The Jewish Brigade Group and Italy: A Political and Historiographical Quarrel.*

[1]

> "Viewed in its scientific aspect, it is scandalous when history is bent to a political use; viewed in its broadly literary aspect, in contrast, it is simply expected, either implicitly or explicitly, that this should happen."[1]

In recent years, the use and abuse of the past for political ends has emerged as one of history's new frontiers.[2] As historian Nicola Gallerano notes, this occurs when a historiographical thread endeavors to promote a polemical reading of the past, with the aim of advancing a political agenda.[3]

This article examines how tendentious or partial interpretations of the past impact on society. It does this by analyzing the emergence, in Italy, of the controversy surrounding the history of the Jewish Brigade Group (JBG). This was a five-thousand-strong British military unit stationed in Italy during World War II. The role played by JBG soldiers in the liberation of the country, largely forgotten by mainstream Italian historiography and by the general public until the late 1990s, was once again put in the spotlight in the early 2000s. This had dramatic repercussions on one of the most sacred Italian civic observances: the 25 April commemoration, which celebrates the liberation from Fascism in 1945, and the subsequent return to democracy. The rediscovery of the JBG's history exacerbated tensions between the Italian Jewish Community and pro-

* I would like to offer my special thanks to the following scholars for their valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and the writing of this article: Professor Philip Cooke, Professor John Foot, Professor Nick Hayes, Professor Guri Schwarz.

Palestinian far-left movement, both regular participants in the 25 April celebration. This eventually contributed to a fault line in the Italian anti-fascist front.

While the 25 April dispute was ultimately the outcome of existing domestic political tensions, and was due, in particular, to the left- and right-wing parties' ideological and political realignment over the last 30 or so years, new texts on the JBG contributed in no small measure to its outbreak. These texts (a couple of books published in the UK, as well as an American documentary) were all published or released at the end of the 1990s. They speak in highly positive terms of the military contribution JBG's soldiers made to the Allied cause during World War II; at the same time, they characterize the Palestinian Arabs as indifferent if not openly hostile towards the cause.

Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce famously said that history is always contemporary history, by which he meant that historical research and writing is invariably informed by contemporary motives. It may be suggested that the new JBG literature developed organically from the precise historical moment in which it was produced, a period characterized by the final negotiations of the Oslo Peace Process (the US-sponsored, Israeli-Palestinian peace talks taking place from 1991 onwards). That the Jewish Brigade, after 50 years of semi-oblivion, became the object of historiographical investigation in this specific historical moment suggests a connection with this fundamental political event, which represented the hitherto best chance for a pacific resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[4] The ultimate failure of the peace talks once again brought to the forefront questions of primacy and legitimacy, which lay at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Such a reading suggests that the texts about the JBG were meant to reassert the historical merits of the Jews of Palestine, thus strengthening their historical rights to the Holy Land, while placing the Arabs of

Palestine in a negative light. Regardless of its ultimate motives, the new JBG literature ignited a political and historiographical dispute in Italy, which is still in progress.

The JBG literature will be set against a variety of evidence, principally the archival record, to test some of the most controversial claims made in the course of the 25 April dispute.[5] The article will focus particularly on the characterization of the JBG as a Zionist force; the Palestinian Arabs' alleged pro-fascist alignment and disloyalty towards the British Empire; and the role played by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, during World War II. First, however, the article will chronicle the unfolding of the 25 April controversy.

The 25 April controversy is also a story of symbols, specifically flags, contesting a highly symbolical political space. Sociologists have pointed out the totemic character flags can assume in relation to the national communities or the political causes they represent.[6] As such, they may be perceived as sacred, or indeed insulting, depending on the circumstances.[7] The article will show how, in Italy, Israeli and Palestinian flags have extended their symbolic meaning well beyond the national community they were originally born to represent. They have become, respectively, symbols of Western values and of anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle.

In terms of context, the words Zionism/Zionist are used in a politically neutral and purely historical sense: respectively, as a doctrine advocating the creation, development, and protection of a Jewish state, and as a person supporting in some form and to various extents such a political project.[8] Secondly, as Steven Beller notes, antisemitism is a "highly ambivalent, even multivalent term, which can cause great confusion."[9] Here, it is used as an umbrella term to describe all possible forms of hostility towards the Jews: racial antisemitism, Judeophobia, or even "mild pejorative prejudice against the Jews."[10]

History is part of our day-to-day life, and the impact of the past on present politics and society can be profound. Drawing on their knowledge and their methodology, historians should intervene in the public debate whenever this is characterized by an improper or tendentious use of history, and try to solve contentions that appear to originate in contrasting interpretations of historical events. They should, first and foremost, make the public aware of the complexity of historical phenomena, as opposed to the simplification and even trivialization of history, which is often the norm in political discussions about history. This is ultimately the reason I decided to write this article.

I. The 25 April Dispute

On 25 April 2016, a demonstration against Fascism took place in Rome. This was nothing new. Since 1946, exponents of various political parties, anti-fascist groups and associations, and thousands of citizens loyal to the anti-fascist Constitution, had gathered every 25 April – in Rome as in other small and large Italian cities – to commemorate the defeat of Fascism and the liberation of the country from Nazi occupation.[11] Traditionally, the 25 April celebration includes a march organized by the local section of the National Association of Italian Partisans (hereafter ANPI). Various pressure groups, each carrying their own banners, walk in orderly fashion while shouting anti-fascist slogans and singing the famous anti-fascist song "Bella Ciao." It is Italy's most important civil celebration, the one day of the year in which people of various political tendencies – temporarily putting aside their differences – come together to renew their anti-fascist commitment, and to give their unwavering support to the Republic that emerged from the ashes of the Italian civil war (Sept 1943 – April 1945).[12] It is also a reminder, for every Italian, that the country's past is tainted by

shameful events, such as the emergence of Fascism, 20 or so years of dictatorship, the infamous racial laws targeting Jewish citizens, a war of aggression resulting in ignominious defeat and Nazi occupation.

However, something unprecedented and disconcerting happened in Rome on 25 April 2016. That year, for the first time, the Jewish Community of Rome organized an autonomous commemoration, right in front of the building used by the Gestapo to torture patriots during the war, and which is now the Museum of the Liberation of Rome. They did this following a major disagreement with the ANPI's Roman section during a stormy organizational meeting held a few days before. Here, the ANPI refused to support the request of the Jewish Community of Rome to ban pro-Palestinian groups from the march.[13] Palestinian flags had been used in the 25 April anniversary ever since the end of the 1970s, in Rome as in other cities. Why, then, did the presence of pro-Palestinian activists only recently become a problem? And why did the leaders of the Roman Jewish Community become convinced that the entire matter was so serious that it was worth jeopardizing anti-fascist unity on a day of remembrance?

The reasons were long- and short-term, domestic as well as international, as I will explain below. Ultimately, the question was rooted in history and, more specifically, in contradicting interpretations of historical facts. This is not unusual in Italy, where journalists and politicians often display an uncommon tendency to use history in day-to-day political debates, with little consideration for historical accuracy and perspective.[14] However, what made the 25 April quarrel unique was that, on this occasion, the historical issue was not, for example, whether the Fascist dictatorship was ultimately a benign regime, or how the crimes of communist partisans at the end of the war should be interpreted, and if the Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party, hereafter PCI) had hatched any alleged secret plots to overthrow democracy—

all topics that have stirred exhausting political and historiographical controversies in Italy.[15] This time it was not essentially about Italian history. Rather, it centred on British and Middle Eastern history and on the role played during the liberation by the Jewish Brigade Group.

The JBG was a military unit of the British Army, established in September 1944 and incorporating Jewish soldiers mainly from Palestine. The Jewish Agency, the principal Zionist organization of Palestine, had been lobbying the British Government ever since September 1939 to form an all-Jewish military unit. By granting this request, the Jewish Agency conjectured, the British Government would implicitly recognize the existence of the Jewish national element in Palestine, a prelude to the establishment of a Jewish nation. For the same reason, the Palestine Mandate authorities and the Colonial Office had vehemently opposed the project, successfully delaying its implementation until summer 1944.[16] In the end, however, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's personal fondness for the Jewish national cause made the difference, and the JBG became reality.[17] The JBG was dispatched to Italy in late 1944, and in spring 1945 it contributed to the country's liberation from Nazi occupation, fighting in particular on the Senio River. Its role in the war was politically relevant, but of limited military importance: JBG soldiers arrived too late to make a real difference in the conflict. They fought well, but in minor actions, and a relatively small number (around 50 soldiers) were killed in combat.[18] Its marginal role probably explains why it fell into relative obscurity. Until the late 1990s, the JBG mostly featured in memoirs written by former soldiers, and published in Israel.[19] It found no or only brief mention in broader accounts of the Italian campaign.[20]

From 1998 onwards, however, interest in the JBG revived in the US and in the UK. An American documentary film by Chuck Olin, titled *In Our Hands: The Hidden*

History of the Jewish Brigade in World War II, was released, followed by two books published in the UK: Morris Beckman's *The Jewish Brigade. An Army With Two Masters* (1998) and Howard Blum's *The Brigade. An Epic Story of Vengeance, Salvation and World War II* (2001). Issued for the popular history market, these texts are almost entirely based on memoirs and interviews. The latter are handled with little consideration for the methodological caveats commonly adopted by professional historians when using oral sources. In particular, the claims made by oral witnesses are rarely checked against the abundant, easily accessible yet little explored archival material on the JBG. Whatever their shortcomings, these texts helped revive the memory of the JBG in the English-speaking countries. A few years later, the memory of the JBG resurfaced in Italy, too; once translated into Italian and popularized, the new strand of literature about the JBG triggered a process of historiographical reappropriation by the Italian Jewish Communities. It also stirred up much debate in the peninsula. In fact, the disagreement between the Roman Jewish Community, ANPI, and the pro-Palestinian political groups, which led to the dramatic fracture of 25 April 2016, was a consequence of the JBG's revival.

The quarrel that would eventually lead to the rift among anti-fascist forces originated 12 years earlier, on 25 April 2004, in Milan. Here, Davide Romano, a journalist and member of the Italian Jewish Youth Federation, thought of displaying the insignia of the Jewish Brigade in the Milanese parade. Romano claims that the idea came to him after reading the Italian edition of Howard Blum's *The Brigade*, published in 2002.[21] Up to that moment, by his own admission, Romano had not even been aware of the JBG's existence.[22] This does not mean that the memory of the JBG had been completely lost in Italy. Many Italian Jews fondly remembered the soldiers from Palestine, who had helped rebuild the shattered Jewish communities in the aftermath of

World War II.[23] This time, however, it was their military feats that were publicized. The president of the Milanese "Friends of Israel" association, Eyal Mizrahi, decided to support Romano's initiative. Leaflets recounting the history of the JBG were distributed among the public attending the march. It was not this, however, that caused the upset. The problem was that the JBG insignia is virtually identical to the flag of the State of Israel. Members of the Milanese Jewish Community were thus parading with Israeli flags, which immediately provoked vociferous protests by radical left-wing and pro-Palestinian marchers. The flag was seen as a symbol of the illegal occupation of Arab Palestinian land, and thus out of place in a demonstration that celebrated liberation from political oppression and military occupation.

Far from being deterred by the outcry of their fellow marchers, the Jewish Community of Milan again displayed Israeli flags in the parade the following year, as did the Jewish Community of Rome. These groups cast themselves as "Representatives of the Jewish Brigade," or simply as "La Brigata Ebraica" (the Jewish Brigade). Pro-Palestinian activists and sympathizers began to systematically boo the JBG banner at it passed, while Jewish demonstrators and their supporters often became the targets of verbal abuse. There were attempts to work out a compromise, as when ANPI asked the color of the Star of David to be changed from blue to yellow, thus creating a symbol that was less reminiscent of the flag of Israel.[24] The conflict, however, could not be resolved. On the contrary, it escalated. The situation was particularly serious in Rome. In 2013, the organizers of the Roman parade managed to avoid clashes between the two factions, but in order to do so they forbade the president of the Roman Friends of Israel association from speaking at the end of the march. This was a turning point. The Roman Jewish Community never forgave ANPI for what they regarded, perhaps not unreasonably, as an insult and an injustice. In 2014, the confrontation nearly turned

physical, and the police had to intervene. The 25 April celebration of the following year was on a Saturday, and the Roman Jewish Community announced that its members would not attend the parade, as they intended to observe the Shabbat. Perhaps ANPI officials thought that this decision would reduce the tensions, at least for that year. This was not the case. ANED, the Association of Former Internees of Nazi Concentration Camps, decided to boycott the 25 April anniversary, as a form of protest against the aggressions the "Representatives of the Jewish Brigade" had suffered in previous years. This was too much for the local representatives of ANPI, who asked the Council of Rome to take on the responsibility to organize the march for that year.[25] The national ANPI, however, disavowed such a decision, which added confusion to chaos.

In 2016 the Jewish Community of Rome demanded the Palestinian groups to be banned from the march as a precondition for its own participation in the official parade. [26] This was perhaps understandable: in previous years pro-Palestine demonstrators had harassed Jewish marchers and their supporters. Yet, such a request was also grounded in a historiographical claim: that the Palestinian flags should not appear because the Arabs of Palestine did not contribute to the fight against Fascism. Rather, they had hoped in the final triumph of Hitler and its forces. [27] Such an interpretation was grounded in the new JBG literature of the late 1990s. These texts magnify the feats of the Palestinian Jews in the JBG, but choose to ignore the contribution of the Arabs of Palestine who served in other Allied military units, for example in the Palestine Regiment (established in 1942 and recruiting both Arabs and Jews). Such texts include instead condescending remarks about the Arabs' fighting spirit, and they question the Arabs' commitment to the anti-fascist cause. The accusation by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu that the then Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Muhammad Amin al-Husseini had been compliant in the planning of the

Holocaust also added fuel to the fire of the 25 April controversy, providing more ammunition for the pro-JBG faction.[28]

Today, the painful and disorientating split within the Italian anti-fascist front seems an established and irreversible fact.[29] The presence of two commemorations, both with symbolic importance, has forced the politicians of the various parties – who are ritually compelled to attend the 25 April celebration – to choose sides. There are those who prefer not to displease either side, and therefore choose to attend both events. This is the case, for example, of the current mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, a member of the populist Five Star Movement. Others have used the platform offered by the Jewish Community's splinter demonstration to take a political stand, and even to redefine policies. This occurred in 2017, when the Partito Democratico (Democratic Party, hereafter PD) – the country's mainstream centre-left party – opted for the JBG meeting, thus breaking with the ANPI. This was a momentous decision, for not only was the ANPI a traditional ally of the Left, but the PD, being the PCI's political heir, had inherited from its Communist predecessor the responsibility of safeguarding the unity of the anti-fascist front and the moral legacy of the Italian Resistance against Fascism. It was a partly an act of political revenge. A few months before, the ANPI had invited its members and sympathizers to vote against the constitutional reform project devised by the then PD leadership, which contributed to the party's disastrous defeat in the referendum of 4 December 2016. But the PD was also moving away from the left of the political spectrum and heading towards the centre. In this respect, the reassessment of the party's Middle Eastern policy, from a pro-Palestinian to a pro-Israeli alignment, was part of a more general strategy aimed at redefining the party's political identity, cultural references, and grassroots support.[30]

The right-wing parties, namely Silvio Berlusconi's neo-liberal Forza Italia and its political allies, the post-fascist Alleanza Nazionale and the regionalist party Lega Nord, wholeheartedly espoused the pro-JBG cause from the very beginning of the 25 April dispute. Again, the support given to the Jewish Communities by the Right had little to do with the history of the JBG; it was motivated, rather, by political convenience. Firstly, it offered a tempting opportunity to vilify ANPI – one of Berlusconi's sworn enemies – and the radical left-wing groups, by accusing both of antisemitism. Secondly, it legitimised the right-wing absence from an event, the 25 April commemoration, they had (unwillingly) attended in the past because of their institutional roles, but which they had intimately perceived as politically alien, for both ideological and historical reasons. Finally, by the mid-2000s, the three principal parties of the Italian Right had all taken a marked pro-Israeli stance, albeit in different moments and for difference reasons; the solidarity with the "Brigata ebraica" groups was in part a consequence of that choice. Since the early 1990s, the newly founded Alleanza Nazionale offered almost unconditional support to Israel, in part to obliterate its Fascist roots.[31] Berlusconi chose to side with Israel a few years later, during his second and third governments (2001–2006), as a mechanism to strengthen the alliance with the United States by fully endorsing George W. Bush's Middle Eastern policy.[32] It proved a turning point in Italian foreign policy, moving from a more pro-Palestinian stance to a clearly pro-Israeli one.[33] Lastly, the Lega Nord's support of Israel provided a moral nourishment for the party's growing hostility against Muslim immigrants.[34] Pro-Israeli and Islamophobic sentiments formed part of Italy's cultural and political environment following the September 11 attacks, and the subsequent publication of a number of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim pamphlets.[35]

The involvement of political parties and politicians turned the 25 April quarrel into a major political issue. Support for the Jewish Community became obligatory for those who wanted to be perceived as reliable and non-extremist politicians, epitomised when in Summer 2017 the Italian Parliament awarded the JBG the "Medaglia d'oro al Valor Militare," the equivalent of the US Medal of Honour. In a different moment, this could have been seen as purely a tribute to soldiers who had fought for Italy, and who had been wrongly forgotten. In such a politically charged context, however, such an award became a de facto political endorsement of Israel and Israeli policy. Nor this was the only tribute made to the JBG in that period. In Ravenna, which is located in the Romagna area, where the JBG saw action, a street was named after the JBG. Moreover, a reference to the "45 soldiers of the Jewish Brigade" was inscribed in a plaque remembering those who had fallen for the liberation of the city. Various plaques were dedicated to the JBG in the same area, for example in Riolo Serra and Castel Bolognese.

Since the beginning of the 25 April dispute, countless articles about the JBG were published in newspapers and blogs. Just like the politicians, the great majority of Italian journalists raced to express their solidarity with the Jewish Communities, partly because these were undeniably victims of intolerable harassment, but also because the pro-Palestinians' public relations were, frankly, disastrous. The latter made the headlines only as a result of the insults they addressed to their opponents. Their argument, that a parallel could not be established between the JBG's feats during World War II and present-day Israeli policy, and that Israeli symbols should therefore not be allowed in the parade, never clearly emerged in the media. Only a small number of intellectuals and artists, many of them Jews, sided with the pro-Palestinian activists. For example, playwright Moni Ovadia lamented the progressive marginalisation, within the Italian Jewish Communities, of "Jewish universalism" (in his opinion a

fundamental Jewish value), in order to make room for "an uncritical pro-Israel nationalism".[36] A few historians sought a middle ground. Alessandro Portelli spoke of "an extraordinary combination of stupidity, sheer pettiness, and arrogance", and blamed both sides for their factionalism.[37] Others took a more markedly pro-JBG stance. Giovanni Sabbatucci, for example, argued the following: "The association of Palestinian fighters with the official celebrations for the defeat of Nazi-Fascism is a resounding historical error as well as a politically inappropriate act […] the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husseini, one of the highest authorities of Sunni Islam, was an ally and friend of Hitler and encouraged him to pursue the program of extermination of the Jewish people. So it makes no sense to invite the heirs of Arab nationalism to celebrate the defeat of Nazi-Fascism, which was ultimately their defeat".[38] The rediscovery of the JBG has also prompted various publications, in Italian, about the Jewish Brigade Group and its involvement in the Italian campaign.[39] Most of them are openly celebratory.

Despite the proliferation of texts in Italian language about the JBG, the Italians' knowledge and understanding of events surrounding the JBG remained limited. Even politicians who issue press releases on the JBG had only a partial understanding. For example, interviewed in April 2017, MP Lia Quartapelle of the Partito Democratico – who had proposed the law to award a gold medal to the JBG – mistakenly claimed that the JBG soldiers were mostly Italian Jews, who had previously emigrated and then returned to liberate their homeland.[40] Journalists too seemed to know very little about the JBG. Most commonly newspapers simply reiterated historical information taken from previous press releases, based on claims by activists of the Milanese and Roman Jewish Communities. These accounts, in turn, were based on the JBG literature of the 1990s, and especially – a close analysis reveals – on Blum's *The Brigade*. Above all,

what was and is still missing in the mainstream media coverage of the JBG are issues relating to the reason the JBG was created in the first place, its actual composition, and the contribution by the Arabs of Palestine to the Allied war effort.

Why then did the Milanese and Roman Jewish Communities (or, more precisely, the local branches of the Friends of Israel association) decide to celebrate the JBG in the first place? Was it primarily that an all-Jewish formation had fought for the liberation of Italy, which was a source of pride? Italian Jewry had given the Italian Resistance some of its more capable and valiant leaders.[41] Seven Golden Medals of Honour were awarded to Italian Jews for the role they played in the Resistance. Italy's youngest partisan was also a Jew: Franco Cesana, killed in action at the age of 13 and posthumously awarded a bronze medal. Furthermore, it should be remembered too that the Nazis deported well over eight thousand Jews from Italian soil to the death camps, often with the active help of the Italian Fascist authorities; only around a thousand made it back.[42] By contrast, the JBG, composed of foreign soldiers, played only a minor part in the liberation of the country. So, why the JBG, when so many Italian Jewish heroes and martyrs could be remembered instead?

The most plausible explanation is that the promotion of the JBG was part of an attempt to enhance a positive reassessment of Zionism in the eyes of public opinion. In previous decades, the word Zionism acquired a strongly negative connotation in Italy, almost the equivalent of Fascism. This was principally due to the actions of the Left. Radical groups, known in Italy as *sinistra extraparlamentare*, promoted an original interpretation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that was modeled on the history of the Italian Resistance. Within this framework, the Palestinian insurgents/terrorists were comparable to the Italian anti-fascist partisans; consequently, Israel was depicted as a fascist occupying power.[43] Although this was a simplistic reading of the Middle Eastern

situation, and a misreading of history, it nonetheless enjoyed a wide and lasting diffusion. The equation between Palestinians and Italian Resistance fighters explains why, in the 1970s, Palestinian flags began to appear at the 25 April parades.

Parallel to this evolution was the progressively problematic relation between Italian Jews and Italian left-wing political parties. From the 1970s, the Italian Communist Party wholeheartedly championed the Palestinians' cause. The PCI, which at the time represented roughly a third of the Italian voters, saw the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a revolutionary organization that was waging a struggle against a state, Israel, which had turned into an imperialist power due to its political alignment with the United States.[44]. Having suffered greatly under Fascism, many Italian Jews joined the political parties of the Left in the post-war years. To paraphrase Matteo Di Figlia, the words "anti-fascism" and "Resistance" were two key terms Italian Jews used in order to define themselves.[45] However, when – in the 1970s – the Left marked anti-fascism as anti-Zionist, many felt torn; their anti-fascist convictions conflicted with their attachment to Israel. The fact that the Left was now siding with the Palestinians seemed incomprehensible to many Italian Jews – indeed almost an act of betrayal. Palestinians had not suffered during the war as they had. Nor did they contribute directly to the liberation of the country as the Italian Jews did. In sum, there was very little linking the Palestinian cause to the history of Italy. The flag of Palestine itself had been officially adopted by the PLO to represent the State of Palestine only in 1964, that is to say two decades after the events being commemorated in the 25 April marches.[46] As such, it had no immediate historical relevance. The lowest point of the relationship between Italian Jews and the Left was in the aftermath of the attack on the Great Synagogue of Rome, carried out by Palestinian terrorists on October 9, 1982. This caused the death of a two-year-old toddler and the injury of 37 worshipers.[47] In the

previous months, Italian Jews felt politically isolated and unjustly targeted, as left-wing militants and politicians levelled against them accusations of complicity or quiescence with the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon (June 1982) and the Sabra and Shatila massacre (September 1982).

In the 2000s, the raised profile of the JBG offered the Jewish communities the chance to rebuild a positive image of Zionism within Italy. At the same time, anti-fascism could be finally reclaimed from the far Left. However, for this to work it was necessary to emphasize the role the JBG had played in the liberation of the country, and, above all, to make the following assumption: that the JBG was a military force made up entirely of Zionists. In fact, the JBG supporters made this point quite explicitly, as the first JBG banner to be displayed – at the 25 April parade of 2004 – read, "[a]nche loro, 5,000 sionisti, hanno liberato l'Italia" (5,000 Zionists also contributed to the Liberation of Italy). It was a point constantly re-emphasised.[48] By stressing the contribution of Zionist militants to the Allied war effort in the JBG, Italian Jewish militants were ultimately hoping to raise Israel's profile in Italian public opinion.

It should be clear by now how serious the impact of the 25 April dispute has been on the Italian political and cultural landscape. It should also be evident that the 25 April quarrel is about partisan interpretations of history in the political arena. We could even say that the 25 April dispute is a paradigm for the political use of history, as it ticks all the boxes: history being made by non-professional historians and disseminated by journalists, politicians, and activists with a political agenda; specific historical events being isolated from their context, and used to make a political point; certain facts being blown out of proportion while others are completely neglected; and most of all, the complete disregard for historical perspective, where something that happened in a

distant past is said to have a direct and outright relevance for the present, as if it happened only yesterday.

II. The JBG as a Zionist Force

Those Italian Jewish communities who actively engaged in the 25 April dispute have, since the very beginning, presented the JBG as an essentially Zionist force. However, the characterization of the JBG as a Zionist force rests on two generalizations. First, that it was the Jewish Agency's offer of collaboration with the British Government, in September 1939, that prompted the Jews of Palestine to enlist in the JBG five years later. This begs the question as to weather those who fought in the unit shared the Agency's view, and were thus motivated by Zionist ambition. And, as a corollary, that the Yishuv (i.e., the body of Jewish residents in Palestine during the Mandate) enthusiastically answered the Jewish Agency's call to arms. These two assumptions can be found in every summary of the JBG history that has been disseminated in Italy. For example, according to a brochure introducing an exhibition about the JBG, held in Rome in 2014, as soon as they were offered the opportunity, "the Jews of Palestine [enlisted] en masse […], they [aimed] to create an autonomous fighting force, serving under Jewish colors."[49] These beliefs are grounded in the 1990s JBG literature, which offers rhetorical, emotionally charged, and mostly undocumented statements on these as well as other issues. Thus, Morris Beckman argues that the news that the JBG was finally to be formed "gave a tremendous boost to the dreamers and supporters of a Jewish National home," thus explicitly linking the JBG to the Zionists' political project.[50] Howard Blum notes that British officers regarded the JBG flag (the same that, much later, was to cause the 25 April controversy) as "the Zionist flag."[51] Chuck Olin's film offers similar interpretations of the issue of the Zionist character of the JBG.[52]

Such assumptions demand a closer inspection. At a base level, were most recruits ardent Zionist? Hanoch Bartov was a member of the JBG. His historical novel *The Brigade*, written in the 1965, records that many Jews joined the JBG because they wanted to take revenge against those who had systematically tried to wipe their people out.[53] A young Palestinian soldier, one of the many anti-heroic and misfit-like characters populating the novel, says, "I have to kill one [a German] by myself. In cold blood. And rape a woman. In cold blood. After that I don't give a damn what happens." And another Palestinian adds, "[t]hat's what we are here for. Not for Roosevelt's freedoms or the British Empire or Stalin. We are here to take revenge. One wild Jewish vengeance."[54] This was, incidentally, one of the reasons for which the formation of the JBG was eventually authorized; Churchill thought that the idea of "Jews trying to get at the murderer of their fellow countrymen in central Europe" would appeal to the US Government and American public opinion.[55] The JBG's unimpressive military achievements must have caused frustration among the JBG soldiers. Bartov, as narrator, makes a disgruntled comment as soon as he hears that the war is over: "That was about it. We had faced an enemy we had never seen, not even once. We had fired into empty fields and were fired at from empty fields. The war had gone forever, the hour of vengeance would never be ours again. We would come home with unsoiled clothes and hands unstained with blood—we, the avengers."[56] There were also other reasons to enlist. Many hoped to gather information about, and hopefully rescue, family members who had remained in their countries of origin when the soldiers emigrated to Palestine. Blum's book tells the story of one of these, the real-life character Johanan Peltz, who had "never been a Zionist," and had enlisted only to have the chance to return to his native Poland in order to look for his missing mother and sister.[57]

However, when assessing the Zionist nature of the JBG we shall primarily rely on hard historical evidence and examine the actual composition of the JBG. It was never purely Zionist force. It included many Jews who were not Palestinian and, critically, many gentiles. This point is virtually unknown to the contenders of the 25 April dispute, for neither the 1990s literature nor the Italian books dedicated to the JBG acknowledge it.[58] Initially consisting of three Jewish battalions of the pre-existing Palestine Regiment, the JBG was meant to rise to the rank of brigade (with around five thousand personnel), by recruiting among British and non-British Jews resident in Palestine, the UK, and in Mauritius (which at the time was home to some fifteen hundred Jewish refugees from Europe). The Palestinian Jewish Agency was the main sponsor of the recruitment appeal. Polish Jews, all former members of the Polish Army, were also given the possibility to be transferred to the JBG.[59] From the outset, it was decided that a number of British specialists, such as signalmen and artillerymen, both Jews and non-Jews, would be transferred to the JBG, as the Palestine Regiment lacked such expertise.[60] There was, in fact, a sense of urgency in the War Office, once finally the decision to form the unit was taken. The press had given much publicity to Churchill's announcement. It soon became clear, though, that the Jewish Agency was not going "to be able to produce sufficient recruits".[61] Yet, British officers knew that, "in view of the importance placed by War Cabinet in formation [sic] this brigade group," the JBG had to somehow be created. In the end, the decision was taken to incorporate an extra 1,000 non-Jewish, experienced soldiers in the Brigade, along with 33 officers, in order to make the JBG operational.[62] The Brigade commander was Brigadier E. F. Benjamin, a Canadian-born Jew who could not speak Hebrew and, according to Brigade Chaplain Bernard M. Casper, was "brought up in a completely British environment and tradition".[63] Gentile soldiers were to be slowly replaced by

Jews, as soon as new recruits became available. Such a substitution was completed at some point during the summer of 1945, when the battle for Italy was already over.[64]

Only conjectures can be made as to why the Yishuv's answer to the Jewish Agency's call to arms was, or appeared, lukewarm. In spring 1944, the number of Palestinian Jews already serving in the British Army had risen to 25,000.[65] Hence, by the time the JBG was formed, there was no longer an ample supply of able-bodied male Jews in Palestine.[66] In fact, the Jewish agency was scraping the bottom of the barrel when looking for recruits. The British authorities rejected many as being too old or unfit for service.[67] Perhaps many felt that the establishment of the JBG had arrived far too late, when the war was already won. British Jews already serving in the Army were not willing to leave their comrades to join the JBG, a newly formed unit almost entirely composed of Eastern Europeans, who spoke languages unfamiliar to them.[68] Gavin Schaffer points out that many Anglo-Jews opposed, in principle, the idea that there should be special Jewish regiments within the British forces, and that they did not want British Jews to be considered as somehow different from their fellow English countrymen.[69] The Yishuv itself was also internally divided on the issue of the JBG, with some of the Hagana leaders – including David Ben Gurion – opposing the enlistment of a significant quota of Jewish fighters in the JBG, as they were afraid of depleting the organization's ranks.[70] For these, and probably other reasons, the recruitment for the JBG was only partially successful.

The key point is that the JBG cannot be considered a Zionist force, as both Jews and non-Jews, coming from different countries and motivated by a variety of political and personal reasons, joined the unit, fought, and died.[71] The banner displayed by the Milanese Jewish Community at the march of 25 April 2004 – "5,000 Zionists also

contributed to the Liberation of Italy" – was therefore historically inaccurate and politically motivated.

III. The Grand Mufti and the Arabs' Disloyalty in World War II

The JBG literature of the 1990s openly cites the issue of the Arabs' alleged apathy for, or even open aversion to, the Allied cause during World War II. According to Morris Beckman, British colonial officers knew that in Palestine "the only available source of local trustworthy manpower was the Palestine Jewish Community."[72] The Arabs of Palestine were not willing to serve, and "by August 1942 […] there were more than three times as many Jewish volunteers in the British Army as Arabs."[73] What was to be expected, on the other hand, from the "mischievous Arab youth"?[74] It also suggests a correlation between the Arabs of Palestine and the Nazis. These are presented as two faces of the same coin, both being the latest embodiments of the eternal antisemitism the Jews have been forced to deal with throughout their history.[75]

A vast body of literature exists on the relationship between the Arab world and Fascism in the 1930s and 1940s, and beyond, fueling the historiography of so-called Islamofascism.[76] In Italy the argument that the Arabs of Palestine were allied with the Nazis has become a generally acknowledged historical fact, which is regularly mentioned by journalists and historians. Paolo Mieli, for example, suggests that many "Palestinians or Arabs, the distinction wasn't clear at the time […] sought to exterminate the Jews". [77] This idea principally originated from the actions that the Palestinian political and religious leader Mohammed Amin al-Husseini (sometimes spelled al-Husayni) undertook during the war.

A staunch anti-Zionist, al-Husseini moved to Berlin in November 1941, pursuing an alliance with Hitler in order to free the Middle East from British and French

influence, and impede the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. He issued statements against the British Empire, addressed to his fellow Muslims, and helped to raise a force of Muslim volunteers in the Balkans.[78] On one specific occasion, in May 1943, al-Husseini wrote to the Bulgarian Foreign Minister asking him not to implement a plan for the emigration of 4,500 Jews – including many children – to Palestine, and suggested "to send them where they will be placed under strict control, e.g. Poland."[79] Whether the Mufti was aware of the fact that this meant condemning them to almost certain death is a matter of conjecture. Fortunately, this particular group of refugees was never deported to Poland.[80]

In the Italian debate, al-Husseini is presented as a leader with unspecified but vast political and spiritual power over the Arabs of Palestine. Many facts surrounding this historical figure, however, are ignored. Al-Husseini (often written with the prefix Haj or Hajj, having carried out the mandatory pilgrimage to Mecca at a young age) belonged to a powerful family, and had previously shown an inclination to collaborate with the British authorities. It is probably for these reasons that the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, appointed him Grand Mufti – a newly established religious title – in 1921.[81] However, al-Husseini's power and influence over the Arab population never went unchallenged by other Arab clans, even when he was on good terms with the British authorities.[82] This was even more so the case when he fell from grace with the Mandate authorities, following his involvement in the anti-Jewish and anti-colonial Arab uprising of 1936. In 1937, British authorities thus forced him to leave Palestine. He first went to Lebanon, then under French rule. The 1936 revolt, or the Great Revolt, as it later came to be known, was a failure. It caused the Arabs of Palestine much suffering, and achieved very little in political terms.[83] Above all, it did not prevent the Jewish Community from growing in number, as well as in military and

economic power. The revolt, which ended in 1939, can be regarded as a struggle for leadership within the Arab community of Palestine. Al-Husseini took advantage of the state of disorder, and had several of his political adversaries assassinated, including a number of moderate Arabs willing to find a compromise with the Jews.[84] For all these reasons, al-Husseini's popularity among the Arabs of Palestine rapidly declined, and by the beginning of 1939 many within the Arab Higher Committee – the political organ that directed the uprising and comprised representatives of the most important Arab clans – were openly opposing the Grand Mufti. During a meeting of the Arab Higher Committee in January 1939, for example, the Palestinian political figure Awni Abd al-Hadi expressed the opinion that the continuation of the revolt had little to do with the good of the Arabs, and served "merely for the restoration of Haj Amin to his former office [as Grand Mufti]."[85] According to the British consul in Damascus Gilbert Mackereth, who wrote a detailed report of that meeting, al-Husseini's past ascendancy over the Arab Higher Committee appeared "to have vanished."[86]

Nine months later, the Grand Mufti made a desperate move to regain influence over Palestinian affairs. On 12 September 1939, British diplomat Sir Basil Newton informed the British Government that al-Husseini was "ready to advise all Arabs to cooperate in [the] present struggle against Germany and refrain from rebellion."[87] In other words, the soon-to-be ally of Hitler had offered to issue a plea against Germany. It is difficult to establish which of the two moves – al-Husseini's overture to the British or the subsequent alliance with the Germans – were more politically opportunistic. The British reaction to al-Husseini's offer was cool, to say the least. The consul in Damascus expressed the opinion that the "Mufti no longer counts among Syrians or Palestinians in Syria," and argued that any approach to him by the British authorities would be interpreted by the Arab population as a sign of weakness.[88] According to the British

consul in Beirut, the Mufti appeared "to have sunk into oblivion."[89] Similarly, the High Commissioner of Jerusalem defined Mufti's influence in the Middle East as "moribund."[90]

In sum, by the beginning of World War II, the Mufti was politically isolated. On the day war was declared, the French Government arrested the few men who had followed him into exile to Lebanon.[91] The ex-Mufti himself was put under house arrest, in spite of his expression of loyalty towards the French Government. He finally escaped to Baghdad disguised as a woman.[92] This was the man who, according to the pro-JBG faction, and according to many Italian historians, politicians, and journalists, held undisputed political and moral ascendancy over all of the Arabs of Palestine. This is simply untrue.

By 1941, the Mufti's influence in Palestine had reached a new low as he travelled to Rome, then Berlin. Other, lesser-known yet influential political figures, who were explicitly pro-British now held greater sway. One such was Sheikh 'Abd al-Qader al-Muzaffar, one of the leaders of the Palestinian national movement.[93] Al-Muzaffar was strongly committed to the containment of fascist influence in the Middle East, urging the British to take a much stronger line to counter the Mufti's machinations in Iraq. He expressed particular concerns that "the Jews could utilize such reliable information [the Mufti's pro-Nazi machinations in Iraq] in order to prove now and after the war that the Arabs were disloyal to the democracies."[94]

Ironically, the years in exile greatly enhanced the Mufti's reputation as a staunch defender of the Arabs' cause, and such fame momentarily revamped his political career after the war. Supported by the Arab League and aided by British inertia, he escaped trial as a collaborator of the Axis Powers, and was later appointed chairman of the newly created Higher Arab Executive.[95] His resurrection, however, was short-

lived. At the commencement of the Arab-Israeli War (May 1948–March 1949), the relationship between al-Husseini's faction and other components of the Arab political and military front was extremely strained. This was especially the case for Abdullah I of Jordan and the Arab Legion.[96] Even the local authorities of Palestine rebuffed him, preferring the Arab Legion to the Mufti's rule.[97] Thus overall, his influence over Palestinian affair was at best fleeting.

What then of Palestinian loyalties to the Allied cause? Here again there is a considerable difference between perception and reality, particularly as presented by the 1990s literature on the JBG. In September 1940, Arabs were invited to join a special battalion of the Royal East Kent Regiment, that was stationed in Palestine. The same offer was made to the Jews. Recruitment figures show that, from November 1940 to May 1941, 5,511 Arabs and 4,604 Jews volunteered.[98] Arab recruitment was aided by the 1939 White Paper, issued in response to the Great Revolt, that reassured them regarding British plans for Palestine.[99] Many Arab leaders openly approved the White Paper, while others welcomed it coolly but did not vehemently oppose it.[100] But there were practical reasons, too, as to why Arab recruitment flourished. The terms of service were less attractive to Palestinian Jews, whereas the low pay - roughly only half that offered to British personnel, was attractive to Arabs whose existing standard of living was significantly lower.[101]

The number of Jewish volunteers did eventually exceed those of Arab origin, particularly after the formation of the Palestine Regiment, in August 1942. This was largely the outcome of the extraordinary efforts made by the Zionist leaders, keen to prove that the Jewish loyalty to the Empire was greater than the Arab. This line of argument was reiterated in the 1990s literature on the JBG. Indeed, recruiting greater numbers than the Arabs was such important a goal that, at times, the Jewish Agency

run “a campaign of victimisation and intimidation” to force Jewish “shirkers” to volunteer for service to the Crown.[102]

Arabs of Palestine were also active in combat units too. This is the case of the 51st Middle East Commando, a mixed Jewish-Arab unit, which fought in Abyssinia against the Italians. Here, the commando’s Jewish Chaplain, Rabbi L. Rabinowitz, commented: “[T]he Jewish men were the first to acknowledge that the Arabs showed the same mettle as they did.”[103]

In sum, the Jews of Palestine did enlist in the British Army in a larger number than the Arabs, and from a smaller population base.[104] Most Arabs were probably indifferent to the outcome of the War. Mussolini’s strongly pro-Arab nationalism policy may even have convinced many that their interests would be better served following the victory of the Axis powers. In this respect, however, Manuela Williams stresses how ‘the response generated by Italian propaganda in the Arab world, and in particular in Palestine, was neither unanimously positive nor proportionate to the efforts made by the Italian government’[105] Regardless of the effectiveness of Mussolini’s propaganda, it is a fact that a considerable number of Palestinian Arabs **did join the British Army, also serving in combat units. They, however, did not participate directly to the liberation of Italy from Nazi-Fascist rule as the soldiers of the JBG did (albeit they role was modest).**

Conclusion

The contenders in the 25 April dispute have seemingly hijacked the 25 April anniversary, importing Middle Eastern issues into a celebration that used to be about the Italians’ anti-fascist identity. The quarrel has very little to do with what happened on the riverbanks of the Senio in spring 1945. Its context is, instead, to be found in

contemporary Middle Eastern and Italian politics. Its domestic origins rest primarily with the institutional Left, who renounced its role as the sole custodian of the values of the Resistance. This opened the way to all kinds of groups, allowing them to introduce their own political stances into the celebration, as well as their own interpretation of what Fascism, anti-fascism, and Resistance mean today. As such the 25 April anniversary has become a platform for dissent against imperialism, racism, the Berlusconi governments, war in Iraq, the construction of high-speed rail in the North of Italy, and so forth. The Italian partisan brigades and their insignias, which used to be central, have progressively been marginalized to make room for other symbols, including Palestinian keffiyehs and Stars of David.

The struggle between Palestinian flags and Israeli flags in the 25 April arena is in many respects an exceptional case of clashing symbols. We have two flags representing two national communities. One is without a state; the other feels under constant threat. They are competing for the same public space, which is, however, located in a third nation. The Palestinian flag is today 'metonymic of the struggle of oppressed people everywhere".[106] However, the flag of Israel has transcended its national borders too. In Northern Ireland, for example, Protestant communities have in the past displayed Israeli flags as a response to the adoption of Palestinian colours by neighbouring Catholics. It was meant to positively characterise Irish Protestants as frontline fighters of a global war against terrorism.[107] In the case of Italian politics, the Israeli flag has come to symbolize uncompromising adhesion to Western values and political alignment with the USA.

As mentioned above, the problem of who gets to decide what anti-fascism means today is central to an understanding of the political tensions surrounding the 25 April commemoration. The rediscovery / invention of the JBG history has provided the

Italian Jewish communities with the opportunity to claim ownership of anti-fascism, to reconcile anti-fascism with Zionism, and, in a sense, to redefine themselves. In Italy Israel nowadays enjoys more political support and a far more positive press coverage than it did 30 years ago.[108] More importantly, anti-imperialism has virtually disappeared from the speeches of progressive politicians. Only on the radical Left does anti-imperialism still carry significant weight, which is why it vehemently protested against the presence of Israeli/JBG flags at the 25 April parade: it still interprets the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of anti-imperialism.

It is open to speculation whether the anti-Israeli and anti-Zionism discourse of leftist militants might be tainted, perhaps unwittingly, by antisemitism. This is, of course, an important matter, especially now that antisemitism seems to be on the rise in Italy as well as in other European countries.[109] To argue, as some authors have done, that antisemitism and anti-Zionism substantially overlap, and that the latter can be regarded as antisemitism in disguise, is perhaps a bit of a stretch.[110] However, it is difficult not to agree with those who draw attention to the danger posed by criticisms that – while being addressed at Zionism or Israeli policies – end up drawing on antisemitist stereotypes, thus disseminating anti-Jewish prejudice and hatred.[111]

While historically unreliable, the JBG literature of the 1990s nonetheless placed the Jewish Brigade Group back into the spotlight. They are a product of the time, marked by the crisis of the Oslo Peace Process, and contain a number of topoi that are characteristic of the Zionist reading of the Jewish people's history. For example, they confer a teleological character to the history of the Jews, connecting historical events in such a way that the creation of the Jewish Brigade appears as a necessary step towards the predestined completion of the Jewish people's history: the foundation of the State of Israel.[112] The characters of the JBG fighters that we encounter in these

books, sometimes presented as the heirs of the Maccabees, can be seen as a late configuration of the "muscle Jew" ideal, as described by Todd Presner: the tough, aggressive, and battle-ready Jew. This has been the ideal male Jew of Zionism since its foundation, and as a counter to the stereotypical Eastern European Jew: combat-shy, physically weak, and exclusively devoted to intellectual activities.[113]

These 1990s texts hint at the theme of Islamofascism. To some extent, this was a polemical reaction to a very similar rhetorical device, which has been used many times against Israel, and which should be labeled as not only grossly inaccurate, but also as intrinsically antisemite: that Israel is acting towards the Palestinian Arabs like Nazi Germany did towards the Jews.[114] I would argue, however, that the insistence on the issue of the pro-fascist sympathies in the Arab world serves especially to defuse left-wing anti-Zionism. This essentially arises from an interpretation of Zionism as an imperialist ideology. Consequently, the foundation of Israel is seen as a colonial enterprise.[115] But if linkages between the Palestinian national movement and Fascism could be conclusively demonstrated, then this would undermine left-wing activists' support for the Palestinian cause. This explains the almost manic attention several authors have given to the life and times of Mohammed Amin al-Husseini.[116]

In conclusion, this article does not in any way underestimate the importance of the Jewish Brigade. The JBG deserves to be studied more in depth. Particularly important is the role the JBG played in helping the survivors of the shattered European Jewish Communities, many of whom were still children, when they began to flow into Italy immediately after the end of the war. They not only supported them materially, but also prepared them for the Aliyah Bet, the emigration to the Holy Land.[117] More studies about the units of the British Army that recruited both Arabs and Jews from Palestine, some of which I have mentioned in this article, are also necessary. Indeed, I

believe that more scholarly research on this latter topic could positively impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by showing that those who are today considered as eternal enemies in reality served and fought together not very long ago, **under the same flag.**

Notes

[1] Claudio Pavone, "The Two levels of Public Use of the Past," in *Political Uses of the Past: The Recent Mediterranean Experience*, ed. Giovanni Levi and Jacques Revel (New York, 2002), 74 - 86, 75.
[2] Margaret MacMillan *The Uses and Abuses of History* (London, 2010); Jeremy Black's *Contesting History: Narratives of Public History* (New York, 2014). An interesting collection of essays, which focuses on Germany and Eastern Europe, is *History and Politics: Remembrance as Legitimation*, edited by Katarzyna Kącka and Ralph Schattkowsky (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2018). These historians have all contributed to an analysis initiated by Jürgen Habermas, in "Concerning the Public Use of History," *New German Critique* 44 (Spring-Summer 1988): 40–50 (Special Issue on the Historikerstreit).
[3] Nicola Gallerano, "History and the Public Use of History," *Diogenes* 42, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 85 - 102, 85.
[4] William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington, DC, 2001).
[5] I principally examined documents of the British War Office (WO32 - War Office and successors: Registered Files), Foreign Office (FO 371 - Political Department, General correspondence, and FO 684 - Consulate, Damascus, Syria: General Correspondence), and Colonial Office (CO733 – Palestine Original Correspondence). These documents can all be found at The National Archive (TNA), in Kew, London.
[6] Émile Durkheim *The Elementary Form of Religious Life* (New York, 1995 [1912]), 123. According to Michael E. Geisler, flags as well as other national symbols are 'charged with the difficult task of *creating a nation* [italics in the original]', see *National Symbols, Fractured Identities: Contesting the National Narrative* (Lebanon, NH, 2005), XV, which includes a chapter about national symbols in Jewish Israel.
[7] See, for example, the struggle taking place in Turkey between the Turkish and the Kurdish, see Günter Seufert 'The Sacred Aura of the Turkish Flag', *New Perspectives on Turkey* 16 (2015): 53-61; or the heated debate in the United States about the display of the Flags of the Confederate States, see Jonathan I. Leib 'Heritage versus Hate: A Geographical Analysis of Georgia's Confederate Battle Flag Debate', *Southeastern Geographer* 35, no. 1 (1995): 27 – 57.
[8] Valuable anthologies of Zionist thought include the classic text by Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea. A Historical Analysis and a Reader* (Philadelphia and Jerusalem, 1997), and what can be considered as its expansion, Gil Troy's *The Zionist Ideas. Visions for the Jewish Homeland - Then, Now, Tomorrow* (Lincoln, NE, 2018).
[9] Steven Beller, *Antisemitism. A Very Short Introduction* (New York, 2007), 1.
[10] Ibid., 2. I have adopted the orthography "antisemitism" instead of "anti-Semitism," as the former is recommended by Beller, ibid.,1, as well as by other authors, see David Hirsch, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (London and New York, 2018), 10; Deborah Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here and Now* (New York, 2019), 43–48.
[11] On 25 April 1945, the National Liberation Committee of Upper Italy ordered a national insurrection. Partisans disarmed and captured the Fascist forces, effectively ending the Italian Social Republic, the German puppet state formally ruled by Benito Mussolini. Most of the German troops were already on their way to the Alpine passes and Germany. On the genesis and meaning of 25 April see Maurizio Ridolfi, *Le feste nazionali* (Bologna, 2003), 199–206; Cristina Cenci, "Rituale e memoria collettiva: Le celebrazioni del 25 aprile," in *Le memorie della Repubblica*, ed. Leonardo Paggi (Florence, 1999): 337–42.
[12] The term civil war has been long opposed by left-wing historians, who preferred to speak of Liberation War. It became a generally accepted term following the publication of Claudio Pavone's *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità della Resistenza* (Turin, 1991). On Pavone's book see the review by Philip Cooke in *Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 1 (March 2016): 215-217.
[13] "Roma, la Comunità ebraica assente al corteo del 25 aprile: 'ANPI non rappresenta veri partigiani,'" *La Repubblica*, April 19, 2017.
[14] See S. J. Woolf, "Introduzione. La storiografia e la Repubblica italiana," in *L'Italia repubblicana vista da fuori (1945–2000)*, ed. S. J. Woolf (Bologna, 2007), 47. The issue of the public use of history has aroused the interest of several Italian historians over the last decades. See, for example, Nicola Gallerano, *L'uso pubblico della storia* (Milan, 1995); Gianpasquale Santomassimo, ed., *La notte della democrazia italiana* (Milan, 2003); Giovanni Orsina, "The Republic after Berlusconi: Some Reflections on Historiography, Politics and the Political Use of History in post-1994 Italy," *Modern Italy* 15, no. 1 (2010): 77–92.
[15] See B. W. Painter, Jr., "Renzo de Felice and the Historiography of Italian Fascism," *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 2 (April 1990): 391–405. Paolo Pezzino, "The Italian Resistance between

History and Memory," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10, no. 4 (2005): 396–412; and Philip Cooke, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (New York, 2011), 149–89. On the post-1989 historiographical reassessment of the PCI see Gianluca Fantoni, "After the Fall: Politics, the Public Use of History and the Historiography of the Italian Communist Party, 1991–2011," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 4 (2014): 815–36.

[16] Michael J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917–48* (New York, 2014), 330–31.

[17] Martin Gilbert, *Churchill, A Life* (London, 2000), 429, 435.

[18] Different sources report different figures. Bernard Casper, a Senior Chaplain to the Brigade, lists 44 names of "sons of Israel who fell in action while serving with the Jewish Brigade". *With the Jewish Brigade* (London, 1947), 7. Morris Beckman writes that, within the JBG, 83 soldiers were "killed in action or died from wounds", whereas 200 were wounded. *The Jewish Brigade* (Staplehurst, Kent, 1998), 161. According to Howard Blum, 57 died and 150 were wounded. *The Brigade. An Epic Story of Vengeance, Salvation and World War II* (London, 2001), 138.

[19] See, for example, Beth Hatefutsoth, *The Living Bridge: The Meeting of the Volunteers from Eretz Israel with the Holocaust Survivors* (Tel Aviv, 1983).

[20] No mention of the JBG is made, for example, in Shelfold Bidwell and Dominick Graham's *Tug of War: The Battle for Italy 1943–1945* (London, 1986), Richard Lamb's *War in Italy (1943–1945). A Brutal Story*, (London, 1993), or in Edwin P. Hoyt's *Backwater War. The Allied Campaign in Italy, 1943–1945* (London, 2002). Although more recent publications do include some reference to the JBG, they generally provide very little information: see, for example, Richard Doherty's *Eight Army in Italy, 1943–45. The Long Hard Slog* (Barnsley, 2014), 178. In other instances the authors only mention, in passing, the presence of the JBG in the Italian theatre of war, as for example James Holland, *Italy's Sorrow. A Year of War, 1944–1945* (New York, 2008), 493, and Ian Gooderson, *A Hard Way to Make a War: The Italian Campaign in the Second World War* (London, 2008), 292.

[21] *La brigata. Una storia di guerra, di vendetta e di redenzione*, translated into Italian by Maria Eugenia Morin (Milan, 2002). The book was reprinted in 2005, 2006 (by NET publisher), and in 2012.

[22] See the story evoked in the article by Davide Romano, published in Bet Magazine Mosaico (the official website of the Milanese Jewish Community): http://www.mosaico-cem.it/attualita-e-news/italia/la-brigata-ebraica-e-la-manifestazione-del-25-aprile-il-racconto-di-una-lenta-ma-crescente-accettazione.

[23] In his autobiography, journalist Aldo Zargani – at the time a 12-year-old, Italian Jewish boy who had fortuitously escaped deportation during the War – described his emotional encounter with the soldiers of the Jewish Brigade in 1945. *Certe promesse d'amore* (Bologna, 1997), 8–9. See also Gualtiero Marpurgo, *Il Violino Liberato* (Milan, 2008), 16–18.

[24] As pointed out by Gunther Plaut, the Star of David, or Magen David, was initially an emblem for the Zionist movement, and was not a generally recognised Jewish symbol until the XX century, *The Magen David. How the six-pointed star became an emblem for the Jewish people* (Washington, 1991).

[25] See the ANPI press release issued on April 8, 2015, "Il 25 Aprile deve essere una festa pacifica ed unitaria," available on the ANPI's national website: http://www.anpi.it/articoli/1330/roma-il-25-aprile-deve-essere-una-festa-pacifica-ed-unitaria'. In Milan, the Jewish Brigade marched, escorted by militants of the centre-left Partito Democratico (Democratic Party), which did not prevent disturbances.

[26] The list of the Roman-based, pro-Palestinian pressure groups that were at loggerheads with the local Jewish Community included Fronte Palestina (Palestine Front), Rete Romana Palestina (Roman Palestine Network), and Rappresentanza Palestina in Italia (Palestinian Representation in Italy).

[27] 'Dall'Ara Pacis a Santa Severa la Liberazione di tutti', *La Repubblica*, 24 April 2016, available at roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2016/04/24/news/dall_ara_pacis_a_santa_severa_la_liberazione_di_tutti-138372237/.

[28] *The Independent*, October, 21, 2015. For historical accuracy, see Dina Porat, "Setting the Record Straight," available at: https://www.yadvashem.org/author/dina-porat.html.

[29] On April 25, 2018 and 2019, the Roman Jewish Community once again organized a separate event.

[30] PD's pro-Israeli realignment had therefore initiated a few years before. In 2005, for example, the leader of the Democratici di Sinistra (PD's political predecessor) launched a campaign called "La Sinistra per Israele," (The Left for Israel). A manifesto, signed by many left-wing intellectuals and politicians, vowed to "counter the anti-Israeli prejudices that part of the Italian Left still holds." The manifesto is available at: http://www.inchiestaonline.it/osservatorio-palestina/e-possibile-una-sinistra-per-israele.

[31] Simon Levis Sullam, *L'Archivio Antiebraico. Il linguaggio dell'antisemitismo moderno* (Bari, 2008), XIV.

[32] Raffaella A. Del Sarto and Nathalie Tocci, "Italy's Politics without Policy: Balancing Atlanticism and Europeanism in the Middle East," *Modern Italy* 13, no. 2 (2008): 135–53.

[33] Arturo Marzano, "Italian Foreign Policy towards Israel: The Turning Point of Berlusconi Government (2001–2006)," *Israel Studies* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 79–103.
[34] Alberto Testa and Gary Armstrong, "'We are against Islam!' The Lega Nord and the Islamic folk devil," *Sage Open* 2, no. 4 (2012): 1–14.
[35] The most influential of these was undoubtedly *The Rage and the Pride* (2001), by the New York-based, Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci. A critique of Fallaci's book, which sold 1.5 million copies in Italy and half a million abroad, can be found in Arturo Marzano, "Israele tra antisionismo e islamofobia," in *L'Italia racconta Israele*. *1948–2018*, ed. Mario Toscano (Rome, 2018), 169–92.
[36] Moni Ovadia, "La perversione del senso del 25 aprile," *Il Manifesto*, April 11, 2015. Journalist Gad Lerner claimed that the introduction of the JBG colour in the 25 April parade was little more than a polemical counterpoint to the presence of Palestinian flags, and proposed to ban both, http://www.gadlerner.it/2015/04/06/diciamo-no-a-chi-importa-la-guerra-del-medio-oriente-nella-festa-del-25-aprile-italiano/.
[37] "Dove stanno i 'veri' partigiani", *Il Manifesto*, April 21, 2017.
[38] "Il Gran Mufti alleato di Hitler contro gli ebrei," *La Stampa*, April 20, 2017.
[39] Primo Fornaciari *I ragazzi venuti dalla terra di Israele*. *Luoghi e storie della Brigata Ebraica in Romagna* (Ravenna, 2011). An appendix details the location of the JBG soldiers' burial sites. Samuel Rocca and Luca Cristini's *La Brigata Ebraica* (Rodengo Saiano, 2012). This is a military history book, containing a vast array of iconographical material.
[40] In all likelihood, she was confusing the JBG with the story of Enzo Sereni (see note 41). Podcast available at: https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/507047/speciale-spazio-transnazionale-vi-raccontiamo-la-brigata-ebraica. Quartapelle's statement is at minute 33:45.
[41] See Luisa Mangoni, "Ebraismo e antifascismo," *Studi Storici* 47, no. 1 (January-March 2006): 65–79. Other Italian Jews gave an important contribution to the war effort by serving in special branches of the British Army; Vittorio Segre and Renato Mieli, for example, worked in the Psychological Warfare Branch, while Enzo Sereni was in the Special Operations Executive. He was captured while on a mission in the North of Italy, and subsequently killed in the Dachau concentration camp. See Vittorio Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew: An Italian Story* (London, 1988), and Ruth Bondy, *The Emissary: A life of Enzo Sereni* (London, 1978).
[42] Toscano, *La "Porta di Sion." L'Italia e l'immigrazione clandestina Ebraica in Palestina (1945–1948)* (Bologna, 1990), 21. Particularly significant with respect to the topic discussed in this article is the ride of the Ghetto of Rome, occurred on 16 October 1943 and resulting in the deportation of over 1000 Roman Jews, see Giacomo DeBenedetti and Estelle Gilson *October 16, 1943: Eight Jews* (Notre Dame, 2001). On the role of the Fascist authorities in the deportation and killings of Italian and alien Jews see Simon Lewis Sullam, *The Italian Executioners. The Genocide of the Jews of Italy* (Princeton and Oxford, 2018).
[43] Sonia Zanier, "The Representations of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Italian New Left's Periodicals of the 1970s," *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 14 (2018): 54–71.
[44] Luca Riccardi, *L'internazionalismo difficile. La diplomazia del PCI e il Medio Oriente dalla crisi petrolifera alla caduta del muro di Berlino (1973–1989)* (Soveria Mannelli, 2013), 397–550.
[45] Matteo Di Figlia, *Israele e la Sinistra* (Rome, 2012), 3.
[46] Proposals to establish a Palestinian flag were put forward as early as 1929, as a reaction to the presence of Zionist flags in the Holy Land. The various component of the non-Jewish Palestinian society, however, failed to come to a consensus on how a Palestinian flag should look like. In particular, Christians insisted that a cross should appear along with the Islamic crescent. Representatives of the Palestinian national movement ended up adopting different versions of the 'Arab flag', namely the black, white, green and red flag of the 1916 anti-Ottoman Arab revolt. One of said versions is now the flag of the State of Palestine. It is worth noticing that the Arabs of Palestine did not play a significant role in the anti-Ottoman revolt. Nonetheless, the 'Arab flag' was preferred because it had come to symbolize pan-Arab nationalism. See Tamir Sorek, "The orange and the 'Cross in the Crescent': imagining Palestine in 1929," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 3 (2004): 269 – 291. An analysis of the significance of the colours of the 1916 Arab flag is in Tim Marshall *Worth Dying For. The Power and Politics of Flags* (London, 2017), 115 – 123.
[47] Arturo Marzano and Gury Schwarz, *Attentato alla Sinagoga. Roma, 9 ottobre 1982. Il conflitto israelo-palestinese e l'Italia* (Rome, 2013).
[48] See, for example, the speech Davide Romano gave at the opening of an exhibition about the JBG in Lodi, on November 9, 2018: "Many find exception with the soldiers of the JBG, because they were not just Jews but Zionists, that is, Jews who wanted the birth of the State of Israel." A video of the speech is available at: https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/556930/inaugurazione-della-mostra-la-brigata-ebraica-in-italia-e-la-liberazione-1943-1945 (Romano's claim is at minute 8:15).

[49] The exhibition, sponsored by Rome Council, was called "The Jewish Brigade in Italy 1943–45." It was held in Rome a first time in 2003, then again in 2014. The 2014 exhibition's catalogue is available at:
http://romaebraica.it/file/12%20la%20Brigata%20ebraica,%202015.pdf.
[50] Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade*, 47.
[51] Blum, *The Brigade*, 129.
[52] One of the film's interviewees, Arie Pinchu, says that "the disbanding of the Brigade was a political move. It wasn't a military move. The Brigade was the force that kept the Jewish refugees close to the idea of Zionism. And they decided to disband it."
[53] The novel was first published in Israel, in 1965. Three years later, it was translated from the original Hebrew into English by David S. Segal, and published in New York by the Canadian publisher Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Bartov's novel appears less apologetic and less politically concerned than the 1990s literature, and it offers a disenchanted depiction of the events surrounding the JBG.
[54] Bartov, *The Brigade*, 46–47.
[55] Prime Minister's Personal Minute, Palestine: Jewish Brigade, Jewish Hospitality Committee, WO 214/47, 26 Jul. 1944.
[56] Bartov, *The Brigade*, 55.
[57] Blum, *The Brigade*, 38.
[58] For an exception see Bruno Archi's *Storia generale della Brigata Ebraica. 1939–1945. Verso la proclamazione dello Stato di Israele* (Rome, 2014), 131.
[59] TNA, OVERSEAS: (Israel) (Code 0(A/X)): Conditions of Service of Jewish Brigade, reference WO 32/10873, 1944–1947.
[60] Machinery for posting, etc. personnel to the Jewish Brigade Group, at TNA, OVERSEAS: (Israel) (Code 0(A/X)): Conditions of Service of Jewish Brigade, reference WO 32/10873, 1944–1947.
[61] Most Secret Cipher Telegram from the War Office, 2 Sept. 1944, at TNA, OVERSEAS: (Israel) (Code 0(A/X)): Conditions of Service of Jewish Brigade, reference WO 32/10873, 1944–1947.
[62] Cipher Telegram from Allied Force Headquarters to War Office, 28 Jan. 1945, Secret, at TNA, FO 371/45397 recruiting for JBG Code 31, file 192." On the non always idyllic relationship between British soldiers and Jewish/Palestinian soldiers within the JBG see the memoirs by Michael Evenari, *The awakening desert: the autobiography of an Israeli scientist* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press), 69 – 70.
[63] See Casper, *With the Jewish Brigade*, p. 20.
[64] Top Secret Cipher Telegram from the War Office to 21 Army Group, 8 Jun. 1945. The telegram says that "[n]on-Jews are being gradually replaced by Jewish recruits."
[65] Rabbi L. Rabinowitz, *Soldiers from Judaea. Palestinian Jewish Units in the Middle East, 1941–1943* (London, 1944), 12.
[66] However, members of other Jewish Communities worldwide were eager to enlist. Yet, their aspirations were frustrated by the strict recruitment guidelines established by HMG. See, for example, the letter from *jeunesse juive*, an association of young Jews from Morocco. OVERSEAS: (Israel) (Code 0(A/X)): Conditions of Service of Jewish Brigade, WO 32/10873, 19 Nov. 1944.
[67] *Cadre of Palestinians for Fd regiment and A tk Bty of Jewish Brigade*, in Jewish Brigade: formation, order of battle, organisation and control, WO 204/1755, 18 Nov. 44.
[68] OVERSEAS: (Israel) (Code 0(A/X)): Conditions of Service of Jewish Brigade, WO 32/10873, 19 Jan. 1945, Restricted. (201–4).
[69] "Unmasking the 'Muscle Jew': The Jewish Soldier in British War Service, 1899–1945," in *Racializing the Soldier*, ed. G. Schaffer (London, 2016), 187–208, (201 – 4).
[70] See Yoav Gelber, *Nation and History, Israeli Historiography between Zionism and Post-Zionism* (London, 2011), 229. See also Yehuda Bauer, *From Diplomacy to Resistance. A History of Jewish Palestine, 1939–1945* (Skokie, IL, 2001), 335–36.
[71] According to Bernard M. Casper, who was Senior Chaplain to the Brigade, as many as 54 countries were represented in the Brigade. Casper, *With the Jewish Brigade*, 21.
[72] Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade*, 26.
[73] Blum, *The Brigade*, 5.
[74] Ibid., 9.
[75] Ibid., 87.
[76] Peter Wein, "Arabs and Fascism: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives," *Die Welt des Islam* 52, nos. 3 and 4 (2012): 331–50. See also, in the same Special Issue, Alexander Flores's review of the key texts on Islamofascism: "The Arabs as Nazis? Some Reflections on 'Islamofascism' and Arab Anti-Semitism," 450–70.
[77] Mieli made this claim during a radio program, broadcast in view of the celebration of April 25, 2017. A podcast is available at: https://www.radioradicale.it/scheda/507047/speciale-spazio-transnazionale-vi-

raccontiamo-la-brigata-ebraica. Mieli's statement is at minute 14:35. Journalist Daria Gorodisky made the same claim in an article published in the newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, April 26, 2015, 13.

[78] Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–2001* (New York, 2001), 165–66. For an analysis of violently anti-Zionist and antisemitic speeches given by the Mufti while in Germany, see Jeffrey Herf, "Convergence: The Classic Case Nazi Germany, Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism during WWII," in *Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism in Historical Perspective. Convergence and Divergence*, ed. J. Herf (New York, 2007), 50–70 (in particular 60–70).

[79] Klaus Gensicke, *The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Nazis: The Berlin years* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011), 117–20.

[80] Ibid., 122–23.

[81] Ibid., 11–2. On Al-Husseini's early years see Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 100–1.

[82] David Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany's War* (Cambridge, MA, London, 2014), 41–42.

[83] Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 159–60.

[84] Yehuda Bauer, *Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London, 1979), 57.

[85] Foreign Office: Consulate, Damascus, Syria, Correspondence, FO 684/12. Palestine, Seychelles deportees and their visit to Grand Mufti, file number 2632/2, 19 Jan. 1939.

[86] Ibid. Mackereth's report was mostly based on declarations that the Arab Higher Committee made public.

[87] Foreign Office: Consulate, Damascus, Syria, Correspondence, FO 684/12. File number 872/2 (1939).

[88] FO 684/12, telegram from HM Consul Damascus to Foreign office, 16 Sept. 1939.

[89] FO 684/12, telegram from HM Consul General Beirut to Foreign office, 20 Sept. 1939.

[90] FO 684/12, telegram from British Embassy in Baghdad HM Consul Damascus, 4 Oct. 1939.

[91] FO 684/12, savingram to Foreign office, 7 Sept. 1939.

[92] FO 684/12, telegram from HM Consul General Beirut to Foreign office, 18 Oct. 1939.

[93]On al-Muzaffar see Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Waltham, MA, 2015), 24–25.

[94] Report of a conversation with Sheikh Al-Muzfar [sic], in PREM 4 52/3, Dr. Weizmann and Jewish Agency, February 1941. As predicted by Al-Muzfar, the Jewish Agency did use this argument after the War, for example to convince US President Harry Truman of the necessity of a Jewish state. Allis Radosh and Ronald Radosh, *A Safe Haven: Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel* (New York, 2009), 84.

[95] Haim Levenberg, *The Military Preparations of the Arab Community in Palestine, 1945–1948* (London, 1993), 31.

[96] Philip Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin Al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York, 1988), 110–22.

[97] Benny Morris, *The Road to Jerusalem. Glubb Pasha, Palestine and the Jews* (London and New York, 2002), 118. At some point, the Mufti's gangs even began to terrorise anyone who had dealings with the Arab Legion. Ibid., 128.

[98] Ronald W. Davis, "Recruitment in Palestine, 1940–43," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1979): 55–76, 74.

[99] The 1939 White Paper promised the establishment, within ten years, of an independent Palestine State, "one in which Arabs and Jews share government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded." It also limited Jewish immigration to Palestine for a period of five years. The text of the 1939 White Paper is available at: https://web.archive.org/web/20160420184256/http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp.

[100] John Marlow, *The Seat of Pilate. An Account of the Palestinian Mandate* (London, 1959), 157.

[101] CO 733/448/10 Recruitment in Palestine, Palestine Regiment, 9 Jan. 1942.

[102] CO 733/448/10 Recruitment in Palestine, Palestine Regiment, 25 Aug. 1942.

[103] Rabbi L. Rabinowitz, *Soldiers from Judaea. Palestinian Jewish Units in the Middle East, 1941–1943* (London, 1944), 23.

[104] In 1939 there were 1,060,593 Arabs in Palestine (including around 55,000 nomads) and 455,329 Jews, respectively 69 and 30 per cent of the total population. In 1945, the two groups had risen to 1,267,456 (68 per cent) and 570,935 (31 per cent). See Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine. Population History and Statistics of the late Ottoman Period and the Mandate* (New York, 1990), 35–36.

[105] Manuela A. Williams, *Mussolini's Propaganda Abroad: Subversion in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, 1935-1940* (London, 2016), 63.

[106] Thomas H. Eriksen 'Some questions about flags', in *Flag, Nation and Symbolism in Europe and America*, ed. Thomas H. Eriksen and Richard Jenkins (New York, 2007), 11. Israeli authorities enforced a ban on the Palestinian flag in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from 1967 to 1993, which may have contributed in making the Palestinian colours an international symbol of rebellion against oppression.

[107] Andrew Hill and Andrew White 'The Flying of Israeli Flags in Northern Ireland', *Global Studies in Culture and Power* 15, no. 1 (2008): 31 - 50.
[108] Mario Toscano, *L'Italia racconta Israele*. *1948–2018* (Rome, 2018).
[109] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Antisemitism. Overview of Data Available in the European Union 2004–2014* (October 2015).
[110] In the introduction of *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in Contemporary World*, ed. Robert T. Wistrich (Basingstoke, 1990), historian Robert Wistrich argues that "contemporary anti-Zionism and antisemitism often resemble Siamese twins.", 7. In left-wing discourse, anti-Zionism, and at times antisemitism, can emerge in connection to – or be a by-product of – anti-Americanism. For a critique of this phenomenon see Brian Klug, "A Plea for Distinctions: Disentangling Anti-Americanism from Anti-Semitism," in *The Anti-American Century*, ed. Ivan Krastev and Alan McPherson (Budapest, 2007): 127–60.
[111] Marzano, "Israele tra antisionismo e islamofobia," 83–86.
[112] This sort of historical determinism can be seen in many texts, for example in an early documentary film about the JBG, *Road To Liberty* (Norman Lourie, 1946, 11 minutes), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u87dEy-9rE&t=24s. On the Zionist reading of the Jewish past see Yael Zerubavel *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago and London, 1995), 13 – 38.
[113] See Todd Samuel Presner, *Muscular Judaism. The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (New York, 2007).
[114] This has been termed as "Holocaust inversion," see Lesley Klaff, "Holocaust Inversion," *Israel Studies* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2019): 73–90.
[115] On this point, and on the prejudices this interpretation has given rise to within the Left, see Gadi Luzzato Voghera, *Antisemitismo a sinistra* (Turin, 2007), 53–54.
[116] The most detailed of the many biographies dedicated to the Mufti is also the first ever published: Joseph B. Schechtman's *The Mufti and the Fuehrer. The Story of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and his Unholy Alliance with Nazism* (London and New York, 1965).
[117] Toscano, *La "Porta di Sion"*, 35–46; Dina Porat, "One Side of a Jewish Triangle in Italy: The Encounter of Italian Jews with Holocaust Survivors and with Hebrew Soldiers and Zionist Representatives in Italy, 1944-1946," in *Italia Judaica, Gli ebrei nell'Italia unita 1870–1945. Atti del IV convegno internazionale, Siena 12–16 giugno 1989* (Rome, 1993), 487–513.