When Jews praised Mussolini and supported Nazis: Meet Israel's first fascists
By: Dan Tamir

"Fascism is not a product for export." – Benito Mussolini, 1925

A mixture of repulsion and weird fascination was the reaction of many to the advertisement in the last election campaign in which Israel's minister of justice modeled a vial of fictional perfume that bore a literally ideological label. It was a nifty idea, all in all, and the message was obvious: What her adversaries were smelling was not "fascism" but proper administration and a solid government. The clip, as we know, did not salvage Ayelet Shaked's campaign: Her party, Hayamin Hehadash, did not cross the electoral threshold this past April. However, the ad did raise a number of questions of both historical and contemporary interest: What is the "smell" of fascism? Can it be "smelled" at all? Has there ever been fascism in Israel, and if so, is it on its way back?

Among the communist left, there is a common tendency to see fascism within every manifestation of nationalism, or at least to see fascism as an extreme form of modern capitalism. In right-wing circles, in contrast, "fascism" is a curse that is to be evaded, a kind of persistent suspicion that must be rebuffed – as exemplified by the much-discussed perfume clip.

But what is fascism? What sets it apart from other right-wing political streams? In 2004, Robert Paxton, in his book "The Anatomy of Fascism" (disclosure: this writer translated that book into Hebrew), listed seven features that collectively might delineate the nature of fascism as an ideology and as a political practice. They are: certainty in the supremacy of the group – national, ethnic – over every right of the individual, and the individual's subordination to the group; belief that the group in question is a victim of other groups, as a consequence of which there is justification for every action taken against its enemies (domestic or external, real or imagined); fear of harm befalling the group from liberal tendencies or "foreign" influences from outside; the need for closer integration of a "purer" national community, whether by agreement or through violence; insistence on the group's right to rule others without any limitations – a right accruing to the group by dint of its singularity or skills; a sense of the existence of a severe crisis, not amenable to any traditional solution; belief in the need for the authority of a lone and solitary leader, and obedience to that leader based on the conviction that he possesses supernatural insights or capabilities.

Another trait that some would add is fierce opposition to socialism in all its forms – a characteristic that was especially apparent in the practice of fascist movements active in the second half of the 20th century, even if not in their declared ideology.

The phenomena most typically identified as fascist are associated with the regimes that were headed by Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler: squadrismos (gangs in Italy) or Nazi storm troopers rampaging in black or brown shirts, mass processions, subordination of the independent media to the regime, the effective elimination of the legislature, the reorganization of the entire economy in ostensible "harmony," persecution of real or

imagined domestic enemies, detention camps, mass executions, mobilization of the entire nation, and finally an external war that leads to utter destruction – in the case of Italy and Germany.

Indeed, Mussolini's Fascist Party and Hitler's National-Socialist Party were the only two fascist organizations that were, for their part, successful in consolidating themselves, establishing a significant public of supporters and political might, achieving power, forming a new regime and finally in leading their countries – whose apparatuses they undermined and which they damaged from within – into a horrific war. (Italy and Germany were the only two countries in which such movements achieved power independently: The puppet regimes the occupiers set up in Europe survived only thanks to the bayonets of the Italian and German armed forces, and collapsed immediately upon their eviction.)

However, in the period following World War I, many other groups and movements were active (mainly in Europe, though elsewhere as well) that were created and operated according to the fascist model – groups that sought to respond to like needs and to apply similar models in their policy. The Rexists in Belgium under Leon Degrelle, Vidkun Quisling's National Rally in Norway, the Hungarian Iron Cross, Corneliu Codreanu's Legion of the Archangel Michael in Romania, the Falange of José Antonio Primo de Rivera in Spain, the British Union of Fascists established by Oswald Mosley, and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party founded by Antoun Saadeh in Lebanon – these are only a few examples of movements that not only operated in the style and with the methods of Mussolini and Hitler, but also sought to establish similar regimes in their countries.

Each of the movements mentioned above bore distinctive characteristics and each pursued a slightly different political strategy, in accordance with the political climate, the structure of the regime and the social codes amid which it acted; none of them, however, succeeded like their later counterparts in Italy and Germany. Nevertheless, all shared the characteristics of what scholars term "generic fascism." In fact, in the 1920s and 1930s, fascism was a political phenomenon that cropped up and operated in almost every modern mass society that was afflicted by a deep crisis at the time.

And what about Palestine?

Compared to the protracted horror of the Western Front in World War I, or to the battles saturated with the blood of myriads in Eastern Europe both in that war and during the emergence of the Soviet Union immediately afterward, the outer reaches of the Ottoman Empire were relatively quiet. However, the trepidation stemming from World War I – including the dissolution of the old political order and the economic and social dislocations that followed in its wake – did not completely spare Palestine of that period. It ranged from mass mobilization, confiscation of property and the exile of whole populations, to privation and hunger, with the addition of extensive killing and murderous actions, and culminating in the total collapse of a generations-old political order, which was supplanted by a new imperial British administration that preserved certain features of

the old order but also precipitated processes of modernization that affected the society, the economy and politics.

The local changes in Palestine were overlaid by significant waves of immigration, including immigrants from Europe who arrived in the Yishuv, the pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine. Like every immigrant community, these Europeans came equipped with cultural baggage and political ideas that had been prevalent in their countries of origin. The communications system, which was improved and speeded up at the time (telephone, telegraph, newspapers), together with the diplomatic ties between Europe and Palestine and the relative freedom of movement between the two regions – all this enabled and even encouraged a flow of ideas between the eastern and northern coasts of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, a not-insignificant number of the European migrants who arrived in Palestine from the Continent's center and east in the 1920s were "graduates" of World War I and the subsequent upheavals. Whether newly discharged from the German, Austro-Hungarian or Russian armies, or whether they were younger siblings of people who had served, like those of their generation who remained in Europe, they too were members of the generation that was scarred by the Great War.

The juxtaposition of a faltering economy, a mass society possessing a modern political-party structure (as was the case in the Yishuv), two national communities competing with each other, disappointment at what seemed to be the inefficacy of the existing political establishment, and limited belief in the ability of the British-Mandatory authorities to provide protection and support for the populace sparked a search for new political answers. As in Europe, some found it in fascism; a fascist group gradually took shape in the Revisionist Zionist group.

The beginning was modest. Like many others in the mid-1920s, Itamar Ben-Avi, the son of Eliezer Ben Yehuda – the reviver of the Hebrew language and the editor of the newspaper Doar Hayom – expressed a liking and even admiration for Mussolini and his actions. Unlike other journalists at the time, he longed for a strong, assertive leader in the Yishuv, and found him in the person of Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Another such person – a novice commentator who began his political and journalistic career in socialist circles and at the newspaper of the left-wing Hapoel Hatza'ir organization, and who was by late 1920s writing a regular column for Doar Hayom, titled "From the Notebook of a Fascist" – was Abba Ahimeir. Together with an intellectual who was disappointed in socialist circles, a writer and poet named Uri Zvi Greenberg, and the physician and essayist Joshua Heschel Yevin, Ahimeir established a group of young people called Brit Habiryonim (The Zealots' Alliance), whose aim was to get the country's youth to see the light about nationalism.

The ideas espoused by the trio, leaders of the maximalist faction in the Revisionist movement, were given expression in the press. After a period in the late 1920s when they managed and effectively edited Doar Hayom, in 1930 they founded Ha'am (which became Hazit Ha'am – The People's Front – the following year). The worldview of this triumvirate entailed constantly treading on the brink of crisis and concern about an ongoing threat to the Yishuv and the Zionist enterprise. They saw the Jews as a whole

and the Zionists in particular as historical victims in Europe and also in the Land of Israel. In their perception, their movement arose from "the silence-stricken battlefields" of World War I, in Yeivin's words. Accordingly, they had only contempt for liberals, moderates and whoever harbored notions of reaching compromises with either the Arabs or the British.

Their glorification of political violence – primarily as used against socialists and communists, but also against liberals and opponents in general – dovetailed well with their fondness for extreme-right circles in Europe. They made no secret of their aspiration for a single, adored leader: In a meeting of the Revisionist movement in Vienna in the summer of 1932, another member of the group, Wolfgang von Weisl, proposed that Jabotinsky be declared the movement's supreme leader and vested with unlimited authority (Jabotinsky rejected the idea).

Brit Habiryonim fell apart at the end of 1933, when Ahimeir and two other Revisionist activists (Zvi Rosenblatt and Avraham Stavsky) were accused of assassinating Chaim Arlosoroff, a labor-Zionist leader, in June of that year. Ahimeir was acquitted of the murder charge but was convicted of heading an illegal organization and sentenced to two years in prison. Doar Hayom was also shut down and ceased publication.

Axis ties

Brit Habiryonim was active for only a short time, but its partial support for Hitlerite politics in Germany in the spring of 1933 (as expressed in the newspaper Hazit Ha'am, and which infuriated Jabotinsky) was of even shorter duration; a few members of the movement even carried out a protest against the Nazi government and stole the swastika-bearing flag from the German consulate in Tel Aviv. In contrast, the Revisionist movement's ties with Mussolini's regime lasted until at least 1938, when Italy enacted race laws resembling those promulgated by the Nazis. Along with cadets of the Revisionist movement's naval school, which operated from 1935 to 1937 in the town of Civitavecchia under the auspices of the Italian fascist regime, additional young Revisionists were students in Italian universities.

One such student was Zvi Kolitz, who, upon returning to Palestine after his studies, published a book, "Mussolini: His Personality and Doctrine." The flattering biography of Il Duce also included a selection of his letters. (Kolitz's residence in Italy and his affection for its leader did not prevent him from subsequently enlisting in the British Army.)

Another graduate of the University of Florence in that decade was Avraham Stern. Following his return to Palestine, he rose through the ranks of the Irgun Tzvai Leumi (the Revisionists' National Military Organization), but after World War II broke out he left the Irgun and established a separate group called the Lehi (an acronym for "Fighters for the Freedom of Israel") – known also as the Stern Gang.

Ideologically, Stern envisaged in his writings and in his manifesto "Principles of Birth" a national resurgence that corresponded closely with the fascist models of the period (even if in a very romanticized version). In the practical sphere, Stern sought cooperation with the Axis forces in the struggle against the British Mandate. In January 1941, following a failed attempt to make contact with the Italian representation in Palestine, Stern sent one of his people to approach the German representative in Beirut. That effort also came to nothing (in large measure due to cost-benefit calculations of the German Foreign Ministry), but did prompt the British to step up their hunt for both Stern and members of his organization.

Were the ties between the Revisionist movement and the fascist regimes based on deep, authentic affinity, or only on shared interests in the struggle against Britain's rule in the Mediterranean? In the case of Jabotinsky, who was far from being a socialist but espoused the importance and application of liberal democratic values, it can be assumed that it was a temporary nexus of interests. But to judge by the speeches, articles, songs and motions for the agenda of the members of the circle advocating a maximalist approach in Palestine, and afterward of the Irgun, its members viewed fascism as a worthy and even desirable path to follow.

Hebrew fascism in the era died out in 1942, between Florentin and El-Alamein. In February of that year, in a small apartment in the Florentin neighborhood of south Tel Aviv, Stern was apprehended and murdered on the spot by the British police; in November, the Axis forces were defeated in North Africa. Even if this was not the beginning of the end, as Winston Churchill maintained, it was the end of the beginning: The ascendancy of fascism on the world stage was curbed, its prestige faded and its aura was significantly dimmed. For decades after 1945, fascism was considered opprobrious, unfit for decent society – not a captivating perfume but a bad smell to be gotten rid of.

Fascist remnants

Eighty years later, what remains of Hebrew fascism in present-day Israeli politics? A number of the attributes of fascism noted above are clearly discernible in the rhetoric of today's right wing. Many Israelis believe in the supremacy of the nation's needs over every right of the individual and in the individual's subordination to the nation: from worshipping the totem of military service and the rabbinical establishment's responsibility for dealing with marital matters, to contempt for those who choose to emigrate. Similarly, it is not difficult to detect the unwavering belief that "the Jews" are a victim of other groups: from the instrumental use of the murder of the millions in Europe in World War II, to the "few vs. many" paradigm here in Israel (with respect, for instance, to the wars it's fought over the years and the two intifadas) – if to note only two widespread excuses made for the State of Israel's inordinate use of military force.

Fear that the "nation's values" will be eroded by universal liberal tenets or by "foreign" influences is also part and parcel of the approach of many on the Israeli right, whether in the passive form of apprehension of groups like the New Israel Fund, "foreign

governments" and "international organizations," or actively, in projects to "strengthen Jewish identity" among the population.

The belief in the need for creation of a "purer" community is also very familiar: from the thugs of the anti-assimilationist Lehava organization and open enmity toward asylum seekers, to the branding of the "leftist" not as a political rival, but as an alien element to be uprooted. And finally, the belief in the right of the Chosen People to rule others indefinitely has been evident every day for more than half a century in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

That said, a number of critical features of classic fascism do not exist in contemporary Israeli political life. First is the widespread feeling of facing a serious, decisive, existential crisis that's not amenable to any traditional solution. It's very possible that the constant sense of crisis in which the Israeli political consciousness has been immersed for decades, hinders the creation of a feeling of a single, sharp and acute crisis. The ongoing state of emergency (constitutionally and in the collective consciousness) dulls the sting of urgency: When rockets slam regularly into parts of the country, they too become routine, albeit a lethal routine. In parallel, Israel's political and legal institutions have also undergone slow erosion. On one hand, in the absence of a constitution, it is impossible to suspend it and declare a case of emergency (which is, as mentioned above, already the norm), only to modify it gradually; on the other hand, alternative groups (religious congregations, associations, private companies, rabbinical courts) are supplanting the state in many spheres. These alternatives offer a range of options at diverse levels for meeting the social and political needs of different communities.

Another feature of fascism that is absent is the demand for the authority of one sole leader and kowtowing to him and his abilities. To begin with, one of the traits that characterize Israeli society – and for whose deep roots we should perhaps be thankful to the existence of the rabbinical and sharia traditions – is skepticism of authority and non-obedience to a single figure. Second, it's quite lonely on top: While the "strong leader" who is enveloped by suspicions and manipulates his supporters and adversaries with cajolery, does show signs of authoritarianism and populism, he looks more like someone who is mostly trying to evade trial, even at the price of justifying corruption and corrupting others, rather than like someone who is trying to forge a sweeping mass movement.

The former education minister who had pretensions of becoming the defense minister was booted (at least for the time being) from the Knesset after chalking up only partial success among his hoped-for electorate: They were unimpressed by the perfume he and his colleague were marketing. And among the generals who are trying to come to power in a soft, centrist election campaign, it's hard to see a leader who will generate, by the sheer force of his personality, a determined movement of people willing to sacrifice of themselves. One small group possessing Nazi traits did in fact score a certain success in last April's election, but the Kahanists have a small problem: Their leader died more than a quarter of a century ago.

The danger of predictions

As is well known, it is hard to make predictions, especially about the future. In Israel, it may be dangerous: In 1991, when Uzi Weill's short-story collection "The Day They Shot the Prime Minister" was published, the notion that something like that could happened was considered a joke at best, or a slightly far-fetched satire at worst. Four years later, the shooting became a reality. Between the Mediterranean and the Jordan, what at a certain point of time seems "inconceivable" is subsequently born.

At the same time, it's important not to view fascist movements as a monolithic and ahistorical threat: Like everything else in this world, they are in constant motion. Thus, people change and so do their views. Wolfgang von Weisl, for example, who called on Jabotinsky to assume unlimited dictatorial powers, began his political activity in the 1920s in the Mizrachi religious-Zionist organization, and after World War II, when Menachem Begin took control of the right wing in Israel, reduced his political activity considerably. Ahimeir became one of the chief editors of the Hebrew Encyclopaedia, Yevin concentrated on spiritual and biblical thought and Kolitz became a film producer in America.

In parallel, fascist movements, like all modern political movements, gain new adherents but also lose old ones. Thus, in 1936, the same year that Kolitz and Avraham Stern traveled from Palestine to Italy to become acquainted with fascism first-hand and were enamored of it, the orchestra conductor Arturo Toscanini – who had been close to fascists while growing up in Milan but by the mid-1930s was an opponent of the regime and an exile from his homeland – conducted the inaugural concert of the Palestine Orchestra (later, the Israel Philharmonic).

The world is today hovering on the edge of an unprecedented environmental and economic crisis, which will give rise to large-scale poverty, want and distress. Already now, millions of people in the industrialized world who harbored hopes for a better future are watching those hopes fade, along with the end of the era of abundance, prosperity and "growth" of the past half a century, in the face of surging waves of global migration and the deepening of economic disparities and social inequality. There are already plenty of disgruntled voters and citizens who are fed up with the political platforms they are being offered. Will disappointment in the system and resentment of it be channeled toward renewed fascism? That cannot be ruled out, even if its attributes will be partially different from those of the old fascism.

In Israel, too, some of the components of classic fascism are already present. The combination of a constitutional crisis, a national threat that transcends the routine, a grave economic situation and the appearance of an unrestrained, charismatic leader could complete the brew and lead to a new era of fascism in Israel. We are not yet there, but we may very well be on the road that leads there.

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The Mussolini-Jabotinsky Connection: The Hidden Roots of Israel Fascist Past
By: Dr. Ramzy Baroud and Romana Rubeo

It is hardly surprising that Italian opposition leader, Matteo Salvini, has vowed that if he becomes Italy's next Prime Minister, he will recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Salvini heads Italy's Lega Party, formerly known as Lega Nord – Northern League – a party that has long been perceived as a modern expression of the country's long-dormant fascist ideology.

Salvini's track record of pro-Israel statements and blind allegiance to Tel Aviv is as old as the man's political career. The fact that Salvini made his political debut at a national level through an announcement made, not from Rome, but rather from Tel Aviv, is sufficient to express the centrality of Israel in his political discourse.

Moreover, Salvini is the golden child of Italy's far-right politics as a whole. Considering Lega's performance in the May 2019 European elections, one could argue that the Italian politician is Europe's most important far-right leader.

It is no secret that Israel has openly aligned its politics with that of the ascending far-right political movements everywhere, especially in the West. This applies to the Israel-India alliance as much as it applies to Israel's disturbing ties to the US Trump administration, Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro's presidency, and the Tories-dominated British government.

Israel's links to Italy, however, deserve further probing, and should not be lumped together with Tel Aviv's growing political intimacy with the global far-right. The reason for that is that Italy was the originator of the modern fascist ideologies, which are linked directly to Israel's Zionist ideology.

In the post-World War II era, Italy successfully managed to suppress the fascist political strand from within, starting with the last two years of the war when Rome joined the global push against the Nazi-fascist alliance. Italy's post-war constitution has gone to great lengths to confront any form of fascism that continued to lurk within Italian society.

It was only natural, then, that on many occasions, the revolutionary forces that had a tremendous impact on shaping the Italian political discourse after the war found common ground with the Palestinian quest for freedom and the Palestinian people's ongoing fight against Zionism and its reactionary allies anywhere in the world.

Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. As the truly radical left in Italy persists in its political hibernation – a process that began soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s – far-right forces have made great strides, allowing in recent years, the likes of Salvini and his racist hoards to return to the political arena. Expectedly, Salvini's

ascendency began paving the road for restoring a long-dormant neo-Zionist-fascist alliance.

Concurrently, the rise of far-right forces in Italy is forcing all political parties in the country's parliament to redefine their own political agendas by inching closer to the right in a desperate attempt to appeal to the emboldened far-right constituency.

Pro-Israel Zionist groups, in Italy and elsewhere, are now exploiting the country's fractious political scene to advance Tel Aviv's global agenda.

On January 17, the Italian government unanimously adopted the erroneous and self-serving definition of antisemitism, as envisaged by the pro-Israel International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, which equates antisemitism with anti-zionism.

The troubling "working definition" has little to do with racism and everything with politics, since Zionism is a modern political ideology, and is neither a race nor a religion. An Italian equivalent of this bizarre undertaking would be equating antifascism and anti-Italian or anti-Catholic sentiment. If this sounds odd in the Italian context, it should sound equally strange in the Zionist-Israeli context.

However, this apparent oddity makes perfect sense when analysed within a historiographical context.

Anti-Zionism critics often describe the Zionist movement as fascist. This seemingly haphazard analogy is fully justifiable on historical grounds.

Indeed, what many are not aware of is that, during their formative years, Zionist and Fascist ideologies, had similar intellectual roots and numerous overlappings in terms of their philosophical and political structures. Some of the founding fathers of Zionism, especially revisionist Zionists, regarded themselves as ideological fascists, and their progression from Fascism to Zionism was a logical one, necessitated by political expediency only.

Before the opportunistic alliance between Germany's Nazi leader, Adolf Hitler, and Italy's fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, in 1936, resulting in Italy's infamous racial laws, a degree of affinity existed between Zionist and Fascist leaders in Rome.

Vladimir Jabotinsky, the founder of Revisionist Zionism, of which Israel's current Likud party and other right and far-right groups are the offspring, saw in Italy "a spiritual homeland".

"All my views on nationalism, the state, and society were developed during those years under Italian influence," Jabotinsky wrote in his autobiography, referring to his ideological formation years in Italy.

In return, Mussolini had expressly spoken in support of Zionism and of Jabotinsky in particular: "For Zionism to succeed, you need to have a Jewish State with a Jewish flag, and Jewish language. The person who understands that is your fascist, Jabotinsky," Mussolini said during a private conversation with Nahum Goldman, founder of the World Jewish Congress, in November 1934, as reported by Lenni Brenner in his volume 'Zionism in the Age of Dictators'.

Il Duce – the fascist reference to Mussolini, which translates to "The Leader" – had already allied with Jabotinsky's Betar youth movement, which modelled itself around fascist ideas and symbols.

"By 1934, Jabotinsky and his Betar youth movement had allied with Il Duce, when the Betar established a naval base north of Rome," Steven Meyer wrote in his article 'Will Israel outlive its fascists?', published in the Executive Intelligence Review in 2002.

Meyer elaborates: 'L'Idea Sionistica, Betar's Italian-language magazine, described the dedication ceremonies which launched the academy: 'The order-'Attention!' A triple chant ordered by the squad's commanding officer – 'Viva l'Italia, Viva Il Re! Viva Il Duce!', resounded, followed by the benediction which rabbi Aldo Lattes invoked in Italian and in Hebrew for God, for the King and for Il Duce… 'Giovinezza' [the fascist party's anthem] was sung with much enthusiasm by the Betarim.'

This account is confirmed in other sources, including by Italian historian, Furio Biagini's Mussolini e il Sionismo – "Mussolini and Zionism". Biagini argues that "in principle, Mussolini wasn't against Jews' aspiration to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine."

Biagini also explained the budding Fascist-Zionist alliance based on geostrategic necessity,

"In its expansionistic design throughout the Mediterranean region, fascist Italy was in direct contrast with the British presence. The British fleet dominated the Mediterranean region from Gibraltar to Cyprus, unto Palestine. By supporting the Zionist movement in its fight against British Mandatory power, Italy wanted to weaken the British empire in the Eastern Mediterranean, while increasing Italian prestige at an international level."

In truth, Jabotinsky was not Mussolini's only link to Zionism, but one of many important allies who proved consequential in later years. Goldman wrote in his autobiography "The Autobiography of Nahum Goldman: Sixty Years of Jewish Life" that Mussolini was a great admirer of Zionism.

"You must create a Jewish state. I am a Zionist, and I told Dr Weizmann so. You must have a real country, not that ridiculous National Home that the British have offered you. I will help you create a Jewish state," Goldmann wrote, conveying Mussolini's message to the Zionist leadership at the time.

Mussolini's enthusiasm to establish a "Jewish state" paralleled the British plot to turn the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which committed the British crown to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In October 1933, the head of the Jewish Agency in Geneva, Victor Jacobson, wrote to Chaim Weizmann, who served as the President of the World Zionist Organization, and later as the first President of Israel, that, ″Mussolini is eager to open even wider the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration, particularly to the refugees coming from Germany".

In his afterword to the book, "Stato e Libertà" – State and Freedom – Italian diplomat Sergio Minerbi wrote: "Mussolini thought that it was impossible to reconcile Jews and Arabs and that they had to be politically separated, so he floated the idea of the partition of Palestine".

All of this changed in 1936 when Mussolini's son-in-law, Galeazzo Ciano, was appointed as Italy's foreign minister. It was then that "Mussolini allied Italy unequivocably with Hitler," as Susan Zuccotti wrote in her book 'The Italians and the Holocaust'. Italy's fascist party was then compelled to part ways with the Zionist leadership, leading to Mussolini's decision not to meet with Jabotinsky.

Following the triumph of the Zionist movement, crowned in the establishment of Israel on the ruins of historic Palestine in May 1948, Zionists have, once again, successfully managed to rebrand their movement as a progressive force, though it never truly abandoned its fascist ideology.

The Nation-state law of July 2018, which defines Israel as an ethnic-racial state was one of many proofs that Israel remains, until this day, fully committed to Fascism.

To say that Zionism is a form of fascism is neither an overstatement or a haphazard claim. Indeed, the root causes of both ideologies should be apparent to any astute student of history.

The fact that Salvini and Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, are now renewing or, at least, openly embracing the old bond between these two destructive ideologies, reflects two troubling realities – on the one hand, it speaks of Italy's failure to uproot Fascism as a political model following World War II, and, on the other hand, the true ideological basis of Zionism, thus the State of Israel itself.

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