'Aiding gli Ebrei' - Delasem under fascism, 1939 to 1945

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Chapter 2

‘Delegazione Assistenza Emigrati Ebrei’

This chapter analyses Delasem’s (Italian Aid Commission for Jewish Refugees) work from 1939 to its liquidation in 1948. It describes the formation and operation of the organisation whose primary purpose was to assist foreign and Italian Jewish people in Italy and its territories. To provide an accurate and detailed account, this chapter uses mostly primary sources retained by the Historical Archives of the Jewish Community of Rome (ASCER). The material comprises internal correspondence between various Delasem offices; external communiqués between Delasem and a myriad of companies and organisations in Italy and outside the country; minutes of meetings, internal memorandums, informal notes and photographs. Many of the organisation’s files were destroyed when the Germans occupied Italy in 1943, but much was saved.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Demarcating the chapter will assist with the chronology of events in Italy, and importantly, make clearer the changing roles of Delasem between 1939 and 1948 when the organisation closed. It is apparent that the lives of Jewish people and the role of Delasem changed greatly between 1939 and 1948.

After 17 November 1938, the lives of Jewish people in Italy changed. 221 On this date, Mussolini issued the ‘Leggi Raziali’ (Racial Laws) which altered the Fascist government’s social and political attitude to Jewish people.222 The Leggi Raziali aimed to limit the rights of Italian Jewish people and to isolate them from social,

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221 De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, p. 368.
222 Zuccotti, *The Italians and the Holocaust: persecution, rescue and survival*, p. 36.
public and political life. The Racial Laws defined Jewishness and excluded Jewish people from the civil service, the armed forces and the Fascist Party.\textsuperscript{223} There were restrictions on Jewish people owning certain industries, and rural, urban, and farming property. Marriages between people of the Jewish faith and other religions were prohibited.\textsuperscript{224} In 1938 when the Racial Laws were introduced, there were 57,000 Jewish people in Italy representing about 0.1 percent of the total Italian population.\textsuperscript{225} Of these, 10,000 were Jewish people from outside of Italy.\textsuperscript{226} Since 1911\textsuperscript{227}, Jewish people from other European countries had entered Italy with tourist, business, health, and in-transit visas.\textsuperscript{228} However, from 1933, there was an increase in the number of foreign Jewish people entering Italy and its territories with many coming from Germany. Later in the mid and late 1930s, most refugees came from countries occupied and annexed by Nazi Germany.\textsuperscript{229}

The Racial Laws when tabled in 1938 had regulations that were applicable to foreign Jewish people. One was that non-Italian Jewish people had to leave Italy and its territories by 22 March 1939. However, by this date, of the 10,000 foreign Jewish people in the country in 1938 only 3720 had left Italy and its territories.\textsuperscript{230} In addition, and completely contrary to the Racial Laws’ regulations that forbade Jewish people entering Italy, between November 1938 and March 1939, 2486 extra foreign Jewish refugees with different visas had entered Italy and its territories.\textsuperscript{231} To stop this influx of Jewish refugees into Italy from other parts of Europe, on 19 August 1939 the Italian government officially forbade the entry into Italy of Jewish people coming from Poland, Hungary, Romania and Germany.\textsuperscript{232} However, despite

\textsuperscript{223} Safatti, \textit{The Jews in Mussolini’s Italy: from equality to persecution}, pp. 125-129.
\textsuperscript{224} Morley, p. 167.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} De Felice, \textit{Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo}, p. 368.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., p. 8.
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid., p. 369.
\textsuperscript{231} Safatti, \textit{The Jews in Mussolini’s Italy: from equality to persecution}, p. 369.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid.
this regulation, non-Italian Jewish people still continued to flood into Italy and its territories from areas occupied by or threatened with occupation by the Nazis.²³³

**Delasem’s operations between December 1939 and June 1940**

In an environment of insecurity, on 1 December 1939, the Rome based Union of Italian Jewish communities or UCII (Unione Comunita’ Israelitiche Italiane)²³⁴ founded Delasem²³⁵ in Genoa.²³⁶ Vice-chief of Italian Police Dante Almansi – who had retained his State based position despite the Racial Laws forbidding it – was the organisation’s first and, as it transpired, only president (Figure 6). Genoese lawyer Lelio Vittorio Valobra – who was the vice-president of UCII – was the organisation’s vice-president (Figure 7), while Arturo Leoni was elected responsible for the treasurer’s office. Enrico Luzzato was nominated Delasem’s secretary.²³⁷

Figure 6 Dante Almansi, President of Delasem Genoa, 1939.²³⁸

In 1930, the Jewish people in Italy formed the ‘Unione delle Cumunita’ Israelitiche Italiane’ (Union of the Italian Jewish communities) that provided communication links

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²³⁴ Reale, p. 147.
²³⁵ Lelio Vittorio Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the President of Rome’s Jewish Community, ASCER Rome, 03 January 1940, pp. 1-2.
²³⁷ Voigt, p. 336.
²³⁸ Dante Almansi, President of Delasem Genoa, 1939, [https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQaUNCLEcaajKy7VVnum-DSg92 VyixKwolFQWiwSVwJsl-KMy](https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQaUNCLEcaajKy7VVnum-DSg92 VyixKwolFQWiwSVwJsl-KMy) [22 August 2015].
between members of the Italian Jews’ population. In Italy in 1938, there were 23 Jewish communities, with each community having its own president. The communities were autonomous in their administrative competencies. 239 Each Jewish community had a Rabbi who taught the Torah, performed marriages, and was responsible for the community’s religious well-being. Furthermore, each Jewish community in Italy had its own administrative and social structure, providing religious, cultural and educational services to Italian Jewish people of the region. Additionally, all Italian citizens considered Jewish by Jewish law automatically belonged to one of the Italian Jewish communities (Figure 8).

Figure 7 Lelio Vittorio Valobra, Vice-President of Delasem Genoa, 1939 240

239 Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the President of Rome’s Jewish Community, pp. 1-2.
Figure 8 The location of Jewish communities in 1938

Until Mussolini displayed anti-Semitic views with the promulgation of the Racial Laws in 1938, Italians of the Jewish and Christian faiths lived peacefully in the Italian peninsula. If there was such a thing as anti-Semitism in Italy, it was confined to a few extremist people.\textsuperscript{242} However, after 1935 with the declaration of the Nuremberg Laws by Nazi Germany that established the anti-Semitism of the Nazis government, Jewish refugees from parts of Europe under the Nazi regime began arriving in Italy.\textsuperscript{243} The Italian Jewish community in general become worried, for the refugees brought reports regarding the Nazi’s attitude to Jewish people. Nazi maltreatment of Jewish people also came to the Italian Jews’ population from other sources, such as from Vatican diplomats and the International Red Cross. Nevertheless, the Italian Jewish communities strongly believed that Mussolini would not allow what was happening in Nazi occupied Europe to occur in Italy.\textsuperscript{244}

In 1939, the Italian government and the Italian Jewish community for different reasons grew increasingly concerned regarding the many European Jewish refugees who continued to flow into Italy from Nazi held countries. For the Italian government, concern revolved around providing the necessary support for these people, but there was also the potential strain it could place on Italy’s infrastructure. For the Italian Jewish community, concern was twofold. First was the desire to assist individuals of their faith in a time of need, but secondly there was the worry that the issues faced by the refugees arriving in Italy could reflect the plight of Jewish people in Italy in the near future.

The refugees in Italy needed support, and the Italian Jewish community aimed to provide assistance for the Jewish people. However, the Italian Jewish community knew that they would be required to work with and be supported by the Fascist

\textsuperscript{243} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
government for aid work to be successful.\textsuperscript{245} Given the economic and political climate, the Italian Jewish community was pessimistic about support from the government, but on the 29 October 1939, they wrote to the Fascist government outlining their wish to assist and organise aid support for European Jewish refugees arriving in Italy and its territories.\textsuperscript{246} There was, however, a ray of optimism in the request, for the letter included not only details about establishing a support organisation but also the potential financial benefits the Fascist government would receive if they supported the proposal. The Jewish community stated to the Italian government that if they supported the proposal, they could obtain foreign financial help to fund the scheme from international Jewish associations such as HIAS-ICA Emigration Association (HICEM) and the American Joint Distribution Committee (Joint) based in New York. Joint had its main European office in Lisbon, while HICEM had its main European office in Paris. It was to HICEM’s office in Paris that Delasem sent all details related to Jewish refugees in Italy. The letter to the government also stated that these Jewish finance organisations had in the past supported Jewish people in need and that they were prepared to provide financial support to Jewish refugees arriving in Italy from other parts of Europe. Significant in the context of the Italian government possible granting of permission to establish a Jewish support organisation was the comment that establishing a support programme would mean that large sums of foreign currency from overseas funding agencies would reach Italian banks.\textsuperscript{247} The Italian government most likely viewed this point favourably, with Italy at this time in financial stress and needing extra funds.

As a result of the communiqué, the Italian government agreed with the proposal put forward by the Italian Jewish community leaders to allow the establishment of a Jewish aid organisation in Italy and the Italian territories.\textsuperscript{248} For the government, the

\textsuperscript{245} Italian Jewish community, Letter to the Italian Fascist government, ASCER Rome, 29 October 1939, pp. 1-3.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid.
Italian Jewish community was helping solve an immigration crisis while simultaneously assisting the country’s financial situation because of the favourable foreign exchange rate between the Lira and the American dollar. For the Italian Jewish community, they had permission to establish a Jewish aid organisation with the blessing of the Fascist government.

On 15 December 1939, the president of the Union of Italian Jewish communities Dante Almansi wrote to the various Italian Jewish communities to acknowledge Giorgio Zevi as Delasem representative in their Rome office (Figure 9). Almansi stressed that his and Zevi’s role as Delasem’s major directors was to assist Jewish refugees in Italy and its territories. He continued, adding that Delasem was now operating as the Jewish aid organisation for foreign and Italian Jewish people who had had their Italian citizenship withdrawn in 1938 when the Racial Laws became effective. The Leggi Raziali stated in the ‘Provvedimenti nei confronti degli ebrei stranieri Art. 3 (Action against the Foreigner Jews Art. 3) that the concession of Italian nationality, given to foreign Jewish people before 1 January 1919, was effectively revoked. Almansi requested each of the Italian Jewish communities to report to Delasem the number and condition of Jewish refugees in their jurisdictions.

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249 Italian Jewish Community, Letter to the Italian Fascist government, 29 October 1939, pp. 1-3.
251 Sarfatti, Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani di oggi, p. 74.
The December 1939 letter from Almansi to the various Italian Jewish communities started a string of on-going communiqués between representatives of Delasem and the 23 Italian communities. On 3 January 1940, Delasem’s president Lelio Valobra wrote to all of the presidents of the Italian Jewish communities with a programme for assisting Italian and foreign Jewish people in Italy. There was no doubt that Valobra considered that helping Jewish people was to be a combined effort between his organisation and the Jewish communities. For the still fledgling Delasem to work efficiently, however, he needed information, asking from each Jewish community for a financial and statistical breakdown regarding activities carried out by the Jewish communities between 26 November and 25 December 1939 for foreign Jewish people in their district.²⁵²

²⁵² Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the President of Rome’s Jewish Community, pp. 1-2.
²⁵³ Delasem’s Office, Lungotevere Sanzio, Rome 2012, Author Collection.
Valobra stressed to the community presidents that Delasem was enthusiastic to help foreign Jewish people in Italy and its territories. He stated that many Jewish communities, especially those of Milan, Trieste and Rome, were very interested in the programme because of the many foreign Jewish people in their jurisdiction needing support. The document by Valobra aimed to highlight the urgency of prompt aid for foreign Jewish people by Delasem in full collaboration with Jewish communities spread through the Italian peninsula. Delasem intended to make Jewish communities aware that the organisation understood the intentions of the Fascist government. The letter stated that the government was not in favour of sending Jewish refugees already in Italy and Italian territories back to their countries of origin.

Valobra’s letter to the presidents continued by outlining Delasem’s two main purposes and in so doing providing the presidents of the communities with directives. First, it was essential to facilitate the emigration of foreign Jewish people from Italy and the Italian territories. Secondly – and linked closely to the first directive – was the importance of providing Jewish people with the necessary assistance while they waited for emigration to occur. Valobra stated that both directives were ‘in perfetta armonia’ (in perfect harmony) and with the ‘desiderio delle autorità’ (desire of the Italian authorities) to achieve a rapid migration of non-Italian Jewish people from Italy and its territories so that they would not be an encumbrance on Italian infrastructure. He also commented that Italian Jewish communities had to avoid returning foreign Jewish people to the European countries of their birth.

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255 Ibid.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
258 Ibid.
259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid.
For the programme to operate smoothly, Valobra explained that Delasem required a representative in each Jewish community to achieve the organisation’s aims.\textsuperscript{262} The representatives were to pass information from Delasem to Jewish refugees and to organise the communities to help non-Italian Jewish refugees morally and economically. Additionally, the representatives were to assist Jewish people in completing the necessary documents for emigration but to also make arrangements so that their temporary stay in Italy was as comfortable as possible.\textsuperscript{263} All this was to occur while maintaining constant contact with Italian government authorities.

Other specific tasks for Delasem’s representatives in the communities included the maintenance of relationships between Delasem and the Italian Jewish communities,\textsuperscript{264} representing Delasem to the Italian authorities,\textsuperscript{265} organising, gathering, and distributing funds to non-Italian Jewish people,\textsuperscript{266} organising local assistance,\textsuperscript{267} and providing Delasem with all the statistical data relating to non-Italian Jewish refugees in their jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{268}

It was vital for Delasem to know the precise location – including residential addresses – and circumstances of Jewish refugees in Italy. The process of emigration for Jewish refugees from Italy occurred from the port of Genoa, the city where Delasem had its headquarters (Figure 10). Jewish refugees had to be notified and then moved from all over the country to Genoa for departure – a process difficult if the whereabouts of refugees was unclear.\textsuperscript{269} To assist in the emigration process, Delasem established at Genoa railway station and at Genoa port a special service for Jewish people coming from Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Between December 1939 and May 1940, Delasem on a monthly average helped with

\textsuperscript{262} Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the Presidents of Italian Jewish communities, pp. 1-6.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{265} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{268} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{269} Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, ASCER Rome, pp. 1-42.
the embarkation from Genoa of 200 Jewish refugees on ships of the Italia Societa’ di Navigazione and Lloyd Triestino lines that sailed to non-European foreign countries. For the Jewish people on-board, it was a voyage to freedom.270

Valobra’s letter to the presidents concluded by informing the Italian communities about the securing of financial assistance from two foreign organisations – Joint and HICEM.271 Both finance organisations aimed to allocate and equally distribute272 funds to assist non-Italian Jewish people in Italy. Valobra stated that it was vital that Jewish refugees in Italy centralise to allow Delasem to provide efficient financial and logistic assistance.273 Valobra’s letter highlights Delasem’s foundations and the important roles the Italian Jewish communities and the Fascist government were to play during the organisation’s entire operation.

On 6 May 1940, Giorgio Zevi, Rome’s Delasem representative, wrote to Aldo Ascoli who was the president of Rome’s Jewish community. In the letter, he stated that in Rome there were around 300 Jewish refugees.274 Since 25 December 1939 and to 25 May 1940, Delasem had spent Lire 150,000 of which Lire 39,000 was provided by Delasem and the rest from the charity of Rome’s Jewish community.275 In the letter, Zevi reinforced the ‘condizioni disastrose’ (disastrous conditions) of Delasem’s Rome office because of the lack of capital. Zevi further emphasised the importance of sending newsletters to Rome’s nearby Jewish communities stressing to them the need for extra funds to help the non-Italian Jewish refugees in Rome and elsewhere.276

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270 Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9th November 1941, ASCER Rome, pp. 1-42.
271 Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the Presidents of Italian Jewish communities, pp. 1-6.
272 Ibid.
273 Ibid.
275 Ibid.
276 Ibid.
Despite the request from Delasem’s representative, it was difficult for Italian Jewish people to find further funds. In addition, it was very difficult for Jewish communities to identify the exact number of Jewish people in their jurisdictions because of the transitory nature of Jewish refugees’ movement in Italy. Ascoli stated that it was difficult providing a list of the Jewish people in his jurisdiction that had emigrated because many did not formally report their departure from Italy to the Jewish community. Ascoli stated that between 1938 and 1940, about 187 Jewish people had left the country from the region in Rome, but he could not provide an exact number.

Until Italy entered the Second World War in June 1940, Delasem focused on helping non-Italian Jewish refugees emigrate from Italy. The organisation worked with the Italian government, the Italian Jewish communities, and other countries like Spain and Palestine to provide a quick and safe exodus of Jewish refugees from Italy. However, a letter dated 22 March 1940 by Dante Almansi to the Italian Jewish communities suggested that Italy’s possible entry into the Second World War was recognised as detrimental to Delasem’s present mode of activities. In the letter, he requested presidents to ‘sollecitare alcuni importanti elementi relativi all’espatrio dei nostri corregionali’ (act quickly to an important issue relative to the expatriation of non-Italian Jews), suggesting that he was aware of upcoming events – but without stating precisely the event – that was to alter Delasem’s abilities to assist non-Italian Jewish people leaving Italy.

277 Aldo Ascoli, Delasem, Letter to the Jewish Community of Rome, ASCER Rome, 10 May 1940, p. 1.
278 Ibid.
Delasem’s role between June 1940 and December 1941

Dante Almansi’s comment to the Italian Jewish communities that they should hasten their expatriation of non-Italian Jewish people from the country suggests that he was aware that Italy would soon be entering the Second World War. He was obviously also aware of the ramifications the decision would have on the organisation’s activities. As it eventuated, on 10 June 1940 Italy entered the Second World War allied with Germany.\(^{281}\) The next day, Almansi wrote to all Italian Jewish communities regarding the implications for Jewish refugees of Italy’s entry into the war.\(^{282}\) Almansi confirmed Delasem’s sentiment to the Italian government, stating ‘sentimenti di illuminata devozione degli israeliti italiani’ (feelings of enlightened of Italian Jews), and that Delasem and Jewish Italians were ready, like in the past, to


\(^{281}\) Sarfatti, Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani di oggi, p. 61.

serve and honour the homeland.\textsuperscript{283} He emphasised the point that all Italian Jewish people should work together with the Fascist government toward achieving the nation’s objective in the war.\textsuperscript{284} This was an action of commitment and a sign of Delasem’s loyalty and devotion to the Fascist government, but the letter’s tone is muted and contains hackneyed phrases. It is contradictory to Almansi’s letter of March that encouraged Italian communities to move rapidly on removing non-Italian Jewish refugees from Italy.

Delasem was optimistic that Italian citizens of the Jewish faith would assist Italy in the war, similar to the support they provided during the First World War. However, within days of declaring war, the Fascist government took several steps against Italian and non-Italian Jewish people. On 14 June 1940, the Italian Minister of Internal Affairs sent a document to each of the prefects of the Italian provinces demanding that they arrest and intern Jewish people of foreign origin (including Italian Jews who had lost their Italian citizenship with the introduction of the Leggi Raziali).\textsuperscript{285} The reasons given for the arrest warrants were that non-Italian Jewish people were enemies of the Italian government. It was this action by the government that Almansi was fearful of eventuating in his March 1940 letter to the Jewish communities. According to Delasem’s data, at about this time there were 1340 Jewish refugees not interned in Italy who still received assistance from the organisation and who were now under threat of arrest. In Milan, there were 852 Jewish refugees, in Rome 173, and in Trieste 157.\textsuperscript{286}

As a consequence of the government’s decision to arrest Jewish people, internment camps to house both refugees and Italian Jewish people were established in Italy and

\textsuperscript{283} Dante Almansi, Delasem, Letter Italian Jewish communities, ASCER Rome, 11 June 1940, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{284} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{285} Michaelis, p. 291.  
\textsuperscript{286} Voigt, pp. 346-347.
Italian territories. The Jewish people interned in Italy were held in two ways – ‘Campi d’ Internamento’ (internment camps) or ‘Internamento Isolato’ (restricted internment) camps. The ‘Confinati’ (the interned) of the internment camps had to remain inside the camp’s compound, while those in restricted internment camps had more freedom but were constrained to a town or village centre. Sometimes they were limited to a small location within that area. There were about 2000 Jewish people interned in the Italian internment camps and 1000 held in the restricted internment category, while another 2000 non-Italian Jewish people were still not interned and instead living with Italian Jews’ families. The interned non-Italian Jewish people in both types of camps had financial help from the Italian government – despite the order for their arrest – and from Delasem, while the 2000 non-interred individuals had only Delasem’s help.

The Fascist government continued to tell prefects to arrest foreign Jewish people and to gather as much data about them as possible. On 19 September 1940, the Italian government sent telegrams to all Uffici Prefettura (Prefectures Offices) in Italy stating that it was important for the government to know ‘con precisa entità numerica’ (precisely the number) of male and female foreign Jewish people in Italy and Italian territories. As non-Italian Jews, they had no right to stay in Italy, and in another telegram to the Prefectures Offices, the Italian government stated that non-Italian Jews in Italy had to be arrested and interned in ‘appositi campi di concentramento’ (specific internment camps). Furthermore, all ‘beni mobili ed
immobili’\textsuperscript{294} (assets and real estates) of non-Italian Jewish people had to be ‘immediatamente confiscati’ (immediately confiscated) in the interests of Italy.\textsuperscript{295}

For four months, the Italian government were openly hostile to the rights and privileges of foreign Jewish people in Italy. However, on 14 October 1940, the Minister of Internal Affairs sent another letter ‘riservata ed urgente’\textsuperscript{296} (confidential and urgent) to Italy’s Prefectures Offices. The subject of the letter was about ‘gli Ebrei stranieri nel Regno’\textsuperscript{297} (foreign Jews in the Italian Kingdom). The communiqué began by stating that the minister had heard that sometimes ‘vengono frapposti ostacoli’\textsuperscript{298} (obstacles exist) that prevent the exodus of foreign Jewish people from Italy and its territories, but that ‘sia facilitato al massimo l’esodo’\textsuperscript{299} (the maximum exodus) had been facilitated of non-Italian Jewish people from Italy. The minister stated that deportation particularly applied to interned foreign Jewish people. The letter is a complete reversal in attitude and policy to previous memos since June, and suggests that the Italian government had backed down about arresting non-Italian Jewish people as stated in the letter dated 14 June. The October letter instead affirmed that non-Italian Jewish people were permitted to leave Italy and its territories and that they were allowed to send information to foreign consulates, the Jewish delegation for emigration (Delasem), and to relatives or acquaintances with knowledge about their passports or documents that were essential for their departure from Italy and Italian territories.\textsuperscript{300} The volte-face can only be speculated on, but will be discussed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{294} Italian Government, Telegram to the Prefectures Offices, ASR, Archivio di Stato di Roma, Prefettura, Rome, October 1940, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{295} Ibid
\textsuperscript{296} Minister of Internal Affairs, Letter to Prefectures offices, ASR, Archivio di Stato di Roma, Prefettura, Rome, 14 October 1940, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{297} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{299} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{300} Minister of Internal Affairs, Telegram to Prefectures offices, ASR, Archivio di Stato di Roma, Prefettura, Rome, 16 October 1940, p. 1.
Despite the backflip, progressively more Jewish refugees were interned in Italian internment camps while the exodus from Italy that occurred mostly from Genoa port and other parts of the Italian peninsula continued under Delasem’s directive. Furthermore, Delasem established a ‘Servizio Ricerche’ (Research Service) to assist Jewish refugees in finding relatives in Italy and overseas lost during their exodus from their European countries of origin or during their allotment to Italian internment camps.301

**Italian internment camps**

Letters contained in Rome’s Jewish archive suggest an on-going vagary of government policies regarding what to do with foreigners of Jewish faith in Italy. Furthermore, in January 1941, there was a stinging telegram from Buffarini – the Minister of Internal Affairs – to Italy’s Prefects stating that clearly, many Italian Jewish people did not understand what was happening regarding the events affecting their country.302 He stated that Italian Jewish people were ‘costituzionalmente avversi’303 (constitutionally hostile) to national sentiment. Therefore, he requested that anyone suspected of being against the Italian government by word or deed had to be sent to internment camps.304 The letter was most likely a threat to Italian Jewish people that they were also under notice and not to cause trouble, but Buffarini’s telegram also highlights the development of a key physical feature of the debate regarding the treatment of Jewish people in Italy between 1940 and 1943 – the internment camp.

There were 40 Italian internment camps until the German occupation of northern Italy in September 1943.305 The civil authorities controlled them from June 1940,

301 Minister of Internal Affairs, Telegram to Prefectures offices, 16 October 1940, p. 1.
302 Ibid.
303 Ibid.
304 Ibid.
305 Ibid.
and they were eventually for Italian and non-Italian Jewish people and Italians of any other faith or belief that was against the Mussolini Fascist regime. The camps were often in renovated or converted structures like barns, castles, and town houses, former convents, prisons, schools and factories, but despite the diverse range of buildings used, all camps were in areas of Italy with a low local population.

Figure 11 The location of internment camps in Italy and occupied territories.

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306 Collotti, pp. 105-107.
307 Ibid.
308 The location of internment camps in Italy and occupied territories, Map adapted from Sarfatti, Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani di oggi, p. 56.
Campagna internment camp was an example of a camp established by the Fascist government from buildings built for another purpose. The camp was in the Picentine Hills, 30 km east of the city of Salerno. The Fascist government used the already extant Dominican monastery of Saint Bartolommeo and the convent of the Observant of the Immaculate Conception. Both facilities had use as training facilities and accommodation for Italian officer candidates in the Italian army, but this function occurred for only one month in the year and the structures therefore were ideal for use for other purposes.

The Campagna camp operated as a Fascist internment camp from 15 June 1940 to September 1943. The first internees were 430 Jewish refugee men from Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Many of the interned were businessmen, doctors, artisans, office workers and intellectuals. The camp could hold 750 people. Campagna internment camp, like other Italian camps, received aid from Delasem for a number of different functions, such as establishing a library, a school, a theatre and a small synagogue. Moreover, after the library and the school were established, a camp bulletin was printed and distributed to keep the interned informed on camp news.

To encourage socialising and to improve morale, those interned formed soccer teams that played other teams formed in the camps. In addition, Bogdan Zins, a famous Polish pianist who was interned at the Campagna camp, was seconded by the local Catholics to play the organ at the parish Mass on Sundays.

Medical assistance for the internees at Campagna was under the surveillance of the local doctor Fiorentino Buccella and helped by many interned Jewish doctors.

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310 Ibid.
Furthermore, from September 1940, those interned managed the camp’s canteen. The internees had permission to move around the town of Campagna daily for six hours. Local police, led by police commissioner Eugenio de Paoli and supported by 30 Carabinieri (police officers of a lower rank), maintained camp surveillance, but the relationship between the internees in Campagna camp and the local population was good – sometimes too good, with black market dealings flourishing between internees and the people of Campagna (Figure 12).

Only a few internment camps were built specifically to house this mix of people of different cultures and languages but with a commonality of having a high proportion of Jewish people. Ferramonti di Tarsia’s internment camp in the Calabria region of southern Italy was one such camp, and the largest internment camp in Italy. The camp was established in an area of 16 hectares. There were 92 dormitories built, each in a distinctive ‘U’ shape. Fireplaces heated the dormitories and each had a separate kitchen where the internees cooked and consumed their meals.

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312 Capogreco, pp. 227-229.
314 Ibid.
315 Ibid.
Other buildings at the camp were erected for administration roles, while the camp’s Fascist Commander-in-Chief lived with his family in a separate house. There was a school, a theatre, and a library, while a nursery looked after the many young children interned. And, of course, there was a synagogue. The camp had all the amenities of a typical European town, but the sinister was still present in the form of eight guard boxes located around a perimeter of barbed wire.

Despite the incarceration of Jewish people in internment camps and the government’s inconsistent view of foreign Jewish people in Italy, Delasem’s work intensified after June 1940. Before Italy entered the war, Delasem had requested that non-Italian Jewish people – like, for instance, Ivan Bloch at Ferramonti di Tarsia

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317 Folino, pp. 7-42.
318 Ibid.
319 Ibid.
internment camp, Hugo Wantoch at Campagna internment camp and Walter Reichmann at Isola Gran Sasso internment camp to name a few - remain known to Italian Jews authorities and, as much as possible, to remain centralised to allow Delasem minimal communication disruption.

Despite arrests of Italian and non-Italian Jewish people as a result of Italy’s entry into the Second World War, the government continued to support Delasem in their role of emigrating Jewish people from Italy. However, Delasem still had to follow Italian government directives and it was in the refugees’ interest that the Jewish communities provided financial assistance to increase the number of non-Italian Jewish people leaving Italy by aeroplane to Portugal or Greece before the later too was occupied by German forces.

On 1 August 1940, Dante Almansi wrote to the Italian Jewish communities affirming that he had received a personal account of the experiences of a Jewish internee who was lodged eventually at the Campagna internment camp. The letter provides a rare, detailed description of the events that most non-Italian Jewish people experienced while refugees in Italy. The unnamed man of unknown nationality wrote that he and others left Genoa’s Piazza Principe railway station on 12 July at 1.55 pm. When they stopped at Rome’s railway station a Mr Kleimann, who was part of the group, phoned the local Jewish community office and Delasem but did not succeed in getting through to either. They therefore continued their journey by train from Rome, and overnight, their carriage was placed in a siding that allowed the group to sleep soundly. They arrived at Eboli next day at 3.40 pm. Their trip was pleasant.

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321 Ibid.
322 Ibid.
323 Dante Almansi did not state the internee’s name.
324 Dante Almansi, Delasem, Letter to the Italian Jewish communities, ASCER Rome, 01 August 1940, pp. 1-3.
325 Ibid.
326 Ibid.
and the Italian police that they came into contact with polite. They left the train and boarded a bus to Campagna, each paying Lire 2 for their luggage. The handling of the paperwork in Campagna police station occurred quickly and they were then taken to Saint Bartolommeo’s convent that acted as the internment camp at Campagna. They paid between Lire 1 and Lire 3 to have their luggage carried between Campagna and the camp, the unnamed internee considering the price appropriate considering the steepness of the road to reach their final destination. 327

According to Almansi, the writer of the letter described the surrounding landforms, the accommodation for the group at the camp, the food they ate, the weather, and the treatment they received from others. Each member of the group on arrival received an iron-framed bed, a new mattress, two sheets, a pillow and pillowcase, a warm woollen blanket and a rack where they could place their clothes. The internee reinforced that all those items were new – not second hand. 328 In addition, he stated that the group received a daily allowance of Lire 6.50 from the Italian government that was sufficient 329 considering that they could eat where they wanted and that local food was relatively cheap. Fruit was priced between Lire 0.80 and Lire 1, potatoes at Lire 0.60, bread Lire 1.95 and milk Lire 1.30. 330 The local population and the police in charge of the camp treated them kindly while the conduct of the other internees was very good. The climate and weather was healthy, and they had magnificent views from their accommodation. 331 There was a short roll call at 8 am, 12 pm and 8 pm, and they had a place to bathe and a room where they could pray in the morning and evening. 332

327 Dante Almansi, Delasem, Letter to the Italian Jewish communities, ASCER Rome, 01 August 1940, pp. 1-3.
328 Ibid.
329 Ibid.
330 Ibid.
331 Ibid.
332 Ibid.
Nina Weksler was another non-Italian refugee who wrote about her journey through Italy from Milan to Ferramonti di Tarsia internment camp on 13 February 1941.\textsuperscript{333} Similar to the unnamed man’s journey to Campagna, Weksler stated how the trip to Ferramonti di Tarsia was pleasant and how the authorities treated her and the eleven other Jewish internees with respect during their journey.\textsuperscript{334} Weksler stated that Ferramonti was a place to inter people, but it was very different to the Nazi concentration camps, suggesting that she or someone she knew had experience with German concentration camps. She stated with some mirth that the internees at Ferramonti camp laughed and cried, that people married, and that they made items with the various trades’ tools available. She called it a little town where people lived together and tried to lead normal lives far away from their homelands and the reality of war.\textsuperscript{335}

These letters and the information they hold are significant for comprehending Delasem’s role after June 1940. It was important for Delasem to keep the Italian Jewish communities informed of the foreign Jewish people’s situation from their first arrival in a new land and their journey through Italy to the internment camps.

One must always critique sources such as the two letters described, especially the journey of the unnamed man travelling to Campagna because Delasem could have fabricated it to achieve their aim of distilling more funds from Italian Jewish communities. However, the fact that the description of another journey (Weksler’s) exists that was not mentioned in documents held by Delasem suggests that the treatment of Jewish refugees was good in Italy despite the anti-Jewish rhetoric from Italian government ministers. The letters also suggest the appropriate use of funds and donations to improve the standard of living for the refugees inside the internment camps.

\textsuperscript{333} Nina Weksler, \textit{Con la Gente di Ferramonti, Mille giorni di una giovane ebrea in un campo di concentramento}, Editoriale Progetto 2000, Cosenza, 1992, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{334} Weksler, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{335} Ibid., pp. 7-8.
On 2 August 1940, a Delasem representative wrote \textsuperscript{336} to Ascoli of Rome’s Jewish community. The letter stated that the Italian government’s solution to hold non-Italian Jewish people in camps was actually a positive outcome for Delasem, because the Italian government was providing the Jewish refugees with immediate aid for survival and the people needing assistance were centralised. However, the situation was serious on the financial front.\textsuperscript{337} About 35 non-Italian Jewish individuals were interned in Rome’s jurisdiction, but there were a further 100 Jewish refugees in Rome’s region still requiring assistance. Delasem had to provide a daily allowance and give refugees vouchers to buy soup, bread, and milk. Moreover, the aid organisation had to give non-Italian Jewish people extra money for consular and transit visas.\textsuperscript{338} To make the financial situation worse, Joint had suspended funding to Delasem; in fact, Joint had not sent their usual Lire 5000 for the month of July.\textsuperscript{339} Delasem reinforced the need from the Italian Jewish communities for financial help, hoping for a better outcome for August and trusting that Joint’s funding would arrive shortly. Despite financial difficulties, Delasem hoped that the number of foreign Jewish people interned in Italy and its territories would increase. Providing safety to Jewish people coming from countries occupied by Nazis was a very urgent issue, and Italian Jewish people had to work together ‘per salvare tanti disgraziati’\textsuperscript{340} (to save the life of many unfortunate) Jewish men, women, elderly people and children.\textsuperscript{341}

Unfortunately for Delasem and the Jewish refugees in Italy, the financial situation did not immediately improve. On 7 August 1940, a further letter stated that Delasem would have to close its offices, beginning with their branch office in Rome, if the financial situation did not recover.\textsuperscript{342} Delasem stated in the letter that 200 Jewish

\textsuperscript{336} Delasem, Letter to the President Jewish Community of Rome Aldo Ascoli, ASCER Rome, 02 August 1940, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{337} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{338} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{340} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{341} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{342} Delasem, Letter to the President Jewish Community of Rome Aldo Ascoli, ASCER Rome, 07 August 1940, pp. 1-2.
refugees in Rome would be desperate if closure of their office occurred, hinting that Italian Jewish people in Rome would most likely witness refugees on their doorsteps begging for food if funds to maintain Delasem’s activities were not found immediately. However, there were positives. On 9 August 1940, Almansi wrote to the president of the Rome’s Jewish community describing the encouraging circumstances of Jewish people interned in Campagna camp. Almansi said ‘nella sostanza’ (in substance), contrary to the negative news of the financial struggle, he was affirming that the material situation of the internees was better because Delasem had given the internees an additional Lire 3.50 per day to supplement the Italian government’s standard Lire 6.50 daily. Ascoli responded, confirming that Rome’s Jewish community ‘accoglie con entusiasmo’ (embrace with enthusiasm) the idea of financial aid for the interned Jewish people in the Italian internment camps. Ascoli hoped that the Jewish community of Rome could be used as an example for other Italian Jewish communities, and that maybe other communities could also organise aid collections.

Despite the positives, internees needed more money to survive. Salvatore Gabbai, an internee at Campagna’s internment camp, stated that there were 400 foreign Jewish and 100 Italian Jewish people at the camp. Gabbai confirmed in the letter that all received the Italian government’s Lire 6.50 daily stipend and accommodation, but funds were needed for a camp infirmary and for the purchase of books. Extra money was also needed for clothes and personal expenses, and to assist internees

343 Delasem, Letter to the President Jewish Community of Rome Aldo Ascoli, ASCER Rome, 07 August 1940, pp. 1-2.
344 Ibid., p. 1.
345 Ibid.
346 Ibid.
347 Ibid.
348 Ibid.
349 Ibid.
351 Ibid.
with corresponding with internees in other Italian internment camps. Gabbai finished the letter by discussing the necessity to obtain permission from the Italian authorities for his requests – before Delasem could fulfil them – indicating that the internees were also aware of the politics and processes of their stay in Italy.\textsuperscript{353}

The worsening financial crisis for Delasem and its effect on their ability to assist Jewish refugees resulted in Ascoli contacting the Italian government and asking for permission to send prayer books in Hebrew to the authorities of Italian internment camps for distribution to the internees. Ascoli reinforced the importance for interned Jewish people to be able to celebrate the autumn’s celebrations of ‘Capo d’ Anno e Digiuno di Espiazione’ (New Year – Rosh Hashanah and Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur) and therefore maintaining key aspects of their culture and religion. The government gave permission, but the letter to the government was also most likely a subtle hint to the government by Delasem that funds were lacking and more support was needed.

The decreasing of Delasem’s exodus activities

Delasem’s aid activities altered after Italy entered the Second World War in June 1940. Italy’s declaration of war against France and the British Empire came at a time when the fortunes of the Allies were at their lowest ebb, with France on the verge of surrender and the British Expeditionary Force besieged at Dunkirk and unlikely to survive. If Britain sued for peace the war would have ended with Italy allied with the victorious Germans – but Britain and its Commonwealth did not surrender. Despite being severely weakened, Britain’s survival made aid activities much harder for

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{352} Gabbai, Delasem, Letter to Delasem office of Rome, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{353} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{354} Aldo Ascoli, Delasem, Letter to the Italian Government, ASCER Rome, 05 September 1940, pp. 1-6.
\textsuperscript{355} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{356} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Delasem. In particular, British bases in the west, central and east Mediterranean Sea at Gibraltar, Malta and Egypt respectively and the Royal Navy’s strong Mediterranean fleet made the previously safe removal of Jewish people on ships flying the Italian flag now dangerous, particularly those passing through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the Atlantic.

**Changes in Delasem’s structure**

When the organisation was established on 1 December 1939, Delasem had about 3000 Jewish refugees to assist in Italy. During the first six months of Delasem’s aid operations until 31 May 1940, an average of 2000 Jewish refugees had emigrated monthly. Furthermore, another 2000 Jewish refugees had entered Italian territories seeking assistance. Most of these were from German occupied countries. Their hope was to use Italy as a transit platform, waiting in Genoa to embark overseas towards countries not under German domination. From December 1939 to June 1940, when Italy entered the Second World War as Germany’s ally, the number of Jewish refugees in the Italian peninsula and territories in transit was about 15,000 people. These Jewish refugees successfully emigrated from the country before June 1940 when Italy entered the war.

Italy’s entry into the war resulted in Delasem having to find alternative efficacious exodus routes from Italy for foreign Jewish people. Furthermore, the war caused a shift in Delasem’s focus to assisting non-Italian Jewish people in Italian internment camps. The political climate had changed, but it was essential that Delasem produced a positive outcome for the retention of finding safe countries for Jewish refugees to emigrate to as well as focusing on better accommodation for Jewish people in the internment camps. Refugees had seen Italy as simply a place along the route to

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359 Ibid.
Aiding gli Ebrei

freedom – a stopover – but now there was a strong possibility that they would be staying in Italian camps indefinitely.

Delasem had been established before the war to help foreign Jewish people emigrate from Italy to foreign countries and safety after they had arrived in Italy as refugees. This role continued with Italy’s entry into the war, but now Delasem had to readjust its aims. To maximise its aid activities, Delasem had to divide its organisation into different departments to achieve better aid output. Delasem’s retooling began with establishing six internal departments catering specifically for emigration, finance, clothing, health, education, and morals.  

The departments were able to assist the increasing number of Jewish people now residing indefinitely in Italy. One trend of more foreign Jewish people in Italy was the increased amount of mail to Delasem. Most came from the Jewish people interned, but there was a large amount from overseas. Those interned wanted information about their stay in the camps and news about emigration from the country. Many of these communiqués had an air of concern, for camp internees were aware that the number of Jewish refugees emigrating was decreasing because of the difficulty of Italian ships using the Mediterranean Sea. Delasem now had to deal not only with organising the increasingly difficult migration of Jewish refugees from Italy, but also supporting the thousands of Italian and foreign Jewish people held in internment camps. Every month, Delasem on average received 3500 to 4000 letters and 300 to 400 telegrams while sending between 4000 and 5000 letters and 300 to 400 telegrams. Delasem also made 100 international telephone calls.

Letters or telegrams were the only forms of communication between Delasem and the interned Jewish refugees who were waiting to emigrate from Italian territories.

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361 Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9th November 1941, p. 9.
362 Ibid.
363 Ibid.
As a consequence of this increase of correspondence from Jewish refugees in internment camps that often asked for extra support and assistance, Mussolini granted Valobra and Delasem’s secretary Enrico Luzzato permission to visit internment camps in Italy and to establish better channels of communication between Delasem and Italian and non-Italian interned Jewish people. Valobra and Luzzato visited Ferramonti di Tarsia, Campagna, Isola Gran Sasso, Civitella del Tronto and Urbisaglia internment camps in July 1941.\footnote{Delasem, Office Communication Document, ASCER Rome, 17 November 1941, pp. 1-6.}

Over two days in October 1941, Delasem wrote a long report addressed to all Italian Jewish communities summarising the work performed since the organisation’s establishment. The report also discussed what Delasem still needed to do. It stated that in Italy there were presently 5000 non-Italian Jewish people,\footnote{Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, pp. 1-9.} of which 3000 were accommodated in internment camps. All received financial support from the Italian government. The remaining 2000 non-Italian Jewish people, however, were financially dependent on Delasem. This Delasem document is important in this research because it details the history and the present situation of non-Italian Jews emigration from Italy and Italian territories. The report stated\footnote{Ibid., pp. 9-10.} that Delasem’s operations had expanded to include 65 foreign correspondents who collaborated with Delasem. These people were in European countries,\footnote{The countries included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, Portugal and Spain.} Africa (Morocco), North America (United States), Central America,\footnote{The countries included Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.} South America\footnote{The countries included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru’, Uruguay and Venezuela.} and Asia.\footnote{The countries included the Philippines and China.} Delasem’s foreign representatives had, as their first task, to help Delasem facilitate emigration activities in their country.

\footnotetext[364]{Delasem, Office Communication Document, ASCER Rome, 17 November 1941, pp. 1-6.}
\footnotetext[365]{Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, pp. 1-9.}
\footnotetext[366]{Ibid., pp. 9-10.}
\footnotetext[367]{The countries included Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Poland, Portugal and Spain.}
\footnotetext[368]{The countries included Mexico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.}
\footnotetext[369]{The countries included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru’, Uruguay and Venezuela.}
\footnotetext[370]{The countries included the Philippines and China.}
The letter outlined the continued importance of the two foreign funding organisations in Joint and HICEM.\textsuperscript{371} The mention of the two major financial and emigration support organisations in the letter suggests the solving of the financial crises that Delasem experienced with Joint in 1940, but it is unclear how this was achieved. Joint was still in charge of the general financial coordination of all the funds collected and distributed for the Jewish emigration assistance. In order to understand the financial importance of Joint, the report mentioned that in 1940 the organisation had collected and distributed worldwide 10 million American dollars.\textsuperscript{372} The role of HICEM, which at one stage had their headquarters in Paris, then Brussels, and finally Lisbon in neutral Portugal when the report was drafted, remained unaltered in having the task of finding various emigration opportunities for internees. They, along with Delasem’s correspondents, had the important task of determining a country’s suitability for Jewish refugees. They also assisted with obtaining consular visas for transit and emigration.\textsuperscript{373} HICEM also helped with transport, and if needed, organised financial support for Jewish people. Delasem worked on the emigration task strictly with HICEM, suggesting that they trusted HICEM in this important task.\textsuperscript{374}

Italy’s entry into the war and the difficulties this action posed to transporting refugees in Italian registered ships resulted in Delasem having to finding alternative routes out of Italy for refugees. Lisbon and Portugal was pivotal to Delasem’s emigration activities, for it provided an Atlantic seaboard for the departure of Jewish people, while Portugal itself was neutral (Figure 13).\textsuperscript{375} However, it was unreachable by sea because the voyage took ships past British Gibraltar that controlled the western entry to the Mediterranean Sea.\textsuperscript{376} However, after June 1940, Delasem established two alternatives routes to Lisbon from Italy. First was by railway from

\textsuperscript{371} Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, pp. 30-31.
\textsuperscript{372} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{373} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{374} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid., p. 40.
Turin into Vichy controlled southern France, then to Spain, and then finally Portugal. The other route was by aeroplane with the airline company ‘Ala Littoria’ from Rome to Madrid in Spain and then proceeding to Lisbon by train.\textsuperscript{377} Between 1939 and 1941, Spain permitted 30,000 Jewish refugees to enter its territories from all over Europe.\textsuperscript{378} Most of these Jewish refugees crossed into Spain from France, where they were then permitted to cross Spain and then into Portugal to safety.\textsuperscript{379}

Despite Delasem finding alternative routes to Lisbon, at the end of 1941 the emigration programme to the Portuguese city became extremely difficult. Delasem’s function – arguably their most important function – of transferring Jewish people to Portugal via Spain was terminated as a result of Nazi Germany pressuring Spain regarding the transit of Jewish people through the country. Despite its neutrality during the Second World War, Spain under Fascist dictator Francisco Franco remained in gratitude to the Nazis for the military help his forces received during the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. The German and Italian military directly assisted in a fascist victory. Between 1942 and 1944, the number of Jewish refugees allowed entry into Spain fell, with only 7500 reaching Portugal via Spain.\textsuperscript{380} However, despite the partial closing of the Spanish frontier to Jewish refugees, Delasem and HICEM continued to discover ways to remove Jewish people from Italy to safety. However, with the war’s continuation and foreign countries under varying amounts of pressure to stop Jewish people across their borders, it became increasingly difficult for Delasem and HICEM to provide channels of exodus for non-Italian Jewish people from Italy and its territories.\textsuperscript{381} However, as the emigration task decreased, there was a noticeable increase in the mission of helping non-Italian

\textsuperscript{377} Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, pp. 40-42.
\textsuperscript{378} Marrus, pp. 164- 165.
\textsuperscript{380} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{381} Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, p. 41.
Jewish people now effectively trapped in Italy in either camps or residing with Italian Jews families.

![Figure 13 Jewish refugees in Lisbon boarding a ship taking them to the United States. June 1941](http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/photo/lc/image/16/16213.jpg) [22 October 2015]

Delasem’s main roles during this period mask a number of smaller tasks that improved the lives of Jewish refugees. One assignment was to reunify Jewish families who had arrived in Italy in an uncoordinated manner and subsequently accommodated in different internment camps. This undertaking – which necessitated up to date information regarding the whereabouts of people, had the full approval of the Fascist government. The Fascist government also assisted and supported Delasem regarding the securing of documentation like passports and visa permits for interned Jewish refugees. The Italian internment camp authorities submitted

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382 Jewish refugees in Lisbon boarding a ship that will transport them to the United States, Lisbon, Portugal, June, 1941, [http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/photo/lc/image/16/16213.jpg](http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/photo/lc/image/16/16213.jpg) [22 October 2015].
passports and visas of Jewish refugees to Delasem just before emigration. This arrangement between the Fascist government and Delasem facilitated Delasem’s activities of finding ways for Jewish refugees to emigrate, for often chances to leave Italy appeared in very short windows of opportunity, and slowly organised paperwork could have resulted in internees missing their opening to depart Italy.\(^\text{384}\)

In January 1941, Delasem published a bulletin ‘Comunicazioni d’Ufficio’ (Office Communications).\(^\text{385}\) The bulletin’s function was to keep Italian Jewish communities and Delasem representatives around Italy better informed and up-to-date with the situation of Italian and non-Italian Jewish people in the country. The first printing ran to 1200 copies, and there were 62 further releases of the bulletin over the course of the next three years. Harry Klein was the bulletin’s director of editorial staff.\(^\text{386}\) Each number of the bulletin contained essential information that Jewish people interned in Italian camps had to know about emigrating from the country. This information varied depending on Italy’s stance in the war, the Italian government’s latest policies, and the attitude surrounding countries had to Jewish people from Italy passing through their frontiers. The bulletin contained updates on Delasem’s aid activities in Italy, and acted to remind Jewish people of upcoming religious events. Riccardo Pacifici, the Rabbi of Genoa, usually wrote this section of the bulletin.\(^\text{387}\) The bulletin was Delasem’s voice that kept all Jewish people – either interned or free – informed of events relating to Italian and foreign Jewish people during this period.\(^\text{388}\)

\(^{384}\) Almansi, Letter to the Minister of Interior, p. 8.
\(^{386}\) Ibid.
\(^{387}\) Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, pp. 21-30.
\(^{388}\) Delasem, Office Communication Document, 17 November 1941, pp. 1-6.
Delasem’s activities between June 1941 and September 1943

The downsizing of Delasem’s emigration task at the end of 1941 did not see the organisation’s assistance to Jewish people diminish. Instead, Delasem concentrated more on the well-being of Jewish people – Italian and foreign – in Italy itself. Requests for clothing from Italian Jewish people increased dramatically in 1941 and 1942, while the forced stay of non-Italian Jewish people in Italy required special consideration because they frequently did not have enough essentials. When non-Italian Jewish people arrived in Italy, they often had few possessions because of the hasty manner in which they had left their homeland. In addition, many thought their stay in Italy would be short and that they would emigrate from the country shortly after arrival. Many had suitcases with their own clothing, but their wardrobe was insufficient for an indefinite stay and for the replacement of items due to normal wear and tear. Consequently, Delasem intensified its appeal to all its offices for clothing.

Delasem’s clothing appeal

One of Delasem’s major projects outside of securing transit from Italy was the acquiring of clothing for Jewish refugees. It was the Jewish Ladies’ Committees in the many Italian Jewish communities who took the mantle of gathering clothing. In June 1941, the Ladies’ Committee of Genoa, guided by Naomi Fajrajzen, wrote to Italian Jewish people in their jurisdiction asking for help to achieve the task of finding sufficient clothing for Jewish refugees. With their help, Fajrajzen collected a

390 Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9th November 1941, pp. 21-30.
391 Ibid., pp. 11-13.
large amount of clothing along with Lire 4500 for use to purchase clothes. The leader of the Jewish Ladies’ Committee in Venice, Vanda Sonino, wrote a report to Delasem stating that her region collected a reasonable quantity of clothing but also Lire 500 for the purchase of new or second hand clothes.\textsuperscript{392}

The situation for non-Italian Jewish people in the Venice region was poor, but the drive by the city’s Jewish community is a good example of how different communities around Italy tackled the problem of refugees having insufficient clothing. The Jewish community of the city helped 64 non-Italian Jews families with between three and six members in each family with not only clothing but also the essentials needed to survive while in Italy. The Jewish Ladies’ Committee of Firenze also took up Delasem’s clothing appeal and was able to send a large quantity of clothing, money, religious books and food for religious purposes to Gran Sasso’s internment camp. However, despite the drive, refugees were still short of essentials. Furthermore, it was unlikely that further clothing collections or donations of money for clothing would be as successful as the first appeal given the worsening economic conditions experienced in Italy. The Allies, now joined by the United States and the Soviet Union, were making inroads into Axis held territory in North Africa and the Soviet Union where Italian forces were located resulting in resource shortages affecting Italian civilians.\textsuperscript{393}

\textit{Medical assistance provided by Delasem}

Medical assistance to Jewish people was another task encumbered to Delasem. Delasem appointed Dr Laura Cavaglione as director for the collection of medicine and medical related equipment.\textsuperscript{394} Cavaglione urged Delasem to ask doctors to donate supplies of medicine. She also suggested that Delasem ask Jewish doctors to

\textsuperscript{392} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{393} Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, pp. 11-13.
\textsuperscript{394} Ibid.
produce some of the medicines that non-Jewish doctors could not make. Cavaglione also suggested making Delasem’s office at Genoa the country’s medical repository centre. According to Cavaglione, having Genoa as the hub for medical supplies would allow her and her assistants to coordinate medical support to the entire country. It would also allow the substitution of one medicine for another depending on the need and availability of medicine when there was a shortage.\footnote{Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, p. 12.}

All Italian Jewish communities helped in the task of gathering medicine and medical equipment, for it was recognised universally that medical support was important for the survival of non-Italian Jewish people in camps or for those billeted with Italian Jews families. Giulio Bemporad from the Jewish community at Turin wrote to Delasem’s medical department stating that fifty local Jewish doctors could supply a large amount of medicine.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 11-13.} Elena Sonino, from the Jewish community in Rome, wrote to Delasem stating that they had also collected a reasonable amount of medical supplies and that they had sent them to the Agnone and Ferramonti di Tarsia internment camps.\footnote{Ibid., p. 18.} However, some of the larger internment camps were better off than smaller camps. For example, there were many pharmacists and doctors interned at Ferramonti di Tarsia who established their own camp surgery.\footnote{Ibid.}

Delasem’s aid appeal for non-Italian Jews children

On 17 November 1941, Delasem received a letter from Dr Israele Kalk regarding the collection of aid for foreign Jewish children interned in various Italian internment camps. His letter related to the general population of children in all camps, but was associated specifically with children at Ferramonti di Tarsia (Figure 14).\footnote{Israele Kalk, Delasem, Letter to Delasem, ASCER Rome, 17 November 1941, p. 1.} Kalk wanted to make the organisation aware that he was helping a group of Jewish
children in Milan. As a result of the letter, Delasem urged all Jewish communities to help Kalk assist young Jewish internees and their families. The appeal was successful, with the children receiving extra food and clothing. Kalk personally provided support for the children’s education by employing teachers and providing scholastic material in the classrooms of the internment camps. He also provided funds to heat the classroom at Ferramonti di Tarsia, a feature particularly appreciated by the children with winter approaching.

In May 1942, six months after his initial letter, Kalk wrote again to Delasem about his visit to Ferramonti di Tarsia internment camp. He described the improvements made inside Italy’s largest camp. He also described a tragic incident. According to Kalk, 514 Jewish people had arrived in the camp from the ship Pentcho that had capsized in the Aegean Sea in 1940. Of the 514, 35 were very young children, one only three weeks old and born during the trip to the camp. At the camp, all the children from the Pentcho were provided with evaporated milk, warm clothes and toys. Kalk continued, saying that ‘la gioia dei piccoli e’ indescrivibile’ (the joy of the children was hard to describe) because for most of them it was the first occurrence that they had received toys.

Kalk made Delasem aware that Ferramonti di Tarsia needed more aid. He attached a postcard to the letter to Delasem for sending to Italian Jewish people requesting extra help. The postcard showed the Pentcho’s sinking and some of the horrible conditions experienced by the Jewish survivors. He also attached a photograph showing students and teachers at Ferramonti di Tarsia’s school to demonstrate the

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402 Ibid.
403 Ibid.
405 Ibid.
406 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
407 Ibid.
achievements of the previous financial support to the camp from Italian Jewish people, suggesting that further financial assistance would be used in a similar way.408

Delasem and Kalk worked together and achieved good results for the children inside the internment camps. In October 1942, Delasem and Kalk were able to send aid parcels to all Jewish children and their families interned in the Italian camps.409 Each parcel contained a pair of shoes, clothes, linen, jumpers, socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, children’s games, a bag of candy and books. These items had a practical component and were suitably appropriate for the approaching winter and the camp’s location,410 but the gifts also had enormous psychological value, boosting the spirit of the children and their families alike. 411 Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Pope Pius XII gave Lire 3500 with the papal nuncio, Francesco Borgoncini, to the Jewish interned at Ferramonti di Tarsia.412

410 Ibid.
411 Ibid.
Delasem: re-establishing its role

Since the beginning of 1942, Delasem had remodelled its activities. The Fascist government operated the internment camps, but Delasem strongly influenced the conditions experienced by internees. The organisation provided assistance for 8000 Jewish people interned in 170 Italian camps.414 These people needed not only material support but also religious and morale assistance.415 Despite Delasem’s help, and primarily because they now had little possibility of emigration, morale was low

for foreign Jewish people in Italy.\footnote{Delasem, Letter to the President Jewish Community of Rome Ugo Foa'.} However, Delasem raised morale by providing Jewish prayer books in Hebrew.\footnote{Delasem, Letter to Delasem office Rome, ASCER Rome, 27 September 1940, pp. 1-2.} In addition, Delasem wrote directly to those in authority at the camps asking them to find religious artefacts needed by Jewish internees in their services.\footnote{Reale, p. 150.} The authorities in charge of internment camps provided a room for Jewish people to pray and to celebrate various religious events, particularly the rites associated with the Passover.\footnote{Ibid., p. 149.} Furthermore, the Fascist government gave Delasem approval to allow Rabbis and vice-Rabbis to visit or to stay for short periods in internment camps. Here, they provided Jewish internees with extra morale support. Consequently, some of the camps – Ferramonti di Tarsia an example – also had a synagogue and a full time Rabbi who guided the Jewish internees in their religious life.\footnote{Ibid.} Ferramonti di Tarsia’s synagogue was 35 metres long and had internal timber benches for 400 people.\footnote{Ibid., p. 143.}

Despite the harrowing conditions for all Jewish refugees in Italy, normal life events still occurred, such as traditional Jewish wedding ceremonies.\footnote{Delasem, Office Communication Document, ASCER Rome, 9 February 1942, pp. 1-6.} Non-Italian Jewish people not only married with full Jewish ritual, but also celebrated the event with members of the local Jewish communities.\footnote{Ibid.}

Delasem also provided material for recreational activities. The largest internment camps had libraries with Jewish literature with books in Hebrew – mostly provided by Delasem\footnote{Ibid.} – numbered in order ready for use by the internees on different topics. The libraries – where internees could read and continue their religious life – were used daily by the Jewish internees and managed and supervised by Italian guards. It was a place with materials provided by Delasem, and internees had painting classes
in some of the camps. Michel Fingstein, a painter interned at Ferramonti di Tarsia, helped with painting activities for children and adults.\textsuperscript{425}

Delasem funded the equipment for various sports. The organisation aimed to improve Jewish people’s morale and to help them enjoy, even in uncertain circumstances, their time while in Italy. Jewish internees – mainly those in the internment camps – established table tennis and soccer teams.\textsuperscript{426} Internees trained daily, while competitions were organised against teams inside camps and from sides made of local non-Jewish Italians. To make their sport activities more interesting and stimulating, Delasem provided the winning sides awards and certificates.\textsuperscript{427} The financial and morale support that Delasem provided was vital for non-Italian Jewish refugees.

Summary of Delasem’s role between June 1941 and September 1943

From its foundation on 1 December 1939, Delasem operated as the Italian aid commission for non-Italian Jewish people.\textsuperscript{428} The original prime task of Delasem was to find channels of exodus for Jewish refugees from Italy to other countries that would welcome them.\textsuperscript{429} However, in June 1940, seven months after the organisation’s establishment, Italy entered the Second World War and the task of assisting Jewish people with emigration from Italy diminished because of unsafe conditions in the Mediterranean Sea.\textsuperscript{430} It was impossible for foreign Jewish people

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{426} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{427} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{428} Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the President of Rome’s Jewish Community, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid., pp. 1-6.
\textsuperscript{430} Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9\textsuperscript{th} November 1941, p. 18.
\end{footnotes}
to leave safely and reach countries that were not under the Nazi Regime. The success of Delasem’s aid activities depended on collaboration with the Italian Jewish communities but also with the Italian Fascist government who established and operated internment camps shortly before Italy went to war.431

The task of assisting Jewish people to emigrate was wound down at the beginning of 1941, but Delasem’s role of helping non-Italian Jewish people located with Jewish families and inside internment camps increased.432 Delasem had to help 6000 non-Italian Jewish people now trapped in Italy but, importantly, at the same time the organisation collaborated with the Italian government for helping those refugees to stay in Italy.433 Despite losing its ability to serve its most important role of removing Jewish refugees from an increasingly hostile European continent, Delasem operated from January 1941 – without pause – in embracing different aid tasks. The most important was financial assistance for Jewish refugees, providing clothing, medicine, educational supplies and morale support.434 Delasem undertook these tasks in a precise and direct manner unhindered by the Fascist government. Thanks to this cooperation, Delasem supplied an extensive functional aid role for the survival of non-Italian Jews families who could not return to their country of birth but who at the same time were unable to emigrate from Italy to other countries.435

Delasem’s letter to Joint dated 7 June 1943 – about three months before Mussolini lost power on 3 September 1943 – detailed that there were 10,000 Jewish refugees in Italy mostly interned in Italian camps. The number increased from 6000 to 10,000 when Italy entered the Second World War in June 1940 as Germany’s ally. Delasem specified the citizenship of the Jewish refugees, stating that there were 5000 Yugoslav Jewish, 2000 Polish Jewish and a combined total of 750 among

431 Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9th November 1941, p. 18.
432 Ibid.
433 Ibid.
434 Valobra, Delasem, Letter to the Presidents of Italian Jewish communities, pp. 1-6.
435 Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9th November 1941, p. 9.
Czechoslovakian Jewish, German Jewish and Austrian Jewish. In total, there was a population of 35,000 Jewish people in Italy in 1943.436

**Delasem September 1943 to May 1945**

In January 1943, the Allies made plans to invade Italy and in July 1943 they landed in Sicily and at Salerno on the west coast of the Italian mainland just south of the city of Naples. Following the Allies’ landing, the Grand Fascist Council took power from Mussolini and immediately agreed, on 3 September 1943, to sign an armistice with the Allies under the newly elected Italian Prime Minister General Pietro Badoglio.437 At the same time, the Germans resisted the Italian surrender, with Hitler withdrawing SS divisions from the Soviet front, France and south of Germany, and redeploying them in the occupation of northern Italy. The Germans disarmed the Italian army, and by October 1943, Italy was divided politically and militarily. Southern Italy, including the regions of Sicily, Calabria, and Campania e Puglia, was occupied by the Allies comprising American, British, Canadian, and New Zealander forces. It was here that Badoglio and the Italian King had fled to from Rome after the Germans occupied northern Italy. The northern two thirds of the Italian peninsula, inclusive of the city of Rome, was occupied by the Germans with Mussolini as leader after his re-establishment to Prime Minister by the Germans. However, Mussolini’s new Fascist regime was only a puppet government, meaning that the new political environment was no different to any other European country occupied by the Nazis. It was therefore lethal to those with pro-Jewish views.438

Following the Allies’ invasion, Jewish people in southern Italy’s internment camps including Ferramonti di Tarsia were released, but those in German occupied Italy were less fortunate. The new Fascist government conducted raids on Jewish people’s

homes, including those in Rome with its very large Jewish community. These actions by German SS soldiers resulted in the rounding up and transportation of thousands of Italian and non-Italian Jewish people to Fossoli di Carpi internment camp – established previously by the Fascist government for Allied prisoners of war – near the city of Modena. The camp also served as a gaol for Italians who refused to serve under the puppet Fascist government. Deportation to Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz Nazi concentration camps in northern Germany and occupied Poland respectively followed for these people.

The Nazis’ occupation of northern Italy severely affected Delasem’s operations. Communication between Delasem’s most important centres of Genoa and Rome was impossible. Nonetheless, despite concentrated efforts by the Nazis to capture Jewish people and eliminate those who assisted them, Delasem in Nazi occupied Italy was still able to rescue and organise hiding places for non-Italian Jewish people. Delasem also managed to supply food to these people. Also important was Delasem’s morph into a clandestine network, which was necessary if it was to survive as an organisation. It had to go underground after 8 September 1943 because the Fascist government – who had supported the organisation from 1939 – was fundamentally a puppet government of the Nazis and therefore anti-Semitic.

The Nazis began manhunts for Jewish people in occupied Italy. Delasem continued its role as a Jewish aid organisation in this area, but its aid operations from this time required great courage, psychological intuition and knowledge of different foreign languages. Their activities occurred with the real understanding that their Jewish aid operations could result in the deportation or execution of Delasem officers by the Nazis.

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439 Delasem, Minutes of Delasem’s meeting Genoa, 8-9 November 1941, pp. 1-42.
440 Ibid.
In Rome, the new Nazi-Fascist government occupied Delasem’s offices. The organisation’s documents were removed for analysis or destroyed. Much of the information Delasem had gathered since 1939 to support Jewish people was now most likely used to capture Jewish people, while the census data collected by the Italian government in 1938 gave the Germans unfettered information about the number and location of many Jewish people. With their offices occupied, Delasem – with the assistance of the Roman Catholic Church – was provided access in secret to the Catholic Church’s ‘Convento dei Cappuccini’ (Convent of Capuchins) office in Via Sicilia 159 Rome to perform their operations (Figure 15). Working in secret from the convent, Delasem assisted 1500 non-Italian Jewish people – a remarkable achievement given the circumstances.442

The threat of Nazi persecution applied now not only to Jewish refugees but also to Italian Jewish people. They had lived under the Racial Laws since 1938 but there had been no real threat, but they were now in mortal danger from the Nazi regime. What had occurred to Jewish people in other Nazi occupied European countries was now reality in northern Italy.443

![Figure 15 Convento dei Cappuccini, Via Sicilia 159, Rome, 1943](http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/typo3temp/pics/be1a08c019.jpg)

To maintain connections with foreign countries that supported and funded Delasem (like Joint in the United States) before Nazi occupation, the president of Delasem Lelio Vittorio Valobra and some of his staff moved to neutral Switzerland. The Nazi-Fascist

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442 Tagliacozzo, p. 114.
444 Convento dei Cappuccini, Via Sicilia 159, Rome, 1943, [http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/typo3temp/pics/be1a08c019.jpg](http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/typo3temp/pics/be1a08c019.jpg) [02 March 2015].
government also raided Delasem’s Genoa office. However, despite the raids, many of Delasem’s staff retained their freedom and continued to work uninterrupted but in secret in Genoa.\textsuperscript{445} Because of Delasem’s continuous commitment, the aid work, despite the insecure circumstances in Switzerland, Genoa and Rome, continued. Father Maria Benedetto of the Roman Catholic Capuchin Franciscan order was pivotal during this time for the movement of money and false documents required for Jewish refugees to escape from Italy.\textsuperscript{446}

From Switzerland, Genoa and Rome, Delasem continued its aid work with the support of Christian religious communities, the Italian partisan movement that was formed and who operated against the Nazis, and Italian civilians until the end of German occupation in May 1945.\textsuperscript{447} During the Nazi occupation, Delasem provided Lire 25,000,000 to support 4000 Jewish people of which 1500 were foreigners and 2500 Italians. As a result of Delasem’s aid programme and the support of the above-mentioned organisations, from 1939 to after the Nazi occupation, Italy had one of the highest Holocaust survival rates of any occupied Nazi nation.\textsuperscript{448}

At the end of April 1945, only a few days before the finish of the European war, Delasem organised a conference for all Italian Jews leaders in Zurich. The meeting was called to decide, for the first time after the promulgation of the Racial Laws, the important decisions to be taken regarding problems and the uncertainty for Italian and non-Italian Jewish people in post war Italy. On 8 May 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allies, ending six-years of bloodshed. However, Italy was shattered as a nation and considered a defeated enemy in the eyes of the Allies. As a result, Valobra as an Italian citizen needed permission from the Allies to leave Switzerland on 10 July 1945 and to return to his native Italy. Delasem never stopped operating in Italy during the Allied occupation, but with the return of their president, there followed at first in Genoa and then Rome over the following months a

\textsuperscript{445} Zuccotti, \textit{The Italians and the Holocaust: persecution, rescue and survival}, pp. 113-115.
\textsuperscript{446} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{447} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{448} Zimmerman, \textit{Jews in Italy under the Fascist and Nazi Rule 1922-1945}, p. 1.
reorganisation of the institution ready to begin operations as an aid organisation similar to pre-1943 circumstances. Comparable to the period between 1939 and 1945, Delasem had to adapt to different environments – in this case, its new post-war role to establish contact with and organise help needed for Italian and foreign Jewish people who survived the Second World War.

In May 1946, Delasem decided to wind down its function as a Jewish aid organisation. The liquidation of Delasem was to occur slowly, with the first action the handing to Arthur Greenleigh, the Joint representative for Italy, of a document hidden during the Nazi occupation. It contained the names of 35,000 Jewish refugees that Delasem had helped since the organisation’s establishment in December 1939 (Figure 16).449 However, despite plans to conclude their operations, Delasem continued to assist in organising all requests for Jewish refugees’ emigration from Italy. At first, Delasem was charged to find suitable accommodation for Jewish refugees, needed by those waiting to emigrate back to their home countries and for Italian Jewish people before they could move to their hometowns or cities. In addition, the organisation had to arrange documentation and coordinate people’s departure.450 In many ways, Delasem reverted to a role they enacted in the first six-months of their operation from December 1939 to June 1940. In addition, the Allied military government in Italy after May 1945 created the Displaced Persons Sub-Commission for organising the aid needed by the Jewish refugees in internment camps where most were still living. Later, the Sub-Commission was replaced by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitations Administration (UNRRA) that took on the role of managing internment camps until all Jewish and non-Jewish refugees were relocated. The above organisations slowly adsorbed Delasem’s aid tasks.451 Many of Delasem’s most experienced staff transferred to assist first the Sub-Commission and later UNRRA. May 1948 witnessed the last movement of Jewish refugees from Italy,

450 Ibid.
with the Italian ship, *Luciano Marana*, departing for Palestine with 844 Jewish refugees. The ship’s departure saw the end of Delasem after nine years of activity.  

Figure 16 Joint Distribution Committee representatives visit childcare facilities at a displaced persons camp, Europe, 1945  

453 Joint Distribution Committee representatives; visit childcare facilities at a displaced persons camp, Europe, 1945, [http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/photo/lc/image/02/02617.jpg](http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/photo/lc/image/02/02617.jpg) [22 October 2015]