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The Language of War: Lexicon, Metaphor, Discourse  
Il linguaggio della guerra: lessico, metafora, discorso

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# The Italic Race and Latin Eugenics

## Scientific Terms for Persecutions and War in the Medical Literature of Fascist Italy

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores how medical language in Fascist Italy contributed to creating a climate of hatred and violence. Through the analysis of medical and scientific journals, the study examines how the Fascist regime influenced the medical profession and how science was used to justify persecution, racism, and war. The article highlights how terminology, such as that relating to ‘race’, ‘purity’, and ‘duty’, was employed to connect biological concepts to Fascist ideology, normalizing discriminatory attitudes. The research reveals how medical science was manipulated to support nationalist and racist ideologies, with doctors playing a key role in legitimizing racial discrimination and eugenics. In summary, the article analyzes how medical discourse contributed to shaping public perception and legitimizing the ideological positions of the regime.

*Keywords:* corporative medicine; eugenics; Fascism; Fascist medical journals.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the First World War, and particularly during the Fascist era, a pragmatic and utilitarian approach to science came to the fore in Italy. As Barbara Gallavotti has observed, the scientist was increasingly regarded as a technician whose input was considered indispensable for the advancement of the nation (1999). Consequently, the scientist was compelled to become a professional who was beneficial to the nation and oversaw research that had been approved by the political

system. Such research would “inevitably be imbued with an ideological bias, and aligned with Fascist demands. This phenomenon was manifest in all domains of Italian life”<sup>1</sup> (Maiocchi 2004, 45).

Medicine, which had been regarded as a social science throughout the nineteenth century (Cosmacini 2019, 12), underwent a significant transformation during the Fascist era. This transformation was characterised by a shift in focus from the study of social medicine and human science to the development of corporative medicine, a discipline that was aligned with the interests of the Fascist state (*ibid.*).

The term “corporative” was frequently employed in the textbooks of the period. Indeed, at the University of Milan in the spring of 1938 - XVI EF<sup>2</sup>, the inaugural lecture of the first course in Corporative Social Medicine was delivered by Dr. Petraghani, who was then Director General for Health at the Ministry of the Interior. In this lecture, he delineated the novel responsibilities of corporative state medicine and espoused the Fascist ethic, which “asserts that each individual should be of service to the nation”<sup>3</sup> (1938a, 234). Therefore, doctors, like the rest of the population, are expected to serve a higher purpose, the nation. This is in line with Gentile’s<sup>4</sup> philosophy, which holds that “the fascist conception is for the State and the individual insofar as the individual coincides with the State, the universal conscience and will of man in his historical existence”<sup>5</sup> (Mussolini 1935, 45).

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<sup>1</sup> My translation of a quote from an Italian book. Original quote: *saranno necessariamente dotate di una sorta di cappello ideologico, che le farà apparire in armonia con le esigenze fasciste. D'altra parte ciò è quanto avveniva anche in ogni altro campo della vita italiana.*

<sup>2</sup> The Fascist Era (*Era Fascista*, EF) was a computation of years. The date in the Fascist Era was written in Roman numerals. Thus, beginning in November, the year 1922-1923 was set as Fascist year I (or year I *di Era Fascista* – of the Fascist Age). This year was written together with the normal year A.D.: next to the Christian year, there was a Roman numeral indicating the corresponding Fascist year. For example, the day of Italy’s war declaration against Greece was written as 28 October 1940 - XIX (the number 19 written as a Roman numeral), in this case year XVI EF corresponds to 28 October 1937 - 27 October 1938. It remained in force until 1945 (cf. Theodosiou, Manimanis, and Dimitrijevic 2011).

<sup>3</sup> My translation of a quote from an article written in Italian. Original quote: *pone ogni individuo a servizio della Nazione.*

<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944). Italian philosopher, historian of philosophy, educationalist and politician.

<sup>5</sup> My translation of a quote from a book written in Italian. Original quote: *la concezione fascista è per lo Stato; ed è per l'individuo in quanto esso coincide con lo Stato, coscienza e volontà universale dell'uomo nella sua esistenza storica.*

The role of the Fascist doctor is frequently analogous to that of a soldier: a state doctor will be ready to act like a soldier and like a worker to meet the needs and problems of the state (Salotti 1939, 240). The doctor is the intellectual and moral foundation of the new social and state direction of medicine, a role doctors take great pride in (*ibid.*). They are also incorruptible guardians of public health and the state's health; they are patriots, and their mission is to strengthen a race destined for domination and glory (*ibid.*, 241).

In the context of such professional values, this article aims to define the extent to which medical language contributed to the climate of hatred and violence that prevailed in the population during the Fascist era:

- How did the use of medical language and metaphors in Fascist Italy contribute to hatred and violence?
- How did this discourse affect attitudes toward marginalised groups?

To achieve this objective, medical and scientific journals with the highest circulation among doctors were analysed, including those dealing with subjects dear to Fascist medicine, such as hygiene and maternal and child health. Furthermore, the journals were selected based on their historical relevance, specifically their status as authoritative journals, the continuity of their publication, as well as the possibility of finding the published issues, and their affinity with the Fascist party. This approach excluded dissident journals. Accordingly, the scientific journals reviewed were:

- *La Federazione Medica. Bollettino della Federazione degli Ordini dei Medici* (*The Medical Federation: The Bulletin of the Order of Physicians* – my translation), published from 1921 to the first four months of 1932, and its replacement title, *Le forze sanitarie* (*The Sanitary Forces* – my translation), published from May 1932 to 1943. With publication schedules that varied from semi-monthly to quarterly, it was possible to read approximately twenty years of publications.
- *La Ginecologia Moderna. Rivista italiana di ostetricia e ginecologia e di psicologia, eugenetica e sociologia ginecologica* (*Modern Gynaecology: Italian Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Psychology, Eugenics and Gynaecological Sociology* – my translation). Founded in 1908 by Luigi Maria Bossi, a famous Italian gynecologist, it was discontinued in 1939. During the Fascist regime, *La Ginecologia Moderna* adapted to the political context of the time. Fascism attached great importance to birth rates and maternal health, and the magazine became a tool for promoting the regime's policy of demographic growth and maternal care.

- *Difesa Sociale. Rivista d'igiene, previdenza ed assistenza* (*Social Defence: Journal of Hygiene, Welfare, and Assistance* – my translation) was a magazine founded in 1929; it was an instrument for disseminating the government's health, welfare, and assistance policies. It came to an end with the fall of Fascism in 1943.

The selected articles include references to concepts such as war eugenics, war-race, and defence-race. In particular, the analysis focuses on the discourse and rhetorical use of sentences and the emotional tone of the text (positive, negative, or neutral) to gain insight into the emotional orientation of the content<sup>6</sup>. To enhance clarity and focus, this article will present the main findings in the form of illustrative examples.

## 2. EUGENICS AND THE ITALIAN CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The etymology of the term “eugenics” is now well-established within the history of science. In his renowned treatise *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*, Galton defines the term as follows:

the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had. ([1883] 1907, 17)

He subsequently defined it as “the study of institutions (or human actions) under social control that can improve or repair the racial qualities of future generations, both physically and mentally” (*ibid.*, 34), thereby ascribing to it connotations of social control, improvement of the human race in the Darwinian sense, and a form of socio-sanitary prevention<sup>7</sup>.

The genesis of eugenics as a scientific discipline in Italy can be traced back to the participation of a national delegation in the International Congress convened by the Eugenics Education Society in London between 24 and 30 July 1912. The delegation consisted of Corrado Gini, Giuseppe Sergi, Alfredo Niceforo, Enrico Morselli, Antonio Marro, Roberto Micheli, Achille Loria, and Raffaele Garofalo, all of whom were prominent figures in Italian medicine. Despite holding different

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bing 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Birnbaum 1961; Bashford 2004; Grenon and Merrick 2014.

opinions and reaching different scientific conclusions, they were to become the principal promoters of eugenics in Fascist Italy.

The diversity of opinion among the experts permitted the study and application of this new science in a range of fields, including anthropology, psychiatry, sociology, political theory, and economics. As Cerro states, the primary motivation for Italian scholars to engage with eugenics was to contribute to the socio-political project of building a nation that had recently achieved territorial and political unity. This was coupled with a desire to defend the physical and moral integrity of the population from the dangers of degeneration (2022, 614).

The opening lecture on the study of social eugenics in an institutional context was held at the University of Genoa in 1912 and concluded with a lecture on the practical applications of this science in gynecology and obstetrics. A trace of this can be found in the Italian journal *La Ginecologia Moderna* which included the word “eugenics” in its title as early as 1908. Overseen by gynecologists Serafino Patellani and Luigi Bossi, this was promptly replicated in Milan, where on 7 December 1913, the inaugural chair of social eugenics was established. In the same year, the Italian Committee for Eugenic Studies was established, and “the inaugural meeting of the Italian Committee for Eugenic Studies took place on 17 November at the Roman Society of Anthropology, marking the inception of the Italian movement in this field”<sup>8</sup> (Cerro 2022, 14).

After the First World War, Italian eugenics found various affinities with the Fascist regime. However, the Fascist party’s affinity with the Catholic Church, which was opposed to birth control, abortion, and sterilisation, resulted in the development of distinctive characteristics, leading to the term “Italian eugenics” or “Latin eugenics” being coined. This new form of eugenics was distinguished by two pivotal elements: firstly, the suppression of preceding qualitative eugenics initiatives; secondly, the advancement of a quantitative, pronatalist, and populist eugenics agenda<sup>9</sup> (Cassata 2006, 47). The subjects of birth control and

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<sup>8</sup> My translation of a quote from an article written in Italian. Original quote: *La riunione inaugurale del Comitato Italiano per gli Studi Eugenetici si è tenuta il 17 novembre presso la Società Romana di Antropologia, segnando l’inizio del movimento italiano in questo campo di studio.*

<sup>9</sup> The difference between qualitative eugenics and quantitative eugenics lies in their goals and methods for improving the population through genetic selection. Qualitative eugenics is concerned with the enhancement of specific traits, whereas quantitative eugenics is focused on the regulation of the numerical distribution of particular genes within a given population.

pre-marital visitation were swiftly identified as contentious, prompting the Italian eugenicists to disassociate themselves from these issues. An article in the journal *Difesa Sociale* in the February 1924 issue, reported on Professor Levi's speech at the conference held on 18 January of the same year, entitled *Natalità ed eugenetica* (*Birth Control and Eugenics* – my translation). The article posits that the birth control formula, devised across the Atlantic, is not primarily concerned with the acquisition of knowledge regarding natural and artificial methods of preventing conception and the practical application of these methods to voluntarily limit offspring. Instead, it is regarded as a special rule of conduct to be preserved in marriage (Levi 1924, 41).

The First Italian Congress on Social Eugenics was held in Milan from 20 to 23 September 1924 and it was organised by the *Reale Società Italiana d'Igiene* (Italian Society of Hygiene – my translation) and the *Società Italiana di Genetica e di Eugenetica* (Italian Society of Genetics and Eugenics – my translation). Italian positions were characterised by skepticism towards British eugenics, with a preference for Latin eugenics. Of notable historical importance was the presentation by Agostino Gemelli, a doctor and religious figure, and founder of the Catholic University of Milan. In his paper, entitled *Religione ed eugenetica* (*Religion and Eugenics* – my translation) Gemelli reaffirmed the Vatican's positions. The Catholic Church would be unable to accept practices such as sterilisation, the imposition of the premarital certificate, or even euthanasia, as these actions are in stark contrast to the principles on which it was founded. Indeed, Agostino Gemelli endorsed a eugenics initiative that was predicated on the following tenets: the restoration of a familial structure that was founded upon the tenets of “natural law” and “Christian moral principles”. However, it was Mussolini himself who brought an end to this impassioned exchange between scientists, talking of an Italic race and clarifying that “in a well-ordered state, the health of its people must come first” and that “the fate of the race must be seriously watched over”<sup>10</sup> (Mussolini 1927).

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<sup>10</sup> My translation of quotes from Mussolini's public speech, written in Italian. Original quote: *In uno stato ben ordinato, la salute dei suoi cittadini deve venire prima di tutto and il destino della razza deve essere seriamente sorvegliato.*



### 3. ESTABLISHING THE ITALIAN RACE

Some historians posit that Italy did not witness the emergence of a significant scientific movement that promoted the integration of eugenics and genetics, nor did the quest for the ideal human race attain the same intensity as in English and German contexts (Pogliano 2005). Nevertheless, as early as 1923, there were endeavours to establish research institutions specialising in the growth, biology, and psychology of the individual and the race. Indeed, on 19 December 1926, the Biotypological Orthogenetic Institute, under the direction of Professor Pende, was inaugurated in Genoa. In 1930, he proceeded to establish an adjoining medical clinic. Pende asserted that the objective of such an institution was to observe children “to identify any hereditary organic weaknesses, bodily or mental abnormalities, or predispositions to disease that could potentially manifest as a result of environmental factors”<sup>11</sup> (Pende 1930, 286). Accordingly, the clinic, through a medical-pedagogical consulting room designated for “antisocial minors”, was tasked with monitoring physical and psychological anthropomorphic parameters. The unruly boys, as reported by the relevant authorities and by schools via teachers or external governmental auditors, could enter a circuit of surveillance and coercion. This enabled the clinic to implement rational prophylaxis of juvenile delinquency through the remediation of the individual personality and an appropriate, rational, and methodical programme of assistance (Gini 1931, 103). The passage reveals that eugenics and scientific research into the “race” were linked to war preparation and national strength. In this case, words like war and national security are connected to efforts to control and “remediate” individuals who might threaten the social order, including “antisocial minors” (*ibid.*).

The anthropometric studies conducted by the Pende Institute expanded, but the somatic differences between the Italian regions and the numerous physical characteristics present within the national territory presented a challenge in visualising the racial structure. As a result, a reference point with a historical foundation was identified: the Roman Empire. This approach led to the Italian race being defined with terms like “spiritual race” or “historical race” rather than a set of

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<sup>11</sup> My translation of a quote from an article written in Italian. Original quote: *al fine di identificare eventuali debolezze organiche ereditarie, anomalie corporee o mentali, o predisposizioni a malattie che potrebbero potenzialmente manifestarsi come risultato di fattori ambientali.*

anthropomorphic characteristics. In an article published in *Difesa Sociale* in 1936 entitled *Migrazioni interne e razza* (*Internal Migrations and Race* – my translation), the author sets out to define the improvement of race. To this end, he proposes that the ethnic groups that make up Italy should be encouraged to enhance the vitality of the race, preserve the qualities that have distinguished it over the centuries, and maintain the fundamental unity that presides over it (Nannini 1936, 67). The argument is made that marriages and children should only be encouraged within couples who possess specific characteristics.

The second Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935 and the subsequent creation of Italian East Africa (*Africa Orientale Italiana* – AOI) led to an intensification of Italic sentiment and, consequently, racism. This was due, in part, to the civilising mission of Italians in Ethiopia and the imposition of a strict apartheid system. From 1937 onwards, contact between Italians and the local population was prohibited in the African colonies. The *madamato*, or cohabitation and affectionate relationship between an Italian and an Eritrean or Somali woman, was also forbidden. Furthermore, it was decreed that no Italian could remain in Somalia for a period exceeding six months without a wife (Stefani 2007, 36).

Italy's racial policies changed significantly after 1936 and culminated in the 1938 Racial Laws, a series of anti-Jewish measures that mirrored the anti-Semitic laws of Nazi Germany. It is evident that at the time the Fascist regime introduced the apartheid system, as it had already done about colonial legislation, Italy was second to no other country in the meticulousness and severity of the measures that were imposed on the Jews (Collotti 2003, 77).

Towards the end of 1936 and throughout 1937, a campaign of defamation against the Jews was initiated by the regime across a range of media, from cultural and scientific outlets to children's comic books like *Il Balilla* and *Il Corriere dei Piccoli* (Collotti 2003, 54). This campaign employed a series of somatic characteristics, including a hooked nose, full lips, frizzy hair, and a long beard, which were used to identify the figure of the Jew (*ibid.*, 55).

The concept of the Jewish race and the question of how it should be defined have posed difficulties for specialists and professionals in the field of medicine. The 1938 law does not provide a definition or specify a genetic parameter, as neither existed at the time. Indeed, the law itself bases membership on parental or family parameters alone. This criticism is highlighted even in the bulletin of the Order of Physicians. In an article from 1939, entitled *Come difendere la razza* (*How to Defend Race* –

my translation), Prof. Gianni Petragliani emphasizes that the concept of race cannot be seen as a pure and stable anthropological expression. In this article, he argues that the assumption that populations are the continuation over time of the average somatic characteristics of the individuals who gradually made them up is erroneous. This is even the case in the Italian context, where history was full of invasions or migrations. (1939, 43). Concurrently, Prof. Salotti, in an article entitled *La Medicina fascista e il problema della razza* (*Fascist Medicine and the Problem of Race* – my translation), elucidates that while no shared biological lines can be identified, on the psychological side, patterns and common features are well characterised. The history of the Jewish race is characterised by several prominent features. In particular, the author identifies a tendency towards pacifism, a general lack of physical and mental aptitude for combat and fieldwork, and an orientation towards commercialism as being particularly noteworthy (*ibid.*, 234). Racial discourse in the text, particularly in the discussion of Jewish pacifism and perceived lack of combat ability, shows how the war was framed as a moral imperative. Jews were portrayed as a racial threat precisely because of their supposed inclination towards pacifism, which contradicted the militaristic ethos of the Fascist state. Moreover, war heightened the need for a robust, war-ready population, and the regime turned to both biological and psychological theories to ensure that the Italian people were fit for combat. The regime's racial and war preparation policies were deeply intertwined, with doctors and scientists playing key roles in ensuring that the population was physically and mentally prepared for the demands of war.

#### 4. SCIENTIFIC TERMS JUSTIFYING WAR

In a statement made on 27 April 1938, Mussolini initiated a gathering of Fascist doctors in Rome by declaring that “wealth does not come from the multiplication of life but from the multiplication of death”<sup>12</sup> (Mussolini 1938, 234). He set the tone for the glorification of war and death as essential components of the Fascist worldview. By invoking this notion, Mussolini seeks to gain the support of scientists and medical professionals for the regime's expansionist policies, which require the nation to embrace conflict as a means of strengthening the state.

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<sup>12</sup> My translation of a quote from an article written in Italian. Original quote: *la ricchezza non deriva dalla moltiplicazione della vita, ma dalla moltiplicazione della morte.*

The response was immediate and swift, as evidenced by the inclusion of an article by Prof. Petragliani in the bulletin of the Order of Physicians. Entitled *La difesa igienico-sanitaria del popolo italiano* (*The Health and Hygiene Defence of the Italian People* – my translation), the article highlights the significance of enhancing not only the quality, but also the quantity of the Italian population, and it emphasizes the need to improve health, particularly the youth, in anticipation of future sacrifice. The focus on health and war reflects a mindset of readiness for conflict, framing the war as something for which the population must be physically and mentally prepared. The idea that young people must be ready to “make sacrifices for the greater good” (1938b, 240) directly connects the health of the population with the demands of war. Mussolini’s orders for everyone to contribute to improving the Italian race reinforce the notion that war requires a strong, healthy, and unified society capable of enduring hardship. War is depicted as a driving force for national improvement, not just in terms of physical strength but also in the refinement of “civility” and discipline. The rhetoric suggests that facing war will bring out the best in the Italian people, binding them together in common purpose and elevating the nation’s strength and character. The call to “believe in this faith of ours” (*ibid.*) and to help each other through challenging times underscores the idea that war is a unifying and almost spiritual endeavour. It is framed as a test of national resolve that will ultimately benefit the Italian people if they remain committed and confident in their collective efforts (*ibid.*).

The concept is further reinforced by an article in which Prof. Pende likens the individual to a machine. He draws a parallel between the constitution of a state and that of an individual, stating that the former’s physical, moral, and intellectual robustness, productive and reproductive capacity, and career trajectory are all determined by the architecture and engineering of the individual’s body (Pende 1938, 247).

Even within the recently established field of Italian psychiatry, an article was published entitled *Note di fisiopatologia della paura* (*Notes on the Physiopathology of Fear* – my translation). In this article, Dr. Ferrario presents fear as a pathology, an obstacle to be overcome in an advanced, “civilized” society (1939, 322). In the context of impending war, fear is portrayed as a weakness that could undermine the nation’s collective resolve. War demands that people face potential conflict without succumbing to distress, and any fear response must be eradicated or controlled. Dr. Ferrario emphasized the importance of a clinical approach to managing fear in the face of conflict. The need for physicians to

understand the origins and treatment of fear underscores the regime's desire to maintain a strong, resilient population that can withstand the psychological pressures of war. Ferrario also stated that the distress experienced by contemporary civilised populations at the prospect of conflict is a necessity for a clinical approach to its eradication by the medical specialist. Given that physicians frequently encounter a range of issues associated with fear, it is vital for them to understand the aetiology, manifestations, treatment and prophylaxis of fear (*ibid.*).

In the late 1930s, armed conflict appeared imminent, prompting Italian medical professionals to anticipate the consequences this would have on their country and the broader continent. In 1937, the Ministry of War issued a letter (letter no. 4710) which ordered universities to organise courses on military health service. The objective is to equip civilian doctors with the skills to manage the typical traumatic injuries associated with a war scenario. Furthermore, the concept of war is depicted not merely as a physical and logistical challenge, but also as a moral and spiritual calling, particularly for medical professionals. The letter argues that doctors' responsibilities during wartime are "even more crucial than in peacetime" (letter no. 4710 – my translation), positioning their work as vital for the survival and success of the nation. The Ministry stresses that doctors must be "ready, quick, intelligent, and decisive" (letter no. 4710 – my translation) during wartime. This language mirrors military expectations, suggesting that the medical field is an extension of the battlefield, with doctors needing to perform under pressure and make life-or-death decisions. The emphasis on mental, practical, and spiritual preparation reflects the broader Fascist focus on discipline, strength, and the collective good.

Although the participation in these courses is presented as voluntary, the text implies a moral obligation for doctors to be involved. The sentence "not a duty but an honour" (letter no. 4710 – my translation) underscores the idea that preparing for war goes beyond practical training or physical readiness. War is depicted as a spiritual mission for the nation, requiring dedication not only to one's profession but to the collective moral strength of the country. Medical professionals, in this case, are seen as moral agents, with their roles elevated to a higher, almost sacred duty during times of conflict. The language used in the text, particularly the notion of the "intimate spiritual significance" (letter no. 4710 – my translation) of war preparation, indicates that war is not just a physical or logistical challenge but also a moral and spiritual endeavour for the nation.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

On 14 July 1938, the text that would become known as the Manifesto of Racist Scientists was published in the *Giornale d'Italia* under the title *Il fascismo e i problemi della razza* (*Fascism and the Problems of Race* – my translation). On 16 August of the same year, Mussolini summoned Guido Landra, a renowned anthropologist, theorist of racism and one of the signatories of the Manifesto, and Landra became the director of the recently established Race Studies and Propaganda Office at the Ministry of Popular Culture. From August 1938, until 20 June 1943, this Ministry published *La difesa della razza* (*Defense of the Race*<sup>13</sup>), a fortnightly magazine that received unlimited funding from the Fascist Party throughout this period. From its inception, the magazine was a pioneering example of sociological marketing, featuring vibrant colours, striking visuals and suggestive imagery in a style that was both contemporary and appealing (*Fig. 1*). It served as a significant platform for the propagation of racial hatred and discrimination, targeting not only Black individuals but also Jews, Gypsies, those with disabilities and mental disorders.

The research presented in this article is part of a larger project that aims to analyse the evolution of medical discourse during the Fascist regime in Italy. Future research plans include viewing other medical publications from the period, specifically *L'Avvenire sanitario*, a weekly magazine of political, jurisprudence and health news, established in 1907 and printed in Milan and *La difesa della razza*, whose editorial board was made up of renowned doctors and scientists.

In conclusion, this partial review of the medical literature of the period has highlighted and acknowledged several previously underexplored aspects concerning the interests and motivations of the medical profession. The health professions, although not entirely unified in their stance, provided a “methodical” and ostensibly objective rationale for the persecution, racism, and the atrocities of the Second World War. The recurrent use of phrases such as “human races exist” and “there are superior and inferior races”, alongside notions of duty to the “fatherland” and its “supreme good”, within academic discourse, lent an air of scientific legitimacy to these ideas. This rhetoric, often bolstered by experimental evidence, reinforced deep-seated fears and prejudices, contributing to the normalization of discriminatory attitudes.

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<sup>13</sup> Translation from Evola 2015.



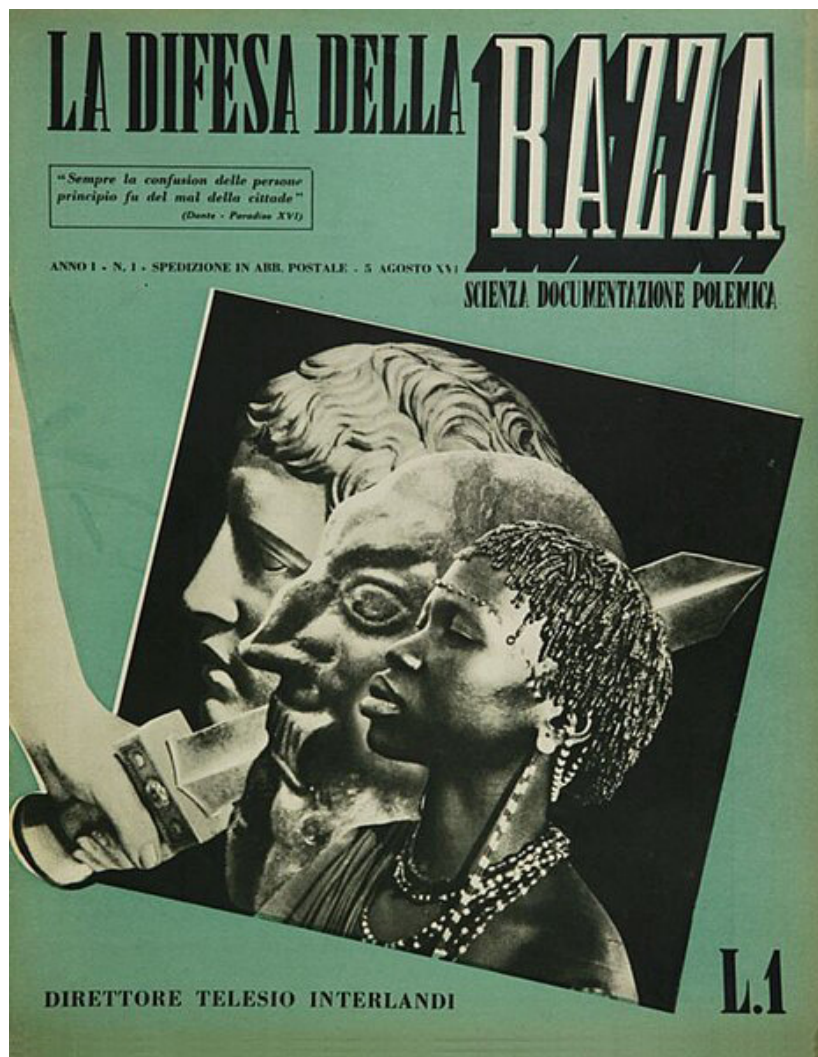


Figure 1. – “La difesa della razza” a. 1, 1 (5 Agosto 1938 - XVI):  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Difesa\\_della\\_razza.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Difesa_della_razza.jpg) (public domain).

The use of specific language in Fascist medical science and wartime discourse played a crucial role in shaping public perception and legitimizing ideological positions. Terminology was carefully selected to align

with the regime's political goals and reinforce a narrative of superiority, nationalism, and exclusion. Words such as "race", "purity" and "duty", related with "war", were frequently employed in both scientific and political contexts, creating a seamless link between supposed biological facts and Fascist ideology.

Fascist medicine was marked by a deliberate manipulation of scientific research to support nationalist and racist ideologies. The medical profession, in particular, played a significant role in legitimizing policies of racial discrimination, eugenics, and warfare. Science was harnessed to serve the state, often under the guise of advancing national health, security, or the war effort. From 1940, coinciding with Italy's entry into the war, the bulletin of the Order of Physicians, which ceased publication in 1943, shifted its focus away from political commentary. Instead, it concentrated exclusively on technical and practical issues, publishing articles on surgical techniques in traumatology and wartime surgery, as well as on the major pathologies affecting populations in conflict zones. As the editor himself wrote in an article published in 1942, "Beyond Science and above Science there is Charity. Science and Charity united must be the symbol of our action and nation"<sup>14</sup> (Petragnani 1942, 15).

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<sup>14</sup> My translation of a quote from an article that's written in another language. Original quote: *Oltre la Scienza e al di sopra della Scienza c'è la Carità. Scienza e Carità unite devono essere il simbolo della nostra azione e della nostra nazione.*



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