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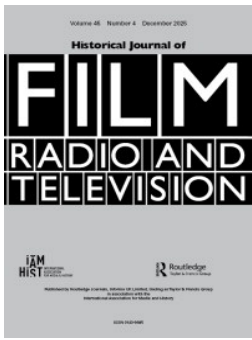
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PERPETUATING FASCISM: PROPAGANDA AND THE TEMPORALITY OF PHONOGRAPHY

Jonathan Thomas 

In this article, I analyse how Italian fascism aimed to perpetuate itself through the use of sound media, especially phonography. I examine how propaganda expressed and was shaped by the articulation between fascism's regime of historicity - its relationship to time - and the regimes of temporality of phonography and radio - the temporal framework in which they frame the actions that mobilise them. To do so, I have chosen to investigate, after presenting a brief political history of Italian phonography, two practical and social fields crucial to the perpetuation of fascism: education and war. The former prepared the way for the latter, and both were tasked with propagating the ideal of national regeneration placed at the heart of this political project, thereby offering an ideal field of investigation to better understand how the regime of historicity determined its manifestation in the field of propaganda and the dissemination of its imaginary. I shall refer to sources from state archives, the general and specialist press, and a discography of around 900 propaganda records produced for a research project concerning the recorded sound propaganda of the Italian fascist regime.

KEYWORDS: Phonography; Propaganda; Italy; Fascism; Temporality

Shortly after Benito Mussolini came to power, the book *Fascism and the Duce. Gramophone with symphony and six records* (1923), authored by Alessandro Celentano, was published in Naples.¹ Each of these “records” is a chapter in an apologetic history of fascism assembled from press cuttings that are as many traces, not to say recordings, of a close past. What could explain this early association of fascism with phonography? What do this media and this political project have in common?

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Their relationship to time? An experience of the present made more intense by its aestheticization? By showing it as an aesthetic and historical mediator of fascism, this book suggests that phonography had a particular ability to record, express and thus perpetuate fascism.

In 1935, Walter Benjamin argued that fascism produced an aestheticization of political life, to which communism responded with a politicisation of art.² However, French political records from the 1930s, which combined speeches and music, reveal that phonography was the medium where the aestheticization of political life met the politicisation of art in the propaganda of many political groups, from the royalist *Action française* to the socialist and communist parties.³ If phonography and fascism have a special relationship, it is most likely to be found in their relationship to time. In 1940, Benjamin seems to oppose again fascism to communism through their relationship to history. While the historical materialist conceives of the past as the unique and irreproducible building material for a better and also unique present, the historicist considers it as an eternity that must be repeatedly brought back to the present.⁴ That is precisely the primary function of phonography, which is, however, a modern medium from which a unique and new present is constructed through a set of novel sonic practices. This article will therefore address the relationship between fascism, phonography and time. If phonography was used to perpetuate fascism, did it do so by extracting it from its historicity through its modernity and uniqueness, or by pushing it even deeper into it through its essential mediation?

Francois Hartog has proposed the notion of a 'regime of historicity' when considering combinations of past, present and future that typify the relationship with time of social groups of all types and sizes.⁵ The regime of historicity thus designates the arrangement of the three temporal situations a group adopts when thinking about the world and reacting to it. That of the Fascist project seems contradictory. It is based on a mythical past through which the present must be regenerated by a new man who will create a new national era.⁶ Yet, linked to futurism, fascism wants the present to be violent, active and fast-paced; to be a revolutionary moment rooted in a millennial history, reborn and eternal, establishing a time loop.⁷

According to Wolfgang Ernst, phonographs or radio sets generate their own temporality; a mediatic time divorced from historical time.⁸ Plastered over the present, this time proposes to re-present the past and to create the illusion of a presence. The temporality of phonography is thus a fusion of past and present in which the former passes itself off as the latter and gives the impression of its return, or resurrection. As phonography had been used as a means of propaganda in the West since the end of the nineteenth century, the way in which its temporality dictated its political uses and was articulated in relation to the regime of historicity of a political project is a promising field of investigation. I propose using the notion of a 'regime of temporality' to designate the temporal determination that a medium imposes on the actions, imagination, and perceptions that it engages in evoking and producing. Based on conservation, the temporal regime of phonography delimited the framework within which a political project could express its regime of historicity by selecting what it would present from the past and how it would do so.

Here, I would like to consider the capacity of phonographic objects to represent the past as an instrument of regeneration through the recalling of history, and then to question fascism's employment of this capacity. Could the listening experience offered by a recording equipped with the appropriate sound symbols stimulate the imagination, arouse feelings, and ultimately instigate the experience (however illusory) of historical and political regeneration? Could the perpetuation of fascism be comparable to the repetition of the projection into the present of a past recorded or represented by the recording?

By addressing these questions, this article aims to shed light on the little-studied role of phonography in the fascist propaganda, and to propose a temporal analysis of its operation in this context. It will also consider radio because its temporal regime, based on the transmission of sound, is that of a present in the process of arriving, thus complementing that of phonography.⁹ By considering the articulations of these regimes of temporality and the political forms they enable, and having highlighted the political stakes of phonography for the fascist regime, I will examine its perpetuation through sound media in the fields of the fascistisation of young Italians and war, two areas in which the imaginary of the birth of fascism was generated, thereby activating its historical impulse.

To do this, I will refer to sources from the Italian State Archives, the general or the specialised press, and information taken from a discography of more than 900 records collected during the research project REDIRE.¹⁰

Italian phonography and its control

In Italy, phonography emerged commercially in the late nineteenth century and was mostly controlled by foreigners through Italian branches.¹¹ By example, the Società Nazionale del Grammofono (SNG – 1912), a major phonographic company, was a local branch of the British Gramophone Company (1898). Published under the label His Master's Voice (HMV), the Gramophone Company's records were distributed by SNG, which had set up the Italian equivalent of HMV under the name La Voce del Padrone (LVDP). In the early 1920s, Pathé, Odeon, LVDP, Columbia and Parlophon dominated a market in which the sole major autonomous Italian company was Fonodisco Italiano Trevisan (1911). Moreover, the phonographic industry developed more gradually in Italy than in the United States or Europe, because records and phonographs were widely regarded as consumer goods with no real cultural value.¹² It is therefore reasonable to assume that the electrification that revolutionised sound recording from the mid-1920s onwards was not experienced as a revolution by the immense majority of Italians.¹³ Indeed, in 1925, only 1,314 gramophones and 10,458 records were sold in Italy, suggesting a tiny market in which the social (and political) practices driven by recorded sound could not yet become popular.¹⁴

Benito Mussolini's rise to power therefore coincided with a state of phonography which could satisfy, at its stage of technical and industrial development, neither the ultranationalism of the National Fascist Party (NFP), nor the deployment of mass propaganda which his regime would soon require. This developed with the help of phonography at the turn of the 1930s, within an apparatus that mobilised

radio, through the EIAR (see below), and cinema, notably through the Istituto Luce (1925). Records would then provide radio with significant part of its programs, as the electrification of phonography and the invention of the pick-up in the late 1920s made it possible to broadcast recordings with satisfying quality. Some of the songs that accompanied popular cinema became recording successes that served the regime's musical propaganda.

However, the Fascist politicisation of phonography began as early as 1922: Columbia, a brand of the British Columbia Graphophone Company present in Italy via SNG, released a recording of *Giovinazza*, the NFP anthem, which demonstrated the sensitivity of record companies to commercial opportunities opened by the new regime and its need for sonic representation. From then on, the fascist social, economic, military, colonial, and symbolic policies were, for the most part, accompanied by recorded songs and speeches published by private companies. However, phonography required control and censorship. In prohibiting the possession or use of any semantic material 'harming the prestige of the State or Authority or offending national sentiment', Article 112 of the 1926 Public Security Act served as a legal basis for Italian prefectures to establish lists of records to be checked, seized and destroyed. In 1927 and 1928, the themes of such records included the anarchist martyrs Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti and the assassination of the parliamentarian Giacomo Matteotti, parodies of an Italian emigré ('Nofrio') and of Mussolini ('Musollino'), plus socialist and antifascist songs. Most of them were produced by Columbia and Victor in the United States and brought by travellers.¹⁵ Once spotted, their owners were investigated to determine whether possession resulted from political activity, but it was common for a banned record to have been acquired inadvertently (during the purchase of a lot) and for its owner to be recognised in due course as being of 'good political and moral conduct' or even a member of a fascist institution.¹⁶ However, authorities feared that coordinated action from abroad could involve records, particularly by providing them with labels that did not indicate their true content. Police stations were thus equipped with phonographs to check out seizures, enabling, for example, the identification, in December 1927, of a recording of socialist speeches with a label marked 'carnival song'.¹⁷ In December 1930, the Ministry of the Interior reported information circulating in 'subversive circles' from the 'secret sect "Justice and Liberty"', an anti-fascist group founded in Paris the previous year, announcing the release of records of speeches by the Italian Socialist Party officials Filippo Turati, Giuseppe Emanuele Modigliani and Oddino Morgari, bearing labels of musical pieces. It was alleged that these records were to be smuggled into Italy and sold *en masse* in Milan by an individual who was unaware of their contents. While the investigation did not confirm these plans, Paris was indeed a place where anti-fascist activism was extended to phonography.¹⁸ From June 1931 onwards, *La Libertà* encouraged the purchase of two records recorded by the socialist label 'Ersa' featuring speeches by Turati (concerning Matteotti) and Pietro Nenni (on the March on Rome), along with socialist anthems.¹⁹

The concept of such records, relaying a recent past rather than the latest Italian news, informs one aspect of the political potential of phonography. Providing a socialist interpretation of the March on Rome or the assassination of

the parliamentary Matteotti, which marked the totalitarian transformation of the fascist state, was an act of appropriation of memories which the regime - which began its "era" with the March on Rome and counted the years in Roman numerals - needed to master to control its time. Thus Columbia's 1926 release of a song about Matteotti (*'Il delitto è Matteotti'* [sic]), while not regarded as subversive, was banned in Italy: aimed at 'maintaining the memory of Matteotti', the song might 'revive the discontent of the Socialist Party'.²⁰ The potential polemic of phonography then depended on its capacity to arouse experiences of time and memory where it was not necessary, revealing the spatial facet of its political power. Thus, in July 1928, a record regarded as purely fascist but which featured 'subversive' speeches and anthems 'in a playful way' was regarded as being a potential risk to public order if used with the wrong intentions; a danger all the greater given that it was on sale everywhere and might therefore be inserted into various temporalities and spaces.²¹

In opposition to the potentially destructive consequences of some of its uses, records were also thought of by the regime as a factor of national unity by transmitting memory and appropriate culture. As a Sardinian musicologist focused on the study of folk culture, and therefore a precocious use of the phonograph as a means of collecting, Gavino Gabriel (1881–1980) wished for the constitution of an ethnic national record library already before 1922, to gather together folk recordings from all over Italy in one place.²² While he subsequently became a major player in the institutionalisation of Italian phonography, Gabriel did not carry out his initial project but instead participated in the creation of the 'Discoteca di Stato' (DS – State Record Library) in 1928, which he directed and, in 1934, described as 'one of the most delicate and modern institutes of culture and political propaganda ever produced by the fascist regime'.²³ Enabling Italy to catch up with Austria (Phonogrammarchiv – 1899), Germany (Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv – 1904) and France (Archives de la parole – 1911), the new institution preserved heritage to establish a nation based on history, using the voices of great Italians from the First World War, and on the sounds of regional cultures, which were of course indicators of Italian fragmentation but the sharing of which might act as a melting pot. The DS was therefore tasked with transmitting to the public sounds of a fascist Italy that, in 1933, the Ministry of Education intended to enlarge to include all musical culture and contemporary phonographic production.²⁴

Also in 1933, while radio threatens the survival of the phonographic industry by broadcasting commercial recordings for free,²⁵ records and radio were associated to improve the fascist propaganda apparatus through culture: the Ente italiano per le audizioni radiofoniche (EIAR) was endowed with a phonographic wing following a complex institutional reorganisation blending public and private financial affairs and interests. Created in 1927 and registered by the State to develop and coordinate national radio broadcasting, the EIAR devised and arranged its programmes according to directives issued by the Ministry of Communications, thereby relaying a fascist arrangement of time.²⁶ In March 1933, the Cetra (Compagnia per Edizioni, Teatro, Registrations ed Affini) was founded under the impetus of the director of the EIAR, Raoul Chiodelli.²⁷ Its statutes made it into a new means of intervening in Italian media, musical, and cultural life, with the aim

of amplifying the production and distribution of shows by the EIAR.²⁸ Its remit was vast: the manufacture and sale of radiotelegraphic, radiographic and televisual emitters and receivers; the manufacture and sale of sound recording and reproduction equipment; the production, publishing and sale of sound recordings; the hiring of songwriters and actors and the formation of artistic companies for mounting radio and television broadcasts and recordings (images and sound) of shows; theatre and concert venue management; music and theatrical publishing.²⁹ Cetra was also tasked with reinforcing the Italianisation of show and phonography production. One of Chiodelli's motivations was

to set up, in line with the wishes of the authorities (Ministry of Popular Culture), a purely Italian phonographic industry to oppose the "trusts" of the English phonographic industry operating in Italy, since, with the exception of one small agency (the Societa Fonodisco Italiano Trevisan), all the other record companies were controlled directly or indirectly by His Master's Voice of London.³⁰

Yet the origins of Cetra suggested that it would merely be a relay of foreign production and commercial interests: an agreement was signed with the Transoceanic Trading Company (the Dutch company that then owned His Master's Voice) and LVDP to make Cetra the exclusive distributor of Parlophon records in Italy, to be sold exclusively by the Italian company Radiomarelli.³¹ This agreement had the advantage of offering a substantial repertoire of recordings without taking the financial risk of creating a catalogue of its own, which enabled Cetra to survive the early disappointing months of its phonographic activity, and then to fully participate in propaganda *via* records deployed with a previously unseen intensity from 1935 onwards.³²

In the early 1930s, the growing presence of records in the general press demonstrates their increasing participation in everyday life and their political potential, which was fully exploited from then on. In the wake of the Italianisation of phonography undertaken by Cetra, the specialised press described for its part an industry 'as useful to the Fatherland as any other' and the record not as a 'toy' but as 'an instrument of culture'.³³ It was placed 'in the service of patriotism' when it included the propaganda songs recorded by most of the record companies present in Italy, with LVDP in the lead.³⁴

A look at LVDP's recordings prior to the March on Rome shows that the repertoire of fascist musical propaganda was not created by producing new aesthetic styles, but rather by fascisticising those that were already successful and popular.³⁵ The most eloquent example of this practice is probably *Giovenizza*, composed in 1909 and given fascist lyrics in 1919 and then in 1924. Thus, in addition to the hymns and military marches (played by brass bands and/or sung by choirs) that were composed without aesthetic innovation to represent the regime's institutions or army and police forces, many propaganda songs used the rhythms of fashionable dances (one step, waltz, tango), which had initially entered the Italian phonographic repertoire as a means of entertainment and socialisation. Traditional song forms, such as the Neapolitan song, the *tarantella*, and the *stornello*, were also used to promote the regime.

The outbreak of the Ethiopian War in October 1935, followed by the international sanctions imposed on the regime and its retreat into autarky, accelerated the fascisation of phonography and its musical repertoire, as well as the affirmation of its Italianness and, by extension, of Italy's cultural and industrial power. The popular success *Canto dei volontari* (Song of the Volunteers) from the comedy *Amo te sola* (1935) was quickly exploited for war propaganda. It was added to the film *All'ombra del Negus* and released by LVDP, Fonit or Columbia on records featuring purely fascist and colonial songs such as *O Rondinella*, *camicina nera*, *Cuore d'Italia*, *Faccetta nera* or *Ti saluto! ... (...vado in Abissinia)*. Columbia, which had fascized its children's catalogues with the book-record *Bebè racconta la guerra* (1923) - a story from the First World War citing *Giovinetta* - and propaganda songs published in the series of small-diameter records 'Piccola meraviglia' (1925), then released recordings of Mickey Mouse (Topolino) as a member of the youth institution Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) and as a soldier, making his family the sinister promise of collecting 'Moorish skins' to create gloves and scarves.³⁶ Hundreds of song recordings dotted the time of war. A medium for preserving the past, the record became a medium for current events:

And always patriotic current events records. Never has recording production seemed so frank and lively in response to public feeling; and these songs, vibrant with Italianness, fixed on the black substance of the record, also constitute, beneath their frivolous appearance, an affirmation of faith and a gesture of healthy propaganda. It should therefore be of no surprise that these songs have featured, *en masse*, on all the lists; on the contrary, it would be surprising if this did not happen. They are modest but good weapons for a holy battle; and they must be taken into consideration.³⁷

The incessant repetition of these musical shapings of current events allowed the regime to implant its pet issues in the minds of its audience. Subsequently, the power of phonography's political representation was no longer limited to the aestheticisation of fascism through light music. Indeed, in 1936 Cetra promoted a '100% Italian' phonograph, soon to be released in models called 'Vittoria' and 'Imperium'³⁸, and began releasing records in its own name.

Furthermore, the publication in 1938 of a 'code for the perfect record enthusiast' (Cetra), a simple list of technical guidelines for the proper use and maintenance of phonographic objects, as well as a 'Record Enthusiast's Manual' (LVDP), a hundred-page brochure presenting the record as the ideal way to access high musical culture, illustrates the social field that phonography was targeting at the end of the 1930s.³⁹ The 'code' was intended at households still struggling to get into phonography due to its high cost and whose members had to maintain their equipment to stay on board, whereas the 'manual' was aimed at those who were already in a position to build up a record collection. Thus, the wider social adoption of phonographic practices was actively desired by players in the Italian phonographic market. In 1940, Cetra, the 'Italian record company', launched a competition to design a wooden record holder with a capacity of 50 records, stating: 'Today, the record is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity for every household. Today, the record library, like the library, indicates the level of culture, or should we say, civilisation, of each home.'⁴⁰

Formulated three weeks before Italy entered the Second World War, this 'necessity' also shows records to be agents, as much as indicators, of the proper cultural, moral and political training of a people who would soon have to face the privations of war and (according to the fascist *leitmotif*) win. Not surprisingly, the national affiliation of record labels has been called into question. LVDP was one such target. British-owned, it was seized in September 1940 and gave to the regime an immediate pledge of allegiance by sending to Mussolini's private residence a cabinet filled with a set of 12 records entitled 'The Fascist's Record Library', along with this note: 'Here is the fruit of the first 48 h of fascist management of the formerly English 'VOCE DEL PADRONE'. From now on, phonographic editions will be exclusively Italian and feature fascist art. The radio equipment section will also be strengthened, and inexpensive appliances will be manufactured for the people.'⁴¹ Its complete Italianisation was sought through its nationalisation in February 1943.

Before this, the autarkic conduct of the record industry was reinforced by Law 615 of 19 April 1942:

The political and artistic control of national phonographic production is the responsibility of the Ministry of Popular Culture. It is notably tasked with regulating the distribution of Italian records within the national territory and abroad and technically advising the competent administrations of the State regarding agreements concluded with other States concerning the import, export and distribution of records, the master recordings and any other recording materials of sound or voice.⁴²

The regime's concern was no longer that records might provoke public disorder, but rather that the process of fascistisation of the Italian people might be undermined by the cultural poison of foreign productions. In the spring of 1943, the Ministry of Popular Culture (Minculpop) issued a confidential and urgent request that record companies should henceforth send two copies of every new release to Benito Mussolini's personal secretary, implicating the Duce himself in the control of phonography.⁴³ The wartime situation revealed the phonograph as a weakness, but also as part of the fortress that Italian society was to become. The war thus underlined the importance of good political control of record conception (the ever-building heritage of Italian sound culture) in an attempt to perpetuate Fascism. Its brief political history, from censorship to ever-tightening control, highlights three points for analysis of the practical consequences of the conservation capacity of phonographic objects.

Firstly, listening (whether to a record played on a phonograph or being broadcast) became, when infiltrated by politics, a time devoted to consent and the manifestation of fascism through leisure, education, training, information and mobilisation.

Secondly, memory: with the record allowing repetition, listening became the agent of the formation of a fascist memory which, when constantly exercised and reinforced through listening, normalised the narratives and the political imaginary it supported and which generated it. Censorship and control were thus primarily focused on the field of memory to ensure that it offered no support for anti-fascist reformulations of the Italian context.

Thirdly, time and its fascist imagination affected the imaginary of phonography, reformulating it in terms of its own issues. Drawing on the imaginaries of time, phonography, and culture in Fascist Italy, a 1937 LVDP advertisement illustrates the memory power of the record and the issues underpinning its control. It shows the famous tenor Beniamino Gigli, a supporter of the regime, holding a record that he looks at attentively. Above the record stands an ancient statue, probably a relic of the Roman Empire. The two objects are captioned 'classical record' and 'classical statue' respectively.⁴⁴ Both are thus inscribed in the same temporality, that of a frozen time in which their classicism will never fade, establishing them as cultural archetypes. However, the statue represents the origin that fascism attributes to the Italian people and regards as its ultimate political horizon through the myth of Rome, its Empire, and the ideal of regeneration that it bears. The continuity established between the statue and the record turned the latter into a cultural artefact that was just as useful as a Roman relic for national regeneration. It becomes an element of historical, political, and cultural past that can be introduced at any time, without having to justify the relevance of its appearance in relation to the present that welcomes it. It is therefore never a product of the present. And since it attempts to produce the present from a past that is not a cause but a goal to be achieved, it is a purely historicist object. Thus, the political task that phonography performed through listening and memory was an attempt to create a temporality outside of historical time, in which everyone would live a fascist existence. However, this theoretical proposition had to give way to a practical one: the conservation and repetition capacities of phonography transformed its objects into media of programming and the control of time - the time of a record allows for the operation of times of leisure, history and affects. Its temporality could then be coupled with that of radio, the inverse of its own, to play on the experience of live listening while also being a facsimile of it. I will now examine the articulation of the regimes of temporality of these media as it was operated within frameworks pertaining to the training of youth and the conduct of war.

Education: the imitation of intemporal models

Who embodies the possibility of regenerating a society more than a child, a being whose present may represent the raw material of a future ideal for a political project? Benito Mussolini early identified a crucial aspect of the perpetuation of fascism as being the formation of a youth uncontaminated by contact with the ideas and values of liberal democracy.⁴⁵ Between 1922 and 1924, philosopher Giovanni Gentile, Fascism's main ideologue, was a key minister of Public instruction.⁴⁶ He reformed school teaching to turn young Italians into spontaneous and creative 'men and women of action', by teaching them 'how to read, observe, think, and act like Italians'.⁴⁷ However, this imperative Italianness did not lead to the frenzied fascistisation of schools. That process actually began after 1925 with the transition of the regime into a dictatorship, accompanied by a reform of school textbooks initiated by the new minister Pietro Fedele.⁴⁸ It accelerated and spread outside of schools with the founding, in 1926, of the ONB, 'which soon became the symbol and showcase of fascist Italy' and was, from 1927 onwards, the only authorised

political youth institution in Italy.⁴⁹ Firstly incorporating boys and then, from 1929, girls aged between 8 and 18, it insisted on the physical education of boys ‘to create a fascist new man, modern and strong, capable of competing successfully and of demonstrating his superiority’.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, girls should become wise housewives with bodies ideal for giving birth to bonny children raised to be hardy enough to endure war.⁵¹

The militarisation of the ONB gained momentum as the regime approached the invasion of Ethiopia.⁵² This shift was accentuated in 1937 by the replacement of the ONB by the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL), which was dependent on the NFP and whose motto, ‘believe, obey, fight,’ was warlike.⁵³ The time of childhood conceived by the regime and deployed by its youth organisations was therefore a present, the full intensity of which, in terms of actions and experiences, was projected towards future national regeneration, firstly through the creation of a new people, then through violence, sacrificial testing and the heroic demonstration of this people’s superior capacity to prevail. How were sound media employed in undertaking this training plan? Moreover, how were their regimes of temporality – the experience of eternal repetition on the one hand and the experience of things to come on the other – exploited by fascism in terms of its regime of historicity?

It should be pointed out that the first institutional use of phonography envisaged by the new government involved public education and was initiated by Gavino Gabriel, who intended to update school teaching through use of the gramophone.⁵⁴ The idea of using the record as a modern mediator of cultures and learning through sonic imitation (music; languages) had already led to discussions during the summer of 1922 with Alfredo Bossi, director of the SNG, who was seeking commercial outlets. It began to come to fruition in December 1922 through discussions initiated between Gabriel, Gentile, members of his ministry and teachers, to define the practical scope.

The arrival of the gramophone in schools was inscribed in the Ministerial Ordinance of 11 November 1923, then in Regional Decree No. 2185 of 1st October 1924. This was preceded by the creation, in 1923, of ‘educational records’ by the SNG on the LVDP brand, which boasted, in a November 1925 catalogue, of having been the first in Italy to have taken “the initiative of developing an educational record library in accordance with the new requirements, in addition to the numerous records of various kinds already released devoted to gymnastics, patriotic commemorations, saluting the flag, and so on”.⁵⁵ While this LVDP catalogue does not list educational records featuring fascist songs, the one from 1st October 1929 did offer some under a “patriotic records” listing, with recordings of *Giovinezza* (1926) plus several songs from the First World War used for the regime’s memorial propaganda.⁵⁶ The same section was to be found in the catalogue of 1st April 1930, along with another section of “children’s records” with a similar programme.⁵⁷ The phonographic industry thus accompanied the growing movement of fascisation of schools and childhood.

Led by a teacher, collective listening to recordings of dialects, folk music and national songs was intended, according to Gabriel, to contribute to the unification of a country divided by its regional peculiarities. As a medium for preserving a

past that could be repeated at will, the record offered cultural samples freed from time and history: the elements of a nature (that of Italy and its people) to be assembled and transmitted. In the late 1920s, the gramophone, which was used to encourage students to sing, functioned as a support for unitary activity and was one of a range of 'essential tools of modern pedagogy' available in the classroom.⁵⁸ In a 1932 advertisement, LVDP encouraged the presence of a gramophone in each school by displaying four models - two of which were portable - made in Italy.⁵⁹

This advertisement also showed three radio sets that were to accompany gramophones in classrooms. Competition between these devices was increased by the June 1933 launch of Radio Rurale, an organisation responsible for distributing eponymous sets to schools and rural homes, as well as broadcasting programmes; a policy continued with the launch of Radio Balilla in 1937. Tasked by the regime with bridging the gap between the equipment rate in towns, which was low but largely in the majority, and that in the countryside, Radio Rurale increased the number of school sets from 4,000 in 1934 to almost 40,000 in 1938.⁶⁰ An article on the 'loudspeaker in schools' in the national daily *La Stampa* acknowledged the gramophone's greater capacity to attract attentive and prolonged listening, but it also vaunted the superiority of radio with regard to two essential points: the costs of its purchase and use were lower while its wide dissemination would enable the regime to instantly broadcast its information and orders to the population throughout the country.⁶¹ The radio was thus perceived as an agent of national unity, but one whose operation depended upon a regime of temporality which was the inverse of that of the gramophone. While the latter generated national unity through the constitution of a culture detached from time and through the integration of a narrative of origins, as well as a matrix for conceiving and interpreting the world, radio did so through the sharing of the same event in progress, and thereby through the sharing of action. Of course, this dichotomy was challenged by the cultural, symbolic, and memorial value of musical programmes - fascist anthems, speeches, classical and lyrical music, light music - but these often came from records, the broadcasting of which could have given the illusory sensation of listening to a live performance. As a medium for such an illusion, radio possessed a potential for manipulation and propaganda greater than that of the record, which nevertheless asserted itself as an invisible but fundamental device for propaganda. In June 1942, a report by Minculpop agreed that radio was an excellent means of education and, to improve its effectiveness, proposed to develop its programmes and involve young listeners in their production.⁶²

Involving the targets of school broadcasts at the very heart the radio's regime of temporality to better reach their classmates was not, however, a new idea. In February 1933, *Radiocorriere*, the weekly news sheet of EIAR broadcasts and a relay for fascist propaganda, featured on its front page a photo of more than a hundred children gathered in front of a radio in a classroom. The accompanying article, 'Sixty thousand children listening to transmissions of national songs', recounts the reception in schools in northern Italy of a broadcast from EIAR stations in Milan, Trieste and Bolzano, which reached, in the city of Milan alone, around 35,000 pupils via 320 devices placed in 86 schools. Lasting over an hour, the programme brought together songs about the *Risorgimento* (1861), the First World War, and

the 'national rebirth' implemented by fascism. This was framed by two speeches given by children, followed by a surprise visit from the Duke of Bergamo, veteran and cousin of the King of Italy Vittorio Emanuele III. A rustic and humorous play by the popular author Alberto Casella, a fascist from the very beginning, was then performed live. From a propaganda point of view, one of the most important moments were the songs sung by a choir (a powerful means of symbolising an active political community) composed of two hundred Milanese school children (100 *Giovani Italiane* – girls from the ONB aged from 14 to 18 – and 100 *Balilla* – boys from 8 to 14 years old) who were introduced in a speech given by a member of the *Piccole Italiane* (girls aged between 8 and 14), dedicating the songs to her young audience. After calling them to listen, she welcomed them: 'You are today, O little friends, at the centre of all our sympathy and all our attention, because we feel that your heart beats very close to ours.' She then asked them to let their 'feelings respond to our songs today'. The proximity induced by a live broadcast may have aided the transmission of human warmth signified by a speech delivered by a female voice which might one day be that of a wife or mother, thereby enabling a better reception of the songs. Once they had been performed, a concluding message intoned by the choir explained their link with their listeners and the symbolic function that the regime expected from them: 'These are your songs, children [...] they are ardent antidotes of hope and faith for childhood and youth surrounded by the phalanxes of fascism: they are marches that accompany the steps of the new Italian generations, today at the forefront of the people in the conquest of a new civilisation.'⁶³

The choir, which featured a collective of harmonious and effective young fascists, whose presence signified a concentration of the stakes of the perpetuation of the regime, represented both the idealised future of the new nation and its immediate accomplishment, audible live by all. Their radio broadcast was not based on a relationship between the people and the Duce, whose charismatic status rose above the human condition, but rather on a relationship between children, an allegory of a small nation addressing those who resembled its members and whom it must guide along the path marked out by the fascist imaginary towards a new Italy.

The idea of duplicating model-children thanks to a material medium was nothing revolutionary. In 1933, the regime already practised it in schools *via* government-issued books describing perfectly fascistised children's characters and communities.⁶⁴ However, the radio generated its own regime of temporality that plunged its audience *in medias res* into the fabrication of a collective and musicalised, over-aesthetised representation of fascist Italy. This regime of temporality was typified by its capacity to capture attention and the programme thus began with a call for the children to listen; 'Get ready! Get ready! Here's the Milan Radio Station on air, and me who's talking: I'm a *Piccola Italiana*, a Milanese schoolgirl'.⁶⁵ The sound environment having been taken over by the radio programme and delimited by the attention it paid to the young listeners, became that of the small nation existing all around them in acoustic waves, and which they were participating in constructing through their attentive listening.

Other attempts at duplication *via* radio transmission were documented by *Radiocorriere* between 1933 and 1937. They were carried out by children from the ONB summer camps, funded by the regime to maintain the political education during vacations.⁶⁶ Between two fascist songs, the children addressed their comrades from other camps. They greeted their far-away mothers and relatives, gave their impressions, and above all expressed their joy at belonging to the ONB and their unconditional love for the Duce.⁶⁷ Yet again, this incursion of a collective and participative temporality into other children's time was aimed at reproducing feelings framed by politics and thereby a fascist subjectivation in real time: the radio was the medium of action motivated through the imaginary of the songs and words of the Balilla.

Sound media was also able to provoke subjectivation without the help of a presenter from the regime. In 1934 an advert for a radiophonograph showed the device and a child with a baton in front of a score. It reads 'a little *maestro* conducting a big orchestra: the extreme ease of operating the radiophonograph'.⁶⁸ While this advert certainly reveals an existing imaginary of personal musical performance enhanced by a phonograph, thus fostering the integration of the device into the home⁶⁹, it may also illustrate the power of subjectivation of the objects it promotes: in a nation where the imagination of fascism is omnipresent through propaganda and the institutions that structure Italian society, a child who imagines himself as a powerful and effective musical leader could do the same as the fascist leader of another collective, this time a popular one. Embodied here by a hybrid device, this power is shared between radio and phonography, each participating *via* its own temporal regime. Radio is the medium of a collective construction, shared in real time, engaged in simultaneously in various spaces. The record, on the other hand, represents a duplication through a subjectivation based on repetition: we learn - we memorise - how to be the person represented by the record through listening and efforts at embodiment.

At least 70 recordings made by school choirs (around sixty) and others of the ONB (about ten), has been published during the fascist era. Their repertoire is mostly made up of anthems (*Bimbe d'Italia*; *Saluto al Duce*; *Balilla*; *Inno dei Balilla Moschettieri*, etc) from different branches of the ONB but also includes military songs and other anthems of the regime. The children served as models for other children. One of them, Gino Pastori, a 12-year-old Balilla chorister and soloist, was mentioned on the labels of his records to better demonstrate his exemplary nature.⁷⁰ Having become a fragment of the past located outside time, Pastori exists as an example in a temporal mode similar to that of another child who entered Italian history earlier and featured in the national anthem *Inno di Mameli* under the epithet 'Balilla': an 11-year-old Genoese boy who is said to have launched a revolt against the occupation of the city by the Austrians and the Sardinians in 1746. Except that Gino Pastori and his classmates can still be heard today, every time their records are played: listening to these children as examples is not an experience whose time is limited to the exceptionality of a radio broadcast. It is repeatable at will and it is also shorter (3 to 4 min per side), which allows for repeated attentive listening: the recordings of these children offer eternal performances and enactments of fascism, its educational policy and its imaginary of regeneration, as

long as the record remains playable. In this sense, unlike radio, the record was the medium of an imaginary aroused by the sound performance to which a political project gave form. Its temporal regime meant that it concerned, unlike radio, the mythical roots of fascism. The latter were warlike pasts - Imperial Rome and the First World War - which insinuated themselves into the military experiences of the regime through radio and phonography.

War: the sonic mythification of a regenerated present

Considered in terms of the historicity of fascism, war was a contradictory event since it could mean both its beginning, as a purifying moment necessary for the regeneration it desired, and its end, because it was a test that would lead it to a new phase or destroy it. The First World War was a crucial matrix and symbolic source for Italian fascism, both in terms of its extreme violence and the national frustration provoked by the disregard for Italian territorial claims in the aftermath of a 'mutilated' victory. The Ethiopian war allowed fascist leaders and soldiers to express their taste for extreme violence and brought the regime into its brief imperial phase. The Second World War brought about its downfall. By concentrating the possibilities for national regeneration and the renewal of its revolutionary principle, the war was a precipitate of fascism's regime of historicity: its ancient imaginary, representing eternity, was updated by an immediate action that would either confirm the correctness of the efforts deployed in the education of young Italians or brutally invalidate them. The temporalities that the war blended were thus like those of the radio (a hyperpresent), and of phonography (a past that seized the opportunity to re-present itself). In wartime, the uses of records and the radio were intimately linked to perpetuate fascism by ensuring, at best, its expansion, or, at worst, a residual but necessary presence so that it would not completely disappear. In peacetime, both media served to recall the past time of the war and to prepare for the future, in other words to project the ultimate manifestation of fascism.

Recordings that served to recall the First World War were released from the 1920s onwards by most of the record companies present in Italy. More than a hundred records feature *La leggenda del Piave* and *La Canzone del grappa* (two very popular songs from the end of the war), the 'epic of Piave' - a musical account of Italy's involvement in the war, one of the aims of which was to 'signify chronologically the transition from [its] heroism to [its] glorification', along with 'songs from the trenches' performed by veterans' choirs.⁷¹ *La leggenda del Piave* also served as a 'para-national anthem' right from the first weeks of the regime.⁷²

Recordings by veterans' choirs, i.e. mediators of an aesthetic of war by those who had experienced it, highlight the particular importance of testimony in the techniques of recalling an event through records, as well as in the regime's commemorative system. This system was based in particular on the DS, whose founding law stipulated in Article 4 that "the use of phonograph record reproduction moulds for patriotic or didactic propaganda" was granted by Mussolini to the 'Associazione nazionale mutilati e invalidi di guerra (National Association of War Mutilated and Invalids' - ANMIG), founded in 1917, which was also allowed to

keep the profits from sales.⁷³ The place occupied by the ANMIG and the memory it represented at the heart of the phonographic system was recalled by the *Radiocorriere* which, in announcing a radio broadcast on 24 May 1933 dedicated to the commemoration of the war, precisely cited article 4. The program featured recordings of famous wartime voices preserved by the DS, each recounting an aspect of the conflict.

These recordings and their presentation by Gavino Gabriel were supposed to be heard by 'Italian radio enthusiasts [...] with an Italian heart that is excited because they will relive with him the hours of passion and joy in which fascist Italy was born'.⁷⁴ The DS (whose propaganda mission was supported by ANMIG) and Gabriel participated together in the establishment of a system that offered the experience of the intense feelings of war thanks to the illusion of live broadcasting produced by the articulation of the temporal regimes of radio and records.

The idea that broadcasting a recording could deceive listeners and give them the misleading impression that they were listening to a live event was not new in Italy at the time.⁷⁵ Although a lack of sources means we cannot be absolutely certain that this illusion actually existed, this broadcasting practice was clearly intended as a means of communication within the framework of a propaganda campaign. It could be described as 'fake live'. The whole point of this kind of broadcast arose from the programming that phonography made possible. Combining records within a broadcast produced arrangements between testimonies and the aestheticisation of politics through music, composing imaginaries and therefore aspects of culture, in this case a warrior matrix of fascism and the new Italy. The principle of which could also operate beyond national borders during the regime's periods of expansion. The alliance of radio and records employed within the framework of military propaganda shows that, in this case, war was as much a matter of troop movements as of movements of cultural elements capable of captivating and acculturating audiences. The wars in fascist Italy was involved led to the creation of discographic repertoires dedicated to each of them and aimed primarily at Italians. Various organs of the regime also sought to adjust the programs of discographic broadcasts designed to extend fascist influence beyond the national territory.

Waged between October 1935 and May 1936, the Ethiopian War was the first whose preparation, course, conclusion and consequences (most notably the international sanctions agreed on by the League of Nations) were accompanied by multiple recordings of around a hundred songs. Many included racist representations of Ethiopian men and women, glorifying war, sacrifice, homeland, and Italy's so-called civilising mission. These joyful songs formed an arsenal of internal propaganda whose recordings, having been newly researched today, show the phonographic medium as a tool of fascist expansion and a means of dominating colonised populations after the founding of the Empire through the harvesting, formatting and commercialisation of their sounds.⁷⁶ Around 300 military and colonial propaganda records were published (plus around one hundred records of folk music from Libya and East Africa). This was an unprecedented amount, demonstrating that phonography had adopted a more major role than ever before in the fascist system which, although it was only directly involved in record releases by Parlophon and then Cetra records, could nevertheless decide to prohibit the release of a song on its territory.

Although, in 1934, the specialist magazine *Il Disco* likened the radio to a newspaper and the record to a library, the notion of a 'news record' blurred the temporal distinction between the two forms of media and expressed its full operational value in the context of war.⁷⁷ Turning the record into a medium of current events meant offering a listening experience which was the opposite of that of a record when heard on the radio during a 'fake live' broadcast: it became a question of extending the experience of listening to a present (or very recent) event into the long duration of preservation. It was a matter of repeating and duplicating experiences of news independently of what characterised it as a singular experience of temporality, so that it occupied the whole space of other possible experiences. Listening to these records therefore meant being able to endlessly repeat phases manifesting fascism through war: mobilisation, the intermediate victories - those of Adua, Amba Alagi, and Maccale - then the founding of the Empire. The Ethiopian War provided the occasion to fully develop phonography as an instrument of cultural propaganda based on an endless repetition of the immediate past. It was also the first theatre for the deployment of loudspeakers, radios, and records in the conquered territories, which helped reinforce their colonisation through regular sound broadcasts in public spaces, some of which were adapted to the customs of the indigenous population.⁷⁸ Radio and records operated as mediators of fascist expansion through a deceptive cultural hybridisation that did not aim to erase racism from the repertoire of war propaganda, but rather to offer the illusion of relative proximity between colonists and colonised, or even a certain consideration of the former for the latter, motivated by exoticism and the intoxication of colonial possession. Discs were thus recorded by Ascari (Libyan or Eritrean colonial troops) and other musicians who brought to life a fusion of folk music, indigenous languages and sonic symbols of fascism - for example, a version of *Giovinezza* sung in Arabic. Devised for distribution by the EIAR, these records are the trace of a cult policy based on the articulation of the temporal regimes of radio and phonography, making the repetition of recorded musical performances, with all their approximations and defects, the elements of a new national imaginary, to which was added the imaginary of an empire in the process of being built.⁷⁹

The founding of the Empire was indeed the subject of a selection of records bearing four speeches by Mussolini delivered between October 1935 and May 1936, recorded by EIAR and published by the DS, which from January 1937 offered Italians and fascist institutions that made immediate purchase 'four historic moments fixed for eternity'.⁸⁰ These records constitute a unique phonographic narrative of fascism. They illustrate its military and imperialist ambitions according to its historicity, where a mythologised past becomes the framework for understanding the present, which, as the home of this new empire, is also becoming a mythologised past. The first three records contain the speech of 2 October 1935, announcing mobilisation. Then, three other series of three records feature speeches marking the beginning of the invasion campaign, victory, and the founding of the empire. Each of these three series ends with an emblematic song of fascist Italy on the last side of the last record, in this order: *Marcia Reale*; *Giovinezza*; *Inno a Roma*. These songs frame the fascist empire, a representation of the Roman Empire, within the current yet timeless setting of contemporary Italy represented by the

anthems of the PNF and the monarchy, symbols of a unified Italy (*Risorgimento*). The *Inno a Roma* (1918), an anthem to eternal Rome, links these two mythical temporalities. These records are thus, from the moment they are socialised through commerce, new and modern remains that offer themselves up to a continuous, repeatable evocation of the only fundamental, tangible, and historically significant achievement of the fascist imagination. The symbolic value of these recordings is again affirmed by their exceptionality. Indeed, although there were numerous recordings of Mussolini's speeches, few were marketed. In peacetime, these traces of fascist regeneration ought to have achieved a degree of publicity at least equivalent, or even superior, to those that the regime highlighted in Rome to demonstrate the power of the ancient Empire.

However, recorded speech was not always a tool for memorial or imaginary propaganda, just like the transcription of the Duce's speeches: their temporal inscription was in fact fluid, especially in times of war. As Italy entered the Second World War, a speech given by Mussolini on 18 November 1940 for the 5th anniversary of the sanctions, appeared in a collection published by the Minculpop, 'Documents of the times', but also in another called 'Current Problems'. The material recorded served less to develop the bases of a political imaginary than to achieve short-term objectives relating to the feelings and morale of a population facing war. This is why the regime's leaders immediately wanted to disseminate the speech delivered by Mussolini on December 1942 and recorded by Cetra, to the Italian people. Such records, in which the Duce provided a brief roundup of the international situation, followed by military losses and the bombing of major Italian cities, before insisting on Italian resistance while continuing to attack the British enemy, were requested by Dino Alfieri, Italian ambassador to Germany, for consumption by workers and other Italian communities based there. They were not sent until early January 1943 due to damage inflicted on the EIAR factory in Turin, but their distribution was extended to Italian residents and troops present in France. There was also collaboration between the diplomatic representations of Zagreb, Budapest, Bucharest, and Sofia, with each mission sending records on to the next once they had been distributed.⁸¹

This distribution could have been immediately undertaken *via* radio, but its absence clearly shows that phonography was a basic element of sound propaganda, due to the modalities of its availability, but also because it fixed the various repertoires and enabled their adaptation to new situations. It is not surprising that the Second World War, like the Ethiopian War, gave rise to the development of a new set of records, and a new way of organising the pre-existing repertoire. More than fifty records feature in the section 'Wartime Marches and Songs' of the 1942 Cetra catalogue, forty others being published by LVDP and Columbia.⁸² The regime could therefore count on Cetra as the reliable agent of an Italianised phonography placed under its control, providing the foundations of a wartime sound culture available to those who owned a gramophone or a radio. The success and capacity of the war repertoire in terms of arousing emotions was of such major political importance that the NFP and the Minculpop took this into account when they requested the composition of popular songs to maintain the morale of Italians by providing more varied radio programmes, the effectiveness of which suffered from repetitiveness and whose adjustment was a permanent cause of concern.⁸³

The relevance of broadcasting recordings of songs rather than their direct performance by orchestras and vocalists, which would have allowed their tone and content to be adapted to the changing context of the war and make for less monotonous programmes, is open to question. Yet it is in this way that the regime of temporality of phonography demonstrated its strategic utility. Recordings of songs provided the regime with resources for controlling time and the experience that took place within it, which it could mobilise at will as long as it did not exhaust them by repeating them. Wartime phonography represented an operational sound library and its functioning acted both on the memory and the moment: it did not dictate immediate action (as did radio), but rather the permanent behaviour to be maintained as an Italian and a fascist. It therefore served, yet again, to stimulate cultural movements that supported troop movements. In this precise case, radio could be seen as functioning like a national gramophone, the cultural action and temporality of which were controlled by fascism. Its regime of temporality was neutralised by that of phonography, and this neutralisation suggests that the fascist political project had lost a substantial part of its capacity to act. Indeed, it sought less to exist in the immediacy of action and the novelty that it induces, than in the repetition of the identical, cutting itself off from a symbolic means of regeneration. The regime thus found itself in the position it attributed to its enemies, those inhumane beings whom Alessandro Pavolini, as Minister of Popular culture, accused of being phonographs in the text he wrote to announce the launching of the radio programme 'The Fighter's Radio', in August 1942: 'Enemy propaganda doesn't appear to be made by men, it seems to be made by records. An old gramophone repertoire that goes around in circles, for periodic returns, no longer having any connection with reality.'⁸⁴

Conclusion

This article has shown that phonography existed as the fundamental medium in a modern sound propaganda apparatus, both for practical and symbolic reasons. Through its capacity to preserve sound signals, the record acted as a portable memory that could be activated at any time, combinable into programmes that became cultural edifices or sound journeys useful for shaping particular political contexts. But it is also its regime of temporality that should be questioned regarding the fascist political project. Phonography's capacity to re-present the past may have appeared as a godsend, as fascism proposing to regenerate the possibilities of a nation's future from a mythified past. Yet phonography, despite its modernity and innovative power, did not extricate fascism from its historicity. On the contrary, it was used by the regime to assert its relationship with history and disseminate it through records listened to repeatedly by a growing number of Italians at home on their gramophones or through radio programs. Thus, phonography was probably toxic to fascism, because the re-presentation of that past did not create any possibility of regeneration, its repetition merely generating weariness. By combining the regime of temporality of phonography with that of radio, and thereby creating the illusion of live broadcasting, the regime deprived itself of the potential extra attention paid to hearing an event occurring in real time, as well as the

possibility of constructing a truly new present, containing a stronger future. It wasted part of its power to act, thereby showing the weakness of its production and the harmful effects of the contradiction placed at the heart of its regime of historicity, that of a regeneration motivated by an eternal example, but sought through a permanent revolution that was unable, by definition, to achieve anything. A new world opened up with each listening, but its repetition ended up exhausting the richness of its experience and its perspectives.

Finally, the great interest generated by research into the use of radio in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany is comprehensible in terms of a greater alignment of its regime of temporality with the accomplishment of its political projects and therefore through its participation in the production of history. Yet phonography remains discreetly in the background, because it alone was able to produce what we today consider to be their sonic vestiges. The fall of Nazism and fascism did not lead to the destruction of the recordings of their songs and speeches. These were regularly reissued in Italy, Germany, and in France.⁸⁵ They may hold a value for neofascists today similar to that which the ruins of the Roman Empire held for the fascists of the *ventennio*. But they allow us to perceive much more information: the fascist environment, the particularities of a voice, the grain of an era. These are pieces of a past that some may imagine should be regenerated as a present (or even an eternity). The most effective and most dangerous alignment of phonography with fascism is probably to offer it objects that concretise its temporal fantasy: that of an eternal present, whose reinsertion into the flow of time is always possible as long as we allow it to happen.

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Notes

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49. *Ibid.*, 179. See Antonio Gibelli, ‘Opera Nazionale Balilla’, in *Dizionario del fascismo*, vol. 2, L–Z, ed. Victoria De Grazia and Sergio Luzzatto (Milano: Einaudi, 2019), 267–71.
50. Tarquini, ‘Fascist Educational Policy’, 179.

51. McLean, *Mussolini's Children*, 152.
52. *Ibid.*, 135–6.
53. Tarquini, 'Fascist Educational Policy', 180.
54. Zucconi, *Coscienza fonografica*, 111–45.
55. Società Nazionale del Grammofono, *La Voce del Padrone. Nuovi dischi*, November 1925, 11.
56. *La Voce del Padrone*, *Catalogo generale*, 1 October 1929, 230.
57. *La Voce del Padrone*, *Catalogo generale*, 1 April 1930, 263.
58. McLean, *Mussolini's Children*, 106.
59. *I diritti della scuola*, 23 September 1932.
60. Philip V. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e mass media* (Parma: Res Gestae, 2022), 237–8, 241.
61. Amadeo Giannini, 'L'altoparlante nelle scuole', *La Stampa*, 15 April 1933).
62. ACS, 942, 84, 2483.
63. 'Sessantamila bambini in ascolto per le trasmissioni degli inni della patria', *Radiocorriere*, 19 February 1933.
64. Colin, 'Les livres de lecture italiens', 72–80.
65. See note 58 above.
66. McLean, *Mussolini's Children*, 73–4.
67. See 'Il programma radiofonico estivo del Fascismo per i Balilla e in pieno svolgimento', *Radiocorriere*, 27 August 1933; 'Voci di Balilla', *Radiocorriere*, 5 August 1934; 'Voci di Balilla sulle la colonia di Grado', *Radiocorriere*, 26 August 1934.
68. *La Stampa*, 14 October 1934.
69. Sophie Maisonneuve, *L'invention du disque, 1877–1949. Genèse de l'usage des médias musicaux contemporains* (Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2009), 54–76.
70. Gino Pastori (vocal) and Coro dei Balilla e Piccole Italiane di Parma (choir), 'Preghiera dei Bimbi d'Italia (per la salvezza del Duce)' and 'Freccia d'oro', Columbia DQ776, 78 rpm (10"), 1934. *Idem*, 'Leggenda dei carabinieri' and 'Duetto di bum e la reginetta', Columbia DQ778, 78 rpm (10"), 1934.
71. Dischi Columbia, *Catalogo generale*, 1936, 158.
72. ACS, 3669, 1327, 511362.
73. 'Regio decreto–legge, 10 Agosto 1928, n° 2223, Relativo alla istituzione di una Discoteca di Stato in Roma', *Gazzeta ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, 17 October 1928, 5018.
74. Daylle, 'I dischi del intervento', *Radiocorriere*, 21 May 1933.
75. This idea is described in an essay dated 1933 and mentioned in: Danielle Simon, "'La voce del Padrone": echi di un demagogo radiofonico', *Laboratoire italien*, no. 30 (2023), parag. 20.
76. See Gianpaolo Chiriaco, 'Abdi's Shop and the Duka Azmari House. Musical Traces of the Italian Colonial Project in Addis Ababa and in Italy', *From the European South*, no. 11 (2022): 48–63. Jonathan Thomas, 'Expanding and Dominating Through Phonography: Fascist Italy and the Colonization of East Africa', *Early Recordings Association Journal*, no. 1 (2025): 1–42. Isabella

- Abbonizio, 'Musica e colonialismo nell'Italia fascista (1922–1943)' (PhD diss., Università degli studi di Roma 'Tor Vergata', 2009).
77. S. Lopez, 'Confessioni', *Il disco*, October 1934.
78. ACS, 942, 115, 703, 'Radiodiffusione circolare e diffusione sonora in A.O.I., Addis Abeba, 7 giugno 1937'.
79. E.g. 'Prima fantasia Ascari eritrei; Seconda fantasia Ascari libici', Parlophon, GP91866, 78 rpm (10"), 1936. See: Abbonizio, 'Musica e colonialismo', 170, 314.
80. Including the ONB, a dozen schools and institutes, Radio Rurale, and several NFP local federations (ACS, 393, R1823). The quote comes from *Il disco*, January–February 1937.
81. ACS, 942, 43, 254.
82. Cetra, *Catalogo dischi 1942* (12 October 1942), 173–86.
83. Cannistraro, *La fabbrica del consenso*, 261–2; Pietro Cavallo & Pasquale Iaccio, *Vincere! Vincere! Vincere! Fascismo e società italiana nelle canzoni e nelle riviste di varietà (1935–1943)* (Napoli: Editrice Iannua, 2003), 133–4.
84. ACS, 942, 61, 370, 'Propaganda ed assistenza di guerra', 5.
85. See Jonathan Thomas, *La propagande par le disque. Jean-Marie Le Pen, éditeur phonographique* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2020).

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