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# The Catholic Church, Italian

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## Catholics and Peace

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### Movements: The Cold War

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Years, 1947–1962

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#### **Abstract**

*This article focuses on the early years of the cold war in Italy in the form of an analysis of the Catholic press from 1947 to the eve of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. In so doing it attempts to answer key questions for Italian Catholicism relating to peace building that arose from total war in the age of mass democracy.*

In the twentieth century, the problem of peace and war took on a fundamentally different character from what it had been before. In the age of total war, of the sacralisation of war and of the globalisation of nuclear fears, the issues of war and peace became for the first time the field of a confrontation among the different ideological systems of mass society. Two new ideological movements, based on diametrically opposed values, arose: militarism and pacifism. How did the Catholic Church and Italian Catholics react to and manage these processes? Did they perceive the novelty of the issue? Did they have a vision of peace and international order which could compete with the main ideologies of the century? This paper, devoted to a fragment of this story concerning the cold war years, tries to give an answer to these questions. It is based on the analysis of the Catholic press from 1947 to the eve of the Second Vatican Council in 1962.

Italian Catholics confronted the issues of peace and war not in direct response to (or by reflecting on) the dramatic experiences of the two world wars, but as a

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reaction to the challenges of mass political ideologies. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Fascist victory prompted the Church and Italian Catholics to deal with militarism, with warmongering and with the ‘ideology of war’. They feared that they would otherwise be excluded from the processes of nation-building in Italy and would, as a consequence, lose their hold on young people and the population in general. Even though they insisted on the primary value of peace in the 1920s and 1930s, Italian Catholics were hostile to peace movements and the League of Nations; they were fully committed to ‘the nation’ and national interest as the key parameters in international relations and they agreed with the theory of *bellum justum* (‘just war’).<sup>1</sup> As we shall see, it was only in the early years of the cold war, with the challenge posed by the communist ‘Partisans of Peace’ – at the time the only peace movement with mass support in Italy – that the Catholic hierarchy and laity were prompted to debate issues broadly linked to the ‘ideology of peace’, such as disarmament, nuclear fears, non-violent responses and collaboration between blocs. Now, the question of peace came to be linked to the perception that it was key for facing the communists in the field of political propaganda, in symbolic politics, as well as in theoretical and philosophical disputes.

This article discusses these developments in six phases: first, a brief picture of the starting point in 1947; second, the initial phase of the Catholic–communist confrontation in 1948–9; third, the phase of communist successes and the emergence of a ‘dialogue’ about ‘peace’ between Catholics and communists in 1950–1; fourth, the phase from 1952 to 1955, when the Catholic movement launched a ‘peace offensive’; fifth, the phase of growing divisions inside Italian Catholicism over détente, communism and the way to ensure peace; and, not least, the phase of deep change which came in the years 1957–62 with the first instances of Catholic participation in non-aligned peace movements.

### The danger of a ‘new war’ (1947–1948)

In 1947 – the year the cold war began to materialise – there was a general anti-militarist and anti-nationalist sentiment in Italy that followed the experience of war, but there was not yet any true reflection on what the catastrophe of the Second World War meant. A discussion on the necessity of facing anew the matter of peace was not completely lacking, but the majority of Catholics avoided a thorough ‘examination of conscience’ regarding their position vis-à-vis the culture of war during the Fascist regime. Nor did they really discuss Christian pacifism or some form of support to peace movements.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Renato Moro, ‘I cattolici italiani di fronte alla guerra fascista’, in Massimo Pacetti, Massimo Papini and Marisa Saracinelli, eds., *La cultura della pace dalla Resistenza al Patto Atlantico* (Bologna: Il Lavoro Editoriale, 1988), 75–126; Renato Moro, ‘Nazione, cattolicesimo e regime fascista’, *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo*, 1, 1 (2004), 129–47; Renato Moro, ‘L’opinione cattolica su pace e guerra durante il fascismo’, in Mimmo Franzinelli and Ricardo Bottoni, eds., *Chiesa e guerra: Dalla ‘benedizione delle armi’ alla ‘Pacem in terris’* (Bologna: Il Mulino 2005), 221–319.

<sup>2</sup> Renato Moro, ‘I cattolici italiani tra pace e guerra: Dall’inizio del secolo al Concilio Vaticano II’, in Luigi Goglia, Renato Moro and Leopoldo Nuti, eds., *Guerra e pace nell’Italia del novecento. Politica estera, cultura politica e correnti dell’opinione pubblica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2006), 381–4.

When, in 1947, international relations became increasingly tense, the Catholic press started to warn of the dangers of ‘another war’, a war that would be ‘fatal’.<sup>3</sup> A poll conducted simultaneously in eleven countries in August 1947 (Australia, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Holland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, United States and West Germany) revealed that the largest category of respondents in Italian society thought that a war would occur in the next ten years, and that, in Italy, Catholics (more precisely, the followers of the Christian Democratic Party) were much more preoccupied with the subject than communists. Given that Italian communists (rather than Catholics) were about to turn the issue of peace into one of the strongest pillars of their propaganda, this was rather surprising.<sup>4</sup> The poll also revealed that Catholics were quite concerned about the politics of the superpowers, even if they appeared doubtful as to the causes of a possible future conflict and its protagonists: 42.7 per cent of Christian Democrats identified the main trouble makers in international relations as ‘Soviets’ and 4 per cent as ‘Russians’. Only a small minority identified them as Americans (3.5 per cent) or others (0.7 per cent). But a very substantial 33.8 per cent of the respondents thought that the threat came from both the Soviet Union and the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Italian Catholics were especially worried about a possible new conflict, because many of them, when considering the ways in which international organisations had been reconstituted after the war, doubted the capability of the United Nations of preserving peace, defined as international stability. Moreover, they were concerned about an Anglo-American policy that seemed to have given in too much to the Soviet Union’s territorial demands, especially in eastern Europe. Not least, they lamented the treatment reserved for defeated countries, particularly for Italy itself.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the majority of Catholics did not find it easy to identify with the Western and Anglo-Saxon democracies and to accept the logic of the new blocs. In June 1947, the official Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, condemned ‘the politics of blocs’, although it accepted the unavoidability of war as an absolute law.<sup>7</sup> *Cronache Sociali*, the magazine of the young left of the Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democratic Party, DC) favourable to social democracy (Giuseppe Dossetti, Amintore Fanfani, Giorgio La

<sup>3</sup> Giuseppe Dalla Torre, ‘Un’altra guerra è fatale?’, *Vita e Pensiero*, February 1947, 118–20.

<sup>4</sup> On the communist peace movement see Philippe Buton, ‘Le pacifisme communiste de la seconde guerre mondiale à la guerre froide’, in Maurice Vaisse, ed., *Le pacifisme en Europe: Dès années 1920 aux années 1950* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1993), 303–24; Jozef Laptos, ‘Le pacifisme apprivoisé: le Congrès des intellectuels pour la défense de la paix en 1948’, *ibid.*, 325–38; Natalia Naumova, ‘Les femmes soviétiques et le combat pour la paix dans les années quarante et cinquante’, *ibid.*, 339–45; Günther Wernicke, ‘The Communist-led World Peace Council and the Western Peace Movements: The Fetters of Bipolarity and Some Attempts to Break Them in the Fifties and Early Sixties’, *Peace & Change*, 23, 3 (1998), 265–311; Robbie Lieberman, *Strangest Dream: Communism, Anti-Communism, and the US Peace Movement, 1945–1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Giovanni Gasparetti, ‘Che cosa pensano gli uomini della possibilità di una guerra?’, *Vita e Pensiero*, November 1947, 674–7.

<sup>6</sup> Antonio Messineo, ‘Pace senza giustizia’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 22 February 1947, 353–8; ‘Una triste pace’, *Coscienza*, February 1947; Giuseppe Dalla Torre, ‘Pace di compromesso’, *Vita e Pensiero*, March 1947, 180–2; Luigi Mietta, ‘La pace europea del 1947’, *Vita e Pensiero*, April 1947, 232; Guido Gonella, *Pace Romana e pace Cartaginese* (Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1947).

<sup>7</sup> *L’Osservatore Romano*, 14 and 18 June 1947.

Pira), pointed out that both 'liberalism and communism' had to be rejected.<sup>8</sup> *Studium*, the journal of the Movimento Laureati di Azione Cattolica (Movement of Catholic Action Laureates), which was close to Mgr Giovanni Battista Montini (the future Pope Paul VI), took a similar line. In it, the young intellectual Aldo Moro, the future DC leader kidnapped and murdered by the Red Brigades in 1978, observed that 'the lack of partiality towards either side, the lack of a firm commitment towards one or the other' best described Christian attitudes towards the 'painful reality of ideological and political conflicts', symbolised by the division of the world into blocs.<sup>9</sup> This typically lukewarm trust in, and often opposition towards, the superpowers' reorganisation of the world explains why the idea of European unity as a peace strategy met with so much favour from Catholics.<sup>10</sup>

As a member of the 'Federazione Universitaria Cattolica Italiana' (Catholic Italian University Federation, FUCI), a movement particularly sensitive to the ferments of theological renewal,<sup>11</sup> wrote in 1948: 'young people', after so many recent 'painful experiences', no longer 'believed in war', even if they did not believe in 'peace' either.<sup>12</sup> Italian Catholics were in fact anti-pacifists; if FUCI was not adverse to the new peaceful aspirations of the young, the majority of Catholics continued to label pacifism as 'Protestant', 'lay' and 'liberal' (and these were certainly not compliments). After FUCI's magazine had explicitly contested the traditional ideas of 'just war' and 'holy war', the Federation was attacked by the 'Gioventù di Azione Cattolica' (Youth Movement of the Italian Catholic Action, GIAC). GIAC was much larger than FUCI and followed a national Catholic course along the lines devised during Fascism by its president, Luigi Gedda.<sup>13</sup> Thus GIAC accused FUCI of being too close to the position of pacifists and of suffering from too much 'intellectualism'. GIAC also recalled that, confronted with the necessity of defence in the past, young Catholics had not hesitated to fight against Fascists by participating in partisans groups during the Resistance, 'dying with the rosary in one hand and the light machine gun in the other'.<sup>14</sup>

It is, therefore, not surprising that the problem of a revision of the 'just war' doctrine was very rarely discussed. The fear of a new conflict was still connected to the idea of a conventional war. So, despite some interest in the issue of the admissibility

<sup>8</sup> Giuseppe Lazzati, 'I messaggi di Pio XII e Truman', *Cronache Sociali*, 15 September 1947.

<sup>9</sup> [Aldo Moro], 'Tra i blocchi', *Studium*, November 1947, 369–70.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Antonio Messineo, 'L'Europa alla svolta del suo destino', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 31 January 1948, 225–37; 'Italia ed Europa', *Idea*, May 1948, 255–7; [Aldo Moro], 'Al di là dello Stato', *Studium*, May 1948, 217; G. Macacchi, 'L'Unione Latina chiave di volta della nuova Europa', *Idea*, August 1948, 455–7; Angelo Vecchio Verderame, 'L'Atlantropa', *Idea*, September 1948, 563–5; Francesco Vito, 'La comunità internazionale e l'idea dell'unione europea', *Vita e Pensiero*, October 1948, 565; Enrico Insabato, 'Il blocco mediterraneo presupposto della Federazione Europea', *Idea*, October 1948, 578–87.

<sup>11</sup> Renato Moro, *La formazione della classe dirigente cattolica (1929–1937)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> Vittorio Bachelet, 'No alla guerra', *Ricerca*, 1 July 1948.

<sup>13</sup> Francesco Piva, *La gioventù cattolica in cammino ... Memoria e storia del gruppo dirigente (1946–1954)* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> 'L'avvenire non sarà dei violenti. Risposta a un contraddittore', *Ricerca*, August 1948.

of nuclear weapons,<sup>15</sup> only a few voices wanted to discuss the repercussions of the nuclear age on the Catholic doctrine of war. *Humanitas*, the Brescia journal published from 1946 onwards and edited by Fr Giulio Bevilacqua together with the historian Mario Bendiscioli and the philosopher Michele Federico Sciacca, was one of these voices. In it, Bevilacqua wondered whether ‘the present schematic doctrine on war – fruit of long elaborations and experiences of the past – could still embrace the new reality and the new realm responsibilities connected to this radically changed technology’<sup>16</sup>. But he remained a lone voice.

### ‘Peace against peace’: dove or olive tree? (1948–1949)

The dramatic confrontation between Catholics and communists over the issue of ‘peace’ began in the context of the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It was in 1948 that Italian Catholicism’s ideological clash with the communist ‘struggle for peace’ began.<sup>17</sup> During the vicious electoral campaign of spring 1948, in which the Christian Democrats and the socialist–communist Popular Front clashed, the communists relied on the Christian Movement for Peace promoted by the former Catholic leader Guido Miglioli. As an exponent of the ‘white’ peasants’ movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, leader of the opposition to the First World War and a communist fellow-traveller (and for this reason not admitted by DC into its ranks in 1946), Miglioli was persuaded of the peaceful nature of Soviet policy. Members of his group came from the tiny Social Christian Party of Gerardo Bruni and from the similarly small Christian Left Party. Very few others came from DC itself after its break with the left and the end of Christian Democrat Alcide de Gasperi’s grand coalition in 1947.<sup>18</sup> Although the Christian Movement for Peace was only small, DC politicians nevertheless attacked it harshly, describing it as the fruit of the ‘pointless attempts of second rank apostates to constitute sects on the order of today’s masters’.<sup>19</sup>

Over the course of autumn and winter 1948–9, the conflict between Catholics and communists became more serious. In October 1948, the Soviet Union launched a ‘peace offensive’, campaigning for a ban of nuclear weapons. In Italy, this communist peace offensive became quickly connected to those political forces who opposed the Atlantic Pact and Italian participation in it. Italian communists launched a bitter

<sup>15</sup> E.C., ‘Il controllo internazionale atomico’, *Idea*, April 1947, 244–5; Angelo Brucculeri, ‘L’organizzazione internazionale dei popoli e l’Unione di Malines’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 25 October 1947, 236; A. Quarto, ‘Superstiti e sterminati’, *Idea*, January 1948, 28–34; Luciano Erba, ‘La Settimana parigina degli intellettuali cattolici’, *Vita e Pensiero*, July 1948, 404–9.

<sup>16</sup> Giulio Bevilacqua, ‘Sangue dell’uomo e sangue di Cristo’, *Humanitas*, 1947, 247. The journal also contained some philosophical reflections on the topic: cf. Mario Sancipriano, ‘L’umanità e la guerra. Una riposizione metafisica del problema bellico’, *Humanitas*, 1948, 443–4.

<sup>17</sup> For an early warning see F. Cavalli, ‘La Federazione Mondiale della Gioventù Democratica’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 25 October 1947, 208–21.

<sup>18</sup> Carlo Felice Casula, *Guido Miglioli: Fronte democratico popolare e Costituente della terra* (Rome: Edizioni Lavoro, 1981).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Giorgio Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori nell’Italia di De Gasperi, 1948–1953* (Roma: Studium, 1993), 44.

controversy with the leaders of Catholic Action. Communists argued that Catholic Action pretended ‘to be in favour of peace while, in fact, they prepared for war’. In January 1949, the Communist Youth Alliance tried to approach young members of Catholic Action with a petition in which Catholics were asked to campaign for a ban on nuclear weapons and to register their refusal to join any military alliance.<sup>20</sup> In April 1949, the Catholic press published news of a second ‘petition for peace’ promoted by communists. Unlike the first one, it was written in an extremely moderate tone and sought to appeal for a general rejection of war in line with article 11 of the Italian constitution.<sup>21</sup> The communist press also gave great prominence to the grandiose Congress of Peace held in April in Paris. It took place in the Salle Pleyel that had been decorated with the famous images of doves designed by Pablo Picasso. The congress brought together many European intellectuals (such as Frédéric Joliot-Curie, Louis Aragon, György Lukacs, Renato Guttuso) and some Catholic exponents of the extreme left (such as Miglioli and the French abbé Jean Boulier). The Congress saw the launching of the world movement of the Partisans of Peace and brought the beginnings of a new mass ideological confrontation over the issue of ‘peace’ in Italy.<sup>22</sup>

The Catholic press reacted polemically to these communist attempts. The magazine of the Movement of Catholic Action Laureates observed that communists were speaking of peace while they were actually thinking ‘more and more of war’; they even used ‘a vocabulary of war’: ‘in their demagogic and class meetings and with the large fonts of their magazines’, the Catholic journal added, communists applied ‘with strange joy the idea of “struggle” to the idea of “peace”’, thus ‘fraudulently hiding the violence indicated by the term “struggle” behind the word “peace”’.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, there were some voices on the Catholic left who favoured a more active peace campaign.<sup>24</sup> In *Humanitas*, Fr Bevilacqua attacked Catholic moralists who, ‘living in the past’ and unperturbed, repeated ‘the . . . unrealistic casuistries’ of a bygone era when addressing the issue of war.<sup>25</sup> But even those who considered an Italian entry into the Atlantic Alliance to be a risk assessed communist peace actions in an entirely negative way. In a parliamentary debate in March 1949, DC deputy Iginio Giordani declared that it was no longer possible to consider a war as ‘just’ and, in April, launched a new journal, *La Via*. The aim of the journal was to campaign against the evolving binary and conformist framework of the cold war, while deeming communist campaigns to be completely insincere.<sup>26</sup> *Cronache Sociali* wrote: ‘accepting communist Manichaeism, upsetting it, fighting the adversary with his own weapons,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 50–1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 75–6.

<sup>22</sup> Rugiero Giacomini, *I partigiani della pace: Il movimento pacifista in Italia e nel mondo negli anni della prima guerra fredda* (Milano: Vaneglistra 1984); and Lawrence S. Wittner, *One World or None: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement through 1953* (Stanford, CA, 1993), ch. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Agostino Ferrari-Toniolo, “‘Lotta per la pace’”, *Coscienza*, 5 Oct. 1948.

<sup>24</sup> Romano Guardini, ‘Alla ricerca della pace’, *Vita e Pensiero*, February 1949, 64–74.

<sup>25</sup> Giulio Bevilacqua, ‘Fragili equilibri della pace’, *Humanitas*, 1949, 341–8.

<sup>26</sup> Andrea Mariuzzo, ‘Mondo cattolico e pacifismo comunista nella guerra fredda. Iginio Giordani e il “Colloquio sulla pace” con Davide Lajolo (1950–1951)’, *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, 42 (2006), 95–6.

does not mean to work for peace, but to play the game of the communists in favour of hate and civil war'.<sup>27</sup> *Adesso*, the organ of the 'progressive Catholics', headed by Don Primo Mazzolari, a country priest and well-known religious writer, who was conducting a campaign 'against war', was also critical of the road towards political neutrality proposed by the communists. The magazine defined this policy as 'reasonable only for those people who do not want to compromise and who, again, believe that they will be able to escape cheaply, keeping their hands in their pockets'. According to *Adesso*, communists exalted 'our natural avarice', by 'making Russia reap the rewards', while 'striving for the title of pacifist men'. Mazzolari's magazine wrote, 'Whoever believes that salvation comes from Russia and then speaks to me about neutrality merely engages in political tactics.'<sup>28</sup> *Studium* denounced the fact that communists now contrasted 'the ideal of a brotherly communion among all peoples, on a world scale' with 'the pacts which, under the pretext of safety, would lead down the fatal road of war'. According to the journal, it would be legitimate to express doubts on this communist 'peace programme', 'since the world is the world and men are men' and since no 'revolution has been achieved by using a softly-softly approach'.<sup>29</sup> *Cronache Sociali* also criticised the communist 'Petition for Peace' in April. 'A responsible man of government', it wrote, could not accept the ideal of unarmed neutrality as was proposed by the petition, because he could not 'abandon the state like a lamb among wolves'. A man of government could well believe 'in the historical effectiveness of unarmed prophets', but he could not, in conscience, assign such a role to his government.<sup>30</sup>

In May, Italian Catholic Action intervened in the debates. After a series of meetings, the central council of the association approved and subsequently distributed clarifications in response to the communist campaign. The document specified, first, that 'effective work for peace could not be carried out if not asking it of the Giver of every peace, God'; second, that 'effective work for peace' could not be made 'without associating oneself with the Pope's work', while those who furiously attacked the pontiff tried to make people forget that he was the only one to defend peace and to condemn any war of aggression; third, that peace was 'indivisible', so that 'effective work for peace' could not be carried out by invoking peace 'only where convenient', while 'fomenting war elsewhere', by 'preaching an economic peace', while 'fighting an ideological or religious war'; or, indeed, by 'asking for peace for a particular people, for a class', while 'declaring war on other peoples or other classes'; and, finally, that 'effective and durable peace work' could not be undertaken 'without promoting it

<sup>27</sup> Achille Ardigò, 'Il Patto Atlantico come strumento bivalente di progresso o di conservazione, di pace o di guerra', *Cronache Sociali*, 31 March 1949.

<sup>28</sup> Adesso, 'Pace crocifissa', *Adesso*, 1 March 1949.

<sup>29</sup> m.p.v. [Marisa Paronetto Valier], 'Sguardi sul mondo. Polemica intorno al Patto Atlantico', *Studium*, March 1949, 157–8. The original refers to the 'twigs of the mimosa' as the highly-gendered symbol for such an approach, probably referring to the yellow mimosa as the symbol of the International Women's Day, founded by the socialist Clara Zetkin (and its adoption by the Italian women's resistance) and to the sensitive nature of the mimosa plant.

<sup>30</sup> 'La petizione popolare contro la ratifica del Patto Atlantico', *Cronache Sociali*, 30 April 1949.

first among individuals and families'. Therefore, Catholic action concluded that 'every attempt to upset the peace in every person, removing the trust and the education that faith gives', 'every attempt to make profane and to break the sacred unit and the moral law of the family', 'every attempt to put groups of men against one another and promote a lack of understanding among classes', were really attacks on the peace the communists 'were saying they wanted'. As for the 'so called petitions for peace', Catholic Action's council declared that membership in the association in itself was a sufficient effort to preserve the peace. Above all, the council recalled that Italians had expressed their will on the subject and followed their conscience with the elections of 18 April 1948, which had brought the weakening of communism.<sup>31</sup>

Even those Catholics, like those writing in *Adesso*, who were critical of Italy's joining the Atlantic Alliance and who supported an equidistant position between the blocs, were not more positive in respect of the petition. *Adesso* wrote, 'they make us shout and sign: peace now! So that the cry echoes better, they take us, lock us up in our narrow confinements, like the deported in cattle cars'.<sup>32</sup> *La Via* also criticised the communist petition, observing that 'asking a citizen "Do you want peace?" was the same as asking him, "Do you want health? Do you want to win the jackpot?"'. Instead, 'the true question' to be asked to the subscribers was "'Do you want to end up in the USSR's orbit or do you want to preserve some liberty and democracy in Europe with the Atlantic Pact?'" Giordani's magazine, shocked, also pointed out that, at the same time as the petition for peace, 'red newspapers exalted . . . the war in China'.<sup>33</sup>

Some Catholic voices had already begun to stress the need for confronting the communist movement for peace not only defensively, but 'with greater objectivity and . . . moderation'. According to *Adesso*, for instance, 'the humble ones', the 'poor people who looked to the east for the same reasons that other humble and other poor people looked to the West', wished for peace 'with the same heart'. It was not possible, then, to consider the opponents of the Atlantic Pact entirely as 'men of the Politburo, of the Cominform etc'.<sup>34</sup> At the time, however, this attitude did not lead to a reappraisal of the communist initiative. When examining the Paris Congress, *Adesso* recalled that the creation and the defence of peace represented such an important topic that it could be 'neither monopolised nor submitted to the one side rather than the other'.<sup>35</sup> The whole Catholic press stressed the dangerous aspect of political manoeuvring that the communist action was assuming. *Studium* considered the undertaking of the Paris Congress to be 'a novel and impressive demonstration of the peace offensive that has been going on for some months'. The journal pointed out that the PCI, 'directly and through the organisations it inspires', was trying 'to

<sup>31</sup> 'Per la vera pace. Orientamenti approvati dalla Giunta Centrale dell'ACI', *L'Assistente Ecclesiastico*, 1948–9, 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Adesso*, 'Prima che sia troppo tardi. Precisiamo le responsabilità nostre e quelle degli altri', *Adesso*, 30 June 1949.

<sup>33</sup> *La Via*, 'La petizione per la pace o per la guerra?', *La Via*, 16 July 1949.

<sup>34</sup> Primo Mazzolari. 'Pace contro pace', *Adesso*, 15 April 1949.

<sup>35</sup> MAPRIM [Primo Mazzolari], 'La pace di Parigi', *Adesso*, 30 April 1949.



use the longing for peace of the masses to its advantage both within various countries and internationally' and was trying 'to stoke fears about the horror of war among them'. Communism was making an attempt 'to raise this immense and sincere tide of popular hopes from "a spontaneous outcry to a reflection of a popular conscience"'. 'But what conscience?' asked the author of the article, giving the answer that there he could only detect 'peace tactics and peace strategy' in the communist positions.<sup>36</sup> In contrast to the communist movement, Catholics stressed the role of Church doctrine in questions of international politics and highlighted the importance of a new phenomenon: the development, in the middle of the twentieth century, of 'a Christian doctrine of international affairs' which was comparable to the emergence of the 'social doctrine' in the nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Hence, some Catholic groups looked with sympathy and satisfaction to Garry Davis's World Citizens Movement, mainly however, for its ability to put communists on trial, as had happened in Paris.<sup>38</sup> For the same reason, they applauded the actions of the World Federation of United Nations Associations.<sup>39</sup>

The communist/Catholic controversy over 'peace' also became a struggle over symbols. *Italia Cattolica* wrote, 'Today, in a world which has been debased by doublespeak, the depiction of peace has become ambiguous: the yellow mimosa [as the symbol of the International Women's Day founded by Clara Zetkin and used by sections of Italian women's resistance movement] replaces the silvery grey olive tree [as the ancient symbol of peace and hope]; and the dove (which, as a symbol, comes from the ancient pact of Noah or from the transcendent Pentecostal renewal of the Cenacle) is replaced by Picasso's image [the symbol of the communist peace movement], . . . his bellicose pigeon [printed] on the Manifesto of the recent Paris Congress'.<sup>40</sup> The communist/Catholic debate even permeated the sphere of popular devotion: appeals to the Virgin as *regina pacis* answered the communist chimes of the 'bells of peace'.<sup>41</sup>

In the end, however, the PCI's mobilising efforts did not succeed 'in radically shaking public opinion'.<sup>42</sup> In July 1949, the chamber of deputies and the senate ratified Italy's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty. After the vote, during the meeting of the PCI directorate on 25 July 1949, the PCI's party secretary Palmiro Togliatti himself admitted that the communist campaign had been 'a flop', since the communist petition gathered far fewer signatures than the 7 million they had

<sup>36</sup> m.p.v. [Marisa Paronetto Valier], 'Sguardi sul mondo. Congresso della pace a Parigi', *Studium*, May 1949, 254.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Bosc, 'La Chiesa e i problemi internazionali', *Cronache sociali*, 30 April 1949.

<sup>38</sup> Jean-Marie Domenach, 'Significato e possibilità del movimento di Garry Davis', *Cronache Sociali*, 15 June 1949.

<sup>39</sup> Paolo Vittorelli, 'L'assemblea delle Associazioni per le Nazioni Unite', *Cronache Sociali*, 31 Aug.–15 Sept. 1949.

<sup>40</sup> 'Pace né subdola, né capziosa', *Italia cattolica*, May–June 1949.

<sup>41</sup> 'Squilla di fine d'anno 1949', *Italia cattolica*, November–December 1949.

<sup>42</sup> Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 83.

expected.<sup>43</sup> For the time being, Italian Catholicism remained more or less united in its rejection of communist peace campaigns.

### The Stockholm Appeal (1950–1951)

At the beginning of 1950, the communist ‘struggle for peace’ gained new momentum. The beginning of the Military Assistance Programme (MAP) in January and the scheduled delivery of US weapons formed the backdrop to a general communist mobilisation that included harbour workers declaring their refusal to handle any military equipment – efforts that the Christian Democrat prime minister Alcide De Gasperi denounced as communist ‘sabotage’.<sup>44</sup> After US President Harry S. Truman’s announcement in February of his government’s decision to develop hydrogen bombs,<sup>45</sup> the issue of nuclear weapons gained more salience. For the first time, Catholic magazines began to inform the Catholic public of the activity of anti-nuclear campaigners, such as the American journalist and peace activist Norman Cousins.<sup>46</sup>

Against this backdrop, the campaign of the Partisans of Peace for a nuclear weapons ban began to overshadow the old mobilisation against the North Atlantic Treaty. The appeal, which was announced at the end of the Third Session of the World Committee of Peace in Stockholm in March 1950 and which would be broadly distributed in the following months, became the focus of Italian debates.<sup>47</sup> Communists now seemed to be able to persuade Catholics to sign petitions against ‘the bomb’; rumours spread that even Christian Democrat representatives (such as Giovanni Gronchi, Giuseppe Cappi and Gaspare Ambrosini) and bishops (of Trieste, Grosseto and Pescia) had signed.<sup>48</sup>

Astute Catholic observers immediately grasped that this new phase of confrontation was more delicate than the previous one. They admitted that the communists were now able to arouse interest among ordinary Catholics and pointed out that communist ‘discourse’ appeared to tap into popular sensitivity at many points. These observers diagnosed a ‘disorientation’ among many Catholics and concluded that communists were succeeding ‘in shaking the conscience’ of many of them. Above all, they noticed that ‘a political formulation’ of the problem of peace, even if ‘rough, unilateral and insincere’, could have ‘more bite than a vague moralising preaching’. A Catholic journal wrote, ‘fighting war with earthly weapons (and even with civil disobedience and revolution) seems to many more promising than exorcising war in a weary and superficial way’.<sup>49</sup>

The Stockholm Appeal posed a difficult situation for the Catholic Church, not least because the cardinals and archbishops of France had declared that ‘in this

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 102–12.

<sup>45</sup> Wittner, *One World or None*, 65.

<sup>46</sup> Piero Guizzetti, ‘Demolire la paura della morte irrazionale’, *Adesso*, 1 June 1950.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. for example, *Adesso*, 1 July 1950.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 133.

<sup>49</sup> Advena, ‘Noi e la pace’, *Studium*, Jan. 1950, 57–9.

nightmarish atmosphere, the Stockholm Appeal against atomic weapons had attracted otherwise reputable personalities'.<sup>50</sup> The concerns among the Catholic hierarchy about a rising popular involvement in the Stockholm Peace Campaign were so great that *L'Osservatore Romano* decided to deny Catholic support publicly.<sup>51</sup> As in previous debates, there followed a series of competing mobilisations and petitions between the Catholic Church and the PCI and its front organisations. As the Partisans of Peace invited people to vote for the Stockholm Appeal, Christian Democrats invited them to support European integration and the Strasbourg parliament as peace campaigns.<sup>52</sup> On 23 June 1950, Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster, the archbishop of Milan, publicly intervened and warned clergy and laity about communist propaganda in more explicit terms than the French archbishops had done. While the French archbishops had limited themselves to rejecting the appeal but had not forbidden Catholics to sign it, Schuster made it clear that no true Catholic could sign the Appeal:

The whole world knows and should know the doctrine and the declarations of the Supreme Pontiffs, the Heads of the Catholic Church, about the peace of Christ in the Realm of Christ, and about the condemnation of all strategies and war methods which are contrary to justice and charity. It is therefore neither necessary nor opportune to repeat these declarations and to put them in writing for a political party which represents neither the ideas of the Church nor the sentiments of the huge majority of Italians.<sup>53</sup>

In the wake of this announcement, the Church hierarchy continued to register signs of growing dissatisfaction among clergy and laity, since a well-known Catholic voice declared his willingness to sign the Stockholm Appeal only a few days later. According to Don Primo Mazzolari, Catholics, as well as all Western anti-communists, were wrong in underestimating what had been proposed by the Appeal. Judging its proponents by their intentions, anti-communists merely furthered prejudices, while the population was mainly interested in the nature of their proposal.<sup>54</sup> By the end of July, the organisers of the Stockholm Appeal announced that they had obtained 10 million signatures in Italy,<sup>55</sup> and the communist press declared that 'the participation of an impressive number of Catholics from all countries in the plebiscite against nuclear weapons' represented 'one of the most important events in the history of these last years'.<sup>56</sup>

In July, with the news of the invasion of Korea, it seemed that many ambiguities could be resolved, as contradictions in the position of the Partisans of Peace were now clearly visible. In fact, they embraced the Soviet position immediately and asked for the withdrawal of US troops from the conflict. Among Italian Catholics,

<sup>50</sup> 'Contro l'impiego delle armi di distruzione di massa. Lettera dei Cardinali e Arcivescovi di Francia sulla pace', *Cronache Sociali*, 1 Aug. 1950.

<sup>51</sup> 'La campagna contro l'atomica', *L'Osservatore Romano*, 5–6 June 1950.

<sup>52</sup> 'Mercanti di pace', *Adesso*, 1 July 1950.

<sup>53</sup> *Adesso*, 1 July 1950.

<sup>54</sup> S. Bolli [Primo Mazzolari], 'La bomba atomica e ogni arma sterminatrice fuori legge', *Adesso*, 1 July 1950.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 131.

<sup>56</sup> Ambrogio Donini, 'I cattolici e la pace', *L'Unità*, 30 July 1950.

fears of a general conflict were widespread. *Cronache Sociali* noticed how ‘in this old Europe’ fear was creeping into ‘houses, palaces, hearts’.<sup>57</sup> Neutral positions now seemed impossible, and even the Christian Democrat left that was linked to *Cronache Sociali* was now in favour of an ‘adequate European rearmament’.<sup>58</sup> Subsequently, the dispute with communists on the politics of peace became even tougher. At the beginning of July De Gasperi and the Christian Democrat newspapers attacked the ‘so-called “committees of peace”’ as ‘committees of insurrection against the legitimately elected government’, as a ‘fifth column’.<sup>59</sup> On 10 July, the DC’s central directorate founded its own ‘National Solidarity Campaign for Peace and Security’ in order to oppose the communist peace movement.<sup>60</sup> The journal *Idea* denounced ‘the manoeuvre of the Stockholm Appeal’ as ‘the first crime against peace’. This turned the Appeal’s supporters into ‘real accomplices’ of communist policies.<sup>61</sup> On 15 August, Mario Scelba, the minister of the interior, called the Partisans of Peace ‘a giant Trojan horse, launched to make an attempt against peaceful peoples’ in a speech at a meeting of the Young Catholics.<sup>62</sup> The pope intervened with an encyclical (*Summi moeroris*) denouncing the communists’ agitation for peace, as they ‘overtly’ neglected or repudiated the principles that constituted ‘the solid bases’ of peace and trampled ‘on the sacred rights of the Catholic Church’. In the wake of the encyclical the Catholic press began to insist on the historical and actual role of papacy in the defence of peace.<sup>63</sup> The official *La Civiltà Cattolica* revealed the heavy means of repression that communists used in east European countries in order to gain support for the Stockholm Appeal.<sup>64</sup> Although this Catholic counter-campaign limited the PCI’s capacity to influence the Catholic grass roots, it did not eliminate the problem of communist pressure. Even if international tensions at the beginning of the 1950s pushed many Catholics towards full solidarity with the West, a strong minority continued to refuse to follow the tide. *Cronache Sociali* criticised the ‘blissful illusion’ that ‘order and independence’ could be based on ‘a soldier’s sword or a *carabiniere*’s baton’.<sup>65</sup> More radical spirits proposed that the Christian Democratic Party should promote ‘a world movement for controlled disarmament’.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>57</sup> ‘I cattolici e la pace’, *Cronache Sociali*, 1 Aug. 1950.

<sup>58</sup> Gianni Bager Bozzo, ‘Conseguenze americane ed europee della guerra in Asia’, *Cronache Sociali*, 15 July 1950.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 182.

<sup>60</sup> Andrea Damilano, ed., *Atti e documenti della Democrazia Cristiana 1943–1967* (Rome: 5 Lune, 1968), I, 476.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Nuvole ad Oriente’, *Idea*, August 1950, 453.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 187.

<sup>63</sup> Andrea Oddone, ‘Azione pacificatrice del papato nelle età antiche’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 12 Aug. 1950, 379–89; Andrea Oddone, ‘Azione pacificatrice e caritatevole del papato contemporaneo’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 30 September 1950, 68–82; Giuseppe Mira, ‘Per una pace sincera’, *Orientamenti Sociali*, 5 (1950), 81–2, ‘La Chiesa conquista i popoli non con le armi ma con la verità’, *Orientamenti Sociali*, 14–15 (1950), 258–9, ‘Per la pace nel mondo. La parola del papa’, *Orientamenti Sociali*, 23 (1950), 419.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 15 July 1950, 221–6; *ibid.*, 19 Aug. 1950, 454–6.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Commenti della stampa’, *Cronache Sociali*, 15 July 1950.

<sup>66</sup> Igino Giordani, ‘Rovina, morte e miseria: ecco la guerra’, *La Via*, 5 Aug. 1950.

It was in this climate, that had developed in Italy in the wake of the outbreak of the Korean War, that aspirations to launch more positive Catholic proposals on the question of peace emerged and that the Church began to feel a strong need for reconsidering official Catholic attitudes towards war. *Cronache Sociali* painted the dramatic reality of a 'Christianity' at risk of 'division and struggle'. According to the magazine, Catholics were 'uncertain, sceptical, divided' towards the peace issue. On the one hand, there were Christians who were persuaded by a 'policy of strength' in order to destroy communism; on the other, there were those Christians who accepted or took part in the communist peace initiative. This split endowed the 'enemies of peace' with strength; Christianity now had to 'recover its active unity in the engagement for peace' and make not only an organised effort but an effort of 'internal clarification'.<sup>67</sup>

Although only a progressive minority began a dialogue with the Partisans of Peace, divisions among Catholics remained strong. On 1 October 1950, *Adesso* published the correspondence between Guido Miglioli and Don Primo Mazzolari.<sup>68</sup> Giordani, too, was convinced that it was impossible to refuse active engagement with communists on the issue of peace, not least to put their sincerity to the test.<sup>69</sup> Many Catholics reacted with irritation to these proposals, with one commentator labelling Giordani and Mazzolari ironically as 'sentimental pacifists'.<sup>70</sup> A DC deputy, Piero Malvestiti, reminded Catholics of the need to distinguish between the 'desirable' and the 'possible'. There was no choice to be made between what communists called 'American imperialism', 'which did not (and does not) seek from anyone a square metre of land – and which respects liberty at home and in the world' and 'Russian-Bolshevik imperialism', 'which would impose harsher, ruthless, stifling slavery'.<sup>71</sup>

Despite these reactions to their campaign, communists continued to make inroads into Italian Catholicism. In November 1950, both Mazzolari and Giordani received an invitation from the World Committee of the Partisans of Peace to participate in the congress first scheduled to be held in Sheffield, but which then, due to the concerns of the British government, had to be moved to Warsaw.<sup>72</sup> Although Mazzolari decided not to attend the congress, he stated that 'progressive Christians' could no longer 'continue to ignore the efforts and the voices that aim to create peace in every corner of the world'.<sup>73</sup> *Adesso* even published a message in support of the congress, although it also criticised key elements of the communist peace movement's platform

<sup>67</sup> 'I cattolici e la pace', *Cronache Sociali*, 1 Aug. 1950.

<sup>68</sup> 'La Democrazia Cristiana e la guerra. Lettera di Guido Miglioli a don Primo Mazzolari', *Adesso*, 1 Oct. 1950; Primo Mazzolari, 'Guerra alla guerra. Premessa a un dialogo che riprende', *Adesso*, 1 Oct. 1950.

<sup>69</sup> *La Via*, 28 Oct. 1950.

<sup>70</sup> P.M. [Primo Mazzolari], 'Pace e guerra', *Adesso*, 15 Nov. 1950.

<sup>71</sup> *Il Popolo di Milano*, November 1950.

<sup>72</sup> The invitation from Ambrogio Donini and Mazzolari's answer can be found in 'Per la storia', *Adesso*, 15 November 1950. On the many difficulties which led to the Warsaw Congress see Philip Deery, 'The Dove Flies East: Whitehall, Warsaw and the 1950 World Peace Congress', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 48, 4, (2002), 449–68.

<sup>73</sup> *Adesso*, 'Cristiani al Congresso della pace', *Adesso*, 15 Nov. 1950.

(with regard to ‘moral disarmament’, herd mentality, partisanship, the dominant role of intellectuals and politicians, the absence of the voice of ‘the poor people of the world’, contempt or intolerance towards religion).<sup>74</sup> At the end of November Davide Lajolo, the Milan editor of the official communist newspaper *L’Unità*, wrote to Giordani and Mazzolari, inviting them to a public debate ‘in order to save the peace’, and comparing the nuclear policy of Truman and his Italian ally with Hitler’s massacres.<sup>75</sup> This public dialogue continued until the beginning of January 1951 and received great attention in the communist press.<sup>76</sup> On 7 January 1951 a meeting of the ‘progressive Christians’, held in Modena, passed a ‘brotherhood pact’ which proposed that, in case of an invasion of Italy by communists or by the United States, Christians would not have resisted, but at the same time would not have collaborated with invaders.<sup>77</sup>

This provoked an ‘agitated’ debate over the meanings of peace, during which ‘harsh and bombastic words, many and humiliating accusations’ were used.<sup>78</sup> *L’Osservatore Romano* denounced the fact that the communist movement for peace proclaimed ‘its solidarity with soldiers’.<sup>79</sup> In the wake of US President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s visit to Italy and communist demonstrations against him, the government even explored the possibility of banning the Partisans of Peace. In a speech at the Rome Opera on 28 January 1951, De Gasperi labelled the Partisans of Peace ‘partisans of invasion, partisans of disintegration, enemies of democratic Italy and of her independence’.<sup>80</sup> The main point of contention with the communists was now the claim by the Catholic Church that their pacifism was ‘true’ and reflected popular Catholic opinion. The DC secretary, Guido Gonella, declared that the ‘problem of peace’ was ‘essential and absorbing’. ‘The equivocal and fake pacifism’ that the communists promoted was ‘a pacifism of war and fear’. By contrast, he claimed, the Christian Democrats’ pacifism meant ‘a will to do everything that could prevent or stop aggression’.<sup>81</sup>

Similar harsh tones were used to describe Catholics who engaged with the communist peace movement. *Il Popolo* attacked the ‘romantics who committed themselves to communism’.<sup>82</sup> *L’Osservatore Romano* depicted the Modena meeting as ‘a Tower of Babel’, where ‘partisans with a clear idea, or at least of an idea *tout court*’ were missing, and confirmed the uselessness of discussions that did not heed ‘the words of the Church and of the Pope’.<sup>83</sup> Luigi Gedda, now the president of the influential Men’s Federation of Catholic Action, declared that it was inconceivable to engage in a

<sup>74</sup> ‘Pace cristiana con libertà e giustizia per tutti. Agli ordini di nessuno. Messaggio delle Avanguardie Cristiane al Congresso della pace’, *Adesso*, 15 Nov. 1950.

<sup>75</sup> Mariuzzo, ‘Mondo cattolico e pacifismo comunista’, 101–2.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Dibattito sulla pace tra un comunista, un democristiano e un sacerdote’, *Adesso*, 15 Dec. 1950. See also Mariuzzo, ‘Mondo cattolico e pacifismo comunista’, 103–4; Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 219–23.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Patto di fraternità’, *Adesso*, 15 Feb. 1951.

<sup>78</sup> The accusation was made by *Adesso*: ‘Menzogne armate e verità disarmata’, *Adesso*, 1 Feb. 1951.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Colloqui’, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2–3 Jan. 1951. The official Christian Democrat newspaper also attacked the communist press and its ‘absurd and arbitrary interpretations’: A.C., ‘Neutralismo’, *Il Popolo*, 10 Jan. 1951.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Vecchio, *Pacifisti e obiettori*, 240.

<sup>81</sup> Damilano, *Atti e documenti*, 500.

<sup>82</sup> L.M., ‘Equidistanze’, *Il Popolo*, 16 Jan. 1951.

<sup>83</sup> Cited in Derio Caronti, ‘Nessuno può barare al gioco’, *Adesso*, 1 Feb. 1951.

Catholic action for peace, while ‘having a dialogue with men who do not want peace but only a general war’.<sup>84</sup> The traditionalist Catholic press spoke of ‘those who sowed the seeds of discord’, of ‘followers of Moscow’, of the ‘rearguard of communism’, and of ‘useful idiots’. Giordani and Mazzolari were reprimanded for having ‘fractured the Catholic front’ and for having abandoned ‘the suffering Church’ in eastern Europe.<sup>85</sup> Even those sections of the Catholic press sensitive towards religious renewal criticised Giordani and Mazzolari, writing of ‘confusion’ and of a ‘skewed perspective’.<sup>86</sup> Fr Bevilacqua admitted that Christians had ‘to speak with everyone *in spe* and *contra spem*’, but only ‘a man who was blind since birth’ could not see that the ‘pacifist movement’ was now ‘in the service of the world’s most armed imperialist power’, a power that ‘was promoted in Italy by agents who were piling on arsenals of weapons for domestic and internecine wars’.<sup>87</sup> Cardinal Schuster thought that Mazzolari’s position would engender ‘confusion in the Catholic milieu, to great communist joy’. The bishop of Cremona, who was Mazzolari’s bishop, pointed out in a letter to him that it was difficult not ‘to come to the conclusion that aligning oneself with communists in pacifist propaganda’ meant ‘to become the play ball of communist propaganda tactics’. According to Mgr Cazzani, the Partisans of Peace ‘even distributed false documents’ and stirred up ‘fears of war, [thus] upsetting and damaging poor people’. How was it possible not to see that ‘under the mask of promoting peace’ they wished ‘to prevent those countries which were not dominated by communism from preparing themselves not for aggression but only to defend themselves in case of aggression’? Communists, he pointed out, did not campaign for the disarmament of the Soviet Union, which would remain as the only armed state, especially as it had always been against disarmament and arms control. The bishop concluded that Catholic priests must show charity towards everyone, including communists; but charity did not impose or legitimate an ‘indulgence that might seem like connivance’.<sup>88</sup> A few days later, on 16 February 1951, Catholic newspapers reported that Mazzolari’s magazine was denied Church approbation. A month later, *Adesso* stopped publication.<sup>89</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica* asserted the traditional Catholic doctrine against peace movement.<sup>90</sup> The pressure that the Partisans of Peace put on the Catholic Church had not ended, but it had lost momentum. Nevertheless, small yet important cracks had appeared in the fabric of Italian Catholicism. *La Palestra del Clero*, a journal for Italian parish priests, admitted that the theme of the lawfulness of war met with ‘enthusiasm’ in large areas of public opinion.<sup>91</sup> This phenomenon attracted less attention than Giordani’s or Mazzolari’s declarations, but it was probably more widespread. For example, *La Palestra* published, among other examples, the case of a priest who thought that war

<sup>84</sup> Luigi Gedda, ‘Saluto rosso’, *Il Quotidiano*, 18 Jan. 1951.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Menzogne armate. Verità disarmata’, *Adesso*, 1 Feb. 1951.

<sup>86</sup> Giovanni Batista Scaglia, ‘Nella logica di un’insufficienza’, *Studium*, January 1951, 1–2.

<sup>87</sup> Giulio Bevilacqua, ‘Pacificatori e pacifisti’, *Humanitas*, 1951, 119–26.

<sup>88</sup> Lorenzo Bedeschi, ed., *Obbedientissimo in Cristo... Lettere di don Primo Mazzolari al suo vescovo (1917–1959)* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1974), 202–3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>90</sup> Enrico Baragli, ‘La guerra, bancarotta dell’umanità’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 28 July 1951, 249–62.

<sup>91</sup> Leone Barbini, ‘Intorno alla liceità della guerra’, *La Palestra del Clero*, 15 November 1951, 1081.

was admissible only as legitimate defence. The review added that he was completely right.<sup>92</sup>

### A 'Christian peace doctrine' (1952–1955)

By the end of 1951 the dramatic ideological dispute over peace between communists and Catholics had lost much of its intensity. A Christian Democrat magazine declared at the beginning of 1952 that the party had known 'how to hold out': 'Cominform or crypto-communist or unconsciously pacifist sirens, sirens of a pacifism which was at the service of an aggressor', had not been listened to.<sup>93</sup> However, for the first time after a long pause, the PCI's secretary-general Palmiro Togliatti again attacked 'Church authorities' for supporting rearmament proposals together with other western European Christian parties.<sup>94</sup> This statement seemed to bring to an end the phase during which communists had intensively sought a dialogue with Catholics. Even the relationship between the Partisans of Peace and Giordani and Mazzolari had now deteriorated, as communists now showed much less interest in working to make inroads into Italian Catholicism, to the point of attacking even the religious personalities with whom they had previously been in a public 'dialogue'. The 1952 Vienna Peace Congress was a disappointment for Mazzolari. The Italian delegate, Ambrogio Donini (the same representative of the Partisans of Peace who had invited Mazzolari to Sheffield/Warsaw a year before), 'provoked boredom', when, according to Mazzolari, he repeated 'the usual indictment against both the West and the Catholic Church', instead of reciting 'the *confiteor* [the general confession of sins used in the Roman rite at the beginning of the Mass], which is a convenient phrase where peace is concerned'.<sup>95</sup> When Giordani was not elected to parliament in June 1953, the communist press went as far as to interpret his defeat as the final unmasking of a hypocritical position. Another communist 'man of the dialogue', Davide Lajolo, denounced Giordani and Mazzolari as 'Pharisees'. Lajolo wrote that Giordani had 'confused the cause of peace with the Vatican' and Mazzolari had transformed himself from 'the priest of the poor' into a 'speaker for the list of the rich at political meetings'.<sup>96</sup> Giordani now wondered aloud whether 'those who said that with people like this there is nothing that can be done were right'.<sup>97</sup>

In the meantime, controversy about the Partisans of Peace continued,<sup>98</sup> but the danger of the opening of a rift between Catholics appeared to have passed.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 1081–3.

<sup>93</sup> Giuseppe Bettiol, 'Una politica di pace, di sicurezza, di difesa della democrazia', *Libertas*, 2 (1952), 15.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Mariuzzo, 'Mondo cattolico e pacifismo comunista', 112.

<sup>95</sup> 'Pace nostra ostinazione. Dopo il Congresso di Vienna', *Adesso*, 1 Jan. 1953.

<sup>96</sup> Davide Lajolo, 'Sconfitta dei farisei', *L'Unità*, 24 June 1953.

<sup>97</sup> Giulio Vaggi, 'Se vuoi la pace vota Lajolo', *Adesso*, 15 July 1953.

<sup>98</sup> Angelo Brucculeri, 'Il nemico della pace', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 29 November 1952, 513–22; Alessandro Cantono, 'Sociologia. Marx, Lenin, Stalin e la guerra', *La Palestra del Clero*, 1 April 1953, 323–4; Alessandro Cantono, 'Sociologia. La Chiesa e la guerra', *La Palestra del clero*, 15 November 1953, 1155–6.



Nonetheless, the confrontation between the Catholic Church and the communists in 1950/1 had many important consequences. First among these was the Catholic insistence on European unification as the ‘firmest defence of peace’.<sup>99</sup> The Christian Democrat press now stressed that Atlanticism also worked ‘for peace’.<sup>100</sup> With the new project of a European Defence Community, a foreign policy based on support for the Atlantic Pact and European integration now began to overlap.<sup>101</sup> Some apprehension about rearmament policy remained within the Catholic left and continued to provide cause for debate in certain sections of the Church, such as the ‘Laureates Movement’, with its interest in new religious tendencies.<sup>102</sup> ‘Europeanism’ became the synonym for a politics of peace within Italian Catholic public opinion. A second consequence of this confrontation was the Catholic re-evaluation of the role of international organisations.<sup>103</sup> *Orientamenti Sociali* wrote in 1952, ‘whatever may be said, the UN embodies [...] the most passionate hopes for and commitments to peace’. The magazine added, ‘There is great value in the UN’s continued existence; a lighthouse is always useful.’<sup>104</sup> The third and most important consequence was the start of a Catholic ‘peace offensive’ in competition with the communist mobilisation. Now that it had become absolutely clear that a dialogue with the Partisans of Peace was impossible, Catholics could insist on building their own peace doctrine as a means either to give them an autonomous role in the mediation between west and east or to permit them a dialogue with peace movements, non-aligned pacifism and non-violence. ‘After a long phase of refusals’, *Adesso* wrote in 1952, ‘Christianity had also realised that it was impossible to remain uninvolved’.<sup>105</sup>

The efforts towards launching a pronounced Catholic ‘peace offensive’ gained momentum. In June 1952 the new Christian Democrat mayor of Florence, Giorgio La Pira, organised a conference on ‘Civilisation and Peace’, bringing together

<sup>99</sup> Piero Malvestiti, ‘Un cuore europeo’, *Libertas*, 3 (1952), 5; Paolo Emilio Taviani, ‘L’alternativa all’Europa’, *Libertas*, 39 (1952), 10. See also ‘Necessità di una mentalità europea. Il discorso del Presidente De Gasperi ad Aquisgrana’, *Libertas*, 32 (1952), 4; C. Ramacciotti, ‘Dopo Berlino guardiamo al futuro’, *Orientamento Sociali*, 4 (1954), 76–8.

<sup>100</sup> Giuseppe Pella, ‘La voce dell’Italia a Lisbona’, *Libertas*, 10 (1952), 4. Cf. also *Europa armata, Idea*, January 1951, 5; Alberto Enrico Folchi, ‘L’Italia e la difesa’, *Libertas*, 30 (1952), 15.

<sup>101</sup> Guido Gonella, ‘Dall’esercito europeo agli Stati Uniti d’Europa’, *Libertas*, 3 (1952), 15. Cf. also L. Benvenuti, ‘Per una efficiente difesa dell’Europa è necessario creare accanto all’esercito europeo, anche un Parlamento europeo’, *Libertas*, 5 (1952), 9–10; Alberto Enrico Folchi, ‘Prospettive dell’unità europea’, *Libertas*, 11 (1952), 6; Alberto Enrico Folchi, ‘Politica estera’, *Libertas*, 25 (1952), 10–11; Francesco M. Dominedò, ‘Politica Estera’, *Libertas*, 11 (1952), 11. Cf. also ‘Terremo in alto la bandiera dell’indipendenza e della libertà. Il discorso di De Gasperi alla Camera sulla politica estera’, *Libertas*, 37 (1952), 20; Pio Bondioli, ‘La paura fa novanta. La Comunità Europea di Difesa’, *Libertas*, 50 (1953), 8; Federico Alessandrini, ‘La Comunità Europea di Difesa (CED)’, *L’Assistente Ecclesiastico*, 1954, 235–240; Federico Alessandrini, ‘Dalla CED all’U.E.O.’, *L’Assistente Ecclesiastico*, 1954, 642–7.

<sup>102</sup> f.m. [Fausto Montanari], ‘Osservatorio. I. Di fronte a un eventuale aggressore’, *Studium*, March 1952, 135; f.m., ‘Osservatorio. I. Armamenti e idee’, *Studium*, November 1952, 635.

<sup>103</sup> m.p.v. [Marisa Paronetto Valier], ‘Sguardi sul mondo. “Unità per la pace”’, *Studium*, November 1950, 604; Antonio Messineo, ‘Nuove proposte per il disarmo’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 10 November 1951, 373–2; Angelo Brucculeri, ‘La nostra tragedia’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 8 March 1952; Antonio Messineo, ‘Il declino delle Nazioni Unite’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 8 Nov. 1952, 373–85.

<sup>104</sup> Francesco Tagliamonte, ‘L’Italia e l’O.N.U.’, *Orientamento Sociali*, 3 (1952), 49–52.

<sup>105</sup> ‘Pace nostra ostinazione. Vogliamo vedere fin dove son “figliuoli di pace”’, *Adesso*, 1 Nov. 1952.

representatives from thirty-five countries, among them some of the most important exponents of the new French religious culture, such as Charles Journet, Jean Daniélou, Gabriel Marcel, François Mauriac and Charles Moeller. The meeting aimed at regaining 'the ground of a common Christian and human civilisation', in order to unite against the 'schismatic countries', where opposition was lacking.<sup>106</sup> As it was clearly in competition with communism, La Pira's initiative differed substantially from the attempts at a dialogue that progressive Catholics had pursued so far.<sup>107</sup> At the Florence conference, the American clergyman Charles W. Lowry asked frankly how the 'the so-called Partisans of Peace' could be opposed.<sup>108</sup> And the final motion maintained that 'true peace' was not possible 'where conditions of liberty and development' of the 'spiritual vocation' of 'human beings' were not assured.<sup>109</sup>

The Catholic Church did not change its doctrine, but the tone of the debate became different. On 13 September 1952, Pope Pius XII greeted the participants of the international meeting of the Pax Christi movement which had been founded in London in 1945. For a long time, the Church hierarchy had considered the movement with suspicion, as it was deemed, like every pacifist movement, to be a potential breeding ground for communist agents. Pius XII again admonished Pax Christi's members that the Church distrusted 'every pacifist propaganda in which the word "peace" is abused in order to hide goals that cannot be confessed'.<sup>110</sup> Nonetheless, the papal gesture itself was significant, and it was the first formal endorsement of the movement. In the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* published in the same year, Fr Antonio Messineo, SJ, ascribed to it a sincere and noble 'anxiety to pursue a noble ideal, as the creation of everlasting peace among peoples and the banishment of war', although he continued to include many traditionally critical remarks about pacifism.<sup>111</sup> In October 1953, *Il Corriere della Sera*, originally a Catholic lay newspaper linked to industrialists, also asked Catholics to intervene lest 'the monopoly of peace' pass to organisations that obeyed 'communist instructions'.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, Catholic journals now often insisted on the 'deep, overwhelming difference' between Catholic and communist 'conceptions of peace',<sup>113</sup> so that they could give a more balanced judgment of the Partisans of Peace. Despite all their mistakes and ambiguities, their efforts showed such persistence and hope, 'such an obstinate will to strive for and make others strive for peace, . . .

<sup>106</sup> Benvenuto Matteucci, 'Il convegno internazionale per la pace e la civiltà cristiana', *Vita e Pensiero*, Aug. 1952, 428–33.

<sup>107</sup> 'Il discorso d'apertura dell'on. La Pira nel salone dei Cinquecento', in *Civiltà e pace: Atti del primo convegno internazionale per la civiltà e la pace cristiana: Firenze 23–28 giugno 1952* (Florence: Tipografia L'Impronta, 1953), 14.

<sup>108</sup> *Civiltà e pace*, 107.

<sup>109</sup> The motion is reported in *Adesso*, 'La pace di Firenze', *Adesso*, 1 July 1952.

<sup>110</sup> Pius XII, *Discorsi per la comunità internazionale* (Rome: Studium 1957), 399.

<sup>111</sup> *Enciclopedia Cattolica* (Vatican City: Ente per L'Enciclopedia e per il libro cattolico, 1952), IX, col. 507–8.

<sup>112</sup> *Il Corriere della Sera*, 6 Oct. 1953.

<sup>113</sup> Giorgio Luigi Bernucci, 'Il dialogo atomico fra oriente e occidente', *Vita e Pensiero*, May 1954, 278.

such a commitment of filling the air with the sounds [of hope] every man wants to hear' that their actions could be considered an indirect 'testimony of God'.<sup>114</sup>

On various occasions in 1954, Pope Pius XII repeated his condemnation of 'atomic, biological, chemical war',<sup>115</sup> and *L'Osservatore Romano* wrote about a 'necessary revision of our doctrine on war' and invited the Catholic press to be concerned about the issue.<sup>116</sup> At the beginning of 1955 the Christian Democrats launched a campaign to develop and discuss peace themes. *Il Popolo di Milano*, a Christian Democrat newspaper, noted that 'it was about time that Christians realised that they should have "a doctrine of peace" and that they worked towards the doctrine's realisation [...]'. 'We do not believe', the paper continued, 'that they indeed have to let others have the monopoly of this first and foremost Christian commitment [to peace]'.<sup>117</sup>

### **Divisions on détente and war (1955–1956)**

During the short period of détente in 1955–6, new disputes about war and peace emerged. The birth of a 'third force', the growth of the non-aligned movement around the world, the polemics within peace movements between 'communist neutralists and non-communist neutralists', as well as the perception that the Partisans of Peace were now 'close to exhaustion' changed the situation fundamentally.<sup>118</sup> Yet again, the debate brought deep rifts within Italian Catholicism into the open, while at the same time further emphasising the problem of the legality of war in the nuclear age.

Three members of the Christian Democratic Party attended the Helsinki Congress of the Partisans of Peace in June 1955. They were supported by the small group around the journal *Prospettive*. But the journal was subsequently proscribed by the DC, its editor expelled and the party membership of 'the three Helsinki pilgrims' suspended.<sup>119</sup> Fr Messineo started a vigorous campaign against coexistence in *La Civiltà Cattolica* in which he defined coexistence as 'an anti-human conception'.<sup>120</sup> In a different but no less negative key, the journal of the Catholic University in Milan compared détente to 'a magnificent tomcat', 'lying ... in a comfortable armchair and purring', while its 'preferred stay' was the kitchen, where he was ready to strike, as soon as the house servant turned her eyes away'.<sup>121</sup> By contrast, the

<sup>114</sup> Cornelio Fabro, 'Della pace e della guerra', *Humanitas*, 1953, 332.

<sup>115</sup> Il pacifico, 'Coscienza e propaganda', *Adesso*, 1 May 1954; Pio Bondioli, *Il Popolo*, June 1954, quoted in 'Come si svuotano le grandi parole', *Adesso*, 15 June 1954. See also Il pacifico, 'Il Papa e la guerra totale', *Adesso*, 15 Oct. 1954.

<sup>116</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano*, 15 Oct. 1954.

<sup>117</sup> See Il pacifico, 'Sui sentieri della pace', *Adesso*, 1 Feb. 1955.

<sup>118</sup> Il Pacifico, 'Neutrali e partigiani', *Adesso*, 15 July 1955.

<sup>119</sup> 'Giorni feriali', *Adesso*, 15 July 1955.

<sup>120</sup> Antonio Messineo, 'L'illusione della coesistenza', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 6 Aug. 1955, 231. See also Antonio Messineo, 'La coesistenza nel timore', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 24 Sept. 1955, 22–32, and 'La coesistenza nell'errore', *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 29 Oct. 1955, 225–36.

<sup>121</sup> Christianus, 'Il gatto e la distensione', *Vita e Pensiero*, Nov. 1955, 613–14.

Laureates Movement adopted a much more positive tone.<sup>122</sup> At his Florence congress in summer 1955, La Pira proposed plans that would lead to the entirely peaceful use of thermonuclear energy, would elevate depressed areas and might foster conventions in order 'to give the precious gift of political and spiritual liberty to people'.<sup>123</sup> La Pira was, however, attacked by *L'Osservatore Romano*.<sup>124</sup>

In May 1955, the booklet *Tu non uccidere* (Thou should not kill) was published. It brought together the reflections on war by a group of young Catholics who supported conscientious objection and who gathered around Don Mazzolari. The publication of the booklet ended once and for all any remaining Catholic left illusions about the communist peace front; '[t]he men of communist peace', it declared, 'are working very hard in order to build a philosophy, not to say an (inhuman) theology of the "just war" of the proletariat, without comprehending that they are repeating the arguments with which, until yesterday, it was possible to demonstrate that there were just wars for kings, for states and for various forms of capitalism.'<sup>125</sup>

For the first time since the end of the Second World War, a debate on the legitimacy of war emerged within Italian Catholicism. Despite the radicalism of *Tu non uccidere*, Catholic reactions were quite sympathetic. A bishop observed that the booklet's claims were well beyond traditional doctrine, but that they could 'become, tomorrow, an element of a future theological synthesis which a new Thomas Aquinas could build, at the end of the troubled crisis through which humanity is passing today'.<sup>126</sup> The Catholic writer Luigi Santucci of *Il Popolo di Milano* spoke of Mazzolari, rather sympathetically, as a 'peace chaplain'.<sup>127</sup> *Studium* remarked that it was possible to share the enthusiasm for the authors' conclusion that even defensive war was not legitimate, but part of the proof for the argument was still lacking. *Civitas* praised its courage and said that all this could 'upset . . . only those who were far from the essence of the Gospel in their social life'. The newspaper of the Catholic Action, *L'Avvenire d'Italia*, appreciated the novelty of the cultural atmosphere in which young people seemed in search of peace and remembered that 'to take the initiative of peace' was a duty for Catholics. Another Catholic newspaper, *L'Eco di Bergamo*, observed that the document was 'introducing a new climate'.<sup>128</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica* itself, the most official and traditional Italian Catholic journal, wrote of 'sincere pages, deeply felt and of deep conviction' and stressed that there was nothing in them that suggested commonalities with 'the communist trick of a deceitfully acclaimed and manoeuvred peace that would put people to sleep before brutally subjugating them'. *Humanitas* defined the booklet as 'the most courageous book against war published in Italy'.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Sigma, 'Tempo di "distensione"', *Studium*, September 1955, 557–60 and Sigma, 'Dall'esperienza dell'odio un impegno di amore', *Studium*, December 1956, 689–90.

<sup>123</sup> Bruna Bocchini Camaiani, 'La Firenze della pace negli anni del dopoguerra e del Concilio Vaticano II', in Franzinelli and Bottoni, *Chiesa e guerra*, 519–20.

<sup>124</sup> *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 June 1955.

<sup>125</sup> 'Tu non uccidere', *Adesso*, 15 May 1955.

<sup>126</sup> Angelo Romani, 'Tu non uccidere', *Adesso*, 1 July 1955.

<sup>127</sup> Published in its entirety in 'Fotomontaggi per don Mazzolari', *Adesso*, 15 Sept. 1955.

<sup>128</sup> A good example can be found in 'Tu non uccidere', *Adesso*, 15 March 1956.

<sup>129</sup> 'Tu non uccidere', *Adesso*, 1 July 1957.

Even under the umbrella of a common Catholic ‘doctrine of peace’, the opposition between two different cultures could not have been clearer. On the one hand, references to Gandhi<sup>130</sup> or to Danilo Dolci<sup>131</sup> began to appear, and a certain attention was devoted to the British Labour left’s position in favour of peace and neutrality (and Aneurin Bevan’s line in particular).<sup>132</sup> Opposition to rearmament policies emerged, for example in the Associations of Italian Christian Workers (ACLI).<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, *La Civiltà Cattolica* criticised Catholic progressivism and ‘Marxist infiltrations’ of Christian vocabulary.<sup>134</sup> Likewise, in the right-wing circles of the Curia, the evaluation of pacifism continued to be completely negative, while ‘just war’ theory was defended;<sup>135</sup> a seminary professor, for instance, answered a reader who had asked him whether Jesus Christ condemned wars by stressing that even an offensive war could be ‘legitimate’, if ‘it was declared by the qualified authority for a just reason’ and if it was accomplished ‘according to the norms of justice and charity’.<sup>136</sup> Fr Virginio Rotondi pointed out in a popular magazine that there were ‘certainly just wars’, ‘dubiously just wars’, ‘clearly unjust wars’, and provided criteria for their classification.<sup>137</sup> In November 1956, having observed the Hungarian uprising and Soviet reactions to it, the Milan Young Catholic Association sent a telegram to the prime minister, Antonio Segni, and not only asked for a break in diplomatic relations with the USSR but declared themselves ready to take up arms to defend Hungarians.<sup>138</sup>

### **Debates about nuclear weapons and decolonisation (1957–1962)**

The emergence of the issue of decolonisation in the late 1950s, drew attention to the Catholics’ responsibilities that reached beyond Europe. Italian Catholic attitudes on international issues consequently changed, even though divisions remained. The Catholic right pointed out that, ‘faced with the clever and perfidious policy which the USSR was developing in the Middle East and in North Africa’, the only thing Europe and the free West could do was ‘to reinforce their political, military and economic relations and develop NATO more and more’.<sup>139</sup> Not every Catholic agreed with this analysis, however. In the wake of the new encyclical *Mater et magistra* (which

<sup>130</sup> Una mamma, ‘Pace nostra ostinazione’, *Adesso*, 1 May 1953.

<sup>131</sup> Giovanni Fincato, ‘Aghi di pino’, *Adesso*, 15 Feb. 1956.

<sup>132</sup> Franco Bernstein, ‘Come si può tradire la pace’, *Adesso*, 1 March 1955; Aneurin Bevan, ‘La paura della guerra non prepara la pace’, *Adesso*, 1 Jan. 1956.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Giuseppe Gemellaro, ‘Gli itinerari della pace’, *Quaderni di Azione sociale*, January 1955, 5–9.

<sup>134</sup> Antonio Messineo, ‘Il progressismo contemporaneo’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 107 (1956), I, 494–506; Antonio Messineo, ‘Infiltrazioni marxiste nel linguaggio sociale’, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 107 (1956), I, 593–605.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Francesco Roberti, ed., *Dizionario di teologia morale*, 2nd rev. and expanded edn (Rome: Studium: 1955/1957), 901.

<sup>136</sup> Aldo Pedrone, ‘La Croce sepolta’, *Adesso*, 1 April 1956.

<sup>137</sup> *Epoca*, 2 Oct. 1956.

<sup>138</sup> M. Pa., ‘La guerra come il cancro’, *Adesso*, 15 Nov. 1956.

<sup>139</sup> Pietro Gerardo Jansen, ‘L’Unione dell’Occidente e il rafforzamento della N.A.T.O.’, *Idea*, February 1957, 111. See also Fernando Della Rocca, ‘Cose d’Europa’, *Idea*, March 1958, 156; ‘Europa e Medio Oriente’, *Idea*, September 1958, 579–81; Pietro Gerardo Jansen, ‘Una minaccia per il mondo libero’,

Giorgio La Pira regarded as a product of the new 'space era'<sup>140</sup>), a growing number of Catholics began to stress the importance of 'brotherhood' between rich and poor countries and of global responsibilities towards injustice as the only way to counter the growing communist presence in the Third World. This new consciousness of development issues and the sensitivity towards the question of the independence of African and Asian colonies, combined with a strong awareness that the cold war had to be overcome, led to the emergence of a Catholic new left with almost pacifist attitudes. Decolonisation seemed to offer an opportunity to depart from the 'power balance of the two colossuses' and the continuous risk of war that it brought.<sup>141</sup> An important push in this direction came from the Algerian crisis, its repercussions on French Catholicism<sup>142</sup> and their deep echoes in Italian Catholicism.<sup>143</sup>

The key factor that gave rise to a new sensitivity among Catholics over questions of peace and war, as in many other countries, was the nuclear arms race that had come to the forefront of debates among Italian Catholics in 1957.<sup>144</sup> On 4 October 1957 the Soviet Union had launched the first artificial satellite, 'Sputnik': 'Something completely novel', *Adesso* commented, 'had burst into our world', 'upsetting an already uncertain balance', and introducing 'fear'.<sup>145</sup> For the first time, many Catholic voices pointed to the radical novelty of the nuclear age and to the paradox of 'being able to make war which keeps war far away'.<sup>146</sup> Support for disarmament among Catholics went so far that even journals with more moderate positions, such as *Studium*, now claimed that the only solution was to abolish 'nuclear conscription'.<sup>147</sup> They declared themselves, albeit rather timidly, to be in favour of a non-violent option of a Gandhian kind.<sup>148</sup> Even the theological right (the journal *Studi cattolici* for which Pietro Palazzini and Cardinal Ottaviani wrote, for instance) adopted a much more open attitude than in the past and now looked for a clarification of implications of nuclear weapon for the traditional just war doctrine, concluding that

*Idea*, September 1958, 591–5; Pietro Gerardo Jansen, 'La propaganda comunista Cino-Sovietica in Africa', *Idea*, August 1960, 515–18.

<sup>140</sup> Giorgio La Pira, 'Un' enciclica per la nostra epoca', *Testimonianze*, 37 (1961), 565.

<sup>141</sup> 'Programmi dei partiti di fronte ai problemi del paese', *Questitalia*, 2–3 (1958), 25–6.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. 'L'Algeria e l'Europa', *Questitalia*, 32–3 (1960), 1–2.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. 'Problemi di coscienza posti dalla guerra d'Algeria. La 'tavola rotonda' organizzata da 'Questitalia' a Roma', *Questitalia*, 32–3 (1960), 20–45; 'La gioventù francese fra il diritto all'insubordinazione e l'opposizione di massa', *ibid.*, 61–7; 'Perché abbiamo disobbedito', *ibid.*, 69–73; 'Il problema dell'obbedienza nelle lettere di giovani combattenti', *ibid.*, 74–5; Jean-Marie Domenach and Iro Murgia, 'Ancora su Francia ed Europa', *Questitalia*, 35 (1961), 38–41.

<sup>144</sup> M. Reina, 'Trattative internazionali per l'uso pacifico dell'energia atomica', *Aggiornamenti sociali*, July 1957, 413–20; Mario Reina, 'Euratom: Aspetti politici, economici, istituzionali', *ibid.*, October 1957, 513–28, Antonio D'Angelo, 'Vita o morte', *Palestra del Clero*, 15 Oct. 1957, 950–3, Giulio Bevilacqua, 'Non cristiani nei metodi', *Humanitas*, 1958, 1–6; Giulio Bevilacqua, 'Energia atomica a scopi pacifici', *Aggiornamenti sociali*, May 1959, 313–24; Giacomo Perico, 'L'energia nucleare: Aspetti scientifici e morali. II.', *ibid.*, December 1959, 645–661.

<sup>145</sup> Giorgio Sani, 'La grande paura', *Adesso*, 15 Oct. 1957.

<sup>146</sup> g.c., 'Osservatorio. 3. Esibizione di forza', *Studium*, November 1957, 731.

<sup>147</sup> g.c., 'Osservatorio. 3. Escatologia atomica', *Studium*, October 1957, 662.

<sup>148</sup> m.p.v. [Marisa Paronetto Valier], 'Osservatorio. 3. Superiorità decisiva', *Studium*, October 1959, 687.

their use was justified only as a defensive measure.<sup>149</sup> *Humanitas* even published a long article by Thomas Merton against nuclear war, in which the author advocated mass conscientious objection.<sup>150</sup>

The year 1959 saw a lively debate about Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev and his foreign and defence policies of ‘peaceful co-existence’.<sup>151</sup> Among the right-wing sections of Italian Catholicism, any discussions with him were entirely rejected and opinions were completely negative.<sup>152</sup> Several right-wing authors painted the condition of the ‘silent Church’ in the communist countries in dramatic colours.<sup>153</sup> At the opposite end of the spectrum, *Studium* expressed a more positive assessment of Krushchev’s policies.<sup>154</sup> The Holy See subsequently forced it to retract its opinions.<sup>155</sup> The new Catholic left of the Laureates Movement and *Questitalia* also expressed more favourable views.<sup>156</sup> The debate not only was a question of theoretical aspirations, but also touched on the rift that existed within the Christian Democrat camp between the Segni-Pella line and the Gronchi line.<sup>157</sup>

Conscientious objection had become a subject which Catholics no longer completely refused to address, although it continued to remain highly divisive. In March 1960, Milan Jesuits justified it in their journal.<sup>158</sup> In autumn 1961, La Pira promoted the (private) screening (with a vast audience) of Claude Autant-Lara’s film *Tu ne tueras pas* (Thou should not kill), and the event gave rise to a very lively dispute.<sup>159</sup> As an observer wrote at the time, it was ‘the logic of arms’ that a significant section of Italian Catholics was now clearly refusing.<sup>160</sup> Instead, they were asking the

<sup>149</sup> P.P., ‘Energia atomica: uso e abuso’, *Studi Cattolici*, March–April 1958, 58–61; Piero Brancoli Busdraghi, ‘L’armamento atomico: una questione di coscienza’, *Studi Cattolici*, July–August 1959, 39–44.

<sup>150</sup> Thomas Merton, ‘La guerra atomica e le responsabilità del cristiano’, *Humanitas*, 1962, 489–500.

<sup>151</sup> Giacomo Corna-Pellegrini, ‘I problemi della collaborazione internazionale di fronte alla politica dei blocchi’, *Vita e Pensiero*, July 1959, 457–64; Luigi Arduini, ‘Alla vigilia della conferenza al vertice’, *Vita e Pensiero*, May 1960, 337–9.

<sup>152</sup> Pio Bondioli, ‘Kruscev’, *Studi Cattolici*, January–February 1958, 85–8; N.G., ‘Le preoccupazioni geografiche di Krusciov’, *Studi Cattolici*, November–December 1958, 93–95; Massimo Rendina, ‘Il match dell’epoca’, *Studi Cattolici*, September–October 1959, 67–68; Massimo Rendina, ‘Coesistere: questo è il problema’, *Studi Cattolici*, November–December 1959, 69–70; ‘Distensione ed equivoci’, *Studi Cattolici*, January–February 1960, 7–10; Massimo Rendina, ‘Riarmo ideologico e pace disarmata’, *Studi Cattolici*, January–February 1960, 69–70; Pietro Gerardo Jensen, ‘Il Comunismo e la minaccia al mondo libero’, *Idea*, September 1961, 600–2; Pietro Barbieri, ‘Cinismo Comunista’, *Idea*, November 1961, 723–5.

<sup>153</sup> Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, ‘La Chiesa del Silenzio. Non siamo insensibili alle sofferenze del Corpo Mistico’, *Studi Cattolici*, January–February 1960, 3–6.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. m.p.v. [Marisa Paronetto Valier], ‘Forza e debolezza dell’Occidente’, *Studium*, July–August 1959, 514–7; a.g., ‘“L’umanità ha forse possibilità di sperare in giorni migliori”’, *Studium*, October 1959; Sigma, ‘La “pace” che ci meritiamo’, *Studium*, December 1959, 789–90.

<sup>155</sup> Sigma, ‘Ancora sulla distensione’, *Studium*, January 1960, 1–3.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Francesco Tagliamone, ‘Prospettive di pace’, *Quaderni di Azione Sociale*, September–October 1959, 715–19 and ‘Un mondo nuovo per l’America’, *Questitalia*, 27 (1960), 3–8.

<sup>157</sup> ‘L’Italia e la distensione’, *Questitalia*, 23 (1960), 4–7.

<sup>158</sup> Giacomo Perico, ‘Guerra moderna e coscienza individuale’, *Aggiornamenti sociali*, March 1960, 131–48.

<sup>159</sup> Bocchini Camaiani, ‘La Firenze’, 522–4.

<sup>160</sup> Corna-Pellegrini, ‘I problemi della collaborazione internazionale’, 463.

two blocs to maintain peace.<sup>161</sup> In the past, war resistance among the tiny radical Catholic groups that had advocated conscientious objection (such as in Giordani's and Mazzolari's case) had been based on a revision of the Catholic theology on war. By the end of the 1950s, the framework of the debate had widened. Catholics now began to look towards Protestant reflections on peace<sup>162</sup> as well as to the new experience of British anti-nuclear movement, to Bertrand Russell and his support for British unilateral disarmament.<sup>163</sup> In 1958, Don Ernesto Balducci recalled earlier Catholic traditions in the new Florentine magazine *Testimonianze*, but added, 'our attention is directed . . . more to Gandhi than to Marx, more to Taha Hussei than to Krushchev, more to Ramakrishna than to Hegel, more to Father de Foucauld than to General De Gaulle'.<sup>164</sup> The first Perugia–Assisi peace march, modelled on the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's Aldermaston march, was held on 24 September 1961. It was the starting point in Italy for the development of a new peace movement that was no longer directly linked to political parties. In addition to communists, socialists, radicals and republicans, a small group of Christian Democrats participated, although the party had declared itself against the march.<sup>165</sup> A new culture was born. It was the culture of a minority of Catholics, but it would grow during and in the wake of the Second Vatican Council.

### Conclusions

In July 1923 (Mussolini's government had been in power for little more than six months), Fr Mariano Cordovani, a Dominican theologian who, within a short period of time, would become one of the most respected voices in the Catholic Church, declared, reflecting on the heritage of the First World War, 'the great mission for the Church in the twentieth century is this: preaching the kingdom of international justice and charity, building a universal conscience that resists both the wild amateurism of politicians who speculate in blood and the anonymous, infinite lust for the slaughter of one's fellow man.'<sup>166</sup> At the time this was a prophetic vision, although it would later become the centre of debate between Catholic intellectuals, especially after the Second World War. Cordovani's analysis illustrates the importance that the Catholic Church and Italian Catholics accorded to questions of peace and war in the context of the ideological confrontations in twentieth-century mass society. In fact, after the famous 1917 note by Pope Benedict XV which defined war as a

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 464. See also 'Il XXII Congresso e il programma del comunismo', *Questitalia*, 43 (1961), 8.

<sup>162</sup> Eros Vicari, 'I protestanti e la pace. La posizione delle Chiese', *Adesso*, 15 April 1959; Eros Vicari, 'I nostri fratelli protestanti e la pace. La predicazione politica', *Adesso*, 15 July 1959; Eros Vicari, 'I nostri fratelli protestanti e la pace. L'impegno sociale', *Adesso*, 15 Sept. 1959; Eros Vicari, 'I nostri fratelli protestanti. Cristianesimo sociale', *Adesso*, 1 Nov. 1959.

<sup>163</sup> 'L'equilibrio del terrore', *Adesso*, 1 April 1960.

<sup>164</sup> E.B., 'Primum dicite: pax (Lc. X, 5)', *Testimonianze*, 5 (1958), 4.

<sup>165</sup> Anna Scarantino, *Donne per la pace: Maria Bajocco Remiddi e l'Associazione internazionale madri unite per la pace nell'Italia della guerra fredda* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2006), 7.

<sup>166</sup> Mariano Cordovani, 'Il XII centenario di S. Colombano e l'apostolato internazionale della Chiesa', *La scuola cattolica*, July 1923, 505.



‘useless slaughter’, from the 1920s to the 1950s, under popes Pius XI and Pius XII, the theme of peace became central to papal teaching.<sup>167</sup> Giorgio Rumi, one of the foremost historians of Italian Catholicism, observed a few years ago that, at the end of the nineteenth century, ‘Italian Catholic opinion seemed completely insulated against the international European rivalries.’<sup>168</sup> The experience of total war in the twentieth century and, in particular, the cold war years brought a fundamental transformation. As Catholics became a part of mass society and thus participated in the ideologisation of politics, Italian Catholics’ faith became increasingly politicised.<sup>169</sup> The increasing awareness of the importance of peace-making within these ideological confrontations did not prevent the emergence of a series of new contradictions, however. With the emergence and growth of mass politics, a growing rift emerged between, on the one hand, the Catholic hierarchy’s elaboration of Catholic doctrine as an issue of principles and, on the other hand, the diverse choices made by politically oriented Catholic groups at different historical junctures. The whole system of principles and guidelines about international affairs (such as the centrality of the papacy as an arbiter, a confessional approach to international organisations, a middle way between pacifism and nationalism) constructed by the Catholic Church at the beginning of the century came under intense pressure from the twentieth-century ideologies of democracy, communism, internationalism and pacifism, as well as nationalism and militarism.

Fr Cordovani’s words were realised only partially during the first half of the twentieth century, as both the official pronouncements of ecclesiastical teaching and the articles of the Catholic press paradoxically combined strong support for the maintenance and creation of peace with a rejection of pacifism, peace movements and internationalism, as well as with the strong advocacy of ‘just war’ theory which frequently led to Catholic endorsement of war. It was only at the beginning of the 1960s that this general attitude began to change. The fierce confrontation with communism in the early cold war years played a very important role in this remarkable transformation. How exactly did this peculiar ‘struggle for peace’ in the early years of cold war influence Italian Catholicism? Did Italian Catholics’ ‘way to peace’ develop *despite* or *through* the ideological confrontation with the Communists? Unlike in West Germany and Britain, a non-aligned peace movement hardly existed in early cold war Italy, so that Italian Catholics were faced only with a communist peace movement devoid of ‘democratic’, non-violent and religious features. Initially, this made it easy for Italian Catholics to refuse to endorse pacifism. While Italian Catholics had before the Second World War linked pacifism to Protestantism and Freemasonry, they came, over the course of the late 1940s and early 1950s, to connect it to communist politics and policies. The contest with communists led Catholics to contrast their own peace

<sup>167</sup> For a very good recent assessment see Daniele Menozzi, *Chiesa, pace e Guerra nel Novecento: Verso una delegittimazione religiosa dei conflitti* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008).

<sup>168</sup> Giorgio Rumi, ‘Politica estera e internazionalismo cattolico’, in Francesco Traniello and Giorgio Campanini, eds., *Dizionario storico del movimento cattolico in Italia, 1860–1980*, Vol. I/2: *I fatti e le idee* (Turin: Marietti, 1981), 149.

<sup>169</sup> Renato Moro, ‘Religion and Politics in the Time of Secularisation: The Sacralisation of Politics and Politicisation of Religion’, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6 (2005), 71–86.

doctrine with communist 'pacifism'. In some cases they went as far as opposing their 'true pacifism' to the false communist one, while continuing to condemn non-aligned peace movements as the 'Trojan horses' of communism. The situation changed only when the ideological confrontation between the Christian Democrats and the PCI became less fierce towards the end of the 1950s. With the emergence of a new 'nuclear consciousness' in the second half of the 1950s, a minority of Catholics began to consider international peace campaigns more positively. At the beginning of the 1960s, they began to participate in them.

Despite the initial rejection of a dialogue with communists on the issue of peace, the early 1950s saw a gradual adaptation. Initially, the Catholic press merely denounced the communist peace campaign as insincere and as part of Machiavellian political manoeuvrings. Gradually, however, many Catholic observers began to acknowledge that the communist peace movement found support from growing and sincere sections of the population. For Catholic progressives this served as evidence that, in order to address the hopes of the Italian population in the context of mass democracy, a vague and moralising preaching of Christianity was no longer sufficient and that more pragmatic forms of political mobilisation were needed. The debate over the communist peace movement thus helped to turn 'peace' into the key political and ideological (rather than ethical) concept within Italian Catholicism. This process was not uniform, however; rather, the debates about peace led to serious rifts. The minority of Italian Catholics who refused to accept the binary framework of the cold war began to criticise Western rearmament policies and to question official interpretations that regarded the communist peace movement as a mere tactical ploy to gain power. While the majority of Italian Catholics considered the issue of peace to be an essential ground for ideological and political conflict, a vocal minority began to escape from this ideological context. This latter group emphasised the value of a 'Christian peace' from the gospels and argued that the choices it required should be free from any political and ideological limitations. This small group proposed pacifism as a key Christian value and considered peace movements (rather than Catholic organisations), regardless of whether they were communist or non-aligned, made up of lay Catholics or Protestants, as the natural domain of a Christian commitment to peace. In the domestic political and international climate of the late 1950s, these progressive Catholics managed to gain more ground and generated a major debate within the Catholic Church on the legitimacy of war. For this active minority it was clear that the time required not only prayers and good intentions, but also action, mobilisation and propaganda. Their refusal of mainstream cold war political discourse helped a minority of Catholics to develop and expand a new religious pacifist sensibility. It also created the general opportunity for individual Catholics to participate in religious or political groups that were not directly linked to the Catholic Church, as well as in the peace movements of the 1960s and beyond.