

HISTORY  
*of the*  
GRAND ORIENT  
*of*  
ITALY

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*edited by*  
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*Freemasonry is a school of liberty,  
of atonement and brotherhood.*

*Ettore Ferrari  
1912*



**There is a human feeling called gratitude.**

**Mine is to Marco Novarino.**

**A master. My mentor.**





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## 4. THE GRAND ORIENT OF ITALY DURING LIBERAL SEASON, FROM NATHAN TO FERRARI

*Emanuela Locci*

### 4.1 Intro

On June 2, 1896, the Constituent of Grand Orient of Italy elects by an overwhelming majority Ernesto Nathan to the Great Mastery. Nathan was born in London on October 5, 1845 to Moses Meyer<sup>401</sup> and Sara Levi.<sup>402</sup> He lived the years of his childhood and training in a distinctly Mazzinian atmosphere, above all thanks to the engagement of his mother, a friend of Mazzini. In the English Nathan mansion, besides Mazzini, was attended by a number of renown personalities from Italian political and intellectual life: Aurelio Saffi, Maurizio Quadrio (who will give the young Ernesto lessons of Latin and French, always in touch with the family),<sup>403</sup> Federico Campanella, Ergisto Bezzi, Scipione Pistrucchi; all exiles and in unsteady material conditions.<sup>404</sup>

Born in a Jewish family, he moved to Italy in 1859, after his father death; in Italy, he contributed with *Unità Italiana* headline. After a brief stay in Lon-

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401 His father, Moses Meyer, born on April 22, 1799, in Rodelheim, near Frankfurt am Main, was a well-to-do merchant and stockbroker, who after long staying in Paris had settled in London, where on July 4, 1850, he had obtained his English citizenship. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ernesto-nathan\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ernesto-nathan_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (November 18 2018)

402 Sara Levi, born in Pesaro on December 7, 1819, was a daughter of Angelo and Ricca Rosselli. After the premature death of the mother was hosted in Livorno by a relative, Emanuele Rosselli, a wealthy merchant with a representative office in London. It was probably he who combined the marriage with Moses Meyer, which was celebrated on May 29, 1836, according to the tradition of Jewish communities that favored unions among coreligionists. The couple settled in London and had, in addition to the five-year-old Ernesto, eleven other sons: David (1839), Henry (1840), Janet (1842), Adolf (1843), Harriet (1847), Joe (1848), Philip (1850), Walter (1852), Alfred (1854), Adah (1856), Beniamino (1859). [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ernesto-nathan\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ernesto-nathan_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (November 18, 2018).

403 Anna Maria Isastia, *Scritti politici di Ernesto Nathan*, Bastogi, Foggia, 1998, p. 94.

404 Ivi, p. 7.

don from 1865 to 1870 (meanwhile, in 1867, he marry Virginia Mieli), he was recalled to the peninsula by Giuseppe Mazzini,<sup>405</sup> willing him in Rome as executive for Roma del popolo magazine. Settled in Rome, in 1888, he obtained Italian citizenship and gathered a broad group of intellectuals.<sup>406</sup> The year after he enters Italian political life by the Republican Party.<sup>407</sup>

## 4.2 Political Line

Beyond his masonic career, the political one is indeed relevant, as city councilor in Rome, from which he resigned in 1890 to protest against the track of Francesco Crispi.<sup>408</sup> He further was a provincial councilor in Pesaro and from 1895 re-elected to the Campidoglio, a post held until 1902. His political achievement led up to his election as mayor of the Eternal City. Nathan is an extraordinary example in the Italian political scenery for his very high moral rigor, grounded essentially on a convinced secular approach to the institution. Thus, from 1907 to 1914, Ernesto Nathan was mayor of Rome, leading a leftist coalition including radicals, republicans, socialists and constitutional democrats.<sup>409</sup> The Chamber of Labor also backed his candidacy.<sup>410</sup> Those were essential years for the close communal history, interested by the improvement of diverse ventures, as the innovation of building policy, the growth of education, citizen participation in the city govern, and the care of public hygiene. Nathan is accountable for the urban master plan, the institution of 16 primary schools, facilities made public, the recovery of the Agro Pontino swamp from malaria.<sup>411</sup> With the end of his term, the government entrusted him with assignments abroad, mostly in England and the United States.<sup>412</sup>

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405 Nathan devoted much of his energy to the dissemination of the works of Giuseppe Mazzini, with whom his family, starting with his mother Sara, had a very close relationship. Mazzini and his supporters were always welcome in the homes of the Nathan family, both in Italy and abroad. Nathan's sister, Giannetta, welcomed Mazzini home in the last days of her life, and here the Italian patriot died, assisted in a loving and filial manner.

406 Vittorio Gnocchini, *L'Italia dei liberi muratori. Brevi biografie di massoni famosi*, Erasmo editore, Roma, 2005, p. 194.

407 Ernesto Nathan, *Noi massoni*, Bastogi, Foggia, 1993, p. 9.

408 See <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-crispi/> (November 18, 2018).

409 He was elected mayor with 60 votes in favor and 12 abstentions, no opposite.

410 Giuseppe Schiavone, *Scritti massonici di Ernesto Nathan*, Bastogi, Foggia, 1998, p. 21.

411 Ernesto Nathan, *Noi massoni*, op. cit., p. 11.

412 Anna Maria Isastia, *Scritti politici di Ernesto Nathan*, op. cit., p. 9.

### 4.3 Masonic Rise

Republican, Mazzinian, mason:<sup>413</sup> these are the cornerstones of his personal, intellectual, political, and corporative resume. Nathan's Masonic career was very quick, he had been affiliated by Adriano Lemmi to "Propaganda Massonica"<sup>414</sup> in Rome on June 24, 1887, and obtained a Master's patent on February 3, 1893. In 1891, the Serenissimo Grande Oriente Spagnolo entitled him as representative and Guarantor of Friendship at the G.O.I. The Italian Obedience corresponded recognizing Nathan as Guarantor, Lemmi and Ballori—as endorsers—stressed the issue that relations between the two Obediences would be ever more firm, to reach the masonic brotherhood, pairing any gap amid men.<sup>415</sup> Same intentions in the missive Nathan sent to the Spanish Obedience, as a gratitude for the designation.<sup>416</sup>

In 1894, we find him I° Grand Watcher and only five years later leading the prominent Italian masonic communion.

### 4.4 Nathan's First Grand Mastery

As Grand Master, Deputy was Ettore Ferrari, another key player in the Italian freemasonic environment. But he remitted his appointment, since the republican belonging of both could have given a marked political bias, a danger for the institution itself.<sup>417</sup> In Nathan, the Grand Orient found the ideal profile, to accomplish the difficult target to lead Italian Freemasonry in the new century, distancing it definitively from that heavy legacy represented by Crispi. As first, merging the inner disagreements, with a view to unity of the Communion. The issues counting masons and still imperative were the fight against clericalism, and the commitment to commemorate the Italian Risorgimento. Beyond that, Nathan was able to indicate other marks: the struggle to dignify human existence and, last but not least, the claim for accountability within the institution.<sup>418</sup> His view-

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413 Please refer to Santi Fedele, *La massoneria italiana tra otto e novecento*, Bastogi, Foggia, 2011, pp. 47–50, for a deepening of the relationship between Masonry and Mazzini.

414 "Masonic Propaganda" [translator's note].

415 *Notizie massoniche*, in "Rivista della Massoneria Italiana", n. 7, year XXII, 1891, p. 108.

416 *Ibidem*.

417 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana. Dal risorgimento al fascismo*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2003, p. 149.

418 Marco Novarino, *Grande Oriente d'Italia. Due secoli di presenza libero muratoria*, Eras-

point on the relation between Freemasonry and civil society is right disclosed in his inaugural address: “è ora, o fratelli, di parlare chiaro ed alto, di ripetere ciò che noi siamo, dove andiamo; è ora che noi, puri di opera e di intendimenti, fughiamo dalla mente degli uomini di buona fede i fantasmi che la malignità cerca di evocare.”<sup>419</sup>

To achieve these goals, Nathan from the very beginning of his office was very near to the various lodges in the Obedience; his travels<sup>420</sup> are often described on G.O.I.'s press, *La Rivista della Massoneria Italiana*, directed by Ulisse Bacci.

Returning to Nathan, it must be emphasized the approach Grand Master has toward political power is detachment. He repelled the acquiescence Obedience had shown toward institutional politics, and his mastery was also defined by the command of a departure from diplomacy. This issue was in sharp discontinuity with the past, represented by Crispi-Lemmi axis, while other features persisted. In particular, the anti-clericalism, Nathan considered one of the pivot of his mastery, is a benchmark of Freemasonry itself, as well as the revival of Risorgimento dimension of the masonic institution. This truly authentically patriotic dimension was a way to restore to Italian Freemasonry an image of full fairness. Its commitment both in the Institution and in the profane world, had to be carried out with two musts: integrity and square dealing.<sup>421</sup>

Back to the dualism masonry-statesmanship, it's remarkable in 1897 political elections Nathan, by a sheet sent to the Council of the Order of February 6, though leaving Brethren free to partake in political life according to their personal convictions, asked probity and properness in form. He also exhorted members to act in preventing reactions (pointing out clericals) from the key positions of Parliament. These general guidelines were then further extended in circular n. 36 of February 13, 1897, expounding the hurdle to overcome: ignorance, reaction, and corruption. Masonry, how-

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mo, Roma, 2006, p. 48.

419 “it is now, Brothers, to speak clear and loud, to restate what we are, where we go; it is now we, pure in deed and intentions, let the ghosts malignity evoke throw off the minds of men of good faith.” [translator's note]. Circular n. 29, June 12, 1896, in “*Rivista della Massoneria Italiana*”, 1896, year XXVII, pp. 129–130.

420 *Un'ultim'ora. Il Gran Maestro in viaggio*, in “*Rivista della Massoneria Italiana*”, n. 17–20, anno XXVII, 1896, p. 316.

421 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 150.



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ever, must care not to be dragged into political struggles cause if you let the “porta quello che si chiama indirizzo politico, vedrebbe uscire dalla finestra la concordia, la fratellanza, l’unità di intendimenti e di azione. La massoneria deve rimanere indipendente dagli uomini, dalle fazioni e dai governi.”<sup>422</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church attacked masonry in those years; indeed, the struggle against the masons and their endeavors has been one of the great issues in Catholic propaganda throughout the nineteenth century in a methodical manner; the masonic question was intertwined with the loss of secular power. Therefore, Freemasonry was imputable for the Italian revolution, whose acme was the fall of Rome.<sup>423</sup>

Moreover, Freemasonry takes it upon oneself that amid its purposes, there was the contrast to clericalism and the Catholic Church. This struggle was only the prelude to reach the actual civil renewal of the country.<sup>424</sup> The Catholic Church could not remain defenseless before a pressing danger. Pope Leo XIII decided to eradicate this danger by gathering some cardinals, members of the *Congregazione degli affari ecclesiastici straordinari*,<sup>425</sup> to whom he asked for advice about a plot to combat Freemasonry.

The outcome then was the encyclical *Humanum genus* of 1884, as just the first in a series of pronouncements and condemnations of Freemasonry in Italy, whose reaction was fast and the strife against the Catholic Church stated as one of the institution's priorities in all areas of civil society. A struggle without quarter for both sides, aimed at the annihilation of the adversary. This was the scenery Nathan found at his very assignment, even worsened by his Jewish origins. At the base of anti-Semitic campaigns, Freemasonry and Judaism were often associated with all the possible duskiness. According to the Catholic press, Nathan was the embodiment of

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422 “politics enter the door, you will see harmony, fraternity, agreement of intentions and action come out of the window. Masonry must remain autonomous from men, parties and governments” [translator’s note]. Circular n. 36, febbraio 13, 1897, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, 1897, year XXVIII, pp. 49–52.

423 The taking of Rome, also known as the breach of Porta Pia, was the episode of the Risorgimento, which sanctioned the annexation of Rome to the Kingdom of Italy. Happened on September 20, 1870, decreed the end of the Papal State as a historical-political entity and a moment of profound revolution in the management of temporal power by the popes.

424 Giovanni Miccoli, *Leone XIII e la massoneria*, in Gian Mario Cazzaniga (a cura), *Storia d’Italia, Annali 21, La massoneria*, Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino, 2006, p. 195.

425 “Congregation of extraordinary ecclesiastical affairs” [translator’s note].

a link affirmed for years. So, at the dawn of Nathan mastery, clericals enhanced their efforts. This situation forced personalities, as MP Giovanni Bovio, to take the defense of the Institution; indeed, Bovio went further, accusing the Society of Jesus<sup>426</sup> of being a sect, mighty and far more dangerous than Freemasonry. The dialectic clash is fair moreover in Italy the anti-masonic bias was also investing other areas, even secular, political, and media. At the June 1896 meeting, the Grand Master drew the attention of the leaders of the Grand Orient of Italy to the attacks the Institution was suffering from parliament. Thus, he proposes to write an open letter, to be published in major newspapers, to share the pillars on which Masonry is founded, which its aims. Meanwhile, Leo XIII, after careful attempts and propaganda, in 1896 promotes the international anti-masonic congress held in Trento, “posto sotto la protezione di Maria Vergine, di San Michele Arcangelo e di Sant’Agostino”,<sup>427</sup> numbering 1,500 entrants.<sup>428</sup> The summits of the Catholic anti-masonic friary, led by Prince Guglielmo Alliata, president of the Unione Antimassonica Universale<sup>429</sup>—founded in 1893—were called upon the Congress. Beyond the specific presences, the location was not random; during 1545–1563 had been the beacon of Catholicism in the fight against Calvinism and Lutheranism. Thus, the city, in an ideal comparison in the fight against heresies—first represented by Calvinist and Lutheran doctrines, after by the secular-masonic ones—was chosen as a bulwark of confession. This concept is well expressed by the columns of “Osservatore Romano” in August 4, 1896: “Nessuna località, meglio di Trento poteva essere più adatta per un congresso anti-massonico. Tre secoli or sono, nella medesima città, un altro consesso di illustri personaggi si radunava a combattere la Massoneria d’allora ... d’allora in poi le idee sovversive contro le idee di Gesù Cristo, fecero strada e nella nuova manifes-

426 The Society of Jesus is a religious Order of regular clerics, founded in the fifteenth century by St. Ignatius of Loyola, whose members are commonly called “Jesuits” by the name of Jesus. The title of “company” comes from the order the military genius of founder himself imprinted on it. For more information, see [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/compagnia-di-gesu\\_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/compagnia-di-gesu_%28Enciclopedia-Italiana%29/) (August 21, 2018).

427 “placed under the protection of the Virgin Mary, of St. Michael the Archangel and of St. Augustine” [translator’s note]. Marco Novarino, *Progresso e tradizione libero muratoria. Storia del rito simbolico italiano (1859–1925)*, Angelo Pontecorboli Editore, Firenze, 2007, p. 129.

428 Rosario Francesco Esposito, *La massoneria e l’Italia. Dal 1800 ai giorni nostri*, Edizioni Paoline, Roma, 1979, p. 253.

429 “Universal Antimasonic Union” [translator’s note].

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tazione di sette massoniche si è perpetuata la guerra alla Chiesa, depositaria infallibile delle sacrosante verità della nostra fede”.<sup>430</sup>

Trento had also been chosen since its belonging to Austria, where masonry had been banned. The Congress also aimed to strengthen the Church, overcoming internal friction that undermined its unity. The four points discussed during the conference: masonic doctrine, masonic drive, prayer, and anti-masonic action. The appointment was strongly backed by Catholic coteries all over the world, witnesses by allegiance from 568 localities, expressed by 1098 associations, 33 cardinals, and 209 bishops.<sup>431</sup> The media coverage of the event impressive thought the epoch. The Grand Master, in circular n. 32 of September 1896, explicit the position of Italian Freemasonry facing Trento meet. First of all, clear appears a disapproval to the Pope neglectful of the Gospel “ingiuria e predica lo sterminio, fino alla radice”<sup>432</sup> of men only willing common welfare. Nathan deplores the conduct of men who, under religious dress, do not shy away from a dishonest and unfair war. Masons are slandered, threatened, assaulted, because the enemies (the Church) see in the Institution a barrier, “un baluardo formidabile contro la vagheggiata restaurazione del suo dominio sui corpi e sulle menti”.<sup>433</sup>

Even the not strictly clerical press was thrown at Freemasonry, the renown article by Romualdo Bonfaldini—former MP, State councilor, then senator, chairman of Press Guild and editor of “Corriere della Sera”—published at the beginning October 1896. Here, the author, besides referring to the Congress of Trento, addresses directly the Grand Master by words biased by the Freemasonry disrepute built on unproved facts, bearer of “influenze che apparvero ostili alla morale del paese”.<sup>434</sup> Moreover, according to the

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430 “No place, better than Trento could be more suitable for an anti-Masonic congress. Three centuries ago, in the same city, another group of illustrious personalities gathered to fight Freemasonry of the time ...from then onwards the subversive ideas against the ideas of Jesus Christ, made their way and, in the new embodiment of masonic sects, the war against the Church has been kept alive, an infallible depository of the inviolable truth of our faith” [translator’s note].

431 Rosario Francesco Esposito, *La massoneria e l’Italia*, op. cit., p. 254.

432 “to insult and preach the extermination, to the root” [translator’s note].

433 “a formidable bulwark against the dreamed restoration of its dominion over bodies and minds” [translator’s note]. Circular n. 32, September 15, 1896, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, 1896, year XXVII, pp. 210–211.

434 “influences that appeared hostile to the morals of the country” [translator’s note]. *Una opportuna risposta*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n. 17–20, anno XXVII,

author “la massoneria odierna non può essere e non è popolare in Italia, perché il mistero personale di cui si circonda. ... Offre troppe occasioni di pensare come all’Istituzione degenerata premano più i vantaggi dei suoi adepti che le ragioni della giustizia.”<sup>435</sup>

Nathan replied by pointing at issue: first of all, Freemasonry does not fight the criterions of Catholicism, except the dogma of faultlessness and of Popes' temporal power. The GM returns to the old accusations moved to the Institution on favoritism, greed, and immorality, firmly declaring it does everything in its power to dislodge those stakeholders in the structure.<sup>436</sup> Over and over again, Nathan was forced to return publicly to these topics, chiefly on the contrast between Freemasonry and the Church, each time trying to clarify its stance.<sup>437</sup>

A theme of mutual clash has been that of teaching Catholic religion in school. Masons willed an education prone to form free men, not tied to any dogma; Church indeed, stating Catholicism has always been a founding issue in Italian culture, claimed religion to be taught at school.<sup>438</sup>

At the end of 1896, Nathan, in continuity with Lmimi's plot, posed the need for the Institution to amply its presence in the government and bureaucracy, to keep its finger on the pulse on some main matters concerning State and its executive.<sup>439</sup> Moreover, the need to seal against clericalism and prevent Catholics meddling in local administrations, encouraged masons to engage more decisively in elections. Beyond this commitment, G.O.I. was at the forefront on people's liberty and self-determination,<sup>440</sup> especially in 1897, and through Ettore Ferrari, busily rooted the struggle for indepen-

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1896, p. 280.

435 “today's Freemasonry can not be and is not popular in Italy, because of the personal gloom surrounding it [ ... ] It offers too many opportunities to think as to a degenerate Institution more rewarding the advantages of its followers than the reasons of justice” [translator's note]. *Ibidem*.

436 Ivi, p. 282.

437 *Intendiamoci*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n. 16–18, year XXVIII, 1897, pp. 241–244.

438 Marco Novarino, *Progresso e tradizione libero muratoria. Storia del rito simbolico italiano (1859–1925)*, Angelo Pontecorboli Editore, Firenze, 2007, p. 128.

439 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 152.

440 Emanuela Locci, *La solidarietà tra popoli e garibaldini. Le spedizioni in terra ottomana*, in Pierpaolo Merlin (edited), *Solidarietà antiche e moderne. Un percorso storico*, Carocci editore, Roma, 2017, p. 106.

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dence of Heraklion from the Ottoman domination. The masonic channels were very active on this cause; the Grand Orient of Greece sent a circular to the Obediences worldwide,<sup>441</sup> Italians responded with heartfelt words, which recalled the brotherhood among mankind and allegiance to the tenet of solidarity amid people, especially those oppressed.

Ernesto Nathan further face another problem: dissident groups raising in the G.O.I.

At the Orient of Naples some lodges, “La Vittoria,”<sup>442</sup> and “I figli di Garibaldi,”<sup>443</sup> decided to rebel against the government of the Order and—according to the Constitutions—the Grand Orient, to protect the masonic togetherness, decided to demolish these<sup>444</sup> and expelling the Brethren who had awakening the turmoil within.<sup>445</sup>

Beyond Naples, the Obedience had to deal with another internal issues on unity: some lodges of Milan were further in disagreement with Rome offices because of Lemmi conduction, specifically his intimacy with Crispi—reputed one of the greatest doers of the Banca Romana disgrace.<sup>446</sup> The dissidents led by Malachia de Cristoforis,<sup>447</sup> after a short time, established in Obbedienza with the name of the Italian Grand Orient<sup>448</sup> gaining inter-

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441 *Notizie massoniche dalla comunione*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n. 4, year XXVIII, 1897, p. 60.

442 “Victory” [translator’s note].

443 “Garibaldi’s sons” [translator’s note].

444 ASGOI, *Decreto* n. 97, August 25, 1897.

445 ASGOI, *Decreto* n. 98, August 25, 1897.

446 The scandal of the Banca Romana was a political–financial case of national importance at the center of the chronicles in 1892–1894 having as its central issue the discovery of the illicit activity of its governor in the previous decade. Council presidents, ministers, parliamentarians, and journalists were involved. Despite the gravity of the charge, the trials led to the acquittal of the accused. Even for Francesco Crispi, specially involved, the political consequences were minimal.

447 Malachia de Cristoforis was born in Milan in 1832, by Giovan Battista and Giovanna Adelaide Rota. An Italian patriot, doctor, and politician. He was a deputy and then a senator in the Senate of the Kingdom of Italy. It was initiated to Freemasonry on August 12, 1875, in “La Ragione” [Reason] of Milan, at the Obedience of G.O.I. For further information, see: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/malachia-de-cristoforis\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/malachia-de-cristoforis_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (August 22, 2018).

448 For further information, see: Marco Novarino, *Progresso e tradizione libero muratoria. Storia del rito simbolico italiano (1859–1925)*, Angelo Pontecorboli Editore, Firenze, 2007, pp. 122–126.

national recognition by the Grand Orient of France, earning an unprecedented success. Nathan tried to recover relations with the Milanese lodges, but the scenery worsened further and soon to the original protester joined ateliers from Liguria, Tuscany, and Sicily. After the French confirmation, Nathan had only to shut with the French of the Grand Orient<sup>449</sup> and to expel the dissenting lodges.<sup>450</sup>

As seen, many of the hurdles Nathan was overwhelmed by came from Lemmi mastery, namely the bond G.O.I. had with Crispi. On April 24, 1898, the Council of the Order was called to express on the request for Crispi expulsion submitted by a bund of lodges. Here, Nathan considered a mediation and proposed to regard Crispi as mason in “sleep”; it was approved an agenda that indeed proposed to quit with a discharge.

Problems didn't end anyway: brand new were to come. 1898 was an extremely difficult year for Italy, both from a social and financial side. This out-came in popular riots bloodily repressed. The Grand Orient of Italy kept away from political and street clashes, but did support the many destitute by meal dispensation and basic supplies. After May 8, 1898—the state of siege proclaimed in the most tumultuous areas—the works of the lodges dangerously located were suspended and freemasons asked to “ricostituire la calma negli animi.”<sup>451</sup> Nathan also asked Brethren to intervene where possible, arranging popular kitchens or bread distribution to the neediest, before hunger reaped the first victims, even considering institutional measures would have been obviously dilatory.<sup>452</sup> More, lodges were urged to form a committee to check foodstuffs so as to survey the price trends of basic supplies to prevent speculation.<sup>453</sup>

Despite the factual arbitration, the headmen of G.O.I. decidedly rejected to support the protest, in an anti-government key. Fairly, in the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century Italy, Nathan's conduct imprinted by political separation actually unfolded with substantial prop to the government and its actions. No surprise, appraising the first Pelloux ministry numbered five initiated ministers (Camillo Finocchiaro-Aprile, Guido Bacelli, Pietro

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449 Missive, Ernesto Nathan, May 14, 1898.

450 ASGOI, *Decreto* n. 107, May 6, 1898.

451 “bring calm in the minds” [translator’s note].

452 Circular January 19 1898, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, year 1898, XXIX, p. 4.

453 *Atti ufficiali della comunione italiana*, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n. 17–20, year XXIX, 1898, p. 258.

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Lacava,<sup>454</sup> Alessandro Fortis and Nunzio Nasi), and an undersecretary of state (Gaspare Colosimo).

In 1899, the constituent assembly of Rome approved the new Constitutions, endorsing Nathan again. The year after the Junta was renewed: Ettore Ferrari (Deputy Grand Master), Antonio Cefaly<sup>455</sup> (Grand Secretary), Alessandro Aleggiani (Treasurer), Federico Fabbri (Orator), Silvano Lemmi (First Superintendent), Umberto Dalmedico (Second Superintendent).

In 1900, on the ballot appointment, after a general assessment, Nathan had the lodges sent an invitation to “costituire al proprio interno una commissione per la organizzazione delle forze liberali in guisa da assicurare loro il predominio nelle amministrazioni delle valli.”<sup>456</sup>

The unprecedented results obtained in the term of 1902 by liberal and democratic political groups and the retirement—by the Chamber of Deputies—of the proposed law on divorce, a topic close to Freemasonry—the involvement in a judicial affair of Tullio Murri,<sup>457</sup> where he later achieved in proving the absolute noninvolvement of him and the Institution, induced Ernesto Nathan and his junta to resign, also to prompt a new mode.

So, the first Grand Mastery of Nathan ended due to his resignation in

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454 Pietro Lacava was born in Corleto Perticara, Basilicata, on October 21, 1835, by Giuseppe Domenico and Brigida Francolino. His father was a lawyer of liberal ideas, who played an important part in the revolutionary movement in 1848 and then in the Lucan insurrection of 1860. He was a patriot and a leading politician, holding numerous government posts. For more information, see: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-lacava\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-lacava_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/) (August 20, 2018).

455 Antonio Cefaly was born in Cortale in 1850 and was for a long time an illustrious political exponent of his city. In 1882, he was elected deputy; in 1898, he was appointed senator, playing important roles. There is no certain fact about his Masonic initiation, but he was a member of the “Tommaso Campanella” lodge in 1894. He held many posts in G.O.I. In 1900, he denied the Masonic membership of King Umberto I. He died in Rome in 1928.

456 “set up a committee to organize the liberal forces to guarantee them premiership in the guidance of the valleys” [translator’s note]. Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 167.

457 The Murri affair was a fact of chronicle of 1902, at the beginning of the Giolittian age, with a wide resonance on public audience, ending with the condemnation for complicity of Linda Murri with his brother Tullio for the murder of the husband Count Francesco Bonmartini.

1903,<sup>458</sup> the Deputy GM Ettore Ferrari replaces him till the ballot,<sup>459</sup> though the masonic career of Nathan is not over: we will find him again at the helm of the preeminent Italian Masonic communion from 1917 to 1919.

In early assessment, during his Grand Mastery, Nathan endowed G.O.I. with new headquarters, Palazzo Giustiniani,<sup>460</sup> a place with a torn history.<sup>461</sup> Already three years before, in 1898, the Grand Orient of Italy had rented the building belonging to Grazioli family and made its base on April 21, 1901, taking the name “Masoneria di Palazzo Giustiniani.” During the installment, he delivered a speech aimed to depict what Masonry embodied, its profile, its issues. Particular emphasis was on the bond of brotherhood that unites Masons worldwide, despite the gaps distinguishing national Obediences.<sup>462</sup>

As for the mass of Obedience, Nathan asserted G.O.I. numbered 182 lodges (actually operative were 150).

The geographical allotment was as follows: 38 lodges in northern Italy, 54 in the center, 26 in the south, 22 in the islands, and 36 ateliers abroad. Many lodges in this period were straitened, so a comedown of fees and taxes was approved. This way, and remedying the insolvency, conditions could have been created even commoners could access the Institution. Indeed, during this period, there was a substantial increase in initiations. Unfortunately, the complete minutes of all the lodges have not yet survived (there are few kept in the archives, some incomplete), thus isn't easy to determine sharply the actual numerical consistency of the Italian communion. Approaching a quantitative analysis of the numerical thickness during Nathan's leadership,

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458 Circular n. 45, November 15, 1903, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, 1903, year XXXIV, pp. 260–261.

459 Circular n. 46, December 23, 1903, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, 1903, year XXXIV, pp. 291–292.

460 Ernesto Nathan, *Noi massoni*, op. cit., p. 12.

461 At the beginning of 1926, Mussolini regime, after outlawing Freemasonry, acquired the building to the public domain and granted its use to the Senate, after the war followed a litigation quitted in amicable settlement for half a century, thus the branch of building overlooking Piazza della Rotonda remained in the availability of Freemasonry. Only in 1985, the Senate was able to dispose of almost the entire building, thanks to an agreement following which Freemasonry moved its headquarters to the Vascello manor on the Janiculum hill.

462 Ernesto Nathan, *La massoneria, sua azione, suoi fini*, Stabilimento tipografico Civelli, Roma, 1901, p. 6.



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at first it might seem the Obedience has not grown. The situation is actually a bit more tangled: even if the full number is almost equal to the Lemmi period, we have to count 12 lodges merged together in Orients such as Livorno, Turin, Catania, and Siracusa. On the number of affiliates, there are no whole references to investigate; indeed, there are pleas for affiliations from priests, nobles, commoners, professionals, landowners, scientists, and other figures.

Shortly before the end of his work, the asset of the Order was a matter of confront. The Grand Master emphasized the time had come for Masonry to provide for the shielding of its patrimony, by a mandatory juridical capacity to be able to defend itself more effectively from defamation and slanders of its detractors. After a certain debate, the Junta was commissioned by the Grand Orient to compose a commission with the task of studying its juridical profile, without incurring, for the Institution, to the loss of its tradition and its rules.<sup>463</sup>

Probing Nathan's mastery, we often come across his speeches where usually from a definition of Masonry, he repute it a lifelong transforming institution. "Essa si muove e cammina con lo spirito dei tempi, non si fossilizza neppure nelle regole e nelle manifestazioni esterne che circoscrivono e distinguono il suo incedere".<sup>464</sup> More, what Nathan was interested in transmitting in and out from the Order were:

- Universal Masonry means the moral, intellectual, and material improvement of mankind. Freemasonry is one, but stands out in national, allied and supportive Communions across the globe.
- A national Masonic Authority leads the Italian Communion. It has the motto: freedom, equality, brotherhood, and is gathered under the traditional cosmopolitan formula A.G.D.G.A.D.U..
- The number of freemasons is unlimited. They mutually call Brethen: they do not mind gaps in their origins, classes, beliefs, and social conditions, and they distinguish one another only by degrees and offices in the Order. Training and assistance are mandatory engagements one to

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463 Adunanza del consiglio dell'Ordine, in "Rivista della Massoneria Italiana", n. 9–12. Year XXXIV, 1903, pp. 130–132.

464 "moves and walks with the spirit of the times, it does not even become settled in the plots and outer signs that confine and distinguish its progress" [translator's note]. Giuseppe Schiavone, *Gli scritti massonici*, op. cit., p. 41.

another, within the limits of right and honest. They contract any commitment in the partnership with the promise on their honor and on their conscience.

- The lodges are governed by a unitary power called the Grand Orient of Italy and is chaired by a Grand Master.<sup>465</sup>

Fundamental to Nathan, the concept of patriotism, issue he defined in a speech of April 21, 1900 “il patriottismo è vissuto come dimensione sacrale, come fede nella religione civile dell’italianità”.<sup>466</sup> Here, he further confirmed patriotism should be the core of the commitment Freemasonry lavished on civil society. Patriotism therefore had to be above politics, but at the same time transversally present. The action of Freemasonry is thus prime: doing everything in its power to return to Italy, to its undeceive or unconcerned citizens, the conscience and faith of the worth of debate. Here, Freemasonry has a dual function, patriotic and educational. Hence, also the heartfelt appeal of the Grand Master to avoid internal schisms, to uplift Freemasonry from politics and to unite all the fair and liberal men of any party, focusing them on a program with a pillar, the fight against clericalism and corruption.<sup>467</sup> Anyway, both the national and the internal unity were called to the Institution, though a scissure that raged on the board of officers rending in two: a radical-republican minority forwarding a line of anti-ministerial, mentioning Antonio Maffi, Salvatore Barzilai, Ettore Ferrari, etc.; the other, larger and moderate faction, instead advocated the idea of an absolute closeness to politics, to keep of the internal unity. Beyond Nathan, part of this was Alessandro Fortis, Camillo Finocchiaro-Aprile, Achille Ballori, and Antonio Cefaly. In spite of this divergence, however, ideological and historical items kept G.O.I. together and were rooted in being masons and Masonry. One was the ideal link between Freemasonry and the unitary state descending from the Risorgimento struggles. No one ever questioned this tie, nor the institutional set-up or the policy expressed by the government. Nor did anyone question the monarchy, not even when, on July 29, 1900, King Umberto I was assassinated by the anarchist Gaetano Bresci.<sup>468</sup> The Grand Orient of Italy promptly condemned the crime,

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465 Ivi, p. 135.

466 “patriotism is lived as a sacral dimension, as faith in the civilized religion of Italian attitude” [translator’s note].

467 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 162.

468 Gaetano Bresci (Coiano, Prato, 1869—Penitentiary of Santo Stefano 1901). Weaver,

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by Nathan is described as “un delitto che con la sua selvaggia impotenza, calunnia e deturpa di fango il nome della patria al cospetto del mondo”.<sup>469</sup> Beyond the message of mere reproach of the criminal act itself, the facts gave Nathan the chance to state more strongly two basic concepts for masonry: patriotism and loyalty to the monarchy. Looking at foreign diplomacy, Nathan was always very active towards other Obediences, especially those subdued to overwhelming empires. Even during Ferrari mastery, he was always engaged in keeping relations with troubled Obediences since subjected to repression by the Hapsburg Empire or other crowns. When WWI broke out in 1914, Nathan strongly wanted Italy to go to war alongside the Allies; the annihilation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the crowning of the Italian Risorgimento affair. Undisputedly, Ernesto Nathan left a decisive mark in Italian Freemasonry during his leadership, especially in the first term.

#### 4.5 From Ernesto Nathan to Ettore Ferrari

With decree n. 151, Nathan convened for Sunday, February 14, the General Assembly, for the election of his next<sup>470</sup> lasting from February 14 to 17, 1904, gathering 132 lodges and 11 upper bodies of the Scottish Rite which unanimously elected (139 votes) the successor of Nathan: Ettore Ferrari.<sup>471</sup> The proclamation, made by the former Grand Master, is covered by the applause of the Assembly. On the proposal of Ferrari, Nathan is proclaimed Honorary Past Grand Master.<sup>472</sup>

With this election “Dalla mano ferrea di Adriano Lemmi e di Ernesto Nathan il maglietta passava in quella vellutata di Ettore Ferrari”.<sup>473</sup> He will

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migrated to Americas, where he linked with groups of anarchists, returned home in June 1900 in order to kill King Umberto I. The monarch had already escaped two attacks, carried out by the anarchists Giovanni Passannante and Pietro Acciarito, but with Bresci had no escape. Sentenced to life imprisonment, the official version wants him to take his life a year later in his cell. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gaetano-bresci/> (July 18, 2018).

469 “a crime that with its savage impotence, slanders and spoils mud on homeland reputation in the world” [translator’s note]. Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 163.

470 Decreto n. 151, in “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana”, n.17–18, 1903, p. 262.

471 Ettore Passalupi Ferrari, *Le muse e la politica*, Edimond, Città di Castello, p. 254.

472 Ivi, p. 255.

473 “From the iron hand of Adriano Lemmi and Ernesto Nathan the mallet went into

lead the Grand Orient of Italy from 1904 until 1917, fundamental years for the history of Italian obedience. Ferrari was born in Rome on March 25, 1845, and trained as sculptor and to art in general by his father, Filippo. In 1867, he took part in the failed insurrection attempt that was to break out in Rome against the papal government. In June 1877, he was elected city councilor of Rome, brought by the Circle of Fine Arts and the newspaper “Il Popolo Romano”.<sup>474</sup> He kept the office, except for a brief interruption, until 1907. Among his first initiatives, there was a proposal for the building of Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Via Nazionale. MP by the electoral college of Perugia from 1882 to 1892, Ferrari sat in Parliament on the banks of the extreme democratic left and—straight Republican—always refused to meet the King and, coherently, in 1919, he rejected the nomination as life senator by minister Francesco Saverio Nitti. The artistic fame of Ettore Ferrari is due to two monuments, both in Rome: Giordano Bruno installed in Campo de' Fiori on 9 June 1889 with a massive public rally, and Giuseppe Mazzini of 1902–1911 on the Aventine,<sup>475</sup> but only placed in 1949.<sup>476</sup>

Returning to his Masonic career, it began in summer of 1881 on a proposal by Ulisse Bacci<sup>477</sup> in “Rienzi” lodge of Rome where he was Worshipful in 1892. Four years later, he became Grand Secretary with Adriano Lemmi and then Ernesto Nathan to whom he always remained amicably bound. GM Ettore Ferrari had a quite different idea, compared to that of Nathan on the role of Freemasonry in the civil society. He advocated the idea, and since its entry into Freemasonry had fought to achieve it, the Institution had to play a more active role in both homeland and foreign politics. Moreover, his inaugural address, pronounced on February 14, 1904, left no doubt about his will. He affirmed: “la massoneria non deve tenersi costantemente isolata e nell’ombra, ma scendere a contatto della

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that velvety one of Ettore Ferrari” [translator’s note]. Rosario Francesco Esposito, *La massoneria e l’Italia*, op. cit., p. 309.

474 “Roman’s Folk” [translator’s note].

475 <https://tinyurl.com/yccmb35x> (August 7, 2018).

476 Vittorio Gnocchini, *L’Italia dei liberi muratori*, op. cit., p. 120.

477 Ulisse Bacci was born near Florence in 1846, joined the Masonry in 1867 to become also General Secretary of the Grand Orient of Italy. In 1872, he became head of the magazine “Rivista della Massoneria Italiana.” Of Republican orientation, in the pages of his paper he directed, stated for a non-confessional school and for the introduction of divorce in the Italian legal system. He wrote some texts of patriotic and anticlerical orientation and the book *Il libro del massone italiano* [*Handbook of Italian mason*]. He died in Rome in 1935.

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vita, combattere alla luce del sole le sante battaglie dell'alta sua missione per la tutela della giustizia e per la grande educazione. Nuovi bisogni presentano nuovi problemi; nuovi problemi esigono nuove soluzioni; da nuovi doveri scaturiscono nuovi diritti: la massoneria non può, non deve chiudere gli occhi alla nuova luce, ma fissarla, scrutarla e dirigerla. Non deve cullarsi in teorie astratte, per quanto nobili ed elevate: ma affrontare i problemi dell'attualità in cui siamo concordi, rin vigorirsi nella soluzione degli interessi che alimentano la vita dei popoli".<sup>478</sup> In short, Masonry, to the new Grand Master, had to "get his hands dirty" in forming the society it was in.

Therefore, beyond the traditional matter of anti-clericalism and secular-ity of education, never adrift, the Grand Master called the Institution to a greater sensitivity and commitment to issues such as: social and labor lawmaking,<sup>479</sup> the institution of a body as peacemaker in the disputes between states; another subject dear to Ferrari was solidarity amid people, compelling in the case of countries fighting for independence and self-determination, as in the aforementioned Greek case of the island of Heraklion. In 1905, the Grand Orient of Italy fiercely objected against the repression of liberal movements in Russia, calling masons to unity against despotism.<sup>480</sup> The disastrous situation in Russia began with the war against Japan for Manchuria settlement. The continuous defeats put a strain on Russia and the Tsar's power was questioned by the masses pressing for the end of the war and the spread of civil liberties. In January 1905, a rally led by an Orthodox priest was going peacefully to the Tsar's palace to request a meeting and petition. The tsarist army opened fire, reaping several victims. The massacre brought down the liability of the monarch and dissent spread to many areas of Russia.

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478 "Masonry should not keep itself constantly isolated and in the shadows, but to come into contact with life, to fight openly the holy battles of its high mission for the protection of justice and for great education. New needs present new problems; new problems demand new solutions; new duties arise from new duties: Freemasonry cannot, must not shut its eyes to the new light, but fix it, scrutinize it and direct it. He must not lull itself into abstract theories, however noble and elevated: but to front the issues of current affairs we agree, to invigorate oneself in the solution of the interests which nourish the life of people" [translator's note]. *Marco Novarino, Grande Oriente d'Italia*, op. cit., p. 50.

479 This issues are deepened in circular n. 49, *La parola del Gran Maestro*, in "Rivista della Massoneria Italiana", n. 3-6, 1904, p. 34.

480 *Informazioni, Per la Russia*, in "Rivista Massonica" n. 5-6, 1906, pp. 275-276.

These waves of protests had wide echoes both in the lodges indeed also in the ranks of the left<sup>481</sup> discarding awhile-internal disagreements to focus on the fight for human rights. Freemasonry led by Ferrari did not remain deaf to Russian facts and at the end of January, the Grand Master and his Junta responded to the Russian massacre by approving a statement: “la massoneria italiana, che con l’ideale e con il sangue edificò la libertà della patria e combatté in ogni tempo le battaglie della giustizia e della redenzione umana, alza un grido di degno per la cieca barbarie e le stragi orrende, con cui il despotismo teocratico in Russia risponde al popolo, che inerme chiede il suo diritto; ed invita tutti i centri massonici ed i fratelli di ogni terra a dar voti e a fare opere, perché quel diritto sia riconosciuto, e sulle rovine del privilegio, si affermi ancora una conquista del progresso civile.”<sup>482</sup>

The mobilization of G.O.I. lodges had no precedents in the history of Freemasonry, the acts backing rebels are not limited to messages of solidarity, but they carried out initiative concerning the “profane” world in which the lodges had however a significant role. Under Ferrari mastery, then, the democratic turn of masonry was accomplished, flaunted by the new junta numbering outstanding members by the radical party as: Adolfo Engel (Deputy Grand Master), Gustavo Canti (Secretary), Rosario Bentivegna (Second Superintendent); a progressive liberal like Alessandro Aleghiani (Treasurer) and a Giolitti rooter as Giovanni Camera (Orator), MP and future undersecretary for finance in the Giolitti executive. Achille de Giovanni (First Superintendent), defeated in the electoral contest with Ferrari for the Grand Mastery, was also part of it. The democratic turning point was highlighted by the introduction, in the Constitutions of Obedience, of a note in article 1: the democratic principle of the political and social order.<sup>483</sup>

481 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria*, op. cit., p. 173.

482 “Italian masonry—which with the ideal and with blood built freedom of the country and fought every time the battles of justice and human redemption—raises a cry of disdain for the blind barbarity and the horrendous massacres, whom the theocratic despotism in Russia responds to the people, helpless asking for their right; and invites all the masonic centers and the Brethren of every land to vote and to act, so that right is recognized, and on the ruins of the privilege, a conquest of civil progress could still be affirmed” [translator’s note]. *La solidarietà di Ettore Ferrari per i rivoluzionari russi del 1905*, in Anna Maria Isastia (a cura), *Il progetto liberal-democratico di Ettore Ferrari*, Angeli, Milano, 1997, pp. 217–232.

483 Fulvio Conti, *Massoneria e sfera pubblica nell’Italia liberale, 1859–1914*, in Gian Mario Cazzaniga (edited), *Storia d’Italia, la massoneria*, op. cit., p. 606.

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This change had almost immediately positive outcome in the masonic field. First of all, Ferrari collected the rapprochement of the Milan team leading the split during Nathan office. Distancing features had vanished, so the idea of the uselessness of two separate Obediences began to be conceived. After some ineffective notices, in November 1904 an agreement decreeing the merge in G.O.I. of the Italian Grand Orient of Malachia De Cristoforis was signed, leading to the original obedience 36 lodges, 27 in Italy and 9 abroad. After this return, relations with the French freemasons of the Grand Orient were resumed; two definitely positive events for Ferrari mastery: *in primis*, the democratic inspiration of the Italian Masonic communion was stressed by the work of the Milanese lodges and *in secundis*, abroad, relations with one of the most illustrious. Obediences worldwide were resumed: the Grand Orient of France. In the same period, a narrow Sicilian protester group, the Sicilian Grand Orient of Palermo, entered the ranks of G.O.I., bringing some lodges founded on the island. Then, almost all the Italian masonry was united under the aegis of the Grand Orient of Italy.

While it seemed to run towards growth in terms of numbers and widespread acceptance, fronted unexpected problems. The first was the scandal involving the deputy Nunzio Nasi,<sup>484</sup> charged of embezzling for having seized large sums of state money during his political offices for personal use and to benefit his constituency. Not to undergo the trial, he took refuge first in Paris and then in London. When back in Italy, he was sentenced and his election deleted. From the Institution viewpoint yet again public opinion could associate its reputation to the corruption of one of its members, thus Nasi was subjected to a Masonic trial, judging him guilty and decreeing his expulsion. The political; parable of Nasi, however, did not stop with this “accident on the way” since by the protests of his faithful electorate was exculpated and readmitted to the Chamber of Deputies in 1913, elected both in Trapani and in Palermo, and re-elected in 1919 and in 1921, when he joined the Social Democracy. In the session of the House of November 16, 1922, during the debate on the confidence to the Mussolini government after the march on Rome, he held an acute speech, foreshadowing the anti-democratic and totalitarian nature of Fascism. In 1924 he applied against the fascist plank and was re-elected on the “Labor Democracy” list.

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484 Nunzio Nasi was born in Trapani in 1850; professor of political economy was an academic at the University of Palermo. He was a Masonic Master from 1893. From 1900 until 1902, he was head of the Grand Lodge of Symbolic Rite. A prominent national politician, he was minister of public education in 1901 in Zanardelli executive.

He joined the Aventine, and in 1926 was declared decayed by the regime, with other dissident deputies.

He died in Erice in 1939.

Another serious problem was related to the tie amid Freemasonry and the Socialist Party.<sup>485</sup> Within this, in 1904, the voices against the masonic membership grounded and the instance to state the mismatch between the party and the affiliation to Freemasonry began to develop. A bunch in the party, the most conservative one, called for an internal referendum in 1905 raising the issue and providing the expulsion in case of masonic belonging. The Grand Master, aware of this, installed a commission with the task of verifying, within the single lodges, the effects that a positive response in the referendum could have had.<sup>486</sup> After verifying the actual presence of socialists among the columns of his temples, he informed the summits of Obedience they were but a few, and almost all questioned stated they wouldn't leave masonry. Anyway, the issue of socialism / Freemasonry did not resolve, was repeated indeed in all the socialist boards up to 1914.<sup>487</sup> Actually, the results of the socialist referendum did not wrong Grand Master's predictions: the small number of voters (11.776 out of 37.921) meant the base did not perceive the issue. The very outcome was the socialist hostility, bringing out the voters—even numerically narrow—disclosed they considered unsuitable socialism and masonry.

Also in the Republican Party, where Ettore Ferrari and other important members of Freemasonry belonged, a debate broke out on the plot of the socialist one. After lively discussions, we came to the conclusion that “crediamo che l'appartenere alla massoneria non costituisca un atto di incompatibilità o di indegnità per un repubblicano per la semplicissima ragione che siamo convinti che i principi fondamentali e animatori di questa associazione mondiale sono in armonia coi principi democratici e repubblicani.”<sup>488</sup>

485 For further information on socialism and Freemasonry, see Marco Novarino, *Compagni e liberi muratori. Socialismo e massoneria dalla nascita del Psi alla grande guerra*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli, 2015.

486 Marco Novarino, *Compagni e liberi muratori*, op. cit., p. 69.

487 Marco Novarino, *Massoneria e movimento operaio e socialista*, in Santi Fedele, Giovanni Greco (edited), *Massoneria ed Europa*, op. cit., p. 98.

488 “we believe that belonging to Freemasonry does not constitute an act of incompatibility or unworthiness for a republican for the very simple reason we are convinced the fundamental principles and animators of this world association are in harmony with



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Besides these debates, triggering entourage close to masonry answering the “political-secular” attack and also to place the masonic issues toward the Catholic Church—about to play an increasing role within the civil society by an alliance with conservatives, an alliance troubling Italian masonic chairmen seeing the positions of the enduring “enemy” toughened by new detractors—Masonry did not remain restful. Ettore Ferrari prompted a Commission gathering Ernesto Nathan, Salvatore Barzilai,<sup>489</sup> Emanuele Paternò di Sessa,<sup>490</sup> Agostino Berenini,<sup>491</sup> and Dario Cassuto<sup>492</sup> to draft a document that would give to all Masons firm guidelines. The results summed up in a circular by the Grand Master pointing out the peremptory refusal of any agreement with the Catholics and the prohibition for masons to deal with them under elections, penalty the expulsion from Obedience. Freemasonry leaders, while recognizing the freedom of feat in the political parties, censored this to be acted with clerical enemies.<sup>493</sup>

This stance, although firm, was almost immediately disregarded in 1906 elections, when some masons of Turin, in the civic term, allied with the Catholics. These—even if “in sleep”—were expelled since the Grand Master’s dispositions made no exceptions. The choice, reputed by many parties too rigid, had immediate effect the resignation from the Board of Antonio Cefaly, in protest. The serious decision, however, was also warn within the Obedience, there was a certain turmoil and dissent to the track followed by Ferrari. In fact, the debate on the political line into the Grand Orient

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democratic and republican principles” [translator’s note]. Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 176.

489 Salvatore Barzilai was born in Trieste in 1860, was a lawyer, politician, activist in the Republican Party, and Minister. His Masonic career began in 1886 in “Universo” [*Universe*] loggia in the Orient of Rome.

490 Emanuele Paternò di Sessa was born in Palermo in 1847, of noble origins, became a famous chemist and taught first in Palermo and later in Rome. The exact date of his Masonic initiation is unknown, he was ordered Master in a lodge of Palermo in 1889.

491 Agostino Berenini was born in Milan in 1812, surgeon, politician and patriot, friend of Cattaneo, was amid the heads of the Five Days of Milan. In 1860, it was among the men who backed Garibaldi to the expedition of the Thousand. It was initiated in Freemasonry in 1866 toward “Progresso Sociale” [*Social Progress*] in Florence. Deputy in the VII legislature headed the extreme left and the radical party. He died in 1886.

492 Dario Cassuto, born in Livorno in 1846, was a lawyer and politician and became a senator. It was initiated to Freemasonry in the lodge of his hometown named after Giordano Bruno, on an uncertain date. In 1899, he was elected councilor of the Order. He died in 1920.

493 *La parola del governo dell’Ordine*, in “Rivista Massonica” n. 9, novembre 1905, p. 387.

was about to come and a proposal by three politicized lodges (“Popolo Sovrano” [*Sovereign People*] of Turin, “Avvenire Sociale” [*Social Advent*] in Reggio Calabria e Cisalpina-Carlo Cattaneo in Milan) was supported. It consisted of a partial adjustment in the first article of the Constitutions, the new text told: Italian communion advocates the democratic principle of the political and social order.

From this, the Obedience shown how preeminent the democratic front was, defining the will of most of the Italian masons of the Grand Orient, and by this, it felt entitled to give even more firmness to its purposes. Following this mandate in 1906, Ferrari invited the lodges to comment on two central issues: universal suffrage and the burden of primary school teachings to the state. On both fronts, Ferrari intended to mobilize the country and the political camps. During this period, there was also a rapprochement with the socialist party, hoping to mend the relations between. Freemasonry decided to take a closer look at the issue of cooperative associations and of social housing, dear both to democrats and socialists.

So Freemasonry was engaged on several fronts, even new, but hadn't drop its anti-clerical vocation; proving the endurance on this issue, voted a harsh censure against one of its leading exponent, Alessandro Fortis who—in an electoral speech—declared that there was no longer a clerical danger in Italy, opposite to what was stated by G.O.I. more annoyed by the coalitions of clerical and moderate working side by side. This position of Ferrari, so rigid and unwilling to welcome colliding voices, gave rise to a current invoking the return to “initiatory tradition and statutes.” This minority remained unheard; lodges were called to act in the front line and masons in first person to built “popular blocs”—electoral alliances between the progressive parties—which had as a direct effect the birth of many leftist administrations.<sup>494</sup> One of the most striking results of the “blockade policy” was the election of Nathan as Mayor of Rome in 1907.

Freemasonry and left-wing parties had common programmatic points that acted as binders in the chance of political agreements, one of these was the topic of secular teaching in schools, so that growing illiteracy would be overcome. Obviously, the convergence on such these issue was considered bearing issues in the strengthening of the secular state.

The battle for a lay school, however, did not see all the Italian freemasons

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494 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 179.

agree with the line from the summits of Obedience; the most conservative fringe of the Grand Orient of Italy, already shown its vision in 1906, began to organize a wider movement of internal dissent, carrying to the great masonic crisis of 1908.

#### 4.6 The Schism, the Birth of the Great Lodge of Italy

Cutting back the dynamics of the split in the G.O.I., the spark started precisely from the secularization of schools. Leonida Bissolati, a socialist deputy, filed a motion in the Chamber of Deputies against religious education in primary schools. Presented in 1907, was however discussed in 1908. Shortly before the parliamentary debate, Ferrari decided to write to all Masonic MPs to suggest a positive vote on the motion.<sup>495</sup> The motion was though rejected even thanks to the vote of some masonic deputies—not once but twice: another deputy, Vittorio Moschini, presented in turn a motion, with the same substantial content but with a less sharp architecture. Giovanni Giolitti had publicly impeded this; well aware, it would have negative consequences in bonds with Catholics. From a political viewpoint, the rejection was attributed to the scarce political plot of Bissolati, not testing the very chance of victory.

The disapproval determined a strong disdain among the columns of Italian communion. Ettore Ferrari, who had spent so much about, decided to take disciplinary measures against those who had not voted the motion, actually ditching it. “Guilty” deputies were thus expelled from the communion on Article 129 of the Constitutions.<sup>496</sup> According to the results of an internal investigation in Parliament, there were 38 Masonic deputies, whose 17 backed Moschini, 11 voted against, and 10 were absent. This internal problem overlaid another one, the unification of Rites, here the Great Lodge of the Symbolic Rite was favorable, while the Supreme Council of the 33 was against. Saverio Fera, at that time Sovereign Grand Commander of the S.R.A.A., opposed the Order's decision to take action against unwilling members. This was actually a war declaration against Ettore Ferrari, his junta, and his management. Fera replaced the resigning members of the Council with others of his own trust and assumed the defense of the deputies. This dramatic situation was consummated on the eve of an important masonic meeting: the General Assembly for the year 1908. Here, was the as-

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495 *Penosi doveri*, in “*Rivista Massonica*” n. 3–6, 1908, pp. 50–52.

496 Marco Novarino, *Progresso e tradizione*, op. cit., p. 175.

assessment of Obedience, an absolutely positive one with a growth of G.O.I. that passed from 195 lodges of 1904–301 in 1907, whose 251 belonged to the Scottish Rite and 50 to the Symbolic one. Two hundred and sixty-six lodges were on Italian territory while 35 abroad. In addition, 71 triangles were established, including 65 of Scottish rite and 6 of Italian Symbolic Rite.<sup>497</sup> Scanning the numbers, the Grand Orient was going through an unprecedented phase of development, with a fairly homogeneous geographical spread, with the foundation of lodges in territories until then outside the Masonic circuit. During the General Assembly, frequent references were made to the Fera affair and the MEPs under investigation. Rosario Bentiveglia declared in resolute terms, it was mandatory to continue on the line proposed by Ferrari, aiming higher: forming an anti-clerical political block, to direct the parliament toward the ends shared by Freemasonry, deleting all political, social, and religious opportunism. The reference to Fera and the dissident masonic deputies was evident. Fera reacted to these criticisms with disciplinary measures on masons and entire lodges, within the framework of S.R.A.A. The situation became even more severe when in June 1908, Ferrari supported by Ernesto Nathan managed to resume the leadership of the Supreme Council and give Achille Ballori (previously resigned) back its leadership. Fera's reaction was fast and fierce: at the beginning of July 1908 spread a decree declaring G.O.I. irregular and asked all lodges belonging to the Scottish Rite to rely upon the Supreme Council.<sup>498</sup> As an immediate response, Ferrari reunited the Grand Orient Committee in an extraordinary and urgent session and decreed the expulsion of Fera and all upholding Brethren .

From that moment began the dispute between the new Obedience founded by Fera, the Grand Lodge of Italy and the Grand Orient of Italy for the recognition as the only legitimate masonic Communion in Italy by foreign Obediences. Moreover, the decision to G.O.I. and found another masonic communion was the result of years of veiled internal dissensions, always alive, between a strongly progressive anti-clerical faction—, seeing in Ferrari, more than in Nathan, its champion—and a minority faction, liberal though conservative.

This split, however harsh for inbound matters and international recognitions, was not that messy on a quantitative level. In August 1908, Ferrari

497 *Una circolare del Gran Maestro*, in “Rivista Massonica” n. 7–8, 1908, p. 146.

498 *Informazioni*, in “Rivista Massonica” n. 11–12, 1908, p. 285.

published a circular describing the situation regarding the split: nine lodges had left the Grand Orient of Italy, the “XX Settembre” [*XX September*] in Florence (Fera was the Worshipful), the “Anglia” of Naples, the “XX Settembre” of Formia, the “Charitas” from Misilmeri, and the Palermo lodges “Giorgio Washington,” “Risveglio” [*Awakening*], “Sicilia Risorta” [*Risen Sicily*], “Palermo” and “Sondesmos.” Two upper bodies of the Rite, the Chapter of Palermo and the Areopagus of Reggio Calabria,<sup>499</sup> also left the Supreme Council. The new Obedience settled in Piazza del Gesù; amid its personalities, we mention—beyond Saverio Fera himself—, John Chamber, John Miranda, Leonardo Ricciardi, Francesco Pellicano, Cesare Pastore, Enrico Pegna, Carlo Ferretti, Theofilo Gay, Costantino Gregorio Carelli, Leonardo Bianchi, Giovanni Francica Nava, Giovanni Ameglio, Enrico Presutti.<sup>500</sup> After a few months, Dario Cassuto, Raoul Vittorio Palermi,<sup>501</sup> Arturo Vecchini, Temistocle Zona, Alessandro Delli Paoli, and Giovanni Lavanga were also expelled.

The Grand Master of G.O.I., with some satisfaction, said: the attempt of the secessionists is completely and miserably failed,<sup>502</sup> but many years to come, the two Obediences continuously revived the digits.

In 1909, the Grand Orient of Italy with its 15,000 members was one of the mightiest communions in the European masonic scenery. More, almost as a proof of the excellent state of health enjoyed by Obedience, also thanks to the income of more modest social classes, Palazzo Giustiniani was acquired.

#### 4.7 Freemasonry and Political Life

This new democratic vocation had produced an exponential development of forces and human resources, but few realized that an overly “civil-political” bias could have distorted the Obedience for what concerned its masonic tradition. The political line held by Ferrari allowed in-

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499 Rosario Francesco Esposito, *La massoneria e l'Italia*, op. cit., p. 323.

500 Some of these masons, Francica Nava, Ameglio, and Bianchi, returned to their decisions and moved back to the ranks of G.O.I.

501 Raoul Vittorio Palermi was born in Florence on May 20, 1864, in a wealthy family. There is little information about his youth, but in the second part of his life, he played an important role in some domestic political events. He began in Freemasonry and was one of the key-players of the birth of the Gran Loggia d'Italia (GLI), Obedience he led from 1919 to 1925. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/raoul-vittorio-palermi\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/raoul-vittorio-palermi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (August 7, 2018).

502 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria*, op. cit., p. 187.

deed Freemasonry to have a primary role in political decisions, or a strong influence in governmental life, but at the same time, this media overexposure was a source of conflict that eventually weakened Italian Communion, as the attacks the Institution suffered from the socialists, who had not downsized their idea of Freemasonry, indeed far from it. Socialists began to think Masonry with its proper vocation to overcome social classes mischanced the proletariat issues; it was therefore mandatory to separate Masonry and socialism. This vision had been carried on for years, since the beginning of the century, but in the Socialist Congress of 1910, the incompatibility topic was re-proposed, through two agendas, one by Gaetano Salvemini.<sup>503</sup> This motion—inviting all not Freemasons socialists not to embrace the Obedience and those already belonging to egress—, had 6,606 votes.

The situation re-emerged two years later with the Congress of the party in Reggio Emilia, where the issue was at the center of the debate. Benito Mussolini supported the agenda declaring the Masonic institution had to be defied cause it “portatrice di quella politica bloccarda che deforma i caratteri specifici dei partiti politici”.<sup>504</sup>

In both the dates, the legal number of consents necessary to validate the statement was failed, thus the question was postponed to the Congress of 1914.

But the winds opposed to Freemasonry were not just mounting within the Socialist Party, even within the Republican Party, they distanced from the Institution, explicitly in 1912 during its meeting in Ancona. According to the most unrelenting wing, Freemasonry was responsible—with its stuck

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503 Gaetano Salvemini, historian and politician (Molfetta 1873—Sorrento 1957). Joined the PSI, he deepened his reflections on the link between socialism and the southern question, criticizing the tendency towards northern worker protectionism. The attention to nation issues led him to argue with the government of Giovanni Giolitti. He directed, with Antonio De Viti De Marco, the weekly “L’Unità,” through which he acted a profound influence on the political debate. Interventionist in 1915, he was a deputy in 1919. In 1925 he founded the anti-Fascist clandestine daily “Non mollare!” [*Do not give up!*]. Arrested, expatriated in France, where he was amid the founders of *Giustizia e Libertà* [*Justice and Freedom*], and then in the United States. From 1933, he taught Italian history at Harvard University, then assumed the U.S. citizenship. Back home, in 1948 was reinstated in Florence. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gaetano-salvemini/> (August 7, 2018).

504 “was the bearer of that blockade policy that deforms the specific characteristics of political parties” [translator’s note]. Marco Novarino, *Grande Oriente d’Italia*, op. cit., p. 55.

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plot by the trend to compromise amid similar political entities—of the loss of republican identity. The removal was there, but not the statement of discordance; so much so that in 1913 Eugenio Chiesa,<sup>505</sup> a Republican MP, was initiated in a lodge of G.O.I. The Catholic Church itself would have played a fundamental role in the excited exile years of the Grand Orient of Italy.

From now on Freemasonry had to officially shield from socialists, albeit not them only. From many parts, G.O.I. was appointed of scarce patriotism. These charge, the masonic summits rejected as defamatory, referred to the matter of the war in Tripolitania in 1911. Then, masons who in the Italian lodges of the Ottoman Empire had asked the leaders of G.O.I. to intervene with the Italian government to avoid a humiliation of the Empire. Italian Freemasonry declared the Tripoli enterprise was essential for Italy. If something could be done, it would have to before: it was late, the weapons had already been taken; otherwise, it would have sounded as an attack against the interests and dignity of Italy. The patriotic position of Italian Freemasonry was fair, first the interests of the Fatherland, and for it the principle of brotherhood solidarity was sacrificed. The Grand Orient of Italy, moreover, had been openly in favor of Italian intervention in Libya, for a range of reasons, from the economic to the social and descending from the “civilization” Italy could bring into this territory. To Masonry, the Italian presence was remarkable, diverse lodges were founded, both at the Obedience of G.O.I. and the fresh Grande Loggia d'Italia.

Although the Grand Orient of Italy was variously engaged, its leaders managed to organize an important event, the 1911 International Congress.<sup>506</sup> Welcoming 2000 Masons from all the Italian districts and delegates of 21 foreign Obediences, was organized for September 20 at the National Theater of Rome. During the afternoon, a procession with 300 Masonic vessels passed through the streets from Palazzo Giustiniani. The central topics were: the anti-clergy action of Freemasonry; public charity; essence and boundaries of solidarity among Brethren of universal Freemasonry; the

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505 Eugenio Chiesa, was a prominent politician before the advent of fascism; he was born in Milan on November 18, 1863, militated since youth in the Republican party. He was a deputy from 1903 to 1926, the year when he had to flee from Italy since the fascist persecution of Freemasonry.

506 *Informazioni. Congresso massonico universale*, in “Rivista Massonica” n. 1–4, 1911, pp. 72–77.

merger of ceremonies, gestures, signs, words concerning the first three degrees of Masonry worldwide.<sup>507</sup>

In May 1912, Ferrari was reconfirmed at the head of the Italian Communion; there—two Piedmontese lodges, the “Dante Alighieri,” and the “Cavour”—reissued the theme of female Masonic belonging. Even in this case, it did not go beyond pledge, the question wasn't addressed properly and no progress was made.<sup>508</sup> At the Constituent, the Grand Master presented a balance sheet on the asset of the Communion. Again the budget was more than flattering; there were 431 lodges and 131 Triangles. The discussion heated on the unification of the Rites, the S.R.A.A., and the Italian Symbolic, but no final determining was reached. More to the confirmation of Ettore Ferrari as Grand Master, the new Junta was elected, with Gustavo Canti Deputy Grand Master and Alberto Beneduce, Alberto La Pegna, Gino Bandini, Carlo Berlenda, Pellegrino Ascarelli. Beneduce was assigned the trust to hold relations with the Political Commission within the Council of the Order numbering Malachia de Cristoforis, Adolfo Engel,<sup>509</sup> Giovanni Ciraolo, Giovanni Antonio Vanni, Salvatore Barzilai, Agostino Berenini, Mario Chiaraviglio, and Teodoro Mayer.<sup>510</sup>

The new Junta gave a renewed impulse to the path always supported by Ferrari, and looked with interest at the new scenario from the broadening of male suffrage. The Grand Orient did not minimize the impact the new electorate—essentially of laborers and peasants—could have on the ballots. By Masonry, these were under the influence by the Catholic Church. Thus, Beneduce drew up a list of measures necessary to counter clerical forces. First, the dissemination of popular education; the reform of taxes, the local ones mostly. The vocation of initiatives was popular: to approach the “base.” Furthermore, the agricultural problem had to be solved, especially in southern Italy, and to think of workers' pensions. In October 1912, Gino Bandini promoted the institution of a defined structure to coordinate the Masonic activities during the terms: a central masonic committee was

507 Rosario Francesco Esposito, *La massoneria e l'Italia*, op. cit., p. 326.

508 See Emanuela Locci, *Storia della massoneria femminile. Dalle corporazioni alle obbedienze*, BastogiLibri, Roma, 2017, pp. 105–138.

509 Adolfo Engel was born in 1851, was an engineer and politician in the ranks of the Radicals. Initiated at the Freemasonry in 1884 in Milanese “La Ragione,” over the course of his Masonic career, he played roles of primary importance, both in the Grand Orient and in the Scottish Rite. He died in Rome in 1913.

510 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 225.



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established, that would gather the numerous committees at local level. A real war machine, although Ferrari, worried this overexposure could damage the Institution, didn't agree. In case of victory, there would be a risk of weakening the parties close to the Institution, in case of defeat, the Masonry could have become the main scapegoat. The works began, thanks also to Barzilai, who hastened to reassure Ferrari of the absolute confidentiality that would protect the work of the Grand Orient. In this span, so rich in initiatives—see the contribution of G.O.I. in the birth of the Banca Nazionale delle Casse Rurali—the Institution had to cope with the controversy due to the resignation of Gustavo Fara, war hero who had distinguished himself in Eritrea and in Libya.

Not that much his resignation, as his past masonic membership raised the question, in some newspapers, of the influence Institution had in the army and in the magistracy. The words to describe Masonry were textually: Masonic Octopus.<sup>511</sup> Paolo Spingardi,<sup>512</sup> minister of war, pronounced very harsh words toward Freemasonry but did not support the discordance between political offices and Masonic affiliation.

G.O.I. reacted immediately to these attacks and rejected as absurd and ridiculous the hypothesis the Masonic belonging could create duties opposite to the discipline of the military hierarchy.<sup>513</sup>

As if the situation was not already deranged, the Italian Masonic Communion handled also the hostility by nationalists; actually not new, though worsened.<sup>514</sup> Luigi Federzoni,<sup>515</sup> leader of the nationalists, declared it was

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511 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 228.

512 Count Paolo Spingardi (Felizzano 1845–Acqui 1918) was a General, professor at the School of War (1886–1887), was also undersecretary (1903) and then (1909–1914) four times Minister of War. Called back into service in 1915, he was chaired by the central commission of prisoners. He was also a deputy (1904), and a senator (1909). <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/spingardi-paolo-conte/> (August 8, 2018).

513 *Informazioni. Adunanza del Grande Oriente*, in “Rivista Massonica”, n. 9–10, 1913, pp. 219–223.

514 *La parola del Gran Maestro*, in “Rivista Massonica” n. 15–16, 1913, p. 347.

515 Luigi Federzoni (Bologna 1878–Rome 1967). Political man and writer, leader of the Italian nationalist movement and founder of its organ, *L'idea nazionale* [The national idea] (1911), deputy in 1913, interventionist and highly decorated, in the first post-war period. He supported the fusion of the nationalists in the Fascist Party, was later Minister of the colonies (until June 16, 1925), of the inner affairs and again of the colonies (6 November 1926–18 December 1928). Senator since 1928, he held the presidency of the Senate from 1929 to 1939 and the Accademia d'Italia from 1938 to

mandatory to erase definitively the leverage Masonry exercised on Italian civil society. Patriots saw in the Institution all the evil according to their ideology: bourgeois reformism, cosmopolitan humanitarianism; the last in particular thought preventing the raise of national hegemony. For its part, G.O.I. believed nationalism was paroxysmal patriotism and it would only harm the nation. The situation appeared to fall in 1913 when G.O.I. refused to participate in a confront with nationalists, whose reaction was to indict an investigation into Freemasonry. Many public figures were called to express an opinion on the Institution and many—from Benedetto Croce,<sup>516</sup> to Pasquale Villari,<sup>517</sup> and Giovanni Amendola<sup>518</sup>—were not positive. The only voice that arose in defense of Freemasonry was that of Ivanoe Bonomi,<sup>519</sup> who openly declared the attitude on Freemasonry was absolutely persecutory. Beyond the single statements, the inquiry itself had quite other meanings, the summit of the Grand Orient realized such an

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1943. In 1943, he pronounced against Mussolini in the session of the Grand Council on July 25. <http://www.interno.gov.it/it/luigi-federzoni> (August 8, 2018).

- 516 Benedetto Croce (Pescasseroli, February 25, 1866–Naples, November 20, 1952) was a philosopher and historian and although he did not lack critics and adversaries, he appears to be the essential figure in Italian cultural life in the first half of the twentieth century. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/benedetto-croce/> (August 10, 2018).
- 517 Pasquale Villari was a historian and a politician (Naples 1826–Florence 1917). Exile in Florence after having partaken in the Neapolitan movement of 1848, he taught history at the University of Pisa (1859). National member of the Lincei (1878), deputy (1870–1876; 1880–1882), senator (from 1884), was Minister of Public Education (1891–1892). <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pasquale-villari/> (August 10, 2018).
- 518 Giovanni Amendola (Naples, 15 April 1882–Cannes, 7 April 1926) was an Italian politician, journalist, and academic. He was elected for three legislatures as a deputy, later in the fascist period, he was strongly critical of the regime, becoming one of the most renowned anti-fascists in Italy. He was one of the promoters of the Aventine, he conceived it as the seat of legality, opposed to the government and the House, considered illegal; and opposed both the various attempts, advocated by Republicans and Garibaldians of the “Italia Libera” [*Free Italy*], of armed insurrection, and to ally the opposition from Aventin to the Communist one. After the murder of Giacomo Matteotti, Amendola was also threatened and twice beaten, the last beating of 1925 proved fatal, in fact Amendola died after two years because of the injuries reported. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-amendola\\_\(Dittà-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-amendola_(Dittà-Biografico)) (August 10, 2018).
- 519 Ivanoe Bonomi (Mantova 1873–Rome 1952). Italian politician, amid the founders of the Socialist Reformist Party (1912), he held diverse government posts, but with the advent of fascism, he withdrew from political life. He returned there after the liberation of Rome, becoming one of the key figures of the early republican age. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ivanoe-bonomi/> (August 10, 2018).

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important part of the political, economic, and intellectual class had this sensing: a conventicle of intrigue, ill reputation, cronyism, completely ignoring the contribution the Institution had given to the national identity: its aims, programs, its battles in view of equality amid men. In this sad moment for the Italian communion, it appeared the struggle for the divorce, the enlargement of the right to vote, the abolition of the death penalty, had no meaning.

One of the few who in this chaos, even emotional, of strong disappointment, the right detachment and right mind on the real reasons for the attack on Freemasonry was Achille Ballori.<sup>520</sup> He declared: “senza dubbio si combatte la massoneria perché si sa che essa si occupa di elezioni politiche e quindi la guerra e lo spirito antimassonico che si diffonde e si organizza nell’esercito, nell’armata, nella magistratura, nelle amministrazioni pubbliche per combattere e neutralizzare l’azione politica dell’Ordine. Se è così la lotta non cesserà che ad elezioni avvenute.”<sup>521</sup>

Ferrari strengthened this concept and stated: “la campagna non ci giunge inattesa alla vigilia dei comizi politici ed amministrativi era prevedibile ed inevitabile.”<sup>522</sup>

The speeches of Ferrari and dignitaries of Grand Orient, or magazines such as “Acacia” and “Rivista Massonica” were no longer enough to reach a wide audience and to obtain consent, for this the settling to fund some progressive headlines that were already published was taken.

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520 Achille Ballori was born in the province of Pisa in 1850, becoming a doctor, he was head of the hospital in Mantua and the united health center in Rome. Here, under Ernesto Nathan, he was councilor for hygiene. In 1874, he was given the rank of Master in “Umanità e Progresso” [*Humanity and Progress*] of Pisa, while in 1891, he was Worshipful of “Rienzi” lodge in Rome. In 1890, he was elected first Grand Superintendent, and in 1893, Deputy Grand Master. Six years later, he became Sovereign Grand Commander of S.R.A.A.. In 1917, he was the only candidate for the Grand Mastery, as Ferrari’s next, but on October 31—same year—he was shot dead in Palazzo Giustiniani in Rome, by Lorenzo d’Ambrosio.

521 “No doubt Freemasonry is fought because it deals with political elections and therefore the war and the anti-masonic spirit that spreads and organizes itself in the army, in the courts, in public administrations to fight and neutralize the political action of the Order. If this is the case, the struggle will only cease after the elections” [translator’s note]. Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 233.

522 “the campaign does not reach us unexpected on the eve of the political and administrative rallies, was predictable and sure” [translator’s note]. *Ibidem*.

But the most important move was to found in November 1913 a new weekly “L’Idea democratica”<sup>523</sup> under the direction of Gino Bandini, a member of the Executive Committee and of Italian Radical Party, for about six years was the most important channel between masonic and profane world.

The years before WWI weren’t laidback: against socialists, nationalists, clericals, all this while the politics of the Blocks,<sup>524</sup> Masonry warmly supported was in crisis.<sup>525</sup>

With the clericals, the struggle was timeworn, in the early twentieth century, they were not the most disruptive, but they returned with leagues with the sole purpose to fight Freemasonry. Even if short-lived, it’s worth mentioning the foundation, in 1913, of the National League against Secret Associations by deputy Romeo Gallenga Stuart and Count Demetrio Baldelli-Mombelli, whose aim was: to fight freemasonry and all secret bodies since they keep undercover on their constitution and statutes.

Nothing could be more untruthful, as both documents were public.<sup>526</sup>

The 1913 terms saw the Catholic electorate in the front row, thanks to the “Gentiloni agreement,” between liberals of Giovanni Giolitti and the Italian Catholic Electoral Union (UECI), presided over by Vincenzo Ottorino Gentiloni in view of the elections policies of 1913. It marked the official entry of Catholics into Italian political life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the declarations of Pope Pio IX on the “non-profitability” of believers’ partaking in political activity were still in force in the Catholic world. But the environment of lay associations was constantly moving. Inside the Opera dei Congressi—the main Italian Catholic fellowship—the group of Fry Romolo Murri<sup>527</sup> ruled, supporting the need to prefer a tacti-

523 “Democratic Idea” [translator’s note]. See Anna Maria Isastia, *La Massoneria al contrattacco: “L’Idea democratica” di Gino Bandini (1913–1919)* in “Dimensioni E Problemi Della Ricerca Storica” 1/1997, pp. 259–287.

524 See also Demetrio Xocato, *La massoneria di fronte alla crisi dei blocchi popolari: la guerra di Libia (1911–1912)*, in “Tetide. Rivista di Studi Mediterranei”, n. 1, year 1, 2015, pp. 1–18.

525 Marco Novarino, *Progresso e tradizione*, op. cit., p. 206.

526 Ivi, p. 210.

527 Romolo Murri (Monte S. Pietrangeli 1870–Rome 1944). Priest since 1893, advocate of a greater political commitment of Catholics, he acted as a critical voice toward the conservatism of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, seeking a reconciliation between socialism and the social doctrine of the Church. For more information, see <http://www.>

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cal agreement with socialists rather than supporting liberals, but in 1904, Pope Pio X intruded dissolving the body.

Vincenzo Gentiloni, and the convenient Catholics, instead lined up with the monarchy and liberals to arrest socialists, Marxists, and anarchists. Pio X, who in the decree *Lamentabili sane exitu* of 1907 had condemned 65 modernist propositions and soon afterwards imposed the “excommunication” of modernism in the encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*, also shared this attitude, aimed at preserving the traditional values. The outcome of political polls of 1913 decreed the success of the agreement: liberals scored 51% of the votes, with 260 elected. The Socialist elected representatives were 58, reformists (Italian Socialist Reformist Party) 21, while radicals achieved a good success with 73 elected (including Murri), 34 Catholics (nonmembers of the Liberal Party), and 5 nationalists. Gentiloni compact led to the merge between the Risorgimento strand and the catholic tradition; the two, united, formed a large majority in the country.

Here, Freemasons sought among their ranks the deputies who, not to lose the seat, had recourse to the vote of Catholics, and a list of these politicians was published on the “Idea Democratica.” The quarrel raged within the Masonic Communion, from many sides measures to punish those failing the lines of Grand Orient were called. Beyond that, there was a fair majority of radicals in the rows of Freemasonry. In the 1913 voting, Freemasonry was often not able to concretely support the radical candidates; an example is the refusal to fund the campaigns of Alberto la Pegna, Filippo Virgili, and Romolo Murri.<sup>528</sup> However, compared to 1908, the presence of masons in Parliament had empowered: 90, thus one on five was a freemason. Returning to the linkage between Freemasonry and socialism, in the congress of Ancona of 1914, two distinct motions were presented, one by Giovanni Zibordi, who asked for incongruity and the other for opposing orientation, therefore favorable to the double belonging, presented by Alfredo Poggi.<sup>529</sup> Benito Mussolini, who at that time was director of the socialist newspaper “Avanti” supported Zibordi. After a long debate, an overwhelming majority, decree not just the incompatibility, but also the immediate expulsion of socialists joined

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treccani.it/enciclopedia/romolo-murri/ and <https://tinyurl.com/y9lt9fqk> (August 28, 2018).

528 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 236.

529 Marco Novarino, *Grande Oriente d'Italia*, op. cit., p. 55.

to Masonry approved his motion.<sup>530</sup> Ferrari's reaction was explained in a circular of May 3, 1914: “dopo il voto del congresso di Ancona non vi può essere dubbio sulla condotta che debbono tenere i massoni iscritti al Partito Socialista ufficiale. Se vi è tra essi qualcuno che è disposto a piegarsi al novissimo dogma del partito, esca senz'altro dalle nostre file, dove noi vogliamo uomini di fede sicura, coscienza salda e dignitosa, volontà libere e forti. Attendo da voi, non oltre i quindici giorni da oggi, l'assicurazione che il pensiero del Governo dell'Ordine è stato da tutti sentito.”<sup>531</sup>

In the General Assembly of May 1914, the Grand Orient of Italy had the chance to evaluate the last years of activity, and also to appraise the situation concerning the internal management of the Order, it was decided—for example—to set improvements in the Constitutions making viable to lodges to increase influence and decision-making power in the running of Obedience. Another issue to be addressed Ferrari faced was the groundless rumors, which concerning the acquisition of Palazzo Giustiniani. He sent an open letter to “Corriere della Sera” to detail the steps of the sale, disentangling there had been any cheating by the contractors.<sup>532</sup>

After a few weeks by the General Assembly, Italy was on the abyss of the First World War. On July 31, 1914, Ettore Ferrari delivered a circular to all the lodges: “Un'ora tragica volge sull'Europa e minaccia di travolgerla tutta nel più spaventoso conflitto che la storia ricordi. Il governo dell'Ordine, conscio dei propri doveri, va adoprandosi con ogni possibile sforzo perché l'azione di tutti i grandi orienti si svolga concorde e conforme ai principii universalmente riconosciuti dalla massoneria, per salvare la civiltà umana dal flagello che le incombe o almeno temperarne le conseguenze. La pace è senza dubbio, nostro costante ideale, perché è condizione prima d'ogni

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530 Marco Novarino, *Massoneria e movimento operaio e socialista*, in Santi Fedele, Giovanni Greco (edited), *Massoneria ed Europa*, op. cit., p. 105.

531 “after the vote of the congress of Ancona there can be no doubt about the conduct that must be held by the Masons enrolled in the official Socialist Party. If there is someone among them who is willing to bow to the very last dogma of the party, he will surely come out of our ranks, where we want men of sure faith, firm and dignified conscience, free will and strong will. I await from you, no later than fifteen days from today, the assurance that the thought of the Government of the Order has been felt by everyone” [translator's note]. Rosario Francesco Esposito, *La massoneria e l'Italia*, op. cit., p. 334.

532 Ettore Passalupi Ferrari, *Le muse e la politica*, op. cit., p. 347.

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progresso; ma se la fatalità degli eventi potesse compromettere l'integrità della patria, trovi essa, per la difesa dei suoi supremi interessi, concorde in un solo volere il popolo italiano. Rifuggano le logge dall'associarsi a moti incomposti e tumultuosi; cerchino anzi d'impedirli. Essi gioverebbero solo a spingere i governi sulle vie della reazione. Se mai suoni l'ora delle dure prove, non mancherà la nostra voce per confortarvi ad affrontarla con lo spirito di sacrificio e con la fede dei padri".<sup>533</sup>

Clear the stance of Freemasonry in the question; besides the obvious plea to masonic ideals, we see the first marks of patriotism. It's favorable to the intervention of Italy alongside the forces of the Entente. After the first doubt, more by prudence than by the lack of conviction for the feat itself, Ferrari spoke straightly for the intervention of Italy. Italian Freemasonry, represented by G.O.I., as previously during the war in Tripolitania, would have respected and supported the choices made by the government. Then Italian Obedience went further; in fact, since August 1914, it arranged a body of mason volunteers, disposable to the government, underlining their belonging to Freemasonry and the loyalty toward the state. In October, a committee raised with the main task to organize the propaganda pro armed intercession. At the end of the same month, Gustavo Canti in a meeting in Turin openly slandered Germany, forced to take power and not to regard the statements.<sup>534</sup> In Italy, to Canti, the enemies to be defeated were: the clericals and the socialists, not new, but well known by the Institution. From autumn 1914 on Masonic channels, ideals such as patriotism and national belonging were repeatedly claimed. Certainly, in G.O.I., there were dissonant positions on the conduct: one was that of Senator Antonio Cefaly, playing in years leading roles in the communion.

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533 "A tragic hour turns on Europe and threatens to overwhelm her in the most frightful conflict that history remembers. The government of the Order, conscious of its duties, must be used with every possible effort to ensure the action of all the great orientations is conducted in accordance with the principles universally recognized by Freemasonry, to save human civilization from the scourge that looms or at least temper the consequences. Peace is undoubtedly our constant ideal; because it is a condition before any progress; but if the fatality of events could compromise the integrity of the country, find it, in defense of its supreme interests, the Italian people in one will agree. Refuge the lodges from joining unaccompanied and tumultuous movements; rather try to prevent them. They would only be good for pushing governments on the path of reaction. If you ever hear the hour of the hard trials, our voice will not fail to comfort you to face it with the spirit of sacrifice and with the faith of the fathers" [translator's note]. In *difesa dell'Ordine*, in "Rivista Massonica" n. 2, 1914, pp. 85–87.

534 Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, op. cit., p. 240.

The question is defined when Italy enters the war, Masonry as interventionist, will always work during the war.<sup>535</sup> Even before the decision, Freemasonry on its own initiative essentially funded the enterprise of Garibaldi volunteers, many Masons amid, who led by Peppino Garibaldi<sup>536</sup> left for the front in France as part of the foreign legion and fought more than once in the Argonne zone.<sup>537</sup> In the weeks before Italy's entry into the war, Ettore Ferrari and Ernesto Nathan went to the United States; as soon as they received the official news that Italy had declared war they immediately returned to their homeland.<sup>538</sup>

Here, the exposition of the history of G.O.I. is due to the skilful pen of Nicoletta Casano; to comment on the masonic history of Ettore Ferrari, I quit by saying in June 1917, Ettore Ferrari joined the Paris Congress where The Entente Masonries, without British ones, met to establish a project of the League of Nations. Fearing the Italian delegation would vote in favor of the principle of self-determination, such a hostile campaign took place in the press that prompted Ferrari to put the Grand Master's mandate back on November 25 of the same year. In April 1918, he was elected Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of S.R.A.A., a post he held until his death. In 1919, he was appointed Honorary Past Grand Master. From the end of 1922, he devoted every effort to reinforcing the Scottish rite. The following year he traveled throughout Italy and it is clear the Insti-

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535 *Informazioni. All'inizio della guerra europea*, in "Rivista Massonica" n. 7, 1914, pp. 315–316.

536 Giuseppe–Peppino–Garibaldi (1879–1950) was an Italian general firstborn of Ricciotti Garibaldi and then nephew of Giuseppe Garibaldi. At the age of 18, he joined his father to fight in Domokos, Greece, alongside people who had rebelled against the Ottoman Empire. In 1903, he went in South Africa under the British Empire (his mother, Constance Hopcraft, was English) against the Boers. Later, he partook in Venezuelan revolution against dictator Julián Castro and he waged in Guyana and Mexico. After a few labor experiences in Romania and Panama, he returned to Mexico to struggle against dictator Porfirio Díaz during the Mexican Revolution. In 1912, he was again in Greece with his father and brothers. From 1913 to 1915, he lived in the United States. Back in Europe, he battled in WWI. At the end, he left his military career to undertake trades between United States and London, however not that successful. In 1922, he entered politics, opposing Benito Mussolini and the National Fascist Party, he became promoter of antifascist actions, with the support of Domizio Torriggiani. In 1926, he left for United States, to home come in 1940. With the armistice, the Germans halted him. War over, he retired to private life and died in Rome in 1950.

537 In Argonne clash, two nephews of him—sons of Ricciotti—died, the very young Bruno and Costante.

538 *Informazioni. Il ritorno in patria*, in "Rivista Massonica" n. 6, 1915, p. 280.



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tution was shrinking to defend against fascist attacks, even with the entry of representatives of the Symbolic Rite among the Scots. In May 1923, Ferrari rearranged the Superior Chambers and decided to publish “Lux,” the monthly bulletin of the Rite, to carry on a free thought that fused socio-cultural issues with esoteric problems. Still at the end of 1924, he committed freemasons to defend the secular values of the Risorgimento. Opponent of fascism, he rejected all public offices.<sup>539</sup> The fascist violence struck him several times; his studio of sculptor was turned over many occasions. Ferrari did not dissolve his Rite even after the approval of the law, November 1925, against the secret societies, commissioned by Mussolini. Guarded by the police, he was denounced on May 25, 1929, on charges of attempt to reorganize the Masonry, and warned. He was in fact in correspondence with Giuseppe Leti, a lawyer and known anti-fascist moved to France, his lieutenant, who in May 1929 passed on full powers. He died in Rome on August 19, 1929.

His Masonic thought can be briefed as follows: “La Massoneria non è un partito o una corrente. politica, nel significato che comunemente si dà alla parola; ma una scuola e quasi vorremmo dire una grande Chiesa cattolica-laica che aduna e accorda uomini di diverso credo politico in un ordine più elevato di eterni principi umani. E ben possiamo affermare, come affermiamo che essa è apolitica, intendendo ch'essa è non già fuori della vita nazionale, bensì fuori dagli angusti cancelli dei partiti, al di sopra delle piccole e grandi competizioni di fazione. Ma essa si muove ugualmente e profondamente nell'orbita della vita pubblica creando le vaste correnti, disciplinando e organizzando le agguerrite falangi che agiscono in difesa della libertà e per la conquista di sempre maggiori progressi nel campo morale e civile”.

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539 <https://tinyurl.com/yccmb35x> (August 7, 2018).