

When I was a young boy, during World War II, I thought that after V-day, having re-established democracy, having defeated Hitler, and having put an end to the physical destruction of the Jewish world in Europe, the very idea of antisemitism would disappear.

We know now that unfortunately it was not true.

Dramatically, along with our efforts to build a new united and civilized Europe, new waves of antisemitism are arising. How is it possible? What should we do to prevent it, to fight it?

I am afraid that as long as we believe in logic, which means that people hate other people on the basis of some bad qualities, we are mistaken. Generally speaking, nobody says that Jews (or Gypsies, or coloured people) are ugly or dirty, that they are cheaters, that they have a lot of defects *and then* that they deserve to be hated and persecuted. Just the other way round: first comes the hatred. Jews *are* to be hated; they *are* to be guilty of every bad thing all over the world, even when they are nowhere to be found in the neighbourhood. And only then, antisemites look for reasons to hate Jews.

I generally say that antisemitism has chiefly three components, at least historically: a theological one, a racist one, and finally a political one. They are all still here among us even in our modern and civilized world, among our youth, in our papers, in our media, and even in some of our teaching.

But the new menace is a political one: it is the way of looking into the very rebirth of the Jewish nationality and of course of a Jewish State as a danger for all the world. Of course the Israeli governments, no less than other ones, may be criticized. Please, read Israeli newspapers and booklets and you'll be astonished to find a free criticism not to be compared with what happens among its enemies. It is good to criticize if it is done in order to build a better society, even better schools and universities, better hospitals where Jews (and Palestinians) are treated. It is bad if it is done in order to nullify, to destroy. It can become a new form of antisemitism, which is to be fought and defeated.

What should we not teach and what should we actually teach in Italian, in European schools?

First of all, we should never try to fight hatred with another hatred. We will not open a new war against Moslems nor against hungry immigrants. But we will fight against those who deny the Shoah; we will never agree to follow advice to speak less about Auschwitz and about the extermination of six millions of Jews. They belong to the history and to the culture of our lands. Their memory is the very memory of this history and of this culture.

That is why we strongly believe in the tasks of the Task Force; here we are, ready to work together, to eradicate hatred, to fight against discrimination, to cooperate for the building of a new Europe that should never again betray our expectations and turn against our hope.

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