

LABOUR, ART AND MASS MEDIA: GIUSEPPE PELLIZZA'S 'IL QUARTO STATO' AND THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

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ART AND MASS MEDIA: THE STRUGGLE FOR REPRESENTATION

During the nineteenth century, industrialization gradually altered the position of the image in visual culture. Lithography allowed for a greater number of copies of a drawing to be produced, creating in the 1830s a public for satiric weekly newspapers such as *Punch* or *Le Charivari*. Before and after the Revolution of 1848, great national illustrated papers such as *The Illustrated London News* or *L'Illustration* were founded, shortly followed by *Die Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* and *Harper's Bazaar*. These newspapers were generally illustrated with galvanized woodcuts (xylographs)¹. Whereas the foreground figures were still composed according to the techniques and stereotypes of history painting, the backgrounds consisted of correspondent's drawings or, increasingly, of photographs. The complex process running from drawing to composing and woodcutting was assured by an artistic proletariat working in the studios of the illustrated papers. In 1884, *Illustrazione Italiana* (founded in 1874) allowed its readers a glimpse of the factory-like organization of its own production (Fig. 1)². From the mid-nineteenth century to the First World War, illustrations halfway between the arts and industrial production dominated visual culture and profoundly changed the capacities of readers and spectators to interpret stories and political events from images.

In this world, the class struggle for representation was no longer an affair of artists alone. Giuseppe Pellizza's *Il Quarto Stato*, exhibited in 1902 in Turin, is the unusual work of a proletarian artist who sought to *represent* in visual terms his class and its struggle for political *representation* (Fig. 2). Inevitably, the artist was himself influenced by the stereotype created by the illustrated press, but he also worked against it. During the ten years in which he worked on his manifesto-painting, the illustrated press also developed its image of workers and their political fight. This is the first comparative study of the working process that led Pellizza to define the composition of *Il Quarto Stato*, and of press illustrations of conflicts between the working classes and the state and the bourgeoisie³. It will demonstrate that during his lifetime the artist, himself inevitably deeply influenced by the bourgeois stereotype, lost the fight for representation against the illustrated press. When first exhibited his painting was not at all successful. He had to fight against a double hegemony: an inner hegemony, represented by the persistence of bourgeois prejudice in his own mind (stereotypes regarding scientific progress and positivism, gender roles and the hidden and unrecognized persistence of suppressed religious values in proletarian propaganda),

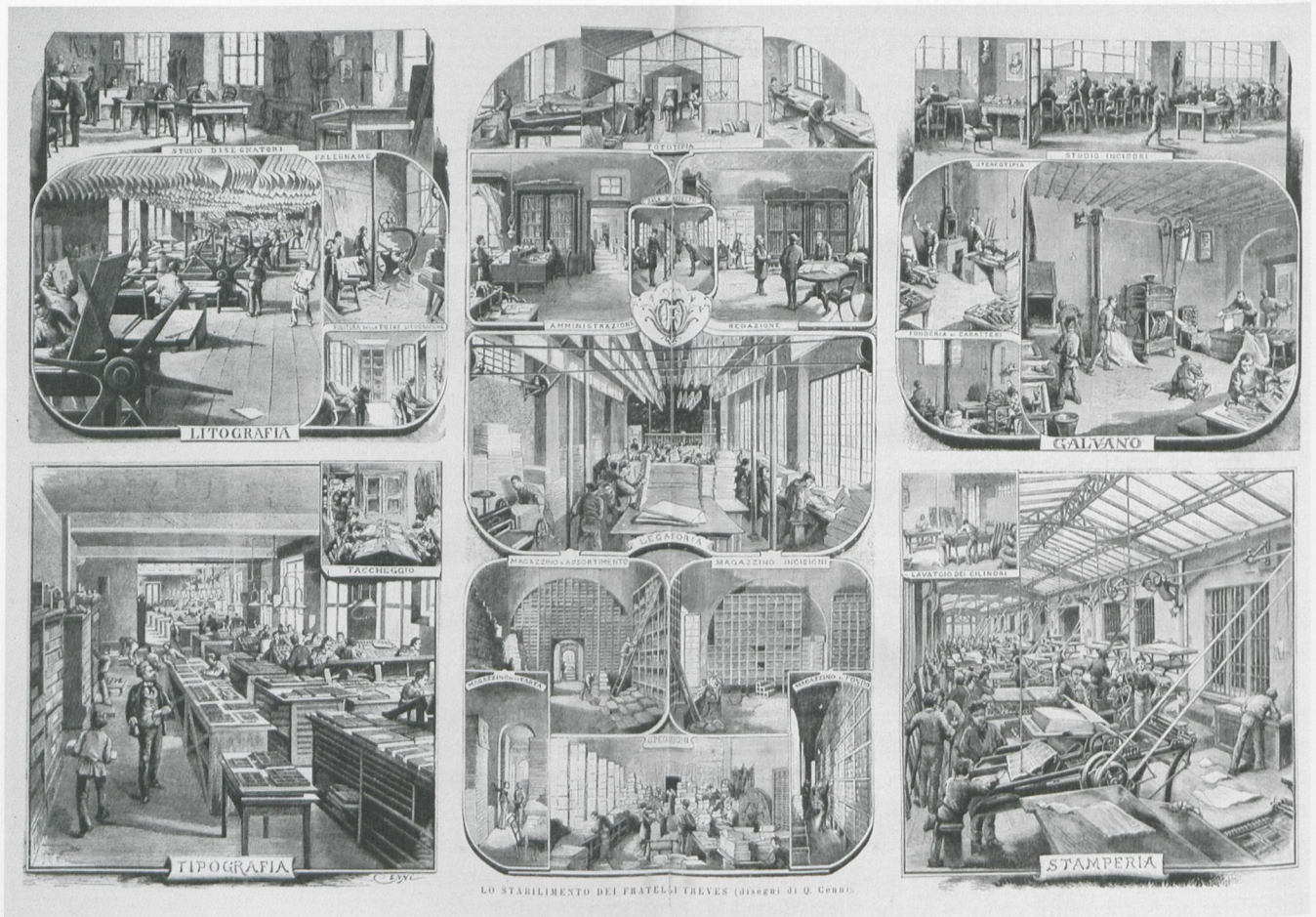
and an outer hegemony of bourgeois media, attempting to represent the worker more convincingly than workers could represent themselves. It was only when later generations looked for an icon illustrating the *moral* rather than the *political* aspect of the fight for representation, that Pellizza's manifesto-painting was finally recognized as a powerful emblem of political struggle during the nineteenth century.

REVOLT AND STRIKES AS TREATED IN THE ITALIAN ILLUSTRATED PRESS, 1883-1902

During the late nineteenth century, the Italian nation that had only attained unification between 1859 and 1871 was rapidly industrialized with the help of foreign capital⁴. It was not until 1874 that a modern Italian illustrated weekly could be founded in Milan. Readers learnt to synthesize text and image into complex visual narratives. We will now discuss how proletarian revolt and strikes were illustrated in that paper which, on account of its high price (roughly equivalent to a skilled worker's daily wage), addressed a bourgeois public. Social upheaval was neither documented nor misrepresented. It was conceived as a mythic event, mixing together fear, disgust and pleasure in violence. Again and again, human masses advance on the spectator, who is thus challenged – as indeed are the Carabinieri, the armed police whose hopeless task it is to turn back the avalanche.

In 1883, a revolt by agrarian workers in Sicily was illustrated by a plate in *Illustrazione Italiana* (Fig. 3)⁵. The rebellious poor, lacking any protection, are bearing portraits of the King and Queen through the streets of Catania. An unnecessarily precise view of the Cathedral contrasts with the rather summary representation of the workers. The imposing church building denies the message of the royal portraits: the strikers are indeed supposed to be inspired by Catholic reactionary forces aiming at separating Sicily from the new Italian liberal and secular nation-state, hoping to be protected by Spain and by the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The spectator is protected by toy-soldiers with rifles and bayonets, arrayed in faulty perspective, to the sound of the trumpet. In the illustration below, the smoking Etna becomes a metaphor for obscure rebellion, for the threat from the underdeveloped, still Catholic South⁶.

Six years later, rebellion and destruction had reached Rome, which since 1871 had been the capital of the secular kingdom⁷. The workers who flocked to the building



1. Xylograph (galvanized woodcut) after a drawing by Q. Cenni, Lo Stabilimento dei Fratelli Treves, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XI, No. 50, 14 December 1884, pp. 380-381

sites of modern Rome lost their jobs when the transformation of the city came to an end, as the consequence of a stock exchange and bank crisis. A double-page illustration, published on 24 February 1889 in *Illustrazione Italiana*, shows the principal episodes of this event (Fig. 5). Some 3,000 workers had been laid off and were gathered in Piazza Cavour in the recently constructed quarter Prati, close to Castel Sant'Angelo. As the government had nothing to offer to the desperate workers, they crossed the Tiber at *Ponte a Ripetta*. There an officer of the *Carabinieri* attempted to assemble some *Guardie di Pubblica Sicurezza*, so as to prevent the angry crowd from entering the city centre on the right bank of the river. The mob then moved into the luxury areas further east, into the Via del Corso and the Via Frattina, where many 'important' shops were located: «They all had their crystal windows smashed», as the paper comments. Then the main stream went on to take care of the theatre *Grande Orfeo*, as shown in the scene ironically captioned *Al Caffè delle Varietà*. The troops were finally able to disperse some of the strikers. The illustration (Corso Vittorio Emanuele - Negozio Finocchi) shows the first bourgeois passers-by examining the destruction. The main scene, however, does not con-

front the reader with any specific place (Fig. 6): what the workers – here angry bestial beings – destroyed is neatly marked by the inscription *Mode* above the ruins of a shop. «L'aspetto di quelle turbe tumultuanti scatenate per le vie di Roma non è davvero rassicurante» [It is truly not reassuring to see this tumultuous mob let loose in the streets of Rome]. By 5 p.m. all was over. It was “reassuring” to see, above, *gli arresti*. The cover-page showed an elegant street immediately after the angry crowd had passed through it (Fig. 4).

In 1893 the *fasci siciliani* – the origin of the word “fascism” – were hungry and angry peasants and land-workers⁸. Socialist workers in Northern Italian industries soon expressed their solidarity with the Southern revolt. Consequently the authorities depicted the movement as a conspiracy secretly directed by the Socialist International. In May 1893 the mayors sent regular troops against the upheavals. *Illustrazione Italiana* gives the impression that the month-long protest was nothing but an outbreak of violence limited to a few days in January 1894⁹. Street-scenes show rituals of arson and murder (Fig. 7). The images strive for a documentary style of photography, but apparently only the background of the main scene was com-



(Fot. Sanbuy).

Esposizione di Torino — QUARTO STATO, quadro di Pelizza da Volpedo.

Nuova Antologia, 16 ottobre 1902, fasc. 740.

2. Heliogravure after Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Il Quarto Stato*, 1901, oil on canvas, 293 × 545 cm, Milan, Civica Galleria d'Arte Moderna, published in: *Nuova Antologia*, series IV, Vol. CI, No. 740, 16 October 1902, before p. 741. The Illustration accompanies the article by Giovanni Cena, «Alla 'Quadriennale' Torinese»

posed from photographs taken on the spot. That main image shows peasants from the small town Gibellina throwing the tax-lists from the balcony of the city-hall into a fire they have just lit in the middle of the street. Young women holding hands dance like witches around the burning *catasto* (Fig. 8). The scene in the lower right angle shows the stoning of the Secretary of the Province, a certain Casapinta who had been sent from Palermo. This martyr of "Piedmontese" taxation is victimized through the "chorus" of the crowd coming from the right, along the wall. There are women and men who have just started a fire fleeing from the troops. In all the illustrations it is women who act most violently. Two weeks later, two of the first photographs to be reproduced in *Illustrazione Italiana* introduce the spectator to the actors of both sides: the dutiful soldiers in a courtyard, and, below, the inhabitants of a small Sicilian town, on the steps of the church (Fig. 9). Following an increase in wheat prices in April and May 1898, a general strike in Milan was bloodily repressed¹⁰. On 15 May *Illustrazione Italiana* (published in Milan) devoted a particularly violent cover-page to the events (Fig. 10)¹¹. Again, the spectator is protected from the attacking mob by the Carabinieri. One of them points his gun at one of the insurgents, about to kill him. The spectator becomes an accomplice to this murder. The background, composed from photographs, exactly places the confrontation in front of Palazzo Saporiti, where as the text explains the workers had made use of a streetcar when first attempting

to construct a barricade. It was also here that the first bricks were thrown from the roofs. The article takes sides with General Fiorenzo Bava-Beccaris, who before storming the barricades had ordered the troops to shoot on the poor, and who – as the paper relates – remained unmoved when an elegant lady, inadvertently killed by a bullet, was laid down at his feet.

The bloody repression of the Milanese upheavals inaugurated a period of the most acute confrontation between reactionary and liberal politics within the liberal kingdom. The attempt at strengthening monarchist and authoritarian elements in the constitution, led by Sidney Sonnino, was countered by more democratic liberals such as Giovanni Giolitti, who, during the year 1901, gradually succeeded in dominating the situation¹². Giolitti sought the silent consensus of the powerful Communist party, attempting thereby to strengthen its reform-oriented wing against the revolutionary forces; he legalized strikes, and managed to influence them by proposing agreements between workers and employers or landowners¹³.

A cover-page of *Illustrazione Italiana*, signed Fortunino Matania, illustrates the change in mentality, even before Giolitti had won the day (Fig. 11). In March 1901, Sicilian streets once again rang to the protests of the poor. Again the spectator is protected by soldiers from the threatening mob, and again stones are thrown in his direction. A soldier, who until recently has courageously confronted the enemy, has just been struck by a stone, and turns towards



3. Xylograph after sketches by Rinaldo Saporiti, *I disordini di Catania*, in *Illustrazione Italiana*, 10, No. 11, 18 March 1883, p. 165

us, wounded and in agony. His comrades are ready to attack, but an officer – holding his sword into the air, as if directing it against its own soldiers – stops the attack, instructing his men to heroically resist their urge to defend themselves or to take revenge for their wounded comrade.

‘IL QUARTO STATO’ AND ITS LONG HISTORY (1890-1902)

In 1889, the 22-year-old Pellizza made a first sketch for a scene of strike and revolt, taking place on a stairway (Fig. 12). He noted:

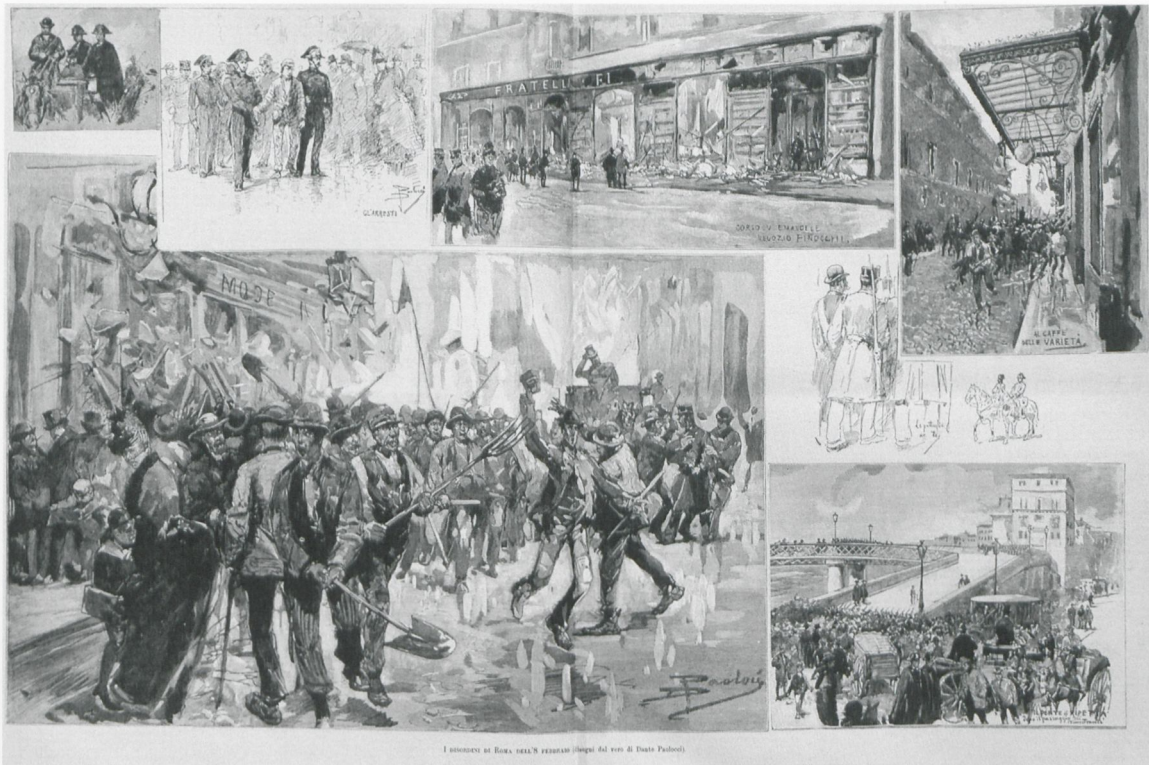
A stout gentleman is running away on fat legs – [...] The leader of the strikers urges them to go calmly – one coming down the stairs is hungry and utters an imprecation. A worker while descending has fallen in front of the stairs. In the background the flag waved by others is inscribed Bread – Bread – hands raised behind the flag. The jacket thrown over the shoulder is typical of the workers, whose faces remain motionless, thin from too much work. A scene of movement – of misery – [...]¹⁴.



4. Xylograph after a drawing “dal vero” by Dante Paolucci, *I disordini di Roma*. — Gli operai disoccupati rompono le vetrine dei negozi di Via Frattina, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XVI, No. 8, 24 February 1889, cover-page

Pellizza evidently wanted to introduce all sorts of types assisting at a scene of strike and upheaval in intensely narrative figures. That would be consistent with the conventions of the illustrated press, so keen on introducing anecdotes. Pellizza then studied the worker with the jacket, a type that had impressed him. He now became the *capo*. There is a small study, again for a larger composition (Fig. 13). According to the painter's notes the leader «is about 35 years old, a proud and intelligent worker. [...] Another one looks at his powerful arms, confident of his strength.»¹⁵

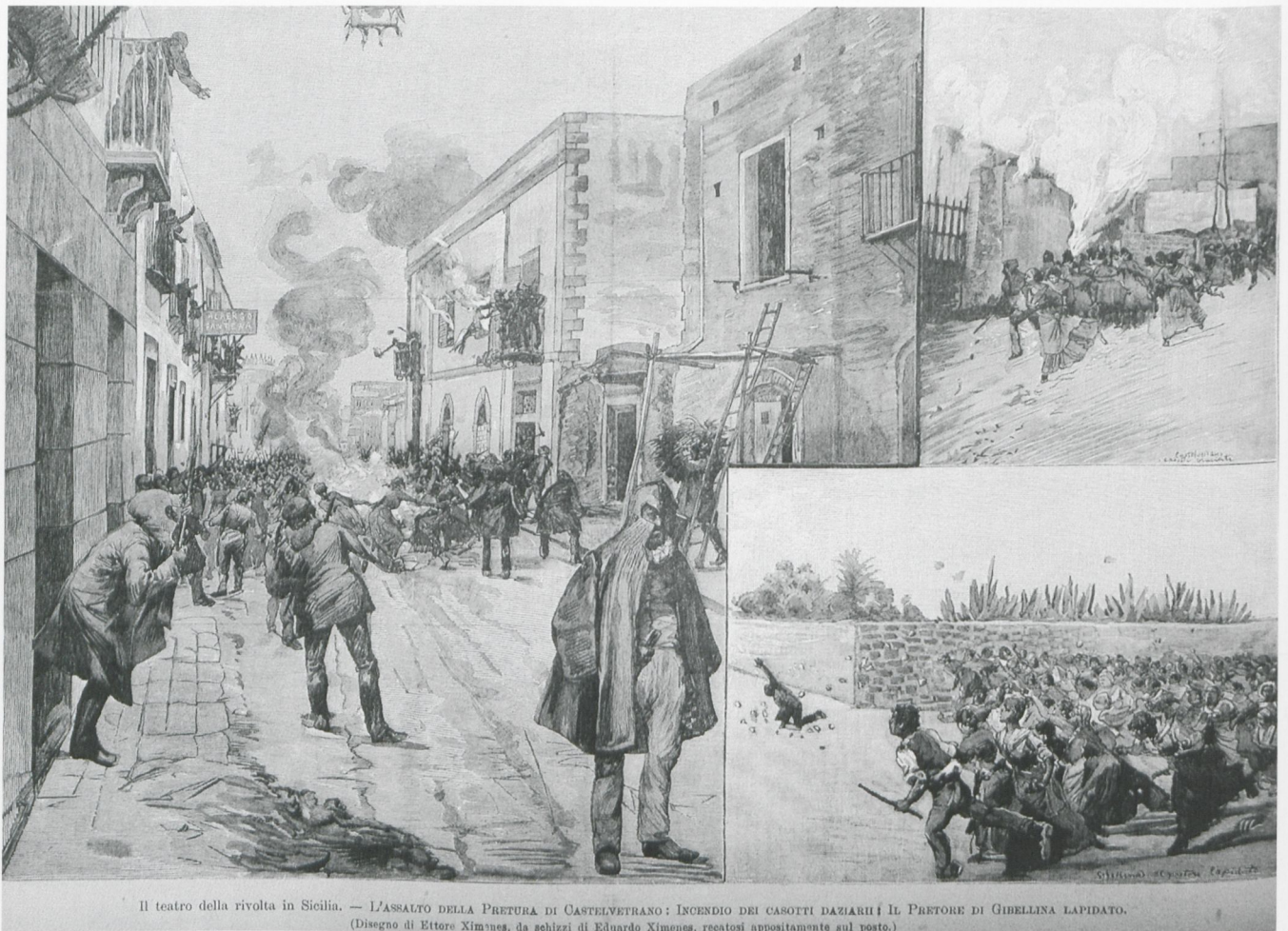
Both of these figures found their place in a more ordered row of strikers advancing towards the spectator, led by an avant-garde of three (Fig. 14). We first recognize the motif in an oil sketch, captioned *Ambasciatori della fame*¹⁶. Early in 1895 the painter drew a larger cartoon in which the frenetic movement of the revolt is restrained only by the three figures in the foreground. The scene is set in Volpedo, a small village in the south-west plain of the Po, where Pellizza was born into a family of sharecroppers who had succeeded in buying their all too small portion of land. The workers are coming out of a small street that leads



5. Xylograph after drawings by Dante Paolucci, *I disordini a Roma del 8 febbraio*, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XVI, No. 8, 24 February 1889, pp. 128-129



6. Xylograph after drawings by Dante Paolucci, *I disordini a Roma del 8 febbraio*, detail, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XVI, No. 8, 24 February 1889, pp. 128-129



Il teatro della rivolta in Sicilia. — L'ASSALTO DELLA PRETURA DI CASTELVETRANO: INCENDIO DEI CASOTTI DAZIARI; IL PRETORE DI GIBELLINA LAPIDATO.
(Disegno di Ettore Ximenes, da schizzi di Edoardo Ximenes, recatosi appositamente sul posto.)

7. Xylograph after a drawing by Ettore Ximenes, *Il teatro della rivolta in Sicilia. — L'assalto della pretura di Castelvetrano: Incendio dei casotti daziari; Il pretore di Gibellina lapidato*, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXI, No. 3, 21 January 1894, p. 36. Ettore Ximenes used sketches by Edoardo Ximenes «recatosi appositamente sul posto»

from the Romanesque *pieve*, the small church that can be seen in the background, to the palace of the local noble landowners, called Malaspina. The large shadow in the foreground is a motif borrowed from Millet, which Pellizza, however, justified through the narration. The three leading workers are symbolically approaching the shadow of the palace belonging to the Signori. According to the painter's notebook, the younger worker who follows the leader has just told him that his wife has fainted from hunger. The boy now points to starving children and desperate mothers. The group of women in front of the church's silhouette indicate misery, as Pellizza described in his diary: the mothers «just sat down on the earth, vainly attempting to suckle their apathetic infants at their sterile breasts [...]».

In another oil sketch, a woman with her child in her arms replaces the boy pointing to the wretched mothers¹⁷. The artist now abandons titles referring to hunger and spontaneous revolt. The result of some more detailed studies was a composition on a canvas 4,5 m large and entitled *Fiumana*, meaning “large stream” (Fig. 15). From the right,

women are approaching with their children. The woman in the foreground holds her baby from behind, presenting it to the viewer. However, when working on the large canvas Pellizza again changed the overall composition. The frontal row of protesters is only recognizable in a second layer of paint covering the underlying representation of the stream of people. The sunlit foreground is now contrasted through the paradox of a dark blue sky. But compared to *Il Quarto Stato*, *Fiumana* remains a stream of mankind instead of a phalanx of decided individuals.

In order to attain that effect, Pellizza made a life-size study of almost every figure¹⁸. He paid his models – construction-workers and peasants – for posing. The old man with his strong arms, the veins marked as in a limewood sculpture, is blinded by the sun like a Homeric prophet. He follows by only half a foot the leader whose presence he legitimizes like a father. The man in the middle carries his jacket like Michelangelo's *David* carries his sling. The final version, compared to *Fiumana*, is more readable, more monumental (Fig. 1). History painting absorbs naturalism.



8. Xylograph after a drawing by Ettore Ximenes, *Il teatro della rivolta in Sicilia*. – L'assalto della pretura di Castelvetro: Incendio dei casotti daziari, detail, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXI, No. 3, 21 January 1894, p. 36

WOMAN AND THE NATION, WOMAN AND CLASS

Pellizza would have liked to exhibit his canvas, 5½ m wide, at the Paris World Fair of 1900. We will never know if any jury would have accepted *Il Quarto Stato* as a representation of official Italy, along with the paintings of Pellizza's friend Giovanni Segantini who had died shortly before in the mountains of the Engadine. The painting was not ready. When it was finally exhibited, in 1902, in the Turin *Quadriennale*, there was no place for it amongst contemporary artworks. Critics did not appreciate its mixture of intense presence and of hieratic distance. In October 1902 the painting was reproduced in the intellectual review *Nuova Antologia* (Fig. 1). In the black-and-white-illustration, it resembled a highly evocative photograph. As such it was often reproduced in Socialist reviews and almanacs. The poet Giovanni Cena, however, interpreted all the figures as symbolic types¹⁹. The younger worker, like Aristotle in Raphael's *School of Athens*, symbolises Will, the elder one, resembling Plato, stands for Idea. Everyone plays his role according to the standards of

classical rhetoric. The younger ones are driven by their lack of patience, the elder ones admonish them to stay calm. But first Cena devotes attention to the woman with the "putto", as he calls the baby. His description begins with the strange gesture of her left hand, raised either in prayer or in remonstrance, he knew not which (*non si sa se di preghiera o di rimostranza*). Thus the woman can be interpreted as pointing to their misery – or as warning the workers that the police are approaching. The ambiguous gesture starts Cena's reading of the narrative.

In his celebrated political icon *28 juillet 1830: La liberté guidant le peuple*, Eugène Delacroix had introduced a woman in a Phrygian cap, alluding to naked *Truth*, recoded as *Nature* during the French Revolution. The sketch shows the main figure when it was still intended as an allegorical figure for a painting about Greece's fight for liberty. In a relief on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris uncovered in 1836, the sculptor François Rude transformed his Marseillaise, personified by the allegorical figure of Fury, into an allegory of all the people's armies²⁰. Thomas Couture's cartoon, 5 m wide, for a painting about the *levée*



GLI UFFICIALI DEL 30° FANTERIA A RAPPORTO NELL'ATRIO DEL PALAZZO DUCALE DI CASTELVETRO.



In Sicilia. — AL SOLE, SUI GRADINI DELLA PARROCCHIA DI CAMPOBELLO (fotografie dirette di E. X.).

9. Above: Illustration after a photograph (Treves), Gli ufficiali del 30.º Fanteria a rapporto nell'atrio del palazzo ducale di Castelvetro; below: after a photograph by Edoardo Ximenes, In Sicilia. — Al sole, sui gradini della parrocchia di Campobello, in: Illustrazione Italiana, XXI, No. 6, 11 February 1894, p. 85



LA RIVOLTA A MILANO. — AL PALAZZO SAPORITI SUL CORSO VENEZIA (7 maggio) (disegno di A. Beltrame).

10. Xylograph after a drawing by Achille Beltrame, La rivolta a Milano. — Al palazzo Saporiti sul Corso Venezia (7 maggio), in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXV, No. 20, 15 May 1898, cover-page

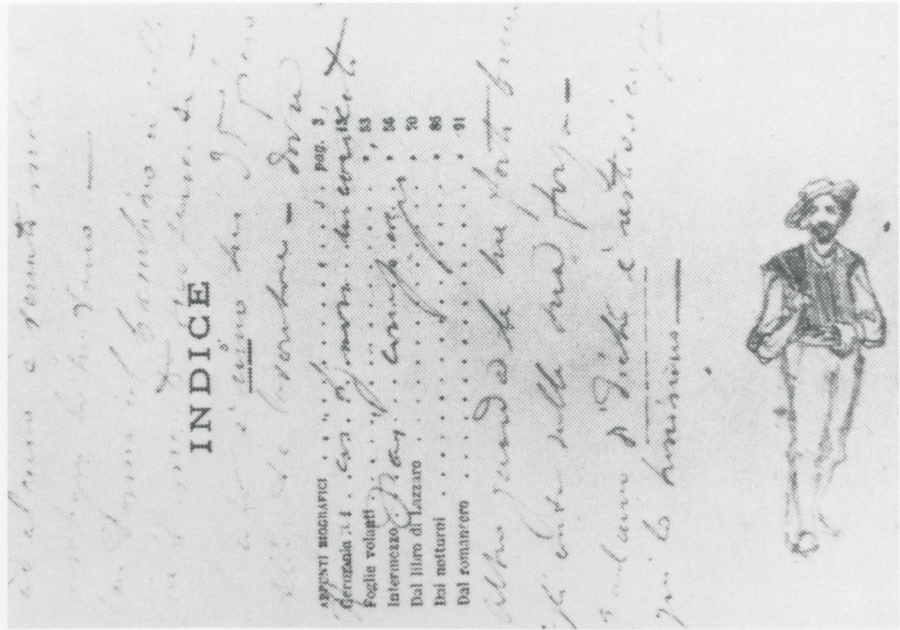


I tumulti di Palermo (2 marzo). — IN VIA MACQUEDA.
(Disegno di F. Matania, da fotografia e schizzi del signor E. Interguglielmi).

11. Xylograph after a drawing by Fortunino Matania, I tumulti di Palermo (2 marzo). — In via Macqueda, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXVIII, No. 10, 10 March 1901, cover-page. Matania used a photograph and sketches by E. Interguglielmi



12. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Sciopero*, September 1890, pen and brown ink on white paper, 10,8 × 6,5 cm, Tortona, private collection



13. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Figura maschile*, 1890, pencil, 10,7 × 17,1 cm, Milan, private collection. The drawing is dated «25. Settembre 1890» («1889» corrected into «1890»)

en masse, the French volunteers leaving for the front in 1792, is an example of the political iconography of 1848²¹. On the upper half, officers write the names of volunteers in their lists. Beneath the flag inscribed *La patrie est en danger*, three women hold up their babies.

Liberté and *Marianne* would never be allowed to forget their revolutionary origin²². Soon they change from being allegories of the nation to being allegories of class. English academic paintings, such as a canvas dated 1891 by Hubert von Herkomer, showed proletarians as impoverished, brave citizens, trying to protect their Holy Families²³. In France, Pellizza had seen, at the World Fair of 1889, a painting by Alfred-Philippe Roll, *La Grève des Mineurs* (Fig. 16). It had first been exhibited ten years earlier. In the centre, a “thinker” invites the observer to reflect. The police are about to arrest a worker, while the mass of strikers waits in the background. At this moment before escalation, some women try to restrain their husbands²⁴. However, there is also a mother trying to breast-feed her baby – undoubtedly a model for Pellizza’s *Ambasciatori della fame*. The narrative character of Roll’s scene, composed of anecdotes, resembles Pellizza’s first studies.

These are only some hints at the prehistory for Pellizza’s secularized Madonna and her ambiguous gesture. She is intensely allegoric, and intensely real. The model was Pellizza’s own wife Teresa, née Bidone. Even before he married her early in 1892, when she was 16 years old, he had painted her as a peasant child-wife, a painting he did not hesitate to exhibit in Turin (Fig. 17). After their marriage, she became a Madonna in an altarpiece for the

church of a poor village. Religion as female (Fig. 18).

In *Il Quarto Stato* she addresses her husband, leader of the strikers. Does he not listen to her? An anecdotal painting would reply to this question; this complex allegory of class, humanity and progress does not do so. One of the most frequently reproduced paintings inspired the composition: Leonardo’s *Last Supper* in the refectory of the Milanese church of Santa Maria delle Grazie²⁵. The second figure on the right of the woman takes up the gesture of Christ calming his disciples’ tumult. The gesture of Christ’s other hand becomes that of Teresa Pellizza. The raised hands of Leonardo’s St Andrew are, mirrored in a downward position, repeated by the worker who advances in the middle of the group of the left side. Pellizza borrowed more of the pathos of religious painting. The avant-garde group is a reinterpreted Trinity, combined with a Deësis: the son, the father, and the Madonna, interceding for humanity at God’s throne.

A POSITION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR REPRESENTATION – TRUE OR RESPONSIBLE?

The same Fortunino Matania who had shown, in 1901, an officer preventing his troops from attacking the crowds, confronted the reader, at the end of April of that same year, with Genoese seamen going from board for strike (Fig. 18)²⁶. Self-assured but not aggressive, they walk, under the eyes of their supervisor, right in the spectator’s direction. The loose contours, translating bright and friendly sun-



14. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Ambasciatori della fame*, January 1895, charcoal and pastel on brown cardboard, 159 × 198 cm, later divided into two parts, Milan, private collection



15. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Fiumana*, 1895-96, oil on canvas, 255 × 438 cm, Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera



16. Alfred-Philippe Roll, *La Grève des Mineurs*, 1880, 437 × 347 cm, Musée de Valenciennes. The heavily damaged painting was exhibited at the Paris World Fair in 1889

light, convey an everyday atmosphere. These workers have raised their own status to that of normal members of society. They are no longer to be feared. The spectator can confront them without being protected by soldiers.

Pellizza's political icon came too late. Only a year after Matania's illustration of the Genoese strikers, Pellizza in his manifesto-painting exhibited at the Turin Quadriennale proposed a heroic view of a revolt that had already met with some success, to which the bourgeois leading class already had begun to concede²⁷. The nation's ruling classes had become accustomed to images of striking workers confronting them. Pellizza, in his most important work, had put aside sentimental revolt and desperation in favour of a symbolic step into the future. But at the time, press illustrations had already shifted their focus from archaic upheaval to self-assured claims for higher wages, even without idealizing strikes made in the name of the progress of mankind. The jargon of naturalism had made familiar what Pellizza still encodes into a noble and moralizing idiom, shaped with the help of religion.

By pointing to what was first, during the artist's lifetime, a failure of *Il Quarto Stato* in the struggle for representation, at least in his contemporary world, we do by no means want to argue against this outstanding achievement of Pellizza's. On the contrary, Pellizza, like any other artist, was involved in the struggle for the way societies created their own *mimesis*, their representation of the world and their place within it. During the nineteenth century, the industrialized image gradually altered that struggle by creating national, racial and class stereotypes. Always part of the symbolic exchange possible through the very idea of art, the artist was trying to change the conventions about what art could or should be, thereby also attempting to create a new artistic public. How could Pellizza have reinvented art entirely and all at once? For people living not outside but within history, the point of representation is not truth but responsibility.

Pellizza created an image of the proletariat confronting bourgeois spectators and claiming its right to representation. His work challenged the very idea of art at its class



17. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Pensieri (Teresa, La sposa)*, 1891, oil on canvas, 144 × 82 cm, private collection



18. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Sacra famiglia*, 1892, oil on canvas, 166 × 106 cm, Tortona/Alessandria, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Tortona

and institutional margins. Even if the painting, relying on motifs borrowed from religious iconography, or *Pathosformeln*, to use Aby Warburg's term, idealized the worker's struggle as an apostolate, glorifying at the same time the longed-for embourgeoisement of small nucleuses of Holy Families, it marks a decisive step not only in the proletarian's struggle for representation, but also in society's struggle for a responsible image of itself. However, it would nowadays be irresponsible to play down the gender roles and the hidden pathos of the canvas. – The painter-philosopher – Fig. 20 shows his self-portrait of 1899 – paid for the failure of his painting, and of his career, with his life. In 1907, he hanged himself behind his canvas.

¹ As the missing link between artistic media and technical mass media, the Illustrated Press of the 19th and early 20th century merits more attention in visual studies. It prepared a mass public for the understanding of modern technical media and its genres. Studies of global or national aspects of the phenomenon: M. Jackson, *The Pictorial Press: Its Origin and Progress*, London 1885 (first published as a series of articles in 1879); A. Tassin, *The Magazine in America*, New York 1916; J. Pennell, *Die moderne Illustration*, Leipzig 1895; K. Schottenloher, *Flugblatt und Zeitung*, Berlin 1922; G. Weill, *Le journal. Origines, évolution et rôle de la presse périodique (L'évolution de l'humanité, 94)*, Paris 1934; F.L. Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, Cambridge/Mass. 1957; M. Wolff & C. Fox, *Pictures from the Magazines (The Victorian City. Images and Realities, 2)*, ed. by H.J. Dyos & M. Wolff, London 1973; A. Ellenius, «Reproducing Art as a Paradigm of Communication. The Case of the Nineteenth Century Illustrated Magazines», in: *Visual Paraphrases. Studies in Mass Media Imagery*, ed. by H. Brander Jonsson et al., Uppsala/Stockholm 1983, pp. 69-92. Important single case studies: J.-N. Marchandiau, *L'illustration, 1843-1944. Vie et mort d'un journal*, Toulouse 1987; K. Renou et al., *L'illustration. Un siècle de vie française*, Exhibition catalogue, Paris 1987; A. Stielau, *Kunst und Künstler im Blickfeld der satirischen Zeitschriften 'Fliegende Blätter'*



LO SCIOPERO DEL PERSONALE DI BORDO A GENOVA (disegno di F. Matania) [v. il Corriere].

19. Xylograph after a drawing by Fortunino Matania, *Lo sciopero del personale di bordo a Genova*, in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXVIII, No. 17, 28 April 1901, cover-page

und 'Punch'. *Untersuchungen zur Wirkungsgeschichte der bildenden Kunst in der zweiten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Ph.D. diss., Aachen 1976; S. Applebaum, *L'Assiette au Beurre*, New York 1978; H. Gebhardt, «Auf der Suche nach nationaler Identität. Publizistische Strategien in der Leipziger 'Illustrierten Zeitung' zwischen Revolution und Reichsgründung», in: *Bilder der Macht - Macht der Bilder. Zeitgeschichte in Darstellungen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by S. Germer & M.F. Zimmermann, München/Berlin 1997, pp. 310-323

² Very illuminating is the introductory foreword, signed by «La Direzione» (apparently Emilio Treves), of the paper that would soon change its name into *Illustrazione Italiana*: «Avvertenza», in: *Nova Illustrazione Universale. Rivista Settimanale*, I., No. 1, 14, December 1875, pp. 1-2. For background information: V. Castronovo, *La stampa italiana dall'unità al fascismo*, Bari/Roma 1991 (previous editions 1970, 1984), chapters VI-VIII. About xylography as the leading technique of the early illustrated press: E.-M. Hanebutt-Benz, *Studien zum deutschen Holzstich im 19. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1984, pp. 651-682 (about the early development of the semi-industrial technique). A study based on the development in Sweden: L. Johansson, *Xylografi och pressbild. Bidrag till trägravvrens och till den svenska biljournalistikens historia*, Uppsala 1982, pp. 314-319 (English summary).

³ The long process leading Pellizza to define the final canvas has been thoroughly analysed by A. Scotti, *Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo. Il Quarto Stato*, introd. by M. Rosci, Milano 1976. She describes Pellizza's working process as leading from romantic anarchism to 'scientific' socialism, from pathetic emotions to realism – as well in a sense of painterly and of political representation. An indispensable basis for the study of Pellizza's work is the excellent oeuvre catalogue: Ead., *Pellizza da Volpedo. Catalogo generale*, Milano 1986.

⁴ Many foreign studies of the early history of the Italian nation-state are not detailed enough, and do not sufficiently inform the reader about the ideological spectrum in Italy that differed for many aspects from other countries: secularism in a deeply Catholic nation, the problem of the underdeveloped South, narrow link of the bourgeois groups to the state institutions, generally feeble weight of a liberal, enterprising bourgeois elite, constitution interpreted as constitutional monarchy in internal politics, as absolutist monarchy in foreign politics, belated establishment of a party system, reception of Marxism by the rather large class of a highly educated lower bourgeoisie. On the other hand, Italian historiography is deeply anchored in contemporary ideological conflicts. Marxist, Liberal, Christian Conservative and national constitutional interpretations not only have their background in contemporary political debates, but also in a long-lasting history of conflicting interpretations. It is, thus, not easy to become informed about early industrial Italy. Also, public interest in the origins of contemporary Italy is astonishingly low in other countries. The view of Italy often is either limited to humanistic culture or marked by a consumerist, tourist attitude. A good short introduction to Italian history since the Risorgimento: G. Galasso, *Italia. Nazione difficile. Contributo alla storia politica e culturale dell'Italia unita*, Firenze 1994, pp. 1-173. Refreshingly non-ideological: G. Aliberti, *La non-nazione. Risorgimento e Italia unita tra storia e politica*, Pisa/Roma 1997. See also: F. della Peruta, *Conservatori, liberali e democratici nel Risorgimento*, Milano 1989.

⁵ For peasant revolts in the early 1880s and their social and economic background, see: M. Clark, *Modern Italy, 1871-1982*, London/New York 1990, pp. 69-73.

⁶ G. Spadolini, *L'opposizione cattolica da Porta Pia al 1898*, Firenze 1954; A. Gambasin, *Il movimento sociale nell'opera dei congressi, 1874-1904. Contributo per la storia del cattolicesimo sociale in Italia*, Roma 1958; C. Marongiu Buonaiuti, *Non expedit. Storia di una politica, 1866-1919*, Milano 1971, pp. 1-40; G. Spadolini & C. Ceccuti, *Chiesa e stato dal risorgimento alla repubblica*, Firenze 1980 (with an excellent choice of contemporary texts).

⁷ Anon., «I disordini a Roma», in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XVI, No. 8, 24 February 1889, p. 126.

⁸ A rigorous contemporary introduction to the situation in Sicily is due to a professor of history in Naples: P. Villari, *La Sicilia e il socialismo*, Milano 1896. See also: R. Zangheri, *Storia del socialismo italiano*, Vol. II: *Dalle prime lotte nella Valle Padana ai fasci siciliani*,

Torino 1997, pp. 517-538.

⁹ Anon., «I disordini in Sicilia», in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXI, No. 3, 21 January 1894, pp. 46-47, 50-51; Anon., «Note e impressioni di Sicilia», in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXI, No. 4, 28 January 1894, pp. 50-56, 84-86.

¹⁰ The exchange of letters between Filippo Turati and Anna Kuliscioff is rich in contemporary information about the general strike in Milan in the spring of 1898: *Carteggio*, Vol. I.: *Maggio 1898-Giugno 1899*, Torino 1949, pp. 347-348. See also: Umberto Levrà, *Il colpo di stato della borghesia. La crisi politica di fine secolo in Italia, 1896-1900*, Milano 1975, pp. 79-120.

¹¹ Anon., «La rivolta a Milano. Episodi illustrati», in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXV, No. 20, 15 May 1898, pp. 339-342; Anon., «La rivolta a Milano. Nuovi episodi illustrati», in: *Illustrazione Italiana*, XXV, No. 21, 22 May 1898, pp. 356-358.

¹² In the late 1890s a struggle confronted the reactionary, monarchist right-wing oligarchs to the more liberal groups. The monarchist group tended to reinterpret the constitution in an authoritarian sense; the liberal – but conservative – group wanted to preserve a parliamentary practise that came close, at least in inner politics, to a constitutional monarchy. See, for the conflict and its ideological background: J.A. Thayer, *Italy and the great war. Politics and culture, 1870-1915*, Madison/Milwaukee 1964, pp. 192-232; G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, Vol. VII: *La crisi di fine secolo e l'età giolittiana*, Milano 1980⁷, pp. 80-93. For the politics of the socialist movements – and the party: B. Vigezzi, *Il PSI, le riforme e la rivoluzione. Filippo Turati e Anna Kuliscioff dai fatti del 1898 alla prima guerra mondiale*, Firenze 1981, pp. 9-49.

¹³ Introductory remarks on the liberal politics of Giolitti in the early 20th century: E. Gentile, *L'Italia giolittiana, 1899-1914*, Bologna 1990², pp. 31-53.

¹⁴ «Un signore panciuto che fugge – gambe grosse capo degli scioperanti prega la calma – chi scende le scale ha fame e pare mandi una imprecazione

Un operaio è caduto per la discesa

fuori dalla scala –

di dietro la bandiera portata da altri

sopra scrittovi pane – pane – mani

in alto dietro le bandiere

giacca sulle spalle caratteristica

degli operai faccie smunte

magre pel troppo lavoro.

Scene di movimento – quindi miseria –

ricchezza contrasti chi sono la gente

si domanda sono gli scioperanti –

soldati non ve ne sono – ancora non

è pervenuta alla questura la notizia –

escono adesso;

La bandiera è di una società di mutuo soccorso – Pane è

stato scritto in nero con inchiostro ma rozzamente»

See: Scotti, 1976 (note 3), pp. 167, 219 and plate 1 a; Ead., 1986 (note 3), No. 577.

¹⁵ «Il capo e uno sui 35 fiero e intelligente lavoratore – dovrà / trattare coi signori incaricato / dai compagni»; «Altro guarda le sue forti braccia / egli conta sulla sua forza.» See: Scotti, 1976 (note 3), pp. 167, 219.

¹⁶ For the complex elaboration of his masterpiece, see Scotti, 1976 (note 3), and Ead., 1986 (note 3). See Pellizza's oil sketch, «*Ciò che ci vien di diritto*», or *Ambasciatori della fame*, 1892, oil on canvas, 51.5 x 73 cm, Biella, private collection (Ead., 1986, No. 703). The title *Gli ambasciatori della fame* comes from the cartoon dating from early 1895 (ibid., No. 933). We therefore use a title found in contemporary notes by Pellizza.

¹⁷ Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, study for *Fiumana*, 1895, oil on canvas, 44.2 x 77.8 cm, private collection (Scotti, 1986 [note 3], No. 934). See also: A. Scotti Tosini, M. Vinardi & Lia Giachero, *Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo*, Exhibition catalogue, Torino 1999, pp. 93, 150, No. 48. In August 1895, Pellizza noted: «La mia Fiumana dovrà essere d'una tonalità scura e forte quantunque dardeggiata dal sole – robustezza, forza, compatezza, doti che rendono inespugnabile chi



20. Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, Autoritratto, 1897-98, 160,5 × 110,5 cm, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

le possiede [...]». In December 1896 he wrote to a friend: «Pel concetto del quadro stimai opportuno tenere d'una tonalità bassa tutta la massa dei personaggi che s'avanzano per cui alle camicie tolsi il brillante dei panni chiari: avrei potuto allora mettere maggior luce sul terreno come consentiva la scomparsa di toni più chiari, non pensai a questo e lavorai durante parecchi mesi sempre rapportando tutto al terreno per cui il quadro invece di aver luce come i mezzi acconsentono languiva. Per me simile sbaglio era imperdonabile appena lo scopersi mi armai di forza tutto ritoccai distruggendo lavori di settimane e mesi.» Scotti, 1986 (note 3), p. 362.

¹⁸ Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo, *Study for "Il quarto stato" after the model Clemente Bidone*, 12 July 1898, pencil and charcoal on cardboard, 200 × 96 cm, whereabouts unknown (Scotti, 1986 [note 3], No. 990); *Study for "Il quarto stato" after the model Giovanni Zarrì*, June 1899, pencil and charcoal on yellowish cardboard, 198.5 × 95 cm, Tortona, private collection (ibid., No. 1007); *Study for "Il quarto stato" after the model Teresa Pellizza born Bidone*, dated 1898 on the back, charcoal and pastel on canvas, 202 × 98.5 cm, Motta di Livenza/Treviso, Fondazione Ada e Antonio Giacomini (ibid., No. 1008); three panels showing a *Group of workers on strike, figure study for "Il quarto stato"*. 1898-99, pencil and charcoal on brownish cardboard, 141 × 200 cm; 145 × 134 cm; 143 × 185 cm; all of the three in Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (ibid., No. 987, 988 and 989). Pellizza was still marked by clichéd characterization: «Un capo come quello della mia Fiumana dovrebbe essere fatto grandiosamente grandi masse di luce e grandi masse d'ombre modellanti grandi piani. Dev'essere semplice, grandioso – come è semplice e grande il suo carattere». See: A. Scotti, *Catalogo dei manoscritti di Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo provenienti dalla donazione Eredi Pellizza*, Tortona 1974, p. 68.

¹⁹ G. Cena, «Alla 'Quadriennale' Torinese», in: *Nuova Antologia*, series IV, Vol. CI, No. 740, 16.10.1902, p. 741; reprinted in: Giovanni Cena, *Opere*, Vol. II: *Prose critiche*, ed. by Giorgio De Rienzo, Torino 1969, pp. 174-175. See also: G. de Rienzo, «Profilo di Giovanni Cena», in: Id., *Camerana, Cena e altri studi piemontesi*, Bologna 1972, pp. 87-115.

²⁰ François Rude, *Le départ des volontaires*, 1836, relief on the Arc de Triomphe, Place de l'Étoile, Paris, in situ. See R. Butler, «Long live the Revolution, the Republic, and especially the Emperor! The political sculpture of Rude», in: *Art and architecture in the service of politics*, ed. by H.A. Millon & L. Nochlin, Cambridge/Mass. 1978, pp. 92-106. For the architectural history of the monument, see T.W. Gaechtgen, *Napoleon's Arc de Triomphe*, Göttingen 1974.

²¹ Thomas Couture, *Le départ des volontaires en 1792*, 1848-1852, oil on canvas, 489 × 925 cm, Beauvais, Musée Départemental de l'Oise. See: M. Fried, «Thomas Couture and the theatricalization of action in 19th-century painting», in: *Art Forum*, 8, No. 9, June 1970, pp. 36-46; A. Delanoy et al., *L'enrôlement des volontaires de 1792. Thomas Couture (1815-1879). Les artistes au service de la patrie en danger*, introd. by Pierre Vaisse, Exhibition catalogue (Beauvais, 1989), Paris 1989.

²² N. Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, «Delacroix zwischen 'Griechenland' und 'Die Freiheit'. Anmerkungen zur politischen Allegorie im Frankreich der Restaurationszeit», in: *Bilder der Macht*, 1997 (note 1), pp. 257-266. M.-C. Chaudonneret, *La figure de la République. Le concours de 1848* (Notes et documents des Musées de France, 13), Paris 1987. See also: M. Agulhon, *Marianne au pouvoir. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1780 à 1914*, Paris 1979.

²³ Hubert von Herkomer, *On Strike*, 1891, 288 × 126.4 cm, London, Royal Academy of Arts. See: L. Mac Cromick Edwards, *Herkomer. A Victorian artist*, Aldershot/GB/Brookfield/Vermont 1999, p. 82.

²⁴ A.F. Herold, *Roll*, Paris 1924, pp. 5, 41, 86 and plate V; *La représentation du travail. Mines - forges - usines*, Exhibition catalogue, Le Creusot 1978, pp. 20-21.

²⁵ Pellizza had studied in Milan and certainly knew the *Last Supper* in Santa Maria delle Grazie. The studies and cartoons for *Il Quarto Stato* show that he was willing to return to a thoroughly studied form of contemporary history painting. The model of British Pre-Raphaelitism was omnipresent around 1900. A return to Leonardo's procedures could establish a specifically Italian variant of public history painting. Literature on Leonardo's *Last Supper* that Pellizza

could have known: A. Houssaye, *Histoire de Léonard de Vinci*, Paris 1876, pp. 96-97, 105; E. Müntz, *Léonard de Vinci. L'artiste, le penseur, le savant*, Paris 1899, pp. 179-201; E. Solmi, *Leonardo, 1452-1519*, Firenze 1900, p. 97. The composition is also influenced by Pellizza's study of theories of suggestion – an aspect that cannot be developed in the context of this article. He studied writings such as: J.-M. Guyau, *Les problèmes de l'esthétique contemporaine*, Paris 1902; Id., *L'art au point de vue sociologique*, Paris 1895; P. Souriau, *La suggestion dans l'art*, Paris 1893. The symmetrical composition, the way the workers confront the spectator and the complicated lightning (dark background, stepping into the light) are inspired by such readings. See also: M. Morasso, «Recensioni analitiche», in: *Il Pensiero Italiano*, III, Vol. VIII, No. 30, June 1893, pp. 281-288; V. Grubicy, «La suggestion nelle arti figurative», in: *La Triennale. Giornale Artistico Letterario*, No. 11, 1896, pp. 82-84, extracts in: *Archivi del divisionismo*, ed. by T. Fiori, introd. by F. Bellonzi, Vol. I, Rome 1968, pp. 96. The text has been mistakenly completed by another text of Grubicy's, only published in 1921. Apparently it has been confused with the second part of Grubicy's article published in 1896.

²⁶ For the social and economic background of the strikes of the early 20th century, see: G. Toniolo, *Storia economica dell'Italia liberale (1850-1918)*, Bologna 1988, pp. 176-178.

²⁷ On the relative lack of success of Pellizza's canvas: Scotti, 1976 (note 3), pp. 53, 55-58. See also my forthcoming study: *Industrialisierung der Phantasie. Illustrierte Presse, Malerei und das mediale System der Künste während des Aufbaus der modernen Staatsnation, 1874-1900*, Berlin, Deutscher Kunstverlag.