

# Writing Contemporary History in Italy between Fascism and Democracy

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IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conference Proceedings, Vol. XXIII © 2009 by the author

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## I. The Second World War and the alliance with Germany

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During the collapse of an authoritarian regime, an important process of the cultural passage to democracy is coming to terms with the recent past.[1] History, therefore, seems urgently relevant to societies that want to understand the legitimacy of their past government. Intellectuals are asked to find explanations for the mistakes a past government made, how such a government should be interpreted and remembered, and what were its ideological and historical roots. In times of deep-seated crisis, professional historians are particularly asked to find convincing answers to all of these difficult issues.

In order to understand the cultural continuities and ruptures that characterize the passage from the dictatorial regime to the democratic one, it is very important to analyse the moment of transition to “contemporary” history. In this light the Second World War is a significant turning point for historical studies. The reconsideration of Fascism for many leading Italian historians started only after 1942 with the breakdown of Italian army, when the devastating consequences of the War were being felt in the country. In Italy, historians had to try to locate their explicit or implicit support of the dictatorial regime and, as we will see, of the war. One of the most difficult tasks was to try to set the alliance with Germany within the framework of national history, not only because Germany was a country that was first perceived as an ally and then as an enemy, but also because the construction of a German “image” in Italy had been a well-known controversial matter from the 19 th century.[2]

Between the 19 th and the 20 th century the liaison between Italy and Germany had been vital for the professionalization of Italian historians, who had taken Germany as the model when creating historical chairs in universities and institutions.[3] Furthermore, the cultural contact with the writings and methods of many German leading historians had been fundamental to the building of a national historiography.[4] The contact between

Italy and Germany started before 1914 and continued after the First World War also. The importance of this relationship is of broader significance, as is demonstrated by most young Italian historians who frequently spent a period of their studies in Germany or Austria. The statistics compiled in the 1950s by the *Comitato di studio sui problemi dell'Università italiana* show that a third of university professors chose to spend a time abroad. Of these, the proportion is the highest for the *Facoltà di Lettere*, where all the archivists and historians have at some time studied (75% of professors had studied abroad and of these 40% in Austria or Germany). This consideration, which invites a comparison, is important for understanding the evolution of teaching methods without, however, underestimating the specific national context.[5] Between 1930 and 1945 many young Italian historians from Federico Chabod to Delio Cantimori, were inspired by leading German historians, and chose to spend a period of study or research in Germany.[6]

Already during the 1920s, Chabod travelled to Spain and Germany where he was inspired by Friedrich Meinecke. During the 1930s he kept contact with German historians through the *International Committee of Historical Sciences*, in which he worked thanks to his master Gioacchino Volpe. His colleague, Cantimori, also travelled in Europe with Volpe's help. Between 1932 and 1934, Cantimori completed his project on the Italian heretics with a fellowship of the *Accademia d'Italia*. Ernesto Sestan, in his *Memories*, remembered how his friend always left with only one luggage bag and "came back with four filled to the brim and stuffed with books in different languages all on Fascism and Nazism, which he bought abroad." [7] These voyages made it possible for Cantimori to deepen his interest in contemporary Europe. The ambivalence of the relationship with German culture is well exemplified by his reception of Carl Schmitt, and indirectly of Nazism.[8] His interest in Schmitt started to develop at the end of the 1920s, and continued in the 1930s with various translations in 1933 and 1934. The works of Schmitt – *Das Begriff des Politischen, Staat, Bewegung und Volk* and *Saatsgefüge und Zusammenbruch des zweiten Reichs* – were published in Italian and then collected into a volume with a preface by Arnaldo Volpicelli and with an introduction by Cantimori.[9] The young historian was a scholar of Giovanni Gentile, and he expressed in his writings a continuous curiosity for the fascist and Nazi avant-garde movements. The revolutionary idea of the Third Reich particularly attracted him, as Cantimori testified in his articles on "*Germania giovane*" (Young Germany). Cantimori would have liked to see a profitable cultural exchange between Italy and Germany.[10]

After 'The Night of the Long Knives' in 1934, when the Nazi regime carried out a series of political executions, and also thanks to the mediation of his wife, who was a Communist, Cantimori's political ideas changed. In his revised opinion, the reactionaries had suppressed the Reich's revolutionary spirit.[11] These events drew the boundary line of Cantimori's detachment from Nazism, which became final after the *Anschluss*. This transition is evident in the entries written for the *Dictionary of Politics* of the Fascist Party in 1940.[12] Under *Nazional-socialismo* (National Socialism), to mention an example, he stated how reactionaries had used the revolutionary ideas of Nazism instrumentally. Cantimori also underlined the risks of Nazism's aggressive policy, which were based on the superiority of Aryan race. In his opinion this characteristic was the

main difference between the German and the Italian authoritarian movements. Cantimori, therefore, underestimated totally the racial laws in Italy, as Chabod would do in 1943 in his famous lessons on the idea of the Nation.

The continuities and the ruptures with the Fascist period in the research institutions, as well as inside the historical discipline, have to be analysed with consideration of the deep changes within the cultural horizons elaborated at end of the 1930s and the 1940s. For many historians the generational impact of the war – a disrupting personal and collective event[13] – marked the different political and cultural approaches after 1945. If the war had been an important rupture for the generation of twenty-year-old students, for the forty-year-old historians, their “young” masters, the conflict was a moment in which all the intellectual contradictions that had been experienced during Fascism came to surface, becoming unexpectedly explicit in their writings as well as in their personal notes.

The war brought many historians not only to ponder international and national politics, but also to reflect on some of the key concepts of their intellectual education, such as Nationality, the fatherland (“*patria*”) or Europe, as well as explanatory categories that in this crucial moment showed all their ambiguous character. The high participation of many historians in Fascist institutions during the war is a sign of how the Second World War was not a period in which interest in Fascism totally declined. The Second World War certainly didn’t involve the general enthusiasm that is associated with the *Grande Guerra* (Great War), which saw a collective mobilization of many intellectuals.[14] Fascism after 1940 didn’t, therefore, impose a rigid cultural uniformity, and it was possible, for example, for an eclectic journal such as *Primato* to be published[15]. Even though these were important signals of disengagement, for the forty-year old generation the period between 1940 and 1943 can’t be considered totally as a time of re-examination.

Important historians had, in the previous years, already changed their subjects, shifting progressively towards the interests of fascist ideology: mechanism of power, expansion of the nation-state, and the problem of European equilibrium became the main foci of their research projects.[16] Archive sources, as well as published articles, testify how from 1935 until the end of 1942 participation in the Fascist wars had clear connections with the foreign policy promoted by the Italian government. In this crucial period the “patriotic” and “nationalistic” motivations were closely linked to a culture that saw in Imperialism an acceptance of Fascism. It is important to notice how in the historical writings terms such as “nation,” “people,” “race,” and “*patria*” were intertwined with concepts such as “state” and “civilization.” All of these expressions were exchangeable, and could be used synonymously. In Gioacchino Volpe’s school, for example, “nation” was often meant as “national individualities” or “national people,” creating a flexible idea of European pre-eminence throughout the centuries.

After 1940 many themes were amplified by the conflict. Federico Chabod, who was not keen on fascist ideology, asserted the primacy of Italy in the Mediterranean in some lectures presented between 1937 and 1940 at the *Università per stranieri* of Perugia, and pondered over these themes also in his article under the headword *Mediterranean*, written for the *Dictionary of Politics* promoted by the Fascist Party.[17] In a long historical analysis, the historian stated how there was for Italy a “vital interest” in the

Mediterranean, and that the Peninsula had had an “imperial role” from the Roman period on. In the same years, his colleague Carlo Morandi corroborated the idea that Italy had a natural right to search for an imperial role in the Mediterranean in the pages of *Primato*, where he tried to find an historical justification for the war itself. For Morandi, as is clear also in his articles written for “*Primato*,” the war had to be put in relation with the “dynamism” of “revolutionary peoples,” who had to create a new hierarchy to overcome the strict and old concept of the 19<sup>th</sup> century “Nation.”[18] The analysis of Morandi is very interesting because his articles were very often not written for specialists, and they usually touched on central themes of the European war. Furthermore, around 1943-1944, Morandi shifted to democratic ideas and published many articles for a broad audience in the journal “*Il Mondo*,” analysing the causes of the Second World War.[19] From 1934, Morandi was a convinced member of the Fascist Party and contributed to many of its cultural events, such as the national congress of *Mistica Fascista* in 1940. As with other intellectuals of his generation, it is not possible to find the exact moment in which Morandi’s political opinions shifted, even if this change seems to be closely related to the crises of the Italian army in 1942. Morandi, like other young historians of his group, had eclectic interests. His studies on modern Italy covered the 17<sup>th</sup> as well as the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and some topics were central in his reflection: the relationship between the State and civil society, the “Italian People,” Europe, international relationships, and other themes that were dominant in Volpe’s school. The main topic on which Morandi concentrated during the first years of Second World War was Europe and its unity. This was a very important topic in the debates of those years, especially in heterodox wings of the Fascist movement. The thought was that a new European unity had to be based, as German historians thought, on a New Order. Between December 1940 and May 1941, a series of lectures took place in Florence, which suggested an indirect celebration of the new war. The theme was *Romanità e germanesimo* (Roman and German spirit).[20] In the lectures he presented there, Morandi emphasized how the warrior lifestyle of Italy, which had materialized with the alliance with Germany, would have brought the Peninsula to regulate the peoples of Europe.

In this same period, Ernesto Sestan, a close friend of Cantimori, Morandi and Chabod, wrote in the historical entry for *Europe* in the *Dictionary of Politics* about “the rights of man, the liberty of people, the democratic feelings, the revolutions as the solution of all problems” as “universal myths” elaborated by the “French spirit” of 18<sup>th</sup> century, defining them as “intellectual constructions.” Sestan stated how in contemporary Europe, divided between totalitarianism and democracy, there was no cause to ask if there was opposition between these two ideologies, since the opposition existed between a “new and an old Europe,” in which totalitarianism represented the authentic will of people because it was nearer to their “vital potentiality” and to “justice.” This dictionary entry is clear and concrete evidence of the reaction that was caused by the fear of a decline in European supremacy, and by the belief that only a New Order centred on Germany and Italy could have changed this situation.[21] In the articles of this period Sestan paid particular attention to the fight for hegemony between Nations – a fight that was for him “vital” in contemporary Europe. Sestan, born in Trento, had an ambiguous admiration for German culture; the wavering of his opinion towards Germany can be caught in some writings, and before the alliance he had an ambivalent feeling towards Germany’s aggressive

foreign policy. These alternative points of view are expressed in some entries in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, such as *Prussia* or *Silesia*, in which Sestan was far from asserting any German pre-eminence on these regions.[22] In 1935 though, in the entry for *Renania*, he stated how this region, if it could not be properly considered Prussian, was certainly German. The historical moment in which this entry was written obviously justified this conception. In 1942, as Simonetta Soldani has demonstrated, his political opinions started to shift towards democratic views.[23]

## II. Italian historians and the early interpretations of Fascism and of Nazism

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The war, therefore, has to be considered as an *event* that modified opinions profoundly and sometimes even very deeply, but not, as we saw, rapidly. The partial process of revision after 1942 was the result of a particular generational dynamic that stands between the individual and the indeterminate collective.[24] Although there was a shift in political opinions, the majority of Italian historians avoided the most unsettling questions. Also in the years after 1945, criticism of Italian policies of aggression, for example, were partial. More usually the “reckless” adventure of the war was blamed on Mussolini and on his decision to search for an alliance with the Nazis. Very few historians either questioned the fundamental imperialist project of their state or objected to the main lines of its international actions since the *Risorgimento*. In their understanding, Italy was indisputably a Great Power, which must naturally pursue similar strategies of expansion.[25] Also, the racist policies of Fascism were underestimated, and were linked to the degeneration of the alliance with Germany.

Chabod, for example, in his well known lectures of 1943 on the idea of Nation, condemned German nationalism and its myth of “pure blood,” while ideologically justifying Italian culture. This is clear when he reconstructs an Italian nationalism as “good,” “democratic,” “made of volunteers,” “inclusive,” and “pacifist”; a nationalism that lacked all the biological elements included in the idea of the German Nation. In his lessons, the biological evolution of Italian nationalism, from Crispi to the *Manifesto* of the racist scientists, found no space.[26] Immediately after the war, in 1948, Chabod made a clear distinction between Fascism and Nazism in the entry for *Europe* written for the *Appendice* of the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. The criteria for this distinction was twofold: based, on the one hand, on foreign policy and the different roots of their cultures. Fascism, in his words, was still a 19<sup>th</sup> century dictatorship, much like Napoleon’s third rule, in which the greatness of the Nation and its dignity were more important than anything else. Fascism was nationalist, Chabod stated, but not totally aggressive, because it was not at all distant from diplomatic solutions. Nazism was completely different: race was the base of its ideology. This characteristic took it very far from the Western civilisation represented by Italy and France. In Italy, he concluded, the war of the *partigiani* had been against the dictatorship and for liberty, but also against the “reckless adventure” to which Fascism led Italy during its alliance with Germany in the Second World War[27]. The oscillations in Chabod’s judgement regarding Mussolini’s foreign policy are a good meter for understanding his complex relationship with the “ideas” of Nation and State. In 1950, Chabod, lecturing in Paris, considered the Italian consensus for

Fascism to be inadequately explained by the use of violence and coercion alone because the ideas that brought the Italian people to agree with the policies of the dictatorial regime were many,[28] from the expansionist ideology to the corporative system.[29] Chabod stated that “something positive, without doubt, had been done” by Fascism.[30] In the historian’s opinion, the Italian consent to Fascism had to be found in the economic growth of the period, and in the promotion of a powerful Italian State from an international point of view. The French lessons of 1950 in contemporary Italy can certainly be considered to be an analysis of the motivations that characterized the sympathy for Fascism in the generation of historians born between 1899 and 1910. This generation, who were teenagers in the years of the First World War, and who saw the rise of the fascist movement during its youth, started to work on many projects promoted by the Regime, and took part in the Second World War in its early maturity. A note of 1945 of Morandi testifies the crisis of that whole generation, which was trying to modify their *forma mentis* with a deep effort of self-education.

“There is a modern mythology,” Morandi wrote in a personal note in 1945, “that has obscured the horizon, and we know how much it was due to the devotees of Gobineau and Nietzsche, not to the balanced exegeses of Sorel and Spengler. We should not only put these writers in the loft, but repudiate their ideals, the myths of race, of blood, of the *übermensch*, of violence, of the supposed Faustian culture, erected as moral principles and then as political regulation and as bases of historical interpretation. The vital instincts, the power of will, the hegemonic mission of the people, these are the irrational reasons, these are the formulas that we should inhibit ourselves from [...] And since the enemy does not hide itself in this or in that political organization, and the danger does not exist only in this or in that State, but is first of all in each one of us, we have to modify our spiritual habitus with a deep effort of self-education.”[31]

These were, in Morandi’s opinion, the most important personal problems that his generation had to try to solve because racism, the hegemonic mission of people, and violence didn’t belong only to one State or one culture, but were hidden first of all in every person in this period. Even though these were important considerations, after 1945 there was a general dismissal of the analysis of the recent past. The passage between the Second World War and post-war period for the historians analysed in this paper was marked by unresolved matters, and remained often full of contradictions. For these intellectuals the period between the mid-1940s and 1950s certainly saw personal, but moreover collective and cultural transitions. It is not the case that after the war the most celebrated of all liberal analysts of Fascism was the great philosopher and historian Benedetto Croce. The philosopher had in the 1920s openly dissented from regime with his “Manifesto of anti-fascist intellectuals.” After the war, Croce explained that Fascism was a European and not a specifically Italian issue. It had been the consequence of the moral sickness that had resulted from the violence of the First World War, and it should be considered as a “parenthesis,” separated from the liberal past and the republican future.[32] Many historians during the long post-war period agreed with Croce’s interpretation.

This generation perceived themselves as far from the collapse of German culture, as Friedrich Meinecke described it in 1946 in *Die deutsche Katastrophe*.<sup>[33]</sup> Nevertheless, Meinecke was an exception of the West German post-war historiography. The eminent historian had located the “German catastrophe” in specific German national traditions, such as Prussian militarism and the weakness of the German bourgeoisie. In the 1950s, leading historians tried to combat the negative view of German national history. Gerhard Ritter warned German’s not to abandon national pride but to recreate a strong and “healthy” national identity. Imperial Germany was often glorified, and the search for a positive national tradition was linked to the Bismarckian *Reich*.<sup>[34]</sup> Hans Rothfels created an image of Germany in which the Nazi rule of terror over non-German populations could not occupy the stage in historical discourse, because positive counter examples could be found in the conservative resistance movement, assuming, therefore, a decisive importance in evaluating the most recent past.<sup>[35]</sup> In East Germany the most radical re-evaluation of the national past came in 1946 from Alexander Abusch, who formulated a vision of the course of German history as a succession of disasters. Abusch’s interpretation was quickly dubbed “the history of misery,” because the Communists realized that it was impossible to build a new socialist identity for a nation on an entirely negative view of that nation. To construct this positive national identity its instructions must emphasize the difference between good nationalism, based on pride in the achievements of the German people, and the bad nationalism of the Nazis. East Germans reinvented themselves as the victims of a capitalist fascist regime that absolved them from the responsibilities of Nazism.<sup>[36]</sup> In the Federal Republic, on the other hand, a virtually unchanged historical profession was keen to remain silent or to seek excuses for its widespread support of Nazism and of the war. National Socialism was widely portrayed as the exception of the national history. In post-1945 in West Germany, a conception of “good nationalism” emerged from the ashes of National Socialism.<sup>[37]</sup>

Just as German historians wrote National Socialism out of German history, so their Italian counterparts did the same with Fascism. Like their German colleagues, Italian historians emphasised the resistance to Fascism, especially after 1943 and especially against the German “occupation.”<sup>[38]</sup> The *Resistenza* was presented not only as a struggle for national liberation, but also as a rebirth of Italy. It is important to underline that an emphasis on resistance movements would have been common after 1945 for re-establishing national narratives in all the countries that had experienced occupation during the Second World War.

In Italy after 1945, there started to be an endemic split between public and private understanding of this narrative, which brought the Italian “resurgence” to an almost exclusive concentration. In the 1960s, after the removal of Tambroni, Italy assisted the resistance to a sudden public officialization.<sup>[39]</sup> Italian historians studied the period from September 1943 to April 1945, but did not study the origins of Fascism or its meaning in the history of the country. They also underestimated the deep reasons for its alliance with Nazism, and failed to consider the imperialist and fascist wars of aggression.<sup>[40]</sup> This process progressively ensured the removal of the most troubling issues tied to the rise of the Fascist Movement and its continuities with the Republic. After 1945 most of the administrative, judicial, police and academic apparatus of the fascist state and party was

left untouched and integrated in the new republican order. As a consequence of these factors, the fascist period was not studied until the end of the 1970s. This opening was also due to the efforts of the '68 generation who opened the discussion of the legitimacy of Italy's unilateral and unified memory.

While West Germans initially emphasized their own suffering, Nazi crimes and personal involvement in Nazism remained taboo subjects in the 1950s. This national consensus broke quite quickly and brought about diverse examinations of the past, first in 1960s and then again in the 1980s. The memory culture was weakened during the 1960s, and even if the majority of Germans still avoided the most unsettling questions, West German historians and legal experts helped reform the approach to recent past. The struggle to reconstitute Germany's collective memory can be attributed to a few émigrés and a small yet active minority among the novices in the profession.<sup>[41]</sup> The reintroduction of the rule of law, and then the gradual democratization of the university system, gave them the opportunities to change the public representation of the past. Hans Woller, discussing the different attitudes towards contemporary history in Italy and in West Germany, has noticed that the earlier approach of German historiography towards its recent past was not due to any German "virtue," but to international pressures. The attention of Italian historiography on the two years of the Italian Resistance movement was due to ideological reasons, but also to the State's archives laws. In the German Federal Republic it was not possible to close the archives because there was significant attention from international public opinion.<sup>[42]</sup>

### **III. Conclusions. A new task: comparative research and trans-national influences**

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Contemporary history progressively found an institutional space in the historical professions in the United States, Britain, Italy, France and West Germany only in the period following the Second World War. After 1945, the problem of how to elaborate, and therefore to confront, the recent past was very important in Europe. In many countries it was particularly difficult to face themes for which there were still no precise academic references, even though there had previously been an opening towards these subjects in other institutes. In the post-war period, a new generation of historians stimulated a synchronic movement to promote the study and institutionalisation of the recent past. Important examples can be found in Germany and in Italy with the creation, at the end of the 1940s and the 1950s, of institutes for contemporary history, such as the *Istituti per la storia della Resistenza* (Institutes for the study of the Resistance), which were designed to collect the sources of the period between 1943-1945. An interesting parallel movement can be found in Germany with the creation of some similar institutes like the Institute for contemporary history in Munich, now IfZ (*Institut für Zeitgeschichte*). Many young historians began their careers at the IfZ. It's very important, therefore, to study, under a comparative point of view, these two countries. Analysing their cultural transfer and contacts, the similarities or differences in the institutionalization and the preservation of sources, can allow the researcher to better investigate the knowledge-practices of "contemporary" history as it operated within and beyond the national context. This

historiographical theme has seldom been undertaken from a comparative or a trans-national perspective, by considering the intellectual networks and cross-border institutional interactions.

The analysis of the period between 1940s and 1960s, as I tried to demonstrate in this article, is very important from many points of view and can help us understand the inner changes of the historical discipline in Italy. This period corresponds to the overlap between the coming of age of the first “post-war” generation of young historians and the passing of the last “pre-war” generation of their young masters, who had participated actively to the institutes created by Fascism. Each of these generations were united by common experiences rather than by age. Certainly, it was the conflict during the 1950s between these two agencies that produced the shifts in and opening up of the study of Fascism, but I believe that the influence of outside observers was also very important, and its analysis could bring new and interesting elements for understanding the birth of “contemporary” history in Italy.

The academic writing of Italian contemporary history, for example, was never an exclusively national affair. Scholars from outside the country, especially in Great Britain, were part of the endeavour from the outset. The English historical debate concerning the origins of Fascism was also of great importance in Italy in the post-war era. During the 1960s and 1970s both countries sought to establish their particular democratic identity by appealing to the past, and the first studies based on extensive archival sources began to be published. In Britain the national tradition was strengthened by the political tradition of the Empire – a tradition which, in the most extreme examples, was used to justify the so-called historical reality of ‘splendid isolation.’[43] However, by the 1960s leading historians began to publish work that was directly interested in Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany, for example: Alan John Percivale Taylor on 1930s British appeasement policy towards Nazi Germany,[44] James Joll on Italian intellectuals before Fascism, and Frederick William Deakin on the republic of Salò. Outside observers of German national history, such as A.J.P. Taylor, tended to agree in 1945 that German national history had known only extremes, and therefore stood at almost polar opposites to the gradual reform that characterised the British national master narrative.

It was during the 1960s, that studies of Fascism began in earnest with the publication of two important volumes edited by Stuart Woolf (*European Fascism* and *The Nature of Fascism* (1968)). Woolf also translated into English Primo Levi’s *If This Is a Man*, in 1961, and *The Truce*, in 1965. He also published his crucial study on the Italian *Risorgimento*. Denis Mack Smith was the first British historian whose studies engaged with the Italian debate. Many others followed him in examining the *Risorgimento*. British historians also opened up the debate on Liberal Italy, most importantly Christopher Seton-Watson who was powerfully inspired by his Italian experiences. Seton-Watson’s work culminated in the ground-breaking and authoritative *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925*, which quickly became a classic following publication in 1967.[45] In its turn Italy started to develop a growing cultural interest towards Britain in this period. English translations of general studies became very important. Italian historians like Leo Valiani and Edoardo Grendi began to study British socialism, while intellectuals like Luigi Meneghello, Piero

Treves and Arnaldo Momigliano became cultural mediators between the two countries. The Centre for the Advanced Study of Italian Society in Reading and the Italian Cultural Institute in London provided important institutional points of contact.

The study of all of these transnational transmissions is therefore a very important, new task in my research because it involves the deconstruction of the idea, dominant in the history of historiography, that a specific scientific field develops exclusively on a national scale.[46]

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Notes:

[1] Richard Ned Lebow, et alii (eds.), *The politics of memory in post-war Europe*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006; Richard J. Evans, "Introduction. Redesigning the Past: History in Political Transitions". *Journal of Contemporary history*. Vol. 38, No. 1 (2003), pp. 5-12; Christoph Cornelißen, et alii (eds.), *Erinnerungskulturen: Deutschland, Italien und Japan seit 1945*, Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2003.

[2] Gian Enrico Rusconi, Hans Woller (eds.), *Parallele Geschichte? Italien und Deutschland 1945 – 2000*, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2006; Gian Enrico Rusconi, *Deutschland-Italien, Italien-Deutschland: Geschichte einer schwierigen Beziehung von Bismarck bis zu Berlusconi*, Paderborn, München, Wien, Zürich: Schöningh, 2006; Gian Enrico Rusconi, Hans Woller (eds.), *Italia e Germania 1945 – 2000: la costruzione dell'Europa*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2005; Karin Hermann, Marco Doria (eds.), "Amico Nemico. Italia e Germania: immagini incrociate tra guerra e dopoguerra". Special edition of *Storia e memoria*. Vol. 1, (1995), pp. 7-147; Filippo Focardi, "Deutschland und die deutsche frage aus der sicht Italiens (1943-1945)". *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven*. Vol. 75, (1995), pp. 445-480; Angelo Ara, Rudolf Lill (eds.), *Immagini a confronto: Italia e Germania dal 1830 all'unificazione nazionale. Deutschen Italienbilder und italienische Deutschlandbilder in der Zeit der nationalen Bewegungen (1839-1870)*, Bologna, Berlin: Il Mulino, 1991 .

[3] Rolf Torstendahl (ed.), *An Assessment of Twentieth Century Historiography. Professionalism, Methodologies, Writings*, Stockholm, Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 2000.

[4] Margherita Angelini, *Allievi e maestri. Una generazione di studiosi di storia tra Italia ed Europa (1930 – 1960)*, PhD thesis, Dottorato di ricerca in Storia sociale europea dal medioevo all'età contemporanea, 18° ciclo, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, 2006.

[5] Comitato di studio sui problemi dell'Università italiana , *La popolazione universitaria*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1960, pp. 130- 133.

[6] Christoph Cornelißen, *Gli storici italiani e la storiografia tedesca fra 1900 e 1960*, in Gustavo Corni, Christof Dipper (eds.), *Italiani in Germania tra Otto e Novecento. Spostamenti, rapporti, immagini, influenze*, Bologna: il Mulino, 2006, pp. 335-363.

- [7] Ernesto Sestan, *Memorie di un uomo senza qualità*, eds. Giovanni Cherubini, Gabriele Turi, Firenze: Le Lettere, 1997, p. 219.
- [8] In fascist elites Carl Schmitt's theories had had a great influence and their were two ways of interpreting them: a "cultural and philosophical" view promoted by the scholars of Gentile as Arnaldo Volpicelli, Felice Battaglia and Cantimori, and a "political and juridical" view that is well exemplified by Carlo Costamagna and his journal "*Lo Stato*". Ilse Staff, *Die Carl Schmitt. Rezeption im internationalen Recht*, in Ilse Staff (ed.), *Staatsdenken im Italien des 20. Jahrhunderts. Ein Beitrag zur Carl Schmitt. Rezeption*, Baden Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1991, pp. 27 – 82.
- [9] Carl Schmitt, *I principii politici del nazionalsocialismo*, traduzione a cura di Delio Cantimori, prefazione di Armando Volpicelli, Firenze: Sansoni, 1935.
- [10] Delio Cantimori, *Politica e storia contemporanea. Scritti 1927-1942*, ed. Luisa Mangoni, Torino: Einaudi, 1991.
- [11] Roberto Pertici, "*Mazzinianesimo, Fascismo, Comunismo: l'itinerario politico di Delio Cantimori (1919-1943)*", Special edition of *Storia della storiografia*. Vol. 31 (1997).
- [12] All the headwords of the Dictionary of Politics are in *Dizionario di politica*, ed. PNF, Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da G. Treccani, 1940 – 1941, ad voces. Alessia Pedio, *La cultura del totalitarismo imperfetto. Il Dizionario di Politica del Partito Nazionale Fascista*, Milano: Unicopli, 2000.
- [13] Margherita Angelini, "*Si parva licet componere magnis*": i giovani storici italiani, la guerra e la caduta del fascismo, in Mario Isnenghi (ed.), *Le rotte dell'io. Itinerari individuali e collettivi nelle svolte della storia d'Italia*, Napoli: Scriptaweb, 2008, pp. 223-250.
- [14] Gabriele Turi, *Intellettuali e istituzioni culturali nell'Italia in guerra 1940-1943*, in *L'Italia in guerra (1940-1943)*, Brescia: Annali della Fondazione Luigi Micheletti, 1991, pp. 801- 826.
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[24] Theoretically, the isolation of a generational level of memory-collectivization is neither new nor original. Many studies have illustrated of in Europe the generational dynamic was important in constructing a collective memory of the war and of authoritarian regimes. Ned Lebow, et alii (eds.), *The politics of memory in post-war Europe*.

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[43] Stuart Woolf, “*The changing role of history and historians over the past half century*”. *Storia della storiografia*. Vol. 52 (2007), pp. 3-29; Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past: English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870-1970*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

[44] Outside observers of German national history, such as A.J.P. Taylor, tended to agree in 1945 that German national history had only known extremes and therefore stood at almost the polar opposite to the gradual reform, which characterized the British national master narrative.

[45] In 1982, Seton-Watson founded the Association for the Study of Modern Italy (ASMI) to bring together geographers, historians, political theorists, social scientists and others involved in teaching and research on Italy.

[46] Gunilla-Friederike Budde, et alii (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien. Jürgen Kocka zum 65. Geburtstag*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006; Christophe Charle, et alii (eds.), *Transnational Intellectual Networks. Forms of Academic Knowledge and the Search for Cultural Identities*, Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2004; Sebastian Conrad, Christoph Conrad (eds.), *Die Nation schreiben. Geschichtswissenschaft im internationalen Vergleich*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002 .

*Preferred citation:* Angelini, Margherita. 2009. Writing Contemporary History in Italy between Fascism and Democracy. In *Human Ends and the Ends of Politics*, eds. M. Black and K. McKillop, Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conference Proceedings, Vol. 23.