

Postcards

# Postcard promotional

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Italian color postcard. A child in the uniform of L'Opera Nazionale Balilla (the youth organization set up in 1926 under Italy's Fascist regime) holds a metal piggy bank, a terracotta piggy bank and a savings book. An Italian text celebrating World Savings Day accompanies the illustration.

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Period 1st half of the 20th century

## Historical context

Savings banks gradually appeared in the 19th century, and began issuing metal piggy banks in the 20th century. These means of promoting and managing savings supplanted the traditional clay piggy banks or other types of piggy bank, which were fragile and insecure, and not linked to any institution.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Italian banking environment was dominated by the Bank of Italy and two large German-owned banks.

However, several networks of philanthropic banks dedicated to small-scale savings were developing in parallel in the north of the country, such as the Cassa Di Risparmio, the first of which dates back to 1822. This emulation encouraged banks to invest in promoting savings: the piggy bank system was introduced in Italy between 1900 and 1910.

The country was to play a major role in the savings movement and its promotion. In 1924, Milan became the international center for savings banks, and the International Thrift Institute was founded the same year. A World Savings Day was introduced at their first congress, on October 31.

Financial institutions focus their promotion on families and schools.

The piggy bank is seen as a means of creating a savings habit by its very presence. However, the link between the promotion of savings and the family and nationalist values associated with the fascist regime was increasingly asserted. The savings piggy bank was recaptured by Benito

Mussolini in the early 1920s, and its iconography found its way onto numerous promotional materials.

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