

THE JEWS IN ITALY

By ELI RUBIN (SOZIUS)

THE JEWS IN MEDIAEVAL ITALY

As to the life of the Jews in the Middle Ages of Europe, the religious fanaticism of those centuries turned the life of the Jews of whole Europe into a long and dark night.

One country, however, in which even in mediaeval times life was bearable for the Jews, was Italy.

Whilst in Spain the stakes were burning alight for the Jews, whilst they had to leave Germany to save their naked life, only the Jews of Italy could stay where they were, only the Roman Jews could continue quite unmolested their spiritual and material work.

Many of the Popes themselves asked and obtained human treatment of the small Jewish minority.

To name some of them, Pope Gregorius (590-608), Pope Calixtus II. (1120) and the Holy Father Alexander III, who, as many influential persons of those centuries did, allowed his economical transactions to be carried out by Jews.

Even Pope Innocent III, himself, the initiator of the Crusades, a religious fanatic, had to renew the Edict of Tolerance proclaimed by Gregorius the Great.

And whilst the 4th Council of the Lateran became by its intolerance and inextorability, a terrible plague for European Jews, yet in Rome, at the Residence of the Holy Fathers themselves, a great many Jews, fugitives from other countries, found an asylum in which to rest after terrible persecutions.

In this connection mention might be made of Holy Father Gregorius IX, who by his Edict of the year 1233 asked tolerance for the Jews "Sons of the same Creator".

This was a language and a spirit quite foreign at that time to the men living outside Italy.

Historical documents of these centuries show that many Jews in Italy then were active as physicians — very often in the service of the Popes —, many were associated with Christian partners in the commercial line, many ploughed their own soil, a possibility which in that time was allowed only to Italian Jews.

Whilst in other countries the Jews had to struggle for their bare life, Christian and Jewish Authorities of Rome had to restrain the luxury in the dresses of Jewish women.

The splendid, intellectual Jewish life in Moorish Spain having been destroyed by the stakes of the Inquisition, Italy became the spiritual asylum of the Jews, the center of Jewish philosophers and poets.

The spiritual pride of the Italian Jews of that epoch found its expression in the title "Prince of the Community" conferred on the Rabbis of the Italian Jewish communities.

In those centuries the Popes, entering Rome after their election for the first time, were welcomed also by a delegation of the Jewish community presenting to the Holy Father the Thora to which the Pope then made his reverence, renewing the promise of the Popes to protect the life and the property of the Jews.

The Popes and other Christian Authorities showed themselves grateful for the Jewish work.

Pope Bonifacius IX, appointed the Jew Emanuele his personal physician and in recognition for his merits and those of his son, Angelo, the Pope granted to the Jewish Community of Rome a considerable reduction in taxes.

Still more conciliant was his successor, Pope Martin V. (1417-1431) and his successors too adhered to the same politics of tolerance, a spirit of mind all the more remarkable as in those times the waives of religious hatred and persecution overflowing Spain, Germany and most other countries of Europe could not remain without effect upon the Italian population.

Then came the year 1492. It was the year of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and many fugitives fled to Italy and this country through the Holy Father Alexander VI, opened to them the doors of Rome, offering to the Jews asylum and hospitality.

6 months later the fugitives from Southern France joined their persecuted Jewish brethren of Spain and

they too found an asylum in Rome.

The reign of Pope Leo X. (1513-1531) meant for the Italian Jews a new period of prosperity, spiritual as well as material, a prosperity so splendid that the Roman Jewish Community applied to the Rabbis of Jerusalem, asking them "if there are no signs for the coming of the Messiah for the Jewish people!"

The documents of that time are speaking of many Jews in prominent positions in the world of Science, Arts and Trade.

The successors of Pope Alexander VI. too maintained the same line of tolerance towards the Jews, and in a special way the Popes Clemens VII. and Paul III.

In that period the Italian Universities were accessible to Jews too and it was the medical career which offered them many chances.

May it be mentioned that the Jewish physician, Giacobbe Mantino,

THE JEWS IN MODERN ITALY

Having previously depicted the Jews in Ancient Times and the Mediaeval Ages, we will now deal with their position in the Italy of to-day.

What is the life of this minority in a Europe full of open or secret hatred against the Jews? In a Europe in which Jews are openly persecuted by a well armed Germany; other countries, smaller, weaker than Germany, content themselves with secret persecutions combined with humiliations under legal guise!

Some of these peoples are using racial pretexts, others are employing religious arguments and the same is said of Nations in which the Jews, enjoying economic liberty, are, as regards their political and social life, surrounded by a wall as high as the arrogance of these peoples.

There are so many countries in Europe in which Jews, notwithstanding the fact that tens of thousands of them have lost their life as soldiers in the war, cannot become army-officers in time of peace.

There are so many countries in Europe in which Jews, notwithstanding their excellent, scientific research-work, cannot become professors of universities.

There are so many countries in Europe in which Jews, in spite of the fact that for generations they have contributed to the economic development of their respective countries, cannot become Public Functionaries.

In these countries when the envy for bread is not using racial arguments, it employs religious pretexts or is using no pretext at all, contenting itself with brutal force.

And what is the position of the Jews in the Modern Italy of to-day?

To be short, Italy has no fear of entrusting her fate to a Jewish Prime Minister, her soldiers to Jewish Generals and her academical youth to Jewish Professors.

And in this way — quite incredible for the European Continent — equality prevails for all citizens in Italy, as proved by the following data, which statements can be controlled without any difficulty:

THE JEWISH SENATORS IN THE FASCIST ITALY OF MUSSOLINI

Date and Place of Birth:

Ancona Ugo, Ing., Prof., 1867, Ferrara,
 Artom Ernesto, Dott., 1868, Asti,
 Barzilai Salvat. Avv., 1860, Trieste,
 Della Torre Luigi, Dott., 1861, Alessandria,
 Dieno Adriano, Avv., 1857, Venezia,
 Levi Isaija, 1863, Torino,
 Loria Achille, Prof., 1857, Trieste,
 Lustig Alessand. Prof., 1857, Trieste,
 Mayer Teodoro, Minister of State, 1860, Trieste,
 Morpurgo Barone Elio, 1858, Udine,
 Mortara Lodovico, Minister of State, 1855, Mantova,
 Segré-Sartorio Conte Salvatore, 1865, Trieste,
 Supino Davide, Prof., 1851, Pisa,
 Volterra Vito, Prof., 1860, Ancona.

Does such a list require any comment?

— Ma perché, mio caro, prima di sposare non mi hai detto che avevi dei denti d'oro?

— Perché non volevo che tu facesse un matrimonio di interesse.

was a Lecturer of the Roman University and historical documents of 1524-1550 speak of no less than 23 Jewish physicians of very high reputation.

It was in the time of Pope Julius III., in reaction to the Lutheran movement that the position of the Roman Jews became worse and the Ghetto was introduced.

And the following period, after many centuries of tolerance and prosperity, was full of humiliation and exasperation.

Even in those times, however, when the laws against the Jews seemed not only too severe, but quite unbearable, then it was always the human and tolerable spirit of the Roman population which set aside those inhuman laws.

Resuming, it may be said about Jewish life in Mediaeval Italy, that the Jews spent many centuries of splendid spiritual and material life mingled with a few bitter periods.

But even in the hardest and most bitter times, they never had to leave their homes, they always could continue to practise their rites, they never had to fear, like the Jews outside Italy, that brutal force might extinguish the flame of Judaism.

This part of Jewish History will always remain a page of honour for the Italian people.

THE JEWISH SENATORS IN ITALY BEFORE THE WAR

Date And Place Of Birth:

Arbib Edoardo, 1840, Firenze,
 Artom Isacco, 1829, Asti,
 Ascoli Graziado, Prof., 1829, Gorizia,
 Cassuto Dario, Avv., 1850 Livorno,
 Castellani Enrico, 1858, Padova,
 D'Ancona Alessandro, 1835 Pias,
 D'Ancona Sansone, 1814, Pesaro,
 Fano Enrico, Avv., 1834, Milano,
 Fano Giulio, Prof., 1856, Mantova,
 Foa Pio, 1848, Mantova,
 Franchetti L. Dott., 1847, Livorno,
 Levi Nobile Ulderico, 1842, Reggio Emilia,
 Levi Civita Giac., Avv., 1846, Rovigo,
 Luzzatti Luigi, Prof., Presidente del Consiglio, 1841, Venezia,
 Malvano Giacomo, Avv., 1841, Torino,
 Massarani T. Dott., 1829, Mantova,
 Maurogónato - Pesaro Isacco, Dott., 1817, Venezia,
 Parenzo Cesare, Avv., 1842, Rovigo,
 Pavia Angelo, Avv., 1848, Venezia,
 Pescarolo Bellom, Prof., 1861, Torino,
 Pincherle Gab. Avv., 1851, Venezia,
 Pisa Ugo, Dott., 1845, Ferrara,
 Polacco Vittorio, Prof., 1859, Padova,
 Romanin-Jacur Leone, Prof., 1847, Padova,
 Sonino Barone G., 1844, Alessandria,
 Sonnino (dei Baroni) Sidney, Dott., 1847, Pisa,
 Ottolenghi Giuseppe, General. Minister of War, 1838, Mantova,
 Ottolenghi Salvatore, 1831, Asti,
 Treves de Bonfilii Barone Alberto, 1855, Padova,
 Wollenberg Leone, Dott., 1859, Padova,

From the dates of birth here given, i. e. going back as far as 120 years, we can see that the tolerance in Italy is not of recent date and was already a fact at a time when the emancipation of the Jews in the other countries had not even begun.

One of those Senators, Isacco Maurogónato-Pesaro, was invited twice by the king of Italy to enter the Cabinet, but he had to refuse for private reasons.

The Senator Gabriele Pincherle was Honorary President of the Council.

Luigi Luzzatti was Prime Minister, General Giuseppe Ottolenghi was Minister of War, Pavia Angelo was twice Undersecretary of State, Senator Lodovico Mortara is actually Lord Chief Justice and First President of the Court of Appellation in Rome.

Senator Isacco Artom was the intimate collaborator of Cavour, and Giacomo Malvano was for many years Secretary General in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

What is the attitude of the Fascist Government in this question?

Facts are proving that such a question does not exist at all.

For many years, up to the present days, the Secretary General of the Parliament was a Jew, Professor Camillo Montalcini, and one of the best known Members of the Italian Parliament is Gino Olivetti.

And the Senate in the Fascist Italy of Mussolini?

The following list of Jewish Senators in the Italian Senate to-day gives a clear answer:

— L'altro ieri m'avete venduto un cerotto per liberarmi dai reumatismi.

— Precisamente.

— Ebbene, ora vendetemi qualcosa per liberarmi dal cerotto.

THE JEWS IN THE ITALIAN ARMY

In Rome can be seen the most splendid monument ever erected in honour of great soldiers — the Arch of Titus.

It has been made in order to glorify the military virtues of the Roman soldiers, but at the same time this Monument recalls the long, hard and bitter resistance of the Jewish soldiers conquered only after weary and bloody battles.

Such monuments are never consecrated to heroes if their conquered enemies themselves were not worthy of such a glorification.

We may be sure that the experiences the Roman soldiers underwent in their different wars with the warlike spirit of the Jewish people in Palestine has never induced the Italians to underrate the military virtues of the Jews as many European nations did before the Great War.

And so it cannot be too great a surprise that the King of Italy during an audience he granted 2 years ago to the President Nahum Sokolow, mentioned to this Jewish leader the fact that in recent years the Italian Army counted no less than 11 Jewish Generals.

8 of these Italian Jews who attained the rank of General are:

General Liuzzi,
 General Olivetti,
 General di Nola,
 General Pavia,
 General Modena,
 General Segré,
 General Pugliese,
 General Bonajuti.

The figure of 11 Generals permits the logical conclusion of a proportionally higher number of Jewish Officers in all ranks serving in the Italian Army.

The Jewish General Giuseppe Ottolenghi was Minister of War of Italy in the years before the Great War.

JEWISH NOBILITY IN ITALY

Most of the Jews in Italy who were raised to the peerage, were honoured in the time of the Risorgimento in gratitude of the good services rendered by the patriotic Jews to their country.

Other Jews were knighted in recognition of their great charity works.

When knighted the following Gentlemen were members of the Jewish Community:

Barone Castelnovo,
 Barone Franchetti Abramo,
 Barone Leonino Leone Davide,
 Barone Levi Agosto Adolfo,
 Barone Levi Giacomo Giorgio,
 Barone Levi A. Giorgio,
 Barone Levi Ulderico (Senator),
 Barone Levi de Veale Moise,
 Barone Lumbroso Abramo,
 Barone Montel Donato Salamone,
 Barone Padoa Leone Emilio,
 Barone Todros Giacobbe Abramo,
 Barone Treves de Bonfilii Giuseppe,
 Barone Vitta Giuseppe Jona,
 Barone Weil-Weiss Lainate,
 Conte Corinaldi Michele Dott.,
 Conte Sacerdoti Isacco,
 Conte Ottolenghi Meir Emilio,
 Conte Ottolenghi Leonetti.

In this list must be included Barone Professor Alessandro Artom knighted some years ago for the great services he rendered during the war to the Italian Navy in the line of Radiotelegraphy.

THE JEWS IN THE SCIENTIFIC LIFE OF ITALY

If ever a science can be considered a free science, it is science in Italy.

A science free for all — an essential condition — in the choice of Professors and Lecturers, a science free from every prejudice and envy for bread so deeply rooted in most of the Universities of the European countries.

On Italian soil the Jewish scientists always found encouragement and the fairest chances for work and existence.

And in this respect too Modern Italy — and no less so the Italy of Mussolini — continues the old Roman traditions and of a high moral value and stimulance is the noble example of the reigning Dynasty of Savoia.

For instance, the Crown-Prince of Italy, the Prince of Piedmont, had as one of his teachers a conservative Jew, the Senator Professor Vittorio Polacco.

And Fascism itself?

The attitude of the Fascist Government in this question, resolved by so many Governments in Europe — not only in Germany — in a barbarous way, may be clearly seen by the following list of Jewish Professors and Lecturers on the Italian Universities.

Le Pretese Der Camaleonte

Mentre cantava l'inno ar Solleone,
 una Cecala se trovò de fronte
 a tu per tu con un Camaleonte
 piu' nero der Carbone.

— Quant'è che me rifriggi 'sta canzone!
 — incominciò a di' lui — Lascela perde!
 Me la cantavi ar tempo ch'ero rosso,
 me la cantavi ar tempo ch'ero verde...
 Che vai cercanno? che te zompi addosso?
 — Io canto ar sole, — je rispose lei —
 e la luce der sole è sempre eguale:
 che voi che ce ne fregghi, a noi cecale,
 de che colore sei?

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