

The antifascist climate and the Italian intellectual exile in interwar Argentina

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Abstract

This article examines the relationships between the Italian Jewish intellectuals in exile in Argentina in the 1930s and antifascist Argentine intellectuals. It argues that the Italian intellectuals who arrived in Argentina between 1938 and 1941 as a result of the of the ‘racial laws’ in fascist Italy adopted strategies to establish themselves that relied more on the employment opportunities that their social and professional status made accessible than to political networks or affinities. Indeed, links with the Italian antifascist groups already present in Argentina were of only secondary importance. But, once established, the Italian exiles received significant support from Argentine intellectual circles and especially from the Free College of Higher Studies (CLES) and other cultural as well as local and international antifascist networks.

Keywords

Antifascism, antifascist networks, intellectuals, Italian exile, Argentina, interwar.

The heavy burden of the political culture of nationalism and, especially of right-wing groups in Argentina’s political life, has established the perception that an authoritarian line steered local politics for much of the twentieth century. However, by the mid-1930s, other cultural and ideological perspectives powerfully fueled the debates. In this context, antifascism became a relevant component in shaping the identities of the different Argentine political families, because it ceased to be a subject that solely concerned the important Italian community in Argentina, since the first political exiles of fascism began to arrive by the mid-1920s, to become a topic that animated the local political arguments. It is at this time that political references become internationalized, and the clash between antifascism and fascism is first experienced as personal.

As a result, diverse antifascist entities begin to surface, but it is in the intellectual sphere that the impact is most visible.

A number of causes are at play in the origin of Argentine intellectual antifascism: the influence of the French antifascist cultural associations, such as the Vigilance Committee of Antifascist Intellectuals (Comité de vigilance des

intellectuals antifascists); the international solidarity organizations in defense of those persecuted by fascism; the Communist International strategic change of supporting popular fronts, and, finally, domestic causes, such as the increasingly restrictive policies of President Augustín P. Justo as regards his political opponents, which tended to favor the most authoritarian segments of the local anti-Semitism and nationalism.

What characterized this time in Argentina's political and cultural history was the expansion of the thematic of antifascism, which was articulated in countless political and cultural experiences, at times, as strategies that hid, under the creation of popular fronts, a residual but still active classism. Other times, it would manifest as an ideological sensitivity, as a state of political sentiments that motivated informal mechanisms of assistance and aid to refugees, as, since 1935, it had become clear that the antifascism/fascism conflict was to be contended as much in each one of the European nations as in Argentina.

But it was not only the Spanish Civil War that would have an impact on broad sectors of the Argentine public opinion, generating new forms of international solidarity against fascism that, at one point, moved 500 local volunteers to join the International Brigades in Spain (Meli 1976: 38–41; Trifone and Svarzman 1993: 84 ff.). It was also a series of 'key events' – from the fight against anti-Semitism and against the restrictive immigration policies of President Justo's government, to local reactions to the death of Henri Barbusse, and the murder of the Rosselli brothers, exiled leaders of *Giustizia e Libertà*, the Italian antifascist movement – that set into motion a wide range of cultural and labor associative experiences, the creation of journals consistent with the political values espoused, and the activity of certain political parties and cultural groups that began at this time to express, with conflictive dynamics and tensions of their own, the problem of antifascism.

In short, the antifascism that was peripherally present in the communities of Italian immigrants since the mid-1920s now became a matter of national politics (Pasolini 2009).

The hypothesis of antifascism as a set of converging ideological affective states is further affirmed when the breadth of associative and cultural events involving many Argentine intellectuals is observed in the context of antifascism. An interesting way of observing this phenomenon is focusing on the set of reactions that came from Argentina as regards the exile of Italian Jewish intellectuals who had to emigrate as a result of the enactment of the 'racial laws' of 1938 by Mussolini's fascist regime.¹ The example is interesting in methodological terms because it allows a cross-sectional comparison among groups of intellectuals from different places and traditions and their ties with the exiles, while showing a series of particular local relationships: on the one hand, between world antifascism and public opinion and, on the other, between Italian antifascism in Argentina and Argentine antifascism; in sum, the relation between the ethnic dimension and the political dimension regarding the subject of intellectual exile.²

In an article published in 1989, Lore Terracini (1989) suggested that the subject of the mini-diaspora of Italian intellectuals to Argentina during the Nazi fascist years had not yet been systematically studied. There was only a set of diverse testimonies available, which ranged from first-hand accounts to a series of newspaper articles that recollected specific accomplishments of the most prominent among those intellectuals. The exception was Ada Korn's study on the contributions of Italians to Argentine culture. Korn's work was an overview in which she distinguished three stages: '*Quelli di prima*', i.e. those who had arrived in Argentina during the great immigration period (1880–1930), '*Gli indesiderabili*', those who were persecuted by fascism, both on account of being antifascists and for being Jews, and '*Quelli successivi*', those who arrived after World War II (Korn 1983).

Terracini's article came to fill the historiographic void on a preliminary basis, since it addressed the problem systematically from the study of a corpus of eleven immigrants who were all Jewish academics. Among them were physicians, such as Amedeo Herlitzka, Renato Segre, Eugenia Sacerdote de Lustig and Leone Lattes, mathematician Beppo Levi, physicist Andrea Levialdi, philosopher Rodolfo Mondolfo, geometrist Alessandro Terracini and his brother Benvenuto Terracini (a linguist), sociologist Renato Treves, and professor Giovanni Turin.

As an exile's daughter (Alessandro Terracini's), having experienced firsthand the emigration and exile process as a child, she used memoirs and Italian official sources as well as personal accounts to outline biographical 'itineraries', pausing primarily on three issues: the reason for choosing Argentina as a destination, immigrants' modes of insertion in the labor market, and exiles' relationship with Italy after the fall of fascism.³ Among other reasons for choosing Argentina, the author finds that, for Italian exiles, the Spanish language presented minor difficulties compared with, say, English. However, she does not rule out that the job opportunities available in Argentina also played an important role in the decision-making process. Labor market integration took on a variety of forms, which point to the fairly positive reception of these exiles. For example, Levi, Segre, both Terracini brothers and Treves found job security at universities in the provinces (National University of Tucumán), while Mondolfo, Levialdi and Turin had to pursue their intellectual endeavors elsewhere. Other exiles, such as physicians Herlitzka and Lattes, in spite of their international reputation, did not become university lecturers, but devoted themselves to their professional private practices (Terracini 1989: 356 ff.).

Relations with Italy were undeniably conflicting. Intellectual exiles were atypical among Italian immigrants on account of being professionals and owing to the forced nature of their decision to leave, and so too were the Jewish exiles: Italian exiles did not speak Yiddish; they were not particularly religiously observant; and were deeply enmeshed in humanistic and secular Italian culture. In some sense, a consequence of the fascist racial laws was the reshaping of an identity around Jewishness, which up until now lay dormant and in the process

of being integrated into Italian society.⁴ In fact, around 1933, Arnaldo Momigliano, an Italian intellectual of Jewish origin who was later exiled in Britain, had argued that ‘the history of the Jewish community in Italy ‘la storia delle comunità ebraiche in Italia s’identifica con quella della formazione della loro coscienza nazionale italiana e che tale formazione è parallela a quella della coscienza nazionale nei piemontesi o nei napoletani o nei siciliani’ (Dionisotti 1987: 558).

Unlike the German Jewish intellectuals exiled in Europe or in the United States who could not help but identify Germany with Nazism, severing all ties including linguistic and cultural ones, the Italian Jews in Argentina were less categorical regarding their ‘Italianness’ and breaking their ties with Italy.⁵ Beyond unfavorable junctures, it was possible to make a distinction between Italy and fascism, animated by different forms of resistance that developed both within the exile communities and in Italy itself.⁶ Indeed, the resistance strategy of Italian communism in the thirties not infrequently estimated that the expressions of dissent that might arise from inside of the fascist regime itself could constitute an important element in the antifascist confrontation (Agosti 1998: 101–12; Rapone 1999: 7–34).

After the Liberation, the emigrants had the option of being reinstated in their Italian teaching positions. Amedeo Herlitzka, Leone Lattes, the Terracini brothers and Renato Treves returned to Italy between 1946 and 1951. Andrea Leviardi went back in 1962, but Rodolfo Mondolfo, Renato Segre and Beppo Levi preferred to stay in Argentina (Terracini 1989: 358; Treves 1990b: 61). The pattern of this emigration is better understood from a global perspective, as suggested by Eleonora Smolensky and Vera Vigevani Jarach (1998). For the authors, who studied the Jewish emigration of Italian origin between 1938 and 1942 from an oral history perspective, one of the distinctive features of this community is its transient existence: ‘arisen from the need to replace lost social ties, it started fading as the coercion factors began to disappear’ (Smolensky and Jarach 1998: 26). While some of the cases considered resemble those presented by Terracini, Smolensky and Jarach infer, from a total of about sixty interviews, the collective experience of nearly a thousand Italian Jews who arrived in Argentina during the period mentioned. The outcome of the process has been full integration into the host society, so much so that today the children and grandchildren of the exiles adopt cultural and religious practices that are a far cry from the original ones.

Bruno Groppo has also addressed the phenomenon of Italian Jewish emigration to Argentina, and has problematized the use of categories such as ‘political emigration’ or ‘political exile’ to shed light on a population that may have emigrated for political reasons – anti-Semitic discrimination and persecution – but did not share, as a whole, a component of political militancy that could be assimilated with the figure of the exile (Groppo 2002: 39).

Back to the original nucleus of Italian university exiles, I intend to present here some ideas regarding the relationship between the intellectual exiles and certain Argentine antifascist experiences during the 1930s. Inspired by

Fernando Devoto's idea regarding the need to analyze migratory experiences comparatively, considering the impact that the diverse contexts encountered in the destination country had on the emigrants (Devoto 2003: 8), my initial hypothesis is that the Italian intellectuals who arrived in Argentina between 1938 and 1941, as a result of the implementation of the 'racial laws' of fascism, attempted insertion strategies that relied mostly on the possibilities that their socioprofessional status, namely their university education, afforded them.⁷ The connection with Italian antifascist associations in Argentina played a role, albeit secondary, that became more salient towards the end of the period rather than at the beginning of some of the exiles' residence process. For example, Renato Treves recalls that he met Gino Germani in June 1941, on the occasion of a lecture he gave at the Sociology Institute of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras). Their relationship, which was at first intellectual and cultivated in the context of the institute activities, later became political. Germani's exile can be viewed as an exception to the Italian Jewish exile experience, in as much as here political ties and affinities played a much stronger role. In fact, Germani had arrived in Argentina in 1934 after one arrest and several months of political confinement in Italy. He associated with the antifascist group of which impresario Torcuato Di Tella was a member, and he enrolled in the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature where he later became a researcher, collaborating with historian Ricardo Levene, director of the Institute (Treves 1990b: 105). By late 1934 and early 1935, Germani had already collaborated in *L'Italia del Popolo*, a newspaper founded in Buenos Aires in 1917 which by the mid-1930s had adopted a pro-Republican independent left orientation. In those years, other articles appeared in the antifascist newspaper *La Nuova Patria*, in which Germani called for the unity of the Italian antifascist forces in Argentina, from the point of view of a young emigrant trying to show that the fascist regime's plan of indoctrinating the youth had not met its goals, and that it was possible to detect an affective antifascist sentiment in Italian youth. What is interesting about Germani's antifascist phase is that many of his preoccupations about society, the forms of state oppression, and the role of youth in authoritarian regimes that he would develop later from a theoretical perspective akin to the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons were conceived at this time (Germani 2004: 45 ff.). Germani's case is also interesting because it illustrates a special itinerary: an example of politically motivated emigration that resulted in the individual's immersion in the intellectual world of the host country, and, from there on, in the development of an international academic career.

So, for the exiles who had been part of the regime, or whom the regime recognized as allies – for example, the prominent businessman Gino Olivetti had been the president of the Fascist Confederation of Industry (Confederazione fascista della industria), and Margherita Sarfatti, Mussolini's former lover, occupied an important place in fascist culture – other spaces, such as the Italian Circle (Circolo italiano) or the Italian Commercial Bank (Banca

commerciale italiana) provided a socializing environment for these elites where the labels of fascist and antifascist did not carry the weight that was apparent in the political organizations themselves (Cannistrato and Sullivan 1992: 355, 38 ff.). Another case in point is that of Gino Arias, also a Jewish immigrant with strong ties with the regime in Italy, who was forced into exile by the racial laws. Since 1933, he had visited Argentina at the invitation of the Argentine Institute of Italian Culture (Istituto argentino de cultura itálica) and the School of Law of the University of Buenos Aires, and became a staunch advocate of corporate economic policy against state socialism.⁸

In the case of other intellectuals, it is likely that the solidarity networks of Argentine antifascist intellectuals – of a liberal and democratic tradition – were more important than networks based on ethnicity. This was so, no doubt, because the professional status of this group added novelty to the makeup of the traditional Italian migratory flow (i.e., more or less skilled manual workers), and because their Jewishness introduced yet another disruptive element in the already troubled Italian antifascist civil associations in Argentina, since this aggravated tensions between the *fuoriusciti*, who arrived earlier, and exiles, who until the enactment of the racial laws were fairly comfortable within the institutional framework afforded by the regime in Italy.⁹

Besides, those who came from university backgrounds in Italy had, strictly speaking, at least once been complicit with fascism since they, for example, had to take an oath of loyalty to the regime – albeit simulated – which was imposed on all university teachers in August 1931 (Boatti 2000; D’Orsi 2000; Goetz 2000). In this regard, Renato Treves has indicated that if the Jewish component was not relevant in the political emigration, neither was the political component particularly important in Jewish emigration (Treves 1990b: 55). All in all, Aldo Garosci has clearly stated that, although speaking of a Jewish antifascism is not possible – a thesis that De Felice will resume later in his *History of Italian Jews under Fascism* (*Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*) – ‘the presence abroad, and even in faraway countries, such as Brazil and Argentina, of men like Rodolfo Mondolfo, Renato Treves, Tullio Ascarelli, undeniably, added to the intellectual prestige of emigrated antifascists’ (‘la presenza all’estero, e sia pure in lontani paesi, come il Brasile e l’Argentina, di uomini come Rodolfo Mondolfo, Renato Treves, Tullio Ascarelli era indubbiamente un apporto al prestigio intellettuale dell’antifascismo emigrato’; Garosci 1953: 192–3).

A new internationalism

How did Argentine intellectuals react to the experience of the Italian intellectual diaspora? It is worth highlighting here a few elements that were present since the mid-1930s, such as the more or less widespread sentiment of a new international solidarity, which was no longer based on the Marxist concept of *obrerismo* (labor social doctrine), but on the defense of the spiritual rights of

the world's intellectual class from the attack of fascist states and their restrictive policies. The idea of a 'general republic for the intelligentsia' was apparent towards 1925, when the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle; IICI) was established in Paris, within the League of Nations. Concerned about corporately legislating on issues such as copyright, translation rights, cultural exchanges among intellectuals, scientists and writers from all countries, and issues of intellectual organization, the IICI was influenced by a pacifist approach that sought to build in this international community the consensus that governments failed to reach at the outbreak of World War I.

However, in the antifascist cultural climate of the 1930s, and shying away from definitions that had the national political framework as reference, the IICI appealed not only to the metaphor of the 'république des esprits', but also to the idea of the international reach of the notion of the 'intellectuel républicain', as a model of cultural action that ensured the practice of a rational humanism (Trebitsch 1998: 58).

With more belligerency, by 1938, both the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture (L'association internationale des écrivains pour la défense de la culture; AIEDC), of Cominternian inspiration, and the PEN Clubs (which defined themselves by their ideological autonomy) agreed on a number of common actions to support writers who had been victims of persecution in fascist regimes, openly declaring themselves opponents of all forms of racial or cultural persecution, and, in particular, of the latest anti-Semitic persecutions (Racine 1998: 39). This reveals to what extent the international political climate forced more categorical definitions regarding fascism in the intellectual nuclei. When the PEN Club Congress was held in Buenos Aires in 1936, under a nonaggression pact among the writers, a neutral stance had been maintained on a topic as heated as the Spanish Civil War, forcing even the tabling of a motion to pay tribute to Federico García Lorca, submitted by the Spanish and Catalan delegation, after the poet's assassination.¹⁰

Other expressions of solidarity with the persecuted by fascism existed in Argentina since April 1935, such as the Relief Committee to Aid the Victims of Fascism in Spain (Comité de ayuda a las víctimas del fascismo en España), the local subsidiary of its Parisian namesake, internationally chaired by Professor Henri Wallon, with a membership in Buenos Aires that included Alfredo Palacios, Aldo Cantoni, Augusto Bunge, Benito Marianetti, Sebastián Marotta and Miguel Contreras, among others. In June 1935, this group tried to organize a solidarity campaign to federate aid organizations helping those persecuted by fascism in Europe. The left political forces participated in it, but not the labor organizations. Those who joined proposed the creation of an organism that would support *patronatos* (charitable foundations) as a solidarity movement, protect the persecuted who were forced to live abroad, and form a federation with clear legal bases.¹¹ By December of that year, the local subsidiary of the

World Relief Committee to Aid the Victims of Fascism (Comité mundial de ayuda a las víctimas del fascismo) was established, and Romain Rolland was its chair. This group consisted mainly of politicians and intellectuals of the Radical, Socialist, Communist and Progressive Democratic parties, like José Peco, Emilio Ravignani, Aníbal Ponce, Augusto Bunge and Julio A. Noble.

When, by 1939, the Relief Committee to Aid the Spanish Intellectuals Exiled in France (Comité de ayuda a los intelectuales españoles refugiados en Francia) was formed in Paris, other Argentine intellectuals, such as the famous writer Alberto Gerchunoff, joined this group. This was a time when the Spanish refugee problem seemed to epitomize the preoccupations of the antifascists.¹²

Also, the non-partisan newspapers, such as *Crítica* and *La Nación*, voiced alarm at the persecution of antifascist intellectuals and politicians in Europe, and covered the murder of brothers Carlo and Nello Rosselli – Carlo had been the leader of the Italian antifascist group known as Giustizia e Libertà (GL). The crime was perpetrated on 9 June 1937 by what the Parisian press called ‘La Cagoule’, a right-wing association formed in Paris after the victory of the Popular Front, which had strong ties with the OVRA (Mussolini’s secret police) (Bourdrel 1970; Kergoat 1986: 222 ff.). Of course, each paper gave the Rosselli brothers’ case a very different journalistic treatment. The liberal daily *La Nación* gave an equidistant reading of the event and, without ignoring the fact that it involved antifascists, what prevailed in the narrative was the criminal nature of this political event. The objective was to follow the investigation process, the indictment, the crosschecking of accounts as they unfolded, until the interest in the murder faded and the clandestine operation of the Secret Organization of National Revolutionary Action (Organisation secrète d’action révolutionnaire nationale, OSARN), of which La Cagoule was a part, was exposed.¹³

By contrast, *Crítica* not only hired well-known personalities from among the Italian antifascist exiles in Argentina, such as the intellectual Mario Mariani, to report on the event, but, from the start, abandoned the criminal angle of the story to uncover the political context surrounding the murder. Their sources were GL itself and their correspondents in Paris, and its loyalties were clearly not only with global antifascism (*Crítica* would always side with the Spanish Republicans and popular frontist ideas), but with an exaltation of the heroic dimension of the GL militant as the model for antifascist action (Mariani 1937).

All in all, the role of the solidarity organizations was to reinforce further the public’s idea of fascism as ‘uncivilized’ and as a threat to the development of culture, rather than to support those persecuted for political reasons. In fact, this support was made possible by personal relations that protected individuals, through acts of generosity that were seldom made public and were carried out in the name of an indisputable and a shared universal democratic ideal.¹⁴

What chances were there, in the context of this antifascist climate, to incorporate the problematic of a few Italian Jewish immigrants – whose other common denominator was having a university academic background? Sources show only that in the circle of the Argentine Communist Party (PCA), made up mostly of workers of Italian origin, concern about the ethnic dimension of antifascism was present in the language sections, especially in the late 1920s, when a leader such as Italian-born Vittorio Codovilla, co-founded the Italian Antifascist Alliance (*Alleanza antifascista italiana*), a pro-communist association that disputed the hegemonic rule over the representation of Italian antifascism with the local Antifascist Concentration (*Concentrazione d'azione antifascista*). All things considered, Codovilla was less of an ethnic leader and more of a political middleman for the Italian-born antifascists, the members of the PCA, and the Communist International, of which he was the Argentine delegate, in a context in which the local communist discipline was consolidating as to the central organization.

Also, during this period, the PCA encouraged the dissolution of ethnic chapters within the national labor movement, particularly the Jewish one, and when, by 1937, it participated hiding in the shadows, the Committee against Racism and Antisemitism (*Comité de lucha contra el racismo y el antisemitismo*) did not fail to express the tension between Judaism as a threatened 'national' identity and the alliances that the Committee had to promote at the local level. This led to major confrontations between some Jewish members of the institution.¹⁵ Moreover, after the German–Soviet Pact was signed, the PCA developed a strong internal disciplinary policy that targeted communists of Jewish origin who questioned the decision of signing an agreement with an anti-Semite nation such as Germany.

Therefore, there would be no room here to conceive of the integration of new intellectuals with professional backgrounds, such as the Italian Jewish exiles, especially because some of them were closer to liberal socialism and the Gobettian and Rossellian tradition than to a form of Marxist 'materialism', which had already been challenged in Italy since the end of the first postwar period, by the works of philosopher Rodolfo Mondolfo (Asor Rosa 1975: 1536 ff.). Accordingly, those who participated in the Italian antifascist organizations in Argentina (especially Treves and Germani) would do so around 1943–44, as co-publishers of *Italia libre*, namesake of the association that proposed the creation of an antifascist front with a strong anticommunist and pro-ally character (Fanesi 1994: 93 ff.).

This estrangement was also apparent between the leadership of the PCA and the Italian communists, who in 1935 had constituted the United Front of Italian Workers' Parties (*Fronte unico dei partiti operai Italiani*). This organization established a pact between the Italian Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party in exile to restore the unity of action of all antifascist forces after the dissolution of the Antifascist Concentration in 1934. But the PCA's interpretation of the political situation essentially subordinated the

subject of antifascism to the anti-imperialist position, while, for the Front, this was a matter of rallying, at least at this earlier stage, the largest number of forces possible to support antifascism (Fanesi 1994: 78–9).

The magazine *Hechos e ideas* and the organization *Giustizia e Libertà*

Other Argentine intellectual groups felt attracted to antifascist discourse, especially when the inquiries dealt with the commonalities of authoritarian movements, partially because the Argentine political process was being perceived as moving toward its fascistization. Consequently, the intellectuals of the Radical Civic Union (Unión Cívica Radical) – the main opposition party – who convened at the magazine *Hechos e ideas*, sought the collaboration of the GL exiles who lived in the United States or in France, such as Gaetano Salvemini, Luigi Sturzo, Carlo Rosselli, Francesco Nitti and Guido de Ruggiero. Already in the first issue of the magazine, Salvemini presented a study on the relationship between capital and labor in fascist Italy, a contribution that would continue into the fourth issue. The essay, which was initially economic, attempted to prove that fascism, as a model to meet workers' aspirations, was a fallacy. Salvemini argued that the basis of the fascist control rested on a corporative state that curtails workers' wages, and a police state that suppresses social dissent. Among the conflicts looming on the horizon, the author saw not only those developing between capital and labor, but also those between the bourgeoisie and the growing role of a bureaucratic state (Salvemini 1935). In an article published in April 1936, Salvemini addresses the problem of fascism again, this time to propose that an emigration drive in Italy could contribute to pacification (Salvemini 1936).

The contribution by Carlo Rosselli selected by *Hechos e ideas* also enters the discussion about the state. In the article 'Death's name is fascism' ('La muerte se llama fascismo'), Rosselli – using the pen name Sincero – introduced the notion that the modern state expressed the tension between administration and legality. Fascism would be a perfect model of an outlaw state that embodied the necrotic condition of the European social organism (Sincero 1935).

In March 1937, *Hechos e ideas* was responsible for publishing the Spanish edition of Salvemini's *Under the Axe of Fascism (Bajo el signo del fascismo)*. That same month, Luigi Sturzo and Francesco Nitti each submitted an article. Sturzo tried to reconcile socialism with Christianity, in a critique of totalitarian states, which he applied to both fascism and communism: 'The totalitarian state suppresses freedom and introduces the supremacy of the temporary over ethical ends' (Sturzo 1937: 364). Nitti also considered both political models equally dangerous, but mainly as producers of the nationalist ideology that would end up denying freedoms (Nitti 1937: 384).

For *Hechos e ideas* the chief concern was trying to think of the most adequate way of integrating the social reforms that were attempted from the State with

the defense of political freedom. In an article of April 1937, Guido de Ruggiero held the view that the liberal state model was the ultimate expression of politics in the Modern Age. Therefore, he argued, they should return to this model because in its center all the tensions of society were accepted dialectically. Of course, this was not the model of pre-fascist Italy. Then, a new political state that would overcome the 'technical, administrative, dictatorial State' would have to be created (de Ruggiero 1937).

The contributions of members of GL ended in June 1938, with a biographical sketch of Carlo and Nello Rosselli by Salvemini, impelled by the assassination of the leader of GL and his brother Nello. The board of directors of the magazine stated that the publication of Salvemini's piece was intended as a 'contribution to the antifascist struggle for the defense of democracy and against all totalitarianisms' (Salvemini 1938: 219).

Beyond the obvious strategy employed by the publishers of presenting a relational and ideological closeness to their authors, it is likely that the contributions were more an indication of the contacts with local antifascists who had GL connections than with actual exiles. Although I have not been able to establish with certainty that connection, it is possible to identify some important relationships that could have played a role in this process. The publisher of some of Rosselli's works in Argentina was Siegfried Ciccotti, who in 1944 published some of his articles, including 'Today in Spain. Tomorrow in Italy' ('Oggi in Spagna. Domani in Italia'), in *Action and Character – Political and Autobiographical Writings* (*Acción y Carácter – Escritos políticos y autobiográficos*), a collection of essays with a foreword by Salvemini. Ciccotti had been a member of the local chapter of the Antifascist Concentration, and in 1941, he was a member of the aforementioned group Italia Libre.

As the Secretary of Italia Libre, Ciccotti became the strongest connection in Argentina for Randolfo Pacciardi, who, from the United States, intended to organize a legion of Italian armed forces in the Americas that would go and fight against fascism in World War II. Ciccotti was a member of Italian industrialist Torcuato Di Tella's circle, and Di Tella was one of the most important financiers of the Parisian Antifascist Concentration and the local Italia Libre (Baldini and Palma 1990: 8–14; Di Tella 1993: 53; Tobia 1993: 57–119).

But what appears to be most evident are the associations with the Spanish socialist sectors and their printed journalism, especially *Leviatán*, a magazine published in Madrid by Luis Araquistain mainly to promote the radicalization of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español; PSOE). GL had a presence in *Leviatán* through the articles that Aurelio Natoli, a GL member, contributed (Cataruzza 1994: 41).

In short, the intellectuals and politicians of *Hechos e ideas* articulated a form of antifascism that sought in the theoretical contributions of some members of GL a set of criteria that would enable them to observe the local political situation from a perspective that would integrate the state's interventionist role and civil liberties. The question of fascism introduced, in essence, the problem

of a state that, as a player, had undermined civil liberties. Hence, historian and congressional representative for the Radical Party Emilio Ravignani, avowed antifascist and a regular contributor to the magazine, found fascism to be the expression of a political ‘instinctivity’, the absolute absence of civility, understood as civic culture and institutional legitimacy (Ravignani 1935).

There was no room in the pages of *Hechos e ideas* for the kind of debates that were common in GL, that would set Rosselli against Lussu – such as the issue of the organization of the labor world in the process of social change – most likely because the prescription for class harmony was the mirror in which these intellectuals beheld themselves (Brigaglia 1979). Or, perhaps, because they reflected internal discrepancies that would not be appropriate to display outside. It was no wonder, though, that this was the case: in a most heterogeneous party, with social roots deeply embedded in the middle classes, with political beliefs that ranged from antifascist and anticommunist in its intellectual circles to neutral in most of the executive organs of the party regarding the Spanish Civil War, the workers’ uprising was not a critical issue, in a context of the Radical Civic Union party abandoning the abstentionist stance it had assumed since the military coup of 1930, to support instead a conciliatory attitude with the government of General Justo (Ciria 1975: 265).

The Free College of Higher Studies or the antifascist network of liberal socialism

For the Italian intellectuals who had been removed from their university posts and expelled from scientific institutions, taking the road to exile seemed the only alternative, both personally and professionally. The Free College of Higher Studies (Colegio Libre de Estudios Superiores; CLES) and the antifascist solidarity network that emerged from it constituted the associative space where these intellectuals could initially continue to develop their professional activities.

The CLES was created in May 1930 by a few intellectuals who were prominent in the Argentine culture of the time, such as Roberto Giusti, who, in 1908, founded the literary magazine *Nosotros*. Conceived as an alternative to the state-run university, the CLES strived to contribute to the development of higher education, creating a series of ‘open-enrollment courses which may or may not be part of the regular university program, that will develop topics that are not studied in depth in the general courses, or that go beyond the scope of the academic curriculum’ (‘Acta de Fundación’ 1953).

With the coup of 1930 and its global repressive measures and ‘anti-reformist’ position regarding the university, the CLES became the stronghold of much of the liberal-democratic intellectual opposition, and by mid-decade, one of the antifascist centers par excellence.

As ‘neither a professional college nor a popularization platform’, the College was caught between embracing the manifestations of high culture and its

mandate to bring culture to as many social classes as possible. In this sense, the 'educational' project that inspired its members created understandable tension between their institution and the state-run university, with rivalries at both the community and faculty levels. The CLES welcomed the professors who had been expelled from universities and, to those who maintained their university positions, it offered an additional space to work, even during the Peronist governments between 1946 and 1955, thus building a very strong subculture of opposition (Sigal 1991).

A year after its creation, the CLES began publishing the outreach magazine *Cursos y conferencias*, which supported an educational ideal most akin to the reformist spirit that the Socialist Party had developed since the late nineteenth century.

Even though it did not offer academic degrees, the CLES had among its partakers a great number of university students and professors, lured by its approach to current issues and the less formal profile that informed its educational mission. Through 'cultural information' courses, the CLES sought to attract the lower middle classes, and, particularly recruit primary and secondary school teachers who could help the educational mission of the institution multiply as it trickled down (Neiburg 1998: 46–7).

The possibility of social advancement and gaining access to higher education as a means of achieving such advancement were uppermost in the minds of the Argentine middle classes during the interwar period. The CLES, then, not only expressed ideological affectivities that linked it to the antifascist opposition, but also the ambition for upper mobility of these social sectors. By 1952, after twenty years of educational service, 608 professors and intellectuals had taught 1,551 courses (77.55 annually), and thirteen educational concerts and thirty-four film screenings had been offered.

In this context of facilitating civil society's access to culture and education – a recurrent subject for the liberal left of this period – it does not come as a surprise that the encyclopedic nature of the plan made it easier to include intellectuals that were not only called in for their specialized knowledge but also for their antifascist views. Thus, the Italian Jewish academics initially found a space for their professional development, along with other non-Jewish immigrants and exiles coming from a socialist tradition, such as Torcuato Di Tella,¹⁶ Gino Germani and Mario Mariani.¹⁷ The CLES magazine also hosted the opinions of political exiles, such as Giuseppe Tuntar, a communist from Friuli, who had contended with Vittorio Codovilla within the Antifascist Alliance (*Alleanza Antifascista*), and proposed the alignment of united antifascist forces in exile – especially with the local Antifascist Concentration – while the Second Congress of the Alliance in Berlin (1929) had established a policy strongly opposed to unity, which led to Tuntar's estrangement from the communist ranks (Fanesi 1994: 50).

In 1939, *Cursos y conferencias* published 'The ancient Roman imperialism and the Italian Neoimperialism: Carthage and Tunis' ('El antiguo imperialismo

romano y el neo-imperialismo italiano: Cartago y Túnez'), an article in which Tuntas argued that the Duce's expansionist policy appeared to be very consistent with the goal of European territorial division, which featured central Europe under Nazi control and the Mediterranean within the orbit of fascism, a scenario where 'the torch of human freedom' would perish (Tuntar 1939: 1221–34).

In line with this affective antifascism, *Cursos y conferencias* also published some of Ignazio Silone's contributions, including a chapter from his book *La escuela de dictadores*. This chapter was publicized as being selected from a study that Editorial Losada would publish later, and cautioned about the special conditions that had enabled fascism and National Socialism, and that these conditions still persisted in its propagation.

The example is very interesting because it points to another of the relational aspects surrounding the CLES: the relationship with Republican Spanish exiles and their participation in the publishing industry. Indeed, in August 1938, Francisco Romero, Amado Alonso and Attilio Rossi were involved in the foundation of Editorial Losada, a publishing house that collected and issued many works by exiled Spanish Republicans, such as Rafael Alberti, Lorenzo Luzuriaga, Guillermo de Torre and Manuel García Morente (de Zulueta, 1999: 58).

Editorial Losada also published works by Mondolfo, Terracini and other Italians living in Argentina, through contacts set up with Attilio Rossi, an exiled antifascist who had left Italy in 1935 and, once in Buenos Aires, created an affordable collection of major works published by Editorial Espasa-Calpe (Treves 1990a: 69).

For the exiles, the possibility of participating in the local cultural life was made possible through the network of antifascist intellectuals and politicians who gathered primarily at the CLES, and also through their affiliation to a few national universities. Rodolfo Mondolfo's itinerary is a case in point:

In 1938, I lost my teaching job, and the following year, I left Italy. I could not publish anything; I did not even have access to libraries. I had to remain a recluse at home. My children had already received their doctorates and they could not practice either. Emigration became an absolute necessity. Then, I remembered that there was a man in Argentina who had translated some of my work. His name was Marcelino Alberti. I asked him in a letter if he could get me a landing permit, which was very hard to get. Alberti discussed my predicament with Alfredo Palacios. Meanwhile, the Italian philosopher Giovanni Gentile, who had been minister under Mussolini, but also a personal friend of mine from the time we were both students, wrote without my asking to Alberini, who was a university dean in Buenos Aires. He requested that I be invited to teach one course. That is how it happened. With Alberini's invitation and the intervention of Palacios, I could obtain permission to enter Argentina for my family and myself.¹⁸

In fact, the renowned socialist senator Alfredo Palacios obtained a visa for Rodolfo Mondolfo. Upon arrival, Mondolfo began to teach courses at the CLES. He taught five lectures in 1933; three in 1940, two in 1942, two in 1943, and one in 1946. There he could establish excellent personal contacts with colleagues who enjoyed high local prestige and strong institutional reputation, such as the philosopher Francisco Romero, a major catalyst of the CLES since its creation, and of other socialist cultural spaces. In 1940, Mondolfo joined the faculty at the University of Córdoba, and in 1947 he started teaching at the University of Tucumán.

Julio Rey Pastor, the Spanish mathematician, living in Buenos Aires, responded to the plight of Beppo Levi and Alessandro Terracini. The former was hired by the University of the Littoral to lead a Mathematics Institute, while the latter was hired by the School of Engineering of the University of Tucumán. Benvenuto Terracini arrived later and, through his brother's efforts and the assistance from Amado Alonso, Director of the Institute of Linguistics of the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), would occupy a prominent academic position at the University of Tucumán. Treves would also wind up there, in his case, with the support of Carlos Cossio, professor of Philosophy of Law at the National University of La Plata. Rey Pastor, Carlos Cossio and Carlos Alonso were faculty members at the CLES from 1931.

The itinerary of Renato Treves also illustrates how the social and professional solidarity network resulting from the contact between the Italian academic world and Uruguayan and Argentine intellectuals operated. After the 'racial laws' barred him from participating in a contest at the University of Urbino, in October 1938, Treves sailed from Naples to Montevideo. He was carrying with him a letter of introduction from the Turinese criminal lawyer Eugenio Florian, who was asking his Uruguayan colleague, Carlos Salvagno, to introduce Treves to Eduardo J. Couture, a lawyer and an important academic at the School of Law in Montevideo. Couture also had very strong intellectual ties to Piero Calamandrei (Losano 1998: 43).

Until February 1939, Treves lived in Montevideo, gave several lectures, and published 'Italian neo-Hegelianism and German neo-Kantianism in contemporary legal thought' ('Neo-hegelismo italiano y neo-kantismo alemán en el pensamiento jurídico contemporáneo') in *Revista de derecho, jurisprudencia y administración*, edited by Couture. It was the organization of a sociology conference in Buenos Aires that put him in touch with Carlos Cossio, who helped him secure a position teaching Introduction to Law at the University of Tucumán (Treves 1990b: 65).

The role of Eduardo Couture as cultural mediator in the context of antifascist solidarity network should not be ignored: 'Couture strived incessantly to welcome, counsel and accommodate the European intellectuals of the most diverse countries of origin, Spaniards, Italians, Germans, French on the other side of the Atlantic' ('Senza posa Couture si prodigò per accogliere,

consigliare e sistemare al di là dell'Atlantico gli intellettuali europei dei più diversi paesi d'origine, spagnoli, italiani, tedeschi, francesi') (Treves 1957: 468–73). Also, when Peronism forced many professors from their university positions, Couture played an important role in placing them at the University of the Republic and, although the possibility of creating an affiliate of the CLES in Montevideo was thwarted until 1955, the CLES did not fail to remember that the friendship ties with Couture were as old as the very creation of the institution.¹⁹

The relationship between this immigration and the Jewish intellectual antifascism in Argentina is worth separate mention. Indeed, Jewish antifascism found a breeding ground in various institutions – the Delegation of Argentine Jewish Associations (Delegación de asociaciones israelitas argentinas; DAIA), founded in 1935, among them – but really thrived with the group who wrote *Judaica*, a magazine founded in 1933. *Judaica* encouraged a robust dialogue between Marxism and Judaism, and proposed the Soviet Union as the ideal model of political and social organization, as it was perceived as 'the only state where Jews can make their own lives, not only as individuals, but also as a nation' (Weinstein 1937). The idea of the then USSR as a destination for the Jewish nation had been present at least since November 1935, when the Committee for Jewish Colonization in Birobidyan (Comité pro colonización israelita en Birobidyan) organized the visit of Soviet delegate Gina Meden, who promoted this project in Jewish settlements in the provinces of Santa Fe and Chaco.²⁰

Internally, *Judaica* set out to defend Jewish identity on two fronts: on the one hand, it chastised the Argentine nationalist right for branding the Jews as responsible for social calamities; on the other hand, it waged an ideological battle at the very heart of the community, at one level, trying to recover the Jewish contributions to Argentine culture since Spanish colonial times, while struggling to educate the members of its own community when their cultural attitudes appeared to mirror anti-Jewish stereotypes (Karduner 1937).

What relationship did the exiles establish with the institutional expressions of the local Jewish community? If this ever existed, it was most likely the result of individual acts of solidarity rather than institutional connections, because, as Treves recalls, the interests of Jewish Italian exiles and those of the local Jewish community ran on different tracks: '... formed by immigrants from Eastern European countries who, having escaped persecutions from the beginning of the century, had languages, traditions, and interests that differed from ours' ('... costituite da immigranti provenienti da paesi dell'Europa Orientale che, fuggiti dalle persecuzioni dell'inizio del secolo, avevano lingue, tradizioni, interessi diversi dai nostri') (Treves 1990b: 105).

To sum up, the CLES embodied one possible form that an antifascist solidarity network mobilized by local intellectuals of a socialist and liberal tradition could assume. Present in other areas of cultural life – such as the universities in Córdoba and Tucumán, which were in need of professional

Table 1 Participation of Italian exiles at the Free College of Higher Studies, 1939–51 (Jews and non-Jews)

Year	Lecturer's Name	Title of lecture	No. of lectures
1938	Mario Mariani	D'Annunzio in the context of contemporary literature	4
	Mario Mariani	Study of contemporary French literature: from Verlaine to Cocteau	6
1939	Rodolfo Mondolfo	The theory of knowledge in the history of philosophy	5
	Rodolfo Mondolfo	Tomasso Campanella	1
	Renato Treves	The crisis of democracy and the transformation of legal science	1
	Camillo Viterbo	Insurance overview	3
	Mario Mariani	Pre-war Italian theater	6
1940	Rodolfo Mondolfo	The political philosophy of nineteenth-century Italy	3
1941	Torcuato Di Tella	Social security for industrial workers	1
1942	Giovanni Turin	Literature and cinema	1
	Giovanni Turin	Review of Orson Wells' <i>Citizen Kane</i>	1
	Rodolfo Mondolfo	The teaching of philosophy at the <i>Liceo italiano</i>	1
	Rodolfo Mondolfo	Names and trends in contemporary philosophy since Hegel: Ardigó	1
	Benvenuto Terracini	Leopardi as philologist	1
	Benvenuto Terracini	The problem of dead languages	1
	Renato Treves	The purpose of the state in contemporary political doctrines	1
	Giovanni Turin	The philosophy of Leopardi	1
1943	Benvenuto Terracini	The problem of translation	2
	Rodolfo Mondolfo	From Heraclitus to Polybius	2
	Beppo Levi	Study on Euclid	3
	Benvenuto Terracini	Languages and culture	2
	Renato Treves	The philosophical problem of law in contemporary thought	1
1946	Benvenuto Terracini	Virgil and Beatrice. Review of cantos I and II of the Divine Comedy	2
	Rodolfo Mondolfo	Historic action and education of Leibniz's philosophy	1
	Gino Germani	Outline of a social psychology for a time of crisis	9
1947	Leone Lattes	Human selection in emigration	1
	Camillo Viterbo	Economic law	8
1948	Leone Lattes	On medicine and emigration	2
	Camillo Viterbo	The myth of value	1
1949	Benvenuto Terracini	What is etymology?	1
	Benvenuto Terracini	The place of Italian among the Romance languages	1
	Benvenuto Terracini	The concept of linguistic freedom	1
1951	Benvenuto Terracini	The close and the remote origins of the European civilization	2

Note: This table is based on data gathered from 'Acta de fundación' (1953).

faculty – this network provided Italian exiles with the opportunity to participate, sometimes as lecturers, and others as instructors, teaching specific courses. Aside from their differential professional profiles and their intellectual acumen, the exile of Italian Jews scholars in Argentina was not a leap in the void. This was apparent from the beginning, and stemmed from a relational fabric that displayed two essential features: being political refugees set in motion sympathies that landed them in the broad ideological context of the local antifascism, while their professional backgrounds drew them closer to the needs of an intellectual life that fluctuated between self-actualization and the pedagogy of civil society. In this sense, the Italian intellectual exile constituted an important contribution to Argentine culture.

Throughout the exile period, some exiles were able to become prominent figures in the cultural life of Argentina, since they helped develop and establish academic centers and new lines of research to great effect in the local university life, as the itineraries of Rodolfo Mondolfo and Renato Treves demonstrate: the former did not return to Italy after the fall of fascism, and Treves went back, but kept his intellectual and emotional ties with the Argentine intellectual world alive.

On the whole, of the total CLES cultural activity during the period 1930–51, the participation of the exiles barely represented five per cent. However, that involvement enabled the expansion and permanence of ties that did not fail to stay active when the political conditions in Italy and Argentina changed and, as judged by the actors, tables were turned. It is no wonder, then, that the CLES enthusiastically welcomed Guido de Ruggiero in 1946, and that his lectures dwelled on the merits of the regained democratic freedoms in Europe, in the context of the triumph of Peronism in the elections of February that year. The conciliatory article by Treves, published in the magazine of the CLES, reveals a sense of defeat: praising Mondolfo's intellectual qualities, it invited Peronist authorities to strengthen institutional and academic relations with Italy, since until that time such contacts had been the result of individual initiatives, which ran counter to the interest of the Argentine State (Treves 1947: 372–7). Although the intention was to mitigate the impact policies adopted by the new government could have on Italian exiles who still remained in the country, it was apparent that the generalized perception was that of a reworked version of the conditions of European fascism in the Atlantic periphery.

Notes

- 1 For the racial laws, see Collotti (1998).
- 2 The matter of the exile of Spanish Republicans is discussed at great length in Schwartzstein (2001).
- 3 Lore Terracini died in Turin, 11 December 1995.
- 4 'It is apparent that the racial laws were a wake-up call for many Italian Jews. They made them painfully aware of a Jewish identity that many among them had put on hold' ('On sait que les lois raciales furent l'occasion pour beaucoup des juifs italiens

- d'un brusque réveil. Il leur fit prendre brutalement conscience d'une identité juive que beaucoup d'entre eux avaient mis en veilleuse') (Bechelloni 1999: 79).
- 5 The exiled French intellectuals experienced something similar to the Italian in that they could establish a moral distance between 'la France' and the 'régimen de Vichy' (Duranton-Crabol 2000: 47).
 - 6 On the German Jewish exiles, see Palmier (1988: 376).
 - 7 Exiles are uncommon immigrants who, just like 'economic' immigrants, have to earn their keep in the receiving country. They differ from the latter in that they cannot freely return to their countries of origin (Dreyfus-Armand and Groppo: 1996: 7).
 - 8 *La Nación*, 10 August 1933.
 - 9 *L'Italia del Popolo*, 30 January 1939.
 - 10 XIVe. Congrès International des PEN Clubs, 5–15 September 1936, *Discours et débats* (1937): 149–50.
 - 11 *Crítica*, 10 June 1935.
 - 12 Gerchunoff focused intensely on the topic of anti-Semitic persecution at least from mid-1938, when he published an article about Sigmund Freud and Stefan Zweig, both exiled in London, whom he calls *heimatlos*, 'men without nation': 'And the people of the perishing city [Vienna] constrained the old sage [Freud], confiscated his printing press, his money, his books, for the crime of thinking and the crime of not being dolichocephalic and essentially fair haired, springing from a common ancestor with Attila's men That emigration of art and wisdom was, in fact, a moving out from uncivil nations to civil shelters' (Gerchunoff 1938).
 - 13 'The two Rosselli brothers were assassinated in France. Their corpses were found near Bagnoles de l'Orne. Political crime' (*La Nación*, 12 June 1937, p. 3) and 'Indictment for the assassination of the Rosselli brothers. The accused Robert Puireux of Fienne interrogated in Paris. His automobile' (*La Nación*, 14 January 1938, p. 5).
 - 14 See a similar idea regarding the Argentine exile of Spanish visual artists who were in the Republican ranks in Weschler (2002).
 - 15 Regarding the Jewish presence in the Argentine labor movement, see Bilsky (1989: 44).
 - 16 Beyond the academic, Di Tella's participation in the CLES is better understood as a leading financier of the institution and dedicated antifascist.
 - 17 Mario Mariani was born in Rome in 1894. He lived in the United States and in Berlin, where he was a correspondent for *Il Secolo* of Milan and *Il Messaggero* of Rome. During the First World War, he adhered to Italian socialist views as an independent, and later he plunged into his literary career, writing several successful works and founding two magazines, *Novella* and *Comoedia*. Forced into exile for opposing fascism, Mariani finally settled in Buenos Aires. There he became a staff member of *Crítica*, a newspaper that ferociously defended local antifascist's perspectives. He died in Sao Paulo in 1951 (*Cursos y conferencias* XIV, VII, 10–11, January–February 1939, pp. 1, 16; Petriella and Sosa Miatello 1976: 423; Falco 1980).
 - 18 Rodolfo Mondolfo to Alberto Szpunberg, 'El último reportaje a Rodolfo Mondolfo: Un testigo del siglo', *Clarín*, 9 December 1976.
 - 19 *Cursos y conferencias*, XLVII, 271, December 1955, p. 470.
 - 20 AGN, Fondo Documental Agustín P. Justo. Ministerio del Interior, Box 47, File 3,229, document no. 18, Sección Especial, Buenos Aires, 4 June 1936.

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