Dr. Carlo Gentile
Martin-Buber-Institut für Judaistik
Universität zu Köln
Albertus-Magnus-Platz
50923 Köln

Marzabotto, 18/12/2024

"Die Massaker im besetzten Italien (1943–45) in der Erinnerung der Täter
Le stragi nell'Italia occupata 1943-1945 nella memoria dei loro autori"
- part III -
Financial and narrative report for 2024 activities

As known, in the Peace School perspective, the knowledge of the historical processes, events, and protagonists of what happened in 1944 should serve as a stimulus for a deep reflection on the mechanisms that led to those events and consequently should favour the analysis of the present situation. The idea is to use the memories of Monte Sole and their emotional load in order to try to rebuild the historical and anthropological context that formed the perpetrators' framework. It means, building a genealogy of violence that investigates the multiple range of factors that led those people to act with that violence.
Inquiring deeply into these mechanisms of the human actions and making people aware of their existence in everyone and in everyday life, can be the first two steps to start an effective and not superficial action against racism, discrimination, xenophobia, ultimately war.
It seems to us that to continue the cooperation in this project is urgent in order to provide us and the community we work within with some useful lenses to read the troubled present time. Already present at the time Russia invaded Ukraine, the conflict in Israel/Palestine has exacerbated a dichotomous way of treating reality: every discourse is based on a binary scale expelling the level of complexity that is central when analysing autocratic or dictatorial regimes, when dealing with war, hierarchies, orders, power conflict mixing up with personal fears, ambitions, scales of values. Deep historical research must feed a less disruptive way of reading the present and can truly promote a culture of peace.
Moreover, memory of WWII is continuously (ab)used in public discourses, overlapping incomparable situations and contexts, emphasising only and exclusively a victim perspective

without elaborating a whole theory of causes and consequences, of multilayered and distributed responsibilities.
The project set, organised and lead by dr. Gentile is a precious tool against revisionism and fake news, providing not only a vast range of verified and verifiable sources but also deep and comprehensive analyses of historical, political and sociological dynamics.

As already mentioned, different actions could be put in place but we decided to focus on two fundamental sectors of intervention:

1. **Designing and organising workshops for teachers and educators 2024.**

From the previous years of the project, we collected a strong need and desire for deepening the aspect of "confronting the evil". Different groups were involved and different activities were organised to face the subject and to make the project findings interacting with the educational world.

1. 24.01.2024 "Il senso del ricordare" (The meaning of remembrance): Since the Peace School birth, it received the strong support and cooperation of the NGO *Percorsi Di Pace* (Paths of peace). They were not only committed to peace culture but they are closely related to Monte Sole, because of political and cultural engagement and because of personal connections. Many of the Ngo members worked and work as voluntary guides about the massacres of Monte Sole. They periodically ask for trainings and this year we started the chapter about *the perpetrator point of view and culture*. In 2025, Dr. Gentile will be the guest for a second and deeper meeting on the subject.

2. 29.02.2024 "Da dove vengono le violenze collettive?" (From where collective violences come?): Giuseppe Dossetti, one of the MP elected soon after the end of WWII to write the new antifascist and democratic Italian Constitution, choose Monte Sole as the "headquarter of his religious community and after for his mortal resting. The monks and the nuns still living in Monte Sole are extremely committed to antifascism, peace and democracy promotion and they explore many and different approaches to deepen the subject. One of those was the interest for the collective dimension of violence and they asked the Peace School to be the host/organiser of a seminar for educators and citizens in general about that subject. Invited guests were 2 university professors, one – Alfredo Ceretti – linked to the monastry and expert in juridical matters, the other – Luca Baldissara – expert in contemporary history and in particular in violence linked to WWII. The Peace School was asked to bring the experience and the collaboration in the research and educational consequences of the analysis on the perpetrator.

3. 11.09.2024 Teachers from "3° circolo Piacenza": This group of about 40 teachers, all belonging to the same institute, asked the Peace School for a specific training about how to present the perpetrator point of view to primary school. They noticed and increased fascination for "the bad guy" by children and they face their lack of competences and tools to be able to transform historical facts into educational experience.

4. 13.09.2024 Teachers linked to the "Portico della Pace": *Portico della pace* is a second level organisation, meaning that it groups more than 20 organisations in the city of Bologna and since 2015 is committed to peace culture promotion. Education plays a central role in this promotion and a lot of effort was put into teachers's involvement. Many teachers are activists themselves but the Portico della Pace was able to cooperate with the educational office of the town of Bologna and this led to the possibility of inviting to participate to extra-professional moments all the teachers working in Bologna. Around 80 of them answered and they spent a day in Monte Sole discussing what is peace culture, what is violence culture and what's the role of formal education in the genealogy of violence. The analysis coming from the project were fundamental to keep the reflections on a factual level and not on a mere theoretical level.

5. 28.09, 29.09, 05.10, 06.10.2024 "80th anniversary of the massacre"
This year core event was the official visit of the Italian President Sergio Mattarella together with the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. This visit allowed us to deeply develop the concept of memory and responsibility, both at individual and collective/public level.
On Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th we offered specific thematic guided visits to the memorial area of Monte Sole, underlining the importance of enquiring the *taeter* side of history in order to manage the present position in the world with a deeper awareness. We explored with the attendees the meaning of the concept of recognising one own responsibility for the past and for the present, and together with this we explored which mechanisms can inhibit this sense in individuals and in groups.
On Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th we moved the reflection to the possibility to commit for actions of individual and collective resistance to the capability of choosing the "evil" part in own lives choices. There was the organisation of a dedicated workshop about the Peace School Foundation birth, due also to the strong commitment of the Hessen State of Germany, and the delivery of two specific thematic guided visits to the memorial area of Monte Sole.

6. 25.10.2024 "Formazione Promemoria Auschwitz 2025": The Deina APS association takes its name from the Greek word deinós, which indicates the astonishing capacity of human beings to be terrifying and at the same time wonderful, to be creative and destructive power. Since 2013, more than 25,600 people have been involved in the association's activities, visiting the former concentration camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau (Poland), Mauthausen-Gusen (Austria), Dachau, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbruck (Germany) and Terezin (Czech Republic) and the cities of Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Krakow, Munich, Prague, Sarajevo and Vienna. The proposed educational paths are aimed at strengthening participation and critical thinking and at raising awareness among citizens on socially relevant issues. These people are led by professionals and volunteers who are trained in history and education. The Peace School was call in this year thaining session in order to provide deep insights towards how to talk and face the perpetrator perspective in educational environments.

7. 05.11, 19.11, 04.12.2024 "Anche questo luogo continua a piangere se nessuno lo viene a trovare": As mentioned in the project proposal, the Peace School entered a fruitful partnership with other institutions to work on the 80th anniversary of the massacre and the

upcoming 80th anniversary of the end of the II World War. Following the input of the Comitato Regionale per le Onoranze ai Caduti di Marzabotto (Regional Committe for Honouring the Fallen of Marzabotto), putting together the educational and the historical research experience with the Istituto Storico Metropolitano "Parri" in Bologna, the Peace School designed a training course for teachers and educators, lasting from November 2024 to May 2025. The title is "Even this place continues to mourn if no one visits it. Monte Sole: themes and tools for reacting to the crisis in history teaching".

A questionnaire to be distributed among history, literature, law and philosophy teachers was prepared and broadcasted between September and October. In an institution as the public school so riddled with educational tasks, it made great sense in our opinion to question these 80 years of memory. Having to untangle civic, relational, cultural, linguistic... education is now daily bread for all teachers; and not only considering the fact that all these disciplines are intrinsically linked to our Constitution and its values as civil servants, but also considering the new organisational charts and roles: the skills we would like to improve with this course concern everyone. We thought that the analysis of 20th century history can have repercussions on citizenship education and social issues, and we decided to be the first to practise this conviction, not validating the idea that history only concerns specialists. The results of the questionnaire helped us to shape some parts of the training course, introducing concrete references to teachers' experiences. The calendar of the course is:

	Title	**Inputs**	**Date (16-18)**	**How**	**Who**
1	History doesn't teach anything	An open discussion about history teaching	05/11	@Parri seminar room	SdP + Parri + Comitato
2	Memory of resistance and memories of massacres in republican Italy between the national dimension and the context of Monte Sole	80 years of Republican Memory	19/11	@Parri seminar room + recording	Filippo Focardi Eloisa Betti
3	People have the power?	Workshop on democracy	04/12	@Parri seminar room	SdP
4	Teaching trough archives: themes, methods, proposals	a. 'Not archived. The Bolognese Resistance through the papers of the Parri Institute'. b. 'The memory of the Monte Sole massacre through	22/01	@Marzabotto archives + recording	Eloisa Betti Filippo Ferrara

		the sources: from archives to the web'.			
5	The biographical approach in education: resources and limits	a. 'Talking about perpetrators to commemorate victims: the Täter project of the University of Cologne' b. 'Testimony as a source: the account of partisans, victims, survivors'.	18/02	@Parri seminar room + recording	Carlo Gentile Roberta Mira
6	Between PoV and emotional contagion	Workshop on moral implications in using biographies in education	06/03	@Parri seminar room	SdP
7	Multiplying educational opportunities	What does it mean to visit a place of memory?	07/05 (all day long)	@Monte Sole	SdP + Parri + Comitato

2. Designing and organising workshops with high school students 2024.

1. 29.01.2024 Students exchange Liceo Righi, Bologna - Städtisches Schiller-Gymnasium, Witten: The knowledge of the historical processes, events, and protagonists of 1944 serves as a stimulus for a deep reflection on the mechanisms that led to those events. The workshop starts with the presence of the group in some of the places of the massacre, which activates cognitive and emotional processes that make the educational activity an all-around human experience. A shared bi-national perspective is incredibly enriching in terms of discussions about personal and collective responsibilities.
2. 22.04.2024 Students exchange Liceo Fanti, Carpi - Wilhelm Friedrick Schule, Eschwege: see above
3. 29-30-31.05-2024 Liceo Fracastoro, Verona: Teachers from this high school are working with the Peace School since 10 years and they organised also a teachers course in Monte Sole. They want to push the anti-fascist educational approach because the city of Verona is particularly marked by racism and extremism. They decided to bring all the

last year students to explore the perpetrators world and to reflect on the possibility of a different choice.

4. 09-12.09.2024 Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.: Youngsters approaching the German military cemeteries need to be guided in facing the perpetrators' side, in order to be able to elaborate the relationship between the human empathy for sufferance and death and moral condemnation for unlawful and wrong human actions. The workshop lasted 2 days in Monte Sole and one day at the Futa Pass cemetery.
5. 15-17.09.2024 Viktoria Schule, Darmstadt: How is it possible to counter right wing extremism? Where does it come from? Analysing the past is useful to find analogies in the present and to alert own-self and the community about dangerous directions. At the same time taking responsibilities towards the past allows to properly honour the memory of the victims. The workshop in Monte Sole eneded with the desire to plant some Monte Sole seeds in front of the school in Germany in order to bring home "fruit from memory".
6. 22-25.11.2024 Verein Gedenkdienst, Wien: Since 2008 the Peace School hosts a volunteer doing his/her civil service. This cooperation is extremely fruitful and interesting in terms of deepening the "restitution/compensation" issue in the field of restorative justice. For the 2nd time Monte Sole was chosen by the organisation to organise also the training residential seminar for history/literature/anthropology students from Wien University. They prepared their trip with a seminar with Dr. Gentile and then they deepened the themes on the field in a 4 days workshop with the Peace School.

3. **Project promotion on Peace School communication channels (dissemination)**: newsletters, Facebook pages, article on experts websites.
    1. Sharing project posts on Facebook and Instagram
        1. https://www.facebook.com/scuoladipacemontesole/posts/pfbid02k4Dh5EJHTrcsgJnps7CAF82tHNMmvhq6dodRH21SCxvmh8HGZRZqbsnVBkkjb2EXl
        2. https://www.instagram.com/p/DAm-jaBo9uy/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==
    2. Dedicated page on Peace School website: https://www.montesole.org/il-luogo-e-la-storia/ns-tater-la-ricerca-sui-perpetratori/
    3. 05.09.2024 "Pea Conference" in Meran – illustrating the project perspective and approach
    4. 26.10.2024 "The art of memory – Archivio Aperto Festival" in Bologna – presenting the project as a fundamental archival perspective for peace education and social reconciliation

The Peace School experts involved in this cooperation were:
Elena Monicelli, Coordinator, email: elenamonicelli@montesole.org
Educators and Trainers:
Elena Bergonzini, email: elenabergonzini@montesole.org
Stefano Merzi, email: stefanomerzi@montesole.org
Maria Elena Rossi, email: mariaelenarossi@montesole.org

Vilmer Venturi Degli Esposti, email: vilmerventuri@montesole.org
Collaborators: Irene Barbapiccola, Nadia Berti, Duccio Cenni, Serena Fasulo, Martina Ferraro, Giulia Giovagnoli, Moritz Plattner

Do not hesitate to contact me in case of need.
Best regards,
Elena Monicelli
Coordinator

Fondazione Scuola di Pace Monte Sole
V. S. Martino, 25 - Tel. Fax 051 931574
40043 MARZABOTTO (BO)
C. F. 91229010375
e-mail: info@montesole.org