriously cutting out and pasting their children’s Erp Village<sup>26</sup>.

“A young capitalist”, which can be contrasted with explicitly anti-American characters such as *Chiodino* and *Atomino*, created by Marcello Argilli: their adventures were often set in striking factories, among South American revolutionaries and discriminated against Afro-Americans (Meda, 2007, Pruneri 2014). Not by chance, very strong criticisms came from two authoritative voices, Lucio Lombardo Radice and Gianni Rodari, both, from the pages of the *L’Unità*.

“Go home Erpinotto” was the title of the article by the pedagogist who accused this type of publication of mystifying reality:

A little ghost wanders around in Italian schools [...] with a striped sweater and a jockey’s cap [...]. What world does Erpinotto live in? In a completely imaginary world, in a dreamlike Italy where everything is being reborn. He lives in an upside-down Italy where machine shops are not closing but reopening, in an Italy where there is no longer any unemployment! Cheeky Erpinotto is lying when he says that “the worker returns home cheerfully with his wages”. A dictator of terrible power when in July 1951 he stated: “No more floods but modern and beautiful canals”. The contempt of the American Erp Office in Via Veneto, 62, Rome for Italian schools and the servility of some Italians in charge of the schools arrived at the point of continuing to distribute a booklet that contains these stanzas even today, after the disasters of Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia, and the Polesine! (3 April 1952)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See: “A review of the activities and performance of the Information Division of the Special mission to Italy from June 1948 to 31 December 1950, with particular emphasis on the last six months of 1950”.

<sup>27</sup> «Un piccolo fantasma si aggira nelle scuole italiane [...] con il maglione a righe e il berretto da fantino [...]. In che mondo vive Erpinotto? In un mondo del tutto immaginario. In un’Italia da sogno nella quale tutto sorge a nuova vita. [...] Vive in un’Italia alla rovescia nella quale le officine meccaniche non si chiudono ma si riaprono, in un’Italia dove non c’è più disoccupazione operaia! Bugiardo sfrontato Erpinotto

Lombardo Radice criticises, in particular, the school that should not become a field of political propaganda and imagining a hypothetical father of a family who once he has read the booklet returns it to the teacher, writing:

Respected teacher, you are not at fault, you have your orders and you carry them out. But let those who give you these orders know, and if you want I can put it in writing, that our children come to school to learn, to study seriously and not to be stuffed with leaflets and booklets of political propaganda. [...] At school we should not be talking about Erp, or the Atlantic Pact, or Truman or Erpinotto. Tell this to who you have to, respected teacher. Do you think that this does not depend on the Italian authorities? Then we will go and tell the lords of Via Veneto in person: Go home Erpinotto!<sup>28</sup>.

A year earlier, Gianni Rodari had also expressed his disappointment with the character of Erpinotto, for whom a room had been reserved during an art exhibition for schools at Palazzo Venezia in Rome. The famous children’s writer targets «charity granted at the price of deception», «the dignity of a minister who lends himself to circulating Marshall Plan propaganda in the form of foul lies in schools». After criticising the distribution of the Atlante delle Regioni in the classrooms, Rodari focused his attention on the “Il gioco del Fondo Lire” (Lire Fund Game):

Why not offer the game of the lire fund even to the workers of the factories that have been closed thanks to the Marshall Plan, so that even the unemployed have something to kill time? The Lire Fund Game is a combination of a game of snakes and ladders and Monopoly. [...] We roll the dice, we are lucky we landed on a square where the Lire Fund gives us two hundred thousand lire. We collect the money and roll the dice again. This time we end up in the strike square: we miss a turn. Is it right that strikes are punished? (22 May 1951)<sup>29</sup>.

quando afferma che “a casa l’operaio con il salario torna gaio”. Jettatore di terribile potenza quando nel luglio del 1951 afferma: “Non più niente alluvioni ma moderni e bei canali”. Il disprezzo dell’Ufficio Erp americano di Via Veneto, n. 62, Roma per la scuola italiana e il servilismo di qualche italiano responsabile della scuola arrivano al punto di continuare a distribuire un libretto che contiene queste strofe ancora oggi, dopo i disastri della Calabria, della Sicilia, della Sardegna, del Polesine!».

<sup>28</sup> «Signore maestro, lei non ha colpa, ha degli ordini e li esegue. Ma faccia sapere a chi le dà questi ordini, e se vuole glielo metto per iscritto, che i nostri figlioli vengono a scuola per imparare, per studiare seriamente e non per essere imbottiti di foglietti e libretti di propaganda politica. [...] A scuola non si deve parlare né di Erp, né di Patto Atlantico, né di Truman né di Erpinotto. Lo dica a chi di dovere signor maestro. Lei pensa che la cosa non dipenda dalle autorità italiane? Allora glielo andremo a dire di persona ai signori di Via Veneto: Go home Erpinotto!».

<sup>29</sup> «Perché non offrire il gioco del Fondo lire addirittura agli operai delle fabbriche chiuse per merito del Piano Marshall cosicché anche i disoc-

The game Rodari refers to is also mentioned in the report found by Ellwood:

Counterpart Lire Fund Game: this game, known in the United States as Monopoly, teaches the mechanics and objectives of Marshall aid in such a way as to bring in the entire family. This was another project ostensibly designed for children but actually intended to appeal to those grownups who could not be reached by other media-illiterates or semi-literates.

It was inevitable that this type of game would soon be exploited for educational, pedagogical, advertising or political, ideological and military propaganda purposes. In fact, as the document itself states, the *Game* offered simplicity, figurative potential and broad possibilities as a tool to generate consensus directed at children and adults with low levels of literacy. «For those who still cannot access the ballet box, there are educational past-times such as the “Il gioco dell’oca del vero italiano” where the square that acts as a leitmotif represents the Statue of Liberty, and Mazzini and Cavour alternate with Marshall and US flags» (Milanesi, 1995, p.56). The dangers (riots, dictatorship, war, sabotage) are always placed on an unmistakable red background and a curious Stalin disguised as a moon also appears. The game is also characterised by a special bonus, whoever lands on 12 (American aid) immediately goes to 89 (working factories), namely, a square before possible victory, concluded by the unloading of American ships.

Mirroring the “Gioco dell’Oca” is “Il gioco del Giro d’Italia” (Allulli Crea, 1950, Fig. 5), a game of 64 numbered squares, advertising the 1950 Giro d’Italia, a tribute to the Erp, with pieces and images of famous cyclists (Coppi, Bartali, Magni, Lazaridés, Robic, Fornara, Schaer, Lauredi, Bevilacqua, Bresci). Whoever lands on 11 punctures his tyre and has to miss a turn. Whoever lands on 12 breaks free from the group on a magnificent road rebuilt with American aid and goes to 61 (final sprint). Whoever lands on 14 (viaduct rebuilt with Erp funds) gains three hours and goes to 17 winning the stage in Genoa. Whoever lands on 27 (roadblock due to political unrest) remains stationary until someone else lands on 27 and takes their place and stays there for one turn. Whoever lands on the squares where there is the Erp target gets the maximum benefits. In a Cold War climate “Il gioco dell’Europa Unita” stands out, where

the route winds around a map of Italy and Central Europe. The text praises the future “Europe without customs”, which should be extremely advantageous for Italy, for its tourism, for the sale of its agricultural products, for its industry and workers. It goes without saying that even in this case, danger is represented by Stalin (“The moustache”) or at 22 by Communist labour camps. The player who sends his piece into Communist territory (in red on the board) misses two turns because he has been «detained by the Russian police»; whoever sends his pawn to one of the customs signs misses his turn because he has been held back by bureaucratic formalities.

An effective vehicle of ideological propaganda is also represented by the abecedaries (ABCs), as demonstrated by *L’alfabeto dell’amicizia* by the Erp Division, printed by the roman publishing house Set-Apollon and driven by a strong pro-US sentiment. It is a document mirroring the booklet found by Prof. Fulvio de Giorgi entitled *L’abc Italo Americano*, aimed at propaganda in favour of the US allied troops during the last phase of the Second World War (De Giorgi, 2008). As already mentioned, the history of the American Information Services in Italy must be traced back to 1943 and the arrival of the Americans in the peninsula. In the liberated territories, radio, cinema, the press and all other means of communication were placed under the control of the allied authorities, through the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB). Its task was to prepare, collect, disseminate, distribute and control all propaganda in the liberated territories and where the fighting was still raging, in order to counter the image of the Anglo-Americans as foreign occupiers.

A comparison between the two brochures allows us to highlight elements in American propaganda that are in common and that are different between the war period and the Reconstruction. The intonation is the same and clearly refers to democracy as the opposite of dictatorship and fascism, with references to friendship between the United States and Italy and to freedom for peoples. Not surprisingly, the two texts have in common the letter H of Hello, I of Italy, L of Liberty, U of union, and the W of Washington.

*L’abc Italo Americano* focuses on the decency of the allied troops and the common battle for freedom. It is not surprising, therefore, on the one hand the reference to the hymn by Mameli (C for singing), the tricolour, the Risorgimento period (Giuseppe Garibaldi) and the Resistance, and on the other hand the stars and stripes flag, the organisational chart of the valiant US army (the letter M shows the insignias of the various bodies of which it is composed) and English words and idioms

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cupati abbiamo un passatempo? Il Gioco del Fondo Lire è una combinazione di Gioco dell’oca e del Monopoli. [...] Gettiamo i dati, siamo fortunati siamo capitati in una casella nella quale il fondo lire ci assegna duecentomila lire. Incassiamo e gettiamo nuovamente i dati. Questa volta andiamo a finire nella casella dello sciopero: fermi un giro. E’ giusto che gli scioperi siano puniti?» (22 maggio 1951).

(the letter “Yankee” depicts a smiling US soldier together with children who are the main recipients of the work).

*L'alfabeto dell'amicizia* dating back to the early 1950s<sup>30</sup> also proposes a reference to the fraternal relationship between the USA and Italy thanks to the use, in the text, of the combination of the colours green, red and blue, a symbolic reference to the flags of the two countries. The prevailing theme, however, is represented by American aid in terms of material and economic resources, by modern technology, by the attractive force of the *American way of life*, making the brochure a sort of «expression of the American Dream» (Cavallo, 1985, p. 751). In fact, the abecedary, in presenting the figure of General Marshall, the promoter of the plan bearing his name, at the letter M, underlines the important role, not only economic, played by the US government in the process of reconstructing the peninsula after World War II: from the shipments of coal for heating (letter C) to the vehicles and materials for the restoration of the railway line (letter F); from the shipment of quantities of wheat (letter G) to the supply of machinery for the textile industry (letter V); from the contribution in the reactivation of damaged power plants (letter E) to the contribution in the development of land, air and sea communication networks (letter T). On several occasions, the enormous financial effort of the United States in support of Europe was identified as an instrument capable of ensuring, in addition to «a future of prosperity and well-being», a better world, under the banner of the values of freedom and peace. (Morandini, 2021).

D dollar<sup>31</sup> (Fig. 6)

Dollar is the currency of the Americans.

American workers sacrificed part of their earnings to raise the dollars needed to help their friend Italy. The value of the aid they send to Italy is many hundreds of millions of dollars: all American citizens gave their contribution

to make the friendship between the American and Italian people ever stronger

P productivity

Productivity is a means of increasing well-being. An advanced country must organise its industries on the basis of maximum productivity, making the most of the skills of its workers and the use of all its resources.

M Marshall

Marshall was a great Italian general who loved children very much. The general created a plan to send American aid to Europe. Using the dollars provided by all American citizens, the Marshall Plan made possible the rapid rebuilding of houses, offices, railways, etc., and the return of tranquillity throughout Europe<sup>32</sup>.

An abecedary written for political propaganda that today assumes not only collectible value, but also a significant role in documenting the history of Italian politics and customs.

#### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The article considers the Marshall Plan's cultural propaganda aimed at Italian youth and children through specific pamphlets and booklets designed to convey messages of modernisation and productivity typical of the American way of life and an integral part of the American policy of containment and fight against communism.

Starting from popular culture and using sources that are still undervalued, it aims to integrate studies on the history of education in the Cold War years and to enrich the literature on post-war publishing for young people: both that dedicated to pro-American comics and that linked to Communist Party initiatives.

The games, nursery rhymes, calendars, atlases and booklets starring Erpinotto represent only a small part

<sup>30</sup> The edition date does not appear on the abecedary. Some historical information, contained within, however, lead us to hypothesise its publication between 1951 and 1953: the term *ab quo* is deduced from the statement relating to the ultra-five-year activity of the UN, established in 1945; *ad quem* from the name of the then President of the United States, Harry S. Truman.

<sup>31</sup> An article published on *Rinascita* in 1947 was entitled “God and the Dollar”: a propaganda article aimed at convincing readers how greedy and materialistic American society was, therefore irreconcilable with Christianity. *Rinascita*, august 1947 (pp.213, 214)

P produttività La produttività è un mezzo per aumentare il benessere. Un paese progredito deve organizzare le sue industrie sulla base della massima produttività, ricavando il massimo vantaggio dall'abilità dei suoi lavoratori e dall'impiego di tutte le sue risorse.

M Marshall è un grande generale italiano che ama molto i bambini. Il generale creò un piano per inviare aiuti americani all'Europa. Utilizzando i dollari forniti da tutti i cittadini americani il piano Marshall rese possibile la rapida ricostruzione di case, office, ferrovie, ecc., e il ritorno della tranquillità in tutta Europa.

<sup>32</sup> D Dollaro è la moneta degli americani. I lavoratori americani hanno sacrificato parte dei loro guadagni per riunire i dollari necessari ad aiutare l'amica Italia. Il valore degli aiuti da essi inviati in Italia è di molte centinaia di milioni di dollari: tutti i cittadini americani hanno dato il loro contributo per rendere sempre più salda l'amicizia tra il popolo americano e quello italiano. An article published on *Rinascita* in 1947 titled “God and the Dollar”: a propaganda article aimed at convincing readers how greedy and material American society was, therefore irreconcilable with Christianity. *Rinascita*, agosto 1947 (pp.213, 21)

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of the immeasurable American propaganda effort. But they illustrate the complexity of both the Marshall Plan, which contained in an almost symbolic form a concentration of political, economic and cultural ideas that were to become the distinctive elements of the American orbit, and of a historical period, post World War II, in which the collision of opposing visions of Italy's future was at its most powerful:

A child [...] questioned by his teacher on the use of relatives, had composed the sentence: 'My cat has had seven kittens who are all authentic communists'. A few days later, in front of the school inspector, the teacher repeated the same question, but the answer was: 'My cat has had seven kittens who are all sincere friends of the West [...]'. "The fact is", replied the child, blushing, "that the kittens have opened their eyes" (Bruti Liberati, 2004, p. 125).

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Libertà di imparare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IThpbve2y9M>

Casa di Produzione: Office of War Information, Overseas

Branch Anno: 1942/1945

I nostri divertimenti

<https://youtu.be/USCzYeGxl1Q>

Regia: Vittorio Quaglieri Anno: 1953

*Istituto Luce:*

Solidarietà americana arriva la 400<sup>a</sup> nave AUSA, data: 12/03/1948

LA SETTIMANA INCOM / 00130

[patrimonio.archivioluce.com/luce-web/detail/IL5000011445/2/solidarieta-americana-arriva-400-nave-ausa.html](http://patrimonio.archivioluce.com/luce-web/detail/IL5000011445/2/solidarieta-americana-arriva-400-nave-ausa.html)

APPENDAGE/FIGURES



Figure 1. “Storia d’America” n. 39.



Figure 2. “Vi piace disegnare?” Competition.



Figure 3. "Erpinotto ricostruttore".



Figure 4. "Erpinotto aviatore".



Figure 5. “Il gioco del Giro d’Italia”.



Figure 6. “L’alfabeto dell’amicizia”.