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Journalism ICI

Term-paper

~~xxxx~~

CHARACTERISTICS

AND PECULIARITIES

OF THE MASS MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION

IN ITALY

A

A really excellent, Thorough, useful Summary.  
I have no criticism. My proposed corrections  
are simply for your own benefit, and  
involve matters of English usage only.

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# I N T R O D U C T I O N

If this was to be a research paper, it is obviously a failure. No research has been possible for me, about several parts of ~~this paper~~ <sup>\*</sup> ~~per.~~

I hope, however, that it will not be altogether meaningless. It consist<sup>s</sup> almost enirely of impressions, intuitions and ~~x~~ deduction from my own experience; I can not ~~prove~~ <sup>prove</sup> anything. But in two cases I had the proof that my impressions were not wrong: one of them is the importance of sports newspapers, the second is the regional distribution of the press. The figures given by the ~~XXXXXX~~ "Handbook of the Foreign Press" coincided with my intuition.

Thus I hope that also the other ~~x~~ statements, however ~~inarti-~~ <sup>unsupported by</sup> ~~culated in term of~~ <sup>that</sup> figures and facts, <sup>as</sup> could be demonstrated exact, if only I could have found where to look for.

The "Handbook" has been very useful, as far as newspaper<sup>s</sup> are concerned. I could notice, however, a couple of obvious mistakes, which I recorded in the notes.

This paper is somewhat longer than required because I wanted to supply with typing labor the lack of research work.

## THE SOCIAL SITUATION

Though the "Economic Miracle" and the "New Renaissance" <sup>in many aspects</sup> are much talked about, Italy still is <sup>an</sup> under-developed country.

One of these aspects is education. The schooling facilities are not <sup>g</sup> ~~growing~~ <sup>at a</sup> ~~in~~ pace with the development of the economy. Illiteracy, among the older generations, is still a pressing problem(1).

The two related problems of traditional poverty and ~~an~~ illiteracy affect very heavily the situation of the mass media ~~x~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ communications. But a fuller understanding <sup>of</sup> this situation requires also a knowledge <sup>of</sup> of Italy's recent history and the present political situation.

Compared with the mass media in the U.S., the Italian media are much less developed, both in total size, as natural, and in per-capita distribution. The habit of reading at least one daily paper, so universal in America, is by no means so widespread in my country.

When we speak of Italy, however, we must draw an unfortunately sharp line of distinction between Northern and Southern regions. South of Rome, and especially south of Naples, where illiteracy and misery are still the rule, a news <sup>paper</sup> is a luxury. Even in these regions, however, radio reaches a good point of saturation, and television <sup>sets</sup> are often ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> common than ~~bath~~ <sup>bathtubs</sup>. The favor enjoyed by the electronic media all over the country is due to the fact that <sup>they</sup> ~~they~~ are the sole source of information <sup>for</sup> for the illiterates.



The burden of the southern regions lowers the national averages in a fashion unfair to the much more developed North. Here, almost every worker picks up his daily paper. The class of peasants and farmers seems less interested in the press, but a radio set can be found in every house, whereas a couple of newspapers are part of the equipment of every tavern in the villages. The impact of television, ~~startling~~ all over the nation, is <sup>e</sup> specially evident in these rural areas, where in ~~xx~~ every tavern and inn there <sup>e</sup> is a television set, often placed in a special room; and the audience is usually numerous.

#### THE POLITICAL SITUATION ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

*The*

In general, Italian press<sup>1</sup> is more a press of opinion than of information. Politicization of newspapers, magazines, publishing houses and news agencies is almost inevitable in a country like Italy, where the political life is characterized by an extreme variety of opinions, factions and parties, ranging from the Communists to the Christian Democrats to the Neo-fascists. Each <sup>o</sup> of the many parties is constantly engaged in a struggle to win the mind of the voters; and the mass media are one of the weapons. The preference of the reader for a newspaper or magazine, that reflects his own political ideas<sup>2</sup> is very similar to the state of American press before 1830. This does not mean, however, that there is no information press. As a matter of fact, all the biggest newspapers are moderate in tone, and ~~i~~ fairly impartial in the presentation of the news; illustrated<sup>3</sup> magazines follow the same pattern, with some remarkable exceptions; radio and television have been taken over by the state, allegedly in order to avoid their politicization, and in fact are

Fairly dispassionate<sup>1</sup> in their informative function<sup>x</sup>.

The confusion and variety of the political scene lead to <sup>a not</sup> ~~one~~ infrequent shift of the media from ~~xxxx~~ <sup>one</sup> position to another. One of the leading <sup>s</sup> illustrated <sup>s</sup> magazine, which I could compare to "Look," was leaning slightly to the right, but three years ago the publishers fired the editor, and the magazine <sup>swung</sup> ~~swung~~ on the other side. The second biggest newspaper in Rome, rigidly centrist and "conformist", in the last years became the bitterest <sup>opponent</sup> ~~opponent~~ to the "opening to the left", i.e. the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ alliance of Christian Democrats with the Socialists. One of the most lively publishing houses was said to be philo-Communist. After the smuggling and ~~xxxx~~ publications of Pasternak works, it was so bitterly criticised by the Party that <sup>it</sup> ~~they~~ apparently moved to more moderate positions. (3) Besides the independent media with some political coloration, there are scores and hundreds of party <sup>t</sup> ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ publications; but their readership is much more limited. The several parties not only have their own newspapers, magazines ~~and~~ and cultural ~~xxxxxx~~ centers, but also <sup>their</sup> ~~they~~ own news <sup>agencies</sup>, which not only report the events within the parties, but also news as seen through their political filter. In fact, these <sup>news</sup> ~~nws~~ agencies are chiefly a propaganda device. (5)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEDIA

THE NEWSPAPERS . The estimate number of Italian ~~xxxxxx~~ daily newspapers is something more than one hundred; the combined circulation, five million copies. 60% are published in the northern part of the country, 25% in the central regions, 15% in the South and the islands. (6)

The format of these newspaper is like that of American dailies(7); the make-up is generally clear, with some tendency to the horizontal disposition of headlines, and short, parallel columns. The quality of newsprint and printing ranges from the excellence of the big Rome and Milan dailies to the misery of the provincial ones. The number of pages is usually much smaller; even the big newspapers seldom consist of more than 15 - 20 pages. This is largely due to the lack of adequate support from advertising. Two basic factors are involved in this situation. First, the income of Italian <sup>consumers</sup> ~~customers~~ is much smaller than American's; second, the ~~very~~ structure of the economy is very different. Supermarkets and department-store, whose ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ advertisements are big part of American papers, are not so widespread in Italy(8); suburbs far from shopping centers are almost unknown. The housewives, therefore, do not need to know in advance what they are ~~xxx~~going to buy.

Lack of advertising on ~~o~~ one hand makes newspapers lighter and more easy to handle, on the other, makes their budget shaky, and opens the door to political influence through subsidies from the parties.

In Italian newspapers, as in all <sup>of the</sup> modern <sup>daily</sup> press, the first page is for big news, both domestic and international. The first columns on the left, however, consist of the editorial. The third page is a "unique feature" of our press. Essays, short novels, literary and artistic news, articles of fashion costume, books reviews find their place here. Throughout the years, the best of Italian modern literature <sup>first appeared in</sup> ~~came out from~~ these pages.

Another interesting feature is that the last two <sup>or three</sup> pages of the newspapers are reserved for national and international news, under the denomination of "Ultime della notte" (news <sup>received</sup> ~~come in~~ late in the night) and "Recentissime" (the very latest news).

Generally lacking in Italian papers are the comic strips (9) while there <sup>e</sup> is no ~~xxxxxx~~ special sunday edition. On mondays,

<sup>a</sup> however, many newspapers have an edition where sports news covers <sup>a</sup> great part of the space.

Sports <sup>have</sup> great importance in Italian life, and consequently the sports pages have among the highest readership. In addition, there is a great number of specialized publication; the ~~xxxxxx~~ <sup>s</sup> largest and most authoritative sports newspaper <sup>^</sup> matches in circulation almost every other paper (10).

The big, independent newspapers are often owned by individuals and families <sup>rather</sup> ~~more~~ than financial groups. So, the "Corriere della Sera" (Evening Courier), our most serious, balanced and informed newspaper, is owned by the Crespi family. The same goes for ~~the~~ the two biggest Roman newspapers, "Il Tempo" (The Time) and "Il Messaggero" (The Herald). In this city the third largest paper is the pro-communist "Paese-sera", which runs the most extensive and lively entertainment pages, with cartoons, lists of shows and

movie-theaters, and other feature; it is widely read ~~but~~ by people of different political position. A very similar paper, "Stasera" ~~(xxxxxxxxxxxx)~~ (Tonight) founded last summer, tried the same trick in Milan (II).

In this city is also published "Il Giorno" (the Day), perhaps the most interesting case in the history of Italian press. Started in 1956, it was printed on very good ~~xxxxx~~ <sup>the</sup> newsprint; its make-up ~~and~~ and all ~~its~~ features marked a complete revolution in our journalistic tradition ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~, though the imitation of Anglo-American ~~xxxxx~~ <sup>s</sup> newspaper was clear. Its delivering service employed trains and private airplanes to reach Rome and Naples overnight. Its success was immediate ~~xxx~~ <sup>lasting</sup> and ~~durable~~, among every class of people; the trouble was that each ~~copy~~ <sup>copy</sup> cost ~~se~~ more than twice <sup>its price</sup> than it was paid for. The paper was covertly bought by the E.N.I., (12) the state - owned Italian Oil Authority, who used it as ~~outspoker~~ <sup>Spokesman</sup> ~~for~~ its own policy, often in contrast with the official view of the government. The scandal of a secretly ~~state-owned~~ <sup>out</sup> paper in active criticism of the government dragged itself for quite a few years; eventually the State admitted ~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> ownership, fired the editor and imposed a more conformist attitude on the "Giorno". The fired ~~x~~ editor, after having denied for years the relationship of his paper with the E.N.I., founded a kind of leftist-leaning weekly tabloid where ~~the~~ the whole story was exposed in the most ~~v~~ <sup>i</sup>atriotic terms. The "Giorno" continues to be one of the most successful Italian papers.

<sup>e</sup> Independent newspapers, moderate and "centrist" have by far the highest readership; they are read ~~for~~ by anybody looking for a fair exposition of facts and local news. But the importance of ~~The~~ party press goes far beyond ~~xxxxx~~ their readership. One good example is the Vatican newspaper, whose readership is very small, but whose influence all over the country is enormous. Likewise, the


Communist "Unità", though apparently losing readers, and in constant financial troubles, affects very heavily the political life by determining the attitude of two million party members. The "Unità" is a skillfully done and vivid newspaper; and, of course, an extremely ~~factional~~ <sup>factional</sup> one. The neo-fascist "Il Secolo", printed in Rome, follows the same pattern in a smaller scale, ~~xxxxxx~~ whereas the Christian-Democrat "Il Popolo" is much more quiet and balanced, in tone as well as in appearance.

THE MAGAZINES. Beginning after the war, the magazines enjoyed an amazing and ever-increasing prosperity. Italian newsstands are glittering with a variety of illustrated magazines. Though ~~xxxxxxxx~~ neither the paper nor the printing are usually as good as in America, they are similar <sup>to</sup> ~~american~~ <sup>american</sup> magazines in political independence and vividness. The Italian opposite number of <sup>America's</sup> Life and France's "Paris-match" is called "Epoca", serious, authoritative and occasionally <sup>al</sup> ~~al~~ boring. Usually in ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ picture magazines the information and the entertaining function are mixed in various degrees, just as in America. In addition, we have plenty of opinion magazines; the mate of "The National Review" is the 13-year-old, and increasingly ~~xxx~~ successful, "Il L'Espresso" (The L'Espresso), which publishes a photographic insert with candid ~~xxx~~ shots of politicians <sup>alternated with those of</sup> and good-looking girls. Other opinion magazines are the radical (14) "L'Espresso" the Social-Democrat "Il Mondo", both small and authoritative. The Communist "Vie nuove" follows the pattern of independent picture magazines (cover-girls, articles on movie stars, scandals, fashion, love-stories, mail-bag, etc.) with the addition of vicious propaganda where possible. What we do not have at all (15) is all the sadistic and over all ~~xxx~~ dull garbage called "entertainment for men". As a matter of fact,



Two big publishing houses in Milano are also competitive in the magazine field.

Remarkable is the activity and the importance of the "St. Paul Society," a religious house which publishes books of every kind, from love stories for teen-agers to expensive art books, from Bibles to handbooks for a happy marriage, in addition to one of the most-read popular magazines.

MOTION PICTURES. After a sharp recession in the middle fifties, *The* Italian movie industry is now flourishing both in quantity and in quality of the product. Of course, not all Italian films are like "La Dolce vita" and the "Eclipse". There is an enormous production of mythological and biblical trash. 

State intervention in this field is very limited. It subsidizes cultural documentaries and, till a few years ago, owned a chain of movie-theaters(13).

There is no evidence, so far as I know, of such an amazing influence of television on the ~~xxxxxxx~~ movie pictures industry as ~~it~~ <sup>True</sup> has been in America. I think this is due in great part to the structure of Italian society, where large strata of the population <sup>have</sup> ~~had~~ few opportunities to enjoy this form of ~~xxx~~ entertainment; with ~~the~~ increasing prosperity, many people switched, in part, to television, but much more had for the first time ~~xxx~~ and money to go to the movies. The most faithful all-time movie-goers are, of course, ~~the~~ teen-agers.

State censorship, though much talked about and criticized, seems fairly liberal to <sup>day</sup>. But a certain confusion in the ~~xx~~ laws regarding this matter allow some provincial magistrates to cut or "shade" certain scenes in the films projected within <sup>their</sup> ~~his~~ jurisdiction, even if the film passed the scrutiny of the state

Then done  
in several  
languages  
and have only  
a note -  
historical  
distinction?



Commission of Censorship (19).

A peculiar Italian institution seems to be the number and importance of Parochial movie-theater<sup>?</sup>. In some regions they are as large, as important and projecting about the same kind of films<sup>(20)</sup> as normal theaters<sup>ly</sup>. Odd enough, there is no political counterpart to this intervention of the Church in the field of ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ entertainment. Movies are usually apolitical or politically independent. In these last two or three years, there has been a mushrooming of films dealing with the Fascism and the two world wars, and in general they were as impartial as possible. One of these, however, was a documentary set up in a very ~~factious~~ <sup>factional</sup> way by a strongly leftist troupe. After some tests in other theaters, this film was programmed in Rome, in a theater placed just a floor below the headquarters of the Neo-Fascist party. The riot <sup>That</sup> followed was a remarkable one.

RADIO. As far as I remember, there have been no attempts to break up the state monopoly<sup>p</sup> of the radio system in Italy. The situation is ~~accepted~~ <sup>taken</sup> for granted, which is not true for Television<sup>(21)</sup>.

The studios are scattered in several cities: the headquarters, however, are in Turin. There are three channels, or programs: the National, which broadcasts news, music, comedies and other pieces of entertainment as well as <sup>of</sup> information; the "Second" more concerned with entertainments, such as popular music; and the "Third," the most intellectual and sophisticated of the three, ~~which~~ which deals with news and news analysis, classical music, essays, political and literary discussions, dramas, etc. The differences, however, are only a matter of degrees.

Radio maintains much of its function as national entertainment-

ner, but a tendency in the American direction is evident, as more and more the stress is put on light musical programs and news bulletins.

Except from the extremists, there are no major complains about the impartiality ~~of the~~ of the "radio-journals". Only recently, <sup>on the</sup> ~~in~~ occasion of the warm debates about the nationalization of electric utilities, cries of scandal ~~xxx~~ have been raised as a long strike of typographers allowed radio to back ~~ix~~ <sup>u</sup> and disturbed ~~by~~ the government standpoint, while the other media where dump.

Public ownership, on the other hand, does not save radio listeners from being ~~gunfired~~ <sup>bombarded</sup> with constant advertising. In ~~xxx~~ <sup>this</sup> respect, Italian radio is very similar to american television, because not only there are periods of solid advertising, but also the regular programs are sponsored by advertisers.

TELEVISION. This newcomer among the media was born in ~~xxx~~ Italy <sup>eleven</sup> ~~thirteen~~ years ago. After three years of experimentation, Italians got involved in a most amazing craze. A quiz show, <sup>patterned</sup> ~~modeled~~ after "The 64,000 \$ Question", filled every barrom <sup>o</sup> ~~xxx~~ equipped with a set; headlines on the first pages of the newspaper recorded successes and failures of the participants, while <sup>on</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>inside</sup> ~~the~~ pages, complete reports ~~stretched~~ stretched for two or three pages; workers and peasants got interested in ornithology or Greek drama; movie theaters were forced to suspend ~~the~~ projection and place a couple of television sets before the screen <sup>u</sup> when this show was transmitted.

As a result, the sales of television sets went to the stars; everybody who could afford, and many who really could not, were buying a "Televisore" <sup>u</sup> Antennas rose on the roof of the works

slums. To <sup>day</sup> <sup>for</sup> figures are probably about <sup>two</sup> million sets, which means a set every 25 italians. ~~xxxxxxx~~ Compared with the ~~xxxxxx~~ number of other appliances, this is certainly an amazing figure. (22)

Like radio, Television is a state monopoly. Owners of sets pay an annual subscription rate of about 15 dollars. (23). But commercials, unknown for five years, were introduced in 1957, and ~~have been~~ <sup>have been</sup> increasing ~~xxxx~~ ever since. They are concentrated in programs 5 -15 minutes long, and are very similar to the <sup>counterparts</sup> americans, with some stress on moving cartoons, gags and supposedly funny sketched. These programs ~~enjoy~~ a very <sup>large</sup> ~~high~~ audience, specially among the kids.

The transmission hours steadily multiplied in these eleven years of television ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ (24) , and the level of the programs ~~xxxx~~ consistently improved. The influence of American television is evident: entire series have been imported, <sup>Such</sup> ~~xx~~ <sup>The</sup> as Perry Como Show, Lucy and I, Perry Mason, Caravan (25) Hitchcock, and some others.

Much more than radio, television has been criticized about the fairness of its political attitude. It has been charged to be a personal feud of Premier Fanfani, ~~xxxxx~~ to overtly back the "opening to the left", etc. I rather suspect that these ~~x~~ attacks are in part due the enormous power of television in molding the public opinion, and the dangers feared in this power.

~~I cannot adequately comment on~~ <sup>cannot adequately comment on</sup> ~~I am not well aware of~~ the impact of Television on other media. Magazines, which have been so heavily affected in America, seem to get along fairly well in Italy. Again, I think this is largely due to the existence of large <sup>stata</sup> of population continually emerging to civilization and prosperity; and these people are hungry for all kind of mass media of communication.

What I know for sure is that the social impact of television is tremendous. Illiterate peasants and workers pass their leisure hours in barrooms and taverns, in front of a television set, and get acquainted with a world <sup>That</sup> they never suspected ~~to~~ exist; <sup>ed</sup> the following political discussion <sup>^</sup> improve in quality <sup>S</sup> and soundness. The harvesting ~~in~~ <sup>^</sup> women farmers chat of the <sup>^</sup> ~~last~~ <sup>^</sup> T.V. stars.

Besides the illiterate and the lower classes, the category most affected by television <sup>is ch. 70000</sup> ~~are the kids~~. This is particularly evident in rural areas, in small villages, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in the poor suburbs, where once the kids used to spend their afternoons playing in the streets and in the piazzas. Now ~~xxxxxxxx~~ they spend most of their time ~~in~~ before a television set.

# N O T E S

1 -- The "Handbook", page ~~x~~ 103, states that illiteracy is growing larger. I do not understand how this could possibly be. The older generations are dying out, and I am sure that today's children go to school much more than their grandfathers. I guess <sup>that</sup> this statement ~~ix~~ results from some misund<sup>e</sup>rstanding.

2 -- The Communist "Vie Nuove", for instance.

3 -- The name of this publisher is Feltrinelli.

4 -- There are, of course, also inde<sup>e</sup>pendent news-agencies. See ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ "Handbook", page 108.

6 -- "Handbook", page 103.

7  
7 -- The tabloid format either did not succeed or has~~ed~~ not been tried in Italy.

8 -- Besides, even those<sup>i</sup> which do exist do~~es~~ not advertise so heavily as in America.

9 -- A few years ago, a few strips used to appear on a Roman paper, once a week. Then there is the supplement for children, and a full page of comics, on the "Giorno" But this is an exception to the rule.

10 -- "Gazzetta dello Sport", ~~450,500,000xxxx~~ ca. 450,000 copies; "Corriere della Sera", 450,500,000 copies. "Handbook, page 103~~4~~

11 -- The maneuver of driving a Communist Horse-of-Troy in the bourgeois Milano was heavily attacked and denounced by the press; I do not know with what effects.

12 -- I am not sure whether it was not financed by the ~~xx~~ E.N.I. from the beginning.

13 -- The "Handbook" gives a figure of 200,000 copies, which surprises me very much, because the only places where I see the "Osservatore Romano" are the doors of the Churches. But it might ~~xxx~~ well be that there are so many churches, in Italy.

14 -- Italian radicals are usually men of the ~~x~~ "Intelligentzia" and 'eggheads'; whose distinctive quality is anti-clericalism. The place of their tiny party used to be somewhere between Social- Democrats and Christian Democrats. I do not know ~~xxx~~ what is their standing now.

~~xxxxxxx~~

15--There is only one weekly which deals with crime, sex and scandals, On the other hand, we do not have any "Playboy":which I will somewhat regret.

16 -- Modigliani

17 -- This publisher is ~~Sinxlix~~ Giulio Einaudi, son of the late Luigi Einaudi, economist of the classic school of thought, liberal, sympathizer of the Monarchic institution, and ~~fixxx~~ second President of the Italian Republic.

18 -- I am not sure whether this chain has been liquidated.

19 -- Last year there have been long debates about a reform of

the laws dealing with this subject, , but I do not know what were the results.

20 -- Parked and cut were needed, of course.

21 -- Groups of Milanese businessmen repeatedly tried to get a license ~~xxx~~ for an independent T.V. station .

22 --I hesitated before writing down this figure, but I heard of it, and after some calculations and comparisons with the number of sets in my own village, I think it is quite possible.

23 -- The subscription rate for radio is about three dollars.

24 -- Two channels are now in operation.

25 -- This was the name in Italy, at least.