THREE NEW READINGS OF THE CLANDESTINE PRESS IN OCCUPIED BOLOGNA

by

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Abstract

This dissertation analyses five newspapers linked to the main antifascist political parties in the strategically important city of Bologna, Italy, between 1943 and 1945, the period of the Second World War in which the country was occupied by the German army.

The propaganda output was critical to the work of Resistance movements across Europe in providing an alternative voice to that of the German-controlled press and convincing ordinary citizens to join the struggle for liberation from the Nazis. In the 1960s, the newspapers that had been produced in occupied Bologna were collated by local historians Luciano Bergonzini, Luigi Arbizzani, Nazario Sauro Onofri and Paolo Montanari, along with the personal testimonies of hundreds of partisans. The newspaper output was analysed in detail by Arbizzani and Onofri in 1966. The newspaper output of political parties linked to the Resistance in other Italian cities was analysed by Frank Rosengarten in 1968. Virtually nothing analysing the content of these newspapers has been published since.

This dissertation proposes three new readings of those newspapers through the spectrum of historiography produced from the 1990s onwards and through a cross-referencing of previously available biographical material which has not been conducted to date.

These three readings focus on: the extent to which the local communist newspaper, *L'Unità*, can be considered an expression of Soviet propaganda and the implications of this for the local newspaper output; the high degree of interconnectedness between the activities of those involved in producing newspapers as well as the paramilitary campaign; and the almost complete absence of references to the Jews in the newspapers of the local antifascist parties.

Contents

List of abbreviations

CLN	Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale
CLNAI	Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia
CLNER	Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Emilia-Romagna
CUAA	Comitato Unitario d'Azione Antifascista
Cumer	Comando Unico Militare Emilia-Romagna
CVL	Corpo Volontari della Libertà
DC	Democrazia Cristiana
FPL	Fronte per la Pace e la Libertà
Fuci	Federazione Universitari Cattolici Italiani
G&L	Giustizia e Libertà
Gap	Gruppi di Azione Patriottica
Giac	Gioventù Italiana di Azione Cattolica
GNR	Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana
Guf	Giovani Universitari Fascisti
MUP	Movimento di Unità Proletaria
PCI	Partito Comunista Italiano
PdA	Partito d'Azione
PLI	Partito Liberale Italiano
PFR	Partito Fascista Repubblicano
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista
PPI	Partito Popolare Italiano
PRI	Partito Repubblicano Italiano
PSI	Partito Socialista Italiano
PSUP	Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria
PSU	Partito Socialista Unitario
PSUI	Partito Socialista Unitario Italiano
RSI	Repubblica Sociale Italiana
Sap	Squadre di Azione Patriottica
UNPL	Unione Nazionale Pace e Libertà
UPI	Ufficio Politico Investigativo

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Introduction

The clandestine press in Italy during the Second World War was unique in Nazi-occupied Europe. In all other countries where an underground press existed it grew up *during* the war as a *reaction* to occupation. As Kochanski points out, a clandestine press 'appeared in almost every country immediately after occupation had begun'.[1]

In Italy, a clandestine press had existed for nearly twenty years, as a voice for the political parties outlawed under the dictatorship of fascist leader Benito Mussolini. It would expand rapidly between September 1943 and April 1945, following the Italian surrender to the Allies and the German occupation of two-thirds of the peninsula.

In Nazi-occupied Europe, there was no access to the public sphere for the opposition. Many of the forms of performative propaganda typically employed by totalitarian regimes, such as rallies, marches or radio shows, were not available to the local producers of antifascist propaganda.[2] The written word took on great significance. Together with acts of violence, it was the principal method of persuasion available to the Italian Resistance movement.

By the autumn of 1944, the Allies – who had invaded Sicily in July 1943 – had pushed the German forces back to the defensive line known as the Gothic Line, cutting across Italy

[1] H. Kochanski, *Resistance: The Underground War in Europe, 1939-45* (London, 2022), p. 39-40.
[2] Ibid., p. 39. Europe's occupied populations had access to the *consumption* of radio propaganda, most notably from the BBC in London, but not its *production* on a local level. Lorenzo Bedeschi describes the importance to the Resistance of the Italian-language radio transmissions organised by the British 8th Army in P. Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti Politici e CLN – L'Emilia-Romagna nella Guerra di Liberazione, Vol. II* (Bari, 1975), pp. 533-543. Laura Conti lists forty bulletins that the Imola Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale transcribed and translated into Italian from 8th Army radio transmissions. L. Conti, *La Resistenza in Italia 25 luglio 1943 – 25 aprile 1945* (Milan, 1961), p. 10. The Allies operated local Italian-language radio stations in Rome, Naples, Bari and Palermo, in M. Flores and M. Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza* (Bari, 2019), p. 183.

from Tuscany in the west to Marche in the east. Bologna, just to the north of it, was the closest major Italian city and was therefore of strategic importance for both the Allies and the German army. The liberation of Bologna seemed imminent. But in November, the British and Americans decided that liberation would have to wait until the spring, due to poor weather conditions and a lack of manpower and halted their advance ten miles south of the city. The decision was announced on the radio station *Italia Combatte* on the evening of 13 November by Field-Marshal Harold Alexander, the Supreme Allied Commander of Mediterranean Forces, and became known as *il proclama di Alexander*, the Alexander proclamation. The transmission was uncodified, and therefore intelligible not just to the Italian Resistance – at whom it was ostensibly aimed – but also to the commanders of the German army.[3] Alexander's advice to the partisans to return home, refrain from large-scale actions and wait for a spring offensive was largely ignored.

It was a decision that gave the Germans an additional six months to exploit the fertile land and productive factories of the north of Italy, with its population of twenty-one million, to support the war effort on other fronts. Klinkhammer calls the decision 'a miracle' for Germany.[4] It also enabled the German army, supported by the forces of Mussolini's Italian Social Republic, the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI), to deport thousands of men and women – largely partisans and Jews – to concentration camps in northern and eastern Europe. The spatial relations of the war in Italy were locked into place throughout the winter spanning 1944 and 1945, with Bologna remaining under German control.

[3] Flores, Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza*, pp. 283-286; H. Alexander, *Field-Marshal Earl Alexander of Tunis – Memoirs 1940-1945* (London, 1962), pp. 136-137; P. Secchia, F. Frasassi, *La Resistenza e gli alleati (*Milan, 1962), p. 84.
[4] L. Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia* (Turin, 1993), p. 366.

Politically, the Italian resistance to German occupation was an enforced experiment in spectrum-syncretism, where the only possible route to victory for the different antifascist parties was to fuse divergent ideologies, thus creating a more limited menu of aspirations and objectives than those of each constituent party. The syncretism was expressed by word and deed – text and terrorism. Among the various documentary expressions of this experiment were the minutes of the cross-party groups, flyers and posters fixed to the walls of cities, and newspapers – the most important of which were the official organs of the parties affiliated to the main cross-party organisation, the National Liberation Committee, the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (CLN).

Many of the minutes of the Emilia-Romagna CLN meetings in Bologna have been lost, unlike those of other major Italian cities, placing greater importance on newspaper output as a textual framework for understanding the political dynamics at play.[5] Conversely, no Italian city was more assiduous in cataloguing and conserving its clandestine newspapers after the war. Yet the output of Bologna's underground press has been largely overlooked in studies of the Italian Resistance in the English language. What analysis exists is accessible only to readers of Italian and was published over fifty years ago.

In this dissertation I propose three new readings of the clandestine press in occupied Bologna and set out the political and military contexts which provide the necessary framework for understanding those readings.

[5] One of the main Bologna archives of Resistance material, the Fondazione Gramsci Emilia-Romagna, says that the minutes of CLNER meetings during the period of occupation were lost. https://www.iger.org/archivio/#1666184301075-59370450-f711 (Last accessed: 9 August 2022).

Two of these readings are enabled by recent historiography, not available to the historians who last looked at this subject. The third is rooted in a cross-referencing of biographical information. The biographical detail has long been available. The analysis is new in as much as it is based on a cross-referencing of primary and secondary sources that has not been conducted before.

The first reading is based on the premise that the main communist newspaper published in Bologna between June 1944 and April 1945, *L'Unità*, can now be considered to have been a small cog in the propaganda machine of the Soviet Union, not just a local publication with a local and national agenda. (This applies equally to all the regional editions of the newspaper in occupied Italy. It also arguably applies to the newspaper over almost three decades, from the 1920s until Stalin's death in 1953). The reading focuses on how the newspaper reflects a new political outlook in the period after the so-called *svolta di Salerno*, or Salerno U-turn, in March 1944, when the communist leader Palmiro Togliatti radically changed party policy, in line with Moscow's guidance.

I consider the implications of this change of policy on the content of the newspaper and on how relations between the communists and the other main antifascist parties in this period are refracted through the newspaper medium. Through a close reading of the newspapers, I provide a detailed breakdown of the dominant tropes used in *L'Unità* and the main socialist newspaper, *Avanti!*, attempting to demonstrate four things. First, that the number and variety of recurring themes in the major antifascist newspapers was far greater than has hitherto been described. Second, that while some tropes are unique to each newspaper – inevitably so, given their differing ideological positions – there are also tropes that are common to

each. Third, that the two newspapers employ certain tropes that are also common to the newspapers controlled by Italy's fascist regime and use language like to that used in public discourse by the occupying German forces. Fourth, that the tropes unique to *Avanti!* evolve perceptibly from the spring of 1944 in response to the new landscape engendered by the Moscow-driven political and military strategy post-Salerno of the Italian Communist Party, the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI).

This part of the dissertation draws on both primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the reproduction of Bologna's underground newspapers in Luciano Bergonzini and Luigi Arbizzani's second volume of *La Resistenza a Bologna*.[6] The main secondary sources which informed my interpretation are Elena Aga Rossi and Victor Zaslavsky's *Togliatti e Stalin*[7] and Tobias Abse's essay 'Togliatti: Loyal servant of Stalin'.[8] Each was based on access to previously secret Soviet archives.

The existing historiography on the Italian clandestine press was published prior to the advent of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) under former Russian head of state Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. One important effect of *glasnost* was Gorbachev's decision to open the formerly classified state archives in 1991. The resulting research has had a major impact on our understanding of Soviet Russia and its role in the Second World War in Italy in ways that are directly relevant to this study. It has led to a critical reassessment of the figure of Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the PCI from 1927 to his death

[6] L. Bergonzini, L. Arbizzani (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vol. II: La Stampa Periodica Clandestina* (Bologna, 1969).
[7] E. Aga Rossi, V. Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin, il PCI e la politica estera Staliniana negli archivi di Mosca* (Bologna, 1997).
[8] T. Abse, 'Togliatti: Loyal servant of Stalin' in *What next? Marxist Discussion Journal*, Issue 25 (London, 2003), pp. 51-65.

in 1964. This in turn has allowed for fresh interpretations of the relationship between the PCI and the other antifascist parties, in particular its complex relationship with the Italian Socialist Party, the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI).

These post-1990 histories challenge the view that Togliatti's U-turn reflected his political skill and pragmatism. This was found in the writings of many former PCI-linked partisans and other historians sympathetic to the communist contribution to the Resistance. Secondary sources that represent this school of thought include Roberto Battaglia's *Storia della Resistenza Italiana*[9] and Paolo Spriano's fifth volume of the *Storia del Partito comunista italiano.*[10]

For the discussion of propaganda, I rely on secondary sources. For theories and definitions of propaganda generally, I draw on Gareth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell's *Propaganda and Persuasion.*[11] To identify some characteristics of propaganda specific to the printed press, I refer to the Marcel Broersma essay 'The Unbearable Limitations of Journalism'.[12] On several occasions I have located the Italian antifascist press within a tradition with roots in the Soviet conception and practice of propaganda. For this reason, I have described some characteristics of the propaganda of the Soviet Union, drawing upon both Karel Berkhoff's *Motherland in Danger*[13] and Peter Kenez's *The birth of the propaganda state*.[14]

[9] R. Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza Italiana, 8 settembre 1943 – 25 aprile 1945* (Turin, 1964), pp. 214-223.
[10] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano, Vol. V: La Resistenza, Togliatti e il partito nouvo* (Turin, 1975).
[11] G. S. Jowett, V. O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Los Angeles, 2011).
[12] M. Broersma, 'The Unbearable Limitations of Journalism: On Press Critique and Journalism's Claim to Truth', in *International Communication Gazette*, Vol72:21 (Los Angeles, 2010).
[13] K. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger, Soviet Propaganda During World War II* (Cambridge, Mass, 2012).
[14] P. Kenez, *The birth of the propaganda state, Soviet methods of mass mobilisation, 1917-1929* (Cambridge, 1985).

My second proposed reading looks at the interdependence of propaganda and the armed struggle. There was an extremely high degree of interconnectedness between the propaganda campaign and the military campaign of the Resistance in Bologna. Many of the same people writing, editing, printing and distributing the underground newspapers during the period of German occupation were engaged in sabotage, planting bombs or carrying out close-range assassinations of senior fascists or German soldiers. The pen and the sword were in the same hands. The typewriter and the hand grenade had become interchangeable weapons. The content strategies of the newspapers were subject to the same kind of ideological imprinting and direction as the military struggle, under the control of the same power structures. This interconnectedness was not necessarily a characteristic of all Resistance groups in Europe. Olivier Wierviorka has shown, for example, that the military and propaganda campaigns in France were for a long time often quite distinct and separate.[15] Assessing the extent to which the degree of interconnectedness seen in Bologna was typical of all Italian cities, or of other European countries, falls outside the scope of this study.

The implications of the interconnectedness in Bologna would be very different for different newspapers. It was an essential factor in what was arguably the high point of the clandestine press in the province of Bologna – the special issue of *L'Unità* of 8 November 1944, which reported on the battle of Porta Lame. It was also the main factor in what was arguably the lowest point of the local propaganda operation – the disappearance after one issue of *Orizzonti di Libertà*, the official organ of the Action Party, the Partito d'Azione (PdA), following the arrest and execution of the party's leadership in September 1944.

[15] O. Wieviorka, *Une certaine idée de la Résistance. Défense de la France, 1940-49* (Paris, 1995); *Histoire de la Résistance 1940-1945* (Paris, 2013), pp. 71-78.

This section is based on a combination of primary and secondary sources. The main primary source in the monumental five-volume *La Resistenza a Bologna,* which includes both the reproductions of the newspapers covered by this study and the first-person testimonies of hundreds of those involved in both the armed struggle and the clandestine press.[16] This is supported by other primary sources, including biographies and memoirs, such as Enrico Bassi's *Avanti!*,[17] Renato Romagnoli's *Gappista*[18] and Elio Cicchetti's *Il Campo Giusto*.[19]

While these memoirs and the personal testimonies provide a substantial body of detail, as well as vivid first-hand depictions of events, there is an obvious caveat regarding their use: first-person histories written twenty to thirty years after the events they describe are likely to contain inaccuracies and exaggerations. Nevertheless, I have relied on them heavily in certain sections, such as Chapter 4, which details the overlap between the activities of those involved in both the production of clandestine newspapers and the armed struggle.

Several important secondary sources were used to collate the biographical information about those involved in the underground press. Alessandro Albertazzi, Luigi Arbizzani and Nazario Sauro Onofri's *Gli antifascisti*[20] contains thousands of biographical profiles of local partisans, antifascists and victims of fascism, collated from official state archives. *Dizionario della Resistenza*, edited by Enzo Collotti, Renato Sandri, Frediano Sessi, contains short biographical profiles of many of the leading figures in the Resistance

[16] L. Bergonzini, L. Arbizzani (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vols. I-V* (Bologna, 1967-1980).
[17] E. Bassi, *Avanti! dal 1943 al 1945. L'Edizione Clandestina Bolognese* (Bologna, 1963).
[18] R. Romagnoli, *Gappista. Dodici mesi nella Settima GAP "Gianni"* (Milan, 1974).
[19] E. Cicchetti, *Il Campo Giusto* (Milan, 1976).
[20] A. Albertazzi, L. Arbizzani, N. S. Onofri (eds.), *Gli antifascisti, i partigiani e le vittime del fascismo nel bolognese: 1919-1945* (Bologna, 2005).

movement, including some of those in Bologna and Emilia-Romagna.[21] *La Resistenza*, edited by Alberto De Bernardi and Alberto Preti, provides important detail about the personnel and structures of the local partisan brigades.[22] Laura Conti's *La Resistenza in Italia* is one of the earliest attempts to catalogue the propaganda output of the whole Italian Resistance, as well as its relationship to political parties and partisan brigades.[23] Nazario Sauro Onofri's *I Socialisti Bolognesi* provides substantial biographical information about the key figures in the socialist movement in the province of Bologna, including many of those involved in the production and distribution of propaganda.[24] Arbizzani and Onofri's *Giornali Bolognesi* provides a detailed breakdown of the authors, editors, typographers and couriers who worked on the five underground newspapers covered by this study.[25]

The website storiaememoriadibologna.it, the official history of Bologna produced by the local council, the Comune di Bologna, in association with the Museo Civico del Risorgimento, is a comprehensive source of biographical information about the Bologna partisans. The site has a searchable database, whose profiles include details on the subject's parents, childhood, occupation, first political involvement, involvement in the Resistance, including any activities in the production of propaganda, and the degree of recognition conferred after the war.

The third reading is based on the almost complete absence of references to the Jews and their persecution in the antifascist newspapers published in Bologna between 1943 and

[21] E. Collotti, R. Sandri, F. Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza* (Turin, 2000).
[22] A. De Bernardi, A. Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza, il Fascismo, La Memoria. Bologna 1943-1945* (Bologna, 2017).
[23] L. Conti, *La Resistenza in Italia 25 luglio 1943 – 25 aprile 1945* (Milan, 1961).
[24] N. S. Onofri, *I Socialisti Bolognesi nella Resistenza* (Bologna, 1965).
[25] L. Arbizzani, N. S. Onofri, *I Giornali Bolognesi della Resistenza* (Bologna, 1966).

1945. A new body of study has emerged in the past fifteen years that has highlighted the problematic relationship between the Italian Resistance movement and Italy's Jewish community, and the response of the Resistance – including its propaganda – to the treatment of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. Reading the official organs of the communists and socialists today allows for new insights into the representation of the Jews in underground antifascist propaganda.

I will argue that the absence was broadly in line with reporting of the Jewish experience to be found across the antifascist newspapers produced in all of Italy's occupied cities, as well as representations in media coverage outside Italy, including clandestine output (in occupied France) and mainstream Allied news (in the United States) and the newspapers published in the Soviet Union. I also provide some possible reasons for the absence in light of representations of the Jews in communist and socialist newspapers during the period of fascist dictatorship. My contention is that the absence of the Jewish experience is also a reflection of socialist and communist party ideology.

My analysis is based on secondary sources. It draws heavily on Matteo Stefanori's *La Resistenza di fronte alla persecuzione degli ebrei*, published in 2015 by Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea in Milan.[26] Stefanori looked at the representation of the Jews in Resistance newspapers in the major northern cities but did not include Bologna in his study. I drew on the third and final volume of Riccardo Calimani's monumental study of the Jews in Italy, *Storia degli ebrei italiani,* for many of the basic historical facts about Italy's Jewish community, up to and including its experience of the

[26] M. Stefanori, *La Resistenza di fronte alla persecuzione degli ebrei in Italia (1943-1945)* (Milan, 2015).

Holocaust.[27] Simon Levis Sullam's *The Italian Executioners* is a valuable and passionate corrective to a tradition in which the involvement of ordinary Italians in persecution of the Jews is either overlooked entirely or bound up in myths of the 'good Italian', whose only involvement was protecting Jews in hiding.[28] Michele Sarfatti's essay 'Italy's Fascist Jews' is cited as evidence that for many Italian Jews, membership of the National Fascist Party, the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), was seen as a natural extension of being Italian.[29] Alessandra Tarquini provides an invaluable overview on the complex relationship between Italy's socialists, Zionism and antisemitism over the course of the twentieth century in *La sinistra italiana e gli ebrei.*[30] The collection of essays edited by Mario Toscano in *Antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana*[31] takes this analysis a step further by looking specifically at the representation of, and attitudes towards, Jews and Zionism in socialist newspapers over a sixty-year period, from the 1890s to the 1960s. Both texts are central to my conclusions about the political climate and culture in which the silence in Bologna's main clandestine newspapers about the Jewish experience could exist side by side with denunciations of fascism and Nazism. Finally, I use Zygmunt Bauman's influential sociological study of the Holocaust in *Modernity and the Holocaust* as an interpretive key that may provide some understanding both of how ordinary Italians behaved during the persecution of the Jews and the way this was represented – or not – in Italian newspapers.[32] These three readings are prefaced by two chapters establishing an interpretative framework. The first chapter considers the significance of Bologna as a strategic target for Germany and

[27] R. Calimani, *Storia degli ebrei italiani: Nel XIX e nel XX secolo* (Milan, 2015).
[28] S. Levis Sullam, *The Italian Executioners: The Genocide of the Jews in Italy* (Princeton, 2018).
[29] M. Sarfatti, 'Italy's Fascist Jews: Insights on an Unusual Scenario', in *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History,* Journal of Fondazione CDEC, Issue 11 (Milan, 2017).
[30] A. Tarquini, *La sinistra italiana e gli ebrei Socialismo, sionismo e antisemitismo dal 1892 al 1992* (Bologna, 2019).
[31] M. Toscano, (ed.), *Ebraismo, sionismo e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana Dalla fine dell'Ottocento agli anni sessanta* (Venice, 2007).
[32] Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1989).

the Allies and describes the main structures of the Resistance movement in the province of Bologna and the region of Emilia-Romagna. This section draws on secondary sources. James Holland's *Italy's Sorrow* provides a broad overview of the Allied campaign in Italy.[33] Giorgio Candeloro's *La seconda guerra mondiale* provides a similarly broad overview from an Italian perspective.[34] Luciano Bergonzini's acclaimed *La svastica a Bologna* and De Bernardi and Preti's *La Resistenza* (cited above) are both exhaustive accounts of the Nazi occupation of the city, and the resistance to it, which I relied on heavily for basic factual information.[35] Some details of a military nature were taken from Pier Paolo Battistelli and Piero Crociani's *Partisan Warfare in Italy*.[36] The documentary film *The Forgotten Front*, produced and directed by Paolo Soglia and Lorenzo K. Stanzani, is an attempt to restore the city of Bologna to a position of centrality in the history of the liberation struggle in the winter spanning 1944 and 1945, and includes analysis from four historians: Luca Alessandrini, Luca Baldissara, David Elwood and Toni Rovatti.[37]

To look at the relationships between the political parties and the paramilitary campaign of the Resistance I have relied heavily on Santo Peli's *Storie di Gap*[38] and Tommaso Piffer's *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza*.[39] I also used Tom Behan's *The Italian Resistance* for insights into the ideological roots of the Resistance movement.[40] For information on the evolution of the Partito d'Azione (PdA) I used Giovanni De Luna's *Partito della Resistenza.*[41]

[33] J. Holland, *Italy's Sorrow. A Year of War, 1944-45* (London, 2008).
[34] G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna: La seconda guerra mondiale. Il crollo del fascismo. La Resistenza. 1939-1945* (Milan, 2014).
[35] L. Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna settembre 1943 – aprile 1945* (Bologna, 1998).
[36] P. Battistelli, P. Crociani, *The Second World War Partisan Warfare in Italy* (Oxford, 2015).
[37] *The Forgotten Front* (Paolo Soglia, Lorenzo K. Stanzani, 2020).
[38] S. Peli, *Storie di Gap. Terrorismo urbano e resistenza* (Turin, 2014).
[39] T. Piffer, *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza italiana* (Bologna, 2010).
[40] T. Behan, *The Italian Resistance. Fascists, Guerrillas and the Allies* (London, 2009).
[41] G. De Luna, *Il Partito della Resistenza Storia del Partito d'Azione 1942-1947* (Milan, 2021).

The second chapter looks at the evolution of the antifascist press during the period of fascist dictatorship and Nazi occupation, both across northern Italy generally and in Bologna specifically. The most complete study in English of Italy's antifascist press, Frank Rosengarten's *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, was published in 1968, fifty-four years ago.[42] He did not include Bologna in his overview. The most complete study in Italian of the clandestine press in Bologna, *Giornali Bolognesi*, by Arbizzani and Onofri, cited above, was published in 1966, fifty-six years ago. Bergonzini briefly touched upon the topic as part of his 1998 study of occupied Bologna (cited above). Recent historiography has enabled me to draw on insights unavailable to their authors on a broad range of issues, from relationship between Stalin and Togliatti to the problematic relationship between the Resistance and the persecution of the Jews.

All translations from original Italian texts are mine. The names of newspapers and periodicals have been left in Italian.

[42] F. Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press 1919-1945* (Cleveland, 1968).

1. BOLOGNA

1.1 The strategic importance of Bologna

On 21 April 1945, US General Mark W. Clark announced: 'The 15th Army Group has today liberated Bologna from the Germans. The American Fifth Army and the British Eighth Army now stand inside the gateway to the Po plain, poised to destroy the Germans.'[43] But Bologna was not liberated by the Allies on that day, as Clark claimed. The city did not need to be liberated from Nazi occupation. The German army and most prominent members of the local fascist hierarchy had vacated the city by the night of 20 April.

Nor was Bologna liberated by its partisans. A planned partisan insurrection, timed to take place just before the Allies' arrival, did not happen. Such an insurrection would have given the local Resistance movement prestige and political leverage.[44] Unlike the fierce battle required to free Florence nine months earlier, and the bloody conflict required to free Genoa six days after Bologna was taken, 'liberation' here merely meant taking possession of public buildings from what little remained of the fascist hierarchy and establishing control of local institutions.[45] At most, there were skirmishes on the outskirts of the city as retreating German troops ran into partisan groups moving towards the centre.[46]

[43] Holland, *Italy's Sorrow*, p. 514.
[44] D. Ellwood, *Italy 1943-1945* (Leicester, 1985), pp. 40-43; De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 187.
[45] Among the very few senior figures from the fascist hierarchy to remain in the city was the *podestà*, or mayor, Mario Agnoli. De Bernardi, Preti say he was the only senior fascist to remain and surprised the CLN by being present in the town hall, Palazzo d'Accursio, on the morning of 21 April to officially 'hand over' power to the city's newly elected CLN officials. Agnoli represented the moderate wing of the party, whose primary interest was to defend the interests of the city, for which he pleaded, unsuccessfully, with the German hierarchy for 'open city' status. De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, pp. 90, 261-266, 297.
[46] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 326. L. Bergonzini, *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vol 1* (Bologna, 1967), p. 181.

This liberation of the north was to come twenty months after the German occupation began. The occupation had followed the announcement by Italy's head of state, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, of the surrender of Italy to the Allies, at 7.30pm on 8 September 1943.[47] Two weeks earlier, in Bologna, the most senior generals of the German army had told their Italian counterparts that all major military decisions were now in German hands. This was really the moment, according to some historians, that Italy gave up its sovereignty.[48]

Italy was now occupied by two foreign forces: the Allies held the south and the Germans the centre and north – about two-thirds of the country. Italy had lost all political autonomy.[49] What Italian authority remained – in Mussolini's RSI in the north, and the 'King's Italy' in the region of Apulia in the south – was illusory, subject to the control of the occupying powers.

Bologna was Italy's seventh largest city by population. It was of strategic importance to the Allies, and holding it was vital to Germany. After the liberation of Florence on 11 August 1944, it was the only major city that stood between the Allies and the triangle of key industrial cities in the north of Italy: Genoa, Milan and Turin. Control of northern Italy

[47] A. Beevor, *The Second World War* (London, 2012), pp. 601-608; Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, p. 28; Ellwood, *Italy*, p. 38.

[48] On 15 August 1943, a meeting took place at the villa of Luigi Federzoni, former minister of the interior and president of the senate in Mussolini's government, in the Bologna suburb of Croce di Casalecchio, to determine the relationship between Italy and Germany on the peninsula in the wake of the coup against Mussolini. At the meeting, the Italian military was represented by General Mario Roatta, who had overall operational command of the Italian army, and Generals Francesco Rossi, Giacomo Zanussi and Giovanni Di Raimondo. The German high command was represented by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, who had overall command of the German armed forces in Italy, Alfred Jodl, the chief of operations staff of the high command of the Wehrmacht, and General Enno von Rintelen, military attaché to Italy. Roatta was informed that, from that moment, Rommel was in command of all military matters in Italy. Bergonzini said: 'It wasn't just the end of an alliance, but also, much more importantly, the implicit renunciation of national sovereignty'. Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 12; Bergonzini, L., *Politica ed economia a Bologna nei venti mesi dell'occupazione nazista* (Imola, 1969), p. 17; Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca*, pp. 30-31.

[49] Beevor, *The Second World War*, p. 608; Ellwood, *Italy*, p. 52; C. Hibbert, *Mussolini, The Rise and Fall of Il Duce* (New York, 2008), pp. 242-244; Holland, *Italy's Sorrow*, p. 100; Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca*, pp. 18-21; D. Mack Smith, *Storia d'Italia 1861-1969* (Bari, 1972), pp. 724-726.

would give the Allies a route into Austria, vindicating Churchill's insistence on attacking Germany via the 'soft underbelly' of Europe.[50]

The city was also a critical transport hub. It was the most important point on Italy's north-south rail axis, with the country's most important rail marshalling yards. These would be the target of Allied bombing from July 1943 onwards.[51] Bologna would become the site of one of the largest urban battles between partisans and the Nazis in Western Europe, excluding liberation conflicts, at Porta Lame on 7 November 1944 – an event that is central to this dissertation.[52] A large-scale battle in the neighbourhood of Bolognina followed a week later. These were the only two mass urban engagements involving the Resistance in Italy, excluding uprisings in the moment of liberation. Roberto Battaglia said the battles were an exception in the Resistance because 'of the exceptional situation of the capital of Emilia [Bologna], which was the place in the north of Italy in which the pressure of the Anglo-American offensive was most concentrated: a volcano ready to erupt with the incandescent lava too long suppressed'.[53]

The hills of Monte Sole, just to the south of the city, would become the site of the largest Nazi massacre in Western Europe, when 770 civilians were murdered as retaliation for the activities of the Stella Rossa partisan brigade in that area.[54]

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[50] Beevor, *The Second World War*, p. 589; MacGalloway, 'All the King's Men? British Official Policy Towards the Italian Resistance' in the University of Warwick's *Retrospectives: A post-graduate history journal* (Coventry, 2013), p. 44; Resis, 'The Churchill-Stalin Secret 'Percentages' Agreement on the Balkans, Moscow, October 1944' in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 83, No.2 (Oxford, 1978), p. 373; Ellwood, *Italy*, pp. 19-21.

[51] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, pp. 257-266, put the total number of deaths in the city at 2,841, with 2,074 wounded, from 32 bombing raids. Bergonzini says the Allied aerial incursions destroyed 43.2 per cent of the total number of rooms in the city. Bergonzini, *Politica ed economia a Bologna*, pp. 7-8.

[52] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, pp. 253-264; De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, pp. 154-165; Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 122.

[53] Battaglia, R., *Storia della Resistenza Italiana*, pp. 445-446.

[54] E. Collotti, R. Sandri, F. Sessi (eds), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, pp. 677-680; Flores, Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza*, p. 369. Klinkhammer cites German military sources for 718 'enemy dead' in *L'Occupazione tedesca*, pp. 364-

Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring, Germany's Commander-in Chief in Italy from 1943 to 1944, was in no doubt of the importance of holding the city against the Allied advance. He knew, in Holland's words, that if the British Eighth Army could link up with the US Fifth Army at Bologna 'the game would be all but over in Italy'.[55] By the autumn of 1944, Kesselring was aware that his forces 'now stood a whisker away' from a decisive defeat. 'Should Bologna fall – and by the third week of October that was looking ever more likely – he would not be able to stop the Allies from breaking out into the central plains. That would spell potential disaster', Holland says.[56] In his memoirs, Kesselring talked of this moment when the US Fifth Army moved to within striking distance of the city:

> From the middle of October the situation south of Bologna gave matter for grave concern. If one or another sector in the Po plain between Bologna and the Adriatic were lost it might be of secondary importance, but if the front south of Bologna could not be held then all of our positions in the Po plain east of Bologna were automatically gone – in which event they must be evacuated in good time so as at least to save the troops and material. Therefore all our strongest divisions must be fed to this part of the Apennines.[57]

The November decision by the Allies to halt their advance ten miles south of Bologna was a major turning point in the story of the Italian Resistance and would give Bologna, and the wider Emilia-Romagna region, a special prominence in the struggle.[58] As Tom Behan put

365. Battistelli and Crociani also cite this number in *Partisan Warfare in Italy*, p. 36. Roberto Battaglia put the number of civilian victims between 8 September and 5 October at 1,830, in *Storia della Resistenza*, p. 432.

[55] Holland, *Italy's Sorrow*, p. 369.

[56] Ibid., p. 417.

[57] A. Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshall Kesselring* (New York, 2016), p. 213.

[58] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 264; Holland, *Italy's Sorrow*, p. 445; Alexander, *Memoirs*, pp. 136-137; D. Orgill, *La Linea Gotica* (Milan, 1967), p. 314. Many partisans, especially among the communists, saw the decision as a betrayal that put their lives at risk, with a hidden agenda of allowing the Germans to wipe out the communist-dominated brigades before the eventual Allied arrival, removing the threat of a communist government post-war. Roberto Battaglia was typical of former communist partisans writing after the war. In 1964, he wrote: 'A proclamation conceived in this way was the greatest service that could have been rendered to the Nazi-fascist cause in Italy, the greatest damage and the greatest offence to the Italian Resistance', Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza Italiana*, p. 434. Unusually, among more recent historiography, Candeloro argues that the partisan suspicions were not entirely without foundation. He said that it is 'certain' that the Allied Command tried to thin out the numbers of partisans according to criteria that had their origins in 'hostility towards the communists'. Candeloro, *La seconda guerra mondiale*, p. 299.

it: ‘One city more than others – Bologna – periodically launched significant military challenges to fascist and Nazi rule’. The ‘bravery and desperation’ behind the battles at Porta Lame and Bolognina ‘stemmed from the fact that the city was straining at the leash, given that the Allied front was just ten miles away (and was to remain there for the next six months)’.[59]

During September and October 1944, hundreds of partisans – acting on Allied instruction – had flooded into the centre of Bologna in preparation for the insurrection planned to coincide with the arrival of the Allies to liberate the city.[60] One estimate puts the number of partisans in the city at four thousand.[61] A report by the Republican National Guard, the Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana (GNR), in November 1944 put the number of partisans in Bologna and its immediate suburbs at seven thousand.[62] With the focus of the Allied attack now shifting decisively to France, the province of Bologna became the ‘forgotten front’.[63]

Following the Alexander proclamation, divisions of the Wehrmacht, which had already moved north, returned with the objective of wiping out the Resistance, knowing they could do so without Allied interference. This concentration of thousands of partisans within the city walls for a now-postponed insurrection, with the resulting loss of the secrecy in what had hitherto been small terrorist cells, made the partisan struggle in Bologna unique in the occupied northern territories. From November 1944 to April 1945, Bologna was transformed into a crucible of partisan activity, both in terms of terrorist actions and the

[59] Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, p. 191.
[60] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza,* pp. 126-133.
[61] Ibid., p. 133.
[62] Flores, Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza,* p. 197.
[63] An article in the *New York Times* on 11 December 1944 called Bologna the ‘forgotten front’. This was used as the title of a film about Bologna’s experience of occupation made in 2020 by Paolo Soglia and Lorenzo K. Stanzani.

production of propaganda. Once Bologna was free, on 21 April 1945, the Allied armies had access to the whole Pianura Padana, the great northern plain stretching to the Dolomites, with no major natural obstacles ahead of them apart from the river Po and its tributaries. Within forty-eight hours, the Allies had entered Modena and then, in quick succession, Reggio Emilia, Parma, Mantua and Verona. Genoa fell on 27 April. Venice, Milan and Turin had been taken by 30 April. After Bologna, the rest of occupied Italy fell in less than ten days.

While the above underscores the strategic importance of Bologna and its province, taken in isolation it risks overstating the value of one stronghold in the wider conflict. Any understanding of the strategic importance of Bologna must be read in the context of Germany's defence of the area along and behind the Gothic Line, and the push of the Allies from the west coast to the east coast of the peninsula.[64]

However, the view that Emilia-Romagna was the vanguard region of the Resistance is not one proposed only by local historians. Candeloro argues that the active involvement of the region's farm workers in the partisan brigades meant that Emilia-Romagna 'became the vanguard among the other regions in northern Italy' in the struggle against the Germans and the fascists and also became a communist stronghold.[65] For Flores and Franzinelli, it is the region where 'without doubt' the greatest number of partisan actions is carried out. De

[64] A detailed account of the battle for the Gothic Line is C. Jennings, *At War on the Gothic Line, Fighting in Italy 1944-45* (Oxford, 2016). See also: Alexander, *Memoirs*, p. 135; Beevor, *The Second World War*, p. 770, p. 887; W. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, *The Second World War, Vol. VI* (London, 2005), p. 76; Holland, *Italy's Sorrow*, pp. 319-332.
[65] Candeloro, *La seconda guerra mondiale*, p. 295.

Bernardi and Preti describe Bologna as the Italian city where 'the communist Resistance was at its strongest'.[66]

1.2 Resistance structures in Bologna and Emilia-Romagna

The Resistance in Italy was organised by the main antifascist political parties. The principal antifascist political parties in Italy between the autumn of 1943 and the spring of 1945 were: the Italian Communist Party, the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI); the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity, the Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (PSUP); the Action Party, the Partito d'Azione (PdA); the Christian Democrat party, the Democrazia Cristiana (DC); the Italian Liberal Party, the Partito Liberale Italiano (PLI); and the Italian Republican Party, the Partito Repubblicano Italiano (PRI).[67]

In Emilia-Romagna, as in most of occupied Italy, the three left-wing parties – the PCI, PSUP and PdA – were the dominant forces in the armed Resistance movement. The DC was involved in a minor role but its members generally eschewed violent actions on religious grounds.

The PCI was created in Livorno in 1921 following a schism within the PSI.[68] Despite its suppression by Mussolini, it remained active as an underground movement until the outbreak of war. In Emilia-Romagna, it was the dominant force among antifascist parties. Of nineteen partisan brigades in the province of Bologna, eleven had links to the PCI.

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[66] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 209.
[67] Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti Politici*, pp. 42-46; G. Carocci, *Storia d'Italia dall'Unità ad oggi* (Milan, 1977), p. 94; Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, pp. 628-632; Mack Smith, *Storia*, p. 286.
[68] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano, Vol. I: Da Bordiga a Gramsci* (Turin, 1967), pp. 78-107. G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia Moderna: La Prima Guerra Mondiale, il Dopoguerra, l'Avvento del Fascismo, 1914-1922* (Milan, 2016), p. 354.

The PSI was formed in 1892. After the split which led to the creation of the PCI, there were further internal disputes leading to the creation of splinter parties such as the United Italian Socialist Party, the Partito Socialista Unitario Italiano (PSUI), from 1922 to 1925, and the Movement for Proletarian Unity, the Movimento di Unità Proletaria (MUP). The PSI and MUP merged on 3 August 1943 to form the Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria, which was known by the acronyms PSUP or PSIUP.[69] Despite the unification, rifts remained throughout the war between the reformist and revolutionary currents within the PSUP.

The Partito d'Azione was founded in Rome on 4 June 1942 by a group drawn heavily from the antifascist movement Justice and Liberty, Giustizia e Libertà (G&L), which had been established in 1929 by the brothers Carlo and Nello Rosselli.[70] It drew on influences that were liberal, democratic, republican and socialist – a broad ideological canvas reflected in its heterogeneous membership. Former G&L activist Ferruccio Parri was appointed head of the PdA in the north of the country, including Bologna. The partisan brigades linked to the PdA took the name Giustizia e Libertà. With 35,000 members, they accounted for 20 per cent of the combatants in the armed Resistance, second only to the communists.[71] A Bologna branch of the PdA was created by Como-born journalist Massenzio Masia in April 1943. Along with Masia, the leaders of the local party were Mario Bastia, Mario Jacchia, Armando Quadri, Mario Finzi, Luigi Zoboli and Gino Onofri. They drew their support in the city largely from the professional classes.[72]

[69] This study uses PSUP throughout.
[70] R. Bailey, *Target Italy: The secret war against Mussolini, 1940-1943* (London, 2014), p. 16; Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, pp. 47-48.
[71] De Luna, *Partito della Resistenza*, pp. XI-XVII.
[72] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, pp. 78-80.

The DC was formed in September 1942 from different Catholic antifascist groups. The two most important constituencies were the members of the former Italian Popular Party, the Partito Popolare Italiano (PPI), and groups of university students and professors. The political programme of the new party was outlined through clandestine publications by its new leader Alcide De Gasperi.

With the exception of one or two individuals, the republicans and liberals were marginal political forces in Emilia-Romagna and almost non-existent in the province of Bologna as partisan movements.

Cross-party organisations

For the Resistance to have any chance of success, its leaders needed to unify these diverse ideological positions into a common front to fight the German occupation. The National Liberation Committee, the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale (CLN), was the first attempt to create an umbrella group of antifascist parties. Founded in Rome on 9 September 1943, the day after the armistice was announced, it functioned as a kind of clandestine Italian government, unrecognised by the Allies. In February 1944, the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia (CLNAI) in Milan was established as the overall political authority for the Resistance in the occupied north.[73]

In Bologna, there were four cross-party groups. The Unitary Committee of Antifascist Action, the Comitato Unitario d'Azione Antifascista (CUAA), was the first attempt to create a coalition of antifascist parties. Founded in September 1942, a full year before armistice, it

[73] Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza Italiana*, p. 177.

contained representatives from left-wing parties only: the PSI, the MUP and the PCI.[74] The Front for Peace and Liberty, the Fronte per la Pace e la Libertà (FPL), was born from a broadening of the CUAA in the spring of 1943 through the addition of representatives of the PdA and PRI. In the meantime, the two main socialist parties, the PSI and MUP, had merged to form the PSUP.[75]

The Emilia-Romagna branch of the CLN, the Comitato di Liberazione Emilia-Romagna (CLNER), was also created in September 1943, in the days following the armistice.[76] In theory, the CLNER answered to the CLNAI, but in practice it had a good deal of operational autonomy. The political make-up of the CLNER was to change several times during the period of occupation. The PRI, for example, left because the CLN would not take an unambiguous republican stance. Uniquely among regional CLNs, there was no Catholic element in Emilia-Romagna at the outset. The DC and the PLI did not join until August 1944. A CLN was a model, not a unitary organisation. It was a model reproduced at regional and local level and even within a single workplace.

Concordia discors?

Maintaining cross-party unity was a constant struggle during the twenty months of occupation. The extent to which it was successful is a subject of debate among historians. In his 1975 epigraph, Alberghi drew a benign conclusion about the tensions between the various parties of the CLNER. Borrowing the Horation concept of *concordia discors*

[74] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 77; De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 26; Storia e memoria di Bologna website, entry for Comitato Unitario d'Azione Antifascista https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/comitato-unitario-dazione-antifascista-390-organizzazione (Last accessed: 9 August 2022)
[75] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 77; De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 27.
[76] Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti Politici*, p. 128; Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 81; De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 40.

('discordant harmony' – achieving a dynamic integration of differing views, which represents neither a pure conflict nor its opposite), he concluded that the parties were able to 'put divergent views to one side to focus on those which unify'. Differences inevitably emerged, he argued, when cross-party agreements were put into practice, but the resulting *concordia discors* served to enrich the Resistance with 'new ideological and moral components, restoring its value as an ideal message aimed at affirming the fundamental values of human coexistence.'[77]

The view arguably underplays the level of animosity that existed at times between the parties and their related partisan groups. This internecine rancour, present all over occupied Italy, led to notorious incidents, the most extreme of which was the massacre at Porzûs near the city of Udine on 7 February 1945, when seventeen members of the Catholic Osoppo Brigade were killed by a communist partisan unit led by Mario Toffanin.[78] In Bologna, a bitter dispute was narrowly averted between the socialists and actionists on one hand and the communists on the other over the unilateral plan by the local PCI *triumvirato insurrezionale* (insurrectional triumvirate) to organise an insurrection on 25 September 1944.[79] The following month there was a confrontation between the socialist 5th Matteotti brigade and the communists of the 7th Gap partisan brigade from Medicina, a town nineteen miles east of Bologna, in which the communists disarmed the socialists because the latter refused to move their forces into the city in preparation for the expected insurrection.[80]

[77] Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti Politici*, p. 8.
[78] F. Vander, *Porzûs Guerra Totale e Resistenza nel nord-est* (Gorizia, 2015), p. 11.
[79] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 128.
[80] Ibid., p. 149.

As in the rest of occupied Italy, communist partisans heavily outnumbered those of any other single party in Bologna, including socialists, actionists and Christian democrats.[81] The party used this advantage as part of the wider process of establishing hegemony of the left-wing antifascist bloc. As Piffer points out, sometimes their methods in trying to achieve that control were crude. They ranged from buying entire brigades to eliminating commanders who refused to join PCI-affiliated brigades.[82] The content of the PCI newspapers can be read as a part of this hegemonic process. The PCI's central role in, and politicisation of, the Resistance proved hugely successful as a recruitment drive. The membership increased from 6,000 in September 1943 to 100,000 in January 1945.[83]

Paramilitary organisations

The Single Military Command for Emilia-Romagna, the Comando Unico Militare Emilia-Romagna (Cumer), was set up in June 1944 by the CLNER to unify the armed partisan groups and provide an overall military direction for the region.[84] It was recognised the following month by the CLNAI, which operated its own unified military command, the Volunteers of Liberty Corps, the Corpo Volontari della Libertà (CVL). In theory, the relationship between the Cumer and the CVL mirrored that between the CLNER and CLNAI, as a vertical chain of command. In practice, the very different realities from region to region meant the Cumer, like the CLNER, had a great deal of operational autonomy.

[81] Battistelli and Crociani say communists accounted for about half of the total number of partisans (Battistelli, Crociani *Partisan Warfare in Italy*, p. 9). Most breakdowns by party tend to be based on total numbers of partisans recognised after the war. As Alberghi points out, however, the socialist and actionist brigades tended to be formed later. This meant that as late as June 1944 the PCI 'controlled the large majority of effective partisans operating in the region [of Emilia-Romagna] and almost the totality of *gappisti'*. Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti politici*, p. 178.
[82] Piffer, *Gli Alleati e la Resistenza*, p. 108.
[83] Flores, Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza*, p. 133.
[84] L. Casali, *Cumer: Il Bollettino militare del Comando unico militare Emilia-Romagna (giugno 1944 – aprile 1945)* (Bologna, 1997), p. 9.

The leaders of the Cumer were drawn from the PSUP, the PCI and the PdA.[85] The Cumer did not become fully representative of the region's antifascist parties until August 1944, when the DC and PLI joined.

Despite the existence of the CVL and the Cumer, each of which had PCI representatives, the communists created a parallel three-man military hierarchy in each region of occupied Italy known as an insurrectional triumvirate. This was to be a constant source of tension between the PCI and the other parties. The three members in Emilia-Romagna were Ilio Barontini, Giuseppe Alberganti and, from September 1944, Giuseppe Dozza, who had been chosen by the CLNER to become the city's mayor after liberation.[86] All three had spent time in Moscow during their periods of exile and had fought against General Franco's forces in the civil war in Spain. The local insurrectional triumvirate had as its ultimate objective the liberation of Bologna before the arrival of the Allies, acting alone in the event disputes within the CLN paralysed the movement. De Bernardi and Preti argue that the existence of the triumvirate 'underlined the strategic objective the PCI posed to the entire movement', namely that it was prepared to fight alone if the other parties didn't agree with it.[87] The communists remained in the CLN but all the time were strengthening clandestine structures that responded to party directives.[88]

Notwithstanding the parallel power structure represented by the insurrectional triumvirate, the Cumer had overall strategic control of the partisan brigades that made up the rank and

[85] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 84; De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 96; Holland, *Italy's Sorrow*, p. 267.
[86] Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti politici*, p. 183.
[87] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 104.
[88] Flores, Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza*, pp. 112-113.

file of the armed Resistance. In the province of Bologna, nineteen principal partisan brigades have been identified.[89] The brigades were loosely tied to the main political parties. There were eleven brigades linked to the PCI, three linked to the PSI, two to the PdA, and two to the DC. The Stella Rossa brigade, which operated around the hills of Monte Sole, was independent of any political party. The three socialist brigades roughly corresponded to the three distinct zones of activity: the city, the surrounding plains and the mountains.[90] The main activities in the city were coordinated by the 3rd Brigade Matteotti Città. Of the two brigades linked to the PdA, the 8th Brigade G&L Masia was most active in the city. The most active Catholic brigade in the city was the 6th Brigade Giacomo.

Gap and Sap

Violent struggle in urban areas in occupied Italy was organised largely by the PCI, through the creation of Patriotic Action Groups, the Gruppi di Azione Patriottica (Gap), small cells whose members are commonly referred to as *gappisti*.[91] The first units were put together towards the end of 1943.[92] In the autumn of 1943, there were only a handful of *gappisti* in Bologna.[93] By September 1944, this had risen to 200.[94] Their most important brigade in and around the city was the 7th Gap. By the end of the war, the 7th Gap alone numbered 933.[95] In Bologna, as in all occupied Italy, they were almost exclusively linked to the PCI. There

[89]De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, pp. 44-71; Storia e Memoria di Bologna website https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/resistenza/protagonisti/formazioni-partigiane-bologna (Last accessed: 9 August 2022).
[90] N. S. Onofri, *Documenti dei Socialisti Bolognesi sulla Resistenza, I diari delle 3 brigate Matteotti* (Bologna, 1975).
[91] Important studies on the Gap brigades in occupied Italy include: Peli, *Storie di Gap*; G. Pesce, *Senza tregua. La guerra dei Gap* (Milan, 1967); 7th Gap activities in Bologna are covered in Romagnoli, *Gappista* and M. De Micheli, *Settima Gap* (Rome, 2011).
[92] Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza Italiana*, pp. 184-185.
[93] Peli, *Storie di Gap*, p. 58; Bergonzini, *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti Vol. V* (Bologna, 1980), p. 939.
[94] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 120.
[95] The number of members of the 7th Gap recognised as partisans after the war is 933. Albertazzi, Arbizzani, Onofri, *Gli antifascisti*, p. 63. De Bernardi, Preti also cite 933 members of the 7th Gap, including those in all the neighbouring towns and villages, in *La Resistenza*, p. 93. Bergonzini put the maximum number between March and November 1944, including couriers, at 400, in *Politica ed economia a Bologna*, p. 48.

were some violent attacks by units linked to the socialists and the actionists, but, as Peli points out, 'direct attacks on men and buildings', the shooting of German officials and the bombing of restaurants and brothels frequented by Nazis were almost exclusively organised by the communists.[96]

The Garibaldi brigades were nominally communist but, in practice, partisans of any political belief were allowed to join as long as they were prepared to take up arms against the German occupiers and fascist forces. This was not the case with the Gap, which admitted only experienced communists.[97] The high-profile nature of the attacks carried out by the *gappisti* in the autumn of 1943 was of huge psychological value to the Resistance movement but also to the growth of the PCI.[98] The Gap brigades of Emilia-Romagna, such as the 7th Gap, which fought at the battle of Porta Lame, represented an 'unsurpassed model' of partisan brigades.[99]

The Gap were supported by the Patriotic Action Teams, the Squadre di Azione Patriottica (Sap) units, which were also created as part of the PCI insurrectionary strategy. The *sappisti* typically held down a normal job and lived as regular members of society but were involved in covert actions to support the *gappisti*. In short, they were part-time terrorists.[100] Unlike the *gappisti*, they were not permanently in hiding or on the run. The first Sap units were formed in the summer of 1944. The most active brigade in Bologna was the 2nd Brigade Paolo. Emilia-Romagna was the region where *sappisti* were most numerous and their

[96] Peli, *Storie di Gap*, p. 33.
[97] Ibid., p. 17.
[98] Ibid., p. 7.
[99] R. Battaglia, G. Garritano, *Breve Storia della Resistenza Italiana* (Roma, 2007), p. 211.
[100] Peli, *Storie di Gap*, pp. 146-159.

growth most rapid, although much of their activity took place in the countryside, not within the city boundaries.[101]

The activities of the *gappisti* and *sappisti* were varied, ranging from small acts of sabotage to the killing of high-ranking German and fascist officers. The Bologna issue of *L'Unità* of 9 October 1944 provided a good example of the nature of partisan actions. It gave a summary of Gap and Sap actions in Italy in the period 1 September to 15 September 1944. The source would almost certainly have been the regular Cumer bulletins to partisans. It is included here to demonstrate the range of partisan activities, rather than for its historical accuracy. The actions were:

> 1,005 Germans killed, 829 wounded between officers and soldiers; 279 fascist soldiers and spies killed and 77 wounded; 341 Germans and fascists disarmed; 20 tons of TNT and 70 tons of petrol blown up; 2 German planes destroyed on the ground; 1 armoured car, 6 tanks, 1 hangar, 2 20mm anti-aircraft gun, 25 wagons and 2 locomotives destroyed; 5 trains derailed; 2 ammunition depots, 13 bridges, 2 electrical substations blown up; 190 vehicles destroyed or damaged; 2 roads blocked; 9 railway lines interrupted; hundreds of acts of sabotage of telephone and telegraph wires and with tyre-bursting nails. Materiel recovered: 14 heavy machine guns; 20 submachine guns; 39 machine guns; 681 rifles and muskets; 222 guns; 1,407 hand grenades; 1 case of anti-tank mines; 5 tons of explosives; 40 tubes of gelignite and a hundred cases of ammunition for all weapons.[102]

Overall strength

There are differing figures for the number of local partisans, according to the definition of partisan adopted. Collotti, Sandri and Sessi put the numbers of partisan combatants in Emilia-Romagna at 57,366, with 5,816 deaths.[103] Casali and Preti say there were 10,500

[101] Ibid., p. 151.
[102] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna, Vol II*, p. 692.
[103] Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza* p. 111.

partisans in the province of Bologna, out of a total in Emilia-Romagna of 79,749.[104] This total includes those recognised as partisans, patriots and those classed as meritorious.

Emilia-Romagna was the most active region for partisans in combat. Piedmont had a greater number of partisans, but that number was swollen by the presence of former Fourth Italian Army at the very beginning of the Nazi occupation.[105] Faced with potential deportation to Germany and an inability to get home, many of its soldiers joined the Resistance. In the summer of 1944, when the number of active partisans was at its height, Emilia-Romagna was the region with the highest number of partisan attacks on the retreating Germany army and the local fascist forces.[106] It was, for Roberto Battaglia and Giuseppe Garritano, 'the region where, perhaps, the partisan movement reached its highest point of strength and organisation'.[107] De Bernardi and Preti argue that there was a different form of Gap activism in the region, '*gappismo all'emiliana*', a form of 'partisan struggle just in this area, from Reggio Emilia to Ravenna, which was so different to the 'elitism' of the big northern cities, a form of organisation which, in the 7th Gap brigade, found its most significant expression'.[108]

[104] L. Casali, A. Preti (eds.), *Identikit della Resistenza I partigiani dell'Emilia-Romagna* (Bologna, 2011), p. 18.
[105] Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza Italiana*, p. 117; Battaglia, Garritano, *Breve Storia*, p. 72.
[106] Battaglia and Garritano break down the partisan numbers in the summer of 1944 by region as follows: Piedmont 25,000; Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany 17,000; Venezia Giulia 16,000; Liguria 14,000; Venezia Eugania 5,600; and Lombardy 5,000. The total of 82,000 armed partisans compared with the 92,000 members of the fascist GNR. The Emilia-Romagna partisans were the most active because they were the closest to the Gothic Line and the greatest concentration of German forces. By April 1945, the total number of partisans was 150,000-200,000, compared with twenty-seven divisions of German soldiers and five divisions of fascist combatants (approximately 300,000), of which fourteen divisions were engaged in the war against the partisans (*Breve Storia*, pp. 153-158, p. 229). Battistelli and Crociani estimate that 80,000 partisans were active in the summer of 1944 but that this number included 'unarmed supporters', in *Partisan Warfare in Italy*, p. 24. The numbers fluctuated throughout the twenty months of occupation. After an amnesty offered by the RSI on 28 October 1944, and the Alexander proclamation two weeks later, 47,000 partisans handed themselves in. Ibid., p. 46. Candeloro puts the number of German army and RSI combatants facing the partisans at 300,000. Candeloro, *La seconda guerra mondiale*, p. 296.
[107] Battaglia, Garritano, *Breve Storia*, p. 208.
[108] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 92.

1.3 Conclusion

This section has sought to establish two contextual frameworks to enable the readings that follow in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. First, the significance of Bologna as a strategic target for the Allies and a centre of violent partisan activity. Second, the political and military structures which underlay that activity. In particular, the dominance of the local communists and their attempts to parlay their power into a hegemony of the left-wing bloc of parties which accounted for the majority of active partisans.

As this research has demonstrated, in the summer and autumn of 1944, Bologna was a major strategic target for the Allies, for its size, location and role as a major transport hub linking north and south. Lose it, and Kesselring's German forces faced potential disaster. It would become a target again in April 1945, just ahead of liberation. The six months in between was marked by the military stasis, because of the Allied halt in November 1944.

The province of Bologna was the closest point to the Allied lines, where the only active conflict now was the guerrilla warfare waged by the communist-dominated partisans on the local fascists and Nazi occupiers. Bologna was the forgotten front for the *New York Times*, an exceptional situation, a volcano ready to erupt for Battaglia, the site of the only mass engagements in Italy involving the Resistance, the one city which launched significant challenges to fascist and Nazi rule for Behan, a city straining at the leash. For Bernardi and Preti it was the city where the communist Resistance was at its strongest.

The local political and military structures underlying this struggle were broadly similar to those in all of occupied Italy, with the CLNER and the Cumer representing the political and

military wings of the cross-party Resistance movement in the region of Emilia-Romagna. The unity of the antifascist parties was the bedrock of the whole movement but the relationship between them was complex and even fractious throughout the period of occupation. The communists dominated, both numerically and in their readiness to use violence, delivered by their Gap units in the city and Sap units across the province. Ostensibly, the PCI fully engaged with the cross-party bodies, but it was operating its own parallel power structures throughout.

In this conflict, the underground newspapers of the political parties took on a vital role, both as propaganda for the shared ideals of the Resistance and as voices of the individual parties, each positioning itself to secure maximum political advantage. The next chapter looks in detail at Bologna's underground press as a voice of antifascism over twenty years, as a set of discourses mobilised in the internal dialectics of power and as an instrument of war.

2. THE CLANDESTINE PRESS

2.1 Italy's clandestine press

An underground press had existed in Italy for about seventeen years by the time of Italy's surrender to the Allies and the resulting German occupation.[109] Networks of journalists, editors, typographers, printers and couriers did not have to be created from scratch in September 1943. They were long established, albeit in a limited form and under constant duress and persecution. They were supplemented by a corps of journalists and editors who had been producing antifascist propaganda in exile, many of whom now returned to Italy to continue their activity. As Rosengarten put it, 'many veterans of the clandestine press during the 1920s and 1930s merely continued their activities in 1943'.[110]

Italy's passage from liberal democracy to dictatorship in the years between 1922 and 1926 does not need to be described in detail here; there is ample historiography.[111] The bookend dates are October 1922, when Mussolini was appointed prime minister by King Victor Emmanuel III after the March on Rome by the fascists and the king's dissolution of parliament, and 1926, by which time Mussolini had eliminated any form of domestic political opposition.[112] The free press was suppressed gradually, through a series of laws

[109] Italy was almost certainly unique in this respect but there are few comparative assessments of underground propaganda movements in that period. Kochanski included a chapter on the clandestine press in her overview of European Resistance movements (Kochanski, *Resistance*, pp. 39-58). A rare attempt to catalogue clandestine publications across occupied Europe is H. Stone's *Writing in the Shadow: Resistance Publications in Occupied Europe* (London, 1996). His round-up covers Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Switzerland. However, it is largely descriptive rather than analytical in nature, written from the perspective of a passionate collector rather than that of a historian.
[110] Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, p. 96.
[111] G. Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna: Il fascismo e le sue guerre, 1922-1939* (Milan, 2014), pp. 13-124; Carocci, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 265-277; Mack Smith, *Storia*, pp. 551-574.
[112] Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, p. 11; C. Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Antifascist Resistance and Mussolini* (London, 1961), pp. 38-41; Hibbert, *Mussolini*, p. 50.

and decrees passed between 1922 and 25 November 1926, when the Special Laws for the Defence of the State were introduced.[113]

1926-1943

A clandestine press grew up in response to Mussolini's suppression. Many of the newspapers linked to opposition political parties or labour groups disappeared. Some went underground, but production within Italy was limited and usually quickly suppressed and punished. Most clandestine titles were printed abroad, particularly in France, for clandestine distribution in Italy.[114] The major privately owned titles, such as national newspapers like *La Stampa* and *Corriere della Sera* or local papers such as *Il Resto del Carlino* in Bologna, were co-opted by the fascists and became vehicles of regime propaganda.[115] After occupation, they came under direct control of the German propaganda machine.

As Rosengarten points out, the spirit of active resistance was kept alive by workers, intellectuals and journalists, often in exile (chiefly in France, Belgium, Switzerland, England and the US) in order to re-establish the antifascist newspapers and political movements that had been outlawed by Mussolini. Of the various forms of conspiratorial activity, among the most important was 'the printing and distributing of underground newspapers'.[116]

[113] Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, p. 8; P. Murialdi, *Storia del giornalismo italiano. Dalle gazzette a Internet*, (Bologna, 2014), pp. 141-149.
[114] Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali bolognesi*, p. 94, write that clandestine editions of *L'Unità* were printed in Milan in 1927, including 500 copies of a Bologna edition, but afterwards production moved to France until 1942. Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, pp. 628-629, describe how the socialists moved operations to France, where newspapers such as *Avanti!* and *La Libertà*, and magazines such as *Quarto Stato*, were produced for distribution in Italy.
[115] Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali Bolognesi*, p. 17; Murialdi, *Giornalismo italiano*, pp. 142-144; N. S. Onofri, *I giornali Badogliani e della RSI a Bologna (1943-1945)* (Modena, 1988), pp. 63-82.
[116] Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, p. 50.

Paris, in particular, became a focal point for Italian antifascist editors and intellectuals. From the mid-1920s on, Paris was the scene of intense political action on the part of Italian antifascists. All the outlawed opposition parties set up new headquarters there. Almost every organised antifascist movement, from the republicans to the communists, began publishing pamphlets, newspapers and magazines in the French capital.[117]

The production and distribution of clandestine propaganda within Italy was limited compared with the period prior to 1926. The effectiveness of fascist suppression made it extremely difficult. Further, clandestine groups, such as the underground PCI, operated in conditions of strict secrecy, eschewing the creation of large networks of people. Nonetheless, the underground output of antifascist newspapers and leaflets was still substantial. Dal Pont, Leonetti and Massara catalogued the trials carried out by the fascist special tribunal of offending materials, which covered both newspapers and flyers. They say that these significantly underestimate the number of newspapers being produced, because in many trials the name of the newspaper in question was not mentioned, and there was only a generic reference to 'the production and distribution of underground press'. Between 1927 and 1943, the number of trials was 528.[118]

As Alberghi points out, the fascist oppression could never be absolute. The communists remained active, operating in small groups but maintaining links with communists in neighbouring provinces. Their activities included the distribution of clandestine newspapers throughout the Emilia-Romagna region.[119]

[117] Ibid., p. 51.
[118] A. Dal Pont, A. Leonetti, M. Massara, *Giornali fuori legge: la stampa clandestina antifascista 1922-1943* (Rome, 1964), pp. 274-287.
[119] Alberghi, *Partiti politici*, p. 49.

1943-1945

Between the overthrow of Mussolini in July 1943 and liberation in April 1945, 581 newspaper titles were published by antifascist groups in Italy, with the number of editions of each title ranging from one to sixty-eight.[120]

Rosengarten identifies six categories of clandestine newspaper in Italy during the occupation.[121] These are: newspapers published by the CLN; the official organs of the five political parties that were the main organisers of the CLN – the PCI, the PSI/PSUP, the PdA, the DC and the PLI; the official organs of political parties not part of the CLN; newspapers of partisan units affiliated with a political party; newspapers published by national antifascist youth movements; newspapers directed at politically independent groups, including trade unions, student groups, women's groups and groups drawn from professional bodies.

In his history of Italian journalism, Paolo Murialdi argues that given the 'risks and the difficulties of clandestinely printing and distributing newspapers under Nazi occupation' it is reasonable to consider the clandestine press in Italy as 'a phenomenon of considerable proportions, as well as of great political value'.[122]

2.2 Bologna's clandestine press

There is no reliable number of clandestine newspapers produced in Bologna in the period between 1926 and September 1943. Records of convictions by local fascist courts for the

[120] Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, p. 110.
[121] Ibid., p. 99.
[122] P. Murialdi, *Storia del giornalismo italiano. Dalle gazzette a Internet*, (Bologna, 2014), p. 180.

distribution of antifascist material show that there were multiple titles in circulation between 1927 and 1943.[123] During Nazi occupation, thirty-two clandestine newspapers were produced in the province of Bologna, with a total of 153 editions producing a total of 487 pages.[124] Issues consisted typically of either two or four pages. An estimated 413 leaflets were published and distributed, often by the same printing presses. Vincenzo Masi, head of the Bologna PCI press commission and member of 2nd Brigade Paolo Garibaldi, said of the Bologna propaganda operation: 'The black brigades and the commanders of the fascist and German police forces couldn't stomach the fact that in our city there was such a strong output of propaganda and clandestine press.'[125]

The first clandestine newspaper produced in Bologna after the armistice was *La Voce dell'Operaio*, in October 1943.[126] The last was *La Squilla* in April 1945. The number of editions ranged from one to twenty-four. Clandestine newspapers were also produced in nearby towns within the province of Bologna, such as Imola, Galliera and San Pietro in Casale.[127] Other newspapers, albeit with tiny circulations, were published by and for specific partisan brigades.[128] In the period immediately after the armistice, most clandestine newspapers distributed in Bologna were written and printed in Milan. But the local Resistance leaders felt that it was of paramount importance to reach a local audience by providing a local perspective on events.[129] They therefore began founding local editions. With the exception of the six issues of *La Voce dell'Operaio* published by the PCI between October and December 1943, the clandestine press in Bologna only really became active in

[123] Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali Bolognesi*, pp. 64-65.
[124] Bergonzini, Arbizzani, *Testimonianze, Vol II*, p. 7.
[125] Ibid., p. 47.
[126] Ibid., pp. 178-179. See Appendix 1, p. 160.
[127] Ibid., pp. 178-179. See Appendix 2, p. 160.
[128] Ibid., pp. 178-179. See Appendix 3, p. 161.
[129] V. Merazzi (ed.), *Massenzio Masia, Orizzonti di Libertà* (Como, 1990), p. 45.

1944, with *Avanti!* and *La Lotta* launching in January, alongside *La Comune* in Imola. The period of peak production was from July to November 1944.

The titles published by antifascist groups in the city of Bologna were competing for hearts and minds with the 'official' title of the fascist regime during occupation, the city's main daily newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino*. The influential newspaper of the Catholic curia, *L'Avvenire d'Italia*, officially followed the pragmatic line of the Vatican in political affairs. In practice, it was shaped by local cardinal Nasalli Rocca, who socialist historian Onofri claimed was pro-fascist from 1920 onwards.[130] In the years of German occupation, the newspaper struggled to find a line that supported neither the occupiers nor armed resistance to them.[131] The newspaper halted publication on 24 September 1944 so as not to have to report the executions of leading members of the PdA.[132]

The focus of this essay is the official organs of four political parties with direct links to the CLNER. These were: *Avanti!* (PSUP); *L'Unità* (PCI); *La Punta* (DC); and *Orizzonti di Libertà* (PdA). The PLI and PRI did not produce an official newspaper in Bologna during occupation. The study also includes *Rinascita*, even though it was not produced during the period of Nazi occupation. It was first published on 18 August 1943, before the armistice, and then again on 8 September. It was not published again until after the war. However, given that there was no liberalisation of the press laws in the forty-five days between the fall of Mussolini and Italy's surrender, it is appropriate to include it.[133]

[130] Onofri, *Giornali Badogliani*, p. 29.
[131] Ibid., p. 87.
[132] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 99; Onofri, *Giornali Badogliani*, p. 104.

[133] Ibid., p. 39.

The 'long war' between *Avanti!* and *L'Unità*

In 1896, *Avanti!* was founded as the official newspaper of the PSI. It would remain the official organ of the PSI until the dissolution of the party in 1993.[134] In the first few decades of its existence, the newspaper was produced in Rome, Milan and Turin, enjoying a national circulation of about 300,000 around the time of the 1919 general election. It was forced underground by Mussolini's restrictions on the press in 1925 and 1926.

On 3 August 1943, the PSI and MUP had merged to create the PSUP and the new party looked into operating a printing press in Bologna. The first local issue of *Avanti!* came out on 3 January 1944. In total, twenty-one issues were printed between January 1944 and April 1945.[135]

L'Unità was launched on 12 February 1924 as the official newspaper of the PCI by Antonio Gramsci, with one of the other founders of the party, Amedeo Bordiga. Gramsci's values – heavily rooted in the ideas of Lenin – continued to inform *L'Unità* in its clandestine years.[136] *L'Unità* was suppressed by the fascists in November 1926, but irregular clandestine issues were published during fascist rule. The paper briefly emerged from its clandestine status in Milan during the forty-five days of the post-Mussolini Badoglio government, when eight issues were published, before returning to its underground status again after 8 September.

[134] U. Intini, *Avanti! Un giornale Un'epoca* (Rome, 2014), p. 13.
[135] The newspaper masthead carried three different affiliations during occupation: Giornale del Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria (January-August 1944); Giornale del Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (August 1944-January 1945); and Giornale del Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria Emilia-Romagna (January-April 1945). Bassi, *Avanti!*, p15.
[136] Intini, *Avanti!*, pp. 48-49.

The main editions of the newspaper were produced in Milan and Rome. The Emilia-Romagna edition, affiliated to the Bologna federation of the PCI, was one of about twenty local editions published during occupation.[137] The first edition in occupied Emilia-Romagna was published on 6 July 1944. Until that point, copies of the Milan edition had been distributed in the region. Between July 1944 and April 1945, twenty-four issues of the Emilia-Romagna edition were published. In addition, in the early months of 1944, the local communists produced a newspaper called *La Lotta.*[138] *L'Unità* and *Avanti!* would be the two most important antifascist newspapers during Nazi occupation. The historic relationship between the two newspapers reflects the long and complex relationship between the socialist and communist movements both locally and nationally. A full analysis of that relationship falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

The split between the PSI and PCI followed the Second International congress in Moscow, when the Soviet leadership called for the expulsion of reformists and the adoption of the name 'communist', rather than 'socialist', in all member parties.[139] The maximalist-dominated PSI sought the patronage of Moscow but never received it. Instead, the PCI, and its newspaper *L'Unità*, became the de facto mouthpieces of the Soviet Union in Italy.

Ugo Intini, editor-in-chief of *Avanti!* from 1981 to 1987 and a historian of the newspaper, provides the socialist view on the implications of these splits for the party newspapers. He

[137] Laura Conti lists editions in Piedmont (Turin, Alessandria, Ossola), Liguria, Lombardy (Milan, Varese, Bergamo, Cremona, Mantua), Veneto, Friuli, Emilia-Romagna (Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna), Tuscany, and Lazio. Conti, *La Resistenza in Italia*, p. 392.
[138] Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali Bolognesi*, pp. 152-161.
[139] The Second International was a grouping of international socialist parties held in Moscow between 23 July and 6 August 1920. It followed a much smaller gathering, the First International, a year earlier. One of the twenty-one points approved said: 'Parties which want to belong to the Communist International are obliged to recognise a complete break with reformism and with the politics of the 'centre' and to propagate this split in the widest possible communist circles.' Filippo Turati was mentioned by name in a list of reformist socialists who had to be expelled. Candeloro, *La Prima Guerra Mondiale*, p. 354.

argues that in the early days after the schism, the socialists and communists established positions that would last for 'almost the rest of the century'. *L'Unità*, he argues, was 'fully given over to an orthodoxy no longer just Leninist, but Stalinist'. *Avanti!*, on the other hand, was 'harshly critical of Moscow in the name of freedom.'[140] It was in this moment, Intini says, that the 'long war between *Avanti!* and *L'Unità* begins'.[141]

Other newspapers of the CLNER parties

La Punta was founded in December 1944 by Achille Ardigò under the direction of the DC leadership. Those involved in the production of the paper represented the two main groups that made up the movement: former members of the by-then-defunct Catholic party PPI, and the Catholic youth movement, the Italian Youth for Catholic Action, the Gioventù Italiana di Azione Cattolica (Giac). Only four issues were published. This is because the DC leadership did not want to publish while *L'Avvenire d'Italia* was still in circulation. *L'Avvenire* was considered the official newspaper of the Catholic church in Bologna. In September 1944, it voluntarily ceased publication. Some of those working on the paper would later claim this was to avoid taking orders from the occupying forces. Onofri posits two other reasons. First, the DC was now fully active in the CLN, and treading a neutral line for Catholics was no longer tenable. Second, liberation by the Allies was considered imminent, and it was not wise to be seen as having been sympathetic to the regime.[142]

Orizzonti di Libertà was founded in March 1944 and was affiliated to the PdA. After the party was founded in Milan in January 1943, it launched a newspaper called *L'Italia Libera*

[140] Intini, *Avanti!*, p. 178.
[141] Ibid., p. 177.
[142] Onofri, *Giornali Badogliani*, pp. 104-106.

– *Giornale del Partito d'Azione* with a circulation of twenty thousand. During the forty-five days of the Badoglio government, the PdA produced three other newspapers. All four were produced in Milan and distributed in Bologna. The idea for a local newspaper came from Massenzio Masia, the leading figure in the local party. The first Emilia-Romagna edition was published in March 1944. A second issue was prepared but never printed.

Rinascita was founded on 18 August 1943 and was affiliated to the National Union of Peace and Liberty, the Unione Nazionale Pace e Libertà (UNPL), and later the CLNER. It was an attempt to create a cross-party voice for the six parties making up the local CLN in spring 1943: the PSI, MUP, PCI, PRI, PdA and DC. The first Emilia-Romagna publication was 18 August 1943, the second on 8 September. It was then published again after liberation, in April 1945, as an official organ of the CLNER.

Population and circulation

At the outset of Italy's involvement in the war, in 1940, Bologna had a population of between 325,000 and 350,000. This fell to 250,000 by late 1942 as people escaped to the countryside from expected bombardments. The bombing campaign would eventually claim 2,481 lives and destroy almost 40 per cent of the city's medieval centre. The population swelled to at least 500,000 in late 1944.[143] There were several reasons for the sudden increase in population. The fighting along the Gothic Line in the south of the region, including Allied bombing raids, had induced panic among the local rural population. In the autumn of 1944, the historic centre of Bologna was declared a *sperrzone*, or 'closed zone', which the German army remained outside. This was not the same status as an 'open city'

[143] Bergonzini puts the population in the 'autumn-winter' of 1944 at 550,000 to 600,000, in *Politica ed economia a Bologna,* p. 9.

but was a category that still offered the illusion of safety from Allied bombings. This encouraged people to move from the surrounding towns and villages into the city. For the last year of the war, Bologna was massively overcrowded, not only with people but also with livestock, which farm people from the surrounding countryside had brought with them.[144]

Circulation of *L'Unità* was typically 4,000 to 5,000 copies. Exceptionally, this could rise to 10,000 copies. The readership was wider than the active members of the PCI. The local branch of the party had only 1,500 members by 18 August 1943, rising to 12,000 by 21 April 1945.[145] The circulation of *Avanti*! was typically 7,000 to 8,000 copies, with peaks of about 14,000 for major events, such as the general strike of March 1944. The five editions of *Rinascita* had an average circulation of 15,000. The single edition of *Orizzonti di Libertà* published had a print run of 5,000 copies. No reliable circulation figures are available for *La Punta*.

Reliable circulation figures for *Il Resto del Carlino* and *L'Avvenire* are not available, but the numbers were likely to be many times higher than those of any single underground title. One source estimates the circulation for *Il Carlino* was about 150,000 to 160,000 in September 1943, rising to 200,000 in 1944 and falling to 15,000 in the final days of the war.[146]

[144] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 32, p. 226; Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 120.
[145] Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali bolognesi*, p. 93. Alberghi (ed.) *Partiti politici*, p. 244, provides other figures that show the growth in membership. Party members in Bologna in September 1944 stood at 4,000 and had reached 7,200 by 12 March 1945. The increase in membership by about 70 per cent between March and April – from 7,200 to 12,000 – is dramatic and can only be put down to the sense of certainty of the impending liberation. Alberghi's source is PCI leader Pietro Secchia. In the same report of 12 March, Secchia put membership across the whole province of Bologna at 20,000 with a further 10,000 in the province of Ravenna. This meant that the region of Emilia-Romagna accounted for one third of the total membership of 90,000 in the occupied north of the country at that point.
[146] Onofri, *Giornali Badogliani*, p. 81.

It has been estimated that the actual readership of each clandestine newspaper was ten times the official circulation, because the papers were passed from hand to hand.[147] On this basis, issues of *Avanti!* would have been read by 70,000 to 150,000 people and issues of *L'Unità* by between 40,000 and 100,000 people. Taking an average population of Bologna during occupation as 400,000, this meant that between 17 per cent and 20 per cent of the city's population read *Avanti!* and between 10 per cent and 25 per cent read *L'Unità.*

2.3 Conclusion

As this chapter demonstrates, the clandestine press in Bologna during occupation was not something that flowered in the moment of Nazi repression but had deep roots and a two-decade experience of attempting to prosper in the unforgiving terrain of fascist dictatorship. The newspaper as a vehicle of antifascist struggle was kept alive both by those in exile and those at home, operating in conditions of utmost secrecy. The number of trials identified by Dal Pont, Leonetti and Massara of those involved suggest the number of clandestine publications in fascist Italy, pre-war, was substantial, in spite of the risks. In the period of occupation, records show there were 581 clandestine newspapers, thirty-two of which were produced in the province of Bologna.

Although both the actionist and the Catholics produced their own propaganda, in terms of both volume of output and reach the two most important newspapers in Bologna were the socialist *Avanti!* and the communist *L'Unità*. Both had continued to operate, albeit in a limited form, in the years of fascist dictatorship. Despite both newspapers being rooted in

[147] D. Gabusi, 'La stampa della Resistenza from Storia d'Italia nel secolo ventesimo' in *Strumenti e fonti, Vol II* (Rome, 2006), p. 370.

socialist values, there was a history of hostility between the two parties, and this was often reflected in the newspapers. Intini talks of the long war between the two newspapers, with *L'Unità* given over to a Stalinist, rather than Leninist, orthodoxy and *Avanti!* maintaining a more critical line on Moscow. In practice, as Aga Rossi and Zaslavsky demonstrate, the PSI had long sought the patronage of Moscow, but the Italian socialists were snubbed by Stalin.

This complex dynamic between the two parties, their newspapers, and their respective relationships with the Soviet Union are critical contexts for the discussion of the line from Stalin to the PCI and its propaganda – produced and distributed by local partisans – which is mapped out in the next chapter and represents the first of three new ways I propose that the underground newspapers in occupied Bologna can be understood.

3. SOVIET STRATEGY, PCI POLICY, PARTISAN PRODUCTION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at how the potentially crippling impasse in relations between the political parties of the Resistance in the occupied north, the Allies and the government of the liberated south was unblocked by a dramatic policy U-turn by the PCI leader Togliatti, laying the foundations for the effective functioning of the cross-party political and military bodies. Drawing on the research conducted in Gorbachev-era Russian archives, Aga Rossi and Zaslavsky – and others – argue convincingly that the U-turn reflected thinking in Moscow about the Soviet Union's wider strategic needs in the Mediterranean. The PCI's new-found embrace of progressive democracy, as opposed to revolution, created the conditions for a double bind in which party members were now held, and which was reflected in a new language employed by the main PCI newspaper, *L'Unità*. The notion of Togliatti's PCI as an exquisitely Stalinist, rather than Marxist-Leninist party, echoes the assessments of *L'Unità* made by Intini and Paolucci in the previous chapter.

My contention in this chapter is that historiography tends to lead to create a static, limited image of the rhetorical devices mobilised by the antifascist newspapers, focusing on the objectives which unite them and flattening their ideological differences. The little discourse analysis which exists tends to be based on a structural opposition between the aspirations and values of the Resistance parties and those of the fascists they seek to overthrow. A close reading of the two dominant Bologna newspapers, *Avanti!* and *L'Unità*, throws up a far richer picture of multiple tropes, which can be exclusive to the individual newspapers, common to both, and in three fundamental rhetorical strategies – the dehumanisation of the

enemy, the criminalisation of the enemy and the invocation of the Risorgimento – indistinguishable from the language employed by the main local regime newspaper, *Il Resto del Carlino*.

Further, a close reading of four tropes employed in *Avanti!* – those dealing with the Allies, the monarchy, the Catholic clergy and the aspiration of revolution – suggest that the rhetorical strategies of the newspapers, far from being fixed throughout the period of occupation, evolve constantly in response to political and military developments, in this instance, Togliatti's U-turn and the PCI's new positioning. The extent to which this evolution reflects Alberghi's *concordia discors* or a bending to the hegemonic pressures applied by the PCI is left open, as there is no conclusive evidence either way.

This chapter also provides a summary of the newspaper as propaganda more widely. Given the Marxist-Leninist basis of the left-wing bloc of Resistance parties, it looks specifically at the Soviet notion of the newspaper as collective organiser, rather than just vehicle of party policy.

3.2 Togliatti, Stalin and the PCI's double bind

Some of the most significant historiography of Italian politics published in the past twenty-five years regards Palmiro Togliatti. In 1927, Togliatti was elected secretary of the PCI, replacing Antonio Gramsci, who had been arrested by the fascists. Togliatti left Italy to avoid fascist persecution and lived in exile – first in France, later in Russia. He was an

influential member of the Comintern, the international organisation of communist parties, from 1934 to 1938.

New studies based on access to Soviet records provide a fresh interpretative framework for his role in the Resistance and the PCI and, consequently, of its propaganda machine. These studies challenge an orthodox depiction of Togliatti that remained largely intact until the 1990s. To understand their relevance to this study, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the orthodoxy they challenge.

After the ignominious escape from Rome of the king and prime minister Badoglio, following the armistice on 8 September 1943, all the parties of the CLN demanded the king's abdication for having supported Mussolini. The CLN confirmed its position at the committee's congress in January 1944 in Bari, which was under Allied control.[148] Togliatti also initially pressed for his abdication. However, upon his return to Italy from Moscow in March 1944, he announced a U-turn in a speech at the national council of the PCI in the city of Salerno, which was also under the control of the Allies.[149] The radical new position came to be known as *la svolta di Salerno* (the Salerno U-turn). Togliatti now argued for the involvement of all antifascist parties in the Badoglio government, with any decision regarding the position of the monarchy to be put off until after the war.[150]

[148] Aga Rossi, Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin*, p. 68.
[149] Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano, Vol. V*, p. 282.
[150] One reason why many historians have viewed Togliatti's intervention as a great piece of political compromise is that it helped avoid a split among the parties of the CLN on the question of the monarchy and support for the southern government of Pietro Badoglio. The communist U-turn eventually became the line accepted by all parties in the CLN, but not without strong debate between and within the antifascist parties. As Candeloro said: 'Togliatti's move had vast repercussions and provoked heated debate between antifascist parties and inside each of them, including the communist party itself; subsequently it sparked debate among writers and historians, in as much as it marked the beginning of a new political direction and exerted great influence over the successive development of events in Italy.' Candeloro, *La seconda guerra mondiale*, p. 277. Behan details some of the disputes within the PCI. Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, p. 51.

The PCI leader outlined a vision of 'progressive democracy', not revolution, based on the unity of all antifascist forces. The PCI began to describe itself as a 'new party'.[151] The rhetoric of revolution was decommissioned. This new vision informed PCI propaganda. The reasons for this switch in policy were debated strongly both at the time and in subsequent historiography.[152] Aga Rossi and Zaslavsky argue that most previous studies had presented the work of Togliatti and the PCI as 'a paradigm of the collaboration with the other political forces in the country which made up the government and as an example of a policy which minimised – in fact, denied – the logic of the polarisation of the international policy'.[153] Much of this earlier analysis, they argue, relied heavily on Togliatti's own declarations about the need to avoid the creation of two opposing political blocs in Europe. The typical characterisation of his policies was one of a 'national and democratic strategy to hold together the government of national unity and to create a peaceful, prosperous and independent Italy'.[154]

Based on the Moscow archives, they argue that Togliatti acted simply in line with the policies determined in Moscow and pursued by other European communist leaders in a similar political situation, notably those of the French communist party. The policy of the PCI was to be subordinated to the strategy of the USSR in its dealings with the Allies and was based on three objectives: winning the leadership of the left-wing bloc of parties; avoiding revolutionary initiatives that would have inflamed tensions between the USSR and

[151] P. Di Loreto, *Togliatti e la 'doppiezza': Il PCI tra democrazia e insurrezione 1944-49* (Bologna, 1991), pp. 11-19.
[152] Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano, Vol. V*, pp. 314-337; Candeloro, *La seconda guerra mondiale*, pp. 276-283; Di Loreto, *Togliatti e la 'doppiezza'*, pp. 21-46; Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza*, p. 221; Colotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 943.
[153] Aga Rossi, Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin*, p. 90.
[154] Ibid., p. 90.

its Western allies; and proposing radical reform that would help them win an election after the war.[155]

At the heart of their analysis is a new reading of the U-turn. Far from being an expression of the PCI's autonomy from Moscow, it was a position that was dictated to Togliatti by Stalin in person in Moscow on the night of 3 March 1944, just before Togliatti returned to Italy.[156] Using the work of Aga Rossi and Zaslavsky as a starting point, Abse declares unambiguously that Togliatti was a Stalinist politician. The Moscow archives 'prove beyond reasonable doubt that Togliatti, far from showing any autonomy or originality, took his orders directly from Stalin himself in the most humiliating fashion imaginable'.[157] Stalin's reason for supporting the king and Badoglio was pragmatic: to arrest the growing influence of Great Britain in the Mediterranean.[158]

While Stalin trusted Togliatti enough to leave him in charge of operational matters, the Italian was not permitted any autonomy on strategy. Togliatti and other leaders of the PCI were almost daily visitors to the Soviet Embassy in Rome in the period 1944 to 1947 to provide reports and receive instruction.[159]

Pons also draws heavily on the new Moscow archives. On the U-turn, he is also unequivocal that the archive information 'conclusively shows, if there was ever any doubt, that the PCI was in no way 'independent' from Moscow'. For the Soviets, a 'moderate approach by the

[155] Ibid., p. 89.
[156] In what is effectively an official history of the PCI, Paolo Spriano's reconstruction of Togliatti's return to Italy would render this claim impossible. Spriano has Togliatti's journey from Moscow to Italy beginning on 18 February, with stops at Baku, Cairo and Algiers. Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano, Vol. V*, p. 282.
[157] Abse, 'Togliatti: Loyal servant of Stalin', p. 10.
[158] Ibid., p. 11.
[159] Ibid., p. 11.

Italian Communist Party was seen as the best way to preserve a balance of power between the Soviet Union and Great Britain.'[160] This interpretation is also broadly supported by Piffer.[161] One caveat to all these interpretations is that the only record of the Togliatti-Stalin meeting was a diary entry by Georgi Dimitrov, the first secretary of the Comintern.[162]

This new moderate policy of Togliatti threw his own party and the radical elements among the socialists and actionists into confusion.[163] Many communists considered it to be merely a stratagem, with the true revolutionary intent to be revealed when the moment was right. This yoking of democratic and moderate positions to a revolutionary political culture and tradition gave rise to a phenomenon which became known as the party's *doppiezza*. The term, which had been in use privately among communists, broke into the wider public consciousness when Togliatti addressed the concept directly in a speech at a meeting of the party's central committee on 24 June 1956.[164] The term has been subject to multiple interpretations in Italian, with a corresponding range of translations in English. These range from 'twin track' to 'duplicity' to 'double standards'. For this study I propose the use of the psychoanalytical term 'double bind'.[165]

[160] S. Pons, 'Stalin, Togliatti, and the Origins of the Cold War in Europe', in *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 3, No. 2, (Cambridge, MA, 2001), p. 9.
[161] Piffer, *Alleati e Resistenza*, p. 107.
[162] Pons, 'Origins of the Cold War', p. 8.
[163] Spriano, *Storia del Partito communista italiano, Vol. V*, pp. 314-337.
[164] Di Loreto, *Togliatti e la 'doppiezza'*, p. 7.
[165] G. Bateson, D. Jackson, J. Haley, J. Weakland, 'Toward a theory of schizophrenia', in *Behavioral Science* (Stanford, 1956), p. 3. The Double Bind Theory was first used in the 1950s in connection with schizophrenia by anthropologist Gregory Bateson and others. I believe it is a more accurate description of the process of communication that was taking place between Togliatti and the PCI rank and file for several reasons. In the simplest terms, it arises when a subject or group receives two sets of demands from an authority figure that are in conflict with each other and that cannot both be fulfilled. The word 'duplicity' implies a deliberate intention to mislead, in which the real objective is concealed by a false imperative. Terms like 'double platform' or 'double track' do not sufficiently convey the inherent contradictions in the positions espoused.

From the 1950s until the opening of the Soviet archives in 1991, the PCI's double bind remained one of the most discussed topics in left-wing politics. Writing without the benefit of the new archive material, in 1991, Di Loreto pointed out:

> The problem of the 'double bind', of the 'double perspective', of the 'politics of the twin track', of the 'double truth', according to the various definitions which have hypothesised the existence within the PCI of two roads to socialism – one revolutionary and violent, the other peaceful – remains to this day one of the aspects which has been most discussed and least clarified in the post-war story of the PCI.[166]

In his 2015 memoirs, Iblo Paolucci, former reporter for *L'Unità* in Genoa and Milan and PCI activist from the post-war years, admitted that those working on the paper dealt with the PCI's Stalinism with 'little critical sense and with a fair amount of hypocrisy and objective opportunism'. The notion that the party operated a double bind in relation to its members, he said, 'had some basis of truth'.[167] He also admits that many on the paper were fully aware of Stalin's 1930s purges, adding: 'We cannot be proud of this way of behaving'.[168]

For some historians, the double bind, in as far as relations with other antifascist parties was concerned, was always a strategy. As Piffer argues:

> The call for unity did not eliminate the party's historical objectives, which were postponed to a later, undefined moment. The realisation of a social order based on the Soviet collectivist model remained the guideline, and collaboration with the forces that did not share these objectives, and, in particular, with the liberals and the Christian Democrats, assumed the meaning of collaboration with precisely those forces that in the long term the communist movement set out to overthrow. An ambiguity ensued that emerged clearly in the

[166] Di Loreto, *Togliatti e la 'doppiezza'*, p. 8.
[167] I. Paolucci, *Quando l'Unità era un grande giornale* (Milan, 2015), p. 28.
[168] Ibid., p. 28.

interpretation the communists gave to the practical act of antifascist unity. And despite the calls from the top, it was very poorly tolerated by large strata of the communist base.[169]

Given the power structures of the PCI, this double bind would have also been felt at a local level, in the writing of the local edition of *L'Unità*. Although members of the newspaper's editorial team talked after the war of having had lively discussions about the content of their articles, such discussions would have been within narrow parameters. The editorial team was under the direct control of the party's press commission, which in turn answered to the insurrectional triumvirate headed by Barontini. Between Barontini and Togliatti were Luigi Longo and Pietro Secchia in Milan, who had overall responsibility for the PCI's Garibaldi brigades. The PCI strategy, as reflected in the local editions of *L'Unità*, was not open to debate. As well as providing an overall direction for the Emilia-Romagna edition, the members of the insurrectional triumvirate would often edit the copy produced by the editorial team and on many occasions also write articles.[170]

3.3 Propaganda in print

The use of the word 'propaganda' when describing antifascist newspapers in this study does not imply a distinction between journalism (objective, truthful, good) and propaganda (biased, untruthful, bad). The term is used neutrally, not pejoratively.

[169] Piffer, *Alleati e Resistenza*, p. 107.
[170] Athos Zamboni, an editor and member of the PCI's press commission in Bologna, described the editorial policy of the PCI propaganda output as 'a fusion between collective and individual study', in which content 'was discussed at length and animatedly'. During the battle of Porta Lame, Alberganti, a member of the insurrectional triumvirate, was editing copy along with Giovanni Bottonelli, one of the newspaper's authors. The text contributed by the PCI to the special one-off joint edition of *L'Unità* and *Avanti!* published in December 1944 was by Dozza and Alberganti. Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 46, 54, 966.

Such a distinction would be, in any case, problematic. While much journalism, from its earliest days in the 19th century, has adopted what has been called the 'objectivity norm', most postmodern press critique, or any contemporary discourse theory, rejects the notion that any form of textual representation can be completely objective or truthful.[171] This study follows Jowett and O'Donnell, who defined propaganda as 'the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist'.[172]

The newspapers studied here are openly partisan (in the wider sense of the word). Each masthead carries in a prominent position the affiliation with its related party. Each foregrounds its official role as the organ or mouthpiece of a single political party. As such, they conform to what Broersma calls 'performative' as opposed to 'descriptive' journalism. Although the newspapers studied here, particularly *L'Unità*, carry elements of reportage that are to be understood by the reader as fact, each also corresponds to Broersma's notion of reflective style as opposed to news style.[173]

Italy's underground press also conforms to two categories used by Jowett and O'Donnell. It is agitative, in that it is 'attempting to rouse an audience to certain ends and usually resulting in significant change'. It is also 'white' propaganda. This is propaganda from a source that is identified correctly and aims for accuracy. It is presented in a manner that 'attempts to convince the audience that the sender is the 'good guy' with the best ideas and

[171] Broersma, 'The Unbearable Limitations of Journalism', p. 27.
[172] Jowett, O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 7.
[173] Broersma, 'The Unbearable Limitations of Journalism', p. 29.

political ideology'. White propaganda 'attempts to build credibility with the audience, for this could have usefulness at some point in the future'.[174]

In addition to the objectives of Italy's antifascist propaganda set out above by Rosengarten, another interpretative framework to be borne in mind is wartime propaganda more generally. Kenez identifies four objectives of war propaganda. These are: arousing hatred against the enemy; preserving the friendship of allies; winning the goodwill and cooperation of neutrals; and demoralising the enemy.[175]

The three dominant parties of the Italian Resistance – the PCI, the PSI/PSUP and the PdA – were all influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology, although to a lesser extent with the more heterogeneous actionists. The leaders of the PCI, including those in Emilia-Romagna, had spent time in Moscow during their exile from Italy, as part of their 'education' as communists. PCI leader Togliatti was, to a very substantial degree, directed by Stalin personally on the party's policies in Italy.

This close relationship between Moscow and the PCI provides a relevant context for Italy's underground press. Berkhoff points out that in the interwar years part of the Soviet programme was to export communism to all parts of the world, giving Soviet propaganda activities a worldwide dimension. National communist parties sprang up in the 1930s, all directly under the control of the Soviet Union.[176] This Soviet control did not change during the war years.

[174] Jowett, O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 17.
[175] Kenez, *Propaganda state*, p. 9.
[176] Jowett, O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, p. 231.

Kenez outlines the evolution of Soviet propaganda through Lenin's reinterpretation of Marxist ideas. Lenin, he says, 'had an unusually clear understanding of what newspapers could accomplish and therefore used the press more self-consciously'. One of Lenin's vital insights was that the propaganda network was not a mere vehicle to distribute content: it was an end in itself.[177] Kenez cites Lenin's view that the 'newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and the collective agitator, it is also a collective organizer', in which the tasks of producing and distributing a newspaper will help in the creation of networks of local agents accustomed to organising revolutionary actions. The work of carrying out propaganda was 'an instrument of propaganda itself'. Lenin's view that propaganda and organisation were 'opposite sides of the same coin' became a fundamental principle of Soviet policy making.[178]

A similar point about the organisational model of a newspaper providing the basis for other forms of political and military engagement is made by Kochanski, when talking of the early clandestine newspaper operations across Nazi-occupied Europe:

> The creation, printing and distribution of the underground press also served as a training ground for the resistance movements. The challenge of operating a printing press in secret necessitated tight security and the formation of small units to guard the premises housing the press. These units developed the sort of discipline essential for the formation of sabotage groups later in the war.[179]

[177] Kenez, *Propaganda state*, p. 26.
[178] Ibid., p. 26.
[179] Kochanski, *Resistance*, p. 44. Enrico Bassi, who worked on *Avanti!* in Bologna, recalled that the local socialist leader Giuseppe Bentivogli explained the need for secrecy between the links in the production and distribution of the newspaper by comparing their activity to that of the Bolsheviks in Tsarist Russia. Bassi, *Avanti!*, p. 23.

The notion of the centrality of propaganda to the functioning of a political party was not unique to the communists. In 1944, a leading member of the PdA in Florence wrote to another senior party figure that 'without a newspaper our party ceases to live'.[180]

The newspaper is not merely a vehicle for party propaganda. And can be more than the collective organiser posited by Lenin. On occasion, the newspaper predated the party, and was the germ from which the idea of the party grew organically. The relationship between *Avanti!*, *L'Ordine Nuovo* and *Il Popolo d'Italia* provides a good example of this.

In 1914, the young socialist Benito Mussolini was editor in chief of *Avanti!*. Following a split within the party over Italy's involvement in the First World War, he resigned as editor and founded *Il Popolo d'Italia* with like-minded former socialists. Around this newspaper a faction cohered which grew into a movement which spawned, in 1921, the Partito Nazionale Fascista. In 1919, Antonio Gramsci was the editor of the Turin edition of *Avanti!*. Following ideological divergences over the reformist and revolutionary aims of the party, he left to set up the periodical *L'Ordine Nuovo* with like-minded radical socialists. Around this paper cohered a faction which grew into a movement which, in 1921, gave birth to the Partito Comunista Italiano. In both cases, the newspaper begat the party. In the beginning was the written word.

[180] Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, p. 113.

For Rosengarten the launch of *L'Ordine Nuovo* was to have profound and long-lasting significance. He argues that 'had it not been for the example set by Gramsci and his fellow editors, it's likely that the Italian Communists would not have been able to function as effectively as they did during the next 18 years and to play a central role in the Resistance movement in Italy from 1943 to 1945'.[181]

3.4 The evolution of the dominant tropes in *Avanti!* and *L'Unità*

Several studies have summarised the main functions of the clandestine press during occupation and, by extension, the typical thematic preoccupations of the parties producing them.

Rosengarten says the underground newspapers were created 'to inform readers of military, political, and diplomatic events in Italy and in the world at large; to transform passive opposition into active resistance by mobilizing all potentially combative sectors of the population; to discredit Nazi-fascist ideology through the use of democratically inspired political propaganda; to educate, or better to re-educate, the Italian people as to the values of free society after 20 years of dictatorship'.[182] They set out to 'transform opportunistic motives into genuine commitment' and to formulate programmes for the 'reconstruction of Italian political, social, and economic life after the war'.[183] And finally to stir political debate, to establish the Resistance as part of 'a universal conflict of men and ideas'.[184]

[181] F. Rosengarten, *The Revolutionary Marxism of Antonio Gramsci* (Chicago, 2015), p. 49.
[182] Rosengarten, *The Italian Anti-fascist Press*, p. 113.
[183] Ibid., p. 115.
[184] Ibid., p. 119.

Arbizzani picks out several characteristic topics of the clandestine press in Bologna, which include: detailing actions of the Gaps, Saps and other partisan brigades; an explanation of internal and international political issues; a projection of a future Italy; the economic struggles of workers, both in the fields and the factories, and the necessity of this as a stage in the insurrection; the Resistance as the expression of the popular will; and an invocation of the Risorgimento.[185] Casali argues that all the themes in the Bologna edition of *L'Unità* could be reduced to three central ideas: the unity of the CLN and of antifascist bodies; a fusion between the partisan movement and the popular struggle; and the construction of the 'new' party.[186]

These analyses aimed to provide an overview or summary and, as such, focus on a relatively limited number of core topics. This leads to flattening of the differences between the newspapers and the parties they represent. Even where there is a greater nuance about the ideological differences of the papers, there is a tendency to point to the typical themes as though they were fixed for the period of a particular newspaper's existence during occupation.

This section is dominated by a close reading of two newspapers, the PCI's *L'Unità* and the PSUP's *Avanti!* They are the only papers of the five covered by this study that produced sufficient content to enable an analysis of trends and patterns in the selection of material

[185] Bergonzini, Arbizzani, *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 171-173. The Risorgimento is the name given to the nineteenth century cultural and political movement which pushed for the unification of Italy into a single country, culminating in the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. Mack Smith, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 19-48, 60-72.
[186] L. Casali, 'La lotta politica nella stampa clandestina bolognese', in vol. 97 of *Il movimento di liberazione in Italia* (Milan, 1969), p. 119.

and use of language. Due to the small sample sizes, the other three papers under discussion – *La Punta*, *Orizzonti di Libertà* and *Rinascita* – are excluded from this analysis.

Four categories

I have divided the recurring themes or tropes into four categories, as each invites a different interpretive framework.[187] These are: reflective of party policy or ideology; characteristic of Italian antifascist propaganda; characteristic of wartime propaganda; typical of war reportage.

I have identified eighteen tropes in the twenty-four editions of *L'Unità* between July 1944 and April 1945 and twenty-one in the twenty-one editions of *Avanti!* between January 1944 and April 1945. There are several reasons why there is a greater number of recurring themes in the PSUP newspaper, despite there being fewer editions. It was published over a longer period than *L'Unità* – for the sixteen months from January 1944 to April 1945, compared with the nine months from July 1944 to April 1945 – so there was a longer evolutionary period for the agenda of the party in response to military and political developments. Issues of *Avanti!* tended to be longer and more discursive, producing a total of 69,892 words over the period (an average of 3,328 words per edition) compared with the 42,214 words of *L'Unità* (an average of 1,759 words per edition).[188] Below the tropes are grouped according to category and frequency. The number in parenthesis is the number of issues in which they occur.

[187] A phrase is classed as a 'trope' in this study when it occurs on at least three occasions during the period of publication. This threshold has been selected arbitrarily by me. There is no accepted formula for deciding what constitutes a recurring trope in a newspaper. The division into categories inevitably contains an element of arbitrariness and is intended to be illustrative of trends rather than empirical evidence of something. See Appendices 5-8, pp. 152-155.
[188] The total includes the text in mastheads, party affiliation, datelines, headlines, standfirsts, dropheads and crossheads.

In *L'Unità*, tropes reflecting PCI policy or ideology include: a call for armed insurrection (21); calls to enrol in Gap or Sap units (17); calls for unity under the CLN (17); calls for a general strike (13); examples of collaboration between partisans and the people (12); the demand for immediate action against the Nazis and fascists (11); Stalin, the USSR or Red Army as 'glorious' models (10); the invocation of a 'progressive democracy' (7); the PCI as the 'vanguard' of the Resistance (6); and the PCI as a 'new party' (3).

In *Avanti!* tropes reflecting PSI policy and ideology include: an analysis of fascism over 20 years (12); the celebration of socialist heroes (12); Stalin, Russia or the Red Army as models (11); the Resistance as a holy war (10); 'revolution' as a positive signifier (9); anti-clerical discourse (7); a call for armed insurrection (5); republican discourse (5); the Second World War as an imperialist struggle (5); calls to join the Gap or Sap (4); calls for the unity of the PCI and PSI (4); negative representations of the Allies (4); the Resistance as a class war (3); political developments of the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (3).

Both newspapers employed three tropes that are typical of war reportage. These are the establishment of a temporal horizon for events (eighteen issues of *L'Unità*, twelve of *Avanti*!), the reporting of local and national developments in the war (fourteen issues of *Avanti*!, twelve of *L'Unità*) and the reporting of international developments of the war (seven issues of *L'Unità*, three of *Avanti*!). *L'Unità* employed a fourth: detailed updates of local partisan actions, which appeared in eleven issues.

The tropes characteristic of Italian antifascist propaganda generally included the invocation of the Risorgimento (used in twelve issues of *Avanti!* and six of *L'Unità*) and the demand

for the recognition of Italy as a democratic nation in a post-war Europe (eight issues of *L'Unità* and four of *Avanti*!).

Owning the origin myth

One of the tropes which is characteristic of antifascist propaganda generally is an invocation of the Risorgimento. The Risorgimento is the name given to the nineteenth century cultural and political movement which pushed for the unification of Italy into a single country, culminating in the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, ahead of full unification in 1870. It provided Italy with a 'birth of the nation' narrative and as such functioned as an origin myth for virtually all social, cultural and political groups in late nineteenth and twentieth century Italy.[189]

The Risorgimento is the only theme used by antifascist parties in their propaganda which is also typical of fascist propaganda. The fascists saw themselves as the true inheritors of the Risorgimento tradition. It was not a trope which was mobilised solely during the Second World War but had been typical of fascist discourse throughout the period of dictatorship. As early as 1923, Mussolini was drawing comparisons between the 'Garibaldian tradition' and the actions of the blackshirts. In 1925, fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile compared the actions of the *squadristi* (violent fascist gangs) to those of the Young Italy movement of Giuseppe Mazzini, one of the key political figures in the push for Italian unification.[190]

[189] Mack Smith, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 19-48.
[190] Rosengarten, *The Anti-fascist Press*, p. 147.

Rosengarten describes how the theme was common to all antifascist parties, both before and during the war.[191] In 1932, a Justice and Freedom movement booklet published in Paris refers to the struggle against fascism as 'the price of the second Italian Risorgimento'. The name, the Partito d'Azione, was based on Mazzini's Action Party, which was active in the 1850s.

During the period of occupation, references to the movement could be found in the principal organs of all the major parties across the occupied north of the country. Because of the amorphous nature of the movement, it could be mobilised to represent different things to different parties. For Catholics, the Risorgimento bequeathed spiritual values and the traditions of self-abnegation and sacrifice. For the communists, their Garibaldi brigades were in the tradition of Giuseppe Garibaldi's volunteer army whose aim was to defeat the Austrians to bring freedom and independence to Italy. Garibaldi was the general who oversaw the military campaigns that led to unification in 1861. The liberals read an enlightened liberalism into the movement. For socialists, in editions of *Avanti!* published across occupied Italy, the Resistance fighters were constantly referred to as patriots of a second Risorgimento. For antifascists in Bologna, there was one reference of huge local significance: the battle in which the Bolognesi routed the Austrian forces under General Joseph Radetzky on 8 August 1848.

In the Bologna editions of the newspapers in 1944 and 1945 there are twelve references to the Risorgimento in *Avanti!* and six in *L'Unità*. There is one reference to the Risorgimento

[191] Rosengarten, *The Anti-fascist press*, pp. 147-168.

in the single edition published of *Orizzonti di Libertà* and one in the two editions of *La Punta* for which complete texts were collected after the war.

The issue of *L'Unità* on 13 September refers to popular demonstrations in which the 'masses' sing the anthems of Goffredo Mameli, the author of the country's national anthem, and Garibaldi.[192] On 21 September, demonstrators praise the CLN and the partisans, while they 'parade for hours in the streets of the town singing the anthem of Mameli and others'.[193] The issue of 9 October cites a Cumer bulletin which refers to the actions of the Garibaldi brigades as 'reliving and proudly reviving in all Italians the Garibaldian epic of the Risorgimento'.[194] On 22 February, 1945, the mass struggle of the Italian people, under the guidance of the CLN, has the 'irrepressible impetus generated by the thirst for justice, freedom and love of country', and by liberating the province of Bologna will renew 'our most beautiful traditions of the Risorgimento'.[195] By 4 March, the now-imminent liberation will renew 'the heroic day of August 8, 1848', in which 'the brave soldiers of the new Italian Risorgimento' will drive out the 'German invaders and the fascist traitors' so the Bolognesi 'will win our freedom and help accelerate that of all of Italy'.[196] By 1 April, the partisans are 'the worthy representatives of Italy of the new Risorgimento, determined to fight to the end alongside the United Nations, until total annihilation of Nazi-fascism' to secure 'freedom and independence'.[197]

[192] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol II*, p. 680.
[193] Ibid., p. 684.
[194] Ibid., p. 692.
[195] Ibid., p. 716.
[196] Ibid., p. 718.
[197] Ibid., p. 733.

In *Avanti!* on 1 Jan 1944, the people are reported to be 'following the Garibaldian insignia against German militarism'.[198] Garibaldi's anthems were written for the antifascist martyrs who had lost their lives. The fascists, the newspaper reports, were capable of many things, including swapping Garibaldi's hymn for *Deutschland über Alles*, the popular name for the German national anthem, and 'prussianising' of Mazzini by comparing him to Count Otto von Bismarck, the nineteenth century Prussian statesman and chancellor of the newly unified German empire.[199] In February, the newspaper includes a saying of Mazzini, that the 'conspirator's iron is even more cruel when sharpened on the tombstone of a martyr'.[200] On 10 June, in the wake of the liberation of Rome by the Allies, the 'noble figures' of Mameli and Anita Garibaldi, wife of Giuseppe, are cited.[201] In July, the Resistance struggle 'renews in the rebirth of Garibaldi's spirit, the story of our national redemption'.[202] In the following issue in July, Radetzky was compared to Kesselring and Mussolini, noting that he had gone but 'the Italian people remained'. Mameli's anthem is cited again, in the words 'may Italian blood burn the hearts of those who drink it'.[203]

In August, the dead bodies of nine partisans were found in Piazza 8 Agosto, the market square named after the liberation battle of 1848 and where a statue had been erected to celebrate the battle. They were shot by local fascist militia. The newspaper said:

> Those imbecile assassins didn't realise they were shooting, for satisfaction of the Germans, the unfortunate and innocent people of Bologna right at the foot of that monument which celebrates a victory of the common Bolognese people over the Germans. But perhaps it is

[198] Ibid., p. 408.
[199] Ibid., p. 415.
[200] Ibid., p. 418.
[201] Ibid., p. 452.
[202] Ibid., p. 466.
[203] Ibid., p. 472.

> logical. It was reparation and revenge owed to the Germans by the fascist militias, demonstrating how complete their servile cowardice is.[204]

By 2 April, with liberation imminent, the newspaper looks forward to the moment when the people will take to the streets and squares to fight the enemy, with the 'red shirts of the partisans guided by Garibaldi', the guardian of the 'sacred borders of the fatherland'.[205]

The one published issue of *Orizzonti di Liberta*, on 1 March 1944, carries a reference to the need to draw on the work done by 'our fathers of '48' to draw up a constitution for post-war Italy.[206] In one of the two issues of *La Punta* for which the full text was later found, published in February 1945, the newspaper talked of the 'warm and serene air of the Risorgimento of 1848' enveloping the city, while the people share the emotions of those 'at the dawn of our unified history'.[207]

Rosengarten goes as far as suggesting that the mobilisation of Risorgimento rhetoric 'fulfilled a mediating function between the forces of conservatism and progress' which was 'indispensable' to the 'at least partial success of the Italian Resistance Movement'.[208]

Legitimacy

Tropes that are typical of wartime propaganda include the criminalisation and the dehumanisation of the enemy. Each appeared in thirteen issues of *L'Unità*. In *Avanti*!, the former was employed in nineteen issues and the latter in fifteen. As examples of wartime

[204] Ibid., p. 488.
[205] Ibid., p. 526.
[206] Ibid., p. 595.
[207] Ibid., p. 973.
[208] Rosengarten, *The Anti-fascist Press*, p. 167.

propaganda, they are – not surprisingly – also tropes used consistently by the regime newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino* as well as in the public discourse of the German occupiers, for whom the partisans were always '*banditen'* (bandits). Both tropes have the same objective: to establish the legitimacy of the actions carried out by one side and delegitimise those of the enemy.

As De Bernardi and Preti point out, in the public discourse of the RSI, there was no attempt to understand the phenomenon of the Resistance 'because there was an urgent need to delegitimise it.'[209] They quote a passage from *Il Resto del Carlino* of 9 November 1943 which combines the tropes of dehumanisation and criminalisation with one presenting the conflict as a civil war. The murder of two local fascist leaders and two policemen showed, the newspaper reported, 'the bestial subversive propaganda and the cowardice of the bosses of the communist organisations, trying again to push the worst and least responsible elements into crime and civil war'.[210]

In its reports of the activities of the partisans, *L'Unità* uses the term '*giustiziato'* in describing killings of the enemy in seven issues. The word has a judicial register, implying a legal execution after a subject was condemned to death. From 1944 onwards, the partisans operated their own 'military tribunal', delivering summary 'justice' to any captured fascists or those considered traitors or spies.

The issue of *L'Unità* of 6 July 1944 carries a typical report of partisan actions which include the details that 'the well-known fascist Masotti' was 'executed', at the town of Fusignano

[209] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 333
[210] Ibid., p. 334.

'a fascist spy' was executed, a fascist 'auxiliary agent' and 'a spy' in the Bologna suburb of Castel Maggiore were also executed. The word *giustiziato* is never used for German soldiers, even for members of the SS. It is reserved for Italian fascists, often accompanied by the epithet 'traitor', and for spies. German soldiers are simply '*ucciso'* (killed). The information about partisan activities used in *L'Unità* was usually taken from bulletins produced by the Cumer, which had a function of sharing military intelligence, rather than the propaganda functions of persuasion and mobilisation. As such, they eschewed words like '*giustiziato'*. Conversely, the language of dehumanisation is used by *L'Unità* either for the Germans or for the 'Nazi-fascists' but never for Italian fascists in isolation.

Criminalisation remains a standard trope of wartime propaganda, as any cursory analysis of modern conflicts, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, would demonstrate. Liz Curtis has shown how, for example, in the so-called 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland, criminalisation was one of the three planks of British policy in dealing with the Irish nationalist paramilitary organisation the IRA.[211]

Beyond the question of legitimacy, the rhetoric of dehumanisation has a further function in wartime propaganda: it helps to justify violence against the enemy. In discussing the Shoah, Bauman says dehumanisation is one of three conditions that need to be met to enable violent atrocities to be carried out:

[211] Curtis said successive British governments in the 1970s and 1980s operated a judicial policy, and related propaganda campaign, based on three principles: normalisation, 'Ulsterisation' and criminalisation. The overall objective of all three strands of the campaign was to eliminate any reference in the media to the conflict as being a war, and thus deny those involved in paramilitary activities, especially those drawn from the nationalist community, such as the IRA, the ostensible legitimacy of being able to portray themselves as freedom fighters. L. Curtis, *Ireland: The Propaganda War. The British Media and the Battle for Hearts and Minds* (London, 1984), pp. 51, 68-69, 130.

> Moral inhibitions against violent atrocities tend to be eroded once three conditions are met, singly or together: the violence is *authorized* (by official orders coming from the legally entitled quarters), actions are *routinized* (by rule governed practises and exact specification of roles), and the victims of violence are *dehumanized* (by ideological definitions and indoctrinations).[212]

Dehumanised objects, he says, 'cannot be considered to have a cause', much less a just one. 'They have no 'interests' to be considered, indeed no claim to subjectivity'. Humans become a 'nuisance factor'.[213] Alessandro Portelli points to a paradox, however, in the use of dehumanisation tropes. Anti-Nazi propaganda in Italy was full of terms such as '*belve naziste*' (Nazi beasts), he says, despite the fact that even the most senior figures in the SS were 'civil human beings'. The paradox is that 'when we deny their humanity, we deny their guilt'.[214]

The 'new' PCI and progressive democracy

The tropes falling under the categories of antifascist propaganda, wartime propaganda and war reportage are the same for each paper and remain constant throughout the lifetime of each newspaper. There are also tropes reflecting party policy and ideology that are the same in each newspaper. These include a call for armed insurrection, calls to enrol in Gap or Sap units, and references to Stalin, the USSR or the Red Army as models. Inevitably, however, given the different ideological agendas of the PCI and PSI, this is also the category that

[212] Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 21.
[213] Ibid., p. 104
[214] Portelli is quoted in the short BBC film 'The street that Hitler wanted to erase from history', first shown on 25 April 2022, directed by Elisabetta Abrami and Benedetta Perilli. https://www.bbc.com/reel/video/p0c2y0bl/the-street-that-hitler-wanted-to-erase-from-history?xtor=ES-213-[BBC%20Features%20Newsletter]-2022April29-[bbcfeatures_hitlerstreet_history] (Last accessed: 9 August 2022)

contains rhetorical tropes specific to each newspaper. Many of those differences reflected the new-found but fragile unity among the parties of the CLN in the wake of Togliatti's change of position post-Salerno.

The increasing thematic harmonisation that takes place from the spring and summer of 1944 finds expression in the publication of the special combined edition of 23 December 1944, which was published simultaneously under two titles: *L'Unità-Avanti!* and *Avanti!-L'Unità.* This alignment of thematic tropes can be seen as an aspect of the *concordia discors*, as the left-wing parties sought areas of compromise, or as an example of the PCI's attempts to establish hegemony of the left bloc from the late spring of 1944, after Togliatti's return to Italy from Moscow.

The Emilia-Romagna edition of *L'Unità* was first published in July 1944. The timing is significant in terms of the content that was produced. It means that all editions reflected the PCI's change in policy following the Salerno U-turn of April 1944. The output also followed the Allied liberation of Rome on 4 June, which paved the way for the resignation of prime minister Badoglio and the establishment of a cross-party power-sharing executive under new prime minster, the liberal Ivanoe Bonomi.

The new policy of the PCI with regards to the Resistance in that moment was based on several fundamental building blocks. First, that all antifascist parties, including the Catholics, should unite in the CLN to defeat the Nazis and fascists, with all institutional questions – especially that regarding the monarchy – left until after the war. Second, an armed insurrection to free the country should start immediately, with the communists in the

vanguard. Those who waited for the Allies to liberate Italy had no right to a seat at the table to draw up a post-war society. The armed insurrection was to free Italy of the occupying forces and of fascism, not to create a workers' state, not to replace one dictatorship with another. Third, armed action should take place through membership of (communist-dominated) Gap and Sap units. The PCI's ideological aspiration is now presented as progressive democracy (not violent revolution). It has been re-born as a 'new' party. All of these positions reflected the strategy determined by Stalin in conversation with Togliatti and imposed by the latter on his party, despite initial stupor and internal resistance.

The party could not renounce its roots in Marxist-Leninist ideology, nor its Soviet inspiration, so had to present them as models of a new kind of democracy. There were also policies inherent in the new position that could not be expressed explicitly, giving rise to the double bind the party held its members in. The objective of dialogue with the other left-wing parties, the PSUP and PdA, had the short-term aim of establishing a unity of action but the deeper aim of establishing hegemony over the left-wing bloc, which would be led into forthcoming elections under communist direction. The Catholics were courted by a commitment to complete and (un-Soviet) religious tolerance and an avoidance of anti-clerical or anti-Vatican discourse.[215] The Allies had to be convinced that the PCI did not represent a threat to peace and stability in a post-war Italy. Forging a bond with the DC was critical to this. At the same time, the party had to keep and expand a membership raised on a revolutionary aspiration, with the October 1917 revolution in Russia as an ideological north star.

[215] Roberto Battaglia outlined the lengths to which the PCI went to overcome the suspicions of the Catholics. Battaglia, *Storia della Resistenza*, pp. 356-361. See also Alberghi (ed.), *Partiti politici*, pp. 248-254.

The call for an armed insurrection is the most common of the recurring tropes in *L'Unità*. It appears in twenty-one issues of the twenty-four. In the first Emilia-Romagna edition on 6 July 1944, which can be seen as something of a manifesto of the local PCI, a demand for insurrection appears twenty-one times in two pages of text.[216] The PCI is walking a rhetorical tightrope in its use of the very similar concepts of 'insurrection' (a violent uprising against an authority or government) and 'revolution' (a forcible overthrow of a government or social order, in favour of a new system). Ensuring they remained distinct concepts was central to the project of Stalin, and therefore of Togliatti. Across the twenty-four issues, there is never an unequivocal call for revolution. The closest the authors, the local party leaders, come to using the word revolution is the invocation of a 'revolutionary spirit'.

The Stalinist line, passed down to the party by Togliatti, was to avoid anything that looked like an explicit call to revolution. At the same time, the PCI leaders were aware they had to speak to the rank and file of the party that saw the Resistance as a steppingstone to the creation of a workers' state. The solution in *L'Unità* was the call for insurrection to free Italy from the Nazi occupation by mobilising a 'revolutionary spirit'. Language that praises revolutionary action or a revolutionary spirit is used in four of the issues that call for insurrection.

The unity of the main antifascist parties under the leadership of the CLN is always invoked by the PCI, but invariably with the caveat that only those who take up arms immediately can sit at the negotiating table to help shape post-war Italy. This trope can also be read as

[216] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 639-640.

an example of the PCI's double bind – an ostensible call for cross-party unity, containing within it the germ of a hegemonic intention. In the issue of 10 September it says:

> With the new political agreement made in Rome by Palmiro Togliatti (Ercoli) and Pietro Nenni, respectively for the Communist and Socialist parties, the foundations of the joint action of the two mass parties that have a very important role in the National Liberation Committee are strengthened and developed and they play a leading role in the liberation struggle. We are sure that this broader and more solid unity of action of the two parties will result in a development of the insurrectional struggle that the people are carrying out, with positive results leading to beneficial future developments.[217]

The first use of the term 'progressive democracy' appears in issue 4, in August:

> Why do we want progressive democracy? As part of the struggle of all the Italian people for national independence and freedom, the Italian Communist Party points out in the conquest of democracy the path that strengthens the popular contribution to the war of liberation is progressing and will allow the Italian people to face the problems of reconstruction.
>
> We speak of progressive democracy as a form of political life which differs from the old pre-Fascist democracy in that it is formed on self-government of the popular masses. It is therefore not a question of a democracy which exhausts itself in a periodic electoral consultation but is a form of social life and politics that ensures, through the free associations of the masses, a pre-eminent popular participation in government.[218]

In the same issue, the armed struggle will 'usher in the era of progressive democracy', allowing Italians a 'peaceful coexistence with economic, political and social development'. In the issue of 13 September, those taking up arms 'will be, by right, the soul and guide of the reconstruction of the new democratic and progressive Italy of tomorrow'.[219]

[217] Ibid., p. 674.
[218] Ibid., p. 665.
[219] Ibid., p. 681.

In the issue of 31 October, the PCI explicitly states its position on power-sharing. The following paragraph could be regarded as a good example of the double bind in which the party held its followers, attempting to reaffirm its roots as a revolutionary Marxist party, which is not reformist or an expression of social democracy, but which is an expression of progressive democracy. It should be borne in mind that at the time of writing, the Bologna PCI was operating under the belief the Allied arrival was imminent. The issue says:

> The communists face it [power-sharing] not in spirit of reformism and social democracy, of parliamentary combinations, of the renunciation of the working class to its independent class struggle and its own function as vanguard of all the oppressed and all the exploited. They face it with the theory and practice of revolutionary Marxism, with recourse to action, to the direct intervention of the masses of the people, in the spirit of a consequent and progressive democracy that mobilises the masses for solutions to the problems of all the Italian people.[220]

In the issue published on 21 January 1945, the PCI leaders attempted to square the circle of being a party rooted in revolutionary Marxism while committed to democracy. In 1945, the Soviet Union is presented as a model of that kind of democracy:

> The lie and slander of an undemocratic communism had been refuted by the constant, more than twenty-year struggle of the Bolsheviks for democracy, by the democratic character of the Soviet regime, by the triumph of Soviet democracy in front of the world and by sacrifices of the Communists for the conquest of progressive democracy.
>
> As comrade Togliatti, head of the Communist Party, said in Florence, 'without the Communist Party in Italy, a democratic rebirth is not possible; without a large party like the one we are creating, it is not possible that Italy will resume its progressive political evolution, so unworthily interrupted by reaction and by the fascist party'.[221]

[220] Ibid., p. 699.
[221] Ibid., p. 708.

The tropes adopted by *L'Unità* to reflect Togliatti's post-U-turn strategy were employed consistently throughout the period of publication, from July 1944 to April 1945.

The PSI modulation post-Salerno

Several of the dominant tropes employed by *Avanti!* – those which expressed key tenets of the PSI policy – changed in the months following the Salerno U-turn. Those socialist ideological positions that no longer sat comfortably with the new direction in which Togliatti (and behind him Stalin) was taking the Resistance were muted or abandoned altogether from the spring and summer of 1944. This does not imply that there was an immediate switch by the PSI. Talks with the PCI remained constant, and difficult, throughout the summer and autumn, culminating in a pact of unity between Togliatti and socialist leader Pietro Nenni in September.

The tropes were employed again, almost in their totality, in the final issue of the socialist newspaper prior to the arrival of the Allies. Of the twenty-one tropes identified, all but three are used in the final issue published under occupation, on 2 April 1945. This can be read as the PSI re-asserting itself and its own political agenda at a moment when liberation is certain, although there is no documentary evidence to support that view. These modulations reflecting a compromise with the new PCI position can be observed by looking at four of the PSI newspaper's tropes: those concerning the representation of the Allies, of the Catholic clergy, the monarchy and revolution.

The Allies

The Allies were represented negatively in the four consecutive issues of *Avanti!* published between January and May 1944. The trope then disappeared.

In January, the newspaper referred to the Allied bombing campaign by saying that no prayers were reaching God, including those of 'the various dignitaries of the Anglican church, whether Reformed or Methodist, who accompany the catastrophic bombers, massive weapons that kill ten people to hit one, with uplifting evangelical choirs invoking divine help for their cause'.[222]

In February, the authors put Germany's militarism in the context of reparations demanded from the country at the Treaty of Versailles, pointing out they 'laid defeated Germany on the Procrustean bed of Anglo-French capitalism', which led to 'the fatal revenge of the German world'.[223] Again in February, the authors penned a paean to an idealised Italy, contrasting it with the major capitalist nations:

> This is the homeland, our homeland, that does not serve unmentionable interests, which does not arm itself to satisfy hateful and insupportable appetites, which does not know the profits of the Anglo-American merchant or the German or Japanese industrialist. And we will be alone. We who, in the mortifying desert of mines determined by international capitalism, will resurrect with our sacrifice the true Italy, the one predicted by thinkers and poets.[224]

[222] Ibid., p. 408.
[223] Ibid., p. 416.
[224] Ibid., p. 419.

The same month, the newspaper grouped together Churchill, Mussolini, Hitler and Roosevelt as leaders trading in petty insults, while a dignified Stalin held the moral high ground:

> The leaders of the great warring nations have wasted no opportunity to express the unveiled opinion that each of them has of the others. Churchill once defined Hitler as a monstrous snake, another time as a ferocious tiger, and Mussolini as the vile jackal who follows. In turn, Hitler classified Churchill as a drunkard and Mussolini made it clear he thought he was a bastard. And similar insults passed between Roosevelt, the Führer and the Duce.
>
> Meanwhile, the people are entangled in a mortal struggle, in which they disperse the freshest energies of life and the reserves accumulated with the fatigue of many generations, and it is not known what new order and what wealth will arise from so much disorder and from so much misery, but one feels, nevertheless, to be at a turning point of history, the leaders of those peoples have not felt how jarring it is of them, in such a trembling tragedy, to voice their personal grievances. Stalin, the few times he spoke, never hinted at the slightest personalism, and has always held the high ground, even at the height of the tragedy that he dominates.[225]

Another article in the same edition suggests that forces are trying to create the conditions for a civil war in Italy 'for amusement of the Germans and the British'.[226] Behind Italian fascism, the authors suggest, can be found 'the bourgeoisie, agrarian and industrial, business and banking, who enjoys these games of bloodshed, which in the end will free their assassins, limiting and concealing their responsibility. Then they will throw themselves into the arms of anyone, even the British and the Americans, in order to save their profit and dominion'.[227]

[225] Ibid., p. 419.
[226] Ibid., p. 421.
[227] Ibid., p. 422.

The capitalists of America and France are duplicitous in their international dealings, even in times of war. The authors say that while 'American capitalism burned with indignation against Russia over the war in Finland', America was simultaneously exporting petrol, planes and explosives 'to the hated Bolsheviks'. At the height of war, French capitalists continued to supply Germany with iron while Germany provided France with coal.[228] These early issues reflect a doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist analysis, in which the war is a by-product of international capitalism, with socialists making little distinction between the capitalist systems of the US, Britain and France on the one hand and that of Germany and Japan on the other.

By 8 April, the first issue of *Avanti!* published after the Salerno U-turn (31 March), the newspaper is talking of 'our Anglophilia', albeit one that must be qualified. England is no longer the imperialist, no longer placed in a grouping on a par with Germany. England has become a defender of democracy, which is, it is implied, an aspiration of the Italian socialists:

> What is the position of us socialists of in the face of the Germans and English, who battle on our land? Nobody should misunderstand us, no one should read us with unclear eyes. We cannot be either Germanophobic or Anglophile a priori.
>
> Likewise, our Anglophilia must be clearly defined. Since the English people have become champions of the sanctity of the pacts, since they drew the sword to defend the independence of the weaker peoples, since they launched for all ideas of healthy democracy, of a sincere and broad adherence to modern ideas – completely opposing those prevalent in Germany and in Italy – as they have solemnly proclaimed their firm intention to leave to the previously free people the freedom to give themselves democratic governments, since they declared that they

[228] Ibid., p. 424.

wanted to be the future in the face of the dark and sad past, we are Anglophiles and will be as long as England continues to herald such ideas and really wants to implement them.[229]

On 1 May, an editorial was dedicated to the situation of young Italian women who are consorting with foreign forces. The article makes what appears to be an allusion to the rapes that were taking place in occupied Italy by Allied forces. All that was necessary, it says, was for 'a young foreign soldier, German or English, to present himself (and don't come to tell us that in southern Italy the Anglo-Americans are forced into carnal violence) for these youngsters, educated in fascism, in imperialism, racism, heroism, Roman virtue, to give in sweetly, spontaneously, without violence or force'.[230]

The Catholic clergy

Of the seven issues in which *Avanti!* took an overtly anti-clerical position, six were published between January and July 1944. The trope made one more appearance, in March 1945.

In January, the authors say the 'Spanish conservative clerical faction recruited Moroccan, Italian and German troops against the democratic government of their country'. In April, the newspaper makes a reference to the Catholic publication *Crociata Italica*, saying it was 'edited by those who proclaim Mussolini as 'the man of Providence', which does everything to support the fascist regime and the continuation of the war at the side of the German ally'. Why, it asks, should priests complain about the bombing of their churches and monasteries,

[229] Ibid., p. 429.
[230] Ibid., p. 433.

before adding sarcastically that 'certainly, other people's houses would be more acceptable'.[231]

On 31 May, in an editorial on the fascist press, the authors launched an extended diatribe against the local Catholic hierarchy and its newspaper *L'Avvenire*.

> And here are the bleats of Christian charity, cardinals and bishops, protests of brotherhood of those whose hands are soaked in brotherly blood, Jesuit oaths of respect to the people and things who will surrender. There is more: the cardinal of Bologna, and his outrider *L'Avvenire*, speaks of returning to respect for the law. But whose laws? Who issued them? Which legislative body made them executive? Because here is the paradox. On 25 July, the Italian people unanimously rose up, hunted the fascist regime and demanded an end to a war it never wanted. All applauded, including *L'Avvenire*, which only recommended that we do not dishonour liberty with revenge.[232]

In the same issue, Bologna's archbishop Giovanni Battista Nasalli Rocca is criticised for having allowed Catholic priests and brothers to be imprisoned. It would be naïve to have expected otherwise, the authors say, from a slave 'of the nefarious politics of fascism'.[233]

The revolution as positive signifier

Of the nine issues of *Avanti!* in which revolution is used as a positive signifier, six were published in consecutive issues between January and May 1944. The trope re-appeared in January 1945 and again in March and April, when the Allied arrival was imminent.

[231] Ibid., p. 429.
[232] Ibid., p. 447.
[233] Ibid., p. 448.

The first local issue published, in January 1944, establishes the PSI's revolutionary credentials:

> The revolutionary opportunity does not present itself twice; let's grab it by the hair and throw it to the world waiting for the great call that unites all those who work and produce! To the Socialist Republic![234]

In February, with the PSI and PSU freshly unified into the PSUP, the authors refer to the complicity of the original PSI in not standing up to fascism:

> The same old Socialist Party, while maintaining its revolutionary ideology, practically carried out a conservative agenda, operating within the sphere of the national institutions, those with constitutional guarantees. This was the moment that the bourgeoisie was waiting for to launch its treacherous and violent aggression. And it created fascism, recruited the crew drunk with blood and greedy for prey.[235]

In April, the authors expressed some nostalgia for the early part of the century, when the road to revolution seemed clear:

> In the first twenty years of the new century, the socialist proposition seemed to be walking towards its sunlit realisation. Gradual, reasoned conquest, in which the evolutionary path almost always preceded the revolutionary conception.[236]

The issue published on 1 May 1944 describes May Day as 'exquisitely revolutionary'.[237] On 15 May, against a background of CLN and the coming together of the PCI and PSI, the authors criticise unnamed opponents of compromise as inhabiting an 'ivory tower where the

[234] Ibid., p. 407.
[235] Ibid., p. 420.
[236] Ibid., p. 425.
[237] Ibid., p. 431.

socialist and communist revolutionary conceptions are safeguarded from impure contact with other currents and other parties'.[238]

Further hints at internal disunity were made on 31 May, when the authors said the party did not believe that for the witnesses and victims of fascism and Nazism more illustrations were needed but that 'some among us' use the notion of a Red Terror as 'a vague slander of our Revolution'.[239]

The monarchy

Overtly republican, anti-monarchical language was used in the first three issues of *Avanti!* published in 1944, again in August 1944 and once more in April 1945. Togliatti's change of stance on this was openly debated in the pages of the newspaper.

In the first issue published, in January 1944, the authors say they have suffered prison, aggression and exile for forty years for the 'republican and socialist ideal', including torture at the hands of the 'hitmen' of the monarchy and of fascism. In the second edition, of 26 February, the authors refer to the minutes of a meeting of the CLN held on 5 February in response to 'recent events'. The meeting 'reconfirmed the condemnation of the monarchy and the Badoglio government', denying both the right to represent the Italian people in the war of liberation. It also reconfirmed the condemnation of the monarchy as having been responsible for its 'enslavement' to the fascist Italian state.[240]

[238] Ibid., p. 438.
[239] Ibid., p. 443.
[240] Ibid., p. 422.

The issue of 1 May contains an extended editorial addressing the Salerno U-turn and its implications for the PSI's republican stance. After setting out a long tradition of republicanism dating to the First World War, the authors say the stakes that Togliatti has raised with his proposal are too great for any party to ignore. The PCI deserves credit for its 'courage and sincerity' for having addressed in the right terms the challenge facing Italians today. The authors conclude with the party's openness to Togliatti's proposals:

> For the carrying out of this action, for the liberation of Italy, we, for the first time in the history of our party, we are willing to go to government while a Savoy still reigns. Then, on the historical and political responsibilities of the crown, once victory is achieved, the Italian people will speak freely. And such a verdict holds no fear for we socialists.[241]

However, on 10 June, the authors are still saying that not just this monarch but any monarchy that cannot guarantee the fundamental freedoms of the people 'must disappear'. The republic 'we intend to install' will not be merely the substitution of a hereditary king by an elected head', the expression of a financial, agricultural and industrial oligarchy. 'Our republic will rise from below, the spirit of the proletariat and the blood of the workers', the authors say.[242]

On 3 August, the authors set out a six-point programme for the management of post-war society. The removal of the monarchy is not listed as an aspiration. However, the section ends with the exhortation: 'Long live the Socialist Republic, long live Italy'.[243]

[241] Ibid., p. 433.
[242] Ibid., p. 453.
[243] Ibid., p. 476.

Talks between the communists and socialists for a rapprochement, if not a full-blown merger, continued all summer, leading to a cooperation agreement in September agreed first by party leaders in Rome and then in Milan. The communication of the Milan agreement, consisting of four points of co-operation, was included in the one-off joint edition of *Avanti!* and *L'Unità* published in Bologna in December.[244]

Avanti!-L'Unità/L'Unità-Avanti!

With the winter of repression against the partisans biting, following the Alexander proclamation, the Bologna edition of *Avanti!* was not published between 16 September 1944 and 1 January 1945. The only title published in that period was the special joint issue of the communist and socialist newspapers, produced on 23 December to celebrate the cooperation agreement between the two parties.[245] The issue was authored by Giuseppe Alberganti and Giuseppe Dozza for the communists and by Giuseppe Bentivogli, Gianguido Borghese and Verenin Grazia for the socialists. These represented the most senior figures in the respective local parties.

Unsurprisingly, the edition featured tropes that had been found in the other editions of each newspaper. For the position of the PSI, the most significant trope – which was not a feature of *Avanti!* before or after – was the adoption of the term 'progressive democracy', which implied a major ideological compromise by the socialists on their revolutionary position.

[244] Ibid., p. 962.
[245] The relationship between communists and socialists was in a state of flux from the moment of the 1921 schism onwards. Additionally, the nature of the relationship was often different in different regions. There were multiple 'pacts of unity' and attempts at a full-blown merger. This was also the case during the twenty months of occupation. Behan, *Italian Resistance*, pp. 45-47.

This trope was employed in two instances. In steps to be undertaken post war, the authors say:

> The fundamental problem of reconstruction today, in the occupied zone, is to prepare the organisation of the masses for the establishment of the basis of a true progressive democracy that calls the people to participate on a daily basis in the political and civil life of the country.[246]

Having outlined a detailed plan for reconstruction of the country, the authors add:

> Only in this way will the unified and free organisation develop and the mass of workers be able, on the level of progressive democracy, to participate in the economic life and social policy of the nation, renewed and aimed at addressing and resolving the serious difficulties of the reconstruction of Italy.[247]

3.5 Conclusion

The view that the strategies of Togliatti were personally directed by Stalin is now orthodoxy. His return from Moscow to Italy in March 1944 was a pivotal moment in the life of the Italian Resistance. The U-turn he performed with regard to communist party policy on the monarchy and the Badoglio government was critical in unblocking an apparently intractable situation, paving the way for the unification of the antifascist parties and laying the foundation for the eventual creation of the CLN, the political cornerstone of the Resistance. But the strategy was not Togliatti's. It was Stalin's, dictated to Togliatti in person in Moscow on 3 March 1944.

[246] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 962.
[247] Ibid., p. 964.

The new party policy of progressive democracy rather than proletarian revolution disguised, it has been convincingly argued, a deeper, longer game, in which the ultimate objective was a dictatorship of the Italian proletariat in a communist world. The private revolutionary aspirations behind the public-facing party propaganda created a double bind, which initially left many communist party members, not to mention socialists and actionists, baffled.

This double bind was expressed in many forms, including the print output of the PCI and its flagship newspaper, *L'Unità*. The Emilia-Romagna edition of the newspaper was a demonstration of how the top-table policy making in Moscow and Milan could be reflected at a local level: the Bologna partisans produced the newspaper, which published PCI policy, which reflected Soviet strategy.

The communist notion of the purpose of a newspaper was rooted in the ideas of Lenin and Gramsci, the founder of *L'Unità*. A critical tenet of Gramsci's thinking was the idea of hegemony. One of the three strategic priorities that Togliatti brought back with him from Moscow was to secure a hegemony of the left-wing bloc of parties, which also included socialists and actionists. Hegemony could be achieved on three fronts: the political, the military and the cultural.

Politically, hegemonic intent could be found in the appointment to partisan brigades of political commissars, in whose 'politics hour' members were indoctrinated into the ideas of the party. It could be found in the meetings of the CLN, where the requirement for a unanimous vote on any decision meant the party could never be outflanked by the other political parties. Militarily, it worked through taking the lead in the violent struggle and

being at the forefront of the most dangerous activities in the guerrilla war. In the most extreme cases, it could also involve disarming or even killing partisans from rival factions. Culturally, it could be found in the propaganda output of the party.

The implied reader of a communist newspaper was not just the worker in the factory, the labourer in the field. It was the Allied intelligence officer, the German occupier, the local fascist leader. It was also the leadership of the rival antifascist parties. In this section, I argue that a close reading of the recurring tropes in *L'Unità* and *Avanti!* shows the way in which the PSI modulated its position in the wake of the Salerno U-turn by abandoning certain tropes of socialist rhetoric in favour of the new (Soviet-determined) line being pushed by the PCI.

This modulation can be seen by observing the socialist newspaper's representation of the Allies, the Catholic clergy, and the monarchy, where initial hostility was either replaced by more placatory tones or simply disappeared. It can also be seen by the gradual abandonment of the rhetoric of revolution. This transformation is arguably crystallised in one moment: when the joint publication *Avanti!-L'Unità* in December 1944 embraces Togliatti's notion of progressive democracy.

4. INTERCONNECTEDNESS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter sets out to demonstrate the extent to which the people and activities involved in the propaganda campaign of the Bologna Resistance movement were organically integrated into the armed struggle.

The first half of the chapter is based upon a data-based analysis of the parallel roles – on the newspapers and in the partisan brigades – of those involved, which shows the extent of the overlap. These data are underscored by a combination of thumbnail biographical sketches of some of the key figures and their first-person testimonies collated in the 1960s by Arbizzani and Bergonzini. The data – and the portraits which emerge – show that this interconnectedness existed at every level of the process, from the most senior political and military leaders to the couriers responsible for ensuring the safe delivery of the newspapers around the city.

Having established empirically the high degree of interconnectedness I then provide two case studies which show that the practical implications of this interdependence could be both positive and negative. The main case study is based on a detailed reconstruction of the production and distribution – in the most prohibitive of circumstances – of the special edition of *L'Unità* published on 8 November 1944 to celebrate the battle of Porta Lame the day before. This is based on a combination of secondary historical sources and the first-person testimonies of several of those who were involved in both the battle and the production of the newspaper. A second, smaller, case study centres on the failure of the PdA to establish an official newspaper in the city, beyond the single edition of *Orizzonti di*

Libertà published in March 1944. The party, newspaper and partisan brigades were all dependent on the same small handful of people, whose arrest proved a decisive blow on all three fronts.

4.2 The pen and the sword in the same hands

After September 1943, the clandestine press grew rapidly in Italy, with production centres in all the major northern cities, newspapers representing all the major antifascist parties and many representing partisan brigades. The risky secret build-out of the necessary infrastructure was conducted by and large without incident in Bologna, although sites were moved frequently for safety.

There was an important difference between the underground newspapers functioning before and after the armistice: now the newspapers in the Nazi-occupied north were instruments of guerrilla warfare, integrated organically into the wider Resistance struggle. The growth of the underground press in Bologna was inextricably linked to the growth of the armed Resistance. Its rapid expansion from early 1944 to a period of maximum output in autumn that year, subsequent retrenchment through the winter of 1944-1945, and gradual reflowering in the spring of 1945, tracks the evolution of the wider partisan movement. The percentage increases and decreases by month do not provide an exact correspondence between armed actions and newspaper output, but the arc of growth, retreat and new growth is similar, with the peak months for each being September 1944 and March 1945.[248]

[248] Activity in both military and propaganda activities reached a peak in September 1944, before falling off during the winter and peaking again in March 1945, just ahead of liberation. Casali, *Bollettino*, p. 26; Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali Bolognesi*, pp. 303-306. See Appendix 4, p. 161.

Many of the same people working in the newspapers were engaged in sabotage or carrying out assassinations of senior fascists or German soldiers. The pen and the sword were in the same hands. This aspect of the clandestine press has been largely overlooked by existing studies. While they have not underestimated the importance of those involved in producing propaganda, they have tended to focus on their vertical relationships – press and propaganda as a level in the hierarchy below the CLN and the party. This overlap is inherent in many of the personal testimonies of those involved. But there has been no analysis of the scale of the horizontal relationships or any attempt to quantify (even approximately) the extent to which the people involved in producing propaganda were also involved in the organisation of strikes, the planting of bombs, the carrying out of assassinations and other violent actions. Nor has there been a close reading of the content of the clandestine newspapers in light of this overlap.

Although bylines had existed in newspapers since the 1920s, and were common if not standard practice by the 1940s, very few of the articles published by the underground press carried a byline because it was highly risky for individuals to be identified in this way. Left-wing newspapers also considered it inappropriate to personalise the news.[249] The information available on authorship of specific articles is largely from post-war testimony of those involved. Similarly, most of the available information on the others involved is based on either first-person or third-person testimony after the war.[250]

[249] Intini, *Avanti!*, p. 153, cites Gramsci's view that a proletarian newspaper 'must be anonymous and must not serve as a showcase for anyone'.
[250] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vols. I-V.*

A comprehensive catalogue of those who worked on the papers is impossible. The papers existed in a time of chaos and flux. People working on the papers came and went, were arrested and were sometimes killed in combat. People sometimes lent a hand on a single issue or on some activity only tangentially linked to the paper. The role of some contributors will have been inflated and others underestimated in reports. However, there is ample documentary evidence of the identities of the key people involved in each title, and of their interconnectedness with multiple aspects of the Resistance.

Of the ninety-one people identified in this study as being involved in the production of the five newspapers linked to the main antifascist parties in Bologna, seventy-seven were active in partisan brigades. This equates to almost 85 per cent. The high degree of overlap between propaganda and military activities does not imply that some of those identified were accorded the status of partisan after the war *because of* their propaganda activities: this would not have been enough to be given the distinction and related financial remuneration.[251]

This interconnectedness was to have radically different implications for different newspapers. On the most mundane level, it was a factor in a newspaper such as *Avanti!* being able to function for up to sixteen months without detection. For *L'Unità*, it enabled the production – almost in real time – of what is arguably the high point of the clandestine press in Bologna: the report of the battle of Porta Lame published on 8 November 1944. For *Orizzonti di Libertà*, it was to have tragic consequences: the inability of the Partito d'Azione

[251] Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 1,058.

to operate a covert paramilitary campaign without being infiltrated by spies led to the demise of the party in Bologna as an active force and the disappearance of the newspaper.

The examples of the interconnectedness between propaganda duties and wider Resistance activities, based on the personal testimonies provided below, are intended to be illustrative of the variety of experiences rather than comprehensive. In the case of *L'Unità*, examples have been chosen to demonstrate this interconnectedness at every level of the process, from the political direction of the content to the distribution of copies of the newspapers. For the sake of brevity, for each of the other newspapers covered, one or two examples have been provided.

L'Unità

Thirty-five of the thirty-nine people that this study identified as having been involved in the newspaper – equivalent to 90 per cent – were actively involved in partisan brigades. This included thirteen *sappisti* from the 2nd Brigade Paolo, eight members of the 7th Gap, two members of the Stella Rossa, one member of the 66th Brigade Jacchia, one member of the 1st Brigade Irma Bandiera and other *sappisti* whose allegiance has not been identified.

Those identified include the three members of the PCI's insurrectional triumvirate – Barontini, Dozza and Alberganti. The three were responsible for providing the overall ideological direction of the local edition, through close contact with party leaders in Milan and Rome. The paper did not have a single editorial director, as was (and remains) the common practice for newspapers. The list includes members of the 7th Gap – such as Renato Romagnoli and Lino Michelini – whose function was to provide security while editions of

the paper were being printed, and Dino Romagnoli, who operated a stationery shop that doubled as a clandestine printing press.

Person	Newspaper role	Partisan brigade
Ilio Barontini	Political direction/Editorial	General commander of Garibaldi Brigades
Giuseppe Dozza	Political direction/Editorial	Insurrectional triumvirate
Giuseppe Alberganti	Political direction/Editorial	Insurrectional triumvirate
Romeo Landi	Editorial	
Ferdinando Zarri	Editorial	1st Brigade Irma Bandiera
Luciano Romagnoli	Editorial	Sap (unspecified)
Lanfranco Bugatti	Editorial	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Athos Zamboni	Editorial	
Sergio Sabbioni	Main writer, editor	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Giovanni Bottonelli	Main writer	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Alberto Landi	Main writer	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Ida Musiani	Typist	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Vittorio Gombi	Typographer	7th Gap Gianni
Vito Casadei	Typographer	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Giorgio Frascari	Typographer	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Mario Stanzani	Typographer	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Paolo Bugini	Typographer	66th Brigade Jacchia Garibaldi
Walter Nerozzi	Typographer	7th Gap Gianni
Mario De Maria	Typographer	
Azzolino Sabattini	Typographer	7th Gap Gianni
Erminio Del Pin	Typographer's assistant	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Alceo degli Esposti	Typographer's assistant	
Spero Ghedini	Contributor	Sap
Umberto Ghini	Contributor	Cumer
Vittorio Ghini	Contributor	Cumer/7th Gap
Vincenzo Masi	Production/distribution	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Agostino Ottani	Production/distribution	Stella Rossa
Dalife Mazza	Production/distribution	Bologna/Modena
Leonildo Tarozzi	Production/distribution	Stella Rossa/Armando Modena
Francesco Frascari	Distribution	Sap Bologna
Ada Zucchelli	Courier	7th Gap Gianni
Iolanda Garuti	Courier	7th Gap Gianni/1st Irma Bandiera
Bice Bortolotti	Courier	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Albertina Bertuzzi	Courier	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)

Anna Oppi	Courier	2nd Brigade Paolo (Sap)
Rita Brini	Courier	
Dino Romagnoli	Ran stationery shop	7th Gap Gianni
Lino Michelini	Security	7th Gap Gianni
Renato Romagnoli	Security	7th Gap Gianni

First-person testimony

Giovanni Bottonelli was a senior figure in the PCI in the city and was on the party's press commission. He was active in various brigades in the hills above Modena, before joining the 2nd Brigade Paolo in Bologna. He was later made divisional commander of the Sap in Bologna. He provided an overview of his role in the PCI's underground press system:

> My activity consisted of looking for underground printers, setting up, in the most secret locations, small printing presses, looking for typesetting characters and paper for our newspapers, which were becoming more and more numerous. The editorial team was made up of, as well as Franco Bugatti, the brothers Alberto and Romeo Landi, Athos Zamboni and Sergio Sabbioni. I also dedicated myself to this work, which ranged from preparing articles, even those written by senior party officials like Barontini, Dozza, Alberganti and others, the political revision of the articles, the sending of material to the printers, to the correction of page proofs. I recall often, even at night, we had meetings in my house to discuss the problems of the Resistance, of the political organisation and of the press.[252]

Athos Zamboni, an editor, was also part of the PCI's press commission. Zamboni was an active trade unionist, one of the leaders in Bologna of the general strike of 8 March 1944. He provided an insight into the editorial methodology:

> The working method was that of a fusion between collective and individual study: for the papers that had to be printed, the single articles and the flyers, the general approach was

[252] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 37.

discussed at length and animatedly. Afterwards each of us wrote the article or the flyer assigned to us, and then we discussed again the material produced. It was extremely delicate and demanding work: it meant being present with the greatest timing on the political and military front. It was necessary to produce material not only for the partisans but for all social and economic levels of society: factory workers, farm workers, women, youth, the middle classes and so on.

The great military and political undertakings (the organisation of the liberation of the political prisoners at San Giovanni in Monte, the big strikes and so on) required extraordinary editions to be produced. It wasn't uncommon to work well into the night. In our work it was necessary to respect, in the most scrupulous manner, the rules of illegal operations. There was a clear separation between the editorial staff, the typographers and the press distribution system. It was necessary to avoid at all costs any links that could have put the whole work of the press at risk. And in each one of these sections, it was necessary to be extremely careful. On the press commission, you lived in complete isolation. Each of us had to break off any external contacts that were not absolutely necessary.[253]

Sergio Sabbioni was one of the main writers and editors at *L'Unità* in this period. He was also a member of the first Sap unit created in Bologna and part of the 2nd Brigade Paolo. His recollection of his early partisan activities underlines the equal emphasis in the struggle given to the hand grenade and the typewriter:

In the month of October 1943, in an apartment in Via Borgonuovo 17, we set up the first Sap team, with arms obtained by making the most of friendships and placating every kind of opportunist. Five revolvers, seven hand grenades and even a machine gun, taken out of the barracks of the [fascist] auxiliary police. We began our work in the clandestine press with a typewriter and a mimeograph bought from the proceeds of selling goods to the Germans.[254]

Vittorio Gombi was a member of the 7th Gap brigade in Bologna and worked as a typographer. He was involved in the battle of Porta Lame, where, according to his

[253] Ibid., p. 54.
[254] Ibid., p. 56.

commendation for a Silver Medal for Military Valour, he 'inflicted numerous losses on the enemy'.[255] This comment is emblematic of this overlap in propaganda/military duties:

> By now the ice was broken and the guerrilla warfare in the city too had begun. About ten days later, while Baldi and I were passing through Via Santo Stefano, at the corner with Via Cartoleria, we saw a group of Germans and immediately threw a grenade into their midst. Then, acting alone, I threw another at a German non-commissioned officer in Via San Petronio Vecchio. In the meantime, other *gappisti* were getting organised and making themselves heard. Naturally, by day I continued doing my job as a typographer.[256]

One of the essential roles in the distribution of propaganda was that of *staffetta* or courier, a role usually occupied by women.[257] Albertina Bertuzzi was a member of the 2nd Paolo Brigade Garibaldi from 20 September 1943 until liberation. She engaged in the sabotage of factory machinery used to produce materiel for the German war effort. She was the personal courier to Sante Vincenzi, the PCI member who directly handled relations between the Cumer and the Allies. Her testimony provides a useful insight into the typical activities of a courier, the risks involved and the way in which the work was integrated into the functioning of the paper and the wider Resistance movement:

> In November 1944 I changed house and took up clandestine work again, this time as a courier for Vincenzo Masi, who was involved with the clandestine press. It was a new experience. It involved the sorting and the diffusion of the clandestine press produced in Bologna and therefore required a superior character and awareness because it wasn't a hit-and-run kind of job, but a permanent job that had to be done every day.

[255] Storie e Memoria di Bologna website, entry for Vittorio Gombi, https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/gombi-vittorio-499810-persona (Last accessed: 10 August 2022).
[256] Bergonzini (ed.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. III,* p. 518.
[257] The term has become widely accepted and is considered by most historians to be function specific, not gender specific. The website of the National Association of Italian Partisans, l'Associazione Italiana Partigiani Italiani (Anpi), says: 'Without the runners, the partisan war would not have been feasible.' https://www.anpi.it/storia/199/staffette (Last accessed: 10 November 2021). The word was commonly applied to women couriers, who made up the overwhelming majority. Some partisans found it demeaning. In a personal interview in June 2018, Renato Romagnoli, former member of the 7th Gap, told me: 'I don't like the word *staffetta*. They were partisans, pure and simple.'

> I had an appointment with the couriers, even three times a day. One of our major concerns was the need to change place every time so as not to be noticed. The meeting points were partly on the hoof in the streets and partly fixed in shops. I recall that I would go and collect the material at the card shop in Via Belle Arti and sometimes I would collect it at short notice from comrade Del Pin, or Casadei's wife. The packages, which were always already packed up, I delivered in a few minutes to the couriers Teresa, Caterina, Anita and Ida, each time agreeing the place for the subsequent meeting. I used to also give material to a socialist comrade and a young man who represented the Partito d'Azione. Almost every day I met Masi to establish the work we had to do and discuss the immediate decisions we had to take.[258]

Renato Romagnoli was sometimes required to stand guard at the printers to ensure that an edition of *L'Unità* or other PCI material was produced without interference and to protect the typographers. He was a member of the 7th Gap Gianni, operating in the neighbourhood of San Vitale. In December 1944, at the age of 17, he was appointed head of the Gap's police force. His responsibility was to kill spies and traitors based on information provided to him by the Resistance's internal intelligence unit. He was also involved in the battle of Porta Lame, the battle of Bolognina and the assault on the prison of San Giovanni in Monte, which freed about 300 political prisoners. Referring to himself in the third person, he recalled the day after the battle of Porta Lame:

> On the morning of 8 November, Italiano [Romagnoli], Barba (Secondo Negrini) and Gallo (Giovanni Galletti), armed with long weapons, were sent to Via Zamboni 90: here they had to protect the typographers charged with printing the extraordinary edition of the clandestine *L'Unità* that would have informed the citizens of the great partisan victory. On bicycles, with the arms concealed in sacks, they arrived at the place: a big, semi-dark room, almost entirely occupied by the printing press. With their arms put away in the toilets, the *gappisti* took turns to wait outside and make sure there were no unpleasant surprises. The movement of the printing press, looked after by one man and one woman, was slow but by and by the copies started to mount up. It took several hours for the whole print run to be completed: there were

[258] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 130.

no hitches which interrupted that drowsiness-inducing activity, accompanied by the constant rhythmical sound of the flat printing press. Once the mission was complete they returned to base, taking several copies of *L'Unità* with the ink still fresh. Everyone wanted to read them.[259]

Avanti!

Twenty of the twenty-seven people identified as having a role in the production or distribution of *Avanti!* – 74 per cent – were members of partisan brigades.[260] Nearly all were members either of the Matteotti Città or Matteo Montagna brigade or in some cases both, at different times. Exceptions include typographer Armando Barbieri, linked with the autonomous Stella Rossa, and Erminio Minghetti and Ermisio Cipollani, both involved in distribution to other towns in the province, who were connected to Garibaldi brigades.

Person	Role	Partisan brigade
Renato Tega	Editor/writer	Matteotti Città
Artemio Pergola	Editor/writer	
Verenin Grazia	Main writer	Yes, unidentified
Mario Longhena	Main writer	
Gianguido Borghese	Contributor	Matteotti Brigade
Enrico Bassi	Contributor	
Paolo Fabbri	Collaborator	Matteotti Brigade
Giuseppe Bentivogli	Collaborator	5th Brigata Bonvicini (Matteotti)
Luigi Stagni	Collaborator	Matteotti Città
Alfeo Liporesi	Collaborator	
Giacomo Donati	Collaborator	
Alfredo Calzolari	Coordinator/security	5th Brigade Bonvicini (Matteotti)
Gino Giuliani	Typographer	3rd Matteotti Città
Amadeo Barbieri	Typographer	Stella Rossa
Giorgio Zappoli	Typographer	8th Brigade Masia (G&L)
Dulio Codrignani	Typographer	
Enea Cavallini	Courier	Matteotti Città

[259] Romagnoli, *Gappista*, p. 141.
[260] Giorgio Zappoli has been counted under *Orizzonti di Libertà*, as he was a member of the PdA.

Emilio Alessandri	Courier	Matteotti Città
Fernando Baroncini	Coordinator typography	Matteotti Montagna
Giovanni Pilati	Coordinator typography	5th Brigade Bonvicini (Matteotti)
Ettore Cocchi	Distribution	5th Brigade Bonvicini (Matteotti)
Erminio Minghetti	Distribution	Matteotti Città
Armando Emiliani	Distribution	66th Brigade Jacchia Garibaldi
Cesarina Alvoni	Distribution	Matteotti Città
Giulio Miceti	Distribution	Matteotti Città
Ermisio Cipollani	Distribution	4th Brigade Venturoli Garibaldi/ 63rd Brigade Bolero Garibaldi
Amleto Villani	Distribution	Matteotti Città

As one of the most senior figures on the local federation of the PSUP, Gianguido Borghese was part of the editorial team providing overall ideological direction for *Avanti!*, along with Renato Tega, Artemio Pergola, Verenin Grazia and Mario Longhena. He was a representative of the PSUP on the Cumer and was part of the technical commission of the CLNER. He was a commander of the Matteotti Città brigade and was awarded the Silver Medal for Military Valour for his partisan activities, with the commendation describing him as a creator of the 'first nuclei of the Resistance'.[261]

Verenin Grazia is credited with joint authorship of four editions of the newspaper and sole authorship of two editions. In his post-war testimony, he also talked of editing drafts of other contributors.[262] He was one of the most senior figures in the local PSUP, a member of the CLNER and held the rank of major in the Cumer. Before being appointed to the CLN, in the autumn of 1943, he operated in nascent partisan brigades along the border between

[261] Storia e Memoria di Bologna website, entry for Gianguido Borghese https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/borghese-gianguido-507734-persona (Last accessed: 10 August 2022).
[262] Bergonzini (ed.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. I*, p. 27.

Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. One of his roles in the Resistance was handling relationships with local banks to maintain a flow of financing to the movement.

Orizzonti di Libertà

Of the twelve people identified as having input into the production or distribution of *Orizzonti di Libertà*, all were active members of partisan brigades. In all but two cases, this was the 8th Brigade Masia G&L, the principal partisan brigade linked to the PdA operating in and around the city. Massenzio Masia was one of the founders of the PdA and was the party's representative on the provincial CLN. He is considered to have been one of the most important figures in the local Resistance movement. He was hugely influential in determining the overall direction of antifascist action in Bologna and in working for the unification of the main antifascist parties. He was the driving force, editor and principal writer for both *Orizzonti di Libertà* and *Rinascita*.[263] He was arrested on 4 September 1944, tortured and executed by firing squad. He was awarded the Gold Medal for Military Valour. His commendation described him as one of the first to enter the Resistance forces in the area, recruiting partisans and leading 'brilliant raids' to secure materiel.[264]

Person	**Role**	**Partisan brigade**
Massenzio Masia	Editor, writer	8th Brigade G&L
Gino Onofri	Organisation/distribution	8th Brigade G&L
Nazario Sauro Onofri	Typographer	8th Brigade G&L
Eneide Sauro Onofri	Typographer	8th Brigade G&L
Giorgio Zappoli	Typographer	8th Brigade G&L
Enzo Biagi	Writer	G&L Montagna
Mario Bastia	Contributor	8th Brigade G&L
Pietro Crocioni	Coordinator of typography	8th Brigade G&L
Michele Gemelli	Provided print characters	8th Brigade G&L

[263] Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 870.
[264] Storia e Memoria di Bologna website, entry for Massenzio Masia https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it/masia-massenzio-478316-persona (Last accessed: 10 August 2022).

Silvio Maselli	Distribution	8th Brigade G&L
Vittorio Spisani	Distribution	8th Brigade G&L
Renato Giorgi	Production	Divisione Modena Armando

Giorgio Zappoli was a member of the PdA who worked on both PdA and PSI/PSUP newspapers as a typographer. In his post-war testimony he describes his role as a typographer and his narrow escape from a firefight with the fascist militia, which took place at the university's geography department on 20 October 1944:

> I recall the first compositions I did, with characters that I had bought on behalf of the Partito d'Azione, in a private house in the Pontevecchio area. I worked alone, making up leaflets which I gave to a bright lad who took them to be printed to the house in Via d'Azeglio where [Mario] Jacchia lived. They were flyers, 70 x 100 in size in a 1/16 format and contained information and incitements to join the struggle: usually it was [Mario] Bastia who gave me the texts.
>
> The day of the battle of the university, 20 October 1944, I met Giuseppe Barbieri, a student who had joined the Partito d'Azione, and Mario Bastia. From Barbieri I had 4,000 lire to pay for characters and paper. With Bastia I talked about the danger which could derive from having a base at the university, following the arrest of our comrade. It seemed as though Bastia didn't share my concern. Unfortunately, then the battle took place: six of our comrades died, among them Bastia. I recall I had only just left and I heard the first shots when I got to Porta Zamboni [a few hundred yard away] on my bicycle. [265]

La Punta

Five of the seven people involved in the production or distribution of *La Punta* were in the 6th Brigade Giacomo, part of the Catholic *Fiamme Verdi* brigades. However, while this meant that they were intimately involved in the wider Resistance movement and active in cross-party initiatives, they were committed, as Christians, to a non-violent approach.

[265] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 111.

Person	Role	Partisan brigade
Achille Ardigò	Founder, Editor	6th Brigade Giacomo
Egisto Pecci	Assistant	6th Brigade Giacomo
Ettore Bagni	Typographer	6th Brigade Giacomo
Oberdan Casadio	Typographer	6th Brigade Giacomo
Angelo Salizzoni	Contributor	6th Brigade Giacomo
Filippo Cavazza	Contributor	
Fulvio Milani	Contributor	

Filippo Cavazza was a Catholic landowner and aristocrat who had a central role in the failed negotiations during the autumn and winter of 1944 for a truce between the partisans and the German hierarchy. Through having similar backgrounds and social status, he was able to strike up a cordial relationship with Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, the general in charge of the local German forces. He is credited with having convinced von Senger und Etterlin not to destroy Bologna infrastructure when retreating from the city, as the German army had done in Florence. Cavazza was also instrumental in persuading prominent local Catholics to commit to a unified response by antifascist parties to the German occupation, even to the point of using force. He represented the Catholic community on the CLNER, despite not being a member of the DC.[266]

Rinascita

Because *Rinascita* was a cross-party newspaper, several of its production team also worked on other newspapers and are therefore discounted from the totals. This includes Massenzio Masia and Pietro Crocioni (*Orizzonti di Libertà*) and Leonildo Tarozzi (*L'Unità*). Of the six who worked only on *Rinascita*, five – 83 per cent – were members of brigades. Given the cross-party nature of the newspapers, this included brigades linked to the PCI (66th Brigade

[266] Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 801; Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, p. 281.

Garibaldi, 2nd Brigade Paolo Garibaldi), the PSI (Matteotti Città) and the PdA (8th Brigade G&L), as well as the autonomous Stella Rossa.

Mario Jacchia was a lawyer and prominent member of Bologna's Jewish community. He worked closely with Masia on the content of *Rinascita*. He joined the PdA in 1943 and was the party's representative on the FPL, the first cross-party antifascist body in the city. Later, he represented the party on the local CLN. In the summer of 1944, he was made inspector of the PdA military units in Emilia, later being given overall military responsibility for the partisan units in the north of Emilia. While organising a military command near Parma he was captured and handed over to the SS. His body was never found. He was awarded the Gold Medal for Military Valour. [267]

Person	**Role**	**Partisan brigade**
Massenzio Masia	Editor	8th Brigade G&L
Ettore Trombetti	Editor	G&L Montagna
Pietro Crocioni	Founder	
Alberto Trebbi	Founder	Matteotti Città
Mario Peloni	Founder	
Mario Jacchia	Writer	66th Brigade Garibaldi
Carmine Mancinelli	Writer, editor	Unidentified (Rome)
Leonildo Tarozzi	Writer	Stella Rossa/Armando
Arturo Ansaloni	Writer	2nd Brigade Paolo

4.3 The battle for the meaning of Porta Lame[268]

The battle of Porta Lame took place near Bologna's north-western gateway on 7 November 1944, just inside the city's inner ring road, which follows the 'third circle' of thirteenth

[267] Collotti, Sandri, Sessi (eds.), *Dizionario della Resistenza*, p. 1,038.
[268] The description of the battle in this section, pp. 103-109, is drawn from first-person testimonies including those of: Renato Romagnoli (*Gappista*, pp. 127-162), Mario De Micheli (*Settima Gap*, pp. 123-140), Elio Cicchetti (*Il Campo Giusto*, pp. 121-130), members of the 7th Gap who took part in it. It also draws on historical reconstructions, including those by Bergonzini (*La svastica a Bologna*, pp. 153-164), Peli (*Storie di Gap*, pp. 251-260) and De Bernardi and Preti

century city walls. At the end of nearly twenty hours of combat, the partisans had forced the German army – including one SS unit – and fascist militia into retreat, causing considerable casualties.[269] A special edition of *L'Unità* was produced and 8,000 copies were distributed the day after the battle.[270]

The battle, fought largely by members of the 7th Gap brigade of partisans, was unique in occupied Italy. The *gappisti* invariably only used attack strategies and operated in small, highly secretive cells. They were never involved in defensive battles on any scale. The battle of Porta Lame was an exception, being 'a clash of such unusual proportions as to make it unique in the history of resistance.'[271] The battle was not planned. It took place because the partisan bases in the city were discovered during a round-up. For De Bernardi and Preti the battle was a success for the impact it had on the enemy. It left 'profound traces in the development of the Bologna Resistance movement'.[272]

The special edition of *L'Unità* produced the following day to celebrate the battle was also a unicum in clandestine press activities. The battle was atypical for its scale, the paper for its immediacy. The level of coordination required in writing, editing, typesetting, printing and distributing so close to the events it was describing represents a unique achievement by the

(*La Resistenza*, pp. 154-166), and the bulletins of the Cumer, published in the weeks following the confrontation (Casali, *Bollettino*, pp. 202-209).

[269] The numbers of dead and wounded on both sides have been contested since the days following the battle. There are conflicting sources. In its bulletin entitled '*relazione sulla battaglia del 7 novembre 1944*', issued on 23 November, Cumer reported: 'Enemy losses: two hundred and sixteen dead and many wounded. Our losses: eleven dead and fourteen wounded" (Casali, *Bollettino*, p. 208). Bergonzini cites as sources both the fascist assault police and Cipriano Tini, head of the Cumer's intelligence service. He reports eleven deaths among the fascists, two among the Germans, twenty to twenty-five among the partisans (*La svastica a Bologna*, p. 262). Referring to the above Cumer report, Peli says the number of dead between Germans and fascists is eighty (*Storie di Gap*, p. 256). Preti says the figures on German and fascist deaths are too discordant to be considered reliable (*La Resistenza*, p. 159). Romagnoli, a survivor of the battle, listed twelve partisan dead (*Gappista*, p. 161).

[270] Peli, *Storie di Gap*, p. 260; Arbizzani, Onofri *Giornali bolognesi*, p. 117; the complete issue can be found in Bergonzini, Arbizzani, *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 702-704.

[271] Peli, *Storie di Gap*, p.63.

[272] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 160.

clandestine press.[273] It is evidence that for the Resistance leaders, winning the propaganda war was intertwined inextricably with winning the military war.

As news of the opening salvoes of the battle reached senior figures in the Cumer and the PCI, plans were laid for the production of the paper. Much of the writing and editing was taking place on the afternoon and evening of 7 November as the battle raged, with the following day being dedicated to the printing and distribution of the paper. It was seen affixed to city walls on the evening of 8 November and distributed hand to hand the following day.

This section will look in detail at the two activities in the battle – military and propaganda – unfolding in parallel, to highlight the degree to which they were interconnected. It will look at how this interconnectedness enabled the PCI to produce and distribute a version of events before the local regime paper, *Il Resto del Carlino*, was able to distribute the officially sanctioned version of events.[274]

Waiting for the insurrection

In October 1944, 305 partisans were gathered in two bases, about 200 yards apart, close to the seventeenth-century Porta Lame, one of the city's gateways. The larger base was the ruins of Maggiore Hospital, the city's main hospital, which was located on Via Riva Reno,

[273] The details of the propaganda effort on the day are drawn largely from the personal testimonies of Vincenzo Masi (Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 40-51) and Giovanni Bottonelli (Ibid., pp. 37-40). Masi was head of the local PCI press commission and a member of 2nd Brigade Paolo Garibaldi. He had overall responsibility for the production and distribution of *L'Unità*. Bottonelli was one of the main writers on the paper and part of the same partisan brigade.

[274] The source for all references to the newspaper is the website https://www.storiaememoriadibologna.it, entry for *Il Resto del Carlino*, November 1944 (Last accessed: 15 August 2022). The website contains photocopies of the originals in PDF format. The first reference to the battle in *Il Resto del Carlino* was in the issue of 10 November.

just inside the city walls. Here, about 230 partisans were gathered. The smaller base was made up of two adjoining two-storey buildings separated by a small courtyard at the intersection of Vicolo del Macello and Via Azzo Gardino. Here seventy-five partisans were gathered. The two groups were made up mostly of members of the 7th Gap brigade. Overall command of operations was in the hands of Barontini, head of the Cumer and a member of the local PCI's insurrectional triumvirate.

By early November, the men and women had been in hiding at the two bases for over one month. They had congregated at these two bases on the orders of the CLNER and the Cumer, who were responding to Allied direction to prepare for an insurrection timed to coincide with the arrival of the Allied forces. At the beginning of September 1944, the Allies had begun to attack Germany's defensive Gothic Line, which ran from La Spezia on the west coast to south of Pesaro on the east coast and passed about forty miles south of Bologna. The expectation of both the British and the Americans at this time was that the north of Italy would be under Allied control by late autumn.

7 November 1944

At about 5.30am on the morning of 7 November, a large round-up or 'raking' action, designed to flush out partisans, was under way in the area near the two bases. About 250 men were involved, made up of 150 black brigades, fifty assault police and fifty German soldiers of the *Feldgendarmerie*. At 6.15am, two German soldiers left the main group and headed along the Cavaticcio canal where they knocked on the door of the Macello building. They were confronted by *gappisti,* who killed them both. The battle of Porta Lame had begun.

Having identified the Macello base, and German and fascist troops surrounded the area and began to bring heavy armoury into the vicinity. This included an 88mm anti-tank gun and numerous mortars. They opened fire from multiple directions on the two buildings of the Macello complex. The partisans inside the Macello were outnumbered about four to one at this point. They were also heavily outgunned.

After having been alerted to the discovery of the base in Vicolo del Macello, the insurrectional triumvirate – Barontini, Alberganti and Dozza – met hurriedly at the house of one of the principal writers of the *L'Unità*, Giovanni Bottonelli, at Via Borgonuovo 17, two miles across the city centre to the east. Bottonelli's house was one of four used for the editorial meetings of *L'Unità* between July 1944 and April 1945.[275]

The usual meeting place of the Cumer was Via Pastrengo 22, just inside the city walls to the south-west of the city, just over one mile from Porta Lame. The insurrectional triumvirate usually met at Via Santo Stefano 20, just to the east of the city's central square. However, Barontini, Alberganti and Dozza spent most of 7 November at Via San Petronio Vecchio, in the city centre. This was the home of Cumer member Ena Frazzoni. With responsibility for the network of couriers, Frazzoni was at the centre of a network of people – mostly women – constantly moving around the city to gather information. It is likely that it was from here that Barontini was in contact with the base. It is almost certain that this network was also the basis for much of the information about the battle which appeared in the 8 November issue of *L'Unità*. The couriers were the oil in the information machine.

[275] The other three locations for editorial meetings were: Via Homs 35, Via Pelagio Pelagi and Via Santo Stefano 2. Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali bolognesi*, pp. 109-112.

The plan hatched at that meeting did not just cover military strategy. Equal importance was given to the propaganda response. Vincenzo Masi, head of the Bologna PCI press commission and member of the 2nd Brigade Paolo Garibaldi, was summoned urgently to the meeting by Alberganti and Bottonelli, who told him an issue of the newspaper had to be produced immediately in standard format and distributed in large numbers. It was necessary to alert all citizens to the battle and heroic role played by the 7th Gap, he was told.

To produce the special issue of *L'Unità* a printer would be needed at short notice. Masi made his way into the heart of the university district, about ten minutes' walk away from his home. Here, at Via Zamboni 90, he tried to persuade the printer Dino Grandi and his wife Guglielma to accept the job. It proved to be a difficult task because of their fear of being discovered. He offered to buy the business from them. They refused. He appealed to their hatred of the German occupiers and the fascist regime:

> Perhaps, in the discussion, I had touched their feelings, saying that against the fascists and the Germans one fought not only with the revolver or the machine gun, that it was time to move, that it was necessary to involve the better part of the Bolognesi – who were still unaware of what was happening – in the armed struggle. With this newspaper alone we would have mobilised the citizenship around the partisans who at that moment were still fighting in the city.[276]

Eventually, with the promise that the whole operation would be protected by the presence of three *gappisti*, they relented. With a printer now in place, Masi headed to the newspaper's editorial base, where he found the writers hard at work. The articles were all overlength. Masi ran from there back to Alberganti and Bottonelli, who suggested some small text

[276] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 46.

revisions, which reduced the pieces by a few lines each. Back at the editorial base, he found the articles were still too long so, together with the writers, he made more cuts.

Using the cover of dense smoke created by grenades and smoke bombs, the partisans were able to escape into the canal. By 6pm they had cleared the immediate area. After a firefight at a fascist roadblock, the partisans split up to retreat to their various designated safe houses around the city. Masi now ran to one of these bases, in Via Lionello Spada 5, in the Bolognina district, just over two miles away, to ask for three guards. He set an appointment with three *gappisti* who would stand guard during the printing process the following day. All three had been involved in the earlier battle. He established with typographer Vito Casadei the time the laid-out pages would be ready for the printers.

8 November 1944

The following morning the newspaper needed to be printed and distributed. Masi met Casadei and acquired the laid-out proofs before heading to the meeting point with the three *gappisti* – Romagnoli, Negrini and Galletti. They walked along Via San Vitale and entered the city at Porta Zamboni. Grandi and his wife had prepared the printing presses by the time they arrived, just before 9am. Masi described the printing process:

> In the printers, Grandi and his wife were working to arrange the compositions. We decided how to deploy the armed men. After a short time, Signora Grandi began the printing. We looked at the first copy with intense joy. We all skipped meals that day. At 4pm I had an appointment with Aroldo Tolomelli, the provincial head of the Saps. I gave him one thousand copies to post on walls around the city. While the second print run was being finished, Grandi was making packs of a thousand copies each. At 5pm on 8 November, at the established hour, the 8,000 copies had all been printed. Casadei arrived in the usual van. We loaded the

compositions and parcels of newspapers, which were immediately taken to the warehouse of the Frascari craftsman, in Vicolo Bolognetti.[277]

By 4pm, the first 1,000 copies of *L'Unità* were handed to Aroldo Tolomelli at an appointed meeting place so they could immediately be affixed to city walls. During the second print run, Grandi began organising the papers into bundles of 1,000 copies. By 5pm, the planned 8,000 copies were ready. Casadei arrived with a truck. The papers were transported to a warehouse in Vicolo Bolognetti, where Masi helped divide them into smaller bundles for the couriers to distribute the next morning, 9 November. 'The comrades who had guarded us headed back to their base', he reported. 'I followed the van, prepared the packages for the couriers that had to take them to their destination in the morning and went back to my house just in time for curfew.'[278]

Reporting the battle[279]

The extraordinary edition of *L'Unità* employs ten of the twenty-four tropes identified above. These are: the establishment of temporal horizon; the call for armed insurrection; the call for a general strike; the criminalisation of the enemy; the dehumanisation of the enemy; Stalin, Russia and the Red Army as 'glorious' models; an invocation of unity through the CLN; news of recent Gap and Sap actions; local and national developments in the war; and the collaboration between the people and the partisans.

[277] Ibid., p. 47.
[278] Ibid., p. 47.
[279] All references to the text in the 8 November 1944 edition of *L'Unità* are from Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 702-704.

The temporal horizon established is one of imminent victory and liberation. It is found in phrases such as ‘the hour of reckoning is near’, ‘towards the decisive battle’, ‘this moment is not far off’, ‘we will soon be free’, and in the quote attributed to Stalin of ‘the final and victorious phase of the war’. An ‘armed popular uprising’ is invoked which, ‘once Bologna is freed, will annihilate the Nazi-fascist monsters on our soil’. This is to be supported by the ‘general insurrectionary strike’. This optimism is rooted in the wider prosecution of the war, in which the Allied forces, ‘having completed the massing of men and vehicles, restored communication routes, bridges and railways systematically destroyed by the Nazis on the run, and favoured by an improvement of the weather, are about to unleash the great attack for the complete liberation of the Po Valley’.

The enemies are ‘war criminals’ and ‘bandits’. The Germans (never the fascists) are ‘monsters’, ‘beasts’, ‘the wounded Nazi beast in its lair’. Stalin is the ‘great leader of the USSR’, leader of the ‘glorious effort of the Red Army’ and inheritor of the ‘glorious October Revolution’. The issue ends with the valedictory: ‘Long live the glorious Red Army! Long live Stalin!’.

The entire edition is a report of Gap and Sap actions, where people march together ‘under the guidance of the National Liberation Committee’. The most commonly employed trope is that of collaboration between the people and the partisans. It appears eight times. The report refers to the ‘prompt reaction of the patriots, who found the people united by their side’, the battle as a warning ‘launched by 300,000 citizens’, a threat to which ‘all the people respond unanimously’, which has ‘materially and morally cemented the unity and solidarity between patriots and people’. The CLN bulletin quoted talks of the Gap ‘supported by the

population who had armed themselves' working 'in coordinated action with the besieged'. It pays tribute to the 'ordinary Bolognesi people who have demonstrated by fighting their solidarity with the patriots' and to 'all the workers who hit the Nazi-fascist beasts hard in Bologna on 7 November'.

The notion of the people rising up and taking action alongside the partisans would have had enormous value as performative propaganda and would have fitted with the PCI positioning itself as the vanguard of mass action. It is one of several tropes with which Peli takes issue, in what appears to be the only critical assessment of the extraordinary edition of *L'Unità* as propaganda. It is worth quoting in full:

> In the immediate aftermath and in the decades to come, the battle of Porta Lame, duly isolated from its context, represented not only a source of legitimate pride, but also a formidable opportunity for propaganda. It is pointless to observe that propaganda is based, by its nature, on considerable distortions of the truth of the events: the Cumer communiqué dated 8 November 1944, citing the 7th Gap, extends the duration of the battle to 'one night and one day', attributes the partisan presence in Porta Lame with the intent of 'defending the population from the threat of round-ups', fabulates support for the Garibaldini of the population that had armed itself, and concludes by arguing that 'the only Garibaldini losses were one dead and some wounded who were not left in the hands of the enemy'. The extraordinary edition of *L'Unità* of 8 November, which hosts the Cumer communiqué with great visibility, in turn underlines that the fighters have 'found the people united by their side'. What is striking is not the obvious foreseeable distortions. In the heat of the moment, one does not write to document, but to transform the event into a myth capable of inciting the struggle; what is truly amazing is the extraordinary speed and efficiency with which the propaganda operation is carried out, even in the prohibitive conditions in which 7th Gap and the other formations found themselves.[280]

[280] Peli, *Storie di Gap*, p. 259.

Peli's contention that the report contained 'considerable distortions' requires qualification. The reports undoubtedly underestimated the number of partisan victims, which is hardly surprising for something being produced while the battle was unfolding. Nor was the objective of the battle to defend the ordinary people from round-ups. It was a purely defensive – and unplanned – event. But two other 'distortions' cited – the duration of the battle and the involvement of the wider population – may not have been as inaccurate as suggested by Peli. The report says the battle lasted nineteen hours. This is in line with some other reports. It is universally agreed the battle started around 6am. At least one official eye-witness report has it petering out around 2am.

The claims for the involvement of the local citizenry may have been exaggerated but may not be entirely without foundation. As Sap member Giacomo Masi later recalled, the city was 'for a few hours, under our control and the hymns of the Resistance were sung on the streets'.[281] However, given that this was part of testimony provided in 1968, twenty-four years after the event, its historical accuracy has to be open to question. There is considerable evidence that those fighting were joined throughout the day by members of Sap brigades from the city's periphery[282]. But to equate *sappisti* with the ordinary, non-committed citizenry would be misleading.

Scooping the regime

It is impossible to determine the short-term propaganda value of the special edition of *L'Unità*. Considering the size of the print run, and the estimate that every issue was seen by

[281] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. III*, p. 566.
[282] Ibid., p. 566.

up to ten people, it is possible that it was read by about 80,000 people in the days following the battle – a substantial minority of the city's population.

There is anecdotal evidence of the impact of the paper in personal testimonies. Elio Cicchetti, a member of the 7th Gap who had taken part in the battle, later wrote:

> The evening following our arrival we received a clandestine copy of *L'Unità,* published in an extraordinary edition, which reported an extensive description of the battle of Porta Lame. For many of us, that was the first contact with a communist newspaper that we had heard about so many times. By the light of a small candle, I read to my companions, in a low voice, the two sides of the newspaper in which the salient phases of the action were told. We were all very moved.[283]

Typographer Casadei said he was 'particularly pleased to see, in the days that followed, the streets of the city abundantly carpeted with *L'Unità* bearing the news of the victorious battle.'[284]

Ferruccio Parri, the actionist representative in the CVL and one of the leaders of the Resistance nationally, later wrote that the battle had had a 'notable' value for the morale of the Resistance movement. Masi, with overall responsibility for distribution of PCI propaganda in Bologna, claimed an impact among the citizenry and made the key point about the timing of the edition vis-à-vis that of the official regime propaganda:

> The Bolognesi who remained in the city, the following morning were able to read the facts of the battle of Porta Lame and the voices were in favour of the partisans. That little sheet had certainly given the citizens some clearer opinions. *II Resto del Carlino* came out a few hours

[283] An interesting detail in Cicchetti's recollection is that he, a member of the PCI, had never seen *L'Unità* until that evening. Cicchetti, *Il Campo Giusto,* p. 130.
[284] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II,* p. 104-105.

later, with its own version and with a comment by the commander of the black brigades, Pietro Torri, in which some names of 'dead comrades' were listed.[285]

There was no standard lead time between events and their publication in underground newspapers, just as the editions of the newspapers themselves did not follow a pre-ordained schedule. The circumstances of war and occupation made both impossible. Local events, such as Gap and Sap actions, could take anything between three days and a month to be reported by *L'Unita.* By contrast, *Il Resto del Carlino* was able to operate to something approaching a normal publication schedule, although the newspaper also suffered from disruption due to the Allied bombing campaigns.

The content of *Il Carlino* was divided into two sections. The first page carried national and international news. The second page was entitled 'Cronaca di Bologna' (News from Bologna). Issue 265 of *Il Carlino*, published on 8 November, the same day as the special issue of *L'Unità*, carried no reference to the battle. The first reference to it was made in issue 266 of 9 November. The issue would have been available in the city on the evening of that day, a full day after the first local citizens had been able to read the version of events in *L'Unità*. The article carried a kicker[286] that said: 'No truce for those without a country'. *Senza patria* was one of the common epithets in regime propaganda used to describe partisans. The headline ran: 'Daring and decisive action against the bands of outlaws'. *Bande* (bands or gangs) and *fuori-legge* (outlaws) were two other common epithets used for partisans, each being part of criminalisation rhetoric typical of wartime propaganda.

[285] Ibid., p. 47.
[286] A kicker is a line of newspaper type set above a headline, usually in a different typeface, intended to provoke interest in, editorialise about, or provide orientation for the matter in the text.

The drophead, or standfirst,[287] read: 'In a moving salute from the Commander of the Black Brigades, the Legionnaires swear to avenge the fallen – The criminals left many dead on the ground.'

The news story began by referring to a clash which took place 'the day before yesterday' between the 'outlaws' and members of the black brigades, the GNR and the assault police. During the struggle several 'young comrades' fell. It then published the text of a statement issued on 8 November by Pietro Torri, commander of the XXIII black brigade. The article named eleven fascist dead. The news story continued, introducing an *Il Carlino* trope that is entirely absent in the antifascist newspapers: the idea that the killing of an Italian by an Italian is fratricide. The fascist press routinely used the rhetoric of civil war (as did *L'Avvenire*), something entirely absent in the tropes of the two main antifascist newspapers. 'Once again fraternal blood has been spilled by the villainous criminality of a handful of reckless men who have turned their back on the country and their family.' The same dehumanisation terminology found in the antifascist papers ('*belve'* – beasts) is employed to describe the partisans.

Since the publication of Claudio Pavone's *Una Guerra Civile* in 1991, it has become orthodoxy to view the Italian Resistance as being involved simultaneously in three types of war: a patriotic war of liberation against the Germans; a class war against the industrialists and landowners who had supported fascism; and a civil war against Italian fascists.[288] Many

[287] A standfirst, also called a drop headline or deck, is a brief introductory summary of an article typically appearing immediately after the headline and typographically distinct from the rest of the article.
[288] C. Pavone, *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Turin, 1991).

communists and socialists rejected the idea that the conflict was a civil war, both at the time and in subsequent historiography.[289]

The issue of *Il Carlino* of 10 November carried a story that was to become the focal point of the regime's propaganda response to the battle of Porta Lame. In the ruins of the Maggiore Hospital, the bodies were discovered of eight men who had been executed as spies by the partisans during the previous month. The kicker read: 'On the trail of the Bolshevik executioners'. The headline ran: "The discovery of a ditch filled with tortured and hanged citizens'. The standfirst read: 'The heinous crimes of the men without a country that were found in the ruins of the Maggiore Hospital'. The lede of the story compared the find to the Katyn massacre, where 22,000 Polish troops were murdered by the Red Army. The story repeated the claim that the men were tortured before being hung.

The story led in the Bologna section of the editions of 11 and 12 November too. In the issue of 11 November, the lede claimed that the previous day's report had 'aroused among the citizens powerful feelings of indignation'. The report claimed a room had been set aside as a torture chamber, in which the walls were covered in blood. The report of 12 November talked of the profound indignation of 'the entire citizenry'. By shifting the argument away from the outcome of the battle and onto the alleged torture and murder of apparently ordinary citizens, *Il Carlino* appeared to have wrested back some of the propaganda value of the events. This narrative was considered by the CLN to have such potential for shaping public opinion that it took the unusual step of publishing a statement justifying the executions.[290] It was addressed to 'the citizens of Bologna' and credited to the military

[289] Flores, Franzinelli, *Storia della Resistenza,* p. 295.
[290] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna,* p. 262; Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. IV*, pp. 428-429.

tribunal of the 7th Gap as well as the CVL and CLN. It said the men had confessed to spying against the partisans, had been condemned to death and were executed by hanging. The bulletin was undated but is thought to have been published in the last week in November.

The immediate impact the battle and its reporting in *L'Unità* had on the morale of the Resistance movement proved to be short-lived because of the Allied decision, six days after the battle, to halt their advance. There were immediate consequences for Bologna and the local Resistance. The German army, which had begun to fall back to the Po, assuming Bologna would be lost within days, returned to the city and embarked on a winter of repression of the Resistance. The Germans now assumed full control of the anti-partisan operations. Out of about 900 members, the 7th Gap had 77 rounded up and shot, either by the local fascist militia or the German army.[291] Between October and December, the number of partisan raids fell to just 5 per cent of the number carried out in the previous three months.[292]

The violent crackdown began two days after the *proclama*, at the battle of the Bolognina, in which six of sixteen *gappisti* hiding out in a house just behind the railway station were killed and five wounded. On 9 December a makeshift hospital for wounded partisans was raided, with fourteen taken away, tortured and executed on 13 December. Between 14 December and 23 December over one hundred partisans were removed from the prison of San Giovanni in Monte, taken up to the hills at Sabbiuno di Paderno, just outside town, and executed by firing squad. Between 10 February and 16 March an estimated ninety-six partisans were

[291] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, p. 167. Their source is Renato Romagnoli, in Romagnoli, *Gappista*, p. 195. Romagnoli doesn't cite a source for his number but appears to suggest it was information supplied by the Cumer. Establishing a precise number of brigade members during that winter is complicated by desertions and new arrivals.
[292] Ibid., p. 167.

executed behind the train station in the neighbourhood of San Ruffilo. The delay also meant that the Allies continued to bomb Bologna, a campaign that increased in intensity in March and April 1945. The repression also reduced the propaganda activities in the city. After 8 November, *L'Unità* was not published again until 16 December, and then was not seen again until 21 January 1945. *Avanti!* was next published on 1 January.[293] However, despite the discovery of many partisan bases, none of the bases used by the clandestine press was discovered. As Bottonelli reported:

> After the battle of Porta Lame, a harsh and terrible winter of struggle began. The Allies, contrary to their agreements, left us alone to fight against the fascists and the Nazis, who had doubled their ferocity. The *gappisti* suffered heavy losses, but the fascists and the Nazis never had peace: at night the city was practically under our control. Many of our bases were discovered, but the enemies never managed to identify the locations of our printers and the operations of our propaganda activities.[294]

4.4 The brief life of *Orizzonti di Libertà*

If the edition of *L'Unità* published on 8 November 1944 is an example of how the interconnectedness of the propaganda and military activities and personnel could produce beneficial results, the story of *Orizzonti di Libertà* provides the opposite example. A first issue of the newspaper was published in March 1944. A second issue was in preparation. But the arrest of the main leaders of the local PdA, as the editors and typographers were working on a second edition, brought to an end the output of the newspaper.

[293] In his 1965 memoirs, Enrico Bassi says: 'The movement came to a standstill. *Avanti!* temporarily suspended publication, picking up again in January 1945, when we started again from scratch to prepare for the offensive of spring 1945.' Bassi, *Avanti!*, p. 20.
[294] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, pp. 39-40.

The newspaper, and the local party, were dominated by one man: Massenzio Masia. Nazario Sauro Onofri, who worked on the paper as a seventeen-year-old, alongside his father Gino, said that on the first edition, Masia 'did everything: the headlines, the editorial, the news'.[295] He passed his texts to typographer Giorgio Zappoli, who laid them out. The typeset pages were taken to Via D'Azeglio 58, five hundred yards from the city's main square, where 5,000 copies were printed. In June, Masia wrote a second edition and was searching for a larger printing operation with more modern equipment. A Linotype printing press was found, along with a new venue, in Via San Petronio Vecchio. But technical faults with the machine delayed production throughout July and August. On 4 September, Zappoli was waiting for Masia, Onofri and the others who worked on the paper for a new attempt to fix the press. Onofri's wife Candida arrived with the news that twenty members of the PdA had been arrested the night before. This included the entire leadership of the party, all of whom were active in the G&L brigades.

This complete disappearance of a local PdA paper appears to be specific to Bologna. Laura Conti lists numerous PdA newspapers, such as *L'Italia Libera*, linked to the party and published in the rest of Italy, most notably the regions of Piedmont and Lombardy.[296] The PdA was the youngest of the antifascist parties and did not have the organisational discipline the communists had developed through the twenty years of fascist dictatorship.[297] The Bologna party was infiltrated by two fascist spies – Ivo Zampanelli and Paolo Kessler – who identified the leaders to the local black brigades. A trial was conducted in which seven men

[295] Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali bolognesi*, p. 217.
[296] Conti, *La Resistenza in Italia*, pp. 122-140.
[297] A report by the British Foreign office in June 1943 described the newly formed organisation as generally pro-British in outlook but lacking 'heavyweights' and 'probably not capable of achieving very much'. Bailey, *Target Italy*, p. 287.

(including Masia) were condemned to death and executed. A further ten were given prison sentences, six of whom later died in either the Gusen or Mauthausen concentration camps.[298]

4.5 Conclusion

In this study, I have identified ninety-one people involved in the production and distribution of five antifascist newspapers (*Avanti!*, *L'Unità*, *La Punta*, *Orizzonti di Libertà* and *Rinascita*) published in Bologna between September 1943 and April 1945. By cross referencing biographical detail published between the 1960s and the 2000s, I have established that of these ninety-one people, 85 per cent were members of partisan brigades, active in the armed resistance. For the communist *L'Unità*, it was 90 per cent of its editorial team. For the socialist *Avanti!* it was 74 per cent. For the actionist *Orizzonti di Libertà*, it was 100 per cent, albeit of a very small editorial team. For the Catholic *La Punta* it was over 70 per cent, again from a much smaller editorial team and distribution network than those at *Avanti!* and *L'Unità*. For the small cross-party *Rinascita*, it was 83 per cent.

In this essay I have used the special issue of *L'Unità* of 8 November 1944 – arguably the high point of the propaganda output in Bologna during the twenty months of occupation – as a case study showing this interconnectedness. It was only this high degree of overlap and interdependence that made it possible for the partisans to produce this newspaper – virtually in real time – and to publish it before the regime newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino* could provide an 'official' narrative of the events at the battle of Porta Lame.

[298] Bergonzini, *La svastica a Bologna*, pp. 161-163; Arbizzani, Onofri, *Giornali Bolognesi*, p. 221; Merazzi (ed.), *Massenzio Masia*, p. 56; De Luna, *Partito della Resistenza*, p. 282.

However, while this interconnectedness was a strength of the local propaganda machine, it could also be a weakness. This was the case in the official organ of the actionists, *Orizzonti di Libertà*, where the failure of the local military and political apparatus to maintain secrecy in its clandestine activities resulted in the decimation of the party leadership, which led to the disappearance of its flagship newspaper.

5. AWKWARD SILENCES

5.1 Introduction

The threshold for being included as a trope in this dissertation is the employment of related language in at least three issues of a newspaper published during occupation. This led to the identification of eighteen tropes for *L'Unità* and twenty-one for *Avanti!* For the contemporary reader, the most striking thing about these groupings of tropes is what is *not* included in them: references to the Jews. In almost 500 newspaper pages published in the province of Bologna during the twenty months of occupation there are only three references to the Jews.

In the twenty-four editions of *L'Unità* between July 1944 and April 1945, there is one reference to the Jews. In the twenty-one editions of *Avanti!* between January 1944 and April 1945 there is one reference to Jews (*ebrei*) and one to Zionists (*sionisti*). There are no references in *La Punta*, *Orizzonti di Libertà* or *Rinascita*, but the small sample size of each makes that unremarkable. In the Bologna-based PCI newspaper *La Lotta*, published six times between January 1944 and March 1945, are no references. In the twenty-three editions of the Imola-based communist newspaper *La Comune* between January 1944 and March 1945 there is one reference.

This chapter provides a close reading of those rare examples of references to the Jews. It points to some possible reasons for the silence on this issue in newspapers whose very purpose was to challenge the values and ideals of the Nazi occupiers and their Italian fascist collaborators. Two historical contexts are explored to create an interpretive framework for this analysis. First, the experience of the Jewish community in Bologna and Italy more

widely, and how that experience evolved during the years of fascist rule and later during the years of Nazi occupation. A key part of this summary is establishing the extent to which ordinary Italians and, later, active members of the Italian Resistance movement, would have been aware of the plight of Jews in Italy and occupied Europe. This, in turn, rests on a depiction of the way Mussolini tried to inculcate antisemitism – understood as hatred or hostility towards Jews – into the Italian people. Second, the study outlines someone of the complex relationship between the Jews and Italian socialists and communists in the decades leading up to the Second World War, including the problematic representation of the persecution of the Jews in socialist and communist propaganda. This also includes an assessment of the way in which Soviet newspapers handled the growing awareness of the systematic murder of the Jews by Nazi Germany.

This chapter shows that the almost complete silence around the persecution of the Jews was not unique to Bologna's underground newspapers but was typical of clandestine newspapers across occupied Italy. Nor was it unique to Italy but could also be found in the news reporting in Allied countries, such as the US. While acknowledging that it was not a phenomenon unique to Italian antifascist propaganda, it raises the question of whether there were specific historical and cultural tendencies of the Italian left – specifically the socialist and communist movements which dominated the Resistance – that helped create the climate and circumstances which may, at least in part, explain an absence so striking to a contemporary reader.

5.2 Bologna's Jewish community

Italy's small Jewish population in the 1920s and early 1930s – about one per thousand of the country's total population – led relatively comfortable lives under the fascist dictatorship. Indeed, as Sarfatti has demonstrated, many Italian Jews were nationalistic and pro-regime. The percentage of Italian Jews who joined the PNF was higher than that of the population generally.[299] The extent to which Mussolini himself may or may not have harboured antisemitic feelings has been the subject of debate but there were few, if any, outward signs of the phenomenon in daily life in Italy until the mid-1930s.

This was to change drastically in 1938, when antisemitism became enshrined in Italian law. The persecution of Italy's Jews was to experience another step change in 1943, when Nazi Germany occupied northern Italy and installed Mussolini at the head of the RSI. Fascist Italy became a cog in the machinery of Hitler's Final Solution. By the spring of 1945, about 7,500 Italian Jews had been deported to Nazi concentration camps, of whom just over 600 returned.[300] Italians in occupied northern Italy were not bystanders, meekly obeying German orders. As Levis Sullam concludes, between autumn 1943 and spring 1945, 'thousands of Italians participated in the destruction of the Jews, delivering more than 6,000 victims to their deaths'.[301] This was over 10 per cent of the country's Jewish population.

In August 1938, the country's official statistical centre Istat had been required to provide the Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza, the body created in July 1938 and known colloquially as the 'Demorazza', with the number of members of the 'Jewish race'

[299] Sarfatti, *Italy's Fascist Jews*, p. 12.
[300] Calimani, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, p. 652.
[301] Levis Sullam, *The Italian Executioners*, p. 7.

in Italy. It provided three numbers in quick succession: 53,413 (on 13 September); 57,425 (1 October); and 58,412 (24 October).[302] Over 90 per cent lived in nine cities, with almost half living in Rome and Milan.[303]

To enable the regime's drastic change of policy it was considered necessary to persuade the mass of ordinary Italians of its legitimacy. Propaganda was considered to be key to the transformation, with newspapers at the forefront of the campaign. As Calimani points out, the process was gradual: 'At first, the directives to the press were not precise, but soon the reporters picked up the scent and promptly adapted. Many local and youth newspapers joined the enterprise with articles against Jews.' These included newspapers in Turin, Bergamo, Fiume, Zara, Rovigo, Piacenza, Cremona, Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Forlì, Sassari and Rome.[304]

De Felice identified 1936 as the year in which antisemitic propaganda in the press began to become more common. He put this down to the improvement in Italo-German relations and the outbreak of civil war in Spain. Initially it was noticeable in columns and cartoons intended to be humorous, but quickly deteriorated. A common theme that quickly emerged was the supposed Jewish roots of Bolshevism and the high number of Jewish people in socialist movements.[305]

Much of the early antisemitic propaganda was the spontaneous and uncoordinated output of individual editors. From the summer of 1938, it was centrally planned. Calimani tracked

[302] Calimani, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, p. 461.
[303] Ibid., p. 462.
[304] Ibid., p. 453.
[305] R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei Italiani sotto il Fascismo* (Turin, 2020), p. 205.

how one newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, the most important regime newspaper, founded by Mussolini in 1914, targeted Jews in the professions in a systematic manner. First it was accountants (30 August), then lawyers (31 August), those working in credit institutions (7 September), magazine editors (11 September), sales reps (13 September), craftsmen and craftswomen (14 September), antique dealers (17 September) and those working in insurance companies (18 September).[306]

With the regime intending to 'shape the country with initiatives of a propaganda nature', a new, deliberately inflated figure of 70,000 Jews in Italy was communicated. Mussolini talked of the need to use propaganda to inject racism into the blood of Italians.[307] By now, no Italian could be unaware that the Jew should be an object of resentment and concern. As Calimani says:

> The regime's offensive, which met with little resistance, was pounding, all-enveloping. The radio and the newspaper talked about nothing else. The attention in the country had to remain high, the state of vigilance permanent, the alert constant. Mobilising meant convincing: meanwhile the enemy [the Jew] was sneaky, powerful, influential and enjoyed support and friendship all over the world and it was not a small defenceless group, but a compact, intellectually formidable force.[308]

Between November 1938 and January 1939, what became known as the 'racial laws' were enacted.[309] As the law passed through its formal stages, Mussolini communicated to his Ministry of the Interior that internment camps should be created to gather Jews in the event

[306] Calimani, *Storia degli ebrei italiani*, p. 469.
[307] Ibid., p. 483.
[308] Ibid., p. 483.
[309] Ibid., p. 499.

of war.[310] One of those camps was built at Fossoli, near the town of Carpi, just forty-three miles to the north of Bologna.

Under German occupation, after 8 September, fascist measures against the Jews intensified dramatically. Mussolini announced by radio the creation of the RSI on 18 September 1943. On 14 November he approved the party's new constitution, known as the Verona Charter, after the city where it was drafted. Article 7 stated: 'Those belonging to the Jewish race are foreigners. During this war they belong to an enemy nationality'. The Jews in Italy were now enemies and were no longer considered Italian. The propaganda campaign intensified. Calimani said that now newspapers 'competed in the propaganda accusing Jews of every kind of wickedness' in the autumn of 1943.

The Jewish population of Bologna was small but had grown substantially from the previous century. At unification, in 1861, it stood at 229, a decade later at 319. By 1938, the number was between 825 and 890.[311] The first signals of something untoward coming into what Onofri called 'the little Eden of the Bolognese Jewish world' were detected in the mid-thirties due to the increasing number of German Jewish travellers passing through Italy to Palestine, the United States and South America to escape Nazi persecution.[312]

[310] Ibid., p. 559.
[311] Onofri, *Ebrei e fascismo,* p. 135. The numbers for the later fascist period, especially from 1938, are less reliable because many records were destroyed by the local fascist party before liberation. Onofri's research about the number of Jews in Bologna at this time was inconclusive. He states: 'The exact number of Jews who resided in Bologna at the end of 1938 or those who had acquired Italian citizenship is unknown. For the *Lunario Israelitico* of 1938 there were 890 members of the community. According to a note published in *Il Resto del Carlino* of 6 September 1938 there were 826, of whom 717 were Italians and 109 foreigners. From a report, without date, by the Demorazza, it appears that in August 1938 there were 825 present and 506 'temporarily absent', making a total of 1,331.'
[312] Onofri, *Ebrei e fascismo*, p. 84.

At the beginning of 1938, *Il Resto del Carlino* editor Piero Pedrazza began his series of antisemitic editorials. The first known victims of persecution in the city were eleven University of Bologna professors who were removed from office in October of that year.[313] Onofri struggled to quantify the degree to which ordinary citizens of Bologna consented to the antisemitic campaign. Without citing any research, he suggests that 'the great mass' of the city's population had 'never harboured anti-Jewish sentiments and certainly did not change their opinion after 1938' and the 'overwhelming majority' provided examples of 'civility and generosity'.[314]

The persecution of the Jews in Bologna, as in the rest of Italy, intensified after the armistice, with the advent of Nazi occupation. SS Captain Theodor Dannecker was given the responsibility of rounding up the Jews in Italy. The process began in Bologna from 6-9 November, during which about twenty Jews were found and deported. A further twelve were deported that month. The round-ups continued into 1944, with the SS assisted by the local fascist police, who, among other things, provided names and addresses.[315]

On 30 November, the interior minister Guido Buffarini Guidi introduced the police ordinance number five, which ordered that all Jews in Italy be sent to concentration camps, with their possessions confiscated. Fossoli was to become the biggest transit camp for Jews in Italy. In total, 111 Jews born or resident in Bologna were deported to concentration camps in Poland or Germany, most of them passing through Fossoli. Only eight returned. The vast

[313] Ibid., p. 121.
[314] Ibid., p. 172.
[315] De Bernardi, Preti (eds.), *La Resistenza*, pp. 413-414.

majority of Bologna's Jews were saved by groups or individuals who hid them during the twenty months of occupation.[316]

The number of Bologna Jews who were active in the Resistance was small, but the community provided two of the city's towering Resistance figures in Mario Finzi and Mario Jacchia, the latter a member of the PdA who was active in the production of *Orizzonti di Libertà*.

5.3 The absence of the Jews in Bologna's antifascist press

The single reference to the Jews in *L'Unità* was in an undated issue in August 1944, under the crosshead 'Let us save the political prisoners'. It read:

> In the fields of Fossoli (Carpi), the Nazis have concentrated thousands of the best Italians: workers of the vanguard, peasants and intellectuals, who struggled bravely and without care for themselves, and had faced the hated enemy. Beside them suffered thousands of Jews, innocent victims of the sinister Nazi racial fury. The living conditions are terrible; hunger, complete separation from any contact with the world, daily moral humiliations inflicted by the brutes of the SS.
>
> But the Germans, to avoid having to abandon their victims during the impending retreat, transported them to Germany. Fearing the escape of the more decisive and well-known elements, they massacred Leopoldo Gasparotto of the Action Party; in the town square they murdered another sixty-eight, in chains, spraying them with bursts from their machine guns. Subsequently, they massacred another seventy-eight.[317]

Several observations can be made about this text. First, it demonstrates that the PCI was aware that the Fossoli transit camp north of Bologna contained thousands of Jews. Second,

[316] Ibid., pp. 434-436.
[317] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 667.

the Jews are presented as a distinct category: workers, peasants, intellectuals, Jews. Third, they are presented as a *separate* category, standing 'beside' (*accanto*) the political prisoners. Fourth, the Fossoli inmates were due to be deported to concentration camps in Germany and eastern Europe. Finally, unlike the other categories, their internment is not because they are an enemy in war but is rooted in racism.

This summary fits with Stefanori's analysis of references in the clandestine press to concentration camps, 'first and foremost, the camp at Fossoli'. In such articles, he said, the Jews were 'part of a much larger group of inmates and prisoners: attention of the press was mostly aimed at those who were imprisoned for political reasons or due to causes of their antifascist militancy and in the ranks of the Resistance'.[318] Despite the awareness of the persecution of Italian Jews demonstrated here, no further mention is made of their plight in the following eight months in the newspaper.

In *Avanti!*, the references to Zionists and to Jews occur in the same issue, that of 8 April 1944. The author talks of the British empire, adopting the voice of a 'British imperialist':

> The British Empire is not a ghost of the past, but a current reality. We are the masters in the art of governing and self-governance. For more than a hundred years we have led world politics without a territorial army. We are the most tenacious conservatives, but our people have always enjoyed ample political freedom. We have hosted all the outlaws: Marx, Mazzini, the anarchists, the Bolsheviks, the persecuted of all countries. But we have the strongest fleet in the world and an unparalleled seafaring glory. We have the Empire, the strength, the money and skill and we don't intend to give up our place for free: anyway, we don't die easily.
>
> And the Phalangists, the Iron Guards, the pan-Slavists, the Zionists (they too), the pan-Americans, the pan-Asian and so on could talk in a similar way. But all these discordant

[318] Stefanori, *La Resistenza di fronte alla persecuzione degli ebrei*, p. 44.

> voices, in the concordance of the answer, are merely the diverse superficial splendour of a deeper, darker, less aesthetic, but more powerful and concordant reason: the fatal necessity for capitalist groups, bourgeois nationals, to extend, at the expense of the opposing groups, the territory of their monopoly of exploitation.[319]

It was not necessary to be Jewish to hold Zionist views, as it is not today. But for many readers in the socialist audience, the association would have been strong, tapping into a long-held socialist anxiety about the growth of Zionism since the 1920s. For Italian socialists in the 1920s, Zionism was 'a pernicious form of nationalism, incompatible with proletarian internationalism'.[320] The Zionist here is the same as the British imperialist: a bourgeois, rooted in capitalism, intent on the oppression of others through territorial expansion.

In the following section, under the crosshead 'A problem: the revision of ourselves', the following section appears:

> We feel a deep, deadly repugnance to Hitlerism, towards the mad conception, which has been sophistically derived from a doctrine which is high and noble. We hate those who, from Hegel, drew the Gestapo, the SS, the pogroms against the Jews, the war on the whole world, the frenzy to kill, the lust to oppress, the sadism to sow horror and death. On them we send our curse, against them the sense stands majestically of the high humanity that is in us, against them the overwhelming need arises to fight until their extermination and that of the ideas they represent.[321]

[319] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 427.
[320] L. La Rovere, 'Fascismo, 'questione ebraica' e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista. Un'analisi di lungo periodo 1922-1967', in *Ebraismo, sionismo e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana Dalla fine dell'Ottocento agli anni sessanta* (Venice, 2007), pp. 95-160.
[321] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 428.

By the 1940s, most reasonably educated Europeans would have been aware of the pogrom Germany in November 1938 known as *Kristallnacht*.[322] In the litany of terrors visited on the world by the Nazi project, the Jews are the only victims mentioned by name in an otherwise generic summary. As with the reference in *L'Unità*, this arguably demonstrates awareness of the specificity of their persecution. No further reference is made to the Jews in the following twelve months.

The edition of *La Comune* on 1 March 1944 deals with a radio transmission of the Trial of Kharkov, a war crimes tribunal held in December 1943 in the city of Kharkov, Ukraine, in which members of the German military were tried by a Soviet military tribunal:

> The importance of the Kharkov trial is not only here, for those who know Hitler's monstrous morality. The atrocities of Kharkov are perhaps more refined and monstrous, if such a horrible comparison can be made. After all, they are on a par with the massacres of the Jews in Warsaw, of the massacres of the students of Prague, the deportations, the systematic devastation of entire regions, the mass killing of innocent hostages in all countries. It is always the same spirit that informs these horrors. That beastly spirit oppression, which informs the massacre, the destruction, came out of the Kharkov trial. Therefore, it is not likely to tell us anything new of Hitler's bestiality. Indeed, I would say that it does not surprise anyone.[323]

In 1942, the SS deported more than 300,000 Jews from Warsaw to the concentration camps. Following a failed uprising in the Warsaw ghetto in January 1943, Heinrich Himmler, Reich Leader of the SS, ordered the whole ghetto to be destroyed, which took place in April and May. Thousands of Jews died in the battle and a further 7,000 were immediately executed.[324] The reference suggests the communists in the province of Bologna were aware of the scale

[322] Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust,* p. 89.
[323] Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *Resistenza a Bologna, Vol. II*, p. 270.
[324] Beevor, *The Second World War*, pp. 360-361.

of the annihilation of the Jews taking place in other parts of Europe. Despite this awareness, no further reference is made to the Jews in the following ten months.

Antifascist propaganda and the Jews, 1943-1945

Stefanori looked at the representation of the Jews in the editions of the newspapers of the antifascist parties published in Rome, Turin, Milan, Genoa and Florence during occupation. His findings suggest that the absence of the Jews in the clandestine press was typical of the antifascist press in the major cities of occupied Italy. For the treatment of the Jews to be addressed as a specifically Jewish matter, rather than just another expression of the evils of Nazi occupation and fascist dictatorship, was rare. It tended to be limited to the most shocking treatment of the Jews.[325]

The representation of the Jews in the official organs of CLN parties was broadly in line with that which he found in the minutes of CLN meetings, including those of the CLNAI, beginning from the observation that 'specific references to the Jewish question are few'.[326] As with press representations, mostly it came down to a lack of recognition of the specificity of the Jewish experience of persecution, a failure to describe the qualitative and ideological difference in the way Jews were being treated compared with the way communists and socialists were being treated. Records of debates within the CLN show 'the marginality of the Jewish problem'. The pressing issues were power relations between the different antifascist parties, their ideas on the structure of a post-war Italy and relations with the Italian government in the liberated south and with the Allies.[327]

[325] Stefanori, *La Resistenza di fronte alla persecuzione degli ebrei*, p. 27.
[326] Ibid., p. 16.
[327] Ibid., p. 17.

There were also examples, such as correspondence in the summer of 1944 between the CLN in Liguria and the CLNAI, where an 'ambiguous vision of Judaism' was expressed, one that tapped into the 'racial and antisemitic prejudices of the time that linked it to the control of world finance and the American economy'.[328]

La Rovere has pointed to examples of how the representation of the Jews in *Avanti!* could lurch between pity based on an understanding of their ultimate destiny and racist stereotype. In November 1943, shortly after the 16 October round-up in Rome, the paper talked of 'tens of thousands of Jews who from all the cities of Italy are torn from their homes and set out on a life of unspeakable misery and hardship, which in most cases will lead them to death'. Yet an article in the summer of 1944 in the Turin edition of the newspaper includes 'the persistence of the stereotype of the rich Jew, a member of the high bank'.

Despite the extremely limited coverage of the Jewish experience, three things were clear for Stefanori in the underground press. First, that there was enough circulation of news for partisans to be 'sufficiently aware of what was happening to Jews throughout the occupied peninsula, as well as in Nazi concentration camps'. Second, that the articles that did deal with the Jews demonstrated a 'progressive awareness' that the persecution of Italian Jews had undergone a 'qualitative leap' from the moment of Nazi occupation. Third, that the Resistance movement seemed unprepared for the application in Italy of practices already adopted by the Nazis in eastern Europe.[329]

[328] Ibid., p. 16.
[329] Ibid., p. 9.

Stefanori stresses that, institutionally, the Resistance was committed to the abrogation of the 1938 racial laws from its very origins in July 1943. This commitment was repeated by way of a decree upon its creation by the CLNAI in September 1944. In February 1945, the CLN of Emilia-Romagna prepared a series of bills to enact into legislation upon liberation, including the abolition of the racial laws. In the new society envisaged by the Resistance movement, there could be no room for any form of religious discrimination and intolerance. But he did not rule out the influence of the ideological imprinting of the various parties that made up the CLN:

> The scrutiny of the clandestine press leads to a further and more general reflection concerning the importance of political cultures and their influence on the approach to the Jewish question. In other words, it seems evident how much the cultural background of the political orientations present in the Resistance determine different visions, which can be found, for example, when exposing facts or acting (think of the intensity of the calls to action present in the actionist and communist newspapers compared to the more moderate tones of the Catholic newspapers, or the aversion towards those who collaborated with fascism during the twenty years [of fascist dictatorship], including Jews).[330]

More recent historiography has been more critical of the left. Alessandra Tarquini argued that in the years of occupation 'and for at least a decade, the left treated the genocide of the Jews with indifference, as one looks at someone without seeing them'.[331] To support her argument that the problematic representation of the Jews continued after liberation she cites an article in *L'Unità* from May 1945 and coverage that followed. The article provided a detailed description of the Red Army's discovery of Auschwitz in January 1945. 'In the long article', she points out, 'based on an article that had been published in *Pravda*, there is not a single word about the fact the victims were Jewish. Similarly, in those months, the PCI

[330] Ibid., p. 77.
[331] Tarquini, *La sinistra italiana e gli ebrei*, p. 92.

newspaper recalled that the inmates in the camps were treated as materials for experiments, described the places and practices of death, did not hide the most macabre aspects, but did not linger on the identity of the persecuted'.[332]

As La Rovere points out, *Avanti!* was guilty of the same oversight, both before and after liberation. He cites a report in April based on testimonies of survivors from Buchenwald and an article on 8 May detailing the discovery of Auschwitz. 'It is significant that both articles lacked any reference to Jews', he said.[333]

Antifascist propaganda and the Jews, 1922-1943

The absence of reporting on the persecution of the Jews in antifascist newspapers was not limited to the period of occupation. Recent studies have suggested that the treatment of the question in socialist and communist newspapers was broadly consistent with their coverage of Jewish issues in the previous two decades.

There is an obvious risk of discussing the Italian left in those years as a homogeneous political movement, both generally and in its response to the persecution of the Jews. As Tarquini points out, during the fascist period, the Italian left splintered into multiple groups. The PCI was to the left of the old PSI. The Unitary Socialist Party was created by the reformists Filippo Turati, Claudio Treves and Giacomo Matteotti. In 1927 it became the PSULI, the unitary socialist party of Italian workers, before merging in 1930 with the PSI led by Pietro Nenni. The Justice and Liberty group was not a pure Marxist party but

[332] Ibid., p. 85.
[333] La Rovere, *Questione ebraica*, p. 121.

espoused socialist ideals. ‘These formations address the Jewish question differently’, she says.[334]

But in spite of schisms, fractures, factions and competing versions of Marxist-Leninism, there were some things common to press coverage across the left. For example, most socialists and communists adhered to the Marxist doctrine that the Jewish question would be automatically resolved by socialism, which they believed had already been demonstrated by the Soviet Union’s post-revolutionary society, which had eradicated the antisemitism of Tsarist Russia, enabling Jews to be fully integrated into Russian society. They were content to overlook facts that did not fit this narrative.

Tarquini outlines a growing antisemitism in revolutionary Russia, which reached a high point in Stalin’s purges. To obtain the complete ‘Sovietisation’ of the Jews, the communist party began to suppress any remaining forms of Jewish identity and tradition. The antifascist press, she says, provided no news of these events. Intellectuals did not comment on what was happening to the Jews in the Soviet Union. She concludes that ‘between the two world wars the exponents of Marxism did not deal with the Jews.’[335]

In Italy, the hugely influential Gramsci, co-founder of the PCI and founder of *L’Unità*, adopted the orthodox Marxist line that antisemitism was a product of a backward age that would disappear naturally with the advancement of the proletariat. Further, he thought the problem to be almost non-existent in Italy.[336] Togliatti failed to see that at the heart of

[334] Tarquini, *La sinistra italiana e gli ebrei*, p. 64.
[335] Ibid., p. 63.
[336] Ibid., p. 67.

Mussolini's project was the desire to fuse a unity between fascism and the Italian character, which meant denying the status of Italian to anyone considered an enemy, which the Jews explicitly would be. Tarquini concludes that it is understandable that 'on the pages of the press in exile, and in the writings of communist intellectuals and politicians, there was no analysis of antisemitism or racism as aspects of fascist totalitarian modernity'.[337]

This blind spot in the Togliattian PCI was based, at least in part, on a conviction that Italians were inherently non-racist, as Gramsci had also believed. Italian communists did not ask themselves why the Jews were 'the object of unprecedented violence' during the years of Italian fascism and German national socialism because 'like most antifascists, they argued that the Italian people were not racist and that antisemitic measures would never have their consent'.[338] Toscano attributes the same blind spot to *Avanti!* in the inter-war years. 'Despite the breadth and frequency of reporting and analysis,' he said, 'the socialist newspaper struggled to grasp the novelties emerging in the contents and political functions of antisemitism and remained anchored to a schematism that could not eliminate a stereotyped vision of Judaism and Jews'.[339]

La Rovere, however, makes a hard distinction between maximalists and reformists among the socialists, who were publishing editions of *Avanti!* in exile at different times during the 1920s and 1930s. What 'catches the eye', he said, in the maximalist editions of the newspaper in those years was the 'the persistent underestimation of fascist antisemitism and the total absence of the figure of the Jew, understood as an individual in flesh and blood and

[337] Ibid., p. 68.
[338] Ibid., p. 69.
[339] Toscano, *Ebraismo, p*. 10.

not as a mere reflection of a social aggregation or class'.[340] This continued even through the 1938 racial laws and later antisemitic legislation, about which the paper carried 'no news, not even in the form of a short communiqué'.[341] The maximalist socialists showed, he argues, that they considered Italian Jews 'doubly enemies, as capitalists and as 'fascists' (precisely as capitalists, the Jews had been 'enthusiastic fascists from the beginning'), and they believed that their persecution did not merit the attention of the proletariat'.[342]

Soviet propaganda and the Jews

In February 2020, Aldo Forbice, a journalist for *Avanti!*, described a book reading in Rome by Italian historian Anna Foà. The audience, which he described as predominantly communist, whether 'ex-, post-, or faithful Marxists', reacted angrily to his assertion that the Soviet Union had been antisemitic and the PCI had 'followed the anti-Jewish line'.[343] Forbice provides no time reference for his observations. For the purposes of this essay, the question is whether the communists operating in 1930s and 1940s Italy could have been functioning within a climate of antisemitism that coloured their representation (and lack of) of the Jews in the press, a climate that was fostered by the presence of its leader – Togliatti – at the heart of Stalin's court until spring 1944. The starting point is to look at how these same questions were being handled by the news organs of the Soviet Union.

[340] La Rovere, *Questione ebraica*, p. 102.
[341] Ibid., p. 104.
[342] Ibid., p. 104.
[343] A. Forbice, 'I comunisti e l'antisemitismo, la prima vittima ebrea, i socialisti rivoluzionari, gli eterni 'ciccioni'? in *Avanti!* online, 28 February 2020, I comunisti e l'antisemitismo, la prima vittima ebrea, i socialisti rivoluzionari, gli eterni 'ciccioni'? - Avanti (avantionline.it) (Last accessed: 11 August 2022).

Berkhoff assessed the challenge the Holocaust created for Soviet propaganda during the Second World War and how the Kremlin responded to that challenge. He made the following observations:

> Among the dead were virtually all of those Jews living in the USSR who had not left in time – in Ukraine alone, approximately 1.5 million. Most were shot to death or killed in gas vans. Moscow had to decide whether to inform its citizens that the occupying forces had a special policy of rapidly killing all Jews. What it ultimately did – the way Soviet propaganda dealt with the mass murder of Europe's Jews – reveals the relative weight of communist ideology, concerns about the Allies, an antisemitic prejudice.[344]

Through captured documents and intelligence reports, Stalin was aware by 1941 that the Nazis were exterminating all Jews, Roma and Sinti. 'They had no lack of information', Berkhoff argues.[345] Despite this, the Soviet media had a 'tendency to bury the knowledge that the Jews were targeted for total mass murder'. Stalin, Berkhoff argued, would have been aware that many of his associates and many Russians were antisemitic and he saw no benefit to Russia's war effort in telling the country about the Nazi extermination policy. There is no evidence, however, of a specific instruction to bury the story. The press did not have a specific policy on the Holocaust because 'the leadership – meaning, ultimately, Stalin – did not choose one'.[346]

However, while Berkhoff finds no clear order from Stalin to censor news of atrocities against the Jews, he doesn't let the Soviet leader entirely off the hook. Stalin and his associates, he says, heard from multiple sources that the Nazis were 'deliberately killing all

[344] Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger,* p. 134.
[345] Ibid., p. 136.
[346] Ibid., p. 165.

the Jews they could get their hands on'. The response of Soviet propaganda was to 'tone down' the fact, and in this undertaking it is possible to document 'Stalin's personal involvement'. He concludes that the main Soviet media 'hardly ever highlighted the Nazi killing campaign against the Jews and, from today's Western perspective, 'buried' it'.[347]

The silence about the persecution of the Jews was not unique to Italian antifascist propaganda or Soviet propaganda. As Jowett, O'Donnell point out, the plight of the Jews in occupied Europe was systematically underplayed in US media coverage. The treatment of the victims of concentration camps received little coverage until the end of the war. They cite a growing antisemitism in the country in the late 1930s and early 1940s as a possible reason. They also argue that 'hysterical' coverage of the First World War, particularly by the British media, had made people suspicious of atrocity stories, creating a 'disastrous delay' in public awareness of the Final Solution.[348]

Nevertheless, this silence did not fall evenly across all the world's media, nor all the newspapers of Resistance groups in Europe. Kochanski lists multiple examples of Resistance-controlled newspapers broaching the persecution of the Jews from as early as 1942. This includes clandestine newspapers in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Poland, all of which had large Jewish communities.[349] She concludes that the Catholic church and the clandestine press were the 'two principal agencies' that could have shaped opinion in a predominantly Christian Europe on the deportations of the Jews.[350]

[347] Ibid., p. 160.
[348] Berkhoff says of the Soviet media coverage of the Jews that 'comparison with wartime British and American journalism reveals similarities'. Ibid., p. 161.
[349] Kochanski, *Resistance*, pp. 278-280.
[350] Ibid., p. 277.

Towards a reason

The above summaries of the antifascist press and its coverage of the Jews from 1922 to 1945 is inevitably reductive and is based on aspects of studies that point to clear trends. There are many caveats and qualifications that could be made, many of which are addressed in the relevant historiography. I have left out, for example, the prominent roles played by Jews in the antifascist press and other writings in the inter-war years. This includes towering figures of Italian journalism such as Claudio Treves and Guido Ludovico Luzzatto of *Avanti!* and Eugenio Curiel of *L'Unità*. In Bologna during the war this included Mario Jacchia. There are also countless examples of people hiding Jews or otherwise helping them during the years of the most extreme persecution.

Also elided here is the substantial difference in the approach in the years of occupation between on the one hand the socialists and communists and on the other the actionists, the latter showing more of an awareness of the specificity of the Jewish persecution. This has been put down to two factors. First, the party was much more heterogeneous than the other left-wing parties, containing a strong liberal and democratic core alongside its strain of liberal socialism. Second, the party, and the Justice and Liberty movement that spawned it, contained many prominent Jewish members.[351] Nevertheless, from these studies and my own analysis a clear picture emerges of an absence of the Jews in antifascist propaganda through the fascist period until the end of the war. Documenting the absence has now been undertaken. Explaining it remains a challenge.

[351] When businessman Adriano Olivetti made contact with the British secret service on behalf of the PdA in June 1943, one of the observations of Jock McCaffery of the British Special Operations Executive was that Olivetti had 'wide Jewish contacts'. Bailey, *Target Italy*, p. 289; La Rovere, *Questione ebraica*, p. 82.

All those newspaper editors and authors knew enough to have said more. While undoubtedly the world was to learn of the extent of the horrors of the Final Solution after liberation, Italians – Bolognesi – had been bombarded with virulent antisemitism from the fascist regime since 1938, had seen the impact of the racial laws, the Verona Charter. They knew about the round-ups of Jews in Italian cities. They knew about the transit camp at nearby Fossoli and of its dark purpose. (There are three other references to Fossoli in the Bologna editions of *Avanti*! None mentions the Jews.) The Red Army had discovered its first Nazi concentration camp at Majdenek, Poland, in July 1944.[352]

The leaders of the Resistance, the same people who had control of the military and propaganda efforts, may simply have been focused, as Stefanori suggests, 'on broad political and organisational objectives', while the partisans on the ground were focused on operational activities and daily survival. In this context, 'there is little space reserved for the persecution of the Jews'.[353] Bauman argued that despite having many of the pieces of the puzzle, nobody at that time was able to see the bigger picture simply because the Final Solution was a human phenomenon without precedent. They were looking at it but were incapable of seeing it:

> People refused to believe the facts they stared at. Not that they were obtuse or ill-willed. It was just that nothing they had known before had prepared them to believe. For all they had known and believed, the mass murder for which they did not even have a name yet was, purely and simply, unimaginable.[354]

[352] Beevor, *The Second World War*, p. 716; Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger*, pp. 155-159.
[353] La Rovere, *Questione ebraica*, p. 5.
[354] Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 85.

Yet while this may provide an explanation for underreporting the Shoah and its Italian emanation, it does not explain the previous twenty years of underreporting. Marxist and post-structuralist critics have discussed the meaning of what is *not said* in literary texts – the 'gaps and silences' in those texts. It is in those silences, it is argued, that the ideology of the text is revealed. The once-original insight has become an orthodoxy in discourse analysis. In journalism, the text that appears on the page represents two editorial choices. First, the decision to include *that* article, with *those* words. Second, the decision *not* to include something else in its place. This selection procedure applies equally to journalism that purports to objectivity and that which is openly ideological, presenting itself as propaganda, as the official organ of a political party.

The ideological frameworks that the main antifascist parties were working within from the 1920s to 1945 must be considered a relevant context for the editorial decisions and omissions in that period. It does not follow from this that the parties or the editors and authors of the antifascist press were, on a personal level, antisemitic. In the case of the prominent figures working in *Avanti!*, *L'Unità*, *La Punta*, *Orizzonti di Libertà* and *Rinascita* in Bologna from 1943 to 1945 there is no documentary evidence of antisemitism. Many of the same typesetters and printers who produced these newspapers also produced fake identity cards and other documents for people on the run from the Nazis, including many Jews.

When asking why Soviet newspapers – which were a huge influence on the newspapers of the Italian communists and socialists – played down atrocities against the Jews, Berkhoff argued that 'a large part' of the answer was antisemitism, both 'within the Central

Committee and as a mindset among Soviet citizens'. Stalin, he says, 'disliked the Jews, but during the war he preferred to hide this'.[355]

Bologna's antifascists – and its citizens more generally – may have been, in Bauman's formulation, indifferent bystanders. Not affected directly or personally enough by the persecution of the Jews for their treatment to be considered a specific case within the wider need to rid Italy of Nazi occupation and fascist control. Unable to see 'the Other' as anything but an abstract category because of a lack of deep personal relationships with Jewish people.

5.4 Conclusion

Bologna's Jewish community was small. Italy's Jewish population was small compared with that in many countries in northern and eastern Europe. The people of Bologna knew of the persecution of the Jews. They knew of the 1938 racial laws. They knew of the round-ups of Jews, including those in the city by Theodor Dannecker. They knew of the camp at Fossoli, of the deportations. They knew what those deportations led to, although the full horrors of the Final Solution were not available to anyone in Europe before 1945. In the five antifascist newspapers in occupied Bologna that I cover in this study, these subjects are almost completely absent.

This absence was not unique to the newspapers of Bologna's antifascist parties. It was characteristic of the output of antifascist parties across all occupied Italy. It could also be seen in the newspaper output of other countries, both in occupied Europe and in the free

[355] Berkhoff refers to a 'small but revealing trail in contemporary archival documents and postwar recollections' to support his claim. *Motherland in danger*, p. 162.

world. Attempts to explain this silence have not led us to a definitive answer and I do not propose one here.

It is difficult to support the idea that antisemitism – conscious or unconscious – was at play. The leaders of the Italian Resistance, both nationally and locally, were not known to be antisemitic. Among the partisans there were also Jews, some of whom distinguished themselves for their courage. In Bologna, this included Mario Finzi and Mario Jacchia. Among the ordinary population, the civil Resistance, many Italians harboured Jews and risked their lives in doing so.

Italy had no record of widespread antisemitism before the 1930s. To enable what was to happen, Mussolini relied heavily on propaganda – constant, vicious, antisemitic propaganda – which increased in intensity from 1938 and underwent another step change from 1943. Although many Italians never bought into this, the fact remains that there was indifference among many ordinary Italians to the plight of Italian Jews from 1938 onwards. This indifference continued when Nazi occupation in 1943 extended Hitler's Final Solution into Italy. As Levis Sullam has shown, Italians helped with the deportations. They helped send Jews to their deaths in concentration camps in Poland and Germany. They looked at Jews, but they didn't see them as Jews. In this respect, perhaps, they were not different from many Jewish people, who considered themselves first as Italians, as patriots, as partisans, and only then as Jews.

But it is difficult to separate the absence in this period entirely from the representation of the Jews in socialist and communist newspapers in Italy in the previous twenty years. The

parallels between the representation of the Jews in Italian communist newspapers and in Soviet propaganda requires further study to establish whether there was any direct link. But given what is now known about the degree of control exerted over the PCI by Moscow, it cannot be completely overlooked as a relevant context.

6. CONCLUSIONS

A unique set of circumstances transformed Bologna into a crucible of resistance to Nazi and fascist persecution of partisans in the winter spanning 1944 and 1945. The concentration of thousands of partisans in the city led to military engagements between partisans and Nazi and fascist forces inside the city walls. Bologna was the only Italian city where this occurred, excluding the insurrectionary battles to liberate cities, most of which took place in the final days of the war in April 1945.

The two most important of those battles, at Porta Lame on 7 November 1944, and in the neighbourhood of Bolognina one week later, came either side of the Allied decision to halt its invasion of the Nazi-occupied north of Italy, on 13 November. In the winter that followed, the partisans of Bologna were not the only partisans who had to fight for survival without the Allies beside them. This applied to all the towns and cities north of the Gothic Line, as well as for partisans in the hills and countryside. But they were unique in having to face six months of brutal repression knowing the Allies were camped ten miles away, with enough firepower to free the city at any moment.

With no Allied push to support, the partisans turned to guerrilla warfare in the city, a war supported by a copious propaganda output. Both were critical in the effort to convince ordinary Bolognese men and women to take up arms to free Italy from German occupation. Many partisans were killed that winter. None was captured or killed in Bologna in the process of writing, printing or distributing clandestine newspapers. This was, in itself, an

extraordinary achievement in an occupied city. Kochanski records 2,000 people killed in Belgium and 770 in the Netherlands 'because of their work on the secret presses'.[356]

The high level of interconnectedness of the partisan propaganda machine with the military and political decision-making establishment of the Resistance had allowed for the almost real-time writing and production of the special edition of the communist newspaper *L'Unità* on 8 November 1944, which reported on the battle at Porta Lame before the regime newspapers could provide the city's almost half-million population with the 'official' version of events. This was arguably the high point of the local propaganda effort during occupation.

This interdependence would also have tragic circumstances, as seen in the disappearance of *Orizzonti di Libertà* after only one issue following the arrest and execution of the local leaders of the PdA. However, while there were many fatalities among those involved in the press, there are no reports of any of those involved being discovered or captured while engaged in propaganda activities.

The communist party was the dominant force in the local Resistance movement, both in terms of numbers of partisan brigades and in terms of newspaper output. The main strategic objective of the communists was to help free Italy of the German occupiers and rid the country of fascism. However, recent studies make it clear that while its contribution to the unity of the various antifascist political parties had this design, it also served the agenda that Stalin had laid out for PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti in Moscow, of establishing a hegemony

[356] Kochanski, *Resistance*, p. 54.

(a concept central to the thinking of both Lenin and Gramsci) of the left bloc with a view to creating the circumstances for a post-war communist government. The PCI looked to achieve this hegemony through debate – in the meetings of the CLN – and, where necessary, through force. The newspapers of the various parties were a reflection of that process in action. A close reading of the main socialist newspaper *L'Avanti!* shows how the PSI modulated its political analysis in response to Togliatti's U-turn on the question of the monarchy.

In one important respect, the antifascist propaganda of the Resistance movement in Bologna was the same as that in other occupied cities in Italy: it had a blind spot for the persecution of the Jews. While the reasons for the absence of the Jews are complex, it is difficult to ignore the ideological imprinting of the communists – especially given the similarities on this question with Soviet propaganda – and socialists. A substantial body of recent research makes it clear that this fitted a pattern of media coverage of the Jews in Italy that had remained largely unchanged in almost twenty years of fascist rule.

This dissertation does not propose a single over-arching idea which unites the new readings explored. However, there are three notions which underly the whole essay. First, the importance of Bologna, and the unique set of military and political circumstances which gave the city a role at the vanguard of the communist-dominated liberation struggle. Second, the centrality of the newspaper, not just as a vehicle for disseminating information and propaganda informed by different ideologies. But the newspaper as a weapon of resistance, an instrument of war, an organising principle, a set of mechanisms organically integrated into a struggle where word and deed are two sides of the same coin, and, producing both,

often the same people. Third, the idea that during the period of occupation a conflict existed at the level of discourse. A conflict in which the rhetorical strategies and devices employed cannot be separated and lined up neatly according to ideology, with Marxist-Leninist beliefs one on side and Nazi and fascist ideas on the other – in a permanent structural opposition – but one which produced a dynamic, protean mobilisation of language, responsive to political and military developments, which at times found communists and fascists deploying the same linguistic markers, or socialists and communists radically different ones.

There are several limitations inherent in the scope of this research, due to its narrow geographical focus and the small sample size of newspapers with a substantial output during the twenty months of occupation. There are four areas where further research could provide a deeper insight into some of the issues raised.

A comparison of first-person testimonies between those of former partisans in Bologna and those of other parts of Italy could shed light on the degree to which the proximity of the Allies in the months after the Alexander proclamation created a unique psychology among those fighting in Bologna, and, if so, how this was expressed through their activities in text and terrorism. A wider data-based trawl of partisans active across Italy and occupied Europe could establish whether the interconnectedness between military and propaganda campaigns identified in Bologna was also present in other occupied Italian cities or in any other cities in other occupied countries.

Additional research could look to establish whether there were causal links between Stalin's antisemitism, the absence of the Jews in Soviet propaganda, and the absence of the Jews in

communist and socialist propaganda in Italy. This could include looking closely at the period spent in Moscow by the leaders of the PCI, prior to their assuming a commanding role in the Resistance.

Further study could consider the newspapers beyond their immediate historical context, as expressions of a radicalised minority of an occupied population. This could assess whether there is a set of discursive practices which constitute a 'propaganda of the powerless', and whether this can be identified through recurring rhetorical tropes or linguistic patterns. Such a study would require a contrast with the propaganda output of oppressed groups in other countries and periods in the twentieth and twenty-first century. Within this, close reading strategies could be employed to assess whether any of the strategies identified mirror those of the propaganda used by the dominant or hegemonic group and how this confirms or challenges Gramsci's theories on the relationship between discourse and hegemony.

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Appendices

1. **Clandestine newspapers published in the city of Bologna.**

Title	First edition	No of issues
Rinascita	18-Aug-43	2
La Voce dell'Operaio	08-Sep-43	8
Avanti!	Jan-44	21
La Lotta	Jan-44	6
Orizzonti di Libertà	Mar-44	1
Noi Donne	May-44	1
La Mondariso	Jun-44	3
La Voci dei Campi	Jun-44	1
Il Lavoratore Agricolo	Jul-44	2
L'Unità	06-Jul-44	24
Tempi Nuovi	Jul-44	2
La Rinascita	22-Jul-44	4
Compagna	30-Nov-44	4
Rivoluzione Socialista	15-Dec-44	4
La Voce delle Donne	20-Dec-44	6
Avanti!-L'Unità	23-Dec-44	1
L'Unità-Avanti!	23-Dec-44	1
La Punta	Dec-44	4
I Diritti del Profugo	Jan-45	2
La Riscossa	Feb-45	3
La Squilla	Apr-45	1

Source: Bergonzini, Arbizzani, (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna*, *Vol II*, p. 179.

2. **Clandestine newspapers published in other towns in the province of Bologna.**

Title	First published	No of issues
La Comune (Imola)	1-Jan-44	23
La Fiaccola (San Pietro in Casale)	Nov-44	2
Vent'anni (Imola)	1-Nov-44	4
Battaglia (Galliera)	21-Nov-44	6
Lavori Forzati (San Pietro in Casale)	Nov-44	2
La Lotta (Imola)	Jan-45	2

Source: Bergonzini, Arbizzani, (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna*, *Vol II*, p. 179.

3. Clandestine newspapers published by partisan brigades in Bologna.

Title	First published	No of issues
La Volontà Partigiana	Jul-44	3
Il Combattente	1-Aug-44	4
L'Ardimento	Jan-45	1
L'Attacco	Jan-45	2
Bollettino del 8th Brigade Masia	n/a	1

Source: Bergonzini, Arbizzani, (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna*, *Vol II*, p. 179.

4. Armed partisan actions and newspaper output in Bologna, by month.

Year	Month	Armed actions	Newspaper editions
1944	January	n/a	5
	February	n/a	5
	March	n/a	5
	April	n/a	2
	May	n/a	10
	June	85	4
	July	111	10
	August	218	10
	September	374	18
	October	111	7
	November	40	9
	December	20	12
1945	January	54	12
	February	199	9
	March	311	17
	April	32	5

Sources: Casali, *Bollettino*, p. 29; Bergonzini, Arbizzani (eds.), *La Resistenza a Bologna*, *Vols. I-V*.

5. Tropes in *L'Unità*, issues 1-12

	Issue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Date	6-Jul	1-Aug	1-Aug	Aug	2-Sep	6-Sep	10-Sep	13-Sep	18-Sep	21-Sep	23-Sep	30-Sep
Trope	**Frequency**												
Call for armed insurrection	21	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of temporal horizon	18	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓	✓
Call to enrol/create Gap or Sap units	17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Invocation of unity through the CLN	17	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Call for general strike	13	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Criminalisation of the enemy	13	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Dehumanisation of the enemy	13		✓		✓				✓	✓			
Collaboration between partisans and people	12		✓				✓		✓		✓		✓
Local and national developments in the war	12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Demand for immediate action	11	✓	✓		✓			✓				✓	
News of recent Gap/Sap actions	11	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				✓
Stalin/Russia/Red Army as 'glorious' models	10	✓	✓							✓			
Demand for recognition of Italy	8												
Call for 'progressive democracy'	7				✓			✓	✓				
Wider development of the war	7	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓			
Invocation of the Risorgimento	6								✓		✓		
PCI as vanguard of the Resistance	6	✓						✓	✓				
PCI as 'new party'	3	✓											

Source: *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vol II,* pp. 639-734.

Footnote: The third 'issue' was a supplement published with issue 2. There was no issue 3. The issue 4 dateline carried only the month.

6. Tropes in *L'Unità*, issues 13-24

	Issue	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Date	9-Oct	Oct	31-Oct	9-Nov	16-Dec	21-Jan	22-Jan	22-Feb	4-Mar	8-Mar	28-Mar	1-Apr
Trope	**Frequency**												
Call for armed insurrection	21	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of temporal horizon	18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Call to enrol/create Gap or Sap units	17	✓							✓		✓	✓	✓
Invocation of unity through the CLN	17	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Call for general strike	13	✓			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓
Criminalisation of the enemy	13	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		
Dehumanisation of the enemy	13	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Collaboration between partisans and people	12		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Local and national developments in the war	12	✓	✓		✓								
Demand for immediate action	11			✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
News of recent Gap/Sap actions	11	✓			✓				✓		✓		✓
Stalin/Russia/Red Army as 'glorious' models	10		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Demand for recognition of Italy	8	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Call for 'progressive democracy'	7			✓			✓			✓	✓		
Wider development of the war	7		✓	✓									
Invocation of the Risorgimento	6	✓							✓	✓			✓
PCI as vanguard of the Resistance	6						✓		✓		✓		
PCI as 'new party'	3			✓			✓						

Source: *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vol II,* pp. 639-734.

Footnote: The dateline of the second October issue carried only the month.

7. Tropes in *Avanti!* issues 1-11

	Issue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Date	Jan	26-Feb	8-Apr	1-May	15-May	31-May	10-Jun	30-Jun	15-Jul	22-Jul	3-Aug
Trope	**Frequency**											
Criminalisation of the enemy	19	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dehumanisation of the enemy	15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Local and national developments in the war	14	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Establishment of temporal horizon	12	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	
Invocation of the Risorgimento	12	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Analysis of fascism over 20 years	12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Celebration of socialist heroes	12	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Stalin/Russia/Red Army as models	11	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Resistance as holy war	10	✓	✓		✓						✓	✓
Revolution as a positive signifier	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Anti-clerical discourse	7	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	
Call for armed insurrection	5		✓									
The war as imperialist conflict	5	✓	✓		✓							✓
Republican discourse	5	✓	✓	✓								
Call to join Gap/Sap	4											
Call for unity of PCI and PSI	4	✓					✓					
Demand for recognition of Italy	4		✓									
Negative representation of the Allies	4	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Wider development of the war	3											
Resistance as class war	3	✓	✓									
Political developments of the RSI	3	✓										

Source: *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vol II,* pp. 407-543.

Footnote: The first issue carried no dateline. The month was estimated by the editors of *La Resistenza a Bologna.*

8. Tropes in *Avanti!* issues 12-21

	Issue	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	Date	19-Aug	26-Aug	15-Sep	16-Sep	1-Jan	31-Jan	18-Feb	6-Mar	2-Apr	23-Apr
Trope	**Frequency**										
Criminalisation of the enemy	19	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dehumanisation of the enemy	15	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	
Local and national developments in the war	14	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Establishment of temporal horizon	12		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Invocation of the Risorgimento	12		✓			✓				✓	✓
Analysis of fascism over 20 years	12			✓			✓		✓	✓	
Celebration of socialist heroes	12					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Stalin/Russia/Red Army as models	11		✓				✓	✓		✓	
Resistance as holy war	10	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	
Revolution as a positive signifier	9					✓			✓	✓	
Anti-clerical discourse	7								✓		
Call for armed insurrection	5				✓	✓			✓	✓	
The war as imperialist conflict	5									✓	
Republican discourse	5	✓								✓	
Call to join Gap/Sap	4			✓	✓		✓			✓	
Call for unity of PCI and PSI	4	✓								✓	
Demand for recognition of Italy	4							✓	✓	✓	
Negative representation of the Allies	4										
Wider development of the war	3	✓	✓				✓				
Resistance as class war	3									✓	
Political developments of the RSI	3					✓				✓	

Source: *La Resistenza a Bologna Testimonianze e Documenti, Vol II,* pp. 407-543.