

Meloni's government censors anti fascism

Sunday 28 April 2024, by [KELLAWAY Dave](#), [SCURATI Antonio](#) (Date first published: 23 April 2024).

Dave Kellaway reports on the controversy surrounding a historian's attempt to give a minute's monologue on the meaning of Italy's National Liberation Day, April 25.

A few days ago, *The Guardian* wrote about how the RAI, which is the country's public TV and radio company in Italy, had cut a short speech. [1] The speech was by Antonion Scurati, a writer and expert. Antonio Scurati, a renowned writer and academic, wrote the speech for the major national holiday on 25 April. This holiday commemorates the victory of the Italian people against the Nazi occupation during World War II. However, the RAI decided not to let him say the whole speech on TV.

Giorgia Meloni, the current prime minister of the hard right coalition government, grew up politically in the continuity neo-fascist MSI party. She was a youth activist in the Rome area. Although she and her party have distanced themselves from some aspects of the fascist period—for example, the persecution of the Jewish community—they have not completely repudiated that regime.

At the same time, this political current has, for some time now, and with some success, tried to downplay and even eliminate the anti-fascist foundation of the Italian Constitution of 1948. I recommend reading the text (just the intro) for its progressive content—as far as a bourgeois constitution allows—compared to the British framework.

The current government wants the word anti-fascism removed from all official discourse. People say these divisions are old-fashioned and do not matter in Italy's society today. Of course, the official mainstream left has helped this change along. They have worked together to manage capitalism and have failed to put up any real fight against the upper classes.. The left's abandonment of its own historical principles has significantly impacted anti-fascist traditions. The president of the Senate, Ignazia La Russa, the second highest institutional post in Italy, who is also a member of Meloni's party, has specifically refused to use the term anti-fascism. He presided over some of the official ceremonies on 25 April.

This year, *Il Manifesto*, a left-wing daily, has been building a national demonstration in Milan on 25 April. It has been twenty years since it called for a similar successful demonstration at the time the neo-fascists were first admitted to one of Berlusconi's governments. Today, the post-fascists are not just a very junior partner but also the leadership of the government, which has maintained the support it won at the last election. Fratelli D'Italia, Meloni's party, is likely to be the biggest party in the European elections in June.

The monologue was censored not so much for its analysis of the fascist period as for its direct reference to the current prime minister's opposition to the values of anti-fascism. Meloni has since tried to distract from the accusation of censorship by publishing the monologue on her Facebook page. She also falsely accused Scurati of asking for too much money for his appearance on the RAI channel and that this was the "real" reason for why he was de-invited from the Che Sara TV show.

The controversy has dominated politics in Italy in recent days, and paradoxically, it has probably caused more people to read or listen to the text than if the RAI had allowed the writer to appear. Other presenters started to narrate the same monologue. Already, the RAI is being purged by the regime; its new director, Roberto Sergio, is close to Meloni's politics, and a significant number of its presenters and journalists have been pushed out or have resigned. Scurati himself has been the target of the right wing and its media, and this has surprised him since he has not been particularly involved in politics.

The left and progressive forces will mobilise for the national mobilization this Thursday, but its real test is to build a fighting opposition to the current hard right government.

Antonio Scurati's monologue for April 25

This is the text of Antonio Scurati's monologue for April 25, which RAI did not want to air, published in full on the Repubblica website on 20 April 2024.

Giacomo Matteotti was assassinated by fascist goons on 10 June 1924.

Five of them, all squadristi who had come from Milan, professionals of violence hired by Benito Mussolini's closest collaborators, waited for him under his house.

The Honorable Matteotti, the secretary of the United Socialist Party, the last person in Parliament still openly opposing the Fascist dictatorship, was seized in the centre of Rome, in broad daylight. He fought to the last, as he had fought all his life. They stabbed him to death, then disposed of his corpse. They desecrated his body so they could shove him into a pit dug badly with a blacksmith's tool.

Mussolini was immediately informed. In addition to the crime, he was guilty of the infamy of swearing to the widow that he would do everything possible to find her husband and bring him back to her. As he solemnly promised, the Duce of Fascism kept the victim's bloody papers in his desk drawer.

In this false Spring of ours, however, we commemorate not only Matteotti's political murder; we also commemorate the Nazi-fascist massacres perpetrated by the German SS, with the complicity and collaboration of Italian fascists, in 1944.

Fosse Ardeatine, Sant'Anna di Stazzema, Marzabotto - these are just some of the places where Mussolini's demonic allies cold-bloodedly massacred thousands of defenseless Italian civilians. Among them were hundreds of children and even infants. Many were even burned alive, some beheaded.

These two concomitant mournful anniversaries — the spring of '24, the spring of '44 — proclaim that Fascism was throughout its historical existence — not only at the end or occasionally — an irredeemable phenomenon of systematic terrorist political violence.

Will the heirs of that history recognize this, for once? Everything, unfortunately, suggests that they will not. The post-fascist ruling group [led by Giorgia Meloni], having won the elections in October

2022, had two paths before it: repudiate its neo-fascist past or try to rewrite history. It undoubtedly took the second path.

After avoiding the topic in the election campaign, the Prime Minister, when forced to address it because of official historical anniversaries, stubbornly stuck to the ideological line of her neo-fascist origins: she has distanced herself from the indefensible heinous acts of cruelty perpetrated by the regime (the persecution of the Jews) without ever repudiating the fascist experience as a whole. She has shifted the responsibility of the massacres carried out with the complicity of the fascist republicans onto the Nazis alone. Finally she has disavowed the fundamental role of the Resistance in the rebirth of Italy (to the point of never mentioning the word “antifascism” on the occasion of the official April 25, 2023 commemoration).

As I speak to you, we are again on the eve of the anniversary of the Liberation from Nazi-Fascism. The word that the Prime Minister refused to utter will still throb on the grateful lips of all sincere democrats, whether left, centre or right. Until that word - antifascism - is uttered by those who govern us, the spectre of fascism will continue to haunt the house of Italian democracy.

DAVE KELLAWAY

P.S.

• Anti*Capitalist Resistance. 23 Apr 2024:
<https://anticapitalistresistance.org/melonis-government-censors-anti-fascism/>

Footnotes

[1] The Guardian, 21 April 2024 [“Italian author accuses state broadcaster of censorship of antifascist monologue”](#).