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<http://jcpa.org/article/the-paradox-of-the-italian-jewish-experience-in-1990-2010/>

### **The Paradox of the Italian Jewish Experience in 1990-2010**

**Dr. Ephraim Nissan**

- There is a paradox to the Italian Jewish experience in the 2000s. Jews are more integrated than ever since 1945, and Israel has been relegitimized in important quarters after being in practice delegitimized by the Communists, Socialists, and those media close to the Christian Democrats in the late 1970s and 1980s, reaching the lowest point in the second half of 1982. Yet, because of various factors including the web as well as unwillingness to take things in stride any longer, the organized and individual voices of Italy's Jews are now often blunt, harsh, and resentful in a way that would have been unthinkable previously.
- While the Jews are indeed more accepted than ever, sporadic expressions of direct, incontrovertible anti-Semitism have occurred even in the circles of power, and even at the highest levels. The past twenty years have seen a confluence between Italy's far Left and far Right in adopting anti-Israeli and sometimes anti-Semitic positions. In some cases this has involved tolerance of right-wing Holocaust denial by elements on the Left.
- Italy's severely anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic responses to the 1982 Lebanon war involved both global and local aspects. It both reflected Italy's past and has partly shaped patterns of response to Middle Eastern and Jewish affairs by a sizable part of Italy's media and public opinion.
- For all the persistence, and sometimes transmogrification, of hostile attitudes toward Jews and Israel from some quarters, there is often sympathy from persons from different walks of life. And since the end of the First Republic in the early 1990s, also some of Italy's politicians allow themselves to express sympathy for Israel.

## **A Bird's-Eye View of Change under the Second Republic**

Since Italy's Christian Democrat electoral victory in 1948, the Republic did not reintegrate the country's Jews to the extent they were integrated under the liberal, pre-Fascist regime that used to be attacked by the clericals precisely because of its acceptance and promotion of Jews.[1]

What is more, the reintegration of the Jews in jobs they had lost because of the racial laws of 1938 was only gradual and incomplete, and in 1947, the amnesty for Fascist crimes was enacted at a time when the reinstatement of Jews was slow.

Arguably, by the 2000s Italy's Jews have been experiencing acceptance to an extent they never had since 1945. Moreover, Israel has been relegitimized in the Italian political and media arena. Important political quarters and newspapers are relatively favorable to Israel.

This contrasts with the grim situation from 1973[2] to the end of Italy's First Republic in the early 1990s. In 1991, under the leadership of Achille Occhetto, Italy's Communist Party reformed itself and changed its name. The unreconstructed Communists left and formed another party, Rifondazione Comunista. In 1992-1993 examining magistrates in Milan – among whom none was more media-visible than Antonio Di Pietro – and later also in other cities pursued a flurry of corruption cases involving politicians and industrialists. This left the Christian Democrats and Bettino Craxi's Socialists in tatters, and both parties dissolved in 1994.

Occhetto inaugurated a somewhat more positive attitude toward Israel[3] in his Democratic Party of the Left (Partito Democratico della Sinistra), in which many Socialists also sought haven. Under the leadership of Massimo D'Alema, Occhetto's successor from 1994, the former Communists reverted to a rather consistently anti-Israeli line.[4] This had to do with tradition as well as D'Alema's own inclination.

As Italy's organized Jewry, as well as individual historians, have become more willing to openly voice blunt criticism[5] of the situation until the late 1980s, as well as of the persistence of old attitudes in the present, D'Alema and others have fought with the trend. D'Alema at one point waxed lyrical about the "equidistant" Middle Eastern policies of the old Christian Democrats, oblivious to their motives, and to the watershed of the Vatican's recognition of Israel – something that made hostility in the clerical camp less tenable.[6]

The motives of the Christian Democrats had been religious beliefs, as well as perceived interests in the Middle East that were not the same as the Communists', and the historical legacy: the clerical party had been acrimoniously anti-Zionist and jaundiced against the Jews years before the Fascists made this their own policy as well. That D'Alema has been oblivious to the reasons of the past, and that when an undersecretary in the government, Bobo Craxi (the late Bettino Craxi's son) was irrationally adamant that Israel had killed an Italian soldier intentionally during the 2006 Lebanon war, is, in a sense, unsurprising.

Indeed, a certain antipathy to rational thinking has a long history[7] in modern Italy – among the clericals, then among the Fascists, then persisting as a mode of argument for some in both the left and right wings of the Republican period. The rapprochement of the Christian Democrats and the Communists in the late 1970s found expression in the state-run broadcast media, when

Christological evocations came to replace logic when decrying Israel's supposed behavior or bestowing a halo on its most violent enemies.

By contrast to D'Alema, another former Communist, Italy's current president Giorgio Napolitano, has made the clearest pro-Israeli statement any of Italy's presidents has ever made. When he was about to visit Israel, he asserted that anti-Zionism has a lot to do with anti-Semitism, and that anti-Zionism is indeed the new form of anti-Semitism.[8]

Clearly awareness of the huge importance of the Shoah has grown in Italy, where the first Holocaust Memorial Day (Giornata della memoria) was celebrated in 2001. Under the First Republic, Italy's Jews tended to acquiesce in the dominant rhetoric that – rather self-absolvingly for Italy – extolled the Italian Resistance and the martyrdom of political deportees, with Jews tending to argue that the racial deportees deserved equiparation to the resisters and political deportees. By now, though, the Shoah is relatively preeminent with respect to the Resistance. The myth of *Italiani brava gente* (i.e., that the Italians were good fellows after all) has been exposed as untenable by a new generation of historians, including several who are not Jewish.

During the yearly celebrations in Milan, on 25 April, of Liberation Day, Jews carrying the banner of the Jewish Brigade[9] are regularly reviled by leftists as – along with the United States – assassins. The mere perception of the Star of David prompts a harsh reaction that leads those militants practically to take over the commemoration.

Indeed, the behavior of Italy's most beloved president, Resistance leader Sandro Pertini, a Socialist, during the traumatic 1982 crisis in Jewish-Gentile relations in Italy (discussed below) has broken the bonds between Italy's Jews and the protagonists if not the rhetoric of the Italian Resistance irreparably.[10]

By the late 2000s, a book sponsored by the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities and recording memories of Roman Jewish survivors, fingered for belated opprobrium none other than the commander in chief of Italy's Resistance, Ferruccio Parri. This was the man who was Italy's premier, the first of the Republic, from June to November 1945.

Parri was muscled out of politics soon afterward, living in genteel poverty until made senator for life in 1963. This spared his image the disillusionment that politicians' images usually suffer from as they remain active. But it now emerges[11] that he neglected to even answer an impassionate plea of the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities to provide reassurances that the Jews would be reintegrated into the posts and properties from which they were expelled by the Racial Laws of 1938. This is an instance of a current paradox: voices of resentment heard from Jewish quarters, concerning matters in the First or Second Republic that Jews, now empowered by the web (where they have institutional sites), are no longer willing to take in stride – which they had to do under the First Republic.

In fact, just as the boundaries between the moderate Right and the neo-Fascists – who used to be outside the pale: outside the *Arco Costituzionale*[12] of the First Republic – have broken down in complex ways under the Second Republic, so also expressions that are inarguably and viciously anti-Semitic have become more acceptable among part of the Left.

Italy's moderate Right as a ruling camp is now basically secular, or rather neutral toward religion, whereas under the First Republic the ruling party had been the Christian Democrats. This change has been rather positive for Italy's Jews. Under the First Republic, a Jew or the Jews could not be direct clients, let alone legitimate members of that party. Instead one was – if enjoying institutional support – typically a client of a client. Otherwise one was a client of either the Left – which came with a hefty price, as one had to toe the Left's line concerning Israel, hence at present vocal resentment on the part of some Jewish former Communists; or, under the First Republic, Italian Jews were individually supportive of one of the small secular parties at the center (especially the Republicans),<sup>[13]</sup> whose own power depended on their being partners in coalitions.

The “Berlusconi phenomenon,” the rise of the media tycoon to Italy's premiership, has been the main factor of relegitimization of Israel in Italy's power circles. This former Craxi ally has admitted that, upon instructions from Craxi, he parted with huge sums of his own money in order to fund Yasser Arafat.<sup>[14]</sup> But Berlusconi's rise to power also began with a sustained love affair with Israel's cause – which is not contradicted by his exceeding coziness with his frequent host, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi.<sup>[15]</sup>

By Berlusconi's own early admission, it was a visit to Israel, and in particular to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial museum in Jerusalem, that opened his eyes. Berlusconi's coming to like Israel parallels France's former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. By the latter's own admission, he used to dislike Israel because of his upbringing and prevailing attitudes in his milieu. A visit to Israel, which according to Giscard was strikingly similar to the French Riviera, brought about a change of attitude.

A scandal in the autumn of 2010, however, shows that Berlusconi's actual attitudes toward the Jews and the Shoah are far more ambivalent. Although the Italian media focus repeatedly on his antics, this does not damage his camp because the need for an alternative to the Left's rule is unaltered for voters who are so inclined. Moreover, arguably for many, and for some Jews in particular, supporting Berlusconi *against* the Left, notwithstanding his sometimes extraordinary faux pas, is a sort of slap intended for the Left – a signal to D'Alema that even this is better than what D'Alema has chosen to represent for Jewish sensitivities.

### **Incidents from the Autumn of 2010**

The end of September 2010 brought two scandals that irritated Italy's Jews, and some non-Jews as well. Premier Berlusconi was widely reported to have told supporters in the street, in relation to his birthday party:

*A Jew tells a relative of his:*

*-At the time of the extermination camps, a fellow national of ours [sic: connazionale] paid us a visit and asked our family to hide him, and we complied. We put him in the cellar, we took care of him, but we had him pay a daily fee.*

*-How much was it, in present-day currency?*

-Three thousand euros.

-Per month?

-No, per day.

-Now that's interesting....

-We're Jews, aren't we. And he paid because he had the money, so what's wrong with it?

-Just one more question. Do you think we should tell him that Hitler is dead and that the war is over?[16]

On 3 October 2010, it was reported in Italy's media that Renzo Gattegna, the president of the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities, had blasted a senator from Berlusconi's ruling party. The senator had leveled a jibe at the forthcoming secession of the thirty-five members of parliament led by Gianfranco Fini – the former neo-Fascist leader who repudiated that past and at one time, during a visit to Israel, begged the Jews' pardon. The senator in question was Giuseppe Ciarrapico, a publisher from a rural area of central Italy and a member of Berlusconi's party. He was attacking Fini, the president of the House of Representatives, who was preparing a secession from Berlusconi's party.

Addressing Berlusconi deferentially, and criticizing his generosity toward Fini and his followers, Ciarrapico continued by claiming:

*Fini has made it public that he is going to establish a new party soon. I hope he already ordered kippahs because this is what it's about. He who betrayed once, will always betray. It may be as well that Fini is carrying out a mission, but then it's a mission that is entirely his personal mission. Let him keep it for himself. When we'll go to the polls, let us see how many votes he will get, that deserter, Fini.[17]*

This is not a unique case in the history of Italy's Second Republic: a politician from a ruling coalition or ruling party referring to a non-Jew, who is felt to have betrayed the cause, disparagingly as though he were Jewish. As will be seen later, the Jew may also be conflated with the arch-traitor Judas Iscariot.[18]

Interestingly, a reader's comment to the report on this incident in Milan's *Il Giornale*,[19] signing himself "wizaradofoz," offered a different perspective:

*Perhaps I am the only one who has interpreted Ciarrapico's words quite differently, for all my not liking him so much: in my opinion, he just meant that Fini has instrumentalized for his own interest even the kippah, which he has worn several times (don't tell me it was for his catharsis). So that this Israelitic symbol could be further instrumentalized by Fini to curry favor. Where is the offense to the Jews? If anything, be careful with Di Pietro's [see later in this article] sordid statements, which in my opinion are actionable. If only we had [real] judges![20]*

This is far from a unique case of absolving interpretations being offered for something that Italy's Jews have felt to be deeply insulting. The present author has analyzed elsewhere

absolving bloggers' responses to the satirist Vauro's notorious "Fiamma Frankenstein" cartoon of March 2008, which portrayed the Jewish parliamentarian and former journalist Fiamma Nirenstein as a female Frankenstein, wearing Fascist insignia and a Star of David. A cartoon that conceived of the Jews as the undead, a motif with deep roots in the anti-Semitic imagination (and one sometimes related to the myth of Jewish vampirism),[21] was found unobjectionable in some Italian responses on the web, quite in line with Nirenstein's own remarks[22] about Italy's penchant for absolving itself.

When reporting on Ciarrapico's statement on 30 September 2010, the large daily *Il Corriere della Sera* claimed[23] that the response was bipartisan indignation among those present in the Senate and also at the House of Representatives. Out of five individual responses quoted, two were by Jewish members of the House of Representatives: by Emanuele Fiano from the Democratic Party of the Left, whom this author remembers as a Jewish youth leader in the socialist-Zionist Hashomer Hatzair of Milan, and Nirenstein.

*Il Corriere della Sera* also stated, in that same report, that Ciarrapico himself subsequently claimed: "There was no anti-Semitism intended." [24] Berlusconi was reported to have said: "All my life I have been Israel's friend" [25] and "I, too, feel like I was an Israeli." [26]

Ciarrapico himself, who was elected with 348,000 votes, in a subsequent interview appearing on 4 October 2010 claimed in defense that he had published "Nobel Prize winner Menachem Begin's autobiography" and a history of the Haganah, and that during the Nazi persecution, from March 1944 until the arrival of the American troops, he (born in 1934) and his family had hidden a Jewish family in their house in Rome.[27] He also claimed that he himself had worn a kippah many years earlier, during a visit to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.[28]

Giulio Meotti, author of *A New Shoah: The Untold Story of Israel's Victims of Terrorism*, [29] began an opinion piece in *Il Foglio* [30] by reminiscing about when a neo-Fascist from Italy's parliament visited Yad Vashem after the 1973 war:

*In 1973, as the Yom Kippur War came to an end, the neo-Fascist member of the House of Representatives, Giulio Caradonna, went to Jerusalem and left a wreath at Yad Vashem. Those were years when Italy's Left was holding demonstrations against Israel, and Caradonna in parliament defended Zionism, "born as a defense reaction imposed by persecutions throughout the millennia upon an ethnoreligious minority that still needs to fight in order to survive." A few days ago in that same parliament, out of a mix of self-worship, political factionalism and miserable moral malice, a wreck of the Right [i.e., Ciarrapico] had done Caradonna a disservice.[31]*

In other words, the Ciarrapico incident appeared to Meotti to disconfirm the impression made by Caradonna that second thoughts about the mistreatment of the Jews had actually morally improved some former neo-Fascists (apart from Fini and his followers).

Gattegna's statement, on behalf of Italy's organized Jewry, began thus and, contrary to the headline in *Il Corriere della Sera* of 30 September 2010, he clearly did not hold the view that all the other senators disagreed with Ciarrapico:

*Italy's Jews, upon watching and hearing Senator Ciarrapico's utterance, felt angry and dispirited. It didn't come as a surprise from Ciarrapico, because everybody knows that, in a moment of sincerity, he said what he has always been thinking about the Jews, coherently with his upbringing and his mentality.*

*We feel dispirited because of what we have not been able to perceive about him, as what we did see instead was smiles, consensus, evident satisfaction on the part of other senators who were pleased because somebody was daring enough to defy political correctness and again insult the Jews. None among those present had the sensitivity, the intelligence and the quickness to react, which would have been necessary to safeguard first of all the dignity and the honorability of the Senate. On top of the unfathomable silence of the president of the session, there also was the reply of the prime minister, who did not take notice of the severity of Ciarrapico's statements, and retorted absolvingly to the insult to the Jews, reiterating his friendship for the state of Israel, thus confusing two distinct entities.[32]*

It should be borne in mind that this is the Second Republic, an era that has seen the Jews better integrated in some respects than under the First Republic. Then why do paradoxical incidents, such as the two reported in this section, take place in the inner circles of power? The following is an attempt at a reply, drawing on some of the complexities of Italy's history over the past few decades.

First, though, it is worth noting that as a general phenomenon Italy also shows a gentler side to Jews. This author, having lived both in Italy and Britain, can attest that Jews in the former are often more trusting in their relations with non-Jews without the need to be self-effacing as Jews. These relations are often more forthright than in Britain, and give more space for Jews to be blunt at times.

There is sympathy for Jews in many circles in Italy, and sometimes for Israel as well. For instance, during the Gaza war a significant number of parliamentarians turned out for a demonstration organized by Nirenstein, who herself is an important voice in foreign policymaking under Berlusconi's premiership. Moreover, the Jewish periodical *Pagine Ebraiche* has a far greater diffusion than only the Jewish community. Among the better educated, there is interest in literature of Jewish context or background. Also worth mentioning are the younger Italian historians who are doing important research on anti-Semitism, generally more candidly than the previous two generations of Italian historians allowed themselves to do.

### **“We Sold You”: Prister's 2010 Obituary for Former President Cossiga, His Admission to the Jews, and the Awkward Aftermath of the 1980 Bologna Blast**

On 3 October 2010, in *Informazione Corretta*, an online media watch reflecting Jewish concerns in Italy, Piera Prister (a contributor to the site) published an obituary for Francesco Cossiga, who was Italy's president in 1985-1992, after Sandro Pertini. Cossiga, who was interior minister during the kidnapping of former Christian Democrat prime minister Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades in 1978, resigned after the latter was killed by his captors; this, the media sensed immediately, made Cossiga *presidenziabile*. Once he became president, Cossiga took to expressing irreverent views that almost everybody else found jarringly inappropriate to the

gravitas traditionally associated with the presidency. Perhaps Cossiga was doing so to prove the point that, just as Pertini could get away with much mischievous behavior, he too was entitled to a personal and sometimes jarring style as president. At any rate, Cossiga ended up resigning in a polemical mode.

Subsequently, Cossiga sometimes expressed views that went against the grain, never more so than when he blamed a blast in Bologna on a Palestinian organization.[33] He eventually managed to coax a representative of the latter into making compromising admissions. On 2 August 1980 a bombing was carried out at the Bologna train station; eighty-five people died. The Bologna case was mishandled by the mainstream Left (and by the authorities) just as the inquiry into the 12 December 1969 Piazza Fontana blast in Milan was mishandled by the mainstream Right (and by the authorities).[34]

After the blast in his city, Bologna's Communist mayor Renato Zangheri immediately and publicly asked Yasser Arafat to name the culprits. Arafat obliged, blaming Lebanon's Christians and Israel. Incredibly, an arrest was made that conformed with the charge. Such an ascribed oracular role, being supernatural rather than rational, unquestionably requires explanation. Yet Mayor Zangheri's reaction to the bombing in his city was to ask Arafat for such a response.

Surprisingly, Zangheri's August 1980 postmassacre public relations stunt with Arafat had an impact on the inquiry. The oracular response naming the guilty ones was followed upon for a while. Events featuring Arafat were not infrequently treated by the Italian media as something approaching religious occurrences. There had been connivance between part of the clerical camp – especially left-wingers among them – and the Communists and eventually Craxi's Socialists in adopting a rhetoric loaded with religious connotations when dealing with the Near East, replacing Marxist arguments against Israel that were still being voiced by the Communists and the radical Left in the late 1960s.

During the mid-1970s war in Lebanon, a particular reporter on Italian state-run radio[35] broadcasted – not inconsistently with his usually vicious attitude – a mind-boggling claim, which this writer recorded in a notebook as soon as it was uttered on the waves. The reporter referred to the Palestine Liberation Organization as a warring faction in Lebanon: “Two thousand years ago they died on the Cross. Now they die wielding a submachine gun.”[36] One need be quite morbid to contrive such conceptual mapping. The only possible “logic” is “my enemy's enemy is my friend”: both narratives target as an adversary the same ethnic and denominational group. There is some justification, then, to the charge that to some observers, the conflict observed is their own war by proxy.

Eventually, Italian far rightists Valerio Fioravanti and Francesca Mambro were each given a life sentence for the Bologna bombing, in addition to several life sentences they were each serving for other crimes. Yet in the mid-2000s Francesco Cossiga stated his belief – which is in line with a report by Gian Paolo Pelizzaro and Lorenzo Matassa – that international terrorist Carlos and Lebanon-based terrorists were to blame for the carnage in Bologna. This was in revenge for an associate of Carlos, Amman-born Saleh Abu Anzeh (a resident of Bologna who represented George Habash's PFLP group in Italy), being arrested in Italy in connection with the Ortona missiles.[37] His arrest and detention were in violation of a tacit agreement of the Italian

authorities – the “Moro-Giovanone pact” of 1974, concluded with Arafat – not to interfere with Middle Eastern terrorists, so that Italy would be left in peace.

German terrorist Thomas Kram, a member of Carlos’s group, is known to have been in Bologna on the day of the massacre. Following Saleh Abu Anzeh’s detention there had been threats of revenge actions. The authorities were subsequently cowed into blocking (invoking secrecy) inquiries about arms trafficking to Italian terrorists. These included Venice examining magistrate Carlo Mastelloni’s inquiry in 1988, and an inquiry about the 1984 killing in Lebanon of two Italian reporters, Italo Toni and Graziella De Palo, who had gone there to investigate that traffic.[38]

Let us go back to Prister’s obituary for Cossiga. She offered rather irate remarks about the political class of Italy’s First Republic, and gave Cossiga credit for his admission, made in old age to Italy’s Jews: “We sold you” – referring to the authorities’ collusion with terrorists who struck Italy’s Jews, too. Prister wrote:

*The stepmother, Italy, kept being true to type, from Mussolini to the cattocomunisti governments: she went back to that same abysmal vice of hers, of colluding with ferocious beasts, be they Nazi or Islamist, discriminating Italians into one’s children and stepchildren, with the result that both kinds fell victim to their fangs.[39]*

Her use of *cattocomunisti* is rather unlike its original sense: “such devout Catholics who are Communists, too.” Instead, she uses the compound as though it denoted both the Christian Democrats (in power) and the Communists (who in practice backed the relevant governmental policies).[40] Prister’s use of *cattocomunisti* bears witness to some people now feeling comfortable with publicly expressing an irate conflation of players from a political era they consider discredited. And in this case, what those players shared was their willingness to sacrifice the Jews.

### **Conceiving of the Jews as Judas, I: An Incident of the Corruption-Buster Turned Government Minister, Antonio Di Pietro**

It is doubtful whether the First Republic would have fallen, or, more precisely, whether the Christian Democrats and the Socialists would have been meted a fatal debacle in the polls in early 1993, had it not been for Antonio Di Pietro. He was the one whose *Operazione Mani Pulite* (Operation Clean Hands), the investigation for graft of numerous politicians and businesspeople in 1992, brought about the end in shame of the First Republic. Of peasant family background from Molise in eastern central Italy, this former electronics technician who then studied law was an examining magistrate and assistant chief prosecutor in Milan, when he carried out a relentless series of investigations that brought down several politicians. The media and much of the public enjoyed his coarse browbeating under investigation of those politicians who were toppled, as well as of some – for example, Prime Minister Romano Prodi – who survived.

Then Antonio Di Pietro became a politician himself, and for a while he was a government minister. An episode in particular irritated Italy’s Jewry. In Italy, the polite term for “Jew” had long been *israelita* (Israelite) – until the late 1980s when the *Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane* changed its name to *Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane*. This was a restoration of

the dignity of the term *ebreo* (Jew). This term had already been neutral for years, because the derogatory term for “Jew” is *giudeo*. In standard Italian, *giudeo* is offensive, *ebreo* is what linguists would refer to as the “unmarked” (neutral, non-connotative) term, and *israelita* is polite and now felt to be prudish and obsolete, as though there had been some justification for using a euphemism, but Jews no longer want it.

Apparently not everybody in Italy makes a distinction between Jews and Israel, or for that matter between *giudeo* and Giuda (Judas Iscariot). The interchangeability, illegitimate yet adopted by some, is confirmed by an episode from 2006, under the Prodi government. On 8 October that year, Antonio Di Pietro, the examining magistrate and prosecutor turned politician, was interviewed by Simona Ventura on her television program *Quelli che il calcio*. Referring to Senator Sergio De Gregorio, who had left the party led by Di Pietro, the latter disparagingly described him as “il perfetto giudeo” (“the perfect Jewboy”), while apparently intending “il perfetto Giuda” (“the perfect Judas”).[41]

In the context, the butt of the attack was that particular non-Jewish opponent. (The relations between British premier Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan, who succeeded him after the Suez fiasco, were described by the latter as himself being both Judas and Brutus.) What stood out, however, in the descriptor used by Di Pietro was the offense to Jews: the Jewish media-watch *Informazione Corretta* denounced this in an item titled “Tonino trash.” This is an instance of the far-reaching Americanization of informal Italian communication. Tonino is an endearing form of Antonio, Di Pietro’s first name. Giving this man the unflattering epithet “trash” in a report headlined on the media-watch shows how far some of Italy’s Jews have come in feeling able to bluntly express their displeasure about anti-Jewish slights.

As to Di Pietro’s style, he was a member of Prodi’s government and yet, when as an examining magistrate he interrogated Prodi during Operazione Mani Pulite, he allegedly told Prodi: “I don’t understand whether you’re a [gullible sod] or feigning you’re a [gullible sod].” Thus in general his verbal style is unacceptably aggressive, just as Forattini’s cartoonist’s style is unacceptably aggressive (see below). Still, it is telling that anti-Jewish prejudice surfaced so coarsely.

Di Pietro is known to have claimed once that he would prefer to go back to being a peasant, and drive a tractor in his native region of Molise. Arguably Di Pietro’s personal background, far from the discourse of Italy’s elite, goes some way to explain his insensitivity where some more worldly Italian might have sensed a taboo with regard to the Jews. Perhaps the reason for jarring incidents that reveal utter backwardness in how Jews are still perceived by some who have made it to the inner circles of power, is that upward social mobility has proceeded unabated but a better social status does not always foster intellectual refinement. And yet, quite to the contrary, sometimes dire prejudice is expressed in today’s Italy by persons with a good intellectual preparation;[42] nor should intellectual prejudice come as a surprise.

By 2010-2011 Antonio Di Pietro appeared to be past his political prime. He was still leading his small party L’Italia dei Valori (Italy of Values), which used to join leftist coalitions. He moderates a blog that is named after him. For some reason, comments posted at his site include detailed, even prolix postings by Holocaust deniers. This has occasionally been pointed out by members of the public in blogs or in comments to online newspaper articles, and random visits to Di

Pietro's site reveal a presence of far-right postings (not necessarily Holocaust denials). If anything, this is an indicator that the site needs better management. It does not entail personal responsibility on the part of the titular of the site, who, being a politician, is unlikely to be moderating it in person.

Yet, while such unsavory postings do not imply that Di Pietro subscribes to their views, he also does not bother to delete them. Indeed, in 2006 an Italian court found against the owner of an unmoderated website because of defamatory claims against another person made in postings at that site. The court declared site owners to have the same legal responsibility as newspaper editors.

Antonio Di Pietro was among the many politicians who declared themselves favorable to new legislation against Holocaust denial, after a university lesson by Claudio Moffa (see below) in which it was indeed denied.[43] A report from 16 October 2010 quoted Di Pietro as stating: "The latest shameful episodes confirm the need and urgency for norms against this dangerous tendency." [44]

And yet, *Il Giornale* of 17 October 2010 published a report[45] about Leonardo Alaedin Clerici, an intellectual who in late September 2010 was appointed secretary of a section of the party led by Di Pietro in Genk, Belgium (a country where many people are of Italian background). Clerici was the only Italian participant at the 2006 Holocaust-denial conference sponsored by Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Clerici himself denied to his interviewer that he is a "negazionista" (Holocaust denier), but his opinions about the Holocaust suggest otherwise. Unsurprisingly, he is also an opponent of Israel's existence.

At any rate, Clerici's links to Tehran also have to do, it was alleged, with his conversion to Shiism. At the 2006 conference, the *Il Giornale* report claims, Clerici opposed the use of the term Holocaust (which refers to a sacrifice), whereas whatever did happen was "within a European conflict," and blamed it all on "Judeo-Christian colonialism" – by its very nature, in his view, racist and at present fighting against Islam.

The report also pointed out that the matter had come to public attention just two days after Di Pietro's statement against Holocaust denial, and also noted the embarrassment of Attilio Di Mattia, a *dipietrista* (supporter of Di Pietro and his party) who is the party's representative for finance and markets, and is reputed to be attentive both to Italy's Jews and to the problems of Italians abroad. *Informazione Corretta* reproduced[46] the report from *Il Giornale*, but noted that it was the only article from that day that was not also posted at *Il Giornale's* website. The media watch claimed that Clerici was indeed a Holocaust denier, and that it would be naïve to wonder what he was doing in the party when the renowned philosopher Gianni Vattimo is a Member of the European Parliament – despite the fact that this staunch anti-Israeli had declared two years earlier his intention to reread the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

## **Conceiving of the Jews as Judas, II: Forattini's Cartoon Showing Begin as Hanged Judas Dripping Coins**

Giorgio Forattini has been regarded as Italy's leading political cartoonist since the 1970s, and during his career he turned from ostensibly left-wing (because of who used to publish his cartoons) to overtly right-wing. When addressing Israel as a topic, as both his left- and right-wing public persona he has resorted to Christological motifs so as to show the public who the Israelis actually are. Before his rise as a published cartoonist, Forattini was a commercial agent, peddling fuel to gas stations. Arguably, his insensitivity and coarseness in matters Israeli or Jewish finds a cogent explanation in his social background, and is at variance with Italy's elite rhetoric just as in Antonio Di Pietro's case.

Among various infamous cartoons from 1982 – when few of Italy's well-known cartoonists did not produce anti-Israeli cartoons with clear anti-Jewish undertones – one of Forattini's caricatures[47] showed a besuited Menachem Begin dead, hanging from a cedar of Lebanon with twenty coins falling off his body. The reference is to Judas Iscariot's thirty shekels, and to his hanging himself.

In the Begin-as-hanged-Judas cartoon, the only element belonging to the ongoing Lebanon war's frame of reference was the tree, this being the cedar from the Lebanese banner. Why, then, was Begin hanged in that cartoon? It was the cartoonist's wish, which he reasonably expected his inflamed audience to share. Why was Begin likened to Judas Iscariot, considering that the betrayal element on Israel's part was not part of the war's narrative?

Judas (Giuda) was warranted by the very fact that the *giudeo* (Jewboy) was involved,[48] and on the evidence of several of Forattini's cartoons about Israel, Jews are ever the Christ-killers, something of which he wants to remind his audience. Why is the hanged Begin's body dripping coins? Because, as everybody in the expected audience knew, Jews are full of money. And what is especially alarming is that Forattini's caricatures are mainstream, and over the years editors have accepted them.

### **A Fading of Distinctions?: The Case of Morgantini and Moffa**

*Informazione Corretta* reacted to a report published on 18 April 2007 in *Avvenire*, a leading Catholic newspaper. The report was titled “La storia imbavagliata” (“History Gagged”).[49] It was about a workshop at the University of Tèramo (a town in eastern central Italy) about the Middle East and the Holocaust. The media watch complained that there was no indication about the background of the academics it listed. The media watch explained that Claudio Moffa is a “Marxist academic, who for years has been an anti-Israeli and anti-Judaic propagandist, who in his publications has emulated the style of the most virulent Soviet anti-Semitic propaganda”; that Adolfo Pepe is a Holocaust denier, and “denounces the supposedly instrumental use made by Israel of the memory of the Shoah, but is an apologist of Stalinism”; and that Angelo D’Orsi was “the first signatory of the anti-Israeli appeal made public after Hizballah aggression against Israel,” that is, the war of the summer of 2006.[50]

The media watch also complained about the *Avvenire* report's reference to *Pasque di sangue* (*Easter of Blood*), Israeli academic Ariel Toaff's notorious book about the blood libel, about whose claims – according to Alessandro Barbero, one of the participants in the workshop – the historians were overly reticent. The title of the report, “History Gagged,” referred to Toaff's

withdrawing the first edition of his book after it was very negatively reviewed by other historians. What is interesting in the present context is that all those themes came together: the blood libel,[51] the Middle East, and Holocaust denial, and this in an academic setting.

In 2007-2009 Luisa Morgantini of Italy's Rifondazione Comunista party (the unreconstructed Communists) was vice-president of the European Parliament for European policies on Africa and on human rights. She presents her advocacy as pacifist, and this is expressed in her staunch anti-Israeli line and, compatibly, being a cofounder of the Donne in Nero (Women in Black) international network. She came under attack from Italy's Jews when she released an anti-Israeli interview to a German neo-Nazi periodical. Morgantini claimed she was unaware of its political affiliation. Basically, this appears to be explainable on the global level as international pacifism, an international network, and a supranational parliament are involved. And yet it is worth considering the local Italian factors involved.

Later on, Morgantini was to give a speech at an official commemoration of the Holocaust in Bologna. The Jewish community of Bologna decided not to attend, and in turn came under attack by the local Left for being disrespectful to the European Parliament. Morgantini is the proud daughter of a member of the Resistance, and it is not inconsequential that she was born in 1940 in Villadossola, thus living as a toddler in the short-lived partisan republic of the Ossola.[52] Incidentally, reference to the Resistance has long been a stock device by which some quarters in Italy feel no need to self-identify with and apologize for Gentile Italy's treatment of the country's Jews during the racial persecutions of 1938- 1945.

In 2009 a rather startling development occurred. There was a minor outcry, in the Jewish *Informazione Corretta*, over Morgantini being listed among the lecturers for a master's program in Middle East Studies at the University of Teramo, which was directed by Moffa. There was some international exposure when, in May 2007, a public demonstration prompted the university to prevent a speech by Moffa's guest, French Holocaust-denier Robert Faurisson. Subsequently the university abolished Moffa's master's program, whose curriculum was notable for giving respectability to Holocaust denial and for anti-Israeli attitudes. Thereafter Moffa restarted his master's program – this time under the aegis of Don Curzio Nitoglia, a clergyman with extreme anti-Jewish and anti-Protestant views[53] – outside state-run universities. It is of course significant that the aegis was that of a faction of the clerical camp that does not accept the post-Vatican-II course the Catholic Church has taken.

Brunello Mantelli, who teaches history at the University of Turin, had launched an appeal against Holocaust denial as taught in Moffa's master's curriculum. The trial started in April 2009 at the Tribunale Penale di Roma. Lawyer Francesca Fragale, politically active on Green issues, was Moffa's counsel. Mantelli's attorney was Roberto Lamacchia, national president of the Giuristi Democratici (a left-wing organization of members of the judiciary and the legal professions). In a public statement[54] Mantelli wrote: "Apparently in Italy if you launch an appeal against Holocaust denial, there is the risk this would be considered an offense." [55]

In his statement Mantelli singled out, among the teachers in Moffa's curriculum, the leftist Luisa Morgantini so as to ask her why she chose to mingle with such lecturers[56] as Andrea Carancini, described as an "expert in Holocaust-denial literatures," Serge Thion (a French

Holocaust denier), Maurizio Blondet (a far-Right cleric), and Tiberio Graziani (editor of a far-Right periodical). *Informazione Corretta* columnist Ugo Volli, in a preamble to that statement by Mantelli, pointed out that the webpage for the master's program is hosted by a website of the clerical far Right. Volli found it astute, on Moffa's part, to bring together left-wing anti-Israelis, some mainstream voices, some Jews "open to dialogue," and inveterate Holocaust deniers.[57]

By agreeing to lecture for Moffa's master's program, Morgantini was clearly stepping up her conflict with Jewish sensitivities. Of course, she could claim that she was not herself endorsing Holocaust denial, and was merely contributing to another part of the curriculum. One is forced to think that lecturing in the master's program was feasible for this particular left-winger (notwithstanding such company) because the curriculum also purports to teach about the Middle East; not for nothing is it named after Enrico Mattei, a public official prominent as Italy's oil tsar in 1953-1962. In a sense this is different from France and especially Britain, but it is also different from Italy twenty years earlier, where officially the radical Right and Left would not be mixed together. It is all very confusing to outsiders, but also to Italians.

Is there anything similar in other Western countries? One may point to the far Right's participation in antiglobalist demonstrations, or the surprising acceptance of Norman Finkelstein, the self-appointed critique of the "Holocaust industry," by both the radical Right (in Italy, too) and the radical Left, the latter in Anglo-Saxon countries. Occasionally in recent years, anti-Israeli behavior has been acclaimed in quarters on the Left even when the behaving agent was nonchalant about Holocaust-denial connections.[58] Or radical leftists have employed arguments[59] clearly associated with right-wing anti-Semitism. Both of the latter examples are from Britain.

Generally, whereas something quite like the Morgantini-Moffa link, a local episode in Italy, does not conspicuously occur elsewhere in the West,[60] the conjunction of right- and left-wing radicalisms is sometimes overlooked when this serves some common purpose. That conjunction is prominent in the antiglobalization camp, and Italy is no exception.[61]

In-mid October 2010, Claudio Moffa gave a lesson whose Holocaust-denying contents spurred Riccardo Pacifici, president of the Jewish community of Rome, to call in the large daily *La Repubblica* for a law against Holocaust denial. Gianni Letta, deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Office, responded with a sympathetic letter that *La Repubblica* published on 15 October. This was the eve of the yearly commemoration of Rome's 1943 Black Saturday, when the Nazis raided Jews' houses and arrested and deported many of the city's Jews.

Moffa gave his lesson in Holocaust denial on 23 October 2010, and it was the last in the syllabus of the master's program named after Mattei. Moffa then claimed to his university that he had merely divulged Holocaust-denying claims by others, whereas the university had to decide whether he actually endorsed those claims. It was pointed out that the truth was not difficult to determine because Moffa's own website[62] left no doubts about it.[63]

After Pacifici's open letter and the response addressed to him by Letta, many politicians from various parties expressed their support for new legislation against Holocaust denial.[64] On 15 October 2010, on the eve of the anniversary of a major Nazi raid against the Jews of Rome, the

academic senate of the University of Teramo, headed by the rector, invited the Faculty of Political Science to discontinue Moffa's master's program. That request was signed by all members of the academic senate, including the dean of the faculty concerned. Interestingly, the master's program had survived at the university notwithstanding earlier reassurances that it be removed. Condemnation on the part of the university's own senate may well doom the program.

Rather unsurprisingly, a law against Holocaust denial was opposed by former ambassador Sergio Romano, who claimed: "An opinion is not an offense, and historiographical research [sic] is fought by means of other research, not by sentences of the courts." [65] Romano, who answers readers' letters in *Il Corriere della Sera*, was replying to a reader who favored the proposed law. He is often in conflict with Italy's Jews, is anti-Israeli, and has on occasion quoted extensively and appears to give credence [66] to Paolo Orano's 1937 book *The Jews in Italy*, which prepared the ground for the 1938 anti-Jewish legislation in Italy.

### **The Anti-Semitic Twin Towers Urban Legend in Italy**

It is worth noting that there also is another kind of denial of a large number of Jews having lost their lives. This is the urban legend according to which, just before the Twin Towers were destroyed, "over four thousand" Jewish employees were informed beforehand and stayed away. Of course, this is offensive to all the Jewish victims and their families.

In Italy, too, that libel against the Jews and Israel was spread, not least in the newsletter of the far-Left playwright and Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo and his partner Franca Rame. As the weekly, right-wing, celebrity magazine *Gente* revealed around 1970, during the Nazi occupation of northern Italy Fo was in the Black Brigades, one of the Fascist paramilitary groups of Mussolini's Italian Social Republic. At the time Fo did not deny this, [67] but claimed he had been drafted and complied, and that up to then, along with his father, he had been smuggling Jews through the border in the mountains. [68] Perhaps his views about Jewish conspiracies suggest more precisely what were his attitudes toward Jews while he was in the Black Brigades, and while he smuggled people in the Alps if he actually did.

In January 2002 the newsletter of the Jewish community of Milan republished with a comment [69] a viciously anti-Semitic cartoon from issue 13 of *Carta*, a periodical incorporating *Il Cuore*, a left-wing satirical forum. A text above the cartoon, which appeared in January 2001, stated: "Over 4 thousand employees at the Twin Towers, American Jews or ones of Israeli origin, on the morning of September 11, mysteriously did not go to work.... WHY???" Two ugly faces of kippah-wearing men each offered an answer: "Look, we had to circumcise the baby and..." with the punning comment "circoincidenza, eh?" (i.e., "circumcoincidence, eh?"). [70] There is also a yellow face on the right-hand side, with sidecurls and a beard, offering three callouts of its own: "Are you talking to me?" "Oh, well..." "...legitimate defense?" [71]

The cartoon was signed by Diavù, i.e., David Vecchiato, cartoonist and art director of *Il Cuore*. Yet the approval of his chief, Riccardo Mannelli, was also necessary for its publication. Remarkably, *Il Cuore* is a leftist forum. Protests did not only arise from Jewish quarters; to their credit, the councilors of the Radical Party of the Lombardy Region held a press conference on 23 October 2001 to denounce the cartoon.

The small Radical Party was formed in 1956 from a left-wing faction of the right-wing Liberal Party. The Radical Party has long emphasized secularism and civil rights, and it was under the lead of pro-Israeli Marco Pannella that this party took the initiative of the referendum in 1974, when divorce was introduced in Italy, and the referendum of 1981, when abortion was. From 1988 the Radical Party adopted a “transnational” policy, and its prominent member Emma Bonino eventually served on the European Commission. Unlike the usual left-wing parties, the Radical Party has consistently sympathized with Italy’s Jews and with Israel. But that is not necessarily the case with its radio station, Radio Radicale.

### **Awareness of the Holocaust as Part of a Global Trend, versus Earlier Sporadic Insensitivity**

Some of the behavior reviewed here, such as corruption-buster turned politician Antonio Di Pietro describing a former ally as “the perfect Jewboy” (“il perfetto giudeo”) while alluding to Judas, and cartoonist Forattini’s obsession with Christological motifs and the Passion when drawing cartoons about Israel, can be partly explained by Italy’s remarkable commitment to upward social mobility not always fostering refinement.

When Berlusconi joked about the Holocaust in late September 2010, this was widely reported even in the regional media. And when the joke was simply retold in some information forums from back-of-beyond,[72] this author was left with the uneasy feeling that they were being in the best case ambivalent, and exploiting the retelling of an amusing joke. On occasion readers were reminded that Berlusconi, as a young entertainer on cruise ships, once had the professional duty of telling jokes.

Prime Minister Berlusconi’s joking about the Holocaust clearly cannot be relegated to a chronicle from the margins of Italy’s political life, the way some far-Right websites can. And yet, to make better sense of how it could have happened, it is worth considering a time when it was acceptable in Italy under the Republic to joke about the Holocaust.

In November 2008 in Rome, a Holocaust-denying high school teacher was suspended.[73] This manifests the increase in the public’s awareness of the Holocaust as an important subject that has a place in the public discourse,[74] something that in Italy reflects a global influence. It was not always the case that sensitivity could be expected.

The year 1952 saw the release of *Totò e le donne* (Totò and Women), a misogynist comedy film scripted, directed, and produced by famous people who were influential long afterward. In one episode, the prominent comedian Totò is shown being pushed onto a train by a lady with whom he was having an illicit affair, and who did not want to be seen with him. Next one sees Totò wearing a convict’s striped uniform and hat, sporting his saddest face, and walking slowly in a tiny, overcrowded courtyard among other inmates similarly clad.

There is a sign on the courtyard: “Mauthausalem,” a portmanteau word formed from Mauthausen, the name of a Nazi concentration camp,[75] and Matusalemme, the Italian name for the biblical Methuselah, the standard of phenomenal longevity. This was intended to make viewers laugh, and no doubt many did.[76]

Another example of sporadic insensitivity to the Holocaust comes from a court of justice. Bloch nylon stockings had long been well advertised in Italy. In the 1970s, the namesake Jewish manufacturer of those nylon stockings, in the Italian Alps, faced hostility on the part of his workforce, whose strikes eventually ruined him. When they put up a sign expressing the wish that he, too, had died in the Shoah like his family, Bloch turned to an employment tribunal – which found that employees are entitled to say such things to their employer. This was considered a “progressive” verdict at the time. As elsewhere in Western Europe, the treatment of racist hate as criminal only made its appearance later, in practice and sometimes de jure.

### **Global Trends Again Take a Local Form: June 2010**

The interplay of global trends and local, national, and regional politics can be discerned in both the militant initiatives in relation to the Gaza flotilla, and media coverage of the incident in early June 2010. For several weeks the preparations for sending those vessels, including militants boasting of their violent intentions by displaying knives for the benefit of photographers, were saluted with inflammatory religious rhetoric in Turkey’s newspapers, which in recent years have been forced to conform to the government line.[77] Israel, for its part, was trying to contain the damage to relations with Turkey and Western countries.

The Islamist government was only briefly thrown off guard when in İskenderun the driver of Turkey’s leading Catholic bishop murdered his boss. He was, however, immediately portrayed as insane, with no relation to politics let alone the flotilla incident. Italian media responses did not take issue with that view, exonerating, with regard to the clergyman’s fate, both the Turkish incitement over the flotilla and the Erdogan government’s role in manipulating it.

The Vatican’s approach, which recalled its attitude during the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in April 2002,[78] was not to antagonize Turkey and others – except Israel, probably because Israel is tacitly understood not to pose any danger to Catholic interests, and to be eager to mend fences. Those Italian media that pay deferent attention to the Pope’s pronouncements, which were made during a visit to Cyprus, concerning Israel’s allegedly unjust policies, did not treat the bishop’s murder as indicating anything negative about the Turkish discourse surrounding the flotilla.

Globally, however, the rhetoric concerning the flotilla was leftist and “pacifist.” On 2 and 3 June, BBC Radio 4 usually termed the participants “militants” even as it sympathized with them, whereas Italy’s broadcast media stuck to “pacifisti.” In Rome on 3 June many posters of CGIL, the leading trade union, were to be seen denouncing Israel, but so, in the better-off, far-Right Parioli quarter, were many posters of the far-Right Forza Nuova. Such neo-Nazi posters, atop a PLO banner with a multitude of black banners in the background, carried the text “[Send] a European army to the Holy Land, against the Palestinian Holocaust.”[79] This comes from circles that routinely deny the Holocaust.

In some of Italy’s leading newspapers one could also find criticism of the Gaza flotilla, which also focused on Italian participants. But this was soon overtaken in the Italian media by the news of the Pope’s criticism of Israel’s “unjust” occupation in Palestine while visiting Cyprus.

## **The Summer and Autumn of 1982 Remembered Twenty-Five Years Later by Italy's Jews**

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, it was paradoxically with Pertini, Italy's most beloved president, that Italy's Jewry's tie to the Italian Resistance and its members, of which he was a leader, in a sense came to an end.

In the autumn of 2007, this short news item appeared in the daily *La Repubblica*:<sup>[80]</sup>

*ROME – “Don't come, because I don't guarantee your safety,” the then chief rabbi of Rome, Elio Toaff, told the president of the Republic, Sandro Pertini, who wanted to take part in the funeral of the little Stefano Tachè, who died in the attack of the Palestinian commando at the synagogue, on 9 October 1982. Then Pertini, along with Spadolini,<sup>[81]</sup> who at the time was prime minister, participated. Yesterday, when the mayor, Walter Veltroni, uncovered the plaque that dedicates a square of the ghetto of the capital to the little victim of Palestinian terror, old wounds were opened and quite harsh judgments came, concerning the Italian government at the time. “It wasn't only terrorism,” said Rabbi Vittorio Haim Della Rocca, who on 9 October 1982 was at the synagogue. “There was a campaign of the Italian government right after [the Maronite Christian-perpetrated massacre at the Beirut Palestinian refugee camps of] Sabra and Shatila.” Also at the microphone, the chief rabbi, Riccardo di Segni, declared: “The blast was the fruit of a terrifying campaign of hatred that has a well-orchestrated stage direction.” And Riccardo Pacifici, the spokesman of the Jewish community of Rome, stated: “It was a preannounced attack. Europe, Paris, Vienna, [where terror attacks had been carried out] had already seen such images. Those who struck, did so knowing there was a consensus of public opinion in place. When Arafat came to Italy in September 1982, only [Italy's then premier] Spadolini refused to receive him.”*

At the time, organized Italian Jewry reacted by compiling a dossier of newspaper clippings, photographs of graffiti, and reproductions of letters with threats. It is quite valuable yet with important omissions, and the broadcast media are not covered.<sup>[82]</sup> Clips from both secular and clerical sources appear.<sup>[83]</sup> Individual Jews were experiencing tense relations with Gentile acquaintances, including in the workplace; some were beaten or threatened.

There were sporadic expressions, either public or private, of dissent from the hate pandemic. The prominent writer Alberto Arbasino published an article recalling the xenophobic climate of 1940<sup>[84]</sup> and condemning the attitude of Italy's intellectuals, who were not decrying the climate of hatred. In that autumn other writers, too, published pieces making similar points. But far more visible were intellectuals making their voice heard as part of the general frenzy against Israel, and sometimes against Jewish culture as being Israel's supposed motivator.

Arbasino, for his part, claimed that Italians were not as anti-Semitic as the French or the Germans, and for that very reason hate campaigns were required to generate a “climate.” He argued that just as Fascist-era cartoons had an impact, one could not exonerate current cartoonists in the vein of the satirical periodical *Il Male*. He then described the cover (reproduced in his paper) of a leftist periodical, *Nuova Società*, dated 25 September 1982 – a photograph of Nazi banners inscribed:<sup>[85]</sup> “Beirut / The Final Solution / The Bible of Horror.”

Arbasino likened the inflammatory content to Nazi film director Leni Riefenstahl, and remarked that the end result was the “Death to the Jews” graffiti on Italian buildings.

He noted: “One would never have expected to pass again through such preoccupying and sinister stages. The last time I heard or said the phrase ‘100% Aryan’ was in 1944, to escape from a high school being searched.” He concluded that “if there is still some decent Italian literature [i.e., belles-lettres], and in circumstances such as this one it keeps silent..., then it should better hide itself among the roses and the pansies.”

In the intervening twenty-five years, various things have changed in Italy and worldwide. The modalities of public Jewish voices in Italy have changed as well. Although the media-induced climate during the Lebanon war of 1982 included aspects that are best viewed against the backdrop of media globalization, it is still an example of strongly local as well as global responses to a trigger globally perceived.[86] In theoretical discussions of globalization, some scholars refer to “glocalization” or the mixing of two or more processes one of which is local.

Italian society’s response to the 1982 Lebanon War, then, was glocalized, and took the form it did because of a local cultural and political legacy, as well as a local political constellation. That is why the Italian response was so extreme and pervasive. It owed much to Italy’s past during the twentieth century (arguably even before Fascism), and in turn it has partly shaped patterns of response to Middle Eastern and Jewish affairs by a sizable part of Italy’s media and public opinion.

No one explanation fits the complexities of Italian attitudes toward Jews or Israel, along with local Jewish responses. Awareness of the background, however, can help foster insights into perplexing events.

### **Postscript**

In February 2011 allegedly one million women took to the streets throughout Italy to participate in coordinated demonstrations against Berlusconi’s allegedly scandalous behavior involving a young girl.. The initiative was named “Se non ora, quando?” (If Not Now, When?), from the title of a 1982 book by Primo Levi. It was his last fictional work, a novel whose characters are mostly Jewish survivors and partisans in the Shoah years who eventually arrive in Italy and prepare to travel to prestate Israel.

The book title itself is, of course, a well-known rabbinic maxim. The better schooled among the protesters probably knew that Levi was being quoted. But that (supposedly) one million women in Italy marched under a slogan by Hillel, a Jewish sage, illustrates that Italy has come a long way indeed in incorporating (however tangentially) cultural elements from its Jewish community. This is what has been new, if not without obstacles and countervailing tendencies, for the Jewish condition in Italy under the Second Republic.

\* \* \*

### **Notes**

[1] Contrast this to Dan V. Segre, "The Roles of the Jews in Italian Society," interview by Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Changing Jewish Communities*, 53, 15 February 2010, [http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=4&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=623&PID=0&IID=3281&TTL=The\\_Roles\\_of\\_the\\_Jews\\_in\\_Italian\\_Society](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=4&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=623&PID=0&IID=3281&TTL=The_Roles_of_the_Jews_in_Italian_Society). Also see Ephraim Nissan, "Un mistero risolto? Riflessioni in margine a *Il serpente biblico* di Valerio Marchi," *Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 74, 1-2 (2008 [2010]): 95-124. [Italian]

[2] Antisemitism proper in Italy up to 1973 is the subject of Alfonso M. Di Nola, *Antisemitismo in Italia* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1973). [Italian]

[3] E.g., Fabrizio Rondolino, "Il sionismo va compreso, Israele non è un nemico," *L'Unità*, 30 April 1991, 8. [Italian]

[4] Maurizio Molinari, *La sinistra e gli ebrei in Italia 1967-1993* (Milan: Corbaccio Editore, 1995) [Italian]; Gadi Luzzatto Voghera, *Antisemitismo a sinistra* (Turin: Einaudi, 2007) [Italian]; Fiamma Nirenstein, *Gli antisemiti progressisti: La forma nuova di un odio antico* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2004) [Italian]; Marta Brachini, "Israele e l'ebraismo in due giornali della sinistra: L'Unità e Il Manifesto (1982-1993)," tesi di laurea (graduation thesis, supervised by Ernesto Galli della Loggia), Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche, Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, Università degli Studi di Perugia, academic year 2002-2003 (posted at the website of Morashà, [www.morasha.it/tesi/brcn/index.html](http://www.morasha.it/tesi/brcn/index.html)) [Italian]. For an earlier period, see M. Toscano, ed., *Ebraismo, sionismo e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana: Dalla fine dell'Ottocento agli anni Sessanta* (Venice: Marsilio, 2007). [Italian]

In the latter, see in particular the chapter by A. Tarquini, "Il partito socialista fra guerra fredda e «questione ebraica»: sionismo, antisemitismo e conflitto arabo-israeliano nella stampa socialista, dalla nascita della Repubblica alla fine degli anni sessanta." Riccardi discussed the policies of the Italian Republic and of the Italian Communist Party toward Israel at different historical periods. See L. Riccardi, *Il «problema Israele.» Diplomazia italiana e PCI di fronte allo Stato ebraico (1948-1973)* (Milan: Guerini e Associati, 2006) [Italian]; idem, "Sempre più con gli arabi. La politica italiana verso il Medio Oriente dopo la guerra del Kippur (1973-76)," in *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, 6. [Italian]

[5] See, e.g., Fiamma Nirenstein, "The Cynical Use of Israel in Italian Politics," interview by Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*, 58, July 2007, [www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=381&PID=470&IID=1589](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=381&PID=470&IID=1589).

[6] For the change in the Vatican's attitudes, see, e.g., Silvano Facioni and Laura Quercioli Mincer, eds., *Quando il Papa andò in Sinagoga. Atti del Convegno in occasione del ventennale della visita del Papa alla Sinagoga di Roma, 4-5 aprile 2006* (Conferenze, 122) (Rome: Accademia Polacca delle Scienze, Biblioteca e Centro di Studi a Roma, 2008). [Italian]

[7] It is important not to consider the preference for irrationality as essential to the national character. That is an ethnic stereotype that has nothing to do with the historical emergence of irrationalism in far-Right thinking in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact,

precisely the stereotype of the supposedly unthinking Italian was part and parcel of anti-Italian prejudice as formulated by the French Enlightenment thinker Claude-Adrien Helvétius (1715-1771), who claimed that Italians would not ratiocinate but were prey to their emotions, a position partly accepted by the Romantic writer Stendhal (1783-1842). See on this Michel Crouzet, *Stendhal et l'italianité: Essai de mythologie romantique* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1982). [French]

[8] President Napolitano's pro-Israeli statements drew attention from part of Italy's press, during his state visit to Israel. A convenient digest can be found by searching for "Napolitano" in the database of *Informazione Corretta* ([www.informazionecorretta.it](http://www.informazionecorretta.it)).

[9] The Jewish Brigade was the army unit, made up of Jews, that fought within the British ranks during the Second World War. In particular, it took part in the Allied forces' difficult conquest of the Italian peninsula – for example, in the battle at Montecassino.

[10] Well before the 1982 Lebanon war, Pertini felt able to tell a group of Italian Jewish high school students that Israel was doing what the Nazis did. Of course they did not dare contradict the president of the Italian Republic, but the incident was reported. The equiparation has become such a cliché in Europe, including Italy, that a recent book on how memory of the Shoah affects Roman Jews in their thirties, whose parents were children during the Shoah and survived Fascist and Nazi persecutions in Rome, devotes pages to how at school they had to cope with classmates' vilification of Israel and likening it to the Nazis. See Raffaella Di Castro, *Testimoni del non-provato. Ricordare, pensare, immaginare la Shoah nella terza generazione*, Studi storici Carocci, 130 (Rome: Carocci, 2008), 304-307. [Italian]

[11] In the last three lines (p. 288) of Sec. 7.2 in Franca Tagliacozzo, *Gli ebrei romani raccontano la propria» Shoah*, Testimonianze e memorie raccolte e organizzate a cura di Raffaella Di Castro (Firenze: Giuntina, 2010) [Italian], citing p. 55 in Toscano, 1988 (below in this note). That bibliographic entry is found in Tagliacozzo's book on p. 108, n. 290. This author owes a fuller bibliographic entry to Franca Tagliacozzo (personal communication, 20 October 2010), which is as follows: R.d.l. [=Regio decreto legge] 20 gennaio 1944, n. 25, "Disposizioni per la reintegrazione nei diritti civili e politici dei cittadini italiani e stranieri già dichiarati di razza ebraica o considerati di razza ebraica," in M. Toscano, ed., *L'abrogazione delle leggi razziali in Italia (1943-1987): Reintegrazione dei diritti dei cittadini e ritorno ai valori del Risorgimento*, Senato della Repubblica, Aziende tipolitografiche eredi Dott. Bardi s.r.l. (Rome: Aziende tipolitografiche eredi Dott. Bardi s.r.l., for the Senato della Repubblica, 1988), 102-105 [Italian]. Importantly, that book was published by the Italian Senate, thanks to Giovanni Spadolini, the late leader of the Italian Republican Party.

[12] The "decent" parliamentary parties, excluding the neo-Fascists and the extreme Left. *Arco Costituzionale* refers specifically to those parties (or their successors), excluding the fringes, that developed the 1948 Republican Constitution. (On 2 June 1946, the elections for the new Constituent Assembly were held together with a referendum that saw the fall of monarchy. The Constituent Assembly elected a provisional president of the Republic, Enrico De Nicola, and prepared a constitution that came into force on 1 January 1948. In 1947 the Christian Democrat

premier Alcide De Gasperi ended the coalition with the Socialists and the Communists, whose own input to the constitution had been crucial.

Note that the Communists were part of the *Arco Costituzionale*, so that descriptor is not synonymous with all those parties that were deemed fit for joining the governing coalition during the First Republic.

[13] For such small parties, the support of geographically concentrated minorities was electorally important. For example, the Social Democrats would cultivate the Albanian villagers of eastern central Italy. An Albanian ethnic and Social Democrat, Mario Tanassi, was defense minister until forced to resign, like President Giovanni Leone (a Neapolitan) in the aftermath of the Lockheed international scandal of the 1970s. But the newspapers reviled Leone's Neapolitan identity when attacking him, whereas the Albanian identity of Tanassi – who went to prison – was never mentioned in attacks on him in the Lockheed-scandal context. This suggests that Neapolitans are an often disliked part of Italy's ethnic self-concept, whereas Albanians are a touchy matter, a sort of "other" within. (In the 1970s and 1980s, fans of the Inter football club in Milan were known to chant at the stadium: "Napoletani, ebrei, stessa razza, stessa fine" ["Neapolitans and Jews, same race, same end"]).

Another manifestation of how the small secular parties of the First Republic sought supporting groups is the flight on 15 August 1977 of Nazi criminal Herbert Kappler from his prison in Rome. Following a meeting of senior politicians from West Germany and Italy, Kappler's status was changed to that of "prisoner of war." [what was the connection between this and his fleeing?] Defense Minister Vito Lattanzio, finding himself criticized for Kappler's flight, claimed that Kappler's wife had carried him away in a suitcase. When asked how that could be, he infamously retorted that "German women are strong." Both Lattanzio's role in the affair and that of the previous defense minister, Arnaldo Forlani, were controversial. Kappler had cancer when he fled, but back in Germany he embarrassed the local authorities by openly joining the neo-Nazis in glorifying the Nazis.

It was also reported, however, that the Social Democrat leader Pietro Longo, the successor of former president and Resistance leader Giuseppe Saragat, was seen in Rome walking around and chatting with an officer of those Carabinieri (gendarmerie) who were directly responsible for Kappler's flight. It was claimed in the media that Longo was thereby trying to make himself politically attractive to Carabinieri and police staff, among whom the party used to have many voters. Longo's behavior on that occasion would have been unthinkable for Saragat.

Importantly, as Major Herbert Kappler had headed the Nazi deportation of Jews from Rome, and was also responsible for the execution of 335 hostages at the Fosse Ardeatine in Rome on 24 March 1944, opposition to his release had mainly come from Jewish quarters, as well as from the families of the Fosse Ardeatine victims. There was an attempt by the media to separate Jews from Gentile victims' families, with representatives of the latter more amenable to Catholic forgiveness (having been pressured to demonstrate it in a live television broadcast), whereas the Jews were shown by contrast to be unforgiving. But when Kappler fled, the same Gentile representatives of Fosse Ardeatine victims felt they had been duped and reacted as angrily as Rome's organized Jewry.

[14] Giampiero Martinotti, "Berlusconi: 'Con meno petrolio più centrali nucleari,'" *La Repubblica*, 14 July 2008 [Italian]. Reproduced in *Informazione Corretta*, 14 July 2008, with a preamble, and retitled: "Convinto da Craxi, finanziari Arafat': lo ha dichiarato Silvio Berlusconi a Parigi." [Italian]

[15] A Jewish facet of this rapprochement between Italy and Libya was related by Lisa Palmieri-Billig, "Gaddafi invites Rome's Jewish leaders to visit – on Shabbat," *Jerusalem Post* Internet Edition, 10 June 2009. Cf. the warning by a prominent Egyptian-born, Italian, pro-Israeli journalist: Magdi Allam, "Il ricatto di Gheddafi" (editorial), *Il Corriere della Sera*, 21 August 2006, 1 [Italian]; reproduced in *Informazione Corretta*, 21 August 2006, and retitled: "Il ricatto di Gheddafi dietro la tragedia infinita dei clandestini." [Italian]

[16] "Un ebreo racconta a un suo familiare... Ai tempi dei campi di sterminio un nostro connazionale venne da noi e chiese alla nostra famiglia di nascondere, e noi lo accogliamo. Lo mettemmo in cantina, lo abbiamo curato, però gli abbiamo fatto pagare una diaria... E quanto era, in moneta attuale? Tremila euro... Al mese? No al giorno... Ah, però... Bè, siamo ebrei, e poi ha pagato perché aveva i soldi, quindi lasciami in pace... Scusa un'ultima domanda... tu pensi che glielo dobbiamo dire che Hitler è morto e che la guerra è finita?..."

E.g., in *Corriere della Sera* of 4 October 2010, under the headline "Berlusconi e il "vizio" delle barzellette «Ne so più di 2000, ma Letta si arrabbia» / Le battute del Cavaliere con i militanti." [Italian]

[17] "Fini ha fatto sapere che presto fonderà un nuovo partito. Spero che abbia già ordinato le kippah, perché è di questo che si tratta. Chi ha tradito una volta, tradisce sempre. Può darsi pure che Fini svolga una missione ma è una missione tutta sua personale. Se la tenga. Quando andremo a votare vedremo quanti voti prenderà il transfuga Fini."

[18] On the image of Judas Iscariot as the Jew, see Hyam Maccoby, *Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil* (New York: Free Press, 1992; London: Peter Halban, 1992); Ruth Mellinkoff, "Judas's Red Hair and the Jews," *Journal of Jewish Art*, 9 (1982): 31-46.

[19] "Gli ebrei contro Ciarrapico: "Rabbia e sconforto,"" *Il Giornale*, 3 October 2010. [Italian]

[20] "Forse sono l'unico che ha interpretato le parole di Ciarrapico in maniera del tutto diversa, pur non nutrendo una particolare simpatia per lui: per me voleva dire semplicemente che Fini ha strumentalizzato a suo favore pure la Kippah, che ha indossato più volte (e non mi si venga a dire per una sua catarsi). Per cui questo simbolo israelita potrebbe essere sfruttato ulteriormente da Fini per acquisire consenso. Ma dove sta l'offesa agli ebrei? Si faccia molto più attenzione alle luride parole di Di Pietro, passibili, a mio avviso, di azione giudiziaria. Se avessimo dei giudici!"

[21] This is also related to the enduring myth of the Jews being associated with the old, cruel Saturn, also known as Father Time and as the child-eating Kronos. See Ephraim Nissan and Abraham Ofir Shemesh, "Saturnine Traits, Melancholia, and Related Conditions as Ascribed to Jews and Jewish Culture (and Jewish Responses) from Imperial Rome to High Modernity," *Quaderni di Studi Indo-Mediterranei*, 3, special issue on melancholia (*Umana, divina*

*maliconia*), edited by Alessandro Grossato (Alessandria, Piedmont: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2011), 97-128.

[22] See endnote 6.

[23] Pre-headline: «Cicchitto: «parole inaccettabili». Il PD: «una vergogna.»” Headline: “Ciarrapico: «Fini ordini le kippah» / È bufera, Berlusconi si dissocia.” Subheadline: “Sdegno bipartisan contro le frasi dell’editore ciociaro, che poi precisa: «Nessuna intenzione antisemita.»” *Il Corriere della Sera*, 30 September 2010. [Italian]

[24] “...non vi era alcuna intenzione antisemita.”

[25] “In tutta la mia vita sono sempre stato amico di Israele.”

[26] “Anche io mi sento israeliano.” Would it be unkind to recall that Mussolini once stated: “I, I am Zionist myself” (“Io, io sono sionista”), sometime before he styled himself “the sword of Islam” (“la spada dell’Islam”)? The latter referred to when he used Somali, Eritrean, and Libyan colonial troops during his occupation of Ethiopia – where he promoted the local Muslims, who were punished for this after the end of the Second World War. This was also when, partly in revenge for the League of Nations’ sanctions, he was an important instigating factor for the 1936 Arab revolt in Palestine.

But for a native of the town of Predappio to style himself “the sword of Islam” was actually an insult for Muslims, many of whom did not forget anti-insurgent Italian violence in Libya. This is why Germany was more popular than Mussolini’s Italy. But we are digressing.

[27] Also the popular television presenter Maurizio Costanzo, who once in the 1980s told the public that the only remaining problem in the world was Israel (while prominent politician Giulio Andreotti, who was in the studio together with Costanzo, did not object), in 2010 revealed that his father helped Jews during the Nazi occupation.

[28] Interview with Giuseppe Ciarrapico, titled “Dimettermi? Macché. Cosa voglio fare adesso? Semplicemente continuare ad essere un senatore del Popolo della libertà,” and published along with other interviews about the same scandal in *Il Corriere della Sera* on 4 October 2010, p. 9. The reportage was signed by Paolo Conti and Antonio Macaluso, and titled “È un vecchio fascistone. Se fosse espulso sarei contenta – Discuteremo di sanzioni. Per me però ha già chiarito – Il senatore: ma anch’io ho messo la kippah – Non può restare al suo posto.” [Italian]

[29] Giulio Meotti, *A New Shoah: The Untold Story of Israel's Victims of Terrorism*, trans. Matthew Sherry (New York: Encounter Books, 2010).

[30] Giulio Meotti, “Serviva Ciarrapico per smascherare il fronte della menzogna antisemita?,” *Il Foglio*, 5 October 2010, 2, reproduced in *Informazione Corretta* on that same day. [Italian]

[31] The Italian original of the passage from Meotti’s article is: “Nel 1973, al termine della guerra del Kippur, il deputato missino Giulio Caradonna si recò a Gerusalemme per deporre una corona di fiori allo Yad Vashem. Erano anni in cui la sinistra italiana manifestava contro Israele e Caradonna in Parlamento difendeva il sionismo, “nato come reazione di difesa imposta da

millenarie persecuzioni di una minoranza etnico-religiosa che deve ancora combattere per la propria sopravvivenza.” Alcuni giorni fa nello stesso Parlamento, in un misto di egolatria, faziosità politica e miserabile malizia morale, un rottame della destra ha reso un pessimo servizio a Caradonna....”

[32] “Gli ebrei italiani nel vedere ed ascoltare l’esternazione del senatore Ciarrapico hanno provato rabbia e sconforto. Ciarrapico non ha sorpreso perché tutti sanno che egli si è limitato, in un momento di sincerità, a dire ciò che ha sempre pensato degli ebrei, coerentemente con la sua formazione e la sua mentalità.

“Lo sconforto è nato da ciò che si è potuto cogliere intorno a lui: sorrisi, consenso, evidente soddisfazione di altri senatori che si compiacevano del fatto che qualcuno trovasse il coraggio di sfidare la correttezza politica e di ingiuriare nuovamente gli ebrei. Nessuno dei presenti ha avuto la sensibilità, l’intelligenza e la prontezza per reagire, come sarebbe stato necessario, per tutelare soprattutto la dignità e l’onorabilità del Senato. Così, all’incomprensibile silenzio del Presidente dell’Aula, si è aggiunta la replica del Presidente del Consiglio che non ha colto la gravità delle affermazioni di Ciarrapico e ha risposto in maniera assolutoria alle offese agli ebrei rinnovando la sua amicizia allo Stato di Israele, cioè confondendo due diverse entità.”

[33] Cf. Dimitri Buffa, “L’Olp fece la strage di Bologna ma per l’Italia è segreto di Stato,” *L’Opinione*, 25 August 2006, 7. Reproduced on the web in *Informazione Corretta*. [Italian]

[34] The *strategia della tensione* (“strategy of tension”) is how Italy’s media referred to the several years following the December 1969 blast at Piazza Fontana in Milan, which was blamed on anarchists but eventually was found to be the work of neo-Nazis, led by publisher Franco Freda. At one of his trials Freda claimed that the bombs he had obtained from Algerian diplomats were not intended for the blast in Milan, for which he kept denying responsibility, but were “sweets for the children of Jerusalem” (“caramelle per i bambini di Gerusalemme”).

The *strategia della tensione* was claimed to be an attempt by the intelligence service to cause a scare in the country concerning far-Left organizations. But the notion developed in public opinion that whereas shootings were associated with the revolutionary far Left, blasts were the work of the revolutionary far Right. The years of the *strategia della tensione* gave way to the *anni di piombo* (“years of lead”), interspersed with frequent shootings especially on the part of the Red Brigades. As to the blast in Bologna, more was to follow: an attack on a train near Florence in December 1984 took the lives of 150 people.

[35] It is worth noting that there appear to have been alliances among broadcasters conforming to given attitudes. Some of the broadcasters who signaled themselves during the 1982 hate campaign then quickly rose to the top echelons of the state-run broadcasting corporations. By contrast, a news anchor who would read news about the Near East dispassionately, without displays of indignation or lament, eventually became the compère of an entertainment program, and in an interview to a magazine stated that he longed for his time as an anchor and regretted that it did not last.

[36] “Duemila anni fa morivano sulla Croce. Ora muoiono impugnando il mitra.”

[37] During the 1970s there was the case of Daniele Pifano, a far leftist arrested in connection with Sam-7 Strela missiles he had introduced into the country; he had been planning to use such missiles from outside Rome's Fiumicino airport to shoot down an Israeli airliner. A technician at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Rome, Pifano was leader of the Collettivo di Via dei Volsci, a political extraparliamentarian group.

[38] Buffa, "L'Olp."

[39] "Così l'Italia matrigna non si è mai sconfessata, da Mussolini fino ai governi cattocomunisti, era ricaduta ancora nello stesso vizio abietto di intendersela con le belve siano esse state naziste o islamiste, discriminando gli Italiani tra figli e figliastri per finire poi tutti vittime nelle loro fauci."

[40] According to the basics of set theory in mathematics, this is what is known as the "union set" (i.e., if one is a Christian Democrat, or a Communist, or both, then one is a member of the union set of the Christian Democrats and the Communists), as opposed to the "intersection set" (i.e., one is only a member of that set if one is both a devout Catholic and a Communist). Prister's compound *cattocomunisti*, as denoting the union set rather than the intersection set, may appear quite awkward. Nevertheless, such semantics of compounding is not unknown in linguistics.

Such lumping together in a lexical compound is what grammarians call *dvandva* (a term from Sanskrit grammar). For example, the ancient Roman ritual of the *Suovetaurilia* comprised the sacrifice of a pig (*sus*), a sheep (*ovis*), and a bull (*taurus*), and all three are named in the compound term. This is not widely known, and it is worth pointing out such notions as otherwise Prister's usage of the term may appear to be unfathomable. Needless to say, she is unlikely to have consciously been thinking of union sets vs. intersection sets from mathematics, and of *dvandva* formation from linguistics and ancient Roman festivals, when giving *cattocomunisti* the meaning she did. But one does not need to know linguistics in order to speak a language, or in order to write it.

[41] This incident was briefly reported by the Milan newspaper *Il Giornale* on 9 October 2006, in an unsigned piece on p. 9 titled "«La gaffe di Tonino sul «giudeo» dell'Idv»." Italian Jewish websites pointed out that this was Italy's only major newspaper to take notice.

[42] Sergio Minerbi, "Neo Anti-Semitism in Today's Italy," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 15, 3-4 (Fall 2003), [www.jcpa.org/phases/phases-minerbi-f03.htm](http://www.jcpa.org/phases/phases-minerbi-f03.htm).

[43] Paola Coppola, "Negazionismo, coro di sí a Pacifici. Letta: in campo anche il governo," *La Repubblica*, 16 October 2010. [Italian]

[44] "Gli ultimi vergognosi episodi confermano la necessità e l'urgenza di norme contro questa deriva pericolosa" (Di Pietro as quoted by Coppola).

[45] Paolo Bracalini, "L'uomo di Tonino in Belgio? Fan della jihad contro Israele," *Il Giornale*, 17 October 2010, 8. [Italian]

[46] “Leonardo Clerici, “L'unico italiano al convegno negazionista di Teheran 2006 Riappare come figura di rilievo nell'lvd di Di Pietro,” *Informazione Corretta*, 18 October 2010 (reproducing Bracalini's report with a preamble). [Italian]

[47] Goldstaub, *La guerra nel Libano*, reproduced on p. 55 this cartoon by Forattini from *La Stampa* of 29 September 1982, along with a cartoon of his from *La Stampa* of 22 September inspired by the Calvary. It showed Begin, naked and also wearing a kippah, carrying a reversed cross resembling a sword and dripping blood profusely while claiming that he, too, was carrying his own cross.

See Adriana Goldstaub, ed., and Laura Wofsi Rocca, asst., *La guerra nel Libano e l'opinione pubblica italiana: confusione – distorsione – pregiudizio – antisemitismo (6 giugno – 8 ottobre 1982). Dossier di documenti (etc.)* (Milan: Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea, “gennaio 1983 – ristampa – ciclostilato in proprio,” originally printed in late 1982) [Italian].

Such 1982 cartoons, of those included in Goldstaub's dossier, that show Begin, all depict him wearing a kippah, except Origone's cartoon about a Final Solution he was supposedly perpetrating. Begin did not usually wear a kippah. It is possible, but unnecessary, that a video clip or photograph of Begin at some religious ceremony inspired one cartoonist to associate the kippah with him, but that fails to explain why all those cartoons displayed such a stable association, even if one assumes that other cartoonists were inspired by the first one.

[48] Historically, Judas Iscariot was sometimes represented as a current local Jewish leader. Wim Klooster notes regarding Dutch America in the late seventeenth century: “As in Suriname, the Jews of Curaçao could count on protection by Dutch officials”; he then gives examples of conflicts between Jews and Christians in Curaçao. One such incident erupted in 1682. Spanish sailors, reportedly in accordance with an old custom, hoisted a dummy to the masthead of their vessel on Maundy Thursday, and put it on fire. The dummy not only represented Judas Iscariot, it was also an effigy of Curaçao's rabbi. The Dutch factor of the slave trade, Balthasar Beck, who apparently greeted the spectacle with approval, was dismissed from the post of captain of the civil guard.

In a note, Klooster explains: “The spectacle has roots in medieval Europe, where Judas was hanged with a money-bag suspended from his neck to personify avarice. All the standard forms of Jewish dress were applied to Judas.” These quotations are from pp. 353-354 and p. 365, note 25, in Wim Klooster, “The Jews in Suriname and Curaçao,” in Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering, eds., *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe in the West, 1450-1800*, European Expansion and Global Interaction Series, vol. 2 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 351-368, where note 25 cites Lester K. Little, “The Jews in Christian Europe,” in Jeremy Cohen, ed., *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 289, 296 (in the latter page's notes).

[49] Antonio Giuliano, “La storia imbavagliata,” *Avvenire*, 18 April 2007. Republished in *Informazione Corretta*, 18 April 2007, with a preamble and under the title “Storia “imbavagliata”? Il caso Toaff è tutt'altro, ma il quotidiano cattolico da credito al convegno di Moffa, Losurdo e D'Orsi.” [Italian]

[50] Ibid., in *Informazione Corretta*.

[51] Cf., e.g., Ephraim Nissan, “‘Questo rito selvaggio’: contesto moderno e sfondo antico di un mito infamante antiebraico,” in Valerio Marchi, «*L’orribile calunnia.*” *Polemiche goriziane sull’omicidio rituale ebraico (1896, 1913)* (Udine, Italy: Kappa Vu, 2010), 227-239. [Italian]

[52] The Repubblica dell’Ossola, the partisan republic in the Ossola valley (on the Swiss border), was in existence from 10 September to 22 October 1944, and was ruled by a council comprising all member parties of the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale. Umberto Terracini, a Jew, held the senior post of secretary. According to Giorgio Bocca’s classic history of that republic, there was a Communist in the council who would shout at Terracini to shut up “as you’re not even a member of the [Communist] Party,” i.e., the party Terracini cofounded in 1921, and from which he had fallen from grace for a while.

[53] For example, in February 2011 the very first article of his listed and downloadable at his website is “Sionismo e genocidio dei palestinesi” (Zionism and Genocide of the Palestinians) at [www.doncurzionitoglia.com/sionismo\\_e\\_genocidio\\_palestinesi.htm](http://www.doncurzionitoglia.com/sionismo_e_genocidio_palestinesi.htm). Other works listed include “La Regina Elisabetta contro Roma” (Queen Elizabeth against Rome) and “Giudeo-Protestantesimo anglicano” (Anglican Judeo-Protestantism).

[54] Hosted by Ugo Volli, “In Italia promuovere appelli antinegazionisti è considerato reato?,” *Informazione Corretta*, 2 April 2009. [Italian]

[55] “A quanto pare in Italia promuovere appelli antinegazionisti rischia di essere considerato reato.”

[56] Listed at [www.doncurzionitoglia.com/MasterMattei-2008-2009.htm](http://www.doncurzionitoglia.com/MasterMattei-2008-2009.htm).

[57] The early Holocaust denier, Paul Rassinier (1906-1967), had been a leftist, and was deported to Germany by the Nazis. After the war he was a French MP. And yet he became a Holocaust denier. See F. Brayard, *Comment l’idée vint à Rassinier. Naissance du révisionnisme* (Paris: Fayard, 1996) [French]; Nadine Fresco, *Fabrication d’un antisémite*, La Librairie du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999). [French]

[58] This was the case of an iconic figure of the 2002 anti-Israeli academic boycott campaign, Prof. Mona Baker, a scholar in translation studies at the University of Manchester. She also became involved in an unfortunate incident concerning the Holocaust, even though the British public was not given the following information, which is arguably crucial to gauge where she stands: “Baker struck up an acquaintance with [Holocaust-denier] David Irving, who in December [2002] reported on his web site that she had kindly taken the trouble to alert him to an ad placed by Amazon.com in the Israeli press which might be considered supportive of that terrible country” (Edward Alexander, “The academic boycott of Israel: Back to 1933?,” *Jerusalem Post*, 3 January 2003, B9). A cartoon in *The Times Higher Education Supplement* portrayed her standing and facing gigantic Israeli tanks, thus arguably using the David and Goliath theme.

[59] Christological references combined with an anti-Jewish stance concerning the Holocaust surfaced in a *Moral Maze* broadcast on BBC Radio 4, in the words of Prof. Steven Rose, who is a philosopher of biology, a leftist, and the instigator of the academic boycott against Israel, and who is admittedly Jewish. He has long regularly intervened at the weekly panel of *Moral Maze*, and on a particular week in the mid-2000s, the theme was whether the Jews should forgive Nazi crime. Rose stated that as apparently the Jews killed Jesus, they need forgive Nazi crimes if they are to be forgiven themselves. The moderator was startled and immediately apologized.

[60] The case of Morgantini, who definitely remained a leftist, contrasts with cases in Europe, including Italy, of a radical leftist switching to the radical Right. An example from France is “71-year-old Jewish-born Ginette Skandrani, one of the founders of the Green Party in France, who was thrown out of the party after being accused of Holocaust denial.” In 2009 he was a candidate in the European elections for the Anti-Zionist Party of leading comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, who himself “faces legal action under French hate-speech law for a performance last year in which he brought on stage notorious French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson and awarded him a prize for ‘unrespectability.’ The prize was awarded by a performer dressed up as a concentration camp prisoner” (Natasha Lehrer, “Comic seeks anti-Zionist vote,” *Jewish Chronicle*, 2 June 2009).

Another candidate was Alain Soral, an ex-communist who served as an adviser to Le Pen, while global terrorist Carlos issued from prison a campaign endorsement (Benjamin Weinthal, “Terrorist ‘Carlos the Jackal’ endorses French Anti-Zionist Party,” *Jerusalem Post*, 4 June 2009).

[61] Italy’s radical Right’s contribution to antiglobal discourse, and how Jews are portrayed in it, was in 1999 the subject of an article by Francesco Germinario, “Critica del ‘Mondialismo,’ stereotipi antisemiti e cospirazionismo storico nella cultura politica del radicalismo di destra,” *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 65, 1 (1999): 115-140. [Italian]

[62] [claudiomoffa.it](http://claudiomoffa.it).

[63] Dimitri Buffa, “Il senato accademico sospende il master Mattei negazionista di Moffa,” *L’Opinione*, 16 October 2010. [Italian]

[64] See endnote 43.

[65] “Ma un’opinione non è un reato e le ricerche storiografiche si combattono con altre ricerche, non con le sentenze dei tribunali,” quoted from a reply by Sergio Romano to a reader, under the headline “Una legge sul negazionismo non risolve il problema,” *Il Corriere della Sera*, 18 October 2010, 35. This was republished the same day in *Informazione Corretta*, with an indignant preamble and headlined “Si può definire ‘ricerca storiografica’ il negazionismo? Solo Sergio Romano ci riesce.” [Italian]

[66] Minerbi, “Neo Anti-Semitism.”

[67] In more recent years, Dario Fo’s own autobiographical account of his wartime record has entered standard statements of his biographical data. For example: “Born 24 March 1926 at

Sangiano (Varese), on Lake Maggiore. 1943, called up by Republic of Salò, Mussolini's puppet Fascist state. 1944, deserts. 1945, student of art and architecture in Milan. 1951, his first monologues broadcast on radio. 1952, theatre debut with monologues." From p. 740 in Joseph Farrell, "Dario Fo (1926-)," in *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies* (2 vols.), ed. Gaetana Marrone (New York: Routledge, 2007), vol. 1, 738-742.

[68] Whereas some smugglers in the Alps did save Jews, some acted primarily to exact payment, and some misled their clients, leaving them stranded in Italian territory instead of taking them to Switzerland (one such case is related by Aldo Zargani, *Per violino solo: La mia infanzia nell'Aldiqua, 1938-1945*, Intersezioni series, vol. 144 (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995). In the tragedy of Ettore Ovazza and his family in Gressoney, in September 1943, a smuggler robbed and killed the son, and denounced (for a prize) the rest of the family to the Nazis, who killed the parents and the daughter, then burnt them in the boiler of the central heating of a school.

During the same month, about fifty Jews were drowned by the Nazis in Lake Maggiore. Meina, the place associated with that event, can be seen from Monte Verità in Ascona, in Swiss territory. In 1993, at a workshop, a Swiss professor fingered Meina, and this writer mentioned to him the drownings. He said in reply that he was sixteen, and a watchman on Monte Verità, and he and the other Swiss men standing guard saw the drownings taking place but could do nothing about it.

[69] Daniele Levi, "Vignette antisemite su Cuore," *Bollettino della Comunità Ebraica di Milano*, 57, 1 (January 2002): 36. [Italian]

[70] "Guardi, noi si doveva circoncidere il pupo e...", "circoincidenze, eh?"

[71] "Dice a me?" "Beh...", "...legittima difesa?"

[72] *InfoSannio*, 2 October 2010, <http://infosannio.wordpress.com/2010/10/02/la-barzellette-sugli-ebrei-di-silvio-berlusconi> [Italian].

Comments at that webpage typically attacked or defended Berlusconi regardless of his joke about the Holocaust, but one reader posted on 4 October this comment: "A very amusing joke, that once again testifies to the great humor of our premier. Silvio, you are great" ("Barzelletta molto divertente che ancora una volta denota il grande spirito umoristico del nostro premier. Sei grande Silvio"). The next reader mentioned that it was not humor, because the Jews certainly were not amused; the next reader praised Berlusconi's sense of humor.

Berlusconi allegedly told that joke on 29 September 2010, but he had also told the same joke in a video clip posted on YouTube, and dated 12 April 2009.

[73] Carlo Alberto Bucci, "Sospeso il prof. che nega l'Olocausto," *La Repubblica*, 22 November 2008, 18. [Italian] The teacher's denying the Holocaust was to teachers and students.

[74] Before the shifting of emphasis to the Holocaust, the emphasis of memory in Italy was on the Resistance, and racial deportees were rather unglamorous, political deportees glamorous. This is true of Italy, but to some extent even in Israel, where the Holocaust memorial day was

officially named after the Shoah (Holocaust) and *gvurah* (heroism). One in one hundred Italian partisans was Jewish, but only one Italian in one thousand was Jewish. Yet in non-Jewish Italy, memory – especially on the Left – focusing on the Resistance placed Jews on the periphery, and reduced Nazi horrors to an illustration of the evils not only of the radical Right but of the non-Left, the bourgeois class, and politics *tout court*, to the greater glory of the Left. This exonerated Italy, if converted to the Left, from feelings of guilt, and legitimized a holier-than-thou attitude of the Left even toward the Jews (viewed as bourgeois).

Other aspects of the evolution of memory in Italy are discussed in Manuela Consonni, “A War of Memories: De Felice and His *Intervista sul Fascismo*,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 5, 1 (2006): 43-56.

For how Israel’s Shoah Day is celebrated in Israel vs. Italy respectively, see James E. Young, “When a Day Remembers: A Performative History of *Yom Ha-Shoah*,” *History and Memory*, 2 (1990): 54-76; Emanuela Trevisan Semi, “The ‘Symbolic Homeland’ in the Jewish Italian Diaspora: The Celebration of Civil Israeli Religion in Italy,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 5, 1 (2006): 95-108.

[75] Mauthausen is not usually classed as an extermination camp, which describes those camps with facilities for the mass destruction of (mainly Jewish) lives as they existed at Auschwitz, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, Chelmno, or Belzec; hence the accurate descriptor is “Nazi concentration camp.” The distinction sounds cynical but is in certain ways meaningful. Confusion is made sometimes even by Jews. All the more so, some coarse filmmaker or comedian from the early 1950s, those responsible for the episode under discussion from *Totò e le donne*, can be expected to have entertained confused ideas.

Note, however, that once the trade union Solidarność arose in Poland in 1980, an Italian state-run television broadcast claimed that “Poland has never been as Catholic as now” – perhaps rather than secular, but one should rather say that it could not be otherwise in percentage, given the destruction of the large Jewish minority and the emigration of most of the remnants ca. 1970. Then when in 1981 General Jaruzelski imprisoned the trade unionists, another television broadcast claimed he sent them to “campi di sterminio” (extermination camps). Either the broadcaster was just ignorant or he was manipulating terminology so as to assimilate Nazi extermination camps to just any concentration camp in which political inmates are merely detained.

[76] On the web in December 2003, a blog of far rightists posted the claim that if that film from the early 1950s could joke about Mauthausen such a short time after the Nuremberg trials, it was evidence that the Holocaust did not actually take place.

[77] Michael Rubin, “Turkey, from Ally to Enemy,” *Commentary*, July/August 2010, 81-86. See also Arturo Marzano, “Arturo Marzano La Seconda *Intifada* nella stampa italiana: La crisi della Basilica della Natività a Betlemme,”

[www.storicamente.com/07\\_dossier/antisemitismo/marzano.htm](http://www.storicamente.com/07_dossier/antisemitismo/marzano.htm), part of the del Dossier Antisemitismo e chiesa cattolica in Italia (XIX-XXI sec.), ed. Cristiana Facchini, at the online journal *Storicamente: Laboratorio di Storia*, vol. 7 (2011), art. 11 (Bologna: Dipartimento di

Discipline Storiche, Antropologiche e Geografiche, University of Bologna)

[Italian]. Notoriously, Giorgio Forattini published in the respected Turin newspaper *La Stampa* a cartoon in which Jesus, in the crib in Bethlehem, stares at a tank with a Star of David, wondering whether “they” are going to crucify him again. That cartoon drew a forceful protest from Amos Luzzatto, president of the Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane, and the newspaper editor apologized. In another cartoon Forattini showed Pope John Paul II being crucified, and trying to defend himself from the charge of anti-Semitism. This was, to say the least, awkward, but Forattini nonetheless pursued his theme of a new crucifixion.

[78] Sergio Minerbi, “Il Vaticano e i quaranta giorni della Basilica della Natività,” *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, 7, 1 (2002): 131-144. [Italian]

[79] “esercito europeo / in terra santa / contro l’olocausto palestinese.”

[80] Cecilia Gentile, “Toaff: Dissi a Pertini: non venga in sinagoga,” *La Repubblica*, 8 October 2007, 16 [Italian]. Rabbi Toaff threatened the community that should anybody shout against Pertini, he, Toaff, would resign. Nirenstein states: “President Sandro Pertini, a socialist who had also condemned Israel, embracing the Palestinian cause, needed the intervention of Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini of the small Republican Party to be permitted to attend” (Nirenstein, “Cynical Use of Israel”).

[81] Giovanni Spadolini, like his party, usually was pro-Israeli. As premier he refused to receive Arafat during the latter’s visit in 1982, when the who’s who of Italy’s inner circles of power were queueing to meet him. Also while premier, however, Spadolini participated in the funeral of a PLO representative who had been shot dead, accompanying his remains to the Verano cemetery amid an outcry blaming Israel (the culprit for the shooting is at present known to have been different). A sinister side to the usually pro-British Spadolini’s performance as prime minister was his openly taking Argentina’s General Galtieri’s side when he invaded the Falklands; Spadolini gave as reason Italy’s blood ties to Argentina. This was not the first instance of Spadolini’s changing politics: to his credit, he was Italy’s only prominent politician to admit to, and apologize for, his Fascist youth.

In 1982 Spadolini was appointed premier even though he was not from the relative majority party, the Christian Democrats. The initiative of departing from custom in that appointment was taken by President Pertini, and the coalition party agreed and imposed this on the Christian Democrats. Arguably, for Pertini appointing Spadolini was a stepping stone toward his successor, Bettino Craxi, the leader of Pertini’s own party. This was the most conspicuous instance of Pertini’s tweaking the rules, a tendency that goes some way in explaining his quite unfortunate role in Italy’s Jews’ predicament in 1982. Pertini cultivated an image as a maverick that greatly endeared him to the public.

[82] Adriana Goldstaub, *La guerra nel Libano* (see endnote 31 above). There are no transcripts of broadcasts in Goldstaub’s dossier, except when they appeared in a newspaper. Yet broadcasts were more devastating – and often with little relation to what was happening on the ground – than the periodical press. Even cultural or entertainment programming was affected, as some broadcasters felt free to vent anti-Jewish prejudice (with no relation to the Near East),

or nostalgia for Nazi Germany, either allusively or overtly. The famous compère Enzo Tortora introduced a Hitler impersonator shouting “Here is our friend!,” and repeated it until his audience clapped. It happened to be the time when Hitler’s fake diaries were announced.

[83] Anthropologist Alfonso M. Di Nola, who researched anti-Semitism in Italy (Di Nola, *Antisemitismo*), contributed a brief text as a panelist to an international forum, concerning attitudes in Italy during the 1982 Lebanon war (Di Nola, Panelist’s contribution to “Antisemitism Today,” *Patterns of Prejudice*, 16, 4 [October 1982]: 3-53). Di Nola’s more detailed analysis, “Deviazioni del linguaggio: un’analisi antropologica,” within Goldstaub’s *La guerra nel Libano* (60-63), distinguishes between problematic responses coming from secularists and committed Catholics who were left-wingers.

The newspapers in Goldstaub’s dossier also include the Vatican’s *Osservatore Romano*. Included as well is the priest-celebrity Gianni Baget Bozzo, “L’ebraismo tra profezia e storia,” *Il Manifesto*, 25 August 2010, 1-2, with a critical letter by a group of Roman Jewish students, and Baget Bozzo’s rejoinder, “Ebrei e violenza, parola e storia,” *Il Manifesto*, 14 September 1982 [Italian]. The former appears on p. 71 and the latter (the students’ protest and the rejoinder) on p. 74 in Goldstaub. The newspaper is of the radical Left.

Baget Bozzo’s argument is now global; as Anthony Julius, in *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), notes: “It is now commonly suggested that Judaism, or in another formulation, the Old Testament, is at the root of Zionist criminality” (518-519). Julius quotes several examples and then argues that this “dehistoricizes the Hebrew Scriptures” (519) and so forth.

If Baget Bozzo, in 1982, was attacking Jewish civilization – in some of the newspaper clips in the dossier, biblical violence was the frame of reference – then after the Twin Towers calamity Baget Bozzo publicly criticized the Pope for trying to have good relations with Muslims, and evoked Muslim enmity to Christians over the ages (but not Christians’ persecutions of Muslims). By the 1980s Italians’ perceptions of Muslims took a turn for the worse as poor immigrants started flocking to the country. Subsequently, however, some degree of acceptance of multiculturalism developed.

[84] Alberto Arbasino, “Tutti zitti i letterati,” *La Repubblica*, 15 October 1982 [Italian] [also in Goldstaub, *La guerra nel Libano*, 85] – thus in the very newspaper that, with its drive for “disassociation” signatures from Jews, was leading the hate campaign. Arbasino denounced the current “climate” of overt anti-Jewish hatred, which he likened to the climate (“si era creato un clima”) he witnessed as a child in the little town of Voghera in 1940, right after Italy’s backstabbing attack on France when the latter was on its knees before the incoming Nazi troops. The two old, poor, lonely foreigners in town, an Armenian pediatrician and a French teacher of French, had become the target for the xenophobia whipped up by the regime, and branded by children as spies. The father of a girl she was tutoring lashed out at the French lady, then aged seventy: “France will get what she deserves,” and read to her passages from Mussolini’s speeches.

[85] “Beirut / soluzione finale / La Bibbia dell’orrore.”

[86] On Jews and globalization, see Ephraim Nissan, "Aspects of Italy's Jewish Experience, as Shaped by Local and Global Factors," in *Jewish Culture in the Age of Globalisation*, special issue edited by Cathy Gelbin and Sander L. Gilman, *European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire*, 18, 1 (2011): 131-142.

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Dr. Ephraim Nissan is a scholar based in London. He has been affiliated with academia in Israel, Italy, and Britain. Of his over 300 academic publications, about 110 are articles in refereed journals. He was born in Israel and raised in Italy. Much of his research is interdisciplinary. About half of his publications are in Jewish studies, a domain in which he has been one of the founding joint editors of a journal. Moreover, he has been guest editor for journals twenty times. His books in preparation include *Italy, Italian Jews, and Jewish Concerns: Essays on the Dynamics of Attitudes in Recent Decades*.