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# Italy's Jews from Emancipation to Fascism

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## 6 Fur Coats in the Desert

### Italian Jewish Refugees in Palestine

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Sixteen-year-old Dan Vittorio Segre grimaced as the sweat trickled down his back. It was September 4, 1939, and his ship had docked just hours ago in the port of Jaffa, in Palestine. Standing in wait for a taxi, he cursed his choice of clothing. His navy blue jacket had made so much sense back in Italy. So had his gray flannel trousers, shirt with cufflinks and detachable linen collar, and his elegant silk tie. He had been especially proud of his hat, made of rich brown felt. Now, standing in the blinding Palestinian sun, enveloped by dust and bustling bodies, Segre did something he would rarely have done in his hometown of Saluzzo, in the Piedmont region of Italy. He got rid of his hat, peeled off his jacket. He undid his collar and tie, and turned up the sleeves of his shirt. “I felt undressed, dirty, defenseless,” he remembered years later, “immersed in the still air of surroundings made up of sand, noise, shoving, and shadows.”<sup>1</sup>

Segre, like several hundred other Italian Jews, had fled to Palestine in the wake of the racial laws. He and others could scarcely believe the scorching Palestinian summer, where temperatures could climb up to forty degrees Celsius in the shade. The weather would not be their only shock, however. The Jewish culture of Palestine differed in every possible respect from their Italian upbringing. The Zionists who set the tone in 1930s and 1940s Palestine were not the Zionists Italian Jews had known in the peninsula. Jews in Palestine glorified socialism. They promoted simplicity and egalitarianism, spurned manners and propriety. There, heroes were not lawyers or doctors or professors; they were farmers and builders clad in shabby work clothes. “They wanted to appear poorer and rougher than my father’s peasants,” remembered Segre.

Italian Jews could not ignore the vast differences between Italian and Zionist culture. Did they accept the radical changes demanded by Zionist rhetoric? For the most part, no Italian Jews clung to their Italian past. They imported their native traditions into Palestine. They recreated the jobs they had had in Italy, with much difficulty. They opted for city life despite the expense it entailed. They replicated the same food, music, even clothing – despite the hot summers – that they had enjoyed in Italy.

At the same time that they replicated their Italian culture in Palestine, however, they also became outspoken Zionists. The gap between what Italian Jews said and what they did was typical of Palestine's Jews, who were in their majority "urban Zionists," to use Hizky Shoham's term.<sup>2</sup> Most Jews in Palestine preached egalitarianism and rural life, but in fact led urban bourgeois lifestyles. Italian Jews embodied this paradox: only a minority of them traded middle-class city life for a totally rural existence and erased all trace of their Italian upbringing, as demanded by Zionist ideals. These were the exception, though. In a sea of Zionist rhetoric, most of the refugees clung to their island of Italianness.

### A New Culture

Italian Jews in Palestine encountered a radically different culture from Italy. The majority of Jews in 1930s and 1940s Palestine promoted Zionist ideals. They maintained that all Jews should immigrate to the "Land of Israel" (Eretz Israel). They used the term "Diaspora" (*galut* or *gola*) in a derogatory manner to refer to Jewish life outside of Palestine. Instead of "immigration," *hagira*, they used the term *aliya*, or "ascent," to reflect the necessity of leaving the Diaspora. Immigrants to Palestine were approvingly called *olim*, or "ascenders." Zionists in Palestine believed that *olim* should come for one reason: to live the Zionist dream by settling in the Land of Israel.<sup>3</sup> The Jewish population of Palestine was known as the Yishuv, literally "Settlement." Zionists in Palestine thought that the Jewish nation should speak Hebrew and perceived all other languages as shameful competition.<sup>4</sup>

Italian Jewish newcomers arrived with profoundly different ideals. Some were Zionist, but of a different brand than the one predominating in Palestine. Italian Zionists had never urged their supporters to go to Palestine, but merely helped others, particularly eastern European Jews, who chose to go there. Prior to immigration, Italian Zionists had seen nothing wrong with living in Italy or anywhere else in the "Diaspora." To the contrary, they were Italian patriots. Take Umberto Nahon and Vittoria Pisa, who arrived in Palestine in 1939, following the racial laws. While still in Italy, Nahon had presided over the Italian Zionist Federation, while Pisa had organized tourist trips to Palestine on behalf of the Federation.<sup>5</sup> Both were Zionist by Italian standards, but neither would likely have moved to Palestine if not for the racial laws.

Italian Jews were scarcely the ideology-driven "olim" venerated by Zionists in Palestine. They went to Palestine to escape persecution, not motivated by ideology. Migration statistics show this clearly: in the decades before the racial laws, only several dozen Italian Jews had

immigrated to Palestine, compared to about 400 arrivals just after the racial laws. Max Varadi from Florence considered himself a Zionist and when he left, in 1940, he went to Palestine. But he would never have left Italy in the first place if not for the anti-Jewish laws. “I felt wonderful in Italy,” he reflected later. “Everything worked so that I would stay in Italy.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Bruno and Erna Ascoli subscribed to the Zionist-leaning newspaper *Israel*. But they never thought of leaving Milan, where Bruno was a successful insurance agent who enjoyed one promotion after another. Only when the racial laws ended his career did the couple and their four daughters go to Palestine.<sup>7</sup> As is typical of refugee migrations, the Italian Jewish movement to Palestine was rushed: some 72 percent of the migrants took less than six months to prepare for departure.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, some Italian refugees to Palestine did not consider themselves Zionist at all. A survey found that only 40 percent of the newcomers had subscribed to the Italian Zionist Federation.<sup>9</sup> Tina Genazzani from Florence, who immigrated in 1939 at the age of forty, had little interest in Jewish nationalism. Italy was everything to her, “the beginning and the end,” as her son explained.<sup>10</sup> Renzo Guastalla from Milan “had never had any particular interest in Zionism,” his wife remembered,<sup>11</sup> and in spite of his first name, Sion Segre Amar from Turin considered himself more of an anti-Fascist than a Jewish nationalist.<sup>12</sup> Luciano and Valerio Bassan, who left Rome at the ages of seventeen and twenty, had also grown up in a household of non-Zionists. Their father professed his love for the three things he held most dear: his family, the Jewish God, and the Italian fatherland. Jewish nationalism had no place in his heart.<sup>13</sup>

Most Italian Jews arrived in Palestine not speaking Hebrew.<sup>14</sup> Some could read biblical Hebrew from their *maggiorità religiosa* and from synagogue services, but none had a handle on the modern spoken language. Livio Campi, who left Trieste at the age of sixteen, hadn’t the faintest idea that Hebrew could be used outside of religious books. “When I came to Eretz [Israel],” he recalled, “there was a newspaper in the toilet [for wiping]. I remember thinking they were using paper from the Bible, because I hadn’t seen Hebrew letters except in the Bible. I was terribly shocked.”<sup>15</sup>

The new arrivals from Italy also held different political opinions from Jews living in Palestine. Zionists in Palestine – even if they lived in a city – promoted socialism and agriculture. To build up the nation, they believed, Jews had to engage in a struggle to conquer land and labor from its Arab residents. This could only happen if a Jewish socialist proletariat would settle the land, take up manual labor, and lead egalitarian lives in agricultural settlements.<sup>16</sup> Zionism therefore glorified *halutzim*, the name for self-styled Jewish pioneers who established collective

settlements – *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*. This ideological elite worked the land, shared living quarters, and raised their children in communal homes.<sup>17</sup> Agriculture enjoyed immense prestige among Jews in Palestine, and Zionist authorities invested in urban settlement only a fraction of the resources they devoted to farming establishments.<sup>18</sup> As for urban life and white-collar professions, the Zionist elite considered them “bourgeois” and associated them with the hated “Diaspora.” They derided middle-class etiquette and elegant dress. They liked rough manners, informal khaki clothes, and folk dances like the Romanian *horah*, an egalitarian circle dance.

Italian Jews arrived in Palestine with a profoundly different attitude to rural life. They were unmistakably urban. Some 80 percent of the refugees came from Italy’s largest cities and the rest, with few exceptions, came from sizable towns. About 20 percent came from Rome, 18 percent from Milan, 18 percent from Florence, 16 percent from Trieste, and 8 percent from Turin.<sup>19</sup> Most had had office jobs before immigrating, and none had worked in agriculture. Before leaving Italy, 65 percent of male family heads over the age of twenty-two had been professionals – lawyers, doctors, chemists, engineers, business owners, and civil servants.<sup>20</sup> Those who did own a farm in Italy, like the Di Cori and De Angelis families in Rome, employed peasant labor. The idea of middle-class children becoming peasants was unthinkable in Italy’s rigid class-system. “Like all Jewish parents, my parents aspired for me to learn an academic profession,” recalled Bruno Di Cori.<sup>21</sup>

Italian Jews came to Palestine with no interest whatsoever in socialism. Like most middle-class Italians, they had been more likely to back the Fascist regime than its socialist adversaries. Dan Vittorio Segre, who arrived at sixteen, recalled that certain refugees in Givat Brenner had been in the GUF, the Fascist University Youth group. He called his early years “My Jewish-Fascist Childhood.”<sup>22</sup> Giorgio Voghera, who arrived in 1938 from Trieste, noted in his wartime diary that “most of [the Italian refugees] had been enthusiastic Fascists.”<sup>23</sup> Refugee Sion Segre Amar from Turin had participated in socialist, anti-Fascist activism before leaving Italy, but he was an exception rather than the rule.<sup>24</sup> The idea of collective, rough, egalitarian life came as a shock to Italian Jews; before immigrating, they had enjoyed any number of class-based privileges, employed servants, and considered etiquette extremely important.

The ethnic-religious fabric of Palestine also differed tremendously from that in Italy. Before leaving the peninsula, Jews had had non-Jewish friends, neighbors, and coworkers. They had interacted with non-Jews on a daily basis. In Palestine, however, Jews had little contact with others. The 900,000 Muslim and Christian Arabs in late 1930s Palestine

lived separately from the country's 470,000 Jews. About 70 percent of all Arabs lived in rural villages and small towns, where few or no Jews lived; Jews in rural areas had their own settlements.<sup>25</sup> Arabs in the cities lived in closer proximity to Jews, but in different neighborhoods.<sup>26</sup> The Arab Revolt, which broke out in 1936 and lasted three years, led to more segregation, as Jews sought the safety of non-Arab neighborhoods. The two groups became less likely to frequent the same markets, cafés, movie theaters, and other public spaces.<sup>27</sup> By the late 1930s each group had its own education system, with Jewish schools teaching in Hebrew and Arab schools in Arabic.<sup>28</sup> Palestinian Arabs tended to work apart from their Jewish counterparts, in part because they had different jobs, and because Zionist leaders disapproved of them working together.<sup>29</sup> Therefore the new Italian refugees had few opportunities to talk to non-Jews. A handful of refugees had Arab neighbors or clients, such as the Passigli family in Ramat Gan who lived next door to an Arab family, or the Di Cori family, whose restaurant in Tel Aviv offered meals to Arab customers.<sup>30</sup> Giorgio Voghera, who settled in Kibbutz Givat Brenner, occasionally came across a young Arab shepherd who led his sheep to graze near the kibbutz lands.<sup>31</sup> These exceptions aside, Italian Jewish newcomers did not interact with Arabs.

The Italian newcomers absorbed the new Zionist culture from a number of sources, first and foremost from the local leadership and its institutions. Jews in British-ruled Palestine had a free hand in self-governance, and their institutions all imparted Zionist values. They had their own parliamentary assembly (Asefat Hanivharim), in which Zionist parties made up the vast majority.<sup>32</sup> The Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency were responsible for policy-making, while a Jewish National Council (Vaad Leumi) oversaw Jewish health care and social welfare. A General Federation of Laborers (Histadrut) guaranteed rights for Jewish workers, while the Haganah (literally "defense") acted as a Jewish military.

Italian Jewish children learned to be Zionist at school. Education was overseen by the Jewish National Council. Lessons in Hebrew and in Jewish history emphasized the "Land of Israel" and paid little if any attention to the history of the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>33</sup> Some teenagers, like sixteen-year-old Bruno Di Cori in Tel Aviv, received weekly agriculture lessons as part of their school curriculum. The teacher called him a "bourgeois," recalled Bruno, and "didn't especially like city children."<sup>34</sup>

Italian Jews also absorbed Zionist ideals from Palestine's Jewish media and public culture. The English-language *Palestine Post*, read by some refugees on a daily basis, preached the duty of learning Hebrew. Articles stressed the importance of the Jewish homeland and the need to shed



ties with the Diaspora.<sup>35</sup> It featured news items and opinion pieces commending *halutzim*, with titles like “Pioneer of the Land,” or “Anniversary of Jewish Pioneer Youth.”<sup>36</sup> Hebrew-language newspapers transmitted the same messages to immigrants who learned the language, as did the radio.<sup>37</sup> The musical play “There Are the Lights,” broadcast in celebration of Hanukkah in 1939, said that just as the Hanukkah lamp’s *shamash* lit eight small flames, so Palestine illuminated the weak lights of the diaspora.<sup>38</sup> Street signs in Palestine featured the names of Zionist activists.<sup>39</sup> The centrally located Eliezer Ben Yehuda Street in Tel Aviv, for instance, memorialized the reviver of spoken Hebrew.<sup>40</sup> Zionist rhetoric found its way into popular culture and daily life: a coffee-shop in Haifa called itself “Café Pioneer,” screenwriters wrote an opera entitled “The Pioneers,” and a theatrical production called “The Earth” told the story of Hebrew farmers at work.<sup>41</sup> Street posters and postcards showed ruddy-cheeked young farmers toiling happily in the field.<sup>42</sup>

Italian Jewish refugees also learned about Zionism from eastern European Jews, the largest group of Jews in Palestine. They had generally arrived earlier and had a better grasp of Hebrew. Although most lived in towns and cities and enjoyed urban lifestyles reminiscent of those they had left behind in Eastern Europe, they considered it their right and duty to educate the newcomers to eschew the Diaspora. When Dan Vittorio Segre got off the boat in Jaffa, a Russian taxi driver in khaki shorts gave him his first lesson in Jewish nationalism. “You must turn your back firmly on the past. There is no way back for the Jews [from Europe],” said the driver. “Zionism should cut the cultural and spiritual links with it, and put an end to the mentality of the Diaspora.”<sup>43</sup>

The Zionist message was evident in Eastern European Jews’ disdain for German Jews. Much like Italian Jews, most German Jews had been middle-class, urban, non-socialist professionals before fleeing Hitler, and great believers in manners and propriety. Once in Palestine, they came under attack for this lifestyle.<sup>44</sup> Italian Jews noticed that the Germans seemed to get everything wrong. “It is said that the German Jews are not convinced nationalist Jews,” Voghera wrote in his diary.<sup>45</sup> Bruno Di Cori from Rome discovered the derogatory name *yekim* or *yekes* that eastern European Jews called Germans. “The ‘*yekim*’ . . . acted as members of the petite bourgeoisie,” he was told. “Their behavior and culture was well known. Some said that the term ‘*yekim*’ stood for ‘slow-witted Jews [*Yehudi ksheh havanah*] . . .”<sup>46</sup> When forty-five German and ten Italian teenagers took part in a shared Youth Aliya program in Givat Brenner, kibbutz old-timers reprimanded the Germans for learning Hebrew too slowly.<sup>47</sup> By observing the criticism of German Jews, Italian refugees understood what was expected of them.

A handful of Italian Jews who had moved to Palestine before the racial laws formed another influence on the newcomers.<sup>48</sup> Foremost among these old-timers was Enzo Sereni from Rome. Sereni enjoyed the reputation of being something of a leader of Italian Jews in Palestine.<sup>49</sup> A convinced socialist, he had joined Kibbutz Givat Brenner in 1927 and adopted a Hebrew name, Chaim. He found Italian Jews' "bourgeois and Philistine spirit," as he put it, both "abominable" and "repulsive." To him the *horah* folk dance was "the very wind of Zion," and he preferred the countryside to the city, where he believed Jews lived as "prisoners in a desert of stone."<sup>50</sup> After 1938, Sereni frequently met with Italian newcomers, hoping to make them more like himself.<sup>51</sup> He tried to convince them to join his kibbutz. "A normal people can't be created without workers and farmers," he told Beppe Artom from Turin soon after the latter's arrival in 1939.<sup>52</sup>

Sereni believed it his right and duty to convert Italian refugees into socialists and farmers. "What did you think, that you would come to Eretz Israel to continue your life as nabobs?" he jeered at Sion and Giorgina Amar from Turin who settled in Tel Aviv. "Yes, for you the city is better," he mocked them. "You'll always be able to be a money changer on [a street] corner . . . You have what it takes." When Sion was not persuaded, Sereni threatened him. "If you refuse to come to a kibbutz, I'll find [Giorgina] another husband who is worth the pain . . . You'll find yourself without a penny and you'll be forced to work as a porter just to give your miserable wife and daughter something to eat . . . Then you'll cry for the kibbutz. But don't come sniveling to me on that day. Run, hide behind your dreams."<sup>53</sup>

Marcello Savaldi was another veteran immigrant who took to educating the newcomers. Savaldi had left Milan for Givat Brenner a mere several months before the racial laws, but those months gave him the elevated status of one who had come out of true Zionist convictions and not because of the racial laws. He too Hebraized his name, to Malkiel. At the age of twenty-six he had formed a firm opinion of the newcomers. "There is a quantity of people coming here," he wrote to a friend in 1940, "who don't understand . . . that here, every single person must renew himself and his life completely, if we are truly to construct a home for the Jewish people." He scorned Italian Jewish refugees for preferring the city to kibbutz life. "They install themselves in the cities," he lamented, "and search all the ways to reach the most lavish and quick earnings, to continue the life they led before coming here." Even refugees who joined the kibbutz did not escape scathing criticism for what he considered their "bourgeois" behavior and appearance. He branded them as "unripe," "unsuitable," "un-adaptable," and "scratched elements."

Nothing escaped his notice, not even the European hairstyle of one Italian Jewish teenager. “The lock on her forehead certainly doesn’t help her enter our atmosphere,” he grumbled.<sup>54</sup>

Italian old-timers were both ashamed of the newcomers and determined to set them on the right path to Zionist fulfillment. Twenty-five-year-old Elvira Eckert, who had arrived from Gorizia just before the racial laws, considered the new refugees spoiled and overly immersed in Italian culture. “Can you believe these new Italians?” she wrote to Savaldi. “I’ve lost the few illusions I had about them. I especially don’t believe their seriousness of intention, when they . . . wait for us to prepare a kibbutz for them . . . with pasta and a warm bath at the ready, and a nice sign saying “Welcome,” perhaps even . . . with a translation into Italian.”<sup>55</sup> Another veteran immigrant, Leo Levi from Casale, pushed the newcomers toward socialism and bade them leave behind their class-based culture. “[Levi] made pointed remarks about my feudal attitude,” recalled Dan Vittorio Segre, who arrived in 1939.<sup>56</sup> Despite their small number, these veterans tried hard to influence the new arrivals. They viewed themselves as the newcomers’ guides and sought to mold them into model Zionists.

### Stubborn Italians

Had Italian Jews done all they were asked, they would have changed their ways profoundly and lost all attachment to Italy. Zionism preached agricultural life, while Italian Jews came from cities. It praised farming, while they had worked in white-collar jobs. It lauded simplicity and roughness, while they were refined. But the fact is that Italian refugees did *not* change their ways once they came to Palestine. They clung to their Italian habits. They worked as hard as they could to replicate the lives they had enjoyed in the peninsula. In a sense, they brought Italy to Palestine.

That Italian Jews managed to keep so much of their native culture owed to the paradoxical nature of Jewish society in Palestine. A glaring gap existed between rhetoric and practice in Jewish Palestine. Thus, while Zionist culture idealized “olim” who went to Palestine purely out of Zionist aspirations, most Jews – Italian Jews included – had immigrated to Palestine for a combination of reasons, including the desire for better livelihoods and to escape persecution.<sup>57</sup> Although Jews in Palestine strongly advocated the use of Hebrew, most – including Italian Jews – privately preferred their mother tongues to Hebrew.<sup>58</sup> Agricultural settlements enjoyed immense prestige in Palestine, but only a small minority of Jews in Palestine actually lived in them. In the late 1930s only a quarter of the Jewish population lived in the countryside, and only

7.5 percent resided on a kibbutz.<sup>59</sup> The rest – among them those from Italy – lived in cities, especially Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Although most Jews in Palestine belonged to the working class rather than to the white-collar strata of Italian Jews, they steered clear from agriculture. Their types of occupation, primarily manufacture, commerce, and trade, bore some resemblance to those of the Italian newcomers.<sup>60</sup>

Italian Jews' ability to ignore Zionist ideals stemmed from the fact that most other Jews in Palestine strayed from those values as well. Palestinian Jews may have celebrated egalitarian simplicity, but few practiced it. True, kibbutz members lived frugally. Men and women in kibbutzim wore khaki pants, ate simply, and slept in tents or huts.<sup>61</sup> They shared everything from mealtimes to child-rearing, even showers (though these were separate for men and women). But most Jews in 1930s and 1940s Palestine were not remotely close to such a lifestyle. Most cherished their privacy, owning or renting apartments in towns. European manners were important enough in Palestine that town dwellers filed complaints about rude bus drivers. The majority of Palestine's Jews ate like Europeans, with diets high in meat, flour, and even pasta.<sup>62</sup> They dressed like Europeans, in clothes imported from Western Europe. Shops sold shoes from Belgium and Austria, velvet from Paris, and woolen fabrics from Scotland. Customers had a choice of tailored coats and waistcoats, bags, gloves, and hats, as well as afternoon and evening dresses following the latest European fashions.<sup>63</sup> Therefore when the newcomers preserved their Italian ways, they were not so very different from other Jews in Palestine.

Above all, Italian Jews in Palestine clung to their urban way of life. As many as 285 Italian Jewish refugees, or 77 percent of the total, chose city life, including Jerusalem, Ramat Gan, Haifa, and above all Tel Aviv, where 48 percent of the town dwellers chose to live (see Appendix C, Tables 5 and 7).<sup>64</sup> Urban life was rarely the economical choice, as country rentals were cheaper than city apartments, and kibbutzim guaranteed employment, food, and lodging. Yet Italian Jews, showing a distaste of country life typical of urban Italians, chose to live in the city.<sup>65</sup>

Tel Aviv attracted the largest group of Italian Jews because it was the closest thing to a European city they could find. By 1937, the city had 3000 shops, 200 restaurants and cafés, 100 hotels and boarding houses, and 40 banks.<sup>66</sup> Catering to European immigrants, Tel Aviv coffee shops sold cream cakes and Viennese coffee.<sup>67</sup> Beach-goers wore bathing suits mimicking the latest European fashions, and Tel Aviv night life included ballroom dancing, cabaret shows, and jazz music.<sup>68</sup> By the 1940s, the city offered European standards of health services and

sanitation, with European-style water closets.<sup>69</sup> Automobiles and buses had mostly replaced horse-driven carts.<sup>70</sup>

City life was also a way to keep Italian Jewish families intact. Unlike labor migrations, consisting mostly of young single men, this refugee migration was made up of families, with high proportions of women, children, and elderly people.<sup>71</sup> Elderly refugees especially had no desire to make radical lifestyle changes at their age. As for refugees with young children, they did not like the idea of shared child-rearing. Bruno Di Cori's family decided against kibbutz life after visiting Givat Brenner when they first arrived in Palestine. "We were used to an independent lifestyle," recalled Bruno. "I, for one, was accustomed to a warm and loving family life and was not attracted to the idea of leaving my parents and moving to live with many other youths."<sup>72</sup> Sion Segre Amar chose Tel Aviv after seeing married couples on a kibbutz share their huts with other people because of housing shortages. "I don't like making love in the presence of [another]," Amar threw at Enzo Sereni, when the latter tried to bully him into joining Givat Brenner. "I leave that to you."<sup>73</sup>

Some Italian Jewish parents chose city life because they did not want their children becoming farmers. Tina Genazzani from Florence settled with her family in Tel Aviv for that reason. "I can't, I absolutely can't, adapt to [the idea of] making my boys cattle-raisers or even worse, and I will do anything for it not to be so," she wrote to a relative in Italy in late 1939. "Let me never see them work the land. I am not and never will be party to this new mentality."<sup>74</sup> When her older son, sixteen-year-old Franco, was forced to attend an agricultural school in order to receive a Youth Aliya visa, she filled with despair. "Today my boy is a handsome young man, a perfect type of *Halutz*, of wide chest, tanned face, fierce and satisfied with his work," she wrote to another family member. "But what has happened to the dreams of his mamma, to the golden future that I had dreamed for him?" Franco joined the agricultural school despite her feelings. "She would sit and cry all the time and had lots of migraines," recalled her younger son Enzo.<sup>75</sup>

Florentine Gualtiero Cividalli in Tel Aviv also questioned the value of an agricultural upbringing for his children. "[Is] a new life, much closer to nature, preferable?" he asked himself. "Would it be better [for them] to try a more direct training in agricultural or manual labor?" He decided against it and sent his children to urban schools instead. "I am afraid," he admitted in his diary, "that . . . there is a certain immoderate spirit [in Palestine]. I want my children to know of the nobility of work . . . But I also want them to conserve an independence of spirit, and an ambition toward broader wisdom."<sup>76</sup>

Most Italian Jews in Palestine stuck to the type of work they had done in Italy. In 1940, only 18 percent of male Italian family heads in Palestine engaged in agriculture or manual work. Even this modest figure shrank as time went by and the men gave up on this type of labor.<sup>77</sup> Refugees clung to their white-collar professions as much as they could. They opted for medicine, law, engineering, industry management, and business. The Servadios, who had run a tanning factory in Pistoia, built a similar plant together with the Ottolenghis in the town of Netanya. The Ben Zimra brothers had operated a finance company in Livorno. Once in Palestine, they entered as share-holders in the Servadio tannery and opened a store to sell the manufactured hides.<sup>78</sup> Angelo Artom, who had owned a pharmacy in Turin, founded a pharmaceutical factory in Tel Aviv together with other Italian refugees.<sup>79</sup> The Florentine doctor Alessandro Fiano continued to work as a pediatrician and the Triestine doctor Silvio Colbi resumed his career as a dentist.<sup>80</sup>

Italian refugees who could not replicate their exact profession aimed for as close a match as possible. They consistently preferred office work and commerce to farming. When in 1939 a dozen Italian Jews set up the Association of Italian Immigrants (*Irgun Olei Italia*), a mutual-aid organization, newcomers asked for its help “especially [in finding] office work.”<sup>81</sup> Rodolfo Di Cori, a retired army general who had spent the 1930s working as a clothes merchant in Rome, turned to agriculture only as a last resort. First he opened an Italian restaurant in Tel Aviv, which served pasta and other Italian dishes. When that failed, he took on work as a school cook. Next he tried to sell chickpeas, then fish, then tea, then steel wool, and finally chicory seeds, but had no success. Eventually he resigned himself to growing poultry in the countryside, only to watch miserably as avian flu killed off all his chickens.<sup>82</sup>

Italian Jews clung to their former professions even at the price of unemployment and poverty. Palestine had little need for white-collar professionals, whose number had grown exponentially with the arrival of German Jewish refugees several years earlier; over the course of the 1930s Palestine witnessed a growth of 209 percent in the number of physicians, surgeons, and dentists, 114 percent in the supply of architects and engineers, 72 percent in the number of people employed in arts, and 32 percent in educators.<sup>83</sup> Jewish doctors had immigrated in such large numbers that the British introduced a quota law limiting the annual number of medical licenses.<sup>84</sup>

Italian Jews’ aversion to agricultural work, therefore, often left them jobless. The Association of Italian Immigrants recorded that out of 133 family heads, 41 (30 percent) had no work or only temporary jobs.<sup>85</sup> At

twenty-six, Renzo Toaff from Livorno, who had studied medicine before the racial laws, refused to join a kibbutz and devote himself to agricultural work. "I couldn't see any reason to give up something in which I'd invested both effort and excitement," he later explained. For months he had barely enough money to buy food and consequently lost eleven kilos (twenty-four pounds).<sup>86</sup> Engineer Gualtiero Cividalli, a forty-year-old father of five, found no work for months. When a job finally came up, it had 600 applicants. Still, Cividalli preferred lengthy unemployment in Tel Aviv to farming. "This life of mine today," he acknowledged in his diary, "is perhaps mad. Eating day by day into the money that we managed to bring here . . . is careless . . . But I don't believe myself adapted to agricultural work."<sup>87</sup> Forty-three-year-old Umberto Genazzani, an experienced pediatrician from Florence, applied to the British Mandate authorities for five years running before receiving his doctor's license. While he waited he tried his hand at commerce, selling first insurance and then Venetian glass. He steered clear from agriculture.<sup>88</sup>

Italian Jewish men, women, and children similarly preferred to hold on to their Italian daily-life customs. Families continued to dress in the same style they had done in Italy. The photo albums of the Passigli family depict them in pressed skirts, stockings, ironed shirts, and elegant cardigans outside their home in Ramat Gan. They had no use for khaki.<sup>89</sup> Gina Segre shipped her luxurious fur coat with her from Milan.<sup>90</sup> Italian Jewish refugee women sported carefully styled chignons on their heads, just as they had in Italy.<sup>91</sup>

Refugees also imported their hobbies to Palestine. They brought with them their musical world, a far cry from the Romanian folk-music the kibbutzim liked so much. Bruno Di Cori delighted in records of Neapolitan songs he had brought from Rome, while Marco Pietri spent his spare time on the kibbutz listening to Beethoven, as he had done in his hometown Fiume.<sup>92</sup> Carla Bentovim from Ferrara never missed a concert of the Palestine Orchestra (later the Israel Philharmonic).<sup>93</sup> Giorgio Voghera from Trieste passed his Saturdays on the kibbutz reading Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Rodolfo Di Cori tried to find a hunting club he could join, an unlikely pastime in the Middle East.<sup>94</sup> Some retained the eating habits they had growing up with in Italy. Rodolfo continued to eat pasta, while Tina Genazzani prepared *polpettone*, an Italian dish made with ground meat.<sup>95</sup> Dan Vittorio Segre found any excuse to visit Mrs. Levi to taste her *grissini*, a delicate type of bread typical of Piedmont, where both were from.<sup>96</sup>

Italian Jews in Palestine designed their houses to look like the ones they had left behind. They did so with the help of large shipments of



their Italian belongings, for the Fascists allowed the export of personal property as long as it did not include money or valuables. The refugees transported enormous containers filled with heavy, elegant furniture, which they used to recreate lavish sitting rooms in their new homes. Emma Benaim from Florence did not travel light. Her baggage included a cupboard, a desk, several armchairs and upright chairs, a bench, some little tables, a mattress, a carpet, and some paintings.<sup>97</sup> The Ascoli family transplanted their library of Italian classics as well as all their furniture from Italy to Palestine.<sup>98</sup> Elsa Ravenna Glass from Trieste had her piano and all her dishes shipped over, while Marcella Zevi from Rome – pregnant when she immigrated – brought a baby cot made of delicate organdy, gauze, and lace.<sup>99</sup> Dan Vittorio Segre described the apartments of fellow Italians in Ramat Gan. “In their homes,” he wrote, “full of solid furniture, bibelots, miniatures, lace runners, and fine tablecloths, there prevailed the same ordered and cautious atmosphere one would find in Venice or Florence.”<sup>100</sup>

Many immigrants continued to speak Italian, long after they settled in. A survey conducted several decades after their arrival, in the 1970s, found that almost half the respondents still used Italian at home, and almost 60 percent still read Italian books.<sup>101</sup> They had frequent opportunities to speak their native language, as their concentration in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem enabled them to see one other frequently. Erna Ascoli met every Monday with three fellow refugee women. They began these meetings soon after arriving, and continued this habit for decades. Although they gathered to improve their Hebrew reading skills, they used Italian for social chatter.<sup>102</sup> The arrival of hundreds of new immigrants from Italy in the post-World War II period also expanded the opportunity for older immigrants to use their mother tongue.<sup>103</sup> As the Italian community in Israel grew, so did their institutions, providing more places and events in which Italian Jews could speak Italian. In 1952, Italian immigrants who had arrived in Palestine in the wake of the racial laws set up an Italian synagogue in Jerusalem. There, they met up on holidays and spoke in Italian.<sup>104</sup> Throughout the 1950s, the Association of Italian Immigrants held congresses and conferences for Italian-speaking immigrants.<sup>105</sup>

### **Temporary Converts: Italian Kibbutzniks**

Only a minority of Italian Jewish refugees embraced the socialist-Zionist rhetoric in its entirety. Initially, eighty-six refugees (23 percent) abandoned their previous lives and became egalitarian laborers on



kibbutzim. But some of these passionate individuals eventually left the kibbutz and returned to their previous ways of life. By the 1950s, no more than fifty-five individuals (14.5 percent) and possibly fewer remained in kibbutz settlements.<sup>106</sup>

The case of an Italian Youth Aliya group at Givat Brenner illustrates how Italian Jews could shift from utter ignorance about kibbutz life, to a fervent embrace of that lifestyle, and finally to disenchantment with kibbutz ways and eventual departure. In 1939, eight boys and two girls aged fifteen to seventeen immigrated to Palestine without their parents and settled in Kibbutz Givat Brenner.<sup>107</sup> These youths had had little or no Zionist education; they went to Palestine because their parents wanted them far from any racial discrimination. Livio and Claudio Campi from Trieste had a Jewish father and a Christian mother and attended both church and synagogue. They probably had little if any exposure to Zionism. After the racial laws their father registered them for Youth Aliya for the simple reason that they could no longer go to school in Italy.<sup>108</sup> Livio and other Youth Aliya members attended a three-week camp in Italy, including a crash-course in Zionist history and a taste of manual labor on a Tuscan farm. None of this prepared the youths for what was to come. When they arrived in Givat Brenner, one observer noted, they were “astonished to learn that the essential work . . . [was] agricultural work.”<sup>109</sup>

Once on the kibbutz, adolescents underwent intensive reeducation. Their guide was Malkiel Savaldi, considered by all an “old-timer.” Savaldi and other kibbutz members urged them to turn their backs on Italy, on urban and middle-class life, and on their families. Renaming was first on the agenda. “You are in the land of Israel now,” Savaldi informed them the day they arrived, “and you cannot [have] . . . names like Celeste, Giulio, Gino, Riccardo.” He gave them new names, some of which sounded nothing like the Italian. Aldo became Shmuel, Gino became Malachi. There were two Riccardos in the group; one was renamed Amos, the other Avraham. Celeste, a common Italian name for girls meaning both “sky blue” and “celestial,” was renamed Tchelet, which is the Hebrew word for “light blue” (and rarely used as a name). Only their last names remained untouched by Savaldi, who had kept his own, too. Kibbutz old-timers chided the teenagers for constantly writing to their families in Italy, arguing it showed an unhealthy dependence on the “Diaspora.” Eventually the kibbutz refused to pay the cost of the youths’ airmail letters to their parents.<sup>110</sup> Kibbutz veterans urged the teenagers to learn Hebrew as fast as possible, and forget their Italian. Suits and dresses quickly disappeared, replaced by khaki shirts and shorts.<sup>111</sup>

A new daily routine stamped out their Italian education. In Italy, most of the teenagers had lived in their parents' houses in the city.<sup>112</sup> They had gone to school in the morning, and prepared their homework in the afternoon. From the moment they arrived in the kibbutz, they slept in tents with other teenagers and spent most their time performing manual labor. Their day began before sunrise, as seventeen-year-old Reuven (previously Renato) Volterra from Rome described in 1941. "When the guard Meir comes to one of the tents, the hour is still early and dawn has not yet risen," he began. "With his arrival begins the workday . . . Wearing work clothes and still tired from sleep, the comrades gather in the cafeteria . . . each one finds the comrade he will work with, and we leave for the field." At noon they lunched, bathed in communal showers, and gathered in study rooms for three hours of classes.<sup>113</sup> After dinner they attended kibbutz committees and assemblies and then went to bed.

The teenagers worked in agriculture, construction, and with livestock. On a typical day, Volterra picked tomatoes in the vegetable garden with twenty other boys and girls, Malachi (Gino) Rietti labored in the henhouse and picked cucumbers in the field, and Mordechai (Marco) Cohen picked fruit in the orchard.<sup>114</sup> As David (Claudio) Campi described, "In agriculture we worked in the vegetable garden, fruit tree garden, vineyard, and hen house. In artisanship we worked in the locksmith's workshop and the carpentry."<sup>115</sup>

Whereas in Italy Jewish children spent the better part of their day in school, the kibbutz favored labor over education. The youths only began their studies at two thirty in the afternoon after spending the entire morning at work, and even then, schooling was unlike any of their classes in Italy. Studies involved two hours of Hebrew, followed by lessons in "Homeland" and "Hebrew Literature." Classes in "Hebrew History" meant Jewish history, but only the period in which Jews (or Israelites) had lived in the area later defined as Palestine, namely, from biblical times until the early centuries CE. The survey then skipped the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age, because in both those periods most Jews had lived in the Diaspora. It resumed in the late nineteenth century, when Jewish nationalism began.<sup>116</sup>

The youths in the kibbutz were taught socialism, of which they knew absolutely nothing. Like most Italian teenagers, they had belonged to Fascist youth movements, which branded socialism as the enemy of the state.<sup>117</sup> As Yoel (Giulio) De Angelis admitted in 1941 at the age of seventeen, "terms like 'socialism, workers' movement, party,' . . . rang new and strange."<sup>118</sup> At eighteen, Neapolitan Amos (Riccardo) Sacerdoti "learned things that . . . were foreign and even contrary to our opinions."<sup>119</sup> They began to read socialist theory as soon as their Hebrew

was good enough.<sup>120</sup> During evening assemblies they listened to kibbutz members discuss equality and socialism,<sup>121</sup> and on joyful occasions danced the *horah*.<sup>122</sup>

After several months of learning Hebrew, working in the fields, and taking lessons, the teenagers changed visibly. They began to speak of kibbutz members as “comrades” (*haverim*) and of Palestine as “the Land of Israel” or just “the Land.” They called their group a “society” (*hevrah*) of committed socialist members. They tried to emulate old-timers and native-born Jews. “Native [Palestinians] . . . have become a goal for us: we want to be like them,” declared Yoel De Angelis. “The aim of our life now is to undergo a ‘Land-of-Israel-ization.’”<sup>123</sup> Sixteen-year-old Enrica Kron from Trieste agreed. “The dream, our common dream,” she wrote in 1941, “is . . . to be old-timers.”<sup>124</sup> Malachi Rietti described himself and his friends as “good and normal” because they aspired to “set up a society based on a Zionist and socialist idea.” He called the group’s training in manual labor a “big success” because they had learned to “value the ability to work and adapt to each branch and project.”<sup>125</sup> At seventeen, Avraham (Riccardo) Honigsfeld from Fiume counted as “normal” only “people whose base is in agriculture and industry.” If a member chose to leave the group, that signaled “serious crisis” because it hindered the group’s “normal development.”<sup>126</sup> The teenagers had become expert at kibbutz lingo.

In good Zionist fashion, the youths reviled their previous homes as a “bourgeois” mistake. Reuven Volterra declared his preference for “the bread and soup” of the kibbutz to “the fat and seasoned meals abroad,” and pledged that he and his friends would “transform . . . from diasporic Jews to ‘Eretz Israelis.’”<sup>127</sup> David Campi also faulted his parents when he wrote, “We used to be children of bourgeois people who aspired to make it . . . And what have we become . . . ? Workers, whose main part of life is labor.”<sup>128</sup>

The youths changed their very memory of emigration. Avraham Honigsfeld wrote in 1941 that he had come to Palestine out of a “mad desire to come to Eretz Israel to build and be built, to build a country for their people who [previously] wandered from place to place.”<sup>129</sup> So indoctrinated had he become, that he forgot the real reason he and others like him had come. The racial laws, and little else, had propelled parents to send their children to Palestine. The youths’ first day in Palestine was a sober one. Yet by 1941 Mordechai Cohen insisted that as soon as the group arrived in the kibbutz, they “immediately burst into song and hora.”<sup>130</sup>

But difficulties abounded. Enrica Kron from Trieste, who immigrated at the age of sixteen, admitted how hard she found kibbutz life. “I have

been here seven months in the kibbutz,” she wrote, “and it has not been an easy thing. Many times I didn’t overcome the difficulties, I wanted to leave and run away.”<sup>131</sup> In spite of the “mad desire” for the land he claimed to have had, Honigsfeld confessed in 1941 that he had almost given up: “[One] hot and suffocating day [when] the sweat came down drop by drop . . . I suddenly threw down the hoe and sat on the edge of the pit that I had just dug, my feet dangling . . . A moment passes. A [kibbutz] member who works near me asks me why I’ve sat down. I don’t answer; pretend I did not hear him. ‘Why?’ I ask myself, ‘why should I sweat? There are towns in the Land of Israel where I could manage as a clerk or something similar.’”<sup>132</sup> He quickly checked himself with the slogans he had internalized: “Many went to the towns and looked for the good life, [but] they didn’t consider that the Land cannot be built without agriculture . . . they thought others would do the physical work.” He vowed he would never be like those urban folk, but clearly he didn’t find kibbutz life easy.<sup>133</sup>

The teenagers found it difficult to speak only Hebrew, as kibbutz old-timers demanded of them. Eighteen-year-old Nurit (Nora) Ravenna from Trieste, who had arrived with another Youth Aliyah group, complained in 1941 about her fading Italian. “I don’t know enough Hebrew and no longer manage in Italian,” she despaired, “So precisely at this moment when so much is happening to me and I would like to be able to express it . . . , I must push everything further and further inside.”<sup>134</sup> Rietti expressed similar anguish when he wrote, “I feel myself illiterate . . . there is no content in what I write, I don’t know how to express my feelings.”<sup>135</sup>

The youngsters missed their families terribly, and wrote regularly to their parents despite discouragement from the kibbutz. When communication slowed down as Italy entered the war in May 1940, and stopped altogether with the German invasion in 1943, they feared for their loved ones. “The uncertainty regarding our families’ fate made it very difficult,” remembered Enrica Kron.<sup>136</sup> Yoel De Angelis missed the comforts of his previous life, particularly “napkins and many other small conveniences,” as he admitted in 1940 to a friend in Italy.<sup>137</sup> Nurit Ravenna could not shrug off her nostalgia for Italy. “If I were an old-timer in the land,” she wrote, “I could say that the memory of Italy is hazy, that Italian culture and customs are distant from me, and that I am Eretz-Israeli, and only to the Land am I tied. But it is not so . . . I am still an Italian.”

In the long run, the youths’ Italian backgrounds won out over the kibbutz’s intensive reeducation. Their doubts and difficulties overcame their shiny declarations of commitment. One by one, most of the young

Italians left the kibbutz. Zionist zeal ultimately gave way to career ambitions and personal desires. Avraham Honigsfeld left the kibbutz to find a spouse. After getting married he worked in income tax in Tel Aviv, and soon after returned to Italy with his wife and readopted his Italian name, Riccardo.<sup>138</sup> In 1944 Enrica Kron moved with her husband to Haifa, where she worked at first as a hospital cook and later as a bank clerk.<sup>139</sup> Mordechai Cohen left the kibbutz to work as a surveyor in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. In 1950 he too returned to Italy and to his old name, Marco. He worked in insurance and sales and eventually opened a silk factory.<sup>140</sup> Tchelet Terracina, although she never resumed the name Celeste, moved to the nearby town of Rehovot in 1951, while Amos Sacerdoti emigrated to Australia.<sup>141</sup> Malachi Rietti stayed in the kibbutz framework somewhat longer, but in 1958 he too moved to a city, Hadera.<sup>142</sup> Yoel De Angelis and David Campi were the only ones in the group to remain kibbutz members their whole life.<sup>143</sup> De Angelis continued to work in agriculture but in research rather than field labor, and eventually won the Israel Prize for scientific achievement. In fact, most of the youths turned their back on agrarian life and socialist ideals.

Italian Jewish adults who opted for kibbutz life underwent a similar process. They too transformed dramatically at first, and they too eventually rejected the kibbutz. They comprised mostly young, single adults, whose age and family status allowed them to experiment with a different and difficult lifestyle.<sup>144</sup> In place of Italian city life, university studies, and white-collar professions, they lived in crude huts or tents and toiled and sweated in farming and in unskilled labor. Carlo Castelbolognesi, who had studied medicine for six years, switched to carrying trays of dirty dishes in Givat Brenner's communal cafeteria. His brother Nello, previously an engineer, worked in the kibbutz's jam factory stirring boiling oranges with a huge ladle.<sup>145</sup> Giorgio Sarfatti, who held a university degree in the sciences, toiled in a cowshed.<sup>146</sup> Milanese Gina Segre Jarach, the daughter of a private banker, also took up manual work. "She labored until the end of her strengths in the vegetable garden, in the orchard, and in removing stones," recalled a friend.<sup>147</sup> Berti Eckert, previously vice rabbi and teacher in Milan's Jewish community, now tended to the henhouse of kibbutz Rodges.<sup>148</sup> Renzo Luisada had been an artist in his native Milan, but in the village of Tel Dan he herded cows.<sup>149</sup>

Italian Jews in kibbutzim traded privacy and decorum for rough-and-tough communal life. That meant doing everything in company, down to the most intimate practices. Giorgio Sarfatti realized the extent of the change one evening when a young woman chatted with his tent-mates. "The conversation wore on, and I began to undress in order to

get into bed,” he recalled. “Suddenly I told myself, ‘Are you mad? [She] is a lady, a short time ago you would have respected her by standing, offering her the sofa, opening the door for her; now you undress in her presence?’” He washed in a communal shower. “After work, and especially on Friday evenings,” he remembered, “all the members met [in the shower] . . . , exchanged opinions, and discussed matters of the day.” He used the communal toilet, a deep hole in the ground covered by corrugated iron.<sup>150</sup> Dan Vittorio Segre from Saluzzo joined what he later called the “social rite” of the men’s shower room. He shed his sweaty work clothes, carried the soapbox, toothbrush, and dental powder supplied by the kibbutz, and slung a towel over his shoulder. “Naked as worms,” he recalled, “we lingered on the humid, slippery benches to talk politics while washing our feet.”<sup>151</sup>

At first the adult Italian settlers embraced this new culture, just as the Youth Aliya teenagers had done. They challenged one another to show old-timers who was the most committed. When Sereni lectured on socialist theory, noticed Dan Vittorio Segre, “the Italians competed among themselves with questions and comments to prove they knew the texts . . . and could follow him.”<sup>152</sup> Some newcomers went as far as to shun Italian friends they considered insufficiently motivated. When Giorgio Voghera from Trieste expressed dissatisfaction with Givat Brenner, his Italian companions voted to expel him from the kibbutz.<sup>153</sup> Max Varadi, who settled in Sdeh Eliyahu, remembered having to show constant dedication. “There was the need to not be different, to not be separated from the rest of the *yishuv*,” he recalled.<sup>154</sup> “To be a pioneer, forget the past, the academic titles.”<sup>155</sup> Nello Castelbolognesi showed his zeal by publishing scathing criticisms of city life in the kibbutz bulletin. “The [Italian] *aliya* is not of a high quality,” he declared. He urged “extracting from this *aliya* the maximum proletarian and agricultural forces.”<sup>156</sup>

Yet this fervor wore off eventually. With time, more and more adult Italian Jews left kibbutz life. They left to pursue jobs they liked better, or to start a family, just as the Youth Aliya teenagers did. Giorgio Sarfatti left the cowshed for Jerusalem, because the woman he loved did not like kibbutz life. In time he became a professor of linguistics at the Hebrew University.<sup>157</sup> Renzo Luisada, his wife Paola, and their daughters Laura and Dina left Tel Dan where he had herded cows. They moved to Tel Aviv so that Renzo could resume his artistic career. He went on to found the “New Horizons” group, an influential movement in the Israeli art scene.<sup>158</sup> Evidently, the kibbutz settlers’ passionate commitment yielded to personal priorities.

Two especially tragic cases illustrate the difficulties Italian Jews faced if they stayed with kibbutz life. Giorgio Voghera had worked as an insurance official in Trieste, and arrived in Palestine in 1938 at the age of thirty. His good friend Marco Pietri, a successful businessman from Fiume, arrived a year later at the age of thirty-six. The two men shared a tent in Givat Brenner. Both suffered terribly from the manual labor. Voghera was in constant pain. "Worst of all are the hands," he confided in his diary at the end of a workday, "they're totally bruised and scratched . . . Every [shirt] button [I fasten] squeezes out a shriek of pain. [My feet] are red from a fungus that has spread even under the toenails, and causes pain and swelling up to the crotch . . . I won't even mention the sleepiness, fatigue, nausea . . ." He came to dread working hours and in the evenings fled to his bed instead of attending kibbutz activities.<sup>159</sup>

Pietri also suffered from bodily pain, but even more from the shame he felt about his physical limitations, since manual labor meant so much in the kibbutz. "The physical fatigue," reflected a friend, "caused him much anxiety and a feeling of intellectual inferiority, almost stupidity." Another observer recalled Pietri's first workday. "He worked as a porter in fruit-picking . . . The work was difficult for him, the treatment toward him humiliating . . . , and in the evening he came back crushed and broken in body and in spirit."<sup>160</sup>

Voghera couldn't get used to kibbutz life. He objected to the kibbutz's veneration of seniority and to their attitude toward newcomers. He published essays in the kibbutz bulletin denouncing old-timers as hypocrites who preached equality but had "better conditions than others . . . only because they have more seniority in the kibbutz . . ." He scoffed at the idea that deciding to stay in a kibbutz was an act of free will and that anyone could leave at any point. "Many are tied to the kibbutz out of financial necessity," he stated, perhaps hinting at his own situation.<sup>161</sup> Pietri protested the severity of kibbutz values. He resented the attempt to "do away with foreign culture and practices," a friend later recalled. "The zealous fighting for national values . . . narrowed one's horizons," he believed. He protested at the kibbutz's scorn of manners and decorum, and got into arguments defending such habits.<sup>162</sup>

Voghera sank into deep depression. "Every evening," he wrote in his diary, "when I fall asleep, I feel an involuntary desire not to wake up again, not to have to cope with the misery of the morning, the troubles of the day." He constantly felt foreign, out of place, a misfit. He had suicidal thoughts, which he managed to push away only by reminding himself that it could have been worse – he could have been in a Nazi concentration camp.<sup>163</sup> Small wonder that Voghera returned to his native



Trieste after the war. He resumed his work in insurance and eventually became an author.

Pietri sank into an even deeper depression. In December 1944 he confided to a friend: "There is no way for the Jewish people outside of Zionism, but I cannot go that way."<sup>164</sup> A few days later he climbed Givat Brenner's water tower and jumped to his death.

Clearly not everyone suffered as much as Voghera and Pietri. Some liked kibbutz life and stayed there all their lives. But they were few; by the 1950s no more than fifty-five individuals remained in rural settlements, making up less than 15 percent of the Italian émigrés. The majority of Italian Jews in Palestine chose the city, even if they experimented with kibbutz life for a while. They were used to urban life in Italy, and they chose urban life in Palestine. They had enjoyed white-collar jobs in Italy, and that's what they wanted in Palestine. They were accustomed to privacy, decorum, and elegance in dress and furnishings. All these they imported into their new country.

### Talking the Zionist Talk

While Italian Jews in Palestine clung to their Italian culture, rarely did they admit it. They internalized the Zionist idea that Jews should have nothing more to do with Italy – or any other country outside of Palestine. Criticism of the Jewish Diaspora grew ever louder in late 1940s Palestine. This had to do with the growing conflict between Jews and neighboring Arabs, which erupted into war in 1948. Zionist leaders wanted to increase the Jewish population and gain more soldiers, and the only way to do that was to bring in Jews from the Diaspora. Zionist authorities in Palestine, and after 1948 Israel, toiled to bring as many immigrants as possible, especially Holocaust survivors from war-torn Europe.<sup>165</sup> The only home for Jews was Palestine, they argued, not the Diaspora. *Im*-migration to Palestine – connoted by the Hebrew term *aliya*, ascent, meant a direct contribution to nation building. *Em*-igration from Palestine to the Diaspora – referred to as *yerida*, descent – meant, to the Zionists, betrayal of the homeland.

Italian Jews who stayed in Palestine after World War II adopted this way of thinking. They came to believe that the Diaspora never had been, and never could be, a home for Jews. Since Italy was part of the Diaspora, it too was unfit for Jewish life. Italian Jews in Palestine and Israel came to believe it was their duty to empty Italy of Jews, and get those Jews to the Land of Israel. They tried with all their might to bring Italian survivors over to Palestine. The Association of Italian Immigrants is a good example of this effort. Though it began as a mutual-aid organization to



help refugees, after the war it devoted its attention to bringing over Jews from the peninsula. When a number of immigrants visited postwar Italy to see their families, the Association urged them to promote immigration to Palestine.<sup>166</sup> “[Travellers] must understand and feel the importance of what they say about Eretz,” stressed a 1945 circular. “They represent the *Yishuv* to their brothers in the Diaspora.”<sup>167</sup> The Association asked its members to write to their relatives in Italy, inviting them to Palestine: “[Consider] the importance that letters . . . can have on our acquaintances [in Italy], who often have an inadequate or inexact idea of life [here].”<sup>168</sup> In the late 1940s, the Association of Italian Immigrants kept careful tabs on the number of Jewish arrivals from the peninsula, rejoicing whenever a new batch came.<sup>169</sup>

Italian Jews in Palestine did all they could to bring their friends and family over from Italy. Berti Eckert in Kibbutz Rodges wrote to his friend Augusto Segre, who had survived the war and was living in Turin. “*Aliya* . . . is the only definitive [solution],” he stated flatly in late 1945. “It’s the logical consequence of your entire life, the only way to live rather than just waiting to die.” Eckert didn’t mind speaking forcefully. “I’m resolved to tell you everything I think, to shake you and rough you up so that you’ll be able to break that damned iron ring in which you’re caught,” he wrote. “Snap yourself out of it . . . Come to Eretz Israel.”<sup>170</sup> Augusto Levi, who had arrived in Palestine in December 1938, felt just as upset that Jews were staying in the peninsula. “If only someone qualified . . . would talk to them of Zionism,” he wished.<sup>171</sup>

Following wartime agreements between the British Mandate and the Jewish Agency, thousands of young Jewish volunteers from Palestine joined the British army to fight the Germans. In 1944 and 1945 they were sent to Italy. Among them was a group of Italian Jews who had immigrated to Palestine in the wake of the racial laws. These young men urged Jewish survivors to immigrate to the Jewish homeland. Piero Cividdalli had gone to Palestine in 1939, returned to Italy as a soldier in 1945, and reunited with cousins he had not seen for six years. “Make *aliya* or become Christian,” he told them bluntly.<sup>172</sup> Giuliano Barroccio, another 1939 émigré, also returned to Italy with the British military. He spent his off-duty hours directing a “Halutz Center” in his native Rome, promoting kibbutz-oriented immigration to Palestine. He also edited an Italian-language monthly for the Jewish Agency, tellingly titled “Awakening.” It was time, he said, for “the return of the people to the Land, professional reeducation, agricultural colonization, and conquest of the deserts.”<sup>173</sup>

Italian Jews in Palestine not only rejoiced when Jews left Italy; they fumed whenever anyone left Palestine to go back to Italy. At the end of World War II, when it became possible to return to the peninsula,

fifty-nine Italian Jews, or 19 percent of the prewar refugees, chose to return.<sup>174</sup> They believed that postwar Italy, despite its war-torn condition, could offer them what Palestine could not. For some this was a job, for others a family, or even the weather. Still others, their number unknown, emigrated from Italy to Palestine after World War II, but decided to return shortly after. The 1948 war in Palestine frightened new arrivals and influenced their decision to return to Italy.

Italian Jews who stayed – 81 percent of the prewar refugees, 316 in all – were horrified at this return migration. “Admonish anyone thinking of returning to Italy,” the Association urged readers in 1945.<sup>175</sup> Twenty-three-year-old Paola Cividalli from Tel Aviv, who had arrived in Palestine in 1939, accused returnees of downright betrayal. “These people don’t know what [harm] they have caused . . . by abandoning us,” she wrote in a letter to her father. She called them “cowards.”<sup>176</sup> Umberto Nahon, who had also arrived in 1939, called the return of Jews to Italy “dishonorable and tasteless.” Rabbi Elia Artom from Turin, another 1939 arrival, charged returners with “treachery, because [they are] shattering the unity and therefore the strength of the People of Israel.”<sup>177</sup> His son Emanuele Artom, living in Jerusalem like his father, attacked Italian Jewish communities for accepting returnees from Palestine. Instead, he said, they should “take measures against those who don’t fulfill their duty . . . like posting for public contempt a list of the culprits . . . , excluding them from professional associations, [or] boycotting their shops.” Artom scoffed at “the security and calm of the Diaspora” and called anyone returning there a “deserter.”<sup>178</sup>

Time and again Italian Jews in Palestine castigated those returning to Italy. “All the Italians who escaped from Jerusalem – pigs, every last one of them,” wrote Bruno Ascoli, who had immigrated to Tel Aviv in October 1938.<sup>179</sup> When Leone Pavoncello returned to Italy after his son was killed in combat in the 1948 war, the Association cut all ties with him on the grounds that he had left Israel “for an utterly unjustifiable reason.”<sup>180</sup>

The irony is that Italian Jewish refugees who decided to stay in Palestine were not so very different from the returnees. True, returnees put their careers, safety, and families before the Jewish homeland, while those who stayed supposedly did so to help their nation. In fact, however, the immigrants who stayed did so for the very same reason as those who left: each one chose the best place for their careers and their families. Palestine’s economy had improved wondrously during the war years;<sup>181</sup> mobilization to the British armed forces, civilian employment by military authorities, a reduction of imports, and an expansion of local industries,

all led to almost full employment by 1945.<sup>182</sup> This made immigrants more likely to find work, and less likely to leave Palestine.

The younger the immigrants were upon arrival, the more they were likely to learn the language and integrate into the economy, which made it easier for them to remain in Palestine after the war. Only 10 percent of immigrants who arrived under the age of fifteen returned to Italy at the end of the war, compared to 13.5 percent of immigrants aged fifteen to forty, 24 percent of those aged forty to sixty, and as much as 41 percent of immigrants above the age of sixty.<sup>183</sup> Young immigrants' marriage to non-Italians also made them less inclined to return to the peninsula. In 1942, the Association of Italian Immigrants estimated that out of thirty-four marriages of Italian Jewish immigrants, nineteen had taken place with non-Italians.<sup>184</sup> Young Italian women especially enjoyed a broader range of work opportunities in Palestine than they would have had in Italy, for jobs deemed "below" middle-class Italian women were standard, even honorable, for women in Palestine. In Italy, only men could serve in the military. In Palestine, Paola Cividalli joined the British Allied forces in 1944, and in 1948 Bebbia Ascoli became a lieutenant in the Israeli army, an achievement her sister Anna reminded her was "quite something."<sup>185</sup> Anna herself trained as a nurse in the late 1940s, ignoring her father's admonition that "nurses in Italy were of a low class."<sup>186</sup>

Italian Jews stayed in Palestine for reasons far removed from ideology. Consider the case of Riccardo and Roberto Bachi, father and son. Riccardo arrived in Palestine in 1939 at the age of sixty-four, cutting short an established career as professor of economics at the University of Rome. Roberto arrived at the age of twenty-nine, after several years of work as a statistician at the University of Genoa. After World War II, the Italian Foreign Ministry invited both father and son to resume their posts. The elderly Riccardo accepted immediately. He had found only temporary work teaching economics in Tel Aviv and had difficulty speaking Hebrew.<sup>187</sup> But young Roberto declined. He had carved out a successful career in Palestine; in 1939 he had joined the statistical department of one of the country's largest hospitals, the Hadassah Medical Center, and two years later he founded a bureau of medical statistics there. By 1945, he had become Associate Professor of Statistics at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Both men opted for the better professional choice, each according to his age and the possibilities available.<sup>188</sup>

Just as staying in Palestine had little to do with Zionism, going back to Italy did not mean rejecting Zionism. Dante Lattes had been one of Italy's leading Zionists in the prewar decades. He had directed the Zionist newspaper *Israel*, and had worked as a writer, journalist, teacher,

and the director of the Rabbinical College in Rome. The 1938 racial laws spurred him to move to Palestine, but things did not go well for him there. He arrived there at the ripe age of sixty-three, and could not find a job. He eked out a living by giving Hebrew lessons to Italians and translating children's stories from Italian to Hebrew. Unsurprisingly, in 1946, when the Union of Italian Jewish Communities invited him to Rome to direct their cultural department and resume his previous role as journal editor, he pounced on the offer.<sup>189</sup> Clearly he, who had dedicated his life to Zionism, did not see himself as a betrayer of that movement.

So convinced were the prewar Italian Jewish immigrants by Zionist rhetoric, that they failed to notice how much they had in common with the returnees they criticized. They talked the talk, so to speak, but they didn't walk the walk. They had left the Diaspora for Palestine in the late 1930s to work, be near loved ones, and find safety. They had not gone out of Zionist convictions. Nor did their choice to remain in Palestine after 1945 stem solely from Zionist zeal. Staying in Palestine benefited them and their families from a professional, financial, and social point of view. Similarly, returnees who left Palestine for Italy did so to find better jobs, or because they feared war with the Arabs. But the refugees-turned-immigrants, after years of absorbing and internalizing the values of their host society, failed to see these similarities.

Italian Jews in Palestine differed from those in the United States in their attitude toward Italy. In the United States, refugees had spent the war years cultivating a rosy view of Italy, echoed by non-Jewish Italian Americans and eventually by the American public at large. Jews in Palestine and later Israel, in contrast, rejected the idea that Jewish life in the Diaspora could be possible. American society did not care about people leaving its shores, whereas Jewish society in Palestine considered every emigrant an injury to the national enterprise. Italian Jews could return to Italy if they wished, without generating any criticism in the United States. The very lack of statistics on how many Italian Jews returned from the United States, reflects the ease with which these migrants made their way back to Italy. In Palestine, on the other hand, the Association of Italian Immigrants and later the Israeli government kept a nervous count of emigrants.<sup>190</sup>

Still, though Italian Jews in Palestine lambasted those who returned to Italy, most of them had imported Italy into Palestine. They opted for urban residence, just as they had done in Italy. They tried to find white-collar jobs, just like the ones they had enjoyed in Italy. They continued to speak Italian, just like they had done in Italy. They held on to their Italian dress, furniture, and food. Only a minority of Italian Jews

attempted to live their lives according to the Zionist mindset by joining kibbutz frameworks and turning their backs on their Italian past, and even this group shrank with time. By the end of World War II, the émigrés had carved out a way of living as Italians in a Zionist environment. Meanwhile, their brethren across the Mediterranean were busy finding their own path, grappling with what it meant to be Jewish survivors in postwar Italy.

- 156 “Italian Relief Workshop,” *Nazioni Unite*, April 15, 1944, 2.
- 157 “Relazione sul Relief,” NYPL, *Nazioni Unite*, September 30, 1945, Italian version, 4.
- 158 Mrs. James A. Walsh to Hon. Juvenal Marchisio, February 11, 1947, CMS, IWL, RG 003, b. 59, f. General correspondence, 1947. Italian Jewish names include Gustavo Ajò, Giorgio Coen, Mario Foa, Mr. and Mrs. Alberto Feidenberg, Ettore Luzzatto, Mr. and Mrs. George Nunes, and so forth.
- 159 *Handicraft Development Inc. Newsletter* no. 4, June 1946, in *HDI Newsletter* no. 5, January 27, 1947, and HDI report, November 30, 1949, all in RAC, Rockefeller Family, RG 4 Nelson A. Rockefeller Personal, Series L Projects, box 78, folder 755, “Handicraft Development Inc. House of Italian Handicrafts.” “Sees Italy Making Steady Comeback,” *New York Times*, December 24, 1946, 25.
- 160 See, e.g., “A Letter from Rome,” *New York Times*, October 12, 1947, BR10; “A Literary Letter about Italy,” *ibid.*, January 21, 1951, 170. “On Television: Daytime Shows,” *ibid.*, October 17, 1953, 21. “On Television,” *ibid.*, November 14, 1953, 24. Paul Milano, *The Portable Dante* (New York: Viking Press, 1947). Paul Milano, *The Selected Works of Dante* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972).
- 161 Carla Pekelis, *A Dictionary of Colorful Italian Idioms* (New York: G. Braziller, 1965).
- 162 “Draft of Address to Be Given at the Chicago Chapter Annual Meeting,” June 1, 1955, UCHIC, Laura Fermi Papers, b. 6, f. 1.
- 163 Author’s interview with Clara Rothman, Lakewood, CA, December 1, 2013, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.

## 6 FUR COATS IN THE DESERT: ITALIAN JEWISH REFUGEES IN PALESTINE

- 1 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 110–112, 119.
- 2 Hizky Shoham, *Carnival in Tel Aviv: Purim and the Celebration of Urban Zionism* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2014), Introduction.
- 3 For a short history of Zionism, see David Engel, *Zionism* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2009). For the Zionist attitude toward homeland and diaspora, see the writings of Ben-Zion Dinur, perhaps the most avid and effective promoter of this approach. Ben-Zion Dinur, *Israel and the Diaspora* (1936; repr., Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969). First published in 1936 as *Yisrael ba-Golah*. For a critique of this approach, see Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, “Galut Betoch Ribonut,” *Teoryah u-vikoret* 4(1993): 23–27.
- 4 Anat Helman, “‘Even the Dogs in the Street Bark in Hebrew’: National Ideology and Everyday Culture in Tel-Aviv,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92, no. 3–4 (2002). Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), Introduction, especially 5–9.

- 5 Undated [1934] memorandum by Leone Carpi for the Unione dei Sionisti Revisionisti, CZA, RG A433, Alfredo Sarano collection, b. 3. Segre, “Sionismo e Sionisti in Italia (1933–1943).” On touring Palestine in the 1930s, see Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 63–67.
- 6 Interview with Meir (Max) Varadi, June 15, 1987, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 54, f. 6.
- 7 Mispahat Ascoli (family-produced booklet), 15–17, Ascoli family archive. Author’s interview with Anna Ascoli Servadio, Tel Aviv, July 12, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 8 Sergio Della Pergola et al., *Gli Italiani in Israele* (Roma: Federazione Sionistica Italiana, 1978), 109.
- 9 This survey, carried out in 1977, does not specify the number of prewar immigrants surveyed. Della Pergola et al., *Gli Italiani in Israele*, 91.
- 10 Author’s interview with Diana Passigli, Ramat Gan, July 30, 2010, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection. Author’s interview with Enzo Genazzani (Nitzani), Savion, July 23, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 11 Damiano Cannalire, *Salvare la Memoria: Come Studiare la Storia di Ieri per Non Essere Indifferenti Oggi* (Milano: Anabasi, 1995), 159.
- 12 Zion Segre Amar, *Il Mio Ghetto* (Milano: Garzanti, 1987), 79.
- 13 Ettore Bassan to [his sister-in-law], 1943, Passigli family archive.
- 14 The 1977 survey of prewar Italian immigrants found that 42 percent reported being able to speak some Hebrew before immigrating, but only 3 percent reported the ability to speak it well. Della Pergola et al., *Gli Italiani in Israele*, 67.
- 15 Interview with Shaul (Livio) Campi by Hana Strauss, September 13, 1994, GBA, Livio Campi folder.
- 16 On the “conquest of labor,” see Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 47–57.
- 17 For the main ideas of socialist Zionism, see Eliezer Don-Yehiya et al., “The Symbol System of Zionist-Socialism: An Aspect of Israeli Civil Religion,” *Modern Judaism* 1, no. 2 (1981): 121–129.
- 18 Jacob Metzger, “Economic Structure and National Goals – the Jewish National Home in Interwar Palestine,” *The Journal of Economic History* 38, no. 1 (1978): 106. Erik Cohen, *The City in the Zionist Ideology* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1970), 5, 8. Amitai Etzioni, “Agrarianism in Israel’s Party System,” *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 23, no. 3 (1957): 363–365.
- 19 Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 361–379.
- 20 IOI circular, April 12, 1940, CAHJP, P 192, f. 3.
- 21 Joel De Malach, *Mi-Giv’ot Toskanah le-Merhave ha-Negev* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 2007), 19–21. Di Cori, *Vè-Esa Etchem*, 26, 33.
- 22 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, Chapter 3 and 130.
- 23 Giorgio Voghera, *Quaderno d’Israele* (Milano: Mondadori, 1980), 77.



- 24 Pugliese, *Carlo Rosselli*, 176.
- 25 *A Survey of Palestine Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Jerusalem: Palestine Government Printer, 1946), 2:697.
- 26 These numbers pertain to 1946. *A Survey of Palestine*, Supplement volume, 12–13. For partial data on 1939, see Year 1939 of *Statistical Abstract of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Office of Statistics), 13.
- 27 Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 172–173. Tensions between the communities also led fewer Arabs to seek treatment by Jewish doctors and fewer Jewish doctors to set up practice in Arab areas. *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:614.
- 28 In 1944, 104,618 non-Jewish children (Muslim and Christian) attended Arabic-speaking schools, and 97,991 Jewish children attended Hebrew-speaking schools. Only 1,504 Jewish pupils attended Arab schools, and no Arabs, according to the available data, attended Hebrew-speaking schools. *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:363–367.
- 29 *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:757–767. Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 47–57.
- 30 For the separateness of Arab and Jewish life, see the same publication, especially Chapter 16, Section 1 on social services, Section 2 on education systems, and Section 4 on social welfare; Chapter 17 on labor and wages; and Chapter 6, Section B on the geographical distribution of the population. For mentions of Arab neighbors and clients, see Di Cori, *Ve-Esa Etchem*, 23. Author's interview with Diana Passigli, Ramat Gan, July 30, 2010, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 31 Voghera, *Quaderno d'Israele*, Chapter 3.
- 32 *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:962.
- 33 Dan A. Porat, "Between Nation and Land in Zionist Teaching of Jewish History, 1920–1954," *Journal of Israeli History* 27, no. 2 (2008): 261.
- 34 Di Cori, *Ve-Esa Etchem*, 20.
- 35 See, e.g., "Hebrew Language Committee," *Palestine Post*, October 17, 1939, 2. In the same newspaper, see Faba Turovlin, "Roundabout" [review of *Textbook of Hebrew Literature*], January 11, 1939, 6; "25th Anniversary of Balfour Declaration," November 3, 1942, 3; "Chief Rabbi's Message," March 20, 1939, 2; "Eternal the Will Not Be Cut," August 17, 1939, 3. Letter from David Porter, *Palestine Post*, January 18, 1939, 6.
- 36 See, e.g., the following articles in the *Palestine Post*: "Pioneer of the Land," October 21, 1941, 3; Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon, "Sixty Years of Bilu: Anniversary of Jewish Pioneer Youth," July 3, 1942, 4; "Pioneers at Rishton's Celebration," July 30, 1942, 3; "Reflections," October 12, 1943, 4. For book reviews, see H. S., "Anthology of Immigration" [reviews of *Sefer Hechalutz* (1940) and *Maapilim* (1940)], March 3, 1940, 8.
- 37 For a list of all the newspapers available in Palestine and their respective platforms, see *A Survey of Palestine*, 3:1346–1356. In the 1940s, Palestine had nine daily, eighteen weekly, and forty-five monthly Hebrew-language newspapers. *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:875.



- 38 “A Feast of Lights Allegory,” *Palestine Post*, December 8, 1939, 5.
- 39 Yoram Bar-Gal, “Hasmala Politit ba-Merchav ha-Ironi: Shemot Rehovot be-Yisrael,” *Ofakim be-Geografia* 33–34(1992): 126–128. Helman, “Even the Dogs in the Street Bark in Hebrew,” 370.
- 40 “A Feast of Lights Allegory,” *Palestine Post*, December 8, 1939, 5.
- 41 Advertisement for Café Pioneer, *Palestine Post*, September 15, 1944, 7. “Looking Backwards,” *Palestine Post*, May 31, 1940, 7. Dorothy Kahn Bar-Adon, “Pioneers See Themselves: ‘The Earth’ Goes to the Country,” *Palestine Post*, October 30, 1942, 4.
- 42 See, e.g., posters archived by the World Zionist Organization, such as “Geula Titnu La’Aretz” from the 1930s, by Keren Kayemet, viewable as Poster 12 in the WZO’s poster guide *Etmol: Hashra’at Hamachar*, [www.wzo.org.il/files/vice\\_chairman/posters/GuideHeb.pdf](http://www.wzo.org.il/files/vice_chairman/posters/GuideHeb.pdf). See also the greeting card from late 1930s Jerusalem in Rachel Arbel, *Blue and White in Color: Visual Images of Zionism, 1897–1947* (Tel Aviv: Beth Hatefutsoth, 1997), Figure 21.
- 43 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 114–117.
- 44 Yoav Gelber, “The Historical Role of the Central European Immigration to Israel,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 38(1993): 329–333. Anat Helman, “East or West? Tel-Aviv in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 15 (1999): 70.
- 45 Voghera, *Quaderno d’Israele*, 83–85, 117–119.
- 46 Di Cori, *Vè-Esa Etchem*, 15, 20, appendix to 15.
- 47 Text by Ori [Uri?], January 2, 1942, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7. For criticism of the youths’ Fascism, see Report by Marcello Savaldi for Vaad ha-Irgun shel Hamadrachim le-Aliyat Hanoar, April 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7. For the German youths’ difficulty with Hebrew, see Marcello Savaldi to Giulio De Angelis’s father, May 9, 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7; and Marcello Savaldi, “Five years of Italian Aliya,” *Davar*, January 19, 1944, accessed in YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 6. See also De Malach, *Mi-Giv’ot Toskanah*, 46.
- 48 About one hundred Italian Jews had arrived in Palestine over the 1920s and 1930s, but most did not settle in a kibbutz. See Marzano’s immigrant list, Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 361–379.
- 49 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 127.
- 50 Enzo Sereni to Guido Lopez, January 29, 1940, ACDEC, Fondo Vicissitudini dei Singoli, B.22, F. 729, Sereni Enzo.
- 51 Di Cori, *Vè-Esa Etchem*, 22.
- 52 Testimony of Beppe Artom and Testimony of Dina Wardi in Pezzana, *Quest’Anno a Gerusalemme*, 73, 102.
- 53 Segre Amar, *Il Mio Ghetto*, 163–164.
- 54 Marcello Savaldi to Franca Muggia, March 26, 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 49, f. 2. Franca Muggia to Marcello Savaldi, April 4, 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 49, f. 2. Marcello Savaldi to Franca Muggia, May 8, 1940, quoted in Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 357–360. Report by Marcello Savaldi for Vaad ha-Irgun shel Hamadrachim le-Aliyat Hanoar, April 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.

- 55 Elvira Eckert to Marcello Savaldi, November 5, 1938, quoted in Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 159. See also Testimony of Berti Eckert in Pezzana, *Quest'Anno a Gerusalemme*, 66.
- 56 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 142.
- 57 For the immigration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Gur Alroey, *Imigrantim: Ha-Hagirah ha-Yehudit le-Erets-Yisrael be-Reshit ha-Meah ha-'Esrin* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsvi, 2004), 38–58. For the period following World War I, see Baruch Ben-Avram et al., *Iyunim ba-Aliyah ha-Shelishit: Dimui u-Metsiut* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsvi, 1995), Chapter 1. For the 1920s and 1930s, see Magdalena Wrobel-Bloom, “From Prejudice to Inclusion: The Difficult Encounter between Polish Jews and Local Jews in Palestine, 1924–1935,” paper presented at the American Historical Association, Chicago, 2012.
- 58 Yael Chaver, *What Must Be Forgotten: The Survival of Yiddish in Zionist Palestine* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 29, 32, 34–36. Helman, “Even the Dogs in the Street Bark in Hebrew,” 362–363. Halperin, *Babel in Zion*, Chapter 1.
- 59 Cohen, *The City in the Zionist Ideology*, 62. Ben-Avram et al., *Iyunim ba-Aliyah ha-Shelishit: Dimui u-Metsiut*, Chapter 2 and 190.
- 60 *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:732. These data pertain to the year 1945. For earlier years, see Ben-Avram et al., *Iyunim ba-Aliyah ha-Shelishit: Dimui u-Metsiut*, 61–62. In 1939, kibbutz dwellers made up about 7.5 percent of the Jewish population in Palestine. Henry Near, “Paths to Utopia,” in *Communal Life: An International Perspective*, ed. Yosef Oved Gorni and Iaácov Paz Idit (Efal, Israel: Yad Tabenkin, 1987), 56. According to Erik Cohen, the percentage of urban Jews during the Mandate period ranged between 82 and 71 percent. Cohen, *The City in the Zionist Ideology*, 62. Alroey, *Imigrantim*, 168–178.
- 61 On kibbutz fashion in the 1930s, see Ayala Raz et al., *Halifot ha-Itim: Meah Shenot Ofnah be-Erets-Yisrael* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 1996), 85–87.
- 62 Anat Helman, “Taking the Bus in 1920s and 1930s Tel Aviv,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 4 (2006): 631, 633. Anat Helman, “European Jews in the Levant Heat: Climate and Culture in 1920s and 1930s Tel Aviv,” *Journal of Israeli History* 22, no. 1 (2003): 76–78.
- 63 Raz et al., *Halifot ha-Itim: Meah Shenot Ofnah be-Erets-Yisrael*, 72–76, 80–83.
- 64 Ramat Gan was a less developed area than Tel Aviv but by no means an agricultural colony. A satellite town of Tel Aviv, in the 1940s it transformed from an agricultural economy to one based on commerce and industry. For a list of the immigrants who settled in Ramat Gan, see Marzano’s immigrant list, Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 361–379.
- 65 On urban Italians’ distaste for rural life, see David Horn, “Constructing the Sterile City: Pronatalism and Social Sciences in Interwar Italy,” *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 3 (1991): 590.
- 66 Ilan Troen, “Ha-Mifneh be-Tikhnun ha-Mediniyut ha-Ziyonit me-Hityashvut Kafrit le-Maarechet Ironit,” *Yahadut Zmanenu* 5(1989): 221.
- 67 Helman, “European Jews in the Levant Heat,” 76–78.

- 68 Ibid., 84, 86.
- 69 Anat Helman, “Cleanliness and Squalor in Inter-War Tel-Aviv,” *Urban History* 31, no. 1 (2004): 81, 91.
- 70 Ibid., 83.
- 71 Forty-five percent of the refugees were female. Almost one-quarter of the newcomers (24 percent) were children under the age of fifteen, just over half (55 percent) were aged fifteen to forty, and over one-fifth (21 percent) were adults above the age of forty. Klein, “A Persistent Past,” Appendix C, Tables 1 and 2.
- 72 Di Cori, *Ve-Esa Etchem*, 19.
- 73 Segre Amar, *Il Mio Ghetto*, 163–164.
- 74 Tina Genazzani to her sister-in-law Piera Genazzani, December 6, 1939, Genazzani family archive. Author’s interview with Enzo Genazzani (Nitzani), Savion, July 23, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 75 Tina Genazzani to her sister-in-law Piera Genazzani, December 6, 1939, Genazzani family archive. Tina Genazzani to her grandmother Matilde, June 9, 1940, Enzo Genazzani private archive. Author’s interview with Enzo Genazzani (Nitzani), Savion, July 23, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 76 Entries from September 18, 1939, and September 4, 1940, “Diario 1938–1946” by Gualtiero Cividalli, 5–7, 12–13, Cividalli family archive.
- 77 IOI circular, April 12, 1940, CAHJP, P 192, f. 3. Since refugee kibbutz settlers often left for town during the 1940s, the number engaged in agriculture decreased with time.
- 78 Testimony of Eliyahu Ben Zimra in Pezzana, *Quest’Anno a Gerusalemme*, 95–96.
- 79 Artom and other Italian Jews founded the pharmaceutical factory ABIC in 1939. “Dr Yoel Ben-Tovim (Bonfiglioli),” in *Entsiklopedyah le-halutse ha-yishuv u-vonav* (1971), vol. 19, 5690. Testimony of Beppe Artom in Pezzana, *Quest’Anno a Gerusalemme*, 75.
- 80 Gualtiero Cividalli, *Dal Sogno alla Realtà: Lettere ai Figli Combattenti. Israele, 1947–1948* (Firenze: La Giuntina, 2005), 340. Author’s interview with Anna Ascoli Servadio, Tel Aviv, July 12, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 81 IOI circular from September 27, 1939, CAHJP, P 192, f. 3.
- 82 Di Cori, *Ve-Esa Etchem*, 21, 55–56, 59.
- 83 N. A., *Report of the Palestine Royal Commission*, 301.
- 84 *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:614.
- 85 IOI circular, April 12, 1940, CAHJP, 192, f. 3.
- 86 Interview with Renzo Toaff by Marcello Savaldi, March 29, 1987, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 54, f. 6.
- 87 Entry from September 18, 1939, “Diario 1938–1946” by Gualtiero Cividalli, 5–7, Cividalli family archive.
- 88 Umberto Genazzani’s appeals to Mandate authorities, Genazzani family archive. Author’s interview with Enzo Genazzani (Nitzani), Savion, July 23, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.

- 89 Author's interview with Diana Passigli, Ramat Gan, July 30, 2010, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 90 Hanna Amit, "Bli Prahim," *Amudim* 43(1984).
- 91 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 140.
- 92 "30 Days to Death of Marco Pietri," January 10, 1945, obituaries by various authors, *Yoman Givat Brenner* (hereon YGB), GBA. Di Cori, *Vé-Esa Etchem*, 24.
- 93 Adelina Della Pergola, "Ricordi di una Vita," *Il Portavoce* 1 (1), 1999, 11.
- 94 Di Cori, *Vé-Esa Etchem*, 54.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 22–23. Author's interview with Enzo Genazzani (Nitzani), Savion, July 23, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 96 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 145.
- 97 Gualtierro Cividalli to Moses Benaim, May 11, 1939, Cividalli family archive.
- 98 Author's interview with Anna Ascoli Servadio, Tel Aviv, July 12, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 99 Arturo Marzano, "The Italian Jewish Migration to Eretz Israel and the Birth of Italian Chalmutz Movement (1938–1948)," *Mediterranean Review* 3, no. 1 (2010): 20, note xxxv. Author's interview with Gabriella Frangin, Milan, May 21, 2010, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection. Zevi et al., *Ti Racconto la Mia Storia*, 69.
- 100 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 145–146.
- 101 Della Pergola et al., *Gli Italiani in Israele*, 68.
- 102 Author's interview with Anna Ascoli Servadio, Tel Aviv, July 12, 2009, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 103 On Italian Jewish immigration to Palestine and Israel in the post–World War II period, see Chapter 7.
- 104 See the correspondence in ISA, RG G, 4712/40, f. Conigliano Synagogue.
- 105 See, e.g., the conference held with President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi in 1955, ISA, RG PRES, 5/13, Ben-Zvi Kenes Oley Italia, and the one held in 1958, also with Ben-Zvi, in ISA, RG PRES, 5/14, f. Kenes Oley Italia.
- 106 Calculated using Marzano's immigrant list and the footnotes accompanying it, Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 361–379.
- 107 Some two dozen Italian Jewish teenagers arrived as part of the "Youth Immigration" program and went to Givat Brenner, the Ahava school, or the Mikveh Israel school. The ten who went to Givat Brenner have left behind enough archival documentation to trace their experience.
- 108 Interview with Shaul Campi by Hana Strauss, September 13, 1994, GBA, Livio Campi folder.
- 109 Marcello Savaldi to Renato [Levi?], May 7, 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 49, f. 2.

- 110 Report by Marcello Savaldi for Vaad ha-Irgun shel ha-Madrichim le-Aliyat Hanoar, April 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 111 On the question of airmail letters, and on the need to swap their Italian clothing for work clothes, see De Malach, *Mi-Giv'ot Toskanah*, 41.
- 112 Of the eleven youths who arrived in Givat Brenner, four came from Trieste, one from Fiume, one from Milan, one from Livorno, three from Rome, and one from Naples. Report by Marcello Savaldi for Vaad ha-Irgun shel ha-Madrichim le-Aliyat Hanoar, April 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 113 Undated (1941) text by Reuven, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 114 Marcello Savaldi to Mr. Rietti, April 21, 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7. De Malach, *Mi-Giv'ot Toskanah*, 39. Text by Marco (Mordechai) Cohen, 1989 booklet, GBA, b. 79, f. “Noar Gimel.”
- 115 Undated (1941) text by David Campi, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 116 Unauthored article, YGB issue 1481, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 117 Report by Marcello Savaldi for Vaad ha-Irgun shel ha-Madrichim le-Aliyat Hanoar, April 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 118 Undated (1941) text by Yoel, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 119 Undated (1941) text by Amos, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 120 Unauthored article, YGB issue 1481, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 121 Undated (1941) text by Reuven, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 122 De Malach, *Mi-Giv'ot Toskanah*, photograph of the hora dance on 86.
- 123 *Eretz-Israelizatzia*. Undated (1941) text by Yoel, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 124 Undated (1941) text by Enrica, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 125 “Divrei Sium” by Malachi Rietti, October 10, 1941, YGB, GBA.
- 126 Undated (1941) text by Avraham, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 127 Undated (1941) text by Reuven, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 128 Undated (1941) text by David, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 Undated (1941) text by Mordechai, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 131 Undated (1941) text by Enrica, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 132 Undated (1941) text by Avraham, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 133 Undated (1941) text by Avraham, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 134 Undated (1941) text by Nurit Ravenna, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 135 Malachi to Malkiel (Marcello Savaldi), March 13, 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 136 Text by Erica Tzukerman (Enrica Kron), 1989 booklet, GBA, b. 79, f. “Noar Gimel.”
- 137 Unauthored (Giulio De Angelis from context), May 1940, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7. 5–23–40 Giulio De Angelis to Franca Muggia, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 7.
- 138 Text by Avraham (Butzi) Niri (Riccardo Hoenigsfeld), 1989 booklet, GBA, b. 79, f. “Noar Gimel.”
- 139 Text by Erica Tzukerman (Enrica Kron), 1989 booklet, GBA, b. 79, f. “Noar Gimel.”
- 140 Text by Marco (Mordechai) Cohen, 1989 booklet, GBA, b. 79, f. “Noar Gimel.”

- 141 Text by Tchelet Terracina's daughter, 1989 booklet, GBA, b. 79, f. "Noar Gimel."
- 142 He moved from Givat Brenner to Revivim, and from there to Alonim, where he lived until 1958. Author's phone interview with Malachi Rietti, Hedera, January 3, 2011, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 143 Shaul (Claudio) Campi and Reuven (Renato) Volterra were killed in the 1948 war.
- 144 Klein, "A Persistent Past," Appendix C, Table 6. See Marzano's immigrant list, Marzano, *Una Terra per Rinascere*, 361–379.
- 145 Gadi Castel et al., *Shlosha Achim* (Netzer Sereni, 1999), 36–37. De Malach, *Mi-Giv'ot Toskanah*, 37.
- 146 De Malach, *Mi-Giv'ot Toskanah*, 37.
- 147 Amit, "Bli Prahim."
- 148 Testimony of Berti Eckert in Pezzana, *Quest'Anno a Gerusalemme*, 65, 68.
- 149 Testimony of Dina Wardi *ibid.*, 101–102.
- 150 Sarfatti, *Mi-Firenze le-Yerushalaim*, 83, 86.
- 151 Segre, *Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew*, 124–125.
- 152 *Ibid.*, 133.
- 153 Article from 1944 by Naftali Stahl, in "Naftali," booklet in memory of Naftali Stahl, GBA.
- 154 Interview with Meir (Max) Varadi, June 15, 1987, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 54, f. 6.
- 155 Testimony of Max Varadi and Matilde Cassin in Pezzana, *Quest'Anno a Gerusalemme*, 93.
- 156 "The Aliya From Italy," February 23, 1940, article by Gur Arie Castelbolognesi in YGB, YTA, RG 2–12, b. 52, f. 6.
- 157 Sarfatti, *Mi-Firenze le-Yerushalaim*, 100–101.
- 158 Dov J. Luisada Avigdor Renzo Stier, *Avigdor Renzo Luisada: The Artist and His Work* (Tel Aviv: ISART, 1982), 7; Testimony of Dina Wardi in Pezzana, *Quest'Anno a Gerusalemme*, 102.
- 159 Giorgio Voghera, "Mahbarot Israel (Quaderno d'Israel) – Hebrew Translation" [Quaderno d'Israele]. *Shadmot* 95(1985): 95–96. Sarfatti, *Mi-Firenze le-Yerushalaim*, 82.
- 160 "30 Days to Death of Marco Pietri," January 10, 1945, obituaries by various authors, YGB, GBA.
- 161 "Seniority and Equality," July 17, 1942 through July 23, 1942, by Giorgio Voghera, YGB, GBA.
- 162 "30 Days to Death of Marco Pietri," January 10, 1945, obituaries by various authors, YGB, GBA.
- 163 Voghera, "Mahbarot Israel (Quaderno d'Israel) – Hebrew Translation," 94–95.
- 164 "30 Days to Death of Marco Pietri," obituaries by various authors, January 10, 1945, YGB, GBA.
- 165 Arie J. Kochavi, *Post-Holocaust Politics: Britain, the United States and Jewish Refugees, 1945–1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Part I. Ori Yehudai, "Permanent Homeland or Temporary Shelter? Jewish Return from Palestine to Europe after WWII," paper presented at



- the Association of Israel Studies, Brandeis, MA, 2011. Anita Shapira, *Land and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 343.
- 166 The ISA holds some two dozen requests submitted by Italian Jews to the British Mandate authorities, asking for permission to visit Italy. See, e.g., Silvia Artom to Chief Secretary, August 20, 1945, f. “Silvia Artom Nee Malvano,” ISA, RG M, 38/235.
- 167 Undated [1945] IOI circular to members, CAHJP, P 192, f. 9.
- 168 IOI circular to members, June 10, 1947, CAHJP, P 192, f. 10, subfolder 1946–1947.
- 169 See the list of “olim” (immigrants) in CAHJP, P 192, f. 15, sf. 5, 6, 7, 8.
- 170 Segre, *Memories of Jewish Life*, 361–362.
- 171 Augusto Levi to JA Aliya Department in Jerusalem, May 22, 1944, CZA, RG S25, f. 5749, Irgun Oley Italia.
- 172 E-mail from Piero Cividalli to Shira Klein, November 5, 2010.
- 173 Anita Tagliacozzo, ed., *Sulle Orme della Rinascita: Cronaca e Memorie del Movimento “Hechaluz” Italiano dal ’44 al ’58* (2004). Issues of the journal *Risveglio*, CAHJP, JIT-44.
- 174 Klein, “A Persistent Past,” Appendix C, Table 8.
- 175 1945 IOI memoranda, CAHJP, P 192, f. 9.
- 176 Paola Cividalli’s letter to her father, July 14, 1948, in Cividalli, *Dal Sogno alla Realtà*, 246–247.
- 177 Letter from Elia S. Artom, distributed through IOI circular of May 24, 1948, CAHJP, P 192, f. 10, subfolder 1947–1948.
- 178 Article by Menachem Emanuele Artom in “Israel,” March 11, 1948, vol. 33, no. 27, distributed through IOI circular of May 24, 1948, CAHJP, P 192, f. 10, subfolder 1947–1948.
- 179 Bruno Ascoli to his daughter, 1948, Ascoli family archive.
- 180 See the list of “olim” (immigrants) and “yordim” (emigrants) in CAHJP, P 192, f. 15, sf. 5, 6, 7, 8. Concerning Leone Pavoncello, see August 25, 1953, Ha-Machlaka le-Hantsachat ha-Chayal to Irgun Olei Italia, and the Irgun’s undated reply, in CAHJP, P 192, f. 15, sf. 1.
- 181 Klein, “A Persistent Past,” Appendix C, Table 8.
- 182 *A Survey of Palestine*, 2:733.
- 183 Klein, “A Persistent Past,” Appendix C, Table 8. See Marzano’s immigrant list, Marzano, *Una Terra Per Rinascere*, 361–371.
- 184 IOI circular to Italian Jews abroad, December 1942, CZA, RG S26, f. 1607, Alonim.
- 185 Entry from July 25, 1944, “Diario 1938–1946” by Gualtiero Cividalli, 89, Cividalli family archive. Undated [1948?] Anna Servadio to her sister “Bebba,” Ascoli private archive.
- 186 Undated [1948] letter from Bruno Ascoli to daughter Anna, Ascoli private archive.
- 187 The School of Law and Economics later became one of Tel Aviv University’s first departments.
- 188 See the correspondence of both Riccardo and Roberto Bachi in ISA, RG2.9, 232/61, f. Italian Professors. Anna Maria Ratti, *Vita e Opere di Riccardo Bachi* (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1961), 51–62.

189 Segre, *Memories of Jewish Life*, 367. On Lattes's Zionist activity in the pre-war decades, see Schächter, *The Jews of Italy*, 165, 167–169.

190 See the list of “yordim” (emigrants) in CAHJP, P 192, f. 15, sf. 5, 6, 7, 8.

## 7 RECOVERY AND REVIVAL: POSTWAR ITALIAN JEWRY AND THE JDC

- 1 Author's interview with Bianca Lopez Nunes Vogethera, Milan, May 23, 2010, Chapman University, Frank Mt. Pleasant Special Collections, Italian Jewish Lives collection.
- 2 The first comprehensive attempt by Italian Jews to count themselves was done in 1965, so this figure is only approximate. Estimates range from 28,445 (Pergola, *Anatomia dell'Ebraismo Italiano*, 144) to 30,000 (Guri Schwarz, “The Reconstruction of Jewish Life in Italy after World War II,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 8, no. 3 [2009]: 360, first quarter 1947 report by Louis Horwitz, JDC NY, uncataloged box, Italy Summary of Reports, 1945–1967, Italian Jews) to 32,160 (Picciotto, “Statistical Tables,” 340) to 35,000 (Benjamin Brook to Union of Italian Jewish Communities, March 27, 1946, JDC NY, AR 1945–1954, 628). Alfredo Sarano, secretary of the Jewish community of Milan, estimated in 1958 that there were between 31,000 and 35,000 Jews in Italy. Booklet, June 1958, CZA, RG A433, Alfredo Sarano Collection, f. 15. A 1965 study done by Italian Jews determined 32,652 Jews in Italy that year. Sabatello, “Ha-Megamot,” 32.
- 3 Mark Wyman, *DP: Europe's Displaced Persons, 1945–1951* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1989), Chapters 3, 6.
- 4 The number of DPs in Italy remains unclear because they constantly moved about and often carried false or no documents. By autumn 1946, about 20,000 DPs resided in Italy, growing to 26,600 in 1947 and diminishing to 3,500 in 1949, 4,000 in 1950, and 1,500 in 1954. “UNRRA Italian Mission, December 1, 1946, Bureau of Relief Services, DP Division. Jewish DPs as of December 1, 1946 in Italy”; Diska's report on Italy, February 17, 1947; “Horwitz hq/d/2212,” May 26, 1949; all in JDC NY, uncataloged box, Italy Summary of Reports, 1945–1967, Population. See also Susanna Kokkonen, “Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Italy, 1945–1951,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 20, no. 1–2 (2008): 93.
- 5 Regio Decreto Legge n. 25, January 20, 1944, published in *Gazzetta Ufficiale* no. 5, February 9, 1944.
- 6 Fubini, *Condizione Giuridica*, 83, 86–88.
- 7 Sarfatti, *The Jews*, 203.
- 8 Alfredo Sarano to JDC Milan, April 1, 1946, ACDEC, Fondo Comunità Ebraica di Milano (II vers.), b. 2, f. 4, 1946. Vitale Milano to JDC, November 30, 1945, ASCER, Comunità Israelitica di Roma, b. 93, f. 3 Joint.
- 9 Giorgio Nissim, *Memorie di un Ebreo Toscano, 1938–1948* (Roma: Carocci, 2005), 147.
- 10 Last quarter report, 1946, 7, JDC NY, AR 1945–1954, 628. Horwitz to Trobe on Italian Jewish communities, January 17, 1947, JDC NY, uncataloged box 1 on Italy, Folder October 1946 to April 1947.