



Historical examples

The “Bella Ciao” song as symbol of liberation from oppression

The song “Bella Ciao” is widely known as a popular symbol of liberation from all kind of oppression and tyranny. Its history is still unclear. It is not known yet when precisely the song was born, who was the author of the text and who wrote the music.

The mystery surrounding the song has also been an element that has contributed to the fortune of the piece, which can be really considered for its longevity and widespread recognition as sort of artistic world heritage.

It would be as if many scattered fragments (popular singing tradition of “mondina workers”, Klezmer music from Odessa, old French popular melodies) at a certain point in time had merged to achieve a song which over the years has become an international hit.

Primarily identified in Italy with the resistance movement against the nazi-fascism (1943-45), the song has been giving voice all over the world to liberation and protest movements as well as symbolizing resistance against oppression, unjust violence and even pandemic.

More recently it has been adopted as international hymn by the Fridays for Future movement. It has been resounding during 2013 mass protests in Turkey and sung on balconies in Italy but also in other countries during the widespread home confinement, due to Corona virus in 2020.

The song has been able to play a collective mobilizing role as it does not have political connotations of one or the other party but it evokes a widely spread and shared (universal?) aspiration towards liberty and justice while moving to seek for change. This is why it is very present nowadays in the action of global green movements.

References

(Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d’Italia) www.anpi.it

Cesare Bermani *Bella ciao. Storia e fortuna di una canzone: dalla resistenza italiana all’universalità delle resistenze*, Novara, Interlinea Edizioni, 2020

