

## Gino Arias

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He wrote with conviction to his wife in August 1938: «I cannot be considered a Jew, because I kicked the Jews out and I am a Catholic». Instead, he too, a professor of political economy and a well-known supporter of Mussolini, was expelled from his university as being of «Jewish race». He arrived in Buenos Aires on 30 January 1939, accompanied by his daughter Irene. Before leaving, however, he had submitted to the ministry an application for Aryanzation, and an appeal against his suspension from service, with a request for reinstatement.

### His family, studies, university career and politics

Gino Arias was born in Florence on 1 October 1879, the first of the seven children of Alberto, a surgeon and doctor, and of Rachele Adele Coen<sup>1</sup>. In Florence he attended the Galileo Galilei high school and then enrolled in the Faculty of Law of the University of Pisa, where he attended for the first year (1896-97), then moved to the University of Bologna, and returned to Pisa for the third year of the course. In the academic year 1899-1900 he returned again to Bologna, where he graduated on 3 July 1900 with a thesis entitled «Trattati commerciali della Repubblica fiorentina. Studio di storia giuridica ed economica. Secolo XIII» [The commercial treaties of the Florentine Republic. A study of legal and economic history. 13th century], obtaining a mark of 110 with honours. That same year he published *Le istituzioni giuridiche medievali nella Divina Commedia* [Medieval Legal Institutions in the *Divine Comedy*]. He then presented his degree thesis as well as this latest publication in the first competition of the Villari Foundation. The jury, comprising Pasquale Villari, Oreste Tommasini, Pio Rajna, Guido Mazzoni and Alessandro D'Ancona,

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<sup>1</sup> Gino's six siblings were: Olga (1882-1942), Lidia (1884-1938), Guido (1886-1970), Giulio (1888-1967), Achille (1897-1900) and Cesare (1901-1986). View the family photographs in the [gallery](#).

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pronounced him the winner for both works<sup>2</sup>.

In 1897 he had already published his first historical monograph *La congiura di Giulio Cesare Vachero con documenti inediti* [The conspiracy of Giulio Cesare Vachero with unpublished documents] dealing with the conspiracy of Vachero, a supporter of the house of Savoy against the Genoese oligarchy (1628).

In 1908 he married Leonia Galletti, and the couple had four children: Bruno (1909), Franco (1916), Irene (1917) and Valerio (1924).

From the political point of view, after a youthful dalliance with socialism, Arias turned more and more towards fascism; he took part in the march on Rome in October 1922 and enrolled in the PNF (Partito nazionale fascista) on 1 May 1923<sup>3</sup>. He became one of its most important theorists: a member of the Committee of Eighteen for legislative reforms in 1925,<sup>4</sup> he issued its first report on the corporate reform of the state<sup>5</sup>. He was also one of the speakers at the 1925 convention of the Fascist Institutes of Culture in Bologna<sup>6</sup> (from which the Manifesto of Fascist Intellectuals emerged), a member of the National Council of Corporations,<sup>7</sup> vice-president of the Accademia dei Georgofili from 1927 to 1932, a collaborator in numerous fascist press

<sup>2</sup> *Il premio della Fondazione Villari*, «Corriere della sera», 27-28 December 1900. For the jury's judgment see the *Prologo a Gino Arias, Le istituzioni giuridiche medievali nella Divina Commedia. Saggio*, Florence, Lumachi, 1901. This same work also won the Vittorio Emanuele II Competition for the year 1900.

<sup>3</sup> The date of his registration in the PNF, as well as his participation in the march on Rome, can be inferred from the documents contained in his file kept in the Sapienza historical archive, unfortunately undated. See Archivio storico Università di Roma La Sapienza (ASURm) f. AS 1427, «Arias Gino», matriculation status, and *ibid.*, «Notizie per l'Ufficio personale». Other papers in process of reorganization are in the *Gino Arias* collection kept at the Social Sciences Library of the University of Florence. Thanks to Omar Ottonelli for the information about the fund provided for the research group.

<sup>4</sup> Archivio Fondazione Giovanni Gentile per gli studi filosofici - Fondazione Roma Sapienza (AFG), *Fondo Giovanni Gentile*, serie 5, *Attività scientifica e culturale*, sottoserie 12, *Curricula e promemoria*, f. 5, «Memoria per la valutazione delle benemerenze eccezionali», p. 16. The announcement was also published in the «Corriere della sera»: *La nuova Commissione dei Diciotto per le riforme statali*, «Corriere della sera», 3 March 1925.

<sup>5</sup> *Le proposte sindacali dei Soloni* [The Soloni's trade union proposals], «Corriere della sera», 17 April 1925.

<sup>6</sup> *Il Convegno di cultura fascista a Bologna*, «Corriere della sera», 31 March 1925.

<sup>7</sup> *Il Consiglio nazionale delle Corporazioni. L'elenco dei rappresentanti per il triennio 1930-32*, «Corriere della sera», 19 April 1930.

publications («Il Popolo d'Italia»,<sup>8</sup> «Gerarchia», «Critica fascista» and «Educazione fascista» among others), and a deputy in the XXIX Legislature (1934-1939), during which he presented several bills.

As for his standing as a scholar, at the beginning of his career he devoted himself to the history of law and of legal institutions of an economic nature, and then moved on to economics and from there to corporatism, of which he was the leading theorist. His publications include: *Principi di economia commerciale* (1917), *La questione meridionale* (1921-1922), *Economia politica e politica economica corporativa* (1930), *La filosofia tomistica e l'economia politica* (1934), *Corso di economia politica corporativa* (1937).

Not yet thirty years old, he started his university career. In the academic year 1903-04 he had a position as a *libero docente* (an unpaid lecturer) in the history of Italian law at the University of Pisa, and moved the following year to the University of Rome, where he was to remain until the academic year 1908-09. After a series of examination matters that were not entirely positive, in 1909 he obtained the chair of Political Economy in the Faculty of Law at the University of Genoa. In 1924 he moved to the University of Florence, as a full professor in the Faculty of Law, first of Science and Technical of Commerce, then of Political Economy, renamed in 1934 Corporate Political Economy. He was also dean of the Faculty of Law from the academic year 1930-31. In 1936 he moved to the University of Rome<sup>9</sup> where he succeeded to Maffeo Pantaleoni's chair of corporate political economy<sup>10</sup>. As an academic he was an active lecturer, even abroad, in the sphere of the all-out propaganda effort which unfolded around the themes of corporatism and fascist economic policy<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> See the list of contributions to the press compiled by Arias himself in AFG, s. 5, ss. 12, f. 5, pp. 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> The announcement of the appointment can be read in ASURm, f. AS 1427, «Arias Gino», «Assegnazione dei professori di ruolo in relazione al nuovo ordinamento degli studi», 9 September 1936.

<sup>10</sup> Arias' academic CV can be read in Archivio Accademia dei Georgofili, f. Ea.6.1, sf. «Gino Arias», personal file.

<sup>11</sup> He gave lectures, for example, in London (*Lo stato corporativo italiano in una conferenza del*

### A Catholic convert, but race?

On 22 July 1932 Arias and his wife converted to Catholicism<sup>12</sup>. «He got baptized hoping to be appointed a member of the Academy», commented Salvemini, who had known him even before having been his colleague in Florence, in a letter to Carlo Rosselli<sup>13</sup>. In 1938, therefore, Arias was convinced that the impending racial laws would not affect him, so much so that in a letter to his wife Leonia in August 1938 he wrote: «You will have read in today's newspapers that Jews have been driven out by everyone in the life of the state: one in a thousand remains! I, though, cannot be considered a Jew, because I kicked the Jews out and I am a Catholic»<sup>14</sup>. He then sent his census form, duly completed, to the Accademia dei Georgofili, «as an Italian, as a fascist, as a Catholic» in September 1938<sup>15</sup>.

His academic career did not seem to be slowing down. In 1937 he was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of the Crown of Italy<sup>16</sup>. In the spring of 1938 he was given approval for a series of «corporate economic» conferences outside Italy, at the invitation of the Institut des hautes études in Brussels and the Institute of Fascist Culture in Ghent and Louvain, Belgium<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, in April of that year, as had already happened in previous years, he was awarded a series of seminars for the senior officers of the royal carabinieri in Florence, to be held between April and June;<sup>18</sup> the cycle of

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*prof. Arias a Londra*, «Corriere della sera», 15 December 1928), Budapest (*Un ciclo di conferenze a Budapest di professori italiani*, «Corriere della sera», 10 August 1929), Athens (*La propaganda corporativa all'estero*, «Corriere della sera», 5 November 1929), in Brazil (*I capisaldi dell'economia corporativa illustrati da Gino Arias in Brasile*, «Corriere della sera», 1 October 1933) and in Argentina (*La crisi liberale nella critica dell'economia corporativa*, «Il mattino d'Italia», 28 July 1933; *Le conferenze del Prof. Gino Arias*, «La scena illustrata», 13 August 1933).

<sup>12</sup> ASURm, f. AS 1427, «Arias Gino», «Stato matricolare».

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Gaetano Salvemini to Carlo Rosselli, 21 December 1933, in Elisa Signori (ed.), *Fra le righe. Carteggio fra Carlo Rosselli e Gaetano Salvemini*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2009, p. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Letter from Gino Arias to Leonia Galletti del 6 August 1938, quoted in Omar Ottonelli, *Gino Arias (1879-1940). Dalla storia delle istituzioni al corporativismo fascista*, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2012, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Archivio Accademia dei Georgofili, f. Ea.6.1, sf. «1938-1947 Accademici di razza ebraica», letter from Gino Arias, 8 September 1938.

<sup>16</sup> ASURm, f. AS 1427, «Arias Gino», «Trasmissione diploma di onorificenza», 14 January 1937.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, «Prof. Gino Arias - viaggio all'estero», 22 March 1938.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, «Insegnanti civili per la Scuola centrale dei Carabinieri reali in Firenze», 20 April 1938.

lectures, planned at the request of the commander of the Central Carabinieri School, Lieutenant Colonel Raffaele Castriotta, had for its subject «social legislation» and «corporate trade union legislation»<sup>19</sup>.

Instead, following the rector's request for clarification about his status,<sup>20</sup> although «without prejudice to the question (which will be decided separately) whether prof. Gino Arias is to be considered of Jewish race»,<sup>21</sup> by October 1938 he had been excluded by ministerial regulations from the University's examination committees; on 14 December 1938 he was suspended from university service, pending the decision of the Higher Commission for Demography and Race (Demorazza) on his belonging to the Jewish «race». Arias tried to defend himself in various ways, arguing, for example, that the family's origin was Spanish and not Jewish. Writing about his father he declared:

Paternal race. An ancient and noble family of Spanish race, widely represented in Spain and Latin America: writers, governors, bishops, etc. All Catholics. My branch is from the Spanish stock and my father professes the Jewish religion, religion, not race. We have returned to the Catholic religion of the race to which my paternal family belongs<sup>22</sup>.

In a letter he sent to Luigi Bottini, secretary of the Georgofili Academy, on 19 October 1938, Arias first attempted to be included in one of the categories which was distinguished for «special merits»;<sup>23</sup> in fact, he declared that he belonged to the second category, «family of war volunteers in the Spanish war», citing in this regard the presence of their son Bruno in the Iberian peninsula. «I also belong to the sixth category» (enrolled in the PNF between 1919 and 1922 and in the second half of 1924) - he continued - because,

See also *ibid.*, «Prof. Gino Arias», 10 July 1937.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, «Insegnanti civili al corso di cultura professionale per ufficiali superiori dei carabinieri reali», 16 June 1937. A trace of these previous engagements with the carabinieri (at least for the previous year) can be found in *ibid.*, «Prof. Gino Arias», 15 July 1936. According to Arias himself, the courses were held for ten years; cf. AFG, s. 5, ss. 12, f. 5, p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, «Prof. Gino Arias. Censimento», 28 September 1938.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, «Prof. G. Arias - Commissione esami», 4 October 1938.

<sup>22</sup> ACS, MI, DGDR, *Divisione razza, Fascicoli personali (1938-1944)*, f. «Arias Gino fu Alberto», Personal file, 5 September 1938.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Archivio Accademia dei Georgofili, f. Ea.6.1, «1938-1947 Accademici di razza ebraica», «Censimento Accademici di razza ebraica», 17 October 1938.

although his PNF card was dated 1923, he had taken part in the Naples congress, the run-up to the marches on Rome, so «the equivalence with 1922 cards is certain». Furthermore, he added, he had immediately fought in support of fascism «alongside Arnaldo Mussolini, in the “Popolo d’Italia”»<sup>24</sup>. This first letter, which does not seem to have been answered, was followed by another on 27 November, thus about a month later, again addressed to Bottini but in a much more despondent tone. «I am writing to my friend rather than to the secretary of the academy», Arias began, and after various accusations concluded: «it seems to me [...] that all this is only a horrible dream»<sup>25</sup>. Bottini's reply, almost mocking, came two days later. Although he understood Arias' state of mind, «the laws of the state are general and cannot cover individual cases. Your profound faith, which is well-known to me, will be of help to you»<sup>26</sup>.

In 1938 Arias sent a memoir to the Accademia dei Georgofili in which he proposed to illustrate «some aspects of my work and of my Italian fascist thought in the thirty years 1909-1938»<sup>27</sup>. To this was added a second text, addressed to the commission for exceptional merits, containing a long list of his publications and activities in support of the regime; at the end, the professor wrote: «as a Catholic, an Italian, a Fascist, I therefore ask to remain in the chair , which I have not deserted, but have truly deserved of the Homeland, of Learning and of Fascism [...]. I cannot agree not to be allowed to work again for young people and to live again among young people until the end»<sup>28</sup>. But his protests were to no avail and, in addition to being expelled

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., sf. «Gino Arias», letter to Luigi Bottini, 19 October 1938.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., letter to L. Bottini, 27 November 1938.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., letter from Luigi Bottini to Gino Arias, 29 November 1938. The preserved copy appears to be a draft of the letter.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., «Alcuni aspetti della mia opera e del mio pensiero d’italiano e di fascista nel trentennio 1909-1938».

<sup>28</sup> The memoir was actually sent to various personalities and institutions and is found in copies in various archives. The text quoted here comes from AFG, s. 5, ss. 12, f. 5. Other copies in the Archivio Accademia dei Georgofili, f. Ea.6.1, sf. «Gino Arias», Gino Arias, «Memoria per la valutazione delle benemerienze eccezionali», e ACS, MI, DGDR, *Divisione razza, Fascicoli personali (1938-1944)*, f. «Arias Gino fu Alberto», «Prof. Gino Arias deputato al Parlamento memoria per la valutazione delle benemerienze eccezionali».

from the university, he was also expelled from the editorial staff of the «Popolo d'Italia» and the magazines with which he collaborated, on 16 October from the Accademia dei Georgofili,<sup>29</sup> from the various institutions of which he was a member, and from Parliament. Arias' appeal was rejected and his suspension confirmed on 7 February 1939<sup>30</sup>.

After Arias' departure, his wife Leonia took over the case for reinstatement and, secondarily, that for exemption for exceptional merits; the latter application was officially filed on 27 January<sup>31</sup>. Even these attempts, however, brought no special results. Leonia again wrote at least two letters to the Directorate General for Demography and Race of the Ministry of the Interior (Demorazza) in 1939. In the first, dated 10 March, she again asked for exemption for the rest of her family, citing her own merits and those of her children, all - according to her - fervent fascists<sup>32</sup>.

A few months later, on May 4, 1939, she wrote again to plead her family's case. This time she turned directly to Antonio Le Pera, director of the Demorazza and a member of the commission for exceptional merits. For Gino, now in Argentina for some time, she stressed his commitment to spreading the fascist ideology even while being far from his homeland:

my husband is currently the holder of the Chair of Political Economy at the University of Tucuman [sic] (Argentina) where he proposes to continue his school of Corporate-Economics with the same Italian-scientist [sic] spirit, and in his mind's serenity, sure in fulfilling his duty now and always, devoted to his homeland, with only the pain of being far from it!<sup>33</sup>

At this point, however, not even Leonia seemed to entertain further hopes. In fact, informing Le Pera of her imminent departure to join her husband, she

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<sup>29</sup> On his expulsion from the Accademia, cf. Archivio Accademia dei Georgofili, f. Ea.6.1, «1938-1947 Accademici di razza ebraica». The exact date of the expulsion can be found in *ibid.*, sf. «Alessandro D'Ancona Guido Pontecorvo», expulsion decree, 16 March 1939.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the letter in ASURm, f. AS 1427, «Arias Gino», letter to the director of the personnel office of the University of Rome, 19 February 1939.

<sup>31</sup> Omar Ottonelli, *Zionism, Fascism, Racial Laws: the Case of Gino Arias*, «A Research Annual», 32, 2015, pp. 83-125: pp. 103-104.

<sup>32</sup> ACS, MI, DGDR, *Divisione razza, Fascicoli personali (1938-1944)*, f. «Arias Gino fu Alberto», letter from Leonia Galletti Arias to the Demorazza, 10 March 1939.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Leonia Galletti Arias to the Demorazza, 4 May 1939.

added: «I would like to have the purely spiritual joy of knowing that exemption has been granted and to bring the news to my husband»<sup>34</sup>. In fact, as already indicated, the reinstatement application had already been definitively rejected on 7 February 1939, thus leaving open only the route of exemption for exceptional merits, which, however, would have been simply a formal, «purely spiritual» recognition, as Leonia wrote, since it concerned only the property sphere and the private business sector, and therefore did not entail any attenuation of the provisions relating to public employees. For this last matter, at least, the outcome was positive. The Duce himself would approve the request,<sup>35</sup> even if it is not possible to establish a precise date. It certainly took place in the spring of 1939, because in the margin of Leonia's letter of 4 May someone, perhaps an official of the committee for exceptional merits, added a hand-written note dated 12 May 1939, which reads: «in the absence of the mother, who is in Bologna, her son Bruno was summoned, whom I informed that his father had been exempted»<sup>36</sup>. The news of the exemption, therefore, reached Arias through the family during the first half of 1939 but it was certainly not enough to allow him to return to Italy and resume his academic career. Leonia herself joined him, as had informed Le Pera, in August of that year, together with her fifteen-year-old son Valerio, who had stayed with her in Italy. Finally, as Fabio Franceschi pointed out, the request for «Aryanization» was categorically rejected by the Demorazza at the meeting of 5 August 1939, in whose minutes it was stated: «he asked to be considered non-Jewish, but was unable to document this claim with legal details»<sup>37</sup>.

### **The move to Argentina**

Gino had therefore decided to leave Italy even before the rejection of his

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., «On. Gino Prof. Arias», undated.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., letter from Leonia Galletti Arias to the Demorazza, 4 May 1939.

<sup>37</sup> ACS, MI, *Direzione generale per la demografia e la razza*, Parte I, *Atti amministrativi*, b. 4, f. 21, quoted in F. Franceschi, *Le leggi antiebraiche del 1938*, cit., p. 34.



appeal against the suspension, leaving his wife Leonia to lead his legal battle, as we have seen. At first, Amintore Fanfani (at the time professor of economic history at the Catholic University of Rome) suggested Brazil to him, offering him a possible university job<sup>38</sup>. However, it was finally decided to emigrate to Argentina. During the crossing, «on the Brazilian coast» Arias wrote to Giovanni Gentile to thank him for the help he had given him at home, even if it had not proved useful. The tone of the letter reveals the deep despair and frustration that Arias was experiencing:

forgive me if I left in a hurry, without saying goodbye and thanking you for what you did, even if in vain, to restore me to civil life, from which your laws had distanced me, depriving me even of the means necessary for family life. [...] Once the times have changed, as I hope, I will return to my homeland, as long as I can resume my ordinary life again, with dignity<sup>39</sup>.

Arias arrived in Buenos Aires on 30 January 1939 aboard the ship *Augustus*, coming from Genoa, with his daughter Irene; the jurist Antigono Donati also landed with them. Numerous journalists from the anti-fascist and tabloid press were waiting for them at the pier. The two men then met the provincial general of the Salesians in Buenos Aires with the aim of seeking help in finding a job<sup>40</sup>. The other Arias children arrived one by one in the course of 1939: Franco, an agronomist, on 6 May, also on board the *Augustus*; Valerio, a student, with his mother, on 20 August on board the *Neptunia* from Naples, and Bruno, an engineer, on 3 October, again on the *Augustus*.

It was not the first time that Arias had been to Argentina. He had arrived there on 21 July 1933 on the ship *Duilio* from Genoa, and then left in October, on behalf of the Foreign Ministry, for a series of conferences and courses in

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<sup>38</sup> Letter from Amintore Fanfani to Gino Arias, 21 November 1938, in O. Ottonelli, *Gino Arias*, cit., p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Gino Arias to Giovanni Gentile, 24 January 1939, in AFG, *Fondo Giovanni Gentile*, s. 1, *Corrispondenza*, ss. 2, *Lettere inviate a Gentile*, f. 255, «Arias Gino».

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Leticia Prislei, *Los orígenes del fascismo argentino*, Buenos Aires, Edhasa, 2008, pp. 85-86; and on the affair of Antigono Donati, reinstated in 1941 as judged «not belonging to the Jewish race», cf. Fabio Franceschi, *Le leggi antiebraiche del 1938 e la loro applicazione nella Facoltà giuridica della R. Università degli Studi di Roma*, «Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale», 38, 2014, pp. 1-69: 32 and *passim* <<https://www.statoechiese.it>>.

some Latin American universities (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Rosario, Montevideo, Santos, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo)<sup>41</sup>. Arias had not always been received with deference. The magazine «Tribuna socialista», an organ of the Socialist Party in Córdoba, regretted the fact that well over twenty-five fascists had attended the speech by the «Mussolini's emissary», and urged young people not to participate in conferences with this sort of guest and to take a more energetic position of rejection<sup>42</sup>. The Italian press, on the other hand, underlined the «enthusiasm» aroused by Arias in the Argentine public<sup>43</sup> despite «the intense hostile campaign of the local anti-fascist press, which incited the students to boycott the initiative»<sup>44</sup>.

In his second stay, in 1939, after a short period spent in Buenos Aires, during which he took part in the activities of courses on *Catholic culture*, he obtained a contract from the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán as holder of the chair of Political Economy at the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences and director of the Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales. He stayed in Tucumán for about a year, from May 1939 to April 1940, during which he proposed the creation of an Italian course (language and literature) intended for first-year students in law and social sciences. The magazine «Sustancia. Revista de cultura superior» greeted his arrival as that of the «master with the leading reputation in Political Economy in Italy, whose inaugural lecture marked him out as an extraordinary figure»<sup>45</sup>. In Tucumán, Arias founded and edited the «Revista de economía política». He then moved to the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, where he obtained the directorship of the seminar in economics

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<sup>41</sup> One of these courses, held at the Faculty of Law and Social Sciences of the University of Buenos Aires and entitled «From the liberal economy to the corporate economy: facts and doctrines», is reported in the *News* section of the «Rivista internazionale di scienze sociali e discipline ausiliarie», s. III, 4, 5, 1933, p. 681. For other documents relating to the 1933 trip see O. Ottonelli, *Gino Arias*, cit., P. 306.

<sup>42</sup> *Don Gino en la Universidad*, «Tribuna socialista», 15 September 1933. Arias' lecture was entitled «Economic crisis, its origin, development and prospects».

<sup>43</sup> *Un corso sul corporativismo fascista entusiasma l'uditorio in Argentina*, «Corriere della sera», 22 August 1933; *Le conferenze del Prof. Gino Arias*, «La scena illustrata», 13 August 1933

<sup>44</sup> *Un corso del prof. Arias a Buenos Aires sul corporativismo*, «Corriere della sera», 28 July 1933.

<sup>45</sup> «Sustancia. Revista de cultura superior», 1, 1, June 1939, p. 87.

and finance and a chair of political economy, at the Escuela de Ciencias Económicas, and was appointed a member of the first executive council of the University (in those years in process of renewal). With reference to his stay in Argentina, some information can be found in the letters that Gino wrote to his brother Guido. In the first one, sent from Tucumán on 2 February 1940, Gino described his new academic position and then went on to the activities of his four children: Bruno was still in Buenos Aires, looking for work; Franco was in Paraguay, carrying out an unspecified «work of colonization»; Irene was preparing for exams with a view to enrolment in a literature course; Valerio had enrolled in the second grade. In the next letter, sent this time from Córdoba on 1 May 1940, he updated his brother and his parents on his transfer to the new local university<sup>46</sup>. In Argentina he collaborated with the magazines «Sol y Luna», an organ for disseminating the ideas of right-wing Catholic nationalism, «Criterio», not founded by him as erroneously stated by some secondary sources,<sup>47</sup> also of right-wing Catholic orientation, and the aforementioned «Sustancia. Revista de cultura superior». Other contributions by him appeared in «Revista de economía política», «Cátedra», «Finanzas. Revista mensual de economía» and in the «Revista de economía y estadística». During his exile, his lines of analysis did not change, nor did any new works appear, apart from his contributions to periodicals, some of which, however, were essays previously published and now translated into Spanish. In the last days of his life he was devoting himself to a work, a *Manual de economía política*, which his daughter Irene then had printed,<sup>48</sup> when interviewed about her father, she defined him as a «strict Catholic thinker of Jewish origin».<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Both letters are quoted by O. Ottonelli, *Gino Arias*, cit., p. 42, n. 165. His daughter Irene later taught Latin in the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires.

<sup>47</sup> Cf., for example, Pietro Rinaldo Fanesi, *Gli ebrei italiani nelle Americhe dopo le leggi razziali del 1938*, Rome, Nova Delphi Academia, 2021, p. 47. The first issue of the review «Criterio» appeared 8 March 1928; the review, during Arias' years in Argentina, was edited by Monsignor Guido Franceschi.

<sup>48</sup> Gino Arias, *Manual de economía política*, Buenos Aires, Lajouane, 1942.

<sup>49</sup> Dionisio Petriella, Sara Sosa Miatello, *Diccionario biográfico italo-argentino*, Buenos Aires,

## Contacts with Italy

The contacts he maintained with Italy seem few and sporadic, even though he did not give up hope of being able to return to his homeland. He wrote to Gentile again in 1939, after his arrival in Argentina, thanking him for the assistance given to his wife, «at this painful time». He also asked for academic material to be sent to him, including the report of the Fascist Committee of Eighteen, of which he had been a member in 1925, since, as he said, «here too, as in Spain, corporatism could be established»<sup>50</sup>. The letter is undated, so it is unclear whether it was written before or after the Demorazza's pronouncement on his case. In addition to Gentile, Arias continued his correspondence, which had lasted for years, with Giorgio Del Vecchio, until recently dean of the Faculty of Law of the University of Rome, also expelled as a Jew despite his closeness to the fascist regime. Arias informed him of his transfer to the University of Córdoba, «the oldest and most renowned Argentine university», yet he made no secret of the fact that he wanted to return to Italy: «I greet you with the most affectionate cordiality, hoping that the day will come when it will be possible for me to do so, once again, in your busy office in Rome, in which you have had the great merit of forming so many young intelligences and of spreading so much light of genuinely Italian thought»<sup>51</sup>. In addition to congratulating him on the post, Del Vecchio's response contains a greeting for two colleagues, Marcello Finzi and Rodolfo Mondolfo,<sup>52</sup> who had also emigrated to Argentina, evidence, perhaps of the

Asociación Dante Alighieri, 1976, under name.

<sup>50</sup> AFG, *Fondo Giovanni Gentile*, s. 1, *Corrispondenza*, ss. 2, *Lettere inviate a Gentile*, f. 255, «Arias Gino (7 July 1924-1939)», Letter from Gino Arias to Giovanni Gentile, 1939. In any case, after his visit in 1933 he had already said he was optimistic about the possibilities of a fascist state in Argentina: *L'idea fascista nell'America Latina. Dichiarazioni del prof. Gino Arias*, «Corriere della sera», 25 November 1933.

<sup>51</sup> Università La Sapienza, Rome, Biblioteca interdipartimentale di scienze giuridiche, *Fondo Giorgio Del Vecchio*, s. 1, *Corrispondenza*, f. 486, «Arias Gino», letter from Gino Arias to Giorgio Del Vecchio, 1 May 1940.

<sup>52</sup> On the latter, helped by Gentile in finding a new job in Argentina, see Paolo Simoncelli, «Non credo neanche io alla razza». *Gentile e i colleghi ebrei*, Florence, Le Lettere, 2013, pp. 41-44. Gentile's letter of recommendation for Mondolfo, addressed to Coriolano Alberini (Alberini, a full professor in Buenos Aires, was at this time Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires) and dated 3 February 1939, and that of 18 March 1939, in

establishment of a small community of exiles around the local universities. Del Vecchio's letter appears rather fatalistic on the situation in which he and Arias had found themselves, «faced with the recent disasters that “occidere animam non possunt” [cannot kill the soul]»<sup>53</sup>. Similar tones are found in a subsequent reply to a missive from Arias, unfortunately now lost. Commenting on some copies of the «Revista de economía política» sent to him by Arias, Del Vecchio wrote:

I see that your strong scientific personality has already established itself very well in this country as well; and while this does not surprise me, it does give me great pleasure [...] I lead, as you can imagine, a very private life, but I do not lack spiritual comforts, starting with the tranquillity of my conscience, so that I am quite peaceful. It is pointless to philosophize over what has happened<sup>54</sup>.

### Death in Argentina and the epilogue in Italy

Arias died in Córdoba on 14 October 1940. In his funeral speech, Benjamín Cornejo, Director of the Escuela de ciencias económicas, said that Arias had died suddenly while on his way to the university for his usual lessons<sup>55</sup>. On the other hand, an article by Adolfo Kuznitzky, published in the online magazine «Justicia y Comercio», spoke of suicide, resulting from the depression into which he had fallen for being unable to escape the racial laws<sup>56</sup>. Again, in the funeral speech, Cornejo said:

He died far from the homeland he loved so much and is embarking on the journey of no return, deprived of the light of the official tributes his high merits had abundantly earned. But this farewell, which a deeply affected group of colleagues and students pays him in the distant homeland of his adoption, matches more than genuinely with what

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which Gentile thanks Alberini for his help, are found in AFG, *Fondo Giovanni Gentile*, s. 1, *Corrispondenza*, ss. 3, *Lettere di Gentile*, f. 4, «Alberini Coriolano (20 June 1926 - 26 December 1939)».

<sup>53</sup> Università La Sapienza, Rome, Biblioteca interdipartimentale di scienze giuridiche, *Fondo Giorgio Del Vecchio*, s. 1, *Corrispondenza*, f. 486, «Arias Gino», letter from Giorgio Del Vecchio to Gino Arias, 29 July 1940.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Giorgio Del Vecchio to Gino Arias, 21 November 1940.

<sup>55</sup> *Profesor Gino Arias*, «Revista de economía y estadística», s. I, 2, 4, 1940, p. 482. In the obituary the date of death is given as 12 October 1940.

<sup>56</sup> Adolfo Kuznitzky, *Mondolfo e gli ebrei d'Italia en Córdoba*, «Comercio y justicia», 14 June 2014 <<https://comercioyjusticia.info>> (accessed 5 December 2021)

Doctor Gino Arias wished to be and was throughout his life: a teacher. [...] His scientific vocation and his sense of duty overlapped his tragedy as a man and a patriot. Only careful observation could perceive the dignity of deep sadness<sup>57</sup>.

The obituary signed by Ernesto Sestan in March 1941 in the «Rivista storico italiana», at that time edited by Gioacchino Volpe, took a different tone. The text focused above all on his work as a historian, taking issue over his links with Achille Loria and with foreign scholars :

his thought was not robust enough to be able to escape so many disparate influences; certainly, he was, then as always, a scholar of vast learning, of broad reading: in comparison with his contemporaries, who might seemed, wrongly, reined in during those years by a rather provincial culture, he could appear, almost ostentatiously, up to date with the latest theories of this German sociologist or that American economist and recall in his studies comparable current phenomena from distant worlds, from India, from Japan. But how was this useful for the understanding of Italian history? Instead, if we may say so, it was useful for the constructions, all intellectualising and abstract, of his sociological mindset; for those systems of his which - once constructed - moved by themselves. [...] Arias was not born for historical studies; and he seemed to realize this, moving away from them after that five-year period of youthful activity and dedicating himself to other studies, more openly and systematically economic<sup>58</sup>.

An aftermath of the Arias affair once again saw as protagonist Gino's widow, Leonia, who turned to the Duce, «pointing out that she was left without means and seeking help for herself and her four children» after the death of her husband. Leonia requested that her husband's pension be paid to her (which Arias was entitled to according to the provisions of **RDL 1728 of 17 November 1938** of 17 November 1938) and that the retirement pension provided for by **law 587 of 23 May 1940** of 23 May 1940 be applied in favour of herself and her children (an allowance for four years of an amount equal to the difference between the salary received at the time of settlement and the pension provided for by RDL 1728). Finally, she asked to be allowed to

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<sup>57</sup> *Profesor Gino Arias*, cit., pp. 480-481, 482.

<sup>58</sup> Ernesto Sestan, *Necrologio di G. Arias*, «Rivista storica italiana», 58, 1941, p. 136-137. On Sestan, his historiographical activity and his positions over the twenty years, Giuliano Pinto, *Sestan, Ernesto*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 92, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2018 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 22 January 2022).

transfer the sum obtained from the sale of a house owned in Florence to Argentina. While this last request could be accepted without particular problems, the other two, despite Mussolini's approval, presented considerable bureaucratic obstacles. First, the Ministry of National Education pointed out that «to accommodate the requests of Signora Arias it would be necessary to enact a special law or to issue an administrative order to be registered with the Court of Auditors»<sup>59</sup>. The first solution, that of a special law, «would not seem appropriate in the case of a person of Jewish race». The second, on the other hand, appeared not to be feasible, since university professors had been excluded from the retirement pension provided for by law 587. This led to the paradoxical situation in which the ministry asked the Demorazza not to apply RDL 1728 to the deceased Arias, which would have made it possible to revoke the dismissal from service of 14 December 1938 and to reinstate Professor Arias de facto in his university role as a dead person. In this way, the widow would have been able to enjoy «not only all the benefits afforded by the application of law no. 587 of 1940-XVIII, but also [...] to have a further advantage, namely that of the collection of the service supplement active from 14 December 1938-XVII to 12 October 1940-XVIII»<sup>60</sup>. Arias therefore seemed on the verge of being reinstated, not for his scientific merits or for his unconditional support for the regime, but to find a quick solution to the widow's economic situation. Even this time, however, Le Pera remained immovable: «not only because the law does not allow any derogation in this regard but also because the family members of Prof. Arias [sic] could in consequence advance the right of payment of all arrears as well as those deriving from the deceased's estate»<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>59</sup> ACS, MI, DGDR, *Divisione razza, Fascicoli personali (1938-1944)*, f. «Arias Gino fu Alberto», Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri to the Demorazza, «Leonina Galletti ved. Prof. Arias», 28 January 1941.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Demorazza to the Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri, «Leonina Galletti ved. Arias», 28 January 1941.

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### Archival sources

A *Gino Arias* collection is maintained at the Social Sciences Library of the University of Florence; it includes both his private library and some papers



awaiting reorganization. An inventory prior to the bequest is in Omar Ottonelli, *Gino Arias*, cit., pp. 281-312.

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