

# The Enforcement of the Racial Laws in the University “Benito Mussolini” of Bari

Adriano Mansi\*

**Abstract.** The article analyses the enforcement of the fascist racial laws in the University of Bari between 1938 and 1943. After a reflection on Jewish presence in the city and in the university of Bari during the first half of the 20th century, it relates the stories of four scholars: three of them were expelled in autumn 1938, the fourth one were wrongly involved in that process. In this way, the article shows the attitude and the behaviors of academic authorities and of the other scholars during these years; the reactions of the involved professors and the silence on this event after the end of the Second World War.

**Keywords:** University of Bari; Racial laws; Fascism.

## Introduction: Jewish presence in Puglia and the University of Bari

The presence of Jews in Southern Italy in the first half of the 20th century was less prominent than in many other cities such as Rome and the Northern part of the country. Puglia, where the city of Bari is located, was no exception. Jewish communities had been an exception and were primarily settled in just a few areas and for short periods of time. It is worth mentioning that at the end of the Second World War, a remarkable group of foreign Jews travelled through the South-East of Italy mainly to sail especially for Palestine [Terzulli, 2002: 179-182]. In this regard, a remarkable case was the community of Sannicandro Garganico (FG) where a group of local inhabitants became Jews during the 30s and emigrated to Palestine at the end of the 40s [Terzulli, 2002: 171-172]. The census launched by fascist regime during the Summer 1938 to identify the Jews on Italian soil assessed the presence of a small number of Jews in Puglia, that is around 150 people (Italian and foreign) in the whole region, half of them in Bari. In comparison to the 1931 census, this document shows that the number of Jews had slowly increased. [Pansini, 2009: 2-3; Terzulli, 2002: 174].

In this particular context was enclosed the University of Bari, established in 1925 and promptly dedicated to Benito Mussolini. The link between the university and the regime was strong and close since the foundation of the higher education institution, because fascism and Gentile's reform managed to support Bari academic ambition, which had been remained frustrated since the national unification in 1861. The first Chancellor, Nicola Pende, was also well integrated in the hierarchy of the regime [Dell'Era, 2013]. It is no wonder that during the opening ceremony of the academic year 1937-38, the Chancellor Biagio Petrocelli (1937-40) talked about «a lively and deep interpenetration» between the State and the education system, which he considered an «achievement» of the fascist regime.<sup>1</sup> According to the Chancellor, the university was not at the service of students, scholars, or families, rather of the (fascist) State.<sup>2</sup> Since the beginning of the 30s in Bari (as in other Italian

---

\* Dottore di ricerca in Storia e scienze filosofico-sociali all'Università di Roma Tor Vergata (2019), Assegnista di ricerca presso il *Centro di Ateneo per la Storia della Resistenza e dell'Età Contemporanea* (CASREC) all'Università di Padova (2020-2021). Address: Via Magenta 8, 35138 Padova, Italy, e-mail <adriano.mansi@unipd.it>.

<sup>1</sup> Archivio generale dell'Università di Bari (General Archive of the University of Bari, AgUniBa), *Annuario accademico della R. Università degli Studi “Benito Mussolini” di Bari*, AY 1937-38, Opening Ceremony (November 22nd 1937 – XVI), Report of the Chancellor Biagio Petrocelli on the academic year 1936-37, p. 5. In this way he referred to the GUF and the “Milizia” as «essential parts of the academic fascist system, whose events and development need to be our concern and our constant pride», *ivi*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> See *ivi*, p. 16.

universities) there was the chair of History and Doctrine of Fascism, entrusted to the future Chancellor Raffaele Resta, which was devoted to the students in Law, Political science and Economy.<sup>3</sup>

From a quantitative point of view, at the end of the 30s the University of Bari was still a small institution, with less than 3.000 students, that would increase dramatically after the war.<sup>4</sup> As pertains foreign students, their number was about 40, predominantly Albanian. Given its geographical position, it is no wonder that the University of Bari did not have a tradition of Jewish scholars among its ranked. In 1931 Enrico Emilio Franco was offered the lectureship in Pathological Anatomy. Franco was a Jew from Trieste who, together with his Jewish student, Luigi Bugliolo, moved to Pisa in 1937. [Leuzzi, 2009: 117]. The scarce number of Jews in Puglia is also proved by the fact that none of the three scholars, who were expelled by the University, was originally from that region, rather had moved to Bari in the years prior to the promulgation of the racial laws. Such a factor had also an impact on scholarly research, which was, on one side, made easier by the small number of cases to explore this process. On the other side, however, scholars have struggled to find information given the scarce number of Jews scholars in Bari.

Without delving into the well established historical literature on national and local cases, it is worth pointing out that scholarly research on the enactment of racial laws in Puglia is particularly scarce and mostly relies on the work by Vito Antonio Leuzzi. He, with Mariolina Pansini and Giulio Esposito, edited a collection of essays *Leggi razziali in Puglia: con testimonianze e documenti* (Bari, Progedit), which expands a research project that was conducted 10 years before [Leuzzi, Pansini & Esposito, 1999]. Finally, such a topic has been at the heart of Francesco Terzulli's work, which, however, was intended to serve as material for high school teachers [Terzulli, 2002]. For this reason I have focused primarily on archival research, both in the General Archive of the University of Bari and in National Archive in Rome. In the former, I have perused a wide array of documents such as the "Annuari accademici" (Academic yearbooks), the "Fascicoli personali dei docenti" (Scholars personal files), the "Carteggio dei rettori" (Chancellor correspondence), the "Verbali del Senato accademico" (Minutes of Academic Senate), the "Verbali del Consiglio di amministrazione" (Minutes of Board of Directors) and the "Verbali dei Consigli di facoltà" (Minutes of Faculty Boards). In particular, in my work I highlighted the authorities' zeal in carrying out ministerial orders and, simultaneously, I have illustrated the scarce Jewish presence at the University of Bari. In the State Central Archive, I have collected files regarding Bari scholars, specifically the folders "Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza" (General Directorate for Demography and Race) in the Ministry of Interior; "Direzione Generale Istruzione Superiore" (General Directorate for Higher Education) in the Ministry of Public Education; "Carteggio ordinario" (Ordinary Correspondence) e "Carteggio riservato" (Private Correspondence) in the "Segreteria particolare del duce" (Secretariat of the Duce). All these sources have been useful to explore the stories of expelled scholars from Bari institution, but they have not provided information on the number of Jewish students. From the analysis of such documents only a few information emerged, specifically concerning four foreign students expelled in 1938 (three from Medicine School and one from faculty of Pharmacy),<sup>5</sup> which is the only quantitative data useful for my study.

### Teaching and spreading racism

Before analysing the enforcement of the racial laws at the University of Bari, it is also worth reflecting on the influence of racism in such an institution before 1938. In the opening ceremony of the academic year 1933-34, professor Giuseppe Sangiorgi read a *lectio magistralis* entitled: "Malattie

---

<sup>3</sup> See *ivi*, *ad annum*; Archivio centrale dello Stato (State Central Archive [ACS]), *Ministero della Pubblica istruzione*, Divisione II, *Leggi, regolamenti, statuti, esami, corsi, statistiche, tasse, studenti, ecc. (1925-1945)*, b. 13, f. Insegnamento della storia e dottrina del fascismo.

<sup>4</sup> 2302 (1936-37); 2389 (1938-39); 2843 (1939-40); 13033 in 1949-50. This data was found in a statistic chapter of AgUniBa, *Annuario accademico della R. Università degli Studi "Benito Mussolini" di Bari, ad annum*.

<sup>5</sup> Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica istruzione*, Divisione II, *Leggi, regolamenti, statuti, esami, corsi, statistiche, tasse, studenti, ecc. (1925-1945)*, b. 192, f. Studenti ebrei, undated, List of foreign Jewish students enrolled in Italian universities in the academic year 1937-38; *ivi*, January 22nd 1938, Chancellor's communication to the Ministry of National Education concerning foreign Jewish students.

sociali e difesa della razza” (Social Diseases and Race Protection). In this occasion Sangiorgi argued that «in 1923 the “mussolinian” idea of race protection was introduced [...] promoting the struggle against the germs of physical and mental corruption». The topic of the *lectio* was not racism itself, Sangiorgi discussed about “social diseases” as so-called «intersexual» diseases, cancer, malaria, tuberculosis and diabetes. However, it is worth noting that his reference to a «race protection» mirrors the fascist regime statement.<sup>6</sup> The concept of “race protection” already existed before 1938, it was used to support actions for the “Italian race’s improvement”. Above all, fascism was recognised as one of the main actors of this process.

Lectureships devoted to questions of race were introduced exactly in the academic year 1938-39 in all Italian universities as part of a ministerial scheme. The Chancellor Biagio Petrocelli, during the opening ceremony in November 1938 stated «that it [the University of Bari] had immediately arranged for [...] adding two important lectureships on race to the course programme: the Biology of Human Races and General Demography and Comparative Demography of Races», assuring that these subjects would be taught in the most rigorous and scientific way.<sup>7</sup> The teaching of Demography of Races (in the Faculties of Law, Political science and Economy) was entrusted to professor Beniamino Mazzilli, while for the course of the Biology of Human Races the University of Bari chose an expert on this subject: professor Augusto Stefanelli, who in 1942 published a book entitled *Biologia delle razze umane, con cenni sulla razza italiana* [Stefanelli, 1942] (The Biology of Human Races, with mentions on Italian race).<sup>8</sup> Such lectureships survived the fall of the Fascist regime, which had established them, even if in the new faculty of *Magistero* (teacher training).<sup>9</sup>

In the same opening ceremony in which Petrocelli announced the start of new lectureships on race, the Chancellor mentioned scholars’ initiatives outside the university to support some traditional fascist themes such as colonialism, autarchy and race protection. Petrocelli stated that he had taken part in these events with great pleasure «because [he] felt [...] the need to put into practice [...], that principle of forceful collaboration among all branches of the Regime [...]; a principle which confirmed [...] that the University [...] [opened] today all its doors to the spirit of this time».<sup>10</sup> It is worth noticing that the academic authorities considered absolutely normal to support and give their contribution to the regime propaganda, even with regard to its race policy. Academic authorities were not alarmed for the idea of race protection, which they considered quite normal in this moment; so they simply acknowledged and followed the new ministerial orders. Hence, the Guf initiative in Bari, aimed to create in the academic year 1938-39 a “Race and Demography Department”, did not come as a surprise.<sup>11</sup>

### **Enforcement of the racial laws at the University of Bari: developments and actors**

Measures against the Jews were enacted in Bari, as in many other universities, before the official passing of the racial laws, in August 1938, specifically through a census of Jewish scholars, students and employees. The Ministry of National education, Giuseppe Bottai, requested these actions even before the racial laws were approved. On August 26th the Chancellor wrote a note to Bari *podestà* (mayor) communicating the presence of three Jewish scholars, one professor and two *incaricati*.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> AgUniBa, *Annuario accademico della R. Università degli Studi “Benito Mussolini” di Bari*, AY 1933-34, Prof. Giuseppe Sangiorgi, *Malattie sociali e difesa della razza*, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> Ivi, AY 1938-1939, p. 16. In the following years appeared in the *Annuario* some publications and dissertations on the topic of race: Toschi Umberto, *Razza-Ambiente-Economia*, “Geopolitica”, an. I, n. 6, Milano, 1939, ivi, AY 1938-39, p. 113; Sibilano Adalberto, *Razze umane estinte e viventi: Gruppo europeoide con particolare riguardo alla razza italiana*, ivi, AY 1939-40-41, p. 100.

<sup>8</sup> AgUniBa, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 129 (1942-43), f. 2411 – Insegnamenti razziali, February 17th 1943, Letter from Chancellor Toschi to the Ministry of National Education. See also ivi, *Verbali del Consiglio di facoltà di Giurisprudenza*, Vol. I, October 15th 1938, p. 281; ivi, *Verbali del Consiglio di facoltà di Medicina*, Vol. III, October 15th 1938, p. 67. The Academic Senate ratified these decisions some days later, see ivi, *Verbali del Senato accademico*, October 17th 1938.

<sup>9</sup> See the University’s Statute approved in 1955, <[www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1955/10/31/055U0958/sg](http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1955/10/31/055U0958/sg)>.

<sup>10</sup> AgUniBa, *Annuario accademico della R. Università degli Studi “Benito Mussolini” di Bari*, AY 1938-1939, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> Ivi, p. 28. The *Gruppi universitari fascisti* (Fascist University Groups, Guf) were the fascist party’s organizations in the Universities, see for example La Rovere, 2003 and Duranti, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> AgUniBa, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 104 (1938-1939), f. 1990 – Censimento del Personale di razza ebraica (pos. 47), August 26th 1938, Petrocelli’s note to the *podestà* of Bari.

One month later, Petrocelli sent an official letter to the Ministry reporting the census' results. The Jews at the University of Bari were four: Bruno Foà, full professor; Ladislao Brull, *assistente*; Giorgio Tesoro, *incaricato*; Francesco Duranti, *libero docente*, who had made a mistake in filling out his form.<sup>13</sup> Both Tesoro and, all the more, Foà were late at answering the census request and the Chancellor had to push for it, although as pertains Foà there were no doubts: he was notoriously a Jew.<sup>14</sup> Foà and Ladislao Brull – full professor and *assistente* – were expelled by means of a ministerial provision, while the University of Bari revoked Tesoro's temporary post for the academic year 1938-39 and he lost his job at the University.<sup>15</sup>

In order to explore in detail the enforcement of the racial law, I will look at the cases of these four scholars, three of them expelled from the University and a fourth one, accidentally involved in such a process. Bruno Foà was born in Naples on December 8th 1905 and he graduated in Law in the same city in the academic year 1925-26, before becoming a *libero docente* in Political Economy in 1929. In 1933 – when he was 28 – Foà was granted the teaching post in *Economia politica corporativa* at the University of Messina, after resolving a long controversy with the University of Catania.<sup>16</sup> He remained in Sicily for three years and later he requested to the Minister to move to Bari, where he arrived in October 1936. In this city, Foà was given a full professorship in March 1937, teaching *Economia politica corporativa* in the Faculty of Economy and Colonial History and Politics (*Storia e politica coloniale*) in the Faculty of Political science. Bruno Foà was close to the Zionist movement, but he had also been a fascist since the beginning of 20s. In the 1938 census report, he has declared to be Jew from his father bloodline, and he alleged that he was part of the Jewish community in Naples as well as that he professed Judaism.<sup>17</sup> Foà had married Lisa Haimann, who was also a Jew. After the expulsion from the university they emigrated to London where they remained until 1940 working for the Bbc, and later to the United States, where Foà lived until his death. Formally, Bruno Foà was given back his position at the University of Bari from 1944 to April 1st 1946, but he never came back to Italy. When he has become citizen of the United States he has resigned before losing his job that request Italian citizenship.<sup>18</sup>

Ladislao Brull was born in Gyongyos (Hungary) on August 8th 1906 and he arrived in Italy in 1924, soon becoming an Italian citizen. Brull graduated in Chemistry in Bologna in November 26th 1928 with first class honours and in 1934 he became an *assistente* in Camerino teaching Physics-Chemistry. Brull joined the Guf in October 28th 1926 and the Fascist national party in May 16th 1934; his oath of office statement was scheduled for February 14th 1935. Ladislao arrived in Bari in the academic year 1934-35 where he taught Physics-Chemistry in the Faculty of Pharmacy and General and Inorganic Chemistry in the Faculty of Science.<sup>19</sup> After his expulsion, Brull ran away from Italy to go to Argentina at the beginning of 1939, travelling through Belgium and Netherlands, supported by his antifascist friends in Bari. He died in Latin America in 1942.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ivi, September 29th 1938, Petrocelli's communication to the Ministry of National Education on Jewish scholars census results; ivi, October 1st 1938, Personal forms sending from Bari to the Ministry and recap of census' results.

<sup>14</sup> Ivi, September 19th 1938, Reminder of Chancellor to the scholars who did not return yet their form; ivi, September 24th 1938, Letter from Petrocelli to Bruno Foà to speed up his form return.

<sup>15</sup> See ivi, October 14th 1938, Communication from the Ministry of National Education to the Chancellor of Bari on Jewish scholars.

<sup>16</sup> See the long correspondence between Catania, Messina and the Ministry in autumn 1933 on Foà's chair. First he was chosen in Catania, but then this choose was revoked and he went to Messina. Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Universitaria (1961-89), *Divisione I*, Fascicoli personali professori ordinari, *III versamento*, b. 204, f. Foà Bruno.

<sup>17</sup> AgUniBa, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 104 (1938-1939), f. 1990 – Censimento del Personale di razza ebraica (pos. 47), September 19th 1938, Bruno Foà's personal form.

<sup>18</sup> For biographic and career, see AgUniBa, *Fascicoli personali docenti*, f. 638 – Foà Bruno; Acs, *Ministero dell'Interno*, Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza, *Fascicoli personali*, b. 238, f. BEN/16385 – Foà Bruno; ivi, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Superiore (1908-1961), *Divisione I*, Liberi docenti, *II serie (1930-1950)*, b. 211, f. Foà Bruno; ivi, Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Universitaria (1961-89), *Divisione I*, Fascicoli personali professori ordinari, *III versamento*, b. 204, f. Foà Bruno.

<sup>19</sup> For biographic and career, see AgUniBa, *Fascicoli personali docenti*, f. 191 – Prof. Brull Ladislao; Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Superiore (1908-1961), *Divisione I*, Liberi docenti, *II serie (1930-1950)*, b. 77, f. Brull Ladislao.

Giorgio Tesoro was born on February 6th 1904 in Rome where he graduated in Law and he became a lawyer and *libero docente* in Fiscal Law. He joined the Fascist National Party (PNF) in January 1927 and he married Gilda De Mauro, who was also a Jew. They were part of the Jewish community in Rome and they professed Judaism. Tesoro was a professor at the University of Rome, but he also taught Administrative Law in the faculty of Law and Financial Law in the faculty of Economy at the University of Bari.<sup>20</sup> When the racial laws were introduced, he lost his temporary teaching post in Puglia and he was also expelled from the University of Rome.<sup>21</sup> In June 1939 his teacher certification (*libera docenza*) was revoked and Giorgio Tesoro emigrated to the United States where he later became an American citizen.<sup>22</sup>

The story of Francesco Duranti was of a different kind, although extremely significant. He was born in Monopoli (Bari) on January 22nd 1870 and he graduated in Medicine in Bologna. During the First World War, Duranti was the head of the ophthalmological department of the Red Cross military hospital in Bari. He became a *libero docente* at the University of Sassari in 1920 and later he came back to Bari to teach Clinical Ophthalmology. In 1926 he was granted the important honorary title of “Grande Ufficiale nell’Ordine della Corona d’Italia”. What is more, he was among the founding members of fascist trade union of university professors in Bari but there was no further information about his participation in the PNF in the collected archival material, even if he had to be registered to participate to party’s life. However, in March 1929 Duranti asked Mussolini an autographed picture, but his request was not satisfied.<sup>23</sup> His story is relevant because even if he was not known as a Jew, on September 22nd 1938 Duranti sent to the Chancellor of the University of Bari, where he was teaching at the time, a personal form in which he declared himself to be of “Jewish race”.<sup>24</sup> For this reason, Petrocelli had to add Duranti’s name to the list of the Jewish scholars he sent to the Ministry at the end of September 1938. Nevertheless, on October 5th, Francesco Duranti wrote to the Chancellor a heartfelt letter. He said that during the form compilation «my brain [...] must have fallen prey, undoubtedly, to a moment of total lapse; because it seems that I answered [...] to all the questions in open contradiction with my feelings and with my life experiences, public and private ones!».<sup>25</sup> Attached to that same letter he provided a second form filled with completely different answers.<sup>26</sup> Petrocelli was not convinced about Duranti statement and he asked police officers in Bari to check scholar’s position. On October 22 the police confirmed that Duranti was not known as a Jew. Hence, Duranti kept on teaching in Bari for almost another two years.<sup>27</sup> In September 1941 Francesco Duranti died but the cause of his death was not related to the developments of the conflict.<sup>28</sup>

These were the scholars involved and expelled from Bari in consequence of the University enactment of the racial laws. All their colleagues did not openly challenged such decisions, rather they accepted the regime turning point without any public protests. Their only aim was – at least as shown by the analysis of the documents – to ensure a continuity of didactic work regardless the vacant teaching posts.<sup>29</sup> In the opening ceremony of the academic year 1938-39, Petrocelli announced that

---

<sup>20</sup> See AgUniBa, *Fascicoli personali docenti*, f. 1041 – Tesoro Giorgio.

<sup>21</sup> Ivi, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 104 (1938-1939), f. 1990 – Censimento del Personale di razza ebraica (pos. 47), September 10th 1938, Giorgio Tesoro’s personal form.

<sup>22</sup> For biographic and career, see AgUniBa, *Fascicoli personali docenti*, f. 1041 – Tesoro Giorgio; Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale dell’Istruzione Superiore (1908-1961), *Divisione I, Liberi docenti, II serie (1930-1950)*, b. 484, f. Tesoro Giorgio.

<sup>23</sup> See Acs, *Segreteria Particolare del Duce*, *Carteggio Ordinario*, b. 1739, f. 523681 – Duranti Gr. Uff. Prof. Francesco, March 4th 1929, Letter from Duranti to Mussolini to ask an autographed picture; ivi, April 13th 1929, Negative answer to the previous request.

<sup>24</sup> AgUniBa, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 104 (1938-1939), f. 1990 – Censimento del Personale di razza ebraica (pos. 47), September 22nd 1938, Francesco Duranti’s personal form.

<sup>25</sup> Ivi, October 5th 1938, Letter from Francesco Duranti to Chancellor Petrocelli.

<sup>26</sup> Ivi, October 4th 1938, Francesco Duranti’s second personal form.

<sup>27</sup> Ivi, October 22nd 1938, Police of Bari answer to Petrocelli’s information request on Francesco Duranti.

<sup>28</sup> For biographic and career, see AgUniBa, *Fascicoli personali docenti*, f. 585 – Duranti Francesco; Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale dell’Istruzione Superiore (1908-1961), *Divisione I, Liberi docenti, I° versamento*, I serie, b. 125, f. Duranti Francesco.

<sup>29</sup> Since September 9th 1938, the Chancellor wrote to Deans of Faculties to work on new temporary posts for the starting academic year, after the expulsions. See AgUniBa, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 104 (1938-1939), f. 1990 – Censimento

the Faculty of Economy opened positions to replace Bruno Foà and Giorgio Tesoro. *Economia politica corporativa* and Corporate and Labour Law were considered very relevant subjects under the Fascist regime and, therefore, the Chancellor's purpose was to give assurances regarding the university willingness and promptness to maintain such courses, as the law provided.<sup>30</sup> This was the only moment of the opening ceremony in November 1938 when Petrocelli indirectly referred to the racial laws, only referring to it briefly and without even mentioning the scholars, who had been expelled. In this regard, the Chancellor's behaviour conformed to the attitude of many other Chancellors in Italy at that time [Cianferotti, 2004; 15-28]. None of the scholars of the University of Bari protested against the enactment of the racial laws, nor were they shocked by the university directive concerning their colleagues. Additionally, some professors also assured the Chancellor that they had filled in their forms with «proper care».<sup>31</sup>

In the files concerning the Board of the Faculty, however, there is no mention of the racial laws. Such documents reveal that the main concern of the Board was to find a solution of the vacant posts.<sup>32</sup> In the meeting of the faculty of Economy on October 13<sup>th</sup> 1938, professor Foà was absent and his colleagues discussed the need to find a new professor for Administrative Law, previously taught by Giorgio Tesoro. At the end of the meeting, Pasquale Del Prete, who would become Chancellor in Bari for ten years after the war (1960-1969), was chosen for such a position. Moreover, during the meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup>, the members of the Board of Faculty talked about the possibility to open a vacancy for the lectureship of *Economia politica corporativa*, which had remained vacant after Professor Foà's expulsion. In the whole of the meeting Foà's name was never pronounced.<sup>33</sup> Finally, as pertains the case of Ladislao Brull, the Faculty of Pharmacy simply revoked his temporary post of Physics-Chemistry on October 13<sup>th</sup> 1938.<sup>34</sup>

### Jewish scholars' reactions

The three expelled decided on the same option after their expulsion: they emigrated, although in different periods of time, in different ways and to different countries. None of them would ever come back to his previous position at the University of Bari. In February 1939, Bruno Foà asked for a *discriminazione* (differentiation) for him, his wife and his daughter, born in April 1938. In support of his request, the professor presented certificates of merit. In the first place, Foà claimed that he could demonstrate the Italian ascendance of his family since 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the second place, he proved that an ancestor of his fought with Lamarmora's unit in 1848. What is more, Bruno Foà was able to provide documents to prove his early involvement in and support to fascism: he had collaborated with the magazine *Azione fascista* (Fascist Action) since 1922; he had been a member of the Fascist party since January 1<sup>st</sup> 1923 and, above all, he had taken part in the march on Rome (October 1922). Attached to his letter, Foà also provided some postcards he had sent to his family while taking part in the march on Rome in 1922, even if he had a secondary role in that event. Moreover, Foà stated that in the 30s he had taken part in the political training courses organised by local Fascist federations in Messina and Bari as well as in the Committee for the *Prelittorali*, and, finally, that he taught a course on colonial culture organised by the Fascist Institute for Italian Africa in 1938. By means of

---

del Personale di razza ebraica (pos. 47), September 9<sup>th</sup> 1938, Letter from Chancellor Petrocelli to Deans of Faculties on new temporary posts after Jews expulsion. In the opening ceremony of the academic year 1939-40, Petrocelli welcomed professor Valentino Dominedò, who won the *Economia politica corporativa* lectureship after Foa's expulsion, see AgUniBa, *Annuario accademico della R. Università degli Studi "Benito Mussolini" di Bari*, AY 1939-40-41, Opening ceremony, Report of Chancellor Biagio Petrocelli on the academic year 1939-40, p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> AgUniBa, *Annuario accademico della R. Università degli Studi "Benito Mussolini" di Bari*, AY 1938-1939, p.10. See also the Academic Senate discussing on substitutions: *ivi*, *Verballi del Senato accademico*, October 14<sup>th</sup> 1938.

<sup>31</sup> AgUniBa, *Carteggio rettori*, b. 104 (1938-39), f. 1990 – Censimento del Personale di razza ebraica (pos. 47), Letters and personal forms from different scholars of the University of Bari to the Chancellor.

<sup>32</sup> AgUniBa, *Verballi del Consiglio di facoltà di Giurisprudenza*, vol. I, October 13<sup>th</sup> 1938, p. 279; *ivi*, November 14<sup>th</sup> 1938, p. 283.

<sup>33</sup> See AgUniBa, *Verballi del Consiglio di Facoltà di Economia e commercio*, October 13<sup>th</sup> 1938, pp. 139-142; *ivi*, November 12<sup>th</sup> 1938, pp. 143-144.

<sup>34</sup> See AgUniBa, *Verballi del Consiglio di Facoltà di Farmacia*, October 13<sup>th</sup> 1938, p. 25.

his patriotic and fascist ventures, Foà wished «only to be equal to all the other Italians in serving his country».<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, his request was rejected and he was forced to emigrate.

Although I could not find Brull's request concerning his *discriminazione*, his documents show that a peculiar "coincidence" occurred. Precisely in October 1938, when he was expelled from the university, Ladislao Brull sent a letter to Mussolini, in which he stated that he had created a device that could be used to develop underwater bombs. In particular, he asked that his device would be tested.<sup>36</sup> His attempt, however, failed and he was forced to leave the country. In regard to Giorgio Tesoro's case, the archival material did not provide any information about his *discriminazione*. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that he was an employee of the University of Rome and, as such, he could allow to formally submit such a request to that University.<sup>37</sup>

### **The reinstatement: a difficult path**

After the Liberation, the University of Bari completely ignored the cases of expelled scholars due to the racial laws, even if (or, especially, because) they were only a few. Simultaneously, scholars, who had supported and propagandised fascist racial laws, could pursue their careers and keep on teaching even after the war with the establishment of Italian republic. In the opening ceremonies of the post-war academic years, the new Chancellor of the University of Bari, Raffaele Resta (1947-1950), never mentioned the racial laws nor their consequences.<sup>38</sup> As a matter of fact, two of three scholars expelled from the University of Bari – Ladislao Brull and Giorgio Tesoro – were not reinstated after the conflict: Brull died during the war and Giorgio Tesoro – who preferred to stay in the Usa – was offered a position at the University of Rome, and not in Bari.<sup>39</sup> Among the case studies explored by this chapter, Foà's instance represents the most interesting and complex one. He never came back to Bari, but he had been formally reinstated since January 1st 1944. Foà decided not to return to Italy because he was completing his consecutive stay in the United States to obtain the American citizenship. Thus, he asked a study permit abroad for one year and then he requested a leave period. His aspiration to be reinstated in an Italian university stemmed, most of all, from a "moral" interest.<sup>40</sup> As such, according to the laws of that time, in order to be able to teach in an Italian university, scholars needed to be Italian citizens: when Foà chose to become an American citizen (since April 1st 1946),<sup>41</sup> he automatically lost his teaching position, regardless his resignation.<sup>42</sup> Between 40s and 50s Foà, through his brother, who worked as a lawyer, took a legal action against Italian provident institutions with regard to economic issues dating back to his post-1944 reinstatement.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Acs, *Ministero dell'Interno*, Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza, *Fascicoli personali*, b. 238, f. BEN/16385 – Foà Bruno, February 15th 1939, Bruno Foà *discriminazione* request; see also *ivi*, June 22nd 1939, Prefecture of Naples on *discriminazione* request.

<sup>36</sup> Acs, *Segreteria Particolare del Duce*, Carteggio Riservato, b. 141, f. 480/R-46-Brull Ladislao, October 19th 1938, Prefecture of Bari on Brull's request to Mussolini.

<sup>37</sup> See Tommaso Dell'Era's contribution on University of Rome in the conference held in Rome in December 2018, to be published.

<sup>38</sup> See AgUniBa, *Annuario accademico dell'Università degli Studi di Bari*, AY 1949-50, Opening ceremony of the academic year 1947-48, Report of Chancellor Prof. Raffaele Resta, pp. 7-11; *ivi*, Opening ceremony of the academic year 1948-49, Report of Chancellor Prof. Raffaele Resta, pp. 33-41; *ivi*, Opening ceremony of the academic year 1949-50, Report of Chancellor Prof. Raffaele Resta, pp. 65-73.

<sup>39</sup> AgUniBa, *Fascicoli personali docenti*, f. 1041-Tesoro Giorgio, June 2nd 1948, District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia, Committee on Admissions and Grievances, information request to the University of Bari on Giorgio Tesoro.

<sup>40</sup> Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Universitaria (1961-89), *Divisione I*, Fascicoli personali professori ordinari, *III versamento*, b. 204, f. Foà Bruno, May 16th 1945, Letter from Foà to the Italian Ambassador in the Usa.

<sup>41</sup> *Ivi*, June 21st 1948, Italian Consulate in New York, Bruno Foà's certificate of American citizenship from April 1st 1946.

<sup>42</sup> *Ivi*, May 15th 1947, Resignation letter from Bruno Foà to the Ministry of Public Education; see also *ivi*, undated, Note to the Minister to communicate that Bruno Foà had opted for the American citizenship and that he had lost his position at the Italian university.

<sup>43</sup> See the letters between the Ministry of Public Education, the Ministry of the Treasury and Foà's lawyer on fiscal and welfare themes in the period from 1948 to 1953: Acs, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale

Bruno Foà had a brilliant career in the United States: first, he worked in Princeton (1940-42), and later in Washington, D.C., as a member of the Rockefeller Foundation and of the Federal Reserve Board. In this way, he could also participate in the implementation of post-war reconstruction plans for Italy. In Spring 1959 Foà sent a request to get employed by the US Embassy in Rome. However, the archival material collected shows no proof of any reply from the American institution.<sup>44</sup> Bruno Foà died in Philadelphia in 1999 at the age of 94. In the period between 1944 and 1946, the Faculty of Economy of the University of Bari decided to ignore the Foà's case, assuming that his transfer in Puglia had been decided by the Ministry, and that the Ministry should be in charge for it.<sup>45</sup> Foà's colleagues were upset because he had not come back to Bari after his reinstatement, and he had not communicated his intentions. Thus, in 1945 the teaching position for Political Economy was already considered vacant and an open competition announced.<sup>46</sup> The other faculties involved in the banishment did not even consider reinstatements a possibility, showing, once again, very little interest in the cases of scholars expelled due to the racial laws.

## References

- Arieti Stefano, Mirri D. editors (2002). *La cattedra negata. Dal giuramento di fedeltà al fascismo alle leggi razziali nell'Università di Bologna*, Bologna: CLUEB.
- Calvario P., Leuzzi V.A. (2001). *L'Università di Bari. Nuove facoltà, lotte studentesche e politiche dell'istruzione. 1943-1945*, Bari: Progedit.
- Cianferotti G. (2004). Le leggi razziali e i rettori delle Università italiane (con una vicenda senese). *Le Carte e la Storia*, X, 2: 15-28. DOI: 10.1411/18737.
- Dell'Era T. (2013). Strategie politiche ed esigenze scientifiche: il ruolo di Nicola Pende nell'istituzione e nell'organizzazione dell'Università di Bari, in *L'Università di Bari fra Otto e Novecento: politica, società e cultura*, Angelo Massafra (ed.), Annali di storia delle università italiane 17. Bologna: CLUEB, 2013, pp. 45-67.
- Duranti S. (2008). *Lo spirito gregario: i gruppi universitari fascisti tra politica e propaganda (1930-1940)*, Roma: Donzelli.
- Finzi R. (2003). *L'università italiana e le leggi antiebraiche*, Roma: Editori riuniti.
- Gagliani D., editor (2004). *Il difficile rientro. Il ritorno dei docenti ebrei nell'università del dopoguerra*, Bologna: Clueb.
- Galimi V., Procacci G., editors (2009). "Per la difesa della razza". *L'applicazione delle leggi antiebraiche nelle università italiane*, Milano: Unicopli.
- La Rovere L. (2003). *Storia dei Guf: organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista, 1919-1943*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.
- Leuzzi V.A. (2001). *L'Università di Bari. Nuove facoltà, lotte studentesche e politiche dell'istruzione. 1943-1945*, Bari, Progedit.
- Leuzzi V.A. (2009). Discriminazione razziale nella scuola e nell'Università. Ebrei stranieri e solidarietà degli antifascisti baresi. In: Leuzzi, Pansini & Esposito, 2009, pp. 113-127.
- Leuzzi V.A., Pansini M. & Esposito G, editors (2009). *Leggi razziali in Puglia: con testimonianze e documenti*, Bari: Progedit.
- Leuzzi V.A., Pansini M. & Esposito G., editors (1999). *Fascismo e leggi razziali in Puglia*, Bari: Progedit.
- Pansini M. (2009). Provvedimenti razziali e propaganda antisemita. In: Leuzzi, Pansini & Esposito, 2009, pp. 1-66.
- Signori E. (2000). Una peregrinatio accademica in età contemporanea. Gli studenti ebrei stranieri nelle università italiane tra le due guerre. *Annali di Storia delle Università italiane*, Vol. 4: 139-162.
- Stefanelli A. (1942). *Biologia delle razze umane, con cenni sulla razza italiana*, Bari: Ed. Macri.
- Terzulli F. (2002). *Una stella fra i trulli. Gli ebrei in Puglia durante e dopo le leggi razziali*, Bari: M. Adda editore.
- Ventura A. (1997). La persecuzione fascista contro gli ebrei nell'Università italiana. *Rivista Storica Italiana*, a. CIX, fasc. 1: 121-197.
- Ventura A., editor (1996). *L'Università dalle leggi razziali alla Resistenza. Giornata dell'Università italiana nel 50° anniversario della Liberazione (Padova, 29 maggio 1995)*, Padova: CLEUP.

---

dell'Istruzione Universitaria (1961-89), *Divisione I*, Fascicoli personali professori ordinari, *III versamento*, b. 204, f. Foà Bruno.

<sup>44</sup> See AgUniBa, *Fascicolo personale prof. Bruno Foà*, May 26th 1959, Letter from the Embassy of the United States in Rome to the Chancellor of the University of Bari with an information request on Bruno Foà, after Foà's submission of a job application; *ivi*, June 15th 1959, Note from the University of Bari on Foà's academic career, answering the previous request from the American Embassy in Rome.

<sup>45</sup> AgUniBa, *Verballi del Consiglio di Facoltà di Economia e commercio*, May 14th 1946, p. 235.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem*; see also *ivi*, July 16th 1946, p. 238.