

Oscar Levi, then Landi

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When the reconstituted Board of Physicians of Florence, in September 1944, reinstated among its own members those colleagues whom, in 1939, the Fascist Syndicate had removed from the professional registry for «racial reasons», Oscar Levi's name was also recorded. It was removed again three years later because it was impossible to track him down. The dermatologist from Trieste had changed his country, language, habits and even his surname. However, he did not Americanize it, despite having immediately moved to and integrated well in New York. Since 1940, he and his brother Cesare took the last name Landi. What he never changed was his profession: the specialization in dermatology that he had obtained in Italy was also valid in the United States, where he practiced privately as well as in hospitals.

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From the free port of Trieste to Turin

Married in 1888, Alessandro Abramo Levi and Rosa (or Rosina), born Salom, had a large family. At the Registrar's Office of the Jewish Community of Trieste, they recorded the birth of one of their sons, on 20 April 1903, to whom they gave the double name of Oscarre Isak,¹ although in later documents he appears only as Oscarre or Oscar. The Levis had four other sons and two daughters: Abramo (called Armando) born in 1889, Daniele in 1896 and then Bianca in 1897, Giorgio Giuseppe Giulio in 1899, Cesare in 1901 and another sister named Ella². The two brothers Abraham and Daniele

¹ ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Levi Oscar», Israelite Community of Trieste, Faith at Birth, no. 386, Trieste, 1 October 1929.

² State Archives of Trieste (from now on ASTr), *Prefettura di Trieste, Gabinetto*, 1938 Jewish Census, *ad nomen*, «Levi Armando»; *ibid.*, «Levi Daniele»; *ibid.*, «Levi Giorgio Giuseppe Giulio»; *ibid.*, «Grünfeld Ella» (the reported date of birth, 13 May 1932, is inconsistent with the date of marriage, 8 February 1921); *ibid.*, «Levi Rosa»; *ibid.*, Inventory n. 110, prepared by Mariacarla Triandan, 1998, *Ufficio Tecnico Erariale (UTE), Diritti immobiliari di proprietari di razza ebraica (1939-1944), Ufficio imposte dirette*, b. 24, f. 396, «Levi Abramo, detto Armando»; *ibid.*, f. 397, «Levi Bianca in Krall»; *ibid.*, f. 398, «Levi Cesare»; *ibid.*, f. 399, «Levi Daniele»; *ibid.*, f. 405, «Levi

followed in the footsteps of their father carrying on his import/export of coffee and colonial goods,³ since Trieste was, since the eighteenth century, in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a crossroads of goods exchanges between East and West, a free port in which many traders of Jewish origin were concentrated⁴. And so it remained when the city came under the Kingdom of Italy, and the provisions in favor of the free zones were extended⁵.

The Royal University of Economic and Commercial Studies of Trieste, where Giulio Morpurgo, who was married to Rachele Ella, one of the maternal aunts of the young Levis, taught and was rector from 1926 to 1930, reflected the features of the city⁶. Three of the Levi brothers chose to study rather than undertake a career in business: while Giorgio studied law, Cesare chose civil

Giorgio Giuseppe Giulio»; *ibid.*, b. 25, f. 413 «Levi Oscar» and *ibid.*, b. 38, f. 691, «Salom Rosa ved. Levi» <<https://archiviodistatotrieste.it>> (accessed 31 July 2022). On Cesare Levi then Landi, see the naturalization documents available *ad nomen* at <<https://myheritage.com>> (accessed upon registration 31 July 2022). As for the members of the Levi family, the papers in the Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives proved to be invaluable. See *Fondo Ente gestione e liquidazione immobiliare (EGELI), Pratiche nominative beni ebraici*, 2134 MI, 2029 GE, 21480 F, ff. «Abramo Levi e fratelli», «Levi Abramo e fratelli [Rachele, Daniele, Bianca, Giorgio, Giuseppe, Giulio e Oscar fu Alessandro]», 1944-1945, in which the name of a sister is reported as Rachele, and not Ella, although it is probably the same person. I wish to thank the Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives for allowing me to consult the Fund. I am particularly grateful to Maria Letizia Cairo, Carla Cioglia and Maria Rosa Laria for their availability. Cf. the record in <<https://asisp.intesasanpaolo.com>> (accessed 25 July 2022).

³ On his father Alessandro Abramo Levi and on his coffee exports see «Annuario generale d'Italia. Unica guida generale amministrativa professionale commerciale e industriale del Regno e delle colonie autorizzata e compilata col concorso degli organi dello Stato. 1933», vol. II, *Comuni del Regno dal n. 3440 al n. 5953*, p. 167; Ministry of Finance - Directorate-General for Direct Taxation, *Imposta sui redditi di ricchezza mobile. Elenco dei contribuenti privati possessori di redditi incerti e variabili delle categorie B e C (esclusa la rivalsa), Provincia di Trieste*, Rome, Libreria dello Stato, 1924, p. 93. On the sons Abramo (also called Armando) and Daniele see ASTr, *Prefettura di Trieste, Gabinetto*, 1938 Jewish census, *ad nomen*.

⁴ Cf. Paolo S. Colbi, *Note di storia ebraica a Trieste nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, «La Rassegna mensile di Israel», 36, 7-9, 1970, pp. 59-73.

⁵ RD 15 September 1922, no. 1356, *Estensione alle nuove provincie della legge e del regolamento doganale vigenti nel Regno* (GU no. 255, 20 October 1922); RD 24 February 1924, no. 225, *Estensione al territorio di Fiume della legislazione vigente nel Regno in materia di dazi doganali e di imposte indirette* (GU no. 47, 25 February 1924).

⁶ For some notes on Giulio Morpurgo see University of Trieste, *Documenti sulla storia dell'Università di Trieste* <<https://www.openstarts.units.it>> (accessed 25 July 2022); R. University of Economic and Commercial Studies of Trieste, *Commemorazione del prof. Giulio Morpurgo. Letta nell'aula magna della R. Università dal prof. Giuseppe Testoni il 10 marzo 1932-X*, Trieste, Tipografia del PNF, 1932 <<https://www.openstarts.units.it>> (accessed 25 July 2022). Other biographical data on Giulio Morpurgo and his wife Rachele Ella Morpurgo (born Shalom) can be found at <<https://myheritage.com>>, *ad nomen* (accessed upon registration 31 July 2022).

engineering and Oscar medicine⁷. A student at the Triestine Classical high school «Francesco Petrarca» – founded in 1912, it is still open nowadays –, Oscar graduated in 1921. In the 1921-22 academic year, he enrolled at the University of Turin⁸. His choice fell on the medical school of that university where talented Jewish professors taught. Some were from Trieste, for example, Benedetto Morpurgo, professor of General Pathology⁹ since 1903, physiologist Amedeo Herlitzka and anatomist Giuseppe Levi; some were from other cities, for example Tullio Terni, neuropathologist Iona Nino Valobra, psychiatrist Marco Treves, and Mario Carrara, to name a few who were professors of Oscar Levi¹⁰.

Two courses in particular influenced his future choices, namely Radiology held by Mario Bertolotti and Dermosyphilopathy held by Jader Cappelli. It was probably thanks to the latter that Oscar developed a passion for dermatology, which he would then pursue together with radiology, disciplines that, at the time, were closely connected both in diagnostic and therapeutic methods. Cappelli had succeeded Professor Arturo Fontana at the direction of the Dermosiphylopathic Clinic since the 1922-23 academic year and had held the chair in the discipline first as *professore straordinario*

⁷ Regarding the profession of his brother Cesare see the boarding passes in The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen*, <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 1 June 2022). About his brother Giorgio, see ASTR, *Prefettura di Trieste, Gabinetto*, 1938 Jewish census, «Levi Giorgio Giuseppe Giulio».

⁸ Historical Archives of the University of Turin (from now on ASUTo), *Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia*, Career log, student ID no. 4235-4442, a.y. 1921-23, student ID no. 4254.

⁹ Cf. Francesco Cassata, *Morpurgo, Benedetto*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 77, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2012 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022). There does not seem to be a family relationship between Benedetto Morpurgo (Trieste 15 August 1861 – Buenos Aires 21 August 1944), son of Angelo and Carolina Levi, and Giulio Morpurgo (Gorizia 9 February 1865 – Trieste 19 October 1931), son of Benedetto Morpurgo: cf. <<https://myheritage.com>>, *ad nomen* (accessed upon registration 31 July 2022).

¹⁰ See here **Amedeo Herlitzka** and **Giuseppe Levi**. See Domenico Ribatti, *Terni, Tullio*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 95, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2019 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022) and the brief biography by Paola Zocchi, *Marco Treves*, 21 October 2013, in Aspi – Historical Archives of Italian Psychology <<https://www.aspi.unimib.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022). On Iona Nino Valobra, a victim of the racial expulsions from the university like the others named above, see Valeria Graffone, *Espulsioni immediate. L'Università di Torino e le leggi razziali, 1938*, Turin, Zamorani, 2018, pp. 67, 75.

[untenured professor], then as tenured professor since 1925¹¹. But on Christmas Day 1925 Celso Pellizzari, the founder (in 1905) and director of the Florentine Phototherapeutic Institute, passed away,¹² and Professor Cappelli, who was his student, was called to replace him in the 1926-27 academic year¹³. In that same year, Oscar Levi intended to submit his thesis, but he could no longer graduate with Cappelli, even if he wanted to. After taking the required examination in Forensic Medicine, he chose to take an elective course in Criminal Anthropology; both courses were taught by Professor Mario Carrara, the successor and son-in-law of the famous Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), who had inaugurated the study of these subjects¹⁴. Levi graduated under Carrara's supervision on 21 July 1927, with a grade of 94/110 and a thesis titled «In the shots fired with automatic pistols at point-blank range are sometimes found traces, which allow the recognition of the weapon and its exact position». His thesis was «recommended for

¹¹ See Maria Chiara Bossi, *Bertolotti, Mario*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 34, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1988 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022). On Jader's assignments see R. University of Turin, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1921-22», p. 62; «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1922-23», p. 77; «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1925-26», p. 51; «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1926-27», *Relazione del rettore*, p. 9; for some biographical references see Laura Codogni, *Cappelli Jader*, 17 July 2022, Historical Archives of the University of Cagliari <<https://archivioistorico.unica.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022).

¹² On Celso Pellizzari see a few notes by Agostino Palmerini, *Pellizzari, Celso*, in *Enciclopedia italiana*, 1935 <<http://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 25 June 2022); on the foundation of the Phototherapeutic Institute see the Royal Institute for Advanced and Practical Studies in Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1915-16», p. 42. On Jader Cappelli see Royal University of Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1926-27», p. 137; on both see Carlo Gelmetti, *La dermatologia e la venereologia dal XIX al XX secolo*, in Id. (ed.), *Storia della dermatologia e della venereologia in Italia*, Milan, Springer, 2014, pp. 103-141.

¹³ Royal University of Turin, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1926-27», p. 9. In his inaugural address, the rector Alfredo Pochettino bade farewell to Professor Cappelli who was leaving Turin for Florence.

¹⁴ Royal University of Turin, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1927-28», p. 77. See also Colomba Calcagni, *Carrara, Mario*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 20, Rome, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1977 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022), and Maria Chiara Bossi, *Bertolotti, Mario*, *ibid.*, vol. 34, 1988 <<https://www.treccani.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022). On the reception of Cesare Lombroso in America, where Levi would eventually emigrate and where he probably came across the Lombroso heirs, who had also emigrated there since they were Jewish, see Patrizia Guarnieri, *Caesar or Cesare? American and Italian images of Lombroso*, in Paul Knepper and Jørgen Ystehede (eds.), *The Cesare Lombroso Handbook*, New York-Oxford, Routledge, 2012, pp. 113-130.

publication» by the examination committee¹⁵.

After graduation he probably returned home, and in March 1928 he formally joined the National Fascist Party, registering in the *fascio di combattimento* [fighting league] of Trieste¹⁶. There are no other traces of his involvement in politics, but he certainly knew that his teacher Carrara had been an opponent of Mussolini's dictatorship from the beginning – as had been the other son-in-law and collaborator of Lombroso, namely Guglielmo Ferrero, and their respective wives, the sisters Paola and Gina Lombroso – and that in 1925, Carrara had signed the so-called manifesto of the anti-fascist intellectuals, remaining steadfast in his political position and paying a price for it.

During the summer of 1927, Oscar Levi prepared to take the professional qualification exam at the University of Rome; he passed it in September with a grade of 86/110¹⁷. He had not exhausted his desire to deepen his knowledge in the field. He decided to specialize in dermatology and to go to Florence, following, in fact, the professor who had been his teacher, Professor Jader Cappelli.

A promising university career

Oscar Levi moved to Florence and took up residence in Canto dei Nelli 9, at the Vitalis¹⁸. He enrolled in the specialization course in Dermosyphilopathy, and finished this postgraduate course cycle in November of 1931, with a thesis titled «Observations and research on some cases of allergic dermatoses». The evaluation committee – made up of professors Jader

¹⁵ ASUFi, AC, SS, f. «Levi Oscar», Royal University of Turin, original of the degree certificate, Turin, 19 August 1929, and ASUTo, *Facoltà di Medicina e Chirurgia, Registri lauree, Esami di laurea 15 luglio 1921-9 luglio 1929*, student ID no. 4254, and *ibid.*, *Registro carriere*, student ID no. 4235-4442, a.y. 1921-23.

¹⁶ ASUFi, AC, *Stati di servizio*, f. «Stato del personale del Sig. Levi Dott. Oscar, Stato di servizio», Provincial Federation of the fighting leagues of Trieste, declaration by Federal Secretary Carlo Perusino, Trieste, 3 March 1933, «anzianità 23/3/1928 Ila Leva Fascista», original on stamped paper.

¹⁷ ASUFi, AC, SS, f. «Levi Oscar», Royal University of Rome, Board qualified certificate (1927 session), Rome, 23 September 1929.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Royal University of Florence, original of the «Libretto d'iscrizione» [university transcript], a.y. 1929-30, student ID no. 9736.

Cappelli, Bindo De Vecchi, Girolamo Gatti, Filippo Neri, Giovanni Favilli, Mario Montagnani and Tommaso Venturi – certified his qualifications by passing him with a grade of 70/70 with distinction¹⁹. To complete his preparation and in order to remain at the university, in June of the same year he prepared to take the exam to also obtain a specialization in Radiology²⁰.

The year 1931 was a unique time for Italian universities. The regime required professors to take an oath of allegiance²¹. Only a small number refused. At the University of Turin, Francesco Ruffini, Lionello Venturi and Mario Carrara, the professor under whose guidance Oscar Levi had graduated, did so and lost their jobs²². At the University of Florence, instead, everyone swore allegiance. In fact, the latter university had subjected to Fascism in the previous year by changing its rector: from the anti-fascist Giulio Chiarugi to Bindo De Vecchi, who was very devoted to and well-liked by the regime. Both of them were members of the Faculty of Medicine.

Oscar Levi was to complete his specialization in this environment, and beginning on 1 December 1932 he was appointed assistant professor at the University of Florence, in the Roentgen-diagnostic, radium and roentgen-therapeutic department of the Photoradiotherapeutic Institute «Celso Pellizzari», which, at the time, was annexed to the Dermosiphilopathic Clinic in via della Pergola 30. During that period, he was sent abroad for study purposes for five months, «to the Institute of Radiology in Frankfurt, to the Radiumhemmet Institute in Stockholm and to the Finsen Institute in

¹⁹ Ibid., application for specialization in Dermosiphilopathy, Florence, 24 October 1929, original typescript; Royal University of Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1931-32», p. 208; Biomedical Library, University of Florence (BBUF), *Tesi storiche*, T.P.12.9, Oscar Levi, «Osservazioni e ricerche su alcuni casi di dermatosi allergiche», R. Dermosiphilopathic Clinic of the R. University of Florence, 1931, typewritten specialization thesis with data tables inserted in the text relating to pharmacodynamic tests of the 16 cases examined.

²⁰ ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Levi Oscar», application to sustain the specialist certification examination in Radiology, Florence, 15 June 1931, typewritten original.

²¹ RD 28 August 1931, no. 1227, *Disposizioni sull'istruzione superiore* (GU no. 233, 8 October 1931).

²² See Franco Orlandi's recent essay, *In the Name of Lombroso. Mario Carrara and the Refusal of the 1931 Fascist Loyalty Oath*, «Annali di storia delle università italiane», 26, 1, 2022, pp. 205-225.

Copenhagen», all of which were at the forefront of research at the time²³.

On 20 July 1934 Oscar Levi discussed his thesis «Experimental research on the healing process of previously irradiated skin wounds», receiving a grade of 70/70 cum laude,²⁴ and his appointment was renewed for the following year. In the meantime, he registered with the Board of Physicians and Surgeons of Florence intending also to practice the medical profession²⁵.

He held the position of assistant professor until the 1935-36 academic year, publishing some experimental research in «Il Dermosifilografo» and in the prestigious «Giornale italiano di dermatologia e sifilologia», founded in 1866 by Doctor Gian Battista Soresina²⁶.

Oscar Levi's promising academic career came to an abrupt end shortly after: regarding his service status, his file reports that in June of 1936, he left his position of assistant professor for health reasons²⁷.

²³ ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Levi Oscar», certificate issued by the Photoradiotherapeutic Institute «Celso Pellizzari», original signed by Jader Cappelli and stamped, Florence, 6 November 1933; Royal University of Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1932-33», p. 107; «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1933-34», p. 105; «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1934-35», p. 123; «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1935-36», p. 71. On the Frankfurt Radiological Institute see Claus Henninger, *Das Frankfurter Röntgeninstitut: Röntgendiagnostik und Strahlentherapie an der Frankfurter Chirurgischen Universitätsklinik von 1914 bis 1929*, Olms, Hildesheim, 1990; on the Stockholm Radiological Institute see Dimitrios Kardamakis, Evi Gustavson-Kadaka, Ekaterini Spiliopoulou and Sten Nilsson, *The History of Radiumhemmet in Stockholm in the Period 1895-1950. The Transformation of an Outpatient Clinic to an Academic Department*, «Vesalius. Acta internationalia historiae medicinae», 16, 2, 2010, pp. 95-99; for the Finsen Institute in Copenhagen some information can be found in Arne Seli, *The Development of Radiotherapy in Denmark During 100 Years from Radiology to Oncology*, «Acta oncologica», 34, 8, 1995, pp. 1005-1010.

²⁴ Royal University of Florence, «Annuario per l'anno accademico 1934-35», p. 383; ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Levi Oscar», minutes of the examination for the specialist certificate in Dermosyphilopathy, Florence, 17 November 1931, original signed by the committee members.

²⁵ Based on the records of the Archives of the Board of Surgeons and Dentists of the Province of Florence (AOMFi), *Registro dell'Ordine dei Medici (1911-1950)*, «Levi Oscar», no. 701, he was registered as of 4 April 1934; unfortunately, the personal file in the relative *Fondo medici cessati* is missing, as also indicated by the Archives (statement in my possession).

²⁶ Oscar Levi, *Ricerche sperimentali sul processo di guarigione delle ferite in cute precedentemente irradiata*, «Il Dermosifilografo», 5, May 1935, pp. 1506-1507, and Id., *Epiteliomi della mano trattati col Radium*, «Giornale italiano di dermatologia e sifilologia», LXXVI, October 1935. Regarding the «Giornale», see Angelo Bellini, *Storia della dermatologia e venereo-sifilologia in Italia*, excerpt from «Giornale italiano di dermatologia e sifilologia», Milan, Cordani, 1934, pp. 1091-1201, and C. Gelmetti, *La dermatologia e la venereologia*, cit., pp. 181-192.

²⁷ ASUFI, AC, *Stati di servizio*, f. «Stato del personale del Sig. Levi Dott. Oscar, Stato di servizio».

The beginning of his persecution, and his escape

We do not know much about the years from the end of his position at the university in June 1936 to the enactment of the racial laws in 1938. Certainly, Oscar Levi was in contact with others who, like him, did not underestimate the racist orientation that the regime was embracing and even thought of leaving the country.

The names of his relatives who had remained in Trieste appear in the Jewish census conducted in August of 1938:²⁸ his mother Rosa, widowed, lived with her other sons, Armando, Daniele and Giorgio Giuseppe Giulio, in via Coroneo 21/II. Ella, his sister, married Grünfeld, lived with her husband in via Aleardi 3. His sister Bianca and her husband Luigi Krall, a non-Jewish and fascist soldier,²⁹ had moved, instead, to Merano in January 1934, while their brother Cesare had been in Milan since 1936, when he married Anna Maria Malaguti. Their daughter Donatella was born in 1937.

Cesare, his wife and their child left Milan for Switzerland at an unknown date,³⁰ and on 8 March 1939, they sailed³⁰ on the Île de France from Le Havre

²⁸ On the census in Trieste see Ellen Ginzburg Migliorino, *Il censimento degli ebrei a Trieste nel 1938*, «Storia e problemi contemporanei», 10, 1992, pp. 33-35, and Francesca Cavarocchi, *Il censimento degli ebrei dell'agosto 1938*, «La Rassegna mensile di Israel», 73, 2, 2007, pp. 119-130.

²⁹ See ASTr, *Prefettura di Trieste, Gabinetto*, 1938 Jewish census. On Bianca Levi and her husband see the database *Hohenems Genealogie. Jüdische Familiengeschichte in Vorarlberg und Tirol* of the Jüdisches Museum Hohenems, *ad nomen*, <<https://www.hohenemsgenealogie.at>> (accessed 30 July 2022), and the database of the Jewish Museum of Merano, *ad nomen* <<http://database.meranoebraica.it>> (accessed 30 July 2022), which reports that «the couple was included in the census of the “Jews” living in Italy on 28 December 1938». But Luigi Krall was not Jewish; he was a soldier who rose to the rank of general of division and joined the RSI even if he was discharged; see the minutes of 31 August 1944 in the Central State Archives, *Verbali del Consiglio dei ministri della Repubblica sociale italiana (settembre 1943-aprile 1945)*, critical edition edited by Francesca Romana Scardaccione, Rome, Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2002, p. 579. He was subjected to purge proceedings: see Army General, V General Affairs Department – Historical Office, *Commissione per l'esame del comportamento degli ufficiali generali e colonnelli all'atto e dopo l'armistizio (1943-1947), Elenco sommario di consistenza a cura del Cap. Andrea Crescenzi*, b. 16, f. 15, «Krall Luigi» <<https://www.esercito.difesa.it>> (accessed 25 July 2022).

³⁰ On Cesare Levi then Landi, see the naturalization documents accessible *ad nomen* at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 31 July 2022); especially NARA *Naturalization Records of the US, District Court for the Southern District of California, Central Division (Los Angeles), 1887-1940*, Declaration of Intention, no. 94579, Los Angeles, 1 October 1939. On his escape to Switzerland see The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search*, *ad nomen*, <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon

to New York. On the same ship, a colleague of Oscar's also crossed the ocean with his family, Doctor Giacomo Ancona, a *libero docente* in special medical pathology at the University of Florence, and a member of the Board of Physicians and the physicians' union in Florence, from which he resigned, along with Alessandro Fiano, before leaving without intending to ever return³¹.

The first «racial» expulsions were among the employees of the Ministry of National Education in implementation of the *Provisions for the defense of the race in fascist schools*; the two universities Levi attended were among the most affected: 32 faculty members were expelled in Turin, and 16 were expelled in Florence from the respective medical schools alone³². Oscar Levi was no longer at the university at the time, as we have seen; but he was struck by the Royal Decree Law of 22 December 1938, no. 2111, which took effect the following February, on the «discharge» of those army officers who were not on active duty, because they were of Jewish race. Oscar Levi, a second-lieutenant medical officer, was discharged from the Medical Corps³³. He did not wait to be also removed from the professional medical registry.

Emigrating: a tortuous path

Oscar Levi went to Switzerland, as his brother Cesare had done with his family, and in Zurich he was able to obtain a visa to go to the United States in

registration 27 June 2022).

³¹ See here [Giacomo Ancona](#). About the mentioned passengers see The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen*, <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 27 June 2022).

³² RDL 5 September 1938, no. 1390, *Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza nella scuola fascista* (GU no. 209, 13 September 1938). On the persecutions at the University of Turin see V. Graffone, *Espulsioni immediate*, cit., p. 78, and for the University of Florence see Francesca Cavarocchi and Alessandra Minerbi, *Politica razziale e persecuzione antiebraica nell'ateneo fiorentino*, in Enzo Colotti (ed.), *Razza e fascismo. La persecuzione contro gli ebrei in Toscana (1938-1943)*, vol. 1, Rome-Florence, Carocci-Regione Toscana, 1999, pp. 467-510.

³³ RDL 22 December 1938, no. 2111, *Disposizioni relative al collocamento in congedo assoluto ed al trattamento di quiescenza del personale militare delle Forze Armate dello Stato di razza ebraica* (GU no. 30, 6 February 1939); Alberto Rovighi, *I militari di origine ebraica nel primo secolo di vita dello stato italiano*, Rome, Stato maggiore dell'esercito – Ufficio storico, 1999, *Annesso n. 1*, p. 147.

March 1939. He moved to France; in April, in the port of Le Havre, he boarded the *Normandie* and arrived in New York on 1 May 1939. On his boarding pass, he declared that he spoke French, English, Italian, German, and Yiddish, and stated that he was going to Indianapolis, to his friend «Mr. Rosenthal», whose address was on North Meridian St., Indianapolis³⁴.

In actuality, Oscar Levi stopped in New York City, where a few months later Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco would also arrive with his family. They were friends, and the composer would always remember that Oscar helped him and his family when they arrived³⁵. They had met in the 1930's in Florence. Levi had cured him of what the composer called «an annoying sciatica [...] with short wave applications». Out of gratitude, Castelnuovo-Tedesco had dedicated to him two studies for piano, *Short Waves* and *Long Waves*. In the summer of 1939, the Castelnuovo-Tedesco family moved to Larchmont, a town not too far from New York City. Their home was visited by various physicians, including his brother-in-law Cesare Tedeschi, and others who had studied and worked at the University of Florence, such as Oscar Levi himself, Mario Volterra, Carlo Schapira (then Sorell), and Roberto Funaro³⁶.

Following, once again, what his brother Cesare had already done,³⁷ Oscar changed his surname from Levi to Landi and was granted naturalization. On 2 March 1940, he married Asya Jardanne (formerly Jacobson), of Russian origin, who had emigrated to the United States as a child with her parents, had obtained naturalization and worked – as far as we know – as a secretary. Both the marriage records and the 1940 census show that the change of surname of both had already occurred. The newlyweds lived together at 306 State Road, Ramapo, Rockland, New York³⁸.

³⁴ The Statue of Liberty – Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen* <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 27 June 2022).

³⁵ See here Mila De Santis, *Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco* (2021), pp. 14-15. I wish to thank Diana Castelnuovo-Tedesco for suggesting Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, *Una vita di musica (un libro di ricordi)*, edited by James Westby, Florence, Cadmo, 2005, p. 313.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283, n. 386, and p. 317.

³⁷ Cf. n. 30.

³⁸ New York City Department of Records & Information Services, *New York City Marriage*

A new life

In the meantime, in Italy, the regime had extended the racial legislation also to self-employed professionals. Article 6 of the law *Regulation of the exercise of professions by citizens of Jewish race* required professionals to declare their Jewish race to the unions of which they were members. It was Estella Servadio, one of Oscar's maternal aunts, who, with proper Power of Attorney, presented this document to the Fascist Union of Physicians of the Province of Florence at the end of August 1939³⁹. It took several months to identify the «unwanted» members: on 1 March 1940, the radiologist's name was on the list of Jewish professionals banned from the Fascist Union of Physicians of Florence, along with those of another twenty Italian colleagues; the judicial officer who was supposed to notify Levi with a registered letter with return receipt noted that it had not been possible to complete the delivery because Levi was «in America»⁴⁰. The same occurred in Turin, where the number of removed names was much higher given the greater number of members of the local Fascist Union of Physicians⁴¹.

Meanwhile, in the United States, Oscar Landi obtained the American Board of Dermatology's recognition of his professional qualifications in 1942⁴² by

Licenses, Manhattan, 1940, document accessibile *ad nomen* at <<https://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 27 June 2022); see also Department of Commerce–Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, document accessibile *ad nomen* at <<https://myheritage.com>> (accessed upon registration 27 June 2022).

³⁹ RDL 29 June 1939, no. 1054, *Disciplina dell'esercizio delle professioni da parte dei cittadini di razza ebraica* (GU no. 179, 2 August 1939); AOMFi, *Miscellanea non inventariata*, «Scheda personale di Oscar Levi», the pre-printed form is only partially completed; the complaint signed by Estella Servadio is there attached, Florence, 31 August 1939, original registered with the Union's stamp of receipt dated 2 September 1939.

⁴⁰ AOMFi, *Miscellanea non inventariata*, Annotations from the Judicial officer, Florence, 9 March 1940, original typescript with the stamp of the officer in charge of the delivery. On the expulsions from the Fascist Union of Physicians of Florence, see Lucrezia Nuti, *Medici e fascismo: espulsioni politiche e razziali ed epurazioni a confronto*, Perugia, Morlacchi, 2021.

⁴¹ The list of those expelled from the Fascist Union of Physicians of the province of Turin is under development; I wish to thank the Board of Surgeons and Dentists of the Province of Turin, in particular the current President, Guido Giustetto, and the administrative director, Venera Gagliano, for allowing me to consult their archives, still not inventoried, and to create a special fund of particular historical interest on the basis of my research concerning those members who were expelled or exiled for racial reasons.

⁴² On the history of the American Board of Dermatology, see Clarence Livingood, *History of the American Board of Dermatology, Inc. (1932-1982)*, «Journal of the American Academy of

successfully undergoing a sophisticated and specific «compensation» process for the evaluation and certification of the candidates' skills. This allowed him to return to work as an assistant in some hospital facilities in New York such as the Hospital for Joint Diseases, where he was «skin clinic assistant and chief of radiotherapy», as «senior clinical assistant dermatologist» at Mount Sinai Hospital, and as a dermatologist for the Lower Manhattan-Gramercy Medical Group⁴³. He probably resumed publishing, and occasionally participated in radio programs as a well-known skin disease specialist; he lived at 152 West 58th Street and had his practice at 30 Central Park South⁴⁴.

Reparation measures in Italy

Meanwhile in Italy, Oscar's name appears along with the names of his brothers and sisters in the procedures relating to the confiscation of a property located in the municipality of Milan at via Stradella no. 1, and of some land in the same municipality registered to the Levi family. The measure, occasioned by the *New provisions regarding properties owned by citizens of Jewish race*, consisted in devolving their administration to *Ente gestione e liquidazione immobiliare* (EGELI), established by the RDL no. 126 on 9 February 1939 for the management and liquidation of Jewish people's expropriated properties. After 8 September 1943, with the creation of the Italian Social Republic, EGELI's headquarters was moved to San Pellegrino Terme, and its direction was entrusted to the accountant and deputy Leopoldo Pazzagli as Special Commissioner⁴⁵. The specific measure started

Dermatology», 7, 6, 1982, pp. 821-850; see also American Board of Dermatology, *History* <<https://www.abderm.org>> (accessed 27 June 2022).

⁴³ This information on Oscar Landi's positions is drawn from the article *Dr. Oscar Landi*, «The New York Times», 12 November 1958. On these facilities see: Joseph A. Bosco and Scott Koenig, *A History of the NYU Hospital for Joint Diseases*, «Modern History of Medicine», 18, 1, 2007, pp. 44-46; J.H. Baron, *The Mount Sinai Hospital – A Brief History*, «The Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine», 67, 1, 2000, pp. 3-5.

⁴⁴ *Landi, Oscarre*, in *Italiani di America. Enciclopedia biografica compilata da Ario Flamma*, vol. III, New York, Cocce Press, 1949, pp. 172-173. The address of his practice is found in *Dr. Oscar Landi*, «The New York Times», 12 November 1958, p. 37.

⁴⁵ *RDL 9 February 1939, no. 126, Norme di attuazione ed integrazione delle disposizioni di cui all'art. 10 del RDL 17 novembre 1938-XVII, n. 1728, relative ai limiti di proprietà immobiliare e di*

from two complaints, one filed on 30 December 1943 and the other on 13 April 1944 by the Land Registry of Milan. On 10 May 1944, with the relevant document signed by Carlo Riva, the head of the Province of Milan, EGELI was delegated to render the confiscation enforceable⁴⁶. In turn, EGELI delegated *Cassa di risparmio delle province lombarde* [Savings Bank of the Lombardy Provinces], which entrusted the management of the mentioned assets «to Dr. Andrea Lavezzi, [and] the accountants Attilio Lavizzari and Carlo Alberto Ciullini»⁴⁷. The last document held in the file is the revocation of the measure by the Prefect of the Province of Milan in June 1945, in compliance with the RDL 20 January 1944, no. 25. On the cover of the folder containing the documentation is noted, with the date 10 July 1946, «confiscation not performed»⁴⁸.

The reconstituted Board of Physicians of the Province of Florence also revoked the racial measures and in September 1944, Oscar Levi and all his other colleagues, who had been expelled like him, were reinstated *ex officio*. However, in the notes of the Registry, his name was definitely deleted in

attività industriale e commerciale per i cittadini di razza ebraica, converted to Law 2 June 1939 no. 739 (GU no. 131, 5 June 1939); Law 16 June 1939, no. 942, *Modificazioni al testo unico di leggi sulla riscossione delle imposte dirette approvato con R. decreto 17 ottobre 1922, n. 1401, e successive modificazioni* (GU no. 159, 10 July 1939); Legislative decree of the Duce 4 January 1944-XXII, no. 2, *Nuove disposizioni concernenti i beni posseduti dai cittadini di razza ebraica* (GU-RSI no. 6, 10 January 1944). See also Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives, *Fondo EGELI* <<https://asisp.intesasanpaolo.com>>. For a historical framework see also Fabio Levi (ed.), *Le case e le cose. La persecuzione degli ebrei torinesi nelle carte dell'EGELI 1938-1945*, Turin, Compagnia San Paolo, 1998. On Leopoldo Pazzagli see also the file *ad nomen* in <<http://dati.camera.it>> (accessed 27 June 2022).

⁴⁶ Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives, *Fondo EGELI*, 2134 MI, 2029 GE, no. 21480 F, f. «Abramo Levi e fratelli» 1944-1945, Executive decree of confiscation by the head of the Province of Milan Carlo Riva, who transferred the management to EGELI, Milan, 10 June 1944. Carlo Riva held the post of Prefect of Milan from 14 September 1943 to 1 October 1943; see Mario Missori, *Governi, alte cariche dello Stato, alti magistrati e prefetti del Regno d'Italia*, Rome, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali – Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1989, p. 522.

⁴⁷ Intesa Sanpaolo Historical Archives, *Fondo EGELI*, 2134 MI, 2029 GE, no. 21480 F, f. «Abramo Levi e fratelli» 1944-1945, proxy document from EGELI to Cassa di risparmio delle province lombarde signed by Leopoldo Pazzagli, Milan, 1 June 1944; *ibid.*, handover and management document of Cassa di risparmio delle province lombarde no. 21480, Milan, 7 July 1944.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, revocation of the confiscation by the Prefect of the Province of Milan, no. 1903-55 Seq., Milan, 20 June 1945; RDL 20 January 1944, no. 25, *Disposizioni per la reintegrazione nei diritti civili e politici dei cittadini italiani e stranieri già dichiarati di razza ebraica o considerati di razza ebraica*, converted to Law 5 May 1949, no. 178 (GU no. 105, 7 May 1949).

November 1947 because it was impossible to track him down⁴⁹. Oscar Landi was still in America; based on the 1950 census, he was a New York resident along with his wife and had his «own business»⁵⁰. He continued to follow the fate of his country with interest and attention, and even wrote, in 1948, a heartfelt reflection on the difficult situation of the free territory of Trieste to the editor of the «New York Times», which was published⁵¹.

The «New York Times» reported that Landi died on 10 November 1958 at Mount Sinai Hospital after a «brief illness»⁵². He is buried at Mount Carmel Cemetery, Glendale, Queens County, New York⁵³.

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- AOMFi, *Miscellanea non inventariata*.

⁴⁹ AOMFi, *Registro dell'Ordine dei Medici (1911-1950)*, no. 701, «Levi Oscar».

⁵⁰ See United States of America, Bureau of the Census, *Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950*, document accessible at <<https://myheritage.com>>, *ad nomen* (accessed upon registration 31 July 2022).

⁵¹ Oscar Landi, MD, *Trieste as Maritime Center: Utilization of Ships Proposed to Revive Port's Activity*, «The New York Times», 28 September 1948, p. 26.

⁵² *Dr. Oscar Landi*, *ibid.*, 12 November 1958, p. 37.

⁵³ See <<https://www.findagrave.com>> (accessed 30 July 2022) although the date of his death there reported is 14 November 1958.

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