

**THE STRENGTHS AND THE  
WEAKNESSES OF A NONVIOLENT  
MOVEMENT FOR PEACE AND  
JUSTICE: THE ITALIAN PEACE  
MOVEMENT**

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this essay is to answer the statement in question through a study of the Italian peace movement from 1998 to 2008, a decade since the important introduction of the new law about conscientious objection and civil service in Italy. This law represents a turning point and is very remarkable, because it introduced for the first time in Italy the idea of non-armed and nonviolent defence and the opportunity to do civil service overseas in conflict areas with NGOs or Associations which have the goal to find out a kind of management, solution or transformation of conflict.

The essay will analyse two fields: some nonviolent campaigns acted in Italy in that period of time and the development of nonviolent magazines. First it will introduce some conceptual theories on peace, secondly it will describe the nature of the pacifist movement in Italy and the main campaigns that occurred during the period considered. Concerning the campaigns observed they are: conscientious objection against military service and the Campagna di Obiezione di Coscienza alle Spese Militari per la Difesa Popolare Nonviolenta-Campagna OSM-DPN- [National Campaign for War Tax Resistance and for Nonviolent People Defence (NCWTR-NPD)]. The evolution of nonviolent training offers and peace research centres will also be considered. As regards magazines they are 'Azione nonviolenta' (Nonviolent Action) and 'Mosaico di Pace' (Mosaic of Peace). The essay analyse these two main areas due to the idea that actions and magazines can show without any doubt the profound penetration of the Italian peace movement inside civil society and the political agenda. In addition it will explore the impact of peace movement to negotiate and to reach its goals in society and political issues. The essay will evaluate the people involved in the campaigns of the peace movement and results they have reached. Another way of measuring impact will be to look at the number of magazines have been sold as well as the number of subscriptions. Moreover the essay will explore the attention to peace issues from public opinion and from institutional level.

Finally, the essay will try to evaluate the strengths and the weaknesses of the Italian peace movement regarding the fields observed and will try to suggest some conclusions and recommendations.

## **Conceptual framework**

The idea of peace is a subtle concept that could have many interpretations and many risks. For example in the description given by Tacitus, Roman imperialism in the 'Agricola' of 98 a.d., leader of the Caledonians Calgaco says:

'Raiders of the whole world, now that their thirst for lack of land total devastation, are also to search the sea: if the enemy is rich greedy, arrogant if poor; people that

neither East nor West can sate, they just yearn to have an equal craving wealth and poverty. Burgle, massacre, rob, and with a false name, they call empire, and finally, where they make a desert, they call it peace.’  
(Marescotti 2005: 62)

Hence this paper needs to begin by clarifying the concepts of violence and peace. To do that it is necessary to recourse to the important essay by Johan Galtung who writes: ‘...violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations’ (1969: 168). This helps us to understand that peace is not just the absence of overt violence and war (negative peace), but it is a necessary condition for human fulfilment (positive peace). Galtung identifies further six distinctions among violence. The most relevant one for this discussion is category number four, where the most important point is to know who causes the violent deed (Galtung 1969: 170). This distinction is the most important due to the fact that he introduces structural violence, which as Galtung goes on to say in his essay: ‘Structural violence is silent, it does not show, it is essentially static, it is tranquil waters’ (1969: 172). Even if the ‘water’ may appear calm, it could be very dangerous, especially when combined with cultural violence. While on the side of violence we need to present a set consisting of structural, cultural and direct violence to create the so-called ‘*violence triangle*’: ‘When the triangle is stood on its ‘direct’ and ‘structural violence’ feet, the image invoked is cultural violence as the legitimizer of both’ (1990: 294). According to Galtung cultural violence plays a strong role inside the triangle because it changes slowly and it maintains his structural frame for a long-term period. On the positive side peace take places together with justice and truth.

In this essay justice is clarified as social justice (Galtung 1969: 183). In addition the concept of justice can be extended as retributive, when it means a form of compensation or restorative, when its aim is repairing harm done and restoring relationships between victims (Darweish 2010). This essay argues that peace, justice and truth, in turn, require finding a balance and the ability to look to the future without a past that festers. Elements are always in flux and difficult to stabilise, requiring the highest affirmation of man's best expectations. Furthermore another condition for positive peace requires a submission to one of the most important rules of Gandhian insight. For Gandhi, goals are intimately connected with means in any nonviolent action or campaign: ‘...the fight for a just society could not be conducted by unjust means’ (Parekh 1997: 376).

As a final point, building positive peace is difficult. It is not possible to forget the effects of disorientation and weakness as people meet in front of the enormity of the problems to be faced with rapid technological change and globalization. In fact whilst these change advance apparently free of many constraints, progress paradoxically ends up making people feel more anxious for their safety, with a desire to reduce their inner freedom and fulfilment in return for assured peace. Fromm (1942), in his book

*The Fear of Freedom* to Curle (1995) in his *Another Way: Positive Response to Contemporary Violence*, describe these feelings very well. However he also indicates elements to resolve bewilderment: to believe in human abilities, in people's humanity and not to do it alone, but know how to build networks of solidarity and sharing. Therefore be ready to care for each other as part of mankind.

### **Italian peace movement: the nature of the pacifist movement in Italy, background and history**

The study of Italian pacifism presents many difficulties. Within the so-called 'peace archipelago' there are many islands that are fragmented from each other and unwilling to stay in touch. Academic institutions in Italy have not paid much attention to pacifism and related topics. Furthermore in Italy, the armed forces have enjoyed a sort of 'untouchability'. This is due to patriotic attitudes amongst society and to avoid any criticism or detailed analysis. Italian anti-militarism and pacifism have been characterized initially as part of the anarchist and socialist movements regarding the opposition to the war in Libya. It has also been known for its resistance to military service in 1915-1918 and outdoor contrariety anti-war and army in 1919. However, these critical actions remain incidents of the moment which did not lead to a complete reflection on the subject of peace. In addition by the end of the 50s Italian pacifism and 'de facto' became confined within the narrow circle of religion that rejects violence and weapons, but that does not make any critical questions for those who hold the political and military power. The 60s were definitely more fruitful and nurtured a generation of pacifists who were more mature and aware of their commitment and the surrounding context. In those years, among other things, the political sphere became distinguished for its only anti-militarist and pacifist party. Although this radical party was pacifist oriented, it was largely minority and 'elitist' in a positive sense of the term.

In the late '60s led to the creation of the phenomenon of 'Workers in uniform', which aims to reform the army by changing it from inside the military structure. In any case the movement of 'Workers in uniform' does not want to overrun the army, but the army should support the working class. In the '70s those involved in the antiwar movement became more aware of the specificity of pacifist issues (Sardonini 1988-89).

The phenomenon of conscientious objection and rejection of authoritarian military structure took on political importance. Conscientious objection, to fully pacifist nature, found its first witness in Pietro Pinna (Pastena 2005) when in 1948 he refused to serve military force for ethical, but especially for political reasons (his contrariety to the war and at the military system). Elevoine Santi was another well known conscientious objector in the early 1950s. He publicly refused to do military service in Italy and was imprisoned in Gaeta (a very severe military prison). War Resisters International wrote about him in its journal, after which he received many supportive letters. It is necessary to remember also the first conscientious objector in the

manufacture of weapons who paid gesture with his dismissal in 1954. His name was Franco Alasia. Finally, it is indispensable to mention the first conscientious objector who refused to pay the costs of the military State budget. Manrico Mansueti did not spend his money for the taxes corresponding to the percentage of defence spending in 1971. He inspired a campaign of objection to military spending that officially began in 1981.

As a result of a long and difficult parliamentary activity Parliament introduced the first law recognizing conscientious objection in 1972. This is also thanks to an extensive debate in public opinion sponsored by several national and famous opinion makers. One important figure in those years, inside the pacifist area, was Aldo Capitini tireless in the fight for recognition of conscientious objection and to promote peaceful initiatives such as the Marcia Perugia-Assisi in 1961. He deserves special recognition as a first a rare practitioner of Ghandian philosophy and methodology in Italy.

The law on conscientious objection had many constraints and it was intended to minimize the spread of the phenomenon of consciousness objection. The law provided 20 months of civil service and completely ignored any political motivation for conscientious objectors. Last but not least, the only motivation considered legitimate was opposition to weapons on ethical, philosophical and religious grounds.

## **The peace movement from 1998 to 2008**

### From conscientious objection to the new national law about objection: 1948-1972

The Italian Constitution came into force on 1 January 1948. Article 52 explains that the defence of the fatherland is a sacred duty for every citizen and the military service is obligatory within the limits and manner prescribed by law. The Constitution made no reference to the right to object, which, by contrast, is provided in the constitutions of some European countries.

The first two cases of conscientious objection occur in Italy after the war. Although the first debate in the country was provoked by the case of Pietro Pinna, proclaimed nonviolent in 1949. It is attributable to both the intervention of some personalities to defend the young and for some international pressure on the Italian government. Also in 1949, the first draft law for the legal recognition of the objection was presented.

The Parliament started to deal with this topic with various legislative proposals that were presented, but the only result was to adopt the so-called 'law Pedini' in 1966 that allows international voluntary service in developing countries to exempt participants from required military service. In the late sixties there was a spectacular example of the mass refusal of military service: hundreds of young people living in the Belice Valley, the area destroyed by the Sicilian earthquake of 1968, refused to

submit to the military service in protest against the State.

In 1973 the League of Conscientious Objectors was formed for recognition of conscientious objection and there were several kinds of public pressure on Parliament from the Radical Party and from public opinion to achieve a regulation. A growing number of young people preferred prison to joining in the armed forces. They were over 150 and their situation began to establish a 'humanitarian case'. With this motivation the first law on conscientious objection was adopted on 15th December 1972, after a brief and superficial discussion. It had the immediate effect to open the prison doors to those who were imprisoned as conscientious objectors. It was possible to reject enlistment in the Armed Forces on the grounds of refusal to bear arms and to replace military service with civilian service. The approval of the law did not meet the wishes of many. In fact, the objection did not qualify as an individual right but as a 'benefit' granted by the State under certain conditions and with certain consequences.

The Constitutional Court acted eight times between 1985 and 1997, with many decisions to declare the unconstitutionality of various parts of the law. The landmark ruling was the first on 24th May 1985, n. 164, by which the Court recognizes the equal dignity of military service and civilian service. In 1986, the Constitutional Court stated that the objector in the civil service is not amenable to military jurisdiction, but the ordinary and as the objector is admitted to the civil service, military status ceases. Finally, in 1989 the Court declared it unconstitutional that the civilian service last longer (eight months longer) than military service. This ruling caused a boom in the number of applications made in 1989 over the previous year, and since then, the increase in requests for objection continues, reaching a record of about 109,000 requests in 1999 (National Bureau for Civil Service 2010: 85).

A dramatic episode in the history of conscientious objection is the adoption of the new law on conscientious objection, which the Parliament failed to make in January 1992. On 16 January the Senate overwhelmingly approved the final text of the reform of law n. 772/1972, already approved by the House. On 1st February the President of the Republic, Francesco Cossiga, referred the bills and the next day dissolved the Parliament. It took another six years as well as the approval of a new law (the present).

### From 1998 to 2008, towards civil service era

The new law on conscientious objection was promulgated by the President of the Republic and published on July 8, Act number 230. The law raised several key points:

- 1) the recognition of conscientious objection as a personal right,
- 2) the elimination of the power of control by the State on the merits of the grounds of conscience,

- 3)the removal of civil service management to the Ministry of Defence and the establishment of an ad hoc office at the Presidency of the Council,
- 4)the drastic reduction of waiting times,
- 5)the opportunity to serve abroad,
- 6)the obligation of training,
- 7)the establishment of national consultation with representative bodies and objectors,
- 8)the introduction of clearer and more precise disciplinary rules ,
- 9)the provision of information campaigns by the state,
- 10)the opportunity to study and experiment with forms of non-armed and nonviolent people defence.

The implementation of the new law had been slow: only at the end of 1999, for example, the regulation was issued by the National organization. While in July the same year the Ministry of Defence stopped objector's new assignments for lack of funds. At the same time 1999 was also the year in which the intention to abolish conscription and the establishment of professional and volunteer armed forces began to take shape. The Parliament adopted the Law 331 in 2000 which contains the guidelines for the establishment of professional military service, setting up the end of conscription in 2007.

The Law 64/2001 provided the creation of the national civil service which is possible also for women. Thanks to it young people can continue to perform community service as volunteers. On 20 December 2001 the civil service's first female volunteer began. In 2002 and 2003 there was a growing number of volunteers (90% women) who accepted the invitation to accomplish a year of civilian service, while the number of conscientious objectors in the civil service stood at 55,000 per year. With the Law 226, on 23rd August 2004, Parliament decided to bring forward the suspension of conscription of January 1, 2005. In December 2004 the last contingent of conscientious objectors started their civil service. From 1st January 2005 the civil service became only voluntary for young men and women aged between 18 and 28 years (*Caritas Italiana Dall'Obiezione di Coscienza al Servizio Civile Nazionale [From Conscientious Objection to the National Civil Service]* 2008).

The civil service splits from the objection of conscience is a real limit. Now, it is not mandatory to object to arms and violence to be allowed to the civil service. Thus people can avoid these issues and to question the significance of defending the homeland without the use of weapons and violence.

In conclusion, the civil service instead of being a tool for changing the military structure in a nonviolent manner, it becomes just a general service to the people or employment for youth.

A Brief History of the NCWTR-NPD in Italy (NCWTR-NPD 2006)

According to the National Campaign for War Tax Resistance and for Nonviolent People Defence the tax protest to military spending in Italy started in 1971 when a municipal employee objected to military budget in support of conscientious objectors to military service. From 1972 to 1981 there were other sporadic objectors which led to the birth of the National Campaign for War Tax Resistance (NCWTR). The national campaign was generated by the Movimento Internazionale della Riconciliazione (International Reconciliation Movement -IRM-), Movimento Nonviolento (Nonviolent Movement -NM-) and Lega Disarmo Unilaterale (Unilateral Disarmament League).

The objectives were the reduction of military expenditure tax option or the option to allocate the funds to projects for Peace and Nonviolence. There were foreclosures by the Tax Agency and the actions of defence for War Tax Refuser Objectors (WTRO).

In the '80s the NCWTR-NPD was expanding. The number of objectors rose from a few in 1981 to about 4,800 by 1990. During that time other organizations joined the movement: in 1982 the Lega Obiettori di Coscienza (Conscientious Objectors League) joined and in 1986 Pax Christi joined. In 1990, the Association for Peace and the International Civil Service also joined. They established a Peace Fund to reach their goals and other legislative results were achieved.

The Constitutional Court issued several decisions (especially the n. 450 of 1989) which essentially stated that the defence of the homeland is mandatory and can be accomplished with or without weapons. The NCWTR-NPD emphasized the difference between a gesture of objection and tax evasion. With the Gulf War there was a strong emotional reaction that led to numerous demonstrations in which many Italian citizens who were opposed to war participated.

The Gulf War was the first time that Italy had participated directly in a war since the Second World War. The NCWTR-NPD had a significant increase in membership. In 1991, supporters of the objection to military spending were almost 10,000.

The civil war in former Yugoslavia began in the year 1992. The events that followed, emphasized that, even in Europe, war had returned to its policy instrument to massacre the civilian population.

There were demonstrations for peace in conflict zones, such as 'Solidarity for Peace in Sarajevo' (1992) and 'Mir Sada' [Peace Now] (1993). The NCWTR-NPD continued to fight to achieve its goals and even after the decline of support focused its efforts to:

- a) obtain an institutionalization of Nonviolent People Defence (NPD),
- b) engage at the level of grassroots initiatives, by funding research on NPD,
- c) held seminars and courses on nonviolence training,
- d) the opening of an embassy of peace to Pristina in Kosovo (1994) in order to prevent an armed clash between the parties and various other initiatives.

At the institutional level further progress was made for the purposes of building



peace. The resolution of the Chamber of Deputies (19/12/1995), committed the government to adopt rules that allow young objectors to participate in humanitarian missions abroad and the decision of the Senate (25/01/1996) committed the government to allocate financial sources to facilitate and promote the activities of civilian peace corps (in the former Yugoslavia). On the other hand a new defence model was issued with the creation of a professional army and a substantial increase in military spending.

At the institutional level another step was taken in 1998 with the approval of a law, which provides funding for the participation of conscientious objectors in humanitarian missions outside the country and affirms the commitment to engage in experiments in nonviolent people defence and people diplomacy. In 1999, three movements (IMR, NM and International Civil Service) left the campaign, and two other organizations participated: Beati i Costruttori di Pace (Blessed the peacemakers, in 1998) and the Comunità Associazione Papa Giovanni XXXIII-Operazione Colomba (Association Community Pope John XXIII, in 1999-Operation Dove), both involved in the development of peacekeeping missions in conflict zones. The campaign focused in this direction to establish an alliance for creating a civilian peace corps made up of grassroots movements and civil society with the White Helmets Network (national network organized by affiliated entities of the civil service and peace associations in order to establish a civilian peace corps composed of objectors) and the White Berets (another association with the same aim as the White Helmets).

Finally, in 2001 the National Civil Service was established with the approval of Law 64. In the text of the law, Article number 11, foresees the possibility for individuals to finance the National Endowment for the Civil Service indicating the type of intervention that they want to finance. From this chance to be able to deduct the amount paid from taxes in the annual tax return to the real tax option the step could be shorter. In November 2002 and in December 2003 the NCWTR-NPD promoted a demonstration for a financial peace in Rome, for the establishment of training for civilian peace and reducing military spending.

The Campaign seeks to open spaces in public institutions and lastly a Committee was formed at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to study alternatives to armed defence in 2004.

### The development of peace research and training opportunities in Italy

Briefly in the context indicated by the Peace Research: ‘attività non armate e nonviolente condotte da civili per la gestione, la trasformazione e la soluzione dei conflitti [non-armed and nonviolent actions led by civilians for managing, processing and resolution of conflicts]’ (Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile. Comitato per la Difesa Civile Non Armata e Nonviolenta [*National Bureau for Civil Service*].

*Committee for the Civilian Non-Armed and Nonviolent Defence*] 2008: 04), the training activities are developed in relation to this form of peacekeeping and they are promoted by subjects classified in the interdisciplinary research of Peace.

In the last decades these opportunities have grown in Italy. For example the peace studies only arrived in the academic world in Italy with university reforms in 1999 and the activation of the graduating class number 35 and of the first degree-oriented peace research, established by the University of Pisa and Florence in the academic year 2001-2002.

To go into this issue refer to the reading on the survey of activities of training civilians for peacekeeping and peace research, *Le Attivita' Formative Civili Relative a Peacekeeping e a Peace Research [The Training Activities from Civilian Society Related to Peacekeeping and Peace Research]* (Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile. Comitato per la Difesa Civile Non Armata e Nonviolenta [*National Bureau for Civil Service. Committee for the Civilian Non-Armed and Nonviolent Defence*] 2008), where many examples of these training courses, from grassroots to institutional level, are described.

### **How did pacifist organizations manage their communication?**

This essay will now turn to the magazines *Mosaic of Peace* and *Nonviolent Action*. The first represents an important part of the pacifist archipelago and the second is the historical magazine of the nonviolent movement, which despite many difficulties, remains a point of reference in Italy for those who want to deal with nonviolence, peace and related issues. One only need observe the trends of subscriptions and copies sold via other channels to understand the impact of these journals and their spread, as well as check for any collaborations or activities designed to improve penetration of the ideas of peace and nonviolence within the public, or in political debate.

Mosaic of Peace: is the journal of peace promoted by Pax Christi-International Catholic movement for peace. It has been published since 1990 and arose from the inspiration of Don Tonino Bello, during his presidency of the Italian section of Pax Christi. It has consolidated over the years as a privileged place for the study of themes and issues of peace and nonviolence which hardly find space in major newspapers. *Mosaic of Peace* has created, along with *Today Mission* and *Nigrizia* magazines, the Campaign against unethical banking encouraging individuals, groups, parishes, religious institutes, to ask for information on how banks invest their savings and to ask the banks not to invest in the arms trade.

Nonviolent Action: is a magazine founded by Aldo Capitini in Perugia in 1964 as a monthly organ of the Nonviolent Movement whose current managing director is Massimo Valpiana. Published today in Verona, Nonviolent Movement goes out regularly every month, and is a benchmark for all proponents of nonviolence. Together with the monthly magazine there is also a periodical collection of 'Papers of Nonviolent Action', lightweight brochures that disclose the basic texts of literature

and tradition of nonviolence (such as those written by Mahatma Gandhi, Leo Tolstoy, Martin Luther King, etc.).

### **Strengths and the weaknesses of Italian peace movement**

The movement of conscientious objection to military service in Italy has been developing steadily and increasing particularly since the passing of the law which allowed its legal implementation. It has gone from 200 applications submitted in 1973 to over 108,000 in 1999 and has since levelled off to more than 55,000 applications per year from 2000 until the end of 2004 (Ufficio Nazionale per il Servizio Civile [*National Bureau for Civil Service*] n.d.). In fact in 2000 a law was passed to suspend conscription and introduce professional military service thus bringing an end to the experience of conscientious objection to military service on 1 January 2005.

It is important to note the numerical link to the implementation of the law on conscientious objection to military service in 30 years, from 1973 to 2003, involved more than 750,000 people and more than 1,700 organizations. More than numbers, however, attention should be paid to the important achievements gained by the movement of conscientious objection to military service in Italy. The first important goal is to have detracted so many young people from the military culture and to have triggered in many of them the desire and the need to question the reasons for their rejection of weapons and violence. With this awareness needs to be developed or strengthened many initiatives on issues relating to peace, nonviolence, peace education and antimilitarism.

The term 'nonviolence' as well as becoming better known has taken a positive character and ceased to be considered only in terms of denial of violence, as Capitini noted in 1967: '... have you started writing nonviolence in one word, so that has mitigated the negative meaning that writing was not detached from the violence, so someone could ask, "okay, remove the violence, but there is anything else?'" (Capitini 1967: 9).

The impulse originating from the movement of conscientious objection has also produced a culture more thoughtful to issues of peace in many organizations that welcomed the objectors initially only as staff to be employed at lower costs.

Finally there were the significant results achieved at the institutional and legislative level. It is sufficient to say that the reform of the law in 1998 for the first time introduced the opportunity to study and experiment with forms of nonviolent and unarmed defense, the objectors also had the opportunity to participate in peacekeeping missions organized by agencies or NGOs in foreign conflict zones. It established an institutional committee for consultation on matters of civil defense and nonviolence in 2004 and increased training opportunities related to the culture of peace and nonviolence to the possibility of planning university courses in 1999.

Finally there was the approval of the national civil service law in 2001 that has taken on the legacy of objection to military service, even if it is not necessary to object to arms and violence to be admitted to the service civil law.

The movement of conscientious objection to military service was the engine, but also benefited from other campaigns and initiatives on peace. A campaign that deserves to be mentioned concerns the NCWTR-NPD.

Founded in 1982 with 419 supporters at the national level it managed to grow steadily until 1991 where it reached its peak with more than 9,600 adherents. Then there was a declining trend until 2001, reaching its minimum with 446 objectors to military spending and has since fluctuated up to the figures of 456 objectors in 2009 (NPD-NCWTR 2010). The campaign has involved more than 68,000 people in 27 years and nine national organizations and movements, as well as many committees and associations at the local level. Furthermore it also raised funds of more than € 1,978,000.00 for peace initiatives. It has certainly contributed significantly to achieve the results described above in relation to the movement of conscientious objectors to military service. This campaign should also be credited with contributions in Italy to raise greater awareness of inquiries concerning military expenditure, military industry and arms trade. Moreover it also promoted the idea of positive nonviolent defence and civilian peace, as possibilities to deal with conflict situations in an alternative to the military system.

The two magazines discussed earlier have seen a similar trend over the last decade although with different numbers. Mosaic of Peace rose dramatically from 1,450 subscribers in 1999 to more than 1,800 in 2000 and then presented a fluctuating decrease slightly and stood at more than 1,500 subscribers in 2009 (Mosaic of Peace 2010). Nonviolent Action also increased from about 1,100 subscribers in 1998 to 1,300 in 2000 and then leveled off at about 1,250 subscribers in 2010 (Nonviolent Action 2010). Both magazines subscribers engaged with each other and also with the common topic of magazines or other related purposes with similar ideals (missionary magazines, educational, related to business ethics or fair trade, etc.). While Mosaic of Peace has partnerships with fourteen other magazines, Nonviolent Action collaborates with nine other magazines. However for both magazines are collaborations with other heads of area, which means that, despite the presence of an important interchange between magazines, there is no escape from the same environment where all are working. Nonviolent Action claims to have an annual turnover of about 300 subscribers, likewise Mosaic of Peace which oscillates in the same issue, with the exception in 2000 with 800 new subscriptions. For both magazines diffusion occurs only by subscription without any advertising fee. Additionally they state that they have never received contributions from public entities for publishing activities. Therefore there are about 3,000 people, by default, involved annually in issues of peace and nonviolence. If there is an addition with potential subscribers of other magazines of different area, subsequently it is possible

to imagine that every year it is likely to reach around 5/6,000 people through subscriptions.

In assessing the weaknesses of the Italian peace movement it is useful to begin from the magazines. Even estimating optimistically that 6,000 people annually are engaging with the issues explored by these publications, the numbers are very far from significant in terms of affecting Italian public opinion. The themes of peace remain, at least for the scope of readers, absolutely minority and niche. Better is the span of action campaigns. However the proliferation of campaigns launched by various organizations can play a negative role, in fact too many campaigns ultimately weaken the activity of all and limit their power to influence Italian public opinion and political agenda. Often campaigns are promoted by associations with few means of dissemination and without coordination between them. For example, there is the ambition to reduce the military budget, or to support a better quality of expenditure on the welfare state. At least four national initiatives in Italy are working towards these goals. Conversely military spending in Italy in recent years has increased steadily reaching the enormous figure of over 23.5 billion Euros, placing Italy in eighth rank in the world for military spending (Paolicelli, and Vignarca n.d.).

Another element of weakness of the Italian peace movement is linked to the fact that the military system is appropriate in some way as image and as well as lexicon that hides the violence by using concepts such as peacekeeping, peacemaking or humanitarian aid and wars are called 'peace missions'. In addition, many university courses were established after the 1999 reform and these courses are oriented to the military professionals. Nevertheless it opened the University to the themes of peace. Whilst this might lead one to think of a positive contamination, the research of the National Bureau for Civil Service, Committee for the Civilian Non-Armed and Nonviolent Defense (2008: 4-5) highlights all the limits of civilian subordination to military structure component. The research also shows the pro-military approach to deal with conflicts kept by many training and educational organizations.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

In summary the Italian peace movement has grown a lot in quantity and quality, especially since the '70s. Much progress has been made in institutional reform and the dissemination of ideas and nonviolent methods, which are no longer the assets of only a few 'initiates'. Associations, movements and groups strive to be at the grassroots level rather than institutional levels to promote greater awareness and dissemination of culture and education for peace. Nevertheless much remains to be done because the military industrial system, thanks to the huge disparity in resources and means at its disposal, is still firmly in power with the majority of public consensus.

On the recommendations to the Italian peace movement this essay is able to make

just one. It must enable a real political-organizational coordination and cooperation within the 'peace archipelago' both in terms of campaigns and activities and, most importantly, communication to the public. The lack of a strong voice that promotes peace and nonviolence is remarkable and the defense of its own organizational identity or small magazine is not useful to force issues of the peace movement to the attention of politics and people.

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