

Italian and Polish Mathematicians face to Racial Persecution and Emigration: Backgrounds, Individual Fates and Global Aspects

Literature has already highlighted some aspects of the relationship between Italian and Polish mathematics, for example with reference to Peano continua or to Volterra functionals. However, other factors of investigation, typical of the so-called social history of mathematics, were not observed: the network of personal relationships between Italian and Polish mathematicians and their vectors of communication in the years between the two wars are still to be fully described.

This paper provides a new analytic picture of the socio-cultural exchanges that involved the members of the two main Italian research communities - the School of Mathematical Logic and the Italian School of Algebraic Geometry - and some of their Polish colleagues (Samuel Dickstein, Edward Stamm, Alfred Rosenblatt, W. Jezierski,...).

I shall argue the idea that the network of relations that Giuseppe Peano, Corrado Segre and their protégés intertwined with these mathematicians, set the ground for an intensification of scientific exchanges between Italy and Poland in the 1930s, culminating in Tullio Levi-Civita and Mauro Picone's visits to Warsaw and Krakow. At the same time, this network led to some beautiful episodes of cross-solidarity when Polish and Italian mathematicians faced the terrible period of anti-Semitic persecution and migration.