

Hidden responsibilities.

The deportation of Libyan Jews in the concentration camp of Civitella del Tronto and the confinement town of Camerino *

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Abstract: The research presented here intends to clarify the fate of the British Libyan Jews moved to Italy and from here to the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen in Germany. The peculiarity of that camp was its nature as a prisoners' exchange point. This meant it was possible to rescue many prisoners. These were people driven from their homes and deported through a long journey. The serious responsibilities of the Italian authorities in these events have been hidden for far too long. The deportations and the prisoners' arrival in Italy unveil the sad reality of the Italian concentration camps known as internment camps. If it is true that the Holocaust has become the symbol of absolute evil, the touchstone of any event, it is equally true that not all stories have the same resonance and that it would be appropriate and necessary to address the historic consciousness and the memories of what happened. Entrusting such a task solely to the Jewish community could easily give the impression that all other groups affected by the Holocaust are excluded from the dialogue. In doing so, one risks to diminish the enormity of the facts. It would therefore be desirable to involve all affected parties in the debate though greater and more careful disclosure of their stories.

Keywords: Deportation, Libyan Jews, Italian concentration camps, Bergen Belsen, Delasem, Mussolini

The deportations and the prisoners' arrival in Italy unveil the sad reality of the Italian concentration camps known as internment camps (Focardi F., 2013, *cap. VI*).

This study was inspired by the writings of Maurice M. Roumani (2015, pp 15-20, pp.23-32, pp. 37-62) and Liliana Picciotto (2002) on the history of the Jews in Libya, their origins and the events that have marked their fate during the 20th century. It continues with an analysis of the "racist" measures along the lines of thought of Michele Sarfatti (2007, *cap. IV*) and Giorgio Israel (2010, *cap. III, IV, V*), who believed that there were different racisms within the fascist ideology. Finally, the investigation in Rome, Camerino and Macerata's archives made it possible to uncover facts and documents until now largely unknown. The archive research work is integrated with oral particularly from the story of Sion Burbea, interned in Civitella del Tronto and freed in Bergen Belsen, which generates reflections on the importance of survivors in historical reconstructions.

Geographically Libya is divided into three parts: Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, Fezzan, clearly distinct both politically and economically. The Jewish presence was mainly distributed along the coast, in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, and the community was essentially composed of citizens from the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Italy and Gibraltar.

In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the first problems in inter-community relations between Arabs and Jews started to become apparent due largely to the impact of modernity, where the more wealthy Jewish communities were better suited to adapt than their Arab counterpart. This contributed to the birth of the image of the Jews as alien to local cultural and

* This paper is an elaboration of the Author's dissertation thesis for the *International Master on Holocaust Studies* of the University of "Roma Tre" (Supervisor: Professor David Meghnagi). It is intended to explain the fate of the Libyan Jews with British citizenship, feature of being an exchange point for prisoners meant many of them could be rescued. These were people driven from their homes and deported through a long journey. The serious responsibilities of Italian authorities have been hidden for too long. (Meghnagi, 2006, p. 79; 2009, pp. 180-183, 189-193; 2015, pp.176-177, 195-196).

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economic world, compounded by the first anti-Semitic manifestations of European origin, from which the Ottoman government distanced itself.

The Ottoman rule lasted until the arrival of the Italians in 1911. The new colonization, started as a military conquest, was seen at the beginning by the Jews as an opportunity to increased protection against the Muslim majority and as to modernize their own community. The dissolution of the institutions of the Ottoman Empire and the contradictions of Italian colonialism allowed, at least until the outbreak of war and the rise of the Arab nationalism, a recovery and renewal of the study of Jewish culture. Cultural development will resume, after the abrupt cessation, with the arrival of Libyan Jews in Israel and in Italy in 1967.

On its arrival in Libya, the colonial government believed to find a Jewish community organized as that of Rome. The reality however was completely different. It was therefore immediately clear that it would be impossible to adapt the policies adopted by the Italian State for its "own Jews" and as a consequence this gave rise to a direct action to Italianize Libyan Jews, firstly by introducing new community regulations according to the model provided by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. In light of this the period 1911-1932 can be considered as an experimental era which split the Jewish community into those who saw it as a growth opportunity and those who found it a strain.

On one hand there was the president of the community, Halfallah Nahum, willing to cooperate with the new Italian authorities bringing about development; on the other there were the local rabbis settled on their traditions which they considered already hard hit guided by the life in the "hara", representing the rising Zionism.

Following World War 1, there were a series of anti-Semitic incidents in Libya, provoked by the fascist authorities that according to the Italian Government were due to the need to implement a control strategy against an imminent Jewish revolt, which was a direct response to the increasing provocations on the part of the same authorities.

In 1929 the Governor Badoglio imposed a drastic reorganization of the community, which produced, among other things a strong reduction of its autonomy. This in turn resulted in the start of a decline of the Libyan Jewish culture, causing many conversions.

Because of the situation created as a result of the government's interference, the rift between Zionists and modernists on one side and traditionalists on the other became even deeper.

In 1926 and then in 1929 the community elections were cancelled between the members of the board and the colonial authorities on the appointment of a non-jew at the head of the community, Alberto Monastero. The appointment was justified by the Italian as a temporary measure, to allow the Jewish community to regroup. In 1932 another serious crisis took place when Badoglio introduced Sunday as closure days for schools, thus forcing the Jewish pupils to be absent for two days, on Saturday as the Jewish public holiday and Sunday as legally Italian holiday. After a series of clashes, it was agreed that primary school pupils could have two days holiday unlike older students who were still forced to attend school on Saturdays. The rabbinical court issued a ruling against the students and parents who decided to obey the new provision, transgressing the Jewish precepts on Saturday. Only thanks to community mediation, a compromise that satisfied both parties was agreed, enabling children to attend school without having to write.

Still in the education arena, another proposal separation of classes for Jews and Italians and yet another suggested the opening of a Jewish school that would allow the respect of the Sabbath.

From its part, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities of Rome dispatched its president, Felix Ravenna, to Libya together with the rabbi of Padua, Gustavo Castelbolognesi, with the scope of seeking a solution to the crisis. Predictably every attempt failed and when Badoglio was recalled to Italy, the Saturday issue remained unresolved.

In January 1934 the new Governor arrived in Libya and was warmly welcomed by the local Jewish community, who perceived him as a friend, on the basis of his existing relationship with the Ferrara Jewish community. He immediately addressed the issue of Saturday's school attendance allowing pupils not to write and started to look into opening private Jewish school. His program was aimed at modernizing the country in order to make it competitive both economically and

culturally, trying to overcome the Jewish traditions, seen as the legacy of ancient customs. Another crisis soon followed the Saturday school opening one. This time as a consequence of the 27 November 1935 decree which forced Tripoli's new quarter traders to keep their shops open every day but Sunday

Balbo had begun to align himself alongside Badoglio's policies, favouring the assimilation program, reflecting the new general guidelines issued by Italian fascism against the Jews.

On the first day of implementation of the new decree, however, the stores remained closed, resulting in minor scuffles. The newspaper "Avvenire di Tripoli", the official Tripoli fascist daily paper, described the act as a blatant challenge to the Fascist Government and Governor Balbo himself, compounding the article with the phrase "Tripoli is not Tel Aviv." The community was punished with the cancellation of a number of commercial licenses and the public flogging of two people.

Only in March 1937, with the appointment of the Chief Rabbi Aldo Lattes, the situation in Libya started to improve almost regaining normality. The new rabbi was able to restore a climate of trust with the Governor and at the same time preserve the Jewish identity, compromising between the traditions and the request for renewal on the part of the Italian authorities.

Following the intensification of relations with Germany and Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia, in 1937 the campaign of the Fascist press against Jews resumed with greater intensity, accusing them of not having supported the Fascist regime during the occupation. In July of 1938 with the publication of the "Manifesto of Racist Scientists", the existence of a pure Italian race was affirmed, and at the same time it was also decreed that the Jews were the only people that could not be assimilated to the Aryan race. The text then went on with the list of ten scientific arguments to support the racist theory, accompanied by a short commentary.

The Sabbath law was ratified in 1932, the order of expulsion of the Jews from the Fascist Party was emitted and Italian Jewish citizens were ordered to leave Libya. The label of Jew was established definition and Jewish citizen were excluded from military service. The use of Christian or Muslim names was forbidden, compelling Jews to adopt only Hebrew names. Economic and professional activities for Jews were limited. In schools all the Jewish teachers were fired and all the Jews sent to the colonies to teach or used only in preparing curricular programs. All Jews were expelled from government, municipal, banks and public institutions positions without any kind of compensation.

Finally, Jewish forbidden from doing business with the government. The same police refused to give protection to Jews, instead they humiliated them publicly

The Royal Decree no. 70 January 9, 1939 validated a racial distinction between Arabs and Jews and guaranteed in exceptional circumstances Italian citizenship to some Muslim but never to Jews, thus relegating them to a subordinate social position.

The Jewish Communities of Libya that had joined since 1931 the Italian Jewish Communities Union, were located in Benghazi and Tripoli and were split in Italian Libyan Jews and metropolitan Italian Jews.

At the meeting of the Fascist Grand Council of 6 October 1938, in which the foundations were laid of racist legislation, the Governor of Libya, Italo Balbo, criticized this choice and denounced the dangers resulting from its implementation in colonised territories. In his view this would cause a serious economic crisis and reset all the progress made, bringing the country back to a backward past.

The strong financial position of the Jews, would surely have caused concerns among all traders and business men. The sudden cessation of all activities would have produced imbalances hardly remediable by the mere presence of Catholic traders and business men.

In order to prevent catastrophic events, the Governor wrote a letter to Mussolini in which he declared: "Jews are already dead; "You need not rage against them, especially since the Arabs, traditionally enemies of the Jews, show them compassion ". Mussolini replied in turn with a telegram, in which he decided to meet the demands of Balbo, while stressing "the Jews seem to be dead but they never definitively are." (De Felice R., 1988).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order not to exacerbate the already difficult relations with England, agreed to suspend the expulsion of foreigners Jews who had applied for residency in Italian territory, especially if British. This decision brought to the outbreak of war in Libya.

This is confirmed in documents like the letter of the 30 October 1940 that the Ministry of Italian Africa addressed to the Interior Ministry, which highlighted Mussolini's decree on the treatment of citizens and enemy subjects and interns in the colony. Royal Decree no. 1415 8 July 1938, which approved the text of the law of war, and Royal Decree no. 565 10 June 1940, which ordered its application, provided for the internment of enemy citizen or subjects in special concentration camps or places of internment in certain African territories, applying measures already in place in Italy.

Finally in the second half of 1941, came the decision to evacuate the whole of the colony of its 7000 foreign residents.

In June 1939, the Libyan Jewish population had grown to 30,387 indigenous Jews, out of a population of 876,563 people, distributed as follows: 22,984 in the province of Tripoli, 3369 in Misurata, 3,653 in Benghazi, 863 in Derna and 4 in the Fezzan province. In June 1940 foreign Jews living in Libya amounted to 1,600 French and 870 British. According to the documents, internment in concentration camps was planned for them too. Specifically in the field of Tadjoura, near Tripoli, to Buerat El Hsun, in Sirtica region and finally to Hun in the southern desert. Each camp was equipped differently and in some of them; the prisoners could receive food from home.

On June 11, 1940, the RAF bombed the fields and the Italian oil platforms in East Africa and Libya. Some British armored forces crossed the Libyan-Egyptian border and destroyed several Italian trucks. On June 28, Marshal Italo Balbo, governor of Libya, died in a flight hit by anti-aircraft fire and was replaced by Rodolfo Graziani.

From September 1940 to February 1941 English forces occupied much of Cyrenaica. On April 3, the Italians recaptured Benghazi and a few months later the Afrika Korps led by Rommel was sent to Libya and began the deportation of the Jews of Cyrenaica in the concentration camp of Giado and other smaller towns in Tripolitania. This measure was accompanied by shooting, also in Benghazi, of some Jews guilty of having welcomed the British troops, on their arrival, treating them as liberators.

As for Libyan Jews they were interned in camps without any possibility of being spared as noted in the documents Foreign Jews fate was rather different. On 9 September 1941, the new governor of Libya, Ettore Bastico, in a telegram sent to the Interior Ministry, demanded the expulsion of foreign citizen from Libya. The reason given was "the absolute necessity inherent to suppressing espionage and getting rid of treacherous elements also lightening the weight of providing for the civilian population have led me to send all foreigners without distinction or exception whatsoever away from areas of military operations (ie entire Libya)." Then the listing of foreigners, whether Jews or Muslims, divided by province and by nationality followed. It also contained a paragraph on the different impact on "strictly observed religious food prohibitions in Africa" which needed to be taken into account.

The Interior Ministry, in its reply letter dated 13 September 1941, stressed the difficulties encountered in finding suitable sites for the construction of concentration camps to accommodate these people. Moreover it became evident the lack of availability of space in the fields provided and the lack of means to be able to resolve these issues in a short time. Given the situation, it was not possible to allocate these foreigners even in free places of internment, especially for the inefficiency of the scarce police resources in small towns. The letter ended thus, with the request to detain these people in the concentration camps of Libya.

The Ministry of Italian Africa, however, did not abandon his intention and in a subsequent communication of 18 September 1941 addressed to the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reiterated the need to evacuate 7,000 foreign subjects already gathered in concentration camps in Libya, not because they were particularly dangerous or suspicious subjects, but because of the food shortages due to their presence. These were foreign subjects in addition to the ten thousand Italians for whom repatriation had already been decided.

Given the large number of people at issue, the Italian authorities also resolved to ask the intervention of the Vichy Government, to evacuate in the neighbouring countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco the 1,600 French subjects of Jewish race and the 715 Muslim residents. Whereas for the remaining groups (255 Greeks, Spaniards, Turks etc ..) was arranged to return to their home countries. In this way, there remained "only" 1,900 Anglo-Maltese and 870 British subjects of e Jewish heritage that could, at this point, be placed in Italy.

On 20 September, Mussolini accepted the requests of the Governor Bastico to evacuate foreign nationals, which started with the convening of the family heads, just a few days after the insistence of the Ministry.

The order given was to be together with the whole family on January 13 at the headquarters of the Rome School in Tripoli, to be then shipped to Italy. On the day set, they were all led to the harbour and boarded the ship Montgenevre (Notarangelo R.- Pagano G.P.,1997) , direct to the port of Naples, escorted by police. Documents report that on January 13, 1942 the evacuation of Libya took place by motor ships.

With the war of aggression and conquest carried out against Ethiopia in the years '35 -'36, Italy became closer to Germany and its anti-Semitism.

On May 9, 1936 with the "Proclamation of the Empire" and the assumption of the imperial crown by Vittorio Emanuele III, the transition from a colonial-type racist policy to one defined as "pure" based on the necessity of maintaining the purity of the Italian race, took place.

This climate allowed Mussolini to progressively introduce his anti-Jewish legislation.

So between the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938 the first signs of a turning point, as defined by Michele Sarfatti's "persecution of rights" started to manifest. This aimed to strike the rights of the person and involved all aspects of economical and social life. So there were the first preliminary steps, such as identification, the census, the elaboration of a legal definition of the Jew, all directed to the setting of a final rule.

It all started with the request by the Department for National Education, addressed to all the University Deans, to gather a census of all Jews both students and professors present and that by the Interior Ministry to the general managers of the ministry and to the prefects to communicate the presence of Jews employed in any office.

On February 16, Mussolini released issue 14 of the diplomatic information, the first official statement on the Jewish question, then divulged by the press and relayed in the documents below. The note began with a clear statement denying the intention of the regime to launch an anti-Semitic policy. The words used by Mussolini were "recent journalistic controversy could arouse in certain foreign circles the impression that the Fascist Government is about to usher in an anti-Semitic policy. As responsible Romans we are able to state that this impression is totally wrong. ". The solution proposed by Mussolini was focused on the creation of a Jewish state, not in Palestine, able to represent and protect all Jews around the world, according to a very personal interpretation of the Zionist ideology. In conclusion Mussolini still denied approach would impose "political, economic and moral measures against Jews as such, except, of course when dealing with who were hostile to the fascist regime. However, he made it possible for the Fascist government to "keep watch on the activities of the newly arrived Jews and in doing so ensure the part played by Jews in the life of the nation is not disproportionate to the identifiable merits and the numerical importance of their community."

Something shifted even in the bureaucratic environments. On 17 July 1938, the Central Demographic Bureau was transformed into the General Directorate for Demography and Race named 'Demorazza', reporting to the Ministry of Interior, under the direction of the Prefect Antonio La Pera, flanked by Secretary of State Guido Buffarini, an expert in the field of demography and in implementing racial measures, which resulted especially in the management of the racist legislation. Already in 1937 the Central Demographic Bureau had approved a proposal for a census of people of colour in Italy, requested by the Italian Society of Anthropology and Ethnology.

The press fully endorsed the government's stance and August 5 marked the beginning of the publication of the periodical "The defense of the race", directed by Telesio Interlandi. Prior to that,

the campaign against the Jews had been entrusted to the periodical "The Tiber," also directed by Interlandi and to "Journalism" directed by Oberdan Cotone. Later came other periodicals, all centered on the theme of race, such as "The right to be racist" by Stefano Maria Cutelli, "Race and civilization" by Antonio Le Pera and "The Jewish problem" by Aniceto Del Massa.

After just one month from its establishment, Demorazza carried out a special census of the Jews, set to racist criteria which aimed to identify the number of Jews in Italy. The overall number of Jewish residents was 58,412 born to at least one parent of Jewish heritage, of which 48,032 were Italian citizens and 10,380 were foreigners living in Italy for six months or more.

The anti-Jewish policy directed to blocking advances in public life is expressed on August 17th with a measure of the Deputy Secretary of State, in which he ordered the expulsion of the Jews from public office within the Interior Ministry and on 8 April through ending any collaboration with the press.

On July 13 the document "Fascism and racial problems," (Manifesto of the Racial Scientists, scholars and teachers of Italian Universities) was finalised, drawn up by a group of fascist scholars under the auspices of the Ministry of Popular Culture, based on specific suggestions issued by Mussolini himself.

The Manifesto affirmed the existence of "human races" and in particular of a "pure Italian race", defined as "Aryan and belonging to an Aryan civilization". It also ruled that the "concept of race is purely biological concept" and that Jews, precisely based on this assumption, did not belong to the Italian race. The document ended with the warning that a specific policy action would follow.

Following this ideology, Jewish persecution in Italy should be officially introduced alongside that of Africans.

On October 6 1938, the Fascist Grand Council approved a "Declaration on race, which introduced the first definition of" belonging to the Jewish race ", blamed the Jews for not having supported the expansionist war in Ethiopia and be the leaders of 'anti-fascist movements. The foundation of anti Jewish policies rested on the formation of a "racial consciousness" in the Italian population and the work of Fascism, directed at improving the quantity and quality of the race.

The text included a "partial" persecution, which exempted professional Jews, except for those in the teaching profession who would be expelled. The Grand Council also warned that conditions could be aggravated or annulled depending on the attitude of Judaism towards fascist Italy. This admonition was especially directed to the American Jewish community that did not intend to stop its condemnation of Nazism and fascism with clear repercussions on the 'Italian Judaism. Only the prohibition of marriage between an Italian citizen of the Aryan race and a person belonging to another race, referred to all and not only Jews.

On the 1 and 2 September 1938 the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Italy approved the laws on the expulsion of foreign Jews, on the Aryan nature of education and the institution of official persecution bodies. Those laws only intended to forbid entry in the Kingdom for the purpose of residence and not for tourism, education purposes or transit avoiding any damage to the interests of local hospitality industry and the shipping companies.

From the Fascist perspective, the Jewish question did not only concern Italian Jews but also the foreign Jews living in the Kingdom. The regime wanted to eliminate them and decided to do so starting with a ban on new request of residency and establishing, with some exceptions, the removal from the country by March 12, 1939 for all those who had taken up residence in Italy after January 1, 1919. Subsequently, on August 19, entry was denied to any German Jew or any Jew coming from Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia; all countries under German control. In doing so the Fascist regime blocked any escape route for Jewish refugees. On May 18, 1940 any transit was also prohibited.

This decision to block Jews from anti-Semitic States, took place simultaneously with the preparations for the internment of foreign Jews not allowed to reside in Italy. Their fate was sealed: either they could return into the Nazi hell or they could endure a fascist future deportation to concentration camps.

On 16 May 1940, Mussolini's order decreed that foreign Jews had to be interned in camps reserved for them. The Union of Communities was informed of the intention to intern men in the camps and group women and children in the internment towns. The idea was to move them all to a special camp in Southern Italy in Tarsia, Cosenza, from where, at the end of the war, they would have been transferred to those countries which were happy to host them. In a letter to the Interior Ministry, dated 7 June 1940, the Human Resources Department of the Public Security Forces was requested to designate an officer to the internment camps.

On June 15, the Secretary of State ordered the roundup of Jewish foreigners, especially Germans, former Czechoslovak, Polish, stateless persons to intern them in concentration camps already set up whereas Romanians, Hungarians, Slovaks were to be expelled. In the following two years the Government decided to transfer provisionally to Italy groups of Jews already interned in other territories of the Kingdom, such as 380 Libyan Jews with British passport. So in the months of April-May 1943, 9,000 foreign Jews were rounded up, of which 6,386 were inmate: 4,339 inmates in municipalities and 2,047 in concentration camps.

On May 6, 1942, it was ordered to the inmates forced labour in the camps. In the same month The Ministry of Corporations invited the prefects to "enlist Jews and professional layabouts to forced labour, removing a dead weight from the Italian society as they cause offence with their idle existence." On August 17 a letter from Demorazza reported data on submitted complaints from a variety of individuals including Jews, aged between 18 and 55 years. It was confirmed, on the basis of agreements made with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the measures in respect of foreign Jews were to be suspended. Subsequently due to ethical and social considerations, the members of mixed families and women with minor children were also to be excluded. The work had to be manual and not belonging to a category of labour being forbidden to Jews.

January 13, 1942, marked the start of Gibraltar born Jewish British citizens departing from Libya. On board there were Maltese citizens, with British passports and Greeks too.

In a communication of the police chief to the General Directorate of Public Health, dated 31 October 1941, reference was made to future inmates coming from Libya, ensuring timely notification of landing ports, so that the necessary measures to "clean-up and disinfection were implemented" . He followed the indication of the concentration camps or places of internment in which "they will be distributed according to their dangerousness."

The landing of the ship Montgenevre occurred in Naples and here the Jewish group was assigned to the various camps.

The Prefect of Naples, Umberto Albini, in a telegram to the Ministry of Internal Security Cabinet Inspector Guerra, announced the arrival at 7:30 am of the ship carrying 406 people including inmates and political refugees, departed with a special train "98a" at 18.15 in the direction of Rome before being dispatched to the target locations: 77 inmates, including 68 British and nine Greeks, plus a group of 32 Jewish subjects left with two vehicles from Florence to Ripoli's concentration camp. 51 British Jews went to Arezzo by motorcar for Civitella della Chiana's camp. 107 British Jews went by two motor vehicles to Teramo to the concentration camp of Civitella del Tronto. 139 Greeks were sent to Montecatini Terme. The heavy baggage brought by the refugees from Libya was left behind as it could not fit in the special train and was never located again. .

The Chief of Police Buffarini specified that the number of English inmates of Jewish heritage was 267 people, divided into: 110 men travelling to Bagno di Ripoli, 50 people went to Civitella della Chiana, 107 people went to Civitella del Tronto and an unknown number of women to Pollenza.

Rome police, in a telegram dated 16 January 1942, confirmed the arrival of the train and described the continuation of the journey trip to the assigned destination, where they remained until transferred to Fossoli, a prelude to the deportation to the concentration camp of Bergen Belsen.

Meanwhile in Naples preparation were underway for health measures to contain any health issue of deported peoples who came from the Libyan concentration camps and had lice that could cause skin typhoid.

The measures of internment to which they resorted for newly arrived Jews were the same already adopted by the fascist regime against its opponents that reflected the political confinement model adopted by Mussolini in 1926 within the "very fascist" laws and replaces the forced domicile used during more liberal times. The measures were decided by provincial commissions formed by the prefect, the superintendent, the public prosecutor, the commander of the military police (Carabinieri) and an official of MVSN. After 1942, the local PNF officials also joined the commissions. An appeal process was also put in place. This was heard by a special Board formed by the Home Secretary, the police chief, the Advocate General at the Court of Appeal of Rome, a general of the military police (Carabinieri), a general of MVSN and always from 1942 by the deputy secretary of the PNF. This measure was part of the international law, devised during the First World War, allowing the governments to limit enemy states' citizens' personal freedom, transferring them in areas far from war zones, possibly isolated and easily controllable.

The confined lived through a strict surveillance by the police or the military police, and their life was made quite difficult.

In 1925 with the approval of law no. 969 decreeing the general plan of the organization of the nation for war, the government was handed extraordinary powers including transforming each national activity for war purposes. The Ministry of War began to think about how to solve the problem of internment of "dangerous foreign civilians", arriving in 1935 to develop the internment measures, establishing different coloured cards depending on whether the internees were Italians or foreigners. In May 1936, the Ministry of War with a circular no. 3/227 established the general criteria for the internment and the internees. On 1 June 1940, circular no. 442/38954 contained the kind of people that would need to be interned:

- a. When war is declared those who are classed as extremely dangerous troublemakers able to upset the constituted order of the state and commit terrorist acts regardless of their race and nationality and those indicated by the centres for internment must be arrested and imprisoned.
- b. Once the troublemakers/saboteurs were arrested their names and a brief report listing the reasons for their arrest and the level of risk should be compiled including the recommendations either to intern them in a concentration camp, on in a confinement placement on an island or in mainland municipality. It should be considered that places on the remote islands were extremely limited and therefore reserved for those very special cases.
- c. For any other subject it will be provided as and when...

On June 8, 1940, after Italy went to war, another circular no. 442/12267 institute the limitations for the concentration camps and confinement places.

In May 1940, the Interior Ministry asked the prefects the lists of Italian Jews to be interned, only if they were to be considered dangerous for political and social reasons.

Mussolini's decree of September 4, 1940 ruled that the enemy's internees could be grouped in special camps, or be forced to stay at a place determined by a measure of internment.

The kind of internment depended on the degrees of severity of the measure. The concentration camps were located only on land, usually in little used or/and abandoned buildings. (Voigt K., 1996, pp. 99-118, 119-191, 335-350).

In the preparatory phase, the Interior Ministry charged some general inspectors with the specific task of finding the appropriate accommodation, dictating the selection criteria. So the camps should not have been close to ports, railway lines, major roads or airports or weapon factories, for military security reasons to avoid leaking information on the movements of troops and the trend of war production. The buildings albeit not in good condition, still had to be fairly stable and their size suitable for containing a number of people, inmates and warders. They had to be supplied with electricity, drinking water and a telephone connection. The need for continued surveillance required the proximity to a police station, a doctor who could take care of the inmates and a grocery store. According to the terms of the lease, the owners could not oppose the completion of any necessary adaptation work, paid for by the State.

Based on the reports submitted by general inspectors, the Interior Ministry performed an initial venue selection, which was completed by the local prefectures. After having undergone the initial scrutiny, the prefectures were responsible for finalising the leases and start works where necessary. The greatest number of camps for the internment of foreign Jews was located in central Italy. Between June and August of 1940, there were 6 for women and 14 for men, all immediately operational and a there was a total of 25 camps by 1941.

Internees were provided a place on a cot, such as those in use in the barracks, with a wool or horsehair mattress, pillow with pillow case, two sheets and depending on the season one or two blankets. Only in case of exceptionally cold weather, it was possible to receive a third blanket. The inmates had two towels, a chair or a stool, a basin, a water bottle and a glass. Washing of sheets and towels was provided by the same company that provided the equipment. In each dorm slept 20 to 30 people, depending on the capacity reaching the limit of Bagno a Ripoli, where the inmates had to take in turns to access the beds. The inmates lived therefore in oppressive and humiliating circumstances, which often went on for years. Moreover roll calls were performed in the open three times a day regardless of weather conditions.

Internment was similar to detention, although the buildings were not fenced off with barbed wire and there were no guard towers or electric wired fences.

As for confinement in local municipalities, there is less information, relying only on documents kept in municipal and provincial archives. Confinement involved a move away from home and transfer to another place, where all contacts with the locals was forbidden unless a specific permission was granted. The inmate was obliged to show up once a day to the police or military police station at specified times. He could leave the house during the day but had to remain within a determined area. At first, confinement was only used for Jewish women while space in a camp became available. On 15 May 1940 a telegram from the Interior Ministry invited the governors of 25 provinces of central and northern Italy to send in a list of places suitable for this purpose, indicating their capacity. The lists had to be approved by the military authorities, to avoid selecting military security zones. The prefects proposed two hundred municipalities and decided on the distribution of women and children in 15 provinces. The internment procedure was such that a travel document was given to the women and children so that it could be submitted to the police headquarter allocated by the Interior Ministry within a given date to find out the town they were destined to. The journey was often by train, the exact location was then generally reached a bus, unless the group was too big and then trucks under escort were used. It could be that the inmates were those having to source their own accommodation once they reached their destination as the administration had not done so. Initially the confinement towns selected were located predominantly in Southern Italy as the areas were harder to reach and less affluent than towns in Central and Northern Italy. Five jurisdictional areas were created, each headed by a general inspector who acted as a liaison between the Ministry of Interior and the periphery. With the progress of the war and the proximity of the Allies in the South, the camps were moved further north and in 1943 there were 18 confinement towns in north-central Italy and only 8 in the South.

From 18 June 1940 to August 1943 there were more than 50 camps under the jurisdiction of Interior Ministry, the majority spread across Abruzzo, Molise and Marche.

The 8 and 25 July 1940 requirements for concentration camps and places of confinement, along with the internment decree of September 4, 1940, included a centralized decision-making structure. Programming, management and control of everything concerning the internment, rested with the Interior Ministry. Its decisions are then passed onto the Prefects and Police Chiefs that have a purely executive role. Even the appointment of the directors of the camps was left to the Interior Ministry, while the decision around places of confinement was delegated to a chief magistrate helped by the local security police. The Interior Ministry retained sole responsibility for the procurement of the building works when necessary. The Ministry then decided on each individual person to be sent in the camps, whereas the decisions about confinement was delegated to the Prefects. Each inmate had his own personal file, opened at the Ministry, who followed him in all his possible movements. The Ministry decided on transfers, on family reunification, on a license or on

the final release. Also it authorized the granting of financial aid for the poorer inmates. Decisions on prescription and dispensation of medications and non urgent hospital admissions were taken by the Ministry.

The General Directorate of Public Security was the office in charge of internment issues, led by police chief Arturo Bocchini, and after his death in November 1940, by his deputy Carmine Senise, who was replaced by Renzo Chierici. Senise was then reinstated in his post, during the Badoglio Government. Many anti-fascists who when war broke out were confined or imprisoned instead of being released once their sentence was spent, had their punishment transformed in internment or confinement. This principle was applied until the end of fascism. The ordinary work was done by three offices of the police: the Office for political exile, the Office for Italian internees and the foreigners interned Office. The latter annexed to the Third Section of the General Affairs Division was directed by Arturo Lioni. In the same division, second section, there was a coordination office led by Police Commissioner Alfredo Tagliavia, placed directly under Epifanio Pennetta, director of the Division with responsibility for overall planning and liaison with the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. Mussolini, in his role as interior minister, wanted to be informed of every single decision, as he wanted to have the final decision on all matters. Therefore, Mussolini retained the responsibility of issuing the permits for the two representatives of the Jewish organizations, Vittorio Valobra Lello and Israel Kalk, the chief rabbi of Genoa Riccardo Pacifici, and the Apostolic Nuncio to the Quirinal, Francesco Borgongini Duca, allowing them to visit the camps.

Prefectures and police headquarters had the role of giving binding instructions to the chief magistrate responsible for the confinement places and to the public safety officer as director of the camp. In particular, prefectures organized confinement in their respective provinces choosing the municipalities, in cooperation with the military authorities, distributing the inmates in various locations and taking logs and personal files in addition to existing ones to Rome. The Prefects together with the Chief Magistrates were responsible for passing on the Ministry instructions to their subordinate officers and via specific newsletters ensure they were implemented. Once a week there was an inspection scheduled in the confinement towns and internment camps. Police headquarters also hosted censorship commissions tasked to censor correspondence in foreign languages. They had also the task of granting visiting permits to close relatives and provide proof of financial status of the inmates, which in turn determined the provision of aid by the Interior Ministry. The prefectures could, in some cases, influence decision-making in certain subjects, such as transfers, disciplinary punishments or the appointment of the directors for women's camps, as prefects' opinions on the choice made by the Ministry was solicited.

The internment costs were included in the state budget. Expenditure for the expansion and management of the buildings and the salaries of administrative, surveillance, including agents used in the transfers and the doctors in charge of inmates' healthcare were paid by the State. Another important item was represented by payments of benefits to poorer inmates, the daily allowance, medical expenses, hospital stays and in the case of confinements the fees for rental expenses. In the spring of 1943, this reached an estimated cost of about 200 million pounds. To this end, a fund was set up by the Interior Ministry, managed by the competent prefecture and each quarter the amount required for the fixed costs was paid into this fund. In case of extraordinary expenditures, prefectures had to obtain a permit from the Ministry before it could proceed and in order to be reimbursed as anticipated. The same route was followed to provide funds to the camp directors and the mayor, who in turn were then could proceed with the distribution of aid and contributions. In July of 1940, in order to have greater control over disbursements a special commission composed of a representative of the State Council, the Court of Accounts and the Ministry of Finance with the Secretary of the department Tagliavia was established at the Ministry of Interior.

The camp directors had to take care of compliance on the part of the inmates, to the regulations stipulated by the Interior Ministry based on criteria set by the Ministry and partly adapted to the local reality. Upon arrival inmates had all personal documents, cameras and all the valuables confiscated. Any departing or arriving parcel and correspondence were monitored. The supply of food and the presence of a doctor for health care was also the director's responsibility. The direction

of the camp involved the keeping of registers and personal files, accounting, payment of the benefits, the reports to the prefectures, the correspondence with the Ministry and the handling of requests of inmates. In bigger camps the director was assisted by one or more police officers. Those officers were chosen from among the police officers of higher level, with the rank of Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner. In addition to the normal salary, the project granted a special relocation bonus. It was an unwelcome appointment, because very often represented a kind of punishment for officials considered not very capable and not reliable, to remove them from positions of responsibility. If they were well trained officers, their assignment was due to a lack of political support or intercessions. They came almost all from the small southern bourgeoisie, often children of teachers, middle managers or farmers, and such employment represented to them the security of a safe state job. They were not people led by a vocation for the law or for the order and this explain the various cases of corruption and the lack of interest for the discipline. Still, they knew that a defeat would be judged, hence the desire not to be too compromised.

In the women's camp, the director, as well as being older, was flanked by a female director or assistant appointed by the Interior Ministry on the proposal of the prefect, who could thus supervise those areas reserved for women. The salary of the female directors was significantly lower than that of their male colleagues. It was usually the local primary school teachers, married or widowed, between forty and fifty years who obtained the job.

From 1940 the camps saw the institution of on-site police station to aid surveillance. In the women's camps, the guards' tower was set up outside the building, to prevent any contact with women. The surveillance job covered the supervision of the inmates and also was supposed to prevent contacts between inmates and the local population in order to prevent any risk of leaks of information.

In confinement places the duties of directors were decided by the mayors of the relevant municipalities. It was their duty, in consultation with the local police chief, to determine the length of the confinement, where and for how long inmates could leave their houses how and how far they were allowed to go and the reporting times. The mayor and the prefectural commissioners were chosen from among the notables of the place and were usually landowners, doctors or lawyers. To these professionals this duty was onerous and badly paid and therefore they often delegated it to their secretary and in 1941 the secretary started being remunerated for it.

General inspectors were connectors between the Interior Ministry and local authorities. They were police officers, often with the title of commissioners, reporting directly to the chief of police. Since they were regime's faithful, they enjoyed the confidence of the Ministry and considered internment a necessary security measure. Their job was to visit the concentration camps and the confinement towns, in order to check that the ministerial regulations were implemented and then report back. In the towns already visited by the local police officials controls did not take place on a monthly basis, but they were rare. Sometimes checks were instigated by the PNF, by reports of the prefects, by anonymous letters or even by inmates, with respect to compliance of regulations.

The checks consisted of visits, examination of the registers and accountancy books, making contact with local authorities, and with representatives of the inmates. Their general view of the situation allowed the Ministry to have a broader view than that offered by the prefects and the chief magistrates. Their relations, although quite detailed, obeyed the party logic and tended to highlight a distorted reality, describing satisfied inmates. In the case of investigations for abuse by officials, inspectors, in their investigations tried to minimise the charges. However if the allegations came from an anonymous source, the investigation was not followed through.

In compliance with the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war in the camps, there were also delegates of the International Red Cross and the diplomatic representatives of neutral officials active in the camps, monitoring the respect of the convention. The Jews, as was done under the Nazis were not treated inmates for military reasons, but considered "undesirable aliens". During the different authorized visits, the delegates were able to meet foreign Jews interned, Libyans, Germans, Austrians and Poles. As reported in the document of January 1943, a

communication from the International Red Cross to the Interior Ministry, it was stated that the Red Cross representative was sending drugs directly to the Jews interned in camps, through the Delegation of Assistance of Emigrants Jews of Genoa.

Between March and September 1941, the US Embassy, which was responsible for the protection of French and British citizens, sent several times an official in the camps. The embassy closed in September 1941, the protection of these citizens in Italy passed to the Swiss Delegation, and later Yugoslavian and Polish citizens were added to.

The reports resulting from these meetings had to be submitted to the Ministry. Moreover the delegate of the International Red Cross, Pierre Lambert, had been recommended to the Ministry for his fascist sympathies and for belonging to a group of Swiss right-wing extremists. The Ministry once assessed critical issues emerged, invited the prefects to resolve them, but most of the time this remained only on paper.

The structure of camps in Abruzzo reflected the selection criteria set by the Interior Ministry. They were made of two or three buildings united under a common administration, whose direction was entrusted to a police inspector for both Civitella del Tronto and Tortoreto, while for Notaresco, Island of Gran Sasso and Tossicia to a mayor or a prefect. (Di Sante C., 2001).

Civitella del Tronto opened on September 4, 1940. It was the third largest camp in Italy and had as its first director the deputy commissioner of P.S. Dr. Mario Gagliardi. It consisted of three buildings intended for internees, the Hospice Alessandrini, the House Improved and the Franciscan monastery of St. Mary of the Enlightenment.

Chief of Police John Cardinale replaced Mario Gagliardi as director of the camp in 1940. Four police officers and one non-commissioned officer constituted the whole of surveillance team, together with a doctor, Dr. Manlio Scesi. On January 17th 107 inmates, British Jews from Libya, the Prefect wrote an urgent letter asking the Interior Ministry for a greater number of police officers to strengthen surveillance.

Meanwhile Delasem continued to pay benefits for the neediest Jews and provide unleavened bread and Barbera wine for Pesach (Passover) particularly from the Turin office as we can read in a letter from the Prefect to the Ministry

As for the relationship with the local population, the situation was better explained by a small incident that occurred. On May 26, 1942 an anonymous letter denouncing the inmates was received by the authorities, The motivation was that they enjoyed "a maximum freedom and spent profusely" ... " they were considered more distinguished guests than a person under surveillance; and they publicly say that now the Jews and their money rule in Civitella "

In a letter from the Prefect of Teramo addressed to the Interior Ministry, dated June 24, 1942, it was stated that the information about the inmates "are exaggerated." This resulted from the findings of the investigation carried out by the General Inspector appointed by the Ministry together with the Teramo's Police Commissioner. The letter however made no mention of the presence of Libyan Jews of British nationality who had collected the subsidy paid to them by the Legation of Switzerland on behalf of the British Government, but had to use the money to purchase personal items, since they had yet not received their luggage after landing in Naples. Free movement in the country was linked to making these purchases.

Instead, what the Inspector wanted to emphasize was the advanced age of the director of the camp, Cav. Giuseppe Franco, and how this did not allow him to maintain the necessary discipline. In this context the Inspector suggested his transfer to the smaller camp of Lanciano. As part of the same inspection report, the Inspector mentioned the overcrowding of the camp due to the arrival of the Libyan Jews and suggested the camp was evacuated. However this request was not actioned. (Osti Guerrazzi A., 2004, pp.11-50, 72-77.)

After the inspector general Falcone denounced the inability of the Director, the Ministry replaced it with the Chief of Police Domenico Palermo, who as a first step limited the inmates' outings. This new director remained until February 1943, when he was transferred under the charges of having had too friendly relationships with some inmates. In a letter dated 16 June 1942, the concentration camp director had communicated to the Prefect of Teramo the request advanced by the British

Jewish inmates for taking a walk during the hours set by the Ministry. The provincial medical officer also endorsed the same request for hygiene and safety reasons, especially for the children. However the main issue was the lack of sufficient police officers on site as many were deployed in other camps such as S Maria dei Lumi and Casa Migliorati which were very remote and therefore required additional surveillance. In order to accommodate this demand it was necessary to strengthen the supervision with another agent and a non-commissioned officer. It was the belief of the prefecture that the square in front of the building was sufficient to allow the inmates to breath fresh air and exercise.

In spite of the constant complaints made by the inmates, even as late as the end of July, there was no news of their luggage. This prompted the Ministry to ask the prefect to invite the inmates to Fiuggi to identify their baggage amongst 160 un-claimed pieces of luggage.

In a note dated 26 August 1942, following his visit to the camp, the General Inspector Navello made a careful analysis of the situation of Civitella concentration camp and reported four points:

1. On the 11, 12 and 13 August 1942 there were 167 Jewish British Libyan inmates, divided into three units: 94 were staying in the Hospice Alessandrini, 37 in Casa Migliori and 36 in Santa Maria dei Lumi.
2. The three groups were subject to the same discipline from a discipline and administrative point of view. However, supervision was organised differently as each unit was a real distinct and a separate camp, which required specific surveillance.
3. The distance between the units required continuous surveillance from a police officer and a member of the public security forces.
4. Finally the request of the inmates for walks in town was denied due to surveillance reasons. The outdoor space in each camp was deemed sufficient to meet their needs.

Following the inspector's report a non-commissioned officer and another guard were dispatched to the camp.

It has been previously mentioned the role played in helping Libyan Jews by the Legation of Switzerland, acting on behalf of the British Government. In a communication from the Ministry of Interior and the Prefecture of Teramo dated 29 August 1942, the Legation stressed the lack of adequate recreation space, play space for children, the poor heating, the poor hygiene and a decrease in the benefits paid to the inmates. On the basis of this notification the Ministry demanded that the prefecture intervened.

Equally the International Red Cross following a visit to the camp on June 25, 1942, reported a similar situation to the Ministry. These interventions led to immediate results from the Ministry as reported in a note addressed to the Italian Red Cross on September 2, 1942. The Ministry decided to address the issues of overcrowding, the shortage of medicines, the poor dental care available, the restrictions on correspondence, the loss of luggage. It allowed that some escorted inmates could access the places where there were un claimed baggage for a possible recognition. In addition, it also disposed for an increase in the number of surveillance personnel to allow inmates to take walks. Finally, it disposed to carry out the necessary works to resolve the hygiene issues.

Therefore the director authorised the outings for the inmates that needed them.

With a further note of November 17, 1942, the Ministry updated the Italian Red Cross on the evolution of the situation, clarifying its positions.

The Prefecture of Teramo in a note dated September 7, 1942, specified that the members of the families of Libyan Jews, were paid a daily allowance of 8 Italian lira in total, as per the circular of the Ministry of 25 June 1940. Subsequently, because of a new ministerial circular of 2 April of 1942, the sum increased to 8 Italian lira a day to head of household, 4 Italian lira to his wife, children and life partners and 3 Italian lira for children and cohabiting dependent that were minors.

Beyond the written documents, I think it is interesting to let the words of a surviving witness, Sion Burbea, describe what happened with the arrival of the Germans and the consequent deportation, after September 8, 1943; after having highlighted two communications:

The first, dated 28 April 1944, is a letter from the police headquarters in Teramo addressed to the head of police of Valdagno and listing the number of inmates: 162 English Jews with their families and also German Jews.

The second, dated May 19, 1944, a telegram also addressed to the chief of police of Valdagno, announcing the closure of the camp of Civitella del Tronto.

“We arrived all of 107 of us, in Civitella del Tronto on the 17th, we were accommodated for two, three months at Casa Migliorata at 109 Corso Mazzini and later in the Hospital "Filippo Alessandrini. Here we celebrated the Passover with wine and our foods. Alfredo Labi and Abraham Reginiano, having sick family members, had accommodation in private apartments upon ministerial permission.

The people in the town helped us every way they could, as it was the middle of winter and we did not have anything. We had lost much of the baggage in the transfer from the port of arrival to the train station of Teramo. Dr. Rosati came from the Ministry of the Interior and sent me and three others to look for our belongings first at the camps in Fraschette of Alatri (Fr) and then in Carpi (Mo). The outcome was negative. In Civitella Rivo Migliorati was the first person who helped us. He was the owner of a general store whose wife Giovannina, among other things, supplied the oil for the ceremonial lamps. The parish priest, Don Fioravante D'Ascanio, indicated the dates on which we could celebrate our anniversaries at a room at the Ospedaletto, which we used as Oratory. There is still is the prayer book that reports on the red cover the writing in Hebrew: "Oratory of Civitella del Tronto (Teramo)". Pharmacist Ariberto Minutes passed us oil with which, in the early days, we cooked the food. The cook was Herbert Jacobson, German Jew, helped by one of our women, mother of Shalom Reginiano. I will talk again later about. The tobacconist was to give us, upon his arrival, the magazine "International Relations".

We also had close relationship with Eugenio Tucci, who was distributing, on a small table placed in front of the hospital, the benefit money to every head of the family. Initially the benefits came from the Italian Government directly. Subsequently the money orders also came from the Legation of Switzerland on behalf of the British Government, as we were all British citizens. The two security agents Paolo Di Genova and Giuseppe D'Andrea who delivered us the money have to be remembered for their great humanity. Some of the "European" Jews only received a small subsidy from Delasem from time to time. Among them was Richard Stein, whose son Orestes often came to visit us at the Ospedaletto. Oreste belonged to a band that often played in the camp. Alfredo Wachsberger, a professional violinist from Vienna was the conductor. The security agents mentioned before and also Quaglia as well as the military police officer led by the commanding officer Bernardini were generally kind to us. In the evening, as there was a curfew, Eugenio Tucci came to play cards with us in the Ospedaletto. Equally kind were the officials that came from Teramo.

Drs. Ermanno Malaspina and Manlio Scesi were the appointed official medics in the camp. However they often allowed qualified inmates to undertake their medical tasks in exchange for goods.

The directors appointed by the Ministry behaved less well and often when goods parcels came from the Swiss Legation, they would hold back some items. Alfredo Labi an inmate sent a complaint to the Legation. After a week two Swiss officials came and later also Dr. Rosati: there was an investigation and the director was replaced by Dr. Taranto, brother of Nino.

The International Red Cross sent a small pharmacy, which was managed by dr. Bersciadskj Semil, a friend of dr. Aribert Minuti and of Fulvia his daughter, whom he used to visit often in their pharmacy. Semil was killed in Auschwitz on the day after he arrived; the same happened to Zieg Samuele, fabric trader we met in Tripoli, and Eskenazi Joseph, a teacher at the Berlitz School in Trieste - which gave me English lessons too.

During my period at Civitella seven children were born, two of which were boys. The elderly Dr. Ascarelli came from Rome to perform the circumcisions.

The vast majority of "European" inmates, however, were male. I remember that there was a couple, Ignaz Haina Jew and his wife not Jewish. Hain could be have been the magistrate that I recall being present in Civitella when there was a final deportation in early May, 1944. His wife wanted to follow her husband, but a German soldier pointed his gun, shouting that he would shoot right away, if she insisted. (Editor's note: another "European" couple present at Civitella – were Ausseberg Chaskel and Sara Maletzky Ausseberg, both of them Jews and both of them died at Auschwitz – according to the Confinement register and the list of Liliana Picciotto Fargion - v. "Il libro della memoria" ed. Mursia, Mi 1991.)

The situation worsened after September 8, 1943, corresponding with the arrival of the Germans. The military police left the country and only Paolo Di Genova and Giuseppe D'Andrea remained in plain clothes. Somebody gave me a falsified ID card certifying I was resident in Civitella and said to show it only when necessary. On 25 September of the same year, on Saturday, between 11, 11 and a half Germanic soldiers arrived on a couple of trucks. Two inmates at Convento S. Maria dei Lumi panicked and fled down the road leading to the village of Borrano. They were machine-gunned: the first died instantly and was a Maltese named Aquilina, perhaps his first name was Antonio. Immediately was stripped by a military of all personal belongings and I remember his body lying by the friars by a door and left in the porch of the cloister, on the right hand site of the entrance. After the war, when I returned to Tripoli, I met Frederick Aquilina who was looking for his brother and I gave him the sad news. I know that Federico dispose for his brother's remains to be returned from the new cemetery of Civitella where he had been meanwhile buried.

The second was Herbert Jacobson, who was wounded in the shoulder. However he was spared because I met him in the displacement camp of Como, on my return from Germany in 1945. In the afternoon of the 25th, the Luftwaffe aviators arrived and confiscated all the food and parcels of the Canadian red Cross in our accommodation at the Ospedaletto.

Two Tripolitania Jews were buried in the new Civitella cemetery. They had died of natural causes: one is Hlafa Habib, uncle Haim Shalom "Mino" Habib, always a spokesman for our group, and the other is Jacob Reginiano. (Editor's Note: there is also a third Jewish tomb, that of Arthur Steinberg, who died of heart problems, as documented by dr. Manlio Scesi).

The following October 26 the drunken Lithuanian soldiers arrived (I remember one had a circle booby bag on his head), who shouted "Komm Cieti" - "Come to Chieti" – they forced only males Tripolinian and European inmates to climb on their four trucks, kicking and punching them. Nemni David was the only one who escaped as he had no family ties whereas the rest of us had families and many also had several children. (In 2004 a nephew of David Nemni married my niece, Scilla Di Segni).

Our destination was the defensive line "Gustav." (Editor's note: On the Adriatic side it started from the sea between S. Vito and Fossacesi, Casoli reached and penetrated inland until the Maiella. After the Apennines down into the Liri valley to the mouth of the Garigliano. Its epicentre was Montecassino as a barricade on the way to Rome). They took us away to a brick factory, in Crocetta on Sangro, near Castelfrentano, and we worked all day digging holes for mines and anti-tank. They gave us very little food and the soldiers said: "Organizziren". Put simply about ten of us went around to procure (even stealing) the food. Almost every day the owner of the factory, Mr. Frontoni, came to check on a gig, with his son, until the soldiers hid his horse and the next day they gave it to us to eat.

My feet were swollen with chilblains and I could not walk, but a German soldier forced me to continue working, pointing his gun to my chest. When he saw my tears of pain he asked me how old I was. We were the same age, he said, and in the evening, to make amend for his brutality, he brought me a mess tin full of food and meat.

Another day we saw the German senior officers scour the area thoroughly with binoculars. Josif, a Romanian enlisted in the Wehrmacht who occasionally passed me the cigarettes, she shouted to hoe without looking up. Then, slowly, he told me that, closer to us, was General Albert Kesselring. 50 meters away there was General Erwin Rommel. (Editor's note: the episode must have occurred several days prior to November 20, 1943, when Rommel was recalled to Germany. His differences

with Kesselring were well known, the latter was left alone to counter the advance of the Allies from South Italy.)

We stayed there about a month and after a heavy bombardment, the Germans abandoned the line and even forced us to retreat, but this time on foot.

On that occasion the Maltese John Spiteri, among others fled without being caught. We arrived in Ortona in the dark. They locked us in a disused school and prevented one of us, a certain Mr. Labi to get out urinating: he urinated inside and then drank it. It was the father of Lulli Alba, who now lives in Israel. A Chieti Scalo we suffered a strafing by Canadian planes.

We were a ragged caravan, weak and emaciated to the point that, when we reached Pianella (in prov. Of Pescara), the parish priest and the mayor did ring the tocsin. An auctioneer informed the population so that they could bring food for us to prevent us from dying on the street. The mayor, before we left, made some of us sign a recount telling how he had helped us. Subsequently, the trucks came and they were loaded, but for me, Jacob Reginiano and four others there was no room. The Germans, not knowing where to put us safely, locked us for two nights in Penne jail. On December 5, we reached back Civitella: it was the day of Chanukah from the evening we were able to turn on the lights of the "festival of miracles."

The final deportation took place on May 4, 1944. There were soldiers, not SS, and they loaded us into trucks with trailers (six, seven vehicles in all). Near Fano, the convoy was gunned down and my father trying to shelter himself fractured a leg. In the Fossoli di Carpi camp (Modena), a "European" jew, Samuele Hacker managed thanks to his entrepreneurship to become an assistant to the German commander. I had met him in 1938 in Tripoli, where he sold some cuts of fabric together with Zieg Samuele, and I found them both in Civitella.

Once in Verona, the German police on 15 May compiled the list of those at the station. They were loaded onto railway wagons intended to Bergen Belsen and of that list I own a copy. These were terribly terrifying moments. Among the jerks and screams, well it happened that the clerk did not register the members of the Habib family as such, but under their mother's surname, Haschi.

Once arrived in the the camp at Bergen Belsen, our British passports were confiscated and we had a different treatment from the other "European" Jews. The Germans did not communicate to anybody that those nationals coming from allied countries were merchandise for negotiations and in fact, this happened very soon, with an exchange of prisoners. Also some women coming from Auschwitz arrived at the camp. (Editor's note: it happened also that for every 10 Jews, the Nazis were demanding and obtained a truck as their fuel supplies were increasingly running out).

Our group remained compact with neither divisions nor selections. However, in another group one of our inmates from the camp Shalom Reginiano was tortured and left to die of gangrene in the cabin, as a warning for having stood up to a guard. In Civitella his mother was the assistant cook.

When, Mino Habib, head of the group, forwarded a letter to the Red Cross, under whose auspices we were, the office of censorship handed it to the head of the camp who came in person to the cabin and, after having gathered us, ripped it in pieces, screaming that never again should he dare such a gesture. Soon after, we were put to work with young women and other men. Except my father, who had a broken leg The food was the one we knew a black brew that drove us to rummage through waste bins, near the kitchens of the SS.

We realized that something was changing, and for the better, the day we were each given a levelled teaspoon of jam. We set for hours to savour it slowly.

On November 16, 1944 we were dispatched to Biberach in Bavaria, in an area that would not be controlled by the Soviets. On the 23 April 1945 the French freed us; then, we were sent to Jordanbad, a beautiful spot where we were looked after by nuns.

After a short stay in Italy, we returned to Libya on September 12, 1945."

Unlike deportation to the concentration camp, confinement was a repressive measure, which consisted in living in isolation in forced residency in a previously earmarked town, directed against those who were subject to scrutiny and restriction of personal freedom. It was simply an

administrative act which could be issued upon any highlight report and which could include foreign nationals.

Also the requirements of this type of internment, as was for the concentration camps, were specified by the Ministry of Interior, General Directorate of Public Security, with the letter n. 442/12267 8 June 1940, sent to all the prefects and the Chief Police Commissioner of Rome, and they were norms on the functions of camp directors and chief magistrate.

As reported by a communication of the Prefect of Macerata to the Chief Magistrate of Camerino and for information to the police command, on July 10, 1940, the Interior Ministry had ordered the first confinement in the town of Camerino of 18 individuals. The news was complemented by a series of rules to follow. (Mosciatti M., 2015)

This crystallised the bureaucratic process, which started from the Interior Ministry and through the prefecture reached to the mayor, respecting roles and rigid rules.

In January 1942 the arrival of a further group of Libyan Jews with British citizenship from Tripoli, arrived by Montgenevre boat in Naples was announced. We have a description of their arrival in the report of the Territorial Legion of Carabinieri Reali of Ancona, Macerata Group, sent to the prefect of the city itself. The document dated January 22, 1942, speaks about 18 Jews arrived in Camerino on the afternoon the day before. Women and children described in poor health, including a family group suffering from tuberculosis. "People always lived in a tropical climate, it is not possible to adapt to the harsh climate of Camerino, unless they are en masse admitted to the local hospital where they are cared for and clothed." On the evening of their arrival, the inmates were accommodated in a makeshift accommodation, in a country house, with straw on the floor and with very little food provided by the municipality.

The same situation was described by the Mayor Fabi, in a letter addressed to the Chief Commissioner and for information to the Prefect of Macerata, on January 20, 1942, which concluded by stating that "leaving them here would equate to authorising the admission en masse to Hospital".

With a telegram, also the Chief Commissioner of Macerata Ceniti, warned the mayor of the coming of the inmates, dictating the rules for their accommodation. The following day the mayor responded with another telegram to the Chief Commissioner denying liability, for any delaying in dealing with the inmates and proposed their immediate transfer as the only solution.

There then followed a letter, in which was a list of all the "effects of use necessary for the British Jews inmates", such as blankets, bedding, clothing etc ..

The same Interior Minister Senise, with a telegram of January 25, 1942, had ordered the "reclamation" of inmates from Libya, to eliminate any danger of infectious diseases, especially typhoid, after receiving from Naples the arrival alert.

Order made effective by a circular of the Prefect of Macerata direct to the Chief Magistrate of Camerino on 28 January 1942.

The local police station on February 10, 1942, found itself having to ask for provisions to the police headquarters in Macerata, in order to provide surveillance for new inmates, not having received any communication about this arrival.

In a letter to Delasem, the inmate Frederick Hollander informed how the administrators of the town of Camerino had done to help the Libyan inmates. In its response of 2 March 1942, after thanking the Italian authorities, he pledged his modest work of assistance.

From the budget dedicated to provide for the inmates, one can form an idea of the poor status of the inmates who were deprived of almost everything.

The report compiled by the Public Security Officer who had visited Camerino in March 1942, depicted an improving situation. The Libyan Jews had been accommodated in new dwellings furnished with straw beds, sheet and covers. The officer describes healthy looking children. He also highlighted the scarcity of everyday cleaning products and clothes which were worn out by excessive usage.

There were several benefits applications to the Swiss legation submitted by female inmates between April and June 1942, such as those of Massauda Labi, Schider Rachele Burbera, Grazia

Labi the latter addressing the Interior Minister and Cardinal Bargognini Duca too. In his reply the Chief Magistrate explained that the International Red Cross did not allow for parcels to be delivered to the confined inmates.

In a further request to the International Red Cross, from inmate Josef Burbea, for winter clothes, the Chief Commander of Macerata specified that this matter was dealt with by the Ministry and not the organisation itself. This fact, together with the presence here of women and children unable to organize themselves as such, paints a picture of the different situation in which these Libyan Jews lived compared to what happened to those in the concentration camp of Civitella del Tronto. The only help possible was therefore, the subsidy of the Swiss Legation and the mayor undertook to refer all applications to the competent body.

On top of this subsidy there was a the daily allowance under state jurisdiction, which was to be paid to the head of the family, his wife or unmarried partner and each cohabiting child. Finally, there was a rent allowance provided for each family to pay the rent.

As with the Libyan Jews of Civitella del Tronto, also this group made requests to track down their luggage, lost on landing in Naples. This applied to Mordekai Burbea, who was authorized to go both to Modena and Macerata to track the luggage down, and also to Zechariah Burbea and Messuda Labi. By an exchange of correspondence between the Prefect of Macerata and the mayor, it emerged a further issue to be resolved. Libyan Jews that landed in Naples and arrived in Camerino were suffering from trachoma, to the point that it required their admission to a hospital. The 1 ophthalmic hospital Costanzo Ciano in Rome was chosen and Nemni Giulia, Zegdun Rachel Burbea, Meranda, Nemni Isaac and David Levi were hospitalized there, in November 1942. The hospitalisation been authorised on July 4 of that year by Interior Ministry, who took charge of the costs. The hospitalization of Zegdun Rachel posed many problems as per the accommodation of her three children, Benjamin, Mahmoud and Mushi, left in Camerino, in foster care, with another elderly woman. Following the above-mentioned difficulties in the management of children, they were transferred to the concentration camp in the province of Arezzo where their father had been already deported. The news of the Minister's resignation was divulged on December 23, 1942, by a letter of the Chief Magistrate of Camerino addressed to police headquarters in Macerata and the Command of the Territorial Legion of Royal Military Police of Ancona, Camerino's Section.

Other news concerned the hospitalisation of Burbea Smeralda for trachoma and Burbea Moses, for scabies both on 27 January 1942 at the Hospital Santa Maria della Pietà in Camerino.

With the transfer of the confined inmates to the Rocca Borgesca dwellings, an abandoned XVI century building, the inmates' living conditions improved although relations with the population remained always tense. Already at their arrival, which saw them forced to settle down in a makeshift accommodation, the citizens made it clear that they wanted to maintain some separation. From a complaint made to the command of the police, by Julius Bartolozzi, in charge of supplying the wood, it was highlighted the perceived misbehavior of Jews inmates. The man pointed to the fact that they had eggs and chickens purchased at significantly higher prices than the list price, making them thus raise so. This was evidence of the availability of money on which they relied. With their subsidies, they could buy things that the locals could not afford, giving rise to discontent and jealousy. Despite the presence of complaints, they wanted to show a distorted reality, the situation was quite complex especially for the lack of meat and the impossibility of ritual animal slaughter.

In a note of January 8, 1943, the Prefect of Macerata asked Camerino's Chief Magistrate for the costs incurred for the maintenance of the new inmates, noting that they had the daily allowance to provide for their needs, amounting to 8 Italian lira for the head of the family and 4 and 3 Italian lira per day respectively for the wife and cohabiting minor children.

The report of the inspector general's visit carried out together with representatives of the Legation of Switzerland dated March 17, 1943 and drew a rather complex reality. Inmates were housed in the Rocca, with very few sheets and blankets in a cold climate, lacking suitable clothing and with a little milk for the children. Even the Chief Magistrate had been forced to recognize the validity of these complaints and asked, that the Ministry provided the necessary supplies. The town

clerk nodded to the request made by the Ministry a few months before for linen to be sent urgently to Frosinone for Zadar's displaced refugees that had virtually emptied their stocks.

Yet on 24 August 1943, the inspection was referred to again as the situation was unresolved and no step had been taken in the right direction. The Swiss Legation had addressed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to have reassurance about the timing of resolving the issues highlighted by the inspector's report which should be a month.

An interesting documentary source for the life in the camps is the municipal registers that enlisted new arrivals and deaths of the inmates. The first was the arrival of British Jews, dated February 3, 1943, marked 41 people divided into men and women, the births of Burbih Clemente (Mordechai and Misa Nauri) and Burbea Salvina (of Joseph and Esther Taieb). From a note dated 16 July resulted that Isaac Labi had submitted a request to the Macerata Police Headquarter to visit the town to purchase new born clothes. The Chief Magistrate reported on the 24 April 1943 to the Police Headquarters that Burbih Clemente, born on March 1, had died on April 12. Adele Cecola had assisted his birth and to this end needed to be paid. A new register dated 14 February 1944 has the names of the newly born children Labi Elisa (of Isacco and Grazia Labi) e Burbea Giorgio (of Zaccaria and Elisa Serussi).

As the armistice was signed on the 8 September 1943, the Chief Police Commissioner sent a telegram to the Chief Magistrate on the 11 September, asking that the foreign enemies state confined inmates were freed with the option for those that had nowhere to go to remain in the town and keep receiving a subsidy for daily survival. All restrictive measures had to be suspended but a generic surveillance. The long term isolation, the presence of numerous women and children and the lack of knowledge of the area did not allow Libyan Jews to leave the town to look for a better future. Suddenly the situation changed dramatically. A further telegram dated 27 September from Macerata Police Headquarter to the Chief Magistrate Fabi disposed for a new confinement of those civilians that had been freed between 26 July and 26 September. Again confinement rules were applied.

As already mentioned, the relationship between the confined inmates and the local population had never been ideal and those feelings were expressed in a letter written by the Prefect to the Chief Police Commissioner of Macerata and dated 6 December 1943. The letter referred to the fact that Jewish people lived amongst local citizens and this cohabitation could cause arrest due to the antinational feelings of the Jews. Moreover the perceived wealth and free time enjoyed by the Jewish population caused some concerns particularly because of price inflation due to key goods being purchased at a higher price. They were considered as undesirable guests and a danger for the town.

In December the Foreign Interest Section of the Swiss Consulate asked the Head of Macerata's Province for a list of all concentration camps in the area. They had to be divided into prisons and camps for civilian inmates, specify the nationality of the inmates in order to allow Switzerland to fulfil its protective duty as agreed by international agreements. In a communication dated 11 February 1944 the Swiss Consul General stated that the letter never had a reply.

Libyan Jews remained in Camerino until 18 April 1943 as mentioned by the prefect in his request to the Chief Police Commissioner of Macerata aimed to obtain the address of the new camp they had been transferred to in order to redirect their mail.

The Chief Magistrate was informed by the Police Headquarter on 15 May 1944 that they had been transferred to the camp of Fossoli di Carpi in the Modena province. The Swiss Consul having learnt that the Jewish inmates had been moved without their belongings, wrote to the Chief Magistrate on the 5 June 1944 to demand their belongings were sent over to Fossoli's camp. The Jewish inmate had been moved by truck to Fossoli for a short period before being sent to Bergen Belsen camp. (Mantelli B. – Tranfaglia N. (2009), pp. 62-76).

On 11 December 1945 the Mayor of Camerino Mr Fattinnanzi, responding to a telegram from Macerata's Police Headquarter stated that no British citizen was any longer living in the municipality.

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