

Routledge Studies in the Modern History of Italy

MUSSOLINI'S CAMPS

**CIVILIAN INTERNMENT IN FASCIST ITALY
(1940–1943)**

Carlo Spartaco Capogreco

Translated by Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme



“A book that presents irrefutable documentary evidence and is of key importance for any assessment and historical judgment of Italian Fascism and its nature.”

—**Simon Levis Sullam**, *University of Venice, Italy*

“*Mussolini’s Camps* is first and foremost a historical essay, yet laudably written so as to reach a wider audience ... At the same time, it is a tale of research, discovery and denunciation.”

—**Michele Sarfatti**, *Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center, Milan, Italy*

“Capogreco painstakingly reconstructs the map of Italy’s concentration camp system, thus turning the existence of such a system, the rules governing it, the discriminatory logic buttressing it into an inescapable issue.”

—**David Bidussa**, *Giangiaco Feltrinelli Foundation, Milan, Italy*

“*Mussolini’s Camps* is crucial for a full understanding of Fascism.”

—**Bruno Bongiovanni**, *University of Turin, Italy*

“The author’s merit rests especially on his having brought to light a topic almost entirely absent from Italy’s public awareness and which has mostly been neglected by historical research as well.”

—**Ruth Nattermann**, *Bundeswehr University Munich, Germany*

“Capogreco has provided the clearest, most precise and most effective overview to date of Fascist civilian internment... His work sets a good example on how to write objectively about delicate and tragic chapters in human history.”

—**Petar Strčić**, *Society for Croatian History and University of Zagreb, Croatia*

“We will find in Capogreco the kind of sound, comprehensive overview of Fascist civilian internment that was missing until now.”

—**Damijan Guštin**, *Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, Slovenia*

“After *Mussolini’s Camps*, our understanding and our mental map of the Fascist regime’s policy and practice of internment – of its very existence as a system, as well as its vast scope and multiple functioning – was transformed.”

—**Robert S.C. Gordon**, *University of Cambridge, UK*



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Mussolini's Camps

This book—which is based on vast archival research and on a variety of primary sources—has filled a gap in Italy's historiography on Fascism, and in European and world history about concentration camps in our contemporary world. It provides, for the first time, a survey of the different types of internment practiced by fascist Italy during the war and a historical map of its concentration camps.

Published in Italian (*I campi del duce*, Turin: Einaudi, 2004), in Croatian (*Mussolinijevi Logori*, Zagreb: Golden Marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2007), in Slovenian (*Fašistična taborišča*, Ljubljana: Publicistično društvo ZAK, 2011), and now in English, *Mussolini's Camps* is both an excellent product of academic research and a narrative easily accessible to readers who are not professional historians. It undermines the myth that concentration camps were established in Italy only after the creation of the Republic of Salò and the Nazi occupation of Italy's northern regions in 1943, and questions the persistent and traditional image of Italians as *brava gente* (good people), showing how Fascism made extensive use of the camps (even in the occupied territories) as an instrument of coercion and political control.

Carlo Spartaco Capogreco is considered one of the foremost international experts on the history of Civilian Internment during Fascism. Currently, he is Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Calabria and Scientific Advisor for the Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center in Milan. Among his other writings of note are *Il piombo e l'argento* (Rome: Donzelli, 2007); *Renicci* (Milan: Mursia, 2003); *Ferramonti* (Florence: La Giuntina, 1987). He has contributed entries and essays to the *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018); *La Shoah in Italia* (Turin: Utet, 2010); *Dizionario dell'Olocausto* (Turin: Einaudi, 2004); *Dizionario del Fascismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2002); *Dizionario della Resistenza* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001); and has also edited and annotated the critical edition of Maria Eisenstein's *L'internata numero 6* (Milan: Mimesis, 2014).

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Edited by Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti (University College London), Marco Mondini (University of Padua and Italian German Historical Institute-FBK Trent), Silvana Patriarca (Fordham University) and Guri Schwarz (University of Genoa)

The history of modern Italy from the late 18th to the 21st centuries offers a wealth of dramatic changes amidst important continuities. From occupying a semi-peripheral location in the European Mediterranean to becoming one of the major economies of the continent, the Peninsula has experienced major transformations while also facing continuing structural challenges. Social and regional conflicts, revolts and revolutions, regime changes, world wars and military defeats have defined its turbulent political history, while changing identities and social movements have intersected with the weight of family and other structures in new international environments.

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Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, translated by Norma Bouchard and Valerio Ferme

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(1940–1943)

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**Translated by
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To Donatella

“Fascism has proved that its roots are deep, it changes its name and style and methods, but is not dead.”

Primo Levi

“In times of universal deceit, telling the truth will be a revolutionary act.”

George Orwell

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Preface

There are certain landmark works of historiography that bring a field of research into focus for the first time, which make visible and urgent a set of historical questions that had hitherto seemed fuzzy, half-acknowledged and most often conveniently ignored. A dramatic case in point was Robert Paxton's *Vichy France* (1972; in French 1973), which, along with Marcel Ophüls' film *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1971), lit a fuse under complacent assumptions in France regarding Vichy's wartime collaboration. In the case of modern Italian historiography, a comparable paradigm-shifting thrust was undoubtedly effected by Claudio Pavone's magisterial reassessment of the anti-fascist Resistance in Italy, in its moral as much as its political and national dimensions, in *Una guerra civile (A Civil War)*, 1991; in English 2013). Following Paxton or Pavone, our mental maps and our critical visions of Vichy and of the Resistance could no longer look the same. The optics and the hermeneutics shifted in tandem. Something similar could be said of the achievement of the work translated here for the first time into English, Carlo Spartaco Capogreco's *I campi del duce. L'internamento civile nell'Italia fascista (1940–1943) (Mussolini's Camps)*. Published by the leading Italian publisher Einaudi in 2004, the book was the culmination of decades of dedicated and meticulous work—often isolated, of interest to only a handful of others; a work of research, recovery, compilation and analysis begun, as the author explains in his own introduction, as far back as the 1980s. After *Mussolini's Camps*, our understanding and our mental map of the fascist regime's policy and practice of internment—of its very existence as a system, as well as its vast scope and multiple functioning—was transformed. To borrow the influential coinage of David Rousset, this was the first comprehensive attempt at charting fascist Italy's distinctive wartime *univers concentrationnaire*.

Mussolini's Camps draws a detailed map—in several strata, of chronology, geographical extension and analysis of function—of the widespread, complex and multi-layered network of the fascist regime's wartime internment camps. The book convincingly congregates these camps as a constituted network, but shows how they varied widely in kind between internment camps, prisons, military and civilian concentration camps, internal confinement colonies and colonial deportation centers, and how each functioned according to its own

regulations and local bureaucracies, which Capogreco meticulously reconstructs. The remarkable extent and complexity of functioning of the network is set out here with dogged lucidity and precision, drawing on a mass of both state and military archive material, in some cases vast and long-neglected, in others fragmentary and inaccessible, as well as on a thorough scrutiny of juridical and political regulation and legislation, at national, regional and local levels. On the basis of this mass of sources, the book charts in three compelling stages the bureaucratic machine that established and governed the camp network, the identities of its victims, both Italian and foreign, and the lived realities of the internees.

One of the great strengths of this book, apart from its remarkable depth of documentation and research, lies in the way it manages to construct a view from both above and below, both map and territory; to capture the system and the presence on-the-ground of these many divergent and distant realities, the sites, the buildings and borders, the rules and customs of each separate camp, and the widely differing experiences of the many thousands caught up in them. A major part of Capogreco's work is taken up with a historical-geographical atlas, a "topography" of almost 70 named camps, each one catalogued and chronicled, located in relevant archive sources, documented by way of statistics, region by region, year-on-year. The dry data teems with local histories and stories: from the site of a nursery school in central Chieti in the Abruzzo region, the only "camp" set up in the town center of a provincial capital, which held just two dozen internees for a few months in 1940, before they were transferred elsewhere; to the island of Ponza, off the coast between Rome and Naples, a former site of internal exile, adapted and extended in 1942 to hold several hundred Montenegrans, Albanians and a handful of Greeks; to the truly horrific conditions of thousands of "Slavs" held during 1942 and 1943 in a concentration camp in one corner of another island, Rab in occupied "Italian" Yugoslavia (present-day Croatia), where at least 1,500 men, women and children died, mostly of starvation (approximately 20% of the camp population). After the war, grim photographs of Rab, Capogreco explains, were tellingly confused and mixed in with images from the Nazi extermination camps of Eastern Europe in some sources, so appalling did they look.

The camp internees were anti-fascists, colonial undesirables, aliens, Jews, Slavs, among others. The populations of the camps shifted over time, in proximity with other forms of wartime imprisonment, not least the "parallel network" of camps for Slavs, managed mainly by the military authorities. Numbers in the camps varied from a few dozen to many thousands; conditions varied from the relatively benign to the appallingly violent and murderous; and the administration of the camps also varied wildly from the draconian to the lax and relatively open. The network in all its extraordinary variety acquires its coherence in Capogreco's account through its disciplined chronological focus on the period 1940–1943, that is on Mussolini's war campaign, launched in haste in June 1940, when Axis triumph seemed inevitable, and terminated in humiliation in July 1943, when he was deposed from

within (followed shortly by the Armistice with the Allies in September). Indeed, the internal chronology Capogreco builds for the establishment and regulation of all these camps begins and ends with flurries of ministerial circulars in, respectively, May–June 1940 and the summer of 1943, organizing and instructing on the opening and the closing of the camps. The book takes care to frame this layer of wartime bureaucracy against both earlier and later histories, in the shorter and longer term. This means first looking back, toward fascist Italy’s practice of *confino*, the internal exile of civilian anti-fascists in isolated rural areas or on a cluster of Mediterranean island locations, a practice first established in 1926; and also back toward broader international histories of the modern practices of deportation, civilian internment, concentration and colonial camps, originating in 19th-century colonies and the Great War. It also means, crucially, looking forward in Italy from summer 1943 just a few short weeks, for example to the notorious “Police order no. 5” of November 30, 1943, issued by the newly established northern fascist Republic of Salò, which stripped all Italian Jews of citizenship and decreed their internment with a view to deportation. This decree marked the high watermark of official *Italian* complicity with the Shoah on Italian soil; its template was found in the earlier internment regime.

The contiguity with the Holocaust points to another signal achievement of *Mussolini’s Camps*, its careful and proportionate placing of the conceptual and historical borders—the points where they do and do not intersect—between this fascist internment, other forms of fascist violence, and the vast histories of violence and genocide in Nazi and fascist Europe, and colonial Africa. The very method of treating occupied Yugoslavia and Italy alongside each other as a linked territory of Italian-administered internment in the book looks radical and important in this regard. Specifically in relation to the Holocaust, groups of Jews populated many of the camps chronicled here, not least the camp site through which Capogreco first established his reputation for historical reconstruction in an earlier book of 1987, Ferramonti in Calabria. This was the largest camp for foreign Jews on Italian soil and, although conditions were harsh in several respects, a community of around 1,000 Jews, transported there from northern Italy and many sectors of occupied Europe and North Africa, were able to improvise a library, three synagogues, a doctors’ surgery and a court. In other words, this was far from a case of the genocide enacted in Italy, but it nevertheless intersected with the histories of the Holocaust and the sense and historical significance of this are only obscured by facile positive comparisons of guilt with Nazi Germany. Counterfactual history is suspect in many ways, but it is at least useful to note that, had the Allies not intervened in 1943, deportation would certainly have befallen the internees at Ferramonti too.

It is no coincidence that Capogreco’s work on *Mussolini’s Camps* emerged between the 1980s and the early 2000s. In precisely this period, something rather profound shifted in Italy’s own conception, memory and understanding of its fascist past, for both good and ill. As Cold War divisions of left and

right frayed after 1989, some aspects of Fascism began to be rehabilitated, not least signalled by the entry of neo-fascists into government from the mid-1990s, and myths of the anti-fascist Resistance lost some of their allure. Conversely, however, a new generation of historians were also liberated from political orthodoxies and enabled to push back over precisely this same period *against* revisionism, *against* the relativization of the two sides of Italy's historical struggle, fascist and anti-fascist, black and red; and *against* myths of Italian innocence and decency, the seductive idea of Italians as *brava gente* (decent folk) who refused the iniquities of the regime. This was a period of pioneering historical research and debate on Italian colonialism, on Italian occupation of the Balkans, and of the atrocities carried out in both; of a deeper and more nuanced interrogation of fascist racism and its own complicity with the Shoah, as well as into the successes and failures of its totalitarian project. *Mussolini's Camps* belongs precisely to this phase of a new and nuanced history of Fascism, embedded in complex ways with wider histories of the regime and its allies, and indeed of modernity, with the site of the Camp as one of its emblems. But the road this book takes to a new clarity on these matters was not born of an abstract notion or of a conceptual model of the camp: rather, as its author notes himself, it was rooted in literal journeys, in roads travelled, in visits he made to each and every one of the sites described in the book, to abandoned structures and forgotten or reused places, as well as to myriad libraries and archives. And both before and since its appearance in 2004, he has been actively involved in the work of on-site documentation and commemoration of many of the sites described in its topography. It is in this sense also that the book stands, besides its landmark insights into the historical phenomenon it describes, as a powerful, necessary act of recovery and memory.

Robert S.C. Gordon
Cambridge, March 1, 2019

List of abbreviations

Archives and institutions

Acs: *Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, Roma (Central State Archives, Rome).

Acdec: *Archivio della Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea*, Milano (Archive of the Foundation Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation, Milan).

Aussme: *Archivio dell'Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito*, Roma (Archive of the Historic Office of the Army General Staff, Rome).

Airsmi: *Archivio dell'Istituto Regionale per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione*, Trieste (Archive of the Regional Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement, Trieste).

Acicr: *Archives du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, Genève (Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva).

Ars—II: *Arhiv Republike Slovenije—dislocirana enota II*, Ljubljana (dislocated unit II of the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia of Ljubljana).

Avii: *Arhiv Vojnoistorijskog Instituta*, Beograd (Archive of the Institute of Military History, Belgrade).

Naw: *National Archives*, Washington.

Anppia: *Associazione nazionale perseguitati politici italiani antifascisti* (National Association of Italian Anti-fascist Political Persecuted).

Nmz: *Narodni Muzej*, Zadar (National Museum of Zadar, Croatia).

CICR: *Comité international de la Croix-Rouge* (International Committee of the Red Cross).

R.S.I.: *Repubblica sociale italiana* (Italian Social Republic).

NDH: *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (Independent State of Croatia).

INZ: *Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino*, Ljubljana (Institute for the Contemporary History).

JIM: *Jevrejski Istorijski Muzej*, Beograd (Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade).

MS: *Županijski Muzej*, Šibenik (County Museum of Šibenik).

Other abbreviations

- Dgps: Direzione generale della Pubblica Sicurezza (General Directorate for Public Safety).
- Dgsg: Direzione generale Servizi di Guerra (General Directorate for War Services).
- Dagr: Divisione affari generali e riservati (Division of General and Reserved Affairs).
- Demorazza, Direzione generale per la demografia e la razza (General Directorate for Demography and Race).
- Mae, Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Mi, Ministero dell'Interno (Ministry of Interior).
- Mvsn, *Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale* (Voluntary Militia for National Security).
- Ovra, *Organizzazione di vigilanza e repressione dell'antifascismo* (Organization for the Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism).
- PdG, Prigionieri di guerra (Prisoners of war).
- R.D., Regio decreto (Royal decree).
- R.D.L., Regio decreto legge (Royal decree law).
- Sim, *Servizio Informazioni Militari* (Military Information Service).
- SME, Stato maggiore del Regio Esercito (Main staff of the Italian Royal Army).
- Co, carteggio ordinario (ordinary correspondence).
- f., fascicolo (file).
- s. fasc., sottofascicolo (sub-file).
- Spd, Segreteria particolare del duce (Particular Secretariat of the Duce).
- B., busta (case).
- Racc., Raccolta (Collection).
- R. br. (*rednoi broj*), order number.
- K. (*kutije*), binder.
- TN: Translator's note.

Annotation

- The “Arhiv Vojnoistorijskog Instituta” of Belgrade is renamed today “Vojni Arhiv” (*Military Archives*) and is an institution of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Serbia.
- The dislocated unit II of the *Arhiv Republike Slovenije* of Ljubljana is today a full part of the *Arhiv Republike Slovenije* (the separate sections have been abolished).
- The “Regional Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement” of Trieste is renamed today *Istituto regionale per la storia della Resistenza e dell'Età contemporanea nel Friuli Venezia Giulia* (“Regional Institute for the History of Resistance and Contemporary Age in Friuli Venezia Giulia”).

Note on the text

In order to reconstruct the preparatory and implementing phases of the fascist internment of civilians, and to carry out the historical and geographical mapping of various concentration camps, first of all I used primary sources. Mainly archival sources.

The documentation makes the historian facing a considerable difference and availability of existing archival sources between the internment managed by the Ministry of the Interior (who tried to plan things in time, producing also a considerable amount of documents) and the “Parallel” civilian internment, mostly realized by the Military Authorities, which faced this issue without any significant planning and as an exceptional and contingent phenomenon.

In the first case (“Regular” Civilian Internment), the archival documentation existing in the *State Central Archive* in Rome (Acs) is rich, centralized and well inventoried. Fundamental is the documentation of the “Internees Office,” preserved in the archival funds of the Ministry of the Interior. The archive of the *Italian Internees Office* was in part merged into the File 32 (“Dangerous Civilian Internees”: Envelopes 65–68) of the permanent Category “A5G—World War II,” and partly into Files 16 (Concentration Camps) and 18 (Internment Locations) of the series *Massime* (General Directorate for Public Safety) of the “M4” Category (Civil Mobilization).

The archive of the *Foreign Internees Office* has been merged into the “A4-bis” Category of the General Directorate for Public Safety, which refers to the personal files of the internees under the Law of War, and includes, in addition to foreigners, also Italian internees “of suspected or proved spy-activity.” For reconstructing the events of concentration camps set up in colonies of confinement (or in former colonies of confinement), the recourse to the documents of the “Confino Politico Office” of the General Directorate for Public Safety of the Ministry of the Interior was very useful. The only exception was the Ustica Camp, for which, unfortunately, there is no documentation at the *State Central Archive*, so it has been necessary to investigate the Provincial State Archive of Palermo.

In order to describe the events of the “Parallel” Civilian Internment and the life of the camps connected to it, the military documentation preserved in the *Archive of the Historical Office of the Army General Staff* (Rome) was

fundamental. However, the documentation of that Archive is not well organized and scattered in the various archival funds. From those files that I have used for this study, I investigated in particular: the Fund N 1–11, “Historical Diaries of the Second World War” (in particular, General Staff of the *Regio Esercito*/Office of War Prisoners, Historical-military Journals with related attachments, years 1942–1943); the M3 Fund, “Documents returned by the Allies at the end of the Second World War” (especially Collection 64); the H8 Fund, “War Crimes” (in particular Collection 104); the M7 “Circular” Fund (in particular Collection 279/3); the Fund L.10, “General Staff of the Royal Army—Various Offices.”

Particularly useful—in relation to “Parallel” Civilian Internment—has been also the contribution of foreign archives: the *Arhiv Vojnoistorijskeg Instituta* of Belgrade (now *Vojni Arhiv*), the *Arhiv Republike Slovenije* in Ljubljana, and the *Archives du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge* in Geneva.

In the Belgrade and Ljubljana Archives there is a good deal of Italian military and civil documentation, acquired by the Yugoslavs after the breakthrough of September 8, 1943. From the *Arhiv Vojnoistorijskeg Instituta* (which keeps many documents related to Montenegro, Kosovo, Dalmatia and Kvarner) were mainly consulted the following funds: “Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica” (Archive of the Opposing Military Formations), “Italijanski Arhiv” (*Italian Archive*). From the *Arhiv Republike Slovenije* (which contains documentation relating to the “Province of Ljubljana”), the following funds were particularly useful: “XI Armadni Korpus” (XI Army Corps); “Komisija za ugotavljanje zločinov okupatorjev in njihovih pomagačev za Slovenijo” (Commission for the Investigation of the Crimes Committed by the Occupiers and their Accomplices in Slovenia); “Kabinet Visokega Komisarja za Ljubljansko Pokrajino” (Cabinet of the High Commissioner for the Province of Ljubljana); “Grupa Kraljevih Karabinerjev Ljubljana” (Group of the Royal Carabinieri of Ljubljana) and “NAW” (copy of the Italian Military documents ended up in the National Archives of Washington and returned to Italy in 1967).

Also the documents preserved in the *Archives du Comité International de la Croix-Rouge*—thanks to the reports drawn up by the delegates who visited the camps, and through a whole series of other news, data and correspondences—were very useful to complete the knowledge framework related to every concentration camp, to the whole internment and to the conditions of the internees. In particular, the following funds were consulted: C SC—Service des camps, Italie; G 17-Listes des effectives, 74/Italie; G17-Listes des effectives, 139/Yugoslavie; G 3 Missions, 24/Italie.

To carry out this study, I also used the following Archives: the Archive of the *Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation* in Milan; the Archive of the Regional Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement (now “Regional Institute for the History of Resistance and of the Contemporary Age in Friuli Venezia Giulia”) in Trieste; the Archive of the Narodna in Študijska Knjižnica (Slovenian National and Study Library) in Trieste; the Archive of the Institut za novejšo zgodovino (Institute for the Contemporary

History) in Ljubljana; the Archive of the Jevrejski Istorijski Muzej (Jewish Historical Museum) of Belgrade; of the Narodni Muzej (National Museum) in Zadar; the Archive of the Županijski Muzej (County Museum) in Šibenik.

However, it would not have been possible to fully outline the events and the “topography” of many concentration camps and many aspects of the Fascist internment of civilians, without the precious contribution of the personal testimonies of more than 50, between former confinees, internees and other protagonists of the events, as well as without a detailed map “reconnaissance” of the geographic sites, which was personally carried out by myself, especially in the period 1985–2003.

If not differently specified, it must be considered that I personally collected the citations and the news reported in this text as well as the “testimonies.”

By delivering this edition of the book to the press, I would like to thank, in particular, for their helpfulness and friendship shown during the preparation: Norma Bouchard, Valerio Ferme, Robert Gordon, Ivo Jevnikar, Michelangelo La Luna, Donatella Muià, Loredana Melissari, Giovanni Belluscio, Robert Langham, Natalia Indrimi, and—last but not least—my two sons Antonio Ivo and Mirko Floriano.

C.S. Capogreco
Rende (Cosenza), March 2019

Introduction

The train that left Ljubljana in the early hours of July 24, 1942 with somewhere between 300 and 400 people crammed in the cars, without water or food, arrived at San Giorgio di Nogaro around midday. That's when we were told that our destination was the concentration camp of Gonars. They moved us via local train to Bagnaria Arsa and, from there, we walked in rows of four between fields, along a dusty road. When we reached the first town larger than a hamlet—I think it was Fauglis—we were met by a crowd of women, children and elderly people. We looked awful: we were sleepy, long bearded, poorly dressed, thirsty and hungry. ... Soldiers with bayonet guns led us at five-meter intervals. The women and children started screaming: "Robbers, rebels, murderers, criminals!" and we were pelted with rotten fruit and tomatoes. The soldiers did not react. Someone in our group answered, "We are not robbers, but students, taken from our beds just because we are against Fascism! We fight for freedom!" His words had no effect. Clearly the people had been brainwashed by fascist propaganda. There were no young men, probably because they were at the war front. Soon thereafter we heard, far away, the bell tower of Gonars, then we saw the water cisterns, the watchtowers, the camps, and the barbed wire fences. That's how our life of internment began [...]¹

This account is excerpted from a conversation I had a few years ago with one of the young, Slav civilians interned in the province of Udine during World War II about his arrival at the camp of Gonars. He and thousands of his compatriots lived through this experience when they were deported to Italy between 1942 and 1943.

In the Yugoslav territories occupied or annexed after the Nazi-fascist invasion of April 6, 1941, Italian forces often resorted to repressive methods that included the burning of villages, shooting of civilian hostages, and deportation of local people to special concentration camps "for Slavs."² Set up in Italy and in the occupied territories, and almost always supervised by the Italian Armed Forces, these camps forced internees to endure a restrictive and harsh internment that led to thousands of deaths, including those of many children. Yet, the world still knows very little about these events, or about the existence of Italian concentration camps during World War II.

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“Internment in inhuman conditions”: this was a charge that showed on the list prepared after the war by the Yugoslav government of crimes that the Italian occupiers had committed before and during the war.³ However, the newly formed Italian Republic, “born of the Resistance,” refused to bring to trial even the most egregious cases, including the organizers of these camps, who, as might be expected, were among those that the government of Yugoslavia asked in vain be extradited.⁴

The refusal to investigate those Italians who committed war crimes, and the erasure of information about fascist personnel who collaborated in carrying them out, have contributed to create a collective understanding of Italian national past history as comforting and self-absolving. Italian colonialism was defined as “humanitarian”; anti-Semitism dismissed as the “product of importation”; and the crimes committed by our troops in the colonies and in the Balkans hidden under a shroud of silence.⁵ This is how the public learned to embrace the sugar-coated view that, in times of peace, and even more so in times of war, Italians behaved “humanely and with goodwill” toward the people of the countries they invaded; and that, ultimately, Italians themselves were victims of the dictatorship, and of Mussolini’s wars.⁶

The behavior of left-leaning and anti-fascist political groups as a whole further contributed to strengthen this image in the postwar period because, by invoking “national interest,” it chose to emphasize the merits of Italy’s Resistance rather than the faults of Fascism.⁷ The conversation about “national kindness” constituted the central nucleus of the hegemonic discourse advanced by the new ruling class. The goal was to pursue reconciliation among all “kind Italians”⁸ by emphasizing the “virtue” of the general population in condemning the tyrannical nature of Fascism; meanwhile, the latter was presented as a “regime without consensus” and, therefore, as an “extraneous body” to Italy’s history and “national character.” Thus, it was possible to obfuscate the plain truth that the dictatorship—as Carlo Rosselli noticed—self-evidently exposed the vices, weaknesses, and miseries of our people.⁹

Having decided to stick to this path, Italy, unable to criticize its past mistakes, needed very little to suppress the grave responsibilities it incurred during the fascist *ventennio* and World War II. Even Italian Jews, who had been among the principal victims of the dictatorship, preferred during the postwar period, when different identities were certainly not viewed favorably, to take shelter behind a memory that was conciliatory.¹⁰

Conversely, the clear brutality of Nazi crimes provided a comfortable alibi for the development of our national forgetfulness. Very little was needed in comparing the behavior of the two allies to relativize and minimize (if not overlook in full) the specific responsibilities of Fascism.¹¹ Thus, Italians, who already in the 1930s had used concentration camps to “pacify” the African colonies, created the comfortable conceit that this emblematic chapter of 20th-century history pertained to them only as victims.¹² And when Giorgio Rochat dared to publish in 1973 one of the few studies that even now is available on the topic of Italian colonial camps, he was accused of “preconceived anti-Italian bias,” and showered with personal insults.¹³

Though there may be a kernel of truth to the myth of the “kind Italian”—as is the case with every stereotype—this cannot justify only praising one’s merits when faced with much graver responsibilities. One needs a more equitable meter of evaluation, if one considers that, neither good nor evil, Italians “simply behaved as themselves, with all the traits and limits of national mores that have revealed themselves over the past two centuries.”¹⁴

Some have noticed, with some justification, that the process of distancing the country from these events strengthened Italy’s sense of national identity, and helped the country climb out from 20 years of dictatorship and from a disastrous war.¹⁵ Certainly, however, it contributed to obfuscate reality for decades, creating distorted self-representations in the cultural sphere and in Italian society as a whole.¹⁶ For example, in Franco Vegliani’s novel, *La frontiera* (1964), an old Yugoslav prisoner on his way to a fascist concentration camp states—in homage to their “kind nature”—that “Italians are, after all, kind people”;¹⁷ while, in more recent years, that same “kind nature” pervades the award-winning movie by Gabriele Salvatores, *Mediterraneo*.¹⁸ Moreover, when in the 1960s a delegation of former Yugoslav servicemen arrived in Italy to pay tribute to the remains of their countrymen who had died in the camp of Monigo, neither the town’s authorities, nor the partisan organizations could point out where they were buried. Indeed, only as a result of this visit did the citizens of Treviso realize that a concentration camp had existed just outside their city.¹⁹ It also so happens that, whether as a result of a technical oversight or of Italy’s desire to deny responsibility, pictures of skeleton-like, starving Yugoslav prisoners in Mussolini’s concentration camps were exhibited as documents of Nazi concentration camps.²⁰ And—in the context of a happy and nostalgic Italy—the song that became the symbol of the fascist colonial wars, *Faccetta nera*, would be replayed on Italy’s public television without mentioning the deaths and damage that many people suffered as a result of our colonial practices.²¹ Finally, to complete a list that could certainly be much longer, one must reflect on the statement made in 1990 by then-President of the Republic, Francesco Cossiga, during a visit to Germany (“We Italians did not experience the horrors of the concentration camps ...”);²² or on the comments made by Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister (“Mussolini never killed anyone; Mussolini would send people on vacation when he sent them to confinement colony”), which reduce the fascist dictatorship pretty much to the role of tour operator.²³

This perspective was enabled by the prevailing historiographic currents, which for a long time, reduced World War II to a representation in which the central, political-military event of the Resistance allowed little room for evaluating the experiences of deportation and internment.²⁴ Evidence of this attitude in the 1950s was the belief espoused by the publishing house of Italy’s most important political party on the Left that it was “inopportune” to publish an important work of testimony on *military internees* deported to Germany.²⁵ Conversely, until 20 years ago, warnings were given about the dangerous depths that “the excesses of ideological memory” might uncover.²⁶

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Returning to the issue of “Mussolini’s camps,” citizens and historians forgot the existence not only of the harshest camps reserved to Yugoslav deportees (the category with the greatest numbers persecuted up until September 8, 1943), but also of the “milder” ones, which the Ministry of the Interior created, starting in June 1940, to handle the official war internment of enemy aliens and undesirables, and of “dangerous” Italians. In this regard, contributing to the general amnesia was the confusion between what constituted internment and police confinement, which decreased the visibility of the first in favor of the older and better-known practice of political confinement. This confusion has allowed for the terms *confinee* and *internee* to be used as synonyms;²⁷ and for the memory of Italian camps—which were active only a few years—to fade behind the more consolidated remembrance of confinement settlements (in Italian: *colonie di confino*). Contributing to this obfuscation was also the policy to intern prisoners in small towns (in so-called “open internment,” in Italian: *internamento libero*), which often fooled even internees about their status.²⁸

Moreover, during the war, Italian concentration camps and “colonie di confino” resided under the same jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior, often utilizing the selfsame physical and bureaucratic structures,²⁹ while important “colonies” like Lipari and Ponza—which previously had been restricted confinement venues—were “recycled” as concentration camps. In the latter cases, however, one faces the more complex set of issues tied to the stratification of functions through time experienced by concentrationary structures, which obviously does not pertain to Italy alone.³⁰ In Italy, the most typical and frequent case was constituted by the change in usage from war imprisonment to civilian internment experienced in many camps overseen by the Royal Army. This change, as is understandable, did not aid an adequate awareness of the reality of fascist civilian internment.³¹ Also very widespread is the chronological confusion caused by the activities of civilian camps during the period of monarchical Fascism in 1940–1943 (for example Ferramonti or Gonars), as well as the activities of camps instituted during the Italian Social Republic (RSI) and the Nazi occupation in the period 1943–1945 (for example, Fossoli).

In the latter part of the 1980s, I visited—after having completed their mapping³²—every former Italian concentration camp. I was able to assess the state of neglect, if not the complete destruction, of buildings and barracks, and the resulting absence of their recognition as places of memory. With the exception of elderly people who directly witnessed the events, I could not find much recollection at all about events pertaining to internment, not even in areas where camps of a certain size had been operative, or where the war and the partisan resistance had left significant scars and social awareness. Numerous young mayors, whose municipalities had hosted concentration camps, admitted sheepishly to me that they were completely unaware of their existence.³³ In Lanciano, a city that was honored with the gold medal of the Resistance, I spent a whole day locating, with the precious aid of a witness,³⁴ the old “Villa Sorge,” which had been the focus of the first autobiographical

memoir published in the postwar period that centered on a fascist concentration camp:³⁵ the villa was nondescript, crumbling, surrounded by huge concrete buildings. In Gonars, the barracks of the largest functioning concentration camp for Slavs in the Peninsula had been completely razed without a single place name or monument to memorialize it. The same fate befell, more or less, the camps of Renicci and Ferramonti. The most extreme case I witnessed was Ventotene: on the small Pontine island, in fact, the “confinement citadel”—the great Lager that had been the forced residence of the entire general anti-fascist leadership, and the symbolic emblem of the entire Italian political deportation system—had been “normally” razed to the ground, as if it were any old factory plant that had fallen into obsolescence.³⁶

I do not think the condition of the sites I visited were much different from the ones described by Anne Grynberg in France during the same period.³⁷ Yet, as opposed to the important steps that the French establishment subsequently took to complete the historical research and the social ownership of “places of memories” in the past,³⁸ in Italy the process has been slower and more delayed.³⁹ Only in the past few years has there been more careful historiographical and social interest turned toward the history and memory of the 20th century to help clear the haze that until now has covered the events surrounding fascist internment.⁴⁰ Even here, however, the rediscovery of the Italian camps—and specifically those created by the Ministry of Interior—is used to underscore their merits (*what they were not* compared to the Nazi camps), rather than to study them in their intrinsic specificity.⁴¹

As David Bidussa recommended in discussing fascist anti-Semitism, it is time to free ourselves of the “demon of analogy with Nazism.”⁴² Yet, the delayed rediscovery of the “milder” Italian concentration camps continues to be the opportunity for new and gratifying collective self-representations, which find their fodder both in the widespread numerical overestimation of the role that Jews played in the camps set up by the Ministry of Interior, and in the lesser harshness of these camps vis-à-vis the expectations evoked by their official designation as “concentration camps.”⁴³

Thus, exploited by mass media and influenced by passing trends, local communities have offered fertile grounds for interpretations that are less interested in an accurate historical representation of Italian concentration camps than in their “promotion.”⁴⁴ Misleading and disingenuous, these characterizations should be stigmatized and prevented from spreading, and be replaced instead with historical rigor and factual evidence. One should especially remind younger generations that not every anti-Semitism led to Auschwitz,⁴⁵ and that the Jews that avoided deportation (surviving, therefore, the *Shoah*) because they were interned in an Italian camp prior to September 8, 1943, do not owe their lives to the “kindness” of the fascist camps or of some local Schindler. What really saved them was primarily the particular geo-political situation established, in September 1943, in the southern part of the Peninsula, since that area of Italy, which at the time housed the majority of interned Jews, was lucky not to experience the vileness and the horrors caused by the Nazi occupation and the fascist republic of Salò (RSI).⁴⁶

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This book does not set out to reveal hidden mysteries, nor does it wish to put on trial the self-exculpatory excuses of the Italian people. Nor does it claim—by limiting its investigation to the essential issues of the topic under consideration—to constitute a comprehensive history of fascist civilian internment. Its goal is to give visibility to a topic that has been little known through a general overview of the materials, and through a geo-historical mapping of the camps, which is offered here for the first time.

Thinking about the younger generations, I thought it useful to provide first some historical information about the main practices of internment and deportation in Italy, beginning with police confinement and colonial internment, which were the specific models for the later network of civilian internment camps created by Mussolini during World War II. In doing so, and in understanding how difficult it is to rely on universally agreed definitions, I propose also a set of terms and examples that help define and distinguish between “concentration” and “internment” camps.

I chose to limit the discussion to the period that goes from June 1940 to August/September 1943. This choice derives not only from the inescapable fact that today far less is known precisely about the camps and the internment policies developed under monarchic Fascism; but also from the awareness that only during that time period (the war years 1940–1943) can one correctly talk about fascist internment of civilians, wishing to include in this definition the camps, the laws, and the concentrationary praxis supervised and elaborated by a country that could still be considered a sovereign state. Obviously, the internment and deportation of civilians enacted throughout the Peninsula during the years 1943–1945 by the republican and collaborationist Fascism of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* were altogether different.⁴⁷

I have also considered it appropriate to dedicate substantial attention to the discussion of civilian internment in occupied Yugoslavia and in Italy’s North-east regions (defined here as “parallel internment,” since it was completely independent of official specific regulations, as it was outside the observation of the International Red Cross). This is important because—in terms of the numbers and the overall sacrifice of lives and suffering—the deportation of the populations in the nearby Balkan country, and indeed of the Slavic ethnic minorities present in Italy, represents one of the most disturbing facets of fascist civilian internment; a facet that still today, generally speaking, is part of a “black hole” in the history of Italy during World War II.⁴⁸

The internment of Yugoslav civilians, instead, deserves great attention because it is against this backdrop that one must understand the rescue of several thousand Jews who had, between 1942 and 1943, found refuge in Dalmatia and in other territories taken over from Yugoslavia, which was at the time controlled by the Italian Army. This represents a case of a “protective internment” that for a long time was discussed by established historians as the result of a systematic plan of “humanitarian rescue,”⁴⁹ but which, rather, inasmuch as it was followed, constituted, also among Jewish refugees, the exception rather than the rule.⁵⁰

Notes

- 1 Testimony given by Jože Koren (Trieste, November 21, 1994). An advertising agent, Koren was born in Velike Lašče (Slovenia) on May 10, 1921, and was a student when he was interned in Gonars on July 24, 1942.
- 2 In fascist Italy, the generic definition “Slavs” applied, with a negative connotation, both to citizens of the former Yugoslavia and to Italian citizens belonging to the Slovenian and Croatian minorities.
- 3 See “Saopćenje italijanskim zločinima protiv Jugoslavije i njenih naroda” (“Bulletin on Italian crimes against Yugoslavia and its people”), edited by the Dražavna Komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača (Yugoslav State Commission on crimes perpetrated by occupiers and their collaborators), Beograd 1946.
- 4 See F. Focardi and L. Klinkhammer, “La questione dei ‘criminali di guerra’ italiani e una Commissione d’inchiesta dimenticata,” in *Contemporanea*, v. 4 (2000), n. 3 (July): 497–528.
- 5 On the limits of the purges in Republican Italy, see H. Woller, *I conti con il fascismo. L’epurazione in Italia 1943–1948*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997; R. P. Domenico, *Processo ai fascisti*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1996; F. Focardi, “L’Italia fascista come potenza occupante nel giudizio dell’opinione pubblica italiana: la questione dei crimini di Guerra (1943–1948),” in *Qualestoria*, 2002, n. 1: 157–183.
- 6 With regard to how the public’s understanding was co-opted, see P. Jedlowski, *Il sapere dell’esperienza*, Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1994 (especially 23–38). For the other ideas mentioned in the passage, see A. Del Boca, *L’Africa nella coscienza degli italiani. Miti, memorie, errori, sconfitte*, Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992; N. Labanca, *In marcia verso Adua*, Turin: Einaudi, 1993; R. Siebert, *Il razzismo. Il riconoscimento negato*, Rome: Carocci, 2003: 133–136.
- 7 F. Focardi, “La memoria della Guerra e il mito del ‘bravo italiano.’ Origine e affermazione di un autoritratto collettivo,” in *Italia Contemporanea*, 2000, nn. 220–221 (September–December): 393–399; A. Cavalli, “I giovani e la memoria del fascismo e della Resistenza,” *Il Mulino*, v. 45 (1996): 363.
- 8 This is how then-attorney general Palmiro Togliatti described the situation on June 22, 1945, as he introduced a decree for amnesty and pardon to the Chambers. See R. Canosa, *Storia dell’epurazione in Italia. Le sanzioni contro il fascismo 1943–1948*, Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1999: 435.
- 9 See C. Rosselli, *Socialismo liberale*, Turin: Einaudi, 1973.
- 10 G. Schwarz, “Identità ebraica e identità italiana nel ricordo dell’antisemitismo fascista,” in AA VV, *La memoria della legislazione e della persecuzione antiebraica nella storia dell’Italia repubblicana*. Milan: Angeli, 1999: 33; and “Gli ebrei italiani e la memoria della persecuzione fascista (1945–1955)” in *Passato e presente*, n. 47 (1999), especially 120–122.
- 11 See N. Gallerano, “Memoria pubblica del fascismo e dell’antifascismo,” in *Politiche della memoria*. Rome: Manifestolibri, 1993: 7–19; M. Franzinelli, *Delatori. Spie e confidenti anonimi: l’arma segreta del regime fascista*, Milan: Mondadori, 2001: 18.
- 12 Giorgio Rochat wrote in the early 1980s that, “We know unfortunately very little about the concentration camps where the populations of the Gebel and of the semi-desert areas [of Cirenaica] were held, because colonial memoirs and historiography completely neglect the issue” (“La repressione della resistenza cirenaica (1922–1931),” in E. Santarelli, G. Rochat, R. Rainero and L. Goglia, *Omar Al-Mukhtar e la riconquista fascista della Libia*, Milan: Marzorati, 1981: 155).
- 13 See E. De Leone, “Il genocidio delle genti cirenaiche secondo G. Rochat,” in *Intervento*, 1979, nn. 38–39: 83–102; G. Rochat, “Il genocidio cirenaico e la storiografia coloniale,” in *Belfagor*, 1980, n. 4: 449–455.

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- 14 A. Cavaglion, *Ebrei senza saperlo*, Naples: L'Ankora del Mediterraneo, 2002: 48. Cavaglion's opinion, referencing here the anti-Jewish laws, could be extended to other important junctures of the *ventennio* and the war period.
- 15 See M. Franzinelli, *Delatori*, cit.: 18–19. In 1946, “there are many more things that people want to forget through amnesty than those that help create a *common heritage*; but maybe, in an ideal parallel with France, it is precisely the awareness of the fragility of our common heritage that must have convinced the political caste (including the Minister of Justice, Togliatti) to speed down the road to forgetfulness” (M. Salvati, “Amnistia e amnesia dell'Italia del 1946,” in *Storia, verità, giustizia. I crimini del XX secolo*, M. Flores ed., Milan: Mondadori, 2001: 161).
- 16 On the construction of identity based on myth, one should point out what George Mosse and Eric Hobsbawm write, respectively, in the “Introduction” to *Toward a Final Solution. A History of European Racism* (New York: Fertig, 1978, Italian trans. *Il razzismo in Europa. Dalle origini all'Olocausto*. Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1980), and in *On History*, London: Abacus, 1991 (trans. *De Historia*. Milan: Rizzoli: 1997, especially 310).
- 17 F. Vegliani, *La frontiera*, Palermo: Sellerio, 1996.
- 18 On Salvatores' film, see F. Focardi, “La memoria della Guerra e il mito del ‘bravo italiano.’ Origine e affermazione di un autoritratto collettivo,” cit., 398; N. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002: 469. Released in 1991, *Mediterraneo* is a “naïve” film that narrates the fascist aggression of Greece through the love stories of Italian soldiers lost on an island in the Peloponnesian Sea. See, E. Monteleone, *Mediterraneo: Sceneggiatura del film diretto da Gabriele Salvatores*, Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1992.
- 19 Reference to this event—which took place in 1965—is found in a pamphlet that accompanied the exhibition of paintings by Vlado Lamut (a former prisoner at Monigo) that took place in Treviso between April 24 and May 1, 1980, under the sponsorship of the National Association of Italian Partisans (ANPI) and the city council.
- 20 In the anthology *Notte sull'Europa* (F. Entasi and R. Forti eds., with Introduction by Carlo Levi, Rome: Aned, 1963), the images titled “Children in Auschwitz” and “After Liberation” belong instead to the Italian concentration camp of Arbe, not the Nazi Lager. Research shows that the prisoner portrayed “after liberation” is the Slovenian Janez Mihelčič, born July 12, 1885, in Babna Polica and deceased in Arbe, February 4, 1943.
- 21 Carlo Saletti discussed the TV program broadcasted by Raiuno on November 24, 1999, in “Memorie che emergono, memorie che confliggono. Il ricordo della persecuzione ebraica nell'Italia della ‘Seconda Repubblica’ tra revisioni e uso pubblico della storia,” in *Bollettino della Società Letteraria di Verona*, 2000: 164n7. On the proliferation of *Faccetta nera* on CDs used for political purposes, or to declare identity flag-waving, see N. Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, cit., 2002: 468.
- 22 Interview to Cossiga, *L'Unità*, December 21, 1990, and the letter to the editor published, in the same newspaper, on January 8, 1991.
- 23 On the comments by Silvio Berlusconi, see the interview by B. Johnson and N. Farrell published on *The Spectator*, September 11, 2003.
- 24 In many countries, the subject of deportation and imprisonment has been considered uncomfortable and “inglorious”: the “passivity” of the *internees-prisoners* was contrasted, with disdain, to the “active” fight of the *partisans-fighters*. One need only remember the suspicion, vexation and suffering that many formerly interned civilian and military men encountered in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. With regard to the latter, see, for example, I. Torkar, *Sterben auf Raten*, Klagenfurt: Drava Verlag, 1991.

- 25 The reference here is to Alessandro Natta's book that Editori Riuniti refused to publish back then. The book was published in 1997 in the volume *L'altra Resistenza. I militari italiani internati in Germania*, Introduction by E. Collotti (Turin: Einaudi, 1997). On this matter, see also A. Rossi-Doria, *Memoria e storia: il caso della deportazione*, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1998: 40.
- 26 A. Cavaglion, "Piccoli consigli al ventenne che in Italia studia la Shoah," *Belfagor*, v. 55 (2000), n. 326 (March 31, 2000), II: 217.
- 27 The political confinement (in the form of "police confinement") existed in Italy since 1926 and was a civilian deportation independent of the state of war, on the contrary of the fascist civilian internment, introduced in 1940.
- 28 "A few days before Italy entered the war in June 1940, I was arrested in Rome and sent to confinement in San Fede, in the mountain region of Potenza ...": thus, in 1968, Manlio Rossi-Doria wrote to Leo Valiani, even though, to be exact, he had been interned (*La gioia tranquilla del ricordo. Memorie 1905-1934*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991: 282). Massimo Mila, in 1945, recalled that Leone Ginzburg "was confined in the lost hamlet of Pizzoli, in Abruzzo," while, in reality, Ginzburg had been interned ("Ricordo di Leone Ginzburg," in *GL Giustizia e Libertà*, May 20, 1945). Natalia Ginzburg herself referred to "confinement" when speaking about the status of *internamento libero* experienced by her husband (see *Lessico familiar*, Turin: Einaudi, 1963: 157). The internment of Franco Venturi has also been generally referred to as "confinement" by his biographers: see, for example, F. Venturi, *La lotta per la libertà. Scritti politici*, L. Casalini ed., Turin: Einaudi, 1996, lix.
- 29 "In the *confinement colony*, in particular, no one understood what the difference was between the juridical status of the confined prisoner vis-à-vis that of the interned one, because the treatment, discipline, rules, and duties were the same for both." Thus wrote Celso Ghini and Adriano Dal Pont in *Gli antifascisti al confine (1926-1943)*, Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1971: 159.
- 30 One need only think, for example, of the German camps of Mauthausen and Theresienstadt, which were prisoner of war camps during World War I, but became civilian concentration camps under Hitler. Or of Buchenwald, which was transformed from a Nazi Lager (1937-1945) into a "special" Soviet camp that the German Democratic Republic (DDR) has since attempted to obliterate from memory.
- 31 This was the case, between 1940 and 1943, for the camps of Gonars, Cairo Montenotte, and Renicci. It was also, in the period following September 8, 1943, the transition experienced by the camps of Fossoli, Servigliano Marche, Sforzacosta, and a few others.
- 32 Some time later, I would present the first list of the camps created by the Ministry of the Interior at the International Convention "Italia judaica," held in Siena June 12-16, 1989; and the list of the camps "for Slavs" (For the most part, supervised by the Military Authorities) at the Convention "Italia 1939-1945. History and memory," Milan, May 24-26, 1995.
- 33 We should reflect on the fact that not a single Italian concentration camp was included in *I luoghi della memoria*, the three-volume work edited by Mario Isnenghi that explains the multiple correlations that exist between events, dates, and physical and symbolic values tied to specific Italian locations (*Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita; Strutture ed eventi dell'Italia unita; Personaggi e date dell'Italia unita*, Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1996-1997).
- 34 The man, Luigi Russo, was a lawyer who died November 18, 2000. I remember him here with fondness for the help he gave me.
- 35 M. Eisenstein, *L'internata numero 6. Donne fra i reticolati del campo di concentramento*, Preface by G. Giovannelli, Postfazione by C.S. Capogreco, Milan: Tranchida, 1994.

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- 36 A longer elaboration and reflections on that trip can be found in C.S. Capogreco, “L’oblio delle deportazioni fasciste: una questione nazionale.’ ‘questione nazionale.’ Dalla memoria di Ferramonti alla riscoperta dell’internamento civile italiano.” *Nord e Sud*, v. 45 (New Series, 1999), n. 6 (November–December): 92–109.
- 37 “Il semblait, à l’évidence, que ces camps ne relevaient pas de la catégorie des ‘lieux de mémoire’ que la France s’était choisis. Dans la plupart des cas, il ne reste aucun signe matériel susceptible de contrarier le travail de l’oubli” (A. Grynberg, *Les camps de la honte. Les internés juifs des camps français (1939–1944)*, Paris: La Découverte & Syros, 1999 (first ed. 1991): 10.
- 38 For example, see J.L. Panicacci, *Le Lieux de Mémoire de la Guerre Mondiale dans les Alpes-Maritimes*, Nice: Editions Serre, 1997; D. Peschanski, *La France des camps. L’internement 1938–1946*, Paris: Gallimard, 2002.
- 39 One had to wait until February 2000 for a representative of the Italian government to give official homage, for the first time, to the victims of a fascist camp (the *attaché* of then-Italian president, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, visited at that time the Yugoslav memorial monument inside the cemetery of Gonars). One year earlier, thanks to insistence of the homonymous foundation, the Ferramonti camp had been recognized as a site of cultural and historical importance, an acknowledgment that, unfortunately, has not impeded the further disrepair of the site. See M. Bacchi, “Un viaggio a Ferramonti,” in *Cooperazione Educativa*, n. 3, 2003.
- 40 It is significant that an entry on Italian concentration camps can now be found in Einaudi’s *Dizionario della Resistenza* and *Dizionario del fascismo* (published in 2001 and 2002 respectively), while it was not present in the *Enciclopedia dell’antifascismo e della Resistenza*, published by La Pietra in Milan between 1968 and 1988.
- 41 See T. Grande, “La ricostruzione ‘in positive’ di un’esperienza di internamento: il campo di Ferramonti,” in *Responsabilità e memoria*, D. Barazzetti and C. Leccardi eds., Rome: Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1997: 149.
- 42 D. Bidussa, *Il mito del bravo italiano. Persistenze, caratteri e vizi di un paese antico/moderno, dalle leggi razziali all’italiano del Duemila*, Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1994: 75. In this sense, just as important—though referred to a broader context—is Pierre Mertens’ warning: “Hitler’s final and most heinous victory is that, Auschwitz being incomparable, he created a formidable monument to all tyrants [...], as if there existed a Guinness-book or a hit parade of the horrific” (“L’imprescriptibilité des crimes contre l’humanité dans le travaux du Conseil de l’Europe et dans la convention de l’Onu,” in *Le procès de Nuremberg. Conséquences et actualization*, Bruxelles: Éditions Bruylant, 1988: 87).
- 43 See for example what Jean-Claude Favez writes about Italian concentration camps and the Jews interned in Italy prior to September 8, 1943: “Despite being called ‘concentration camps’ ... they were treated like civilian internees who were citizens of enemy countries” (*Une mission impossible? Le CICR, les déportations et les camps de concentration Nazis*, Lausanne: Histoire, 1988: 305).
- 44 The hilarious description of the Ferramonti camp proffered by the local Pro loco association, for example, describes it as the “unique experience of an internment camp that was free from every racial prejudice.” On the “fashion” and the “redundancy of memory” with regard the experiences of Jews in fascist Italy, see A. Cavaglion, *Ebrei senza saperlo*, cit., 2002: 39 and following.
- 45 See, D. Bidussa, *Il mito del bravo italiano*, cit., 1994: 17–18.
- 46 C.S. Capogreco, “Il campo di concentramento di Campagna e l’internamento ebraico nel Meridione,” in *Giovanni Palatucci. La scelta, le differenze*, L. Parente and F.S. Festa eds., *Atti del Convegno di studi*, Avellino, December 20, 2001, Avellino: Mephite, 2004.
- 47 For Jews, for example, the status of those interned in camps or in *internamento libero* changed automatically, at the time, to that of “arrested to be deported” (L.

- Picciotto, *Il libro della Memoria. Gli ebrei deportati dall'Italia 1943–1945*, Milan: Mursia, 1991: 855).
- 48 It was already 1997, when Italian concentration camps during World War II and the internment of Slavic populations were omitted in an excellent historical volume (*Friuli e Venezia Giulia. Storia del Novecento*, Gorizia: Libreria Goriziana), which however gave ample space to the discussion of internment practices during World War I.
- 49 See Daniel Carpi, “The Rescue of Jews in the Italian Zone of Occupied Croatia,” in Y. Gutman, E. Zuroff eds., *Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust. Proceedings of the Second Yad Vashem International Historical Conference, April 1974*, Jerusalem 1977, pp. 465–525; L. Poliakov and J. Sabille, *Jews under the Italian Occupation*, Paris: Éditions du Centre, 1955 (Italian translation: *Gli ebrei sotto l'occupazione italiana*, Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1956: 131–155); M. Shelah, *Un debito di gratitudine. Storia dei rapporti tra l'Esercito Italiano e gli ebrei in Dalmazia 1941–1943*, Rome: Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Ufficio Storico, 1991 (original edition, Tel Aviv, 1986); J. Steinberg, *All or Nothing*, London-New York: Routledge 1990 (Italian translation: *Tutto o niente. L'Asse e gli ebrei nei territori occupati 1941–1943*, Milan: Mursia, 1997, 21 *passim*).
- 50 The “rescue of Jews” in Croatia substantially helped the young Italian Republic in propagating “the myth of Italians as kind people, by employing the theme of the humanity of its soldiers and people” (D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo. Le politiche di occupazione dell'Italia fascista in Europa (1940–1943)*, Preface by Philippe Burrin, Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003: 459).

1 Preliminary survey

1. The “*police confinement*”

A key element of the coercive and repressive system practiced by the fascist regime was the deportation of its rivals, starting from 1926, enacted through their confinement on small islands (*colonie di confino*) or in isolated and destitute locations.¹ The interpretive stretch applied by legislators to the legal concept of *domicilio coatto* (the measure of obligatory stay established during the rule of the Liberal government), from which the idea of “police confinement” (*confino di polizia*) derived, required the application, even to political opponents, of criteria that, previously, “had been predominantly, though not exclusively, reserved to an aspect of social marginalization that oscillated between petty crime and generic rebellion.”² The link between the *domicilio coatto* and *confino di polizia* was created by appealing, in both cases, to police measures that had been enacted to deal with social and political dissent, as well as by creating a more restrictive definition of “dangerous behaviors.” This allowed these cases to be withdrawn from the control of the legislature and of the judiciary.³ Another very important change was the decision to assess confinement autonomously and separately from the lighter preventive measures of warning (*diffida*) and monition (*ammonezzione*).⁴ These two had always preceded the enforcement of obligatory stay (which could be applied at a later date). Police confinement, instead, became an autonomous measure that could be applied without precedents. In addition, when compared to *domicilio coatto*, which hurt a person’s rights by forcing the person to live in a specific place, confinement enacted so many different restrictions on personal liberties that it basically became, as someone has claimed, “a form of open-air prison.”⁵

Specifically created provincial boards presided by prefects, who typically just limited themselves to ratify already-made decisions, often by the Duce himself,⁶ determined the sentencing of confinement for people who, until the time of their arrest, were completely unaware of the proceedings brought against them, and had no true recourse to a defense.⁷ The duration of such sentences, established by the ordinances of the provincial boards, varied between one and five years,⁸ even though the maximum limit could easily be exceeded through “re-sentencing,” which was used for those who “did not seem to mend their ways.”

The regulations' linguistic vagueness, coupled with the procedural simplicity, rendered police confinement the instrument of political repression most frequently adopted by the fascist regime. As opposed to the Special Tribunal, which formally was charged with "temporary and exceptional authority," confinement was part of the police's day-to-day legal powers, thus becoming one of the most typical expressions of the State's whims, bent as it was on the repressive control of real and perceived political opposition.⁹

The deportation imposed administratively through "police confinement" (it was in fact the police, not the judiciary, that decided whether to confine or defer to the Special Tribunal), was the most common punishment for those opponents of the regime against whom—absent of even minimal documentary evidence—not even a biased tribunal could issue convictions. In actuality, there existed a kind of continuous osmosis between the confinement and the rulings of the Special Tribunal: political opponents who had to serve a jail sentence typically had to spend some time in confinement; the same happened to the accused that were acquitted by the Special Tribunal.¹⁰

The risk of deportation did not pertain only to active anti-fascists or broad opponents of the regime. People could be condemned for a long list of specious accusations, often based solely on hearsay, and activities,¹¹ including preaching.¹² As Emilio Lussu wrote, "the school professor, the defense lawyer, the writer of novels, the idle café-goer, the laborer who criticized a decrease in salary," and other citizens, could become, without knowing it, political deportees.¹³ Indeed, confinement even served as deterrent to control the less engaged opponents of the regime or the generic "grumblers," as well as fascists believed to be guilty of dissidence.¹⁴ This alienating reality was certainly harder on women, who found themselves dealing with confinement from a position of isolation that was much deeper than the one experienced by the men.¹⁵ Even the conquest of the Empire became a good opportunity to fatten the lists of those sent to confinement, as new imperial subjects were gradually added to its numbers.¹⁶

The islands: "open air jails"

Confinement to the islands especially affected those who were considered the most dangerous opponents of the Fascist regime. Which caused them to live in unnatural conditions, in tight and alienating spaces where—aside from being subjected to material shortages and the difficulty of satisfying basic needs—they endured forced idleness and the provocations of their watchmen, who enacted a sort of "depressive repression" meant to weaken their ability to fight and to extinguish the rebellious energy of the deportees.¹⁷ The first ordinances of confinement, which were ordered by the provincial boards of Bergamo, Bologna, L'Aquila, Perugia, Rome, Siena, and Verona, predominantly targeted party activists (laborers, professionals, intellectuals, and former deputies). The first individuals subjected to confinement—communists, socialists, republicans, anarchists, and liberal-democrats—were sent to

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the islands of Favignana, Lampedusa, Pantelleria, and Ustica, which had already been colonies for citizens sentenced to *domicilio coatto*, and where the living conditions were at the limits of subsistence. Later, the confinees started inhabiting the Lipari and Tremiti Islands, until, due to the continuous increase in their numbers (at the end of 1926, they numbered already 900), the idea was circulated of having “confinement colonies” even on the mainland or in the overseas territories.¹⁸

Favignana

As the former deputy Luigi Salvatori wrote, the living conditions of the confinees sent to the island of Favignana were, to say the least, horrifying: political confinees slept in the same beds with regular criminals; and from sunset until the following morning they were segregated under forced arrest in the former *domicilio coatto* colony’s filthy jail-rooms.¹⁹

Lampedusa

The 120 people confined in Lampedusa also lived in terrible conditions, jammed into one big, rundown room that was meant for 50 people. These conditions, which were worsened by the constant harassment that fanatic members of the militia imposed on political prisoners, became public at the time through a complaint transmitted clandestinely to the foreign press by Francesco Fausto Nitti.²⁰

Pantelleria

The island, which had held those condemned to house arrests since the times of the Bourbon kings, was used for political confinement for a very short period of time. A private building, rather large and with iron grates, was used to house together the political confinees of Pantelleria, some of whom were even able to have private apartments. Non-political confinees (who in 1927 numbered about 700, and whose manpower contributed significantly to the island’s economy) lived in separate dwellings.²¹

Ustica

On Ustica ruled the same, sad living conditions “already well known to public opinion” that in 1912 had caused the death of 161 Libyan deportees, and of 141 more in the years 1915–1916.²² The fascist government placed the political confinees in ten rooms of various sizes, spread throughout the town up to the marina. The opportunity given to some confinees to sleep in private homes made life less difficult for those who were its beneficiaries.²³ However, the limited size of the island rendered quite difficult even the daily coexistence with the 150 ordinary confinees: in this climate, on August 15, 1927, one of

the latter killed the anarchic, union-man Spartaco Stagnetti.²⁴ The fifth political confinee to arrive on the island was Antonio Gramsci. Chained like a criminal, he reached Ustica on December 7, 1926, with his few belongings stuffed into a pillowcase, after having endured solitary confinement in jail and the hassle of a long trip by “ordinary transfer.” He thought the island beautiful and, to his trained eye as a social scientist, even very interesting.²⁵ Of a different opinion was the former fascist deputy Alfredo Misuri, who was relegated on the island following serious disagreements with the party. He described the island as overcrowded, poor and dirty, with little water and foodstuffs.²⁶

In 1932, following a decision by the Ministry of Interior, most political confinees were transferred to Ponza and Ventotene. Only a smaller group was left behind for further punishment in Ustica with the ordinary confinees. The Lipari and Tremiti islands were initially seldom used to house political confinees, but following the increased use of Lampedusa, Favignana and Pantelleria, Mussolini himself demanded they be used for the most tireless opponents of the regime, since they provided “the greatest guarantees of security.”²⁷

Lipari

Among all the islands reserved to confinement, Lipari was certainly the most liveable, both because its sizable dimensions encouraged relationships between the confinees and the inhabitants, and because, in greater measure than elsewhere, in Lipari the confinees were allowed to live in private homes, together with their families or friends.²⁸

Lipari’s confinement colony began its activities in 1926, after the restructuring of the old housing units. In the summer of 1929, the colony was the scene of the famous escape engineered by Carlo Rosselli, Emilio Lussu and Francesco Franco Nitti. Having adventurously landed in Tunis, onboard the large boat *Dream V* on August 1, 1929, they succeeded in reaching France, where they provided witness to the world’s free press of the repressive system enacted by the fascist dictatorship.²⁹ The escape from Lipari, which had huge reverberations even among Italians abroad, caused the violent wrath of the chief of police, Arturo Bocchini who, from there on, granted the fascist militia the role of principal enforcer in the confinement colonies.³⁰ On the island, numerous punishments and reprisals followed causing, among others, the destitution of the colony’s director, and the deaths of Lipari’s own Antonino Costa and of the Julian confinee Giuseppe Filippich.³¹ In 1933, the confinement colony of Lipari was shut down for good.

From the end of 1934 until 1939, the regime would use the island to house 450 Croatian nationalists belonging to the *ustaša* organization of Ante Pavelić. The Croat group, with the exception of 38 people housed in the Canneto area, took over the same big rooms that had hosted the confinees.³²

Ponza

On Ponza, political confinement began in July 1928 to handle the continuous influx—as in nearby Ventotene—of anti-fascists who had previously been assigned to islands that, in retrospect, were considered unsafe for their relative proximity to the African coast. On September 10, 1935, Sandro Pertini was brought to the island. The future president of Italy was shadowed night and day and, when he tried to protest against this ulterior vexation, the reply was imprisonment.³³

Ponza's confinees lived in the large rooms of the ancient penal baths of the Bourbon kings, where Carlo Pisacane had recruited the majority of the men who had participated in the Sapri expedition.³⁴ It was an unsanitary building, in which many internees would lose their health and, in some cases, their lives.³⁵

As a result of the decision by the government to cut in half the *sussidio* to the confinees, on Ponza, as was the case for other confinement colonies, there were massive protests and acts of passive resistance, which were soon followed by waves of arrests and jail transfers.³⁶ The height of the repression occurred in 1935 when, in reprisal, the authorities eliminated the most important, self-managed structures created by the confinees: shops, mess halls, the library, and the artisanal workshops.

Despite the fascist repression and the many diverging political ideologies that existed among the confinees,³⁷ the confinement colony of Ponza established “a formidable cultural and political cooperative, wherein the most diverse knowledge and experiences coalesced.”³⁸ However, the “antifascist university,” as the confinement colony of Ponza was commonly known among the opponents of the regime, was unexpectedly shut down in July 1939.

Ventotene

After the closure of Ponza, a small group of its political confinees was transferred to the Tremiti Islands, with the remaining confinees being transferred to the nearby island of Ventotene, which, from thereon, took the place of the island of Ponza as the main center for political deportation in Italy.³⁹ In addition to about a thousand inhabitants, the island of Ventotene hosted around 800 confinees. During the years 1939–1940, the majority of Italian antifascists who had fought with the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War were banished to the island.⁴⁰

During World War I, Ventotene had been the site of deportation for civilian internees (both political and not) coming from Venezia Giulia, while entire family groups were deported there from Albania.⁴¹ During World War II, Altiero Spinelli, Eugenio Colorni, and Ernesto Rossi—proponents of European Federalism—developed on the island the memorable “Ventotene Manifesto.”⁴² Yet, the sensational expulsion from the Communist group of Ernesto Terracini and Camilla Ravera that took place in 1942 bears witness to the difficult cohabitation and the harsh ideological contrasts that divided political deportees.⁴³

The confinees, initially, lodged in what was known as the “tower” or “castle,” an old building from the Bourbon era. Later, an imposing “confinement citadel” manned by a small army of 150 men (*Carabinieri*, public security agents, and members of the fascist militia) was built specifically for them.⁴⁴ The new structure, opened in the spring of 1940, comprised military barracks and 12 huge pavilions, one of which was reserved for women; until the fall of Mussolini, it would become, in Italy, the most representative locus for anti-fascist deportation.⁴⁵

Tremiti

In the Tremiti archipelago, the island of San Nicola (called Tremiti itself) had been used as a place of banishment since time immemorial.⁴⁶ In January 1912, following the revolt of Sciara Sciat, 1,080 Libyan civilians had been exiled there.⁴⁷ Fascism sent to San Nicola both political and regular confinees (among the latter, mostly Sardinians and Sicilians), who were settled in the four large barracks left from Bourbon times situated inside the walls surrounding the most inhabited part of the island.⁴⁸ Later, between 1929 and 1934, similar new pavilions, resembling jails would also be built.

The facing island of San Dòmino, the archipelago’s largest, was instead reserved for women confinees, even though 200 homosexual and regular confinees entrusted with agricultural labour also lived there.⁴⁹ Also on San Dòmino, during the second half of the 1930s, construction of a rural village was begun with the objective of gradually transferring all the civilian population of the archipelago there, so as to reserve the entire island of San Nicola for the confinees. In truth, because the island populations were reluctant to leave behind their old homes, the working-class housing on San Dòmino only served to house civilian internees beginning in June 1940.

As of 1937–1938, the Tremiti islands acquired a predominantly punitive scope, mainly hosting confinees that were considered undisciplined or incorrigible. During those same years, the island was the scene of significant protests, which were organized by the confinees to challenge the use that the colony’s management made of the “Roman salute.” The latter was considered a necessary element of management’s repressive programme, even though no law or public security provision required its use. The protest soon turned into a full-fledged revolt against the police’s attempt “to apply the Nazi principle that the enemy not only should be imprisoned, but humiliated and morally despised.”⁵⁰ Noticeable, in this context, is what happened to Giovanni Gervasoni, an extraordinary evangelical figure who, as a result of the battle over the Roman salute, was forced to spend five months in jail and 40 days under guarded surveillance.⁵¹ The extraordinary protest on the Tremiti islands, which spread to other confinement colonies, ultimately convinced the local authorities to revoke the previously issued orders; and, in 1939, Mussolini himself chose to truncate the Roman salute incident with an extraordinary about-turn.⁵²

If confinement to the smaller islands pertained principally to the regime's opponents who were considered most dangerous, less dangerous ones were confined in mainland locations: generally small towns, situated mostly in the Italian Center-South—Sicily and Sardinia included.⁵³ In those locations, the *podestà* (the town mayor) and the *carabinieri* were entrusted with monitoring and supervision; and, because in the often sleepy life of the southern provinces, one could run into officials who were not particularly zealous or biased, it was sometimes possible that the latter “would overlook a number of details, as long as they did not incur many hassles.”⁵⁴ The local populations generally held the political confinees in high regard and consideration. Yet, because the confinees were spread throughout the towns in small numbers (sometimes as few as one per location), the “inland” isolation at times felt more pronounced than in the island colonies.⁵⁵

A “social” experiment

As more people were being assigned to confinement—a fact that could have very quickly saturated the traditional islands used for deportation—the Ministry of the Interior began to hypothesize the creation of confinement colonies on the mainland even for the most dangerous opponents of the regime. Initially considered in 1927,⁵⁶ this possibility emerges more concretely in the early 1930s, only to be implemented in 1939 with the creation of the confinement colony of Pisticci in the province of Matera.⁵⁷

Called the “first Italian concentration camp”⁵⁸ or, more often, “an agricultural center for confinees,” the new colony represented a new development not only because it was situated on the mainland, but also because its confinees were allowed to “hold permanent jobs.”⁵⁹ According to what Guido Leto,⁶⁰ the former head of the OVRA, states in his memoirs, in Mussolini's plans the colony represented “a social experiment,” inasmuch as its goal was to pursue the “recovery” of antifascist enemies through work.⁶¹ The truth is that Pisticci was a “prison-factory” at the whims of its manager, Eugenio Parrini, who was very well connected with the Ministry of Interior's circles.⁶²

When around the mid-1930s, after much researching and surveying, the choice for a site to build the confinement colony fell on the borough of Bosco Salice, the municipality of Pisticci, under which that general area of 25 square kilometers fell, was seeking permission to transform the estate into agricultural land.⁶³ As a matter of fact, with the decree n. 207 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry dated November 25, 1938, the area was transferred from category “A” (*pasture and forest use*) to category “B” (*agricultural usage*) in the appropriate classification for the reassignment of civic uses.⁶⁴ However, because Parrini had shown interest in these lands, the municipality could not use them for the social purposes it had intended.⁶⁵

The first confinees to arrive in Pisticci in April 1939 were housed in eight hangars built in 1924 that were being restructured in the Caporotondo hamlet.⁶⁶ This was the most central area of the municipality, which also

housed the offices for the confinement colony managers and the ones of Parrini's company. Actually, though Parrini's private business and the bordering confinement colony (which officially belonged to the State) had different administrative offices, they were one and the same.⁶⁷ Already in the summer of 1938, anticipating the opening of the new colony, the Ministry of the Interior had identified possible "guests," drawing on the lists of confinees exiled in other locations. As of August 31, 1938, they numbered 433. The confinees were chosen according to their predispositions, the danger they posed and, as even Arturo Bocchini noticed, "the promise of a reduction of sentencing for those who, through work, would show themselves deserving,"⁶⁸ In July, there were already about 100 confinees in Pisticci. Their numbers tripled by November, when the colony could be considered fully operational.⁶⁹

The management of the colony was assigned to the chief of public security, Gabriele Criscioli. There were 154 men of the Militia deployed as security support (in subsequent years, the number would more than double), aided by 100 *carabinieri* and 50 agents to ensure public safety. Initially the area was not fenced in, though its perimeter and road entrance were controlled through frequent checkpoints and armed surveillance. Later, barbed wire was laid out at regular intervals on wooden posts, and watchtowers were installed.⁷⁰ The confinees' work was typically in construction, agriculture or artisanship: its end goals were the construction of the colony's self-same infrastructures and small houses envisaged by the project of land reclamation, as well as the tilling and cultivation of the lands.⁷¹ Priests, artists, and intellectuals were also assigned to the colony.⁷²

The laborers-confinees received a daily compensation of 5 Italian lire in addition to the normal *mazzetta* of 6. They were persuaded to work with the promise of 4-month "discounts" for every year of confinement they had to serve.⁷³ Admission to the new colony, however, depended on a "healthy and hardy constitution," not only because of the noticeable workload, but also because malaria pervaded the area, and healthcare support was limited.⁷⁴ Between late 1939 and early 1940, due in part to substantial contributions from the confinees, a village in the typical fascist style was built about 4 kilometers from the agricultural center. It was named Marconia, to honor the famous scientist who had died two years earlier.⁷⁵

According to the regime, the work activities were supposed to conform to the often-reaffirmed aims of "distracting the confinees from idleness," and of "bringing together the agrarian and human reclamation projects."⁷⁶ The results, however, were altogether different: "born to ghettoize Anti-Fascism and ensure it could do no harm,"⁷⁷ the Lucan colony strengthened its confinees' resolve and political awareness. Indeed, through debates with other comrades—first only among Italian ones and, after the country's entry in World War II, with foreign ones as well—the confinees of Pisticci, rather than being "reclaimed," strengthened their fierce opposition to the dictatorship, living that particular work experience only as an opportunity to avoid inactivity and the idleness of the island confinement colonies.⁷⁸

The myth of the villeggiatura (“vacation time”)

Most sentences delivered by the provincial boards pertaining to confinement centered on political motives.⁷⁹ However, fascist Italy never enacted the mass-deportation campaigns of political opponents that took place in Germany during 1933–1934. At the end of 1926, confined dissidents numbered 900. From 1926 to 1943, throughout the 17 years when the laws about confinement applied, it reached the total of 12,330.⁸⁰ These figures show Italy to have a much lower level than the internal political deportation figures reached by Germany. In fairness, one should add to these figures those pertaining to the opponents subjected to civilian internment, an activity that, as we will see, Fascism used liberally for political repression.⁸¹

In the famous “Discorso dell’Ascensione” he delivered to the lower house of the Italian Parliament on May 26, 1927, Mussolini, referencing recent police actions, communicated that he had called for the deportation of every citizen “suspected of Anti-Fascism” or devoted to “counter-revolutionary activities.”⁸² In actuality, the dictator seized the opportunity to recommend to the police and its prefects not to “create false martyrs” through the excessive meting out of confinement as punishment. In inflicting this punishment, the dictatorship chose in fact the avenue of a “constant, but not resounding” repression, which tended toward isolating the vanguards by limiting the number of deportees. This was done, mostly, to ensure that no one abroad would think that the ranks of Anti-Fascism were still large and vital; but also for reasons related to the regime’s ascent to power, to the diversity of groups that had supported it, and to the types of compromises it had to practice among them:⁸³

Faced with these issues, as opposed to Hitler who completely reshaped previous legislation, Fascism and Mussolini in particular chose to integrate and reinterpret current legislation, without visible sharp breaks, but often utilizing and perverting it, as was the case with the fascist version of concentration camps: police confinement.⁸⁴

Typically, however, the repressive tactics of Fascism focused more on paternalism, and on the chances given to dissidents to “redeem themselves,” than on the immediate and violent repression chosen by the Nazi regime. These two different modalities, which arose from the different nature of the two regimes and of the societies that spawned them, undoubtedly should require that “each be evaluated within its context, without attempts to minimize the Italian situation when compared to the German case.”⁸⁵ Truly, Fascism did not have to enact mass deportations because, in 1926, there were no threats of insurrection in Italy. During the first half of the 1920s, political dissent had already been defeated, even with bloodshed, by fascist *squadrisimo*, and tens of thousands of dissidents had already taken shelter abroad.⁸⁶ Repression was limited, therefore, to selecting the most visible dissidents, and isolating them

through political confinement.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the Special Tribunal of Fascism typically dealt with the best-known anti-fascists and with the leaders of the opposition.

The tendency to minimize the opposition's numbers was one way that Fascism countered the propaganda conducted abroad by the political émigrés (*fuorusciti*).⁸⁸ Thus, both Italian and foreign "friendly newspapers" were invited to publish reassuring articles about life in the confinement colonies (presented, more or less, as if it were "vacation time"), so as to substantiate the idea that the purpose of confinement was to remove from circulation the "public nuisances" who wanted to obstruct Italy's path "toward a bright future."⁸⁹ To give the world the impression of a government with large social consensus, and to hide confinement under the patina of normalcy, Mussolini did not forgo exploiting even the Red Cross, whose president, after two quick stops in Ponza and Lipari, stated that he felt "reassured and satisfied about the living conditions of the political confinees."⁹⁰ The comparisons between the confinement colonies for dissenters and the seashore ones for vacationers began to gain traction following the escape from Lipari of 1929. After that, in line with the general repressive scheme enacted by Bocchini, *Militia* commands demanded to give orders even to directors of the confinement colonies, who were members of public security forces, to ensure that confinement would become "a real restrictive measure of the freedoms of bad citizens, not a seashore vacation colony, as unfortunately it has been thus far."⁹¹ About this unique parallelism, stoked even in the postwar period by those who wished to lessen the real nature of deportation tied to police confinement, it is useful to read again Carlo Rosselli's words:

I have been on Lipari for six months [...]. I am already tired, horribly tired of this chicken-coop life, of this false semblance of freedom: prison might be better. In a prison cell, the impossibility of escape is clear and the sacrifice clearer. Confinement is a cell without walls, all sky and sea: the militia patrols are its walls. Walls of bone and flesh, not lime and stone. The desire to trespass them haunts us.⁹²

2. Deportation and internment

The deportations, the Deportation, the internment

Deportation is a very ancient and varied activity. It was particularly pervasive in Augustus' Rome, when individuals branded for *deportatio* not only were forced to leave the city (where they were deprived of their home and means of subsistence), but also lost their Roman citizenship. As opposed to the *relegatio*, deportation was permanent, and was expiated in Sardinia, on the islands of the Aegean Sea or, in the latter years of the empire, in the deserts of Asia or Africa, where the deportee often had to do hard labor.

Forgotten almost completely during the Middle Ages, deportation returned as a practice in the modern era, especially in countries like France, Great Britain, Portugal, Russia, and Spain, which used it to great advantage in the colonization of new distant lands. In the early 19th century, besides using it as a sentencing measure, the police started employing deportation as an administrative measure against those considered dangerous for the public order and security, first and foremost the homeless, the idle, and the deviant. In Russia, deportation to Siberia and to the Island of Sahalin, often accompanied by hard labor, was applied to those suspected of opposition to the Czar's regime and, in later years, to the Soviet one.⁹³

In Italy, the idea of deporting convicts took hold in 1865, following the abolition of the death penalty. It was recommended for "lifers" by the Vighiani bill of 1874, though it was never enacted as law. The administrative equivalent of deportation, instead, was already enacted in 1863 through the procedure of *domicilio coatto* ("obligatory stay"), which in theory was limited to ordinary crimes, but, not infrequently, was also used to keep in check anarchists and socialists.⁹⁴

During the 20th century many began to differentiate between deportation and "forced transfer": the first defines the crossing of borders between countries; the second the obligation to move from one region to another within the same country. Having said this, only following the judicial outcomes of the Nuremberg trials has there been a categorical prohibition against deportation. Conversely, before World War II, some forms of deportation had even been agreed by international treaties like the one signed on July 24, 1923, that envisaged the "exchange of populations" between Greece and Turkey.⁹⁵

Only in the aftermath of World War II, as the knowledge of the extent and brutality of Nazi internment and extermination grew, did the term "deportation" gain more sinister connotations. Auschwitz came to symbolize the terminal of deportation and annihilation of European Jewry: the extraordinary emotional impact that the name carries has obscured, if not completely obliterated from collective memory, the remaining deportation and concentration camp typologies.⁹⁶ Having become the *location-symbol* of the *universe concentrationnaire* and of the *Shoah*, Auschwitz summarizes within itself the entire history of deportation.⁹⁷ It influences even the common sense of those like us who, especially as a result of the 800,000 compatriots who were deported to Germany after September 8, 1943, tend to link deportation almost exclusively with pictures of the forced transfers toward the Nazi concentration camps. As a result, we tend to minimize or forget altogether the existence of other historical deportations, including those enacted by the Italian State, both in the peninsula and in its colonies.⁹⁸

"Internment" is instead understood as a measure that restricts one's personal freedom. It is inflicted through administrative decrees that force individuals to live in specific habitable structures (typically fenced-in barracks, called "concentration" or "internment" camps), or in locations far away from the war front and the country's borders (which explains the term *internment*).⁹⁹ In

narrower terms, internment is preceded by the capture, through individual arrests or collective raids, of individuals, who are then usually subjected, before they are actually interned, to shorter or longer periods of detention and deportation transit.

The act of interning someone, for the dictionary, consists in “relegating dangerous suspects in concentration camps placed in restricted locations away from the State and its operations.”¹⁰⁰ But “internment” and the verb “to intern” are generic terms, typically used to describe countless types of segregation of individuals and groups of people, whether civilian or not. In the 20th century, for example, one can list the Nazi internment of Jews, the French against the veterans from the Spanish Civil War, the British targeting Irish rebels;¹⁰¹ and those enacted, during the two World Wars, by warring countries against the citizens of enemy countries residing in their territories. These situations, as must be clear, differ hugely one from the other.

The internment of civilians during World War I

Among the many elements that contributed to the overall character of World War I, a very significant one was the almost complete erasure of the traditional boundaries that existed between civil society and the battlefields.¹⁰² As Enzo Traverso writes,

though on a scale incomparably inferior to what took place during World War II, the bombing of cities, the internment of citizens of enemy countries, the deportation and forced labor of civilians marked a turning point in social relations and crossed a new threshold of violence.¹⁰³

When hostilities started in 1914, most countries closed their borders, blocking foreign nationals on their territory, and interning civilians of enemy countries¹⁰⁴ (almost inevitably, they also conveniently interned fellow countrymen believed to be dangerous to the State). Albeit with different modalities, the warring countries interned enemy civilians to prevent them from carrying out acts of espionage or from returning to their homelands to enlist in their armed forces. The provision thus originated from the belief that every civilian of draft age constituted a possible enemy, and on the presupposition that he who is not a fighter today could become one in the future.¹⁰⁵ “From one moment to the next—states a Red Cross report from the period—civilians were compared to criminals, and were led off to concentration camps or to improvised and inadequate collection centers.” Indeed, the principle that military operations must limit their scope to the armed forces, and that civilian populations should be guaranteed general immunity from them, has become part of wartime law only in recent times.¹⁰⁶

The Red Cross received numerous requests for news and intervention on behalf of interned civilians, and its International Committee, on behalf of war prisoners, suddenly had to face entirely novel issues. As opposed to captured

soldiers, no law or international convention protected civilian internees: they represented “a war novelty” absolutely outside the realm of international treaties.¹⁰⁷ Only after World War II, the practice of interning civilians during international conflicts, which had been enacted through habit, was finally regulated by an international convention.¹⁰⁸ Previously, not even the Conference of The Hague of 1907, which regulated war laws and customs between nations, had introduced norms pertaining to the internment of civilian populations.¹⁰⁹

Having declared war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire on May 24, 1915, Italy enacted internment measures against both Austro-Hungarian subjects and Italian citizens who had been booked for espionage or political reasons.¹¹⁰ Rather than create concentration camps, the Italian government pursued the isolation and “dispersion” of internees on the territory, especially to islands and small isolated locations. The almost-30,000 Austrian civilians residing in the Kingdom were mostly deported to small towns in Sicily and Sardinia, where they were subjected to specific monitoring measures.¹¹¹ Internment also affected over 10,000 Italian citizens: it was usually enforced on generic accusations of “hostility against national interests,” such as “the suspicion of espionage,” “hostility against the armed forces,” and “philosophical-Austrian sympathies.”¹¹²

Specific norms enacted in 1915 assigned the decision to intern to the Supreme Command, which delegated it to the Military Commands. These, in turn, gave authority to the Military Corps. Conversely, civilian Commissars in the occupied territories were charged only with sending the internees to the locations chosen by the Ministry of Interior.¹¹³ By evacuating, interning, and “sending off” these citizens, the Italian government aimed at containing and reducing to size those socio-political forces that were summarily labeled as anti-nationalistic (priests, teachers and catholic leaders, socialists and anarchists).¹¹⁴

Almost all the Slovenians (around 12,000) were evacuated from areas near the war front; and nearly every mayor, teacher, and priest was deported from towns located along the Isonzo river. Of the 54 parish priests who remained in residence, a total of 42 were interned in accordance with the disposition of July 10, 1915, that regulated the removal of Church authorities that were guilty of “behavior that was dangerous for public safety.”¹¹⁵ Special internment measures were enacted against Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, if they were Slovenians, Germans or Croats who were native of the lands upon which Italy held expansionist aims. They were sent to prisons or special camps, such as the one in Nocera Umbra; and were then brought together, at the end of the war, in the “quarantine camps” of Forte Procolo (Verona), Gardolo (Trento), and San Giusto (Trieste). Subsequently, the majority of them were transferred to the islands of Lipari and Asinara, or interned in the concentration camps operating in Altamura, Servigliano Marche, Nisida, and Bagni di Comano.¹¹⁶

Even after the war ended, Italy interned Slovenian and Croatian civilians—if they were thought to be sympathizers of the new Yugoslav State—deporting them to Sardinia, to the Islands of the Quarnero and Dalmatia, or to the

camp of Gardolo, which was only shut down after numerous, ensuing protests.¹¹⁷ In December 1918, popular protests and the complaints of the socialist press induced the civilian commissar to loosen the rigor of the internment;¹¹⁸ and finally, two months later, “the free citizens of any nation who had resided in the occupied territories, or who had been expelled from them prior to November 3, 1918, were all formally released.”¹¹⁹ However, since this required a signed official document that was difficult to obtain, the actual release from deportation localities occurred very slowly¹²⁰ so much so that the foreign press again attacked the Italian government for its specious behavior. The situation was resolved only thanks to the intercession of Francesco Saverio Nitti, who had just been elected as the new Prime Minister. On August 11, 1919, Nitti invited all civilian commissars for Venezia Giulia and Venezia Tridentina, and the governor of Dalmatia, to promote a speedy repatriation of those internees who had no specific accusations against them, stating that Italy could not worry about “the hostility of a few elements who were still faithful to the old regime or who sympathized, for ethnic reasons, with other States.”¹²¹

The internment of civilians during World War II

During World War II, a number of countries regularly used the practice of internment, including Switzerland, though the country had officially embraced a policy of neutrality.¹²²

One must recall that in 1929, following the tragic experience of the Great War, the diplomatic conference that met in Geneva to ratify the Convention on war prisoners had clearly affirmed the unanimous will of the participants to undertake, as soon as possible, “serious studies to establish an international convention regulating the conditions and the protection of foreign nationals who might find themselves in the territories of an enemy State or in territories occupied by this country.”¹²³ This desire was further pursued in Brussels in 1930 where, during the XIV International Conference of the Red Cross (CIRC), a committee was charged with developing a convention pertaining to civilian internment. Such study, named the “Tokyo Project,” because it was presented at the XV International Conference of the Red Cross, which took place in 1934 in the Japanese capital, was going to be discussed and ratified in Geneva in 1940, but the sudden start of World War II prevented it from happening.¹²⁴

In September 1939, therefore, at the start of the war, hundreds of thousands of civilians found themselves in foreign territories without any conventional protection. The International Committee of the Red Cross, in the absence of actual norms, immediately tried to ensure provisional status for these individuals to grant them the greatest freedoms. As early as September 4, 1939, it proposed that the warring countries temporarily adopt (through ad hoc bilateral agreements) the “Tokyo Project”; or, by analogy, that they might implement for civilians the 1939 Convention relative to prisoners of war, excepting, obviously, the dispositions that could not be applied due to the nature of civilian internment. The majority of the States (some through

formal declarations, others through their factual responses) agreed to protect civilian internees, who were subdivided by the CIRC into two categories:

- (I) Foreign enemy civilians who, at the start of the conflict, were in the territories of warring countries.
- (II) Civilians who were citizens of a State that was militarily occupied by the enemy.

This initiative greatly improved the supply of humanitarian aid to civilians interned during World War II vis-à-vis the years 1914–1918. Nonetheless, the Red Cross’s safeguard, even when States decided to grant it, did not apply to political internees or to the other similarly categorized groups of civilians.¹²⁵

As far as Italy goes, the country had a network of camps in the territory (the confinement colonies) whose creation predated the start of the war. Starting in June 1940, when it entered the World War II conflict, Italy adopted civilian internment measures both against foreigners present in the peninsula, and against fellow countrymen believed to be dangerous or suspicious. With the internment of foreign citizens (“enemy subjects”), Italy achieved four objectives: it safeguarded military security; avoided espionage; prevented the sharing of intelligence provided by internal opponents; and blocked the repatriation of those who were of arm-bearing age, thus preventing their enlistment. The internment of Italian civilians, which officially pursued the goal of public security, was actually used as an alternative to police confinement to banish real or presumed enemies of the regime and, at times, fascists themselves who embraced dissident positions vis-à-vis party lines.

Like confinement, civilian internment was carried out according to two options. The first one, the so-called *internamento libero* (“free internment”), consisted in the obligation to reside in certain localities, typically small villages located in the most secluded and impoverished areas of the peninsula. The second, internment in concentration camps, forced internees to move to specific structures: either buildings that had been converted for this purpose, or real camps with barracks.

Side-by-side with the regulated internment controlled by the Ministry of Interior, fascist Italy also practiced, especially in the occupied territories of Yugoslavia, a parallel civilian internment. Typically overseen by the Italian Royal Army, this internment constituted the largest numerical portion of the entire phenomenon and, as far as the law, the least justifiable one, due to the very harsh living conditions to which the internees were subjected.

The internment of prisoners of war

Already in the 5th century BCE, Sun Tsu stated in his famous *The Art of War* that, “war prisoners have to be treated generously.”¹²⁶ However, in antiquity the winner’s compassion was not the rule: typically, captured enemy soldiers were killed or forced into slavery. During wars of conquest,

warriors were turned into slaves, and often their wives and children as well: it could thus happen that entire captured cities could be forced into slavery. In Roman law, the *miles* (soldier) who had fallen prisoner, automatically lost his *status civitatis* (status as a citizen) together with his freedom: forced into slavery, he could be forced to perform menial jobs or even put up for sale. Thus, for many centuries, the tradition endured of paying ransoms to obtain the release of prisoners.¹²⁷

Eventually, killing the enemy who had put down his arms or shown the desire to surrender was prohibited following the advent of Christianity and the spread of chivalric rules. During the Enlightenment, a decisive turn took place: prisoners of war were just considered unlucky, not criminals. As a consequence, their captivity was not equivalent to a sanction, but rather became a protective measure enacted by the imprisoning country.¹²⁸

Legal rules that provided special status to prisoners who had been captured—a milestone in the evolution of civilizations on a par with the abolition of slavery—were only established in the second half of the 19th century with the codification of specific norms, and the elaboration of convention deeds shared by the international community. President Lincoln was the first to promulgate modern rules about the treatment of prisoners during the Civil War.¹²⁹ In 1864, during the aforementioned war, what many consider the first concentration camp in history opened in Andersonville, Georgia, as a structure tying closely together the internment of soldiers and civilians.¹³⁰ That same year, in Geneva, the major European nations signed the first of numerous international conventions, a milestone in so-called humanitarian law that was meant to define the status and living conditions of soldiers captured in battle.¹³¹

In modern wars, ever larger and fiercer armies increased disproportionately the number of war prisoners. As a consequence, the need arose for internment capable of neutralizing, for the duration of the war, foreign soldiers who had been captured. Starting with the Great War, the expression “concentration camp” became commonplace (replacing “imprisonment camp” or “internment camp”) to indicate locations destined for the cautionary detention of enemy soldiers. Significantly, concentration camps for prisoners of war during World War I (especially German and Russian ones) stood out for their extreme lack of humanity in the treatment of prisoners:¹³² mass deaths occurred frequently, and long ghostly crowds of closely shaven prisoners anticipated by 25 years the images of annihilation from the Nazi and Soviet camps of World War II, which were often established in the same places.¹³³

At the end of the Great War, due to the vast number of soldiers imprisoned during the war, the need for an international treaty on war incarceration gained urgency.¹³⁴ Following the leadership of the 10th and 11th International Conferences of the Red Cross, held in Geneva in the years 1921 and 1923, a convention project was elaborated for study, which resulted in a diplomatic Conference held in Geneva itself on July 27, 1929. The delicate issues

related to war imprisonment, which had been examined previously within the scope of agreements pertaining to overall war law,¹³⁵ thus came to be regulated for the first time through a Convention that was specifically dedicated to war imprisonment.¹³⁶

The text of the Convention envisaged that soldiers who had been captured would be interned in specifically selected locations (cities, fortresses, or other localities), or in “enclosed camps,” with the duty not to go beyond specific boundaries. The buildings or the barracks where the prisoners were lodged had to guarantee adequate hygienic and health standards, and be provided with essential services such as infirmaries, shops and bathrooms with showers.¹³⁷ However, the safeguards provided for by the Convention on paper were not always respected and granted to prisoners in actuality, especially during World War II, when human rights were almost completely forgotten. As a reminder, the most emblematic case was the dreadful fate of Soviet soldiers congregated in Nazi concentration camps:¹³⁸ in the satellite-camp of Birkenau alone (constructed only 3 kilometers away from Auschwitz in preparation for the Soviet Union’s offensive), 15,000 soldiers were interned with no safeguards: none survived.¹³⁹ Also well documented is the suffering that 650,000 Italian soldiers endured at the hands of the Third Reich following their deportation after September 8, 1943: they were labeled “military internees” (*Italianische Militär-Internierten*, acronym IMI), a qualification with no juridical meaning that effectively turned them into slave labor.¹⁴⁰ In June 1941, 180,000 Polish prisoners of war in Russian hands were also treated like “internees,” rather than war prisoners; and the name Katyn has now gained a notoriously symbolic and evocative meaning.¹⁴¹

On June 24, 1940, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ciano, wrote the following to the President of the Red Cross International Committee:

In reference to your missive of the 11th current month, addressed to the *Duce*, we would like to inform you that the Italian Red Cross, in conformity with Article 77 of the International Convention of 1929 relative to the treatment of war prisoners, has already arranged for the creation of an information office for foreign prisoners who are going to be on Italian land.¹⁴²

In its actions, however, Italy itself often ignored the Geneva Convention during World War II. It did so, for example, in the treatment of soldiers and officers of the disbanded Yugoslav army, whom it detained after the cessation of hostilities, and treated as “civilian internees.”¹⁴³ Italians used the same treatment for Greek officers from the Ionian Islands, who were arrested “not as combatants, but because of the political activity they conducted,” and were then handed over to military authorities as regular internees.¹⁴⁴

By early 1943, Italy housed 75 concentration camps for prisoners of war, when counting quarantine and hospital camps.¹⁴⁵ At times, some of these camps (e.g., Gonars, Cairo Montenotte, and Fiume) were reserved for

civilian internees. Others, planned for war imprisonment, had their mission altered during the construction phase (a typical example is the case of Renicci, in Tuscany).¹⁴⁶

On the eve of September 8, 1943, Italian camps for prisoners of war housed about 70,000 Allied soldiers, spread mostly throughout the country's northern regions.¹⁴⁷ From the available documents and the reports of visits to the camps carried out by the International Red Cross, one notices that, generally speaking, Italian authorities followed the mandates of the Geneva Convention in their treatment of captured, foreign soldiers. However, this process was not always adhered to factually, especially because, starting in the second half of 1942, the influx of prisoners surpassed early numerical forecasts by such large numbers that it caused massive problems for an organization that, in itself, was already very deficient.¹⁴⁸

Particularly inadequate, and at times disastrous, were the conditions of transit camps in Libya and the receiving camps in southern Italy. The conditions of the permanent structures placed in Italy's Center-North were adequate, however, there were significant differences between them with regard to the lodging and living conditions of prisoners, among whom officers were always given privileged treatment. Typically, in the reports written by Red Cross representatives, there emerged significant differences in the treatment given to British and French prisoners, and that reserved for Yugoslav and Greek ones. The latter, typically housed in precarious and decrepit structures, often lamented the violations of the articles 36–41 of the Geneva Convention.¹⁴⁹ Even when they were in the same camps with British and American soldiers, their conditions often remained pathetic. Significant, in this sense, is the testimony of a Yugoslav prisoner in camp number 78, located at Fonte d'Amore, near Sulmona (Abruzzo):

For two full years we were prevented from leading any sort of civilized life: only humiliation, hunger, and filth. But the most dangerous disease that infected us was pessimism: the constant feeling that everything was conjuring against us, Yugoslavs [...]. A feeling that was almost impossible to let go. Our neighbors, British and American prisoners of war interned in the same camp, could witness "live" our desperate conditions through the barbed wire that separated the different areas, so they recommended to the camp's command that some of the packages addressed to them be distributed to us, Yugoslavs. Of course, the Italians turned down their recommendation.¹⁵⁰

In general, aside from some racist behaviors toward Indian and South African soldiers,¹⁵¹ the behavior of Italians toward prisoners of war was mostly appropriate. A vast bibliography is available that details the treatment of Italian prisoners of war under Allied control.¹⁵²

3. The camps

Concentration and internment camps

The expression “concentration camp,” which ties together two terms that belong to the military vocabulary, entered the West’s dictionary between 1914 and 1918. The Great War caused the concentration camp phenomenon, which began at the turn of the 20th century during the colonial wars, to spread worldwide. Civilian and prisoner of war camps multiplied so quickly that, by 1916, there were hundreds of them, not only in Europe, but also in Africa, India, Australia, Canada, and even Japan. The concentration camps of World War I were the unexpected outcome of “total war.” Though they were not comparable to the Lager and the Gulag, which were conceived with a precise strategy of dehumanization and annihilation, they became the laboratory for their development, setting an important stage for the path that led Europe from 19th-century prisons to the concentrationary systems of totalitarian countries in the 20th century.¹⁵³ Totalitarianism, the new and most characteristic evil trait of 20th-century history, succeeded in controlling large swathes of the world by relying on the systemic use of concentration camps that, not inaccurately, have been labeled “the greatest infamy of the 20th century.”¹⁵⁴ Indeed, the images immediately evoked by the expression “concentration camp” are primarily those of the Nazi *Lager* and, possibly, of Stalin’s *Gulag*.¹⁵⁵

Hannah Arendt claims that totalitarianism used concentration camps as “laboratories to verify its claim to absolute dominion on humankind,” becoming very quickly the “central institution of totalitarian power.”¹⁵⁶ David Rousset, who survived the camps of Buchenwald and Neuengamme, coined the apt definition “concentrationary universe” (which became commonly used following the publication of the homonymous work in 1946)¹⁵⁷ to point out that the Nazi concentration camps were not just an instrument of repression, but a truly “separate universe,” a “world apart” governed by peculiarly tragic and self-standing laws.¹⁵⁸ Conversely, the notion of a “concentrationary universe” allowed one to understand that camps might also exist that are not part of a system; and therefore that the existence of camps, in any given moment in the history of a nation, in itself does not prove the existence of a concentrationary system.¹⁵⁹

The term “concentration camp,” as Annette Wieviorka correctly notices, “is too erratic to allow us to understand different phenomena. The desire to coalesce under one pre-constituted definition of objects that are very different in nature and governed by differing logic actually inhibits the understanding of historians.”¹⁶⁰ What is certain is that, from World War II onward, this concept has contained, more and more, ideas about subjugation, slavery, and the violent death of individuals, becoming, so to speak, “a sickly word.” Indeed, the proclamation of the “uniqueness” that has conferred to Auschwitz the symbolic value of a negative standard, could not but interfere with the

meaning itself of “concentration camp,” which, still today, correlates to a rather nebulous, ambiguous, and abused concept.¹⁶¹

I believe, therefore, that two considerations are necessary here:

- 1 What makes a “concentration camp” is the space designated to gather civilians who have been segregated following an administrative decision, whether by civilians or by the military.¹⁶² Clearly, then, any place that corresponds to these characteristics can be considered a concentration camp, regardless of the specific typology of its physical structures (an enclosed field, a building, and so on), or whether, officially, it might be called something else. Having said this, I believe that even the confinement colonies run by the fascist regime should be assimilated to concentration camps.
- 2 Based on the principle that those who were enclosed in a camp were forced there due to abuses and disdain of the law, we should distinguish concentration from internment camps. In a correctly defined internment camp, individual internees, though deprived of it, lose their freedom according to motivations that, typically, constitute the temporary justification for that deprivation.

Clearly defining the structures under which internment takes place helps not only to correctly identify the camps under consideration, but also to understand the administrative processes applied to their internees. This way, one renders visible, among other things, the incompatibility (which also had quite a few exceptions)¹⁶³ between real concentration camps and the rule of law: in a democracy, nothing else should exist but “legal and temporary” camps, wherein one justifies the segregation of individuals through absolutely contingent and limited events (state of exception).¹⁶⁴ In principle, therefore, the presence of camps in a democratic system does not entail an arbitrary or illegal action, as long as such structures are truly of “internment,” thus temporary and subject to legal guarantees.

However, in current usage, the expressions “concentration camp” and “internment camp” have been used as synonyms and continue for the most part to be interchangeable.¹⁶⁵ In the French *Nouveau Petit Larousse illustré* dictionary (1949 edition), for example, concentration camps were “places where, during the war, one confines civilians of enemy countries,”¹⁶⁶ a definition that more correctly identifies internment camps. Some years later, one of the greatest experts in the concentrationary Nazi system, Olga Wormser-Migot, objected to the definition of concentration camp in the *Petit Robert* dictionary, judging it to be “incomplete and biased.”¹⁶⁷

In the postwar period, and not only in France, typically one continued not to distinguish between the different types of camps. On occasion this was done intentionally, with the specific goal of hiding the essentially illegal nature of the real concentration camps of totalitarian regimes through more bland definitions, such as “internment,” “work” or “rehabilitation” camps,

when not simply as “camps.”¹⁶⁸ This occurred in Poland in December 1981, when the Communist military leadership locked up tens of thousands of its foes in what it called “internment camps”: an improper and misleading definition, which was nonetheless accepted without objection even in the West.¹⁶⁹

The cases for the improper uses of these definitions are countless. It would be therefore beneficial, through a rigorous conceptualization and classification of categories, to underscore at least one fundamental distinction: the one that distinguishes the internment structures that are based on tyranny and the negation of human rights from those that, though occasionally revealing negative and despicable characteristics, preserve nonetheless a margin of formal justification and legality. Historical and comparative studies of the camps, new areas that are currently the focus of research, will be unable to continue to base themselves on lexical approximations that are frankly insufficient.

The colonial camps

Historically, the first camps were not the Nazi and Soviet concentration ones, but the colonial camps created by the Spaniards, Americans, and Britons. Completed during the colonial wars to collect the families and possibly the supporters of enemy fighters,¹⁷⁰ these structures did not resemble in any way the infamous Russian and German camps. On the contrary, when compared to the dimensions, cruelty and extended time of operation of the Gulag and Lager, the colonial camps would occupy a marginal role, primogeniture camps excepted.

The first such camps were created in 1896 in Cuba. There, a revolt against Spain that had been going on for a year was quashed by Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau, a general of Prussian origins whom the Spaniards had named governor of the island.¹⁷¹ As soon as he arrived in Havana, Weyler ordered that, within eight days’ time, all the peasants who were rebelling, “should gather” in “fortified camps,”¹⁷² structures that, thereafter, would be called by others *campos de concentración*.¹⁷³ The Americans—though they had called Weyler y Nicolau a butcher—in 1900 ended up bringing back his methods to the Philippines. The British created these structures during the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, where between 20,000 and 28,000 internees eventually died (however, they were not the first ones to employ this system, as is often mistakenly reported).¹⁷⁴

Even Italy produced its own concentrationary colonialism. In the summer of 1930, after almost four years of war, the general Rodolfo Graziani completed the “pacification” of Libya by deporting and interning almost 100,000 civilians who belonged to the semi-nomadic populations of the Gebel, of Marmarica, and of the Aughiar territories. He forced them to vegetate, together with 200,000 heads of livestock, behind the barbed wire of 15 tent cities grounded in the Syrtis.¹⁷⁵

El-Agheila, Marsa el-Brega, Agedabia, Sidi Ahmed el-Magrun, Soluch, Ain Gazzala, el-Abiar: these are some names of the Italian *Lager* in Libya, the largest of which could house up to 20,000 tents. The camp of El-Agheila, where relatives of the enemy fighters were kept, was the one with the harshest living conditions. Thousands of Libyans lost their lives in it,

killed by scarcity, executed by firing squad for the most trivial infractions of the rules imposed by the Italians, and killed by illnesses that struck inordinately the forced concentration of nomads. Others had died before in the transfer of the populations from one side to the other of the vast country. The prisoners were given starvation food rations: half a kilogram of rice for five people, one hundred grams of rice a day.¹⁷⁶

Among others, in September 1931, the feared chief of the anti-Italian resistance, Omar al-Mukhtar, was hanged on the main square of the concentration camp of Soluch.

The segregation in the camps of the Syrtis, which lasted about three years, concluded in September 1933: out of 100,000 deportees forced into inaction or hard labor, less than 60,000 survived.¹⁷⁷ For the historians of the regime those camps represented “a great and unique endeavor,”¹⁷⁸ but the international press and public opinion deemed them “a nightmare.”¹⁷⁹ Their names, however, still ring empty today as “unknown and distant to the civic conscience of Italians.”¹⁸⁰

Notes

- 1 Police confinement was codified by the articles 184–193 of the R.D.L. [*Royal Law Decree*] of November 6, 1926, n 1848 (*Testo Unico delle Leggi di Pubblica sicurezza*), which had merged with the Law of November 25, 1926 (Law for the Defense of the State, also called *Legge Rocco*, whose norms are commonly known as “extraordinary laws”). According to the article 184 of the R.D.L. 1848, the following were considered “a threat to public safety”: 1) those who had already been booked; 2) those who had committed or had openly revealed the desire to commit acts meant to violently subvert the national, social, and financial rules of the State. Except for slight modifications, the articles 184–193 were merged with those numbered 180 through 189 in the new Unified Text of 1931.
- 2 L. Musci, “Il confino fascista di polizia. L’apparato statale di fronte al dissenso politico e sociale,” in A. Dal Pont and S. Carolini eds., *L’Italia al confino 1926–1943. Le ordinanze di assegnazione al confino emesse dalle Commissioni provinciali dal novembre 1926 al luglio 1943*, Milan: La Pietra, 1983, vol. 1: xxi–xxii.
- 3 Mussolini himself, when he was still a socialist, protested against the Crispi government for the improper use of house arrests against anarchists and socialists. See A. Aquarone, *L’organizzazione dello stato totalitario*, Turin: Einaudi, 1965: 99n2.
- 4 “Preventive measures” (defined as *ante-delictum* to distinguish them from penal sanctions) had been envisaged in the *Testo Unico delle Leggi di Pubblica sicurezza* of 1865. Under Fascism, the *warning* forbade those who were suspected of activities against the regime from engaging in politics; a *monition* forbade them from leaving their place of residence without the authorization of the police.

- 5 C. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli anti-fascisti al confino (1926–1943)*, cit. 43–46. See also G. Porta, “Il confino,” in *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell’Italia unita*, M. Isnenghi ed., Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1996: 439–460.
- 6 Of the six members of the board on the judging commission, two were both judges and accusers. See A. Aquarone, *L’organizzazione dello stato totalitario*, cit.: 556–560.
- 7 See A. Aquarone, cit. 425. In truth, from 1941 onward, before sending someone to confinement, it became necessary to interrogate the accused and the witnesses; but such dispositions to ensure civil liberties were not always put into practice. They were not applied, for example, to the antifascist Italian militants that had fought in the Spanish Civil War: these were confined by *fiat* as soon as they returned to Italy in 1939. See L. Musci, *Il confino fascista di polizia*, cit.: lix.
- 8 But the R.D.L. of May 8, 1927, n. 884 established that, in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, the limit of five years of confinement could be exceeded.
- 9 Even among the fascists themselves (see A. Saccone, *La legge di pubblica sicurezza*, Milan: Bocca, 1930), some expressed doubts about confinement regulations that put on the same level those who “had performed” actions meant to subvert the structure of the State, and those who, instead, had simply “shown the intention” of committing such acts.
- 10 See G. Amato, “La libertà personale” in *La pubblica sicurezza*, P. Barile ed. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1967: 156; P. Carucci, *Arturo Bocchini*, cit., in AA.VV. *Uomini e volti del fascismo*, F. Cordova ed., Rome: Bulzoni, 1980: 97; A. Aquarone, *L’organizzazione dello stato totalitario*, cit.: 105–106.
- 11 Emblematic was the case of the 20 citizens of Monterotondo, confined as a unit, because they had been accused of having participated in the funerals of a socialist representative (in C. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino 1926–1943*, cit.: 266).
- 12 This is what happened, but not as a one off, to Liutprando Saccomanno, an evangelical pastor who was sent to confinement at Ustica in 1927. See G. Rochat, *Regime fascista e chiese evangeliche. Direttive, articolazioni del controllo e della repressione*, Turin: Claudiana, 1990: 97–104.
- 13 E. Lussu, *La catena*, Paris: Res Publica, 1930: 28 (now Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1997).
- 14 A. Aquarone, *L’organizzazione dello stato totalitario*, cit.: 105.
- 15 A. Gissi, “Un percorso a ritroso: le donne al confino politico 1926–1943,” in *Italia contemporanea*, March 2002, n. 226: 31–59.
- 16 As Altiero Spinelli remembers, for example, entire families were deported from Albania to Ventotene (*Gli antifascisti in galera*, in AA.VV. *Lezioni sull’antifascismo*, P. Permoli ed., Bari: Laterza, 1960: 149).
- 17 One strange expectation of confinement was tied to the need to “find a stable job,” a virtual impossibility if one considers that the majority of places where confinement took place were plagued by massive unemployment. In actuality, the government showed it was somewhat realistic, providing confinees, who had no means to find a livelihood, a minimum daily stipend (the *sussidio* or *mazzetta*). Initially, with the 10 daily liras provided by the *sussidio* and by self-administering the mess halls and internal shops, political confinees were able to avoid the degradation of life in confinement. After December 1930, when their *sussidio* was halved, their material conditions worsened significantly. See J. Busoni, *Nel tempo del fascismo*, Rome: Bulzoni, 1975: 142; L. Salvatori, *Al confino e al carcere*, cit.: 94; L. Musci, *Il confino fascista di polizia*, cit.: lxxvi–lxxviii.
- 18 On the subject of the old colonies for those having to endure house arrests, see F. Canfora, “Domicilio coatto,” in *Il Digesto italiano*, Rome: Unione Tipografica Editrice, 1899–1902, v. 9: 3. A debate about the overseas deportation of criminals and government opponents had already begun before the rise of Fascism

- and the colonial conquest. But the Ministry of the Interior only advanced a concrete proposal in January 1927, and a location that would satisfy this need was found in Gasr Bu Hadi, 476 kilometers south-east of Tripoli (Libya). See L. Musci, *Il confino fascista di polizia*, cit.: lxxv; A. Dal Pont, *I Lager di Mussolini. L'altra faccia del confino nei documenti della polizia fascista*, Milan: La Pietra, 1975: 133–136 (“L’operazione Libia”).
- 19 L. Salvatori, *Al confino e in carcere*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1958: 64–65. Salvatori, who was viciously assaulted by fascist squads on October 31, 1926, was confined to Favignana in December of that same year. See *Enciclopedia dell’Antifascismo e della Resistenza*, Milan: La Pietra-Walk Over, 1987, vol. 5: 334–335.
 - 20 A. Preziosi, “Il tenente Veronica,” in AA.VV., *Il prezzo della libertà*, Rome: Anppia, 1958: 125–129; *Enciclopedia dell’Antifascismo e della Resistenza*, cit., vol. III: 254–255; G. Scalarini, *Le mie isole*, M. De Micheli ed., Milan: Franco Angeli, 1992: 38.
 - 21 E. Musolino, *Quarant’anni di lotte in Calabria*. Milan: Teti: 1977: 77–78. Among the political confinees sent to confinement in Pantelleria, besides Musolino, were Fabrizio Maffi, Giuseppe Romita, Giuseppe Berti, and more.
 - 22 P. Valera, “Prigionieri di guerra nell’isola di Ustica,” in *l’Avanti*, January 20, 1912, and “La fine dei prigionieri di stato,” in *La folla*, October 27, 1912; M. Genco, “L’agonia dei deportati libici nella colonia penale di Ustica,” in *Studi Piacentini*, 1989, n. 5; C. Moffa, “I deportati libici della guerra 1911–1912,” in *Rivista di Storia Contemporanea*, 1990, n. 1; V. Ailara and M. Caserta, “I deportati libici: una questione ancora aperta,” in *Lettera del Centro studi e documentazione Isola di Ustica*, I, December 1999, n. 3; and also, II, April 2000, n. 4.
 - 23 See G. Scalarini, *Le mie isole*, cit.: 73; J. Busoni, *Al tempo del fascismo*, Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1975: 142.
 - 24 See “Spartaco Stagnetti,” in *Antifascisti nel Casellario politico centrale*, Rome: Quaderni dell’Anppia, 1994, vol. XVII: 300.
 - 25 Gramsci, who had been arrested in Rome on November 8, 1926, resided on the island only a few days, but left an enduring memory: together with Amedeo Bordiga, he founded a “culture school” that fought against the intellectual degradation of the confinees and became a laboratory that set the example for other confinement colonies. See A. Fellegara, “La scuola dei confinati politici,” in *Lettera del Centro studi e documentazione Isola di Ustica*, v. 1, December 1990, n. 3. On the stay on the island of the Communist leader, see A. Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere*, Turin: Einaudi, 1965 (letters sent to Tatjana Schucht on November 19, 1926, and April 11, 1927). On the nature of “ordinary transfer” see G. Monaco, “Traduzione ordinaria,” in AA.VV., *Il prezzo della libertà*, cit.: 119–121.
 - 26 A. Misuri, “*Ad bestias!*” *Memorie di un perseguitato*, Rome: Edizioni delle catacombe, 1944. Misuri, who had been the leader of Fascism in Umbria, had criticized the party and fascist movement in a speech he gave to the House of Deputies on May 29, 1923. As a result, he was attacked in the streets and expelled from the party. On the confinement to Ustica, see also N. Rosselli, “Al confino,” in *Il Ponte*, 1946, n. 4: 291–302.
 - 27 As evidenced in a note by the Ministry of the Interior in the Prime Minister’s cabinet of May 3, 1927, cited in A. Dal Pont, *I Lager di Mussolini*, cit., 1975: 44–45.
 - 28 The homes, which a few authorized confinees rented at their own expenses, had to be located within the borders of the confinement area designated by the authorities.
 - 29 In Paris, Filippo Turati, Alberto Cianca, Gaetano Salvemini and other Italian expatriates welcomed the escapees. On *La Libertà* of August 25 (the weekly of the antifascist community directed in Paris by Claudio Treves), there appeared a

- lengthy review with the reactions of the presses of France, England and Germany. On this incident, see also F. Turati, "Vincitori e vindici," in *La Libertà*, August 11, 1929; G. Salvemini, *Ricordi di un fuoriuscito*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1973: 116; E. Lussu, *Teoria dell'insurrezione*, Milan: Jaca Book, 1969 (first published by Parigi: Edizioni Giustizia e Libertà, 1936); L. Valiani, "Il domicilio coatto," in *Il confino politico a Lipari*. Edited by Centro Studi e Ricerche di Storia e Problemi Eoliani, Marina di Patti: Pungitopo Editrice, 1990: 38.
- 30 This was based on article 10 of the D.R.L. of January 9, 1927, n. 33, which gave the Ministry of the Interior the authority to use the militia "for special services." Documents show, as A. Dal Pont has clarified that, at the beginning of 1929, the Italian secret services knew of a possible escape from Lipari (*I Lager di Mussolini*, cit., 1975: 9).
- 31 L. Musci, *Il confino fascista di polizia*, cit.: lxxx; J. Busoni, *Confinati a Lipari*, Milan: Vangelista, 1980: 106–108.
- 32 T. Sala, "Le basi italiane del separatismo croato (1929–1941)," in AA.VV. *L'imperialismo italiano e la Jugoslavia*, Urbino: Argalia Editore, 1981: 283–350; P. Iuso, *Il fascismo e gli ustascia. 1929–1941. Il separatismo croato in Italia*, Rome: Gengemi Editore, 1998: 81–105.
- 33 S. Pertini, *Sei condanne, due evasioni*, V. Faggi ed., Milan: Mondadori, 1978.
- 34 TN: Carlo Pisacane was a Risorgimento patriot who attempted to instigate an uprising in the Kingdom of Naples in 1857. He landed on Ponza with a small army and freed the prisoners of the island, before moving on to Sapri, on the mainland of Campania, in vain hope to raise the peasants against the Bourbons.
- 35 See the report submitted clandestinely to the foreign center of the Communist Party in 1930, now in *Enciclopedia dell'Antifascismo e della Resistenza*, Milan, 1984, vol. IV: 697–698.
- 36 On December 12, 1930, 94 confinees from Ponza, "who had contravened the obligations of confinement," were transferred to different jails in Campania; 30 of them, considered among "the leaders of the revolt," were held there until March of the following year.
- 37 These divergences, for example, led to the attack on Giuseppe Germani, a militant in the political movement *Giustizia e libertà*, on November 4, 1932, at the hands of confinees holding different political views.
- 38 P. Grifone, "Come si studiava al confino," Introduction to *Il capitale finanziario in Italia*, Einaudi: Turin, 1971: xlix.
- 39 C. Ravera, *Diario di trent'anni 1913–1943*, Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1973: 628 passim.
- 40 Having already been interned by the French, these veterans were transferred to Italy by the Germans after they occupied France. At that point, they were confined together by the Italian authorities. See P. Vilar, *La guerre d'Espagne 1936–1939*, Paris: Puf, 1986: 137 (translated into Italian as *La guerra di Spagna 1936–1939*, Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1996). Also, *La Spagna nel nostro cuore. 1936–1939. Tre anni di storia da non dimenticare*, Rome: Associazione Italiana Combattenti Volontari Antifascisti in Spagna, 1996: 37.
- 41 "Un esilio che non ha pari," in *1914–1918 Profughi, internati ed emigrati di Trieste, dell'Isontino e dell'Istria*, Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2001: 82 passim; A. Spinelli, *Gli antifascisti in galera*, cit.: 149.
- 42 L. Valiani, *Il domicilio coatto*, cit.: 39.
- 43 On how sectarianism, contrasts, and suspicions rose to the extreme in the "artificial world" of the confinement colonies, see E. Rossi, *Miserie e splendori del confino di polizia. Lettere da Ventotene 1939–1943*, M. Magini ed., Milan: Feltrinelli, 1981.
- 44 G.M. De Rossi, *Ventotene e Santo Stefano*, Rome: Guidotti Editore, 1993: 69–72.

- 45 Among the many commentaries on the colony of Ventotene, see A. Spinelli, *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984: 261–343; A. Jacometti, *Ventotene*, Padova: Marsilio, 1974.
- 46 Until January 21, 1932, the Tremiti islands, which were considered prison-islands, had not been integrated administratively in any Italian municipality. They were governed by the penal colony director, who also functioned as the lead civilian official. See E. Mancini, *Isole Tremiti. Sassi di Diomede. Natura, storia, arte, turismo*, Milan: Mursia, 1979: 117.
- 47 C. Moffa, “I deportati libici alle Tremiti dopo la rivolta di Sciara Sciat,” in *Fonti e problemi della politica coloniale italiana*, Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1996; also, A.M. Ashiurakis, *Perché la deportazione?*, Tripoli: Libyan Studies Center, 1992; L. Del Fra, *Sciara Sciat. Genocidio nell’oasi. L’esercito italiano a Tripoli*, Rome: Datanews, 1995.
- 48 Positioned in parallel lines, between the sea-facing Gate and the one leading to the ancient fortress, the buildings (comprised of two floors) were inhabited in part by descendants of former prisoners.
- 49 See Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico, Affari generali, b. 13, 740/14, s.f. 2 “Tremiti” (1939); G. Goretti, *Omosessuali e confino nel periodo fascista*, Dissertation, University of Rome I (La Sapienza), a.a. 1990–91; V.A. Leuzzi, M. Pansini and F. Terzulli, *Fascismo e leggi razziali in Puglia, Censura, persecuzione antisemita e campi d’internamento (1938–1943)*, Bari: Progedit, 1999: 142–143.
- 50 A. Spinelli, *Come ho tentato di diventare saggio*, cit.: 258.
- 51 On Giovanni Gervasoni (Venice 1909–Dachau 1945), see G. Rochat, *Regime fascista e chiese evangeliche*, cit.: 195–205 (on the objection to the “Roman salute,” 200–203).
- 52 The dictator, whose lack of coherence never bothered him, chose the first opportunity to cut to the chase, writing in his own hand the resolution by which it was stated that, “Confinees do not have the right to give the Roman salute in the political confinement colonies” (A. Dal Pont, *I Lager di Mussolini*, cit., 1975: 127). See also, “Saluto romano all’isola di Ponza,” in AA.VV. *Il prezzo della libertà*, cit.: 213–216.
- 53 It was up to the provincial boards to determine whether someone should be sent to confinement on an island or to a mainland municipality: the choice typically was based, aside from the relative political danger of the candidates, on their health conditions.
- 54 C. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino (1926–1943)*, cit., 1971: 73.
- 55 On the nature of “inland” confinement, there exist, first and foremost, the important testimonies of Carlo Levi, Cesare Pavese, Camilla Ravera, Cesira Fiori and other famous antifascists. Among the research performed in the archives, worthy of mention are: S. Carbone, *Il popolo al confino. La persecuzione fascista in Calabria*, Cosenza: Lerici, 1977; M. Crispino, *Storie di confino in Lucania*, Venosa: Edizioni Osanna, 1990; S. Pirastu, *I confinati antifascisti in Sardegna 1926–1943*, Cagliari: Anppia, 1997; P. Mascaro ed., *Le ali della memoria. Confinati a Cortale durante il regime fascista*, Lamezia Terme: Centro-stampa Dal Margine, 2000.
- 56 See Acs, Mi, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico, Affari generali, b. II, Appunto della Direzione della polizia politica del 9 agosto 1927.
- 57 A well-documented reconstruction of this colony was made by Adele Meneghini in her Dissertation, *L’antifascismo nella provinciale di Matera (1926–1943)*, Università di Roma (La Sapienza), aa. 1990–1991. See also L. Scacco in *Provincia di confino. La Lucania nel ventennio fascista*, Scena: Fasano, 1995: 275 passim; L. Pescarolo, *Il lungo cammino (dalla dittatura alla democrazia)*, Suzzara: Edizioni Bottazzi, 1984: 29–84. About the city of Pisticci, see D. D’Angella, *Saggio storico sulla città di Pisticci*, Pisticci: I.M.D. Lucana, 1978.

- 58 G.A. Persichilli, "Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell'internamento in Italia (giugno 1940–luglio 1943)," in *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, XXXVIII, 1978, n. 1–3: 81.
- 59 The article 189 of the T.U. (unified text) of the Public safety Laws (promulgated with the R.D.L. of November 6, 1926, n. 1848) stated: "When confined to a municipality of the Kingdom or to a Colony, the confinee has the duty to find a permanent job in the manner established by the public safety authority charged with his/her surveillance."
- 60 Leto joined the public safety forces at the end of World War I, and then was director of the Dagr from 1922 to 1938. In 1938 he became the head of OVRA (the Fascism's secret police, established in 1927). After September 8, 1943, he joined the RSI, working in close collaboration with the Gestapo in suppressing the Partisan resistance. In the postwar period, having been temporarily suspended from his position to be judged by the High Commission for the Purging of Fascism, Leto was fully acquitted. His public statements (through books, newspaper articles, etc.) about his fascist past, clearly mystifying in content, provoked harsh reactions from members of the former resistance. See for example, E. Rossi, *La pupilla del duce, l'Ovra*, Parma: Guanda, 1956.
- 61 G. Leto, *Ovra. Fascismo-Antifascismo*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1951: 65.
- 62 Eugenio Parrini, owner of the "Società anonima prodotti agricoli nuoresi" and then of the "Eugenio Parrini and Sons," had noticeable income generated from government business, and gained substantial profits out of the construction of a number of Italian concentration camps. According to Loris Pescarolo, an anti-fascist from Mantua, Parrini was a personal friend of Galeazzo Ciano and, probably, a member of the OVRA (L. Pescarolo, *Il lungo cammino*, cit., 1984: 33).
- 63 About 400 families lived in Pisticci, a town of 12,000 inhabitants, in extreme poverty. The municipal project provided for the division of the area into small farmlands, through the construction of 100 small farmhouses to be assigned to the most needy citizens. On the social dynamics of the rural community of Pisticci, see J. Davis, *Pisticci. Terra e famiglia*, Castrovillari: Teda Edizioni, 1989 (but this text does not mention the experience of the confinement colony).
- 64 Law of June 16, 1927, n. 1766.
- 65 The decree 207 named the engineer Orazio Lepore as "technical representative" for the transformation of the estate. In turn, Lepore conferred the responsibility for the execution of the agricultural works to the company of Eugenio Parrini. See L. Sacco, *Provincia di confino*, cit. 279.
- 66 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico, Affari generali, b. 13, fasc. 4 "Pisticci" (1939). By the end of April, there were already 60 available spaces, and 39 confinees living in its quarters.
- 67 The director of the colony only dealt with political and police-based questions; Parrini and his workers dealt with everything else.
- 68 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico, Affari generali, b. 32, fasc. 4, "Pisticci" (1939). Report by the Chief of Police, Arturo Bocchini, to Mussolini on August 6, 1938, with list dated August 31, divided according to the penal colony of origin.
- 69 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico, Affari generali, b. 13, fasc. 4 "Pisticci" (1939).
- 70 Witness testimony by former confinees Otello Sarzi and Carlo Porta (Reggio Emilia, January 28, 1999; Ventotene, September 27, 1994).
- 71 From a study of 200 dossiers on confinees, Adele Meneghini has collected the following data: 50% worked as bricklayers, manual laborers or electricians; 23% were carpenters and bakers; 17% were field workers or farmers. As for their geographical provenance, 70% were from the North (especially from Emilia,

- Friuli and Itria), while 13% came from the South (especially from Campania, Puglia, and Sicily) (*L'antifascismo nella provincia di Matera*, cit.).
- 72 Don Francesco Brambilla from Cremona was confined there for his subversive activities. Among the painters, one notices Morandino Zapparoli, a communist, and Pompeo Borra, a republican. See L. Pescarolo, *Il lungo cammino*, cit., 1984: 65.
- 73 According to the ministry's memorandum of January 21, 1939.
- 74 On February 22, 1941, the confinee Quintilio Di Lorenzi, who had been transported to the hospital of Matera with too much delay, died upon entering the hospital: see N. Cataldo, "Pisticci," in *Enciclopedia dell'Antifascismo e della Resistenza*, cit., vol IV: 634. On the presence of malaria in Pisticci, see F. Avanzati, *Lo strano soldato*, Milan: La Pietra, 1976: 14.
- 75 See G. Coniglio, *La colonia confinaria di Pisticci. Dal Ventennio fascista alla nascita di Marconia*, Metaponto: Legatoria Lucana, 1999: 179–186. Also of interest is the pamphlet *Marconia, frazione di Pisticci*, put together by the State elementary School of Marconia during the 1966–1967 scholastic year.
- 76 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico, b. 32, f. 4, "Pisticci," Report by the Chief of Police, Arturo Bocchini, to Mussolini of August 6, 1938.
- 77 L. Pescarolo, *Il lungo cammino*, cit., 1984: 46.
- 78 See the witness account of Giovanbattista Nervo in C. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino (1926–1943)*, cit., 1971: 289; and L. Fanuzzi, "Gli antifascisti ritornano nei luoghi del loro confino," in *La Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*, October 16, 1986.
- 79 Political confinees were considered those who were sent to confinement according to the second subsection of article 184 of the R.D.L. of November 6, 1926, n. 1848. The other ones were considered "ordinary confinees," and they corresponded, basically, to the old deportees sent to the *domicilio coatto*. Political confinement fell under the jurisdiction of the "Sezione movimento sovversivi" of the Ministry of Interior's Division of general and reserved affairs (Dagr).
- 80 Adriano Dal Pont and Simonetta Carolini, in their study *L'Italia al confino 1926–1943*, cit., count 12,330 political confinees (generally called "anti-fascists"), out of a total 16,876 personal dossiers they examined. From these are excluded the people confined for suspicion of fraud, currency trafficking, bankruptcy, and espionage, and those who were members of public offices or the fascist party.
- 81 On political conflicts under Fascism, see L. Casali, "E se fosse dissenso di massa? Elementi per una analisi della 'conflittualità politica' durante il fascismo," in *Italia contemporanea*, 1981: 101–120.
- 82 See B. Mussolini, *Discorso dell'Ascensione. Il Regime Fascista per la grandezza d'Italia*, Rome-Milan: Libreria del Littorio, 1927.
- 83 P. Ungari explains these motives in *Alfredo Rocco e l'ideologia giuridica del fascismo*, Brescia: Morcelliana, 1963.
- 84 C. Daneo, "I luoghi della deportazione fascista fino alla guerra," presentation given to the VII Meeting of the Fondazione Ferramonti (April 25, 1995).
- 85 P. Dogliani, *L'Italia fascista 1922–1940*, Milan: Sansoni, 1999: 49. On the comparison with the German case, see A.J. De Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, New York: Routledge, 1995 (Italian translation, *L'Italia fascista e la Germania nazista*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999).
- 86 See C. Daneo, "I luoghi delle deportazione fascista fino alla guerra," cit.
- 87 R. De Felice, "La situazione dei partiti antifascisti alla vigilia della loro soppressione secondo la polizia fascista," in *Rivista storica del socialismo*, 1965, n. 25–26: 79–96; and L. Musci, *Il confino fascista di polizia*, cit: liv.
- 88 L. Musci, *Il confino fascista di polizia*, cit.: lvii; and also E. Collotti, *Fascismo, fascismi*, Milan: Sansoni, 1994.
- 89 The *reportages* from areas of confinement (often penned by reporters who never visited the confinement colonies) became frequent following the 1929 escape from

- Lipari. For example, the daily *La Stampa* published a report in 11 installments, penned by Mino Maccari: “A month in Ponza and Lipari among the confinees” (September 4, 1930, and following), now in M. Maccari, *Visita al confino (1929)*. Marina di Belvedere Marittimo: Cultura Calabrese Editrice, 1985.
- 90 F. Mazzonis, “Confinati politici a Lipari nei documenti inediti del Presidente Generale della C.R.I.,” in *Trimestre*, v. 9 (1976), n. 3–4: 463–496.
- 91 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Ufficio confino politico, Affari generali, b. 16, f. 10, sf. 4, Report by the senior leader of the *Militia*, Niccolò Nicchiarelli, of January 7, 1930. La Villeggiatura (“Vacation Time”) is also the title of the film that, in 1974, Marco Leto has freely adapted from the experience of Carlo and Nello Rosselli.
- 92 In A. Tarchiani, “L’impresa di Lipari,” in AA.VV. *No al fascismo*, E. Rossi ed., Turin: Einaudi, 1957: 75.
- 93 See the entry “Deportation” in the *Grande Dizionario Enciclopedico*, Turin: UTET, 1986, v. VI: 466.
- 94 Il “domicilio coatto” were introduced through the law of August 15, 1863, n. 1049 (called Legge Pica), against brigandage. In the *Testo Unico delle leggi di Pubblica sicurezza* of 1865, it was among the “preventive measures,” also called *ante-delictum* measures.
- 95 See G.S. Goodwin-Gill, *International Law and the Movement of Persons between States*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978; De Zays, “International Law and Massive Population Transfers,” in *Harvard International Law Journal*, 1975, n. 207.
- 96 Anna Vera Sullam Calimani reminds us that, “The metonymic reading of Auschwitz as a stand in for every concentration camp and name/symbol of extermination began in the Sixties. Right after the war, one did not know much about its vast annihilation especially because the camp had been freed by the Soviets and had remained under their control. Initially, other camps were sadly famous: Buchenwald, Dachau, Mauthausen, where intellectuals and political prisoners had also been interned, and whose survivors were able to bear witness; and, later, Bergen-Belsen, where Anne Frank had died” (*I nomi dello sterminio*, Turin: Einaudi, 2001: 71).
- 97 G. Bensoussan, *Auschwitz en héritage? D’un bon usage de la mémoire*, Paris: Éditions Mille et un nuit, 1998: 12 (trans. *L’eredità di Auschwitz. Come ricordare?*, Turin: Einaudi, 2002); M. Sarfatti, “Il volume ‘1938 Le leggi contro gli ebrei’ e alcune considerazioni sulla normativa persecutoria,” in *La legislazione antiebraica in Italia e in Europa*, Rome: Camera dei Deputati, 1989: 53–54.
- 98 B. Mantelli, “Deportazione dall’Italia (aspetti generali),” in *Dizionario della Resistenza*, E. Collotti, R. Sandri and F. Sessi eds., Turin: Einaudi, 2000, vol. I: 124; C.S. Capogreco, “L’oblio delle deportazioni fasciste: una ‘questione nazionale’ ...,” cit.: 92–109, specifically 97–100.
- 99 See the word “Internamento,” in *Lessico Universale Italiano*, Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 1972, vol. X: 507.
- 100 Here, the definition is provided by the *Vocabolario della lingua italiana di Nicola Zingarelli*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1987.
- 101 The mass internment of Irish civilians by Great Britain took place early during the Easter insurrection of 1916, and again during the Ulster uprising of 1971. See R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*, New York and London: Viking-Penguin, 1990.
- 102 On the concept of “all-out war,” see S. Guarracino, *Il Novecento e le sue storie*, Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 1997: 79.
- 103 E. Traverso, *La violenza nazista. Una genealogia*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002: 104.
- 104 In addition, or instead of, measures to limit the physical freedom of enemy civilians such as internment, sometimes countries chose to adopt measures such as expulsion or repatriation, the suspension of the right to due process, and the seizing, sequestration, liquidation, and requisition of assets.

- 105 Already on October 16, 1793, a decree of the French national convention established that “Foreigners born in the lands of powers that are at war with France will be arrested and imprisoned in safe-houses” (J.C. Farcy, *Les camps de concentration français de la Première Guerre mondiale, 1914–1920*, Paris: Anthropos, 1995: 362).
- 106 See E. Greppi, *I crimini di guerra e contro l’umanità nel diritto internazionale. Lineamenti generali*, Turin: Utet, 2001: 24 passim.
- 107 A. Becker, *Oubliés de la grande Guerre. Humanitaire et culture de guerre. Populations occupées, déportés civils, prisonniers de guerre*, Paris: Noësis, 1998: 236; H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1948 (Italian translation, *Le origini del Totalitarismo*, Turin: Edizioni di Comunità, 1999: 599 passim).
- 108 “For the Protection of civilians in Times of War,” IV Convention adopted in Ginevra on August 12, 1948. See A. Marcheggiano, *Diritto umanitario e sua introduzione nella regolamentazione dell’esercito italiano*, Rome: Ufficio Storico Sme, 1991, v. II, 274–298.
- 109 The push to standardize in written form the norms that would humanize war had its heyday during the first and the second Conference of The Hague (held respectively in 1899 and 1907).
- 110 Historians claim that up to 70,000 people were interned, though there is no accurate documentation about these numbers. See “*Un esilio senza fine.*” 1914–1918 *Profughi, internati ed emigranti di Trieste, dell’Isontino e dell’Istria*, F. Cecotti ed., Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2001: 83, 95.
- 111 For the most part, they were detained, by referencing article 16 of the R.D.L. of May 2, 1915, n. 634, which pertained to the residence of foreigners in Italy. Initially, they were sent to the garrisons of Verona and Alessandria, which were used as reassignment centers.
- 112 Heated parliamentary exchanges took place about the vague and fabricated accusations used to intern people. One of the most vocal critics was the socialist leader, Filippo Turati, who contested the legal premises of the procedures. See Camera dei Deputati, *Raccolta degli Atti parlamentari, Legislatura XXIV, Sessione prima, Discussioni, Tornata of December 11, 1915*, p. 8557.
- 113 See “*Un esilio senza fine.*” 1914–1918. *Profughi, internati ed emigranti di Trieste, dell’Isontino e dell’Istria*. F. Cecotti ed., cit.: 82 passim.
- 114 M. Rossi, *Irredenti giuliani al fronte russo. Storie di ordinaria diserzione di lunghe prigionie e di sospirati rimpianti (1914–1929)*, Udine: Del Bianco Editore, 1998: 111–112. On the “sending away,” see A. Visintin, *L’Italia a Trieste*, cit.: 127, 179.
- 115 P. Svoljšak, “L’occupazione italiana dell’Isontino dal Maggio 1915 all’ottobre 1917 e gli sloveni,” in *Qualestoria*, v. XXVI (1998), n. 1–2: 33–63; C. Medeot, *Storie di preti isontini internati nel 1915*, Quaderno di “Iniziativa Isontina,” Gorizia 1969; L. Bruti Liberati, *Il clero italiano nella Grande Guerra*, Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1982.
- 116 Particularly difficult were the living conditions of the internees of Asinara, where deaths due to cholera occurred in thousands. See A. Visintin, *L’Italia a Trieste*, cit.: 181–185; M. Kacin Wohinz and J. Pirjavec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866–1998*, Venice: Marsilio, 1998: 29.
- 117 G. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino 1926–1943*, cit., 1971: 125 passim; R. Ursini-Ursič, *Attraverso Trieste. Un rivoluzionario pacifista in una città di frontiera*, Rome: Studio i, 1996: 18.
- 118 A. Visintin, *L’Italia a Trieste*, cit.: 178; M. Rossi, *Irredenti giuliani al fronte russo*, cit.: 109.
- 119 Telegram of the Vice-Chief of the Stato Maggiore dell’Esercito, general Pietro Badoglio, on February 7, 1919, cited in A. Visintin, *L’Italia a Trieste*, cit.: 178.
- 120 The official issuing of the document seemed “to delay as much as possible the return of those who appeared problematic, at the time of a difficult transition,

- for the establishment of a new state and political order in the freed territories” (P. Malni, “Profughi e internati della Grande Guerra,” in *Friuli Venezia Giulia. Storia del '900*, cit.: 133).
- 121 As cited in A. Visintin, *L'Italia a Trieste*, cit.: 180. Addressing the same topic a few days later, Prime Minister Nitti claimed that “Only the greatest largesse in such measures could help us both assuage the accusations that are moved against us abroad and, having pacified people’s feelings, return civilian life to normality in the new provinces. The return home of the majority of internees will certainly serve to assuage the negative rumors spread about internments. Conversely, confirming the sentencing against those who are most gravely compromised by their hostility against us will ensure that the annulment of internments is not interpreted as an act of weakness on our part” (in C. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino 1926–1943*, cit., 1971: 125 passim).
- 122 The subjects of internment were those who opposed the Nazi regime, and Jews who had been expelled from Germany and Austria. The Swiss government made the decision in the hope of defending itself from the Germans, depriving them of any pretext to invade the country. See *Les interneés en Suisse. Tels qu'ils nous ont vus*, Genève: Les Editions Labor, 1940.
- 123 *L'activité du CICR en faveur des détenus dans les Camps de concentration en Allemagne (1939–1945)*, Genève: Comité international de la Croix-Rouge, 1947: 8.
- 124 See the memorandum of the Tokyo Project in *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, v. 21 (1939), n. 249 (September): 741–748.
- 125 The CICR offered internees similar services to those provided to prisoners of war: visits to the camps, receipt of official lists with all the names of the internees, investigations, assistance, repatriations, etc. Moreover, it tried to ensure that military internees and civilian refugees found in neutral countries be granted similar privileges to those of prisoners of war. See, *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, v. XXV, February 1943, n. 290: 144–145.
- 126 Sun Tsu, *The Art of War*, H. Jialin and R. Luraghi eds., Rome: Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, 1990: 42.
- 127 The typical praxis, however, developed other modalities, especially the *exchange* or *release* of prisoners *on their word*, which, gradually, contributed to move past the financial-private conception of war imprisonment. See A.F. Pansera, “Prigionia di guerra,” in *Enciclopedia del Diritto*, Varese: Giuffrè Editore, 1986, v. XXXV: 463–554.
- 128 V. Starace, “Prigionieri di guerra (diritto internazionale),” in *Nuovissimo Digesto Italiano*, Turin: Utet, 1957, v. XIII: 853 passim.
- 129 The so-called *Lieber's Instructions* of 1863.
- 130 The camp in Andersonville (where in a short span of time 13,000 American soldiers would die) foregrounded many of the characteristics of future concentration camps, such as the suffering, struggles, and widespread dying of the internees. See R. Mitchell, *The American Civil War, 1861–1865*, London and New York: Longman, 2001 (Italian translation: *La Guerra civile americana*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003); J.M. MacPherson, *Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- 131 G. Rochat, “La società dei Lager. Elementi generali della prigionia di guerra e peculiarità delle vicende italiane nella seconda guerra mondiale,” in *Fra sterminio e sfruttamento. Militari e prigionieri di guerra nella Germania nazista (1939–1945)*, N. Labanca ed., Firenze: Le Lettere, 1992: 127.
- 132 With regard to German and Czarist imprisonment camps during the Great War, see C. Mullins, *The Leipzig Trials. An account of the war criminals' trials and a study of German mentality*, London: Witherby, 1921; *Report of July 8, 1920 to the International Committee of the Red Cross by Elsa Brändtröm, Swedish Delegate of the Red Cross on the Situation of the Prisoners of War in Russia*, London, undated (circa 1929).

- 133 O. Abel, "Les prisonniers de la Grande Guerre," in *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, July 1987, n. 7; A. Gibelli, *La grande guerra degli italiani*, Milan: Sansoni, 1988: 124 *passim*.
- 134 For example, 600,000 Italian soldiers were imprisoned, between 1915 and 1918, by the armies of the Central empires. See G. Procacci, *Soldati e prigionieri italiani nella Grande Guerra*, Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 200: 168.
- 135 I am referring here, specifically, to the first and second Peace Conferences held in The Hague in 1899 and 1907 respectively, which discussed the laws and customs of earthly war. F. Pansera, "Prigionia di guerra," in *Enciclopedia del Diritto*, cit., v. XXXV, 464–465.
- 136 The Convention on the "Treatment of war prisoners," established through 97 articles, was signed in Geneva on July 27, 1929, by representatives of 47 countries. See "Convention relative au traitement des prisonniers de guerre signée à Genève le 27 juillet 1929," in *Société des Nations. Recueil des Traités*, 1931–1932, v. CXVIII: 344–411. The convention was ratified and put into action by the Italian government with the law of October 23, 1930, n. 1615. The new convention was careful in defining precisely its beneficiaries: only "legitimate combatants," in case of capture, could be considered "prisoners of war," see G. Cansacchi, "Combattenti legittimi," in *Enciclopedia del Diritto*, cit., vol VII: 721 and *passim*.
- 137 See "Convenzione di Ginevra relativa al trattamento dei prigionieri di guerra del 27 luglio 1929," Sezione II, in *Rivista di Diritto internazionale*, 1933: 284 *passim*.
- 138 It is believed that 58% of Soviet soldiers who were captured by the Germans (3.3 out of 5.7 million) died during imprisonment (C. Streit, *Keine Kameraden*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1975).
- 139 Birkenau (often also called Auschwitz II), was created in March 1941 and was the largest of all the concentrationary complexes: at certain times, more than 100,000 people were amassed there. See G. Gozzini, *La strada per Auschwitz. Documenti e interpretazioni sullo sterminio nazista*, Milan: Mondadori, 1996.
- 140 G. Schreiber, *I militari italiani internati nei campi di concentramento del Terzo Reich 1943–1945*, Rome: Ufficio Storico dello Sme, 1992; *Fra sterminio e sfruttamento*, cit.; A. Natta, *L'altra Resistenza. I militari italiani internati in Germania*, cit.
- 141 In the woods of Katyn (14 kilometers west of Smolensk) the bodies have been exhumed of over 4,000 Polish officers interned by the Soviet Union during the years 1939–40, after being taken from the Lager of Kozelsk. For a long time, this crime was attributed to the Nazis. See D. Artico, "La strage di Katyn nella storiografia sovietica," in *Italia Contemporanea*, June 2001, n. 223: 351–362.
- 142 See, *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, XXII, July 1940, n. 259; 525.
- 143 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 110, f. 1 (Affari generali), ins 43, Memo from the Italian Red Cross on foreign civilian internees and prisoners of war, March 27, 1943. See also F. Potočnik, *Koncentracijsko taborische Rab*, Koper: Lipa, 1975 (Italian translation: *Il campo di sterminio fascista: l'isola di Rab*, Turin: Anpi, 1979: 21).
- 144 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dacr, Cat. Massime M4, b 109, f. 16 (campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins. 30 "internamento greci"; Supreme Command to Dgps of the Ministry of Interior, communiqué of March 23, 1942, titles "Internment in Italy of Greek civilians"; Acicr, G17/Italie, from Italian Red Cross to International Committee of Geneva, request by Greek officials, August 30, 1941.
- 145 Aussme, Fondo Diari Storici II Guerra Mondiale, Stato Maggiore del Regio Esercito, Diario Storico-Militare, Racc. 1243, March–April 1943, *Situazione campi di concentramento p.g. al 31 Marzo 1943, XXI*.
- 146 See, *infra*, the summaries in the mapping of the camps provided in "Topography of the Camps."

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- 147 See M. Minardi, *L'orizzonte del campo. Prigionia e fuga dal campo PG 49 di Fontanellato (1943–1944)*, Fidenza: Comune di Fontanellato-Editrice Mattioli, 1995: 13.
- 148 Ibid.; A. Brignone and N. Calvini, *Campo di concentramento n. 95 (1941–1945) Cairo Montenotte*, Comune di Cairo Montenotte: Arti Grafiche D. R., 1995; *Al di là del filo spinato. Prigionieri di guerra e profughi a Laterina (1940–1960)*; I. Biagianti ed., Firenze: Comune di Laterina—Centro Editoriale Toscano, 2000; A. Marziali, “Vita quotidiana dei prigionieri di guerra britannici in Italia durante la Seconda guerra mondiale,” in *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, 1977, n. 19: 63–113.
- 149 See for example, Acicr, B. G. 17/Italie, “Aide-Mémoire des officiers yougoslaves prisonniers de guerre, au camp Cortemaggiore” (July 19, 1941); “Rapporto del capitano V. Budimir Simić al comandante del campo p.d.g. di Cortemaggiore,” September 11, 1941; *Rapport sur le conditions de traitement des prisonniers de guerre britanniques en Italie, d'après les renseignements de notre Délégué au 3 décembre 1942*, March 30, 1942.
- 150 I. Miclavac, “Skoti deset taborišč,” in *Borec*, Ljubljana, 1998, n. 565–566: 158–159. Due to a series of protocol breaches and much stonewalling, from May 1941 to April of the following year, Greek prisoners of war were unable to meet with representatives of the International Red Cross. “Une telle situation ne peut se prolonger. Elle ridiculise le CICR aux yeux des PG grecs”: thus protested, on April 14, 1942, the person responsible for the Greek Service of the Red Cross in a memo directed to the Committee of Geneva (Acicr, B.G. 17/Italie, *note du Service Hellénique sur les visites de camps de PG en Italie*).
- 151 See A. Marziali, *Vita quotidiana dei prigionieri di guerra britannici in Italia durante la seconda guerra mondiale*, cit.: 63–113.
- 152 Among others, J.L. Miège, “Italian prisoners of war in North Africa,” in *I prigionieri militari italiani durante la seconda guerra mondiale*. R. Rainero ed., Milan: Marzorati, 1985; F. Conti, *I prigionieri di guerra italiani 1940–1945*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986; G. Tumiatì, *Prigionieri nel Texas*, Milan: Mursia, 1985; V. Zilli, “Gli italiani prigionieri di guerra in Urss,” in *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, 1981, n. 2; P.S. Spadoni, “I prigionieri in Africa nella Seconda guerra mondiale,” in A.L. Carlotti ed. *Italia 1939–1945. Storia e Memoria*. Preface by F. Della Peruta, Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1996.
- 153 See E. Traverso, *La violenza nazista. Una genealogia*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002: 104–107.
- 154 The definition is by Andrzej J. Kamiński, militant in the Polish resistance, who was deported by the Nazis to the camps of Gross Rosen and Flossenbürg, and was the author of the first comparative history of the Lagers: *Konzentrationslager 1896 bis heute. Eine Analyse*, Stuttgart: Lohlammer, 1982 (Italian translation *I campi di concentramento dal 1896 a oggi. Storia, funzioni, tipologia*, Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1997: 13). Important observations about the relationship between totalitarianism and the 20th century can be found in T. Todorov, “Il secolo delle tenebre,” in AA.VV. *Storia, verità, giustizia. I crimini del XX secolo*, M. Flores ed., Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2001; and in W. Sofsky, *L'ordine del terrore. Il campo di concentramento*, cit.
- 155 *Gulag* (the acronym for *Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei*, “Central administration of the camps”) was introduced in 1930 to replace the earlier *Gul* (“Central direction of camps for the rehabilitation of work”), and is now typically used to describe Soviet concentration camps.
- 156 H. Arendt, *Le origini del totalitarismo*, cit.: 599–600.
- 157 D. Rousset, *L'Univers concentrationnaire*, Paris: Éditions du Pavois, 1946 (Italian translation: *L'universo concentrationario*, Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1997). The work was published in Italian by Longanesi in 1947 with the semantically

- inappropriate title, *Dio è caporale*: see A.V. Sullam Calimani, *I nomi dello sterminio*, cit.: 30.
- 158 See A. Wiewiorka, “L’expression ‘camp de concentration’,” in *Vingtième Siècle*, April–June 1997, n. 54: 9–10.
- 159 See A.J. Kamiński, *I campi di concentramento dal 1896 ad oggi*, cit., 1982: 260; A. Wiewiorka, “L’expression ‘camp de concentration’,” cit. 10. A few years later, Rousset examined the issue of other concentration camps created by other dictatorial systems (foremost the Soviet and Maoist ones), and created an international commission for the study of concentration camps.
- 160 A. Wiewiorka, “L’expression ‘camp de concentration’,” cit.: 12.
- 161 See G. Gozzini, *Lager e Gulag: quale comparazione?*, cit.; J. Kotek and P. Rigoulot, *Il secolo dei campi, Detenzione, concentramento e sterminio 1900–2000*, Milan: Mondadori, 2001 (original edition, *Le siècle des camps*, Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 2000).
- 162 The fact that the decision to intern someone is undertaken through an administrative decision is not irrelevant, but rather fundamental: it would not be possible, otherwise, to distinguish between camps and prisons. Hannah Arendt wrote: “The deviations from this norm in Stalin’s Russia have to be attributed to the disastrous scarcity of prisons and maybe also to the unfulfilled desire to transform the entire justice system in a system of concentration camps” (*Le origini del totalitarismo*, cit.: 612–613).
- 163 See for example, D. Cesarani, *Camps de la mort, camps de concentration et camps d’internement dans la mémoire collective britannique*, cit.: 20–23.
- 164 Such is, for example, wartime, when countries have the power (or the juridical duty) to proceed to the internment of certain categories of civilians. See, for example, the entry *internamento* in the *Lessico universale italiano*, Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana, 1972: 506–507.
- 165 See A.J. Kamiński, *I campi di concentramento dal 1896 a oggi*, cit., 1982: 15, 43, 287. See also, for example, the entry *internare* in the *Grande dizionario dell’uso*, Turin: Utet, 1999: 678.
- 166 As evidenced in A.J. Kamiński, *I campi di concentramento dal 1896 a oggi*, cit., 1982: 15n5.
- 167 “A place where one gathers, during times of war or of political trouble, under the surveillance of military or police war authorities, suspects, foreigners, and national enemies.” The episode was cited by Annette Wiewiorka in “L’expression ‘camp de concentration’,” cit.: 8.
- 168 “Especially within Stalin’s regime—recalled Hannah Arendt—concentration camps were generally described as forced labor camps because the bureaucracy had wanted to ennoble them with such name, though they were clearly not this; forced labor was the normal condition of all Russian workers, who did not have the freedom of movement and, at any time, could be arbitrarily mobilized to be sent anywhere ...” (*Le origini del totalitarismo*, cit.: 608–609).
- 169 A.J. Kamiński, *I campi di concentramento dal 1896 a oggi*, cit., 1982: 15, n5.
- 170 It might be correct to identify as the first concentration structures those that Kamiński defines as *Geisellager*, that is “hostage camps” (*I campi di concentramento dal 1896 a oggi*, cit., 1982: 42).
- 171 Born in Palma of Majorca on September 17, 1838, between 1901 and 1907, Wyler y Nicolau was named Ministry of War for Spain for three times.
- 172 See J. Terrero, *Historia de España*, Barcelona: Editorial Ramón Sopena, 1972: 545.
- 173 See M.A. Fernández, in *Nueva Historia de España* (18 vol.), Madrid: Edfar Ediciones, 1974, vol. XVI: 117; R.I. Canosa, *La reconcentración 1896–1897*, La Habana: Verde Olivo, 1997.
- 174 The philanthropist Emily Hobhouse (1860–1926), who visited these camps in December 1900 and in October 1901, was especially vocal in denouncing the horrible conditions of the British colonial camps. See E. Hobhouse, *Report of a*

- visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies*, London: Friars Printing Association, 1901; B. Bianchi, "Deportazione e memoria femminile. La Guerra del Sud Africa (1899–1902)," in *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, v. XLII (2001), n. 3: 423–439; T. Pakenham, *The Boer War*, London: Abacus, 1994. In the British Parliament, the condemnation of the Lagers was led by the liberal deputies Lloyd George and John Ellis.
- 175 See E. Salerno, *Genocidio in Libia. Le atrocità nascoste dell'avventura coloniale 1911/1931*, Milan: SugarCo, 1979; G. Rochat, "La repressione della resistenza in Cirenaica (1927–1931)," in *Omar al Mukhtar e la riconquista fascista della Libia*, cit.: 53–189; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi*, Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1988; G. Ottolenghi, *Gli italiani e il colonialismo. I campi di detenzione italiani in Africa*, Milan: SugarCo, 1997; R. Graziani, *Cirenaica pacificata*, Milan: Mondadori, 1932.
- 176 E. Salerno, *Genocidio in Libia*, cit. See also, N. Labanca, "L'internamento coloniale italiano," in *I campi di concentramento in Italia. Dall'internamento alla deportazione (1940–1945)*, C. Di Sante ed., Milan: Franco Angeli, 2001: 40–67; *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*. Centro Furio Jesi ed., Bologna: Grafis, 1994: 276–279.
- 177 A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit.
- 178 R. Sertoli Salis, *Storia e politica coloniale italiana*, Messina-Milan: Principato, 1936: 250–252.
- 179 M.-E. De Bonneuil, "Vers la farouche Senoussi," in *L'Illustration*, November 4, 1933.
- 180 Thus wrote Enzo Santarelli in 1967; but such statement still is valid today. See *Storia del fascismo*, Rome 1973, vol. II: 71–74.

2 The bureaucratic machine

1. “Regulatory” civilian internment¹

The Italian government started to implement the technical and normative directives finalized to regulate the internment of civilians in the mid-1920s, coordinating them closely with other actions undertaken to prepare Italy’s possible entry into war.² Indeed, the “General Plan to prepare the Nation for war,” contained the beginnings of an outline of the general terms for military and civilian mobilization, dated back to June 1925;³ these initial outlines were to be further developed in subsequent years.

In 1929, every Italian prefecture instituted an *Anagrafe delle persone sospette in linea politica* (Civil registry for politically suspect people), which held the names of the citizens who needed to be arrested should “particular contingencies” emerge, such as the visits of hierarchs, patriotic rallies, times of specific social tensions and, obviously, a state of war. The provincial archives—kept current and perfected through the constant reminders of the ministry, so that one might “whatever the situation, act without any delay against those individuals mentioned in them ...”⁴—reported to the *Casellario politico centrale* (“Political central registry”), which was a special governmental arm created in 1894 to control “subversives.”⁵

In 1930, the Ministry of War began the preparatory work to identify the measures to enact, should mobilization be needed, against “agents recognized as conducting or suspected of espionage,” and against the “provocateurs serving other nations who were capable of carrying out anti-Italian propaganda or damage the armed forces.”⁶ Three years later, following orders by the Ministry of Interior, the search would begin on the whole national territory for structures and locations suitable to install “concentration camps.”⁷ The prevailing intention was to utilize already existing buildings, both publicly and privately owned (regular homes, villas, castles, factories, former convents, and more), and to limit to special cases the creation ad hoc of real camps and barracks.⁸

In May 1936, the Ministry of War gave detailed instructions about the general criteria regulating the institution of the camps and the people to be interned within them. The overall criteria were as follows:

- a the camps should be located preferably in the provinces of Perugia, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, Aquila, and Avellino;
- b their number would initially be limited to a maximum of three;
- c each camp could not hold more than 1,000/1,500 internees;
- d in addition to political opponents of the regime (already confined or yet to be held), “confirmed spies” had to be interned;
- e the internment was among the competencies of the Ministry of Interior.⁹

On January 31, 1936, the SIM (“Military Information Service,” Service of Counterespionage) had also expressed its opinion about the measures to be adopted, “case by case and at any given moment,” toward those under scrutiny. Indeed, following a long period of elaboration that had lasted six years, the SIM ratified the circumstances that would lead to the arrest, internment and, in the case of foreigners, to their expulsion from the Kingdom. From the term “mobilization” thus derived the “Catalog M,” within which were specified the procedures to be adopted for every person whose name was entered, if the need arose.¹⁰

Foreign civilians. In July, 1938, the *Testi della Legge di guerra e della Legge di neutralità* (Texts about wartime law and neutrality law) took into consideration the prospect of interning civilians of countries at war with Italy.¹¹ This gave the Ministry of Interior, and by extension the territorial prefects, the power to “arrange the internment of enemy subjects who could bear arms” or who could “carry out activities that were detrimental to the State.” The text, moreover, referred everything that pertained to the treatment of internees to a specific decree that Mussolini promulgated on the matter.

Traditionally, the Ministry of the Interior carried out the supervision of foreign nationals living in Italy. Already in 1914, the General Directorate for Public Security had prepared a list of “foreigners suspected of espionage.” The following year this list would become the *Anagrafe centrale degli stranieri* (The Office of Vital Registry for foreign nationals), a substantial database relative to the movements and behaviors of non-Italians in the Kingdom, organized according to the information that the prefectures transmitted to Rome. Neglected following the Great War, the *Anagrafe* was revived and kept up-to-date starting in 1929, becoming in a short time one of the Ministry of Interior’s most important instruments of political surveillance.¹² Duties relative to the control of foreigners (e.g., entry permits, stays, rejections, expulsions, and more) fell on the Division of General and Classified Affairs (Third Branch of the General Directorate for Public Security), which also carried out the investigative services pertaining to military counterespionage.¹³

The internment of foreigners began to be enforced effectively only after the issuing of decree for the *Application of War Law on the State Territories*, which as of June 10, 1940, rendered operative wartime law.¹⁴

Italian Civilians. While the internment of “foreign subjects” was regulated by the *Leggi di guerra* (Wartime Laws), the internment of Italian citizens considered dangerous or suspect (i.e., the “internees due to police concerns”) rested upon the *Testo Unico delle Leggi di Pubblica Sicurezza* (The Unified

Text of the Laws of Public Security). The latter was activated through “adjustments” brought about by a decree of September 14, 1940,¹⁵ which made internment a “preventive measure.” It became a formidable repressive instrument used against Italians, but on some occasions even against foreign civilians, who already could be sent to confinement.¹⁶

In reality, this type of internment was already enacted administratively during the early days of Italy’s war participation, anticipating by three months the issuing of the September 17, 1940 decree that would have provided it with legal protection. This was due to a memorandum issued by the Ministry of the Interior on June 1, 1940, which stated:

As soon as the state of war is declared, we must arrest and transfer into jails the most dangerous Italian and foreign nationals, regardless of race, who are capable of disturbing the public peace or committing sabotage or attacks, as well as Italian and foreign nationals flagged by the counter-espionage services for immediate internment.¹⁷

Furthermore, the memorandum recommended that the arrests be executed with “maximum order and without scaremongering,” so as to give the impression that each intervention had as its target “isolated and truly dangerous cases,” rather than being caused by generalized regulations.

A subsequent memorandum released by the Ministry of the Interior only two days before Italy entered into war provided peripheral authorities with the “rules” to run “concentration camps and internment localities.”¹⁸ They established the obligation to carry out three daily roll calls, maintain registers and personal dossiers for each internee, and establish the perimeter within which they could move during potential “unsupervised circulation” time. It was through such administrative orders that, from a simple cautionary measure meant essentially to control “foreign enemy nationals,” Italian civilian internment became also an instrument of the police to quash political and social opposition.

Among civilians who had been interned by the Ministry of the Interior, regardless of whether they ended up in “concentration camps” or became *internati liberi* (“free internees”), it was possible to recognize two very distinctive standings: on the one hand were those interned for *reasons of war*, that is foreign civilians whose dangerousness was related to their being “enemies”; on the other hand were those interned for *public safety reasons*, mostly Italians, who because of their “dangerousness” were interned as if they were enemy civilians.

For both, internment caused the loss of individual liberties, the removal from their families (only very few camps allowed the presence of entire families), and compliance with countless and systematic controls and restrictions. However, the protections conferred to internees held for public safety reasons were greatly reduced vis-à-vis those provided to those held as “enemy subjects.” In particular, the latter could take advantage of the legal protections and respect granted by the Italian government in observance of non-written norms about the “reciprocity of treatment” granted Italian subject internees in other countries.¹⁹

One should notice that the anti-Semitic laws promulgated in Italy starting in 1938 did not include any reference to immediate or future internment practices regarding Jewish citizens. Nonetheless, as far as the status of “foreign Jews”²⁰ and those who had become stateless, the norms regulating internment ended up interacting with, and being strengthened by, the racial laws that forbid their entry and stay in Italy. As a result, foreign and stateless Jews, who had not succeeded in leaving the peninsula by the deadline established by the decree of expulsion, were mostly interned.²¹ They found themselves, as Liliana Picciotto has suggested quite correctly, in the anomalous condition of being situated “halfway between being capable of doing damage, inasmuch as they were enemies, and being subject to police security measures.”²²

Prefectures were at the forefront in recommending internment since, in their role as representatives of the Ministry of the Interior in the country’s peripheries, they had been punctiliously keeping files since 1929 on all individuals considered dangerous and who might be detained under “specific contingencies.” The names were recorded in logs and labeled according to five “risk categories”:²³

- 1 Extremely dangerous;
- 2 Dangerous because capable of disturbing the peaceful happening of official events;
- 3 Dangerous in the event of disruption to law and order;
- 4 Mentally unstable;
- 5 Felons with previous criminal records.

Within the Ministry of Interior, the office responsible for dealing with questions pertaining to internment was the General Directorate for Public Security—under the leadership of the Chief of Police. More specifically, an *Ufficio internati* (Internee Office) or *Ufficio internandi* (To-Be-Interned Office) was created in the General Directorate’s Division for General and Classified Affairs, led by Epifanio Pennetta. This was a centralized bureaucratic structure that consisted of a subdivision for Italian internees and one for foreigners, which had the responsibility of preparing the injunctions of internment on the basis of recommendations advanced not only by the prefectures, but also from the Ministries, the Italian Embassies and consulates abroad, or other groups such as the Ovla, the *Demorazza* (General Directorate for Demography and Race), the Inspectorates for Public Safety, the Commission for Migration and Work, and so on.

The Internee Office, an agency with purely administrative duties, prepared the separate dossiers containing the documents relative to individuals subjected to internment and, when it was opportune, ordered the annulment of such provisions.²⁴ The Office for Italian Internees, which was directed first by Ugo Magistrelli, and then by Ulderico Ercoli, was under Section I of the Division for General and Classified Affairs (which dealt with the “transfer of subversive types”), under which were also the *Ufficio confino politico* (Office

for political confinement) and the *Casellario politico centrale*.²⁵ The *Ufficio internati stranieri* (Foreign Internees Office), led by Alfonso Lione, was instead under the Section III of the Division for General and Classified Affairs, which was also charged with the supervision of foreign nationals. The duties of the *Ufficio internati stranieri* were very broad, because its area of competence was not limited solely to “foreign subjects,” but extended to all civilians (whether foreign or Italian) who were “suspected or verified spies.” For this reason, though it operated under the tutelage of the Ministry of Interior, this office kept assiduous contacts with the press offices of the various branches of the Armed Forces and, in particular, the SIM.²⁶

To meet the financial burdens of internment (which required an average annual expense of 80 million lira), the Ministry of the Interior created specific funds within the affected prefectures, into which it deposited every four months the sums needed for *routine* expenses pertaining to the internment in camps and any exceptional, one-time costs. Moreover, as was provided by the specific legislation, a Special Committee for administrative and budgetary control was established with representatives from the Council of State, the National Audit Office, and the Ministry of Finance.²⁷

The main reference texts that regulated civilian internment during the first three months of war were the Ministry of the Interior memoranda. These had been transmitted to the prefects as simple administrative orders, specifically, the one of June 8 pertaining to the *Prescrizioni per i campi di concentramento e per le località di internamento* (Rules for concentration camps and internment locations, circular n. 442/12267); and the supplementary one on the same subject (circular n. 442/14178), released June 25, 1940. The general norms contained in these two orders would regulate the life of internees even in subsequent years. Their essential injunctions, in fact, would coalesce in Mussolini’s decree of September 4, 1940, which would constitute the active legal standard for fascist civilian internment.²⁸

The arrests of individuals listed for internment began in the days immediately following Italy’s entry into the war. In big cities, where the majority of foreigners resided, law enforcement units performed thorough searches, often without warrants to notify those it arrested. The general rules made no exceptions for the elderly or the sick, even though different provincial prefectures enforced them quite differently.²⁹ Following their arrest, the unfortunate victims were taken to police headquarters, where those destined for concentration camps were transferred to the jails. Once arrested, people were assigned either to a “camp” or an “internment locality,” according to their perceived degree of danger: the most dangerous individuals were interned in the camps, while all others were sent to the “localities.” An even more strict option called for internment in the island camps.³⁰ The stay in prison cells usually extended to a few weeks, during which the internees-to-be were forced to live with common criminals: not surprisingly, almost every surviving witness account describes that time period as one of the harshest and most humiliating of the entire sequence of events.³¹ When those arrested were

assigned to *internamento libero* (“free internment,” which was equivalent to the obligatory stay condition), they typically were not kept in jail in advance. In the transfer from the jails to the train station, the internees remained handcuffed, and, at times, shackled to each other. Only when boarded, the security detail had the option of removing the handcuffs.³²

The stages of arrest and detention followed a rehearsed routine leading to the transfer of people to confinement; as a result, they were thoroughly familiar to those who had been sent to confinement previously. For “foreign Jews”—who often had already been severely tested by Nazi persecution, but were not used to Fascism’s repressive practices—doubts about the true intentions of the Italian government caused serious worries. Their main fear was of being handed over to Nazi authorities: only when they were reassured that the trains they boarded were not directed to the Italian–German border, they would relax somewhat.³³

In September 1939, the General Directorate for Public Security hypothesized that, should Italy enter World War II, it would need to intern 3,631 foreign civilians: 1,462 to the camps, and 2,169 to the localities provided for *internamento libero*. The provisions for internment also concerned 754 Italian citizens: 458 to the camps, and 296 to free internment. Overall, then, provisional internment concerned “only” 4,385 Italian and foreign civilians.³⁴

The numbers affected during the war, however, were higher. In October 1940, there were already 4,251 foreign internees (of whom 1,839 were “Arians” and 2,412 were Jews) and 1,373 Italian (331 of whom were Jews). In the months before Italy’s entry in the conflict, therefore, the Ministry of the Interior had already interned 5,624 civilians between Italians and foreigners.³⁵ By 1941, there was a slowdown in these injunctions; nonetheless, by November 1942, the internee total reached 11,735 (4,366 Italian and 7,369 foreign citizens); and, by April 1943, 19,117 (of whom 12,285 were Italian, and 6,832 were foreign).³⁶ The result was that, “to meet the need to intern those responsible for theft related to rationing, and the many people that *should have been transferred* from metropolitan French areas, and from Corsica and Venezia Giulia,” the Ministry of the Interior arranged the expansion of the Ferramonti camp, and sped up the construction of a new camp of large dimensions near Faba Sabina.³⁷ Moreover, by 1943, the prospect was raised to create “concentration camps” in Montalbano Jonico (Matera), Marino del Tronto (Ascoli Piceno), Pienza (Siena), Cortona e Lucignano (Arezzo).³⁸

Many of the internment measures taken by the Ministry of the Interior between 1940 and 1943 were decided during the first year of war. Following a frantic initial period, the focus of the arrests shifted constantly: it went from targeting a variety of foreign subjects (eventually, the government preferred surveillance measures over internment to control them), to focusing on “internal enemies,” broadly represented by anti-fascists and enemies of the regime.

In all actuality, in early 1941, through the SIM, the Ministry of War was still suggesting “radical and complete” internments as a solution to the

government. However, the Chief of Police decided that it was impossible to enact such drastic measures due to the large number of foreign subjects present in the peninsula, estimated at the time to be 10,683 people: 4,513 English, 4,731 French, and 1,619 Greek citizens.³⁹ The cautious position endorsed by the Chief of Police—as Paola Carucci has noticed—was due to his “higher degree of competence vis-à-vis other authorities.” It also reflected a basic principle that had always governed the police system in Italy, which was to “avoid needlessly oppressive measures if these were considered ineffectual.”⁴⁰ Later on, other motivations substantiated this cautious response. Among them was the need for the internment “machine” to cut a few thousand beds (originally used in smaller towns for free internees) and to make them available for evacuees from cities subject to air raids, and to meet the unexpected influx of internees coming from the “new provinces,” such as the newly occupied territories of Libya.

The Ministry of Interior, therefore, on the one hand started transferring to the camps the majority of “free internees”; and on the other, it invited the prefects to begin a sweeping revision of the internment provisions previously adopted, and to “study more rigorously” the new proposal. As a result, in a short time, the camp population doubled until it reached, at the beginning of 1943, 10,493 people, out of a total of 18,862 civilians subject to internment.⁴¹

Trying to quantify exactly how many people were interned by the Ministry of the Interior following Italy’s entry into war until September 8, 1943, is not easy, since parts of the personnel dossiers dedicated to the internees have gone missing (they were likely smuggled or destroyed during the transfer of the Ministry’s documentation from Rome to Valdarno, near Vicenza, where they were moved under the Italian Social Republic). However, there still are over 20,000 dossiers available that are preserved in the Central State Archives. Of those, 8,410 are labeled “dangerous Italians” (of which 1,000 are *Allogeni*⁴² and 400 Jews), while 12,000 document foreign civilians (mostly “enemy subjects”) and Italians interned for espionage.⁴³

2. “Parallel” civilian internment

Though the internment of civilians fell under the specific competencies of the Ministry of Interior, during World War II Italian military authorities rather than civilian ones were more likely to use the practice.

The Royal Army carried out large scale internment of civilians, especially in the areas of Yugoslavia occupied or annexed in 1941. There its strategy was often to “clean up” local populations from entire inhabited areas,⁴⁴ a praxis that characterized the frequent “police operations” bent on controlling the territory. It was often paired with special anti-partisan “operations” that at times resulted in mass deportation, in violation of the most basic norms of international law. Moreover, also in violation of the convention on war imprisonment, the Royal Army also gathered under “civilian internment” large numbers of soldiers from the former Yugoslav Army.⁴⁵

In Yugoslavia, the Italian Army used civilian internment as part of its violent and deliberately racist occupation that included the burning of villages and the execution by firing squad of civilian hostages, behaviors that created in local populations “a trail of resentment against the Italian community that, still today, hardly abates.”⁴⁶ In addition to the obvious goal of removing from crucial war locations individuals who could help the partisans or intervene directly against the Italian occupants, internment furthered the goal of “de-Balkanizing” the territory. This was an old fascist objective, comparable to today’s “ethnic cleansing.” For example, in the area of Slovenia annexed by Italy as the “Provincia di Lubiana,”⁴⁷ this cleansing seemed possible by “substituting” autochthonous populations with Italian settlers brought in from the farthest regions of the Kingdom. “I would not be averse to the transfer en masse of the populations,” Mussolini affirmed in Gorizia on July 31, 1942;⁴⁸ a plan about which, soon thereafter, General Mario Roatta would provide further details.⁴⁹ Indeed, according to Elio Apih’s words, this plan was part of a 20-year strategy of violence and abuses, or rather of pervasive “cultural genocide,” enacted by “borderlands Fascism” (*fascismo di frontiera*) against Slovenian and Croatian minorities in Italy.⁵⁰

In the annexed Yugoslav territories, Italian authorities used civilian internment in a number of “privately” run concentration camps. There were three main structures: the camp of Arbe (Rab) for the needs of the northern Adriatic quadrant (the Fiume area and Slovenia); the camp of Melada (Molat) for the central area (Dalmatia); and the integrated camps of Mamula and Prevlaka for the southern Adriatic quadrant (mainly the Mouths of Kotor, land in Montenegro that was consolidated with the area of Dalmatia annexed to Italy as a “civilian Governorate” in 1941).

The largest camp, set up on the island of Arbe, was placed under the supervision of the *Intendenza* (Stewardship) of the Second Army.⁵¹ From *Intendenza* depended even as far as the movement of internees, five large camps for Yugoslav internees located in Italy: Gonars and Visco in Venezia Giulia, Monigo and Chiesanuova in Veneto; and Renicci in Tuscany.⁵² The camp of Melada (Molat), the second in size among those set up in Yugoslav territories, was placed instead under the civilian Governorate of Dalmatia. The Fifth Army Corps controlled the smaller camps of Buccari (Bakar) and Porto Re (Kraljevica), which were mostly reserved for transit; while the Fiume Prefecture controlled the small transit camp of Laurana (Lovran), the Seventeenth Army Corps oversaw the transit camp of Scoglio Calogero (Ošljak), and the Sixth Army Corps controlled the two camps of Mamula and Prevlaka. In addition, many Yugoslav civilians were interned in the concentration camps under the control of the Ninth Army or “Superalba” (Superior Command for Albania), which were set up in Antivari (Montenegro) and in Kukës, Klos, German, Kavajë, Puke, Scutari, and Durazzo (in Albania).⁵³

In Montenegro, already during the summer of 1941, the Italian Armed Forces issued announcements and decrees regarding the internment of civilians

in concentration camps.⁵⁴ However, the most voluminous and detailed instructions regarding internment *manu militari* (at the hands of the military)—seen as a “decree of primary importance” in the framework of striking down the Yugoslav popular revolt—is found in the notorious *Circolare 3C-L*, issued on March 1, 1942, by General Roatta, who had just become head of the Second Army, nicknamed, from May 5, 1942, *Supersloda* (acronym of “Superior Command for Slovenia and Dalmazia”). In the second chapter of the *Circolare* among other things, one reads: “When necessary to maintain law and order and to aid the running of our operations, Command Units are empowered to intern—as protective, precautionary or repressive measures—individuals, families, country or city dwellers and, if necessary, the entire population of towns and rural villages [...]”⁵⁵ These guidelines partially replicated measures already in place in Montenegro since July 1941, and anticipated somewhat those that, in 1944, field marshal Alfred Kesselring would implement to crush the Italian resistance: they envisaged the internment of entire “dangerous” social and professional groups, including families in which, “without clear reasons,” were absent male individuals between 16 and 60 years of age. Additional directives concerning internment were provided by the lesser known *Circolare 3C-L* (published on May 1, 1943, in a booklet of over 400 pages), and by the many other military guidelines issued by the Armed Forces leadership and by lower military commands.⁵⁶

Using Roatta’s guidelines (which hypothesized the “evacuation” of 20,000–30,000 Slovenians) as a blueprint, a plan was set for the “Province of Ljubljana” that called for the internment of laborers, the unemployed, refugees, the homeless, former soldiers, “regular visitors to public dormitories,” unemployed students, people without families, university students, teachers, office workers, professionals, former Italian soldiers who had moved to Yugoslavia from Venezia Giulia following the advent of Fascism, and “sympathizers of the partisan movements.”⁵⁷ The same fate, with the additional requisition of livestock and the destruction of dwellings, was reserved, within 48 hours from the attacks, for the inhabitants of houses that were close to areas where sabotage had occurred, whenever those responsible had not been identified. The initial instructions pertaining to the age and gender of those requiring internment had specified only men between the ages of 16 and 60, though they were soon rendered obsolete when they were extended to women and children. Students and intellectuals had to be interned regardless of whether they were politically militant: “Our enemy is constituted by the *intelligenza* of Lubiana,” claimed General Mario Robotti in September 1942, an opinion that, though exaggerated, recognized the support that the *Osvobodilna Fronta* (the Slovenian Liberation Front) enjoyed among intellectuals.⁵⁸

In the first part of the *Circolare 3C-L* (Chapter xvi), there was a thorough description about the “establishment and functioning of the camps for civilian internees” that indicated the organizational duties and subdivision of internees: “protective” and “repressive.” “Protective” internment, in its original definition, concerned those people who, “opposed the partisan movement,

and had presented themselves of their own will to the Italian authorities to be protected from possible retaliatory actions by their enemies.”⁵⁹ This type of internment was also broadly used to safeguard informants and collaborators.⁶⁰ This said, however, the line of demarcation that initially separated “protective” and “repressive” internment (the latter at times called “precautionary”), in time became less visible and hard to determine.⁶¹

In addition, the *Circolare 3C-L* established that the transfer of internees in the territories supervised by the Second Army and all procedures related to this transfer should be coordinated by its *Intendenza*. Points e) and f) of the document, moreover, established two norms “to be followed and remembered,” with which, obviously, General Roatta wished to give the parvence of legality to this type of internment, despite its obvious arbitrariness:

- e Since there are no international rules and agreements to be observed with regard to civilian internees, the S.M.R.E., the *Supersloda* Command, and our Office hereby issue those we believe necessary to regulate every responsibility, jurisdiction or rights both for the camps’ chain of command and for the internees;
- f The internees of the camps in the territory under supervision of the Army are subject to the rules of the military penal code (Announcement of the Duce n. 143 on November 15, 1942—XXI).⁶²

Truth be told, the category of “protected” or “to be protected” internees made internment a close relative of two processes that typically happen during wartime: the removal and the evacuation of civilian populations (or of some of its elements) from areas at risk.⁶³ Indeed, as internment grew exponentially, numerous conversations took place between the Supreme Command, the General Directorate for Public Safety and the Inspectorate for War Services (subsequently renamed the General Directorate for War Services)⁶⁴ to clarify the respective areas of responsibility, and to define the status of civilians who had been deported from the Balkan peninsula.

Even as of October 3, 1942, during the important three-level summit that took place at the Supreme Command to classify the 18,000–20,000 Yugoslavs interned by the Army, the disagreement was absolute. Representatives of the Supreme Command claimed that, since these civilians had been detained because they were “politically dangerous,” they fell under the responsibility of the General Directorate for Public Safety. The Directorate’s representative, Commissioner Alfredo Tagliavia, asserted instead that they should be simply considered “civilian evacuees who, for precautionary reasons, should be subject to general orders.” For their part, the representatives of the Inspectorate for War Services claimed that these internees were “politically dangerous elements” and, therefore, it was their institutional jurisdiction to deal with them.⁶⁵

A few days later, in a lengthy *note* addressed to the Supreme Command, the General Directorate for Public Safety reiterated the inability of its camps,

for lack of space, to take on the responsibility for those Yugoslav civilians (regardless of whether they were evacuees or internees) that the Royal Army had picked up in its sweeps:

This ministry established, prior to the start of the war, the organization of concentration camps for the internment of foreign subjects and fellow countrymen judged to be politically dangerous. Such camps, which have been increased as much as possible and currently number forty, due to the spreading of the conflict, but especially due to the intense and uninterrupted flux of internees from the new provinces, from the occupied territories and from Libya, are currently completely full, even beyond their real capacity.

Searches for new locations where to establish camps are made very difficult by the lack of suitable buildings, which are currently occupied by military authorities. Equally difficult, if not impossible, would be the construction of new camps, since we lack suitable building materials. Even current internment locations in the various municipalities of the Kingdom, where thousands are interned, are almost completely saturated. Regardless, it is not advisable to place politically dangerous Slovenians with civilian populations.⁶⁶

Following additional contacts and discussions about the best “placement” for the Yugoslav civilians, and a clarification from the authorities in charge about their custody, at the end of 1942 the different sides reached a compromise: while they waited for the Ministry of the Interior to establish new camps, the Yugoslav internees would continue to be the responsibility of the military authorities who, as an exception and among other things, would construct “a second set of barracks for 5,000 people” in the Arbe camp.⁶⁷

The “*Parallel*” *Civilian Internment*, which was practically run by the Royal Army, and the “*Regulatory*” *Civilian Internment* run under the Ministry of the Interior did not constitute, as one might wrongly believe, two separate or competing types of civilian internment under Fascism.⁶⁸ For that matter, the Italians also carried out police confinement and regulatory internment in Yugoslavia: starting with the second half of 1941, prefects and various governmental authorities dispatched “dangerous and suspicious” civilians to *internamento libero* or to camps instituted by the Ministry of the Interior throughout the Italian peninsula.⁶⁹

Between the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, to deal with what in time had become the “former Yugoslavs’ emergency,” the General Directorate for Public Safety set aside, almost exclusively for these internees, the camps of Casoli, Città S. Angelo, Corropoli, Lanciano, Notaresco, and Scipione; it created a new one in Sassoferrato; and reactivated, in their new role as “concentration camps,” the former confinement colonies of Ponza and Lipari.⁷⁰ Though significant, these measures were not sufficient to absorb the multitude of civilians swept up by the army in Yugoslavia, since

numerically they surpassed the totals for all internees under the Ministry of Interior's charge.⁷¹

This is how, by 1942–1943, in conjunction with the “regulatory” network created by the Ministry of the Interior in 1940, a second network was developed in Italy dedicated to “Slav” civilian internees. It consisted, first and foremost, of the six large camps operated by the Military Authority: Gonars, Monigo, Chiesanuova, Renicci, Colfiorito, and Visco. Such camps, in whose management the “Offices for prisoners of war” of the Supreme Command (in Rome) and of the Second Army (in the occupied territories) all played an essential role, were set up in functional army barracks and in buildings originally destined for war prisoners.⁷²

On January 18, 1943, the High Commissioner for the “Provincia di Lubiana,” Emilio Grazioli, who due to his position was heavily invested in the issue of “parallel” internment, attempted to bring the matter under the “normal jurisdiction” of the Ministry of the Interior and end the confusion about the roles and responsibilities of civilian and military authorities. Referring to the “extreme setbacks caused by the Military Authority’s mass internments,” Grazioli suggested to the Ministry of the Interior (copying the General Directorates for Public Safety and for War Services) that, in the future, measures for the internment or acquittal of former Yugoslavs be implemented exclusively by the Civil Authority, as was established by law. As far as the concentration camps controlled by the Military Authority,⁷³ the High commissioner hoped that they would remain under the jurisdiction of the Royal Army only until the Ministry of the Interior was able to deal with them directly.⁷⁴

In Rome, Grazioli’s proposals found a favorable audience. On January 23, 1943, the undersecretary for the Interior, Guido Buffarini Guidi, informed Ljubljana that they had his “highest approval.”⁷⁵ In April, Mussolini himself announced that the camps located in the Peninsula, except the one in Visco, would pass under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior.⁷⁶ But the initial success of the High Commissar’s proposal, which wished to bring “parallel” internment under the control of civilian authority, remained such only in words. The Ministry of Interior, in fact, though in principle confirming its availability toward a “gradual transfer of responsibility” for the camps under consideration, declared itself unable to do so at that time.⁷⁷ Indeed, with the Allies ready to land in Italy and the fascist regime not far from collapse, the Ministry of the Interior certainly could not deal with the expected change of the guard in the spring of 1943.⁷⁸ Meanwhile, in the camps under consideration, the internees’ clandestine political organizations had established paramilitary cells. And, without the aid of the army, government authorities would have been unable to continue to keep segregated the great mass of internees. Thus, at the critical juncture of September 8, 1943, the “Camps for Slavs” in Italy’s center-north, as well as those in the occupied territories, were still controlled by the military authorities.⁷⁹

It is difficult to establish precisely how many Yugoslav civilians faced fascist internment. For one, according to the High Commissioner for the “Provincia di Lubiana,”⁸⁰ the military authorities did not always create personal dossiers for every person sent to internment, as confirmed by documents retrieved from the Eleventh Army Corps.⁸¹ Nowadays, this makes it more difficult to calculate the number of civilians interned *manu militari*. Therefore, taking into account the most reliable sources (such as the International Red Cross), and considering how camps were structured overall by the military and the civilian authorities, as well as considering *internamento libero*, we can estimate about 100,000 of former Yugoslav civilians were interned by Italy (for the most part Slovenian, Croatians, and Montenegrins).⁸²

As far as the single “Provincia di Lubiana,” we can surmise that, until September 1943, about 25,000 Slovenian and Croatian civilians were interned.⁸³ Conversely, the number provided by the Yugoslav government in the postwar era of 67,230 Slovenian internees (among whom 9,691 were women, and 4,282 were children) seems excessive, even taking into consideration the internment carried out by the Ministry of Interior.⁸⁴ In an official report prepared for the Supreme Command in mid-December 1942, General Roatta referred to the presence of about 17,369 Slovenian civilian internees in the camps run by the military authorities.⁸⁵

We will see in Chapter 3 that, as of the end of 1942, a kind of “parallel” internment, autonomous from the “regulatory” one overseen by the Special Inspectorate for Public Safety of Venezia Giulia, also affected the Slovenian and Croatian minorities who resided within the old borders of the Italian Kingdom (the *allogeni*).⁸⁶ These populations were interned usually in the concentration camp of Cairo Montenotte in Liguria and in “concentration locations” (smaller transit camps that also functioned as subsidiary prisons) created in Venezia Giulia itself: at Poggio Terzarmata (Zradvščina), Piedimonte (Podgora), and also in a suburb as well as in the city of Gorizia itself.⁸⁷

3. Conditions of internment

In June 1940, Maria Luisa Moldauer, a young Polish Jew who had just completed her degree in Italy, asked herself what disturbing future might await her, as she was forced to live in a run-down prison cell before being interned in an Italian camp:

So, what was a concentration camp? Dora and I had talked about it often, but without ever coming up with a clear answer. We knew absolutely nothing about them, and we tried to find a halfway point between the Isle of Man and Dachau, that is, between what we had read and heard about the internment of enemy foreigners in England, and of Jews and anti-Nazis in Germany.

Homes or barracks? Men and women, together or apart? Communal mess hall or individual eating? Forced labor? Equal treatment for all or according to individual dossiers? Any freedoms or restrictions?⁸⁸

During those same weeks, in Rome, officials from the General Directorate for Public Safety asked themselves how the German concentration camps were organized. Reinhard Heydrich, the man responsible for the Central Safety Office of the Reich (RSHA) whom they had consulted, hastened to reply to the Head of the Italian Police, Arturo Bocchini. He sent him the “Rule book” for German camps, and made himself fully available to welcome for—ulterior clarification and explanations—a delegation of Italian officials at a later date.⁸⁹ Actually, in April 1936, the Head Commissioner for Public Safety, Tommaso Petrillo, had already visited the camp of Dachau; and in December 1938, Guido Landra and Lino Businco (director and deputy director of the Office for the Study of the Race within the Ministry of Popular Culture) had been to Sachsenhausen, where they had met leading Nazi representatives. Such “technical” meetings, however, had been sporadic and were not followed by concrete political action. Bocchini himself dropped Heydrich’s invitation, blaming difficulties tied to the war, and a lack of personnel.⁹⁰

At the outset of World War II, due to the biased propaganda campaign by the Nazis that attributed the primogeniture for the Lagers to the English, His Majesty’s government prudently avoided calling “concentration camps” the structures it had set up to host civilian war internees in Great Britain.⁹¹ In Italy, already in July 1930, Mussolini had recommended that his generals carefully avoid using the term “concentration camp” in their messages and official reports discussing the camps of the Sidra region. He suggested instead that they use the terms *campo di raccolta* (“collection camp”) or *accampamento popolazioni* (“population campsite”) to avoid worrying the local populations and especially the international press.⁹² Between 1940 and 1943, instead, possibly to align itself at least linguistically with its German ally, the Italian government easily referred to every structure destined to the internment of civilians as “concentration camp.”⁹³

For historiography’s sake, it might be better to define as “concentration camps” only the Italian structures dedicated to “parallel” civilian internment (that collected individuals deprived of legal protection). Instead, the term “internment camp” might be used for the structures under the control of the Ministry of the Interior that possessed generally a formal legality recognized by the countries at war with Italy and by the International Red Cross.

An even more careful distinction, based on the intrinsic motivations for internment presented in the previous chapter, would allow us to highlight in addition the “double function” carried out by the Italian camps during World War II. Indeed, those administered by the Ministry of the Interior were at the same time “internment” camps for some categories of inmates (enemy subjects and foreigners), and “concentration” camps for those—foremost among them opponents of the regime—who were interned following “preventive

measures” similar in their essence to the German *Schutzhaft*.⁹⁴ This distinction would allow us to notice, as well, that “parallel” internment camps were “concentration” camps for the majority of civilian internees (deported without any legal safeguard), but also “internment” camps when they hosted “protective” internees, distinctions that are not purely pedantic and academic.⁹⁵

Aside from the name, however, Italian World War II concentration camps had little in common with the German *Konzentrationslager*. Not even the Italian concentration camps “for Slavs” became part of a planned totalitarian “concentrationary system” of exterminationist nature. The underlying inspirational philosophy for fascist civilian internment was not the exhaustion of individuals or the exploitation of their slave labor. Its object was instead the banishment of dangerous, suspicious or undesirable elements (internal opponents of the regime first and foremost); and, in the occupied zones, the “cleansing” of at-risk areas.

The reference models for fascist camps are therefore recognizable in the same concentrationary Italian praxis that by the 1940s already had its own, well-consolidated tradition.⁹⁶ Specifically, the establishments under the Ministry of Interior’s control had confinement colonies as their closest referents. Those for “parallel” internment showed instead ties, as far as their organization and structures, with Italian prisoner of war camps. Finally, the tent camps on the Yugoslav islands showed significant analogies with the Italian colonial camps of the previous decade.⁹⁷

A particular vision of the concentration camps emerges in a document by the General Directorate for Public Safety in the early months of 1940. Within, one reads that, in the new “social understanding of fascist Italy,” the camps,

must not be understood as slothful places where individuals wait in idleness for the setting of the sun, but bustle with industriousness to produce what the majority needs [...].

The concentration camp will become much more organized and fruitful, and therefore less onerous for the State, if it is set up in a timely fashion. This means that it will be provided with an initial nucleus of general services and dorms for the early inmates who, following a pre-established plan, will do work that, in general, coincides with the agricultural transformation of lands.

Those held there will be treated as well as our human spirit might hope for. However, at a time when the nation is occupied in its ultimate battle, no courtesies will be used toward the least desirable individuals among us.⁹⁸

The use of internees for the agricultural transformation of the land refers to an “autarchic” idea of the camps that tied them to the broader fascist plan of “integral reclamation” of the territory.⁹⁹ It is not by chance that one of its main “theoreticians” and biased advocates was the *Cavaliere del Lavoro*

(Knight for the Order of Merit for Labor) Eugenio Parrini, the creator of the “agricultural confinement colony” of Pisticci (see the mapping of the camps) and of the camp of Ferramonti: both conveniently were created near the sites of his agricultural reclamation projects. In 1942, in a detailed report where he boasted “observations and expertise that go back even to the European War [World War I, n.d.r.],” Parrini promoted again with the Ministry of the Interior his point of view about the feasibility and purpose of camps for civilian internees: they had to be set up in areas that would allow, through the creation of vegetable fields and the transformation of agriculture and estates, opportunities for all “willing” internees to work. They also had to serve as “full-fledged temp towns,” peopled by whole families, conceived in a way that their integrated buildings might function, once the internees had left, as the basic structures for new agricultural villages.¹⁰⁰

In some camps created *ex novo* by the Ministry of the Interior (Ferramonti, Frascette, Farfa), the internees were responsible for building the self-same living infrastructure. In other camps, a small number of internees were employed as cleaning or kitchen crews, or as cooks, artisans and, in some special cases, to provide health care for their fellow inmates.¹⁰¹ However, despite the original intentions and Parrini’s commitment to turn them into “autarchic communities capable of promoting voluntary work,” as we will see, idleness reigned in the overwhelming majority of Italian camps, and in the confinement colonies.

Notes

- 1 “Regulatory” and “Parallel” are not official bureaucratic definitions of the time, but wording that I have chosen to define the two types of internment of civilians made by Italy (1940–1943). The first one substantially linked to the rules and regulations (*Regulatory*), the second one mainly released from them and almost outside the law (*Parallel*).
- 2 See G. Antoniani Persichilli, “Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell’internamento in Italia (giugno 1940–luglio 1943), cit.: 77–96.
- 3 The first discipline of “civilian mobilization” (a group of measures concerning various sectors of Italian society) took place with the law of June 8, 1925, n. 969. The article 3 of the R.D.L. of October 15, 1925, n. 2281 subsequently regulated the “Committee for civilian mobilization”, which constituted one of the advisory authorities for the “Commission of supreme defense” (instituted in 1923), put in charge of organizing the country for war. To these followed, specifically, the law of December 14, 1931, n. 1699, integrated—for war reasons—by the R.D.L. of September 5, 1938, n. 1731, and by the announcement of Mussolini of March 22, 1941. See G. Dallari, “Mobilizzazione civile,” in *Enciclopedia del Diritto*, Varese: Giuffrè Editore, 1976, vol. XXVI: 665–670.
- 4 This according to the memorandum sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the prefects on January 21, 1936, found in Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 1, b. 98. Also in G. Antoniani Persichilli, “Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell’internamento in Italia (giugno 1940–luglio 1943), op. cit.: 80; and S. Carolini ed., “*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche.*” *Gli internati dal 1940 al 1943*, Rome: Anppia, 1987: 350–351.

- 5 Following the approval of the laws of Public safety of 1926, and the creation of the Ovla, the Registry had become in all effect an office underneath Section I of the Dagr of the Ministry of Interior. See G. Tosatti, "Il ministero dell'Interno: le origini del Casellario politico centrale," in *Le riforme crispine*, I, *Amministrazione statale*, Milan: Giuffrè, 1990; and by the same, "L'anagrafe dei sovversivi italiani: origini e storia del Casellario politico centrale," in *Le carte e la storia*, 1977, n. 2: 133–150; P. Carucci, "L'organizzazione dei servizi di Polizia dopo l'approvazione del Testo Unico delle leggi di P.S. nel 1926," in *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, XXXVI, 1976, n.1.: 84–114; *Antifascisti nel Casellario politico centrale*. A. Dal Pont, S. Carolini, L. Martucci, et al. eds., Quaderno n. 1, Rome: Anppia, 1988: 9–23.
- 6 See G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio centrale di stato," in *Una storia di tutti. Prigionieri, internati, deportati italiani nella seconda guerra mondiale*, Atti del Convegno, Torino 2–4 novembre 1987, Milan: Angeli, 1989: 35–50.
- 7 Initially the responsibility fell on Ercole Conti, who had already been charged with encamping in Italy the Croat nationalists protected by the fascist government. See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Archives of the inspector E. Conti, b. 18, f. "Search for locations for concentration camps."
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 98, f. I (Political-military measures to be adopted at the time of mobilization). See also G. Antoniani Persichilli, "Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell'internamento in Italia (giugno 1940–luglio 1943)," in *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, XXXVIII, 1978, n. 1–3: 80n4.
- 10 Circular of SIM n. 3/227 of January 31, 1936, cited in G. Antoniani Persichilli, "Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell'internamento in Italia (giugno 1940–luglio 1943)," cit.: 80; see also, G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio centrale di stato," cit.: 36.
- 11 R.D. of July 8, 1938, n. 1415, in the Supplement to the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* of September 15, 1938, n. 211 (especially, articles 284, 286, and 289).
- 12 As Giovanna Tosatti has written, "The *Anagrafe centrale degli stranieri* was an instrument of permanent control from which it was possible to mine, aside from the needed statistical data, any and all information needed to enforce public safety and political surveillance" (*Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale di Stato*, cit.: 41). According to the memorandum n. 443/20030, released by the Ministry of the Interior on December 1, 1929, "all foreigners residing in the Kingdom, according to their nationality, area of specialization, and motive of presence" had to be registered with the *Anagrafe*.
- 13 In October 1942, the Services of Counterespionage (which had 16 Centers distributed in the major Italian cities) were consolidated in a single unit, the SIM, directed by the Colonel Cesare Amé. See C. Amé, *Guerra segreta in Italia (1940–1943)*, Rome: Casini Editore, 1954.
- 14 R.D., June 10, 1940, n. 566, announced on the *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, June 15, 1940, n. 140.
- 15 R.D.L., September 17, 1940, n. 1374 (*Modificazioni ed aggiunte al Testo Unico delle Leggi di P.S. per il periodo dell'attuale stato di guerra*), in *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, October 12, 1940, n. 240.
- 16 I am referring here to those who were considered "dangerous for public safety" by the article 181 of the *Testo Unico delle Leggi di Pubblica sicurezza* (R.D. of June 18, 1931, n. 773).
- 17 Circular n. 442/38954 by the Ministry of the Interior of June 1, 1940, to the Kingdom's Prefects and to Rome's Police Commissioner (in Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A5G—World War II, f. I, "Various orders—Memoranda").

- 18 Circular n. 442/12267 by the Ministry of the Interior of June 8, 1940, to the Kingdom's Prefects and to Rome's Police Commissioner (in Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A5G—World War II, f. I, "Various orders—Memoranda").
- 19 Internees who were officially recognized as "enemy subjects" (citizens of countries at war with Italy who were on the Peninsula or in its possessions) could be protected by the Red Cross, whose representatives carried out periodical visits of the camps, as was the case with prisoners of war. See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 104, f. 16 (Concentration Camps), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 14.
- 20 As Klaus Voigt has underscored, the fascist bureaucracy labeled with this term Jews who hailed from countries that were officially anti-Semitic (*Il rifugio precario. Gli esuli in Italia dal 1933 al 1945*, vol. 2, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1996—original title: *Zuflucht auf Widerruf*, Stuttgart 1993).
- 21 As of mid-May 1941, there were 3,812 foreign Jews in Italy, of whom 2,700 had been interned. See Acs, *Segreteria particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato (1922–1943)*, Cat. 169/R, f. 14 "Statistics for Jews residing in Italy."
- 22 See Liliana Picciotto in her "Preface" to C.S. Capogreco, *Ferramonti. La vita e gli uomini del più grande campo d'internamento fascista (1940–1945)*, Florence: La Giuntina, 1987: 10. Also, K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 10 passim.
- 23 Once they were transmitted to the Ministry of Interior, such information was held in the *Casellario politico centrale*, whose archive—inclusive of some 5,000 envelopes dated from 1894 to 1945—is currently stored in Rome within the Central State Archives.
- 24 See G. Tosatti, *Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, cit.: 37–38.
- 25 The Archives of the *Ufficio internati italiani* has merged, in the Archivio Centrale di Stato, in the file 32 ("Dangerous civilian internees") in the permanent Category "A5G—World War II"; and in some of the files 16 and 18 of the series "Massime" (general instructions of the Dggs), in Category M4 (Civilian mobilization).
- 26 The Archives of the *Ufficio internati stranieri* merged in the Category "A4-bis" of the Dggs, which refers to the personal dossiers of individuals interned as a result of wartime laws. It does not include only foreigners, but also Italians "suspected or ascertained to have engaged in espionage activities." On the events that led to the organization of various structures in the Ministry of Interior, see G. Tosatti, "Il ministero dell'Interno," in *L'amministrazione centrale dall'Unità alla Repubblica. Le strutture e i dirigenti*, G. Melis ed., Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992.
- 27 Members of the "Special Committee," which was provided for by the Articles 3 and 4 of the R.D.L. of June 21, 1940, n. 856, were: Antonio Sorrentino for the Council of State, Giovanni Pardo for the National Audit Office, and Enrico La Penna for the Ministry of Finances. Its secretary was the commissioner of public safety, Alfredo Tagliavia, responsible for planning and general coordination of the Second subdivision of Dagr within Dggs. See, specifically, the *Appunto* (Memo) of the Dagr from May 25, 1943, in Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Concentration Camps), b. 111, s.f. I (General Affairs).
- 28 *Decreto del Duce* (Mussolini's Decree), as government head, of September 4, 1940 (*Disposizioni relative al trattamento dei sudditi nemici*), in *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, LXXXI, October 11, 1940, n. 339.
- 29 See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 1–22; C.S. Capogreco, *Ferramonti*, cit.: 38–40; M. Minardi, *Tra chiuse mura. Deportazione e campi di concentramento nella provincia di Parma*, Comune di Montechiarugolo, 1987: 129.
- 30 See S. Carolini ed., "Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche," cit.: 388–389.
- 31 Maria Eisenstein (born Moldauer) has recalled in great detail her detention in Catania's jail (*L'internata n. 6*, cit.: 73–89). See also the witness testimony of

- Carlo Alberto Viterbo in C.S. Capogreco, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani nel 1940 e il campo di Urbisaglia-Abbadia di Fiastra," in *La Rassegna mensile di Israel*, n. 1 (2003). And also, C. Cassar, *The Bru Story*, Malta: Gozo Press, 1997: 12–13.
- 32 See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 19–20.
- 33 Arriving at the stations, those arrested did not typically know their destination. For fear of ending in German hands, a German refugee committed suicide in Fiume during his arrest, and an attempted suicide occurred in Rome's prison for women (see K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 13–22). Analogous situations—including an attempted suicide—also occurred among foreigners interned in Great Britain, see. F. Lafitte, *The Internment of Aliens*, London: Libris, 1988: 112–113.
- 34 Acs, Cat. Massime 14 (Istruzioni di polizia militare), b. 59, f. 60 (Measures to be adopted in case of war against foreigners), s.f. (General Affairs), undated note (but September 19, 1939) stamped "Seen by the Duce." On that same date, it was hypothesized that 1,379 foreign civilians should be expelled from Italy, and that another 253 be under special surveillance; the Italians under special surveillance would have been 360.
- 35 See G. Tosatti, *Gli internati civili nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, cit.: 46n48.
- 36 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 116, f. 16 (Concentration camps), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 49 "construction of new camps," *Appunto* by the General Directorate for Public Safety of April 12, 1943. By this date, of the 19,117 interned civilians, 10,666 were in camps, and 8,451 were in internment locations.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Acs, Mi., Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 116, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 49 "New camp construction."
- 39 Acs, Mi., Dgps, Dagr, A5G 89, b. 412, f. "Measures submitted to the Duce. Daily newscast 1941."
- 40 P. Carucci, "Il ministero dell'Interno: prefetti, questori, ispettori generali," in *Sulla crisi del regime fascista 1938–1943*, Venice: Istituto veneto per la storia della Resistenza-Marsilio Editore, 1996: 44.
- 41 See G. Tosatti, *Gli internati civili nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, cit.: 46.
- 42 With the term "Allogeno" ("allogeneic," "different from the others") were defined by the fascists, in a derogatory sense, the individuals belonging to Slovenian and Croatian ethnic minorities of Friuli and Venezia Giulia Italian Regions.
- 43 See Acs, Mi, Cat. A4bis (Internati stranieri), e Cat. A5G-II Guerra mondiale.
- 44 As well, during the occupation of Greece, Italian military authorities moved autonomously to the internment of civilians, but on a decidedly much reduced scale. See D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 426 passim.
- 45 See A. Marcheggiano, *Diritto umanitario e sua introduzione nella regolamentazione dell'esercito italiano*, Rome: Sme, 1991, vol II, t. I: 378–417.
- 46 M. Coslovich, *I percorsi della sopravvivenza. Storia e memoria della deportazione dall'Adriatisches Küstenland*, Milan: Mursia, 1994: 28. On the methods enacted by the occupiers, see D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 314 passim; T. Ferenc., "Si ammazza troppo poco." *Condannati a morte, ostaggi, passate per le armi nella Provincia di Lubiana. 1941–1943. Documenti*, Ljubljana: Društvo piscev zgodovine NOB-Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 1999; E. Colotti, "Sulla politica di repressione italiana nei Balcani," in *La memoria del nazismo nell'Europa di oggi*, L. Paggi ed. Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1997: 181–208; P. Moraca, "I crimini commessi da occupanti e collaborazionisti in Jugoslavia

- durante la Seconda guerra mondiale,” in *L'occupazione nazista in Europa*, E. Collotti ed., Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1964: 517–552.
- 47 The “Province” of Ljubljana (the southern portion of Slovenia) was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, in violation of international law, on May 3, 1941.
- 48 See U. Cavallero, *Comando Supremo. Diario 1940–43 del Capo di S.M.G.*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1948: 297–299; G. Fogar, “Venezia Giulia 1941–43. Il quadro politico militare,” in *Qualestoria*, XII, 1984, n. 3; M. Kacin Wohinz, “I programmi fascisti di snazionalizzazione di sloveni e croati nella Venezia Giulia,” in *Storia contemporanea in Friuli*, XVIII, 1988, n. 19: 9–33.
- 49 Roatta explained: “Internment can be extended, irrespective of its military benefits, to the evacuation of entire regions (for example: Slovenia) or parts of them (for example: in the areas near railroad systems). In such cases it means the complete transfer of significant amounts of the local populations within the Kingdom and their substitution with Italian populations *in loco*” (Ars, II, XI, Corpo d’Armata, b. 1082, s.f. VIII, da Comando Supersloda a Comando Supremo, *Internments*, September 8, 1942). Also in *Zločini italijanskega okupatorja v “Ljubljanski Pokrajini,”* I, *Internancije*, cit., doc. N. 38/a: 132–133.
- 50 See E. Apih, *Italia, fascismo e antifascismo nella Venezia Giulia (1918–1943)*, Bari: Laterza, 1966; T. Sala, “Programmi di snazionalizzazione del ‘fascismo di frontiera,’” in *Qualestoria*, II, 1974, n. 2: 24–29; G. Cobol, “Il fascismo e gli allogeni,” in *Gerarchia*, September 1927.
- 51 The Second Army, with headquarters in Sušak, near Fiume (Rijeka), included a General Staff, and the Command of the Air Force, the Corps of Engineers, and the *Carabinieri*, and the Administrative Command that (in particular, the “Intendance”) was charged also with the supervision of the camps.
- 52 *Circolare n. 3CL*, Parte Prima—Cap. XVI “Costituzione e funzionamento dei campi per internati civili,” in C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci. Un campo di concentramento in riva al Tevere*, Milan: Mursia, 2003: 151–155. The camp of Visco was not included in this memorandum because it was opened at a later date.
- 53 See C.S. Capogreco, “Aspetti e peculiarità del sistema concentrazionario fascista. Una ricognizione tra storia e memoria,” in AA.VV. *Lager, Totalitarismo, Modernità*, cit.: 227.
- 54 See D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 416–417.
- 55 Issued by the *Supersloda* on March 1, 1942 (and amended on April 7 and 19 of the same year) the *Circolare 3C* (“3C Circular”) was published in a pamphlet widely disseminated among the troops. An original is available at the Inštitut za Novejšo Zgodovino of Ljubljana. See also, M. Legnani, “Il ‘ginger’ del generale Roatta. Le direttive della 2^a armata sulla repressione antipartigiana in Slovenia e Croazia,” in *Italia contemporanea*, December 1997–March 1998, n. 209–210: 155–174.
- 56 The *Circolare 3C-L* is composed of two parts for a total 23 chapters. Pages 398–404 refer expressly to internment. An original printed copy is available at the Inštitut za Novejšo Zgodovino of Ljubljana.
- 57 Ars, II, Ninth Army Corps, b. 660 s.f., Divisional Command of “Granatieri di Sardegna,” “Progetto di epurazione della città e provincia di Lubiana dagli elementi sovversivi,” attached to the message by General Taddeo Orlando of June 3, 1942, directed to the Command of the Ninth Army Corps. Also in *Zločini italijanskega okupatorja v “Ljubljanski Pokrajini,”* I, *Internancije*, I, *Internancije*, Ljubljana 1946: 116, doc. n. 18.
- 58 B. Godeša, “Le autorità italiane di occupazione e gli intellettuali sloveni,” in *Qualestoria*, XXVII, 1999, n. I: 168–169.
- 59 M. Cuzzi, *L'occupazione italiana della Slovenia (1941–1943)*, Rome: Stato Maggiore dell’Esercito, 1998: 195.

- 60 A document addressed to the Ministry of the Interior from the High Commissariat of the Province of Ljubljana described as “protective” those Slovenians who had been interned insofar as “threatened to death by the partisans because confidants or in friendly relationship with the authorities or soldiers” (Ars, II, Alto Commissario, b. 14, s.f. 5, da Alto Commissariato a Mi, “Settlement in Province of Bergamo of Slovenians,” June 25, 1942).
- 61 From a careful reading of the documents, in fact, it emerges that even “protected” internees, often, were suspected, if not considered dangerous.
- 62 *Circolare n. 3C-L*, reproduced in part in C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci. Un campo di concentramento in riva al Tevere*, op. cit.: 154–155.
- 63 Not unfrequently, in the documents of the Second Army, the terms “internee” and “evacuees” are used as synonyms. See “Programma dei provvedimenti e delle operazioni da attuare in Slovenia” composed on May 25, 1942, by General Robotti (Ars, II, Eleventh Army Corps, b. 661, s.f. III).
- 64 The Inspectorate for War Services, created with the R.D.L. of May 5, 1941, n. 410, worked within the Ministry of the Interior taking care especially of civil mobilization and the removal and evacuation of civilian populations. The R.D.L. of December 16, 1942, transformed it into “General Directorate for War Services.” See Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. A5G 216, b. 431, f. *Disciplina servizi di guerra*.
- 65 See Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari Generali), ins. 33 “Slovenians—internment,” note of October 3, 1942, signed by A. Tagliavia.
- 66 Ibid., from the General Directorate for Public Safety to the Supreme Command—Third Division and, p. c., to the Inspectorate for War Services, *Internati in campi di concentramento militari*, note of October 8, 1942.
- 67 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 33 “Slovenians—internment,” from the Chief of Police to the Dgsg, communication of January 18, 1943, prot. 451/35445, with heading “Construction Arbe camp.”
- 68 General Roatta, on a number of occasions, had expressed the hope that questions about the Yugoslav internees could be handled “through a unitary lens by the central authorities,” leaving to the *Supersloda* only the “task of collecting, differentiating, and sorting out” (Ars, II, Eleventh Army Corps, b. 1082, s.f. VIII, from the *Supersloda* Command to the Supreme Command, “Internments,” September 8, 1942).
- 69 For the “Provincia di Lubiana,” the first mention of confinement goes back to July 25, 1941; into December, proposals for confinement numbered four hundred. See T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima. Confinamenti-rastramenti-internamenti nella Provincia di Lubiana 1941–1943. Documenti: 5*.
- 70 See the data profiles dedicated to the different camps in Chapter 5 Topography and the History of Camos (1940–1943).
- 71 On June 9, 1942, the High Commissar, Grazioli, informed the Ministry of the Interior that General Robotti expected to intern 30,000 people: Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Massime cat. M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 33 “Slovenian internment.” See also T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 25.
- 72 Even the camp for prisoners of war n. 83 located in Fiume (Rijeka) had an important role, though for the sorting out and transit of prisoners, in the internment of Yugoslav civilians. See T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 11, 480. With regard to the jurisdiction of the camps being discussed, see. Aussme, *Diari storici II guerra mondiale*, Smre, Racc. 1130, Ufficio Pdg, Dsm, bimestre gennaio-febbraio 1943, alleg. 131, from Ufficio P.d.G. to *Supersloda*, “Campi concentramento i.c.,” February 25, 1943.

- 73 The camps referenced were, at that time, those of Gonars, Chiesanuova, Monigo, Renicci, Colfiorito, and the “labor camp” of Pietrafitta.
- 74 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Agr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 43 “Campi di concentramento per internati civili gestiti dall’autorità militare,” private letter from the High Commissar for the Province of Ljubljana of January 18, 1943.
- 75 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Agr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s. f. I (General Affairs), ins. 43 “Campi di concentramento per internati civili gestiti dall’autorità militare,” from the Cabinet of the Ministry of the Interior to the High Commissioner for the “Provincia di Lubiana,” telegram of January 23, 1943.
- 76 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Agr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General Affairs), ins. 33 “Sloveni—Internamento,” from the Cabinet of the Ministry of the Interior to the General Directorate for Public Safety, April 30, 1943, subject: “Internamento dei civili sloveni.” According to the Duce’s instructions, the camps placed in the annexed territories remained under the supervision of the *Supersloda*, which also had the prerogative of letting go those internees who, though they found themselves in the camps controlled by civilian authorities, had been detained by the military ones.
- 77 On the issue of the “change in management, see T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 25; and C.S. Capogreco, “Per una storia dell’internamento civile nell’Italia fascista,” cit.: 571–574 (527–574).
- 78 Moreover, during those same months, the military authorities were working on the opening of two new camps (in Ceprano and Labico, in Latium) for internees arriving from Slovenia and Dalmatia. See Aussme, Smre, Uff. P.G., Dsm, Racc. 1130, bim. gennaio–febbraio 1943, subject: “campi di concentramento per p.d.g. e i.c.,” allegato n. 64 (da Stato Maggiore Regio Esercito ot Ministry of War, March 18, 1943, “approntamento campi per i.c.”).
- 79 See V. Ivetić, “Oslobadjanje političkih zatvorenika i interniraca iz italijanskih zatvora i logora u Jugoslaviji sredinom septembra 1943. godine,” in *Vojnoistorijski glasnik* 1987, n. 2–3: 93–111.
- 80 “Internment was carried out with different criteria, depending on the point of view of the various garrison commanders all the way to the minor units (platoons). Therefore, it was impossible to figure out, not even with relative approximation, the number of interned civilians and their names, where they were interned, and for what reason the measure was taken [...]” (Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I/43 from the High Commissioner for the “Provincia di Lubiana” to the Cabinet of the Ministry of Interior, confidential letter of January 18, 1943).
- 81 For example, in a memo of October 31, 1942, Tenent Luca Magugliani wrote: “The sweep of able bodied men, and their subsequent internment in different concentration camps, has been completed, during the current year, following very different criteria and without the indexing and compilation of the biographical data for all the Slovenians who fell under the decision to intern them in concentration camps ...” (Ars Ljubljana, II, XI Corpo d’Armata, b. 726, a/VIII, “Promemoria sugli internati politici,” October 31, 1942).
- 82 See Acicr, C Sc, B. G. 17/Italie, “Aide-Mémoire sur la question des internés ex-yougoslaves en Italie,” August 27, 1943. In 1946, the Yugoslav Board of Inquiry for the verification of the crimes committed by occupiers counted 149,488 internees taken by Italy (*Saopćenje o talijanskim zločinima protiv Jugoslavije i njenih naroda*, op. cit., n. 1–6: 102). This number in 1982 was reduced to 109,437 by the Yugoslav historian V. Terzić, *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941* (Beograd-Titograd-Ljubljana 1982, vol. I: 608).
- 83 A reliable source is represented by the monthly military reports drawn up by the Office of Second Army’s Command, which also give the relative abilities of

- different camps to accommodate prisoners (unfortunately, only for a few periods of time). The Red Cross's reports also provide important data.
- 84 *Saopćenje o talijanskim zločima protiv Jugoslavije i njenih naroda*, cit., n. 1–6: 92.
- 85 Aussme, *Diari storici II Guerra Mondiale*, Smre, Racc. 1130, Ufficio PdG, Dsm, bimestre gennaio-febbraio 1943, alleg. N. 58, Risposta del generale Roatta al Comando Supremo (III Reparto—Ufficio Affari Generali), “Situazione in Slovenia—campi di concentramento, December 16, 1942, cited in C.S. Capogreco, “Per una storia dell'internamento civile nell'Italia fascista,” cit.: 556n96. However, one needs to keep in mind that, here, the terms “Slovenian internees” included also the Croats hailing from the areas of Gorski Kotar and Kočevje, included in the provinces of Rieka and Ljubljana.
- 86 See T. Ferenc, “Primorska in italijanska koncentracijska taborišča,” in *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, XL, 200, n. 1: 197–220 (esp. 208–219); F. Filipič, *Slovinci v Mauthausnu*, Ljubljana: Cankarjeva Založba, 1998: 31–37.
- 87 For a very short time a “concentration place” was also active in Aidussina (Ajdovščina), which was at the time in the province of Gorizia, where the population of the village of Ustje was sent, following the village's destruction at the hands of the military.
- 88 See M. Eisenstein, *L'internata numero 6*, cit.: 90.
- 89 See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Ufficio rapporti con la Germania, R/G, f. 1940: 33.
- 90 See R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, Turin: Einaudi, 1988: 358–359, 553–354; G. Antoniani Persichilli, “Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell'internamento in Italia (giugno 1940–luglio 1943),” cit.: 85.
- 91 See D. Cesarani, *Camps de la mort, camps de concentration et camps d'internement dans la mémoire collective britannique*, cit.: 18. The collection places for those civilians who had been picked up were at that time called by the British government “provisional” or “transit” centers.
- 92 Circular sent by Mussolini to Badoglio on July 4, 1930, cited in G. Ottolenghi, *Gli italiani e il colonialismo. I campi di detenzione italiani in Africa*, Milan: SugarCo, 1997: 98n2. During a press conference he held in Benghazi on June 9, 1931, General Rodolfo Graziani, in reference to the concentrationary structures created by the Italian government, told the journalists, “I wish to clarify that these are not real concentration camps as someone might think [...]” See G. Rochat, *La repressione della resistenza in Cirenaica (1922–1931)*, cit.: 169–170.
- 93 Still in 1947, the camp of Lipari (which had become the temporary center of collection for all foreign refugees) was termed “concentration camp” by the government of the Italian Republic. This led to the odd request aimed at the Red Cross by the guests of that camp: “Please change the terminology of the camp, currently named ‘Campo di concentramento’ to ‘Campo raccolta profughi,’ for ethical reasons, seeing as we are truly refugees, who worry that the term ‘Campo di concentramento’ placed on each of their documents might damage them, since the name ‘camp de concentration’ could lead to a mistaken understanding and induce some to think that it applies to criminals or common prisoners,” Acicr, C. Sc. B. G. 17/Italie, Camp de Lipari (Internés étrangers en mains italiennes), Visité du 1er au 3ème mars 1947.
- 94 The term *Schutzhaft* (preventive or security custody) referenced the Prussian law pertaining to a state of siege of July 4, 1851. It was equivalent to police arrest for indeterminate amounts of time, outside judiciary controls. In Nazi Germany, German and Polish nationals who were interned were called *Schutzhäftlinge* (that is, “internees for public safety reasons”), not civilian internees of war. See A. Poniatowska—S. Liman—I. Krężałek, *Związek Polaków w Niemczech w latach 1922–1982*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo 1987.

- 95 An analogous situation about the camps' "double function" has been recognized by Kamiński in American camps for Japanese internees; French camps for German exiles, and the Spanish Republican camps (*I campi di concentramento dal 1896 ad oggi*, cit.: 277).
- 96 In 1935, a few weeks before the beginning of the Italian–Ethiopian conflict, a large concentration camp was opened by Italy in Danane, Somalia. It was supposed to hold enemy soldiers but during the war in Ethiopia, which was aimed at annihilation, very few enemies were imprisoned there. The camp, instead, filled with civilians, especially at war's end: the noteworthy, the officials, Copt ministers, fortune-tellers, bards, and more. What was left of the Ethiopian imperial army and rebel units was also housed there. From October 1935 to March 1941, between 6,500 Ethiopian and Somalian internees took turns living in Danane: a little less than half the prisoners died due to undernourishment and the disastrous hygienic conditions. See A. Del Boca, *L'Africa nella coscienza degli italiani*, cit.: 41–57.
- 97 See C.S. Capogreco, "Aspetti e peculiarità del sistema concentrazionario fascista. Una ricognizione tra storia e memoria," in *Lager, Totalitarismo, Modernità*, cit.: 219; G. Rochat, *La repressione della resistenza in Cirenaica*, cit.: 155 *passim*.
- 98 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 99, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento, s.f. I/I, undated and unsigned document, likely from the early months of 1940). Also in S. Carolini ed., "*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche.*" *Gli internati dal 1940 al 1943*, cit.: 349–350.
- 99 See G. Tassinari, *Autarchia e bonifica*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1940; R. Mariani, *Fascismo e "città nuove"*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976. P. Bevilacqua, "Le bonifiche," in *I luoghi della memoria. Simboli e miti dell'Italia unita*, M. Isnenghi ed., Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1996: 405–416.
- 100 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 112, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 65, "Osservazioni e norme per la costruzione di un campo di concentramento per internati non militari." Report prepared by Eugenio Parrini on February 24, 1942.
- 101 This took place, specifically, in the camps of Bagno a Ripoli, Montalbano, Urbisaglia, Fabriano, Manfredonia, and Ferramonti.

3 The internees

1. Foreign internees

At the end of August 1939, in preparation for the imminent start of World War II, the Ministry of the Interior invited prefects to count the citizens of potentially enemy States residing in Italy.¹ Four lists were thus created: the first included those who might best be expelled from the Kingdom; the second, those who should be interned in concentration camps; the third, those listed for *internamento libero*; and the fourth, those who should come under special surveillance. According to the survey, 1,367 foreign civilians were listed for expulsion, and 3,631 for internment. Of these, 1,462 should be interned in camps, and 2,169 in other locations (*internamento libero*). Finally, 253 foreigners were singled out for special surveillance.

At break of war, the Ministry of the Interior demanded further information about foreign civilians that should be expelled or interned “because capable of activities damaging to Italian interests, or because they could bear arms.” Now, however, the Ministry wanted a census not only of those belonging to “alleged” enemy States, but also of all foreigners of other nationalities “who should be removed from the Kingdom.”²

The preparations aimed at the practical implementation of internment intensified and were perfected following the German military attack on France. On May 20, 1940, specifically, the Italian prefectures were asked to update the lists of potential enemy subjects, and for the first time they were asked to also include in the lists “foreign Jews.”³ Therefore, on June 1, with the previously mentioned memo that summarized the norms enacted in the previous years by the Ministry of War and of the Interior, the government’s decision with regards to the detention of people of interest were relayed to the country’s peripheries.

Mussolini’s decree of September 4, 1940, established the modalities for how foreign internees should be treated by the Italian government. In it, as we saw earlier, Italy officially defined civilian internment in observance of the rights of the individual, suggesting that enemy internees would be treated with tolerance, protected from threats of violence, and submitted to the inspections of the Red Cross.⁴ Yet, this “protection of civil liberties” was not fully provided

to civilians who had been interned for reasons of “public safety,” and to all the many others who were labeled “enemy subjects.”⁵

“Enemy subjects” and other foreign civilians

The task of handling the internment of “enemy subjects” and other foreign civilians fell on the Counter-espionage centers; and, foremost, on the SIM, which was also responsible for the internment of Italian civilians “suspected or ascertained to have engaged in espionage activities.”⁶ But in June 1940, against the harsher directives endorsed by the SIM, the Ministry of the Interior chose to intern only “the most dangerous ones.” This measured choice was dictated by the need to limit the number of internees, due to the shortage of functional concentration camps and the insufficient number of spots available for *internamento libero*; and by the desire to show foreign governments that Italy did not intend to use internment pell-mell, but only in circumstances of “ascertained danger.” This desire was clearly at the root of the Chief of Police’s orders that were transmitted to the Prefects on June 10, 1940, wherein he confided,

that all orders imparted to the police agencies related to the state of war will be applied judiciously, proceeding with careful and vigilant rigor, hitting appropriately and without excesses to avoid any international repercussions and retaliation against our countrymen residing abroad.⁷

The same circular, in discussing the internment of “enemy subjects,” stated specifically that “only the dangerous ones” had to be detained, while waiting for further instructions about the others. Instead, in cooperation with the Centers for counterespionage, the prefects should grant leave from the kingdom to foreigners from neutral or non-belligerent countries, even if they had been singled out for internment.

Italy’s definition of “enemy subjects” included those who had double, foreign citizenship, if one citizenship was from an enemy country, as well as stateless people who still had, or once had, enemy citizenship. However, those who had double citizenship between Italy and an enemy State were not included among enemy subjects.⁸ This caused some paradoxical situations, such as the one concerning two children of Italian emigrants, French by residence who, interned in 1940 as “enemy subjects,” spent 15 months in a concentration camp before being granted a reprieve by the Ministry of the Interior.⁹ Conversely, in line with fascist politics, which considered Malta a “non-liberated land” belonging to Italy, Maltese people who resided in the Kingdom were treated as “Italian non-residents” rather than “British subjects.”¹⁰

In October 1940, four months after Italy’s entrance in war, Italy had interned only 4,251 of the more than 10,000 foreigners living in the Kingdom who could be interned. Of these, 2,396 had been sent to the camps, with 1,855 sent to special “locations.”¹¹ The “measured” course of action initially

outlined by the Chief of Police toward foreign subjects prevailed even during subsequent months, so much so that, by March 1941, the camps interned only 161 of a possible 4,490 Englishmen, 99 of 4,732 Frenchmen, and 78 of 1,612 Greeks. On that same date, *internamento libero* counted 414 Englishmen, 316 Frenchmen, and 136 Greeks.¹² This situation remained practically unchanged through the years, as did the difference in opinions between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of War, which, through the *SIM*, continued to push for a “radical and complete” internment of foreigners present on the Italian territory. A memo to Mussolini, prepared in April 1941, reads:

[...] from early in the conflict, we have examined case by case the relative position of foreign subjects residing in Italy, some of whom, based on the danger they pose, have been interned in small centers or restricted in concentration camps. Recently the Ministry of War (*SIM*) had asked that all Englishmen be sent indiscriminately to concentration camps. However, the United States embassy, which safeguards English interests in Italy, having heard about this, inquired with our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and pointed out that in England and in other lands of Empire only a small number of Italians have been interned. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has therefore pointed out the consequences that a similar measure by the English government would have for our countrymen, and the Ministry of War (*SIM*) has tabled its request [...]¹³

Indeed, by mid-July 1941, there were only 759 British subjects interned in Italy and Libya out of a total of 2,655 residents. Of those interned, 179 were in camps, while 580 were subjected to *internamento libero*.¹⁴ In Italy, British internees were held in the camps of Montechiarugolo, Civitella della Chiana, Civitella del Tronto, Tremiti, Treia, Pollenza e Solofra, while the Greeks were interned preferably in the camps of Bagno a Ripoli, Montechiarugolo, Civitella della Chiana, Treia, and Pollenza.¹⁵

In 1942, the government decided to reconsider the standing of every foreign enemy subject still in the Kingdom on a case-by-case basis: there were 4,513 English, 4,731 French, and 1,619 Greek citizens. Once again, the Ministry of War recommended drastic internment measures, but only those considered dangerous or suspicious continued to be interned, while measures of surveillance were intensified for the others.¹⁶

In Libya, “unavoidable necessities” related to the suppression of espionage and to the difficulties of resupplying food resources led Ettore Bastico, the governor, to outlaw almost all the 7,000 “foreign subjects” residing in the colonized territory by September 1941.¹⁷ To be fair, most of them had already been interned in the camp of Tajura, near Tripoli, then in the one of Buerat el Hsun, in Syrtis.¹⁸ Following that measure, in the early months of 1942, 263 Libyan Jews with British citizenship, 225 members of the local Greek-Orthodox community, 1,900 Maltese, and a number of other foreigners were deported to Italy.¹⁹ From Greece, in May 1942, 331 British

subjects were transferred to Italy, a contingent that included “all male internees aged between 15–55, mostly of Maltese or Cypriot origin.”²⁰ On more than one occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advised the Ministry of the Interior, for the sake of convenience, to avoid interning Maltese citizens in concentration camps. Not surprisingly, those transferred from Libya, except the few who showed demonstrable danger, were initially sent, like normal Italian evacuees, to “reception centers” readied by the Inspectorate for War Services. Thereafter, the Ministry of the Interior invited the affected prefectures to ascertain if and how many among the Maltese who had arrived in Italy, truly harbored “Italophile feelings.”²¹

Initially, foreign subjects interned in Italy were distributed throughout many camps: Montechiarugolo, Salsomaggiore, Bagno a Ripoli, Civitella del Tronto, Pollenza, Treia, Petriolo, Lanciano, Solofra, Civitella della Chiana, Chieti, Agnone, Isernia, Corropoli, Alberobello, and more. After a while, however, the camps used for this purpose decreased noticeably. Those that continued to accommodate this category of internees were located in areas that made it easier for the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss delegation, which were located in the capital, to reach them.²² Interestingly, the exclusion of the southernmost camps reflects the decision Italy made at the beginning of the war to bar foreigners from the South of Italy. The choice, as is confirmed by a document sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in May 1942, was aimed at preventing representatives of the Red Cross who had visiting rights with foreign subjects to meet with other categories of internees:

The Supreme Command has pointed out that it is absolutely necessary, for reasons of public safety, to forbid foreigners from traveling to Southern Italy. For this reason, we confirm that the International Red Cross should only be given the list of concentration camps where foreign subjects of enemy countries are interned, thus excluding those in southern Italy reserved for our fellow countrymen and for those who hail from occupied territories, to avoid that representatives of the CICR ask to visit these camps as well.²³

Foreign and stateless Jews

The anti-Jewish laws, enacted in Italy in the years 1938–1939, did not include references to potential internment procedures. Such measures toward Italian or foreign Jews were not mentioned in the circular of August 31, 1939, which informed prefects on the measures to take against foreign civilians, nor in the September 5, 1939, one, which pertained to those belonging to “presumed enemy” countries.²⁴ Clearly, in fascist Italy, the Jewish “danger” was still simply one of general order, but not sufficient yet to cause internment.

After war began in Europe, however, the regime invited the prefectures and law enforcement agencies to pay special attention to Jews, as evinced in a circular by the Chief of Police, dated September 25, 1939:

We have been informed that Jewish elements are spreading false and biased news throughout the Kingdom about the current political situation to cause uncertainty among the people. Stop. We recommend that the authorities in charge of public safety in the individual provinces give employees precise and explicit orders to carefully surveil the Jews. And, where concrete responsibilities are established about the matter, rigorous measures be implemented against them. Stop. Please inform the Ministry about possible emergencies.²⁵

Yet, we must remember that Italy continued to allow the entry and sojourn of foreign Jews for a long time, even after the rise to power of Nazism and the subsequent exodus from Germany of thousands of German Jews, on the condition that they had not actively been members of anti-fascist political parties. After all, Mussolini had often flaunted such behavior, as evidence of “Rome’s universality,” and of his own “cultural superiority” over Hitler.²⁶

The living conditions of Jewish refugees and émigrés arriving in Italy were adequate up to the promulgation of the racial laws. That is when the legislative decree of September 7, 1938 (*Provvedimenti nei confronti degli ebrei stranieri*—Measures toward foreign Jews) and the one dated November 17, 1938, n. 1728 (*Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza italiana*—Measures for the defense of the Italian race) established that Jews entering the Kingdom after January 1, 1919 must leave the country within six months or be subject to expulsion; and that Italian citizenships awarded to Jews after that date be revoked.²⁷ At the end of the period established by the law (March 12, 1939), however, not all those affected had been able to leave the Peninsula, since very few countries were willing to welcome them; while others, surprisingly, continued to enter the country. The threatened mass expulsion, however, did not happen, even though the corresponding decree, whose ultimatum was extended numerous times, remained in effect.²⁸

The first signs that foreign Jews were included among civilians facing internment surfaces, as already mentioned, in the circular issued on May 20, 1940 by the Ministry of the Interior. A few days later, the same ministry specified that Jews hailing from allied States could constitute a risk for Italy’s military and internal security and, therefore, one might envision them also being interned.²⁹ Obviously, this concern was directed toward Jews who had escaped Nazi persecutions. Confirmation of this idea is the additional statement by the Ministry of the Interior that foreign Jews residing in Italy, and “especially those who came here under false pretenses, deceit or illicit means, should be considered to belong to enemy States, criterion that, it seems, Germany follows.”³⁰

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established its stance in a memo of June 15, 1940, where in principle it agreed with the need to intern “German Jews or those of countries that had fallen under German control.” However, it suggested departure from the Kingdom for stateless Jews and those belonging

to neutral States.³¹ On the same day, the Chief of Police issued warrants of arrest for Jews “belonging to States with racial policies,” and for those stateless people between 18 and 60, who could be perceived as being “undesirable elements filled with hatred against totalitarian regimes”:

As soon as the space becomes available in our jails, which will happen when we effect the transfer to concentration camps of those individuals who have already been arrested, we will proceed to a sweep of all foreign Jews belonging to States enacting racial policies. These undesirable elements who are filled with hatred against totalitarian regimes and are capable of actions harmful to the defense of the State and public order, must be immediately removed from public life. Thus, we must arrest foreign German Jews, former Czechoslovakians, and stateless Poles aged between eighteen and sixty. For each, you must send a list to the Ministry that includes their vital statistics so they can be reassigned to concentration camps. As they await the concentration camps readied for this specific purpose, their families will have to be sent, via mandatory deportation orders, to the provincial capitals selected once I receive the respective lists. Hungarian and Romanian Jews will have to be expelled from the Italian Kingdom ...³²

On the heels of these orders (which, ostensibly, tied internment measures to anti-Jewish laws), German, Polish, formerly Czechoslovakian or Austrian Jews, and all other stateless Jews present in Italy were arrested.³³ Adult males were sent to the camps, while women and children were assigned to *internamento libero*.³⁴

In the meeting of the Executive of the Italian Union of Israelite Communities, held in Rome on May 30, 1940, the President, Dante Almansi, informed the participants that:

The state of war has led the government to enact measures against foreign Jewish refugees. These will be brought together in one location in Italy's south, more precisely in Tarsia (in the Cosenza province), where they will have to remain until the end of the war to be transferred from there to countries willing to receive them.³⁵

Almansi also reports that the measure would be enacted in two phases: an initial internment of men and women in different locations in the Kingdom; and their subsequent reunion in the Ferramonti camp, near Tarsia, where the families would be allowed to “reconvene” in special barracks.³⁶ This statement confirms the peculiar role that the Italian government wished to confer, at least initially, to the Ferramonti camp and to the internment of foreign Jews, seen not so much as an “open ended” measure related to the war's duration, but rather as a temporary measure enacted by the police as it awaited to identify “countries willing to receive them.”

By differentiating between “foreign subjects” and “foreign Jews who hail from States that enact racial policies,” the Ministry of the Interior somehow created a further category of foreign internees, as it clarified that the internment of those who belonged to the latter category (foreign Jews) did not depend upon the state of war, but would have taken place even without it.³⁷

Upon Italy’s entry in war, between departures and arrivals, the balance of foreign Jews present in the Peninsula settled around 3,800 individuals. To these, subsequently, would be added another 2,200 hailing from areas under Italian control (Slovenia, Dalmatia, Albania, the Dodecanese, Libya), who were granted special entry into Italy.³⁸ Truth be told, the internment of foreign and stateless Jews was not limited only to the Ferramonti camp, as the government had initially hypothesized, because they ended up being housed in other structures,³⁹ and in hundreds of locations that had been reserved for *internamento libero*.

At the end of the war, when faced with the dreadful numerical evidence from the *Shoah*, Italy’s internment appeared as the much lesser evil that European Jewry faced between 1933 and 1945. The simple geographical fact that the majority of Italian camps were in the South of the Peninsula (which fell under Allied control after September 8, 1943), ensured, in most basic terms, the safety of thousands of Jews who thus avoided Nazi persecution. This is also why most witness and autobiographical accounts of foreign Jews who experienced fascist internment typically speak in positive terms about it. Having said this, one must not forget that Mussolini’s regime enacted racial persecution starting in 1938; and that, between 1943 and 1945, the fascist Republic of Salò (RSI) had an active role in the deportation of Jews to the Lager of the Third Reich.⁴⁰

Gypsies

The generic term *zingari* or *zigani* (Gypsies) applies generally to a vast number of nomadic people belonging to different ethnic groups, mostly Sinti and Roma, some of whom had lived in Italy for centuries.⁴¹ During the *Ventennio*, when it was thought that these nomadic groups accounted for about 25,000 people in the peninsula,⁴² the prefectures were often invited by the central authorities to provide information about their movement.

Foreign Gypsies, who had entered the country clandestinely, were the first to find themselves in the crossfire of the fascist police, for reasons of “public hygiene and crime prevention.” In the circular on “public safety and hygiene,” sent to prefects on February 19, 1926, the Ministry of the Interior denounced the infiltration into Italy of:

Gypsies who are bent on vagabondage and begging, an issue that is caused by the obvious negligence of the Offices of Public Safety. Instead, these Offices should be forced to ensure the observance of current rules,

impeding the entry on Italian soil of Gypsies, charlatans or the like, in caravans or alone, even if they hold regular passports. Foreign Gypsies, who have managed to infiltrate the country, should be sent back to the border, in the shortest possible time.⁴³

On August 8, 1926, a new circular reiterated the intention of the government:

Cleanse the national territory of Gypsy caravans, whose danger to public safety and hygiene due to their traditional lifestyle it is superfluous to mention [...]; and we must hit squarely at the Gypsy organism by turning back the caravans that show up with the typical inventory of animals, wagons and furnishings [...].

The Ministry, moreover, reminded prefects that transit on national territory is only allowed for the caravans that have passports with visas already approved by the consulates of the States they have crossed and one for the destination country.⁴⁴

During the first half of 1938, especially in the Northeastern provinces of the peninsula, the government enacted numerous stings on nomadic populations (most likely foreigners and of dubious citizenship).⁴⁵ Typically, the arrests were followed by pushbacks over the border or deportations to Sardinia, Abruzzo, Calabria, or other areas in the south of Italy. But Gypsies were not segregated in concentration camps or in analogous structures. In Sardinia, for example, they were allowed “to disperse in the island’s interior and take care of themselves.”⁴⁶ The existence of an actual camp has not even been confirmed for the small town of Perdasdefogu, though some witnesses claim the contrary. The same is true for Poggio Mirteto, in the Rieti province, where authorities collected the majority of the Roma they gathered in Abruzzo and northern Lazio.⁴⁷ In all likelihood, the nomads were assigned specific areas where to camp; and the “camps” referenced by some witnesses were nothing more than the normal nomadic camps, which the Gypsies themselves, from time to time, set up to obey the orders of the authorities.⁴⁸

The arrests and sweeps of nomads greatly increased in 1941, following the Nazi-fascist occupation of Yugoslavia. Many of their caravans, coming from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, moved into Italy to escape the persecution of the Ustaša regime, which systematically exterminated them.⁴⁹

The more or less significant presence of Gypsy internees has been ascertained in the camps set up by the Ministry of the Interior in Boiano, Agnone, Tossicia, Ferramonti, Tremiti, Vinchiaturro, and other locations dedicated to *internamento libero*.⁵⁰ The Boiano camp, starting in September 1940, interned in separate sectors even Chinese and other foreign civilians. Then, for a short period, the Gypsies alone remained until, in summer of 1941, the camp was finally closed and turned into a factory. The 58 Gypsies who were still there were transferred to Agnone,⁵¹ a camp that had been cleared of other internees to make room for entire nomadic families hailing mostly from Yugoslavia.

Despite the cold and lack of food, they did not judge their conditions in the new camp negatively.⁵² Conversely, the Gypsies who arrived in Tossicia in June 1942, and were interned in the temporary building owned by the Mirti family, lived in very challenging circumstances.⁵³ A report about that camp, compiled by the office of the *Carabinieri* of Teramo on August 6, 1942, provides an emblematic view:

On July 22, 1942, a contingent of 28 Gypsies arrived at the concentration camp of Tossicia from Ljubljana, bringing the camps' total to 112 people. The daily check of 5.50 Italian lire for head of family and 1.00 Italian lira for all other members of a family does not even cover the standard cost of goods. The shopkeepers, unhappy with what they have been provided on credit for a number of days, give buyers only what the latter can buy with the money at hand.

Some time ago, to slightly alleviate the very difficult existence of the internees, the *podestà* (Camp director) gave permits to the women who are heads of family to go in the countryside and look for vegetables and milk. This solution has promoted begging throughout the countryside as a way to collect these foodstuffs.

On July 30th, 1942, the Commander of the post of *Carabinieri* of Montorio a Vomano, stopped and led back to the concentration camp of Tossicia the following individuals who, even though they had a permit given to them by the *Podestà*, had pushed themselves all the way to Montorio a Vomano.

- 1 Hudorovic Francesco, son of Giorgio, born in Ljubljana, aged 28;
- 2 Hudorovic Zara, daughter of Paolo, born in Presza of Ljubljana, aged 36;
- 3 Hudorovic Ida, daughter of Franz, born in Ljubljana, aged 10;
- 4 Hudorovic Albina, daughter of Giovanni, born in Ljubljana, age 10.

After this incident, the Director of the camp has abolished all permits to avoid a repeat of these issues, especially those related to begging.

Therefore, it is necessary for the authorities to adopt measures that allow internees to acquire foodstuffs necessary for survival; moreover, we acknowledge the need to move them to another well-fenced concentration camp, because the current one does not guarantee security even though its entrance is locked.

The surveillance provided by the two soldiers in charge of the camp is thorough and continuous, but useless due to the large number of internees and to the opportunities that the internees have to leave the camp unsupervised.

We communicate, moreover, that the suspension of the previously discussed permits has increased the internal discontent, with the aggravating factor that children, who constitute the majority of the internees, are starving and the parents cannot decrease their suffering since they lack the means to do so. We do not exclude that this situation might lead to a

mass evasion that is impossible to contain due to the lack of soldiers who can serve guard duty.

Another serious inconvenience in the camp is represented by the lack of hygiene, which might lead to the development of infectious diseases. Since the current number of internees exceeds the camp's capacity, and given how dirty they are, they promote the growth of lice and other insects.

To avoid the easy spread of infectious diseases among the local populations, we recommend that the concentration camp be moved to the open countryside, away from the inhabited areas.⁵⁴

After the September 8, 1943, many interned Gypsies, who had been released or escaped from the Italian camps, joined the partisan bands in the fight against the Nazi-fascists.⁵⁵

2. Italian internees

As the nation prepared for war, the General Directorate for Public Safety prepared the lists of subjects to intern (see Chapter 2), pulling the names from the lists of "dangerous" individuals that the prefectures had been updating since 1929. The reasons the authorities used to determine the internment of Italian citizens on their own were sufficient to determine their confinement. However, during the war, the regime often chose internment over confinement, since it was not subordinated to decisions made by a special commission, and did not have time limitations. Moreover, because the absolutely gratuitous and generic typology of the five "risk groups" established by the ministry could automatically trigger internment, it, more than confinement, fulfilled every repressive need of the regime. For example, it was used to punish "suspected perpetrators" of generic crimes such as black market dealings, theft, prostitution, ration infractions, and more. That said, the majority of people labeled dangerous, and thus interned, were those for political reasons. Internment (and confinement) for political reasons affected almost all sectors of Italian society, though the consistent presence of peasants and priests stands out particularly. One reason being that in Venezia Giulia, the region with the greatest number of internees, internment frequently affected entire peasant families and numerous religious people.⁵⁶

Within the General Directorate for Public Safety of the Ministry of the Interior, the *Ufficio internati italiani* (Office for Italian internees) was charged with the internment of fellow countrymen. It did this by labeling individual files with different initials (A/C, A/I, E/C, E/I) according to whether the internees were Arian, Jewish, or destined to be sent to concentration camps or *internamento libero*.⁵⁷ The aforementioned study published by the ANPPIA ("*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*") divided Italian internees, with the exclusion of the "non-political" ones, in six categories. The first three were categorized according to the "crime" of anti-fascism: *registered anti-fascists*; *anti-fascists detained as internees* once they were sentenced; and *purported*

anti-fascists. The last three included *Jews*; *Gypsies*; and *workers repatriated from Germany* as punishment.⁵⁸ This study also addressed the “super-category” of *Allogeni*, for whom fascist internment often became a calvary.

On the basis of their official subdivision, on November 1942, out of a total 4,148 Italian internees, 2,165 were classified by the Ministry of the Interior as “rebels” from Venezia Giulia; 910 as political opponents or “mentally unstable”; 794 as petty criminals; 233 as Jews; and 46 as Gypsies.⁵⁹

Opponents

As already mentioned, for the Ministry of the Interior the broad group of opponents of the regime, from the generally rebellious ones to hard-core militant anti-fascists, belonged to the even broader and heterogeneous category of “dangerous Italians.” Included among them, in the subdivision proposed by the ANPPIA, were three groups of internees: *registered* anti-fascists; anti-fascists *detained as internees* after having completed an earlier sentence in jail or in confinement; and *purported* anti-fascists.

Registered anti-fascists were the opponents of the regime whose names had long been included by the prefectures in the lists of the people to arrest under specific circumstances, such as times of intense social unrest and, obviously, times of war. Their internment, therefore, was not motivated by contingencies, but by “political precedents” related to their previous biographical records. These were often anti-fascists who had already been condemned by the Special Tribunals; former enemies previously sent to confinement or booked by the police; political unionists who belonged to parties disbanded by the regime; and many more. Since their arrest had been planned in advance by the prefectures, they were among the first to be interned, generally in early July 1940.⁶⁰

The second group of opponents of the regime (those “detained as internees”) was constituted by those who belonged to the *elite* of Italian anti-fascism: it included many who, at the start of the war, were already imprisoned or in confinement. Once their sentence had been carried out, they were typically subjected to an “automatic” order of internment that, theoretically, would keep them “out of the game” until the end of the war.⁶¹

One of the most famous among them, Altiero Spinelli, wrote that such arbitrary mechanisms allowed the regime to transform the detained in jail individuals who should have been released as internees, so every anti-fascist could be held indefinitely as a prisoner.⁶²

Alfredo Bonelli, an anti-fascist who had been in confinement since 1936, thus remembers the experience while segregated in Ventotene:

Many of us went automatically from being confined to being interned, remaining in the penal colony without any change to our practical living conditions, even though our juridical conditions had changed. I was one of them. As December 4, 1941 approached, I was called into the office to

be told that, starting on December 5th, I would remain as an internee until the end of the war. Nothing changed [...].⁶³

The most glaring case, however, was probably that of Mario Magri, martyr of the Fosse Ardeatine, who remained in confinement from 1926 until 1940, when he was finally declared an “internee,” a change of status that, as Magri wrote,

however, did not influence my situation at all. I continued to live the same life as before, with the same obligations and the same schedule. The only thing that changed was the farce of the renewals of my confinement. I was interned for the war’s duration; and, as long as it lasted, my destiny was scripted [...].⁶⁴

Many anti-fascists never even learned about their new status as internees, because no officials felt the need to inform them.

In the ANPPA’s classification, the third group of opponents of the regime (the “purported anti-fascists”) included people who were interned for isolated or unorganized expressions of dissent, such as: having insulted “the Head of the Government” or having “criticized the regime”; having sung “mutinous songs” or listened to “forbidden radio shows”; or having “defaced walls with forbidden words” or a number of other forbidden actions. These were all crimes committed by those who had willfully decided to voice their opposition to the regime, or had been caught red-handed during rare protests. Under these circumstances, it was unclear which behaviors could be punished with internment, so that, at times, even fascist sympathizers could fall victim to this punishment.⁶⁵

As a result, one typical problem for anti-fascist internees, as well as for confinees, was the cohabitation with shady characters, spies, and provocateurs. For example, Giovanni Grilli, who had been sentenced by the Special Tribunal in 1927, recalled how, in the camp of Istonio, for some unspecified reason,

there were also fascists, though not in an official capacity. Carlo Silvestri was an overzealous servant of the regime and a former Milanese journalist who had garnered a certain fame in the past, and in the future would do anything to show off. Silvestri would prod anyone who was willing to ask the Duce for a pardon. When the poor soul took the bait, he would redact the pardon request or would suggest the wording, convincing the poor guy to say all sort[s] of humiliating and shameful things: how he lowered himself in front of Mussolini’s wisdom; how he asked forgiveness for his errors and for his mistaken ideas which he now repudiated, etc. Naturally Silvestri was in cahoots with the camp director who, to help him in this role, even gave him an office.

But fascists did not restrict themselves to write pardons: they also blatantly promoted the regime and the Axis forces. With Silvestri there were others (among them a certain Dr. Bonfantini, who would later become a member of parliament in Saragat's political sphere) who would get together in the evenings when the newspapers arrived: the former journalist would pick up the *Popolo d'Italia* and, with solemn voice, so that even those who didn't want to listen could hear, he would read all that was readable: the war bulletin; the speeches on this or that; and the essays by Mario Appelius, which celebrated the "coventrization" of this or that English city [...]. In such an environment, it wasn't easy to organize "schools" as we had done in prison. For one, we switched camps with a certain rapidity, and many comrades came and went; additionally, the central administration checked on us rigorously with *carabinieri* and policemen, as well as with informers and provocateurs who lived among us.⁶⁶

Many who did not have political or criminal records were particularly shocked by having to abandon "without reason" their homes, families, and workplaces because of an internment decision. This is what Achille Spallino experienced when, as a 60-year-old without a criminal record, he was interned in the camp of Manfredonia as a "dangerous Italian citizen."⁶⁷ Conversely, long-standing anti-fascists, used to the dictatorship's constant vexation, did not show any surprise when faced with this new type of deportation during the war period. For the many who had experienced confinement on the islands, the camp environment had a certain familiarity, as we can see in Giuseppe Scalarini's description of the Istonio camp: "Near the cots, there were bags, boxes, rough shelving, clothes hanging from the walls, drying underwear [...] just as was the case in the dorms in Lampedusa and Ustica."⁶⁸ The Barracks of the concentration camps were, in fact, the same as those established in the confinement colonies via the 1938 special instructions document. For every internee, it typically included: a bed frame with a metal or canvas netting; a mattress with a pillow; two sheets, a blanket, two towels, a chair, a hanger, a metal bucket, a wooden bed stand, a bottle, and finally a glass.⁶⁹

In setting the internal organization of the camps, anti-fascists utilized, when possible, criteria and models that were analogous to those that had been used in the late 1920s confinement colonies. However, the frequent cohabitation of patchwork groups of internees, who had very different needs, were often moved around, and experienced the shorter stays in the camps relative to the colonies, and hindered (except in special cases) the creation of complex, communal experiences. Nonetheless, the title "Universities of Anti-fascism," which was often used for the confinement colonies of Ponza and Ventotene, occasionally was also attributed to the Ministry of the Interior's camps.⁷⁰ Ariano Irpino, Colfiorito, Fabriano, Istonio, Manfredonia, and Monteforte Irpino became the principal locations for the internment of the regime's opponents, together with

the “work center” of Castel di Guido and the colonies of Pisticci, Tremiti, Ustica, and Ventotene, which also became “concentration camps” during the war.

In Manfredonia, emboldened by their experiences in prisons and colonies, the anti-fascists secured a primary role in handling the mess halls and the “box office.” They also instituted a supervisory body that, clandestinely, checked on the life of the camp and, if necessary, intervened to defend the internees. Moreover, they organized a *bocce* field and cultivated a small plot from which they were able to extract a decent amount of vegetables and legumes. The Communist internees even succeeded in creating a clandestine cell of the party with annexed “School of Marxism,” which was subdivided in three levels, according to the political preparation of those enrolled.⁷¹

One of the first camps for opponents of the regime was Colfiorito of Foligno. Among its early guests was the Apulian farmhand Alfonso Superbo,⁷² a “dangerous antifascist” who had entered the camp on June 26, 1940. He had just embarked in the typical routine experienced by the most tireless opponents of the dictatorship, having served six years in jail and three in confinement. The same was true of Agostino Fumagalli,⁷³ a Milanese warehouse worker, and Eugenio Musolino,⁷⁴ a Communist leader, both of whom had already been condemned by the Special Tribunal in 1930 and in 1928 respectively; and of Lelio Basso,⁷⁵ already sent to confinement in 1928 and imprisoned in 1930. The fascist journalist and writer Edmondo Cione was also among the “politically suspicious” elements sent to Colfiorito.⁷⁶

The following testimony from Ariano Irpino provides a glimpse of the living conditions experienced by “dangerous Italians” in the camps where they were the only or majority group:

Camp discipline is not unbearable, but all services are neglected. The infirmary, for example, doesn't even own a thermometer and, when the dispensary orders intravenous injections, the person in charge has to disinfect my arm with warm water. Those who manage “make do” and “live day-by-day.” Those who protest are transferred to the Tremiti Islands, or end up in jail for having broken the disciplinary code. There are frequent escapes from the camp, but they are discovered through roll calls that are repeated three times a day, at 8:00AM, Noon, and 4:00PM. The escapees are always recaptured and punished with jail time lasting three to six months. Every week there is an inspection visit from the police headquarters in Avellino. The officer, however, rather than about the internees, is more concerned about hauling away, [in] the same police car [in] which he arrived, hundreds of eggs and some *prosciutto* that the policemen have collected preemptively.

Among the internees there are numerous “politicals,” who can boast a past of struggle and imprisonment. There is even a veteran of the Spanish Republican Army. Most live ethically far from each other, maybe because lengthy persecutions and the humiliating misery they endured have sapped their fight and initiative. I try to lift the morale of my scattered

companions by financing, through small, ten-day deposits, the purchase of books, and I try to create a fund that might help those who are in extreme need. My greatest wish would be to start our own mess hall. I am also trying to obtain from City Hall the use of the city's library, to which, generally speaking, the town authorities are amenable. Unfortunately, the camp's management, which should give its permission to the project, keeps the paperwork buried in the office to avoid any hassles [...].⁷⁷

“Allogeni”

Between the World Wars I and II, ethno-linguistic minorities represented about 2% of the Italian population and, aside from the Francophone group in Valle d'Aosta, they were mainly distributed in the lands annexed following the Great War: Venezia Giulia and South Tirol. The 1921 census showed that, in the “old provinces” there lived eight well-organized minority populations (Albanians, Catalans, Croats, French, Germans, Greeks, Ladins, and Slovenes) with a total of 250,000 people. The lands acquired after World War I increased their numbers, integrating in the Italian State large communities—among them 98,000 Croats, 228,000 Germans, and 327,000 Slovenes—who had past social, political, and cultural structures and traditions of national rights that the “old” ethnic minorities certainly did not have.⁷⁸

In Trentino, the South Tirol, and the Ampezzano (area of the Tridentine Veneto region), where the civilian high commissioner had worked since 1919 to help populations from the Trento and South Tirol areas coexist, Fascism initiated narrow policies of “Italianization”: German schools and newspapers were abolished, and place names rendered in Italian. The term “South Tirol” itself became forbidden and changed into *Alto Adige*.⁷⁹ Moreover, since the regime strongly supported internal migration within the territory, Italian-speaking inhabitants grew in the region from 3% in 1918 to 58% in 1939. A further alteration in the demographic relationships and socio-economic fabric of the region occurred between 1939 and 1943, with the signing of the *Option in Südtirol* agreement between Hitler and Mussolini. The agreement allowed the linguistic and cultural communities of German and Ladin origins the choice to leave Italy and move with their belongings to the Third Reich.⁸⁰

The origins of Italy's relationship with Slav minorities went back to the Peace Treaty of Prague of August 10, 1866, when the Kingdom of Piedmont was given control of the Veneto region, Val Resia, and the Val Natisone and Torre. At the end of World War I, Italian Slavs numbered about 425,000 and constituted 50.02% of the population in the former Austrian lands that had passed under Italian control with the name *Venezia Giulia*.⁸¹

The region, which during the fascist *Ventennio* experienced substantial degrees of repressive violence destined to continue “beyond the bookends of the rise to power and decline of Fascism,”⁸² witnessed the first sensational, anti-Slav, *squadrista* attack on July 13, 1920, in Trieste. On that day, the fascists burned the *Narodni Dom*, the National House, which was headquarters

for Slovenian organizations in Italy. Subsequently, in November 1925, Mussolini created the basis for the so-called “borderland Fascism” in defense of the “country’s interests” on its Eastern borders by bringing together Italian nationalist forces through a combination of Anti-Slavic and Anti-Bolshevik feelings.⁸³ As the regime consolidated its power, it progressively eliminated the few Slovenian and Croatian organizations that remained from World War I to enforce an ethnic subjugation of *allogeni* (the Slav minorities) that was carried out “in the name of a supposed superiority of Italian civilization that did not allow alternatives to a voluntary or forced assimilation.”⁸⁴ Later, the regime initiated the “ethnic” or “national reclamation” of the region, which included actively promoting emigration, the requisitioning of lands, and the abolition of Slovenian and Serbo-Croatian as languages of use, even in church functions.⁸⁵

The police’s vigilance over the Slovenian and Croatian communities intensified in April 1939, in direct correlation with the protests by the Yugoslav State against Italy’s occupation of Albania.⁸⁶ In June 1940, with Italy’s entry into war, the police attacked especially hard clandestine Slavic organizations, carrying out numerous arrests. A substantial amount of those detained, classified generally as terrorists, nationalists, communists, or just intellectuals, were forced into internment. Of these, about 60 were referred to the Special Tribunal, which, in December 1941, during the so-called Second Trial of Trieste, inflicted very severe sentences.⁸⁷

During the war, many in the Slavic minorities who were enlisted in the Army became part of special, unarmed, work battalions, and were typically sent to Sardinia, Sicily or Southern Italy, where they were treated more like cases needing special surveillance than soldiers.⁸⁸ Through this type of mocking and humiliating military service, which, in many ways, was a fate worse than internment, the fascist regime wanted to prevent *allogeni*—considered in itself suspicious and untrustworthy (as allogens)—from joining up with partisan units.⁸⁹

Following the attack against Yugoslavia of April 6, 1941, when the fascist authorities carried out the evacuation of all local “hostile” populations from the vicinities of the eastern borders, the internment of Slavic communities in the Venezia Giulia became a common practice. Later, when the partisan movement began to expand in the region,⁹⁰ even the methods were applied here that had been experimented in the Province of Lubiana: extended prohibitions, the burning of villages, and the internment of the families or of the collaborators of purported partisans.⁹¹

In June 1942, the notorious Special Inspectorate for Public Safety for the Venezia Giulia, which also had branches in Istria, set up shop in Trieste, in a villa on Bellosguardo Street, under the command of Giuseppe Gueli and the direct supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. The Inspectorate, which distinguished itself for the “professional” and cruel repression it used against Slavic and Italian anti-Fascism,⁹² could make decisions without consulting police headquarters and prefectures about civilian deportations. From then onward, the internment of *allogeni* became truly a collective nightmare, and even the Italian Royal Army took on a very active role in its enactment.⁹³

Special “concentration locations” for families of deserters, which were often used as subsidiary prisons for police headquarters, were set up in Gorizia and Poggio Terzarmata (Zdravščina). In Gorizia, the women were gathered in the former monastery of Castagnevizza (“Na kapeli”), and the men in a former textile factory in the hamlet of Piedimonte (Podgora). Men, and in special cases women, were also held in Poggio Terzarmata, in another former textile factory.⁹⁴

In September 1942, because numerous youths in the province had left their homes, the prefect of Gorizia, Aldo Cavani, issued a notice declaring:

all those who recently have left their homes to join armed militia will be granted impunity if they return to their homes no later than the eighth day since the publication of this announcement. Should this term pass without such outcome, the Special Tribunal will press charges against them, and all their family members will be deprived of their assets, arrested, and interned.⁹⁵

Cavani’s initiative did not elicit the desired response, and, in the weeks and months following the announcement, the number of internees increased exponentially. As a result, the Special Inspectorate and the Ministry of the Interior contacted the Supreme Command to request the use of a high volume concentration camp, such as those used for prisoners of war, in order to send exclusively the Slavs of Venezia Giulia there.⁹⁶ As of February 23, 1943, the Inspectorate was granted Camp 95 for prisoners of war, which was operative in Cairo Montenotte, in the province of Savona, and was capable of holding 2,000 internees.⁹⁷ Initially, both male and female internees were held in this camp, though later women and children were sent to the camp of Frascette in the province of Frosinone, which was administered by the Ministry of the Interior.⁹⁸

This is how a woman, who was 14 years old at the time, recounted the experience of being arrested and deported to Frascette, after she had been detained on September 27, 1942, in the small hamlet of Vertoiba, in Gorizia:

My older brother had gone off with others from the area to be with the partisans. So the *carabinieri* came looking for news, and we told them he had left to look for work. Because at the time so many disappeared under suspicious circumstances, they did not believe us. That night they rounded up many families and took us to the *Carabinieri* station of San Pietro in Gorizia, where we stayed the whole day. Then they told us to divvy up the money we had, because the men and women would be separated. Our family could not divide a penny, because we didn’t have any money [...].

From the *carabinieri* station they transferred us to Police Headquarters in Gorizia. After some questioning, we were transported to the local jail [...]. But, as a result of the continuous round ups that followed

the growth of the Slovenian liberation movement the previous year, the cells were so overcrowded that one couldn't even find a small free space in them [...].

After a few weeks, we were moved to the former convent of Castagnevizza, on a hill outside the city. The convent, in whose chapel are buried Charles X of France and his descendants with claims to the French throne, had been modified to host the ever-increasing number of detainees. Its manager was a Marshal of the *carabinieri*, and the attendants were fascist militia. Cohabitation with the latter was by no means easy, since the militiamen stole left and right, to the point that, to take some earrings, they even ripped the girls' earlobes. There were also cases of attempted rape on some of the younger detainees, but the marshal controlled the situation, squashing all lawlessness and demanding the utmost propriety, and so earned our respect [...]

On March 15, 1943, they took us via truck to the train station of Gorizia. There were about 150 women: we boarded a special transport train, though we had no idea where we were going. After they locked the various cells (though I was allowed to remain in the corridor), the train left around two in the afternoon and, aside from a brief stop in the fields near Mestre, we traveled without interruption until noon the following day, when we reached Frosinone. From here, on some lorries, after a short trip we arrived to the camp of Fraschette, in the municipality of Alatri. During the whole trip, we received no food [...].⁹⁹

Nothing changed for *allogeni* internees following Mussolini's deposition in July 1943, which confirms a general continuity between the anti-Slavic repression enacted by Fascism and its handling by Badoglio's government.¹⁰⁰ As the war continued, and the same methods of repression remained in force, the Slavic populations remained convinced that, for them, Italy remained the same, "since it behaved the same way in those lands before the advent of Fascism."¹⁰¹

Only on August 17, 1943, after numerous protests, the Chief of Police issued a telegraphic memo that invited the peripheral authorities to "review behavior toward *allogeni* [...] [and] explore which of them might be freed."¹⁰² That said, the number of releases effectively enacted remained insignificant. At that point, with the backing of the Permanent Mission of the Holy See in Italy, the internees intensified their protests (often going on hunger strikes) that aimed at their release by the new government.

In a letter sent to the new Prefect on August 20, 1943, the bishop of Trieste, Santin, declaring himself certain that the partisans "should be confronted inasmuch as they are enemies of Italy," called the attention of the official to the need to differentiate between "partisans and those who willingly help them," and the rest of the interned Slavic population, which he believed should be freed and "let be":

Villages and homes burnt down, countless families missing, people killed wildly without any reasons, torture and violent caning during interrogation, mass arrests, camps that are filled with internees often held in inhuman conditions (I have seen this with my own eyes): all this has sown hatred, bitterness, mistrust, and has favored the partisans' propaganda. We must remedy the damage caused by the destruction. We must send home the majority of the internees, reviewing quickly the individual cases without any preconceived notions (I am speaking of internees, not of those convicted of crimes). We must revisit the norms that are applied to the families of runaways, which are draconian. We need to review the reprisal symbolized by the internment of relatives (even when innocent) and by the dispossession of their assets, since they have proven to be useless [...].¹⁰³

After September 8, 1943, many of the still interned *allogeni* fell into the hands of the German Armed Forces. Emblematic, in this sense, is what happened to the concentration camp of Cairo Montenotte, whose inmates were all deported to Germany.¹⁰⁴

Jews

In the 1930s, as the fascist government was about to enact its anti-Jewish laws, Italian Jews seemed well-integrated in the life and social apparatus of the country. Their attitudes toward Fascism were not much different from those of their Aryan countrymen. Their political beliefs were quite varied, ranging from *consenso* [agreement] and indifference to complete opposition to the regime. Indeed, it is impossible to forget the support that they had given to the Fascist movement from the moment it walked its first steps.¹⁰⁵

Historians have amply documented the reasons why Italy enacted State-driven anti-Semitism.¹⁰⁶ Specifically, in examining the genesis and development of the *politica della razza* (racial policies) enacted by Fascism, Michele Sarfatti has demystified the thesis of a "reluctant" Mussolini. He has shown that Mussolini himself, autonomously, reached a crucial turning point that transformed anti-Semitism, which until then had not been widespread in Italy, into a sort of "national, mandatory feeling" that turned Jews, without exception, into "officially" dangerous people.¹⁰⁷

On May 26, 1940, as the entry of Italy into war approached, the Undersecretary of State for the Interiors, Guido Buffarini Guidi, communicated to the Chief of Police, Arturo Bocchini, the desire of the *duce* to prepare concentration camps "even for the Jews," inviting him to "report back directly" on the matter.¹⁰⁸

It has not been possible to ascertain whether Buffarini Guidi had then forgotten to specify which categories of Jews had to be interned, or if Mussolini's intention, later abandoned due to a change of mind or technical difficulties in carrying it out, had been to intern *every* Jew. What is certain is

that the note constitutes the only document we still have today that contains a specific reference to the internment of Jews “just because they are Jews” on the part of the fascist regime.¹⁰⁹ Other references about civilian internment issued by Italy, in fact, never make reference to Jews *tout-court*, but only to those who were citizens of anti-Semitic countries, were stateless or, if Italian, were individuals who “posed a real danger.” This perspective seems particularly clear in a memo circulated by the Chief of Police on May 27, 1940, the day after Buffarini Guidi issued his memo. Arturo Bocchini thus alerted the prefects:

In case of an emergency, in addition to the foreign Jews referenced by previous memos, one will need to intern even those Italian Jews who, because they are really dangerous, must be removed from their homes. Please prepare relative lists that will have to be ready by June 10. Proposals that are limited to the cases that constitute an effective danger to public safety will then be made through separate reports.¹¹⁰

By June 1940, therefore, the Jewish danger to the “general order,” which had been decreed two years earlier by the racial laws, had not been deemed sufficient to determine the internment of *all* Jews.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, World War II changed the parameters of reference of pre-war anti-Semitism, making less and less feasible, especially for Italian Jews, the earlier choice of Fascism to “discriminate without persecuting.”¹¹² This is the context through which to understand the regime’s decision to propose again its old project to expel Jews from the peninsula, communicated on February 9, 1940, by the Chief of Police to the new president of the Union of Israelite Communities in Italy, Dante Almansi.

With Italy’s entry into World War II, the monitoring of Italian Jews, even as it was part of the more general measures of surveillance enacted on the population, took on very specific connotations. On May 27, 1940, as mentioned earlier, the prefectures had been informed of the need to intern Italian Jews who were considered a real danger to public safety. In addition, on June 6, the Ministry of the Interior specified that, in considering internment, the level of danger attributed to Italian Jews had to be determined “also with regards to their capacity for defeatist propaganda and espionage activities.”¹¹³ These recommendations not only entailed, for each province, the identification of the more “dangerous” Jews, but also placed *Jewishness* halfway between a simple aggravating condition and one that made someone dangerous *per se*.¹¹⁴

In 1941 the project to expel Jews from Italy was set aside due to a fundamental technical impossibility: the spreading of the conflict reduced the opportunities for Jews to leave the peninsula to almost zero.¹¹⁵ However, this did not mean that the regime lowered its guard on the matter. As Buffarini Guidi wrote to the prefects in January 1941,

A number of Jews have shown once more their obtuse misunderstanding of what is taking place politically and historically, showing themselves constitutionally incapable of developing national feelings. As a result, we need to pursue ever more energetically racial policies against them. Consider, therefore, the possibility of sending to the concentration camps the local Jews who, through their feelings and behaviors, are more likely to raise suspicions.¹¹⁶

The technical means by which Jews were interned evinced immediately that the Ministry of the Interior acted toward them primarily because they were Jews, and only secondarily because they opposed the regime. Indeed, in their personal folders, their racial origins were clearly underscored, while their political affiliation (which technically was the only one responsible for the internment provision) was typically subordinated and made secondary to the former. Moreover, heavy and explicit racist reasons were often included in the dossiers of the internees. For example, in September 1940, a Jew from Ancona was interned with the accusation of having demonstrated “in all aspects of civilian living [...] an incorrigible spirit of Jewish dishonesty.”¹¹⁷

However, the different prefectures carried out the procedural tasks related to the Jewish question in a variety of ways. Some prefects enacted a drastic and generalized internment, which included even the more elderly Jews. Others, instead, behaved more even-handedly.¹¹⁸ At times the zeal with which public officials in peripheral areas performed their duties was extraordinary: some of them reached the point of proposing solutions for Italian Jews that went well beyond those prospected by the law and requested by the central authorities.¹¹⁹ On June 4, 1940, for example, the prefecture of Ancona asked permission to remove all military-age Jews from the city. Such request was supported by the Police Commissioner with a letter sent directly to Mussolini, in which he claimed that “though there might not be any Jews who are actually dangerous, potentially they could be so, since most if not all wish with all their hearts and in their self-interest that the war be won by those countries that are ours and Germany’s enemies [...]” The letter concluded, with the proposal to adopt internment as a general measure, even if it was not completely justified, “in the spirit of the Racial Laws, and in the interest of peace and prevention.”¹²⁰ The prefecture of Livorno, for its part, proposed to the Ministry of the Interior that the city’s foremost Rabbi, Alfredo Sabato Toaff, be interned. Otherwise, in the Prefect’s opinion, he might use the authority and the prestige guaranteed him by his position to “perform illicit activities, bent to the tutelage of the interests of his race, and damaging to the political interests of the country.”¹²¹

Notwithstanding the varying degrees of animosity that might guide the behavior of peripheral or central authorities, we can distinguish two significant aspects in the implementation of internment measures against those belonging to the Jewish minority: 1) the link between reasons related to war contingencies and motivations tied to racial policies; 2) the primacy that the

“racial problem” took even for Italian Jews, though to a lesser degree than for foreign Jews, over issues of public and national safety.

Between June 1940 and July 1943, about 400 Italian Jews were interned for different lengths of time.¹²² At first sight, this figure could seem insignificant. However, if compared to the overall numbers of Italian Jews living in Italy at the time (a little less than 1.1 per 1,000 of the country’s population), it shows that the Jewish minority was singled out disproportionately vis-à-vis the rest of the population: indeed, over 10% of all Italian internees were Jewish.¹²³ Of these, a considerable number were interned in the camps of Campagna, Gioia del Colle, and Urbisaglia.¹²⁴

Starting on May 6, 1942, Italian Jews also became subject to a “civilian work draft.” This measure, which forced into manual labor men and women between 18 and 50 who had not already been interned due to presumed or ascertained “risks,” was primarily a propaganda measure. It was meant to counter the possibility that the “fighting and working Italian masses” perceive Jews to be privileged since the anti-Semitic laws excluded them from military service.¹²⁵ Tullio Cianetti, who on April 18, 1943 became the Minister for the Corporations, came up with the idea of “stepping up” the draft of civilians, hypothesizing its transformation into *a complete deployment of Jews in the service of labor*. The measure would have introduced a regimen of true hard labor and the creation of designated camps for “physically fit Jews between 18 and 36 years of age.”¹²⁶ However, the related bill, which had already been approved by the Council of Ministers, did not go into effect due to the events of July 25, 1943, that caused the fall of the regime.¹²⁷

At the end of World War II, the persecution experienced by Italian Jews between 1938 and 1943 was generally given secondary attention vis-à-vis the Nazi deportations that took place between 1943 and 1945.¹²⁸ This contrasting stance, which also occurred in France, corresponded to the pervasive need felt by civil society in the immediate postwar period to reintegrate Jews in the national community. So much so that the majority of historians, starting with Renzo De Felice, worked hard to show the extraneousness of the racial laws to the “deep identity” of the Italian State.¹²⁹

As far as fascist internment, one cannot deny that, in the more general scope of the persecution of the years 1938–1943, it is remembered by Italian Jews as a “generally minor” episode.¹³⁰ This is probably due to the fact that, during the war, persecution struck Jews in very different ways. The considerable proportion of Italian Jews who suffered internment confirms, however, the character of “social prophylaxis” exercised by this measure, which was surely not dictated solely by “simple” reasons of public safety.¹³¹

Gypsies

Fascism’s racial laws did not mention Gypsies. At most, they might have been included in the decree that forbid Italian citizens from marrying people belonging to “non-Aryan races.”¹³² Though it was not included in legislative

decrees, the “Gypsy issue” was nonetheless raised by the regime, which used in support improbable “cultural-scientific” argumentations. For example, in an essay published in 1939, Renato Semizzi, professor at the University of Trieste, mentioned the “psycho-moral-racial qualities” of this people, defining them as “regressive mutations.” He concluded with an ample digression on the “results of the crossing between Gypsies and Italians,” judged as “an unfavorable contribution to the race, as a result of negative psychic and moral characteristics.”¹³³ The following year, the journal *La Difesa della Razza* (The Defense of the Race) published a new “scientific” essay in the name of Guido Landra, director of the *Ufficio studi e propaganda sulla razza* (Office for the study and propaganda on race) in the Ministry of Popular Culture, who had been, among others, a signatory of the so-called “Manifesto of racist scientists.” After having alerted the readers to the “danger of crossbreeding with Gypsies, who are known for their tendency to be vagabonds and thieves,” and having praised as exemplary their treatment by the German government, Landra hoped that, even in Italy, one might implement as soon as possible measures against the Gypsies, who were judged by the professor to be “eternal strays devoid of any moral consciousness.”¹³⁴

The first provisions for internment were emanated with the memo that, on September 11, 1940, the Chief of Police sent to the prefects of the Kingdom and to the Police Commissioner of Rome. In it, after having restated the need to send foreign Gypsies abroad, Arturo Bocchini ordered the following:

Those still in circulation who are truly or allegedly Italian nationals should be swept up as quickly as possible and concentrated under rigorous surveillance in the most appropriate localities in each province [...] the exceptions being the most dangerous and suspicious elements who should be sent to island destinations or residence in municipalities and provinces that are far from the borders or from areas of military interest.¹³⁵

In reality, the order had three immediate outcomes: it made the “Gypsy issue” an order of business for prefectures to handle; it explicitly related the category of Italian Gypsies to other civilians subject to internment; finally, it enabled each prefect to prepare “removal” structures (similar to provincial camps for Gypsies) that were not indicated in the official measures established for civilian internment.

Most peripheral authorities affected by the order followed it by arresting those Gypsies who were in their respective areas of jurisdiction.¹³⁶ Italian Gypsies that were swept up in the province of Ferrara were concentrated in the municipality of Berra, while those in the province of Bolzano were held in the local jails, pending the discovery of an appropriate location for their removal. The prefect of Campobasso, after having communicated to the Ministry that he had organized a census and the subsequent sweeping up of the Gypsies in his province, suggested that the concentration camp of Boiano be assigned exclusively for the internment of Gypsies. Conversely, other

prefectures judged the concentration of those detained in their geographical confines as inappropriate, as was the case of Udine, a province with military sensitive infrastructures and too close to the country's eastern borders.¹³⁷

In 1941, the Ministry of the Interior issued a circular on April 27 with an explicit order directed at the "internment of Italian Gypsies."¹³⁸ The following year, on August 7, the same ministry ordered that the Gypsies who had been swept up and who did not have a permanent job be given a daily allowance of seven lira a day.¹³⁹

Notes

- 1 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime I 4 (Istruzioni di polizia militare), b. 59, f. 60 (Provvedimenti da attuarsi in caso di guerra a carico di stranieri), s.f. I (Affari generali), circolare n. 443/43427, from the Ministry of the Interior to Prefects of the Kingdom and Police Commissioner of Rome, August 31, 1939.
- 2 Ibid., Circular n. 443/79351, from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom and Police Commissioner of Rome, September 12, 1939.
- 3 Ibid., Circular n. 443/35615, from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom and Police Commissioner of Rome, May 20, 1940.
- 4 At the break of war—as mentioned in the first chapter—the CICR directed a plea to the governments and Red Cross committees of warring and neutral countries, through which it asked that—in treating enemy civilian internees—the countries would implement (possibly through bilateral agreements signed between individual governments and the Red Cross) the Convention blueprint approved in Tokyo in 1934. See *Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, XXI, September 1939, n. 249 (the text of the plea is on pp. 741–748). With regard to Mussolini's decree, see also S. Sorani, *L'assistenza ai profughi ebrei in Italia (1933–1947)*. *Contributo alla storia della "Delasem."* Rome: Carucci, 1983: 211–213.
- 5 The protection of civil liberties of enemy subjects was about to be abandoned in April 1943, when a bill was introduced by the new minister for the Corporations, Tullio Cianetti, that called for the introduction of mandatory labor for some categories, among whom were civilian internees of foreign countries. See Acs, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Acts 1942–1943, Ministry of Corporations, f. 80, *Schema di R. Decreto Legge*.
- 6 From 1942 onward, the Sim would become the central agency for Italian counterespionage. See G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato," op. cit.: 42n45.
- 7 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime I 4 (Istruzioni di polizia militare), b. 59, f. 60 (Provvedimenti da attuarsi in caso di guerra a carico di stranieri), s.f. I (Affari generali), memo n. 443/43778, from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom and the Police Commissioner of Rome, June 10, 1940.
- 8 Ibid., telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of the Interior, June 15, 1940.
- 9 The strange circumstance is reconstructed by A. Regis, "Esperienze al margine della guerra, Testimonianze di militari valesiani," in *L'impegno*, XV (1995), n. 3: 34–40.
- 10 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, A5G II Guerra mondiale, b. 23, f. 7, s.f. 6, *Maltesi d'Italia! Italiani di Malta!*, printed and edited by the *Comitato d'Azione maltese*. See also note 20 in this chapter, and A. Scicluna Sorge, *Italianità di Malta*, Rome: Editrice Dante Alighieri, 1940.

- 11 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A4 bis, f. 63. Of the 4,251 foreign internees, 2,412 were Jewish. On that same date, there were 1,373 Italian internees, and 4,732 confinees; of these, 2,335 had been confined for political reasons. See G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio centrale di stato," in *Una storia di tutti. Prigionieri, internati, deportati italiani nella seconda guerra mondiale*, Atti del Convegno, Turin, November 2–4, 1987, cit.: 45–46.
- 12 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime I 4 (Istruzioni di polizia militare), b. 59, f. 60, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 34 "Rieti." Note for Mussolini undated, but likely April 1941.
- 13 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 134, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 34 "Rieti," undated memo for Mussolini (but April 1941).
- 14 Acicr, G17/Italie, from the US embassy in Rome to the *Comité international de la Croix-Rouge*, Genève, "British civilians interned in Italy and Libya," July 25, 1941. The Libyan camps were those of Tajiura and Gargaresh.
- 15 Acicr, G17/Italie, from the Swiss delegation in Italy, Rome to the *Division des Intérêts Étrangers*, Berne, "Intérêts grecs—Internés et camps de concentration," February 5, 1941.
- 16 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A5G, II Guerra Mondiale, b. 412. See S. Carolini, "Gli antifascisti italiani dal confino all'internamento 1940–1943," in *I campi di concentramento in Italia. Dall'internamento alla deportazione (1940–1945)*, Costantino Di Sante ed., op. cit.: 115.
- 17 Acr, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 105, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 23, from the Ministry for Italian Africa to the Ministry of the Interior, telegram of September 9, 1941.
- 18 See Acdec, witness statement by Jacob Habib (born in Bengasi April 21, 1918), in I. Iacoponi, "Campi di concentramento in Abruzzo durante il secondo conflitto mondiale: 1940–1945. Civitella del Tronto," in *Rivista abruzzese di studi storici dal fascismo alla Resistenza*, v. 5 (1984), n. 2: 217.
- 19 See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 105, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General Affairs), "Libyan evacuees"; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol. II, cit.: 42.
- 20 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M.4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General affairs), ins. 32 "Internment English nationals already sent to confinement in Greece," from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ministry of the Interior, telegraph of May 9, 1942, labeled "Maltese and Cypriot subjects interned in Greece." At the time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs advised the Ministry of the Interior, "for convenience's sake," not to intern the Maltese, who were not deemed dangerous, in concentration camps.
- 21 Following the indications provided by the prefects, 164 Anglo-Libyans and their families were deemed "Anglophiles," and they were interned in the camp of Fraschette. See the Dissertation L. Gromme, *I campi di concentramento per internati civili di guerra (10 giugno '40–8 settembre '43): il caso del Lazio*. Università La Sapienza, Rome, 1998: 28–32, and following.
- 22 However, there were exceptions to this rule: in March 1942, for example, 300 Greek civilians were interned, even if for a short time, in the Ferramonti camp. See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (General affairs), ins. 30 "Greek internment," Dggs to Supreme Command, communication of March 12, 1942, labeled "Greek civilians to be interned in Italy."
- 23 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 110, s.f. I (General affairs), ins. 39 "Croce Rossa—Richiesta notizie varie," from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 29, 1942 (442/12277).

- 24 The internment of foreigners was officially motivated by the need to insure national security. In this light, it should have only been applied to those Jews who were citizens of enemy States, such as, for example, Polish citizens residing in Italy. See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 5.
- 25 Acs, Mi, Gabinetto, Ufficio Cifra, Telegrammi in partenza, Circolare telegrafica n. 442/47394, "Provvedimenti da adottare nei confronti di elementi ebraici," from Chief of Police to prefects of the Kingdom and Police Commissioner of Rome, September 25, 1939. Also in M. Toscano, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani 1940–1943: tra contingenze belliche e politica razziale," in C. Di Sante ed., *I campi di concentramento in Italia. Dall'internamento alla deportazione (1940–1945)*, cit.: 95.
- 26 Up to the *Anschluss* there were no limitations, aside the political ones, to the entry and sojourn into Italy of foreign Jews, who were allowed to carry out freelance, professional activities. See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol. I, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1993 (original edition, Stuttgart 1989): 1–54, 139–263.
- 27 Actually, many Jews had already left Italy following the Italo-German police agreement of April 1936, which had made their exile more difficult. See R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 547–54, document n. 15.
- 28 Between the beginning of 1939 and May 1940—when crossing the borders was completely forbidden—about 6,000 Jews whose life was at risk poured into Italy. See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario. Gli esuli in Italia dal 1933 al 1945*, vol. I, Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1989: 299–349; R. Pains, *I sentieri della speranza. Profughi ebrei, Italia fascista e la "Delasem"*, Milan: Xenia, 1988: 25.
- 29 An incisive synthesis of this issue has been drawn by Voigt in "L'internamento degli immigrati e dei profughi ebrei in Italia (1940–1943)," in *La legislazione antiebraica in Italia e in Europa*, Atti del Convegno Rome, 17–18 October 1988, Rome: Camera dei Deputati, 1989.
- 30 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime I4 (Istruzioni di polizia militare), b. 59, f. 60 (Provvedimenti da attuarsi in caso di guerra a carico di stranieri), s.f. I, nota 443/6454, from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 26, 1940.
- 31 *Ibid.*, memo 34/R08383, from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Ministry of the Interior, June 15, 1940.
- 32 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Cat. Massime Mc, b. 99, f. 16, s.f. I (Disposizioni di massima su campi di concentramento), ins. I (Affari generali), telegram n. 443/45626, from Chief of Police to Prefects of the Kingdom and Rome's Police Commissioner, June 15, 1940. Cited the first time in A. Reitano, "La persecuzione razziale," in *Il coraggio di dire no*, U. Alfassio Grimaldi ed., Pavia: Amministrazione Provinciale, 1976: 124n37.
- 33 Hungarian and Romanian Jews, instead, were expelled from the Italian Kingdom.
- 34 An additional circular (n. 443/47137 of June 27, 1940), in which the Ministry of the Interior clarified to the prefects that Jews who had immigrated to Italy prior to 1919 and those who were married to Italian citizens were not to be interned, confirmed instead without a shadow of a doubt that "foreign Jews" that Fascism wanted to intern were the same people against whom loomed the decree of expulsion of September 1938. See K. Voigt, "L'internamento degli immigrati e dei profughi ebrei in Italia (1940–1943)," cit.: 61.
- 35 Almansi's statement was redacted from the book/minutes of the Executive of the Italian Union of Israelite Communities, as per M. Sarfatti, "Gli ebrei negli anni del fascismo," in *Gli ebrei in Italia*, C. Vivanti ed. Turin: Einaudi, 1997, vol. II: 1698.
- 36 On the same day of May 30, 1940, the Chief of Police assigned the construction contract to the fascist entrepreneur Eugenio Parrini. See Acs, Mi, Dgps, Agr,

- Cat. Massime M 4, b. 121, f. 16 (Campi di Concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari di provincia), ins. 13/6 "Demiano Ferramonti."
- 37 See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit. v. II: 10.
- 38 Ibid.: 88–99. The number of "foreign Jews" interned in the camps remained constant around 2,000 people throughout the war.
- 39 Aside from Ferramonti—which, however, remained by far the largest camp for this category of internees—the other camps that held foreign and stateless Jews were, in order of size, Campagna, Civitella del Tronto, Isola del Gran Sasso, Urbisaglia, Nereto, Notaresco, Tortoreto, Tossicia, Agnone, Boiano, Isernia, Casoli, Lama dei Peligni, Civitella della Chiana, Bagno a Ripoli (see the individual tabs in Chapter 5 "Topography and history of the Camps").
- 40 See L. Picciotto, *Il Libro della memoria*, cit.: 855; C.S. Capogreco, "Il campo di concentramento di Campagna e l'internamento ebraico nel Meridione," in *Giovanni Palatucci. La scelta, le differenze*, cit.
- 41 The terms *zingaro* and *zigano* derive from the Greek *atsiganoi* (from which derive also the German *Zigenuer*, the Hungarian *Czigany*, the Spanish *Gitanos*, and the English *Gypsies*).
- 42 See D. Kenrick and G. Puxon, *Il destino degli zingari. La storia sconosciuta di una persecuzione dal Medioevo a Hitler*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1975: 121 *passim*.
- 43 See A. Masserini, *Storia dei nomadi. La persecuzione degli zingari nel XX secolo*, Padua: Edizioni GB, 1990: 45–46.
- 44 Circular cited by A. Masserini, *Storia dei nomadi*, cit.: 46–47.
- 45 See G. Levakovich and G. Ausenda, *Tzigari. Vita di un nomade*, Milan: Bompiani, 1975; and D. Kendrick and G. Puxon, *Il destino degli zingari*, cit.: 122 *passim*.
- 46 A. Masserini, *Storia dei nomadi*, cit.: 52–53.
- 47 See M. Karpati, "La politica fascista verso gli zingari in Italia," in *Lacio drom*, 1984, n. 2–3; D. Kenrick and G. Puxon, *Il destino degli zingari*, cit.: 121 *passim*; and the letter of the mayor of Perdasdefogu, in A. Masserini, *Storia dei nomadi*, cit.: 64n1.
- 48 See the witness testimonies reported in M. Karpati, "La politica fascista verso gli Zingari in Italia. Testimoni sui campi di concentramento in Italia," in *Quaderni del Centro studi sulla deportazione e l'internamento*, n. 11, Rome, 1983–1986.
- 49 See R. Hudorovic, "Il racconto di Rave," in *Lacio drom*, 1983, n. 1; D. Kenrick and G. Puxon, *Il destino degli zingari*, cit.: 203.
- 50 See M. Karpati, "La politica fascista verso gli Zingari in Italia," cit.: 117–121, and "La politica fascista verso gli zingari in Italia," cit.; L. Piasere ed., *Italiani Romani*, Rome: Cisu, 1999.
- 51 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 117, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11/6.
- 52 Witness testimony by Zilka Heldt, in D. Kenrick and G. Puxon, *Il destino degli zingari*, cit.: 123–124.
- 53 See I. Iacoponi, "Tossicia," in *Rivista abruzzese di studi storici dal fascismo alla resistenza*, IV (1985), n. 1: 199–210; C. Di Sante, "I campi di concentramento in Abruzzo," in Idem ed., *I campi di concentramento in Italia. Dall'internamento alla deportazione*, cit.: 194–195. See also the testimony of Giuseppe Levakovich, in G. Levakovich and G. Ausenda, *Tzigari*, cit.: 70.
- 54 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. A5G, II Guerra Mondiale, b. 67, from the Prefecture of Teramo to the Ministry of the Interior, "Zingari provenienti da Lubiana internati a Tossicia," August 8, 1942, attached copy of the report signed by the company commander of the Royal *Carabinieri* of Teramo, Lieutenant Carlo Canger, of August 6, 1942.
- 55 See M. Karpati, "La politica fascista verso gli Zingari in Italia," cit.: 118, 121; B. Nicolini, "Caduti per la patria," in *Lacio Drom*, 1965, n. 2: 44–45.

- 56 See G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio centrale di Stato," in *Una storia di tutti. Prigionieri, internati, deportati italiani nella seconda guerra mondiale*, cit.: 38–39; A. Bonelli, "L'internamento," in S. Carolini ed., *Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*, cit.: 17.
- 57 The *Ufficio internati italiani* functioned within the jurisdiction of the First Section of the Division of General and Private Affairs of the Dgps. The documentation pertaining to this office, held by the Acs, is today partially preserved in the Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. A5G II Guerra Mondiale, f. 32 (Internati civili pericolosi), partially in the Mi, Dgps Cat. Massime M4 (Mobilitazione civile), ff. 16 and 18. See G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato," cit.: 38–39.
- 58 The last category included individuals repatriated to Italy and interned for "acts of indiscipline" that took place in Germany (insubordination, financial requests, incitement to strike), or for refusing to return to Germany at the end of a leave of absence. The *repatriated* were typically sent to the work camps of Castel di Guido and of Pisticci and, after a period of 2–3 months, returned to normal life. See A. Bonelli, "L'internamento," cit.: 21; C. Bermani, *Il lavoro nella Germania di Hitler. Racconti e memorie dell'emigrazione italiana (1937–1945)*, Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1998. With regard to the Jews, the subdivision proposed by the Anppia is not very convincing, since they (the Italian ones) almost never were interned as Jews.
- 59 Official data from the Ministry of the Interior, in Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. A4bis, f. 63.
- 60 An emblematic case among them might be Siro Attilio Nulli, a high school teacher who in 1926 had been removed from the classroom for "incompatibility with the government's directives." Because of that precedent, in 1941 he was interned because he "still believed in his political ideas." See S. Carolini, ed., *Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*, cit.: 330–334.
- 61 Regardless, such procedure was not news because, for a few years, many people who had been sentenced by the Special Tribunal, once they served their term, were automatically sent to confinement. See A. Bonelli, "L'internamento," cit.: 18; C. Ghini and A. Dal Pont, *Gli antifascisti al confino*, cit. 158–159; C.S. Capogreco, "Per una storia dell'internamento civile nell'Italia fascista," cit.: 536–537.
- 62 See A. Dellepiane, *La lunga via della libertà. Testimonianze per servire la storia della Resistenza*, Milan: Silva, 1963: 109.
- 63 A. Bonelli, "L'internamento," cit.: 18.
- 64 M. Magri, *Una vita per la libertà. Diciassette anni di confino politico di un Martire delle Fosse Ardeatine*, Rome: Ludovico Puglielli Editore, 1956: 180–181.
- 65 The internment that was handed down for these crimes (for example, listening to Radio London, a practically universal occurrence among Italians) typically was easily revoked. However, even among those included in this category, a number remained interned until the fall of Fascism.
- 66 G. Grilli, *Due generazioni. Dalla settimana rossa alla guerra di liberazione*, Rome: Edizioni Rinascita, 1953: 189–191.
- 67 In May 1941, Spallino expressed his consternation to Riccardo Pastore, the Inspector general, pointing out that he "had no political precedents and never had been subjected to police measures." See Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 125, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 17 "Foggia," from the Inspector R. Pastore to the General Directorate of Public Safety, "internati campo di concentramento di Manfredonia," May 12, 1941.
- 68 G. Scalarini, *Le mie isole*, cit.: 122.
- 69 Acs, Mi, Dgpa, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 112, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 65, memo of the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects, "Casermaggio per I campi di concentramento," June 13, 1940.

- 70 In an article that he published in 1965 on *Israel*, the journal he directed, Carlo Alberto Viterbo once defined “university of antifascism and anti-Nazism” the camp of Urbisaglia, where he had been interned in 1940.
- 71 See V. Iazzetti, “Il campo di concentramento di Manfredonia (1940–1943),” in *La capitana*, 1984–1985, n. 21–22: 53–84.
- 72 See *Antifascisti nel Casellario politico centrale*, Quaderno n. 17, Rome: Anppia, 1994, entry “Superbo Alfonso”: 373.
- 73 Ibid., Quaderno n. 8, Rome 1992, entry “Fumagalli Agostino”: 405.
- 74 Ibid., Quaderno n. 13, Rome 1993, entry “Musolino Eugenio”: 219.
- 75 Ibid., Quaderno n. 2, Rome 1989, entry “Basso Lelio”: 263.
- 76 During the early months of 1941, Cione was able to register anew in the fascist party and had the measure of internment transformed into a simple warning. See F. Gentile, “Edmondo Cione: dal crocianesimo liberale al corporativismo della Repubblica Sociale Italiana,” in *Studi Bresciani, Quaderni della Fondazione Micheli*, n. 13 (2002): 64–65. After the war, Cione wrote about his experience in “Campo di concentramento a Colfiorito di Foligno. Al confino con Lelio Basso e con gli slavi,” in *Brancaleone*, II, December 14, 1947, n. 4–9.
- 77 A. Dellepiane, *La lunga via della libertà. Testimonianze per servire la storia della Resistenza*, cit.: 116.
- 78 See P. Stranj, *La comunità sommersa. Gli sloveni in Italia dalla A alla Ž*, Trieste: Editoriale Stampa Triestina, 1992; F. Pristinger, *La minoranza dominante nel Sud Tirolo. Divisione etnica del lavoro e processi di modernizzazione dall’annessione agli anni settanta*, Bologna-Padova: Patron, 1978.
- 79 See G. Klein, *La politica linguistica del fascismo*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986.
- 80 See K. Stuhlpfarrer, “Il problema delle opzioni in Alto Adige come esempio della politica etnica nazista,” in *Spostamenti di popolazione e deportazioni in Europa 1939–1945*, Bologna: Cappelli, 1987: 140–151.
- 81 After the Great War, 327,000 Slovenians had joined the Italian state (a fourth of the entire population, with an area of occupation equal to a third of the ethnic Slovenian territory as a whole), as well as 98,000 Croats. See C. Podrecca, *Slavia italiana. Polemica*, Trieste: EST, 1997 (new edition of the 1884 edition); P. Stranj, *La comunità sommersa*, cit.: 79–80; M. Kacin Wohinz and J. Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866–1998*, Venice: Marsilio, 1998: 30–33; *Slovenska kulturno gospodarska zveza*, “Memorandum sulla legge di tutela della minoranza slovena in Italia e motivazioni delle richieste,” Trieste: Tipolito Graphart, 1985.
- 82 P. Dogliani, *L’Italia fascista. 1922–1940*, Milan: Sansoni, 1999: 311.
- 83 See L. Ragusin Righi, *Politica di confine*, Trieste: Mutilati e Combattenti, 1929; M. Kacin Wohinz and J. Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866–1998*, cit.: 37.
- 84 P. Stranj, *La comunità sommersa*, cit.: 81; L. Čermelj, *Sloveni e croati in Italia tra le due guerre*, Trieste: Editoriale Stampa Triestina, 1974.
- 85 L. Čermelj, *Sloveni e croati in Italia tra le due guerre*, cit.: 172–174; E. Apih, *Dal regime alla Resistenza. Venezia Giulia 1922–’43*, Udine: Del Bianco, 1960. F. Nazzi, *Il duce lo vuole. La proibizione dello sloveno nella vita religiosa della Slavia Friulana*, Premariacco: Lipa Editrice, 1995.
- 86 M. Kacin Wohinz and J. Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1866–1998*, cit.: 58 passim; A. Bonelli, “L’internamento,” cit.: 21.
- 87 See M. Pacor, *Confine orientale. Questione nazionale e Resistenza nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1964: 170–172; M. Kacin Wohinz, V. Vremec and L. Turk, *Il secondo processo di Trieste*, Opicina: Biblioteca Pinko Tomazič; A. Dal Pont, A. Legnetti, F. Macello and L. Zocchi, *Aula IV. Tutti i processi del Tribunale speciale fascista*, Milan: La Pietra, 1976. The trial began December 2, 1941, against 60 prisoners: nine were condemned to death; the rest received 978 years in prison. Between 1927 and 1943, 131 of the 978 trials carried out by the

Special Tribunal pertained to Slovenians and Croats (544), 10 of whom were condemned to death and executed by firing squad before World War II.

- 88 M. Pacor, *Confine orientale*, cit.: 175.
- 89 In reality, as Mario Pacor reminds us, these men “became, together with the thousands of deportees and confinees, active nuclei of resistance and anti-fascist propaganda in the towns where they were sent, fraternizing and bonding with the local populations [...]” (*Confine orientale* 175). See also M. Kacin Wohinz and J. Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1966–1998*, cit.: 67.
- 90 Already during the latter months of 1941, the Slovenian partisan units that were operating on the other side of the old borders had attempted some incursions in the Venezia Giulia.
- 91 See M. Kacin Wohinz and J. Pirjevec, *Storia degli sloveni in Italia 1966–1998*, cit.: 74–76; A. Zidar, *Il popolo sloveno ricorda e accusa. I crimini compiuti dallo stato fascista italiano contro gli sloveni*, Koper: Založba Lipa, 2001: 106–131.
- 92 Shortly, the Inspectorate became notorious for its ruthless jailers, who subjected the detainees to heinous torture in the basement of what Mario Pacor has described as the “first *Villatriste* [pain villa] of the many that emerged in Italy” (*Confine orientale* 175–176). See also G. Fogar, “Ispettorato speciale di Pubblica sicurezza per la Venezia Giulia,” in *Dizionario della Resistenza*, cit., vol. II: 428–430.
- 93 General Ferrero, commander of the XXIII Corps of the Eighth Army stationed in Trieste, distinguished himself for his initiative. Conversely, in its antipartisan activities, the Inspectorate also operated as the coordinating technical arm at the disposal of the Eighth Army. See M. Pacor, *Confine orientale*, cit.: 168.
- 94 See A. Buvoli, “Il fascismo nella Venezia Giulia e la persecuzione antislava,” in *Storia contemporanea in Friuli*, vol. I (1996), n. 27; *Bili so uporni. Vodnik po koncentracijskih taboriščih in zaporih*, Ljubljana: Partizanska knjiga, 1980: 186–187.
- 95 Acs, Mi, Dgsg, I, b. 90, f. 322 “Concentration locations for families of deserters in Aidussina and Poggio III Armata,” notice from the prefect of Gorizia Aldo Cavanti, September 19, 1942.
- 96 See S. Pahor, “Vzpostavitev italijanskega protipartizanskega policijskega aparata (Primorska 1942–1943),” in *Jadranski koledar 1997*, Trieste 1997: 96–98; Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A5G, II Guerra Mondiale, b. 425, f. 170. s. f. 2, from the Ministry of the Interior to the General Directorate for war services and the Prefect of Gorizia, March 3, 1943.
- 97 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 135, f. 16, s.f. 2, ins. “Savona”: “Camp Cairo Montenotte available, this place for well-known war needs starting day 23 curr. month. Transfer internees must be signaled to the general staff and military station Genova, and carried out according to the norms signaled in the circular 3/29380, dated April 30 past year.” The availability of the Camp of Cairo Montenotte was communicated by the General Directorate for Public Safety with this telegram, signed by the manager of the Prisoners of War Office of the General Staff of the Royal Army (E. Pallotta), on February 20, 1943 (I owe this reference to Samo Pahor, who cordially signaled it to me, and whom I thank here). On the life of the camp of Cairo, see F. Filipič, *Slovinci v Mau-thausnu*, Ljubljana: Cankarjeva Založba, 1998; A. Frignone and N. Calvi, *Campo di concentramento n. 95 (1941–1945). Cairo Montenotte*, Comune di Cairo Montenotte: Arti Grafiche D.R., 1995.
- 98 On 20 February 1943, with a telegram signed by E. Pallotta, the head of the SME-prisoners of war office, the DGPS was informed of the availability of the Cairo Montenotte concentration camp for civilian internees (Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 135, f. 16, s.f. 2, ins. “Savona”).
- 99 Witness account of Milena Bizjak (the document was given to me by the manager of the Anppia of Gorizia, Vincenzo Marini, who conducted the interview in

- February 1987). This same text was published, with a mistaken last name, in the volume edited by S. Carolini, "*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche.*" *Gli internati dal 1940 al 1943*, cit.
- 100 See E. Apih, *Italia, fascismo ed antifascismo nella Venezia Giulia (1918–1943)*, cit.: 451; M. Coslovich, *I percorsi della sopravvivenza. Storia e memoria della deportazione dall'Adriatisches Küstenland*, Milan: Mursia, 1994: 28.
- 101 M. Pacor, *Confine orientale*, cit.: 183. See also the chronology of the measures issued by Badoglio's government, on pp. 292–294.
- 102 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, 1943, Cat. C2 (Affari generali), f. "Scarcerazioni detenuti politici," from the Chief of Police to the police commissioners of the Kingdom; to the special police inspectors in the prefectures; to the directors of the penal colonies of Ventotene, Tremiti, and Pisticci; to the general inspector of Public Safety Gueli, within the police headquarters of Trieste, telegram dispatch 441/49615 of August 17, 1943.
- 103 Letter to the Prefect of Trieste, Cocuzza, in A. Santin, *Trieste 1943–1945. Scritti-discorsi-appunti-lettere*. G. Botteri ed., Udine: Del Bianco Editore, 1963: 15.
- 104 See I. Tibaldi, *Compagni di viaggio. Dall'Italia ai Lager nazisti. I "trasporti" dei deportati*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 1994; F. Filipič, *Slovenci v Mauthausnu*, cit.
- 105 Five Jews were among the founders of the first *fascio* in Milan; three had lost their lives "for the fascist cause"; 230 of them had participated, in 1922, on the March on Rome; moreover, Jewish captains of industry and merchants had often supported financially the Fascist party. See A. Milan, *Storia degli Ebrei in Italia*, Turin: Einaudi, 1963: 392.
- 106 See R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, op. cit.; M. Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews. German-Italian Relations and the Jewish Question in Italy, 1922–1945*. Institute of Jewish Affairs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978 (Italian translation: *Mussolini e la questione ebraica. Le relazioni italo-tedesche e la politica razziale in Italia*, Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1982); M. Toscano, *Ebraismo e antisemitismo in Italia. Dal 1848 alla guerra dei Sei giorni*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 2003. For the *corpus* of fascist anti-Jewish legislation see also M. Sarfatti ed., "1938. Le leggi contro gli ebrei," monographic issue of *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, v. 54, January–August 1988, n. 1–2.
- 107 See M. Sarfatti, *Mussolini contro gli ebrei. Cronaca dell'elaborazione delle leggi del 1938*, Turin: Zamorani, 1994; *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista. Vicende, identità, persecuzione*, Turin: Einaudi, 2000; and, *Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani di oggi*, Turin: Einaudi, 2002.
- 108 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 100, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 2/2, from Buffarini Guidi to Bocchini, note n. 11478 of May 26, 1940, which was first cited in G. Antoniani Persichilli, "Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell'internamento in Italia," cit.: 85, 89.
- 109 There has been much discussion on the true meaning of Buffarini Guidi's note. See, for example, C.S. Capogreco, "Internamento, precettazione, mobilitazione forzata: l'escalation persecutoria degli ebrei italiani dal 1940 al 1943," in *Qualistoria*, v. 23 (1995), n. 1–2: 1; M. Toscano, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani 1940–1943: tra contingenze belliche e politica razziale," cit.: 101–102; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit. vol. 2: 11. A very plausible explanation is offered by M. Sarfatti in *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista*, cit.: 172.
- 110 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Cat. Massime M4, b. 99, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari generali), telegram n. 442/37214, from the Ministry of the Interior (signed by the Chief of Police) to the prefects of the Kingdom and the Police Commissioner of Rome, May 27, 1940.

- 111 See K. Voigt, "L'internamento degli immigrati e dei profughi ebrei in Italia (1940–1943)," cit.: 57–78; C.S. Capogreco, "Ebrei italiani ed ebrei stranieri di fronte alle leggi razziali," in *Fondazione Ferramonti*, v. 2 (1989), n. 2–3: 7–19.
- 112 See specifically, M. Toscano, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani 1940–1943: tra contingenze belliche e politica razziale," cit.: 100.
- 113 Telegraphic circular n. 442–42281, from the Ministry of the Interior to Prefects of the Kingdom and Police Commissioner for Rome, June 6, 1940. See M. Toscano, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani 1940–1943: tra contingenze belliche e politica razziale," cit.: 102.
- 114 M. Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista*, cit.: 181.
- 115 Between August and October 1940, the *Demorazza* put together a detailed project on this topic, to be followed by a legislative bill: it called for the gradual but general expulsion of Jews over a span of five years; and proposed a solution to deal with the complicated issue of mixed religion families (6,820 of 10,000). See M. Sarfatti, *Gli ebrei nell'Italia fascista*, cit.: 176–179; R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 345–346; L. Picciotto, *Per ignota destinazione. Gli ebrei sotto il nazismo*, Milan: Mondadori, 1994: 64–65.
- 116 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime R9 (Razzismo), f. 6, from Buffarini Guidi to the Prefects of the Kingdom and the Police Commissioner of Rome, January 14, 1941. Also in G. Tosatti, "Gli internati civili in Italia nella documentazione dell'Archivio Centrale dello Stato," cit.: 39.
- 117 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A5G—II Guerra Mondiale, b. 68, f. 32/E, message from the Prefect of Ancona to the Ministry of the Interior, September 26, 1949. Cited in L. Garbini, "Ancona 1938–1940. Note e percorsi di ricerca," in *Storia e problemi contemporanei*, vol. 7 (1994), n. 14: 48. See also *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, Centro Furio Jesi ed., Bologna: Grafis 1994: 338.
- 118 See, R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 371; A. Bonelli, "L'internamento," cit.; L. Vincenti, *Storia degli Ebrei a Palermo durante il fascismo. Documenti e testimonianze*, with an introductory essay by G. Portatone, Palermo: Offset Studio, 1998.
- 119 See R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 370.
- 120 Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr., Cat. A5G II Guerra mondiale, b. 68, f. 32/E, letter from the prefect of Ancona, Tullio Tamburrini to the Ministry of the Interior, June 4, 1940, and letter to Mussolini from the Police Commissioner of Ancona, June 7, 1940. Cited in L. Garbini, *Ancona 1938–1940. Note e percorsi di ricerca*, cit.: 47.
- 121 See M. Toscano, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani 1940–1943: tra contingenze belliche e politica razziale," cit.: 110. See also S.I. Minderbi, *Un ebreo fra D'Annunzio e il sionismo. Raffaele Cantoni*, Rome: Bonacci, 1992: 95–115, 120.
- 122 Numerical and statistical data found in Acs, Mi, Dagr, Cat. A5G II Guerra Mondiale, f. 32/175 "Statistica internati," and in the folders pertaining to the individual camps. The total of "a thousand more or less" of internees, offered by Renzo De Felice (*Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 370–371), which other authors, including myself, subsequently cited, is devoid of objective validation in the available data.
- 123 In 1938, there were about 47,000 Italian Jews, including those from Rijeka, but excluding those from the colonies. See M. Sarfatti, *Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani di oggi*, cit.: 10.
- 124 See C.S. Capogreco, "I campi di internamento fascisti per gli ebrei (1940–1943)," in *Storia contemporanea*, v. 22 (1991), n. 4: 663–682; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, op. cit.: 54–57; F. Terzulli, "Il campo di concentramento per ebrei a Gioia del Colle (agosto 1940–gennaio 1941)," in *Gioia: Una città nella storia e civiltà di Puglia*, Fasano: Schena, 1992, v. III: 495–593.

- 125 The draft's obligation was to be performed where one resided or nearby, but the *Demorazza* hypothesized that those targeted by the injunction be collected in designated concentration camps. For a variety of reasons (including the widespread hostility of military authorities to use Jewish manpower for "safety reasons"), of the 11,806 Jews hit by the injunction, only 2,038 were effectively forced into labor (see R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 373–375; M.L. San Martini Barrovecchio, "Documenti dell'Archivio di Stato di Roma nel periodo della persecuzione fascista (1939–1944)," in *Italia Judaica. Gli ebrei dell'Italia unita 1870–1945*, Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali-Ufficio centrale per i Beni archivistici, 1993: 160–161; M. Morpurgo, "'Lavoro obbligatorio' e 'Difesa territoriale' nei ricordi di un goriziano," in *Gli ebrei in Italia durante il fascismo. Quaderni del Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea*, novembre 1963, n. 3: 159–160).
- 126 See G. Parlato, "Polemica antiborghese, antigermanesimo e questione razziale nel sindacalismo fascista," in *Storia contemporanea*, v. 19 (1988), n. 6; and *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, Centro Furio Jesi ed., cit.: 369–372 (Appendix III). Total deployment for war reasons was allowed through the Unified Text of the Laws for the discipline of citizens during times of war, approved October 31, 1942, with the Royal Decree n. 1611.
- 127 The contents of the "deployment of the Jews" had been previously announced by Mussolini in the speech he gave to the National Directors of the PNF (National Fascist Party) on June 24, 1943. See *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, v. 31 (January 4, 1942/September 12, 1943), cit.: 193.
- 128 See G. Schwarz, "Gli ebrei e la memoria della persecuzione fascista," in *Passato e presente*, 1999, n. 47: 130; C. Saletti, "Memorie che emergono, memorie che configgono. Il ricordo della persecuzione ebraica nell'Italia della 'Seconda Repubblica' tra revisioni e uso pubblico della storia," in *Bollettino della Società Letteraria di Verona*, 2000: 121–122.
- 129 See G. Bensoussan, *L'eredità di Auschwitz. Come ricordare?*, Turin: Einaudi, 2002: 18, 170–173.
- 130 M. Sarfatti, "L'internamento nei campi degli ebrei italiani antifascisti e degli ebrei stranieri (1940–1943). Rassegna bibliografica e spunti di ricerca," in F. Volpe ed., *Ferramonti un Lager nel Sud*, Cosenza: Orizzonti Meridionali, 1990: 51.
- 131 Certainly, the downplaying of the events by the protagonists themselves has ended up reflecting itself in the work of the historians, discouraging them from investigating the internment of Italian Jews who, in the words of Mario Toscano, did not constitute at all "the secondary chapter to which it has been confined by memory and history" ("L'internamento degli ebrei italiani 1940–1943: tra contingenze belliche e politica razziale," cit.: 96, 112).
- 132 This held only if one reached the conclusion, as one did in Germany, that Gypsies could not be considered "arians." See A. Masserini, *Storia dei nomadi. La persecuzione degli zingari nel XX secolo*, cit.: 50; G. Boursier, "La persecuzione degli zingari nell'Italia fascista," in *Studi storici*, 1996, n. 4.
- 133 R. Semizzi, "Gli zingari," in *Rassegna di clinica, terapia e scienze affini*, XXXVIII, 1, 1939, pp. 64–79.
- 134 G. Landra, "Il problema dei meticci in Europa," in *La difesa della razza*, v. 4 (1940).
- 135 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 105, s. f. I (Affari generali), ins. 19, circolare n. 63442/10, from the Chief of Police to the Prefects of the Kingdom and to the Police Commissioner of Rome, September 11, 1940. Also mentioned in S. Carolini ed., "Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche," cit.: 396; and *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*. Centro Furio Jesi ed., cit.: 341. See also, G. Boursier, "La

- persecuzione degli zingari nell'Italia fascista," cit.: 1070, and "Gli zingari nell'Italia fascista," in *Italia Romani*, v. 1, L. Piasere ed. Rome: Cisu, 1996.
- 136 See G. Boursier, "La persecuzione degli zingari nell'Italia fascista," cit.: 1070–1071.
- 137 On the replies sent by the prefects to the Ministry of the Interior, see *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, Centro Furio Jesi ed., cit.: 340–341; G. Boursier, "La persecuzione degli zingari nell'Italia fascista," cit.: 1070–1072.
- 138 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. A5G II Guerra mondiale, b. 68, f. 32, s.f. 2, ins I, from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom and to the Police Commissioner of Rome, "Zingari italiani. Internamento," n. 10.10538/12971. Cited in *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, Centro Furio Jesi ed., cit.: 341.
- 139 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 100, circular n. 10/1000, from Ministry of the Interior to Prefects, "Zingari avviati fuori dei loro comuni e raccolti in determinate località ai fini della vigilanza—Confinati comuni in terraferma e isola," August 7, 1942.

4 Life in the camps and care of the internees

1. The camps of the “regulatory” civilian internment

From January 1940, the General Inspector Guido Lo Spinoso, together with colleagues and functionaries, began traveling throughout Central and Southern Italy to find appropriate buildings to activate “concentration camps.” These were to be managed by the Ministry of the Interior, following the rules for “regulatory” internment, between June 10, 1940, to September 10, 1943.¹ In reality, during the first weeks of June there were already 4,400 spaces in internment camps. However, the objective of the Ministry of the Interior was to have 9,400 spaces available within a short period of time. Meanwhile, the restructuring of buildings already pre-selected and the search for other sites to establish “camps,” as well as the identification of furnished rooms for *internamento libero*, were well under way.² Abandoned buildings situated not very far from residential areas with a police station were given special consideration. Following the norms provided by ministerial inspectors, buildings that were considered more secure or easier to control were selected first. An on-site survey followed and, having obtained the definitive approval of the Ministry, rental contracts were stipulated, when needed. The fulfillment of these tasks were followed by works of restructuring and disinsectization of the holdings, while the necessary furnishings were found in military warehouses or, more often, bought from dedicated suppliers.³

The Northern regions of the peninsula and its larger islands—geographical areas that in 1940 were thought to be particularly involved in military operations—remained almost completely off limits to the relocation of camps by the Ministry of the Interior⁴ and, initially, to the identification of sites destined for *internamento libero* since they could not be in areas of strategic importance or subject to enemy fire.⁵

Geographical choices, however, also followed other considerations, such as more impervious terrain (for example the Abruzzo-Molise and Marche—mountainous regions with a poor network of roads—were selected as sites for half the camps), low population density, and the lesser political involvement of the inhabitants of the Southern provinces. Finally, there were also economic considerations, since the presence on the territory of individuals

“subsidized” by the state, as were the vast majority of the people interned and confined, represented a shot in the arm for the economy of traditionally depressed areas. In other words, those were the same motivations that had already led the regime to send the majority of confinees to locations in the Center-South of the peninsula where, in some cases, especially on the islands, an actual “industry of deportation”⁶ had developed. With the continuation of the war and the unexpected nearing of the front to the Southern regions, such geographic dislocation revealed itself to be inadequate. Therefore, the Minister of the Interior had to proceed with the establishment of new structures of internment situated further North and, during the Spring and Summer of 1943, to the evacuation of inmates in the South of the country.⁷

Initially the provinces with camps and locations of internment were subdivided into five zones of inspection, each subject to the control of a high functionary of public security, and generally including four to five provinces. The first zone, under Inspector Carlo Argentieri, was located further North and comprised the provinces of Parma, Pistoia, Florence, and Arezzo. The second, under Inspector Francesco Cincaglini, included Pesaro, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno, and Perugia. Inspector Robert Falcone presided over the third zone, comprised of Teramo, L’Aquila, Pescara, Chieti, and Rieti; while Inspector Antonio Panariello oversaw the fourth, which included the provinces of Frosinone, Campobasso, Avellino, Naples, and Salerno. Finally, the fifth zone, under Inspector Enrico Menna, encompassed the provinces of Foggia, Bari, Matera, Potenza, and Cosenza, beside the small islands of deportation.⁸ The novelty of the concentration camps, when compared to the confinement colonies, was their being placed on the mainland, even though some camps were opened on smaller islands, such as Lipari and Ponza, whose confinement colonies had been eliminated in the past.

With the exception of Sicily, even in the selection of the locations for *internamento libero* the Ministry of the Interior had preferred the regions of the Center-South.⁹ This geographical selection, however, was not definitive and, in the following months, a greater number of Northern provinces would be selected.¹⁰

In Emilia Romagna there were two internment camps: Montechiarugolo and Scipione di Salsomaggiore. In Tuscany: Bagno a Ripoli; Sant’Andrea a Rovezzano, in the district of Florence; and Oliveto, in the district of Civitella della Chiana. In the Marche: Fabriano, Petriolo, Pollenza, Sassoferrato, Treia, and Urbisaglia. In Umbria: Colfiorito di Foligno. In Latium three camps were active: Fraschette, in the municipality of Alatri; Badia di Farfa, in the district of Fara Sabina; and the former confinement colony of Ponza. In Abruzzo-Molise there were 19: Civitella del Tronto, Corropoli, Isola del Gran Sasso, Nereto, Tortoreto, Tossicia, Notaresco, Città Sant’Angelo, Casoli, Istonio, Lama dei Peligni, Lanciano, Tollo, inside Chieti, Agnone, Boiano, Casacalenda, Isernia, and Vinchiaturro. In Campania, there were four: Campagna, Ariano Irpino, Monteforte Irpino, and Solofra. There were three in Puglia: Manfredonia, Alberobello, and Gioia del Colle. In Calabria

there was only one, Ferramonti; and as well there was only one in Sicily, in the former confinement colony of Lipari.

In addition, the function of concentration camps was carried out by the “work center” of Castel di Guido (Rome), and by four confinement colonies, where civilian internees lived in the same building with the confinees: the ones of Ventotene (Latium), Tremiti (Puglia), Pisticci (Lucania), and Ustica (Sicily).

Because of food shortages, the precariousness of their living quarters and, not least, the lack of freedom, the lives of the individuals in the camps created by the Ministry of the Interior were marked by significant distress and suffering. A foreign Jew who was not biased against fascist internment, stated: “People of all ages and social extraction, people who often did not understand each other because they spoke different languages, were packed in a small space, condemned to inactivity, tormented by anguish [...]”¹¹ A recurring complaint among all categories of inmates was the difficult cohabitation in conditions of promiscuity. For example, in December 1942, a group of Greeks deported to Ponza from the island of Corfu, wrote to the Ministry that the arduous condition of internment on the island was rendered even more difficult by the “obligatory cohabitation” with 500 Slavs, Orthodox, and Muslims. They asked to be transferred so that they could stay “with internees who were fellow countrymen or people of the same culture and social extraction.”¹² The theoretician of “Fascist socialization,” Edmondo Cione—interned because of strife with his comrades—emphasized that, if internment was materially not so terrible, “spiritually it represented an affliction due to moral distress and the concerns over the future.”¹³

The camps’ daily organization was set by internal regulations established by the directors on the basis of general rules and local necessities, as well as by the typical schedule of the segregated communities: roll calls, meals, the distribution of mail, the undertaking of new arrivals, transfers and departures, curfew, etc. In the larger camps, the regulatory norms, the daily organization, and the behavior of the authorities closely resembled the usual routine of confinement colonies. As was the case for confinees, internees could not interact with the local population, except for indispensable exchanges. In addition, they were prohibited from engaging in politics, reading non-authorized publications, possessing radio equipment, and keeping passports or other personal documents. Correspondence with family members, even though subject to censorship, was allowed, while correspondence with non-relations was not, unless a special authorization was granted.¹⁴ Maria Eisenstein, interned in the female concentration camp of Lanciano, lamented: “It is useless to notify us of the things that are prohibited: they are too many. It would be simpler to let us know what is permitted.”¹⁵ Not that different, though more colorful, was the opinion of Giuseppe Scalarini, the old Socialist caricaturist, regarding the camp for “dangerous Italians” at Istonio: “Every day there was a new prohibition! It seems as if they were looking for new ones every day [...]”¹⁶

In smaller camps the rules were less numerous. There, the daily pace was almost analogous to that of *internamento libero* and, generally, during the day the inmates could leave their quarters and “circulate” within a prescribed area. With time, however, even that was reduced by the authorities. It could also happen that, in a municipality with a camp, “free internees” were present.¹⁷

Directing the most important camps, as was the case of the confinement colonies, fell to the functionaries of public security, generally police commissioners who were supported by agents of administrative services and the police. The smaller camps were directed by the *podestà* (the mayor of the fascist age), while services of external surveillance for both large and small camps were carried out by the fascist Militia and/or the *Carabinieri*.¹⁸ Internees could leave the larger camps only if escorted and for reasons such as specialized medical visits, hospital admissions, or the purchase of provisions for the mess halls. Nevertheless, the perimetral enclosures of the few Ministry of Interior camps that were so provided rarely represented an insurmountable barrier, as testified by the significant number of successful escapes.¹⁹ Fugitives, like other transgressors of camp rules, were punished by being segregated in designated “security chambers” within the larger camps; or, in the case of more serious offenses, with full incarceration and a transfer to harsher camps, such as those located on the islands.²⁰

In 1940–1941, the daily subsidy that the Ministry of the Interior granted “enemy subjects” and all internees classified as financially “non-self-sufficient” enabled them to secure fairly adequate food supplies. Their ability to do so was also due to the fact that, in some camps, the mess halls were self-managed on the model of confinement colonies and, therefore, costs were kept down while food supplies were of better quality. The subsidy initially amounted to 6.50 Italian lire, a sum that was integrated with a room indemnity for *internamento libero*. Women who were interned with their husbands received a subsidy of only 4 Italian lire per day.²¹ Typically, however, especially in the earlier days of internment, the tendency was to break up the unity of families by sending members to different and distant camps.²²

In the more depressed regions, the conditions of the inmates who “enjoyed” an economic subsidy guaranteed by the State could even appear enviable to the poorer social classes who, during war times, had to struggle on a daily basis to avoid hunger.²³ This impression is corroborated by some considerations made by Giorgio Amendola, who was confined on the island of Ponza before the war. This anti-fascist representative observed that, despite the suffering caused by being deprived of one’s freedom and the “sense of mortifying impotence before the strength of the regime,” the subsidy assured political prisoners “conditions superior to those reserved for certain classes of workers in some regions.”²⁴

Yet, from the end of 1941 onward, the purchasing power of the subsidy diminished substantially despite successive increases established by the government.²⁵ Arturo Dellepiane, a worker and union leader from Liguria who was interned in Ariano Irpino on April 6, 1942, remembers that the problem

that concerned prisoners the most was food, since the subsidy could not easily provide for daily meals even in camps with their own mess halls.²⁶ Even the Mantovan Loris Pescarolo, who had been relegated in Pisticci in 1940, identified the issue of food as one of the most worrisome aspects of life in the camps as the war carried on:

For many of us the daily rations that were given were insufficient and we tried to find something more [...]. But then, even rainier days arrived, as fatal as destiny, and we were pushed to hunt for stray dogs that were in the colony, making stew out of them even though it was revolting to our stomach.²⁷

Objectively, the *internamento libero* offered better life conditions than the camps. First of all, since “free internees” lived without being physically separated from the local population, they had many occasions to find support.²⁸ Even Jewish internees, despite the relentless government propaganda that sought to marginalize them, were not ostracized by the local population. At times, they were even able to take on professional activities that had been officially prohibited by the ongoing racial legislation.²⁹ In January 1942, Mussolini became aware of the growing support of the people of Abruzzo for foreign internees and snapped at the Federal appointee of L’Aquila:

Evidently racial difference is poorly felt, as is political difference. They look at these individuals as poor devils who are not guilty of having been born Jews, French, or Levantine. But they are dangerous and one must put their intentions on trial [...]. The local party authorities have not conducted the propaganda necessary to warn that these people must at least be avoided.³⁰

Civilian internees who fell under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, whether in camps or subject to *internamento libero*, were not subject to gratuitous cruelty or other types of physical violence. However, from time to time, especially in the larger camps, the directors and security forces became the sources of oppressive acts toward the internees. In the Ferramonti camp, for example, the militia centurion Alberto Zei established, of his own initiative, a daily ceremony of raising and lowering the flag with the intent—as reported by the director of the camp to the Ministry of the Interior—“to subject to greater humiliation inmates who were required to remain on standby and salute the flag.”³¹ In the same camp, some Greek internees, among whom was a former colonel,³² were slapped by a Lieutenant who was, however, transferred shortly after.³³ We also know of a slapping that took place in the camp of Montechiarugolo where the director, according to a police report, had “beaten up an internee who had reported some inconveniences”,³⁴ as well as of the repeated violent outbursts of Sergeant Sebastiano Marini, commander of the *carabinieri* serving in the camp of Ponza,

against the Montenegrin inmates in the island.³⁵ In general, however, higher authorities disapproved and prosecuted firmly these actions, especially when the victims were “enemy subjects.”³⁶

Not even “foreign Jews”—though branded by the Fascist government as “undesirable elements full of hate against totalitarian regimes”—were subject to particularly repressive measures. The peripheral authorities saw in internment a political and organizational duty to be carried out as diligently as any bureaucratic routine. And even though fascist internment included Jews coming from countries that were allies or enemies of Italy, it was generally understood as a wartime rather than an anti-Semitic measure. Then again, the norm of the decree of internment according to which “internees must be treated with humanity and protected against every offense and violence” established limits for those who would have wanted to act otherwise. Voigt writes:

Unlike what occurred under National-socialism, Fascism had not completely devalued the concept of “humanity,” even though in the anti-Semitic propaganda the tendency was to oppose to it the term “pietism,” used in a pejorative sense [...]. One could of course debate if the term “humanity” is adequate, considering the deprivation of freedom of internment camps, or even if this is a rather cynical use of the term “humanity.” It must be said, however, that within the coercive camp system, the already cited norm of the internment decree, to which also the inferior executive organs could make reference (i.e., camps’ directors, podestà, commanders of police quarters) not only helped avoid arbitrariness and maltreatments but also entailed the commitment to protect the life of internees.³⁷

This is possibly the reason why, after the initial reactions of alarm, the concerns of Italian Jewish organizations were assuaged about the conditions of their co-religionists sent to the camps. Nevertheless, the uncertainty over the future and the unresolved fear of being sooner or later delivered into the hands of the Nazis, weighed heavily on this category of internees.³⁸

The behavior of the leadership and security personnel was severe and inflexible toward Slavic Italian ethnic minorities or subjects of Yugoslavia, even when interned in the “regulatory” camps of the Ministry of the Interior. Starting in the early months of 1942, when the number of these internees increased, the regime in the camps became stricter. Perimetral enclosures and window grates were built, while internal cafeterias kept internees from going out of the buildings for their meals. The urban areas that internees could previously use were reduced or abolished. In addition, there was a change in the practices of control and some camps began limiting their activities to the internment of Slavs.³⁹ In the report of general inspector Falcone on a hunger strike that took place in the camp of Istonio in February 1943, it is possible to understand better the Fascist anti-Slav arsenal:

One must keep in mind that the internees of the concentration camp of Istonio are by and large Yugoslav, most of them young and many of them imprisoned because they were about to join the partisans. They harbor feelings of resolute adversity towards everything that is "Italian." At first, they were somewhat submissive, but ever since Russia reported some victories, they exhibit a sense of pride and they cannot hide their sentiments towards Italy. Therefore, all efforts at persuasion are wasted.

Any sign of weakness on the part of the camp's director would have confirmed their belief in the certainty of a Russian victory. This is the reason why the director sent nine of them to the prison. On their way, some were gesturing menacingly to the wife of the cafeteria contractor. Once in prison, all nine of them refused to eat [...].⁴⁰

As the years passed and the war escalated, the conditions in the Ministry of Interior camps worsened for everyone, even though in different measures and timelines. The growing food scarcity ever since the Fall of 1941 and the lira's loss of purchasing value further weakened the buying power of the subsidy. The ability to secure food came to depend more and more on the black market, which was basically tolerated by the directors and enabled by the security personnel of the camps. These challenges impacted the larger camps the most, but also the camps located on the islands, where it was more difficult to have access to the black market or be able to trade with the local population. A former Yugoslav internee in the Tremiti Islands recalls:

We suffer from hunger. Many fainted because of it. If, at times, some fish became available, those who had money tried to buy it. In those cases, the fish was roasted over an improvised fire and everything was eaten, head and fishbone included. With much greed, we ate potato and onion skins. Some even drank the water that had been used to boil the skins and suffered from a stomach ache that, for a while, made them forget their hunger [...].⁴¹

To handle this situation, from July 1942 onward, the Ministry of the Interior allowed many prisoners deemed "not especially dangerous" to perform some work, mostly agricultural and in construction, outside the camps. This enabled them to supplement the small government subsidy with a small salary or additional food. However, between subsidy and salary, the pay for any internee could not be higher than that of a local laborer. Jews were of course barred from the type of employment that was prohibited by the Race Laws.⁴² Between October 1942 and January 1943, the military authorities made efforts to direct internees towards some form of labor. For example, they destined a contingent of Slav internees to "work concentration camps" in Tavernelle and Ruscio (in the province of Perugia), and in Fertilia (Sassari).⁴³ They also identified categories of low-risk internees (e.g., "politically non-dangerous" and "protective"), to whom they gave daily passes to localities

outside the camps, even if under military escort.⁴⁴ This concession not only granted small earnings to many individuals, but also enabled them to avoid forced idleness, which at times could be almost as insufferable as hunger.

In the winter of 1942–1943 the restocking of food supplies fell to dangerous lows, and the vast majority of the internees fell ill to malnutrition diseases. On February 17, 1943, the general inspector for Public Safety, Salvatore Li Voti, reported the following to the Ministry of the Interior:

There are cases of malnutrition and some individuals look through the garbage to feed themselves. Others lay in bed to save their physical energies or prefer to break the law so that they can be put in prison, where food rations are larger [...]. What I have related for the camps of Ventotene and Ponza is valid also for the colonies of Ustica and the concentration camp of Ferramonti, where food rationing renders the food supply very precarious [...].⁴⁵

With the arrival of Spring, the situation improved, even though in July 1943 hungry Slav internees of the camp of Fraschette-Alatri started to collect and eat “dirty and filthy remnants of vegetables left on the ground”⁴⁶ by the delivery trucks.

2. The camps of “parallel” civilian internment

The geographical distribution of the concentration camps (“for Slavs” only) that the Military authority, the Special Public Safety Inspectorate for Venezia Giulia and some Prefect set up in the Peninsula was very different from the “regulamentary” network created by the Ministry of the Interior. The “parallel” concentration structures were located in the Center-North, especially in the North-East. Their selection was determined, primarily, by their greater proximity to the old border between Italy and Yugoslavia, from where the great majority of the internees originated. However, when these camps were established in 1942, the southern regions of the peninsula could no longer be considered “distant from war operations.”⁴⁷

In the Slavic territories annexed by Italy or occupied militarily in 1941, the camps of civilian internment had a fairly uniform distribution from North-West to South-East, along the Adriatic coast. Typically, the main camps were located on the smaller islands, while preference to the mainland’s coasts was given for transit camps intended for shorter periods of internment. The administration of the camps fell under the jurisdiction of the Italian Royal Army. However, with the exclusion of the camp of Arbe, in the annexed territories prefects were also entrusted with many of the decisions.⁴⁸

On the Italian territory the camps for “former Yugoslavs” were set up in Friuli and Venezia Giulia (Cighino, Laurana, Gonars, and Visco); Veneto (Monigo, in the municipality of Treviso and Chiesanuova, in the municipality

of Padova); Tuscany (Renicci, in the municipality of Anghiari); and Umbria (Colfiorito, which previously was under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior). From February 1943, the camp number 83 for war prisoners also, sited in Fiume under the jurisdiction of the Italian Second Army, hosted Slav civilian internees (and also women and children from April). In addition, there were "labor camps" in Pietrafitta and Ruscio (Umbria) and in Fertilia (Sardinia).

Moreover, camps reserved exclusively for *allogeni* were set up in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Gorizia, Piedimonte [Podgora], and Poggio Terzarmata [Ždravščina]). They functioned as "sites of concentration" (i.e., transit camps and/or ancillary prisons) at the service of the police. For the *allogeni* there was also a labor camp (Fossalon), and a camp for prisoners of war in Liguria (Cairo Montenotte) which, in February 1943, was made available to the Special Inspectorate for Public Safety of Venezia Giulia.

In the North-Western Yugoslav territories occupied or annexed by Italy, the following main camps were set up: Arbe (Rab), under the jurisdiction of the Intendancy of Second Army; Buccari (Bakar) and Porto Re (Kraljevica), under the Fifth Army Corps. In the province of Zara were active the camps of Melada (Molat), under the civil governor of Dalmatia; and Zlarino (Zlarin), which depended on the Eighteenth Army Corps. Further South, in the province of Cattaro, were Mamula and Prevlaka camps, controlled by the Sixth Army Corps. In Dalmatia the following transit camps were always active: Divulje, Murter, Scoglio Calogero (Ošljak), Vodizza (Vodice), and Zavecchia (Biograd). On the island of Ugliano (Ugljan), a camp built of masonry had not yet been completed when, in August 1943, it first housed 300 prisoners, who were freed after September 8.

The camps "for Slavs" administered by the Italian Royal Army were often organized following the administrative model of the Italian camps for prisoners of war. Some, like the camps of Cairo Montenotte, Fiume, and Gonars, for example, were created and effectively functioned for this purpose. Others, like Colfiorito and Renicci had been designed as prisoner of war camps, but later on were used to intern civilians. They were managed by a high-ranking, reservist officer (typically a colonel or a lieutenant colonel of the *Carabinieri* or of the Army) aided by one or two attendants and several officers, including doctors. These camps, which were quite large, were almost always subdivided in separate sectors to facilitate the surveillance of the internees. Order and security measures fell to contingents of soldiers relocated from the territorial military command, at times with the aid of the *Carabinieri*.

The living conditions of the internees, who were provided neither economic subsidy nor a self-managed canteen, varied from one case to the next, and ranged from bearable to inhumane. Generally speaking, the conditions of these internees were far worse than of those living in the camps administered by the Ministry of the Interior, due to the chronic scarcity of food, overpopulated quarters, precarious health and sanitary conditions, and the almost complete lack of support.⁴⁹

The camps that provide greater archival documentation—notably Arbe, Chiesanuova, Gonars, Monigo, Renicci, and Visco—depended upon the authority of the Intendancy of the Second Army for the movement of the internees. As the Intendancy's "Office for prisoners of war" started to process civilians too, it changed its name to "Office for prisoners and civilian internees of war."⁵⁰ These camps represented the main terminals for the deportations accomplished by the Second Army in the former Yugoslav territories. But even among these six camps there were pronounced structural and organizational differences, and substantial differences existed with regard to the type of housing, the equipment that was available, and the living conditions of the prisoners.⁵¹

Normally, internees could not leave the camps but, at least initially, were allowed to receive family visitors.⁵² The internees had their own clothing and footwear but, as their arrests often came as surprises, most of them had nothing but the clothing they were wearing when they were detained. Only the neediest were provided military clothing and shoes during the harsh winter months.⁵³ With December 1942, every family could send a care package weighing up to 5 kilograms once a month. The shipping of these packages could not be done by the regular Post Office, but only by military offices especially set up in Ljubljana and other smaller cities. Nevertheless, a variety of obstacles hindered its best implementation and often, when the packages arrived at their destination, the food could no longer be consumed because it had spoiled during long stays in warehouses.⁵⁴ An exception was the well-functioning parcel service organized in Southern Dalmatia by the 120th Regiment of Infantry of the division "Emilia." In operation since 1942, it had accepted the mail packages destined for civil inmates in the camps of Mamula and Prevlaka. Up until September 8, 1943, it delivered about 10,000 packages.⁵⁵

A distinctive trait of the camps for Slavs was the lodging of the internees in improvised tent cities. Even though they had been defined as provisional housing structures, in the vast majority of cases they remained operational for each camp's entire existence. Living in small, unfurnished tents that were often erected on the seaside or on floodplains caused great suffering during the winter months for the internees, who were often quite elderly and lacked adequate clothing, but were forced to lean or lay on the ground without a bed.⁵⁶

On November 22, 1942, following an inspection of the Arbe camp where 200 men and 89 women internees had died, the medical officer of the Second Army brought to the attention of his superiors the opportunity to relocate the inmates housed in tents to buildings with a roof, and provide them at least with salvaged clothing.⁵⁷ Thanks especially to the pressures from the Vatican, between November 30 and December 28, 1942, 2,412 internees (women, children, and the elderly) were transferred to camps located on the peninsula.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the extremely harsh conditions of those who remained in tents did not change at all.

On January 12, 1943, in the Province of Ljubljana, a group of freely living Slovenian women wrote Emilio Grazioli, the High Commissioner of the province of Ljubljana, begging to possibly transfer “to a building” those who were still living under tents in Arbe:

Our sons, brothers and fathers who have suddenly been interned find themselves in a state that is worrisome for their health and even life. Because almost all of them have been imprisoned during summer time, they are lightly clothed. Still today they remain without winter clothing and linens and therefore unequipped to spend the winter in concentration camps [...].⁵⁹

But even for the internees of the camps located in Italy, life in tent-cities was often a torment. One of the internees of Renicci recalls how the winter cold was lethal to many prisoners:

We were given a tent that we had to mount on our own for every group of fifteen, because in Renicci neither barracks nor tents had been set up. But since we had arrived when it was already nighttime, we could not mount the tent. Therefore, even though there was snow on the ground and it was very cold, we spent the first night outside.

We finally mounted our tent on the second day: it was set up next to the barbed wire that separated the first from the second sector and was given the number 35. The ground was very humid, so we were going to look for brush over which we would place our blankets. But the guards did not allow us to do so, and those who were caught breaking branches off oak trees ended up in serious trouble. So the vast majority of us had to put our blankets directly on the mud and, in a brief period of time, fell ill [...]. I lived under a tent all the way until the Spring of 1943. In every tent there were fifteen or twenty people, but later they even set up tents for sixty internees [...].⁶⁰

The tent-cities on the seaside of Arbe, Melada, and Zlarin produced the desolate spectacle of thousands of deportees amassed on top of each other, without means of support (there were only a few camps' commissaries, for those who had appropriate vouchers), which recalled very closely Italian colonial camps, as the photographs published by Rodolfo Graziani testify.⁶¹ Another similarity between these two types of structures, similarities that should be closely evaluated, pertains to the length and role that the Italian camps for Slavs might have acquired in time. In Africa, Graziani and Badoglio thought about keeping the camps of the Sirtide region operative for an indefinite amount of time, and transplanting the deported populations there so as to keep the Gebel for Italian migrants.⁶² This idea does not appear so different from the Fascist plan of 1941–1942 concerning the “ethnic cleansing” and “totalitarian clearing” of Slovenia and Dalmatia.⁶³ In other words, a

comparison between the Italian camps in Yugoslavia and Libya further reinforced the colonial imprint of the Fascist aggression on Yugoslavia that was delineated by Sala and Rodogno.⁶⁴ It did so by pointing out the vast differences that existed between the Adriatic tent-cities for Slavs and the “normal” structures for civilian internees of war administered by the Ministry of the Interior during World War II.

Beside the tent-cities, the wire fences that General Roatta ordered to be built around the main Slovenian cities (themselves transformed in enormous concentration camps), echoed the fences that were installed on the border between Libya and Egypt during the 1930s.⁶⁵ It is worthwhile to recall that Pietro Badoglio had invited Graziani not to dismantle the “framework of our command that has as its basis the fences and the concentration camps.”⁶⁶

In these camps, hunger and malnutrition were also widespread and responsible for high levels of mortality. During the most difficult times, many internees laid on the ground most of the day, since their survival instinct drove them to save energy. When the pangs of hunger tormented them, they would search through the garbage for improbable scraps of food.⁶⁷ A document of the Yugoslav Red Cross of December 10, 1942, described the diet of Slav civilians interned by Italians as “especially precarious and insufficient.” According to this source, in the camps of Arbe, the daily food intake was of 100 grams of bread and 50 grams of potatoes.⁶⁸ Seven days after this report, General Gastone Gambara, just promoted to the command of the XI Army Corps stationed in Slovenia, wrote this note for his office: “It is logical and appropriate that a concentration camp does not mean fattening camp. Diseased individual = calm individual [...]”⁶⁹ These two brief sentences, which have now become famous,⁷⁰ clarify perhaps better than a treatise the philosophy of the concentration camps for Slavs. The hunger suffered by the internees and the inevitable ailments it caused, though not necessarily planned by the Italians, were nevertheless formidable allies in controlling thousands of individuals imprisoned in the camps.

According to Ivan Bratko, one of the Slovenian internees who fled the camp of Gonars through a bold escape plan on August 30, 1942,⁷¹ the amount of food allocated by the Italian authorities to each inmate was scarce, but should have been sufficient to prevent the harrowing hunger that occurred. However, according to Bratko, “before being delivered to the internees, a quarter of the food was stolen [...] by the commanders and then all along the intermediate levels of the power hierarchy [...]”⁷²

Truthfully, the food rations allotted by the Royal Army were at starvation levels from the start: the charts allocated 877 calories a day for repressive internees, and 1,030 for “protected” internees.⁷³ These rations, as some in the Italian Army admitted, fell short by at least 1,000 and 900 calories, based on the minimum needs of non-active, medium-sized individuals. In the best of hypotheses, the Yugoslav internees received daily food rations equivalent to half their caloric intake needs. This is the reason why only those who received food packages from home, or were able to buy additional food in the camps’

commissaries, could remain in reasonable health.⁷⁴ It was only when the level of mortality reached untenable levels that the Central Office of the Second Army, in agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, explored measures to improve the inmates' living conditions.⁷⁵

With regard to room and board, the most dramatic conditions were those of the "repressive" civilian internees in the concentration camps of Arbe and Melada. But from the early months of 1943, hunger was widespread even in the Italian camps for Slavs where numerous internees from Arbe had been transferred due to their severe physical conditions. In this sense, emblematic is the case of the camp set up in the buildings of the "Caldorin" barracks of Monigo where, within a year, 232 internees died.⁷⁶ The doctors of the hospital in Treviso, where inmates with little hope of survival were admitted, were shocked at their grave state of malnutrition.

Professor Menenio Bortolozzi, who was at that time the chief medical officer of anatomy and pathology, recalls a time when more than half of the 600 beds available in the city's hospital (Treviso) were occupied by internees:

As their conditions worsened, they were sent from the camp to the hospital, but it was too late. We were only able to save a few. One-year old children, babies who were a few months old, elderly men, including a 92-year old one, died. They all died of hunger [...].⁷⁷

Professor Bortolozzi performed about 30 autopsies on the emaciated, swollen cadavers of the internees, whom he did not hesitate to describe as "identical to the ones in Buchenwald." Almost all of the deceased were affected by tuberculosis, most likely contracted under the tents at Arbe, the camp from which the internees with the gravest physical conditions came.⁷⁸

In the camp of Renicci, where hundreds of malnourished inmates from Arbe had arrived, in January 1943 internees resorted to eating acorns.⁷⁹ The former medical officer of the Gonars camp, Mario Cordaro, gives the following testimony:

Our work had become absolutely unbearable. Unfortunately we could not do anything but observe our impotence since the patients could not be helped with their diet, and there was a medicine shortage. There was not enough room in the cemetery of Gonars for the dozens of cadavers that arrived daily, so a new one had to be built quickly.⁸⁰

The military doctors serving in Yugoslav camps faced even worse clinical and human cases. Doctor Camillo Croce, responsible for the health office in the camp of Melada from September 1942 to February 1943, even now recalls the grave conditions of the inmates he tried to assist as best he could:

I was living inside the camp and I was the only doctor on assignment. Normally, I was stationed in the infirmary, with the help of an internee who acted as a factotum nurse [...]. In the most serious cases of

malnutrition, I tried the best I could to prescribe food supplements, especially children and the elderly who were reduced to a pitiful state. When the health conditions on the inmates were very serious, I would recommend hospitalization at San Demetrio, in Zara, where we sent a number of medical emergencies.⁸¹

On November 20, 1942, the Bishop of Ljubljana, Monsignor Gregorij Rožman, together with the Bishop of island of Veglia (Krk), Monsignor Srebrnič, went to see Pius XII to protest the conditions in the camp of Arbe. The two prelates, while acknowledging that the leadership of the camp abided by a “humane and just treatment of the prisoners,” lamented that internment had negatively impacted about 10% of the population of the province of Ljubljana (which they placed at about 300,000 people), and that all the internees were suffering greatly as a result of the camp’s harsh conditions. Therefore, they asked that the situation be immediately addressed so as to avoid the camps of Arbe becoming “camps of death and extermination.”⁸²

The Papacy forwarded the complaints of the Bishops, of Ljubljana and Krk, to the Italian government. This query landed on General Roatta’s desk, and he entrusted the investigation to General Gianni who traveled to visit Arbe on November 26–27, 1942.⁸³ Having assembled and collected a great deal of data and information, on December 16, Roatta sent a voluminous report to the Supreme Command, minimizing the Bishops’ accusation.⁸⁴ In a poorly hidden attempt to turn the accusers into the accused, he argued that:

It would have been much better if these local authorities, rather than paint in dark colors the camps’ living conditions, had persuaded their followers not to stand with the partisans, who are sworn enemies of freedom and religion. Had they done so, they would have rendered unnecessary, or at least limited, the use of concentration camps that only now, after the fact, worry them.⁸⁵

That said, Roatta neither denied that Italians had executed mass internments, nor questioned the camps’ high mortality records. Rather, he tried to justify as “necessary or accidental” the facts that had been reported, going as far as arguing that “the vast majority [of the internees] arrived to the camps in poor physical conditions and very many of them were elderly.”⁸⁶ Yet, because of the Vatican’s direct intervention, all the children and the great majority of women and the elderly were eventually transferred from the inferno of Arbe to the camp of Gonars.⁸⁷

Making reference to the elevated mortality rates, Yugoslav writers have sometimes defined Arbe an extermination camp, though the exact number of casualties is still uncertain. The Bishop of Veglia, Srebrnič, stated the following on August 5, 1943:

In Arbe, in the territory of my diocese, where at the beginning of July 1942 an internment camp was opened under the worst imaginable

conditions, according to the existing records more than 1,200 interned have perished up to April of this year. Eyewitnesses who assisted with the burials, however, report assuredly that the number of dead during this time amounts to at least 3,500, but more likely 4,500 and more [...].⁸⁸

A friar from the convent of Saint Eufemia, which is not very far from the camp, referred in his chronicles to “official Italian records that would attest to the death of 1,267 internees.”⁸⁹ The former partisan and Arbe internee, Franc Potočnik, reported 1,009 “registered burials,” but noted that the number of deaths was much higher since, not infrequently, multiple cadavers were placed in the same coffin.⁹⁰ The figure that today seems more accurate is the one indicated by the Slovenian historian Tone Ferenc, who has documented 1,435 deaths.⁹¹

To evaluate the realities and responsibilities of the Arbe camp one must make a fundamental distinction. For the Slovenian and Croatian prisoners, interned illegally for a long period of time in contempt of any legality whatsoever, Arbe was a concentration camp with high levels of mortality, probably the worst among those established by Italians during World War II. For Jewish internees, however, the short permanence at Arbe (in barracks, and never in tents, during Spring–Summer 1943) was characterized by the typical conditions of internment.⁹² Nevertheless, as many former internees have pointed out,⁹³ the difference in living conditions cannot be traced back only to “political” reasons that determined the different treatment for the two categories (the Jews, as “protective” internees, and the Slavs as “repressive” internees) but also needs to account for random factors. For instance, due to environmental and climate changes, from the Spring of 1943—the time when Jews started to arrive at Arbe—conditions changed for all internees.

The living conditions of “military internees,” that is officers, petty officers, and soldiers of the former Yugoslav army who were segregated without benefiting from their status of P.O.W. (prisoners of war), were better than those of regular civilian internees. Yet, the behavior of Italian authorities towards them varied significantly. On one hand, Italy considered prisoners of war to be those military personnel of the former Yugoslav army captured in April 1941 who were never released. On the other hand, Yugoslav soldiers arrested after April 1941, or interned again following a prior release, were considered “civilian internees,” with the justification being that a Yugoslav state no longer existed. In fact, the majority of the Yugoslav armed forces present in Italian internment camps were included in the category of civilian internees.⁹⁴ Following an agreement between the Ministry of War and that of Finance, they received some economic provisions⁹⁵ and, for a period, could enjoy short leaves to care for families or for exceptional events.⁹⁶

Starting in February 1943, a large internment camp for Italian Slavs (that is, the Slovenian and Croatian minorities of Venezia Giulia) operated in Cairo Montenotte (province of Savona) outside of the “regulatory” internment network supervised by the Ministry of the Interior. For numerous reasons (including the end of the more frigid season and of food shortages),

this camp did not register a high level of mortality,⁹⁷ even though, here as well, internees experienced severe hunger. Regarding this and also other aspects of the internment of Italian minorities, it helps to reread the testimony of the Bishop of Trieste, Antonio Santin, about the meeting on May 26, 1943, between a prelate who was visiting, and a general who had arrived in Cairo to inspect the camp:

While I was in the infirmary visiting patients, suddenly the General of the Brigade for the Defense of Genova, Fabbri, arrived to the camp for an inspection [...]. He claimed that all the internees were rogues and we should have treated them much more harshly. I will not repeat his tough words. Everyone is guilty. When I tried to clear the air by observing that he did not know what was happening, he thought I was making outrageous statements, and believed it was his duty to transcribe them. I observed that the camp did not hold criminals (who are subject to the Special Tribunal), but men who were held to keep them away from the partisans or because of allegations against them. It is natural for inspectors and commanders to hold preconceptions and harbor views and sentiments about guests as beyond improvement. I also told the General that to spread hate and make enemies of the population was not wise. I even implored the General to report to higher authorities how scarce food was, since I had seen it with my own eyes, and learned from the Colonel how little the internees received. They were hungry [...].⁹⁸

In the memories of the survivors of the camp of Arbe the figure of Lieutenant Colonel Vincenzo Cuiuli, the commander of the camp called the “Snake,”⁹⁹ stands out for his personal sadism. As a rule, the regulations of military commands or of camp commanders did not call for physical violence and abuse of internees. Nevertheless, here and there, abuses that were detrimental to a person’s dignity took place, as did physical punishment such as chaining misbehaving prisoners to punishment posts, or even lashing and beating more disorderly prisoners with rifle butts.¹⁰⁰ The regulations for the discipline of the internment camps for civilians established by the bureau of the Second Army called for the “salute of the internee,” also requiring “the Roman salute of all Italian officers, petty officers and troops” by the internees.¹⁰¹

On August 24, 1942, in the camp of Gonars, where arrangements had been made for a pole and tent to provide disciplinary punishments, a sentinel fired a gunshot, without apparent motive, that killed a 30-year-old internee, Rudolf Kovač.¹⁰² In Renicci, during Badoglio’s interim government, the anarchist Umberto Tommasini was wounded with a revolver by a garrison lieutenant, along with some comrades, because he started to sing “The International,” while the communist Giorgio Jaksetich, together with four other internees (three Italians and three Slavs), was put through a simulated capital execution.¹⁰³ Generally, however, internees were not subjected to cruelties or forced labor, even when confined to Italian camps for Slavs.

The high commissioner for the “Provincia di Lubiana,” Emilio Grazioli, on more than one occasion proposed that work camps be organized for the internment of Slovenian people “rather than internment camps where one could be idle.”¹⁰⁴ These proposals went mostly unheard. Sometimes, the internees were led to work outside the camps: in Slovenia, for the deforestation of some areas along railway lines; in Italy, especially for construction of roads and for building sites in land reclamation areas.¹⁰⁵ Normally, in camps for Slavs, only small groups of individuals were assigned to manual labor, craftworks, clerical tasks, and health care assistance. The remaining internees “did not know what to do with their time.”¹⁰⁶ However, there did exist three labor camps in Italy: two for former Yugoslavs and one for *allogeni*. The living conditions in these camps were considered to be better than in other camps.¹⁰⁷ This is confirmed by the following testimony, where the author acknowledges both the “normal” camps of Gonars and Monigo, and the labor camp of Pietrafitta:

They sent me to the concentration camp of Gonars by rail, with 300 people chained together in groups of five. Life as an internee was certainly not easy: there was little food and nothing to do. One always thought about the food that was not available [...]. I remained in that camp until the beginning of winter. On November 28 I was transferred to Monigo, around Treviso.

For members of my group, life in this camp was worse than in Gonars. The commanders of Monigo, with the excuse of wanting to offer us a “great Christmas meal” as the festivity approached, “lightened” our already scarce food supplies. ... Nonetheless, I must say that the buildings of Monigo allowed for better living conditions than those of Gonars. We were living in a military base and therefore our conditions were objectively better than in barracks. In addition, there was an abundance of water, which is very important. I remained in Monigo till the evening of December 28, 1942, when I was transferred with a group of about 240 internees and placed in two railroad cars.

We traveled for forty-eight hours without eating absolutely anything. After about two days, at eleven at night, we arrived to the station of Ellera, in the province of Perugia, destined for the labor camp of Tavernelle. There were bunk beds in our barracks, and every internee was given two and a half kilograms of hay as bedding. Imagine what one could really do with two and a half kilograms of hay for six months ... We did not know where it was best to put it, under our head or under the buttocks ... We worked on the building site for the new railway line and I was made crew leader of the internees assigned to the construction of the railroad bridge over the river Nestore. We had to dig up 8 cubic meters of soil and load it on small wagons mounted on train tracks ...

I must say that even though it was heavy labor, life was better than in the concentration camps where I had previously been. In Tavernelle, we had to work all day and ate on site, but we had supper in the barracks

and there we could cook, and eat jam or drink wine that we bought with “coupons.” The Zanetti company in charge of the railroad construction paid the camps a certain amount for each of us. We were paid about four and a half liras a day in the form of “coupons” to be spent in the supply room of the mine. Some of the internees also received money from their families, if they had the means to do so, but this money was also delivered as “coupons.”¹⁰⁸

Despite the fact that living conditions in these camps were absolutely terrible, the internees hailing from urban environments and with higher levels of education proved to be, unexpectedly, the more resilient ones. By contrast, internees who came from the countryside, and were used to continuous physical labor and substantial nourishment, suffered from hunger and long periods of forced inactivity (idleness) much more than others.¹⁰⁹ Internees coming from the countryside also had the added disadvantage of a lower degree of political sophistication that kept them from understanding the reasons for their internment, thus depriving them of the possibility of “coming to terms with it.”¹¹⁰

Violently removed from their natural environment and relocated to a new, hostile, and artificial setting, “few internees were capable of overcoming diseases that in normal conditions would not have been lethal.”¹¹¹ However, the worst conditions were those of internee families who had children and elderly among their members. In the camp of Arbe, for example, at the end of August 1942, there were 1,000 internees below the age of 16. One of these children, who miraculously survived fascist internment, recalls his tragic experience as follows:

I arrived in Arbe on August 5, 1942, with my entire family: my eighty-seven-year-old grandfather; my father and my brother, respectively 54 and 27 years old; my 21-year-old sister-in-law. I was 7 years old. My mother passed in 1941. Another brother, a partisan, had been killed, and my third brother had gone missing for a long time. I was born in Stari Kot (which belonged then to the municipality of Draga), a village with only 36 homes ... Three fellow villagers were shot as they were held hostage, while the rest of the population was entirely deported to Arbe, after a five-day stop in the transit camp of Buccali. In the terrible camp of Arbe, on November 11th, my grandfather died, while my father passed the following January 27th. Another 17 of my fellow villagers died on the island, while 21 would die later, after being transferred to the camp of Gonars.

My aunt and I were also transferred to Gonars on December 5, 1942, where I would remain till September 18, 1943. I was sent to the Beta sector of that camp and initially I was assigned to Barrack N. 6. In January, my aunt caught epidemic typhus and I was left without clothes and food: I was dying [...]. At the end of March, I was taken to the infirmary where they practically threw me among the dying internees. By chance, I was discovered by my sister-in-law who was in the maternity ward (where

she gave birth to a girl on April 4, 1943). I started to shout that I was still alive and I could not be left there, abandoned and waiting to die. ...¹¹²

Just as dramatic were the conditions of those who came from numerous villages destroyed or burned by Italians or who had neither families nor friends who could assist them. They could not depend on shipments of food or other items of necessity, and lacked the moral support and ties to the external world that other internees received.¹¹³

3. Operations for the protection and assistance of internees

Two weeks prior to Italy's entry into World War II, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Galeazzo Ciano, through a message to the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, officially communicated the Italian government's commitment to treat foreign subjects the same way it treated prisoners of war (when applicable and following bilateral agreements):

With regard to civilian internment—wrote the Minister—we recall that article 289 of the Italian Law of War, approved by Royal Decree on September 15, 1938-XVI n. 1415, establishes that for the enemy combatants we must observe in all cases, and when applicable, the orders relative to the treatment of war prisoners, per conditions of reciprocity.¹¹⁴

In the same period, Italy's philosophy pertaining to internment politics was described as follows to the director of a concentration camp in Puglia by the Chief of Police in Bari, a province with a keen interest in the practice:

The concentration camps and sites of internment that are at the moment set up in Italy must conform to all requirements for health and quality of life so as to demonstrate to possible visitors and diplomatic representatives of the International Red Cross and of the Holy See the fairest treatment of the internees. This is done to ensure that the same treatment is given to our fellow countrymen imprisoned abroad.¹¹⁵

The Minister's words, like those of the Chief of Police, testify to the supportive attitude embraced by the Fascist government to Ministry of the Interior civilians protected by their status as "enemy subjects." The same guarantees were not extended to other categories of internees, and this disparity clearly influenced their quality of life during their internment. This was especially evident in the frequent cases where internees of different status lived in the same camp, such as the British and Yugoslav internees who lived together in the camps of Fraschette di Alatri and Bagno a Ripoli.¹¹⁶ In a message sent to Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini (who would become pope Paul VI) on October 20, 1942, the Yugoslav Legation to the Vatican emphasized the peculiar fact that its own citizens ("interned following the annexation of large tracts of Yugoslav territory to the Kingdom of Italy") were not granted the status of "enemy subjects."¹¹⁷

Even if in practice the material and existential condition of the internees had been identical, the various groups were perceived differently. For example, the testimony of an Italian Jew clearly shows that his group experienced Fascist internment with a strong sense of suffering and injustice:

Life was spent monotonously, with the preoccupation of an uncertain future and with the consciousness of suffering an unmerited injustice. We were torn between feelings of contempt to the fascists, hate towards the Germans and the attachment to Italy, which was at war and dominated by stupid and evil men.¹¹⁸

The same sentiment emerges from the words of Carlo Alberto Viterbo, the future president of the Italian Zionist Federation, who, in June 1940, compared full-scale internment to imprisonment: “[we were not] in a disgusting environment, and were not mingled with ordinary criminals, but [it was] imprisonment nonetheless. ...”¹¹⁹

Very different is the opinion of Italian internment generally provided by foreign Jews, who had survived persecutions and segregations much graver than the Italian ones. When compared to the reports of Italian Jews and other foreign internees (such as Greek and Chinese), they offered a decidedly less negative vision of fascist camps prior to September 8, 1943.¹²⁰ The Red Cross delegate who, on August 23, 1943, visited the camp of Urbisaglia (the same camp where, three years prior, Viterbo had been interned), summarized the on-the-spot evaluation of internment given to him by an Austrian Jew as such:

Colonel Pollak, doctor and former chief of the Viennese police, praises the conduct of the policemen as “excellent.” In his opinion, the treatment of the internees is equally “excellent.” In his view, there is great “understanding, goodness and humanity” on the part of the director of the camp, and he expresses his deep gratitude to the Italian Government [...].¹²¹

Not even the historian Menachem Shelah, who as a boy miraculously escaped from Croatia under Ante Pavelić had a negative memory of internment:

My family and I were interned in Castelnuovo Don Bosco, a small village between Turin and Asti. In that rural environment, we spent pleasant days after escaping the terror of the Nazis and of the Ustasha authorities. In the fall of 1942, when I was a ten-year-old boy, we were transferred from Castelnuovo to Ferramonti and I also have positive memories of being interned in that camp.¹²²

A decidedly different opinion is that provided by the former Prefect of Corfu and oftentimes Minister of the Hellenic government, Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza, also interned in Ferramonti in 1942:

The Italians offered to collaborate with them and remain as Prefect of Corfú, but I refused, so I was arrested and deported to Italy. Conditions were bad in Ferramonti and, with the subsidy of 8 liras a day, what one could buy at the commissary was truly very little. I remember a period when, for seven days, all we had to eat was a meagre ration of zucchini ... I thought about writing to a priest in Lausanne who was a good friend of mine. In the letter, which I wrote in French, I said we were well treated and in good company. But then I added in Greek and in small handwriting: "hunger and cold." He understood and he contacted the Red Cross. They sent us help.¹²³

To give a concrete idea of conditions in non-Nazi concentration camps, the Hungarian writer Arthur Koestler came up with a unit of measure whereby the French camp of Le Vernet d'Ariège (where he had been interned in 1939) was the "degree zero of ignominy."¹²⁴ To measure the conditions of Fascist internment, it is possible to state that the Ministry of the Interior's regular camps did not fall below the degree zero of the hypothetical "Koestler scale." This measure was exceeded, however, in the camps for Slav internees, where, for lengthy periods of time, the internees' struggle against hunger and the terrible sanitary conditions was part of daily life.¹²⁵

It is therefore true, as Klaus Voigt argues, that the declaration of the decree of September 4, 1940, which, echoing the Convention on prisoners of war, demanded that prisoners be "treated with humanity and protected against all offense," was generally followed.¹²⁶ Yet, this had no consequence in the camps for "parallel" internment, since they were structures *extra legem*, the existence of which was neither foreseen nor regulated by the norms for civilians that were at that time in effect in Italy. In particular, in the Yugoslav territories, fascist internment took the shape of an illegal act of deportation or of forced relocation of the population, often preceded by destruction that cannot be justified by military needs. These actions contravened the laws and rules of war and even violated the dictates of the IV Convention of Human Rights of The Hague.

At the Nuremberg Trials, the deportation and the internment of people from occupied territories (as were the "former Yugoslavs" interned by occupying Fascist forces) were prosecuted as crimes of war, as were the execution of hostages and the devastation of residential areas that could not be justified through the lens of military necessity (Italy was responsible for the latter in Yugoslavia from 1941 to 1943).¹²⁷ In fact, Article 6 of the Statute of the Nuremberg Military Tribunal not only considered such actions as falling within its jurisdiction, but included them among the crimes for which its perpetrators should bore full, individual responsibility.¹²⁸ That said, no Italian soldier or civilian was ever condemned for those crimes.¹²⁹

"We thank the International Red Cross with all our heart for the great help it gave us during our stay in Ferramonti."¹³⁰ These words, proffered by the Archimandrite of Corinth, Damaschinos Hagiopulos, after leaving the

Calabrian camp on July 2, 1943, with 41 other Greek internees, witnessed the effectiveness of the humanitarian organization based in Geneva in assisting foreigners interned in Italy; aid that, obviously, was also extended to “enemy subjects” present in camps like Ferramonti, where Red Cross delegations were denied access.

That said, the Ministry of the Interior generally allowed the Red Cross to visit “enemy subjects” sent to camps and sites of *internamento libero*, in compliance with the Geneva Convention concerning prisoners of war.¹³¹ The first inspections, carried out by the delegate to Italy, Pierre Lambert, in January 1941, took place in five camps that hosted mostly British and French internees: Bagno a Ripoli, Civitella della Chiana, Montechiarugolo, Pollenza, and Treia. Between June and October 1942, Hans Wolfgang de Salis, who succeeded Lambert, also visited these camps and, for the first time, those of Casoli, Città Sant’Angelo, Civitella del Tronto, Corropoli, and Lanciano. de Salis also met the “freed internees” of the provinces of Bergamo and Treviso and, in this city, on October 29, 1942, was unexpectedly allowed to visit the camp for “former Slavs” of Monigo, run by the military authorities.¹³² In June 1943, Hans Wolfgang de Salis visited other camps that hosted enemy subjects: Ariano Irpino, Campagna, and Solofra in Campania; Agnone, Casacalenda, and Vinchiaturio in Abruzzo.¹³³

Prior to the fall of the Fascist regime, the Red Cross had gained access to 38 camps managed by the Ministry of the Interior, but only to one camp in the parallel network handled by the Royal Army. During the same period, three categories of civilians who had not been equated to internees confined on military grounds were excluded from receiving the aid of the Red Cross: 1) the regime’s opponents and Italian minorities; 2) foreign Jews and stateless people; and 3) the so-called “former Yugoslav” citizens. One should mention, however, that if the camps hosted categories of internees other than “enemy subjects,” those individuals could meet off the record with Red Cross delegates without any opposition by the Ministry of the Interior.¹³⁴

The Comitato Internazionale della Croce Rossa (CICR, or, International Committee of the Red Cross) as attested by the document below sent from the Ministry of the Interior to its Foreign Affairs counterpart, requested many times that the Italian government grant access to the camps that had remained off-limits to its delegates, so it could provide humanitarian assistance to all civilians interned in Italy:

The International Red Cross, by way of its delegate, Doctor de Salis, has persistently asked for the authorization to visit concentration camps where civilian subjects of enemy States reside, as well as to camps where there are foreign subjects of nations that are not at war with Italy, or subjects of nations that are either occupied by the Axis or with which diplomatic relations have either been cut off or suspended.

According to the delegate of the International Red Cross, this request is founded on the humanitarian mandate of this institution, which calls for aid to be provided to all foreign civilian internees regardless of their status as subject of enemy States.

To that effect, we look forward to a prompt reply by the Ministry so we can provide urgent instructions to the Public Security authorities charged with the matter.¹³⁵

A similar request, sent by the Red Cross in the first half of July 1943, pertained above all to the camps of Ferramonti, Nereto, Tortoreto, and Tossicia. On August 10, 1943, the new Badoglio government authorized it, with the exclusion of Ferramonti, which was in the area of military operations.¹³⁶ As a result, between the end of August and early September, just prior to the armistice declaration, the new delegate of the CICR, Bruno Beretta, traveled to Southern Italy to visit—in addition to some municipalities of *internamento libero*—the camps of Civitella del Tronto, Corropoli, Nereto, Notaresco, Polenza, Tossicia, Urbisaglia, and Sassoferrato.¹³⁷

Among the camps that remained off limits to the Red Cross were obviously the “parallel” internment ones (the visit to Monigo in October 1942 was the exception), since Italy did not consider the Yugoslav internees of those camps “enemy subjects,” nor, in most cases, foreigners, but rather “Italians by right of annexation,” who were interned for political reasons and/or issues of law and order. It was in those camps that the internees in greatest need of assistance were located. Indeed, the Red Cross, which between the end of 1942 and the first half of 1943 had launched without any success several initiatives to provide aid to Yugoslavs interned in Italy, wrote on July 15, 1943, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome explicitly asking to be allowed to visit camps that hosted exclusively or for the most part Yugoslav internees: Frascette, Renicci, Chiesanuova, Monigo, Gonars, Colfiorito, Visco, Lipari, Ustica, Ponza, and Arbe.¹³⁸ Well after a month had passed, the Italian delegate of the CIRC, de Salis, expressed his pessimism about the possibility of obtaining the authorization in a timely manner, in a brief report on the camp of Gonars he sent to Geneva.¹³⁹

However, a few days later, as part of the cautious engagement of this issue by the Badoglio government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs granted its authorization to the Red Cross’s request. Nevertheless, the Ministry emphasized how the assistance to “former Yugoslav” internees could not be “officially sanctioned as a *de jure* protection, but only as a practical, humanitarian form of aid.”¹⁴⁰ Regrettably, the recipients derived almost no benefit from Italy’s belated response, which arrived on the eve of September 8, 1943, when the camps “for Slavs” were being disbanded or about to fall under the larger state of paralysis that followed Italy’s armistice declaration.¹⁴¹

Besides the CIRC, the Ministry of the Interior also allowed diplomatic representatives of neutral nations to visit enemy civilians interned in Italy, in

accordance with the Geneva Convention. Functionaries of the United States Embassy—which protected English and French interests after Italy's entrance into the war—visited the camps of Montechiarugolo, Pollenza and Treia many times between March and September of 1941.¹⁴² After the American military intervention, the protection of British and French civilians fell under the jurisdiction of the Swiss delegation, which visited several camps. For example, they visited the camp of Frascette during the months of February, March and August of 1943.¹⁴³

During their inspections, the delegates of the Red Cross and the functionaries of diplomatic corps were also accompanied by the general inspector of public safety, Carlo Rosati. The delegates could confer with the internees absent from the camp directors, but Rosati or one of his subalterns had to be present. This is why it is easy to understand, as the Viennese writer Herman Hakel observes, that the internees feared freely describing their conditions.¹⁴⁴ If complaints arose, Rosati generally dismissed them, and denounced the internees as “querulous” or “petulant” to the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁴⁵

Following each visit, the delegates of the Red Cross would write a report that was sent to the Ministry of the Interior. It is evident from reading these reports that the delegates hinted at the problems that surfaced with much prudence and circumspection, out of concern for the Fascist authorities' susceptibilities. Even Rosati, after each inspection, would write up a report, and the Ministry of the Interior would invite the prefects to resolve any problematic incident, though, most of the time, these invitations would go unanswered.¹⁴⁶

The Swiss Legation complained several times to the Italian government about the treatment of internees under the delegation's protection. In a note on August 4, 1942, addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Legation, whose representatives had visited Bagno a Ripoli on July 22, denounced the fact that a number of internees of that camp had been imprisoned “because they complained about room and board.” This was a behavior that ran counter to the provisions envisaged for war prisoners—per article 24 of the Constitution of Geneva of July 27, 1929—that Italy had endorsed even for the treatment of interned civilian enemies.¹⁴⁷

A few weeks after Italy's war entry, Father Pietro Tacchi Venturi (the Jesuit who served as liaison between the secretary of state, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, and the Ministry of the Interior), in a note written to the chief of police Bocchini, on behalf of Maglione, Venturi agreed that “current circumstances” fully justified the internment of civilians. In principle, then, the Church approved the fascist government's internment practices.¹⁴⁸ Conversely, the Church saw as its overriding priority—and not only in Italy—the spiritual assistance of Catholics during internment, and the missionary care of internees of other faiths. Centrally, the Holy See instituted a permanent information office supported by the Vatican Radio that, from the beginning of the war, strove to put prisoners of war and interned civilians in touch with their faraway families.¹⁴⁹ However, in order to provide more tangible help to the internees, religious authorities had to gain access to the different camps.¹⁵⁰

And indeed, between December 1940 and July 1943, following the Pope's orders, the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Francesco Borgongini Duca,¹⁵¹ traveled extensively between Calabria and Venezia Giulia to meet many interned civilians, bringing them spiritual and material comfort. Overall, Monsignor Borgongini Duca visited 31 camps for civilian internees managed by the Ministry of the Interior (many of which he visited multiple times), and four (Chiesanuova, Gonars, Monigo, and Renicci) controlled by the Italian Royal Army.¹⁵²

During the Nuncio's visits, internee representatives presented him with a list of their needs. He, in turn, would forward them to the Ministry of the Interior. Borgongini Duca, who undoubtedly wanted to accommodate the varied requests of the internees, generally expressed positive impressions of his visits to the camps, praising their directors and painting idyllic portraits that were not always shared by the internees.¹⁵³ Specifically, Yugoslav internees disagreed, as exemplified in the following testimony by Stojan Pretnar, an influential Slovenian jurist who, as a young man, was interned in Gonars and Renicci:

During his visits, Borgongini Duca gave us holy cards of the Virgin Mary and forwarded the Pope's greetings. I believe, however, that, while it was commendable that the Vatican wished to comfort the internees, its real duty should have been to ask Italy to eliminate concentration camps where thousands of people taken from their homes suffered and died. We know, of course, that at the time only 12 years had passed from the Concordat; and that the *Consulta* selected by the High Commissioner Grazioli, which included Slovenian collaborators, met Mussolini on June 8, 1941, but also visited Pope Pius XII. The latter, by welcoming the visit, sanctioned *de facto* the occupation of our lands which, in violation of the Convention of The Hague, happened without even a declaration of war. ...¹⁵⁴

Similarly, according to the writer Hermann Hakel, Jews reacted to the smug attitude exhibited by the Prelate as if they were being "treated like children." However, they took pleasure in the visits, since they took them as proof that someone was interested in them.¹⁵⁵

Per initiative of the Vatican, Slovenian chaplains were deployed to each of the concentration camps "for Slavs."¹⁵⁶ However, the Church's wish to pair internees with chaplains who at least could speak their language, was soon ostracized by the authorities. As Borgongini Duca explained in a letter to Cardinal Maglione on September 26, 1942, "The Government does not trust Slovenian priests, so we must make do with Italian chaplains who speak the language, though they are few and not always suitable."¹⁵⁷ In the camp of Cairo Montenotte, the Slovenian priest was substituted by an Italian colleague, Don Tapazin, who might "have spoken, and poorly, two words of Croatian and none of Slovenian."¹⁵⁸ In the Renicci camp, the new priest, don

Antonio Zett, who professed to being “first a fascist, then Italian, and lastly Catholic,” left awful memories of his service.¹⁵⁹ In addition, outside of the camps, when the partisans’ offensive became insistent and worrisome, many Slav priests were themselves interned and substituted by military chaplains.¹⁶⁰

The Vatican’s intervention resulted in the placement of its chaplains on a permanent basis even in some of the camps run by the Ministry of the Interior. For example, to provide spiritual assistance to Catholic internees and promote the evangelization of others, the Vatican dispatched Calliste Lopinot, an Alsatian Capuchin, to Ferramonti.¹⁶¹ Similarly, the Franciscan of Chinese origins, Antonio Tchang Kan-I, was assigned to Isola del Gran Sasso, a camp where many of his fellow countrymen were interned, a number of whom he baptized during a visit by the Nuncio.¹⁶²

A particularly important role in support of the internees was that of the bishops in whose dioceses the concentration camps were located. These bishops should be credited with having provided an important point of reference (and not only for spiritual reasons) for prisoners of all faiths living in the camps and under *internamento libero*.¹⁶³ In geographical areas with high density of internment, such as were Venezia Giulia and Veneto, such support and solidarity toward the internees became common even among the population and the lower levels of the clergy,¹⁶⁴ though their worthy efforts were systematically opposed by Fascist leaders and other local authorities. For example, the Prefect of Gorizia, Cavani, expressed his concerns to the Ministry of the Interior over the activities of priests in the province of Udine, who actively collected clothing, bread, and basic essentials to send to the internees of the camp of Gonars. On March 27, 1943, he wrote the following to a colleague from Udine:

Because these actions could encourage unfortunate incidents within the population, especially at such delicate times, I have informed the local ecclesiastical authorities to avoid that this type of aid be provided to a race that, as we know, has never had, nor has favorable feelings towards Italy. ...¹⁶⁵

In Ljubljana, on April 13, 1943, the High Commissioner Grazioli ordered that civilian Commissars for the Province’s various districts “cease, if it still is provided, any assistance on behalf of the internees.”¹⁶⁶ Indeed, in Slovenia, the solidarity toward internees engaged individuals from every strata of society, and the Fascist leaders objected to it as a sign of “anti-Italian activity.”

On April 15, 1943, the episcopal conference of the Tri-Veneto region approved a letter to Mussolini written by Monsignor Antonio Santin and signed by four bishops. From its beginning, the letter bore witness to the very real social emergency caused to the Giulia region by the internment of its inhabitants, and by the practice of incorporating in the “special battalions” young men of conscription age who belonged to Slav minorities:

As bishops and priests of numerous individuals in our dioceses who are interned in concentration camps or are rounded up, though very young, in the barracks of special battalions, we are very worried about what's happening in our region, and turn to you asking for measures that highlight your enlightened and generous will. ...

The four bishops asked the Duce, on behalf of their parishioners, for more food, a review of the internment decisions, and an explicit authorization from above enabling the dioceses to collect and send to the camps, without fear of repercussions, aid and public offerings on behalf of the internees.¹⁶⁷ A month later, Monsignor Antonio Santin was allowed to visit the special camp for *allogeni* of Cairo Montenotte, in Liguria, and the camp of Frascette, in Latium.¹⁶⁸ Regarding the "tragedy of reprisals and internment against Slovenians," the Archbishop of Gorizia, Monsignor Carlo Margotti, conferred with the Duce on April 2, 1943, and with the Inspector Giuseppe Gueli on April 19 of the same year.¹⁶⁹

Worthy of mention also are some testimonies and stands by military chaplains who courageously denounced the indiscriminate round-ups and conditions in the camps. One such example is the diary of Lieutenant, Father Pietro Brignoli,¹⁷⁰ a document that is "disturbing for the realism with which it describes the actions of the military undertaken to the detriment of civilians and partisans";¹⁷¹ and which devotes much attention to the capture and internment of civilians following the round-ups of the Royal Army in the Yugoslav countryside. Another courageous chaplain, Father Giorgio Zoldan, thus conveyed his impressions of the Italian "transit camp" near Sibenik in an account of December 1942 to his commander:

Once more, I bring to Your attention, and plead that you insist with the authorities in charge, so they might close down the disgrace of the so-called concentration camp of Vodice. I would like to invite you to visit. It is too humiliating for us, as Italians, to witness such inhumane treatment of innocent individuals who, if guilty, we would execute as a matter of honor rather than keep in such state. ...¹⁷²

Completely different were the reports and the stances taken by monsignor Ivo Bottacci, the military chaplain in charge of the Second Army.¹⁷³ Between January 18 and 27, 1943, he visited the concentration camps of Arbe, Chiesanuova, Gonars, Monigo, and Visco, giving idyllic descriptions about them, going as far as attributing to the camps a "humanitarian" function, since "very many internees could not enjoy similar conditions and services in their own homes."¹⁷⁴

The diplomatic activities of the Holy See were very effective in convincing Fascist authorities first, and Badoglio's leadership later, to release a large number of Slav internees (especially women, children, and the elderly), who had been interned without specific charges. This approach became particularly important in the spring of 1943, when Italian authorities sought to

leverage the political capital of such releases, imbuing it with anti-Communist rhetoric, so as to undermine popular support for the partisan movement while improving the regime's relationship with the Church. Still in 1943, the Vatican, urged on by the Red Cross, intervened decisively with the Italian authorities so that Yugoslav deportees in the camps of Arbe and Frascette be equated with "normal" foreign internees and, as such, receive the assistance of the Red Cross.¹⁷⁵ After the fall of the Fascist regime, the Church's actions on behalf of Yugoslav citizens deported by Italy gained renewed energy in its interactions with the Badoglio government.¹⁷⁶

Lastly, the *Delasem* ("Delegation for the assistance of Jewish emigrants"), the organization headquartered in Genoa that was created by the Union of Italian Jewish communities on December 1939, was also very active in assisting co-religionists interned in Italy. Until September 8, 1943, the organization, which could count on the support of important Jewish international organizations, took on an intense activity of assistance and legal advice on behalf of internees, with the authorization of the Fascist government.¹⁷⁷ To achieve its goals, *Delasem* took advantage of a peripheral network of correspondents, chosen among interned co-religionists deployed in camps and localities of *internamento libero*. The Ministry of the Interior, for its part, ruled with a memo on May 18, 1942, that the activities of these correspondents be limited to welfare support, and to assistance in filing the paperwork that would allow Jewish internees to emigrate from Italy.¹⁷⁸ The "Mensa dei Bambini" [*Children's Canteen*], an organization founded in Milan by Israele Kalk, played a particularly strong organizational role on behalf of Jewish internees. Kalk, a fiery and passionate Lithuanian Jew who had gained Italian citizenship before 1919 (and therefore was not subject to expulsion under fascist anti-Semitic laws), began after 1940 to focus his work primarily toward children who were interned in the Ferramonti camp.¹⁷⁹

Notes

- 1 For the reports of Lo Spinoso, see Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4 (Mobilizzazione civile), bb. 17–20, 24, 34, 40, 42–43. See also K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol. II, cit.: 53.
- 2 See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime, M4, f. 23/I, *Appunto* of Direzione generale di pubblica sicurezza of May 31, 1940.
- 3 See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4 (mobilizzazione civile), f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I, ins 4, "casermaggio, manutenzione, vestiario." See also F. Terzulli, *L'internamento fascista in Puglia*, in "Fondazione Ferramonti," II, January–June 1989, n. 2–3: 49ff.
- 4 The only camps set up in Northern Italy were the ones of Montechiarugolo and Scipione, in the province of Parma.
- 5 Article 5 of Mussolini's decree of September 4, 1940, states: "internees must be treated with humanity and protected against offense and violence. They cannot be destined to unhealthy locations or those vulnerable to enemy fire." These requirements were at times blatantly disregarded. The Ferramonti camp, for example, was located in an insanitary area subject to malaria.

- 6 Significant is account of a female witness from the island reported by E. Mancini, *Isole Tremiti*, cit.: 138 (on the Tremiti islands, the confinement colony “employed” over 1,500 people, including military personnel and civilians). For a reference to Ustica, see the letter of the director of the confinement colony to the Prefect of Palermo, in S. Carolini ed., “*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*,” cit.: 377–379.
- 7 Due to the grave political and military time, the relocations toward the Center-North camps of Scipione, Chiesanuova, Corropoli, Renicci, and Frascette of deportees evacuated from the islands of Ustica, Lipari, Ponza, and Ventotene were especially difficult and complex. See the information relative to the single camps in this volume (“Topography of the Camps”).
- 8 The subdivision of the internment zones at first did not correspond to the pre-existing 11 zones inspected by the Dggs or to the zones controlled by Ovra. After a while, however, the internment zones were absorbed by the preceding 11 zones of the Dggs. See the dossiers on these provinces in Acs, Mi, Dggs, Agr, Cat. Massime M4, ff. 16 and 18, as well as F. Terzulli, *L'internamento fascista in Puglia*, cit., p. 52; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 113.
- 9 On May 25, 1940, three days after the approval of the law concerning the national preparation for the war, the prefects of the Center-Southern regions received the following telegraphic dispatch: “In case of emergency ministry will intern foreigners and Italians, who it is necessary to remove from their residences, in Central and Southern Italian municipalities [...],” circular n. 442/36838 of May 25, 1950, in G. Antoniani Persichilli, *Disposizioni normative e fonti archivistiche per lo studio dell'internamento in Italia*, cit. p. 83.
- 10 See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: Table on p. 600.
- 11 P. Pollack, *Il campo di concentramento di Urbisaglia*, in Acdec, Fondo Kalk, III–IV.
- 12 See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 27, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), letter signed by nine internees, Ponza, December 16, 1942.
- 13 E. Cione, *Campo di concentramento a Colfiorito di Foligno. Al confino con Lelio Basso e con gli slavi*, cit.
- 14 See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 102, s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 12/1, “Rimesse denaro. Franchigia e censura postale.”
- 15 M. Eisenstein, *L'internata numero 6*, cit.: 63.
- 16 G. Scalarini, *Le mie isole*, cit.: 123.
- 17 This was the case of Lanciano, where the Jewish writer Aldo Oberdorfer (1885–1940) was listed among the free internees. See Acs, Mi, Dggs, Agr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, ff. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per la provincia), ins. 12 “Chieti,” list of internees in the province of Chieti, July 14, 1940.
- 18 The Italian finance police supervised the camp of Frascette, but it should be noted that this camp was a peculiar one. See the mapping at the end of Chapter 5 (Topography and history of the camps).
- 19 Escapes generally concluded with the realization of their futility since the camps were located in fairly remote areas with few roads.
- 20 The most frequent transfer destination for internees who were being punished were the Tremiti islands. See S. Minerbi, *R. Cantoni. Un ebreo anticonformista*, Rome: Carucci, 1978: 105–107; E. Musolino, *Quarant'anni di lotte in Calabria*, cit.: 116–120.
- 21 See S. Carolini ed., “*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*,” cit. pp. 377, 385; S. Sorani, *L'assistenza ai profughi ebrei in Italia (1933–1947). Contributo alla storia della Delasem*, cit.: 69–82.
- 22 Cfr. R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei sotto il fascismo*, cit., p. 371. In the camp of Ferramonti, the first families arrived in September 1940: cfr. C.S. Capogreco, *Ferramonti*, cit.: 59.

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- 23 The camp of Ferramonti, for example, was in Calabria, a region that, in 1940, reached a record number of 25,000 unemployed. See G. Conti, "L'opinione pubblica calabrese di fronte alla seconda guerra mondiale (dall'inizio del conflitto alla caduta del fascismo)," in *Aspetti e problemi di storia della società calabrese nell'età contemporanea*, Reggio Calabria: Editori Meridionali Riuniti, 1977; P. Bevilacqua, *Le campagne del mezzogiorno tra fascismo e dopoguerra. Il caso della Calabria*, Turin: Einaudi, 1980: 273–274.
- 24 G. Amendola, *Un'isola*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1980: 130–132.
- 25 In Italy, the cost of living index rose 16% in 1941 and 1942; 63% in 1943. See N. Gallerano, "Il fronte interno attraverso i rapporti delle autorità 1942–1943," in *Il movimento di liberazione in Italia*, 109, 1972.
- 26 See A. Dellepiane, *La lunga via della libertà. Testimonianze per servire la storia della resistenza*, cit.
- 27 L. Pescarolo, *Il lungo cammino. Dalla dittatura alla democrazia*, cit.: 55.
- 28 See R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 420–421.
- 29 Among Jews in *internamento libero*, the practice of medicine and the teaching of foreign languages was quite common. In the camp of Ferramonti, even family members of the director received lesson in foreign languages by interned Jews. See C.S. Capogreco, *Ferramonti*, cit.: 174, 73n.
- 30 G.B. Guerri, *Rapporto al duce. L'agonia di una nazione nei colloqui tra Mussolini e i federali nel 1942*, Milan: Mondadori, 2002: 114.
- 31 S. Carolini ed., "*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*," cit.: 411.
- 32 On this episode, which took place on May 10, 1942, see F. Folino, *Ferramonti. Un Lager di Mussolini. Gli internati durante la Guerra*, Cosenza: Brenner, 1985: 163–164; C.S. Capogreco, *Ferramonti*, cit.: 72–74.
- 33 It should be noted that Mussolini had decided to grant special privileges to the most visible Greek internees in Italy (a larger daily indemnity and the transfer in hotels or private homes) in the hope of favoring their compliance. (Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins. 30 "Internamento greci," da ministero degli Affari Esteri a Dgps, firmato Ciano, Telespresso del 5 settembre 1942, "Internati greci in Italia. Rifer. Nota del Mi n. 442/23564 of August 14 u.s.").
- 34 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 131, s. fasc. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 28/3, da commissario Armando Giglio a Capo della Polizia, March 5, 1943. See also K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 128.
- 35 Testimony of the former internee Stevan Nikolić, born in Podgorica (Foligno, November 16, 2000), May 21, 1909.
- 36 With regard to the foreigner, as Klaus Voigt writes "the ministry of the Interior disapproved the use of physical violence ... for fear of possible consequences on Italians interned in other countries" (*Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 128).
- 37 K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 171.
- 38 See M. Leone, *Le organizzazioni di soccorso ebraiche in età fascista*, Rome: Carucci, 1983: 187–188, 210–211.
- 39 As noted, to the "Slav" internees were "assigned" the camps of Casoli, Città S. Angelo, Corropoli, Lanciano, Notaresco, Scipione, and several others.
- 40 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 118, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12/11 "Istonio," da ispettore generale di PS di zona Falcone a ministero dell'Interno, prot. 038, March 16, 1943.
- 41 Written testimony by Zoran Kompanjet (Fiume, January 18, 1990), kindly made available by Francesco Terzulli. Kompanjet, teacher and writer born in Abbazia (Opatija) on August 17, 1919, was rector of the university of Fiume (Rijeka) from 1976 to 1978. He was interned at the Tremiti Islands from November 1941 to March 1942.

- 42 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr., Cat. Massime M4, b. 99, f. 16, s.f. I, ins. I, "Disposizioni di massima su campi di concentramento e località d'internamento," Circular 442/18947, da ministero dell'Interno a prefetti, Lavoro agli internati, July 5, 1942. See also S. Carolini ed., "*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*," cit.: 375–376; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 146–147.
- 43 In these three camps work involved land reclamation (Fertilia), the construction of the rail-line (Pietrafitta-Tavernelle), or the extraction of minerals in nearby mines (Ruscio).
- 44 In the camp of Chiesanuova, for example, 14 internees were deemed suitable for work. See Ars, II, XI Corpo Armata 1083b, s.f. III, da Comando Divisione di Fanteria "Lombardia" a Comando Carabinieri Regi XI Corpo D'armata, "impiego lavori internati," June 4, 1943.
- 45 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime, M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 101, s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 8 "Ispettori generali di PS," Report of Inspector S. Li Voti, February 17, 1943.
- 46 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime, M4, b. 127, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 18/1, "Campo le Fraschette di Alatri," Report of vice-Prefect of Frosinone, July 2, 1943.
- 47 The undersecretary of the Interior Guido Buffarini-Guidi stated the following in *Appunto per il duce* of November 19, 1942: "The placement of the ones who have been removed must take place in the provinces of Northern and Central Italy, having to exclude those of Southern Italy and the Islands for mainly military reasons" [S. Carolini ed., "*Pericolosi nelle contingenze belliche*," cit.: 399–340].
- 48 See N. Živković, "Jugosloveni u fašističkima logorima u drugom svetskom ratu," in *Vojnoistorijski Glasnik*, 1995, n. 1: 192–199.
- 49 See, for example, F. Potočnik, *Koncentracijsko taborišče Rab*, cit.; C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci. Un campo di concentramento in riva al Tevere*, cit.; A. Kersevan, *Un campo di concentramento fascista. Gonars 1942–43*, Preface of C.S. Capogreco. Udine: Kappa Vu, 2003.
- 50 The commands of the Second Army (*Supersloda*) were located in Sussa (Sušak), at the gates of Fiume. From April 10, 1941 to March 15, 1943, the general of the brigade Arnaldo Rocca (succeeded by Colonel Eugenio Morra) was at the head of the *Office for prisoners of war* and then of the *Office for prisoners and civilian internees* of the Second Army. The *Ufficio Prigionieri di Guerra* Maggiore dell' Esercito was directed by the lieutenant colonel Eugenio Pallotta. For additional information on the camps and the movement of the internees, see: Aussme, M3 It, b. 64 (Ufficio A.C. Campi di concentramento) and Avii, *Italijanski Arhiv e Neprijateljskih Jedinica*.
- 51 See, *infra*, the data sheets at the end of Chapter 5 (Topography and history of the camps).
- 52 Aussme, 1243, Smre, Uff. Pdg, Dsm, March–April 1943, all, 68 "Campi concentramento i.c.," March 11, 1943. Initially, a few licenses had been given for "acknowledged and urgent necessity." These possibilities were excluded starting March 1943. From the camp of Renicci, for example, collective leaves to the nearby shore of the Tevere only occurred after the fall of the Fascist regime. On visits to internees, see the testimony of Zora Piščanc in *I cattolici isontini nel XX secolo*, III, *Il Goriziano fra guerra, Resistenza e ripresa democratica (1940–47)*, Gorizia: Istituto di Storia Sociale e Religiosa, 1987: 437–439.
- 53 See D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 420.
- 54 See Ars II, f. 1082/b, *Dopisi*, s.f. IX, from the Command of the Military District of Ljubljana to various addresses, November 28, 1942, prot. N. 7030/P, "Pacchi viveri agli internati"; ivi, f. 661/V, *Inventarmi XI A.Z.*, Command of the Infantry Division "Isonzo," summary of the food packages sent to the office of Ljubljana on March 7, 1943. On the shipment of packages, see also point n. 7 of the cited report of Mario Roatta, "Situazione in Slovenia—campi di concentramento."

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- 55 See N.L. Zorić, *Robje, ne hvala, Otpor fašističkom agresorju u Boki Kotorskoj 1941–1943*, Beograd: Vojska, 1996: 145–147.
- 56 Conversation with Metod Praznik, former Slovenian internee (Ljubljana, November 3, 1996); see too B. Jezernik, “La vita quotidiana nei campi d’internamento,” in *Qualestoria*, XII, December 1984, n. 3, pp. 34–50.
- 57 Naw, T-821, R. 398, Command Supersloda (Second Army), Report of the medical officer Alberto Lang, November 22, 1942.
- 58 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I (Affari Generali), ins. 43 “Campi di concentramento per internati civili gestiti dalle autorità militari,” Communication of the Prefecture of Fiume to the ministry of the Interior of December 18, 1942, under the title “campo concentramento internati civili di Arbe.”
- 59 Ars, II, f. 14 Gabinetto Alto Commissario, b. 61/V, signed letter sent to the high commissioner Grazioli by way of the podestà of Ljubljana L. Rupnik, January 13, 1943. See also *Zločini italijanskega okupatorja v “Ljubljanski Pokrajini,”* cit.: doc. n. 45: 138–139.
- 60 Testimonial of Lojze Bukovac, in C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci*, cit.: 91–102.
- 61 See R. Graziani, *Cirenaica Pacificata*, Milan: Mondadori, 1932.
- 62 See G. Rochat, *La repressione della resistenza in Cirenaica*, cit., p. 170 and ff. In 1922, Graziani stated that concentration camps “ensure the elimination of the connivance with rebels and create a more docile population ...,” report to De Bono, May 2, 1931, cit. In G. Rochat, *therein*.
- 63 See Chapter II.
- 64 See T. Sala, “Guerra e amministrazione in Jugoslavia 1941–1943: un ipotesi coloniale,” in *L’Italia in guerra 1940–43*, Brescia: Annali della Fondazione Luigi Micheletti, 1990–1991, n. 5; D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 314 ff, 400–410.
- 65 The city of Ljubljana was surrounded by a barbed-wire fence of 34 kilometers spaced out with 69 small surveillance forts.
- 66 Acs, Fondo Graziani, 1/2/2, Lettera di istruzioni di P. Badoglio a R. Graziani, 29 luglio 1932. See G. Rochat, *La repressione della resistenza in Cirenaica*, cit.: 137.
- 67 See B. Jezernik, *Boj za obstanek. O življenju Slovencev v italijanskih koncentracijskih taboriščih*, Ljubljana: Založba Borec, 1983: 50 ff.
- 68 Acir, G. 17, Service Yougoslavie, Note pour le Secretariat, Object: I.C. yougoslaves en Italie, December 10, 1942, signed R. Siegriet.
- 69 Ars, II, XI Corpo Armata, b. 726, s.f. VII, Nota del Generale Gastone Gambarà, December 17, 1942.
- 70 This short, expressive document was published many times in the postwar period.
- 71 The writer and publicist Ivan Bratko (1914–2000) is the author of the volume *Teleskop* (Ljubljana, Mladinska Knjiga, 1974) where he narrates the escape from the camp of Gonars. On this event, see also J. Martinčič, *Beg iz Gonarsa*, Ljubljana: Založba Borec, 1978.
- 72 In N. Pahor Verri ed., *Oltre il filo. Storia del campo di internamento di Gonars 1941–1943*, Gonars: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1994: 112. On the scarcity of food ascribed to the stealing on the part of officers of the camp, see B. Jezernik, *Boj za obstanek*, cit.: 121 ff.
- 73 The calories in the rations for internees established by the Ministry of war, are described by General Giuseppe Gianni in a report of December 3, 1942, to the Command Supersloda (Naw, T-821, r. 398, “Campi di concentramento per civili di Arbe,” December 3, 1942).
- 74 See the above-cited report by General Giuseppe Gianni who visited the camp of Arbe in November 26–27, 1942.

- 75 As Davide Rodogno explains, this demonstrates the full knowledge on the part of the Italian authorities that the high mortality of the internees was the result of malnutrition (*Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 421).
- 76 According to a letter of the podestà of Treviso, between September 10, 1942 to January 26, 1943, 51 internees died in the camp of Monigo. See Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins. 43, da podestà di Treviso a ministero dell'Interno, "Trasporti funebri di internati politici deceduti, raccomandata del 26 gennaio 1943." According to the list of names assembled by Tone Ferenc, the total number of deceased internees was 232 (*Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 469–474) even though this was the camp that housed the highest number of "protective" internees.
- 77 Testimonial of professor Menenio Bortolozzi, in R. Bolis, "Chi erano quei 2800 sloveni nel lager fascista a Monigo," in *l'Unità*, April 25, 1980.
- 78 See I. Dalla Costa, "Monigo, uno dei campi di concentramento in Italia," in *Patria indipendente*, March 24, 1985: 26–27; M. Trinca, *Monigo; un campo di concentramento per slavi a Treviso. Luglio 1942–settembre 1943*, Treviso: Istresco, 2003: 62.
- 79 See C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci*, cit.: 50.
- 80 See A. Kersevan, *Un campo di concentramento fascista*, cit.: 217.
- 81 Testimonial of Doctor Camillo Croce (Como, June 20, 2001).
- 82 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 109, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins. 1/33 "Sloveni-internamento," from ministry of Foreign Affairs to ministry of the Interior, express telegram of November 21, 1942, with the title "Situazione in Slovenia-campi di concentramento." The memo, which contained the prelates' report was sent to the Holy See as well as the Supreme Command and the High Commissioner for the "Provincia di Lubiana."
- 83 See note 73.
- 84 In the report, the General stated the number of Slovenian internees was of 17,000 and not 30,000 and noted that the figures reported to the Holy See came from local ecclesiastical authorities hostile to Italy, especially the Bishop of Veglia. The General observed also that the highest number of internees was of 10,552, even though the camp had reached 19,369.
- 85 Aussme, *Diari storici II Guerra mondiale*, Sme, Racc. 1130, Ufficio PdG, Diario storico-militare, gennaio–febbraio 1943, allegato n. 58. The report is signed by Mario Roatta ("Situazione in Slovenia-campi di concentramento"). It was transmitted from *Supersloda* to the Supreme Command, in Rome, on December 16, 1942, in C.S. Capogreco, "Per una storia dell'internamento civile nell'Italia fascista (1940–1943)," cit.: 556.
- 86 See J. Walston, "History and Memory of the Italian concentration camps," in *The Historical Journal* I, 1997, n. 40, pp. 176 ff; D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 419 ff.
- 87 See *Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre*, vol. IX (gennaio–dicembre 1943). Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975, p. 261 (letter of the Secretary of State Cardinal Luigi Maglione to the apostolic delegate to Washington Monsignor Amleto Cicognani of April 22, 1943); see also *Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre*, vol. VIII (gennaio 1941–dicembre 1942), cit., Città del Vaticano 1974: 698–690 (letter of the Apostolic Nuncio in Italy Monsignor Francesco Borgongini Duca to Cardinal Maglione of October 26, 1942).
- 88 *Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre*, vol. IX (gennaio–dicembre 1943), cit.: 425, note 1.
- 89 O. Badurina, *Kronika samostana Sv. Eufemije*, 5, Franjevački Samostan Kampor.
- 90 See F. Potočnik, *Il campo di sterminio fascista: l'isola di Rab*, cit.: 88.

- 91 T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 435–460. The Slovenian Božidar Jezernik lists 1,167 dead internees (1,056 males and 111 females); the Croatian Ivan Kovačić 1,447 (1,244 males and 203 females): B. Jezernik, *Italijanska koncentracijska taborišča za Slovence med 2. Svetovno vojno*, Ljubljana 1997: 413; I. Kovačić, *Kampor 1942–1943*, Adamić, Rijeka 1998: 167–243.
- 92 On the events of the “Jewish camp” of Arbe, see J. Romano, “Jevreji u logurimu na Rabu i njihove uključivanje u Narodnooslobodilački rat,” in *Zbornik*, 1973, n. 2: 1–68; F. Potočnik, *Il campo di sterminio fascista: l’isola di Rab*, cit., p. 119–120; D. Rodogno, *Il nuovo ordine mediterraneo*, cit.: 419–424, 440–484.
- 93 Conversations with Stane Kirn, former Yugoslav internee of Arbe (October 9, 1998) and Ivo Herzer, former Jewish internee (November 6, 1986).
- 94 *Ars*, II, Sezname internirancev, f. 1/19. See list of military prisoners of war interned as civilians.
- 95 These provisions were tied to a period of service of at least ten years. If the period was shorter, a monthly subsidy of 150 liras was given to the neediest families. See “Promemoria” of December 31, 1942, to the Chief of The General Staff of the Italian Army, in *Ars*, II, XI Corpo d’Armata, b. 66r a/VIII.
- 96 See the testimony of S. Pucelj in *Oltre il filo ...*, cit.: 178–179.
- 97 On the camp of Cairo M., see, the end of Chapter 5 (Topography and history of the camps).
- 98 See A. Santin, *Trieste 1943–1945*, cit.: 22.
- 99 See A. Vratuša, *Iz verig v svobodo. Rabska brigada*, cit.: 331.
- 100 See T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 29.
- 101 Naw, T-821, r. 406, “Disciplina dei campi di concentramento per internati civili,” January 25, 1943.
- 102 Testimonial of Jože Koren, cit. See also A. Kersevan, *Un campo di concentramento fascista*, cit.: 232.
- 103 See C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci*, cit.: 66.
- 104 See T. Ferenc, *La Provincia italiana di Lubiana. Documenti 1941–1942*, Udine: Istituto Friulano per la Storia del Movimento di Liberazione, 1994: 499.
- 105 See “Zločini Italijanskega okupatorja v ‘Ljubljanski Pokrajini,’” I, *Internacije*, cit.: p. 31, doc. 35-b; C.S. Capogreco, “Per una storia dell’internamento civile nell’Italia fascista (1940–1943),” cit.: 564.
- 106 B. Jezernik, *La vita quotidiana nei campi d’internamento*, cit.: 39.
- 107 See, *infra*, the mappings of the camps of Pietrafitta, Ruscio, Fertilia and Fossaloni.
- 108 Testimony of Marijan Česnik (Ljubljana, November 7, 1996). When Yugoslavia was invaded, Česnik (born on October 30, 1919), was a student of engineering at the University of Ljubljana.
- 109 See B. Jezernik, *Boj za obstanek*, cit.: 35 ff.
- 110 Conversation with a few former Slovenian and Croatian internees (M. Osredkar, J. Koren, F. Šimac).
- 111 T. Ferenc, *Rab-Arbe-Arbissima*, cit.: 33.
- 112 Testimony of Herman Janež (Ljubljana, January 31, 1996).
- 113 Even in the Italian camps for prisoners of war, “packages, besides providing food, were very important for the psychological health of prisoners,” in A. Marziali, *Vita quotidiana dei prigionieri di guerra britannici in Italia durante la seconda guerra mondiale*, cit.: 89–90.
- 114 “Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge,” XXII, July 1940, n. 259: 525.
- 115 In F. Terzulli, *Ebrei stranieri in un piccolo campo pugliese*, cit.: 123.
- 116 In June 1943, the prefect of Frosinone reported to the ministry of the Interior that some Slovenian and Croatian internees of the camp of Fraschette were providing their services to families of Anglo-Maltese internees. See L. Gromme, *I campi di concentramento per internati civili di guerra (10 giugno ’40–8 settembre ’43): il caso del Lazio*, cit.

- 117 Avii, *Arhiva Neprijateljstkih Jedinica*, Br. reg., 25/1, 18–19, K. 1021, Rome, October 20, 1942.
- 118 Testimony of Gastone Piperno, former internee of the camp of Gioia del Colle, in F. Terzulli, *Il campo di concentramento per ebrei a Gioia del colle* (agosto 1940–gennaio 1941), cit.: 591.
- 119 Viterbo's letter was written to his family from Urbisaglia on June 30, 1940; in C. S. Capogreco, "L'internamento degli ebrei italiani nel 1940 e il campo di Urbisaglia-Abbadia di Fiastra," in *La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 2003, n. 1.
- 120 Perhaps this might explain the decision on the part of Jewish parents to give their new born the name of the dictator. See "Noi ebrei salvati dall'Italia," in *La Stampa*, January 11, 1990. On the experience of Greeks and Chinese, see E. Averoff-Tossizza, *Prigioniero in Italia. L'odissea di un antifascista greco in un campo di concentramento italiano*, Milan: Longanesi 1977; P.W.L. Kwok, *I cinesi in Italia durante il fascismo. Il campo di concentramento*, Naples: Marotta, 1984.
- 121 Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, *Rapport sur les visites aux internés civils de la province de Macerata, Visités par le Dr. B. Beretta le 22 et 23 août 1943*. See also P. Pollak, *Il campo di concentramento di Urbisaglia*, cit. Yet, from the same report of the Red Cross, it emerges that food was insufficient and internees lost 15–20 kilograms in a short period of time.
- 122 Testimony of Raoul Spicer, also known as Menachem Shelah (Boston, November 11, 1986). Shelah (1932–1995) is best known for his book *Un debito di gratitudine*, cit.
- 123 Testimonial of Evangelhos Averoff-Tossizza (Athens, November 30, 1986), born in Trikkala in 1910. Averoff, who served as Minister of Foreign Affairs for Greece from 1956 to 1963, wrote about his internment in *Prigioniero in Italia. L'odissea di un antifascista greco in un campo di concentramento italiano*, Milan: Longanesi, 1977.
- 124 See A. Koestler, *Scum of the Earth*, London: Cape 1941 (trans. in Italian as *Schiama della terra*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989, p. 81). See also D. Cesarani, "Camps de la mort, camps de concentration et camps d'internement dans la mémoire collective britannique," cit.: 20–21.
- 125 The title of one of the first studies on fascist internment camps for civilians that was published in Yugoslavia is precisely "struggle for life" (*Boj za obstanek*, by B. Jezernik, cit.).
- 126 K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol. II, cit.: 128.
- 127 See E. Greppi, *I crimini di guerra contro l'umanità nel diritto internazionale*, Turin: Utet, 2001: 135–138.
- 128 It is important to recall that the principles for international human rights recognized by the Statute and the sentences of the Nuremberg Tribunal (constituted following the London Accord of August 8, 1945, signed by the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France) were confirmed by the resolution n. 94 of the General Assembly of the UN, unanimously supported on December 11, 1946.
- 129 See M. Battini, *I peccati di memoria. La mancata Norimberga italiana*, Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2003, and F. Focardi, "L'Italia fascista come potenza occupante: la questione dei crimini di guerra (1943–1948)," in *Qualestoria* 2000, n. 1: 157–183.
- 130 Acicr, G. 17/Italia, lettera al Cicr of July 13, 1943, signed by D. Hagiopulos.
- 131 See J.C. Favez, *Une mission impossible? Le CICR, les déportation et les camps de concentration nazis*, cit.: 304–306; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol II: 114 ff.
- 132 See Monigo, in the section "Topography of the Camps."
- 133 See Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps.
- 134 See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol II, cit.: 114.
- 135 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 110, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. I, ins. 44, "elenchi numerici degli internati britannici dic. 1942–

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- ago. 1943,” da Dgps-Mi a Mae, prot. 451/8134, “Scambio liste internati civili in Italia e nei paesi dell’Impero Britannico.”
- 136 Acicr, G. 17/Italia, da Cicr a Mae 10 July 1943; risposta, 10 August 1943. See K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol II, cit.: 115.
- 137 Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps.
- 138 Acicr, G. 17/Italie, da Cicr a Maé, “Visite d’un délégué du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge au camp d’internés civils ex-yougoslaves,” July 15, 1943.
- 139 “Nous leurs avons exprimé le vif espoir que l’action de secours envisagée en faveur des Internés civils yougoslaves dans toute l’Italie puisse être réalisée avant qu’il ne soit trop tard. La situation décrite ici à propos des internés se trouvant à Gonars est celle de la grande majorité des quelques 60,000 à 100,000 internés de même nationalité dans ce pays” (Acicr, G. 17/Italie, IC, da de Salis délégué du Cicr a Service Yougoslave du Cicr Ginevra, *Rapport confidentiel sur le Camp de Gonars*, August 18, 1943).
- 140 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr. Cat. Massime M4, b. 104, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 14/5, express telegram reserved by Mae (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to Cri/Ufficio Pdg and Mi, August 19, 1943, “Soccorso e visite ex jugoslavi in Italia,” signed Vidali, in C.S. Capogreco, *Renicci*, cit.: 176–177.
- 141 “Your Excellency Rev.ma wants to communicate Yugoslav Government that Italian Government is arranging demobilization of the Croatian and Slovenian internment camps following the Holy See’s involvement,” so telegraphed on August 25, 1943, Cardinal Luigi Maglione to the Apostolic delegate to London William Godfrey (*Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre*, cit., Vol. IX: 446).
- 142 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 103, s.f. 14, ins. 3, “Visite dei rappresentanti Ambasciata S.U.A.”
- 143 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 103, s.f. 14/6, “Visite dei rappresentanti della Legazione Svizzera.” See also L. Gromme, *I campi di concentramento per internati civili di guerra (10 giugno ’40–8 settembre ’43): il caso del Lazio*, cit.: 95.
- 144 K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, vol. II, cit.: 116.
- 145 Ibid.
- 146 Ibid.: 116–117.
- 147 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 103, s.f. 14, ins. 6 “visite dei rappresentanti della Legazione svizzera,” from the Swiss Legation in Italy to Mae, verbal note of August 4, 1942.
- 148 Cfr. K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., pp. 181–183; S. Zuccotti, *Il Vaticano e l’Olocausto in Italia*, Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2000: 95–107.
- 149 See “Sollecitudine operosa del Papa per le vittime della guerra,” in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, XCII, January 1941, vol. 1, quaderno n. 2174: 161–162.
- 150 The Vatican asked the governments of the belligerent states the permit to visit the internees. See “Il Santo Padre per i prigionieri e per i profughi,” in *L’Osservatore Romano*, January 18, 1941.
- 151 Francesco Borgongini Duca was apostolic nuncio of the Italian State from 1929 to 1953, when he was elected cardinal. He died in Rome the following year.
- 152 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4 (Mobilizzazione civile), f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 103, s.f. 14/2, “Visite del Nunzio Apostolico.” Between December 24–27, 1940, Borgongini Duca visited the camps of Montechiarugolo, Civitella della Chiana, Pollenza, and Treia; from April 7 to April 15, 1941, he was in Isola del Gran Sasso, Notaresco, Civitella del Tronto, Nereto, Tortoreto, Urbisaglia, Pollenza, Treia, Fabriano, and Bagno a Ripoli; from April 23 to April 25, 1941, he visited Agnone, Boiano, Isernia, Casacalenda, Vinchiaturò, Marina di Istonio, Lanciano, Lama di Peligni, and Casoli; between May 19 and May 23, 1941, Monteforte Irpino, Ariano Irpino, Manfredonia, Alberobello, Pisticci, Ferramonti, and Campagna; between May 18

- and May 28, 1942, he visited Montechiarugolo, Bagno a Ripoli, Civitella della Chiana, Treia, Pollenza, Urbisaglia, Fabriano, Tossicia, and Isola del Gran Sasso; on October 26, 1942, he was in Gonars; in February 1943 in Chiesa-nuova, Monigo, and Renicci; between April 10 and April 16, 1943, he visited Pollenza, Treia, Isola del Gran Sasso, Tossicia, Notaresco, Città Sant'Angelo, and Tollo; from May 25 to May 1943, he came to Frascette, Pisticci, and Ferramonti. See also *Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre*, cit., vol. IX (1943): 111, vol. VIII: 698–699, doc. N. 527.
- 153 “The majority of government report on his visits describe his satisfaction for what he saw, despite the poor housing conditions, the lack of food, the insufficient medicines, the diseases and the boredom ...,” S. Zuccotti, *Il Vaticano e l'Olocausto in Italia*, cit.: 99.
- 154 Testimonial of the former internee Stojan Pretnar (Ljubljana, November 10, 1998). Pretnar, who passed away on March 3, 1999, has addressed this topic in “Italijan o Trpljenju Slovencev v italijanskih taboriščih,” *Delo*, October 29, 1998.
- 155 K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II: 183–184.
- 156 A few names are Father Serafin, who served in Monigo; Father Daniele in Renicci; Father Margon in Cairo Montenotte; and father Pucchio in Arbe.
- 157 *Le Saint Siège et les victimes de la guerre 1941–1942*, vol. VIII, doc. N. 527, cit., from the Apostolic nuncio in Italy to the Secretary of State, Rome, October 26, 1942.
- 158 A. Santin, *Trieste 1943–1945. Scritti, discorsi, lettere*, cit.: 22.
- 159 Don G. Babini, *Dentro la linea gotica. Odissea di una comunità parrocchiale*, Sestino, 1979: 5.
- 160 See M. Franzinelli, *Il riarmo dello spirito*, cit.: 98–99.
- 161 See Fr. Callistus a Geispolsheim, *De Apostolatu inter Hebraeos in publicae custodiae loco cui nomen v. “Campo di Concentramento Ferramonti-Tarsia, Cosenza,”* *Analecta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum*, Rome 1944; Id., “Diario 1941–1944,” in *Ferramonti: un Lager nel Sud*, cit.: 156–207.
- 162 See P.W.L. Kwok, *I cinesi in Italia durante il fascismo*, cit.: 70.
- 163 For the camp of Bagno a Ripoli, see V. Galimi, *L'internamento in Toscana*, in E. Collotti ed., *Razza e fascismo. La persecuzione degli ebrei in Toscana (1938–1943)*, Rome: Carocci, 1999, vol. I: 529. For the camp of Frascette, see *La provvida mano*, cit.: 52–98.
- 164 Assistance to the internees was greatly developed in the diocese of Gorizia where Monsignor Margotti established a “Committee for the Assistance of the Internees of Gonars.”
- 165 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime, M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 110, s.f. I (Affari generali), ins. 43, “Raccolte di fondi per civili sloveni internati nel campo di concentramento di Gonars (Udine), prot. 038998.”
- 166 Ars, II, XI Corpo d'Armata, b. 1082 c/VII, ordinanza dell'alto commissario Emilio Grazioli.
- 167 See A. Santin, *Trieste 1943–1945*, cit.: 20–21.
- 168 Following the report of Borgongini Duca, “the leadership of this camp, which had inhuman conditions, was removed,” in A. Santin, *Trieste 1943–1945*, cit.: 23.
- 169 See L. Tavano, *L'arcivescovo C. Margotti e la chiesa goriziana di fronte alla guerra e ai movimenti di liberazione (1940–1945)*, cit.: 142.
- 170 See P. Brignoli, *Santa messa per i miei fucili. Le spietate rappresaglie italiane contro i partigiani in Croazia dal diario di un cappellano*, Milan: Longanesi, 1973. Born in Cenate Sotto (Bergamo) on October 15, 1900, Brignoli was named military chaplain on January 3, 1936. In December of the same year he was sent to East Africa and on May 4, 1941, he left for Yugoslavia (where he joined the II Regiment of Grenadier of Sardinia) and remained there until November 25, 1942.

- 142 *Life in the camps and care of the internees*
- 171 M. Franzinelli, *Il riarmo dello spirito*, cit., p. 137. See also M. Isnenghi, *Le guerre degli Italiani*, Milan: Mondadori, 1989: 302.
- 172 From a memo of Giorgio Zoldan on December 15, 1942, to Consol I. Sacchi, commander of the Battalion "Squadristi." See Franzinelli, *Il riarmo dello spirito*, cit.: 100. The camp of Vodice was a collection and transit center for internees destined to the large concentration camp of Melada.
- 173 Bottacci was born in Castelmaggiore on April 6, 1895.
- 174 Ars, II, XI Corpo d'Armata, b. 1082 f. VIII, from the report of Monsignor Bottacci of January 31, 1943, to the Military Ordinariate following a visit to the concentration camp.
- 175 See Acicr, G. 17/Italia, "Aide-mémoire sur la question des internés ex-yougoslaves en Italie," August 21, 1943, in a letter of Cardinal L. Maglione to the Apostolic Nuncio in Berna, Monsignor Filippo Bernardi, June 17, 1943.
- 176 See L. Ferrari, *L'azione della Santa Sede per i prigionieri nei campi d'internamento italiani*, cit.
- 177 The *Delasem* assisted those who were trying to leave Italy. It also provided material and moral support to those who waited to be expatriated. See R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, cit.: 427 ff; K. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario*, cit., vol. II, pp. 335 ff; S. Antonini, *DelAsEm. Storia della più grande organizzazione ebraica italiana di soccorso durante la Seconda guerra mondiale*, Genoa: De Ferrari Editore, 2000.
- 178 See S. Sorani, *L'assistenza ai profughi ebrei in Italia (1933-1947). Contributo alla storia della "Delasem,"* cit.: 53 ff.
- 179 See K. Voigt, "Israel Kalk e i figli dei profughi ebrei in Italia," in *Storia in Lombardia*, IX, n. 2, 1990: 201-250; C.S. Capogrneo, *Ferramonti*, cit.: 73 ff.



Figure 1 Concentration camp of Fraschette (Latium), 1943.
Source: Personal Archive, Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, Rende.



Figure 2 Concentration camp of Ferramonti (Calabria), 1942.
Source: Personal Archive, Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, Rende.



Figure 3 Ernesto and Alda Rossi in confinement at Ventotene, August 1941.
Source: Archive “Centro Studi Piero Gobetti,” Turin.

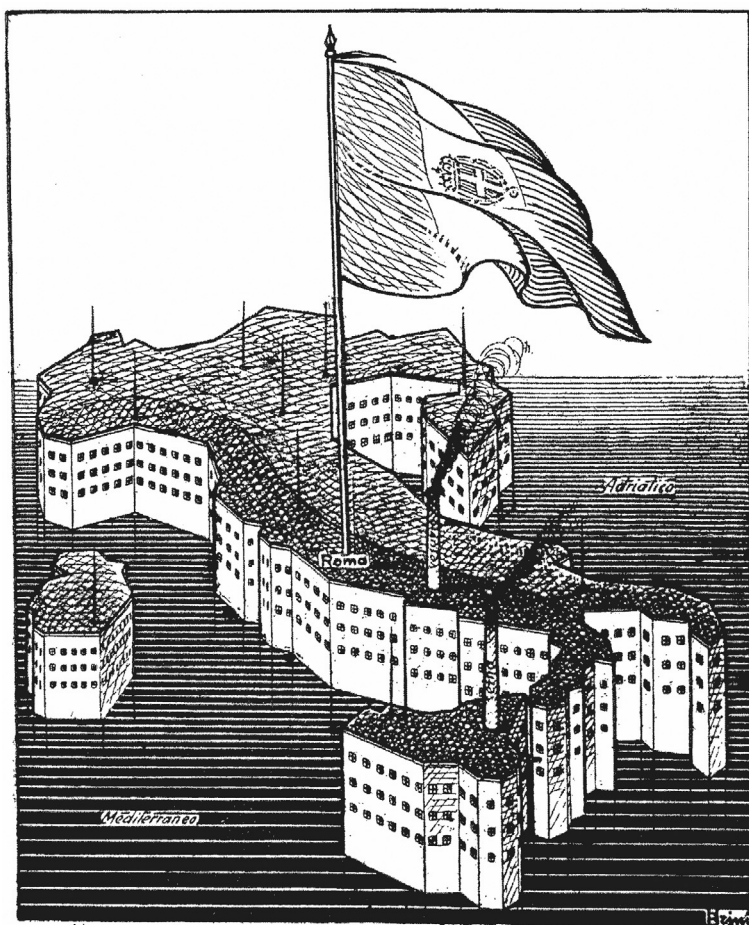


Figure 4 The tricolor flag with the Savoy emblem waves over Fascist Italy turned into a prison.

Source: Ink drawing by Giuseppe Scalarini, c. 1945. Personal Archive, Bianca Chiabov, Milan.



Figure 5 Yugoslav children in the Concentration camp of Arbe, 1942.
Source: Archive Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije, Ljubljana.



Figure 6 The inside of a male barracks, Concentration camp of Gonars.
Source: Archive Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije, Ljubljana.

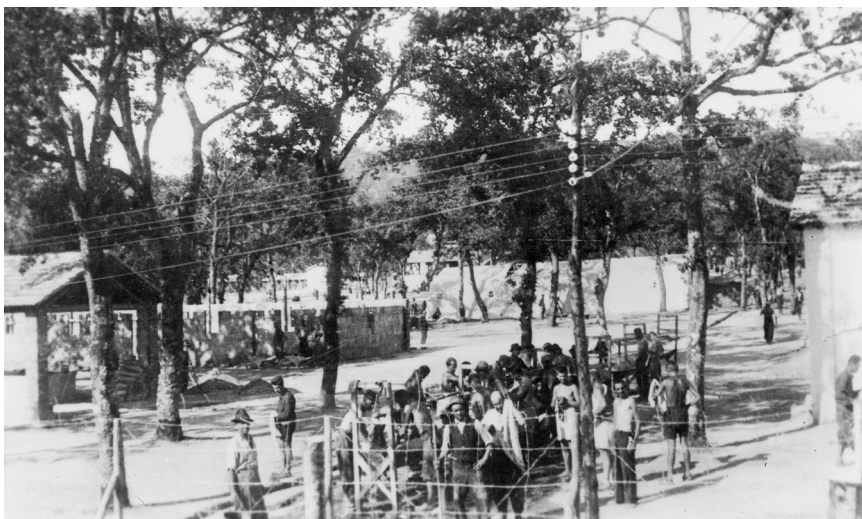


Figure 7 The interior of a sector in the Concentration camp of Renicci.
Source: Archive Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije, Ljubljana.



Figure 8 Flag-raising in the Concentration camp of Melada, 1942.
Source: Personal Archive, Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, Rende.



Figure 9 A group of poor Jewish internees, camp of Ferramonti.
Source: Personal Archive, Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, Rende.

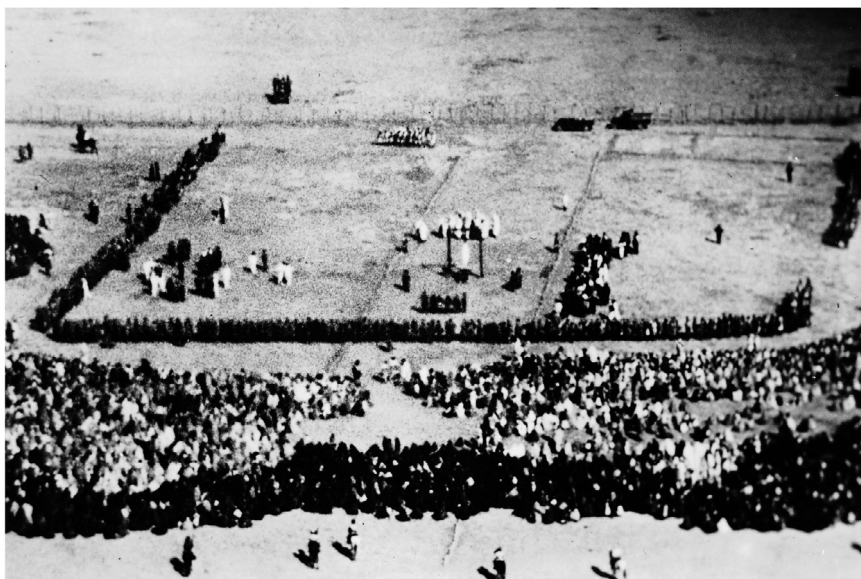


Figure 10 Public hanging of a Libyan partisan in a colonial camp in Cyrenaica, 1931–1932.

Source: Personal Archive, Luigi Goglia, Rome.



Figure 11 The cemetery of the camp of Arbe, immediately after the war.

Source: Archive Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije, Ljubljana.

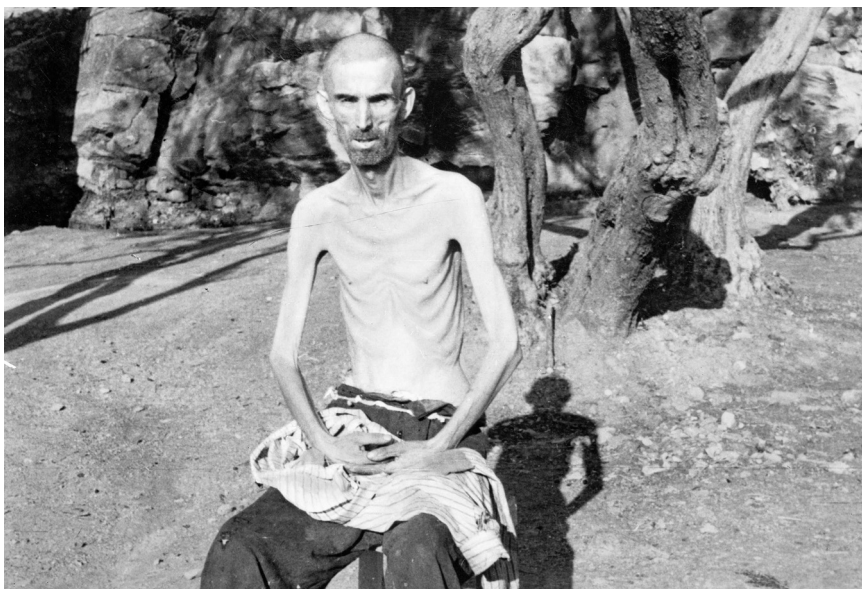


Figure 12 The Slovenian internee Janez Mihelčič, Concentration camp of Arbe 1942.
Source: Archive Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije, Ljubljana.



Figure 13 Distribution of rations in the Concentration camp of Arbe.
Source: Archive Muzej novejšje zgodovine Slovenije, Ljubljana.



Figure 14 Former internees from the Concentration camp of Campagna (Province of Salerno) in line for the distribution of rations after the arrival of the Allied Forces, in 1943.

Source: Personal Archive, Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, Rende.

5 Topography and history of the camps (1940–1943)

I. Camps supervised by the Ministry of the Interior (included in “regulatory” civilian internment)

Emilia-Romagna

MONTECHIARUGOLO (Parma)

Opened by the Ministry of the Interior in June 1940, this camp was set up in the 15th-century castle owned by the Marchi family and situated in Montechiarugolo’s downtown. The part of the building set off for the camp could hold up to 200 internees, a number that, truth be told, it never reached. The building, in a state of shoddy disrepair despite being equipped with functioning water and electrical systems, had a main floor and two more above it, for a total of 30 rooms of varying sizes. In addition, there was a garden; ample, well-fenced courtyards; as well as other areas for the bathrooms and kitchen, where town restaurateurs prepared two daily meals for the internees.

The camp came to be known for the frequent coming and going of internees, the first of whom were “contingent” ones (French and English enemy subjects as well as “foreign Jews”) who arrived in early August 1940. At the end of that month, however, the majority of internees from the nearby camp of Scipione—also categorized as “enemy subjects”—were transferred there; while in the following months, almost all the Jewish internees from Montechiarugolo were transferred to camps in the Center-South of Italy.

By mid-December of 1940, the Emilian camp counted 118 people, among whom were 28 Frenchmen and 79 Britons. Of the latter, 20 were from Malta, mostly students who, before the start of the war, attended Italian universities.

The daily life of the internees was spent between the rooms, the loggia and the castle’s courtyard, whose entrance was guarded by the *carabinieri* who had placed a permanent guardhouse there. With appropriate permission from the camp’s director, the internees could access the gardens or go to town for specific needs. Internal surveillance and other policing duties were carried out by public safety agents, under the command of an official who also acted as

the camp Director. Carmine Medici, Olindo Tiberi, Iginio Adami, Mario Majello, and Vittorio Pietrantonio followed one another in this role.

Prevalent among all internees were the difficulties related to being forced into a crumbling building that had not undergone the improvements necessary to host large quantities of people: there were few toilets, the humidity was excessive, and water and heating were substandard.

In June 1941, with the arrival of 58 former Yugoslav sailors from Dalmatia (who would remain in Montechiarugolo for two months), the camp achieved its maximum occupancy: 146 people. At that time, the Slav internees, together with their French counterparts, went on a hunger strike to demand better living conditions and, specifically, a self-managed canteen. This happened, even though the French received a monthly subsidy of 100 lira from their government; while the Britons, who were the most privileged, received a subsidy of 300 lira, in addition to packages sent them by the Red Cross.

When the armistice was announced on September 8, 1943, there were 103 internees in this camp, only 50 of whom could not escape. After some vicissitudes, these internees were transferred to the building of the elementary school in *Via Veneri*, in the Reggio Emilia neighborhood of Santa Croce.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>August 8, 1940</i>	<i>December 15, 1940</i>	<i>January 16, 1941</i>	<i>June 30, 1941</i>	<i>June 30, 1942</i>
Internees	67	118	116	146	78
<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>January 15, 1943</i>	<i>March 1, 1943</i>	<i>August 15, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	82	82	103	120	109

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dagps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 131, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 28/3–6.

Acicr, Csc, Service des camps, Italie (January 16, 1941; August 27, 1942).

SCIPIONE (Parma)

Opened in June 1940, this camp was set up in an old castle belonging to Parma's Vittorio Emanuele II Orphanage, which was on a hill about 4 kilometers from downtown Salsomaggiore. Provided with electricity, plumbing, and phone services, the building was thought capable of holding 200 people. It had a main floor and two additional storeys, with about 30 rooms of varying sizes used as dorms. In addition, there was a dining hall, kitchen, laundry room, bathrooms, and ample internal courtyards surrounded by strong walls. In the small suburb of Scipione, where the camp was operative, there were only a few peasant homes in addition to the castle. Initially, agents of public safety carried out both internal and external surveillance, under the

command of a non-commissioned officer who acted as the camp director. Starting in 1942, the *carabinieri* were charged with external surveillance.

Initially, the internees in this camp were “dangerous Italians” and, in smaller numbers, “foreign Jews” and “enemy subjects.” By August 1940, Scipione was emptied out, with the transfer to nearby Montechiarugolo of almost all the internees, until, in September of that same year, it was completely shut down. The camp was reopened in the middle of August 1942 to host exclusively Slav internees. For the most part, the latter were draft-age youth originally from Slovenia, Dalmatia, and, in smaller numbers, Venezia Giulia.

Between mid-June and mid-July, 1943, 120 internees were transferred to the Ferramonti camp, and eight to Farfa. After a brief time period during which only about 20 internees remained, 139 internees and eight confinees from Montenegro—four women among them—entered the camp tattered, barefoot, and famished, having been evacuated from the camp in Lipari. The maximum number of internees, 173, was registered on July 31, 1943.

The camp developed many analogies with the Montechiarugolo one, since both were set up in old, humid castles facing problems with heat and water delivery. However, the living conditions of the internees differed to the detriment of the “Slav” camp of Scipione, where the internees lived in pitiful conditions. Aside from lacking food, which caused a general physical deterioration of the inmates, Scipione also offered insufficient medical support provided in a hiccupy manner by a health officer from Salsomaggiore: as a result, there were many cases of tuberculosis, pneumonia, and scabies.

When the armistice was announced, Scipione held roughly 150 internees. Some of them escaped on the night of September 9, 1943, climbing over the fence that surrounded the camp. In the following two days, a total of 31 internees escaped the camp. After that, the German command decided to release the internees who had no specific charges against them, while the rest were transferred to internment locations.

From the end of 1943 onward, the camp of Scipione hosted political internees, and Italian and foreign Jews who had been rounded up in the province of Parma. In December 1943, it became a “provincial camp” for Jews of the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI). Then in June 1944 it became the transit camp for 15 Jewish internees coming from the camp of Roccatederighi (Grosseto) on their way to the camp of Fossoli. It was finally shut down in September 1944, after numerous partisan attacks that had occurred in the previous months.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>August 15, 1940</i>	<i>August 31, 1940</i>	<i>August 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>July 15, 1943</i>	<i>July 31, 1943</i>
Internees	42	63	104	132	28	173

<i>Date</i>	<i>September 8, 1943</i>	<i>December 27, 1943</i>	<i>February 1, 1944</i>	<i>March 17, 1944</i>	<i>June 10, 1944</i>	<i>August 31, 1944</i>
Internees	148	130	60	40	38	15

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dags, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 131, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 28/2, 28/8.

Tuscany

BAGNO A RIPOLI (Florence)

This camp was established in July 1940 in a country residence (Villa “La Selva”), which was property of Silvio Ottolenghi, a Jew who had moved to Palestine following the proclamation of the fascist racial laws. The villa, which Florence’s Revenue Office wished to confiscate to transfer its offices there as part of the “evacuation” of its major operations from the city, was administered in the absence of its owner by Margherita Soavi, an “Aryan” woman who, when the camp opened, kept some rooms for herself in which to pile the furniture, as well as to create an apartment for the custodian.

Located about 3 kilometers from downtown Bagno a Ripoli, and 9 kilometers from the center of Florence, the building consisted of 40 rooms of varying dimensions, each holding between 6 and 20 people, on a main and two upper floors. It had plumbing, electricity, and phone systems and, from mid-April 1941, also some showers. Following speedy improvement works during the second half of June 1940, the camp was set up to hold 225 internees, with the first only arriving by the end of September.

The command was given to the commissioner of public safety (Pasquale De Pasquale, Fernando Di Donna, Domenico Cecchetti, and Mario Cecioni took turns in the position), aided by a second-in-command and some regular officers. Initially, a local general practitioner, Dr. Bifano, provided healthcare and, in 1942, a dentist also followed. Internees with more serious medical conditions or in need of surgical procedures were hospitalized in Florence.

Early on, the internees ate their meals at the Santa Teresa shelter, located only 400 meters from the camp. Later, as their numbers grew, a dining hall was set up inside the villa, run by Alfredo Forni, the same person who provided the meals for the local shelter.

The Bagno a Ripoli camp initially held foreign and stateless Jews, as well as “enemy subjects” (British, French, Greek, Norwegian, Russian, and so on). At the end of January 1942, 77 British Jews arrived there having been transferred from Libya as part of the removal, for reasons of public safety, of foreign residents from the Italian colonies. During 1942, there were numerous transfers of internees to other camps. In May 1943, 50 “former Yugoslavs” arrived at Bagno a Ripoli from the camp of Tollo, and in July another 40 from the camp of Corropoli.

Considering the whole duration the camp was active, the average number of internees fluctuated between 95 and 100 people. Living conditions were not particularly harsh at the beginning, and the internees' days were characterized by the typical rhythms of Italian internment. During the day they could walk along a country trail that ended near the entrance to the neighboring towns of Ponte a Ema, Bagno a Ripoli, and Antella.

As the months went by, internment life became harsher, and the "borders of confinement" extended only 400 meters from the villa (corresponding to the border of the manor farm Matteuzzi). A letter from January 13, 1942, signed by 45 of the 53 Yugoslav civilians interned in Bagno a Ripoli, explained to the International Committee of the Red Cross the extremely difficult living conditions the signers were subjected to ("we are in desperate conditions ... without clothes, linen and shoes"), and they requested swift material and financial support.

On December 27, 1941, to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas, the ministrant from the Russian Church of Florence (the Prince Ivan Kourakin) was allowed to enter the camp and partake of the Christmas ceremony with the 60 Greek internees. That same year, with the aid of the Red Cross, a small library was created, while in the spring of 1942, management allowed the creation of "language and popular culture courses," for the most part supervised by the internees themselves. In the fall, referencing the recent provisions by the Ministry on the matter, about 15 internees were allowed to find work in the camp's vicinity. The archbishop of Florence, Monsignor Elia Dalla Costa, went to the camp more than once to comfort the detainees and, during Christmas 1942, to donate 360 Italian lire "to improve the Christmas Day food provisions" for all internees.

Following the fall of the fascist regime, the situation remained almost unchanged. Even after September 8, 1943, the camp continued to operate normally, violating the armistice clauses that required the liberation of internees. As Valeria Galimi has documented, Florence's police commissioner, Mormino, made the decision not to free the internees, justifying this behavior by claiming communication difficulties. On the 22nd of the month, taking advantage of the inadequate levels of surveillance, about 50 internees escaped (including some Jews). Other Jews could have escaped, but they did not, not so much because of the risks inherent in escaping, but because—despite the fear of the Germans—they could not imagine that their stay in such a pleasant building could have transformed itself into an antechamber for deportation to the German "Lagers."

In December 1943, Villa La Selva would become a "provincial camp" for Jews rounded up in the Tuscan provinces (Florence excluded). On January 15, 1944, a group of foreign Jews rounded up in Abruzzi (including women and children) passed through the camp; and on the 26th of the same month, they were transferred to Fossoli concentration camp (Modena) under the supervision of the German command. The camp of Bagno a Ripoli ceased its activities in July 1944, following a partisan attack that led to the liberation of 40 or so internees.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>September 9, 1940</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>October 31, 1940</i>	<i>January 1, 1941</i>	<i>April 2, 1941</i>	<i>January 30, 1942</i>
Internees	2	10	25	127	75	180
<i>Date</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>January 30, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>January 19, 1944</i>	<i>March 15, 1944</i>	<i>April 4, 1944</i>
Internees	166	180	173	123	96	83

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dagsps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 124, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 15 “Firenze.”

Acicr, and Sc, Service des camps, Italie (January 15, 1941; April 2, 1941; August 26, 1942).

CIVITELLA DELLA CHIANA (Arezzo)

Opened in July 1940, this camp (at times called “Villa Oliveto”) was located in Oliveto, a small suburb of the municipality of Civitella della Chiana, 500 meters above sea level, and a distant 4 kilometers from the train station of Badia al Pino and 16 kilometers from the city of Arezzo. It was set up in a country villa (Villa Mazzi, owned by the homonymous family). This had been used, before the war, to house paramilitary Croatian groups (*Ustasha*) that performed military drills in the nearby countryside, whose members worked in the fields to cover up their true motives. Direction of the camp fell to a public safety official (the following would take turns directing the camp: Amedeo Mascio, Vincenzo Gullino, Ferdinando Longhi, Enrico Iacono, Carlo Vitti, Carmelo Giardina, and Francesco Garofano).

The building, which could hold roughly 80 internees, had a main floor and two additional storeys: on the top two floors were the dorms, while on the main floor was the office of the director, the infirmary, the kitchen, and the mess hall. Every floor had toilets, but insufficient water pressure rendered the flushing tanks unusable much of the time, causing unhealthy, insanitary conditions. There was a “bathroom with tub” between the top two floors, which could be used by the detainees, as long as they reserved it at the cost of 3 Italian lire per person.

The internees, who were grouped in the categories of “enemy subjects” (among whom there were numerous Indians) and “foreign Jews,” began to arrive in July 1940. Initially, they were allowed to stroll along whole sections of road and numerous hairpin turns that led to the villa. But, starting in December 1940, the permissible area was restricted to the straightaway in front of the building. In January 1942, a first group of 51 Jews of British citizenship arrived here from Libya, some as members of entire families, and among them many children and pregnant women (seven babies would be born here during the internment period). The new arrivals were in terrible hygienic conditions: as a result, they severely tested the villa’s capacity to accommodate them.

The owner of the villa himself (Pasquale Mazzi, who was accused more than once of price fixing) was in charge of the food supply, as he managed a small commissary. He also provided board for the internees, receiving from the prefecture a daily sum of 6.5 Italian lire per two meals. Additionally, the Red Cross often shipped food items. Healthcare, which was officially the purview of a local doctor, benefited substantially from the presence of two internee doctors, a Pole and an Englishman.

The most frequent gripes concerned the lack of water, food and medicine shortages, overcrowding, and the difficulty of promiscuity during cohabitation, all problems that, on more than one occasion, Red Cross delegates reported on. Even the British *Foreign Office*, as it pertained to its own citizens held in Civitella, accused the Italian government, through the British delegation in Bern, of failing to follow articles 4, 10, 11, 12, and 13 of the 1929 Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war that the Italian government had agreed would also apply to civilian internees.

In July 1942, on the advice of the general inspectors Enrico Cavallo and Carlo Rosati, the decision was made to transfer the 14 unmarried internees from the camp (ten British subjects, of whom nine were Indian; and one each of Dutch, Greek, Iranian, and Yugoslav), setting aside the villa for families that had arrived from Libya, to whom would be added other family members dispersed in other camps of the peninsula. As a result of this decision, Civitella was composed thereafter solely of Jewish internees. But, contrary to what was happening in the other “Jewish camps” in Italy (such as Ferramonti, Campagna, and in the same Civitella del Tronto), here the inmates were given no opportunity for social integration, or for cultural and recreational initiatives; nor was there any schooling set up for the many children in the camp.

On September 10, 1943, Chief of Police Senise’s telegram, ordering the camp disbanded, arrived at Civitella: in compliance with the armistice agreements, the director declared that the internees were free. Nonetheless, the 69 Jews of British/Libyan origin who were still in Villa Mazzi decided it was more convenient to continue to live there. Once the German troops arrived, they returned to their internee status in the formally reconstituted camp (though their status would soon change to “deportee”). On February 5, 1944, the British-Libyan Jews were collected by an SS unit and transferred to the prison of Florence, then to the Fossoli camp. From there, on May 16, 1944, they were deported to the *Aufenthslager* of Berger Belsen. The camp of Civitella was definitively shut down following a partisan attack on June 9, 1944.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>December 5, 1940</i>	<i>January 14, 1941</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>September 15, 1943</i>	<i>December 25, 1943</i>
Internees	67	69	69	63	69	Approx. 90

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dagps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento),
b. 114, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 5 “Arezzo.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (January 14, 1941; April 22, 1942;
August 25, 1942).

MONTALBANO-ROVEZZANO (Florence)

The camp of Montalbano (at times called “Rovezzano camp”) took its name from the Castle of Montalbano, a castle/villa that belonged to the Pardo family where the camp was created in June 1940. It was at the limits of the municipality of Florence, in the borough of St. Andrea a Rovezzano.

The building, located in an isolated area 6 kilometers from Florence and 3 kilometers from the train station of Complobbi, held up to 100 people, but at times would have no more than 50 internees. It had a main floor and a second storey, and consisted of about 20 rooms of different sizes. The families of the custodian and of a bricklayer lived in two small apartments with a separate entrance.

During the first months of operation, a deputy superintendent directed the camp, with the aid of two *carabinieri*, who took residence in a space that had previously been a stable. From mid-May 1941, the guard corps was increased, and the direction of the camp fell to Commissar Domenico Cecchetti, manager of a branch office of public safety in Florence.

Though the signing of the lease contract took place on June 17, 1940, and by the end of the month the building had been declared ready to be activated, the first internees (“dangerous Italians” and *allogeni* from Venezia Giulia) arrived only in mid-April 1941. In the following months, “former Yugoslav” internees also arrived at the camp. None of the arrivals were women, since the Ministry’s original idea of making the castle of Montalbano a women’s camp had been scratched.

Living conditions were extremely harsh. The building, among other things, did not have electricity, heating, or showers. Finally, in November 1941, some heaters were installed, but only in the dining hall. Self-run cafeterias were not allowed, and the kitchen was entrusted to an innkeeper from the nearby suburb of Anchetta, Guido Papini. An internee, Gaetano Chimenti, who was officially compensated for his duties as attendant, assisted Papini. With great difficulty the director conceded leave authorizations from the camp, and some internees were allowed to work with the farmers in the fields adjacent to the castle.

After July 25, 1943, and the fall of Mussolini, life in the camp of Montalbano continued as it had only in appearance. In actuality, the complaints of the Slav internees (the only remaining “tenants” of the camp) grew increasingly forceful, as they demanded to be released immediately, so that by early September, due to the repeated protests, some were transported to the jails of Florence.

After the armistice was announced, almost all the internees still in the camp left without a fight. However, though at reduced capacity, the camp continued to operate even after September 8, 1943, and remained operative for Italian “Aryans” until the following summer, under the RSI.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 1, 1942</i>	<i>October 12, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>March 10, 1944</i>	<i>April 15, 1944</i>
Internees	24	52	56	18	18

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dags, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 124, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 15/3.

Marche

FABRIANO (Ancona)

The camp of Fabriano was set up in September 1940 in a wing of the “Gentile” boarding school, owned by the Order of *Nostra Signora della Misericordia* (“Our Lady of Mercy”). After the lease was signed, work was done to adapt the rooms intended for the camp, which until the month of July had functioned as military barracks. Young boarders entrusted to the care of friars continued to live in a separate section of the building.

Situated in Via Cavour, about 500 meters from the post of the *carabinieri*, the building consisted of two factory-like buildings joined at an acute angle. The part designated for the camp, which could host up to 180 people, was composed of a main and second floor, with about 12 rooms, four of which were dormitories that could hold 50 beds each. On the main floor was a long corridor (3 meters in width by 34 meters in length) set up as a dining hall, and another room set up as a guard post. Attached to the building was a vegetable garden and a large courtyard where the kitchens, and a number of latrines and washbasins were located. By that winter, almost all the rooms were furnished with woodstoves.

The first internees arrived in mid-October 1940, and were placed under the direction of a public safety officer supported by police officers, and the “surveillance” of the *carabinieri*. They were all members of the “dangerous Italians” category, though later a number of “former Yugoslavs” would also be held there.

In April 1941, near Easter time, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Italian government, Francesco Borgongini-Duca, visited the camp. During the summer of 1942, 23 internees were authorized to work on the restoration of the bridge over the river Esino, in the Pianello neighborhood of the municipality of Castellsellino, also in the province of Ancona. To keep tabs on the traveling

internees, a guard post manned by three *carabinieri* was set up on the construction site. Other internees from the Fabriano camp worked, as laborers and artisans, in local workshops and construction sites.

Early on, living conditions were not too harsh, and the internees were allowed to leave under escort for specialist doctor visits or for specific purchases on behalf of the whole community. The situation worsened in time due to the increasing restrictions caused by the war, but also because, with the arrival of “former Yugoslav” internees (most of whom were Croatsians deported from Dalmatia), discipline and security tightened considerably. Some Slavs, who tried to escape, were transferred to the island camps; others were sent temporarily to the prison in Ancona. In May 1943, the Secretary of the Fascist Party, Carlo Sforza, lamented that, in the Fabriano camp, some “Balkan partisans” promoted Communism among ordinary prisoners. Thus, he encouraged the Undersecretary for the Interior, Albini, to intervene as soon as possible by imposing the “appropriate actions.”

Between July 25 and September 8, 1943, the majority of internees had been freed or had succeeded in escaping of their own volition, but the camp was back up and functioning under the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (RSI) by the end of 1943. On October 14, the Bureau of the Treasury of Ancona, forced to leave its offices due to the Allied bombings, asked the authorization of the Chief of the Province to set up its tax offices in the locales of the “Gentile” College. The plea was rejected. The Fabriano camp continued to operate under the RSI: on February 19, 1944, 120 internees were handed over to the Germans, who transferred them to the Calvari camp. Archival evidence suggests that the camp of Fabriano was still operative in April 1944.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>November 21, 1940</i>	<i>March 31, 1941</i>	<i>June 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>February 29, 1944</i>
Internees	20	72	90	61	72	12

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 114, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 2 “Ancona” (2/6, 2/7).
Acs, Mi, Dgps, Cat. A5G II World War, b. 66.

PETRIOLO (Macerata)

As a camp exclusively for women (where “enemy subjects” and “foreign Jews” were interned), it began to operate in December 1942, following the evacuation of the Treia camp. It too was set up in a countryside location (Villa Savini, also called “La Castelletta”), property of the Savini-Brandimarte family. It could hold roughly 60 people.

The building, originally identified as suitable by inspector Lo Spinoso, had been recently built and was located in the Castelletta district, 2 kilometers from the center of Petriolo, and 7 kilometers from the closest railway station of Corridonia. Surrounded by a metal fence, it consisted of a main floor and two additional storeys, with a total of 14 rooms. It had a newer kitchen, with a wood furnace and electric burners. In addition, there were four bathrooms, a small garden where the burning wood was collected, and an annex that became the guard post for the *carabinieri*.

The prefecture signed a rental contract on July 29, 1942. However, due to specious motives and the excessive length of the renovations (the contracting company was charged with fraud), the transfer of the Treia internees only took place on December 13, 1942.

All the internees left the villa in the days following the declaration of Armistice.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>December 13, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	28	24

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f.

2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 22/13 “Petriolo. Villa La Castelletta.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (August 23, 1943).

POLLENZA (Macerata)

This camp, opened in June 1940, was set up at “Villa Lauri,” an impressive country estate owned by the Ciccolini-Costa family. It was located in the Santa Lucia district, roughly 1 kilometer from the railway station of Pollenza. Surrounded by a park that was enclosed by a wooden fence, the villa consisted of a main floor and two additional storeys, with 30 rooms that could hold roughly 100 people. On the main floor the kitchen and the guard post for the *carabinieri* was set up; on the next floor, an infirmary that, surprisingly for this kind of camp, was also set up with three convalescence beds.

Pollenza was a women’s camp that accommodated almost exclusively “foreign enemy” and *allogeni* internees from Venezia Giulia. The first women arrived June 26, 1940, while on February 12, 1942, the 65 internees that had been evacuated from the Lanciano camp arrived all together.

Since it did not have its own director, the camp was “administered” by a public safety officer (initially Domenico Petriccione, then Giulio De Mase) supported by a director (Annunziata Spada, who was followed by Rosina Spadoni) and a small group of police officers. However, on a weekly basis, the director of the nearby camp of Urbisaglia, of which “Villa Spada” was for all intents and purposes a women’s annex, inspected the camp.

The building's conditions were generally good: water flowed abundantly and, starting in June 1941, hot water heaters supplied the showers. During the day, women internees could spend time in the park that surrounded the villa; and on Sundays, for a while, they were allowed to attend mass. Due to the interest of the Apostolic Nuncio, from time to time a priest would enter the camp and give confession to the Catholic prisoners.

Relationships between management and internees were not always easy. In the spring of 1943, one of the internees, Dolores Barreiro, was reported for contempt toward the camp's director; and, during the questioning by the judicial authorities, the woman claimed to have been slapped by the director. Another inmate, Hildegarde Simon, who was recovering in the hospital because of verified knee pathology, informed police headquarters that she had been accused of simulating and forced to walk the 6 kilometers that separated the camp from the hospital.

As was the case for other internment structures, living conditions in Pollenza differed according to the status of the internees. The Inspector General, Nicola Lorito, noticed in a report of October 15, 1941, that "the special attentions provided by management to British internees" caused "discord and envies that were detrimental to discipline." So much so that, with the goal of eliminating these differences, the official asked the Ministry to transfer out the eight British citizens interned in Treia.

Following the Armistice of September 8, 1943, most of the internees were able to leave Villa Lauri, though, in the following weeks, the Nazis and the fascists swept many of them up from nearby areas and returned them to the camp. From there, in the early afternoon of September 30, they were sent to the former prisoner of war camp of Sforzacosta, converted at that point into a gathering point for former internees and civilians. On January 18, 1944, the Pollenza camp reopened under the control of the RSI, and on February 7, 50 former Jewish internees (men and women) who had escaped the camps after September 8, 1943, were brought there. As of February 29, 1944, there were 46 internees in the camp (23 men, 21 women, and 2 children). In mid-March 1944, partisans attacked the camp, and six Jews managed to escape, joining the attackers.

On March 31, 1944, an SS unit sent specifically to Villa Lauri transferred the 44 Jews who were still in the camp to the Fossoli concentration camp instead.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>June 26, 1940</i>	<i>August 1, 1940</i>	<i>March 8, 1941</i>	<i>January 25, 1942</i>	<i>October 19, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>April 13, 1944</i>
Internees	3	28	54	9	80	103	50

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 128, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 22/4 "Macerata. Villa Lauri di Pollenza."

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (January 18, 1941; June 26, 1942; August 23, 1943).

Sassoferrato (Ancona)

Among the camps controlled by the Ministry of the Interior, this one was one of the last to open. The contract for the lease of the buildings was signed in August 1942, and renovations began that September, though the camp itself only opened on February 27, 1943.

Set up in the former monastery of Santa Croce, a spacious and well-lit building that was still inhabited by three monks, the camp took over the structure that belonged to the Calmadolese monks. The central building had a main floor, and two storeys above it, believed capable of holding between 130 and 140 internees. On the first and second floors, the many rooms could hold four beds each; while on the main floor, next to the kitchens and some other bedrooms, were the cloister and a refectory that could hold more than 100 people.

The camp was 1.5 kilometers from the railway station, and a little more than 2 kilometers from downtown Sassoferrato. It was administered by the local *podestà*, but, once a week, it was “visited” by the Chief of Police, Antonio Vecchio, who also ran the nearby camp of Fabriano. Surveillance was managed by the *carabinieri*, who set up a post composed of an officer and five servicemen; management and command of the camp was instead the purview of public safety agents. The internees were either *allogeni* or “former Yugoslavs,” and they followed an internment regime analogous to the one in effect in Fabriano.

The fall of Mussolini did not change the internees’ circumstances. By September 3, 1943, when the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited the camp, there were still 37 internees: 34 Slovenes and 3 Croats from the provinces of Gorizia, Fiume, and Zara. The camp ceased to function on September 15, 1943, just seven months after it had opened, when the remaining internees were freed. Some documents suggest that it was reopened, for short periods of time, by the RSI.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 31, 1943</i>	<i>May 1, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	60	30	38

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 114, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 2/8.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (September 2, 1943).

URBISAGLIA (Macerata)

Opened June 1, 1940, this was one of the Ministry of the Interior’s earliest camps to come into operation. It was set up in the villa of the Giustiniani-Bandini Princes, located about 1 kilometer from the town of Urbisaglia. The

building, which had already been used during World War I to intern prisoners of war, was next to the famous Gothic Abbey of Chiaravalle di Fiastra, along the borderline that separates the municipal land holdings of Tolentino and Urbisaglia.

On the main floor of the building, the great hall was used as a refectory, while the old, pre-existing kitchen was reactivated. The floors above were made to hold about 100 beds (in big rooms on the first floor, smaller rooms on the second floor and in the attic). Management of the dining hall was given to a chef from Tolentino, who was aided by some orderlies.

The chief of public safety supervised the camp with the help of some police officers. In time, various officials who also were in charge of the nearby camp of Pollenza held the post of director (Marco Bitozzi, Giuseppe Franco, Paolo Spetta, and Umberto Leproni); while the *carabinieri* managed the camp's external surveillance, through a fixed post that was set up inside the villa.

The first internees, Italian Jews, came to the camp on June 16, 1940. By the end of July, another 80 foreign and stateless Jews arrived (Germans, Austrians, Poles, and Romanians). Starting in spring 1941, Slav ethnic minorities (*allogeni*) also joined them; while in 1942, there were also “former Yugoslav” internees. For shorter periods of time, Urbisaglia also held “enemy subjects.”

The Jewish group comprised of about 60 people, among whom were some fairly well-known inmates such as Raffaele Cantoni, Carlo Alberto Viterbo, Eucardio Momigliano, Gino Pincherle, Renzo Bonfiglioli, Odoardo Della Torre, and Leone Del Vecchio.

During its first two years of activity, physical conditions in the camp were eminently bearable. The building had heating and was in decent shape, and in the earliest months the internees were even allowed to listen to a radio device they had bought through a collection. The vast and flourishing park that surrounded the villa contributed positively to the psychological condition of the internees, who were granted a certain freedom of movement: indeed, they could work outdoors with the peasants on the estate of the Giustiniani-Bandini princes and, taking turns, could go to Urbisaglia or Macerata to make group purchases or visit their doctors. Moreover, without much trouble, their relatives could visit them in the camp.

Jewish internees were granted a room they could use as a synagogue, and they instituted an “assistance committee” that provided monthly financial support to the more needy members. Language courses were provided for all internees, and a small library was also set up. Medical assistance was officially entrusted to an Austrian Jew, Dr. Paul Pollak, who was paid monthly by the Ministry of the Interior.

Among the least pleasant issues, during the early months, one should mention overcrowding. To address this, Raffaele Cantoni vigorously protested with the camp's management, referencing international norms set up to safeguard war imprisonment. In reply, he was labeled an instigator, and transferred to the Tremiti Islands camp. One should also point out, among the

negatives, the behavior of two public safety officers (Cosimo Carlucci and Antonio Di Stefano) who, as recorded in a report completed by the camp director in September 1941, were found guilty of harassing the internees. Furthermore, during the winter of 1942–1943, this camp also experienced frequent cases of illness due to malnutrition.

Mussolini's fall on July 25, 1943, did not change the status of the internees of Urbisaglia (who at the time were foreigners and *allogeni*). However, after September 8, as internees and guards feared falling into the hands of the Germans, many internees decided to escape. Others yet, having no money and not knowing where to hide, decided to remain in the camp's building.

On September 13, 1943, following the instruction promulgated by the Chief of Police, the director of the camp officially exonerated the internees still residing in the villa. But by the 27th day of that same month, under orders of the police headquarters in Macerata, all internees were enjoined to return to the camp. The majority obeyed this new order, believing the authorities' promise to guarantee their safety. However, between September 29 and 30, 1943, both the internees who had come back voluntarily, and those who had been swept up in the countryside (including many who had been in the nearby camps of Pollenza and Petriolo, a total of over 100 men and women) were loaded on trucks by the Germans, and transferred to Camp 53 for prisoners of war in Sforzacorta, a district of Macerata. This camp, which had now become the collection center for civilians picked up in the area, remained officially under the direction and surveillance of the Italian forces until the October 23, 1943. Jewish and "Aryan" internees collected in Sforzacosta after September 8, 1943, suffered different fates: a) "Aryan" internees were sent to the Fossoli camp on January 28, 1944, with a convoy organized by Macerata's prefecture; b) Jewish internees, after a strange period of "free internment" (*internamento libero*) in the historic downtown of Urbisaglia, and a "normal" internment in the former camp of Pollenza, were transferred on March 31, 1944, to Fossoli camp by the SS, when they numbered a total of 44 men and women.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 5, 1940</i>	<i>August 1, 1940</i>	<i>March 8, 1941</i>	<i>June 15, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>	<i>September 8, 1943</i>
Internees	31	123	72	107	94	83	85

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 128, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 22 "Macerata."

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (August 23, 1943).

TREIA (Macerata)

This camp, exclusively for women, opened June 1940 in the Passo di Treia neighborhood, a few kilometers away from the town of the same name. It was set up in Villa Spada (also known as “Villa La Quiete”), a large country residence owned by the Counts Vannutelli that was surrounded by a park overlooking a natural overhang.

Furnished with plumbing, electricity, and phone service, the villa had a main and first floor, with a total of 30 rooms of varying sizes. It also had two large bathrooms, four restrooms, and an internal courtyard with two large verandas.

Judged capable of holding 100 female internees, the camp was managed by a public safety officer (at first Nicola Martinez, subsequently Carmine Ferrigno), with the help of a female director (Luisa Marchesini, Alberta Cannara, and Irene Mancini followed one another in the role). The surveillance was handled by the *carabinieri*, who created a small post inside the building.

The first internees were all foreigners (mostly English and French “enemy subjects”) and they arrived at the end of June 1940, so that by August 1, there were 37, of which 15 were Jewish.

Healthcare and sanitation left much to be desired, and parasitic infestations were quite common. The only reason the internees’ living conditions were bearable was due to the relief provided to them by care packages and other relief items supplied by the Red Cross and the home governments of the different inmates. How numerous packages sent to the British internees were handled became the subject of repeated protests: an anonymous complaint received by the Chief of Police in April 1941 claimed explicitly that the packages were constantly tampered with, and not all of their contents delivered to the recipients.

A few days after the camp opened, the Bishop of S. Severino and Treia visited. Frequent also were the visits of representatives of the International Red Cross, the American Embassy, and the Swiss legation, who denounced the structural inadequacy of the building: specifically, the roof, the restrooms, and the old furnace. However, because the cost of repairs was significant, and the owners of the building refused to take them on, the public safety inspector, Mr. Rosati, sent a message to the Ministry of the Interior on April 3, 1942, in which he proposed annulling the rental agreement, and transferring the camp to “another adequate building.” Unfortunately, a few days earlier, for reasons that were not ascertained, a fire had broken out which had exacerbated the already precarious conditions within the villa.

In June 1942, due to the owners’ refusal to pay for the urgent repairs, the authorities reached the conclusion that they needed to evacuate the internment facility. However, the camp was relocated in the nearby town of Petriolo only in December of that year.

During the months that followed the camp’s closure, the government still used Villa Spada: it placed 52 Africans there (“subjects from Italian Eastern

Africa”) who had worked on the *Mostra delle Terre d’Oltremare* (“Overseas Lands Exhibition”) in Naples. On October 28, 1943, a partisan cell attacked the building.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 5, 1940</i>	<i>October 1, 1940</i>	<i>March 8, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 19, 1942</i>
Internees	28	40	40	28	27

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 128, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 22/2 “Macerata. Villa La Quiee di Treia.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (January 18, 1941; June 27, 1942).

Umbria

COLFIORITO (Perugia)

In 1940, the Ministry of the Interior set up a camp for civilian internees in the old firing range of Colfiorito, a mountain district of the municipality of Foligno. The old military compound, which from 1885 to 1925 had been used by the armed forces for its summer drills, was state property and included 11 barn-like structures. As of June 1936, the former shooting range (when it still fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance) was already deemed suitable to gather “dangerous elements.” In June 1939, in view of such usage, the Ministry of the Interior obtained partial use of the area, and began works meant to render functional the tenth barn, while furnishing the complex with security cameras, telephones, and robust perimeter fencing. The refurbished barn initially housed Albanian confinees, the earliest of whom arrived in August 1939, remaining in the general territory of Colfiorito until the spring of 1940.

In April of that same year, following the survey visit of Inspector Guido Lo Spinoso, the former shooting range of Colfiorito was declared capable of hosting an internee camp for war civilians. As a result, between May and June, new renovation works were undertaken to prepare another barn for the security detail and one more for the refectory and kitchen services. Finally, an order was placed to create barracks that could hold 200 people. The camp, which in actuality only hosted 100 internees, was one of the first to see action in June 1940, and was managed by a public safety official together with some officers. Security was provided by the *carabinieri*, while health services were the purview of the municipal doctor of Annifo, a not-too-distant neighborhood.

Internment in Colfiorito was influenced by the harsh climate (the camp was located exactly at an altitude of 770 meters above sea level) and by the

humidity, which was caused by its vicinity to a swamp. One must also add that the barns, which had originally been planned as stables, lacked stoves and roofing insulation, and that the internees' clothing was inadequate to handle the winters' rigor. Telling in this sense was that the police commissioner, Ernesto De Marco, who had been named camp director in November 1940, chose to live in a small hotel rather than stay in his office, where he had caught bronchitis.

Internees belonged to the “dangerous Italians” category: *opponents* and *allogeni*. Among others, one should mention Eugenio Musolino, a communist leader who had been sentenced by the Special Tribunal in 1928 and arrived in the camp on July 31, 1940; and Lelio Basso, who had been confined to Ponza in 1928 and was transferred to Colfiorito on August 23, 1940.

Initially food rations were adequate but, with the arrival of winter and the increasing difficulty to procure supplies, they became ever more insufficient, both in terms of quality and quantity. In protest, the internees carried out a sensational hunger strike, following which, as punishment, many were transferred to other camps.

That November, a great cold wave endangered the lives of many inmates, many of whom were suffering from tuberculosis. What is more, no area of the camp was heated, not even the cafeteria (only at the end of November would it be serviced by two woodstoves) or the other common areas. In December, finally, upon realizing that living conditions were intolerable, the Ministry of the Interior ordered that the 114 Colfiorito internees be transferred to the camps of Ariano, Fabriano, Manfredonia, Monteforte, Pisticci, and Tremiti. Their evacuation would be completed by January 23, 1941.

Thus, just seven months after it opened, the camp of Colfiorito ceased to exist. But a while later, it would be expanded and reactivated to host former Yugoslav internees under the control of the Military Authority.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>December 15, 1940</i>
Internees	114

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 132, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 29/1 “Colfiorito.”

Lazio

CASTEL DI GUIDO (Rome)

The Ministry of the Interior conceived of this internment facility as a “work center” (on the model of the Pisticci colony). It was located in the estate of Castel di Guido owned by the *Pio Istituto Santo Spirito ed Ospedali Riuniti*

(“Holy Spirit Charitable Institute and Unified Hospitals”). Its central nucleus was roughly 7 kilometers from the railway station of Maccarese, in the province of Rome.

At the end of 1941, the Governorship of Rome, which had managed to acquire 1,200 hectares of the land, began construction on houses (officially destined for “evictees”) and on a “work center” managed by Eugenio Parrini (comprising dorms, canteens, kitchens, and related services) that could hold up to 100 people.

As it prepared to hold its real “guests,” the center hosted, starting with the spring of 1942, civilian internees (especially those held for political reasons), and even some confinees. They were all utilized by Parrini as low-cost labor on the agrarian estate that extended from Castel di Guido (a small locale 20 kilometers from Rome) to Maccarese, and which comprised extended vegetable plantations and orchards. In its flattest areas, in the direction of the railway station and especially around the tenement called *Le Pulci* (“The Fleas”), the estate was cultivated with wheat. Otherwise, the land was devoted to pasture. Nearby there were also the caves of *pozzolana* (“pozzolan”), their stone extracted for masonry works.

The internment structure, whose management nucleus was placed near the *via Aurelia*, was headed by a *carabinieri* brigadier with the support of Parrini’s company supervisor. Internees and confinees lived on the first floor of a large building equipped with enough barrack furnishings to house 50 people. The main floor, instead, hosted the stables, while near the building were the managers’ quarters and the *carabinieri* barracks. Not too far, in another building, was the mess hall, the workshop, and the carpenter’s shop. The small hamlet also included the homes of two or three families, and a general store that sold a little of everything.

Most internees worked directly for the agricultural outfit, but some carried out autonomous artisanal jobs, or tasks as masons, carpenters, or mechanics, always for Parrini. Work was not forced on them, but the opportunity to be outdoors for eight and a half hours a day, while making 10 Italian lire on top of the normal subsidy, made it quite attractive; especially because those who did not work had to spend their time segregated in the dormitory.

Despite the fact that internment at Castel di Guido occurred in conditions of relative privilege, even there repression could raise its head at the least provocation, with the subsequent transfer to the jails of Regina Coeli for those who had shown “insubordination.”

When Mussolini’s fall was announced, the managers of the center disappeared for a few days. The first official exoneration of internees took place on July 31, 1943, but the apparatus continued to function even up to September 8. On October 29, 1943, the Police Commissioner for Rome informed the General Directorate for Public Safety that “the Grand Officer, Mr. Parrini, delegate of the Governor’s Work Center of Castel di Guido, where internees and confinees served as laborers, has suspended all works and has withdrawn all equipment from the barracks.” The Police Commissioner

requested, therefore, to know the Ministry of the Interior's decisions "with regards to the fate of the confinees still living in the Work Center."

A few days later, the last "workers" were let go, and the center was shut down.

Archival references:

Acs, Spd-Co, f. "Maccarese, Società Anonima Bonifiche," b. 535219 and b. 509396/7.

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 145, f. 18 (Località di internamento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 57 "Roma," s.f. 3 "Castel di Guido, Centro di lavoro."

FRASCHETTE (Frosinone)

Fraschette, which had been planned as a concentration camp for prisoners of war, stood on a round plateau, 600 meters in diameter, in *Le Fraschette*, a natural bowl at the feet of Mount Fumone, 4 kilometers from the municipality of Alatri. It began operating in July 1942, with the completion of the first housing nucleus that could hold 1,000 people.

Its construction had begun at the end of December 1941; and, based on the initial project, it could have hosted 7,000 enemy soldiers. During construction, however, the objectives for the camp changed; and, consequently, the typology of the living quarters also changed, so that about 200 shacks were built, which were suitable to house a population composed mostly of families. Indeed, the goal was to make it a "holding village for refugees" under the control of the Inspectorate for War Services, the government agency in charge of the accommodation of evacuees. But, due to reasons related to what was happening on the war front, even this objective fell apart, and the shantytown of Fraschette became a concentration camp for civilian internees.

A wooden fence, spaced out by 20 watchtowers, circumscribed the facility around which the *carabinieri* patrolled the premises. Within the camp, instead, public safety officers were charged with policing the inmates. Compared to other camps managed by the Ministry of the Interior, Fraschette (under the direction of the Commissar Stanislao Rodriguez, who was followed by Giovanni Fantussati) stood out for some important peculiarities: 1) it was placed under the supervision of the General Directorate of War Services, while the General Directorate for Public Safety was only entrusted with general "safety" duties; 2) mainly, it became a location for the internment of family units, especially women and children; 3) it did not provide subsidies to internees, only meals, prepared in military kitchens specifically placed *in situ*.

Following the camp's opening, the number of internees increased gradually, settling eventually at around 4,500 people. The earliest arrived in October 1942: they were Britons from Malta, deported from Libya. Eventually, the British-Maltese internees of Fraschette numbered roughly 950 people, more or less half of the entire community evacuated from Libya.

At the end of October, the first of many transfers of “former Yugoslavs” arrived at the camp. Among the arrivals were 90 women and 164 underage children, many very young, who came from the concentration camp of Melada, in Dalmatia. Yugoslav civilians were also transferred there from other internment locations when the Ministry of the Interior, in January 1943, decided that “relatives of the rebels” should be concentrated in Frascette. As a whole, the “former Yugoslavs” interned in this camp were about 2,900, a thousand coming straight from the Melada camp.

During the second half of February 1943, the first Italian internees (*allogeni*) arrived at Frascette. Under orders from that infamous Special Inspectorate for Public Safety, a total of 1,000 would arrive to the camp: 800 directly from Venezia Giulia, and 200 transferred from the concentration camp of Cairo Montenotte.

Starting in May 1943, moreover, the Frascette camp became the landing point for a constant number of Italian and foreign deportees, especially women, that the Ministry of the Interior decided should be evacuated from the islands of Ponza, Ustica, and Ventotene. From Ustica, between May and June, about 260 internees and confinees arrived, of whom more than 200 were women. From Ponza, 54 women and children, while the 541 men confined to the island were transferred to the camp of Renicci. Finally, from Ventotene, on August 24, 1943, seven women internees and five confinees arrived.

The health and sanitary conditions of the camp (which had not been finished) were extremely poor: the wooden shacks were humid and cold; the sewer system emptied outdoors; the latrines were few and placed too far away from the buildings. Even medical care, provided by a local doctor, was not up to snuff. The organization and management of the kitchens and mess hall was entrusted to an infantry contingent manned, between officers and soldiers, by about 50 people. Initially, 20 *carabinieri* and 8 public safety officers took turns standing guard. Later, the number of *carabinieri* reached 120, while the public safety officers increased to 50.

The weak perimeter fencing (which was little more than symbolic given that it was made of thin wooden poles) allowed those internees who wished to beg for food in nearby towns to escape easily. But the living conditions of the inmates obviously differed according to their circumstances. The Maltese, as “enemy subjects,” enjoyed guarantees provided by the Geneva Convention and the aid of the British government. Other groups generally had to face many difficulties on their own, especially the most abject hunger. Truth be told, the Bishop of Alatri, Monsignor Facchini, and a group of Josephine nuns from the monastery in Veroli, often provided support for the most needy. The ethnic minorities of Venezia Giulia were initially allowed to receive care packages and money from their communities; later, however, because according to the Italian authorities such subsidies were provided by a communist aid organization tied to Slovenian resistance cells, the delivery of packages and even family visits were forbidden.

Between February and August 1943, the Swiss Legation visited Frascette three times, while on May 12, 1943, Monsignor Antonio Santin, bishop of Trieste-Capodistria, also visited the camp. The high prelate left money for the citizens of the Giulian and Dalmatian provinces and let them know that, following an initiative of the Pope, 400 young internees would be welcomed in two religious establishments: 200 boys to Loreto, and the same number of girls in Rome. Still in May 1943, the Papal Nuncio, Borgongini Duca, also visited Frascette.

Following Mussolini's deposition, overall conditions in the camp remained unchanged. On August 17, 1943, Chief of Police Sinise invited police commissioners for the related provinces to "reconsider the standing of ethnic minorities" and establish how many could be freed. However, the number of internees discharged was very small. As a result, the internees began to push the new government to obtain immediate and encompassing releases. The demands of the Slavs were strongly supported by the religious authorities; nonetheless, the numerous pleas aimed at achieving at least the immediate discharge of the elderly, women, and children, remained unanswered well past September 8, 1943.

In the days following the armistice (once the officers and *carabinieri* in charge of surveillance left), the camp fell into the most abject confusion and state of neglect. In truth, for some time the difficulty of procuring food had made its normal distribution almost impossible, often allowing only bread and potatoes to be handed out, when they were available. Despite everything, the majority of internees did not leave Frascette: not knowing where to go, the Maltese and Yugoslavs chose to stay as a group in their shacks. During the day, the majority wandered in nearby towns and the countryside trying to earn a living by selling articles of linen and furnishings they had taken from the camp's shacks and warehouses.

When the Germans arrived in the area, they showed little interest for the shantytown and its inhabitants. Nonetheless, they took quarters in some areas of the camp and turned the shacks abandoned by the internees into stables. Then, during the latter part of December 1943, they left the facility having contributed to the despoiling and destruction of the furniture.

The Ministry of the Interior, urged on by the camp's management, requested the Germans' collaboration to achieve the official closure of the facility (whose existence was at that point only in name) and the evacuation of the internees still there who, by mid-December, had been reduced to 2,000. The solution proffered by the Germans envisaged the transfer to Northern Italy of the Anglo-Maltese internees, who were almost all still at Frascette; and the repatriation of the Croatian and Slovenian internees against whom no specific "charges" were pending. The camp's dissolution was decided in mid-January 1944, and completed by April 19 of the same year.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 31, 1940</i>	<i>Summer 1943</i>	<i>September 25, 1943</i>	<i>November 1, 1943</i>	<i>December 15, 1943</i>	<i>January 19, 1944</i>
Internees	1,204	4,500	3,000	2,665	2,050	1,311

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 126, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 18/1 “Campo Le Fraschette di Alatri.”

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 5/1–4, K. 1021.

FARFA (Rieti)

This camp, planned as a barracked facility, was placed in the countryside of Badia di Farfa, a hamlet belonging to the municipal territory of Farra Sabina, 6 kilometers away from the town’s center. The chosen area, selected by Inspector Guido Lo Spinoso in the spring of 1941, was near a mineral water spring, 4 kilometers from the small town of Castelnuovo di Farfa and 14 kilometers from the railway station of Poggio Mirteto.

The land on which the new camp was to be built was partly arable, partly covered by vineyards. It belonged to the Real Estate Management Society of Rome, and housed three farms. After a number of failed starts, the contract for the camp’s construction was awarded to Eugenio Parrini’s company. This choice was not fortuitous, since, as one can read in the Ministry of the Interior’s documentation, the government’s intention was to use the facility after the war as a “concentration camp for individuals assigned to police confinement,” on the model of the Pisticci colony.

Due to a lack of manpower, the camp’s construction proceeded very slowly, so much so that, in May 1943, the General Directorate for Public Safety decided to solve the problem by putting the internees to work. A proxy for Parrini’s company, Luigi Seghi, was charged with personally going to some of the Abruzzi camps (Istonio, Lama dei Peligni, Neretto, and Tortoreto) to select the best workers. Meanwhile, on July 2, 1943, the Ministry of the Interior issued a memo wherein it asked the affected prefectures to identify “able bodied, not dangerous internees,” who were willing, under compensation, to contribute to the building of the barracks in Farfa. We know that 18 internees arrived from Manfredonia; 9 from Montechiarugolo; 8 from Scipione; 31 from Istonio; 7 from Tortoreto; and 20 from Nereto.

Officially, the Farfa camp began operating in early June 1943, though the facility had not yet been completed: it was still missing its fences and watch-towers, while the entirety of barracks and tents resembled more a construction site than an internment facility. Twenty *carabinieri* (soon doubled in numbers) were assigned to surveillance, while the municipal doctor of Poggio Nativo was tasked with providing medical assistance.

Hypothesized as a “work center” with a capacity of 2,700 inmates, only 84 internees had been placed in the camp as of July 14, 1943.

By the end of August 1943, the Ministry of the Interior suggested the transfer to Farfa of a large number of internees from the Ferramonti camp, since the latter was to be evacuated. Such transfer was never actualized and, on September 18, 1943, finally, the Ministry of the Interior—taking into account the camp’s state of neglect—declared Farfa “temporarily shut down due to fortuitous circumstances.”

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 14, 1943</i>	<i>August 30, 1943</i>
Internees	84	95

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 134, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 34 “Rieti” (34/1).

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. A4 bis (Foreign Internees), b. 7/50 “Rieti.”

PONZA (Littoria)

In the summer of 1941, the Ministry of the Interior took into consideration the idea of creating a concentration camp on the island of Ponza (whose confinement colony had been shut down in 1939), as a way to handle requests for new internment locations for civilians who had been held in the Balkans. Once the necessary surveys and inspections of the old buildings were completed, the required works of modernization began in mid-November. However, in addition to the buildings that had already been part of the confinement colony, new ones were added to the “camp” of Ponza, so that, when the works were completed, it could hold as many as 800 internees.

Initially, supervision of the camp was given to Commissar Attilio Bandini (who would be replaced in September 1942 by Sebastiano Vassallo, a member of OVRA, Fascism’s secret police) with the assistance of 35 public safety officers. Fifty *carabinieri* were tasked with the security service, while the island’s physician, aided by a jack-of-all-trades nurse (an internee who, until recently, had been a medical student), provided medical services. Initially, the mess hall service had been assigned to a local business owner but, starting in October 1942, the inmates took over its operation.

The first group of internees arrived on the island March 5, 1942. They were about 200 citizens of Montenegro (178 men and 15 women) labeled “Communists and Nationalists.” A second load of 112 men and 24 women arrived March 24; and more groups, all Montenegrins, in early 1943. Female internees occupied separate lodgings owned by the D’Arco family.

In June 1942, a group of 220 “undesirable intellectuals” arrived from the Albanian camps of Preza and Puke. The majority were ethnic Serbs from Kosovo, the Yugoslav region that had been annexed to “Greater Albania.” And in November 1942, nine Greek internees from the Island of Corfu also arrived in Ponza.

From the beginning, health and sanitary conditions in the camp were not up to standard, while the victuals’ situation became critical during the winter of 1942–1943, when the island was poorly supplied for a number of months. For the most part, living conditions of deportees in the camp of Ponza did not differ much from those endured by confinees in the colony a decade earlier. The perimeter that internees were given to spend time, however, decreased (to approximately 1,800 square meters) from that which had been granted in the 1930s to confinees. During the day, internees could walk about in the agreed area under the surveillance of armed sentinels; and during the summer months, internees were allowed to bathe in the sea, but only to improve “personal cleanliness.” The local commander of the *carabinieri*, Marshal Sebastiano Marini, left very bad memories of his very violent behavior toward the internees.

On July 26, 1943, the news of Mussolini’s fall was communicated to the internees directly by the director of the camp, Chief of Police Sebastiano Vassallo, who claimed to be “happy about the news,” and announced that, within a few days, the internees would be freed. The evacuation plan, agreed upon by the authorities in charge at the beginning of August, called for the transport of the 541 unattached, male internees to the concentration camp of Renicci, while female internees and families (54 people altogether) would go to the Fraschette camp.

The Ministry of the Interior officially agreed to the evacuation on August 28, 1943: half the internees set sail on September 7, for Gaeta; the transfer of the rest coincided, the following day, with the declaration of the Armistice.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 5, 1942</i>	<i>March 25, 1942</i>	<i>September 30, 1942</i>	<i>July 15, 1943</i>	<i>August 1, 1943</i>
Internees	193	329	553	708	595

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 127, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 20 “Littoria,” s.f. 4.

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 111, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari per provincia), ins. 51/12.

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica, Br. 11/1–95, K. 1021.

VENTOTENE (Littoria)

During World War II, the Ministry of the Interior even used the confinement colony of Ventotene (which had taken over for Ponza as the “general headquarters” for Italy’s anti-Fascism), as a concentration camp.

The physical layout of the colony and of the camp were exactly the same, and they did not cause any particular housing straits, since the great confinement citadel created on the island in the early 1940s could hold up to 820 deportees (compared to the 230 the colony held in 1939). Two hundred of the 800 available slots were reserved for confinees, and 200 for internees, many of whom became such simply through an officially decreed change of status to their previous state of confinement.

The vast concentrationary space, placed in a secluded area of the island, comprised military barracks and 12 identical, annexed buildings. Each of the latter was divided into two dormitories, with shared restrooms, whose dividing wall did not quite reach the ceiling. The dormitories could be accessed through a bare square hall, where the evening roll call took place (during the winter, these were also used for daytime headcounts). Each dormitory was comprised of 25 camp beds, lined up against the walls in two facing rows that were separated by rudimentary nightstands.

The deportees' living conditions, which had been difficult in 1940, became particularly harsh beginning in the winter of 1941–1942. From then on, as Altiero Spinelli reminisced in *Il lungo monologo*, “hunger took hold of the island, drying out the bodies of the confinees first, then those of the soldiers and of the island people, with only the policemen remaining fat and polished.”

As of June 15, 1943, Ventotene housed 640 confinees (they were all Italians) and 203 internees (175 Italians and 28 foreigners). In July, they received news of Mussolini's removal with jubilation and, in some cases, incredulity. The policemen, the soldiers, and the director of the camp, Marcello Guida, did not abandon their posts, but stayed on, as the Piedmontese Giorgio Braccialarghe reports in his memoirs, “with a very different attitude” compared to the one they held before. In exchange for the promise of internee self-discipline while they awaited to be exonerated, the director of the camp agreed with the Italians to end some restrictions: boundaries on their space of confinement; morning roll calls; and building lock down from outside at night. However, even foreign internees, since the dictatorship that had deported them no longer existed, demanded their immediate liberation.

In the days after July 25, 1943, notwithstanding events tied to the difficult political and military transition, Ventotene also experienced unsettling times due to “technical” problems: naval communication had been rendered difficult by the sinking, which Allied airplanes caused on July 24, of the postal ship *Santa Lucia*, which was tasked with the ferry service between the island and the mainland. For a while, private ships had to provide the maritime bridge between Ponza, Ventotene, Ischia, and Naples. On August 7, 1943, with a telegram addressed to the new head of State by five Italians (Sandro Pertini, Francesco Fancello, Altiero Spinelli, Pietro Secchia, and Mauro Scoccimarro), two Slovenes (Ante Balić and Anton Fiauciović), and an Albanian (Lazar Fundo), the deportees of Ventotene demanded “the immediate liberation of political internees and exiles due to the end of the fascist regime.”

A first group, consisting of 148 Italian political confinees and internees who had just been exonerated, among whom were Altiero Spinelli and Giuseppe di Vittorio, succeeded in leaving on August 10. Sandro Pertini left the island in mid-August. By the end of the month, despite many problems with the ferries, the Ventotene colony was completely evacuated with the transfer to the camps of Renicci (165 men) and of Frascette (7 women) of the foreign deportees, and of the Italian detainees that the Badoglio government did not want to free yet. Altogether, more than 870 people were transferred or set free from the symbolic place of Italian political deportation.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>February 28, 1941</i>	<i>December 31, 1942</i>	<i>January 16, 1943</i>	<i>March 31, 1943</i>	<i>June 15, 1943</i>	<i>July 15, 1943</i>
Internees	?	?	19	198	203	219
Confinees	676	775	675	667	640	660
Total number	?	?	694	865	843	879

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 111, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins. 51/12.

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 145, f. 18 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. n. 20 “Littoria,” s.f. I “Ventotene.”

Abruzzo-Molise

AGNONE (Campobasso)

This camp opened on July 14, 1940, in the former convent of Saint Bernardino of Siena. The building, owned by the diocese of Triveneto and abandoned for a long time, had been used as a summer seminary since 1931.

Under the directorship of a chief of public safety (Guglielmo Casale), the camp was thought capable of holding 150 internees. The *carabinieri* were entrusted with the surveillance, and they established a guard post in the former convent. Initially there were only male internees: “enemy subjects” (typically British, Czech, and Slovakian) and “foreign Jews” (mostly from Germany and Austria). Later Agnone became a camp for men and women internees and held only Gypsies from Yugoslavia.

The building, which was in good condition, had shared bathroom facilities with showers, and seven large and nine smaller rooms, all turned into dormitories. It also included a parlor/refectory, and a large courtyard. It did not have central heating.

In the early months of 1941, about 30 “enemy subjects” and 60 “foreign Jews” resided in the former convent. Later, in July 1941, the Ministry of the

Interior decided to transfer the 57 Jews living in Agnone to Isernia (the “enemy subjects” had already been sent to other camps), while, from the now-closed camp of Boiano, 58 Gypsy internees arrived. Thus started the “second life” of Agnone, a time characterized by extreme poverty and terrible sanitary conditions. Life as an internee was very difficult to accept for the Gypsies, who were used to the complete freedom of a nomadic life. As a result, there were frequent attempts to escape, after which management decided to equip the building windows with sturdy bars. Thefts and fights were also common.

The Gypsies’ memories of the camp, however, are not negative, especially because many of them had just barely escaped the extermination planned for them by the Croatian Ustasha. Zilka Heldt, who at the time was ten years old, claims that in the Agnone camp, despite the cold and the lack of food, Gypsies could live in fairly normal conditions.

A report by the International Red Cross of June 21, 1943, suggested that, at the time, living conditions in the camp had improved noticeably compared to two years prior; and that the internees did not show grave signs of malnutrition. Legumes and vegetables were cultivated in the camp’s garden, and the harvest supplemented the prisoners’ fare and helped to fight vitamin deficiencies. Even the sanitary conditions had improved: three times a month one could take hot water showers; and a doctor regularly visited the internees, while seriously ill patients were admitted to the hospital of Isernia.

Following the armistice on September 8, 1943, the *carabinieri* freed the internees, many of whom joined the local partisan bands. Others instead were picked up by the German authorities and used to excavate the trenches into which mines would be hidden.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>July 15, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 10, 1942</i>	<i>June 21, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	84	102	57	118	133	155	150

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 117, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 “Campobasso,” ss.ff. 6, 10, 11.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 21, 1943).

BOIANO (Campobasso)

This camp was set up in the four warehouses of an old tobacco plant that belonged to the *Società Saim*, located at the extreme periphery of the town and facing the railway. The internees were placed in three of the buildings, while the fourth was used for the kitchens, mess hall, and other basic services. Management of the camp was assigned to a chief of public safety (first

Umberto Struffi, then Eduino Pistone) who lived in the town, while the *carabinieri* and some public safety agents took care of the camp's surveillance. An external vendor was charged with providing the foodstuffs. The first internees arrived in September 1940.

According to the official report by the authorities, the complex could hold "250 'regular' internees or 300 Gypsies." In actuality, the average occupancy was much lower than forecasted, and it consisted, in addition to Gypsies, of Chinese internees and about ten "foreign Jews." On February 3, 1941, through a rep, the internees complained to an area inspector "about the unhygienic conditions of the buildings, and the poor quality and quantity of the daily rations." The barracks, which were surrounded by a 2 meter-high wire fence and had heavy bars on the windows, were indeed in very poor condition and, during bad weather, leaked substantial amounts of water. Due to these issues and to additional structural problems, renovations on the buildings were begun, but never completed. Instead, following a recommendation of the Inspector General Rosati, the camp was shut down and the 58 Gypsies still residing in it were sent to the Agnone camp.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>February 5, 1941</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>July 15, 1941</i>
Internees	5	89	20	58

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 117, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 "Campobasso," ss. ff. 8, 10, 11.

CASACALENDA (Campobasso)

Set up in a former boarding school building owned by the Caradonio-Di Blasio Foundation near the center of town and adjacent to a middle school, the camp housed only women. With rare exceptions, it held three groups of foreign internees: "enemy subjects" (usually British), "foreign Jews" (mostly German and Polish), and "former Yugoslav" citizens.

By March 1941, the camp held 22 "foreign Jewesses" and an Italian one, and 19 foreign "Aryans." Starting in 1942, there were numerous Yugoslav internees. The chief of public safety (Giuseppe Martone until September 1940, afterward Guido Renzoni) managed the facility aided, as in other women's camps, by a woman director (Ezia Calogero). Two public safety agents and three *carabinieri* initially provided Administrative and surveillance services.

The building was composed of three large rooms (the largest could hold 12 beds) and nine smaller ones, each with 2–3 beds. Mistakenly, it was initially believed capable of housing between 160 and 190 internees; however, rooms on the second and third floor, which initially had been considered suitable, could not be used because they were too narrow. As a result, and by necessity,

beds were even placed in the corridors. Starting on August 22, 1940, the internees themselves managed the kitchen, located in a room on the first floor. Because the structure lacked an appropriate space, there was no infirmary: nonetheless, a local doctor provided medical assistance through periodic visits, while internees could travel to Campobasso, with authorization and under escort, for specialized care visits.

Typically, the internees had three hours a day outdoors, during which they could spend time walking the roads adjacent to the camp.

On June 22, 1943, during a visit by the International Red Cross, the camp counted 49 internees, two of whom were Anglo-Maltese, some countryless Jews, a few Italians, and 16 former Yugoslavs. The latter, specifically, protested the attempts by management to require the Roman salute for them to obtain packages of food and other goods sent from home. In the report, later submitted to the Ministry of the Interior, representatives of the Red Cross demanded, among other things, a greater evenness in the treatment of the various categories of internees. The representatives also provided a check for 1,600 Italian lire to be divided among the “former Yugoslav” internees to “buy needed clothing or additional food.”

The Casacalenda camp remained open until September 8, 1943. The liberation of the foreign internees, established by the Armistice provisions agreed upon by Italy and the Allies, took place once the Chief of Police’s specific order reached the camp.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>June 22, 1943</i>
Internees	64	31	60	41	44

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 117, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 “Campobasso,” ss. ff. 7, 10, 11.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 22, 1943).

CASOLI (Chieti)

The Casoli camp opened in early July 1940, following necessary improvements to the two selected buildings: a regular house owned by the Tilli family, which could hold 50 people; and an abandoned schoolhouse owned by the town, which could hold 30 people. In the former school, the internees lived in a relatively dry, single room, which had a heater and was taken up almost exclusively by their beds. The building under Tilli ownership, instead, turned out to be particularly humid and unhealthy, resulting in it being inappropriate for the purpose for which it had been rented. Therefore, a few months after the camp’s opening, the prefecture replaced it with a building, having the same

capacity that had been used in the past as a movie theater. Finally, as of July 1942, an additional building was acquired to serve as kitchen and mess hall.

Altogether, based on official numbers, Casoli could host 80–100 internees, though the actual numbers, on average, were lower. Directorship of the camp was given to the *podestà* of Casoli, who always acted respectfully toward the internees, the first of whom arrived on July 14, 1940. Surveillance of the internees was the responsibility of the *carabinieri*, while the local doctor provided medical support. Initially, the internees could walk freely into town during the daytime hours; if they needed specialized medical care or to take care of personal matters, they could travel under escort to Lanciano, the most important city in the area.

Initially, aside from a few “enemy subjects,” Casoli housed only “foreign Jews” (prevalently German and Austrian), of whom 27 arrived late in September 1941 from the Ferramonti camp. In 1942, like other camps run by the Ministry of the Interior, Casoli experienced a quick change in its internee population: that May, the 50 foreign Jews living there were transferred to Campagna to be replaced by 82 “former Yugoslavs,” arriving from Corropoli.

Starting in 1942, more internees lived in the camp on average. This factor, and the growing difficulties in procuring foodstuffs, made living conditions more problematic. Inspectors from the International Red Cross, who visited the camp because “enemy subjects” were present (among them three Greeks, while the remaining 71 internees were all “former Yugoslavs”), noticed structural issues (the absence of washbasins and the shortage of latrines), and lamented the limited opportunities for internees to be outdoors.

Due to the events on September 8, 1943, the Casoli camp was shut down and the internees were released, but nine Jews who had been interned in Casoli were later arrested and deported to Auschwitz. The camp of Casoli would briefly be reactivated (but not for Jews) during the rule of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana*.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 15, 1940</i>	<i>August 15, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>	<i>September 1, 1942</i>
Internees	50	30	82	87	80

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12 “Chieti,” ss. ff. 7.

Acs, Mi, Ps, A4 bis (Stranieri internati), b 1/13 “Chieti.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (September 1, 1942).

CHIETI

Opened halfway through June 1940, and believed sufficient to hold 200 internees, the Chieti camp was the only one located in the downtown area of a city that was a county seat. It was set up in the buildings of the “Principessa

di Piemonte” kindergarten, owned by the city, which already during the Ethiopian war had been commandeered to handle civilian mobilization.

Management of the camp was given to a chief of public safety (Mario La Monaca), while the *carabinieri* set up a post inside the building to provide surveillance services. The camp held internees belonging for the most part to the two categories of “enemy subjects” and “foreign Jews.”

As of September 14, 1940, out of a total of 21 internees, there were 8 British, 5 French, 4 Czechs, 2 Italians, 1 Slovakian, and 1 Irish. By the end of October, in addition to the Frenchmen (12) and Englishmen (8), there was 1 Italian and 6 “foreign Jews” of different nationalities.

The Ministry of the Interior closed the camp on November 10, 1940, following a request by the local *podestà* who, at the start of the new academic year, had been unable to find an alternative location for the kindergarten children. The internees were then transferred to other camps, based on their “category” of belonging: the 6 “foreign Jews” to Casoli; the 17 “enemy subjects” to Montechiarugolo and the only “dangerous Italian” to Manfredonia.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>June 15, 1940</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>November 10, 1940</i>
Internees	13	21	29	24

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12 “Chieti,” ss. ff. 6.

CITTÀ SANT’ANGELO (Pescara)

This camp was set up in June 1940 in an old tobacco factory, but its first internees arrived only during the spring of the following year. Many different public safety officers took turns managing it, while the surveillance service was provided by the local *carabinieri*, who set up a post in the camp’s vicinity. The town’s doctor provided medical assistance.

The building, cramped and fairly unhealthy, was considered capable of holding 150 people. It had three floors and faced Via Umberto I, a street in the historic center of town. Electricity, plumbing, toilets and bathrooms were provided. On the main floor there were eight rooms; ten on the second; and eight more on the third. Behind the building was a vegetable garden that the internees could freely access. Initially, the camp did not have kitchen facilities, which were added, together with an annexed mess hall, in the spring of 1943; an infirmary with an isolation room had been added in December 1942.

The internees were almost exclusively “former Yugoslavs” relocated from Dalmatia. On July 2, 1941, the camp’s director wrote to the Ministry of the

Interior that, “following a practice that was already in place,” he had carefully divided them in homogenous dormitories, trying to keep “officers, degree holders, business owners, etc. away from the masses and all sorts of riff-raff.” In May 1942, 50 more former Yugoslavs belonging to the most disparate social groups (among the Slovenes there was even an elderly former senator) arrived from the camp of Corropoli.

Initially, Città Sant’Angelo internees could walk about town from 8:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and could eat their meals in local eateries, paying out of pocket. In time, however, the internment standards became tougher and a mess hall was set up internally, a measure that drastically reduced opportunities to engage with the local population.

Because the camp temporarily housed some British internees, Hans Wolf de Salis, representing the International Red Cross, visited the camp on September 2, 1942. He found the overall conditions of internment acceptable, and pointed out how, generally speaking, the internees of Città Sant’Angelo enjoyed greater degrees of freedom than those in Casoli and Lanciano, which he had visited the previous day. That December, however, in agreement with the Police Commissioner of Pescara, the local Inspector General decided to restrict time away from the camp to two hours a day, during which the internees had to walk “in squads, escorted by officers and *carabinieri*.” Some of the internees, who had already been labeled “dangerous Communists,” were arrested as provocateurs and transferred as punishment to the camps of Lipari and Ponza.

The Città Sant’Angelo internees were not released officially in response to what happened on September 8, 1943. That said, they left the camp, since their guardians had disappeared. The building would briefly be reactivated during the rule of the Repubblica Sociale Italiana.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>May 5, 1941</i>	<i>July 1942</i>	<i>September 1, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>September 1, 1943</i>
Internees	134	135	108	113	79

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 133, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 30 “Pescara,” ss. ff. 4, 8.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (September 2, 1942).

CIVITELLA DEL TRONTO (Teramo)

Holding a maximum total of nearly 200 internees, this camp employed three different residential units: the former Franciscan convent of Santa Maria dei Lumi (with approximately 60 beds); the former nursing home

Filippo Alessandrini (with approximately 100 beds); and a private building belonging to the Migliorati family (with approximately 40 beds). It started operations in early September 1940, under the management of numerous public safety officials that have occurred over time (Mario Gagliardi, Giovanni Cardinale, Giuseppe Franco, Domenico Palermo, and Francesco Mariniello), while the *carabinieri* monitored the facilities.

Initially, the internees were placed in the former convent, which was the better building and was just outside town. The first internees to arrive, on September 4, 1940, were Belgian “enemy subjects.” “Foreign Jews” and other foreign civilians, among whom were ten Chinese traveling salesmen, followed them between September and October. In January 1941, approximately 100 Greek citizens arrived, though they remained in Civitella for only a short time. But in January 1942, with the arrival of 114 British Jews evacuated from Libya (there were 28 family units, including many elderly and children, classified as “foreign subjects”), the camp management was forced to acquire the other two buildings (the Migliorati home and the former Alessandrini nursing home). In early July 1943, 42 additional inmates, mostly British “enemy subjects” transferred in from the Corropoli camp.

Living conditions, aside from the dampness of the building, the crowding, and the lack of heating, were not particularly harsh, especially for the “enemy subjects” who, through the Red Cross, received care packages and even cigarettes. Typically, the internees could spend time in the town, and relationships with the locals were cordial.

After September 8, 1943, the internees were not set free. Some left on their own, but all three camp buildings remained active. On October 26, 1943, following orders of the German command in Chieti, 121 male internees were picked up from the camp and taken to build anti-tank ditches near Crocetta sul Sangro, in the province of Pescara: they worked 12 hours a day, and slept on the ground, in an old brick factory. They stayed there until early December when, due to official complaints that the Swiss Legation presented to the Ministry of the Interior (on behalf of the British prisoners it represented), and to the approaching battlefront, they were taken back to Civitella. During that trip, 15 internees managed to escape. As of December 6, 1943 (when the forced labor group came back), there were 166 internees (representing men, women, and children), of whom 118 were foreign Jews: 86 British-Libyan, and 32 of other nationalities. The camp remained active under RSI control until early May 1944, when the internees were sent to Fossoli under the escort of an SS and German police team. The first group (23 “foreign Jews”) left Civitella on April 18, 1944; the second, comprised of 134 people (86 British-Libyan Jews, and 48 split between “foreign Jews” and “enemy subjects”), on May 6, 1944. From Fossoli, the British-Libyan Jews would be deported to the *Aufenthlager* of Bergen-Belsen on May 16, 1944.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>November 15, 1940</i>	<i>February 15, 1941</i>	<i>April 3, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>
Internees	20	110	232	186	167
<i>Date</i>	<i>August 8, 1943</i>	<i>November 15, 1943</i>	<i>December 6, 1943</i>	<i>January 15, 1944</i>	<i>April 15, 1944</i>
Internees	186	60	166	164	157

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo” (ss. ff. 13, 16, 19).

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, A4 bis (Stranieri internati), b. 6/38 “Teramo.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 25, 1942; September 3, 1942; August 20, 1943).

CORROPOLI (Teramo)

This camp began operations in February 1941 in the abandoned monastery of the Celestine monks’ gothic abbey. The building, which has a large internal courtyard, sits on the Maiulano hill, approximately 1.5 kilometers from Corropoli. In the late 1930s the Provincial, Anti-Tuberculosis Consortium of Teramo purchased it to turn it into a preventorium. The Ministry of the Interior, however, temporarily blocked the project, in 1940, so that, after renovations that lasted a few months, it could turn it into concentration camp with the capacity to hold 180 internees.

Many public safety officers alternated at its helm: Guido Trevisani, Mario Maiello, Carmine Medici, Francesco Along, Carmine Sanzio, and Mario Gagliardi. Security and policing services were assigned to the *carabinieri* and to public safety agents. Initially, the internees were especially “dangerous Italians,” *allogeni* and in smaller numbers “foreign Jews.”

On June 18, 1942, 45 former Greek officers arrived from Greece with the status of civilian internees (they were soon thereafter transferred to the camp of Busseto, in the province of Parma) together with 20 British “enemy subjects.” On July 1942, 11 British internees of Indian origins arrived at Civitella della Chiana, while many more would arrive from Libya in the following months. As of September 3, 1942, when the Red Cross visited the camp, there were 69 internees: 47 British citizens, and 22 “former Yugoslav.” Forty-eight additional “former Yugoslav” internees arrived from the Tollo camp in May 1943: these, together with some of their compatriots, were transferred to Bagno a Ripoli in early July. During that time, the British internees departed for Civitella del Tronto, so that the buildings of the Corropoli camp remained practically empty until the arrival of 150 “former Yugoslavs” who had been evacuated from Lipari on July 14, 1943 (in conditions that a report by the Red Cross defined as “of extreme thinness”). Just before their arrival, the camp was equipped with a barbed wire fence and with a better security detail manned by 22 *carabinieri*.

The internees of Corropoli were allowed to “amble” daily for a few hours in a restricted area of the fields surrounding the abbey. Escorted by officers or *carabinieri*, they could take turns going to town to buy food provisions for the mess hall; or to Teramo, for specialized medical visits. Those who arbitrarily left the confines of the allotted areas, were arrested and sent to the district prison of Nereto. As was the case for other camps, the actual living conditions of the internees varied according to their *status*. Those of the former Yugoslavs were most pitiful, which is why they repeatedly went on hunger strikes. British subjects, conversely, received food stuffs and care packages from the Red Cross, which, as the accusations went, they sometimes sold illegally with the complicity of local intermediaries or of the agents guarding the camp.

Mussolini’s deposition aroused many of the internees’ hopes to be freed. But their situation remained practically the same until mid-September 1943. Then, on the 19th of the month, some men, led by the future partisan commander Armando Ammazalorso, attacked the abbey and freed 36 Yugoslavs, among whom was former, Croatian Lieutenant Svetozar Ciukovič, who would take on a significant role in the battle of Bosco Martese fought against the Nazis on September 25, 1943.

The camp remained in operation under the Repubblica Sociale Italiana and, between November and December 1943, the internees were employed to dig anti-tank trenches on the Sangro battlefield. On February 1, 1944, when the camp was virtually empty, 69 Jews arrived from Nereto; but it was shut down at the end of May, after the last internees (approximately 60, mostly Jews), were transferred to the former P.O.W. concentration camp of Servigliano Marche.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>May 1,</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>Sep-</i>	<i>January</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>April</i>
	<i>1, 1941</i>	<i>15,</i>	<i>1942</i>	<i>24,</i>	<i>tember</i>	<i>15,</i>	<i>16,</i>	<i>15,</i>	<i>15,</i>
		<i>1941</i>		<i>1942</i>	<i>3, 1942</i>	<i>1943</i>	<i>1943</i>	<i>1943</i>	<i>1944</i>
Internees	18	65	132	64	69	150	103	165	73

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo,” s.f. 15 “Corropoli.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (Septemer 3, 1942; August 20, 1943).

ISERNIA (Campobasso)

The Ministry of the Interior placed the camp in Isernia (a city that, until the 1960s, was under the administration of the Campobasso province) in the former Benedictine convent located in the historical town center commonly known as the “ancient district.” The chief of public safety, Guido Renzoni, initially

managed the facility, though he was transferred punitively to Casacalenda in October 1940, following the escape of two foreign internees, a Yugoslav and Romanian deserter. His colleague, Pasquale Morra, supported by agents and *carabinieri* who performed most of the administrative and security duties, succeeded him. The camp gathered a varied typology of Italian and foreign male internees. On September 13, 1940, of the 76 internees in the camp, 59 were Italians, among whom were many of Slavic origin (*allogeni*), 5 Frenchmen, 3 “former Yugoslavs,” 3 Germans, 2 Romanians, and 1 each from England, Poland, Hungary, Albania, and Syria. During the whole time the camp was in operation, the most represented categories were “dangerous Italians,” *allogeni*, “enemy subjects,” “foreign Jews,” and “former Yugoslav” citizens.

The building, which during the previous year had hosted about 40 Albanian *carabinieri* trainees, faced the main road of Isernia, a town of 8,000 people at the time. It had four large dormitory-style rooms on the main floor, and the same number on the first floor: optimistically, it had been believed capable of holding up to 120 internees. In actuality, its capacity was much less, especially because four rooms in the building, which had been originally computed in the available space, were eventually given to a nearby educational institute. Conversely, in order to face the arrivals of new internees, during the summer of 1941 the Isernia camp acquired a new space. It was a former cinema theater, a large room with a wooden floor, where 50 Jews that had been transferred from Agnone were relocated. The latter, unable to endure “the confines of the space, its sanitary shortcomings, and the impossibility to live their spiritual practices,” on September 19, 1941, asked the Apostolic Nuncio to intervene to promote a transfer to Campagna or Notaresco. The camp director, for his part, informed the prefect of Campobasso that transferring the Jews would improve “discipline and the smooth handling of the Isernia camp,” since their presence “was not well tolerated by the majority of the Aryan internees.” So as of January 9, 1942, Jewish internees were sent for the most part to the Ferramonti camp, and “former Yugoslav” citizens took their place in the “Ancient district” of Isernia.

In January 1942, given the increasingly difficult living conditions, the camp director asked the Ministry not to exceed 70 internees in the camp, a request that the Campobasso prefect did not support, since he believed that the Isernia camp could normally hold 200 internees.

On September 12, 1943, the city was targeted by Allied aerial bombings, during which even some of the internees were killed as they were trying to bring aid to the city’s population.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>January 10, 1941</i>	<i>March 13, 1941</i>	<i>December 15, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>December 23, 1942</i>	<i>April 18, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	76	72	86	124	65	93	95	98	139

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 116, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 “Campobasso,” s.f. 5 “Isernia. Ex-convent Ancient District.”

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 117, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 “Campobasso,” ss. ff. 10, 11.

ISOLA DEL GRAN SASSO (Teramo)

Opened in June 1940, this camp occupied two buildings close to each other, at about 2 kilometers from the town of Isola del Gran Sasso: the guest-house of the Basilica of San Gabriele, owned by the Passionist Fathers; and the former hotel San Gabriele, belonging to the Santilli family, but under bankruptcy foreclosure. Though in theory the two buildings could host 180 people, in reality they were able to hold less than 120.

The local *podestà* managed the camp, while the security detail was provided by *carabinieri* under the leadership of a non-commissioned officer. Initially, internees were especially “foreign Jews” who, starting in 1941, were transferred to other internment locations. In January 1941, 42 Italian Jews arrived here mostly from the recently disbanded camp of Gioia del Colle. That same year, in September, ten Chinese internees arrived from the nearby camp of Tossicia. The Jewish and Chinese ones lived in separate locations, with the former occupying the hotel, and the latter the guesthouse of the Passionist fathers. On May 16, 1942, following the departure toward Ferramonti of the 55 “foreign Jews,” another 116 Chinese internees arrived to Isola, also from Tossicia.

The hotel building was reasonably well kept. Equipped with a kitchen, mess hall, and even an infirmary, its plumbing provided drinking water and showers, supported by a water heater. Thus, when the internees complained, those complaints mostly pertained to the other building, the guesthouse, because, in addition to structural deficiencies, it lacked in food and basic services.

In general, the Isola internees were given great freedom of movement. The Chinese internees often went as far as Teramo, or climbed the slopes of the Gran Sasso mountain, and would come back, occasionally, bringing back dead stray dogs, whose meat was considered a delicacy. Until October 1943, the camp hosted a total of 147 Chinese internees, who could rely for spiritual assistance on Father Antonio Tchang, a compatriot belonging to the Order of the Friar Minors, who had been relocated near the camp by the Vatican.

The camp of Isola remained in activity even after the announcement of the Armistice (September 8, 1943), so that by mid-October of that year it still counted about 100 Chinese internees.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 15, 1940</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>January 15, 1941</i>	<i>April 15, 1942</i>	<i>March 15, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1944</i>
Internees	15	93	105	107	146	147	99

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo,” ss. ff. 6, 15.

ISTONIO (Chieti)

The camp of Marina di Istonio (today Marina di Vasto) was operational from mid-June 1940. It was set up in two separate buildings located about 100 meters from the beach, near the train station: a never-completed hotel belonging to the Ricci family, capable of holding about 100 beds; and a cottage owned by the Marchesani family, which had already been used as barracks for a corps of *Guardia di Finanza* (Department of Revenue officers), and which held 80 people. The security detail was provided by the *carabinieri* who, in 1942, also made use of sentry boxes placed near the two buildings, which were not very far from each other.

The camp of Marina di Istonio, which was managed by a chief of public safety (initially Vincenzo Prezioso, a local officer), was the quintessential camp for “opponents” (Italian political dissidents), though it also held ordinary internees and “fallen out of favor” fascists. The political dissidents came from different Italian regions, mostly from Lombardy and Venezia Giulia: among the Communists one remembers Giovanni Grilli from Milan, and the Calabrian Eugenio Musolino, who have left us numerous documents about their internment experience; the Socialists Giuseppe Scalarini, who was almost 70 years old at the time, and Giulio Guido Mazzali, who would go on to become chief editor of the *Avanti!* newspaper; and finally, among the Liberal Party members, Mario Borsa, who would become editor-in-chief of the *Corriere della Sera*, and the art critic Raffaello Giolli, who was interned with his young son Paolo and had been editor of the art magazine *Domus* (Giolli would eventually be deported to Mauthausen where he died).

Initially, living conditions were not unduly harsh: the two buildings were well kept and, in the morning, some internees were allowed to go to the library, located in the uptown area. All internees could circulate within most of the municipal territory and, since the camp was without a mess hall, they could frequent locally contracted restaurants. Some internees even started a rabbit farm, which the local farmers admired as if it were an avant-garde center for animal husbandry. In time, however, circumstances worsened, especially after management discovered, in January 1941, an alleged subversive organization led by the Milanese internees Angelo Pampuri and

Mauro Venegoni (who would eventually be honored with the gold medal for military valor).

Following that discovery, a number of internees were transferred punitively to the Tremiti Islands, and the internment regime became much more restrictive. Among other new restrictions, the area where internees could circulate freely was limited to the 50 meters in front of the two buildings; and an internal, non-self monitored, mess hall was created that caused numerous internee complaints. In March 1943, to protest against food that was declared inedible, the inmates staged a great hunger strike, after which eight were subjected to prison time. In June 1943, 31 internees, judged to be not particularly dangerous, were sent, as unskilled laborers, masons, and workers, to the camp of Farfa, which was under construction.

Already in the fall of 1941, the military and civilian authorities had recommended the camp's closing "for safety reasons"; or, as an alternative, the substitution of the "Italian subversives, all with police dossiers" with foreign Jews from the Isola del Gran Sasso camp, who were reputed more trustworthy. However, ignoring these concerns, following the deposition of Mussolini on July 25, 1943, the Ministry of the Interior replaced the anti-fascist prisoners and the freed *allogeni* with about 100 "former Yugoslav" citizens. In vain, on August 8, 1943, the police commissioner of Chieti invited the Chief of Police of the Badoglio government to "urgently consider the possibility of immediately disbanding the concentration camp of Istonio Marina." Only approximately 20 Yugoslav internees, on file as "especially dangerous Communists," were transferred at the end of August to more secure camps.

The camp of Istonio remained operative until the end of September 1943.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 15, 1940</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>March 5, 1941</i>	<i>November 1, 1941</i>	<i>July 1, 1942</i>	<i>September 15, 1942</i>	<i>July 30, 1943</i>
Internees	79	109	108	185	128	170	167

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12 "Chieti," ss.ff. 8, 11, 16.

LAMA DEI PELIGNI (Chieti)

This camp was set up in mid-June 1940 in a private residence belonging to the Borrelli family on the town's main street. The building, two floors and an attic, was judged capable of holding 65 internees. Generally speaking, however, due to numerous transfers and releases, there were hectic internee turnovers and, during its first two years of existence, camp numbers were minimal. In those first years, the camp was managed by the local *podestà*, after which

the chief of public safety took his place. Surveillance was provided by the *carabinieri*, while the town's doctor provided healthcare.

Conditions of internment, aside from the wintery climate and the unstable living conditions, were not excessively harsh: controls were not rigorous, and internees practically had free rein to circulate in town during the day. Since the camp's building did not have a kitchen, the internees were authorized to use two local eateries for their meals.

The first internees to arrive, in July 1940, were “enemy subject” civilians. At that time, out of ten internees in the camp, five were British, one French, and four were either “stateless or foreign Jews.” Soon thereafter, the “enemy subjects” were transferred out and, in their place, the camp held other stateless or foreign Jews (a group of 30 arrived from Ferramonti in September 1941); these, save a few exceptions, stayed in Lama until the closure of the camp, which took place after the declaration of the Armistice on September 8, 1943.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 1, 1940</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>September 15, 1942</i>
Internees	10	23	24	70

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12 “Chieti,” ss. ff. 10, 16.

LANCIANO (Chieti)

This camp was set up in a country villa owned by the Sorge family in *via dei Cappuccini*, the road that leads to Caselfrentano. The building, which even had a telephone, was 1.5 kilometers from downtown Lanciano, and reputedly capable of holding roughly 70 internees.

From June 29 until September 21, 1940, the local *podestà*, Raffaele Di Guglielmo, managed the camp. At a later time, management of the facility was transferred to the chief of public safety, with the following taking their place as camp directors: Eduino Pistone, Olindo Tiberi Pasqualoni, Domenico Palermo, Carmine Medici, and Giuseppe Franco. In the early period of internment—distinguished by an exclusively female population—a female director assisted the director: first Rosa Pace, then Maria Marfisi. Security detail was given to the *carabinieri* who, from fall 1940 onward, set up a guard box in the small lodging owned by the Basile family, facing the camp. The municipal doctor of Lanciano, Giuseppe Carabba, who would visit the camp once a week, provided healthcare.

The first internees arrived in early July 1940. The group consisted mostly of foreign women categorized as “enemy subjects” or “foreign Jews.” In early 1941, the majority of “enemy subjects” (starting with British citizens) began

to be transferred to other camps or to *internamento libero*. Thus, as of February 12, 1942, with the transfer to Pollenza of the last internees, the “women’s camp” of Lanciano concluded its existence.

Conversely, starting on February 27, 1942, when a contingent of internees arrived from the Italian camps in Albania, Villa Sorge held only male internees, almost exclusively belonging to the category of “former Yugoslav” citizens.

The villa where the camp was set up had three floors: on the main floor, in addition to the entrance, were four rooms, the restrooms, and a generic room; on the first floor there were five rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom with toilets, and a covered terrace; on the top floor, finally, there were three rooms. Each of the rooms, depending on its dimensions, held between six and ten beds. Living conditions were precarious and forced the internees to endure many strictures: toilets and latrines were in poor sanitary condition due to the lack of water, and the only functioning faucet was located in the building’s external courtyard. The heating system was inadequate so that, during the winter, the rooms were ice cold, since the window structures were also falling apart.

While it was a “women’s camp,” internees had significant freedom of movement: during the day, the women could walk to the surrounding areas and, under guarded escort, could also go downtown for general shopping needs or for specialized doctor’s visits. As far as food, each internee took care of her needs, cooking on coal or gas burners.

The situation changed with the arrival of the Yugoslav internees when, to prevent them from shopping downtown, management created a mess hall overseen by an external company. The internees badly panned the quality of the services, because each of them had to pay 6.30 Italian lire daily. Therefore, on April 4, 1942, they set up a massive protest, refusing to eat their meals. As a result, eight internees were transferred to a jail, and the others to other internment camps. The leader of the strike, Boris Lentic, after being held in jail for an extended period of time, was sent to Lipari.

During a visit by the International Red Cross representatives, that took place in September 1942 as a result of the internment of three Greek “enemy subjects,” the internees complained about the lack of food and medical supplies, and of the space limitations imposed on their “walks.”

Camp life was fairly unsettled from the early on: the first director was substituted in 1941 and transferred punitively to Boiano as a result of a fight between a Russian internee and the female director. The summer of that same year, the new director was subjected to the same measure because his daughter was “too familiar” with the female internees and a male internee she met in town. Maria Luisa Moldauer, a young, Jewish Polish internee who had just completed her university studies in Florence, left us a striking witness account entitled *L’internata numero 6 (Internee Number 6)*, under her married name, Eisenstein, which described the difficult cohabitation among female internees, the narrow perspectives of the camp’s director, and, generally speaking, the early months of internment in the camp. Though it was somewhat

fictionalized, it represented the first memoir published in Italy (in Rome, just after liberation in 1944) on internment in a fascist camp.

Following the declaration of Armistice on September 8, 1943, many internees left the villa of their own volition, even though the camp continued to be formally active until mid-October, when almost all the inmates had already escaped into the surrounding countryside.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 15, 1940</i>	<i>August 15, 1940</i>	<i>May 1, 1941</i>	<i>March 26, 1942</i>	<i>September 1, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>October 1 1943</i>
Internees	47	75	26	52	57	46	69

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12 “Chieti,” s.f. 12.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (September 1, 1942).

NERETO (Teramo)

Opened in June 1940, the camp occupied two buildings: one owned by the Santoni family, on Via Vittorio Veneto; the other belonging to the Lupini family, located in Via Scarfoglio. Initially, the structure was managed by the local administrator for the Cultural Fascist Institute; later by the podestà; and finally by the chief of public safety. Security detail was provided by the *carabinieri*, who eventually established a permanent guard station facing each building.

The earliest internees arrived June 17, 1940. In time, their numbers increased so much that, in October, the camp had to add a third building to its structures: the former “Silkworm Palace,” a building owned by the agrarian consortium in Viale Roma. As a whole, the Nereto camp could hold 160 people. Among the all-male internee population were grouped “dangerous Italians” (*opponents* of the regime), “foreign Jews” (German, Austrian, Polish, and stateless ones, mostly from Fiume), “former Yugoslav” citizens, and a smaller number of “enemy subjects” and *allogeni* from Venezia Giulia. A group consisting of 40 “foreign Jews” arrived here from the Ferramonti camp in early October 1941.

As was the case for other camps spread out in different buildings, living conditions varied according to the structure. The most livable one was the “Santoni Palace.” The other two, especially the “Silkworm Palace,” were fairly decrepit and without heating systems.

Generally speaking, internees could move through the town during the day, though the only municipal park was excluded from their purview. However, those who lived in the “Silkworm Palace,” which was considered a punitive structure, typically could not leave the building. Some internees

dealt with the many problems related to food by cooking for themselves; while the “wealthier” ones usually ate at local, subcontracted restaurants. A kitchen and a mess hall had been set up in an internal courtyard for those who lived in the “Silkworm Palace.” The municipal doctor took care of general health concerns, while it was possible to reach Teramo for specialist visits or urgent care under guarded escort of the *carabinieri* or public safety agents.

The camp of Nereto permitted a number of cultural and recreational activities, including choir concerts (occasionally held in the presence of the director) and soccer games. Relationships with the local population were generally good, so much so that three former internees would marry local women in the postwar period. Much more problematic were, instead, the relationships between the inmates and the commissar Francesco Alongi, who directed the nearby camp of Corropoli and who, starting in August 1942, was charged with overseeing the camp of Nereto as well.

In May 1943, 20 internees were transferred to the province of Rieti to help build the new Farfa camp, while during that same period Nereto welcomed internees from the Tortoreto Stazione camp, following the evacuation of the latter by the Ministry of the Interior for safety reasons.

After Mussolini was overthrown, the few Italian internees were released, while the 158 foreigners, almost exclusively “former Yugoslav” citizens, remained in the camp even after the Armistice: their internment, confirmed by the puppet RSI government, became even harsher at that point. On December 4, 1943, German soldiers occupied the “Silkworm Palace” and the internees were transferred to the other two buildings. On December 21, 1943, the director summoned to “Casa Lupini” the 70 internees still in the camp with the expressed intention of “sheltering them from the SS.” But the true motive was to hand over the Jewish internees to the Germans. The camp was shut down February 1, 1944: the 69 internees still on site were transferred to Corropoli.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 31, 1940</i>	<i>February 12, 1941</i>	<i>August 31, 1942</i>	<i>October 31, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>	<i>December 15, 1943</i>	<i>February 1, 1944</i>
Internees	28	56	145	200	170	70	69

Archival references:

- Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo,” ss. ff. 10, 18.
 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, A4 bis stranieri internati, b. 6/38 “Teramo.”
 Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (August 20, 1943).

NOTARESCO (Teramo)

The Notaresco camp, established in early July 1940, occupied two buildings within the town's perimeter: one, in Via De Vincenzi, owned by the De Vincenzi-Mazzarosa family; the other, in Via Giardino, which belonged to the Liberi Eligio family. Together the buildings could host roughly 100 internees.

The camp, which initially was managed by a chief of the prefecture, and later by the town's *podestà*, was guarded by the local *carabinieri*, who set up a post near the De Vincenzi palace. The municipal doctor of Notaresco, for his part, provided medical services to the camp.

Both buildings were without kitchens or infirmaries, but had showers, though without heating units. In 1942, however, the bathrooms were expanded and upgraded.

The earliest internees—countryless and foreign Jews—arrived at Notaresco on July 13, 1940. In September, due to a case of polio, the Chief of Police temporarily suspended the arrival of other internees. By January 1941, once the emergency was over, the camp population consisted of 68 Jewish internees: 19 stateless ones from Fiume, who had previously been Italian citizens, and 49 foreign ones. By early May of the following year, the Jews in the camp (due to transfers, roughly 60 still remained) were transferred to Ferramonti.

Living conditions, during the first two years of operation, were practically equivalent to those of *internament libero*. Internees could access restaurants and other public spaces even if, as per instructions, “only long enough to take care of their needs.” During the day, moreover, internees could walk on the town's streets and along the early stretches of the province's roadways that departed from Notaresco. The internment regime became significantly harsher and unbending in June 1942, when 60 “former Yugoslav” civilians (mostly Croatians from Dalmatia) arrived at the camp with the label of “partisans or partisan-sympathizers.”

To accommodate the new internees, mess halls were created inside the buildings, and the areas to which they could have access in town were severely restricted. In the spring of 1943, however, 32 internees were given authorization to go to work for local farmers.

Following the events of September 8, 1943, the camp of Notaresco continued to operate without a release of its internees. Only at the end of the month, 31 of them were allowed to leave; a second group of 14 people were let go on November 7. By the end of that month, there were 23 internees in the camp, and down to 5 by January 1944.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 31, 1940</i>	<i>Septem-ber 15, 1940</i>	<i>January 15, 1941</i>	<i>June 15, 1941</i>	<i>April 15, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1943</i>	<i>Novem-ber 7, 1943</i>	<i>Novem-ber 25, 1943</i>	<i>Jan-uary 1, 1944</i>
Internees	55	96	70	36	58	70	21	23	5

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo,” ss.ff. 12, 17.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (August 19, 1943).

TOLLO (Chieti)

Set up in a privately owned building thought to hold 100 people, the camp was opened at the end of 1941 with the specific goal of interning “former Yugoslav” civilians. Initially it was managed by the local *podestà*, with security detail provided by the *carabinieri* who set up watchtowers in three strategic areas outside the building, and a smaller sentry box within the building itself. The local municipal doctor administered the camp’s healthcare services.

The building, equipped with electricity, had a main and upper floor, for a total of 15 rooms. A kitchen-mess hall, common room, restroom facilities, and the watch guard area were established on the main floor, while the upper floor was reserved for the internees’ rooms. The first internees arrived at Tollo in February 1942 from Zadar and Trieste: there were 42 Croats from Dalmatia, labeled as “dangerous communists,” who had been transferred from the Italian concentration camps in Albania and Montenegro.

By February 1943, for safety reasons, the prefect of Chieti had asked the Ministry of the Interior to shut down the camp and transfer the internees. In May of that same year, after fact-finding missions were unanimous in confirming the prefect’s and the *carabinieri*’s worries, the Ministry of the Interior decided to transfer Tollo’s 98 Slav internees elsewhere: 50 were sent to the camp of Bagno a Ripoli, and 48 to Corropoli.

At that point, it was decided to use the camp for Italian civilians interned for food ration violations. The building, though often inactive, continued operations until October 1943.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>February 23, 1942</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>July 15, 1942</i>	<i>October 31, 1942</i>	<i>May 1, 1943</i>
Internees	42	80	99	91	98

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 118, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 12 “Chieti,” s.f. 9.

TORTORETO (Teramo)

This camp used two buildings that, while situated in the same municipal perimeter, were almost 8 kilometers apart. Internees were housed in Upper

Tortoreto in a building owned by the De Fabritiis family that could hold roughly 25 people; while in Tortoreto Station (a hamlet that, after the war, became an autonomous municipality called Alba Adriatica), they lived in an old, distinguished villa, property of the Tonelli family, close to the train station and capable of hosting 75 people. Neither building was fenced.

Opened at the end of July 1940, the camp had a number of directors who resided in Upper Tortoreto: besides the local *podestà*, five more public safety officers took on this role (among whom were Attilio Capurro and Amerigo Amelio). Safety agents and *carabinieri* (which numbered 64 in the summer of 1942) undertook surveillance duties, while local doctors provided medical assistance.

Initially, the inmates were foreign and stateless Jews (many of whom hailed from Fiume). Thereafter, they were ethnic minorities from Venezia Giulia; and, finally, Italian citizens guilty of food ration infractions. Among the many Jewish internees, I single out the Romanian Saul Steinberg who, after the war, would move to the United States, becoming famous as a cartoonist for the *New Yorker*.

Living conditions in the two buildings were hardly comparable. “Casa De Fabritiis,” in Upper Tortoreto, experienced significant difficulties with regard to plumbing and bathroom facilities, and did not house a kitchen, so that the internees had to frequent local restaurants to eat. The Villa Tonelli building, though slightly run down, was more spacious and organized: equipped with an infirmary and kitchen with annexed mess hall, it had seven rooms on the main floor, and the same number on the top floor, each capable of holding between ten and fifteen internees. In daytime, everyone could walk within a certain area of the town though, with the passing months, that area became progressively restricted. Initially, Villa Tonelli inmates were allowed to go into town when the local market was active and, during the summer, to swim in the sea.

In May 1943, following a number of anonymous tips and the outspoken protest of military authorities (who feared contacts between internees and “elements on the enemy’s payroll,” or sabotage activity against the railways), Tortoreto’s 90 inmates, mostly Jews, were transferred to other camps. Those who lived in Villa Tonelli were sent to Nereto.

Following these departures, the Tortoreto Station building ceased all operations, while the one in Upper Tortoreto resumed its activities in July 1943 as an internee destination for Italian civilians guilty of food rationing violations. It was permanently shut down on September 6, 1943, when the last two internees were moved out.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 31, 1940</i>	<i>Septem-ber 15, 1940</i>	<i>April 30, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>August 31, 1942</i>	<i>November 30, 1942</i>	<i>Feb-ruary 15, 1943</i>	<i>May 1, 1943</i>	<i>Septem-ber 3, 1943</i>
Internees	9	103	80	74	114	110	97	90	8

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo,” ss. ff. 9, 11.

TOSSICIA (Teramo)

This camp was set up in August 1940 in two buildings in downtown Tossicia: one owned by Sauro Marti’s family (after the war it became to headquarters for the Forestry Corps); the other owned by Giulio De Fabi’s family (after the war turned into the offices of a savings bank). In November 1941, the camp gained a third building, property of the Di Marco family, which could hold a dozen internees. All together, it was thought that the three buildings could hold 120 people.

Up to 80 internees were housed in Casa Mirti, which was equipped with a small mess hall, but did not have bathrooms or an infirmary. The same was true of Casa De Fabi. The latter, however, had functioning plumbing, though only nominally so, since the pipe ducts were falling apart; the kitchen also served as mess hall for about 50 internees. The situation was more or less the same at Casa Di Marco: no infirmary or bathrooms, no plumbing; all it had were a squatting toilet and a small kitchen. The local *podestà* was entrusted with management of the camp, while security detail for all three buildings was provided by the *carabinieri*, whose offices were not far from the two main buildings.

The internees were foreign Jews, the majority of whom had been transferred from the Manfredonia camp, and foreign enemies (mostly Chinese transferred from the Boiano camp). As of January 31, 1941, there were a total of 127 internees. Later that February, the Jewish inmates were transferred to the camp of Civitella del Tronto, while more Chinese arrived to Tossicia.

As far as living conditions, the Tossicia camp was one of the worst, if not truly the worst, among those set up by the Ministry of the Interior. Even the Red Cross inspectors denounced the camp’s vastly deficient hygienic and sanitary shortcomings and overcrowding. Despite these protests, no upgrades were ever made to the facilities: rather than resolving the undelayable structural issues, local authorities preferred to allocate the camp to some Gypsy families, with the understanding that they had “fewer needs” than other categories of internees.

This operation began on May 12, 1942, when the Ministry of the Interior ordered a cross-transfer between the camps of Isola del Gran Sasso and Tossicia: 42 foreign Jews were transferred from Isola to Ferramonti, while the 116 Chinese internees of Tossicia were moved to Isola. Two months following the departure of the Chinese inmates, who had completely emptied the camp, entire families of Yugoslav Gypsies from Slovenia arrived in Tossicia: all in all, 118 people who lived in truly despicable conditions. As Italia Iacoponi has documented, between August 11, 1942 and September 6, 1943, nine infants were born in the camp. In the summer, due to building disinfestations,

the internees were forced to sleep outside for lengthy time periods. That is when many men were used to help with the cereal harvest (some were even deployed in surrounding regions), while the women would beg in the surrounding areas. The workers-internees earned a small salary in addition to board.

During the 1942–1943 winter, the difficult living conditions worsened for lack of wood to burn. Later, in April 1943 during Easter, the camp was visited by the Apostolic Nuncio, Borgongini Duca, who brought 100 lire to each inmate, and by Father Giuseppe Ravaioli, a Franciscan parish priest from Loreto, who gave confession to the internees whose language he spoke. On August 19, 1943, when the representative of the Red Cross showed up, there were 116 internees of varied ages, whom the official report described as “generally disciplined and respectful, but itching to be free.”

Following the Armistice of September 8, 1943, no internee was released. The camp was technically disbanded on September 26, when all the Gypsies, including women and children, left for the area of Bosco Martese. The Head of the Teramo province, Ippoliti, had hypothesized moving to Tossicia the internees of Corropoli, but this proposal did not seem to have had a follow up.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>January 15, 1941</i>	<i>May 1, 1942</i>	<i>July 22, 1942</i>	<i>June 23, 1943</i>	<i>September 1, 1943</i>
Internees	27	127	116	112	118	118

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 136, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 41 “Teramo” ss. ff. 5, 7.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (August 19, 1943).

VINCHIATURO (Campobasso)

This camp, exclusively reserved for women, was managed by the local *podestà*, assisted by a female director, Amalia Vacalucci, a retired teacher. Security detail was provided by five *carabinieri*, and medical assistance by the municipal doctor of Vinchiaturò.

The camp was located in a private residence owned by the Di Nonno family in Via Libertà, one of the main roads in the small Molise town. The inspectors from the Ministry of the Interior, who inspected it in the spring of 1940, believed the building to be capable of holding up to 50 internees. Of a different opinion were the Red Cross envoys that visited the camp on June 21, 1943, for whom the camp could only hold 35 internees.

With the exception of a few Italian anti-fascist women and one Gypsy (Giuseppa Caris who was transferred to Boiano in February 1941), Vinchiaturò held only foreign internees, many of whom had been labeled as prostitutes: Russian, Polish, Hungarian, “foreign Jews,” and “former Yugoslavs.”

The camp's building had electricity, but it was in a precarious condition and did not have bathrooms. The kitchen, which was manned by an external vendor, and the mess hall were on the main floor. On the first floor were three bedrooms and a living room, while the second floor held five additional bedrooms, two toilets and two sinks. During the winter of 1941, due to the especially harsh weather conditions, public authorities decided to equip the building with some woodstoves.

During the day, for a few hours, the internees could spend time outside on the streets near the camp and, once in a while, they could even walk in the countryside under *carabinieri* escort. During the long, winter evenings, some of the internees fought the pervasive apathy by drawing or by offering language lessons to their fellow internees. On Thursdays (to avoid the greater chance of contact with the locals during the weekends), they could attend mass.

Generally speaking, internment living in Vinciatiuro was not easy, because the promiscuity between the various categories of internees made tidy collective cohabitation difficult to achieve. Women without criminal records, interned solely due to the war, found themselves sharing overcrowded living spaces with prostitutes and shady characters that had spent many years of their lives in jail. This difficult cohabitation might have caused two internees to attempt suicide: in the summer of 1940, Elsa Ratz tried to jump from a window; while in January 1942, Ietta Engl poisoned herself.

In June 1943, to alleviate the overcrowding believed to have caused many of the camp's problems, ten internees were transferred elsewhere upon the persistent requests of the Red Cross envoy. The camp remained active until the Armistice was announced, at which time the foreign internees still living there were released according to the orders issued by the Chief of Police on September 10, 1943.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>August 20, 1940</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>February 1, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>April 14, 1943</i>	<i>June 21, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	10	32	47	42	38	46	47

Archival references:

- Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 116, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 "Campobasso," s.f. 4.
 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 117, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 11 "Campobasso," ss. ff. 10, 11.
 Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 21, 1942).

Campania

ARIANO IRPINO (Avellino)

Opened in July 1940, this camp was located in the Martiri neighborhood, a hamlet 2 kilometers from the town center of Ariano Irpino. Camp

management used different buildings to hold its 130 internees: a brick building on two floors owned by the Mazza family for the directorate of the camp; and ten small, earthquake-proof cottages that had been built for the area's earthquake victims.

It was managed by a commissar of public safety (Vito Pirozzi), supported by a number of agents, while surveillance duties were assigned to the *carabinieri*, who set up a permanent sentry post on the premises. The medical officer of Ariano, who visited three times a week, provided medical assistance. An internee who acted as a nurse on his behalf helped him.

Many "dangerous Italians" and *allogeni* from Venezia Giulia were among the all-male internee population. Early in 1942, a number of "former Yugoslavs" from Dalmatia and the province of Ljubljana began streaming into the camp: of these, the Slovenians were the most organized. Infrequently, the camp also held "foreign Jews" and "enemy subjects." According to the testimony of Arturo Dellepiane, who was held in Ariano in May 1942, infiltrated among the other inmates were numerous spies, provocateurs, and moles of the regime: the anti-fascists had to learn the hard way how to look out for and isolate them.

A fence circumscribed the camp area. The office of the director and an secretary were in the main building. Also nearby were the barracks' storage facility, the *carabinieri* residence and, initially, even a kitchen and a mess hall. As the number of internees grew, the kitchen services (which had been entrusted to a local vendor, Anna Spadazzi) used one of the small cottages, whose internal walls had been torn down, as its mess hall. Soon thereafter, the inmates began self-managing their food services. The dorms were set up in eight of the ten small cottages (the other two hosted the mess hall and other services), which were all on one floor and did not communicate with each other.

Initially, between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and 4:00 and 6:00 p.m., the internees could walk on the provincial road adjacent to the camp, or shop at the one nearby convenience store. In turn, and under guard, they could also walk into town to make purchases for the group and for specialized care and medical appointments. Some of the inmates were allowed to work on farms and in artisanal shops close by where, typically, they completed agrarian tasks, mechanical repairs, or painting jobs. One internee, who was in medical school, was allowed, for "educational purposes," to frequent the local hospital. Among those who stayed in the camp, many took on artisanal jobs making hats, purses, and table centerpieces, the sale of which allowed them to round off their government subsidies. The internment regime became much harsher in 1942.

On June 19, 1943, because an enemy subject was interned in the camp (a Palestinian Jew with a British passport), a delegation from the International Red Cross visited Ariano. Its overall impression of the camp's living conditions was not exceedingly critical. The following month, the inmates greeted the news of the fall of the regime with great merrymaking and ovations.

Then, toward the end of July 1943, the first Italian internees were let go. The complex was shut down following the Armistice of September 8, 1943.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>October 16, 1942</i>	<i>June 19, 1943</i>
Internees	18	77	58	84	86

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 115, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 7 “Avellino,” ss. ff. 4, 8.

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 19, 1943).

CAMPAGNA (Salerno)

The camp of Campagna (a little town wedged in a gorge created by the river Tenza, 250 meters above sea level) began operations June 15, 1940. It availed itself of two former convents, owned by the city, situated at the opposite peripheries of town. The buildings had long been used to house the Army’s officers-in-training, who, for one month a year, came to the area for shooting drills. The former convent of Saint Bartholomew (on the west side and famous for having housed Giordano Bruno during his novitiate years) was in a decent condition. The former convent of the Immaculate Conception (which had belonged to the Order of the Observants) was instead substantially run down and, for fear of collapse, was evacuated in March 1941, with the subsequent relocation of the majority of internees to the Saint Bartholomew building.

A chief of public safety managed the camp (the first director was Eugenio De Paoli, who was followed by Maiello and Carrozzo), while 30 *carabinieri* and public safety agents, and fascist Militia provided administrative and surveillance services. The administrative center was set up in a downtown building that was nearly equidistant from the two buildings that housed the internees. Medical services, officially under the direction of the local doctor Fiorentino Buccella, were in fact provided by the many doctors and medical students interned in the camp. In 1941, a rudimentary nursing and medical unit was set up inside “Saint Bartholomew” to aid the internees. From September 1940 onward, the internees managed independently the camp’s mess hall.

In its early days, the camp housed ten British and French enemy subjects and about 40 Italian Jews. But the majority of internees in the Campagna camp were foreign and stateless Jews: Germans, Austrians, former Czechoslovakian and Yugoslav citizens, and residents of Fiume. As far as professions, the most numerous groups were shopkeepers and business owners, doctors, and artisans, but there were also office workers and intellectuals.

In a report dated February 1, 1940, the inspector Guido Lo Spinoso—who was responsible for locating the two buildings—hypothesized that they could hold up to 750 internees. This prediction proved to be too optimistic: while indeed the “Immaculate Conception” building had 23 dorm-style rooms (of which three were on the main floor, together with the kitchens and the warehouse rooms), due to its state of disrepair, it could hardly hold a hundred internees. Conversely, “Saint Bartholomew” might have held a maximum of 300 people, spaced out in the five barrack-style rooms and 12 smaller rooms distributed between the main and first floor.

The furniture was “barrack-style,” the quintessential furnishing of Italian camps and confinement colonies. And, while electricity was provided at low cost by the local energy company, there was no central heating. Bathrooms and toilet facilities, built next to the dorms, were poorly built and insufficient to accommodate the number of users; while running water was available only in the courtyards: in August 1942, two internees succumbed to typhoid fever and, despite being transported to the hospital in Salerno, lost their lives.

For about six hours a day, the internees could leave their lodgings and circulate in the town within an area whose borders (corresponding to the last homes on either side) were marked by a colored line across the road’s pavement. This freedom of movement helped develop good relationships with the local community, based on respect and reciprocal friendliness. Starting in the fall of 1941, however, this freedom was limited to the morning hours to avoid “too much contact” between internees and the local population.

The presence of so many out-of-towners (Campagna was the largest among the Ministry of the Interior’s camps set up inside pre-existing structures), who obviously needed numerous products and services, was a breath of fresh air and an unexpected boon for the depressed local economy. It resulted, however, not only in exchanges and socialization between the local community and the internees, but also in a prosperous black market. The relationship between the two groups developed even more noticeably when the “Immaculate Conception” building was cleared of internees, and the latter were authorized to reside temporarily in rooms leased by local families.

Thanks especially to the moral and material support provided by the *Delasem*, the community life of the Campagna internees had its own special developments. Among the many accomplishments one should remember the small orchestra directed by the Polish pianist Bogdan Zins; the library with 1,500 books; the well-attended soccer games; and the small temple set up in a room of “Saint Bartholomew.” A mimeographed sheet in German, edited once in a while by the inmates, commented with fine irony on the camp’s life.

Extremely congenial were relationships between the internees and the Bishop of Campagna, Monsignor Giuseppe Maria Palatucci (uncle of Giovanni, the homonymous and by now well-known Police Commissioner of Fiume), who on many occasions championed their well being with the authorities.

In June 1943, as one of the residents was a Belgian civilian classified as an “enemy subject,” a Red Cross delegation arrived for the first time in Campagna for an inspection. In the report transmitted soon thereafter to the Ministry of the Interior, the inspectors claimed to have had “an excellent impression” of the efforts devoted by the various authorities (director, *podestà*, doctor, and other municipal administrators) to improve the state of internment in the camp.

Nothing changed for the internees in July 1943, after the fall of Mussolini. But in the days following the Armistice, the Camp’s director officially freed them following orders he received from the Chief of Police. At that point, to ensure their safety, the former internees immediately headed toward the mountains.

The town of Campagna, in those days, was subjected to two bombardments: the most tragic took place on September 17, when 300 people, mostly civilians, were killed, including a Jew who had just been freed from the camp.

Following the liberation of Campagna, on September 19, 1943, the “Saint Bartholomew” building became the site of a refugee camp managed by the Allied Forces’ *Displaced Persons Sub-Commission*.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 15, 1940</i>	<i>September 15, 1940</i>	<i>November 15, 1940</i>	<i>February 1, 1941</i>	<i>September 14, 1941</i>
Internees	369	272	230	170	151
<i>Date</i>	<i>April 15, 1942</i>	<i>June 15, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>June 17, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	115	201	182	149	148

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgpr, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 134, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 36 “Salerno.”

Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 17, 1943).

MONTEFORTE IRPINO (Avellino)

Opened at the end of June 1940, this camp was set up in the former orphanage Loffredo, a building in Corso Garibaldi, on one of the main streets of Monteforte Irpino.

Managed by the local *podestà*, the camp held “dangerous Italians” from different Italian regions, many of whom had been interned after their sentencing to confinement or jail time by the Special Tribunal had been completed. Their surveillance and custody were provided by the *carabinieri*, while their medical care was in the hands of the local health official. For specialized care visits or surgical emergencies, the internees were taken to the nearby San Giacomo Hospital.

The camp's building, on three floors, was believed capable of holding 100 internees, but the actual occupancy was much inferior to that number. On the first floor were ten, different-sized rooms that could each accommodate between four and eight beds. On the second floor were three rooms, each holding between six and eight beds. On the main floor was the office of the *carabinieri* charged with security detail; a large room that could hold 25 beds; and another room that was used, at a later date, for the kitchens and mess hall. There were toilets on every floor.

Among the many anti-fascists who lived in this camp, one recalls Fausto Sarti from the Marche region, among the earliest arrivals, who had been in confinement without interruption since 1936; and the Calabrian Natale Borgese, who arrived in Monteforte in June 1942, after having spent five years between jail and confinement. But Monteforte's most famous internee is probably Franco Venturi: extradited from Spain in 1941, after spending two months in the jails of Turin, he was sent to Monteforte in early May, staying until the summer, when he was transferred to Avigliano as *internato libero* ("free internee").

According to witnesses, the local population acted with particular kindness toward the internees, who had to follow the typical regime in force in the small camps set up by the Ministry of the Interior: for a few hours a day they could spend time in a restricted perimeter within the town, while they were authorized to travel, under guard, to Avellino under special circumstances. Initially, since there was no mess hall in the building, the internees could eat their meals at a nearby restaurant.

The internees greeted the news of Mussolini's fall with happiness and hope, but the camp remained operative for more than a month afterward.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 15, 1940</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>October 1, 1942</i>
Internees	15	48	51

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 115, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 7 "Avellino," ss. ff. 3, 8.

SOLOFRA (Avellino)

This camp, exclusively for female internees, was placed in a private building owned by the Bonanno family on Via Misericordia, one of the main streets of Solofra. Believed capable of housing roughly 50 people, it began operations in early July 1940. The local *podestà* (Costantino De Maio) was chosen as its director, and was assisted by a female director (Giuditta Festa). Its surveillance was provided by the *carabinieri* who set up a guard station on the premises.

The camp mainly hosted internees of varied nationalities labeled as “prostitutes and politically suspect women.” At times, there were also some Jewish women (the maximum of five Jewish internees was achieved in March 1943). The building, which had electricity, also had a small garden and was on two floors: on the main floor were set up the kitchens, mess hall and the office of the *carabinieri*; on the second, were ten or so rooms, each capable of holding between three and six internees. In addition, two showers were set up that could provide hot water once a week, as well as two toilets with wash basins. At a later date, a small infirmary was also added.

The kitchens, which initially had been entrusted to an external vendor, were later managed by the camp’s directorship, with the aid of two waiters. Three times a week the internees were allowed to take a two-hour walk along the road that led to the countryside. Otherwise, they could be outside in the camp’s garden. The municipal doctor provided medical assistance three times a week for normal visits and required anti-syphilis therapy. In the case of medical or surgical emergencies, the *podestà* set up admittance to the town’s hospital; while, if they were so authorized, the internees could go under guard to Avellino for specialist care.

The internees did not have many opportunities to use their significant free time, aside from playing card games or reading the few available books. And boredom, together with the general life of isolation, promoted arguments and misunderstandings, given the significant disparities in national identities, beliefs, and mindsets. In February 1943, of the 26 internees in the camp, there were four French, three “former Yugoslavs,” three Polish (two of which were Jewish), three stateless Russians, two Belgian, two Greeks, and one each of English, former Czechoslovakian, Romanian, and Dutch; there were also three Italians, one of whom was Jewish, and one an *allogeno* of German origin.

After the fall of Mussolini, the Solfora camp continued its regular operations. Later, in the days following the armistice of September 8, 1943, some internees disappeared jumping over the walls of the garden. The facility, however, remained operative until January of the following year.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>Novem- ber 15, 1941</i>	<i>March 15, 1942</i>	<i>October 16, 1942</i>	<i>February 3, 1943</i>	<i>June 18, 1943</i>	<i>August 31, 1943</i>
Internees	27	23	26	27	16	34

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 115, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 7 “Avellino,” ss. ff. 5, 8.
Acicr, C Sc, Service des camps, Italie (June 18, 1943).

Basilicata**PISTICCI (Matera)**

Once Italy entered the world conflict, even the “agricultural colony” of Pisticci, which at the time could hold around 1,000 people, became a concentration camp for civilians interned by the Ministry of the Interior. The inmates of Pisticci were mostly those categorized as “dangerous Italians” and “*allogeni* from Venezia Giulia,” but also “enemy subjects” and “former Yugoslavs.”

A substantial number of the Italian anti-fascists interned in this colony came directly from prisons. Among them, we remember Giovanbattista Basello, Guglielmo Germoni, Dario Barbato, Gustavo Comollo, Italo Belardi, Agostino Ottani, Vito Pappagallo, and Giacinto Varetto: all had been sentenced by the Special Tribunal and subjected to internment once their jail sentence was completed. In August 1940, due to “repeated antifascist outbursts” (but probably also because he had married a British subject), the prince Filippo Doria Pamphili, who after Liberation would become Rome’s first mayor, was interned in Pisticci. Also interned for a short time were Umberto Terracini and, according to some witness testimonies, Walter Audisio, who would gain fame as “Colonel Valerio” during the partisan resistance.

Among the foreign internees were roughly 50 Poles who had arrived from France, where they had migrated looking for jobs, and who, at the start of the war, had been enlisted in special units that protected the Maginot Line. Later, having sought refuge in the Italian occupied zone, they had been arrested and interned in Pisticci. At the end of 1942, a small group of former Greek officers arrived from Corfu: among them was a medical captain whose work greatly aided the colony’s community. Within the Slav group, which included many “Italians by right of annexation” from the Fiume region and the Quarnero islands, was the Croatian poet Josip Šuljić who entered the Lucan colony on June 15, 1941. At the end of the year, out of 776 deportees living in Pisticci, 553 were internees. Their daily life was pretty much the same as that of the confinees.

The Italian Communist cell was very well organized and had among its confined leaders Giuseppe Neri and Giuseppe Gaddi, as well as the internees Dario Barbato and Gustavo Comollo, the future “Commissar Pietro” active during the war of Liberation. The Communists undertook a long struggle that led to the autonomous management of the mess halls, which originally had been entrusted to local vendors connected with the directors.

The true overseer of the colony was Eugenio Parrini, who some internees, in their witness statements, called a fanatic supporter of the *Duce*, and even a “diehard philo-Nazi.” More than anything else, however, it appeared that he was interested in protecting his business interests, a pragmatic view of the situation that led him to collaborate extensively with the members of the Communist group. They too, as far as their labor practices, preferred to

collaborate with Parrini rather than antagonize him with hostile, sabotaging practices; a behavior that probably reduced repressive outbursts (which still occurred) and certainly contributed to the productivity of the “agricultural colony.”

In a short time, the colony was indeed able to produce surprising outcomes: 800 hectares of land were reclaimed and 38, two-storey farm cottages were built, each on 20 hectares of land, and each capable of holding four families. The “prison-firm” of Pisticci (the *Agricola*, as Parrini used to call it) became almost a model estate, sporting a first class carpenter’s shop, and with significant agricultural, zootechnical, and machinery holdings. Supported and sponsored by the Fascist government, it produced many easy profits for its owner.

When Mussolini’s government fell, the many Italian and foreign anti-fascists welcomed the news by singing revolutionary hymns. The following days, though very slowly, Suppa, director of the colony, began to allow small numbers of confinees and internees to leave: these, handed their expulsion orders, went back to their homes. Though the liberation of the Communist inmates did not occur truly until mid-August, many (as the Mantuan Loris Pescarolo wrote in his memors) took advantage of the confusion and chaos taking place during those days to immediately make themselves scarce, “without waiting for the duly signed papers.”

The colony still held captive anarchists, those “suspected of espionage” and, especially, 700 Slavs (Italian ethnic minorities from Venezia Giulia and former Yugoslavs), many of whom, in protest, went on hunger strike. Upon a request by the colony’s director, on August 17, four more *carabinieri* and 12 soldiers were added to the guard corps, while the prefect of Matera, after having ordered the preventive detention and the transport to the jails of the rowdiest inmates, requested that the General Directorate for Public Safety make available further military support and the transfer to other camps of at least half the Slavs.

Thus, on September 1, 1943, the Ministry of War issued the order to transfer 350 Slav internees to the concentration camp of Chiesanuova. Due to the obvious difficulties of effecting such a transfer at time of such great uncertainty, the transfer did not happen. In the confusion, protests, and turmoil that followed, the colony continued to operate until September 13, 1943. On that day, a Slav internee, for whom we only have the first name (Zelcko), clandestinely traveled to Taranto to establish contact with the Allied troops command; and soon thereafter returned to Pisticci with a detachment of British soldiers. From that moment onward, the confinement colony ceased to exist, and its buildings housed a camp for *displaced persons* under the command of commissar Bartolomeo Malvasi, and the supervision of two allied officers, Colonel Lansill and Captain Eddeng. Until the end of the war, about 18,000 refugees and evacuees from Abruzzo and Lazio transited through the camp. A high-visibility role in organizing the camp was that of the British Lieutenant John C. Hanshaw, who would be killed on the Cassino front. In

1952, after long bureaucratic controversies, the Municipality of Pisticci gained ownership of the lands and of the remaining zootechnical assets, which had belonged to the “agricultural colony.”

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>June 30, 1941</i>	<i>August 31, 1941</i>	<i>December 31, 1941</i>	<i>April 30, 1942</i>	<i>September 15, 1942</i>	<i>December 4, 1942</i>	<i>February 2, 1943</i>	<i>April 30, 1943</i>	<i>July 2, 1943</i>
Internees	?	?	553	?	440	?	?	?	652
Confinees	?	?	223	?	557	?	?	?	214
Totals	571	507	776	705	997	708	794	824	866

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino di polizia (Affari generali), Cat. 710/50.

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 131, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 24/ “Matera,” ss. ff. 6, 7.

Puglia

ALBEROBELLO (Bari)

This camp, which became operative on June 28, 1940, was located on a large, old farm, commonly known as “Red House,” owned by the Francesco Gigante Foundation. The building was located in the Albero della Croce neighborhood, an isolated hilly area about 400 meters above sea level, 5 kilometers away from Alberobello, on the road for Noci. One of the earliest facilities offered to the Ministry of the Interior as a possible internment site, it was set out on two floors and had 32 rooms. In the spaces available (the camp did not use all the rooms), 100 beds were set up for the internees.

The *podestà*, the prefect, and even the Minister for National Education protested the Ministry of the Interior’s decision to “transform the Agricultural School into a concentration camp,” to the detriment of crops, livestock farming, and the pedagogical activities of the Foundation. However, the Chief of Police showed himself to be unbending, and the camp of Alberobello began its operation under the management of the *podestà* himself, Donato Giangrande, who would be followed by his deputy, Giambattista Melchiorre.

Throughout its time in operation, a total of 208 internees (of whom 87 were Jews) lived in the camp, averaging 80 a day. Among the first to arrive were 20 British civilians (English, Maltese, Irish, and Indians) arrested in Naples who, however, were soon after transferred to the Scipione camp. Thereafter arrived 79 “foreign and stateless Jews” (German and Austrian), as well as 8 Italian Jews, who were then joined by roughly 60 “dangerous Italians,” *allogeni* and some previous offenders. Finally, starting on August 1, 1942, close to 90 “former Yugoslavs” arrived at the camp.

During the early months, the internees' overall living conditions were manageable, since the camp was not crowded and the food supplies arrived with regularity. The camp's security detail was provided by the *carabinieri* who established a permanent guard post on the premises and would escort to town the internees charged with buying provisions for the mess hall. Ernesto Santini, the director of the nearby camp of Gioia del Colle, inspected the old farm weekly.

Furniture in the dorms was limited to horsehair-stuffed mattresses placed on planks, which rested on iron stands. Restroom facilities consisted of only one lavatory and some latrines. Missing was an infirmary, heating system, and warm water, while medical assistance was provided by the frequent visits of the health official, who was initially the *podestà* himself.

Jewish internees remained in the Alberobello camp until July 13, 1942, when all 37 were transferred to Ferramonti. During the time they were in the camp, they organized themselves very well: they managed the mess hall through a targeted fee, and established a good relationship with the local population.

In May 1941, the Apostolic Nuncio, Borgongini Duca visited the internees, listening to their concerns, which he relayed to the camp directorate while searching for solutions. In March 1942, the Italian Royal Navy proposed the evacuation of the camp for military safety reasons, but the Ministry of the Interior disagreed, limiting itself to increasing the surveillance of the internees.

Starting in August 1942, with the arrival in the camp of "former Yugoslav" internees, supervision and discipline became more rigorous, and the authorities decided to raise around the perimeter of the camp (which had been marked by bushes and low walls) a barbed wire fence. The new arrivals had been interned for "antifascism" and "aiding and abetting rebels." However, they were not a very homogeneous group, since they also included Jews, Serb royalists, and even some Croatian Ustasha: therefore, as Francesco Terzulli wrote, they were "a jumble of people that had little in common, if not a variously motivated enmity toward Fascism." On December 22, 1942, one of the Croatian nationals was transferred to the prisons of Fiume with the accusation of organizing an armed resistance.

From February 1943, some internees were occasionally allowed to perform tasks on behalf of the Agricultural School, while all the other ones remained unemployed, devoting themselves at most to works of artisanship.

Even the internees of Alberobello greeted Mussolini's fall with enthusiasm, but it did not lead to any changes. An order for the evacuation of the camp, due to political and military reasons, arrived instead on September 3, 1943. At that time, the internees who could benefit from such a decision, were freed. Instead, those who were considered unsuitable for release (58 *internees*, mostly "former Yugoslavs" or *allogeni*) were transferred to the "work center" of Castel di Guido, near Rome. Nine more foreigners (including some Jews) were sent to the Farfa camp. The last departures from "Red House" took place on September 6, 1943, the day when the camp officially ceased operations.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 1, 1940</i>	<i>October 30, 1940</i>	<i>March 1, 1941</i>	<i>March 31, 1942</i>	<i>July 1942</i>	<i>Septem-ber 15, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>Septem-ber 6, 1943</i>
Internees	20	80	57	32	105	53	94	67

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 115, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 8 “Bari,” ss. ff. 3, 6.
 ACS, Mi, Dgps, Cat. A4 bis (Stranieri internati), b. 6/47 “Bari.”

GIOIA DEL COLLE (Bari)

This camp was set up, at the end of July 1940, in the former bakery/mill *Pagano*, owned by the Lattarulo family, which was located at the periphery of the town of Gioia del Colle, on the road toward Santeramo. The building, managed by the public safety official that controlled the city’s police station (Ernesto Santini), was believed capable of holding 200 people, though, in reality, the internees would end up averaging roughly 50 at a time. The *carabinieri* and public safety agents provided administrative and surveillance services.

Surrounded as it was by high walls, with an iron gate and a watchtower, the camp looked like a military base or barracks. Though it was provided with well-functioning plumbing, it did not have electricity. On the main floor was the mess hall and the offices of the *carabinieri* and of the director; on the first floor were two large dormitory-style rooms each with 50 beds; while the second floor, for a while, was set up as an isolation area for sick inmates. The compound also had a garden and courtyard, where the restrooms were fitted with four rudimentary squatting toilets.

During the camp’s entire period of activity, it held in total 59 internees. Aside from one Polish and one stateless internnee, they were all Italian Jews. The first internees—36 Jews who had been transferred from the Campagna camp—arrived on August 15, 1940. In turn, and under guard, two internees would go daily into town with a cart in tow, to buy what was needed for the group mess hall. During the day, internees could spend time in an area around the former mill with signs that pointed out the “borders of confinement.”

Health services were officially provided by the town’s doctor, though, truthfully, a Polish doctor, Marco Halpern, took care of the internees’ health.

The Ministry of the Interior quite effortlessly gave relatives of the internees the authorization to visit them in the camp, and even some of them obtained brief permits to visit sick relatives. During the initial phases of the camp’s existence, under escort of the *carabinieri* in small groups of 4–6 at a time, the internees could also go into town to visit the local brothel. This allowance, however, soon ended.

On December 14, 1940, the prefect of Bari offered the Chief of Police the opportunity to transfer the internees to another location. The proposal was motivated by safety reasons, since in the area a military airport had been built that was readily visible from the top floors of the camp’s building. Following this warning, on December 31 the order was delivered to shut down the camp, though it would be fully executed only by June of the following year. The majority of the internees left on January 15, 1941, with 42 of them having the camp of Isola del Gran Sasso as their destination. The last internees left the camp of Gioia on June 7, 1941. The following year, the camp’s equipment was moved to the Ferramonti camp.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>August 6, 1940</i>	<i>October 1, 1940</i>	<i>November 1, 1940</i>	<i>November 15, 1940</i>	<i>January 14, 1941</i>
Internees	40	53	54	53	52

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 115, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 8 “Bari,” ss. ff. 2, 6.

MANFREDONIA (Foggia)

Opened June 16, 1940, this camp was set up—against the *podestà*’s will—inside the municipal slaughterhouse (the “new slaughterhouse”), a building that had been completed three years prior, but was not yet operational. It was on the road to Foggia, roughly 1 kilometer from downtown Manfredonia, and not too far from the sea and the train station.

Surrounded by a concrete wall, the “new slaughterhouse” faced the road through a heavy metal gate and, between buildings and internal roads, occupied over 46,000 square meters. It also had available a large surrounding area, also well enclosed, and open to the internees when they were allowed outside. To turn it into a concentration camp, the building was equipped with sewers, restrooms, electricity and, with the aid of internal wooden dividers, 20 rooms, 11 of which were turned into dorm-style rooms. In adjacent but separate buildings were set up an infirmary, toilets, mess halls, a commissary, laundry room, a common room, and a small chapel. To complete the outfit were offices for the administration and for the security detail. These renovations were completed in October of 1940.

The camp was managed by a public safety official (until June 1943, Guido Celentano, thereafter Rosario Stabile), with the help of a *carabinieri*’s brigadier, a civilian employee, and some agents. Sixteen men, either agents or *carabinieri*, provided security detail. Local doctors provided medical assistance with the help of an interned nurse (Alfredo Bartolucci, a Communist from Forlì who had already been sent to confinement in 1926), who received a daily stipend for his work. Other internees also performed socially useful

duties under compensation: one was charged with cleaning, another with the operation of the showers.

According to Viviano Iazzetti's investigations, from June 1940 to July 1943, 519 internees spent some time in the Manfredonia camp, with daily averages around 170. The majority were labeled as "dangerous Italians," a definition that, especially in this camp, was inclusive not only of political enemies of the regime ("opponents"), but common felons, *allogeni*, and individuals suspected of espionage and "activities against the State." Between July 1 and September 18, 1940, 31 stateless Jews that had been rounded up in Fiume were interned here, though they were soon after sent to Tossicia, with the exception of five, who were transferred to Campagna in February 1942. During the following months 31 "former Yugoslavs" from Fort San Nicolò, the jail of Šibenik, replaced the Jews.

The internment regime in Manfredonia was especially strict: the orders imparted by the director on June 16, 1940, even included special roll calls, in addition to the three generally required. Moreover, as in the confinement colonies, during the night doors and windows were secured with heavy padlocks.

The Italian anti-fascist group was very well organized. Among its members were Mauro Venegoni and Giulio Mazzocchi (who had already been condemned by the Special Tribunal), two opponents of the regime who would take on important roles during the Resistance. Building on the experience they had gained in prison and in the penal colonies, the anti-fascists took on a major role in managing the mess hall and the little shop of Manfredonia. Moreover, they set up a *bocce* field and a small library, and cultivated a small vegetable garden from which they harvested a nice quantity of vegetables and legumes. The Communists set up a clandestine party cell with an annexed "Marxist school" that taught three courses, appropriate for the different levels of political preparedness of its attendees. In the summer of 1940, the internees were involved in a traditional "clash on principles" of anti-fascist deportation: the demand of the authorities to impose the Roman salute on the prisoners. The inmates' fight, from which they emerged victorious, lasted a month and caused the arrest of two people.

The Archbishop of Manfredonia, Monsignor Andrea Cesarano, gifted the camp with books and sent forth a priest to celebrate mass every Sunday. In the afternoon of May 20, 1941, the Apostolic Nuncio, Borgongini Duca, arrived from Ariano Irpino, bringing words of comfort to the internees, 25 of whom asked him to support their transfer to the "agricultural colony" of Pisticci.

Between June 5 and 13, 1943, three groups of Yugoslav and Italian anti-fascists, making a total of 97 people, were transferred from Manfredonia to Ferramonti. The following month, after Mussolini's fall, the few remaining Italian internees still residing in Manfredonia were set free. At the time of the Armistice, on September 8, 1943, the camp was still in operation, with roughly 20 former Yugoslav internees who, in the following days, succeeded in escaping south, toward the Allied forces.

Presences in the camp

Date	August 1, 1940	August 31, 1940	September 15, 1940	March 10, 1941	April 30, 1942	May 15, 1943	August 31, 1943
Internees	193	228	204	180	75	148	61

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 125, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 17 “Foggia,” s. f. 2.

TREMITI (Foggia)

During World War II, even the confinement colony of the Tremiti Islands, which was still active, operated as a concentration camp for the Ministry of the Interior. To do so, Director Coviello augmented its receiving capacity by using 20 “small cottages” that were part of the “Rural Village of San Domino,” recently completed for the inhabitants of the islands.

In September 1940, albeit reluctantly, these buildings were assigned by the *podestà* of the Tremiti to the confinement colony’s administration, which provided them with electricity and with the necessary gear, transported from the former colony of Lampedusa, to house 240 people. In San Domino, moreover, there were two pavilions where, since 1939, 57 homosexuals had been sent to confinement: to make room for the soon-to-arrive new inhabitants, the Ministry of the Interior, under the advice of Mussolini, officially transformed the confinement of the 57 occupants into warnings, which allowed the Ministry to dismiss them. Finally, the concentration camp of the Tremiti Islands could rely on the former “Municipal House San Domino,” a two-floor building, whose upper floor was remodeled as living quarters for the public safety agents.

For the authorities, therefore, the Island of San Domino could accommodate 320 beds for internees: 240 in the public housing cottages, and 80 in the old pavilions. All told, the Tremiti could hold 780 deportees: 460 on the Island of San Nicola, and 320 on San Domino. Though it kept one directorate and administration, the confinement colony split in two: the island of San Nicola continued to host the majority of the confinees; conversely, the island of San Domino housed the internees. Said otherwise, the real colony continued to function on San Nicola, while the concentration camp became operative on San Domino. To meet the new demands, an autonomous detachment of *carabinieri* and public security agents was dispatched to the second island. This unit reported to an officer who, in turn, reported to the director of the colony on San Nicola.

The internees of the Tremiti Islands belonged to a variety of categories: “enemy subjects,” “dangerous Italians” (among whom some were Jews), ethnic minorities from Venezia Giulia (*allogeni*). As soon as they arrived on the island, they were housed in the pavilions, and only at a later date some of them were transferred to the more welcoming cottages. The allocation of the latter, eventually, resulted in corruption cases involving agents that worked at

the camp, and the representative of the company that provided the equipment and building supplies.

Initially, living conditions on the island were not particularly harsh. The San Domino camp could count on self-managed mess halls; and a library was set up that, once in a while, organized meetings and cultural debates. The living conditions were decent for those who lived in the cottages, even though they too were not heated during the winter. Many internees were allowed to work with the islanders who needed manpower to assist in the upkeep and cultivation of their farms. Others set up their own little plots of land near the barracks and the cottages. The general tenor of living worsened significantly in the fall of 1941, due to the shortfalls in food supplies. From then on, hunger could be quelled by the internees only on the black market or by receiving food supplies sent by their families or the Red Cross.

In January 1942, the Headquarters of the XIth Army Corps requested the transfer, for safety reasons, of the confinees and internees living in the archipelago. The request, however, was not considered by the Ministry of the Interior, which believed that, “due to how dangerous they are, the Tremiti deportees cannot be sent to the mainland” and, moreover, that the presence of confinees and internees on the Tremiti Islands, who were subject to very strict surveillance, “could not cause any damage to the military security.”

The Tremiti were, in fact, the only islands of deportation whose internees were not evacuated in the summer of 1943. Following Mussolini’s fall, the Italian anti-fascists segregated on these islands—due to the veto of the counter-espionage offices—were released after some considerable delay. On September 20, 1943, roughly 100 deportees (for the most part Slavs), having taken control of a large vessel, escaped toward Bari, despite the attempt of the *carabinieri* to stop them. From the capital of Puglia, the Slavs reached the gathering camp for former internees that had just been set up by the Allies near Taranto.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>September 6, 1940</i>	<i>February 1, 1941</i>	<i>August 12, 1941</i>	<i>October 1, 1941</i>	<i>December 1, 1941</i>	<i>January 1, 1942</i>	<i>March 1, 1942</i>
Internees	91	120	170	184	202	198	202
Confinees	?	366	344	324	352	336	336
Total	?	486	514	508	554	534	538
<i>Date</i>	<i>May 1, 1942</i>	<i>October 15, 1942</i>	<i>December 1, 1942</i>	<i>March 1, 1943</i>	<i>June 20, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>	<i>August 2, 1943</i>
Internees	?	188	?	?	279	270	?
Confinees	302	270	239	356	308	324	302
Total	?	458	?	?	587	594	?

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio confino politico (Affari generali), Cat. 710/2. b. 3.
Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 125, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 17 “Foggia” s. f. 5 “S. Domino di Tremiti”/5.

Calabria

FERRAMONTI (Cosenza)

This camp—one of the few to be built as a series of barracks—started to operate in the middle of June 1940 in a malaria zone situated 35 kilometers from Cosenza described by witnesses as unhealthy, without water, and exposed to sun and wind. With an area of 16 hectares and a population of 900 internees, Ferramonti was one of the largest camps realized by the Ministry of the Interior during World War II.

The Directorate General for Health expressed a negative view of the chosen site—located in the central valley of the river Crati, in the municipality of Tarsia, facing the railway line Cosenza-Sibari—but despite these concerns, strong ties existed between the Ministry of the Interior and the contractor Eugenio Parrini, who was ultimately put in charge of building the barracks.

Under the internal surveillance of public safety, and the external one of the *Milizia*, Ferramonti was the largest camp for “foreign and stateless Jews.” The first director was the commissioner of public safety, Paolo Salvatore (who remained in charge for two and a half years). Leopoldo Pelosio and finally Mario Fraticelli followed him for a very brief period. When the camp came into operation, the structures of the camp consisted of only two pavilions about to be completed and a few brick buildings from the late 1920s that belonged to Parrini’s company, reserved for the directorate and as office space.

The first internees arrived June 20, 1940. By the end of July, there were roughly a hundred internees (for the most part Jews rounded-up from Italy’s larger cities). By September, with the arrival of 302 people, including women and children, from Bengasi (Lybia), the Ferramonti camp held 700 internees; and, now fenced in by barbed wire, had become a closed structure, comparable in many ways to a ghetto. The various-sized barracks used wood-like structures (made from *carpilite*), which were anchored by concrete foundations: those for families housed small groups of three or more internees, while regular ones housed unattached men and women.

Starting in November 1941, other foreign internees joined the Jews: Greek, Chinese, Slavs, and, in 1943, even French coming from Corsica. However, the number of Jews never dropped below 75% of the internee population, which reached its peak in August 1943 with 2,016 internees.

The largest group of Jews arrived in Ferramonti during February and March 1942: it consisted of 494 younger people, mostly Czechs and Slovaks, who had tried to reach Palestine to escape Nazi persecution aboard the *Pentcho*, a run-down Bulgarian river boat that had left Bratislav in May 1940, but had shipwrecked that fall in the Aegean Sea. Among the many arrivals in the camp, worthy of mention are the three young Polish Jews who came to Ferramonti in December 1942 having escaped from a Nazi labor camp on October 26. Aside from the *Pentcho* group, other significant Jewish arrivals included a transport of 106 “foreign Jews” from Ljubljana (who were originally from Germany, Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia) that arrived on July 31, 1941; a second “Ljubljana transport” of 50 Jews that arrived in September 1941; and finally the “Kavajë transport” (from the name of the Albanian camp where the group had originally been interned), which comprised 194 Jews, mainly from Belgrade and Sarajevo who had poured into Montenegro following the Nazi occupation of Serbia and Bosnia in October 1941. During the first half of 1942, via smaller transports, another 164 “foreign Jews” arrived in the camp: 48 from Isola of Gran Sasso; 58 from Notaresco; and 34 from Isernia and Alberobello. Finally, in spring 1943, following the disposal by the Ministry of the Interior of January 19 (circular 451/36426, the result of dramatic housing shortages for displaced Italians),¹ 300 more “foreign Jews” arrived from their *internamento libero* in small towns in the provinces of Aosta, Asti, and Viterbo.

Conversely, the first contingent of internees to arrive from Greece (90 people) reached the camp on May 23, 1942, while a second group of 30 people moved there on December 20, 1942; previously, 120 Greek civilians evacuated from Libya had been transported to Ferramonti on March 4, 1942. The largest contingent of “former Yugoslavs,” comprising 120 internees, arrived from the Scipione camp on July 12, 1943.

Jewish internees succeeded in organizing a strong community life, with many initiatives for the “public good”: mess halls, the library, three synagogues, a clinic, a “courthouse,” and even a facsimile parliament for internees. These structures, unofficially recognized by the authorities, made living conditions more bearable, and countered the monotony of internment that could last years. In March 1942, the Rabbi of Genoa, Riccardo Pacifici, a leading figure of Italian Jewry, paid a visit. The previous year, the Apostolic Nuncio, Borgongini Duca, had also visited Ferramonti.

Barbed wire, roll calls, and watchtowers clearly underscored that this was a concentration camp. However, the authorities (starting with Gaetano Marrari, the marshal who supervised the security detail agents) were mostly tolerant and the few cases of physical violence were circumscribed to aggressions by the militia. Initially, the conditions in the camp were bearable because Jewish internees could count on the considerable moral and material support of the *Delasem* and of the *Mensa dei Bambini* (“Children’s Refectory”). The climate (very humid during winter and extremely hot in summer) and the presence or threat of malaria (requiring the ingestion of quinine) negatively

impacted morale. From the end of 1941, the difficulty in securing food supplies worsened the situation, so that, during the 1942–1943 winter, hunger was widespread throughout the camp. Having said that, during the camp’s three-year existence, only 37 individuals died due to ill health or other reasons.

Among the Jews interned in Ferramonti, were the psychotherapist Ernst Bernhard, the painter Michel Fingesten, and future Israeli historian Menachem Shelah. Among the Greeks, the Under-Bishop of Corinth, Damaskinos Hadjopoulos, and the prefect of Corfu, Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza (who was in the camp for a little more than five months, starting from May 23, 1942). General Cosimo Poli Marchetti, who was interned as an “anti-Italian extremist” arrived with the small French group in June 1943.

In January of 1943, the complaints by the more intransigent members of the Fascist Federation of Cosenza, who for months had accused the camp’s directorate of “too benevolent an attitude toward the internees,” led to the removal of Paolo Salvatore. In July, the Ministry of the Interior considered moving the internees to the province of Bolzano in the North, but the fall of the Fascist regime put an end to that dangerous plan. A month later, Ferramonti was directly impacted by the conflict: Allied airplanes, thinking they had identified a military base, struck a pavilion on August 27, killing four internees and wounding eleven more. On September 14, 1943, the avant-garde of the VIII British Army reached the camp, and the Jewish internees were spared the oft-feared deportation to Germany.

At that point, alongside the dismantling of the Fascist camp, a new camp for *displaced persons* began to operate in the same barracks, under the control of the Allied occupation authorities. For a few months, this second Ferramonti camp became one of the largest and most vibrant Jewish communities of liberated Italy, even though the departures and transfers of former internees toward Cosenza and Bari, as well as Palestine and the United States, became more and more frequent. Among those who organized the first trip of relocation to Palestine was the Zionist leader Enzo Sereni, who came to Ferramonti for this expressed purpose in the spring of 1944.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 31, 1940</i>	<i>September 30, 1940</i>	<i>March 15, 1941</i>	<i>June 15, 1942</i>	<i>March 31, 1943</i>	<i>August 15, 1943</i>	<i>January 1, 1944</i>
Internees	100	700	1,000	1,621	1,668	2,016	1,505

Archival references:

- Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 120, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 13 “Cosenza,” s.f. 6.
 Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 121, s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 13 “Cosenza,” s.f. 6–11.
 Acdec, Fondo “Israele Kalk.”

Sicilia**LIPARI (Messina)**

Following the closure in 1933 of the confinement colony of Lipari, the existing structures were used between 1934 and 1939 to house the Croatian *Ustasha* protected by Mussolini. In the summer of 1941, the Ministry of the Interior made the decision to set up a concentration camp for civilians on the island (though the official documents present it as a “reactivation of the confinement colony”). Shortly thereafter, the General Directorate of Public Safety established that 600 “former Yugoslav” Communists, for whom a different destination had not yet been found, were to be interned on the islands of Lipari and Ustica.

Renovations on the old, state-owned pavilions were completed at the end of October 1941, and Lipari’s camp was opened immediately after with a nominal capacity of 400 spaces; capacity that, in actuality, revealed itself to be a too optimistic projection. The directorate was located in the office of the commissioner for public safety of the island, and 30-year-old Giuseppe Geraci was put in charge of it; while surveillance was the responsibility of 40 *carabinieri* and 20 police officers, and doctor Onofrio Palamara provided medical assistance.

Between November 20 and December 8, 1941, with three transfers from Zara, 366 foreign civilians arrived in Lipari (especially Croats from Dalmatia, but also Montenegrins, Albanians and Slovenians), in addition to the 17 Yugoslavs who had landed on the island a few days earlier. The first contingent, composed of 260 Yugoslavs, almost all from the region around Split, arrived in Lipari on November 20, 1941; among them were three friars who had been arrested on October 21 in their monastery on the island of Veglia (Krk).

At night, the deportees were locked in their quarters while during the day they enjoyed some freedom of movement in the town. Women (wives or close family members) were authorized to live in two private homes, in support of the deportees. The internees, each paying a quota of 6 Italian lire a day for meals, managed the mess hall and commissary autonomously; while kitchen workers (woodcutters, cooks, servers) received supplemental rations. The internees organized themselves in communities, with a “president,” Dane Matošić, and a “committee,” comprised of 19 members in charge of the kitchen and other common needs.

Generally, relationships between the internees and the islanders were good, but those with the uncompromising director Geraci were difficult. There were no complaints regarding housing but, as time went by, the internment regime became harsher. In a report of June 17, 1943, General Inspector Salvatore Li Voti affirmed that “the internees of this island, who are generally hostile to Italy, are assuming a haughty behavior following the hope of their liberation. ...” The high official then proposed to his ministry the transfer of the “more

fearsome” internees (about 100) to other camps; and the internees “who were not dangerous and more suitable for work in the fields and in construction” be transferred to the colony of Pisticci. Significantly, the National Secretariat of the Fascist Party had already asked the Chief of Police Chierici to remove the internees “who many times had demonstrated hostility,” from the island.

The Ministry of the Interior—already engaged in the evacuation to the North of Italy and foreign deportees—decided for the evacuation of Lipari choosing two destinations for the internees: 150 would be sent to the camp of Corropoli and 139 to that of Scipione. On June 23, 1943, 100 internees left Lipari, with a transfer by train in Milazzo; another 50 left the island by ferry on July 14 with the destination of Vibo Valentia. By the end of July, the remainder of the internees was transferred (ten were wounded by an aerial strike during their travels northward) and the camp of Lipari was closed.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>November 10, 1941</i>	<i>December 8, 1941</i>	<i>May 15, 1942</i>	<i>June 20, 1943</i>
Internees	15	383	319	289

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 131, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 2 (Affari per provincia), ins. 25 “Messina,” ss. ff. 1–6.

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 106, f. 106 (Campi di concentramento), s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins. 24 “Internamento persone sospette delle Dalmazia.”

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 18/7–4, K. 316.

USTICA (Palermo)

During World War II, the confinement colony of Ustica was still in operation though, in April of 1938, the vast majority of the “political” confinees had been transferred, and “common” ones had taken their place. Starting with the second half of 1940, this colony also took on the function of concentration camp under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior, so that by March of the following year it counted 318 internees. Its total capacity (calculated by counting those who occupied the 50 various-sized barracks in the village and those who lived in private homes) was believed to be 2,020 places.

The camp of Ustica shared the same dwellings and administrative offices of the confinement colony, and was directed by commissioner Foresta. However, following the Ministry of the Interior’s order to house several hundred “former Yugoslav communists whose final destination had not yet been determined,” in the spring of 1942 the camp increased its capacity by 500 units (thus reaching a total of 2,524 spaces) by substituting an equal number of bunk beds for the original beds. On November 1, 1942, Ustica held a total of 2,065 deportees: 895 were confinees (all Italians: “political” and, mostly,

“ordinary” confinees) and 1,170 internees (15 of whom were women). Of the internees present at that time, 750 were Montenegrins, 500 Slovenians and 150 Croats. Absent, but still on the books that day, were 415 additional deportees, divided between confinees and internees.

The Yugoslav internees were generally housed in the larger barracks of 100–120 spaces. Their permanence in the camp was marked by hunger and terrible hygienic and sanitary conditions, as well as by the difficult cohabitation with “ordinary” confinees (who often were veritable criminals) that constantly robbed other deportees and caused them hardships.

On June 12, 1943, 2,622 deportees were in charge of the Ustica island. Of which 1,313 were the internees then present (Slovenians, Croatians, Montenegrins, Albanians, and Greeks); 509 were the common confinees; 172 the political confinees (veterans of the Spanish war and other anti-fascists); 628 were deportees temporarily absent (for prison, hospitalization or other reasons). Following the decision to evacuate the island, 500 political prisoners were transferred to the concentration camp of Padova-Chiesanuova. On June 21, 1943, 117 deportees were sent to the Renicci camp, while another 100 confinees and internees (40 males and 60 females) were transferred on the same date to the camp of Fraschette di Alatri.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 13, 1941</i>	<i>November 1, 1942</i>	<i>June 12, 1943</i>
Internees	318	1,170	?
Confinees	?	895	?
Total	?	2,065	2,622

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio Internati, A4bis Internati stranieri e spionaggio 1939–1945, various envelopes.

Archivio di Stato di Palermo, Questura 1920–1942, b. 989.

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 17/1–13. K. 1021.

II. Camps for “Slavs” of the “parallel” civilian internment (mainly, supervised by the military authorities)

Main camps located inside the ancient borders of the Kingdom of Italy

a) Camps dedicated to “former Yugoslavs”

CIGHINO AND TRIBUSSA/ČIGINJ IN TREBUČA (Gorizia)

Cighino (Čiginj in Slovenian) is now a small town in the Republic of Slovenia, 4 kilometers south of Tolmino and 31 kilometers north of Gorizia, within whose province it belonged in the 1940s. In February 1942, using existing military

barracks, Italy made Cighino the site for the first concentration camp for civilians who had been rounded up in the “Provincia di Lubiana.”

The camp, which was under the management of Colonel Francesco De Caroli, the commander of an artillery division stationed in Longatico (Logatec), was comprised of a brick building, which was used by the command and the guards, and wooden barracks, each capable of housing about 100 internees. In the plans of the Italian authorities, Cighino was supposed to house Slovenian civilians awaiting the verdict of the War Tribunal. In reality, however, it primarily housed Slovenians destined to internment.

The camp began its operations on March 6, 1942, but was only active for a month. At the beginning of April, it was dismantled following the complaints of political and military authorities of Venezia Giulia who criticized the camp’s excessive proximity to Slovenia and especially its location in an area inhabited primarily by *allogeni*.

During its brief existence, the camp housed roughly 600 civilian internees, who were mostly individuals arrested during the first large-scale round up in Ljubljana in February–March 1942.

With the closing of the camp, all of Cighino’s internees were transferred to Gonars. Even in Tribussa Inferiore (Dolenja Trebuša), another small town in the area that now belongs to the Republic of Slovenia, Italians had planned a concentration camp for Slavs by the end of February 1942. The structure could house 400 internees, but it was never put into use, because Gonars became the preferred site for a concentration camp.

Archival references:

Ars II, XI Corpo Armata, F 66i/IV.

GONARS (Udine)

During the Great War a field hospital was established in Gonars, a small town near Palmanova (in the Friuli region) where, from October 1941 to mid-March 1942, a camp for 3,300 prisoners of war (known as Camp #89) became functional. From March 22 onward, about a thousand officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the former Yugoslav Army (of Slovenian origins) were interned in Gonars. They had been held by Italians a week earlier, and were not considered prisoners of war, but civilian internees. Around the original concentration camp, a large structure made of barracks and tents (“the main camp”) was built in an area originally set aside to build a train station and, by March 27, 1942, military authorities officially listed Gonars among the civilian camps.

Structurally, Gonars consisted of two camps: a “main” and a “secondary” one. The latter—accepting the former Yugoslavian soldiers mentioned above—was also known as the “military camp.” The main camp (or “civilian camp”) was surrounded by a wire fence over 3 meters high and subdivided into three sectors: α , β , and \boxtimes . The Alpha sector initially had limited capacity and functioned as an early gathering site. Later, when a new tent city was created, its capacity reached 2,800

people, and for a while it was reserved for “protective” civilian internees. The Beta sector consisted of 17 prefabricated barracks and could hold 2,000 people. Finally, the Gamma sector had seven smaller barracks, designated to fulfill various services.

As a whole, the Gonars camp could hold 6,500 people and was the largest camp for civilian internees in the Italian peninsula during World War II. Management, which was housed between the main and secondary camp, fell to the Lieutenant Colonel Eugenio Vicedomini (who would be succeeded by Cesare Marioni, Ignazio Fragapane, Gustavo De Dominicis and, after September 8, Arturo Macchi), 36 officers, and about 6,000 soldiers who were charged with security. Jurisdiction over the internees fell under the purview of the XI Army Corps, stationed in Ljubljana.

The first contingent of actual civilian internees arrived to Gonars a few days after the opening of the camp, directly from the province of Ljubljana; the second one, in early April, following the evacuation of the camp of Cighino. Between June and July 1942, 2,218 civilians from Ljubljana were rounded up and brought to Gonars in five transports: of these, 1,368 of them were housed in tents. By the middle of August, the camp housed 6,000 people and, a month later, Gonars reached its highest number of internees at 6,396. On November 19, the first family units arrived in the camp.

Internment conditions were very harsh. Overcrowding and malnutrition caused the spread of pediculosis, scabies, and various infectious diseases. About 80% of all pregnant women delivered stillborn fetuses. The food was insufficient and consisted of broth cooked with very little pasta or rice, and less than 200 grams of bread. By early 1943, many of them were still shoeless, covered in rags, and lacking basic clothing necessities. During the camp’s period of operation, there were no less than 439 deaths and 63 births. In December 1942, authorities added a special burial site for internees next to the city’s cemetery.

The camp housed many important artists and intellectuals. Among them, musician Samo Hubad, director of the Opera House of Ljubljana; guitarist Leo Ponikvar; actor Jože Tiran; the writers Juš Kozak and Branka Jurca; opera singer Vilma Bukavec; and the painter and sculptor Niko Pirnat, from whom the camp commander commissioned a statue dedicated to the Madonna. Occasionally, there were cultural activities, including conferences and concerts, and the internees produced an internal newsletter, *Izza zice* (“Beyond the wire”).

Many members of the Slovenian and Croatian Resistance were interned in Gonars. Their clandestine structure could affect the choice of barrack-leaders and of those charged with managing internal organizations. Young internees were trained to take over control of the camp and prepare the logistics for a much hoped for return to Yugoslavia. Numerous prominent figures of the Liberation Front (*Osvobodilna Fronta*) and the Slovenian Communist party were interned in Gonars under different names. They included Janez Učakar, Bojan Štih, Anton Vratuša, Franc Potočnik (as a “military internee”), Milan Osredkar and, not least, Boris Kraigher who, in the postwar, would become the President of the Executive Federal Counsel of the Yugoslav Republic. And because, if discovered, prominent leaders faced a high chance of execution, in the summer of 1942,

Osvobodilna Fronta (“The Liberation Front”) set up a daring escape plan to save the anti-fascists most at risk. After several weeks of digging, they completed a 60-meter-long tunnel that, originating in barrack #22, emerged in a cornfield a few meters from the camp’s perimeter fence. In the night between August 30 and 31, 1942, Boris Kraiger, Ivan Bratko, Maks Perc, Franc Ravbar, Janez Učakar, Franc Pangerc, Bojan Štih, and Viktor Ilovár escaped.

In the fall of 1942, partially due to this sensational escape, which resulted in the dismissal of Commander Vicedomini, the camp of Gonars was almost completely evacuated. Civilian internees were transferred to Renicci and Monigo, while military ones to Chiesanuova. The demobilization, however, was short lived, since 830 Yugoslav civilians from the Arbe camp (primarily women and children) were relocated to Gonars. In December, a convoy with women also arrived from Ljubljana. As a result, by the end of 1942, there were many more women, whose numbers would progressively increase through February 1943, when Gonars recorded the presence of 1,916 women, 1,472 children and “only” 695 men. The male/female ratio changed again that spring, when many women and children were released, even as 1,700 young Slovenian men were transferred from Monigo to the “minor camp” of Gonars.

Following the events of September 8, 1943, the internees of Gonars took over the internal security of the camp, while the external surveillance remained in the hands of Italians. After a few days of co-management, the “prisoners” and the directorate agreed to evacuate the camp: the internees were free to go, but had to do so in small groups.

The programmed release started the night of September 13, but after the first two groups departed, impatience and chaos prevailed. The mass of internees (about 4,000 people), swept over barriers and blockades, and left the cap toward Collio (the hills that extend between the river Isonzo and its tributary Iudrio) and the valley of Vipacco river.

Many former internees joined the partisan brigade S. Gregorčič, active in the high Isonzo region; others, instead, were captured by German soldiers and brought back to the camp where about 70 elderly and 700 women and children remained. By October 19, 1943, the camp still registered the presence of 737 Slovenian and Croatian civilian internees who, before being released, were assigned by the Germans to forced labor.

In 1973, following an initiative of the Yugoslav government, a memorial monument was created next to the city cemetery to collect the remains of 453 Yugoslavs deceased during the war in Northern Italy.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 24, 1942</i>	<i>May 1, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>	<i>Sep-tember 17, 1942</i>	<i>Dece- mber 29, 1942</i>	<i>Feb-ruary 1, 1943</i>	<i>April 19, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>
Internees	878	2,350	6,074	6,396	5,687	2,676	4,503	4,253	4,459

Archival references:

Ars II, XI Corpo d'Armata, F 66i/V.

Aussme, H8 crimini di guerra, b. 104, Relazione dell'ex comandante del campo De Dominicis (February 1, 1947).

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 6/12, K; 1021.

VISCO (Udine)

This camp was set up in January 1943 in the military barracks of *Borgo Piave* (today's Caserma Sbaiz), an old complex at the periphery of the village of Visco, on the road to Palmanova. According to the initial plans, the camp was to host 10,000 inmates, as well as a range of social and labor structures for the internees that would have distinguished it from others. However, as work progressed, the camp's capacity was reduced to 5,000 places, and the remainder of the project scaled down.

The decision to set up a camp for civilian internees in Visco was urgently made in December 1942, in the expectation of large numbers of them coming to Italy following the massive attack that German, Italian, and *Ustasha* troops were about to let loose against the Yugoslav Liberation Army. The old military barracks of Borgo Piave, which comprised 18 brick pavilions, were cleared out of their military units, and the construction and expansion work began in earnest, with the goal of building 332 wooden barracks and installing 22 large tents. The military complex, enclosed by a double barbed wire fence 2 kilometers long, was thus entrusted to Salvatore Bonofiglio, a Lieutenant Colonel of the *carabinieri*, aided by 14 officers (including 4 doctors) and 546 soldiers.

Both the organization of the camp and the transfer of internees fell under the jurisdiction of the Second Army's Intendance, since it considered Vasco, with Arbe, one of its operational centers. On February 20, 1943, the first 300 Slovenian and Croatian civilian internees arrived: they were exhausted, in rags, marked by starvation, and could barely walk in the courtyard of the military barrack. Between February and March 1943, other large convoys arrived from Gonars and Monigo and, more directly, from the "Caserma Belga" of Ljubljana, one of the main centers for the collection and sorting of civilians rounded up in the Slovenian capital and its surrounding areas. Then, on June 15, from the Italian camp of Prevlaka arrived 435 Montenegrin internees, mostly former soldiers (including many officers) who had belonged to the battalion "Orien" of the Yugoslav Royal Army.

Of the internment camps for "former Yugoslavs," Visco had the most livable conditions and, during its entire period of operation, "only" 23 internees died.

Here too, however, food supplies were scarce, but the barracks were sufficiently clean and dry. Internees also had access to a wood shop and walk-in clinics; and, for those who held religious beliefs, to a brick chapel. Internees formed a choir, organized soccer teams and produced a mimeographed newsletter ("Višek—Visco"), one copy of which, from March 8, 1943, still

exists. Clandestinely, individuals from the three nationalities of internees in the camp (Slovenians, Montenegrins, and Croats) organized political and military training courses, as well as a “Liberation Committee.”

After July 25, 1943, when control of the camp by the guards loosened even more, the internees’ political activity emerged from the underground, as they prepared to support the liberation of the camp with military action. A few days before the armistice, roughly a thousand internees, under orders of liberation by the *Supersloda*, boarded a train at the station of Palmanova directed to Ljubljana. However, the train did not leave because the line had been interrupted near Aidussina (Ajdovščina). Following the events of September 8, the Italian command remained in place without liberating the internees.

On September 11, after news that the partisans had liberated Gorizia, the camp’s Liberation Committee asked the commander permission to contact insurgents in the city to better prepare the evacuation of the internees. The committee also asked permission to conduct its own surveillance operations inside the camp. These requests were granted and a small detachment of three people left by truck for Gorizia promising to return before sundown. Upon reentry, however, they found the camp empty: the morning of September 14, the Liberation Committee, fearing the worst, had ordered the evacuation of all internees. Since most guards had already abandoned their posts, the premises were in place for an agreement with the camp’s commander to allow the peaceful exodus of the internees, many of whom left having already acquired arms.

A flood of over 3,000 people, organized in lines and comprising also women, children, and the elderly, left Visco and advanced slowly eastward. Heading every group was a platoon of the internees’ military organization, which guided the exodus toward Romans-Gradisca-Miren in the zone controlled by the Slovenian partisans. Along the path, near Romans and beyond the Isonzo river, skirmishes erupted with Nazi-fascist militia, during which several internees died.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 19, 1943</i>	<i>April 19, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>
Internees	1,400	2,390	1,619	3,272

Archival references:

Aussme, M7 Circolari, Racc. 279, f. 3 (Campi di concentramento).
 Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 18/1–2, K. 1021.

LAURANA/LOVRAN (Fiume)

The concentration camp of Laurana, a small city on the Istria coast, was instituted by Temistocle Testa, the Prefect for the Province of Fiume (officially known as “Provincia del Carnaro”). Following the ordinance of

October 23, 1941, he decreed that all civilians the police wanted but could not be reached would have all their assets confiscated, and their families interned (with the goal of “putting an end to the phenomenon of political banditry in the annexed lands”). On November 26, he established the “provisional camp” of Laurana in the building of the Park Hotel, which he had confiscated for this purpose. The hotel, which could hold up to 500 people, was later supplemented by a nearby hydrotherapy building.

Laurana was only a transit camp, and operated from fall 1941 to March 15, 1943 (the hydrotherapy building was used only up until December 16, 1942). It was under the jurisdiction of the Prefecture, which reported to the commissioner of public safety of Abbazia (Opatija, in Croatian) and to the prefect commissioner of Laurana. Internees began to arrive in early December and were mostly the elderly, women, and children. They were all relatives of individuals who had joined the partisans, or were thought to have done so, and stayed in Laurana as they waited to be transferred to the Italian peninsula to be interned in other concentration camps or on the islands.

Witness accounts reported scarcity of food and harsh disciplinary conditions comparable more to the Fascist camps for Slavs administered by the military authorities than the Italian camps overseen by the Ministry of the Interior. In May 1942, there were 900 internees (almost all civilians) in Laurana. Overall, about 3,000 internees, including those in transit, spent time in the camp. Among them, by mid-July 1942, were 889 civilians (208 men, 269 women, and 412 children), whom the Italians had rounded up in Podhum after the infamous retaliation that cost about 100 lives ordered by the Prefecture of Fiume against the town’s inhabitants.

Following the request of Prefect Testa to the Ministry of the Interior, the Laurana camp ended its activity in mid-March 1943, after the last internees were transferred to the Fraschette concentration camp in the province of Frosinone.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>December 26, 1941</i>	<i>February 10, 1942</i>	<i>May 20, 1942</i>	<i>July 15, 1942</i>	<i>February 5, 1943</i>
Internees	102	115	850	900	170

Archival references:

Aussme, N. I-II, Racc. Diari storici, b. 446.

Dar, Riječka prefektura, b. 215.

CHIESANUOVA (Padova)

Chiesanuova is a suburb of Padua (nowadays within city limits) near the *Cemetery Major*, on the road to Vicenza. At the end of June 1942, a concentration camp for “former Yugoslavs” (Yugoslav civilian internees, mostly of Slovenian origin) opened in the buildings of what is now the Romagnoli barrack.

Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Dante Caporali, the camp comprised six large brick pavilions and ten smaller structures, and was surrounded by a perimeter wall 4 meters high, with four watchtowers at its four corners. Each of the six pavilions, under the controls of a different officer, operated as an autonomous unit. In turn, these units were broken down in two rows, or wards, each consisting of six large communicating rooms with no separation between them. At the end of the last room were the privies and a communal washhouse.

The first 1,429 internees (all men, mostly from the “Province of Ljubljana”) arrived in Chiesanuova on August 14, 1942, having been transferred from Monigo. Within a month of the camp’s opening, there were 2,129 inmates, but between October and November roughly 1,500 internees were transferred to the camps of Renicci and Arbe. In their place, arrived Yugoslav “military internees,” who had been interned in the smaller camp of Gonars. Subsequently, starting in January 1943, new arrivals brought the number of internees to 3,410. The largest number came from the camps of Zlarino (186), Arbe (300), and Ustica (500).

Living conditions were very harsh. In the central square of the camp was a punishment pole—a stockade of sorts—where those responsible for infractions were tied; while below ground there were prison cells for those requiring detention. The daily rations guaranteed at most 700 calories, forcing the starving internees to seek the help of family and friends in sending urgent food deliveries, even though packages with food and other necessities only started to be delivered regularly during the fall of 1942.

In wintertime, the internees spent their days in the large rooms, huddled together on bunk beds to protect against the cold. That said, the barracks’ solid concrete structure did provide a certain level of comfort and security, compared to the tents and barracks found in many camps for Slavs. The living conditions of “military internees” were better than those for civilians. Generally, they led quieter lives and remained mostly in their ward, especially because, following the inglorious surrender of the Yugoslav army in 1941, they were not looked upon kindly by their fellow countrymen.

Among the Chiesanuova internees were many doctors who, despite the lack of proper instruments, did all they could to keep the prisoners healthy (much more so than the medical officers). Despite their efforts, in the 12 months that the camp remained in operation, 70 internees lost their lives. Significant also was the material and spiritual assistance that Fr. Placido Cortese, a Paduan priest originally from the island of Cherso (Cres), provided the internees with the support of Slovenian female students who attended the University of Padova.

Initially, the guards maintained a distant and hostile attitude toward the internees, but in time relationships improved and a flourishing black market developed between guards and internees; so much so that, according to charges filed on March 1, 1943, by Colonel Bruno Licini, those with financial means could purchase just about anything at exorbitant prices. A bread roll,

for example, cost 20 Italian lire, while a cigarette went for 4 Italian lire. Upon request from former officers of the Yugoslav Navy, a guard even brought into the camp component parts for a radio receiver. The radio was then assembled and put into operation clandestinely, so that news of the Allied forces' victories spread through the barracks, fueling the propaganda activities of the antifascists.

In the camp of Chiesanuova internees also organized socio-cultural activities. There even existed a support committee that ensured that portions of the contents of care packages be allocated to a common fund to aid the neediest internees. Occasionally, the inmates organized concerts and workshops; and they published four issues of an internal news bulletin, entitled "The Honest Truth for the Internees," a parody of the Fascist propaganda flyer ("The Honest Truth for Slovenes") that Italians distributed extensively throughout the "Provincia di Lubiana."

Following news of the armistice, the more politicized internees organized a failed plan to seize the soldiers' weapons and take over the camp. On September 10, 1943, the Germans occupied the camp and, by way of two train convoys, transferred the prisoners to Zagreb, via the Brenner Pass and Vienna. In the Croatian capital, some were enlisted in Slovenian collaborationist organizations, but many others were released.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>	<i>September 17, 1942</i>	<i>December 29, 1942</i>	<i>February 1, 1943</i>	<i>April 19, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>
Internees	1,429	2,129	3,039	3,403	3,015	2,857	3,410

Archival references:

Aussme, H8 Crimini di Guerra, b. 104, Relazione dell'ex direttore del campo (February 17, 1947).

Ars II, XI Corpo d'Armata, F. 661IVI.

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 7/1, K. 1021.

MONIGO (Treviso)

Monigo, which in the 1940s was a hamlet in the periphery of Treviso, is today a neighborhood of the city itself. At the end of June 1942, a concentration camp for "former Yugoslav" civilian internees was set up in the then-recently built military barracks *Caldorin*.

The camp occupied seven large pavilions: four housed the internees, and the remaining three were for storage, the infirmary, and the kitchens. Each dormitory was furnished with bunk beds holding about 50 people, with the men separated from the women and children. Beginning in fall 1942, the male and female sectors were separated by barbed wire. Management of the

structure was given to Alfredo Anceschi, a Lieutenant Colonel of the *carabinieri*, who was aided by Captain Eliseo Signorini.

The first internees arrived in Monigo on June 2, 1942: 315 were Slovenian civilians arrested in a large sweep in Ljubljana; and another 255 came from the area around Longatico (Logatec). A second, significant convoy arrived on August 6, and was comprised of 432 civilians rounded up from the vicinity of Kočevje and Novo Mesto. That same fall, 800 internees arrived from Gonars, but most were transferred to the “labor camp” of Tavernelle, in the province of Perugia. The last large group to arrive was a convoy of 300 women and children from Arbe.

Initially, the camp housed different categories of Yugoslav internees, because it operated as a gathering and selection center where, with the assistance of Yugoslav collaborationists, camp leadership identified politically dangerous internees who were then transferred to Ljubljana to be tried or used as hostages. At a later date, the presence of “protective” internees increased in Monigo, so that camp conditions improved to the point that the authorities considered it among the more “presentable” camps for Yugoslav civilian internees. This is why on October 21, 1942 (when Monigo housed 3,464 internees), Hans Wolfgang de Salis, the International Red Cross Committee delegate for Italy was granted access to visit, and referred to the Treviso operation as an Italian “model concentration camp.”

In reality, through the lens of its entire existence, internment conditions in Monigo were anything but presentable: there was little food; roll calls could happen many times a day; and a punishment pole was placed in the camp’s central square.

The life of the internees became harsher during winter due to rigid temperatures, overpopulation, and the lack of appropriate clothing (many of them still wore the summer clothes they had on when they were arrested). Following the arrival of the Arbe convoys, gravely ill internees occupied almost half of the 600 beds in the civilian hospital of Treviso. During the 13 months of the camp’s operation, 42 children were born in Monigo, whereas 235 internees (54 children and 178 adults) died. Of which 187 of them were buried in two mass graves in Treviso’s main cemetery: one for the children; the other for the adults. The vast majority of the deceased were individuals whose health had been irreparably compromised by pneumonia, tuberculosis or other serious diseases contracted on the island of Arbe.

A cell of *Osvobodilna Fronta* also operated clandestinely in Monigo. Besides its military-political proselytizing, it provided assistance to the most needy and exposed informers, since Slovenian collaborationists often visited the camp, seeking to enlist in their militia wavering and openly anti-communist internees.

The internee population changed considerably between February and March 1943. At that time, a large number of Slovenian internees was either transferred or released, and mostly Croat internees took their place from Gonars. According to *Novice iz za žice* (“News from beyond the barb-wire”),

a sort of newsletter written by the internees, on March 18, 1943, there were 3,122 internees in the camp: 1,050 men, 1,085 women, 513 boys, and 466 girls. With the arrival of spring and more temperate weather, the camp conditions improved, and in April, Monigo became the official site for Yugoslav cautionary internees. On April 19, out of 2,500 internees, 2,465 were considered “protective,” and many of them assisted in the infirmary and in offices, or worked outside the camp.

In the first half of 1943, aside from being transferred to other camps (more than 1,500 internees were sent to Gonars), large groups of internees were liberated, at least in part due to the constant pressure exerted by Church authorities.

After September 8, 1943, while the Colonel was in the hospital, a group from the Liberation Front took over management of the camp. Together with other internees, its members reached the *Collio* area (Gorizia), where many of them joined partisan groups.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 2, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>	<i>October 21, 1942</i>	<i>December 29, 1942</i>	<i>February 1, 1943</i>	<i>March 15, 1943</i>	<i>April 19, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>	<i>September 1, 1943</i>
Internees	570	1,528	3,464	3,172	3,274	3,122	2,500	2,213	1,623

Archival references:

Ars II, Alto commissariato, F I4/V, s.f. 6.

Acicr, C Sc, Service de camps, Italie.

RENICCI (Arezzo)

This camp was established near *La Mòtina*, a hamlet in the municipality of Anghiari, about 3 kilometers from the historical town center. The sandy terrain (from which the toponym of “Renicci” derives) overlooking the banks of the river Tevere and a small grove of oak trees, was enclosed with a triple barbed wire fence, and equipped with several watchtowers.

Construction on the camp (planned in 1941 to house 9,000 prisoners of war, and identified as Camp #97) began in July 1942 on an area of 11 hectares, to which 6 more were added later. Only two of the three planned sectors were completed: they comprised 24 brick buildings for the internees, housing for the guards, and refectories, storehouses, offices, and bathrooms. In the area facing the camp itself were the offices of the directorate.

The camp was under the authority of the infantry Colonel Giuseppe Pistone, who internees noted was harsh and intransigent. The commanders of the sectors were Lieutenant Colonel Fiorenzuola and Sergeant Major Rossi, to whom 200 men between *carabinieri* and soldiers reported. The first internees, all men, came as transfers from Gonars on October 7, 1942, when the

camp of Renicci was still unfinished: it only had the barbed wire fence and a few brick buildings that were used to house the military garrison. Therefore, the internees were placed in tents set up on the bare terrain: the smallest held 15–20, the larger ones up to 60.

Following the first convoy, several others arrived from Gonars, Chiesanuova, and Arbe. By the end of October the camp already housed 1,300 internees, but the number increased to 3,950 by December, varying in age from 12 to 70.

Due to the cold weather and the lack of food, internment in Renicci was especially harsh. Living in small and overpopulated tents favored the spread of parasites and many infectious diseases. The Italian military doctor who provided assistance to the camp with the help of three internees could not do very much for the patients as there was very little in the way of medicines, hygiene, and food. Internees had no running water available (which was often missing from the kitchens as well), and the latrines, insufficient in number, were outside, under decrepit canopies that were often carried away by the wind. Due to hunger—as the Italian Red Cross communicated to the Ministries of Interior and of Foreign Affairs in January 1943—many internees survived on acorns, which can be toxic. The few who had “jobs” as barbers and cobblers, or worked in constructing the camp’s barracks, lived a little better.

By the end of January 1943, roughly 100 internees had already died due to dysentery or starvation. There are 160 deaths documented over the duration of operations at Renicci, with three or four a day happening during the coldest periods, so that an abandoned country cemetery nearby was reactivated to bury the dead.

With a few laudable exceptions (e.g., Lieutenant Rouep), the military administration treated the internees more like criminals than political deportees. Among them 70 were identified as hostages, upon whom to retaliate in cases of collective uprisings or insubordination.

By the end of January, conditions of internment improved. On the one hand, the authorities decided to speed up the delivery of food packages sent by the families of the internees; on the other hand, the weather became milder, and the neediest internees received shoes and clothing. In addition, the release and transfer of large groups of internees began. Aside from the releases due to the intervention of the Church or resulting from independent decisions of the military authorities, many internees were freed on the condition that they become members of the collaborationist militia. On February 16, 1943, Renicci was visited by the Apostolic Nuncio, Borgongini Duca, who brought to the internees the personal greetings of, as well as money donated by, the Pope.

In the summer of 1943, the Badoglio government chose Renicci—which was considered especially secure—to house a large number of Italian and foreign anti-fascist deportees who had been evacuated from the south of the Italian peninsula. Among the new arrivals, coming from Ustica, Ponza, Ventotene, and other localities, were the Albanian Lazar Fundo and Ganu

Kriezu, the Slovenian Jože Srebrnič, and the Italians Vincenzo Gigante, Alfonso Failla, and Giorgio Jaksetich. To separate the Italians from the foreigners, a double metal fence was set up to subdivide the second sector of the camp, to all intents and purposes creating a third sector.

Already in the early months of 1943, Yugoslav internees had solidified and extended their clandestine political organization. After the fall of Mussolini, their paramilitary groups came out in the open and began regularly to “patrol” the camp. This contributed to increased tensions between the guards and Italian and foreign internees, who demanded to be rapidly freed. Tensions grew even higher following the proclamation of the armistice. On September 9, numerous protests took place in the camp’s three sectors that culminated in a fierce confrontation with the camp’s guards, which resulted in the wounding of four internees, including the Italian Carlo Aldeghieri, a recent arrival in Renicci with the Ventotene group.

In the afternoon of September 14, the approach of a German patrol caused great upheaval in the camp and the flight of the Italian soldiers, who lacked motivation in upholding a no longer functional regime. Very quickly the camp emptied out, except for sick and bed-ridden internees. Many of the former internees headed for the Tuscan-Marche and Romagna Apennine mountains, where many would join the partisans. Another group of roughly 700 people was rounded up by the Germans, and taken back to the camp to be deported.

On November 1943, the camp of Renicci was reopened by the RSI Police Headquarters in Arezzo to house political internees.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 31, 1942</i>	<i>December 29, 1942</i>	<i>February 1, 1943</i>	<i>March 15, 1943</i>	<i>April 19, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>	<i>August 1, 1943</i>
Internees	1,300	3,950	3,865	3,455	3,015	2,857	3,888	3,500

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), s.f.

I (Affari generali), b. 110, ins. 43/1.

Aussme, H8 Crimini di guerra, Racc. 104, Relazione dell'ex direttore del campo.

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 17/8–4, K. 316.

COLFIORITO (Perugia)

From June 1940 to January 1941, as we know, a pavilion of the former firing range of Colfiorito di Foligno housed a camp for civilian internees administered by the Ministry of the Interior.

On August 1941, the Italian Army started renovations on the pavilions of the shooting range with the goal of setting up a concentration camp for prisoners of war, identified as #64. The renovation, according to the plans,

should have been completed within two months but was still not finished more than a year later. On October 4, 1942, 100 British and South African prisoners were transferred to Colfiorito from War Prisoners Camp #54 (situated in Passo Corese, province of Rieti) to work on the site.

The new camp of Colfiorito operated formally as a camp for prisoners of war and was commanded by Captain Tullio Chechin from October 1942 to January 1943. Thereafter, the command was assigned to Captain Gioacchino Mandini and the security to military personnel selected among older soldiers who had suffered battle wounds. The first transport of civilian internees (of 700 Montenegrin) arrived in Colfiorito in January 1943 from a camp for prisoners of war situated in Pissignano, a small village in the municipality of Campello on the Clitunno (Perugia). By the end of March, 838 civilian internees resided in Colfiorito. Another 300–400 prisoners arrived in April, June, and August, with roughly 100 internees transferred directly from the Albanian camps of Kavajë and Klos. The peak number of 1,500 internees was reached in August 1943.

Twice a week, the camp's physician visited the sickest patients, at times ordering their admittance to the hospital of Foligno, but the camp's hygiene and sanitary conditions were very poor. Each barrack housed 150 internees and, despite recent renovations, fleas and lice were everywhere. The latrines, in particular, had poor drainage and were inadequate to serve the high number of internees. Months after their arrival, the majority of internees still wore the same, now tattered, clothing they were wearing when arrested.

In the first trimester of 1943, hunger reigned supreme. Internees received 150 grams of bread, 60 of pasta, and a few vegetables daily. Only 400 individuals who could work on construction sites in Città Ducale were given supplemental rations. In time, conditions improved, due in part to the ability of internees to rely on packages sent by their families. The Assistance Committee *Jugoslovenski Dom* ("Yugoslav nation"), an association established in Cairo by the Yugoslav government in exile, succeeded in sending to Colfiorito five shipments of food.

Neither the fall of Mussolini, nor the armistice of September 8, 1943, changed conditions in the camp. Colfiorito was dismantled on the night of September 27 when, at around 2:30 p.m., a group of 1,200 internees escaped, with the implicit approval of the commander. Another 200 internees, mostly sick or elderly, decided to stay. The guards shot some bullets in the air for show, but even the camp commander ran off before the arrival of the Germans. A group of internees went North but the vast majority stayed in the area and joined the partisan brigades "Gramsci" and "Garibaldi." The roughly 300 remaining internees (mostly the ill, the elderly, and a few undecided ones) who remained in the camp were taken by the Germans and transferred to other detention camps.

As of April 1943, 87 internees of Colfiorito were relocated to Ruscio, in the vicinity of Monteleone di Spoleto, where a camp for Yugoslav prisoners of war had functioned until then. The civilian internees of Ruscio were put to

work in the nearby lignite mine managed by the *Società Mineraria Umbra*, taking over for the Yugoslav prisoners of war who had preceded them. The camp had a dormitory, a kitchen, barracks for storage, and bathrooms. Outside the wire fence were two more barracks for the security detail and camp management. The mine was located 200 meters from the camp, and an 8-hour workday earned the internees 15 Italian lire.

After September 8, the commander of the camp, Captain Arnaldo Mutti, dismantled the Ruscio camp and transferred the internees back to Colfiorito.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>January 15, 1943</i>	<i>March 31, 1943</i>	<i>August 15, 1943</i>
Internees	700	838	1,500

Archival references:

Aussme, M7, Circolari, Racc. 279, f. 3 (Campi di concentramento).

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 8/1–6, K; 1021.

PIETRAFITTA-TAVERNELLE (Perugia)

The “labor camp” referred to either as Pietrafitta (in the municipality of Piegaro) or as Tavernelle (municipality of Panicale), both in the province of Perugia, actually comprised three distinct units: Pietrafitta, with a capacity of 300 people; Ellera, with 200; and “Castello Sereni” (also known as Castelsereni, a building owned by the homonymous family, near Castiglion della Valle), with a capacity of 100. About 400 work camp internees were housed there overall.

The government decided to build a new railroad (covering the Ellera-Tavernelle segment) in the area around the river Nestore, where a thermo-electric plant and a lignite mine were already active, to facilitate the freight shipment of coal. Pietrafitta was the planned railroad terminus, next to the plant and the mine, though the plan was also to extend the line to Tavernelle (3 kilometers farther), and eventually to Città Ducale/Chiusi, where the new line would connect with the Florence-Rome line.

On October 7, 1942, the General Staff completed the necessary inspection of the area. The camp commander, Captain Guido Razzano, took over on December 18, as the internees (who came from Gonars and Monigo) also began to arrive. Chained together in groups of five, they arrived by train to the station of Ellera, from there they would march up to 4 hours to the camp escorted by military personnel. The last convoy of 240 people left Monigo on December 28, 1942 and, after a journey without food that lasted two days, they finally reached Ellera. The internees (numbering roughly around 600) were employed to remove the soil—in preparation to build a bridge over the Nestore river—and extract the stones that were used to support the railroad.

The Pietrafitta unit, actually situated closer to Fontignano, and the Ellera one, not very far from the homonymous railroad station, included three barracks, each 6 by 32 meters in length, made available by the military corps of engineers. The Castello Sereni unit was set up in a building located in an isolated area about 1 kilometer from the village of Castiglion della Valle. Military personnel guarded all the internees.

Pietrafitta, which also functioned as the main camp, was the more organized of the units. Here, besides the three dormitory-barracks for internees and soldiers, were the directorate and an infirmary served by a military doctor. Each unit was manned by 30 soldiers, who assisted Lieutenant Commander Mario Farinacci (an officer who, according to the internees, had taught high school in Terni and had demonstrable democratic leanings as a civilian), and Captain Valentino Munzi, a devout fascist.

The workers-internees each received military uniforms (stripped of their badges), and slept in bunk beds with straw mattresses. The barracks were built on clay soil that, in rainy weather, would become a quagmire.

Despite having to work hard all day long, the workers-internees believed their lot to be much better than that of typical internees in Italian concentration camps. The Giuseppe Zanetti company, contracted to construct the railroad, paid an established amount for each worker put to work by the camp. The workers, in turn, would receive 4.5 Italian lire a day for their work, but this compensation came in the form of “tickets” that could only be spent at the mining company’s store. The same conversion and limitation on spending was true of money sent to the internees by their families.

Following news of the September 8 armistice, on September 15, 1943, both the soldiers and the internees left the camp, worried about the arrival of the Germans.

Archival references:

Aussme, M3, It, Racc. 64, f.2 (Ufficio A.C.—Campi di concentramento).

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateliskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 2/1–3, K. 1021.

FERTILIA (Sassari)

The completion of the land reclamation project of Fertilia, in the province of Alghero, was achieved in part through the manpower provided by a labor camp for former Yugoslav civilian internees deported from Dalmatia (for the most part transferred from the camp of Melada).

The camp of Fertilia, opened in January 1943, was roughly 12 kilometers from Alghero (near the airport), and hosted about 300 internees. They were housed in three concrete barracks and were mostly assigned to agricultural labor and work associated with the reclamation project. A few also worked on the construction site for the new Sassari-Alghero road.

A unit of roughly 50 *carabinieri*, under the leadership of an officer, oversaw the custody of the “internee-laborers,” and lived in a brick barrack that also doubled as the camp’s headquarters.

The camp was dismantled in August 1943 with the transfer of the internees to Renicci concentration camp.

b) Camps dedicated to “Allogeni”

CAIRO MONTENOTTE (Savona)

Starting in December 1941, a concentration camp for prisoners of war (known as Camp n.93) was set up in Cairo Montenotte under the jurisdiction of the Command for the defense of the territory of Genoa. Its location was in Vesima, facing the railroad San Giuseppe di Cairo-Alessandria, in a flat area where, during the Great War, there used to be a small aviation camp.

In February 1943, as the prisoners of war were relocated, the camp of Cairo was made available to the Special Inspectorate of Public Safety of Venezia Giulia, and destined to the internment of Italian Slovenian and Croatian minorities. In a short period of time, 1,400 civilians representing ethnic minorities from an area comprising the provinces of Udine, Gorizia, Trieste, Fiume, and Pola (as well as Istria and the islands of the Gulf of Quarnero) arrived at the camp.

As documented by Tone Ferenc, throughout September 1943, 20 convoys of civilian internees arrived at the camp from Trieste. The first, consisting of 150 men and 44 women, left from the jails of Coroneo, in Trieste on February 1943. The women, however, stayed in Cairo only a few days, before being transferred to the camp of Fraschette di Alatri. All remaining convoys carried only male internees.

The camp, which was managed by Lieutenant Colonel Pasquale Alessandro Passivanti, consisted of 15 internee barracks with bunk-beds and straw mattresses (for a total capacity of 2,000 people); housing for the direction and the garrison; an infirmary; a chapel; a commissary; and a few storage areas.

Conditions of internment were very harsh but were nevertheless better than those experienced in the camps for former Yugoslav civilians. This occurred not only because fascist civilian internment was no longer facing the dramatic emergency caused by weather and food shortages during the winter of 1942–1943; but also, most likely, because the regime wanted to treat the internees from Venezia Giulia better than the others. In Cairo, for example, bread rations were more substantial, and the authorities did not delay or prevent the delivery of care packages, typically sent by family members or parish committees. Moreover, there existed a well-provisioned commissary for the very few indeed that could afford purchases. Though conditions were more precarious for those who could not count on help from home, they could always count on the solidarity of their fellow internees. During the camp's six months of operation, only three internees died, a Croat and two Slovenians. A gravestone still commemorates them today in the city's cemetery: Anton Ban, Anton Bončina, and Josip Kavčič.

The camp had a precise internal organization: each barrack was subdivided into four “platoons,” each responding to a supervisor, while a barrack “manager” oversaw all four detachments. Further up the line of command, a “manager of managers” represented all the barracks in reporting to the commander of the camp. The man elected to this role by the internees was Laminjan Manfreda, a man from Volče, a village near Tolmino.

On May 26, 1943, the Bishop of Trieste and Capodistria, Monsignor Antonio Santin, visited the internees, performed a religious ceremony and, on behalf of the Pope, left the sum of 30,000 Italian lire to support the poorest internees. In a report sent two days later to Borgongini Duca, Santin acknowledged the good functioning of the camp, but also underscored the obvious fact that internees were starving.

A number of internees were employed in the construction of drainage ditches near the factory of Montecatini. Others worked inside the factory. As compensation, the workers-internees typically received 5 Italian lire a day, a sum that barely allowed them to afford a heftier meal and a double ration of bread.

Camp life allowed a few recreational and cultural activities to be organized, such as chess tournaments, conferences, and choral performances. In July 1943, Allied airplanes repeatedly dropped flyers on the camp glorifying the landing in Sicily, and the news of Mussolini’s fall caused much euphoria among the internees. However, the camp commander immediately quashed this enthusiasm, threatening to kill the internees “like dogs,” while arresting and putting their representative (the “manager of managers”) in a confinement cell for a few days. Thus, in apparent calm, the camp continued to operate until September 8.

Following the announcement of the Armistice, a delegation of internees met with the commander demanding the immediate release of the 1,260 inmates, but the Italian commander, delaying more or less in good faith, allowed them to fall into German hands.

In the second half of September, the German soldiers brought to camp other internees and prisoners of war rounded up nearby. Then, on October 8, 1943, loading the prisoners into 30 livestock vehicles, they deported almost all of them to Germany. The convoy arrived in Mauthausen on the night of October 12, 1943. The following day, the 990 internees, all registered as Italians, were transferred to the camp of Gusen.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>February 29, 1943</i>	<i>May 26, 1943</i>	<i>July 20, 1943</i>	<i>July 31, 1943</i>	<i>September 8, 1943</i>
Internees	194	750	840	936	1,260

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, b. 135, f. 16, s.f. 2, ins. “Savona.”
Aussme, H8 Crimini di guerra, b. 104, Relazione dell’ex comandante del campo (March 21, 1947).

FOSSALON (Gorizia)

A “labor camp” was organized in Fossalon di Grado for internees relegated in Sdraussina (Zdravščina) who “could work the land,” making Fossalon a satellite site of the older camp.

The camp, which housed on average 100 people, was placed on the site of the *Bonifica della Vittoria* (Reclamation project of Vittoria), in the municipality of Grado. Specifically, its housing and administrative center was in Eraclea, in Casa Concordia, a rural housing cluster by the road that flanks the Isonzato river. Fenced and under the surveillance of *carabinieri* directed by Marshal Gino Calmieri, the housing cluster extended under a large portico, and comprised two houses, three smaller units, two stables, a hayloft, and four silos. In addition to the *carabinieri*, security guards hired by the land reclamation agency also checked on the inmates.

The internees were Slovenian minority Italians (*Allogeni*), mostly incarcerated in Trieste and then transferred to Sdraussina; the others were interned directly in Fossalon, without passing through Sdraussina.

After September 8, 1943, many internees left the camp and joined the partisans.

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f. 16 (Campi di concentramento), b. 111, s.f. 1 (Affari generali), ins 57/1 “zone di bonifica.”

POGGIO TERZARMATA/SDRAVŠČINA (Gorizia)

The camp, created in September 1942 by the prefecture of Gorizia, following an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior and the Inspectorate for Public Safety of Venezia Giulia, was set up in a former textile factory that, up to 1936 (the year it closed), employed roughly 1,000 workers. It was located in Poggio Terza Armata (formerly known as Sdraussina), a small town in the municipality of Sagrado, not far from the Isonzo river. The direction and administration of the camp were given to the Office of Public Safety, while the surveillance and security detail were the responsibility of soldiers and the “black shirts” (Fascist *Milizia*).

Internees were allowed only one hour of yard time a day in a courtyard enclosed by walls 4 meters high. For many, the camp of Sdraussina was a transit camp where they stayed before being relocated to their final destination (generally Cairo Montenotte); transferred to “special battalions” (army units housing “political suspects”); or subjected to the judgment of the Special Tribunal.

The concentration camp (which in official records was usually described as “subsidiary prison”) was declared sufficient to house 300 internees. While adequate as a holding facility, it lacked the infrastructure and services of real prisons. Therefore, freedom of movement was severely limited, and prolonged confinement in the dormitories increased the suffering and discomfort of the internment.

There are no accurate records about the total number of internees who spent time in Poggio, but they were mostly men from the small towns of the Vipacco, Isontino, Tarovano, and Postumiese areas. There were, however, some women and family units, who were relatives of partisans (or suspected partisans) and draft dodgers. According to an investigation by Ermenegildo Baruzza-Planjavec, between suspected or real partisans destined for the Special Tribunal and other categories of suspects, several thousand civilians, mostly representing *allogeni*, transited through this camp.

Internment was characterized by overcrowding, food shortages, and inadequate health care, conditions that proved quite deleterious for the elderly, children, invalids, and the sick. Occasionally, the “Special Inspectorate” transferred internees to Trieste for interrogations, whereafter they often returned in terrible conditions.

Following July 25, 1943, the antifascist committees of Friuli and Venezia Giulia demanded the liberation of political prisoners and internees (Italian and foreigners), and punishment for the crimes committed by the infamous “Special Inspectorate.” However, even in Sdraussina, most internees were only able to leave the camp on September 9, 1943, after the surveillance units had dissolved.

Archival references:

Airsml, Zapor v Zdravščini pri Sagrađu, testimony of Janko Valentinčič.

Acs, Mi, Segreteria del capo della Polizia, Documento dell’Ispettorato speciale di PS della Venezia Giulia (in via di riordinamento).

Main camps located in the annexed Yugoslav territories

ARBE/RAB (Fiume)

The concentration camp of Arbe was created on the southeastern side of the homonymous island (Rab, in Croatian) in the Gulf of Quarnero, in a flat area between the coastal coves of Campora (Kampor) and Sant’Eufemia (Sv. Fumija), roughly 6 kilometers from the island’s capital, Arbe. At the end of June 1942, after the few area homes were evacuated, a vineyard uprooted, and the road to Arbe widened, Italian soldiers began installing about a thousand six-person tents within the chosen location.

In a meeting that took place in Ljubljana on July 7, General Mario Roatta announced that “a concentration camp had been set up in Arbe with the capacity to hold 6,000 people in tents.” Within two months, according to the general, the structure would include two new sectors, comprised of barracks capable of holding 5,000 inmates each, for a total of 16,000 internees. In reality, by the time the first internees arrived, aside from barbed wire fencing and watchtowers, the camp’s set up was purely virtual: as at the end of July, the tents still had not been fully set up, so many deportees had to complete the job themselves as soon as they arrived. In the months that followed, the Offices of the Second Army (under whose authority the camp of Arbe

resided) worked hard to achieve the intended, original capacity. However, by the fall of 1942, the Supreme Command, reconsidering as a whole the internment of “former Yugoslavs,” decided, in agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, to complete only one of the two additional sectors. In fact, the scope and function of the camp had been redefined: having abandoned the original project of making Arbe the “grand terminal” for Slovenian internment, with a capacity of 20,000–25,000 people, the decision was made to limit it to a sorting facility, for which 10,000–11,000 spaces were sufficient. The downsizing of Arbe was motivated mostly by the difficulty of transporting internees and supplying the island with food, due to the vagaries of maritime travel.

The camp was put under the management of the *carabinieri* Lieutenant Colonel Vincenzo Cuiuli (who also commanded the entire island garrison). His offices were set up in the elementary school of Campora. Roughly 2,000 men (*carabinieri* and soldiers) were assigned to security detail, many finding housing in private homes confiscated from the locals.

The first area to become operative was “Campo Primo” (First Camp), which was itself subdivided into four sectors each under the authority of its own officer. On the right of the main road coming from Arbe, it was located alongside a reclamation area. On the left side of the road, were the areas that, in the original plan, had been designated for the “Campo Secondo (Second Camp),” “Terzo (Third Camp),” and “Quarto (Fourth Camp).” Further down the road the rest of the facilities were set up; and, beyond those, a clearing for the burial of deceased internees. Initially, women, children, and the elderly were placed in a separate area of the “Campo Primo”; later, they were moved to the “Campo Terzo,” before being transferred for good to Gonars in late fall 1942. The “Campo Secondo” became operative only in spring 1943, and housed more than 2,700 Jews under “cautionary internment.” The “Campo Quarto” area remained mostly unused.

The construction of the barracks, some in wood, others in brick, began in fall 1942. Before then, the Arbe internees only had six-man tents. Larger tents became available only early in 1943, together with the first barracks, each capable of holding 80–90 people.

The first group of internees, 198 Slovenian men from Ljubljana, arrived on the island on July 28, 1942, with the ship *Plav* from Fiume. On July 31, the second convoy, also composed solely of 243 Slovenian men, arrived; while the largest transport took place on August 6, bringing 1,194 internees from Ljubljana.

From the end of November onward, the number of internees began to diminish despite the arrival of new convoys. This occurred not only because of the camp’s high mortality rates, and of the transfer to the Italian camps of Gonars, Monigo, and Chiesanuova of roughly 100 internees (mostly women, children, and the elderly); but also because those who were willing to join the ranks of the anti-communist voluntary militia (Mvac) were freed. Then, between December and April, almost 1,800 more internees were transferred, mostly to Gonars, Monigo, and Chiesanuova.

The *carabinieri* corps (reporting to the *Supersloda*) were responsible for transports to and from the island. From its records we surmise that 27 convoys, carrying 7,541 forced internees, arrived on the island. Of these, two thirds were Slovenian civilians. The remaining were Croats coming from the Yugoslav territories, such as Gorski and Kotar, that had been annexed to the province of Fiume in 1941. To these numbers must be added the 2,761 Jewish residents or refugees of Italian-occupied Croatia, interned for “cautionary” and “protective” reasons in Arbe during spring 1943. Therefore, during little more than a year of operation, the camp interned about 10,000 civilians: men, women, children, and often entire families. As far as where the convoys originated, 5,000 internees came from the province of Ljubljana, 19,000 from the province of Fiume (especially the area of Čabar), and 350 from Italian camps (Monigo, Chiesanuova, and Gonars). Jews, however, came from the camp of Porto Re (Kraljevica) and several other locations of *internamento libero* situated within former Yugoslav territories.

The internees of Arbe were mostly farmers, lumberjacks, workers, and artisans. There were also a few shopkeepers and intellectuals. The latter played an important role in the development of cultural, political, and military organizations in the camp, where, at the beginning of 1943, a clandestine cell of the Slovenian Liberation Front formed that managed to establish contacts with the island’s Croatian anti-fascists.

In “Campo Primo” and “Campo Terzo”—the repressive sectors of the Arbe’s camp—the internees’ living conditions, especially for those staying in tents, were particularly distressing due to starvation, cold, and overcrowding. During rainstorms, more than once the latrines clogged up, dumping raw sewage among the tents. On the night of October 29, 1942, a violent downpour that carried away 400 tents and caused five children to drown hit the camp. Food rations were also scarce and very bad, with bread allocations not exceeding 80 grams a day. Especially precarious were the conditions of pregnant women who, quite often, delivered stillborn children.

In these conditions, people died practically every day, almost always due to “cardiac arrest,” according to the camp’s military doctors. Truth be told, in Arbe the internees died of hunger. According to the reports by the *Supersloda*, as of mid-December 1942, 502 of them had already died.

It has not been possible to determine with certainty how many internees died throughout the camp’s period of operation, which lasted only 13 months. We know however that there were at least 1,435 victims whose identities were ascertained. This number reflected 19% of the Slav internees in Arbe (7,541), and corresponded to a higher percentage of victims in the Nazi concentration camp of Buchenwald (15%). For this reason, Yugoslav scholars have sometimes called that of Arbe an “extermination camp.” This denomination is improper, though we know that no legal action has ever been undertaken against the Italians responsible for such carnage accomplished by fascism.

On the evening of September 8, 1943, the news of the Armistice spread through the camp and almost immediately the Liberation Front cell set in

motion a plan to disarm the Italian garrison, which it carried out on the 11th. At the same time, Commander Cuiuli was arrested in the island's capital, and condemned to death via trial carried out by the internees themselves. On September 13, the partisan brigade "Rab" was formally constituted: it was composed entirely of former internees, under the leadership of a former officer of the Yugoslav Navy, Franc Potočnik. The brigade included five battalions (one composed entirely by Jews) for a total of 1,600 men and women fighters. After it made contact with the partisan command in the area, between September 16 and 19, 1943, the brigade of former internees made landing in three separate areas of the Croatian littoral to launch an attack against the Nazis and the *Ustasha*. On September 17, Vincenzo Cuiuli was transported to the prison of Cirquenizza (Crikvenica) where he should have been executed the following day, but apparently committed suicide during the night.

On the island, following the departure of the vast majority of internees, only 250 Jews remained: the elderly, and women and children. Some were ill and, after the occupation of Arbe by the Nazis, they were transferred to the Risiera di San Sabba Lager, in Trieste, from where they were deported to Auschwitz. A smaller group of former Jewish internees, using fishing boats, reached the island of Lissa (Viš), where Marshal Tito had set up his partisan troops' headquarters, before departing from there to Bari.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>July 28, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>	<i>December 1, 1942</i>	<i>December 29, 1942</i>	<i>February 1, 1943</i>	<i>April 19, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>
Internees	198	2,532	6,577	5,562	2,853	2,628	2,232	3,296

Archival references:

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 20/5, K. 897.

Aussme, Ufficio Pdg Smre, diario storico-militare.

Ars II, F 1079, Sezname internancev, s.f. 1–67 (Taborišče Rab).

BUCCARI/BAKAR (Fiume)

Buccari (Bakar, in Croatian) is a small coastal town in the periphery of Fiume that, after the occupation of Yugoslavia, became part of the Italian province of Carnaro. Its concentration camp was overseen by the Fifth Corps of the Second Italian Army and began operations in March 1942. Initially intended to hold up to 500 Croatian "rebels," its capacity would eventually double.

The camp was situated in the town's periphery and comprised about 20 fenced-in barracks near the seashore. It held mostly Croatian civilian internees rounded up by various battalions of the Fifth Army Corps, but it also housed about 50 Jews, refugees from nearby Croatia.

At the beginning of April 1943, besides 735 “repressive” internees (431 males, 269 females, and 35 children) there were 107 “protective” internees (19 males, 64 females, and 24 children). The conditions of internment, especially for the “repressive” internees, were always very difficult, especially concerning food and sanitation. At the end of April, following the spread of typhus, 842 non-Jewish internees were transferred to Italy: the “protective” ones to the camp of Monigo (Treviso); the “repressive” ones to Gonars (Udine). However, since they had to be quarantined, their transfer took place slowly.

At that time, the military had also planned the complete evacuation of the camp since, as the war progressed, it was more and more vulnerable to attacks by partisan squads, even though the Italian Army and the Yugoslav resistance had exchanged prisoners as a preventative measure. Nevertheless, the camp remained in operation until July.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>April 10, 1942</i>	<i>December 13, 1942</i>	<i>April 5, 1943</i>	<i>April 30, 1943</i>	<i>July 1, 1943</i>
Internees	53	574	842	893	225

Archival references:

Acs, Mi, Dgps, Dagr, Ufficio internati, A4bis (1939–1945), f. 18 (Fiume), b.4.

Aussme, M3, Racc. 64, OP2 “Campi di concentramento.”

Aussme, M3, f. “Internamento ebrei Slovenia-Dalmazia,” b. 69.

PORTO RE/KRALIJEVICA (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, acronym NDH)

The camp of Porto Re (Kraljevica in Croatian, a small city on the Adriatic Sea roughly 20 kilometers from Fiume/Rijeka) opened in August 1942 and operated until September of the following year. As was the case for Buccari, it was overseen by the commander of the Fifth Army Corps and reserved for the internment of partisans or Croatian civilians rounded up for retaliatory purposes. This camp, however, was not in the Yugoslav territories annexed by the Kingdom of Italy the year before, but in the so-called “Second Zone” of the “Independent State of Croatia” (NDH), under occupation by the Second Italian Army.

The camp had a capacity of 1,500 internees and faced the sea near the castle of Frankopan. It was surrounded by barbed wire and watchtowers, and housed four large wooden pavilions (each capable of holding 300 inmates), and eight more of smaller dimensions.

From November 2, 1942, after the Slav internees left, Jews under the protection of the Italian army began to arrive in Porto Re. By the end of the year, there were 614 women, 455 men, and 104 children, of whom only 18 were Catholics.

Once the Jews arrived, food and sanitary assistance in the camp improved relative to their earlier conditions: roofs covered the latrines and sinks; and new, more comfortable barracks were built, some housing medical offices, a pharmacy, and a meeting hall. In this “Jewish camp” cultural, artistic, and religious activities took place comparable to the ones that, during those same months, were taking place in Ferramonti. These included self-government by the internees, which, in Porto Re, produced good outcomes.

In March 1943, a plan was made to bring together all Jewish refugees located within the “Second Zone.” Ultimately, Arbe was chosen for this purpose so that, in early July, all Jews interned in Porto Re were transferred there. Thereafter, Porto Re returned to hosting only Croatian civilian internees. On June 27, 1943, there were 1,163 internees, who were all Jewish. By the end of July, among the 140 internees (82 males, 56 females, and one child) none were Jewish.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>November 2, 1942</i>	<i>December 31, 1942</i>	<i>April 6, 1943</i>	<i>June 27, 1943</i>	<i>July 29, 1943</i>
Internees	1,003	1,173	1,100	1,163	140

Archival references:

Aussme, M3, fascicolo Campi di concentramento-Situazione internati.
Riječka prefektura, 1924–1945, Fondo HR-DARI-8, Difesa della razza (1938–1944).

MELADA/MOLAT (Zara)

This concentration camp, under the control of the civilian Government of Dalmatia, was established at the end of June 1942 in Jazi, a natural bay on the island of Melada (Molat), which was secluded and suitable for disembarking the internees.

The camp was set up on the seashore, along a pine grove that had been partially cut down. It had five bunker-like sentry boxes built in concrete, and was surrounded by barbed wire along the entire perimeter, roughly a kilometer long. A two-storey building, the only one already present on location, became the command headquarters under the authority of Leonardo Fantoli, who was succeeded on January 7, 1943, by his deputy Carlo Sommer. Administrative and security duties were entrusted to 180 *carabinieri* and a few hundred soldiers, including a company of the infantry division Zara. For periods of time, “black shirts” also were present in Melada. Healthcare was the responsibility of a military officer: first, Giuseppe Spinone; then, Camillo Croce.

Initially, the camp only had small tents, where the internees, packed to the seams, slept on the ground over a small layer of hay. Later, 12 large wooden barracks were built on concrete foundations: each was nominally capable of

holding 100 people. Bathroom facilities comprised a large lavatory (lacking running water and located on the seashore), and five latrines. Melada's total capacity was 1,200 internees but, in some periods of activity, it housed more than double that number.

The first convoy of 223 people (76 males, 103 females, and 44 children and adolescents up to 15 years old) came from Zara on June 29, 1942, with the motorboat *Ammiraglio Viotti*, a Yugoslav ship that the Italians had confiscated in 1941. The ship traveled back and forth between Melada and other embarkation points on the Dalmatian Coast so that, by July 20, after ten more transports, the camp had 1,320 inmates. During the 1942 summer, 361 inhabitants of Eso Piccolo (Mali Iž) ended up in Melada following an anti-Italian uprising that was punished with seven death sentences carried out immediately. In peak overcrowding times, the camp commander refused convoys of new internees, who were brought back to the continent and placed, more or less provisionally, in collection and transit camps around Vodizza (Vodice) and Zaravecchia (Biograd na moru).

On August 15, 1942, an inspection by the police headquarters in Zara reported 2,337 internees in Melada: 1,021 women, 866 men, and 450 children (ten of whom were born in the camp). This number grew to 2,500 by the end of the year. The number of internees dropped in early 1943 due to the continuous transfers to Italy (especially to the camp of Fraschette di Alatri), which affected a total of roughly 2,000 people. On January 9, 1943, Melada numbered 1,627 internees, among whom 552 were women and children. At that time, 280 internees still lived in the tents that, when the camp opened, had been labeled "provisional."

Aside from a healthier location and its dependence from civilian authorities (instead of the Office of the Second Army), conditions of internment in Melada were not very different from Arbe's. Here as well, living conditions and food availability were lacking. Internees were given only 1 liter of water every 24 hours for drinking and other purposes. Monsignor Girolamo Mileta, the Catholic Bishop of Sebenico (Šibenik), described the camp as a "sepulcher of the living." His was not a metaphoric statement, considering that from June 30 to November 25, 1942, 442 internees died, according to a report written by commissioner Fantoli. For the entire period of the camp's activity (June 1942 to September 1943), those deceased from malnutrition, malaria, and tuberculosis numbered roughly 700. The mortality rate did not reach the numbers registered in Arbe primarily because of the care packages that internees received from families who, typically, lived closer to the camp.

The camp of Melada had a special role as the Dalmatian center for civilians held as hostages. With the ordinance of May 19, 1943, the prefect of Zara, General Gaspero Barbera, decreed that all men between 21 and 50 years of age "interned in Melada as relatives of fugitives" be considered hostages to execute in reprisal should "rebel" forces attack or commit homicides in the territories. Following this decree, which the Italians affixed in all public offices and even in churches, the command of the

camp, in collaboration with the prefect in Zara, maintained an updated list of “hostage-internees,” who at times could be executed. Among the civilians held in Melada as hostages, 250 workers were also rounded up in the local factories of Lozovac. All together, during the camp’s period of operation, roughly 300 “hostage-internees” (all men) were executed. In June 1943, to address the high numbers in the camp, the prefect of Zara asked the command of the Second Army to transfer to other military camps those prisoners who had been rounded up by the armed forces. That started the so-called “evacuation” of the Melada camp, to which also contributed the decision to let go, in groups of one hundred, those prisoners against whom there were no grave charges: the sick, the elderly over 65 years old, women, and children.

The camp ceased its activity on September 9, 1943, when, following the news of the Armistice, the Italian soldiers abandoned their posts. Overall, 10,000 internees came through Melada, of whom approximately a thousand lost their lives. Yugoslav historians report 954 dead (422 in 1942, and 532 in 1943) without specifying if these figures include those who were executed. The association of former internees refers to 700 internees dead by natural causes, and 300 as hostages executed by firing squad.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>June 29, 1942</i>	<i>July 20, 1942</i>	<i>August 15, 1942</i>	<i>Septem- ber 1, 1942</i>	<i>Novem- ber 15, 1942</i>	<i>Decem- ber 29, 1942</i>	<i>January 9, 1943</i>
Internees	223	1,320	2,337	2,300	2,200	2,400	1,627

Archival references:

ACS, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. Massime M4, f, 16, b. 138.

Acs, Mi, Dggs, Dagr, Cat. A5G, II Guerra mondiale, b. 425.

Aussme, M3, Racc. 64, OP2 “Campi di concentramento.”

MAMULA AND PREVLAKA (Cattaro)

The camps of Mamula and Prevlaka were established in March 1942. The first one was situated on the small island of Mamula (Lastavica); the second one on the nearby peninsula of Prevlaka, a narrow strip of land at the entrance of the Bocche di Cattaro (Boka Kotorska) that, starting at the base of Colle Osoje, stretches for about 2 kilometers to Capo Oštro.

Mamula was under the military command of the “Emilia” Division, and Prevlaka under the “Messina” one. From the beginning, however, the two camps were complementary and integrated into a single “concentration system” under the jurisdiction of the Sixth Army Corps, which also oversaw the internment of civilians arrested in southern Dalmatia and in the Cattaro region.

In this “system,” Prevlaka functioned as a center of first reception, where prisoners could be released or transferred to Mamula (where conditions of internment were harsher) as regular internees or hostages. Conversely, from Mamula only inmates who were gravely ill or who were recommended for a transfer by the Division commander or the prefect of Cattaro were transferred to Prevlaka. In the case of grave diseases, the internees could be admitted to the military hospital of Meline (near Castelnuovo) or released.

Initially, both camps housed men and women. Starting in June 1942, women were gathered in Prevlaka. From September onward, the Sixth Army Corps decided to unite the management of the two camps under the “Concentration Camp Command for Political Internees” led by the commander of the 120th Infantry Regiment of the “Emilia” Division. Conditions of internment were very harsh in both camps. However, internment in Mamula was tantamount to detention. The fortress of Mamula also functioned as a subsidiary prison whose inmates were divided into two categories: 1) civilian inmates awaiting trial by the military War Tribunal, recorded in the registers with the acronym T.G. (“Tribunale di Guerra”); 2) civilians assigned to “repressive internment” (typically by the prefecture or Police Headquarters). Three colonels would successively be in charge of the unified camp: P. Pasquini, P. Rivara, and G. Prolaran.

The personnel in charge of each camp were selected among officers of the *carabinieri* who had strong military experience and were loyal to Fascism. They were chosen by the command of the Sixth Army Corps upon recommendation by the command of the “Emilia” and “Messina” Divisions. In Mamula, however, there were two commanders: one responsible for the military garrison and one for the concentration camp.

Prevlaka, as mentioned earlier, was situated on the homonymous peninsula (*prevlaka* in Serbo-Croatian means “isthmus”), which, because of its strategic position, had always been used as a military post. The camp was in the middle of the peninsula, in a military compound that had belonged to the Yugoslav Army. It was enclosed by barbed wire and divided into four sectors: two for the internees from the Cattaro province of Cattaro (one for men; one for women); and two for internees coming from the NDH (the so-called “Independent State” of Ante Pavelić), also separated according to sex. Each sector had its own kitchen. The sectors instead shared the infirmary, managed by the medical officer Aldo Julio, and a pavilion for disinfestation. The internees were housed in concrete barracks that had been dormitories for Yugoslav soldiers, and in a large pavilion subdivided into smaller spaces. There were bunk beds, but since they were not always sufficient, some internees slept on hay mattresses on the floor. The military garrison that controlled the only access route to the peninsula provided security.

Upon arrival, the internees were searched thoroughly and their valuables confiscated. During the day, they were subject to frequent roll calls at different times of the day, and could wander within the camp’s enclosure,

where the latrines and washrooms were located. Some were allowed to work in farms outside the enclosure. Others were employed inside the camp as warehouse workers, cooks, interpreters, and so on. However, any attempted escape or minor rule violation caused charges to be immediately levied with the military War Tribunal.

Mamula was located in an Austro-Hungarian prison-fortress on the tip of the homonymous island. The old building's right wing housed internees from the annexed Yugoslav territory (mainly from the province of Cattaro); the left wing those rounded up in the territories that belonged administratively to the NDH (the "Second" and "Third" zone). All the women were held in the central area (the "forum"), which was later reserved for civilians under investigation by the military War Tribunal. Since the camp was surrounded by sea, it did not need many guards: the garrison initially only had about 15 officers and 40 soldiers. From July 1942, the security detail was increased with the establishment of new guard posts and the addition of sea boats for patrols. Every wing of the fortress had seven cells for inmates, each in the spaces originally destined for the placement of cannons. In the "forum" were three additional spaces for internees and one set up as an infirmary.

Sanitary conditions were decidedly unsatisfactory: water and food were scarce, and there were no opportunities to take showers; moreover, there were no locales for disinfection, and only the garrison's soldiers were entitled to use the one, available bathroom. Originally, internees slept on hay mattresses set on the floor (only at the end of 1942 were some bunkbeds added). During the winter months, the internees slept with their clothes on since there was no heating, while during the summer months, the cells became extremely hot and infested with mosquitoes, but the air became even less breathable because of buckets for bodily needs.

Food supplies, which had been especially unstable, improved when they were supplemented by an efficient food delivery system organized by the "Emilia" Division between August 1942 and September 1943, when families of internees and activists of the Liberation Movement were able to deliver 10,000 packages to the camp. However, as per orders of the Italian government, until the fall of Fascism, no civilian internee was granted the support of the International Red Cross.

During the two camps' entire period of activity, 500 internees lost their lives. Among them are included an undetermined number of hostages executed in the Prevlaka camp area and in the nearby village of Kameno.

The camp of Prevlaka officially ceased its activity on June 30, 1943, though, a month earlier, its Croatian internees belonging to the NDH had been released; and, on June 2, 435 Montenegrins, formerly enlisted in the Yugoslav military, had been sent to the Italian concentration camp of Visco, via Fiume. The last 19 internees were transferred to the San Lorenzo Fortress in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) on June 30.

The fortress-camp of Mamula was active until September 14, 1943.

Presences in the camp of Mamula

<i>Date</i>	<i>October 30, 1942</i>	<i>December 30, 1942</i>	<i>June 25, 1943</i>
Internees	125	173	?
Detained	368	367	?
Total	493	540	509

Presences in the camp of Prevlaka

<i>Date</i>	<i>December 30, 1942</i>	<i>February 1, 1943</i>	<i>April 15, 1943</i>	<i>June 1, 1943</i>
Internees	640	497	283	435

Archival references:

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 20/1–9, K. 1021.

Aussme, M3, Racc. 64 OP/2, “Campi di concentramento.”

ZLARINO/ZLARIN (Zara)

A camp for “politicians and their families who had been rounded up,” capable of holding roughly 1,000 internees, was created at the end of March 1943 on the island of Zlarin (for the Italians, Zlarino), facing the bay of Sebenico. It was located near Capo Marin, an arid and uninhabited promontory in the Northwestern area of the small Adriatic island.

The camp, guarded by 120 soldiers and about 20 *carabinieri*, was initially managed by the Commander of the 173rd unit of the *carabinieri* “Eugenio di Savoia” Division. He was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Umberto Ransava of the “Bergamo” Division. The camp was quickly activated, following the orders of the Italian military authorities of Spalato (Split), who wanted to urgently remove all males over the age of 15 from the coastal zones where Italian formations were deployed.

The first convoy of 50 internees arrived from Spalato on March 25, when the camp lacked everything but a fence. The internees themselves had to set up their quarters in military tents holding 18–20 people each. An isolated area of the camp was reserved for hostages, who could not have any contact with the other internees. At the end of April, the number of inmates reached 1,652, the majority of whom had been arrested during the sweeps that the Divisions “Bergamo” and “Eugenio di Savoia” had performed in Dalmatia between March 21 and April 8.

Initially, living conditions were terrible. Toilets were inadequate, food rations inadequate, and the water supply of less than a liter of water a day barely sufficient to keep the inmates alive. In contrast with Melada, here the terrain upon which the camp was set up was arid and inhospitable, with no wells or sources of water in the vicinity. Only when the command allowed packages sent by families to be delivered did the conditions improve.

Meanwhile, inside the camp, extremely serious intestinal and skin infections had spread among the prisoners, though, because the severely ill were typically sent home, “only” 60 inmates officially died in the camp.

Set up as a short-term camp, Zlarin remained in activity for only three months. Already in May, transfers had begun toward the Italian camps for Slavs. The camp was closed on June 15, 1943, when the remaining 1,000 internees boarded the *Triglav* ship and were deported to Italy, via Fiume.

In the three months of operation, seven out of eighteen internee civilians in Zlarin were executed near Sebenico.

Presences in the camp

<i>Date</i>	<i>March 25, 1943</i>	<i>April 30, 1943</i>	<i>June 15, 1943</i>
Internees	50	1,652	1,200

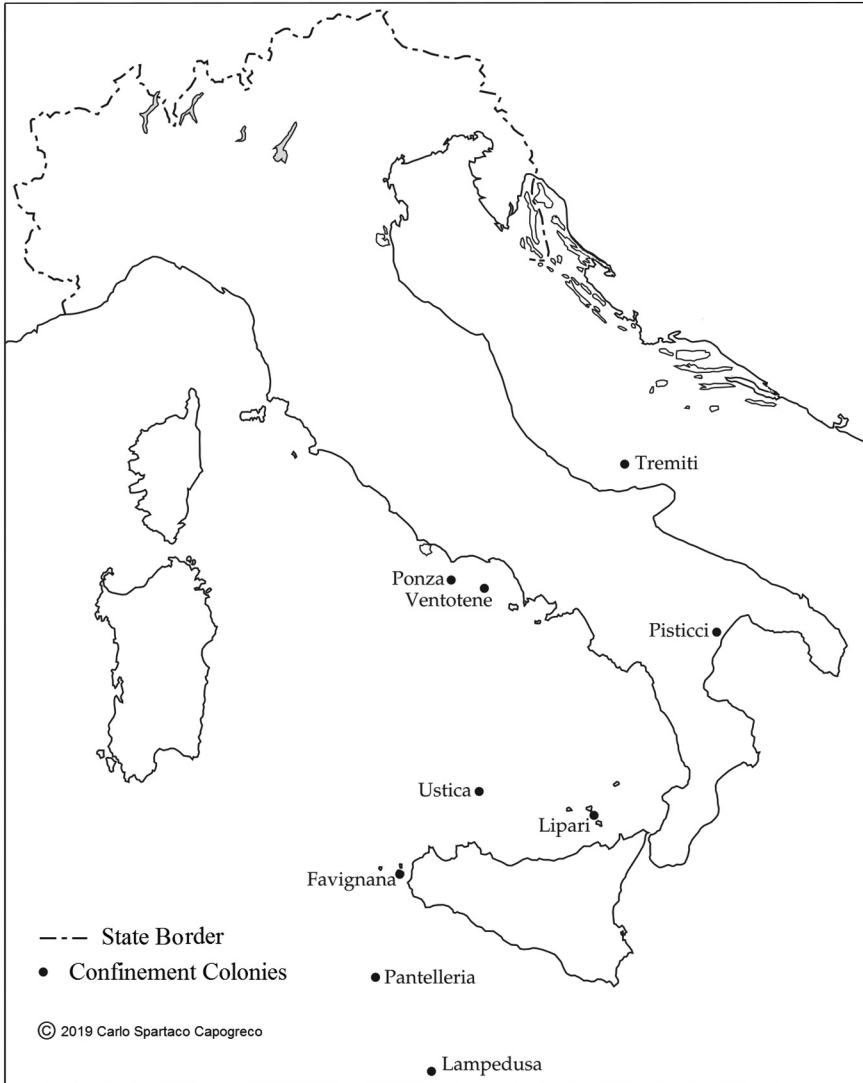
Archival references:

Avii, Arhiva Neprijateljskih Jedinica, Br. Reg. 18/4–1, K. 560.

Nmz, documenti vari sul campo e sugli internati.

Note

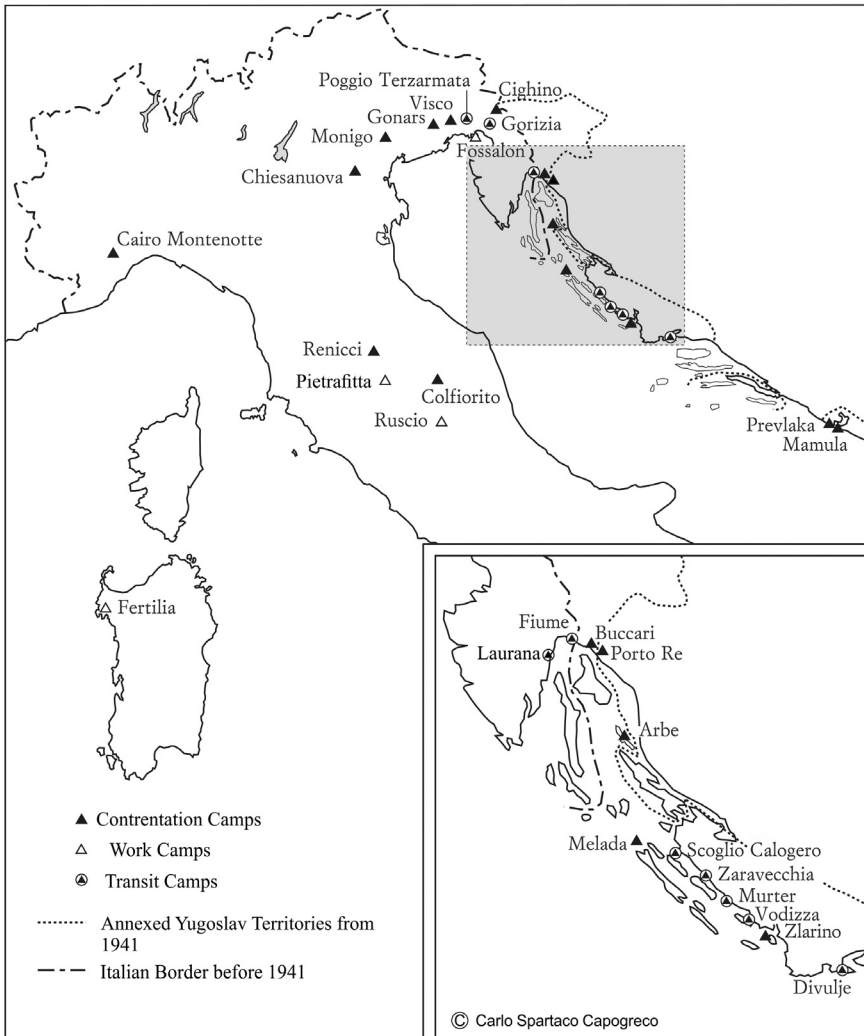
1 See Chapter 6, which discusses the circular 451/36426.



Colonies of “Police Confinement”.



Concentration Camps supervised by the Ministry of the Interior (1940–1943).



Concentration camps for “Slavs” of “Parallel” Civilian Internment.

6 Chronology of the main administrative and legislative Acts and Orders (November 1926–November 1943)

This chronological list includes notes and brief descriptions about the contents of the most important acts and orders emanated by the Italian government. It begins with the Royal Decree 1848 (November 6, 1926) that established police confinement and continues until the legal memo 53247/451 (September 10, 1943), with which the Badoglio government sanctioned the liberation of foreign enemy subjects who had been interned. To clarify the evolving dynamics that followed the declaration of the armistice on September 8, 1943, the chronology ends with two provisions issued by the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* (Republican Fascism's puppet state): the circular 451/22386 of November 1, 1943 (that rescinded the liberatory measures against internment), and the Police ordinance n. 5 of November 30, 1943 (which would allow, even in Italy, the deportation of Jews with the object of extermination to the German lager).

1926 Royal Decree, November 6, 1926, n. 1848—"Unified Text of Public Safety Laws" (derived from the Enabling Act of December 31, 1925, n. 2318).

His Chapter V ("On Police confinement") introduced confinement as an institution that allowed the fascist regime to deport its political enemies (those who had acted upon or "manifested the desire to commit" violent and subversive actions against the State legal system).

Law, November 25, 1926, n. 2008—"Provisions for the defense of the State."

The above-mentioned Royal Decree n. 1848 became entrenched among the rules established by this Law (rules that would come to be known as "Special laws").

Royal Decree, January 9, 1927, n. 33—"Reorganization of personnel in the administration of public safety and police services."

It allowed the Ministry of the Interior to use the Militia for "special services" (such as working in confinement colonies).

- 1929 Circular, December 1, 1929, n. 443/20030.
Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.
- It established, in each prefecture, the "Civil registry for all people suspected of political activity," under the "Central political registry" (*Casellario politico centrale*) created in 1894. In this registry were kept the names of people to arrest during "special contingencies."
- 1931 Royal Decree, June 18, 1931, n. 773—"Unified Text of Public Safety Laws."
Reintroduced deportation for political reasons: the articles 184–193 of the "Unified Text" of 1926 (relative to confinement), with small changes, were incorporated in Articles 180–189 of this new "Unified Text." Aside from Articles 180–189, this Text is still operative today.
- Laws, December 14, 1931, n. 1699.
It added to the Law of June 8, 1925, n. 969, and regulated "Civilian Deployment" (*Mobilitazione civile*). Due to war needs, it would be integrated with the Royal Decree, September 5, 1938, n. 1731, and with the Duce's announcement of March 22, 1941.
- 1932 Circular, March 6, 1932, n. 442/2401—"Special services of surveillance and prevention."
Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.
The instructions of this circular set the standards for all measures of public surveillance and prevention implemented until the end of the war.
- 1935 Circular, June 17, 1935, n. 44688.
Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.
It summarized the main general instructions on how the "Central political registry" was to function.
- 1936 Circular, January 21, 1936, n. 441/0407—"Regularisation of the lists of people to be arrested during special contingencies."
Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.
It reminded the prefectures that the lists needed to be kept diligently up to date.
- Circular, January 31, 1936, n. 3/227.
Sent by the Ministry of War (Sim) to the Ministry of the Interior (Dgps).

It explained the measures to take during times of national security and during mobilization against people “suspected or ascertained as having committed” espionage.

Notice, May 8, 1936, n. 11164/503—“Concentration camps for individuals considered dangerous and suspicious from the military and political standpoint.”

Sent by the Ministry of War (Command of the Chief of Staff) to the Ministry of the Interior (Dgps) and Sim.

In reference to the Circular of January 21, 1936, by the Ministry of the Interior (441/0407), it provided general instructions on the general criteria to institute concentration camps.

- 1938 Royal Decree, July 8, 1938, n. 1415 “Adoption of the Legislative Text on war, and on neutrality,” generally known as “Law of War.” It established the internment of foreign subjects, delegating to a decree by Mussolini their treatment, which, as far as possible, would be comparable to that of prisoners of war.

Circular, July 27, 1938, n. 442/18205.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

It established the creation of a “security and prevention service” meant especially for the surveillance of foreigners entering the Kingdom of Italy.

Royal Decree, September 5, 1938, n. 1731—“Changes to Articles 4 and 6 of the December 14, 1931 Law, n. 1699 on war discipline.”

It adapted the norms for “Civilian mobilization” to wartime needs.

Royal Decree, September 7, 1938, n. 1381—“Measures to handle foreign Jews” (taken up again by the Royal Decree, November 17, 1938, n. 1728, then converted into Law, January 5, 1939, n. 274).

It established the following for foreign Jews: a) the annulment of Italian citizenship conferred after January 1, 1919; b) the prohibition to establish permanent residence in the Kingdom of Italy, Libya, and the Aegean Sea dominions; c) the expulsion from these lands, by March 12, 1939 (with the exception of those over 65 years old, and those married to Italian citizens), of everyone whose stay began after January 1, 1919.

- 1939 Circular, August 16, 1939, n. 442/06687.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

Issued measures applicable “during periods of security and mobilization,” as planned in the Ministry of War’s memo of January 31, 1936.

Circular, August 31, 1939, n. 443/43427—“Measures to adopt toward foreigners under a possible state of emergencies.”

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

In anticipation of war, it invited the prefects to signal the number of foreign people living in Italy who belonged to potential enemy states.

Circular, September 5, 1939, n. 443/79351.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

Brought back memo 443/43427 and requested additional information on foreigners (both presumed “enemies” and others) and “subversive elements” that were included in the first and second category of people that should be arrested during certain contingencies.

1940 Circular, May 20, 1940, n. 443/35615.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

It instructed the prefects to again control information previously provided on those elements belonging to enemy countries and, for the first time, clarified that the lists must also include foreign Jews.

Circular, May 25, 1940, n. 442/36838.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

The Ministry requested, by June 5, a list of the center-south municipalities where, in an emergency, it might intern foreign and Italian civilians, who it must remove from their regular homes.

Notice, May 26, 1940.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It stated, “... foreign Jews residing in Italy, and especially those who have come under pretexts, deceit or illegal means, should be considered as if belonging to enemy countries.”

Circular, May 27, 1940, n. 442/37214.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

It established that, in an emergency, in addition to the foreign Jews singled out in the previous memos, internment must be extended to those Italian Jews who “because of how dangerous they are, must be removed from their homes.”

Circular, May 31, 1940, n. 443/39910.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It invited prefectures to send in the lists of "dangerous, Italian Jews needing internment" (though, racial profiling is not sufficient to cause internment).

Circular, June 1, 1940, n. 442/38954—"Norms to follow in an emergency concerning detained and interned individuals."

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It provided further instructions about Italians and foreigners who must be interned as soon as Italy declares war. It also suggested what must be done: the prefectures must, among other things, state whether those who were detained should be sent to an island, a mainland camp, or to "unimpeded" internment.

Circular, June 8, 1940, n. 442/12267—"Rules about concentration camps and internment locations."

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

Issued "rules" for internees and how concentration camps and other locations must function to ensure "that there be no confusion, and that there exist no disparity in treatment for the internees."

Circular, June 10, 1940, n. 443/43778

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It reminded that the preventive detention of civilians being considered for the concentration camp must be done avoiding excessive scaremongering. It also stated that, among enemy subjects, only the dangerous ones must be held; as for the others, the prefectures must await further instructions.

Royal Decree, June 10, 1940, n. 566—"Implementation of War Laws on the Territory."

In *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, June 15, 1940, n. 140.

It rendered official wartime laws (envisaged by the Royal Decree of July 8, 1938, n. 1414); as such, also the internment of enemy civilians, starting at 12:01 a.m., June 11, 1940.

Circular, June 15, 1940, n. 443/45626.

Sent by the Chief of Police Bocchini to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It ordered the arrest and internment of “foreign Jews belonging to States who practice racial laws.” These Jews were described as “undesirable elements imbued with hatred for Totalitarian Regimes, thus capable of all sorts of damaging actions,” and therefore “must be taken out of circulation.”

Law, June 19, 1940, n. 661.

Because the construction and management of concentration camps (planned in article 284 of the Royal Decree of July 8, 1938, n. 1415) were tied to the implementation of war measures, it authorized the expenditure of 35 million lira (art. 2) to build and manage concentration camps, as “general war services.”

Circular, June 20, 1940.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

Established that county doctors visit concentration camps at least once a month; and that Police Headquarters inspect, at least once a week, those camps that were not under the supervision of a public safety officer.

Royal Decree/Law, June 21, 1940, n. 856—“Rules for the asset and financial management of the State in the War period.”

Article 4 provided for the establishment of Special committees for administrative and accounting control for the management of particular services related to the war period.

Circular, June 25, 1940, n. 442/14178—“Regulations for concentration camps and internment locations.”

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome’s Police Commissioner.

It followed the memo/Circular of June 8, 1940 (442/12267), and established new prohibitions and regulations, mainly pertaining to letters, family visits, and subsidies provided for destitute internees (6.50 Italian lira daily, increased by 50 lira monthly for the *internati liberi*).

Circular, July 2, 1940.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior—Chief of Police to the Kingdom of Italy’s Police Commissioners.

Urged the transfer from the prisons to camps and designated locations of those already rounded up. It clarified that the transfers could happen in groups, and that the internees could bring clothes and personal belongings.

Circular, July 24, 1940, n. 442/16955.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It confirmed that internees could not live with their families within the concentration camps, even in the case of underage children. However, it noticed that individual cases could be negotiated with the Ministry.

Circular, July 27, 1940, n. 442/5389427.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It prohibited anyone who did not have a special authorization by the Ministry of the Interior to enter the concentration camps or approach an internee for any reason whatsoever.

Royal Law Decree, August 4, 1940, n. 124001/363—"Construction and management of concentration camps, general war services."

It established that the building and administration of concentration camps must be considered "general war services" as for Royal Decree of June 21, 1940, n. 856.

Royal Decree, August 18, 1940, n. 1741.

With regard to the Royal Law Decree of June 21, 1940, n. 856, it established the "Special Committee for the administration of General War Services within the Ministry of Interior." In addition to the latter ministry, this committee would have representatives from the Government Council, the Court of Auditors, and the Ministry of Finance.

Decree by Mussolini, *Duce* of the Fascism and Head of Government, September 4, 1940—"Regulations concerning the treatment of foreign subjects."

In the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n. 239, October 11, 1940.

It contained the norms already present in the administrative regulations of June 8, 1940 (circular 442/12267) and June 25, 1940 (circular 442/14178), and constituted the actual legal framework for civilian internment under Fascism.

Circular, September 11, 1940, n. 63462/10.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It upheld the circular of June 11, 1940 ("Gypsies and their carts"), and earlier orders about the refoulement of foreign Gypsies, and established that those who were Italian citizens be rounded up and concentrated in the "most suitable location" in each province.

Memo, September 16, 1940, n. 443/81118.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It instructed the prefects to facilitate as best as possible the exodus of foreign and stateless Jews abroad, even when, as a precautionary measure, they had been sent to concentration camps or to *internamento libero*.

Royal Law Decree, September 17, 1940, n. 1374 "Changes and additions to the Unified Text of Public Safety Laws in force during the current wartime period."

In *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n. 240 of October 12, 1940.

It authorized the Ministry of the Interior (art. 1) to intern people who were subject to police confinement as per article 181 of the Unified Text of Public Safety Laws of 1931. In actuality, it practically transformed civilian internment in one of public safety's "preventive measures."

Circular, October 8, 1940, n. 443/71188.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It reaffirmed the need to facilitate the departure toward neutral countries of foreign or stateless Jews ("especially those interned or stuck in concentration camps") who could pay for their trip.

1941 Circular, January 14, 1941, n. 2223.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It encouraged to pursue "ever more vigorously" racial policies against the Jews and, therefore, to send to concentration camps those people who caused the greatest suspicions.

Mussolini's Call (*Bando del Duce*) of March 22, 1941.

It provided "penal and disciplinary measures concerning civilian deployment."

Circular, April 20, 1941, n. 25725/442/10423—"Increase in internee subsidy."

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It established that the food subsidy provided for destitute internees within the camps and "free internment" locations be increased from 6.50 to 8 Italian lira daily.

Circular, April 27, 1941, n. 10.10538/12971.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It included the explicit order that finalizes the internment of Italian Gypsies.

Circular, October 26, 1941, n. 442/80005—"Transfer of Communist Internees-to-be to the concentration camps of Lipari and Ustica."

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It ordered that all "Communists Internees-to-be" ("former Yugoslavs") who had not been provided with a different destination or whose injunction was in process, to be transferred to the camps of Lipari and Ustica.

1942 Note from the Ministry of the Interior of February 19, 1942, to the Ministry of War.

It reported that the Ministry of the Interior typically dispatched confinees and internees to the islands, to concentration camps on the mainland, or to internment locations based on their perceived "degree of dangerousness."

Circular, July 5, 1942, n. 442/18947—"Work for confinees and internees."

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It informed that the Ministry was not opposed to allowing political confinees and internees in municipalities (Jews included) to work. About those in colonies and camps it suggested that one must take into account more rigorously their "dangerousness."

Circular, August 7, 1942, n. 10/10000—"Gypsies sent away from their municipalities and collected in specific locations for surveillance purposes—Regular confinees on the mainland and the islands—Subsidy."

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It established that, starting on August 16, 1942, Gypsies who had been rounded up, and were not working or had other sources of income, be given a "daily subsidy" of 7 Italian lira.

Circular, November 17, 1942, n. 451/31621.

Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.

It informed that rabbis can be authorized periodically to access concentration camps.

- 1943 Circular, January 19, 1943, n. 451/36426.
Sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom of Italy and Rome's Police Commissioner.
It invited the prefects to move forward with the gradual transfer of free internees to concentration camps. Issued as a way to handle the grave lack of housing for civilian evacuees, this memo would cause the relocation to concentration camps of hundreds of internees, including a great many Jews.
- Order from the Ministry of the Interior, May 5, 1943.
Sent to the Special Inspectorate for Public Safety of Venezia Giulia and Prefects of the affected provinces.
It forbade the shipping via mail or hand delivery of care packages or money (but not clothes) to ethnic minority internees, because such activities, in Venezia Giulia, were the equivalent of public displays of solidarity. It forbade as well, even to those internees who were not dangerous, licensing arrangements.
- Mussolini's order, July 1, 1943.
It increased daily subsidies for destitute internees and confinees from 8 to 9 Italian lira. As for their partners and dependents, the subsidy increased from 4 to 5 Italian lira for wives and adult relatives, and from 3 to 4 Italian lira for children and other underage relatives.
- Circular telegraph, July 27, 1943, n. 441/46643—"Release of internees."
From the Chief of Police to the Kingdom of Italy's Chiefs of Police, OVRA supervisors, and Director of the confinement colonies of Ventotene, Ponza, and Tremiti Islands.
This disposition, following the fall of the fascist regime, decreed the release of those Italians sent to internment or confinement for political reasons. However, it excluded communists and anarchists.
- Circular telegraph, July 29, 1943, n. 441/46984.
From Chief of Police, Senise, to the Kingdom of Italy's Chiefs of Police and Supervisors of Areas under OVRA management.
It followed the circular of July 27 (46643), specifying that Italians who were interned and confined for communist, anarchist, or espionage reasons, as well as ethnic minorities from Venezia Giulia and the occupied territories should not be freed.
- Circular telegraph, August 2, 1943, n. 441/47501.
From Chief of Police, Senise, to the director of the confinement colony of Ventotene.

It informed that, while communists, anarchists and *allogeni* must still be retained, other antifascists, including those belonging to the group *Giustizia e Libertà*, must be freed. Italian Jews should be freed if they were not communists or anarchists, and had not committed “particularly grave acts.”

Circular telegraph, August 14, 1943, n. 441/49216.—“Release of prisoners, confinees, and internees.”

From Chief of Police, Senise, to the Kingdom of Italy’s Chiefs of Police, special Public Safety inspectors in the prefectures, colony directors for the Tremiti Islands, Ventotene, and Pisticci.

It communicated that measures for the release of political prisoners, internees, and confinees must be broadened to include communist detainees. However, the memo also established that those who were freed must be reported to their destination site authorities for appropriate surveillance.

Circular telegraph, August 15, 1943, n. 441/49386.

From Chief of Police, Senise, to the Kingdom of Italy’s Chiefs of Police, special Public Safety inspectors in the prefectures, colony directors for the Tremiti Islands, Ventotene, and Pisticci.

Following up on the previous day’s memo (441/49216), it clarified that those “responsible for anarchist and espionage activities, as well as *allogeni* from Venezia Giulia and occupied territories” cannot be freed.

Circular telegraph, August 17, 1943, n. 441/49615—“Release internees.”

From Chief of Police, Senise, to the Kingdom of Italy’s Chiefs of Police, special Public Safety inspectors in the prefectures, colony directors for the Tremiti Islands, Ventotene, and Pisticci; and the General Inspector for Public Safety, Grand Officer Giuseppe Gueli in the Police Headquarters of Trieste.

It invited the Chiefs of Police and Inspector General Gueli to verify the standing of *allogeni* who were encompassed by the dispositions of the August 14 and 15 circulars (nn. 441/49216 and 441/49386) and explore which ones might be freed.

Circular telegraph, August 21, 1943, n. 441/50301.

From Chief of Police, Senise, to the Kingdom of Italy’s Chiefs of Police.

Referring to previous memos about the release of political prisoners, internees, and confinees, it communicated that such orders must also be applied to Italian anarchists “who are not particularly dangerous.”

Circular telegraph, September 10, 1943, n. 53247/451—“Release of interned foreign subjects.”

From Chief of Police, Senise, to applicable Chiefs of Police and directors of concentration camps.

As a result of the Armistice with the Allied powers, it ordered the release of internees who were subjects of foreign enemy States. Those among them who could not find new accommodation were allowed to stay in the camps or in the internment municipalities, continuing to receive their daily subsidy.

Repubblica Sociale Italiana/Circular telegraph, November 1, 1943, n. 451/22386.

From the Ministry of the Interior to the Heads of the Provinces.

With this provision, the RSI repealed the liberating measures from the restrictions of internment previously issued by the Badoglio Government (in particular, circular No. 53247/451 of September 10, 1943, concerning subjects of enemy states). The Ministry of the Interior also asked to know which and how many camps were still working and the names of the civilians interned in the camps themselves or in the “internment locations.”

Repubblica Sociale Italiana/Report on the concentration camps of November 26, 1943.

Drafted by the Ministry of the Interior of the RSI for the German Police.

The General Directorate for Public Safety apprised the Germans that, of the 40 camps active until June 1943, only 12 were still operative (Fabriano, Civitella del Tronto, Corropoli, Isola Gran Sasso, Nereto, Notaresco, Tossicia, Fraschette, Civitella della Chiana, Montalbano, Bagno a Ripoli, and Scipione). The others were shut down as a result of war activities, or had been evacuated by the German authorities. In addition, the Dgps (General Directorate of Public Safety) estimated that, in order to prioritize the needs of the political police (in view of the imminent closure of Fraschette), four new camps would be required, for a total of 4,000 spots.

Repubblica Sociale Italiana/Police ordinance n. 5, November 30, 1943.

From the Minister of Interior Buffarini Guidi to the Heads of the Provinces.

It established that all Jews (Italian and foreign, however residing in the RSI territories) be interned in designated provincial concentration camps, as they waited to be rounded up in “specifically outfitted special camps.”

Following this order, more than 30 “provincial camps” were established in RSI territories, some of which were in pre-existing

internment camps. Conceived as temporary structures, the “provincial camps” had an extremely short life because the Germans (in agreement with the Italians) had heavily withdrawn their internees to create the Jewish deportation convoys headed to the extermination camps. The “special camp” was established in December 1943, at Fossoli di Carpi (province of Modena).

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