

## **From Modernism and under the Fascist flag of Italian Nation to Post-modernist urban sprawl**

### ***The emergence and the power of the architectural Schools in Italy***

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#### **Abstract**

*In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, architecture had no place as a national recognised school in Italy. Architects' professional formation was blended inside the Academies of Arts and just few of them were trained in Engineering Schools of the northern part of the country. There were strict limitations in being creative in design and architecture, because of the tendency to imitate and follow the past, until the strategy of design and architecture changed tune by aligning modernist ideas to a controversial transformation.*

*With the Rationalist Exhibitions of architectural design in the 1930s, architecture acquired the official support and protection of Mussolini himself; the ultra modernist projects of the first students of the newly founded architectural schools of Rome and Florence had an immediate impact to politics in such a way that in the following years modernist architecture became the Nation's architecture showing up in large scale competitions, such the EUR in Rome and the Railway Station of Florence. The Nation's architecture had such an influence to policy making that all the planning laws after World War II were based on the first laws in the 1930s and 1940s; the nationalist regime managed to put forward rules and regulations which had to re-format the built environment through the development master plans in the 1950s and beyond.*

#### **The Rationalist exhibitions – Conflicts and alliances between teachers and students of architecture in Italy in the 1930s**

In Italy before 1920s, the architects' education and formation depended upon a kind of professional 'patronage' by other professions and disciplines, such as engineering and arts. There were no standards to regulate the profession of the architects, and most importantly, no autonomous School to pursue studies in architecture. For the first time in 1859, a new law was passed in Parliament which established the basics for the institution of courses in architecture inside two Schools of Engineering: the School of Applied Sciences in Turin and the Technical Institute of Higher Education in Milan. Only few years later, in 1865 in Milan

and in 1866 in Turin, new departments of architecture materialized with their students being awarded the Diploma of Civil Architecture.<sup>i</sup> The content of the programme in engineering was broader and more scientific than the reduced programme of studies in the departments of architecture, or better, those of 'civil architects'. Thus, several years later, Camillo Boito, famous Italian historian, architect and writer of the late nineteenth century, with reference to that inconsistency in the programmes affirmed that only a very limited number of students had applied to study in these departments, because they were considered as a refuge for the weakest students; indeed these departments were derided as '*gli ospedali*' (=the hospitals).<sup>ii</sup>

There had been many acts, decrees and laws to be approved, until architects managed to get social, political and professional recognition at last in a period of time in which nobody could have expected to become reality; that was the era of the infamous 'consent' to the Fascist regime of Mussolini. Until then, they had shown no sufficient cultural preparation, because there had been lack of adequate architectural training and curricula in most Schools of architecture; a fine example could be the School of Rome led by also very conservative teachers, like Gustavo Giovannoni and Ugo Ojetto, two of the most explicit enemies of progress and development of the architects. Nevertheless, at the same time contradictory actions and movements emerged in Northern Italy; one new group advocating Modernism was formed in Turin in 1926 by adopting the name '7' and initially embracing Luigi Figini, Guido Frette, Sebastiano Larco, Gino Pollini, Carlo Enrico Rava, Giuseppe Terragni and Ugo Castagnola (replaced later by Adalberto Libera). For the first time in December 1926, the '7' group presented their manifesto and samples of work to the public inside an entire issue of the review *Rassegna Italiana*. Bruno Zevi, architect and historian, commented on their work by highlighting their intention to use rational ideas in order to design buildings responding to real necessities. The group insisted that architecture had to reject some of its elements in order to create only fewer basic typologies.<sup>iii</sup>

Therefore, for the first time between the 1920s and 1930s, there was a public declaration of architectural scholars rejecting their 'epic' curricula of their Schools, such as the School of architecture of Rome. But, the same group of the '7' tried to attenuate the fears of the traditionalists by keeping a moderate profile and by declaring that they did not wish to break with their past and tradition. Indeed, on several occasions, they affirmed that 'in our country exists such a Classic background; the traditional spirit is so profound in Italy that, evidently and almost automatically any kind of new architecture would not be able to avoid safeguarding of our distinctive traces of the past.'<sup>iv</sup> This declaration might prove that new

architecture in Northern Italy had shown a different quality than the rest of European Rationalism. Initially Italian Rationalism did not go beyond the aesthetic limits imposed by traditionalist educational programmes of the institutions they had attended. In fact, as the '7' declared in the special issue of the *Rassegna Italiana*, their modern architecture could be only compared with the 'archaic' periods of the past; that meant that, they were not so far away from the devotion to the ancient Roman spirit, which was explicitly promoted many times by Gustavo Giovannoni, conservative leader and teacher in the School of Rome.

Alongside the '7' group, several other groups and movements emerged during the same years, like the '*Novecentisti*' (=followers of the nineteenth century spirit). Indeed, the '*Novecentisti*' expressed their standards of cultural consistency by re-proposing a repertoire of architectural forms and style, somehow recalling historical precedents. Contrarily, the '7' attempted to approach other active contemporary European movements which were proposing new links with social life; the '7' group were mainly concerned to be understood by common sense used to review any new trends by retrospective evaluation. In order to achieve this, they maintained a gentle and realistic tone in debate. However, several times they used some sort of ambiguous language which was to become common to many people later. So, the first architectural designs of Giuseppe Terragni, such as the Novocomum housing, and of Giuseppe Pagano, such as the Gualino Headquarters in Turin (both completed in 1929), demonstrate equally architectural innovation and new thinking in the whole discipline of architecture. In their *Rassegna Italiana* articles, the '7' group evoked a 'new spirit' already noticeable in Europe in the work of people in action in a variety of sectors, like Jean Cocteau, Pablo Picasso, Igor' Fëdorovič Stravinskij, Peter Behrens, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier. The authors of the articles are now expressing their admiration for people from the past who have managed to break with bad taste and the entire simplistic so-called traditionalism; they have made reference to all diverse outcomes of creativity and have cited even Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* in their pioneering pieces of writing. \_

Almost immediately in the 1930s and 1940s, divergences became exceptionally common in architecture, as we should be able to find out. These conflicts emerged clearly either in exhibitions and/or in fierce rivalries between architectural groups in the so-called competitions for the Nation; now architects become exceptionally skilled in the politics of their own profession. This attitude might have contributed to their survival in the adverse and unprecedented situation of being regulated under Mussolini's Fascist regime. Their main strategy quite succeeded in convincing Mussolini that, their architecture was the right

kind of architecture for his regime; evidently sometimes this was not the case. When the war strikes entire Europe in the 1940s, some architects, like Giuseppe Pagano, one of the founders of the review would die in concentration camps; he died at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria on 22 April 1945.

In 1928, the 1st Exhibition of Rationalist Architecture held in the '*Palazzo delle Esposizioni*' (=Expo Palace) in Rome did create to some extent some kind of controversy. But, as we should see further, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition organised and held in Pier Maria Bardi's gallery in Via Veneto in Rome would initiate a massive debate in 1931. In one way or another, most of the participants in these exhibitions managed to be the protagonists of most of the fierce competitions between architectural groupings of discontent in that dark period of nonspecific 'consent'; these alliances between friends and against 'enemies' inside the same profession undoubtedly managed to separate the Northern from the Southern Schools of Architecture. We should see the School of Rome being in the middle of that chaos, as a central and core institution struggling to create a balance between State politics and internal professional politics of conflicting leadership, which fluctuated between Giuseppe Giovannoni, conservative and Marcello Piacentini, mischievous and colourful personality; both Giovannoni and Piacentini had been enormous personalities who besieged the professional and political arena for many turbulent years (with Piacentini staying as a protagonist of architecture and Urbanism until the 1960s).

When Manfredo Manfredi, Head of the School of Architecture of Rome, died in 1927, the School was soon entrusted to Gustavo Giovannoni by Pietro Fedele, Minister of Education of the Fascist government. Giovannoni felt so proud of his work in the School that he soon recalled his students' attention towards material and at the same time intellectual order. According to his pastoral guidance and principles, the School of architecture in Rome should become the driving force in the profession by being responsible for the entire nation's architectural activities (including teaching posts in the Schools and national competitions). But, sadly Giovannoni showed intolerance towards any kind of Modernism. Soon Giovannoni's triumphal tone and optimism about a traditionalist School of architecture would disappear. In March 1928, the 1<sup>st</sup> Exhibition of Rationalism was inaugurated in Rome, although that emergence of Rationalism was slightly contaminated by some form of Classicism in the decorative arts. Many students of the School of Rome took part in that exhibition, like Mario Ridolfi, Luigi Vietti, Adalberto Libera and Gaetano Minnucci (with Libera and Minnucci as main organisers of this exhibition). And obviously we can find Marcello Piacentini, Giovannoni's rival, to be the main advocate of this event by promoting it in

Architettura e Arti Decorative (=Architecture and Decorative Arts), the main architectural review of that time published by the Roman School (and edited and directed by both Giovannoni and Piacentini). Thus, Marcello Piacentini dedicated a full article to the 1st Exhibition of Rationalism in Architettura e Arti Decorative with exceptional abundance of illustrations of architectural designs and projects; he also commented about the materials proposed by the designs. For example, according to Piacentini, concrete should not be the only material to construct and decorate modern buildings; he also promoted and suggested traditional materials, such as marble. But, most importantly, Piacentini did not condemn the participants in that exhibition and as a result, he managed to create an everlasting cultural gap between him and Giovannoni; that gap remained thereafter to denote strong divisions in architecture and especially between progressive and traditionalist teachers and supporters of architecture in Italy. <sup>v</sup>

The young generation of architects, who were born during the first decade of the twentieth century encountered Fascism whilst being very young and inexperienced. Therefore, they were forced to become members of the Fascist Party through the Fascist Syndicate of architects; obviously some kind of reaction would have materialized sooner or later. As a result, a pressure group reacted to Gustavo Giovannoni and his colleagues' hysterical historicism immediately; those young architects formed a national association identified as the '*Movimento italiano per l'Architettura Razionale*' (= Italian Movement of Rational Architecture), M.I.A.R., which encompassed forty seven members divided into regional sections. Soon after, they appeared as an architectural movement and organised a group exhibition, as we saw, held in Pier Maria Bardi's gallery in Rome. Furthermore they managed to get support by the national Fascist Syndicate of architects. During the inauguration of the exhibition, the architects of the M.I.A.R. presented to Mussolini their '*Manifesto per l'architettura razionale*, in which, as Leonardo Benevolo put it, they tried to equal creativity with decadence. The M.I.A.R wrote their manifesto by including six basic points to convince Mussolini that, traditionalist architecture belonged to the old middle class, whereas new rational architecture was the only one to fit with Fascist 'revolutionary' ideas. Therefore, they offered 'a new architecture for Fascism'. The manifesto was presented to the Press and was published on 31 March 1931. The author translated some part of it, as follows:

1. 'Mussolini wants contemporary art; that means Fascist art.

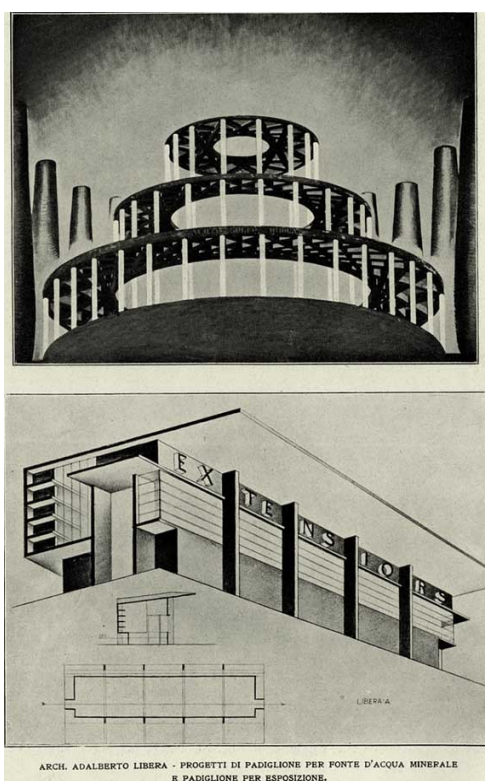
2. Sadly any inadequate architectural work created by aged architects, who served Giolitti (Liberal government), has been intended as Fascist art.
3. We are now affirming that, Fascism is only equal to fascism and that, aged architects are not only transforming Italy in a huge museum by re-masticating and re-chomping old styles, but also they have denied Fascism the right to acquire their own architectural imprint.
4. Architecture in Mussolini's times must comply with masculinity, power and pride for the Revolution. Aged architects can be only considered as an emblem of impotence, which does not fit with us.
5. Our movement has no other moral objective than that of serving our robust revolution. We are appealing to Mussolini to get the opportunity to have our designs built; we are fifty young people suffering of distrust and systematic opposition from people who do not concede business to any other person around them. In four years, we have only built six houses!
6. In order to establish architectural renewal, it is crucial to secure construction. Do not believe that, we are now seeking profit! Instead, we are expressing a Fascist idea. Each one of us is now ready to work under the conditions which, we have learnt and experienced in the squadrons of action.'<sup>vi</sup>

We can imagine Gustavo Giovannoni and other elderly teachers' reaction to this kind of audacious document. Even more tolerant architects, like Marcello Piacentini, were disappointed by such a performance of educational revolution. But, bear in mind that, this manifesto might have been just an explosion of anger of the younger generations being deprived of work for several years and also facing severe economic hardship in the 1930s. On the opposite side, cliques of architects were assigned all large projects of public interest; young architects had to struggle to be introduced inside these circles. And as a result, they used manuscripts (and speech) published to persuade the Fascist regime to approve their projects in competitions. This happened very often and it was very evident during the fierce battle for winning the Railway Station of Florence competition between most competitors; the old generation lost against the young generation of emerging architects of the '*Gruppo Toscano*' after a ferocious war of words and politics which seemed to be professional 'dirty tricks' to gain support from both the public and the regime.

Pier Maria Bardi, critic and journalist who hosted the 1st Rationalist exhibition in his gallery, had also expressed his support to Modernism by publishing his 'Rapporto a Mussolini sull'architettura' (=Report on architecture to Mussolini); in his report he instigated the younger generations of architects to turn to Mussolini, 'because he could only regulate the destiny of architecture badly managed at the time being.' By supporting the infamous Manifesto, Bardi confirmed that, 'in their petition, the young generation is now asking for Mussolini's response. Whatever might be Mussolini's response, it should be the right answer, because Mussolini is always right.'<sup>vii</sup> Pier Maria Bard's report might be considered as one of many attempts from several cultural groups of the same period to monopolise to their own advantage an always vague concept of the so-called '*cultura fascista*' (=Fascist culture). Several authors, like Leonardo Benevolo and Bruno Zevi affirmed that, the same request for recognition as official cultural groups had been several times forwarded by leading figures, like Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (Futurism), Margherita Sarfatti (Milanese avant-garde group) and Massimo Bontempelli ('*Novecento*' group). But, Mussolini personally would disappoint everybody by avoiding being associated to anyone in particular; he had always maintained some kind of freedom to choose, according to emerging instances and, most importantly, according to his own convenience.<sup>viii</sup>

However, Mussolini's attitude to choose according to his own convenience was several times adopted equally and employed by architects into their own strategies as well; they used to stand by some personalities from the regime, when events such as the rationalist exhibitions degenerated into fierce public debate. So, in the first Exhibition of Rationalist Architecture, we can find Alberto Calza Bini, architect and National General Secretary of the Fascist Syndicate of Architects, to exhibit one project. Although considered as a mediocre architect, Alberto Calza Bini had demonstrated excellent competence in politics and, it is the merit of people like him that, the profession of architect and urban planner was safeguarded to remain intact until the end of World War II when Urbanism and the revived School of architecture emerged to support the reconstruction of most cities severely deformed by the war destruction and abandonment. However, the outcome of the 1st Rationalist exhibition was mainly a slap on the face of Gustavo Giovannoni, Head of the powerful central School of Rome; it was so embarrassing for him at that moment to see his so-called return-to-traditions programme to be ridiculed by his best students, like Mario Ridolfi, Luigi Vietti and Adalberto Libera, just to name few of them. After the end of the exhibition, Giovannoni's revenge exploded to hit back all that disobedience by either offering the lowest possible grades (Mario Ridolfi's case) or referring them to get their degree in the autumn session of

the thesis discussion (Adalberto Libera's case). Giovannoni's leadership suffered a serious set back; his authority proved to be so weak and this fact was evident to the regime as well. Marcello Piacentini, his competitor to the post and esteem of the students of architecture, did not lose the chance to invite all young graduates to another rationalist exhibition by writing a message in his review *Architettura e Arti Decorative* in conclusion of his article 'Prima internazionale architettonica' in 1928.



**Figure 1.** Adalberto Libera's project in the 1<sup>st</sup> Rationalist Exhibition in 1928 (Source: Piacentini, M 1928, 'Prima internazionale Architettonica', *Architettura e Arti Decorative*, XII, pp. 544-561)

Nevertheless, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition of Rationalist Architecture in Pier Maria Bardi's gallery in March 1931 prompted another and perhaps more intensified dispute. Now the School of Architecture of Rome was involved openly in a fierce debate by being directly represented in the exhibition with the participation of numerous ex-students and even assistant professors; the entire School was literally ripped into pieces and was more profoundly offended than



during the previous exhibition in 1928. Among forty seven participants, thirteen architects were related to the School of Rome, whereas only seven to the School of Milan.

Giovannoni's famous cultural programme and curricula to create particular styles and links with the past was denied openly by everybody. To the open denial of the graduates and assistant professors, a personal attack from Pier Maria Bardi to the teachers' reputation was carried out to add more hassle to Giovannoni's position. This time, Mussolini acted not only as a supporter, but also as a sponsor of Bardi's gallery. And in that gallery, Bardi shows to Mussolini a piece of illustrative art which was to demolish the relationship of the participants with Giovannoni and his traditionalists; it was perhaps the first time that an architectural design in the format of a conceptual board/illustration hit the top people of the higher education institution so hard. During the day before the opening of the exhibition, Bardi personally hurried up to create a piece of illustration to which, he gave the title '*Tavolo degli orrori*' (=board of horrors); this board contained an assortment and collage of photographs and items of bad taste combined with architectural designs by Giovannoni, Piacentini and Milani, leading personalities of architecture and especially of the School of Rome.

Several times in his critiques, P. M. Bardi had accused Piacentini in particular that, he 'had filled his entire studio with designs and drawings for the projects of half Italy'. So, in that table of horrors, Bardi explained that he found out that some sort of 'paradise' was enclosed inside the architectural student's brain; that paradise was made by a collection of their preferred teachers' teaching materials. Now he considered that, some architectural students may have understood that inside their teachers' brains should be a special selection of materials as well; students' brain should have been fed by that special selection. But, this was a mystery. Had all that material come out during teaching sessions? Bardi said that it had not. In their heads, the teachers, who were also called 'cultural' architects, had kept enclosed much more things that, they did not want to reveal to all students. Before the 2nd Exhibition in 1931, Bardi affirmed jokingly that nobody had the key to unlock and read the 'hidden paradise' inside these 'cultural' architects' heads. Then, the M.I.A.R. architects managed to unlock the mystery in another easier way and they presented it in this '*Tavolo degli orrori*'; they killed the 'cultural' architect, opened the skull and emptied the content upon a '*tavolo*' (=table)! They organised the content to be shown better in detail to everybody visiting the exhibition; pictures of it were also sent to all friends. <sup>ix</sup>

The news of the '*Table of horrors*' and also Mussolini's admiration and comments spread immediately around Rome by means of the message: 'Dux is now with them.' The three derided teachers, who were publicly exposed to gossip, sent some confidants to visit the

exhibition and verify the truth of this news.<sup>x</sup>

### **From the activism of exhibitions and the pressure for regulatory decrees and laws to the establishment of Urbanism**



**Figure 2.** Adalberto Libera's project called *L'Arco della Pace* (=The Arch of Peace) in area E42 (Source: Archivio Ludovico Quaroni now in Fondazione CE.S.A.R. (Centro Studi sull'Architettura Razionalista))

Evidently many journalists acted as manipulators of the public opinion several times to support friends and castigate enemies of their ideals. But, in the case of Pier Maria Bardi and his writings in both the *Ambrosiano* newspaper and the *Quadrante* review, we can assume that the press played an enormous role in the patterns of politics followed by many professions. Then, the M.I.A.R. actions show clearly that manipulation of the public opinion could be an easy game, if imagery and information can reach quickly entire cities and countries. As a result, State politics and policies could be affected and more pressure for more regulation through legislation could also be a matter of days or perhaps hours.

Sometimes trickery used by journalism can cost more to a profession than anything else.

The profession of the architect was hit by some sort of distortion of true circumstances and this fact was opposed by the real outcome of the efforts of some legislators/architects who managed to fill higher positions in the government or in the union (Syndicate). The main outcome was to promote and get approval of decrees related to the establishment of new independent Schools of architecture from Northern to Southern Italy. In the middle of the political turmoil, architects managed to create an extremely favourable climate to the advancement of their profession, even though they were several times constricted to use 'dirty' tricks between them. However, the trickery was soon developed to high quality politics and the results were obviously seen in the format of laws, such the Law on Urbanism (Town planning) discussed and approved during these infamous years of discontent, but strangely enough, of general 'consent' to the political agenda.

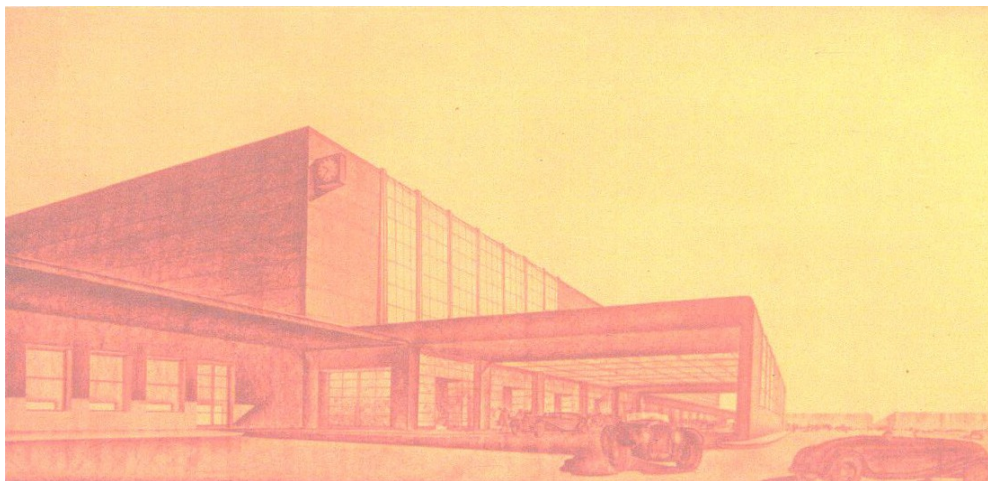
Having being attracted by the analysis of the facts of the Rationalist Exhibitions, the author has explored another phenomenon which emerged during the same years; that means the race of the architects to win national architectural competitions. And of course all alliances and antagonisms generated by the hiss and hassle of thunderous exhibitions, such as the exhibitions by M.I.A.R., had affected not only winning entries, but also the future of many architects and engineers collaborating with them. It is just necessary to re-connect to the 2nd exhibition to see how cliques can easily split or change or even create other ramifications. The *'Tavolo degli orrori'* included an architect whom, the ex-students of architecture should have avoided being included in; the name of Marcello Piacentini was so dangerously exploited and ridiculed that his revenge, or better, his plot was to be lethal for the M.I.A.R. As expected and soon after the end of the exhibition, the Fascist Syndicate of Architects withdrew their support to that movement; they started endorsing immediately another organisation to challenge Rationalism; the new group got the name of *'Raggruppamento Architetti Moderni Italiani (=Group of Italian Modern Architects)*, R.A.M.I. Mercilessly and sarcastically enough, by adopting a new name, the new formation did not only manage to dismantle the previous group, but also reversed the spelling of M.I.A.R. to R.A.M.I. The new organisation declared their moderate political preferences and clarified their approach to traditional and the so-called *'utilitarie'* (=utilitarian, functional) trends. Their manifesto was published on 5 May 1931; they used no more words, such as 'movement', because of their ambiguous and perhaps subversive meaning. As a result, a large number of members passed to this new group/safe haven. Although the Syndicate had initially approved the programme of the exhibition, Marcello Piacentini managed to make pressure

to Alberto Calza Bini, Secretary of the Syndicate, so that he would keep Rationalism under strict surveillance; the excuse was that the Syndicate should be vigilant to preserve 'Italianism' (=Italian cultural identity) intact. Calza Bini had previously kept an eye upon other important delegates to the '*Comitato internazionale per la realizzazione dei problemi dell'architettura contemporanea*', C.I.R.P.A.C. (=International Committee of Resolving Problems of Contemporary Architecture), like Carlo Enrico Rava and Alberto Sartoris. In fact, in 1929, Adalberto Libera declared that Calza Bini had already started campaigning against Rava's group identified as '*Gruppo nazionale dei razionalisti italiani*', G.N.A.R.I.<sup>xi</sup> Several architects were punished either by the School of Rome, like Ludovico Quaroni, later architectural historian and philosopher and at that time third year student and/or by the Syndicate and the School, like Gaetano Minnucci, architect and at that time assistant of Marcello Piacentini.

In that period, several architects from Tuscany were in contact with their colleagues in Rome; traditionally the School of Rome has been always connected with the School of Florence. A fine example is the relationship with teachers and architects in Rome of Giovanni Michelucci, famous Florentine architect and in that period living and working in the capital. Michelucci had not only contacted Gaetano Minnucci, Adalberto Libera, Mario Ridolfi and others, but also Roberto Papini and Marcello Piacentini. In the 1930s we can see that the School of architecture of Florence was established and as a result, the institution attracted teachers like Giovanni Michelucci and also architects related to the highest positions in the Fascist Syndicate of Architects. Michelucci used to invite some of his Roman colleagues and friends to give lectures as visiting staff and among them, in 1931, he invited Giuseppe Pagano. Unfortunately between the first team of teachers, we can discover architects like Ugo Ojetti, for example, who was an imitator of the conservative Gustavo Giovannoni, or perhaps worse. Ojetti had started his career in Rome and he was declared enemy of Marcello Piacentini as well as of any other person a bit more progressive than he was. Therefore during that visit in Florence, by referring to the conservative influence on students and, soon after his visit to the first student show of Florence, Pagano affirmed that he felt that, 'modern architecture had fallen asleep under Mazzanti's National Library (an extreme copy of the historical past built by the Arno river in Florence) ... and at the end, architecture became dormant with the construction of the Vittorio Emanuele piazza (most recent Piazza della Repubblica).'<sup>xii</sup> After that declaration, both Pagano and Michelucci had to face the hysterical reaction of Ugo Ojetti, as usual.

As we can see, M.I.A.R. and their declarations had put architects in the awkward position to

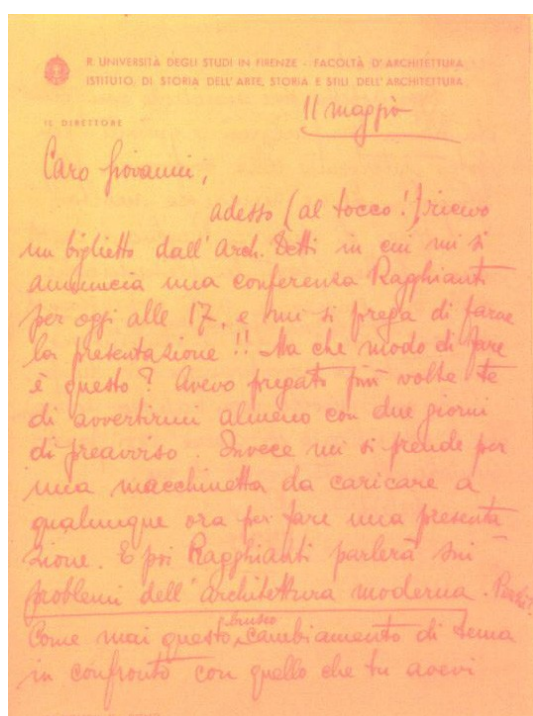
proclaim support to 'Fascist order', whilst supporting Modernism; that meant they were able to fight against conservatism on one hand, but they were locked in false promises at the same time. However all clashes between modernists and traditionalists were always placated after agreements obtained from central government and the unions to proceed with their projects for large infrastructures (especially railway stations in the 1930s and 1940s).



**Figure 3.** Giovanni Michelucci and the Gruppo Toscano: competition drawing for the Railway Station of Florence (Source: Property of the Library of the Faculty of Architecture of Florence; photograph by the author in March 2003).

As a matter of fact the expansion of towns and cities and the construction of new roads and the railway infrastructure had a positive result in regulating also urban planning; the architects were to be the big winners of urban sprawl projects either before or after World War II, such as the master plans for Sabaudia, Littoria, E42 (before the war) and new master plans for the reconstruction of all big cities in Italy (after the war). Any way we should find out that all alliances and groupings of architects and planners after the war were based clearly upon the alliances created in the infamous period of 'consent' in the 1930s and 1940s. Another curiosity was that things changed somewhat violently in the Schools of architecture by having teachers brutally blaming each other about the 'consent' and allowances to Fascism. So, we can see the '*Gruppo Toscano*' winners for the Station of Florence blaming and smearing each other's reputation, or friends, like Roberto Papini, Emilio Brizzi and Giovanni Michelucci exchanging letters of grievances sometimes for trivial

things. All that irritation led some teachers and architects to leave the Schools of architecture and join the Schools of Engineering in the 1950s (like the case of Giovanni Michelucci in 1948) and, obviously that move helped engineers to restore again their relationship with architects and architecture, which was damaged back in the 1920s (when architecture split from the Schools of Fine Arts, such as the cases of Rome and Florence, for example and/or from the Schools of Engineering, such as the case of Milan).



**Figure 4.** Sample of Roberto Papini's response on 11 May 1947 to Giovanni Michelucci's complaints about missing an important presentation by Prof. Ragghianti. (Source: Property of the Library of the Faculty of Architecture of Florence; photograph by the author in March 2003).

From now on in Italy, architects, engineers and politicians had to work hard together to produce all major master plans, according to the famous '*Legge per l'Urbanistica*' (=Law of Urbanism), which was conceived and elaborated by all during the years of 'consent', but it happened after long battle, debate and a new reform of the Schools of architecture in which new internal subjects/qualifications related to Urbanism were to be included. The proposal of

that law was presented at first by Alberto Calza Bini in 1933 and was approved finally in 1942; unfortunately the war brought it to a halt, until it was recovered again in the 1950s to develop further and support all future studies and realisation of master plans of all Italian territory.

In conclusion, the author should like to emphasize and agree with Harold Perkin's affirmation:

'Modern society in Britain, as elsewhere in the developed world, is made up of career hierarchies of specialized occupations, selected by merit and based on trained expertise. Where pre-industrial society was based on passive property in land and industrial society on actively managed capital, professional society is based on human capital created by education and enhanced by strategies of closure, that is, the exclusion of the unqualified.'<sup>xiii</sup>

In Italy the above is clearly obvious in both policy-making activities and professional pressure to acquire the right of self-control and self-organisation. But, the most important finding might be that, the class of architects managed to rise above all other sectors of the entire professional class by using extremely sophisticated diplomacy and strategic planning.

- i Archivio del Ministero di Istruzione Pubblica, *Monografie della Reggia Università e degli Istituti superiori*, 1913, Vol. II, pp136 & 296.
- ii C Boito, 'Condizioni presenti degli architetti in Italia', in *Questioni pratiche di Belle Arti. Restauri, concorsi, legislazione, professione, insegnamento*, 1893, p357.
- iii Gruppo '7', 'Architettura', *Rassegna Italiana*, no. 12, 1926; B Zevi, *Storia dell'architettura moderna*, 1955, pp231-232
- iv Gruppo '7', 'Architettura', *Rassegna Italiana*, no. 12, 1926, p232: 'Da noi esiste un tale substrato classico, e lo spirito della tradizione ... è così profondo in Italia che evidentemente e quasi meccanicamente, la nuova architettura non potrà non conservare una tipica impronta nostra.'
- v M Piacentini, 'Prima Internazionale Architettonica', *Architettura e Arti Decorative*, XII, 1928, pp544-561.
- vi L. Benevolo, *L'architettura nell'Italia contemporanea*, 1998, p86.
- vii Ibid. p87.
- viii B Zevi, *Storia dell'architettura moderna*, 1955, p650.
- ix L. Benevolo, *L'architettura nell'Italia contemporanea*, 1998, p615.
- x G Pensabene, 'La tavola degli orrori', *Il Tevere*, 1933, p1.
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