

The European Physical Journal

A: Hadrons and Nuclei
B: Condensed Matter and Complex Systems
C: Particles and Fields
D: Atomic, Molecular, Optical
and Plasma Physics
E: Soft Matter and Biological Physics
AP: Applied Physics
ST: Special Topics
H: Historical Perspectives
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Il Nuovo Cimento: Historical Recollection

The history of *Il Nuovo Cimento* is strongly related to the history of the Italian physics community and goes back in 1855, when it was first issued in this form by a group of scientists of the University of Pisa (Matteucci, Mossotti, Pilla, Piria and Savi) who already in 1844 had published a previous version entitled *Il Cimento*. This journal had a short and tormented life, due to the political events in which the same scientists were involved as nationalists during the war for Italian independence. One may recall the Tuscan University Battalion commanded by Mossotti at the battles of Curtatone and Montanara.

It is also important to remember that the University of Pisa during the first half of the nineteenth century was one of the most liberal intellectual centers in Italy.

It was under those circumstances that *Il Cimento* ceased to appear for some years due to the reactions caused by the defeat of the first war of independence. The revival with the name of *Il Nuovo Cimento* in 1855 was due to Matteucci and Piria, who were the first directors, and successively to Felici, a pupil of Mossotti and Matteucci, who became the only owner of the Journal. Felici, successor of Matteucci in the chair of experimental physics in Pisa, in 1849, was successful in keeping *Il Nuovo Cimento* alive until 1897, when the Italian Physical Society (SIF) was founded. It was closely linked to *Il Nuovo Cimento* as shown by the subheading *Organo della Società Italiana di Fisica* since the first issue appeared in January 1897. Thanks to Felici the only Italian physical journal was kept alive; he gave it to the Italian Physical Society which acclaimed him Honorary President at the general assembly held in Rome at the Institute of Physics of “*Via Panisperna*” (which 30 years later became very famous due to the Enrico Fermi Team).

Felici and Volterra were the first Directors of *Il Nuovo Cimento*, which became the representative scientific journal of the Italian physics community entirely reflecting the development of the Italian Physical Society.

From 1895 to the beginning of the Second World War, *Il Nuovo Cimento* maintained its initial characteristic of a national journal publishing most of the works of Italian physicists. The historical importance of the magazine is illustrated by the contributions of scientists as Amici, Cannizzaro, Matteucci, Mossotti, Levi-Civita, Ricci-Curbastro, Righi, Roiti, Pacinotti and Volterra.

Its international impact was gained in the years between the First and the Second World War, with the contribution of Fermi (it suffices to recall the theory of β -decay) and the group of Rome (Amaldi, Segré, Pontecorvo and Rasetti) as well as Persico, Rossi, Racah, Wick, Fano, Majorana, Wataghin, Rasetti and Cockroft.

Even during the Second World War, *Il Nuovo Cimento* never ceased publication and assumed a new character in 1947, thanks to the pioneers of the renaissance of the Italian Physical Society, among whom were Polvani, Amaldi and Bernardini.

In fact the journal took with them its new modern and international shape, with an astonishing development reflected by the increasing number of published pages from 290 in 1947 to 10,000 in 1971 and by the adoption of English as official language.

Seminal and important papers can be mentioned, for instance, by Conversi, Pancini and Piccioni (the muon lifetime), Puppi (mesons for cosmic rays), Castagnoli, Regge, Salvini, Verde, Gregory, Lagarrigue and Leprince-Ringuet, Charpak, Telegdi, Cabibbo, Gatto and Zichichi and many others, reflecting the importance of the Italian school on weak interactions and theoretical particle physics.

This growth induced in 1969 the start of issuing the *Lettere al Nuovo Cimento* for rapid scientific information, until 1986 when it was merged with the *Europhysics Letters of the European Physical Society* with the French homologue *Journal de Physique Lettres* as a first stage of a common European venture.

Starting in 1965 *Nuovo Cimento* was published in two, and subsequently four, different sections covering more specialized fields, i.e. *nuclei, particles and fields (NCA)*; *general physics, relativity astronomy, mathematical physics and methods (NCB)*; *geophysics and space physics (NCC)*, *condensed matter, atomic molecular and chemical physics, fluids, plasmas, biophysics (NCD)*.

The interest in the different scientific aspects of the journal in the eighties and nineties is shown by the publications of important papers in particle, nuclear and condensed matter physics.

It was in 1999 that, following a decision of the Council of SIF approved by the general assembly of the Society, *Nuovo Cimento D* merged with the sections *B* and *D* of the *European Physical Journal (EPJ)* as did, one year after, *Nuovo Cimento A* with the EPJ section *A* and *C*; joining the French and German partners with *Journal de Physique* and *Zeitschrift für Physik*, respectively.

As reported by Ricci, SIF President and director of *Il Nuovo Cimento* at the time "... merging had the aim at promoting a truly European Journal that could be attractive for European physicists as well as researchers worldwide... *Nuovo Cimento* has already been strongly linked to the Italian Physical Society both historically and scientifically... but we realized that this was a necessary decision to keep up with the new trends and the European needs of the diffusion of scientific information..."

R.A. Ricci