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Table of Contents

Paolo Montesperelli <i>Memory in Social Research</i>	87
Marina D'Amato <i>Children, TV Spots, and Snaks</i> [Bambini, spot e merendine]	97
Shalva Weil <i>Two Global Pandemics: Femicide and COVID-19</i>	110
Claudia Gina Hassan <i>The Holocaust at School, between Remembrance and Oblivion</i>	113
<i>Special Section: Year 1938 and Italian Universities</i> <i>Section Editors: Tommaso Dell'Era and David Meghnagi</i>	
Tommaso Dell'Era, David Meghnagi <i>Introduction to Special Section:</i> <i>The "Racial Laws" of 1938 and Italian Universities.</i> <i>The Universities of Perugia, the Institute of Roman Studies,</i> <i>and the Rome High School "E.Q. Visconti"</i> [Introduzione all'inserto speciale: Le "Leggi Razziali" del 1938 e l'Università Italiana. Le Università di Perugia, l'Istituto di Studi Romani e il Liceo romano "E.Q. Visconti"]	122
Simona Salustri <i>Perugia and its University. Persecutions of Jews in 1938</i>	124
Gabriele Rigano <i>The University for Foreigners of Perugia and the Anti-Semitic Laws of 1938</i>	136
Donatello Aramini <i>A Racist and Anti-Semitic Romanità:</i> <i>The Racial Laws of 1938 and the Institute of Roman Studies</i>	161
Romana Bogliaccino <i>Researches and Teaching Experiences</i> <i>on the Fascist "Racial Laws" in High Schools:</i> <i>A Case Study of the Lyceum "E.Q. Visconti" of Rome</i>	197

Memory in Social Research

Paolo Montesperelli*

Abstract. The first part of the present study refers to the way in which some memory limits negatively affect the data faithfulness in social research. Then, a distinction is made between faithfulness, trust-worthiness and reliability, arguing that memory plays a crucial role also in the other two important requirements of empirical research. Finally, the symbolic nature of memory is analyzed – i.e., its close osmosis with the dimension of meaning – and emphasized other effects on social research.

Keywords: Memory; Meaning; Social research.

In the Dialogue on science *Theaetetus* (191c8-195a9), Socrates compares the experiences etched in memory to the engravings on a wax tablet, the writing system of the time. Over time, the number of memory-related similes has grown: memory as a warehouse (Aristotle and Saint Augustine), a palace or a garden (mnemotechnies), an original *tabula rasa* (Locke), a narrowing bottle neck (Renaissance¹), a photo album, a magnetic tape, a software, etc.

The basis of these different similes is still the symbolic nature of that writings / memories etched in wax. At the same time, the idea of memory as a delimited space has stood out: a space on which the experienced reality is imprinted in an approximately faithful way, precisely according to those limits.

The first part of the present study takes the same interpretative approach. That is, it refers to how some memory limitations negatively affect empiric investigation, particularly data faithfulness in social research. Then, I will distinguish between faithfulness, trust-worthiness and reliability, – arguing that memory plays a crucial role not only in faithfulness but also in the other two important requirements of empirical research.

Finally, I will return to the symbolic nature of memory – i.e. its close osmosis with the dimension of meaning – and emphasize other effects on social research.

1. Memory and data faithfulness

“Memory errors” constitute a very complex field. Schacter (2001) classified them into seven categories. The same “magic number” (Miller 1956) is also found in the seven ways of forgetting recorded by Assman (2016). Similarly, seven are the reasons that erase, mystify, or distort memories, according to Gobo (2015, 67).

Memory (with its “errors”) can play a significant role on the researcher’s role. For instance, one could think of the empirical basis creation, the legitimacy of research (“context of justification”), the availability of results etc. For example – in the context of ethnographic research – the notes or diaries used by the researcher to jot down observations, feelings, ideas and intuitions could be distorted if he remembered events that corroborate a prior interpretation, and forgot others that contradict it.

The passage of time as well might cloud the memory. To avoid this, the Lynds (1929, 1937) would take notes immediately after any contact with the inhabitants of Middletown, and would even report on accidental conversations. However, the concept of “faithfulness” usually refers to the interviewee.

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¹ See Assmann (2016/2019, 11-3, 61-3).

They must recall the necessary information to answer, so that we could claim that memory is so crucial that it pertains to the interview as a whole².

To facilitate the task of remembering, questions in the survey should follow a logical order, since the interviewee's "ordering of ideas is conducted by topics" (Ballatori 1994, 93). This precaution is nonetheless insufficient *per se*.

The researcher should further verify how faithful is the transformation of each answer in a data matrix. Generally speaking, faithfulness is precisely concerned with the correspondence of the *datum* in the matrix to the respective status on the property³. If this correspondence is only partial or null, the datum is not faithful.

Different misinterpretations can result from the phrasing of a question. Schacter shows how the re-enactment of a past event can change depending on the phrasing of the question in the survey (1996/2001, 104-5). The use of abstract terms and /or concepts limits short-term memory, leading the interviewee to non-relevant answers (Baddeley 1982/1999, 30; Montesperelli 2003, 65 ff).

Some scholars try to offer more detailed stimuli, as in the case of "stories" and "position vignettes". The former are episodes devised by Marradi (2005), anchored to daily life and well-detailed, told to interviewees so that they will express their opinion by remembering the narrated episode.

Similarly, "position vignettes"⁴ and other iconographic stimuli answer the same concern: to help comprehension. In this case the researcher resorts to visual memory, which is more lasting than verbal.

Socio-personal events or other factual information are usually easier to remember – even after several years. This fact would constitute an important guarantee of faithfulness in surveys based on these types of information, such as longitudinal surveys, for example those on social mobility in Italy (see Cobalti and Schizzerotto 1994).

Frequently the survey is verbose; moreover, interviewees are sometimes not motivated and often in a hurry. The survey presents no interest to them, and is hence not carefully read. For instance, interviewees are asked to read a long list of possible answer to a question in just a matter of seconds, remember them all, and appropriately choose the one closest to their ideas⁵.

This will result in the interviewee only remembering a few options - usually the first or the last on the list (see Treves 1998, 23) - and only choosing among these. Some software employed in telephonic surveys allow to reorder the list for every interviewee, specifically to avoid this problem. This solution, however, does not appear to be optimal in my opinion. Notwithstanding the reordering, interviewees will at any rate only remember a few options, especially since they only hear but cannot read the questionnaire.

A number of scholars have estimated the number of options that can be remembered: according to Miller (1956) and Luce (1959, 5 ff.) they are 7, with a range of ± 2 depending on particular conditions. Other more demanding scholars advise however not to exceed 3 options in all⁶.

Similarly, also taxonomies with too many classes could escape the respondent's memory. Exceptions are the classes of a cardinal variable, each of which has a very low semantic autonomy. In this context, it is sufficient to remember the overall meaning of the variable itself, rather than each of its categories. For example, it is straightforward to classify respondents by age, even when each category includes only one year, and the set of categories is numerous.

² According to Tourangeau and Rasinski (1988), re-enactments during an interview occupy the central position in a five acts sequence, from understanding the question to communicating the answer. However, this sequence seems too rationalistic and linear to me, as instead answers come from many feedbacks and reworkings *in itinere*. Furthermore, the two scholars seem to only consider mental processes of the individual respondent, leaving aside cultural and communicative contexts around him (Fideli and Marradi 1996; Gobo 2015, 57).

³ "Property" means a characteristic of any "cognitive object" (object, subject, event). The "state" is a way in which that property is manifested.

⁴ Position vignettes are so-called to distinguish them from "salience vignettes", in which the task is to recognize a theme, as in the TAT (Russo and Vasta 1988).

⁵ For examples, see Marradi (2019, 75-83).

⁶ See Galtung (1967, 108), Marradi (1984, 56), Bernardi (2005, 176), Marradi (2019, 80-1).

Nevertheless, apart from the exception of cardinal variables classification, it is still feasible to avoid unfaithfulness stemming from an excessive number of classes by breaking the list into several semantically homogeneous parts.

Alternatively, an open question can be asked by the interviewer, who will then verify each answer against the pre-decided categories, numerous as they might be. This task is however not usually trivial.

Faced with these and other examples, we may ask ourselves how to verify data faithfulness; this question is indeed crucial, as gathering accurate information should be the main goal of any research. But this effort is time consuming and demanding since it would require a cell-by-cell examination.

In statistical and psychometric theory, the assessment of the degree of correspondence between state and data relies on two conditions: the existence and knowableness of the actual state, and the measurability of the property in question, so as to detect the amplitude of any gap between actual and recorded status.

Unfortunately, in the field of social research the possibility of knowing the actual status is limited only to a few properties: typically, socio-personal data, which are attested by official documentation (residence, educational qualifications, voting records, etc.). Contrarily, knowability of attitudes and opinions' actual state is dubious, and sometimes its existence itself is uncertain. For instance, a survey question might presuppose opinions or knowledge that the interviewee might not possess (Gobo 1997, 82).

Furthermore, the few properties that would allow such faithfulness control are often not continuous or detectable by measurement units, and therefore do not provide a measurement of the gap between state and data (Marradi 1990).

In the case of surveys on attitudes and opinions, an “in-depth” non-directive interview could be added - for each interviewee – to the survey interview. This approach could potentially capture misrepresentations hidden in the directive interview answers. This procedure - labeled “interview on the interview”⁷ - would be very useful, but it is almost never employed as it is extremely time- and money- consuming, two crucial resources in the widespread Fordist conception of social research. In any case, even if the state of the subject did exist and were knowable, it is not given that it be stable. Opinions could fluctuate, and the reconstruction of a memory could change over time (see section 3).

2. *Research trust-worthiness*

A scientific community used to sift through procedures and empirical results achieved by colleagues in the same discipline should be part of trust-worthiness assessment. That is, said community should be capable to evaluate the *trust-worthiness* of the conceptual and operational definition of the different research outputs (Marradi 1990, 85).

While faithfulness concerns - as we have just seen - the single datum in its relation with the corresponding property state, trust-worthiness is a more general estimate of the probability that a given research (in that specific space-time context, subjects, researchers and collaborators, etc.) produce data which are more or less faithful. In other words, faithfulness assessment requires direct knowledge of the relative status, while the estimate of trust-worthiness is based on experience and on explicit and tacit knowledge of those who conduct the evaluation.

In my opinion, research that requires respondents to have very detailed memories has a high probability of including unfaithful data. The study of daily behaviors using time-balances detections entails asking each sampled subject for a systematic recording of time spent in a series of activities. From this recording, the researcher reconstructs the allocation of temporal resources and – indirectly – the behavioral models or the relevant values underlying the choices.

⁷ Leader in this line of research was the Lodz research center in Poland (Lutynski 1988), which was followed by a series of fruitful and original research coordinated by Alberto Marradi (1988; Marradi-Gasperoni 1992 and 2002).

Sorokin and Berger (1939) asked for the recording of activities with a 5-minute sensitivity. For a similar research in Turin, the survey covered an entire 24-hour period: all daily activities of each family had to be self-transcribed in a specific booklet, specifying their duration; for this research as well, the minimum temporal sensitivity threshold was 5 minutes.

Since behaviors were recorded, research was believed to be more objective (Belloni 1984, 51). However, I would advise greater caution in the matter: apart from the close link between semantics and memory (par. 4), remembering all the activities carried out is a difficult task, even more so remembering each individual activity extent and its temporal allocation. Likewise, the unfortunate person is unlikely to register their ongoing activities; rather he will do it *ex post*, maybe at the end of the day, in their spare time. Thus, the recording of behaviors will not be much more "objective" than other ways of reconstructing people's opinions, values, attitudes.

The same fallacy concerns retrospective research that ask the interviewee to remember certain episodes of their biography, their temporal location and extent. This information is apparently factual, and hence less biased by subjective evaluations and value orientations. In truth, the effects on memory of both time passed and the relation between experience and memory could make the respondent's responses far from "objective" (Corbetta 1999, 228-9).

Similar observations apply to several studies concerning the report relating to household expenses. The origin dates back to the first social investigations in 1850s France. The engineer – and later sociologist – Le Play would asked families to write down income and expenses in a diary, so as to then reconstruct the choices, behavioral patterns, and daily life of each family (Serger 1970, 181). Similar tools were adopted by Rowintree who asked 35 working-class families to keep records of income and expenses, as well as expenses for daily groceries (see Gobo 1997, 17ss.).

These examples have requests that are too meticulous, which can be pedantic or useless in the eyes of many interviewees, to the point of not justifying memory efforts.

Nonetheless, these limitations can be partially overcome if respondents are highly motivated to answer. A well-known research directed by Lazarsfeld used family consumption balances to reconstruct the daily life of Marienthal's unemployed. In that context, women administered the resources, carefully spending the little money available. Hence, they proved to be extremely accurate in remembering even the most minute voices, while men were much more distracted and forgetful (Jahoda et al., 1933/1986, 97).

Nowadays, an important source of information is ISTAT's periodic survey on the consumption of Italian families. This constitutes an incredibly important survey, as it contributes to the estimation of the country's national accounts, to the definition of the incidence of poverty, the distribution of public funds, etc. Indeed it is used by institutions, political decision-makers, experts in various disciplines.

For a 14 days period, each sampled family must daily record – in a “diary” of around sixty pages which is not trivial to fill out – the expenses incurred by all family members for the purchase of food and drinks, meals and drinks out of home, ready-made food, products at vending machines and non-food consumer goods and services, the quantities of self-produced goods (either consumed or given away), the places of most frequent purchase for food and non-food items. In turn, the surveyor asks – with a direct interview of the family after one month – additional information on the main expenses incurred by the family for goods and services and for the purchase of durable goods in the last three months⁸.

This survey appears to me so articulate, based on a wide and very meticulous range of expenses, to be too demanding. It requires a significant memory effort, for instance when the interviewee must indicate yearly amount of family savings, monthly expenses for each consumption type and for the many sub-items of each type. It is possible – and perhaps plausible – that in this case as well the compilation takes place, to say the least, at the end of the day, as for time-records, relying on approximate memories.

⁸ The questionnaire is 244 pages long.

3. Reliability in the relationship between data

While faithfulness and trust-worthiness concern the relation between the scientist's observation and the domain of witnessed referents, *reliability* concerns the relationship between two (or more) observations of the same cognitive object. If they differ, an observation error occurred, and such observation is not accurate and reliable as it should.

The origins of the notion of reliability relate to the physical sciences, a domain outside the scope of the present paper. I will therefore limit myself to a few ideas within the field of human sciences. Regarding multiple measures repeated on the same subjects, the *panel* consists in detecting the evolution of some trends, for example a diachronic change of attitudes, by interviewing the same sample multiple times over a long period of time. However, finding the same sample of interviewees twice or three times is extremely difficult. For this reason, the researcher usually prefers a retrospective approach, in which interviewees are asked to report on past events. Research on Middletown adopted this solution. In Middletown III (Caplow et al. 1982), 50 years after the previous survey, the same people were not interviewed.

For some, this was a limit, because the results proved “without a sense of historical depth” (Caccamo 1992, 184), as if images of the past and the present were only two photos, which do not allow to follow the transitions, developments, traumas of the transformations under analysis. From a methodological point of view, two reports distant in time cannot be conflated into one – albeit retrospective – based on memory. Reliability structurally requires at least two surveys on the same subjects.

Hermann Ebbinghaus' studies on memory contributed greatly to the definition of the first analysis techniques to estimate precision of repeated observations. However, it was Cronbach – commonly known for its *alpha* reliability coefficient – who identified two fundamental assumptions of this estimate: (1) the state of the object does not spontaneously change during the interval between the first and last observation; 2) nor is it altered by the observation process. Cronbach himself added to this formulation several doubts and critical remarks, especially on the first assumption (1947, 1-2, 4). The second assumption, instead, is often contradicted by contemporary survey procedures in social sciences.

Developing Ebbinghaus' intuition, in the 1900s a procedure was devised to “measure” reliability of an instrument by repeating the observations: it is the so-called *test-retest*, in which the researcher submits the same stimuli to the same subjects in different times (see Anastasi 1954/1997, 164 ff.).

The procedure is as follows:

- i. a stimulus (e.g. a direct question) is administered to multiple individuals at time t ;
- ii. the responses are coded and transformed into a vector of the matrix;
- iii. phases i. and ii. are repeated at time t' with the same interviewees and method;
- iv. a correlation coefficient is calculated between the numerical vectors obtained in phases ii. and iii.

The higher this correlation is, the greater the faithfulness of the recorded: in this sense, reliability and faithfulness would be the same thing. However, it is not so.

The correspondence between two (or more) trials does not imply their faithfulness at all. This is what happens in systematic errors: two (or more data) are identical, since they are both distorted by the same cause.

Also consider the case in which – given two repeated observations – the interviewee changes opinion or modifies a memory between t and t' ⁹. When he is interviewed for the second time, instead of manifesting his new point of view, he remembers his first answer and repeats it, concerned with

⁹ «One of the main causes of transformation in our memories is represented by the phenomena of interference. The time that separates the encoding [of a memory] from its recovery is filled with other learning experiences, often similar to the first one, that compete or integrate with it (...). The interference exerted by subsequent events on the re-enactment of previous events is also at the basis of one of the most effective procedures for inducing false testimonial memories.» (Vannucci 2008, 20).

showing consistency with past positions¹⁰ even at the cost of providing unfaithful declarations. Those with a long experience of empirical research know how frequent the concern of being coherent in their beliefs is, and how much this fits into a more general picture – already defined by Nietzsche (1886/1968, 71) and called by Goffman (1959) "presentation of the self".

Going back to the *test-retest*, we could then widen the interval between t and t' , trusting that time will erase the subject's memory of their previous response (this would be part of the "oblivion of erasure" put forward by Ricoeur, as explained in the next section).

But even if the two data resulted to be different from each other, they could both still be faithful: one with respect to the interviewee's original position, and the other with respect to the subsequent point of view. Whether, on the other hand, one of the two data is unfaithful, the researcher would still have to face the arduous task of finding out which one.

In other words, two concordant data are not necessarily evidence of faithfulness, and two discordant data do not prove un-faithfulness; thus, reliability cannot be confused with faithfulness, but – at most – could represent its cue.

Confusion between faithfulness and reliability has a noble origin: Aristotle considered worthy of knowledge only what was repeated in different referents or events, precisely because their "substance" – much more important than "accidents" – would manifest itself through repetition. Although a prosaic reason was much more decisive to muddy the waters: it is much more difficult to control faithfulness than reliability. As we have seen, faithfulness requires looking at referents external to the matrix, which is incredibly tough. Instead, verifying reliability is much easier, because it only requires looking within the matrix and, perhaps, solving problems by calculating correlation between vectors. It is very complex to understand if a narrated fact really happened, while it is much easier to detect whether the interviewee has told the same thing in the first and second survey. Confusing faithfulness with reliability means choosing the easiest way, even if it leads to a completely different direction. However, it also means considering the state and the datum as the same thing, which is a blast for all objectivists.

4. *Memory and the biographical approach*

We have so far considered "standard" social research – i.e. based on data matrix, statistical processing and analysis of the co-variation between variables. On the "non-standard"¹¹ side, recent decades have seen a development of the biographical method – along the so-called "narrative turn" (see Riesman 2001 and 2007). This approach encompasses some promising substantive and methodological innovations: the narrative is seen both as cognitive process constantly actuated in everyday life (Bruner 1986), and as an empirical research tool in the social sciences ("oral history", "life histories", etc.).

Methodology wise, some stress the limits of an approach based the interviewees memories, which render correct and truthful reports difficult to obtain (Corbetta 1999, 228-229; Campelli 1990). In short, it would be a scarcely "trustworthy" method (par. 2).

In fact, if it is rather problematic to verify the faithfulness of a datum in the "standard" co-variation method, it is even more so in the "non-standard" approach. Indeed, the correspondence between state and *datum* is lost in the absence of a matrix, and therefore the very notion of "faithfulness" collapses (par. 1). It is replaced by the more nuanced concept of "conformity", which in turn concerns the correspondence of the narrative to both the narrated event and the intention, memory of the narrator.

Let us begin with the conformity of the story to the events which are object of the story. In reconstructing how an event has "actually" unfolded, it is sometimes possible to triangulate sources,

¹⁰ Precisely repetition and its effects on memory can distort knowledge (Schacter 1996/2001, 114). «One of the contexts in which the need for stability emerges most is that of attitudes and beliefs. The majority of people has expectations of stability over time in their attitudes and beliefs (...). We tend to perceive ourselves to be consistent over time and therefore to think that we have firm and not easily modifiable attitudes and beliefs "(Vannucci 2008, 79; cf. Gobo 2015, 90).

¹¹ For a clear outline of the distinction between standard / non-standard, see Marradi (1996).

i.e. to compare interviews, audiovisuals, archives, other documents, etc. This is enabled by the “democratization of memory”, that is, by the fact that the possibilities of accessing the past are manifold, through biographies or archives not only of well-known personalities, but also of ordinary people, unknown to official sources.

The recurrence criterion is another way to try to control conformity of a story to the narrated event. If multiple interviews describe it in the same way, it is reasonable to believe that it really happened accordingly: «in my opinion, repetition is the salt of any serious research. I was happy every time a story was repeated because it meant that the various pieces, all equal and at the same time all different, would start to fit, finding the right place. The mosaic was taking shape and growing” (Revelli 1989, 48).

We could consider recurrence as the “non-standard” equivalence of reliability (par. 3): both are only cues, traces of objectivity of the collected information. In fact, it is not clear how many repeated occurrences it takes to render the trace credible, nor how many discrepancies to invalidate it. In addition, the same event told twice by the same interviewee in two different interviews is sometimes told differently: this happens not only because two interviewers will never ask identical questions, and not only when the two surveys are separated by a long period of time that could affect memories. It happens above all because a single interview will never exhaust the whole biographical and historical memory of the interviewees. Therefore, their story will only be an extract resulting from a selection also made interacting with the interviewer (Portelli 2007, 18; see Montesperelli 2003, 129). As Gadamer writes, experience can certainly be remembered, but it does not exhaust itself in any specific memory (1960/1983, 94)¹².

It is even more difficult to verify the conformity of a narrative to the narrator's memory and representations: the interviewee could be telling what he does not really think, moved by acquiescence towards the interviewer, social desirability, the intention of implying something, etc. These are frequent distortions in “non-standard” as much as in “standard” research (see Marradi 2019).

Both sides of conformity – with respect to factual events and to subjective representations – are affected by the adaptive, dynamic, symbolic and interpretative nature of memory¹³. Far from being a simple wax surface or an inanimate commodity placed on the mind's shelves, memories are active and transform, much like living organisms (Musatti 1931).

Also testimony of a past event, even in the witness' best intentions, can be swayed by many factors: previous or subsequent experiences, mental patterns, hierarchies of relevance and plausibility, expectations, stereotypes, typifications, others' memories. In addition, we could also list many unfathomable reasons (Mastrobernardino 2011, 29-35), or latently deriving from the intersubjective dimensions of either collective memory (Halbwachs 1924 and 1949), historical-linguistic preconceptions (Gadamer 1960), or proximity among people (Ricoeur 2000/2003, 175-176).

Especially from the Seventies, studies on “false memories” have been growing, to the point of constituting an autonomous disciplinary field, characterized by specific cognitive objectives and detection methods. Nevertheless, what the social researcher most often encounters are not “false memories”, but stories halfway between reality and imagination. In these accounts, « “invention” and “information” interchange and overlap, rendering the boundary between outside and inside the narrator exceedingly unclear» (Portelli 2007, 10).

The interview can make the interviewee remember what was hitherto forgotten, silent, unquestionable, and therefore not worthwhile of thought nor speech. As has happened to me and many other researchers multiple times, interviewees often thank the researcher at the end of the interview because the survey was an opportunity to reflect on themselves and their life story, and because it allowed them to problematize what they used to take for granted.

¹² «No autobiography is complete, no autobiographer can escape the question: what Self is the autobiography about, from which perspective is it composed, and for whom? The autobiography that we actually write is but one *version*, a way of achieving consistency » (Bruner 2002, 84; cf. Bruner 1986).

¹³ In this regard, Arendt (1978) offers a beautiful image: memory is like the slow and unceasing work of transformation of wrecks left on the bottom of the sea, modified by the continuous flows of life.

Hence a subject's "narrative identity"¹⁴ is always partial and in-progress for the subject itself, as well as in its communication with others (Ricoeur 1983-1985: see Bichi 2002).

The interviewee narrates themselves as if their current situation is the coherent, logical effect of past events. Perhaps, their story exaggerates similarities between now and then, to impose a sense of coherence and connection between facts that would be unrelated in themselves. Other circumstances are instead discarded, in order to maintain this idea of continuity, and *vice versa* others are strongly underlined, almost as if episodes of a personal epic to which all other circumstances deemed secondary can be traced. Finally, some events are remembered and told as a metaphor of implicit meanings, which the interlocutor must find.

Like memory, so its limits, distortions, gaps often originate from meanings of interest for the researcher. Facts can be narrated differently from their actual occurrence but in accordance with the meaning given to them by the narrator. Hence the "mistakes" of memory can sometimes be more important than the "truth". For this reason as well, "conformity" is different from "faithfulness", precisely because the former consists in its adherence not only to facts, but also to its distance from them. In this sense, memory – rather than a warehouse to store "goods" in, and subsequently recover them intact (par. 1) – is a matrix of meanings (Portelli 1985, 18).

The ample and diversified classic literature on memory confirms the concept of memory not as a simple depository. Rather, memory consists in an active re-elaboration of memories, as a use of time based on criteria of likelihood and relevance, on classifications, representations, even based on relations with the memory of others. When Halbwachs describes "collective memory", he considers it a creation on the basis of social change and of mediations between meanings inherent of individual memories. Furthermore, for Halbwachs social differentiation corresponds to a plurality of collective memories in dynamic relationship between them (1949). For Bartlett (1932) remembering, like any cognitive activity, is an effort towards meaning creation. That is, it does not proceed from past to present, but it also makes the reverse itinerary. In fact, its ultimate aim is to find a meaning that agrees with the current needs of the individual. Hence, memory contributes in a crucial way not only to the preservation of what *has been*, but also to the construction of what *is*. Precisely by virtue of "what is", Benjamin writes that "a lived event is concluded, or at least locked in the sole sphere of lived experience, while a remembered event is limitless, because it is only the key to access everything which happened before and after it" (1955/1973, 28). Still on the Frankfurt side, Marcuse (1955) extends memory to the unconscious, to its fantasies and meanings marginalized by the "principle of performance", prevailing in today's repressive society.

Going back to empirical research, in order to try to trace the meanings which shape memories, the researcher must draw on his own technical skills, but also on the "art of listening", on hermeneutic sensitivity, on his explicit and tacit personal knowledge. All precious qualities, but difficult to encode. All of this is even more vital when the interpretation wants to include oblivion as well. Oblivion should be conceptualised not only as a limitation, as a mere memory gap, but as a crack on its surface, full of meanings of its own. This happens indirectly: to remember something one has to forget something else. For a subject to recall and give meaning to a clipping of their own experience, another part of it must remain in the shadow.¹⁵

For Gadamer (1960) we think, speak, act, and in general are situated into history thanks to tradition, which is in fact composed by re-enactment but above all by oblivion: "I consider as one of the greatest intuitions passed to me by others the fact that Heidegger once, decades ago, explained to us that the past is not eminently in remembrance, but in forgetting" (Gadamer 1986-1993 / 1995, 9).

¹⁴ "Narrative identity" can be conceived as a unit formed "narratively", through consecutive identifications with and departures from socio-cultural objectifications. It is also the subjects' ability to reflect on themselves, to establish a narrative continuity across different experiences.

¹⁵ "Imagine a man who did not possess the power of forgetting at all and who was thus condemned to see everywhere a state of becoming: such a man would no longer believe in his own being, would no longer believe in himself, would see all things flow from one another in moving dots and he would lose himself in this river of becoming. In the end, as a true disciple of Heraclitus, he would hardly dare to raise his finger anymore. For every action we need oblivion: as for the life of every organic being we need not only light, but also darkness" (Nietzsche 1874/2001, 8). Similarly, Ricoeur considers a memory that forgets nothing (2000/2003, 590) ghostly and monstrous.

This also applies directly: oblivion in itself has multiple meanings and functions, so much so that Ricoeur (2000) identifies various types of oblivion. There is a “cancellation oblivion”, where memories are buried. There is also a “happy oblivion”, which preserves the memory and then makes it resurface. There is the oblivion induced by forgiveness, or the one that tends to forget our historical condition of finite beings, to tend instead towards an almost eschatological opening.

The inherent meanings of oblivion can also surface in social research. When a subject does not remember something in a conversation or in a narrative interview, their forgetfulness could constitute a censorship made by unconscious, or the effect of a personal trauma or a cultural taboo. The subject may forget an event also because collective culture or personal predispositions attribute a low degree of relevance to it. Sometimes the fractures, the caesuras that interrupt the biographical continuum, the turning points in personal life are mitigated or forgotten. This usually happens because the interviewee intends to communicate – to himself and others – a more coherent and continuous image of his own identity. Other “silences of memory” can express extraneousness, difference, with respect to objectified meanings. Let us think of when the interviewee does not remember having said what he finds written in the transcript of the interview: this can happen not only because he is “forgetful”, but because the translation from spoken to written, like any other translation, is always also a “betrayal” (Gadamer 1960/1983, 444 ff.; see Ricoeur 2001).

In short, we must consider not only the engraved signs in the wax tablet, but also the only apparently empty spaces between signs. Just like those gaps emphasize the sign, in the same way oblivion can better define memory. In its function of expressing meanings (albeit in an oblique, indirect way), oblivion is not opposed to memory, but part of it. Both converge in giving a sense to the sense-less, an order to chaos, a history to the past.

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Bambini, spot e merendine

Children, TV Spots, and Snaks

Marina D'Amato*

Abstract. Through a qualitative-quantitative research, it was possible to deduce that children and young people of the latest generations live globally in a media culture and receive less and less stimulation from local tradition due to the changing life of the generations that raise them, finding themselves growing up with media-mediated tastes. In this context, cardiologists and paediatricians identify new dysfunctions such as obesity, anorexia, bulimia, hypercholesterolemia, food intolerances as the most common diseases among the very young of the third millennium. The tradition implemented on the orographic and environmental climate of places has disappeared, and a fashion of food belonging to no one and therefore suitable for everyone, health alarms are the social indicator of an increasingly widespread discomfort.

Keywords: Childhood; Advertising; Nutrition; Sport.

Riassunto. Attraverso una ricerca di tipo quali-quantitativo, è stato possibile evincere che i bambini e i ragazzi delle ultime generazioni vivono planetariamente in una cultura mediatica e ricevono sempre meno stimoli dalla tradizione locale a causa dei mutati cambiamenti di vita delle generazioni che li allevano, trovandosi a crescere con gusti mediati dai media. In questo contesto, i cardiologi ed i pediatri individuano nuove disfunzioni come obesità, anoressia, bulimia, ipercolesterolemia, intolleranze alimentari come le patologie più diffuse tra i giovanissimi del terzo millennio. Venuta meno la tradizione implementata sul clima orografico e ambientale dei luoghi, ed assunta una moda di cibo appartenente a nessuno e per questo adatta a tutti, gli allarmi sanitari costituiscono l'indicatore sociale di un disagio sempre più diffuso.

Parole chiave: Infanzia; Pubblicità; Alimentazione; Sport.

1. Globalizzazione alimentare

La capacità di gestire il proprio corpo è una delle tappe iniziali del processo di socializzazione di ogni comunità umana. L'alimentazione costituisce l'elemento essenziale per la sopravvivenza, per la vita, per l'equilibrio psicofisico. Ogni comunità si distingue per ciò che mangia e gli antropologi dagli anni '20 in poi hanno dimostrato che la civiltà di un popolo può essere valutata in funzione della sua specifica cultura "alimentare". Il cibo come elemento distintivo di appartenenza identitaria è stato finora studiato soprattutto in termini storici (le tradizioni alimentari); o fisiologici (medico-sanitari).

La società dell'informazione nella quale viviamo muta lo scenario culturale globalizzandolo non solo in termini mitici e valoriali ma anche e soprattutto omologando stili di vita e comportamenti, quello alimentare in primo luogo.

Andy Warhol sosteneva che la Coca Cola diffusa nel mondo era la prova "provata" della democrazia americana perché ognuno poteva spendere quel poco necessario ad ingurgitarla.

La "mcdonaldizzazione" del mondo è uno dei fenomeni sociali più studiati non solo da un punto di vista prettamente alimentare, (egemonia del modello americano e sua diffusione) ma soprattutto culturale e valoriale. Nella società globale la Nestlé è l'esempio più evidente di una omogeneizzazione dei gusti che mutuando da ogni cultura un sapore li rende "medi", adattabili a tutti i palati.

I bambini e i ragazzi di queste ultime generazioni che vivono planetariamente in una cultura mediatica, che ricevono sempre meno stimoli della tradizione locale per i mutati cambiamenti di vita delle generazioni che li allevano, si trovano a crescere con gusti mediati dai media!

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I cardiologi ed i pediatri individuano nuove disfunzioni come obesità, anoressia, bulimia, ipercolesterolemia, intolleranze alimentari come le patologie più diffuse tra i giovanissimi del terzo millennio. Venuta meno la tradizione implementata sul clima orografico e ambientale dei luoghi, ed assunta una moda di cibo appartenente a nessuno e per questo adatta a tutti, gli allarmi sanitari costituiscono l'indicatore sociale di un disagio sempre più diffuso.

La televisione gioca un ruolo essenziale nella mediazione simbolica della realtà rivolta ai bambini e ai ragazzi, essa costituisce il vissuto più noto esterno alla famiglia. Nonostante non si possa correlare con certezza la fruizione del video ai comportamenti poiché nessuna ricerca sociologica scientificamente valida ha mai potuto mettere in relazione la visione all'azione, tuttavia i sociologi più accorti sono ormai convinti che lo schermo, con il flusso continuo di immagini e suoni, predispone agli utenti un modo di pensare il mondo. In questo contesto la pubblicità assume all'interno della programmazione dedicata ai bambini e ai ragazzi un ruolo essenziale. I tre motivi per cui i pubblicitari "usano" i giovanissimi in tv per veicolare i prodotti costituiscono le principali regole del marketing, si rivolgono infatti ai bambini perché sono: 1) immediati consumatori di prodotti; 2) mediatori di consumi con gli adulti di riferimento; 3) futuri consumatori.

Inoltre, la centralità dell'infanzia è importante pubblicitariamente perché ad essa si assimila nell'immaginario collettivo l'autenticità del prodotto, la sua bontà, la sua bellezza, la sua freschezza.

La pubblicità televisiva si pone come una sorta di scuola parallela che propone ai bambini un'educazione basata su valori condivisi. È così che Giuseppe Saggese, presidente della Società Italiana Pediatria (Sip), ha condotto un'analisi per studiare l'uso smodato della televisione da parte degli adolescenti: su 1200 studenti di scuola media di età compresa tra i 12 e i 14 anni, nel 1997 coloro che guardavano la Tv per più di tre ore al giorno era pari al 19% dei ragazzi. Nel 2004 la percentuale è salita al 26,8% per raggiungere nel 2005 la soglia del 31%). Di questi il 75,3% guarda la televisione durante i pasti. Chi potrebbe discutere la bontà del bene, del sapere, della bellezza, chi può mettere in discussione l'efficacia di una comunicazione che mira a coinvolgere positivamente la salute e la conoscenza? La pubblicità alimentare fa leva proprio su tutti questi valori esaltandoli attraverso dialoghi semplici ma soprattutto trasmettendoli con atteggiamenti autorevoli. È questo il dato che emerge di più a livello europeo mentre in Italia l'affettività ha la meglio su tutto. Si realizza nella velocità di una storia continuamente ripetuta di quindici secondi la trasmissione di un valore supremo: non tanto il diritto, ma il raggiungimento della felicità stessa. E ciò accade verticalmente, gerarchicamente perché sono i grandi che interagiscono tra loro o che si rivolgono ai piccoli, in qualche modo sono la rappresentazione di un'"educazione" dell'infanzia da parte della società. Gli spot diventano così non soltanto un luogo di identificazione, ma una vera e propria paideia, un modo per generare un nuovo tipo di essere umano provvedendo alla definizione di una identità, dando la possibilità di farlo per il tramite di qualcosa che si può acquisire molto facilmente: un cibo veloce, una barretta di cioccolata, una bibita. Gli adulti che sono quasi sempre i protagonisti degli spot italiani ed europei definiscono valori semplificando la realtà, fanno dentro lo schermo ciò che fanno nella vita. Inducono a mangiare facendo finta di non farlo e cioè usano parole, sguardi e gesti per far pensare agli altri che quel prodotto è un loro desiderio fanno credere con la loro naturalezza che il loro personale piacere si trasforma nel desiderio individuale di chi guarda. La manipolazione dei bambini preda e target è assai efficace in questi contesti in cui l'atmosfera gradevole e soprattutto il valore dell'armonia familiare che in Italia è egemone su tutti gli altri costituisce la prova del bene da assumere. Nel momento in cui i bambini vengono a contatto con questi personaggi e con le loro avventure, i simboli assumono un valore determinante per costruire la loro personalità e le relazioni con gli altri. La semplice trama della storia di uno spot in cui tutto fila liscio come l'olio e tutto finisce bene permette di vivere da vicino i protagonisti ma soprattutto di formarsi un giudizio personale, in questo caso una voglia che compensa anche la solitudine nella quale si è il pomeriggio di fronte al video. Si impara così attraverso gli spot della tv a conoscere una realtà che non ha regole, ma convenzioni fatte di attimi felici. La distinzione tanto dibattuta tra la realtà e la finzione nella percezione infantile qui viene completamente annullata perché non si fa appello a capacità cognitive sviluppate né alla funzione televisiva di essere una finestra sul mondo ma soltanto alla riproduzione

di uno specchio deforme della vita quotidiana: aldilà dello schermo tutto è felicità al di qua spesso non è così, ma basta mangiare per essere felici. Anche perché a differenza delle pubblicità dei giocattoli che una volta acquistati dimostrano troppo spesso la loro fallacia (non sono così grandi né così duttili come appaiono nelle mani del coetaneo televisivo) le barrette di cioccolata, le patatine, le bibite e perché no, gli antipiretici fanno effetto subito sono effettivamente molto buoni e la cadenza con cui vengono proposti in Italia più che altrove, consente di andarli a cercare in cucina prima che la storia ricominci. Accade quindi che l'immagine virtuale della tv diventa in un attimo vera. È dimostrato che le inserzioni pubblicitarie di prodotti alimentari contribuiscono massicciamente a predisporre risposte largamente condivise dal pubblico dei minori indipendentemente dal loro reddito e dalla loro cultura. Poiché la televisione generalizza il ceto medio per poter essere compresa dalle categorie meno acculturate e la pubblicità esalta questo aspetto. I bambini in questo modo finiscono per comparare la realtà più alla televisione che alla realtà stessa, anzi, in qualche modo la anticipano. Il meccanismo è semplice i minorenni osservano le azioni degli altri e fanno propri i modelli osservati come modalità di risposta ai problemi attraverso un processo di imitazione ma anche attraverso un più profondo meccanismo di identificazione. Si sa che durante l'infanzia la richiesta di modelli a cui adeguarsi è spontaneamente più forte che in qualsiasi altra età della vita e la visione costante e continua di modelli di comportamento che inducono a mangiare come risposta a ogni problema (la solitudine, l'abbandono, la disaffezione scolastica l'incomprensione) annulla le difficoltà e risolve le questioni. Che cosa c'è di più e di meglio? Inoltre, l'enfasi che gli spot soprattutto italiani pongono sulla bellezza e sulla linea del corpo influenza certamente il modo in cui le bambine vedono se stesse e l'importanza che pongono nell'essere affascinanti. Le ultime statistiche offerte dall'ISTAT sull'obesità mettono in evidenza come nella fascia di età più bassa si registrino le percentuali di maggiore magrezza tra le ragazze (delle ragazze sono sottopeso il 16,3% delle ragazze italiane tra i 18 e i 24 anni mentre sono sovrappeso il 17% dei ragazzi italiani della stessa età.) Gli stereotipi che emergono chiaramente dalle inserzioni pubblicitarie si rivolgono diversamente ai maschi e alle femmine perché i risultati delle ricerche condotte in questo ambito dimostrano la tendenza delle bambine e delle preadolescenti a comparare se stesse con i modelli delle pubblicità, tendenza che cresce con gli anni e che è più significativa in corrispondenza di una scarsa percezione della propria avvenenza e autostima. In definitiva il meccanismo dell'induzione e imbonimento persuasivo attraverso l'armonia e l'offerta di felicità garantita è molto semplice: con lo spot viene proiettata una immagine futura di come ognuno potrebbe essere grazie a quel prodotto, un'immagine a cui viene spesso associata anche l'invidia che diventa il motore per far accettare la proposta d'acquisto. Gli spot alimentari soprattutto italiani propongono un confronto tra l'immagine di sé al momento attuale e quella possibile e quindi è chiaro che senza quel prodotto si è una persona inferiore.

2. Pubblicità e alimentazione

Si sente sempre dire che i ragazzi di oggi mangiano male, lo junkfood è diventato anche la causa di un affidamento familiare in Gran Bretagna. È di qualche tempo fa la notizia che un bambino di 10 anni che pesa 89 chili è stato tolto alle cure materne ed affidato ai servizi sociali, perché si è considerata la scorretta alimentazione come una prova di maltrattamento nei suoi confronti. La giovane madre inglese si è difesa adducendo il pretesto che al figlio non piacciono le verdure e che per nutrirlo non può prescindere da patatine, hamburger, dolcetti... I giovanissimi mangiano o troppo o troppo poco; sempre più spesso in modo discontinuo o ossessivo. Le rubriche dei giornali ci insegnano a pensare che il cibo è la cartina di tornasole dell'equilibrio giovanile, che il peso dei ragazzi così come il loro colorito sia la prova della loro efficienza e normalità. I disturbi alimentari sembrano assurgere ad indicatori sociali del malessere delle società opulente.

Come può questa generazione di figli ipercalorici che ha vissuto un'educazione sentimentale "in punta di forchetta" non avere con il cibo un rapporto importante?

Questa è anche la prima vera generazione di ragazzi nati e cresciuti oltre che in famiglia e a scuola

anche davanti la TV e con le mani su una tastiera.

I mezzi di comunicazione di massa hanno veicolato nuove suggestioni alimentari: le merendine, gli snack, le bibite, oltre gli hamburger e gli hot dog riempiono lo stomaco dei ragazzi perché passano nelle loro menti continuamente come proposte di appartenenza a un gruppo, come ambiti di condivisione, come elementi che fanno parte della loro vita sociale, prima di entrare effettivamente nel loro stomaco.

Questa generazione ha imparato a mangiare guardando la televisione non solo perché spesso da bambini sono stati messi di fronte allo schermo per farli star buoni all'ora di pranzo e di cena, ma perché i loro programmi preferiti, sono "farciti" di merendine e di leccornie a lunga conservazione che divenendo desideri, di fatto soddisfano un duplice bisogno: quello di chiedere qualcosa che sarà facilmente esaudito e quello di far comprare qualcosa che verrà acquistato volentieri come lenimento di un diffuso senso di colpa degli adulti. Merendine, patatine, spuntini, dolcetti e bibite di ogni colore, costituiscono così il magico universo agro alimentare di una generazione che unisce il cibo al gioco, che concepisce il giocattolo come parte integrante del cibo (si pensi ai gadgets che popolano i pacchetti di merendine) e che soprattutto diventa così parte di un più ampio gruppo di pari.

Che cosa sa questa generazione del ciclo alimentare? Chi ha insegnato l'imprescindibile importanza di un'alimentazione corretta? Arriveremo anche noi ai consulenti etici statunitensi che aiutano i grassi americani a ritrovare la loro taglia medium? Secondo i ricercatori più aggiornati i consulenti valutano le risorse con cui è prodotto un oggetto e l'efficienza energetica del suo uso e quindi la possibilità di vivere in modo "sostenibile" analizzando il cibo come il resto delle cose che si acquistano o si fanno. L'etica living è una dieta in cui non si mangia di meno ma con la quale si contribuisce a cambiare le emissioni di gas serra!

I problemi che queste questioni pongono sono evidentemente psicologici, sociali, economici.

La questione psichica è difficilmente valutabile se non nel riconoscimento della vastità del disagio che si manifesta con i disturbi alimentari. A ciascuno il suo percorso di dolore e di lotta, alle cronache e alle statistiche i dati salienti di un dramma umano che da individuale diventa sociale.

Qual è la portata dell'influenza della pubblicità sui bambini? In che misura li condiziona nei loro comportamenti di acquisto, in che modo gli adulti lo fanno in loro vece? Gli studi di marketing hanno percepito grandi cambiamenti nei consumi delle famiglie a partire dagli anni '80, non solo per l'aumento del potere di acquisto, le possibilità del tempo libero, ma anche per il cambiamento di attenzione ai bisogni e ai desideri dei bambini. Da allora il consumo di beni utili come il cibo e di oggetti inutili come i gadget è in continua crescita e i giovanissimi hanno un ruolo centrale in questa tendenza. Gli studi mettono in evidenza quanto le loro "paghettoni" influiscano economicamente, ma anche quanto sia ampia la loro partecipazione nelle decisioni di acquisto familiare, ma soprattutto come nel nostro caso si evince quanto il consumo sia un mezzo di risoluzione di conflitti o di tensioni familiari. Tutte queste ragioni economiche e non hanno reso i bambini e i ragazzi i nuovi protagonisti del mercato. La pubblicità fa crescere alcuni prodotti ed attribuisce status ai marchi facendo leva sul bisogno di conformità culturale degli adolescenti. Rivolgendosi direttamente a loro piuttosto che ai genitori la pubblicità guadagna gli spazi più importanti. Questo tema dell'infanzia protagonista degli spot pubblicitari costituisce una questione importante nei paesi nordici perché suggerisce in qualche modo un cambiamento delle gerarchie familiari ed individua espressamente nel bambino l'agente economico, per questo in Svezia sono tassativamente vietate le pubblicità con i bambini. Non potendo considerare il bambino il destinatario principale dell'acquisto, l'influenza che il messaggio pubblicitario può esercitare è rivolta a prodotti per ragazzi, ma che diventano appetibili anche per gli adulti che hanno il desiderio di ringiovanirsi costantemente. Ciò è legato non solo ai prodotti di pulizia, ma anche se non soprattutto a quelli alimentari. Del resto, i bambini meno sensibili alle novità dimostrano di fidelizzarsi ai prodotti: meno sensibili degli adulti alle novità e tra le tante analisi compiute sui giovani consumatori un risultato le accomuna trasversalmente, i bambini restano più fedeli alle marche di tutti gli altri. La fidelizzazione al prodotto è stata studiata ovunque e l'elemento più significativo delle scelte adulte è che sono state introiettate dai bambini. In fin dei conti i grandi acquistano ciò che hanno conosciuto da piccoli. Rispetto all'esposizione dei messaggi pubblicitari

anche da questa mia ricerca emerge che un bambino italiano medio seduto davanti alla tv per 3 ore giorno alla fine dell'anno ha visto 32.850 spot pubblicitari alimentari e notoriamente la pubblicità realizza un sogno: la realizzazione di sé attraverso l'acquisto inglobando una serie di altri valori: riassume le mitologie contemporanee più forti con poche parole e molte sensazioni.

Dalla ricerca emerge che l'atmosfera conta più delle formule, suggerendo relazioni di significati che pur mirando a qualcosa di assai concreto come il cibo, di fatto evocano elementi che fanno approdare la felicità in una fantasmagoria di mondi possibili. Lo abbiamo osservato, lo scopo non è quello di informare né di sorprendere, ma di persuadere divertendo, associando il cibo all'anelito più importante della vita: la felicità.

Nel caso degli spot alimentari non si pone neanche il problema spesso evocato di confusione tra la realtà e la fantasia. E i bambini che vivono a ritmo della loro epoca così come è messo in scena dalla pubblicità, assimilano o comunque percepiscono continue manifestazioni di edonismo, tutto ciò pone evidentemente una sfida al mondo dell'educazione.

Come affrontare i giovani in un contesto dominato dalle mitologie di mercato, dalla macchina della soddisfazione, dalla provocazione del piacere? Come ripensare il ruolo dell'educazione, soprattutto quella alimentare nella nostra epoca che valorizza la superficialità, l'immaginazione, il pragmatismo, i sentimenti, le emozioni e la complicità con gli adulti, piuttosto che il ragionamento, la cultura, l'etica?

3 Nota metodologica

Nell'indagine svolta per offrire una prospettiva comparativa, sono stati presi in esame gli spot alimentari trasmessi da un campione di emittenti televisive europee durante una fascia oraria stimata di alto ascolto da parte di un pubblico di minori, ma anche associata ad essa la dimensione della prossimità dello spot alla fascia presa in esame. Il campione selezionato e sottoposto ad analisi è corposo: due settimane di programmazione nella fascia fra le 16:00 e le 19:00 per 24 emittenti di 11 paesi europei: Italia, Francia, Gran Bretagna, Germania, Spagna, Olanda, Norvegia, Svezia, Portogallo, Polonia e Grecia. In totale, sono state monitorate 1008 ore di programmazione televisiva e per ognuno degli spot alimentari ivi trasmessi è stata compilata una scheda di analisi del contenuto appositamente disegnata.

La prima settimana campionata è quella da lunedì 27 novembre a domenica 3 dicembre 2006, la seconda da lunedì 22 a domenica 28 gennaio 2007. La ricerca è stata poi aggiornata al 2009. Questi due periodi sono stati scelti in modo ragionato in momenti di alta stagione televisiva, avendo solamente cura di evitare periodi atipici del palinsesto televisivo, quali festività o eventi televisivi che, per natura e straordinarietà, inevitabilmente modificano le strutture abituali della programmazione.

La tabella che segue riporta in dettaglio l'elenco delle 24 reti analizzate. Per ogni paese è stata scelta un'emittente pubblica e una privata, seguendo il criterio della popolarità, consultando i dati medi di ascolto e il tipo di programmazione. Qualche eccezione a questa regola si è resa necessaria, poiché in alcune nazioni europee esistono già limitazioni al marketing pubblicitario. È il caso di due paesi scandinavi quali Norvegia e Svezia, dove i network pubblici (rispettivamente NRK e STV) non trasmettono alcuna pubblicità, ma anche della Gran Bretagna dove i canali nazionali della BBC seguono la stessa politica. Nel caso inglese, è stata inclusa nel campione la rete *Channel 4*, che ha uno status misto: pur essendo controllata da una *public corporation*, questa rete, a differenza della BBC, si finanzia esclusivamente attraverso la vendita di spazi pubblicitari.

Infine, per quanto riguarda l'Italia, è stato ampliato il campione alle 6 emittenti principali per quote di mercato; i due network RAI e MEDIASET sono stati quindi interamente monitorati.

Tabella 1: Il campione di reti analizzato

Paesi	Reti analizzate
Italia	Rai 1 (pubblica) Rai 2 (pubblica) Rai 3 (pubblica) Rete 4 (privata) Canale 5 (privata) Italia 1 (privata)
Francia	France 2 (pubblica) TF1 (privata)
Gran Bretagna*	Channel 4 (mista pubblica e privata) ITV1 (privata)
Germania	ARD (pubblica) RTL (privata)
Spagna	TVE-1 (pubblica) Tele 5 (privata)
Olanda	Netherland 3 (pubblica) Veronica (privata)
Norvegia**	TV2 (privata)
Svezia**	TV4 (privata)
Portogallo	RTP1 (pubblica) TVI (privata)
Polonia	TVP1 (pubblica) TVN (privata)
Grecia	ET-1 (pubblica) Mega (privata)

* Le reti pubbliche della Gran Bretagna non trasmettono pubblicità; è stata pertanto scelta in sostituzione la rete mista Channel 4.

** Le reti pubbliche di Norvegia e Svezia non trasmettono pubblicità; per questi due paesi è stata analizzata la rete privata principale.

La metodologia impiegata si fonda su una scheda di analisi del contenuto strutturata, che si compone di 6 diverse sezioni: informazioni di base sugli spot pubblicitari (1), caratteristiche del prodotto pubblicizzato (2), modalità di induzione al cibo (3), descrizione dei personaggi principali (4), eventuali caratteristiche della famiglia (5) e del gruppo dei pari (6). Queste aree coprono gli aspetti salienti della pubblicità alimentare non solo da un punto di vista quantitativo, quanti spot, in quali reti, di quali prodotti, ma anche qualitativo svelando profilo e strutture dei messaggi pubblicitari¹.

Sono stati considerati pertinenti all'analisi tutti gli spot che pubblicizzano alimenti e bevande di ogni tipo; si è anche deciso di includere, per completezza, le pubblicità di medicinali ingeribili, quali vitamine, antidolorifici, antipiretici. Non sono stati invece considerati spot pertinenti all'analisi le sponsorizzazioni dei programmi, poiché in questo caso non vi è uno spot vero e proprio ma solo la citazione di un prodotto ("il programma è stato presentato da ..."), e gli spot di catene di distribuzione (quali Sainsbury, Tesco, Coop, etc.), dove a essere pubblicizzato non è un prodotto specifico ma il luogo dell'acquisto.

Nel 1750 a.C. Il Codice di Hammurabi considerava un crimine punibile con la morte vendere qualcosa a un bambino approfittando della sua buona fede. Oggi nonostante le norme costituzionali, civili, e penali che tendono ad allungare l'età della responsabilità, il *puer* italiano è soprattutto un target economico divenendo così nella prassi quotidiana quel *puer economicus* a cui si rivolgono le imprese multinazionali non solo per i prodotti di abbigliamento, pulizia, ma anche se non soprattutto per quelli alimentari.

Gli *spot* diventeranno il luogo in cui si “affitta” o si “compra” uno stile di vita? L’uomo fin dalla nascita è coinvolto in processi di trasformazione che alterano il suo stato, trasformandolo in qualcosa o qualcun altro. Oggi questa rappresentazione di essere “qualcuno” è diventata sempre più cosciente e di natura soprattutto commerciale. Un numero crescente di ragazzi considera se stesso alla stregua di un attore. La medializzazione di buona parte delle nostre esperienze, con la loro quasi totale assimilazione nella sfera economica-commerciale, è un fenomeno sociale di grande portata, tanto che “corriamo il rischio di diventare i primi, nella storia, in grado di rendere le nostre illusioni così vivide, pervasive e realistiche da poterci vivere dentro” (Rifkin, 2000).

La ricerca

Ogni dieci minuti, ogni bambino europeo è indotto a mangiare qualcosa. Ma i bambini italiani sono sollecitati a farlo ogni cinque!

Se è vero come i dati raccontano che in occidente si guarda, da ragazzi, la televisione per almeno tre ore al giorno, e se è altresì vero che in quasi tutti i paesi europei esiste un’attenzione specifica a quella che è considerata la fascia debole, tanto da programmare solo telefilm, storie, cartoni animati e quiz adatti ai più piccoli è un dato oggettivo che non fanno in tempo a finire una merendina o uno snack che già un’altra sollecitazione golosa appare sullo schermo. Per avere un’idea della dimensione di esposizione agli spot alimentari, si può stimare che un bambino che guarda una media di tre ore di televisione al giorno “subisce” circa 32.850 pubblicità di alimenti nell’arco di un anno (affollamento pubblicitario ricavato dall’analisi delle reti esaminate nel campione italiano). La dimensione del fenomeno è tale da influire in maniera significativa sull’educazione alimentare, anche se la pubblicità non ha il fine di insegnare ma di vendere.

La ricerca compiuta su 11 paesi europei (Italia, Francia, Gran Bretagna, Germania, Spagna, Olanda, Norvegia, Svezia, Portogallo, Polonia, Grecia) in due settimane campione di novembre (la prima) e febbraio (l’ultima) negli anni 2006 -2007 e 2009 scelte per la loro lontananza da eventi conviviali come il Natale, il Carnevale o la Pasqua, mette in evidenza che il bombardamento di spot nei programmi per bambini è immenso. E quello alimentare assume un ruolo importante in un panorama pieno di giocattoli, e di gadgets.

Tutto ciò contro ogni principio “di etica pubblica” perché l’allarme dei pediatri, degli insegnanti, dei ministeri della gioventù è un grido comune contro i disturbi alimentari: obesità da un lato e anoressia dall’altro sembrano i sintomi del nuovo disagio della civiltà.

Scuola, famiglia, medicina, istituzioni, sembrano compatte contro un nuovo nemico: la grande abboffata. Eppure, la televisione diventa il veicolo continuo, capillare e invadente di un nuovo stile di comportamento.

Si mangia per noia, si mangia per riempire un vuoto, si mangia per calmare l’ansia, si mangia perché è buono, per stare con gli altri, si mangia perché è di moda, si mangia perché altrimenti sei fuori dal giro e il gruppo dei pari non ti riconosce senza l’uso di quella bibita o di quella patatina “ultimo modello”. E si mangia soprattutto in quel lungo tempo che si passa davanti alla televisione, che ogni 10 in Europa e 5 minuti in Italia lo ricorda. Si mangia anche perché i genitori comprano, per placare il senso di colpa della loro assenza, prodotti zuccherati, ipercalorici, grassi, che danno nell’immediato con il senso di sazietà la soddisfazione di riempire un vuoto. È un gioco delle parti che sta travolgendo secolari abitudini alimentari dei paesi europei.

La globalizzazione di cui tanto si parla a livello economico, dei flussi migratori, delle opportunità culturali, andrebbe forse soprattutto considerata a partire dall’omologazione del palato che non risponde più alle necessità dell’ambiente (cibi più grassi nei luoghi del freddo), dieta mediterranea all’olio d’oliva nel bacino che lo produce, ecc. ma un qualche cosa che mediato da tutti i sapori li sintetizza elaborandoli in un gusto che non appartiene a nessuno, ma che proprio per questo può

andare bene a tutti alterando l'essenza iniziale e modificandola in modo tale da costituire un sapore che la evoca ma che non le appartiene realmente.

Si può chiamare il limoncello "Limoncè"? Il primo nasce e cresce in un terreno aspro vicino al mare assolato, e il suo sapore è l'inconfondibile sintesi di una spremuta di un agrume locale, amalfitano e salernitano, il secondo ricorda quel gusto ma lo reinventa in modo da poter essere condiviso da tutti coloro che non amano l'aspro o il troppo intenso.

La globalizzazione del pianeta attraverso le ghiandole salivari meriterebbe un'analisi accurata e metodica. In questo ambito è sufficiente pensare che i gusti fondamentali: il dolce e il salato vengono esaltati e proposti ai bambini di tutto il mondo attraverso sostanze che li evocano reinventandoli e soprattutto attraverso circostanze ideali che li mettono in evidenza veicolandoli: famiglie felici, giochi, atmosfere di pienezza e libertà che per la più semplice legge del mercato pubblicitario, passano al prodotto con la proprietà transitiva.

La felicità del gruppo di amici che beve Coca Cola, o la gioia di un succo di frutta guadagnato dopo una corsa sul prato sono l'incomparabile seduzione del successo del desiderio che con pochi euro può essere soddisfatto.

La ricerca mette in evidenza che nelle 3 ore al giorno, per le due settimane esaminate, di 24 emittenti, le pubblicità di alimenti in Europa sono 5.563.

Nel caso italiano delle 6 reti Rai e Mediaset, prese in esame, gli spot alimentari sono 1.256.

Ogni bambino quindi vive in una realtà di 90 sollecitazioni quotidiane utili ad ingerire cibo, bevande o farmaci, nonostante una norma che vieta di interrompere i programmi per bambini con la pubblicità e che impedisce a loro tutela le inserzioni di alcolici nella fascia protetta.

Questa mole di spot conferma l'attenzione dell'industria alimentare al mercato pubblicitario, in particolar modo quello televisivo. A conferma delle ipotesi e dei dati rilevati nella ricerca, anche l'Osservatorio sulla comunicazione pubblicitaria della Facoltà di psicologia dell'Università Sapienza ha rilevato in una settimana campione (15-21 maggio 2006) delle reti Rai e Mediaset 1.000 spot rivolti ai bambini, 154 al giorno, più di 56.000 in un anno. Il 90% degli spot per bambini è trasmesso dalle reti commerciali, Italia1 l'80%. La maggiore concentrazione è durante la fascia protetta. I prodotti alimentari e i giocattoli rappresentano il 50% degli spot. La proposta del prodotto alimentare non è rivolta solo al bambino, ma spesso coinvolge l'intera famiglia. Le aziende acquistano spazi per le pubblicità dei propri prodotti indirizzati ai bambini prevalentemente durante il fine settimana, la domenica in particolare e di mattina, durante il pranzo e il pomeriggio, rivolgendosi soprattutto alla fascia d'età 4-14 anni. Le cinque reti considerate nella ricerca (le reti RAI e Italia Uno e Canale 5) trasmettono in un anno 15.000 prodotti alimentari rivolti ai bambini, cioè 20 minuti di trasmissione al giorno. Se oltre a questi si considerano anche le pubblicità non espressamente rivolte ai bambini, ma che li possono comunque coinvolgere, la cifra raddoppia (Metastasio, 2007).

L'estensione del fenomeno, ed il suo impatto potenziale sulle scelte alimentari dei minori, può essere meglio compresa con qualche rapido calcolo sui livelli di esposizione alle promozioni alimentari in TV. La quota di pubblicità alimentare trasmessa nelle 252 ore di programmazione monitorate per questa ricerca nelle reti italiane raggiunge circa le 6 ore; nel campione di emittenti utilizzato per un confronto a livello europeo, sono oltre 25 le ore di spot alimentari analizzati. Fra i pubblici televisivi, la quota di bambini che osservano queste pubblicità alimentari è elevata in diverse fasce orarie, tanto più in quella pomeridiana fra le 16:00 e le 19:00, fascia peraltro protetta in Italia. Si può concludere che la massiccia esposizione a pubblicità alimentari contribuisce in maniera significativa alla (dis) educazione alimentare dei minori.

Il numero di spot alimentari varia significativamente nelle diverse realtà europee.

In Italia Rai 1 e Canale 5, le due reti selezionate per il confronto, sono presenti con 592 passaggi al terzo posto nella classifica del numero di spot alimentari trasmessi; precedono l'Italia solamente Polonia e ciò si spiega soprattutto con la "novità" del libero mercato e di un potere d'acquisto che va

quotidianamente evolvendo nonostante l'inflazione galoppante, e una povertà diffusa, non è un caso che i prodotti alimentari soprattutto esteri possano costituire nell'immaginario e nella realtà collettiva una forma di immediata partecipazione ad un mondo "ricco", occidentale e forte quale appare quello dell'ovest.

Le inserzioni pubblicitarie di cibo che propongono un prodotto di basso costo possono in qualche modo avvallare quelle teorie economiche politiche che considerano la Mc Donaldizzazione del mondo un'espansione democratica dell'occidente. La discrasia tra l'offerta mediatica di bottigliette planetarie e di patatine condivise in mezzo mondo è evidente allo sguardo di ogni turista, che scorge all'entrata di Mc Donald, in ogni angolo della Polonia, una donna anziana che propone piccole ricotte avvolte in cesti fatti a mano. Scontro di civiltà? O archeologia del vivere comune? (880 spot).

Il caso spagnolo è emblematico a livello Europeo per la rapidissima evoluzione economica e di stile di vita nell'accesso alla comunità UE. Si osservano facilmente i successi delle grandi imprese di moda, edili, televisive e telefoniche che stanno rivoluzionando non solo lo stile degli spagnoli, ma anche quello dei cittadini europei e del mondo. Non a caso forse il numero elevato di inserzioni pubblicitarie alimentari che omologa al resto del mondo uno stile di vita monarchico e tradizionale può essere letto come un esempio pratico dell'innovazione che trasforma il Paese. Il giovanilismo di Barcellona, Madrid e Siviglia non si racconta più solo attraverso la velocità dei treni che le uniscono e la forza di attrazione che esercitano nei confronti dei ragazzi europei, ma anche attraverso un cibo che uguale ovunque, li fa sentire a casa (828 spot).

È molto significativa la differenza quantitativa di spot alimentari con gli altri paesi quali la Svezia che conta solo 58 spot in due settimane! Un bambino svedese in fondo è interrotto solo quattro volte al giorno, mentre guardala tv! I ragazzini olandesi (212 spot) sono interrotti più spesso con l'induzione alimentare, 15 volte non è poco durante un pomeriggio. In Norvegia (228 spot) la quantità di spot alimentari è praticamente analoga a quella olandese.

Ciò che si evince dal complesso dell'analisi è che nonostante le grandi differenze fra paesi, il tema delle pubblicità alimentari e il ruolo svolto nell'educazione alimentare è materia di preoccupazione in tutta Europa.

L'affollamento di spot alimentari è molto eterogeneo nelle reti televisive che abbiamo preso in considerazione.

Ovunque esistono restrizioni pubblicitarie per le televisioni pubbliche finanziate con il canone o comunque di stato e naturalmente diverse dalla logica che anima e sostiene le tv commerciali che fondano la loro economia sull'introito pubblicitario.

Per queste argomentazioni rimandiamo alla nota normativa che esplicita comparandole le diverse legislazioni in materia (D'Amato 2007).

Le reti pubbliche analizzate hanno infatti trasmesso meno spot alimentari, come conseguenza del minore affollamento pubblicitario; tuttavia, anche fra le emittenti pubbliche europee esistono importanti differenze. In Italia, le reti Mediaset hanno trasmesso 971 spot contro i 286 della Rai; le reti pubbliche hanno quindi messo in onda meno di un terzo delle pubblicità alimentari trasmesse dal network privato. Confrontando le reti pubbliche campionate a livello europeo, emergono politiche di rete radicalmente divergenti: le reti pubbliche in Svezia (STV), Norvegia (NRK) e Gran Bretagna (BBC) non vendono inserzioni pubblicitarie quindi nessun programma pomeridiano viene interrotto ed i bambini svedesi, norvegesi ed inglesi di fronte ai programmi delle reti di Stato non subiscono induzioni all'acquisto di nessun genere.

Il caso italiano è ben diverso perché Rai 1 ha trasmesso 176 spot alimentari, nel periodo che abbiamo considerato, in fondo il pomeriggio della fascia protetta è "rimpinzato" solo di 13 spot meno solamente della rete pubblica spagnola TVE1 (416) e polacca TVP1 (369 spot).

Tutto ciò anche se i dati complessivi mettono in evidenza che solo il 34% degli analizzati si rivolge

a giovani consumatori. Ma la salienza con cui i bambini e i ragazzi sono presenti mette in risalto la loro presenza qualitativa più di quanto non accada quantitativamente.

Il contesto “casalingo” è il più frequentemente utilizzato dalle pubblicità che promuovono alimenti perché quando in televisione si accenna al cibo di fatto si evoca la casa in tutta la semplice sicurezza che questa comporta.

La casa si propone come luogo ideale di consumo e come rassicurante garanzia sulla bontà del prodotto.

La tendenza a utilizzare la casa come ambientazione prevalente è soprattutto frequente in Italia (37% di spot), ma è anche presente negli altri paesi europei. Altri contesti molto utilizzati per vendere alimenti sono quello “naturale”, quello “urbano” e quello “fantastico o fiabesco”. Il contesto naturale amplifica l’immagine di qualità del prodotto, in particolare in relazione alle materie prime utilizzate, mentre il contesto urbano pone l’accento pubblicitario sulla semplicità di consumo al di fuori delle mura domestiche. Il contesto fantastico o fiabesco è particolarmente efficace per stimolare la fantasia dei bambini. L’elemento che accomuna tutte le ambientazioni pubblicitarie ovunque e che quindi costituisce una costante è la dose di tranquillità e sicurezza di ogni ambiente, ove le dimensioni di rischio (alimentare) sono sempre escluse.

Gli spot di alimenti ricchi di zuccheri, grassi e sali sono parte assai consistente delle pubblicità alimentari.

In Italia, circa il 36% di pubblicità promuove prodotti con consistenti calorie, come dolci e merendine, snack dolci o salati e catene di fast food, cioè hamburger, patatine fritte e bevande gassate. Nessuna di queste pubblicità ovviamente avverte di consumare i prodotti con moderazione. Rispetto agli altri paesi europei, l’Italia primeggia nelle pubblicità di pasta, pani e cereali, in particolare di dolci, torte e pasticceria, mentre ha percentuali inferiori di spot dedicati ai latticini, in particolare yogurt e bevande a base di latte.

Un dato critico che emerge dall’analisi è che i prodotti ipercalorici, pensati in gran parte per il fuori pasto, sono prevalentemente rivolti a un pubblico giovane. In Italia, questo è il caso delle pubblicità di fast food, sempre rivolte a un pubblico di ragazzi; delle pubblicità di snack dolci o salati, rivolte a giovani nel 75% dei casi; delle pubblicità di dolci e merendine, rivolte a giovani nel 43% dei casi. Bambini e adolescenti sono quindi il target privilegiato dei prodotti ad alto potere calorico e pochissimo investiti della necessaria moderazione da assumere nei loro confronti. Non esistono praticamente nel nostro paese pubblicità di educazione alimentare.

Le pubblicità di prodotti adatti a diete sane e bilanciate sono poco frequenti.

Fra queste, ad esempio, le pubblicità di verdure in Italia non superano il 10% degli spot alimentari. Le promozioni di yogurt e cereali sono spesso associati a una comunicazione che sottolinea gli effetti benefici e salutari; nel caso dei cereali per la prima colazione, è però opportuno ricordare che esistono diverse pubblicità di cereali arricchiti di zuccheri o cioccolato, che modificano le qualità nutrizionali dei prodotti aumentandone le calorie e che seducono invogliando all’acquisto proprio per questo. Nel circuito pubblicitario, quindi, i prodotti consigliati a bambini, ma non solo, per una dieta equilibrata non riescono a controbilanciare la quantità di prodotti inadeguati a un’alimentazione corretta.

Campagne sociali per una corretta alimentazione e contro l’obesità infantile esistono in diversi paesi europei e denunciano l’impegno non solo istituzionale, scolastico o sanitario, ma anche una presa di coscienza da condividere nel motivare diverse abitudini alimentari.

L'Italia è esclusa da questa pratica e da questa motivazione pubblicitaria, nonostante le campagne educative compiute dalla presidenza del Consiglio e dalle Associazioni private come Pubblicità Progresso (Cuoco, Pagani, Pasquali, 2006; Raineri, 2005; Gadotti, 2004)).

L'idea di usare la pubblicità stessa per insegnare a mangiar bene è una pratica educativa rilevata con spot di diversa natura, in Spagna, Gran Bretagna, Polonia e Portogallo. La particolarità tutta francese è quella di aver adottato di recente un provvedimento che impone a tutti gli spot alimentari televisivi di includere una scritta in sovrapposizione che richiami l'attenzione dei telespettatori verso una dieta bilanciata e l'utilità dell'esercizio fisico.

Non è ancora dato sapere quanto e in che misura queste inserzioni educative, avranno un ruolo di indirizzo e di contenimento nei confronti dei ragazzi perché nessuna indagine ne ha valutato gli effetti nel breve e lungo termine, tuttavia appare evidente che se l'induzione al cibo ipercalorico produce di fatto un maggior consumo di esso, non c'è ragione di non credere che una campagna educativa non abbia un impatto analogo almeno a livello di un ripensamento, di una riflessione o anche di una conoscenza non impositiva di altre possibilità. Le iniziative di questo genere suscitano molto interesse e è opportuno rimarcare che non sono state ancora recepite in Italia.

L'associazione di prodotti alimentari a gadget omaggio o a cartoni animati sono tecniche pubblicitarie per catturare il target giovanile.

In Italia, il 6% degli spot analizzati è stato accomunato ad un gadget; di questi, l'82% promuoveva prodotti rivolti a un pubblico giovane. I riferimenti a cartoni animati nelle narrazioni pubblicitarie sono più frequenti negli spot collocati in prossimità di programmazione per ragazzi; le percentuali più alte di spot con cartoni animati sono state rilevate in Spagna (14%), Grecia (11%) e Portogallo (9%). L'abitudine a vendere sogni e fidelizzare consumatori attorno a stili di vita condivisi nelle comunità di appartenenza è ampiamente permeata anche nelle pubblicità rivolte ai più giovani consumatori.

Divertimento, felicità, entusiasmo, erotismo sono gli elementi più presenti nelle inserzioni pubblicitarie italiane. Il 64% degli spot alimentari italiani accomuna il cibo al piacere. Gli atteggiamenti o modelli comportamentali veicolati dalle pubblicità alimentari anche a livello europeo sono riconducibili principalmente a una sfera ludica.

Tratti di razionalità, quali intelligenza, furbizia, competitività e consapevolezza, sono presenti nel 46% degli spot; atteggiamenti solidali e di affettività si trovano nel 37% di spot, mentre qualche tratto trasgressivo, e in misura minore di aggressività, rischio, violenza o illegalità, è presente nell'8% di spot italiani analizzati. Manifestazioni di aggressività sono state rilevate anche in pubblicità rivolte a minori, ma sempre senza alcuna conseguenza dannosa sui personaggi protagonisti delle storie. Nessuno spot rivolto a minori ha mostrato situazioni di rischio o illegalità, passibili di emulazione pericolosa, e per questo sanzionabili dal giuri della pubblicità.

Tutto ciò induce una riflessione di vera e propria istigazione "perversa" nel senso che mangiare qualunque cosa fa sempre bene, non c'è pericolo, si è più felici.

L'induzione al cibo si manifesta principalmente mostrando dinamiche di consumo in contesti di svago e di affettività.

Le dinamiche riconducibili a bisogni primari, principalmente mangiare e bere, sono presenti nel 68% degli spot italiani. Essi sono spesso inseriti in cornici simboliche di piacere, connotato dal godimento di attività di svago (49%), e felicità, scaturita essenzialmente dalla sfera sociale, affettiva (23%), prevalentemente amicali. A conferma del fatto che insieme al "buono" si assume il "bene".

Le strategie prevalenti di induzione all'acquisto si fondano sulla proposizione di modelli sociali, stili di vita e valori.

La persuasione all'acquisto è sempre meno concentrata sul "prodotto" e sempre più sul "marchio", spostando il baricentro dalla funzionalità all'espressività, dall'aver all'essere, dal possedere all'appartenere, dalla spiegazione alla seduzione. L'Italia si caratterizza per un uso ampio del registro del divertimento (38%), dell'ironia, della conoscenza e della riflessione; molto importanti rimangono gli altri ingredienti mischiati tra loro, in particolare l'affettività, la seduzione e lo stupore. L'efficacia di queste strategie di comunicazione è nota e si sono raffinate le capacità interpretative degli spettatori adulti; da più parti tuttavia, si sollevano dubbi sulla decodifica corretta di messaggi composti da parte di minori che non hanno ancora strumenti cognitivi sufficientemente sviluppati né conoscenze capaci di metterli in grado di scegliere. Se come diceva Baudrillard, tutto marcia al ritmo della seduzione nei confronti dei ragazzi lo stimolo all'acquisto come prova di appartenenza sembra costituire ancora l'elemento di forza di ogni strategia comunicativa, rivolta ai giovanissimi anche quando si tratta di continuare ad "imboccarli".

I personaggi degli spot alimentari rispettano sostanzialmente una parità numerica fra uomini e donne che solitamente corrisponde all'effettiva percentuale della composizione maschile femminile dei paesi.

In Italia la percentuale di donne (51%) è lievemente superiore a quella di uomini (49%), così come accade nella realtà, e la proporzione analoga in Francia, Gran Bretagna, Spagna, Polonia e Grecia. I personaggi maschili invece sono leggermente superiori a quelli femminili negli spot di Germania, Olanda, Norvegia, Svezia e Portogallo.

Bambini o adolescenti sono fra i protagonisti della narrazione nel 28% degli spot alimentari italiani.

I tratti di personalità prevalenti dei giovani delle pubblicità ruotano attorno alla dimensione della socialità e alla sfera dell'affermazione sociale, di etica, estetica o dei saperi. I minori sono fra i protagonisti delle pubblicità soprattutto quando il prodotto si rivolge a un target giovanile: fra gli spot italiani con giovani protagonisti, il 75% si rivolge a un pubblico di bambini o ragazzi. Gli spot di alimenti calorici, quali dolci e merendine, snack dolci o salati, fast food utilizzano più frequentemente minori nelle proprie narrazioni rispetto alla media delle altre pubblicità.

La famiglia costituisce l'elemento centrale negli spot di prodotti alimentari.

Relazioni di tipo familiare sono presenti nel 31% degli spot italiani. La famiglia è rappresentata in attività tipiche della vita quotidiana (55% di spot) e diffonde modelli di serenità e amore: armonia (77% di spot), felicità (67%), sicurezza (52%), affetto (51%), trasmette in misura minore elementi di salute (29%) e conoscenza (15%), anche di tipo alimentare.

La famiglia è una garanzia di benessere e salute e non è un caso che il dato distintivo sulla mediazione familiare nell'alimentazione proposta dagli spot è che la sua presenza varia a seconda dei prodotti pubblicizzati: la famiglia, è presente in quelli "buoni" utili alla crescita, indispensabili per la salute fisica, mentre è assente da quelli "cattivi". Essa, infatti, è assai rappresentata nelle promozioni di carni (78%) o latticini (56%), ma tende a scomparire nelle pubblicità di snack, dolci o salati e compare in misura limitata nelle pubblicità di dolci e merendine (22%).

La famiglia degli spot è garante sempre, anche quando non è effettivamente nel giusto, perché non

aggiunge “consapevolezza” o “giudizio” alle abitudini alimentari, al contrario rassicura il destinatario su qualità e valori nutritivi del prodotto anche quando la sua qualità appare discutibile.

Gli amici, il gruppo dei pari, sono i mallevadori, di dolciumi e snack, sono un po' il gatto e la volpe di Pinocchio, inducono senza agire, ma predispongono un ambiente e sono i protagonisti di una scenografia in cui insieme al dolce, alla merendina e allo snack si vende autonomia, individualismo, capacità di essere autonomi nel branco. La socialità in un gruppo dei pari è rappresentata nel 28% degli spot italiani.

Il gruppo suggerisce il consumo dell'alimento in ambienti altri rispetto alla famiglia. I prodotti che rientrano maggiormente nel consumo autonomo, fuori dalle mura domestiche e lontano dagli occhi dei genitori, sono spesso prodotti da fuori pasto, calorici, ricchi di zuccheri o grassi. È il caso ancora una volta degli spot di snack dolci o salati o dei fast food. L'elemento di trasgressione alle regole non è mai esplicito nelle pubblicità, tuttavia sembra insinuarsi indirettamente all'interno di compagnie di giovani con la proposizione di consumi autonomi.

Il mondo degli spot alimentari è popolato da individui della classe media. Né troppo ricchi da essere distanti, né troppo poveri da creare disagio.

La pubblicità televisiva di ogni prodotto si rivolge sempre a un ceto medio perché il mondo sociale rappresentato evita accuratamente di proporre situazioni di malessere o povertà, televisivamente poco appetibili, ma anche le realtà distanti per la loro inaccessibile ricchezza, e incapaci di creare un sentimento di immedesimazione e di appartenenza.

Le analogie, le similitudini, che emergono nei messaggi pubblicitari analizzati, mettono in evidenza la sostanziale uniformità europea dell'induzione all'acquisto alimentare.

Le differenze principali emerse fra gli 11 paesi studiati riguardano la dimensione quantitativa degli spot trasmessi, come conseguenza delle diverse politiche di rete, piuttosto che quella qualitativa, di natura e forma dei messaggi promozionali. Le strutture narrative degli spot sono relativamente simili nelle realtà studiate, nonostante le differenze culturali esistenti, poiché l'incidenza dell'industria alimentare globale sul mercato pubblicitario europeo è forte. Un paniere significativo di prodotti uguali, di grandi marche alimentari (quali Danone, Ferrero, McDonald's, Kellogg's, Masterfoods, Coca Cola), sono stati pubblicizzati in tutte o quasi le televisioni europee prese in esame a conferma della globalizzazione non solo dei palati ma anche delle modalità espressive di riempirli.

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Two Global Pandemics: Femicide and COVID-19

*Shalva Weil**

Abstract. Both femicide and COVID-19 are global pandemics, only the former has not been recognized as such, while the latter has. Nearly 90,000 women were killed by men, mainly their partners and family members in 2017, the last year for which we have statistics. Since the coronavirus outbreak and lockdown in many countries, there has been a surge in domestic violence and femicide globally. Clearly, there is no systematic data yet. However, the article describes recent reports in the spike in violence against women and femicide in different countries, ranging from Europe to South America. Violence against women is inextricably tied to issues of power and control. Even if the social order has changed and there is more gender equality, the fact remains that this is still a male-dominated world, today dedicated to combating the virus, but not yet dedicated to eradicating the other pandemic of femicide.

Keywords: Femicide; Feminicide; Domestic violence; Coronavirus; COVID-19; Hotlines; Shelters.

1. Femicide and Coronavirus

Femicide, or the killing of women because they are women, is a global phenomenon, which occurs in every society and at every level. Until recently, it was not a visible problem at all (Weil 2016). A total of 87,000 women were intentionally killed in 2017, the most recent year for which we have statistics (UNODC 2018). Nearly 60,000 women were killed by intimate partners, former partners, or family members. 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day.

Femicide, like the coronavirus, occurs in every society indiscriminately and spreads at an incalculable rate. While coronavirus is lethal, so too femicide has to be eradicated. The difference between covid-19 and femicide is that coronavirus is sudden and unpredictable, whereas femicide is constant and, unfortunately, predictable.

2. Femicide in Europe and in the World

From 2013-7, I chaired a European Union-funded COST (Cooperation on Science and Technology) Action entitled “Femicide across Europe” with a Management Committee of 80 representatives from 30 European countries. At the termination of the Action, we edited a volume summing up our intense activity over four years, which included the establishment of working groups in Europe on the definition of femicide, on data assessment and gathering, on patterns of culture which affect femicide, on prevention of the murders of women (Weil, Corradi and Naudi 2018). In 2015, we held a training school in the quarters of the police force in Rome with graduate students and police personnel. In February 2016, I addressed the Italian Parliament in Rome on the subject of femicide; this was the first discussion on femicide per se that had been held there. In 2018, we established the European Observatory on Femicide, based in Malta and today in Cyprus and Germany, which is dedicated to gathering qualitative as well as quantitative data on femicide.

During the duration of the COST Action, I also attended three different meetings of the United Nations to promote the recognition of the word ‘femicide’, and to call for guidelines to prevent the gender-related killings of women and girls. Until 2016, only the subject of violence against women had gained recognition (Simonovic 2016), but not femicide per se. While each country has national laws and policies regarding the lethal killing of women, it became obvious that femicide is a global

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phenomenon, which demands international collaboration in order to eradicate. The same is true of the coronavirus, which has been declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a global pandemic; femicide has not. To date at the time of writing, WHO has not gone further than putting out ‘tips’ how to be careful about domestic violence during the coronavirus (WHO 2020).

3. The impact of COVID-19 on domestic violence

COVID-19 has indeed impacted upon domestic violence and femicide. All countries have reported an increase in domestic violence, and femicide rates are on the rise, even in China, where statistics are sometimes unreliable.¹ In 2020, the United Nations issued a report entitled “Global Responsibility, Global Solidarity” in which they noted that “... accompanying the crisis has been a spike in domestic violence reporting, at exactly the time that services, including rule of law, health and shelters, are being diverted to address the pandemic (UN 2020). With families isolated in their homes, children are also facing the rapid increase of online child abuse.” Furthermore, the threat and closure of women’s shelters has meant that some women and their children are thrown back to live with their assailants in frightening circumstances. With greater isolation, women are less in touch with social networks and support groups, and helplessness is increasing.

In Turkey, the hotlines are inundated with complaints by women, who are suffering both mental and physical violence at the hands of abusive partners. In Brazil, the state hotline “Ligue 180” reported an increase of 18% in calls in one week in March alone. In France, the Interior Minister, Christophe Castaner, publicly admitted that domestic violence had increased by 30% since the lockdown.² In 2018, the High Council for Gender Equality declared that 11,000 additional places were needed for emergency shelters, but by the end of 2019, only 1,000 places were scheduled.³ Additional cases of severe domestic violence may remain unreported, in situations in which the only way to inform the authorities is by internet or by phone, and these may be prohibited or confiscated by an abusive partner.

Nations are being forced to confront the issues of domestic violence, with the threat of femicide hovering in the background, but resources are being channeled towards the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and social and health services to the victims of domestic violence are being reduced. In practice, since femicide is of such low national priority, it is the NGOs who take the lion’s share. In Chile, an NGO has developed a “Feminist Emergency Plan for the Coronavirus Crisis” with strategies for collective feminist mutual aid, which include emergency plans for women to exit dangerous domestic situations, and mobilizing health professionals and carers for children.⁴ In Mexico, social sector efforts to cope with violence against women have been truncated, but advocacy organisations are valiantly trying to help.⁵

Data on Femicide during the Coronavirus

To date, there is no systematic comparative data on femicide during coronavirus, but there are a few empirical reports. In Spain, there were 18 femicide fatalities since the beginning of 2020 till mid-March, and a third occurred during the coronavirus outbreak.⁶ In Argentina, where the rate of femicide is extraordinarily high during regular times, 86 femicides have already been perpetrated since the beginning of 2020, of which 24 occurred during the COVID-19 plague. The Argentinian Femicide

¹ www.sixthtone.com/news/1005253/domestic-violence-cases-surge-during-covid-19-epidemic

² www.euronews.com/2020/03/28/domestic-violence-cases-jump-30-during-lockdown-in-france

³ www.france24.com/en/20200325-trapped-at-home-domestic-violence-victims-at-high-risk-in-coronavirus-confinement

⁴ <https://towardfreedom.org/blog-blog/chilean-womens-movement-releases-feminist-emergency-plan-in-the-face-of-the-coronavirus-crisis/>

⁵ www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/04/13/covid-19-can-augment-violence-to-mexican-women/

⁶ www.newtral.es/mujeres-confinadas-en-casa-con-sus-agresores-que-recursos-se-han-puesto-en-marcha/20200321/

Observatory reported that one woman was killed every 29 hours during March 2020.⁷ In Turkey, 18 women have been killed since the lockdown, the majority in their homes.⁸ In the United Kingdom, nearly three times as many women were murdered in March by men -14 in all-than the average for the same period over the last decade, according to the UK Femicide Census and the NGO “Counting Dead Women.”⁹

4. Data in Israel

Israel does not have a Femicide Observatory like Italy or other countries. Statistics are not systematically collected such that police records, parliamentary data, Haaretz’s website, and NGO reports differ widely. Hotlines throughout the country report that domestic violence has increased. According to data which we have culled from ongoing media reports, there have been seven cases of femicide since January 2020, four of which occurred during the coronavirus outbreak since March. The Israeli government has not taken the threat of femicide seriously either during this outbreak or prior to it.

5. Conclusions

Femicide, like coronavirus, is a pandemic, but it has not been recognised as such. The COVID-19 virus has impacted negatively on domestic violence, and it appears that globally there is a surge in the rate of femicide. Both WHO and the United Nations are aware of what one of my respondents called “domestic terrorism”, but they have few answers in a situation that resources and public health systems have to deal first with the rising numbers of dead and sick. On April 6, 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addressed the “horrifying surge in domestic violence” aimed at women and girls linked to lockdowns by governments the world over,¹⁰ but he did not mention the likelihood of a rise in global femicide.

Violence against women is inextricably tied to issues of power and control. However much we imagine that the social order has changed and that there is more gender equality, the fact remains that this is still a male-dominated world, today dedicated to combating the virus, but not yet dedicated to eradicating another pandemic: femicide.

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⁷ www.clarin.com/sociedad/coronavirus-argentina-aumentaron-30-llamadas-linea-144-violencia-genero_0_hsNF8q3tF.html

⁸ www.dw.com/en/domestic-violence-rises-in-turkey-during-covid-19-pandemic/a-53082333

⁹ www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-domestic-abuse-uk-killings-women-girls-a9467131.htm

¹⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>

The Holocaust at School, between Remembrance and Oblivion

Claudia Gina Hassan*

Abstract. In the context of a broader reflection on memory, the paper analyzes, some didactic experiences of teaching the Shoah in different formats in three Italian regions. . The value dimension of individual and collective memory, its ethical value, the study of its transmission methods through the generations, also in relation to the intercultural changes that have taken place in our society since the 1980s, are the main object of interest of this project. The objectives indicated by the project are analyzed in their realization and implementation. Among these, of special importance are: transforming superficial information and simple commemorative memory into meaningful learning; enabling memory to become active participation; contributing to the linkage of the emotional and cognitive dimensions.

Keywords: Memory; Education; Shoah.

The saturation and absence of memory of the Holocaust are the two-faced Janus of the same difficulty of collective elaboration of a past that has always been distant from us in space and now also in time. The memory of the Holocaust has often occupied a mental and cultural, much more than physical and temporal, space far from Italy. Reflecting on the memory of the Holocaust and its representations means dealing with the ways in which a society interprets its past, the set of practices and symbols it puts into practice, the narrative structures and attitudes behind them. We are witnessing a veritable externalisation of memory that is profoundly changing the sense of remembrance. Going back in time, Assmann (2002, p. 165) emphasised how, unlike individual memory, “on a collective and institutional level this process is driven by a precise policy of remembrance, or, more precisely, by a precise policy of oblivion. There is no cultural memory capable of self-determination: it must necessarily be based on mediators and targeted policies”. This is why the idea of a construction of memory, of a political role in the choices of what to remember and what to forget, emerges in an evident and often non-random way.

These choices are at the heart of the formation of identity and the discourse between past, present and future. Remembrance cannot ignore the present dimension, its needs and urgencies. New paradigms open up around this need with regard to the relationship between memory-identity and cultural perpetuation. The regulatory, historical and narrative aspects establish the foundations of belonging and identity. Every culture develops its own "memories", uniting temporal and spatial dimensions with the social dimension. Numerous factors come into play here, with memory being an arena of meanings and forces that not only concern the past but also involve the image of the future.

In the immediate post-war period and until 1961, the year of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, no one spoke about the Holocaust. The construction of the debate on the resistance in Italy, the story of democracies conquering dictatorships in the United States, the patriotic and anti-fascist war in the Soviet Union and even the idea of new man, the pioneer, the *sabra* in Israel (Zertal, 2007, p. 96) meant that the elaboration of the Holocaust had to give way to the urgencies of reconstruction and post-war events. National stories needed heroes: the partisan, soldier and pioneer were the strong men on whom to build the future and the memory of the nations. The Holocaust was simply one of many crimes of World War II. What was going on in the concentration camps was semantically combined with other tragic events, mere “side effects” of conflict and ethnic hatred (Alexander, 2006, p. 27)

The survivor had no place in collective memories, the nameless victim received no attention, which

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was all dedicated to the anti-fascist activist and the political deportee. And so in Italy, heroic history clouded the Holocaust, which the Italian conscience ignored.

There had certainly been no shortage of *signalmen* (Traverso, 2004) those who had been aware of the fracture in civilisation that Europe was leaving behind, but they were just a few isolated and marginalised intelligences, the group of German intellectuals who had emigrated to the United States and who, in their condition as exiles, managed, more than others, to maintain a critical and reflective view during and immediately after the war. These were scholars, like Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt, German Jews who had been educated during the Weimar Republic and had fled Germany when Hitler came to power. As Traverso points out, they were exiles and witnesses of a secular culture, they had followed European events from afar and had analysed every aspect of them, grasping and explaining the imminent tragedy even before it happened. Far from Europe but also from American intellectual circles, and unable to make themselves heard. They could see the catastrophe looming on the horizon, they grasped its boundaries and scope with lucidity, but were unable, in their position as exiles, to find space for their words. No one was willing to listen to them, even though they were able to sense the drama that was taking place in Europe.

It was necessary to wait for the so-called era of the witness, (Wieviorka, 1999) the eruption into the public sphere of the survivor, for the Holocaust to become part of the public and cultural debate of the time; the role of the media in particular was as important for the construction of the agenda as it was for the narrative grammar adopted. The general decline of ideologies, the crisis of progressive models and narratives gave way to a unifying narrative and the Holocaust took the place of all the other 20th century collective narratives. The Holocaust became the paradigmatic memory, the past by which Western culture measures itself, its present and its future. Since then, it has been a crescendo of initiatives and attention, but even at the end of the 1980s the memory of the Holocaust was defined as solitary and fragmented (Rossi Doria, 1998, p. 36). Today, seventeen years after the institutionalisation of Holocaust Remembrance Day with the law of 2000, we can hardly speak of choral remembrance, let alone unitary memories. Law 211/2000 was approved in the Chamber of Deputies where the racial laws had been voted for unanimously in 1938. Nevertheless, much work has been done since then. However, we have to (Hassan, 2016, p. 96) understand the implications of this commitment and these activities, the ability to create cohesion, collective memory and critical knowledge. The intentions of Holocaust Remembrance Day indicated a strong investment in building a sensitivity based on the relationship with the past. The real cultural node, however, is not based on general knowledge but on the changes that knowledge grafts onto mindsets, ways of being, collective experiences and, perhaps most importantly, on the non-superficial and temporary ability to empathise with the victims of yesterday and today. It is hard to imagine how Remembrance Day and commemoration will evolve, and even harder to imagine the meaning they will have in collective conscience. We are already witnessing a sterilisation of the emotional aspect that runs parallel to that of a cognitive nature. Remembrance cannot forget history and a memory of "repetition" is very different from critical memory. The multi-dimensional space of memory and its multiple symbolic functions demand that we overcome both the blind path of the sterile criticism of ritualisation and a mythical idea of memory, a sort of fetish to its own end.

The effect of overheating information, images and initiatives creates sacralisation whilst also emptying and trivialising the message. The trivialisation of discourse with improper comparisons and occasional forays into the matter definitely does not help the critical understanding of history. Therefore, with respect to this media cacophony, educational and pedagogical paths become an absolute priority to prevent memory from becoming a spectacular and self-referential idol. With respect to the collective and official removal of a past that is difficult even to think about and imagine, public and political discourse now seems increasingly attentive to the extermination of the Jews. This has become the subject of numerous approaches, involving thousands of students, countless civil and political initiatives, hundreds of TV broadcasts and a conspicuous film production every year, to the point where a real canon and style can be observed. A separate debate would be worth reserving for the journeys of memory, which have undergone significant transformation over the years, mirroring

society's depiction of deportation and the death camps. They have become part of the construction of Italian public memory and their time scales are very different. Until the fifties (Bisacca & Maida, 2015) in fact, the journeys were mainly those of the survivors, organised by Aned with a strongly celebratory intent ascribable in a semi-private memory. The political intent remained in the background and the resistance had not yet become the founding myth of the rebirth of a nation, that it was to become ten years later. In the meantime, journeys began to create a veritable geography of remembrance, civic sentiment and historical awareness. They became a ritual to be celebrated every year. Between the 1960s and 70s, the educational dimension of the journeys was predominant, with the participation of students and institutions.

In the last twenty-five years of the twentieth century, the Holocaust took on a universal value on which Europe founded its identity. These were the years in which the film *Holocaust* was released. An anti-Semitism that had been hitherto latent re-emerged, with the attack on the Synagogue in Rome. The Berlin Wall fell and the 50th anniversary of the racial laws of 1938 provided an opportunity for new celebrations and reflections. In this climate of great media and popular attention, the journeys of memory also began to take on a significant numerical dimension. But the real explosion of mass travel came after the law of 2000. This veritable experiential fruition of the memory of the Holocaust reached a real detachment from historical facts to become a representation of absolute evil, a meta-historical evil. Not always does one start with an adequate historical baggage, one sets out to explore the absolute evil placed outside of history. As if history were just the irrelevant frame of a much more interesting picture. Only by placing knowledge of the facts at the centre of the picture can we establish a healthy relationship between history and memory. The weakening of the historical sense of the younger generations is accompanied by a dizzying dissemination of history in snippets through fiction and historical novels, creating a short circuit between truth and storytelling. In this perverse plot between the creation of events, the mediatisation of the Holocaust and education, Adorno's warning continues to be as relevant as ever.

Maestra Auschwitz

From the sixties, Adorno described Auschwitz as a priority in the pedagogical field, a fundamental ethical principle for every educational intervention (Adorno, 2006, pp. 315-333). Teaching takes on a central role due to the unavoidable anthropological questions it would pose. Who is man? Who are we if we went so far as to do what we did? And why did no one ever say anything and perhaps never even think about what was happening? Everything happened with the active involvement of few but with the silent consent of so many (Hughes, 2010)

Kant and Goethe failed dismally to curb Nazi barbarism. The refined culture that we are attached was stripped of all meaning, revealing its helplessness and inability to influence reality. How, deep in the heart of Europe, in the cradle of civilisation and culture, could a complete breakdown of civilization, a rupture of humanity, have happened? A fracture that undermined the very categories of thought and the structures of meaning created previously, destroying not only the idea of civilisation but even man's very trust (Neimann, 2011). Even theological thought was called into question. Where was God? His silence demanded an answer. And so began a reformulation of the very idea of divinity in both the Jewish and Catholic spheres. One of the most interesting answers is the hypothesis of a God no longer omnipotent, no longer lord of history, but, instead, a weak God (Jonas, 1997). So if God is weak, he must need us, man. Which means that there are no more alibis, that we are totally responsible.

It would be easy to answer and explain, as has been done, with an image of collective madness, an accident in history or even the idea of a detour along the glorious road of civilisation in progress. These are all reassuring answers that tell us that we are "something else", that we are different from that barbarism, which does not concern us directly. Even more disturbing is the reflection on the very nature of humanity, on ourselves and our responsibility.

In his monumental *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Raul Hillberg argues that, as a historian, he merely offers a simple description, not an explanation of the reasons behind the Holocaust. The

risk of giving unsubstantiated answers would have been too high. Better a brief description, a reconstruction using documents and a mountain of miscellaneous paperwork (Hilberg, 1995). We must at least start from there, from history, from what happened, from the way the process commenced and developed. With respect to the rituality of memory that succeeds, albeit misunderstood, in making memories a-historical, the knowledge of history allows us to stitch the pieces back together, to understand the mechanisms, the social structure and the ideology within which the Holocaust developed and became reality. Often, for *those who work with memories*, their job is reduced to the organisation of initiatives (be they original or repetitive). But commemorating Remembrance Day or organising a trip to Auschwitz does not mean that we know about history. Seeing, visiting and being moved does not mean that we understand. Sometimes, organisational efficiency and a limited knowledge of history can coexist. If Raul Hillberg's warning to reflect on how things happened, and consequently on historical facts, is very strong, I think the question of why is also unavoidable. The most important answer comes from cultural transmission and education. As Adorno said, while it is very difficult to make changes in the objective sphere, we can work on a subjective level. In other words, if we cannot change the world, we can nevertheless accomplish a great deal on an individual level, using all the educational tools available and through pilot experiences, capable, through targeted educational projects, of filling collective rituals that would otherwise be destined to weary repetition with meaning. An initiative that attempted to take this direction was the Research-Action Pilot Project *Adotta un Ricordo* (Adopt a Memory), which developed between 2004 and 2009 in different regional contexts, i.e. Piedmont, Lazio and Tuscany.

The pilot project *Adotta un ricordo*

The Holocaust education pilot project expands the methodological paradigm of the historian and brings a peculiar contribution, the result of reflections on memory and its policies, to studies on the relationship between memory and history, sociological and philosophical contributions on evil and the relationship between modernity and the Holocaust. The project is configured as a veritable education in memory, with due analysis on historical sources and testimonies, on the possible meanings of memory, and with reflections on the sense of memory in the present.

The project has brought together the two main approaches to teaching the Holocaust, that of the International School for Holocaust Studies, which focuses on documentation, and that of Enzo Traverso and the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*, which reflects on the ways in which the Holocaust is transmitted culturally and its significance. The essential cultural references that have posed fundamental questions about man and Nazi extermination are those of the Frankfurt School and Hannah Arendt, as well as those of reflection on otherness, from Lèvinas to Hans Jonas and Zigmunt Bauman. The policies of memory and the "didactics" of the Holocaust are closely linked, one influencing the other. The direct weight of political choices on didactics is evident but no less important, although not immediately perceptible, is the influence of the methodologies of the cultural transmission of the Holocaust. The institutionalisation of Remembrance Day in Italy was the strongest moment of acceleration for projects on the Holocaust in schools and elsewhere. The perspective adopted by the project is "both diachronic and comparative foreground (Traverso, 2002, p. 11). This means not limiting our attention to Germany and the 20th century alone. The Holocaust, a paradigmatic genocide, as defined by the IHRA, helps us understand other forms of mass violence, other genocides and other violations of human rights.

The document for the group working on Education on the Holocaust and other genocides (www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/italian_holocaust_and_other_genocides.pdf) contains the statement made by Linda Woolf of the Webster University: "mass violence, torture, violations of basic human rights and the mistreatment of human beings are not a new aspect of humanity; the documentation of such events is numerous in the historical archives. It is essential to develop a deeper understanding of the psychological, cultural, political and social roots of human cruelty, mass violence and genocide. We must continue to examine the factors that enable individuals to perpetrate, collectively and individually, evil/genocide and the impact of apathetic bystanders as

fuel for human violence. If an exact model for predicting mass violence/human cruelty is beyond the reach of human capacity, we have an obligation to develop a model that highlights the warning signs and predisposing factors for human violence and genocide. With this information we can develop policies, strategies and programmes to combat these atrocities". In this perspective, therefore, answering the question of whether the Holocaust is a unique event does not mean imposing a moral claim. It does not mean that the Holocaust was worse than other evils, such as the extermination of the American Indians or the genocide of the Armenians or the victims of the Stalinist gulags. We have neither the right nor the tools to quantify, assess or compare mass suffering. The project starts with the Holocaust to establish links with the present, with other genocides, with new deportations, segregations and new forms of racism. The *Adotta un ricordo* project has been implemented in three Italian regions promoted by the Level II International Master's Degree in Holocaust Teaching of Roma Tre and the non-profit organisation Europa Ricerca: Piedmont, Lazio and Tuscany, with the support of the Regional Schools Directorates and the Province of Rome. The project originated from the observation of a clear deficiency in many Italian schools: instead of stimulating an analysis of the Holocaust, Remembrance Day has been reduced to an emotional encounter with the past which, due to its immediacy, fails to translate into critical-reflexive elements. The model is partly related to constructivism (Cosentino, 2002), a model that better corresponds to the complexity of the societies in which we live and that places the student at the centre as player and protagonist of the learning process.

The value-based dimension of individual and collective memory (Meghnagi, 2009, p.188), its ethical value, the study of the ways it is handed down from generation to generation, also in relation to the intercultural changes that have occurred in our society, constitute the main focus of this project. With the aim, therefore, of involving students in this research, through active collaboration, they were offered the chance to take part in a survey and comparative analysis of the memories they had collected, conducting short interviews with their grandparents and parents relating to their memories and knowledge of the historical period in question and, in particular, to the events surrounding the history of the Nazi persecution and deportations, age permitting. The experiences differed, precisely because there is no hard and fast model of teaching, valid everywhere and always. In every local situation, the projects, while maintaining their basic structure, were enriched, responding to the needs and explicit requirements of the School Directorates. The different experiences in Rome, Turin and Florence did, however, maintain the same basic structure.

In Florence, the project was welcomed by the Regional Schools Directorate and included the possibility of independent continuation of the experience the following year. Each school which hosted the project became a reference point for another twinned school. The pilot project consequently became self-regenerating in a chain that optimised the results and multiplied good practice.

In Turin, the experimentation focused on the comparison between different memories. Schools and classes where the multicultural, particularly Maghreb, component appeared to be prominent, were chosen. The intention was to create and transmit a shared memory among young people, including those from families which had no experience of the Holocaust for geographical or cultural reasons.

In Rome, the project brought children from the Jewish school together with those from the state school. In this case, the comparison of memories was experienced directly through different family stories. The various local structures of the project respected the educational autonomy of the teachers, supported by tutors in the education of the children.

In some cases, the terrain had already been sown with previous experiences of value, while in others, some vague work had been done, creating an immediate response that made it possible to build a high-quality teaching path. A constant feature of the various projects was the teacher training sessions offered by the Master in Holocaust Teachings at Roma Tre, directed by Professor David Meghnagi. An educational programme attended by scholars from different Italian and foreign cities who offered the best of their research in the field and personalised bibliographical indications.

This Master is the only structure in Italy that offers continuous and specific training on the subject. There is no shortage of high-quality courses but they all offer just a few days of training. Some of the tutors working on the project¹ attended this Master. The training process involved several phases: that aimed exclusively at the teachers, but also that aimed particularly at tutors who entered the classes in the presence of teachers. A lesson for the students, of course, but also for the teachers who adopted the relational approach, the methodology and the selected contents. A lesson both on how to teach the Holocaust and on the historical framework essential to its understanding. A work of support to teachers who then proposed it in other schools and in other contexts, creating a virtuous circle of good practices. The initial disorientation of some of them has turned into positive action towards other teachers and other schools. Many difficulties were declared by the teachers at the outset, ranging from the inadequacy of the educational system to competition from other training agencies, especially the media, from bias if not blatant hostility of families due to the emotional overload. They were all addressed and resolved in the initial meetings, dedicated exclusively to teachers.

The theme has been analysed both in a transnational sense and with reference to the specific Italian situation. The stages that led to the genocide, anti-Semitism, ghettos and camps are just some of the topics dealt with, along with denialism, moral dilemmas and the definition of the enemy. In some cases, preparation of the teachers was lacking and their teaching methodology neglected the historical development that led to the genocide. Books or films were often proposed without the correct historical support or even placed in an abstract meta-historical dimension. Once the historical framework had been offered by the tutors, the teachers chose many different pedagogical paths with excellent results, from music to art, and from theatre to creative writing. Of course, teaching the Holocaust requires a knowledge of the facts but also the use of appropriate language, attention to words to avoid confusion, the ability to steer students towards the use of sources, and the ability to ask questions correctly. In complete autonomy, the teachers have chosen and applied their teaching

Just to make an example, the students in Florence did a series of drawing studies on hands on barbed wire which were very moving, or played the music that the prisoners had composed while they were imprisoned in the concentration camps. Of course, I am not going to list all the works, even if they deserve to be valued beyond the project. The teachers worked on a cross-disciplinary basis, with extensive involvement of the students, who became researchers themselves in direct contact with the sources. Attention was always twofold, on both a cognitive and emotional level, the two levels proceeded in parallel, crossing and integrating. To make a last example that exemplifies these two levels, Lanzmann's film *Shoah* and Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* were compared.

The first questions himself and us about the gas chambers, the inexplicability of those deaths and that "unspeakable" abyss, looking for traces and human testimony. The second focuses on those who were "saved", who escaped the horror of that death, leaving open the door of human hope. Death and the survivors are the two shores upon which the memory of the Holocaust is built, the cognitive plane with its questions on the whys and wherefores of history does not contrast but integrates with the emotional dimension, projected towards the future. Spielberg's hope and Lanzmann's questions, build collective memory, critical memory and excellent didactic tools that allow us to imagine and think about the "unspeakable" aspects of the Holocaust, about places like Birkenau and the disintegration of humanity.

The three experiences that started out with different institutional interlocutors adapted to the needs of the different territories, making it possible to make a comparative analysis of the different memories: comparison between Jewish and non-Jewish schools, comparison with second-generation immigrant children, comparison between centre and periphery, and generational comparison, between grandparents and grandchildren. Thanks to this analysis, students were offered the chance to

¹ The tutors who entered the classes were: Rossana Pierangeli, a former student of the Master who also trained at Yad Vashem in Israel, Professor Sandra Corvi, also a former student of the Master and a former middle school teacher, Professor Paola Valabrega, also at the school, well-known scholar Alberto Cavaglion, and the then young PhD student in Paris, Diego Guzzi.

personally undertake a critical recovery of the memories held within their families, with the consequent ability to extend the knowledge acquired to other areas of historical and urban reality.

In this first phase of the project, students were able to approach the facts of history not only through the cognitive component, but also at emotional level. In this task, the active role played by the student, the collection of the testimony within his or her own family gave rise to the perception and awareness that he or she is an integral part of that history which has been the object of study.

In this way, starting from a specific story collected from fragments of individual memory or documentary sources, the group of students reconstructed the general historical framework of the time, starting from the comparison between history and the stories collected.

Parallel to an in-depth knowledge of the historical period in question, the project has given extensive space to learning using film footage, literature on the subject, interviews collected from students and, last but not least, direct testimony. The recognition of emotions and empathy play a particularly important role in the use of these teaching tools. The experiential condition of "feeling" the other plays a fundamental role in the management of interpersonal relationships, by helping us to manage emotions. But, from an intellectual point of view, it is central to learning, enhanced with the help of personal emotions. In this case, for example, thanks to the analysis of the emotional experiences of Holocaust survivors and witnesses who lived through the Nazi-Fascist period, the project has supplemented the cognitive level that was the foundation on which everything else was built. Learning has stimulated the development of the empathic and socio-affective behaviour of the student. Testimony has always been one of the most touching and significant moments in all projects. Several witnesses have intervened. Liliana Segre intervened twice, in Rome in the main hall of the Visconti High School, and at the Book Fair, after completing nine months of work with students in Turin. The silence that reigned in a large Aula Magna full of students was unusual. You could have heard a pin drop. Everyone listened to the story in religious silence and intense emotional tension held everyone in suspense. The students were already prepared, they knew what she was talking about, they knew what the death march was, they knew how the camps were organised and they also knew about the phase before the deportation. The testimony brought their knowledge, their readings, the films they had seen and the documents they had analysed to life. The project was fused with the same ideal tension, the same intensity and the strong ethical and moral intent with which Liliana Segre spoke in her testimony. The children were particularly impressed by the conclusion of her speech, when she said that she could have killed a German soldier after being freed from the camps, but preferred not to, choosing life instead.

Testimony always has enormous educational value, due both to the physical, human presence, which represents a deviation from the stereotype of the Jew, an abstract idea full of prejudice, and because the singularity of presence is a counterpoint to the abstract numbers of mass exterminations. The unspeakable is personified, restoring humanity and dignity. It was the peak of the children's educational path, making it possible to adopt critical thought and an ethical dimension: a living ethical message, with open questions on individual and collective responsibilities. It was an opportunity to stimulate the growth of a civic awareness and active citizenship in the youngsters. Students become witnesses of the testimony given. I saw very clearly the retransmission of memory in the students I accompanied to Auschwitz. After the trip, they wanted to invite Sami Modiano, a survivor of the Auschwitz death camp, to the University of *Tor Vergata* of Rome. They contacted him, went to see him and organised the event.

With this multiplicity of interventions, the didactic course has transformed superficial information and simple commemorative memory into meaningful learning; it has allowed memory to become active participation; it has achieved a passage from pure knowledge to the understanding of the historical meaning of the event, but also its current implications, by welding the emotional and cognitive levels together.

The integration of the historical dimension with memory and its transmission through the generations envisaged three distinct moments: the study of historical sources (documents and historical facts of the period); the analysis of autobiographical testimonies on the events experienced by Jews born before 1945; their comparison with the memories in their own family.

Thanks to this analysis, the students had the chance to personally undertake a critical recovery of their families' memories and extend the knowledge acquired to other areas of historical and urban reality.

The project used archive materials from Rome's Jewish Community. More specifically, the students analysed the testimonies and questionnaires collected during the project for the distribution of the "Fund for Holocaust victims in need", between September 1999 and March 2001. The documentation can be found at the Jewish Deputation.

The analysis of texts and interviews was supplemented by the study of historical documents and history lectures, as well as suggested factsheets and books necessary to their critical understanding. Of course, there were also essays, novels and testimonies on the subject; the viewing and discussion with teachers of historical documentaries, films and interviews collected by Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation; the direct meeting with witnesses of the tragedy.

By listening to life stories, the students rediscovered the value and wealth of the past and memory, which they then processed in different forms and presented in the final event. Each research group presented a work (an audio-visual piece, theatrical performance, concert, choir ensemble, a series of drawings, a composition of everything - and many other creative ideas) with a critical reflection matured within a rich and articulate path that lasted about nine months. In some cases, in Florence, the work began in March, ended in around January the following year. This allowed time for elaboration and independent study during the summer.

By interviewing their grandparents, memory also became a source of dialogue between generations, identifying fractures and passages by reconstructing family memories and comparing them with the reality of historical events and the way they have been culturally elaborated. In this perspective, they became a bridge between individual subjective memories, collective memory and historical reality.

So memory becomes a tool with which to reread and analyse the events that have marked the past of a city, and a moment of comparison between subjectivity and objectivity, allowing a better understanding of the historical complexity.

The works produced by the children were presented on the final day of the project. In Florence, a day of study accompanied the result of their work. In Rome, there was an exhibition in the hall where they listened to the testimony of Piero Terracina. In Turin, they wrote and performed a play before the testimony of Liliana Segre at the Turin Book Fair, in the presence of Furio Colombo and others. The final day of one of the Roman projects was attended by Yale historian Steven Katz, Professor Umberto Gentiloni representing Nicola Zingaretti, and the curators of the project.

Conclusions

This reconstruction of the four projects on Holocaust teachings, two of which in Rome, can but be partial, because each of them had its own specific development and particular characteristics, showing that the ideal methodology is one that focuses on the relationship, which differs according to the context and the interlocutor. I have tried to convey a sense of the complexity of a work that lasted nine months for each year and was articulated in various stages, demonstrating that the teaching of the Holocaust can give positive results at all levels, and can transform attitudes, prejudices, clichés and trivialisations. The teaching of the tragedy of the extermination has undergone many changes and enhancements in recent years, reaching an exemplary, paradigmatic approach that looks to the past to interpret the present and project itself towards the future. But without confusion, with a linguistic, scientific and human rigour to teach that use of the distinction typical of our critical and self-critical intelligence. Between total silence and the mediatic and celebratory uproar that consumes everything and empties it of meaning, educational paths are a counterbalance to the reactions of disinterest if not annoyance that we witness (Meghnagi, 2005).

If we retrace the teaching of history in Italian schools we can see how the Holocaust occupied a marginal space for a long time. It was only after the Berlinguer decree that a reflection on the didactics of 20th century history and consequently on memory and its transmission, but also on a possible

political use of history and its teaching, began. Since then, many schools and methodologies have dealt with 20th century history, from the linguistic turning point to culturalism. Starting with reflections on the Holocaust, violence becomes one of the themes of education, a paradigm from which to start, a key to interpreting the structure of our societies, a thermometer of the state of health of the environment in which we live. In this sense, the teaching of the Holocaust is a knowledge of history but also, and above all, an attempt not to escape the disturbing questions of yesterday and today, embracing one of the most important educational challenges: transforming the duty of remembrance into a work of memory.

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**Introduction to Special Section:
The “Racial Laws” of 1938 and Italian Universities.
The Universities of Perugia, the Institute of Roman Studies,
and the Rome High School “E.Q. Visconti”**

*Introduzione all’inserto speciale:
Le “Leggi Razziali” del 1938 e l’Università Italiana.
Le Università di Perugia, l’Istituto di Studi Romani
e il Liceo romano “E.Q. Visconti”*

Tommaso Dell’Era, David Meghnagi***

Abstract. The essays of this special section of issue no. 2/2020 of the journal *Trauma and Memory* represent the second part of the research on the topic “Year 1938 and Italian Universities” (the first part is in issue no. 1/2020). The studies collected here concern the two universities of Perugia and two cases connected with Italian university institutions, the Institute of Roman Studies and the Roman High School “E.Q. Visconti”.

Keywords: Antisemitism; “Racial Laws”; Fascism; Italian University; Shoah.

Riassunto. I saggi che compongono questo inserto speciale del n. 2/2020 di *Trauma and Memory* costituiscono la seconda parte del lavoro di ricerca ed elaborazione scientifica sul tema “Il 1938 e l’università italiana” (la prima parte è nel n. 1/2020). Gli studi qui raccolti riguardano le due università di Perugia e due casi collegati con istituzioni universitarie italiane, l’Istituto di Studi Romani e il Liceo romano “E.Q. Visconti”.

Keywords: Antisemitismo; “Leggi razziali”; Fascismo; Università italiane; Shoah.

Prosegue in questo inserto speciale la pubblicazione della seconda parte del lavoro di ricerca ed elaborazione scientifica sul tema “Il 1938 e l’università italiana” a partire dal convegno internazionale *Le “Leggi razziali” del 1938 e l’università italiana* (Roma, 3-5 dicembre 2018). Gli studi qui raccolti riguardano le due università di Perugia e due casi *a latere* delle istituzioni universitarie italiane con esse collegati per diverse ragioni: l’Istituto di Studi Romani e il Liceo romano “E. Q. Visconti”.

Le novità che emergono da questi lavori riguardano principalmente la ricostruzione dei profili di alcune delle persone espulse e di quelle coinvolte nell’applicazione della legislazione razzista e antisemita dello Stato italiano, insieme all’illustrazione dei meccanismi e delle politiche di sostituzione dei docenti cacciati dalle università. Un altro aspetto importante è il ruolo svolto dalla persecuzione antisemita nel processo di fascistizzazione degli atenei presi in considerazione. Altri

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elementi rilevanti che emergono da questi lavori sono: l'indicazione di nuove fonti archivistiche accanto allo scavo approfondito di quelle già conosciute e l'attenzione (in particolare, ma non solo, per il caso della Stranieri di Perugia) rivolta alla realtà studentesca, illustrata anche attraverso il recupero di rare e preziose immagini. Il quadro conclusivo che emerge per quanto concerne la realtà locale perugina è quello di due istituzioni universitarie fasciste che procedettero all'applicazione rigorosa delle leggi razziste del 1938 in maniera complementare, evidenziando il caso della Stranieri le difficoltà che l'introduzione dell'antisemitismo di Stato comportò sul piano della propaganda internazionale del regime.

L'Istituto di Studi Romani, realtà di recente indagata a proposito del 1938, viene in questa sede esaminato in maniera più approfondita e completa non solamente dal punto di vista delle fonti archivistiche e a stampa, ma anche da quello dell'interpretazione e del dibattito storiografico. Ne risulta l'immagine di un istituto di cultura strutturalmente e intrinsecamente legato al regime, alle attività del quale presero parte numerosi docenti e studiosi universitari (in particolare, ma non solo, dell'Ateneo romano). L'analisi mette in rilievo in modo particolare gli intrecci sul piano storico, ideologico e interpretativo tra l'universalismo cattolico, l'universalismo romano nella lettura fascista, il razzismo e l'antisemitismo di Stato nella versione spiritualistica nell'ambito della competizione tra cattolicesimo e fascismo per la nazionalizzazione delle masse.

Lo studio sul Liceo "Visconti", infine, rappresenta un esempio particolarmente interessante di ricerca sull'applicazione della legislazione del 1938 in ambito scolastico con l'individuazione, a seguito di un lungo lavoro di raccolta delle fonti scritte e delle testimonianze orali, dell'elenco degli studenti espulsi insieme all'unica insegnante, docente anche all'Università di Roma.

Perugia and its University. Persecutions of Jews in 1938

Simona Salustri*

Abstract. In 1938 the University of Perugia, led by the anti-Semitic rector Paolo Orano, implemented rapidly the racist laws passed by the Fascist regime. Three professors were expelled: Cesare Finzi, *ordinario* of *Chimica farmaceutica*, Gino De Rossi, *ordinario* of *Microbiologia agraria*, and Giorgio Todesco, *straordinario* of *Fisica*. Bernardo Dessau, a well-known physicist retired and *professore emerito* in 1938, was cancelled from the yearbooks of the University and excluded from the academic life. Two *assistenti* were initially expelled and then reinstated: Quinto Micheletti, who taught *Patologia speciale chirurgica*, and Leonardo Viviani, *assistente* at the Faculty of *Scienze politiche*.

Keywords: Anti-Semitism; Italian racial laws of 1938; University of Perugia.

Perugia. A Fascist university

In the early 1920s, Perugia was a small university struggling to survive, crushed by the lack of funds and continuously forced to raise its already high student fees. It was only in November 1924 that the effects of the Gentile reform were felt, when the University was declared “free” by a decree of Vittorio Emanuele III, leading to the university being subject to the laws of the Kingdom. However, it was not until the following year that Perugia’s transition to the status of *Regia Università* was made and it was included with the so-called type B universities provided for under the reform, a change that allowed Perugia to access state funding, in addition to the investments of private entities. This entailed the transformation of the *Scuola di Veterinaria* in *Istituto superiore*, alongside the two historical Faculties of *Giurisprudenza* and *Medicina e Chirurgia* (including the School of *Farmacia* and that of *Ostetricia* for aspiring midwives, in addition to the aggregated *Stazione Idrobiologica del Trasimeno*); at the same time, the *Università per Stranieri* (University for Foreigners) was also officially founded [Dozza, 1991; 385-392].

Subsequently, under the rectorate of Sergio Panunzio, one of the theorists of Fascism closest to Mussolini, the Faculty of *Scienze politiche* was created in 1927 [Di Nucci, 2011; 71-84], destined to become the jewel in the crown of the university courses of the regime that wanted to create a strategic cultural centre in the city which had been the headquarters for the March on Rome [Treggiari, 2014; 229-232]. “Fascism, which has become the State, and the historical character of Italian civilization, - as Panunzio explained from the pages of the “Popolo d’Italia”- needs its doctrine and its political, economic and legal institutions to be the subject of methodical study by young people who are heading for administrative, trade-union, corporative, diplomatic and colonial careers” and these lessons could be best taught by the *Facoltà fascista* of *Scienze politiche* [Campi, 2006; 19-21].

The University was therefore in rapid expansion and moving closer to complete alignment with the Fascist regime. The reception reserved for the PNF (National Fascist Party) secretary Filippo Turati, received by a cheering crowd in 1928 and by a speech praising the regime given by the then rector Lanciotto Rossi, professor of *Diritto processuale civile*, was one clear sign of this; other signs were the subsequent awarding of the *honoris causa* degree in *Giurisprudenza* to the President of the

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Senate Luigi Federzoni [Treggiari, 2014; 233-234], and the growing popularity of the *Gruppo universitario fascista* (GUF - Fascist university group), among the first founded in Italy [Giuntella, 1992; 208; Varasano, 2012; 413].

In this context, in 1931, faced with the obligation to swear an oath to Fascism, the University of Perugia lost Edoardo Ruffini Avondo, who immediately refused to submit to the imposition of the regime [Goetz, 2000; 97-110; Boatti, 2001; 181-186, 199-204, 206-211]. The decision by this professor of *Diritto* caused great alarm amongst his colleagues, and the new rector Leonardo Dominici asked Ruffini to withdraw his resignation letter, forcing the jurist to write another in which the real political reasons for his refusal were replaced by alleged family reasons [Treggiari, 2014; 236]. The rector could not allow a “stain” to slow the University’s growth or impact the perfect harmony reached with Fascism. For their part, most teaching staff of *Giurisprudenza* preferred to submit to the obligations of the regime rather than make the same choice as their esteemed colleague or identify with him.

Having risen in the ranking to grade A in October 1936, as a result of perfectly adhering to the boundaries set out by the Fascist regime, the University of Perugia now had six Faculties: *Giurisprudenza*, *Scienze politiche*, *Medicina e Chirurgia*, *Veterinaria*, *Agraria*, and *Farmacia* [Dozza, 1991; 430]. At its helm in the academic year 1935-36 was Paolo Orano, professor *ordinario* of *Storia del giornalismo* at the Faculty of *Scienze politiche* and assigned to teach *Storia e dottrina generale del fascismo*. Orano, whose political and scientific activity was publicly celebrated by the University in the lecture theatre named after Benito Mussolini¹, embodied the perfect man of culture dear to the Fascist ideology, capable of bending science and eloquence for the purposes of the regime [Fabre, 2013].

There is no need to wait until Orano’s appointment as rector to find examples of his Fascist oratory, but his first opening speech of the academic year 1935-36 cannot fail to capture our attention: it is a text which Orano himself compared to an agenda that bound the whole university. The rector declared himself a rigorous representative “[of] the spirit and [of] the command sought by the Fascist party”, interpreting his role as a participant “of the militarization of souls”, driven by Mussolini to reach “the culmination of power and glory indicated by [him] from the first day of his arrival in government”. So, for the sake of the homeland, the whole university, with its 561 students, as well as all 77 “comrade” professors, called to give purpose to their life through acceptance of a fasces-bearing Italy, had to show “perfect discipline and total dedication” to Fascism².

The political positions and the intransigence of the rector manifested themselves even more clearly in the direct appointment of the Faculty deans: in 1937-38 he decided to replace Federico Chabod, removed as dean of *Scienze politiche*, with Carlo Curcio; the latter, author of the statute of the PNF, in Perugia as a lecturer since the academic year 1927-28, was certainly a more suitable figure to guide the most Fascist of the Faculties than the secular and anti-clerical historian who in 1925 had helped his teacher, the anti-Fascist Gaetano Salvemini, to escape [Venturi, 1980].

The application of measures in defence of the race: exclusions, reinstatements and resignations

When the racial laws were enacted, the University of Perugia was obviously ready to apply yet another Fascist provision without delay, and its rector was at the forefront in denigrating Italian Judaism. One of Orano’s best known publications, *The Jews in Italy*, was what brought about the

¹ *Per il quarantennio dell’attività politica, scientifica e letteraria di Paolo Orano*, in Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l’a.a. 1936-37*, Perugia, Tipografia della Rivoluzione fascista G. Donnini, pp. 37-39.

² *Relazione letta dal rettore magnifico on. prof. Paolo Orano nella solenne inaugurazione dell’anno accademico 1935-36-XIV (20 novembre 1935-XIV)*, in Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l’a.a. 1935-36*, Perugia, Tipografia della Rivoluzione fascista G. Donnini, anno XIV, p. 5 ff.

resumption of the anti-Semitic campaign in Italy in 1937 and, although Mussolini later distanced himself from the rector's stance, Orano's publication gives us a clear indication of what a determined and convinced supporter of anti-Semitism it was who was leading the Umbrian university in the aftermath of the enactment of the racist laws of 1938 [Germinario, 1999; Dell'Era, 2018; 3n].

In the inaugural speech of 1938-39, Orano placed little emphasis on the exclusion of Jewish lecturers; in less than three lines he said that "in application of the R.D. of 5 September 1938 n. 1930-XVI, the following professors will cease teaching: Gino De Rossi, Cesare Finzi and Giorgio Todesco". Orano also reported on the "voluntary" resignation of Professor Lanciotto Rossi³. The rector dispelled thus any doubts about the misunderstanding that had arisen in early September of that year when the name of Lanciotto Rossi, former rector before Dominici, and Faculty dean of *Giurisprudenza*, had been included among the teachers of "Jewish race" in the lists published in national newspapers; an error taken from the local pages of the Umbrian regional edition of "La Nazione". The following week, however, both the national newspapers and the local page of "La Nazione" had published Rossi's dry denial, who had probably been confused with Gino De Rossi⁴.

The fact remains that Orano tackled the "Jewish question" in just a few lines, stating that the academic situation was to be considered absolutely normal since the Jewish professors had already been replaced and new assignments had been made. This was a very hasty statement, confirmed by the fact that the names mentioned did not constitute a complete list of those involved in the exclusion. Indeed, on an undated unheaded typed page, signed by the general coordinator of the library service and added to the copy of the Yearbook in consultation at the Rectorate of Perugia university, in addition to the three names mentioned are those of Bernardo Dessau, Quinto Michlstader (Michelstaedter?) Micheletti, and Leonardo Viviani⁵.

But let us now look at the two lists, following the order of the two lists, to reconstruct the professional careers of each of the expelled professors.

Cesare Finzi, born in Parma in 1885, had been a professor at Perugia of *Chimica farmaceutica* – and subsequently from 1936, of *Chimica farmaceutica e tossicologica* – since 1929 when he had been appointed dean of the Faculty of *Farmacia*, a position he held continuously until his exclusion in October 1938⁶. After numerous years spent at the University of Parma, first as an *assistente* and then as an *aiuto* (from 1907 until 1920 and then from 1921 onwards), Finzi had accepted the invitation from the University of Perugia, initially trying to keep both positions. He was then formally dismissed from the University of Parma because he had not returned at the end of a long period of leave, thus concluding his experience at Parma⁷.

Finzi had started teaching a course in Perugia which had only been created two years prior; yet he had achieved significant results, which in turn led to him being given a permanent position – from *straordinario* to *ordinario* from November 1932⁸ – and recognition by the University for his work in shaping the new degree course and the *Istituto di Chimica*, while at the same time also covering the

³ Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l'a.a. 1938-39*, Perugia, Tipografia G. Guerra, anno XVII, p. 12.

⁴ The newspaper reference is found in Tommaso Rossi, to whom thanks are due for having allowed us access to a part of his dissertation *L'applicazione della legislazione antiebraica in una realtà locale. Perugia 1938-1944* discussed at the Università degli Studi di Perugia, Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, a.a. 2002-03, supervisor prof. Loreto Di Nucci.

⁵ M Pieroni, *Applicazione RD 1390/1938 epurazione docenti di razza ebraica*, in Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l'a.a. 1938-39*, Perugia, Tipografia G. Guerra, anno XVII, p. 12.

⁶ Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l'a.a. 1938-39*, Perugia, Tipografia G. Guerra, anno XVII, p. 57.

⁷ Acs (Archivio centrale dello Stato), Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 200, fasc. Cesare Finzi, Letter from the rector of Parma to the Ministry, 3 June 1929.

⁸ Ivi, Report by the evaluation commission for the promotion of prof. Cesare Finzi to *ordinario*, «Bollettino Ufficiale», 25 May 1933.

chairs of *Chimica generale* and *Chimica analitica* at the Faculty of *Farmacia*, and that of *Chimica* at the Faculty of *Medicina*⁹.

In 1937 he was awarded the honour of the *Ordine della Corona d'Italia* (Order of the Crown of Italy) and in the same year he became secretary of the Fascist chemists' Union of Perugia¹⁰; so he could not be defined, according to Orano's theories, as the "classic" anti-Italian Jew opposed to Fascism. Finzi, like many others, had not been reticent in participating in local initiatives supported by the regime; for instance, in July 1938 he had held a city conference during which he made reference to Arturo Barillaro, the *manipolo* leader recently killed in the Spanish civil war¹¹. Likewise he had not shied away from taking the oath in 1931¹².

The meeting minutes of the two faculties are as emotionally detached as the rector's speech, and in perfect bureaucratic style. The Faculty of *Farmacia* minutes of 27 September 1938 state that "Professor Finzi, being suspended from the duties of dean in compliance with ministerial provisions concerning professors of Jewish race, is replaced in his functions by Professor Polimanti", and the minutes of the Faculty of *Medicina*, recalling Finzi's Jewish race, and his position teaching *Chimica*, report the annulment of his appointment¹³. The same tones of "normality" a few months later characterised the journal "La Chimica e l'industria" (Chemistry and industry), on whose pages it was written that Finzi had been relieved of his duty and that his place had been taken by Antonio Angeletti, after few months of deanery of Primo Dorello¹⁴. The gaps were formally filled by simply replacing one name with another; in this way the many notes of appreciation regarding the work carried out by professors such as Finzi were removed, inflicting damage on Italian research, which was increasingly closed in a sterile autarchy and which renounced that internationalization so long sought after in the post-war period, especially in the scientific sectors.

Finzi had moved to Parma, his hometown, by December 1938, and when he was called to collect the additional sum to the pension awarded to "university professors released from service due to the racial laws", he did not appear in person before the Perugia authorities¹⁵. Finzi settled in Collecchio with his wife and son until 1943. After 8 September he hid in the Apennines near Parma (in Pianadetto), risking his own life and that of his family several times and also collaborating with the partisans and allies [Delsante, 2019; 40-49].

He returned formally to the Umbrian university in January 1944 following his reinstatement as a supernumerary *ordinario*, and took up his position as a lecturer officially from 1945, although in a letter of June of the same year addressed to the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, he requested to be transferred to another university¹⁶. We do not know if his request was due to family reasons or if Finzi was unwilling to return to the University that had banished him and that was now reinstating him as supernumerary personnel.

However, his post-war career resumed in Perugia and was marked by certain events. The year following his reinstatement, he was accused – and later fully exonerated – by the attorney general at

⁹ Ivi, Copy of meeting minutes of the Scuola di Farmacia, 5 January 1933.

¹⁰ Ivi, Communication of the general manager to Finzi, 22 February 1937; Communication of the minister of the Corporazioni to the Ministry of Pubblica Istruzione, 10 March 1937.

¹¹ Cfr. «Il Messaggero», 2 July 1938, regional page, taken from Tommaso Rossi.

¹² Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 200, fasc. Cesare Finzi, Prestazione di giuramento (Oath), 30 November 1931.

¹³ AsUniPg (Archivio storico dell'Università di Perugia), Scuola di Farmacia, meeting minutes, vol. 5 from 14 March 1938 to 26 July 1939, meeting 27 September 1938; Facoltà di Medicina, meeting minutes from 28 January 1937 to 14 September 1939, meeting 27 September 1938.

¹⁴ «La Chimica e l'industria», 1, 1939, p. 49; Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l'a.a. 1938-39*, Perugia, Tipografia G. Guerra, anno XVII, p. 57.

¹⁵ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 200, fasc. Cesare Finzi, Communication from the Prefect to the Ministry of Educazione nazionale, 28 August 1942.

¹⁶ Ivi, Letter from Finzi to the Ministry, 1st June 1945.

the Court of Appeal of Perugia of falsifying the chemical report in a murder trial; in November 1952, because of an error of homonymy, only subsequently corrected, he was asked to retire 8 years earlier than his official retirement date¹⁷. He then became Faculty dean of *Farmacia* once again, from 1955-56 to 1960, when he retired; in 1962 he became emeritus professor¹⁸.

Gino De Rossi, born in 1874 in Pisa, where he graduated in *Medicina e chirurgia* with a thesis on hygiene¹⁹, moved to Perugia in 1907 following his appointment as *professore straordinario* of *Batteriologia agraria* at the city's *Istituto Agrario*. Despite being a doctor, at the outbreak of the First World War, De Rossi turned out to be the only bacteriologist in the province responsible for the Military Hospitals' bacteriological service, so his exemption from military service was requested following his enlistment call from the district of Lucca²⁰.

Having become *ordinario* of *Batteriologia agraria* in 1919 and director of the *Laboratorio di Batteriologia dell'Istituto Agrario*, De Rossi held the teaching post for *Igiene* from 1910 to 1938; in addition to this specialization, he began to focus on *Microbiologia agraria* during the 1920s. At the time of his expulsion, De Rossi was therefore an esteemed and well-known tenured professor of *Microbiologia agraria e tecnica* at the Faculty of *Agraria*, as well as being director of the *Istituto d'Igiene* of Perugia²¹. In the personal file present in the University Archive, various documents have been found which attest to De Rossi's scientific worth. It is also worth noting that the professor was a member of the *Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche*, had contributed to the Italian Encyclopaedia, and was held in high regard by local and national politicians for his expertise [Di Trocchio, 1991].

Despite this, the Faculty of *Agraria* was not slow to replace him, giving his teaching position to Tommaso Castelli, a *libero docente* and *aiuto* to the chair of *Microbiologia*, while for the *Igiene* teaching post, the Faculty decided to appoint for free Enrico Puccinelli, professor of *Patologia generale*, and afterward Enrico Calisti²².

However, De Rossi did not give up. Following the expulsion order, he filed for discrimination but his request was not successful²³. In January 1939 he obtained the definitive settlement of his pension, and in 1942 he received the recognition of an additional allowance, initially denied, that was due to public employees even if they were exempted from service²⁴. This was a small victory, especially if we consider that, following the loss of his job, the professor was forced to limit his work to writing scientifically popular texts from his home in Rome, the city where he was living on June 1, 1944 when the two January decrees concerning the readmission of Jewish teachers allowed his reinstatement²⁵.

The minutes of the Faculty of *Agraria* of 20 November 1944 reported De Rossi's readmission to service and the fact that pro-rector Giuseppe Ermini wanted to write to him to find out if he intended to resume his courses, applauding "the act of justice accomplished"²⁶. The professor of *Microbiologia*

¹⁷ Ivi, Communication from the rector to the Ministry, 9 August 1946, Note for the minister, 11 March 1952.

¹⁸ Ivi, Note for the minister, 27 April 1961.

¹⁹ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 168, fasc. Gino De Rossi, Stato personale (Personal status).

²⁰ Ivi, Telegram from the director to the Ministero dell'Agricoltura, 28 September 1918; Letter from the minister of Agricoltura to the Ministry of Guerra, 24 October 1918.

²¹ Ivi, Service record.

²² AsUniPg, meeting minutes of the Facoltà di Agraria, vol. 4 from 1st June 1936 to 23 February 1946, meeting 14 October 1938; meeting minutes, Facoltà di Medicina, from 28 January 1937 to 14 September 1939, meeting 22 October 1938.

²³ AsUniPg, De Rossi Gino fascicolo personale, Letter of the rector to De Rossi, 3 January 1939.

²⁴ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 168, fasc. Gino De Rossi, Letter from De Rossi to the Ministry, 4 July 1940; Letter from the Ministry to De Rossi, 19 January 1941; Decree of Minister Bottai, 12 March 1942.

²⁵ Ivi, Decree of readmission to post, 30 July 1944; Letter from the pro-rector Caronia of the Università di Roma to the Ministry, 29 August 1944.

²⁶ AsUniPg, De Rossi Gino fascicolo personale, Estratto del verbale della seduta della Facoltà di Agraria, 20 November 1944; Letter from the pro-rector to De Rossi, 10 November 1944.

actually returned to his chair on 1st November 1945²⁷ and, when in 1947 it was a matter of choosing between teaching and an appointment as *commissario straordinario dell'Istituto nazionale di Entomologia pura e applicata* in Rome, he declined the offer, to continue teaching in Perugia²⁸, where the following year he moved from the chair of *Microbiologia agraria e tecnica* to that of *Industrie agrarie*²⁹. De Rossi, in retirement from 1st November 1949, also received recognition at the end of his career, being awarded the title of emeritus professor³⁰.

Giorgio Todesco, whose academic experience offers us a further insight into the dynamics of exclusion, had graduated in *Fisica* at the University of Bologna in 1921 and had become a *libero docente* in *Fisica sperimentale* in 1929, and was subsequently made permanent in December 1934³¹. From 1935 he became *straordinario* professor at the University of Sassari, with teaching assignments in Bologna too, and he moved to Perugia following the express request made by the four scientific faculties' deans to the rector. Orano himself had contacted the *Ministero* so that Todesco could be transferred from Sassari to give the stability needed to the chair of *Fisica* and to the leadership of the department, held with difficulty by Professor Kahanovicz due to health reasons³². Todesco then moved permanently to the Umbrian University to teach *Fisica* at the Faculty of *Medicina* in January 1937, and for the academic year 1937-38 he was also assigned to teach *Chimica fisica* at the Faculty of *Farmacia* and *Fisica superiore* at the University of Bologna, where he was highly esteemed thanks to his collaboration with the *Scuola di perfezionamento in Radiocomunicazioni*³³. Indeed, in his personal file there is a letter from the well-known scientist Quirino Majorana who asked Orano to give his authorization so that his pupil could teach in Bologna from Saturday to Monday, certain that the qualities Todesco had already shown would mean the courses in Perugia could also continue. Todesco himself said he was sure he could work at his best between several universities for the sake of his subject, with his utmost commitment for the Perugia *Istituto di Fisica*³⁴.

So here was a physicist working between multiple locations, thanks to his skills in a sector strategic for the development of the regime, who was shown the door by two different universities and forced to interrupt a brilliant career. In just over nine months from when the request was made to keep both teaching positions, the situation had radically changed. In the aftermath of the promulgation of the racial measures, Todesco wrote to the Rector of Perugia to thank him for the job opportunities he had had at the Umbrian University; at the same time he received a certificate from the dean of the Faculty of *Medicina* in which the Faculty recognized his undoubted value as a scholar, scientist, teacher and *Istituto* director³⁵. This certificate was certainly an indication of the respect these colleagues had for the physics professor, but it is in no way comparable to making a public stand against the exclusion

²⁷ AsUniPg, De Rossi Gino fascicolo personale, Communication from the rector to the director of the Tesoro, 3 December 1945.

²⁸ Ivi, Letter from the rector to De Rossi, 17 October 1947; Letter from De Rossi to the rector, 7 November 1947.

²⁹ Ivi, Communication from the minister to the rector, 13 April 1948.

³⁰ Ivi, Communication from the rector to the dean of the Faculty of Agraria, 28 April 1949; Estratto del verbale della seduta della Facoltà di Agraria, 22 November 1949.

³¹ AsUniPg, Todesco Giorgio fascicolo personale, Stato di servizio (service record); Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 455, fasc. Giorgio Todesco, Università di Bologna ufficio del personale, 1st July 1958.

³² AsUniPg, Todesco Giorgio fascicolo personale, Letter signed by the deans to the rector, 12 June 1936; Letter from the rector to the minister, 4 July 1936; Letter from the rector to the minister, 29 October 1936.

³³ Ivi, Communication from the rector to Todesco, 13 November 1937; Letter from the rector of Bologna to the rector of Perugia, 24 December 1937.

³⁴ Ivi, Letter from Majorana to the rector, 28 December 1937; Letter from Todesco to the rector, 28 December 1937.

³⁵ Ivi, Letter from Todesco to the rector, 15 October 1938; Declaration of the dean of *Medicina e chirurgia*, 26 October 1938.

from teaching and from all Italian cultural spheres. In addition to being relieved of his academic duties, transferred to Ivo Ransi, Todesco was also excluded by the major scientific societies [Capristo, 2002; 349-350] and only thanks to the application of discrimination was he allowed to work for the *Società elettrica e chimica italiana* [Dragoni, 2002; 188]³⁶.

Forced into hiding in Milan during the months of the Nazi occupation, the Physics academic returned to his Bologna residence and a few days after the Liberation he asked the *Ministero* to be reinstated in his previous role; he returned to Perugia in July of the same year and made himself available to the University that had expelled him, “in the renewed spiritual climate of the liberated homeland”³⁷. Just as for Finzi, in the session of July 1945 Perugia’s *Consiglio della Facoltà di Farmacia* wanted to officially record its satisfaction in seeing Todesco return to his position, without, however, making any reference to the infamy of the racial laws³⁸.

A few months later, his colleagues of the Faculty of *Medicina e Chirurgia* put forward Todesco to the Ministry for promotion to *ordinario*³⁹. Once he had obtained his professorship, he moved permanently to Parma from November 1947⁴⁰, while he returned to the University of Bologna to teach when he was entrusted with the *Onde elettromagnetiche* course in the academic year 1946-47 [Salustri, 2004; 2009; 2010].

We do not know how much the anti-Semitic legislation might have influenced his decision to leave the University of Perugia permanently; from his parting letter it is clear that the professor considered his task at the city’s *Istituto di Fisica* at an end, carried out “in the midst of significant difficulties”⁴¹, and it is not hard to imagine that his whole family’s residence in Bologna, including his 6 children, was a valid reason for speeding up his transfer to a location closer to home. For its part, the University of Perugia thanked him for his continued work even after the Liberation through the words of the rector Giuseppe Ermini who, retracing Todesco’s career and suspension “due to a hateful provision of the Fascist government of the time”, recalled the certificate of merit expressed in his favour by the Faculty of *Medicina*⁴² at that time. This was an acknowledgment, or, perhaps, an attempt to “save” face, at least in appearance, on the part of the Faculty which, like all the others, had done nothing to help save a colleague from the “hateful” anti-Semitic laws.

In the second, additional list mentioned previously, there is also the name of Bernardo Dessau, Todesco's predecessor at the chair of *Fisica* and emeritus professor of the University of Perugia when the racial provisions of 1938 were issued. A leading figure in Italian physics, Dessau was an internationally known scholar thanks also to his collaboration with Augusto Righi and Guglielmo Marconi [Focacci, 2012; 11]. Before his retirement on 29 October 1936, the Faculty of *Medicina e chirurgia* had recognized his great worth and, through the rector Orano who expressed his approval

³⁶ His militancy in the Gruppo nazionale fascista della Scuola, his enrolment in the Partito nazionale fascista dated 1932, and his military service in the First World War were recognised. No trace of this information is in his personal file.

³⁷ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 455, fasc. Giorgio Todesco, Letter from Todesco to the Ministry, 30 April 1945; Letter from Todesco to the Ministry, 9 July 1945. AsUniPg, Todesco Giorgio fascicolo personale, Telegram from Todesco to the rector, 30 June 1945.

³⁸ AsUniPg, meeting minutes of Facoltà di Farmacia, vol. 5 from 14 March 1938 to 26 July 1939, meeting 11 July 1945.

³⁹ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione universitaria, divisione prima, fascicoli personali professori ordinari, III versamento, b. 455, fasc. Giorgio Todesco, Seduta del Consiglio della Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia, 3 November 1945.

⁴⁰ The transfer documents are present in both files conserved in Acs and in AsUniPg.

⁴¹ AsUniPg, Todesco Giorgio fascicolo personale, Letter from Todesco to the rector, 31 October 1947.

⁴² Ivi, Letter from the rector to Todesco, 5 November 1947.

in writing, Dessau was put forward for emeritus professor. The ministry therefore gave its official approval, after verifying that Dessau's record showed nothing politically compromising even if he was not a member of the Fascist National Party⁴³.

Originally from Offenbach am Main, Professor Dessau, Righi's *assistente* in Padua and then in Bologna where he had become a *libero docente* in 1896⁴⁴, taught *Fisica sperimentale* in the Faculty of *Medicina* of the University of Perugia for over thirty years starting in 1905. He was also assigned *Fisica e Meteorologia* at the *Regio Istituto superiore agrario sperimentale* and he held the chair of *Fisica sperimentale* in the *Scuole di Farmacia e Veterinaria* [Focacci, 2012; 15]. He had a long teaching career, though it was interrupted from 1917 to 1920 when, due to his German origins, he was removed from the chair after some students reported him, accusing him of having received money from Germany in exchange for his espionage work⁴⁵. These serious accusations prompted the prefect of Umbria to place him under close surveillance and to inform him that "his presence and that of his family is not welcome in Italy"⁴⁶. This was a similar fate to that of other intellectuals and teachers originating from the central European empires – regardless of whether or not they were Jewish – during the First World War and in the years that followed; for the first time, the full involvement of culture in war was apparent [Salustri, 2017], and this outcome weighed heavily on Dessau, humiliated by the provision and forced into financial straits in Florence.

After his suspension ended, the Physics professor's career resumed quickly: he became *ordinario* of *Fisica sperimentale* at the Faculty of *Medicina e Farmacia*, of which he was dean before Finzi, from 1920-21 to 1928-29; he was assigned the courses of *Fisica chimica* for *Farmacia* and *Fisica* at the *Istituti di Agraria e Veterinaria*; he was also director of the *Istituto di Fisica* and director of the *Osservatorio meteorologico* from 1921 to 1926. His life was therefore dedicated to teaching, studying and research - so much so that in 1929 he was invited to join the *Consiglio nazionale delle Ricerche* [Focacci, 2012; 23-24, 27] -, but it was also dedicated to his involvement in the Jewish community. With his wife Emma Goitein, a renowned painter, he became one of the main figures of Perugia's Judaism, transforming his home into a centre of Jewish activity and an intellectual cénacle [Toaff, 1975; 186], as well as being a staunch supporter of the Zionist movement in Italy.

If, in 1937, according to the rector Orano, Italy's Jews should have aligned themselves against all their fellow European Jews to prove their belonging to the Fascist homeland, it was precisely in Dessau's Zionism that Orano found the best representation of his worst enemy. It is perhaps no coincidence that, despite having expressed his approval in writing for Dessau's promotion to emeritus professor, in the memo of the general manager of the *Ministero dell'Educazione nazionale* there is a note added to the Faculty of *Medicina*'s decision showing Orano did not pronounce on the matter, but rather left the decision to the Ministero⁴⁷.

As was the case in other universities, the Physics professor did not forfeit his title but, in accordance with the ministerial circular of December 1938, he was totally excluded from participating in academic life; the man whom Righi had defined his best *assistente* was in an instant expelled from all Italian scientific societies. His fate was not dissimilar to that of the younger Gabor Dessau, Bernardo's son, a *libero docente* of *Giacimenti minerari* and assigned professor at the *Politecnico di Torino*, who was excluded from both the University and the *Ispettorato generale minerario* (Mining Inspectorate) [Capristo, 2002; 236-237].

⁴³ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione superiore, fascicoli personali, II versamento, 2 serie, b. 49, fasc. Bernardo Dessau, Copy of the meeting minutes of the Faculty of *Medicina e chirurgia*, 5 July 1936; Memo from the general manager of the Ministry, s.d.; Letter from Orano to the Ministry, 23 January 1937; Decree of emeritus nomination, 10 February 1937.

⁴⁴ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione superiore, Biblioteche e affari generali, Archivio generale, Università e istituti superiori, 3 serie, b. 22, fasc. Bernardo Dessau, Documents for the *libera docenza*, 1895-96.

⁴⁵ Acs, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione generale istruzione superiore, fascicoli personali, II versamento, 2 serie, b. 49, fasc. Bernardo Dessau, Consiglio accademico, 17 December 1919.

⁴⁶ Ivi, Letter from the Prefect to the Ministry, 14 December 1916.

⁴⁷ Ivi, Memo from the general manager of the Ministry, s.d.

Having escaped deportation together with his wife, Dessau died in 1949 and had a private funeral, in accordance with his will, without the public recognition due to one of the most important Italian physicists of the first half of the twentieth century⁴⁸.

All that remains is to trace the events of the two assistants indicated in the additional page in the Yearbook of 1938-39.

Quinto Micheletti, originally from Pola (Pula), *assistente incaricato* to the chair of *Patologia speciale chirurgica e propedeutica clinica* at the Faculty of *Medicina* received the suspension letter on 19 October 1938⁴⁹. A few days later a ministerial telegram asked that the *assistente* be informed that, due to further investigations, he should send statements relating to his mother's nationality⁵⁰; a few months later, a new telegram arrived at the University of Perugia requesting Micheletti to produce documents relating to his father's nationality⁵¹. The *assistente* replied by sending Orano his father's birth certificate, "born in the redeemed lands" and the documentation relating to his obtaining Italian citizenship "with full rights"⁵². As a result, the expulsion order was cancelled by ministerial provision on 19 October 1939.

The story of Micheletti highlights how, with the cumbersome anti-Jewish legislation, the regime had been forced to deal with several professors repeatedly to ask for clarification of their Jewish origins, but also how the regime enforced a fierce "Jew hunt" which had not to let anyone evade the measures. Micheletti was an Italianized surname, as was the case for many inhabitants of the Redeemed lands; in 1933 a prefectural decree established that the surname Michelstaedter be transformed into Micheletti. The assistant, born in Pola, and from a Jewish family originating in Trieste, was related to the well-known Italian writer Carlo Michelstaedter, and a large part of his family had moved to Umbria between the 1920s and 1930s, bringing with them their Italianised surname [<http://www.narnia.it/micheletti%20LA%20STORIA.pdf>].

Micheletti remained in service at the University of Perugia as an *assistente incaricato* until April 30, 1940 when he resigned. In May 1942, Orano, at the request of the president of the civil hospital of Terni, replied that he could not provide any news regarding the *assistente*, who was no longer employed at the University⁵³. A document from the late 1960s confirms that Micheletti never returned to holding any post at the University of Perugia after 1940⁵⁴.

Finally, let us briefly recall, as far as documents allow, the story of Leonardo Viviani, *assistente incaricato* at the *Istituto giuridico-politico della Facoltà di Scienze politiche*. Suspended for a few months from October 16, 1938 with the same communication that Micheletti received, Viviani hurried the next day to present a written declaration in which he claimed to be of "Italian race", son of an Italian father and mother, of Catholic religion like his parents⁵⁵. The same day he sent his declaration, a telegram from the *Ministero* arrived for Orano, in which it stated that, following the verification of the "new personal file produced by the interested party", Viviani should be removed from the list of those suspended. The rector cancelled his previous provision and communicated it to the interested party⁵⁶. A few months later, when Micheletti's suspension was still in the balance, Viviani's was declared definitively closed⁵⁷. The *assistente incaricato*, author in 1934 of the *Storia di Malta*, with an introduction by Paolo Orano and presented as the work of a young son of the Fascist school of political science in Perugia who had exceeded the expectations of his teachers⁵⁸, was able to continue in his academic position.

⁴⁸ Ivi, Communication from the rector to the Ministry, 21 November 1949.

⁴⁹ AsUniPg, Micheletti Quinto fascicolo personale, Copy of the ministerial letter 6515, 14 October 1938 and Letter from Orano to Micheletti, 19 October 1938.

⁵⁰ Ivi, Telegram from the Ministry, 24 October 1938 e Communication from Orano to Micheletti, 5 November 1938.

⁵¹ Ivi, Telegram from the Ministry, 24 April 1939 e Communication from Orano to Micheletti, 5 November 1938.

⁵² Ivi, Hand-written note from Micheletti to the rector, 20 May 1939.

⁵³ Ivi, Letter from the rector to the president of the Civil Hospital of Terni, 20 May 1942.

⁵⁴ Ivi, Personnel office note, 31 October 1969.

⁵⁵ AsUniPg, Leonardo Viviani fascicolo personale, Suspension from duty, 19 October 1938 and signed declaration, 20 October 1938.

⁵⁶ Ivi, Ministerial Telegram to the rector, 20 October 1938 and Decree of rector, 20 October 1938.

⁵⁷ Ivi, Letter from the Ministry to Orano, 10 December 1938.

⁵⁸ The note is in the «Archivio storico di Malta», 7, 1935, p. 100.

Not just academic personnel

From the regional pages of “La Nazione” on 4-5 September 1938, an article revealed the size of the Jewish population present in the University and, in addition to the three teachers (De Rossi, Finzi and Todesco), it listed 10 foreign students, of which 9 male and 1 female, and 12 Italian students, of which 11 male and 1 female⁵⁹. Therefore 22 Jewish students, out of a total of 573 enrolled, were excluded from the University following the introduction of the racial measures. These represent a tiny number of foreign university students if we think how attractive Italy was for many Jewish students fleeing countries where racial measures had already been introduced [Gentlemen, 2009; 2000], but can be explained by the local competition from Perugia’s *Università per Stranieri*.

As for the university students mentioned, it was not possible to find useful sources to discover what really happened during their stay in Perugia; however, we do know that the local *Gruppo universitario fascista* (GUF) was very active in promoting state racism. The GUF in Perugia could count on leading figures of the Fascist youth organization such as Fernando Mezzasoma, who from secretary of the local group became one of the major executors of Starace's policy, capable of bringing his political and organizational dynamism from the periphery to the centre [During, 2008; 115, 134-135]. This is not the place to retrace the rise (to the detriment of all the pre-existing associations) and the growth of the Perugia GUF, whose activities were among the first to be reconstructed by historiography as regards the history of single university groups [Giuntella, 1992]. However, it is important to underline the relationships that closely linked this organization to the political life of the city, as well as to the University, confirming how much the Fascism of the universities went hand in hand with the formation of a new generation forged by the regime and called to local and national government in the name of Fascism [Varasano, 2012; 411-426].

The activism of the Perugia GUF therefore marked some key passages in the history of the relationship between university students and Fascism throughout the twenty-year period. One of these was undoubtedly the racial campaign that the GUF of Perugia were keen to promote by establishing a *Corso di studi e propaganda della razza* (*Course of study and propaganda of the race*) in August 1938 in advance on the national directives. It was comprised of a series of lectures, subsequently collected in a booklet, at the centre of which was Mussolini's racism, as a defence of the Italic race in the colonial context, and which translated the *Manifesto of racist scientists* point by point [Duranti, 2008; 358-360; La Rovere, 2003; 343n].

It is therefore not surprising that at the opening of the 1938-39 academic year, the secretary of the GUF dedicated a part of his speech to the course, highlighting how racial policy had immediately resonated with the youth of the University of Perugia⁶⁰.

Continuity...

Returning to the exclusion of academic personnel, racial laws affected the academic set-up of Perugia in a numerically small way: unlike other universities, only 7.7% of the teaching staff – comprising 25 *ordinari*, 11 *straordinari*, and 42 *incaricati* – were excluded from university life. The reasons obviously stem from the scarce presence of Jewish teachers in the Umbrian University; local research has indeed highlighted how the Jewish community of Perugia was historically involved above all in the commercial sectors [Toaff, 1975]. In our opinion, this scarcity is also due to the University’s structure which, on the eve of the Second World War, was an expanding university campus, yet still with a lower number of courses and with few professorships compared to other universities, and certainly affected by competition from the nearby Rome Faculties.

⁵⁹ The reference to the newspaper is found in Tommaso Rossi.

⁶⁰ *Relazione del segretario del G.U.F. di Perugia intitolato al nome di “Ludovico Menicucci”*, in Regia Università degli Studi di Perugia, *Annuario per l’a.a. 1938-39*, Perugia, Tipografia G. Guerra, anno XVII, p. 20.

The numbers, however, have a purely functional role in contributing to the overall national picture on exclusion, whereas by focussing on a qualitative analysis, it is striking that in the Perugia context, racial laws essentially affected the three Faculties of *Medicina*, *Farmacia* and *Agraria*. The Faculty staff of *Scienze politiche*, a faculty dear to the rector who had been its dean and where he taught the *Storia e dottrina generale del fascismo*, and of *Giurisprudenza* were not affected by the provisions of 1938; this meant that no room had been left to the “enemies of the Fascist homeland”, whether Jews or Liberal Democrats, to interfere in the areas of the University of Perugia most important to Fascism. Their activity implementing the regime’s aims had continued unhindered under the leadership of Orano, who was soon to become Senator of the Kingdom, at the end of a long war whose foundations had also been ideologically built by the Perugian rector over many years dedicated to the formulation of his anti-Jewish thought [Battini, 2010].

Only in the Faculty of *Medicina* is there a trace of an open discussion that took place to decide how to replace Finzi, though more connected to the reorganization of studies than to the scientific worth of the teacher expelled⁶¹, while for the other courses there was nothing written to indicate any debate on the replacements. Instead of discussions, there is a simple list of new assignments to maintain teaching continuity. That same continuity was the objective pursued in October 1944 when, during the post-Liberation purging procedures regarding 6 *ordinari*, 15 other teaching staff (*professori incaricati, aiuti, assistenti* and *liberi docenti*), and 7 members of the technical and administrative staff [Flamigni, 2019; 77-79], the Faculty Councils discussed course reorganization and deliberated the suppression of Fascist courses, and the removal of *Dottrine corporative*, *Storia e dottrina del fascismo*, and *Biologia delle razze umane*, the latter taught by Aldo Spirito.

Just as these courses had become part of the didactic regulations, these teachings introduced by the regime were removed; just as the Jewish teachers had been expelled after 1938, after the war they returned once more to the university teaching staff. In most cases there was not even a faint greeting for the colleagues who had been forced to leave their positions, as was the case for Ruffini in the Thirties, who returned to the University without enthusiasm to be met with the deafening silence of his Faculty [Treggiari, 2014; 237]. In the Umbrian university, therefore, action was taken to put into practice the dictates of the regime, and the anti-Semitic measures had constituted an acceleration of a process of “fascistization” which began in the aftermath of the seizure of power by Fascism, in absolute continuity with a regime that always looked to Perugia, not just because of the presence of the Faculty of *Scienze politiche*.

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⁶¹ AsUniPg, Facoltà di Medicina, meeting minutes from 28 January 1937 to 14 September 1939, meeting 27 September 1938.

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The University for Foreigners of Perugia and the Anti-Semitic Laws of 1938*

Gabriele Rigano**

Abstract. The essay intends to reconstruct the methods of applying the anti-Semitic legislation of 1938 to the University for Foreigners of Perugia. The institution of Perugia was thought by Fascism as an international propaganda tool for the regime. In 1938, anti-Semitic politics introduced significant changes and problems that were not easy to solve. It was not easy to reconcile two distinct objectives of the cultural policy of fascism. The first long-standing: to create a current of young foreign professionals sensitive to the Italian and Fascist spirit and culture through facilitations in access to universities. The other more recent target: to place filters to exclude unwanted elements, such as Jews. The promotion of Italy abroad and state anti-Semitism were not always compatible: the racist campaign represented a problematic variable for the international propaganda of fascism. The case of the University for Foreigners of Perugia is therefore paradigmatic from this point of view.

Keywords: Fascist anti-Semitism; Universities history; Foreign student in Italy; Fascist propaganda outside of Italy.

1. Fascism and foreign students in 1938

The year 1938, which would be marked by Fascism's public anti-Semitic metamorphosis that had been incubating for several years during the totalitarian evolution of the regime (De Felice 1993⁵; Matard-Bonucci 2008; Sarfatti 2018³), began with particular attention being given to the presence of foreign Jewish students in Italy (Fabre 2007). It was not a new issue (Voigt 1993, 220-8; Signori 2000 e 2018; Salustri 2009, 133),¹ but in the imminence of Italy's racist stance and the anti-Semitic feelings at the time, especially in Eastern Europe, it took on a particular urgency (Capelli e Brogгинi 2001). It was necessary to avoid an influx in Italy of students from "undesirable nationalities" (racial laws), as had happened in the past, due to the worse conditions they faced in their countries for "ethnic reasons."² There were restrictive laws concerning Jews especially in Poland, Hungary and Romania, and it was the situation in Romania, which in January 1938 clearly defined itself in anti-Semitic legislative terms, that probably alarmed Italian diplomatic circles. These new fears were added to the

* In order not to weigh down the text, only the research deemed indispensable will be mentioned. The List of Abbreviations is on page 160.

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¹ Before 1938, attention in the MAE had been prompted by some national cases of foreign Jewish students, such as that of the Poles in 1937, indicated by the Italian ambassador in Warsaw as "the least good part of these people," to which was added, however, that of the entire Danube and Balkan area, and against which the best response was thought to be "a disguised form of obstructionism." These specific preclusions would later become part of a systematic treatment at the beginning of 1938. See ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 42 (21), file Studenti italiani o stranieri iscrizioni presso Università Scuole 1936-37 (pos. II-14-PG 3), Italian Embassy in Warsaw at MAE, no. 1261/424, 28 May 1937; MAE DIE at the Italian Embassy in Warsaw, no. 875749/161, 2 August 1937; MAE DIE notes for H.E. the Minister, 21 June 1937. The Schools Archive at the ASDMAE is in great disorder and at present the correspondence between inventory and ordering is not perfect for some series. For this reason, in addition to the envelope, which does not always correspond to the number indicated in the inventory, the position that distinguishes the different series of the archive will also be indicated.

² For the two quotes see respectively: MEN DGIS at MAE and MCP, no. 3009, February 8, 1938, in ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 40 (64), file Accertamenti, elenchi, statistiche 1938, subfile Parte generale 1938 (pos. II-14-PG 7); and Circular no. 23 of the MAE, 31 May 1938 on Enrollment of foreign students in the RR. Universities and higher institutes of the Kingdom, in *ibid* b. 69 (pos. II-14-PG 3), file Parte generale, subfile Pratiche studenti ebrei nelle R. Università di Pisa, Bologna etc. Academic Year (AY) 1937-38.

traditional concern that saw foreign Jewish professionals who had been educated trained in Italy as potential competitors to the Italians. For this reason it was hoped that after completing their studies they would return to their homelands, or at least that they would leave Italy.



1. Edith Deutsch, German
ex-Austrian



1. Edith Straus, German



2. Eva Benedek, Romanian

It was not easy to reconcile two distinct objectives of Fascism's cultural policy. One was of earlier date: to create a current of young foreign professionals sensitive to the Italian and Fascist culture and spirit through facilitated access to universities. The other, most recent objective: to put up filters to exclude undesirable elements, such as Jews. As we will see later, the promoting of Italy abroad and state anti-Semitism were not always compatible: the racist campaign was a problematic variable for Fascism's international propaganda.

It was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) that began to focus its attention on foreign Jewish students: on January 10, 1938, it asked the Ministry of National Education (MEN) "to send [...] statistical data concerning Jewish students of foreign nationality currently enrolled in the Universities and High Schools of the Kingdom" (Fabre 2007, 64-5). On January 19th the MEN forwarded the MAE's request to the Italian universities. The inquiries found that there were 1344 foreign Jewish students in the 1937-38 academic year (AY), out of a total of 2699 foreign students for the same AY (see Table 2).³

The MAE had in fact focused its attention on foreign students even earlier (see Table 1). On December 2, 1937, the Ministry headed by Galeazzo Ciano had asked the MEN for "the precise number of foreign students enrolled in the 1936-37 AY at the Universities of Bari, Bologna, Rome, Ferrara and that of the Sacred Heart of Milan."⁴ The MEN's reply arrived on January 5, 1938, and five days later a further request was made regarding foreign students, this time Jews. On January 14th these concerns emerged from the secret rooms to be proclaimed by Telesio Interlandi's *Il Tevere*, in an article titled "Quelli che vengono" ("Those Who Come"), and in *Il Resto del Carlino* in Bologna (Fabre 2007, 63-8; Onofri 1989, 89 -93; Salustri 2009, 148-50). These events are intertwined with those of some foreign Jewish students, whom the MAE and the MEN dealt with assiduously in the months that followed. Also on January 14th, the MAE asked the University of Pisa for information on the enrollment of some Lithuanian Jewish students: Riva Diskantes, Tavelis Goldbergas, and

³ It should be noted that the Pisa data in Table 2 were quite strange, with 290 out of 291 foreign students being foreign Jews. But according to documentation found in the same file (a very detailed list of names) in the 1937-38 academic year there were 246 foreign students at the University of Pisa, 224 of whom were foreign Jews. It is not easy to identify reliable facts among the considerable, and disparate, data found in different sources on the number of foreign students in Italian universities. See for example the data given in Table 1.

⁴ ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 40 (64), file Accertamenti, elenchi, statistiche 1938, subfile Parte generale 1938 (pos. II-14-PG-7), MAE DIE to MEN DGIS, no. 0924099/2082, 2 December 1937 and reply no. 26888, 5 January 1938 (not numbered). On the topic of international student migration see Mariuzzo 2011 e 2015.

Alessandro Konas.⁵ It was feared that the procedure had not been followed that provided for “political” clearance issued directly by the MAE on a case-by-case basis. In truth, the law provided that this clearance could also be issued by the consular representatives, as was the case with the Lithuanians, but on March 5, 1938 the MAE deemed it expedient to deny the authorization, opening a real political can of worms: in fact at least 240 other foreign students “of largely undesirable nationality” – that is, Jews with Polish citizenship (224 out of 246 foreign students enrolled in Pisa in the 1937-38 AY were Jews)⁶ – had been enrolled through the same procedure, or, even worse, exchanging the legalization of the documents submitted to the MAE for access to Italian universities with the required “political” clearance.



4. *Friz Balner, German
ex-Austrian*



5. *Friz Birkner, German
ex-Austrian*



6. *Gerhard Müller,
Swiss*

The story aroused great discontent among the students, resulting in a petition being addressed directly to Mussolini and the intervention of Polish diplomatic authorities.⁷ The problem was linked to the fact that all this came to light when the 1937-38 academic year was drawing to a close, jeopardizing the authorized status of over 240 students who had been enrolled for several months and, furthermore, who were about to complete their studies (Tanti 1998; Pelini-Pavan 2009). It is not inconceivable that, in addition to the developments of Romanian anti-Semitism, this affair also contributed toward the MAE and the MEN focusing their attention on the issue of Jewish foreign students, arousing fears about an influx that would be difficult to control at a time in which Jews were becoming unwanted.

Even more significant is that at the beginning of 1938 the two ministries became inflexible in the very restrictive applying of rules that for years were systematically ^{6. Gerhard Müller, Swiss} circumvented by universities, which were interested in facilitating access for foreign students to increase enrollment. This prompted the regime’s institutions to review all the laws concerning the access of foreigners to Italian universities.

⁵ ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 69, file Parte generale 1938 (pos. II-14-PG-3), MEN DIE to the University of Pisa, no. 803459/58, 14 January 1938 and reply no. 263, 18 January 1938.

⁶ ASDMAE, AS 1936-45, I versamento, b. 69, file Università italiane affari generali, subfile Pratiche studenti ebrei nelle Università di Pisa, Bologna ecc. AY 1937-38 (pos. II-14-PG-3), List of foreign students enrolled at the University of Pisa in the 1937-38 AY (Diskantes no. 33, Goldbergas no. 66, Konas no. 100).

⁷ See *ibid*, Prefecture of Pisa to MAE DIE, no. 04845, 2 April 1938 and *ibid*, file Parte generale 1938, Ciano to Bottai, no. 829961/575, 24 March 1938. For the negative response of the MAE, see *ibid*, MAE DIE to the University of Pisa, no. 822454/255, 5 March 1938 and MAE DIE to the Italian Legation in Kaunas, no. 822622/59, 5 March 1938. In general, also for the intervention of the Polish diplomatic authorities, see ASDMAE, AS 1936-45, I versamento, b. 69, file Parte generale 1938. For the petition to Mussolini, see ACS, MPI, DGIS, div. II, Leggi, regolamenti, statuti, esami, corsi, statistiche, tasse, studenti etc. 1925-1945, b. 201, file Iscrizioni irregolari studenti stranieri a Pisa e in altre Università, Bottai to Sebastiani, without ref. no. 29 April 1938 and ASDMAE, AS 1936-45, I versamento, b. 69, file Parte generale 1938, subfile Pratiche studenti ebrei nelle Università di Pisa, Bologna etc. AY 1937-38 (pos. II-14-PG-3), *Appello a S.E. Benito Mussolini Duce del Fascismo*, 24 April 1938, signed by 60 foreign students at the University of Pisa.



7. *Hanna Robenstein,
Palestinian*



8. *Heinrich Fautl,
German ex-Austrian*



9. *Ida Panzierer,
German ex-Austrian*

Between the 2nd and the 8th of February, Mussolini, together with Bottai, reviewed the entire question of foreign students' access to Italian universities (Sarfatti 2018,³ 154), hanging heavily over which was the unsaid “Jewish question,” which was called into question by the MAE after Bottai had asked it for an opinion. The “radical restrictions” that Bottai proposed as the policy indicated by Mussolini were identified by the Directorate General of Italians Abroad (DIE) of the MAE, which got to the heart of the matter by clarifying that “the problem is therefore reduced to the need to limit or prohibit access especially of [foreign] Jewish students to Italian universities.” Thus quotas for foreign students were proposed that had to “constitute for the administration not so much a fixed and insuperable limit, as much as an expedient for justifying the cause of any exclusions.” Furthermore, an MAE certificate for enrollment was to be introduced as mandatory: the aforementioned clearance, which would in fact be introduced shortly thereafter as a necessary condition, the province exclusive of the MAE DIE. These proposals were accepted and confirmed in April, modifying the previous bureaucratic process.⁸



10. *Lucien Ismalum, Egyptian*



11. *Jeanette Bachrich, German ex-Austrian*

In the meantime, the age-old question was being resolved of foreign students, mostly Jews, irregularly enrolled at the University of Pisa. On March 24, 1938 Ciano emphasized to Bottai the “opportuneness of wanting to take adequate measures, so that the provisions concerning the enrollment of foreign students may be strictly observed, in view of the reasons of which you are well

⁸ ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 40 (64), file Accertamenti, elenchi, statistiche 1938, subfile Parte generale 1938 (pos. II-14-PG 7), MEN DGIS to the MAE to the Ministry of Popular Culture, no. 3009, 8 February 1938. The two responses (Ministry of Popular Culture, no. 1470/15, 14 February 1938 and MAE DIE, no. 817440/373, 19 February 1938) in ACS, MPI, DGIS, Div. II, 1925-45, b. 201, file Ammissioni degli studenti stranieri nelle Università del Regno.

aware.”⁹ The reasons of which Bottai was well aware probably regarded the need to close the doors on foreign Jewish students.

It was decided by mutual agreement to grant an amnesty to avoid what would have been an international scandal, granting admission only for the 1937-38 academic year, promising to evaluate case by case the following year, in which the MAE could fully enforce the new provisions formulated to remove “the undesirable elements” – the Jews. Faced with the insistence with which the Italian Legation in Lithuania pleaded the cause of the Jewish students Alessandro Konas, Riva Diskantes, and Tavelis Goldbergas, the DIE’s Guglielmo Rulli wrote confidentially to Frasoni, the plenipotentiary minister in Kaunas: “I am anxious to inform you confidentially that the reasons for the delay alleged by the Ministry for denying its clearance to the students were brought about by the necessity to find some kind of pretext to reject the applications. Indeed, we must try to send away from the Italian universities those students who try to settle in the Kingdom inasmuch as they have difficulties in their countries of origin due to their race.”¹⁰

2. The University for Foreigners of Perugia in the regime’s anti-Semitic policy

The MEN also took action in February: on the 14th, a census was taken of Jewish students and professors in Italian universities (Galbani 1991). Written in the diary of the Rettore of the University of Perugia, Paolo Orano, for the date of February 16, 1938 we find: “a coded telegram arrives from the Ministry: investigation on Jews. I send my answers.”¹¹



12. Josef Wald,
German ex-Austrian



13. Kurt Ostberg,
German



14. Kurt Sinnreich,
German ex-Austrian

With suspicious timing, on February 16th *Diplomatic Information* no. 14 was made public, which denied rumors of imminent racist measures in Italy. The note concluded, however, in a sinister tone: “The Fascist government nevertheless reserves the right to monitor the activities of the Jews who have come to our country recently and to ensure that the part played by the Jews in the overall life of the nation is not disproportionate to the intrinsic merits of the individuals and to the numerical importance of their community” (Sarfatti 2017², 28-30). Paolo Orano, a committed Fascist intellectual, had made his first contribution to the rise of the anti-Semitic campaign in 1937. In April of that year he had in fact published a small volume titled *Gli ebrei in Italia* (The Jews in Italy), which set off the journalistic campaign in preparation for the regime’s anti-Semitic turn (Rigano 2004 and 2006).

⁹ ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 69, file Parte generale 1938 (pos. II-14-PG-3), Ciano to Bottai, no. 829961/575, 24 March 1938.

¹⁰ Ibid, Guglielmo Rulli to Francesco Frasoni, no. 841861/90, 16 April 1938.

¹¹ *Agenda 1938* on the date of February 16, Orano private archives, Rome.

He had been the Rettore of the State University since the previous year, and he also sat on the board of directors of the University for Foreigners of Perugia,¹² a unique academic institution greatly exploited by the regime for its international propaganda value, which at the time was in the form of summer courses aimed primarily at foreigners. The soul and leader of the University for Foreigners was Astorre Lupattelli, a prominent exponent of the local notables.¹³

The University for Foreigners was not involved in this first “cognitive” stage of the regime’s anti-Semitic policy for the universities. Not until August 9th did Minister Bottai ask for information on the presence of Jewish students, requiring an answer “with the greatest possible haste.”¹⁴ Notes from information services regarding the entry of Viennese or former Austrians Jews into Italy had probably drawn attention to the University for Foreigners. The informative reports had arrived from Vienna in the first half of July. The first read:

“I have the honor of making it known that, the Fascist Government having recently enacted very strict measures to prevent the influx of Jewish students into Italy, these students, in order to enter the country, resort to all sorts of expedients. One of these is enrollment at the Royal University for Foreigners of Perugia, having the enrollment card sent to them while they are still here. They then use this document to legitimize their presence in the Kingdom. Thus, for example – and this is not the only case –, the Jewish student Fritz Balner di Emilio obtained enrollment card no. 296 from the University of Perugia for Foreigners and will depart from here, by airplane, on July 1st of this year, for Venice, and will then continue by train, via Bologna. One has the feeling, that there are those in Italy who take the trouble to find a way to smuggle Jews into the Kingdom.”¹⁵



15. *Leo Tcherkoff, Palestinian*



16. *Max Edelhofer, German ex-Austrian*

As of March 18, 1938 (the Anschluss had taken place on March 12) the Jews, now ex-Austrians, were not allowed to stay in Italy, and starting from June 14th they could not enroll in Italian universities (Voigt 1993, 227 and 283-4). On July 13th, a second informative report arrived which read:

“Another system used by young Jews to leave Austria more easily and to enter other countries without difficulty is to enroll in summer courses for foreigners at universities. They apply by mail for enrollment at the university, and once it has been confirmed by the university’s letter, they can get a passport issued and money quite easily. They can use the same letter as a pass with the border authorities. It is said that by these means many Israelites have already managed to enter Italy. They enroll mainly in the Universities of Perugia, Florence

¹² But he was never its Rettore, as has been claimed instead in various studies (Collotti 2003, 42; Luconi 2007, 130-1; Duggan 2013, 340). The best biographical notes on Orano in Fabre 2013.

¹³ In 1938 the University for Foreigners of Perugia was classified by the MEN as a “Istituto con ordinamento special” (Special Order Institute). On the history of the University for Foreigners of Perugia, see Lupattelli 1947; Paoletti 1990; Ciampi 2003; Gheda 2004; Stramaccioni 2005; Maori 2010. Also worthy of mention is Belardi 2008.

¹⁴ AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, MEN to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 12336, 9 August 1938.

¹⁵ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, informative report quoted in MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR to the Prefect of Perugia, no. 433/72189, 28 July 1938. Regarding Venice airport as a pole of attraction for refugees, see Voigt 1993, 286-287.

and Siena, but always with the intention of not leaving Italy after finishing their courses, and of remaining there permanently.”¹⁶

When this second informative report reached the Ministry of the Interior (MI), measures had already been taken that were based on the first informative report: on July 28th, the Prefect of Perugia was asked to investigate the case.¹⁷ A list of students “of Jewish religion” enrolled in the University for Foreigners was then drawn up. A second list was drawn up on August 19th.¹⁸ The two lists give the following names:¹⁹

1. ¹BERNAU Fritz Erwin son of Emil, born in 1901, German [ex-Austrian]
2. ¹BENEDEK Eva daughter of Julio, born in 1917, Romanian (see image 3)
3. ¹BIEZUNSKI Pinchas son of Abraham, Palestinian (see image 28)
4. ¹BLUME Wilhelm Ferdinando son of Heinnch, born in 1914, German
5. ¹DENTSCH [DEUTSCH] Edith daughter of Adolfo, born in 1914, German [ex-Austrian] (see image 1)
6. ¹FAUTL Heinrich son of Ugo, born in 1915, German [ex-Austrian] (see image 8)
7. ¹FINK Jan Frederiche son of Wilhelne, born in 1918, Polish
8. ²FRANKFURT Fany daughter of Edoardo, German [ex-Austrian]
9. ²GLASS Tiberio [Tommaso] son of Tiberio, born in 1922, Hungarian
10. ²GUNSBERG Abraham son of Markus, Polish
11. ²ISMALUM André Lucine, born in 1896, Egyptian (see image 10)
12. ²ISRAEL Germaine wife of Herzenstein, French-Egyptian
13. ¹KOCH Walter son of Karl, born in 1914, German [ex-Austrian] (see image 22)
14. ¹MÜLLER Gerhard son of Waldemar, born in 1919, Swiss (see image 6)
15. ¹NORDMANN Paul Samuel son of Alice, born in 1918, Swiss (see image 29)
16. ¹OSTBERG Kurt son of Stephan, born in 1919, German (see image 13)
17. ¹ROBENSTEIN Ester Haura [Hanna] wife of Biezunski daughter of Isacco, Palestinian (see image 7)
18. ²ROSENBLAT Tatiana daughter of Maurizio, Polish
19. ²SCHLOSSMANN Josef son of Salomone, Polish
20. ¹SILLERSTEIN [SILBERSTEIN] MONTA Olga daughter of Jak, born in 1900, Romanian (see image 30)
21. ¹SINNREICH Kurt son of Rodolfo, born in 1916, German [ex-Austrian] (see image 14)
22. ²STRAUS Edith daughter of Federico, born in 1910, German (see image 2)
23. ¹WALD Josef son of Samam, born in 1917, German [ex-Austrian] (see image 12)

On August 19th the MI gave the names of the ex-Austrians Balner (see image 4), Fault [sic, Fautl] and Wald, enrolled at the University for Foreigners directly from outside Italy through the form available at foreign universities and in Italian diplomatic and cultural circles throughout the world. “Given the dissemination of these brochures and forms abroad,” the MI official wrote, “it seems easy to get hold of them and use them to become enrolled, especially since no documents are required, and the correspondence takes place between the university administration and the foreigner, directly, without other formalities.” Three other ex-Austrians are then named who entered Italy by the same method in July 1938, eluding the control of the MI: Deutsch, Sinnreich and Koch. Lastly, Fany

¹⁶ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, informative report dated Vienna, July 13, 1938.

¹⁷ Ibid., MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR to the Prefect of Perugia, no. 433/72189, 28 July 1938. Regarding application of racial laws in the Province of Perugia, see Boscherini 1995.

¹⁸ AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, Perugia Police Headquarters to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 004349, 30 July 1938, with enclosed list and Perugia Police Headquarters to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 004349, 19 August 1938, with enclosed list.

¹⁹ With 1 in superscript (¹) in the first list, with 2 in superscript (²) in the second list.

Frankfurt, who had lived in Italy for several years, was named.²⁰ It is possible that some of them used this ruse to escape from Austria, annexed to the Reich, without ever reaching Perugia. The entry of German Jewish students would be controlled in the future.



17. Passport of Georg Silbermann



18. Georg Silbermann, German ex-Austrian

The MEN' request of August 9th regarding the presence of foreign Jews was answered by Lupattelli on August 16th with the sending of the first list received by the Police and a very interesting letter:

«In response to note 9 corr. no. 12336; This University does not ask for the *religious* affiliation in the enrollment applications; however this year the R. Police Headquarters has carried out investigations in receiving the statements of residence of our enrolled foreign students and, at my request, it has delivered to me the list, a copy of which I transmit to the Most Excellent Ministry. I take this opportunity to ask you to let me know if the prohibition regarding the enrollment in all Italian schools of students and scholars of the Jewish race must also apply to this University, which does not issue academic and professional titles and has the sole purpose of spreading the Italian language and culture among foreigners”.²¹

The Rettore must have intervened also at the MAE to try to exclude the University for Foreigners from the anti-Jewish policy that was taking shape in the academic world. Amedeo Giannini, a member of the University's board of directors representing the MAE, wrote to Lupattelli on an unspecified date: “S. E. Ciano believes that the rules for Jewish students do not apply to enrollment at the University of Perugia.”²² Drawing on the special character of the institution he led, Lupattelli essentially asked that an exception be made for the University for Foreigners regarding the general prohibition for foreign Jews to have access to public education. Indeed, on August 6th the MEN

²⁰ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, Copy of the letter to the DGPS of the MI, 19 August 1938, signed by the Public Safety Inspector General Fantusati. Deutsch, Sinnreich and Koch had actually enrolled in July. See the files of the three students in AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1938. According to the University's internal documents, however, Frankfurt, Gunsberg and Schlossmann were not enrolled, as there are no files on them and they are not mentioned in the University's *Bulletins*.

²¹ AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, draft of the letter from Lupattelli to the Ministry of National Education, 16 August 1938. Handwritten, underlined in the original.

²² AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, Letter from Amedeo Giannini to Astorre Lupattelli, undated Handwritten, underlined in the original.

issued a circular prohibiting the enrollment of foreign Jews in Italian universities, even if they had already been enrolled in previous years. But the University for Foreigners had already been excluded from the restrictive provision, given that the August 6th circular had not been sent to it.²³ It cannot be ruled out that Lupattelli's urgent request also posed the problem of foreign Jewish students, which was in fact debated in the latter half of August.²⁴ After a number of contacts between the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the MAE and the MEN, by order of Mussolini a derogation was established for the university according to which Italian and foreign Jews could only continue studies undertaken in previous years: new enrollments were not allowed (Sarfatti 2017², 149-51). This was established in the decree of 5 September 1938 no. 1390 containing the *Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza nella scuola fascista* (Provisions for the defense of race in Fascist schools). The concession for foreign Jewish students had been expressly disclosed by the MAE on August 25th,²⁵ but was formalized by the MEN much later, on October 6, with an addition of some significance: the exclusion of German Jewish students, to whom the university was forbidden anyway, in deference to Italy's ally on the other side of the Alps (Signori 2000, 158-9; Capristo 2007, 144-6).²⁶



19. Mayer Panzierer, German ex-Austrian



20. Passport of Mayer Panzierer

²³ This was the MEN circular no. 19153 of 6 August 1938. According to the MEN papers, the circular was not sent to the University for Foreigners. We know, however, that Lupattelli was informed in August of what was happening, such that on August 16 he wrote about it to the MEN. Regarding the exclusion from the sending of the August 6th circular, see ACS, MPI, DGIS, Div. II, b. 192, file Studenti ebrei divieto d'iscrizione.

²⁴ The embassy in the United States also received requests of this type. See ASDMAE, AP, 1931-45, Italia 1938, b. 50, file Razzismo in Italia, Embassy Telegram to Washington to MAE, no. 11381, 10 August 1938. In confirmation of the role of American echoes in Mussolini's change of course, see *ibid*, MAE DIE to Embassies in Washington, Paris, Warsaw, Prague and Bucharest Legations, MI Directorate General of Demography and Race, MEN, etc., no. 887993/10166, 25 August 1938.

²⁵ ASDMAE, AP, 1931-45, Italia 1938, b. 50, file Razzismo in Italia, MAE DIE to Embassies in Washington, Paris, Warsaw, Prague and Bucharest Legations, MI Directorate General of Demography and Race, MEN, etc., no. 887993/10166, 25 August 1938. On September 9, 1938 the MAE notified all diplomatic representatives of the exception for foreign Jewish students to be able to continue only the studies undertaken in the academic years prior to 1938-39. ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, Circular of the MAE DIE to all diplomatic representatives, no. 0008, 9 September 1938.

²⁶ One documented exception regards the German Jewish student Wolfgang Rosenberg, enrolled at the Istituto Superiore Orientale in Naples. The Pope's secretary of state, Card. Pacelli, had interceded on behalf of Rosenberg, who had converted to Catholicism; shortly thereafter Pacelli was elected to the papal throne. See ASDMAE, AISS, b. 102, file Questione razziale-Pratiche personali, subfile Rosenberg Wolfgang.

On September 23rd Bottai replied to Lupattelli's letter, stating "that the prohibition for students of the Jewish race to enroll in Italian schools does not apply to this university, given its special character." The minister concluded by advising the "utmost caution with regard to the enrollment of German Jews."²⁷ At the University for Foreigners students could attend various courses that lasted a maximum of three months, and at the end of which they received a certificate of knowledge of the Italian language, whereas a special course issued a certificate of qualification for teaching Italian abroad.²⁸ Lupattelli asked for the derogation for the University for Foreigners in August, when the idea was of a general ban for foreign Jewish students. But the September 5th decree, ratified for foreign Jewish students with the circular of October 6th, which allowed only those students who were already enrolled in the 1937-38 academic year to continue their studies, would in fact have meant the closing of the University for Foreigners to Jews: the Foreigner's educational program provided for Italian and culture courses that were at most quarterly, so that every year was concluded in itself, given that there were no multiyear courses as in other universities. This would have caused a decline in the international image of Italian culture.



21. Wolfgang Rosenberg, German



22. Walter Koch, German ex-Austrian

We have no elements for establishing what reasons led Lupattelli to request an exemption from the exclusion of foreign Jewish students for his university:²⁹ opposition to the anti-Semitic campaign,

²⁷ AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, MEN to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 13191, 23 September 1938. As early as September 19, 1938, the secretary of the University for Foreigners assured foreign Jewish students who applied to the University that the anti-Semitic provisions did not concern the Perugian university. See AUSPg, Studenti, Palestina, 1938, file Alice Levin.

²⁸ The academic year at the Foreigners was divided into three quarters, from April 1 to December 23. 1st quarter: April 1 to June 30; 2nd quarter: July 1 to September 30; 3rd quarter: October 1 to December 23. Studies were divided into Italian language, literature, history and art courses and high culture courses. The former were in turn further divided into a Preparatory Course; Intermediate Course with French, English, Romanian, German and Hungarian sections, general notions of Italian literature, practical phonetics and grammatical methods; Advanced Course with historical grammar, comparative stylistics, Italian literature, civil history and art history. The latter were divided into Etruscan studies, "Lectura Dantis," modern and contemporary Italy, with a different specific century each year (in 1938 it was the 1500s), courses on various subject (in 1938 the Augustan civilization, Augustus: serenity and constant order, progress made by Italian agriculture in the Fascist regime). See *Bollettino della Regia Università italiana per Stranieri Perugia*, from 1938 to 1944, special January issues on the life of the university and statistical data for the year.

²⁹ The Rettore does not mention this even in Lupattelli 1947.

the defending of the international nature of the school he directed, the desire to obtain a privileged position in relation to other universities? Without a doubt, however, and beyond his intentions, the problem posed by Lupattelli, which had already been raised in ministerial circles, given the excluding of the University for Foreigners from the first anti-Jewish monitoring, paved the way for similar solutions in other settings.

3. From the Perugian university to courses for foreigners in other universities

The exception Bottai made for the University for Foreigners opened the door to the solution in this sense for other similar situations: the special Italian courses for foreigners held at various Italian universities, and organized by the Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero (National Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries). The directors of courses for foreigners at the various Italian universities met on September 14th to assess the situation in light of the racial laws. Subsequently, probably on the impetus of the Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero (National Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries), "confidential instructions" had arrived, so that "there should be no particular difficulties for Jews requesting enrollment in the courses, provided they are not in possession of a German passport."³⁰ The ban remained in force for Germans.

Because of the racial laws, there was the problem of identifying Jews among foreign students, especially among Germans, given the continuous flow that came to the university in Perugia for the three quarterly courses into which the academic year was organized. As early as November 30, 1938, on the occasion of the publication of the course programs for 1939, Lupattelli had written to the MEN to "have the esteemed counsel of the Hon. Ministry on how to exercise the 'utmost caution with regard to the enrollment of German Jews,'" as Bottai had written to the Rettore on September 23rd. On December 1st Lupattelli also wrote to the Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l'Estero (National Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries), asking for an opinion on the proposal of inserting a question on religion in the registration form.³¹ The institute made it known "that the item 'Religion' was omitted in the registration forms prepared by us, in which, however, not only the father's name but also the mother's name were requested, so as to have as many elements as possible for the purpose of evaluating the race of those enrolled of Germanic nationality."³² The explicit question on "race" finally appeared in the University for Foreigners registration forms for 1940.³³

The particular nature of the University for Foreigners, basically open to the enrollment of foreign Jewish students, at least on paper, was reasserted several times,³⁴ but in reality the situation was different, as we shall see. In addition, enrolling at the University for Foreigners was sufficient to ensure a stay in the kingdom, as the MAE wrote to the MEN on January 26, 1939, in response to a request dated January 10th. In the same document the question of German Jewish students was left

³⁰ AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, National Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries to Lupattelli, no. 4393, 18 November 1938, also for the meeting on September 14th. In correspondence with the ministry there is no mention of the School for Foreigners in Siena because it was still an institution not recognized as a university. Regarding the Sienese school, see Sangalli 2010.

³¹ Note the confusion, even by December, between religion and the Jewish race, when the laws were clearly of a racial nature.

³² Ibid., draft of the letter from Lupattelli to the MEN, 30 November 1938; draft of the letter from Lupattelli to the National Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, undated [1 December 1938; obtained from the reply] and reply no. 4912 dated 10 December 1938. The reply of the MEN (no. 16717) would arrive on 7 February 1939.

³³ See the forms in AUSPg, Studenti, 1940 to 1944.

³⁴ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, MAE to MEN, no. 302261, 26 January 1939, referred to also in *ibid.*, MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR to DGDR and Border Police Div., no. 443/53123, 8 February 1939; AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, MEN to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 20859, 1 August 1939.

open, proposing “to return to the subject.”³⁵ On March 17th the MAE the reservations on Germans were resolved, granting the possibility of enrolling at the University for Foreigners “provided that they had a passport marked with letter J stamped in red on the first page, since only these passports guaranteed German Jews that they would be able to return to the Reich.”³⁶ On March 19th the concession for the Germans extended to courses for foreigners at the University of Florence “and if such is the case, at other universities” with the authorization, on a case-by-case basis, of the MAE and, for all foreign Jewish students, of the DGPS of the MI.³⁷ Thus Italian courses at the University for Foreigners and at other universities were completely open to foreign Jews, at least officially, as we shall see. At the other universities, however, the anti-Semitic laws had very serious effects not only on Italian students, but also on foreign students. At the University of Pisa the effects were especially oppressive. In fact all the students admitted in derogation to the 1937-38 AY, of which we have already spoken, were not admitted in the 1938-39 AY; they were in an irregular position, since their enrollment in the previous academic year was not considered valid, and therefore that of 1938-39 was an enrollment that was forbidden by law for Jewish students, both Italian and foreign. Another university that was hard hit was the University of Bologna, a favorite destination for foreign Jewish students.³⁸

Lupattelli was able to get the University for Foreigners excluded from the interdiction against the Jewish students, and this had opened the door to the same solution for the Italian language and culture courses initiated at various universities under the aegis of the Istituto Nazionale per le Relazioni Culturali con l’Estero (National Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries). The MAE approved this line because together with the Ministry of Popular Culture, it was very attentive to the repercussions of the racist policy on propaganda abroad. It was a very delicate issue, given that the anti-Semitic campaign was not universal currency in terms of propaganda in international relations. All this prompted the Fascist authorities to move cautiously. For example, Italian schools abroad controlled by the Fascist government remained open to both Italian and foreign Jewish students, except in those countries where the “local laws” were against it.³⁹ A similar, albeit specific, story concerned the Società Nazionale Dante Alighieri (National Dante Alighieri Society), which purged its national committees of Jews but not its foreign committees, although it tried to keep the Jewish members from being too visible in the latter.⁴⁰ These were situations that differed from each other,

³⁵ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, MAE to the MEN, no. 302261, 26 January 1939.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, MAE to the MEN, no. 306728, 17 March 1939. See also SIGNORI, *cit.*, p. 159. The J on the passport of German Jews was introduced on October 27, 1938. See K. VOIGT, *cit.*, p. 35. Starting in 1939, German students who applied to enroll at the Foreigners and who declared that they were not Jews had to produce an Aryan certificate, which was issued by the Nazi authorities. See for example AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1939, files Brigitte Adolph and Erika Friedemann.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, MI DGPS Div. AAGRR to the Prefects and to the Chief of Police of Rome, no. 443/59059, 19 March 1939 and AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 761, file Iscrizioni incomplete 1939, MEN to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 16717, 7 February 1939. This last document shows that the MAE had to give the clearance for Germans and the MI had to be consulted for the duration of the stay of all foreign Jewish students. See also CAPRISTO, *cit.*, pp. 145-146.

³⁸ Regarding the case of Pisa, see Pelini-Pavan 2009b, 45-59 and Pelini-Pavan 2009a. Regarding the case of Bologna, see Brizzi 2002; Brizzi 2004; Salustri 2009, 133-55; Salustri 2010, 181-218.

³⁹ ASDMAE, AISS, b. 102, file Questione razziale-Parte generale, Telespresso form MAE DIE to all diplomatic and consular offices, no. 893050/C, 13 September 1938. Indeed, even after 1938 there were Jewish students enrolled in Italian schools abroad. See ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I versamento, b. 109, Romania 1940 Bucarest file, Bucharest Education Department - First Report 1939-40; *ibid.*, Bucharest Italian middle school to MAE DIE, no. 359, 15 November 1939; *ibid.*, Bucharest Italian middle school to MAE DIE, no. 520, 2 June 1940; *ibid.*, Bucharest Italian Business School to MAE DIE, no. 51, 21 October 1938; *ibid.*, Bucharest Education Department to DIE, 10 January 1939; *ibid.*, “Regina Margherita” Italian elementary school to DIE, no. 471, 19 October 1938. Perhaps the fact that many Italian schools abroad were run by religious organizations which received government funding and which would have a hard time excluding baptized Jews also had a bearing on the matter. Regarding this matter, see also Cavarocchi 2018, 7, which indicates that there were no regulations that prohibited the enrollment of Jewish students in Italian schools abroad.

⁴⁰ The Dante Alighieri story was studied at the conference “Italian Culture, the Dante Alighieri Society and Fascist Anti-Semitism,” held in Rome on October 29, 2018, on the initiative of President Andrea Riccardi, the proceedings will soon be published.

but responded to the need to not cause a fall in the international image of Italian culture and the regime, avoiding that Italian institutions abroad would be considered a direct offshoot of Fascism and its more controversial policies.⁴¹

4. The strict application of anti-Semitic laws

The anti-Semitic laws concerned not only students in schools, but also the teachers and administrative staff. The census of employees of the “Jewish race,” which began on August 9, 1938, revealed the presence of Lucia Gugenheim Culcasi among the teaching staff of the University for Foreigners, a Jewish woman registered with the local Jewish community, who taught the intermediate Italian course for German-speaking students. She taught German language and literature at the Vittorio Veneto high school in Milan. According to the Police Chief of Perugia, in 1938 she was held in high “esteem and reputation” among the “the city’s intellectual circles,” “distinguishing her for her intelligent effectiveness.” She taught at the Foreigners from the first days of the new institution in 1923, “with the full satisfaction of the University directors,” after having carried out a variety of activities for the holding of the internal front during the Great War. She had been a member of the Milan *fascio femminile* (women Fascists) since 1933 and was active in the Federazione Nazionale del Libro (National Book Federation), from which she received several diplomas of merit.⁴² At the end of the 1937-38 AY, during which she taught 364 hours of lessons, she was proposed for an early raise in salary “in consideration of her uncommon merits.”⁴³ Instead the racial laws arrived and she was forced to leave her position as of October 15, 1938.⁴⁴ After the war, reinstated to the staff in 1948, she resumed working for the University for Foreigners, where she continued to teach until 1956.⁴⁵ During the war her position was covered by Vincenzo Villa (78 hours of lessons) and Walter Binni (282 hours of lessons).⁴⁶ Binni, a native of Perugia, was humanities and history professor at the Istituto tecnico di Pavia (technical Institute of Pavia), temporarily attached to the Soprintendenza Bibliografica di Modena (Bibliographic Superintendency of Modena) and went from there to the University for Foreigners on December 16, 1938.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Regarding Fascist propaganda abroad, see Garzarelli 2000, 225-64; Garzarelli 2004; Pretelli 2008; Cavarocchi 2010; Fotia 2018.

⁴² ACS, MI, DGDR, FP, b. 144, file 9187 Gugenheim Culcasi Lucia, Chief of Police of Perugia to the Prefect of Perugia, no. 2868Gab., 28 December 1938. On the beginning of her teaching at the University for Foreigners, see *Bollettino dell’Università Italiana per Stranieri*, 31 August 1944, p. 4.

⁴³ ACS, MI, DGDR, FP, b. 144, file 9187 Gugenheim Culcasi Lucia, Duplicate of the certificate of the Superintendent of Medieval and Modern Art of Perugia, 6 December 1938.

⁴⁴ See the documentation in AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei. The census order arrived with the MEN circular no. 12336 dated 9 August 1938. The Ministry sent twenty forms which had to be returned filled in by each employee. Lupattelli responded on September 3rd by sending 14 completed forms, including that of Lucia Gugenheim, temporarily attached to the Superintendency of Medieval and Modern Art of Perugia and from there to the University for Foreigners (*Annuario* 1936, 513). See also Capristo-Fabre 2018, 176.

⁴⁵ See AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1945-1966, b. 30A Docenti, file Certificati, Certificate of the teaching activities carried out by Prof. Lucia Culcasi Gugenheim at the Italian University for Foreigners, 30 September 1958. See also *Bollettino dell’Università Italiana per Stranieri*, 31 August 1944, p. 4 and *La vita dell’Università Italiana per Stranieri*, 1954 and 1955, respectively on pp. 16 and 32. In her first years she taught French-speaking students.

⁴⁶ See *Bollettino dell’Università Italiana per Stranieri*, 10 January 1940, p. 525. Also no. of 15 January 1941, p. 475, Leny Zaniboni with 192 hours, Walter Binni with 131 hours. Binni also taught comparative stylistics: see *ibid*, 10 January 1940, p. 526 and 15 January 1941, p. 476.

⁴⁷ AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1945-1966, b. 30A Docenti, file Comandi, subfile 1947, Rettore to the MPE, 21 October 1947 and file Certificati, Certificate of 29 April 1953 on the activities carried out by Walter Binni, which states that he taught at the Foreigners until December 23, 1948. See also the Ministry of National Education, *Annuario. 1940 – Anno XVIII*, Rome, p. 1320. It seems unlikely that Binni could not have imagined how that position had become open, given that between 1938 and 1939 the entire academic world was purged of Jewish teachers, students and administrators. The experience of teaching at the University for Foreigners is always highlighted in his CV submitted in the various competitive examinations that would opened the way to his academic career. See ACN, MPI, DGIS, Div. I, FPLD, II serie, b. 56, file Binni Walter, and ACS, MPI, DGIS, Div. I, Concorsi a cattedre, II serie, bb. 309 and 310, file Cagliari. Italian language and literature. Although Binni had been a member of the National Fascist Party since May 24, 1935 and



23. *Theodor Feldman, German ex-Austrian*



24. *Shaul Hareli, Palestinian*

In 1940 the Prefecture of Perugia began to investigate the “racial origins” of Count Romeo Adriano Gallenga Stuart, a noble Perugian supporter and benefactor of the University for Foreigners who had died in January 1938. The count had donated Palazzo Gallenga Stuart to the municipality of Perugia, which in 1927 designated it as the headquarters of the University for Foreigners and donated its library to the university, which had created the “Gallenga Stuart Schunk fund.” The name of this fund was probably what worried local authorities, since the MEN circular no. 6819 of 12 November 1938 prohibited the acceptance of donations and legacies arranged by “persons of Jewish race.” Information was requested from the widow, who gave the assurance that he had been “Aryan and Catholic.” Investigations continued but provided no further results, and the issue was dropped.⁴⁸

The educational life of the university was little influenced by the regime’s racist and anti-Semitic turn. At other universities courses were instituted in keeping with the new racist policy, such as the biology of human races, intensifying also the courses on anthropology, genetics and demography.⁴⁹ At the University for Foreigners, racial subjects were infrequent from 1938 to 1944. In 1939 Pericle Ducati gave a class on the formation of the Italic stock that was not lacking in anti-Semitic references (Cavarocchi 2010, 271), but when one of the ideologues of Fascist racism, Nicola Pende, gave a lecture at University for Foreigners in 1942, he spoke of something entirely different: his talk was on

according to the Prefect of Perugia in 1941 he was “of good moral, civil and political character,” he had been very close to Aldo Capitini at least since 1931, and subsequently was a member of the Liberal Socialist group and a leader of antifascist activities in Perugia, Florence, Milan and Turin. See ACN, MPI, DGIS, Div. I, FPLD, II serie, b. 56, file Binni Walter, Certificate of the Fascist Party of Perugia, 31 July 1941 and Prefect of Perugia to MEN, no. 8247, 26 September 1941. Regarding his antifascist activities, see ASPg, Prefettura Perugia, Gabinetto, II sottosezione, file 1223, Periodic Reports of the Province, Perugia 1943, Report for December 1943 with enclosed Police Headquarters report dated 10 December 1943 and Capitini 1966, 97 and Binni 2007.² Regarding Binni, see Binni 2013, although a scientific biography of Walter Binni is still lacking.

⁴⁸ See the documentation in ASPg, Prefettura, Gabinetto, b. 48, file Accertamento razza di discendenti da matrimonio misto, subfile Gallenga-Stuard [sic] Romeo. Regarding the “Gallenga Stuart Schunk” fund, see Capaccioni 2008, 288-292. Circular no. 6819 of the MEN dated 12 November 1938 found in AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei.

⁴⁹ For some cases see Gregory-Fattori-Siciliani de Cumis 1985, 69-75; Ventura 1997, 175-83; Cavarocchi-Minerbi 1999, 492-500.

«Le fasi di sviluppo della personalità e le fasi educative pedagogiche» (The stages of personality development and educational pedagogical stages).⁵⁰



25. Robert Aufricht, German ex-Austrian



26. Regina Edelhofer, German ex-Austrian

Thanks to its vocation of universal openness, to its particular character, and to the action of Astorre Lupattelli, the University for Foreigners was the only university that overall was open to foreign Jewish students, at least in theory. With its universal tension, Italian culture was considered a meeting point beyond the tensions that made coexistence between nationalities and groups in conflict difficult at an international level. The international conflict remained in a somewhat sugar-coated image outside the door of the university, which was represented as a happy island of coexistence. In 1935, on the occasion of its tenth anniversary, the town's magazine, *Perusia*, allotted ample space to the University for Foreigners, highlighting its universal character and establishing ties with the myth of Rome. A symbolic encounter was described in an idyllic scene: "the young Hitlerian woman leaps from Bavarian steel to amiably shake the hand of the young Israelite woman, who in the hospitable exile of Italy was able to return to the exercising of her profession" (Gheda 2004, 142). However, it must not have been just rhetoric if in an even more crucial year, 1939, we find published in the *Bollettino della Regia Università italiana per Stranieri* (Bulletin of the Royal Italian University for Foreigners) a significant thought of a group of Palestinian Jewish students enrolled there: "following their stay at the Royal University for Foreigners, the Palestinian students wish to express their admiration for this hearth of serene culture that is open to all friends of Italy, without any distinction. Those who already loved Italy found their feelings confirmed by the teaching of excellent professors. They propose to return in the coming year in greater numbers."⁵¹ We do not know if the message was written before or after the pronouncement of the Italian racial laws, but apart from its value in itself

⁵⁰ *Bollettino della Regia Università italiana per Stranieri Perugia*, 15 January 1943, pp. 273 and 318.

⁵¹ *Bollettino della Regia Università italiana per Stranieri Perugia*, 15 January 1939, p. 442. The signatures were of Hanna Biezunski [Robenstein], P.[inchas] Biezunski, Alise Baruch, Leo Tchertkoff, and Salomone Gattegno. The last of these was an Italian resident in Palestine, a fiduciary of the Fascists abroad. The Biezunskis had been reported by Police Headquarters on July 30, 1938 as Jews enrolled at the Foreigners. See the list in the text. There were 16 Palestinian Jews enrolled in 1938. See *ibid.*, p. 458 and further on.

as testimony to the climate that reigned at the Foreigners, it is significant that Lupattelli chose to insert it in an issue of the *Bollettino* published in 1939, therefore after the racial laws of September–November 1938, even if it is possible that it was a move agreed upon together with the MAE and/or the MEN. However, one thing is certain: those students did not return in the coming year.

Indeed, despite the official opening, after 1938 the number of Jews at the University for Foreigners decreased rapidly, until they completely disappeared. What difficulties did Jewish students encounter in entering the renowned Perugian school? Among those reported in 1938, Deutsch, Sinnreich, and Fautl, once they had arrived in Perugia, disappeared soon after: they were all fleeing ex-Austrians.⁵² We have a bit more news about the others (see the list below).⁵³ Also present were the ex-Austrian German Frankfurt, and the Pole Schlossmann, who had been living in Italy for several years.⁵⁴ There is no news about the Pole Gunsberg. Then there was the group of Palestinians that included Biezunski and Hanna Biezunski (née Robenstein), among others.⁵⁵ In December, the prefecture of Perugia had identified another Jewish student at the University for Foreigners, the Pole Marian Bendel, who in the summer of 1938 was the foreign students' fiduciary of the Gruppo Universitario Fascista (Fascist University Group) of the University for Foreigners.⁵⁶ The German Wolfgang Rosenberg (see image 21), who had attended in the summer of 1938, had instead escaped the investigations of the authorities.⁵⁷ In October 1938, the Prefecture of Perugia, in drawing up a list of foreign Jews who had arrived in Italy after January 1, 1919 and who were residing in the province, reported Schlossmann, Blume, Müller, Wald and Sachs from the Palestinian group,⁵⁸ to which Frankfurt and Bendel were added later.⁵⁹ The departures of Wald and Müller were reported from the end of 1938 through 1939.⁶⁰ In 1938, at least 41 Jews were enrolled in the University for Foreigners, out of a total of 1182 students (3.47%).⁶¹

⁵² Along with ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, Copy of the letter to the DGPS of the MI, 19 August 1938, signed by the Public Safety Inspector Fantusati, see AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1938, the personal files of the three students.

⁵³ Ostberg had arrived in Perugia with a scholarship of 2000 lire granted by his university in London and with an accompanying letter from Camillo Pellizzi. Regarding this the MEN asked for information; see *ibid.* For Israel Germaine, probably in Herzenstein, see AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei, MEN DGIS to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 22244, 4 October 1938 and replies dated 5 and 10 October by Lupattelli; see also ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 3, file Ebrei Stranieri-Studenti, MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR a MEN Gab., no. 443/71410, 6 September 1938; copy of the letter of the MEN to the MI DGPS, no. 22244, 4 October 1938; copy of the letter of the MEN to the MI DGPS, no. 23496/23780, 29 October 1938.

⁵⁴ Regarding Frankfurt, see ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 14, file Perugia, in particular Prefecture of Perugia to MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR, no. 0053, 24 November 1938 and *ibid.*, Div. AAGGRR, A4 bis, b. 120, file Frankfurter Fanny. Regarding Schlossmann, see L. BOSCHERINI, *cit.*, pp. 57, 158, 164, 179, 180; ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 14, file Perugia, List of names of foreign Jews residing in the province of Perugia since 1 January 1919, dated 6 October 1938; *ibid.*, copy of the letter of the MEN to the MI DGPS, no. 12961, 19 September 1938. It does not seem, however, that at least in 1938 they were enrolled in the University for Foreigners.

⁵⁵ The group consisted of A. Levi Allon (Jerusalem), Alisa [or Alise] Baruch (Tel Aviv), Meir Bichovsky (Tel Aviv), Hanna Biezunski (Tel Aviv), Pinchas Biezunski (Tel Aviv), S. Shaul Hareli (Jerusalem), Jenny Heidenfeld, Alice Levin (Tel Aviv), Erich Levin (Tel Aviv), M. Asher Pevsner (Tel Aviv), Elie Dan Rolbag (Jerusalem), Alexander Sachs (Jerusalem), Hia Schuster, Leo Tchertkoff (Tel Aviv), Rahel Unna (Tel Aviv), Jehudith Zisling (Tel Aviv). See *Bollettino della Regia Università italiana per Stranieri Perugia*, 15 January 1939, p. 458.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, and ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 14, file Perugia, Prefecture of Perugia to MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR, no. 0074, 2 December 1938 and AUSPg, Studenti, Polonia, 1938, file Bendel Marian.

⁵⁷ Correspondence of 1940 between the University and Rosenberg in AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei.

⁵⁸ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 14, file Perugia, List of names of foreign Jews residing in the province of Perugia since 1 January 1919, dated 6 October 1938.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Prefecture of Perugia to MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR, no. 0074, 2 December 1938 and Prefecture of Perugia to MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR, no. 0053, 24 November 1938.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Perugia Police Headquarters to MI DGPS Border Police Div., no. 00564, 28 December 1938 and Prefecture of Perugia to MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR, no. 09007, 14 July 1939.

⁶¹ The list includes three students not enrolled in 1938 but indicated by the police.

1. ALLON A. Levi, Palestinian, probably not arrived in Perugia
2. BALNER Fritz Erwin, German [ex-Austrian], in Perugia from 3 July to 15 September 1938
3. BARUCH Alisa [o Alise], Palestinian, in Perugia from 22 July to 21 August 1938
4. BENDEL Marian, Polish, in Perugia from 1 July to 30 September 1938
5. BENEDEK Eva, Romanian, in Perugia from 14 July to 8 August 1938
6. BICHOVSKY Meir, Palestinian, in Perugia from 26 August to 26 September 1938
7. BIEZUNSKI Pinchas, Palestinian, in Perugia from 26 July to 21 August 1938
8. BLUME Wilhelm Ferdinando, German, in Perugia from 28 June to 23 December 1938
9. DEUTSCH Edith, German [ex-Austrian], in Perugia from 28 July 1938
10. FAUTL Heinrich, German [ex-Austrian], in Perugia from 25 July 1938
11. FINK Jan Frederiche, Polish, in Perugia from 3 July to 13 August 1938
12. FRANKFURT [FRANKFURTER] Fany [Fanny], German [ex-Austrian], not registered in 1938
13. GATTEGNO Salomone, Italian resident in Palestine, in Perugia from 21 July to 20 August 1938
14. GLASS Tiberio [Tommaso], Hungarian, in Perugia from 1 to 31 August 1938
15. GUNSBURG Abraham, Polish, not registered in 1938
16. HARELI S. Shaul, Palestinian, in Perugia from 5 to 27 July 1938 (see image 24)
17. HEIDENFELD Jenny, Palestine, probably not arrived in Perugia
18. ISMALUM André Lucien, Egyptian, in Perugia from 11 August to 10 September 1938
19. ISRAEL Germaine, French-Egyptian, in Perugia from 10 August to 9 September 1938
20. KOCH Walter, German [ex-Austrian], in Perugia from 5 July to 15 August 1938
21. LEVIN Alice, Palestinian, probably not arrived in Perugia
22. LEVIN Erich, Palestinian, probably not arrived in Perugia
23. MÜLLER Gerhard, Swiss, in Perugia from 2 July to 30 September 1938
24. NORDMANN Paul Samuel, Swiss, in Perugia from 18 July to 5 September 1938
25. ORNSTEIN Carl, German [ex-Austrian], not arrived in Perugia
26. OSTBERG Kurt, German, in Perugia from 25 July to 15 September 1938
27. PEVSNER M. Asher, Palestine, probably not arrived in Perugia
28. ROSENSTEIN Ester Hanna in Biezunski, Palestinian, in Perugia from 22 July to 21 August 1938
29. ROLBAG Elie Dan, Palestine, probably not arrived in Perugia
30. ROSENBERG Wolfgang, German, in Perugia from 1 July to 30 September 1938
31. ROSENBLAT Tatiana, Polish, in Perugia from 11 to 19 August 1938
32. SACHS Alexander, Palestinian, in Perugia from 27 September to 23 December 1938
33. SCHLOSSMANN Josef, Polish, not registered in 1938
34. SCHUSTER Haia, Palestinian, in Perugia from 11 August to 12 September 1938
35. SILLERSTEIN [SILBERSTEIN] MONTA Olga, Romanian, in Perugia from 14 July to 8 August 1938
36. SINNREICH Kurt, German [ex-Austrian], in Perugia from 20 July 1938
37. STRAUS Edith, German, in Perugia from 12 August to 30 September 1938
38. TCHERTKOFF Leo, Palestinian, in Perugia from 3 August to 2 September 1938 (see image 15)
39. UNNA Rahel, Palestinian, in Perugia from 18 July to 19 August 1938 (see image 27)
40. WALD Josef, German [former Austrian], in Perugia from 16 July to 15 August 1938
41. ZISLING Jehudith, Palestinian, probably not arrived in Perugia



27. Rahel Unna, Palestinian



28. Pinchas Biezunsky, Palestinian

In 1939, many new applications for enrollment came from foreign Jews. As of March 17, Germans, who previously had been excluded, had to have their passport marked with the red J for “Jude.” Applications arrived from the Germans Robert Aufricht (see image 25), Janette Bachrich (see image 11), Fritz Birkner (see image 5), Max (see image 16) and Regina Edelhofer (see image 26), Theodor Feldmann (see image 23), Carl Ornstein, Ida (see image 9) and Mayer Panzierer (see image 19), and Georg Silbermann (see image 18), all former Austrians from Vienna: it may still have been part of the small exodus of Jews from Vienna to the University for Foreigners that began after the Anschluss, to escape from the Nazis. The Palestinians Alice and Erich Levin, who were present also in 1938, applied for enrollment, but like the Germans, they almost certainly did not arrive.⁶² In the files of the Germans, except for those of the Edelhofers, there is a copy of the passport with the J (see images 17 and 20): the documentation was in order, but no one reached the Foreigners. In addition to the bureaucratic obligations (essentially, possession of a passport with a J stamped in red), we know that other filters had been activated: for the Germans, the discretionary clearance of the MAE, which prevented, for example, the enrollment of the Edelhofers.⁶³ But for the others the Ministry limited itself to requiring the J passport, as is documented in the case of the Panzierers.⁶⁴ It seems more plausible that the obstacles came more from the German than the Italian authorities, with the currency restrictions and the obstacles to an emigration that did not have the characteristics of a definitive abandoning of the Reich (Voigt 1993, 29-36 and 281-90). That the German authorities sought to

⁶² See the personal files in AUSPg, Studenti, Germania and Palestina, 1939. It is not clear whether Aufricht and Birkner managed to reach the Foreigners. However, the answer is likely negative. In 1938, all of the 16 Palestinians were Jews; in 1939, only 2 out of 5 Palestinians were Jews, and they probably never reached Perugia. See *Bollettino della Regia Università italiana per Stranieri Perugia*, 10 January 1940, p. 558.

⁶³ AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1939, file Edelhofer Max. Max Edelhofer probably succeeded in arriving in Italy later, as in July 1943 he was in the concentration camp at Tortoreto, in the province of Teramo. See ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR., A4 bis, b. 102, file Edelhofer Max.

⁶⁴ AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1939, file Panzierer Mayer and *ibid.*, Segreteria, 1928-1944, b. 761, file Iscrizioni incomplete 1939, MAE to the R. Italian University for Foreigners and c.c. to MEN Cab., no. 306729, 17 March 1939.

hinder “seasonal” emigration for studying seems to be confirmed by the testimony of Carl Ornstein, who on April 14, 1939 wrote to the university secretary: “Thank you very much for your dear letter. I am sending the passport with the letter J on the first page; but I ask you please, dear madam, to add a few lines to your reply, so that I can show them at the border; one is never cautious enough, especially now in these turbulent times. We hope that everything will pass.” On March 31, 1939, Ornstein wrote to the University for Foreigners: “As for my feelings for Italy, I want to add that I adore Il Duce, whose biography (written by Margherita Sarfatti) has a place of honor in my library (in which the Duce’s speeches are also found) and many newspapers clippings concerning Il Duce.”⁶⁵ Whereas in February 1940, at the time of the request for enrollment of the ex-Austrian German Jew Hans Engler, the consul had intervened and the applicant had been reimbursed.⁶⁶ Ornstein had attempted to enroll also in 1940, like the Pole Bendel, but neither of them made it to the University for Foreigners.⁶⁷ What probably happened was that where the German authorities did not intervene to stop the arrival of non-German foreign Jewish students, the Italian authorities did, such as in the case of the Palestinian Levins and the Pole Bendel. In 1940 the Italian authorities definitely banned from enrollment Wolfgang Rosenberg, a German Jew who had been enrolled in 1938, and who was interned in the Isola del Gran Sasso concentration camp in the province of Teramo.⁶⁸



29. Paul Nordmann, Swiss



30. Olga Sillerstein Monta, Romanian

After Italy entered the war, in June 1940 Frankfurt and Bendel were interned in the province of Potenza.⁶⁹ As paradoxical as it may seem, the only Jew we can confidently state was able to get to

⁶⁵ AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1939, file Ornstein Carl. In 1939 the works of the Margherita Sarfatti, a Jew, including *Dux*, the biography of Mussolini, had been quietly withdrawn from the market. See Fabre 1998, 245 and 258-62. Ornstein had enrolled also in 1938, but had not succeeded in arriving in Italy. See AUSPg, Studenti, Germania, 1939, file Ornstein Carl, letter from Ornstein to the University dated 31 March 1939.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1940, file Engler Hans.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, file Ornstein Carl and *ibid.*, Polonia, 1940, file Bendel Mariano.

⁶⁸ See the documentation in AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2300, file Ebrei.

⁶⁹ ACS, MI, DGPS, Div. AAGGRR, A16, b. 14, file Perugia, Prefecture of Perugia to MI DGPS Div. AAGGRR, no. 07522, 17 June 1940 with list of interned persons enclosed.

the University for Foreigners was Italian. It was Margherita Pesaro (widow Nathan), resident in Montecarlo, who attended in June 1940 – perhaps only for a few days, but her presence is attested.⁷⁰

In 1939 Lupattelli asked the MEN which provisions were in force for the enrollment in the University for Foreigners of Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Bottai ministry asked MAE, which after having indicated the required documents, reassured him “that probably this year, no Jew of the Protectorate will enroll at the Italian University for Foreigners in Perugia.” Lupattelli, however, had acted at the request of a Jew from the Protectorate who was planning to enroll.⁷¹ The MAE, through its consulates and cultural institutes, surely worked to deter Jews intending to move to Italy for study purposes.

Although enrollment was not forbidden for Jews, these circumstances in fact led to the elimination of the Jewish presence among the students at the University for Foreigners. In 1942 Lupattelli was able to write to the Federazione fascista di Perugia (Fascist federation of Perugia) “that this University has no Jews among its students enrolled.”⁷² Despite the fact that Lupattelli had succeeded in obtaining a fairly important concession, the setting and the clear will at the ministerial level not to actually carry out the directive, made the requests of Rettore for openness remain good only on paper. All this underlines how the anti-Jewish laws could be even more oppressive in practice than in their declaration. Among the Jewish students whose history crossed paths with the University for Foreigners in Perugia, Carl Ornstein, Mayer Panzierer (see image 19) and Georg Silbermann (see image 18) perished in the extermination camps.⁷³

After the liberation of Perugia on June 20, 1944, the University for Foreigners was put under the administration of the allied military government. The antifascist Aldo Capitini was appointed in place of Lupattelli, who was briefly interned in the camp for fascists in Padula, Campania, along with Paolo Orano, Rettore of the state university.⁷⁴ On the occasion of the opening of the high culture courses for the 1944 academic year, Capitini invited the literary critic Attilio Momigliano, referring explicitly to his expulsion from the University of Florence for racial reasons.⁷⁵ In October he inaugurated the courses with readings of Dante, which opened a new season in the history of the University for Foreigners in the wake of the great changes taking place in Italy during the difficult transition from the Fascist dictatorship to democracy.

⁷⁰ AUSPg, Studenti, Italia, 1940, file Margherita Pesaro.

⁷¹ AUSPg, Segreteria, 1928-1944, b. 761, file Iscrizioni incomplete 1939, letter of Kurt Burstyn to the University for Foreigners of Perugia, 4 May 1939; letter of Lupattelli to the MEN, 8 May 1939; *ibid.*, b. 2300, file Ebrei, MEN to the Rettore of the R. University for Foreigners of Perugia, no. 20859, 1 August 1939 in which the reply of the MAE reported in the text is quoted. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was created in mid-March 1939 following the invasion and dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by Nazi troops.

⁷² AUSPg, Segreteria amministrativa, 1928-1944, b. 2280, file Partito Nazionale Fascista, letter of Lupattelli to the Federal Secretary of the National Fascist Party of Perugia, 18 September 1942.

⁷³ See The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names at the website www.yadvashem.org/wps/portal/IY_HON_Welcome (last consultation 21 September 2019). Regarding Panzierer, see also <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000530053&categorieLien=id>.

⁷⁴ Gheda 2004, 174-9 and 189-92. Orano died in detention in Padula on April 7, 1945. Lupattelli died in Perugia on June 3, 1945, shortly after having been released from the camp in Padula.

⁷⁵ ASPg, Prefettura, Gabinetto, b. 154, fasc. Università e istituti superiori, subfile Università per stranieri.

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Table 1. Foreign Students in Universities and Colleges of the Kingdom in the AY 1936-37, 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40, 1940-41

Universities and Colleges	1936-37				1937-38			1938-39			1939-40				1940-41		
	I	II	III	V	I	II	IV-V	I	II	IV-V	I	II	IV-V	VI	I	II	IV
Royalty																	
Bari - University	29	36	29	36	34	44	34	37	31	37	25	27	7	41	19	23	20
Bologna - University	645	598	645	662	567	567	567	346	346	346	185	191	134	221	167	183	153
Bologna - Business Economics ^A	8	10*	8	- ^X													
Cagliari - University	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0
Catania - University	14	14	14	14	11	11	11	9	12	9	5	5	10	5	3	3	3
Firenze - University	108	108	108	118	99	100	108	88	88	88	89	89	37	123	115	128	120
Firenze - Cesare Alfieri College ^B	7	10	7	- ^X	8	8	- ^X (1)*										
Genova - University	117	122	117	117	103	116	110	89	92	89	41	43	45	41	27	37	31
Macerata - University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Messina - University	6	6	6	6	7	7*	7	4	4	4	5	6	5	5	4	- [#]	3
Milano - University	160	160	160	167	134	127	153	65	66	65	67	68	58	68	63	68	68
Milano - Polytechnic	72	72	72	72	100	103	103	69	70	69	46	46	42	49	41	45	40
Modena - University	110	122	110	134	54	70	67	37	52	37	13	15	8	20	15	23	19
Napoli - University	125	138	125	141	105	125*	125	84	87	84	63	56	51	71	35	38	35
Napoli-Oriental College	6	*	6	6	16	*	16	18	*	18	10	*	9	10	5	*	5
Napoli - Naval College	1	1	1	3	1	4	1	4	7	4	6	8	6	7	3	2	4
Padova - University	168	148	168	168	146	153	165	93	97	93	89	71	68	96	72	80	105
Palermo - University	10	9	10	14	14	19	20	14	10	14	15	0	16	19	6	5	6
Parma - University	24	25	24	25	25	30	30	14	17	14	19	24	18	24	16	19	19
Pavia - University	58	60	60	60	48	50	48	26	26	26	22	22	17	31	9	12	6
Perugia - University	24	24	24	24	44	44	44	40	41	40	27	27	6	27	22	26	5
Pisa - University	198	195	198	195	307	291	291	62	62	62	40	40*	37	44	15	13	11
Roma - University	347	354	364	385	358	393	393	269	321	269	266	338	246	- ^X	218	390	390
Sassari - University	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Siena - University	56	57	56	59	28	38	38	16	20*	16	4	6	5	6	5	6	6
Torino - University	113	116	113	116	103	103	103	97	97	97	95	83	3	108	76	76	71
Torino - Polytechnic	48	48	48	48	42	42	42	52	52	52	40	40	20	40	44	45	45
Trieste - University	23	24	23	36	28	43	43	27	37	27	27	29	19	34	22	27	26
Venezia - Architecture	0	0	0	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	3	0	1	1
Venezia - Business Economics	20	14	20	14	19	23	23	12	13	12	15	15	12	17	20	19	19
Free	I	II	III	V	I	II	IV-V	I	II	IV-V	I	II	IV-V	VI	I	II	IV
Camerino - University	34	35	34	34	55	57	57	54	58	54	54	56	61	62	31	35	34
Ferrara - University	3	3	3	3	2	8	7	6	7	6	5	7	5	6	2	- [#]	2
Milano - Bocconi Univ.	22	22	22	21	33	33	33	25	26	25	25	26	29	31	21	22	24
Milano - Catholic University	[4]9	49	49	50	45	45	45	34	34	34	43	42	44	45	38	40	43
Napoli - College of Magisterium	0	*	0	0	0	*	0	1	*	1	2	*	2	2	2	*	- ^X
Roma - Maria SS. Assunta College ^C											2	*	- ^X	2	4	*	- ^X
Urbino - University	6	3	6	6	6	9	9	2	1	2	3	3	4	3	4	4	8
Totals	2612	2585	2631	2737	2547	2667	2699	1695	1775	1695	1354	1387	1028	1264	1125	1371	1322

^A The Institute was absorbed by the University of Bologna in 1937

^B The Institute was absorbed by the University of Florence in 1938

^C The Institute was born in 1939

[#] Missing data

^X Item not present

*Bologna, Business Economics 1936-37, in University of Bologna yearbook 1936-37, p. 434; Firenze, Cesare Alfieri College 1937-38, see ACS, MPI, DGIS, Div. II, 1925-45, b. 192, fasc. *Studenti ebrei, divieto di iscrizione, Numero degli studenti ebrei di nazionalità straniera iscritti nelle Università e negli Istituti superiori nell'anno accademico 1937-38* [Number of Foreign Nationality Jews Students registered in Universities and Colleges AY 1937-38]; Messina 1937-38, in University of Messina yearbook 1938-39, 6; Napoli 1937-38, in University of Napoli yearbook 1940-41, 111; Napoli, Oriental College, in those years has no yearbook; Pisa 1939-40, in University of Napoli yearbook 1940-41, 27; Siena 1938-39, in University of Siena yearbook 1939-40, 18; Napoli, College of Magisterium (Suor Orsola Benincasa), has no yearbook; Roma, Istituto Maria SS. Assunta, has no yearbook

I) Statistical yearbooks

II) Academic yearbooks

III) ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I vers., b. 69 (pos. II - 14 - PG 3), f. Parte generale, sf. Pratiche studenti ebrei nelle r. Università di Pisa, Bologna ecc. AA. 1937-38, Studenti stranieri iscritti nelle Università e negli Istituti Superiori - Anno accademico 1936-37

IV) ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I vers., b. 21 (pos. II - 14 - PG 13), f. Università italiane. Affari generali, Studenti stranieri nelle Università e negli Istituti superiori del Regno negli Anni Accademici 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40, 1940-41

V) ACS, MEN, DGIS, Div. II, Leggi, regolamenti, statuti, esami, corsi, statistiche, tasse, studenti ecc. 1925-45, b. 201, fasc. Studenti stranieri. Iscrizione nelle università del Regno, Studenti stranieri nelle Università e negli Istituti superiori del Regno negli Anni Accademici 1936-37, 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40

VI) ACS, MPI, DGIS, Div. II, Leggi, regolamenti, stati, esami, corsi, statistiche, tasse, studenti ecc. (1925-45), b. 166, fasc. Statistiche, Studenti stranieri iscritti ai vari corsi di Laurea o di Diploma AA 1939-40, situazione al 1 marzo 1940

Table 2. Number of Students of Foreign Nationality and Jews Students of Foreign Nationality Registered in Universities and Colleges in the Academic Year 1937-38*		
University and Colleges	Foreign Students (I)	of which Foreign Jews (II)
Bari University	34	4
Bologna University	567	492
Cagliari University	2	2
Camerino University	57	-
Catania University	11	2
Firenze University	108	33
Genova University	110	62
Messina University	7	-
Milano University	153	70
Modena University	67	52
Napoli University	125	21
Padova University	165	73
Palermo University	20	5
Parma University	30	23
Pavia University	48	27
Perugia University	44	7
Pisa University	291	290
Roma University	393	78
Sassari University	1	1
Siena University	38	18
Torino University	103	30
Milano Polytechnic	103	14
Torino Polytechnic	42	17
Trieste University	43	10
Ferrara University	7	6
Venezia College of Business economic	23	-
Venezia College of Architecture	2	-
Firenze Cesare Alfieri College	(1)	1
Milano Bocconi University	33	3
Milano Catholic University	45	-
Napoli Oriental College	16	3
Napoli Naval College	1	-
Urbino University	9	-
Totals	2.699	1.344

* In the Universities and Colleges not indicated there are no Foreign Students and Foreign Jews.

- I) ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I vers., b. 21 (pos. II - 14 - PG 13), f. Università italiane. Affari generali, Studenti stranieri nelle Università e negli Istituti superiori del Regno negli Anni Accademici 1937-38, 1938-39, 1939-40, 1940-41
- II) ACS, MPI, DGIS, Div. II, 1925-45, b. 192, fasc. Studenti ebrei, divieto di iscrizione, Numero degli studenti ebrei di nazionalità straniera iscritti nelle Università e negli Istituti superiori nell'anno accademico 1937-38 (also in ASDMAE, AS, 1936-45, I vers., b. 69 (pos. II-14-PG 3), fasc. Parte generale, sfasc. Pratiche studenti ebrei nelle R. Università di Pisa, Bologna ecc. AA 1937-38)

List of Abbreviations

(the indents on the left refer to sub-units)

ACS	MI, DGPS, Div. AAGRR,	<i>Archivio Centrale dello Stato</i> [Central Archives of the State] <i>Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati</i> [Ministry of the Interior, Directorate General of Public Safety, General and Confidential Affairs Division]
	A16	<i>A16 stranieri ed ebrei stranieri</i> [A16 foreigners and foreign Jews] <i>Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Demografia e Razza, Divisione Razza, Fascicoli personali</i> [Ministry of the Interior, Directorate General for Demography and Race, Race Division, Personal Files]
	MI, DGDR, FP	<i>Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Direzione Generale dell'Istruzione Superiore</i> [Ministry of Public Education, Directorate General of Higher Education]
	MPI, DGIS	<i>Divisione I, Fascicoli personali Liberi Docenti 1930-1950</i> [Division I, Personal Files of Free Teachers 1930-1950]
	Div. I, FPLD	<i>Divisione II, Leggi regolamenti statuti esami corsi statistiche tasse studenti, 1925-1945</i> [Division II, Laws regulations statutes exams courses statistics tuition students, 1925-1945]
	Div. II,	<i>Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale</i> [Ministry of National Education]
	MEN	<i>Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale</i> [Ministry of National Education]
ASDMAE		<i>Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri</i> [Diplomatic Historical Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs]
	AISS	<i>Archivio dell'Ambasciata d'Italia presso la Santa Sede</i> [Archives of the Embassy of Italy to the Holy See]
	AS	<i>Archivio Scuole</i> [Archive of the Schools]
	AP	<i>Affari Politici</i> [Political Affairs]
ASPg		<i>Archivio di Stato di Perugia</i> [State Archive of Perugia]
AUSPg		<i>Archivio dell'Università per Stranieri di Perugia</i> [Archive of the University for Foreigners of Perugia]
DIE		<i>Direzione Generale degli Italiani all'Estero</i> [Directorate General of Italians Abroad]
MAE		<i>Ministero degli Affari Esteri</i> [Ministry of Foreign Affairs]
MEN		<i>Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale</i> [Ministry of National Education]

A Racist and Anti-Semitic *Romanità*: The Racial Laws of 1938 and the Institute of Roman Studies

Donatello Aramini*

Abstract. This article offers a close reading of the initiatives following the racial laws promoted by the Institute of Roman Studies, an institution operating in synergy with the political culture and imperial ambitions of the fascist regime by supporting and influencing its rhetoric of *romanità* and the use of symbols and myths of the “Third Rome”. Refusing the interpretation of racial laws as a temporary phase of Italian history completely alien to the country’s cultural context, the article underlines how 1938 fits into and can be reinserted into the general interpretation of the Institute of Roman Studies’ initiatives. Furthermore, it analyses the consequences of the racial legislation on the staff and collaborators employed by the Institute. The author shows that the racial laws represent an additional element of the attempt of some distinguished intellectuals to find a synthesis between the sacralisation of politics and the politicisation of religion through the myth of Rome. Spreading and trying to strengthen the national-roman version of racism, the author underlines that the Institute of Roman Studies was in the first line to shaping an interpretation that, influenced by the Catholic anti-modern thought, was no more moderate or less responsible for the persecution of the Jews than other more revolutionary positions inside the fascism. In fact, this interpretation made the concept of the Italian race even more acceptable in public opinion, strengthening and rooting it in the history and greatness of Italian civilisation throughout the centuries. Finally, the article stresses that the racial laws were a crucial moment of shaping the fascist anthropological revolution, totally supported by an Institute fully engaged in the middle of the battle for the nationalization of the masses fought by the regime and the Catholic Church between the wars

Keywords: Racism; Anti-Semitism; *Romanità*; Fascism; Myth of Rome; Catholicism.

1. The issue

“Dear friend,

I have the honour to confirm receipt of your circular letter, sent on the 6th day of this month, protocol number 35, subject: “The defence of the race”.

The Institute of Roman Studies – within the limits of its work – will not fail to offer a modest contribution, through various manifestations of its work, to studies regarding the problems of race, based on the directive with which you have explained that the origin of Italian racism, while beginning from the biological, is essentially of a spiritual substance and must be prioritised to safeguard the invaluable intellectual and moral patrimony of Rome that is rooted in our people.

All the more happy I am to personally comply with this directive, as in founding the journal *Roma* sixteen years ago and the Institute of Roman Studies thirteen years ago, I have devoted myself to contributing to the defence of the invaluable intellectual and moral patrimony of Rome that is the root of our people and Western civilisation.

Please accept my most devoted respect”.

With these words¹, Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, founder and, from 1935 onward, president for life of the Institute of Roman Studies, replied to Minister of National Education Giuseppe Bottai’s circular letter dated August 6, 1938, sent to all cultural institutions following the July 14 publication of *Il fascismo e i problemi della razza*, later known as the *Manifesto of Race*, in the newspaper *Il Giornale d’Italia*

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¹ The letter is in Historic Archive of National Institute of Roman Studies (henceforth abbreviated as ASINSR), Affari Generali, b. 52, f. 30.

(Toscano M., 2003a, p. 175-184). In the circular letter, Bottai not only announced the beginning of the concrete phase of racism in Italy, but he also stressed that racism had been at the centre of fascist policy since power was seized, first merely quantitatively through demographic-boosting efforts and later qualitatively. In the same circular letter, Bottai underlined that Italian racism, contrary to what had been declared in the *Manifesto*, was not to be understood in a mere biological sense, but – first and foremost – as a spiritual matter. In light of this clarification, he invited Galassi Paluzzi “to put the racist question at the forefront” of the Institute’s work, “to enrich its features, its applications and its aims”².

Galassi Paluzzi’s response arrived ten days after the ministry’s circular letter, a rather unusual timeframe considering his typical diligence in responding to requests from the politicians, particularly from Bottai. In his letter, Galassi Paluzzi revealed an air of caution. Instead of outright agreeing to focus the Institute’s studies on the racial question, he explained that it would work to provide a “modest” contribution to the race problem. He then underlined the deeply spiritual nature – or rather, cultural nature – of Italian racism, that allowed for racial elements to be linked to Italy’s “intellectual and moral heritage”. As I will try to show, this last aspect is crucial, considering that the *Manifesto*’s publication aroused much criticism around the country and in the Italian cultural world (albeit with different positions: De Felice R., 1961, 1993, p. 309-338; Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 210-221; Matard-Bonucci A., 2008, p. 265-289; Israel G., 2008; Galimi V., 2018, p. 19-26).

On July 29, a week prior to the letter, Bottai had indeed stressed to the Minister of Popular Culture Dino Alfieri and to Nicola Pende the urgent need to “get ideas back on track” and “blend the idea of ‘race’ with the idea of ‘Rome’”. On August 5, following a meeting with Alfieri, the minister of national education noticed that the purely determinist and materialist explanation of race was being slowly balanced by “the historic concept of civilization” (Bottai G., 1982, p. 128-129). Thus, in August 1938, the Institute of Roman Studies began its involvement in the new political and cultural direction of fascism: racism had crept through open the doors to Borromini’s Oratory of St. Philip Neri, the headquarters of Galassi Paluzzi’s institution³.

As has been well documented (Toscano M., 2003a, p. 208-243; Id., 2003b; Dell’Era T., 2007; Id., 2008; Pavan I., 2010; Rigano G., 2010; Toscano M., 2010; Id., 2015), over the last thirty years, historians have dismantled the myth of the “good Italian”, providing a thorough review of the belief that fascism was merely a semi-racist or half-heartedly racist regime. Studies have also proven it is inaccurate to blame Italy’s 1938 racial decree to the country’s alliance with Nazi Germany. There is still much debate on the importance of 1938 in fascist ideology and policy. While some argue it was a turning point (De Felice R., 1961, 1993; De Felice R., 1981, 1996; Toscano M. 2000; Id., 2003a; Id. 2003b; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008; Germinario F., 2009; Israel G., 2010), others consider it as a mere radicalization of a process that began when Mussolini seized power (Sarfatti M., 1994; Id., 2000; Bidussa D., 1992; Id., 1994a; Id., 1994b; Burgio A., 1999; Collotti E., 2003; Fabre G., 2005). Nevertheless, researches has highlighted that racist and antisemitic legislation was the result of Italian initiative, the effects of which were just as brutal as those under National Socialism. Starting with a brilliant essay from Mauro Raspanti (1994), studies have gone on to shine light on the particulars of Italian racism, tied not only to biological factors (as with Nazism, as shown by George L. Mosse, 1978), but to esoteric, spiritual and cultural elements, which intermingled with biological issues, resulting in a constant sway in the racial politics of fascism (on these different interpretations, Dell’Era T., 2016a)⁴. Starting in the 1990s, numerous studies have corroborated and supported this

² *Ibidem*.

³ Following a long process, only in 1941 the Institute of Roman Studies managed to change headquarters by obtaining the rooms of St. Alexis Institute for the Blind on the Aventine hill, receiving in the same occasion the Royal title (Visser R., 1994).

⁴ This is not the place where analysing the different interpretations on the meaning of 1938. On it, see the aforementioned work of Dell’Era. On De Felice’s work, starting from 1981 his interpretation was in my opinion widely revised, thanks to Mosse and Emilio Gentile’s researches. Their influence brought De Felice to underline the existence

interpretation, which also benefits from wider international debate on the nature of fascist ideology (in particular: Griffin R., 1993; Gentile E. 1993; Payne S.G., 1995; Gentile E., 2001; Griffin R., 2007a; Id., 2008; Griffin R, Mallet R., Tortorice J., 2008; Costa Pinto A., 2011; Costa Pinto A., Kallis A., 2014), following in the tracks of pioneering works (particularly Israel G. and Nastasi P. 1998; Maiocchi R., 1999), to highlight the participation, the spread and the dimensions of persecution under Mussolini's Italy (albeit of different opinions: Finzi R., 1997; Fabre G., 1998; Capristo A., 2002; Dell'Era T., 2004; Mantovani C., 2004; Capristo A., 2006; Cassata F., 2006; Galimi V., Procacci G., 2009; Turi G., 2010; Capristo A., 2011a; Ead. 2011b). Emerging from this thorough research is a clear picture, proving (sometimes to the point of reversing the image of the "good Italian" to its polar opposite) the severity of racism in Italy in legal terms, its depth, spread and rooting, as well as the total and disinterested involvement of the intellectual world. In turn, the involvement of intellectuals has been the subject of a series of studies, starting from the 1970s, on the relationship between culture and fascist political power. Nevertheless, as has been recently stated (Iori L., 2019, p. 362) there remains a "glaring historiographic gap" regarding the field of classical antiquity, where "there is no comprehensive work on the impact of racial policies, neither in a quantitative or qualitative perspective, in a field so crucial to the regime's propaganda".

Based on these considerations, our question is what role the Institute of Roman Studies and its initiatives played. For decades, the historiography has long regarded the Institute with diverging views, with researches aimed at demonstrating either that it was not involved in the regime's propaganda (Romanelli P., Morra O., 1972; Brezzi P., 1992) or the institution's total synergy with fascist political culture (Cagnetta M., 1979; Canfora L., 1980, p. 78, 93-103; Cagnetta M., 1990a). However, in recent years, thanks to a new understanding of fascist *romanità* (Cofrancesco D., 1980; Cagnetta M., 1990b; Visser R., 1992; Scriba F., 1995; Stone M., 1999; Giardina A., Vauchez A., 2000, p. 212-296; Belardelli G., 2005, p. 206-236; Painter B.W., 2005; Gentile E., 2007; Kallis A., 2011; Id., 2014; Salvatori P., 2014; Tarquini A., 2017) a more nuanced approach has spread, aiming to depict the Institute as close to the regime but not part of it, whose function was to shape a modern myth of Rome in a Catholic-fascist perspective, and its "modernistic manipulation" (La Penna A., 1999; Vittoria A., 2002; Nelis J., 2011; Id., 2012; Arthurs J., 2012; Nelis J., 2017; Müller C., 2017). Other scholars, furthermore, have focused on the Institute's failed attempt to find an ideological synthesis that, through the myth of Rome, could merge Catholicism and fascism, by *fascistising* the former and Catholicizing the latter (Aramini D., 2015; Id., 2016).

Until the eightieth anniversary of the racial laws, questions on racism and antisemitism were surprisingly missing from studies on the Institute (it is only mentioned in La Penna A., 1999, p. 620-622, who states that racism was neither condemned nor supported in its initiatives). This amnesia went as far as removing the Institute's most propagandistic publications from its catalogue⁵. The issue can be found in some recent works that establish a connection between its involvement in fascist racial politics and the imperial exaltation of Ancient Rome resulting from the Ethiopian conquest (Aramini D., 2015, p. 202-203). To fill an evident gap, finally, some publications (Silverio E., 2014a; Id., 2014b; Ghilardi M., 2018; Id., 2020) have focused on the topic from a merely narrative viewpoint, underling a sort of independence from the regime's ideology due to the clerical and moderate nature of the Institute. Keeping in mind these thirty years of historiographical achievements on the connections, tensions, ambivalence, contradictions and continuities of 1938 with fascism's general policies and its totalitarian mission to shape an anthropological revolution of Italians, this essay presents a different interpretation. It does not consider the racial laws as a temporary phase of Italian history that is completely alien to the country's cultural context, but aims to show how 1938 fits into and can be reinserted into the general interpretation of the Institute of Roman Studies' initiatives.

and the central role of an original racism and antisemitism deeply tied to the anti-bourgeois totalitarian revolution fascism aimed at giving shape.

⁵ An updated version of the catalog is available at the Institute website: www.studiromani.it/catalogo.html (January 20, 2020).

2. Rome as a European *Communis Patria*

The Institute of Roman Studies was founded in 1925 by Carlo Galassi Paluzzi⁶. His cultural background was marked by that singular political and cultural climate of “various nationalism”, common in Italy in the early twentieth century, which had led intellectuals to view themselves as civic and political players, and to consider themselves – in the words of George L. Mosse – the harbingers of a new age and the last custodians of societal values. They believed these values had to be spread among the masses, transcending the reality of decadent, materialistic and alienating liberal bourgeois society, in order to rediscover the mystical sense of the nation’s spiritual unity (Mosse G.L., 1970, p. 145-146). These intellectuals formed and promoted a vision of life, a worldview, that would bring about a “conservative revolution” in order to lay the foundation for a new modernity, the antithesis of the Enlightenment and bourgeois modernity (Sternhell Z., 2007). A connoisseur of *romanità*, active member of the Fides Romana group and a collaborator at *Corriere d’Italia*, which was close to the clerical-fascist positions of the *Rassegna Nazionale* (on them: Sorrentino D., 1980 and 1993; Baragli M., 2018, p. 257-407), Galassi Paluzzi came from a self-taught educational background and had been profoundly influenced by this world view that, after his conversion to Catholicism just before the outbreak of World War I, was imbued with anti-modern Catholic political thought and the myth of medieval Christianity (see: Miccoli G, 1985, p. 21-92; Menozzi D., 1993, p. 14-71). He developed his thoughts following World War I, focusing on the myth of *romanità*. In his opinion, the history of Rome had to be rescued from the ivory tower of academic and mono-disciplinary studies in order to share it with a wider audience who needed to be educated on the universal values of their civilisation (Coccia B., 2000, p. 9-10; Vittoria A., 2002, p. 514-516).

Thanks to the support of prominent political and cultural figures⁷, the Institute of Roman Studies became one of the most prestigious institutions in fascist Italy. According to its Charter, its aim was to promote new studies that would awaken Italians’ “historical sense of the role Rome had in the unfolding of civilisation across the world”⁸. The Institute aimed at developing and spreading the myth of *romanità* while finding a synthesis among different points of view, in addition to collaborating with prominent scholars, politicians, architects and urban planners, in order to undermine the foreign monopoly on Roman studies and hand over the reins to “Romans of the new Italy” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1926a, p. 180). This made the Institute one of the most interesting examples of the progressive osmosis between academic culture and fascist politics. According to Galassi Paluzzi, the Institute should be a place for the best scholars to connect, “to no longer ignore each other – as happened in the past – and achieve an understanding that allows them to organically study the various problems that concern the City without duplicate efforts and wasting energy in vain” (*ibidem*, p. 178). His goal was thus to promote the history and the cultural originality of Ancient Rome and Christian Rome, considering the latter the true heir of the former in terms of politics, art, culture and spirituality⁹. In a broader sense, his underlying intention was to demonstrate that the supremacy and universal function of Rome over the centuries was the consequence of the fusion of two elements: the Cross and the Eagle. The fusion of the Rome of Caesar and the Rome of Peter was the Eternal City’s source of its primacy, a primacy of *culture* and *civilisation* that needed to be rediscovered, redeemed and defended against the continuous assaults of modernity and of anti-Roman ideologies such as the Reformation, German criticism and the Protestant spirit that destroyed Christian unity. Since the French Revolution,

⁶ See C. Galassi Paluzzi’s letter to P. Fedele, March 21, 1925, in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 1, f. 2.

⁷ It is worth briefly mentioning: the presidents Pietro Fedele, Luigi Federzoni and Vittorio Scialoja; the members of the Steering Committee Emilio Bodrero, Giuseppe Ceccarelli, Carlo Cecchelli, Pietro De Francisci, Giulio Quirino Giglioli, Gustavo Giovannoni, Egilberto Martire, Roberto Paribeni, Pio Paschini, Pietro Tacchi Venturi and, since 1937, Giuseppe Bottai.

⁸ ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 1, f. 1.

⁹ On this topic, see the single issues of the journal *Roma*.

such anti-Roman ideologies had caused the evils of Western society: individualism, positivism, liberalism, Social Democracy and communism (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1927).

According to Galassi Paluzzi, *romanità* meant:

“Order, discipline, balance, hierarchy; *romanità* means an ordered love for the universal, because the purpose of the Roman spirit, of the Latin soul, is the world as a single field of apostolate in which to lead in or restore order. Leading in or restoring Legislation, the Law, that is, social order; leading in or spreading Faith, the Gospel, that is the human and divine means of re-establishing the Eternal order” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1926b, p. 519).

For Galassi Paluzzi this was a personal and essential mission, since – as he affirmed at the First National Congress of Roman Studies – the study and knowledge of Roman and Latin civilisation would lead to the understanding of the “inner source” and the “life-giving sap of our national civilisation (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1928).

The racist and antisemitic campaign arose in the midst of the celebration of the two-thousandth anniversary of Augustus’ birth (on this: Aramini D., 2020). Prior to the campaign, the issue had been totally absent from the Institute’s general initiatives which were far from the image Mussolini gave in his famous speech given on October 25, 1938, to the National Council of the Fascist Party, during which he defined Ancient Romans as “racists beyond belief” and emphasised the continuity of the Italian race over the centuries (Giardina A., Vauchez A., 2000, p. 262-263). The Institute’s image of Ancient Rome was actually closer to Mussolini’s claims in 1924 and in 1936, after conquering Ethiopia: Rome was a model of assimilation and fusion of peoples (*ibidem*). The first issue of the monthly *Roma*, indeed, demonstrated how the myth of Rome had to be interpreted by quoting the hymn to Rome written by the late imperial poet Rutilius Namatianus after the sack of Alaric: “For nations far apart thou hast made a single fatherland; under thy dominion captivity hath meant profit even for those who knew not justice: and by offering to the vanquished a share in thine own justice, thou hast made a city of what was erstwhile a world”¹⁰. These verses were central to underlining the “eternal renewal” of Rome, the Eternal City, that shaped all of Western civilization, absorbing different cultures and remodelling them with its own indelible sign (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1923).

Close to the signing of the Lateran Treaty, during the celebration of the two-thousandth anniversary of Virgil’s birth, the Institute further spread the image of the political empire as an “instrument of Providence to create and maintain the order and the law of the universe” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1931). It was exalted Virgil’s rural and bucolic side, his ideals of patriotism, labour, and family, as well as Horace, known for his lauding of Rome’s originality and power throughout the world (Mancuso U., 1935). The fascist conquering of Ethiopia was proof of Italy’s constant imperial destiny, that, from Ancient times, through the influence of Christianity, had always tended to civilise and evangelise other civilizations (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1936; Various authors, 1937; on the role of classical antiquities studies in defining the concept of the fascist empire: Cagnetta M., 1979). Rome, in short, was the immortal *Communis Patria* of European peoples and the Institute of Roman Studies, in seeking to collaborate with foreign scholars and institutes, intended to re-establish Rome’s centrality and to serve the higher purpose of new understanding between peoples (Visser R., 1994).

These ambitions found both outlets and resonance at the national and international levels during the Augustus’ celebrations between 1937 and 1938. Through continuous parallels between policies under the first Roman emperor and Mussolini, was shaped an image of Augustus as a “revolutionary restorer”, a defender of traditional values, a peacemaker of the Empire; as he who had put an end to Rome’s warrish politics and favoured the Romanisation and civilisation of all territories through peace, paving the path for Christianity (Aramini D., 2016, p. 51-54; Aramini D., 2020). These aspects were so crucial to the Institute that they became the central theme of the V National Congress of

¹⁰ See the website https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Rutilius_Namatianus/text*.html (July 13, 2020).

Roman Studies, dedicated to the role of the Roman Empire in the history of civilisation. Held at the height of the Augustan celebrations in April 1938, mere weeks before the regime's turn to racism and antisemitism, the Congress painted a picture of the Roman empire focusing on absorption, fusion and peace (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1938b). The speeches were based on the empire's work to unify various populations, both spiritually and politically, without forced "denationalisations", but by creating a truly "universal" civilisation (Cardinali G., 1938). Roman law, considered a combination of Roman norms and provincial customs, was testament to such "attraction" and "fusion" (Riccobono S., 1938. Also: Giglioli G.Q., 1938; Giovannoni G., 1938). The conference also highlighted how Christianity allowed Rome to become "truly eternal and universal", merging Roman civil universalism with Christian religious universalism (Barbera M., 1938). Furthermore, the Church, despite the dismembering of Roman state, made it possible to maintain "a continuation of the idea, of the tradition, of the conscience, of the survival of imperial Rome" through "the progressive civilisation of barbaric peoples". The Church's determining role was particularly evident with the Lombards, defined as the "roughest" of all the barbarians, who, quickly "were also enveloped and attracted" by the charm of Rome, and "welcomed" its religion "leaving behind the heresy they brought with them from the east" (Calisse C., 1938). This last element was an evident reference to Nazi Germany, which, like its ancestors, should have been absorbed and led by the Catholic and Fascist Rome.

All of the Institute's conferences, lectures and publications aimed at showing how and to what extent Rome had uniformed Europe over the course of centuries. Series of publications launched between 1937 and 1939, such as *Orme di Roma*, *Le grandi strade del mondo romano* (which even included volumes on Eastern Europe, Anatolia, Africa and Asia), *Il limes romano*, *Roma e le province*, *Roma mater* and *Italia romana* proved the role that Rome played over the centuries, not as a mere ruler who subjugated peoples by force, but as a melting pot of different cultures and traditions, all planted and nourished in a Latin garden, exclusively rooted in the Italian peninsula. Figures like Augustus, who placed Italy at the centre of the empire, Constantine, and Popes Leo and Gregory the Great symbolised this process of assimilation (on the diffusion of these myths, see: Moro R. 2004; Guasco A., 2013; Moro R., 2020, p. 186-201, 240-328). Such a direction could only clash with Germany's positions, including both recent Nazi viewpoints and traditional German culture, which was more inclined to exalt Ancient Greece over Rome, and – according to Mommsenian heritage – Caesar over Augustus (Aramini D., 2018; Id., 2020). Germans were also inclined to define themselves as the opposite of all that was Latin, a tendency shared by Italians. In fact, with very few exceptions, for centuries, Italian culture deemed Germanic people the antithesis of Latin culture, to the point of remarking on the presence of two nations and two peoples on the Italian peninsula. This contrast between Latins and Germans was further fuelled during the nineteenth century following the development and increasing importance of national identities (Roberto U., 2018, p. 227-302). Even on the origin of peoples, albeit indirectly, German theories differed from those prevalent in Italy and especially from the political culture of "various nationalism" that spurred the Institute of Roman Studies (on Nazism and classical antiquity: Losemann V., 1999; Chapoutot J., 2017). On the peninsula, in fact, Luigi Pigorini's studies on the Indo-European origins of civilisation and Italian population were overcome by Giuseppe Sergi's theories, who underlined the existence of an even more Ancient – and previously civilised – Mediterranean people that only later came in contact and fused with the Indo-European people coming from the north. This ethnic diversity was then transcended by Latin culture, the bearer of civilisation, that ensured cultural uniformity across the Italian nation over the centuries (De Francesco A., 2013, p. 159-213). Such theories were adopted by fascism (*ibidem*, p. 184-188) that funded vast archaeological researches to dismantle the interpretation that Aryans had founded European civilisation (especially the Nazi radical version) as well as to prove the superiority of Italian Mediterranean culture, as underlined by Sergio Sergi's imperial anthropology (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 149-155). In doing so, the regime fully intended

to legitimise its political aspirations to dominate the Mediterranean and to the leadership in Europe (all elements fully supported by the initiatives organized by Galassi Paluzzi¹¹).

Such opinions were widespread throughout the country, as demonstrated by the sharp contrasts during the Volta Conference in 1932 (Various authors, 1933a; De Felice R., 1974 p. 410-411) which were also related to an opposition publicly supported and encouraged by Mussolini himself to Nazi racist theories. In 1933 and 1934 (De Felice R., 1961, p. 115-126; Id., 1974, p. 408-506; Moro 2020, p. 206-230) this opposition was influenced by the international fascism positions (Ledeen M.A., 1972; De Felice R., 1974, p. 307-310 and 408-441) and by the centrality of Roman law, considered by the fascist political religion as the greatest gift that Ancient Rome had ever bestowed upon humanity and a model of shaping a new totalitarian State (Gentile E., 1993, p. 146-147 and 152-154). Here too, the contrasts origins were based on German nationalist tendency, deeply rooted in legal scholars ideals, to consider the culture and the law as a direct product of blood and soil (*blut und boden*). According to this philosophy, Roman law represented the tool to tyrannise people and annihilate their traditions and national feelings. Through their studies, Germanists ended up re-evaluating the Germanic customary traditional law, attempting to prove its centrality on modern law and, consequently, drastically downplaying the legacy of Rome. The Nazi Party also supported this interpretation. During the Congress of National Socialist Legal Scholars held in Monaco in 1934, indeed, there was no space for the voluntary or human aspects that characterised Ancient Rome, according to Italian legal tradition (De Napoli O., 2009, p. 103-110). Italian Romanists considered Rome a productive synthesis that found its most effective compendium in Rutilius Namatianus's aforementioned verses.

The Institute of Roman Studies not only supported this synthesising view of Rome between different peoples and cultures, but, as clearly demonstrated by the previously mentioned V National Congress, added another element that further alienated the Germanists: the key role of Catholicism. Previously, in 1928, Pietro De Francisci had linked pagan Rome's universalism with that of Christianity in the Institute's monthly journal, considering both founding elements of all of modern civilisation's spiritual patrimony. In his view, Roman-Christian legal tradition, thanks above all to Justinian's work, was still alive and present in all of the civilised world: "all modern legislation, both in form and spirit – he argued –, derives from Roman law; the influence is not limited to legal institutions, it is part of all of our methods, our thoughts, our intuition, and our legal education: therefore, alongside Christianity and Greek artistic tradition, it is a foundation of modern civilisation (De Francisci P., 1928). A few years later, *Roma* published an article by legal scholar Carlo Calisse, who denied the existence of a sharp break between Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Through his research, Calisse proved the influence of Roman law and, subsequently, of canon law on Lombard law (on Calisse: Rebuffa G., 1973). From this basis, he believed that the foundation of Italian law – and, consequently, the legal systems of all of civilised European countries – could be traced back to the merging of Roman law and canon law through Justinian mediation and the creation of common pontifical law (Calisse C., 1931). These positions were also supported by Giuseppe Ermini (see: Mombelli M., 1993). Indeed, in another volume edited by the Institute of Roman Studies, Ermini argued that:

"The process of legal renewal that began with new Christian concepts while the empire was still alive, of which there are clear traces in the fourth and fifth centuries Roman Law and even more in Justinian's Code, continued and strengthened in the Middle Ages to fully developed with the Christian society of the twelfth and following centuries, when the authority of the Church, universal and common to the peoples as that of the empire, definitively imposed its principles in the Law, as well as its own law alongside Roman law, to regulate the life of men" (Ermini G., 1934a, p. 57; Ermini G., 1934b).

¹¹ There are no published studies on the international role of the Institute of Roman Studies. Just a few references are in Visser R., 1994, who however analyses just the organizational issues. A cultural view has been attempted in a paper I held at the International Conference *Crossing Borders: Intellectuals of the Right and Politics in Europe and Latin America. Transnational Perspectives* (Lisbon, University of Lisbon, November 17-18, 2016). This paper, entitled "The Myth of Rome. Politics and Culture at the Institute of Roman Studies (1925-1944)", will be soon published.

These positions, which tended to downplay (but not entirely exclude) barbaric elements while stressing how Christianity had received the legacy of Imperial Rome, clearly emerged during the International Congress of Roman Law organised by Galassi Paluzzi, held in April of 1933 in both Rome and Bologna, to celebrate Justinian's work in honour of the fourteenth centennial of the publication of the Digest. During the congress, the German and Italian positions openly clashed, with the former intent on reaffirming the profound Greek, Eastern and Hellenistic influences on both Roman law and the Justinian's Code, while undermining the importance of the Code and Christian thought over the centuries. The Italian scholars, on the other hand, led by Pier Silvio Leicht and under the influence of the new political and cultural relationship between the regime and the Church in the name of the myth of Catholic Italy (Ceci L., 2013, p. 158-211; Moro R., 2020, p. 254-261), insisted on the profound Christian influence which gave Roman law a more "human" aspect, allowing it to become a nearly universal code in the West (Leicht P.S., 1935). It was Salvatore Riccobono who harshly criticise the anti-Roman theories. Starting from the assumption that the history of law was the most important part of the civil history of a people, as the law regulates all the life of a nation and society, and that religion had always played a key role in the public and private lives of Ancient citizens, Riccobono showed that Christianity had grown in importance from the third century onward. One of the Institute's first collaborators and an expert in legal history, Riccobono underlined the influence of Christian ethics on all aspects of ancient life. Consequently, once it became the most dominant element people's lives, its principles began to permeate both public and private law. Thus, the Justinian's Digest became the most outstanding product of Latin genius, proving the universality and eternal persistence of Roman law (Riccobono S., 1935).

The distance from Nazi culture, and from an interpretation according to which Catholicism was nothing more than a product of Judaism (Chapoutot J., 2017, e-book: from position 6435 to position 7304), became even more crucial due to the subsequent political implications. In the midst of the crisis of the West, attributing more or less importance to Rome (both Ancient and Christian) or to Celtic and Germanic people in the development of European culture over the millennia, strengthened or weakened Italy's and Germany's aspirations as leaders of a new civilisation and a new world order. Nevertheless, and despite the aforementioned aversion to the German criticism, Italian's opposition to Nazi views did not represent an unsurpassable issue. Indeed, as soon as the political climate changed after the conquest of Ethiopia, with the Italian rapprochement to Hitler's regime and with the signing of the Axis, the president of the Institute – torn between personal positions, directives of a totalitarian regime and the need for increased funding to survive and to impose its positions within the Fascist ideology – revealed his pragmatism to mending differences and trying to find a common ground for non-convergent ideas. For example, following the publication of *Mit Brennender Sorge* encyclical (Miccoli G., 2000, p. 150-163; Sale G., 2004, p. 127-150; Fattorini E., 2007, p. 77-88, 104-140; Bouthillon F., Levant M., 2016; Moro R., 2020, p. 386-411) he decided to publish in 1937 a review of the four years earlier published book *Romanesimo e Germanesimo. La crisi dell'Occidente* (Bendiscioli M., Moenius G., Herwegen I., Wust P., 1933). The book was written by a Catholic scholar like Mario Bendiscioli (Torchiani F., 2016), among the first to criticise Nazism as a form of neo-paganism (Bendiscioli M., 1937; Moro R., 2020, p. 236-237, 396-397). According to the reviewer, the book was still extremely relevant to the political situation as it revealed the rift that divided Germany in two. The chasm, coinciding exactly with the former border of the Roman empire, attested to the importance of Romanisation (both Ancient and Christian) that had occurred in the south of Germany, and the danger emanating from the north of the country. In this way, Galassi Paluzzi didn't condemn German or Nazi thought as a whole, but merely in part. Only the Protestant north – alongside the threat of Bolshevik Russia – fuelled the risk of a "European civilisation depleted of its Catholic soul" (Incisa della Rocchetta G., 1937).

In 1937, Galassi Paluzzi made two more attempts at smoothing out differences. The first entailed urging Senator Emilio Bodrero, a former nationalist, undersecretary of the Ministry of Public

Education from 1926 to 1928 and full professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Padua, where he had also acted as *rettore* (Rigobello A., 1969), to “mitigate, given today’s different relationship with Germany, the attack on Germany on page 19 of your manuscript, although it is well justified”¹². Two years earlier, in 1935, during the celebrations for the two-thousandth anniversary of Horace’s birth, Bodrero explicitly denounced the “poor folly of Arianism” and “Germany’s current comical and pitiful theories”¹³. This second phrase was not published (Bodrero E., 1938, p. 32-33)¹⁴. Just a few weeks before, a similar request to revise a manuscript was addressed to the Apostolic Nuncio to Italy Francesco Borgongini Duca. According to the president of the Institute of Roman Studies, the sentences that needed to be revised regarded a tendency to oppose Imperial Rome and Christian Rome, and to interpret – as the nuncio did – the first as an empire that was “limited to only one ethnic group” and “held up by a swarm of spears”¹⁵. In responding to Galassi Paluzzi, who quoted Rutilius Namatianus, the nuncio reiterated the difference between the two Romes and the novelty of the Christian conception of “a close brotherhood of all human beings in Christ the Redeemer”. Contrary to Roman imperialism, where “everything outside of Rome is barbaric and must be subjugated by force”, in Catholicism – he explained – “there is no Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, servant or free man”, but there are only men “that must be converted with charity and kindness”¹⁶.

Based on this general cultural position and as a consequence of viewing Rome as a *Communis Patria*, both modern political antisemitism and religious antisemitism were of secondary importance to the Institute of Roman Studies. In fact, the hostility towards Jews was based on Catholic anti-modernism – of which anti-Judaism was an integral but not exclusive component. While anti-Judaism was not an absolute priority for Catholic anti-modernism as it was for secular antisemitism, it was nevertheless tied to a complex and sometimes ambiguous ideological and political vision that deemed Jews as one among the principle enemies of the Church, a leading but not primary force in the fight against Christian Rome (Moro R., 2002, p. 35-75; Id., 2003c). Evidence of this can be found in one of Galassi Paluzzi’s few comments on antisemitic controversies in Italy between the two wars. In 1927, as director of *Roma*, Galassi Paluzzi mentioned the Jewish problem in his commentary on the controversy between *La Tribuna*, a Roman daily newspaper that inherited Italian nationalist tradition, directed by Roberto Forges Davanzati, and the Jewish-Zionist weekly *Israel*. The controversy, following articles in the weekly *Roma Fascista*, directed by another ex-nationalist, Umberto Guglielmotti, brought to the forefront a series of anti-Jewish stereotypes from a clearly nationalist and clerical perspective, tied closely to anti-Zionist views that questioned the patriotism of Italian Jews due to their belonging to a universal and anti-national international community (on this: Toscano M., 2003a, p. 155-174). Responding to the affirmations of Francesco Coppola, who believed the Jewish world and Jewish thought represented the cornerstones and sources of anti-Romanity, Galassi Paluzzi specified that, in his opinion, the real danger did not derive from the “genius of the Jewish race” or from Judaism itself. Rather, it was modern day Jews that were dangerous because they denied the foundations of Jewish religious thought, and in doing so, promoted and supported “the truest anti-Roman movement: Protestant individualism” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1927, p. 439). In line with the tendency of Catholicism, between the 1920s and 1930s, to be more anti-Protestant than anti-Semitic, following the spread of the new neo-pagan heresies such as nationalist statolatry (Moro R., 1998; Zanini P., 2019), Galassi Paluzzi believed that the Reformation and German criticism had shaped anti-Roman sentiment, which did not have Jewish roots, despite what the ex-nationalist director of

¹² Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Emilio Bodrero, letter of November 25, 1937, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 53, f. 14, sf. Bodrero Emilio.

¹³ See the typescript in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 23, f. 11, sf. Bodrero Emilio.

¹⁴ Emilio Bodrero to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 29, 1937, Pubblicazioni, b. 53, f. 14, sf. Bodrero Emilio.

¹⁵ Carlo Galassi Paluzzi to Francesco Borgongini Duca, letter of June 1, 1937, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 37, f. 34.

¹⁶ Francesco Borgongini Duca to Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, letter of June 8, 1937, *ibidem*. The Nuncio did not revise the manuscript: Borgongini Duca F. (1937), p. 9-18 and in *L'Osservatore romano*, March 2-3, 1936.

the monthly *Politica* claimed. Tracing the teleological path of anti-Roman thought from Protestantism to Communism passing through the individualism, rationalism, the French Revolution, liberalism, positivism, historic materialism and social democracy – all products of Luther’s Reformation – Galassi Paluzzi was able to attribute the guilt of Western anarchist and anti-hierarchical decadence to the German monk’s theses. On the contrary, hierarchy, order and unity, all key elements of the *romanità* and rooted in the concept of family, were also part of the Jewish mentality. Therefore, it was Jews – not Judaism – that posed a threat, but much less so than Protestantism. If the Judaism threat lay merely in material aspects (the love of gold, for example) and in their resentment of Christians, Protestant culture was entirely antithetical to the Roman mentality, further aggravated by the warrior spirit of the “Germanic race”, its noble spirit and its imperialistic capabilities, characteristics that did not apply even minimally to the “degenerate Jewish race damned by God”. Galassi Paluzzi stressed once again that the true enemy lay in the north, and that “the Jewish danger, although extremely serious and sentimentally repelling, seems less serious and profound than the danger of Germanic criticism” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1927, p. 437-444).

Alongside these positions, *Roma* also allowed space for different, less lenient opinions on Judaism. In 1927, the journal also published an article by Luigi Huetter in which he underlined the danger posed by Judaism due to its deep hatred for Christianity as well as the fact that Judaism was more than just the Jewish religion, as Galassi Paluzzi seemed to state in his article. According to Huetter, Judaism was also a series of “sectarian superfetations and doctrines” that arose within the diaspora, naming “banking-utilitarian and nationalist” Zionism as one of the most evident examples (Huetter L., 1927). Even more clear cut is commentary from Tomaso Santacroce, deputy director of *Roma Fascista* and author of the articles that sparked the controversy. In his opinion, the Jewish religion did not stem from the Western civilisation that blossomed from Rome. It was a product of the East, and thus Asian, sectarian, subversive to hierarchy and authority, equally threatening of Protestantism. According to Santacroce, Judaism and the Talmud were a “totalitarian code”, a “typical aversion to the Roman-Catholic order of the state, of family and of morals”. Judaism, he continued, injected “fatalism and the predestination of the elects: an Eastern disease that introduced the disheartening anti-social infection of *determinism* and *materialism* into the German mentality”. In making such statements, Santacroce took up the antisemitic accusations of nationalist tradition that he himself belonged to: that 1789 and the much-despised French Revolution was not the mere fruit of the descendants of Huguenots, Calvinists and Jansenists, but, above all, of freemason intellectual Jews, of the plutocrats in London and Amsterdam, the ancestors of socialist internationalism (Santacroce T., 1927).

3. The scholars involved: a precise ideological choice

Despite these debates, it wasn’t until 1938 that the Jewish question truly became an issue for the Institute of Roman Studies. A few weeks prior to Bottai’s letter, Carlo Cecchelli urged his friend Galassi Paluzzi to hurry to address the racial topic that blew up following the publication of the *Manifesto of Race*. An editorialist for the *Corriere della Sera* and a scholar of Christian archaeology, Cecchelli was a typical exponent of a Catholic and nationalist fascism which attempted to present the Italian race in a way that was compatible with religion. Cecchelli tended to merge biological attributes to history, making the idea of Rome a key factor in the ethnic cohesion of the Italian people. According to this view – which led to the secularisation of religion-based anti-Judaism – the Jew, although not considered an inferior race, was seen as a key exponent of Asian civilisation, deemed the secular mortal enemy of the West forged by Rome (Cecchelli C., 1939a; Moro R., 2003a, p. 310-313). Towards the end of July 1938, Cecchelli suggested that Galassi Paluzzi organise a series of radio shows¹⁷. The president of the Institute of Roman Studies immediately expressed his interest.

¹⁷ C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Cecchelli, letter of July 25, 1938, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, b. 28, f. 7, sf. Radioscene 1938.

The series of three lectures were to be broadcasted on the national radio (*EIAR*) and accompanied by music and acting scenes of the Roman past, set on the Forum and the Palatine and Capitoline Hills. The “highly political goal of the initiative” was obvious, as Cecchelli himself explained. The shows were strictly related to “the current racial politics” that had to be interpreted “basing on the idea of *romanità*”¹⁸.

While Cecchelli’s plans never came to light, the Institute of Roman Studies nevertheless began preparing to follow through on Bottai’s request. Thus, toward the end of September, after receiving information on the initiatives being organised by the Royal Academy of Italy¹⁹, Galassi Paluzzi proceeded to discuss organising a conference series²⁰. Between the months of October and November, the invitations were sent to Pericle Ducati, Roberto Paribeni, Aristide Calderini, Giulio Quirino Giglioli, Carlo Cecchelli, Guido Manacorda, Emilio Bodrero, Giacomo Devoto, Salvatore Riccobono, Gustavo Giovannoni, Ugo Rellini, Nicola Pende and Galassi Paluzzi himself. Immediately accepting were Bodrero, Cecchelli, Devoto, Ducati, Riccobono and Giovannoni. Nicola Pende, invited to analyse “the problem of race for the human type called Roman-Italic”²¹, declined due to previous work engagements²², as did Giglioli²³. Ugo Rellini also declined the invitation, underlining that he had already expressed his ideas in an article that would have been published in *La difesa della razza* (Rellini U., 1940), in which he highlighted the use of palethnology to demonstrate the attributes and cultural persistence that define Italians, as opposed to “the idea of numerous invasions, which is still dominant”²⁴. Cardinali too decided not to participate in the conference, claiming it was not “currently opportune” to dedicate even more space to his positions²⁵. Equally interesting are Manacorda’s and Paribeni’s refusals. The latter stated he was “absolutely” against speaking about race for the Ancient Roman world unless Galassi Paluzzi aimed at divulging concepts that were “entirely nonconformist”²⁶. A professor of German literature at the University of Florence, Manacorda was close to the *Frontespizio* journal, a group that promoted the convergence of fascism and Catholicism led by Giovanni Papini and Piero Bargellini (Garzarelli B., 2007). As early as 1934, when the political climate was completely different, Manacorda issued a harsh attack of German racism and Alfred Rosenberg’s myth of Aryan civilisation. In *Frontespizio*, where Papini would reveal the religious and anti-Catholic nature of Nazism (Papini G., 1934), Manacorda wrote against arbitrariness and anti-scientific positions that – in substituting the well-documented history with the hypothetic and controversial prehistory – would end up crediting all of global civilisation – from Hellenism to Ancient Rome, from the Renaissance up to fascism – to the race that came from the north. He also believed that such theories, which deemed Catholicism as the mortal enemy of Aryan and Western civilisation, were a tragedy as they became a real “gospel” followed by a “large crowd of German spirits” (Manacorda G., 1934). Nazism, in fact, was not as much a pagan statolatry but a true new religion, and the outcome of the “eternal conflict” between “paganism and Christianity, Apollo (or Dionysus) and Christ, romanticism and classicism, Germanicness [*Germanentum*] and Romanness, racism and universality, idealism and realism” (Manacorda G., 1933, p. 5-6; Moro R.,

¹⁸ C. Cecchelli to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of July 26, 1938, *ibidem*.

¹⁹ In a note of September 21, 1938, Galassi Paluzzi was made aware that the Royal Academy of Italy had organized a special committee on studying the role and presence of Judaism in Italy, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 1 “Preliminari”.

²⁰ By examining the National Institute of Roman Studies archive, both the decision to organize a cycle of lectures and the names of invited scholars was made by Galassi Paluzzi who did not convene a Steering Committee meeting (the first meeting following the racial politics was held on March 28, 1939).

²¹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to N. Pende, letter of November 7, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 5 “Conferenze non avvenute”.

²² N. Pende to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 17, 1938, *ibidem*.

²³ G.Q. Giglioli to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 28, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁴ U. Rellini to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 7, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁵ G. Cardinali to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 23, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁶ This was Paribeni’s replied: “I absolutely declines speaking about race. Or I could say things entirely nonconformist”, R. Paribeni to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of October 22, 1938, in *ibidem*.

2020, p. 209-210). Four years later, Manacorda declined the Institute's invitation to hold a lecture entitled *Il Rinascimento come rifioritura imperiale della razza italica*, in which according to Galassi Paluzzi he had to show "the great reblooming of typical Roman characteristics of spiritual expansion, reaffirming itself once more by virtue of the Italian race" in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries²⁷. Unfortunately, Manacorda's response has not been found in Galassi Paluzzi's correspondence, and the reason he gave for declining remain unknown. Nevertheless, his refusal must have been quite explicit, as the president of the Institute did not reextend his invitation²⁸.

The scholars invited to participate, largely longstanding collaborators of the Institute (Ducati, Riccobono, Cecchelli, Giglioli and Paribeni), some of which were even members of the Steering Committee (Calderini, Giovannoni and Bodrero), showed the will to maintain the Institute's line. However, by inviting Manacorda, and even more so Rellini and Pende, Galassi Paluzzi revealed an evident ideological choice: he took side against the strictly biological racism. Rellini was one of the strongest adherents to Sergi's theories on the existence of a culturally evolved Mediterranean civilisation prior to the Indo-Europeans (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 135-155; De Francesco A., 2012, p. 186; Cultraro M., 2016). Pende, on the other hand, was one of the most prominent exponents of national and Roman-spiritualistic racism, totally antithetical to the Nazi position. His thesis focused on the idea that races were the result of a biological, spiritual and sociological mixture. In his opinion, Rome and its civilization had generated a synthesis of the dissimilar populations living in the Italian peninsula and had shaped a human type, the Roman-Italic, that had remained unvaried throughout the centuries. This model of man was original and completely different from others, not only due to its physical characteristics but for its innate and unchanged spiritual qualities (Israel G., 2010, p. 233-253; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 70-73).

By methodically choosing its conference speakers, the Institute of Roman Studies aimed at promoting a spiritualistic idea of race, defined by the concepts of descent, civilisation and culture. On March 28, 1939, when informed of the initiatives carried out since the summer of 1938, the Institute's Steering Committee posed no objections. Only Bodrero reaffirmed the will to maintain elevated research standards for all future Institute's initiatives²⁹.

4. Consequences of the racial laws

Starting in August 1938, the Institute of Roman Studies had to follow the rules and regulations outlined in the racial legislation. The circular letter number 11836 on the census of Jewish people employed in academies and educational institutes, sent on August 19, 1938, by the Ministry of National Education, requested that each member of the Institute complete a questionnaire on their race. The decree number 1390 of September 5, 1939, on "measures to defend the race in fascist schools" ordered that members of the Jewish race were expelled from all schools, institutions and academies at the beginning of the school year, October 16 (on the laws: Sarfatti M., 2000, p. 150-217; Capristo A., 2002, p. 16-22; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 25-40). In September, during the last days of Augustan celebrations, Galassi Paluzzi sent the Ministry of National Education a long list of invited guests at the upcoming conference in order to be informed on the names of scholars "belonging to the Jewish race" scheduled to participate³⁰. Due to the tight time frame, the ministry

²⁷ C. Galassi Paluzzi to G. Manacorda, letter of October 13, 1938, *ibidem*

²⁸ C. Galassi Paluzzi to G. Manacorda, letter of November 2, 1938, *ibidem*.

²⁹ ASINSR, Verbali Giunta Direttiva, vol. V, meeting of March 28, 1939. At the meeting there were: Galassi Paluzzi, Bodrero, Bottai, Ceccarelli, Cecchelli, Giglioli, Millosevich, Paribeni, Tacchi Venturi, Tomassetti. There were absent: Federzoni, Fedele, Venturi, Giovannoni, Guasco.

³⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to Marino Lazzari, General Director of Antiquities and Fine Arts, letter of September, 7 1938, in ASINSR, Congressi, b. 220 Convegno Augusteo, f. 58 Preliminari, sf. Ministero Educazione Nazionale. The same day, the letter was sent to Edoardo Scardamaglia, General Director of Academies and Libraies and to Giuseppe Giustini, General Director of High Education.

responded that it was unable to satisfy the request³¹ and authorised the president of the Institute to allow all invited scholars to participate, as, officially, they were invited before the laws went into effect³².

On October 4, 1938, Galassi Paluzzi replied to the census, indicating that he was not a member of the Jewish race. Furthermore, on line E, where respondents were required to indicate the date of their family conversion from the Jewish religion to another faith, he pointed out with a certain presumption: “In 1127 A.D., one of my ancestors, as stated in an epigraph, donated goods to a church in Nocera. From 1500 onwards, I have parchments documenting related to my family. I don’t know anything before 1127 A.D., but I believe this should be sufficient” (quoted in Capristo A., 2002, p. 28). Two months later, on December 22, he wrote to the Ministry of National Education’s General Directorate of Academies and Libraries ensuring that no members of the Steering Committee local sections of the Institute were Jewish. In Rome offices, there had been only one Jewish employee, Aldo Neppi Modona, who – as Galassi Paluzzi stated – would have stopped working at the Institute within the three-month limit required by the Decree No. 1779 of November 15, 1938 (*ibidem*, p. 148). Hired by the Institute on September 16, 1935, Neppi Modona worked at the central file cabinet on Rome bibliography until September 16, 1936, and from January 1, 1937, until March 3, 1939, he acted as head of the publication office³³. Sources regarding racist persecution in the archive of the National Institute of Roman Studies are scarce and fragmented. Nor does Galassi Paluzzi’s personal archive contain any mention of the 1938 laws. The Institute furthermore was ruled just by the Steering Committee and by the president. It did not have official members, but collaborators who were invited to participate in conferences, lectures and publications. A total of three scholars were expelled from the Institute: the aforementioned Neppi Modona, as well as Professors Gino Segré and Giorgio Falco (Capristo A., 2002, p. 147-148). An emeritus professor of Roman law at the University of Turin as well as a member of the board of the Institute of Roman Studies in Turin, Segré was also a member of the Lyncean Academy, the Turin Academy of Sciences and a collaborator of the Italian Encyclopaedia. Born in the province of Mantua on June 21, 1864, he would die in Turin on July 31, 1942 (*ibidem*, p. 336). Giorgio Falco, born in Turin in 1888, was full professor of medieval history at the University of Turin when racial persecution began (he was replaced by Francesco Cognasso). Converting to Catholicism in 1939, Falco continued his studies privately, mostly in Rome, thanks to his friendship with Arturo Carlo Jemolo, managing to escape from the raids during Nazi occupation of Rome by taking shelter in the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Wall. In the second post-war period, Falco took up teaching once more, first in Genoa where he taught medieval and modern history and then back in Turin, where in 1949 he became member of the Lyncean Academy (Arnaldi G., 1994). Aldo Neppi Modona was born in Florence in 1895 where he graduated in 1919. An archaeologist, he was among the founders of the International Institute for Etruscan Studies in 1932. In 1927, the same year he began his collaboration with Galassi Paluzzi³⁴, he taught courses in Ancient Greece and Rome at the University of Pisa. When the persecution of Jews began, he was also a teacher in Greek and Latin literature in Florence at “Michelangelo” High School for Classical Studies and, in 1937, he obtained the *libera docenza* at the University of Rome³⁵. In the post-war, Neppi Modona went back to teaching and, in 1957, became a full professor of Ancient Greek and Roman Antiquities at the University of Genoa, where he remained until he retired in 1970. Secretary of the editorial

³¹ M. Lazzari to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of September 19, 1938, *ibidem*.

³² See Galassi Paluzzi’s note of September 22, 1938, *ibidem*. A list of invited Jews at the Conference included the names of: Luigi Crema, Doro Levi, Mario Attilio Levi, Fernando Liuzzi, Arnaldo Momigliano, Lucia Morpurgo, Alda Spinazzola Levi (ASINSR, Congressi conferenze e mostre, b. 220, f. 58).

³³ See the statement required by Neppi Modona and written by Galassi Paluzzi in ASINSR, *Personale cessato* (published in Ghilardi M., 2018, p. 230) and the correspondence among them in Archivio contemporaneo “Alessandro Bonsanti”, Gabinetto G.P. Vieusseux, Firenze (henceforth abbreviated as ACGV), Fondo Aldo Neppi Modona.

³⁴ In Neppi Modona Archive the first letter with Galassi Paluzzi is dated on October 26, 1927. In the letter he was invited to participate at the I National Congress of Roman Studies, in ACGV, Fondo Neppi Modona.

³⁵ I owe this information to Tommaso Dell’Era that I thank.

board for the journal *Studi etruschi* starting in 1952, he became co-editor in chief in 1955 and, in 1978, he was nominated vice president of the Institute for Etruscan and Italic Studies, with Massimo Pallottino as a president (Maetzke G., 1985; Capristo A., 2002, 307-308; Iori L., 2020, p. 237-240; Ghilardi M., 2020, p. 58-59).

In addition to the three official expulsions, as one can easily imagine, the 1938 racial laws also affected some of the Institute of Roman Studies' most distinguished collaborators, who were completely excluded and marginalised from one day to the next. Not a single Jew continued their collaboration with the Institute after 1938, neither officially or under a pseudonym (as was the case for Mario Attilio Levi at Ispi, cf. Bellomo M., Mecella L., 2020). Among such scholars, it is worth mentioning the geographer Roberto Almagià (Caraci Luzzana I., 1988). Born in Florence in 1884, in 1915 he succeeded his *maestro* Giuseppe Della Vedova at the University of Rome. The undiscussed leader of Italian geography for half of a century (Perrone A., 2016), Almagià was editor in chief of *Rivista geografica italiana* during fascism. At the census of 1938, he proudly declared his family's ancient belonging to the Jewish race, as well as their equally longstanding presence in Italy (Capristo A., 2002, p. 48). The geographer first collaborated with the Institute of Roman Studies in 1933 (Almagià R., 1933), taking part some years later in the Augustan celebrations organized by the Institute in both 1937 and 1938. On February 24, 1937, during a series of lectures entitled *La figura e l'opera di Augusto*, Almagià held a talk published in early 1938 (Almagià R., 1938)³⁶.

Even more indicative of little weight the Institute gave to the race problem prior to 1938, as well as Galassi Paluzzi's political opportunism, is the behaviour towards one of the most distinguished Italian classical studies scholars of the twentieth century, Arnaldo Momigliano (just for an introduction on Momigliano, see: Polverini L., 2006b; Di Donato R., 2011; Lizzi Testa R., 2013). A student of Gaetano De Sanctis and professor of Roman history at the University of Turin, Momigliano began collaborating with the Institute at a young age, thanks to a recommendation from bibliographer and Italian Encyclopaedia collaborator Giannetto Avanzi. In 1934, Avanzi asked Galassi Paluzzi to allow Momigliano to participate at the IV National Congress of Roman Studies to be held in October 1935³⁷. As has been recently argued (Ghilardi M., 2020), Momigliano gained Galassi Paluzzi confidence with his paper (Momigliano A., 1938) and was invited by the president to participate at the Institute's series of lectures entitled *Africa romana*, also held in 1935 (Momigliano A., 1935). Two years later, in 1937, Galassi Paluzzi turned to the historian once more, this time asking his opinion on a book comparing Mussolini to Augustus that he received from an elementary school teacher in Belluno³⁸. A few months later, in August 1937, Galassi Paluzzi manifested his esteem for Momigliano by asking him to examine the list of scholars invited to the Augustan Conference scheduled for September 1938, concluding the bimillennial celebrations³⁹. Galassi Paluzzi also invited De Sanctis' former student to the V National Congress of Roman Studies to be held in May 1938 to present a paper on the Romanisation of the Hellenistic Orient⁴⁰. Lastly, in the autumn of 1937, Momigliano participated in an initiative honouring Augustus by presenting a paper that would be published immediately in the Institute's *Quaderni Augustei* series by September 23, 1938, the last day of the celebrations. Deadline for the manuscript: July 1938⁴¹.

³⁶ See *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 5, 8, February 22, 1937, p. 5 e 7.

³⁷ See Avanzi's note for Galassi Paluzzi in ASISNR, Conferenze Congressi Mostre, b. 89, f. 15.

³⁸ Momigliano considered the book (entitled *Augusto Fondatore dell'Impero romano – Il Duce Fondatore dell'Impero Italiano*) not scientific and, consequently, advised to not publish it (see the correspondence with the author in ASISNR, Conferenze Congressi Mostre, b. 210, f. 10)

³⁹ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letters of August 4 and October 3, 1937, in ASISNR, Congressi, conferenze e mostre, b. 223, f. 70.

⁴⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of August 10, 1937, in ASISNR, Congressi conferenze e mostre, b. 129, f. 25.

⁴¹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of October 26, 1937, in ASISNR, CCM, b. 129, f. 25.

On February 8, 1938, Momigliano held a lecture entitled *Gli ordinamenti militari augustei e le loro conseguenze nella storia dell'Oriente ellenico*⁴², and on August 10, a few days past the deadline, he sent his typescript⁴³. Momigliano's paper thus arrived at the Institute after the racist and antisemitic fascist policy was put in place. Despite the aforementioned esteem for the scholar and his increasing involvement in the Institute's cultural life, the typescript was not published⁴⁴, and, upon the historian's request, returned to the author in 1939⁴⁵ (it will be published many years later: Momigliano A., 1992a). Not only Momigliano was a member of the Jewish race, but his interpretation conflicted with the fascist-approved image of Augustus' Rome (Mazza M., 2015; Id., 2017; Aramini D., 2020). Instead of presenting the Roman empire as a sort of expansion of Italy towards other peoples, Momigliano argued a progressive merging and integration of Roman and provincial elements, leading to a gradual substitution of the Italic aristocracy by members of the local bourgeoisie. Curiously, pointing out the issue to Galassi Paluzzi was Neppi Modona⁴⁶. Nevertheless, contrary to a recent interpretation (Ghilardi M., 2018, p. 195-196), I don't believe Momigliano's paper was refused caused his divergence with the regime's vision. First of all, Galassi Paluzzi never opposed the publication of works that conflicted with the nationalist, Catholic and fascist direction that shaped the Institute's initiatives. Take for example Julius Evola's paper presented at the III National Congress of Roman Studies (Evola J., 1934), or Borgongini Duca's aforementioned work, or the series of lectures entitled *Roma onde Cristo è romano*, which painted a militant picture of the Holy See's role, emphasising a timeless leadership of the Catholic Church in opposition to the short-lived and transient laic political institutions and ideologies (on this: Aramini D., 2015, p. 195-197). Secondly, the interpretation of Augustus spread by the Institute was not that of an imperial dictator or a Rome that subjugated other cultures, but a bearer of civilisation who synthesised Latin culture with provincial traditions, as made evident in the V National Congress of Roman Studies (*ibidem*, 2020). Momigliano's views were not perfectly in line with those of the Institute, but nor they were antithetical. Lastly, in 1935, the president of the Institute had already expressed his doubts on Momigliano's analysis regarding the Hellenistic influence over the Roman world. He however merely asked the author to revise some parts of his writings, to avoid misunderstanding or a possible interpretation of "Rome as a Hellenistic state"⁴⁷. On this occasion, following Momigliano's flat out refusal to make changes to his thesis⁴⁸, Galassi Paluzzi did not pose any further resistance and published the piece as it was in *Africa romana*⁴⁹. Yet, despite such regular collaboration and confidence, Momigliano's relationship with the Institute of Roman Studies ended abruptly in the summer of 1938. Such a behaviour can only be explained by the racial laws and the re-emergence of a never disappeared anti-Jewish religious mentality. In ceasing to collaborate with Momigliano, Galassi Paluzzi demonstrated the indifferent opportunism or detachment of the cultural world (as well as of Italian society as a whole) facing the racial laws. Although his invitation to the Augustan Conference still stood, on September 16, 1938, Momigliano wrote to his mentor, De Sanctis: "I am still invited to the Augustus' celebrations: it is evident that I will not attend" (quoted in Polverini L., 2006a, p. 21). These words revealed the first steps of a painful separation caused by fascist radical ideologisation of the nation (on the intertwining between idea of the nation and fascist racism, particularly illuminating is: Gentile E., 1997, p. 172-177. On the relationship between Italian Jews and the nation, see: Toscano M., 2003a, p. 186-187, 247-251; Schwarz G., 2004, p. 101-108).

⁴² See *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 6, 6, February 7, 1938, p. 7.

⁴³ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of August 10, 1938, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 1.

⁴⁴ In a note of September 3, 1938, Galassi Paluzzi argued: "do not publish" (in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 2).

⁴⁵ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of March 7, 1939, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 1.

⁴⁶ See the note for the President, August 20, 1938, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 217, f. 2.

⁴⁷ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of June 7, 1935, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 58, f. 7.

⁴⁸ A. Momigliano to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of June 28, 1935, *ibidem*.

⁴⁹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to A. Momigliano, letter of July 8, 1935, *ibidem*.

5. A Roman and nationalist racism

On January 16, 1939, began the cycle of lectures on *La civiltà di Roma e i problemi della razza* (Rome's civilisation and the race problems). Galassi Paluzzi expected to immediately publish the papers⁵⁰. In the same days, another cycle of lectures was held on Rome and Judaism by Monsignor Giuseppe Ricciotti⁵¹, abbot general at the Order of St. Augustine Lateran Regular Canons and professor of Jewish Studies at the Universities of Rome and Bari. Openly critical of racist antisemitism since 1935 (Nicolotti A., 2017), Ricciotti stressed in the prestigious *Nuova Antologia* that, as he showed in his exegesis studies, tearing down all of Judaism would also destroy a significant part of Christianity (Ricciotti G., 1935, p. 473-474). As previously discussed, Galassi Paluzzi's goal was to reaffirm the primacy of Italian genius, a cultural and civic primacy derived from Rome "cohesive and organisational" actions⁵², that not only remained unchanged over the centuries, but had also shaped all of Western civilisation. This genius was not influenced by foreign invasions and ended up by permeating the cultures with whom Italians came in contact along their way⁵³.

Carlo Cecchelli was the first scholar invited to talk. He held a paper entitled *Roma segnacolo di reazione della razza alle invasioni barbariche*. According to Galassi Paluzzi, the paper aimed at emphasising "how in Rome and in the civilisation it created, the Italian descent, or if you prefer, the Italian race found the chronometric place, as a mathematician would say, to resist and victoriously react to Barbaric invasions, reaffirming the originality of the race"⁵⁴. Upon publication, the title of the paper was significantly modified, as were all others, substituting the word race with descent, less connected to a biological understanding and, with an evident ideological meaning, more open to a cultural interpretation. The archaeologist focused his thesis on the eternal primacy of Rome. Recognised by the Church as a divine creation, Rome was rooted in a cultural idea of descent that – Cecchelli affirmed – added "all the prestige of a secular tradition" to the biological concept of race. Christianity – he continued – conferred Italians a timeless spiritual superiority (Cecchelli C., 1939b, p. 8). Despite the Barbaric invasions and the destruction of its political institutions, the spirit of the Roman race "maintained its primacy among the peoples, managing in several cases to amalgamate them" and to absorb Barbaric elements within its "civilisation" thanks to the predominant cultural role played by St. Peter's successors (*ibidem*, p. 8 and 12-22). Cecchelli focused on cultural elements and showed that, being well defended by popes such as Leo the Great and Gregory the Great, and thanks to the evangelising role of the Church, Rome was able to imbue other populations with its culture. In the clash between the Barbarians and the Byzantines, Cecchelli believed that all of the Middle Ages testified the continuation and the expansion of the idea of Rome, which effectively became an eternal spirit and "pivot around which all of Western civilisation revolves" (*ibidem*, p. 31-32). The thirteenth century and the birth of the age of Municipalities showed the reaffirmation of descent unity and strength and the coming of its rebirth under the sign of eternal Rome, more than just the capital of Latium – as Dante Alighieri underlined in his Latin epistles – but a common symbol of civilisation for all Italians (*ibidem*, p. 38).

Giacomo Devoto was the second scholar to lecture at the cycle on the race (Prosdocimi A.L., 1991; Mastrelli C.A., Parenti A., 1999). Distinguished linguistic, full professor of glottology at the

⁵⁰ The lectures held were 7 but only 5 were published in 1939 and 1940.

⁵¹ Unfortunately, there is no trace of this cycle of lectures in the Institute Archive. They were held on January 25, and February 3 and 6, 1939. A few references are in some notes sent to the newspapers (in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 4) and in the weekly scheduled program published in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, issues number: 7, 4, January 23, 1939, p. 7; 7, 5, January 30, 1939, p. 7; 7, 6, February 6, 1939, p. 7.

⁵² C. Galassi Paluzzi to P. Ducati, letter of November 11, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3.

⁵³ See the program scheduled and written by Galassi Paluzzi in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 1.

⁵⁴ C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Cecchelli, letter of October 13, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3.

University of Florence, he began collaborating with the Institute of Roman Studies in 1934 by suggesting to Galassi Paluzzi a volume on the history of Latin language for the Institute's upcoming *Storia di Roma* series (Ghilardi M., 2017, p. 131-141). On October 13, 1938, Devoto immediately accepted an invitation to present a paper on *La lingua di Roma espressione del genio della razza*, requesting however that the title be changed to *La lingua di Roma espressione della stirpe romano-italica*⁵⁵. The conference was held as planned on January 25, 1939,⁵⁶ but the paper was never published. The author didn't send the definitive typescript, submitting only a summary. The quarrels, tensions and misunderstandings with the Institute regarding the book on Latin language (Ghilardi M., 2017, p. 131-144) and Devoto's impression that the conference on race focused on themes and conclusions that had been published in the meantime on the *Storia di Roma* (Devoto G., 1939), brought him to abandon the project⁵⁷. During his speech, Devoto began with the assumption that the language of a people is not an immutable element, but the result of a slow historic process, a "labour" of "struggles, of efforts, successes and defeats". It was the "consequence of cultural facts". By focusing on the concepts of history and culture, Devoto painted a picture of a slow process that led Latin to become the language of the Italian people. Making their way to the peninsula in very distant periods, Latin and Italic dialects, both Indo-European in origin, were radically different from one another, Devoto argued. The former, instead of blending with the latter, fiercely resisted and overlapped the local languages as Rome expanded. As citizenship was granted, the dialects lost their "*raison d'être*" and gradually disappeared, without the use of violent suppression. "No Italic word" – Devoto explained – "no Italic morphological element" entered into "the Latin sphere". First the empire, and later the Church, definitively established the morphological system that became the root of Italian linguistic tradition, as well as expanding it and preventing foreign elements from being incorporated, as had been successfully and previously avoided with the Italic dialects⁵⁸.

On February 27, 1939, it was architect and urban planner Gustavo Giovannoni's turn to present a paper (Zucconi G., 2001)⁵⁹. He was invited by Galassi Paluzzi on October 13, 1938, to illustrate how architecture became one of the greatest symbols of the "peculiar and artistic genius of Roman civilisation and of Italy" in a paper entitled *L'architettura come volontà costruttiva del genio romano e italico*⁶⁰. Avoiding the use of the word *race* once again, the title was perfectly in line with the objective of the conference series: to highlight the consistent originality of Italian civilisation, a national civilisation with a universal calling that shaped the entire Western world, and its unfaltering continuity over the millennia. Giovannoni began by stressing that architecture was the most evident testimony of Italian genius continuity, as it was able to meld with or incorporate any style and give birth to new and original artistic forms each time, not only to express the nation's conscience but to mark its place in the world, as proof of its universal essence. He then criticised the positions that attempted to diminish Italic culture, deeming it a mere copy of the Greeks and then the Byzantines, going so far as to consider the Renaissance as a cultural current streaming from beyond the Alps. In his view, it was architecture that revealed "the characteristics of an exemplary continuity", "the greatest permanent element that is race". Architecture had "incorporated foreign influences", that "momentarily" had caused its "numbing or enslavement", yet "it came back more Italian than ever" every time (Giovannoni G., 1939, p. 4). Thus, from Ancient Rome to the Romanesque-Gothic period, from the Renaissance to the religious art of the Counterreformation and Neoclassicism, this continuous assimilation process created a style that became universal – Giovannoni argued –,

⁵⁵ See the letters between Galassi Paluzzi and Devoto of October 13, 1938, in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b.94, f. 39.

⁵⁶ See the news in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 4, January 23, 1939, p. 7.

⁵⁷ G. Devoto to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of June 19, 1939, in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39 and G. Devoto to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of November 13, 1939, in ASISNR, Pubblicazioni, b. 390, f. 459.

⁵⁸ A summary of Devoto's lecture is in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 93, f. 39, sf. 3.

⁵⁹ The news of the lecture is in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 9, February 27, 1939, p. 7.

⁶⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to G. Giovannoni, letter of October 13, 1938, in ASISNR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3. Giovannoni accepted on November 12, 1938 (*ibidem*).

evidence of Italians' constant imperial mission (*ibidem*, p. 7, 10, 15-17). During the twentieth century – the urban planner concluded –, faced with the popularity of Art Nouveau, a “vulgar”, international and “imported” movement, “racial consciousness” was once again reawakened through fascism, which reaffirmed “the eternal soul of our descent”, “to give the world, alongside mechanical civilisation, a civilisation of the spirit” (*ibidem*, p. 20-21).

A few days later, Bodrero spoke on the Renaissance, a theme originally assigned to Manacorda⁶¹. Bodrero immediately accepted the invitation, but not before changing the title of the paper, removing the word *race* and replacing it with the decidedly more neutral *people*. Bodrero presented his paper on March 1, 1939⁶². Taking up a more political tone than the other speakers (possibly explaining why the paper was never published), he lashed out against the tendency to deny the Italian origin of the Renaissance and its originality, a sign – he explained – of a global offensive against everything that was Italian, Roman, Latin or Catholic (Bodrero E., 1939, p. 265-266). Passing through the analysis of Renaissance, Bodrero concluded by indirectly criticising biological racist theories, pointing to the “German offensive” in favouring the Greek world to Rome and to theses supporting the northern origins of all European peoples, Mediterraneans included, as the root of the attack directed at the centrality of the Italian nation (*ibidem*, p. 269). These anti-Roman theses, in his opinion, were not capable of taking into consideration how and to what extent the Renaissance spurred the re-emergence of the universality that, already present during the Roman empire, was taken up by the Church and directed at a constant research of the “spiritual unity of mankind” (*ibidem*, p. 271). Fifteenth century Italy had therefore recreated “the ideal-type of the European man” in a world that had been parcelled off into several states, by not only demonstrating once and for all the “exemplary virtue of the Italian people” but its propensity to empire and universality, as well as its ability to successfully diffuse its model of civilisation around the world (*ibidem*, p. 272-273). It was their “historic destiny” – Bodrero concluded –, felt throughout the centuries as a mission that fascism had now brought to the forefront (*ibidem*, p. 275).

The last three scholars truly got to the root of the argument, fully embodying the intended spirit and ideological direction of the initiatives on race. On March 27 and 29, 1939, archaeologist Pericle Ducati, former local leader of the nationalist party *Associazione nazionalista italiana* and full professor at the University of Bologna, where he was also director of the Civic Museum and president of the Institute of Roman Studies local section (Parise N., 1992), presented two papers. The first, rejected by Rellini, on the origins of the Italic descent in the pre-Roman age, and the second, rejected by Paribeni, Cardinali and Giglioli, on *Il concetto di stirpe e civiltà di Roma antica*⁶³. Closely linked, as pointed out by Galassi Paluzzi himself, the two papers had to prove the key and progressive role of “the cohesive and organisational imperial strength of Rome” in giving rise to “that world which could also be called Italian descent”⁶⁴. By using the terms *descent* and *civilisation* on one side and the image of Italic descent as a world where many come together as one (showing once again Rutilius Namatianus' influence), the words once more pointed towards Galassi Paluzzi's emphasis on a spiritualistic racism based on history, traditions, culture, institutions and thought. Ducati accepted the advice. Following Rellini's studies, he presented Italy as the fruit of continuous waves of invasions from different descents. The current Italian descent could trace its origins to the Mediterranean race that arrived from northern Africa and sparked cultural transformation from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic Age. Waves of Slavs, Phoenicians, Greeks and Etruscans followed, all from the Mediterranean, except the Phoenicians who were incapable of fusion due to their Semitic origins and remained “a separate race”. Last to arrive on the peninsula were Indo-European populations from the

⁶¹ C. Galassi Paluzzi to E. Bodrero, letter of November 7, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3.

⁶² See: *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 9, February 27, 1939, p. 7.

⁶³ The two lectures news is in *Rassegna d'informazioni dell'Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 11, March 26, 1939, p. 7.

⁶⁴ C. Galassi Paluzzi to P. Ducati, letter of November 11, 1938, in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3. Ducati accepted and sent his reply on December 3, 1939, *ibidem*.

north who gave rise to the Latin descent (Ducati P., 1940, p. 3-14). This mixture – Ducati stressed – soon began to amalgamate and take root on the peninsula until it became “a single race with homogeneous characteristics that go beyond the material and physical to the spiritual level, namely the most important attribute in history”. Italy thus was shaped “by the fusion of the two great lines of descendants, the Mediterranean and the Indo-Europeans” (*ibidem*, p. 14-15). If, with his first talk, Ducati left little opportunity for misunderstanding or argument and revealed clear elements of antisemitic racism in his judgement of the Phoenicians, he made his positions even clearer in the second paper. Not only Italy, but Rome itself was the fruit of “two distinct descents” the Indo-European Latins and the Mediterranean Sabines. Rome and Italy progressively became a single thing “not as much for physical reasons but, above, all, for the spiritual element” (*ibidem*, p. 17-19). According to Ducati, at the heart of the Italian nation and the development of a Roman and Italian race was the Roman concept of “citizenship” (*ibidem*, p. 20). It determined the “immense superiority of Rome” that “gave rise to a superior form of humanity” and made *romanità* a wealth in which “all barbaric people” could take part. Its strength lay not in the race, but in the concept of the citizen, with both rights and duties (*ibidem*, p. 20-21). As the empire gradually expanded, the concept of Roman civilisation, in which “spiritual qualities predominate over physical characteristics when in contact with other people”, was gradually refined. The physical does not matter but were spiritual factors that shaped the “Roman descent” and the “Italian descent” (*ibidem*, p. 22). Refusing Hellenic cosmopolitanism that obliterates the nation, Rome’s universality spread around the world “principles of civil life” according to which “even the freed slave [...] became a Roman citizen and a relative of his previous master” (*ibidem*, p. 26). These elements spread further over the centuries thanks to Christian universalism (*ibidem*, p. 27). Ducati concluded by attacking the editorial line of *La difesa della razza* that viewed the extension of citizenship implemented by the edict of Caracalla in 212 A.D. as the beginning of the barbarisation of the Italic race (Foro P., 2003). He also criticised pro-Nazi scholars such as Giulio Cogni (Gillette A., 2002, p. 59-64; Dell’Era T., 2010; Id., 2015; Id., 2016b; Id., 2016c; Id., 2017; Id., 2018a). According to Ducati, Italian nation was the product of a fusion of different ethnicities not influenced in any way by the subsequent invasions of the Goths and Lombards from the north or the Arabs from the south. Furthermore, despite the existence of a variety of languages and dialects (perhaps another attack on the racist German tradition that linked the concepts of language, people, soil and blood. See: Mosse G.L., 1964; Id., 1978) Rome boasted a “singular historic, civil, linguistic and religious patrimony” dating back much more than two thousand years (Ducati P., 1940, p. 28).

The last conference in the cycle on race was held on April 26, 1939⁶⁵, delving deeper into the concepts expressed by Ducati with Salvatore Riccobono⁶⁶ giving a talk on the Roman law entitled *Il diritto romano come misura del genio della razza*⁶⁷. The legal scholar’s interpretation on the centrality of Roman law in shaping modern law – without any Oriental or Barbaric influence – had been presented in a number of previous Institute initiatives. A full professor of Roman law at the University of Rome, member of the Lyncean Academy and the Royal Academy of Italy (Varvaro M., 2016), Riccobono retraced the evolution of Roman law (here too the word *race* disappeared from the paper’s title, substituted by *genius*) and exalted its ability to adapt to the passage of time and to changing political and social contexts. Roman law was subjected to constant, intelligent adaptation that was “in contact with life”, keeping “faith in tradition” as well as in Ancient customs intact (Riccobono S., 1941, p. 3, 13, 31). This was widely demonstrated, according to the scholar, by Augustus, a perfect

⁶⁵ The definitive program sent to the newspapers (“Conferenze sulla romanità e la razza all’Istituto di Studi Romani”, *Il Tevere*, December 24, 1938), mentioned another closing lecture held by the President Galassi Paluzzi on *Il fascismo come affermazione romana della razza*. This speech, however, was not held. Both in the Institute Archive and in the private Galassi Paluzzi’s papers there are no traces related to why it was not held and on the issues he would have been dealt with.

⁶⁶ Invited by Galassi Paluzzi on October 13, 1938, Riccobono replied accepting the proposal on the same day (see the correspondence among them in ASINSR, Corsi Superiori di Studi Romani, b. 94, f. 39, sf. 3).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Rassegna d’informazioni dell’Istituto di Studi Romani*, 7, 15, April 24, 1939, p. 7.

ideal-type of the descent, who – through the Principate – adapted the experiences of the past to the conditions of the vast empire (*ibidem*, p. 34-36). Riccobono aimed at showing that the secret of Roman and Italian creativity and culture lay precisely in its respect for its cultural and intellectual traditions passed down by history. This attempt, to be read closely with his speech at the V National Congress of Roman Studies, was part of a larger effort led by the president of the National Institute of Fascist Culture Pietro De Francisci and by Carlo Costamagna to find a way to overcome the deep dichotomy between race and *romanità* that had always pervaded Romanist studies. In 1937, this dichotomy pushed legal scholar Alfredo De Marsico to declare the Nazi concept of race as the antithesis of the Roman and fascist concept of descent. Speaking to the Chamber of Deputies, in fact, De Marsico explained that the German legal system was based on the confluence between race, nation and people. Rome, on the contrary, rejected this view as it was a “melting pot [...] of all races that, melded together by the flame and the ideals of law, became a single descent”⁶⁸. Even in March 1939, immediately following the II Conference of the Italian-German Juridical Collaboration Committee in Vienna, and just a month before Riccobono’s speech, Costamagna insisted on the voluntary features in both Roman and Italian legal traditions, implying that the concept of descent derived not only from spiritual but above all from political factors, and thus more from the strength of the empire, creator of public and state law (Costamagna C., 1939. On the Conference and the relationship between legal scholars and racism see: Pavan I., 2006; Ead., 2008; De Napoli O., 2009, p. 103-133 and 213-231; Falconieri S., 2014).

The dichotomy between race and *romanità* that characterised Romanist studies in Italy had always been shared, as previously mentioned, by the Institute of Roman Studies. Nevertheless, the racial laws required the Institute to change its interpretation, just as it was gaining momentum during the Augustan celebrations held in 1937-1938. Galassi Paluzzi attempted to frame the Italian race concept with its cultural traditions. Italy was the victim of countless invasions, culturally dominated by Ancient Rome, universal to the point of extending citizenship to all of its citizens and to nominate emperors from every part of the empire, even Africa. With the collapse of its imperial political institutions, Rome lay its fate in the hands of a new Rome, the Christian Rome, even more universal than before, having spread the message of Christ all across the world⁶⁹. According to the scholars close to the Institute, the only way to make Italian racism credible was to dilute it in an idea of a nation and civilisation, a universal civilisation that, thanks to the two Romes, shaped Europe and the West, now increasingly crisis-ridden precisely because it had abandoned the Roman model of civilisation, having been lured away by the sirens of anti-Roman streams that joined forces since the sixteenth century in an all-out attack on *romanità*. Europe could only be saved, in their minds, by rediscovering Roman civilisation led by the Italian descent, considered the preserver of a whole history that – thanks to the fascist regime – came back to the forefront, as Galassi Paluzzi stated to Hungarian historian Joseph Balogh years earlier⁷⁰.

The cycle on race was thereby perfectly in line with the interpretation taking shape at the General Directorate for Demography and Race led by Giacomo Acerbo and in the journal *Razza e civiltà*, both deeply influenced by Pende and Sabato Visco’s theories (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 274-286; Gillette A., 2002, p. 104-129). Among the different versions of racism vying for supremacy in fascist Italy, this was the furthest from the Nazism. National-Roman racism was indeed founded on more ambiguous concepts, such as descent and civilisation, which made it more appealing for both the intellectual world and part of the Catholic circles, as Pende himself confided to Mussolini (Israel G.,

⁶⁸ Chamber of Deputies, Proceedings of the Italian Parliament, XXIX legislature, Debates, meeting of March 19, 1937, Tipografia della Camera dei deputati, Roma, 1937, p. 3474.

⁶⁹ Father Pietro Tacchi Venturi argued these positions on a lecture held in 1937 at the Institute (P. Tacchi Venturi, “Roma propagatrice del Cristianesimo”, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 38, f. 37 and in *L’Osservatore Romano*, March 15-16, 1937). During the cycle on race was taking place, cardinal Domenico Jorio stressed similar conclusions in “La romanità dei concili ecumenici”, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 39, f. 44.

⁷⁰ C. Galassi Paluzzi to J. Balogh, letter of October 4, 1933, in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 22, f. 98

Nastasi P., 1998, p. 221) and as emerged in an article of Father Antonio Messineo on the Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica* (Messineo A., 1939. On Catholics and antisemitic racism: Miccoli G., 1988; Moro R., 1988b, 1999; Sale G., 2009, p. 83-176; De Cesaris V., 2010; Fattorini E., 2010; Rigano G., 2012; Ceci L., 2013, p. 212-261; Dell’Era T., 2018b; Id., 2018c; Valbousquet N., 2019). This idea of racism was close to the nationalist tradition and anchored its meaning on history, on the slow taking shape of a civilisation and on the notion of Italian nation, namely a nation formed well before the Middle Ages (as had been showed by another appreciated scholar like Arrigo Solmi, 1933).

In this interpretation, the idea of race not only became synonymous with nation, as noted by Father Messineo in reviewing (and accepting) Acerbo’s positions but, distancing from what German culture had always underlined (namely that the Italian race was formed as a result of Barbarian invasions) and under the influence of Massimo Pallottino’s researches on the Etruscans, at the same time the existence of an Italian race (or nation) was traced back to the pre-Roman era and considered unchanging over the centuries under the constant influence of Roman civilisation. According to this view, fascism once again imposed the traditional idea of Italian race and nation to the centre of national life. Therefore, antisemitism became rather a problem of race but, as in nationalist tradition (De Felice R., 1961, p. 43-57, 61-64; Michaelis M., 1962) and in Paolo Orano’s book *Gli ebrei in Italia* published in 1937 (De Felice R., 1961, p. 212-213; Sarfatti M., 2000, p. 136-141; Germinario F., 2009, p. 36-38), it became a clear political choice against a people who represented a antithetical model of civilisation (Matard-Bonucci A.M., 2008, p. 170-173, 233-237; Israel G., 2010, p. 233-253; De Francesco A., 2013, p. 192-211. On modern antisemitism: Poliakov L., 1978; Mosse G.L., 1978, p. 124-182; Germinario F., 2010). Significant was the reference to the emperor Tiberius’ longstanding tolerance of the Jews in an article published on the Institute’s journal by the classical studies scholar Emanuele Ciaceri (Ciaceri E., 1940, p. 81).

At any rate, just as racism proved not to be an insurmountable obstacle for the Institute of Roman Studies, Italy’s alliance with Nazi Germany was also widely accepted in the end. In a speech written by Galassi Paluzzi on the occasion of the Berlin International Conference of Archaeology in August 1939, the president of the Institute praised the work of both the Duce and the Führer as well as the constructive contribution of their two peoples, considered architects of modern Europe and Western civilization, who would lead “European and Western civilization to salvation and strengthening” with their alliance⁷¹. He was not worried about “too great of an affirmation of Germany” or the fears of appearing to be a cumbersome ally. In his view, this was “folly” or “madness”, when compared to the “certain dangers” posed by Anglo-French overweening power⁷². This point of view was certainly not free from friction or criticism, which were particularly evident when priests or representatives of the Vatican Curia participated in the Institute’s initiatives (Aramini D., 2015, p. 203-205). A few months prior to Father Messineo’s criticism of the myth of the nation in *La Civiltà Cattolica* (Moro R., 2020, p. 511-517), in January 1939 at the Institute of Roman Studies Jesuit Father Mario Barbera explicitly condemned radical nationalism (on these aspects: Moro R., 2003b, p. 604-611, 614; J. Nelis, 2011, p. 267-269), focusing on the fact that Christian Rome’s universal imperialism was not a “destructive uniformity of various national characters and cultures, but a brotherhood of souls in a higher common doctrine” that preserves “superior unity in diversity”⁷³. In the same year, additional distinguished figures from the Church, such as Monsignor Alfredo Ottaviani, reiterated the ecclesiastical magisterium of living in a common brotherhood. On the same occasion, the monsignor took up threatening tones when reaffirming the supreme authority of the pontiff, who, over the centuries, made even the most powerful monarchs quiver (Ottaviani A., 1939. See also: Fumasoni Biondi P., 1940; Salotti C., 1940).

⁷¹ The paper is in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 15, f. 54.

⁷² C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Capomazza, letter of May 21, 1940, in Private Archive of Carlo Galassi Paluzzi (henceforth abbreviated as ACGP), Corrispondenza, f. Camilla Capomazza.

⁷³ Mario Barbera, “Il P. Roberto De Nobili araldo di Roma nell’India”, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, Pubblicazioni, b. 309, f. 4.

6. What type of new order?

While the alliance with Nazi Germany was not an insurmountable obstacle for Galassi Paluzzi, the outbreak of the war in his opinion was merely another piece of a bigger plan “that transcends us”. The Institute thus needed to carry on being a “militia” marching “in the battlefield that has been assigned to us so that the ancient and eternal truths of the Rome of the Caesars, of Christian Rome, and of Savoyard and Fascist Rome will triumph in the new world order” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1941a). To achieve these goals, he decided to set up a series of propaganda initiatives, such as the *Mare Nostrum*⁷⁴ publication series or the new cycle of lectures entitled *Roma e il Mediterraneo* (Pellati F., 1942; Mustilli D., 1942; Romanelli P., 1943)⁷⁵. These initiatives contained a clear reference to the past in presenting the then-current war as a sort of fourth Punic War in which England played the role of a modern Carthage⁷⁶. The recurrence of antisemitic themes, prejudices and stereotypes was also evident, though less blatantly. In an unpublished work on the historical origins of Syria and Palestine, written by archaeologist Ernesto Vergara Caffarelli (then-*assistente ordinario* of archaeology and art history at Sapienza University in Rome⁷⁷), the author – in analysing the historical events of the region – seized the opportunity to underscore “the unshakeable individualistic spirit of the population and therefore the obstinate particularism of the region” that in pre-Roman times had prevented the creation of a unitary state entity and made it difficult for Rome to pacify the area due to the “fanatical hatred of the Jews towards all forms of Roman or Western civilisation in general”. The author concluded that it was only thanks to Rome’s use of force that it was able to put an end to the region’s secular anarchy and lead it to the “extraordinary prosperity” that continued until the Arab conquest⁷⁸.

Alongside the speeches given primarily by prelates, that increasingly underscored the active and combative role of the Church (unburying the myth of the crusades: Jorio, D., 1941) and condemned forms of exaggerated nationalism while reaffirming the universal nature of Catholicism (Cordovani M., 1942), the Institute once again reflected on the roots of Italian descent. The first volume of the cycle of lectures *L’Italia dalla preistoria alla romanizzazione* was published in 1941. Unlike two years earlier, this time Galassi Paluzzi managed to involve Ugo Rellini, who began his paper on Latium by underscoring that he’d had to fight a tenacious struggle over the years “against certain Italians who are still indoctrinated from beyond the Alps” (Rellini U.A., 1941, p. 33). He reiterated that he did not agree with the theories on the Aryan race or the idea of a sudden mass invasion of the Aryans from the north. In his opinion, just small groups had, over several centuries, descended to the south and interacted and blended with the local populations. Following a slow amalgamation of local and Indo-European populations – Rellini argued –, the “different peoples of Europe” had come to exist in a way they were all closely related to each other (*ibidem*, p. 27-28). Italy and Latium were no exception. Rellini – citing the speech that Giacomo Acerbo gave on January 27, 1940, at the Institute of Fascist Culture in Florence whereby the national-racist position had become concrete (Acerbo G., 1940) – emphasised that the Roman descent was based on the combination of three

⁷⁴ The books were published by the Institute on Roman Studies. They were entitled: [Eugenio Giovannetti], *Quel che la Francia deve e non ha dato a Roma e all’Italia*; [Pietro Romanelli], *Africa romana e Tunisia italiana*; [Aristide Calderini], *Roma e l’Egitto, l’Italia e l’Egitto moderno*; [Roberto Paribeni], *Roma ed Ellade, Italia e Grecia*.

⁷⁵ According to the supposed program, the other lectures were: G.Q. Giglioli, *Orme di Roma in Corsica* and F. Chabod, *La funzione e l’idea di Roma nel mondo mediterraneo durante il Medio Evo* (Chabod declined the proposal: see the letter he sent to Galassi Paluzzi on November 30, 1941, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 236, f. 1, sf. 2).

⁷⁶ See the typescript *I moderni cartaginesi*, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 68, f. 9.

⁷⁷ In the post-war period Vergara Caffarelli was director at the Antiquities Office of South Etruria and, from 1951 to 1961 (the year of his death), director of Antiquities Office in Tripolitania. Some brief biographical notes on him are in Munzi M., 2004, p. 21-31.

⁷⁸ The sources at the Institute Archive do not explain why the book was not published. In the folder there is just the signed typescript and a business card: E. Vergara Caffarelli, *La Siria e la Palestina dagli albori della storia all’invasione araba*, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 304, f. 4.

elements: Sabine-Mediterranean, Villanovan-Terramare-Indo-European, and Etruscan-Oriental. It was thanks to this union that the foundations of Rome's interaction with the other Italic peoples had been laid and that took shape a bilateral process of unification of different cultures (Rellini U.A., 1941, p. 32).

Ducati's position on Emilia was equally significant. Drawing upon research by Edoardo Brizio and Giuseppe Sergi, he revised Pigorini's theory on the strictly Terramare-Indo-European origins of the inhabitants of Emilia and the Latins (Ducati P., 1942, p. 4-5, 14-16). In alluding clichés concerning the industriousness and organizational skills of the peoples of the north alongside their lack of a sense of aesthetics and art, Ducati asserted that an important driver for the development of the Emilian Terramare civilisation had been its encounter with populations further south. For him, the populations from south and their artefacts, customs and rituals had significantly contributed to emancipating the Terramare inhabitants from the more primitive and poorer aspects of their culture (*ibidem*, p. 16-27). The archaeologist thus ended up completely toppling Aryan theories, deeming Mediterranean civilisation greater than Indo-European one, just like Sergi did. Emilia, and therefore Italy, were the expression of a deep blend of various descents that had been definitively amalgamated by Roman civilisation.

“Ancient Mediterranean and Indo-European descents – Ducati stated at the end of his work – were permeated with the *romanità*; a *romanità* that was the embodiment of a people, where precisely those Mediterranean and Indo-European elements had been blended together in a crucible on the sacred hills of Rome. Bologna, Rome's beloved, not only was pre-eminent in those times that had paved the way for the laborious ascent of *romanità*, but also grasped onto the torch of *romanità* upon its rebirth and made it shine vividly” (Ducati, 1942, p 28).

All other lectures drew upon these positions, applying them to other Italian regions. Perhaps not by chance, the papers regarding not only Latium but also the northern regions of the peninsula were immediately published. These were the regions where – according to German-oriented thinking and theories influenced by Pigorini's research – the greatest numbers of people had descended from the north. Istrian archaeologist Piero Sticotti – providing additional grounds not only for positions that exalted the pre-eminence of Italic descent in Italy compared to the Aryan descent but also historically legitimising the fascist aspirations regarding Dalmatia – aimed at demonstrating that the populations of Carnia had Illyrian and not Celtic origins. Namely, that they had come from early Romanised south-eastern areas and then remained deeply Roman until recent times (Sticotti P., 1942, especially p. 10). For Ernesto Curotto – linguist and professor at the University of Genoa – despite their Aryan origin Ligurians' “primitive and rough customs” became civilised thanks to the “beneficial influence of *romanità*” and to “mixing with Latin blood”, which allowed them to gradually merge with Rome (Curotto E., 1942, especially p. 10 and 18). Archaeologist Aristide Calderini, full professor of Ancient Greek and Roman antiquities at Cattolica University in Milan, drew upon scholars who had come before him and underscored the ethnic blend that characterised the area of Lombardy that was all but uniform in the Aryan sense (Calderini's essay was published at the end of the war: Calderini A., 1945, p. 18-27).

The lectures and the volumes demonstrated how – in addition to attempting to reconcile *romanità* and Germanicness in the name of their complementary nature in the struggle against atheistic modernity⁷⁹ in order to create a new Europe in which the two regimes could fulfil a specific, distinct and complementary function⁸⁰ – the Institute of Roman Studies did not intend to give up on insisting on a fusion between Latins and Germans based on the pre-eminence and profound contiguity of

⁷⁹ These words were used by Romeo Mezzanotte in a lecture where he analysed the figure of German Saint Clemente Maria Hofbauer, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, Pubblicazioni, b. 309, f. 9.

⁸⁰ As stated by Mario Appellius in “Roma nella Nuova Europa”, in ASINSR, Affari Generali, Pubblicazioni, b. 412, f. 1.

Ancient and Christian Rome. This aspect, in some cases, was vulnerable to different interpretations as well as to criticisms of the Nazi ally, as occurred during the lectures on *Romanità e Germanesimo* not by chance held by Guido Manacorda⁸¹. Drawing upon his studies that had been published a few years earlier, the scholar openly spoke of the antithesis between the Roman-Christian and Germanic civilisations. Germanic civilisation was, in fact, imbued with “pantheism” and “primitivistic-irrational connections” in which the exaltation of the race revealed “a sort of fear, that inadequacy of those who feel that they get lost in expansion because they lack a universal vocation and because they feel that, by detaching themselves from their blood and soil, they lose the landmarks”. These words – which were quoted in the journal *La vita italiana*, edited by Giovanni Preziosi, who on several occasions criticised national-Roman racism (Preziosi G., 1940a; Id., 1940b; Id., 1941) – prompted Julius Evola (under the pseudonym Arthos) to step in and harshly criticise Manacorda’s words. In Evola’s opinion, Manacorda’s ultimate goal was to reduce *romanità* to a mere synonym of Catholicism while completely neglecting to underline the Nordic-Aryan roots of Rome that were hostile to the religion of Christ and his Semitic apostle Paul (Arthos, 1941). Evola’s essay, and to a greater extent the growing clout with Mussolini and within fascism of his ideas on race as an ancestral myth to carry out a new revolution (for more on Evola’s ideas, see Raspanti M., 1994, p. 81-86; Gillette A., 2002, p. 154-175; Cassata F., 2003; Germinario F., 2009, p. 99-110; Staudenmaier P., 2020), triggered a rapid-fire debate in *Roma*. In what has been called the “small war between racists” (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 210-230; Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 253-262; Gillette A., 2002, p. 130-153), Galassi Paluzzi aimed at opposing Interlandi’s biologicistic-based position (Raspanti M., 1994, p. 74-78; Cassata F., 2008) and most of all Evola’s esoteric, pagan and anti-Catholic spiritualism (Evola J., 1939; Id., 1941; Id., 1942; Arthos, 1942). After the biological parenthesis of the *Manifesto* in 1938, what gave a push to the initiatives organised by Galassi Paluzzi was the awareness that, since the end of 1938, within the fascist regime, Acerbo’s views and national-Roman racism had seemed to gain the upper hand, as seen by the publication of Acerbo’s essay with an introduction by Pavolini, Minister of Popular Culture. This view was given further clout by the decision to set up a commission at the General Directorate for Demography and Race with the task of drafting a new official manifesto on Italian racism, which was completed in April 1942 (Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 225-230; De Francesco A., 2013, p. 201; the manifesto is published in De Felice R., 1961, p. 600-601). However, as the war raged on, Evola’s view gained clout among young generation, among the most intransigent fascists, and with Mussolini himself (Raspanti M., 1994, p. 83-84; Israel G., 2010, p. 255-256). This, along with the increasing consciousness in conservative and Catholic circles of the nature of fascism as a political religion alternative to traditional religion (Gentile E., 2010, p. 382-432; Moro R., 2020, p. 386-458 et seq.), pushed the president to strengthen the Institute’s systematic ideological direction. On racism, took shape a convergence between Acerbo’s view – who in his book explicitly referenced the verses of poet Rutilius Namatianus (Acerbo G., 1940, p. 27-28) –, Pende and the Jesuits of *La Civiltà Cattolica*, who were profoundly against biological determinism and Evola’s paganism (Barbera M., 1943; Moro R., 2020, p. 517-520. Moro R., 2003a, p. 303-314 is fundamental; see also Ipsen C., 1996; Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 221; Taradel R., Raggi B., 2000, p. 98-123; Ipsen C., 2003; Valbousquet N., 2018).

What the president of the Institute and his collaborators increasingly attempted to do – unrealistically but tellingly – was to create ideological pressure to bring the regime and the *duce* back on the path of the restorative nationalist and Catholic revolution (Aramini D., 2016, p. 55-58). Galassi Paluzzi lashed out against Evola’s and others’ “neo-pagan” attempts to distance Ancient Rome from the Christian Church because they considered Christianity a Semitic religion and, therefore, a driver of the decline of the Roman Empire. Galassi Paluzzi believed that attempts to “debase Catholicism” in the meantime “debased *romanità* and Italianness” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1941b) and that it was

⁸¹ Just a few references are in Carlo Galassi Paluzzi, “L’attività dell’Istituto di Studi Romani durante l’anno accademico 1940-41”, in ASINSR, Verbali Giunta Direttiva, vol. VI, meeting of June 18, 1942.

necessary to set racism once and for all “on truly scientific and historical grounds” (*ibidem*, 1941c). “Evoking prehistoric or protohistoric myths” and “hoping in the return of rites and beliefs of primitive tribes”, in his opinion, ultimately disseminated “a semi-philosophical, and essentially anti-historical fantasy” that risked losing sight of “the true political and social aims of racism” (*ibidem*, 1942a). Historically thinking – he continued –, after two thousand years of Christianity, it was impossible to back the survival of paganism and even less so to support the opposition between the Rome of the Caesars and Christian Rome or between Christianity and the empire (*ibidem*, 1942b). He believed it equally mistaken to claim that the Nordic peoples were superior to Mediterraneans. Galassi Paluzzi, with a touch of irony, posed the question as to why the Nordic peoples, “who are allegedly the prototype of civilisation”, had remained silent and watched “while the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans created still-unsurpassed forms of civilisation”. Against all “whims” and “fantasies”, he pointed out that history alone is capable of deciding which peoples are superior or inferior. And, historically, it was evident that “the southern and Mediterranean peoples had created the highest forms of civilisation; and we must equally believe over history that, while these southern and Mediterranean peoples created the great things they created, the Nordic peoples, on the other hand, were mere savages” (Galassi Paluzzi C., 1942c). In short, the Nazis ended up being considered as the new barbarians who – while necessary because they were oriented towards destroying the modern decaying and corrupt civilisation – would have been later civilised another time by the Christians (Moro R., 2020, p. 496).

According to this view, Christianity continued to play a key role in the Institute’s ideological path. It was described as the new sun that rises from the sunset of Ancient world and the only force capable of overcoming and defeating the barbarians’ goals, as stated in Ottorino Bertolini (Bertolini O., 1941, p. 223-224, 274-284, 700-701) and Roberto Paribeni’s books on *Storia di Roma* series (Paribeni R., 1941, p. 3-4, 177-183, 261-262, 293-306, 327-352). Father Mariano Cordovani, often harshly critical of fascism, even went so far as to reiterate that Rome had not Italianised the Church at all. Instead, the Master of Sacred Palace and theologian at the Vatican Secretariat of State, at a conference held on January 30, 1942 at the Institute, underscored that Christianity had made *romanità* truly universal, and thus *romanità* could not be turned into a form of nationalism (Cordovani M., 1942). Ultimately, the spread of Pius XII’s myth as a *defensor civitatis* (Aramini D., 2015, p. 209-210; regarding Pius XII: Ceci L., 2013, p. 300-322) was part of a general cultural context that continued to spread an ideological *koinè* (Moro R., 2020, p. 540–546) and a racist myth in line with the study published in 1942 by Vincenzo Mazzei (Mazzei V., 1942).

A young legal scholar born in 1913 and *assistente ordinario* of public law at the University of Rome, Mazzei was not one of Galassi Paluzzi’s collaborators. Yet in his study, he proposed an interpretation close to the Institute’s position. He considered Italians to be Mediterranean populations and the result of the encounters of numerous peoples that had been merged together by Rome and whose identity had remained unchanged over the centuries. In his work, antisemitism was not a determining factor as much as a political gauge of the more general defence of race. Mazzei therefore did not agree with the biological inferiority of the Semitic world and underscored how the key crux of fascist ideology was the nation, not race, as instead was in National Socialism (Matard-Bonucci M.A., 2008, p. 234-235; De Francesco A., 2013, p. 203-211). In his studies, Mazzei drew upon the research of a young Etruscan scholar, Massimo Pallottino, who was very close to Giglioli. During the war, Pallottino was a collaborator of the journal *Roma* and set himself apart thanks to his theses on the Etruscans. His work drew upon the trend – in part already present in the works of Neppi Modona and Ducati – that re-evaluated Etruscan culture’s contribution to the creation of Italian civilisation. Pallottino gave shape to a sort of revolution in the study of pre-Roman populations, setting aside the issue of the origin of peoples and insisting on the slow and complex process of a civilisation’s creation as being the result of contact between different cultures (Delpino F., 2014. On Etruscology between the two wars: Haack M.L., Miller M., 2016).

7. Racism as a synthesis of diverse cultures

With this way of looking at the past, antisemitism ultimately became a political element that was necessary for the more general rebirth of Roman civilisation, which the Jews had been excluded from in Ancient, medieval and modern times. It was a religious antisemitism that featured aspects of modern and laic antisemitism and that was linked to anti-Zionism, anti-modernism and the anti-Enlightenment (Moro R., 1988b; Id., 2002, p. 35–102). In this outlook, the Jews were an enemy of Rome, but not *the* enemy, as instead the apocalyptic and redemptive Nazi version portrayed them (Mosse G.L., 1978; Fiedländer S., 1997). The ultimate enemy had always been the anti-Roman German culture – namely the heretical, anti-Catholic and pagan Protestantism embodied in the modern thought (see: Moro R., 1998). In the second post-war, these considerations were the heart of Galassi Paluzzi's defence facing the purge trial instituted by the Council of State. After being removed from his position in August 1944⁸², he wrote a letter to Monsignor Celso Costantini (one of the Institute's collaborators and who became official officer of the Holy See at the Institute of Roman Studies), asking that Pius XII and Cardinal Montini intercede for him, considering the close relations that "his" Institute had with the Roman curia and the flattering opinions that he had received over the years (and that he attached to the letter). After all, before being published, the series of essays on race had been approved by the Jesuits (as was the case with many of the Institute's publications). Father Pietro Tacchi Venturi – who was often consulted on the essays before they were sent to print – was also a member of the Steering Committee, while it was Father Mario Barbera in 1939 who had approved the publications on race⁸³. Cecchelli's paper, for example, combined in his opinion "solid and immense culture" with a "correct historical criterion and specific sense of romanità and Christianity"⁸⁴. Just like Bodrero's, whose only flaw, according to Barbera, was of considering the school as a political institution aimed at training citizens in the interest of the state. This point of view, while reflecting the scholar's affinity with nationalism, for the Jesuit was a result of Hegelian theory of the state as a divinity (and perhaps this was why the president of the Institute decided not to publish it)⁸⁵. After the war, "regarding the Jewish problem", Galassi Paluzzi therefore stated that he had never expressed opinions that went "beyond what the Church itself taught and practiced for centuries in creating the ghettos" and had "always maintained and affirmed that it was absurd to consider the problems of race from a zoological point of view, as if it were a question of breeding horses and not a strictly spiritual and cultural matter"⁸⁶.

In any case, the Ministry of the Interior constantly received – from the Rome headquarters and provincial offices – the names of individuals with a Jewish surname so that the ministry could certify the moral and political respectability as well as the race of the names indicated and therefore allow or prohibit access to and participation in the Institute's initiatives. This was in line with the directives of the political institutions, but Galassi Paluzzi's scrupulousness, consistency and precision showed demonstrated his faith in fascist ideology, a faith shared by the rest of the country (Osti Guerrazzi A., 2005; Levis Sullam S., 2016; Galimi V., 2018)⁸⁷. Faced with fascism's divine mission on Earth as an ally of the Church (Griffin R., 2007b, p. 222-224), racist and antisemitic politics were necessary and perhaps even indispensable political choices. They were a result of the regime's redefinition of the

⁸² Galassi Paluzzi was removed on August 17, 1944, and replaced with Quinto Tosatti, very close to the Christian Democratic Party. The Steering Committee resigned immediately after Rome had been freed with a statement presented by Ceccarelli and Tacchi Venturi, and approved by all the other members: Bodrero, Cardinali, Cecchelli, Giovannoni, Guasco, Paribeni, Tomassetti (ASINSR, Verbali Giunta Direttiva, vol. V, meeting of June 19, 1944).

⁸³ See: ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 304, f. 2.

⁸⁴ M. Barbera to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter of March 17, 1939, in ASINSR, Pubblicazioni, b. 304, f. 2.

⁸⁵ M. Barbera to C. Galassi Paluzzi, letter, no date but probably dated Spring 1939, *ibidem*.

⁸⁶ C. Galassi Paluzzi to C. Costantini, letter of June 14, 1948, in ACGP, Perché si sappia, Pacco IV, f. S.E. Costantini.

⁸⁷ The last list sent to the Rome Police Headquarters held at the Institute Archive is dated on July 3 1944. All the lists are in ASINSR, Affari generali, b. 164, ff. 59, 60 e b. 171, f. 88.

idea of nation ever since it had seized power (Gentile E., 1997, p. 149-211; Germinario F., 2009). This redefinition led to a complete shift away from the ideals of inclusivity and openness typical of the *Risorgimento* and of the liberal state, towards a vision of an exclusive, intolerant and totalitarian nation. This approach, as De Felice wrote, lacked respect for anything and everything that was different from itself and was a harbinger of the tragedy the Jews would face (De Felice R., 1961, p. 462).

Based on these considerations, the national-Roman racist view spread by the initiatives of the Institute of Roman Studies was no more moderate or less responsible for the persecution of the Jews than other more revolutionary positions inside the fascism. In fact, this interpretation made the concept of the Italian race even more acceptable in public opinion, strengthening and rooting it in the history and greatness of Italian civilisation throughout the centuries. Although Galassi Paluzzi and the scholars close to the Institute were not fully convinced of the existence of a Jewish conspiracy, as instead in Preziosi's thinking, and although they were sceptical of Evola's neo-pagan view and the apocalyptic vision of reality that characterised much of Nazism, they nevertheless accepted racism without hesitation, proving once more that evil is no banal, but it is normal (Mosse G.L., 1977, p. 72-73). In a word, attempting to shape a stable idea of nation by synthesising different fascist moods, the Institute found itself in a "sort of formal embrace" (Moro R., 2005, p. 67). It was crushed in the middle "of an ambitious attempt of totalitarian transformation of Italian Catholicism to which the Church responded with an equally ambitious effort to catholicise the nation" (Moro R., 2008, p. 424. On the relationship between the Church and totalitarianisms, see also Chamedes G., 2019, p. 121-234). By analysing racism and antisemitism, the Institute of Roman Studies represents a place where one can observe the encounter, the clash, the fusion, the tensions, and the deep and mutual influences of two typically modern phenomena produced by mass politics: the sacralisation of politics and the politicisation and ideologisation of religion (Moro R., 1988a; Id., 2015). Any attempt at dialogue and unity were impossible because the protagonists themselves were irreconcilable. Tensions therefore remained and, except for short periods, the Institute ultimately ended up being more of a sounding board than a unifier of the ideological divergences between fascism and Catholicism.

Last but not least, a concluding remark on Carlo Galassi Paluzzi. His loyalty to the fascist directives and to spreading racism in the country cannot be interpreted exclusively as a complete obedience to a totalitarian regime. Racism and antisemitism had deeper roots, linked to his deeply anti-democratic mentality. It was this anti-democratic mentality and his hostility towards anything and everything related to modernity and liberalism that pushed him to follow the regime until up to approve the alliance with Nazism. The latter ended up to be considered a fundamental instrument for shaping a new Europe, as it was rooted upon anti-democratic attitudes and upon a lack of respect for anything was dissimilar to its own view, just like the fascism. Galassi Paluzzi – like the fascist intellectuals who went out of their way to attempt to give a scientific foundation to Italian racism – sacrificed the Italian Jews without so much as a moment's hesitation. The Institute of Roman Studies, which was a completely fascist institution where was frequent to attend a lecture with scholars wearing the fascist uniform, where its president boasted that he had created the Institute in conjunction with the march on Rome, trying for years to include fascist symbolism in its emblem (consisting of an imperial eagle and a Latin cross), could not wash its hands of the burden of racist politics merely because it pursued a national concept of race or because it was Catholic. Instead, as I hope to have showed in this work, the Institute's close relationship with Catholicism implies a greater moral responsibility. In a word, it was certainly jointly responsible for the fascist policies on race and the persecution of the Jews in Italy.

After Rome had been freed by the allies, the new era of the Institute was inaugurated with a lecture by philosopher and Minister of Public Education Guido De Ruggiero, an antifascist and one of the founders of the Italian Action Party (De Felice R., 1991). De Ruggiero opened a new series of lectures entitled *Riesame critico del concetto di romanità*. In addition to lashing out against the fascism myth of Rome, he stressed the need for shaping a new universal idea of Rome, able to respect universalism

and cosmopolitanism, which were the cornerstones of the Ancient empire and of Christian thought. The new myth of Rome had to involve and unite, as in the past, all of the European peoples arisen on Roman empire ashes in a new synthesis, in a “message of mutual understanding and collaboration” (De Ruggiero G., 1945). De Ruggiero’s words echoed Benedetto Croce’s book *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*. Published in 1932, while nationalism appeared to be triumphantly unstoppable, he had caught sight of a hint of a new consciousness that drew upon liberal thinking and Mazzini and Cavour’s concept of Italian *Risorgimento*. This was a new light similar to that of “seventy years ago, a Neapolitan of the old kingdom or a Piedmontese of the subalpine kingdom became an Italian without becoming false to his earlier quality but raising it and resolving it into this new quality, so the French and the Germans and the Italians and all the others will rise themselves into Europeans and their thought will be directed towards Europe and their hearts will beat for her as they once did for their smaller countries, not forgotten now but lover all the better” (Croce B., 1933, p. 360). The myth of eternal Rome had to shape the dream of a new united, democratic and liberal Europe, able once and for all of locking away the horrors, intolerance and extremism that had characterised the first half of the twentieth century (Gentile E., 1997, p. 271-290). That road – which had yet to be travelled – would be slow, tortuous and ambivalent⁸⁸, as Croce himself showed. According to him, the Jews indeed had to erase any form of diversity, division or tradition that he believed to be responsible for the persecution over the past centuries⁸⁹.

However, at the Institute of Roman Studies the series of lectures on the new concept of *romanità* showed interpretations not even in line with De Ruggiero’s liberal and historicist thinking. The ideal of Italy as a Latin and Catholic nation was exalted⁹⁰, in the hope of finding new political spaces giving shape to a new sense of national identity and bringing out a new cultural and political leading role for Italy. In a Europe under the dark clouds of the Cold War, crushed by the two secular enemies like Asian bolshevism and Protestant liberalism, the necessity was to re-impose the civilising centrality of Rome, or better of Christian Rome (see Acanfora P., 2013, p. 19–33). Mass politics once again required the need of myths (Mosse G.L., 1988, p. 395–421).

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⁸⁸ On the role and initiatives of the Institute of Roman Studies in the post-war period there are no researches. At a very quick and first look, however, in the immediate post-war years only Galassi Paluzzi was removed (he repeatedly tried to come back to the guide of the Institute, see: APCGP, Perché si sappia, Pacco II). The other scholars, instead, continued their collaboration, spreading an interpretative trend on the myth of Rome, which was above all focused on the exaltation of a Christian Rome that completed and enhanced the imperial role of ancient Rome.

⁸⁹ On Croce’s position, and Momigliano’s reply, see: Israel G., Nastasi P., 1998, p. 24.

⁹⁰ C. Salotti, *L'anima di Roma*, in ASISR, Corsi superiori di studi romani, b. 188, f. 22; I. Giordani, *S. Paolo a Roma*, *ibidem*; La XIX annata degli «Studi Romani», *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 20, 1944.

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Staff considered of Jewish race fired from the Institute

1. Aldo Neppi Modona, head of the Publications Office, Rome headquarters. He was born in Florence on October 20, 1895, where he graduated in 1919. In 1925, he contributed to creating the Permanent Committee for Etruria and became *libero docente* in classical antiquities at the University of Pisa. In 1928, he received a postgraduate fellowship at the Historical and Archaeological Institute of Rhodes. In 1932, he was one of the founders of the International Institute of Etruscan Studies. Starting from September 16, 1935, he was employed at the Institute of Roman Studies in Rome in the central file cabinet of Rome bibliography until September 16, 1936. From January 1, 1937, to March 3, 1939, he was head of the publications office. When the persecution of the Jews began, he was a Greek and Latin teacher at Michelangelo High School for Classical Studies in Florence. In 1937, he obtained the *libera docenza* in classical antiquities at the University of Rome. After the war, he was reinstated as High School teacher and, after a long legal battle in revising some State recruitment procedures where he was excluded for racial reasons, in 1957 he obtained a position as full professor of Ancient Greek and Roman antiquities at the University of Genoa, Department of Humanities. Here, he also continued teaching Etruscology and Italian archaeology until his retirement in 1970. In 1952, he was chief of the editorial board of the academic journal *Studi Etruschi*, becoming co-editor in chief in 1955. In 1978, during Massimo Pallotino's presidency, he was appointed as vice president of the Institute of Etruscan and Italic Studies. He died in Florence on May 25, 1985.

2. Gino Segré, emeritus professor of Roman law at the University of Turin; member of the Steering Committee, Turin section.

3. Giorgio Falco, full professor of History of Middle Ages at the University of Turin.

Researches and Teaching Experiences on the Fascist “Racial Laws” in High Schools: A Case Study of the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” of Rome

Romana Bogliaccino*

Abstract. The devastating effect of the Italian racist legislation of 1938 on middle and high schools is the object of this study, with a focus on the particular case of the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” of Rome. The research has been carried out within the educational project *L’Archivio del Visconti e la Storia* (“The Visconti Archive and History”), with the active participation of the school students. The purpose of the project was to provide students with historical method tools and to raise their awareness, as well as a civic and ethical reflection, on the Shoah topics. The survey, developed mainly through the examination of unpublished documents contained in the Lyceum’s archive, led to the identification of 58 Jewish students and a teacher, Maria Piazza, expelled from the school because of the “racial laws” in 1938. Many oral and written testimonies on the traumatic experiences of the students have also been collected. The Lyceum has recently dedicated to the expelled students and teacher a commemorative plaque, to keep alive the memory of all the victims of the fascist anti-Jewish persecution.

Keywords: Shoah; Italian racist legislation; Expulsions from Italian schools in 1938; Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” of Rome; Maria Piazza; School archives.

The fascist anti-Jewish norms enacted in 1938 affected the entire Italian educational system. The conference *Le “Leggi razziali” del 1938 e l’università italiana* offered the opportunity to outline a very broad and detailed picture of what happened in the universities. This paper is an elaboration of the contribution I presented at the conference, in which I meant to shift the focus to secondary education, at the middle and high school level¹.

The data show a strong incidence of the 1938 racist decrees both on primary and secondary schools: altogether about 5400 school students were expelled. Indeed, in Rome alone there were about 1600 expulsions, and of these, more than 500 took place at the secondary level². These numbers provide a general snapshot of the situation, but they do not show the actual impact that the application of the fascist “racial laws” had on the single scholastic realities. Therefore, the examination of particular cases can enlighten specific aspects, such as the distribution of Jewish students in the different types of schools and areas of the city. The analysis may also highlight the serious consequences of the forced interruption of the educational process.

The present study focuses on a particular and significant case: that of the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti”, a school located in the center of Rome, that has a long-established history. It is a high school with a classical curriculum, that during the late 1930s also included the lower “gymnasium” (corresponding to the three-year middle school). The school has always been attended by many students from Jewish families living in nearby areas.

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¹ Conference *Le “Leggi razziali” del 1938 e l’università italiana*, December 3-5, 2018, Camera dei Deputati-Università Roma Tre. I thank Prof. David Meghnagi, who promoted the conference, for allowing space in discussing this particular area.

² These data of the Archive of the Jewish Community of Rome (*Archivio Storico della Comunità Ebraica di Roma “Giancarlo Spizzichino”*, ASCER) are published in: Antonucci S. H. & Piperno Beer G. (2015), pp. 47-51.

I would like to make a premise: the survey, that led to identifying the exact extent of the 1938 expulsions from this school, was born both from the need to achieve a historical reconstruction, but also and above all, from a didactic need. Raising awareness among high school students of the complex issues of the Shoah is not easy, and the interventions implemented by the schools are not always valid and effective, capable of profoundly affecting the consciences, as well as providing a correct historical framework. The topics are not studied in a systematic way in the schools, and the initiatives are left to the sensitivity and spontaneity of the teachers. In high schools' History programs, the Shoah is in general addressed, but not every professor finds the time to delve deeply into the subject. The various commemorative occasions - October 16, January 27- are not always effective: there is often a lack of preliminary preparation, and the students themselves are sometimes passive in dealing with the topic. They often experience these events as formal, repetitive, and not very fruitful. On the other hand, the meetings students have with witnesses and survivors of the Shoah are always very incisive. They produce lasting effects on the minds of students, but, unfortunately, with the passage of time, these encounters are now increasingly rare. These considerations push the most committed teachers to propose new projects and to experiment more effective ways to actively involve the students in serious and in-depth studies of specific aspects of the Shoah.

With the purpose to experiment didactic strategies that would make students more conscious and involved, as even protagonists of the process of historical reconstruction, I conceived in 2013 the project "The Archive of Visconti and History", which is still in progress. A study laboratory was created to conduct research with the students in the school's historical archive, and as the object of investigation we chose a very dramatic and meaningful event, for the students distant in time, but also very close to their daily experience: the expulsion, due to the "racial laws" in 1938, of same-aged Jewish students from their own school, the Lyceum "E. Q. Visconti".

The devastating effects of the Italian anti-Jewish legislation, known to students in a general way, have become the subject of a detailed study, that has considered sources not yet systematically investigated. The students participated with the teacher in the carrying out of the research. They focused on the data collection, both from primary and secondary sources, and then contributed to the interpretation and re-elaboration of their findings. This approach allowed the students to acquire a scientific investigation method and produced concrete results of considerable interest. As a matter of fact, the systematic analysis of these archival sources had never been done before, the results would help to detail the more general historical framework.

The research also helped to uncover and contact some living former students expelled from the school in 1938, who with their direct testimonies transmitted a rich heritage of memories and humanity to today's students, bequeathing them a decisive contribution to their growth and education.

Our intent was to bring out a profound, psychological link between the events of anti-Jewish persecution, which increasingly appear remote and not entirely comprehensible to the current students, and the reality in which they live daily. Checking how much those events have affected the lives of girls and boys like them, who took the same courses in their own classrooms, helped students better understand historical events of vast and dramatic importance, while more effectively stimulating their active involvement in the learning process.

The project, therefore, was developed taking into account two objectives: on the one hand, to carry out a correct work of historical reconstruction (or at least to provide the method and an example, on a small scale, of how historical research should be carried out), and, on the other hand, to raise students' awareness towards the Shoah, thus contributing to their civic education, as well as historical education.

Various groups of students, guided by the teacher, over the last five years undertook the archive work, taking part in the research planning phase and in the choice of the method to be used for recording data. Since no official list of the expelled students exists in scholastic documents, only

through a careful examination and comparison between the registers of two school years, 1937-1938 and 1938-1939, was the identification of the expelled Jewish students attained. The useful information was examined, all the relevant elements were recorded, and a database model was constructed. Thus, the data relating to the students and their parents reported in the registers were all inserted in the database, together with other significant indications: for example, the note attesting the withdrawal of the diploma by the students in October-November 1938, for the subsequent enrollment in the Jewish school.

The research was extended to the Archives of the Jewish Community of Rome, where we found a valid support and useful information³. We have examined many “race declarations” (“*Dichiarazione di appartenenza alla razza ebraica*”), the infamous form that all the Italian Jewish families, included those of “Visconti” students, had been obliged by the fascist regime to complete. With these additional data, it was possible to confirm or clarify the results of our survey. We then verified the possible subsequent presence of the students in the Jewish school by consulting the records of all the enrolled students.

After sorting and evaluating the data, the results of the survey follow: 58 Jewish students of Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” suffered the discriminatory effect of the “racial laws”. It was truly a considerable number. Since in Rome over 500 secondary school students (lower and higher grades) were expelled, the “Visconti” students represented more than 10% of the total. In relation to the Lyceum school population (middle and high school) there were about 6/7% of students expelled, distributed in a very varied way, in some classes the total numbers exceeded 10%. The majority of students expelled by “Visconti” afterward attended the Jewish school, but not all of them did. For some students, the scholastic experience ended with the expulsion from state school, a traumatic, indelible event in their lives and education.

Our students were able to reflect upon several other results of the research. The most disconcerting consideration was that: on the registers we found only an absence of names, a void that nevertheless corresponded to the far more terrible absence of the students from the desks of the “Visconti” classrooms in October 1938. The research revived the effects of this terrible persecution, and it led to reflection on the incurable wound that it could have caused on the impressionable minds of adolescent boys and girls, who were in midst of their formative years. We tried to figure how the school had changed after the expulsion of the Jewish students, suddenly “erased,” and how their schoolmates reacted. Many of them perhaps did not understand the meaning of what was really happening, and they were struck by the sudden and inexplicable disappearance of their classmates, as a profound and evident injustice. But no one succeeded in expressing his bewilderment, given that they had been accustomed under the fascist regime to consent and tacitly accept all rules and regulations despotically imposed upon them.

Several testimonies speak of the bewilderment and sorrow of absence that did, in some cases, lead to an awareness regarding the true nature of the fascist regime⁴. But still, all of this realization, when it happened, occurred in private, in general silence. No one in the school did or said anything to react to the terrible injustice. Furthermore, the analysis of the reports of the official meetings of the Lyceum faculty, in the scholastic archive, did not highlight anything out of the ordinary that was happening, no comment or consideration of the expulsions emerges from these documents.

³ I would like to thank for her kind help Dr. Silvia Haia Antonucci, in charge of the ASCER.

⁴ Marisa Cinciari Rodano (born in 1921), former student at the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” and afterwards senator of the Italian Republic, recalls the impression she had when, returning to school in October 1938, she did not find her two Jewish schoolmates and her teacher Prof. Maria Piazza. She claims that it was the moment when she became aware of what fascism really was. Her testimony was given in a conference held on April 26, 1994 at the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” (“*Donne della scuola nella Resistenza a Roma*”, published in: ANNPIA (1994), pp. 87-88).

The dismissals from the schools happened, in fact, in a silent way, with a general public indifference, true or simulated, that surrounded them. The act was violent but implemented in such a way as to avoid reactions: the students “simply” never returned to school after the summer holidays, as if in those three months they had vanished into thin air, evaporated from the classes, and (as to us in a chilling way it turned out to be) their names had disappeared from all the school records, without even a note. We know that the racist decrees on the schools were among the first to be implemented as part of the racial exclusion policy adopted by the fascist regime: the Minister of National Education Giuseppe Bottai made sure that they were approved in September, before the beginning of the lessons expected by mid-October. He did this precisely to prevent Jewish students and teachers from starting the new school year prior to the implementation of the decrees⁵.

After being expelled from school, most of the “Visconti” students had the opportunity to continue their studies in the Jewish school. There already existed in Rome, since 1925, the Jewish elementary (primary) school “Vittorio Polacco”, and after the promulgation of the “racial laws” its enrollment grew from 400 to 700 students. But, there were no schools for Jewish students to attend higher levels. The Jewish Community took action very quickly to allow the boys and girls to refrain from interrupting their middle and high school studies, and a school was soon established in a rented villa in Via Celimontana, near the Colosseum. Over this period of time we have collected writings and testimonies from the same former students we interviewed. Almost all the expelled students in Rome enrolled in the school in Via Celimontana, including those “Visconti” students⁶.

Furthermore, teachers who were also expelled from various schools in Rome, or from other cities, taught there, and they were among the best teachers in service. There were also those who, very young, had just attained their professorship - such as Emma Castelnuovo, the daughter of the distinguished mathematician Guido Castelnuovo⁷ -, but they were no longer allowed to enter state schools. Altogether, about forty teachers expelled from the public schools taught there. The school curricula were similar to those of the public school. The environment of the Jewish school was animated by a positive desire to react to persecution and promote excellence despite adversity. The school indeed was characterized by a very high quality of teaching, and the brilliant results in the final exams confirmed it: the students also had the praise and recognition of the Royal Commissioners. The school later had to be transferred and was settled in Lungotevere Sanzio and in Via Balbo, but all the courses had to stop in 1943 with the Nazi occupation of Rome. The intense work to preserve and guarantee a cultural education for young people was certainly an exemplary demonstration of Resistance by the Jews to persecution.

As part of this entire project, archival research was accompanied by an attentive analysis of the set of fascist laws and decrees “for the defense of the race”. The students also examined historical essays and testimonies that helped to shed light on important details and gave rise to the extension of the research, even in directions not initially planned. For instance, we discovered that a Jewish teacher of the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti”, the Professor of Sciences Maria Piazza, was forced to leave teaching due to the fascist legislation.

⁵ Regio Decreto-Legge 5 settembre 1938-XVI, n. 1390. *Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza nella scuola fascista*. The Decree declares: “Students of Jewish race cannot be enrolled in schools of all levels, whose studies are recognized as having legal effect”. The fascist “racial laws” on school were then integrated into the Regio Decreto-Legge 15 novembre 1938-XVII, n. 1779. *Integrazione e coordinamento in unico testo delle norme già emanate per la difesa della razza nella Scuola Italiana* (Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana, 1938).

⁶ The Jewish school was created thanks to the active work of the exponent of the Jewish Community Guido Coen. On the Jewish school in Rome see: Antonucci S. H. & Piperno Beer G. (2015), pp. 47-51; Fishman D. (2019).

⁷ Emma Castelnuovo (1913-2014) after the war taught Mathematics in the public secondary schools. Guido Castelnuovo (1865-1952) taught at the University of Rome from 1891 to 1935, he gave a fundamental contribution to the study of algebraic geometry.

Maria Piazza had taught in the Lyceum from 1929 to 1938, and after the dismissal she continued to teach in the Jewish school. Her name was found by consulting the documents of the school's archive, but then it too disappeared, just like that of the students. The teacher was recalled in many oral and written testimonies of former students, thus allowing us to have a good idea of who she was⁸. In addition to being an accomplished and effective professor of Sciences, Maria Piazza was a valuable scholar and researcher. In 1932 she had obtained the "libera docenza in Mineralogia" at the University of Rome. Moreover, she was the author of articles for the *Enciclopedia Italiana* and of an important manual of Mineralogy and General Geography⁹. She lost all these positions in the years 1938-1939, due to the racist laws.

Guido Castelnuovo enlisted Maria Piazza to hold courses of General Chemistry in the so-called "clandestine university," a program created to overcome the problem of university studies, foreclosed to Jewish students, that gave them the opportunity to obtain a university-level preparation in the sciences. The ingenious solution was found in the autumn of 1941 by Guido Coen with the fundamental collaboration of Guido Castelnuovo. They established a connection with the Director of the "Institut Technique Supérieur" of Fribourg in Switzerland, Guido Bonzanigo, which offered distance learning courses, without the obligation of attendance. Although they could not obtain officially recognized certification, the students were able to advance their studies. After the liberation of Rome in 1944, Guido Castelnuovo obtained validation for the exams from the Minister of Public Education Guido De Ruggiero, a point that allowed students to conclude their university studies in the shortest time possible, and with great success. About thirty students took courses at the "clandestine university." Seven of them had come from Lyceum "E. Q. Visconti"¹⁰.

After the war, Maria Piazza resumed teaching at the Lyceum "A. Righi" where she would end her career, and also continued to hold courses at the University of Rome. Maria Piazza's professional story is a significant example of the effects of the racist legislation, being Piazza both a high school teacher and a university teacher. A monographic study on her is currently being conducted by me, as a development of this research.

Two students expelled in 1938, that we were able to meet and interview directly, Gino Fiorentino and Piero Piperno, spoke enthusiastically of Professor Piazza, and they highlighted many interesting details of her professional life. The oral testimonies of the expelled students have been of great interest for the research and for my students, strongly affected by the words and stories of those who had personally experienced the devastating consequences of fascist persecution, when they were their age.

The first meeting took place with Gino Fiorentino, who had welcomed the invitation to return to his old high school in 2017 for a long conversation with us, an occasion that was partly recorded and filmed. The pages of school records suddenly came to life for our students, and all that the arid absence of names did not say became instead a living reality, full of memories and feelings. Gino Fiorentino was expelled when he was 15, after having brilliantly undertaken his fifth "gymnasium" at "Visconti". His course of studies was abruptly interrupted in the middle of high school, leaving him a deep wound, from which he never completely recovered. He continued his studies at the Jewish

⁸ Maria Piazza (1894-1976) is remembered by various testimonies: her former students Gino Fiorentino and Piero Piperno gave us many interesting information about her, as a teacher at "Visconti" and later at the Jewish school. A colourful portrait of Maria Piazza is outlined by her former student Fabio Della Seta (Della Seta, 1996).

⁹ The manual is: Almagià R. & Piazza M. *Mineralogia e geografia generale: con numerose illustrazioni, carte e tavole fuori testo. Corso di geografia ad uso degli istituti tecnici superiori*, vol. 1, Napoli: F. Perrella, 1934. The book was one of those excluded from all schools in 1938, since it was written by Jewish authors. In addition to being expelled from schools, Maria Piazza was also expelled from several scientific societies and she could no longer teach at the University of Rome.

¹⁰ On the "clandestine university" we had direct testimonies by Gino Fiorentino and Piero Piperno, interviewed on March 27, 2017, and on November 20, 2017. See also the articles: Castelnuovo E. (2001), pp. 63-77; Fiorentino G. (2001), pp. 79-83; Coen L. (2009).

school, and then he took courses at the “clandestine university” mentioned above. He then graduated with ease in Engineering after the war, thanks to the solid preparation already received. He was able to provide us with valuable and detailed information on that period. Gino Fiorentino made it clear to my students how awfully he had lived the silent indifference over the persecution of the Jews students. He said that after his exclusion from the Lyceum no schoolmate looked for him anymore, and he felt his former school as a hostile place. For many years he did not talk of that experience even to his family. Only in a few cases did he accept an invitation to return to the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti”. The current students welcomed him with enthusiasm and warmth, these moments most likely reconciled him with the past and with the school just before the end of his life¹¹.

Sometime later, we had a subsequent opportunity to meet and interview another former “Visconti” student, Piero Piperno. With his memories of expulsion, of the Jewish school, and the following dramatic events of his family during the Nazi occupation, he too helped to broaden the picture of those years. We have also recently been able to contact another former student, Angelo Perugia, for an upcoming interview.

The insidious fascist “racial laws” struck Jewish students in their crucial years of adolescence and education, and the sting of exclusion inevitably conditioned their life and subsequent choices. But the experience of expulsion and the sentiment towards the school concretely responsible for that act were not the same for everyone. Each witness was able to share a different personal reaction and a particular aspect of the common experience of persecuted students. Their school history was also conditioned by a little difference in age. All of them remained deeply marked, but most of the younger ones apparently overcame the trauma more easily.

Piero Piperno, born in 1927, for example, had been expelled after attending the first year of middle school (first “gymnasium”) at the Lyceum “Visconti”, and he decided to enroll again in 1944, after the liberation of Rome, in order to complete his studies in the same Lyceum. He, thus, showed no aversion to the school that had excluded him. Like him, many other Jewish students continued and completed their studies in public schools after the end of the Nazi occupation.

A different case is that of Gino Fiorentino, born in 1923, who had been expelled halfway through his high school studies. As we mentioned before, despite the positive results of his subsequent studies, his memory of the expulsion remained traumatic. Students of his age carried on their studies in a very troubled way, through many adversities and obstacles, that could not always be overcome.

Students born in 1919 or 1920 had even greater difficulty, with regards their continuation of studies. They had just finished high school, having taken the State exam in July 1938, but then they were denied access to the university, an otherwise normal next-step in education after the Lyceum. These students were indeed the most penalized, their life choices were profoundly conditioned. In fact, they could have resumed their studies only after several years of interruption - from 1938 to 1944 -, more or less at the age of 25. But in most cases, returning to school was certainly too late, because meanwhile, with increasing difficulty, they had to look for a job to cope with the immediate needs of life. This situation certainly marked their education and professional future in a decisive way¹².

Finally, we considered the situation of oldest students, relative to the consequences of the “racial laws”, as is the case of the famous economist Franco Modigliani. Born in 1918, he was able to

¹¹ The information on Gino Fiorentino, who died in December 2017, are taken from the interview he gave us in 2017. Talks with his family members were also helpful. Other interviews can be found on the web, in particular I point out the one to Gino Fiorentino and his wife Emma Alatri, recorded in 2011 by the “Centro di Cultura Ebraica di Roma”.

¹² There were about fifteen “Visconti” Jewish students who had just finished their studies in July 1938. The research on them is still in progress. A few of these students took advantage of the rare opportunities to undertake university-level studies offered by the Catholic Universities, such as the Lateran and the Gregorian, that allowed access to some of the most brilliant Jewish students.

complete his high school studies at the Lyceum “Visconti” before the promulgation of the fascist legislation, and he was already attending university in 1938. According to the racist laws he was allowed to complete his studies, but, in pursuing an academic career, he would not have been able to do so in Italy. As such, he had to go abroad, another loss for Italian culture¹³.

As institutions, schools in Italy were one of the great victims of anti-Jewish persecution. Excluding Jewish students and professors from schools was an act of great violence, and indeed, it was a prelude to other unimaginable violence. Our analysis of the effects of the fascist anti-Jewish legislation has highlighted the important role of the school as a crucial node and mirror of society. Therefore, it is now essential, above all in the schools, to defend freedom of thought and equal rights by preserving the memory of violated rights, to educate young people so that they may recognize and combat all forms of injustice and discrimination.

Surveys have revealed a microcosm of lives and different situations. Indeed, we gathered many other testimonies of sons and daughters of expelled students, and these showed the presence of many ties and affections, even sometimes lasting friendships and marriages among the former students who experienced fascist persecution. The project brought out a reality kept silent in the archive, that told us the struggles and sufferings of many young people.

Most of the students, along with their families, managed to escape the Nazi persecution among many difficulties. Nevertheless, our research dramatically brought out the names of two students who could not save themselves: Giovanni Carlo Della Seta and Lello Frascati. They were arrested on October 16, 1943, during the Nazi round-up in Rome, and were deported to Auschwitz, from where they never returned.

The didactic purpose of the project led to the organization of several conferences, during which our students had the opportunity to present some results of the research¹⁴. The overall results of the study on the expulsions of 1938 at the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti”, along with all the collected testimonies, will be published in the next months.

In the school year 2017-2018 I proposed to extend this research project to other schools and it was promoted a Network of schools entitled *School and Memory - Italian Schools Archives*, coordinated by the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti”. The aim of the Network is to collect the data on the expulsions of 1938 of an increasing number of schools, and to compare and elaborate the results of research in a common database, on the model of the one we have already prepared. Thus, we can outline the experience of expulsions in a capillary and increasingly complete form. The Network also includes various public educational institutions, archives, libraries, and other associations committed to defending historical memory.

As a significant part of the project, I proposed to remember and honor the “Visconti” students and teacher, who were victims of fascist persecution, in a visible and permanent way, by placing a large commemorative plaque in our school’s courtyard. The inauguration has been held at the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” on January 31, 2019, with a conference attended by many representatives of government institutions, the Jewish Community of Rome, direct witnesses of expulsion, family members, students who conducted the research, and all the students of the school¹⁵.

¹³ Franco Modigliani (1918-2003) moved to the United States in 1939, where he pursued a brilliant academic career, he taught for many years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1985.

¹⁴ The most significant conferences organized at the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” on the racist laws of 1938, as part of my project “The Archive of Visconti and History”, were held on: January 29, 2015; January 30, 2017; January 31, 2018; May 3, 2018. The conferences were attended, among others, by representatives of the Jewish Community of Rome, the International Master in Shoah Education at the University of Roma Tre, the Fondazione Museo della Shoah. For more information about the project see the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” website.

¹⁵ On my project “L’Archivio del Visconti e la Storia” and all the related events, see the Lyceum “E. Q. Visconti” website: <https://www.liceoeqvisconti.edu.it/index.php/offerta-formativa/l-archivio-del-visconti-e-la-storia>

From here forward, all the names of the victims of the fascist anti-Jewish laws, inscribed on the plaque, will constantly remind of the shameful historical memory of this event. They will also inspire civic responsibility and vigilance in all current students to thwart any renewed violation of fundamental human rights.

PROFESSOR AND STUDENTS EXPELLED FROM THE LYCEUM “E. Q. VISCONTI” IN 1938	
<i>Prof. Maria Piazza</i>	
Giovanna Amati	Vittoria Fornari
Sergio Anticoli	Lello Frascati
Luciana Ascarelli Molco	Paolo Jacchia
Maria Letizia Ascarelli	Bernhard Kichelmacher
Ruggero Bises	Romano M. Kichelmacher
Sergio Bondì	Benedetto Levi
Vittorio Bonfiglioli	Emilia Levi
Anna Calò	Gabriele Massarek
Silvio Calò	Ignazio Massarek
Mirella Citoni	Marinella Ottolenghi
Alessandro F. Coen	Roberto Ottolenghi
Alessandro G. Coen	Angelo Perugia
Santoro Coen	Annarosa Piperno
Giovanna Della Seta	Giuseppe Piperno
Giovanni Carlo Della Seta	Lucietta Piperno
Piero Della Seta	Marco Mosè Piperno
Silvia Della Seta	Mariella Piperno
Giovanna Di Capua	Piero Piperno
Maria Di Capua	Marco Pisetzký
Mario Di Capua	Gianna Pontecorvo
Luciano Di Cave	Sergio Ravà
Piero Di Nepi	Bianca Maria Rimini
Silvana Di Nepi	Franca Rossi
Claudio Di Segni	Carlo Sestieri
Giannetto Di Segni	Cesira Sonnino
Luciano Di Veroli	Emilia Sonnino
Gino Fiorentino	Samuele Sonnino
Alberto Fornari	Settimio Sonnino
Gabriella Fornari	Claudio Ziffer
<i>Liceo “E. Q. Visconti”, Progetto “L’Archivio del Visconti e la Storia”</i> Commemorative plaque, January 2019	

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