

THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR II

Erasmus Plus KA2 “Memory of Europe: Historical intersections and their message for the contemporary generation”

ITALY
BEFORE THE END OF WWII

THE SINKHOLES

ITALIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

THE SINKHOLES



The sinkholes are large vertical caves typical of the karst region of Friuli Venezia Giulia and Istria and are used to indicate large basins in the ground. In current language, however, "sinkholes" indicate the massacres of Italian civilians and soldiers which took place at the end and immediately after the Second World War in the territories on the eastern Italian border, largely carried out by the Yugoslav partisans.



To commemorate the victims of the sinkholes massacres, the Day of Remembrance was established in 2005, a commemorative day celebrated every year on 10 February. 7

All this began when the border between Italy and Yugoslavia was delineated by the "Wilson line" when the Slavs were stolen from a part of Istria by the Italians and about 500,000 Slavs found themselves living in foreign territory causing the discontent of many people.



A first wave of violence erupted during the years of the Second World War, when, on September 8, 1943, Italy signed an armistice with the Anglo-Americans and the Germans took control of the north of the peninsula by establishing a puppet-led government. by Mussolini.



It was from that moment that, in Istria and Dalmatia, the Yugoslav partisans began to claim possession of those territories, torturing and throwing fascist Italians into the sinkholes and not only. With the end of the Second World War, the attacks gradually became more and more violent and intense: in the spring of 1945, the Yugoslav army led by Tito marched towards the Julian territories; the intervention was greeted with euphoria by the Italian people who saw in the Slavs, like Americans and English, liberators.

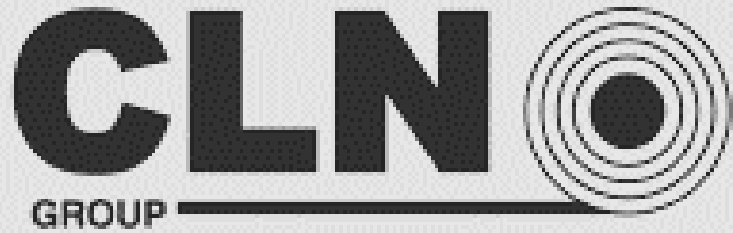
ITALIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT



When the armistice was ratified on 8th September 1943, the Italian army was taken by surprise and left disbanded by the flight of the king and the generals, while the Germans occupied the parts of the country that had not yet been liberated by the Allies.



Resistance developed with time in those areas that were under German control and administered by Mussolini, reinstated as the head of the Italian Social Republic. The first partisans were disbanded soldiers who had managed to avoid being captured and sent to concentration camps after the armistice. This first group of partisans was soon joined by all the young men who refused to be enlisted in the fascist army.



The CLN - National Liberation Committee, representing all national antifascist groups, was at the head of the Resistance. Partisan groups gradually grew in strength and expertise regardless of the harsh repression carried out by the Germans and the fascists, who did not hesitate to harm civilians in order to put an end to their support to the partisans.



They carried out retaliation massacres everywhere (Fosse Ardeatine, Monte Sole, S. Anna Stazzema, etc.), leading to more than 14,000 victims. However, this did not prevent the development of close cooperation between civilians and Resistance fighters. Women in particular had a very important role, not only as fighters, but also with regard to assistance, support and exchange of information. Support by civilians and the Allies allowed the Resistance movement to spread from the mountains to the lowlands and in the cities too.

WWI HOW IT ENDS IN ITALY: BORDERS



More complex and controversial border issues. On the eastern side, the match was between Italy and Yugoslavia. De Gasperi already at the first London conference and in a letter to the US Secretary of State James Byrnes, suggested as the basis of the discussion the line Wilson (from the name of the US President, in the Ap), which took account of the ethnic factor, but basically resolved most of the Istria to Italy and proposed an autonomous status for the cities of Fiume and Basically, it is making few concessions. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, played a strong role in combatting the nazifascism and, above all, the presence of its troops in some of the contrious areas, had a very rigid attitude. Tito's troops had hardly agreed to dropping beyond the so-called Morgan line (by the name of a general), but officially they had not renounced the claims on Trieste.



An opening, which, in Italy, was viewed as an affront, was the proposal made by Tito to Palmiro Togliatti, then Minister of Justice, for an exchange between Trieste (Italy) and Gorizia (in Yugoslavia). The removal of Tito proposal in the end happened. (In the Ansa photo, a demonstration on the triexay question).



At the end of lengthy negotiations, a fourth line of mediation was chosen between the Soviet proposals (oftenly in favour of Yugoslavia), the British and the American, the French. The territory of Trieste was divided into Area A under Western control and zone B under Yugoslav control. Most of the Istrian Peninsula were allocated to the government of Belgrade, while the Trieste issue was only dissolved in 1954. Seven years of mainly internal tensions and polemics rolled by the conservative right and neofascists. Italy went a little better on its borders with Austria, because De Gasperi, by promising the adoption of a special statute for Trentino Alto Adige and by securing, through the agreements with the Austrian Foreign Minister Gruber, the rights of the German-speaking population, managed to maintain the Brenner border. Instead, a salty account was paid west along the border with France. The 'backugnal' suffered by Mussolini in 1940 cost Italy the transfer of Briga and Tenda to the sea Alps, territories belonging to the sabauda koruna. The demands on the Valle d'Aosta, where the French occupying troops were subtorted in May 1945, were dead letter. The autonomy and the French-speaking authorities were compensated, as was Trentino Alto Adige, by granting the region an autonomous status.



Italy had to renounce its colonial possessions under the peace treaty. The Dodecanese islands were returned to Greece; Albania and Ethiopia, to which Eritrea was united, became independent nations. Libya was independent in 1951 and Somalia, after a long Italian protectorate under the mandate of the ONU, has been independent since 1960. With the renunciation of colonial possessions, seen by conservatives as a loss, Italy did in fact spare itself the trauma of the fight for independence that took place in other European colonising nations such as France and Great Britain.

THE WORLD and ITALY AFTER WORLD WAR II



After the Second World War, Germany was defeated, as well as France and England who were no longer able to maintain the colonies. The only two states that could aspire to the role of world power were the United States and the USSR. Two states of opposite ideologies, but both two multi-ethnic and continental powers. Each bearer of its own culture and its own message, radically opposed. This led to an essentially bipolar world system. On the moral level, it gave a new dimension to horror, due to its enormous amount of massacres and its shocking "quality". Bombings, famines, violation of humanitarian rules, were joined by two hidden truths of the conflict, one on the genocide and the other on the use of the atomic bomb.



A work of codification and updating of international law was undertaken, including a real "criminal" sector applied in the Nuremberg (45-46) and Tokyo (46-48) trials. The United Nations Organization (UN) was formed, created at the San Francisco Conference in place of the old society of nations. Inspired by the Atlantic Charter, the UN statute provided for a General Assembly of member states and a security council that has decision-making power. The council consisted of 15 members of which 5 permanent: USSR, USA, Great Britain, China and France. With the Bretton Woods agreements of July 44, the International Monetary Fund was created, with the aim of building an adequate amount of world foreign exchange reserves and ensuring stability among currency exchange rates. The fund was flanked by the World Bank and a "Gatt" trade based on the general lowering of customs duties.

WORLD WAR II

ECONOMY IN ITALY

World War II



World War II - with the country divided, was fought throughout most of Italy. Foreign occupation inflicted substantial damages on the national economy. The money, the 'lira' fell to a thirtieth of its pre-war value (by comparison, during World War I it had fallen to one fifth of its initial value).



The Bank of Italy, like the country's other institutions, experienced some dramatic moments. Its administration was split in two. Separate commissioners were installed, one in the Nazi-occupied North, in the Social Republic, and another under the Allies in the South, in the Kingdom of Italy. The appointment of Luigi Einaudi as Governor (in January 1945) laid the basis for the return to normality at war's end.



The restoration of monetary stability, achieved between 1945 and 1948 with a sound, consistent plan, had four essential points. The first was halting inflation. In the summer of 1947 the compulsory reserve mechanism was refined and targeted to the needs of monetary control. The power to vary the reserve ratio was assigned to a new body, the Interministerial Committee for Credit and Savings, chaired by the Treasury Minister. The reform, clearly specifying the determination of the monetary authorities to put an end to inflation, affected expectations and cut off the rise in prices.

The second point was the re-establishment of a limit to the monetary financing of the State: in May 1948 the overdraft on the Treasury's current account at the central bank was limited to 15 per cent of budgeted State spending.



The third point was joining the international financial community: in October 1946 Italy was admitted to the Bretton Woods institutions. The liberalization of trade and foreign exchange began, and after the devaluation of November 1947 the two-tier foreign exchange market disappeared. The Italian Foreign Exchange Office was formed to handle foreign currency transactions. Italy would later become part of the European Payments Union, created in 1950. The fourth point was the reorganization of banking supervision: after the abolition of the banking inspectorate, created in 1936, the supervisory function was assigned to the Bank of Italy; political responsibility was entrusted to the CICR, whose meetings were attended by the Governor as head of its technical arm.



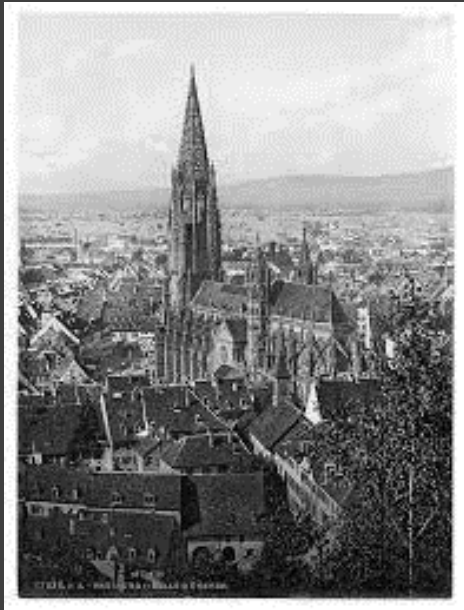
The protection of savings was enshrined in the new constitution of 1948, Article 47. The strengthening of the lira, to which Director General Donato Menichella contributed greatly, laid the foundations for the non-inflationary growth of the successive period.



From the aftermath of the war to the early 1950s, the actions of the Bank of Italy were essential to attracting and managing the international aid (Interim Aid, Marshall Plan and World Bank) that served to bring Italy out of emergency and to kick-start reconstruction.

THE ART CITIES IN ITALY IN WWII

THE ART CITIES IN WWII



The advancement of war operations during World War II soon determined the use of aerial bombardment. Since the late 1930s, in fact, censuses and inventories of movable and immovable property vulnerable to bombing were started to safeguard cultural heritage. With the passage of time and the beginning of the conflict, the indications became more operative: "in 1942 the Minister of National Education, Giuseppe Bottai, gave some common directives of anti-aircraft protection. Particularly at risk were the industrial centers of the North of the country: Genoa, Milan and Turin. In Milan, one of Leonardo da Vinci's most important paintings: "L'Ultima Cena" came out unscathed from the conflict thanks to the fact that it was provided for protection through scaffolding and sandbags of those frescoes for which there wasn't the possibility of moving to a safer place.



For the protection of cultural heritage, particular attention was paid to the protection of movable property, for which it was planned to move to safe places, after compiling the lists indicated by the Ministry: "on 26 June 1940 the eviction of the artistic heritage of Piedmont was completed. In total 580 works were deposited in the shelters, for which an adequate service of custody was organized.



LIFE IN POSTWAR ITALY

POST WAR POPULATION

After the liberation of Italy from the German invader and the final fascist defeat (April 25, 1945), Italy returned united and independent.. We now had to deal with the material and moral reconstruction of the war-torn country. Huge sacrifices were needed because the houses, the schools, the roads, the industrial plants, everything was to be rebuilt.. The United States in 1947 launched the Marshall Plan.. In the early months of '47, Alcide De Gasperi, Italian Prime Minister, returned from a diplomatic trip to the United States with a loan of 100 million dollars and with the certainty of having consolidated the friendship with America. Dollars from the United States with the Marshall Plan gave a great boost to reconstruction.





THE GLORIOUS THIRTY YEARS

From 1945 to 1973 the world economy experienced growth; the factors that determined economic growth are:

- the increase in population;
- the growth of investment by private individuals and States;
- the presence of cheap raw materials like oil;

In this period, world GDP tripled.

«ECONOMIC MIRACLES»

The countries in which economic growth was incredible were Japan, Federal Germany and Italy. For these countries the expression «economic miracles» has been coined.

- In Italy, the causes of the economic miracle are:
- the abundance of cheap labour;
- the export of Italian products, in particular to European countries;
- State intervention in support of the economy;

With a gradual increase in living standards and income, Italians always fulfilled new desires by entering the welfare society and led people to excessive consumerism





«ECONOMIC BOOM»

In the mid-1950s, Italy was still an underdeveloped country with most of the population still employed in agriculture (42.2%).

But between 1958-1963 the so-called economic boom began, years in which Italy became one of the most industrialized countries in the world; the causes are many:

- the expansion of the world economy;
- the low cost of labour;
- the large labour supply;

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