

4. FROM HISTORICAL COLONIALISM TO FORMS OF COLONIALITY TODAY

The "meschina Italieta" has a history of violence, oppression, exploitation, killing, expropriation that for too long has been removed from our books, from our memory. Which history? Our history!

Every time I talk about colonialism with friends, relatives, acquaintances or people I met by chance, almost everyone seems to minimize the extent of our oppressive imperialist intervention in the former colonies.

The rhetoric of the "short duration", "lacking economic productivity", "limited geographical extension", has been masked for more than a century as "colonialismo buono", that means a "good colonialism", and the Italian colonialists as "brava gente", "good-natured people". As if colonialism could be in any way justified because of inferior range compared to other Europeans countries! In the guilty conscience of many is still the case.

People recall to the time when Italians were there to build bridges, roads, schools, and churches as if they were "civil" and "good" works done to "modernize" the countries and "help" local communities. These works were made because the occupations were both of settlement and of exploitation and so it served for the wealth of the colonizers and a greater benefit for the motherland. With the construction of roads and bridges for example, the transport of material was facilitated and the time needed shortened. Moreover it was possible to have a more extended control on a broken ground, difficult to be accessed by the military vehicles. The churches were built to give spaces to the missionaries to carry on their work of evangelization and "civilization" of the populations considered "wild" and deprived of human values. The schools, first and foremost built for the education of the colonizers children, were places of indoctrination where it was imposed the superiority of western knowledge, both through the imposed language and through the subjects taught. The cultural heritage of local communities was concealed. Ever the schools were religious one, where the need was to wipe out who these children were to make them who they wanted them to be.

The circles of culture, which in the time of fascism became fascist headquarters, were places where only whites Italians could have access. Nonetheless some black native people were "welcomed" either as attendants, colonial soldiers, or in some cases lords of local "elite" who had been hired paternalistically in local power positions within the community to have a direct control over the population. These last were also who to then pass on the colonial heritage of command, as coadjutor in the administrative and military colonial apparatus. This was done to pursue even after the process of decolonization, a patriarchal culture of violence taught by the "settler's fathers".

Colonialism has a long history and its beginning lead back to the conquest of America, initiated by Christopher Columbus (Italian: Cristoforo Colombo) justified and quickly officialised by the papal bull "Inter caetera Divinae" promulgated by the then-pope Alessandro VI Borgia who in 1493 granted the Spanish reign with the domination on the new western territories. In the bull it is written: "The form used for this act was the usual medieval guarantee based on the fullness of the apostolic power of the Pope, and the possession of the discovered lands required the usual condition of the obligation to introduce the Christian religion in the occupied lands."

To remember is also the "Romanus Pontifex" Papal Bull issued by Pope Nicholas V in 1454 which recognize to the Portuguese crown the conquests made on the African territories, in particular in Morocco (Ceuta, 1415) and along the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. In the Bull is even recognized the slavery of blacks in Africa subjected to the Portuguese colonizers either as a result of the occupation or under commercial purchase.

This is pointing out to an indissoluble bond that exists between law, money, religion and politics.

the memorial with others of the committee.

So after few days I found myself in Affile. Three other committee members were there to wait for me and a friend of mine. After a small talk we took the road to the memorial. It is a steep street the one that bring to it so we went by feet. At the road cross before the hill a Carabinieri car was parked to make a checkpoint. The committee people approached them to advise that they were bringing us to make some shootings at the memorial to make them aware that if something would happen again they would be in part responsible as witnesses! Our visit at the memorial was quite short, the last experience caused a kind of a trauma and from time to time the gaze was turn to the street to see if some provocateurs would reach us.

Before to get in front of the memorial, on the right side, on some rocks were affixed five plates to the memory of Graziani such as (from the first picture left):

- Soldiers and colonists in A.O.I. (Eastern Italian Africa). To the great warlord, marshal R. Graziani.
- The comrades of the German Wehrmacht "Armata Liguria" for their supreme commander field - To the Marshal of Italy Rodolfo Graziani. His campaigns soldiers. Of Ethiopia. Of Libya. Of Italy.
- Our walls collapse. Not our hearts (Gothic Line 1944/45).
- To the soldier of honor General Rodolfo Graziani. Supreme commander of the Republican National Guard.



Picture of Rodolfo Graziani plates taken in Affile in August 2013.

On the 22nd of July 2013 Nicola Zingaretti in a written answer to the interrogation presented by the regional councilor Giancarlo Righini (from the right party Fratelli d'Italia created in 2012 from politicians beforehand belonging to the Popolo della Libertà, Berlusconi's party) said that the project of the memorial and of the park and their realization have been regular done so that if they would eliminate any reference to Rodolfo Graziani the financial aid will be given again to the municipal committee. So that the bust and other relics of Rodolfo Graziani which where situated in the small museum created inside the monument, were suddenly removed! What a trick!

What will it change once the name of Graziani disappears from the public eye?

Wouldn't that still be a place where fascist nostalgic meet to commemorate the fascist colonial legacy on the 29th of June again and again?

What will change if after many months the school head of several schools, in Affile and in the neighborhood cities, don't give any sign, any answer, to the proposal of the Antifascist Committee and the local A.N.P.I. (Italy Partisans National Association) to bring in the schools a program where to research on fascism and colonialism?

The story of Affile is paradigmatic of a more complex system of oppression and fascination of collective consciousness.

Shame on Italy! "Dismantle the memorial built for fascist Graziani!"

Beside all other different initiatives done to criticize the realization of the monument, its demolition seems to be the most pragmatic way to deal with it both for the Affile's Anti-