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Abrevieri

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The image of Bolshevism in the Italian public opinion, 1917-1919

This article will focus on how the image of Bolshevism was conveyed and dealt with in Italy between 1917 and 1919, through the analysis of the most significant periodical press of the time. For this purpose, it is essential to take a step back, and to mention the perception of the Russian revolution in Italy from its inception. From the outset the revolution of February 1917 was considered by Italian public opinion in a rather differentiated way. Italian workers and peasants immediately glimpsed in the initially confused news about the “serious disorders of Petrograd” the sign of a certain and upcoming emancipation of the working and peasant masses from exploitation and war suffering. But overall, it was the majority of Italian public opinion that looked favourably at the February Revolution: the interventionists because the new government of Prince L’vov would continue the war, the reformist socialists and the democratic-radicals because Alexander Kerensky was part of the Russian provisional government, as a guarantee of a bourgeois-democratic revolution¹. After an initial disorientation with respect to Russian events, the Italian Prime Minister, the liberal Paolo Boselli, expressed his support for the provisional government: “the entry of the Russian people into the ranks of free peoples increases the forces of civilization [...]. The ongoing events in Russia increase the strength of our war, and also for this reason we must be happy and cheer on them”². However, the formation of the Soviet of

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¹ Leonardo Pompeo D’Alessandro, *La Rivoluzione in tempo reale. Il 1917 nel socialismo italiano tra rappresentazione, mito e realtà*, in Marco Di Maggio (ed.), *Sfumature di rosso: la Rivoluzione russa nella politica italiana del Novecento*, Torino, Accademia University Press, 2017, p. 3-26, <http://books.openedition.org/aaccademia/2270>; Giorgio Petracchi, *Diplomazia di guerra e rivoluzione. Italia e Russia dall’ottobre 1916 al maggio 1917*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1974, p. 97; Elena Dundovich, *Bandiera rossa trionferà? L’Italia, la Rivoluzione di Ottobre e i rapporti con Mosca 1917-1927*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2017, p. 34-35. On the perception of the Russian revolution in the world, see Marcello Flores, *La forza del mito. La rivoluzione russa e il miraggio del socialismo*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2017.

² Gabriella Donati Torricelli, *La rivoluzione russa e i socialisti italiani nel 1917-18*, in “Studi Storici”, 8 (1967), no. 4, p. 729.

workers and soldiers in Petrograd and its appeal to proletarians all over the world for peace began to make the Italian socialists understand that there was a clear divergence between the provisional government and the Soviet, which in turn was supported by Lenin³. It was precisely the latter, after his return to Russia by train from Switzerland to catalyse the attention of the Italian socialists. The socialist newspaper “Il Grido del Popolo” [The People’s Cry] wrote that “Lenin is the most socialist and the most revolutionary of the authoritative leaders of the Russian socialist parties” and “affirms the socialist and international aims of Russian revolution which others would like to stem and limit to a pure and simple bourgeois conquest”⁴.

After the October Revolution, the Italian political spectrum became increasingly polarized with respect to Russian events. In the varied and composite panorama of the “left”, in effect, the positions, in a first phase, differed above all according to the perspectives from which people looked at the Italian war effort. The side of the interventionist left, made up of democrats, republicans, reformist socialists, looked with concern at Lenin’s coming to power also for the consequences that this would have had on the Entente coalition, with the certain Russian defection from the conflict. The pacifist wing, however, composed of the so-called socialist maximalists (the most radical), looked favorably at the policy of the Bolsheviks. A capillary maximalist socialist propaganda, in agreement with the pro-Bolshevik intelligentsia active in Italy, at that time began to spread confidence among the Italian working masses in Lenin’s initiative and in an imminent European revolution that would free the peoples from the bourgeois oppression. Indeed, it is likely that Italy was the Western European country whose public opinion was most affected by Russian events. In a speech of November 22, 1917 at the Central Committee of the Soviet, Trotsky, perhaps exaggerating, stated that Italy was the country that had welcomed the revolution with more enthusiasm⁵. Until the summer of 1919, however, the Soviet myth in Italy was opposed by another competing and alternative myth, the American one. Both US President Woodrow Wilson and Lenin then appeared to be two champions, albeit from opposing political sides, of peoples’ rights and self-determination. Progressively, there was a decline of the Wilsonian myth, mainly due to the treatment reserved to Italy at the Paris Peace Conference. In effect the outcome of the Conference regarding the Adriatic claims of Italy as opposed to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, considered unfair by a large part of Italian public opinion, corresponded with an ascent of the myth of Lenin, which until 1920 seemed irresistible⁶.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 730.

⁴ Lenin, in “Il Grido del Popolo”, April 29, 1917.

⁵ Giorgio Petracchi, *La Russia rivoluzionaria nella politica italiana. Le relazioni italo-sovietiche, 1917-1925*, Bari, Laterza, 1982, p. 33.

⁶ Idem, *Il mito della rivoluzione sovietica in Italia, 1917-1920*, in “Storia contemporanea”, 21 (1990), no. 6, p. 1110-1111.

Initially it was Angelica Balabanoff, an Italian naturalized Russian activist, who played a crucial role in allowing Italian socialists to know more precisely the dynamics of Russian Bolshevism, informing them since 1917 through her correspondence for the official newspaper of the Italian Socialist Party (Psi) “Avanti!” [Forward!], directly from Petrograd. Thus, the irremediable split that was taking place in the international socialist field, between the radical Bolsheviks and the reformist Mensheviks began to be perceived more clearly⁷.

In a first phase, it was mainly the Russian socialist-revolutionary emigrants living in Italy to inform about the Russian events. However, they generated some confusion on the two directions, which would later be irreconcilable, of the democratic revolution and the Soviet revolution, overlapping the request for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly and the action of the Petrograd Soviet, often compared to the Paris Commune of 1871. For example, Vasily V. Suchomlin wrote several articles on the “Avanti!”, under the pseudonym “Junior”, exalting the revolutionary function of the Russian peasants⁸, while Michail Vodovosov, also on the socialist newspaper, highlighted the idea that the aim of the Russian masses was to give the revolution “a development and forms that distinguished it from previous bourgeois political revolutions”⁹. If the reformist leaders of the Italian Socialist Party had continued to support Kerensky, already in July 1917 Antonio Gramsci – one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party in January 1921 – had clearly stated that he was on Lenin’s side¹⁰. Gramsci then clarified that Russian Bolshevism constituted the negation of Marxism as it had been interpreted up to then by socialism, that is in a deterministic and evolutionist sense. Paradoxically, Gramsci wrote, Marx’s *Capital* “was, in Russia, the book of the bourgeois, rather than the proletarians”, since “it was the critical demonstration of the fatal need for a bourgeoisie to be formed in Russia, a capitalist era to begin, a western-type reality to be established, before the proletariat could even think of its own revenge, its class demands, and its revolution”. And instead, Gramsci wrote, “the Bolsheviks repudiate Karl Marx, and affirm, with the testimony of their explicit action and of their accomplished conquest, that the canons of historical materialism are not as cast-iron as one might think and have thought”¹¹. Unlike the revolutionary wing of the Psi, represented by Gramsci, Amadeo Bordiga and Giacinto Menotti Serrati, the reformist wing, through the magazine “Critica sociale” [Social criticism], expressed its support for Martov’s Mensheviks, criticizing Bolshevism and its claim to circumvent the deterministic logic of historical Marxist materialism, which had led to an imposition by decree of the socialist system. In one of his

⁷ Angelica Balabanoff, *Lettere dalla Russia*, in “Avanti!”, July 3, 1917.

⁸ Antonello Venturi, *La lotta per l'immagine della rivoluzione: i socialisti-rivoluzionari russi in Italia tra il 1917 e la nascita del PCdI*, in “Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa. Storia e politica”, 31 (2016), p. 242-259; Antonello Venturi, *Rivoluzionari russi in Italia, 1917-1921*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1979.

⁹ Ing. [Michail Vodovosov], *Borghesi e socialisti nell'attuale crisi*, in “Avanti!”, July 24, 1917.

¹⁰ *Ecco così Kerenskij*, in “Il Grido del Popolo”, August 25, 1917.

¹¹ A. G. [Antonio Gramsci], *La rivoluzione contro il 'Capitale'*, in “Avanti!”, December 24, 1917.

articles, Claudio Treves, one of the main exponents of Italian reformism, wondered how the Italian maximalists and the Russian Bolsheviks ultimately differed from the utopianism of the Renaissance philosophers Tommaso Campanella and Thomas More. The polemic of the reformist socialists towards Bolshevism focused on its claim to skip “the industrial bourgeois era” and to want to move “from the patriarchal agrarian economy to collectivism”. Furthermore, the reformists accused Leninist voluntarism, in the light of the classic reading of Marxism through a deterministic and mechanistic lens: in the absence of an evolution of the production systems and of the transition from an agricultural to a bourgeois society, it made no sense to think of imposing socialism by decree¹².

In criticizing Bolsheviks’ and Lenin’s work, the Italian reformist socialists also referred to the German socialist Karl Kautsky, until then considered the most authoritative Marxist theorist, who had heavily attacked Bolshevik politics in two essays published in 1918: *Demokratie oder Diktatur* and *Die Diktatur des Proletariats*. Kautsky argued that socialism and democracy should remain inextricably linked and that the idea of a dictatorship exercised by a party in the name of the working class against other socialist-inspired parties, such as the Menshevik and the social-revolutionary parties in Russia, was to be rejected. Moreover, according to Kautsky, Lenin had placed himself outside Marxism with his claim to implement a revolution in a backward country, therefore not mature for socialism as yet. According to Kautsky’s opinion, the insufficient development of the proletariat in Russia had forced the Bolsheviks to abandon the path of democracy to rely only on police and terrorist repression measures, which had nothing to do with Marxism¹³. The reformist socialist Rodolfo Mondolfo followed this path, highlighting on “Critica sociale” in February 1918 the extraneousness of Leninist practice to Marxism. Mondolfo quoted Marx’s preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* with respect to the conditions necessary for the development of a revolution: only when the social relations existing in a given society become an obstacle to the development of the production forces, then the conditions for a social revolution arise. According to Mondolfo, “revolution is not the same thing as social convulsion” and in Russia perhaps a convulsion had occurred, but not a revolution, so “if, to introduce a regime of terror, audacity and violence may suffice in any historical moment, to implement socialism things are a little more complicated”¹⁴.

For his part, Mussolini, who at the outbreak of the February Revolution still declared himself an interventionist socialist, radically condemned Bolshevism for its “defeatism” and pacifism. Like Mussolini, politicians and intellectuals of a nationalist orientation, who later merged largely into fascism, initially saw the February Revolution favourably, for its modernizing effects and for its “vitalist”

¹² Very-Well [Claudio Treves], *Lenin, Martoff e... noi!*, in “Critica sociale”, 28 (1918), no. 1.

¹³ Giuseppe Bedeschi, *I socialisti riformisti italiani e la rivoluzione bolscevica in Russia*, in “Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa. Storia e politica”, 31 (2016), p. 185-188.

¹⁴ Rodolfo Mondolfo, *Leninismo e marxismo*, in “Critica sociale”, 29 (1919), no. 4.

charge, but then bitterly criticized Bolshevism, for having betrayed the cause of the war and for its anti-Christian and anti-western positions¹⁵. The bourgeois liberal-democratic press, that of newspapers such as the “Corriere della Sera” and “La Stampa”, while initially looking with sympathy at the February Revolution, which would contribute to westernizing, democratizing and liberalizing the tsars’ autocratic Russia, then condemned without appeal Bolshevism, accused of bringing Russia back to an even worse condition of barbarism. Even for the Italian republicans, Lenin was the champion of “Russia of desertion and betrayal”¹⁶.

The “Corriere della Sera”, the reference point of liberal interventionism, had initially looked favourably at the February Revolution, which seemed to have defeated the Russian autocracy and thus brought Russia closer to Western “civilization”. The envoy of the Milanese newspaper in Russia, Luigi Barzini, had read recent Russian events as the guarantee of a renewed war impetus alongside the Entente not only of the provisional government but of the Russian masses: “Towards war there is a perennial uprising of popular enthusiasm, because the masses see victory as a revenge, a push for new and definitive progress. From the alliance and commonality of purpose with the most civilized and liberal nations of Europe, the Russian people receives a prodigious impulse towards the conquest of modernity that victory promises”¹⁷. However, as the policy of the Bolsheviks became clearer and in particular after their seizure of power in October 1917, the moderate Italian press took on an openly anti-Bolshevik connotation, denouncing in dark tones what was happening in Russia¹⁸. An idea shared by liberal and conservative public opinion was that the Bolsheviks were in the pay of the Germans and the central empires. The newspaper “Il Giornale d’Italia”, close to the positions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sidney Sonnino, an interventionist nationalist, wrote: “Russia is in the throes of a new revolution that threatens to produce disastrous consequences for that unfortunate country. [...] Everyone knows that the Leninists, who today are masters of the situation in Petrograd, are recruited largely from the Jews of German origin, who work on behalf of Germany, dragging the country to the most unbridled anarchy to prevent it from facing its commitments with allies”¹⁹. After the end of the war, then, with the Russian civil war underway, Bolshevism was associated without any uncertainty with a regime of terror, which had nothing to do with Western civilization and which therefore had to be torn down or otherwise stemmed. “Bolsheviks’ communism – the “Corriere della Sera” wrote – was believed to have at least ensured in the countryside a temporary well-being for the peasants: instead, they are among the most pitiable victims of the red terror, since everything they produce is

¹⁵ Salvatore Cingari, *Il ‘Regno della bestia trionfante’. La rivoluzione di Lenin fra nazionalismo e prefascismo*, in *Sfumature di rosso*, p. 27-55.

¹⁶ *I rappresentanti del ‘Soviet’ a Ravenna*, in “La Libertà”, August 11, 1917.

¹⁷ L. B. [Luigi Barzini], *La verità sulla Russia*, in “Corriere della Sera”, March 12, 1917.

¹⁸ Guido Donnini, *Il 1917 di Russia nella stampa italiana*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1976, p. 353-419.

¹⁹ *Nuova rivoluzione in Russia. Convulsioni*, in “Il Giornale d’Italia”, November 10, 1917.

immediately requisitioned". Furthermore, it was denounced that "the Bolsheviks are intent on deliberately suppressing the bourgeoisie". Disturbing and rough details were added: "the nationalization of women has been attempted in many cities, but without success, given the lively resistance of the victims of the obscene ordinance: nevertheless, the agents of the Soviets took advantage of it to inflict monstrous outrages on the women of the bourgeoisie"²⁰.

The Catholic press, with the Jesuit magazine "Civiltà Cattolica" [Catholic Civilization] in the first place, had condemned the Russian events since the February Revolution, uniting in its condemnation liberalism, socialism and communism, all judged to be the expression of the same evils of modernity and associated by the same refusal of God. Ultimately, if the February Revolution had been carried out in the name of liberalism and its exaltation of modern individualism and secularism, the October Revolution was for the Catholic press the logical consequence of the same political and spiritual misleading, adding further errors, first of all the refusal of peaceful cooperation between classes and of private property²¹. Other Vatican circles, however, going beyond ideological judgments, reflected on the advantages that the situation emerging from the February Revolution and the establishment of the provisional government could give to the positions of the Catholic Church and the Uniate Churches in Russia. Indeed, the Romanovs had always severely opposed everything that appeared to be related to the Vatican's intrusions into the former Tsarist Empire. In particular, the Holy See welcomed the fact that the provisional government had authorized the reconstitution of the Greek-Catholic and Roman Catholic hierarchies on Russian territory and that Orthodox Russia had renounced, at least for the moment, the fearsome plan of domination over Constantinople. Ultimately, for the Holy See, despite the negative judgment on Russian anarchy, what seemed to be most important – at least in that first phase – was the end of the threat brought by orthodoxy to the interests of the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe²².

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 and the exit of Bolshevik Russia from the war led to the emergence of a decidedly anti-revolutionary attitude on the part of the Entente powers. Even the Italian government tightened the repression of any attitude that could overshadow Bolshevik sympathies, for example through the new penal charge of "war defeatism". The information service of the Army Supreme Command was very active in the last months of war, ready to denounce revolutionary and defeatist attempts by soldiers in the trenches or to read pro-Soviet and anti-government messages in the correspondence sent by soldiers to their families. After all, even the Caporetto defeat, for the Italian authorities, was

²⁰ *Nuovi orrori del regime bolscevico. Un'ecatombe di Granduchi*, in "Corriere della Sera", February 4, 1919.

²¹ Ettore Bucci, *La Luce e le tenebre. 'La Civiltà Cattolica' e la Rivoluzione d'Ottobre (1917-1991)*, in *Sfumatore di rosso*, p. 75-102.

²² Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Cattolici italiani e Russia rivoluzionaria*, in "Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa. Storia e politica", p. 129-130.

largely due not to the strategic errors of the high commanders, but to the anti-patriotic defeatism propagated in the ranks of the army by infiltrated Bolshevik agents²³. The correspondent from Petrograd of the conservative “Il Giornale d’Italia”, Guglielmo Zanetti, also reported to his readers in a very vivid way the events related to the “red terror”, explaining that the Bolsheviks hit not only the bourgeois, but, indiscriminately, all their opponents and the socialists themselves, accused of plotting against Lenin’s power²⁴.

The end of the war did not result in a drop in the attention of the Italian government towards the “subversives”. On the contrary, the beginning of the Russian civil war saw Italy directly engaged in an attempt to stem the Bolshevik revolution. In August 1918, the Italian government sent an expeditionary force to Russia in order to fight, together with the Entente’s armies, against the Bolsheviks. This expeditionary force was joined by the so-called redeemed legion, made up of Italian speaking soldiers of the former Austro-Hungarian army, taken prisoners by the Russians and then concentrated at the Italian Tianjin concession in China. In the spring and summer of 1919 these soldiers fought against the Bolsheviks alongside General Kolčák’s counter-revolutionary Army and did their utmost to keep the Trans-Siberian railway active in order to allow the supply of “white” armies²⁵.

If the Italian government had taken a clear anti-Bolshevik position, most of the workers’ movement, however, continued to sympathize openly with Bolshevism: not only the nascent communist movement, led by Gramsci, but also, as we have seen, the “maximalist” wing of the Psi. The “red biennium” (1919-1920), characterized in Italy as in the rest of Europe by strikes and factory occupations, saw a polarization between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the judgment on Bolshevism in Russia and Central-Eastern Europe. The creation of the Republic of the Councils in Hungary in March 1919 and the more or less ephemeral revolutionary attempts in Central and Eastern Europe made the Italian government fear an imminent revolution also in Italy²⁶.

The Russian exiles in Italy played an important role in the construction of the negative myth of Lenin and of Bolshevism, presented as a leap into barbarism, characterized by violence, authoritarianism and paganism. For the exiles of Menshevik and social-revolutionary tendencies, Lenin was simply the new tsar²⁷. The circles of Italian interventionism, led by Mussolini’s “Il Popolo d’Italia” [People of Italy], continued to attack Russian Bolshevism and “Italian Bolsheviks”,

²³ Elena Dundovich, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Graziano Mamone, *Ombre rosse*, in “Diacronie”, 3 (2017), no. 31, <http://journals.openedition.org/diacronie/6059>.

²⁴ Armando Zanetti, *Tutto l’orrore della Russia bolscevica veduto da vicino*, Roma, L’italiana, 1919.

²⁵ Giorgio Petracchi, *La Russia rivoluzionaria...*, *passim*; I. C. D. Moffat, *The Allied Intervention in Russia, 1918-1920*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; Elena Dundovich, *op. cit.*, p. 49-51.

²⁶ Valentine Lomellini, *La “grande paura” rossa. L’Italia delle spie bolsceviche (1917-1922)*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2015, p. 96-97.

²⁷ Antonello Venturi, *Rivoluzionari russi...*, *passim*; A. Tamborra, *Esuli russi in Italia. Riviera ligure, Capri, Messina*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1977.

not so much for the authoritarian aspects of Lenin's party, but for the fact that according to Mussolini it did not represent an authentic revolution and was in reality a "reactionary" phenomenon. We could say that militant anti-Bolshevism had its official baptism with the attack and devastation at the headquarters of the "Avanti!" newspaper in Milan by fascists and nationalists on April 15, 1919²⁸. The anti-Bolshevik criticism from the left also came from the revolutionary syndicalists, a rib detached from socialism since the war in Libya, fought by Italy against the Ottoman Empire in 1911-12, in the name of a "healthy imperialism" and the myth of Italy as a proletarian nation. According to the revolutionary syndicalists, the revolution was to be the product of the initiative of those who "produce" the same way and not of those who "think" the same way²⁹. However, there were also some nationalists who, in the face of the staunch resistance shown by the Bolsheviks in front of the White and of the Entente's Armies, expressed sincere appreciation for Lenin, also on racial grounds. He was, as Virginio Gayda – a former correspondent from Russia of "La Stampa" – wrote, the indomitable representative of the pride of the Slavic race in the face of the onslaught of the demo-plutocratic powers, the exponent of a new political aristocracy, capable of expressing a revolutionary energy and an intransigence at the antipodes of "Democratic Semitism". Instead, Trotsky was harshly condemned, as treacherous and opportunistic insofar he was not a Slav like Lenin, but an "Israelite of German descent"³⁰. Armando Zanetti, in "Il Giornale d'Italia", resumed in a certain way the exaltation of the figure of Lenin as an undisputed leader, endowed with the "exceptional energy and demagogic attitude" typical precisely of the true leaders. Therefore, he was provided with an "iron logic of thought and of method" and with a "tenacious fanaticism": all positive qualities, according to the author, which raised him above Bolshevism, judged negatively as a socially disruptive movement³¹.

During 1919, also an important part of the "national revolutionaries" – interventionists revolutionary syndicalists, nationalists and fascists – putting aside the initial harsh criticisms of Bolshevism as defeatist and traitor during the war, manifested a remarkable fascination with the charismatic leader Lenin and with the tenacity shown by the Bolsheviks, who rose to real representatives of the Russian people. In these milieus, however, a clear aversion harboured for the socialist followers of Bolshevism in Italy, held responsible for anti-patriotism and considered theorists of national dissolution and social chaos in Italy. Indeed,

²⁸ Enrico Serventi Longhi, «Lupus dei qui tollit peccata mundi». Il mito di Lenin tra nazionalisti, repubblicani, sindacalisti e dannunziani, in "Zapruder", 33 (2017), no. 44, p. 45.

²⁹ Francesco Bonavita, *Introduzione*, in Angelo Oliviero Olivetti, *Bolscevismo, comunismo e sindacalismo*, Milano, Editrice "Rivista Nazionale", 1919, p. 53. On the relations between revolutionary syndicalism and fascist ideology, see Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista (1918-1925)*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1996, p. 139-140; Zeev Sternhell, *Nascita dell'ideologia fascista*, Milano, Baldini & Castoldi, 1993.

³⁰ Virginio Gayda, *Il crollo russo. Dallo zarismo al bolscevismo*, Torino, Fratelli Bocca, 1920, p. 309.

³¹ Armando Zanetti, *La Russia bolscevica*, Genova, Stab. Tipo-Litografico P. Pellas, 1919, p. 19.

Russian Bolshevism had somehow practically demonstrated the theoretical worth of national socialism dear to the “revolutionary right”³², because Leninism was judged able to merge socialism and nationalism, unlike the Italian socialists, who instead opposed the concept of nation. A similar sympathy for the Bolsheviks came from the poet-soldier Gabriele D’Annunzio, the head between September 1919 and December 1920 of the self-proclaimed Carnaro Regency, created in the Rijeka/Fiume province, in order to defend the Italian character of the Adriatic town “betrayed” by the Italian liberal government³³. The idea of a similarity of temperament between Lenin and D’Annunzio, both men of action, endowed with an unyielding will, was widespread among legionaries (the poet’s followers). At the same time, they remarked the difference existing between Lenin, ready to use violence for the affirmation of his own ideas, and the Italian reformist socialists, cowardly lovers of all-out pacifism, humanitarianism and bureaucratic parliamentarianism. Even in the circles of the non-socialist and republican democratic left, they looked with a certain admiration at the figure of Lenin and his iron revolutionary will, hoping to be able to apply it in Italy to overthrow the monarchy, while avoiding all the negative elements in Bolshevism, that is the establishment of a new party tyranny after the overthrow of the old tyranny of the tsars³⁴.

On the other hand, there was no differentiation between Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the opinion of the most revolutionary group of Psi, which gathered around the magazine “L’Ordine Nuovo” [The New Order], directed by Antonio Gramsci: admiration was unconditional towards both of them. At the same time, Gramsci’s comrades clearly identified their political opponents: obviously the right, but above all the reformist wing of the Psi, headed by Claudio Treves and Filippo Turati, who gathered around the magazine “Critica sociale”, considered a symbol of the ideological corruption of the Italian socialists. Gramsci from a certain point of view exalted an aspect of Lenin, which was appreciated also by the “revolutionary nationalists”, namely voluntarism, and criticized the reformist socialists for their confidence in mechanistic determinism, therefore turning Marx’s doctrine – Gramsci wrote – into “the doctrine of proletariat’s inertia”³⁵. This consonance between Gramsci and right-wing insurgency was not accidental: actually, both Gramsci and Mussolini shared the adhesion – although differently nuanced – to the neo-idealism of the philosophers Croce and Gentile, who opposed the positivism, which the socialists of late nineteenth-century reformist formation

³² On the concept of “revolutionary right”, see Zeev Sternhell, *La Destra Rivoluzionaria. Le origini francesi del fascismo*, Milano, Corbaccio, 1997.

³³ Serventi Longhi, *op. cit.*, p. 50. On D’Annunzio and Fiume, see Paolo Alatri, Nitti, *D’Annunzio e la questione adriatica*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1976; Francesco Perfetti, *Fiumanesimo, sindacalismo e fascismo*, Roma, Bonacci, 1988; Raoul Pupo, *Fiume città di passione*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2018.

³⁴ Serventi Longhi, *op. cit.*, p. 53-56.

³⁵ Antonio Gramsci, *La critica critica*, in “Il Grido del Popolo”, January 12, 1918.

referred to³⁶. In the Bolshevik revolution the *Ordine Nuovo* group saw firstly a great novelty in the Soviets, and maintained that this element of socialist self-management should be imported into Italy, through the establishment of work councils³⁷. Indeed, the Soviets' myth spread among the Italian working masses, even if few had precise ideas on what they really were. Moreover, the opinions on the Soviets diverged even among the same *Ordine Nuovo* intellectuals. Gramsci conceived the Soviet as the "heir and continuator of the Paris Commune", Bordiga as a "bureaucratic state organ", while most understood it in the more general sense of an assembly of all the people, therefore of symbol of direct democracy. The slogan "all power to the Soviets" frequently appeared on the Italian walls³⁸. The opposition existing between the concepts of parliamentarianism and "sovietism" was clearly highlighted by "L'Ordine Nuovo", representing the former nothing more than a "bourgeois dictatorship" and the latter "the dictatorship of the popular masses", that is an authentic proletarian democracy. These issues were addressed also on the same newspaper through articles written by leading exponents of Russian Bolshevism, such as Nikolai Bukharin³⁹.

The Psi's official newspaper "Avanti!", controlled by the maximalist socialists, ultimately moved on a line similar to Gramsci's magazine, albeit with less intellectual and philosophical finesse. Enthusiasm for the Russian and European revolutions filled all its pages, with special attention to the revolutionary movements rampant in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, in particular to Béla Kun's Soviet Hungary. Hence the "Avanti!" was ready to organize strikes and demonstrations against "white terror" in Poland and Hungary and in solidarity with the international revolution. However, the "Avanti!", unlike "L'Ordine Nuovo", did not seem capable of articulating an in-depth analysis of the ongoing revolutions and of the Bolshevik revolution in particular. In effect the "Avanti!" interpreted it as an event brought about by historical necessity, which would manifest itself automatically even in Italy, without having to organize it practically, as the end of the bourgeois regime was judged imminent⁴⁰. Even as regards the adoption of the Soviet model in Italy, although both the maximalist socialists and Gramsci's *Ordinovisti* shared the cult of the Soviets' myth, the maximalists, tied to the essentially prudent and wait-and-see practice of the Italian socialist tradition, proposed to start experience the Soviets gradually, for example initially in one single town⁴¹.

³⁶ Paolo Spriano, *Introduzione*, in *La cultura italiana del '900 attraverso le riviste*, vol. 6, "L'Ordine Nuovo" (1919-1920), Torino, Einaudi, 1963, p. 22-23.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

³⁸ Giorgio Petracchi, *Il mito...*, p. 1117.

³⁹ Nicola Bukharin, *Parlamentarismo e sovietismo*, in "L'Ordine Nuovo", 1 (1919), no. 19, p. 146.

⁴⁰ Gaetano Arfè, *Storia dell'Avanti!*, Roma, Mondo Operaio – Edizioni Avanti!, 1977, p. 115-123; Gaetano Arfè, *Storia del socialismo italiano (1892-1926)*, Torino, Einaudi, 1965, p. 274.

⁴¹ This was the proposal of Serrati, the leader of the maximalist radical wing and the director of the "Avanti!", at the Congress of Bologna of the Italian Socialist Party, in October 1919: Giorgio

The Hungarian revolutionary experiment was followed with great attention by the Italian press, which was divided into a minority, consisting of socialist and radical newspapers, such as the “Avanti!” and “L’Ordine Nuovo”, which openly sympathized with the “proletarian regime” in power in Budapest, and a majority of conservative inspiration – the so-called “bourgeois press” –, in the lead the “Corriere della Sera” and the “Giornale d’Italia”, the latter on nationalist right-wing positions⁴². There were few exceptions in this highly bipolar panorama: the most authoritative example in this respect was represented by “La Stampa” of Turin, historical expression of the liberal-democratic bourgeoisie, which attempted to observe the Bolshevik phenomenon with objective detachment⁴³. For instance, referring to a widespread attitude of preconceived criticism towards the Soviets, “La Stampa” wrote that a similar attitude “does not touch the core of the question, which is not to know whether Bolshevism is democratic or tyrannical, producer or squanderer, angelic or diabolical, and not even if Bolshevism is truly Bolshevistic”, because the real questions were rather what “a year and a half of the Bolshevik regime in Russian and European history” entailed and what it will entail “if it continues”⁴⁴.

The historically liberal and bourgeois-inspired press, such as the “Corriere della Sera”, maintained over time a firm attitude of condemnation of Bolshevism, especially due to its anti-democratic, authoritarian and violent regime. In Italy, the “Corriere” constantly denounced, in the first post-war period, the danger of an Italian Bolshevik drift. It did not condemn the strikes as such, but insofar as they were characterized by subversive political purposes, especially when they took on international meaning, for example in the case of the socialist strike of July 1919, proclaimed in solidarity with the Soviet governments of Russia and Hungary. Above all, the “Corriere” denounced the attempt to sovietise Italy through the creation of the factory councils, especially by Turin socialists, supported by “L’Ordine Nuovo”⁴⁵.

The “Corriere della Sera” in 1919 had observed with particular attention, through the articles of Arnaldo Fraccaroli, what was happening in Central and Eastern Europe. The Hungarian Soviet Republic seemed to be the first vanguard of the Bolshevik hordes bound towards both Western Europe and Italy, where the “red biennium” then underway aroused the profound anxiety of the bourgeoisie and the conservatives: “Hungarian Bolshevism is in agony. The great tragic turmoil is about to end”, while the followers of Béla Kun were painted as “upset, crushed by

Petracchi, *Il mito...*, p. 1118. See also Stefano Caretti, *La rivoluzione russa e il socialismo italiano (1917-1921)*, Pisa, Nistri-Lischi, 1974.

⁴² Pasquale Fornaro, *Dalla Grande Ungheria all’Ungheria del Trianon: il dramma di una nazione nei riflessi della diplomazia e della stampa italiane*, in “Rivista di Studi Ungheresi”, 13 (2014), p. 39.

⁴³ See Valerio Castronovo, *La stampa 1867-1925: un’idea di democrazia liberale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1987.

⁴⁴ Bergeret, *Guerra e rivoluzione. Il bolscevismo: il nocciolo della questione*, in “La Stampa”, April 13, 1919.

⁴⁵ Glauco Licata, *Storia del Corriere della Sera*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1976, p. 192-193.

the same violence of their reforms, which brought misery, desolation, squalor”⁴⁶. Furthermore, the “Corriere della Sera” denounced the irresponsibility of the Hungarian communists, who granted high pay to the people by printing banknotes in incredible quantities, which consequently had no value anymore: “Fifty crowns a day! One hundred crowns a day! They are wages that impress, that enhance. Bolshevism is therefore heaven on earth!”. However, the truth was that “these high wages are a deception, they are nothing”, since “the Government of the Soviets does not think about the disaster it is preparing for tomorrow, especially for the workers, even if Bolshevism were to continue. It creates an artificial wealth today, which will be an atrocious misery tomorrow”⁴⁷. The “Avanti!” had a different opinion, acknowledging the Hungarian Council government of attempting to resolve the nationalities problem peacefully, meantime accusing the Entente of seeking confrontation with Budapest, and of refusing any collaboration. The Hungarian Bolsheviks, the Psi organ said, “struggle not only to free their brothers and their country [...] but also to ensure a minimum of economic unity which [...] is indispensable” and “to procure political and economic freedom to those races and nations that have lived with them for centuries”⁴⁸.

Between 1919 and 1920, in reaction to the fear of the “Bolshevik contagion” in Italy and the pro-Bolshevik attitude held by the majority maximalist wing of Italian socialism, anti-Bolshevik militant organizations began to form outside the traditional parties, with the aim of bringing citizens together on an anti-revolutionary platform, in order to defend the “bourgeois order”. For example, between March and April 1919, the anti-Bolshevik People’s Union was founded in Milan, aiming to broaden its action throughout Italy and gather all the “good Italians” regardless of their party affiliations. The following words read on a propaganda leaflet from this organization: “Citizen! Do you have a party? We don’t ask you what it is. Are you a good Italian? It is enough for us”. In June 1919 the prefect of Genoa informed the Ministry of the Interior that the Union was “constituted among those elements of the generous Italian people [...] above and outside of any party or association” to “avert from Italy [...] the danger of a revolution, which delays and compromises the prompt realization of right social aspirations”. However, in spite of the alleged apolitical nature of the association, which presented itself as exclusively devoted to the superior interests of the homeland, it was evident that its militants belonged almost exclusively to the circles of interventionism of a nationalist orientation, the same environments that were then converging in support to nascent fascism⁴⁹. Indeed, Mussolini was able

⁴⁶ Arnaldo Fraccaroli, *La mascherata funebre del comunismo ungherese*, in “Corriere della Sera”, May 7, 1919.

⁴⁷ Arnaldo Fraccaroli, *Com’è brutto il paradiso! Nell’Ungheria dei bolscevichi*, in “Corriere della Sera”, May 30, 1919.

⁴⁸ *I Soviet in Ungheria*, in “Avanti!”, April 3, 1919.

⁴⁹ Andrea Mariuzzo, *L’emergere dell’antibolscevismo nell’opinione pubblica italiana*, in “Annali della Fondazione Ugo La Malfa. Storia e politica”, 31 (2016), p. 121-122.

to synthesize a new ideology. On the one hand he rejected Bolshevism proposing to defend the interests of the great industrial and agrarian owners while on the other he sought to interpret the will of change of the “Italian producers”, proposing a model – rather vague in reality – of people’s spiritual revolution, to be opposed to the disruptive idea of political revolution that came from Soviet Russia⁵⁰.

The Catholic milieu also lined up, along with the liberal, conservative and national-fascist milieus, in the condemnation of Bolshevism, which in Italy was identified in the Italian Socialist Party, where the maximalist wing was in the majority. Catholics, with the founding of the Italian People’s Party in 1919, had attempted to reconcile a democratic platform with the inter-classist and corporate vision of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. Thus, they had the ambition to conquer the popular masses, mainly the peasants, in competition with the Socialist Party, a fearsome rival being the only other mass party on the field that emerged from the first post-war national elections, in November 1919, with universal male suffrage and proportional electoral system. The opinions of the Catholic press on Russian Bolshevism were therefore terrifying, because Russia was depicted as the realm of human aberration, an authentic Dante’s Hell. For example, the Catholic magazine “*Studium*” in February 1919 wrote that “integral Russian socialism, like the Germanic one, is the product of sensational defeats” and consequently represented an “abortion, the monster, Caliban generated by the national disaster and by the failure of the program of a whole people”. Ultimately, according to “*Studium*”, “Bolshevism will show itself for what it really is, an instinct for greed, a slashed and inverted imperialism, the pulverization of the struggle in the individuality of the crime”⁵¹. On the other hand, the socialists continued to oppose such images of terror: “Bolshevism, Soviet, Lenin. Say these words, and the bourgeoisie all over the world will throw you against a storm of swearing. With a mixture of ignorance, hatred and terror, the bourgeois press will vomit the most atrocious slanders”. In Soviet Russia – it was explained – “the parasite, the exploiter, those who live on the work of others” could not exercise political power, but “the transitory class dictatorship cannot, however, in any way be confused with the overpowering of a minority [...] to the detriment of the community. On the contrary, the freedom of the press, of assembly, of association are fully guaranteed”⁵². The experience of the Hungarian Republic of Councils was personally followed by the Italian socialist parliamentarian Oddino Morgari, who at the beginning of September 1919, after the defeat of Béla Kun, heartily denounced the unleashing of the “white terror” in Hungary with the

⁵⁰ Emilio Gentile, *op. cit.*, p. 214-216.

⁵¹ Francesco Aquilanti, *Esperienza socialista*, in “*Studium*”, 13 (1919), no. 2.

⁵² *Il regime dei Soviet in Russia*, in “*Avanti!*”, May 1, 1919.

complicity of the Entente: “white terror in Hungary takes fierce forms. Anti-Semitic pogroms are followed by systematic killings of people in prisons”⁵³.

The image of the “red terror”, conveyed by the anti-Bolshevik press in Italy in 1919, contributed significantly to create the myth of “Russian barbarism” and “Asian barbarism” which would later have great fortune in Italy both during Fascism and the Cold War. On the other hand, the myth of the October revolution would remain an essential reference for most of the Italian Left, and in particular for the Communist Party, until the end of the 1980s. It can therefore be said that in the first post-war period the ideological foundations were laid for the deep rift between the pro-Soviet left and the anti-communists, which would characterize the history of Italy for a large part of the twentieth century⁵⁴.

The image of Bolshevism in the Italian public opinion, 1917-1919

Abstract

This article examines some of the most significant Italian periodicals between 1917 and 1919, both the conservative and the radical ones, with the aim of analysing the perception of the image of Bolshevism in Italy, from the Russian February Revolution to the attempts to export the Bolshevik experience in Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: Bolshevism; Conservatism; Socialism; Italy; press; political perception.

⁵³ *Il terrore bianco in Ungheria. Un appello del compagno Morgari*, in “Avanti!”, September 2, 1919. See Giuseppe Calciano, *Appunti e documenti sull'attività internazionale di Oddino Morgari*, in “Rivista storica del socialismo”, 10 (1967), no. 32, p. 155-190.

⁵⁴ Alexander Höbel, *Dal “terribile 1956” alla “solidarietà nazionale”. Il Pci, il Psi e la Rivoluzione d'Ottobre*, in *Sfumature di rosso*, p. 206-239; Tommaso Detti, *La Rivoluzione d'ottobre e l'Italia*, in “Studi Storici”, 15 (1974), no. 4, p. 881-893; Santi Fedele, *L'autunno del mito. La Sinistra italiana e l'Unione Sovietica dal 1956 al 1968*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2016; Silvio Pons, *Berlinguer e la fine del comunismo*, Torino, Einaudi, 2006.

ABREVIERI

<i>AARMSI</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice
<i>AARMSL</i>	= Analele Academiei Române, Memoriile Secțiunii Literare
<i>AARPAD</i>	= „Analele Academiei Române”, seria II, București, 1879-1916
<i>AA.SS.</i>	= <i>Acta Sanctorum</i> , ed. Bollandisti, III ^a ediție, Parigi 1863-1870
<i>AB</i>	= Arhivele Basarabiei
<i>ACNSAS</i>	= Arhivele Consiliului Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității
<i>AE</i>	= L'Année Epigraphique, Paris
<i>AIR</i>	= Arhiva Istorică a României
<i>AIAC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie Cluj
<i>AIIAI</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>AIIC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj
<i>AIINC</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, Cluj
<i>AIIX</i>	= Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol”, Iași
<i>ALIL</i>	= Anuarul de Lingvistică și Istorie Literară, Iași
<i>ALMA</i>	= <i>Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi</i> . Genève.
<i>AM</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei, Iași
<i>AMAE</i>	= Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe
<i>AmAnthr</i>	= American Anthropologist, New Series, Published by Wiley on behalf of the American Anthropological Association
<i>AMM</i>	= Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis, Vaslui
<i>AMMB</i>	= Arhiva Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași
<i>AMN</i>	= Acta Musei Napocensis
<i>AMR</i>	= Arhivele Militare Române
<i>AMS</i>	= Anuarul Muzeului din Suceava
<i>ANB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, București
<i>ANC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Cluj
<i>ANDMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Direcția Municipiului București
<i>ANG</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Județean Galați
<i>ANI</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Iași
<i>ANIC</i>	= Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale
<i>ANR-Cluj</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Cluj-Napoca
<i>ANR-Sibiu</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Sibiu
<i>ANRM</i>	= Arhivele Naționale ale Republicii Moldova, Chișinău
<i>ANRW</i>	= Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Berlin-New York
<i>ANSMB</i>	= Arhivele Naționale. Serviciul Municipiului București
<i>ANV</i>	= Arhivele Naționale, Vaslui
<i>AO</i>	= Arhivele Olteniei
<i>AP</i>	= Analele Putnei
<i>APH</i>	= Acta Poloniae Historica, Varșovia
<i>AqLeg</i>	= <i>Aquila Legionis. Cuadernos de Estudios sobre el Ejército Romano</i> , Salamanca
<i>AR</i>	= Arhiva Românească
<i>ArchM</i>	= Arhiva Moldaviae, Iași
<i>ArhGen</i>	= Arhiva Genealogică
„Arhiva”	= „Arhiva”. Organul Societății Științifice și Literare, Iași
<i>ArhMold</i>	= Arheologia Moldovei
<i>ASRR</i>	= Arhiva Societății Române de Radiodifuziune
<i>AȘUI</i>	= Analele Științifice ale Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași

- ATS = Ancient Textile Series, Oxbow Books, Oxford și Oakville
 AUAIC = Arhiva Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași
 AUB = Analele Universității „București”
 BA = *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Roma, Città Nuova Editrice
 BAR = Biblioteca Academiei Române
 BArchB = Bundesarchiv Berlin
 BAR int. ser. = British Archaeological Reports, International Series
 BBR = Buletinul Bibliotecii Române
 BCIR = Buletinul Comisiei Istorice a României
 BCMI = Buletinul Comisiei Monumentelor Istorice
 BCU-Iași = Biblioteca Centrală Universitară, Iași
 BE = Bulletin Epigraphique
 BF = Byzantinische Forschungen, Amsterdam
 BJ = Bonner Jahrbücher, Bonn
 BMI = Buletinul Monumentelor Istorice
 BMIM = București. Materiale de istorie și muzeografie
 BNB = Biblioteca Națională București
 BNJ = Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher
 BOR = Biserica Ortodoxă Română
 BS = Balkan Studies
 BSNR = Buletinul Societății Numismatice Române
 ByzSlav = Byzantinoslavica
 CA = Cercetări arheologice
 CAI = Caiete de Antropologie Istorice
 CartNova = *La ciudad de Carthago Nova 3: La documentación epigráfica*, Murcia
 CB = Cahiers balkaniques
 CC = Codrul Cosminului, Suceava (ambele serii)
 CCAR = Cronica cercetărilor arheologice din România, CIMEC, București
 CCh = *Corpus Christianorum*, Turnhout
 CChSG = *Corpus Christianorum. Series Graeca*
 CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, Turnhout, Brepols
 CDM = *Catalogul documentelor moldovenești din Arhivele Centrale de Stat*, București, vol. I-V; supl. I.
 CDȚR = *Catalogul documentelor Țării Românești din Arhivele Statului*, București, vol. II-VIII, 1974-2006
 Chiron = Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, 1971
 CI = Cercetări istorice (ambele serii)
 CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin
 CL = Cercetări literare
 CLRE = *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire*, eds. R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz, K. A. Worp, Atlanta, 1987
 CN = Cercetări Numismatice
 CNA = Cronica Numismatică și Arheologică, București
 CSCO = *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Louvain
 CSEA = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiae Aquileiensis*, Roma, Città Nuova Editrice
 CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Wien, De Gruyter
 CSPAMI = Centrul de Studii și Păstrare a Arhivelor Militare Centrale, Pitești
 CT = Columna lui Traian, București
 CTh = *Codex Theodosianus*. Theodosiani, Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis, I, edidit adsumpto apparatu P. Kruegeri, Th. Mommsen, Hildesheim, 1970-1971
 Cv.L = Convorbiri literare (ambele serii)

„Dacia”, N.S.	= Dacia. Nouvelle Série, Revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne, București
DANIC	= Direcția Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale
DGAS	= Direcția Generală a Arhivelor Statului
DI	= Diplomatarium Italicum
DIR	= <i>Documente privind istoria României</i>
DIRRI	= <i>Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru Independență</i>
DOP	= Dumbarton Oaks Papers
DTN	= <i>Din trecutul nostru</i> , Chișinău
DRH	= <i>Documenta Romaniae Historica</i>
EB	= Études Balkaniques
EBPB	= Études byzantines et post-byzantines
EDCS	= <i>Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss-Slaby</i> (http://www.manfredclauss.de/)
EDR	= <i>Epigraphic Database Roma</i> (http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php)
EpigrAnat	= Epigraphica Anatolica, Münster
ERAsturias	= F. Diego Santos, <i>Epigrafiya Romana de Asturias</i> , Oviedo, 1959.
Gerión	= Gerión. Revista de Historia Antigua, Madrid
GB	= Glasul Bisericii
GCS	= <i>Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller</i> , Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1897-1969
GLK	= <i>Grammatici Latini Keil</i>
HEp	= <i>Hispania Epigraphica</i> , Madrid
„Hierasus”	= <i>Hierasus</i> . Anuarul Muzeului Județean Botoșani, Botoșani
HM	= Heraldica Moldaviae, Chișinău
HU	= Historia Urbana, Sibiu
HUI	= Historia Universitatis Iassiensis, Iași
IDR	= <i>Inscripțiile din Dacia romană</i> , Bucurști-Paris
IDRE	= <i>Inscriptions de la Dacie romaine. Inscriptions externes concernant l'histoire de la Dacie</i> , I-II, Bucarest, 1996, 2000
IGLN	= Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae, Bordeaux
IGLR	= <i>Inscripțiile grecești și latine din secolele IV-XIII descoperite în România</i> , București, 1976
ILLPecs	= Instrumenta Inscripta Latina. <i>Das römische Leben im Spiegel der Kleininschriften</i> , Pecs, 1991
ILAlg	= <i>Inscriptions latines d'Algérie</i> , Paris
ILB	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae. Inscriptiones inter Oescum et Iatrum repertae</i> , Sofia, 1989
ILD	= <i>Inscripții latine din Dacia</i> , București
ILN	= <i>Inscriptions latines de Novae</i> , Poznan
ILLPRON	= <i>Inscriptionum Lapidarium Latinarum Provinciae Norici usque ad annum MCMLXXXIV repertarum indices</i> , Berlin, 1986
ILS	= <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , 1892
IMS	= <i>Inscriptiones Moesiae Superioris</i> , Belgrad
IN	= „Ioan Neculce”. Buletinul Muzeului Municipal Iași
ISM	= <i>Inscripțiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine</i> , București, vol. I-III, 1983-1999
JGO	= Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas
JL	= Junimea literară
JRS	= The Journal of Roman studies, London
LR	= Limba română
MA	= Memoria Antiquitatis, Piatra Neamț
MCA	= Materiale și cercetări arheologice
MEF	= <i>Moldova în epoca feudalismului</i> , vol. I-XII, 1961-2012, Chișinău
MEFRA	= <i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité</i> , Roma

- MGH = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum auspiciis societatis aperiendis fontibus rerum Germanicarum medii aevi*, Berlin 1877-
 MI = Magazin istoric, București
 MIM = Materiale de istorie și muzeografie
 MM = Mitropolia Moldovei
 MMS = Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei
 MN = Muzeul Național, București
 MO = Mitropolia Olteniei
 MOF = Monitorul Oficial al României
 Navarro = M. Navarro Caballero, *Perfectissima femina. Femmes de l'elite dans l'Hispanie romaine*, Bordeaux, 2017.
 NBA = *Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana*, Roma, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum
 NDPAC = *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, I, A-E, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2006; III, P-Z, 2e edizione, Marietti, 2008
 NEH = *Nouvelles études d'histoire*
 OI = Opțiuni istoriografice, Iași
 OPEL = *Onomasticon provinciarum Europae latinarum*, vol. I-IV, Budapesta-Viena, 1994-2002
 PG = *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris, 1886-1912
 PIR = *Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I.II.III*, editio altera, Berlin.
 PLRE = *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vol., eds. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971-1992
 RA = Revista arhivelor
 RBAR = Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române, București
 RC = Revista catolică
 RdI = Revista de istorie
 REByz = *Revue des Études Byzantines*
 RER = *Revue des études roumaines*
 RESEE = *Revue des études Sud-Est européennes*
 RHP = *Die römischen Hilfstruppen in Pannonien während der Prinzipatszeit. I: Die Inschriften*, Viena
 RHSEE = *Revue historique de Sud-Est européen*
 RI = Revista istorică (ambele serii)
 RIAF = Revista pentru istorie, arheologie și filologie
 RIB = *Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, Londra
 RIM = Revista de Istorie a Moldovei, Chișinău
 RIR = Revista istorică română, București
 RIS = Revista de istorie socială, Iași
 RITL = Revista de istorie și teorie literară
 RIU = *Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns*, Budapesta
 RJMH = *The Romanian Journal of Modern History*, Iași
 RM = Revista muzeelor
 RMD = *Roman Military Diplomas*, Londra
 RMM = *Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums*, Mainz
 RMM-MIA = Revista muzeelor și monumentelor, seria Monumente istorice și de artă
 RMR = Revista Medicală Română
 RRH = *Revue roumaine d'histoire*
 RRHA = *Revue roumaine de l'histoire de l'art*
 RRHA-BA = *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art. Série Beaux Arts*
 RSIAB = Revista Societății istorice și arheologice bisericești, Chișinău
 Rsl = Romanoslavica

<i>SAHIR</i>	= Studia et Acta Historiae Iudaeorum Romaniae, București
<i>SAI</i>	= Studii și Articole de Istorie
<i>SCB</i>	= Studii și cercetări de bibliologie
<i>Sch</i>	= <i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> , Paris
<i>SCIA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istoria artei
<i>SCIM</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie medie
<i>SCIV/SCIVA</i>	= Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)
<i>SCN</i>	= Studii și Cercetări Numismatice, București
<i>SCȘI</i>	= Studii și cercetări științifice, Istorie
<i>SEER</i>	= The Slavonic and East European Review
<i>SHA</i>	= <i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
<i>SJAN</i>	= Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale
<i>SMIC</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană, București
<i>SMIM</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie medie, București
<i>SMIMod</i>	= Studii și materiale de istorie modernă, București
<i>SOF</i>	= Südost-Forschungen, München
<i>ST</i>	= Studii Teologice, București
<i>StAntArh</i>	= Studia Antiqua et Archaeologica, Iași
<i>T&MBYZ</i>	= <i>Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de recherches d'histoire et de civilisation byzantines</i>
<i>ThD</i>	= Thraco-Dacica, București
<i>TR</i>	= Transylvanian Review, Cluj-Napoca
<i>TV</i>	= Teologie și viața, Iași
<i>ZPE</i>	= Zeitschrift für Papyralogie und Epigraphik
<i>ZSL</i>	= Zeitschrift für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde