

Jerusalem and the Jewish people, by Benedetto Musolino.* **A historical and psychological reinterpretation**

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Abstract. Leading exponent of the Italian Risorgimento, Benedetto Musolino (Pizzo, 1809-Pizzo, 1885), was one of the precursors of political Zionism. Active in the Neapolitan revolution, he played a key role in the Roman Republic and in the *Expedition of the Thousand*. After holding the office of Deputy for six terms, he was elected Senator of the Kingdom in the XIV legislature. Among his most important works, published long after his death *La rivoluzione del 1848 nelle Calabrie (The Revolution of 1848 in Calabria)*. Ed. by S. Musolino. Naples, 1903; *Giuseppe Mazzini e i rivoluzionari italiani (Giuseppe Mazzini and the Italian revolutionaries)*. Ed. by P. Alatri. Cosenza, 1982. Written in 1851, *Jerusalem and the Jewish People* theorizes and argues in the framework of an Ottoman-British Alliance, the rebuilding of a Jewish homeland in the lands where the Jewish civilization took shape in ancient times. The book remains unedited and was rediscovered at the beginnings of the twentieth century, thanks to the action of the first exponents of Italian Zionism. The book was published a century after its composition, in 1951, on the initiative of the President of the Union of Italian Israelite Communities Raffaele Cantoni, and Dante Lattes, with a broad introduction by the historian Gino Luzzatto. The new edition was edited by David Meghnagi- Florence, 2014.

Keywords: Anti-Semitism, *Eretz Israel*, Jewish emancipation, British Empire, Ottoman Empire, Palestine, Italian Risorgimento, Zionism.

Riassunto. Esponente di primo piano del Risorgimento italiano, Benedetto Musolino (Pizzo, 1809-Pizzo, 1885), è uno dei precursori del sionismo politico. Esponente della sinistra risorgimentale, ebbe un ruolo importante nella rivoluzione napoletana, nella Repubblica romana e nella spedizione dei Mille. Dopo avere ricoperto per sei mandati la carica di deputato, fu eletto senatore del regno nella XIV legislatura. Tra le sue opere più importanti, pubblicate molto dopo la morte *La Rivoluzione del 1848 nelle Calabrie* (a cura di S. Musolino); *Giuseppe Mazzini e i rivoluzionari italiani*. (A cura di P. Alatri). Cosenza, 1982). Scritta con mezzo secolo di anticipo, rispetto all'opera di Herzl, *La Gerusalemme ed il Popolo ebreo*, fu riscoperta mezzo secolo dopo, grazie all'azione dei primi nuclei del sionismo italiano. Il libro fu pubblicato un secolo dopo la sua composizione, nel 1951, per iniziativa del Presidente dell'Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane, Raffaele Cantoni, e di Dante Lattes con una ampia introduzione dello storico Gino Luzzatto. La nuova edizione è stata curata da David Meghnagi, Firenze, 2014.

Parole chiave: Antisemitismo, Emancipazione ebraica, Eretz Israel, Impero britannico, Impero ottomano, Palestina, Risorgimento italiano, Sionismo.

“And if in nature there is the sacred principle that every people, every human being has the right to his share of the land, to a room anywhere on this planet, there cannot of course be a people, a government or an individual who can contest the Jews' right of ownership or privilege over Palestine, a place they have never morally or politically renounced. A place they have never even personally and materially abandoned. Hence every powerful, philanthropic and generous government should contribute to removing this ancient mark from humankind, returning to the land of

* Benedetto Musolino, *Gerusalemme ed il popolo ebreo* (1851). Biographical notes by Francesco Musolino. Preface by professor Gino Luzzatto. Rome: La Rassegna Mensile d'Israel, 1951. New edition edited by David Meghnagi: Florence: Libri Liberi, 2014. The Italian version of this paper, entitled “Gerusalemme ed il popolo ebreo di Benedetto Musolino. Una rivisitazione storica e psicologica”, has been published in *Trauma and Memory*, 2021, 9, 3: 84-109 (DOI: 10.12869/TM2021-3-01).

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their fathers a people so deserving and so just... Wake up from long sleep and move, because it is time to operate ... Get together from all corners of the earth, because the time has come to rehabilitate your fathers' room.” (B. Musolino, *Gerusalemme ed il popolo ebreo*, 2014, pp. 9-11).

"Almost forty-five years have passed since I had the honor of meeting the author... I was working as a study assistant at the distinguished jurisconsult and my venerable Master Adriano Mari, who, having been four times President of the Elective Chamber, he had known Benedetto Musolino for a long time and esteemed him as one of the most respected left-wing deputies [...]. Mari [...] one day announced my visit to him and asked me to listen to some of his proposals concerning the Israelites and Palestine. I consented and received in my study the Hon. Musolino, who after having placed a large volume, bound in black leather, on my desk, said to me, that that book was a manuscript in which he had exhibited his project in favor of the Israelites and began to tell me that for a long time he had a thought of promoting the return of the Jews to their ancient national headquarters. This was so that with their wakeful intelligence, they brought a vivifying current of European culture to Asia and opened up to the people there, the way that civilization had prevented a terrible clash between Russia and England which, originating from their rivalries in India and Constantinople, would have been a reason for pause and perhaps of regress for the civilization of the human family. He had been to Palestine three times and a fourth trip would also have been happy if the unnecessary efforts made to find promoters to help his design had not discouraged him from further expenses. He told me that for this purpose he had presented himself to Lord Palmerston in London, who had advised him to consult the banker Rothschild [*see image on p. 27*], who had spoken to a Rabbi, I do not remember if in England or France; but nobody had listened to him. He spoke to me enthusiastically about the fertility of Galilee, where he said, wheat grows spontaneously, luxuriant even though no one has plowed and sown; he highlighted the ease with which Jews in Palestine could have better respected the holidays, their traditional religious observances than anywhere else and concluded, asking if I believed that there was something to be done in Italy to bring about its purpose". (M. Finzi, 1905, "Un precursore del sionismo" (www.benedettomusolino.it/ebraica/finzi_ita.pdf)).

"The Union of Italian Israelite Communities has repaired the oblivion of past generations. It is now up to the risen Israel to pay homage of gratitude to the Italian patriot, naming one of those streets of the cities of Israel where his renewed faith vibrates in the destinies of the nation and in the peaceful and serene future of men" (D. Lattes, *Il Calabrese Benedetto Musolino ignorato precursore del sionismo di Herzl*, 1952).

1. Prologue

When Benedetto Musolino drew up *Gerusalemme ed il popolo ebreo* (Jerusalem and the Jewish people), Southern Italy was under the control of the Bourbons. In Rome there was still the shame of the ghetto, where Jews had been forced to live for centuries.

But it was now only a matter of years. In about two decades, with the liberation of Rome, the ignominy of the ghetto would come to an end.

No longer forced to live as recluses in unhealthy places, exposed to the arbitrariness of the powerful and to the periodic aggression of the plebs, the Italian Jews would finally be able to move freely around the peninsula, with a unique contribution to the construction of the Risorgimento State and to the renewal of the cultural life of their country.

In the here and now, in Italy as in the rest of Europe, what seemed most important for the Jews was the end of the legal and social enslavement to an abject system that excluded them the margins of social life.

For Carlo Cattaneo, the hero of the Five Days of Milan, the right to property and the free movement of people were inseparable principles. The emancipation of the Jews and their full integration were both an ethical, political and economic necessity (Cattaneo, 1836)¹.

In contrast to a line of thought deeply rooted in European political, democratic and revolutionary thought², Musolino believed that individual emancipation could not entail the renunciation of the collective aspirations that had fueled Jewish religious and cultural life for centuries (Musolino, 2014, cit., p. 4). Whether in the name of individual rights, which for Musolino were out of the question, Judaism had turned into a "Mosaic" confession, as claimed by the most radical currents of the Movement for Jewish Reform in Germany, there would have been an irreparable loss. With the abandonment of the idea of the Return, and of Hebrew as a liturgical language, the unity of the Jewish people, cultivated for centuries in the liturgy, would be shattered (*ibid.*). Thanks to an exceptional international situation that was emerging, the Jews could realize the oldest of their dreams: to return to being a nation in their historical homeland.

2. The geopolitical aspect of the Project

Musolino's ideas had not developed in a vacuum. They were part of a geopolitical design that had the British imperial power and its cultural and political civilization as an idealized reference point. And as premise an overvaluation of the role that the developing of a railroad linking the Near East to the Indies would have had in preserving British supremacy. The premise that serves as the backdrop for the whole construction, was belied by the facts. But no more can be asked of the fertile and creative imagination than it can realistically offer.

A maritime power, England risked seeing its political and economic hegemony weakened with the development of the railways. Overestimating the danger, Musolino wanted to play in advance with a general and differentiated strategy to protect his possessions in the Far East. The background to the project was the idea of an alliance with the Ottoman Empire in opposition to the Tsarist Empire. One of these goals was to contain the threat of the rising American power to the detriment of the British Empire³. In this view, the establishment of a Jewish principality was an important part of this project.

In this view, the creation of a Jewish principality was the missing link. On the European side, the unification of Germany and Poland would have been a natural bulwark against Russian expansionism in the West. The unification of Italy, now near, would have slowed down the expansionist aims of France in North Africa and in the Middle East. On the Eastern Mediterranean side, the creation of a Jewish Principality would have guaranteed Great Britain a solid regional ally for the defense of its interests in the Far East. Thanks to the presence of a "hard-working" "and ingenious" population,

¹ Carlo Cattaneo (Milan 1801 - Castagnola, Lugano, 1869). Italian writer and patriot, he was a disciple of Romagnosi. Of Republican and Federalist ideas, he was at the head of the War Council during the Five Days of Milan (1848). Forced into exile, he found refuge in Switzerland, where he devoted himself to intense training for the future Italian ruling classes. In 1839 he founded *Il Politecnico*, the most important cultural periodical of the time, which he directed until 1862, with particular attention to the problems of science and technology (see Cattaneo, 1962).

² In the debate held in the French National Assembly between 21 and 24 December 1789, in response to the wave of peasant aggression against Alsatian Jewish communities following the storming of the Bastille, Honoré Gabriel Riqueti de Mirabeau, Henri Gregoire, Maximilien de Robespierre, Adrien Duport, Antoine Barnave and Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre openly took a position in support of Jewish emancipation by distinguishing between the individual rights of the Jews, which were incontrovertible and necessary, and national rights, which were considered incompatible with the new order that was being built. On that occasion, de Tonnerre-Clermont stated: "We must deny the Jews as a nation," said de Tonnerre, "and grant everything to the Jews as individuals. They must not make a political body or create an order in the state. They must be individual citizens" (See *Storia degli Ebrei di Francia*. In Internet: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storia_degli_ebrei_in_Francia#Convocazione_degli_Stati_generali_e_cahiers_de_dol%C3%A9ances).

³ As Gino Luzzatto has pointed out, while concerns about Russian expansionism, curbed by Anglo-French agreements and then by the emergence of German power on the European scene, appear justified, predictions about the danger to British hegemony posed by American development are wrong, or at least well in advance. Musolino had identified the massive influx of immigrants combined with the unique availability of natural resources as an important vector of development for the new world, mistakenly believing that the dangers of a war between North and South, which exploded a decade later, had been overcome (see. Luzzatto, 1951. In Musolino, cit., pp. XIX-XXI).

with "immense capital" (Musolino, *cit.*, p. 4), the Ottoman Empire would have relaunched the asphyxiated economy of its South-Eastern provinces.

The ideal route for a railway from Europe to India would have to cross France and Austria, continuing through Belgrade, Asia Minor, Damascus and Baghdad until reaching the Far East. Such a choice, in addition to providing an advantage to France and the European central powers, would have exposed the railway network to possible Russian incursions. Hence Musolino's advocates a line from one of the countries of Syria, preferably Tyre, which England, with its naval superiority, would easily reach without fear of rivalries. In this perspective, the creation of a Jewish principality within Ottoman territory would, according to Musolino, have helped to overcome the refusal to transfer portions of their territory, even small portions. Starting from Tyre, in Lebanon, the route would continue to the Indies. In this perspective, the "Jewish Bosphorus", as Musolino calls it (*ibid.*, pp. 178 and 187), would have extended over a much wider territory than that which after the First World War was foreseen with the British Mandate on Palestine⁴.

In the idealization and one-sidedness with which Musolino looked at England, as a beacon of civilization, there was no place for the aspirations of the peoples subject to British rule. The legitimate aspirations of the minorities who lived under the Ottoman yoke (think of the Armenians) are absent in his book or merely traced back to the intrigues of Russian and French diplomacy to gain power and influence against the Ottoman Empire. This is partly true, but it does not cancel the fact in itself of the legitimacy of the aspirations for freedom and equality of populations that for centuries had been subjected to Islamic rule.

Attentive to the social question, Musolino does not close his eyes to the starting inequalities within a given society and between different economies. In his view, free trade and protectionism are not neutral doctrines, to which he could refer as if they were natural truths. The theory of "free trade" is in fact the expression of a process of rationalization of the pushes of the more solid developed economies to conquer markets and export their goods. Not by chance, the author emphasizes, until 1846 Great Britain had had a prohibitionist orientation, later becoming a champion of free trade. There was no "secret hand" in the transformation that took place. More simply, an industrially more advanced country had every interest in breaking down customs barriers to conquer new markets. On the contrary, a more fragile economy, in order not to succumb, could be temporarily resorting to customs barriers and state intervention (Musolino, *cit.*, pp. 271-272).

In the specific case of Italy, with the deep divide between north and south and the presence of the Pontifical State, protected by important European states, the national question was rather a social question. According to the author, in order to unify the country, it was necessary to free its productive energies. In vain from the benches of the First National Parliament in Turin in 1861, he would have advocated the need for a major land reform, which would eliminate the scourge of large estates.

Functional to Britain's geopolitical interests, Musolino's plan was not merely instrumental. The empathy that transpires in every page of the book and which appears confirmed by subsequent testimonies (Finzi, *cit.*), the knowledge of Jewish history, goes beyond the geo-political horizons in which this project is embedded. His is a profound participation that takes on the tones of an apology for the Jewish life. "Intelligent and ingenious in the arts in the letters and in the sciences," writes Musolino, "their young people are admired in all factories in all schools and universities". "Sober" "hard-working" and "continent, in civil life" they prove to be "good husbands", "good fathers" and "excellent sons". They are persevering and courageous, "enterprising" and "endowed" with a high sense of "justice" and "charity" (Musolino, *cit.*, p. 9). Cradle of the "first religion", of "civilization"

⁴ The "Principality of Palestine" would have included "Phenicia, Galilee, Judea, Idumea, and Arabia Petrea", extending from the "River Leonte, which drains into the Mediterranean up to Haonara (*sic*) on the Arabian coast of the Red Sea", having for borders "to the east Desert Arabia; to the west the Mediterranean; to the north the river Leonte, the Anti-Lebanon and the ancient Iturea; at south the Isthmus of Suez and the Red Sea" (Musolino, 2014, p. 17). The British Mandate on Palestine, following the First World War, initially provided for a much smaller territory that included the two banks of the Jordan. In 1921, by decision of the British authorities, Transjordan was spun off from the British Mandate on Palestine, to make way for the Kingdom of Transjordan (see Laqueur, 1973).

and of the "age of man" (*ibid.*), its most ancient land has ever been the reference in which votes, desires and hopes were gathered.

The rebirth of a Jewish nation in the Land of the Fathers has a paradigmatic value for the whole of human civilization, a moral act due to clear an ancient "stain" against a people who "gather so many titles of justice and merits" (*ibid.*, pp. 9-10). Thanks to a convergence of unique historical and social factors ("nor has there been a more propitious time than the present", for a most just cause in itself"), the rebuilding of a Jewish national life could easily be achieved (*ibid.*, p. 11).

The most ancient homeland of the Jewish people has always been "the land, promised and inherited by a nation both famous and unfortunate", which has played a fundamental role in the development of civilization and which for centuries and millennia has strenuously defended its values, identity and culture. If in nature, "the principle is sacred that every people" and "living being" has a right "to its share of the land", no people, government or individual can question the right to oppose Jewish "possession" of the land of the fathers, which they have never "morally" or "politically" renounced, nor "even personally and materially abandoned" (*ibid.*, p. 9).

In lyrical, biblical and *verdian*⁵ tones, the author does not hesitate to appeal to those directly concerned to destiny themselves from the "long sleep" in which they have been wrapped up for centuries, because the time has finally come to "operate" and bring together the exiles from the 'four corners of the earth', to rehabilitate "the room" of the "fathers" (*ibid.*, p. 9).

3. A Karst current

Musolino's ideas had as their background a growing attention in European culture for the city of Jerusalem. Approximately five thousand books in English between 1800 and 1875, had as their object the city in its many aspects and meanings⁶. The rebirth of a Jewish presence in the *Land of the fathers* had appeared in political and religious discourses and reflections, according to the British imperial interests. Especially within the Evangelical religiosity of the dissident churches, it was considered a fulfillment of the ancient Jewish prophecies. In opposition to the theology of the Church, in which Jews were condemned to live in a wandering and humiliated condition until the end of time, their returning to the *Land of theirs Fathers* was a preparation for the "Return of Christ to Earth" and could therefore be achieved before their future "*conversion to Christianity*".

In this intertwining of romantic utopias, inspired by religious perspectives different from those of pre-conciliar Catholic theology, and by considerations of a practical nature related to the consolidation of British imperial hegemony in the world, the destructive charge of the substitutionist framework of Christian theology could be partly attenuated and the Jewish idea of returning to the

⁵ Composed on a book by Temistocle Solera, the *Nabucco* made its successful debut on March 9, 1842 at the Scala in Milan. Due to the parallelism that the spectators of the time could establish between their political condition and their aspirations for freedom with that of the ancient Jews under the yoke of Babylon, it assumed a paradigmatic value over time. See: <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabucco#Note>; https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Verdi.

⁶ Not even Marx had escaped this attention. In an article published in the *Tribune* on the 15th of April of 1854, after describing the Millet system, which gave non-Muslims a certain degree of religious autonomy and self-government, including the right to maintain their own internal courts and to collect taxes, the author drew attention, with words full of compassion, to the conditions in which the Jews of Jerusalem found themselves: "Nothing equals the misery and the suffering of the Jews of Jerusalem, inhabiting the most filthy quarter of the town, called *Hareth-el-Yahoud* ... between the Zion and the Moriah... (They are) constant objects of Mussulman [Muslim] oppression and intolerance, insulted by the Greeks [Eastern Orthodox Christians], persecuted by the Latins [Roman Catholics], and living only upon the scant alms transmitted by their European brethren. "and are only attracted to Jerusalem by the desire of inhabiting the Valley of Jehoshaphat and to die on the very place where the redemption is to be expected. They turned to that mountain of Moriah where once stood the temple of Lebanon, and which they dare not approach; they shed tears on the misfortune of Zion, and their dispersion over the world" (Marx, 1854, in Avineri, 2012. See also Massara, 1972, p. 81). "To anyone familiar with Marx's venomous portrait of Judaism in his early essay "On the Jewish Question", quotes Avineri, "not to speak of his many uncomplimentary comments about individual Jews (fellow socialists such as Ferdinand Lassalle included), his words here will come as a surprise. That the only place in all of Marx's writings in which he expresses some empathy for Jews refers to the Jews of Jerusalem awaiting the Messiah is, at least, rather extraordinary" (Avineri, 2012).

Land of the Fathers, even within a religious vision that made them the object of others' projections, could take on a positive role.

Not by chance, once he came to power, Oliver Cromwell⁷ authorized the return of Jews to the country, obtaining Freud's homage two centuries later in choosing the name for the third of his six children (Meghnagi, 1992, 2004). For their part, the founding fathers of the United States, descendants of a great migration, which was in many ways an escape from Europe, lived the stories of the Hebrew Bible as their own, while the black slaves sublimated their great pain in songs in which they identified their suffering with that of ancient Israel.

4. Some precedents in Great Britain

Advancing in 1801, Jantes Bicheno, brought forward the idea of a return of the Jews to the Land of their fathers. in an article that appeared in the Times in 1839, by the Earl of Shaftesbury⁸. On the occasion of the conference of the five major European powers (England, France, Austria, Russia, Prussia) on the future order of the Middle East, Shaftesbury sent a report to Lord Palmerston in support of the Jewish colonization of Palestine. The idea was dropped. This was due to the absence of an international body that would take full responsibility for it (G. Luzzatto, *cit.*, in Musolino, 2014, p. XXV; Carpi, 1985). It was relaunched in 1852 by the English colonel Georg Gawler, a friend of Sir Moses Montefiore⁹. Active in the struggle for the abolition of slavery in the British dominions, Montefiore had made himself a spokesman for the rights of Jewish minorities, traveling with his diplomatic passport far and wide to European capitals and in the territories of the Ottoman Empire. Authorized by the Sultan in 1857 to buy land, he built the first neighborhood outside the walls of Jerusalem (*Mishkenoth Sha'ananim*)¹⁰.

In 1852 the Society for the colonization of Eretz Israel had arisen in London on the initiative of the Sephardi Rabbi Yehudah Alkalay (Enelow, 1906)¹¹. Against the backdrop of internal and external changes in Jewish life, the process of returning to the Land of the Fathers began its first steps, without proclamations and in silent forms.

A leading figure in the Sephardi communities of the Balkans, Rabbi Alkalay had among his most faithful followers, Simon Loeb Herzl, the paternal grandfather of Theodor Herzl, the future founding father of the Zionist movement.

In the Semlin Synagogue, where Alkalay taught and officiated, Herzl's grandfather performed the functions of *gabbay*¹², preserving as a precious gift, one of the first copies of a work by Alkalay, which appeared in 1857, in which he reaffirmed the obligation for every Jew to live in Israel (Enelow, *cit.*). In the vision of Rabbi Zwi Hirsch Kalischer, an important and atypical figure of the Ashkenazi orthodoxy of the time, the Jewish return was a preparation for the Messianic advent (Kalisher, 1862)¹³.

The idea that Jews might need a state to protect themselves from anti-Semitism began to emerge in the last two decades of the century. The idea of Shaftesbury was taken up by Benjamin Disraeli,

⁷ Oliver Cromwell (Huntingdon, 1599 - London 1658): a fervent Puritan. He was a leader and a politician (see https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Cromwell#Fede_religiosa).

⁸ Antony Ashley Cooper (London, 1801 - Folkestone, 1885). Earl of Shaftesbury. He was among the earliest supporters of "Christian Zionism". See

https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_AshleyCooper,_VII_conte_di_Shaftesbury#Religione_e_restaurazione_dell'ebraismo.

⁹ Sir Moses Haim Montefiore (Hebrew: משה חיים מונטיפיורי; Livorno 1784 - Ramsgate, 1885). Entrepreneur and philanthropist of the Leghorn Jewish community, naturalized British. See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_Montefiore#Bibliografia.

¹⁰ See <https://jerusalemfoundation.org/old-project/mishkenot-shaananim-cultural-center-guest-house>.

¹¹ Judah Alkalay. Sarajevo 1798 – Jerusalem, 1878.

¹² Gabbay (Hebrew: גבאי): a person who assists in synagogue services, ensuring that the relevant liturgical and organizing needs are met. The term, of Aramaic origin, denoted in Talmudic era the tax or charity collector and treasurer (see Goldrich, 2002).

¹³ Zwi Hirsch Kalischer (Thorn, Germany, 1795-1874). See www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/9159-kalischer-zebi-hirsch

only to be dropped following the opposition encountered, in the preparatory work for the Berlin Congress of 1878¹⁴.

5. *Daniel Deronda*

In 1876, George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda* was published in serial form¹⁵. Eliot's extensive knowledge of the problems of Jewish life was marked by two important encounters by two important encounters. The meeting in 1853 with the scholar of Spinoza, G.H. Lewes, and his life companion¹⁶, had contributed to widening his mental horizons and revising his prejudices about the Jews. The encounter in 1866 with Immanuel Deustch, a scholar with a vast Talmudic and mystical culture, introduced her to the Jewish world, its issues and its deepest anxieties and aspirations¹⁷. In Hebrew, Daniel means "God is my judge". His name recalls a biblical character who in the Jewish tradition, as in the Christian one, has been the object of particular attention. In the Jewish tradition, his dreams were a source of reflection, hope and suffering meditation on the end of time. Transfigured into the character of Mordecai, he is a symbol of the values that underpin Jewish life.

Placed in the present, the *Deronda* story is also a reworking of some of the themes found in the Biblical archetype of the Moses story. Delivered to the river's waters, to which his mother tenderly handed him over in the hope that someone would save him from Pharaoh's edict to have all Hebrew children killed, leaving the females alive, Moses is saved by Pharaoh's daughter and grew up in the royal household. But the voice of the heart, symbolized by his encounter with the *Burning bush*, brings him back to his great mission.

By his mother's will, Daniel does not know that he is Jewish. As a child he was entrusted to an acquaintance to be brought up as a gentleman. Eliot makes sure to keep the true identity of the main character hidden, until the readers' identification process made it difficult to go back.

His first contact with the Jewish world is fortuitous. While on a boat on the Thames, *Deronda* rescues a beautiful, poor woman, Mirah Lapidoth, who is attempting to commit suicide. This is an important metaphor in which different mythical elements converge: the river, the water of which flows like life. Water as a vital element and the soul that Daniel, who had grown up by the will of his mother unaware of his world, risked to lose. Mirah is a singer, who arrived in London without a penny to look for her mother and brother, after escaping from her father, in his fear that he was planning to sell her to a friend. The encounter with Mirah marks a turning point in the inner journey of individuation. Infected by the mystical enthusiasm of Mirah's brother and his unshakeable faith, Daniel becomes fascinated by the Jewish world and after meeting his mother he discovers that he is.

The novel consists of two distinct plots. The English plot focuses on the figure of Gwendolen, the spoilt daughter of a widow, who is much courted and who, having fallen into poverty, marries a man who is devoid of feelings and whose death by drowning she witnesses imperturbably.

¹⁴ The Congress was held between 13 June and 13 July 1878 under the presidency of the German Chancellor with the aim of re-establishing a balance of forces between the great powers that had been compromised by the Bosnian Serb revolt against Ottoman domination and the Ottoman defeat for the work of the Russians. In response to requests from Jewish associations (in particular from the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*), the congress established that the countries to which independence was about to be recognized should extend the rights to all their citizens, without distinction of faith. The problem arose in particular for Romania, which accepted but disregarded the commitments made. An important detail, to which Carpi draws attention, before the Congress was circulated a booklet of 16 pages, which he had probably written in person, which follows themes and ideas that he had cultivated over the years and that apart from the choice of 'English as the language of the future State, have many points of contact with those developed by Musolino in his book (Carpi, cit.). Baptized at the age of thirteen, on the journey made between 1827 and 1831 to rediscover the Mediterranean, Disraeli visited "Moorish" Spain, the cradle of the golden age of the culture of his ancestors. In Venice he visited the Jewish cemetery on the Lido of Venice, where his ancestors returned to Judaism are buried, after their marran parenthesis (Carpi, 2019).

¹⁵ George Elliott (Mary Anne (Marian) Evans (Arbury, 1819 - London, 1888). British writer, among the most important of the Victorian era. See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enciclopedia_Britannica.

¹⁶ George Henry Lewes (London, 1817 - 1878). Philosopher, literary and theatre critic. From 1854 he lived with Eliot. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Henry_Lewes#Biography.

¹⁷ Immanuel Oscar Menahem Deutsch (1829 - October 28, 1873). Semitist, Talmudic and Near Eastern scholar. See https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclopædia_Britannica/Deutsch,_Immanuel_Oscar_Menahem.

In the Jewish plot, as well as the figure of Daniel, who acts as a bridge between the two worlds, the focus is on Mirah, her brother Mordecai and Elijah Klesmer. The choice of Jewish names has a great symbolic value. The name of the musician Elijah Klesmer is taken from a combination of the figure of the prophet who recognized the voice of the Lord in the sweetest and softest music and the Jewish musical tradition as such. The prophet Elijah is in the Jewish tradition the one who would announce the arrival of the Messiah and the Redemption. The word Klesmer comes from the Hebrew *Klei-zemer*, musical instruments), and has become a symbol of the Jewish musical tradition of Eastern Europe. The reversal of the anti-Semitic stereotype of the wandering Jew is revealed by references to parables, sayings and reflections from Jewish mysticism, the Talmud and the poetry of Yehuda Halevi, which Eliot puts into Mordecai's mouth in his dialogues with Daniel.

Daniel in Hebrew means "God is my Judge", a highly regarded character in Jewish and Christian tradition, and whose dreams have been a source of reflection, hope and painful meditations on the *End Times*. Mordecai is one of the central characters in the story of Purim and the rescue of the Jewish people from the project of extermination planned by Aman¹⁸. The name Ezra recalls a character who played a central role in the reorganization of Jewish life after the return from Babylonian exile¹⁹.

Mordecai and his sister Mirah are Cohen, belonging to the tribe of Levites and are of Priestly lineage. His father had chosen the name Lapidoth to honor his Polish parents (Eliot, cit., ch. XX, p. 470). The name Mirah, a diminutive of Miriam (Moses' sister), contains the root of the verb to see (*lir'oth*).

After their marriage, Deronda and Mirah move to the *Land of the Fathers*. The history of Judaism has never stopped: "Our fathers themselves changed the horizon of their belief and learned from other races". He knows now that his "first duty" is to his people. If "there is anything to be done toward restoring or perfecting their common life", he shall make that his "vocation" (G. Eliot, 1876, cap. 64, pp. 1816-1817).

For Deronda, the rediscovery of his roots is not literally a return to the past, but a door open to the future.

"I am going to the East"- he will tell her friend Gwendolen, whom he visited before leaving- "to become better acquainted with the condition of my race in various countries there... The idea that I am possessed with is that of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national center, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe. That is a task which presents itself to me as a duty; I am resolved to begin it, however feebly. I am resolved to devote my life to it. At the least, I am awoken a movement in other minds, such as has been awakened in my own" (Eliot, 1876, chapter 69, p. 2160).

To an emancipation that had as its background the demand for the renunciation of one's own roots, Eliot opposes the recovery of a history and memory with the reconstruction of an independent national life. Expressed in Daniel's words before departure, hers is a "separation with communication" (*ibid.*).

Daniel's choice does not prejudice anyone's rights. What Mordecai desires for the Jews is no different from what he desires for every people and every nation. Moving beyond the narrow political horizons of colonialism and imperialism, no nation can be excluded from its rights.

"Nations have revived. We may live to see a great outburst of force in the Arabs, who are being inspired with a new zeal." "Amen, amen," said Mordecai, looking at Deronda with a delight which was the beginning of recovered energy: his attitude was more upright, his face was less worn" (*ibid.*, p. 1168).

¹⁸ To give shape to his murderous project he insinuates in the king the idea that the Jews are a foreign and harmful body to be eliminated with the following words: "There is a people scattered and disseminated among the nations, in all the provinces of your kingdom, their laws are different from those of any other people and they do not fulfil the laws of the king, and the king does not benefit from tolerating them. If it pleases the king, it is written to destroy them" (*ESTHER*: 3,8).

¹⁹ *The Book of Ezra* (Hebrew: Ezra עזרא; Latin: Ezra) is a text contained in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh, תנ"ך) and in the Christian Bible. In the Hebrew Canon it is counted as one text with Nehemiah (Hebrew נחמיה, "The Lord has comforted"). See Esdra (1968), Nehemia (1969).

The novel's publication marked a profound turning point in cultural and literary debate and left a mark (see Boccara, 2019). For some it was a novel that was missed due to the evanescence of the Jewish characters compared to those described in the English plot, where Eliot appears profound and perceptive. For others, the elimination of the Jewish plot would have improved the literary rendering of the novel. For the most hostile, the positive characterization of the Jewish characters compared to the "English" ones was to be considered *revolting*.

For those within the Jewish world who denied the value of aspirations for national rebirth, the calls for a return to Zion in the Jewish liturgy were merely forms of the past, emptied of real content. But "dying sentiments", as Daniel tells Mordecai (*cit.*, p. 1168), or those that seem to be dying, can, as in Ezekiel's great dream, come back to life.

The young Freud, who had caught the work's originality, wrote to his fiancée in 1882 that he was amazed at the author's "profound understanding" of the "most intimate habits of the Jews," which "we talk about only among ourselves" (Freud, 1960)²⁰.

6. The Racine's *Esther*, the Rousseau's *Emilio* and the Napoleon proclamation

Echoing the anguish and millenary dreams widespread in the Sephardi and Marran diaspora, Racine²¹, one of the greatest writers of his time, had skillfully linked the story of Esther (risen in the Marran culture as a symbol of their tragic condition) with the biblical prophecies of the return to an independent national life. A year before Racine was born, a mysterious Jewish prince, who had made thousands of Jews everywhere dream, was burned at the stake. Welcomed with enthusiasm in the Marran diaspora that saw in him the messenger of an imminent liberation from the chains of oppression, David Reubeni had traveled the length and breadth of Europe for fifteen years, meeting the powerful in the name of a mysterious Jewish kingdom endowed with of a large army, discussing on an equal footing a Jewish-Christian alliance project against the Ottoman Empire for the liberation of Jerusalem (Sestieri, 1991; Eisenstadt, 1993)²². Until the powerful understood that there were no armies to protect him, and that the distant kingdom he spoke of existed only in his feverish fantasy. Forty years earlier, Isaac Abravanel²³ had looked at the catastrophe that had struck Spanish Judaism as in the labor of the Messiah (*Chevre 'Masciah*). Only with his pain in Monopoli (in peninsular Italy) where he had found refuge, did he deliver to the prophecies of Daniel, the most distressing questions about the end of an entire world, looking in the folds of the Scriptures for the announcement of the Redemption.

Racine's choice to place the story of Esther in the late sixth century C.E., a time when Jewish history was to be considered sacred for Catholic theology, had a strategic value. Because of her personal story and the Hebrew roots of her name (S-T-R in Hebrew means secret), the figure of Esther had risen in the culture of the Marranos to an archetypal symbol of a tragic condition in which fidelity could only be expressed in secret. Racine could defend the Jews, siding with their aspirations, without running the risk of being accused of heresy.

His *Esther* has no illusions even about her husband Ahasuerus. He too is an anti-Semite (Boccara, 2018). The anguished words Racine puts into Esther's mouth go to the heart of the problem: "What mortal alarms! All Israel dies", "weak lambs abandoned to raging wolves", what "carnage" and "how many bodies piled up", and "limbs deprived of burial".

²⁰ Echoing the words that Eliot will put in Deronda's mouth, in his letter to his fiancée dated 23 August 1882, Freud writes about Marta's grandfather, who was the chief rabbi of the Sephardic community in Hamburg, as follows: "And as for us, I believe: even if the form in which the old Jews felt at ease no longer offers us shelter, something of the core, the essence of Judaism, brilliant and happy to live, will not abandon our home" (Freud, 1960; Meghnagi, 1992, 2004).

²¹ Jean Racine (La Ferté-Milon, 1639 - Paris, 1699). French playwright and writer, with Pierre Corneille he was the greatest exponent of the French tragic theater of the seventeenth century. See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Racine.

²² David Reubeni (Khaybar, Saudi Arabia, 1490 - Lirana, Spain, 1541).

²³ Isaac ben Yehuda Abravanel (Hebrew: יצחק בן יהודה אברבנאל). Lisbon, 1437-Venice, 1508. A leading political figure in Portuguese Judaism, he was a rabbi and philosopher. He lived in Portugal, Spain and Italy. See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Abrabanel.

Written with the sorrowful gaze of those who burned on the Inquisition's pyres, the drama appears retrospectively as a glimpse of an unimaginable and nameless violence, hidden in the folds of a society from which to flee before it was too late.

Performed for the first time with great success in Saint-Cyr in January 1691, the drama has its own history and philological foundation that cannot be squashed by what tragically happened three centuries later with the mass exterminations. History could have proceeded differently. But the enjoyment of a work of art, for its internal logic, tends to override the time in which it was written. As with Heine's anguished warnings about the false quiet that hovered in Germany (Heine, 1834), or Kafka's anguished representations of human beings being reduced to a sign or turned into insects, it cannot help but evoke anguish in those who read them in light of what happened afterwards next (Meghnagi, 2005).

In a line of continuity and in a more advanced, but not yet free, political context, Rousseau (1762)²⁴ could say that it would only be possible to truly "know" what the Jews had "to say" when they became free as a people (*ibid.*). In the brief mention in the *Emile*, Rousseau does not mention the *Land of Israel*. But the problem was on the table.

On his way to conquer Jerusalem in April 1799, Napoleon appealed to the "legitimate heirs of Palestine" deprived "of the land of their fathers for millennia of lust for conquest and tyranny", to tell them: "Get up with joy, you exiles, and take possession of the heritage of Israel" (cit., in Attali, 2003, pp. 423-424; Yehuda, 1950, pp. 202-209). After having conquered Egypt and obtained a victory over the Turks at Mount Tabor, Napoleon imagined conquering Syria and from there aiming his troops on Constantinople and Vienna. From Palestine he would bet on the Indies. Inspired by a letter from Thomas Cobert to the Viscount of Barras²⁵, the Napoleonic proclamation had a short life. The British troops who had helped stop the Napoleonic advance in the East entered the *holy city*.

When he became emperor, Napoleon did not treat the Jews kindly. He considered them to be "an unpleasant people", "lazy and cruel", "vermin" and "locusts" that despoiled the countryside. They were followers of a book (the *Talmud*) in which 'true biblical traditions' were mixed with 'the most corrupt morality' in matters concerning relations with 'Christians'. The newly emancipated Jews were contemptuously regarded by Napoleon as a 'race' to be made 'impossible' to harm and spread 'evil' (Anschel, quoted in Poliakov, 1976, p. 268). Tempted at first to deprive them of their acquired rights, he subjected their religious hierarchies, brought in from all parts of France, to scrutiny, asking them if they would be prepared, if need be, to throw away the law of Moses for the good of France. Overestimating their power and capacity for organization, he thought of creating a Sanhedrin on the model of the ancient one, to be used and manoeuvred politically. Discovering how little they themselves were organized he decided that the "regeneration" of the French Jews could do without it. His mysterious appeal on the road to Jerusalem had fallen into oblivion. As in a karst river, it re-emerged decades later in an essay by Laharanne²⁶, which was much appreciated by Moses Hess²⁷.

7. On the slopes of the Janiculum

In the convulsive days of the Roman Republic, young Belgians, Hungarians, Dutch, Bulgarians, Americans, English, Swiss, a Finnish man and many Frenchmen were fighting against the French

²⁴ Rousseau (Geneva, 1712-Ermenonville, 1778). Swiss philosopher, pedagogue, writer and musician. He was born into a Calvinist family of French origin. See https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau.

²⁵ Paul Francois Jean Nicolas, Viscount of Barras (Fox-Amphoux, 1755- Chaillot, 1829), was the head of the Directory that governed France between 1755 and 1799 (see https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Barras).

²⁶ Ernest Laharanne (1860). *La Nouvelle Question d'Orient: Empires d'Egypte et d'Arabie: reconstitution de la nationalité juive*. Italian translation: *La nuova questione d'orientale. Imperi d'Egitto e d'Arabia. Ricostituzione della nazionalità ebraica*. Translation and preface by Dante Lattes. In: *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel (RMI)*. Third Series, vol. 17, no. 10 (October 1951), pp. 1-16. In his essay Laharanne advanced the idea of a Jewish State being reconstituted from Suez to Smyrna. Moses Hess (1862) published large portions of it in Letter 11, in *Rome and Jerusalem*. See Gelber (1931).

²⁷ Moses Hess (Bonn, 1812 - Paris, 1875). German philosopher, politician and activist. He was one of the most important precursors of the Zionist movement (See Avineri, 1985). He was buried according to his will in the Jewish Cemetery in Cologne. In 1961 his body was moved at the request of the Israeli government to the *Kibbutz Kinnereth* Cemetery in Israel. See <https://it.findagrave.com/memorial/68933210/moses-hess>.

army that had come to the aid of the Papal States. To help them, there were women and boys, ladies and commoners, in the front line of the relief effort (B. Diddi, S. Sofri, 2011).

Among them were young Jews from other parts of the peninsula, to put an end to the shame of the last ghetto in Western Europe. Among them was Leone Carpi, a prominent figure in the Jewish Community of Ferrara and Minister of Finance of the Republic (he would later be the first Jewish deputy elected to Parliament from his city)²⁸.

Like Benjamin Disraeli, Carpi was also a native of Cento. Imagining a conversation between Leone Carpi and Benedetto Musolino, the great-grandson (historian of Italian Judaism at Tel Aviv University) rhetorically asked in a conference dedicated to the Calabrian patriot, what they might have said to each other (D. Carpi, 1985, p. 40). His great-grandfather, whose name he bears, had limited himself to asking for the right to equality for Italian Jews. Musolino had gone further. Did they talk about it? And if in the crucial days for the destiny of the Republic, or afterwards, if they had talked about it, what did they say to each other? What conclusions had they reached? Among the fighters who fell for the Republic was Giacomo Venezian, a young patriot with whom Musolino would find much in common²⁹. For Giacomo Venezian, emancipation should not lead to a loss of one's cultural and national identity. "The Jews," he had written a few years earlier, "must all suffer to maintain their nationality, they must continually strive for its greater development. Nothing must be done out of an external impulse, out of a mania for approaching other nations, for uniting and blending with them" (Venice, January 22, 1843. Quoted in Fano Jacchia, 1972, pp. 149-202; see also Canepa, 1981, pp. 81-83). Will the two have met and spoken? And what did he think of the flag with the Polish symbol of the Mickiewicz³⁰ Legion in solidarity with the Jews? In Musolino's ponderous book, with its rich array of notes, none of this is mentioned. Yet the Polish writer's fervid imagination with the *Polish political symbol* carried through the streets of Rome³¹ could not fail to strike the imagination³¹. Starting from a Christological perspective Mickiewicz had linked the aspirations of the Polish people for freedom with those of the Jewish people. Looking at himself as a "savior," "son of a foreign mother"³², Mickiewicz called for "Israel" to be "our older brother," "respect, brotherhood, help in the way of her eternal and earthly good-equality in civil political rights".³³

With its unresolved theological ambivalences, Mickiewicz's position represented a theological and religious turning point that predated some of the developments of *Nostra Aetate* by more than a century.

The positive reversal of the images of Judaism, albeit within a perspective in which the "new revelation" was the inversion of the "older" one with all the consequences that this entailed, represented a break with the theological teaching of contempt that had dotted the Church's teaching for centuries. It is not by chance that the words chosen by Mickiewicz will be taken up by Karol Wojtila in the first visit of a Catholic pontiff to a Jewish synagogue in two millenium³⁴.

Although for some time the Polish writer had nurtured the fantasy of a future mass conversion of the Jews, he had never done so. In a speech he gave in a small Parisian synagogue on the evening of

²⁸ Leone Carpi (Cento, 1810- Rome 1898). Italian political economist and journalist. One of his important writings of 1847 is dedicated to the oppressive condition of the Jews in the State of the Church (L. Carpi, 1847). For an in-depth study see also L. Carpi 1977, pp. 599-604.

²⁹ Giacomo Venezian (Trieste, 1824 - Rome 1849). Not to be confused with his nephew, patriot and academic who fell on the Karst front in World War I.

³⁰ Adam Bernard Mickiewicz (Zaosie, 1798 - Constantinople, 1855). One of the most important Polish writers (see Mincer, 1999, pp. 29-52). See also R. Ascarelli (2008).

³¹ Printed in March 1848, Article 10 of the Polish Political Symbol called for "Israel", "our older brother", "respect, brotherhood, help on the path to its eternal and earthly good - equality in political and civil rights". See *Volantino (Leaflet): Fondazione Bergamo nella storia, Museo storico di Bergamo*. In Internet: www.camera.it/application/xmanager/projects/camera/file/pannellimostra.pdf.

³² Unaware that the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet corresponds to the number 1, Mickiewicz gave his name the value of the number 44. In fact, in Hebrew, the word Adam corresponds to the number 45. For an in-depth study of the use of the technique of *ghematria* in the commentary on the Scriptures see Scholem (2008).

³³ See *Volantino (Leaflet). Cit.*

³⁴ Mickiewicz's reference of "elder brothers" was echoed by Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtila) during his visit to the Synagogue in Rome in 1986.

9th of Av (11th August, 1845), corresponding to the Jewish Year 5605³⁵, he urged Jews not to be lured by the sirens of assimilation, to keep strong ties with their history and religious identity, and to keep alive the dream of a return to Zion.

Received by Pius IX in April 1848, he told him that the Holy Spirit dwelt in the blouses of the proletarians of Paris. In order to be consistent with the teaching of the Gospel, the Pope would have to lead the movement of renewal that was shaking the whole of Europe. The conversation ended badly. Disappointed by the attitude of the pontiff, Mickiewicz set up his own Legion to join the fighters of Lombardy-Veneto. Reconstituted in Rome in his absence, the Legion played a role in the heroic defense of the city against the French army that had come to the aid of the Pope.

In a mixture of romantic religious and libertarian aspirations and millenarian political dreams, the Polish writer later imagined the creation of a Jewish Legion in which Jewish religious dietary rules would be respected, as the first step towards a future Jewish national army³⁶. When the Crimean War broke out, Mickiewicz reached Istanbul in 1855 with his friend Armand Levi³⁷. The aim was to set up a Jewish army corps within the Polish Legion to fight alongside the anti-Tzarist coalition for the freedom of Poland, thus laying the foundations for a future Jewish national army. The project stalled due to Mickiewicz's sudden death in November of the same year³⁸. When the body of the Polish writer reached Krakow from Paris in July 1861, Moses Hess, one of the great precursors of the Zionist movement, was about to publish *Rome and Jerusalem* in his Parisian exile (M. Hess, 1862).

8. A play of mirrors

Condemned to death in absentia after the fall of the Neapolitan and Roman revolutions, Musolino, who was no longer young, had to draw on his remaining energy to deal with the most painful losses. His father had been assassinated by the papal troops, the family home set on fire, and his mother died of a broken heart. Hunted down and in exile, he went to London to propose to the British authorities the revival of a Jewish nation in the land where Jewish civilization took place.

The Italy that was born ten years later, and for which Musolino had fought actively contributing to the success of the landing of the Thousand, would be different from the dreams and hopes of the young people who had sacrificed their lives in the revolutions of '48. The frequently hoped-for agrarian reform to free the country's productive energies remained a mute letter for a century. In a game of cross-references, the future Jewish principality, with its democratic structure and welfare system, mirrored what the Italian Risorgimento with its Piedmont influence would later sacrifice.

The importance Musolino attached to the Hebrew language in the development of the national liberation movement, mirrors the great linguistic challenge that Italy would later have to face.

The welfare idea he envisioned for the future Jewish Principality was realized in Italy much later.

9. The Law of the Return and the choice of the Hebrew language as the national language

Almost anticipating the cries and tears of the delegates from the pogrom-soaked territories of the Tsarist Empire against the Ugandan project at the Zionist congress held in 1903, Musolino believed

³⁵ According to the Jewish calendar, the 9th of the month of Av commemorates the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem by the Roman Legions in 70 EV. For date converter see https://it.chabad.org/calendar/converter_cdo/aid/6225/jewish/Date-Converter.htm.

³⁶ A not secondary element of novelty, in the Jewish army corps would have been the observance of the dietary rules provided for by the Jewish religious tradition (the *kasheruth*).

³⁷ Armand Levy (1827-1891). Lawyer, journalist and republican and anticlerical activist. He was born into a Roman Catholic family. His grandfather was Jewish. He was actively involved in the independence of Poland, Romania and Italy. After Mickiewicz's death he entered into relations with Hess and will find a place in his work (Hess, 1862). See [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armand_Lévy_\(journalist\)](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armand_Lévy_(journalist)).

³⁸ The project for the creation of a Jewish Legion was taken up during the First World War by Yosif Trumpeldor (Piatigorsk, 1880 - Tel Hai, 1920). A decorated officer in the Tsarist army, Trumpeldor founded the *Zion Mulé Corps* with Jabotinski in 1915. After the war, Trumpeldor returned to Russia to found the pioneering He-chalutz movement. In 1919, he left the Soviet Union to join the youth of the *Hashomer Hatzair* movement in defending the moshav and kibbutzim of the Galilee. Killed in an Arab attack on the Jewish settlement of Tel Hai in the north of the country, he became a mythical figure of national heroism (see Laqueur, 1973).

that only in the *Land of the Fathers* could the project of reconstructing a Jewish national existence be realized³⁹.

The constitution he imagined for the Jewish principality was inspired by the most advanced values of the 1848 revolutions: a liberal and democratic system with universal male suffrage, freedom of the press, of worship and of teaching, where compulsory schooling goes from four to sixteen years of age and, no less significantly, the official language is Hebrew. A symbolic state, in which the Jews acted as a receptacle for projections and sublimations of anxieties and aspirations to which, after the defeats of 1848, the Risorgimento movement with Piedmont traction would not have corresponded.

Thanks to the presence of an intelligent and hard-working population with capital, the Ottoman Empire, which appeared to be in sharp decline, could revitalize its southern provinces. The British, on whose success the project depended, could trust in the presence of 'a lookout' to protect the routes leading to their possessions in the Far East.

In order to overcome the opposition of the Ottomans, it was necessary to ensure, at least in the beginning, that the Jewish Principality was not an independent state, and that the Jewish prince was a loyal and faithful subject to the Sultan, required to contribute to the Sublime Porte 'an annual tribute' and to provide "a troop contingent every five years". The subordination of the Jewish Principality to the Sublime Porte was for Musolino an inevitable price, from which it could later be freed.

"Any other proposal made to the Sublime Porte," writes Musolino, "would not only be rejected with indignation but also considered as folly. Britain itself would refuse to pledge its dignity and credit on any other basis. All things therefore impose the obligation for the present to limit themselves to modest and plausible claims, without which all attempts would be useless. Let the Israelites try for the present to regain the longed-for Jerusalem and to re-establish themselves in Palestine, with all those political guarantees which assure them of religious liberty, individual freedom, general distributive justice, and civil and administrative independence. Time may perhaps offer them opportunities under more favorable conditions; when the increase of their population, the growing prosperity of the Principality, and the great services rendered to the Porte, to England, and to the World, will make them deserve the right to rise to a completely independent kingdom" (Musolino, 2014, p. 59).

In a simplified view of the political, social and religious dynamics affecting the region, Musolino believed that within the framework of a British-Ottoman alliance, the aspirations for emancipation of Christian and other religious and national minorities would be realized gradually, thus avoiding xenophobic reactions from the Islamic majority. Aspirations for the emancipation of Christian and other religious and national minorities within the framework of a British-Ottoman strategic alliance were to be realized gradually, thus avoiding xenophobic reactions from the Islamic majority.

In this picture, strongly marked by a Eurocentric prejudice, which had as its background the widespread inability to look at the other side of the Mediterranean as a world with its own distinct civilization, Arab civilization appeared reduced to an appendage of the Ottoman one.

A hundred years ahead of time, Musolino set the guidelines for what would become *The Law of Return* in 1950⁴⁰.

In the Constitution drafted by Musolino, the Christian churches would have retained the rights and privileges granted by the Sublime Porte, under the "capitulations" imposed by the Western powers. Worship would be "the responsibility of each Confession" (Musolino, 2014, p. 24).

³⁹ Faced with the spread of pogroms in the territories of the Tsarist Empire and the violent resurgence of anti-Semitism in Central Europe, after the failure of negotiations with Sultan Abdul Hamid, Theodor Herzl considered the alternative offer of a settlement in Africa. The proposal approved at the Zionist Congress of 1903 (with 295 votes in favor, 178 against and 98 abstentions), was dropped after Herzl's death the following year (see Laqueur, cit.).

⁴⁰ Article 16 of the Musolino Constitution reads as follows: "Nationality is inherent in being an Israelite after having settled in the Principality. It can be lost in the cases foreseen by the Laws. For non-Israelites, nationality is acquired or lost in accordance with civil and criminal laws" (Musolino, 2014, p. 28). The first article of the Law of Return in Israel, passed in 1950, states that every Jew has the right to settle in the State of Israel as an '*ole chadash*'. The term '*ole*' derives from the verb to ascend, indicating a spiritual as well as psychological "ascent". It should be remembered that in the Bible, the journey to Israel, regardless of where one comes from, is an ascent. For the full text of the Law of Return and the subsequent amendments of 1954 and 1970. See Internet: www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/israel-s-law-of-return.

In contrast to a religious tradition that entrusted the reconstruction of the Sanctuary to a messianic age and wiping the slate clean of subsequent religious and cultural developments in Jewish life, Musolino imagined that the Jews would have, alongside the synagogues, a Temple in Jerusalem. The author does not, however, go into the specifically religious, cultural and political consequences of this.

"The Public Treasury," reads Article 12 of the Constitution, "shall provide only for the maintenance of the Temple service in Jerusalem and for the salaries of the High Priest and of the Members of the Great Council of Rabbis; of the Supreme Chiefs of the Members of the Governing Councils of Dissident Beliefs" (*ibid.*, pp. 24-25.) The individual synagogues and the churches of the other denominations will be maintained by the respective Municipalities and Congregations" (*ibid.*, p. 25). The clergy were not to have special privileges and the various faiths, including the Jewish faith, were not allowed to have "hospitals" or special public schools: "Charity and teaching as public duties," Musolino writes, "will be regulated on a uniform system for all citizens" (*ibid.*, pp. 24-25).

10. The Legacy of a thought

When, at the dawn of Jewish emancipation in Germany, Immanuel Kant referred to the "euthanasia of Judaism" as a "solution" to the Jewish question, he certainly did not imagine the use that others might later make of it⁴¹. Kant, like Kautzky a century later, was referring to a disappearance by assimilation and not to a violent destruction of it, which it subsequently met with in Europe with the rise of Nazism.

The words used are never innocent and have their own logic. *Euthanasia of Judaism, degiudaization*, were terms widely present in the German debate on the right of the Jews to emancipation, revealing a whole world of obsessions and ghosts that came from afar and that only after the tragedy of Auschwitz became the subject of a rethink involving all areas of culture (Meghnagi, 2005, 2010, 2020).

For Kant the Jews were "a nation of deceivers" and "mere merchants" who "seek no civilized honor", but want to "replace the loss of this with the advantages of deceiving" the peoples among whom they live "and also of deceiving each other". Unlike Fichte who wanted to get rid of the Jewish presence in Germany by sending all the Jews to the *Promised Land*, or by 'beheading them all in a single night', giving them a new head' (Fichte, 1793 quoted in Poliakov, 1976, p. 217)-, once freed from their allegedly nefarious spirit, the Jews would be able to correct themselves (cf. Poliakov, 1976, pp. 214, n. 40).

For Hegel 'all the states of the Jewish people', including 'the wretched, sordid and infamous state in which it finds itself' today, are 'but the consequences and developments' of a destiny 'which has mistreated it' and 'will not cease to do so' until 'it is reconciled with the spirit of beauty, abolishing it through this conciliation' (quoted in Poliakov, 221). For him, Jewish consciousness was a "servile" and "parasitic" consciousness, regenerable only by a complete break with their past (cf. Poliakov, cit., pp. 220-221)⁴².

In a society where all human beings were subservient to religion, Bauer argued, it made no sense to speak of Jewish rights to emancipation, especially since "the Jew", "theoretically deprived of political rights", had "practically" at his disposal "a formidable power", "exercising wholesale" the political influence that was "denied to him in detail" (Bauer, 1843, quoted in in Poliakov, 1976, p. 482)⁴³.

⁴¹ Kant used the term both in relation to the birth of Christianity, and in relation to his own time (Poliakov, 1976, p. 214, n. 40).

⁴² On Hegel's thoughts on the Jews see Hegel, 1947, vol. II, pp. 222-224.

⁴³ According to Bauer, Judaism was at the origin of the human alienation process that began with the decline of the older religions, which Christianity (considered spiritually superior to its mother religion) would lead to its most extreme forms. Accused of having "nested in the pores and crevices of bourgeois society", the Jews were to be considered the true architects of their misfortunes. The "tenacity" of their "national spirit", revealed an "absence" of "capacity" "for historical development", in accordance with their "anti-historical" character and an "oriental essence" (Bauer, 1843, in Poliakov, cit., p. 482).

The contemptuous position of Bauer towards the right of the Jews to emancipation, marked the break of relations with the young Marx, with whom he had collaborated until then.

For Marx it was the reopening of a family trauma. An emotional bombshell in which the unresolved ambivalence towards an entire world of origins, devaluated and despised, was inextricably mixed with the proud revolt against a grave injustice of which an entire generation of Rhenish Jews, forced to convert in order not to lose the rights acquired during the period of Napoleonic domination, bore the marks (cf. Avineri, 2019).

Marx's father was descended from a dynasty of rabbis and was a Levi⁴⁴. Facing the necessity of an abjuration, Marx's father had repeatedly asked the authorities to exempt him from the obligation to convert. They refused, so he reluctantly opted for the Lutheran Church and had his wife and children baptized in 1825.

Growing up in a town where his grandfather, and later his uncle, were the rabbis of the local Jewish community, to make his way to school, Marx had to go through the Synagogue, where his uncles, cousins, and grandparents went for prayer (see Avineri, 2019). A symbolic crossing that projected on the young boy the dark image of a suspended condition full of unresolved ambivalence.

To Bauer's scornful arguments, the young Marx had no difficulty in pointing out that human emancipation from all forms of religious and social alienation should not be confused with political emancipation, and that the religious, civil and political rights that Bauer denied the Jews, were an integral and unavoidable part of a society based on the market economy.

As he would later explain in detail more fully, abandoning the mists of a discussion flawed from the beginning, it had to start by addressing the problem of human emancipation and the social relations of production. In essence, Marx stated that the evils of which Jews and Judaism were being accused, were in the perspective of human emancipation, evils that belonged to the whole of society. But by identifying these evils as having supposed Jewish characteristics, even if traced back to history and not to a supposed congenital essence, took some of the worst stereotypes of anti-Semitism as true.

Since the "practical Christian, "became a Jew again," Marx stated and since as a consequence of this process "Judaism" had come "to universal lordship," as soon as society had come to suppress "its empirical essence" the "traffic and its presuppositions," "the Jew" would become "*impossible*." "The *social* emancipation of the Jew," "*is the emancipation of society from Judaism*" (Marx 1844, cit.)⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ According to Jewish tradition, the surnames Levi and Cohen are descendants of the Tribe of Levi to which Moses and Aron belonged. In remembrance of the functions performed by the Levites in the Temple of Jerusalem, in the liturgy the Cohens and Levi take precedence in the call to read the Torah.

⁴⁵ To mention some: "We recognize in Judaism, therefore, a general *anti-social* element of the *present time*, an element which through historical development – to which in this harmful respect the Jews have zealously contributed – has been brought to its present high level, at which it must necessarily begin to disintegrate... The Jew has emancipated himself in a Jewish manner, not only because he has acquired financial power, but also because, through him and also apart from him, *money* has become a world power and the practical Jewish spirit has become the practical spirit of the Christian nations. The Jews have emancipated themselves insofar as the Christians have become Jews... What, in itself, was the basis of the Jewish religion? Practical need, egoism. The monotheism of the Jew, therefore, is in reality the polytheism of the many needs, a polytheism which makes even the lavatory an object of divine law... Money is the jealous god of Israel, in face of which no other god may exist. Money degrades all the gods of man – and turns them into commodities... The bill of exchange is the real god of the Jew... The *chimerical* nationality of the Jew is the nationality of the merchant, of the man of money in general. The groundless law of the Jew is only a religious caricature of groundless morality and right in general, of the purely *formal* rites with which the world of self-interest surrounds itself... From the outset, the Christian was the theorizing Jew, the Jew is, therefore, the practical Christian, and the practical Christian has become a Jew again... Only then could Judaism achieve universal dominance ...Once society has succeeded in abolishing the *empirical* essence of Judaism... the Jew will have become *impossible*... The *social* emancipation of the Jew is the *emancipation of society from Judaism*" (Marx, 1844, cit.).

Since they were never explicitly denied as such (unlike Hess, who at the time shared the Hegelian theoretical framework at the time ⁴⁶), Marx's most serious and damaging statements created many problems for his biographers who were more sensitive and attentive to the question of anti-Semitism in left-wing culture. Marx's statements contributed to feeding the socialist movement and progressive thought with the notion that Judaism was at most a mere historical excrescence condemned to extinction and that the task for the Jews was to accelerate the process of extinction of their civilization and culture.

With an involuntary confession of belonging that did not, however, leave room for the possibility of more compassionate and acceptable choices, Marx added that if 'the Jew' had recognized "as invalid this *practical* nature of his" and had worked "for its elimination", he would have freed himself "from his previous developments and works for *human emancipation* as such", turning "against the highest practical expression of human estrangement" (Marx, 1844, cit.).

In a paradoxical way and in the perspective of a true human emancipation, the historically given *Jewish self-hatred* and Judaism historically, led in other ways to the recovery of some themes that are foundational to the Jewish tradition and rooted in biblical thought. Specifically, the theme of equality the aspiration of a redeemed world that in the traditional religious vision of Judaism is the result of divine action at the end of time, which man, by his actions, can at most help to hasten, without replacing God (cfr. Scholem, 2008).

On a psychological level, the elaboration and publication of the essay had a cathartic effect on the young Marx (Mizrahi, 1972). While retaining the theoretical framework of the essay of '44, in *The Sacred Family*, written two years later, he softened the more violent tones used to represent the Jews and Judaism and positively cited the arguments of Gabriel Riesser on behalf of the German Jews⁴⁷. Apart from a vulgar and completely inappropriate remark in *Das Kapital* ⁴⁸, indicative of his serious unresolved psychological problem (which in his private correspondence with Engels could take on violent and unspeakable tones), in his later writings, the devalued images of the Jew and Judaism, which his anti-Semitic detractors spilled against him, will make way for the contrast between the working class and the bourgeoisie⁴⁹.

One wonders whether the recognition in the *Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1848) of the positive role played by the Bourgeoisie in its ascendancy did not indirectly represent a partial rectification of the negative images with which his youthful writings had portrayed the historical contribution of Jews and Judaism in the genesis of the new world.

Had the young Marx looked towards the East, he would have had no difficulty in seeing for himself how prejudiced and removed from reality the symbolic equation on which the whole discussion based

⁴⁶ In those same years, Hess had described Jews and Judaism as 'soulless mummies' and contrasted the 'universalist' God of Christians with the 'nationalist' God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the wake of Marx's theses, he stated in 1845 that 'in the natural history of the social world' the Jews had 'the world-historical vocation of developing "the beast of prey" from man' and had accomplished the work 'for which they were destined'. "The mystery of Judaism and Christianity" had "been revealed in the modern world of the 'Jewish-Christian shopkeepers'". (Cf. M. Hess, 1845, quoted in Poliakov, 1976, p. 468).

⁴⁷ Gabriel Riesser (Hamburg, 1806, Hamburg, 1863). Grandson of rabbis, in the revolution of 1848 he became vice-president of the Frankfurt Parliament. See <https://jewish-history-online.net/article/herzig-riesser>.

⁴⁸ For example, the statement in line with the '44 essay that the capitalist knows that all commodities are intimately "circumcised Jews" (see Marx, 1964, vol. I, p. 187)

⁴⁹ An example of Marx's unresolved idiosyncrasies are the epithets towards Ferdinand Lassalle, with whom he had come into dispute over the struggle strategies of the workers' movement: "The form of his head and hair", reads one letter, "proves that he is descended from the Negroes who mated with Moses' flock at the time of the exodus from Egypt" (quoted in Poliakov, 1976, &p. 487; see *id.*, p. 252). In contrast to a succession of examples given by Silberner, in which Marx uses the word Jew as an insult, in one of his letters, he uses the word Jew as an insult, in a letter to a Dutch cousin, whose family had converted, referring to Benjamin Disraeli, he used the term *Stamgenosse*, one of the same tribe (Avineri, *ibid*). Apart from the 1854 article on the misery of the Jews in Jerusalem, on which I have dwelt (see footnote 8 of this essay), a further element of this complex dialectic is the respectful encounter Marx had with the great Jewish historian, Graetz. The fact that they found interest in each other, Avineri points out, says a lot about what separated them, but also about what united them (*ibid.*).

was. It would not have been difficult to point out the dramatic conditions in which the persecuted and oppressed Jewish masses of Eastern Europe found themselves.

Just three years earlier, a fabricated ritual murder trial had been held in Damascus, which Heine is said to have used as a basis for writing an important unfinished work (Heine, 1921).

In a game of transgenerational mirroring, it was the daughter Eleanor, who corrected and turned the images of Jewish history and life on its head. Eleanor to whom Marx was closest (and who would edit her father's works) was active in the British labour movement in London's East End, where most of the workers were Jews of Eastern European origin.

In an act of symbolic re-appropriation, evident in the words chosen for her father's obituary, Eleanor learned yiddish, the language that Jews had used for centuries and that German Jews emerging from the ghettos would like to forget.

Faced with the anti-Semitic wave of the second half of the century, recalling positively the Jewish origins of his friend and teacher, and recognizing the role played by Jewish workers in the first great workers' strike in London, Engels expressed in a letter to Isidor Ehrenfreund all his dismay at the wave of anti-Semitism in Vienna (Engels, 1890)⁵⁰.

The explicit condemnation of anti-Semitism in left-wing movements was not peaceful. It was the result of a long struggle that opposed the different souls of socialism: from Bakunin to Fourier and Proudhon, whose hatred against Jews was perhaps matched only by his misogyny for women, anti-Jewish stereotypes were widely spread.

It was no coincidence that the *Dreyfus Affair* was initially dismissed as a purely internal affair of the bourgeoisie, and only when it became clear that the attack on the Jews was in fact an attack on democracy and freedom, did the socialist movement come out in force: not for the Jews as such, but for democracy and against reaction.

While the real issue at stake was clear: uniting democrats everywhere. This was not the case, however, for Jewish national aspirations, which were widely rejected and opposed, even in their most lukewarm version.

When the Labour movement was confronted in Eastern and Central Europe with the national question at the end of the 19th Century, Jews were the only nationality in the Tsarist Empire that did not have this right recognized. In the wake of a cultural tradition deeply rooted in European culture, Judaism was to be considered a kind of living fossil destined in time to disappear (Meghnagi, 1985).

The right to national self-determination was considered a necessary step in the transition to socialism, but not for Jews.

Scattered among the peoples and deprived of a land of their own, the Jews had to sublimate their sufferings, renouncing at the outset any specific national and cultural appeal. In the progressive versions the Jews were the vanguard of a historical process that would lead humanity to overcome all forms of prejudice and create a more just society. Delaying this process by opposing it with national or even just "cultural" claims, as the *Bund* proposed, was to be considered objectively reactionary and counter revolutionary (See Meghnagi, 1985, 2005). Contemptuously at the First Congress of the Socialist Workers Party of Russia (POS DR), Plekhanov, considered one of the leading theorists of Russian Marxism, described the Bundists as 'seasick Zionists'⁵¹. The seeds of intolerance are like mushrooms. United in expelling the Bund, the Bolsheviki and Mensheviki went through an irreversible and irremediable fracture at the same congress (See Meghnagi, 1985).

⁵⁰ Isidor Ehrenfreund was a member of the Association of Bank and Credit Institution Employees in Vienna (see Massara, cit., p. 249). In an exchange of letters published without the names of the authors in the social-democratic newspaper Arbeiter-Zeitung on 8 May 1890, we read: 'We owe too much to the Jews. Not to mention Heine and Börne, Marx was a full-blooded Jew. Lassalle was a Jew. A large number of our best comrades are Jews. My friend Viktor Adler, who is at the moment expiating his devotion to the working class in the Vienna jails, Eduard Bernstein... Paul Singer... - all people of whom I am proud to be friend - all Jews! Wasn't I myself introduced as a Jew by "Gartenlaub"? And indeed, if I had to choose, I would rather be Jewish than "Herr von" (*ibid.*, p. 252).

⁵¹ The General Union of Jewish Workers of Lithuania, Poland and Russia. In yiddish: *Algemayner yidisher arbeter bund in Lite, Poylin un Rusland* (אָלגעמיינער יידישער אַרבעטער בונד אין ליטע פּוילין און רוסלאַנד). The Bund was established in Vilnius in October 1897. See Brunazzi M. - Fubini A.M. (eds.), 1985.

"Jews today have become an eminent revolutionary factor; Judaism a reactionary factor, the lead ball of the progressive Jew, one of the last relicts of the Feudal Middle Ages, a social ghetto, consciously claiming itself while the ghetto of tradition has already disappeared. We will not have emerged completely from the medieval age as long as Judaism still exists among us. The sooner it disappears, the better for society and for the Jews themselves.

This disappearance does not in any way imply a tragic process, like the genocide of the Native Americans or the Tasmanians. It does not mean a decline into degradation and stupidity, but a rise to higher energies, to prosperity and well-being; the opening up of an endless field of activity. It does not mean the passing from one medieval ruin to the next, not the passing from orthodox Judaism to clerical Christianity, but the creation of new and better men.

So Aasvero will finally be at peace. He will continue to live in the memory as the greatest of humanity's martyrs, the one who suffered the most and devoted himself the most to it (Kautsky, 1914, pp. 489-490)⁵².

Kautsky's words, written on the eve of the First World War, reflected a line of thought, widely spread line of thought, in which Jews, even when individually accepted, were directly or indirectly called upon to annul themselves in the name of *higher human* values.

11. Rome and Jerusalem

Like many young people who came out of the ghettos, Hess had initially entertained the idea that the process of emancipation, however painful and full of ambiguity, would have historically put an end to their marginalization. Leading exponent of the Hegelian left, Hess had actively collaborated from Paris, the *Rheinische Zeitung*, directed by Marx, contributing in no small way to the writing of *Die Deutsche Ideologie* (1845).

In the *Manifesto of the Communists* (1848) published by Marx and Engels after their separation from Hess, the "communist Rabbi", as Arnold Ruge had called him, like him committed to the Hegelian left, will be mocked as a "true socialist" (Marx-Engels, 1848). Yet he had made a significant contribution to the first elaboration of those ideas, with insights and concepts, albeit not formulated in a systematic way, which then entered the baggage of socialist thought (Avineri, 1985)⁵³. Despite differing positions, the relationship between Marx and Hess did not break down completely, especially since Hess later played a significant role in the development of the German labor movement. After Hess's death in 1875, Marx had words of sorrow for the loss of his youthful friend, emphasizing that he had always been bound to him by a close friendship⁵⁴.

Born and raised in Jewish Orthodoxy, Hess had come into conflict with his father over his life choices. Having broken away from Orthodoxy, he retained a keen interest in Jewish history.

His growing awareness of the viscerality of anti-Semitism in Germany (in this he was close to the lesson of Heine, who in his essay on German philosophy urged us to be wary of the apparent calm in Germany (Heine, 1834), had led him in the 1850s to look at the national question in general, and the Jewish question in particular, in a different light.

In contrast to Marx, whose depth of thought he recognized, for Hess 'the class struggle' could not be the key to explaining the whole of human history, especially in concrete action, he underestimated the intertwining of the social and national question, which could not be reduced to illusions and mere deceptions of the ruling classes. Religious, national and family solidarity were the result of ancestral

⁵² Karl Johann Kautsky (Pray, 1854 - Amsterdam, 1938). He was among the most authoritative exponents of Marxist thought and German Social Democracy (Salvadori, 1978).

⁵³ To mention some of them: the passage from the opposition between wealth and poverty, characteristic of the first stages of socialism and that not by chance were strongly impregnated with anti-Jewish prejudices, to the opposition between capitalism and proletariat; the identification of self-consciousness with the historical movement and the "overcoming" of philosophy in its becoming praxis. In the mid-1840s, Engels ascribed to Hess the idea that communism was the necessary consequence of humanism. See Kolakowski, 1980; Cornu, 1971; Avineri, 1985).

⁵⁴ Hess had informed him several times about the book *Dynamische Stofflehre* that he intended to publish. After reading the book, sent by Hess's wife, Marx promised to take action, while noting that in many places it still deserved revision, even though it contained "ingenious conceptions" (see Silberner, quoted in Gui, 2020, p. 96).

ties and references that could not be reduced to a purely economic interpretation of historical development.

Although the concepts of economic and social formation, of false consciousness and of the relationship between structure and superstructure elaborated by Marx went far beyond certain simplifications and trivializations that they would have encountered in the political practice of the workers' movement, the problem remained.

In his tormented and contradictory wandering among the scientific, pseudo-scientific and ideological constructions of his time, Hess ended up by confusing and overlapping different concepts and ideas of nature and culture, of nation and "race"⁵⁵.

Havig say this, the underestimation of the national question in the socialist movement, constituted an indication of a great self-deception of socialist thought and revolutionary inspiration.

From Hess's perspective, the idea of "race", which in the wake of Positivism and Scientism was dangerously asserting itself in European thought, and which invested every branch of knowledge (Poliakov, 1973), was not a reason for exclusion, or for the oppression of one nation or one "race" over others.

For Hess, the common origin of the human races or their different origins in no way justified the right to slavery or the oppression of one people or nation and one "race" over another. Denied in its origins, the biblical idea of brotherhood between peoples, nations and "races" was for Hess a point of arrival inscribed in a cosmic, natural and historical process that was morally and politically inalienable and would lead to equality and justice⁵⁶.

What in the Bible was placed in the origin, so that no one, to paraphrase a rabbinic commentary on the *Genesis* account, could say "my father is better than your", was projected by Hess into a messianic future that would unite the peoples of the earth.

The rebirth of the Jews as a nation, necessitated among other things by the dull rejection of them, was part of a process involving humanity as a whole towards a stage of higher moral and cultural development, from which no people should be excluded (Hess, 1862, Avineri, 1985). The coming liberation of Rome was a promise for the future liberation of the Jewish people and other oppressed peoples (Hess, 1862).

Published in only a few copies in 1862, Hess's tormented reflection was the object of and later took on an almost prophetic value⁵⁷.

In the desperate and illusory quest to be accepted, even at the cost of annihilating himself, Theodor Herzl had initially *fantasized* the mass conversion of the Jewish children of Vienna, with the parents waiting for their children outside St. Stephen's Church: a collective baptism of great splendor and in the presence of the Emperor, a sort of "honorable" surrender in which the parents would not convert, sanctioning at the same time the end of a collective existence that historical developments had made *anachronistic*.

⁵⁵ The concept of race with reference to human beings is put in quotation marks here to emphasize that it is an ideological construction of racism and not a fact of reality (cf. Poliakov, 1976).

⁵⁶ "Because of a profound ignorance of natural and social laws," reads an 1857 article by Hess, "instead of deducing the high morality that teaches the fraternity of men and peoples from the material and intellectual progress of society, as well as from the physical and moral development of individuals, one would like to deduce it from their common origin, forgetting that the further back one goes towards the origin of humanity, the more morality is reduced to a patriarchal sentiment of continuity; and the more morality is reduced to a patriarchal sentiment, the more distant it is from this elevated sentiment which recognizes to all the members of society the same rights, in spite of the diversity of nations and races. Hess, 1857, in Gui, 2019, pp. 296).

⁵⁷ Abraham Geiger, one of the fathers of the Jewish Reform Movement, described Hess as an intruder who "after having failed in socialism and in all sorts of swindles, wants to make a sensation out of nationalism. At the same time as the Czech and Montenegrin nationalities he wants to revive the Jewish nationality" (quoted in W. Laqueur, cit. p. 69). In fact, Hess was and remained a leading figure of socialism even after the Zionist turn. As for nationalism, the spoliation of any national reference to Judaism, carried out by the Jewish Movement for Reform, was accompanied in large sectors of German Judaism by a growing identification with the destinies of the German nation (Mosse, 1988).

Painfully awakened to the murderous hatred against a Jewish captain, falsely accused of treason, the founding father of the Zionist movement found within himself the energy to think and imagine the most daring of solutions: organizing the exodus of an entire people dispersed among peoples. He placed himself at the head of a movement and a diplomacy that had yet to be built, dialoguing on an equal footing with the powerful, confident that the democratic spirit of the people would support him in his action. A positive and confident approach that in retrospect looks like a lucid and desperate intuition that clashed with immense historical difficulties and that, in realizing it, would have had to reckon with a deaf and irreducible rejection that has never faded.

A three-pronged thread, says *Qohelet*, is not easily broken. In his return to Judaism, Hess drew his deepest energies from his grandfather's teaching, of whom he kept alive the memory of sharing with his grandson the first fruits of the *Land of the Fathers* on the feast of *Rosh Hashanah* (the Jewish New Year), as if they were the greatest gift. Herzl's paternal grandfather had been a friend and follower of Rabbi Alkalay (Avineri, 1985; Weisz, 2013 pp. 47-51).

"Everything we have tried to do," Herzl asserted after reading Hess's book, "is already in this book" (Herzl, quoted in Laqueur, vi., p. 69).

Musolino's book remained in the drawer for a century before being published. Who can imagine what Herzl would have added if he had known about it, especially if he had known that his trips to Istanbul and London to plead the case for a Jewish state had been made by the Italian patriot half a century earlier.

12. Epilogue

Having remained unknown for a long time, Jerusalem and the Jewish People was rediscovered at the beginning of the 20th century, thanks to the action of the first nuclei of Italian Zionism⁵⁸. Compared to the rest of Europe, Italy appeared in those years like a happy island. Deeply identified with the values of the Risorgimento and integrated in the social, cultural and political life of the country, Jews were present in parliament and politics, in industry, in universities, in the police and in the army, holding the position of general, mayor, prefect, and even, as happened in one case, Prime Minister.

Jewish ingression into society had progressed at every level and like nowhere else in the world. But for those who knew how to read between the folds, not all that shone was a light turned to the future. The worsening of social crises and the desire to merge the many differences of Italian life into a homogeneous and unitary state, the ghosts of "a state within the state", were beginning to produce effects that would later, with the systemic collapse that followed the Great War and the rise of Fascism, produce their harmful effects⁵⁹.

For Italian Jews, who had been fully integrated into the life of their country, it would have been difficult, even impossible, to imagine that within a couple of decades and in spite of the blood shed in the Great War, they would have been deprived from one day to the next of every right and reduced to the condition of pariahs. To the point that, to paraphrase the image of Levi's double dream and the title of his second book, the entire epic of emancipation seen in the long term might appear as a pause or a truce, if not a deception of the senses. (Levi, 1963; Meghnagi, 2005).

⁵⁸ The existence of the manuscript was already known to the historian A. Boem, who mistakenly postponed its composition by twenty years (Carpi, 1985). It was mentioned and discussed within the first nuclei of Italian Zionism (cf. Finzi, cit.; D. Lattes, 1952, p. 36). As if it were *a destiny* for Musolino to be rediscovered by Jewish authors, his other most important work, specifically devoted to the Risorgimento, had to wait another thirty years to be proposed by the historian Paolo Alatri (1982).

⁵⁹ On liberal anti-Semitism in the post-Risorgimento period see Canepa (1975).

Unpublished for a century, Musolino's book was published in 1951 by Dante Lattes⁶⁰ and Raffaele Cantoni⁶¹, with a dense preface of Gino Luzzatto⁶². Three year earlier, in the post-war cultural climate, linking the hopes of the past to more recent tragedies, the publisher Einaudi had reprinted Carlo Cattaneo's *Le interdizioni israelitiche*, a classic of Risorgimento literature on the Jews' right to emancipation.

The publication of Cattaneo's book was a tribute to the values of the Risorgimento. It was a sign of a return to life for a minority that had been violently persecuted and annihilated a few years earlier.

In a game of symbolic references the publication of Musolino's book made explicit a historical and ideal path between the two Resurgences that had been fiercely violated. After the tragedy of extermination, the individual emancipation of the Jews and the Jewish national rebirth in the land of their forebears could no longer be treated separately, one granted while the other refused. They were to be considered inextricably linked (Meghnagi, 2014, 2022)⁶³.

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⁶⁰ Dante Lattes (Pitigliano, 1876 - Dolo, 1965). He was a leading figure in Italian Zionism. Rabbi and publicist, he was a former student of Benamozeg. In 1925 he founded *La Rassegna mensile d'Israël (RMI)*, the most important forum for historical, religious and political debate in Italian Jewry. In 1936 he was among the founders of the World Jewish Congress. His works include *D. Lattes* (1928, 1938).

⁶¹ Raffaele Cantoni (Venice, 1896 - 1971) was an Italian anti-fascist and leader of DELASEM, an organization for the assistance of Jews before and during the German occupation. After the war he was president of The Union of The Italian Israelite Communities (UCII). See S. Minerbi, 1978.

⁶² Gino Luzzatto (Padua, 1878 - Venice, 1964) was an Italian historian, medievalist and academic. In 1925 he was among the signatories of Benedetto Croce's Manifesto of anti-fascist intellectuals. Following the "Racial Laws" of 1938, he was expelled from university. During the war of liberation against Nazi occupation, he joined the *Partito d'Azione*.

⁶³ The reprinting of *Jerusalem and the Jewish people*, which took place in 2014 with *Libri Liberi*, was carried out as part of the celebrations for the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Unification of Italy, on the initiative of the Colloquium "Between West and East", the International Master's on Holocaust Studies at the University of Roma Tre and the Europa Ricerca Onlus. The publication was made possible thanks to a contribution from the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio della Calabria and the efforts of Vittorio Rossi, president of the small Florentine publishing house (whom I would like to remember), who enthusiastically accepted my proposal. The publication was preceded by two conferences, on 26 January and 26 September 2011, which provided the background to the process that made the book possible (See Meghnagi, 2014, p. XII; 2022)

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— Gerusalemme al il Popolo Ebreo —

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La Palestina nei suoi rapporti commerciali e politici coll'Asia e coll'Europa
e più di tutto colla Gran Bretagna.

— Progetto —

— da consegnarsi al Commo di Sua Maestà Britannica —

per

— Benedetto Musolino ex-deputato al Parlamento Napoletano —

— Genova 10. maggio 1851. —

Cover of the project, written in Italian, for the creation of a Jewish Principality that Benedetto Musolino sent to the British Government

La Colonisation de la Palestine
et
Les Chemins de fer Orientaux

Projet dédié et présenté

à
Monsieur le Baron James de Rothschild

par
Benoît Musolino

Ex-député au Parlement de Naples

Paris 1856

- Rue St. Lazare 134 -

Cover of the project for the creation of a Jewish Principality
that Benedetto Musolino sent to the Baron James de Rothschild

Benedetto Musolino

Gerusalemme ed il popolo ebreo

Con un saggio introduttivo di
DAVID MEGHNAGI



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**Cover of the new edition, edited by David Meghnagi,
of Benedetto Musolino's 1851 book *Jerusalem and the Jewish People*
(Florence: Libri Liberi, 2014)**