

M. Flores, S. Levis Sullam, M.-A. Matard-Bonucci, E. Traverso (a cura di),
Storia della Shoah in Italia. Vicende, memorie, rappresentazioni, 2 voll., (Torino:
UIET, 2010)

by Guri Schwarz

This two volume collection of essays edited by Marcello Flores, Simon Levis Sullam, Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci and Enzo Traverso is dedicated to the reconstruction of the origins, development, consequences and memory of the Shoah in Italy. It constitutes the ideal continuation of a collective endeavor that began several years ago, leading in the first place to the publication of an impressive collection of essays – original for the most part – on the history of the Shoah and its memory, which was published in 2005-2006. That first work, edited by Marina Cattaruzza, Flores, Levis Sullam and Traverso - with the aid of an international scientific committee which, alongside the editors, included Omer Bartov, Dan Diner, Saul Friedlander - was dedicated to the issue of the Shoah in general terms, without dedicating specific attention to particular national cases and without giving space to the very Italian scenario¹. Thus with these latest two volumes that team of editors, joined now by the French scholar of fascist anti-Semitism Matard-Bonucci who substitutes Marina Cattaruzza, offers a focus on the Italian side of anti-Semitic persecutions in the Thirties and Forties. It must be noted that the fact that such an important historiographical initiative – which developed for several years and moved from an overall analysis of the phenomenon of persecution to the in-depth study of a particular national situation, involving a rich set of highly credited scholars from the US, Israel, and various European countries - was thought of and developed in Italy is in itself a novelty. These two connected operations testify to the awakening of an interest within Italian historiography to a theme, that of the Shoah, which until not many years ago was certainly not occupying a central position in the Italian cultural and academic world. It is now more than twenty years that Italian historiography has ‘discovered’ the Shoah, and has dedicated growing attention to the analysis of fascist anti-Semitic policies. We find gathered here most of the scholars - both experienced and established researchers as well as younger but nonetheless capable historians – whose works have contributed to the opening of this new season of scholarship concerning the Shoah in general, and Italian anti-Semitic persecutions in particular.

The editorial project was certainly extremely ambitious, and this new product – specifically dedicated to Italy – must be seen and evaluated in the context of the wider project. Not unlike the precedent opus this new two-volume

¹ M. Cattaruzza, M. Flores, S. Levis Sullam, E. Traverso (eds.), *Storia della Shoah. La crisi dell'Europa, lo sterminio degli ebrei e la memoria del XX secolo*, 2 vol., (Torino: Utet, 2005-2006).

collection of essays is subdivided in two parts, the first dedicated to “The premises, the persecutions and the extermination” and the second to “Memories, representations, legacies”; furthermore it must be noticed that each of the two volumes is organized into several autonomous and yet connected sections, each approaching the problem from a specific thematic angle. The earlier publication dedicated to the overall analysis of the Shoah (and its memory) frames the general context in which the particular Italian case is now reconstructed and analyzed. This seems to justify – at least in part – the fact that in these latest two volumes the wider international context appears to be ignored, while the analysis immediately plunges into the specific problems raised by the observation of the Italian situation.

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The first volume is made up of 26 independent essays, and the authors are for the most part Italian scholars (with the exception of Matard-Bonucci, Klinkhammer and Zuccotti). The first section goes under the title “Emancipation and Nation”, and is subdivided into two parts: the first one dedicated mainly to the cultural premises of the phenomena of racism and anti-Semitism in the XIXth and XXth centuries, the second to their deployment within the fascist regime. The first essay to open the volume is written by Tullia Catalan, a researcher of the University of Trieste, who offers a concise presentation of the condition of Italian Jews between 1848 and the early XXth century, illustrating through the use of the most recent historiography the internal dynamics of the small but lively Jewish group, as well as suggesting a revision of the generally accredited idea that emancipation and integration could developed in XIXth century Italy with virtually no problems and no obstacles. It is followed by a contribution by Simon Levis Sullam, who presents what he calls the «enemies of emancipation», meaning that rich and varied cultural framework which opposed the concession of equality to the Jewish minority and deployed anti-Judaic ideologies. He moves from the presentation of anti-Jewish riots in Mantova, Acqui and Rome in the first half of the XIXth century, to anti-Semitic stereotypes in popular literature, and finally offers a brief illustration of catholic and liberal anti-Jewish discourses in the second part of the century. Although not containing any novelty, this essay has the merit of presenting the state of the art in a rather thorough and convincing way. Furthermore it must be noted that the insistence on the need to study with attention the presence, the articulation and the evolution of anti-Jewish discourse reflects the general tendency of the latest historiographical debate to reconsider the conventional view of liberal Italy and, by so doing, to raise questions on the connections between that season and the fascist era. In this respect a key element is represented, obviously, by catholic anti-semitism. This is the object of a specific contribution by Annalisa Di Fant, who presents with clarity the nature and evolution of phenomenon in the XIXth and the XXth centuries. Her essay, which summarizes the results of her own research

and draws on the fundamental contributions by Giovanni Miccoli – undoubtedly the most prominent historian of catholic anti-Semitism in the modern period – contributes to illustrate the rich and intense set of traditional prejudices present within the catholic world, as well as their function in the context of the political and cultural battles of unified Italy. Then we move on to a more general overview on the biases present in the liberal conception of citizenship, through a contribution by Michele Nani. He summarizes here the results of his own studies on the presence of three – variously connected – discourses on racial diversity within post-unification Italy: anti-African, anti-southerners and anti-Jewish². Finally, this first section is closed with a convincing description of the various strands of racist thought within the Italian scientific community, offered by Francesco Cassata, a young and yet prolific and authoritative scholar who has distinguished himself by publishing several fundamental volumes on Italian eugenetics and the different trends marking the racist conceptualizations present within the intellectuals³.

Obviously this section was meant to present the social and cultural premises for the analysis of fascist anti-Semitic policies. While each of the essays is well written and there are no major flaws or omission to be found – the major limit seems to be the lack of attention on social and socialist anti-Jewish rhetorics, which have started to be analyzed only very recently⁴ - , it seems that such a presentation is insufficient. This reflects the general condition of scholarship regarding the issue, that is still limited and would need to be developed further: while we have assisted in the latest decades to a multiplication of in depth studies on fascist anti-Semitic policies - their genesis, evolution, implementation and consequences – there is still a lot work to do on the previous period. What we find here are contributions that – while not offering any new findings per se – present the reader with the idea that the issue of anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance in liberal Italy is of great importance to the understanding both of the Italian nation-building process and to the birth of fascist ideology. For this very reason the reader would have wanted to know

² M. Nani, *Ai confini della nazione: stampa e razzismo nell'Italia di fine Ottocento*, (Roma: Carocci, 2006); on the same issues – but not considering the anti-Semitic element – see also A. S. Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861-1911. Meridionalism, Empire and Diaspora*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

³ F. Cassata, *Building the New Man. Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twentieth Century Italy*, (Budapest: CEU Press, 2011); from the same author, concerning fascist racism see also “*La Difesa della Razza*”. *Politica, ideologia e immagine del razzismo fascista*, (Torino: Einaudi, 2008). On the development of racist ‘science’ in Italy see also: G. Israel, *Il fascismo e la razza: la scienza italiana e le politiche razziali del regime*, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010); R. Maiocchi, *Scienza italiana e razzismo fascista*, Firenze 1999; G. Israel and P. Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista*, (Bologna: Il Mulino 1998); ; A. Treves, *Le nascite e la politica nell'Italia del Novecento*, (Milano: Led, 2001); C. Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società. L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta*, (Soveria Mannelli: Rubettino, 2004); A. Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*, (London-NY: Routledge, 2002).

⁴ M. Battini, *Il socialismo degli imbecilli. Propaganda, falsificazione, persecuzione degli ebrei*, (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2010); M. Toscano (ed.), *Ebraismo, sionismo e antisemitismo nella stampa socialista italiana: dalla fine dell'Ottocento agli anni Sessanta*, (Venezia: Marsilio, 2007).

more, and especially it would have been important to clarify the connections between liberal and fascist Italy. This is of course a huge historiographical problem which is still at the center of much debate; in recent years some scholars' – Alberto Mario Banti being the principal figure in this respect - have pointed out the presence of a cultural code which made wide references to blood and ethnicity within Italian national discourses, and insisted on the elements of continuity between the liberal period and the fascist one⁵. In this respect, as well as with other relevant issues too, the editors of these volumes seem to have chosen to avoid taking a clear stance.

The second section of the first part proceeds chronologically into the fascist era. It is opened with an essay by Matard-Bonucci, who reflects on the connection between racism and the building of a totalitarian regime during the 1930s. Coherently with the analytical stance taken in her monograph dedicated to the analysis of fascist anti-Semitism⁶, the French scholar tends to set aside the issue of the cultural origins of the phenomenon and its connections with pre-existent conceptions of the nation, insisting instead on the political function of racial policies and propaganda for the development of Mussolini's totalitarian project. Her position is essentially in line with De Felice's interpretation of the phenomenon⁷, downplaying the role and relevance of anti-Jewish prejudice in Italy, and insisting on the fact the laws of 1938 represented a clear break with the past (both the immediate fascist past as well as the more remote national history). A contrast with De Felice's interpretation emerges instead with regards to the implementation of the racial legislation, while the renown historian of fascism and biographer of Mussolini stated that such policies knew a scarce and inefficient implementation, Matard-Bonucci – in line with the scholarship developed since the 1990s and with the results of her own research work – insists on the fact that the local authorities, the prefects in particular, were very serious in applying the racial norms, and often went well beyond the text of the laws, interpreting them so as to take the harshest possible course of action against the Jewish minority. In the closing paragraphs Matard-Bonucci obviously confirms that Mussolini's anti-Semitic policy was not – as was widely believed in the early post-war years – in any way neither a product of direct or indirect pressures from Germany, nor a price paid for the alliance with Hitler. Yet she does not fail to remember how such a policy shift must be considered in a European context, stressing how anti-Semitism had become, by the late 1930s, a key element in all nationalist movements.

⁵ For a groundbreaking research on the central role of images e rhetorics concerning ethnicity and blood ties in the construction of the Italian national discourse see A. M. Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento: parentela, santità e onore alle origini dell'Italia unita*, (Torino: Einaudi 2000); for the connection and continuity between the cultural codes of Risorgimento and those of Fascism see especially the less convincing analysis offered in Id., *Sublime madre nostra: la nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011).

⁶ M.-A. Matard-Bonucci, *L'Italie fasciste et la persécution des Juifs*, (Paris: Perrin, 2007).

⁷ R. De Felice, *The Jews in Fascist Italy: a History*, (NY: Enigma Books, 2001).

The connection between the development of the totalitarian project, the construction of the fascist ‘new man’ and racial anti-Semitism is also confronted in Francesco Germinario’s essay, which approaches the problem from the point of view of intellectual history. He dedicates some brief but convincing pages to the presentation of key fascist intellectuals and their vision of the racial issue, stressing in particular the weakness of fascist racial theories and ideology. Concerning the question of the origins of the phenomenon in Italian culture and history, the author states that they must be looked for not in preceding racial tradition and discourse, but rather in the history of the idea of an anthropological revolution – the building of a ‘new man’ – that predates fascism and of which the regime is presented as the most radical and passionate interpreter. Nonetheless the essay puts much emphasis on the rupture represented by the implementation of a racial and anti-Semitic legislation, so much so that, according to Germinario, we can see in those developments such a radical mutation of fascism’s ideological framework that he qualifies it as “the nazification of fascism”. So fascist anti-Semitism would appear to be an element that indicates how the Italian regime gradually lost its ideological autonomy and was drawn into the national socialist worldview. This is of course a key issue that connects to previous debates and interpretations and seems to be potentially misleading as it re-opens the issue of the influences – direct or indirect – of the German regime on Italy in the development of racial policies. We must remember that – in the framework of a narrative of national absolutism – many had insisted on the fact that the racial twist in fascist policy was due to foreign influence; nonetheless there is no proof of direct or indirect pressures on the political side and – furthermore – the autonomy and originality of fascist anti-Semitism has instead been one of the key elements highlighted by Italian historiography in the last thirty years in order to re-evaluate and finally study with attention that delicate and controversial passage. Thus Germinario’s statement appears to be highly problematic, as it certainly touches a very sensible point⁸.

The issue of the relationships between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy is critically reconstructed in the essay by Andrea D’Onofrio. It is certainly clear that the choice made by Mussolini with the publication of the notorious ‘Manifesto of Racist Scientist’ of 1938 pushed Italian racial debates – as well as of course the practical policies – in a direction, that of ‘biological racism’, which was in many ways in contrast with the dominant positions in cultural and academic world. Thus drawing the Italian racial doctrine in some ways closer to Germany. Such a shift, which caused further confrontations and debates and was never fully accepted by various sectors of the Italian cultural elite, is nonetheless not to be seen as a passive acceptance of the Nazi outlook on the problem and – as D’Onofrio points out – must be read within the context of the political and ideological dialectics between the two regimes.

⁸ He has further developed his interpretation in an independent volume: *Fascismo e antisemitismo: progetto razziale e ideologia totalitaria*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza 2009).

A brief description of the racial policies implemented by Mussolini in the African colonies is offered by Nicola Labanca, certainly the most prominent scholar of Italian military and colonial history. He honestly points out how the research on colonial racism still needs to be developed further. The essay concentrates on the legislative measures taken in the colonies to prevent sexual unions between the Italian and the local population, insisting – in a line of thought that has a certain tradition, dating back at least to the third edition of De Felice’s book on fascist anti-Semitism⁹, and which appears convincing - on the connections between colonial racism and internal/anti-Semitic persecutions.

In this same section we also find an interesting contribution by Alberto Cavaglion on the role of Italian Jews in the anti-fascist struggle. This is certainly a relevant element, nonetheless it appears strange not to find any specific essay on the other side of the problem: how Italian Jews related to fascism, and the role that many had in supporting the regime from the early beginnings of the movement up to the racial campaign. The participation of Jews as active supporters of the Fascist movement since its birth, and then of the regime, is one of the peculiar elements of the Italian case and would have deserved further attention.

The volume then moves on to the second part, dedicated to the persecutions between 1938 and 1943, that is the period between the beginning of active racial policies to the fall of Mussolini and the occupation of Italy by German military forces. This part is opened by a documented and detailed essay by Michele Sarfatti, one of the principal scholars of Italian anti-Semitic policies, who presents origins and evolution of the legislation in those five years. Coherently with his earlier contributions, Sarfatti insists on pointing out how the racial twist was under preparation at least since 1935-36¹⁰. Unlike the other contributors, Sarfatti stresses how the development of such a policy by the dictator depended mainly – even though not solely - on the fact that Mussolini was nurturing the belief that Jews were an external element: non-national and not prone to full absorption and submission to fascism.

Fabio Levi instead offers some keen insight on the victim’s reactions to persecution. Basing himself on memoirs and diaries, the scholar from the University of Torino presents the anguish, disbelief and the inability to fully grasp the proportions of the events by Italian Jews. He illustrates the strategies enacted to live through “the storm”, as the persecution is often defined in Jewish memoirs. The personal (often intertwined with the political) reactions of that part of the minority (both Italian and foreign Jews) that chose exile in response to persecution, is the object of a brilliant contribution by Enzo Traverso. The issue of Jewish exile from Italy has not yet been the object of

⁹ See. R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei in Italia sotto il fascismo*, (Torino: Einaudi, 1972; the first edition was published in 1961; the english edition, see note n. 7, is the translation of the 1993 edition).

¹⁰ See M. Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini’s Italy: from equality to persecution*, (Madison Winsconsin: Winsconsin U.P., 2006).

systematic research, and Traverso offers here some basic elements to comprehend that part of the story. The essay begins by presenting some basic data on the numbers of those who went in exile after 1938: 6000 people, of which 2000 in the USA and 2000 in Latin America, 504 in Palestine and the rest scattered in various nations from the UK to Australia. To these must be added another 6000 that sought refuge in Switzerland since September 1943. Then the author proceeds to illustrate the personal, professional and political drives which lead to emigration, putting the Italian case into a wider comparative context and finally presenting four cases concerning Italian-Jewish intellectuals such as Carlo Rosselli, Carlo Levi, Max Ascoli, Arnaldo Momigliano. In this section we also find an essay by Gabriele Turi, one of the leading historians of Italian culture and cultural institutions. He faces the issue of how intellectuals responded to the racial and anti-Semitic turning point of 1938. His essay does not offer any new insight on the problems and is limited to a synthetic presentation of recent findings. Finally, a contribution by Alessandra Minerbi closes the section, by illustrating the peculiarities of Italian legislation concerning those of 'mixed' race. This is a key issue, as it allows to comprehend according to which criteria the Jews were identified. Furthermore, the diversity in the Italian legislation on this matter, as compared to the German one, has often been considered not only a distinctive element of Italian racial policies, but also a choice that proved to be in many ways harsher, as it provided those of 'mixed' origins - or who had made mixed marriages - less protection. The essay offers several new elements, and presents the evolution of the condition of the 'mixed' both in the first phase of persecution (1938-1943), as well as in the second one (1943-1945).

We are thus lead to the final section of the first volume, which is dedicated to the time of killings and deportation operated by the German occupying forces with the active collaboration of local fascist authorities faithful to Mussolini. This final portion of the volume is made up of nine separate essays. In the first three Lutz Klinkhammer, Luigi Ganapini, and Davide Rodogno, present a synthesis of their earlier research¹¹. Their essays deal, respectively, with the mechanism of German occupation, the characteristics of the last phase of Mussolini's regime with the creation of the Italian Social Republic, and the policies of the Italian occupying forces in Southern France, Greece and the Balkans. While the first two are confined within the time frame 1943-1945, the essay by Rodogno obviously includes the earlier period (1940-1943), illustrating the complex dynamics of the Italian occupation system and its policies concerning the Jews, and insisting on how such policies must be read in their proper context: that of cynical calculation of the interest of the states, of Italian strategies concerning the administration of the occupied territories, and of the wish to distinguish Italy from the Germany.

¹¹ See L. Klinkhammer, *L'occupazione tedesca in Italia: 1943-1945*, (Torino: Bollati Borighieri, 1993); L. Ganapini, *La repubblica delle camicie nere*, (Milano: Garzanti, 1999); D. Rodogno, *Fascism's European Empire: Italian occupation during the Second World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2006).

Three essays are concerned with the protection offered to the persecuted Jews, by common people, by the Resistance and by the Church. Lilliana Picciotto offers here some of the results on her detailed ongoing study of the road to survival for Jews in occupied Italy, Bruno Maida briefly illustrates the attitude of the Resistance movements, while Susan Zuccotti critically discusses the responsibilities of the Vatican. Mimmo Franzinelli and Carlo Spartaco Capogreco instead deal with the arrest and murder of the Jews; the first with an essay on delators, the second with a synthetic presentation of the places and times of deportation. While Valeria Galimi faces the issue of bystanders and, more generally, of the understanding that there was of the fate awaiting the deported Jews. Overall this section appears poorer and less convincing than the earlier ones, it is especially striking to note the disproportion between the quality and relevance of the contributions concerning the salvage of Jews (by common people, the Church, the Resistance movement) and those dealing instead with their capture and deportation. In particular it can be noted that the contributions by Ganapini and Franzinelli do not address adequately the key issue: how and to what extent did the Italian authorities collaborate with the round ups and the deportation? Considering how the question of Italian responsibilities in arrests and deportations has had a central role in the debate that has been ongoing in the last twenty years, from such an important collective endeavor we would have expected to find some more complete and convincing considerations on the period 1943-1945.

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The second of the two volumes of this collective effort is dedicated, as we have said earlier, to the issues of memory and cultural representations. It is organized in three separate sections. The first is entitled “Times and rites of memory” (but in truth there is scant attention to rituals as such), and it is made up of six essays. Among them must be noted the excellent contributions by Filippo Focardi and Paola Bertilotti, who offer us a well rounded view of the different stages of post-war memory and of the role played by the memory of racial persecutions within the antifascist national narrative. Focardi concentrates on the early post-war years (1945-1947), a period that is crucial both for the large amount of memoirs published as well as for the construction of the founding narratives of the Italian Republic. The essay touches briefly but attentively several different issues, from the transmission of information concerning the extermination policies by the newspapers, to the fate of the many volumes of memoirs published in that period – with special attention to female memoirs and to the exceptional figure of Primo Levi – up to the cancellation of all faults and responsibilities of the Italian nation, with the construction of the ‘myth of the good Italian’. He shows quite well how the early post-war period was not in any way a time of silence; in fact it was a period marked by an exceptional production of testimonies. The time of silence and oblivion would have come later, with the Fifties. From this season

Paola Bertilotti starts here keen analysis, that is developed up to the latest years. The essay is rich and shows great ability in offering an overview of the different seasons of memory in post-war Italy.

In this first section we also find brief essays by Raffaella Di Castro, who presents a synthesis of her psycho-sociological research on third generation memories in the Italian case, and by Ilaria Pavan, on Italian historiography and the Shoah, presenting the evolution of research from the immediate post-war years up to now. Marcello Flores and Valeria Galimi co-sign a brief essay on a subject that has not yet been studied adequately: the trials concerning Shoah-related crimes in post-war Italy. While the theme is certainly relevant, this very short essay appears quite descriptive and analytically weak. The passages on relevant events like the Italian echoes of the Eichmann trial, the Bosshammer trial, and on the Priebke case don't add much to earlier knowledge and often fail to highlight some of the key problems. For example, the Priebke case is read as a testimony of the growth of attention in the Shoah memory. It is undoubtedly so, yet how did this happen? What agencies were involved? What were the implications of such an event? What happened with Priebke was extraordinary: on August 1 1996, after the military tribunal established that the accused was guilty as charged but that he should nonetheless be freed, the Jewish population of Rome responded with an uproar and literally besieged the tribunal, holding Priebke and the Court captive until the Minister of Justice found a way to arrest him again and make way for a new trial in front of a civil court. Two problems are raised by those events, and the public debate that preceded and followed them: 1. Priebke was being tried for complicity in the Ardeatine Caves massacre, where 335 Italians (some of them Jews) were killed as a reprisal for an earlier partisan action. Such an event had been a key reference point for anti-fascist memory and identity since 1945; and within such framework only very little space had been left for the specific Jewish plight. The Ardeatine Caves massacre had never before been seen or represented as specifically connected to the memory of the Shoah. Yet in the 1990's the overall memory shifts transformed the trial of Priebke in an event directly connected to the memory of Jewish extermination. 2. In that case Jewish memory, and the 'Jewish side' of the war tragedy acquired center stage. But there is more: we also assist to the Jews, the tiny Jewish minority, taking to the streets and defying public authority in a way that was absolutely unprecedented.

What is crucial here is the connection between the rise of the memory of the Shoah, the decline of the anti-fascist narrative, and the development of a new and different – more proactive and forceful – stance on part of the Jewish minority. Of course the fact that the emergence of such a memory implied a greater public role for the minority is not surprising. Yet this element seems to have been set aside in this specific essay, and – with few exception – this seems to have been the case for the whole volume.

Here and there we have hints, or brief passages concerning Italian-Jewish memory, yet no specific essay is dedicated to this issue. We have, in fact, one

essay by Mario Toscano, from the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, dedicated to the Jews in Republican Italy, yet his contribution offers only a very synthetic description of Italian-Jewish institutional life, concentrating on the inner dynamics of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. Thus we do not have any contribution that deals with Jewish memory (or, better, memories); that would have been important for three sets of motives. First of all because the Jewish group had a key role in preserving the memory of the persecution as well as in offering legitimacy first to the so called ‘myth of the good Italian’, and later to the overall revision of the past that brought about a new awareness concerning national responsibilities in the racist campaign. Secondly because the relationship between Jewish memory (or memories) with the anti-fascist national narrative is a key element to understand the evolution of the latter and the role played by Auschwitz in collective imagination. Thirdly because the evolution of Italian Jewish memories attests to the redefinition of the groups identity and the construction of its relationship with the State, the nation and its past; thus it would have been fundamental to consider such factors as they would have allowed to better comprehend the process of post-war reintegration.

Reintegration, in fact, is not merely a question of legal rights and material compensation for the losses and the injustices suffered by the persecuted. Reintegration is a more complex phenomenon, entailing the mechanisms of identity building and in which – inevitably – memory and interpretation of the recent tragedy played a key role. The fact that only a very small number of Italian Jews chose to leave the country after the war, and that many who had left before chose to return, is a clear indicator of the persistence of the bond between the Jews and the Nation. A bond which was of course influenced by the living conditions, the possibilities of getting back properties and jobs, but which was certainly confirmed by the idea that the ‘true Italy’, that the authentic spirit of the Nation, was not the one incarnated by the fascist regime which enacted the persecution. In accordance with virtually all post-war political and cultural forces, the Jews pledged their faith to the myth of the ‘anti-fascist Nation’; a representation of the past which constituted one of the corner stones of the Italian political and institutional system for several long decades following the end of the war. Unfortunately, except for a few precise but limited considerations made on this matter by Paola Bertilotti, there is little or no attention to this set of questions. Reintegration is in fact presented exclusively in its material aspects, considering factors undoubtedly relevant but that alone do not allow to fully grasp the socio-cultural process which were taking place since 1945 and, with them, to represent the role and function of memory.

The second part of the volume is dedicated to communities and institutions, and – after the presentation of Jewish communal life by Mario Toscano, we find a well documented reconstruction of legal reintegration and economic reparations - since the immediate post-war years up until today – offered by the jurist Giorgio Sacerdoti, President of the CDEC Foundation. Other essays

in this section deal with very diverse aspects of the post-war phase. Tommaso Dell'Era, of the University of Viterbo, illustrates in detail the personal and professional vicissitudes of those Italian scientists who had contributed to the development of fascist racist ideology, and who appeared as the signatories of the Manifesto of Racist Scientists of 1938. Of those ten intellectuals, one – the neurologist Arturo Donaggio – had died in 1942, and the others had to undergo enquiries by the authorities that set to purge the social system and the institutions of figures involved with the regime. As has been shown by a series of studies such a process was all but linear and coherent, and – after a determined start – it had only a very limited impact on Italian society. This is true also for these specific figures: of the seven who had been academics, six maintained their role and position until when they reached the age of retirement. Only one – the physician Emilio Franzi – was never hired back into the University, but mainly due to the support he gave to the Fascist Republican Party, created by Mussolini in his Italian Social Republic, and not for his role in the racial campaign.

Gadi Luzzatto Voghera offers a brief overview of the attitudes of the Left towards the Jewish problem in post-war Italy. His essay touches several interesting problems in a time frame that goes from the immediate post-war up to the early Nineties, ranging from the memory of the Shoah and the identification of the Jews as a paradigmatic victim, to the position taken by left wing parties and movements toward Israel. The lack of adequate bibliography, and the fact that the author did not compensate with original research, inevitably leads this to contribution that merely scratches the surface. Very many questions remain open concerning, for example, the image and perception of the Palestinians in the left, and especially in the post-68 movements, or the relationship between Italian and Palestinian terrorist groups during the seventies. There is definitely the need to do some proper historical research on the subject. The essay on the left is followed by one on the right, or rather on the neo-fascist far-right, written by the journalist Antonio Carioti. His contribution offers a clear and convincing presentation of the neofascist attitudes towards the Jews, their long lasting anti-Semitism, as well as their changing perception of the State of Israel.

Two essays are dedicated to the Catholic world and its positions regarding the memory of the Shoah, and the issue of anti-Semitism. The first subject is touched by Alberto Melloni, senior catholic academic, while the second is the object of a detailed research by the post-doctoral scholar Elena Mazzini. The second one appears to be definitely more interesting and problematic, reconstructing the inconsistencies present in the Catholic world's discourse on racial anti-Semitism: its efforts to distinguish it from traditional anti-Judaism, and to deny any connection between the actions and discourses of the Church in earlier times to the recent tragedy. This part of the volume is closed by a precise reconstruction, written by the jurist of the University of Catania Ernesto De Cristofaro, of Italian memorial laws.

Finally, the last section of the second volume is dedicated to the presence of the Shoah in Italian post-war culture, with ten very different contributions. We have essays dedicated to different media and forms of expression: Millicent Marcus on the cinema, Emiliano Perra on television, Laura Iamurri on visual arts, Robert Gordon on literature, and Roberta Ascarelli on women writers. These contributions, while quite different in style and quality, offer a well rounded representation of the presence of the Shoah in Italian cultural production from 1945 to the present. A further enrichment is offered by a specific essay dedicated to the figure of Primo Levi, written by Marco Belpoliti who has been the curator of his collected works.

Four more essays, very different in nature, contribute to the presentation of the Italian memorial system. Elisabetta Ruffini, of the Istituto Storico della Resistenza of Bergamo, reconstructs with detail and intelligence the history of the Italian memorial in Auschwitz; a site of memory which has recently been at the center of a conflict separating Jewish and anti-fascist memories. Valentina Pisanty's essay instead should have offered some insight on the banalization of the Shoah in the Italian case, yet her contribution appears quite and overall definitely unsatisfactory. The journalist Lia Tagliacozzo offers some insight on the Italian echoes of the Lebanon war (1982), and on the ensuing terrorist attack performed by a Palestinian assault group to the primary synagogue in Rome. Her contribution is one of the first on that delicate moment, and – although more research is certainly necessary – the author correctly indicates how the debates and the events of that year heavily influenced the relationship between Italian (and especially Roman) Jews and the rest of society. Finally, David Bidussa closes the volume with an insightful reflection on the celebrations of the 'Day of Memory' (27th of January, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz) which, on the basis of a law passed by Parliament in the year 2000, has come to be dedicated every year to the commemoration of racial persecutions and the extermination of the Jews. His critical reflection on how to remember, on the various ambiguities of Italian commemorative policies and on the problems arising after ten years of memorial exercises, represents both an occasion to understand what happened in that first decade of the new century and to conceptualize how to face the difficult task of commemorating without producing merely vain and empty rhetoric¹².

It is not easy to evaluate such a rich and complex collective work. Such operations tend to address two very different publics, that of the specialist scholar and that of the more general readers. It is extremely hard, if not impossible, to satisfy the needs of both. I believe that there are three main problems with this operation. The first concerns the lack of interpretative clarity: the editors have evidently chosen not to take a clear stand on several

¹² See also, by the same author, *Dopo l'ultimo testimone*, (Torino: Einaudi, 2009). For a critical outlook on the transformation known in the last decades by the politics of memory in the Italy (and in Europe), and on the emergence of the memory of Jewish persecutions see also G. De Luna, *La Repubblica del dolore. Le memorie di un'Italia divisa*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2011).

controversial issues. The main ones are 1) the connections and relationships existing between fascist antisemitism and precedent historical and cultural experiences; 2) the meaning and significance of the racial turn in Mussolini's policy. Thus the first volume presents different and non coherent contributions, a fact that might disorient those readers who are not perfectly acquainted with the debates on these problems. Furthermore one could say that probably more attention could have been given to the pre-fascist period, as in fact the understanding of the dynamics of integration and anti-Semitism in liberal Italy appear to be a key factor for a better comprehension of the roots racial persecutions.

Another fault in these volumes concerns the weakness of the introductions written by the editors. These are extremely brief and, again, testify that the intent was more descriptive (showing the state of the research) rather than analytical (providing a new coherent outlook on the events). This attitude also lead the editors not to take a stand concerning key terminological questions: in their introduction, and throughout the two volumes the terms "Shoah", "Holocaust", "Genocide" are used as synonyms. This choice, maybe made to respect the different sensibilities of the authors and their diverse national and cultural backgrounds, seems to ingenerate some confusion. We all know that the terms are not synonyms and that each implies a different vision and conception of the phenomenon. It could be noted that it is not by mere accident that the volumes bear in the title the word "Shoah", as the term has gradually conquered the Italian cultural scene since the Eighties. That was the result, among other factors, of a long and intense campaign by Italian-Jewish institutions that refused the term "Holocaust" because of its religious implications.

The choice of not choosing is questionable, as are of course all choices concerning the architecture of such complex cultural operations. Nonetheless the volumes certainly contribute in offering a synthetic impression on the state of research concerning the Italian case. For this reason they probably would deserve to be translated into English, as this would be a good occasion to introduce the results of Italian historiography to a wider scholarly public.

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