



## Manuals and textbooks for Italian migrants' teachers in the early Twentieth Century<sup>1</sup>

Manuali e libri di testo per i maestri italiani dell'emigrazione nel primo Novecento

Manuales y libros de texto para profesores italianos de emigración a principios del siglo XIX

Manuais e livros de texto para os professores italianos da emigração no início do Novecentos

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### Abstract

In the wake of the first results of studies on the relationship between the alphabet, emigration and teachers, in the transnational circulation of knowledge and reading books, a very promising furrow for historical-educational research concerns the migration policies of the Italian State, especially in the first twenty years of the twentieth century. The contribution devotes additional attention to the segment of texts published for the “all special” preparation - political, cultural and didactic -, of teachers of emigration, in the courses opened for their training (D’ALESSIO, 2019). The article intends to deal with the specific manuals addressed to them - of which the real model is Cabrini’s *Il maestro degli emigranti* (1912). The texts and books intended to prepare, with the indispensable knowledge and guidelines, those who had to provide adequate instruction to those who were about to leave were intended to encourage the maturation of a specific culture on emigration, among all the teachers in Italy.

**Keywords:** Italian emigration. Teaching culture. Manuals and textbooks for teachers.

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## Resumen

A raíz de los primeros resultados del estudio sobre la relación entre el alfabeto, la emigración y los profesores, en la circulación transnacional del conocimiento y libros de lectura, un camino muy prometedor para la investigación histórico-educativa se refiere a las políticas migratorias del Estado italiano, especialmente en los primeros veinte años del siglo XX. El aporte dedica un suplemento de atención al segmento de textos publicados para la preparación “muy especial” - política, cultural y educativa de los docentes emigrados, en cursos abiertos a su formación (D’ALESSIO, 2019). El artículo pretende abordar los manuales específicos que les son dirigidos, de los cuales el modelo es *Il maestro degli emigranti* de Cabrini (1912). Los textos y libros destinados a preparar, con los conocimientos y la orientación necesarios, a quienes debían dar una formación adecuada a los que se marchaban, pretendían favorecer la maduración de una cultura específica en el ámbito de la emigración, entre todos los profesores de Italia.

**Palabras clave:** Emigración italiana. Cultura docente. Libros de texto y libros de texto para profesores.

## Resumo

Na esteira dos primeiros resultados do estudo sobre a *relação entre o alfabeto, a emigração e os professores*, na circulação transnacional dos saberes e dos livros de leitura, um caminho muito promissor para a pesquisa histórico-educacional diz respeito às políticas migratórias do Estado italiano, especialmente nos primeiros vinte anos do século XX. A contribuição dedica um suplemento de atenção ao segmento de textos publicados para a preparação “muito especial” - política, cultural e educacional dos professores da emigração, em cursos abertos para a sua formação (D’ALESSIO, 2019). O artigo pretende tratar dos manuais específicos que lhes são dirigidos - dos quais o modelo é *Il maestro degli emigranti* de Cabrini (1912). Os textos e livros pretendiam preparar, com os conhecimentos e orientações necessárias, aqueles que deviam dar uma instrução adequada aos que se viam de saída, pretendiam favorecer o amadurecimento de uma cultura específica no campo da emigração, entre todos os professores da Itália.

**Palavras-chave:** Emigração italiana. Cultura professoral. Manuais e livros didáticos para os professores.

## Riassunto

Sulla scia dei primi risultati di studio circa la *relazione tra alfabeto, emigrazione e maestri*, nella circolazione transnazionale dei saperi e dei libri di letture, un solco molto promettente per la ricerca storico-educativa riguarda le politiche migratorie dello Stato italiano specie nel primo ventennio del Novecento. Il contributo dedica un supplemento di attenzione al segmento di testi pubblicati per la preparazione “tutta speciale” - politica, culturale e didattica -, dei maestri dell’emigrazione, nei corsi aperti per la loro formazione (D’ALESSIO, 2019). L’articolo intende occuparsi della specifica manualistica loro indirizzata - di cui il vero modello è *Il maestro degli emigranti* di Cabrini (1912). I testi e libri destinati a preparare, con le cognizioni e gli orientamenti indispensabili, chi doveva fornire l’adeguata istruzione a chi si accingesse a partire intendevano favorire la maturazione di una cultura specifica in materia di emigrazione, fra tutti i maestri d’Italia.

**Parole chiave:** Emigrazione italiana. Cultura magistrale. Manuali e libri di testo per i maestri.

## Introduction

This contribution intends to shed new light on the special action taken by the Italian State to respond to the social phenomenon of emigration at the beginning of the 20th century, “such as to require measures of a juridical-social nature, aimed at regulating, guiding and protecting it successfully”. In particular, it aims to shed light on a rather neglected aspect of the history of state educational policies for emigration. As Ambrosoli (1995) pointed out, the problem of the education of emigrants on national soil, who have yet to depart before embracing their exodus, remains overlooked to this day.

This work analyzes the choices and strategies taken by the Country at the turn of the 20th century, in the wake of the social question of emigration, and, in particular, the commitment by the General Commissariat for Emigration over the span of thirty years, to protect the migratory wave, its policy being “the intellectual and technical improvement of the worker who is forced to emigrate because of extenuating economic circumstances” (CGE, 1924b, p. 7). Standing in the way of these goals were the conditions of ignorance and misery of the adult emigrants. The hardships in diverting the migratory masses were closely linked to the lack of numbers and preparation of a corps of Italian teachers to be entrusted with this task. Next, we intend to examine the solutions that matured during the crucial first decade of the 20th century. In this time initiatives to fight illiteracy within the general population were combined with those aimed at instructing emigrants, by leveraging the mediating actions of teachers and shifting the focus onto the role of certain political, social and cultural protagonists of the time. Particular attention will be paid, in the circuit of *alphabet, emigration, and teachers* (ASCENZI et al, 2019), to specific manuals intended for emigration teachers, not yet explored by studies interested to the circulation of schoolbooks, of preparation and training of the departing emigrant.

What did an emigrant’s teacher’s job entail? How did the training of new teachers fit in with the needs expressed by the political class and associations at the turn of the 20th century? Which characteristics were fostered in the teachers who later on became the best propagators of “emigration awareness” among the public and with the emigrant masses? We will attempt to address these questions by focusing on the content, orientation, and goals laid out in a number of teachers’ manuals from the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century, and comparing the attention paid to books for those who were about to leave their homeland with that paid to texts, often hybrids, assembled for teachers of emigrants. This contribution therefore devotes additional attention to the segment of texts for the political, cultural, and didactic training of emigrant teachers (D’ALESSIO, 2019). The presence of a formalized course dedicated to preparing teachers of emigrants sheds more light on the history of the teaching profession in Italy, particularly in regards to training and recruitment, in addition to the refinement of certain teaching tools and the realization of the delicate, complex task at hand, at a crucial point in Italian history.

### 1. The “special action of the Italian State” for migration policies in the early 20th century

The Commissariato Generale dell’Emigrazione (General Commissariat for Emigration) is a special department dedicated to the counsel of emigrants that had the advantage of unifying services that until then had been handled by multiple ministries. Despite being considered its birth defect by some scholars, the CGE was founded following a law that appeared as a “compromise between governmental and parliamentary projects” (OSTUNI, 2001, p. 312), and,

until its death in 1927 (following the creation of the General Directorate of Italians Abroad), it represented a crucial step in Italian policies on emigration. The normative text of January 31, 1901, no. 23 (BODIO, 1902) represented, in fact, the result and the moment of coagulation of opposing political positions which, through a lively parliamentary debate, had recognized the need to change the legislative attitude sanctioned by the provisions issued between 1868 and 1888<sup>2</sup> of exclusive police control over the migratory phenomenon. Thus began a new season of attention and protection of the flows of migrants leaving Italy, for several reasons. In fact:

The Commissariat, set up as the supreme moderator of Italian emigration, had a very wide-ranging task, which was to supervise and oversee the implementation of all the provisions established by the new law promulgated on January 31, 1901. This [...] brought about a radical innovation in the organization of the State's activity towards the complex phenomenon of emigration (CGE, 1924a, p. 12).

The organization of the Commissariat was based on its Central Office, which set the guidelines for emigration policy while ensuring that it was in full compliance with laws and regulations. It was supported in this by an advisory body, the Higher Council of Emigration, composed of 30 members situated in executive offices within the kingdom and abroad. The wide-ranging functions carried out by the Commissariat referred to Service I for General Affairs, Service II for Internal Affairs and the Transport of Emigrants, and Service III concerning the Affairs and placement of emigrants abroad. Among the many institutional activities carried out by the Central Office, there was also the monthly publication and distribution of the Bulletin of Emigration (which contained studies and research, reviews of foreign legislation, various news on foreign markets and other official acts), together with the free distribution of guides, manuals and information for emigrants about foreign countries and anything else that might be useful to those who were about to depart (D'ALESSIO, 2021). The Commissariat therefore carried out various and onerous functions of “national utility” in order to guarantee the protection and assistance of emigrants, starting from their development at home and abroad.

The law of 1901, in fact, was the first organic law on emigration which, by ensuring a unified approach, gave significant answers, both in its eminently social and economic character, and in the fact that it put the problem of emigration on par with other international issues (RABBENO, 1901). It actually established a form of involvement and protection by the State before departure, in transit, and after the emigrant's arrival. In fact, according to the first General Commissar Luigi Bodio<sup>3</sup> in 1902:

The new Italian law intends to implement the protection of emigrants during the different stages of their movement, namely in their towns of origin, the ports from which they embark, on board the steamers that take them across the Ocean, and, finally, in their countries of destination (BODIO, 1902, p. 11).

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, the previous legislative provisions were united by the same guiding principle: “to protect the emigrant before departure and to guard him against speculation” by regulating the choice of recruiting agents, checking enlistments, and the safety conditions of transport vessels; but, as all this was limited to police control, they did not meet the need of greater political, legal, and economic character that the situation demanded.

<sup>3</sup> Senator Luigi Bodio was the first General Commissar from 1901 to 1904, followed between 1905 and 1908 by Admiral Leone Reynaudi; by Deputy Luigi Rossi between 1908 and 1911; by State Counsellor Pasquale Di Fratta between 1911 and 1912; by Senator Giovanni Gallina from 1912 to 1918; by Senator Mayor des Planches Baron Edmondo between 1918 and 1919; and from 1919 until 1927 by Prof. Giuseppe De Michelis (GRISPO, 1985).

Once the principle of freedom of emigration was established, sights were set on protecting the individual, which then went to reflect on the interests of the homeland. As brought forth by studies on the phenomenon of migration (BEVILACQUA, DE CLEMENTI, FRANZINA, 2001; BONIFAZI, 2013), a shift occurred from a negative policy of personal protection (in the repression of situations of malfeasance and deception of intermediaries) to a positive approach of public protection of the migration phenomenon as no longer only individual, but collective: “in the progressive search for the means to facilitate the placement of workers and settlers abroad, in such a way as to make the interest of the mass of emigrants coincide with the superior interest of the economy and national needs” (CGE, 1924b, p. 35). There is no doubt, when considering Bevilacqua’s reflections, that this characteristic of emigration “as a form of work enterprise had its highest expression in the first fifteen years of the 20th century, and had as its main protagonists the peasants of the South” (BEVILACQUA, 2001, p. 129).

Within the spectrum of state interventions, a leading role was played by the new governmental body of the General Commissariat for Emigration<sup>4</sup>, which focused its action on three main plans for the development of emigrants<sup>5</sup>: basic literacy and the cultural and moral preparation of emigrants at home; vocational training and initiatives to promote the placement of emigrants abroad; specialized training of emigrant teachers (CGE, 1924a, p. 36).

## 2. Alphabet, emigration and teachers

The State’s action in preparing emigrants represents a privileged aspect of intervention manifested in some important initiatives during the first two decades of the 20th century. In addition to ensuring “extrinsic” protection to the emigrant through its protection and defense bodies, this orientation converged with the awareness, which had matured in the public debate on the topic, of a form of “intrinsic self-protection” for the emigrant, which could not disregard the cultural and professional preparation of the expatriates (DI FRATTA, 1912). Infact,

the emigrant must be in possession of the elements to ensure that his decision to leave his homeland for a foreign country is reasoned and well thought out [...]. It is necessary, then, that he has notions, as rudimentary as possible, about everything that refers to the very important act he is planning to carry out; that he knows what help and assistance he can rely on at home, during the journey and abroad, to overcome the obstacles he may encounter and to deal with all the paperwork he may have to resolve (CGE, 1924a, p. 37).

Having observed a discrepancy between the quality of assistance provided to migrants (COLETTI, 1912) from areas of the North and those in the South, “where there is a desert,” it became clear that there was a real need for reform, especially in the rural South. As it contributed 46.6% of the outward flow from Italy, emigration was an eminently southern

<sup>4</sup> The new law, having established the body of emigration services in the Commissariat, managed to provide for the expenses of these services through the constitution of a “Fund for Emigration” which regulated special revenues from emigrants and carriers.

<sup>5</sup> “The General Commissariat for Emigration had to provide, by giving a progressive and more intense development to its emigration policy, in whose complex program it considers the valorization of the emigrant through education and technical and professional training given, as much as possible, to our best workers” (CGE, 1924B, p. 6).

phenomenon (SORI, 1979), yet the means provided by the law to smoothly oversee this transition were lacking. Hence the push to improve education and reform public school in its practical aims, including preparing emigrants. As clearly argued by Angiolo Cabrini (Milan 1869-Rome 1937), a militant socialist member of parliament from 1900 to 1919 who was strongly interested in the education of emigrants, only teachers could successfully untangle the thorny knots of these issues. However, given the obvious lack of training, “first it is therefore necessary to prepare the teacher” (CABRINI, 1911, p. 12), in accordance with the demands of the Central Commission of Southern Italy in 1909, when it asked the Ministry of Education to open new schools for emigrants, in order to combat their “lack of education”. This led to Minister Credaro's decision to appoint a Commission to formulate a program for schools for emigrants. It was proposed that the preparation of teachers of public schools for emigrants be carried out in three main ways: the normal school for men and women, with lessons on emigration and the education of emigrants to be held in the last year of the course; pedagogical school and summer-autumn courses aimed at developing and renewing teachers' skills; special master courses on emigration.

The initial plan of intervention unfolded with the opening of new schools throughout Southern Italy, in the towns with the largest contingent of emigrants, which, in 1904, together with the 3,000 evening and Sunday schools for adults brought on by the Orlando Law of 1904 and thanks to the contribution of 50,000 Lire from the Commissariat in addition to those of the Ministry of Public Education, led to the inauguration of another 450 schools. The funds provided by the Commissariat and the Ministry ensured extra remuneration to elementary teachers for evening and Sunday lessons for illiterate adults in areas with wider migratory currents (GALLO, 2016). Therefore, it became clear that the question of educating emigrants was to be grafted onto the general question of educating the illiterate popular masses, leading to commendable, if not entirely adequate solutions (suffice it to say that in 1910 there were only four employees at the CGE). At this early juncture, private associations played a leading role. Among these, the Società Umanitaria di Milano (DELLA CAMPA, 2003), populated by numerous principal figures, including Angelo Cabrini himself, who was active in the northern regions, where the migratory currents of the late 19th century first gained momentum. Other associations which were relevant to the fabric of Central and Southern Italy include ANIMI (D'ALESSIO, 2020), an entity which in 1921 was delegated to combating illiteracy in the regions of Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia, and the Consorzio Emigrazione e Lavoro, born in 1916, for the regions of Puglia and Abruzzo-Molise (BARAUSSE, 2018). The State, on the other hand, which viewed emigration and illiteracy in the period between the late Nineteenth Century and the Giolittian Age as “so entangled that radical intervention is required” (AMBROSOLI, 1995, p. 73), moved to open a number of master courses on emigration with the specific task of training school teachers for those intending to go abroad. The initial, diligent intervention of private associations, with the aid of secular and religious assistance bodies was followed by governmental action, all sharing the common purpose of curbing the social, cultural and economic emergency brought on by the torrential outpour of Italians towards foreign countries.

### **3. The education of emigrants and the work of the teachers**

In the report by Camillo Corradini presented at the Second Congress of Italians Abroad in 1911, there are certain significant considerations “on the most effective ways to provide for the education and training of the emigrant masses before embarking”, which was the fourth

topic discussed in the seventh section (CORRADINI, 1911). In particular, Corradini strongly emphasized how the teacher's job, in addition to following the three fundamental outlines of the proposed program, entails cultivating the ability to carry out oral lessons that unfold as clear and relaxed conversations about one recurring theme. In fact:

It is the teacher's duty to instill the feeling of being Italian in the hearts of emigrants, so that, even in a foreign country, our workers may feel and express the ideal bond which ties them to their homeland with conscience and dignity (CORRADINI, 1911, p. 30)<sup>6</sup>.

This feeling was instilled not through specific dedicated lessons, rather, the teacher would rely on his "friendly and authoritative" tone, recalling the past glories of Italy, along with its illustrious figures, so as to transmit within the endeavoring travelers a sense of belonging and even of continuation of a common history. Despite their imminent departure, the hard labor of the "humble and obscure workers" had its place in the complex economy of the country. Corradini doesn't fail to emphasize how the educational style of the emigrant's teacher proves its "pedagogical virtue" by facing the minds to be formed with "patience and self-sacrifice". The Minister drew attention to the administrative and financial responsibility that the State had to address to the opening of schools in the countries with a larger contingent of emigration, thanks to the contribution of both the MPI and the MAE, to ensure the expenses related to lighting, heating, teaching aids and especially to the recruitment of teachers. The education of emigrants was part of the traditional municipalism of public school, which had been integrated by state intervention in the Giolitti era. An emigrant curriculum, as Corradini points out, "should be considered a new branch growing from the tree of public school" (CORRADINI, 1911, p. 34).

In the early twentieth century (SORI, 1979; DE CLEMENTI, 1999; SANI, 2021), it became glaringly clear, even to the Congress of 1911, having seen the magnitude of the migratory phenomenon<sup>7</sup>, that the extension of education for the purposes of expatriation "is identified with the general problem of decisively ending illiteracy", which still was, in many regions, a very worrying scourge to be eradicated. Hence the shared decision to devote specific attention not only to strengthening popular education, to meet practical and concrete needs, including eventually choosing to emigrate (resulting from the same provisions of the Orlando Law of 1904), but also to the opening of special schools for the intellectual and moral preparation of emigrants, in the same buildings as elementary and public schools, with the same staff, and divided into two courses: one for illiterate and semi-illiterate emigrants; the other for emigrants in possession of an elementary school diploma.

If, however, the proposal addressed to the Central Commission for Southern Italy derived from the opportunity to open dedicated schools for uneducated emigrants, to help them acquire "the first necessary tool to overcome financial struggles: the alphabet", an awareness of one's rights in a foreign country, as well as a bare minimum of lexical knowledge in the language of the host country, Corradini still insists that the first action for the magisterial class

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<sup>6</sup> The "tendency to discover or rediscover at a distance a sense of national belonging" was confirmed "however, as one of the unexpected features of the profile of Italian emigration and immigration that was being drawn or consolidated abroad" (FRANZINA, 2006, p. 8).

<sup>7</sup> On the reasons investigated by the recent historiographical research on the amplitude and incidence of the phenomenon of migratory flows out of Italy between the 19th and 20th centuries, "a phenomenon that was certainly unprecedented in terms of the number of protagonists, the duration of the phenomenon, the geographical extent of the spaces involved, the radical nature of the social effects determined", in an overcoming of the prevailing link between emigration and social discomfort and misery, see the considerations of Piero Bevilacqua on the disintegration of the rural society at the end of the 19th century, in "a disarticulation of its ancient social blocks, of its oppressive hierarchies, an explosion of new forms of individual and collective freedom" (BEVILACQUA, 2001, p. 107).

to take, as will be seen in certain dedicated manuals, is to instill a feeling of national identity even outside the country's borders. In various passages, the need to "revive" this sentiment is stressed in order to create and nurture the "ideal bond between the emigrant and the motherland"<sup>8</sup>. In this regard, Corradini sets out his conclusions at the end of the report, with a survey of five million Italians abroad, and another million (CGE, 1925,1926) who "fluctuate between Italy and abroad":

There is a Little Italy as well, which has come to be on the other side of the Ocean. We must try to give it courage in the face of today's epic struggle for work and maintain its attachment to Great Italy, our motherland, by means of a double bond: economic and sentimental (CORRADINI, 1911, p. 36).

Corradini's conclusions derived from the same results of the inquiry carried out in 1910 on the conditions of elementary education, and are in accordance with the general consideration within Italy at the time, regarding the question of popular education and national education. The initiatives coming from private and lay associations, as well as religious associations devoted to the moral assistance of Italians abroad, which had played a primary role as "emigration agencies" at the beginning of the migratory phenomenon, projected the emergency situation of the flow of Italians leaving for foreign destinations into the public arena and therefore urged for a more present state intervention.

Just after 1905, for a decade until the first war - as we will see especially in the three years between 1909 and 1911 -, a series of events and initiatives followed one after the other. In the framework of the important question of the stabilization of the role and tasks of the Italian magistral class, these events and initiatives were linked to the emergence of the migratory question on the issue of popular education and, in particular, to the tasks of cultural and national mediation assigned to the Italian teacher. It is not by chance that teachers acted also as secretaries in the local emigration committees (FIFTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE LAIC SECRETARIAT OF EMIGRATION, 1911), as well as Correspondents (MAZZONI, 1908), as they were recognized as the most adept at treating with illiterate people in need of care, news, a basic education with specific paths of orientation and protection, along with the cultivation of some degree of autonomy, so as to handle themselves properly in the phases of their expatriation.

The congresses organized in that season by the provincial sections of the teachers of the Unione Magistrale Nazionale (BARAUSSE, 2002), such as the one in L'Aquila in 1909, contributed to the public debate addressed in the state structures by certain shrewd exponents of political and governmental groups. Among these, in his work centered on *Emigrazione ed emigranti* (CABRINI, 1911), Angelo Cabrini himself documented how politicians, associations, and institutions such as Dante Alighieri<sup>9</sup>, as well as a plethora of initiatives and congresses, sparked a lively public debate about the migratory phenomenon of the early 1900s, particularly after the turning point of 1901 in which departing towards European or trans-oceanic countries gained momentum.

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<sup>8</sup> About some reading books that are mainly demonstrative of this educational purpose aimed at cementing the bonds between departing emigrants and the abandoned homeland, we refer to the best-known text by Camillo Manfroni, *La patria lontana* (1899) as an exemplifying prototype of a whole strand of an early literature on emigration at the end of the 19th century (LUATTI, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. the data retraced by Arturo Galanti on the activities of Dante Alighieri Society in congresses and publications for the protection of emigrants and the diffusion of Italian culture through books (CONVEGNO NAZIONALE COLONIALE PER IL DOPOGUERRA DELLE COLONIE, 1919, p. 19).



1911 was a crucial year, thanks to certain events and especially with regard to popular education and the related phenomenon of the education of emigrants. In fact, it is worth highlighting the convergence of the Daneo-Credaro law, which established Patronages and special schools for emigrants; the Congress of the Italian Magisterial Union in Turin, the second Congress of Italians abroad in Rome; as well as the concomitant publication of many texts on the phenomenon of migration or specifically aimed at emigrants and, as we will see, their teachers (ATTOLICO, 1913). Along with their educational and political roles, teachers' tasks included a much overlooked editorial aspect which was tied to their own training and the preparation of migrants. This had more to do with instilling an interest for Italian literature and culture within soon-to-be expats. In this sense, there is a certain symmetry between the publication of books specifically for emigrants and manuals addressed to their teachers. Here we shall attempt to examine the latter in more detail. Job orientation and the formation of an Italian identity abroad are, to summarize, the binary on which literature for emigration advances (D'ALESSIO, 2021, p. 443-457). These themes merit a more in-depth examination when considering the educational initiatives undertaken by emigrants' "special" teachers (D'ALESSIO, 2019).

#### **4. The special preparation of emigration teachers**

Alongside the release of publications by the General Commissariat for Emigration and other scholars of the migratory phenomenon (D'ALESSIO, 2019), a series of conferences were held by the state to address the pressing issue of preparing teaching staff. There was a general recognition of the importance of the teacher's social role as a protector, "the pillar of public school, capable of selecting and imparting the proper knowledge in preparation of this new struggle for existence which consists in expatriation for work purposes" (ATTOLICO, 1912, p. 22). In fact, teachers were chosen to be the main mediators between the State and the emigrants, over the about 4000 unsuccessful District/Municipal committees.

Debate over the work of teachers had already been stirring since the first Congress of public education held in Milan in 1906 (as well as in the Conferences of secular assistance to emigrants and in the Congress of Friulian Emigrants of 1911). Following such signs of great public concern over the key role assigned to teachers in the cultural and intellectual preparation of emigrants, especially rural ones, a new initiative was taken to solve the problem. In 1909, in fact, a Magisterial Course for Emigration was started (DI FRATTA, 1912), organized in Rome, by the private initiative of Mrs. Angelica Devita Tommasi, with the aim of spreading "a formalized culture regarding emigration among teachers in Italy, particularly in the more peripheral provinces from which the majority of people expatriate." The course was replicated (thanks to the support of the Commissioner for Emigration for 1910 Vincenzo Giuffrida, then later of Cabrini himself and of Di Fratta, who at the time was General Commissioner <sup>10</sup>), for years in the same location (ATTOLICO, 1913, p. 1-2), until the outbreak of the Great War. In order to achieve his goal sooner, Cabrini himself promoted local emigration courses, with the support of both the General Directorate for Primary Education and the Commissariat for Emigration. Just a few years later, the main course found itself competing against local crash courses which lasted eight days and were organized in designated locations. Teachers were paid per day. Most of these localized

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<sup>10</sup> Pasquale Di Fratta, Councillor of State, was appointed General Commissioner of Emigration between 1911 and 1912 and later Member of the Council for Emigration, between 1911 and 1917.

courses were situated in the rural south, as there was a higher flow of emigrants from those regions<sup>11</sup>. The program, set up between 1911 and 1913, was conceived on the model of the Schools of Social Legislation in London, Berlin and Milan, and closely followed that carried out in the Special Course on Emigration, on the wave of Cabrini's lively encouragement and interest. It is from these scenarios that the importance of teachers' work was recognized. By meeting the needs of the "emigrant proletariat" they acted as a fundamental link in teaching those who were about to go abroad, whether to another city or country. Their goal: to make emigrants "less ignorant of the places they were headed to, and aware of the laws and of their duty of solidarity with the local workers". Therefore, the master added "to his great apostolate of the redeeming school of the masses", this "new branch of work is of immediate practical use for the economic good of the disenfranchised" (POSTIGLIONE, 1909, p. 19). However, apart from the conferences in L'Aquila and the debate they triggered on the urgent issue of the fight against illiteracy, there were few initiatives undertaken in the remaining southern regions. Cabrini himself recalls that, in order to create more training opportunities for special teachers of emigrants in the South, he promoted accelerated courses on emigration.

The details of the organization of these special local courses are available to us thanks to a series of booklets which recount various teaching experiences in Southern Italy. The Ministerial Ordinance of 1913 (having seen the laws of July 15, 1906, no. 383 and June 30, 1910, no. 464; and having consulted the Central Commission established by article 73 of the aforementioned law of July 15, 1906) recognized "the convenience of spreading indispensable knowledge among elementary teachers, so that they may then properly dedicate themselves to the education of emigrants". The duration of the course was of eight days and consisted of "oral lessons, given by a competent person appointed by the Ministry, written exercises, and other activities, all under the teacher's supervision". The presidency of each course was of a Royal School Inspector appointed by the Ministry. Two teachers chosen by the inspector exercised the functions of secretary and received reasonable compensation. The detailed content of the program envisaged for the accelerated magistral course was also illustrated in the various publications of account given to the press after the course was held in various localities of central and southern Italy (D'ALESSIO, 2019).

Despite the fact that these crash courses were of keen interest to teachers, "serving almost as a leaven and push", certain aspects were scrutinized. The main critique regarded the brevity of the course compared to the vastness of the program. It was suggested to extend it to at least ten days. It was also suggested that some materials of practical use be provided to future teachers of emigrants, including statistical and legislative documentation, together with reports on the emigration services of the Commissariat. Another criticism regarded the lack of importance attributed to exercises. It was considered opportune to make them compulsory for a classification of profit (not just attendance) and therefore as a preferential criterion for the assignment of special assignments to teachers of emigrants<sup>12</sup>. Certainly, these measures

<sup>11</sup> Worthy of note were the conferences organized on the initiative of the Società Umanitaria in Abruzzo, thanks to the support of an active local magistral section "that feels highly of its modern educational and social mission, has the duty to give our emigrants all that civil assistance" necessary (D'ALESSIO, 2019). From the report of teacher Postiglione to the third Abruzzi magisterial congress held in Chieti in September 1909, we know the work carried out in the region by the local teachers, in contrasting illiteracy and asking for an energetic interest of the State in the work of protection and safeguard of the migrant working masses (POSTIGLIONE, 1909, p. 7).

<sup>12</sup> Another thorny issue was the exclusion of female teachers, whose absence was not justified. Moreover, there is a push to organize libraries specialized in the subject and the integration of the program with aspects of welfare.

contributed to improving the quality of the preparation of special emigration teachers, directing them towards a real reform of their relations with local administrations, which they would have to avoid. The aim was to stimulate their “progressively greater independence”, which consists in making the teacher “the real body of local protection for emigrants”, instead of the municipal committees (ATTOLICO, 1913, p. 7).

In addition to the information on the aims and methods of the accelerated courses, it is interesting to know the detailed contents of the programs for teachers of emigrants (ATTOLICO, 1912). We learn that the master courses provide for two lesson plans: the first, concerning general notions about emigration of workers. In this area, the program offers lessons on Italian emigration and its development; internal and foreign emigration; transoceanic or continental emigration; the balance of Italian emigration as well as opinions and figures on the subject. Ample space is dedicated to the repercussions of emigration on the national economy, demography, social life, family, and military defense. The second deals more specifically with “what the emigrant must be taught” and, specularly, brings us closer to the specific teaching culture required of teachers of expatriates. The main topics are as follows: organization of emigration services in Italy; news about sea transport; arrival in destination countries (Italian authorities, assistance societies and patronages, Italian schools); sending remittances and emigrants' savings; news about countries where Italian emigration is preferably directed; white slave trade, dangers and work; elements of economy. There were also written and oral exercises in foreign languages and on the different jobs of the emigrant, as well as on the practices of working life. A particular aspect on which the program focuses is dedicated to social morality. Here there is ample reference to the defense of national dignity, to the importance of keeping love for one's own country alive and of patriotism as the “cement” of emigrant nuclei, with its incontestable value. The importance of solidarity with the workers of the countries of immigration is then recalled, as well as the urgency, in such courses and in schools for emigrants, to “create an awareness of the emigrant”. Teachers are, in many of them, hailed as “ministers of one of the holiest forms of social protection” and true apostles of the beneficial work of spreading education among emigrants, according to a vision in which the school comes into direct contact with the people, responding to the social conditions and needs of the time.

These stimuli and proposals were followed by certain measures taken by the State, which in 1912 opened schools for emigrants in about 200 southern provinces, entrusting the teaching to the same teachers who took part in the short courses of lessons on the education of emigrants in September 1911 in the regions of Umbria, Abruzzo, Lazio, Campania, Basilicata and Calabria.

## 5. Educational models for emigrants in teaching manuals

A little book entitled *L'emigrante istruito* was released by the newspaper “La Patria” in 1910. It presented itself as a small manual of lessons for overseas emigrants, a “simple guide aimed towards priests, teachers, or others who want to assist the emigrant workers in a practical way”. Right from the introduction, it declares its own “immediate practical value,” deserving of examination in all of its parts, to better understand its contents and the tools put forth for whomever “feels the duty to contribute to the noble endeavor of elevating the moral and intellectual level of our emigrant masses” (p. IV).

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Further suggestions come from the possibility, then, of strengthening the teachers' interest in the cause of emigration through some scholarships and free travel tickets.

After illustrating the ways in which it is possible to open an evening school in the Communes for emigrant workers, the author reflects on the qualities attributed to the teacher who knows how to achieve concrete results on a practical level: from the knowledge of the migratory issue to the need to get hold of books, newspapers, guides of the CGE, to the possession of basic elements of the language of one's country of destination and of all the "necessary social and geographical knowledge". The suggestions offered for the course curriculum are interesting. The content to be taught aimed to tread as closely as possible to the worker students' abilities: giving information on their destinations, with elementary lessons on physical geography, economy, politics, customs and culture, along with social norms and the local culture regarding work. The last 15 minutes of each lesson is dedicated to reading and speaking exercises in the relevant language. Last, the teacher will dedicate some time to a class discussion, in order to summarize the lesson and recall the students' newly gained notions. This is conducted in a tone that is not so much professorial as it is familiar. The lessons are carried out as friendly, almost brotherly, lively and varied conversations. The manual is therefore very useful in simulating the organization of a program in three sections, one practical, the other geographical and the third social, appealing above all to the ability of the teacher who must "necessarily take into account the various needs of those to whom the night school is directed" (p. 10).

The small guide is emblematic of certain useful tools made available to teachers, particularly the proposal of lesson plans on which others could be modeled, between the initiatives put in place by secular and religious institutions active in the field of education of the masses (including the Secretariats of emigration of the Società Umanitaria in Belluno<sup>13</sup> or even of L'Aquila, mentioned above), and the close actions of the State aimed at training emigrants, through the indispensable link represented by the magisterial class.

Certainly the most representative manual, within this literature intended for Italian teachers of the first quarter of the 20th century, is represented by Angelo Cabrini's *Il maestro degli emigranti* (The teacher of emigrants), which, in Credaro's own statements in the preface, responds to the urgency of their "very special" political, cultural and didactic preparation, of marked social urgency (CABRINI, 1912). Angelo Cabrini's *Il Maestro degli emigranti* (The Master of Emigrants) has therefore been hailed as the most organic *vademecum* of the teacher (DI GIACINTO, 2020), and of the rural teacher in particular, since it illustrates with clarity and punctuality the aims of teaching, proposes methods and proper didactic expedients, provides content and references to the same texts, as well as references to all the scholastic organizations and the free books published by the Commissariat. Published in 1912, it gathered many ideas and contributions exposed by an industrious Cabrini (as we have seen, deputy, journalist, cultural animator) in some of his previous writings and interventions on programs, schools and teachers, also brought to the congresses of the Unione Magistrale Nazionale (including those of Ancona and Rome in 1910) to point out "that the problem of the protection of emigrants was, to a great extent, a problem of education of the emigrants themselves" (CABRINI, 1911, p. 3). Illiteracy, in fact, appeared to be the main cause of the weakness of emigration policy, so that "true education, capable of acting on large masses, should be given here, within the borders of Italy, for today's and tomorrow's emigrants" (CABRINI, 1912, p. 4). An action of public interest is consequently linked to the collaboration that the country expects from teachers.

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<sup>13</sup> "The education of emigrants, under the twofold aspect of general and professional culture, is a problem that has long been of concern to all those, institutes or individuals, who are interested in the phenomenon of emigration" (SEGRETARIATO DELL'EMIGRAZIONE DI BELLUNO, 1909, p. 1).

In reiterating the aims and usefulness of the preparation for those who are leaving, Cabrini offers two precise outlines of lessons, twelve hours each, to be held in towns with a high level of emigration, divided between overseas and continental emigration. He then goes on to illustrate the contents of the instruction which, on the one hand, aims at persuading the emigrant of the usefulness of learning about laws, regulations and institutions at home, during the journey and abroad; on the other hand, he insists on the proposal of descriptive readings of the customs and habits of the host countries, without neglecting that “all this should be enlivened and warmed by a vibrant sense of Italian spirit and solidarity with the workers of the country of emigration” (CABRINI, 1911, p. 10). The need to hold courses of lessons for emigrants was, on the one hand, to fill the gaps in the popular school and, on the other, to “arm the emigrant worker with all the knowledge necessary to orient himself, to avoid intermediaries and, in the final analysis, to assist himself, in understanding and feeling the environment of arrival”.

In the wake of the most widespread manual for teachers of emigrants, there are other texts and books, which we will try to review, often addressed in a hybrid way to both students and teachers for the work “of educating and raising the material, intellectual and moral level of emigrants” (SARAZ, 1914, p. 18). First of all, it is important to highlight the time span of this special manual on emigration, which has been rather neglected by studies, printed from 1900 to 1925, following the development of scholastic and migratory policies, i.e. the first 15 years of the Giolitti period, the break at the outbreak of the first war, the first wave of fascism between 1922 and 1924, up to the signs of its transformation into a regime after 1925: to emphasize the non-negligible concomitance, on which we have already tried to pin our gaze, between the moments of turning point on the normative, legislative and cultural level in favor of the migrant masses and the simultaneous circulation of suitable tools, also on the editorial level, for their teachers. After Cabrini’s volume came the 1914 school manual, with which Pietro Lippolis proposed a course of eleven lessons for overseas emigrants. The style of the work shows that it intercepts the development of state educational policies during the First World War, especially by recording a degree of maturity regarding the mission assigned to the magistral class in dealing with the complex issue of preparing departing emigrants. The State believed it could provide for the insufficient commitment in favor of emigrants, writes the author, “by relying on the mission of the magisterial class, informed by a spirit of disinterest and apostolate for popular culture” (LIPPOLIS, 1914, p. 6). According to him, in fact, the very opening of schools for emigrants was linked to the work entrusted to teachers, in which the solution to the problem of emigration was found, “such as that of forming an awareness of emigration in the masses of the people, who, driven by need or by vain illusions and, at times, by the desire for greater activity, are unconsciously carried away by the currents of emigration” (LIPPOLIS, 1914, p. 6). In the preface, the Apulian teacher clearly states that he has “sifted” through the publications of Cabrini, of the General Commissariat and of some statesmen and scholars in order to offer, in an orderly and selected way, all the useful material to his colleagues destined to schools for emigrants. In order, therefore, to achieve the main goal that emerges from Lippolis’ introductory statements, the eleven lessons aim to form an awareness of emigration, before departure, in transit, and post arrival, combining the elements of general cultural and specialized professional preparation with maintaining cultural ties to the homeland. In this sense, it is significant that the first lesson starts from the “Necessity to educate oneself before emigrating” and presents a second part of useful readings; the following lessons are also based on this double track, a more informative and cognitive one (of laws, norms, but also history and geography of the countries of destination, travel documents, facing a long journey on board a ship, with

information about the places of arrival: America, Argentina, Brazil, remittance of savings, pensions) and the other more moral (how to behave, how to avoid alcoholism, gambling, quarrels), often proposing poems that instill feelings of belonging to Italy, for example “Remember, o emigrant!” by Gabriele De Robbio (MICELI, 2003). The work concludes with “Il decalogo dell’Italiano” (The Italian’s Decalogue), which highlights the need to present a positive image of the Italian abroad, against the persistent negative stereotypes and the US restrictionist policies, which were adverse to illiterate emigrants, and mindful of fostering international relations of economic and financial exchange in the colonies. In this way, one can overcome certain initial, anti-migration political views and embrace a new national consciousness of emigration (BONIFAZI, 2013, p. 13), itself connected to the need for an educational policy for the great exodus. From the “scholastic anti-immigrationist” views of late nineteenth-century readings (LUATTI, 2017), the early twentieth century witnessed the spread of didactic tales in which the theme of migration focused on the advantages of preparation before embarkation. The magisterial manuals, in a convergent manner, promoted a more conscious emigration by spreading the belief of its value as a factor of transformation and change, both of the individual subject and of the collective representation of the Italian people, upon departure from the docks.

## **6. Migration policies and the first post-war period: the formation of a specialized teaching staff**

The General Commissariat continued to increase its protective work for emigrants, in the intellectual and moral preparation of illiterate adults who were about to travel overseas, even after the government assignment in 1919 to the Agency against illiteracy, which was soon suppressed.

In particular, the difficulties of the post-war period for the emigration of the great masses, which had undergone a strong contraction and pushed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to resume interest in the management of services to emigration, induced the Commissariat to take initiatives in favor of improving the preparation of skills in the trades most in demand, favoring the opening of specialized courses for colonists, cement workers, bricklayers, construction workers, for the purpose of qualified learning (GALLO, 2016). But the CGE would soon return to the task of preparing illiterate adults for the more general instruction of emigrants and citizens.

In spite of the technical and financial difficulties encountered in its attempt to open about 100,000 schools for emigrants a year, the Commission involved over 3000 municipalities in a survey of the availability of premises and the number of local emigrants. After responses from almost 600 municipalities in the South and the islands, in the first half of 1921 about 800 evening courses of 100/110 2-hour lessons were opened (with 29,953 pupils, of whom 15,184 were promoted). The task of providing assistance through information tools also led to the publication of a series of pamphlets, guides and vademecums that were widely distributed (CGE, 1911)<sup>14</sup>. In addition to this varied production distributed free of charge by the Commissariat, since 1921 a number of manuals for the education of emigrants of greater editorial value and

<sup>14</sup> Publications were halfway between practical guides and descriptive geographical and economic studies on the countries of destination. They provided useful information on the places of arrival, the formalities for acquiring the documents for expatriation, the means of transport, the prices of travel as well as the shipping companies and their agents, so that the emigrant would be instructed on all the risks of fraud and speculation on their part and would acquire the minimum knowledge necessary to know how to move before leaving (LUPI, 1981; TAROZZI, 1996; D’ALESSIO, 2021).

content have been published, together with didactic texts. This minor literature for emigrants contributed to the circulation of a series of practical instructions of great utility, completely free of charge<sup>15</sup>. At the same time, a series of instructions and norms were distributed to the teachers, to the Royal Inspectors and to the Directors of Education.

By 1922, after this “first example of rapid education of the masses” (MICCI, 1925, p. 146), the experiment was not repeated, since the Ente Nazionale per la lotta contro l’analfabetismo (National Agency for the fight against illiteracy) had been established, later replaced by the “Opera Nazionale” in August 1921, which took advantage of the Commissariat’s experience in the education of the migrant masses<sup>16</sup>.

The initial proposal of the Credaro Commission, which included Cabrini himself, the Camillo Corradini for the Ministry of Education, Vincenzo Giuffrida for Emigration, the lawyer Mendojá MP, professor Osimo for the “Umanitaria” and commendator Pironti for the Ministry of Education (CREDARO, 1911) would lead to the creation, ten years later in 1922, of a truly specialized corps of teachers for emigrants, with courses aimed at students in their last year of normal school, together with already practicing or unemployed teachers, which reached the number of about 10. 000, or already graduated (about 6,000). Here, an organic and complete course was promoted so that this “throng of teachers” could carry out their work in the special schools for emigrants that the General Commissariat intended to open, in order to complete the work of the Institution against illiteracy.

Among the guides printed for the teachers of emigrants in this period, it is worth mentioning the one prepared by Clelia Falconi, based on the lessons she held at the Royal Normal School for Women in Genoa in June of 1922 (FALCONI, 1922). In the work entrusted to the professor by the CGE, the articulation of the various parts of the job and the specificity of its destination to a female body of future teachers are of some interest. In spite of the fact that at the beginning the author informs us that these are handouts taken from the thirty lessons she was commissioned by the CGE on a vast program, the volume is quite substantial at almost six hundred pages. Falconi introduces the course with an explanation of the migratory phenomenon, giving some historical notes and presenting its general characteristics, then illustrates the action of the State and the restrictionist policies, and provides instructions and advice that the teacher must transmit to the emigrant on his or her journey, the provisions in place, hygiene and diseases, but also on the behavior and demeanor that the emigrant must maintain when abroad. Halfway through the course, from the fifteenth lesson, in order to provide “the minds of her young listeners”, the teacher, with a clear and accessible study of the phenomenon of emigration in Italy, deals extensively with the rules of admission in the main continental and transoceanic emigration countries and other information on economic geography. It is worth noting the general layout of the manual, which appears more systematic and organic than previous ones, also in the suggestions given on interesting texts useful for the preparation of teachers to instruct and educate emigrants: drawn from the so-called travel literature of the time, the author recommends, along with the better known *Sull’oceano* by De

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<sup>15</sup> To guarantee uniformity of direction, the Commissariat published a *Syllabus* specifically aimed at the students of schools for emigrants (according to the phonic method), of 46 loose sheets, collected in a special cover [. ...] lent itself wonderfully to the purpose, giving the student the opportunity to reread, review and copy, at any time of day and at any break during the work, the words or phrases already explained during the lesson” (COMMISSARIATO GENERALE DELL’EMIGRAZIONE, 1920).

<sup>16</sup> Minister Baccelli issued Royal Decree no. 1723 of September 2, 1919, which established the National Board for the education of illiterate adults, a measure aimed at concentrating initiatives for the fight against illiteracy in a single autonomous body. R.D. no. 240 of August 28, 1921 gave birth to the “Opera contro l’analfabetismo” (an organization against illiteracy).

Amicis, those by Giacosa and Sicchirollo, with those by Coletti for Brazil, by Villari and Mantegazza for the United States, but also by Lupati Gentili for Argentina, the others still by Pecorini, Sergi, De Martino, Venerosi Pesciolini and Frescura (FALCONI, 1922, p. 592). Finally, in inviting the teachers to contact the Commissariat and the private societies of protection and assistance for any news, bulletins and guides, the author also gave the addresses of the CGE in Rome, the Società Umanitaria in Milan, the Opera pia Bonomelli in Milan and the Italica gens in Genoa.

At the end of the course, the author repeats “the need for discipline, direction, protection, for the good of our migrants” (FALCONI, 1922, p. 572), focusing once again on the important work given to the future teachers and female teachers of Italy.

## **7. The emigrant’s conscience in manuals for teachers**

Also in the very popular manual written by Eloisa Italia Capaguzzi, a large part of 1923 is dedicated to the good behavior of the emigrant abroad, for the “prestige of the homeland” reflected in his person, to maintain a good national reputation of Italians (CAPAGUZZI, 1923, p. 84-91). Having been freed from a condition of material and moral inferiority thanks to the protection of the Emigration Commissariat and of other lay and religious assistance bodies, the emigrant had to show himself to be an “honest, temperate and respectful” worker. To this end, the qualities of the good emigrant abroad are analytically indicated, and he or she will have to follow some “fundamental imperative principles”: he must be hard-working, clean, polite, honest, temperate and educated. In function of a “dignified education that, by bringing a mediated advantage to the distant country, brings a direct one to the emigrant himself” (CAPAGUZZI, 1923, p. 86).

In the same market as the scholastic books “intended for teachers, student teachers, priests and all those involved in the education of emigrants”, the rich manual by Alighiero Micci (MICCI, 1925) was printed in 1925. This manual had good circulation, thanks to the relevance of the author's institutional, associative and editorial profile and commitment to the emancipation of Italian emigrants (BARAUSSE, 2003).

After an initial presentation of the causes of emigration, its effects, as well as the crises and various currents in the dynamics of development during and after the war, Micci offers a detailed picture of the legislation from 1901 to the most recent measures (including the Consolidated Act of 1919), together with an illustration of the governmental services operating in the country, and then describes the non-state bodies for the assistance of emigrants in the various foreign countries. In particular, in the eleventh chapter, the author reviews the actions taken by the State in defense of emigration, retracing the work of the General Commissariat and dealing with master courses on emigration, schools for professional education and schools for colonial preparation. The third part of the substantial text, intended as a guide for teachers of emigrants, focuses on the social legislation of the main countries of Italian immigration, on working conditions and provides some information on economic geography and on protection offices abroad.

The purposes of the work are explained with that clarity and simplicity which the author claims to have adopted with the intention of contributing to the dissemination, in the public consciousness, of the important problem. It is not by chance, Micci says, that he decided to address himself to Italian teachers, by filling “a gap that was widely noticed and deeply felt after the publication of the new programs for elementary and supplementary classes, for teacher training institutes, for competitions for the office of teacher, director and school inspector” (MICCI, 1925, p. IX). The author then shifts focus to the need to “develop the emigrant’s



consciousness, a consciousness made up of dignity, probity, and boldness simultaneously”, which, in his opinion, had been lacking in the migratory currents up to that moment and had determined the impossibility “of an effective protection of the homeland children far away”. Making this consciousness, he continued, and creating this personality meant “not only raising the standard of living of the workers, but [...] raising the moral level and prestige of the Homeland in consideration of the civilized world”. In the closing lines of his preface, Micci claims his own position as an “Italian and an educator” who aims to “find an echo in all those who, by election or by duty, have the care of national education” (MICCI, 1925, p. XI).

What filters through Micci’s rapid passages takes on a sharper outline in the *Manuale per l'istruzione dell'emigrante* (CGE, 1925) which in the same year, at the end of the first quarter of the 20th century, was published by the General. Commissariat. In June 1925, in the introductory part of the manual, the General Commissioner for Emigration De Michelis wrote a letter of presentation to Benito Mussolini, as President of the Council of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explaining that it was a volume that collected the notebooks that had been used in 1922, in draft form, to prepare the teachers of emigrants who had graduated from the courses set up by the Commissariat. These pages clearly show the vision taken on by the first wave of Fascism regarding the migratory phenomenon as “a great national interest, represented by a real economic force that expands abroad the moral and material borders of the Homeland” (CGE, 1925, p. VII). No longer, therefore, it is explained, a “demographic overflow” to be let loose in order to make room in Italy, nor a means to be encouraged for the benefits of remittances, but a true instrument of expansion of the national boundaries beyond the physical ones of the country.

De Michelis vindicates the position taken by his leadership at the Commissariat in giving this new force “all its value, increasing it, enlivening it”, so as to make the migratory exodus no longer spontaneous, nor dispersed and uncontrolled, but an “organic complex of energy” so much “more fruitful as it is more valued in the intellectual, moral and technical field”. It is therefore a phenomenon of the assertion of the nation in the colonies, for the purpose of a policy of reinforcement, evidently of the power of the fascist government, which was in transition towards becoming a regime that was careful to make emigration controlled, ordered and well directed. From this point of view, therefore, of an increased valorization of the migratory phenomenon, as an agent of strengthening the workforce abroad, the actions for cultural and professional elevation of the expatriates are placed: in the sure reverberation of the politics of the country inside.

De Michelis then retraces the development of government interventions after 1921, not only in the vocational courses of the northern regions (where departures have been common for a long time), but also in the southern and island areas, with the opening of evening and holiday schools, especially for peasants and laborers, later transferred to the National Agency for the fight against illiteracy. He goes on to explain the later choices made by the CGE with the opening of special courses for illiterate adults, aimed at providing them with a basic knowledge of culture (geographical, economic, social) and citizenship. In the following passage, De Michelis strongly emphasizes how, in order to accomplish this task, the state must prepare “a specialized staff of teachers” (CGE, 1925, p. VII): this was remedied by setting up at the Scuole Normali a series of Magistral Courses on emigration accessible to students in their last year, as well as to unemployed or already practicing teachers of both sexes (an important aspect compared to the exclusion of women from the first local Magistral Conferences opened between 1911 and 1913).

The unexpected success of these courses can be seen in the number of schools involved (141) and the number of students enrolled (almost 10,000), with almost 6,000 teachers trained to teach in the field of emigration. The experiment was not repeated the following year because it was no longer authorized by the Ministry of Education. We are now at the turning point of the Gentile reform, which would change the very order of teacher training, together with a revision of school programs. But in the meantime, the tireless Commissariat had also made up for the lack of materials and handouts to guide the personnel in charge of the courses. Twelve notebooks, compiled by the officials of the Commissariat and printed in draft form, were thus collected for distribution. The notebooks proved to be particularly useful and appreciated, so much so that (once revised and enlarged) they were collected into a single volume, due to the requests both of the graduate teachers themselves and of scholars of emigration and official or non-state bodies for the protection of emigrants.

De Michelis introduced the structure of the work, which is composed of two main parts: the first is an introduction to the phenomenon of emigration, with a collection of all the provisions and social legislation for the protection of emigrants both at home and abroad; the second deals specifically with the economic geography of the main foreign countries of emigration. Therefore, in line with other contemporary texts, the work embraces several areas, including the historical, juridical, economic and social ones.

The value of the manual, as per the considerations expressed by the General Commissioner of the time, lies, in this new political turn of events, in its practical usefulness both for teachers and for their students, the adult migrants, who aim to make themselves useful as trained workers, qualified, linked to the project of political affirmation of the motherland, to no longer regret what they see as an act of abandonment, but to be honored with their own civil dignity as Italians, in the footsteps of an ideology increasingly steeped in nationalism, beginning after the first world war.

Shortly after, however, the educational commitment spent in favor of popular education, of the connected preparation of emigrants and of their own teachers, would come to an end, at the end of the liberal season of the early 20th century, concerned with the valorization of the emigrant at home and abroad and in the wake of post-war consequences. In a different political climate, in fact, the General Commissariat, despite its successful work in the past, was suppressed and transformed into the political body sanctioned by its conversion into the Direzione Generale degli Italiani all'Estero (General Directorate of Italians Abroad) in 1927, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the wake of the regime's anti-migratory turnaround during the phase of reorganization of emigration towards foreign countries.

## Conclusions

Trying to summarize the different aspects in line with the various historical- political periods and the relative ideological positions, “in the prevalence of internal reasons” (OSTUNI, 2001, p. 317), we have tried to examine the theme of the education of emigrants and the connected work of teachers. In this delicate and complex social mission, it is possible to identify three levels. One *instrumental*, linked to the first literacy campaign carried out in public schools, especially in the Giolittian age; one *functional*, for the purpose of technical and professional training for entry into the world of work, aimed at countering the forms of protectionism increasingly manifested in some countries, especially the United States, from 1917 onward, as there was reluctance to admit emigrants without basic tools such as literacy; a more *educational and identity-oriented* one, combined with the feeling of belonging to the homeland on the other side of the border and therefore in the direction of an initial valorization of workers as agents

of civilization abroad, colonizers and skilled workers in the first post-war period: bringing the migratory question back to the national question on the economic level, which then resulted in the subsequent political brake on exoduses, in the limitation of the freedom to emigrate and in the forms of control, organization and planning of migratory flows.

Connected to these levels, the overall literature on emigration in which we are interested here, contiguous to the mass of readings for emigrants that passed through the schools between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Italy and abroad (BARAUSSE, 2015), is not only a sensitive thermometer of the processes underway regarding the governmental management of the migratory phenomenon, but also a valuable observatory of the pedagogical culture required of teachers and of the educational goals set for the emigrant. These aims, as we have tried to show so far, are partly divergent between the needs of preparation for work in the receiving countries (more evident in Cabrini's position, for example) and needs directed towards a general improvement of the migrants' backward cultural conditions (traceable in the concerns expressed by Corradini), in the connected need to strengthen the feeling of dignity and Italianism, almost the last witness left to those who set out on the journey, to be kept during the crossing and to keep alive once they set foot on foreign soil. The transformations of the professional training offered to the migrant masses in the first post-war period, according to a new state planning, and the specular reduction of the didactic freedom of the teachers, dating back to the Giolittian era, compared to the observance of the directives coming from the center.

In conclusion, the manuals and textbooks for teachers of emigrants that we have examined from this point of view are important litmus tests of the initiatives and didactic tools made available to strengthen the awareness of a specialized professional culture in the teaching class, which, as we have seen, was not free from the effects of ideological positions concerning emigration in its different historical phases and of the relative elaboration of educational models more suitable for the formation of a good emigrant, before the decision to leave and upon arrival in a foreign land.

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