Fascist youth organizations and propaganda in a transnational perspective: Balilla and Gioventù italiana del Littorio all’estero in Argentina (1922-1955)

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1 The Italian Fascist regime from 1922 onwards was among the first to extensively organize youth and leisure in its striving to gain totalitarian control over society. In doing so apart from the family it rivaled with other institutions traditionally in charge of these ambi’ts like the church at the national level as well as with supranational institutions recently created by the League of Nations. Apart from being a relatively new political movement, Fascism maintained a special relationship with the concept of youth in various ways: not only were its main characters, with few older than forty, comparatively young. They also instigated an explicit youth cult, the Fascist anthem tellingly titled Giovinezza. Consequently the indoctrination of youth as the future Fascists was considered central, as the longevity of the regime was thought to depend on them.

2 The Fascist youth organizations were set up in decided opposition to the previous liberal educational model in general, that also underwent a profound reform, named after its author Riforma Gentile (1923). Not least they were meant to complement the regular school system, in order to guarantee a totalitarian grasp on the youths. The Fascist youth organizations centered on anti-intellectualist pedagogical principles that exalted physical pre-military exercise whereby the youths’ emotions were to be appealed to rather than their intellect. By collective activism like choreographed marches, the youths’ characters were to be formed along the lines of the envisioned italiano nuovo, the new Italian, and their uncritical fitting into the hierarchical societal model with the Duce at the top was to be secured.
Complementary to the little existing research on extracurricular educational institutions during Fascism that hardly transcends the national framework, in this article I want to put the Fascist youth organizations in a transnational perspective. It was in the wake of the recent historiographical paradigm of transnational or global history that studies on Fascism as a product for export or as a «global phenomenon» have shown how enriching a widening of the analytical scope beyond the national borders can be. To apply this innovative approach also to the specific albeit central case of the organization and education of youth is the aim of this article.

As has already been hinted at, important foreign sources of inspiration for building up the Fascist youth organizations were for example the British boy scouts. The Fascist regime even took up personal contact with their founding father Robert Baden-Powell, who visited Italy in 1933. Subsequently, the resulting Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) and later Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL) served as models for youth organizations in other countries, for example Nazi Germany or Franco-Spain, by means of which exchanges of high representatives and members were organized. Yet these transnational trajectories of the youth organizations once they had been established have so far not been followed closely. More recent publications are trying to fill this gap. However, the focus is still primarily on mutual observations and personal exchanges inside Europe.

Departing from the evidence that considerable interventions by the Fascist regime took place also in non-European territories, this article – contrary to the Eurocentrism of most comparative research on Fascism – pleads for taking into account Latin America. Thereby, considering the early stage of this research the way for further investigation is to be paved. The main focus of the article is on the activities of Fascist foreign organizations in Argentina, being a country with one of the largest Italian immigrant communities overseas. Likewise the reception by and receptiveness of the Italian immigrant communities as well as the Argentine host society are taken into account. Lastly, a brief outlook is given on the afterlife of the Fascist youth organizations as an inspirational source for the Peronists from 1946 onwards even following the fall of the Fascist regime. The overall question is how the Fascist regime tried to disseminate the Fascist ideology and to install a societal model, meant to be controlled in a totalitarian manner, not only in Italy but in its expansionist aspirations also in other parts of the world. More specifically, the article tries to highlight how youths were not only targets of political propaganda, but at the same time also tools or media with which the Fascist regime tried to transfer ideological contents. In doing so conflicts and limitations appeared at different levels on which some light is shed. So rather than proceeding chronologically, the conflictive points between different groups of actors will be focused on.

Fascist migration policy, propaganda and youth organizations abroad

While previous liberal governments in Italy had promoted emigration as a necessary valve for the country’s population growth, the Fascists took on a completely different stance, inspired by nationalist ideas, and considered emigration as a weakening of the nation and a loss of work capacity. Therefore, in order to prevent future emigration in the course of the 1920s the Italian migration laws underwent profound reforms until
emigration was almost completely prohibited in 1927\textsuperscript{14}. The numbers take account of this increasing regulation of the migration flux: while in 1924, 70,000 Italians, that is, half of the transoceanic emigrants went to Argentina alone, in the 14 years between 1926 and 1940 only 80,000 Italians left their homeland\textsuperscript{15}. A fact that is often forgotten is that there were also emigrants who after some time returned to Italy and between 1931 and 1934 the number of these so called re-emigrants even exceeded the one of those leaving the country\textsuperscript{20}.

On the discursive level in Fascist Italy, the population of Italian descent already living in foreign countries was no longer treated as emigrant – a term that disappeared from the official rhetoric – but as « Italians abroad », Italiani all’estero. This semantic redefinition made the « Italians outside Italy » – irrespective of their official national status in the new host country – suddenly also objects of Fascist policy\textsuperscript{21}. The interest in the emigrant communities, that the Fascist regime professed at least on a rhetorical level, was something completely novel compared to former governments\textsuperscript{22}. Considered as a necessary evil they were to, at least be utilized as a means of disseminating the Fascist ideology abroad and as an instrument of the Fascist expansionist policy. The ultimate goals ranged from either repatriating them at some point, recruiting them in times of war or building up a Fascist International\textsuperscript{23}.

Just as the Fascists ascribed youths inside Italy a central role for the survival and renewal of the regime, who were to ideally carry the ideology abroad and thereby function as « adolescent ambassadors »\textsuperscript{24}, the Italian emigrant communities’ offspring, too, was considered especially receptive and therefore useful for the Fascist cause\textsuperscript{25}. As a means of their fascistization and a first step of their final repatriation, youth camps (Campeggi Mussolini) were organized on Italian soil particularly for children of the Italiani fuoriusciti, the « Italians outside Italy »\textsuperscript{26}.

As far as the countries are concerned, apart from Europe, the Fascist propaganda abroad was directed at overseas countries with large Italian immigrant communities such as the USA, Brazil and Argentina. After the waves of Italian immigration around the turn of the century, the share of Italians and Argentines of Italian descent was with up to 40 or 50 % in the interwar period, much higher in Argentina than in the other two countries\textsuperscript{27}. Because of these demographic facts, the Fascists considered Argentina as their virtual outpost in Latin America, from where to coordinate further propagandistic action directed at the whole of the continent\textsuperscript{28}. In the early phase of the Fascist rule in the course of the increasing regulation of emigration even some projects of agricultural colonization took place on Argentine soil: in 1924, 5,000 hectares in the Patagonian province of Rio Negro were given to 500 Italian families, and the following year 81 families settled on 1,3000 hectares\textsuperscript{29}. The special interest of the Fascist regime in Argentina, that even came to be considered as a Patria di riserva\textsuperscript{30}, a reserves’ fatherland for potential times of war, is further underlined by the fact that both diplomatic representations were simultaneously elevated to the level of embassy in 1924\textsuperscript{31}. Other actions of a more propagandistic nature, meant to accentuate the purportedly traditional connections between the two countries, were the visit of Prince Umberto of Savoy to Argentina, the inauguration of the submarine cable (Italcable) between the two countries or the tour of the cruise-liner Italia to Argentina in the mid-20s\textsuperscript{32}.

In order to disseminate the Fascist ideology abroad, different organizations were built up, most importantly the Fasci italiani all’estero, which operated in many countries and had 8 million members worldwide. The local Fascio in Buenos Aires was the first to be founded
on Latin American soil, even before the March on Rome in October 1922 and in the continental comparison also remained the most important. Further Fasci in other Argentine cities followed\textsuperscript{33}. Claiming the interpretative monopoly of \textit{italianità}, which under fascism coincided with the Fascist ideology, the Fasci in Argentina tried to instigate patriotic sentiments and resuscitate emotional connections towards the former homeland among the otherwise ideologically heterogeneous Italian community in Argentina. Therefore, the Fasci engaged in the social, cultural and educational sphere, rivaling among others with the various traditional associations of Italian immigrants in Argentina, mostly of charitable, social or cultural nature. It was either tried to replace these or fascistize them to serve the Fascist regime’s ends\textsuperscript{34}. As far as the media are concerned through which ideological contents were meant to be disseminated, the already existing press in Italian language (partly organs of said traditional associations) was added to by new publications (like \textit{Il Mattino d’Italia} or \textit{Il Littore}) that were directed by members of the Fasci themselves or by local sympathizers. In some cases editors even engaged experts in propaganda and advertisement directly in Italy\textsuperscript{35}.

In the course of trying to gain fascist adherents in Argentina, the Fasci aimed at organizing the Italian immigrant communities according to the Italian societal model under Fascism. So analogous to the leisure and educational organizations in Fascist Italy, \textit{Dopolavoro} and the various youth sections according to gender and age, \textit{Balilla} and \textit{Gioventù italiana del Littorio all’estero} (GILE), were set up in Argentina\textsuperscript{36}. Likewise the Fasci intervened in the numerous traditional Italian schools in Argentina, of which some adhered to the \textit{Riforma Gentile}, the Fascist educational reform of 1923, and which were considered central for the intensification of \textit{italianità} among the Italo-Argentine population\textsuperscript{37}.

While there is quite an extensive body of secondary literature on the Fasci italiani all’estero in general and also on their activities in Latin America\textsuperscript{38}, the specific role of youths and the educational field has not been looked upon despite the centrality conceded to them by the Fascist regime\textsuperscript{39}. Publications on the history of education in Argentina have so far neither taken the specific case of Italian schools into account nor extra-curricular educational phenomena like youth organizations. This desideratum is all the more regrettable, because the propagandistic activities of the fascist regime on the educational sector in Argentina and the reaction of the local population can help to differentiate the simplistic theoretical model of one dominant sender influencing a rather passive recipient. There are more than a few hints in the sources that local institutions ranging from traditional immigrant associations to stately institutions (like the Biblioteca Nacional) also actively ordered propaganda material and publications from Fascist Italy. Thereby the actions of the purportedly passive consumers of ideological contents also had repercussions on the formulation of the fascist foreign policy that ideally had to be constantly adapted to the local conditions in order to remain successful.

Apart from the rivalry with the traditional Italian associations in Argentina as to who held the interpretative monopoly of \textit{italianità}, the activities of the Fascist organizations aroused conflicts on various other levels\textsuperscript{40}: as far as Fascist Italy itself is concerned, the Fasci disputed over responsibilities with the regular diplomatic corps and together with the youth, leisure and cultural organizations even came to be considered as «paradiplomacy»\textsuperscript{41} which once more underlines their relevance as a field of study.

Also the Argentine government resented the interference of Fascist organizations on Argentine sovereign territory, which were accused of instigating violent riots between
sympathizers of Fascism and Anti-Fascists. It was attempted to eliminate these two conflictive zones on the Congresso dei Fasci Italiani all’estero in 1925: on the one hand the respective competences of the Fasci and the Italian diplomatic corps, whose personnel was to be successively replaced by loyals to the Fascist cause, were clarified. On the other hand the Fasci were made subject of Argentine law.

Nevertheless the relationship between the Fasci and the Argentine government kept on undergoing changes due to political developments. While the coup d'Etat in 1930 and the military rule of General Uriburu created a political climate favorable for the development of Fascist proselytizing, already his successor, President Justo, in 1935 in the course of a conservative restoration and rapprochement to Great Britain agreed with the sanctions imposed on Italy by the League of Nations after the invasion of Ethiopia. This surely can be named one of the low points of relations between the two countries. In reaction to increasing activities of Nazi-German groups in Argentina in the late 1930s, President Ortiz prohibited political associations in foreign languages that were controlled from abroad altogether. Many Fascist organizations, that is to say, also the leisure and youth organizations, reacted by simply renaming themselves. The Italian schools were another ambit where the intensified ideological conflicts manifested themselves: In the face of the perpetual controls from the nationalist Argentine government, the Italian embassy threatened to close down the institutions completely.

On the level of the common population, the activities of the Fasci, Balilla and other Fascist organizations surely fueled the conflicts between those parts of the population sympathizing with fascism and decided anti-fascists. Especially the 1920s were a phase of violent riots between fascist sympathizers and anti-fascists in Argentina which culminated in 1926 with the assassination of the leftist Italo-Argentine Camillo Nardini by militant Fascists in Mendoza. As far as the reception of Fascism by the Italo-Argentine community is concerned, many Italo-Argentines at least until the mid-1930s saw the international image of Italy restored with the advent Mussolini and Fascism as a possibility of positive identification and a way of countering the stereotype of the poor, destitute and politically underrepresented Italian immigrant from the early 20th century. Otherwise the Italian immigrant community's attitude towards Fascism changed over time and was strongly subject to the bellicose efforts of the Fascist regime. So on the eve of the Ethiopian war in the mid-30s, support-campaigns were organized that culminated in the enrollment of about 900 Italo-Argentine volunteers. Whether those enthusiasts were motivated by the promise launched by the Fascist propaganda machinery that they would obtain land in Africa in the case of a victorious outcome lastly remains open for speculation. After the military success of Fascist Italy in Abyssinia, Fascist sympathizers in Argentina founded a so called Comité Pro-Italia that produced a petition against the sanctions of the League of Nations and campaigned for the boycott of British merchandise. While the pro-Fascist party could draw considerable support from the ranks of the church and the diplomatic representatives, the anti-Fascists, on the other hand, that were in no way less numerous, also organized themselves in committees and demonstrated against Italy's military engagement in Africa.

The Italian was judged an optimal element especially because he hardly resisted the environment, in few years he was already completely assimilated, in a way that he could only with difficulties be distinguished from the native criollo.

With these words one correspondent of the Italian bimonthly Critica fascista summed up the situation of the Italian immigrants in Argentina shortly after the prohibition of all...
foreign associations by the Argentine government in 1940. As the author supposes, in the eyes of the Argentine government, the Italians were deemed *i migliori Argentini*, « the best Argentinians » because of their all too rapid assimilation. Overall the Fascist propagandists saw themselves confronted with a socially and ideologically largely heterogeneous Italian immigrant community with a huge generation gap, especially between the ones that had arrived prior to and after WWI. Although the local Italian mutual aid associations, that had been especially important for immigrants around the turn of the century, might have exerted some unifying effect on the Italo-Argentine community, by 1940 – albeit still economically strong – they had notably decreased in members\textsuperscript{51}.

Due to the lack of concrete numbers up to this point, in order to finally evaluate the success of the Fascist organizations in Argentine one has to rely on the assessments of contemporaneous local Fascist leaders: In 1938 of half a million ‘Italians’ living in the capital, there were only 2,500 active Fascists, that is only 0,5\%\textsuperscript{52}. Because of this evidence the existing secondary literature attests the failure of the Fascist organizations to acquire new members\textsuperscript{53}. Yet differentiating between the various Fascist organizations, one has to admit that those which realized concrete charitable, cultural or educational activities, like the *Balilla*, were more successful than the *Fasci* whose main *raison d'être* was to disseminate abstract ideological contents\textsuperscript{54}. Apart from the youth organizations the Italian schools were another realm, where the Fascists gained considerable influence, for example by taking over the control of the association *Pro Scuola*\textsuperscript{55}. Nevertheless on the whole, in the late 1930s Mussolini showed himself disappointed with the Fascist proselytizing efforts in Argentina and deemed the Italo-Argentine community lost for the Fascist cause. The situation seemed all the more deplorable to him in comparison to Brazil where the activities of the Fascist organizations had shown more promising results, not least because of the more favorable political climate under Getúlio Vargas\textsuperscript{56}. With the impending war in Europe, the attention of the Fascist leadership lastly shifted elsewhere. In conclusion, the magniloquently proclaimed will of the Fascist regime to ideally reincorporate ten million “Italians outside Italy” had not been very realistic to begin with\textsuperscript{57}. Over the years the Fascist regime simply lacked the financial means to maintain an active political role vis-à-vis the emigrants of Italian origin spread all over the world\textsuperscript{58}.

Despite the limited success of the Fascist regime in establishing youth organizations in Argentina after the Italian example, the topic is worthwhile investigating further because of the fact that the Fascist regime was the first to take on an active role towards the Italian emigrant community. The motivation was not only to improve Italy’s image in the international arena – as we have seen the Fascist interventions in South America were by no means devoid of conflicts – but also to extend political and social control beyond the borders of the Italian nation-state\textsuperscript{59}. As shown above, the members of the Italo-Argentine community were not at all simply passive recipients of the propagandistic measures, but had considerable spaces to reinterpret, negotiate, resist or even ignore completely the ideological messages. Furthermore, the radiance of the Fascist model of organizing youth in Italy and abroad still after the fall of the regime itself should not be underestimated.

### Peronist youth organizations

While ideological similarities and differences between Fascist Italy and Peronist Argentina have already been the subject of much heated debate\textsuperscript{60}, the specific topic of
youth organizations in both countries has not yet been addressed in a comparative manner. In order to counteract this lack, some first observations are laid down below.

21 Perón, on his trip to Europe from 1939 to 1941 as a member of the Argentine military, had shown himself deeply impressed with the Fascist mechanisms of indoctrinating and organizing children and youth. After he was elected president in 1946, Fascist Italy can be named as one important source of inspiration among others for the Peronist educational policies. In order to adequately evaluate overlaps and differences between the two cases, of course, beside the Fascist foreign youth organizations, precedents in Argentina itself, that is, youth organizations of political parties or the church have to be taken into account. Unfortunately, despite the abundance of publications on educational reforms during Peronism, research on extracurricular phenomena like youth organizations and their transnational connections and sources of inspiration is still rather scarce.

22 One of the similarities to the Fascist educational policy that appeared in the course of the redefinition of the role of the Peronist state in education and in organizing youth is the generational idea according to which the youth was addressed as the future generation of the nation. While this kind of an idea had precedents already in 1930s Argentine nationalism, it was only under Peronist rule that children and youth were addressed as separate political subjects and gained more visibility in the public sphere. Ranging from symbolic actions like the public burying of a so called « message to youth » to be recovered and read 50 years later to the erection of a children’s city (Ciudad Infantil), the younger generations were suddenly paid much more attention to. Furthermore, the Peronists by stressing sports and physical exercise as well as in organizing youth championships and camps adhered to similar pedagogical principles.

23 However, it has been pointed out, that the general focus of the Peronist regime was rather on children while lacking a clear-cut concept of youth: proof thereof is the common distribution of toys, mostly by Evita herself, or the construction of a students’ city (Ciudad Estudiantil) only two years after its equivalent for the younger cohort mentioned above. Finally, the Peronists’ aspirations on the field of organizing youth according to the Fascist example, took institutional form only in 1953 after seven years of Peronist rule. The resulting Unión de Estudiantes Secundarios (UES), though, remained numerically weak and existed only for two years till the fall of Perón in 1955. Another deviance from the Fascist precedent was that the Peronist generational concept was much more inclusive by explicitly also addressing the old. In view of the phase shifting between the two regimes and the eclectic nature of Perón’s outward orientation, one might see in this intergenerational harmonizing rhetoric and measures a lesson learnt from Italy to do it otherwise in Argentina.

Conclusive remarks

24 Considering Fascist propaganda abroad, a lot of scientific value can be gained from not just dismissing it as merely megalomaniac rhetoric. Despite the sobering results in building up youth organizations abroad, the intentions of the Fascist regime alone testify to a deep social change in that period. In the midst of the overall question on how to organize society, youth was conceded a central role and new forms of organizations were created. On the methodological side, the case study of Fascist youth organizations in Argentina and their follow-ups during Peronism adds to the approach of transnational
history by also showing inherent problems and limitations of the transfer of ideologies and organizational forms. In a theoretical perspective this article contributes to countering the simplistic model of unidirectional influence and domination. As the Italo-Argentine community’s reactions were by no means homogeneous and foreseeable, the Fascist foreign policy could not stay static over time but had to be constantly adapted to the specific situations abroad. Finally, in doing justice to the local agency it has proven fruitful to conceive of the Peronist youth organizations not just as a defective copy of the Fascist model, but – despite all the organizational problems and late institutionalization – also a conscious deviation and further development.

NOTES

1. Charnitzky, Jürgen, Die Schulpolitik des faschistischen Regimes (1922-1943), Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1994, p. 279.
4. Ibid., p. 289.
5. Ibid., p. 263.
6. Ibid., p. 314.
9. Cf. e. g. Budde, Gunilla ; Conrad, Sebastian et al. (Eds.), Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen, Theorien, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006 ; Conrad, Sebastian ; Eckert, Andreas et al. (Eds.), Globalgeschichte. Theorien, Ansätze, Themen, Frankfurt, Campus, 2007.
26. While in 1935 15.000 children of ‘Italians abroad’ took part in the summer camps (Dogliani, 2009, op. cit., p. 195), due to the early stage of the research, the concrete numbers of Italo-Argentines (or the proportional representation of different nationalities for that matter) participating in these so called Campeggi Mussolini, are yet to be found out.
28. Finchelstein, Federico, op. cit., pp. 40f., 101 : For example the Fascist news agency Roma Press, in charge of supplying the whole of Latin America with news from Europe, was located in Buenos Aires.
32. Devoto, Fernando, op. cit., p. 349.
34. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., p. 55 ; Grillo, María Victoria, op. cit., p. 233.
35. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., p. 58 ; Grillo, María Victoria, op. cit., p. 240.
39. Only Newton Ronald C. (op. cit., p. 55f.) for the case of Argentina and Savarino Franco (op. cit, p. 129) for the case of Mexico briefly mention the existence of Fascist youth sections but do not develop this aspect further.
40. Grillo, María Victoria, op. cit., p. 233.
42. Devoto, Fernando, op. cit., p. 346.
43. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., p. 59 ; Grillo op. cit., p. 251.
44. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., p. 62.
45. Devoto, Fernando, op. cit., p. 345.
46. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., pp. 43 ; 51f.
49. Ibid., p. 3f.
51. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., p. 46.
52. Ibid., p. 60.
53. Newton, Ronald C., op. cit., p. 60 ; Grillo, María Victoria, op. cit., p. 233.
54. Grillo, María Victoria, op. cit., p. 250 ; Gentile, Emilio, op. cit., p. 177 ; Devoto, Fernando, op. cit., p. 355.
56. Grillo, María Victoria, op. cit., p. 250 ; Guerrini, Irene and Pluviano, Marco, op. cit., p. 385 ; Bertonha, João Fábio, op. cit., p. 113f.
57. Guerrini, Irene and Pluviano, Marco, op. cit., p. 382.
64. Ibid., pp. 261, 296.
67. Ibid., pp. 298, 301.
68. Acha, Omar, op. cit., p. 67.
En essayant de parvenir à un rajeunissement de la politique, le fascisme italien concédait un rôle central à l’endoctrinement de la jeunesse, considérée comme essentielle à la survie du régime. Cet endoctrinement passait non seulement par l’enseignement, mais aussi par les loisirs dont l’encadrement était confié à divers mouvements de jeunesse. Influencées par des organisations étrangères, Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) et Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL) servirent de modèle dans d’autres pays, phénomène lié à l’expansionnisme idéologique fasciste qui, au-delà de l’Europe, toucha des nations du continent américain (États-Unis, Brésil et Argentine), où vivaient de grandes communautés d’immigrants italiens. Cet article est donc consacré aux mouvements de jeunesse fascistes et à leur propagande en Argentine. Il analyse leur impact au sein de la communauté italienne et de la société d’accueil, en insistant notamment sur l’idée selon laquelle ces mouvements ont été une source d’inspiration pour le Péronisme (1946-1955).

In aiming at rejuvenation of politics Italian Fascism conceded the indoctrination of youth as guarantors of the regime’s durability a central role. This was not only to be achieved in school but also during leisure time in the form of the Fascist youth organizations. Drawing from different external sources of inspirations, the resulting Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) and Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL) themselves came to be models for organizing youth in other countries. In the course of the Fascist ideological expansionism, the youth organizations were considered an important instrument of propaganda abroad. Apart from Europe special attention was paid to overseas countries with large Italian immigrant communities like the USA, Brazil and Argentina. In putting the Fascist youth organizations into a transnational perspective, the main focus of the article is on their propagandistic activities in Argentina as a country with a large population of Italian descent. Likewise the reception and reaction of the Italian immigrant community and the host society are taken into account. Lastly, an outlook is given on the afterlife of the Fascist youth organization as an inspirational source during Peronism (1946-1955).

Para conseguir la renovación de la política, el fascismo italiano concedió un rol central a la adoctrinación de la juventud como garantes de la perdurabilidad del régimen. Esa finalidad debió ser lograda, no solamente mediante la escuela sino también durante el tiempo de ocio, por las organizaciones juveniles fascistas. Inspiradas por fuentes extranjeras las organizaciones resultantes, Opera Nazionale Balilla (ONB) y Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL), constituyeron modelos para organizar a la juventud en otros países. En el marco del expansionismo ideológico fascista se consideraron a las organizaciones juveniles un instrumento importante de la propaganda en el extranjero. Aparte de Europa se prestó especial atención a países de ultramar con grandes comunidades de inmigrantes italianos como los EE.UU., Brasil o Argentina. Poniendo a las organizaciones juveniles fascistas en una perspectiva transnacional, el artículo se centrará en las actividades propagandísticas en Argentina, país con una gran población de origen italiano. De igual manera se tomarán en cuenta la recepción y la reacción de la comunidad italiana y de la sociedad anfitriona. Por último se echará un vistazo a la pervivencia de las organizaciones juveniles fascistas como fuente de inspiración durante el primer peronismo (1946-1955).