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ABSTRACT
This article explores the activity of foreign-born Jewish women in Liberal Italy and their role in the shaping of the secular civil society then emerging through their pioneering work in education, philanthropic social activism and politics, and through their presence in different professional milieux. Divided between baronesses and the revolutionaries, most of whom were university educated, these women led very different lives and did not belong to a single organisation. Yet they functioned as vectors for different "internationals" of feminism, pacifism, socialism. Their trajectories force us to look beyond the national and Mediterranean area, and to include Russia and America within a continuous process of exchange. By showing how gender shaped the role of these women as vectors of internationalism - in a way that did not apply to men - this article engages in *gendering* Jewish internationalism.

Liberal Italy, Jewish foreign-born women in Italy, secular philanthropy, pacifism, socialism.

Baronesses and revolutionaries:
the activism of foreign-born Jewish women in Liberal Italy.

Before the 18th century, the Italian peninsula was at the heart of transnational Jewish flows of charity funds, books, rabbis and merchants from and to Palestine, the Levant, North Africa and Europe. These exchanges continued into the 19th century, when geopolitical and technological change reshaped the emerging "Jewish international", pushing Italy to the periphery.[1] Recent work has focused on the changing dynamics of Italian Jewish networks between the 18th and 20th century, but exchanges beyond the Mediterranean - and involving women - have received scant attention.[2] By contrast, this article places the international connections of Jewish women centre stage, as a starting point for exploring the activity of foreign-born Jewish women in Liberal Italy and their role in the shaping of the secular civil society then emerging.

These women led very different lives and did not belong to a single organisation. Yet they functioned as vectors for different "internationals", in ways that recall Georg Simmel's "intersection of social circles".[3] Collectively, they made a significant attempt to "shake up" Italian civil society through their pioneering work in education, philanthropic social activism and politics, and through their presence in different professional milieux. By showing how gender shaped the role of these women as vectors of internationalism - in a way that did not apply to men - this article engages in *gendering* Jewish internationalism.

Not affected directly by the global dynamics linked to imperialism, or by the challenges of Jewish mass migration, Italy shifted to the periphery of the new 19th century "Jewish international". Yet it remained at the centre of other internationals: a fulcrum for liberal exiles in the early Risorgimento; the new centre of a Catholic international; and, from the 1880s, the largest emigration nation in world history.[4] These internationals often overlapped and sometimes Italian Jews were still at the centre of events, most obviously during the Mortara Affair, which became an international cause célèbre and precipitated the emergence of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* (AIU).[5] In Italy, the AIU became the main platform for cross-border Jewish philanthropy and a forum in which Italian Jews could identify as both Jewish and self-consciously liberal.[6] Yet the dominant role of French imperial power in the Mediterranean from the 1880s led to tensions between the Parisian and Italian branches of the AIU, underlining the extent to which the networks of the old Jewish international had lost purchase in the new internationalist sphere.[7] Crucially, moreover, Italian Jewish women were excluded as agents from the AIU, even if they were rhetorically called upon to act as patrons.

Jewish women had moved along transnational trajectories since the 17th century. Usually, however, they moved as objects rather than actors, for example when Jewish organizations arranged the transfer of brides and dowries between Livorno, Venice and other Mediterranean cities.[8] These institutional networks coexisted with informal ones well into the 19th century. For example, some recently discovered letters attest to the networks of rabbis smuggling Jewish women at risk of forced baptism in Italy from Livorno to Marseille and Tunis at the height of the 1858 Mortara Affair.[9] Not coincidentally, in 1861 the Livorno rabbi in charge of this smuggling operation became the principal organizer of the local branch of the AIU.[10] One of the first AIU operations in Italy was an attempt made through the Italian Foreign Ministry

to free a Jewish girl in Bengasi, who was being "kept worse than a slave."[11] As elsewhere, the AIU enabled Jewish politics in Italy to make the transition from individual efforts to collective action, creating an organized platform for transnational Jewish activism.[12]

Nevertheless, there are a few examples of Italian Jewish women operating as international actors beyond the framework of the AIU. **Flora Randegger** (1824-1910) from Trieste twice founded a girls' school in Jerusalem in the mid-1850s and 60s.[13] Her motivations were religious, even "mystical", but her commitment to women's education and the way she used the press to raise funds were radical for her time.[14] Similarly, in 1878 **Carolina Nunes Vais** (1856-1932), from Livorno organized the first school for girls in Libya, which contributed significantly to Italian cultural penetration of the country in the pre-colonial era.[15] But the radical activism of women like these did not generate a broader pattern among Italian Jewish women; by focusing their efforts on Jerusalem and Tripoli, they were following old Italian-Jewish trajectories.

A different configuration revolved around **Sara Levi Nathan** (1819-1882), one of the closest supporters of Mazzini.[16] Active between London, Switzerland and several Italian cities, Sara exemplified the intricacies of the international dimensions of Italian nationalism by exporting the cause of the Risorgimento as a liberal crusade among English radicals and importing Butler's abolitionist movement into Italy. A pioneer in secular women's education and philanthropy in Rome in the early 1870s, Sara did not engage with Jewish causes, although some of the male members of her family did so, both locally and transnationally through the AIU: a pattern common among several male Italian and European Jewish liberals.[17] Sara Nathan exemplifies an early pattern of exposure of Jewish women to different internationals and its impact on Italian secular civil society, a phenomenon discussed in this article.

In the 18th century, a number of Jewish women in Italy had set up women-only Jewish confraternities, but through the 19th century Jewish community organizations resisted any public role for women.[18] Consequently, Italian Jewish women did not create their own national organization until 1927, although they served as delegates for local Zionist branches from the early years of the 20th century.[19] Zionism, which allocated women "an equality to be a delegate and a right to vote equal to that of men,"[20] held an understandable appeal for Italian Jewish women. Yet in practice men continued to lead the Italian Zionist movement and to send male delegates to international Zionist congresses. Furthermore, Italy as a society did not face the challenges posed by mass Jewish immigration that were an important factor in Jewish women's activism in Britain or the US. The reticence to consider women effective agents in the local and international Jewish spheres, the absence of the challenges of Jewish migration, and the broad acceptance of Jewish women's activism within a wide range of non-Jewish social institutions, contribute to explain the intense degree of social activism by Jewish women in secular civil society in Italy.[21]

Ever since the late 18th century, the Italian peninsula had been an attractive destination for the elite migrations of merchants, aristocrats on the *Grand Tour*, and artists.[22] These included famous Jewish artists, like Moritz Oppenheim, and patrons of the arts, like German-born Henriette Hertz, who moved to Rome in the late 1880s and became a major art donor to Italian and German institutions in the city.[23] From 1848 onwards political progressives made their way to Italy - Mazzinians and anti-clericals, like the French cosmopolitan revolutionary

Armand Levy who founded the Roman branch of the AIU, [24] or, decades later, David Lubin, a Polish-born American who founded the International Agricultural Institute in Rome in 1905.[25]

Several studies focus on Jewish foreigners in Italy after 1933, but the history of foreign-born Jews in Liberal Italy has yet to be written.[26] In fact, few foreign-born Jews arrived in the peninsula at the beginning of the 20th century, with the majority coming from Central and Eastern Europe, though a few still came from the Levant.[27] This small group of foreign-born Jews included several women who had a significant impact on Italian civil society; for the purpose of this article, this not exhaustive group may be divided between the baronesses and the revolutionaries, most of whom were university educated.

Scholarship on Jewish internationalism is usually outward-looking, in that it focuses on the activism of Jewish elites in Western and Central Europe in other parts of the world, and on Jewish diplomacy more generally. By contrast, the group of foreign-born Jewish women that are the focus of this article directed their energies inwards, within Italy. By doing so, they confirmed the new configuration of modern Jewish internationalism, in which Italy had shifted from the centre to the periphery. Since most of these women continued to move back and forth within their individual international networks, it is also helpful to think of their actions as an ongoing dynamic, rather than as static unidirectional movements. Their trajectories force us to look beyond the national and Mediterranean area, and to include Russia and America within a continuous process of exchange.

There were specific, gendered reasons why foreign women ended up in Italy: for marriage or for studies. It was easier for Jewish men to obtain noble titles in Italy than elsewhere in Europe, but foreign-born Jewish barons did not generally move to Italy, which was less economically attractive than Paris or Frankfurt.[28] Indeed, a number of Italian Jewish women emigrated after marrying a foreign baron , such as Marie Perugia who moved to London where, as Baroness Leopold de Rothschild, she became a generous philanthropist in the grand style of her husband's British relatives. By contrast, the Jewish baronesses of our study imported philanthropic practices cultivated in their birth families to Italy, impacting local communities in their new home.

As for the female Jewish revolutionaries featured in this article, most came to Italy as university students because the uncertain legal situation in post-unification Italy enabled them to enrol and graduate here earlier than in other countries - a unique opportunity provided by the instability of the newly formed Italian state. These women presumably moved to Italy because they saw Italy's open universities as progressive. On arrival, however, they found that Italian women were excluded from political and property rights, and often from education, while the strict "sense of sexual hierarchy" in the family extended to work regulations.[29] In different ways, Jewish foreign-born women activists made this the focus of their activities.

Foreign-born Jews were not the only women to move to Italy in this period, and several Protestant women were drawn to the peninsula by Mazzinian ideas and by hostility to the Catholic Church as a political entity. Catholic women's institutions - convents, hospitals and schools - were themselves undergoing changes at this time, but at a slow pace and within rigid, paternalistic frameworks.[30] Often Jewish and Protestant women worked together on philanthropic projects, but Jewish women emphasised the secular nature of the organizations they founded in ways that Protestants did not. For example, both Jewish and Protestant women supported the agrarian school for women founded in 1902 by the Jewish teacher and activist

Aurelia Josz.[31] Josz founded this innovative school after visiting schools in Belgium and England. She was driven by a passion for rural work and by the Tolstoian philosophy of the dignity of labour and importance of nature - a philosophy that inspired other contemporary social movements, including Zionism (in which Josz also took an interest).[32] A focus on education and "practical philanthropy" closely linked Aurelia Josz to Baroness Alice Hallgarten Franchetti, whom I discuss below. Their friendship and cooperation within a wider network of Jewish, Protestant, and atheist women activist indicates the predominately female quality of foreign progressive activism in Liberal Italy.

Baronesses: from transnational to local engagement.

Our Jewish baronesses married into families that had made their fortunes by following the routes of the "old Jewish international" between Livorno and the Mediterranean. Through their marriages and relocation to Italy, they became a link between Sephardi-Italian dynasties and Eastern-European Ashkenazi networks that stretched from Russia, Germany and the Habsburg lands to the US. In all three cases, their Italian Jewish husbands sought noble titles immediately prior to the marriage. As women in a patriarchal society, they were "tokens of exchange" on the marriage market, in the transfer of wealth, and in the acquisition of titles. But they were also individuals with their own passions and visions, who drew upon the paternalistic philanthropic ethos of their birth families to change the society around them.

Sara Louise Rothschild (1834-1924) was born in Vienna and married Raimondo Franchetti in November 1858. On this occasion, Raimondo and his father received the title of Baron, prompting the press to comment (with a reference to the contemporaneous Mortara Affair): "while in Rome they baptize Jews, in Turin they make them barons."[33] The couple initially lived in Turin, where Raimondo represented the Rothschilds in the new railway business and invested in land: by his death in 1905, he was one of largest land owners in Northern and Central Italy.[34] Eventually, also to overcome the ostracism shown by the Turin aristocracy, the couple moved to Venice and to their country houses with their children destined to become art collectors and a music composer.[35]

Raimondo was a generous philanthropist to Jewish and non-Jewish institutions in Livorno (whence his family originated), Turin and Venice, as well as internationally: through their Rothschild connection, the couple supported the *Œuvre d'apprentissage* in Jerusalem, although Sara did not continue with this after her husband died.[36] She preferred to focus on non-Jewish causes, to demonstrate her patriotism towards her new country of adoption.[37]

Sara's engagement with the communities close to the seven country houses they owned in the Veneto, Piedmont, Tuscany and Emilia combined traditional forms of charity (towards the poor and the elderly) with modern, co-educational kindergartens.[38] Whereas Raimondo cultivated the international and Jewish philanthropic connections his wife had brought with her to Italy, she (like many other Rothschild women) focused her philanthropic work on rural communities around the country estates where she lived for most of the year. This local philanthropy may also have been motivated by a desire for individual acceptance by local elites and can certainly be understood as a form of local paternalism, but it also had a dynamic impact in these rural areas.

Alice Hallgarten Franchetti (1874-1911)**,** married the politician Leopoldo Franchetti --Raimondo's first cousin – and went much further in her philanthropic efforts, investing

specifically in women's education, welfare and work. The innovative pedagogic methods she introduced around her country house in rural Umbria, were eventually exported and applied internationally. Alice was born in New York into one of its leading German American Jewish banking families, very well-known also for their philanthropic commitments. In New York, her father Adolph was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees at New York's Mount Sinai hospital between 1876 and 1879, while in Frankfurt her uncle Charles (considered by Alice a "second father") was the director of the local AIU committee, active in the *Hilfsverein* and the JCA, and an early and generous supporter of Berta Pappenheim and the *Jüdischer Frauenbund* (League of Jewish Women) she founded in 1904.[39] According to Werner Mosse, as a prominent intermediary between Jewish and non-Jewish left-liberals, Hallgarten expressed his identity through social action.[40] This strong philanthropic ethos left its mark on Alice, who remained in close contact with her family and visited them regularly. These contacts exposed her to the world of international Jewish philanthropy: when Alice and Leopoldo travelled to the US as newlyweds in 1900, they were invited to visit the Jewish agricultural school of Woodbine founded by the Baron de Hirsch Fund in which her uncle Charles was active.[41] Alice's commitment to international Jewish causes continued as confirmed by a generous donation together with her husband and her mother to persecuted Russian Jewry through a subscription of the Roman Jewish community in 1905.[42] She however focused her philanthropy on non-Jewish children and women around her.

In the mid 1890s Alice Hallgarten had moved to Rome with her mother for health reasons. As soon as she arrived, she got involved in the *Unione per il Bene*, an interfaith philanthropic organization aimed to combat begging and help children, by "giving and doing."[43] Alice's ecumenical interests are attested by her contacts with the French Protestant minister Paul Sabatier, with Americans such as the Reform Rabbi Felix Adler, founder of the Ethical Culture movement, and the Christian social reformer Vida Scudder. The latter would later write about Alice that she "wanted the Christian baptism, but her passionate loyalty to her race stopped her […] because, she said, Jews in Russia, persecuted by pogroms, would never accept her donations if she became a traitor to Israel."[44]

In 1898 Alice supported an agricultural colony for orphans from Rome, an interest that brought her into contact with like-minded secular Jews such as the Nathans and her future husband Leopoldo whom she married in 1900. After her marriage Alice reinforced her philanthropic efforts. In 1903 she became involved in the *Federazione Lavori Femminili*, a cooperative set up to promote women's work and connected to the *Consiglio Nazionale delle Donne* (CNDI), the Italian branch of the *International Council of Women* (ICW). Representing a new phase of "practical feminism," the *Federazione* supported women's claim to political equality through concrete projects rather than political propaganda.[45] Among other activists in the *Federazione* there were foreign Jewish women such as Xenia Poliakov Levi, Italian Jewish activists like Sara Nathan's daughter-in-law Virginia and the writer Amelia Rosselli, who had coined the term "practical feminism."[46]

Unquestionably, however, Alice's most important activity took place in Città di Castello in Umbria, around the Franchetti's country house of *La Montesca*. The villa was part of Leopoldo's parliamentary constituency, and while her husband worked as the local MP and landowner, Alice focused on co-educational kindergartens, schools and women's work through the *Tela Umbra*: a textile workshop for peasant women that revitalized and modernized local

traditions. Her papers reveal the attention with which she followed innovative educational experiences in Europe and the US, and how she supported both foreign and Italian progressive educators, most notably the feminist physician Maria Montessori. The latter found in the Franchetti couple a crucial support for her innovative pedagogic ideas: they sponsored her first book and hosted her first international training courses at *La Montesca*.[47] True to her international outlook and "convinced of the radical change it would bring,"[48] Alice was also instrumental in "arranging the international patenting of her method," which would allow extraordinary control of the distribution of the Montessori method around the world.[49] In her brief and intense life - she died of tuberculosis in 1911 - Alice was a hands-on philanthropist, dedicated to women and children, who focused her efforts on rural Umbria and pedagogic innovation.

Xenia Poliakov Levi (1872-1944) was born in Moscow in 1872 into one of the most powerful families of the Russian-Jewish elite – a family that engaged in lavish philanthropy for both Jewish and non-Jewish causes.[50] Her father Lazar, who was a very wealthy banker and railway magnate, presided over the Moscow Jewish community for over 35 years. He was a major donor to the ORT, an organisation founded by his brother Samuel in 1880 to support Jewish vocational training and agriculture that was to became one of the most important transnational Jewish organizations of the 20th century.[51] Xenia moved to Italy in 1896 after her marriage to Giorgio Levi, who came from a Jewish-Venetian family that had made its fortune in Egypt.[52] With his wedding in view, Giorgio Levi had requested to be made a baron, but encountered opposition tainted with antisemitism against the "market for titles."[53] The protracted procedures made Poliakov, then General Consul of Turkey and Persia in Moscow, propose (and later withdraw) a project to establish a bank "to develop Italian trade relations with the East," that would have been directed by Levi, as Consul of Persia in Italy.[54]

Through Xenia, Levi's international networks grew exponentially - she had family in Moscow, London and Paris. In Rome, the couple lived in the Villino Levi, which had been restructured by Carlo Pincherle, an architect who planned the houses of several other affluent Jewish families. Here, Xenia was involved in local secular philanthropic organizations such as the *Federazione Lavori Femminili*, with which Alice Franchetti was also involved.[55] Xenia was not active in the ORT, but, in keeping with her family's interest in Jewish education, she and her husband founded the first Italian-Jewish orphanage in Rome in 1902.[56] She remained its most generous board member until 1917, and was one of the first women to play such a role in any Jewish-Italian organization. Meanwhile, Xenia continued to demonstrate her interest in Russian Jews and her affiliation with the Roman Jewish community through her support for communal fund-raising drives on behalf of persecuted Russian Jews and as the most generous donor of charity to be distributed in memory of Chief Rabbi or Rome, Vittorio Castiglioni.[57] During the 1920s and 1930s, Xenia lived in Florence, where she was active in local secular organizations such as the Florentine Lyceum from 1932.[58] In 1944 Xenia and her husband were arrested at their home in Florence and deported to Auschwitz.[59]

If we consider these three cases as a group, a pattern begins to emerge. It is striking that after they moved to Italy none of our baronesses maintained their family traditions of involvement with major Jewish international organizations (AIU, ORT). Instead, they applied their philanthropic ethos locally, focusing on education and women's work. They may be considered as vectors of change because of the way they introduced and cultivated new ideas,

methods and networks with a view to empowering women through education and work. Their social position reflected the status of women in a patriarchal system that made them crucial tokens of exchange for connections, prestige, and wealth, linking their husbands through marriage to their powerful male-dominated family networks. At the same time, they chose to pursue their own sphere of philanthropic activism. By gendering the Jewish international - and emphasising its absence where we would most expect to find it - we have highlighted the agency of these women, who were consciously making independent choices as to where and how to focus their activism.

Radicals and revolutionaries

Clusters of foreign-born Jewish women from the educated middle-classes were drawn to Italy by romantic, progressive ideas. The first line may be traced in a network of German women of Jewish origin who arrived in Italy immediately after Unification in 1861.

Ludmilla Assing (1821-1880) found exile in Florence in 1862, when she escaped the Prussian police after publishing the diaries of her uncle Karl August von Varnhagen von Ense married to the Berlin Jewish *salonnière* Rahel Levin. [60] Ludmilla and her older sister Ottilie - who had moved to the US and became a well-known feminist and abolitionist - were not actually Jewish but they grew up in a social and cultural environment where they were very familiar with Judaism and marked as Jewish.[61] In Florence, Ludmilla was in contact with other German exiles, Jewish and non-Jewish, with Italian intellectuals and in December 1873 she married an army officer, Gino Grimelli.[62] Before and after her wedding, Ludmilla continued in Italy the Berlin salon tradition of her aunt Rahel Levin and of her cousin, the feminist writer Fanny Lewald, both of Jewish origin; however, whereas Rahel and Fanny engaged with Jewishness in their writing, Ludmilla didn't.[63] As a writer and journalist, she played a crucial role in exposing Italian democrats to a cosmopolitan and radical liberal internationalism, while also exporting the Italian Risorgimento as a liberal crusade. Her salon in Florence became a venue for radical democrats, expats and Germans like Lewald herself who visited in 1868.[64] Indeed, Ludmilla operated as a link between the Prussian liberals such as Ludwig Bamberger and Mazzinian and Garibaldian radicals in Italy.[65] In Italy she wrote for the liberal democratic German journal *Frankfurter Zeitung* and published in Italian on the necessity of education as a key to women's emancipation.[66] For Ludmilla Assing, the right of women to education was only one among many progressive commitments. By contrast, for Schiff, who became an Italian correspondent for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* after Assing's death, women's emancipation and pacifism were central to both her national and international activity.

Born in Germany, **Pauline Schiff** (1841-1926), moved to Italy with her family, first to Trieste and then, in 1861, to Milan and Pavia to study at the University.[67] Here, Pauline cultivated her contacts with German Jewish left-liberals, for example mediating between the democratic deputy Leopold Sonneman, publisher of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, and the Italian radical democrat Felice Cavallotti.[68] Through the latter, Schiff became active in the *International League for Peace,* and in the *International Association of Women*,[69] its short-lived women's section which was "probably the first international network of women."[70]

Pauline believed that the idea of *patria* should be transcended by internationalism and that there could be no peace without women's emancipation, to be based on women's work, which she saw as "a lifeline for the woman."[71] Consequently, in 1881 she co-founded the first

Lega promotrice degli interessi femminili in Milan, with a view to organizing women workers, and promoting secularism and universal suffrage. From 1888 she was active in the *Unione Lombarda for Peace and Arbitration* – until she resigned in 1892, publicly denouncing the misogynist attitude of its members.[72]

Pauline was a journalist, writer, translator (in 1888, she translated Max Nordau's *The Malady of the Century* into Italian) and in 1891 started her academic career teaching German: the second woman to teach at an Italian university (and the first in the Humanities), as a woman she was denied the Chair of German Literature.[73] These struggles impacted her feminism. Since the law perpetuated the oppression of women, she campaigned for a "compulsory paternity law," and promoted both state insurance for mothers and female suffrage. In 1896, as secretary of the Milanese committee of the *International Union of Women for Peace* and of the *Federation of Italian Feminist Societies*, Pauline published an appeal for "women of all nations to help each other fight militarism, obtain peace and arbitrage and find a way out of a situation created by the preponderance of man."[74]

As one of the five Italian representatives of the international group of reformist intellectuals gathered around the *Revue de morale social* in 1899, she was invited to participate in a survey on feminism organized by another Jewish woman, Maria Fischmann di Vestea, in which she articulated her personal perspective. For Schiff: "the feminist movement is one of the powerful levers unceasingly pushing humanity towards progress. And at the same time, it brings the specific positive result that many women are starting to benefit society as a whole."[75]

Schiff attended several peace and women's congresses from 1889 to 1915, when she joined the *Women's International League* in The Hague. She continued to defend her pacifist beliefs during World War I, although by 1917 she shifted to interventionist positions.[76] As one of the most active Italian players in the "burgeoning international society"[77] of the early 20th century, Schiff believed that a strong national identity should be congruent with (not opposed to) an international order. Through law, freedom of speech and women's suffrage, she believed that only women could transform war into a rational principle, employing the energy of each nation for the good of the general international order.[78]

Whereas Assing and Schiff operated in Florence and Milano, another German-born woman of Jewish origin functioned in Rome as a *trait-d'union* between German and Italian intellectuals: **Margherita Traube Mengarini** (1856-1912), daughter of Ludwig Traube, a well-known physician in Berlin. Margherita had accompanied Fanny Lewald to Italy in 1877. In Rome, she married, had children and enrolled in university. In 1883 she was the first woman to graduate in Natural Science in Italy and and an important career as a scientist. A feminist who wrote in favour of women's suffrage and was active in the *Unione Femminile*, Margherita's *salons* in Rome and Anzio became social hubs for Germans based in- or passing through - Italy. These included her brother the palaeographer Ludwig Traube, the art-collector Henriette Herz, and archaeologists like Adolf Furtwängler and the Austrian Emmanuel Löwy. Within these partly-Jewish networks Margherita cultivated her own interests in classic art and archaeology, sports and speleology.[79] Margherita's niece Anna Fraentzel followed her to Italy, where she worked as a champion of literacy and of the fight against malaria in the *Agro Romano* - a project in which Italian Jews like the Nathans and Franchettis were also actively involved.

Assing, Schiff and Traube constitute a group of German women of Jewish origin, who moved to Italy, did not affiliate with Jewish organizations or causes, became Italian activists

functioning as vectors of secular internationals between Germany and Italy, and between Christian, secular and Jewish philanthropists, activists and intellectuals.

Yet we can identify a more radical cluster of Jewish women who moved to Italy from the Russian port city of Odessa, one of the most economically successful and politically active Jewish communities in Russia - a place where "secular culture flourished nurtured by Italian opera."[80] This second cluster of progressive women typified the groups of motivated, unconventional, already partially radicalised, Russian-born Jewish women, who brought to the West their faith in science, in the power of education and in the equality of women - and their desire to be of use to the masses.[81] In Italy, as elsewhere, these Russian Jewish women played a "trail-blazing role".[82] Elena Raffalovich was one of the first to promote secular co-education in the early 1870s; others fought for a place for women in academia and the professions, and introduced new forms of philanthropy, feminism and socialism.[83]

Ernestina Puritz Paper (1846-1926) was the first woman to graduate and practice medicine in Liberal Italy.[84] She had moved from Odessa to Zurich in 1870 to study medicine, and then on to Pisa where she was the first and only woman enrolled at university, "admired for her passion for science and hard work."[85] Ernestina's career and public engagement showed what a woman could accomplish in Italy. After graduating in Florence, she opened a private practice in 1878, inaugurating the presence of professional women in Italian society.[86] As a public speaker, Ernestina focused on women's right to education, and on the professionalization of hygiene. In 1911 she founded a professional women school for hygiene and represented it at the International Council of Women Congress in Rome in 1914.[87] She also headed the Hygiene section of the Tuscan branch of the *CNDI* (Italian section of the Council) until 1919.[88]

Ernestina's family followed her to Italy from Odessa and also contributed to both the medical profession and to progressive, secular, civil society. Her cousin Giacomo, also a doctor, became an active board member of the local secular cremation society. Through him, Ernestina became related to the Nathans. No documents attest to her connection with the Jewish community in Florence, but her name appears on the subscription list for the newly constituted Jewish National Fund branch in 1923 (a fund-raiser's note on his encounter with Ernestina at her home in Florence reads "discussion and gave well").[89] By importing her passion for science from Odessa to Italy, Ernestina opened up opportunities for women in medical science and professional life. She was deeply secular, hence the preference for cremation she shared with many secular Jews of her time, and ready to engage with the new Zionist challenges.[90]

Maria Fischmann di Vestea (1868-1931) **–** who we encountered earlier organising a survey of Italian feminists - followed where Ernestina had led. Maria was also from Odessa, and the first woman to graduate in medicine in Pisa in 1893.[91] After her marriage, Maria stopped practicing medicine and focused her activity in the social aspects of woman's health. Focusing on co-educational secular education, she opposed state-regulated prostitution and strenuously campaigned for suffrage both nationally and internationally.[92] In 1914 she presented a paper on prostitution at the ICW Congress in Rome.[93] The press noted her self-confidence in addressing all-male audiences on controversial issues such as co-educational sex education, deeming her attitude foreign to the majority of Italian women.[94] Although Maria had married her non-Jewish professor in Pisa, she plainly retained some kind of Jewish identity since she requested a Jewish burial when she died in 1931.

Whereas Schiff, Puritz and Fischmann engaged in different forms of philanthropic activism in a liberal and social key, **Anna Kuliscioff** and **Angelica Balabanoff** have been regarded as "the lady" or "only man" [95] and "the grandmother of Italian socialism."[96]

Anna Kuliscioff (1857-1925) played a fundamental role in Italian feminism and socialism.[97] She thought women's emancipation was central to the socialist revolution and focused her activities on women's rights, suffrage and improving women's working conditions. Anna Rozenštejn, who chose the name Kuliscioff to emphasize her Russian origin, led a life of exile, prison, propaganda and study between Russia (where she was a leading Jewish radical of the 1870s), Switzerland, Paris, and finally Italy. Here in her own words, she put an end to her life as a "wandering Jew."[98] The first female medical graduate in Naples (1886), she faced strong opposition to her professional ambitions - as a woman, a foreigner and a revolutionary. This reinforced her commitment to women's emancipation "based on work, shared and compensated equitably," as she argued in *The Monopoly of Man*, a book partly inspired by August Bebel ideas.[99] Interacting with the major socialist thinkers of her time, she was present at the Second International congresses of 1891 and 1893. It was thanks to Kuliscioff that the motion "equal work, equal salary" was added to the principle of the legislative protection of female labourers. This, in turn, inspired her lobbying for the 1902 law on the protection of mothers and children.[100]

Meanwhile, Kuliscioff followed developments in Russia, including - in the early 1880s - the "storms of our people against the Jews which remind us of medieval wars of religion, brutal and wild."[101] She criticised the antisemitism of the authorities, clearly identifying with the Russian masses.[102] In 1917, she rejoiced at the Balfour declaration and criticized Orlando, the Italian prime minister, for referring to Palestine as the "Holy Land of the Sepulchre" and failing to mention "the people persecuted in almost all of Europe, which will finally have its own place of refuge from all pogroms, including those carried out by Russian revolutionaries."[103]

Kuliscioff had no contact with Jewish organizations in Italy and rejected women's organizations like the CNDI as expressions of an elite, bourgeois feminism. For her, women's work and suffrage were the only keys to change: in 1912 she founded *La difesa delle lavoratrici*, the first socialist feminist journal. In this undertaking, she collaborated with **Angelica Balabanoff** (1878-1965) another Russian-Jewish socialist who came to Italy to complete her studies.[104] In 1897, shortly after arriving in "her beautiful country of adoption," Balabanoff immersed herself in Italian and international socialist activities. In 1903, she worked with Italian immigrants in Switzerland, where she launched a campaign against the abuse of young Italian women by nuns.[105] In Switzerland, Balabanoff became intrigued by the young Mussolini, with whom she later collaborated as chief editor of the socialist journal *Avanti*. Back in Italy, she carried on her fervent activity as a translator and speaker on the Russian situation and revolution, and on the Russian Jewish proletariat.[106]

Balabanoff collaborated with Kuliscioff's *La difesa delle lavoratrici*, as did Margherita Sarfatti, a Jewish Italian journalist destined to become an important political player and art critic in Fascist Italy.[107] When Sarfatti was fired from the journal for praising women activists in peasant schools – which Kuliscioff and Balabanoff considered a form of paternalistic intervention - Sarfatti highlighted the perception of their marginality as foreigners: "These

Russians! Why are they coming to Italy and among us Italians? These terrible women, so different from us, who want to lead us yet have so little understanding of us!"[108]

Kuliscioff and Balabanoff were both radical Russian Jewish women who chose to live in Italy, yet their approach to women's emancipation differed. For Balabanoff only the revolution would resolve this problem. She remained "the voice and face of internationalist pacifism" throughout World War One, coordinating the first international women's conference in 1915 and the Zimmerwald socialist movement calling for immediate peace.[109] When she realized that pacificism would not stop the war, she moved to Moscow where in 1919 she worked as secretary of the Third International (Comintern), before becoming rapidly disillusioned with Soviet Russia. After years of peregrinations between Europe and the US, she returned to live in Italy in 1947, resumed her role in Italian politics and promoted the presence of women in public life. In 1962 Balabanoff was officially invited to Israel: received by Ben Gurion, she spoke to local women organizations, and was surprised that "not only did people understand me but the newspapers praised my Yiddish!"[110] Balabanoff was the last in this series of progressive, foreign-born Jewish women who tried to shake up Italian civil society after they moved to Italy. They were key figures in pacifism, feminism and socialism, and in science, academia, and the professions.

Conclusions

The women described in this article can be understood as vectors for different secular internationals, working in close collaboration with other activists in Italy. All sought to bring about social change, though their approaches and ideas differed. On reflection, we could also group them into three categories: baronesses, radicals and revolutionaries. Yet they also elude strict categorization, since our baronesses were doing radical work in some ways and the radicals were revolutionary in their feminism.

These women have been ignored by works on Italian Jewry because they were not concerned with Jewish institutions in Italy. Indeed, most of them were secular in their articulated world views and beliefs as Mazzinians, scientists or socialists. Yet – apart from Assing- none of them converted and all belonged to networks of sociability that included secular Italian Jews. We might understand their Jewish identity as contingent rather than constitutive; that does not mean it was irrelevant. Their experiences were shaped by the international lives they led as Jewish women and their collective and individual impact on secular civil society in Italy underlines the important role of foreign-born Jewish women as a category in Italian Jewish history. Their marginality - as Jews, foreigners and women – made it possible for them to transcend barriers, inspiring other women to do the same in the years before and after the Great War. A small number of female Italian Jewish philanthropists had been active from the early 1870s in Italy, of whom Sara Nathan was the most prominent. Yet it was mostly the cohort of Italian Jewish women born after 1870, who graduated from university and/or became involved in philanthropic social activism. The secular organizations they often helped to found provided a forum in which Italian and foreign Jewish women worked together. Pauline Schiff and Maria Fischmann-di Vestea played a role in international and Italian feminist organizations and congresses. The latter spoke at the 1914 ICW Congress in Rome, along with Ernestina Puritz. (Interestingly, the idea of a Jewish International Council of Women was first discussed at this congress, but no documents attest to their engagement in

it.)[111] Importantly, however, none of these women engaged with Jewish international organizations per se, even when the men in their lives were active in this world.

This pattern of engaging with a secular civil society was Jewish, female and specifically Italian, because the instability of the new Italian state presented opportunities for women like these, enabling them to shape a secular civil society still in the making. Jewish women in other countries usually began their activism within Jewish institutions, before progressing to "general" or secular activities.[112] In Italy, the opposition of Jewish organizations to female communal activism was particularly entrenched - and the urgent issues faced by women in a country where both education and welfare were in short supply led foreign and Italian Jewish women to engage primarily with secular civil society. Tellingly, the first Jewish women's organization (ADEI), in Italy was not created until 1927: it was established by women active in non-Jewish organizations such as the *Unione Femminile*, with which it shared its premises.[113] The ADEI was not officially linked to the Women's International Zionist Organization (est. 1920 in Britain), to avoid appearing "anti-national" to the increasingly nationalist Fascist regime.[114] It focused on strengthening Jewish culture, and on supporting Jews in Italy, Palestine and the Italian colony of Libya. This international activity underlines how much things had changed for Italian Jewish women by the early 1930s, even if the level of ADEI activity was still far lower than that of comparable Jewish women's organizations elsewhere.

Exploring the role played by foreign-born Jewish baronesses and female revolutionaries in Italy helps to broaden our understanding of the transnational range of radical Jewish networks beyond the US, Germany and Palestine by bringing Italy into the picture. Rather than simply writing about Jewish women's international activities, we have attempted to *gender* Jewish internationalism by showing how their gender shaped the role of these women as vectors, in a way that did not apply to men. On the one hand, male members of the international Jewish aristocracy did not marry into Italian Jewish families (and if they did, they did not move to Italy). On the other hand, after the mid-1870s foreign-born Jewish men ceased to be drawn to Italy as a progressive beacon. Unlike the Jewish women featured in this article, Jewish men did not need to move to Italy to attend university. Thus, the divergent opportunities open to men and women can be taken as a further indication of the ways that the chronological turning points that mattered for men were often less relevant to women.

Through the networks they inherited and the families into which they married, the baronesses brought the old Jewish international of the Mediterranean into contact with the networks and organisations of the new Jewish international that centred on Berlin and Vienna, Paris, London and New York. These aristocratic and cosmopolitan Jewish women chose to gradually change the reality around them through philanthropic activism and education. Conversely, our radicals broaden the traditional geography of Russian Jewish activism. As elsewhere in Europe, the impact of Russian-born Jewish women on Italian academia was crucial, since they were the first to enter universities and live as professional women. Hirsch has argued that in Germany such women were "cultural mediators" - a concept that allows us to understand them as individuals operating in a specific cultural context, and to appreciate the possibility of multidirectional interaction among cultures and groups.[115] Yet foreign-born Jewish women were acting as cultural mediators in Italy even earlier. For Liberal Italy, however, I have used the concept of vectors to emphasise the position of these women at the

intersection of many different social circles, the exchange between them, and their wide and varied impact - in academia, philanthropy, politics, feminism and peace activism.

A distinctive feature of the Italian context is the role such women played as pioneers, and the degree of their influence in shaping a secular civil society that created new opportunities for Italian women. In this, their exposure to international influences was a key factor, just as it had been for Sara Nathan in an earlier generation. Yet the case of Alice Hallgarten Franchetti and her support for the Montessori method underscores the fact that Italy was not simply a passive recipient of new ideas but also an "exporter" of innovative practices – something her international networks facilitated. In different ways foreign Jewish women arriving in Italy were vectors for reciprocal encounters between East and West, North and South. This encounter stimulated their activism. Their cosmopolitanism and their commitment to Italy enables us to question the centre-periphery tension in the shifting configurations of 19th century Jewish internationalism. Hitherto, their stories have tended to be told separately, but this article shows the heuristic value of "gendering Jewish internationalism". Taken together, the pattern of foreign Jewish women arriving in Italy and applying their drive to the society around them emerges strongly, enhancing our understanding of Jewish history and women's history in Italy and beyond.

NOTES

1. Green, "The West and the Rest."
2. Bregoli, Ferrara degli Uberti, Schwarz, *Italian Jewish Networks*.
3. Stoetzler, "Intersectional Individuality."
4. Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile.* Viaene, "Catholic Internationalism." Coathe, *Emigrant Nation*.
5. Green, "Old networks, new connections."
6. Levi D'Ancona, "Prospero Moisè Loria."
7 .Tzur, "Religious Internationalism."
8. Bodian, "The Portuguese dowry societies."
9. Fuchs, "Barrels in the port of Livorno."
10. "Notizie," *Educatore Israelita* (EI), 1857, 126,154. Abraham Piperno to Central Committee of AIU in Paris, September 6, 1861, in Jerusalem, Central Archives History of the Jewish People (CAHJP), AIU archives, Italy, Livorno.
11. "Alliance," EI, 1863, 54-56.
12. Leff, *Sacred Bond of Solidarity*.
13. Arbib, "Intercultural exchange."
14. EI, 1857, 280-283; 299-305.
15. Simon, *Change within tradition*,111.
16. Isastia, *Storia di una famiglia*.
17. Green, Levi Sullam, ed. *Jews, Liberalism, Anti-Semitism.*
18. Francesconi, "Confraternal Community."
19. Miniati, *Les "Émancipées"*, 45-127.
20. Mortara Levi, "Gli ebrei russi e il sionismo," *L'Idea sionista*, 5/1,1905, 17.
21. Levi D'Ancona "Jewish women."
22. Caglioti, "Elite migrations."
23. Fraiman, "The expressive hostility." Ebert-Schifferer, ed. *Segno del mio amore*.
24. Bucciantini. *Campo dei Fiori*, 42-45.
25. "David Lubin. An Appreciation," http://www.fao.org/library/about-library
26. Voigt, *Il rifugio precario.*
27
. *Censimento della popolazione.* Papo, "L'immigrazione ebraica."
28. For example, Count Camondo and Baron Reinach had Italian titles but did not move to Italy. Roma, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Consulta Araldica, files 84, 253.
29. Sluga, Caine, *Gendering European History*, 90-92.
30. *Per le strade del mondo*.
31. D'Annunzio ed. *Aurelia Josz*.

32. "Atti del IV Convegno Sionistico Italiano," *L'Idea Sionista, 4/3, 1904*, 31.
33. *Le Messager de Paris,* December 17, 1858.
34. Scardozzi, "Una storia di famiglia."
35. Cremonini, Fergonzi, *Da Giorgio Franchetti*. Giorgi, Erkens, eds. *Alberto Franchetti*.
36 "Société de travail in Jerusalem," EI, 1860, 187; Luncz, *La famille Rothschild et Jerusalem*, 23-24.
37. EI 1859, 348; EI 1860, 186.
38. Girardi, *I Franchetti*, 29-30. Giulio Benso, "La baronessa Luisa Franchetti."
39. Ausfus, Niss, *The House of Noble Needs*, 396. Heuberger, ed. *Ein Amerikaner*.
40. Mosse, *The German-Jewish Economic Elite*, 84-86.
41. Baron de Hirsch Fund Records, I80/4, box 86 folder 5, in American Jewish Historical Society, *Jewish life in America*.
42. "Pro ebrei russi," *Vessillo Israelitico*, 1905, 639.
43. Fossati, "Attiviste sociali. "
44. Buseghin, "L'epistolario di Alice," 134.
45. *Operosità Femminile Italiana*, 141-150; 252.
46. Rosselli, "Femminismo pratico."
47. *The Montessori Method*. Babini, Morgan and Pick Source, "Science, Feminism and Education."
48. Buseghin, *Alice Hallgarten*, 96.
49. Tozier, "An educational wonder-worker," 19. Thomas, "Montessori's contribution to school reform.
50. Freeze, *A Jewish Woman of Distinction*.
51. Litton, "Steps in Ort,". *Reports of the Provisional Committee*; Ivanov, "From a Russian-Jewish philanthropic."
52. Cammarata, *Angeli, Margherite, Mandolini.*
53. Jocteau, *Nobili e nobiltà*.
54. Cesare Levi to Pelloux, 10-01-1899 in Consulta Araldica, file 361, Levi Giorgio.
55. *Le Industrie Femminili Italiane*, 5.
56. *Il Corriere Israelitico*, 1902, 65.
57."Le sottoscrizioni per gli ebrei Russi," *Vessillo Israelitico*, 1903, 223; *Il Corriere Israelitico*, 1911, 80.
58. "Nuove Socie da Gennaio 1932," *Lyceum di Firenze, Bollettino Mensile*, 1931, 89.
59. Baiardi, "Persecuzioni antiebraiche a Firenze", 85.
60. Bradt, "Ludmilla Assing."
61. In 1910, Kurz for example defines her a "liberale Jüdin", see Kurz, *Florentinische Erinnerungen*. https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/kurzi/florerin/chap002.html
62. See Assing correspondence in Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, Carteggi vari.
63. Hertz, *Jewish High Society*.
64. Vitale, "Presenze femminili tedesche". Fanny Lewald, *Ein Winter in Rom*, 77.
65. Feder, ed. *Bismarcks Grobe Spiel*,142.
66. Assing, *La posizione sociale della donna*.
67. Bartoloni, "Paolina Schiff."
68. Schiff to Cavallotti, September 19, 1880, in Milan, Fondazione Feltrinelli, Fondo Cavallotti,116.
69. Nattermann, "La paix des Dames," 92.
70. Berkovich, *From Motherhood to Citizenship*, 64.
71. Schiff to Cavallotti, May 16, 1890, quoted in Ridolfi, *La democrazia radicale*, 330.
72. "Una vivace adunanza," *Corriere Della Sera*, March 3, 1892. Bartoloni, *Donne di fronte alla Guerra*, 14-17.
73. Polenghi, "Missione naturale, istruzione artificiale."
74. Schiff, "Union International des Femmes pour la Paix."
75. Marie di Vestea, "De toutes partes," *Revue de Morale Sociale*, 2, 1899, 206.
76. Nattermann, "The female side of war," 239.
77. Sluga, *Internationalism in the age of nationalism*, 13.
78. Schiff, *L'influenza della donna sulla pace*.
79. Puletti, *Due strade, una direzione.*
80. Jarrod, *City of Rogues, 29.*
81. Hibner Koblitz, *Science, Women and Revolution*.
82. Hirsch, *From the Shtetl to the Lecture Hall.*
83. Salah "From Odessa to Florence."
84. Govoni, "Ernestina Puritz."
85. Padelletti, "Le donne all'università", 156. Ravà, *Le laureate in Italia*.
86. *La Nazione,* March 6, *1878, 3.*
87. *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Femminile*, 356-359.
88. Rome, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, CNDI papers, file 3.
89. List of donors for KKL in Florence, 1923 in Jerusalem, CAHJP, P140/7a.
90. Levi D'Ancona, "Giving and dying in Liberal Italy."
91. Peretti, *Da Odessa a Pisa*.
92. "Groupe d'initiative," *Revue de morale sociale*, 1 (1899), 5-7.
93. Maria di Vestea, "Sulla Prostituzione", 593.
94. *La Voce*, November 17, 1910, 436-439. Pasqualini, "From the Sexual Question."
95. Casalini, *Anna Kuliscioff.*
96. "Si è spenta stamane a Roma", *La Stampa*, November 25, 1965, 7.
97. Sheperd, *A Price Below Rubies*, 69-106; Colombo Ascari, "Feminism and Socialism."

98. Kuliscioff to Costa, November 18, 1880, quoted in Sheperd, *A price below rubies*, 87.
99 . Kuliscioff, *Il dominio dell'uomo*, 19.
100. Passaniti, ed. *Lavoro e cittadinanza femminile.*
101. Kuliscioff to Costa, June 4,1882, in Kuliscioff, *Corrispondenze dalla Russia*, 34.
102. Kuliscioff to Turati, March 24, 1901, *Carteggio*, vol. 2, 17.
103. Kuliscioff to Turati, December 13,1917, quoted in Sheperd, *A Price Below Rubies*, 97.
104. Slaughter, "Humanism versus feminism."
105. Balabanoff, *My life as a rebel*, 35-38.
106. "Il Comitato Pro Russia," *La Stampa*, December 9, 1905, 3.
107. Liffran, *Margherita Sarfatti*, 59-76, 143-148.
108. Sarfatti *Diary*, quoted in Ilaria Cimonetti, *Alle radici di Novecento Italiano*, 28.
109. Cioni, "Una donna in Guerra", 188.
110. Balabanoff to Wolfe, quoted in Lafont, *The Strange Comrade Balabanoff*, 209.
111. Las, *Jewish Women in a Changing World*, 32.
112. McCune, *The Whole Wide World*, 2.
113. *Associazione Donne Ebree d'Italia*.
114. Orvieto, "Associazione Donne Ebree d'Italia."
115. Hirsch, *From the Shtetl*, 80.

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