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The Form of Ideology and the Ideology of Form

Cold War, Decolonization and Third
World Print Cultures



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4. Publishing the Resistance

Third-Worldist Writing in Cold War Italy

Neelam Srivastava

Introduction

Italy emerged out of World War II in a particular position vis-à-vis the Cold War alignments of NATO and the Soviet bloc. It had experienced a civil war after the fall of Mussolini's government on 8 September 1943, due to the development of a sizeable anti-fascist resistance that spread across the national territory and fought against the remaining Italian fascist forces and the German occupying army. In the post-war period, Italy became a member of NATO, but it also possessed one of the biggest and most influential communist parties in Europe, the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which rapidly became a mass party after the war, and was closely aligned with Soviet political directives. The PCI assumed an important role in directing the development of Italian public culture post-1945, and it also indirectly wielded its political influence over the work of two important Italian publishers, Giulio Einaudi Editore and Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Editore. Concurrently, however, many Italians, especially the younger generation born around the end of the war and coming of age in the late 1960s—the so-called '1968 generation'—were becoming increasingly sympathetic to Third World struggles and wars of national liberation. Algeria and Vietnam were intensely evocative buzzwords in the 1960s, symbolizing internationalist sentiment and a consciousness that decolonization mirrored their own battles against reactionary forces at home. Non-alignment was a position being adopted

by many political activists who were fed up with the Soviet-influenced line of the PCI and who realized that the future of Marxist revolution was outside of Europe. The flamboyant and mercurial Giangiacomo Feltrinelli,¹ founder of the eponymous publishing house, and the anti-fascist intellectual Giovanni Pirelli, who worked as an editor for Einaudi and would later get involved with the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), were key exponents of the Italian new left that sought to renovate its ideological principles by looking to the Third World, and to the development of political and cultural thought beyond Cold War polarities.

Italy thus emerged at the forefront of cultural initiatives that disseminated Third-Worldist writing to a wider European public, alongside the publisher François Maspero and the journal *Présence Africaine* in France. Einaudi and Feltrinelli, in publishing (and translating) the work of Frantz Fanon, Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, Mao Tse-Tung, Ho Chi Minh, and other anticolonial intellectuals, responded to a real hunger for new political alternatives among younger readers—what could also be defined as an emerging market for such texts. When Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* was first published in Italian in 1962, it sold upwards of 100,000 copies, making it one of the bestselling books of that year.² The first issue of *Tricontinental*, a bimonthly publication produced in Havana, whose Italian edition was curated by Feltrinelli, featured on the inside of its front cover a phrase by Ernesto Che Guevara: 'The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution' (*Il dovere di ogni rivoluzionario è fare la rivoluzione*), each word of the internationalist slogan interspersed with the image of a bullet (Fig. 4.1).³

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- 1 The extremely wealthy Feltrinelli took umbrage at those who considered his publishing venture a 'hobby'; he was capable of storming out of meetings if his projects weren't taken seriously (see Carlo Feltrinelli, *Senior Service* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999, p. 93). He was a charismatic and controversial figure at the centre of both Milanese high society and radical circles, and became close to revolutionaries and celebrities alike.
 - 2 For a detailed account of Fanon's publication in Italian by Einaudi, see Neelam Srivastava, 'Translating Resistance: Fanon and Radical Italy, 1960–1970' in *Translating Frantz Fanon Across Continents and Languages*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Sue-Ann Harding (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 17–39.
 - 3 For a history of the Tricontinental movement's print culture dissemination, see Robert Young, 'Disseminating the Tricontinental' in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, ed. by Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, and Joanna Waley-Cohen (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 517–47. For a comprehensive account of Tricontinentalism's



Fig. 4.1 Unknown artist, *Tricontinental*, n.1, year 1 (1967), inside of front cover. 'The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution. We remind the Latin American oligarchies that OLAS [which stood for Latin American Solidarity Organization] expresses our ideas.'

Over time, both publishers developed specific series comprising cheap, thin paperbacks that were accessible to students and younger readers, about political issues of the day, which often included works by Third-Worldist authors: the Edizioni della Libreria (Feltrinelli) and the Serie Politica (Einaudi). In this essay, I examine editors' correspondence, publishing lists, and publishing ventures by Einaudi and Feltrinelli in order to examine more closely how these publishers were instrumental in introducing Third-Worldist texts to an Italian readership and thus shaped their reception in the public sphere. The dissemination of these works ultimately had a far-reaching influence on political ideas that emerged out of the 1968 movement. Examining the cultural work of publishing and the forms of print culture it produced reverses the direction of travel relating to the exchange of ideas between colony and metropole, as it is conventionally understood. Arguably, anticolonial

cultural production, political history, and relationship to Global South theories, see Anne Garland Mahler, *From the Tricontinental to the Global South: Race, Radicalism, and Transnational Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

movements were instrumental in presenting new possibilities for political revolution in Europe, and print culture—especially publishing initiatives and magazines—was key to its publicization, as Feltrinelli and Einaudi well knew.

At the same time, however, what this account reveals is that both publishers privileged the political writing coming from Third World movements, but did not undertake more ‘literary’ projects by Global South writers. My analysis bears a connection with the work of Laura Pennacchietti, who has analyzed Italian publishers’ archives relating to the reception of Windrush writers in Italy in the post-war era, to show how major writers and editors like Elio Vittorini opposed publishing authors whose literary writing was considered too strongly ideological in terms of its antiracist and anticolonial stances, rather privileging the exoticist vein of local colour and light humour represented by the writing of Edgar Mittelholzer and V.S. Naipaul’s early novels (like *A House for Mr Biswas*).⁴ These preliminary findings suggest that ‘literary writing’ from the decolonizing world was being evaluated by Italian editors and publishers in quite different ways from ‘political writing’ coming from the same regions. While political writing was promoted and published, creative writing was viewed more cautiously and more critically. Cultural gatekeeping and implicit notions of aesthetic taste operated strongly in the assessment of creative work, as I show in my reading of an editorial memo by the Einaudi editor Laura Gonzalez at the end of this essay.

But why revisit Third-Worldism now? It might seem, at first, that to re-read decades-old documents and texts relating to Italian intellectuals’ interest in revolutionary Cuba and Algeria is a very dated activity—the First, Second and Third World no longer exist in the same form as they did in the 1960s. But judging by recent scholarship, the term ‘Third World’ seems to have come back in fashion, especially in the realms of aesthetics and politics; requiring different conceptual and analytical tools from the ‘postcolonial’ and offering alternative geographies of knowledge exchange.⁵ We have come a long way from Aijaz Ahmad’s

4 Laura Pennacchietti, “‘Books Written by the So-called Colonials or Half-bloods’: Italian Publishers’ Reception of Novels by the Windrush Writers in the 1950s and 1960s”, *Modern Italy*, 23.4 (2018), 411–28.

5 Mahler argues that Tricontinentalism offers a bridge between 1960s Third-Worldism and contemporary theorizations of the Global South. She distinguishes

fierce (and at some level justified) criticism of Fredric Jameson's formulation of 'Third World' literature in 1986. I wish to recount briefly this famous argument between the American and the Indian Marxist critics, and then suggest a different way for recuperating the term 'Third World' for a theory of resistance.

Jameson understands Third World Literature as relating to the countries that do not belong either to the First or the Second World, subjugated by foreign capital and imperialism, and suffering from the effects of underdevelopment; by extension, he argues, literature produced by intellectuals in these countries would bear the allegorical marks of this anti-imperialist struggle, thus producing what to western readers appear as crudely politicized narratives, with a rudimentary and instrumental use of realism.⁶ Ahmad, in his riposte to Jameson's essay, strongly contests his undifferentiated application of the term Third World to all countries outside of the western and socialist blocs, and again by extension, argues for the 'epistemological impossibility' of such a nebulous entity as Third World literature, which comprises a dizzying array of diverse languages, cultures, and political-economic orders.⁷ What neither critic fully considers in this specific debate—and this may be symptomatic of the amnesiac 1980s vis-à-vis the decolonization struggles of the 1960s—is the possibility that the Third World was actually a political project, rather than a shorthand for underdevelopment.⁸ In his essay, Jameson does mention Cuba and

the Tricontinental and the Global South political traditions from postcolonial studies, which 'has tended to emphasize an experience of colonization rather than a horizontalist ideological project' (see Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 17).

6 Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multi-National Capitalism', *Social Text*, 15 (Autumn, 1986), 65–88 (p. 67).

7 Aijaz Ahmad, 'Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the "National Allegory"', *Social Text*, 17 (Autumn, 1987), 3–25 (p. 5).

8 Elsewhere Ahmad elaborates on the notion of the 'Third World' and his issues with this category; see his essay 'Three Worlds Theory' in Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 287–319. As Neil Lazarus and Timothy Brennan have argued, the 1980s seem to usher in a period of forgetfulness in critical thought vis-à-vis the ideological energy of Third-Worldism; the focus shifts to the study of the postcolonial neo-liberal order, and theoretical frameworks also adopt a wider range of positions beyond that of Marxism. Postcolonial theory develops in the 1980s, drawing on post-structuralism and postmodernism as conceptual building blocks. Often the genealogy of the field, and its relationship to what Hala Halim calls the 'pre-postcolonial moment', gets lost in retrospective accounts. See Neil Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and Timothy Brennan, *Wars of Position: The Cultural Politics*

its tradition of studying 'cultural revolution' via global Third World thinkers such as Ho Chi Minh and Augustino Nieto, though he does not return to this more positive affirmation of the 'Third-World' as an intellectual formation later on in the essay.⁹

If we situate it as a political project, Third World(ist) thought and literature should not be understood from the perspective of readers shaped by, and located in, western capitalist societies. Rather than being a product 'for' the West, Third World writing operated along South-South reading circuits. Anne Garland Mahler eloquently argues for an understanding of Global South locations as independent of territoriality.¹⁰ My interpretation of 'Third World writing' in the context of this essay is closely aligned with Mahler's idea of the 'Tricontinentalist text'. This conception of the text refers to 'any cultural product that engages explicitly with the aesthetics and especially the discourse of Tricontinentalism, meaning it reflects a deterritorialized vision of imperial power and a recognition of imperialism and racial oppression as interlinked'.¹¹ It merges an anti-capitalist stance with an anti-racist commitment. Further below, I discuss Tricontinentalism as a global revolutionary strategy that developed in Cuba in 1966.

Third World writing was a literature of protest, but not necessarily aimed at a western reader, who is the implicit reader of Jameson's idea of 'Third World literature', as for example when he says that 'as western readers whose tastes (and much else) have been formed by our own modernisms, a popular or socially realistic Third World novel tends to come before us, not immediately, but as though already-read'.¹² The 'Third World novel' became such only when read by a First World reader; thus, on the one hand, it should be understood as a mode of reading, relating to the geo-political positionality of the reader, and on the other, as a mode of writing, namely as a kind of novel that comes out of the political experience of Third-Worldism. It is not coincidental that one of

of Left and Right (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Lazarus and Brennan seek to downplay the theoretical innovations of postcolonial studies by locating its intellectual origins within Marxism. Robert Young offers perhaps the fullest and most convincing account of postcolonialism's relationship with Third World Marxism in his *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

9 See Jameson, 'Third-World Literature', p. 75.

10 Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 6.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

12 Jameson, 'Third-World Literature', p. 66.

the authors Jameson discusses in the essay is Sembène Ousmane, whose filmic and literary work explicitly references anticolonial liberation and reflects on postcolonial relationships between blacks and whites in the aftermath of decolonization.

Jameson's national allegory model deeply informed the emerging field of postcolonial literary studies, and its presence is clearly felt in some of its seminal works such as *The Empire Writes Back*.¹³ But as Hala Halim says, 'the literature of riposte' and of 'the empire writing back,' which is 'one dominant model in Western postcolonial criticism, with its attendant anglophone and francophone literatures, while it commands a measure of descriptive purchase, retains for the empire a centrality that in reality was contested in the solidarities of Bandung and associated movements'.¹⁴ Third-Worldist publications like *Lotus* and *Tricontinental* 'instantiate the impetus to reorient intercultural dialogue, as no longer primarily between metropole and colony but between former colonies'. In other words, recuperating the Third World as a political project that drew its force from Non-Alignment, through the analysis of sympathetic editorial initiatives such as those conceived by Einaudi and Feltrinelli, can help reconstruct a cultural history of South-South exchanges, and also map the influence of Southern ideas of emancipation and human progress on Northern public spheres. Italian publishing initiatives helped to disseminate Third-Worldist ideas to national audiences, with the aim of educating their political consciousness and building transnational solidarity. As Mahler and

13 There is, of course, a rich critical debate on Jameson and Ahmad's famous exchange. Over the past few years, there have been positive re-evaluations of Jameson's position from scholars working within the 'combined and uneven development' approach to world literature; see for example Auritro Majumder, *Insurgent Imaginations: World Literature and the Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 28–35. Lazarus dedicates a long discussion to the debate in *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, where he argues that Ahmad's essay has been construed as the 'unanswerable' riposte of postcolonial studies to Jameson's supposedly Orientalist and essentializing concepts of national allegory and Third World literature. Lazarus spends much of the essay defending Jameson against Ahmad's critique and emphasizing the need to retrieve the Third-Worldist moment that helped to inspire Jameson's theorization. Lazarus's main aim here is to contextualize Third-Worldism within a global history of resistance to the capitalist world order. See Neil Lazarus, 'Jameson on Third-World Literature: A Defence', *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, pp. 89–113.

14 Hala Halim, 'Lotus, the Afro-Asian Nexus, and Global South Comparatism', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32.3 (2012), 563–83 (p. 571).

Young have both emphasized in their studies of Tricontinentalism and its cultural production emanating from Cuba, print culture was seen as instrumental in creating a Third World Left.¹⁵ However, at the same time, this political alignment did not match a corresponding aesthetic alignment; Italian publishers, even avant-garde ones like Feltrinelli and Einaudi, remained resistant to creative and literary work emerging from the (post)colonial world.

Third-Worldism also influenced a renewal of aesthetic taste gradually taking hold in the metropole. Arguably, Italian culture and literature after the second world war were informed by an internationalist outlook on Third World struggles, mediated and experienced through the memory of anti-fascist resistance.

In what follows, I analyze the dissemination of Third-Worldist texts in Italy thanks to the activities of Einaudi and Feltrinelli publishers. In the first section, I explore how Italian 'resistance literature' took shape in those years across anti-fascist and anticolonial contexts, through a look at publications in the Einaudi catalogue and discussing the key role played by Giovanni Pirelli in disseminating the message of the Algerian revolution via his edited collections of testimonies. In my discussion, 'testimony' is identified as a key form for anticolonial and anti-fascist narratives. In the second section, I discuss the extraordinary figure of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the 'millionaire publisher' who became close to Fidel Castro and whose sympathy for liberation struggles led him to produce an Italian version of *Tricontinental*, the publication coming out of revolutionary Cuba, key for understanding the articulation of Third-Worldist thought as an internationalist project and as distinctly non-aligned.

Giulio Einaudi and Giovanni Pirelli

Einaudi and Resistance Literature Across Antifascism and Anticolonialism

Publishing houses and other cultural firms were key players in shaping the Italian cultural sphere after 1945. They also focused public attention

15 See Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 7; Young, 'Disseminating the Tricontinental', pp. 522–23.

on anticolonial liberation struggles by translating works by Fanon, Cabral, Guevara, and other major Third-Worldists for Italian audiences. The editor Giulio Einaudi was particularly instrumental in helping to reconstruct Italian culture after the end of fascism, and was a highly committed and politicized publisher, with links to the Italian Communist Party and the more radical section of the Italian left; so much so that throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s (and beyond), the Einaudi book was perceived as 'explicitly militant'.¹⁶ Einaudi editors such as Italo Calvino, Giovanni Pirelli, and Raniero Panzieri were instrumental in creating a literary canon, later called *Letteratura della Resistenza*, that took on a multi-generic form. Narratives of the Resistance, relying as they did on testimony and documentary, traversed the categories of 'saggistica' (non-fiction) and 'narrativa' (fiction). But if we consider Einaudi's publication of what would become anti-fascist literary classics, such as Primo Levi's *If This is A Man* (1958) and Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (1945), alongside anticolonial/Third-Worldist writing about Algeria and Cuba, a more expansive canon of resistance writing emerges, authored by Italian intellectuals and artists who had fought in the Resistance and who now turned to anticolonial writing as an ideal continuation of their cause. Such 'resistance aesthetics', which draws on literary and artistic currents of the Italian post-war period like realism and neorealism, played a central role in re-imagining the Italian nation both in anti-fascist and in internationalist, anticolonial terms, and also widens the concept of resistance beyond Italy to encompass a shared solidarity with anticolonial struggle.

Even today, Einaudi remains a key force at the heart of Italian culture, wielding an immeasurably important influence on the literary tastes and political orientations of its readers. Giulio Einaudi founded the publishing house in 1933, and its first home was in the same building that housed Antonio Gramsci's journal, *L'Ordine Nuovo*, which helped to define Italian Communism and the future direction of the Italian Communist Party. Records of discussions among Einaudi editors just after the war reveal the enduring influence of Gramsci on the kind of role the publishing house saw itself as playing. Taking their cue from Gramsci's acclaimed text *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Literature and

16 Francesca Lolli, 'La Resistenza di un editore: Einaudi' in *Letteratura e Resistenza*, ed. by Andrea Bianchini and Francesca Lolli (Bologna: Clueb, 1997), 59–93 (p. 71).

National Life),¹⁷ editors such as Carlo Muscetta argued for the need of a 'more homogenous general direction which had as its inspirational criterion the concept of a national and popular culture'.¹⁸ And indeed Einaudi did take up this call to shape Italian post-war identity through the publication of key texts that attempted to respond to Gramsci's call for a literature that was marked by its 'going to the people' (*andata al popolo*). Not least among these editorial choices was the gradual publication of Gramsci's entire oeuvre.

A common thread in Einaudi's contribution to the construction of a national-popular culture after the war is a focus on 'civic commitment' and the ethical-political function of testimony with reference to the memory of anti-fascist struggle and resistance. Einaudi started several series in the immediate post-war period, including the 'Testimonianze' (Testimonies), which came from a perceived need to 'highlight in a specific series memories and writings on fascism, the war, and the partisan struggle [the Italian resistance]'.¹⁹ The creation of the category of 'resistance literature' by Einaudi was part of the editors' aims to create a 'popular literature' for Italy.

Reading the editorial correspondence of the 1950s and 1960s, which featured the interventions of some of the most important Italian intellectuals of the twentieth century—Calvino, Pavese, Einaudi, Panzieri, Pirelli, and many others—reveals the *process* through which these editors saw themselves as actively involved in the development of culture. This is a role that today we might consider to be that of universities or cultural institutions, but in the Italy of those years, Einaudi took on this mandate, which was very Gramscian in its focus on civil society and on the books that could influence it.

17 Gramsci's *Letteratura e vita nazionale* first came out in 1950 with Einaudi. Einaudi had a dedicated series for Gramsci works, called *Opere di Antonio Gramsci*. The first book by Gramsci to come out in Italy were the *Lettere dal carcere*, published by Einaudi in 1947, inaugurating the Einaudi Gramsci series. Einaudi eventually published the authoritative and full version of Gramsci's *Quaderni del carcere* in 1975, edited by Valentino Gerratana.

18 Carlo Muscetta quoted in Luisa Mangoni, *Pensare i libri. La casa editrice Einaudi dagli anni trenta agli anni sessanta* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1999), p. 607.

19 *Le edizioni Einaudi negli anni 1933–1998* (Turin: Einaudi, 1999), p. 785.

Einaudi and Resistance Literature

Einaudi in the early post-war years built up publishing lists that focused on stories and themes from the Italian Resistance, texts that subsequently became classics of Italian literature and were taught widely in schools (by Italo Calvino, Cesare Pavese, Beppe Fenoglio, Renata Viganò among many others). The *Resistenza's* historical and political meanings for post-war Italy were still being debated in the 1950s–1960s; but the publication of memorials and testimonies, as well as fictional texts about the Resistance by *ex-partigiani*, in many ways contributed to its construction. One of the main aims of Resistance testimony was to create an anti-fascist political consciousness; more broadly, the kinds of testimony that Einaudi published, and which spanned anti-fascist and anticolonial narratives, were intended to produce political change among their readership.

Einaudi's cultural work in those years helped to give shape to a literary canon, *letteratura della Resistenza*, which took on a multi-generic, indeed multi-disciplinary nature. A look at the Einaudi catalogue of the 1940s and 1950s shows that narratives of the Resistance were not easily placed in a single series.²⁰ Einaudi had a series called 'Saggi', literally 'essays', whose very name obviously evoked what publishers today call 'non-fiction', and another one called 'Coralli' (Corals), defined as 'narrativa', which in English would be translated as 'fiction'. Both Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli* and Primo Levi's *If This is a Man* (second edition, published in 1958) came out in the Saggi. The latter was first published by Einaudi in 1958 (the first 1947 edition had come out with a different publisher) and was a huge commercial and critical success. It was subsequently re-published in the Coralli series, signalling its interchangeability across the historical, essayistic and fictional genres.

All four of Giovanni Pirelli's anthologies of letters about resistance struggles came out in the Saggi. There was an emphasis on truthful, unadorned, and anti-rhetorical testimonies, which can be connected to neo-realism as an aesthetic that rejected fascist stylistic pompousness and triumphalism in favour of a re-invigorated, as in re-politicized, recourse to realism. Two of these anthologies collected letters by resistance fighters in the war against fascism, namely, *Lettere di*

20 Ibid.

condannati a morte della resistenza italiana (Letters of Italian resistance fighters sentenced to death, 1952), and *Lettere dei condannati a morte della resistenza europea* (Letters of European resistance fighters sentenced to death, 1954), and the other two collected letters and testimonies from resistance fighters and children involved in the Algerian revolution against French colonial occupation, namely *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina* (Letters of the Algerian Revolution, 1963), and *Racconti di bambini di Algeria* (Stories of Children from Algeria, 1962). *The Diary of Anne Frank* was published in the Saggi in 1954, and Nuto Revelli's grassroots history of the Italian Resistance, *La guerra dei poveri* (The War of the Poor) in 1962 (the same year Einaudi published Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*).²¹

The Saggi list gives us a snapshot of the educational function assigned to this series, and the series description conveys the felt need to educate and acculturate the Italian public: 'The Saggi have indicated and developed a series of cultural pathways always underpinned by a strong civic commitment. In addition to literature and philosophical essays, architecture, music, figurative art, cinema, music, etc. figure prominently in the Series'. It is further defined as a 'cultural library'.²²

The mixture of documentary and narrative/fictional elements meant their genre shifted between the essayistic and the literary; choosing which Einaudi series to assign a book to took on a status that was analogous to defining its literary genre. For example, Calvino's great first novel, a work set during the partisan struggle, *Path of the Spiders' Nests* (1947) was published in the Coralli, the fiction line. Einaudi's editorial process illustrates a national literature in the making through the work of publishing and canon-formation. Literature of and about the Resistance assumed an educational function, with the aim to teach future generations about ethical resistance against fascism. This ethical impulse was connected to the central role played by testimonial literature.

21 All of Carlo Levi's works, including *Paura della libertà* and *L'orologio* that dealt with Resistance themes, were first published in the Saggi. Other significant texts include Sergei Eisenstein's *Tecnica del cinema*, György Lukács's *Saggi sul realismo*, Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, and later Mario Tronti's *Operai e capitale*, a defining text of the Italian workerist movement. See *Le edizioni Einaudi negli anni 1933–1998*, p. 245.

22 *Le edizioni Einaudi negli anni 1933–1998*.

Einaudi as Publisher of Texts on the Algerian Resistance

In these same years, Einaudi published a series of books on decolonization struggles and Third World thought. An especial focus was the Algerian war of liberation against colonial France.²³ Titles published by Einaudi in this area include the journalist Raffaello Ubaldi's *Servizio proibito* (Forbidden Reporting, 1957), the first Italian report on wartime Algeria, Henri Alleg's *La Question* (*The Question*, published as *La tortura* in 1958 in the Libri Bianchi series), André Mandouze's *La révolution algérienne par les textes* (*The Texts of the Algerian Revolution*, 1961, published in Italian with the title *La rivoluzione algerina nei suoi documenti*, translated by Giovanni Pirelli), Pirelli's two books of testimonies about the Algerian war (which I discuss further below) and, most importantly, most of Frantz Fanon's published work. Einaudi was probably the first editor in the world to publish a translation of *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*): this came out in Italian as *I dannati della terra* in 1962, in the Libri Bianchi series. *A Dying Colonialism* was published in Italian as *Sociologia della rivoluzione algerina* in 1963, again in the Libri Bianchi series.²⁴ Most of the editors in the publishing house, especially Einaudi himself, were very supportive of the Algerian cause.

Pirelli played a key role in publishing texts about the Algerian revolution. He and Einaudi worked closely with Maspero in France, and often these texts appeared simultaneously, or a few months apart, with Einaudi and with Maspero.²⁵ Laura Gonsalez, who also worked for

23 Mariamargherita Scotti compares the concerted effort on the part of Italian editors to publish texts on revolutionary Algeria with the '*guerre des éditeurs*' (war of the editors) that took place in France, where politically committed editors like François Maspero and others attempted to bypass censorship of Algerian issues during the war with France by disseminating books and journals via underground channels; Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli. Tra cultura e impegno militante* (Rome: Donzelli, 2018), p. 140.

24 For a full account of the publication of Fanon's oeuvre in Italian, see my essay 'Translating Resistance'.

25 These include much of Fanon's oeuvre and Pirelli's collections of Algerian testimonies mentioned earlier. I discuss the editorial history connecting Einaudi, Pirelli and Fanon with reference to archival correspondence, in my essay 'Translating Resistance'.

the publishing house, was an important translator of Fanon, and also edited and translated a collection of Ernesto Che Guevara's writings for Einaudi.²⁶

The focus on Algeria was partly due to the special status in the numerous anticolonial struggles that characterized the era of decolonization between the 1950s and 1960s. It was widely considered a model for other anticolonial revolutions taking place across the African continent, and in the 1960s and early 1970s, Algiers became known as capital of the Third World (and of course was prominent among the non-aligned nations).

In Italy, the Algerian war 'had an extraordinary moral and civil echo'.²⁷ This solidarity for Algeria cut across the political spectrum; the Democrazia Cristiana, the party in power, supported a pro-Arab policy more generally, and the Italian Communist Party was the most proactive of all European communist parties in providing both ideological and concrete support to the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) that led the country to independence.²⁸ The FLN was provided with offices in the PCI headquarters in Via delle Botteghe Oscure in Rome.

Cultural manifestations in support of the war were profoundly linked to Italy's strong sympathy towards Algeria. In the progressive press of the time, Algeria came to take on the role of a 'pre-Vietnam' moment, with headlines in a November 1961 issue of the Communist paper *L'Unità* announcing a demonstration through the centre of Rome students and activists supporting the Algerian cause (Fig. 4.2).²⁹

This sympathy can be linked to Italy's 're-discovery' of its Mediterranean vocation in the post-war period, as part of a politics of power and sphere of influence in the region.³⁰ According to Giulio

26 See Ernesto Che Guevara, *Diari, scritti e discorsi di guerriglia. 1959–1967*, ed. by Laura Gonzalez (Turin: Einaudi, 1969).

27 Sergio Romano, 'Osservazioni in margine a un libro' in *Italia e Algeria: Aspetti storici di un'amicizia mediterranea*, ed. by Romain Rainero (Milan: Marzorati, 1982), pp. 9–22 (17).

28 Stéphane Mourlane, radio interview 'La Fabrique de l'Histoire: Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie 4' (2010), <http://www.fabriquedesens.net/La-Fabrique-de-l-Histoire-Histoire>, 414

29 'Corteo di giovani manifesta per la libertà dell'Algeria', *L'Unità* (November 4, 1961), p. 2.

30 The Italian entrepreneur Enrico Mattei, head of ENI, the Italian national energy company, played an important role in establishing Italy's influence across the decolonizing Mediterranean, especially in countries like Algeria. ENI presented

Attraverso le strade del centro

Corteo di giovani manifesta per la libertà dell'Algeria



La bandiera dell'Algeria alla testa del corteo

Bandiere del F.L.N.
e cartelli di condanna
dei massacri francesi

Centinaia di giovani hanno partecipato ieri con entusiasmo alla manifestazione di solidarietà con il popolo algerino che era stata indotta dalla Unione goliardica italiana. Studenti, lavoratori, ragazze hanno ricordato a migliaia di cittadini la tragedia che da sette anni sta vivendo un popolo intero. Il grido «Algeria, Algeria», le bandiere bianche e verdi del F.L.N., i cartelli di condanna per le atrocità commesse dal «pari» e dalla polizia francese, hanno rappresentato il simbolo dello spirito internazionalista della parte migliore della gioventù romana.

Prima di manifestare nelle strade, i giovani si sono riuniti in assemblea nel salone di Palazzo Marignoli dove il presidente nazionale dell'Uci, Andrea Margheri, ha parlato a nome di tutti gli universitari e democratici. L'oratore ha sottolineato con forza la connessione tra la repressione colonialista in Francia, tra il rafforzamento degli «ultras» e la maggior tracollata in Europa del «partito della guerra».

Al termine della riunione è stato formato il corteo. I giovani, gridando la loro appassionata condanna per la «sporca guerra» hanno attraversato il Corso e via del Tritone raggiungendo piazza Barberini, dove poi tornati sul loro passo ed infine si sono diretti verso piazza di Spagna. Non si sono avuti incidenti perché una volta tanto la polizia ha preferito non disturbare la manifestazione.

La manifestazione si è chiusa al canto degli inni della Resistenza.

Celebrazione del 4 novembre

Quest'anno il 4 novembre, anniversario della Vittoria, avrà una particolare solennità coincidendo con la manifestazione

Sciopero dei tassisti dipendenti

I tassisti dipendenti dalle aziende industriali (circa 500) hanno effettuato ieri un comitato sciopero contro due arbitrati licenziamenti disposti dalle ditte Salati e Piccini. Attraverso le Commissioni interne e i sindacati hanno chiesto la revoca di tali licenziamenti, ma i concessionari hanno opposto un secco rifiuto. Pertanto l'azione sindacale sarà insospirata nei prossimi giorni.

Il testone affisso sui muri

Il testone musulmano è ricomparso da alcuni giorni sui muri di molte strade. Il manifesto, che contiene l'immagine uno «storico pensiero» sulla Cina non reca alcuna firma. Chi lo ha fatto stampare? Chi lo ha distribuito? A chi porta la macchia «resistenziale»? Il mistero serpeggia attonabilmente e copre la salita civiltà che è in ascesa.

In tale caso si sa: il manifesto è stato incollato sui

Le borgate nel piano regolatore

Ieri, mattina decisa di riaperta, i rappresentanti dei Consorzi fuori piano regolatore, accompagnati dall'assessore Ciano e Venturi, dai consiglieri comunali Franchellucci e Lieta, e dal segretario dell'Unione Consorzi Vignolo Melandri, si sono recati al ministero dei Lavori Pubblici.

Una delegazione dei lottisti è stata ricevuta dal capo di Gabinetto e dall'ing. Valle, presidente del Consiglio superiore

Fig. 4.2 Unknown photographer, *L'Unità* (4 November 1961), p. 2. 'A procession of young people marches for the freedom of Algeria.'

Valabrega, from 1958 onwards, the Italian left began to take a real interest in the Algerian liberation struggle, and towards the end of the 1950s the war began to be seen as a Mediterranean, not just a European, issue. This interest coincided with the strengthened importance given to the public memory of anti-fascist struggle, that opposed reactionary tendencies, and called for an international anticolonial solidarity.³¹ Italy's support

itself as an equal trading partner, supposedly replacing the paternalistic attitude of colonizers with a fraternal one, and explicitly distancing itself from neo-colonialism. Highlighting this kind of involvement allows us to complicate and enrich schematic narratives of decolonization with the intricate discourses of aid and cooperation that emerged from Italy. For an excellent discussion of ENI and Mattei, see Erica Bellia, 'Industrial Writing and Anticolonial Discourse in Italy, 1955–1965' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2021), pp. 39–45.

31 Giulio Valabrega, 'La questione algerina a Milano', *Italia e Algeria: Aspetti storici di un'amicizia mediterranea*, ed. by Romain Rainero (Milan: Marzorati, 1982), 313–29 (pp. 314–15).

for Algeria markedly distinguished it from France, where the ex-colony played an ambivalent, often negative role in the collective memory, and among the NATO countries, Italy was one of the closest to the group of non-aligned nations that had participated in the Bandung conference in 1955. However, Italian anticolonialism was not accompanied by a critical reflection on Italy's own colonial past.³²

Echoing their nations' attitudes towards the war, the Italian Communist Party strongly supported the Algerian FLN, unlike the French Communist Party, which displayed an ambivalent and at times hostile attitude to the FLN's aims and objectives. The PCI was praised by the FLN at the conference of Algiers in 1963 (after independence) for having given it the strongest support among the European left parties and the biggest contribution to helping it define the 'Algerian path to socialism'.³³ The Italian left represented by the PCI did indeed support Algerian independence on quite an exceptional level.³⁴

Giovanni Pirelli's Algerian Testimonies

The anti-fascist partisan and anticolonial/Third-Worldist activist, Giovanni Pirelli, who refused to take over one of Italy's great industrial complexes from his father Alberto, was a major presence within the editorial team at Einaudi.³⁵ He was a shareholder of the Giulio Einaudi publishing house and his opinion was highly respected. Pirelli became interested in the Algerian war of liberation against the French in the late 1950s, and played a central role in setting up an FLN support network in Italy.³⁶ He subsequently became close friends with Fanon between 1960

32 See Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2005) on this point.

33 Paolo Borruso, *Il PCI e l'Africa indipendente. Apogeo e crisi di un'utopia socialista (1956–1989)* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2009), p. 81.

34 See Giulio Valabrega for an account of the many cultural and political initiatives that arose throughout Italy, but especially in Milan, in support of the Algerian cause. Among these, he mentions the work of Pirelli and the informal network of support that he and many other prominent left intellectuals created for the people of Algeria; Valabrega, 'La questione algerina a Milano', p. 321.

35 See Alberto Pirelli, Giovanni Pirelli, and Elena Brambilla, *Legami e conflitti. Lettere 1931–1965* (Milan: Archinto, 2002).

36 See Tullio Ottolini, 'Giovanni Pirelli e la guerra d'indipendenza algerina: tra attivismo intellettuale e *soutien* concreto' in *Giovanni Pirelli intellettuale del Novecento*, ed. by Mariamargherita Scotti (Milan, Mimesis, 2016), pp. 94–95; and Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli*, pp. 132–33.

and 1961 during a series of encounters in Tunis, where the Martinican psychiatrist was in exile.

Pirelli's third collection of letters, *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina* (Letters of the Algerian Revolution, 1963), edited with Patrick Kessel, consisted mainly of testimonies about the repression and torture of Algerians during the war (it was published in French at the same time with Maspero under the title *Le peuple algérien et la guerre: lettres et témoignages 1954–1961*).³⁷ In planning his *Letters of the Algerian Revolution*, Pirelli wanted it to become a chapter of Algerian history, rather than merely part of a French account, sympathetic and self-critical though it might be. The war of liberation had to be narrated by the Algerians themselves, and hence could not include French testimony.

In Pirelli's research and in his collections of testimonies, the concept of Resistance gradually expands from Italy out to Europe, and ultimately encompasses Algeria's liberation struggle from French colonial rule. The Resistance loses its initially 'national' scope and is universalized so as to include the condition of man in any situation of oppression. Pirelli's three collections of letters, all written in the first person, constitute an example of a new conception of literature and history, which privileges testimony and the first-hand experiences of those directly involved in the conflicts. All three books are not memoirs but rather document a very recent past. His first book of *Letters* by the Italian *partigiani* condemned to death is involved in constructing an idea of the Resistance for the Italian public, barely seven years after the end of the war, when the meanings of this event were not yet stable and fixed, and indeed were still contested.

This concept of writing flows into Pirelli's aesthetic and historical project of the *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina*, again published just after the end of the Algerian war, in 1963. His aim here was to hear from the Algerians themselves. What emerges is a history of the war where the Algerians are protagonists. In their introduction, Kessel and Pirelli note that almost all the documentation relative to the war was from French sources, and they are trying to provide an alternative account through Algerian testimonies and letters, which would attempt to equate it with the 'experience of the European resistance' rather than from the perspective of a liberal paternalism in which Algeria appeared as the

37 *Lettere della Rivoluzione algerina*, ed. by Patrick Kessel and Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1963).

victim, rather than the protagonist, of a war of liberation.³⁸ In Pirelli's *Letters of the Algerian Revolution*, we read accounts of torture, suppression, violence, murder. But the intentions of the editors, as expressed in the preface, made it very clear that the kind of testimonies they chose to include were not there to evoke pity or affect, and indeed they suggested a specific pathway of reading:

The letters present us for the first time with a mass of Algerian texts, born out of the struggle and the suffering of an entire people. To read them with a sentimental and passionate attitude—with horror, anger, outrage—would mean to misconstrue [*svisare*] the sense and rationale of this collection. A careful reading, on the other hand, allows us to identify in the letters certain original aspects of the Algerian experience.³⁹

Though the collection's title contains the word 'letters', in fact the documents included in it presented a wide range of texts, most of them never before published. Many were letters written to newspapers or lawyers denouncing the various forms of colonial violence that had been perpetrated against their authors, and some were collective letters written by inhabitants of a village or community that had been attacked by French colonial forces. Others were sort of political autobiographies of Algerian militants. The texts were chosen for their ability to demonstrate the coming to political consciousness of Algerian prisoners and victims of torture through their own description of their ordeals. As Kessel and Pirelli explain in their Editors' Note, 'the common element of these letters is their personal character. That is, they originated in situations that directly concern their author or of which he is the direct interpreter, and they have a practical and immediate aim, even where the author is not addressing an individual, but rather intends to reach a large audience with their testimony'.⁴⁰ For this reason, they excluded letters that, though they were testimonies, could be seen as journalistic or literary, or as 'official' writing.⁴¹ Testimony as a *form* here is clearly delineated: it is personal, direct, communication, in which the presentation of atrocity and trauma is left to the reader to process without explicit authorial

38 Patrick Kessel and Giovanni Pirelli, 'Prefazione', *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina*, p. xxv.

39 Ibid., p. xxvii.

40 Kessel and Pirelli, 'Nota dei curatori', p. xxxi.

41 Ibid.

mediation. The intention behind the fashioning of these distressing accounts is clearly political and not literary or emotional.

The language of the letters tends towards representational transparency, and the power of denunciation lies in the factual exposition of horrific violence, in the way a legal testimony might be. An example is the letter written by Gilberte Salem-Alleg, the wife of the well-known anticolonialist campaigner Henry Alleg, editor of the pro-Algerian newspaper *Alger Républicain* and author of a famous text denouncing the use of torture against Algerians in the course of the war of independence, *La Question* (the Italian translation of this text, as mentioned earlier, had been published by Einaudi in 1958). Salem-Alleg presents her own experience of being interrogated by a French officer about the whereabouts of her husband in simple, chilling language, that immediately establishes Salem-Alleg's intention, namely to communicate her husband's imminent peril:

If my husband is still alive, today he is in mortal danger! [...] Several times a day I've been interrogated by officials and by a non-commissioned officer (who spent five years in Indochina) who for an entire afternoon gave an erotic-political speech filled with questions and threats. I didn't immediately grasp it was an interrogation. 'You should think about your children, it's hard, you know, to lose one's mother when one is young; I know this by experience...' In the meantime he played with a revolver, he would drop the bullets onto the table, he would put them back in the gun and he would make me realize that there was always a loaded bullet in it.⁴²

Gilberte's is a contained account compared to the letter from her husband Henri, which she includes as part of her testimony. Henri, in his letter, describes in detail the personal tortures he underwent at the hand of French paras and officers, and offers a political context for their actions. One officer begins to strangle him with his necktie, all the while slapping him violently in the face. At the same time, he says: 'What we do here we will do in France. What we do to you we'll do to Mitterrand, to Duclos! This is the Gestapo! [...] No one knows you've been arrested, you'll croak, and we'll also fuck that whore of your [French] Republic'.⁴³ Henri is presenting his own individual ordeals as the expression of

42 Gilberte Salem-Alleg, 'Lettera aperta di Gilberte Salem-Alleg' in *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina*, p. 172.

43 Ibid., p. 176.

French colonialist fascist views held by his torturers, bitterly antagonistic of the perceived reformism towards the Algerian question symbolized by the politician François Mitterrand and one of the leaders of the French Communist party, Jacques Duclos.

Not all the letters share this descriptive-factual mode. The prominent FLN activist and freedom fighter Zohra Drif, in a letter to her lawyer, presents an acute political analysis of the liberation struggle, exemplifying the consciousness of Algerian nationalism that Kessel and Pirelli were keen on retrieving from the Letters. Addressing the French metaphorically, she exclaims: 'You say you have suffered under the German occupation? You have certainly experienced atrocities, but we, we have been suffering, morally, materially, for 127 years! You have taken away from us the most wonderful thing a people can have, our personality, the consciousness of our personality! What are we? Neither European nor Arab, a bad copy of the European, a shadow of the Arab. Our past? Non-existent!'⁴⁴

The locations of the letters vary, testifying to the international and transnational dimensions of the war: Algeria (both rural and urban), and France are the two main locations; but a very prominent role is played by letters coming from the Algerian internment camps.⁴⁵ For European readers, this was an obvious reminder of the concentrationary universe of the Nazi extermination camps, and indeed this analogy was used by the FLN and French anticolonialists for propaganda purposes. The intertextual link with Pirelli's Italian and European letters emerges in this interest to recuperate the human diversity of the Resistance: young, old, educated, uneducated, male, female. Members of the Algerian Resistance came from all strata of society, much like the European one to fascism—Resistance was the expression of a *people*, and yet composed of distinct individuals each with their own story. Pirelli's books aim to highlight the common basis of the anti-fascist and anticolonial project, and his intention to recover an untold and subaltern archive of voices and subjects involved in this Resistance.

44 Zohra Drif, 'Lettera di Zohra Drif all'avvocato Pierre Gautherat del foro di Parigi' in *Lettere della rivoluzione algerina*, p. 189.

45 A section entitled 'Mondo concentrationario in Algeria, 1957' (Concentrationary world in Algeria, 1957) includes collective letters from the interned people in these camps; *ibid.*

The size of the book—over 770 pages—and the variety of the testimonies enclosed within it suggest that even more than an anthology, the book could be considered an emerging historical archive of the Algerian revolution. The narration of events in the war through Algerian eyes offer an alternative history in the absence of official Algerian accounts, a sourcebook, as it were, for future historians of the war.⁴⁶ Pirelli also believed that publishing these documents would contribute to greater international support for the Algerian cause. He considered this attention to Third World political struggle as part of a growing interest of Italian historiography in the Resistance and the workers' movement.

Yet For Pirelli, this type of scholarship, far from being a 'subaltern history' (namely subordinated to more mainstream narratives—thus recalling Gramsci's prevalent use of this term in the *Prison Notebooks*), was 'now being considered as a component of general historical problems', as Pirelli wrote to his father in 1956.⁴⁷ Reading the letters is a non-linear experience, given the various and discontinuous forms that testimony takes here. This method of compilation seems to follow Gramsci's idea that subaltern histories are by definition more fragmentary than retrievable via a systematic approach. As in the case of Pirelli's Letters from the Italian and European Resistance, his subalternist history in *Letters of Algerians* strove to establish a counter-discourse around the meanings pertaining to the Algerian war, which were highly contested in the French public sphere, though they found more traction among the Italian public.

The *Letters* were sure to appeal and strike the sensibility of a European reader, however they were not aimed at evoking pathos, but rather at developing political militancy among its readers; in other words, the editors focused on creating a sense of solidarity with the Algerians who had written the letters.

Pirelli's other book about the Algerian war was a collection of children's testimonies and drawings about the conflict, *Racconti di bambini d'Algeria* (Stories of Algerian children). These were Algerian

46 See Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli*, p. 136. Pirelli in 1961 noted that what distinguished the Algerian revolution from previous anticolonial struggles was its will to create a national historical archive of its process; this demonstrated its political maturity and made it an exemplary anticolonial movement.

47 Pirelli, Pirelli, and Brambilla, *Legami e conflitti*, p. 188.

child refugees that Pirelli and Jacques Charby interviewed. The children could express their response both verbally and through drawings. The dust jacket blurb mentions that the book was coming out at a time in which the Algerian people were finally able to return to their liberated homeland, adding: 'If the most decisive denunciation of Nazism came from a young city girl, Anne Frank, these country children... express the same definitive denunciation of colonialism. With them, begins the Nuremberg of Algeria' (Fig. 4.3).⁴⁸



Fig. 4.3 Dustjacket, *Lettere dei bambini d'Algeria*, ed. by Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1962).

The editorial packaging of this book clearly aimed at highlighting analogies between the experiences of the Algerian people and those of the Jews, with the explicit parallel between these testimonies of Algerian children and Anne Frank's *Diary*. The book was published in 1962, in the very months in which Algeria was forming an independent government after the Evian accords. The repeated evocation of the Nazi persecution against Jews was used by the Einaudi editors (and especially Pirelli) to frame the Algerian experience for their Italian readers, through instantly recognizable analogies with the experience of the Holocaust. It was published in the Einaudi Saggi Collection, a series that privileged historical and political testimony, as mentioned earlier.

⁴⁸ *Racconti di bambini d'Algeria*, ed. by Giovanni Pirelli (Turin: Einaudi, 1962), dust jacket cover.

This collection was quite different from the previous *Letters from the Algerian Revolution*. The testimonies of the children are generally much briefer, much more evocative in the gaps and elisions of the narrative of trauma being expressed. Most crucially, unlike the *Letters*, some of which were bald chronicles or even lists at times, they read as *stories* (presumably also due to the structure of the interview format). The written or recorded testimonies are interspersed with striking drawings and paintings by the children themselves, which include depictions of tortures, fighting, killings, and dead bodies.⁴⁹ As with his other anthology, Pirelli was keen to avoid sentimentalism: in his preface, he explained that his aim was to 'provide a collection of significant and truthful testimonies'. For this reason, he and his collaborators had discarded the stories in which it was felt that children were trying to 'force reality' to garner sympathy or pity.⁵⁰ Instead, we find several examples of stories where the children offer short but acute analyses of the French-Algerian conflict and the reasons behind it, as for example Abdelhamid Yousfi's story, which ends with the following statement: 'France says we will not know how to govern Algeria. I am sure we will know how to govern it'.⁵¹

The idea of resistance aesthetics as it emerges in the publications and correspondence of the publisher Einaudi in the years after decolonization, demonstrates a series of recurring features: art as testimony, history, education, collective narrative, and subalternist perspective. An opening of Italian literature to the world, which also means to different world aesthetics, happens through a commitment to Third-Worldism, though not to a rapprochement to Third World literature, which, as I have been arguing, needs to be understood as a politically oriented literary genre, rather than as an indicator of geographical provenance. The representation of African decolonization in the work of Pirelli, also through his careful curating of Fanon's oeuvre for an Italian public, is intimately connected to his 'resistance aesthetics': the expression of a particular conjunctural moment in Italian culture

49 Pirelli financed the project almost entirely on his own, and supplied all the art material that the children used for the drawings; see Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli*, p. 142.

50 Preface, *Racconti di bambini d'Algeria*, p. 11.

51 Abdelhamid Yousfi, in *Racconti di bambini d'Algeria*, p. 137.

which transforms this work into an internationalist text that aspires to transcend their European perspective, and in doing so become 'world' texts. The voice and image of the colonized, and the ethical questions implicit in this representation, are at the centre of the poetic reflection in each of these narratives.

It might be objected that such a reading of Pirelli's works of Algerian testimony unduly privileges his European subject-position over the Algerian voice, given that the selection process was performed by him and his European collaborators. However, it also explores how a radical and effective anticolonial politics, respectful of the Algerian ownership of the historical record, can be conducted from metropolitan locations. Art assumes a privileged role in this politics, because 'art manifests a radical hospitality to what Adorno calls the singular and non-identical'.⁵² Estrangement and empathy, rather than a Eurocentric assimilation, are key features of this resistance aesthetics. Despite the fact that the children's stories were marketed to a European audience as akin to the *Diary of Anne Frank*, Pirelli resolutely rejected any facile analogies. Giulio Valabrega had proposed to Pirelli to do a joint collection of stories of Jewish children under Nazism and Arab children during the Algerian war. But Pirelli refused, explaining in a letter to Valabrega that such a project would risk becoming a mere appeal to a generic anti-fascist liberal conscience among its European public, rather than allowing for specific political demands to emerge out of the publication of these testimonies.⁵³ He felt that an indiscriminate grouping together of the Jewish and Algerian experiences meant depoliticizing and diluting the impact of the Revolution on international public opinion.

As I have discussed in this section, Einaudi's privileging of political testimony and writing from and about the Third World meant that *literature* from the Third World was less relevant to their editorial vision. In the following section, I examine Feltrinelli's editorial project around Third-Worldism, which took different forms from that of Pirelli and Einaudi, but which nevertheless reveals the profound influence that anticolonial theories and practices emanating from the Third World had on Italian intellectual culture: anticolonial revolution had

52 Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-siècle Radicalism, and The Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 173.

53 See Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli*, p. 143.

a transformative, though under-appreciated impact on European left thought. There were, of course, limits to this influence—but the point here is not so much to decry the obvious shortcomings of Italian Third-Worldism (which was characterized by a strong colour-blindness, among other things), but rather to uncover and valorize a tradition of Italian thought that engaged in a dialogue with, and built on, Third-Worldist ideas.

Giangiacomo Feltrinelli and Tricontinentalism

As discussed above, Pirelli was heavily involved in initiatives showcasing the Algerian cause to the Italian public. In June 1962, soon after Algeria became independent, he helped to set up a large exhibition in Milan entitled 'La nazione Algeria. Mostra di fotografie e documenti sulla lotta di liberazione del popolo algerino' (Nation Algeria: an exhibition of photographs and documents on the liberation struggle of the Algerian people). According to Pirelli's biographer Mariamargherita Scotti, many anti-fascist intellectuals acted as patrons, including the left-wing and fabulously wealthy Milanese editor Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.⁵⁴ Despite some supposed disagreements between them, when we examine Feltrinelli's editorial projects around Third-Worldism we discover a remarkably similar intellectual journey to that of Pirelli in terms of his lifetime commitment to anticolonial causes.

Feltrinelli's publishing house, founded in 1955, remains one of the most influential and widely known in Italy even today. Early on, Feltrinelli had conceived of creating a publishing house that combined distribution with editing; the Feltrinelli bookshops quickly became an iconic presence in many Italian cities. Carlo Feltrinelli mentions in his biography of his father that Giangiacomo both founded some bookshops in Milan and also took over some existing bookshops in Pisa, Rome, Milan and Genoa.⁵⁵ This holistic approach to book production surely helped to ensure the outstanding success of Feltrinelli Editore over the years. The idea was to create books that were cheap and pocket-size, not elite products, reflecting the progressive views of the

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 134. Dr Scotti has also very kindly shared with me the brochure of the exhibition on Algeria which mentions Feltrinelli's name as one of the organizers.

⁵⁵ See Feltrinelli, *Senior Service*, p. 95.

publisher. Feltrinelli's business vision was shaped by his interest in internationalist causes, which showed in his editorial choices from the start. One of the first two books he published in 1955 was Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography* (originally published in 1936 by Bodley Head); the other was Langley Russell's *The Scourge of the Swastika: A Short History of Nazi War Crimes* (originally published by Cassell 1954). Both books were linked to the guiding principles behind the founding of the publishing house: a 'consequential and consistent anti-fascism' and the search for a co-existence among different social and political structures that also meant support for self-determination of Third World and postcolonial countries coming to independence in those years (1950s and 1960s).⁵⁶

As was the case with Einaudi, the early years of Feltrinelli's publishing activities participated in the general post-war push to renovate Italian society and culture and were strongly supported by the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Palmiro Togliatti, the Secretary of the PCI, endorsed the founding of Feltrinelli Editore, by taking part in the initial planning discussions in the mid-1950s.⁵⁷ Feltrinelli was therefore taking advantage of the changing cultural atmosphere in Italy, the opening to progressive ideas, to internationalism and Third-Worldism.

Like Einaudi, Feltrinelli published several books about the Algerian struggle. These included *Algeria fuorilegge* (Outlaw Algeria, 1956) by Colette and Francis Jeanson, who would head the famous Jeanson network, a group of Europe-based militants sympathetic to and supportive of the Algerian cause (Pirelli was also part of this network and contributed financially to it).⁵⁸ Feltrinelli also published a photo-reportage, *Algerini in guerra* (The Algerians at war, 1961) by two French journalists, Dominique Darbois and Philippe Vigneu, with numerous photographs illustrating the struggle of the FLN. The words 'partisan' and 'resistance' recur in all these anticolonial publications and make an explicit reference to the memories of the European anti-fascist resistance: 'Photographs of battles, stories of ambushes, scenes of partisan life that we have already lived through [...] did we really have

56 Ibid., p. 80.

57 Ibid., p. 81.

58 See Scotti, *Vita di Giovanni Pirelli*, pp. 132–33.

to start again with all of this less than ten years after the end of the war? Was it for this that we fought?'.⁵⁹ The 'we' of this remark addresses ex- anti-fascist partisans, registering the consciousness of shared ideals across anti-fascism and anticolonialism. Many prominent Italian ex-partisans (*partigiani*) both theoretically and practically supported the decolonization movements of the 1950s and 1960s. This support had much to do with a disillusionment with the rigid polarities of Cold War ideologies, and a growing sense that the most exciting revolutionaries were coming from outside Europe.

Even more than in Algeria, though, Feltrinelli became extremely involved in the Cuban Revolution. He visited Havana several times, getting close to Fidel Castro, and sponsored several projects, including a planned memoir of Castro; his son Carlo recounts amusing anecdotes of his father visiting Havana, waiting for hours for an audience, and then sharing epic dinners of 'spaghetti alla Fidel Castro' and long discussions with the Cuban leader well into the Caribbean night.⁶⁰

1967 is a key year for tracking the Third-Worldist orientation of the Feltrinelli publications. That year, the publishing house came out with a new, cheap series, called 'Edizioni della Libreria', produced in their Milan bookshop: 'political pamphlets of significant interest [...] These are documents and texts that are necessary for the political formation of militants'.⁶¹ The first pamphlets were about Italy, but then the Third World took centre stage. Feltrinelli began producing a sub-series within the Edizioni della libreria called 'Documenti della rivoluzione dell'America Latina' (Documents of the Latin American Revolution), which published 49 titles and featured classics such as Ernesto Che Guevara's *Two, Three, Many Vietnams* (1967) and Régis Debray's *Rivoluzione nella rivoluzione?* (*Revolution within a Revolution?*, 1967), as well as many other texts by Castro, the collected speeches pronounced at the Cultural Congress of Havana in 1968, and the revolutionary Carlos Marighella's works on urban guerrilla war in Brazil.

1967 was also the year that the bi-monthly *Tricontinental* was founded. This extraordinary journal, published out of Havana, was the

59 Dominique Darbois and Philippe Vigneau, *Gli algerini in guerra* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), n.p.

60 See Feltrinelli, *Senior Service*, pp. 297–98.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 277.

official 'media outlet' of OSPAAAL.⁶² OSPAAAL was the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, created in 1966 in Havana at the First Tricontinental Conference. It had originated from an earlier organization, the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), created at the 1955 Bandung Conference, and marked the extension of AAPSO into the Americas. As Mahler argues, 'the Bandung and Tricontinental moments might be taken as two major cornerstones of Cold War anticolonialisms'.⁶³ Under the direct sponsorship of revolutionary Cuba, *Tricontinental* proclaimed the birth of tricontinentalism as a 'global revolutionary strategy' that could counteract global imperialism, and it was produced in Spanish, English, French, and Italian (as *Tricontinentale*). Feltrinelli, who was already working with Castro and the revolutionary leadership in Cuba, produced the Italian edition of *Tricontinental* from its first issue in 1967 until issue 23 (March–April 1971), a year before he died (March 1972).⁶⁴

Tricontinental, together with the *Tricontinental Bulletin*, were the print products of Cuba's tricontinental strategy, which was designed as a 'third way' for international socialism beyond the Soviet and Chinese blocs. As Young observes, the Tricontinental was the first organization to attempt a global revolutionary alliance against imperialism since the early days of the Comintern.⁶⁵ But unlike the Comintern, it was not directed by European communists. It merged two separate spheres of 'subaltern struggle', namely Asia and Africa on the one hand, and Latin America on the other.⁶⁶ *Tricontinental* did not include any creative writing, but rather political and cultural essays. As the Italian journalist and Third-Worldist militant Saverio Tutino, who also worked for the Italian edition of *Tricontinental*, recalled in his 1968 history of the Cuban revolution, already in 1964 Cubans 'were beginning to present a line that could translate into a global strategy, taking as its point of departure the existence of actual anti-imperialist movements in the Third World'.⁶⁷

62 See Lucia Moro, 'La *Tricontinental*, una rivista per la rivoluzione' (unpublished MA Dissertation, 2010–2011, University of Padua), p. 5, <http://tesi.cab.unipd.it/36482/1/LUCIA.MORO.pdf>

63 Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 23.

64 Moro, 'La *Tricontinental*', p. 11.

65 See Young, 'Disseminating the Tricontinental', p. 520.

66 See Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 27; see also Young, *Postcolonialism*, p. 17.

67 Saverio Tutino, *L'ottobre cubano. Lineamenti di una storia della rivoluzione castrista* (Turin: Einaudi, 1968), p. 381.

Cuba and Algeria were the leaders of this movement, and were urging other under-developed nations to lead the way in the struggle against imperialism. They were proposing a new global unity that would supersede the Cold War bloc: the unity of the three continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The 1966 Havana Conference of the OSPAAAL, the Asia, Africa, and Latin America Solidarity Organization, inaugurated the Tricontinental, and as Tutino remarks, 'after the Tricontinental conference, Havana became the capital of the restless, troubled, not yet unified, but active, world of the small countries and peoples in some way oppressed or attacked by imperialism'.⁶⁸

Ernesto Che Guevara could be said to be the ideological architect of Third-Worldist internationalism, with his famous slogan 'two, three, many Vietnams', with which he ended his message directed at the Tricontinental in 1966, though he wasn't present in Havana at the inaugural conference.⁶⁹ The tricontinental strategy, in many ways, was a way of re-interpreting globalization 'from below', taking stock of the inter-connectedness of the world economy and the concurrent marginalization of certain groups and populations within it. In a speech published in the fifth issue of *Tricontinental* in 1968, Castro underlined how imperialism touched every continent, not just the so-called Third World. He also deconstructed the term 'under-developed', distinguishing between social and political development on the one hand, and economic development on the other. Speaking on behalf of his fellow Cubans, 'we are not at all offended if they include us among the under-developed countries, because the development of consciousness, our social development, and our general cultural development is becoming the fundamental pre-condition for our economic-industrial development'.⁷⁰ This sentiment was also voiced by the German playwright Peter Weiss in his essay, 'The Most Important World of our Era', published in a 1967 issue of the journal. He felt that Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria and North Korea were much more developed than the so-called developed countries, since they had been able to free themselves of the ruling classes of their countries and had 're-established the dignity of man', whereas western nations, which were still based on class differences

68 Ibid., p. 390.

69 See Young, 'Disseminating the Tricontinental', p. 519.

70 Fidel Castro, 'Discorso di Fidel Castro alla chiusura del congresso culturale dell'Havana', *Tricontinentale*, 2.5 (April-May 1968), p. 33.

and exploitation, were actually under-developed.⁷¹ Mahler notes that the Tricontinental was markedly different from the Bandung principles because it eschewed the development rhetoric and non-violence at the heart of the previous conference's vision, and embraced a commitment to armed resistance.⁷²

The journal is an extraordinary collection of internationalist Third-Worldist thought, assembling the writings of the major anticolonial thinkers of the Third World, and of black leaders such as Stokely Carmichael and LeRoi Jones. It included very few pieces by western authors (with the odd exception, such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Régis Debray, known intellectual supporters of Third-Worldism). The early issues read like anthologies of non-European revolutionary thought and culture: Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto, Roque Dalton, Carlos Marighella, Fidel Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Ernesto Che Guevara, are but some of the more famous names of the vast tricontinental canon generated by the journal. Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas's celebrated essay on third cinema, which advocated a culture 'from and for the revolution', was first published in a 1969 issue of *Tricontinental*.⁷³ Scholarly interpretations vary with regard to the significance of this body of writing. As Young notes, *Tricontinental* established for the first time a syncretic corpus that would provide the theoretical and political foundations of what he calls Marxist postcolonialism.⁷⁴ For Mahler, on the other hand, the journal's outputs form the intellectual origins of Global South theory; 'the Tricontinental's more fluid notion of power and resistance is parallel to a shift currently taking place in academic scholarship from postcolonial theory to the Global South'.⁷⁵

As the first issue's editorial declares:

The *Tricontinental* Journal proposes to host the contributions of the most important leaders of the Third World and those of revolutionary intellectuals whose work is intimately linked to the cultural production

71 Peter Weiss, 'Il mondo più importante della nostra era', *Tricontinentale*, 1.2 (October–November 1967), p. 160.

72 See Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 74.

73 Octavio Solanas and Fernando Getino, 'Verso un terzo cinema', *Tricontinental*, 3.13–14–15 (July–December 1969), pp. 153–72.

74 See Young, 'Disseminating the Tricontinental', pp. 534–35.

75 Mahler, *From the Tricontinental*, p. 8.

of under-developed countries. The importance of *Tricontinental's* publication lies in the fact that it will serve as a medium for stirring up, dissemination, and exchange of revolutionary experiences, and also for the most noble ideas of men who fight, feel and think in favour of the complete liberation of humanity.⁷⁶

The address to the reader presented *Tricontinental* as a 'tribuna di idee in cui verranno dibattuti i problemi essenziali dei tre continenti' (a platform of ideas on which the essential problems of the three continents will be discussed), and claimed it would allow readers, wherever in the world they were located, to know and understand how the 'man of the Third World' lives, acts, and thinks.⁷⁷ It promised to offer both theoretical analysis and praxis. Here, the Third World is more than a physical location; it is a political project that spans most of the globe, and thus the journal addresses a global (though not universal) reader. *Tricontinental* was clearly aiming to produce a global ideological framework for tricontinentalism. Halim's call to reorient cultural dialogue along a South-South axis, and indeed the widespread proliferation of Global South studies, is historically rooted in the intellectual work produced by *Tricontinental* as a platform for global thought inspired by anticolonial revolutions.

The first issue of *Tricontinental* featured Fanon's celebrated obituary for Patrice Lumumba, the Congolese liberation leader assassinated by the Belgian secret police, 'The Death of Lumumba: Could We Do Otherwise?', and a piece by the Black Panthers leader Stokely Carmichael, entitled 'The Third World is Our World'.⁷⁸ Carmichael offers a compelling argument for an alliance between African Americans and the people of the Third World, 'because we consider ourselves—and indeed we are—a colony within the United States itself. The same power structure that exploits and oppresses you oppresses us too; it loots our resources in the colony we live in, in the same way that it loots your resources in the external colonies'.⁷⁹ Carmichael's extension of the Third World as the space of the oppressed *and* a space for revolution blurs

76 'Editoriale', *Tricontinentale*, 1.1 (August–September 1967), p. 2.

77 'Al lettore', *ibid.*, p. 3.

78 Fanon's essay was re-published in *Towards the African Revolution* (New York: Grove Books, 1967), pp. 191–97.

79 Stokely Carmichael, 'Il terzo mondo è il nostro mondo', *Tricontinentale*, 1.1 (August–September 1967), p. 17.

geo-political borders between western and so-called under-developed countries.

As mentioned, Feltrinelli edited the Italian version of *Tricontinental* for five years, and the archives of the publisher, located in the Fondazione Feltrinelli in Milan, contain the photocopied and typewritten Spanish versions in foolscap of all the articles that would then be translated in Italian for simultaneous publication. There was a team of translators who worked for the magazine, including Saverio Tutino, Savino D'Amico, Maria Rossi, Ettore Desideri, and others. *Tricontinental* cannily utilized the glamorous appeal of Third World revolutionaries to publicize its covers, and Ernesto Che Guevara's image appeared on many of the issues, thus helping to establishing the popular iconography of Che as a visual symbol of revolution and radicalism. Ho Chi Minh, the Black Panther leaders, and of course Castro himself adorn the pages of the journal. The graphic design of the publication helped to establish its global appeal, thanks to the work of its artistic director, Alfredo Rostgaard.⁸⁰



Fig. 4.4 Cover of *Tricontinental Bulletin*, 25 (April 1968).

⁸⁰ See Young, 'Disseminating the *Tricontinental*', p. 537.

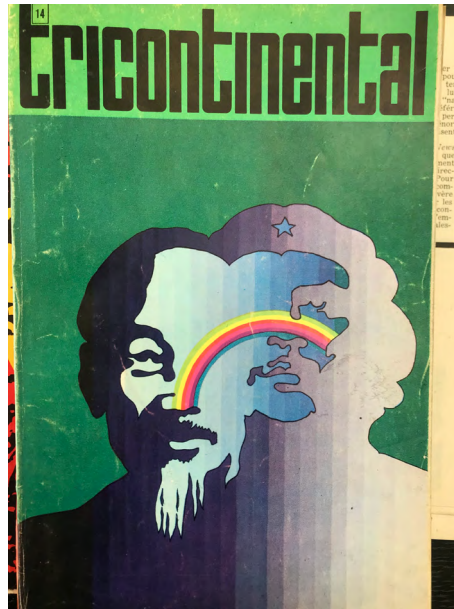


Fig. 4.5 Cover of *Tricontinental*, 14 (September–October 1969).



Fig. 4.6 Satirical advertisement for Air Congo. The caption reads: 'His innocent gaze cannot see the future. The Intercontinental Boeing—the Flying Coffin—has a military version: the Stratford B-52, which drops 10 tons of bombs on Vietnam every day. Today in Vietnam, tomorrow in his country.'

From *Tricontinental*, 1 (August–September 1967).



Fig. 4.7 Satirical advertisement for Ford. The caption on top reads: 'The United States are looting the Third World and Ford has the best idea'. From *Tricontinentale*, 5 (April–May 1968). The ad points out the various materials that go into the production of a Ford vehicle. Next to each material (iron, steel, aluminium, copper, petrol, rubber), it lists the names of the Third-World countries from where these materials are extracted and the revenue in US dollars generated for the Ford corporation.

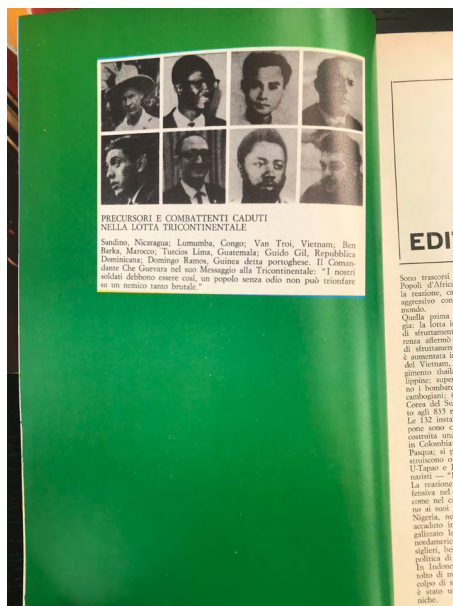


Fig. 4.8 From *Tricontinentale*, n. 3–4, December 1967–March 1968.

The journal carried no advertisements; in their stead, it featured ironic sendups of ads for global companies and corporations, such as the ones for Air Congo and Ford. Throughout, *Tricontinental* endorsed the message that armed struggle was the only way to achieve liberation from imperialism. Issue 3–4 showed had a composite photo on the inside of its front cover showing ‘Combatants and Fallen of the Tricontinental Struggle’, including Lumumba Guevara, and Ben Barka. It was accompanied by a caption listing their names and ending with a quote from Guevara’s message to the Tricontinental Conference: ‘Our soldiers must be like this, a people without hatred cannot triumph against such a brutal enemy’ (see Figure 4.8).

Feltrinelli truly took the Tricontinental message to heart, namely that armed struggle was the only effective way to conduct a revolution, and his subsequent involvement in clandestine radical movements in Italy owes much to his absorption of tricontinental thought. In November 1967, Feltrinelli gave an address to the San Saba association in Rome. According to a report filed by Italian secret police, in this speech Feltrinelli advocated the points made at the Tricontinental Conference in Havana, which promoted armed struggle and ‘Cuban empiricism’ as a better revolutionary method than Soviet-style Marxist political parties. Feltrinelli felt that political guerrilla war was a valuable tool not only for Latin America, but for many capitalist countries as well. Feltrinelli in later life joined the armed struggle political group the Red Brigades, and died in March 1972 while trying to plant a bomb on an electricity pole in the city of Milan, as part of a planned subversive action with his companions.⁸¹

Conclusion

I would like to end this account of Italian Third-Worldist publication projects by returning to the question of Third World literature and its audiences. Feltrinelli and Einaudi were actively committed publishers, and their editors and collaborators included many ex-partisans and

81 See Feltrinelli, *Senior Service*, pp. 422–25. For a detailed account of the mysteries surrounding his death, see Silvia Morosi e Paolo Rastelli, ‘La tragica morte di Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, l’autore Innamorato della Rivoluzione’, *Corriere della Sera*, 14 March 2018, <http://pochestorie.corriere.it/2018/03/14/la-misteriosa-morte-di-giangiacomo-feltrinelli-editore-borghese-innamorato-della-rivolucion/>

left-wing intellectuals who were instinctively sympathetic to anticolonial movements. However, it remains an open question as to whether political support for decolonization struggles extended to cultural and literary affinities between First World sympathizers and partisans and Third World writers. The decades I have examined in this essay, namely the 1950s up to the early 1970s, show that Einaudi and Feltrinelli published many political writings by African, Asian, and Latin American authors. They also published a few literary and cultural writings from the Global South, mainly Latin American authors, like Gabriel García Marquez (Feltrinelli published the first translation in the world of *A Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1968), though their number was small compared to the Third World political texts they published. Sembène Ousmane's works were not published in book form in Italian until 1978, when the Catholic publisher Jaca Book published his novel *Il Vaglia* (*Money Order*, originally published in French as *Le Mandat* in 1966). As far as can be ascertained from its historical catalogue, despite its extraordinarily progressive list of titles, in the 1960s Feltrinelli only published two African novels, Mongo Beti's *Il re miracolato* (*King Lazarus*) in 1960, and Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard* in 1961.⁸²

These absences make us reflect on the so-called limitations of 'Third World literature' as defined through a European aesthetic. It is worth remembering, in this context, the figure of Laura Gonzalez, the great forgotten translator of Fanon and one of his finest and most penetrating interpreters in Italy, who also edited Che Guevara's writings for Einaudi (helpful, she felt, for class struggle in Italy). Gonzalez was a very capable and ideologically sophisticated translator, and was actively involved in frontline left-wing politics and Third-Worldism; she spent a good amount of time in Cuba and knew many Algerian militants of the FLN. Luca Baranelli, her colleague at Einaudi, remembers her as fascinating, extraordinary and refined, with an excellent literary culture and equally versed in French and Spanish. He recalls an episode of her Third-Worldist militancy: when Moïse Kapenda Tshombé, a Congolese politician who had been involved in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, visited Rome, she threw rotten eggs in his face.⁸³ In a letter written during the

82 Feltrinelli 60, 1955–2015: *Catalogo storico* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2015), pp. 7, 11.

83 Luca Baranelli 'Sulla Serie Politica Einaudi', Interview by Luca Zanette, *L'ospite ingrato*, 15 November 2007, <http://www.ospiteingrato.unisi.it/sulla-serie-politica-einaudi/>

student occupation of the Faculty of Letters at the University of Rome in 1966, Gonzalez outlined her interest for the Vietnamese and Senegalese fiction she had recently read, shot through with patronizing remarks. Her remarks on Sembène Ousmane recall those of Jameson on 'Third World literature':

The novel *L'Harmattan* is very far from my own interests and tastes, he's a sort of Senegalese Sciascia, if you see what I mean. The African pays his own tribute to realism. Ideologically, Ousmane is Fanonian and the novel is the story about the 1958 referendum in an African country. The world he describes is a world that interests us, like everything that comes from Africa: the feticheurs, polygamy, the revolutionary militants, passionate and filled with crude Marxism, the Muslims, the mission converts, the corrupt African bourgeoisie, the Europeanized intellectual. All in all, a well-constructed fresco, but always too intentional, too explicit, with stock characters, programmatic discussions that aren't always convincing. Moreover, one gets the sense Ousmane is writing to explain to Europeans how things are [in Africa]. With Africans this is always a problem, basically it's our fault if their first forays into the novel are along lines that no longer interest us. But if we continue to publish Sciascia, Cassola, Bassani, etc., why not follow their long and difficult journey and foster some relationships with them (while waiting for some better work), and make a short 'Corallo' [fiction title] which can't be any worse than many others?⁸⁴

Gonzalez knew and sympathized deeply with Third-Worldist perspectives and struggles. And yet her aesthetic sympathies clearly do not lie with Sembene in this passage (nor with acclaimed Italian realist writers such as Leonardo Sciascia, Carlo Cassola and Giorgio Bassani, whom she considers old hat). In many ways, Gonzalez's remarks on the need to 'develop' the literary quality of African literature recall Jameson's comment that 'the 'Third World novel' does not offer the same satisfactions as Proust or Joyce', possibly because of 'its tendency to remind us of outmoded stages of our own First World cultural development and to cause us to conclude that 'they are still writing novels like Dreiser or Sherwood Anderson'.⁸⁵ Gonzalez's misreading

84 Laura Gonzalez, 'Letter' to Guido Davico Bonino, editor at Einaudi, dated 1 May 1966, from the student-occupied Faculty of Letters, University of Rome, Archivio Giulio Einaudi Editore, Corrispondenza con autori e collaboratori italiani, Folder 99, Gonzalez Laura. 25/7/1961-18/12/1980, File 1501, pp. 87-88.

85 Jameson, 'Third-World Literature', p. 65.

of Vietnamese and Senegalese realisms seems due to her confusing 'our' (European) forms of realism with 'theirs', and with the radically different valences in terms of context and reception. The lesson here, and one to be carefully examined through the archival material relating to Third-Worldist debates on aesthetics, is what Jameson cautions us against:

If the purpose of the canon is to restrict our aesthetic sympathies, to develop a range of rich and subtle perceptions which can be exercised only on the occasion of a small but choice body of texts, to discourage us from reading anything else or from reading those things in different ways, then it is humanly impoverishing.⁸⁶

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⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 66.

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