

$$205 + 13 = 218$$

DATE DUE

DEC 27 1960

BVI

MAY 26 '66

MISSOURI

JAN 22 '62

DEC 27 '61

MISSOURI

JAN 22 '68

MAY 19 '71

FEB 3 1961

LOUIS GEORGE

JAN 22 '68

BEN MAY 9 1978

MISSOURI

MAR 22 1961

Van Horn

NOV 23 1963

FEB 18

MAR 9 '61

APR 12 '61

MAY 26 1961

SWINNEY

DEC 15 1961

LINCOLN

JAN 29 1962

JAN 16 '62

APR 15 '61

45

If this is a man

by Primo Levi

Translated from the Italian by Stuart Woolf

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The Journey

I was captured by the Fascist Militia on December 13, 1943. I was twenty four, with little wisdom, no experience, and a decided tendency — encouraged by the life of segregation forced on me for the previous four years by the racial laws — to live in an unrealistic world of my own, a world inhabited by civilized Cartesian phantoms, by sincere male and bloodless female friendships. I cultivated a moderate and abstract sense of rebellion.

It had been by no means easy to flee into the mountains and to help set up what, both in my opinion and in that of friends little more experienced than myself, should have become a partisan band affiliated with the Resistance movement *Justice and Liberty*. Contacts, arms, money and the experience needed to acquire them were all missing. We lacked capable men, and instead we were swamped by a deluge of outcasts, in good or bad faith, who came from the plain in search of a non-existent military or political organization, of arms, or merely of protection, a hiding place, a fire, a pair of shoes.

At that time I had not yet been taught the doctrine

I was later to learn so hurriedly in the Lager: that man is bound to pursue his own ends by all possible means, while he who errs but once pays dearly. So that I can only consider the following sequence of events justified. Three Fascist Militia companies, which had set out in the night to surprise a much more powerful and dangerous band than ours, broke into our refuge one spectral snowy dawn and took me down to the valley as a suspect person.

During the interrogations that followed, I preferred to admit my status of "Italian citizen of Jewish race." I felt that otherwise I would be unable to justify my presence in places too secluded even for an evacuee; while I believed (wrongly as was subsequently seen) that the admission of my political activity would have meant torture and certain death. As a Jew, I was sent to Fossoli, near Modena, where a vast detention camp, originally meant for English and American prisoners-of-war, collected all the numerous categories of people not approved of by the new-born Fascist Republic.

At the moment of my arrival, that is, at the end of January, 1944, there were about one hundred and fifty Italian Jews in the camp, but within a few weeks their number rose to over six hundred. For the most part they consisted of entire families captured by the Fascists or Nazis through their imprudence or following secret accusations. A few had given themselves up spontaneously, reduced to desperation by the vagabond life, or because they lacked the means to survive, or to avoid separation from a captured relation, or even — absurdly — "to be in conformity with the law." There were also about a hundred Jugoslavian military internees and a few other foreigners who were politically suspect.

The arrival of a squad of German SS men should have made even the optimists doubtful; but we still