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Abstracts

ALICE MARTINI, *L'amicizia impossibile? Le relazioni economiche tra Italia e Germania negli anni Trenta*

The work presents a reflection on some aspects of the German-Italian economic and commercial relations between the two conflicts, specifically in the Thirties. Its purpose is to offer an interpretation that better allows to understand also the political and diplomatic dynamics that led to the creation of the Axis (1936), to that of the Pact of steel (1939) and to the entry of Italy into the Second World War (1940).

As one of the main references, this work uses the book by Per Tiedtke, Germany, Italy and the International Economy 1929-1936. Co-operation or Rivalries at Times of Crisis?, Marburg, Tectum Verlag, 2016. However here the time span covered is larger, reaching almost the date of the Italian entry into the war and adding some ideas about the role of Great Britain. The connections of economic policies and economic aspects to international and foreign politics are highlighted, too, in order to understand whether and to what extent the latter were influenced by the first ones. The purpose of the work is in fact to show that the economic factors played a not so marginal role in the political choices of the two countries, notwithstanding the declaration of the “superiority” of politics that the two regimes were offering to the rest of the world.

The nature of German-Italian economic relations, in fact, exactly because of the structure of the two economies, remained almost the same throughout the period from 1929 to 1939-40, with no significant alteration created by the rise to power of Hitler, the creation of the Axis, the military alliance or the invasion of Poland. They kept going along the path that had been undertaken some decades earlier, when Germany was already significantly stronger than Italy and could exploit that strength to its own advantage, designing the “lemons for machines” trade model that put Berlin in the position of firstly undermining Italian economic positions in South-East Europe and then building in that area a “solo” hegemony.

For many (mainly political) reasons Rome could do nothing more but waiting for “better days”, but – as this work shows through the examples of the trade and clearing agreements, of the coal supplies, of South Tyrol and of the Balkan issues – the Italians tried to defend their interests and – more or less publicly – tried to resist to the German escalation to the top of the continental economy.

Keywords:

German-Italian economic and commercial relations

Economic Axis

Clearing and Trade agreements in the Thirties