

## 2 When a Journalist Defies More Than the Mafia: The Legacy of Giuseppe Fava and Italian Antimafia Culture

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### Two Shots and Five Bullets in Catania

Giuseppe Fava, a newspaper editor, author and playwright who was regarded as one of Italy's most outspoken campaigners against organized crime, has been slain, the police said today. Mr. Fava's body, shot twice, was discovered Thursday night in his parked car here. The police said he had gone to pick up his granddaughter, who was rehearsing a part in a theater comedy. Mr. Fava, 59 years old, wrote several books dealing with Sicily.

Antimafia campaigner, *New York Times*,  
7 January 1984

Only last week he appeared on a nationally televised talk show to discuss the Mafia.

With its first report on 7 January 1984, the *New York Times* announced the death of the internationally acclaimed journalist Giuseppe Fava. Two days earlier, five bullets ranging from 5 to 7.65 millimetres took Fava's life on the street next to the Verga Theatre, where his plays were frequently performed (Ward 2007, 8). Just the week before his death, on 28 December 1983, Fava was the guest of Enzo Biagi's popular TV program on *Retequattro*. Fava was one of the few people who boldly denounced the criminal networks, the names of the mafiosi, and the changing character of the mafia in Sicily. In his last interview with Enzo Biagi, Fava's shocking revelations once again created trouble for the leading mafiosi figures on a nationally broadcast television program. Mincing no words, he charged:

Mafiosi are in the Parliament, sometimes they are ministers, sometimes they are bankers, mafiosi are those who are in charge of the nation right now. You cannot define a "mafioso" as a small time crook who forces you to pay a cut of your small business. This is small stuff that exists in all Italian cities, in all European cities. The problem of the mafia is much greater, much more tragic. (Fava 1983a)

The assassination of Fava was not an entirely surprising event, given his unrelenting, concise disclosures about mafia crimes in print, television broadcasts, and film. His attacks against the mafia's expanding power in Catania reached their peak in the early 1980s, when the different mafia clans increased their illicit revenues through their entrepreneurial skills and collaboration with corrupt politicians and bureaucrats. Perhaps Fava's (1983b) famous article "I quattro cavalieri dell'apocalisse mafiosa" (The four horsemen of the mafia apocalypse) should be noted as a milestone that paved the way for his murder. Fava publicly condemned the mafia's social and political networks in Catania. The article, published in *I Siciliani* on 1 January 1983, revealed precise information about the criminal business deals of the Santapaola clan, which was the notorious mafia syndicate of Catania. The mafia wars in Sicily and the murders of prominent public figures in the early 1980s created widespread despondency among Sicilians. The ruthless power of the mafia clans was at a height when the hit man of the mafia boss Nitto Santapaola killed General Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, the most powerful official in the antimafia fight, on 3 September 1982. After this shocking murder, Fava represented a relatively easy target for Nitto Santapaola, whose orders to assassinate the journalist were carried out by the hit man Maurizio Avola, the boss's nephew.

However, it took more than ten years to discover the perpetrators behind the murder of Fava. On 18 May 1993, Nitto Santapaola was arrested. This arrest was made possible by Maurizio Avola's decision to become a *pentito*, in other words a mafioso who turns state's evidence, ostensibly repents, and provides evidence against the mafia. Eventually, Avola confessed to the murder of Giuseppe Fava and revealed the names of those who ordered and organized his killing. Fava's slaying was truly a demoralizing event among the fellow Sicilians who shared his same principles, which were fundamental for building the future of their homeland. Yet his death spurred new ethical codes of truth, democratic freedom, and justice, which were Fava's guiding principles for ruling the polity and shaping sociocultural life.

In the following discussion, I focus on Fava's ethical codes and explore how they constitute a legacy of socially committed journalism, which functions as both a weapon to defeat mafia organizations and culture, and contributes to the formation of antimafia writers working in online journalism today. In order to understand the significance of Fava's ethical practices of investigative reporting on the mafia in the 1970s and the early 1980s, it is beneficial to situate him in relation to a few of the Italian journalists who conducted inquiries into Cosa Nostra in the postwar period. For example, after contributing articles to such dailies as *Il tempo di Sicilia* and *Il mattino di Sicilia*, the award-winning Mauro De Mauro (1921–1970?) earned recognition at the newspaper *L'ora* for his investigations of the relations between Cosa Nostra and major political figures, the drug industry, and illegal construction. Dubbed the “inconvenient journalist” (*il giornalista scomodo*), due to his public revelations about mafia criminals and corrupt politicians, De Mauro was kidnapped on 16 September 1970. His remains have never been found, fuelling conspiracy theories to this day about his death and the potential collusion between members of Cosa Nostra, the Italian government, and the secret services. Mario Francese (1925–1979) is best known for his socially committed investigative articles published at the Palermo newspaper *Il Giornale di Sicilia*, which examined such important subjects as the mafia Ciaculli massacre on 30 June 1963, when a car bomb killed five carabinieri and two members of the Italian Army; the power structure of the various mafia clans and the names of bosses ruling them; and the Corleonesi clan in particular, headed by Salvatore Riina, later convicted of ordering the murder of Francese. Francese was killed in front of his Palermo home on 26 January 1979. Although Michele Pantaleone (1911–2002) worked for achieving civil democratic rights, justice, and the defeat of the mafia in his capacities as a politician in the 1940s and the 1960s, and a journalist at *L'ora* in Palermo, he is likely most renowned for his numerous books that analyse a range of problems produced by the Sicilian mafia. Among his important studies are *The Mafia and Politics* (1966), *Mafia e droga* (1966), *Mafia e antimafia* (1992), and *Omertà di stato* (1993). Though his career was brief, the poet, antimafia activist, and journalist Giuseppe Impastato (1948–1978) is particularly noteworthy. Born in a mafia family in Cinisi, in his personal and professional life Impastato performed radical critiques of mafia power, politics, and business. Among his accomplishments is the creation of the independent radio station Radio Aut in 1976, where he broadcast constant attacks on the mafia that challenged the mafiosi

and the public image they aim to project as so-called men of honour demanding respect. Significant here is the radio program “Onda pazza” (Crazy broadcast), in which Impastato employed sharply witty satire targeting the Cinisi mafia boss Gaetano Badalamenti, along with the multiple crimes he and fellow mafiosi committed, often in collusion with city leaders and business people. On 9 May 1978, Impastato was murdered by the mafia, his body staged to make it look as if he had set a bomb in a failed terrorist attack. In 2002, Gaetano Badalamenti was finally found guilty for ordering the murder.

While keeping in mind the varied contributions made by journalists who published valuable investigations into the mafia and its crimes, I want to focus here on the particular ethics and works that distinguish Fava’s contributions to both the field of antimafia journalism in the seventies and the eighties and, subsequently, the practices and roles of web-based antimafia journalism, as the current practitioners endeavour to change the sociopolitical and cultural landscape of the country. The analysis draws upon the full range of Fava’s journalistic productions, which include documentaries that he produced, his books, and the articles he wrote for *Il Giornale del Sud* and *I Siciliani*. After examining the multiple perspectives on the mafia, Italian society, and politics that Fava crafted and his primary ethical codes, I focus on how his legacy shapes contemporary web-based antimafia journalism as exemplified by two significant online news sites: *I Siciliani giovani* and *Libera Informazione*. Fava is a pivotal figure in relation to these antimafia online news organizations. *I Siciliani giovani* was formed specifically to sustain Fava’s ethical principles of journalism and civil life, as incorporated in his publication *I Siciliani*. Similarly, *Libera Informazione* has solid connections with *I Siciliani giovani*, and has organized events at which Fava’s legacy is recalled to cultural memory in order to mobilize the participants around his principles of civil responsibility and the antimafia fight against all crimes, corruption, injustice, and oppression.

### **Giuseppe Fava’s Three Ethical Codes: Truth, Freedom, and Justice**

Three years before his death, Fava introduced new epistemological dynamics into journalism as a profession. On 11 October 1981, he stated, “I have an ethical concept of journalism” (Fava 1981). This concise, powerful declaration indicates how Fava constituted the foundation of his philosophy as a journalist and pioneered a reforming path of journalism by making ethics the keystone of informing the public about

difficult social problems and their solutions. However, neither Fava nor scholars who examine his works have analysed the principles of his professional ethics, or how he conceptualized and enacted them. Based upon Fava's numerous articles, interviews, films, and documentaries, I propose that there are three utmost ethical principles comprised by Fava's guiding concept that he put into practice while working as an investigative journalist. These three principles are truth, freedom, and justice, which also create the realms of Fava's socially committed journalism. The truth is the primary principle that should form the polity in society. Hence, with the help of truth, every citizen has the opportunity to learn the core mechanism of political decisions, apparently mysterious policy changes that influence everyday life, and the mutual collaboration between the state and non-state forces. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consolidate the second principle, freedom, in society to pave the path of truth because only a free society, whose members are not suppressed by the powerful, is able to sustain the truth as the fabric of ethical and moral culture. Thus, the two ethical principles of truth and freedom are functionalized to bring justice into the sociocultural sphere of society and legal regulations of governance. Indeed, justice comes to the fore as the final ethical tenet and governing force of the conflated power of truth and freedom. Therefore, justice, the third ethical principle, is an outcome of the complex interrelationships between truth and freedom, as these two ethical precepts constitute the essential dynamics of justice. Fava referred to each of these principles as a metanarrative while telling his story, in which the mafia functioned as the main antagonist. In this specific context, the roles of truth, freedom, and justice may be understood as the responsibility to tell the truth about the mafia and the numerous problems it produces in social, economic, political, and cultural life; freedom from mafia oppression in the aforementioned spheres, levied through acts and threats of violence; and justice in the sense of transparent, honest, and equitable action in the system of law and its enforcement, and in the sense of equality for all citizens, guaranteeing equal access to human rights. These ethical principles as practised by Fava contribute to both socially engaged forms of journalism and the culture of legality in daily living.

Fava's ethical approach to journalism was neither superficial nor illusory. He knew the strengths and weaknesses of the mafia clans and eventually recognized the realities of this chronic social problem, underlining the importance of the state's contribution to fighting the mafia. With the engagement of the state in the antimafia campaign,

it would be possible to defeat mafia culture and bring the third ethical principle, justice, into the core governing mechanism of society. Accordingly, he stated:

If five million Sicilians rebelled against the Mafia, nothing would happen at all ... The real enemies of the mafia are a true State, the rule of law, the judges who really bring justice, incorruptible officials, and politicians authorizing their duties with the interpretation of absolute morality. (1983c)

Fava's recognition of the vital importance of state power and its institutions to dismantle mafia organizations and unflinching critiques concerning the state-mafia collusion indicate his analytical acuity and commitment to rebuilding civil society.

On 5 April 1976, Fava's use of the metaphor of cancer to express the character of the mafia and its sociocultural effects drew public attention. Referring to the mafia as a deadly disease, he aimed to reveal the destructive power of the syndicate in the entire city of Catania. He tells readers, the mafia

is not simply crime committed in the background of extortion, corruption, and bad governance. Catania is the city wherein small groups of young people living with the impossibility of continuing their assaults against the banks, post offices and the jewelers, have devoted themselves to a darker, more sordid and tranquil kind of criminal speculation, which is extortion aimed at public institutions. This is happening in Catania and this is the mafia. Whatever one may say, this is the mafia. The mafia is the struggle between conflicting criminal interests that plunder the economic benefits of a city and create a monopoly of violence and fear to subdue citizens. ("Gli anni dell'Espresso sera")

This definition of the mafia invokes the mafia's omnipotent status as a disease that prevents attempts to attain truth, freedom, and justice. Expanding upon the pathology of the mafia's causes and development, Fava defined the sociocultural situation of Southern Italy and particularly of Catania with the coinage "Catania syndrome" in his famous article "Sindrome Catania" (1983c). This syndrome consists of the sociopsychological dynamics of a decayed society that lacks the necessary qualities to reveal the truth. The detachment from the truth summarizes the precarious sociocultural context in which the mafia determines the macro dynamics of social order.

Fava's analysis of the Catania syndrome draws out its many symptomatic elements and effects, which include the socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor in the urban centre and peripheries of the city. Fava underlines the settlement of the 200 richest people of Catania along the entire coastline of Acitrezza, from San Gregorio and Gravina to Mascalucia and Tremestieri. The luxury villas, buildings, and villages of the upper-crust of Catania represent symbols of power and bring into relief dramatic contrasts with the emigration of Catania's poor and unemployed to the ghettos and slums of Turin and Milan to seek a better life. Fava continues his social critique of the Catania urban text, informing readers,

The changing character of the urban settlement pushed the poor people of Catania into the maze of streets and crumbling buildings of the new neighborhoods such as San Berillo, Librino and Monte Po. Two hundred thousand deprived people of Catania live where the social and public services give the image that nothing has changed in one hundred years in this part of the country ... The marginalized population of Catania perhaps could be better understood through increasing delinquency among its young people who could not find even a place to play football. (1983c)

The social realities of the Catania syndrome lie in the dependency and submission of the residents of Catania to the mafia's enduring power. Fava astutely calls attention to the mafia extortion racket as key to the criminal clans' power and the Catania syndrome in everyday life. Accordingly, Fava tells us:

You can either accept or deny it, but you cannot change the fact that ninety percent of the business and commercial sector pay extortion money to the mafia clans in Catania. Yet more tragic outcomes are followed by the bloody clashes between rival clans that compete to gain the control of the drug trafficking. The victims of these clashes are the people of Catania, not the outsiders. Catania is a city where a small town politician can become a governor of the territory and an obscure provincial contractor can become a Knight of Labor so everything he touches turns to gold. An affable entrepreneur, the friend of good bourgeois salons, who shook the hands of the prefects and deputies, could be accused of killing Dalla Chiesa within a few months. This is the Catania syndrome. (1983c)

Fava's multidimensional struggle to articulate the social and cultural dynamics of Sicily reached beyond his articles in the newspapers. Fava

moved to Rome at the end of the 1970s, and worked for RAI, the national Italian broadcast association. There he made films and documentaries related to Sicily, its history, and people. Among the documentaries, *Da Villalba a Palermo (Siciliani, Cronache di mafia)* is striking for the way Fava masterfully demonstrates how the mafia and its culture are embedded within the social structure and shape the beliefs, words, and actions of the local people in their everyday lives.<sup>1</sup> Co-directed by Fava and Vittorio Sindoni and filmed in 1980, the documentary puts before viewers' eyes the local power of the mafia, which seems impossible to challenge from the local people's perspectives. In one scene, Fava approaches a group of young people standing in the middle of the street in Palermo, and asks one of the young men, "Why does the mafia exist in Palermo, Sicily?" The young man seems puzzled at first and says, "I don't exactly know the reason but it's an ancient problem." Fava probes the issue of the "ancient problem" and immediately directs one more question to the young man. In an authoritative voice, he asks, "Do you think the mafia still exists today?" This time, the young man has no doubts and responds very precisely, "No, no!" Such an accurate and disappointing answer is no surprise at all. The young man's response shows not only the detrimental silence the local people observe amidst the mafia's dominating power, but also reveals the denial of the very existence of the mafia. After this negation of the mafia's existence, Fava approaches another boy to discover his reactions to the idea of collaborating with the police and state forces if a crime is witnessed. Fava asks, "If you see a person who is shot and murdered by someone that you know, in broad daylight in the middle of the street in Corleone, do you go to the magistrate and say who the killer is?" The young boy says, "I prefer not to answer."

It is evident in the documentary that Fava's ethical code of truth in particular, and how it is exercised in a free society, depends on the factual realities lived and known by the local people and the free dissemination of the facts regarding them. More important, the realities of the local people shape the very form of the truth, as either distorted or accurate in relation to factual information. The urgent need for truth and its presentation to the public structured the mission that Fava embraced in his subsequent enquiries. Shortly after this documentary, Fava directed the then newly established *Il Giornale del Sud*. He put into practice a transparent, direct, and explicit approach while editing the newspaper. Other newspapers in Sicily periodically reported on the businesses of the mafia clans and corruption cases in their pages. However, exposing



the specific names of those clans and their members was relatively limited. When I interviewed Gaetano Liardo from Libera Informazione, he informed me that the editors of the regional and even national newspapers would sometimes censor the news if the case involved mafia clans, as well as their relationships and networks with the leading political figures. This kind of censorship was one of the main reasons for establishing an independent, web-based news establishment (interview by author, 5 January 2011). The censoring of so-called sensitive information was contrary to the journalistic efforts of Fava and his ethical code. Thus, when the first issue of *Il Giornale del Sud* was published on 4 June 1980, Fava ambitiously explained three fundamental words shaping the mission and goal of the newspaper: people, justice, and truth in his article "Con amore collera e speranza." With this explicit scope, Fava published meticulously researched inquiries into the expanding criminal industries of the specific clans, mafia bosses, and the politicians and bureaucrats who colluded with them. This consistent public scrutiny created difficult conditions for the mafia organizations and their collaborators, who were already known by the majority of the public. Indeed, their names found a huge space in the pages of the local newspaper *Il Giornale del Sud*. The dangers of such reporting cannot be minimized. In 1958, *L'ora* newspaper published the names of the powerful mafia bosses, their major business connections, and the political figures with whom they colluded. The newspaper's offices were bombed, as John Dickie notes (2004, 319).

Although local struggle is necessary to defy the territorial power of the mafia, Fava was among the first to publicly recognize that the crime organizations also constituted a national problem. Nevertheless, the mafia was predominantly perceived as a regional issue rather than a national one. From Fava's perspective, the notion of the mafia as a provincial issue presented various problems for the nation and the struggle to fight the mafias. He proposed the three principles defining his ethical code needed to be employed at the national level, an idea developed in his prominent book *Mafia. Da Giuliano a Dalla Chiesa*, published in 1982. This study made a profound contribution to understanding the historical evolution of the mafia in Italy. Through his brief presentation of the history of the mafia, a destructive power in Southern Italy for over 100 years, Fava argued that it was erroneous to think of the mafia as only a regional problem. Instead, in "I quattro cavalieri dell'apocalisse mafiosa" (1983b), he illustrates how the criminal organization produces a sociopolitical tragedy of national proportions generating material

problems throughout the entire country. Furthermore, the representation of the mafia as an isolated problem of Southern Italy, aids mafia clans by covering its adaptable character. The adaptability of the mafia groups makes them particularly effective at profiting from new opportunities to conquer territories in Northern Italy even in the 1970s. Viewing the mafia as restricted within the borders of Southern Italy was popular in mainstream media, particularly after the Second World War. The orientalist approach towards the definition of the mafia as a "Southern Question" and its power in Southern Italy not only radicalized the problem, but also veiled the immense expansion of the mafia groups across Northern Italian cities and communities in the 1970s and the early 1980s. In this sense, the broader perspective Fava adopted in his conception and approach to the mafia phenomena and their national effects was foresightful, challenging, and reformative.

As part of Fava's socially committed journalism, several articles demonstrate his deep concern over the way truths are distorted as deceptions in Sicily. In the very first issue of *Il Giornale del Sud*, he expressed his rage about buried truths and how the obstacles to uncovering them were orchestrated and camouflaged by mainstream newspapers, official media outlets, hundreds of pages of court decisions, and police reports. According to Fava in "Con amore collera e speranza" (1980), if one is eager to learn the truth, it needs to be sought where those truths lie in their diverse forms. His idea of truth and the effects of its repression in the sociocultural context of Sicily motivated his investigative journalism. The mafia was a socio-economic, cultural, and historical reality plundering society in every field, from sports to culture, politics to environmental problems. Thus, Fava declared that his editorial mission at *Il Giornale del Sud* was to fight the mafia and its influence on social and cultural spheres through each section of the newspaper, which consisted of a total of thirty-two pages (1980).

The disinterest shown by the public reaction in northern Italian towns towards the ongoing scandals in the southern part of the country was pervasive. Fava believed it was imperative to close the social and cultural gap between the south and north. Guided by this aim, Fava's socially engaged journalism targeted the social problems of the country in which the mafia was the primary cause of social erosion, produced through its cultural mentality, socio-economic networks, and expanding power over different sectors of the country. These social problems included different subjects examined from a wide range of perspectives. Indeed, Fava covered environmental concerns of the small towns and

the catastrophic social outcomes that might have posed certain risks to Sicily in his articles. For instance, in "I Siciliani, perché?" (1983e), Fava wrote that the level of pollution in Priolo, which is a small industrial town, and the province of Syracuse in Sicily, threatened the thousands of peoples' lives who had to live in this territory. He added that Comiso, miles away from Priolo, was under a severe threat as the United States Air Force had decided to deploy Ground Launch Cruise Missiles at the town's airbase in the early 1980s and had completed its deployment in June 1983. The second biggest nuclear heads in Europe were in the heart of Sicily, and if the airbase were destroyed, half of the entire island of Sicily would be erased from the map within minutes. Fava's microgeographic journalism dealt with a social problem even in a small town, and at the same time, proposed it must be addressed accordingly by the entire nation. Likewise, if the same or similar problem was created partly or completely by the mafia and through violating the moral codes of society, the public reaction should be at the national level. Fava's holistic approach was understandable at the time when Southern Italy was marginalized by the political figures with the power that could address its economic and social problems. Despondency thus prevailed among the citizens of the region. Accordingly, Fava claimed that "everything that happens in Milan, Rome, Venice, Turin for better or worse, belongs also to the South, to the Sicilians. What happens in the South and in Sicily, good, evil, fear, pain, poverty, violence, beauty, culture, hope, dreams, belongs to the whole nation" (1983e).

In addition to putting the mafia's economic affairs under public scrutiny, Fava also drew attention to the extensive and deep social networks of the mafias that eventually paralysed both Catania and its residents in the 1970s. This embedded mafia disease creates social and economic disaster, and likewise, hopelessness among the local people. In doing so, the mafia consolidates its persistent power, while tearing apart the social, cultural, and historical legacy of the society. Fava explained this contradictory interrelationship between the power of the mafia and the weaknesses of society by emphasizing how the Mediterranean basin, the birthplace of many admirable civilizations, was erased as uncivilized variants of the mafia and its culture territorialized the regions. Fava's (1980) dejected perspective is discernible in his statement:

We live in a country stained with blood ... from stupidity, vanity and the violence of the Powerful ... We, I mean the Sicilians, five million human beings, continue to delegate the less capable people to decide on our own

destiny. Five million smart people who may be at the center of the Mediterranean civilization could not manage to organize and decide on their own destiny.

Fava continued underscoring his daily mission to renew Sicilian culture, driven by diverse emotions such as anger, love, and pride disseminated through the articles, reviews, and opinions in *Il Giornale del Sud*.

*Il Giornale del Sud* unquestionably became one of Fava's pioneering venues for spreading information about the mafiosi and denouncing the scandalous political-criminal nexus, as well as mafia expansion and diversification in business. Pino Arlacchi (1986) also addressed the emergence of the new mafia strategies in Sicily in the early 1980s, noting how they fostered relations with the business sector with a vigorous entrepreneurial spirit (5). Nevertheless, it was hard to find an institution or organization in which the mafia did not exert dominating power in the early 1980s. Similarly, Fava wrote extensively about the new areas, geographic and financial, that the mafia was developing. He particularly analysed how the mafia business network effectively infiltrated the legal economy. This infiltration was not limited to the business sector alone. It was running deep even in Fava's workplace. It became clear, as Alexander Stille (1996) notes, that the owner of *Il Giornale del Sud*, Gaetano Graci, had solid connections with corrupt politicians, judges, and the mafia (40, 71–2). Therefore, Fava and his young team left the newspaper, and undeterred, established their independent newspaper, *I Siciliani*, in 1983. The philosophy of journalism that Fava applied at *Il Giornale del Sud*, reporting astounding scandals and corruption news, also shaped the mission of *I Siciliani*. He conceived of *I Siciliani* as a newspaper that would cover all areas of life, people, and the region, including politics, current events, sports, local culture, entertainment, and art. In contrast to other newspapers, the form of *I Siciliani* was structured through its critical perspective that was based on exposing all facts and speaking truthfully about power. As a result, the writing in *I Siciliani* achieved recognition as cutting edge and authoritative, of equal if not greater stature than *Il Giornale del Sud*. For example, in his by now famous article "I quattro cavalieri dell'apocalisse mafiosa" (1983b), Fava exposed the business dealings between the businessmen Carmelo Costanza, Mario Rendo, Francesco Finocchiaro, and Gaetano Graci and the mafia, especially the crime boss Nitto Santapaola, and explained how the resultant financial network enabled the mafia to dominate the local economy of Catania.

Although the recent attention attracted by Roberto Saviano's 2008 non-fiction novel *Gomorrah*, applauded for the way it exposed the day-to-day business of the camorra in Campania, may lead one to believe that crime organization is a relatively recent development, in 1983 Fava published a detailed inquiry into the expansion of both Cosa Nostra and the camorra in terms of geographic territories and criminal undertakings with the Italian state and its institutions. His article "Mafia e camorra: chi sono, chi comanda?" (1983d) tersely argues that the state has functioned as an enemy for over a century in Sicily. Perceiving the state as a nemesis has historically been shaped by certain rational paradigms and oppressive governing methods of the state. These methods included the tax system, tariffs, obligatory military enlistment, and confiscation. The unification of Italy was neither able to win the citizens' hearts nor decrease their degree of hostility against the state. Indeed, persistent disappointments among the citizens of the new state brought a "bitter solitude" (1983e). He added that the political developments within the last forty years made it clear that Palermo, the capital city of Sicily, was a colony of the Roman power. The dramatic failure of the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (Fund for the South), plundered by embezzlement, fraudulent use of public works funds, corruption, and violence made the local economy collapse and tore apart the region. Finally, the dreadful crisis of the justice system came to the fore with the mafia assassinations of the magistrates Pietro Scaglione, Cesare Terranova, Gaetano Costa, and Giangiacomo Ciaccio Montalto. All these tragic developments strengthened the notorious belief that the state was absent in Sicily and the Sicilians were left alone with their troubles.

*I Siciliani* gained numerous enemies and rivals in a very short time. Fava's articles defeated the mafias, politicians, and businessmen in the moral sphere, if not the economic and political spheres, with the three ethical codes of truth, freedom, and justice constituting the basis of his struggle. Fava and his passionate team defied the mafia through their socially committed journalism in *I Siciliani*. Unfortunately, they were able to perform this highly prolific and equally perilous role for only one year, up until Fava was murdered in 1984. Fava devoted his life's work to making the truth, freedom, and justice the leading ethical forces in Sicilian society, supplanting corruption, violence, and injustice. The mafia groups still have undeniable power in the local and national economy and political life in Italy today. On the other hand, since the assassination of Fava, numerous journalists and media outlets have been writing and working in Sicily and other parts of the country. Although Fava's

writings did not produce fundamental change in the economic and political spheres, his eminent role as an investigative journalist and his ethical code form a legacy that works as a source of inspiration for the next generation of journalists following Fava's challenging, socially engaged path. Among the online news sources evidencing Fava's legacy are *I Siciliani giovani* and *Libera Informazione*, both founded after his tragic death. These journalistic outlets wield influence in the antimafia movement thanks largely to their decisive role in web-based media. They also testify to the mafia's failure to silence news media in the face of what I suggest are serious threats to the diverse mafias in Italy today posed by web-based media.

### **The Ethical Legacy of Giuseppe Fava and Its Influence on the New Generation of Antimafia Journalism and Culture**

Today there are numerous antimafia media establishments across Italy. Some of them operate at the local level and others engage in the fight against the various mafias at the national and international levels. The developments in media, technology, and the methods of spreading information have clearly played a great role in the growth of antimafia operations in cyberspace and their endeavours to produce online and offline spaces in terms of a culture of legality. However, if we do not take into account the evolution of the antimafia movement, its historical dynamics and, most important, the huge costs that were paid by dauntless journalists such as Fava, these developments in journalism designed as weapons against the mafia and practices of social renewal cannot be fully understood. Fava's legacy extends beyond his ethical code. What is more, Fava's legacy includes his persistent struggle to stand against the mafia whatever the cost to be paid for this revolutionary act, as evidenced by his murder. As in the cases of Judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, the mafia killed Fava, but not his ideas. His assassination and the threats against other journalists following Fava's path have rendered the antimafia fight more durable and powerful. Amy Boylan's "Democratizing the Memorial Landscape" in this volume underscores the importance of commemorating the sacrifices of all victims in cyberspace. In this context, Fava's heritage as an inspiration for the next generation of journalists in the media and commemoration of mafia victims on the virtual landscape constitute parallel dynamics of antimafia struggle. Fava's socially committed journalism functions as a historical model. Similarly, the creation of a

cyberspace for mafia victims serves as a model of vital mistakes of the past that must be avoided. Indeed, Boylan describes such a despairing commemoration as “a house of memory for the dead” in cyberspace. As a result, both the struggle of Fava and commemoration in virtual spatialities show dreadful and sometimes contradictory aspects of anti-mafia culture. Yet these formidable aspects are deeply rooted in the ethical legacy of prominent social figures in Italian society. I also propose that Fava’s legacy and its incorporation within the developments in web-based media have made the voices of the public both more visible and less obedient to censorship and deterrence. In this context, *I Siciliani giovani* and *Libera Informazione* are two noteworthy examples illustrating how cyberspatialities of antimafia journalism, based upon Fava’s ethics and practices of social commitment, may deeply affect, if not determine, the mafia’s fate.

*I Siciliani giovani* endeavours to realize the mission of Giuseppe Fava and his newspaper *I Siciliani*. It is clear from the name of the organization that this is a renewed news agency with a young cadre of reporters; *giovani* literally means young in Italian. However, its goal aims to attain ideals very similar to those guiding Giuseppe Fava and *I Siciliani*. The slogan of *I Siciliani giovani*, which appears under the title of the printed magazine and website, articulates the purpose of their struggle and indebtedness to Fava. Invoking Fava’s well-known words, the slogan states: “What purpose is living, if you don’t have the courage to fight?” The phrase serves as remarkable motivation and a reminder that the primary principles of Fava’s ethics of journalism reach millions of Sicilians through *I Siciliani giovani*. The printed magazine is disseminated monthly. The website of *I Siciliani giovani* is updated daily. Similar to the program instituted by Fava, the website and the printed magazine cover diverse issues related to the social, political, economic, and cultural issues of Catania, Sicily and Italy. The mafia and its activities form the primary content of *I Siciliani giovani*. The website features diverse sections that represent differentiated cultural products of legality. Among these are editorials, articles on politics, investigative inquiries, reports, interviews, articles on history and the economy, local and national breaking news, culture, and ebooks. The website is available only in Italian. Nevertheless, it is possible to comment on the news and entries, subject to editorial approval. One of the most crucial missions of *I Siciliani giovani* is to sustain the antimafia fight and make it more effective by using its public power in conventional and web-based media.

The role of *I Siciliani giovani* has vital importance, as underscored by the recent scandals that broke in Italy in March 2015, and raised the problematic issue of how certain individuals benefited from their associations with the antimafia movement, using them as cover for their businesses and collaborations with the local mafiosi. The Antimafia Commission of the Italian Parliament has opened a new investigation for the claims that Antonello Montante, the president of the Sicilian branch of the employers' organization *Confindustria*, has had relationships with Sicilian mafia bosses. The widening scandal gripped the country after the investigators discovered in early March 2015 that Roberto Helg, Palermo's chamber of commerce leader, received €100,000 as extortion money from a local businessman. These two shameful incidents are tragic developments since both Montante and Helg have appeared many times at antimafia events and have expressed their efforts to fight the mafia. Rita Borsellino (2015), the sister of the assassinated magistrate Paolo Borsellino, made a sobering statement about the scandals and antimafia movement, saying that the movement sprang up spontaneously in Sicily on the wave of emotion after the massacres of 1992 ... There are many people who have stuck with it, who have sacrificed their time and their work ... But unfortunately, even though it's painful to say, others have evidently hidden under this banner to pursue their own interests.

Although the Montante and Helg cases have damaged the reputation of the antimafia fight, they have also prompted immediate, salutary self-scrutiny, enabled largely by web-based media. *I Siciliani giovani* published a news campaign called "La Mafia dell'Antimafia" (The mafia of the antimafia) to protest the discredited names and, moreover, declare ten objectives in its April 2015 issue. The objective was to make the antimafia fight more effective and to develop new solutions for the problems in the antimafia movement:

1. Eliminate bank secrecy.
2. Confiscate all mafia assets and goods, including those attained through corruption and tax evasion.
3. Assign all confiscated goods to the cooperatives of young labourers; assist the people who support cooperatives.
4. Effective registration of the confiscated property.
5. Sanction relocations, the abuse of insecurity, and the failure to comply with the Statute of Workers' Rights or working regulations.



6. Achieve separation of the financial and industrial capital; cap on investments in publishing; enforce the Tobin tax (a tax on all spot conversions of one currency into another to punish short-term financial round-trip excursions into another currency).
7. Public management of the essential public services (schools, universities, defence, water, energy, technological structures, international credit).
8. Support the project of the national safety of the territory, as an economic driver especially in the South; prohibition of other uncontrolled developments; banning polluting industries; restructuring of existing land and land reclamation at the expense of the polluter.
9. Improve control of the territory in high-intensity mafia areas.
10. Strengthen application of Article 41 of the Constitution. Article 41 reads: "Private-sector economic initiative is freely exercised. It cannot be conducted in conflict with social usefulness or in such a manner that could damage safety, liberty and human dignity. The law shall provide for appropriate programs and controls so that public and private-sector economic activity may be oriented and coordinated for social purposes."

I Siciliani giovani's campaign against the recent scandals and its news about the risks of the mafia both at the regional and national level show how they put into practice the elements of Fava's socially committed journalism. The ten objectives of the antimafia movement illustrate how the journalists working at I Siciliani giovani employ a critical perspective to detect problems of illegality, even in activities operating in the purview of the antimafia, and bring new strategies to make the movement more effective in the legal, political, social, and cultural spheres. I Siciliani giovani is hardly anomalous. Dozens of antimafia establishments in web-based media complement the mission of I Siciliani giovani, with Libera Informazione among them.

The foundation of Libera Informazione must be located in the history of Libera, which is the largest non-state antimafia organization and network in the country. Libera Informazione was established in 2007 as one of the branches of Libera, upon the initiative of the journalist Roberto Morrione. The aim was to create a media network among journalists, freelance media workers, newspapers, television and radio sectors, online media, and the citizens, which would inform the public about organized crime activities both at the national and

international levels. The Internet portal of Libera Informazione ([www.liberainformazione.org](http://www.liberainformazione.org)) is updated regularly. In contrast to *I Siciliani giovani*, Libera Informazione only covers the news and activities of organized crime and the antimafia movement. As a result, it has a more articulated focus on the mafia. The presentation of the multiple facets of the mafia organizations in society and the state is a challenging mission. Libera Informazione aims to achieve a broad flow of information through its collaborations with various antimafia associations, bloggers, local journalists, and individual activists. In doing so, they work to create and apply public pressure on both the policy-makers and the mainstream Italian media to allocate more space for news about the mafia. There is no doubt that the strong, extensive network of Libera helps realize the goals of Libera Informazione. On the other hand, the news at the website of the foundation also directs attention to the local news related to the mafia. When I interviewed journalists working with Libera Informazione in 2011, I was told that the website was open to comments in 2007, but after the increase in inappropriate comments, attacks, and threats, they decided to close the website to visitor comments. More alarming, the website was hacked in 2010.

The structure of Libera Informazione's website is organized into eight sections: breaking news located on the home page, interviews, videos, publications and archives, investigative files, the network of the foundation, and the news section for each region of Italy. The most influential contribution of the organization is the publications that can be downloaded free. The investigative files also inform the public so the citizens have the opportunity to learn more about the recent corruption scandals through in-depth articles. This service is especially critical due to the mafia infiltration of news organizations and the lack of information on mafia activities in mainstream media. Furthermore, the sections on mafia news and the antimafia events for each region render the organization's mission more effective by performing mass dissemination of factual insights from the local areas through its local volunteer journalists. This local connection, which Fava examined in his writings and documentaries, exposes the territorial power of the mafia and its silent but deep influence over the people in microgeographic sociocultural relations.

The network of Libera Informazione is a significant instrument for making the antimafia movement stronger and more diversified. One of their most important collaborations is with *Narcomafie*, which is a monthly magazine founded in 1993 by don Luigi Ciotti, who is also

the founder of *Libera. Narcomafie's* magazine and website disseminate information about the mafia and particularly drug trafficking, which brings the most revenue to the mafia syndicates. *Narcomafie* has published a remarkable number of investigative files about the mafia and drug trafficking. One of its most notable publications came out in 2008, titled *Nuovo dizionario di mafia e antimafia* (New dictionary of the mafia and antimafia). Recent issues in 2015 and 2016 provide detailed information about the power of 'ndrangheta in Lombardy and the Veneto regions.

Both *I Siciliani giovani* and *Libera Informazione* are indispensable instruments of democratic formations in web-based media, functioning to raise concerns in the name of the public while fighting against the mafia. Amitai Etzioni (2004) argues that virtual democracy consists of the participation of online communities to widen the scope of democracy and express their concerns. He explains that "the Internet could not only fully duplicate offline democratic procedures and outcomes, but it could improve upon them. It would be much easier online than offline for millions not merely to gain information and to vote, but also to participate in deliberations and in instructing their chosen representatives" (98). From this perspective, web-based media employed by the antimafia movement widen the scope of virtual democracy in Italy while defending the public good by taking Fava's ethical codes of truth, freedom, and justice as their guiding principles. It must be noted that the type of information disseminated may be a determinative force for mobilizing the masses. The information, especially *radical information* such as Fava's news about the mafia, has the potential power to change the political landscape by exposing in news writings and videos the embezzlement of public funds, corruption, and unethical behaviour of the politicians, or even informing the public about the limitations of the citizens' sovereignty. These are the hard social problems of the country. In theory, public engagement serves public deliberation and lends its voice to active citizenship, which opens gates to alternative spaces for the representation of public voices. In doing so, the web-based media arm of the antimafia movement offers new remedies to these hard social problems by exposing truths, shaping the form of freedom, and seeking justice.

The mafia poses certain risks to targeted victims, including journalists, through its relentless violence and threats that are a more dramatic deterrent at the local level where the mafia has a strong power base. On the other hand, if the voice of the people does not fall on deaf ears,

the mafia is not an invincible force. This is the reason that the local sites and connections of mafia infiltration warrant national attention, as proposed by Fava in the early 1980s. The roles antimafia web-based media can perform to draw such attention can be best understood in the critical frame offered by Ulf Hannerz (1992) and his definition of Global Ecumene as a network of the networks (34). As a dominating force, Global Ecumene is more visible where the cultures between the periphery and centre are highly connected. In this respect, in the last decades, antimafia media outlets have provided such connections by creating a public space for local journalists and making confidential information about the mafia clans and their political networks available to everyone who has internet connections and thus access to the websites. Indeed, online antimafia media's struggle seeks to create a Global Ecumene of the antimafia movement. This is to say that the cyberspatial practices and resultant spaces of antimafia culture in Italy aim to transform the direction of the risks posed by the mafia by spreading ample, concise information among citizens about the criminal organizations. The antimafia agencies in web-based media wield profound influence over the public domain of society, which eventually becomes the interplaying area for the development of the Italian antimafia culture of legality.

Public opinion cases regarding crime generally do not take into account the role of community influence on individual reactions (Stack et al. 2007, 295). In this context, antimafia journalism in cyberspace represents a powerful instrument for developing the public sphere as a site for increasing individual awareness. This struggle conveys the message that the citizens are not alone to show their opposition to various forms of oppression and threats produced by the local mafiosi. Pertinent in this respect is Micheal Schudson's (1998) notion of the "informed citizen" as a crucial instrument for detecting "political dangers" in the available flow of free information rather than government-based information sources (52). More to the point, in contrast to conventional news sources, the internet offers a public space that is relatively free from censorship, which poses certain advantages in regions where the mafia structures the hierarchy of power and often politics. Gaetano Liardo of Libera Informazione underscores this point, asserting that the publication of news related to the political-criminal nexus still presents a challenge in mainstream television broadcasting and print media (interview with author, cited in Cayli 2013a, 65). Moreover, such news outlets tend to devote limited space to local news concerning mafia activities and power, unless they pose an explicit national threat, as in the cases of

the murders of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino. Other pertinent issues include the very formation of journalists. Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini argue in *Comparing Media Systems* (2004) that there is a rather slow development process of “journalistic professionalism” in southern European countries (138). In these countries, strong clientelism and political culture set the main barriers to creating professional journalists who should be independent and working in the service of truth rather than certain powerful groups. In line with this statement, important agents of mass media and politics have found new, uncontested milieus in the political life of Italy, especially with Berlusconi’s entrance into the political arena in the 1980s, bolstered by his media power (Mancini and Mazzoleni 1995; Mazzoleni 1995). Thus, I argue that the critical, alternative media – particularly web-based media – presents remedies, or at least constructs a public space for the production of those remedies, as evidenced by antimafia media establishments. This kind of cyberspatiality creates public space and makes it functional so as to mitigate the mafia’s power over the public domains of society. Such cyberspatialities function as products and producers of radical, yet critical journalistic professionalism that employs counterpublic practices and helps realize the ideals of ethical journalism in Fava’s sense. Hence, each of these practices offers a new tool to diminish the power of the politics-media-mafia triangle.

These antimafia initiatives in new media frequently direct public attention to the poor administration of state institutions and egregious political impotence that empower mafia clans comprised by Cosa Nostra, the camorra, ’ndrangheta, and the United Holy Crown. The power of web-based media has created a determinative space by keeping the public informed about “political scandals” and challenging the “political legitimacy” with surges of critical power within the new communication sphere (Castells 2007, 250). Moreover, web-based media gains more importance in socio-economically advanced countries such as Italy where 58.5 per cent of the population uses the Internet actively (Internet Users in Europe 2015). Perhaps more important, new media does not only help the fight against the mafia, it also triggers the settlement of democratic communication (Tambini 1999) and stimulates mass democracy (Bucy and Gregson 2001).

Fava was among the relatively few Italian journalists who ventured to defy the mafia publicly in the 1980s. Today, the mafia still poses particular risks to the local journalists not only in Sicily but throughout the entire country. However, what makes today’s antimafia culture

different from that of the 1980s is the increasing number of agencies, institutes, volunteers, and journalists that fight persistently. We can note that Italian antimafia culture has produced the most innovative and diverse methods in the world to combat the mafia. This relatively successful fight cannot be accurately understood if we ignore the previous journalists, like Francese, De Mauro, and Fava, who immensely contributed to this struggle and provided an extraordinary example for the next generation of journalists. As clearly evidenced by the expanding web-based media outlets, Fava's ethical codes of truth, freedom, and justice have shaped the principal character of antimafia journalism. The courageous attempts demonstrated by Fava and today's antimafia journalists form a fundamental weapon for defeating the mafia and its culture. Fava and his team's *I Siciliani* continue to inspire and inform this fight under the publication title *I Siciliani giovani*, and are joined by such important online news sites as *Libera Informazione* and *Narcomafie*, among numerous others. The power of web-based media strengthens the antimafia mission by providing timely, accurate information about the various mafia organizations and their activities throughout Italy and the world. This does not mean mafia threats on journalists can be taken less seriously. Roberto Saviano, Giuseppe Maniaci, and Michele Albanese are only a few names among eighty-nine journalists who have been threatened by mafia groups (Walker 2014), several of whom must live under constant bodyguard protection. It is not a surprise that these journalists are based in Sicily, Campania, and Calabria, where the mafia groups have a strong territorial power. The fight against the mafia serves to protect the right to speak and the right to know. More important, defeating the mafia and mafia culture fosters the hope that an ideal society is attainable in Italy, because the mafia symbolizes hopelessness, oppression, inequality, moral deprivation, and injustice. These unjust conditions produced by the mafia are the poignant reminders of Italy's social problems that have marginalized the ideal society concept since the unification of the country. However, the national mafia problem also opens a new chapter in the lives of the foreigners who visit Italy's virtual or geographic territories and engage with the antimafia movement and its cultural production. Such encounters can create an ethics that enables travellers to embrace global values of justice and the struggle to attain it. Moving from the canvas of the mafia's symbols to the fight to renew Italian culture and attain an ideal society is a journey of sociocultural transformation. Fava's ethical codes, mafia victims, and the new generation of web-based media

articulate the motivations and practices that such a sociocultural transformation needs. This is the reason that the fight against the mafia is grounded in the project to renew Italy through democratic channels, civil resistance, and bottom-to-top social mobilization, markedly empowered by the increasing employment of web-based media.

NOTE

- 1 The author regrets that there is no other information available regarding Giuseppe Fava and Vittorio Sindoni's *Da Villalba a Palermo (Siciliani, Cronache di mafia* (1980).