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KEYWORDS

children holiday camps; institutions of indoctrination; politics; fascist emblems; leader cult

ABSTRACT

Originally established as welfare institutions at the beginning of the 20th century, under Italian fascism the function of the *holiday camp* was transformed into an instrument of indoctrination and physical training. Built predominantly using the architectural language of the *razionalismo*, the summer camps of the 1920s and 30s were impressive in their design and spatial organisation. But even if their modernist architecture does not seem to have any political references, there are several enrichment codes and symbols that form the backdrop to exert an ideological influence on the young visitors. Lettering, political emblems and slogans, works of art, machine aesthetics and ultimately the floor plan organisation all had an effect on the guests. With the *colonia*, an entire generation was disciplined, manipulated, sworn to Mussolini and the fascist regime and ultimately prepared for war. After the war, the buildings were mainly taken over by state or church relief organisations. With increasing individual tourism, many facilities have stood empty since the 1970s. Their desirable restoration and conversion, however, should take account of the ominous purpose and orientation and make them visible. Artistic and architectural interventions can be a way to critically question these legacies of fascism for future generations.

Italian metadata at the end of the file

Believe, Obey, Recover: The Political Purpose of the Italian Fascist *Colonie*

The original purely humanitarian significance of Italian children's holiday camps, as established in the late nineteenth century, lay in medical aid and prevention. Diseases and deficiency symptoms caused by a lack of light, poor air and insufficient nutrition were countered here with extensive sunbathing, physical exercise, and balanced meals. However, the objectives of the camps set by church welfare organisations underwent a fundamental change during the years of the fascist regime, or rather some additions were made. On the one hand, the strengthening and invigoration of young people was now carried out in the sense of strengthening the Italian nation. For the fascist rulers, physical improvement was about strengthening the *Volkskörper* (body of the people), i.e. less about the strength and health of the individual and more about the physical superiority of a new generation. The youth organisation

Opera Nazionale Balilla, which was replaced by the Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (GIL) in 1937, had a clear paramilitary character. The young people wore uniforms that included a wooden fake rifle, were organised in military hierarchies, carried out military sports exercises and engaged in a series of military rituals such as flag roll calls, swearing-in ceremonies and hero worship. The holiday camp helped to educate the young Balilla physically and morally and transform them into soldiers. The fascist government nationalised all privately and church-run camps and ensured that no other organisation could exert any influence on the youth in the Italian context. Secondly, the system of holiday camps was instrumentalised for ideological indoctrination and emotional attachment to the fascist regime. On the one hand, one strategy was the intellectual instruction and education of the children through, among

other things, political *enlightenment* in the daily lessons. At the same time, the camps promoted the building of an emotional bond, for example with the father figure of the Duce. It was above all the emotional affect that ensured that the stays in the holiday camps were very positively received and subsequently transfigured as a “wonderful world.”¹ It is significant that in the 1920s large industrialists also saw in the summer camps a potential to get the children of their employees and workers used to discipline at an early age and to bind them to the company. Large industrial companies such as FIAT, Olivetti, Piaggio, Edison or Montecatini also built and operated holiday camps out of an economic interest in raising a healthy, efficient and loyal workforce.² As a very late industrial nation, Italy thus caught up with what had already been practised in Germany, for example, as a paternalistic corporate culture during the founding period.

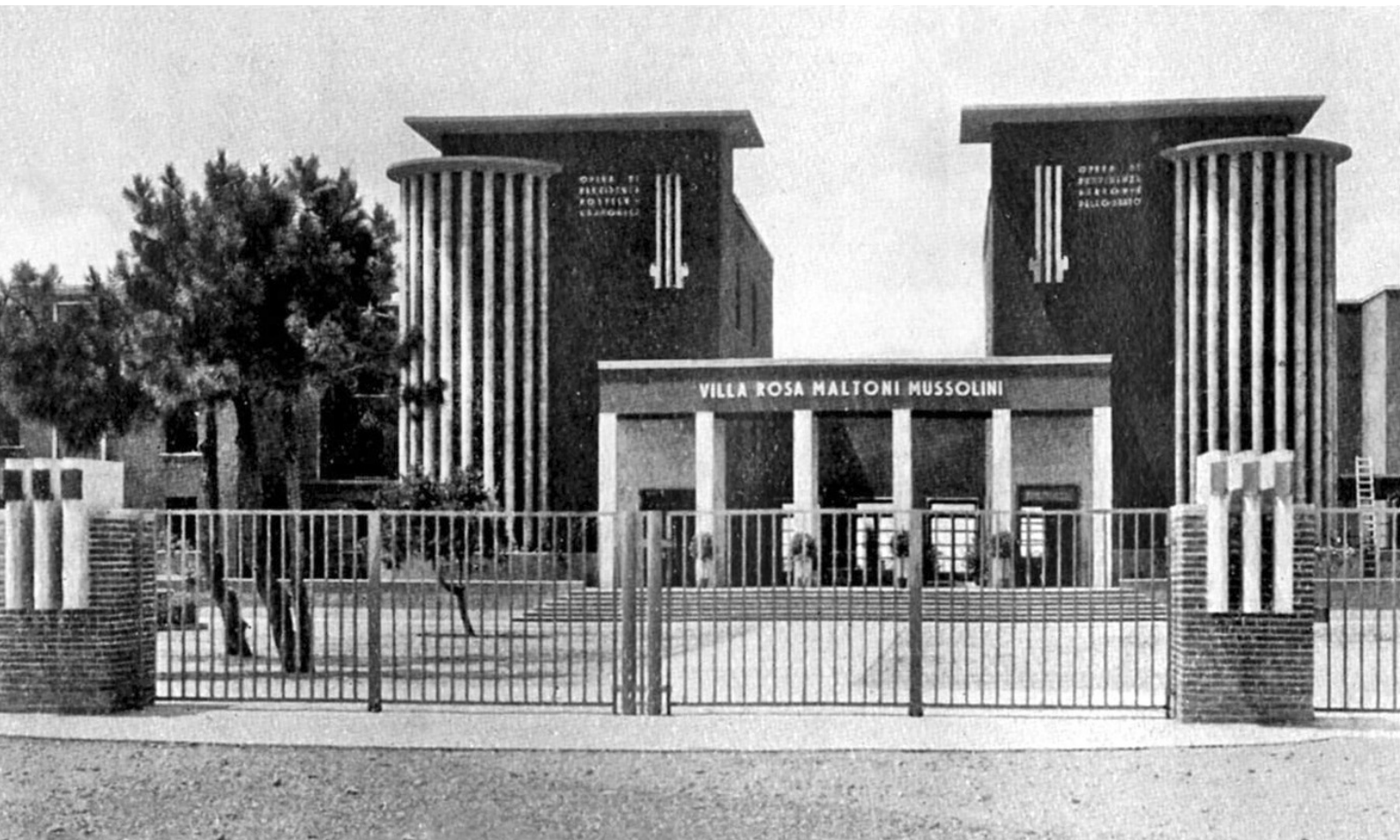
Moreover, the term *colonia* became a paraphrase of the living space to be expanded. Even though the term *Colonia marina* had already been used for a long time, fascism gave it an additional meaning. As a reaction to the First World War, the opening up of new land represented one of the essential elements of the fascist movement. This took place through the conquest and annexation of territories outside Italy and through the founding of new cities within the Italian peninsula, the so-called *città di fondazione*.³ In order to open up to new agricultural land, remote areas were also developed with the *nuovi borghi*, small settlements for newly relocated farmers.⁴ The development of the Adriatic and Ligurian coasts by the holiday camps represented a further building block in the development of the land. The fascist regime thus created new land for its population and expanded quasi inwards. With the Calambrone settlement, for example, an entire town with children’s summer camps was built on a coastal strip off Livorno. At the beginning of the 1930s, these expanded objectives of the summer camp policies led to a forced construction of new holiday facilities on the coasts (*colonie marine*), in the mountains (*colonie montane*) or as day-care facilities in the countryside or on the periphery of the cities (*colonie elioterapiche, fluviali or solari*). Since the mid-1980s, the subject of holiday camps has enjoyed great popularity among architectural historians. The focus has been on the institutions built according to the architectural language of *razionalismo*.⁵ Differently than the more monumental and rhetoric examples of some public buildings, they did not seem to have any political content or suggestive elements. In the general architectural-historical reception of the buildings of *razionalismo*, mainly structural-spatial qualities are emphasised and ideological implications are rarely addressed. Even when the historical background is discussed and the proximity to the regime of architects such as Giuseppe Terragni or Angiolo Mazzoni is mentioned, there is usually no detailed examination of what the political moment in their architecture consists of.⁶ In the case of the holiday camps too, architectural style and the practice of use are predominantly considered separately and their mutual conditionality is not examined. The primarily aesthetic evaluation of the buildings avoids

a moral-ethical classification. The stylistic proximity of *razionalismo*, the architecture of a totalitarian regime, to the International Style, which is considered the architecture of liberal democracy, is rarely problematised.⁷ However, the extent to which this modern and avant-garde architecture of the holiday camps was an integral part of political indoctrination will be shown in the following paragraphs. The paper will also consider enrichment codes, i.e. additive elements of architecture, as well as machine aesthetics and spatial organisation.

LETTERING AND TITLES

The name, year of construction and political emblems were given prominent and large wall surfaces in each holiday camp. Clearly visible at the entrance portal or at the roll call area and often extending over several floors, they functioned as a permanent reference to the fascist regime. They reminded the young guests to whom they were indebted and obedient for their holidays. First and foremost and in large letters was the name or title. Then, the typological designation of *Colonia marina, montana* or *elioterapica*, the town whose *Fasci di Combattimento* (Italian Fasces of Combat) ran the camp was usually named together with the abbreviation PNF (for Partito Nazionale Fascista), G.I.L. or a person’s name. Among the names, the surname Mussolini was particularly common. But not only that of the head of state Benito, but also that of his mother Rosa Maltoni or his brothers Alessandro and Arnaldo. Some were also called simply “Dux.” Most often, the names of members of the Italian royal family from the House of Piedmont, such as Vittorio Emanuele III, Principessa Maria or Regina Elena, were used. Many camps were named after heroes of the First World War such as the naval hero Costanzo Ciano, after fascist politicians such as Roberto Farinacci or Italo Balbo, after “martyrs” of the fascist movement, Sansepolcristi or their predecessors, and in some cases also the irredentists such as Guglielmo Oberdan. Several institutions were named after a historical date that was central to Italian fascism: XXVIII Ottobre, October 28, 1922, which celebrated the day of the “March on Rome” that brought Mussolini to power. The III Gennaio harks back to January 3, 1925, when the fascists established their one-party dictatorship. In the mid-1930s, IX Maggio was added, May 9, 1936, when Mussolini proclaimed the Italian Empire after the invasion of Ethiopia. These dates marked the most important events in the calendar of the fascist regime. The year of construction was indicated exclusively with a Roman numeral and the initials E. F. for Era Fascista – beginning with the year 1922. For example, the indication “E. F. XII” would mean the twelfth year after 1922, i.e. 1934. The year of construction alone was a reference to fascist rule and its epochal significance was underlined with its own chronology. The name and year of construction were supplemented by the emblem of the party and, from 1925, also of the fascist state, the fasces or *fasci littori*. It was often depicted in stylised form and repeated three times. At the large double entrance of the “Rosa Maltoni Mussolini” camp in Calambrone, there were even four such





rows of three. Sometimes the fascist eagle was included. Sometimes a political slogan or a quotation from Mussolini was also added, such as “Credere, obbedire, combattere” (Believe, obey, fight) – the most warlike commandment of the fascist “catechism.” In evocation of the naval supremacy of the ancient Roman Empire, the Latin formula “Navigare necesse est” (Seafaring is necessary) was sometimes also used. In larger facilities with several buildings, the various wings also bore their own names, as in the case of the “XXVIII Ottobre” camp in Cattolica, where the four dormitory wings were named after heroes of the First World War such as Costanzo Ciano, Nazario Sauro, Francesco Baracca and Gabriele D’Annunzio. The extent of the cult of personality around Mussolini is illustrated by the Sciesopoli mountain colony in Selvino, where the respective tracts were named “Duce,” “Arnaldo” and “Fabrizio” – Mussolini’s nephew. These elements were used to form entire blocks of lettering and to design building fronts, such as in the mountain colonies in Savignone **Fig. 1** and Bardonecchia **Fig. 2** where they could occupy the entire height of the building. Each individual element was a reference to the fascist regime, so that in three to five repetitions the connection to the political context was established.

FASCES

After the Fascist years, Catholic relief organisations or other State institutions took over the holiday camps and removed the lettering as a sign of the fall of the regime. However, the architects had also inscribed structural signs on the buildings that could not be erased. For example, separate structures such as cylindrical staircases, fluted round towers or even ground plan figures represented stylised fasces. A prominent example of this is the Colonia “Rosa Maltoni Mussolini” in Calambrone (designed by Angiolo Mazzoni, 1931–33), whose glazed corner towers were encircled with slender columns that appear like two giant fasces. **Fig. 3** Even in plan, the elongated structure describes two bundles, although this could only be seen from the air. The motif can be seen most clearly in the lesser-known mountain “Dux” camp in Ponte di Legno, **Fig. 4** where a roughly fluted round tower was provided with an axe blade three storeys high. Unlike a lettering, this gigantic structure was not so easy to grind down and has therefore survived to the present day. In addition to these monumental formulations, however, more subtle designs can also be found. At the *colonia marina* “Dalmine” in Riccione, for example, the narrow window pilasters of the



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staircases, enclosed by stone bands, suggest two fasces. The same motif is also found at the "Vittorio Emanuele III" in Tirrenia, on the corner towers of the dining room. Often, only a stylised axe blade was depicted, which stands *pars pro toto* for the praetorian bundle. Thus, at the aforementioned mountain camp in Bardonecchia, a blade was indicated with the speaker's balcony on the central, albeit square, tower. **Fig. 2** In some day camp, a rectangular or slightly bevelled element on a round component or column symbolises the axe. The three-storey central tower of the day summer camp "Anderlini" in Cerea is shaped as a gigantic glass blade.

WORKS OF ART

In addition to the lettering and emblems, pictorial works of art, reliefs and statues also conveyed political content. These were used almost exclusively for this purpose. There were very few purely decorative works of art or works charged with other meaning in the holiday camps. The depiction of a "Piccola Italiana" in the *colonia femminile* in Tirrenia or a "Balilla" in the courtyard of the Colonia Novarese in Cervia welcomed the young guests with a fascist greeting. The viewer thus observed himself or herself self-reflexively as part of a larger community. The

- 1
Colonia montana "Monte Maggio," Savignone, undated
(Camillo Nardi Greco Archives, Genova).
- 2
Colonia montana "IX Maggio," Bardonecchia.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).
- 3
Colonia marina "Rosa Maltoni Mussolini," Tirrenia.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).
- 4
Colonia montana "Dux," Ponte di Legno.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).
- 5
Colonia montana "Principe di Piemonte," Agerola – San
Lazzaro. Undated postcard (author's private archive).
- 6
Murals at the *colonia marina* "Gustavo Fara," Chiavari
(ph. Arne Winkelmann, 2006).



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child is not depicted as part of a family, but as a follower of the Duce. Mussolini himself was depicted at the “III Gennaio” daytime camp in Turin (an expropriated villa of the industrialist Riccardo Gualino) in uniform and with his arm outstretched with a clenched fist in a ruler’s pose. A statue in the dining room of the marine camp “XXVIII Ottobre” in Cattolica showed Mussolini as a helmsman. This depiction could still be harmlessly interpreted as a statesman. Against the background of the ship motif, as will be shown later, he functions here as a fleet admiral steering a warship. The blatant affirmation and glorification of the military and war are other pictorial contents found prominently in various camps. At the mountain holiday camp “Principe di Piemonte” near Naples, the façade featured two colossal reliefs “La Regia Aeronautica Militare e il Corpo degli Alpini” (The Royal Air Force and the Alpine Corps) by sculptor Eros Pellini. **Fig. 5** The right side depicts fighter planes and pilots, the sky above is filled with flying combat squadrons. The left relief shows mountain fighters, behind them rope teams on the steep slopes of the Alps. Angular physiognomies and muscular bodies stage the ideal of soldierly masculinity. In the seaside *colonia* “Gustavo Fara” (a general in the Italian-Lybian War) in Chiavari, two murals were created by the Futurist artist Domenico Ghiringelli, dedicated to the military units of the Air Force and the Navy. **Fig. 6** The

art movement of Futurism had glorified military force and the aesthetics of the machine since Marinetti’s founding *manifesto* published in 1909. The murals celebrated not so much people as military equipment: towering bows of warships, fighter planes, tanks, gun barrels, etc. The picture on the left of the entrance shows a shipyard with crane installations, the picture on the right the entire military arsenal conquering a small island with straw huts. As the ships are built in the shipyard, so the children are “forged” in the colonies for the purpose of imperial conquests. As a sign of this imperial expansion, the façade of the Monte Maggio mountain camp in Savignone was also decorated with a stylised map showing the Italian Empire from the Italian Boot to the Horn of Africa with its colonies in Libya, Abyssinia, Eritrea and Somalia. These few examples illustrate the blatant depiction of the aggressive expansionist policy of the fascist regime, of which youth was an integral part.

MACHINE AESTHETICS

Another aspect that emerges from the barracks analogy is that of the smooth running of a mass operation. This applies not only to the colony of the fighting unions but above all to the colony of the big industrial companies, such as FIAT, Piaggio, Redaelli and Montecatini.⁸ In fascism, one



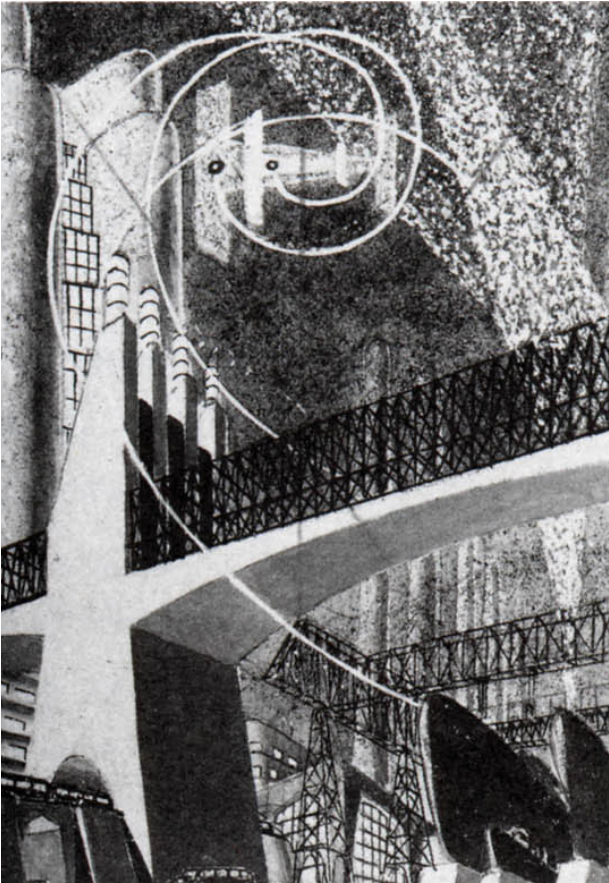
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can speak of a desired “machinisation of the human being,”⁹ in which the individual only has the role of an anonymous function within a machine. This image can be transferred to the structural organisation and formal design of the camp. The colony was clearly structured in functional terms. The service areas such as kitchen, laundry and administration were clearly separated from the children’s areas, the sleeping areas of the girls and boys were separated from each other (insofar as a holiday camps was not immediately reserved for only one sex or the other), all the life processes of the visitors such as sleeping, eating and washing were collectivised and combined. In accordance with the quickest possible assembly or distribution of the children, the buildings were usually accessed by wide ramps, which were often circular or shaped in arches, as in the *colonia* Montecatini or Varese in Cervia. The arrival ritual at the *colonia* Montecatini included climbing the observation tower with its ramps. The steady movement of the uniformed children made their single file march make the tower look like a kind of pump or propeller shaft. The functional differentiation, clear geometries and partly panoptical spatial situations for better surveillance favoured the smooth operation of the holiday facilities. This is particularly evident in the two round towers of the FIAT *colonia* in Marina di Massa and Salice d’Ulzio, whose

interiors form a single large spiral around a circular atrium. The catchword of mechanisation and *machinisation* also includes the engine-like design as in the day camps “Roberto Farinacci” in Cremona, **Fig. 7** “Pietro Vincenzi” in Bardolino **Fig 8** or “Maria Pia di Savoia” in Vercelli. The combination of round towers and rotundas allows the association with a gigantic piston apparatus or engine.

WARSHIPS AND FIGHTER PLANES

The ship metaphor is one of the central *topoi* in modernist architecture. It stood for the dawn of a new age, for a social utopia as well as for euphoria about technology and a belief in progress.¹⁰ The image of the passenger ship also suggests itself in the case of recreational architecture by the sea. Many of the holiday camps’ building forms clearly evoke ship hulls, semi-circular staircases look like bulges, railings and ramps are reminiscent of railings and gangways. Portholes and flagpoles underline the nautical motif. But in the camps not only the motif of the ocean liner is connoted, but also, and this may even overlay the first meaning, the motif of the warship. In the *colonia* “XXVIII Ottobre,” a small fleet seems to be anchored around a central structure, which is described on a contemporary postcard as a *nave ammiraglia* (flagship). Because of their squat shape, the four sleeping quarters look like navy speedboats or torpedo

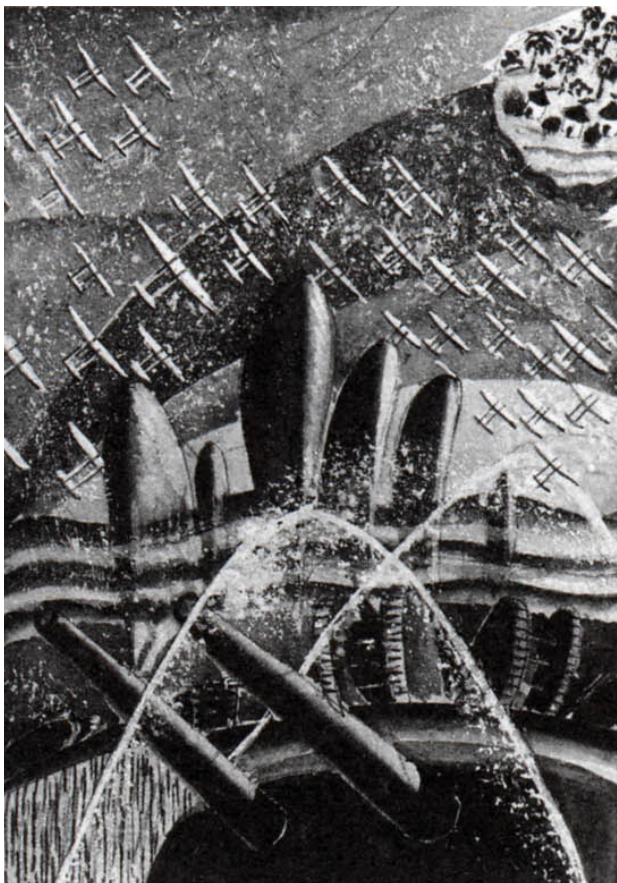


boats rather than civilian steamers. **Fig. 9** Together with the Balilla in naval uniform, the image of the generation that is to be prepared for war, the naval war, was completed. For a propaganda photo, a troop of Balilla, led by a Blackshirt officer, posed as a crowd of sailors on the stairs of one of the dormitories. **Fig. 10**

Wearing cadet uniforms with white sailor caps and dark shirts, the boys, aged about nine to ten, imitate navy soldiers. This makes it unmistakably clear what the aim behind the camp's programme was. From the same series of photographs comes a photo of a marine standing by a cannon guarding the camp. Children are lined up on the roofs of the dormitories, flagpoles are flown over the tops, as if the ships were ready to sail, to set sail for war. The "XXVIII Ottobre" facility in Cattolica consisted exclusively of nautical motifs and is also called *Le Navi* (the ships). Very clearly, the seaside camp Novarese in Rimini also connotes a warship.

Fig. 11 An elongated building with curves has a central stair tower that makes the building look like a battleship with a gun turret. A flagpole with fluttering pennants completes the impression. This building shape around a central turret and the same shape at the bow and stern is not that of an

ocean liner, but clearly that of a cruiser, which was common between the world wars. In addition to the navy, some *colonie* represent the air force. The marine camp "Stella Maris" in Pescara appears as a huge fighter plane. With its wings at the front of the nose, the ground plan of the camp in Pescara bore a clear resemblance to the Caproni fighter planes of the time. The rotunda in the middle of the building is reminiscent of a pilot's cockpit, just as the canopies of the two wings of the building evoke the association with wings from the ground perspective. Wings were also the design theme of the "IX Maggio" mountain camp in Poggio di Rojo or the daytime camps on Monte Mario in Rome, Palazzolo sull'Oglio and in Mestre. Formed as light flying roofs with a wide overhang and rounded corners, they made the buildings seem to float. The mountain holiday camp in Serramazzone honoured with its name the fighter pilot Danilo Barbieri, who died in the Abyssinian War, and its building form took up the insignia of the air force. It defines a rounded right angle whose building wings are stepped and rounded towards the outside, creating the impression of wings, i.e. the eagle of the air force. The aspect of flying leads on to the next aspect, that of the ground plans as the major sign in *aeropittura*.



AEROPITTURA – FLOOR PLANS SEEN FROM THE AIR

Under the term *aeropittura* (aerial painting), Futurist artists had developed a style in which the dynamics of aviation were of particular importance. The focus of the paintings was the perspective from the aeroplane with a dramatic view of cities, industrial plants or building complexes. In most cases, a wing or propeller referred to the means of transport that made this view possible from the air.

In architecture, it was the other way round: the ground plans of buildings could be read as huge signs from the air. Apart from a floor plan graphic, the large form could only be perceived from an aeroplane. Thus, the progressiveness of the aeroplane as a means of transport was per se inscribed in these building concepts. Two colonies also had a basic form that resembled the figure of an aeroplane: the marine camps "Principi di Piemonte" in Tirrenia and "Stella Maris" in Pescara. **Fig. 13** Against the background of the machine aesthetic, the proximity to the sea and the military conception, the ground plan forms of some camps can be read as ships or as warships. The elongated building of the Colonia Novarese in Rimini with its curves and a central tower resembles a battleship with a gun turret. As part

of the propagandistic staging for postcards, words were formed with the bodies of children on the roll call squares or on the beach. Whether standing in lines or lying in various poses, they formed slogans such as VIVA or the equivalent of two overlapping Vs, *VIVA IL DUCE*, *DUX, DUCE A NOI* (for us) as well as the letter M for Mussolini. The M is also found on many daytime camps as a kind of entrance gate or as part of the lettering. From an elevated vantage point from the colony building, these choreographies were photographed in conjunction with the flagged flagpole. Pictorial symbols such as the coat of arms of the Royal House of Savoy or the fasces were also recreated. Three camps also paid homage to Mussolini with the outline of an M: the railway holiday camp in Bellaria, the marine facility "Vittorio Emanuele III" in Tirrenia and the daytime *colonia* "Roberto Farinacci" in Cremona. The M was formed by a semicircle with a bisecting line. Stylised fasces could be interpreted into the ground plan of the marine *colonia* "Regina Elena" in Tirrenia or "Italo Balbo" in Marinella di Sarzana **Fig. 14** as well as in many other buildings. The ground plan thus functioned as a mega-sign in the air or simply on the maps.

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Murals at the *colonia marina* "Gustavo Fara," Chiavari
(ph. Arne Winkelmann, 2006).

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Colonia "Roberto Farinacci," Cremona
(ph. Arne Winkelmann, 2008).

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Colonia solare "Pietro Vincenzi," Bardolino.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).

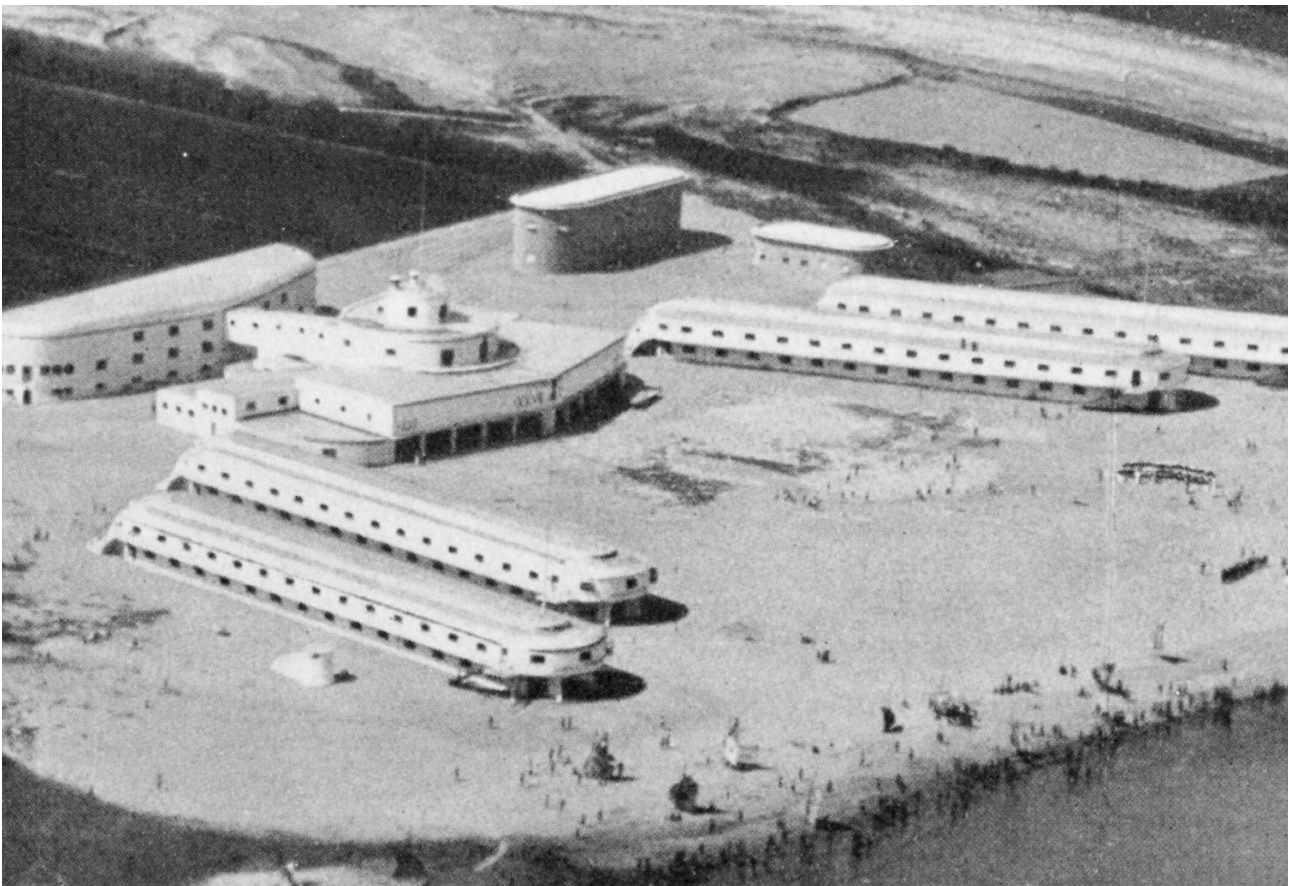
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Colonia marina "XXVIII Ottobre," Cattolica.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).

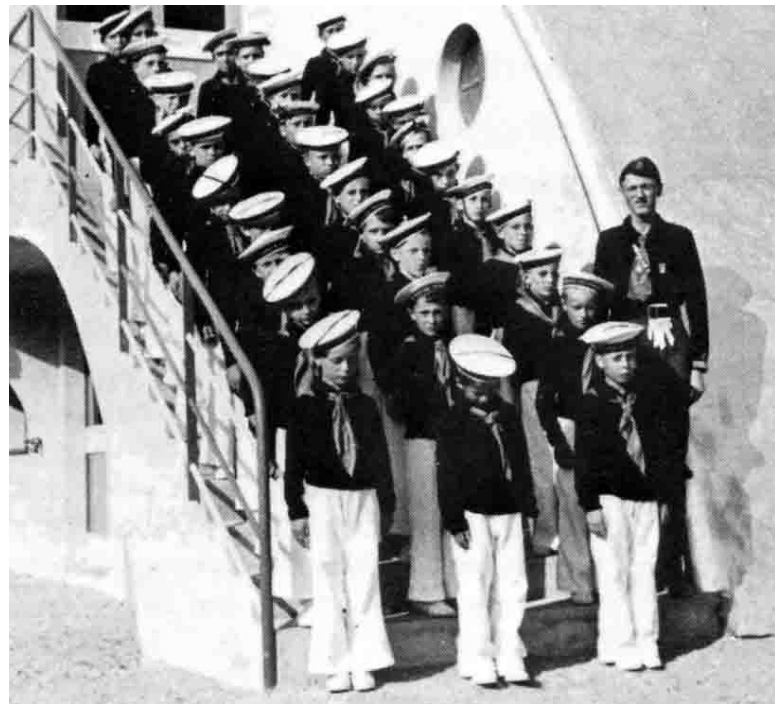




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BARRACKED SLEEPING

The fascist youth organisation ONB, later GIL was hierarchically structured. The smallest unit represented a *squadra*, a squad of ten boys. Three such *squadre* formed a *manipolo* (maniple). Three of these manipels made up a *centurie*, about 100 boys. And again three of these *centurie* formed a *coorte*, a cohort. In the end, three cohorts comprised a *legio*, a whole legion. This hierarchical structure was analogous to that of the ancient Roman army – with the same terms and the same team strengths. The Italian army of the 1930s and the fascist militia MVSN, the so-called Black Shirts, also followed this historical model. The room structure of the dormitories followed this division of the youth organisation in most cases. If one looks at the *colonia* “Amos Maramotti” in Riccione, for example, against the background of this organisational structure, a clear picture emerges: the dormitories each offered space for ten beds, i.e. a *squadra*. Three dormitories were in a row and together thus housed a *manipolo*. The entire floor of this camp consisted of three wings and thus its three *manipoli* comprised one *centuria*. And since the building counted three floors, it consequently hosted one cohort. **Fig. 15** This analogy to the military hierarchy can be found in almost all holiday camps. As another example, consider the *colonia* of the Fascist Combat League of Turin in Marina di Massa. With a length of 180 metres and several wings and courtyards, it was the largest children’s holiday camp

in Italy. In keeping with its dimensions, the dormitories are much larger, but here too one finds *squadre*, or orderly rows of ten beds. One dormitory contained three of these rows and thus one maniple. Next to it were two dormitories of the same size, which gives a *centuria* in terms of numbers. All the dormitories on one floor together hosted a cohort. Since this building also has three floors, it housed a whole legion of Balilla – 900 children in one building complex. **Fig. 10** Since beds were marked in many contemporary floor plans,¹¹ the logic of the room organisation can often be clearly understood. Sometimes, as in the *colonia* Torino, the basic units were larger, but the sequence in steps of three and the multiples of the basic numbers remain the same. In Cattolica, the four aisle-shaped tracts represent large dormitories that are not subdivided. Inside such a dormitory, four rows of beds are found in an interior space occupying the entire length of the building - bed to bed, head to head, in rows about 100 metres long. But even though it has not been divided into smaller units here, the total number of beds again follows the hierarchy of the Balilla. Each sleeping wing holds 225 beds, so that the sum of the four wings again counts 900 children, which in the end again represents a legion. Regardless of the spatial organisation, the seaside *colonia* of the Bolognese Fighting League was called “Decima Legio,” referring to the central army of Julius Caesar’s Gallic War. Designed in a traditional language, it had a bed capacity of over 900 beds – again, that of a legion.



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To show that a room with just ten to twelve beds can have a completely different function in a children's holiday camp a comparison with the same typology but as part of another political system is useful: the camps for the Soviet youth organisations of the "Young pioneers" and the "Komsomol."

The pioneer camps in the Soviet Union, which have been built since the 1960s, also have dormitories for ten children, but do not follow a military hierarchy. But even if the appearance of the young pioneers with their uniforms and roll calls seemed very military, the organisation was not structured like an army. Here they spoke of a "collective." A collective refers to the main unit of a pioneer camp, but more than that: it is the generic term of the educational concept of the Soviets.¹² To become a good socialist citizen, a child had to develop and improve his social skills early on. A child was thus educated in and through the collective. This means that the child's personality was formed and shaped by the comrades of the collective. But since the child itself is also part of the group, it in turn also shapes and moulds its comrades. In order to learn this social competence, the collectives have to be changed more often. The daily routine and the activities during the holiday stay are coordinated with these changes. This means that even if the dormitories appear typologically the same, they are substantially different because of their structure of use.¹³

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Colonia marina "XXVIII Ottobre," Cattolica.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).

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Colonia marina "Novarese," Rimini.
Undated postcard (author's private archive).

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Tato (Guglielmo Sansoni): "Flying over Calambrone"
Undated postcard (author's private archive).

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Floor plans of the *colonia marina* "Principi di Piemonte,"
Tirrenia; *colonia marina* in Montesilvano, Pescara
(drawings by Arne Winkelmann, 2023).

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Colonia marina "XVIII Ottobre," Cattolica; *Colonia marina*
Novarese, Rimini; Torre Fiat, Marina di Massa; *colonia*
marina "IX Maggio," Marinella di Sarzana
(drawings by Arne Winkelmann, 2023).

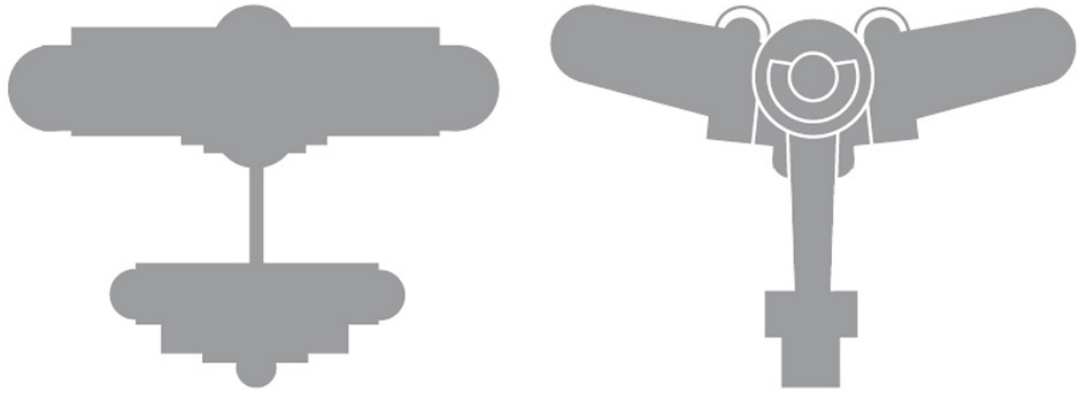
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Colonia marina "Amos Maramotti," Riccione, floor plan
(drawing by Arne Winkelmann, 2023).

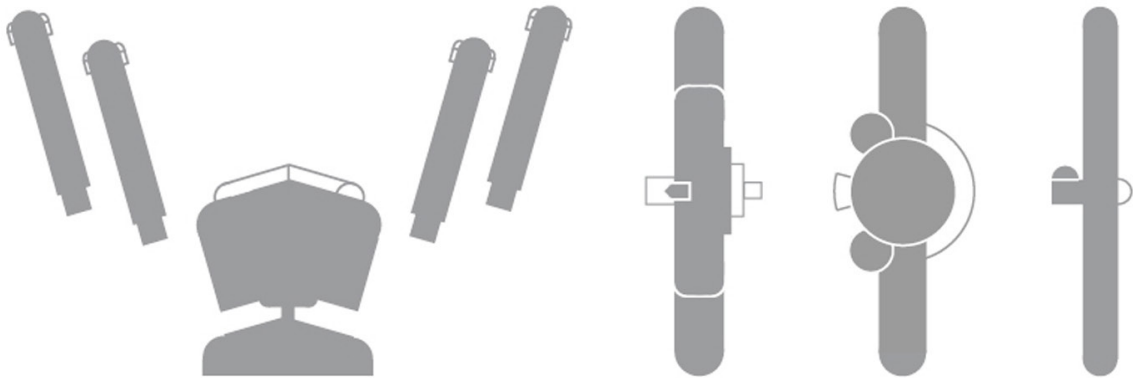
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Colonia marina "XXVIII Ottobre," Marina di Massa, floor plan
(drawing by Arne Winkelmann, 2023)

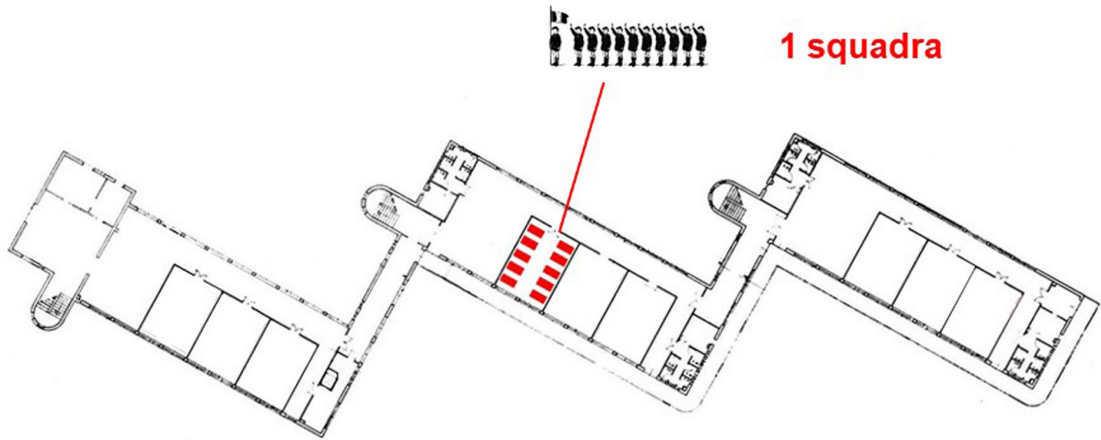




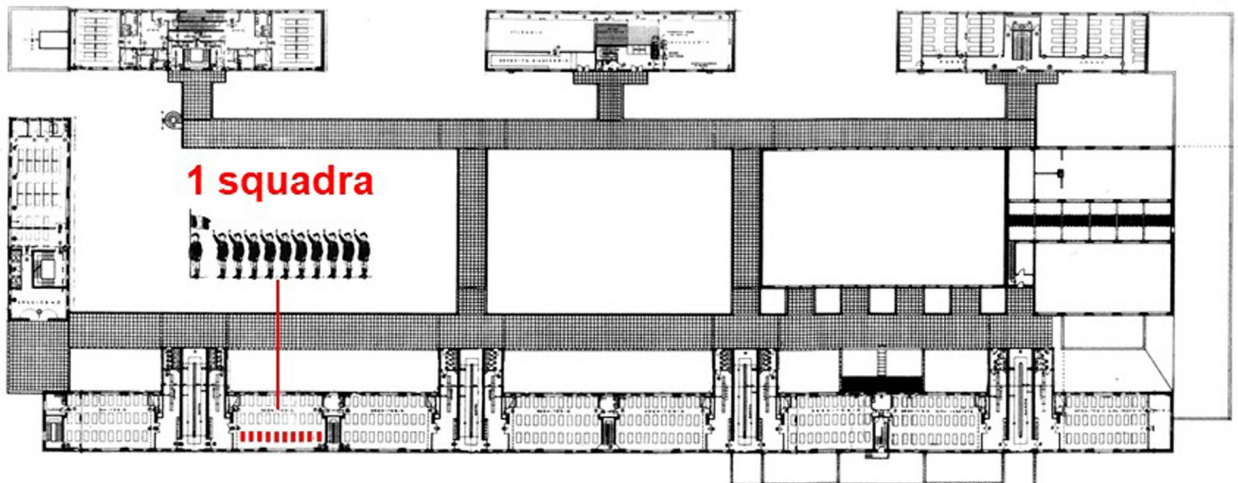
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CONCLUSION

These examples should have made it clear that suggestive and manipulative moments can also be inscribed in the formal language of modern architecture. The supposedly universal and symbol-free architecture of modernism could certainly be made serviceable in the context of totalitarian influence and help to swear an entire generation to loyalty to the regime and the glorification of violence. Reducing the architecture of *razionalismo* to spatial and aesthetic qualities means depoliticising it. What is needed here is a differentiated and critical view that takes political and socio-cultural aspects into account. For the status of a monument, predominantly architectural criteria would be applied. The architectural and artistic qualities, the engineering achievements, the partly innovative spatial organisation and the often townscape-defining design of many holiday camps argue for their protection as monuments. Some of these buildings are already registered as monuments, some have been renovated and converted, but many more stood abandoned for years, are visibly decaying and are waiting for a future use. If they are protected, it is not because of but despite their negative political implications. Their history, purpose and goals must be critically examined and should be addressed if they are to be converted. To deny this would be a kind of historical closure, in which only the positive aspects of culture are preserved, while the negative aspects are negated.¹⁴ As architectural monuments or memorials, the *colonia* as a legacy of fascism can contribute to political enlightenment. With a structural or artistic intervention, with a didactic preparation and development or by means of other material, visible confrontations with their political content, they can serve as places of dispute and learning. The documentation exhibition "BZ '18-'45" in the Monumento alla Vittoria in Bolzano (designed by Marcello Piacentini, 1926–29) can be cited as a successful example of a critical approach to architectural monuments of fascism.¹⁵ An awareness of historical political transgressions helps to prevent future radicalisation and inhuman attitudes and to maintain a democratic discourse. In the seaside towns of Calambrone, Marina di Massa, Cesenatico, Cervia and Riccione, as well as in some of the larger camps, didactic installations and interventions that address the historical context and objectives of the colony would be desirable. For as should have emerged from the argumentation, they cannot be understood as welfare institutions, but as places of systematic indoctrination as well as physical and mental preparations for war. As much as they may be convincing in terms of design and aesthetics, their ultimate purpose was sinister.

¹ Eduardo Paolozzi, "Wonderful World," in *Cities of Childhood* (London: 1984), 10; Stefano Pivato, *Andare per colonie estive* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2023), 9.

² Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent. Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 74ff.

³ Giorgio Pellegrini, ed., *Città di fondazione italiane 1928 – 1942* (Latina: Novecento, 2005); Harald Bodenschatz, ed., *Städtebau für Mussolini. Auf der Suche nach der neuen Stadt im faschistischen Italien* (Berlin: DOM, 2011).

⁴ Johanna Diehl, *Borgo, Romanità, Alleanza & Ufficio* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2014).

⁵ Giorgio Frisoni, Elisabetta Gavazzi, Mariagrazia Orsolini and Massimo Simini, "Storia e miti della colonia," *Domus*, no. 659 (1985): pp. 1–29; Alex Wall and Stefano de Martino, eds., *Cities of Childhood. Italian Colonies of the 1930s* (London: Architectural Association, 1988).

⁶ Katrin Albrecht, *Angiolo Mazzoni. Architekt der italienischen Moderne* (Berlin: Reimer, 2013), 307–12; Thomas L. Schumacher, *Surface & Symbol. Giuseppe Terragni and the Architecture of Italian Rationalism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1991), 37.

⁷ Diane Ghirardo, "Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist's Role in Regime Building," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (1980): 109–27; Giorgio Ciucci, *Gli architetti e il fascismo. Architettura e città, 1922–44* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989).

⁸ Katharina Torkler, "Ferienkolonien von Industrieunternehmen zur Zeit des Faschismus in Italien" (Phd thesis Freie Universität Berlin, Hamburg, 2001).

⁹ Michele Anderle, *L'architettura delle colonie per l'infanzia durante il Fascismo* (Phd thesis, Istituto Universitario di Architettura, Venice, 1987).

¹⁰ Gert Kähler, *Architektur als Symbolverfall. Das Dampfermotiv in der Baukunst* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1981), 21ff.

¹¹ Mario Labò and Attilio Podestà, *Colonie marine – montane – elioterapiche* (Milan: Editoriale Domus, 1942).

¹² Ruth Boldemann, *Probleme und Möglichkeiten der Kollektivverziehung im Pionierlager* (Leipzig: 1967); Helga Fernau, *Zentrale Pionierlager. Richtlinien zur Planung und Projektierung* (Berlin: Bauinformation, 1985); Nigel Grant, *Schule und Erziehung in der SU* (Bern: Verlag des Schweizerischen Ost-Instituts, 1966).

¹³ Arne Winkelmann, "Sleeping in Rank and File. On the Political Dimension of Dormitory Accommodation in Children's Holiday Camps," in *Studies on Types: Dormitories*, ed. Laboratory EAST (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2022), 30–43.

¹⁴ Joshua Arthurs, "Fascism as 'Heritage' in Contemporary Italy," in *Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe*, eds. Andrea Mammone and Giuseppe A. Veltri (London: Routledge, 2010), 114–27; Flaminia Bartolini, "Dealing with a Dictatorial Past: Fascist Monuments and Conflicting Memory in Contemporary Italy," in *Monument Culture: International Perspectives on the Future of Monuments in a Changing World*, ed. Laura A. Macaluso. (Lanham-Boulder-New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 233–42.

¹⁵ Waltraud Kofler Engl, "Kult-, Streit-, Lernorte. Faschistische Denkmäler in Bozen," in *Kommunismus unter Denkmalschutz? Denkmalpflege als historische Aufklärung*, eds. Jürgen Danyel, Thomas Drachenberg and Irmgard Zündorf (Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 2018): 65–70.

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Credere, obbedire, curare: le finalità politiche delle colonie per l'infanzia nell'Italia fascista

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KEYWORDS

colonie per l'infanzia; indottrinazione; politica; simboli fascisti; culto del duce

ABSTRACT

Nate come istituzioni assistenziali all'inizio del ventesimo secolo, durante gli anni del fascismo la funzione delle colonie per l'infanzia fu trasformata in uno strumento di indottrinamento e di addestramento fisico. Costruite prevalentemente con il linguaggio architettonico del razionalismo, le colonie degli anni Venti e Trenta erano all'avanguardia per il loro design e organizzazione spaziale. Ma anche se la loro architettura di stampo modernista non sembrava avere riferimenti politici espliciti, nelle colonie si trovavano numerosi simboli necessari per esercitare un'influenza ideologica sui giovani visitatori. Le scritte, gli emblemi e gli slogan politici, le opere d'arte, l'estetica della macchina e, infine, l'organizzazione delle planimetrie hanno certamente avuto un effetto sui giovani ospiti. Con le colonie, un'intera generazione fu disciplinata, manipolata, resa devota a Mussolini e al regime fascista e infine preparata alla guerra. Nel dopoguerra, gli edifici sono stati rilevati principalmente da organizzazioni umanitarie statali o ecclesiastiche. Con l'aumento del turismo individuale a partire dagli anni Settanta, molte strutture sono rimaste vuote. Il loro auspicabile restauro e la loro riconversione, tuttavia, dovrebbero tenere conto dei nefasti scopi originari, per renderli visibili e criticizzarli. Gli interventi artistici e architettonici possono essere dunque un modo per interrogare criticamente queste eredità del fascismo per le generazioni future.

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