

ARCHIVE SOURCES

1. Historical context

Events in Italy during the Second World War led to a particularly complex institutional system which has had direct, or indirect, repercussions on the current state of available archive sources. After 8 September, 1943, the King and the legitimate government transferred from the capital to Brindisi and then to Salerno while the new Italian Social Republic was setting up a Fascist government in the North. The Prime Minister and his Ministers, the Duce's personal secretary and staff, the whole State apparatus of the National Fascist Party that were based in Rome were transferred to the North of Italy and installed in various premises. Consequently, a vast relocation of all the related archives material was organised. The creation of the Italian Social Republic introduced substantial changes to both administrative and military apparatus, with particular reference to the National Republican Guard the Police force, Party organisations, the creation of para-institutional groups and bands responsible for contrasting the Partisans and maintaining public order. The Prefects who were now known as Provincial heads were substituted by non-professionals, while the local Police Chiefs and officers were substituted, at least in part, by Fascist militants. The responsibilities of central State organisations, however, remained virtually unchanged: documents confirm this and reveal a substantial degree of continuity. The German invasion of Northern Italy brought German military offices and organisations onto national soil, together with the different administrative structures in the Adriatic Coast Operations Zone and in the Provinces of Trento, Bolzano and Belluno.

The Allied Military Government was operational in Southern Italy which was, for the most part, occupied by the Allied Forces. The AMG carried out a formal role within the government of the "Kingdom of the South". With the liberation of Rome on 4 June 1944, the Government of liberated Italy returned to the Capital where the Council of Ministers, the Ministries and other central State organisations began to carry out their normal duties. In the majority of cases, though, the documentation that had previously been available was now missing as it had been previously transferred to the seat of the Italian Social Republic. This also contributed to delaying the process of returning assets to Jewish citizens, as stated by the EGELI Commissioner. As the frontline steadily advanced northwards and various Italian cities and towns were liberated, the Government in Rome and the Allied Military Administration began to take more control. To the north of the Gothic line instead, the heads of Province were being substituted, before the hostilities came to an end, by political Prefects chosen by the Committee for National Liberation. After the end of the War, qualified Prefects were returned to office; local institutions had kept much the same positions and responsibilities, but the personnel that had previously been in office were substituted. As far as the management of Jewish assets was concerned, the onslaught of the Front meant that both property and documents were being transferred to within RSI territories. At the end of the war, and after 25 April 1945, the recovery process of the Central State Archives is both varied and eventful: suffice it to consider that the archives of the Ministry of the Interior had been lost, and yet a dossier concerning the discrimination of the Jews recently turned up in Merano and was subsequently handed over to the Central State Archives. The more important Central Government documents, recovered in the North of Italy, remained available to Anglo-American authorities who microfilmed the parts they considered to be of primary interest. In order for Italian offices to consult these documents, a state archivist acted as go-between for the Ministers and the Anglo-Americans whose custody they were in. It was only in 1947, with the signing of the Peace Treaty, that the Italian Government regained full possession of their archives. Contrary to what had initially been decided, the archives of the Allied Control Commission were not allowed to remain in Italy but were shipped to Washington. The Italian Archives Administration body is still completing the purchase of the microfilm for the Central State Archives. The large quantity which has already been purchased, is being computerised for on-line consultation.

The documentation relative to the whole War period, and the RSI in particular, has been significantly impoverished. It presents gaps and the continuity is fragmented due to the inevitable dispersion and accidental loss of material during the War, the transit of documents during transfer and recovery, together with the intentional destruction brought about by the political changes.

2. Institutions and archives

Based on the Law regulating archives 1409/1963 30 September which is now covered by the unified decree 490/1999 29 October the State offices are obliged to conserve their documents for forty years after which they are deposited in the appropriate State Archives. This applies to the offices of the Prime Minister, the Ministries and other central bodies who refer to the Central State Archives, and decentralized offices that refer to the State Archives situated in each Provincial Capital. Public authorities also keep their documents for a forty year period, while private institutions conserve their own documents which must be made available for research purposes if they are considered to be of notable, historical importance.

The reconstruction of events relating to the persecution suffered by the Jews in Italy, calls for the analysis of Italian Archive fonts, particularly those of the Ministry of the Interior – including the subordinate offices of the Prefecture and the local Police; the former Ministry of Corporations, and current Ministry for the National Economy which is part of the Ministry of Finance, together with the Local revenue Offices; the Ministry for Foreign affairs and the War Ministry of the time, as well as German, British, American and Swiss sources. There is an immense bibliography regarding the issues of persecution, forced labour and deportation to extermination camps. On the other hand the bibliography concerning the property seizures is very meagre, even if indirect information can be gleaned from the texts dealing with other aspects of Fascist racial policies: this is why the Commission opted not to add a bibliography to the Report but refers back to the appropriate chapters.

Right from the outset, the Commission set its attention to recovering laws, regulations and, above all, internal provisions, identifying archive sources and analysing administrative procedures applied to the management of excess assets under rdl 126/1939 of 9 February. It also dealt with the management and destination of both seized and confiscated assets in accordance with dlgs 2/1944 of 4 January, which followed order 5/1943 of 30 November 1943 and was signed by Buffarini Guidi. The order ruled that all Jews should be sent to concentration camps and their assets should be seized with immediate effect, pending confiscation in favour of the RSI. Lastly, the Commission also addressed the issue of the restitution of said assets.

In the initial phase, the Commission consulted the Administrative offices of the State Archives to determine which, and how much, information concerning the acquisition of assets of Jewish citizens, by public or private bodies during the period from 1938 to 1945, might be conserved in the State Archives or was known to the Superintendency responsible for non State Archives

The Central State Archives is the institution that conserves the vast majority of information relating to the application of racial laws. Whole series of documents are housed there, mainly from the Ministry of the Interior, concerning; the persecution suffered by the Jews, discriminatory practices carried out in accordance with measures issued between 1938 and 1939, forced labour and internment during the RSI. As already mentioned, the Cabinet archive relating to the period spanning the Unification of Italy to 1945 (RSI) has been lost. Other office records, however, dating from June 1944, still remain and contain a conspicuous, if somewhat incomplete amount of documentation regarding the period we are concerned with. This documentation comes from the Head Office for Public Security and from what remains of the Head Office for Demography and Race.

The City Councils and Prefectural Offices helped to conduct the 1938 Census of the Jews and were in possession of three lists containing their names and whereabouts, together with other related documentation. The Prefectures, who were territorially responsible, and to whom the Head Office for Demography and Race referred, had the power to directly or indirectly acquire information concerning all aspects of the racial policies. The Prefectural Offices and Local Police Offices, who collected information and documents regarding checks carried out on the population, including the Jews, were involved in the RSI's setting up of the concentration camps and internment areas which were managed directly by the Italian authorities. As far as the specific issue is concerned, the following organisations were responsibly for the management of excess assets, dictated by the provisions of 1939; the Provincial Finance Offices, the Revenue Offices, the Land Tax Authorities and Income Tax Offices. Assets seized or confiscated in accordance with the laws of 1944, were specifically dealt with by the Prefectures and the Local Tax Offices. They referred systematically to the Ministry of Finance and the EGELI. The latter was a public body instituted in 1939 for the specific purpose of managing assets in excess of the ownership rights of Jewish citizens in the Italian Social Republic era. It was also responsible for handling confiscated movable and immovable assets and partly responsible for seized assets. A special agreement allowed the EGELI to delegate the management of assets to both public and private credit institutions. For this reason, we were extremely interested in locating the archive sources of these banks.

The application of the racial laws became progressively more pervasive, particularly regarding the interdiction to carry out professional, entrepreneurial, financial or commercial activities, to work for State and public offices and to attend schools or any institute of education. The application of these measures may have produced documentation which might still be located in public administration offices, banks, insurance companies, health and social security offices or any other public or private institution. The effect of this aspect of the racial laws caused both moral and financial damage which is not easily quantifiable, and decidedly not atoned for by the reinstatement to their jobs and the integration of the years of persecution for health and pension contribution purposes.

At the time, orders were given to Mortgage Authorities, Property Registration Offices, Provincial Councils for the economy and labour (latterly the responsibility of the Chambers of Commerce), the Provincial Councils for the corporate economy, banks, insurance companies, and more generally to all offices that may have had useful information to contribute towards a more accurate reconstruction of the financial status or productive activities of the Jews, so as to guarantee a more thorough application of the racial laws.

Considering that all State offices, public authorities and both private and public institutions have their own archives, the quantity of information potentially available is enormous. In fact, with regard to the situation of Jewish assets, the information source framework proved to be extremely complex, articulate and fragmentary. As far as quantity was concerned, we were faced with a vast source of documentation which, regarding the issues mentioned previously, turned out to be incomplete; whole series or core information were missing which in turn did not favour a systematic reconstruction of events. The fragmentary nature of these sources is evident. Cross referencing of the records concerning the exchange of correspondence between offices and authorities often revealed that even the draft copies of original letters and replies had not been conserved by either one or the other of the parties involved, and existing originals had only rarely been filed in the archives. On the other hand, what little information is available concerning draft copies and correspondence is often to be found in the archives of branches of public offices, City Councils and banks. They reveal a complex bureaucratic network which supported the impressive number of functions and activities resulting from the application of racial laws concerning the management of Jewish assets but - as the confiscation decrees of 24 April 1945 show - it did not guarantee continuity. It was particularly difficult to put together the pieces of an extremely intricate and detailed provisions, which led to uncertainties in their interpretation and subsequent requests for clarification and which were nonetheless diversely applied in the Provinces. The Commission tried to demonstrate this phenomenon by reconstructing a large number of specific examples, as well as the more general ones.

Analysing the procedures and researching the sources on a wider scale, allowed for the identification of both private and public institutions involved in the management of excess assets, property seizure and confiscation and sales, while only indirect information is available concerning theft and looting at all levels. Quite different archive profiles exist concerning the treatment of Jewish goods under the 1939 law, that established that the EGELI should be responsible for their management, and the decree 2/1944 of 4 January and the damaging provisions already applied in some towns such as Rome well before, or after, the laws were issued and which did not respect the measures established by the legislation.

Documentation concerning the management of excess assets in the years from 1938 to 1943, and their subsequent restitution, is to be found in the archives of the banks delegated by the EGELI, in the Jewish Assets Office and the EGELI collection conserved in the Central State Archives, and in series deposited in the appropriate State Archives by the local Tax Offices or still housed in their own archive if documentation for the period still exists. For information on the reconveyance of real estate which began in the EGELI offices in Rome in the autumn of 1944, refer to the chapter on "The abrogation of the racial laws: the EGELI and restitution".

The situation related to the rule of the Italian Social Republic (RSI) is far more complex. Point 7 of the Verona Manifesto - organised for 14 November 1943 on occasion of the Fascist Party Conference - declared that "members of the Jewish race" should be declared aliens of enemy nationality. With the publication of ordinance 5/1943 of 30 November, Buffarini Guidi ordered all Jews to be sent to concentration camps and their assets immediately seized pending confiscation in favour of the Italian Social Republic. The dlgs 2/1944 of 4 January ordered the confiscation of Jewish assets. While the Heads of Province had immediately issued seizure writs, in compliance with the war laws, and from the moment that the Jews had been declared to be members of enemy nationality, both prior to and following the issue of the legislative decree, or in application of the Buffarini Guidi ordinance, the first confiscation decrees were only actually issued at the beginning of March 1944.

The Prefectures were responsible for the seizure of property. They set up offices for the management of Jewish assets while the Heads of Province were authorized to nominate trusted organisations or individuals to act as “sequestrators”. There was no established procedure regarding the management of seized assets which was conducted in any number of ways. Related documentation is difficult to find and may have been intentionally or accidentally destroyed. It is currently impossible to reconstruct a complete list of the seizures writs issued. Incomplete records can be found: at the Prefectures, in the sequestrator’s archives and in court case files – relating to the unlawful appropriation of property by the abductor, of goods entrusted to his care. Further information can be found among papers belonging to the EGELI. The latter was also responsible for the restitution of the assets it managed directly, those which had been managed by delegated banks and those managed extra-EGELI or rather, the seized assets themselves. Those banks delegated by the EGELI to handle seized assets also have information in their own archives. Relatively few seizure writs were converted to confiscation decrees and for this reason the issue of seized assets is a difficult phenomenon to reconstruct. The EGELI archives reveal that the documentation authorising the management of these goods was irreversibly incomplete even at the time of issue.

The management of assets subject to confiscation was assigned to the EGELI and to authorised banks. After the Heads of Province had issued the confiscation writ, the responsibility passed to the Revenue Offices that collaborated with the Ministry of Finance and the EGELI. Bonds, deposit accounts and valuables could remain in the custody of the institutions they had been deposited with, subject to appropriate regulations, unless the EGELI specifically requested their release for management purposes. The series containing the confiscation decrees is conserved in the Jewish Assets Office collection of the Ministry of Finance which is conserved in the Central State Archives. Although there is adequate documentation concerning the confiscations sector, problems which are difficult to interpret still remain. There was often a delay in the lapse of time that it took an issued decree to arrive at the finance offices and the EGELI. Who was responsible for the goods during that time? The confiscation decrees show that the Head of Province could also hand over part of the confiscated goods to individuals or organisations other than the EGELI. With reference to the *Credito Fondiario del Monte dei Paschi di Siena*, which had been authorised by the EGELI to administer assets confiscated in Tuscany, the bank itself does not appear to have taken possession of any of the assets for which 142 confiscation decrees were issued and, consequently, was therefore not obliged to retribute anything. The documentation concerning the restitution of assets is fragmentary and it is only occasionally possible to identify the sums paid over following the confiscation decrees and the reference number allocated by the EGELI. Delivery notes are to be found among the papers of some Prefectures and some bank documents contain records of payments and receipts or entries of varying nature.

Various assets that had been seized or stolen were recovered during 1945 in Valdarno at the Head Offices for Public Security. Information concerning the itinerary and whereabouts of purloined goods, albeit fragmentary and infrequent, has come to light from numerous sources. Of particular interest is the information gathered from the offices responsible for the management of Jewish assets within the Prefectures, judicial sources, and other evidence. This is dealt with in the chapter titled “Theft and Looting”. In certain cities, such as Florence, the seizure writs were not converted to confiscation orders which all told seem to have been fairly limited and the assets appear to have been almost entirely managed by a “sequestrator” named Martelloni. The latter was put on trial at the end of the war. More information is to be found in the chapter on Florence.

3. National state sources conserved in the Central State Archives and in other Historical Archives

The Central State Archives, together with the already mentioned series from the Ministry of the Interior, also conserves for the purposes of research into racial policies, the Archives of the Council of Ministers together with those belonging to the Duce’s Secretary of State, the High Commission for sanctions against Fascism, the Ministry of Popular Culture, the Ministry of Education, and in particular, the Directorate General for Antiquity and the Fine Arts and, with reference to the latter, correspondence issued by its offices concerning the recovery of works of art and bibliographic material.

The documentation from the Ministry for Industry, Trade and Crafts did not prove to be of interest; it was incomplete and only contained partial records. What documentation remains of the Republican Fascist Party and the Republican National Guard also turned out to be fragmentary.

Only two of the existing collections were of specific importance in reconstructing the status of Jewish assets, namely: the Ministry of Finance's Jewish Assets Office and the EGELI. The documentation available relates to the period 1938 to 1945 and concerns the management of Jewish assets during the reign of the Kingdom of Italy. The period from June 1944 (the liberation of Rome) to 1957 concerns the restitution of Jewish assets under Italian Social Republic, the closure of pending claims and the definitive liquidation of the EGELI in 1997. Following the finalisation of liquidation procedures, the treasury deposited EGELI and ARAR documents (Company for the Acquisition of Residual War Materials) with the Central State Archives. The latter was also in some way involved in the management of Jewish goods. With regard to EGELI managed assets, and to those managed by the banks on its behalf, the albeit incomplete documentation available outlined the acquisition and management procedures. The documentation relating to the restitution phase of said assets appeared to be somewhat more fragmentary but, where related documentation was recovered, it also shed some light on the restitution phase of the assets seized.

The Commission agreed to set up a databank related to information concerning the confiscation decrees of the Jewish Assets Office between 1944 and 1945; the series is divided into Provinces. Each decree may refer to one or more individuals, but there may also be one or more decrees relating to one person alone. Given that the decrees were issued by the Heads of Province, and then sent to the Ministry of Finance and the EGELI, it was possible to cross-reference and integrate the information conserved in the Central State Archives with that contained in the Prefectural documents, also housed in the same archive, and copies were sent to the Commission. A further check was carried out using a coeval alphabetical index found in the Jewish Assets Office which allowed us to evaluate what information was actually missing. For more detailed information concerning the databank, refer to the following chapter and the Appendix. Considering the current state of the sources, we have not been able to systematically reconstruct the seizure writs of which there are lists and occasional traces in the archives of the Prefectures and banks.

Occasional references are to be found concerning the seizure writs and confiscation decrees in the RSI Gazette. The series, however, is not complete.

Prefectural decrees referring back to seizure writs and confiscation decrees, or more generic provisions annulling them, were certainly issued throughout those parts of the national territory involved in the phenomenon, even if this seems to have included only a limited number of Prefectures. Compared with the often incomplete organic series of the RSI confiscation decrees of the Jewish Assets Office collection conserved in the Central State Archives, no source actually systematically lists the beneficiaries of restitution with the exception of occasional restitution orders, receipts, payment vouchers or other information. Consequently, it seemed appropriate to set up another databank within the Central State Archives containing the lists of names found in the EGELI collection and which relate to bank calculations of the sums owed and costs incurred for the management of the assets in question. These lists are, unfortunately, only partial and the resulting calculations were based on varying criteria; they nonetheless form the basis of an independent nucleus of information which may be added to by cross-referencing this data with that held by those banks who conserved a considerable quantity of period documentation, such as the *Istituto San Paolo di Torino* or the *Banca Agricola Mantovana*.

The historical archives of the Chamber of Deputies revealed collections relating to the National Council and the National Constitutional Court. The historical archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brought to our attention the Cabinet series concerning the Political Affairs and General Affairs.

4 Peripheral State collections conserved in the State Archives

Specific information concerning Jewish assets found in archive collections were either often in incomplete and fragmentary, or substantial and detailed which was the case with, for example, the Prefectures of Milan or Bologna. Others, such as Venice, were devoid of inventories and lacked organisation.

A Prefectural collection exists in documentation contained in the State Archives of Alessandria, Arezzo, Asti, Bari, Bergamo, Bologna, Bolzano, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Ferrara, Forlì, Genoa, Gorizia, Grosseto, Imperia, Aquila, La Spezia, Lucca, Mantova, Milan, Modena, Novara, Padua, Perugia, Pisa, Pistoia, Ravenna, Reggio Emilia, Rome, Rovigo, Siena, Turin, Trieste, Varese, Venice, Vercelli, Vicenza, Viterbo.

Local Police are present in Ancona, Arezzo, Ascoli Piceno, Bari, Bologna, Campobasso, Como, Cuneo, Ferrara, Grosseto, Latina, Macerata, Padua, Pavia, Pesaro, Piacenza, Trento, Venice.

Local Tax Office collections only exist for the cities of Bari, Cuneo, Savona, Turin, Vercelli.

Arezzo as microfilm records of the Provincial Delegation of the High Commissariat for sanctions against Fascism. Trieste conserves the Government's Commissariat General collection for its own territory. Florence has information from the Court of Assize (Martelloni trial) and Trieste from the Court of Appeal. Varese has information concerning the Provincial Committee for Liberation and the Communal Social Services Authority. Bari, Bergamo and Gorizia have collections deposited in the local Chambers of Commerce. Bari, Livorno, Mantova, Rome, Terni and Venice indicate sources concerning Land Registries; Chieti, Rome and Trieste indicate the Property Valuation Office. Padua conserves the EGELI collection; Ferrara and Terni indicate collections deposited in the Communal Historical Archives and Mantova conserves the Scalchieri Archive.

In general, the State Archives volunteered information on the series concerning racial policies. They stated the document type and sent copies of complete series or just the documentation considered to be relevant. It would be useful if the research carried out in some State Archives were to continue.

5. Consignment of files concerning citizens of Jewish origin ordered in 1961

The current situation of the sources of information now housed in the State Archives has not registered a conspicuous increase in deposits if compared with the years 1961-1962. Following the Prime Minister's instructions, the Ministry of the Interior issued circular No. 30/61 dated 20 June 1961 to all the branch offices and the Archive Management Office, which at the time was under the Head Office for Civil Administration. The note dated 6 June 1961, No.793/168, from the Head Office for Public Security and addressed to the Head Office for Civil Administration states that "the Presidency of the Council of Ministers [...] has given instructions for the personal files of citizens of Jewish origin to be deposited in the State Archives as it is no longer deemed fit, for reasons already known, to further delay the application of said provision which has on many occasions, both past and present, been called for by the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy"; it also points out that the documentation in question is to be considered "documentary material of historical importance". It is the responsibility of the State Archives, in accordance with the Prefectures and the Local Police Headquarters, to agree on the modality of the transfer "which must obligatorily take place". In a subsequent circular No.32/61 dated 31 August, the Head Office for Civil Administration explained to the Directors of the State Archives, the Prefects and the Local Police Chiefs that the transfer not only concerned the personal files of Jewish citizens, "but also the documentation on the racist campaign in its entirety which is still conserved in the Prefectures and the Local Police Headquarters". The latter, however, does not refer to dossiers regarding the concentration camps Jewish citizens were deported to "in view of the fact that this documentation is still currently being consulted by interested parties, who still have compensation claims pending with Bonn's Federal Government". The clarification is still, however, ambiguous if we consider that it makes no reference to the concentration camps managed by the Italian authorities. The orders were carried out reasonably expediently and especially so by the Prefectures. Some Prefectures and Local Police Headquarters, however, deposited only a limited number of dossiers concerning Jewish citizens with the State Archives. The documentation was often fragmentary and on more than one occasion, it was stated that documentation no longer existed. The documentation in the Local Police Headquarters of Caserta, L'Aquila, Lucca and Pisa had been lost. The Naples Headquarters deposited 95 dossiers claiming that all documentation prior to 1941 had been destroyed. The Venice Prefecture transferred all the relative documentation it had except for that titled "Jewish Assets" because they continued to receive requests from various authorities, principally the Local Tax Office. The documents were finally transferred in 1972. With reference to Bolzano, which was the site of the Gries concentration camp, the Local Police Headquarters communicated that all the dossiers in their possession dealt exclusively with the concentration camps and therefore had nothing to deposit.

The Acts related to this operation which gave rise to the occasional list of names of Jewish citizens together with the more or less detailed inventory of the documentation deposited are now conserved in the Central State Archives. The documents received from the Prefectures and the Police Headquarters are deposited in the appropriate State Archives.

6. Central and decentralized State offices, public authorities and private institutions

Considering the fact that some documentation which should have been in the State Archives was in fact missing, the Commission wrote to the Ministry of the Interior and subsequently received copies of a

limited number of Cabinet dossiers. It also contacted the following: the Prefectures, the Local Police Headquarters, the Ministry of Finance and the Local Tax Offices, the Treasury, the Presidents of the autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano; the President of the Council for the Autonomous Region of Aosta Valley; the Carabinieri General Command; the historical records office of Military General Staff Headquarters; Post Head Office. As far as the Chamber of Commerce was concerned, data held by the Ministry for Industry, Commerce and Handicraft was examined and specific investigations carried out in some individual Chambers of Commerce, such as those of Milan and Rome.

With regard to the issue of confiscated works of art, the RSI decided, at a certain point not to sell those objects which were known to be of historical interest in order to avoid losing the country's artistic heritage. The objects were handed over to the Territorial Superintendence of the then Ministry of National Education. The Commission wrote to the current Superintendence for Archaeological, Architectural and Historical Heritage to see whether or not they were in possession of documents that might be useful for the recovery of those objects. The results of research carried out are to be found in the chapter "The removal of artistic cultural and religious objects". The Commission also contacted the Inter-ministerial Commission, responsible for the recovery of works of art, within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and was given permission to consult the documents they had acquired. As well as viewing correspondence from Dr. Rodolfo Siviero, it also examined the dossier entitled Jewish Community – Commission for the restitution of artistic and bibliographical goods that contained the records of the delivery of religious objects to the Head Rabbi of the Jewish Community in Rome. Other dossiers made available were those relating to the Jewish Communities in Florence, Livorno, Milan, Merano, Bolzano, Trieste, Rome; the Rabinical College of Rome (the return of 54 cases containing books); the dossier entitled Seized Jewish objects and those regarding Riccardo M. Luzzatto, Guido Bedarida and Edwin Lombroso, and Guido Orvieto.

Within the framework of collaboration with the management of the State Archives, the Commission wrote to the Archive Superintendences, who are responsible for non-State archives or rather, private archives and public authority archives, and received the following useful information: the Superintendence for Abruzzo confirmed that documents referring, in particular, to the internment of the Jews can be found in the Abruzzo City Councils; Lombardy, instead, possesses communal documents concerning the Census of the Jews, property and legal measures. Research was coordinated by ABI and ANIA (National Association of Insurance Companies) respectively, for those bank and insurance company archives that come under the jurisdiction of the Superintendence.

The Commission wrote to the National Institute for the History of the Liberation Movement in Italy requesting data from them and other institutes responsible for the history of the Resistance.

It naturally contacted the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy who supplied a detailed summary of useful information. Some Commissioners were authorised to carry out research in the Union's archives. The Communities of Ferrara, Florence and Livorno, carried out research themselves, on behalf of the Commission who also received duplicates of documents from Parma, Casale Monferrato and Livorno. Information was proffered concerning Trieste and Merano together with manuscripts and publications by the Jewish Community Library. The Contemporary Jewish Documentation Centre Foundation (CDEC) also obtained copies of circulars and provisions for the application of Anti-Jewish legislation during the RSI issued by the National Fascist Confederation of Credit and Insurance, together with an important EGELI report dated 1945, the Cariplo dossier on the Jewish Community in Milan and various other dossiers concerning individual events.

The Commission also wrote to SIAE (Italian Association of Authors and Editors) and received a report on the Association's behaviour towards Jewish citizens and the application of copyright laws.

Correspondence between the Commission and the Military Tribunal initiated following the interview of the Military Prosecutor General in Rome published in the "*Il Messaggero*" on 20 May 1999 concerning the archiving of court files relating to war crimes. The Commission inquired whether said documentation might shed light on the seizure of movable assets belonging to Jewish citizens carried out by German troops or the Italian Social Republic (RSI). Following a series of letters sent to the individual military judicial authorities, Rome contributed information, which the Commission was already informed about, concerning Herbert Kappler who was also guilty of the "arbitrary requisition" of 50 Kilos of gold "requested" from the local Jewish Community. Turin, instead, had little information to offer other than that concerning a sentence referring to the pillage of the city's Synagogue in June 1944.

The summary of the Commission's work sets out the criteria used for contacting all these institutions, the type of correspondence exchanged and the methodology applied. The Commission thus

acquired a conspicuous quantity of duplicated documents which were listed by provenance which, together with the databanks set up in the Central State Archives, provided the basis for the entire research programme.

7. The Banks

EGELI documents revealed the names of the Banking Institutions who were delegated to manage assets of various kinds; the databank of confiscation decrees set up in the Central State Archives contains the names of banks and insurance companies who were trustees of bills of exchange, bank deposits and insurance policies. By inviting the banks to collaborate, the Commission carried out a census which helped to identify which documents related to the period in question were housed in the banks' historical archives and also arranged a meeting with representatives of these banking institutes. 24 banks replied to the invitation, and of those 24 some have considerably extensive archives.

Only a limited amount of information was available due to the elimination, incompetent filing and inadequate inventory of the documentation collections, or because of their reorganisation based on an internal codification system rather than a nominal system. There was only a partial match with the list of names the Commission had of Jews whose bills of exchange and deposit accounts had been confiscated. Only 7 names out of 50 corresponded with clients of the Banca Agricola Mantovana; 1 out of 3 rectifications was made by the Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia who, it turns out, did not possess the related documentation. Some information was contributed by the Banca Popolare di Milano who also accounts for some information found in the former Banca Agricola Milanese. Banca Commerciale Italiana, on the other hand volunteered detailed, useful information particularly with regard to client names and assets seized, while safe deposit boxes had not been identified and at times the safe custody accounts were missing. The Banca di Legnano also contributed some information. Undoubtedly, more substantial information is to be had from the documentation held by the banks.

The copies of documentation received and the signalling of important series – as the information summarised below reveals – have brought to light a conspicuous amount of information conserved by the banks. Should the Commission be allowed to continue its research, the information should be analytically filed in order to integrate the information in the databanks, concerning the confiscation and the restitution of assets, set up in the Central State Archives. It would also provide the basis for investigations into the seizure and freezing of assets to be integrated with data from the Prefectures. The banks have collaborated actively and, following the request of the Commission, have even reordered documentation and personally carried out research.

A particularly large quantity of documentation is conserved in the Banca Agricola Mantovana, which also has 296 files concerning the administration of Jewish assets – on behalf of the EGELI – regarding confiscation decrees, records of the taking possession of and the restitution of assets, desequstration orders, purchase agreements for seized property and the opening of safe deposit boxes

The Banca Commerciale Italiana presented a detailed report and copies of interesting material which refer to General Management Committee records and correspondence between Raffaele Mattioli and Azzolini, the Governor of the Banca d'Italia of Italy. It also includes the Italian branches bank Services collection which is of particular importance and contains documents concerning: legal provisions, confiscations, war damage compensation, the bank's own restitution documents for assets removed by the Germans and relations with the German authorities. Correspondence with the various branches revealed interesting data concerning the state of assets and goods in several Northern Italian Provinces, in relation to the confiscation of businesses and assets and their subsequent restitution.

The Banca Nazionale del Lavoro sent a short list of documents relating to the management of EGLI assets through the independent land credit Division. It refers, in particular to immovable property seized in the Marche, Abruzzo and Umbria provinces.

The Banca Popolare di Novara supplied information on deposit accounts and safe deposit boxes; it also state that safe deposit boxes had been broken into by the Germans who absconded with the contents, which were never returned. A list was also presented with the names of Jews in the Province who had been singled out by the Local Police Headquarters so their assets could be frozen.

Some documentation was received from the Banca Regionale Europea, while the Banca di Roma appears not to have any useful documents available.

The Banco Ambrosiano-Veneto claimed that none of the banks who were merged into it had operated on the EGELI's behalf, and it does not appear to have any information on record concerning confiscation provisions.

The Banco di Napoli operated on the EGELI's behalf; however, in 1995 it handed over all related documentation to the Inspectorate General for the Liquidation of Dissolved Public Bodies of the Treasury.

The Banco di Sicilia, who also operated on behalf of the EGELI does not have any related documentation.

The minutes of the Board of Directors are the only record the Bi.Pop. Cassa di Risparmio di Reggio Emilia conserve of its dealings with the EGELI.

Conversely, the Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde has copious information concerning its dealings with and on behalf of the EGELI. As well as documentation concerning the management of confiscated assets, it also conserves interesting documents relating to dealings with dr. Martelloni, the former Prefectural Commissioner for Jewish Affairs for the Province of Florence, as well as 7 registers containing the inventories of the contents of 11 crates that Martelloni transferred from Florence to Milan, and documentation related to the delivery of the goods he had previously taken to Milan, to the Jewish Community in Florence. It also conserves documents concerning the management of confiscated Jewish assets entrusted to the Monte dei Pegni di Milano: copies were acquired relating to the valuation of confiscated movable assets, together with a list of the consignees of said movable goods, as well as correspondence with the EGELI.

Useful information concerning the issue restitution came from the Cassa di Risparmio di Biella e Vercelli.

The Cassa di Risparmio di Bologna, who operated on the EGELI's behalf, conserves information on the restitution of confiscated property concluded in 1948.

The Cassa di risparmio di Gorizia, who also operated on behalf of the EGELI, on the other hand, only possesses documents related to assets belonging to enemy citizens and the proceeds of fiscal expropriation.

Documentation concerning the management of goods on behalf of the EGELI was received from the Cassa di Risparmio di Parma e Piacenza.

A detailed list of documents related to Jewish assets was drawn up by the Cassa di Risparmio di Torino. It also has correspondence concerning confiscation decrees, safe deposit boxes, and correspondence regarding Turin, Asti and Aosta with the local State authorities.

The Cassa di Risparmio di Trieste, sent detailed information and copies of documents of notable importance concerning assets seized by the Germans, the release of assets, the recovery of money seized by the Germans, dealings with Jewish Communities and inquiries conducted concerning 5 chests of jewellery.

Lists of Jewish citizens divided by profession and in alphabetical order were among the documents sent by the Cassa di Risparmio di Venezia, together with files concerning confiscation, and other useful correspondence.

Limited documentation was sent by the Cassa di Risparmio di Verona.

Documentation regarding the seizure and confiscation of movable goods belonging to Jews, and their subsequent restitution was contributed by the Credito Italiano, who also conserves its correspondence with the Banca d'Italia in Trieste and with the Oberkasse des Obersten Kommissars in der Operationzone Adriatisches Küstenland. There were also three registers documenting the opening of safe deposit boxes, a list of 3,420 Jewish names from a notebook of typed carbon copies, a file called "Shareholders of Jewish race", contained useful information regarding the registration, declaration and transfer of company shares.

The Unicredito conserves documents regarding Trieste, correspondence with the Banca d'Italia and its branches, particularly those of Fiume, Pola and Udine and documentation concerning disputes. Of particular interest is the correspondence with the German authorities and a list concerning the consignment to the Germans of valuables contained in safe deposit boxes rented by Jews.

The Istituto Italiano di Credito Fondiario operated on the EGELI's behalf. As well as the registers of the Board of Directors, which contain information concerning the restitution of assets and the balance sheets for the years 1941 to 1944, it also conserves accounting ledgers relating to Jewish assets, enemy assets and friendly assets.

Mediovenezie conserves documentation relating to its dealings with the EGELI and information on Jewish assets in Fiume.

The Monte dei Paschi di Siena archives are very large and contain a section dedication to the EGELI, as well as dossiers on the owners of seized assets and indices of seized Jewish assets. The Credito Fondiario del Monte dei Paschi di Siena was charged, by the Italian Social Republic, with the management of the assets confiscated for the whole of Tuscany.

There is also considerable documentation from the Credito Fondiario dell'Istituto San Paolo, who also operated on behalf of the EGELI. The series which are of particular interest are those concerning seized Jewish assets and confiscated Jewish assets. There are also files related to the taking of possession of excess goods and indices of both seized and confiscated assets. F. Levi published a book based on the documentation from *San Paolo IMI* titled, "*Le case e le cose*". It examines confiscation decrees and large quantities of documentation concerning the EGELI's management of assets. It is one of the few books that deals specifically with the issue of property seizures at the expense of the Jews.

The Commission acquired other core information following the research requested, and carried out at some of the more important banks.

8. The Banca d'Italia

Parallel research was conducted in all the collections conserved in the historical archives of the Banca d'Italia. The chapter dedicated to the Banca d'Italia gives a detailed run down of the archive units, and the individual collections contained therein, concerning the issue of Jewish assets: no specific, independent series exists which deals with racial provisions, for this reason information had to be sought transversely in the various series relating to the years we are concerned with. In addition to documentation specifically related to the Banca d'Italia, there is important documentation regarding Italian credit institutions and the seizure of assets carried out in the latter war years. This chapter lists the collections used for research purposes as follows: Service orders (single issue) Azzolini Directory, Introna Directory, Moltrasio Directory, the Secretariat to the Council of State, Bank Supervisory body, Inspectorate for the safeguarding of savings and for the regulation of credit, Internal relations, Foreign relations, Studies, Beneduce, Internal relations-Clearing Houses, Secretariat, Personnel, Specific Secretariat, Technical support office, Consortium for industrial subsidies, Special Liaison office, Branches of the Banca d'Italia.

9. Insurance companies

Together with ANIA's help, the Commission conducted a Census among the insurance companies, given that policies were also part of the assets seized or confiscated, or in the case of life insurance policies, the policies may have remained "unresolved" when the policyholders were deported to extermination camps. Following the census, a meeting was called with several insurance companies.

115 of the 246 questionnaires sent to the insurance companies were returned, but only 6 of them actually proved to be of interest for the Commission's work. This was due to the fact that, in the majority of cases, the companies were not operative in the period 1938 to 1945, or at least were not involved in the life insurance sector. Unfortunately, most of the documentation related to the policies has been destroyed. The census revealed little information regarding the archives. The 6 companies that proved to be of interest also conserved little documentation. *Alleanza Assicurazioni*, who limited its operations to the life insurance sector, had only a restricted number of clients at the time: most of the documents in its archives were destroyed, the remaining boxes containing documents for the years 1938 to 1945 do not contain enough pertinent information to be able to reconstruct the contracts. *AXA Assicurazioni* conserves some residual documentation relating to life insurance policies for 1938 - 1945, but none of the policyholders appear to be Jewish. *GAN Assicurazioni* no longer possesses documentation for the period in question. *INA* (National Insurance Association) only has very limited documentation which is not of any obvious use. *Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà* has a more substantial archive and, even though it is somewhat fragmentary and incomplete, it contains information concerning dormant policies, including life insurance contracts activated in the period between 1921 and 1943; only one case of a non-liquidated policy belonging to a Jewish citizen was found. The company does not, however, have documents concerning confiscation decrees carried out under the 1944 provisions. *Assicurazioni Generali* has an even larger archive. They managed to computerise the data concerning dormant policies for the period from 1942 to 1966, which allowed for detailed cross-referencing and the subsequent identification of sixty or so non-liquidated policies taken out by Jewish citizens that emerged from the 25,000 policies examined. The company possesses occasional, non-specific information concerning the effects of the 1944 confiscation provisions.

10. Line of research and unresolved issues

As already previously stated, documentation relating to the restitution of assets proved extremely fragmentary and incomplete. It became apparently even more difficult to reconstruct what actually happened to the assets managed by the sequestrators, whose names were rarely mentioned and whose professions were basically unknown. Following the trail of purloined goods is even more arduous: for this reason references to post office savings account books is precious. The books were permitted but remained under the control of the authorities. The books were withdrawn from those account owners who were deported or sent to concentration camps. There is a large quantity of documentation testifying episodes of theft and the “illegal” removal of property (‘illegal’ in that neither were contemplated by RSI laws on this issue) but it is almost impossible to estimate the extent of this phenomenon which is undoubtedly conspicuous, especially with regard to jewellery, furniture, silverware, ornaments, cash, and easily movable property.

Research into the context of compensation for war damages is equally difficult and undoubtedly includes claims presented by Jewish citizens. Limited documentation on the matter from the Treasury and its decentralised offices is to be found in the State Archives, and what is there is not easily researchable. No research was carried out on the documentation concerning the management of assets belonging to enemy citizens, to see if this included Jewish citizens, issued with seizure writs following the application of war laws. The situation of Jewish assets in the Mediterranean area (Rhodes, Albania, Libya, Split, Ljubljana, Nice and Athens) administered, occupied, or controlled by the Kingdom of Italy was not dealt with in this phase of the research programme due to difficulties in finding appropriate archive sources.

The massive investigation carried out in state and non-state archives brought to light a large quantity of information, however – with the exception of the series of confiscation decrees, several series belonging to the Prefectures or the Banca d’Italia, and others conserved in banking institutions such as the San Paolo IMI,¹ the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the Banca Commerciale Italiana, Istituto di Credito Fondiario Mantovano – none of the sources proved to be organised or complete enough to allow for the systematic reconstruction of events. We can conclude that it would have been necessary to constantly cross-reference the different central, local state and non-state collections. Considering the extremely limited time available, the Commission carried out its research by occasionally comparing data from several different sources such as the EGELI, the Jewish Assets Services Office and the Prefectures; or between the Prefectures, Local Police Headquarters and the banks.

A more analytical, research approach by sectors was chosen when investigating the documentation of each single institution as was the case, for example, with the Banca d’Italia. In other cases a brief introductory investigation was carried out, as with some of the banks previously mentioned. Others again called for research at a territorial level, as was the situation in Parma, where the plurality of the sources together with other significant aspects, such as the large number of non-Italian Jews present in the area, made it possible to address and present the phenomenon on a local plain. A specific investigation was carried out both in Florence and Rome. With regard to the former, and as already mentioned, the property seizure decrees were ultimately never converted to confiscation orders. The current situation with Rome, however, does not allow for the accurate identification of what was taken from the Jews, except for the well-known episode of the quantity of gold that was handed over to the Germans.

The whole research activity itself turned out to be extremely complex, principally because of the vast quantity of documentation that came to light, the fact that it was often incomplete and research instruments were often inadequate. Added to this were the notable logistics problems which are always encountered when the papers being investigated are still in the hands of active administration authorities.