

## “Remember without Hate”: The Holocaust as European Memory in 1960s’ Italian Television

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This article discusses a small cluster of documentary programmes that aired in the first half of the 1960s and representing Italian TV’s earliest forms of engagement with Holocaust-related topics. Within this small corpus, particular attention will be given to two documentary programmes broadcast by Italian State-owned network RAI in 1965. The documentaries *Europe for Liberty* and *The Day of Peace* represent some of Italian television’s earliest forms of engagement with the issue of how to remember the Holocaust. Moreover, these discussions of Holocaust memory were framed in terms in which national and transnational dimensions coexisted. However, this emphasis on supranational memory was not at odds with domestic needs, as it was ultimately consistent with established Italian national narratives about the war and the country’s role in it.

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The Second World War and the Holocaust are without doubt fundamental memories in Europe and beyond (Judt 2005, p. 821).<sup>1</sup> Scholars from a variety of fields have described these watershed events as the source of official forms of shared cosmopolitan memory, morality, and identity (Alexander 2009; Levy and Sznajder 2006, p. 184). There is certainly a degree of truth in this claim, as well as in the related one that the process of European cultural integration revolves in part around finding a common memory of the Second World War and the Holocaust (Diner 2003, p. 36; Onken 2007, p. 30). Whether European integration will be able to develop in the future with the same degree of confidence displayed in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is yet to be seen, and recent work in the field of memory studies acknowledges the challenges posed to the European Union by Brexit and the rise of populism, the refugee crisis, economic

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uncertainty, and tension at its border (Kraenzle and Mayr 2017). Even without these trials, the development of a continental memory is still at an embryonic stage (Jedlowski 2009, p. 63). When talking about European memory, we are still mainly referring to different national articulations of memories pertaining to events that European countries share with each other (Grande 2009, p. 51). This is particularly noticeable in the case of World War Two commemorations, which occur on different country-specific dates (mei 2014, p. 7), but also applies to European commemorations of the Holocaust every January 27. They all are examples of ‘rooted cosmopolitanism’ (Beck and Grande 2007), whereby transnational memories are situated, inflected and expressed at the local level.

As a result, the claim that public memory of the Holocaust is still predominantly national is correct (Aksu 2009, p. 328), but partial. European and national memory of the Holocaust do not come at each other’s expense. Moreover, the development of trans- and supra-national memory is a process that does not inevitably entail homogenisations and simplifications (Müller 2010). A final but important qualification refers to the periodization of this process of Europeanisation of Holocaust memory. Much of the current literature tends to emphasise the acceleration in this process since the 1990s due to important factors such as the end of the Cold War, the establishment of the European Union, the string of fiftieth anniversaries of major war-related events, and the passing of the wartime generation (Clifford 2013, pp. 9-11). Here too, whilst much more prominent around the turn of the century especially in terms of official commemorations (for example in Sierp 2014), the European dimension of memory was not missing in previous decades, including in popular culture, for example television.

The study of television is a relative latecomer in the field of Holocaust studies. This is perhaps surprising, if we consider how the medium represents a prime source of historical information for large sections of the public, thus playing a key role in shaping public memory

(Roediger and Wertsch 2008, p. 16). This may be even truer in the case of Italy, a country with notoriously low levels of literacy and little shared culture well into the twentieth century. In Italy, television has played an important “educational” role since its inception in 1954 (Gundle 1997, p. 61). It is therefore particularly important to look at those early formative years.

This article discusses a small cluster of documentary programmes that aired in the first half of the 1960s and representing Italian TV’s earliest forms of engagement with Holocaust-related topics. Within this small corpus, particular attention will be given to two documentary programmes broadcast by Italian State-owned network RAI (Radiotelevisione italiana) flagship channel Canale Nazionale (as it was then called) in 1965 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. These programmes were *Europe for Liberty* (Europa per la libertà) and *The Day of Peace* (Il giorno della pace) (Cavani 1965a; Milano and Salvi 1965a; b).

These two documentaries will be discussed more in detail later; for now, it is worth flagging up that they are significant for several reasons, two of which of particular relevance to this article. The first one is that they represent some of Italian television’s earliest forms of engagement with the issue of how to remember the Holocaust, at the time still inextricably seen as one aspect among many of the broader destruction caused by the war rather than a defining feature of it as it has been construed in more recent decades. The second one is that these discussions of Holocaust memory were framed in (mostly Western) European terms, or more precisely in terms in which the national and the transnational dimension coexisted. When Italian television first engaged with Holocaust memory, it did so within a predominantly Western European framework. However, this emphasis on European memory was not at odds with domestic needs, as it was ultimately consistent with established Italian national narratives about the war and the country’s role in it. With this approach, the article sets itself a twofold aim: to contribute to the cultural history of Holocaust reception in Italy by discussing two

relatively little-known but significant TV programmes, and to add to the literature on the development of transnational Holocaust memory in Europe. In order to do so, the first part of the article will contextualise *Europe for Liberty* and *The Day of Peace* within Italian (and Italian television) engagement with the Holocaust, as it was understood at the time. The second part of the article will analyse the two documentaries more closely and discuss their cultural and historical significance.

### *Holocaust memory in Italy and on Italian television*

Holocaust narratives in post-war Italy were tightly linked to the memory of Fascism, antifascism, and the Resistance, which in turn were influenced by the country's peculiar position during and after the conflict. During the war, Italy shifted from the position of Nazi ally to that of co-belligerent with the Allies. The string of crushing defeats leading to the ousting of Mussolini in July 1943 was followed by the dissolution of any semblance of a state after the 8 September announcement of the armistice. Southern Italy was occupied by the Allies, while the North and Centre of the peninsula were invaded by the Germans. In the civil war that followed the armistice some Italians joined the Resistance while others sided with the Italian Social Republic and collaborated with the Nazis, each side accusing the other of betraying the country – a bitter internecine conflict that left many open wounds in collective memory (Lepre 2003, p. 218). Fifty thousand civilians, including eight thousand Jews, were deported to concentration or death camps. The majority of them were arrested by Italians, rather than by the occupying German forces (Levis Sullam 2017, p. 23).

Post-war Italy therefore presented a myriad of fragmented and often conflicting strands of memory (Rusconi 1995, p. 7), a state of affairs that the rigid polarisation of the Cold War did very little to dispel. The division was not simply between the mutually exclusive anti- and neo-fascist public narratives, but within the 'constitutional arch' itself, in particular between

the left and the moderates (Focardi 2005, pp. 23-7). The two main political parties and cultures were represented by the Italian Communist Party (PCI), permanently in opposition, and the pro-Western Alliance Christian Democrats (DC), in government without interruption from 1945 to the early 1990s in a number of shifting coalitions. In the first half of the 1950s, at the Cold War's height, the government's fight against left-wing "totalitarianism" put the quest for memory and justice on hold in favour of "integration" of those who had gone astray', to borrow from Jeffrey Herf's analysis of a similar process that occurred in West Germany (Herf 1997, p. 267). In this context, the neo-fascists' call for national reconciliation against the communist enemy struck a chord in the Vatican and in part of the DC party. In the early 1950s, anticommunism replaced antifascism as the touchstone of Italian democracy (Focardi 2005, pp. 31-32).

Holocaust consciousness in the early postwar period reflected the complex set of circumstances described above. The experience of deportation (and the return to life for the survivors) involved Italian victims of Nazi deportation from a variety of subject-positions, ranging from Jews to political deportees, to military internees, to forced labourers. This resulted in the blurring of distinctions in the name of the shared camp (or *Lager* as commonly referred to in Italian) experience, and Holocaust talk was never solely about the extermination of the Jews. As noted by Robert Gordon, 'the nexus Resistance-'deportees'-Lager was a defining container category for the first 10 to 15 years of talk about the camps.' (Gordon 2012, pp. 9, 118). Said nexus, combined with the political context described above, explains its rather peripheral presence, especially in popular culture.

In these early post-war years, projects on fascist and Nazi crimes, including the Holocaust, were shelved. Such was the case of *I fidanzati* (The Fiancées), a 1953 script penned by established writer Vasco Pratolini and up-and-coming director Franco Zeffirelli telling the story of an inter-confessional romance doomed by the racial laws in fascist Italy. The film

never went into production despite the importance of the names involved in the project. According to the authors, its indictment of Fascism was at odds with the *Zeitgeist* (Balma 2015; Pratolini and Zeffirelli 1954, p. 277). Censorship was also tight and it severely limited the range of views about the recent past available to the Italian public. For example, *The Last Stop* (Jakubowska 1948), a Polish film shot inside the Auschwitz camp and widely hailed as a fundamental early contribution to the canon of cinematic representations of the Holocaust (Loewy 2004), was originally censored by the government because deemed ‘nightmarish’ and ‘violent’, and for this reason ‘of poor artistic value’. It was eventually approved for release, but only on condition that all ‘repulsive’ scenes (i.e. the ones depicting Nazi violence) were edited out (Ministri 1951; Minuz 2013, pp. 37-39).

It was only in the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s that the memory of the war, antifascism, the Resistance, and deportation (Jewish and political) was partially retrieved. This was due to a combination of international and domestic factors. The inception of a policy of coexistence between the two superpowers, albeit with occasional reversion to tension such as the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, opened new ground for the discussion of Nazism and the Holocaust, and set the field for the watershed event represented by the Eichmann trial. On a smaller scale, a further factor to concur in drawing public attention was the ‘swastika wave’, a brief but widespread outbreak of neo-Nazi propaganda acts that started in West Germany in 1959 and rapidly spread out to the rest of Europe and the United States (Ehrlich 1962). Furthermore, the replacement of the unwaveringly anti-communist Pius XII with the reformist John XXIII in 1958 at the head of the Catholic Church had important consequences in Italy. Under the leadership of John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council laid the first stone in the process of revising Catholic anti-Jewish prejudices (Melloni 2009). Moreover, John XXIII’s more progressive approach to Italian domestic matters displayed awareness of the country’s rapidly changing social structure, modernisation and secularisation. In this changing context,

antifascism was very much part of the daily political diet for many (Rapini 2005, p. 77), and the years between the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s saw a flurry of Holocaust-related political-cultural initiatives. These included the appearance of the first historiographical works about the Holocaust in Europe and in Italy, the publication (or republication) of memoirs, diaries, and autobiographies, as well as the release of films (Gordon 2012, pp. 56-63; Perra 2010, pp. 51-74). As I will shortly illustrate, it is in such context that the extermination of the Jews of Europe makes its first significant appearances on television.

This renewed interest in Fascism, Nazism, the Resistance, and deportation was compatible with Italy's new political makeup, marked by the establishment of the more reform-oriented first centre-left cabinet in 1962 (Crainz 2005, pp. 163-64; 80-81). The centre-left governments of the 1960s recovered a low-key antifascism that preserved Italy's self-representation as a pacifist, pro-European, and innocent country. Italy had inserted pacifism in its DNA, stating in the Constitution that the country 'rejects war [...] as a means for the settlement of international disputes' (1948, p. art. 11). The same article of the fundamental law stated that 'Italy promotes and encourages international organisations furthering [peace and justice among the Nations.]' Consistent with this prescription, Italy was a founding member of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community (ECC). The existence of a strand of pro-European intellectual activity had been part of the country's cultural milieu throughout its modern history, from Giuseppe Mazzini and Carlo Cattaneo during the *Risorgimento*, to the 'powerful vision of continental unity' penned by antifascist prisoners Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli in their 1941 Ventotene Manifesto (Anderson 2009, pp. 482-84).

Other than being pacifist and a promoter of European integration, post-war Italy also presented itself as innocent, born out of the Resistance and fully redeemed after the fascist 'parenthesis', as Benedetto Croce famously defined it (Croce 1988; Rapini 2005, p. 84). This

sanitised version of history played on relatively safe myths such as that of the ‘good Italian’ (Fogu 2006). This myth appealed to established self-representations of Italians as healthily sceptic of state authority, inherently sympathetic towards other fellow human beings, peace-loving by nature but capable of heroism if required (Gordon 2012, pp. 148-49). Combined, these two factors led to the persistence of I have elsewhere defined as a strong narrative of innocence and victimhood in Italian public memory of the Holocaust and the war. As the TV programmes discussed here will show, this view made it possible to present Holocaust-related topics without acknowledging it as an event in which Italy was implicated (Perra 2010, pp. 42-46, 125-30).

The history of Italian television is tightly linked with the political development of the country. This is primarily because RAI, monopolist broadcaster until the mid-1970s, operated under direct government supervision, with the DC at the centre of the system. RAI fulfilled its mission to educate, inform and entertain by airing programmes infused with strong Catholic ethics and morality, and aligned with the DC’s political aims (Zanatta 2017, p. 23). This also applied to history, and during the period of centrist governments, the war and the Holocaust appeared only very sporadically.

The close link with politics also defined Ettore Bernabei’s period of service as director-general from 1961 to 1974, post to which he was appointed at the behest of his political patron Amintore Fanfani (Chiarenza 2002, p. 243). Fanfani was the main supporter within DC of a government shift towards the centre-left in order to keep abreast of changes in society; Bernabei’s job in RAI was to confer more pluralism to structure and programming in order to facilitate the Socialist Party’s inclusion into government. The results of this strategy were immediate and tangible. In 1961, a second channel aimed at a more progressive audience was launched, while the quality of programming rose also on the main channel *Programma*



*Nazionale*. Within a clear anti-communist and pro-government framework, Bernabei's RAI devoted itself to a Catholic-humanist project of 'pedagogic enlightenment', to be accomplished by providing programmes promoting a set of values that championed social cohesion and appealed to an increasingly less rural and traditional population (Piazzoni 2014, p. 63).

In this period, RAI programmes began to discuss recent history, including Fascism, antifascism and the Resistance with a certain degree of regularity. It is in this context that Nazism and the Holocaust also make their appearance on television. Instrumental to the shift in the first half of the 1960s was a group of young and talented professionals appointed to bring a breath of fresh air into the network's cultural contribution. These new personnel included Umberto Eco and Gianni Vattimo of later academic fame, Liliana Cavani, Emmanuele Milano and Giovanni Salvi. It is not a coincidence that the programmes discussed in this article were authored by members of this group.

#### *Holocaust-related programmes: 'Europe for Liberty' and 'The Day of Peace'*

As mentioned above, before the Bernabei tenure, Holocaust-related themes made only a very cursory appearance. The only exception in the 1950s was a 56-minute long documentary titled *1943-1945: The Price of Peace* (1943-1945: Il prezzo della pace), which aired on the Programma nazionale on 8 February 1959 at 20:50 as part of the series *Fifty Years of Italian History (1898-1948)* (Baldi 1959). The documentary did not differentiate between political and racial deportation, used footage from feature films to illustrate the camps, and discussed the Italian population as well as the Catholic Church exclusively as victims and rescuers. Despite these obvious shortcomings to today's viewers, *The Price of Peace* represented the first time ever that the concentration camps, the gas chambers, Jewish victimhood, and the roundup of the Jews of Rome were mentioned on Italian television. The second exception is represented by *The Judge*, a 29-minute long report by journalist Enzo Biagi, who travelled to Warsaw using

Polish Jewish teenager Dawid Rubinowicz's tragic diary as guide (Biagi 1961). It aired on the Programma Nazionale on 21 June 1961 at 22:35. Despite some overly sentimental tones ('in Auschwitz, too violas would flourish'), *The Judge* offered Italian TV viewers their first encounter with Auschwitz (Garofalo 2014, p. 174).

Beyond these two exceptions, the first systematic treatment was the over 200 minute-long *History of the Third Reich* by Liliana Cavani (1961-1962), which aired on the newly created *Secondo programma* channel. The four-part documentary achieved a remarkable success for a product airing on a newly established channel with limited geographic coverage (Garofalo 2014, p. 181). The documentary made frequent references to the destruction of the European Jews, and once mentioned persecutions in Italy—the first reference ever on Italian television—defining them as a spurious imitation of Nazi Germany's deeply unchristian regime, whose culture was for this reason presented as completely alien to Italy's. Whilst clearly unsatisfactory for today's viewers, this view was also put forward in the most authoritative historiographical works of the time, for example by Renzo De Felice (1961) who claimed that popular opposition to anti-Semitic legislation was so widespread that its promulgation signaled the beginning of the end of Italians' support for Mussolini (Matard-Bonucci 2007, p. 304). De Felice reiterated his interpretation on TV in 1965 in the third episode of the four-part programme *The Struggle for Liberty* (Del Bosco 1965). There, he reinforced his view that Italians distanced themselves from the regime in 1938, also facilitated in this by Pius XI's opposition to Fascist anti-Semitic policy. *The History of the Third Reich* picked up on this theme and linked political antifascism and the alleged rejection of anti-Semitism on Christian grounds by the Italian population at large. This way, the rejection of anti-Semitism and antifascism were presented as intrinsic features of Italian identity. Consistent with this convenient view, almost none of the Holocaust-related programmes aired in the 1960s and

1970s were about Italy, focussing instead on Vichy France, Anne Frank's Holland, Poland and the Warsaw ghetto revolt, and of course Germany.

It is here that the national dimension of memory dovetailed with a broader European perspective. The point of intersection was the continental scale of the Holocaust, presented as the outcome of "Nazi-Fascism" in Europe. As the next few pages will show, the continent (at least West-side of the Iron Curtain) was in turn redeemed by antifascism and democracy. The programmes discussed below conform to this broader narrative, situating Italy within a continental narrative that eschewed confrontation with the murky side of the country's past.

This reluctance to deal with the Italian dimension of the Holocaust resulted in television's early propensity for engaging with the transnational memory of those events. As early as 1965, *Europe for Liberty* and *The Day of Peace* offered prime-time RAI viewers a chance to probe European self-understanding after the tragedy of war. *Europe for Liberty* went on air in two episodes of 62 and 59 minutes on 2 and 9 April at 9pm, in the weeks preceding the twentieth anniversary of Italy's Liberation, celebrated on 25 April each year, while *The Day of Peace* was a single 50-minute long episode also aired at 9pm on 7 May, the eve of the first European day of peace to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of VE-Day.

These two programmes were part of a relatively rich television schedule clustered between April and June. Alongside *The Day of Peace*, Liliana Cavani authored documentaries on Vichy France and on women's participation in the Resistance.<sup>2</sup> In the same months, the series *Chronicles of the Twentieth Century* (Cronache del XX secolo) dedicated several programmes to WWII themes, from justice for war crimes in post-war Germany to the aftermath of the Hiroshima bombing. Between April and May, the four-episode programme *The Struggle for Liberty* (La lotta per la libertà) reconstructed the twenty-three years from the

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<sup>2</sup> *La donna nella resistenza*. Directed by Cavani, L., 1965, *Philippe pétain: Processo a vichy*. Directed by Cavani, L., 1965. This work made for television in Cavani's early career provided the groundwork for her famously controversial 1974 film *The Night Porter*.

rise of Fascism to the Liberation of Italy (Del Bosco 1965). Thus, the twentieth anniversary saw the broadcasting of several programmes on Second World War-related issues, delivering a message that was as inclusive as possible and targeted at the widest possible audience. The choice to cast the Italian case within a mostly Western European framework made sense. In 1956, *Terzo Programma*, the third radio channel, commemorated the anniversary of Italy's Liberation on 25 April with a programme on the Resistance and Europe. Gianni Isola's comment on this radio programme that the continental dimension was a way to water down the resentment that the commemoration was bound to generate in Italy (Isola 1999, p. 96), could easily apply to the TV programmes made nine years later.

There was a clear rationale in this emphasis on diluting the Italian dimension of memory within a supranational framework. As stated above, behind the apparent political consensus lurked bitter resentments, too sensitive to be openly addressed and worked through as often happens in countries that have gone through a civil war, and particularly when the very existence of this type of internecine conflict is not acknowledged as such. John Foot has defined the whole history of Italy since unification as being marked by the state's inability to create consensus over the past, a lack of closure that facilitates the endless production of divided memories. As a result, the politicisation of history left limited room for debate of controversial topics, and Italian elites have often supported a sanitized version of national history (Foot 2009, pp. 11-21). One way around dealing head-on with this troublesome past was to broaden the perspective beyond Italy, as many of the programmes of the period did.

However, *Europe for Freedom* and *The Day of Peace* differed from other similar productions, since their main focus was not so much on retelling the history of those events, but on their memory across countries and generations. For these reasons, the structure of the two broadcasts was somewhat different from the traditional documentary style of the time. Instead of the usual authoritative voiceover sanctioning one version of history, these programmes presented an

assemblage of opinions that displayed an effort to grasp the complexity of memory in Europe. Testimony to these efforts is the fact that both *Europe for Freedom* and *The Day of Peace* have enjoyed frequent re-runs over the years and to this day, in particular on the state broadcaster's educational channels RAI-Storia and RAI-Scuola.

*Europe for Liberty* had a somewhat troubled gestation. The authors' Emmanuele Milano and Giovanni Salvi's original idea was to call the documentary *Europe of Sorrows* (Europa dolorosa) (Crainz and Gallerano 1987, p. 139), a title that associated Europe with the feminine symbol of Christian endurance of the *mater dolorosa*. The project then morphed into a five-episode documentary series to be aired in 1962 with the title *Pages on the European Resistance* (Pagine sulla Resistenza europea). *Pages on the European Resistance* was designed to present a pan-European outlook that straddled the Cold War divide. Travelling on both sides of the Iron Curtain, the documentary explored the traces left by the war in the cities, in the concentration camps, and on the people who witnessed it, with the explicit aim of transferring knowledge of this experience of collective European suffering to the young generation. In presenting the series, RAI's TV-listing magazine *Radiocorriere* eulogised the network's financial effort and the pacifist message of the programme (M.S. 1962). However, as noted by Gianni Isola, the spirit of the programme was out of step with the sudden rise in East-West tension, which a few months later led to the Cuban Missile Crisis (Isola 1999, p. 98). The documentary was shelved after the first episode and resuscitated only three years later, in 1965, in a much shorter version of two episodes and without most of the parts shot in Eastern Europe. The result of this long incubation was *Europe for Liberty*.

This repackaged version of the programme was criticised by the Communist Party daily *l'Unità* the day after the broadcast of the first episode. *L'Unità* was incensed not only with the fact that the programme's idea of Europe did not include the eastern bloc (apart from Auschwitz), but also with the programme's dilution of the notion of Resistance and its

morphing into a nondescript call for Christian compassion (g.c. 1965b). This critique was not entirely unreasonable. The first episode of *Europe for Liberty* set the tone for the whole programme by stating at the outset that it was a collection of ‘examples and testimonies of small and big acts of heroism’ and encouraging viewers to ‘remember without hate the storm that engulfed Europe’, also adding that ‘today Europe, including divided Germany, has healed her wounds’ (Milano and Salvi 1965a). The programme then examined European sites of memory of the Second World War such as Vercors, Bastogne and Auschwitz. The segment on the Polish camp was accompanied by a voiceover that somewhat simplistically claimed that ‘all *Lagers* had the same physiognomy’, adding (correctly) that Auschwitz was the biggest one. The victims were presented as ‘Jews from all Europe; Poles; people of all classes.’ While the voiceover reminded viewers that the camps were a horror witnessed by the whole of Europe, contemporary footage of the empty Auschwitz camp and of the museum established on its premises somberly filled the screen. The introduction of the Holocaust theme established the transition between the first and the second half of the episode, and justifies the original title of *Europe of Sorrows*, associating the image of Europe with the feminine symbol of Christian endurance of the *mater dolorosa*.

The second part of the first episode is centred on the stories of three women. The first one was a not-better-defined Mrs Israel, a Jewish survivor of Auschwitz who had lost her son and all her family in the camp. The second woman was a German from Nuremberg – ‘one of the many who feel they belong to Europe’, as the voiceover pointed out – who lost her seventeen-year old son on the front on Christmas Eve 1944. The third one was Lucia Apicella, better known as Mamma Lucia, an Italian woman from Cava de’ Tirreni near Naples who, during the brief period of fighting in her area between the Germans and the Allies, devoted herself to provide a dignified burial to soldiers without distinction of sides (Crainz 1996, pp. 55-6).

All three women are images of the *mater dolorosa* (and quite literally grieving mothers), an image likely to be familiar to many viewers. Their pain was, in the view of the programme, what made them firmly European in the present and for the future. However, each one of them also happened to stand for a subject-position with regards to the past. History put the Nuremberg woman among the perpetrators and the Auschwitz survivor among the victims. The woman representing Italy in this narrative was situated outside this perpetrator-victim spectrum. Instead, the symbolic image of Italy was embodied by a woman whose actions were motivated by a simple but moving spirituality, a secular Virgin Mary who cast an ecumenical gaze that included everyone in its Catholic charity - a presentation of Italy's role within the community of nations consistent with centuries-old strands of moderate Italian culture that saw Catholic Italy's mission among the nations as the carrier of Christian universal love (Duggan 2008, pp. 155-7).

The second instalment of *Europe for Freedom* presented the story of Hans and Sophie Scholl, the tragic leaders of the Christian-inspired unarmed resistance group *The White Rose*, by interviewing the siblings' father. The documentary then moved on to discuss Warsaw, a city reduced to rubble by the Nazis because of its Resistance and rebuilt after the war. The documentary made explicit mention of the Warsaw ghetto four-week long uprising and eventual destruction and emphasised the extraordinarily heavy price paid by the entire city for its anti-Nazi resistance in terms of loss of life and obliteration of its architecture. The episode then returned to Western Europe, with a brief mention of the Nazi prison in the Fort de la Chartreuse fortress near Liège where members of the Belgian Resistance were held, and ending its tour of Europe in Amsterdam with a discussion of Anne Frank.

This series of positive and tragic exempla from recent European history was followed by a round of vox populi interviews with a sample of the European youth. The opinions selected displayed widespread commitment to democracy, tolerance, and memory, the latter intended

not so much as a way to dwell on past suffering, but as an investment towards a better future, a view explicitly shared by the programme producers (Milano and Salvi 1965b). With this message, followed by Anne Frank's oft-quoted phrase 'in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart' (Frank 1997, p. 330), the two-episode programme ended on an optimistic note about the future of the continent.

*L'Unità* was as displeased with this second part of the programme as it had been with the first one. The reviewer took issue with the programme's view of memory, which he interpreted in purely political terms as a simple call to draw a line and legitimise former perpetrators, an invitation to 'remember by forgetting'. The sample of young people selected by the programme to convey a sense of awareness of the value of democracy inherited from their parents' experience was seen by *l'Unità* as 'squalid', because interpreted as indifferent towards the "real" antifascist values, i.e. the rejection of 'class oppression' (g.c. 1965c). The centrist press, exemplified by the moderate newspaper *La Stampa* had a very different understanding of the programme. *La Stampa* endorsed *Europe for Freedom's* message of democratic and pacifist antifascism, thus clearly distancing itself from the class-oriented reading provided by *l'Unità* (Buzzolan 1965; vice 1965). A coda to the discussion was added two decades later, when historian Guido Crainz charged *Europe for Freedom* with depoliticising and de-contextualising the war in favour of a Catholic-imbued interpretation centred on the moral conflict between "brutality" and "humaneness" (Crainz 1986 referenced in Cooke 2000, 195-196).

Memory, and more specifically the second generation of Europeans' memory of the war, was the subject of Liliana Cavani's *The Day of Peace* (1965a). The programme alternated interviews with young men and women from Paris, Berlin and London and with members of the previous age cohort, some of them public intellectuals. Thus, the sample of young people from Berlin expressed their Europeanism and bafflement at what they defined as the 'collective



madness' of Nazi Germany, a view corroborated by the theologian and former member of the Hitlerjugend Gottfried Edel; the opinion of French and English teenagers who saw Nazism as past history was counterbalanced by the testimonies of one French ex prisoner of Dachau and of survivor-cum-historian Georges Wellers. In London, Arnold and Philip Toynbee agreed that part of the responsibility for the Second World War lay in the victors of the previous one, and expressed confidence that the new generation had learned the lesson from the war.

This view was shared by Nuto Revelli and Mario Rigoni Stern, the two intellectuals representing Italy in this round of European voices. The choice of these two figures was not haphazard. Both had participated as members of the elite corps *Alpini* in the disastrous Russian campaign, which turned them into staunch antifascists (Revelli fought in the Resistance in Italy and France, and Rigoni Stern spent the remainder of the war in German camps), and both had published memoirs of their war experience that became instant classics and almost immediately entered the canon of antifascist literature. By epitomising the stereotype of the brave but ultimately antifascist soldier, they were therefore in the most authoritative position to define the new generation of Italians, strengthened by the memory of the Resistance, as fully legitimate citizens of a peaceful Europe.

The Holocaust plays an essential contrapuntal role in the narrative, mainly through the use of alternate editing in the arrangement of the interviews. The documentary opens with a sombre voiceover stating that 'from the fronts, the extermination and concentration camps [...] people return to freedom'. Shortly after this introduction, the documentary presents the view of two Parisian teenagers who claim that for them peace is the norm; this view is followed by the French survivor of Dachau who survived unspeakable horror during the death marches. The moving testimony is immediately followed by the two French teenagers' claim that Nazism is in the past and that they want to invest in the present and the future. Once again, their

unwillingness to engage with past horrors in the name of the future is counterpointed by George Wellers' description of the over 4000 children deported from Drancy to Auschwitz.

A similar juxtaposition of different generations' perspective is noticeable in the sections shot in Berlin and in London, although the contrast is much less jarring. On the one hand, three German youths express their trust in Europe and hope for German reunification, and voice their bemusement at the 'collective madness' represented by Nazism; on the other hand, Edel recalls how Hitler was the 'idol' of young Germans growing up in the Third Reich like him, and how hard it was for them to recognise the 'folly' of it at the time. In London, a young couple sees the war as 'distant', a view implicitly eulogised by Arnold and Philip Toynbee's claim that 'Europeans have learned from, the war' and are wary of propaganda. The conceptual core of the programme was left to Revelli and Rigoni Stern. The former's claim that peace was only made possible by the Resistance was corroborated by the latter's view that Italian youths knew the value of the Resistance, and therefore of peace and democracy, which in Europe could only be fully accomplished in a context of easing of Cold War tensions.

The Holocaust (in the sense of deportation more in general, as it was intended in Italy at the time) thus plays an important twofold role in *The Day of Peace*. On the one hand, it acts as a memento and something that the younger generations should not forget, as implied by the stark editing of the Paris interviews. On the other hand, however, the young generation's distance from the war is also their blessing and what allows them to invest in a future of democracy in Europe. The synthesis is offered by Rigoni Stern's assessment of Italy's younger generation: their solid anchoring in the Resistance guarantees their commitment to peace. The Holocaust and the Resistance were part of conceptual continuum that started cracking only much later, from the 1980s onwards (Focardi 2016, p. 259). Here, they play the essential foundational role often described in the literature as characteristic of the post-Cold War Holocaust consciousness which opened this article.

*L'Unità* praised the programme, or at least some of the opinions it presented. But it disagreed with its continental ambition, which the communist party newspaper failed to grasp, seeing it as a list of national voices instead (g.c. 1965a). In this case, too *l'Unità* offered an interpretation of the programme that differed from the one presented by the other major newspapers, which had no particular qualms with the broadcast's transnational range.<sup>3</sup> A number of factors contributed towards displaying such emphasis on transnational themes. 1965 was perhaps the year in which enthusiasm for European integration, well accepted in Italy at the time, reached a climax. The Commission had consciously tried to establish a centralised European government in pursuit of Continental interests. Earlier that year, the President of the Commission Walter Hallstein had presented himself to journalists as a sort of European Prime Minister (Taylor 1983, p. 109), an overly optimistic self-assessment that a French veto quickly subdued later that same year. Moreover, a further step towards more integration was the Merger Treaty signed in April 1965, which combined the three existing European bodies into a single institutional structure, *de facto* creating the European Community (Davies 2003, p. 7).

The television programmes broadcast by RAI in Italy can therefore be seen as an effort to participate in a more general mood, and make some steps towards preparing its viewers for the construction of a shared European memory of the recent war. Further research would be required to determine to what extent these views were widespread among the other members of the 'Inner Six' club France, West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. What can be said is that, at least in Italy, such emphasis on Europe was quite deliberate while at the same time perfectly consistent with deep-seated Italian narratives about the country, its history, and its place in the world.

### *Conclusion*

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<sup>3</sup> See for example 1965. Vent'anni fa il giorno della pace. In *Radiocorriere TV*, 57.  
*This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article to be published by Taylor & Francis in JOURNAL OF WAR AND CULTURE STUDIES in an upcoming issue, available online:*  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ywac20/current>.

In conclusion, in this article I have argued that, contrary to what is implied by most of the literature on the subject, the development of trans- and supra-national memory of the Second World War and the Holocaust precedes the 1990s, especially if one looks beyond the level of official commemorative practices. This was certainly the case with Italian television's approach to the twentieth anniversary of the end of the war. This interest in a European memory of the Holocaust was situated in an international context marked by the relative easing of Cold War tensions (although not without significant setbacks such as the crisis in 1962 that scuppered plans for an approach more inclusive of the Eastern Bloc) and the acceleration in the process of European integration of the 1960s.

The attention to forms of continental memory fitted together with established national narratives, carving out for Italy a role centred on the values of the Resistance and of Christianity in this European community of memory that incorporated—rather than silenced—the Holocaust. We are clearly within what Jeffrey Alexander has defined as the 'progressive narrative' of the Holocaust, according to which Nazism was a social evil defeated and obliterated 'by a new and powerful social light' (Alexander 2009, p. 15), in this case the Resistance. In the specific case of Italy, however, incorporating the Holocaust into self-congratulatory narratives centred on Italy as a country built on the two pillars of the Resistance and Christianity concurred in deflecting attention away from the unpalatable role played by Italy in the Holocaust. In this sense then, presenting the memory of the conflict within a continental lens to Italian viewers was consistent with deep-seated, and to this day still largely widespread, narratives that fail to come to terms with the specific role of Italy as a perpetrator during the Second World War.

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