

RAILWAY WORKERS IN ITALY AND THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL PURGING IN FASCIT PERIOD

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Introduction

There is little regional research in Italy about the workers who built the railways, the origins of the railwaymen, their political views and, above all, the feature of the service and their occupational identity¹.

This type of research would facilitate the understanding of social evolution in important areas, which resembled “railway towns” for many years. Indeed, even in Italy, many such “railway towns” developed during the 19th century (Foligno, Chiusi, Novi Ligure and other smaller towns), although they were less important than those in the United States and Great Britain. Such towns were not born with the railways, but they grew up thanks to the existence of the railway installations, and most part of their inhabitants was made of railwaymen. Moreover some small countries (*paesi scalo*), were born around a station along the railway, often taking their name from ancient medieval countries, situated on the highlands a few kilometres far.

Up until the present day the service in the railways has been the most varied throughout the world of work, taking into consideration the various tasks and working hours. The “figure” of the railwayman included workers employed in administration of directions and offices (approx. 10% of the total); the engineers and other technical specialisations of a lower level, employed in the planning and maintenance of the railway lines, the rolling stock and the electricity installations; and above all the jobs connected with the movement of the trains such as the engine-drivers and stokers, the travel staff (the guard, conductor and brakeman) and the station staff. They made up more than 60% of the railwaymen. The train workers had a strong occupational identity and they were the most pugnacious in both trade unions and politic affairs.

With respect to this last point, it should be noted that the railwaymen have always represented one of the most politicised categories since the last decade of the 19th century when socialist ideology influenced them. Thanks to the commitment of various pioneers, they began to take an interest in politics and developed the first trade union organisations, beginning with the mutual benefit societies during the 1870’s of the

¹ The main publications concerning the Italian railwaymen are: L. Guerrini, *Organizzazioni e lotte dei ferrovieri italiani (1862-1907)*, (Firenze, 1957); E. Finzi, *Alle origini del movimento sindacale: i ferrovieri*, (Bologna, 1975); G. De Lorenzo, *La prima organizzazione di classe dei ferrovieri*, (Roma, 1977); G. Checco-S. Stefanelli, *La mutua dei macchinisti e fuochisti. Una storia nella storia del movimento dei ferrovieri*, (Milano, 1987); *Il Sindacato Ferrovieri Italiani dalle origini al fascismo 1907-1925*, edited by M. Antonioli and G. Checco, (Milano, 1994); F. Paolini, *Storia del sindacato ferrovieri italiani 1943-1958*, (Venezia, 1998); *Il sindacato in ferrovia dalle origini alle federazioni dei trasporti*, edited by S. Maggi and F. Paolini, (Venezia, 2000); *Lavoro e identità. I cento anni del sindacato ferrovieri*, edited by S. Maggi, (Roma, 2007).

XIXth century. The most important of these pioneers was Cesare Pozzo, chairman of the mutual society of machinists and firemen in Milan (founded in 1877)², who tragically died in 1898 after having made a fundamental contribution to the birth of unionism³. One year before the first deputy coming from the railwaymen, Quirino Nofri, had been elected to Parliament.

At the end of the 19th century and also in the first years of the 20th century, when Italian industry began to take off, the railway workers represented a fundamental basis for the left-wing forces and the growing socialist movement. The railwayman seemed to embody the social modernisation carried out by trains, which linked isolated towns and countries to the national life.

The railway workers realized the first national strike of Italy in 1905, and the conservative classes were afraid of their attitude of rebellion. Indeed, in the following years, strike became a “normal” feature of railways, paralyzing more and more the national life.

Whilst the forces on the left continued to remain in control, all the main political creeds subsequently found fertile ground amongst the railway workers, especially fascism. Mussolini’s movement penetrated deeply amid the managers so generating a social clash within the railway administration and then leading to the political purge of the 1920’s which drastically reduced the number of employees.

The industrial nature of the railway sector caused the railwaymen to assume a worker’s mentality, despite the fact that they had already become civil servants in 1905 and, unlike those employed by the ministerial bureaucracy, they did not feel any close links with the public office which they belonged to. They had an apparently conflicting behaviour: a strong bond with their job, not accompanied by an analogous identification with their employer.

Owing to this particular *forma mentis* the trade unions and political ideologies were able to find a strong root amongst the railwaymen. On the other hand, the spread of such ideas amongst the railway workers was facilitated by the fact that the sector was literate and operated on a large national scale, totally separate from the local particularisms, where the notables’ parties ruled.

The management of the Italian railways

Owing to the delayed economic development and the slow process of national unification, completed in 1861, the realisation of an Italian railway network first took place only in the 1860’s despite the existence of some small networks – of 2,189 km in total – above all constructed in Piedmont, Lombardy and Tuscany, which were the most developed regions of the peninsula. The railway building became the most important task of the Italian state, just after its establishment. Government saw in the railway the way of connecting the different economies and societies that composed the new nation (Tab. 1).

² This mutual society, named Società nazionale di mutuo soccorso Cesare Pozzo, is now the biggest in Italy.

³ His bibliography in S. Maggi, *Il tormento di un’idea. Vita e opera di Cesare Pozzo. Dal sindacato al socialismo (1853-1898)*, (Milano, 1998).

Before 1865 the management of the railway-sections was less uniform, deriving from different pre-unification experiences. The state railways, especially those in Piedmont, existed alongside the lines owned by various private companies which each received considerably different concessions from the others.

In that same year it was decided that the construction and operation of the railways should be entrusted to five companies with private investment. However, the system almost immediately met with crisis and the State had to spend huge sums of money for ransom and the balancing of budgets.

Consequently a long debate arose in search of a new order which was finally put into practice in 1885. It entrusted the operation to three big companies, while the ownership of the lines, permanent installations and the rolling stock remained with the State.

The peninsula was divided longitudinally with the intention of encouraging traffic between the north and the south to overcome the considerable differences between the two areas of Italy. The eastern network was entrusted to the *Società Adriatica* which managed in total 4,300km of railway, while the western network, of 4,100km, was assigned to the *Società per le Strade Ferrate del Mediterraneo*. The third and final grantee company was the *Sicula* which had to manage 1,100km of lines in the island. The grants of 1885 lasted for a maximum of sixty years and were subdivided into three periods of twenty years each.

This system also failed and the State was forced to offer repeated financial handouts, until the nationalisation of 13,000km of railways – the majority of the existing network – achieved after a heated debate in April 1905, relatively early compared to the other European States⁴. A state railway administration (Ferrovie dello Stato) was created, that was initially autonomous from the Ministry which it belonged to, with a board of directors free to take managerial decisions. However, the administration was then brought under tight political control⁵.

The railways were under the direct management of the State up until the start of the privatisation process in 1985. That same year a law was passed on 18th April to establish the *Ente Ferrovie dello Stato*; exactly 80 years after the nationalisation. Its task was to achieve the goals of “saving money and efficiency” and it was granted patrimonial, and financial autonomy. The minister only retained the powers of supervision and address.

The establishment of the *Ente Ferrovie dello Stato* represented the first big reform in the Italian administration and it opened the road up to a series of changes leaning towards the privatisation of numerous sectors. The next step occurred at the end of 1991, brought on by the country’s economic crisis and by the deficit in the public budget, when the government decided to adopt incisive measures in order to privatise the big public enterprises and so transforming the railways into a joint-stock company. The *Ferrovie dello Stato* are today a private society, whose capital is held entirely by the State, divided into a lot of companies: the most important are Trenitalia for the trains and Rete ferroviaria for the railway line and stations.

⁴ The network run by the State reached 16,000km - over 22,000km existing - during the 1930’s, period of maximum extent.

⁵ S. Maggi, *Aspetti istituzionali della storia delle ferrovie nell’Ottocento*, “Le Carte e la Storia”, n. 2, 1995, pp. 176-181.

The social identity of the railwaymen

The first point to be noted in the study of the work on the Italian railways regards the complicated organisation of the category, which is characterised by a multitude of levels differing on professionalism, extent of education, amount of payment and the quality of life. Suffice to think that until the end of the 1950's the service was organised into more than 100 different jobs (Tab. 2).

The origins of the railwaymen were also varied, but it must be noticed that the whole sector was alphabetized, even in pioneer years. While the office employees of the various sectors came from the small town middle classes, those specifically qualified as workers mostly came from the working artisan classes where the workers learned a trade that they then put to use on the railways. Towards the end of the 19th century, thanks to the headway made in teaching, the specialised workers were employed among those graduated from the technical schools.

The majority of the personnel connected with the movement of trains such as the station hodmen, the brakemen, the signalmen etc. mostly came from small towns and the countryside. This happens again both among the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and after the second world war, when the workers flowed *en masse* into the domain of industry and the tertiary sector because of the depopulation of the countryside.

The origins from the provincial towns appears to be a long-established characteristic of the Italian "lower class railwayman". This is probably owing to the fact that railway work was more appealing to those in the countryside compared to the cities where the factories and the offices of public administration and banks were considered more attractive. As for the last half century one should also remember the prevailing origins from the southern regions, which lack industry. In this case, the railways have conformed to the great Italian phenomenon known as the "southernizing of public administration".

Despite the wide occupational diversity and social stratification, group cohesion was particularly stable and was due to the pride of working on the railways and the affection for the job which was considered to be of fundamental importance for both economic and social development.

The railwaymen have always considered themselves as one "big family", a working class that stood apart from the others with a sincere joint identity; a family that has fought many battles together over the years for the emancipation of the working class and for the improvement of their standards of both life and work as well as the reformation of the management of the railways.

Life in the railway environment even influenced the views of the wives and children who found themselves living in stations, stairways and boxes since permanent on site presence was part of working on the railways. The job therefore tightly conditioned their social habits so that not only the railwaymen but also their families tended to make friends with each other which increased a sense of shared belonging. As a direct result of this pervasive characteristic of the job, many railway families were formed in Italy with sons that followed in their fathers' footsteps and were frequently encouraged by the same companies who preferred to employ those that had grown up around trains as

they were already aware of the specific requirements of the service. Less attention was attributed to the conservation of the railwayman's lineage by the State business in 1905 which did, however, provide a preference clause for the sons of the railwaymen in the entrance competitions.

Regardless of the profound differences between them, all the railway workers found a common unity in the fact of "being railwaymen", in their possession of that "artisan craft" that enabled them to make the trains work, a symbol of progress and a technological challenge. Such aspects were even more accentuated in Italy because of the delay in the development of a modern industry.

Occupational identity and the contents of the service

Half-way through the 19th century the train appeared to be a very fast object which was enabled by its power to generate extremely serious disasters. Precise rules were consequently adopted to discipline the movement of the trains, thus opposing the substantial freedom that was in force on the ordinary roads. These standards sanctioned many of the railwaymen's duties and theoretically made the whole system like a precision device but they turned out to be excessively complicated.

Although the rules of the service included certain regulations which were to be respected, in actual fact the concrete contents of the job's execution were the sole prerogative of the employee who often had to take immediate decisions on his own. Every worker, even those at the lower levels, therefore had important attributes, unlike the repetitive work in the factories carried out under the control of the supervisors.

This great responsibility (penal, civic and disciplinary) was indeed the most original trait of the railwayman's occupation, let alone the risk of accidents which the majority of the staff encountered whilst carrying out their duties. These responsibilities and risks contributed to the consolidation of the union of the railway families and their common occupational identity.

As a result of these features there has always been a particularly strong insurance movement amongst the workers. It was introduced in the 19th century to assist the workers and their families by mutual societies, which, before the development of trade unions, represented the main worker organisations in Italy and were particularly spread among the railwaymen.

If the railwaymen's service had on the one hand more freedom than industrial work, its discipline and hierarchy were on the other hand extremely rigid, almost military-like. The railwaymen considered themselves a sort of para-military corps and their uniforms and caps, which determined the rank held by each agent, contributed to the birth of such a behaviour. Furthermore, there was a heavy work load which in many cases stretched to 16 hours a day for both the station staff, the engine-drivers and the travelling staff⁶.

Many sectors of the railway had a continuous day and night work cycle including Sundays, Christmas and Easter. The irregular working-time encouraged the railwaymen

⁶ The problem of the excessive working-time emerged at the end of the 19th century, due to the numerous grave accidents and the rebellion of the railwaymen. In order to grant the service security the government imposed severe prescriptions, which limited the working day in June 1900.

to form links with their colleagues rather than those outside. This was also because they were often obliged to move away from their original homes and consequently lost contact with childhood friends.

The long, daily commitment and the personal responsibility were compensated for by a high salary, which was nevertheless not paid in a straightforward manner since it was characterised by many incentives known as the “additional competence”.

In the Italian society of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the railwaymen enjoyed a remarkable prestige. They represented the main workers’ aristocracy, claimed as such by the other workers and often envied for the amount and regularity of their earnings, not to mention the career opportunities. Indeed the railways’ promotional system based on old age presented many opportunities for occupational growth. This was also due to the huge size of the administration and its exceptional exchange especially in the sector of the “active service” staff (the definition given at the time in the Italian network to the duties linked with train traffic), in which many lost their physical fitness and were consequently doomed to carry out the lighter duties. The boiler-lighters could terminate their career as engine-drivers, the brakemen as guards, the hodmen as station employees or even station masters.

The railwaymen differed from the other workers for income, customs, *forma mentis* but - apart from the “railway towns” - they represented a minor part of the industrial work. Yet, at the same time, the sector acted as a leading role model for remaining workers.

The railwayman benefited from a well-respected social position in their everyday life in the workers districts. He led a dignified life which was not exclusively subordinate to his needs of economic survival. This was demonstrated by the way they dressed, which was considered as an important distinctive symbol in the 19th century, and also by the fact that the railwaymen’s wives employed servant girls to do the domestic chores, especially in the towns of southern Italy⁷.

In the world of the railways, subdivided into a myriad of duties, those employed in train movement represented an even more particular rank and they only shared their habits with other similarly qualified colleagues. Each morning they would not leave home to “go to work” but “to begin their service”; a typical expression that denoted their conviction in the importance and distinction of their job compared to other normal ones. In order to indicate their position on the hierarchical ladder, engine-drivers, conductors, signalmen etc. did not use the term “worker”, but instead preferred “agent” which better characterised the non-purely-manual attributes. They didn’t simply work for the railway, they were railwaymen in the widest sense of the term, both during the fulfilment of their duty and in their private life.

The most characteristic figure was undoubtedly the engine-driver, named in Italy “machinist”. He was therefore not just a driver but a mechanic who other than just driving the steam train also had to be able to take care of its maintenance and minor repairs. The engine-drivers were looked upon with particular admiration. In the 19th century the steam train actually represented the main image of progress and whoever could drive it obviously enjoyed considerable prestige, despite the extremely difficult living conditions. These conditions occasionally led them to drink excessive amounts of

⁷ D. Jalla, “*Perché mio papà era un ferroviere...*”. *Una famiglia operaia torinese dei primi del Novecento*, "Rivista di Storia Contemporanea", year IX, January 1980, p. 45.

alcohol but also to great vivacity in both the trade unions and politics, as well as having a greater team spirit than other jobs. By the beginning of the 20th century the engine-drivers and the firemen already had their own unions, their own group newspaper (“In Marcia!”), and their own internal skilled schools, which after a final exam awarded the so-called “abilitations” that authorised them to drive various types of locomotive. The skilled schools were, however, introduced for other jobs, especially for those linked to train movement.

The features of the work on the railways, with the great personal responsibilities, the team spirit and the love of the job gave birth to the affirmation of a strong trade union which, at the beginning of the 20th century, became a model for the other workers organisations.

From the time of their establishment in the 1890’s, the railwaymen’s trade unions had to confront the problem of how to keep the different railway jobs together and, at the same time, not isolate them from the rest of the workers’ movement. Unlike the other groups, the decisive centralisation was not as important as the ability to mediate between the demands made by each job and their general choices. It is important to clarify how the internal cohesion did not diminish the keen interest in the workers’ struggle. On the contrary, until the 1950’s the Italian railwaymen considered themselves one step ahead of the others and the true leader of the entire workers emancipation movement.

Then, with the railwayman’s loss of “status”, the growth of autonomous trade union organisations began, which then raised a corporative mentality.

The process of political purging and the recent process of restructuring

After the first organisations of railwaymen, beginning with the mutual benefit societies during the 70s of the XIXth century, a strong unified trade union (Sindacato ferrovieri italiani - Sfi) was founded in 1907. It became in a few years the most important trade union in Italy until the first world war.

Between 1900 and 1920, thanks to the reduction of working hours, the number of railwaymen increased from 100,000 to 235,000 (Tab. 3), which was accompanied by an increase in the trade unionism, in strike and in the participation to socialist politics, that was unequalled in other sectors.

Fascism was against the railwaymen and took drastic action as soon as it gained power. In December 1922 the board of directors of the *Ferrovie dello Stato* was cancelled and the attributes owed to it were temporarily assigned to an extra commissioner who - within approximately two years - completed the business reformation operation; from 226,000 railwaymen in service on 30th June 1922, two years later only 174,000 agents remained⁸.

The massive expulsion, mainly carried out according to political criteria, together with the simplification of the operational systems and the new forms of staff management, caused a decrease in the number of railwaymen which was absolutely unheard of at the time, since the railway had been conceived to resemble a world in constant and safe

⁸ A.M. Bonanno, *Ristrutturazione; esigenza del dominio borghese. Pubblico impiego e ferrovieri dal 1919 all’avvento del fascismo*, (Torino), pp. 17-31.

expansion, therefore able to influence peoples' progress and lead them towards economic and social modernisation.

The fascist action hit hard the occupational pride of the railwaymen, who were used to secure work and the protection of their trade union rights. However, their group prestige remained unaffected: as the work rhythms were intensified during the twenty years of fascism, although their wages stayed high, and the railways were still highly respected thanks to the "trains on time" propaganda and the technical progress resulting from line electrification in which Italy was ahead of the rest of the world.

At the end of twenty years of fascism the train began to lose ground in the transport market. The railways were worryingly abandoned in favour of motor-vehicles and street infrastructure.

After the second world war, however, the number of employees rose once more above 220,000 people like at the start of the 1920's before fascism, because of unrealised technical interventions and further working-time reductions. However, the staff expansion was followed by a considerable loss of "status". Indeed from the 1960's onwards the railwaymen were no longer considered to be the best representative of the worker's aristocracy and their occupational pride also suffered a serious blow. Other sectors now led the way in progress and modernisation. According to public opinion the train itself had assumed a marginal role and a negative image. In the meantime the myth of the automobile fed off the nourishment provided by the big industrial producers, such as FIAT.

Half-way through the 1980's, with the start of the process of privatisation, the greatest industrial restructuration ever realized in Italy began. From out of the 220,000 railwaymen in service in 1987, only less than 100,000 are left today and further cuts are expected over the coming years.

The rapid decrease in staff was accompanied by contradicting circumstances of retired railwaymen 40 years old with incentives that the State had entirely taken upon itself. These facts in the very moment in which public spending cuts were introduced in order to "get into Europe" and the consequent pension blocks that prevented other workers from going into retirement.

Privatisation generated notable conflict within the business. The engine-drivers, in particular, continuously went on strike and promoted a new type of trade union called the "foundation committee" (*comitati di base - cobas*) which was made up of railwaymen in service that opposed the traditional trade unions. In 1990's they began a long battle to raise their salaries.

At the same time, the traditional trade unions lost their power, because the railwaymen have been put together the other transport workers during the 1980's. At present, the young railwaymen are separated in different societies (Trenitalia, Rfi etc.) and therefore less close as a group.

Conclusion

The recent reorganisation has been characterised by the quick introduction of new technologies (modern rolling stock, centralised traffic control, automatic level-crossings), and has been accompanied by the employment of many young people with private contracts without the traditional stability of the railway service. The old

occupational identity has nevertheless been thrown into confusion by the complete change in the work structure.

Important transformations had occurred in the past. In addition to the fascist restructuring, there was the transition from steam to electricity and diesel trains, the abandonment of many watch points along the tracks, the move from telegraphs to the telephone and the reduction in working hours. But the last change is really the biggest one in the history of the railwaymen also because it occurred so quickly.

The staff has been halved in number. The attractive country stations have become anonymous stopping points with no services and have fallen prey to vandals. The high-speed trains (*"Pendolino"* and *Etr 500*) arrived inspired by the French TGV, and in the last years the fast line Turin-Milan-Rome-Naples has been opened for the most part. The new technology has permitted remote-control of points and signals on the long distance stretches so that the station staff is now superfluous. In the meantime the secondary railways have been abandoned without attempts to make the most of their potential.

At this epic turning point the job of the railwayman has lost a large part of its special charm. The romantic figures of the guard and the station master are becoming extinct. The railway today is a complex electronic mechanism which is far more impersonal and lacks the old political and cultural vivacity that had always characterised the world of trains and its workers.

The restructuring of the Italian railways is still going on with the process of liberalization, and new railway companies begin to manage some freight services and some branch lines, while a new company is expected in 2011 for the high speed services.

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Tab. 1. Length of the Italian railways

| year | km |
|------|--------|
| 1839 | 7 |
| 1840 | 20 |
| 1845 | 152 |
| 1850 | 619 |
| 1855 | 1,267 |
| 1860 | 2,434 |
| 1865 | 4,622 |
| 1870 | 6,460 |
| 1875 | 8,037 |
| 1880 | 9,309 |
| 1885 | 10,901 |
| 1890 | 13,617 |
| 1895 | 15,958 |
| 1890 | 16,417 |
| 1905 | 17,067 |
| 1910 | 18,079 |
| 1915 | 19,639 |
| 1920 | 20,374 |
| 1925 | 21,094 |
| 1939 | 22,372 |
| 1965 | 20,381 |
| 1975 | 20,176 |
| 1990 | 19,576 |
| 2000 | 19,568 |

Tab.2. The Italian railway ‘world’ in 1906, one year after the nationalisation of the network

| Rank | Jobs | Salary and Wage (annual amount for ranks to 12, daily amount for the lower ranks: 13-17, which did not hold a permanent position) |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Capi compartimento | 10,000-15,000 |
| | Capi Servizio | 10,000-15,000 |
| | Ispettori superiori | 10,000-15,000 |
| 2 | Sotto capi servizio | 9,000-12,000 |
| 3 | Capi divisione | 7,200-11,000 |
| 4 | Ispettori capi | 5,400-8,800 |
| 5 | Cassieri di 1° grado | 4,500-7,200 |
| | Ispettori principali | 4,500-7,200 |
| 6 | Cassieri di 2° grado | 3,000-6,000 |
| | Ispettori | 3,000-6,000 |
| 7 | Allievi ispettori | 1,800-3,000 |
| | Capi magazzino di 1° grado | 3,000-5,400 |
| | Capi stazione principali | 3,600-5,400 |
| | Capi ufficio | 3,000-5,400 |
| | Sotto cassieri | 2,700-4,500 |
| | Sotto ispettori | 2,700-5,100 |
| 8 | Applicati tecnici principali | 2,700-4,500 |
| | Capi deposito di 1° grado | 3,000-4,800 |
| | Capi disegnatori | 2,700-4,500 |
| | Capi gestione principali | 3,300-4,800 |
| | Capi magazzino di 2° grado | 2,700-4,500 |
| | Capi stazione di 1° grado | 3,000-4,200 |
| | Capi tecnici di 1° grado | 3,000-5,100 |
| | Controllori di 1° grado | 2,700-4,500 |
| | Segretari amministrativi | 2,700-4,500 |
| | Segretari di ragioneria | 2,400-4,500 |
| 9 | Sotto capi ufficio | 2,400-4,500 |
| | Applicati principali | 2,100-3,600 |
| | Applicati tecnici | 2,100-3,600 |
| | Capi conduttori principali di 1° grado | 2,100-3,600 |
| | Capi deposito di 2° grado | 2,400-3,900 |
| | Capi gestione | 2,100-3,600 |
| | Capi stazione di 2° grado | 2,400-3,600 |
| | Capi tecnici di 2° grado | 2,400-3,900 |
| | Capi telegrafisti di 1° grado | 2,400-3,600 |
| | Controllori di 2° grado | 2,400-3,600 |
| | Disegnatori principali | 2,100-3,600 |
| | Sotto capi magazzino | 2,100-3,600 |

| | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| 10 | Capi conduttori principali di 2° grado | 1,650-2,700 |
| | Capi deposito di 3° grado | 2,250-3,300 |
| | Capi stazione di 3° grado | 1,800-3,300 |
| | Capi tecnici di 3° grado | 2,250-3,300 |
| | Capi tecnici di officina telegrafica | 2,100-3,300 |
| | Capi telegrafisti di 2° grado | 1,800-3,300 |
| 11 | Applicati | 1,200-3,000 |
| | Assistenti dei lavori | 1,200-3,000 |
| | Capi fermata di 1° grado | 1,500-2,700 |
| | Capi stazione di 4° grado | 1,500-2,700 |
| | Controllori viaggianti | 1,350-2,700 |
| | Disegnatori | 1,200-3,000 |
| 12 | Aiutanti applicati | 1,080-2,100 |
| | Aiutanti disegnatori | 1,080-2,100 |
| | Capi conduttori | 1,080-2,100 |
| | Capi deviatori | 1,020-1,800 |
| | Capi fermata di 2° grado | 1,080-2,100 |
| | Capi manovra | 1,080-2,100 |
| | Capi squadra operai | 1,500-3,000 |
| | Capi uscieri | 1,500-2,100 |
| | Capi verificatori | 1,650-3,000 |
| | Guarda magazzino | 1,020-2,100 |
| | Guidatori dirigenti di treni elettrici | 1,080-2,100 |
| | Macchinisti | 1,500-2,700 |
| | Macchinisti di treni elettrici | 1,500-2,700 |
| | Sorveglianti dei magazzini | 950-1,800 |
| | Sorveglianti della linea | 1,080-2,100 |
| 13 | Capi frenatori | 2.50-4 |
| | Capi squadra accenditori e manovali | 3-5 |
| | Capi squadra guadiani d'officina | 3-5 |
| | Conduttori | 960-1,500 |
| | Fuochisti | 900-1,650 |
| | Fuochisti conduttori di motori a vapore | 3-5 |
| | Fuochisti di caldaie a vapore | 3-5 |
| | Guarda portoni | 3-5 |
| | Sotto capi squadra operai | 3.20-.6.50 |
| | Uscieri | 1,080-1,800 |
| | Verificatori | 3.40-5.80 |
| | Capi squadra alle merci | 2.50-4 |
| | Capi squadra cantonieri | 2.20-3.60 |
| 14 | Capi squadra dei magazzini | 2.50-4 |
| | Capi squadra deviatori | 2.50-4 |
| | Capi squadra manovali | 2.50-4 |
| | Capi squadra manovali d'officina | 3-5 |
| | Capi squadra manovratori | 2.50-4.60 |
| | Guardafreni | 900-1,200 |

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|-----------|
| | Guardie di stazione | 2-3.80 |
| | Operai di 1° Classe | 2.70-5.60 |
| | Operai di 2° classe | 2.60-4.60 |
| | Portieri | 2.50-4 |
| 15 | Accenditori | 2.50-3.80 |
| | Aiutanti operai | 2.20-3.60 |
| | Deviatori | 2.10-3.20 |
| | Frenatori | 2.30-3.20 |
| | Guardiani d'officina | 2.20-3.60 |
| | Guardie di stazione | 2-3.80 |
| | Manovratori | 2.10-3.60 |
| | Manovratori d'officina | 2.20-3.60 |
| | Operai di 3° classe | 2.40-4.20 |
| | Untori | 2.30-3 |
| 16 | Cantonieri | 1.70-2.50 |
| | Guardiani | 1.70-2.50 |
| | Guardiani cantonieri | 1.70-2.50 |
| | Manovali | 1.80-3 |
| | Manovali d'officina | 2.20-3 |
| 17 | Guarda barriere (women) | 0.30-0.75 |

Tab. 3. Personnel of the Italian state railways since 1905

| Financial exercise (30 June each year before 1964) | Number of railwaymen |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1905-1906 | 118,345 |
| 1906-1907 | 134,117 |
| 1907-1908 | 144,889 |
| 1908-1909 | 148,603 |
| 1909-1910 | 148,727 |
| 1910-1911 | 148,759 |
| 1911-1912 | 147,549 |
| 1912-1913 | 149,449 |
| 1913-1914 | 154,509 |
| 1914-1915 | 149,875 |
| 1915-1916 | 157,051 |
| 1916-1917 | 162,105 |
| 1917-1918 | 156,610 |
| 1918-1919 | 180,409 |
| 1919-1920 | 221,483 |
| 1920-1921 | 235,460 |
| 1921-1922 | 226,907 |
| 1922-1923 | 205,470 |
| 1923-1924 | 174,140 |
| 1924-1925 | 176,145 |
| 1925-1926 | 172,768 |
| 1926-1927 | 169,930 |
| 1927-1928 | 166,294 |
| 1928-1929 | 163,164 |
| 1929-1930 | 160,700 |
| 1930-1931 | 150,604 |
| 1931-1932 | 144,906 |
| 1932-1933 | 138,858 |
| 1933-1934 | 136,047 |
| 1934-1935 | 134,660 |
| 1935-1936 | 133,521 |
| 1936-1937 | 133,142 |
| 1937-1938 | 138,526 |
| 1938-1939 | 138,080 |
| 1939-1940 | 148,659 |
| 1940-1941 | 159,104 |
| 1941-1942 | 175,088 |
| 1942-1943 | 200,256 |
| 1943-1944 | 201,468 |

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| 1944-1945 | 200,196 |
| 1945-1946 | 198,145 |
| 1946-1947 | 195,066 |
| 1947-1948 | 188,835 |
| 1948-1949 | 181,753 |
| 1949-1950 | 171,097 |
| 1950-1951 | 167,818 |
| 1951-1952 | 162,394 |
| 1952-1953 | 160,094 |
| 1953-1954 | 156,383 |
| 1954-1955 | 158,558 |
| 1955-1956 | 155,879 |
| 1956-1957 | 162,406 |
| 1957-1958 | 159,966 |
| 1958-1959 | 155,343 |
| 1959-1960 | 164,220 |
| 1960-1961 | 166,199 |
| 1961-1962 | 167,624 |
| 1962-1963 | 172,943 |
| 1963-1964 | 174,910 |
| 1964 (end of the year) | 174,284 |
| 1965 | 174,862 |
| 1966 | 171,430 |
| 1967 | 159,696 |
| 1968 | 156,290 |
| 1969 | 169,944 |
| 1970 | 190,520 |
| 1971 | 195,246 |
| 1972 | 213,789 |
| 1973 | 213,831 |
| 1974 | 216,593 |
| 1975 | 221,311 |
| 1976 | 220,921 |
| 1977 | 221,278 |
| 1978 | 218,177 |
| 1979 | 217,277 |
| 1980 | 219,258 |
| 1981 | 221,406 |
| 1982 | 221,451 |
| 1983 | 220,000 |
| 1984 | 217,562 |
| 1985 | 216,310 |
| 1986 | 214,789 |
| 1987 | 216,553 |
| 1988 | 211,714 |

| | |
|------|---------|
| 1989 | 206,505 |
| 1990 | 186,688 |
| 1991 | 170,741 |
| 1992 | 164,655 |
| 1993 | 141,733 |
| 1994 | 135,294 |
| 1995 | 126,338 |
| 1996 | 121,844 |
| 1997 | 119,281 |
| 1998 | 116,260 |