

“With cold ferocity and ostentatious prejudice”: Persecution at the University and Polytechnic of Turin

Valeria Graffone *

Abstract. “With cold ferocity and ostentatious prejudice”, a quote from Primo Levi, a student of “Jewish race” at the University of Turin, which, in essence, presents the violence and the absolute unreasonableness of the measures undertaken in 1938 to expel Jews – professors, students, technical and administrative personnel – from the University and the Polytechnic of Turin. To recount the inflicted wounds, even in percentage terms, on the entire academic community, the diligent obedience of the institutions and their representatives, the “silent” reaction of those who witnessed the immediate and irrevocable expulsion of their colleagues, the difficult and postponed return or non-return of professors who were victims of the persecution once the war was over.

Keywords: Persecution; Racial laws; University of Turin; Polytechnic of Turin.

“With cold ferocity and ostentatious prejudice”

“Silence” is the word that echoes powerfully in all the current studies of the enforcement of the racial laws in Italian universities. It was to be defined as “A monstrous curtain of silence”¹ by Primo Levi (in 1938 a student “of the Jewish race” at the University of Turin) referring to “the fate reserved for Jews in a German Europe”².

“With cold ferocity and ostentatious prejudice”³ was Levi’s description of the student gossip about Giacomo Ponzio, professor *ordinario* of *Chimica generale* and supervisor for Levi’s thesis in 1941. This was the day some of his students “felt” the gaze of the professor on them when they were being examined. Jewish professors must have felt the same way about the gazes of their colleagues at the university at the time they were being put on lists and expelled. The expulsions were ferocious because they were cold, silent, indifferent, and lacking in official reaction by the organs and representatives of the University of Turin except for several messages of farewell and thanks from the *presidi* of the faculties of *Giurisprudenza*, *Scienze* and *Lettere* recorded in the faculty-council meetings.

These were expulsions based on acts of prejudice against people whose names were highlighted in red on the rolls of the University of Turin. Red was the color that marked all the Jewish degree candidates in the registers of the minutes of their graduation examinations. Red was the color of the marks that checked off, one by one, all the names of professors “of the Jewish race” listed in the census imposed by the *Ministro dell’Educazione Nazionale*, Giuseppe Bottai, in August 1938. These were the strategies that the administrative offices used to underline the alleged racial difference. These and the mandatory apposition of the formula, “of the Jewish race,” on all the diplomas awarded to students, as called for in a circular of Minister Bottai of November 1939.

This was a membership in race that was highlighted, shown off in this case in the census forms compiled by some of the “Aryan” professors at the University of Turin, who in response to the question at hand, wrote “absolute Aryan” with determination, like Francesco Pastonchi, a very well-

* *Polo delle Scienze Giuridiche, Politiche, Economico-Sociali e Strategiche*, University of Turin, Italy, e-mail <valeria.graffone@unito.it>.

¹ Primo Levi, *Il sistema periodico*, Einaudi, 2018, chapter *Potassio*, p. 48.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ivi*, chapter *Zinco*, p. 28.

known professor of *Lingua e letteratura italiana* at the Faculty of *Lettere e Filosofia*⁴. “Of the Aryan race and the Catholic religion for millennia!” was the answer of Edoardo Audenino, *libero docente* of *Clinica psichiatrica*⁵.

The personnel expelled: important numbers and important names

At the end of the 1930s, the University of Turin was the fourth largest university in Italy, after Rome, Naples and Milan⁶. There were nine faculties: *Agraria, Economia e Commercio, Farmacia, Giurisprudenza, Lettere e Filosofia, Magistero, Medicina e Chirurgia, Medicina veterinaria, Scienze matematiche, fisiche e naturali*. The *Senato Accademico* was presided over by *rettore* Azzo Azzi, *ordinario* of *Igiene* and was made up of the *presidi* of the faculties. The *Consiglio di Amministrazione* was made up of the representatives of the government, the province and the city of Turin, the *Consiglio provinciale delle corporazioni*, and the *Cassa di Risparmio di Torino* bank. In the 1937-38 academic year, the teaching staff consisted of 75 professors *ordinari*, 11 *straordinari*, 28 *aiuti* and 67 *assistenti* (tenured personnel). There were also 84 external *professori incaricati* in service, chosen from the 393 *liberi docenti* available⁷. There were 14 people in the administrative personnel, and 26 in the technical personnel. There were 93 people who were “*personale subalterno*.”

On August 9, 1938, the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale* initiated its “census of the personnel of the Jewish race” in all the schools, universities, and academies of the kingdom. The results were collected in a summary/overview and sent to the ministry along with the forms on September 29. The summary contained the names of 58 people who were Jewish on their father’s side, 2 on their mother’s side, and 5 people married to Jews, for a total of 65 names. Among these, one member of the subordinate personnel and 53 professors were expelled between September and December 1938 – i.e. ca. 8% of the teaching staff at the university⁸. Actually, this was more than 10% if we consider only the professors *ordinari* and *straordinari*, 9 out of 86 in the 1937-38 academic year. The expelled professors included 8 *ordinari*, 1 *straordinario*, 5 *incaricati*, 18 *aiuti* and *assistenti*, and 21 *liberi docenti*⁹. The faculties most affected were, in order, *Medicina, Giurisprudenza, Scienze*, and *Lettere*: 32 professors were suspended in the Faculty of *Medicina* and 9 in *Giurisprudenza*; 6 professors were expelled in the Faculty of the *Scienze* and 4 in *Lettere*; 1 *incaricato* was expelled in *Agraria* as well as 1 *assistente di ruolo* in the Faculty of *Economia e Commercio*.

68% of the expelled professors and staff were practicing Jews enrolled in the Jewish community; 22.6% were enrolled in the Jewish community but were non-practicing Jews; 5.6% were not enrolled in the Jewish community and did not practice Judaism nor any other religion; 3.7%, declared that they were practicing Catholics¹⁰.

Four *assistenti* were also expelled, but their names appeared neither in the summary prospective, nor in the official lists sent by the university to the ministry on September 29, nor in the letter sent by the ministry to the university October 14, 1938. Nevertheless, these four unknown expelled

⁴ In 1945 prof. Pastonchi was put on a purge trial for the identification and removal of employees compromised with Fascism.

⁵ Annalisa Capristo, *L'espulsione degli ebrei dalle accademie italiane*, Zamorani, 2002, p. 24 & p. 29; the answers refer to the forms compiled by the two professors as members of academies and scientific and literary societies. For Turin Polytechnic, see Ugo Barbetti’s answer. He was an *assistente* to the chair of *Costruzioni idrauliche*. “Family wholly Catholic from the beginning.” (Archivio Storico del Politecnico di Torino, personal file of Ugo Barbetti, racial form compiled 15.11.1938).

⁶ Simona Salustri, *Un ateneo in camicia nera. L'Università di Bologna negli anni del fascismo*, Carocci editore, 2010, p. 158.

⁷ Archivio Storico dell'Università di Torino (hereafter ASUT), Yearbook of the R. Univ. of Turin 1937-38.

⁸ The 1937-38 academic Yearbook data was used to calculate the percentages. *Assistenti volontari* and *aiuti* were not counted because they were untenured personnel.

⁹ Two *professori incaricati* and nine of the eighteen *aiuti* and *assistenti* were also *liberi docenti*.

¹⁰ Percentages calculated for the 53 professors expelled on the basis of the data contained in the summary prospective of the census sent to the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale* September 29 1938.

assistants were victims of racial persecution, as was Giulio Momigliano Levi, *assistente volontario* at the *Clinica medica* who was “exempted from serving in the position he occupied”¹¹ by *direttore* of *Clinica medica*

Carlo Gamna, and as were 3 other *assistenti* whose term contracts were not renewed beginning with the 1938-39 academic year¹².

There was only one woman among the expelled, Rita Levi-Montalcini. The highest percentage of people expelled – 31% – were 30-39 years old. 15.5% were 20-29. 12% were 40-49. 20.7% were 50-59. 17.2% were 60-69 and 3.4% were over 70.

Several professors and a female administrative staff member, whose names appear in the summary prospective of the census of the personnel “of the Jewish race,” managed to avoid being dismissed from service or being discontinued in positions as *liberi docenti*. In fact, Law Decree 1728 of November 17, 1938 – *Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza italiana / Provisions for the defense of the Italian race* – left the possibility open that the authorities in charge recognize the “non-belonging to the Jewish race” of persons who conformed to the strictures of Article 8 of the Decree: “a person is not considered of the Jewish race if he or she was born of parents with Italian nationality, only one of whom is of the Jewish race, and who belonged to a religion other than Judaism on October 1, 1938.” Consequently, no provision for suspension or termination of a position was pronounced for Cristoforo Carlo Giuseppe Colombo and the brothers Virginio and Ettore Debenedetti,¹³ whose mothers were not Jewish. There was no action against Mario Toscano, whose personal file contains his baptismal certificate dated May 2, 1924¹⁴. Adele Jona, an administrative staff member, was not expelled. Although she was Jewish on her father’s side, she was “Aryan” on her mother’s side.

In the Faculty of *Giurisprudenza*, professors *ordinari* Samuele Giuseppe Ottolenghi of *Diritto internazionale* and Cino Vitta of *Diritto amministrativo* were expelled. In the Faculty of *Scienze matematiche, fisiche e naturali*, Gino Fano and his colleague Alessandro Terracini were expelled. Fano held the chair of *Geometria analitica con elementi di proiettiva e geometria descrittiva con disegno* and Terracini was *ordinario* of *Geometria analitica con elementi di proiettiva descrittiva con disegno*. The courses of the two professors made up a two-year program. In the Faculty of *Lettere e Filosofia*, *ordinario* of *Filologia romanza* Santorre Debenedetti and *ordinario* of *Storia medievale* Giorgio Falco were expelled along with Arnaldo Momigliano, professor *straordinario* of

¹¹ ASUT, personal file of Giulio Momigliano Levi, letter from Carlo Gamna, *direttore* of the *Istituto di Clinica medica generale e terapia medica* to *rettore* Azzi, November 14 1938.

¹² The *assistenti* were Rinaldo Laudi, *aiuto volontario* from February 1936 at the *Clinica chirurgica*, also expelled from the hospital, *Ospedale Mauriziano*, and killed as a partisan, probably January 1945; Emilio Levi, *assistente straordinario* at the *Istituto Giuridico* from January 1 to July 31 1938; Silvio Segre, *assistente volontario* 1933-38 at the *Clinica malattie nervose e mentali*, who was arrested in Turin in 1942, deported to Auschwitz and did not return. In addition, *libero docente* of *Patologia speciale medica* Davide Giuseppe Diena was arrested in Turin August 29 1944 and was killed in the Flossenbürg concentration camp March 2 1945. See: “Scienza e vergogna. L’Università di Torino e le leggi razziali,” exhibit at the University of Turin 15 November 2018 - 28 February 2019, <https://scienzaevergognaunito.wordpress.com> (accessed 27/11/2018).

¹³ Ettore Debenedetti, *libero docente* of *Patologia speciale medica*, was at first considered of the Jewish race. He was pronounced dead in June 1939; his disqualification was revoked in August 1939.

¹⁴ Dr. Guglielmo Colombo, *assistente volontario* at the *Clinica Pediatrica* at the Faculty of *Medicina* in Oct. and Dec. 1938 also asked that the provisions of his suspension and dismissal from service be rescinded because he had been a practicing Catholic since his birth and his mother was not Jewish. *Rettore* Azzi sent the request to the *Ministero dell’Educazione Nazionale* on 27 Dec.1938. Colombo will then submit an application to the *Ministero dell’Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza* on January 23, 1940. The *Demorazza* Commission recognizes that the professor and his son Renato do not belong to “the Jewish race”; however the teacher will be resumed on 2 November 1945 (cfr. Archivio centrale dello Stato, Ministero dell’Interno, Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza, Divisione Razza, fascicoli personali - henceforward ACS, MI, DGDR, DR, FP - b. 292 *Colombo Guglielmo* e ACS, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale dell’Istruzione Superiore, Fascicoli personali dei liberi docenti, II versamento - henceforward ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPLD, II - b. 133 *Colombo Guglielmo*).

*Storia romana con esercitazioni di epigrafia romana*¹⁵. In the Faculty of *Medicina e Chirurgia*, Amedeo Herlitzka and Giuseppe Levi were expelled. Amedeo Herlitzka was a professor of *Fisiologia umana* and *direttore* of the *Istituto di Fisiologia*. Giuseppe Levi was *ordinario* of *Anatomia umana normale* and teacher of three Nobel Prize winners for medicine – Renato Dulbecco, Salvador Luria and Rita Levi-Montalcini. In 1938-39 Levi-Montalcini was enrolled in her second year in the *scuola di specializzazione in Psichiatria e Neuropatologia* and *assistente volontaria*, nominated by the *rettore*, at the *Clinica delle malattie nervose e mentali*.

The important names among those expelled from the University of Turin included not only professors *ordinari* but also *assistenti* (among whom was Rita Levi-Montalcini), *professori incaricati* (e.g. Guido Fubini-Ghiron, *ordinario* of *Analisi matematica* at Turin Polytechnic) and also *liberi docenti*, such as the astronomer Giulio Bemporad, who had been working at the *Osservatorio Astronomico* at Pino Torinese since 1933 and who was forced to leave in December 1938 because of the racial laws.

Reactions

This was just something that happened, it seemed, something silent except for the emphasis and the space dedicated to it in the newspapers and magazines of that time.

This was a silence at both extremes. On the one hand, there was the silence of the institution and the “Aryan” colleagues. On the other hand, there was the silence of the Jewish professors, the victims of the provisions.

In the minutes of the *Senato Accademico* of the University of Turin there were no references to the racial laws or the suspension of personnel “of the Jewish race” – neither in the September 10 session nor in that of October 15. *Preside* Giovanni Battista Allaria of the Faculty of *Medicina e Chirurgia* also assumed the same attitude of public indifference.

Within this context, the Faculties of *Giurisprudenza*, *Scienze* and *Lettere* acted somewhat differently. All three, in their meetings held on the same date, October 14, 1938, pronounced their farewells to the colleagues who were affected by the provisions “for the defense of the race,” naturally, after they had been duly expelled. Thus farewells and thanks represented the only official response of the University of Turin to the exclusion of its Jewish professors.

At the other extreme, there were the expelled professors. In their case too, they “held their peace.” Some responded to the farewells and thanks. In the November 14 session, the *Preside* of *Scienze* Alceste Arcangeli “reads the cordial farewells that He [i.e. Arcangeli], interpreting the sentiments of the Faculty, addressed to the colleagues of the Jewish race [...] who were released from service as of October 16 l. m. [the previous month]. The *preside* also reads the letters with which the above-mentioned Professors express their thanks and their farewells to the Faculty”¹⁶.

At the time right after the promulgation of the decree, all the faculties accepted the expulsion. They adapted and took measures to face the problem of the teaching chairs that were vacated as a result of the racial laws¹⁷. The Faculty of *Medicina* assigned *pro tempore* professor Herlitzka’s course of *Fisiologia umana* to Francesco Paolo Mazza, professor *straordinario* of *Chimica biologica* until 1939-40. For 1940-41 professor Mazza was transferred as *ordinario* from the chair of *Chimica biologica* to that of *Fisiologia umana*¹⁸. By similar means, Giuseppe Levi’s teaching was assigned to Luigi Bucciante, *aiuto* and *incaricato* in the faculty until 1939-40. The following year, the faculty deliberated that Bucciante be called to teach *Anatomia umana normale* as a

¹⁵At the time of his expulsion, professor Arnaldo Momigliano needed one more year as professor *straordinario* before he could apply for definitive tenure as *ordinario*. As soon as he was reinstated officially in 1945, he applied for this.

¹⁶ ASUT, minutes of the meeting of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Scienze matematiche, fisiche e naturali* from 18/12/1936 to 13/01/1943.

¹⁷ Valeria Graffone, *Espulsioni immediate. L’Università di Torino e le leggi razziali, 1938*, Zamorani, 2018, pp. 97-108.

¹⁸ Prof. Francesco Paolo Mazza died during the war on January 29, 1943, at the age of 38. Thus the Faculty called in prof. Anna Maria Di Giorgio, *ordinaria* of *Fisiologia* at the University of Siena.

professor *straordinario* because he had won a recent public competitive exam. However, the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale*, “maintaining that it is more fit to provide for the chair through the transfer of a professor who has already reached the rank of *ordinario*”,¹⁹ pronounced the Ministerial Decree of October 9, 1940. This decree arranged the transfer of the office of professor Ferdinando Rossi of the University of Bari to that of Turin. Bucciante was thus assigned to the University of Bari to take Ferdinando Rossi’s place.

The Faculty of *Giurisprudenza* immediately acted by means of two requests for transfers. For *Diritto Amministrativo* (the chair of Cino Vitta), the faculty accepted the application of Pietro Bodda, *ordinario* of that subject at the Royal University of Pavia. For *Diritto Internazionale* (the chair of Giuseppe Ottolenghi), the faculty accepted the application of Alessandro Passerin d’Entrèves, *ordinario* of the *Filosofia del diritto* also at the Royal University of Pavia.

Already at the beginning of 1939, the Faculty of *Scienze* requested that new competitions be opened to fill the chairs vacated by Gino Fano and Alessandro Terracini. To fill the gap until the end of 1942, the faculty resorted to termed lectureships. In November 1942 the faculty appointed the same person as *straordinario* that they had nominated as *incaricato* until the end of 1939-40,²⁰ Pietro Buzano, once a student of Alessandro Terracini.²¹

When the Faculty of *Lettere* faced the issue of replacements, it held many sessions until the end of November 1939, the time when an entire year had passed since the introduction of the racial laws. The chairs were filled by means of a decree of the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale*. Francesco Cognasso, *ordinario* of *Storia* at the Faculty of *Magistero*, took the place of professor Falco. Roberto Andreotti, first-place candidate of the job competition at the University of Turin, was called to substitute Momigliano. Professor Francesco Ugolini, with a similar candidacy, took Debenedetti’s place.

Students

Royal Law Decree 1390 of September 5, 1938, covered not only Jewish professors but also Jewish students. It prohibited Jews from enrolling in schools at all levels and allowed only “attending students” to finish their university studies that they had begun in previous years²². In 1938-39, after the enforcement of the racial laws, only 129 Jewish students remained enrolled out of a total of 6450 university students. In February 1938, before the provisions, there were 288 Jewish students. Furthermore, we should realize that, in addition to students who were prevented from pursuing their studies, there were also the secondary-school graduates who would have wished to enroll in the university between 1938 and 1945 if the laws “in the defense of the race” had not denied them this possibility. Among the Jewish students that were pursuing their studies in preparation for their degrees were Primo Levi,²³ Vanda Maestro,²⁴ and Luciana Nissim²⁵. Rita Levi-Montalcini was studying to complete her major field of study.

After September 8 1943 Primo Levi took refuge at Amay, where, he, along with Vanda Maestro, Luciana Nissim, Guido Bachi and Aldo Piacenza, founded a small partisan band affiliated with the *Giustizia e Libertà* (“justice and freedom” clandestine political movement). The band was discovered and the members were arrested. Primo, Vanda and Luciana declared that they were Jewish and, after a month in prison, they were transferred to a camp in Fossoli and, from there, in

¹⁹ ASUT, personal file of Ferdinando Rossi, letter of *Rettore Azzi* to the *Preside* of the Faculty of *Medicina e Chirurgia*, 19 Oct. 1940.

²⁰ For 1940-41 and probably also 1941-42, teaching was assigned without payment to prof. Tommaso Boggio, *ordinario* of *Meccanica superiore* in the same Faculty.

²¹ In 1942 Pietro Buzano was one of the three final candidates for the Chair of *Geometria analitica con elementi di proiettiva e geometria descrittiva con disegno* at the Univ. of Cagliari. The Faculty of *Scienze* at Turin decided to call him as professor *straordinario* at its meeting of 21/11/1942. After the war, Buzano moved to Turin Polytechnic.

²² This permission was not applicable to German Jewish students.

²³ Primo Levi graduated in *Chimica* from the Univ. of Turin in June 1941.

²⁴ Enrolled in the Faculty of *Scienze* at the Univ. of Turin in 1936 and graduated in *Chimica* at Genoa in 1942.

²⁵ Luciana Nissim graduated in *Medicina* in 1943.

February 1944 to Auschwitz. Vanda Maestro was sent to the gas chamber at the end of October 1944. Primo Levi was liberated by Soviet troops on January 27, 1945. Luciana Nissim was transferred to the sub-camp of Hesisch Lichtenau, where she was liberated by the Americans in April 1945.

A short re-entry, a hard re-entry or no re-entry at all²⁶

In 1945, at the moment that their reinstatement was communicated, many of the expelled professors found themselves in Italian cities other than Turin or abroad²⁷. Giuseppe Levi and Cino Vitta were in Florence. Levi's fellow faculty member Amedeo Herlitzka was Buenos Aires, Argentina. From the Faculty of *Scienze*, professor Gino Fano was in Lausanne, Switzerland, and Alessandro Terracini was in San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina. Giorgio Falco was living in Rome and his colleague Arnaldo Momigliano was at Oxford, England.

The re-entry of many of these professors was hard for economic and family-related reasons. Thus Alessandro Terracini, who was burdened by financial problems, managed to re-enter the university only at the beginning of 1948. The re-entries of several others were not only hard but also short. In 1945 Giuseppe Levi and Amedeo Herlitzka were 73 years old and kept their positions for only two more academic years before they had to retire. Santorre Debenedetti stayed on for only one year. Gino Fano's return was even shorter. He will return for only six months.

Then there was the problem of the forced cohabitation of the Jewish professors and the professors that took their positions at the moment of their expulsion. Initially, the regulation (Royal Law Decree 301 of October 19, 1944), provided that the Jewish professors had to be re-integrated exactly in the chair they occupied at the moment of their release, destining their substitutes to transfers to other chairs or other universities. However, in April 1945, the decree, *Provvedimenti per l'istruzione superiore* (provisions for higher education), stipulated the doubling of chairs, or, in cases where the positions were not available, the re-admission of the reinstated professors in excess numbers.

In this way, the chairs that Debenedetti, Falco and Momigliano had held were doubled. In the Faculty of *Giurisprudenza*, the chair of professor Ottolenghi was doubled even though his substitute, Alessandro Passerin d'Entrèves, had decided to accept an appointment to the chair of *Studi italiani* at the University of Oxford. Along with three professors in the Faculty of *Lettere*, Alessandro Terracini was also reinstated in a position "in excess." His substitute, Pietro Buzano had transferred to Turin Polytechnic. On the other hand, Anna Maria Di Giorgio,²⁸ the professor who had covered the position of Amedeo Herlitzka from 1943 on, remained in her position. Thus the *Istituto di Fisiologia* was assigned to two professors as co-directors until Herlitzka retired. On the other hand, when Giuseppe Levi re-entered service at the university, *pro rettore* Mario Allara provided that he be reinstated as director of the *Istituto di Anatomia* that he had formerly directed. Ferdinando Rossi was obliged to hand over the chair to Levi and transfer to the University of Genoa. In fact, Rossi's transfer to Turin in 1940 was revoked by a law decree (Article 17 of the D.L.L. April 5, 1945, no. 238) because his transfer had lacked the vote of the Faculty of *Medicina*.

In September 1945 professor Pietro Bodda, who had substituted Cino Vitta in the chair of *Diritto amministrativo*, underwent a hearing to purge persons who had compromised themselves with the Fascist regime. However, he was acquitted of any blame by the ministerial commission for the purging of university personnel. Cino Vitta, who resumed service again beginning November 1, 1946 was thus excused from teaching and assigned the task of doing research on *Diritto pubblico orientale* until he retired two years afterwards.

The re-entry of Arnaldo Momigliano was a case in itself. The youngest of the reinstated professors, who was 37 in 1945, was only formally reinstated. He officially returned to service at the University of Turin in the summer of 1946, but from that time on he never taught again at the

²⁶ Valeria Graffone, *Espulsioni immediate. L'Università di Torino e le leggi razziali, 1938*, cit. pp. 26-29.

²⁷ After their expulsion, 24 of the 58 professors emigrated abroad (41%), some for short periods, others permanently.

²⁸ Di Giorgio stayed on as *ordinaria* of *Fisiologia* and *incaricata* of *Chimica biologica*.

university. Instead, he taught in England until 1964, when, after 16 years outside of Italy, he was invited by the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* to return. Momigliano actually returned to teach in Italy in 1964-65, not at the University of Turin but at the Superior Normal School at Pisa.

The Royal Turin Polytechnic

In 1937-38 Turin Polytechnic was made up of two faculties – *Ingegneria* and *Architettura*. Its *direttore* was Giancarlo Vallauri, *vice presidente* of the *Reale Accademia d'Italia*. In 1934 he founded the *Istituto Elettrotecnico Nazionale Galileo Ferraris* and was *ordinario* of *Elettrotecnica*. Vallauri was then replaced by Aldo Bibolini, professor of *Arte mineraria e tecnologie speciali* in November 1938.

At the Polytechnic the teaching staff consisted of 16 professors *ordinari*, 5 *straordinari*, 7 *aiuti* and 22 *assistenti* (tenured personnel). There were also 79 external *professori incaricati* and 38 *liberi docenti*. There were 12 in the administrative staff and 9 in the technical staff. There were 19 who were “*personale subalterno*.”

There were 736 students enrolled, including 84 foreigners and 8 female students.

On November 15, 1938, Vallauri inaugurated the academic year by reporting on the developments of the year before and taking his leave from his position as director of the Polytechnic. On this occasion, he said: “Following the provisions for the defense of the race, wanted by the Duce in his lofty political judgment, in addition to two *assistenti* and two *professori incaricati*, Professor of *Analisi matematica* Guido Fubini-Ghiron left his teaching and here should be remembered”²⁹.

From this research, from the papers preserved in the University’s archive and in the central state archives, the names of at least 8 professors emerged who certainly were expelled. There were two other cases of teaching staff who were not publicly cited in official records, but were nonetheless victims of racial persecution. This amounted to c.5.4% of the teaching personnel at Turin Polytechnic³⁰.

In the meeting of the *Consiglio d’Amministrazione* on October 14, 1938³¹, Vallauri had included some self-employed teaching staff among the “excluded”; later the question of the exemption from the service of personnel of “Jewish race” was resumed in the session of December 23, in which the newly appointed *direttore* Bibolini communicated that Guido Fubini-Ghiron “was exempted from the service as of December 14” and that the administration of the Polytechnic

must provide for the dispensation from service [...] of the Jewish staff included on its payroll

These include:

Piperno prof. Guglielmo, *aiuto ordinario, macchine termiche*;

Fubini-Ghiron Eng. Gino, *assistente ordinario, Costruzioni in legno, ferro e cemento*;

Fubini-Ghiron dott. Eugenio, *prof. incaricato, Radioricezioni*;

Pontecorvo Eng. Paolo, *prof. incaricato, misure radiotecniche*;

Levi Eng. Franco, *assistente straordinario, scienza delle costruzioni*.

Eng. Fubini-Ghiron Gino was certainly exonerated from service; dr. Fubini-Ghiron Eugenio and Eng.

Pontecorvo Paolo were no longer entrusted with any teaching; Eng. Levi Franco was no longer hired as an *assistente straordinario*.

Of said staff, only prof. Piperno [in addition to the *ordinario* Guido Fubini-Ghiron], due to his length of service as an *assistente* and *aiuto*, has the right to retirement benefits and severance pay [...].

Also suspended the *libere docenze* of prof. Sacerdote dr Gino and Eng. Treves Scipione.

Of all these communications “the Council takes note”³².

²⁹ *Archivio Storico del Politecnico di Torino* (henceforward ASPoliTo), Yearbook 1938-39.

³⁰ Data from the 1937-38 Yearbook was used to calculate the percentages. An *assistente volontario* was not counted because he was not part of the structured personnel. 7 victims of the law were 20-40 years old, 3 were 50-70 years old.

³¹ ASPoliTo, minutes of the meeting of the *Consiglio di Amministrazione*, from July 9, 1937, to December 23, 1938.

³² *Ivi*, session of December 23, 1938. The underlinings are from the original text.

In the wake of the promulgation of the decrees “for the defense of the race,” Guido Fubini-Ghiron, *ordinario* of *Analisi matematica* in the Faculty of *Ingegneria*, was expelled from Turin Polytechnic along with his two sons – Gino Fubini-Ghiron, *assistente ordinario* in *Costruzioni in legno, ferro e cemento armato* in the Faculty of *Ingegneria* and Eugenio Fubini-Ghiron, *professore incaricato* of *Radiotecnica generale: radioricevitori* at the *Scuola di perfezionamento in Elettrotecnica Galileo Ferraris*.

Three of the professors released were Guglielmo Piperno, *aiuto ordinario* in *Macchine termiche* as well as *libero docente* and *professore incaricato* of the same subject for 4th-year *Ingegneria civile* students, and professor Paolo Pontecorvo, *incaricato* of *Radiotrasmittitori: misure radiotecniche* at the *Istituto Elettrotecnico Galileo Ferraris*.

Scipione Treves, *aiuto ordinario* of *Macchine termiche*, was released³³. Gino Sacerdote was disqualified from his *libera docenza*. Professor of *Comunicazioni elettriche*, he had been *capo Reparto Comunicazioni* of the *Istituto Elettrotecnico Galileo Ferraris*. Beginning in 1937, he was *direttore* of the *Istituto Nazionale di Elettroacustica O.M. Corbino* in Rome³⁴.

The engineer Franco Levi, volunteer assistant at the *Resistenza dei materiali* laboratory, who had to take shelter abroad, in France, "to escape the consequences of the racial laws, is not confirmed"³⁵. At the end of his academic career, Levi himself was to give testimony of what he experienced in those years:

In 36 I became assistant to Gustavo Colonnetti, the founder of the *istituto di metrologia*. With the first wave of racial laws, I took refuge in France. I worked in a chemical factory in Lille, manufacturing explosives and chemical fertilizers. In 1940 I reached Marseille, in free France, where I specialized in cosmetics. I was arrested because of my ration card, on which I had written: Aryan. Colonnetti sent me a false baptismal certificate, but with the official stamp of the fascist censor, a guarantee that saved my life. The Italian consul in Marseille organized the last train that gave Jews the opportunity to return to Italy, escorted by the Carabinieri. For six months I worked with Colonnetti again, then we both fled to Lausanne, finding hospitality on a university campus for refugees³⁶.

There were two cases where professors who were not mentioned in the minutes but who were nevertheless subjected to discriminatory norms. The first case is that of Professor Gino Fano, *ordinario* of *Geometria analitica con elementi di proiettiva e geometria descrittiva con disegno* at the University of Turin as well as *incaricato* of *Geometria descrittiva con disegno* at Turin Polytechnic from 1909-10.

The second case was that of Gabor Dessau, *assistente straordinario* with a provisional position

³³ On June 2, 1939, the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale* sent the notice of the revocation of the *libera docenza* in *Macchine termiche* to the Polytechnic of Turin and to the University of Bologna that of the revocation of the *libera docenza* in *Comunicazioni elettriche* (both registered by decree of March 18, 1939 and with effect from December 14, 1938): Scipione Treves had obtained the qualification for *libera docenza* in *Macchine termiche* with a ministerial decree of November 24, 1927, the qualification was then confirmed with the decree of 26 May 1933. The teacher had also held the Biennial course in *Comunicazioni elettriche su filo* at the Postgraduate School in *Radiocomunicazioni* of the University of Bologna from 1932-33 to 1937-38 [*Tecniche dei servizi R.T.* course from the Yearbook of the University of Bologna, academic year 1937-38], obtaining the *libera docenza* in *Comunicazioni elettriche* with a ministerial decree of January 14, 1938 (cfr. ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPLD, II - b. 492 *Treves Scipione*). At the Polytechnic the professor had also been authorized to take the course, without payment, in *Calcolo degli organi dei motori di aviazione* for the year 1938-39 (resolution of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria* of 20 May 1938), but in the letter sent on May 31 from Vallauri to Treves Scipione to inform him of the conferral of the course also for the following academic year, a side note reports: "teaching duties suspended because of the Jewish race" (see ASPoliTo, personal file of Scipione Treves).

³⁴ In the academic years from 1934-35 to 1937-38, professor Sacerdote had also held series of lectures in *Acustica tecnica* (years 1934-35 and 1935-36) and *Elettroacustica* (years 1936-37 and 1937-38) at the Postgraduate School of *Radiocomunicazioni* at the University of Bologna (see University of Bologna Yearbooks for the academic years 1934-35; 1935-36; 1936-37 and 1937-38 available on <https://amshistorica.unibo.it/annuariunibo>).

³⁵ ASPoliTo, personal file Franco Levi, 13 June 1957, 26 July 1960, 13 December 1962 – declarations and certifications of Turin Polytechnic about prof. Franco Levi. Levi was the *assistente* of prof. Gustavo Colonnetti, *ordinario* of *Scienza delle Costruzioni* at the Faculty of *Ingegneria* and the only professor at the Polytechnic not to present himself for service at the constitution of the Italian Social Republic.

³⁶ C.Cer, *Il mago del cemento rimpiange il '68. Franco Levi, 70 anni, ha lasciato l'insegnamento per dedicarsi alla ricerca*, "La Stampa", February 8, 1984.

from November 1933. *Professore incaricato* of *Giacimenti minerari* for 1936-37, he became a *libero docente* of the same subject as a result of a decree on March 20, 1937³⁷. In all probability, Dessau did not fill out the racial questionnaire because of “practical” reasons, in so much as he was working in Addis Ababa as engineer in charge of the *Ispettorato generale minerario per l’Africa Orientale*. He was dismissed from this position as a consequence of the “provisions for the defense of the race in 1939”³⁸. In any case, his name no longer appeared in the 1938-39 university Yearbook.

The students at the Polytechnic also had to do without the lessons and ingenuity of Alessandro Terracini, *ordinario* at the University of Turin, where he taught *Geometria analitica con elementi di proiezione descrittiva con disegno* in the Faculty of *Scienze matematiche, fisiche e naturali*. As it was actually a two-year course, the course was held in alternate years - for first and second year students - by professors Gino Fano and Alessandro Terracini, both *ordinari* at the University of Turin, both expelled in 1938 because "of Jewish race". Polytechnic students, upon specific agreement between the two universities, attended the course together with university colleagues, sharing lessons, classrooms and teachers.

A professor at Turin Polytechnic also managed to obtain a recognition of his “non-belonging to the Jewish race” – Vittorio Morpurgo, professor *straordinario* of the Faculty of *Architettura*. From October 1938 to April 1939, the *Ministero dell’Educazione* kept on asking him for documents that proved the nationality of his mother and father. The Ministry wrote in an October 17, 1938 telegram that this was necessary for “the determination of race”³⁹. On November 2, Morpurgo also handed over the baptismal certificate of his wife, Wanda Cerioli. In the meantime, Morpurgo asked to change his last name and use that of his mother, “Ballio”.

Reactions

In the session of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria* held on October 7, 1938, *preside* Panetti “announces that, in consequence of the Law Decree of September 5 and 7, 1938, [...] several Colleagues must abandon our School; recalls their scientific and didactic accomplishments and sends them the warmly appreciative greetings of the Council. Vallauri associates himself with the words of the *Preside* and wants the Colleagues who are leaving us to be sent the greetings of the Council and the assurance that the memory of their work remains alive in our spirits as in those of their disciples. The Council associates itself with the words of the *Preside* and of H.E. [His Excellency] the *Direttore*”⁴⁰.

On October 25, Vallauri wrote to the suspended professors in order to extend the “warmly grateful greetings” of the *Consiglio di Facoltà*. Vallauri wrote personally to Guido Fubini-Ghiron and Gino Fano, the two oldest teachers among those expelled, but also to the young Eugenio and Gino, sons of professor Fubini-Ghiron, and to the 29-year-old Paolo Pontecorvo. His farewell letters are more direct and more personal than those that his successor Bibolini wrote to the professors Piperno and Sacerdote in June 1939 and also those sent by Azzo Azzi, *rettore* of the University of Turin, to some of his teaching staff affected by the racial measures.

Both Bibolini and Azzi used a formula of prepared set phrases to notify the revocation of the *libere docenze*. They were formal, impersonal communications. "By order of the *Ministero dell’Educazione Nazionale* I inform you that with Ministerial Decree March 18, 1939, you have been declared forfeited from the *libera docenza* in *COMUNICAZIONI ELETTRICHE* [for Gino Sacerdote] / in *MACCHINE TERMICHE* [for Guglielmo Piperno] because of Jewish race, with effect from December 14, 1938 [...]. The *Direttore* Aldo Bibolini”⁴¹.

³⁷ ASPoliTo, personal file of Gabor Dessau.

³⁸ Annalisa Capristo, *Il decreto legge del 5 settembre 1938 e le altre norme antiebraiche nelle scuole, nelle università e nelle accademie* in *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, vol. 73, no. 2, 2007, pp. 131-167.

³⁹ ASPoliTo, personal file of Vittorio Morpurgo Ballio, telegram of the *Ministero dell’Educazione Nazionale*, signed by Giustini, the *direttore* of Turin Polytechnic, 17 Oct. 1938.

⁴⁰ *Ivi*, minutes of the meeting of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria*, vol. 8-12, 1937-1945.

⁴¹ *Ivi*, personal files of Gino Sacerdote and Guglielmo Piperno, letters of revocation of *libera docenza* sent by the *direttore* Bibolini, June 5 1939. A similar letter had also reached Gino Fubini-Ghiron from Vallauri, who on October 18 informed the young *assistente* of his suspension from service; this communication was then followed by that of October 25 in which Vallauri inserted his personal greetings and best wishes.

Azzi did not send any official letter of farewell or thanks to the professors expelled from the University of Turin, either personally or in the name of the University. To Rita Levi-Montalcini, an *assistente* appointed by the *Rettore*, he wrote on December 5: "I inform you that, in accordance with art. 8 of the R.D. Law of November 15, 1938 [...], I have ordered your dispensation from the service of *Assistente volontaria* at the *Clinica delle malattie nervose e mentali* diseases starting from December 14, 1938"⁴². For the *libero docente* Stefano Montuori it did not differ, nor did Bibolini, from the ministerial model: "I inform you that with D.M. March 18, 1939, you have been declared forfeited from the qualification of *libero docente* in *Fisiologia sperimentale* because of Jewish race, with effect from December 14, 1938"⁴³.

On October 18 Vallauri had already written to professor Guido Fubini "I make it my duty to share with you that the *Consiglio di Amministrazione* [...] assigned me the task of extending to you the most heartfelt thanks, to which I add my own personal thanks, for your active and treasured collaboration as a member of the Council itself *and for your long and meritorious work for the benefit and decorum of this Institute* [words in italics handwritten by the *direttore*]"⁴⁴. On November 1, Fubini answered from Paris, where he had moved temporarily to avoid persecution, "I thank you for the words that you wished to add, and thank you even more for the words you have addressed me with so courteously. If you hold it opportune, I ask you to express the feelings of my gratitude to the *Consiglio Didattico* in my name"⁴⁵.

Professor Fubini was definitively dismissed from service on December 14, 1938. Already by the end of October he had moved to Paris, France. From there he asked the Polytechnic's secretary in chief to send him several documents that he needed to provide in order to be hired by the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton,⁴⁶ because, as he wrote, "I have to be in New York on January 15"⁴⁷.

In the meantime, the Polytechnic was taking measures to substitute him. At its October 7, 1938, session, the *Consiglio della Facoltà di Ingegneria* assigned Giorgio Palozzi a position as substitute teacher of *Analisi matematica*. Palozzi was *assistente straordinario* and *libero docente* of the same subject. Later, at the April 22, 1939, session, the Council deliberated "to bring to the attention of the Ministry the name of Prof. Carlo Miranda, professor *straordinario* of the aforementioned subject at the University of Genoa"⁴⁸.

Despite the move to the United States, Fubini tried to obtain the only legal exception provided for by Law Decree no. 1728 of November 17, 1938: Provisions for the defense of the Italian race. According to Article 14, for those who were included in the category of "discriminated against" for reasons of "exceptional merit", including in the education and scientific field, the provisions of the previous articles 10 and 13 lett. h, did not apply: that is to say those persecutory rules that envisaged limits on real estate property and industrial and commercial activity, effectively denying "Italian citizens of Jewish race" the right to own land, urban buildings and companies or the possibility of working in the administrations of private insurance companies and to take part in military service in time of peace and war.

⁴² ASUT, personal files of Rita Levi (then Rita Levi-Montalcini), letter from *Rettore Azzi* with the subject "Dismissal from service", December 5 1938.

⁴³ *Ivi*, personal file of Stefano Montuori, formerly Goldberger, letter from *Rettore Azzi* with the subject "Forfeiture of the qualification of *libera docenza*", June 6 1939.

⁴⁴ ASPoliTo, personal file of prof. Guido Fubini-Ghiron, communication of *direttore* Vallauri to prof. Fubini-Ghiron recognizing his termination of service on behalf of of *Consiglio di Amministrazione* of Turin Polytechnic 18 Oct. 1938.

⁴⁵ *Ivi*, MS letter of prof. Fubini to *direttore* Vallauri, 1 Nov. 1938. Underlining in original text.

⁴⁶ Tullio Levi-Civita wrote prof. Oswald Veblen of Princeton directly, asking him to accept Fubini, who "after Volterra, [is] considered the most incisive and intelligent Italian analyst [appealing to] the scientific and humanitarian mission of the Institute through your enlightened protection." Letter, 30 Oct. 1938 translated and put on the site of Univ. Bocconi, <<http://matematica-old.unibocconi.it/fubini/fubini.htm>> (accessed 16/11/2018).

⁴⁷ ASPoliTo, personal file of Guido Fubini-Ghiron, MS letter of prof. Fubini sent from Paris to the *direttore* of the Secretariat, Nicola Vigna, probably Nov.-Dec. 1938. Prof. Fubini managed to reach New York only in March 1939.

⁴⁸ *Ivi*, minutes of the *Senato Accademico* vol. 1, 1935-1946. The name of Silvio Cinquini was signaled for the chair of Guido Fubini-Ghiron by Senator Giovanni Gentile.

For the evaluation of any special merits, a special Commission was initially set up at the *Ministero dell'Interno*, later replaced by the so-called *Tribunale della Razza*; the law furthermore provided that the benefits could also be extended to family members.

From the documents preserved in the Turin State Archives, database of the National Fascist Party - Federation of Turin, it appears that the request for exemption for the Fubini-Ghiron family involved, in addition to the Polytechnic professor, also the sons Gino and Eugenio, his wife Anna Ghiron and his brother-in-law Angelo Ghiron, who before the anti-Semitic measures had been CEO of the company "Sorrentino Fratelli e Valenzano SA", engaged in the coal trade⁴⁹.

For applications for exemption on the grounds of educational and scientific merits, it was the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale* that had to provide information on the activity carried out by the applicants, "making known [to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza*] if the merits [...] claimed can be considered of an exceptional nature for the purposes of the claimed benefit"⁵⁰.

With regard to Fubini's question, the Minister Bottai replied that "this Ministry [...], within its competence and without prejudice to the further decisions of this Dicastery, expresses the opinion that the scientific and educational merits of Fubini Ghiron can be considered adequate to the purposes of the requested concession"⁵¹.

Other Turin academics filed requests for exemption, but the Ministry's "investigation" did not give the same result as that for professor Fubini. Among the teachers of the Polytechnic, Guglielmo Piperno, *aiuto ordinario, incaricato* and *libero docente* in *Macchine termiche*, also applied. In a long letter dated February 7, 1939, he asked that his teaching and scientific activity and the work in favour of the national fascist party, which he joined on October 29, 1932, be examined⁵². For the educational and scientific merits, the *direttore* Bibolini reported that the activity carried out "CANNOT be considered [...] of an exceptional nature to the effects of the exemption for which he has applied" and consequently the *Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale* "assumes the unfavorable judgment expressed by the *Direttore* of the R. Polytechnic of Turin"⁵³. The Prefect of Turin also gave an opinion contrary to the acceptance of the request, declaring that the teacher "has no military qualifications, nor merits of a political nature"; the federal secretary of Turin Piero Gazzotti also expressed a negative opinion: "Piperno [...] did not acquire

⁴⁹ Archivio di Stato di Torino (henceforward ASTo), Partito nazionale fascista – Federazione di Torino, Fubini Gino - File no. 32505; Ghiron Angelo – File no. 4533.

⁵⁰ ACS, MPI, DGIS, Fascicoli personali dei professori ordinari, III versamento (henceforward ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPPO, III), b. 214 *Fubini-Ghiron Guido*, letter from the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza* to the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale – Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Superiore* with the subject "Fubini Ghiron Guido. Exemption", May 14, 1940. The exemption card available to the Commission, on which the date of the session and the final resolution adopted against the applicant were also noted, provided for a first part with personal details and family status; a central part with data on professed religion, possible registration with the P.N.F. and any military and civil merits acquired; a third and final part in which the opinion of the Prefect and the National Fascist Federation-Turin and the final one of the Commission were recorded.

⁵¹ *Ivi*, reply of the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale* to the *Ministero dell'Interno*, September 14, 1940. From the file of Gino Fubini-Ghiron preserved in the State Archives of Turin, it would seem that the members of the Fubini-Ghiron family "request exemption but in vain» cfr. ASTo, National Fascist Party - Federation of Turin, Fubini Gino - File no. 32505, <https://Archividistatorino.beniculturali.it/naviga-patrimonio/progetti/pnf-federazione-torino> (accessed on May 4, 2021). Some assets of the Fubini-Ghiron family were to be expropriated and entrusted to the property management and liquidation body – EGELI – following the Legislative Decree of the Duce [head of the Italian Social Republic] of January 4, 1944, no. 2, *Nuove disposizioni concernenti i beni posseduti dai cittadini di razza ebraica/New provisions concerning assets owned by citizens of Jewish race*.

⁵² ACS, MI, DGDR, DR, FP, b. 135 *Piperno Guglielmo*, request for discrimination sent to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza*, February 7 1939. For registration with the national fascist party, see the letter from the federal secretary of the national fascist party - federation of Turin Piero Gazzotti to the prefect Carlo Tiengo (prefect in Turin from August 16, 1938 to February 1, 1941) with the subject "Application for discrimination. Guglielmo Piperno", July 19, 1939 and the letter from the Prefecture of Turin to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza* with the subject "Application for discrimination. Guglielmo Piperno was Giuseppe", August 7 1939.

⁵³ *Ivi*, letter from the *Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale* to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza* with the subject "Piperno Dr. Guglielmo. Exemption", October 3, 1940.

any merit in the political field that would make him worthy of obtaining the coveted exemption.”⁵⁴

Scipione Treves, *libero docente* in *Macchine termiche* and *Comunicazioni elettriche*, holder of the *Telefonia* course at the *Istituto tecnico industriale Delpiano* and various positions held in the telephony and electrical engineering industry, also applied. To the letter sent to the *Ministero degli Interni* on November 21, 1938, he attached a long report to present his technical and scientific activity, the military service he carried out not yet eighteen years old in the war campaign of 1918, his activity as head of the radio-telegraph-engineers group- film technicians of the engineers union, honours and references. In this memo he referred to the award obtained by the *Reale Accademia d'Italia* for his three-volume teaching manual “*Corso di telefonia*”, to his enrollment in the national fascist party from May 1, 1925, and, regarding the nomination for a *libere docenze*, he wrote: “*Libero docente* (appointed by the Commission completely made up of Aryan professors) in *macchine termiche* with D.M. of November 24, 1927, and definitively confirmed after the five-year term, on the proposal of the *Consiglio Accademico* of the Polytechnic of Turin [...]; another lectureship (conferred by the Commission, also completely made up of Aryan professors) in *comunicazioni elettriche* by D.M. of January 14, 1938”⁵⁵. Scipione's father, the journalist Giuseppe Moise Treves, wrote personally to Rachele Guidi Mussolini to ask for her intercession in favour of his son; he also wrote to Umberto di Savoia, Prince of Piedmont, to ask him to speak with Buffarini Guidi. In December 1941, Scipione Treves, still awaiting the outcome of the application, sent "to further complement the application for exemption presented in November 1938", the notarial copies of the decrees by which the rank of Lieutenant was conferred on his maternal grandfather Scipione Calabi in the National Guard of Verona between 1867 and 1869⁵⁶.

The Prefect of Turin repeatedly gave an opinion contrary to the acceptance of the request, citing also the negative opinion of the Federal Secretary⁵⁷. In September 1940, the *Ministero dell'Interno* asked the Prefecture for some clarification on the date of registration with the P.N.F. and on the attitude held by Treves during the Quartarellian period⁵⁸. The Prefect replied on January 13, 1941:

It appears [...] that Treves, professor, industrial engineer, technical consultant for a limited company, publicist, had all the convenience of being immediately in possession of the P.N.F membership card. - However, during the Quartarellian period, he refrained from any overt attitude so as not to compromise himself with acts or manifestations of thought that could harm his solid social and economic position.

After the acute period 1924 - beginning of 1925, the applicant, not least because of his intimate relationship with the co-religionist Avv. Gino Olivetti, at that time member of Parliament and lobbyist of Turin and national industry, saw with the business flair of his class the convenience of owning the P.N.F membership card to use it as a safe-conduct pass and all-purpose permit for his various dealings.

The request for the card was his first and only manifestation (...) of thought.

In fact, it turns out that, despite his wealth (achieved with a truly strange speed) he did not give the Party the slightest contribution of money, aid or work.

I therefore fully confirm the negative opinion already expressed [...]⁵⁹.

⁵⁴ *Ivi*, letter from the Prefecture of Turin to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza* with the subject "Application for exemption. Guglielmo Piperno formerly Giuseppe", August 7 1939 and letter from the federal secretary of the national fascist party - federation of the combat squads of Turin - Piero Gazzotti to the Prefect of Turin with the subject "Application for exemption. Guglielmo Piperno", July 19 1939.

⁵⁵ ACS, MI, DGDR, DR, FP, b. 30 *Treves Scipione*, request for exemption sent by prof. Treves to the *Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza*, November 21, 1938.

⁵⁶ *Ivi*, letter from Scipione Treves to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza*, December 22 1941.

⁵⁷ *Ivi*, letters from the Prefect of Turin to the *Ministero dell'Interno – Direzione Generale per la Demografia e la Razza*, March 22, 1939 and May 26, 1939.

⁵⁸ In reference to the period of the murder of Giacomo Matteotti, kidnapped on June 10 1931 and found dead the following August 16 on an estate in the Quartarella scrubland, near Riano Flaminio.

⁵⁹ ACS, MI, DGDR, DR, FP, b. 30 *Treves Scipione*, reply from the Prefect of Turin to the *Demorazza* with the subject "Treves Scipione di Giuseppe - exemption", 13 January 1941.

Substitutions and vacant professorships

In the aforementioned session of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria* on October 7, 1938, it was debated whether to entrust the chair of *Geometria descrittiva con disegno*, which had been held by Gino Fano, to dr. Eng. Eugenio Frola, *libero docente* of *Scienza delle costruzioni* and *assistente ordinario* of *Analisi algebrica* in the Faculty of *Scienze* at the University of Turin⁶⁰.

During the session, the name of Pietro Buzano, *assistente* and *libero docente* in *Geometria analitica* at the University of Turin, also emerged as a possible replacement for professor Fano. The course in *Geometria analitica* held at the University of Turin, upon specific agreement between the universities, was also attended by students of the Polytechnic. Once Fano and Terracini had been removed, the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria* decided to provide for the subject with internal staff at the Polytechnic, assigning the task to someone who gives “confidence to know how to keep teaching at the level that is appropriate for [...] the Institute”⁶¹. The person chosen was Aldo Ghizzetti, former *aiuto ordinario* of *Analisi matematica e geometrie* at the Faculty. From November 1, 1940, Ghizzetti asked to be placed on leave for study reasons, wanting to carry out consultancy activities in Rome, at the *Istituto nazionale per le applicazioni* within the CNR. Teaching was therefore entrusted to Rinaldo Perassi, *assistente di ruolo* of the same subject, “as there is no way to proceed otherwise”⁶². But in the Summer of 1941 Perassi was called to arms, Eugenio Frola, already in charge of *Geometria descrittiva* from 1938-39, took over the teaching of *Geometria analitica*. Frola was to hold the course in 1941-42 and also in the following years⁶³. The loss of Fano as head of *Geometria descrittiva* and as holder of the two-year course in *Geometria analitica* at the University of Turin (a course he held together with Alessandro Terracini and which engineering students could attend with colleagues from the Faculty of *Scienze*), created many problems at the Polytechnic – with no easy solutions. Initially, the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria*

for *Geometria analitica e proiettiva* and for *Geometria descrittiva*, believes it appropriate that separate appointments be made because they are carried out, every year, in parallel in the two courses of the two-year preparatory course, and each requires a number of hours of lessons and exercises that are too considerable for one person⁶⁴.

Hence the decision to entrust the teaching of *Geometria descrittiva* to Frola and that of *Geometria analitica* to Ghizzetti. But, following Ghizzetti's request for a leave of absence, who was replaced by Perassi, in his turn called to arms, in 1941 the University was forced to entrust both courses to the *libero docente* Eugenio Frola. Despite attempts at a new agreement with the University, made by Carlo Miranda, *ordinario* of *Analisi matematica* and substitute for Guido Fubini-Ghiron, things did not go well⁶⁵.

⁶⁰In the Turin Polytechnic Yearbook of the academic year 1937-38, Dr. Frola was classified as a *libero docente* in *Perfezionamento sulle costruzioni in acciaio* and *assistente volontario* in *Costruzioni in legno, ferro e cemento armato*, Faculty of *Ingegneria*. The assignment of *Geometria descrittiva con disegno* was to be confirmed in subsequent years, after the end of the world war. Frola also replaced Bonaparte Colombo, expelled from the University of Turin, Faculty of *Scienze*, in the post of *Matematiche complementari* for the academic year 1939-40.

⁶¹ ASPoliTo, minutes of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria*, volumes 8-12, years 1937-1945, session of October 7 1938 and ACS, MPI, DGIS, *Miscellanea di Divisioni Diverse I-II-III (1929-1945)*, b. 98 bis, f. Torino *Incarichi Politecnico di Torino 1938-39*.

⁶² ASPoliTo, Minutes of the *Senato Accademico* of the Polytechnic of Turin, meeting of 20 November 20 1940.

⁶³ ACS, MPI, DGIS, *Commissioni libere docenze, incarichi, corsi di cultura militare (1935-1949)*, b. 30, f. Torino *Incarichi Politecnico di Torino 1942-43* and ASPoliTo, Yearbook for the academic years from 1941-42 to 1947-48. Only one Yearbook was published for the years 1941-42 to 1947-48.

⁶⁴ *Ivi*, minutes of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria*, volumes 8-12, years 1937-1945, session of 7 October 1938. The underlinings are from the original text.

⁶⁵ *Ivi*, session of June 19 1941, also in ACS, MPI, DGIS, *Commissioni libere docenze, incarichi, corsi di cultura militare (1935-1949)*, b. 27, f. Torino *Incarichi Politecnico di Torino 1941-42*. Miranda was then to be transferred with

To replace Guglielmo Piperno, *aiuto ordinario* for *Macchine termiche* and in charge of the same course for 4th year students of *Ingegneria civile*, Arnaldo Castagna, former *libero docente* in *Macchine termiche*, was called. Augusto Cavallari-Murat was appointed from 1939-40, following a national competitive exam, to replace Gino Fubini-Ghiron, *assistente ordinario* of *Costruzioni in legno, ferro e cemento armato* at the Faculty of *Ingegneria*. In the meeting of the *Consiglio di Amministrazione* on October 14, 1938, to replace Franco Levi professor Colonnetti proposed the appointment of Giulio Pizzetti as *assistente straordinario* with provisional assignment for the *Prove dei materiali* laboratory. The Council approved.

As far as the Postgraduate course in *Elettrotecnica* set up at the *Istituto nazionale Galileo Ferraris* is concerned, where Eugenio Fubini-Ghiron and Paolo Pontecorvo had worked, from the academic year 1938-39 teaching *Radiotecnica generale e radiotrasmittitori* was entrusted to the *libero docente* Mario Boella and that of *Radioricettori* to Giuseppe Dilda, professor of *Radiotecnica* at the *Istituto tecnico industriale Delpiano*.

From 1940-41 and for the entire duration of his military service in the Navy, Boella was replaced as a substitute teacher by the *libero docente* Andrea Pincirolì. Pincirolì was also to be appointed for the teaching of *Misure radioelettriche* for the years 1941-42 and 1942-43, and in 1942-43 he was to be responsible for part of the course in *Elettrotecnica* as a substitute for Vallauri, who in the meantime had been called to chair the CNR.

Expatriates: the departed and the returned

Professor Guido Fubini-Ghiron neither managed to return to Turin Polytechnic nor to witness the end of the war. In fact, he died in New York on June 6, 1943, at the age of 64. His sons did not return to teach in the university either. Having emigrated with their father to the United States, they started to work in New York.

The *Consiglio della Facoltà di Ingegneria* met for the first time after the liberation on May 7, 1947, and successively on October 9, 1945. In this second session,⁶⁶ there was an announcement that Scipione Treves was re-hired as *libero docente* in *Macchine termiche*, Guglielmo Piperno as *libero docente* in *Comunicazioni elettriche* and as *aiuto ordinario*⁶⁷. Piperno retired as *aiuto ordinario* on March 16, 1948.

From the academic year 1945-46 to 1952-53 Piperno was in charge of teaching *Macchine termiche* for the degree course in *Ingegneria civile*. He left this post, due to age limits, on November 1, 1953. The professor remained as *libero docente* until 1966-67.

Scipione Treves, on the other hand, was one of the *liberi docenti* in *Macchine termiche* at the Faculty of *Ingegneria* until the academic year 1950-51⁶⁸. The revocation of the *libera docenza* in *Macchine termiche* for the Polytechnic of Turin and in *Comunicazioni elettriche* for the University of Bologna for Treves followed the decree of the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* of August 7, 1944, and on the basis of the provisions of the circular of August 8, 1944, no. 396⁶⁹. On September

D. M. May 7, 1943 and with effect from October 29, 1943 to the chair of *Istituzioni di matematica* at the Faculty of *Scienze* of the University of Naples. Following Miranda's transfer, the teaching of *Analisi matematica algebrica* was to be entrusted to Tommaso Boggio for the years 1943-44 and 1944-45; for *Analisi matematica infinitesimale* the assignment was to be given to Pietro Buzano (in 1944-45 also in charge of *Geometria descrittiva e disegno*) who was definitively to move to the Polytechnic as *straordinario* and then *ordinario* of *Analisi matematica* from 1 November 1945; cf. ASPoliTo, Yearbook for the academic years from 1941-42 to 1947-48. See also Direzione Amministrativa, cat. I, faldone X, Carte relative al personale docente, tecnico e amministrativo del Politecnico, 1944-1946.

⁶⁶ ASPoliTo, minutes of the meeting of the *Consiglio di Facoltà di Ingegneria*, vol. 8-12, 1937-1945.

⁶⁷ See the minutes of the *Senato Accademico* session of 16/07/1946 and of the *Consiglio di Amministrazione* 29/10/1948.

⁶⁸ ASPoliTo, Yearbook for the academic year 1950-51.

⁶⁹ ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPLD, II, b. 492 *Treves Scipione*, note on the bottom left of the letter announcing the revocation of the qualification to *libera docenza* sent by the *Ministero dell'Educazione* to the University of Bologna,

1 of the same year, the teacher therefore sent a handwritten note to the Ministry to learn "what is his position - as *libero docente* in *Macchine termiche* and in *Comunicazioni elettriche* - after the repeal of the racial laws"⁷⁰. Treves had obtained the *libera docenza* in *Comunicazioni elettriche* with a ministerial decree of January 14, 1938. Confirmation, was required by law after five years, but due to the racial laws and the war, was instead requested only in November 1944 by the Faculty of *Ingegneria* of the University of Rome. The ministerial confirmation decree was finally to be ordered on March 9, 1945⁷¹. Gabor Dessau was again among the *liberi docenti* at the Faculty of *Architettura* in the Yearbooks until 1947-48⁷². Gino Sacerdote was again among the *liberi docenti* of *Architettura* as well as among the professors at the *Istituto Elettrotecnico Nazionale Galileo Ferraris*, where he took on the direction of the acoustics section⁷³. Sacerdote had obtained the approval for an *libera docenza* in *Comunicazioni elettriche* with a ministerial decree of April 8, 1933. In May 1938, at the end of the five-year period, the professor had submitted an application for confirmation of the *libera docenza*, but "due to the particular situation in that year, and due to the so-called racial laws, the application remained unanswered"⁷⁴. On June 2, 1939, he was notified of his forfeiture of the qualification with effect from October 14, 1938. At the end of the war, Sacerdote asked for the application to be reexamined. The *Consiglio della Facoltà di Ingegneria* approved the confirmation of the qualification on February 13, 1948. He finally obtained definitive confirmation following the ministerial decree of March 8, 1948, almost exactly fifteen years after his first application had been approved.

In his inaugural speech for the 1947-48, *direttore* Eligio Perucca mentioned Franco Levi "among the new teachers" who were to be assigned new positions for the upcoming year. Levi became *direttore* of the *Centro Studi sugli stati di coazione elastica* at Turin Polytechnic by professor Colonnetti in 1945 and from 1947 he substituted Colonnetti in *Scienza delle costruzioni*. Colonnetti had been named *presidente* of the *Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche*.

Paolo Pontecorvo, professor at the *Istituto Elettrotecnico*, did not return. His name is not present in the Yearbooks for 1945-46, 1946-47, and 1947-48. After his expulsion, Pontecorvo emigrated to Great Britain (Edinburgh) and then to the USA, where he became head of research at Raytheon, a large telecommunications firm operating in the field of national defense⁷⁵.

Nor did Gino Fano return to the Polytechnic. However, he resumed his post as *ordinario* at the University of Turin, albeit for only six months, from May 1 to November 1, 1946, the date of his retirement due to age limits⁷⁶.

June 2, 1939, and ASPoliTo, personal file of Scipione Treves, letter from the *Commissario* of the Polytechnic of Turin to prof. Treves, August 2, 1945.

⁷⁰ ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPLD, II, b. 492 *Treves Scipione*.

⁷¹ Treves is also listed as a *libero docente* in *Comunicazioni elettriche* at the Faculty of *Scienze matematiche, fisiche e naturali* of the University of Bologna in the Yearbook which includes the academic years between 1942 and 1946. At the same University he held, also for the following years, the *Tecnica delle trasmissioni su filo* for the Postgraduate course in *Radiocomunicazioni* and from 1956-57 he was a *libero docente* in both disciplines (*Macchine termiche* and *Comunicazioni elettriche*) of the Faculty of *Ingegneria* (see University of Bologna Yearbooks for the academic years from 1942-46 to 1956-57 available on <https://amshistorica.unibo.it/annuariunibo>). On October 1, 1967, he finally asked for exemption from teaching, as a *libero docente* in *Macchine termiche* at the University of Bologna, having reached the age limit. (cfr. ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPLD, II, b. 492 *Treves Scipione*).

⁷² Only one Yearbook was published for the years from 1941-42 to 1947-48.

⁷³ Accademia delle Scienze di Torino, *Biografie e Commemorazioni*, report on Gino Sacerdote, www.accademiadelle scienze.it/accademia/soci/gino-sacerdote (accessed 16/11/2018).

⁷⁴ ACS, MPI, DGIS, FPLD, II, b. 425 *Sacerdote Gino*, report of the examining commission (composed of professors Perucca, Vallauri and Codegone) for the definitive confirmation of professor Gino Sacerdote's *libera docenza* in *Comunicazioni elettriche*, February 10, 1948.

⁷⁵ Irene Bignardi, *Memorie estorte a uno smemorato. Vita di Gillo Pontecorvo*, La Feltrinelli, Milano, 1999, p. 17. See Frank Close, *Half- Life: The Divided Life of Bruno Pontecorvo, Physicist or Spy*, Basic Books, New York, 2015, p. 196.

⁷⁶ Valeria Graffone, *Espulsioni immediate. L'Università di Torino e le leggi razziali, 1938*, cit., p. 116.