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## NEO ANTI-SEMITISM IN TODAY'S ITALY

Sergio I. Minerbi

*The purpose of this article is to analyze and confute some of the arguments recently put forward by important Italian intellectuals against Jews and against Israel. Neo anti-Semitism camouflaged as anti-Zionism is spreading in Italy today. Three main examples of this phenomenon are given: Sergio Romano, Alberto Asor Rosa, and Barbara Spinelli. Romano claims that the memory of the Shoah has become an insurance policy and is used by Israel as a diplomatic weapon, while Israel itself is "a war-mongering, imperialist, arrogant nation" and "an unscrupulous liar."*

*Asor Rosa claims that Israel "developed a marvelous army" but at the same time "the tradition and thinking melted away," while Israel affirms, he writes, "the racial superiority of the Jewish people." For Barbara Spinelli: "Israel constitutes a scandal" for the way in which Moses' religion validates "rights which are often meta-historical" and "linked to sacred texts." Spinelli thinks that Israel should express its culpability to Palestinians and Islam. She goes as far as stating that some Israelis dream "of a sort of second holocaust." She also attacks the "double and contradictory loyalty" of the Jews.*

*There is a short analysis of the Italian press and of the stand of the Catholic Church. The lynch in Ramallah is discussed, as well as the declarations of Ambassador Vento. The author also raises the question of school textbooks, the boycott against Israeli universities, and the existence of other voices, very different from the ones mentioned above.*

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Italy had always been considered a country immune to anti-Semitism, which is why the racial laws imposed by the fascists in 1938 and the ensuing atrocities of the republic of Salò had such a traumatic effect upon the Jews. One could hope that a similar phenomenon would never recur after the liberation. However anti-Semitism has come back even if there are no racial laws these days, and it is often hidden behind attacks against Sharon's politics. Anti-Semitic accusations blame all the Jews for crimes they never committed.<sup>1</sup>

Such signs of anti-Semitism are not new. At times anti-Semitism is camouflaged as anti-Zionism, as Gianni Scipione Rossi writes in his recent book: "Anti-Zionism interprets the role of a 'presentable' mask of a much more profound aversion."<sup>2</sup> A strong worsening of this situation was noted during the period of the war in Lebanon in 1982-3, and the results were immediately felt. The PLO took advantage of an atmosphere favorable to it and organized a terrorist attack against the main synagogue on the Lungotevere in Rome on the day of the blessing of the children (9 October 1982), that murdered Stefano, aged two.

A few years later, in 1988, the chief rabbi of Rome, Elio Toaff, voiced a serious warning following anti-Semitic occurrences in the capital:

The threats, the anonymous letters, the revolting graffiti, and the outrageous deeds which have taken place these days could be the prelude to more shameful actions, not only against the Jews. I feel I am reliving the climate of fifty years ago, which preceded the approval of the racial laws by the fascist regime.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these occurrences, there is a theory that anti-Semitism is behind opposition to the politics of the State of Israel. The spiritual guide of this anti-Semitism is Sergio Romano, Italy's ex-ambassador to Moscow and one of the editorial contributors of the most important daily paper, *Corriere della Sera*. He was one of the first Italian intellectuals to express the change in attitude towards Israel with ferocious criticism and veiled anti-Semitism. The new kind of anti-Semitism he introduced is that of a liberal intellectual who is very much in vogue and who finds it necessary to attack Jews in general and Israel in particular, for the purpose of promoting himself.

Romano dedicated an entire volume to this, entitled *A Letter to a Jewish Friend*.<sup>4</sup> It is necessary to pay more attention to his book, as it is one of the most flamboyant cases of anti-Semitism—and especially since it has not remained an isolated case.<sup>5</sup> It has

been so successful that he has recently published a second edition of his libelous work. Some other Italian intellectuals have followed in his steps.

Romano wrote a superficial text, very virulent against the Jews, which attacks the Jewish religion without bothering to know much about it, in an attempt to make it look ridiculous. He allows himself to use terms and expressions that have long been considered intolerable and blatantly politically incorrect. He writes, for example:

The dictatorship of the fastidious Jewish rules, a fossil catechism (with 248 positive rules and 365 negative rules, according to Rabbi Toaff) of one of the most ancient, introverted, and backward religious faiths ever practiced in the West.<sup>6</sup> It appeared as a reaction to the Enlightenment, a Judaism which is angry, archaic, and psychologically impenetrable to any form of tolerance and coexistence.<sup>7</sup>

Romano quotes at length from the book written by Paolo Orano, *The Jews in Italy*, which was published in June 1937 on the eve of the enactment of the racial laws, and which was meant to prepare the ground for those infamous laws.<sup>8</sup> Thus Romano introduces the thesis of the fascist anti-Semitism as though it already had a "*droit de cité*." Romano claims that the Jews are their own enemies because "their strong presence in the ranks of the revolution makes them suspect in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, their riches and financial abilities in the eyes of the leftists, their cosmopolitanism in the eyes of the nationalists, and their separateness in the eyes of everybody."<sup>9</sup> If Romano had a scrap of intellectual integrity he would have had to admit, after such a description, that any generalization is false and that in effect he is accusing the Jews of one thing and of its opposite at the same time.

Romano adds two more reasons for the new anti-Semitism:

The first of which is the privileged status which the State of Israel, with the support of the Jewish community, holds in international society....The second cause for the new anti-Semitism is paradoxically the space which genocide has progressively occupied in the history of the century.<sup>10</sup>

Any impartial observer at the UN knows that this august organization has for years now been the mouthpiece of Palestinian propaganda; such an observer also knows that every year about

fifty resolutions are approved by the General Assembly, all condemning Israel, unilateral, and lacking the slightest objectivity.

The second “cause” is in fact a menace in disguise: dear Jewish “friends,” stop alluding to the Shoah, because doing so awakens the anti-Semites. According to Romano:

From Spinoza onwards, the most intelligent Jew is original and seducing and always, in certain aspects, a “marrano”<sup>11</sup>...at the eve of the Second World War, Jewish intellectuals continued to be intellectual “marranos,” meaning men and women on the border between two different worlds, to which they were equally connected and sensitive.<sup>12</sup>

The “marranos,” a depreciative term, were Jews who had returned or tried to return to their fathers’ faith after the expulsion from Spain. The inquisition considered them to be Christian heretics, and burned them at the stake in city squares.<sup>13</sup> By using the term “marranos” Romano means to say that today’s Jews should either throw away their Judaism or hide it in order to be accepted, since society is still unwilling to accept Jews into its midst.

Romano affirms that the thesis of “collective responsibility” turns on the Jews themselves, after accusing part of the Jewish world of supporting the thesis of the collective guilt of the German people of today.<sup>14</sup> Who upholds this thesis? Romano remains vague, does not produce precise references, and does not name names; according to him these theses “are used by a part of the Jewish world.” Yet the procedure followed by the Israeli government at the Eichmann trial<sup>15</sup> was the complete opposite of a collective accusation against the entire German people. With great diligence, a tremendous effort was made to prove the responsibility of an individual for the crimes he himself had committed. The well-known thesis of the collective guilt of the German people was exemplified in Goldhagen’s book, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. However, this book was much criticized in Israel,<sup>16</sup> once again proving Romano’s accusations to be groundless.

There are those who are nostalgic for the times when the Jews, except for a minority of Zionists, were ashamed of being born with such a stigma, to the point of demeaning themselves and dreaming of being identical to other people. These Jews—“forebears alien to violence”<sup>17</sup> in the words of Primo Levi—learned to make themselves as small as possible and even to turn the other cheek according to Christian teachings. “I love the Jew with the bent-down spine,” wrote the Italian Jewish writer Natalia

Ginzburg during the Yom Kippur War of 1973 on the pages of the daily *La Stampa*. The struggle of the Jews during the emancipation period was aimed at reaching equality with other citizens. Today, the struggle must have a different scope: to obtain the right to be different and to be able to keep one's own culture within a democratic state.

### Is Keeping the Memory of the Shoah Alive a Strategy?

The subtle and repulsive insinuation that the Jews wish to keep the memory of the Shoah alive for their private purposes is particularly offensive to any thinking person. Romano writes: "This strategy of the memory answers for many a natural need of security...the memory of the genocide is an insurance policy."<sup>18</sup> The writer, Primo Levi, explained some people's wish to forget the Shoah: "The person who has inflicted the wound pushes the memory deep down, to be rid of it, to alleviate the feeling of guilt."<sup>19</sup> "An extreme case of the distortion of the memory of a committed guilty act is found in its suppression."<sup>20</sup>

In a book entitled *The Temptation of Forgetting*, Franco Ferrarotti wrote: "Forgetting is the ultimate refuge of those who prefer burying everything, who do not have the courage to look their own past in the eyes, who hope to cancel it as a bad dream: *a speedy collective amnesty through mass amnesia*."<sup>21</sup>

Romano accuses the State of Israel of using the Shoah in order to reach "international legitimacy," but does not provide an example of such activity. He affirms: "For Israel, it has consisted in the past as a precious source of international legitimacy as well as an extraordinary diplomatic weapon."<sup>22</sup> Romano adds that he sees in the "evocation of the genocide and the denunciation of anti-Semitism" an instrument in the hands of Israel:

Nothing can justify the aggressor as much as the memory of a violence he had to sustain. Could there perhaps exist a connection between certain unfair manifestations of Israeli politics, since the war in Lebanon onwards, and the vigilance against anti-Semitism to which we are more and more frequently called to pay attention?<sup>23</sup>

Certainly the Shoah is part of the collective Israeli memory. In addition to being the only country in the world which accepts a Jew as an automatic citizen, Israel must assume the role of mem-

ory-keeper of the Shoah, especially in times when there are so many who deny that the Shoah ever took place. But to define such a sentiment as a misuse of a “diplomatic weapon” on the part of the Israeli government is exaggerated, especially since Romano provides no proof of such use.

### Nolte and Historical Revisionism

Romano laments the fact that the “European past does not ‘pass’” and makes it the reason for his book. We should recall a book by Gian Enrico Rusconi entitled *Germany: A Past that does not Pass*.<sup>24</sup> The book deals with the discussion between German historians following an essay by Ernst Nolte, an important revisionist historian. I have noted Nolte’s contradictions and his unacceptable theses such as the absurd pretenses that Zionism and Nazism had the same objective, that there was an “intimate affinity between Judaism and Bolshevism,” that the Nazi persecutions against the Jews were justified by their provocative declarations, that Hitler carried out an “Asiatic action” because he was a potential victim of a similar action on Stalin’s part, and that the demented hatred against the Jews had a grain of rationality.<sup>25</sup>

On the same wavelength as Nolte, Romano stated that the wars of the twentieth century eliminated no less than 87 million people; that in the Russian gulag 12 million people died, in addition to the 7 million who died in the Stalinist collectivism, and he reached the bitter conclusion that: “Not all of these genocides had the same importance in the eyes of public opinion. That of the Jews occupies in the collective imagination of the western world, a dominant space.”<sup>26</sup> Romano returned to this argument and wrote: “Even if ‘qualitatively’ different from other massacres of the twentieth century, the genocide of the Jews remains an historical event, to be examined and understood in the particular circumstances in which it took place.”<sup>27</sup>

The Shoah can be examined in the light of the historical context, but it will always remain a unique episode in the history of mankind. The Nazi efficiency, the industrialization of the killing, the murder of men, women, children, and old people of any country—such actions becoming an end in themselves to the point of continuing even when the course of the war should have dictated its suspension—all these are the elements which give the Shoah its sad privilege of being unique. For Romano, “the genocide, in the hands of the most intransigent Judaism, is a kind of a murderous reprisal.”<sup>28</sup> This is absurd, but the day will come when some-



one will go so far as to use this point to claim that the Shoah was wished for and invented by the Jews.

I had the opportunity to demonstrate Romano's errors in a brief book I wrote.<sup>29</sup> Although he quoted me, Romano gave little heed to my observations in the preface to the new edition of his book. He even surpassed himself by differentiating between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, by writing about the "disproportionate presence of Jews in revolutionary parties," and about the State of Israel which "uses the genocide to better defend its reasons for existing." Romano mentions the issue of Jenin in April 2002, and discusses at length the case of Cornelio Sommaruga, former chairman of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). He omits mentioning to the reader that the accusation that Israel killed 5,000 Palestinians in Jenin was later reduced to 500, and finally to 52, among whom were many armed men who were killed in a battle so fierce that 23 Israeli soldiers were also killed in it.

### **The National Jewish Movement**

Zionism is the national movement of the Jewish people that was created along the lines of the European national liberation movements of the nineteenth century, which followed the "spring of the nations" of 1848 and the emancipation of the Jews introduced by the French revolution of 1789. It started as a political movement in the mind of a journalist, Theodor Herzl, who wrote his program in a small volume, *The Jewish State*, which was published in Vienna in 1895. It was undoubtedly Herzl's vision which led to the establishment of a national movement of the Jewish people. During his short life (he died in 1904 at the age of forty-four) he became the first and most important Zionist diplomat, developing an intense political activity. In 1904 he met with Pope Pius X at the Vatican, Sultan Abdul Hamid II in Constantinople, and German Emperor Wilhelm II in Jerusalem. Above all, he created the Zionist Organization, which held its first congress in Basel in 1896.

On 14 May 1948, Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel. The main objective of Zionism had been brilliantly achieved in fifty years, but the dream of gathering the great majority of the Jewish people in one country has not yet been reached. Romano maintains that this demonstrates the failure of Zionism: "This is the screen behind which someone has been able to hide an embarrassing truth: that the extraordinary success



of the State of Israel is paradoxically accompanied by the failure of the Zionist ideology.” On the contrary, one can affirm that few ideologies in the world can boast a success as complete and withstanding as Zionism.

In Italy, the majority of the Jews did not participate in the Zionist movement, at least not in its early years. The example given by Romano of an isolated Italian Jew such as Arnaldo Momigliano, who was definitely a serious intellectual but not much of a “representative sample” of the masses of Jews in Eastern or Central Europe, allows Romano to affirm that “the refusal to leave [for Palestine] is no less than the extreme manifestation of hostility...with which Zionism was received by the major part of the Jewish community before and after the great war.”<sup>30</sup> Romano willfully forgets that entrance to Palestine was controlled by Great Britain, and that often the only way to obtain a “certificate” (an entry visa) was to possess at least 1,000 pounds sterling, a sum which was merely imaginary for the Jews in Poland and elsewhere. The British authorities prohibited the entry of Jews to Palestine in their White Book, published in 1939 on the eve of the Shoah during which those same Jews were to be murdered.

Romano does not realize that there can be real Jews who are at the same time real Italians, and he claims that “for almost 100 years...the principal ambition of the major part of the Jews in the peninsula was to throw away the ghetto, the kosher meat, the religious practice, the mental and tribal ties of their cultural and religious tradition.”<sup>31</sup> Romano mixes up Jews’ free choice of eating kosher meat with the ghetto in which the Jews were forcefully enclosed for centuries, against their will, first by the Republic of Venice and then by the Pontifical State in the sixteenth century. Romano claims Jews ought to throw away their religious faith in order to become “generals, ministers, presidents of the council.” One wonders if their Catholic colleagues of the Italian Christian Democratic Party, for instance, should really find this indispensable.

Romano affirms that the Italian Jews were not attracted by Israel, a country whose “religious greediness” they could not share. He adds: “They knew that in Israel, had they chosen to make it their homeland, they would have had to live with the Ashkenazim of the *shtetl* and the oriental ghettos and with Sephardim of the Arab countries: archaic people of a world with which they had no familiarity.”<sup>32</sup> Such a completely devoid of factual evidence statement is typical of Romano. Out of about 40,000 Italian Jews, 5,000 have made Israel their home, and for them reality is com-

pletely different, as is shown by an interesting inquiry led by Sergio Della Pergola and Amedeo Tagliacozzo.<sup>33</sup>

## Victims and Assassins

Romano's judgment of the State of Israel is completely baseless when he writes: "The memory of the received humiliations and a sense of intellectual superiority has created a war-mongering, imperialist, arrogant nation, and as De Gaulle said in 1967, 'domineering'....The Israeli is the *Übermensch* of the Near East."<sup>34</sup> This last definition, which compares the Israeli (yet another generalization) to the Nazi "superman," is particularly offensive because it establishes a similarity between Israelis and Nazis which is nothing less than revolting.

Primo Levi wrote: "Confusing [the assassins] with their victims is a moral illness or an esthetical affected way or a morbid sign of complicity; above all it is a priceless service given (willingly or not) for the negators of the truth."<sup>35</sup>

According to Romano, Israel is "courageous, hard, imperious, despising, and in many circumstances an unscrupulous liar."<sup>36</sup> In order to prove his thesis, Romano only gives the example of Ben-Gurion, who denied the operation in Qibya in 1953,<sup>37</sup> but he omits to mention that the Israeli authorities recognized their responsibility for the Qibya action from then on. Whether because of ignorance or bad faith, Romano does not let real evidence confuse his arguments.

Romano's reasoning is also guided by ignorance and prejudice when he writes: "The regional origin of the major part of the immigrants has progressively strengthened, in the composition of society, the presence of oriental or African Jews, that is to say the communities that are more introverted and religious."<sup>38</sup> "Israel is not the state of the Jews," he adds, "it is more simply, the state of a part of oriental and Arab-African Judaism."<sup>39</sup>

Romano's ignorance of the demographic data of Israel is obvious: in the year 2001, 2.17 million out of 5.25 million Jews living in Israel, or 41.3 percent, were of European or American origin, while only 1.57 million or 30 percent were of African and Asian origin. However, the most interesting data is that by now, 3.252 million, or 62 percent of the Israeli population was born in Israel.<sup>40</sup>

Romano maintains that "in order to survive and impose itself, Zionism must use an instrument of pressure—the solidarity between the Jewish communities in the world, or the Jewish interna-

tional according to the anti-Semites—which is in contrast to its national philosophy in many aspects.”<sup>41</sup> The solidarity with the Jewish community is a two-way street: the communities wish to receive the support and guidance of Israel in cultural and educational concerns. There is nothing strange in the fact that Israel has many sympathizers among the Jews of the diaspora and wishes to strengthen its ties with them. But there is nothing new in this argument since it is the same as the old myth of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

It is interesting to note that Romano found it necessary to include the full text of these protocols in a previous book entitled *I falsi protocolli*.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps he was prompted by the desire for historical accuracy. However one must wonder that he should be so meticulous. That he should find it necessary to include them in their entirety denotes the importance he himself gives them.

### Alberto Asor Rosa

Alberto Asor Rosa teaches at the “Sapienza” University in Rome, and is a notorious scholar of Italian literature. He is situated on the left side of the Italian political map, in contrast to Romano. Nevertheless, he shares Romano’s line of total criticism of the State of Israel and his position has had a vast following in Italy.

Asor’s ignorance regarding Judaism and Zionism is huge, almost incredible in fact, if one does not discern a basic anti-Semitism behind his dubious reasoning.

It is senseless to affirm that: “The West’s culpability towards Judaism has been compensated, assuming a weight of culpability just as great towards Islam.”<sup>43</sup>

The roots of the State of Israel are to be found in the famous Balfour Declaration of 1917, which the League of Nations made its own, incorporating it in the preamble to the mandate on Palestine assigned to Great Britain in 1922. The culpability of the West towards the Jews, accumulated through the centuries, did not include the Shoah at that point in time and there can be no room for compensation for it. In addition, there is no culpability toward Islam: while the miniature national home of the Jews was being formed in Palestine, a series of Islamic Arab states were emerging *ex novo* on a much vaster territory, among which were Syria, Iraq, and Transjordan. Lebanon, which at the time was a pluralist country, has become an Islamic republic, while Egypt was not yet independent. The Middle East became Arab and Muslim, and the

only exceptions to this were the Maronites in Lebanon and the Jews in Palestine. The West does not need to carry any guilt feelings towards Islam on that score, having led to the establishment of more than ten independent Arab states next to a miniscule Jewish national home.

It is also inaccurate that "Judaism, in order to become Israel, accepted the great legacy of the West." If Asor alludes to the institution of a state, the Jews did not need to accept any other legacy than their own, since they had a state on the same land of Israel long before the foundation of Rome, at the time of the Egyptian empire and the Babylonian empire, which were much more advanced civilizations than the West and which could have inspired the Jews. If, on the other hand, Asor alludes to the scientific dimension, one must remember that a major part of Western science is derived from the Jewish contribution to medicine, psychoanalysis, physics, and mathematics. It is a give and take relationship, though not according to the writings of Giuliano Della Pergola, who believes that he can use exactly those fields to find proof that Israel is part of the West: "I allude to science, rationality, democracy, and urbanism, to the diffusion of computers, organization, and specialization of professions. In short, to the modern."<sup>44</sup>

Modernity is an extremely important issue, since a good part of Islamic radicalism derives from the fact that Islam does not manage to find a way to safeguard its own tradition and accept modernity at the same time. Islam has taken many basic elements from Judaism, such as the non-separation of religion from the state and an absolute monotheism devoid of any pictures. What Islam has not absorbed, yet, is the capacity to adapt to new solutions, which would allow modernity to be integrated into Islam. After a golden period during which Jews and Muslims became the bridge between Greek and Oriental science and the West (it is enough to recall the school of medicine of Salerno in the ninth century), the Jews continued on the road of scientific progress while the extremist part of Islam refused to do so.

The Jewish roots in the West are very old, as David Sorani justly underlines: "Whoever knows Jewish history and the history of the West knows that European life has been for more than two thousand years influenced by the Jewish presence and that the mutual influences have been multiple. The West would not be what it is without the contribution of Judaism."<sup>45</sup> For his part, Asor says in a completely baseless affirmation: "From a people of clergymen and intellectuals a new people of zealots were born. A state was born, and a people were dissolved. A marvelous army was

developed, an invincible force, and the tradition and thinking melted away as snow in the sun.”<sup>46</sup>

The denigrators of Israel accuse it systematically of one thing and also of its opposite. At times Israel is considered to be a theological state, immersed in Jewish religious tradition and therefore not sufficiently secular or modern, and at times it is accused of being the exact opposite. Reality is more complex, since Israel has many simultaneously different facets. After the industrial massacre of World War II, the remains of the Jewish people are in solidarity with Israel. Besides, the army and often the soldiers themselves are scientists, rabbis, judges, philosophers, and writers, each with his or her own private opinions, which are not necessarily in tune with any majority opinion. Not only did the Jewish people not dissolve, it has on the contrary been reinforced by the State of Israel. It is hard to understand why what is normal for all the peoples in the world—the right to self-determination—should be denied to the Jews. It is unthinkable that while a Palestinian state is being supported, the same right should be denied Israel. The nation-state is a European invention of the nineteenth century, but in accepting it the Jews have received a form and not its content. Israel has formed its own way of respecting tradition within a modern state.

Asor seems displeased or at the very least surprised that the Jews have shed the role of victim, and he maintains that they have taken on the role of executioners. As a matter of fact, Jews have not become murderers, but there is no reason for them to be condemned to play the role of “victims” for thousands of years. For someone who cannot accept that the victim-era of the Jews is over, it is probably necessary to accuse the Jews of having become executioners themselves.

One hears again and again how the Arab states are permanently humiliated. Syria and Egypt attacked Israel by surprise in 1973, and little prevented them from succeeding in their goal of erasing Israel off the face of the earth. What did Europe do on that occasion? Some countries refused to allow American arms and ammunitions to land on their soil, making Israel’s position even more precarious. The shadow of Arab petrol dominated European politics, which was determined by a panic about being left without the precious oil. In reality, there never was any shortage, as the leaders knew perfectly well.

The Arab nations of the Middle East have the right to feel “humiliated” for other reasons, as brilliantly exposed by some Muslim Arabs in a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report published in 2002 about Arab human development.<sup>47</sup> Ac-

According to this report, three principal factors constitute the major obstacle to Arab economic development: It is necessary to respect human rights and political liberty; to allow Arab women to fully use their potentials; and finally, to consolidate the acquisition of knowledge with its effective usage. The report shows that the participation of the population in national politics and economics remains the lowest in the world. The lack of democratic systems in the Arab countries remains the major obstacle to the development of human resources and the economy, which are the most humiliating factors for the Arab states. Contrary to what Asor claims, it is not the "imperial order" which decrees that the "Islamic masses must crawl in the mud for some centuries to come,"<sup>48</sup> but rather the Arab societies themselves which are responsible for it.

Asor accuses Israel of reaching the "monstrous but inevitable affirmation of the racial superiority of the Jewish people in front of under-developed neighboring peoples." He does not deign to cite his sources and so we will never know to what he alludes. No Israeli head of state ever held such a political position, and Asor provides no evidence for these claims. Yet making accusations which are not sustained by any factual evidence, and which in turn become "facts" merely because they have been uttered, is quite typical of the professional denigrators of Israel. Another empty accusation is aimed at the "para-fascist political group" which has taken hold of the Israeli government. The Labor party, headed by Barak, lost the 2001 elections to Ariel Sharon due to many reasons, among which was the fact that Arafat did not even wish to discuss Barak's generous proposals at Camp David, and instead preferred to start the intifada.

Asor maintains that in the field of military technologies, Israel "has preceded and become the teacher of the rest of the West, including the United States." This may be correct, but for reasons Asor willfully ignores. The first of these reasons is that the Islamic fundamentalists, in their rush for world power, found it useful for their cause to start appeasing the West, while pretending to be only attacking Israel. As far as Europe is concerned, this procedure has undoubtedly succeeded. The age-old European anti-Semitism was combined with a great sympathy for the Palestinian cause for reasons similar to those evoked by Asor: the so-called humiliation of the Palestinians, their chronic under-development, the fact that European resources could not be of use because they were systematically diverted to finance terrorism and the private pockets of one of their leaders, while no Palestinian could open his mouth in protest because democracy is lacking—all these were



holding the Palestinians back. The allegiance of the Palestinian terrorist groups with the Red Brigades and other European terrorist groups, and their choice of targets in Italy and in other countries in Europe, did not awaken the Europeans to action. All that interested them was continuing to do business at the price of kneeling in front of the fundamentalists in order to achieve a precarious security. Only when the Islamic fundamentalists attacked the United States directly on 11 September 2001 was there a change in policy in the United States, and as a consequence a certain policy change occurred in some European countries as well.

The second reason is also political and not military. Paul Thibaud writes about the moral and political crisis of Europe, which is due to lack of horizon, bad collective conscience, and individualism without norms. Thibaud adds: "The culpability for the Shoah is at the heart of this crisis."<sup>49</sup> There is no longer a moral strength capable of fighting any alien forces in a Europe in which the birth rate has reached unheard of lows, where hedonism reigns, and consumerism is the new religion. The Europeans have lived through the Cold War under the American nuclear umbrella, saving millions of dollars in military expenses but remaining completely defenseless. Today the Cold War is over, and a subterranean anti-Americanism has become the issue of the day, while the real danger to the free world lies in Islamic fundamentalism.

Also the Catholic Church is profoundly anti-American and pro-Islam, as was demonstrated during the war in Iraq.<sup>50</sup> The Pope may be fascinated by Islamic religious spirituality, or he may be worried about the Catholic community in the Middle East, but in any case he chose to support the Moslems. In the crisis preceding the attack on Iraq, what may seem as two unrelated occurrences were linked by the Church itself: whenever the Church expressed its opposition to the war in Iraq, it never forgot to mention the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians.

Israel has demonstrated that it is possible and necessary to fight Islamic terrorism and in doing so it has chronologically preceded the somewhat sleepy conscience of the Western world, which often prefers its anti-Americanism rather than a campaign against Islamic terrorism.

The third reason has in a sense been imposed on Israel. Having been the first state to be subjected to terrorist attacks, it was natural that it became the first state to develop methods of defense. The hi-jacking of an El-Al passenger plane to Algeria obliged the Israelis to introduce the controls which were vehemently criticized at the time by the other airlines, only to be implemented by them later on as well. Every terrorist attack gener-



ates new methods of defense, and these days there is talk of arming the El-Al airplanes with new systems invented in Israel in order to avoid potential missiles which could be aimed at them. Contrary to what Asor affirms, Israel not only did not cancel itself by becoming "militarized," it has proved that it wants and can survive. Jewish thought and self-defense go hand-in-hand. Israel survives thanks to its army, and the Jews contribute to world thought thanks, among other things, to the fact that the State of Israel exists.

### Barbara Spinelli

Barbara Spinelli, a well-known journalist of the daily *La Stampa*, apparently wanted to follow in Romano's footsteps, first in a book<sup>51</sup> and later in a virulently anti-Semitic article. In October 2001 she wrote among other things:

Israel constitutes a scandal...for the way it has been established, for the sacrifices its birth has inflicted on the Palestinian citizens who had not taken part in the annihilation of the Jews in Europe. Last, but not least, for the way in which Moses' religion inhabits our planet, validating rights which are often meta-historical rather than historical, linked to sacred texts more than to the regular becoming of the people and the time.<sup>52</sup>

Spinelli forgets that when the State of Israel was about to be born, the Palestinians refused the decision of the United Nations of 29 November 1947 regarding the partition of Palestine, and preferred to start a war against the Israelis, believing they could throw them into the sea. The Bible is certainly respected in Israel, but the state is based on international law and on the right of people to self-determination.

In addition, Spinelli demonstrates either an astounding ignorance of Judaism or a serious case of bad faith when she writes that Jewish monotheism blurs "an attitude favorable to the philosophical and theological doubt which is at the foundation of European virtue, and which characterizes Christian monotheism, in particular the Christian one." This is a highly laughable statement: the Jews have given the world Maimonides, Spinoza, Freud, and Einstein, who innovated philosophical thought for centuries. This phenomenon took place precisely because the Talmud is based on constant discussion, a perpetual gymnastics of the brain that is devoid of the dogma so characteristic of Catholicism.

Spinelli continues: "It is urgent to express that '*Mea Culpa*' which is cruelly lacking, which should be said to the individual Palestinian and generally to Islam." The Jews in general and Israel in particular have nothing to reproach themselves for as far as relations with Islam are concerned. For centuries Jews have lived in Moslem countries in rather good relations with the Moslems, but on condition that the Jews remain "*Dhimmi*," second-rate citizens. Notwithstanding the conflict with the Palestinians, Israel has tried to keep good relations with Islamic countries such as Turkey, and more recently with Egypt and Jordan. On the theological level there is absolutely no Jewish resentment against Islam. Unfortunately, this sentiment is asymmetric. The Islamic fundamentalists, albeit a small group within Islam, found justification for their terrorist acts within the Islamic faith.

Still, according to Spinelli, "there are those, in Israel itself, who suspect that the people of Israel, in order to regenerate itself, wish to attract new pain from future days, while dreaming of a sort of second holocaust." She also mentions an "apocalyptic temptation" which she relegates to Israelis in general, without so much as mentioning one such Israeli. Besides, there is just one small step from saying that the Jews dream of a "second holocaust" to suggesting that the first one had been desired by them as well.

Spinelli attacks the Jews with the old accusation of "double and contradictory loyalty towards Israel and towards the state to which they belong." In fact, such loyalty is not contradictory in the least, even if Spinelli maintains that "it may be time to question the ties with Israel." The solidarity with Israel disturbs certain intellectuals, such as those who in 1982 sent out a call on the pages of *La Repubblica*, inviting Italian Jews to condemn Israeli policy. For certain fearful Italian Jews who wish to become completely assimilated, the proud Jew who defends himself is annoying. The Italians, who have millions of compatriots living in the United States and South America, are conscious that a spiritual link can be maintained with a country of origin, while being excellent citizens of the country of residence at one and the same time.

### The Intifada as Seen from Italy

For many years now I have maintained that the most important front during times of war is the media, and I have dedicated a book to the analysis of the anti-Israeli stand of Belgian televi-

sion.<sup>53</sup> Ferrante Pierantoni has introduced disinformation in the widest context of non-violent war, which according to him is in the process of substituting for war as we know it.<sup>54</sup> The internet and computer hacking, as well as future technological warfare, are becoming the name of the game.

After the second intifada started, new heights of hatred toward Israel have been heard in Italy: there were numerous champions of the anti-Israeli campaign in the Italian press, such as Igor Mann and Ugo Tramballi, as well as Leonardo Coen and Riccardo Cristiano, to mention just a few. For the major part of the Italian press, it was Ariel Sharon who started this intifada by visiting the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It matters little to these reporters that the Palestinian minister of communication, Imad el Faluji, said on 5 March 2002 in Lebanon: "The intifada was no spontaneous matter, but planned after Arafat's refusal to Clinton's proposals at Camp David. It is a mistake to think that it was Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount that started Palestinian violence."

The critics wish to forget the fact that Prime Minister Barak had proposed at Camp David to cede the Palestinians 96 percent of the occupied territories as well as the partition of Jerusalem. Yasser Arafat did not even consider Israel's peace proposals and organized the intifada instead, together with others. The Palestinians wanted the intifada in the hope that they would obtain with arms and terror what they could not get at the negotiating table. Today Arafat continues to demand the right of return of the refugees, which is nothing but an euphemism for the destruction of Israel. Arafat repeated recently: "No one can abolish the right of return."<sup>55</sup> He disregards, of course, the fact that in the last ten years a large number of Palestinians have established themselves in Israel and have received citizenship via marriages to Israeli citizens.

Close to a million Jews were forced to abandon their houses in the Arab countries and find refuge in Israel. In the definitive framework it will be necessary to take into account the rights of the Jewish refugees as well, and the solution will have to be found on economic, not territorial grounds.

The Palestinians already understood in 1982 that the most important battlefield had become that of the media, and above all that of television. In this battle a major part of the Italian press and of the RAI (Italian state radio and television) have positioned themselves on the side of the Palestinians, forgetting completely that their duty is to provide the Italian public with impartial information. A part of the Italian press confuses those who perpetrate terrorist attacks with those who are the victims, to the point

of including the suicide terrorist among the number of victims; not to mention the use of the term “*Kamikaze*,” which is historically wrong when used for the murderers of women and children, as Cardinal Rulli justly noted. The use of the word “colonist” in the press evokes colonialism and makes the killing of the victims almost legitimate. There are two criteria used to measure and describe the “exterminations” allegedly carried out by the Israelis on one hand, and the minimization of the Palestinian attacks on the other hand.<sup>56</sup> There is no humiliation that can justify the use of terror, and terrorism is not a sporadic action of some desperate people living in a dump, as we are made to believe. Terrorism is an activity led by organizations such as the Tanzim, the Islamic Jihad, and the Hamas, which recruit the candidates for suicide attacks, finance and instruct them, and bring them to the place of the crime. After the attack takes place, they assist the terrorists’ families financially.

Tramballi concludes his book thus:

The evident Palestinian self-inflicted pain had for half a century one instigator: Israel. Continuing a policy of repression of racial nature, sabotaging any negotiation, Sharon acted deliberately in order to keep the Palestinian question in conflict.... Apart from a few exceptions all the prime ministers of Israel confronted the issue in the same way: as doctors who are not healing their patients but who deliberately aggravate their depression.<sup>57</sup>

It is difficult to imagine a more simplistic view of a reality as complex as that of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

## **The Catholic Church and the Jews**

Based on the accusation of deicide against all Jews, Christian anti-Semitism has taken many shapes through the centuries.<sup>58</sup> Mannucci has given a chronology of the anti-Semitic measures which took their inspiration from the Church for centuries.<sup>59</sup> Even the Church has accepted that killing the Jews was encouraged by the atmosphere created by its teachings of hatred towards the Jews and their demonization. While the Church may not be directly responsible, it has prepared a fertile ground for anti-Semitism. In an effort to rid itself of all responsibility for its role during the Shoah, the Church published in 1998 the document “We Remember,” in which it is affirmed that: “The Shoah was the work of a

thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity.”<sup>60</sup> This statement is arguable and in contrast with those of certain Catholic personalities. Cardinal Roger Etchegaray writes:

Without a doubt anti-Semitism arose before Christianity and has pagan roots as well, but one must admit that it was reinforced in the Christian climate by pseudo-theological arguments. Such arguments have diminished the capacity to resist them by many Christians when the Nazi anti-Semitism manifested itself in all its genocidal brutality.<sup>61</sup>

When a group of armed Palestinian militants invaded the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem on 2 April 2002, the Vatican—and the Pope at its head—organized a world campaign against the Israelis who surrounded the Basilica without entering it.<sup>62</sup>

During the entire month of April and the first part of May 2002, the leaders of the Holy See were violently anti-Israeli, as expressed by Pope John-Paul II, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran of the Secretariat of State, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Michel Sabbagh, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, and Father Ibrahim Fares of the Custody of the Holy Land. In the forty days of the siege of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem, during which armed Palestinians profaned this Christian holy place, the Holy See attacked only Israel, which was making—from outside the Church—every effort to prevent the Palestinian terrorists from escaping.

Among the many lies propagated during those forty days was the news on the RAI that the Israelis killed a Salesian priest, Father Jacques Amateis “at the altar while he was celebrating Mass.”<sup>63</sup> He was alive and well all the time. The nuncio himself, Pietro Sambi, denied this accusation, but few people in Italy were willing to recognize the error. Italian journalists such as Giuseppe Bonavolontà and Marc Innero described in their book how the thirteen Palestinian terrorists left the Basilica to be sent into exile in Europe: “These [Palestinian] women, these children who filled the roofs of the houses did not understand the reason for such an injustice. Their husbands, fathers, fiancés, were heroes, heroes of the Palestinian cause, fighters for the liberty of their own people.”<sup>64</sup> The Italian journalists omit to mention that these same thirteen Palestinians had “blood on their hands” and had been responsible for several terrorist attacks prior to their seizing of the basilica.

At the same moment that they were released, Israeli mothers and wives could not understand how such people could be liberated, people who had “heroically” assassinated their children and husbands.

### **The Lynch in Ramallah and Ambassador Vento**

On 12 October 2000, two Israeli reserve soldiers entered Ramallah by mistake, and took refuge in the local Palestinian police station. The crowd, with the assistance of the policemen, lynched them and threw them out of the second floor window. The event was filmed by a TV photographer of Mediaset, and that evening the entire world could watch the terrible pictures. A few days later, on 16 October, a paid announcement appeared in the daily Palestinian newspaper *Al Hayat al Jedida*, in which the RAI correspondent, Riccardo Cristiano, wrote to the Palestinian authorities:

One of the competing private television stations (and not the official Italian television station, RAI) shot the events....The impression of the public was that we (RAI) were the ones who took those pictures. We underline that this is not how matters took place because we always respect the journalistic procedures of the Palestinian authority for the work done in Palestine.

From Cristiano's letter it is easy to understand that the “procedures” in question are those that cover up the truth and forbid filming reality when it is not convenient for the truth to be shown. One suspects that the state television “puts on air only pictures with the Palestinian ‘point of view’” as Enrico Mentana, director of TG5 (the TV channel of Mediaset, the private chain competing with RAI) allows us to understand.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the word used for a bloody murder was “event” since it was Israelis who were lynched, and not Palestinians.

The RAI recalled Cristiano to Italy and then promoted him to the seat in New York. This promotion permits the assumption that Cristiano had written his explanation to the Palestinian paper according to precise instructions received from the RAI directors; the letter was despicable, throwing all the blame on Cristiano's colleagues, who were obliged to leave the area because of Palestinian threats to their lives. Enrico Mentana of Mediaset accused Cristiano of having committed “a grave denunciation.”

The Italian ambassador to the United Nations, Sergio Vento, told a group of Italian journalists on 19 October 2000:

Israel was losing the media war; everybody knew that, it was enough to see the broadcasting of the CNN. Then two events brought this type of war to a tie, which have become increasingly important in international affairs: the destruction of the tomb of Joseph and the lynching of two soldiers in Ramallah. One asks oneself if these were casual occurrences.

According to Vento, the Israelis knew that the tomb of Joseph would be attacked [by the Palestinians] and in Ramallah the two soldiers had been sent as “sacrificial lambs.”<sup>66</sup> In short, in both cases it was an Israeli trick, aimed at gaining points in the media war. Such a hypothesis is not only absurd and superficial but also inappropriate for an experienced diplomat. Worse still, it seems plausible that Ambassador Vento was acting upon instructions by his boss, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs Dini, who probably wanted to gain Arab support in the election of an Italian candidate for a post at the United Nations. The hypothesis that one must look as far up as Dini is based on the fact that Vento was not recalled, nor did he have to hand in his resignation, but instead was advanced to Washington.

### **Alitalia and Football Matches**

From the beginning of the intifada, the national Italian company has landed its direct Rome-Tel Aviv flights at three o'clock in the morning in order to prevent its crews from staying over in Tel Aviv. Such measures have not been taken with regard to the United States after 11 September, or with the Philippines, Finland, or Indonesia—all countries which have suffered from terrorist attacks. In this context, one can detect more than a slight wish to punish Israel, and Israel only, for the terrorist actions carried out by the Palestinians.

An even more serious occurrence is taking place in the football world. Whether within the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) cup, or within the international championship of the European champions, Israeli teams no longer have the right to host home games with the European teams. Thus Israel suffers double damage: morale damage, due to the lack of support from its local fans, and financial damage. It is as though a person receiving threats from the mafia were punished. Such measures



were never taken before: not against Italian teams during the time of the Red Brigades, not against Bosnia, and not against the Philippines. The anti-Israeli discrimination regarding soccer games is quite evident, since it is not applied to other games such as basketball, volleyball, or to the Davis tennis cup.<sup>67</sup>

### At School: The Crucifix, Textbooks

A new issue has come up in Italy recently, with the decision to hang the crucifix in the schools and in public buildings. Chief Rabbi of Rome Riccardo di Segni thinks that the crucifix is above all a “religious sign” and writes:

For us it is above all the image of a son of our people who was put to death in an atrocious way; but it is also the terrible memory of a religion which, in the name of this symbol, brandished like a weapon, has persecuted, marginalized, and humiliated our people as well as others.<sup>68</sup>

The last council has changed direction, but intolerance has become the issue of the day. The unification of Italy was achieved against the best judgment of the Catholic Church. For decades, the state made it clear that it was separate from the Church, establishing itself as a state based upon the law rather than a clerical state. The fact that a step in the opposite direction is now suddenly being taken, raises several eyebrows.

There are many lies inculcated against Israel by the textbooks in the Italian schools, and those in the history and geography books stand out the most. The problem is not a new one. Already in 1991, Lucia Roditi Forneron wrote:

Textbooks which are one-sided and provide disinformation regarding Israel and Judaism create ignorance among the young, as well as sentiments of rejection and depreciation towards the people and the Jewish state. It is favorable to the development of anti-Zionism, anti-Semitism, and historical revisionism.<sup>69</sup>

For example, in the fifth grade of the Copernicus high school in Bologna, the textbook which was adopted is called *The Territories of History*.<sup>70</sup> The chapter regarding the “Palestinian question” picks up a text by Livia Rokach which is outstanding in its tendentiousness and falsification of the historical events. Rokach maintains that in 1947 the Zionist community accepted the UN

resolution, “giving rise immediately to military operations aimed at ‘cleansing’ its territory of the Arab population.”<sup>71</sup> The opposite was true: the Jews were immediately attacked by all its neighboring Arab countries and their large armies as soon as the resolution was accepted at the UN.

### Academics against Israel

A few teachers of the Ca' Foscari University in Venice have published an appeal in February 2003, calling on people not to participate in a conference that took place in Israel, and not to heed scientific and cultural requests from Israel. According to the rector of Ca' Foscari, Maurizio Rispoli: “This call was signed on a personal basis by six of the five hundred teachers, and can obviously not be considered as the position of the institution.”

Amos Luzzatto, president of the Union of Jewish Communities, finds this to be counterproductive:

The idea of a cultural embargo is horrible, also because the principal forces fighting for peace and for an understanding with the Arab world reside in the Israeli universities. Sabotaging the universities is like stabbing in the back those who at great risk do that which certain Italian academics are doing in their living rooms with a stroke of the pen.

Giovanni Levi, a teacher of Modern History, spoke of anti-Semitism. However, one of the people who signed, Francesco Gatti, a teacher of Asian history, replied:

I have adhered to this opinion because I am anti-Zionist and not anti-Semitic: I believe that Israel should have respected the UN resolutions regarding the occupied territories, but since '67 there has been a continuous escalation of violence. In light of this, the relations with the Israeli institutions should be re-examined.<sup>72</sup>

Even more extreme was Professor Michelangelo Torri who wrote in the magazine *Nuvole*, maintaining that the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001 on the Twin Towers in New York was due to a Jewish conspiracy.<sup>73</sup> The magazine read:

Naturally, once again, the hypothesis of an operation conducted by big international financial groups, with accomplices from former elements of the American secret services, as well as a support action led by the Israeli secret services, are hypotheses which are not mutually exclusive.<sup>74</sup>

## Different Voices

In order to contemplate the greater picture, it is necessary to remember that today's Italy has also witnessed many reactions to the unconditional support of the Palestinians. The president of the senate, Marcello Pera, indicated on a visit to Tirana the risk of forgetting the "Israeli reasons." Pera's outcry concerned information that should not create "a climate so unbalanced in favor of one side only"—that is in favor of the Palestinians—the consequence of which could be a "return to anti-Semitism."<sup>75</sup>

Oriana Fallaci writes in one of her famous articles: "I find it shameful that the state-run television stations contribute to the resurgent anti-Semitism, crying only over Palestinians deaths, while playing down Israeli deaths, glossing over them in unwilling tones."<sup>76</sup>

The director of the daily *Il Foglio*, Giuliano Ferrara, organized a great manifestation of solidarity with Israel on 15 April 2002 in Rome. Its slogan was: "Israel must live." The president of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, sent a message from Brussels saying: "On this day of solidarity I would like to say loudly and clearly that Europe is close to the men and women of Israel." Other messages of solidarity were sent by Deputy Prime Minister Gianfranco Fini, president of the House of Deputies Pier Ferdinando Casini, and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.<sup>77</sup> Among the many who have published articles that were well balanced were Paolo Mieli, Ernesto Galli della Loggia,<sup>78</sup> and Enzo Bettiza.<sup>79</sup>

Fiamma Nirenstein, *La Stampa* correspondent in Jerusalem, writes in her recent book:

At the end of the day, a strong message in defense of liberty came from Jerusalem, out of the state of laws, of parliamentary democracy, of a humanist army, capable of everything for the love of those values which were its foundation. For the world and for itself, Israel, in the name of these values, was capable of giving human lives, of fighting, and of winning.<sup>80</sup>

Gianfranco Fini gave an interview to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* in which he said:

I have [already] declared that fascism oppressed human rights and I added that the racial laws were the cause of the most horrible occurrence in the history of humanity....As an Italian I have to assume the responsibility. The Italians are responsible for what happened after 1938, from the racial laws until 1945. They have

an historical responsibility, a national responsibility, but not a personal one.<sup>81</sup>

I would like to conclude with the words of the chief rabbi of Rome, Riccardo di Segni, when he answered the question asking him whether he saw signs of a rebirth of anti-Semitism connected to the Middle East. He said:

The situation in France is a grave risk. In Italy we are not at the same level. Let's say that there exists a risk, which is not an immediate one, but is merely on the horizon. The exclusive and too radical condemnation of Israeli politics could transform itself, in someone's intentions, into a cover for criticism of the mere existence of Israel. In Italy I see signals from various parts, in some ways hidden, mediating an anti-Jewish hostility of religious origin.<sup>82</sup>

Although it has taken a new shape, there is no real difference between the age-old anti-Semitism and the new anti-Israeli trend. A lot of hatred is the basis of both. The partiality is cleverly carried out, decked with fragmented truths, and taken out of context, as well as containing purposeful omissions regarding the Palestinians' actions, which are no less than crimes against humanity.

## Notes

1. This article is partly based on my paper to the conference on "Image and Identity of the Italians" held in Rome by the Centro Studi Stampa Romana Francesco De Sanctis, 2002.
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3. "Toaff lancia l'allarme: l'antisemitismo cresce come cinquant'anni fa," *Il Sole 24 Ore* (19 May 1988), p. 2.
4. Sergio Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo* (Milano: Longanesi, 1997); new edition 2002.
5. Sergio Minerbi, *Risposta a Sergio Romano* (Firenze: Giuntina, 1998).
6. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1997, p. 84
7. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1997, p. 119.
8. Paolo Orano, ed., *Inchiesta sulla massoneria* (Roma: E. Bodrero, 1925), p. 171; quoted by R. Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1972), pp. 43-44.
9. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1997, p. 24.
10. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1997, pp. 138-139.
11. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1997, p. 74.

12. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1997, p. 82.
13. Anna Foà, *Ebrei in Europa: dalla peste nera all'emancipazione* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1992).
14. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 31.
15. Sergio Minerbi, *Eichmann: Diario del processo* (Milano Trento: Luni, 2000).
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17. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Raymond Rosenthal, trans. (London: Abacus, 1989), p. 110.
18. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 32.
19. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, p. 14.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
21. F. Ferrarotti, *La tentazione dell'oblio, Razzismo, antisemitismo e neonazismo* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993), p. 9.
22. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 32.
23. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 90.
24. G.E. Rusconi, *Germania: un passato che non passa, I crimini nazisti e l'identità tedesca* (Torino: Einaudi, 1987).
25. Nolte in Rusconi, *Germania*, p. 8. On Nolte see: S. Minerbi, "Ernst Nolte and the Memory of the Shoah," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 14:3-4 (Fall 2002), pp. 69-84.
26. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, pp. 26-27.
27. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 31.
28. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 133.
29. Minerbi, *Risposta a Sergio Romano*.
30. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 55.
31. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 71.
32. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 72.
33. Sergio Della Pergola e Amedeo Tagliacozzo, *Gli Italiani in Israele* (Roma: La Rassegna Mensile di Israel, 1978).
34. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 52.
35. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, p. 35.
36. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 138.
37. Following an increase of tension between Israel and Jordan, in October 1953 Israel undertook a retaliatory operation at Qibya, then an Arab village under Jordanian rule.
38. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 52.
39. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 116.
40. www.cbs.gov.il/shnaton 53, Table 2.21, Jews and others, by continent of origin, place of birth, sex, age; Average 2001, *Statistical Abstract of Israel, 2002*, n. 53 (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002).
41. Romano, *Lettera a un amico ebreo*, 1977, p. 45.
42. Sergio Romano, *I Falsi Protocolli, il 'complotto ebraico' dalla Russia di Nicola II a oggi* (Milano: Corbaccio, 1992).
43. Alberto Asor Rosa, *La guerra, Sulle forme attuali della convivenza umana* (Torino: Einaudi, 2002), p.100.

44. Giuliano Della Pergola, *Ha Keillah*, April 2003, n.2, Year XXVIII-141, p. 20.
45. David Sorani, "Asor Rosa e il mito vuoto," *Ha Keillah*, February 2003, n.1, Anno XXVIII, p. 1.
46. Rosa, *La guerra*, p. 100.
47. UNDP, *The Arab Human Development Report 2002* (New York: 2002).
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49. Paul Thibaud, "Le christianisme et l'écharde juive," *Le Figaro*, 20 August 2003.
50. Sergio I. Minerbi, "The Pope and War against Iraq," paper delivered at the conference at Bar-Ilan University on 21 May 2003.
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55. www.memri.org, interview with Yasser Arafat, to Saida Hamad, *Al-Hayat*, London, 5 October 2002.
56. Miriam e Sergio Della Pergola, "13 articoli di fede," *Kol Ha-Italkim*, n.17 (April 2002).
57. Ugo Tramballi, *L'ulivo e le pietre, Palestina e Israele: le ragioni di chi? Racconto di una terra divisa* (Milano: Marco Tropea, 2002), p. 233.
58. I have treated this subject in previous articles: "The Visit of the Pope to the Holy Land," (Jerusalem: Israel Information Center, September 2000), pp. 5-18; "La beatificazione di Pio IX," *Kol Ha-Italkim*, Jerusalem, Anno III, N.11, Ottobre 2000, pp. 1-2; "Did a Real Reconciliation Occur in the Relations between the Church and the Jews?" *Kivunim Hadashim*, no. 4, April 2001, pp. 74-81 (in Hebrew); "Pius XII: a Reappraisal," in Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2002), pp. 85-104; "Pio XII, il Vaticano e il Sabato nero," *Nuova Storia Contemporanea*, Anno VI, n.3, Maggio-Giugno, 2002; "The International Crisis around the Basilica of the Nativity," *Kivunim Hadashim*, no.7, September 2002, pp. 74-83 (in Hebrew); "The Church: Friend or Foe?" *The Jerusalem Post*, 24 January 2003, p. B9; "The Christian Palestinians Start a Religious Dispute," (Hapalestinim hanozrim mezeitim mahloket datit), *Kivunim Hadashim*, no. 8, April 2003; "Giovanni Paolo II e gli Ebrei," in Ester Capuzzo e Ennio Maserati (editors), *Per Carlo Ghisalberti, Miscellanea di Studi*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli, Maggio 2003, pp. 697-708.
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60. "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," 16 March 1998, in C. Rittner, St. D. Smith, and I. Steinfeldt, eds., *The Holocaust and the Christian World* (London: Kuperard, 2000).
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63. The Catholic news agency MISNA wrote: "Jacques Amateis, Salesian Italian father, 65 years old, was killed this morning in Bethlehem in an attack by the Israeli army," 2 April 2002. In the afternoon of the same day, MISNA announced in Italian that the priest was alive.
64. Giuseppe Bonavolontà e Marc Innaro, *L'assedio della Natività* (Milano: Ponte alle Grazie, 2002), p. 245.
65. Maria Teresa Meli, "Scontro Rai-Mediaset sul video del linciaggio," *La Stampa*, 9 October 2000.
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