

<b>TOPIC: COLLABORATION</b>	<b>TITLE: A story of courage: Giuseppina Gusmano, a Righteous Among the Nations.</b>
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## INTRODUCTION

<b>age</b>	Secondary School students (16 – 18 years old)
<b>duration</b>	five periods ( 50 minutes each )
<b>sources</b>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>a) <b><u>Didactic motivations</u></b></p> <p>Understanding the characteristics of Collaboration and distinguishing between historical/ political Collaboration (R.S.I. Italian Social Republic, which was born in 1943 with Mussolini) and its attendance, understanding Italian people's choices (after the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1943 ), they were often conflicting choices, in contrast with people's common feelings.</p> <p>COLLABORATION</p> <p>If we want to understand Collaboration as a political and institutional phenomenon we must start from the downfall of Fascism (25th of July 1943) and the creation of the Italian social Republic (September 1943).</p>  <p>b) <b><u>Ethical motivation</u></b></p> <p>Pointing out the ethical responsibility of the choice in a tragic time of historical, human, emotional and civil opposition. (Partisans / Republicans / Indifferent people).</p> <p>Photos, posters, books, videos, quotations, films</p>
<b>biography rationale</b>	<p><b>Giuseppina Gusmano (1912-1999)</b></p> <p>A Righteous among the Nations</p>
<b>aims</b>	<p><b>OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Defining the concept of “collaboration”</li> <li>2. Inviting the youngest to think about the historical events which influenced our predecessors' lives and making them understand the present time.</li> <li>3. Developing a critical thinking about the daily reality, starting from a historical</li> </ol>

	<p>knowledge and achieving ethical aims.</p> <p>4. Creating the premises for a better future built on historical bases and a strong learning</p> <p>The Students should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the events related to the final phase of WWII in Italy. Power point presentations: WW II from Fascism downfall to the Social Republic (Appendix 1)</li> <li>• Bring out facts from the authentic available documents (photos, newspapers, evidences). <i>Pictures RSI (Appendix 3)</i></li> <li>• Understand the reasons why so many young people chose to take position against the fascist regime, fighting totalitarianism ( Resistance) or line up with the regime , with the Italian Social Republic (R.S.I.), which declared itself Homeland defender but which actually was in the hands of the Germans. <i>Presentation RSI (Appendix 2)</i></li> <li>• Reflect on the concept of individual “responsibility”, facing the difficult choices the youngsters have to make nowadays. <i>Biography, Giuseppina: A Righteous among the Nations (Appendix 5)</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>other aspects</b></p>	<p>classroom arrangements</p>	<p>Ordinary classrooms or Labs for the videos, the posters and the photos. During the drama activities, the students move to the “Aula Magna”</p>
	<p>groups</p>	<p>Class group. The whole class works on texts, newspapers, magazines, documentaries (indoors)</p>
	<p>equipment</p>	<p>Materials: Photos, posters, books, videos, quotations, interviews. Whiteboard and LIM.</p>

## DEVELOPMENT

### historical background

#### **The Italian Social Republic (R.S.I)**

After the 25th of July, the King had had Mussolini arrested because the Fascist leader had received a vote of no confidence by the Great Council (Gran Consiglio). On the 12th of September he was released by some German paratroopers at Campo Imperatore, in the Gran Sasso mountains where he was kept. They brought him to Germany and Hitler had him accept to become the leader of a new Italian state together with the Nazi ally; the Italian Social Republic was born, it was also called „The Salò Republic“ from the name of the town by the Lake Garda, where its headquarters were placed ( on the 23rd of September 1943).

The Germans immediately occupied the Italian Eastern border (Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Pola and Fiume), creating a German protectorate which was put under the direct government of the Reich under the name of Adriatisches Kustenland (the Adriatic coast) but they left to the Social. Republic the independent administration of it.

#### **The Salò Republic: ideological, military and social features**

The Social Republic, whose supporters were called *repubblichini* ( Republicans), advocated a sort of republican Fascism, as it was on its birth, (the Movement of the“ Fasci di combattimento“, the original fascist party which was born in 1919), a new sort of Fascism which tried to gain approvals and proposed a new programme with the aim of fighting against the traitors of the 25th of July, in particular against the monarchy and the moderate fascists themselves.

The Salò Government was composed of Fascist party officials and Party representatives who had been devoted to the regime for twenty years, but also pro-Nazis who joined it at the end. Mussolini proposed the nationalization of the enterprises which should have been run by workers: nobody believed in him and nothing was realised.

The Social Republic took also radical measures towards the Jewish people who had already been persecuted by the regime since 1938. In October 1943 the members of the fascist party who had decided Mussolini's downfall were taken to trial in Verona. There were five death sentences: the Foreign Affairs Minister, Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son in law, was also sentenced.

The social Republic never enjoyed a real autonomy, everything had to be approved from Berlin. In 1943 the R.S.I established the compulsory conscription but the civilians escaped and the few who were recruited tried to desert.

The Nazis were interested in the repressive actions the social Republic did, the requisition of foodstuffs, the forced enrollment of workers in the occupied areas. Only Resistance opposed.



## The Risiera of San Sabba



The Risiera of San Sabba was a set of buildings for husking rice. It was well-known because it was the only extermination camp in Italy. It was built in 1913 in San Sabba, in the outskirts of Trieste. The buildings were seized by the Germans and used as a temporary camp for prisoners, for the Italian soldiers taken after the 8th of September 1943; the camp was called STALAG 339.

After its creation, the social Republic left to the Nazis some areas near the Eastern border, the towns of Trieste, Udine and Fiume. The Nazis established their administration there and called them «**Adriatisches Kustenland**».

At the end of October 1943 the Germans renovated the factory and it became a Police prison camp (*Polizeihaftlager*), it was intended for the sorting of the German and Polish deported people and for the warehousing of seized goods but afterwards it became a concentration and extermination camp, for political and Jewish prisoners.

The prisoners were taken from jails or they were caught in roundups in Trieste, in all Venetian area and in Slovenia.

On the ground-floor the prisoners worked as tailors and shoemakers in laboratories.

The SS officers and the troopers lived in the same building where also were found 17 very very small cells. In each of them up to 6 prisoners were packed.

**Partisans, politicians, Jews waited in the restricted cells, they waited for days, weeks, for the accomplishment of their tragic fate.**

In some cells the prisoners were undressed and tortured. The doors and the walls were covered with graffiti and writings which were lost but they had fortunately been copied in diaries by the historian Diego de Henriquez.

In another building, on 4 floors, Jews, civilians and prisoner soldiers, women and children were closed in dormitories. They were designed to deportation, to the camps in Dachau, Auschwitz and Mauthausen.

In the courtyard, near the cells, there was a building for the exterminations and inside it the crematory. The plant was in the basement and they reached it by a metal ladder and an underground canal, which linked the crematory to the chimney.

The Nazis used first the existent drying klin, then Erwin Lambert, a true expert in the building of crematories, transformed it in a real crematory to burn more bodies. At the end of April 1945 the Nazis, running away, had it blown up to cancel the evidence of their crimes.

According to some testimonies the number of the victims burnt at the "Risiera" were between 3,000-5,000 people, from Trieste, Croatia, Slovenia, Istria, Friuli and Jews. More than 25,000 were transferred to the concentration and extermination camps in Germany and Poland. They were partisans, political prisoners and Jews.

The "Risiera" was occupied by the Allies after the war and it became a camp for refugees but it was soon abandoned. In 1965 it was proclaimed National Monument and in 1975 it became a City Museum. The Death cell and the 17 prison cells were kept unchanged. There is also a Library and a permanent exhibition of photos.



biography

**Giuseppina Gusmano**

**(1912-1999)**

**A Righteous among the Nations**



**Giuseppina Gusmano**

This is the story of a woman who saved 15 Jewish children in 1942-43.

The event occurred between Turin and Casale Monferrato.

Giuseppina Gusmano, helped by her friend Gioconda Carmi, did all that she could for those children. They lived in the orphanage «Enrichetta Sacerdote» in Turin during the tragic days of war and persecution. The two women tried to make the children regain their dreams of childhood. It was an exceptional event because some of those children are still living all over the world.

Turin was being bombed and the orphanage was evacuated. Giuseppina hosted 15 of the children in her house, they were Jewish and she had to hide them.



She was a teacher and she transformed her house in a school, a dormitory and a canteen. To her neighbours who disapproved her action she said: «... and if they were your children?»

She could save everyone obtaining also her neighbours' help. The last of the children she saved was her daughter's friend Emanuele Pacifici. Only when her daughter Dirce met Emanuele a long time later, the story Giuseppina had always kept for herself, by modesty, was remembered.

On 15th March 2001, two years after her death, she was honoured with the title of «Righteous among the Nations» in our Town Hall





The street in Casale Monferrato which is named after the woman who saved fifteen Jewish children.

<b>activities</b>	<b>1</b>	Introductory lesson about the context (WWII final phase in Italy)
	<b>2</b>	Individual or common reading proposals and guided brainstorming about the meaning of making choices
	<b>3</b>	Presentation of important historical circumstances: Italian Social Republic (The Salò Republic). Appendix 2 - Appendix 3 (pictures)
	<b>4</b>	Analysis of an aspect of R.S.I's Collaboration: "La Risiera di San Sabba" (a factory for the manufacture and husking of rice near Trieste, in the North- East of Italy Appendix 4 (slides+short documentary on the city Museum "Civico museo della Risiera")
	<b>5</b>	Viewing of the PowerPoint Historical background Appendix 1 and preparing a series of questions for discussion: Can we talk of "aggression" of the totalitarian regimes in the first half of the XXth century? The Nazi occupation in most of Europe, is it also a great violation of moral principles? After the 8th of September 1943 Italian people have to make a choice. Which choice? <b>Focusing</b> on the choices made by young people and their responsibility in participating in the Social Republic after the end of Fascism.
	<b>6</b>	<b>Reflection:</b> analysis Italian Social Republic and pictures (Appendix 3) <i>Group work: the students answer a short questionnaire</i> What does it mean "collaborating government"? Why are these kinds of governments called "Puppet governments"? What are the characteristics of the Italian Social Republic from a social point of

	view? Where is it geographically situated?
7	<b>Analysis:</b> The “Risiera di San Sabba” in Trieste, (The factory for the manufacturing of rice) an aspect of collaborating government during the Italian Social Republic, Appendix 4
8	Viewing of slides and “Risiera” film: Appendix 4 <b>Questions</b> The facts concerning R.S.I. involved young people who had shared interests, pastimes, life in general, after the 8th of September 1943 they found themselves on two opposite sides. Reflect on this aspect. The existence of the “Risiera” in Italy makes you reflect on the consequences of political and military Collaboration. What feelings do the pictures suggest you? What are the motivations which push a citizen to collaborate with the occupying armies? The tip off, can it be considered a form of Collaboration?
9	Questions for conclusive discussion: Can Collaboration be considered also in a positive aspect, concerning the choices of people who helped other people who were persecuted by the Regime? A story of courage: Giuseppina Gusmano, a Righteous among the Nations: the students could write a text on their own they can represent
10	<b>TEXT A story of courage (Dramatisation)</b> <b>VOICE 1</b> Gioconda Carmi, was born in Casale Monferrato, she spent all her life looking after little children at the orphanage “Enrichetta Sacerdote” in Turin, where she was the housemistress. <b>VOICE 2</b> Since 1942 the air raids over Turin had become more and more frequent, a bomb damaged the orphanage and they had to move to a house on the hills around Turin. The town became soon more and more dangerous and Gioconda decided to move again with the children to Casale Monferrato, where they found a shelter in the Synagogue. <b>VOCE 1</b> THE DARKNESS OF THE NIGHT AND THE DARKNESS OF THE SOUL: IT WON'T BE A PEACEFUL AND RESTFUL NIGHT BUT A DANGEROUS NIGHT OF VIOLENCE. <b>GIOCONDA:</b> “We have to hurry, we have to get up quickly, to hide and try to escape. Hurry up, line up! It’s not a school trip. It’s a journey, the journey which leads to safety.” <b>*Turin, August 1943</b> <b>VOICE 2</b> “ TURIN SURROUNDINGS ARE FULL OF DANGERS FOR THE LITTLE FUGITIVES FROM THE ORPHANAGE : THE DECISION IS MADE. <b>GIOCONDA:</b> “Some of you will reach the Jewish Community in Casale Monferrato, you’ll be safer there!” <b>VOICE 1</b> BUT EVEN CASALE IS DAILY AFFECTED WITH THE DREAD OF PERSECUTION AND DEPORTATION. <b>GIOCONDA</b> “What will happen to these children?”

**\*Casale Monferrato, the 29th of September 1943, Jewish New Year's Eve.**

**VOICE 2** ONE DAY GIUSEPPINA RUSHED IN THE SYNAGOGUE, SHE WAS PANTING AND SHE WAS SHAKEN. GIUSEPPINA WAS A HUMBLE WOMAN WITH A HEART OF GOLD, A WOMAN WHO WORKED AT THE SYNAGOGUE WHERE THE LITTLE ORPHANS WERE SHELTERED AND WHERE HER DAUGHTER DIRCE FOUND FOOD AND PLAYED TOO.

**GIUSEPPINA** "Quickly, hide the children, the Germans are arriving!"

**VOICE 1** UNCERTAINTY AND DISCOURAGEMENT ARE SPREADING: THE CHILDREN ARE FRIGHTENED AND GIOCONDA DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...

**GIUSEPPINA** "Come to my house, I'll hide you till everything will be finished!"

**VOICE 2** THE LITTLE FUGITIVES HAVE TO MOVE AGAIN...

**GIOCONDA** "Children, take all your things and be quiet: tonight we are going to Mrs. Giuseppina's house."

**VOICE 1** FACING DANGER, THE CHILDREN MOVE TO THE SMALL HOUSE WHERE GIUSEPPINA LIVES TOGETHER WITH HER DAUGHTER AND HER HUSBAND...

**GIOCONDA** "Be quiet! Sleep!", "Study!" "It's time for dinner!" "We are going to play in the courtyard!"

**VOICE 2** TIME PASSES FOR THE SMALL COMMUNITY, SHELTERED BY GIUSEPPINA'S HEART OF GOLD

**GIUSEPPINA** "Felice, our neighbours have been indulgent, they won't speak of our guests, but what shall we do for the food?"

**VOICE 1** THEY WERE HELPED BY THEIR NEIGHBOURS, THE CHILDREN WERE HAPPY WITH THAT LITTLE THEY HAD, A SNACK.... ONCE THEY WERE OFFERED SOME CHOCOLATE...

**NINA** "Chocolate is so good!, it's only a bar, but we are going to share it; I'm going to put it on a slice of bread, I'm going to eat it, without touching the bar, I'm going to smell it and that's all!"

**VOICE 2** NINA KEPT THE BAR OF CHOCOLATE FOR A WEEK...IT WAS LUXURY FOR THE TIMES OF WAR!

DISCIPLINE, LOVE, HUMANITY, A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING: THIS IS GIOCONDA AND GIUSEPPINA'S STRANGE FAMILY.

**EMANUELE** "What nice binoculars that German soldier had you could see very well! I met him in piazza Castello: there were tanks, jeeps, German soldiers" :

**VOICE 1** AND GIOCONDA PUNISHED HIM, HE HAD RISKED TOO MUCH GETTING SO NEAR THE GERMANS!

**ALFONSO** "Giuseppina, send me some of the children: I can host them and I have my children's beds where they can sleep!"

**VOICE 2** SOME NEIGHBOURS, LIKE ALFONSO, DID THEIR BEST FOR THE CHILDREN. A SIMPLE SENTENCE GIUSEPPINA HAD SAID WAS SUFFICIENT AND THEY TOOK LEAVE OF THEIR INITIAL FEARS AND DOUBTS.

**GIUSEPPINA** "Listen to your heart, and if they were your children...how can we leave them alone!"

**VOICE 1** DAYS PASS QUICKLY, THE TIME FOR DEPARTURE ARRIVES, A MELANCHOLY LEAVE AT THE TRAIN STATION.

**GIOCONDA** "Who knows what will happen? Our future is mysterious and full of doubts...these children, their smiles, their hopes, their love for life, what will

	<p>happen?”</p> <p><b>GIUSEPPINA</b> “It’s time to go...let’s light hope: let’s walk together, you must fight if you believe in the future! Remember that we are connected by love, it’s the only way to find yourself!”</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION</b></p> <p>Some children from the orphanage, like Emanuele, will be able to escape deportation, thanks to Gioconda’s determination and Giuseppina’s courage and also thanks to that sentence: “ ...and if they were your children!”.</p> <p><b>Since 2001 Giuseppina Gusmano’s name, next to Schindler’s and many others’, has been written on a plaque as RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS, at the foot of an olive tree, on the boulevard which leads to Jerusalem.</b></p> <p><b>(Appendix 5)</b></p>
<p><b>references</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.retecivica.trieste.it/triestecultura/musei/civicimusei">www.retecivica.trieste.it/triestecultura/musei/civicimusei</a></p> <p>G.P. Pansa, <i>Eia, eia alalà: La nascita del fascismo</i>.BUR</p> <p>B. Maida. <i>La Shoah in Piemonte</i></p> <p>C. Pavone, <i>Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza</i>. Bollati Boringhieri</p> <p>M. Fioravanzo, <i>Mussolini e Hitler. La Repubblica sociale sotto il Terzo Reich</i> Donzelli Roma, 2009</p> <p>E. Pacifici, <i>Non ti voltare</i>.Ed. Giuntina, Firenze</p>

## CONCLUSION

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