

RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Salvemini's antifascist exile in London: attracting the attention of a British audience

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### Abstract

In 1925 the Fascist dictatorship forced Gaetano Salvemini to leave Italy and begin a new life in exile. Salvemini understood he could find political and financial support in London to achieve two main aims: to live a decent life as an antifascist exile and fight the Fascist dictatorship from abroad. Thanks to a network encompassing intellectuals, academics, journalists, and politicians, London provided Salvemini with a platform for sharing antifascist stances outside Italy. This essay will develop research on this topic by taking into account Salvemini's conference speeches, articles, books, and essays written while in Britain, from 1925 to 1934. The corpus of the selected texts will show that Salvemini carefully singled out topics that were able to attract the attention of a foreign audience, particularly British public opinion. Therefore, the analysis of Salvemini's intellectual production during this period and the reaction of the press will contribute to cast a new light on his antifascist strategies; in other words, it will lead to a consideration of the extent to which being part of a British intellectual network transformed his approach to the antifascist struggle.

**Keywords:** antifascism; exile; transnational studies; intellectual networks; Fascism

### Introduction: in exile between France, Britain, and the United States

Gaetano Salvemini's complex biography and wide-ranging intellectual production have been studied from several points of view, from the 1950s to the present (Cantarella 1986; Grasso 2019). Within such a rich scholarship, in recent years historians have been interested particularly in Salvemini's antifascist exile: they have analysed Salvemini's experience in Britain (Gussoni 2020) and in the United States (Camurri 2015) emphasising its transnational features.

Salvemini decided to leave Italy in 1925 – he was 52 years old – and would eventually return to his homeland only in 1949, well after the end of the Second World War, at the age of 76. During these 24 years, he experienced geographical mobility and financial precariousness, moving between France, Britain, and the United States. Although it is convenient to split Salvemini's exile in two main parts, distinguishing his 'British' and 'American' experience – the first, from 1925 to 1934, with London

as his main centre of interest; the latter, from 1934 to 1949, at Harvard – it is equally essential to acknowledge that these two experiences were strongly interconnected, and that overall, the ‘discovery of the United States’ (Salvemini 2002, 110) and of Britain overlapped until 1934.

In this periodisation, France occupies a secondary role. Cradle of Italian *fuoruscitismo* (Garosci 1953; Fedele 1976; Tombaccini 1988), France was never considered by Salvemini as a country in which he could settle down permanently. He often travelled to the surroundings of Paris, where he spent some time with his wife, Fernande Dauriac, who moved there after leaving Florence (Fantarella 2018). This personal reason made his presence on the French territory more frequent and put him in dialogue with the *fuorusciti*; however, he never looked for an occupation in Paris or addressed his antifascist action to France. Even after 1927 – when, after the outlawing of political parties, many other antifascists left Italy for France and joined the *Concentrazione antifascista* – Salvemini preferred to keep himself distant from that milieu (Gussoni 2020). As he explained in his memoir *Dai ricordi di un fuoruscito* (Salvemini 2002, 76) he considered France as a country flooded with Fascist spies, and although he was aware that it was less expensive in terms of the cost of living, it offered limited job opportunities. In considering Salvemini’s attitude towards antifascism in France – strongly influenced by the presence of Italian political party leaders in exile – a third aspect should be taken into account: a general disillusionment with politics and distrust of political parties. In 1919, Salvemini had been elected as MP within the ‘Combattenti’ list, winning 16,000 preferential votes in the Bari province (Killinger 2002, 151); however, this personal electoral success resulted in a disappointing experience in parliament, which made him decide to permanently abandon political militancy (Salvemini 2001).

Despite Salvemini calling himself a *fuoruscito* in his memoir (2002), in this essay, his experience of mobility in Britain and the United States will be defined exclusively with the term ‘exile’. As Camurri (2015) has clarified, Salvemini’s experience cannot be simply assimilated in the definition of *fuoruscitismo*, if one associates this concept with the trajectory followed by the antifascists who settled mainly in France (or Switzerland) and gathered in the Concentration: rather, Salvemini’s experience should be interpreted through the wider lens of twentieth-century intellectual exile. Distinguishing between *fuoruscitismo* and exile allows us to focus on the British experience (1925–1934) and analyse the extent to which Salvemini developed antifascist strategies which could have a stronger impact on British public opinion than on Italian people living abroad. Given Salvemini’s limited interaction with the Italian community in London (Bernabei 1997; Rampello 2015) it is crucial to consider the significant series of collaborations he established with British intellectuals.

The first section of this essay will summarise the evolution of Salvemini’s antifascist stance in the years 1922–5 and the ‘discovery’ of Britain in the same period. The second part will give an overview on Salvemini’s exile in London, focusing on the intellectual interactions and relationships which allowed him to become an influential voice in the debate on Fascist Italy, particularly in the pages of prestigious British reviews and newspapers, and in public conferences and speeches as early as 1926. The third part will focus on Salvemini’s publications, with a specific focus on the series of pamphlets *Italy To-day*, to show that Salvemini carefully singled out topics that could potentially attract the attention of a foreign audience, particularly British and American public opinion. In conclusion, the analysis of Salvemini’s intellectual production during this period will contribute to cast a new light on his antifascist strategies: in other words, it will lead to a consideration of the extent to which his experience in exile transformed his approach to the antifascist struggle.

### The evolution of Salvemini's antifascism and the discovery of Britain

The years 1922–5 can be considered as a preliminary phase which set the basis of Salvemini's exile, for two main reasons. Firstly, because Salvemini's antifascist stances gradually evolved from a passive, critical observation (and overall underestimation) of Mussolini's government, to a sharp opposition, which forced him to go into exile. Secondly, because these years mark Salvemini's discovery of Britain: besides visiting London twice, he laid the foundations of his British network, getting to know influential intellectuals who would support him in his struggle against the Fascist dictatorship (Gussoni 2020).

Salvemini set foot on British soil for the first time in his life in August 1922: despite the tension that permeated Italy, he did not expect that on October 22, while he was still abroad, the Fascists would march on Rome. In his view, Fascism was a regrettable and violent, but transitory, phenomenon; in fact, not much different from another 'dictatorship' that had previously affected Italy – Giovanni Giolitti's governments. Salvemini was strongly averse to Mussolini's political stances – beginning with nationalism; however, at the time he thought that the only thing to do was to sit and wait for the Fascist government to fail and collapse by itself. He did not publish nor publicly denounce the atrocities of Fascism, either in Italy, or abroad: he discussed them with friends, in the Florentine Circolo di Cultura, and recorded his thoughts in a diary, hoping to be able to reuse his notes in the near future, to write a well-rounded study of Fascism (Salvemini 2001). He had to change his mind dramatically in June 1924, when the Socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti was kidnapped and killed. He then realised the real nature of Fascism and entered a phase of antifascist activism, which resulted in the publication of the clandestine journal *Non Mollare*. Arrested, then released, he decided to leave Italy and continue his antifascist struggle from abroad (Salvemini 2002; Franzinelli 2005).

As Salvemini himself admitted, he had a blurred view of the phenomenon of Fascism until 1924 (Salvemini 2002, 3); nevertheless, by 1922–3 he was aware that Fascism could, at some point, make his life difficult in Italy. Fascinated by British culture – in Florence, he was close to the Anglo-American community and collaborated with the British Institute – in 1922 he seized the opportunity to explore Britain in person. His close friends Mary and Bernard Berenson, art critics living in Florence, had helped him to plan and finance the trip, and had put him in contact with Alys Russell – Mary's sister – who was among the founders of the Fabian Society, and would introduce him to her intellectual circle of liberal-socialist thinkers and activists (Strachey 1981). This first trip allowed Salvemini to personally meet academics and editors with whom he fostered future collaborations, or consolidated existing relationships: George Peabody Gooch, editor of the *Contemporary Review*, in which he had already published an article ('The Roman Question') on 1 July 1922; Ernest Barker, principal of King's College London, who invited him to deliver a series of lectures on the Triple Alliance (similar arrangements were made in Cambridge and Manchester). These kinds of agreements allowed Salvemini to secure his return to London in summer 1923. Besides honouring his lecturing commitments, which were praised by prestigious newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian*, he met the *Guardian's* editor Charles Prestwich Scott – he had a letter of introduction from Geoffrey Scott, the editor's nephew, a scholar in Berenson's circle – and attending the summer school of the Fabian Society, with the aim of expanding his intellectual network.

Salvemini's correspondence and memoir (Salvemini 1985 and 2002) show that, besides allowing him to foster intellectual and academic collaborations, these two trips to London made him consider the opportunity of beginning a new life in Britain and promote a striking antifascist campaign abroad. In 1922, on his way back from London, he predicted: 'When Mussolini removes me from my professorship, I will come to England and give

lectures for 5 guineas each ... I must be ready to find a way to earn my living: and if I knew English, I would find it in England or in the United States' (Salvemini 1985, 80–81). In 1923, he entered Britain with a counterfeit passport, exposing himself to Fascist attacks, since Mussolini, who feared Salvemini could criticise Fascism in his British public speeches, had personally denied him the documents to leave Italy. In that precise moment, he began 'feeling like an exile' and pondered the possibility of planning an antifascist campaign in Britain, supported by influential intellectuals (Salvemini 2002, 4). Nevertheless, after much consideration, he decided to return to Florence and resist any pressure. This passive attitude remained unchanged until the murder of Matteotti, which made him realise the need for action.

A series of protests to commemorate Matteotti, and especially the foundation and publishing of the clandestine periodical *Non Mollare* (22 numbers, from January to October 1925) marked a dramatic change of attitude. Salvemini, with Ernesto Rossi, Carlo and Nello Rosselli and other intellectuals close to the Florentine Circolo di Cultura, intended *Non Mollare* as a reaction against the Fascist escalation of 3 January, stemming from the awareness that the Aventino strategy (the withdrawal from parliament of the opposition parties after Matteotti's murder) had failed (Franzinelli 2005, 3). The journal did not go unnoticed by the Fascist regime: its informers indicated Salvemini as one of the persons responsible for the publication and arrested him in June 1925. Salvemini spent one month in prison; he was then released and set free on probation, until the amnesty of August 1925 revoked the charges against him.

While imprisoned, he received letters of solidarity from British intellectuals, such as Ray Strachey, Bolton King, John Maynard Keynes, George Macaulay Trevelyan, and Thomas Okey, whom he had met during his trips to London. Bolton King and Thomas Okey, together with the Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald, also expressed their support in public, signing an appeal published by Piero Gobetti's *Rivoluzione liberale*. In Britain, newspapers and journals such as *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily News*, *Daily Herald*, *Observer* and *Foreign Affairs* reported the news of the trial. Henry Wickham Steed, editor of the *Review of Reviews*, and in contact with the prominent Catholic antifascist Luigi Sturzo – who, meanwhile, had settled in London, himself in exile – was the person who devoted himself more efficiently to the cause. He published an appeal in his journal, and at the same time he persuaded the Foreign Office to confidentially discuss the case with Mussolini through the British Ambassador in Rome. The consequence of this meeting was twofold: the Fascist leader realised that Salvemini had an influence in London's intellectual milieu and that this influence could be used to change the perception of Fascism abroad; Salvemini realised that in Britain he could count on this influence to obtain protection, earn his living, and carry out a striking antifascist campaign (Gussoni 2020).

However, Salvemini's path towards exile was not as linear as it might seem: although convinced that life in Italy would be dangerous for him, when crossing the border in August 1925, he still believed that he could stay safely abroad for a short period of time and, once the dust had settled, that he would be able to return to his university chair in Florence. He eventually decided not to return at the beginning of October, after the assassination of two Florentine antifascists, Gustavo Consolo and Gaetano Pilati (Bonsaver, 2010). This episode made him realise that he had to continue abroad 'a struggle which [was] no longer possible to carry out in Italy' (Salvemini 1985, 430): he resigned from his university post and seized the opportunity to communicate his decision to *The Times* (1925) and *The Manchester Guardian* (1925), which commented on the case, showing a growing interest in Salvemini both as an historian and an antifascist.

In conclusion, the experiences of 1922–3 allowed Salvemini to be held in high esteem by intellectuals, academics and newspaper editors, who proactively showed their support in 1925. At the same time, Salvemini was able to use the personal esteem that he had

gained and make it part of a wider antifascist strategy plan, which would involve British intellectuals, aiming to have an impact on British public opinion and change the misleading perception of Mussolini as a leader bringing order and stability to Italy, as disseminated by Fascist propaganda (Baldoli 2003, Colacicco 2018).

### The support of British intellectuals

In November 1925, in a letter to his friend Mary Berenson – the person who most inspired his interest in Britain and facilitated his introduction to intellectual circles through Alys Russell – Salvemini lucidly summarised his feelings: ‘When I am in London, I am not in exile: I am at my home, in the homeland of my heart, free among the free’ (Salvemini 1985, 482). Despite the popularity of this quotation (Killinger 2002, 206), until 2020 scholarly research did not provide a comprehensive analysis of Salvemini’s British exile (Audenino 2009; Grasso 2009; Signori 2009; Camurri 2015), the importance of which has now been demonstrated. Between 1925 and 1934, Salvemini devoted himself to the antifascist cause by delivering lectures and participating in debates; publishing articles, appeals, and letters to the editors of the most important British newspapers; editing, with Virginia Crawford, the series of pamphlets *Italy To-day*; writing books such as *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (1922) and *Mussolini diplomate* (1932); raising support for antifascists in exile through the Italian Refugee Relief Committee; and planning clandestine actions to help antifascists arrested in Italy (Gussoni 2020). Salvemini’s statement on not feeling in exile in London, but rather considering himself a free person supported by equally free people, is explained by the fact that he was surrounded by an intellectual circle that made the antifascist cause their own, as they had already proved with their commitment following his arrest. At the same time, being part of a network allowed him to become an influential voice in the political debate around Fascism and bring the topic to the fore in British newspapers as early as 1926. In this section, we will focus on some of Salvemini’s most significant interactions with British intellectuals and how these interactions had an impact on his antifascist campaign.

One of the key features that emerged from the analysis of Salvemini’s network in exile is the presence of women, who played a leading role in planning, supporting, and making Salvemini’s antifascist strategy more effective. Alys Russell, Marion Rawson, Virginia Crawford and Isabella Massey represented the working force behind every activity carried out by Salvemini in those years. Besides providing him with the necessary tools for performing his tasks – translating papers and helping him improve his English language proficiency – Russell, Rawson, Crawford, and Massey were a source of contacts, information, and inspiration for Salvemini’s whole antifascist campaign. They put their expertise at the service of the antifascist cause, and this equal relationship resulted in a process of mutual intellectual exchange which enhanced Salvemini’s campaign.

The relationship between Salvemini and Alys Russell – established since 1922 thanks to Mary Berenson – gives us the opportunity to explore this point further. Shortly after his arrival in London, having decided not to return to Italy, Salvemini started planning his antifascist activity with Russell. She started making arrangements for him to deliver ‘a course on 1. How Fascism came to power 2. How a Fascist Dictatorship Works in Daily Life and 3. The Struggle against *Fascismo*’.<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Russell’s support, between January and March 1926, Salvemini began an intense lecturing activity, which would see him deliver around 65 public speeches by the end of the year (Salvemini 1985, 543). Russell was hosting him at her house in St Leonard’s Terrace, Chelsea: her unpublished correspondence to her sister proves the liveliness of this milieu, attended by Fabian intellectuals and members of the London School of Economics, including the political scientists Graham Wallas, Harold Laski, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (Clarke 1978;

Wiener 1971), and the Classics scholar Gilbert Murray, a close friend of Russell's from the time of her marriage to the philosopher Bertrand Russell (Bruneau 2007), whom she divorced in 1921. It is crucial to mention these particular names since they were directly involved in the organisation of three lectures on Fascist Italy which took place in the first months of 1926: the first, held on 19 January at the National Liberal Club (London); the second, on 17 February, at the Oxford Branch of the League of Nations Union; and the third on 23 March, again in London, at Essex Hall.

Before addressing the content of these lectures and their impact, it is important to note that each of them was chaired by a prominent British intellectual already in Salvemini's circle of acquaintances. The presence of Graham Wallas at the National Liberal Club, Gilbert Murray at the League of Nations Union, and Henry Wickham Steed at Essex Hall must be considered as a demonstration of personal esteem and support to the antifascist cause, and served to publicly acknowledge Salvemini as a leading, reliable expert on Fascist Italy. Since the Fascist government sponsored its own propagandist in Britain – Luigi Villari, who 'flooded Britain with books, lectures, letters to the editor' (Salvemini 2002, 86) – it was essential to be able to counter Villari's activity with an equally powerful support, which Salvemini found in his intellectual network.

If the fact of having Wallas and Murray as chair of the first two lectures can be considered as evidence of Russell's involvement in planning those events, the organisation of the March lecture at Essex Hall gives us a clearer idea of the extent of her support. Russell and her niece, the suffragist activist Ray Strachey, advertised the event widely in feminist magazines such as *Time and Tide* and *Woman's Leader*, began selling tickets, and enrolled 20 intellectuals in their circle, who formed a committee and acted as 'patrons' in support of Salvemini. Besides Steed, who chaired the event, the list included Wallas, Laski and Lowes Dickinson, Sydney and Beatrice Webb, the suffragist Millicent Fawcett, the social activist Naomi Mitchison, the writers H. G. Wells and Lytton Strachey, the historians Philip Guedalla and H. A. L. Fisher, the politicians Augustine Birrell and Lord Haldane (Gussoni 2020, 73–74). It is interesting to note that information on the list of patrons can be obtained from a report that Luigi Villari wrote to Mussolini after the lecture took place, to reassure him about the irrelevance of the event. Although Villari belittled the impact of the lecture – maintaining that, overall, the event was attended only by 'young ladies and gentlewomen' – he admitted that such a long list of patrons 'might seem a serious matter, especially for the Italian public'. Therefore, he carefully denigrated the patrons one by one: to mention a few, Steed was described as an 'italophobe and unscrupulous man'; Birrell and Lord Haldane were considered as no longer having an impact on politics; Fisher's support was explained by Villari as an act of solidarity towards a fellow historian, rather than a political stance, adding that Salvemini was usually described in Britain as a 'leading scholar with a European reputation, however no one has ever read a line of his *Magnati e Popolani*'.<sup>2</sup> Despite Villari's disparaging views, it is evident that having a long list of prominent supporters allowed Salvemini to strengthen his positions and widen his audience.

Furthermore, evidence of the interest generated in Britain by the National Liberal Club lecture can be found in the Fascist reaction: in his *Dai ricordi di un fuoruscito*, Salvemini mentioned this as one of the episodes that were used by the Fascist government to accuse him of anti-Italian propaganda and to validate the measure that deprived him of Italian citizenship towards the end of 1926 (Salvemini 2002, 34–41). The same lecture had caused him to receive death threats from the Fascist newspaper *Impero* – threats that did not go unnoticed by Salvemini's British supporters, especially Steed and Ernest Barker, who made arrangements to preserve his safety: the entrance of Essex Hall was patrolled by two policemen on the occasion of the March lecture (Gussoni 2020, 74–75).

Before addressing the content and the impact of these lectures through the reports published by British newspapers, it is useful to underline that the relationship between Salvemini and *The Manchester Guardian* become significant at the beginning of 1926. Its editor, Charles Prestwich (C.P.) Scott, whom he had personally known since 1923, had already supported Salvemini at the time of his arrest, and would constantly champion the antifascist cause in the following years (Gussoni 2020, 141–153). Between December 1925 and January 1926, *The Manchester Guardian* published a series of three articles on ‘The Dictatorship in Italy’ (Salvemini 1925a, 1925b, 1926) signed by Salvemini, which contributed to shedding light on the real nature of Fascism. It is not surprising, therefore, that Salvemini’s lectures attracted the attention of Scott’s newspaper.

Commenting on the 19 January lecture, *The Manchester Guardian* (1926a) reported as follows: ‘Professor G. Salvemini, late Professor of Modern History in Florence University, gave a moderate, brilliant, and comprehensive lecture on “The origins, meaning, and results of Italian Fascism” at the National Liberal Club tonight’. A similarly enthusiastic review was published after the March lecture:

The audience which filled the hall listened with great enjoyment to the Professor’s illuminating and witty analysis of Fascism and its achievements, or its harvest of other’s people work, and at the end only one supporter of the Fascist government [Luigi Villari] put a question’ (*The Manchester Guardian* 1926b).

These reports allow us to know more about the content of the lectures (which was, overall, the same): they were arranged around three main points, which Salvemini would further develop in his major study on *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy*, published in the US in 1927 and then, in a revised version, in Britain in 1928:

Professor Salvemini in the course of his full and interesting descriptions of the rise of Fascism contended that to explain it as due to Fascism having saved Italy from Bolshevik revolution was a complete mistake. Italy, like other countries, suffered from post-war neurasthenia. ... The March on Rome could easily have been stopped if the military class had wanted to stop it – a couple of machine-guns could have scattered it. It was not a revolution; it was a *coup d’état* carried out by a military and capitalistic clique without any rising of the people. ... Professor Salvemini, in examining the claim that the dictatorship had saved the economic life of Italy, and that the abolition of liberal institutions was necessary to that end, said this was an arbitrary assumption. The economic revival was largely the result of the 20 million gold lire borrowed during the war from England and America, so far as it was not due to natural recovery, and he pointed out that a million Italians are now working in France and sending money home (*The Manchester Guardian* 1926a).

Salvemini’s analysis of the rise of the Fascist dictatorship was on each occasion enhanced by the interaction with the intellectual chairing the event. The article commenting on the National Liberal Club lecture provides us with details of Graham Wallas’s intervention, showing that he stressed the idea of Fascism as being not merely an Italian affair, but a problem ‘common to all civilised countries’:

‘Do you suppose’, Professor Wallas asked, ‘that merely saying that such things do not happen in England, or that the spirit of the English people would rise against them, would make us quite secure? It is not quite certain that everyone would have the steady, cold, two-in-the-morning pluck to stand up unarmed and oppose an armed

minority, and accept exile and ruin rather than make terms with the unclean thing.’ (*The Manchester Guardian* 1926a).

Salvemini aimed to overcome the belief, thoroughly disseminated by Fascist propaganda abroad, of Mussolini as a dictator who had brought back order and security to Italy, and therefore the idea that Fascism had to be considered as a domestic matter, which would not impact the international situation. For this reason, he plainly pointed out what Fascism meant in everyday life – the suppression of liberty – and, following up on Wallas’s words, he stressed the need of getting the support of British public opinion:

One of the worst features of the dictatorship was that all citizens were obliged to make recognition of it, and Professor Salvemini ended with drawing an impressive picture of the violation of conscience, the sufferings and exile that followed from this state of affairs. ‘Great Britain is for us Italians the country of liberty. We see in every Englishman something of Gladstone. When we read praises of Fascism in English papers and books we are filled with bewilderment and dismay. If these writers, who treat our shame and anguish so lightly, recognised all the evil they were doing, I feel sure they would mend their ways.’ (*The Manchester Guardian* 1926a).

These examples show that being supported by an intellectual network that he had been nurturing since 1922 gave Salvemini the opportunity to express his view on Fascism more effectively. The endorsement of prominent intellectuals allowed him to address himself not to a limited audience of Italian people living abroad, but rather to British public opinion, which he considered crucial in order to jeopardise Mussolini’s international reputation.

### Fascism explained to a British audience

The organisation and delivery of the three lectures presented in the previous section exemplify the concerted effort of Salvemini’s network in Britain, which allowed him to have a platform to express his political stance only a few months after the beginning of his exile. He was utterly convinced that antifascism would have an impact only if it managed to gather the attention of foreign public opinion – especially British and American. As he wrote at the end of 1926 to his friend, the social activist Umberto Zanotti Bianco, his opinion was based on Mussolini’s weaknesses in dealing with the international order:

Mussolini will one fine day do something crazy on foreign policy. Then, *if we had worked hard enough abroad*, he would find himself opposed by the whole of Europe. There will be no need for war. An economic boycott will suffice. Then everything will fall apart. And then it will be our time. The key position is not in Italy, nor France. The key is in England and the United States. We must address our efforts to these countries. (Salvemini 1985, 549).

Of course, the evolution of the international scenario would prove to be more complex than this. However, this preliminary observation on Mussolini’s foreign policy, which would be the central idea explored in *Mussolini Diplomate*, first published in 1932 (Salvemini 2017), resulted in the development of an antifascist strategy addressed to a foreign audience. In other words, Salvemini presented Fascism through specific topics which could appeal to a British and American audience, counting on the endorsement or direct involvement of prominent intellectuals. This section will analyse Salvemini’s strategy by



presenting a selection of publications which can be considered as representative of the main topics he and his supporters addressed throughout the years 1926–34.

On a quantitative level, the list of Salvemini's written contributions of these years is remarkable: in Cantarella's *Bibliografia salveminiana* (1986, 166–183) it occupies 20 pages encompassing books, articles, letters to the editor, interviews and pamphlets, published in Italian and in English, in Britain, the United States and, less often, in France. In order to navigate such a vast production, it seems useful to focus the attention on a specific editorial project – *Italy To-day* – which can be considered as representative of Salvemini's strategy, both for the aim of appealing to a British and American public, and for being endorsed by British intellectuals.

The editorial history of *Italy To-day*, its relevance within Salvemini's exile experience, and the role of his network in supporting and distributing the publication, have been addressed recently (Gussoni 2020, 153–166). It was a series of monthly or bimonthly pamphlets published in English, in Britain and in the United States from 1929 to 1932, carrying the subtitle 'Documents Published by Friends of Italian Freedom' and edited by Virginia Crawford.

Crawford, a Catholic social activist and suffragist, had known Luigi Sturzo since 1923 and it is likely that this acquaintance allowed her to meet Salvemini when he joined his fellow exile in London (Farrell-Vinay 2010; Grasso 2009). She was also a journalist, interested in Italian affairs – mainly history of art, but also politics. In 1923, she had published an article on 'The Rise of Fascism and What it Stands for', in which she rhetorically asked: 'can his [Mussolini's] talents and his force of character enable him to triumph permanently over the inherent weakness of position won for himself by force and violence and illegality?' (Crawford 1923). Together with her niece, the translator Marion Rawson, Crawford would be one of Salvemini's most active supporters throughout his exile, and *Italy To-day* must be considered as the most tangible result of their collaboration. They both wrote and edited the issues published; however, Salvemini preferred to keep his name in the background, and let Crawford, on behalf of the 'Friends of Italian Freedom', illustrate the political, social, and economic consequences of the Fascist dictatorship. As Elisa Signori (2009, 34) noted, this prevented *Italy To-day* from being attributed 'directly to the circle of Italian antifascism' and served to 'enhance its credibility'. In Carlo Rosselli's words, *Italy To-day* represented 'the only antifascist paper compiled by influential and independent foreign intellectuals, at their own expense and personal effort' (Schiavi 1956, 261–262).

In the foreword of the first issue we read:

It is proposed by the Friends of Italian Freedom to issue, month by month, a series of pamphlets in which will be classified documents bearing on the Fascist State and information collected from various sources that would otherwise not be easily available to the English public.

As Fascism has given rise to a profusion of published matter, much of it ill-informed or even wholly misleading, the present series of pamphlets represents an attempt to sift the grain from the chaff and to collect in a convenient form material that is worth preserving. It is hoped the enterprise will be welcomed by all friends of Italy who deplore the present political condition of the country and look forward to the return to a regime of conciliation and liberty. (Crawford 1929a)

This passage elucidates Crawford and Salvemini's aim to design a series of publications suitable for anglophones which would provide the British and American audience with the necessary tools to understand Fascism – and hopefully develop antifascist stances – as part of Salvemini's broader programme of building opposition to Mussolini rooted in

international public opinion. The kind of documents published by *Italy To-day* encompassed compelling articles that had already appeared in the British and American press, long documents which would not find space in any ordinary review or newspaper, and unpublished studies tailored to meet the needs of the British and American audience. For this reason, *Italy To-day* can be considered as an anthology of the topics which Salvemini considered relevant to attract public opinion.

It seems useful to list below the titles of each issue, which serve to identify editorial choices and recurrent topics.<sup>3</sup>

January 1929	The 'Corporative State' in Fascist Italy
February 1929	Economic Italy in 1928
March 1929	Fascist Electoral Methods
April 1929	Is Fascism an Economic Success? A Newspaper Controversy
May 1929	The Lateran Treaty (The Complete Text)
June 1929	The Fascist Special Tribunal
July 1929	Political Prisoners and Police Surveillance
August 1929	Italian Liberals and the Lateran Treaties
September 1929	An American Enquiry
October 1929	Internment Under Fascist Rule
November 1929	Fascist Rule in South Tyrol
December 1929	Three Views on Fascism
January 1931	The Latest Plot (by Gaetano Salvemini)
February 1931	Fascism: Year VIII (by Percy Winner)
March 1931	Outwitting the Fascists (by Emilio Lussu)
April 1931	To the Italian Workers: A Clandestine Pamphlet issued by the Secret Society 'Justice and Liberty'
May 1931	The Case of Vinciguerra and Rendi (by A British Resident in Rome)
June 1931	Prisoners of Fascism (by a British Resident in Italy)
July-August 1931	The Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State
September 1931	The Vatican and the Fascist Regime (by Francesco Luigi Ferrari)
October 1931	The Education of the Italian People
November-December 1931	Lauro de Bosis
January 1932	Mussolini and Disarmament
February 1932	The Oath of the University Professors
March-April 1932	A Controversy concerning the Oath of University Professors
May-June 1932	Land Reclamation and Fascism
July-August 1932	The Discovery of Italy
September-October 1932	Italy from 1926 to 1931

By looking at this list, we can see that in 1929, the issues were presented with their titles only, whereas in 1931 the name (or pseudonym) of the contributor appeared more frequently. This strategy can be explained as aiming to strengthen *Italy To-day's* reliability: in 1929 its priority was to obtain a readership presenting unbiased information; from 1931, the same readership would be educated enough to recognise the trustworthiness of opinion expressed by prominent antifascist exiles, including Salvemini, Emilio Lussu and Francesco Luigi Ferrari.

In this sense, it is useful to compare two issues dealing with the Fascist economy. The first is dated February 1929, and its foreword, written by Crawford, states:

This, the second pamphlet of the series, consists of extracts from the American COMMERCE REPORTS ... The reports, as can be seen, are those sent home by the American Commercial Attaché in Rome and by American Consuls in various Italian cities. They are not, therefore, easily available to English readers, while their value lies in the fact that they are based solely on financial and commercial considerations without any political bias. (Crawford, 1929b)

Overall, the reports described the 1927–8 economic situation as depressed and not improving. This plain presentation of data, almost without comment, can be compared to the discussion of Fascist economy presented in the September–October 1932 issue, reprinting a controversy between Villari and Salvemini which took place in the pages of the *Economist* between July and October 1931. The debate concerned the economic crisis in Italy, which, according to Villari, was to be seen as part of the global, post-1929 crisis, whereas in Salvemini's view, it had begun in Italy as early as 1927. When discussing the matter in 1929, Salvemini and Crawford let the Commerce Reports speak for themselves; in 1932, they decided to publish a 22-page-long appendix, signed by Salvemini in person, in which he added details to his argument and carefully dismantled Villari's views, making references to the issue of February 1929 to further support his thesis:

Detailed information about the serious crisis which overtook Italian economic life in 1927 is to be found in the reports which the Commercial Attaché of the United States in Rome sent to Washington month by month. The reports for 1928 are collected in the green pamphlets of Feb. 1929. (Salvemini 1932, 11)

This exchange of views between Salvemini and Villari also allows us to consider another feature of Salvemini's strategy: a plain, straightforward writing style, which could appeal to the anglophone reader. As early as 1908 – at the time, he was working with Alfredo Galletti to reform the Italian middle school – Salvemini considered English as 'the language of clarity and simplicity': studying the English language would educate young Italians to develop a 'clear, emphatic, concise style'. He believed that 'in Anglo-Saxon thought, facts, experience, plain data ... assert themselves in all their bare and emphatic reality' (Bucchi 2023, 469–470). This approach is reflected in the following passage of the same appendix used to contradict Villari's views:

As if all this were not enough, the figures when sent in to the Board of Social Insurances in Rome are systematically 'cooked', in order that Mussolini and his propaganda-agents may announce to the world that the Italian unemployment figures 'compare very favourably' with those of other countries.

From the material at my disposal I submit to the reader some proofs which I have drawn exclusively from the year 1930. (Salvemini 1932, 25)

The economy was just one of the themes which were developed in order to explain Fascism to a British and American audience: the list of issues allows us to appreciate the importance of other questions, including the organisation of the state; Fascist education and the imposition on professors of an oath of allegiance; the relationship with the Catholic Church; the use of justice and the treatment of opponents; the views expressed by foreign journalists. Each topic was addressed according to its own, intrinsic, relevance, but also in a timely manner: if one looks at the year 1931 – when several members of *Giustizia e Libertà* were arrested and put on trial – the theme of justice and the treatment of opponents took up five out of ten issues. Similarly, the issue of October 1929 was devoted to discussing Carlo Rosselli, Emilio Lussu and Francesco Nitti's escape from internment in Lipari and the subsequent arrest in Italy of Carlo's wife Marion Rosselli, a British citizen – a case which Salvemini had used to stir British public opinion in the press and that was repurposed for *Italy To-day*, providing a complete account of the episode through excerpts taken from the main newspapers. In 1931, to refresh the readers' memory on a topical issue, the history of the escape from Lipari and its consequences was presented again by one of its protagonists, Emilio Lussu, by reprinting a series of articles written in 1930 for the American review *Atlantic Monthly*.

The analysis of how the theme of justice and treatment of political opponents was tackled allows us to consider another feature of Salvemini's strategy: the use of press appeals supported by British intellectuals. Even before Marion Rosselli's arrest took place, the theme of justice was already central in *Italy To-day*, as shown by the June 1929 issue, devoted to the Fascist Special Tribunal. It encompassed a series of letters to the editor published in *The Manchester Guardian* between May and October 1928, followed by a detailed list of people tried by the Tribunal between 1927 and 1928. The issue commented on the series of arrests which followed a bomb attack against the King of Italy – who escaped uninjured – which took place in Milan on 12 April 1928, killing 20 people. Although responsibility for the attack has never been explained – it might have been a Fascist plot – the police inquiry at the time led to the arrest of 500 people in antifascist circles (Giacchin 2009; Franzinelli 2020). Inconclusive investigations continued until 1930, when a Fascist spy, Carlo Del Re, managed to infiltrate *Giustizia e Libertà* and caused the arrest of 24 of its members, including Ernesto Rossi, one of Salvemini's closest friends, who risked being sentenced to death. With a pervasive press strategy supported by *The Manchester Guardian* – and strengthened by the January 1931 issue of *Italy To-day* – Salvemini managed to attract the attention of public opinion asking for a public, fair trial, and transformed the political debate centred on the arrest of Rossi into a broader campaign that aimed to undermine the reliability of the Fascist dictatorship (Gussoni 2020, 141–152). The June 1929 issue of *Italy To-day* provides us with a summary of the strategy adopted in 1928. Firstly, it gave the anglophone reader the opportunity to consider the treatment of political opponents in Italy as it was presented by a group of prominent intellectuals – including Fawcett, Wallas, Wells, Laski, Lowes Dickinson among others – who, on Salvemini's request, signed an appeal sent to *The Manchester Guardian*, which read as follows:

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1928, an atrocious crime was committed in Milan. ... Everyone will desire that those who were guilty of the outrage shall be punished. But it is vitally important that the trial should be so conducted as to prevent a miscarriage of justice. We, therefore, the undersigned, venture to urge the Italian Government not to deprive the persons accused of the elementary right of choosing their counsel, of knowing in good time the evidence to be given against them, and of being publicly tried (*Italy To-day* June 1929, 3).

By calling for the prevention of an injustice, the intellectuals signing the appeal gave Salvemini the opportunity to take up the topic again with a letter to *The Manchester Guardian*, then included in the June issue of *Italy To-day*. The letter elucidated details of three examples of unfair and excessive judgement which allowed Salvemini to conclude:

Those accused of the outrage at Milan will be tried by a tribunal of this nature. ... If neither the public nor the Press are to be admitted to a trial of this kind before such a tribunal, no one will believe in the justice of its sentence. (*Italy To-day* June 1929, 6)

The fact that the London correspondent of the Fascist newspaper *La Tribuna*, Giovanni Engely, felt the urgent need to intervene by sending a letter to *The Manchester Guardian* must be considered evidence of the impact that the British debate had caused in Italy; similarly, Mussolini's brother Arnaldo wrote a harsh attack in *Il Popolo d'Italia*, which was also quoted by *The Manchester Guardian* (*Italy To-day* June 1929, 7). Besides reprinting the whole debate, which included a reply from Graham Wallas to Engely, to further convince its readers of the illegitimate methods adopted by the Fascist regime against its opponents, *Italy To-day* presented a 'List of Convictions', which included details of 'the date, name of the principal prisoner, number of people convicted, the "offence committed", the penalty inflicted, and the official charge'. This approach can be considered as an example of Salvemini's strategy, which aimed at complementing the views of influential intellectuals – who could attract the attention of both the public opinion and the Fascist regime – with factual analysis of the Italian situation, presented through facts and figures.

In conclusion, the collection of *Italy To-day* is a precious source of information on Salvemini's antifascist strategies, revealing the topics which he considered central in order to attract the attention of a British and American audience, and the strategies that he and Crawford adopted in order to fulfil the aim of preparing international public opinion to stand against Mussolini's regime.

## Conclusion

Shedding light on the features of Salvemini's British exile has allowed us to reveal the modernity of his approach and focus on his ability to transform a condition of disadvantage into an opportunity to develop a new strategy to fight the Fascist dictatorship from abroad, undoubtedly different from the strategy he would have adopted had he remained in Italy.

Although it is difficult to concretely measure the impact of Salvemini's antifascist campaign outside his intellectual circle, this essay has shown that the attention he garnered in the press cannot be underestimated. As recent scholarship has demonstrated (Gussoni 2020, 180–196), Salvemini's approach to British political circles and parties was rather limited: his attitude evolved from an appreciation of British politics, during which he obtained support from some members of the Labour Party, to a progressive disillusionment, and a complete disappointment upon realising that even a Labour government would not sacrifice its positive diplomatic relations with Fascist Italy. Undoubtedly, Salvemini could have better exploited his political connections during a phase in which some political goals seemed achievable. However, if one were to consider the impact of Salvemini's campaigns on the evolution of British foreign policy, one could only anticipate disappointing results. Only by considering the features of British political history and the complex dynamics of international relations in the interwar period is it possible to understand how Salvemini positioned himself in light of these issues.

As Camurri (2014) has suggested, it is useful to reassess the twentieth-century exile experience considering 'the cultural conditioning stemming from the new environment

in which [exiles] were welcomed'. In this sense, the analysis of Salvemini's exile in London – including the path that gradually led him to discover Britain and decide not to return to Fascist Italy – has revealed a process of mutual influence between him and the network of intellectuals with whom he shared antifascist stances. On the one hand, being part of an influential network allowed Salvemini to have a platform and gain credibility, as on the occasion of the first lectures of 1926, in which he was supported by influential scholars. On the other hand, Salvemini learned how to make the most out of this support, adopting an antifascist strategy tailored to appeal to a British (and American) audience, selecting relevant topics and applying a factual method of presenting ideas, facts, and figures, which could shed light on the real nature of the Fascist regime, and prepare international public opinion to oppose Mussolini on the field that Salvemini considered crucial, that of foreign policy.

Salvemini's experience also fits in well with Hugo García's scholarly definition of transnational antifascism, as 'largely made by the thinkers and activists ... who tried to check the spread of Fascism by establishing networks and organisations capable of bridging national and ideological boundaries' (García 2016, 567). Although this essay has focused on the British side of Salvemini's exile, it is crucial to acknowledge the transnational dimension of his experience, which went beyond the three countries – France, Britain, and United States – where he lived between 1925 and 1949. It is therefore essential to continue considering Salvemini as a transnational antifascist, exploring the significant relationships and cultural exchanges he had with prominent intellectuals across Europe and the United States, during a span which covered the whole duration of the Fascist dictatorship. This approach would not only enrich our knowledge of one of the most prominent Italian intellectuals, but also enhance our understanding of antifascism in exile.

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## Notes

1. Letter from Alys Russell to Mary Berenson, 22 October 1925, held in Smith, Indiana Correspondence from Family Members, Subseries Russell, Alys Whittall Pearsall (Smith), H.W. mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, b. 7.
2. Report from Luigi Villari to Mussolini, 24 March 1926, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Rome), Ministero Cultura Popolare, Reports, b. 8, f. 82.
3. The year 1930 is not listed since *Italy To-day* assumed a different shape in that year, since it was supposed to be sharing contents with the monthly bulletin *Italia*, issued by the Antifascist Concentration in Paris (Gussoni 2020, 156–157).

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### Italian summary

Nel 1925, a causa della dittatura fascista, Salvemini fu costretto a lasciare l'Italia e a iniziare una nuova vita in esilio. Capì che poteva ottenere sostegno politico ed economico a Londra, per raggiungere due obiettivi principali: condurre una vita onesta e combattere la dittatura fascista dall'estero. Grazie a una rete formata da intellettuali, accademici, giornalisti e politici, Londra offrì a Salvemini la possibilità di far sentire la sua voce e portare l'antifascismo alla ribalta oltre i confini italiani. Questo saggio sviluppa ulteriormente la ricerca su questo argomento prendendo in esame la

produzione scritta di Salvemini durante la sua permanenza in Gran Bretagna, ossia tra il 1925 e il 1934. I testi selezionati dimostrano che Salvemini si concentrò su alcune tematiche che considerava rilevanti e in grado di suscitare l'interesse dell'opinione pubblica britannica. Di conseguenza, l'analisi della produzione di Salvemini in questo periodo e la reazione della stampa intende offrire un contributo alla comprensione delle sue strategie antifasciste; in altre parole, porta a considerare la misura in cui l'essere parte di una rete intellettuale britannica trasformò l'approccio di Salvemini alla lotta antifascista.

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