

***-BOLOGNA-***  
***CASERME ROSSE***

*29th February 2008*

**DOSSIER**

***CONCERNING THE POLEMIC***

***WITH THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF BOLOGNA***

***AND***

***THE ITALY-ISRAEL ASSOCIATION  
(BOLOGNA)***

*Luisa Morgantini, Vice President of the European Parliament, was recently attacked by the Jewish Community in Bologna and of the Italy - Israel Association (of Bologna) because she was invited last 29th February to attend the ceremony to commemorate policemen, soldiers and civilians who refused to collaborate with the Nazi occupiers and consequently were deported in Germany passing from the detention centre of Caserme Rosse (Bologna).*

*The Jewish Community and the Italy-Israel Association in Bologna contested the choice by the organizers to invite Luisa Morgantini accusing her to be anti-Semitic and a denier of the Israel State, so that they decided not to participate into the commemoration.*

*Here below you can find her letter to the media, the press release that was circulated by the Jewish Community of Bologna and by the Association Italia-Israele Bologna, with their accuses, some letters of solidarity (written by Nurit Peled, Lily Traubmann, Daphna Golan and Gila Svirsky,) one article by Zvi Schuldiner published on the Italian newspaper Il Manifesto on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008, and a short press review on this issue.*

**Letter by Luisa Morgantini – Vice-President of the European Parliament concerning the press release sent to the media by Mr Lucio Pardo (Jewish Community of Bologna) and by the Association Italia-Israele Bologna**

Rome, 28 February 2008

I am deeply saddened and offended for being the victim of fanaticism, untruth, and prejudice, since this is how I consider the contents of the letter signed by Mr Lucio Pardo, whom I don't know in person, but which was circulated by the Italian news agency ANSA.

I was born in Val d'Ossola, the daughter of a partisan who – during the Second World War – fought in the mountains to defend his country against the Nazi-fascists. With this heritage, I grew up reaffirming: "No more war, no more persecution". For anyone.

The existence of the State of Israel is not the issue. But, I harshly criticize the policies of successive Israeli governments – such as the military occupation, the ongoing expansion of settlements and the closure imposed on Gaza. In criticizing these policies, I am only defending the principles laid down in

international law and by UN resolutions, as well as the right of Palestinians to live in their own State, in freedom, as Israeli citizens do.

As stated by the resolutions voted in the European Parliament, I still believe that the policy of the Israeli government is a policy that corresponds to collective punishment, violating international law; equally I condemn – as I have always done – any action against the Israeli civil population by some Palestinian extremist groups, reaffirming for many years the need for a just peace that would protect both the Palestinian and the Israeli people and the coexistence of two peoples and two States. For this reason, together with the last delegation of Members of the European Parliament to Israel and Palestine, that took place last February, we went to Gaza and Sderot.

I have always declared that the only way that the EU can defend human rights is to condemn at the same time all forms of anti-Semitism, racism or xenophobia.

Tomorrow I will be in Bologna, and I really thank the organisers for this invitation, to remember and commemorate all those civilians and soldiers - both women and men - who were shot or imprisoned in Caserme Rosse and deported to Nazi concentration camps and to pay homage to all of them through remembrance; and to reaffirm that "never again a Shoah, never again persecutions."

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## **LUISA MORGANTINI EP SPECIAL ENVOY TO BOLOGNA: PROTESTS BY JEWISH COMMUNITY (ANSA)- BOLOGNA, 28TH FEBRUARY**

The Jewish Community and the Italy-Israel Association in Bologna contested the choice by the European Parliament to send EP Vice-President Luisa Morgantini (PRC - GUE/NGL, Group of the United European Left) as its representative to the ceremony tomorrow, 29 February, to commemorate policemen, soldiers and civilians who refused to collaborate with the Nazi occupiers and who subsequently were deported.

The Jewish Community will not participate in the ceremony. "Unfortunately - wrote Lucio Pardo from the Italy-Israel Association - Luisa Morgantini has always distinguished herself by her continuous action of criticizing the Israeli State. These criticisms are not addressed to a single government, nor she

never approved successive governments, but they are aprioristic, unconditioned and without appeal, criticisms against all governments of the Israeli State, against all its Institutions, against all its actions, in substance against its own existence”.

“The European Parliament is free to send who ever it wants, even Jean Marie Le Pen - concluded Pardo - Jews in Bologna are also free to demonstrate all their opposition against anyone who denies Israelis the right to live”.

“Today the Jewish Community of Bologna, invited, as it has been for many years, to participate in the ceremony at the “Caserme Rosse” - wrote the Jewish Community - has decided not to participate because the European Parliament has designated Luisa Morgantini as its representative. We believe in democracy and freedom as a guarantee for all individuals, such as all the people who will be remembered here today and who have given their lives in order to ensure these for our country.

Morgantini has always distinguished herself for her declarations against the Israeli State, vilifying it in all its aspects. These unilateral criticism delegitimize the Israeli State, the only free and democratic State in the Middle East and represent the premises for its total destruction. It is therefore true that “whoever denies the Israeli State, also denies the Shoah”. One of the organizers of the ceremony, Armando Sarti, has also diffused the text of the mail sent to him today by the Israeli Ambassador, Gideon Meir, who declined the invitation “because of previous commitments. But I don’t want to miss it – wrote the diplomatic representative - so consider me however ideally present in the imperishable remembrance of innocent victims brutally killed during the darkest period of the contemporary history by Nazi-fascist hangmen. Israel remembers and honours them with emotion and it will never forget them, so that such tragedies will never happen again” (ANSA). MR 28-FEB-08 17:01 NNN

### **Message of solidarity to Luisa Morgantini by Nurit Peled**

Jerusalem 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008

Luisa Morgantini, unlike the Jewish personalities who slandered her, sees people and identifies with people, not with states. That is why she is truest friend of Israel - because she succeeds where the Jewish communities around the world fail - to understand that in order to save Israel one should be as critical as possible against the crimes committed by the government of Israel and its army - crimes that doom us all - the people who live here, not the people of Bologna of course - to perish. Luisa Morgantini understands that the state of Israel uses its citizens in Israel as it uses its non-subjects - whom it oppresses in Palestine, as chips in a murderous cynical game where nobody's life is worth anything. The fact that Luisa keeps on coming here, to encourage her Israeli friends and her Palestinian friends alike, knowing we

are all the victims of the ruthless and corrupt regime of occupation - is always a wonder to me. She is never received as she deserves to be received. In spite her high rank in the European Parliament, no high officials ever invites her or receives her according to protocol. But she never cares for that because unlike the heads of Jewish communities, she comes for the people. She is always one of us, always has time and patience and enthusiasm for us, never forgets our troubles, our actions, our progress and our names, although she is always busy trying to do something for the wretched of this whole planet.

Unlike the Jewish community of Bologna, who never did anything to alleviate the pain of the people who suffer here from poverty and hunger, from daily torture and loss, Luisa Morgantini is always working for this cause. Luisa Morgantini has never gained and will never gain anything from her involvement in the hell into which Israel has turned the holy land but for her - and unfortunately Jews are hard to understand that - the most important gain is the love of the people and the knowledge that she could help.

As a Jewish Israeli and as a victim of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, I feel ashamed of the Jewish community of Bologna. In all my visits to Bologna, in all the peace and human rights conferences I participated, I have never seen even one representative of that affluent community. For me the Italian care, the Italian concern for the place where I live and raise my children are all embodied in the person of Luisa Morgantini whom I shall always be proud to call my big admired sister, my model and my mentor.

*Nurit Peled*

***Nurit Peled received the Sakharov Price by the European Parliament on 2001. She is an Israeli professor, translator, writer. Nurit Peled and Rami El Hanan's daughter, Smadar, 13 years old, has been killed in a kamikaze attack, in Jerusalem in 1997.***

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**Message of solidarity to Luisa Morgantini by Lily Traubmann**

Megiddo, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008

Dear Luisa,

Just today the day in which the Israeli army is entering in the Gaza Strip, causing tens of deaths, destruction and above all seriously undermining the hope of a life in peace for two people, I have read that you have been under the attacks by the Jews community of Bologna, on the occasion of the commemoration for the resistance against Nazism.

This news deeply shocked me, you precisely who have ever had a coherent attitude, supporting and stimulating the dialogue in favour of a solution able to consolidate a just peace between Palestinians and Israelis, you that have always been supportive, you are undoubtedly the most appropriate person to attend an event like that.

I have thought of Nayla who lives in Gaza, with whom thanks to your proposal, we have been rewarded together with the prize Women of the year in the town of Aosta, I thought to her feelings and to the people she loves.

I believe that it exists a deep relationship between the violent attitude by Jewish Community in Bologna and the lack of perspectives of change towards a better future for us who are living here, as well as it exists a deep link between your behaviour deeply loyal and the fact that we are still able to seek other ways to change this terrible situation.

I am deeply convinced that Jewish communities in the world have the important task to assume a clear and critical position against the occupation, they must understand that the blind support given to the Israeli Government and to the occupation policies are leading us in an abyss of never ending war. Dear Luisa, I feel ashamed for what has happened, one of these days, when history of the region where I live in, the history of whom have really contribute will be written, you will have in it undoubtedly an important role.

A strong hug,  
*Lily Traubmann*

***Lily Traubmann received the Prize Woman of the year 2007 by the Valle d'Aosta region. She is a member of the association Women in Black since 1988; she represented the Hartzl's kibbutz in Peace Now, Network of Women for peace, she participated into the organisation and direction of Bat Shalom and in other peace organizations.***

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### **Message of solidarity to Luisa Morgantini by Daphna Golan**

Dear Luisa,

I was sad to hear that the Jewish community did not honour you Luisa for your pursuit for peace and justice for Israel and Palestine. I am sad to hear that they do not want to listen. In these days, when a war with no end and no future is continuing to hurt Israelis and Palestinians, a voice like yours, for negotiation, for mutual recognition and understanding, for a brave and just peace- your voice is a voice which should be heard by all- including the Jewish communities in the world. The war on Gaza, the ongoing occupation of Palestinian Territories, the policy of control and restrictions of freedom of

movement of Palestinians, the ongoing violence- is terrible for Palestinians, and for Israelis. Thank you for not giving up hope, that one day, we Israelis and Palestinians, from all different groups- will talk to each other, and live in Peace.

*Daphna Golan*

***Daphna Golan, an Israeli professor, teaches in the Academy-Community Partnership for Social Change – Faculty of Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.***

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### **Message of solidarity to Luisa Morgantini by Gila Svirsky**

I have known Luisa Morgantini for over 10 years in the context of my work on behalf of peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Throughout this period, I have found Luisa to be faithful to the values of justice, truth, and the pursuit of peace. She has spoken frequently of the importance of the state of Israel, to exist side-by-side with the state of Palestine, in good cooperative relations.

As an Israel Jew and a staunch Zionist, I resent the false accusations that Luisa is anti-Semitic, anti-Israel, or a denier of the Holocaust. These accusations are not only absurd, deceitful and hurtful, they also undermine the efforts of those who hold political policies to a higher level of morality.

While I do not always agree with all of Luisa's remarks, I continue to value her voice of integrity and decency as she works for a peace with justice throughout the world, and in the Middle East in particular.

*Gila Svirsky*

***Gila Svirsky is an Israeli activist for peace and human rights. She is a member of the Women in Black association, she has been executive director of the Israeli organization Bat Shalom and she has been among the founders of the Coalition of Women for a Just Peace (coalition of Israeli and Palestinian organizations).***

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## **ISRAEL AND THE RIGHT TO CRITICIZE**

By  
Zvi Schuldiner\*

*Published on 1st March on the Italian newspaper Il Manifesto*

Lately the Sapir College, where I work and act as head of department, has been targeted by a shower of missiles that threaten our lives and have killed one of our students.

We are located just outside of Sderot and, like many around here, we suffer the consequences of Hamas' crazy policies in Gaza.

This policy, criminal and wrong, is part of a scenario of which my country – Israel – and its government has the main responsibility having adopted policies which are not less but more criminal, causing scores of deaths and immense destruction in Gaza.

Thanks to US support, the strategy of strangling Hamas goes on and both Palestinians and Israelis are paying very high prices.

A few weeks ago, a delegation from the EU Parliament led by Luisa Morgantini visited our region. Luisa called me to say that she was going to Gaza and that she was interested in visiting Sderot as well.

I invited her for an official visit to our College and she accepted. Why do I think it is so important to invite a EU delegation led by Luisa Morgantini? For the same reason why 64% of Israelis think that it is necessary to negotiate with Hamas.

Both Hamas and Israeli leadership – with the full support of the US – are leading us on a dead-end path, full of blood and pain.

Any voice able to open new horizons must be welcomed.

I am as Israeli as anyone else here, and I deplore my government's policy. As many other Israelis after the '67 war, I am against the occupation of Palestinian Territories and I believe that our leaders are leading us into a disaster. This doesn't make us anti-Semite or opposed to the existence of Israel.

I first met Luisa when she was in FIOM, during the first Intifada.

The association "ARCI" – with Tom Benetollo, Chiara Ingrao and Luisa Morgantini- helped me start the dialogue with Peace Now and in '89 they have been the basis for "Time for Peace".

"Time for Peace" opened the doors of dialogue with Palestinians for "Peace Now" and represented a very important step in the search for peace.

Attempts to discredit Peace Now, or those who have a more radical position like us, are a constant. We are considered traitors and by some, self-hating Jews.

The demagogic manipulation of the Holocaust, our history and anti-Semitism should not make us to forget that the criticizing any government – it being

Italian or Israeli – is a basic right, key to a leftist ideology and fundamental in the achievements made in the last two centuries by liberal states.

I met Luisa at countless pacifist demonstrations in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel, and her presence was always an additional evidence of her solidarity with the Israeli peace movement.

Luisa, Vice-President of the European Parliament, came to our College to listen to our voices for three hours, the voice of people that are under the attack of missiles.

The people of Sderot -and of a near by Kibbutz- have clearly explained that we don't want to be neither victims nor heroes.

Luisa made it possible for these voices to be heard. It is thanks to her that the euro-parliamentarians have heard our voices, clearly stating that the alternative is not more fire but more negotiations, and a stronger European effort in support of dialogue.

The attempts to silence Morgantini and other critics of Israel's policies are nothing more than a way to serve a wrong propaganda leading us towards a dead-end road. Luisa, like many Israelis, does not criticize "the State of Israel" but the wrong policies adopted by its governments. This policy is not only a disaster for Palestinians but also enormously damaging for Israelis. It would be very useful if Italian Jews, who are concerned for our future in Israel, would start opening their eyes and minds to imagine a different road and a different future.

*Zvi Schuldiner*

**\*Zvi Schuldiner is Head of Department of Public Administration and Policy - Sapir College - D.N. Hof Ashkelon.**

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*Translated into English by Francesca Marzo and Corinna Giorgi for Luisa Morgantini Office*















