Introduction

This workshop offers a perspective on an educational work with individuals, groups and political institutions starting from the only Italian Historical Park, in Monte Sole near Bologna, and conducted by a volunteer Organization, "Terre, memoria e pace". The Park lies on the site of the so-called "massacre of Marzabotto", which was principally carried out by the SS at the end of September 1944, and where many hundreds of civilians were killed and their villages destroyed. The first part is conceived as an introduction to the site; during the workshop a series of slides on this aspect will be presented. The profound relationship and importance of history and geography for the educational work at Monte Sole represents a central element of our approach. On this point, we are indebted to the work of Dr. Andrew Charlesworth for his understanding of the role of the landscape in the memorial sites of the Shoah. The enclosed material contains other contributions given on these themes during the last years (London, Spiro Institute, 1995; Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, 1996; Bologna, Centro Montanari, 1998; Casalecchio (in Italian, unpublished), 1997.

A. The Site

Monte Sole is a triangle of hills, near Bologna, between the two valleys of the river Setta and of the river Reno. In September 1944 it was the theatre of a slaughter carried out by the SS while withdrawing northwards with the support of local fascist elements. These mountains had been for a very long time, and were still, populated by different communities organized in villages. The villages had gradually lost their importance during the second half of the XIX Century, because of the creation of industries and railways connecting Northern with Central Italy, and passing West and East of the hills of Monte Sole, along the two rivers. The inhabitants on the top of the hills had become in this way more and more isolated. Their families had lived for generations with very few exchanges or trade with the town. Most of the people were poor farmers who usually farmed the land for an absentee landlord, according to the metayage cropping system. At that time some groups of partisans were also living in these territories, though they were not much politicized and organized yet.

The Allies had arrived in Florence in August 1944 and the front was very near but it would not move forward until Spring 1945. On September 1944, an SS Division surrounded systematically the mount and then went upwards destroying both the local population and the places they lived in. During this event approx. 770 people, the majority women and children, were killed; their bodies and the houses they lived in were in many cases destroyed and burnt.

Interpretations, Representations, and a Possible Link with the Shoah.

Waves of memory and monumentalization
For a certain time the truth about this event has been hidden. A well diffused and important newspaper of Bologna denied, just after the facts, that in Monte Sole there had been a slaughter. Later on, during the winter 1944-1945 the front stopped on the Appennine hills between Florence and Bologna very near to Monte Sole for several months, and after the end of the war the danger of bombs was another cause that made it more difficult to return on these sites.

If you visit these places today you will find nothing of the villages we have talked about. Only some stones are left, and even these are covered by grass: after fifty years nature has made the place scarcely recognizable. One could imagine that a house once stood there, but never of a whole village. None of the few survivors has continued to live on those hills, nor new villages have been founded. The first impression could be that nothing has ever happened, and the site may cause the visitor a beautiful impression of peace and silence.

In fact, for many decades after the war the memory of the massacre of Monte Sole was not connected to the top of the hills, but to the small city of Marzabotto, in the valley of the river Reno. Here was built in 1961 a memorial and ossuary ["Sacrarrio"] under the local Catholic Parish, where the remains of the bodies transferred from Monte Sole had been buried, according to the models of the First World War Memorials. Members of the Partisans had also built a small monument on the top of the highest hill, the "Monte Sole", devoted to the memory of the Partisan Brigade "Stella Rossa". On the abandoned site, vegetation and trees begun to grew again and the former cultivated landscape become an example of wilderness. The wideness of this phenomenon made it a case-study for botanists coming from the near University of Bologna.

At the beginning of the 1980's, a gradual re-discovery of the sites on the top of the hill was made by a minority of the Catholic Church, also because of the fact that five priests had been killed during the massacre together with their communities. In this connection one should mention that at Monte Sole there exists today a Christian community of monks and nuns, which is intended to be as a sign of repentance by the Christian Church for its silence during the fascist era and the Shoah. This presence has led to a new series of small monuments - devoted to the Catholic memory of the massacre - on the sites of the former villages.

Then, in 1989 a Regional law established Monte Sole as an Historical Park of cir. 6000 Hectares and the following program:- * the preservation of the natural ambient, as in natural parks; * the restoration and conservation of the remains; * the reconstruction of the memory of partisan actions and of the massacre, * the foundation of a School of Peace capable of transmitting its memory to the young generation and of preventing the rebirth of this phenomena; * the study and the explanation of the causes of the fascist phenomenon in Italy, and of nazism in Germany

The controversial relation of Monte Sole with the Shoah

The interpretation of this massacre is still a source of conflict. Just after the war, two interpretations were proposed, one by the supporters of Communist Party (which had a very strong majority all over the Region until today) and the other by a vast majority (then, and a rightwing minority today) of the Catholic Church. For the first, the extent of the destruction was a proof of the importance of the partisan action; for the second, the same extent was proof of the danger posed by the partisans for the common citizens and their limited contribution [see Enclosed 1 - 1995 - prg. 5-6]. Thus, a very divided memory was transmitted from generation to generation among the population.
A third, more recent interpretation (1987) connect the facts of Monte Sole neither to the partisan actions, nor to "reprisal", but to the project of extermination which took place during the same period in the whole Europe, particularly in the East. In this context, Monte Sole has been depicted as a minor manifestation of the Shoah, in terms of total destruction of a whole culture. It must be added that the same SS Division that operated at Monte Sole had carried out another massacre of civilians without a military justification on the hill of Tuscany, at Sant'Anna di Stazzema (Lucca), several weeks before.

The development of this last interpretation gave our organization of educators (founded at the beginning of the '90s) the starting point for a program of peace education for children and adults, starting from Monte Sole as a minor site of the memory of the Shoah. What follows are some examples of its activities.

**Educational experiences at Monte Sole with groups**

**The Camps "Peace in three voices".**

The experience of the Peace Camps started in 1991 and lasted until 1994. It was strongly encouraged by a group of volunteer organizations and financed by the Regional Government of the Emilia-Romagna to which Bologna belongs. Our aim was to unite 3 groups of youngsters between 14 and 18 years old, two of which were in an actual conflict: one Israeli, one Palestinian, and one Italian. By living together and by sharing daily life, they would understand who "the Enemy" is, and that "hate" is more a lack of understanding and knowledge than real hate for other human beings. Every year a first period - usually 10 days- was spent by the seaside in a holiday village where groups of other youngsters were living. Then the rest of the time -about other 10 days- was spent in a villa close to the city centre of Bologna but isolated on the hills. We decided on this solution because we thought that the fact of living "alone", without other people around, would help the discussions and better transmit our message.

The Israelis came from the young wing of the Meretz party, and the Palestinians from "The Young Falcons movement", connected with PLO. The Italians did not belong to a political movement, nor did they have a particular knowledge or a strong commitment to Middle East. Every delegation had 2 leaders who were in charge of guiding discussions and of taking care of their boys. The 3 delegations were divided into mixed groups that had a 2 hour discussion meeting every afternoon, and other sessions in the morning. The first part of the work was centered on mutual knowledge and on the expression of feelings about the conflict. Then, other topics strictly connected with the political situation in Israel at that time were discussed, like the problems in the Gaza strip, the West Bank and the status of Jerusalem. Very high points of tension were reached, and of course it was almost impossible to find solutions to all those questions.

The success of the camp was above all on the emotional side. Many people confessed to having never had a friend from the other side, and to having never thought it could have happened. For the Italian delegation the situation was quite difficult: it was a neutral group, but it was pushed and pulled by the two sides which were trying to convince it of their positions. Anyway it was an important role for the equilibrium and for relaxing the atmosphere after the hard moments, and we know that many friendship lasted also after the end of the camp, at home. That was exactly the point: to show the reality of the "Other", to show him/her as a person who is possible to know and to love.
Working with the schools

With schools - from primary to the last class of the high school - we usually work in two or three phases: first a workshop at school, then a visit at Monte Sole, and in some cases a "verification" at school. Monte Sole is a place rich in meaning but difficult to "read", and during the visit it is very important to walk along the paths without hurry in order to have time to grasp something of the relation of the site with its past, its present, and itself (on this see Encl. 2 - 1996, prg. 1-2).

In the first phase, the aim is to encourage the class to get to know the place and understand its language. The persistence of different interpretations of the events at Monte Sole requires close attention to words and their meaning. An exercise in basic vocabulary aimed at understanding the events and their interpretations, conceived as a game, may be useful at this point.

Words and meaning

An important question in every educational project is the knowledge of terms and meanings. Our work with the schools shows that Italian pupils aged 13-14 years have difficulties in the understanding of many words about Monte Sole. The educator presents to each pupil a sheet with 16 words, each bearing a number, and 16 definitions each bearing a letter (See Enclosed 3, 1998). The exercise consists in the association of each word to its correct definition. The words are: PARK (Parco), MEMORIES (Memorie), MONUMENT (Monumento), SLAUGHTER/MASSACRE (Strage/Eccidio), REPRISAL (Rappresaglia), SISTEMATICITY (Sistematicit…), SHOAH, HOLOCAUST (Olocausto), EXTERMINATION/ANNIHILATION CAMP (Campo di sterminio/annientamento), WORKING CAMP (Campo di lavoro), MILITARY CAMP (Campo militare), JEW (Ebreo), ISRAELI (Israeliano), ISRAELITE (Israelita), ISRAEL (Israele), CHOICE/ELECTION (Elezione).

The definitions, in some cases absent from dictionaries, are taken from Historical Dictionaries, historical studies or also from witnesses. The choice of words depends on their usefulness for the group and their number may vary. After having finished the exercise, a discussion can begin about the difficulties of finding the right definition. Sometimes the pupils suggest other useful words and in these years we modified our vocabulary accordingly to the lacks suggested by the activities with the pupils.

Dealing with Emotions

The attempt to establish relations between the "position" (historical, geographical, cultural...) of the site with the "position" of the visitor implies of course treatment of the emotional side of the site. What is important here is firstly to facilitate perception by the visitor of his/her emotions (or of the lack of emotion); secondly, to be conscious of the link between these feelings and the representation of the site; and finally, to overcome one’s own personal representation of the site/event in order to better grasp other dimensions. The following is an example of an activity performed with boys and girls 13 years old. The whole work consisted of four sessions, three of which lasted two hours and were held at school, and one of which (the third) lasted half a day and was held on the site of Monte Sole.
The boys knew from the beginning that the main theme of the work was peace education, but they had not been informed they would be taken on the site of the massacre. In the first session we worked on emotions. The pupils were invited to listen to a story, to music, to watch a video, to look at a picture. The activity was centered on "exercises of perception" by different senses (sight, hearing, touch...). We tried to learn to recognize (1) the presence of different emotions, in each pupil; (2) the difference between them, when felt by oneself and when felt by others, and (3) to establish a connection between the cause of an emotion and the emotion in itself. During this activity, the educators had their faces painted with different colours and patterns, without any explanation of this fact. Then the pupils were asked to guess which feelings and emotions the educators wished to express. Finally, the pupils painted their faces and discussed in groups which feelings they had wanted to express and which feelings could have been interpreted from an external observer. The aim was to learn to know and express by words one's reactions to the emotions, the personal ones and those coming from other people.

In the second session the pupils were divided into groups of 4 or 5 and were asked to prepare a brief scene about a conflict (on a small scale: in a family, at school, on the street ...), trying to express as clearly as possible the emotions felt by each character. The different scenes were then analyzed in order to extract common patterns. The main aim was to establish a general formula for discussion of conflict.

A three zone map.

The third session involved visiting Monte Sole. The boys were told the story of the massacre, and we tried to find out causal connections among events (was the state of war a sufficient cause to explain the fact? or what else was involved?).

In the fourth session, through a long discussion, we tried to encourage a nonviolent resolution of conflict. We observed that emotions are not a direct consequence of a fact, even if they temporally immediately follow it. The direct consequence of a fact are thoughts, which in turn produce emotions. But what a person thinks of a fact does not depend only on the fact itself, but also, and essentially, on the thoughts, connected to his/her individual history and education, and it is thus possible to modify them. (The Nazi regime understood this, and "education", or mis-education, was a main part of its program.) It is therefore on this aspect that we can work, through extensive but fruitful self-education, to reduce thoughts that cause negative emotions, and the explosion of violent conflict.

In this way the pupils could construct a map containing three concentrical zones: the first and most inner (the "events of the open conflict"), the second (the "thoughts originated by the facts"), and the outer (the "facts"). The path from the outer to the inner zone represents also the development from "normal life" to the "open conflict", and the path from inner to outer represents the development from the open conflict to peace. This kind of map may be used not only to represent the reaction of a single person to a conflict: it may also represent the geography of the Historical Park, with an inner zone (the massacre on the top of the hill), a second zone (the flanks of the hill, where the action of destruction was prepared without reaching its climax) and the outer zone (the "outer" world of the valley, its industries and newspapers, which had not (or would not have) conscience of the preparation of the massacre.
A Perspective on the Educational Approach with Groups

Linking "in" and "out" with a map.

The result of the above activity is thus a map establishing a relationship between the site, the massacre, and the inner conflicts of a visitor or of a group, that is, his/her/their thoughts, emotions and reactions. The outer zone represents the world outside the conflict, were it took origin (in this case, the war), but it is also the place (the city, the school) where the visitor comes from, corresponding to his daily life. The middle zone is the area crossed by the visitor approaching the place (e.g. climbing on the flanks of the hill), and it corresponds, in an "emotions-centered" perspective, to the thoughts that the self-representation of a fact produces. Finally, the inner zone correspond to the area where most of the murders of Monte Sole took place, and it represents also the open conflict. This may help the visitor to establish a connection between "his" world and "Monte Sole's" world, between the place the visitor is visiting and the life he/she is living; between that conflict and the conflicts experienced by the visitor himself (by his/her political, cultural, national groups) in the life. This seems to be also a small achievement in the research of a link between the study of the past and the education to peace, and may be helpful in dealing with other conflicts.

Shoah, Memory, Laws, Constitution (/Covenant).

The extermination of the European Jewry, the Shoah, in its uniqueness and incommensurability (because of the extermination camp, conceived as a perfectly rational mean to this end), and at the same time in its continuity with other, minor events, connected with it in a systematic way (in particular, the concentration camp system, with its supporting structures) should remain the criterion of measure, pertinence, and interpretation of what is connected to sites like Monte Sole. The memory of these sites should be read starting from this fundamental criterion, and not on the bases of the sense of being "victim" or "victorious" against an enemy conceived as external and, in this sense, "barbarous". The aim is to achieve a form of education that is based on personal assumption of responsibility. Such kind of education will also help to encourage national reconciliation - as the Italian Constitution affirmed after the fall of fascism - but not in the nationalistic sense of legitimizing every soldier "as a fighter", irrespective of his allegiance.

Monte Sole as a school of peace will also treat the possibility of giving every citizen – irrespective of his/her allegiance, and without aiming to change it in favor of another – a common citizenship through the laws and the basic covenant of the State.

What to do today

We now turn to the question of what is possible to do today.

The Regional Law 19/1989 instituted the "Historical Park - School of Peace of Monte Sole". Its main purposes are: the restoration and conservation of the remains; the reconstruction of the memory of the partisan actions and of the massacre; the foundation of a School of Peace capable of transmitting that memory to the young generation and preventing the rebirth of these phenomena.

It can be useful to trace briefly some obstacles encountered by the project sketched in this Law on the way of its realization. Firstly, one must consider that the Territorial Plan of the Park had to be approved by a multitude of different institutional subjects. Secondly, there is a difficulty...
which is common to every Park: activities like hunting, building, buying etc. are strictly restricted, which goes against personal or local interests. Thirdly, the institution of an historical Park is unique as far as the Italian Law is concerned, so that there is not much clearness on the legal background of the Park. The nearest examples are obviously the laws on natural parks, but a simple transposition of them is not without ambiguities, since in our case the very reason to preserve places is based in historical (rather than naturalistic) grounds. Finally, one must admit that ceremonies and celebrations of the Resistance during these fifty years transmitted the memory of the facts in a rather superficial, or ritual, way. Young generations (and often their parents too) seem in many cases to understand this memory only as a kind of respect towards old partisans.

**Searching a way for memory**

This short survey of the major difficulties one encounters during the work introduces us to the last and more important point we wish to discuss, that is, how to develop educational projects capable of conveying to visitors a memory that is true and relevant. This point becomes crucial if one looks at the actual Italian political situation, characterized by a certain will to "overcome the past", and treating fascism as an obsolete ideology. Arguments like "these facts are now under the judgement of history, not ours", or "continuing to remember the facts brings only rage and spirit of revenge, the opposite of the peace we all are searching", or "all deeds are equal, no matter their political ideology", are now frequently repeated, also by educated people, and in good faith. So problems arise in everyday discussions like: can forgetting be a source of peace? Is peace simply the absence of conflict? Is it not better to pray for peace, rather than remembering old events?

We think it could be admitted that, first of all, oblivion was a significant part of the plans of the exterminators: from this point of view, their actions were successful. It follows that every educational action has to counteract the tendency to forget. This is usually done in by a Museum. But this form is also not without ambiguities: one should just think that in Prague, Nazism did not destroy the ancient synagogue with the famous cemetery in order to create a "Jewish museum": it had to transmit to the supposed new, Judenfrei, generations, the feeling that it had been "liberated" from a particular enemy. Without going to this extreme, it is difficult to escape the fact that the usual way to celebrate antifascism does not create a profound awareness of the inner mechanisms of the phenomenon: emphasis is usually given to the emotive, feeling-centered memory around the "mere facts". The Museum (or in general the place of the massacre) becomes, in this respect, a "place of fear" in opposition to, and without ties with, usual, external, common life. It is true that fear can also be cathartic, but one should perhaps think that in this kind of catharsis "all cats are the same grey in the night", if there is no real comprehension of the mechanisms of the massacre.

If one looks at the monuments, the usual representation of men and women as mere victims can reinforce, despite the good faith of the architect, the idea that "any victim is equal to any other, his ideology or the reason why he was killed being unimportant". We would also believe that insistence on the anonymity of victims brings us to a form of relativism, also encouraged by TV, according to which every massacre can be understood only in terms of number of victims, without explanation of the ideological mechanisms which produced the massacre. And since education has to do with ideologies, the elimination of the relation between massacres and ideological mechanisms eliminates in turn the possibility of education for peace. If so, massacres become unpredictable events like earthquakes, and the possibility that politics and education can build (or destroy) the basis for coexistence between cultures, false.

If this argumentation is true, it seems that educational activity in such places has to abandon the "feelings" and concentrate on explanations. We believe that this can be achieved through a
particular attitude towards the site. The site of the massacre, with the remains of a few houses and villages almost entirely covered with vegetation, provides the opportunity for walking and reflecting. An unhurried meeting with the place offers the visitor the possibility to grasp the meaning of the site and to experience its educational possibilities.

We note by the way that the meaning of the site does not coincide with the mere reconstruction of the events. Nowadays, especially in regard to Holocaust sites, but also in regard to Monte Sole, the dynamic of the events is sufficiently known: what is still needed is rather reflection on the meaning of the event.

**Conclusions**

Finally, we stress some conclusions that arose from our educational work.

a) The Shoah is an unique phenomenon, connected with nazi-fascist ideology, but the forces which produced it do not seem to be deeply understood: one must presume that they will persist in different forms, until their mechanism will really be understood in every aspect.

b) In these forces, one should count the falsification of truth and reality, which played such an important role in Nazism, and therefore the relationship between politics, information and reality should be a relevant subject for peace education.

c) A "simple" "Schuldgefühl" (sense of guilt) based on mere emotional feelings has dangerous implications: it can produce, in time, counter-reactions such as: "we have had enough of this feeling, we should not exaggerate, every party is guilty.”