

## Emanuele (Emanuel) Pekelis

[Go to personal file](#)

Having just graduated, Pekelis left with his entire family from Odessa to reach his brother Alexander in Florence. He studied medicine and became a volunteer assistant at the Institute of Pathological Anatomy; in 1938, he was expelled from the Professional registry by the Fascist union of medical doctors of the province of Florence and from the Accademia medico-fisica fiorentina. He was compelled to emigrate and managed to reach safety in the United States, where he found work in different hospitals and obtained naturalization. He did not return to Italy.

### From Odessa to Florence

Emanuele (Emanuel) Pekelis was born on 11 January 1904 in Odessa to shop owner Haim and Maria Rosa Levinson. He was the second born of three brothers: the oldest, Alessandro (Alexander) was born on 7 April 1902 while the youngest, Abraam Raimondo, was born on 25 July 1907<sup>1</sup>.

Their parents urged Alessandro, upon graduating from high school, to leave Odessa for a foreign country<sup>2</sup> before turning eighteen years old, in order to avoid the draft; the young man settled in Vienna where he enrolled at the university in Philosophy<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ASUFi, AC, SS, b. 211, f. 3991, «Pekelis Alessandro», Police Bureau, authenticated copy of the residence declaration of foreigners in Italy, n. 3866, Florence, 8 August 1924, and *ibid.*, b. 422, f. 10796, «Pekelis Emanuele», authenticated translation of the birth certificate, Florence, 8 December 1922. In this document, the birth date is indicated as 29 December 1903 according to the Julian calendar, and the conversion to the Gregorian calendar is written in pencil. See the entry *Alessandro Haim Pekelis*, in *Russi in Italia: dizionario* <<http://www.russinitalia.it>>, in which the birth date of Emanuele is, however, mistaken, whereas the birth date of Raimondo is recorded as 27 July 1907 also in *Indice generale degli ebrei stranieri internati in Italia 1940-1943, ad nomen*, available online in the portal of the Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center <<https://www.cdec.it>> (accessed 16 December 2021).

<sup>2</sup> ASUFi, AC, SS, b. 211, f. 3991, «Pekelis Alessandro», sworn translation in Italian of the diploma for the degree completed in Odessa, Rome, 14 October 1921; see also Carla Pekelis, *La mia versione dei fatti*, Palermo, Sellerio, 1996, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup> ASUFi, AC, SS, b. 211, f. 3991, «Pekelis Alessandro», R. University of Vienna, identification card

Link to other connected Lives on the move:

[Alessandro \(Sandòr\) Bieber](#)

[Carla Coen Pekelis](#)

[David Diringner](#)

[Guta Gluckmann](#)

[Medshiboshski](#)

[Beniamino Jolles](#)

[Enrico Zvi Jolles](#)

[Oscar Levi then Landi](#)

[Giuseppe \(Josip\)](#)

[Medshiboshski](#)

[Willy Oppler](#)

[Alessandro Pekelis](#)

[William \(Guglielmo\)](#)

[Nino Rogers](#)

[Carlo Schapira then](#)

[Sorell](#)

[Isacco Sciaky](#)

[Jacob Teicher](#)

[Stefano Vadász](#)

[Mario Volterra](#)

However, the goal of the Pekelis family was to emigrate and join their oldest son, and to accomplish this, they waited for Emanuele to finish his secondary education at the supplementary department of the Professional Technical School of Odessa in June 1921<sup>4</sup>. In the meantime Alessandro left Austria and declared to have moved to Italy on 30 October 1921, where he took up residence at via Tornabuoni 7 in Florence<sup>5</sup>. It was in Florence where his whole family reunited. However, a few months later the father Haim died «from complications after surgery»<sup>6</sup>. According to the posthumous memoirs of Carla Coen, who became Alessandro's wife in 1931, Alessandro took on the job of his father Haim in «fur trading»<sup>7</sup> and opened a wholesale on via Tornabuoni. But the two younger brothers «Emanuele and Raimondo, although impressed by [their brother's] success, were in a certain way critical regarding his choice of Florence instead of the city that had been for a long time a beacon of culture and taste in the eyes of the Russians, namely Paris!»<sup>8</sup>.

In Florence, however, there was one of the largest Russian communities in Italy, settled there since the Napoleonic era and characterized by an orthodox majority. This community also comprised «Jewish families from the Russian empire who referred to the lively Jewish community in the city». By bringing together a certain religious tolerance, cultural liveliness and study and business opportunities, Florence even more became a point of reference for all expatriate compatriots in the aftermath of the Russian revolution<sup>9</sup>.

---

of the Philosophy student, Mr. Alessandro Pekelis, issued on 20 September 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., b. 422, f. 10796, «Pekelis Emanuele», registration form at the R. Istituto di studi superiori in Florence, 17 December 1922, which informs that his school issued the transcript of his course of study on 15 June 1921; however, the certificate is not present in the file.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., b. 211, f. 3991, «Pekelis Alessandro», Province of Florence, copy of the residence declaration of foreigners in Italy by Alessandro Pekelis (according to the RDL 25 January 1923, n. 64), Florence, 8 August 1924.

<sup>6</sup> C. Pekelis, *La mia versione dei fatti*, cit., p. 61.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>9</sup> See Marcello Garzaniti, *La comunità ortodossa russa a Firenze fra Ottocento e Novecento*, «Annali di storia di Firenze», VIII, 2013, pp. 285-295, p. 289; see also Giuseppina La Rocca, *L'aquila bicipite e il tenero Iris. Tracce russe a Firenze nel primo Novecento (1899-1939)*, Pisa, Pisa

Alessandro grew impatient not so much with the city of Florence but rather, with his commercial activity. In fact, he chose to return to school – changing direction with respect to his Viennese studies – and undertook legal studies by enrolling at the Law School in the academic year 1924-25. Perhaps he was inspired by Emanuele, who was the first to enroll, in the academic year 1922-23,<sup>10</sup> at the School of Medicine and Surgery of the Regio Istituto di studi pratici e di perfezionamento in Florence.

### University studies

The Pekelis brothers were part of a group of Jewish students from Central and Eastern Europe and from Russia enrolled at the Florentine university, who graduated between 1927 and 1931<sup>11</sup>. Both graduated in 1928 and became volunteer assistants in the same year: Emanuele at the Institute of Pathological Anatomy and his brother Alessandro to the chair of Criminal Law and Procedure<sup>12</sup>. As such, they lived through the spread of fascism – underway since the early 1920s – in all of the university schools, and in January 1926, they witnessed the resignation of antifascist Giulio Chiarugi from the office of rector – one of the first apparent successes of the fascists. The medical faculty were among the principal protagonists of those events, and an important part of that process consisted in trusting men close to fascism with the direction of the medical clinics.

In those years, Alessandro had gotten close to many of the antifascist circles linked to prominent figures like Piero Calamandrei and Nello Rosselli<sup>13</sup>. When

---

University Press, 2018, pp. 161-162.

<sup>10</sup> ASUFi, AC, SS, b. 422, f. 10796, «Pekelis Emanuele», application to the first year of the School of Medicine and Surgery, Florence, 15 November 1922.

<sup>11</sup> See Anna Teicher, *Da discriminati a rifugiati: gli studiosi ebrei stranieri dell'ateneo di Firenze*, in Patrizia Guarnieri (a cura di), *L'emigrazione intellettuale dall'Italia fascista. Studenti e studiosi ebrei dall'Università di Firenze in fuga all'estero*, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2019, pp. 41-56, p. 42; the others were the Poles David Diringer (Literature), Jacob Teicher (Philosophy), the brothers Enrico Zvi Jolles (Science) and Beniamino Jolles (Medicine) together with the other medical doctors: the Romanian Carlo Schapira and the Hungarian Alessandro Bieber, who were joined by Guglielmo (William) Nino Rogers, a Jew of English origin but born in Trieste.

<sup>12</sup> R. University of Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1927-1928», p. 53 and p. 88.

<sup>13</sup> See Massimo Mastrogregori, *Il caso Pekelis. Croce, Russo, Calamandrei e la protezione degli*

Emanuele Pekelis defended his thesis entitled «Il cancro primitivo del polmone» [The primary lung cancer] on 8 November 1928 at the Institute of Pathological Anatomy, receiving the grade of 83/90,<sup>14</sup> the same Institute was directed by Bindo De Vecchi, a full professor. Two years later, in 1930, De Vecchi replaced Enrico Burci as rector of the university, and remained in that office until his death in 1936<sup>15</sup>. De Vecchi had been among the commanders of the Fascist University Militia created by Burci and used to maintain order within the University.

Emanuele Pekelis was a volunteer assistant at the Institute of Pathological Anatomy for two consecutive academic years<sup>16</sup>. Among the volunteer assistants of the Clinic was also Gino Patrassi,<sup>17</sup> who had been a member of the Fasci di combattimento [fighting leagues] since 1921: ten years later, this colleague of Pekelis' would play a significant role in his life. Together with his brother Alessandro, Emanuele obtained Italian citizenship only in 1931, which, according to the Law, was among the mandatory requirements to hold any university position; this may also be the reason why he could not enter the national search for an assistant and thus continue his academic career<sup>18</sup>.

---

*studiosi ebrei nell'autunno 1938*, «Storiografia», 6, 2002, pp. 127-129.

<sup>14</sup> ASUFI, AC, SS, b. 422, f. 10796, «Pekelis Emanuele», Regio Istituto di studi pratici e di perfezionamento, original of the graduation report, 8 November 1928; Biblioteca biomedica, Università di Firenze (BBUF), *Tesi storiche*, T.L.24.3, E. Pekelis, «Il cancro primitivo del polmone», typewritten thesis, Facoltà di Medicina, Istituto di Anatomia patologica diretto dal prof. Bindo De Vecchi, a.y. 1927-28.

<sup>15</sup> See Antonio Pavan, *De Vecchi Bindo*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 39, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1991 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 23 December 2021).

<sup>16</sup> R. University of Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1928-29», p. 88; and *ibid.*, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1929-30», p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> Gino Patrassi moved to Padua: see Archivio dell'Ordine dei medici chirurghi e odontoiatri della Provincia di Firenze (AOMFI), *Fondo Medici chirurghi cessati* (MCC), *Fascicoli personali* (FP), f. 525, «Patrassi Gino», Medical Union of Padua, original of the registration for transfer of Prof. Dr. Gino Patrassi, 4 March 1940. On his academic career at the University of Padua see Achille Cesare Pessina and Giuseppe Realdi, *La scuola internistica padovana di medicina clinica e sperimentale di Gino Patrassi*, «Medicina e chirurgia. Journal of Italian Medical Education. Quaderni delle conferenze permanenti delle Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia», 60, 2013, pp. 2710-2712 <<http://www.quaderni-conferenze-medicina.it>> (accessed 23 December 2021).

<sup>18</sup> A. Teicher, *Da discriminati a rifugiati*, cit., p. 44 and p. 46, and RD 30 September 1923, n. 2102, *Ordinamento della istruzione superiore*, GU n. 239, 11 October 1923, art. 35, comma 3, and art.

During the years in which he was a volunteer assistant, he published a volume entitled *I riflessi condizionati* and some contributions in medical periodicals concerning the topic of his degree thesis, namely on lung cancer, in addition to monographic works illustrated with tables<sup>19</sup>. In December 1933 Emanuele authored an article in German with two colleagues in the «Zeitschrift für die gesamte experimentelle Medizin», which presented the results of a research on pathological anatomy carried out in Frankfurt, where, in the previous months, he had spent a period of study, probably as exchange fellow, at the Medizinische Universitäts-Klinik<sup>20</sup>.

Meanwhile he qualified to practice the medical profession by taking the state exam in Rome in 1929;<sup>21</sup> in the same year he registered in the Medical doctors' professional registry of Florence in order to start his medical practice, and moved his residence from the family home to via Gustavo Modena 4<sup>22</sup>.

Of the next ten years we only know that he was a licensed physician and that his academic career did not go beyond those two years as a volunteer assistant and his stay in Frankfurt.

---

115, even though the law refers only to the assistant and help personnel appointed through a national public search, who had been officially hired and received a salary. Instead, volunteer assistants worked without compensation and were therefore neither officially hired nor received a salary. This later changed with the DL 1 October 1973, n. 580, *Misure urgenti per l'Università*, GU n. 255, 2 October 1973, art. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Emanuele Pekelis, *I riflessi condizionati*, Bologna, Stabilimenti poligrafici riuniti, 1929; Id., *Linfosarcoma peribronchiale primitivo*, «Pathologica», 15 February 1930; Id., *Il cancro del polmone*, «Tumori», 1, 1931; Id., *Il cancro primitivo bronchiale nel materiale necroscopico di Firenze*, «Accademia medico-fisica», 13 March 1931; Id., *Contributo allo studio anatomo-patologico dei carcinomi primitivi del polmone*, Florence-Milan, Istituto di Anatomia patologica della Regia Università di Firenze - Istituto editoriale scientifico, 1931; Id., *Sulle granulazioni azzurrofile delle cellule dei connettivi*, «Haematologica», 1931; the complete list of the publications is included in the bibliography.

<sup>20</sup> Id., G. Hessel and H. Meltzer, *Untersuchungen über die Ausscheidung Harnfähiger Stoffe in den Magendarmkanal bei nephrektomierten Hunden*, «Zeitschrift für die gesamte experimentelle Medizin», 1 December 1933. The affiliation can be inferred in *ibidem*. The fellowship was likely connected with an exchange program since there is no file under the name of Pekelis in the Universitätsarchiv Frankfurt (communication from Carsten Trautmann, 8 June 2022).

<sup>21</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. «Pekelis Emanuele», R. University of Rome, certificate of the State Exam for qualification to practice the profession with a score of 100/110 dated 11 January 1929, certified copy of the original, Florence, 2 February 1929.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, application for registration in the Medical professional registry of Florence, typewritten original, 27 February 1929.

### **Disbarred and stateless for a second time**

In any case, he must have settled in and decided to stay and work in Italy, until the situation changed radically in September 1938, when the *Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza nella scuola fascista* [Provisions for the defense of the race in the fascist school] were promulgated, which ordered the expulsion of Jewish teachers and students from the school system<sup>23</sup>. Even though Emanuele did not hold any academic positions, the racial provision impacted him because Article 4 provided that Jewish members ceased to be part of academies, associations and cultural institutes by October 16. Emanuele was therefore identified among the members of Jewish origin of the Accademia medico-fisica fiorentina, even though he did not file his «Personal Form», a pre-printed form that he had been sent to fill out as an aggregate member for the census. Mario Volterra, one of the full members of the society, did the same;<sup>24</sup> they were both expelled from the Accademia in October 1938 along with all of their colleagues who shared Jewish origins. Two days later, another decree was published, namely the *Provvedimenti nei confronti degli ebrei stranieri* [Provisions regarding foreign Jews]<sup>25</sup>. This struck him even more closely: Article 3 revoked the Italian citizenship of Jewish foreigners who had received it after 1 January 1919; he thus returned to being stateless.

### **Traveling once again: from Florence to France**

In the meantime, the trade unions also started to identify members of Jewish

---

<sup>23</sup> RDL 5 September 1938, n. 1390, *Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza nella scuola fascista*, GU n. 209, 13 September 1938, converted into L 5 January 1939, n. 99.

<sup>24</sup> BBUF, Archivio Accademia medico-fisica fiorentina, II b, cc. 78-89, VI 3.6, «Elenco nominativo dei soci effettivi e aggregati, emeriti», 1937: Emanuele Pekelis is at line 71 of the list of aggregate members, while Mario Volterra is at line 85 of the list of full members; the names were canceled with a red pencil. On the questionnaire of the racial census promoted by the Ministry of National Education see also the appendix in Annalisa Capristo, *L'espulsione degli ebrei dalle accademie italiane*, Turin, Zamorani, 2002, even though in the volume only the expulsion of his brother Alessandro from the Italian Society for the Philosophy of Law is mentioned (pp. 316-317).

<sup>25</sup> RDL 7 September 1938, *Provvedimenti nei confronti degli ebrei stranieri*, GU n. 208, 12 September 1938.

origin through the same «Personal Forms» used previously by the Ministry of National Education. Emanuele Pekelis filled out and turned in his «Personal Form», in which he declared to be of the «Jewish race» from both parents, to be a member of the Israelite Community and to profess the Jewish religion<sup>26</sup>. The Fascist union of medical doctors of the province of Florence drew a first list of members to be removed from the professional registry: the name of Emanuele Pekelis appeared there among 29 foreign colleagues. Among them, only Abramo Medshiboshski and his wife Guta Gluckmann, both dentists, shared with Pekelis the condition of being Russian and stateless<sup>27</sup>. Among the members of the union leadership who undersigned that list was also Gino Patrassi, who had been called to serve on the Board of auditors and who, as has been said, had been a volunteer assistant with Pekelis in the same institute ten years prior<sup>28</sup>. When the Union sent him the notice, Emanuele Pekelis had already crossed the border. His file with the Professional registry includes the receipt of the registered letter by which he was informed of his removal, and which was signed by a certain Berti<sup>29</sup>. Since he was no longer able to exercise his profession, the only alternative was to flee and the first destination was France, which could even seem to be a safe haven under the government of Édouard Daladier. Carla Pekelis writes that she and her three daughters moved from Florence first to Nice; then, her husband Alessandro went to take them to Paris. They then moved from the capital first to Tours, then to Haut Bagnac, and to Marseille<sup>30</sup>. Their respective

---

<sup>26</sup> AOMFi, *Miscellanea non inventariata*, «Scheda personale Pekelis Emanuele», original form completed and signed, Florence, 20 September 1938.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., «Verbale assemblea ordinaria Sindacato fascista medici di Firenze», n. 3; «Elenco nominativi ebrei stranieri», 30 January 1939; see here [Guta Gluckmann Medshiboshski](#) and [Giuseppe \(Josip\) Medshiboshski](#).

<sup>28</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. «Patrassi Gino», communication of the nomination to the provincial directorate of the Union of medical doctors from the provincial secretary Umberto Luigi Torrini, 24 January 1939.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., MCC, FP, f. «Pekelis Emanuele», copy of the signed registered letter from Umberto Luigi Torrini, secretary of the Fascist union of medical doctors of Florence, to Emanuele Pekelis, Florence, 31 January 1939, with dated acknowledgement of receipt of the registered letter attached, 3 February 1939.

<sup>30</sup> See C. Pekelis, *La mia versione dei fatti*, cit., p. 162.

mothers, Maria Rosa and Ada Coen, were also with them. Carla does not specify if Emanuele left with them, but they were all together in Paris because on the boarding pass Emanuele indicated the address of Avenue Victor Hugo 174 in the French capital as his last residence, with his mother.

After the Nazi invasion of Poland, France no longer seemed safe and the Pekelis family decided to move again. They were likely divided in Marsiglia: everyone, except Emanuele, followed Alessandro, initially to Spain – Perpignan, Barcelona, Madrid, Badajoz – then to Lisbon in Portugal<sup>31</sup>. Emanuele instead decided to change continents and boarded the SS President Garfield in Marseille on 10 December 1939, declaring that he was reaching a relative, «Mrs. T. Tchlenoff», at 3569 Broadway. «Mrs. T. Tchlenoff» is most likely Tacta Levinson, widow of Emanuel Tchlenoff and the sister of Emanuele's mother Maria Rosa; she lived with her daughter Rya and Rya's American husband<sup>32</sup>. The ship docked in New York on Christmas Eve.

Almost one year later, on 28 December 1940, his brother Alessandro left Lisbon, with his wife Carla and their three daughters Daniela Ada, Simona Luciana Raimonda Emanuela and Rossella Carla Alessandra, all under the age of 18; their two grandmothers were with them and all together they reached Carla's brother, who had been the first to leave<sup>33</sup>. Guido Coen, also a lawyer, had settled at 235 East 75th Street in New York<sup>34</sup>.

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> See The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen* <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 16 December 2021). On Tacta Tchlenoff see *Department of commerce-Bureau of the census, Sixteenth census of the United States: 1940, New York*, in which she appears as a resident with her daughter Rya, married to the head of the family Reuben Gabel, document accessible *ad nomen* at <<https://myheritage.it>> (accessed upon registration 3 January 2022).

<sup>33</sup> They embarked from the port of Lisbon on the ship Serpa Pinto on 28 December 1940 and reached their destination on 9 January 1941; see The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen* <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 16 December 2021). A photo of Carla with her daughters in New York in 1951 is in the [gallery](#) of Carla Coen Pekelis.

<sup>34</sup> Guido Coen's first trip to the United States was from Genoa on 4 December 1938; the second was also from Genoa on 8 September 1939. The residential address indicated is the one transcribed on the back of the boarding pass of Alessandro Pekelis and his family; see The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen* <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 16 December 2021).



While the other members of his family had fled to the United States, Raimondo, the youngest of the Pekelis brothers, stayed in Italy: his name appears in the lists *Ebrei stranieri internati in Italia 1940-1943* [Foreign Jews interned in Italy 1940-1943], according to which he was interned in Isola del Gran Sasso in September of 1940 and, in May of 1942, he appears to have been transferred to Ferramonti, in the province of Cosenza. He would later manage to arrive in Switzerland<sup>35</sup>.

### In the United States

In 1940 Emanuele Pekelis was already employed at St. Francis Hospital and Nurse Home, 928 Emporia Avenue, Wichita, Sedgwick, Kansas<sup>36</sup>. In the United States he would also meet his future wife: Rosemarie Milly Lenel. In addition to medical training, the two shared the same Jewish origin, which had compelled them to seek refuge overseas. Rosemarie was born in Mannheim, Germany and, in the 1930s, sought refuge in Switzerland, at her brother Heinz Walter Lenel's place in Berna<sup>37</sup>. Her name appears in the correspondence of Walter Maria Kotschnig (1901-1985), also a German Jew, who, in 1925, worked at the International Student Service (ISS) in Geneva and later served as its General Secretary from 1927 to 1934. In 1936, Kotschnig emigrated with his family to the United States, where he served as a foreign policy adviser and was active in the agencies of the United Nations<sup>38</sup>.

---

<sup>35</sup> See the information held in the online database Anna Pizzuti (a cura di), *Ebrei stranieri internati in Italia durante il periodo bellico, ad nomen* <<http://www.annapizzuti.it>> (accessed 18 December 2021).

<sup>36</sup> Kansas, Department of commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth census of the United States: 1940*, «Pekelis Emanuel», accessible *ad nomen* at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 3 January 2022).

<sup>37</sup> She indicated as the last residence of her brother Heinz Lenel «57 Langgassk», that is, Länggasse 57, Berna, when she boarded the SS Excalibur in Lisbon on 5 December 1941 and arrived in New York on 18 December 1941; documents reproduced at The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search*, «Rosmarie Milly Lenel» <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 3 January 2022).

<sup>38</sup> See University at Albany, State University of New York, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, *German and Jewish Intellectual Émigré Collections, Walter Maria Kotschnig Papers, 1920-1984, Correspondence, 1927-1984, Correspondence with individuals connected with the International Student Services (ISS), the Work Camps for America of the ISS, the*

Rosemarie was likely helped by ISS while she was in Switzerland, so that she could continue her education once she had arrived in the United States, as part of the plans of the American government to aid refugee students, who were looking for programs that could accommodate them. In a newspaper of the time we read that Mount Holyoke College, founded in 1837 as a women's school, «is expecting Rosemarie Lenel of Mannheim who will continue her pre-medical studies»<sup>39</sup>.

Emanuele and Rosemarie married on 18 April 1943 in Larchmont, New York<sup>40</sup>. Meanwhile in Italy, on 25 September 1944, the reconstituted Professional registry of medical doctors of Florence restored Emanuele Pekelis' registration on its own initiative, as it did for all of his disbarred colleagues. However, Emanuele was not interested in going back, so much so that he had requested naturalization, which he obtained in December 1945<sup>41</sup>. The medical Board of Florence did not track him down, and the Board's Council deleted him from the Registry on 30 November 1947 as untraceable and in arrears<sup>42</sup>.

From New York the couple moved to South Dakota and in 1948, both worked at McKennan Hospital<sup>43</sup> in Sioux Falls. Then the two decided to go westward

---

*European Student Relief Fund, the World Student Service and the World Student Service Fund, 1932-1971, bulk 1936-1943, b. 2, f. 63, «Lenel, Rosemarie, 1939».*

<sup>39</sup> Carnzu Clark, *College Students of U.S. Plan System of Refugee Education*, «The Centenary Conglomerate», 17 March 1939. The same article was published with the revised title, *College Students and Refugees*, in «The Canadian Jewish Chronicle», 31 March 1939. On the story of Mount Holyoke College information is available online at <<https://www.mtholyoke.edu>> (accessed 3 January 2022).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, New York City, *Marriage License Index 1908-1972*, marriage license dated 6 April 1943, n. 6632, vol. 3. On his wife see Chicago Illinois, Naturalization Records, District Court, Northern District, Petitions for Naturalization, v. 1289, No. 319551-319800, Ca. 1944-1946, no. 319639, 19 February 1946, accessible *ad nomen* at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 3 January 2022).

<sup>41</sup> See the naturalization request document of his wife Rosemarie Milly Lenel, which reports the details of Emanuele Pekelis' naturalization, «No. 6605247, U. S. District Court East District», 10 December 1945, in *Chicago Illinois, Naturalization Records, District Court, Northern District, Petitions for Naturalization*, v. 1289, No. 319551-319800, Ca. 1944-1946, no. 319639, 19 February 1946, accessible *ad nomen* at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 3 January 2022).

<sup>42</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. «Pekelis Emanuele», minutes of the meeting of the Council of the medical Board of the Province of Florence, 30 November 1947.

<sup>43</sup> «Polk's Sioux Falls (Minnehaha County, SD). City Directory», 1948, p. 307. McKennan Hospital

and in 1952, Rosemarie started to work for the Kaiser Hospital of Oakland, where she stayed until 1976, when she retired<sup>44</sup>. The couple likely separated in those years, and in 1956 Emanuele Pekelis started to work as a pathologist at Camarillo State Mental Hospital,<sup>45</sup> a psychiatric hospital in Ventura County, California. The structure had been built in the 1930s and it remained active until 1997<sup>46</sup>. His name appears in the correspondence of Linus Pauling, a famous chemist and winner of two Nobel prizes, the first in chemistry in 1954 and the second for peace in 1962. The epistolary exchange between the two suggests that they were in contact for academic purposes: to Pekelis, who had asked him for a copy of the lecture he had delivered at a conference on 4 February 1956 in San Francisco, Pauling responded that he did not have any material for this event and was sending him the text of a presentation he had given at a conference in Harvey on similar subjects<sup>47</sup>.

We then lose track of the reserved physician. What we know is that he remarried on 12 January 1966 at 61 years old with the 47-year-old American widow Jeanette Dale Stock (Ohio 4 March 1918 - Jasper, Walker, Alabama, 7 June 1999)<sup>48</sup>. He died on 8 April 1979 in Jasper, in Walker County, Alabama<sup>49</sup>.

---

was founded in 1911 with a gift from Helen Gale McKennan, a wealthy widow and a landowner. Information on the history of McKennan Hospital is available at <<https://www.avera.org>> (accessed 3 January 2022).

<sup>44</sup> *Obituaries, Dr. Rosemarie Lenel*, «Oakland Tribune», 23 April 1981.

<sup>45</sup> «Polk's Ventura County (California). Directory 1956», 1956, p. 734.

<sup>46</sup> On his work as a pathologist at Camarillo State Mental Hospital see «Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences», ser. II, 18, 1955, p. 90; on the hospital's structure, the *Camarillo State Hospital Collection*, which holds artifacts, documents, maps and photographs, is available online at the John Spoor Broome Library <<https://library.csuci.edu>> (accessed 2 January 2022). A publication also exists on the history of the hospital: see Nausica Zaballos, *Vie et mort d'un hôpital psychiatrique: le Camarillo Hospital (1936-1996)*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2014. After 1997 the architectural structure was converted for use by California State University Channel Islands <<https://www.csuci.edu>> (accessed 2 January 2022).

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Emanuele Pekelis, Camarillo State Hospital, to Linus Pauling, 3 February 1956, and reply from Pauling, 8 February 1956, in Oregon State University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives, *Linus Pauling online, Linus Pauling Day-by-day*, collection of documents on the life of Pauling from 1930 to 1969 <<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu>> (accessed 18 December 2021).

<sup>48</sup> See the database *California, Marriage Index, 1960-1985*, accessible *ad nomen* at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 2 January 2022).

<sup>49</sup> See Social Security Administration, USA, *The Social Security Death Index (SSDI), 1935-2014*, accessible *ad nomen* in *ibid*.

### Major publications

- *I riflessi condizionati*, Bologna, Stabilimenti poligrafici riuniti, 1929.
- *Cancro primitivo bronchiale nel materiale necroscopico dell'Istituto di anatomia patologica della Regia Università di Firenze*, Siena, Stabilimenti arti grafiche San Bernardino, 1930.
- *Linfosarcoma peribronchiale primitivo*, «Pathologica», 15 February 1930.
- *Il cancro primitivo bronchiale nel materiale necroscopico di Firenze*, «Accademia medico-fisica», 13 March 1931.
- *Il cancro del polmone*, «Tumori», I, 1931.
- *Sulle granulazioni azzurrofile delle cellule dei connettivi*, «Haematologica», 1931.
- *Contributo allo studio anatomo-patologico dei carcinomi primitivi del polmone*, Florence-Milan, Istituto di anatomia patologica della Regia Università di Firenze - Istituto editoriale scientifico, 1931.
- *Linfosarcoma peribronchiale con sviluppo prevalentemente intrapolmonare rapido*, Genoa, Società tipografica litografica Oliveri, 1931.
- *Sui quadri di irritazione del connettivo sottocutaneo (di cavia) con particolare riguardo al contegno delle granulazioni citoplasmatiche*, Florence-Pavia, Istituto di anatomia patologica della Regia Università di Firenze - Tipografia cooperativa, 1931.
- With G. Hessel and H. Meltzer, *Untersuchungen über die Ausscheidung Harnfähiger Stoffe in den Magendarmkanal bei Nephrektomierten Hunden*, «Zeitschrift für die Gesamte Experimentelle Medizin», 1 December 1933.

### Archival sources

- Archivio dell'Ordine dei medici chirurghi e odontoiatri della Provincia di Firenze (AOMFi), *Fondo Medici chirurghi cessati (MCC), Fascicoli personali (FP)*, f. 521, «Pekelis Emanuele».
- ASUFI, AC, SS, b. 422, f. 10796, «Pekelis Emanuele».

- Biblioteca biomedica, Università di Firenze (BBUF), *Tesi storiche*, T.L.24.3, Emanuele Pekelis, «Il cancro primitivo del polmone», typewritten thesis, School of Medicine and Surgery, a.y. 1927-28.
- The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen* <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>>.

Lucrezia Nuti

Translated by Melissa A. Leone

Cite as:

Lucrezia Nuti, *Emanuele (Emanuel) Pekelis* (2022), in Patrizia Guarnieri, *Intellectuals Displaced from Fascist Italy. Migrants, Exiles and Refugees Fleeing for Political and Racial Reasons*, Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2019- <<http://intellettualinfuga.fupress.com/en>>  
e-ISBN: 978-88-6453-872-3  
© 2019- Author(s)  
Article published under license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Publication date: 20 January 2022.

Updated: 26 April 2022, 9 July 2022.