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The Italian Resistance between history and memory

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Abstract

Since the 1960s the Resistance has held pride of place in public ceremonial, political debate and to a point also in historical writing in Italy. The emphasis on its popular and national character transformed the Resistance into the struggle of the whole country to rid Italy of the German invaders and the small number of Italian fascists who remained their allies, but in ways that took no account of the complexity of people's reactions and the different ways in which Italians experienced the years immediately after the fall of fascism. In the last decade, however, numerous accounts have been published that contradict the images of the Resistance that for 30 years have constituted the 'official' memory of the Italian Republic. As a result, the Resistance offers a classic example of the 'public use of history', in which historical interpretation has served primarily to justify party political, institutional and ideological ends. It is now clear, however, that the supposed unity against fascism was more the result of agreement that there were limits beyond which political differences could not be pressed rather than of a deeper political unity that might have provided the basis for the political and institutional reform of the Italian Republic. The contrasting memories and interpretations of that period that have recently re-emerged for the same reason make it more difficult to project a new Italian democracy for the future.

Keywords

World War II, resistance, memory, public history, fascism, Nazi Germany.

Ever since the appearance of Claudio Pavone's celebrated study, a milestone in a long process of historiographical revision (Pavone 1991),¹ the Italian Resistance has become widely thought of as a civil war as well as a war of liberation.² This has reopened, as it were, the memory of those years; has brought recognition by 'the Left' of the need to give space to the stories and motivations of the losers, those who chose to fight on the side of the fascists and Nazis, without of course suggesting that one side is simply the mirror image of the other. Research on other types of memory has become possible, including on varieties of the hitherto unmentionable: not all the stories and memories of the war of liberation/civil war/class war (the three categories Pavone uses in defining the Italian Resistance) converged and found a space in that hegemonic narrative which, from a certain point onwards, dwelt exclusively on the Resistance as a popular epic and founding moment for a 'new' national identity.

Since the 1960s, public commemorations, political exchange and, up to a point, historiographical debate had highlighted the popular, national character of the Resistance, which was portrayed as the struggle of an entire population to liberate the country from the German invader and its few Fascist allies, leaving in the shadows many of the complexities of behaviour and social dynamics that characterized the lived experience of Italians during those years. Moreover, battles over the memory of the Resistance were always thought of as involving the national community as a whole (Pavone 1992), and it seems clear that historical interpretation was often if not completely subordinate to, at least knowingly functional to, the ongoing political struggle at any given time. The Resistance thus represented a classic example of the 'public use of history', in which a historiographical discourse is construed to further the purposes of other orders of discourse (institutional, ideological, or party political) (Baldissara 2002).

The result of the new trends is the emergence of a series of substantial historical contributions that cannot be fitted in to that public representation of the Resistance that sustained the 'official' memory of the Republic for 30 years or so. The memory that was cancelled was that of a 'litigious past, considered inconvenient because it could still give rise to conflict' (Loraux 1990: 27–9, 52–3). This too litigious and controversial past gave rise to a widespread tendency to create strategies of oblivion. Rather than admit that the conflict involved members of the same community, once the civil war was over the adversary was denied the status of an enemy, and was degraded to the level of traitor and lackey of the foreigner. In a civil war the defeated are often denied the right to memory, and are excluded from the 'public' view of the past that from then on upholds the rites of communal existence.

Faced with a crisis such as that which Italy as a nation experienced from 8 September 1943 to 2 June 1946, the tendency was to hide the fractures of recent history. As in the Athens studied by Nicole Loraux, in postwar Italy 'multiple, non-communicating, and potentially conflicting' memories were made to merge by the dominant political authorities into a 'public memory', so as to lay foundation of a new collective identity, and of course 'public memory [is] always a dominant memory, the memory of the winners' (Cenci 1999: 337). In this construction of memory, oblivion, or the manipulation of events in order to construct an image that caters to necessity, becomes as essential as the transmission of events.

The role the Resistance played in determining the identity of the Italian Republic is (still) much debated. The space that the Resistance could (and knew how to) occupy was remarkable in comparison to the complexity and strength of the forces that faced each other on the world's political and military stage. It is antihistorical and ungenerous to blame the Resistance for not having liberated Italy on its own (this same observation could be made of all European resistance movements, and of each nation that was compelled to join a world alliance in order to oppose Nazism). Besides, if the Allies, with all their mistrust

and worries about the rise of the communists, continued to supply the partisans, it is because they were well aware of the contribution they were making to the military effort. The Germans, for their part, showed a comparable concern with their draconian orders against the partisans and their large-scale roundup operations.³ In order to avoid any limits on their freedom to pronounce on Italy's political destiny, the Allies, and above all the British, undoubtedly attempted to limit the role of the armed resistance to the support of the Allied advance and sabotage. These tasks were certainly not without significance, but they were far from enough to encourage the development of a true national liberation army.⁴

Even if the partisans' contribution to the war against the Germans was carried out within the limits imposed by the Allies, on the political front, antifascism and the Resistance succeeded to some degree in evading those limits. Much memoir writing and historiography, above all of the Left (albeit not all, although this is often forgotten), mistook the radical hopes for socio-political renewal of a part of the Resistance for the real possibilities that the situation offered. The myth of a Resistance betrayed was born that, like all myths, disregards historical reality.⁵ On the whole though, a realistic calculation of the balance of power between the Resistance and the Allies effectively braked the revolutionary tendencies of some elements and brought complete political success in the struggle against Fascism, favouring the legitimization of a new group of leaders braced to take control at the end of the war.

Yet from a historical point of view, the limits of antifascism's achievements are clear, whether in forging new institutions of the state (too much ambiguity and compromise, too much continuity with the old order – see Pavone (1995: 70–159; 1982: 160–84)), or building a new national political consciousness. The organizational and political evolution of the Resistance itself made such an outcome almost inevitable, because this was a war fought by 'bands' rather than by a national liberation army. One of the finest autobiographical novels about the experience puts it well: 'you can have war by bands, but peace by bands, never' (Meneghello 1976). In other words it was inevitable that the ethical and political inspiration of the partisans would be taken over, mediated and often diluted by those parties that had represented only one element of the situation while the network of bands was operating, but that 'naturally' became the Allies' principal points of reference after the liberation.

Oblivion too fell over the serious internal conflicts concerning military strategy and the ultimate political ends of the effort that had lacerated the Resistance movement while it was going on.⁶ These conflicts collided head on with the national question in the regions along the north-eastern border and exacerbated the contradictions of the alliance between the Communist Party and other antifascist forces that were present to some degree everywhere. The dominant participation in the Resistance of a Communist Party that was destined to become, in part because of that very fact, the strongest in the western world, was one of the most basic political questions of the Resistance

and assumed explosive dimensions in those border zones where the claims of the Yugoslav Resistance extended.

Porzûs⁷ and the north-east certainly are not representative of all of Italy. The tragic outcome of the Resistance in those areas (including the subsequent massacre of many Italians in the regions occupied by the Slavs, by throwing them in the deep limestone crevices of the region, the infamous *foibe*) highlights how well the antifascist agreement, even with its myriad contradictions and ambiguities, held up elsewhere. The unity of the Resistance could not be taken for granted and, while it left room for severe internal conflicts, the common opposition to all formations to the German occupation and, with varying intensity, to Nazi-fascism, permitted Italy to take its place at the bargaining table not simply as a defeated power. It also allowed Italy to emerge from the Fascist experience with a working agreement among the new political forces that led to the Constituent Assembly and the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic.

Moreover, although it was clear who had lost (even if after the war the climate of general self-acquittal popular among Italians rendered increasingly vague the responsibilities for the Fascist *ventennio* and the war, to the point of making them ever less clear and certainly not ascribable to specific individuals), the victors were reluctant to lay claim forcefully and proudly to the honours of battle. Rusconi has attributed the cause of this both to the dispersion of the Action Party members, who were the most resolute in emphasizing the civil war aspects of the struggle in contrast to the communists' greater tendency to emphasize the national liberation aspects, and also to the rise of what he sees as another, virtual civil war, which inhibited the parties' use of the term even in reference to the past, for fear of being accused of fomenting hate and discord (Rusconi 1993: 52–3, 73).

The translation of the Resistance's innovative energy into institutional, political and social terms was rendered difficult above all by the fact that the various programmes that the political parties drew up in 1944–5 remained vague and confused, and there was no clearly visible political protagonist to whom the victory could be attributed without question. Rather than one single victor, there were many who considered themselves as such, often on the basis of irreconcilable claims. Antifascism had various versions and declinations: one was about 'the contents of the democracy to be established'; and another was the 'boundaries of the area of legitimacy of the future political system', which soon came to be understood as anti-totalitarianism (and therefore anticommunism) (Chiarini 1997: 108–9). The Resistance was unable to establish itself as a founding myth in the collective memory of the Italians, in part because of 'the character of abstractness, of gratuitousness so-to-speak, it held in the eyes of the majority who had not experienced the war of liberation' (Chiarini 1997: 52), in part because of the differing and at times absolutely conflicting definition of the term and the reality on which it was based, namely an armed struggle that was simultaneously a war of liberation, civil war and class war.

Antifascist unity then was more an agreement regarding the acceptable limits of political confrontation than an element capable of guiding the reconstruction of political life and institutional reform. The unity of antifascism certainly should be given credit for producing and supporting the intense effort that led to the promulgation of a democratic constitution, the fruit of a compromise among the major political – moral tendencies – Catholic, liberal, communist, socialist, actionist – on which the newly born parties drew. Antifascism should also be defended against those accusations that trace certain later opposition practices back to what was called the ‘constitutional compromise’, identifying in the constitutional pact a sort of genetic defect in the birth of the Republic, conditioning its existence and putting off a long overdue death.⁸

This is a debatable thesis if one considers the enormous scale of the problems to be tackled at the time: relations between the political players, but also the condition of the country, racked by social conflicts, regional separatist movements, resurgences of *qualunquismo* and deep economic uncertainty. Only political forces already well-rooted at the national level (and none of those that eventually emerged as major players could claim to be such), or able to offer an ethical-revolutionary type of legitimization recognized throughout the entire national territory in place of an electoral legitimization, would have been able to take on the task of carrying out a wholesale reconstruction project. So compromise (constitutional, but in the end political as well) represented the only possible opening in a situation where there was a real risk of the break-up of the nation. This compromise managed to produce the most distinguished period of political and institutional innovation in Italian history.

The movement to ‘put the Resistance on trial’, which began by taking advantage of the amnesty law pushed through by Togliatti; the systematic denigration of the Resistance that continued, at least by moderate public opinion and in the statements of a number of governing politicians, until the middle of the 1950s signalled the existence of profound fractures not only in politics, but in the very body of society (see De Luna and Revelli 1995). There was widespread discrimination against communists, that is, against Italian citizens who, while keeping significant mental reservations, professed a political belief that remained within the limits of the Constitution.

On this basic terrain, antifascist unity suffered the most stinging defeats, instead of a renewal that seemed minimal and reasonable. An antifascist ‘revolution’ should have been able to impose the substitution of the entire leadership structure of the State administration, but it was not capable of this and only the political apparatus of the Fascist regime was actually hit by the purges.

Resistance and antifascism represented common ground among the various parties that participated in the struggle for liberation, but they were not able to compensate for the disintegration of the national state that had occurred from 1943 to 1945. Italy thus gave up the possibility of emergency legislation that could take advantage of the extraordinary nature of the moment and design from scratch a new organization of authority. The struggle over the constituent

assembly's powers ended by denying it ordinary legislative authority, which was left to the coalition governments of the day, who accomplished very little. In truth there was no single resistance ethic, but various ethics that often refused to communicate with each other, or were outright adversaries, as the recurring tensions among the armed formations of different political and ideological persuasions had already revealed during the war.

In other words it was impossible to found a comprehensive project of state reform and a programme of government on the values of the Resistance because these had to be shared between parties who in every other respect were ideological adversaries. This fact, more than any sort of a betrayal of the spirit of the Resistance often evoked by Leftist historians, explains the disappointing outcome, in terms of reforms, of the Resistance struggle.

Furthermore only a minority of Italians, animated by a strong ethical faith, had fought in the name of the principles that were later solemnly proclaimed as the foundation of the new state. So the celebration of the victorious war of liberation hid not only the civil war against the fascists, but also the 'great rupture' that, as De Luna (1994: 749) has written, 'divided the collective identity of Italians after the war ... (the split) between those who "had chosen" and those – the majority – who had renounced any "choice"', simply waiting for events to pass. The victory of the minority who had chosen an active antifascism thus hid a fragmented and dispersed reality and the veil of forgetfulness that fell over all this rendered difficult any real, unifying recomposition of the experiences and memories of the Italians of those days. Unless a real effort is made to come to terms with the past in every sense, no strategy of national reconciliation can ever be effective.

Rosario Romeo was among the first to underline how the theory of the Resistance as a 'second Risorgimento' allowed for a 'fairly rapid' coming to terms with the previous regime, and the whitewashing of all responsibilities and faults, 'quickly and reciprocally recognized as excusable' (Romeo 1981: 197–8). Luisa Mangoni has identified 1947–8 as the moment in which, in place of a culture of crisis that seemed to be opening the way to a stimulating critique of the previous decades, new barriers went up, pushing the opposing fronts to find common ground only in a few new certainties, including the general antifascism of the Italian people: 'Fascism and its components were not questions to be dwelt on, not yet. Choices had been made, positions consolidated. Fascism, together with the reasons for and ways of participating in it, remained, at least for some, merely a private anguish, a bitterness that had to be atoned for individually and in silence' (Mangoni 1994: 646–7).

Cristina Cenci, in her analysis of the first celebrations of 25 April – in 1946 – has shown how:

Rather than conflicting, the memories in Italy of 1945 are anomic, that is, juxtaposed and unrelated. They refer to different and non-communicating

universes The expression ‘second Risorgimento’ . . . allows for the anomic crisis to be overcome through reference to a continuity with no historical reference Interpreted as a re-enactment of the Risorgimento myth, the Resistance is at the same time the origin of the new Italy and the confirmation of a national essence that is unaltered and unalterable. As such, it constitutes one of the most important means used to clear away Fascism, and to consolidate a sort of oblivious memory in large parts of the population.

(Cenci 1999: 326, 347)

All things considered, a generalized self-acquittal of all the responsibilities of the past regime provided the ideal climate for the failure of the purge of high officials from the state administration,⁹ at this at precisely the moment when the *Cesura* of 25 April became widely accepted as the starting date of the new Italy. Until 1974, when Renzo De Felice’s biographical study of Mussolini from 1929 to 1936, raised the question of the consensus in favour of Fascism, the historical experience of the regime had been relegated to a corner of the national conscience. It was then brought back to centre stage when a modernizing theme was discovered in it, and so it could be repackaged without those authoritarian elements that were in reality intrinsic to the regime’s ideology and practice: the suppression of individual, political and trade union liberties, along with its ardent nationalism, exaltation of war, colonialism (Del Boca 2000: 325–53),¹⁰ and anti-Semitism.

The myth of the Italians as ‘good people’ (Bidussa 1994) thus fed on self-serving oblivion and cancellation, seen above all in that ‘great displacement’ which concerned national Fascism’s persecution of the Jews (Focardi 1999: 135–70; Collotti 2000: 355–75; Schwarz 2004: 111 ff). Analogously, Italy’s ambiguous position as both defeated and cobelligerent nation, with a government formally called upon (by the armistices) to respond to the wrongdoings of Fascism yet which claimed to be antifascist, could be employed toward a general displacement of the crimes committed by Italians during the war, especially as an occupying nation.¹¹ Something similar also occurred in France. Henry Rousso maintained that France, thanks to De Gaulle, had ‘miraculously saved its honor’, and was able to sit at the victors’ table. The ‘resistance myth – a construction both imaginary and founded on elements of reality’ – played a role in this, making sure that the persecution of the Jews gained little or no attention (at least until 1971–2, when the ‘Touvier affair’ exploded – see *Esprit* (1992)).

In a country characterized historically by a ‘plurality of stories and memories in a unification process which preserved differences’ (Isnenghi 1996: 567, 597), one not willing to grapple seriously with its Fascist past, the Resistance should have represented the great new narrative. Even if it was founded on the collective oblivion of what had occurred beforehand, this narrative was one to be shared by the majority of citizens. It should have been the birthright of

the republican nation, the expression of the antifascist genetic code that had given birth to the new state and the new society. Yet in the midst of the Cold War, the communist question prevented the Resistance from becoming the new founding myth of republican Italy because of the weight of that party's role in the liberation struggle. In Norberto Bobbio's view, after the 18 April 1948, the basic principle of legitimacy of the republic became not antifascism, but anticommunism (Bobbio and Rusconi 1992).

Nevertheless, beginning in the years of the constitutional thaw, the theme of Resistance unity was gradually established as the dominant representation of the nation in the public sphere, in support of that antifascist paradigm which 'represented the historic form that the national problem took on after the fall of the liberal and monarchical State and the end of the "occupation" of the State by the Fascists' (Baldassarre 1986). In Pietro Scoppola's view, despite the hostilities that followed the rupture in the government of May 1947, antifascist unity remained an essential element of De Gasperi's strategy. The Catholic leader '[accepted] antifascism as the basis of the new Italian democracy, but blocked any and all Jacobin and Leninist temptations the Left might have harbored, and accepted democracy based on a freely expressed consensus' (Scoppola 1995: 57).

On the other side, the Communist Party always considered antifascist unity as the context in which to develop its own political position, even if the special relationship with the Soviet Union and its model prevented Togliatti from understanding the international trends of the postwar years, and pushed the party to a short-sighted opposition of principle to the Marshall Plan. Its goals of economic growth and welfare eluded them completely. Today there is a tendency to revalue the theses of historians such as Furet and Nolte, who considered antifascism the Trojan horse of Italian communism. To do so without considering the underlying reasons why the Communist Party, in the space of a few years, overtook the Socialist party at the polls and became the prime political choice of workers and farm labourers is to prefer abstraction and ideology to reality. Instead it might be worth reflecting on how the Italian situation would have looked without the PCI's stand on behalf of those classes traditionally excluded from power, in a context of difficult and slow economic recovery and serious social tension (long before developments in the 1960s shifted the centre of gravity of social conflict elsewhere).

The antifascist paradigm constituted a theme of the dominant political discourse, a meeting point and area of mediation for the political class, as well as offering an unspoken agreement on the limits of political confrontation. It never offered a basis for practical political choices. The political rupture of 1947 and the nation's plunge into the Cold War meant that both sides felt the necessity to preserve some common ground on fundamentals, what Chiarini recently defined as 'a stable line of communication – and an area of solidarity – between opposing blocks' (Chiarini 1997: 110). In other words, the rhetorical

tradition that highlighted the patriotic aspects of the Resistance, to the point of defining it as the last war of the Italian Risorgimento, had a positive role. Rosario Romeo judged it 'precious for postwar moral reconstruction', in that it was able in a certain sense to 'join the events [of the Resistance] to the country's Risorgimento past, and thus safeguard the idea of an uninterrupted continuity between antifascist Italy and national tradition' (Romeo 1981: 175; see also Pavone 1959).

Patriotic motivations were certainly present in the Resistance. For the most part though, this was a patriotism that was unable to find in Italian history up to that point a common core of values and roots with which it might identify. History supplied no usable identity to aid the founding of the new nation. In fact, the words 'fatherland' and 'Italy' took on a renewed sense of truth only in the struggle against the Germans and the Fascists. 'We felt as if we were hearing them for the first time', Natalia Ginsburg wrote later (quoted in Pavone 1991: 172). Rather than the so-called 'death of the fatherland' (Galli della Loggia 1996), what actually occurred was that various ideas of fatherland – often unable to relate to each other – took over the dominant national sentiment of the time, which was seen as Fascist in origin and therefore had to be thrown out.

In the long term the public exaltation of Resistance unity and patriotism never succeeded in fusing together experiences that in reality had been very different. Putting the Resistance on trial, as mentioned above, shows today how little the partisan ethos was shared in a country where few had known it directly. The entire experience was 'culturally' in the minority: most of southern Italy was involved only in a very small degree, and the population of central Italy for only a few months (the spring and summer of 1944). Only north of the Gothic Line did war by bands represent the daily life of some tens of thousands of partisans for twenty long, hard months, as well as for those parts of the larger population that became involved.

The transformation of the Resistance into a founding myth of the 'new' republican Italy subsequently evolved into the celebration of a Resistance 'embalmed' for posterity (Pavone 1992: 459), key dimension of a great national movement in which dissenting voices were not welcome. A great merit of Claudio Pavone's work – which brought together and organized ideas and research already current in the specialist historiography – is to have restored to the Resistance its complexity. Not only has 'the Left' recognized the need to analyze the history and stories of the losers, of those who chose to fight on the side of the Fascists and the Germans, but it has also encouraged the analysis of all sorts of different memories from the period (Pavone 1991). The many experiences and memories connected to the phenomenon of 'fence-sitting' can now be considered. This term might now be released from the negative connotations it attracted during the armed resistance, so that it can become a field of research on those who decided to not become involved in the civil war: for family reasons, out of selfishness (whether individual, group or class),

in short, all those who today are defined as the ‘grey zone’, to stretch an expression of Primo Levi (1994).¹²

If 25 April is the day of memory for the Italians who fought, ‘this does not, however, cancel out the “other” memories: of those who remember having fought against the resistance and the partisan movement . . . ; of those who, feeling and declaring themselves “apolitical”, attempted to “survive” by steering a middle course between partisans and fascists; of those who remember not “the” Resistance but “their” at times very partial resistance; and those who do not want to remember and do not want to be remembered. A range of memories, therefore, that have taken hold and become self-justifying.’ The official Resistance, on the other hand, has always tended to divide rather than unify national history of the public sort, with a gap between ‘the institutional use of memory and all the layers of memory deposited in peoples’ minds, in other words between the political and historical usage of memory and the variety of recollections present in society.’ The founding myth of a proper collective identity should be ‘recognizable by all without argument’, and as such continuously renewable (Ballone 1997: 408, 422).

In this vein of inquiry, of particular significance is the study of the memories left in communities that were victims of massacres by German troops – at times, but not always, with the assistance of soldiers of the Republic of Salò. Although these actions were defined as antipartisan reprisals, they often happened without any recognizable and specific episode as pretext for the massacre.¹³

These studies have produced more detailed knowledge about those who committed the massacres, about the nature of the war fought by the Germans, as well as highlighting the situations that changed it into a war aimed especially against civilian populations. As the lively discussion among German historians about the Wehrmacht’s war demonstrates,¹⁴ beyond the reality of modern war as total war – a concept partially experimented with during World War I – were those impulses that strove to turn the German military campaigns into something typically Nazi. They were driven on by a specific idea of conquest, which aimed radically to change the face of Europe. The German ‘war against civilians’ (Battini and Pezzino 1997) fought in Italy and on other fronts, organized by way of a complex and highly developed system of orders, was part of the so-called European civil war. The logic of this effort ‘attempted European unification under the rule of the German-Nazi human type’, an expansion that ‘aimed at dominion by the master race, incarnate in Germany and fully prepared to use its fragments scattered throughout the rest of Europe’ (Pavone 1994: 111).

In short, the atrocity strategies that the German army employed even in Italy (although to lesser degree, both quantitatively and qualitatively, than in the East) need to be located within the context of a war that Enzo Collotti has defined as not only total, but ‘from the beginning . . . for the conquest of territories, [and] . . . for the affirmation of the supremacy of the German race’ (Collotti 1996: 26).

Yet research has often revealed that the survivors of the massacres hold the partisans partially responsible. Even today the partisans are still accused of having triggered off by their actions, or often simply by their presence, the potential for violence of the Germans. Claudio Pavone comments on the massacre at Civitella Val di Chiana that ‘the general question at the heart of the argument . . . can be expressed as follows: should the responsibility for the reprisals fall on the Germans and the Fascists who carried them out, or on the partisans who provoked them with their actions?’ (Pavone 1996: 17).

When faced with this question, frequently posed by the people involved, the historian must on the one hand respect all the various memories expressed, including those that do not fit in the conventional wisdom, but on the other try to lift perspectives from the local community to the broader context, so as to try and offer an explanation of the tragic events and why memories are so different. In other words, the aim should be to go from memory to history. It is certainly not appropriate to put the Resistance ‘on trial’, or to substitute the fighting man’s point of view with that of people who, having suffered most, refuse to pay any more for the choices of others. However, making the partisans responsible for the tragedy of a massacre has allowed communities devastated by these Nazi-fascist attacks to identify a scapegoat, a clearly identifiable and comprehensible local reference point.¹⁵

Diverging memories are not an Italian specialty, but belong to every European country. European memory is ‘on the one hand made up of various forms of removal and forgetfulness, and on the other is divided and antagonistic’, says Remo Bodei (1995: 49). As we have seen, the Second World War in Europe can be considered a civil war involving the entire continent because of the intertwining of traditional, geopolitical conflicts with the clash of ideology, political models, and alternative civilizations, all of which turned every national and ideological choice into a source of conflict. At the same time the idea of a ‘European civil war’ refers to the struggle between collaborationists and partisans, that is, to the potential civil war in every country caught up in the general conflict.

The events of the war and the support for Fascism and Nazism on the part of many in countries occupied by fascist powers contributed to some degree to the segmentation of national memory in all European countries after the end of hostilities and resulted in later years in the development by the official authorities of a politics of memory, nourished by displacement, forgetfulness and partiality (see Paggi 1997). Hence, the seriousness of the dilemma of punishment or pardon for the numerous collaborationists, which was a very grave problem indeed in countries such as France, where collaborationism was a sort of ‘affair of State, heavily involving highly-placed individuals who belonged to the central nucleus of the French elite’ (Huyse 1998).¹⁶

Where pre-war régimes were destroyed, as in Yugoslavia, the rewriting of the recent past – in particular the events of World War II – began immediately, so that new school textbooks could be produced as quickly as possible.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the grand official narrative of the anti-Nazi resistance as a source of legitimization both of the Communist Party and 'Yugoslav identity', was replaced by different and contrasting reconstructions aimed at legitimizing the foundation of new national entities. The grand official narrative of the socialist era had hidden the fact that 'the Second World War was not only a struggle against a foreign aggressor, but also a civil war' that inevitably produced a conflict of memories. This was all concealed down to the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation, then exploded when the crisis came (Höpken 1998).

So if divergent memories should be considered a typical characteristic of postwar Europe, the Italian case remains special, because the complex relationships of the time between partisans and civil populations keep re-surfacing in persistent and structured antagonism towards the Resistance from people who were not there. In Italy more than elsewhere, the segmentation of memories has accompanied and conditioned the construction of democracy because the experience of fascism was more devastating here: the entire society was caught up in the crisis of the regime. At the margins, some memories persist that combine a specific rejection of local partisan experiences, a general refusal of antifascist values and the official commemorations of 25 April (Father Balducci 1984) talks of 'the public industry of heroism'), with a hostility towards conventional party politics taken to the point of refusing not only the rhetoric of the Resistance but even the very idea of 'resistance'.

In analyzing the extent to which the desire for peace in the majority of Italians caused them to perceive the presence of partisan bands as potentially threatening, whether or not they were reckless, and in exploring the effect of the partisan ethic of conviction on people who cared more for sheer survival, today's historian comes to the heart of the question of the national significance of the Resistance, and its capacity to represent an element of identification for the majority after the war. The answer that seems to come up is decidedly negative. The identity of the Italians is defined by Bodei (1998) as a 'divided we', a fragmented sense of self that has difficulty relating to universally accepted values and so can not see itself in a shared memory of the past.

None of this means yearning for a unanimous memory, or for some sort of project of national reconciliation.¹⁷ These are political notions that pertain to another order of problems than those dealt with here and, as they are extraneous to the logic of historical research, everyone is entitled to their own opinions on them. The theme treated here instead is whether it is possible to identify, using historical analysis, a unifying dimension of the Italian experience in those months of war/war of liberation/civil war. To what extent did divergent memories weigh upon the conception, construction and shaping of Italian democracy in the last 60 years? Are they simply a historical element to be reconstructed and interpreted along with all the others that went into defining how the political system functioned, and its limits?

Collective memory is a full-scale historic factor, a meeting point between the political and social sides of life, between lived experience and the re-ordering of it that takes place in subsequent accounts, a means of defining and consolidating identity to the extent that it 'conserves and transmits values' (Nora 1984: xviii). Explaining the existence of a multiplicity of memories is a hard historical task, measuring their impact on subsequent national history even harder.

If we shift attention from the combatants to the civilians 'in order to recover the concreteness and contradictoriness of the experience that communities large and small, beyond ideology, had of the war, of Nazism and Fascism' (De Felice 1998: 112) we will see how problematic it was to try to include the majority of the population in the resistance ethos afterwards, to make a civic religion out of it. What matters today is not so much the presence of divergent memories (in an open society memories always differ and up to a certain point it is better that this should be so), as to judge the intensity of the conflicts over them, to trace the strategies of reconciliation applied to them and the effectiveness of those efforts.

At stake is the attribution of that social capital represented by a 'past ... actively transmitted to the current generation ... and accepted as endowed with a sense' (Yerushalmi 1990: 14). The theme of divided memory then leads, in the last analysis, straight to the great questions of how to construct a national identity and a ruling class, because 'the problem of leadership is a question of national cohesion'. Divided memory shifts the causes of a leadership deficit, of the sort revealed by the so-called crisis of the first republic, from the field of governance to that of citizenship, because citizenship means 'the full acceptance of a common political culture, of the language and rules that allow for the resolution of the tensions of civil society within the political system' (Salvati 1997: 24).

Notes

- 1 Pavone's book is part of a debate that has involved the most critically acute elements in contemporary Italian historiography, above all of the Left: see, for example, Gallerano (1986). Gallerano recognizes the delays of 'antifascist culture' in confronting 'some clichés even taboos in its tradition: from the orthodox image of a unanimously patriotic antifascism ... to the psychological removal of the lacerating and contradictory processes set off as the collective conscience tried to free itself of its compromises with fascism, to the problem of violence. (There has also been) ... and the inability to go beyond a reading of the years between the wars, but above all of republican Italy, through the over-politicised and reductive prism of fascism/antifascism' (133). For this reason judgments such as those of De Felice seem too perfunctory when they speak generically of the 'received wisdom of the Resistance' (De Felice 1995), at least when referring to the field of historical study.
- 2 In truth the thesis is still not accepted, above all among veterans of resistance associations: see for example, the monograph number of *Lettera ai compagni* (33(6), November/December 2003) entitled *Resistenza guerra di liberazione non guerra civile*.

For a critique, from the point of view of juridical exegesis, of the expression ‘civil war’ see Gallo (1995: 66–96).

- 3 On this topic see Baldissara and Pezzino (2004).
- 4 It was unrealistic to say the least to pretend that the moral and political value of the armed struggle of some tens of thousands of partisans could make the Allies forget the responsibilities of Fascist Italy, and push them to reconsider Italy’s position as a defeated power that had unconditionally surrendered (and was later admitted as a co-belligerent more for political motives than for any real contribution to the war that the king’s and Badoglio’s army could offer). On the relationship between the Allies and the Italian governing powers, see Ellwood (1977).
- 5 On the subject of the Resistance ‘betrayed’, see Pavone (1992: 456–80). For a recent historiographical revival of this theme, one with more evident motivations, see Ginsborg (1989: ch. 2; 1992).
- 6 On this question see the excellent book by Peli (2004).
- 7 On 7 February 1945 a group of Garabaldini gap members stationed in shepherds’ huts near Porzùs in the province of Udine, attacked and killed about twenty partisans of the autonomous formation ‘Osoppo’. The massacre formed part of the conflict between osovani and garibaldini that was grafted onto the alleged betrayal of national interests by the latter and by the betrayal of antifascist values by the former – these were the basis of the mutual recriminations. This explosive situation was exacerbated not only by the nationalistic claims of the Yugoslavs, but also by the support (later mitigated for tactical reasons) they received from the Italian Communist Party. Franceschini’s (1996) synthesis of these events is helpful.
- 8 See, for example Feltri (1994). These questions were a matter of widespread political debate in the years of the crisis of the Italian political system, cf. Mastropaolo (2000).
- 9 On the purges, see, Pavone (1982) and Flores (1977: 413–67), and, more recently, Domenico (1996), Woller (1997) and Dondi (1999).
- 10 See also the critical evaluation of Renzo De Felice’s work in the same volume (Santomassimo 2000: 415–29).
- 11 One thinks of the repeated denials by the illustrious journalist Indro Montanelli of the use of poison gas in the Ethiopian campaign, which now has been proved by historians. On the crimes committed by Italians, see the essays in Baldissara and Pezzino (2004). On the absence of postwar punishments of Italian war crimes, see Focardi (2000); Focardi and Klinkhammer (2001).
- 12 Levi was referring to an area ‘of poorly defined contours that both separates and joins the two fields of masters and servants’ (p. 29), an area of mediation between power and those subjected to power, to which even the victims could have access. The common usage of the term now indicates instead an amorphous, vague zone that denies legitimacy to any established power. For more on the ‘grey zone’ see Pavone (1998).
- 13 In recent years numerous volumes have been published on the massacres of civilians in Italy during World War II: for a critical review, see Gribaudo (1999). On the relationship between massacres and reprisals, see also the data cited by Pezzino (2004: 20–1).
- 14 See the collection of records edited by Collotti and Gozzini (1996).
- 15 This does not, however, prevent the dimension of responsibility, in Todorov’s sense of ‘ethic of responsibility’, from being used as a useful litmus test for partisan involvement. The possibility of reprisal could not be ruled out of the series of evaluations that the partisans had to make before every action (Todorov, 1995a). It is Todorov who reminds us that ‘human existence is impregnated thoroughly with values and . . . , as a result, the desire to expel from human knowledge every link with values is an inhuman task’ (Todorov 1995b: 17).

- 16 Huysse holds that ‘in these countries, collaborationism and the subsequent purges continue to unsettle “collective memory”’ (1998: 125).
- 17 On this point I agree with Luzzatto (2004). In his pamphlet Luzzatto repropose the perennial reality of antifascism as the constitutional foundation of the Italy of today, without questioning the reasons – not all of which can be traced back to its political adversaries – why that paradigm broke down.

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RESISTANCE AND THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF AFRICA

By Eric Allina-Pisano

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In late 1926, African workers fled from their positions as field hands on Portuguese-run maize farms in the central Mozambican districts of Manica and Chimoio. The workers, all male, were coerced recruits brought from Chemba, a Zambezi valley district. The precise circumstances of their recruitment are not clear. The colonial administration in central Mozambique had recently overhauled its labor recruitment practices after facing criticism in the League of Nations in 1925. These changes notwithstanding, it is unlikely that recruitment took place in an atmosphere free from coercion. Nearly two-hundred of the Chemba recruits had fled by April 1927, most within two or three months of beginning work on the farms, while some took to their heels immediately upon their arrival.¹ The maize farms had a terrible reputation among workers from as early as 1908, when Zambezi valley recruits declared they “would prefer to eat roots and wild fruits than to go to . . . Manica where they would die.”² Labor recruits there could expect long hours of heavy manual labor, inadequate meal rations, wage arrears or non-payment, poor housing, and a fierce daily regime governed by verbal and physical abuse. Such work conditions routinely violated labor laws, but authorities rarely responded to workers’ charges with effective action.

Little wonder, then, that the field workers fled; their decision to do so scarcely requires explanation. Labor contracts had a fixed term, in this case one year, and there were few if any workers who would have stayed at the job had it not been for the overall system of coercion that existed in colonial Mozambique. Police often accompanied recruiters, local African authorities assisted in the identification of potential recruits, and those who initially avoided recruitment sometimes turned themselves in to ransom a relative who had been seized in retaliation.³ The director of the private recruiting agency that had delivered the workers to the maize farms in 1927 was—if not surprised—close to panic at the scale of worker flight. His agency had paid advances to the workers as part of the recruitment contract and covered the costs of transportation from Chemba, several hundred kilometers from Manica and Chimoio. The workers had fled so early in the term of recruitment that they had not yet worked off the advances they earned; the recruitment agency faced serious losses, amounting to five percent of its capital.⁴

The director prevailed upon colonial administrators to help track down the wayward workers, who had earned the label *evadidos*. When administrators in Chemba tried to locate those who had fled in the Zambezi valley chiefdoms from which they had come, they discovered that the *evadidos* had not returned home. Chemba’s chiefs suggested that the missing workers had remained in central Mozambique, having found new jobs in Beira, the Indian Ocean port city, and in the agricultural area along the rail line that ran west from Beira to the border with Southern Rhodesia.⁵ They found good cover among the 20,000 or so Africans working in Beira and the rail corridor. Some of the fugitive workers

obtained new identification papers using an alias, making it that much more difficult to track them down.⁶

Colonial police rounded up relatives and African chiefs in Chemba; the administrators imprisoned some in Chemba but sent others to Manica and Chimoio to help locate the *evadidos*. The search parties had minimal success, locating only a couple dozen of the fugitives who had secured new employment since having fled the maize farms.⁷ Even worse—from the perspective of the recruitment agency's director—some of those sent to search fled in turn, following their relatives and neighbors into the wage labor market. The agency had paid to transport and feed these individuals as well, figuring to deduct the costs from the wages of the *evadidos*, once located.⁸ Few of the fugitives were found, and the search effort merely added to the agency's losses.

The series of events might appear to be an example of successful African resistance to colonial coercion. Portuguese colonial policy had a strong reputation for abusive labor practices and even private recruitment agencies such as the one involved in this case could often count on administrative authorities to put the coercive capacities of the state at the disposal of recruitment efforts.⁹ The success with which the *evadidos* and their confreres eluded the authorities is perhaps particularly surprising given Portuguese labor policy, which lived up to its reputation. Thus we might consider their efforts as simply another, albeit less than ordinary, case of everyday resistance.

* * * * *

The social history of Africa is, with few exceptions, history from below. The reasons for this are both historical and historiographical. Most African social history has focused on the 19th and 20th centuries, especially on the colonial era, when Africans were almost de facto subalterns. Inspired in part by the historiography of slavery, particularly of the American South, historians of Africa strove to discover, understand, and interpret the experiences of Africans who lived under colonial rule.¹⁰ Given the context of colonialism in Africa, efforts to explore such experiences attempt to present the perspective of Africans subject to colonial rule.

This history from below frequently examined historical events and processes through the lens of a resistance paradigm.¹¹ Colonialism, with its great injustices, stark inequalities, and infrequent though compelling acts of rebellion, lends itself well to the paradigm. Explorations of African resistance replaced an imperial tradition of historiography that focused largely on European endeavors in Africa. To write history from below, historians had to look past (and through) colonial-era evidence that so often reflected more about European perceptions and interests than African experiences. Archival material was most likely to contain tax and population data; Africans appeared most often when colonial regulations were transgressed. Scholars read between the lines and against the grain to produce a richer, more balanced view of the colonial period.

In an initial phase historians narrated the epochal changes of the colonial era—conquest and independence—and the actions of the “great men” who figured in those changes. Some of this initial work drew an explicit connection

between the start- and end-points of colonialism, linking nationalist movements for independence with those who resisted colonial conquest.¹² Work in this vein came close on the heels of the emergence of independent African nation states in the early and mid-1960s. There was a sense that new nations in the post-colonial era needed a new history, especially when earlier imperial histories had neglected the role of Africans in the history of the continent. Narratives of resistance to colonial conquest and the struggle for independence centered African historical actors on the stage of history. Historians sought for and found—in both written and oral archives—accounts that described African efforts first to stave off and later to throw off the imposition of colonial rule. This endeavor very nearly defined what it meant to pursue “Africanist” scholarship.

The problems with the linkage between primary resistance to colonial rule in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the modern nationalist movements of the 1950s and 1960s are well known: a narrow focus on elite politics; the near exclusion of women, peasants, rank and file workers; and an undifferentiated view of these latter groups when they appeared at all.¹³ A critique emerged in the late 1970s, questioning how real the link was between primary resistance and nationalist struggle.¹⁴ Part of what drove this critique was a concern with class and class identities. Scholars sought to identify the “faceless masses” and in so doing, they asked whether one could speak of primary resisters and nationalist leaders in the same breath. Class divisions, based on people’s relation to pre-colonial and colonial modes of production, held out the possibility that initial resistance and nationalist struggle composed historically distinct and separate processes.

The concern with economic differentiation in African societies drove a new generation of scholarship through the 1980s. While casting doubt on the connection between primary and nationalist resistance, this generation did not drop the resistance paradigm but rather drew on materialist perspectives to locate indigenous resistance within the broader framework of class struggle. This work pointed out the problems of discussing African resisters as a monolith. Such an approach had analytical shortcomings—the assumption that people had universal interests and goals—and was historically inaccurate—suggesting that there was a uniform response to colonial rule. Class divisions within the African population, previously existing and often intensified during the years of colonial rule, shaped different groups’ responses to the exploitation of colonial capitalism.¹⁵ The view toward a disaggregated “native population”—one that contained collaborators as well as resisters—represented a clear advance over what some saw as the romanticism of the previous generation of scholarship.¹⁶

Neither the nationalist nor the materialist literature captured the full range of African politics. Both were romantic, though for slightly different reasons. The first ignored the inconvenient existence of Africans who, for a variety of reasons, served the interests of the colonial state. Instead it focused on the heroes of anti-colonial resistance and sought to link them with latter-day nationalist leaders. The second limited itself to class-based identities that often foundered on the ambiguous position that many peasant groups occupied. The articulation of pre-colonial modes of production with colonial capitalism produced social groups whose identities and interests frustrated materialist categories. Yet both generations of scholarship were romantic in that they sanitized the internal

politics of African communities.¹⁷ Consequently neither approach accounts for how the powerful used the powerless in a variety of ways: how men used women, elders took advantage of juniors, or how the fortunate and ambitious exploited the unlucky and retiring.

The limits of a class-based analysis were readily apparent however, to a new group of scholars concerned with gender, generation, ethnicity, and a host of other cleavages within the social realm. First, the materialist approach (particularly among the underdevelopment school) located forces of change outside of the continent and continued to represent Africans as objects rather than subjects of history. Second, consideration of collaborators notwithstanding, the overall view of colonialism remained bound by a rigid dichotomy between colonizer and colonized, with little sense of internal African politics beyond the notion of class struggle. A third generation of scholarship emerging around 1990 drew on and contributed to emerging literature on “everyday resistance.”¹⁸ These scholars explored the politics of the quotidian in as many of its aspects as was possible, reaching past the colonizer-colonized dichotomy and revealing the richness of power struggles within the subordinate group. Their work considered expressions of resistance from Africans occupying a host of positions in the social realm, as urban workers, migrant laborers, peasant farmers, women, youth, Christians, Muslims, or members of specific ethnic groups.¹⁹ This body of work characterizes the current state of the field.

The use of oral testimony has been central to this expansion in the range of subjects investigated. Evidence collected directly from informants made it possible to reach deeply into the social realm and explore the history of its distinct and diverse communities.²⁰ The authors of colonial archives were often uninterested in, unaware of, or simply unable to apprehend the complexity of social relations within African societies. Even district-level officials—those closest to the African communities being incorporated into the colonial system—were frequently ignorant of social differentiation within African communities, beyond the roughest distinctions between followers and chiefs, women and men, or children and adults. Unable to disaggregate the “native population,” colonial administrators rarely grasped the dynamic and evolving social cleavages within rural African populations.

Historians’ use of oral testimony is not new, but its relationship to these different areas of inquiry is. Oral data have been commonplace in the writing of African history since at least the early 1970s, and these data were key in helping to center African historical actors on the stage of history. Informants’ accounts of resistance to colonial conquest helped rewrite the opening act of the colonial era from an African perspective. Such incidents had an important place in collective memory, especially in post-colonial societies that had actively incorporated epochal events into a national identity.²¹ The events often form part of potential informants’ individual recollections of a shared history. As such, they are safe to recount because they are distant in time, unique in occurrence, and depersonalized. The actors directly involved are, for the most part, no longer alive. Resisters’ extraordinary acts of defiance cannot be confounded with more enduring local tensions. Furthermore, because such events happened—in a sense—to everyone, the responsibility for them belongs to no one.

Scholars who seek to move beyond these epochal events may encounter ob-

stacles as they negotiate the oral archive. It is far more difficult to engage informants with questions about social cleavages that are proximate, particular, and personal. Gender, generational, and other conflicts present clear and present danger to certain individuals and they may be reluctant to discuss such issues openly, most especially with a stranger. The tensions between senior and junior male members of Zulu communities in the Thukela river valley helped drive Bhambatha's rebellion in 1906.²² Similar stresses shaped conflict within the Zulu population more than eight decades later as school children defied their parents and sought to render apartheid South Africa's black townships ungovernable. These fault lines are still active sites of friction and make the oral archive a minefield for researchers. Disagreements between cotton-growers and purchasers over prices in contemporary Mozambique recall the forced cultivation scheme imposed under Portuguese colonial rule. It may be difficult to uncover past acts of every-day resistance to cotton cultivation when the same growers face different types of coercion in a world governed by IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programs. In the 1950s, cotton cultivators faced a host of coercive, exploitative, and institutionalized practices sponsored by the colonial state. In the 1990s, growers confront practices that may be far less formal but are nonetheless highly coercive.²³ Continuing conflicts can make it difficult to acquire clear accounts of how growers limited the demands made upon them by the colonial state.²⁴

The difficulties notwithstanding, over the past decade oral testimony has moved from common to compulsory in the writing of African social history. One would be hard-pressed to find support for a project that examined the past century of African history and did not employ oral historical material. Its use has become a methodological orthodoxy, especially among Africa-based scholars but also in the United States and other countries.²⁵ The great bulk of recent scholarship on African social history has cleaved to this trend.²⁶

Explorations of everyday resistance have been prominent within this literature. Historians have left behind Resistance in favor of resistance, seeking expressions of anti-colonial sentiment in the day to day lives of ordinary Africans whose activities escaped the gaze of previous generations of scholarship. The meaning with which these expressions are endowed takes center stage, and many scholars engage with the work of Antonio Gramsci and his interlocutors.²⁷ The question of hegemony is crucial in these explorations as historians show how Africans from all social backgrounds forged a critique of colonial domination.

The flight of labor recruits from Chemba described in the opening of this paper is perhaps more and less complicated than other instances of African resistance to colonial rule. It is instructive that those who fled did not return home, as one might expect if their aim had been to avoid wage labor and dedicate themselves to household-based agricultural production. Instead, they found new positions in which they could earn higher salaries than the more restricted recruited workers. Some of the *evadidos* appear to have planned just such a move, having given false names to the recruitment agency in order to more easily cover their tracks once they fled into the wage labor market.²⁶ Some of these African men, it appears, were quite willing to seek wage labor and demonstrated some skill in negotiating labor policy and the labor markets to achieve their goals.

The use of aliases and false identity documents represents only the simplest of measures and could be described as a reactive or defensive action. Those who fled—either at first or from among those who were brought to locate the initial *evadidos*—may well have planned to do so in advance of their journey to Manica or Chimoio. By signing on as recruits or agreeing to travel in search of their relatives, they had their meals and transportation arranged and paid for, no small matter for the several hundred kilometer journey. Was their flight a premeditated act aimed at exploiting the agency's recruitment infrastructure? Their subsequent entry into the wage labor market on their own terms—in some cases at the best-paying jobs available—suggests that the workers were more active players than passive or reactive victims of colonial coercion. An even more interesting possibility is that they were not merely actors but nimbly planning ones who schemed to exploit their would-be exploiters. This view dovetails uncomfortably with invariably negative colonial assessments of African workers, but it also puts the lie to the same colonial condemnations of “traditional African indolence.”²⁷ Moreover, it allows us to look at the colonial encounter and see African agency that is neither that of a victim nor of a freedom fighter. If people from Chemba did in fact “travel and eat at the . . . cost [of the recruitment agency]”²⁸ with the purpose of absconding for a better job at the first opportunity, their actions were far from principled or selfless. Rather, they were forward-thinking self-interested acts of duplicity carried out within a highly exploitative system. Their example represents less resistance than creative decisions about how to deploy their labor, and their choices may be less acts of resistance than negotiation. And if we must call their chiefs' participation in the recruitment process an act of collaboration, we must also recognize it was collaboration *against*, rather than *with*, colonial rule.

When men in Mozambique and elsewhere avoided labor recruitment to seek better-paying wage labor positions, the effect of their acts may well have been to deny certain colonial interests the potential use of their labor power. But their longer-term strategy was often to accumulate cash to purchase the livestock and implements necessary to expand household-based agricultural production. Some of these men eventually became successful farmers producing for broader markets in agricultural commodities. Were these cash-cropping peasants resisting when they insisted on controlling their labor? Likewise, when the effect of such actions was to increase dramatically the workload of their female relatives, how do we assess such actions? If a wife shouldered the burden of increased household agricultural activity in the absence of a migrant husband, helping boost production and accumulated wealth, was she dominated? Or finally, when adult men selected for forced labor recruitment were surreptitiously replaced by their junior male relatives who went to toil in their place, the domination-resistance dyad begins to fracture under the multiplicity of interests involved. These practices and others, some of which drew on patterns of strategic decision-making embedded in local power relations, clearly resonate with established inequalities between women and men, juniors and seniors, that pre-date the colonial era.²⁹ It is time, I would suggest, for the social history of Africa to go beyond the resistance paradigm.

Recent scholarship has shown just how important the infra-politics of African communities are in understanding the social history of colonial rule in Africa.

However, the expanse of social terrain that such politics occupies begins to stretch the confines of the resistance paradigm. Africans engaged in a broad range of activities not only in reaction to colonial domination, but also as complex strategies of negotiation with forces from within and without their communities.³⁰ At times people resisted or collaborated, at others they did both simultaneously, while at still others their actions aimed only tangentially at the colonial state. Their efforts were not always directed toward state actors. They engaged colonialism at multiple, overlapping sites and their interactions with colonial agents did not always fall neatly into categories of domination, resistance, or collaboration. Domination and resistance can be seen as end-points along a power-laden continuum of experience. There is a full range of human action which spans that distance and in between the poles there lies a very crowded spectrum of human interests, goals, and needs.

If one tries to categorize commercial agricultural production or wage labor activity solely as resistance, one does violence to more than language.³¹ Such an effort also does violence to history, because it collapses complex human actions and historical processes. One risks divorcing events from their context and narrowing our view of the past.³² The binary opposition of resistance and domination may be a good place to start asking questions about power under colonial rule, but it limits our capacity to recognize nuance, ambiguity, and contradiction.

The resistance paradigm may impose a teleological view on our understanding of colonialism, in which colonial dominance must be the focal point for any deployment of power. European colonial power clearly bore the greatest determinative influence, but it was not all-determining. Its dominance is clear only with hindsight, and hindsight can be "the enemy of understanding."³³ Latter-day knowledge of colonial power may cause our gaze to return to sites of colonial action, much as the hands of a Ouija board user return to spell out the object of the user's interest. Colonial domination may well have been inevitable but it was not imminent (or immanent), and neither colonial officials nor African subjects could afford to act as if it were. Administrators frequently chose to accommodate African interests in the implementation of colonial policy simply because it was easier or less expensive to do so. Similarly, Africans did not suddenly (or even gradually) abandon the struggles tied to the internal hierarchies of their communities to engage solely with agents of colonial rule. To do would have been disastrous: they still needed to deploy, engage, deflect, contest, and appropriate local power to be able to survive, produce, and maintain or advance their social standing.³⁴ Moreover, it simply would not be possible to abandon this multiplicity of struggles. People's identities were not solely constituted by their status as colonial subjects: they were simultaneously women, men, elders, juniors, members of lineages or ethnic groups, producers and consumers of material goods, land holders, holders of spiritual beliefs, and more. Their identities were overdetermined by these interests and concerns, and resistance cannot capture the full range of either their intent or their actions.

Moreover, how do we decide that resistance (or its inevitable if unplanned siblings, collaboration and domination) is the most appropriate interpretation of human behavior? Or, as some have asked, "the most interesting?"³⁵ If we instead

consider the full range of people's actions as acts of negotiation with forces of political and economic change, we can produce a more complete, nuanced, and compelling account of their history. We must expand our lexicon and outlook to view the colonial experience as a field of negotiation rather than one of resistance, collaboration, or domination.

The practice of African social history is poised to make just this shift in outlook. Recent scholarship addresses a diverse set of subjects but shares at least one characteristic: the use of oral testimony solicited from living members of the communities selected for study. The evidence collected can be used in two ways. First, it provides important contextual commentary on archival sources, making it possible to read against the grain, extracting useful pieces of information from otherwise opaque biases. Second, oral testimony may frequently address subject matter that administrative authors either ignored or overlooked. The spread in use of oral evidence has brought with it an expansion in the diversity of subjects investigated. Scholars have had great success putting oral and written sources into dialogue with one another, expanding the range of each. It is one thing to read that a maize farmer's abuse of his workers was so gratuitous that he faced fines under rarely-enforced regulations. It is quite another to learn that his farm came to be known as "Chigodore," the name being derived from the Shona ideophone *godo*, "of striking someone on the head with a stick."

Oral testimony can reveal the "local categories of tension and friction"³⁶ within the entire colonial sphere, throwing into sharp relief the "presence and play of power"³⁷ not only between Africans and colonial officials but within African communities as well. Collection of oral data from informants makes it possible to construct a thick historical narrative. Narrative thickness allows us to consider how people made locally-inspired, creative choices about how to engage wider forces of political and economic change, and those choices often reflected as much about the infra-politics of African communities as about their interactions with the colonial state. These infra-politics were often invisible to the administrators who created the historian's evidentiary stock in trade, the archive, which tends to enforce the elision of the everyday.

Perhaps most importantly, the thickness derived from oral material can open up the full spectrum of history seen from below. It is more than a window onto the opaque or the overlooked. This approach provides not only another or more complete account of familiar events—in the case considered here, of African avoidance of forced labor—but normative commentary upon them as well. Thus we learn something about African attitudes toward colonial wage labor and perhaps some of the tradeoffs between life as a peasant or a proletarian. In these voices, we hear history read from below.

The new orthodoxy associated with a reliance on oral testimony offers great promise for the future of social history in Africa. Oral testimony will be crucial as the social history of Africa goes beyond the resistance paradigm.³⁸ Such testimony—in its songs, nicknames, jokes, and personal narratives—establishes a crucial counterpoint to dominant narratives, whether documentary or otherwise. It makes it possible to explore history from below in all of its ambiguity and contradiction and permits a greater focus on the experiences and strategies of Africans as they fought, worked, prayed, prospered, studied, loved, and suffered. Listening to African voices, we "get a sense of the texture of life . . . which is

what social history should be all about.”³⁹ These voices are what will provide the thickness of historical context that makes it possible to write social history. For social historians of Africa, “the way forward is to listen, and listen again.”⁴⁰

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ENDNOTES

This paper draws on exchanges too far-flung to detail in their entirety, but I can trace their roots to the 1996 African Studies Association meeting in San Francisco, where Paul S. Landau, Carol Summers, and Donald S. Moore presented papers on a panel titled “Rethinking the Resistance Paradigm in African Studies,” after which Steven Feierman delivered an especially erudite commentary.

1. A(rquivo) H(istórico) de M(oçambique), C(ompanhia) d(e) M(oçambique)/A(ssociação) de T(rabalho) I(ndígena)/C(orrespondência) E(xpedida)/Caixa 1: Director Gerente to Chefe Chemba, no. CL/333 of 2 Abril 1927; Direção to Chefe Chemba [telegram], 6 Abril 1927.
2. AHM, CdM/S(ecretaria) G(eral)/Processos/Caixa 71: Chefe de Sub-circum-scripção de Sanca to Chefe de Sena, No. 110 of 1909, 30 September 1909, SGP/0130/39.
3. For more complete accounts of forced labor recruitment in Portuguese Africa, see James Duffy, *Portuguese Africa* (Cambridge, 1959); Gerald J. Bender, *Angola Under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley, 1978); Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900–1982* (Boulder, CO, 1983); Jeanne Marie Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism: Mozambican Strategies and Struggles in Lourenço Marques, 1877–1962* (Portsmouth, UK, 1995).
4. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 1: Director Gerente to Director Negócios Indígenas, no. CL/110 of 26 Dezembro 1926.
5. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 1: Chefe Chemba to Recrutamento Beira, n.d.
6. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 1: Director Gerente to Chefe Chemba, no. CL/388 of 16 Abril 1927; Director Gerente to Director Negócios Indígenas, no. CL/393 of 18 Abril 1927; CdM/ATI/Dossies/Caixa 36: ATIMS, Macequece 1927; Sub-agente Macequece to Director Gerente, D/186 of 13 Junho 1927.
7. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 1: Director Gerente to Director Negócios Indígenas, no. CL/393 of 18 Abril 1927; CdM/ATI/Dossies/Caixa 27: ATIMS, Correspondência Confidencial, 1927 à 1929, Agente Vila Pery to Director Gerente, no. DG/154 of 25 Maio 1927; CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 2: Director Gerente to Agente Vila Pery, no. CL/596 of 3 Junho 1927.
8. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 2: Director Gerente to Director Negócios Indígenas, no. CL/775 of 18 Julho 1927; Director Gerente to Agente Vila Pery, no. CL/596 of 3 Junho 1927.
9. Especially because those same authorities often directed forced recruitment for the state itself.
10. Perhaps the most oft-cited work is Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1974).

11. This is a vast body of literature. I have not attempted to produce a bibliographic essay but rather an interpretive overview. Those interested in consulting the literature on resistance in African history would do well to begin with Allen Isaacman's essay, "Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa," in *Confronting Historical Paradigms: Peasants, Labor, and the Capitalist World System in Africa and Latin America*, edited by Frederick Cooper, Allen F. Isaacman, Florencia E. Mallon, William Roseberry, and Steve J. Stern (Madison, 1993), 205–317. For a review of recent contributions to this field, see Klaas van Walraven and Jon Abbink, "Rethinking Resistance in African History: An Introduction," in Jon Abbink, Mirjam de Bruijn, and Klaas van Walraven, eds., *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History* (Leiden, 2003), 1–40.

12. The classic work in this vein is Terence O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896–7* (London, 1967).

13. Crawford Young reviews this literature in "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective," *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 103 (1986): 421–495. Terence Ranger's 1977 essay is in part an auto-critique, "The People in African Resistance: A Review," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 4, no. 1 (1977): 125–146.

14. See in particular Ranger, "The People in African Resistance," and Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, "Resistance and Collaboration in Southern and Central Africa, c. 1850–1920," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (1977): 31–62.

15. Frederick Cooper, "Peasants, Capitalists, and Historians: A Review Article," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 7, no. 2 (1981): 284–314; Jack Lewis, "The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry: A Critique and Reassessment" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 11, no. 1 (1984): 1–24.

16. Ranger, "The People in African Resistance," 142.

17. Sherry B. Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27, no. 1 (1995): 179.

18. Other factors that moved scholarship beyond marxist approaches include the collapse of the Soviet Union, after which materialist analyses lost some appeal.

19. Penvenne, *African Workers and Colonial Racism*; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Portsmouth, 1992); Jonathan Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856–1888* (Portsmouth, 1995). Paul S. Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Portsmouth, 1995); Allen Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938–1961* (Portsmouth, 1996); Raymond E. Dumett, *El Dorado in West Africa: The Gold-Mining Frontier, African Labor, and Colonial Capitalism in the Gold Coast, 1875–1900* (Athens, 1998); Benedict Carton, *Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa* (Charlottesville, 2000); David Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania, 1880–1920* (Athens, 2000).

20. Scholarship on the use of oral historical material has a long history itself; see Joseph C. Miller, ed., *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History* (Folkstone, 1980); Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, 1985); Luise White, Stephen F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2001).

21. The contemporary uses of these events and their place in collective memory are especially evident in "Pompa nas celebrações da revolta de Báruê: Cabrito para sacrifício ao Makombe fogue numa cerimônia em que política se misturou com a tradição," [Pageantry

in the commemoration of the Bárúè revolt: Goat destined for sacrifice to Makombe escapes in a ceremony in which politics is mixed with tradition] *Notícias*, 4 de Abril de 1997.

22. Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906–08 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford, 1970); Carton, *Blood from Your Children*.

23. In the mid-1990s, cotton cultivators in northern Mozambique embarked on a sellers' strike in protest over low prices, which provoked the company that held a purchasing monopoly in the area to complain to the district administrator. The growers then found themselves facing armed soldiers as they were told they must sell their cotton at the price dictated by the company. Personal communication, Anne Pitcher.

24. Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty*, 17–18.

25. The ability to communicate directly with subjects in their own language is key in this trend. Many scholars based in Africa speak local languages. For many scholars outside the continent, financial support for language study has been crucial, as has the backing of the generation of scholars who have helped mainstream the use of oral testimony since the 1970s.

26. The results have dominated the field. Since 1990, the Herskovits Prize, awarded annually for the best scholarly work on Africa in English distributed in the United States, has gone to seven historians. Five of the seven make extensive use of oral testimony in their works. A major force in publishing this body of work is Heinemann's Social History of Africa series, and at least one reviewer has noted that oral testimony has become a "hallmark" of the series. James Brennan, H-Africa review of *Making Ethnic Ways: Communities and Their Transformations in Taita, Kenya, 1800–1950* (Portsmouth, 1999), by Bill Bravman, archived at <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-africa&month=9910&week=b&msg=qfbwlr7jCCBBEmFyGThp8A&user=&pw>

27. See especially Glassman's *Feasts and Riot*; Paul S. Landau, "Hegemony and History in Jean and John Comaroff's *Of Revelation and Revolution*," *Africa* 70, no. 3 (2000): 501–519.

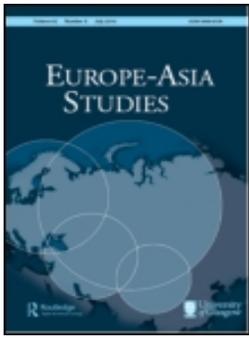
28. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 2: Director Gerente to Director DNI, no. CL/851 of 9 Agosto 1927; CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 2: Director Gerente to Governador, no. 913 of 30 Agosto 1927.

29. Such slander was part of a colonial mantra in Africa. For a small number of references in central Mozambique, see AHM, CdM/SG/Relatórios/Caixa 241: Circunscrição de Manica, Relatório do Arrolamento de Palhotas e Recenseamento da População Indígena, 1928, SGR/5104/01, 16; CdM/SG/Correspondência/Caixa 179: Secretaria Geral, Circulares 1927, Circular 118 of 3 Novembro 1927; AHM, CdM/ATI/Dossies/Caixa 36: ATIMS, Macequece, 1927; Sub-Agente Macequece to Director Gerente, no. D/208 of 8 Julho 1927.

30. AHM, CdM/ATI/CE/Caixa 2: Director Gerente to Director DNI, no. CL/775 of 18 Julho 1927.

31. Elizabeth Eldredge argues that the periodic absence of male labor was a feature of pre-colonial Lesotho's political economy and that women had long assumed the greater part of work involved with agricultural expansion. Elizabeth A. Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom: The pursuit of security in nineteenth-century Lesotho* (Cambridge, 1993), 10. Allen and Barbara Isaacman have shown how pre-colonial pawning practices reflected local attitudes about whose labor was most expendable. Barbara Isaacman and Allen Isaacman, "Slavery and Social Stratification among the Sena of Mozambique: A Study of the *Kaporo* System," in Suzanne Miers and Igor Kopytoff, eds., *Slavery in Africa: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Madison, 1977), 109.

32. Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1530, 1533.
33. Leroy Vail and Landeg White, "Forms of Resistance: Songs and Perceptions of Power in Colonial Mozambique" *American Historical Review* 88, no. 4 (1983): 886.
34. Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1533.
35. Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey* (Madison, 1999), 128.
36. I owe this range of ways that people exercise power to Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1517.
37. Vail and White, "Forms of Resistance," 886.
38. Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," 177.
39. *Ibid*, 175.
40. Some readers might remark that the case of the Chemba recruits described in this essay appears to rely solely on documentary evidence. Two comments are in order. First, my reading of this evidence depends vitally on interviews I conducted from 1995 to 1998 with over one-hundred residents in central Mozambique. Second, the documentary evidence that describes the flight of the Chemba recruits is unusual in its completeness. Moreover, it is one of the infrequent instances when we have a clear view of the fissures within the community of colonial policy makers and practitioners. These fissures were always there but rarely visible. Ann Laura Stoler explores the importance of such fissures and of recognizing that categories such as the "colonial state" were historically shifting ones full of tension and contradictions. "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 1 (1989): 134–161.
41. Vail and White, "Forms of Resistance," 919.
42. Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and the Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History* (Charlottesville, 1991), 324.



Reconstructing the History of Early Communism and Armed Resistance in Romania

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Reconstructing the History of Early Communism and Armed Resistance in Romania

MONICA CIOBANU

Abstract

This article examines the role played by the armed resistance in Romania during the period of Sovietisation and Stalinisation (1944–1962) and its significance within the politics of memory and justice after 1989. One conclusion of the analysis is that opposing interpretations by political actors each in search of legitimacy correspond to attempts to manufacture plausible narratives of the specific historical discontinuity posed by the revolutionary break of 1989. A second conclusion reveals how memory and identity conflicts at group and individual levels can easily result in the translation of historical myths into enduring historical facts.

IN POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EARLY history of the communist regime, which covers the period from post-World War II years and the integration of the country into the Soviet bloc up to the nationalist-communist period begun in 1964 by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, has been generally dominated by a narrative of *Gulag*-style repression. Most historical accounts are unanimous in agreeing that Soviet occupation and the accompanying process of forced Stalinisation were linked with the machinery of repression and terror used against the population through a network of prisons, forced labour camps and deportations. Moreover, academic analyses by historians and social scientists, together with memoirs and oral histories of surviving actors of that era, have interpreted these events as part of a well-designed plan of national destruction. A report issued in January 2007 by the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of Communist Dictatorship in Romania characterised the Stalinist repression as ‘social genocide’; a genocide which targeted not only the class enemies of the socialist revolution but also those very groups for which the revolution was allegedly fought. The report also estimated that in the 1950s half of the country’s then population of between 16 and 17 million people was directly or indirectly persecuted (Tismăneanu *et al.* 2007).

However, this narrative of collective suffering not only emphasises the issue of victimisation under communism, but also attempts to incorporate elements of collective agency in the form of popular opposition and revolt. This opposition and revolt chiefly involves the stories of various groups of rebels involved in armed resistance, a resistance which began as early as 1944 when Romania was still an ally of Nazi Germany and later when

the Soviet military entered the northeastern part of the country and occupied the territories of northern Bessarabia and northern Bukovina. It lasted until the early 1960s when the last partisans were destroyed by the *Securitate* (the newly created secret police). These resistance groups, principally located in remote mountainous areas of the northwestern part of the country, posed serious challenges to the collectivisation of agriculture by the Romanian Communist Party (*Partidul Comunist Român*—PCR) which sought to deliver the country into the Soviet orbit. Although they enjoyed the support of local villagers, these groups were geographically too disparate, too small, and ideologically too heterogeneous to become a strong and unified anti-communist and anti-Soviet opposition movement.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the significance of the role played by the armed resistance in the context of the Sovietisation and Stalinisation of the country and to critically examine its place within the politics of memory and justice after 1989. Two divergent views of the resistance as understood by competing political actors are analysed. A first version, promoted by a heterogeneous group of anti-communist elements (historical parties, former dissidents and political prisoners, civic associations and many intellectuals), glorifies the resistance to the extent of elevating it to a national anti-Soviet movement. A second version, promoted by political actors with direct roots in the old communist regime (the various heirs to the Communist Party, former members of the communist secret police and nationalist elements), dismisses its significance by trivialising and often vilifying it as a criminal or anti-national movement. The clash between these opposing versions of the historical narrative of the armed resistance illustrates how the struggle for the past can legitimise power and authority in the present. Together with the two versions voiced by political actors, each of which claim a rightful monopoly over a hegemonic historical narrative, the fluid and often contradictory recollections and reactions of former participants and witnesses to the events and those of their respective local communities are also included in this analysis. The intention of this article then is broader in scope and content: it seeks to examine the relationship between individual, family and group memories as an essential part of an ongoing project of incorporating collective memory into a new historical narrative.

In order to lay the ground for this undertaking, the first part of the paper provides some preliminary theoretical and empirical discussion regarding the politics of memory in post-communism in general and in Romania in particular. This is followed by a historical overview of the communist takeover between 1944 and 1964, and of the institutional mechanisms of repression that were established by it, and then by a general presentation of the nature of the armed resistance. The second part consists of an in-depth analysis of the history of three groups that were actively engaged in direct military- and guerrilla-style confrontations with the *Securitate*: the Arsenescu–Arnăuțoiu group, named after two former military officers in the royal army who fought against the Soviet army on the Eastern Front during World War II (Colonel Gheorghe Arsenescu and Lieutenant Toma Arnăuțoiu), which operated between 1949 and 1958 in the southern area of the Făgăraș mountains near the village of Nușoara in Argeș county; the Șușman group that operated in the Apuseni mountains in an extensive area on the northwestern frontier region of Romania from 1948 until 1958, which was named after Teodor Șușman, a wealthy man belonging to the ‘rural bourgeoisie’ (*chiabur*);¹ and a group led by Ion-Gavrilă Ogoranu, a member of the youth

¹He was the former mayor of Răchițele in Cluj county and a highly respected opinion leader in the community.

wing of the Iron Guard fascist organisation in the 1930s and early 1940s, consisting primarily of high-school and college students, which operated for a decade in the northern section of the Făgăraş mountains. The activities of these groups have become well-known as a result of the availability of both detailed archival documents housed at the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives in Bucharest (*Consiliul Național pentru Studiul Arhivelor Securității*—hereafter CNSAS) and through numerous interviews, oral histories and biographical accounts carried out by journalists, historians and social scientists with members and supporters of these groups.² A third section of the paper looks at contemporary conflicting accounts and representations of these partisan groups within the local communities in which they operated five decades ago and public representations of them through mass-media and cultural productions. Finally, the last part of this analysis addresses the resistance within a broader theoretical and empirical framework of remembering, rewriting and re-evaluating the past through the prism of the politics of the present.

Preliminary remarks on the post-communist politics of memory

Studies of collective memory emphasise in various ways the selective, dynamic and social characteristics of this phenomenon that are shaped by the changing realities of the present and are subsequently subject to both partial forgetting and partial remembering (Halbwachs 1992; Nora 1996; Zerubavel 2003). These authors also show the intrinsic relationship between memory and identity construction at individual, family, group or national levels. By reinterpreting past events, stressing only certain facts, ignoring some and modifying their meaning in accordance with a current historical context, individuals assert their belonging to a certain group and collectivities find a basis for maintaining social solidarity. Or, on the contrary, the past can be instrumentalised or utilised as a source of particular ongoing or new cultural, social or political conflicts between competing actors. According to the French historian Pierre Nora, during such processes of recollection societies establish their own distinctive ‘lieux de memoire’ (sites of memory) defined as ‘any significant entity . . . which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of the community’ that can take either non-material forms (symbols, rituals, commemorations) or material (historical monuments or sites) (Nora 1996, pp. xvi–xviii). Thus, memory and history easily find each other in an uncertain or ambiguous relationship regarding the extent to which memories will become part of history or fail to do so.

²Numerous interviews and testimonies published in the last 20 years in newspapers and magazines document the history of these three groups. However, the most comprehensive volumes based on oral histories, interviews and archival documents are: (1) for the Arsenescu–Arnăuțoiu group see Voicu–Arnăuțoiu (2009) and Mungiu (2010); (2) for the Șuşman group see Jurju and Budeancă (2002) and Goșu (2004); and (3) for the Ion-Gavrilă Ogoranu group see Ogoranu (2009), Dobrinu (2007a) and Goșu (2004). Also, the television documentary *Testimonies of Suffering—A History that one does not Learn about at School* that includes more than 30 hours of testimony by former partisans, political prisoners, directed by journalist Lucia Hossu-Longin between 1991 and 2006 and published in 2007 (Hossu-Longin 2007). This volume also incorporates testimony of individuals involved with the three groups. The Civic Academy Foundation began after 1997 to organise each summer the School of Memory at the Sighet Memorial. The participants of the summer schools included academics, journalists, former partisans and survivors of the Stalinist prisons and labour camps, as well as former dissidents. The proceedings of the summer school are published each year in the collection *School of Memory* edited by Romulus Rusan. For more information about the work of the Sighet Memorial and the summer school see www.memorialsighet.ro, accessed 15 July 2012, and Ciobanu (2008).

In post-communist societies, the politics of memory has been directly connected to policies of truth and justice promoted during the transitional period and aimed at coming to terms with a totalitarian past. Social memories have been brought to the surface by both official and non-official acts of revealing the truth of the repression exercised by the communist regime in the form of official apologies, opening of secret files and truth commissions. Under communism, official propaganda erased or distorted many historical memories in order to subordinate them to an all-encompassing ideology of the socialist order (Passerini 1992; Watson 1994). The party-state thus exerted a monopoly over collective memory through official control of various means of propaganda and communication including education, mass-media and other forms of cultural production. Once such a single official history has been displaced following the collapse of communism, and various competing memories and narratives have emerged to replace it, transitional societies frequently succumb to certain myths which may inhibit or even endanger the new liberal democratic project (Hosking & Schopflin 1997; Shafir 2006; Stan 2006). Among the most common of these myths that have come to dominate public debates in East and Central Europe, Schopflin lists the following: myths of national redemption and suffering, myths of unjust treatment as a result of unfavourable historical circumstances and, in connection with revolutions, the myth of rebirth and renewal (Schopflin 1997, pp. 29–33).³ Political and intellectual elites use such myths for the purpose of political socialisation.

In Romania, after the violent overthrow of the communist regime in 1989, the construction of the myth of a heroic and patriotic armed resistance through oral histories, memoirs and autobiographies of the participants or their descendants who survived the communist repression was strongly encouraged by both anti-communist opposition parties and organisations as well as by civic groups. Among the former the most vocal were the pre-World War II historical parties (the National Peasant-Christian Democratic Party (*Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin și Democrat*—PNTCD) and the National Liberal Party (*Partidul Național Liberal*—PNL)) that emerged as the main anti-communist opposition parties in the 1990s together with the newly formed Association of Former Political Prisoners (*Asociația Foșilor Deținuți Politici*—AFDPR). Among civic organisations the voices of the humanist intelligentsia were involved in a form of dissidence known as ‘resistance through culture’ (Verdery 1991). They were represented by the Group for Social Dialogue (*Grupul pentru Dialog Social*—GDS), the Civic Alliance (*Alianța Civică*—AC) and the Civic Academy Foundation (*Fundația Academia Civică*—AFC). The work of these various actors has become part of an all-embracing intellectual and political project to construct a national narrative that emphasises the myths of national victimisation and of communism in general as a system externally and coercively imposed and in consequence alien to the Romanian people. This historical account seeks at the same time to deconstruct an opposing version of interpreting recent history (involving especially the second stage of communism under the repressive and personalised dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu) as a story of national passive acquiescence, acceptance and compromise with the regime. Besides civic associations engaged in re-writing a national narrative that emphasises opposition and resistance to the regime, organised teams of historians systematically using oral history methodology have

³In using the concept of myth we are subscribing to George Schopflin’s definition that ‘myth is one of the ways in which collectivities . . . establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own system of morality and values . . . myth is about perceptions rather than historically validated truth’ (Hosking & Schopflin 1997, p. 19).

attempted to reincorporate the history of armed resistance as an integral part of the history of communism. The Institute of Oral History from the University of Cluj has been particularly active in this area. Between 1997 and 2003 an extensive project covering a large geographical area and aimed at gathering testimonies about the armed resistance was coordinated by Doru Radosav. This historical research has resulted in several studies and two books.⁴ In addition, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism (*Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului*) founded in 1993 under the patronage of the Romanian Academy has also approached this subject extensively. Its director, the historian Radu Ciuceanu, a former political prisoner (who was incarcerated from 1948 to 1963 and experienced some of the harshest prison conditions in Pitești and Gherla) was himself a member of an armed resistance group that operated in the southern part of the country in the Oltenia region. The Institute published several documentary volumes and articles in its journal, *Archives of Totalitarianism (Arhivele Totalitarismului)*, which were based principally on primary documents relating to the resistance.⁵

The proliferation of articles, interviews and personal accounts addressing the subject of partisan opposition to the Soviet occupation in the 1990s and early 2000s illustrates the preoccupation with this newly rediscovered chapter in the history of communism. One magazine, released under the auspices of the Union of Writers, which began publishing this literature after 1990, was suggestively titled *Memoria: Revista Gîndirii Arestate (Memory: the Journal of Arrested Thinking)*.⁶ Each year between 1990 and 1994, newspapers and magazines published at least 250 articles on the topic of resistance (Radosav 2006, p. 104). After 2000, when *Securitate* files and documents were released and became more accessible, social scientists began to develop an increasingly strong interest in this topic. According to Florian Banu, between 2000 and 2007 the armed resistance was the third most preferred subject of study among researchers who sought accreditation with the National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives (CNSAS) (Banu 2008, p. 129). Intellectuals and culture, and religious cults and organisations, were the first and second preferred areas of research. Given that communist censorship had attempted to erase the armed resistance from collective memory by either ignoring or dismissing it as representing the actions of ‘criminal’, ‘enemies of the people’ or ‘fascist’ elements, these accounts represented something new and a pretext for self-reflection among a public uncertain and ambivalent about coming to terms with a traumatic past. Simultaneously, a negative image of the armed resistance that embraced earlier themes of communist propaganda began to be manufactured

⁴For more information about the Institute of Oral History from Cluj see its webpage at: <http://institute.ubbcluj.ro/io>, accessed 10 June 2012. The two books referred to are Jurju and Budeancă (2002) and Radosav *et al.* (2003).

⁵Information about the Institute can be found at: www.totalitarism.ro, accessed 10 June 2012. The most significant volumes consisting of archival documents authored by its researchers are: Ciuceanu *et al.* (1998; 2000); Ciuceanu (2001); and Brișcă and Ciuceanu (1998). It is important to note that the Institute and its director, Radu Ciuceanu, have been contested in some intellectual circles and civic associations. This contestation is partly caused by the Institute’s subordination to the Romanian Academy (the heir to the pre-1989 official academic establishment) and its association with the heir to the Communist Party (the Social Democratic Party (*Partidul Social Democrat*)). Ciuceanu himself, although a former political prisoner and member of the armed resistance, was perceived as an untrustworthy character given his political affiliations with former unreformed communists and extreme nationalists represented by the Party of Great Romania (*Partidul România Mare*—PRM). He became a member of parliament during 2000–2004 on the lists of the PRM.

⁶See <http://revista.memoria.ro>, accessed 10 August 2012.

by media outlets representing the interests of former political elites and *Securitate* elements that continued to dominate government and influence public life after 1989.⁷ Similarly negative images of the partisans and their impact on the lives of their communities as criminals and outlaws were shared by some members of localities who lived through this history or later by their descendants. These responses of rejection were provoked by exhumations of former partisans who were summarily executed and anonymously buried by the *Securitate* in the 1950s, which were undertaken by the Institute for the Investigation of Crimes of Communism (*Institutul pentru Investigarea Crimelor Comunismului*—IICCR) between 2007 and 2009 and afterwards by the Centre for the Investigation of Communist Crimes (*Centrul pentru Investigarea Crimelor Comunismului*—CICCR). Strong ethical antagonism between those perceiving partisans as heroes and those considering them villains reflects the disputed place of this phenomenon in collective memory at the local village or town level.

The Soviet takeover and the consolidation of the communist regime

After more than a decade of a relatively stable—although corrupt and patrimonial—parliamentary system, Romania's imperfect democracy in the 1930s was threatened by the rising influence of a xenophobic ultra-nationalist and strongly Christian Iron Guard movement. The brief authoritarian monarchy of Carol II (1938–1940) was unable to insulate the country from the turmoil of World War II and from the consequences of the emerging conflict between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany over the domination of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The Non-Aggression Treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union (the Ribbentrop–Molotov pact) signed in 1939 contained a secret protocol that ceded Bessarabia, northern Bukovina and the Hertza region to the Soviet Union. This was followed by two other treaties between the Axis Powers: the Vienna and Craiova Treaties signed in August and September 1940. As a result, Romania found that it had no choice but to cede territory to countries allied to Nazi Germany: the northern territory of Transylvania to Hungary and Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. Romania during the war became an ally of Nazi Germany under the dictatorship of General Ion Antonescu. But the Axis defeat at Stalingrad in 1943 and the significant losses suffered by Romanian troops on the Eastern Front raised major internal doubts about the country's military alliance with Hitler. Former leaders of the pre-war bourgeois political parties began to pursue the possibility of a peace treaty with the Allies. Given Antonescu's reluctance to submit to what he viewed as extremely disadvantageous Allied terms, Romania's secession from the Axis was ultimately only accomplished through a *coup d'état* organised by King Michael (Carol II's son) on 23 August 1944. Eight days later Soviet troops entered Bucharest.

However, the royal coup and the weakness of the Romanian Communist Party (PCR) made the communist takeover a difficult task for the Soviet occupation. At the time, the PCR counted barely 1,000 members. Because of its perceived anti-national orientation the PCR had earlier been banned shortly after its creation in 1921 and forced to operate clandestinely. For more than two decades, it remained invisible in the society at large and appealed

⁷Between 1990 and 1996 the country was governed by the largely unreformed high and mostly second tier former officials of the Communist Party (*Partidul Comunist*—PCR) in alliance with former *Securitate* officers gathered under the umbrella of a social-democratic party that renamed itself several times. It came back to power in 2000 as the Social Democratic Party (*Partidul Social Democrat*—PSD).

primarily to ethnic minorities dissatisfied with their arbitrary inclusion within the new national borders established by the 1918 Trianon Treaty. Internal fragmentation and factionalism were to become the party's chief features.⁸ But in 1944 the communists entered into a coalition government with representatives of the three principal parties—the Peasant Party (*Partidul Țărănesc*—PNTȚ), the Liberal Party (*Partidul Național Liberal*—PNL) and the Social-Democratic Party (*Partidul Social-Democrat*—PSD)—led by General Constantin Sănătescu. Communist manoeuvring with Moscow, however, led to Sănătescu's dismissal and to the appointment of Nicolae Rădescu as prime minister. Yet his efforts were seriously undermined by the PCR which, with Soviet support, set up four front organisations through which it exercised substantial influence. These were the Society for Friendship with the Soviet Union, the Union of Patriots, the Patriotic Defense and the Ploughman's Front. The new governing coalition was now the National Democratic Front (*Frontul Democratic Național*) consisting of these four front organisations, the trade unions, the social-democrats and the communists. Rădescu was removed through the direct intervention of the Soviet commissar Andrei Vyshinski.

A new prime minister, Petru Groza, was appointed in 1945. Soviet intervention in Romania's domestic affairs subsequently became even more intrusive. Fearing that the communists might not be fully in control Stalin fell back on military action and intervened to prop up the National Democratic Front. The Red Army occupied Romanian Army headquarters and disarmed all troops in the capital. The king refused to cooperate and would sign no bills until Groza resigned. The Soviet Union consolidated its domination by demanding \$300 million in reparations, by taking over the oil and timber industries, the Black Sea ports and Danubian shipping. Groza then took credit for the return of northern Transylvania partly courtesy of the Allies. The communists embarked on a campaign of purging fascist collaborators and executed Antonescu. At the same time, a process of land reform and collectivisation began. Peasants with less than five hectares were instructed to form committees to redistribute land confiscated from Germans, collaborators, war criminals, churches, monasteries, charitable institutions and the crown. The 1946 elections were manipulated. A year later the leaders of the PNTȚ and PNL were arrested and their parties dissolved. The PSD merged with the PCR in 1948. King Michael was forced to abdicate in December 1947 and the new republic, named the Popular Republic of Romania (RPR), was established.⁹

This was the formal beginning of the communist regime. Repressive legislation seeking the destruction of private property and of class enemies was immediately enacted. Article 209 was added to the 1948 penal code designating plotting against the social order a crime, while Law 16 passed in 1949 established the death penalty for treason (Bălan 2000, p. 70). Large and mid-sized rural households came under increasing pressure. After 1950, for example, local authorities were given discretionary power to ensure the collection of agricultural taxes and grain. Anyone opposing these measures and in general any elements considered a threat to the new order were subject to compulsory re-education. Re-education programmes were set up in work units, which after 1952 were renamed work colonies. In the first year of their establishment, these work colonies interned almost 12,000 people of whom the most heavily represented categories were from the peasantry and the working class.

⁸For a history of the Romanian Communist Party see Tismăneanu (2003) and King (1980).

⁹For establishment of the Popular Republic see Giurăscu and Fischer-Galați (1998).

In these colonies—the most noteworthy of which were Periprava, Poarta Albă, Salcia, Stoenesti, Megidia, Capul Midia, Ovidiu, Peninsula—extremely inhumane conditions and the brutality of many of the guards and commandants led inexorably to an excessive number of deaths. The horrors of the colonies outraged public opinion both within and outside the country to such a degree that the regime felt pressured to defend itself.¹⁰ In 1952 the government established two commissions to investigate illegal acts committed against internees as well as violations involved in their release. However, these investigations were little more than a fig leaf. They were obviously not motivated by any concern for those who died or were injured. The seven individuals sentenced for abuses and illegal acts at Salcia, for example, were pardoned in 1957. In 1959 the Minister of Internal Affairs, Alexandru Drăghici, rehabilitated and restored the benefits of 21 officers and sub-officers who had been previously convicted.

The conditions and methods of punishment used in the Stalinist prisons were equally repressive. A special feature of Romanian detention was a re-education programme that employed both physical and psychological torture and which continued to be implemented until 1964. It was inspired by the theories of the Russian educational psychologist A. S. Makarenko, that sought large-scale changes in personality as well as the political realignment of whole communities and their ethnic and religious identity. This system of re-education was imposed on political detainees in prisons at Pitești, Aiud, Gherla, Suceava, Ocnele Mari and Danube–Black Sea Canal. Under the supervision of prison commandants and guards selected groups of political prisoners were forced into and then charged with beating and torturing fellow prisoners. These, in turn, were forced to torture their cell mates with the same methods. Parallel to these acts of physical repression, ‘prisoner-torturers’ were coerced to force their victims into confessing to atrocities and into using demeaning language against their families and religious or ethnic group. They were also coerced into renouncing previous political convictions and affiliations. As with the first investigations of abuses in work colonies, official inquiries into these activities resulted only in clearing those involved of any serious guilt. Instead, political prisoners who were forced into the re-education experiment—most notably Eugen Țurcanu, Popa Țanu and Nuți Pătrășcanu (all former members of the Iron Guard)—were scapegoated and sentenced to death. And lastly, party propagandists fabricated a conspiracy theory that it had all been orchestrated by the Iron Guard leader Horia Sima who, from his exile in Spain, had given the necessary instructions in order to compromise the credibility of the regime and the party.¹¹

Overall, it is estimated that the victims of direct Stalinist repression included 600,000 political detainees, 200,000 administrative internees, peasants who refused to submit to collectivisation, deportees, prisoners of war and more than half a million young people forced into labour (Rusan 2007). In fact, the *Gulag*-style repression ended relatively late in Romania and never followed the process of de-Stalinisation initiated by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 after Stalin’s 1953 death. De-Stalinisation was used as no more than a pretext in the struggle for political advantage by competing factions within the PCR in which the nationalist faction led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, secretary of the PCR, was eventually victorious. He managed to ensure its primacy over the ‘foreign faction’ of Anna Pauker

¹⁰For the topic of work camps and work colonies see Jela (2006, pp. 126–34).

¹¹For the detention system and the phenomenon of re-education see Stănescu (2000), Mureșan (2008) and Ierunca (1990).

consisting of non-ethnic Romanians who had been trained in Moscow and sent by the Kremlin to Bucharest. It was not until 1963, through Ordinance no. 5,¹² that certain convictions were amnestied and political sentences pardoned. In 1964 political prisoners who survived the horrors of the *Gulag* were finally released, though in conditions of harsh restraint. All were required to express enthusiasm for the new regime (Bălan 2000, p. 249). After release they and their families continued to be under secret police surveillance and were subject to discrimination in the workforce and educational system. The last remaining partisans hiding out in the mountains were also captured or killed by *Securitate* forces in the early 1960s. In 1964, Dej issued a Declaration of Independence,¹³ that criticised Russia's overwhelming hegemony in the Soviet bloc and the threat it posed to national independence. In this fashion, and after almost two decades of intensive repression, the communist regime was at last able to achieve a measure of consolidation by styling itself a nationalist-communist regime despite the fact that the reality of national independence remained largely illusory.

The anti-communist armed resistance movement

The anti-communist armed resistance occurred between 1944 and 1962 and lasted almost two decades. It is important to make a distinction here between the civilian resistance to Sovietisation and communisation and armed resistance. The former involved passive opposition and was especially to be found in rural areas. It was manifested in the refusal to join agricultural cooperatives that were based on common possession and cultivation of the land, and by evading compulsory quotas or refusing to cooperate with the newly installed communist authorities after the elections of 1946. Armed resistance in contrast involved open confrontation with the police and military forces and other overt forms of opposition to the regime. The most common acts expressing rejection of the regime and its representatives were printing and distributing flyers with an anti-communist and anti-Soviet message, removing symbols of the regime from public places, and destroying registers that contained information about forced requisitions of farm instruments, animals and grains from rural households. Acts of violence or sabotage were quite rare and occurred only in direct confrontations or in cases involving betrayal.¹⁴

The resistance began in 1944 in the northeastern part of the country after Soviet troops crossed into Romanian territory and occupied northern Bukovina and northern Bessarabia. Given Romania's alliance with Germany and its involvement on the Eastern Front the Soviets had little trust in the local population. They began to deport the Romanian and Ukrainian population living within 100 km of the front and coerced them into requisitions for the military. It was in these circumstances that small groups of partisans began to operate in the mountainous areas of Bukovina. One of their priorities was to relocate the local population in the territories remaining under Romanian control. The most significant were groups, led by Vladimir Macoveciuc, Ion Vatamaniuc and Constantin Cenușă, operating in

¹²Ordinance no. 5 of 3 January 1963.

¹³The Declaration of Independence (*Declarația din Aprilie 1964*) was adopted at the Plenary of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party (*Comitetul Central al Partidului Muncitoresc Român*) held from 15 to 22 April 1964.

¹⁴The most comprehensive accounts of the armed resistance are Bălan (2000), Bodeanu and Budeancă (2006), Dobrinu (2006), Hossu-Longin (2007) and Radosav (2006).

and near the surrounding towns and villages. They consisted primarily of foresters or mountain people who had previously fought on the German side and had kept their weapons. In the initial stages all of them continued to seek support from the German army and to maintain their allegiance to it. But, after the *coup d'état* of 23 August 1944, many were captured by the Soviet authorities and were either executed or given heavy prison sentences.¹⁵ However, some of these partisans re-emerged after 1948. The most long-lived of these groups was led by Gavril Vatamaniuc who managed to evade the authorities until 1955. After escaping a death sentence and surviving imprisonment, Vatamaniuc re-emerged after 1989. Together with other former members or supporters of the resistance, he became one of the last living testimonies of this unknown history. It is also important here to mention the presence of Vasile Motrescu who between 1944 and his execution in 1958 led an outlaw existence either as a member of these groups or as a solitary fugitive. His temporary recruitment as a *Securitate* collaborator—which he eventually renounced in dramatic circumstances involving the failure to capture the Ogoranu group in 1951—made him a tragic and controversial character among the partisans. We will return later to this episode and the efforts undertaken in Hossu-Longin's documentary *Testimonies of Suffering* to rehabilitate Motrescu.

After the final defeat of the democratic and bourgeois-dominated parliament and the abolition of the monarchy on 30 December 1947, the resistance movement began to expand throughout the country. These new groups were broadly favourable to Western democracies and sought support from both the United States and Britain. In the absence of credible data it is impossible to assess the size of these groups and their members. However, official documents released by the government in 1959 estimated the number of resistance groups at 1,196 during an almost 15 year period (from 1945 to 1959), an astonishing number if true. It illustrated the regime's insecurity and its fear of widespread popular revolt. The historian Dorin Dobrinu has in fact identified 14 geographical areas in which numerous though rather small and disparate groups of partisans led a shadowy and clandestine existence. These are: Bukovina, Moldova, Vrancea, Northern Transylvania, Central Transylvania, the Apuseni mountains, Crişana, Arad, Banat, Oltenia, the Făgăraş mountains (on both the southern and northern flank), Muntenia and Dobrogea (Dobrinu 2009, p. 317). Certain regional differences, rooted in both the particular socio-demographic characteristics and geographic make-up of specific regions, distinguished these different partisan groups. In respect to geography, the phenomenon of resistance was stronger in the isolated mountainous areas of Făgăraş and Apuseni that were less accessible to the authorities. Heavily forested, these two regions were not as intensively subject to collectivisation. As Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery emphasise in their recent study of collectivisation, Transylvania as the most mountainous part of the country was collectivised later as a result of both the presence of a resistance movement and the difficulties involved in mechanising and cultivating less fertile soils (Kligman & Verdery 2011, pp. 144–45). Here the resistance was centred around the leaders of groups led by Toma Arnăuţoiu, Teodor Şuşman and Ion Gavrilă-Ogoranu. Located in remote areas and in proximity to both the Hungarian and the Soviet borders, communities in these regions were extremely antagonistic towards any outside intrusion in their economic and political life. The area of the Apuseni mountains has a longstanding tradition of nationalist resistance that goes back to 1848 when the region was

¹⁵For the armed resistance in Bukovina see Brişcă and Ciuceanu (1998) and Brişcă (2000).

incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was here where Romania's own 1848 revolution began. The nature of the terrain did not favour detection by the authorities. Most of the population lived in scattered villages at altitudes of about 1,400m in mountains riddled with caves of which there are approximately 400 in Apuseni alone. The historical experience and occupational structure of the population (logging, sawmills and mining) created a distinctive sense of identity among residents that was different from that which was to be found in the rest of the country. They were always known as *moși*. The Făgăraș mountains provided partisans with similar opportunities for concealment. Known as the Alps of the Carpathians, these mountains cover an area of 70 km in length and 40 km in width. Eight of its peaks are over 2,500m. In addition, the suppression of the Greek-Catholic church, which had been forced into a merger with the Greek-Orthodox church in 1948, persuaded many priests and churchgoers to go into hiding in this wild area where there were few roads. Ethnic, regional and religious nationalism thus represented here a powerful mobilising force against the Soviet regime and the terrain provided an excellent environment for subversive activities.

At the same time, the resistance movement became active especially in the southern region of Dobrogea, the western areas of the Banat and in the southeastern region of Oltenia. In Dobrogea the resistance was principally the work of members of a Macedonian ethnic group that was threatened with the confiscation of their assets by local communists. Most owned pasture land and sheep. The so-called 'trains of death' in which many were executed during their alleged transportation to Jilava prison in the southern part of Romania have remained deeply embedded in the collective memory of this group.¹⁶ In the Banat region the rural bourgeoisie had also remained strong and was similarly deeply committed to private property. Here Colonel Ion Uță attempted to unify other groups from the region by rallying peasants from the mountain villages of Severin county. However, Uță and his fellow partisans were killed in 1949. Others in his group or from other groups who escaped clashes with the *Securitate* were convicted in a show trial in June 1949 in Timișoara and many of them were executed.¹⁷ The resistance groups in Oltenia were similarly decimated in violent confrontations with the communist police.¹⁸

Yet there was no consistent coordination between these various groups. Some few former army officers and other political leaders who had a broader vision of the anti-communist resistance hoped for support from Western governments in an attempt at leading the civilian population in a future national insurrection. But they learned very quickly how unrealistic such plans were. The one attempt to bring these disparate groupings under central control was initiated in 1946 by an organisation known as the National Resistance Movement which included army officers and members of the historical parties who believed at the time that an armed conflict between the USSR and the USA was imminent. However, it was quickly shut down by the authorities and its leaders given lengthy prison sentences. Another failed initiative at unifying the resistance movement originated in the southeastern region of the Apuseni mountains. In 1948, Captain Nicolae Dabija—a well-known officer who had been honoured by both the Romanian and German military for exceptional actions on the Eastern Front in the Caucasus in 1942–1943—organised and trained a group of partisans. His plan

¹⁶For the anti-communist resistance in Dobrogea see Ciolacu (1995) and Constantin Ionașcu (2000).

¹⁷For the armed resistance in Banat see Milin (2000).

¹⁸For the armed resistance in Oltenia see Ciuceanu (2001; 2003).

was to unify the various groups from Apuseni and then coordinate with the resistance from other regions of the country with support from the US embassy. Ultimately, its plans having come to nothing, the group was destroyed in March 1949 after a fierce confrontation with the combined forces of the *Securitate* and the police (Dobrinu 2006; 2007b).

The support of relatives and friends from local communities with food, clothing, medicine and other necessities was crucial for the survival of such groups. Until 1953 partisans hid in the surrounding woods and mountains during summer and autumn. Here they constructed small shelters in the form of cabins or huts. In the winter they came down to the valleys without much fear and sought refuge in the homes (generally the barns) of relatives, friends or acquaintances supportive of their actions. However, after 1953, *Securitate* forces stopped relying solely on the support of local authorities for information (the mayor, city council and the police) and began their own surveillance by attempting to recruit informers among those suspected of having ties with the partisans. But the recruitment of informers proved to be unreliable as many who were forced to sign collaboration agreements with the *Securitate* were either playing a double game, or in some cases misleading the authorities by falsely informing on the partisans' whereabouts. Such incidents were documented in *Securitate* reports issued at the time. For example, a report released in 1958 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs documenting the capture of the Şuşman brothers in the village of Traniş refers to the arrest of one of their supporters, Floca Iosif. Interrogation of Iosif yielded only partial and vague information about those involved with the Şuşmans.¹⁹ This type of defensive strategy, stonewalling security agencies, was common throughout the different regions where partisan groups operated. This was later confirmed by former witnesses and participants during interviews and oral histories conducted after 1989. Of interest here, for example, is a case documented by Smaranda Vultur in the village of Domaşnea in the Banat region 'where the most important kin groups divided themselves into those who fled into the mountains and those who joined the Party or the *Securitate* so as to protect their kin' (Kligman & Verdery 2011, pp. 303–5). However, increasing pressure on local communities made it dangerous for partisans to come down to the villages in the winter. When they did so they had no choice but to continuously change locations. In extreme situations, when food supplies were running low, partisans would take cheese and lamb meat from sheepfolds with the tacit consent of the shepherds. They left behind notes detailing the exact amount of produce taken in order to protect the shepherds by making it appear as a robbery. The same method was used when produce was taken from village stores. This in fact provided the *Securitate* with a fine justification for labelling these groups bandits, thieves or fugitives from justice. There were also some instances of partisans who chose a solitary existence in the hope that they would have a better chance of remaining undetected. This was the case of Ion Bandea, a peasant from the Banat, who managed to survive clandestinely until 1962 when he was finally shot by the *Securitate*.

Most groups of partisans were centred on and operated primarily in terms of regional interests rather than on the basis of ideological principle. Initially, the *Securitate* and its propaganda apparatus attempted to portray them as offshoots of the fascist Iron Guard movement or as enemies and capitalist exploiters of the people. But, in reality, the movement was quite heterogeneous in terms of both political and social class background and professional affiliation. A majority, estimated at almost half, was recruited from various

¹⁹ 'Bande de din regiunea Cluj—G. Teodor Şuşman', CNSAS, Dosar no. 8600, vol. 2 (D41/v.2).

strata of the peasantry and was not related to any political party or organisation. This is important for it indicates that to a great degree the history of the armed resistance was integrally related to growing local opposition to agricultural collectivisation. However, as shown earlier, there were in addition to these peasants a number of officers discharged by the Soviets from the army because of prior German participation on the Eastern Front, representatives of the small educated stratum of villagers (priests, school teachers), as well as high-school and college students, industrial workers and middle-class professionals. Among the clergy, as already noted, especially in northern Transylvania there was a significant presence of Greek-Catholic priests who refused assimilation to the Greek-Orthodox church. Also, many who later joined the resistance did so a few years after the first partisans went into hiding in order to escape police harassment and pressure to reveal information about co-villagers or family members, or to escape the compulsory quotas of grains or animals requested by the local branch of the PCR. Some were simply forced out of their villages by circumstances. In fact, for many a commitment to anti-communism only crystallised later as a result of this fugitive experience.

Members or sympathisers of the Peasant Party were the most numerous and far exceeded those affiliated with the Iron Guard. There were in fact very few instances when partisan groups openly declared adherence to extreme right-wing fascist ideology. Among these the most significant were the group led by Ogoranu and the group called Cross and Sword (*Cruce și Spadă*) led by Iron Guard member, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Mărășești, in the Cluj county area. There were also members of the Liberal Party and even members of the local branches of the Communist Party and the Ploughman's Front. Despite the multiplicity of ideological preferences and diversity in social composition, two main recurring themes were conveyed in political messages sent by the partisans: adherence to the historical traditions of national independence and a sense of vigilantism against injustices committed by communist officials against local populations. Most groups named themselves either after well-known historical leaders praised for their heroic stance during battles of national independence or included the title of outlaws in the tradition of Robin Hood-style crusades (Radosav 2006, p. 97). For example, one band in the region of Vrancea styled itself Vlad Țepeș II after the fifteenth century ruler famous for his practice of impaling Ottomans (Dobrinu 2006, p. 249). Other groups took the names of King Michael or Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the Peasant Party. The Arsenescu–Arnăuțoiu group was known as the Outlaws of Muscel and another group adopted in its title the name of Avram Iancu (a Romanian nationalist from the Austro-Hungarian Empire active in the 1848 revolution). Their actions in attacking police headquarters and city hall, and in threatening local officials feared in the community, were understandable if put in this broad context of reaction to communisation.

The presence of some PCR members in these groups and the various types of support given to the resistance by local communist officials are similarly comprehensible in these terms. For many years the PCR was perceived in rural areas as an alien, foreign and atheistic presence incompatible with a local world centred on a well-established order. This order was grounded in traditional social hierarchies based on wealth, power and prestige. Personalised ties and affiliations prevailed over more abstract and objective or impersonal ties. Loyalty to one's kin group (understood in a broad sense that included not just immediate family, but also members of the extended family group defined by both blood ties and patrimonial relations of godparents and godchildren) was regarded as a paramount responsibility. Most people then were reluctant to join the PCR and if they did so, it was the

result of pressure and blackmail or was motivated by reasons that went beyond any genuine conviction or commitment to communist ideology. The PCR's failure to recruit wealthy and important local people like Teodor Țușman, Mihai Jurj, Nicolae Pop or Iosif Capotă represented a serious blow to communist officials (often appointed from other areas) who realised that their efforts towards communisation and collectivisation would continue to be undermined by the strong influence exerted by these local leaders.²⁰ At the same time, the recruitment of the poorest peasants to the party was negatively perceived by villagers who did not particularly differentiate themselves as either middle peasants or *chiaburi*. In fact, those who owned more land, had local businesses or were part of the rural intellectual class (priests, school teachers or physicians) were regarded both as insiders to the village hierarchy and instrumental in representing village interests to the outside political establishment. As Alina Mungiu shows in her ethnographic study, deferential attitudes towards such high status individuals persisted even during the times of their outlaw existence (Mungiu 2010, p. 83). Initially then some local representatives of the PCR and of the police refused to turn in partisans by professing ignorance of their whereabouts. There were even cases in which officials provided direct aid to partisans and sheltered them in their homes. The particularism of kinship and community then usually if not almost always far outweighed the universalism of class ideology. In fact, the structure of village organisation before World War II was fundamentally based on patron relationships between wealthier and poorer peasants, relations which quite often were legitimised through symbolic relationships of god-parenthood. This, together with the high esteem in which the educated stratum of the village (comprising priests and school teachers) was regarded, made it extremely difficult for the PCR to introduce social class warfare in the rural areas (Kligman & Verdery 2011, ch. 6).

The Soviet regime was perceived by many in Romania as inevitably short-lived and doomed to failure. Until the defeat of the Hungarian revolution in 1956 the prevailing belief was that the Soviet Union would be challenged and ultimately defeated by the Western powers and that the country would eventually re-establish its pre-war political system. This hope gave the partisans the motivation to endure the harsh conditions of a fugitive life. As Ion Bălan emphasises, the armed resistance had a fundamentally defensive character. It was centred on the idea of mobilising villagers and helping to organise an anti-communist insurrection when 'Americans would come' (Bălan 2000, p. 260). Such a seemingly unrealistic expectation was supported in the beginning by the apparently concrete actions of Western embassies. For example, the National Resistance Movement in the late 1940s had

²⁰Mihai Jurj was a forester and his parents were among the wealthiest *chiaburi* in Răchițele. He refused to join the RCP and in 1948 went into the mountains with Teodor Țușman and his sons. He and his wife Lucreția led a fugitive life until 1954 when they were betrayed and captured. A year later Mihai was executed and Lucreția was imprisoned until 1964. Nicolae Pop was also a wealthy forester in the region called Țara Lăpușului in Maramureș. During Horthy's Hungarian occupation of northern Transylvania he saved many Jewish children from deportation to Auschwitz (an act for which he was included in the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem) and then in 1948 he helped some anti-communist partisans. He refused to become a *Securitate* informer and together with his son and daughter and 17 other people organised a partisan group. Nicolae Pop was shot in 1953. Iosif Capotă was born in a large peasant Greek-Catholic family in 1912 in the Transylvanian village of Margău. He became a well-known and respected veterinarian in the region saving many domestic animals from rabies. In 1946 he was involved with the Peasant Party. After refusing to cooperate with the communist authorities he went into hiding in 1947. For the next ten years Capotă led a clandestine life and lived in different homes in Margău and in the surrounding villages. Together with Alexandru Dejeu (a Greek-Catholic physician married to Capotă's niece), he distributed more than 5,000 anti-communist manifestos between 1949 and 1954. They were both executed in 1958.

some contacts with the British embassy in Bucharest, while President Truman's expressed support for the Greek government against the communists in 1947 convinced the leaders of the historical parties that the Soviet regime might be removed. In 1952 the United States was said to have parachuted a Romanian paramilitary unit into Romania. All were captured and 13 executed in 1953. Secret reports compiled by the *Securitate* at the time described persistent rumours and discussions between persons claiming to have seen foreign soldiers in the surrounding woods in the Craiova region.²¹ Many years later, Nicolae Pop's daughter Aristina Pop-Săileanu, who was only 18 years old when she joined her father in the mountains, recalled a chillingly comic incident. While they and others were hiding out in the barn of a party official they heard the communists partying and drinking in their host's house singing 'Long live the partisans/Until the arrival of the Americans' (Rusan 2008, p. 49). Such were the contradictions and confusions of the time.

In the 1950s the main source of encouragement for the armed resistance came from Western propaganda through radio stations such as Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio France. Radosav captures very well the illusory nature of many broadcasts and interprets the myth of the Americans' arrival in the collective imagination as quite removed from any temporal reference (Radosav 2006, p. 93). In almost all of the oral histories and interviews referred to above, the interviewees say that they constantly awaited the arrival of the Americans and constantly postponed indefinitely in their minds the possible date of their arrival. This idealised image of the Americans as saviours was more pronounced in Transylvania and the Banat. In these regions between 1899 and 1913, approximately 200,000 people (particularly those from rural areas) emigrated to the US (Jurju 2003, p. 230). Many, especially those who had done well and returned to their villages, projected an exaggerated image of America and its opportunities and powers which they passed on to their children (Ogoranu 2009, p. 120).

But with the passage of time the hope for external support and the expectation of an imminent war between the West and the Soviet Union began to fade. Those who escaped capture became more concerned with individual survival and tried (although unsuccessfully) to plan their escape from the country. Equally important for the destruction of the armed resistance was the *Securitate's* adoption of much more effective methods of capturing its members. Once the central authorities understood that they could not rely solely on the support of local subordinates, agents were infiltrated into suspect communities under fictitious names. Stories were developed to provoke family members or other partisan supporters into revealing information about their whereabouts. *Securitate* officers thus gathered and used sensitive information about people's private lives and manipulated local feuds and rivalries to their advantage. In 1949 General Alexandru Nicolschi introduced a tactic known as the 'bands' diversion' consisting in the creation of fake groups of partisans dispersed in the active regions of Vrancea, Banat and Făgăraş. They were instructed to gain the trust of partisan groups and then lure them into the hands of the *Securitate* (Ogoranu 2009).²² Yet the insertion of fake bands and disguised agents in the villages and surrounding areas had no immediate results. Some agents failed to present themselves convincingly among the locals and their presence as outsiders was deemed suspicious. Fictitious bands

²¹Notă-Ministerul Securităţii Statului Regiunea Craiova—23 noiembrie 1952', CNSAS, Dosar 7893, vol. 2, no. 2, 'privind acţiunile organizaţiilor de Securitate împotriva bandelor subversive din munţi' (D82/2pi).

²²CNSAS, Dosar no. 8600, vol. 2 (D41/v. 2).

faced the same problem. Several incidents involving the Ogoranu group and the Arnăuțoiu brothers attest to their reluctance to establish ties to any such suspect bands. In 1957, as earlier noted, the *Securitate* recruited a partisan, Vasile Motrescu, as a member of a fake band known as 'Mandea' that had been entrusted with the capture of the Ogoranu group. In an extraordinary dramatic encounter between the five members of the Ogoranu group and the four false partisans (including Motrescu), he unexpectedly revealed their true identity. The three *Securitate* agents were shot and Motrescu went into hiding until 1958 when he was captured and sentenced to death. This incident is extensively discussed in Hossu-Longin's documentary film, *Testimonies of Suffering*, and symbolically referred to as a retroactive 'appeal for Motrescu'. Her intention was to prove Motrescu's integrity by using archival *Securitate* sources together with Vatamaniuc's and Ogoranu's testimonies.

But ultimately these clandestine *Securitate* methods combined with extreme repression resulted in the destruction of most resistance groups by the late 1950s (Hossu-Longin 2007, pp. 21–31). Raids on the villages, interrogation and torture of local inhabitants in order to obtain information, the arrest of people for not reporting to the police suspicious activities or the presence of fugitives became increasingly frequent. There were many incidents in which those who were acting to protect partisans were fatally shot or wounded during open confrontations between fugitives and police. Entire families were deported and imprisoned; their homes and assets confiscated in a public display meant to instil fear and terrorise the villagers. Aristina Pop-Săileanu remembers how her house was burnt, the animals killed and photographs of her father's face punctured with needles (Rusan 2008, p. 59). In fact, this is not an isolated story. Many surviving relatives of partisans remember how they were forced to destroy pictures of them. As a symbol of the legitimacy of the new power, the homes of Șuşman, Pop and Arnăuțoiu were magically transformed into police or *Securitate* headquarters. By transforming such important referents of community life, which would remind families and the village as a whole of certain individuals or families who opposed the new order, the regime attempted to erase from collective memory the old order based on status and prestige. Under such intense pressure, support and sympathy for the armed resistance slowly diminished. Villagers began to blame the partisans for the constant sense of fear under *Securitate* surveillance and repression. As Andrei Miroiu observes, out of the operations aimed at dismantling the armed resistance 'success was achieved through a combination of tactics which included informer penetration, intelligence gathering, and persuasion—generally coupled with violent actions when the location of partisans was discovered ... in a less than timely fashion' (2010, p. 691).

Finally, those who had been captured but managed to escape execution (and succeeded in surviving the harsh conditions of labour camps and prison) were released in 1964. They returned to their homes and found what had become a consolidated socialist order governed by new elites. Neighbours, friends and family members were afraid and reluctant to help them reintegrate into the new socialist world. To avoid further repression and to protect their families, former partisans lived discreetly. Their stories were either half-forgotten or distorted by a communist propaganda that portrayed them as thieves, bandits and counter-revolutionary elements. Literary production subordinated to communist ideology—the new propaganda of socialist realism—attempted to manufacture a heroic and patriotic image of *Securitate* officers who fought valiantly against class enemies. The partisans were systematically vilified and de-mythologised. As early as 1949, in *Lazăr de la Rusca* (*Lazăr from Rusca*), a novel written in verse by Dan Deșliu, the partisans were described as

criminals. The main character Lazăr (a folk singer) relates how an outraged public opinion demanded exemplary punishment of partisans who had executed a *Securitate* informer (Deşliu 1949). Similar narratives portraying partisans from the mountains as evil and cruel Iron Guard fascists continued to be represented through the 1970s and 1980s in fiction as well as in the official gazette of the Ministry of Internal Affairs *Pentru Patrie (For the Homeland)*. Petre Sălcudeanu's *Biblioteca din Alexandria (The Library from Alexandria)* was a best-seller in 1980 (Sălcudeanu 1992).²³ In these portrayals of the partisans, communist propaganda defined them as class enemies. In such a fashion, the history and destruction of the armed resistance was interpreted in official historiography as part of a victorious class struggle against a failed counter-revolution.

Remembering and reassessing the role of the partisans

This section examines the way in which the role of the armed resistance has been reinterpreted after 1989 and reincorporated in collective memory. This question is illustrated in an analysis of how historical accounts of the three groups—the Arnăuțoiu–Arsenescus, the Ogoranus and the Șuşmans—have been favourably reconstructed by the media, civic organisations, intellectuals and by participants in the groups themselves. Each has attempted to give the role of the armed resistance in general and the lives of the partisans in particular some special and symbolic meaning for an historical account that stresses a courageous and heroic nationalist opposition in the face of an oppressive Soviet-style regime. The tension between such positive and adulatory accounts and the frequently negative memories of the members of partisan groups within their own respective local communities, and also by various political actors sympathetic to the communist regime, are presented here in contrast. A brief chronology of the three groups gives some background.

The Arnăuțoiu–Arsenescu group was set up in 1949 in the southern area of the Făgăraș mountains. Its zone of operations covered rural areas in the counties of Argeș and Muscel that had remained free of collectivisation. After involvement in the repression of the Iron Guard rebellion under General Antonescu in 1941, and after fighting on the German side on the Eastern Front, Gheorghe Arsenescu was discharged from the army at the rank of colonel.²⁴ Arsenescu—born in 1907 and raised by his widowed mother with five other siblings—was in a minority in the armed resistance because he had a larger vision and a long-term plan for the anti-communist movement. He established contacts with former army officers leading similar movements in the regions of Oltenia and the Banat in anticipation of a national uprising. Unlike other partisans, he also believed in an offensive-type strategy based on open confrontation with the authorities (Bălan 2000, pp. 271–72). Together with the brothers Toma and Petre Arnăuțoiu, Arsenescu established the movement he named The Outlaws of Muscel (*Haiducii Muscelului*) in the spring of 1949. An agreement was worked out in the house of Iancu Arnăuțoiu, the father of Toma and Petre. To understand the strong

²³This is anti-partisan novel in line with party ideology.

²⁴For one year (1940–1941) General Ion Antonescu's fascist military dictatorship relied on an alliance with the Iron Guard movement. However, the two seriously disagreed over strategy. While Antonescu believed in military discipline, the Iron Guard's tactics were based entirely on violence. In 1941 the Guard attempted a *coup d'état* against Antonescu and launched terrorist acts against a number of politicians and pogrom-style killings in Jewish communities. Antonescu crushed the rebellion and its leaders and removed the Iron Guard from the coalition government.

support that the resistance enjoyed in this area a brief account of the Arnăuțoiu family background is needed. The family had deep roots in the area as for over four generations it was an important and influential presence in the village of Nucșoara. Iancu was a school teacher for 40 years and an influential entrepreneur who owned land and cattle in the village. He was involved in real estate, brokered economic and political deals in the community, secured loans for middle and poor peasants and served as godfather at many weddings and baptism ceremonies in the village. He was also a leader of the Peasant Party (PNT) in Argeș county and a former decorated veteran of World War I. Iancu and his wife Laurenția had five children. The first son, Ioan born in 1916, became an army officer and rose to the rank of lieutenant and died in 1944 on the Eastern Front in Crimea. The only daughter, Elena, was born in 1919. She and her brother Anton, born in 1924, were in 1989 the last surviving members of the family. Although not directly involved in any anti-communist activities, both suffered reprisals at the hands of the authorities including imprisonment and (in the case of Anton) physical torture because of their connections to the partisans. Anton died in 2000 after recording his autobiography.²⁵ In 2011, aged 92, Elena published her own oral testimonies (Arnăuțoiu 2011). Of the two brothers who became partisans, Toma, born in 1921, was similarly a decorated officer on the Eastern Front. On returning as a wounded veteran in 1944 he refused to serve in the Soviet army. Toma and his youngest brother Petre, born in 1932 and a graduate of the local commercial school, established the partisan group that operated in the southern area of Făgăraș for a decade. According to *Securitate* reports, the Arnăuțoiu and Ogoranu groups were considered the most dangerous to the new regime of all armed resistance groups.

Initially, the Outlaws of Muscel consisted of 16 partisans belonging to the rural middle class (landowners, priests and school teachers), but also including several peasants and shepherds. Among them were four women but only two of them remained in the mountains: Maria Plop, a young woman working in the Arnăuțoiu household and Maria Jubleanu, the wife of the partisan Titu Jubleanu. Maria Jubleanu was shot in 1951 by *Securitate* agents.²⁶ As a result of divergent views on tactics between Arsenescu's aggressive approach and the Arnăuțoiu brothers' more defensive strategy the group split in July 1949. They also divided their areas of operation between the rivers Doamnei and Vâslan. The Arsenescu group, which included five other individuals, was slowly dismantled by the *Securitate*. Until 1960, when he was betrayed, Arsenescu had managed to repeatedly escape capture by the authorities, but ultimately was caught and executed. What was left of the Arnăuțoiu group—five individuals including the two brothers, Maria Plop, a two year old girl Ioana (the daughter of Maria and Toma) and the young Constantin Jubleanu (the son of Titu and Maria Jubleanu)—was also captured in 1958 after its betrayal. Jubleanu resisted and was shot. The others were taken into *Securitate* custody and a year later Toma and Petre Arnăuțoiu were executed with 14 other men who had supported the group as outsiders. In 1962 Maria Plop died in jail of tuberculosis after a sentence of life imprisonment. Ioana was taken from her mother and sent to an orphanage, her birth certificate identifying her by her mother's name only.

²⁵For Anton Arnăuțoiu's biography see Dragoș Carciga (2006, pp. 297–304).

²⁶Short biographical accounts of the women involved with the group are available at: www.eroinenucsoara.ro, accessed 15 June 2012. The information, including photographs and archival documents, was compiled by Ioan-Raluca Voicu-Arnăuțoiu.

The succession of events was a devastating blow for the village of Nucșoara and the surrounding areas: besides the execution of the 14 men, 100 others (both men and women) were arrested, convicted and given prison sentences ranging from three years to life imprisonment. Ioana learned the identity of her parents only at the age of 34 at which point she began to research what had happened to them in an attempt to restore their reputation and that of the group to which they belonged. Three other women who supported the Nucșoara partisans with food, shelter and acted as messengers—Elisabeta Rizea, Marina Chircă and Ana Simion—subsequently endured interrogation, torture and imprisonment but survived and re-emerged after 1989. Their testimonies and accounts (especially Rizea's) became a source of both oral history and controversy within the community.²⁷

The Șușman group originated in the village of Răchițele located 60 km from the Transylvanian city of Cluj itself. The economy of the community, centred on forestry and a well-developed timber industry, provided the partisans an intimate familiarity with the various mountainous routes that linked the three counties of Cluj, Alba and Bihor together. During its ten years of clandestine existence (1948–1958), the members of the group constantly moved between the three counties and received support from the residents of adjacent villages in the Vlădeasa mountains. The group was named for Teodor Șușman (1894–1951), former mayor of Răchițele and a wealthy *chiabur* whose entrepreneurial activities encompassed a lucrative timber business and the ownership of a profitable local store. Like Iancu Arnăuțoiu, Șușman was also seen as a leader within his community. His reputation became established in the 1920s when he was instrumental in persuading King Ferdinand to grant the forests and pastures of the Vlădeasa mountains—which had previously been owned by the Dual Monarchy—to local tenants. During World War II, when the region was under Hungarian occupation and isolated, Șușman had ensured its continued food supply. For many decades he remained an important and perhaps legendary figure in the collective mind so much so that a *Securitate* report referred to him as 'the King of the Mountains'.²⁸

Refusing to join the PCR in 1945, Șușman was removed as mayor and his assets confiscated. But then, in 1948, Șușman and his two sons Visalon (1928–1958) and Teodor Șușman Jr (1923–1958) together with six others (most of whom were wealthy *chiaburi*) took to the hills as fugitives. Three of them fell into the hands of the authorities within a

²⁷With her husband Elisabeta Rizea became a strong supporter of the partisans but it led to the arrest and imprisonment of both in 1956. Showing courage and taking risks she continued to support the Arnăuțoiu brothers after her release. Rizea was arrested again in 1958 and remained in jail until 1964. Her story and the way she narrated her beatings and interrogations brought her celebrity status after 1989, becoming the subject of many newspaper articles, TV documentaries and books. The visits of former King Michael and President Emil Constantinescu at her home in Nucșoara legitimised Rizea as a symbol of the anti-communist resistance, but also stirred strong resentments and envy among other villagers. She died in 2003. Marina Chircă, also from Nucșoara, was considered one of the most loyal and trusted supporters of the partisans. In 1958 after realising that she and her sister Ana Simion had been followed by *Securitate*, the two hid for five years in an attic. They were caught and jailed in 1963 but released a year later. Ana Simion's support for the armed resistance had earlier led to six years' incarceration (1950–1956). After her release, Simion became the target of a *Securitate* plot: an agent placed in the village gained her trust by promising to marry her. The relationship between the two remained strained until her death in 2011. She later denied being trapped by *Securitate*. For Ana Simion's account see the interview by Cătălin Nedelcu in 2010, available at: <http://memorialsighet.ro/index.php?view=article&catid=47%Abreviar-pentru-procesul>, accessed 30 January 2012. For detailed accounts of the three women's involvement in the armed resistance see Voicu-Arnăuțoiu (2009) and www.roinenucsoara.ro, accessed 15 June 2012.

²⁸'Bande de din regiunea Cluj—G. Teodor Șușman', CNSAS, Dosar no. 8600, vol. 2 (D41/v2).

year. Others, who supported the Şuşmans, including Mihai Jurj and his wife Lucreţia and Jurj's half brother Roman Oneţ, later joined the group in order to escape police interrogation and potential arrest. Three years later in 1951, now aged 57 and physically weakened by the fugitive life, as well as emotionally distressed by constant police harassment levelled at his family and co-villagers, Teodor Şuşman committed suicide. Now only five remained in his group. Three—Mihai and Lucreţia Jurj and Roman Oneţ—were caught by the *Securitate* in 1954. Mihai died shortly after his arrest from a head wound. Oneţ was sentenced to death and Lucreţia was given life imprisonment with hard labour. Seventeen others connected to Şuşman received harsh jail sentences. The Şuşman brothers died in 1958 in a fire during a stand-off with the authorities. *Securitate* officers had set fire to the barn where they were hiding. As for Lucreţia, after spending ten years in prison she was pardoned and released in 1964. After 1989 she became, like Elisabeta Rizea, a heroine of the armed resistance and also a subject for study.

Finally, the Carpathian Făgăraşan group (*Grupul Carpatin Făgăraşan*) known initially as the Haşu Group, then the Haşu–Gavrilă Group, and ultimately as the Gavrilă Group, began its activities in 1948 and for the following ten years remained active in the northern area of the Făgăraş mountains. Most of its members came from a local high-school, Negru-Vodă, where the Iron Guard had maintained since 1924, as earlier noted, a youth organisation programme known as Cross Fraternities (*Frățiile de Cruce*). Other group members were locals fearful of repression and students from Braşov and Cluj with roots in the area. Its surviving leader, Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu, was born in 1923 in a family of Greek-Catholic middle peasants from the Netoiu village in Făgăraş. As a high-school student at Negru-Vodă, he became an active member of Cross Fraternities and in 1940 its regional leader. After his release from prison in 1944 for participation in the Iron Guard rebellion of 1941, Ogoranu enrolled in the school of reserve officers in Câmpulung Muscel. After the war, he attended courses in agronomy and commerce at the University of Braşov. Laurian Haşu's biography (the initial leader of the group) was quite similar. Haşu's family was also of middle peasant stock from the Făgăraş area. He was also imprisoned for his Iron Guard activities and attended law school at the University of Cluj. It is significant that after the leadership of the Iron Guard was decimated by Antonescu in 1941, the movement was led by Nicolae Pătraşcu who was much better disposed towards the communists. In 1945, Pătraşcu signed a protocol of understanding with the PCR and for the next two to three years the Guardists were protected. However, by 1948 the communists felt much more in control and launched an attack on the Guard much like that used against members and sympathisers of the historical parties. A wave of arrests and killings aimed at university and high-school students affiliated with the Cross Fraternities also occurred in 1948. Those who escaped formed the basis of the Carpathian Făgăraşan group. Almost immediately following this the communist government initiated military operations against them and against the inhabitants of the surrounding villages of the Făgăraş mountains. The group benefited from strong regional support as no fewer than 65 localities were in one way or another connected to the partisans. The members of a support group connected with Ogoranu—Vultanul—came under the *Securitate*'s surveillance and were subsequently imprisoned. But solidarity was so widespread that in some instances there were no direct contacts between the partisans and their support networks. It is quite remarkable that Olimpiu Borzea (a school teacher who was instrumental in organising one of the most important support groups) and Ogoranu met only after 1989. To give some idea of the extensiveness of the

networks, the *Securitate* launched no fewer than 108 actions targeting the group and its supporters. *Securitate* forces exhibited constant concern and anxiety about the resistance from Făgăraş and often felt unprepared to deal with it during open confrontations. As members of the Cross Fraternities most of these partisans were familiar with the tactics of guerrilla war, which they had learned from German war manuals. Many of them, especially their leaders, were socialised as members of a paramilitary organisation that valued discipline and solidarity among its members and condemned betrayal in the harshest terms. Some, who had been involved in the Iron Guard rebellion and were subsequently interrogated, arrested and imprisoned (as Ogoranu and Haşu were), were already well-acquainted with the life of the fugitive and prison existence.

However, between 1950 and 1951 hundreds were arrested and some died in open confrontations with security forces. Yet repressive measures alone did not cause the dismantling of the group. As earlier discussed, the *Securitate*'s attempt at luring the partisans into the hands of the 'Mandea group' in 1951 had failed because of Motrescu's double game. Similarly, the recruitment of informers was unsuccessful. Given that a larger number of police and military forces were deployed in the area, after 1951 the Ogoranu group could no longer come down to the villages to procure food and other basic necessities. The partisans had to attack and rob state suppliers or sheepfolds. A memorable episode occurred in August 1952 at the Balea Falls (*Bălea Cascadă*) tourist site when Ogoranu and five other partisans forced 64 tourists to enter the tourist centre. Ogoranu and his men took the visitors' clothes, money from the register, removed all communist symbols and held a pro-monarchist and anti-Soviet rally that apparently moved the audience deeply.

Andrei Haşu, the *de facto* leader, was betrayed and shot in 1952. Afterwards the organisation counted only 11 members. Two years later, it lost several more in an armed confrontation with *Securitate* forces in which one officer was killed.²⁹ A well-crafted plot conceived by the authorities delivered a final blow. A *Securitate* agent, Costică Niculescu, and a former member of the Iron Guard, gained access to the group and persuaded five of them to leave illegally for Greece in 1955. Later they were apprehended by the police and executed (Hossu-Longin 2007, pp. 70–79). In 1978, this episode was presented in a distorted manner in the film *The Action Bus* (*Acţiunea Autobuzul*) on which the Minister of Internal Affairs had acted as a consultant. In presenting the partisans as criminals and the *Securitate* officers as patriots, the film merely served older versions of communist propaganda. By 1955 the group ceased its activity. Of the 14 group members and supporters tried for crimes against the state in 1957, six were executed. Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu was the last to remain alive. In 1954 he took refuge in the house of Ana Săbăduş (who was to become his wife) and lived clandestinely until 1976 when he was arrested. His life was subsequently spared apparently as a result of US Department of State intervention. As an anti-communist partisan and former Iron Guard supporter, Gavrilă Ogoranu became the subject of both admiration and sharp disagreement after 1989. He published his autobiography in three volumes and became a well-known public figure through the many interviews he gave in the media and his participation in various forums discussing the communist regime. In fact, to a larger extent than was the case of the survivors of the Arnăuţoiu or Şuşman groups, Ogoranu

²⁹A brief history of the group is presented on the website of the Ion Gavrilă Ogoranu Foundation, available at: www.ogoranu.ro/lupta.html, accessed 30 January 2012. Also, his own memoirs which were published in 2009 represent an interesting source (Ogoranu 2009). For a comprehensive study of the armed resistance from the northern flanks of the Făgăraş mountains and Ogoranu's group see Dorin Dobrinu (2007).

illustrates some of the difficult and ambiguous questions facing any re-evaluation of historical memory: should the armed resistance be viewed as a coherent nationalist and patriotic movement? Should participants be considered heroes?

A positive answer to these questions has developed among humanist intellectuals—some of them well-known writers and dissidents of the 1970s and 1980s—representing civic associations including the Civic Alliance, the Group for Social Dialogue and the Civic Academy Foundation. These organisations became especially active in the 1990s in challenging the political monopoly of the successors to the PCR and the *Securitate*. As early as 1992, the first exhibition addressing the communist past organised by the Civic Alliance promoted myths of martyrdom and heroism. The exhibition was dedicated to the memory of the victims of communism and the resistance. Corneliu Coposu and Elisabeta Rizea from Nușoara were keynote speakers (Petrescu & Petrescu 2010, p. 560). Coposu was a former political prisoner who spent 18 years in prison and who in December 1989 became the head of the anti-communist historical party, the National Peasant Christian-Democratic Party (*Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin și Democrat*). The rediscovery of the armed resistance was then integrated into a historical narrative that elaborated a romanticised conception of the partisans and their supporters. It was essential to this attempt to dismantle the myth of a passive nation that had accepted a repressive and alien regime for almost half a century. Following what Eviatar Zerubavel has called a ‘pronouncedly regressive mnemonic tradition’, the rise and fall of the armed resistance now became a tragic story of a glorious past that incorporated the true character of the nation (Zerubavel 2003, p. 17). Some historians also fell into this trap by wrongly arguing for the uniqueness of the resistance in the East European context (Boldur-Lățescu 2004). Others have over-emphasised its significance by claiming both its adherence to a unique nationalist ideology and its integration in some centralised paramilitary plan (Ciuceanu 1996, pp. 2–3). Occasionally, media accounts of the armed resistance went even further by comparing it with the 1968 Czechoslovak Spring and the 1980s Polish Solidarity movement and in crediting it with ‘saving the national dignity’.³⁰

This trend is present in the TV documentary *Testimonies of Suffering (Memorialul Durerii)* produced by the journalist Lucia Hossu-Longin and released in the early 1990s. In a discussion of the movement in the Făgăraș mountains the novelist Octavian Paler says: ‘We allow foreigners to talk about Romanian passivity yet we ourselves are quick to endlessly define this very passivity and resignation’. During the documentary former partisans are introduced as figures who have finally been acknowledged as belonging in the national pantheon of heroes. Ogoranu is flamboyantly described as a ‘tree from the once majestic forest that still stands; a tree that demands the right to be remembered after a life lived in the vicinity of death, evil and captivity’. The image of the tree as a symbol of masculine strength and endurance is repeatedly used by Hossu-Longin. She also refers to the two young men, Ioan Mogoș and Nicolae Mazilu, partisans from Făgăraș who were shot in 1950 and thrown together in a common grave as ‘two brothers . . . two beautiful and tall trees crushed by the same historical catastrophe’. In the documentary, former Bukovina partisan Gavril Vatamaniuc compares the guerrilla-type warfare in the mountains to the struggle for physical survival of wild animals from whom partisans learned the art of concealment. With

³⁰ ‘Haiducii lui Dumnezeu’, *Jurnalul Național*, 10 May 2004, available at: <http://www.jurnalul.ro/special/haiducii-lui-dumnezeu-print-69076.htm>, accessed 21 August 2012; ‘Semnați Aici! Pentru monumentul unei femei monumentale’, available at: <http://rizea.ro>, accessed 27 August 2012.

a mixture of masculine pride and emotional detachment, Vatamaniuc narrates an episode of direct confrontation with government forces during which he and Motrescu killed three soldiers. Women are described in gendered terms and images as well. Maria Plop is characterised as ‘brave and fearless’ and is exalted as ‘Maria Româna’. Her image very much resembles that of heroines of the past who led great leaders into battle, as was well-represented in the romantic nationalist literature of the nineteenth century. Elisabeta Rizea becomes ‘the brave woman of Nucșoara’ (Hossu-Longin 2007, pp. 43–79, 271–78, 329). Sometimes the women in question support this image of themselves as devoted mothers or wives. For example, Lucreția Jurj recalled the answer she gave when interrogated about why she carried a gun when hiding in the mountains: ‘Because’, she said, ‘I did not want my husband to carry two’ (Jurj 2004, p. 102). Contemporary critics of communism after its collapse frequently try to incorporate stories like these in a narrative of the national struggle for independence. For example, after Rizea’s death in 2003, some civic activists tried to elevate the image of a courageous peasant woman into a symbol of enduring liberty. In 2004 the satirical magazine *Academia Cațavencu* and some well-known intellectuals launched a campaign to build a statue of her in Bucharest on the same spot where Lenin’s statue once stood.³¹ The choice of this location shows how some anti-communist activists have envisioned the creation of a ‘*lieu de memoire*’ signifying resistance to communism in a place that once honoured one of its founding fathers. This act would have in fact marked a decisive moment of historical discontinuity with the communist regime. Ironically, such a logic of historical discontinuity with the pre-existing bourgeois order was pursued under communism in identical fashion in the very same act of destroying symbols and artefacts integral to that very order.

If the partisans were heroes, *Securitate* officers, informers and traitors were always described as villains and frequently referred to as Judas figures. Former partisans or supporters of the armed resistance themselves often attached religious meaning to the figures of their torturers. Ion Cîrnu, a former captain who interrogated and beat many of the wives, sisters and daughters of the partisans (including Elisabeta Rizea herself), was referred to in interviews as Satan or the devil (Hossu-Longin 2007, p. 273). The same was said of Ioan Grovu, the *Securitate* officer involved in trapping members of the Ogoranu group into their fictitious escape to Greece. At his funeral peasants from the village of Cârțișoara scrawled graffiti on his house portraying him as a ‘Juda’ (Hossu-Longin 2007, p. 79). The same symbolism was used by former partisans to explain their particular ability to endure beatings, interrogations and imprisonment. The three women who supported the Arnăuțoiu group at great cost to themselves—the sisters Marina Chircă and Ana Simion and Elisabeta Rizea—invoked the religious duty to stand by family and neighbour, to help people in need and betray no one for material compensation. In *Testimonies of Suffering*, a former political prisoner describes resistance to communism as a confrontation with the ‘anti-Christ’.

However, if looked at from the standpoint of how strong were their anti-communist views in affiliating with or supporting the resistance, the testimonies of participants often show ambivalence. Reasons (or circumstances) can include simply being caught in extraordinary situations, compromising choices that were made in order to cope with policies imposed by the post-1945 regime, and also of course sharp anti-communist and anti-Soviet views.

³¹‘Semnași aici! Pentru monumental unei femei monumentale’, available at: www.elisabetarizea.ro/elisabeta_rizea_3pdf, accessed 10 June 2012.

In some instances these experiences and encounters with the regime shaped and reinforced their political views. This was true, for instance, of Lucreția Jurj. In her account she admitted that initially she had tried to encourage her husband Mihai to join the PCR, but after the experience of partisan life, ten years of imprisonment and a subsequent life of fear, her views crystallised as clearly anti-communist:

My wish after the Revolution was to let everyone know that we were from the Șușman group. ... There were hard times, it was so difficult to run around permanently harassed by the *Securitate*, to walk in cold and rain trying to find food. ... What for? Because we did not think like them? To be free? To express ourselves freely? (Jurju & Budeancă 2002)

In fact, testimonies and oral histories conducted with members and supporters of the three groups also indicate that unlike their leaders who held strongly antagonistic views of the communist regime and Soviet occupation, their followers or supporters had less defined political opinions. In addition, anti-communism was differently expressed by leaders depending on their previous professional lives or political affiliation. For Gavrilă-Ogoranu anti-communism was interrelated with strong religious-nationalist commitments. He saw himself as a soldier of both Christ and *patria* and after 1989 lobbied for military recognition of those involved in the resistance movement (Ogoranu 2009, p. 115; Goșu 2004, pp. 101–2). In contrast, the former military officers Arsenescu and Arnăuțoiu perceived their own fight in the context of a war for national liberation from foreign occupation and the preservation of the monarchy which was dismantled by the communists in 1946.³² In Teodor Șușman's case, negative views of communism were shaped by inter-war education and propaganda.

But, regardless of the reasons or circumstances that led them into the armed resistance, after 1989 almost all of the survivors attempted to assert a new social identity that established involvement with the resistance as its basis. For some, it represented a return to a previously denied social status. After 1989, Lucreția Jurj went back to using her first husband's name (with whom she had originally joined the resistance) after taking her second husband's name in an attempt to escape political persecution following her release from jail in 1963. For others it was a major discovery that led to a new identity. Before discovering the identity of her parents, Ioana-Raluca Voicu-Arnăuțoiu was Raluca Voicu after her adoptive parents. She was by then a successful young violinist with the Bucharest Philharmonic. On learning the circumstances of her birth (Plop had given birth to her in a cave assisted only by the Arnăuțoiu brothers while hiding in the mountains) her life changed radically. When her adoptive mother died she petitioned the court to annul the adoption and certify her as the legal child of Toma Arnăuțoiu and Maria Plop. Three years of legal proceedings followed, but with the help of Marina Chircă and Elisabeta Rizea as witnesses she assumed the name of Ioan-Raluca Voicu-Arnăuțoiu.³³ Now, for 20 years she has been an active promoter of memorialising and researching the armed resistance. In the Șușman family, the only son still alive, Traian, reconnected with his native village Răchițele after nearly two decades. His return, however, was unwelcome and not wanted by many villagers directly connected with the post-war history of Răchițele and its local partisans.

³²These commitments are clearly incorporated in the oath that members of the group had to take. The full text of the oath is reproduced in the collection of documents edited by Ioana-Raluca Voicu-Arnăuțoiu (2009).

³³'Timpul măturisirii', *Jurnalul Național*, 16 June 2005, available at: <http://www.jurnalul.ro/viata-mea-e-un-roman/timpul-maturisirii-print-42882.htm>, accessed 5 January 2012.

In fact, attempts to revive the memory of the armed resistance and elevate the historical importance of partisans have not generally been well-received in these communities. Two or three generations later old family feuds and personal animosities have tended to resurface. After 1989, such well-remembered disputes could easily erupt in fierce competition for access to local political power, status and land redistribution. These conflicts mirrored political tensions between representatives of the old regime (former communist officials and *Securitate* officers) and anti-communist opposition groups that were typical of the first 10–15 years of Romania's democratic transition. In Nucșoara, those involved in capturing partisans, or their descendants, were still influential in the community in the early 2000s. In occupying key positions in the mayor's office, the police or in charge of land restitution they essentially ran local politics (Mungiu 2010, p. 118). After the restitution law was passed in 1991 Nucșoara found itself in turmoil. Old animosities coalesced with new ones. Those who by law had to cede expropriated land to former political prisoners found themselves united by a common interest. In reaction, they drafted a 'Memorandum to the President' in which they claimed themselves to be World War II veterans and attacked the local partisan groups and its leaders Arnăuțoiu and Arsenescu as thieves and murderers in terms typical of communist propaganda (Mungiu 2010, pp. 89–91). The atmosphere became so charged that the local priest refused to sanctify the erection of a cross in the local cemetery commemorating the 16 men executed in 1958. Again, Elisabeta Rizea was until her death the subject of much envy and gossip in Nucșoara despite her successful efforts with the first elected anti-communist coalition to improve the community's roads. Both she and Lucreția Jurj expressed bitter disappointment about envious neighbours and acquaintances who seemed incapable of understanding that a small pension cannot in the least compensate for the many years of repression and deprivation they suffered. A similar conflict occurred in Răchițele after 2008 when the local courts approved a request for land restitution initiated by the descendants of partisans and political prisoners. Officials of the town of Margău (under whose jurisdiction Răchițele fell) refused to implement this decision. A local priest, Teodor Boc, whose father died in uncertain circumstances (many believe that he was executed by the Șușmans for betrayal although some historians contest the accuracy of this account), rallied villagers around him and began a campaign against the Șușmans. In June 2010, Boc tried to prevent the exhumation of the remains of Teodor Șușman, which had been undertaken by archaeologists from the Center for the Investigation of Crimes of Communism (CICCR) (Oros 2010). As had been the case in Nucșoara, the partisans were stereotyped as murderers and blamed for any suffering brought to local families (Ciobanu 2011, pp. 214–16).

Ogoranu's unusual biography generated a broader national debate that was split between rejection and admiration. As a former member of a fascist organisation, Ogoranu was precluded from benefiting from the law compensating victims of communism. Nonetheless, he became something of a celebrity and a regular at public events, symposiums and conferences dedicated to the anti-communist movement. After 2000, in cooperation with the cultural foundation *Negru Vodă* and historians from Bucharest, Brașov and Cluj, he became actively involved in a project to establish the Memorial of Anticommunist Resistance from Făgăraș.³⁴ However, despite his popularity his inclusion in the pantheon of heroes of the

³⁴For the work of the Negru-Vodă Foundation see www.negru.voda.ro, accessed 10 June 2012.

armed resistance in the report issued by the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in 2007 generated substantially negative reactions (Tismăneanu *et al.* 2007). Anger also erupted at the release in February 2010 of the film *Portrait of the Fighter as a Young Man* which was inspired by his life and premiered at the Berlin film festival. Yet the same film generated considerable admiration for the partisans of northern Făgăraş in a region that had experienced so much turmoil more than 60 years before. An audience of 700, including family members and descendants of the partisans, former political prisoners and locals who either witnessed or participated directly in the events depicted, attended the film's release in 2010 at the Cultural Centre in Făgăraş. The last survivor of the partisan group, Ion Ilioiu aged 81, was feted by the actors and an enthusiastic audience (Dobrescu 2010). Until his death in 2006, Ogoranu continued to proclaim the genuineness of his political beliefs and the patriotism of his actions. A foundation that bears his name was set up in 2008 to memorialise the partisans and the armed resistance. It has taken a strongly anti-communist and nationalist position during commemorations and events marking various national and international political developments.³⁵

It is important to see that negative stereotypes attached to partisans by some local inhabitants also reflected negative images constructed by politicians representing the heirs of the PCR and the *Securitate*. When Hossu-Longin's documentary *Testimonies of Suffering* was aired on state television in 1991 there was considerable government hostility to it. For three years the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Information Services (heir to the former *Securitate*) refused to give Hossu-Longin access to their archives. She was accused by parliamentary members representing successor parties of the PCR of undermining efforts at national reconciliation. A number of media outlets, including the weekly *Great Romania* representing the xenophobic nationalist Party of Great Romania (*Partidul România Mare*—PRM), launched a campaign to compromise the partisans by reviving anti-partisan communist propaganda. Some former officials directly involved in the repression of the armed resistance in the 1950s looked for and received protection from former communists turned post-communist politicians/luminaries. In their view the partisans were simply outcasts from society. One proponent of this position was Alexandru Nicolşchi, the *Securitate* general who had sent fake bands into the mountains to trap the real ones. Another former *Securitate* general, Neagu Cosma, presented the armed resistance in his memoirs as a movement of the wealthy classes of landowners and urban bourgeoisie that felt threatened after World War II and were supported by Western espionage networks. Cosma also claimed that the involvement of any individuals with working-class or peasant background was exclusively a question of fascist elements and loyalties (Cosma 1994, p. 101). Also, in 1993, the initiative to establish the Sighet memorial as a museum dedicated to the victims of communism encountered similarly strong opposition. Both the PSD and the PRM characterised it as a fascist undertaking. By reproducing pre-1989 propaganda depicting partisan resistance as a movement subordinated to the interests of enemies of the working class, these accounts made every effort to manufacture a counter-narrative and destroy the positive version of events promoted by Sighet memorialists.

³⁵See <http://ogoranu.ro>, accessed 10 June 2012.

Some conclusions about the memorialisation of the armed resistance

Two questions need to be addressed here. First, what are the implications for the 'politics of the present' of the opposing versions of the resistance movement by competing political actors? Second, how do these inter-personal and inter-group conflicts over remembering the armed resistance enrich our broader understanding of collective memory and truth-telling in post-communism?

In respect to the first question, it can be argued that following the overthrow of the communist regime in December 1989, two opposing interpretations of the role of the armed resistance corresponded to an attempt to construct a narrative of a specific historical discontinuity by competing political actors searching for political legitimacy. Former communist officials who played an instrumental role in the propaganda and state apparatus before 1989 promoted a negative image of the partisans that overwhelmingly emphasised their fascist and criminal activities. In doing so, former elites separated the pre-communist past from the post-1989 era and thus were able to present themselves as the direct heirs of the 1989 revolution. According to them, the successors to the PCR are the true representatives of the majority of a society that by and large was simply a passive bystander during communist times. This large sector of the population should then be seen as the immediate beneficiary of the democratic transition while the socio-economic policies of the new government should and would reflect their needs and interests. By contrast, former dissidents, intellectual elites, representatives of civic associations and historical parties denied any historical continuity between the communist regime and the post-1989 era and attempted to establish linkages between the pre-communist and post-communist periods. Thus, re-assessing the role of the armed resistance in the history of opposition to communism became an essential argument supporting the thesis of a myth of national victimisation and the alien nature of the communist regime. In this view the 1989 revolution should be seen as a return to the pre-World War II liberal value system and the anti-communist opposition should be considered the legitimate architect of December 1989 and therefore the designer of the transition.

In reality, both accounts of the armed resistance are historically biased. They are based on a deliberate omission of certain aspects of its nature, especially the fact that most partisans and their supporters (with the exception of its leadership) were merely responding to an alien regime that threatened their livelihood and disrupted the social organisation of their rural communities. Ultimately, this analysis illustrates how conflict over the past is enmeshed with the struggles of the present. This brings us to the second question concerning the conflicting accounts of the role of the partisans at the micro-level of our analysis, i.e. survivors of the armed resistance (partisans and supporters) and their descendants and local communities. Despite clear ideological motivations for embracing a clandestine life at the time, in a majority of cases individual testimonies were ultimately aligned with anti-communism. However, firm and specific views reflecting this ideological position were not expressed from the outset. In fact, a careful analysis of partisans' and supporters' recollections suggests that an incomplete and therefore problematic reconstruction of the past was geared to the production of an uncontested version of the early history of communism. For Lucreția Jurj and Elisabeta Rizea, and for the descendants of the Arnăuțoius and Șușmans, to be part of or affiliated with the armed resistance became a marker of a distinctive social identity that involved definite responsibilities. In Nora's terms, it reflected memory as an 'individual duty' that resulted from 'the discovery of roots, of

belonging ... [it] becomes a total commitment' (Nora 1996, p. 11). At the same time, local conflicts generated by the exhumations involving the Șușman group or the erection of a cross in Nucșoara reveal how practices and sites of memory become central loci for ongoing struggles over identity. By opposing these actions of memorialisation those who had sided with the communist authorities and opposed the partisans, and those who were just mere spectators, refused to become identified as collaborationists or informers. They also quite readily label former partisans and their supporters as criminals and thieves. Memory and identity conflicts like this are easily aggravated by a political climate in which power struggles are carried out around symbolic representations of the past. Historical myths then inevitably become indistinguishable from historical facts. For each group they *are* historical facts, reified versions of a history difficult to disentangle.

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PER UNA STORIA DEI MOVIMENTI DI RESISTENZA. IL CASO “NO TAV”

Andrea Ferrero

Neoliberalismo, postdemocrazia, resistenza

I cambiamenti che agli esordi del XXI secolo interessano le modalità delle proteste e la forma dei movimenti nati dopo la caduta del Muro di Berlino sono numerosi. Il territorio, l'ambiente e la loro difesa divengono importanti fattori e motivazioni della lotta, che diventa resistenza, grazie alla creazione da parte di numerosi gruppi locali, di un'ampia rete di comitati, collettivi, associazioni e presidi in tutte le regioni d'Italia. Attraverso il loro “No”, i movimenti territoriali si oppongono a politiche governative sospinte da una logica economica neoliberista. Le ragioni del No oltre a essere ambientali, sono economiche e politiche, si influenzano e si condizionano a vicenda e fanno parte di una rivendicazione che unisce coerentemente i tre ambiti attraverso un'ampia controinformazione condotta da comitati e associazioni; la controinformazione è, appunto, il risultato della produzione di risorse dei

NO TAV



movimenti per i movimenti e, nel caso di quello “No Tav”, essa diviene il nucleo di una prima costruzione ideologica. Essa è stata costruita sfruttando le molteplici esperienze di attivisti e di esperti che si sono dedicati alla causa della lotta contro la nuova linea ferroviaria Torino-Lione.

La protesta, nata in Val di Susa negli anni Novanta, è la prima a porsi in opposizione rispetto ad uno specifico progetto in un determinato territorio e dalla sua esperienza nascono nuovi metodi di lotta. L'utilizzo del *web* e, specificamente, dei *social network*, costituisce la parte fondamentale della protesta e un'ampia messe di documenti rappresenta il patrimonio di cia-



scuna mobilitazione locale¹. Attraverso l'opposizione ad una singola grande opera, il movimento No Tav condivide idee e valori, metodi e idee di resistenza, producendo un proprio sapere, promuovendo e pubblicando ricerche, studi scientifici, giornali, libri e, ancora, organizzando dibattiti, incontri in cui sono discussi e diffusi i risultati di tali ricerche e i documenti che comprovano l'inutilità e anzi la dannosità, su ogni piano, da quello ambientale a quello economico, di una nuova infrastruttura, dettata da mere logiche di profitto.

Le ragioni specifiche dell'opposizione, ricondotte nel dibattito pub-

blico, in modo semplicistico, e sostanzialmente scorretto, alla "sindrome *Nimby*", si sono rapidamente allargate ad una critica generale del sistema rappresentativo. Nel tentativo di recuperare le qualità intrinseche della democrazia, il movimento No Tav è protagonista di una ferma critica della modernità e dei modi della politica, dalla quale scaturiscono alternative coerenti. Nell'evolversi dell'azione collettiva, il movimento è divenuto l'espressione di una "rete delle mobilitazioni"; al di là del rifiuto opposto al singolo progetto infrastrutturale, tale rete mette a disposizione di tutti risorse organizzative, energetiche e intellettuali, coinvolgendo le persone comuni, al di fuori dei partiti politici, e senza delega da parte di interessi diffusi. Un nuovo metodo di conduzione delle lotte per la difesa dei territori si è ormai affermato in seno alla società italiana, coinvolgendone larghe fasce, a dispetto della disparità di forze tra i favorevoli; non perché sino maggioritari numericamente, questi ultimi, ma per il loro ampio controllo dei mezzi di comunicazione. Eppure il movimento No Tav ci sorprende ogni giorno, con il ricorso a metodiche nuove capaci di coinvolgere le persone, e non certo soltanto gli abitanti della Val di Susa. Forse, una riprova della "fantasia al potere".

1. Sono qui riprodotti solo alcuni dei numerosi comunicati e documenti del Movimento; per consultarli e approfondire l'argomento: [www. http://www.notav.eu/wp/](http://www.notav.eu/wp/).



Per una periodizzazione del movimento

No Tav, ovvero No Treno ad Alta Velocità, nasce negli anni Novanta in opposizione alla linea ferroviaria che collega le città di Torino con Lione, in Francia, inserita in un progetto di collegamento al “Corridoio V” che da Kiev dovrebbe raggiungere Lisbona.

Protagonista è la Valle di Susa, già segnata da lotte che negli anni Settanta vedono una parte della popolazione contraria alla costruzione dell'autostrada che attraversa la Valle, situata al confine tra Francia e Italia. In queste prime mobilitazioni scaturlisce un modello d'azione che verrà poi ripreso dal movimento contro il treno ad alta velocità, che ne aumenterà il valore e l'importanza.

All'interno del contrasto che si viene a creare nella Valle, rientrano esperienze di opposizione alla costruzione di un'altra serie di infrastrutture. I soggetti facenti parte la prima fase della protesta, contro l'autostrada e l'elettrodotto, non essendo ancora riuniti in un movimento unico, prendevano parte al conflitto in base alle loro passate esperienze politiche e considerata la loro residenza nel territorio. Per la sua difesa si erano attivati militanti di diversi partiti, tra cui il circolo locale di Democrazia proletaria, un gruppo di esperti della rivista “Dialogo in Valle” e cattolici legati al “Gruppo Pace” di Condove. L'intento di questa prima formazione era cercare di produrre e comunicare il

senso di esasperazione nei confronti di un territorio già martoriato dall'insediamento di diversi stabilimenti produttivi, di una ferrovia e della strada statale, presenti da lungo tempo. Vengono così affrontati i primi passi per diffondere la mobilitazione a tutta la popolazione interessata, fino a raggiungere la fase di massimo interesse e di coinvolgimento nei riguardi dell'elettrodotto negli anni Ottanta, per poi concludere nel 1995.

1991-1996

Hanno inizio numerose ricerche, con l'intento di diffondere tutte le possibili informazioni circa l'opera della ferrovia ad alta velocità. Da una parte della popolazione, già attiva nelle proteste precedenti, viene creato per condurre tale fase conoscitiva, agli inizi degli anni Novanta, il primo comitato: questo sarà il primo passo verso la mobilitazione. In aggiunta a quelli presenti nelle vicende contro l'elettrodotto e l'autostrada, detto comitato raduna una moltitudine di associazioni e partiti, protagonisti nel diffondere ed elaborare i primi lavori di ricerca e nella parte nascente del





movimento fino alla sua crescita negli anni 2000.

Nel 1991 nasce il comitato Habitat, con l'intento di condurre ricerche, approfondimenti, inchieste e con l'obiettivo specifico di coinvolgere la popolazione, legando la creazione della nuova opera al vivere quotidiano.

L'associazione è uno dei soggetti più importanti della mobilitazione e lo rimarrà anche nella fase di resistenza odierna, nel 2014, che interessa non solo la Valle di Susa ma tutto il territorio italiano. Nell'organizzazione di eventi e manifestazioni, espressione della diffusione delle conoscenze che si producono nel movimento per il movimento, viene accompagnato anche dalla Comunità montana. Questa collaborazione diviene centro e nucleo in cui si connettono diverse attività di opposizione: l'azione istituzionale, la comunicazione con l'esterno, gli studi scientifici, le azioni legali, l'organizzazione di incontri pubblici e il coordinamento tra i diversi soggetti che si sono attivati. Le prime iniziative che scaturiscono dalla collaborazione tra Habitat e Comunità mon-

tana sono la manifestazione nazionale contro l'Alta Velocità, l'11 marzo 1995 a Firenze, in cui sono presenti tutti i comitati delle regioni interessate, e la mobilitazione del 1996 a Sant'Ambrogio, sede di uno dei primissimi comitati No Tav e della prima grande manifestazione in Valle.

1996-1999

Questo periodo è segnato dall'importanza che i media danno a presunti eco-terroristi, incriminati per i tredici attentati che tra il 1996 e il 1997, si verificano in Valle. In questi vengono colpite trivelle e altre strutture e ogni atto viene accompagnato da volantini siglati "Valsusa libera" e "Lupi grigi".

La "strategia della tensione", che porta i comitati a cercare di rompere la sensazione di accerchiamento creatasi intorno al caso Tav, viene ricondotta dai *mass media* e da successive analisi, a soggetti promotori di una nuova linea, che ha come fine rompere l'unità tra sindaci e movimento. Quest'ultimo se ne distacca completamente, ma all'inizio di marzo 1998 vengono arrestati Maria Soledad Rosa, di origine argentina, Edoardo Massari, di Ivrea e Silvano Pellissero, di Busoleno: tutti e tre di area anarchica.

Questo periodo è segnato dal drammatico epilogo del suicidio di due delle persone arrestate: Maria Soledad Rosa (Sole) e Edoardo Massari (Baleno). Solo nel 2002 la Cassazione assolverà i giovani e smonterà le

soleno, Bardonecchia, Torino e Chambery, dove nel gennaio del 2001 una delegazione Valsusina si reca per protestare con gli attivisti francesi anch'essi contrari al Tav. Il 2001 è anche l'anno in cui viene creato Spinta dal Bass, comitato che aggrega persone di diverse generazioni, militanti, ex militanti e giovani provenienti dal volontariato cattolico.

Nasce inoltre il comitato dei medici di base, dal momento che se l'opera dovesse essere realizzata, ci sarebbero seri rischi per la salute di tutta la popolazione della Valle a causa della dispersione di polveri contenenti amianto e uranio, responsabili di malattie mortali come mesotelioma e leucemia.

Questo periodo si conclude con il primo incontro, a Bussoleno, dell'Assemblea Permanente, organizzazione sostenuta dalla componente più vicina ai centri sociali, all'associazione Ya Basta e all'area della "disobbedienza". L'assemblea raccoglie comitati, amministratori, comuni cittadini e tutti coloro che si oppongono al progetto Tav, anche senza nessuna provenienza politica, in risposta all'esigenza della mobilitazione. Per questo, tale assemblea è itinerante per tutta la Valle, così da poter essere il più possibile vicina alla gente e presente nei territori a rischio trivellazioni. L'opposizione all'opera diviene un canale di formazione di identità molto vicina alle persone che ancora non sono entrate in un'ottica di protesta.

2005-2009

Gli anni 2005 e 2006, racchiudono il culmine del conflitto e il suo espandersi fino al 2009. L'avvio dei primi sondaggi sul territorio imprimono una reazione drastica del movimento No Tav, da cui nascono numerosi presidi permanenti nelle zone interessate dai cantieri. Il gemellaggio che avviene con numerosi altri movimenti, sia italiani che internazionali, oltre la creazione del Patto di Solidarietà e Mutuo Soccorso, accrescono la partecipazione, sia quantitativamente che qualitativamente, alla protesta, rendendo il movimento di rilevanza nazionale. In questi anni avviene il passaggio dalla protesta popolare alla sua fase di permanenza, non solo per il movimento No Tav, ma per tutti i movimenti italiani aderenti al Patto.

A fine novembre del 2005 si verifica una delle battaglie più importanti: "La battaglia del Seghino", che vede il dispiegamento e il rafforzamento delle forze dell'ordine, con l'intento di occupare i terreni alle pendici del Rocciamelone, montagna simbolo della Valle.

In queste circostanze vengono anche create le basi del gemellaggio No Tav, con il movimento vicentino No Dal Molin e l'avvio, al termine della marcia Venaus-Roma, della prima rete nazionale costituita dai movimenti locali. Tutte le realtà che si battono per la difesa del territorio, contro la realizzazione di opere pubbliche e private,



Documento costitutivo

PATTO NAZIONALE DI SOLIDARIETA' E MUTUO SOCCORSO TRA COMITATI, RETI, MOVIMENTI e GRUPPI Sala della Protomoleca, Campidoglio, ROMA 14 Luglio 2006

I Comitati, le Reti, i Movimenti, i Gruppi a conclusione della Carovana NO TAV Venus-Roma, qui riuniti, presso la sala della Protomoleca del Comune di Roma, il giorno 14 luglio 2006, di comune accordo, stabiliscono di creare una RETE NAZIONALE PERMANENTE E UN PATTO NAZIONALE DI SOLIDARIETA' E MUTUO SOCCORSO per affermare nel nostro paese:

- Il diritto alla preventiva informazione e partecipazione attiva dei cittadini in merito a ogni intervento che si voglia operare sui territori in cui essi vivono, condividendone i beni comuni (acqua, aria, terra, energia);
- L'utilizzo di sistemi di promozione e di consumo che valorizzino le risorse territoriali, minimizzino gli impatti ambientali e gli spostamenti di merci e persone, e che non siano basati sullo sfruttamento, in particolare del Sud del mondo;
- Il principio di una moratoria nazionale sulla realizzazione delle grandi opere pubbliche e sulla localizzazione degli impianti energetici (centrali a combustibili fossili, inceneritori, termovalorizzatori, gassificatori, rigassificatori, ecc) sia per la mancanza di un piano energetico nazionale, sia per impedire che la logica degli affari di pochi divori le risorse dei molti.
- L'urgenza della cancellazione della Legge Obiettivo, della Legge Delega Ambientale, della Legge Sblocca Centrali, dei Certificati Verdi per gli inceneritori e della radicale modifica del Disegno di Legge sull'energia.

Su queste basi, diamo vita a un Coordinamento Nazionale (con sito Web ed e-mail), costituito da un rappresentante per ogni organizzazione partecipante, e invitiamo tutti gli altri Comitati, Reti, Movimenti e Gruppi ad unirsi in questo Patto Nazionale di Solidarietà e Mutuo Soccorso.

Il Coordinamento Nazionale si riunirà periodicamente in una sede a rotazione. Il prossimo appuntamento è a Roma in occasione dell'Assemblea Nazionale del 30 settembre.

Roma, 14 luglio 2006

PRIMI FIRMATARI:

NO TAV, NO MOSE, NO PONTE, NO PAV, NO COKE Civitavecchia, NO Gassificatore Malagrotta (Roma), NO Rigassificatore OFFSHORE Livorno-Pisa, Rete Nazionale Rifiuti Zero, Coordinamento Ambientalista Lago di Bracciano, Associazione Culturale Ardinia (in difesa Altopiano di Navelli) (AQ), Associazione Italiana Esposti Amianto, Il Municipio (Roma), Associazione Radici, Coordinamento Comitanti Ambientalisti Lombardia, Movimento Contro il Terzo Traforo, Comitato per la Difesa dell'Acqua Pubblica di Rieti, Comitanti per la salute della piana Firenze, Prato, Pistoia, Coordinamento dei Comitanti Popolari Toscani e Liguri per la Difesa dell'Ambiente, Foro Contadino Toscano.

comitanti e associazioni che vi lavorano da un punto di vista culturale e politico e infine realtà che si occupano della diffusione di forme di economia alternative danno vita al Patto Nazionale di Solidarietà e Mutuo Soccorso, strumento al servizio di chi, nel Paese, lotta per la difesa del proprio territorio, contro le grandi opere inutili e contro lo scempio delle risorse ambientali ed economiche.

Nel Patto rientrano più di quattrocento associazioni e cento realtà territoriali provenienti da tutta Italia, con il chiaro intento di diffondere le

lotte, creare una memoria collettiva ed escludere ogni delega e qualsiasi forma partito. Le azioni in cui la nuova rete di aiuto diventa protagonista assumono una rilevanza sempre più importante, risultato della geniale organizzazione creata intorno a rivendicazioni spesso lontane geograficamente, ma appartenenti tutte alla resistenza del nuovo millennio. Cresce la risonanza internazionale, continuamente rinnovata sia dalla nascente rete di relazioni creata dal Patto che dalle numerose occasioni di incontro e gemellaggio che i movimenti riesco-

Patto Nazionale di Solidarietà e Mutuo Soccorso

Il Patto Nazionale di Solidarietà e Mutuo Soccorso è uno strumento al servizio di chi nel nostro paese lotta per la difesa del proprio territorio, contro le grandi opere inutili e contro lo scempio delle risorse ambientali ed economiche.

E' una cornice entro cui si ritrovano le diverse realtà che aderiscono al Patto per mettere in relazione le esperienze e le lotte, ma non è una sede decisionale: è piuttosto un contenitore per valorizzare queste esperienze, per non disperderle e per farne patrimonio comune; è un sostegno per dare loro maggior visibilità e in questo modo rafforzarle e aiutarle a crescere; è un supporto per una memoria collettiva che non vuole dimenticare i risultati acquisiti e intende ripartire dalle sconfitte subite; è una sede in cui praticare la solidarietà e l'aiuto reciproco.

Nel suo ambito nascono e circolano proposte condivise, ma non è una sede di elaborazione e definizione di strategie in cui gli aderenti sono tenuti a riconoscersi.

Il Patto Nazionale di Solidarietà e Mutuo Soccorso non è certo un tentativo per infiltrarsi di soppiatto nella politica di palazzo né intende farsi ospitare nei palazzi della politica; non ha governi amici a cui guardare con fiducia; non ha partiti a cui consegnare deleghe in bianco e non intende certo percorrere una strada che lo porti a diventare esso stesso partito.

Non per questo rifugge dalla politica e dal confronto, e sa distinguere chi opera con trasparenza da chi tenta di imbrigliare le lotte. Il modello che propone è al tempo stesso l'unico metodo che è disponibile ad accettare: quello della partecipazione attiva dei cittadini.

Questo sito web è soltanto uno strumento al servizio del Patto: una scatola da riempire con il contributo di tutte le realtà che vi aderiscono. E' una scatola di scarpe che contiene questo lungo stivale che va dalla Valle d'Aosta alla Sicilia e dai Friuli alla Sardegna, uno stivale che vogliamo conservare nelle migliori condizioni possibili, e vogliamo difendere da chi fa di tutto per rovinarlo.

Sarà dura, ma ce la faremo.

[Leggi il documento costitutivo del Patto](#)

no a stabilire nelle diverse nazioni europee interessate da devastazioni territoriali.

2009-2014

Questo periodo racchiude la dimostrazione della capacità di resistenza del movimento No Tav, diventato protagonista di quello che è ormai un conflitto nazionale, che mostra concrete possibilità alternative di un cambiamento del sistema-mondo. Si conferma inoltre, dopo il Referendum del 2011, la solidarietà con i movimenti per i Beni comuni e contro il nucleare, caratterizzati da una forte rete internazionale e da importanti lotte per l'acqua.

Anche gli appuntamenti a Strasburgo diventano un'occasione per mantenere la protesta non esclusivamente locale o nazionale, ma farla di-

venire europea, grazie all'unione con movimenti No Tav baschi e francesi. Proprio nel maggio 2010 infatti, una delegazione valsusina raggiunge Strasburgo per portare al parlamento europeo le ragioni dell'opposizione e presentare la carta di Hendaye, frutto dell'incontro tra movimenti di resistenza italiani, francesi e spagnoli. Sul versante francese sono più di settanta le organizzazioni, tra collettivi e associazioni, firmatarie assieme a una decina di associazioni basche, della Dichiarazione Comune del 23 gennaio 2010, che conferma lo scambio di esperienze e la condivisione di idee tra rappresentanti di Francia, Spagna e Italia che si oppongono al Tav. La dichiarazione è il modo per unire le forze, fare ascoltare la propria voce e, considerato che le problematiche sono comuni, produrre un'opposizione che dovrà superare il quadro locale per diventare europea.



Questa fase è anche segnata dallo sgombero da parte delle forze dell'ordine, della "Libera Repubblica della Maddalena". Vengono ripetuti diversi tentativi di sabotaggio, uno dei quali termina con la detenzione di due attiviste. Gli arresti diventano una questione molto diffusa in tutta Italia: sono più di trenta e numerose sono le denunce a inizio 2012. "L'Italia che resiste" si fa sentire per tutta la penisola e nel *web*, da tempo teatro di informazione, controinformazione e conflitto, dove protagonista diventa anche Anonymous che, a sostegno del movimento, "hackera" il portale dell'amministrazione peni-

tenziaria. A questi fatti rispondono in Italia numerosi presidi in oltre cento città e, alle dichiarazioni di Giorgio Rossetto, attivista No Tav tenuto in stato di isolamento nel carcere speciale di Saluzzo, si aggiunge la denuncia delle gravi condizioni del sistema penitenziario. Questo chiaro fattore postdemocratico è intercettato da più movimenti che insieme istituiscono il No Isol, comitato in lotta contro le condizioni delle carceri italiane.

La questione No Tav viene portata anche in occasione delle elezioni in valle di Susa e nella Val Sangone, come scelta di alcuni candidati.



Carta di Hendaye del 23 Gennaio 2010

Questa dichiarazione è stata redatta da associazioni e movimenti di diversi Stati membri dell'Unione europea (Francia, Spagna, Italia) che si battono contro la costruzione di nuove Linee ferroviarie TAV (Treno ad Alta Velocità) e di Linee merci rapide ad alta capacità e che si riuniscono oggi per unire le forze e fare ascoltare la propria voce considerato che le problematiche sono le stesse dappertutto.

L'opposizione dovrà quindi superare il quadro locale per diventare europea.

Noi, cittadini, associazioni e movimenti provenienti da diversi Stati membri dell'Unione europea (Francia, Spagna, Italia) in lotta contro i progetti TAV

Constatiamo che:

- questi progetti costituiscono per i territori attraversati un disastro ecologico, socio-economico e umano, la distruzione di aree naturali e terreni agricoli, nuovi corridoi di degrado e di inquinamento ambientale con rilevanti conseguenze negative per i residenti locali,
- questi progetti non tengono in considerazione la partecipazione delle popolazioni al processo decisionale; denunciando l'opacità con la quale agiscono i governi di fronte al profondo dissenso sociale e comunale e il disprezzo degli argomenti e delle proposte dei cittadini,
- la motivazione ufficiale per la costruzione di queste nuove linee si basa sistematicamente su ipotesi di traffico e di redditività socio-economica false, così come di una sottovalutazione dei costi per una migliore "vendibilità" di progetti il cui valore reale non è stato dimostrato. Numerosi studi hanno dimostrato al contrario l'irrilevanza di questi progetti in termini economici e sociali (Essig relazioni in Gran Bretagna, Bermejo nei Paesi Baschi meridionali, Citec nei Paesi Baschi settentrionali, Brossard 1998 et Ponts et Chaussées 2003 nel Rodano-Alpi, Quaderni dell'Osservatorio Tecnico della linea Lione - Torino, - organismo italiano -), e le relazioni della Corte dei conti francese e italiana.
- la priorità è data al TAV, che ha un costo enorme, a scapito del traffico locale e alla manutenzione e sviluppo delle reti ferroviarie esistenti, che non sono né curate né ottimizzate per sviluppare il trasporto merci che permette di servire le economie dei territori e un trasporto pubblico accessibile a tutti.
- mettiamo in discussione l'espansione aberrante del trasporto scatenata dal capitalismo globale che non ha consentito uno sviluppo uniforme locale, ma ha favorito invece la concentrazione abnorme di traffico e la delocalizzazione selvaggia della produzione.

Chiediamo:

- alla Commissione europea e al Parlamento europeo, promotori delle politiche dei trasporti dell'Unione europea sulle medie e lunghe distanze, di aprire una riflessione sull'assurdità e la non necessità di grandi infrastrutture (TAV, autostrade, ampliamenti degli aeroporti, super-porti ...) e una profonda revisione della strategia dell'Ue in materia di trasporto (TEN-T Trans European Networks - Trasporti).
- ai governi di Francia, Italia e Spagna la cessazione immediata delle attività e dei progetti TAV e l'apertura di un vero dibattito pubblico uniforme a livello europeo sul modello di trasporto, di sviluppo dei territori e sociale che sono alla base dell'incremento incontrollato del TAV.

Affermiamo che le soluzioni si possono trovare :

- **nell'ammodernamento, manutenzione e ottimizzazione delle linee esistenti, che rappresentano l'alternativa più accettabile dal punto di vista ambientale e un costo finanziario molto inferiore rispetto alla costruzione di nuove linee, ciò che corrisponde all'applicazione in Francia dell'articolo 1 della legge Grenelle Ambiente del 3 agosto 2009 (soluzione prevista anche nel "Libro Bianco di Delors").**
- **nella decrescita dei trasporti connessa ad una profonda trasformazione del modello economico e sociale, dando la priorità alla prossimità e alla rilocalizzazione dell'economia,**
- **attribuendo in ultima istanza alle popolazioni direttamente interessate il processo decisionale, fondamento della vera democrazia e dell'autonomia locale nei confronti di un modello di sviluppo imposto**

Nel 2013 si susseguono manifestazioni e serate informative nei diversi presidi sparsi nel territorio italiano: a Ven-
naus si discute sui problemi relativi alla Palestina in un incontro intitolato "Dalla Palestina alla Val Susa"; ad



Alessandria viene creato il presidio No terzo Valico e a Torino, di fronte all'aula "bunker" del Pazzo di Giustizia, aumentano le giornate di protesta contro le accuse indirizzate ai militanti No Tav, tra cui compaiono anche Alberto Perino e il leader del Movimento 5 Stelle Beppe Grillo.

Aumentano gli appuntamenti e si saldano le relazioni tra i movimenti italiani, soprattutto con il nascente movimento per il diritto alla casa. Vengono inoltre rafforzate le collaborazioni con Radio BlackOut e aumentano le manifestazioni in solidarietà con i movimenti spagnoli. Tutte queste realtà sono il frutto di una consapevolezza iniziata in Val Susa, ma dilagata lungo lo Stivale, in tanti territori che resistono all'involuzione della democrazia in tutto il continente europeo. Le rivendicazioni e gli intenti del movimento No Tav si possono ritrovare nelle numerose informazioni che dilagano sul *web* e soprattutto nei territori in cui i presidi operano tutti i giorni al fine di

diffondere il riconoscimento della realtà e la consapevolezza di poter ottenere un mondo guidato da valori diversi. In ogni città interessata da grandi costruzioni pubbliche o private, vengono organizzate manifestazioni e incontri informativi e tutti all'unisono esprimono la loro voce di dissenso per denunciare un sistema non democratico e colpevole di enormi devastazioni territoriali. A coronare la forte relazione tra i territori in opposizione alla costruzione di opere inutili e persino nocive, oltre ai numerosi esempi di solidarietà, è la manifestazione nazionale contro il Tav del 3 maggio 2014 a Torino, chiamata "Colpevoli di resistere" che ha raccolto un'enorme fetta di cittadinanza consapevole di affrontare insieme un lungo periodo di resistenza. Non è cessata, intanto, la criminalizzazione dei militanti No Tav, fino ad arrivare al processo per terrorismo, concluso, tuttavia, con l'assoluzione di quattro attivisti. La lotta, nella Valle e fuori, continua.