

“Subito, tutti mi guardarono con disprezzo”: The Child’s Experience under Italian Racial Law in Frediano Sessi’s *Ultima fermata: Auschwitz. Storia di un ragazzo ebreo durante il fascismo*¹

Frediano Sessi’s fictional diary *Ultima fermata: Auschwitz. Storia di un ragazzo ebreo durante il fascismo* (Last Stop: Auschwitz. The Story of a Jewish Boy during Fascism, 1996), was written for children 11 years and older to convey the impact of the Fascist government’s redefinition of Italian identity on the life of a school-aged, Jewish Italian child, and to provide them with a template for assessing their own environment. As historical narrative, the novel depicts the Fascist government’s victimization of its people on national soil, and its institution of a system of persecution that would eventually feed into the more notorious Nazi system of genocide. As a diaristic chronicle of a young boy under Fascism, it guides the reader through the personal suffering and upheaval caused by state-sanctioned persecution, and the threat of arrest, deportation, and death. Finally, as a text produced at a time when Italian identity was well on its way to being revised due to Italy’s quickly rising status as an immigrant nation, the novel’s depiction of the tragic consequences of formalized, race-based discrimination and persecution presents its young readers with ethical and moral questions to be considered as they develop into citizens of a multiethnic society.

Through its primary focus on the Italian context and the personal suffering of its young victim, the novel counters the postwar tendency of excluding the Italian Shoah from national memory, and effectively helps break the “uninterrupted silence” that for years dominated the period (Colombo xii). The silencing of this difficult history was in part the result of a concerted campaign of national rehabilitation after the war. In order to again define Italy as a nation allied with moral and ethical good, the terms of which had shifted from Fascist religious and racial idealism to Liberalism, the complex and incriminatory question of Italian state-sanctioned persecution was in most discourses repressed. Fascism was redefined as largely foreign, i.e. German Nazism, and the nation was redefined as anti-Fascist. In this public reimagining, emphasis was placed on the Nazi concentration camp system and Nazi brutality on Italian soil after the fall of the Fascist government in 1943, while resistance was exploited as an action that united the nation against Nazi ideology and practice, proof of the “authentic” nation.

What Luzzatto Voghera has termed the “velo di omertà” (“veil of silence”; 140), was in part manifest in the way the country administered the physical remnants of the Fascist regime’s racial persecution and direct alliance with Nazi Germany, particularly in the two decades following the

war. When faced with Italy's own concentrationary system, the early postwar governments abandoned what remained, including the nation's principle internment camp at Ferramonti di Tarsia, which was almost completely destroyed to make room for a new highway (Foot 75). The camp at Ferramonti di Tarsia was converted into a museum, the Museo Internazionale della Memoria Ferramonti di Tarsia in 2004, twenty years after the work of historian Carlo Spartaco Capogreco brought the extent of the camp to public attention and gave rise to a more wide-ranging inquiry into what is now commonly known as the Italian Shoah.² By contrast, the Risiera di San Sabba, converted into a transit and extermination camp under and by German occupation forces and partially destroyed as they fled in 1945, was preserved and decreed a national museum in 1965.³ Neither the dominant rightist narratives nor the leftist counter-narratives from the 1940s to the 1970s, removed the "veil of silence" over questions of Italy's own system of racial persecution and the associated issues of responsibility for and complicity in genocide. A consequence was the erasure of the Italian Shoah from national memory and from the construction of a postwar national identity. Just as significant, the erasure also made it difficult for Jews to reclaim rights lost under Fascism, particularly those whose citizenship had been revoked (Colombo xvi).⁴

Since the late 20th century, and particularly since the 1990s, efforts have been made to integrate the Italian Shoah into the dominant historical account of the nation. Among these efforts, we find academic investigations of records that reveal the structure of Italian persecution, including laws, census records, and remnants of the nation's concentrationary and deportation systems. Meanwhile, despite some long delays as in the case of Ferramonti di Tarsia, government-sponsored memorials such as Milan's Memoriale della Shoah, have made the Italian Shoah visible to today's public.⁵

The growing number of Italian youth books on the Italian Shoah has proven an equally vital addition to the investigation of the Italian context. They are an essential component of public school curriculum proposals that seek to insert this moment into the formal education of children. Many such books, for example, Giulio Levi's fictionalized autobiography *1940-1945 Gioele, fuga per tornare* (2008), Lia Tagliacozzo's compilation of child survivor accounts, *Anni spezzati* (2009), and Lia Levi's exile novel *Una valle piena di stelle* (1997), center the narrative on landmark events, reveal the distressing and dangerous consequences of discrimination and persecution, and include didactic elements such as period documents and chronological timelines, that, in the words of Lydia Kokkola, "lend veracity" to historical fiction (2-3). Alongside works most frequently recommended for the school curriculum, i.e., Anne Frank's diary, Primo Levi's *Se questo è un uomo*, and

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Roberto Faenza's film *Jona che visse nella balena*, they are arguably among the most important sources of Shoah education in Italy today.⁶

Ultima fermata: Auschwitz places the focus of this education primarily on Italy itself. As a work of fiction, it takes the experiences of Jewish Italian children, told in such non-fictional texts as Levi's earlier *Una bambina e basta*, Tagliacozzo's aforementioned volume, and Sonnino's later *Questo è stato*, and synthesizes them in some of the Italian context's most salient and emblematic moments. It also uses narrative conventions of Italian youth literature on the Shoah, as we shall see below, to present a powerful message of awareness and tolerance to today's youth. Finally, its diary format allows the young reader entry into an intimate relationship with the young protagonist, who expresses in the first person the experiences, emotions, and possible thoughts of thousands of persecuted Jewish Italian children.

To achieve its purpose of educating the youth reader at a time—1996—when the “veil of silence” was being lifted, the novel recounts the young Arturo Finzi's story in the two pivotal years of the Italian Shoah, 1938 and 1943. At its core is the physical and psychological journey of displacement embedded in the novel's title and adopted as metaphor for both the historical and personal trajectory of the boy's tale: Arturo is transported from inside Italian society to a new identity as alien to the Italian state, and from inside the Italian nation to his journey's “last stop: Auschwitz.” His story demonstrates how persecution is programmed systematically and reshapes the lives of its victims through progressive stages of disenfranchisement. It highlights some of the steps taken to formalize racism, and embeds in the narrative documents that during the late *ventennio* served the dual purpose of legitimizing it and indoctrinating, such as the *Manifesto of Race* (*Manifesto degli scienziati razzisti*), brief excerpts from Mussolini's radio speeches, and songs and sayings integral to the Fascist education of Italian youth. As part of its message to the reader, the novel also presents the connection between the events of 1938, the Nazi occupation of 1943, and the protagonist's demise, thereby proffering a powerful tale of the possible tragic consequences of the politics of exclusion.

The text considers the Jewish Italian child's marginalization and its consequences in three parts, each reflective of its strategic reading of history. Part I, titled “*Quaderno del 1938*” (“Diary of 1938”), presents the beginning of the “persecution of rights,” recounting the 10-year-old Arturo's experiences after the initial passage of the Racial Laws. Part II, titled “*Quaderno del 1943*” (“Diary of 1943”), presents the “persecution of lives,” recounting life under Nazi occupation and the now more conscious and wary 15-year-old boy's informed understanding of the situation and his resulting sense of doom. Part III, titled “*Il racconto di Giulia*” (“Giulia's Account”),

takes place after the war and is the most obvious example of the text's didactic purpose. It is a cautionary conclusion that provides details of the Nazi concentrationary system. Narrated by Arturo's girlfriend Giulia, it also provides an example of the value of knowing history and of learning from it to be attentive to signs of persecution and discrimination in one's own environment. The novel ends with an afterword containing a historical chronology and titles for further study, a common addition in youth literature on the Shoah that serves to instruct outside the parameters of the fictional account. Together, these distinct sections impart a challenging yet necessary education on the dangers of racism, oppression (especially of its youngest victims), and the importance of witnessing and testimony.

1. Part I: "Quaderno del 1938": The persecution of rights and segregation, trauma, adaptation

Arturo's diary begins, "Ho scoperto di essere ebreo solo stamattina" ("I found out I'm Jewish this morning"; 9). This statement is immediately followed by the boy's relegation to the back of the classroom. He states, "Entrando in classe, il bidello mi ha indicato il banco dove avrei dovuto sedermi, lontano dagli altri compagni, e da Paolo, tra tutti il piú caro" ("When I entered the classroom, the janitor pointed to the desk where I would now have to sit, far from the others and from Paolo, my closest schoolfriend"). It is significant that the story of a child's experience under Italian Racial Law should open this way. By the early 20th Century, Italian Jews were among the most highly assimilated in Europe. They had participated extensively in the Liberal and nationalist revolutions of the Risorgimento that unified Italy in the 19th Century. Politically unified, the new nation now endeavored to unify Italians under the umbrella of Italian identity, and part of the process of "making Italians" ("fare gli italiani"), was to emancipate Jews from the ghetto and grant them full citizenship. The Fascist government's Racial Laws, implemented quickly and seemingly without warning, broke with Risorgimento ideals and forced the realignment of Italian identity and the physical exclusion of Jews from public life.⁷ Entered on May 10, the day after the announcement of the *Impero fascista* and not long before the Racial Laws were fully enacted, Arturo's simple, yet telling description represents the Fascist government's movement towards the reconceptualization of the Italian nation and Italian national identity.

The initial moments of Arturo's life under Racial Law prompt a series of comments and questions that address the issue of nationhood and the imposition of a Jewish identity at the exclusion of Italian identity. They also highlight what the populace perceived at the time to be the unexpected nature of the changes introduced into the lives of Italy's Jewish citizens.

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Arturo notes, “Quella parola, ‘ebreo,’ un’etichetta che mi trovavo addosso senza sapere da dove venisse, mi sembrava terribile” (“As a label attached to me without my knowing where it came from, that word, ‘Jew,’ seemed terrible to me”; 10). And again, “Che Patria era l’Italia se ora non mi riconosceva piú come figlio?” (“What kind of a country was Italy if it no longer recognized me as its son?”; 13). Used as a political means for separation and “otherness,” the boy’s Jewish background is deemed a problematic identity, “soprattutto non ho nessuna voglia di essere ebreo” (“above all, I have no desire to be Jewish”; 17); “il mio essere diverso dagli altri, perché ebreo” (“my being different from others because I’m Jewish”; 44). In this reflection on identity politics, the reader is made aware of the way in which identities are manipulated to weaken and separate, rather than to form a larger national identity that recognizes multiplicity in itself.

The first phase of Arturo’s journey through identity politics is best understood by considering the evolution of the Fascist regime’s racial policies. The impetus for the regime’s racial program was the wish on the part of Mussolini and the National Fascist Party (Partito nazionale fascista, *PNF*) to instill “racial consciousness” in Italians (De Felice qtd. in Israel 114). Mussolini’s endeavor contained several elements that would eventually converge in 1938. The factor with the most direct impact on the context represented by Arturo’s story was Mussolini’s notion of an Italian race distinct from others, including the Africans inhabiting the new Italian Empire and Jews inhabiting Italy. Since Mussolini defined the Italian Empire as a direct descendent of the Roman Empire, Italianness was the direct descendent of Romanness, not a national identity born out of unification and the Risorgimento, informed by foreign-born Enlightenment ideals (Israel 173). Of course, the racial meaning of this Roman identity had less to do with perceptions of ancient Rome and more to do with popular perceptions of New Imperialism.

In his study of the issue, Giorgio Israel surveys the long-term formulation of the regime’s position on race, which began in the 1920s. Mussolini’s pro-natalist, demographic politics, inaugurated in 1927, were in part informed by the desire to “defend the Italian race,” the so-called “difesa della razza,” though they initially did not articulate the intention to persecute Jews (159-60). They would later evolve, however, into guidelines based on proportional participation in the public sphere, then into the restrictionist 1938 laws.⁸ The Lateran Accords of 1929 also played an important role in the racial politics to come, for the relationship they fashioned between the Vatican, Catholicism, and the Fascist regime.⁹ Until the late 1930s, Mussolini’s politics were implemented primarily through official channels such as these. In 1937, however, he published one of his first explicit statements on race in an article published in *Il Popolo d’Italia*, where he

spoke of a “new problem” resulting from “international Jewry” (Israel 169). One year later, the long evolution of the regime’s position on race would result in the Racial Laws. Significantly, the theoretical and administrative backing needed to promulgate the laws effectively, developed quickly: the publication of the Manifesto of Race lent scientific legitimation to the regime’s racism, while the newly established General Administration for Demography and Race, or *Demorazza*, immediately created a census of the Jewish population of Italy. When striving to understand the purposeful impact of this slow trajectory, it is important to remember that the Racial Laws, with the theoretical backing of the Manifesto of Race, not only distinguished between Jews and Aryans, but also between Jews and Italians.¹⁰

One of the first actions decreed by the laws was the expulsion of Jewish children from public school. This action provided a clear indication of the overall purpose of the legislation. Because the school was one of the first places in which the regime put its “defense of race” directly and visibly into practice, expulsion set the course for an understanding of Italian identity dissociated from the Risorgimento and that would serve as foundation for educating the new citizen under the Fascist government. In the words of the Fascist government’s own 1939 *School Charter*, state education was to “shape the human and political conscience ... in the moral, political, and economic unity of the Italian nation” (Schnapp 314). It follows that schools would be the site where children would be educated in Fascism, and, as Arturo’s experience shows, where the regime would embed its racist principles into the very fabric of social relations.¹¹

That *Ultima fermata: Auschwitz* should begin in school and with the boy’s reaction to his ostracization creates a chronologically realistic portrayal of the historical situation, while at the same time revealing the psychological impact of the new legal and social status of Jews. Alberto Della Regola, a child at the time, uses the phrase “colpi di arma da fuoco” (“shots from a gun, Maida”; 15), to capture the devastating effects of this very moment. For his part, Arturo uses phrasing that captures the force Della Regola felt. He begins with the short, powerful adverb *subito*—all of a sudden, “Subito, tutti mi guardarono con disprezzo” (“All of a sudden, everyone looked at me with contempt”; 10). Thus, mirroring Della Regola’s case, Arturo’s “giorno della mia segregazione” (“day of my segregation”; 51) represents a sort of quick death—the removal of the boy from the Italian community that up until now had shaped his sense of self. Arturo concludes, “Era la fine: i nostri amici ci avrebbero abbandonato e noi non avremmo più la possibilità di studiare come gli altri” (“It was the end: our friends would abandon us and we would no longer be able to study like the others”; 63).¹²

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

While, as seen earlier, the visible enforcement of Fascist law begins with the relegation of the Jewish boy to the back of the classroom, the teacher's personal attitude towards him speaks of the atmosphere created and supported by official racism. Behind Arturo's teacher hangs a crucifix and a portrait of Mussolini, symbols of the Lateran Accords and their place in the evolution of Arturo's present situation. When the teacher comments on Arturo's presence he does so as employee of the state, representative of the education system, and advocate of the Fascist ethos functioning under these icons. The teacher expresses Arturo's position through stereotypes containing values that underpinned the regime's racial program and "truths" that were deemed necessary for the defense and health of the Italian nation. In this vein, he accuses Arturo and Jews in general of "ordire complotti contro lo Stato fascista" ("plotting against the Fascist State"; 71). Thus, when Arturo's friend Paolo, who is not Jewish, raises his left hand as a form of resistance against the Fascist salute, the teacher accuses Arturo for Paolo's rebellious act. He tells Paolo, "Tu sei bacato nello spirito ... dal tuo compagno di banco" ("Your spirit has been corrupted ... by the student sitting next to you"; 44). The teacher's appraisal evokes the figure of the international Jew featured in Paolo Orano's 1937 book, *Gli ebrei in Italia* (Jews in Italy). Though Orano, an influential member of the PNF, did not take an outright exclusionary stance, he considered those Jews who did not pledge allegiance to the Fascist state as an ideological threat to the nation, internationalists allied with such leftist revolutionary movements as Bolshevism.¹³ Taking up this stereotype, particularly as the situation for Italy's Jews begins to be more restrictive, the reference Arturo's teacher makes to the leftist international Jew implicates the boy as foreign enemy of and threat to the Fascist state. Moreover, as a reprimand against Paolo's action, it also illustrates the threat against those who resisted and, conversely, the promise of forgiveness and inclusion for the betrayal of the "other."

The racism institutionalized in school soon became part of the social discourse. Arturo's teacher is not representative of those many non-Jewish Italians who did not support the Racial Laws. Some of these, both common citizens and Fascist functionaries alike, even risked their lives to help save Jews through acts of altruism and valor, particularly after 1943. The teacher represents, however, those who became complicit either by espousing anti-Semitism, taking advantage of the change in the official status of Jews, acquiescing, or all of the above. After the teacher's espousal of racial rhetoric in school, Arturo gives reports of anti-Semitism in society. Thus, inserted into the narrative are terms that reflect the atmosphere created by the regime's racial policies and that now also appear on the common person's lips, "zelante, antisemita, filonazista" ("zealot, anti-Semite, pro-Nazi"). He notes, "ma oggi non c'è modo di sentire parole normali.... Ho sentito ...

un'altra parola: 'ariano'" ("You don't hear normal words anymore.... I ... heard another word: 'Aryan'" ; 16, 25). Through its verbal codification, Arturo is able to gauge incidents of anti-Semitism that were either new or invisible to him before,

da quando mi hanno detto che le persone come me sono di razza non propriamente italiana, sono sempre attento a tutti i discorsi in cui compaiono le parole *ebreo* o *razza impura*; e devo dire che sono tanti ... dal giornalaio, in piazza, nel negozio di frutta e verdura ... lungo le scale, in chiesa.... [La] parola ebraica [è] detta in modo non sempre amichevole. (24-25)

Since they told me that people like me belong to a race that is not entirely Italian, I pay more attention when I hear the words *Jew* or *impure race*; and I must say it happens often ... at the newspaper stand, in the *piazza*, at the fruit and vegetable vendor's ... in stairways, in church.... [The] word Jew [is] not always said with a friendly tone.

Many Jews and non-Jews alike assumed that legal exclusion was the end point of racial legislation. However, Arturo's comments and persistent questions arising from an investigation of his milieu reveal the conditions constructed upon the original legal foundation, and the fact that this marked the beginning of long-term consequences in the lives of Jews. Arturo asks, "Che cosa ci si deve aspettare nei mesi e negli anni a venire" ("What should we expect in the months and years to come?"; 63); "Dove arriveremo a questo passo" ("Where will we end up at this rate?"; 64); "Ma io che scuola frequenterò? Potrò mai finire le elementari? Sperare di accedere alla media?" ("Which school will I attend? Will I be able to finish grade school? Will I be able to attend middle school?"; 65). Through the movement between the practical concerns of expulsion and the personal concerns of belonging and friendship expressed by Arturo's questions, the novel's school-aged reader will understand particularly well the consequential emotional trauma. More generally, and perhaps most importantly, the novel brings home the point that racial rhetoric and laws based on ethnic discrimination often do not have simply an immediate, visual, and quantifiable effect, but also long-term effects with the potential of becoming commonplace and invisible.

With Arturo's increasingly difficult experiences, Part I on the "persecution of rights," identity, and trauma ends with Arturo's grave word "addio" ("farewell"). The word remembers the novel's title and foreshadows the course—the "slippery slope" discussed above—that will take Arturo away from Italy to Auschwitz. Equally significant, the word expunges the next five years from the record.

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

2. Part II: "Quaderno del 1943": The persecution of lives as ideological and practical outcome of the Racial Laws

After the initial impact of the Racial Laws, we are given no indication of the long and difficult 5-year process of Arturo's adaptation to his new environment. The questions Arturo posed in 1938 are not clarified for the reader. Likewise, the narrative does not explain how Jewish children interpreted and adjusted to the segregation of attending a Jewish school. As a story of the child victim's experiences under Racial Law, these explanations would have provided a clearer understanding of the process of alienation to which thousands of children were subjected. The reader would have witnessed the protagonist's imposed transformation from an Italian boy who is Jewish and attends a state school for all Italians, to a Jewish boy made to attend a Jewish school because he is "other." For this, Sessi's novel follows a typical pattern in representations of the Italian Shoah for young readers, even in autobiographical accounts such as the ones collected in *Anni spezzati*. In these texts, more systematic depictions of specific moments of Italian persecution and disenfranchisement are favored over reflections on the difficult and problematic process Jews faced in adapting to life after 1938.¹⁴

Yet, we can read the lack of entries between Arturo's diary's two parts as a striking *visual* indicator of "il buio nel quale siamo immersi da anni" ("the darkness in which we have been immersed for years"; 98). By passing over a 5-year period that might seem to stabilize Jewish persecution, and moving immediately to 1943, the text maintains the descent of Arturo's status in Italian society. We can add to this an interpretation of the lack of entries as Sessi's way of visually representing the ideological and practical bridge between the Fascist government's persecution of Jews in Part I, and their arrest and deportation under Nazi occupation in Part II. To illustrate, in response to someone's assertion that "trovi sempre qualcuno che ti aiuta, anche se fascista!" ("you can always find someone to help you, even a Fascist!"; 92), Arturo insists that the Italian government's policies and the *Demorazza* facilitated the arrest and deportation of thousands to both Fascist and Nazi camps.

The connection between Parts I and II is firmly established once the Finzi household has relocated from their home in Bologna to Rome, which places Arturo's growing anxiety within the theater of two of the most significant moments of the Italian Shoah, the Nazi extortion of gold and the October 16 roundup. As he develops from a 10-year-old boy shocked by sudden ostracization to a more conscious 15-year-old adolescent, Arturo displays increasing wariness and presentiment growing out of careful observation of and reflection on events around him. His reaction to the Nazi

extortion of 50 kilograms of gold is to remain suspicious of the outcome of fulfilling the request, and he qualifies, “Una buona notizia, *secondo mio padre*” (“This is good news, *according to my father*”; 102). Arturo’s interpretation—the “reading” fundamental to Sessi’s message to the child reader—counters most of the Jewish community’s trust in its nation to protect it, as recounted in Debenedetti’s account of the events of October 16 and the period leading up to them. Arturo comments,

ancora una volta sono convinto che ci stiamo adattando a condizioni sempre peggiori e non pensiamo nemmeno lontanamente di reagire.... I miei si uniscono al coro delle speranze di tutta la Comunità ebraica; la presenza del Papa ... le rassicurazioni che provengono da varie parti li rendono ottimismo: i fascisti italiani non sono mai arrivati ad atti di crudeltà fisica contro gli ebrei, anche con l’introduzione delle leggi razziali. Perché sarebbe dovuto accadere ora? Come sai, caro diario, io non sono così ottimista. (102-03, 105)¹⁵

I am once again convinced that we are adapting to conditions that are growing worse and worse, and that we are not at all thinking about doing something about it.... My parents join in the hopes expressed by the entire Jewish Community; the Pope’s presence ... and reassurances coming from different places make them optimistic: Italian Fascists have never committed acts of physical cruelty against Jews, even after the introduction of the Racial Laws. Why should it happen now? As you know, dear diary, I am not so optimistic.

Though not reflective of the reality of the millions of European children who were helpless victims of persecution and death, the child protagonist of Italian youth literature on the Shoah is, like Arturo, frequently depicted as either less trusting than adults or more responsive to the instinct to escape. This convention results in survival and the positioning of the child as hero, as in Lia Levi’s *Una valle piena di stelle* and *Un cuore da leone*, the latter, like Arturo’s Part II, taking place in 1943 Rome. Coming long after Emancipation and a few decades on the heels of a period in Italian history in which Jews had defended the nation and were decorated soldiers of WWI, it was difficult for adults especially, to reason through the government’s treacherous actions against its Jewish citizens. The child hero’s purpose is to motivate the reader’s appreciation of the importance of listening, skepticism, and following the instinct of survival against social training and conformity. Arturo observes,

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Molti fingono che non stia accadendo niente. Nelle vie del vecchio quartiere ebraico la gente si ritrova, ... gli artigiani fanno affari anche con un nuovo genere di clienti: soldati ed ufficiali tedeschi, che ... sembra proprio non facciano alcuna differenza tra negozi "ariani" e quelli con la scritta "giudeo." (107)

Many pretend nothing is happening. People gather in the streets of the old Jewish quarter, ... artisans do business even with a new kind of client: German soldiers and officers, who ... do not seem to see a difference between 'Aryan' stores and those marked with the word "Jew."

Evaluations such as these contain words and phrases whose purpose it is to reveal the danger of Italy's Racial Laws and alliance with Germany. The semantic choices Arturo makes become more fierce as the situation under the Nazi occupation escalates and draws nearer to the boy's personal context. And so, appearing on the first page of Part II, dated July 25, 1943, are words relating to the war: "questo orrore" ("this horror") and "fame, freddo, paura, dolore" ("hunger, cold, fear, pain"). In reference to the Jewish situation after Italy's surrender to the Allies, Arturo notes on September 9 that Jews are "censiti" ("documented") and that "le nubi nere del temporale ... rischiano di addensarsi" ("the dark clouds of the thunderstorm ... threaten to gather"). Later, on September 25 "gli orrori del nazifascismo, la fame e la miseria ... consumano la maggior parte delle città" ("the horrors of Nazifascism, hunger and poverty ... consume most cities"). On September 24 he describes German activity in the north as a "flagella" ("scourge") and states that "la furia tedesca si abbatte sui civili con stragi e massacri" ("the German fury is descending upon civilians, slaughtering and massacring them"). When referring to the Nazi search of offices in the Jewish community on September 29, he uses the terms "invasi" ("invaded"), "lunga e accurata perquisizione" ("long and thorough search"), and "sequestrato" (sequestered), and states that the Germans "si sono impadroniti" ("took possession"; 103) of documents and money.

As is well known, the *Demorazza* facilitated the identification of Rome's Jews and their eventual arrest for deportation on October 16.¹⁶ The events of October 16 bring the issue of Italian responsibility to the forefront. This day was one of the most tragic outcomes of the historical evolution and practical application of the Fascist Government's Racial Laws and its alliance with Nazi Germany. Most importantly for the novel's message to its young reader, it was the outcome of Italian persecution in both its official capacity and local implementation. And in fact, in his last letter to his girlfriend Giulia, written on that day, Arturo concludes, "Penso che per noi

sia arrivato l'ultimo atto, che già i provvedimenti del lontano 1938 preparavano" ("I think that the final act has arrived for us, one already set in motion by the long-ago 1938 measures"; 130). The implication of Italian responsibility expressed by Arturo's words carries weight when we consider the reluctance of the dominant postwar narrative to assess it before the 1980s. If we consider the debate over Holocaust commemoration in Italy unfolding at the time Sessi wrote the novel, we can conclude that the narrative's direct movement from 1938 to 1943 vindicates the choice of October 16, integral to the experience on Italian soil, over the government's adoption of the international January 27 as the national date of Holocaust remembrance.¹⁷ Arturo's first-hand experience of the event becomes the Italian climax of 5 years of state-sanctioned persecution and the final Italian stop on his journey to Auschwitz fated by the Fascist government's passage of its 1938 Racial Laws. Following his arrest on October 16, he is deported to Auschwitz where he dies. The conclusion of Arturo's story is definitive, and, for the young reader, a clear, emblematic sign of the dangers of official, race-based persecution.

3. Part III: "Il racconto di Giulia": The civic formation of the novel's youth reader

While Arturo provides a personal account of his experience of October 16, in Part III Giulia, now 17, provides more precise details of the event and its aftermath. In this conclusion, which serves as coda to Arturo's diary, the girl presents a description of Auschwitz and the Final Solution, including the number of victims, the use of Zyklon B, and showers and crematoria. This part is written with the purpose of making transparent what the text terms the "verbal disguise" fundamental to Nazi reports of the concentration camp and the Final Solution, i.e. "installazioni speciali" and "bagni" ("special installations" and "baths"; 125). Thus, Giulia reveals and bears witness to what Arturo could no longer himself report in order to defy the notion of a "final solution" even when its intended victim could not.¹⁸

In his discussion of the significance of witnessing to the "restoration" of the narrative that "*could not be articulated*," Dori Laub concludes, "What ultimately matters in all processes of witnessing ... is not simply the information, the establishment of facts, but the experience itself of living through testimony, of giving testimony" (Felman and Laub 85). Giulia's position makes clear even to the uninformed reader the absence of Arturo as witness. Yet, it also speaks of her giving testimony for him and restoring the void in witnessing left by his demise. Giulia becomes the character whose reflection on history represents the kind of formation the book intends for its readers. By performing a thoughtful rereading of history

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

meant not only to gain knowledge, but also to understand its future implications, she demonstrates a “living through testimony ... giving testimony.” She asserts, “Il mio, il nostro imperativo futuro è: non dimenticare ... ogni uomo dovrebbe farlo suo nel presente, incaricandosi di tramandarlo alle generazioni che verranno (“My, our future imperative is: do not forget ... everyone should accept the challenge by taking on the responsibility of passing it on to future generations”; 129).

In a novel with a didactic purpose, Giulia's testimony constitutes a call to the reader aimed at working towards a cohesive Italian society that counters the environment of Arturo's personal experiences in 1938 and 1943. It reflects what Italian educators consider an essential component of young students' education in Shoah history and their participation in future civic engagement as Italian society becomes increasingly diverse. Educator Laura Tussi concludes in her *Educazione e pace*, “Lo studio, la documentazione e la trasmissione degli eventi storici connessi alla Shoah implicano un legame diretto con dinamiche di trasformazione sociale, di evoluzione del sistema di valori e di costruzione della società civile stessa” (“The study, the documentation, and the transmission of historical events related to the Shoah are directly connected to the dynamics of social transformation, of evolving systems of values, of the very construction of a civil society”; 61). Thus, through Giulia the novel raises fundamental questions regarding its readers' own education in history, and their application of this education to their development as witnesses of their own environment.

What imperative can we expect the child reader to take away from Sessi's novel? At the end of Part I, Arturo *rereads* his diary, a process that clarifies for him the evolution of his current situation, “mi accorgo della progressione lenta e continua dei provvedimenti antiebraici in Italia. Se in un solo anno è successo che abbiamo perduto ogni sicurezza, cosa ci accadrà domani?” (“I notice the slow and steady evolution of the anti-Jewish measures in Italy. If we have lost all security in just one year's time, what will happen tomorrow?”; 73). (Re)reading history and present-day situations is presented as a necessary process in the child's ethical formation. Part of this formation is the understanding of how acts of persecution and discrimination are realized.

Because persecution will not always manifest itself as violent acts, so visible in images of the concentration camp and in televised reporting of oppression around the world today, it is important, as Sessi concludes, to learn to perceive the implications of seemingly less violent and racist words and actions. Youth literature set in the Italian Shoah, and particularly illustrations accompanying the text, represent Nazis as brutes, menacing strangers, and larger-than-life individuals, so that the reader can readily identify their presence. Italians practicing racism, on the other hand, typically

come from inside the community.¹⁹ The less-transparent presence of threatening Italians brings home the ethical question of betrayal, and more significantly the betrayal of Italians by Italians. Thus, Arturo is first personally subject to Fascist Racial Law by the schoolteacher, a figure integral to a child's personal development and civic formation. By beginning in school, the novel not only remains faithful to reality, as seen in our discussion above, but also immediately commences the reader's development as witness to persecution in what is commonly deemed a safe environment.

At 10 years old, Arturo is too young to understand the reasons behind the identity politics that now define him, but at 15 he is able to recognize the trajectory begun in the schools and leading to enforced segregation from public life. Part of this recognition comes from understanding the role free will plays in creating a situation such as his, "Perché dico uomini e non mostri? I nazisti e i fascisti nostrani ... sono uomini comuni, che hanno scelto la strada assai piú comoda e semplice della sopraffazione e della violenza" ("Why do I say men and not monsters? Nazis and our own Fascists ... are common men who chose the simpler and more convenient route of subjugation and violence"; 101). Statements such as these create a powerful equation of complicity: Italy's involvement in persecution is not simply due to its extraordinary political alliance with Nazi Germany, but is the result of a more complex combination of political alliance and the personal convictions and greed of countless individuals. The equation was ultimately realized through the Racial Laws and events such as October 16, 1943, which would descend upon Jews like a "silenzio di morte" ("silence of death"; 107).

Sessi's novel proposes a process of applying a reading of history to one's immediate social milieu that has since been implemented in noteworthy school projects on the Shoah, among them *Il Novecento. I giovani e la memoria* (ed. Daniele Apicella, 2001), a compilation of student-authored essays, and *Poesie per Alberta* (ed. Annalisa Accetta, 2005), a collection of student-authored poems. Maria Rosaria Cavezza's poem, "Importanza dell'uguaglianza" ("The Importance of Equality"), collected in *Poesie per Alberta*, for example, bridges past and present. Though it continues the dominant postwar definition of Fascist racists as "others," an equation that for decades helped suppress questions of Italian responsibility, the poem nevertheless demonstrates the beginning of a process of awareness as advocated by Sessi's novel:

Tutti gli uomini
sono nati uguali,
hanno tutti
un corpo, una mente

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

ed uno spirito.

Ma molti non hanno capito
e non capiscono,
hanno fatto degli ebrei delle cavie
e fanno dei diversi delle vittime.

La realtà è un'altra:
le vere bestie erano loro,
i veri diversi sono loro,
procuravano e procurano sofferenze e umiliazioni
e si divertivano e si divertono
a giocare con la vita
degli altri.
(47)²⁰

All men
are born equal,
they all have
a body, a mind
and a spirit.

But many have not understood
and don't understand,
they turned Jews into human guinea pigs
and turn those who are different into victims.

This is not reality:
they were the real animals,
they are the ones who are different,
they caused and cause suffering and humiliation
and they had fun and have fun
playing with the lives
of others.

How should the child act? The novel depicts several *italiani, brava gente* (good Italians) that counter the attitude of Arturo's non-Jewish classmates, whom the boy calls "pecoroni" ("sheep"; 10) for their passive acceptance of an education in racial prejudice. However, as with much of the novel's representation of intricate issues, the depiction of the *italiani, brava gente* is not proposed without in some way illuminating the complexity of its historical narrative. Those studying the postwar period have raised questions

about the application of the concept to national accounts of the war. The original concept was applied to those who performed actions to help the persecuted, and famously included those who assisted Rome's Jews in amassing the 50kg of gold in a "gara di solidarietà" ("race of solidarity"; 102). Yet, in an effort to drop a veil of silence over the period and its concomitant issues of complicity as Italy underwent reconstruction, the identity was applied to all Italians and thereby rendered "banal," to paraphrase historian Claudio Fogu.²¹ Arturo's own experience, defined by his statement, "Ho l'impressione che si stia diffondendo la favola bella del 'buon italiano'" ("I get the impression that people are spreading the phony story of the 'good Italian'"; 92), bears witness to the manipulation of this important concept.

The novel aims at rectifying the banalization of *italiani, brava gente* by inserting acts of active resistance into its narrative. It provides the child reader with examples of Italians committing acts of defiance against the regime, ranging from subtle opposition to outright participation in the Partisan struggle. When Arturo and his best friend Paolo are 10, for example, they learn simple acts of resistance from Paolo's grandfather Willer. When called upon to go outside and listen to Mussolini speak, Willer distorts the term *Duce* into the nonsensical *Buce*, flying in the face of the potentially violent Fascist response to those who outwardly disapproved of the regime. Though with no apparent consequence, his action represents the refusal to accept the myth of the Duce as leader of the Italian nation. For his part, Paolo joins the Partisan movement at 15. Arturo defines this action as a choice, reminding the reader that those who performed acts of discrimination and persecution or simply acquiesced also did so out of choice. Exposed to his grandfather's antifascist ideology, Paolo was already at age 10, "sad and sorry" for his Jewish friend, and cognizant of the fact that race rhetoric serves to exclude, "se si parla di razza italiana è per escludere chi è diverso o straniero" ("If we talk about an Italian race, it is to exclude those who are different and foreign"; 22). The articulation of Paolo's statement on race rhetoric may seem advanced for a 10-year-old boy, but it actually presents the world in easily understood dichotomies that even the novel's youngest intended reader may recognize—similar/different, inside/outside, national/foreigner. Simple examples of resistance on the part of ordinary Italians such as Paolo and his grandfather Willer provide an effective way of illustrating that even the smallest gesture can thwart the compulsory and blind conditioning the regime relied upon to ensure collaboration and support.

Ultima fermata: Auschwitz provides the youth reader with an essential but at times challenging education. It stops short of revealing Arturo's experience in Auschwitz, and so avoids investigating a site outside

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

Italy that would move the reader's focus away from Italian responsibility. It also does not delve into the difficult psychological process of adjusting to persecution in the years between 1938 and 1943. This representation would have enriched the child reader's awareness of the consequences of racism and segregation, but might also have given the events of 1943 the feel of a break from a "stabilized," "safe" Italian form of racism. Ultimately, by bridging the gap between the Italian context and its development into Arturo's end in Germany, and presenting Giulia's final testimonial as its coda, the novel encourages the reader's recognition of the dangers behind the modern-day rhetoric that insists, for example, upon the racial distinction between "Italian" and immigrant.²² Through Arturo's observant skepticism, the acts of defiance of other characters, and Giulia's final critical appraisal, Sessi's youth novel participates in a corrective process of the obscuring dominant postwar narrative and affords the child an education in a difficult national history.

Virginia Picchiatti

UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

ENDNOTES

¹ All translations are mine, unless otherwise stated.

² I use historian Di Palma's wider application of the term *Shoah* to the Italian context. Di Palma's usage encompasses the entire period of persecution, from the passage of the Racial Laws and the publication of the Manifesto of Race in 1938, resulting in the *persecuzione dei diritti* (persecution of rights), to 1943-1945, the period of the *persecuzione delle vite* (persecution of lives).

³ For the Risiera di San Sabba's history, see <http://www.risierasansabba.it>.

⁴ For an account of the difficulties of reintegration into Italian society, see Schwarz. Schwarz explains that though the Racial Laws were "unequivocally ended" by 1947, the delay in confronting the Jewish experience after 1938 and the continuing presence of anti-Semitic attitudes at all levels of society, complicated the process of reintegration (8-9).

⁵ Rome's Museo della Shoah has been in planning for several years. Upon this writing, its development has not yet been completed, being the topic of a long debate and subject to numerous postponements.

⁶ For a discussion of this context and the role of Levi's *Una valle* in it, see Picchiatti.

⁷ Several excellent volumes have investigated Italian identity in this context. See, for example, Garvin; and Parussa.

⁸ An official document, *Informazione diplomatica* n.17 dated February 17, 1938, states "Il Governo fascista si riserva ... di vigilare sull'attività degli ebrei venuti di recente nel nostro paese e di far sì che la parte degli ebrei nella vita complessiva della Nazione, non risulti sproporzionata ai meriti intrinseci dei singoli e all'importanza numerica della loro comunità" ("The Fascist government reserves the right to monitor the activities of Jews who have recently come to Italy, and to ensure that the proportion of Jews in relation to the overall life

of the Nation does not result disproportionate to the intrinsic merit of the individual and to the numeric value of his community"; qtd. Israel 171).

⁹ The Lateran Accords lent legitimacy to the Fascist regime through Papal approval. However, though in some ways creating an exclusionary relationship between Fascism and the Catholic Church, they did not directly and in principle reflect the position of everyone associated with the Church, from clerics to the populace. See Bosworth; and Zuccotti (*Under His Very Windows*).

¹⁰ See the Manifesto of Race, especially points 4, 6, 8, and 9. For the original Italian, see http://www.deportati.it/archivio/manifesto_razza.html. For the English translation, see Schnapp.

¹¹ For a discussion of the teaching of the Fascist ethos in school, see Duggan, particularly chapter 7. Duggan uses personal sources such as diaries to investigate teachers' approach to this task.

¹² The confusion and trauma experienced in 1938 is further underscored through a complication of Arturo's background. Arturo and his sister Sara were baptized Catholic. The boy's instruction in the meaning of the term "ebreo" (Jew) is prompted by its racial classification, rather than as the religio-cultural identity shared by many Jewish Italians. Arturo's grandparents had been observant Jews, but his parents converted to Catholicism to avoid observing strict Jewish law. After 1938, the Fascist government defined as Jewish those children born to two parents who had converted, even if baptized and raised "a essere buoni cristiani" ("to be good Christians"; 15), as Sara specifies. Within the larger context of racial discrimination, the Finzi family's situation serves to disavow claims that "[Italy's] brand of anti-Semitism differed from the Nazi variety ... [because] it was based on spiritual and cultural, rather than [...] biological, concepts" (Zuccotti, *The Italians* 40). And indeed, as Zuccotti clarifies, legal provisions that did not recognize conversions "clearly treated Jews as a race" (40).

¹³ See Israel. Writing before the publication of the Manifesto of Race and the passage of the Racial Laws, Orano describes the "good Fascist" and demands that Italian Jews declare their political alliance to Fascism and against the Jews of Europe (Israel 168). By 1938, of course, there would be no place for Jews in the PNF, though by that year 20% of the Jewish Italian population belonged to the party. The change in political status is illustrated by Arturo's father, who was a decorated WWI veteran, but by 1938 is persecuted for being a Jew. He represents the 50 Jewish generals who served in WWI, more than in any other European country, and with one being Italy's highest decorated WWI soldier. For these statistics, see Brustein, 327, 320-21.

¹⁴ As survivor testimonials show, and as mentioned above, the Racial Laws' initial psychological impact on the Jewish child was sudden and violent, originating from the aforementioned exclusion from public life and the forceful separation from school and friends. Later, however, the child's Jewish and thus "separate" identity "normalized." For those whose Jewish identity had been primarily religious, their affiliation with a more totalizing Jewish identity intensified. As the survivors featured in Zuccotti's *The Italians and the Holocaust* attest, after the sudden trauma of the compulsory loss of their Italian identity, segregation into Jewish schools prompted children to actively engage their ancestral Jewish identity. Therefore, as they performed "a closer examination of their special heritage that helped them appreciate its role and meaning," they became more purposefully dedicated to religious services and acquired a newfound pride in accomplishments by Jews (44-46). This scenario achieved the ethnic segregation willed by the Fascist regime at the same time that it subverted the image of inferiority on which racial rhetoric in part hung.

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

¹⁵ Though we are now in 1943, earlier in 1938 Mussolini published statements meant to appease Jews at the publication of the Manifesto of Race and the passage of the Racial Laws. In *Informazione diplomatica* dated August 5, 1938, just one month before the beginning of the full enactment of the Racial Laws, for example, he reproached Jews for misconstruing his politics of discrimination, “Discriminare non significa perseguitare. Questo va detto ai troppi ebrei d’Italia e di altri Paesi, i quali ebrei lanciano al cielo inutili lamentazioni, passando con la nota rapidità dalla invadenza e dalla superbia all’abbattimento ed al panico insensato” (“Discriminating does not mean persecuting. This must be said to the many Jews of Italy and other countries who launch pointless cries to the heavens, passing with the usual rapidity from intrusiveness and pride to despondency and senseless panic”; qtd. in Israel 205).

¹⁶ For the landmark account of this event, see Debenedetti.

¹⁷ The nation does commemorate October 16, as it does February 10, the *Giorno del Ricordo*, which remembers the Foibe and the Istrian-Dalmatian exodus. These commemorative events, however, are not given the national focus (including national and school programming) of January 27, the *Giorno della Memoria*. For further discussions of the process and evolution of Italian commemoration, see Gordon.

¹⁸ Shortly after the publication of *Ultima fermata: Auschwitz*, Sessi published a book that recounts the experiences of children prisoners during the Shoah, *Sotto il cielo d’Europa*.

¹⁹ For example, in Levi’s *Una valle piena di stelle* (1997), an illustration of a Nazi officer shows him as an imposing figure in uniform with a menacing face. Meanwhile, in Levi’s *Un cuore da leone* (2006), the father of one of the young protagonist’s friends yells at the Jewish boy to leave, “Io gli ebrei per casa non ce li voglio!” (“I don’t want Jews in my house!”; 67). The accompanying illustration of the father shows him in pajamas with an angry face with stubble, while the text describes him as “una specie di orco in pigiama” (“a sort of ogre in pajamas”; 68).

²⁰ Other examples are poems by Vania Previte and Nicola Galli in *Poesie per Alberta*. Previte writes in “Io non lo farò” (“I Won’t Do It”): ...per quella ragazza, il sogno è stato realtà, / quella realtà che mi porta a dire: / non si può dimenticare! / Né oggi, né domani, né mai. / Io non lo farò! (for that girl, the dream was a reality, / that reality that makes me say: / we can’t forget! / Not today, not tomorrow, never. / I won’t do it!; 78); in the poem “Shoah,” meanwhile, Galli creates a relationship between himself and Anne Frank: “Anna mi chiama: ‘ero una bambina vivace, la vita mi è stata / negata. Ti chiedo di non dimenticare quello che / Hitler ci ha fatto provare”(Anne calls to me: ‘I was a lively girl, life was taken / from me. I ask you not to forget what / Hitler made us experience; 124).

²¹ Fogu discusses the most enduring image of Italians constructed by the dominant narrative of the period, “In their own eyes and in those of their liberators, Italians possessed a fundamental banality of goodness that had prevented them from perpetrating inhuman and criminal acts. If anything, they had been victims of *nazifascismo* (Nazi Fascism) and bore no sense of collective responsibility for their fascist past” (147).

²² Children born in the 21st Century will grow up in a different social situation. In October 2015, the Italian Parliament began approval of a new law on citizenship. The *Camera dei Deputati* approved awarding citizenship to children of immigrants by means of *Ius soli* and *Ius culturae*, provided specific conditions are met. For information, see “Cittadinanza” at http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2015/10/13/news/legge_cittadinanza_senato-124967907/.

WORKS CITED

- Accetta, Annalisa, ed. *Poesie per Alberta*. Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2005. Print.
- Apicella, Daniele, ed. *Il Novecento. I giovani e la memoria*. Web. 3 Jan. 2016. <http://daniele.apicella.com/novecento/>.
- Bosworth, R.J.B. *The Italian Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism*. London: Arnold, 1998. Print.
- Brustein, William I. *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Print.
- Capogreco, Carlo Spartaco. *Ferramonti. La vita e gli uomini del più grande campo d'internamento fascista (1940-1945)*. Firenze: Giuntina, 1987. Print.
- “Cittadinanza: Sì della Camera allo ius soli. La nuova legge passa la Senato.” *La Repubblica*. 13 Oct. 2015. Web. 3 Jan. 2016. [La Repubblica.it](http://www.larepubblica.it)
- Colombo, Furio. Introduction. *The Italians and the Holocaust. Persecution, Rescue, and Survival*. By Susan Zuccotti. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. ix-xvii. Print.
- Debenedetti, Giacomo. *16 ottobre 1943*. Torino: Einaudi, 2005. Print.
- Di Palma, Sara Valentina. *Bambini e adolescenti nella Shoah: storia e memoria della persecuzione in Italia*. Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2004. Print.
- Duggan, Christopher. *Fascist Voices: An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. Print.
- Faenza, Roberto, dir. *Jona che visse nella balena*. Jean Vigo International, 1993. Film.
- Felman, S., and Dori Laub. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Fogu, Claudio. “Italiani brava gente: The Legacy of Fascist Historical Culture on Italian Politics of Memory.” In *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*. Ed. C. Fogu, R. Lebow, and W. Kansteiner. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. 147-176. Print.
- Foot, John. *Italy's Divided Memory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Trans. B. M. Mooyart. New York: Bantam, 1993. Print.
- Garvin, Barbara, and Bernard Cooperman. *The Jews of Italy: Memory and Identity*. Bethesda: University of Maryland Press, 2008. Print.
- Gordon, Robert. “The Holocaust in Italian Collective Memory. ‘Il giorno della memoria,’ 27 January 2001.” *Modern Italy* 11.2 (2006): 167-88. Print.

THE CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

- Israel, Giorgio. *Il fascismo e la razza. La scienza italiana e le politiche razziali del regime*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010. Print.
- Kokkola, Lydia. *Representing the Holocaust in Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Levi, Giulio. *1940-1945 Gioele, fuga per tornare*. Firenze: Fatatrac, 2008. Print.
- Levi, Lia. *Una bambina e basta*. Rome: Edizioni e/o, 2003. Print.
- . *Un cuore da Leone*. Casale Monferrato: Edizioni Piemme, 2006. Print.
- . *Una valle piena di stelle*. Milan: Mondadori, 1997. Print.
- Levi, Primo. *Se questo è un uomo*. Torino: Einaudi, 1989. Print.
- Luzzatto Voghera, Gadi. *L'antisemitismo, domande e risposte*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1994. Print.
- Maida, Bruno. *La Shoah dei bambini. La persecuzione dell'infanzia ebraica in Italia, 1938-1945*. Torino: Einaudi, 2013. Print.
- "Manifesto della razza." *Fondazione memoria della deportazione*. ANED – Associazione nazionale ex deportati nei campi nazisti, 2014. Web. 3 Jan. 2016. http://www.deportati.it/archivio/manifesto_razza.html
- Orano, Paolo. *Gli ebrei in Italia*. Rome: Editrice Pinciana, 1937. Print.
- Parussa, Sergio. *Writing as Freedom, Writing as Testimony: Four Italian Writers and Judaism*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008. Print.
- Picchiotti, Virginia. "Writing the Shoah for Young Readers: Lia Levi's *Una valle piena di stelle*." *Italian Culture*, 31.2 (2013). 75-90. Print.
- Risiera di San Sabba*. Comune di Trieste. Web. 3 Jan. 2016. <http://www.risierasansabba.it>.
- Schnapp, Jeffrey. *A Primer of Italian Fascism*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2000. Print.
- Schwarz, Guri. *Ritrovare se stessi. Gli ebrei nell'Italia postfascista*. Roma: Laterza, 2004. Print.
- Sessi, Frediano. *Sotto il cielo d'Europa. Ragazze e ragazzi prigionieri dei lager e dei ghetti*. Torino: Einaudi, 1998. Print.
- . *Ultima fermata Auschwitz: storia di un ragazzo ebreo durante il fascismo*. Torino: Einaudi, 1996. Print.
- Sonnino, Piera. *Questo è stato. Una famiglia italiana nei lager*. Milano: Il saggiatore, 2004. Print.
- Tagliacozzo, Lia. *Anni spezzati. Storie e destini nell'Italia della Shoah*. Roma: Giunti, 2009. Print.
- Tussi, Laura. *Educazione e pace. Dalla Shoah al dialogo interculturale*. Milano: Mimesis, 2011. Print.
- Zuccotti, Susan. *The Italians and the Holocaust. Persecution, Rescue, and Survival*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. Print.
- . *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Print.