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Creating the ‘New Fascist Man’

The Contribution of the ‘Integral Fascist’ Giorgio Alberto Chiurco to the Anthropological Revolution of the Italian Regime

Michelangelo Borri | ORCID: 0000-0002-9315-1515

University of Trieste, Trieste, Italy

michelangelo.borri@phd.units.it

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Abstract

The creation of the Fascist New Man was one of the primary objectives of the Mussolini regime. This article aims to examine the theme by way of a specific case study of the physician and Fascist party official Giorgio Alberto Chiurco. A Fascist ‘of the first hour’ and faithful follower of Mussolini, Chiurco expressed his commitment to the project of creating a new Italian man with activity in various sectors. In medicine and sports, by promoting the training of new generations that would be healthy and athletic. In eugenics, by promoting the defense of the national genetic heritage from the ‘peril’ of contamination. In politics and culture, by promoting the so-called fascistization of schools and universities. All this activity shows, on the one hand, the important contribution made by single individuals to the totalitarian project of the regime and, on the other, the efficacy with which Fascism succeeded in orienting the activities of intellectuals and scientists on a national and international level.

Keywords

Italy – Fascism – New Man – eugenics – racism – Giorgio Alberto Chiurco (1895–1974)

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The New Fascist Man: Presenting the Theme

Benito Mussolini and Fascism did not invent the theme of the so-called 'New Man'. As has been amply demonstrated, the theme was already widespread in Europe well before fascist-inspired movements and parties made their appearance, the theme having found fertile ground in the revolutionary and anti-bourgeois vanguards of the First World War and the immediate postwar period.¹

Nevertheless, in the years between the two world wars, the creation of the New Man was elevated to the role of a political project of the new totalitarian regimes. The theme of the New Fascist Man has been the object of a remarkable number of scholarly contributions, starting from transnational studies that treat the theme from a European perspective and over the long term, investigating the way in which fascist political movements and regimes conceived the formation of new national communities of New Men between 1919 and 1945.² These studies have shown that the New Man does not represent a concept in and of itself, but is part of a larger cultural mosaic that includes many of the central themes of fascist ideology, such as youth, masculinity, athleticism, purity of the race, and its defense against any form of 'degeneration'. The attempts to carry out profound cultural and social revolutions, aimed at the creation of new states and renewed societies of the 'elect', have been recognized as distinctive elements of fascist regimes properly so-called, compared to the many extremely right-wing authoritarian dictatorships that arose in Europe in the period between the two world wars.³ These projects aimed to radically transform the customs, habits and even the way of thinking of human beings themselves, carrying out a mission of 'regeneration' of society that would pave the way for a new national rebirth.⁴ To achieve these goals, fascist regimes mobilized artists, writers, and scientists, actively involved in the realization of what Roger Griffin has called an 'epochal new beginning'. This implied that

1 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

2 James A. Mangan, *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon-Global Fascism* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci and Pierre Milza, eds., *L'Homme nouveau dans l'Europe fasciste, 1922-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 2004); Jorge Dagnino, Matthew Feldman and Paul Stocker, eds., *The 'New Man' in Radical Right Ideology and Practice, 1919-1945* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

3 Aristotle Kallis, 'The "Fascist Effect": On the Dynamics of Political Hybridization in Inter-War Europe,' in *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe*, eds. António Costa Pinto and Aristotle Kallis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 13-42.

4 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993).

both society and the national population were to be entirely reconstituted on the basis of new ideological precepts.⁵

This article aims to present the theme of the fascist New Man through the experience of one of these intellectuals, the physician Giorgio Alberto Chiurco (1895–1975). University professor, and Fascist 'of the first hour', Chiurco devoted himself to the Fascist regime's project of national regeneration over a wide spectrum of activities, making contributions that ranged from eugenics and medicine to the physical, moral, and cultural education of the younger generations.⁶ Chiurco's experience, examined as a concrete case study, can help explain how Fascist Italy, starting in the 1920s, pursued its long-term 'regenerative' mission aimed at completely fascistizing the new generations.

Other studies have treated the theme from a comparative perspective, through the comparison of particularly significant case studies, such as the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, or the cases of Nazism and Italian Fascism.⁷ According to a longstanding historiographical tradition, Germany was thought to have played a fundamental role in transforming Fascist Italy into a 'racial state', with decisive consequences also on its way of conceiving and developing the theme of the New Man. More recent studies, however, have instead highlighted the original and long-term characteristics that led Italy to launch its own aggressive racial program.⁸ In this sense, the relationship with Nazi Germany should be read not in terms of subordination, but as one of exchange and mutual influence, on both the scientific and political levels.⁹ Chiurco's perspective may help to highlight the interest manifested by strata of the Fascist scientific uni-

5 Roger Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 13.

6 For biography see Michelangelo Borri, *Giorgio Alberto Chiurco: Biografia di un fascista integrale* (Milan: Unicopli, 2022).

7 Peter Fritzsche and Jochen Hellbeck, 'The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany,' in *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, eds. Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 302–344; Alessio Ponzio, *Shaping the New Man: Youth Training Regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015).

8 For an overview see Michele Sarfatti, *La Shoah in Italia: La persecuzione degli ebrei sotto il fascismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2005); Iliara Pavan, 'Fascism, Anti-Semitism, and Racism: An Ongoing Debate,' *Telos*, no. 164 (2013): 45–62; Simon Levis Sullam, 'The Italian Executioners: Revisiting the Role of Italians in the Holocaust,' *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 1 (2017): 22–38. See also the special issue edited by Silvana Patriarca and Valeria Deplano, 'Nation, Race, and Racism in Twentieth-Century Italy,' *Modern Italy* 23, no. 4 (2018).

9 Patrick Bernhard, 'Blueprints of Totalitarianism: How Racist Policies in Fascist Italy Inspired and Informed Nazi Germany,' *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 6, no. 2 (2017): 127–162, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00602001>.

verse for racial theories developed in Germany and vice versa. As well as the common grounds and differences of the two projects. During the 1930s, as we shall see, Chiurco engaged in frequent exchanges with the Nazi cultural world, highlighting how important the racial question was in the construction and transnational development of the New Man during the period between the two world wars. These exchanges also show how the progressive radicalization of Fascist racial policies did not depend on German influence, but rather on internal propensities of Mussolini's regime.

In the course of his studies of Italian Fascism, Emilio Gentile had already demonstrated that the utopia of a new humanity, regenerated by Fascist ideology and political practice, was not simply an instrument of propaganda, but rather a key element of the Fascist dictatorship, as well as an essential indicator of its totalitarian nature.¹⁰ Through the creation of a new citizen prototype, Gentile wrote,

fascism wanted to achieve a complete anthropological revolution, which was to change the character of the Italians. The fascist myth of regenerating the nation paved the way to racism and anti-Semitism. Important steps of this anthropological revolution were campaigns aimed at reforming customs, anti-bourgeois struggle, and above all accepting racism and anti-Semitism as ideologies of the State.¹¹

From the mid-1920s, in the context of the anthropological revolution described by Gentile, Fascism gave rise to what Luca La Rovere has defined as 'the most important experiment in mass political pedagogy that has ever been attempted in Italian national history'.¹² As already pointed out, this objective would not have been pursuable without a massive mobilization of scientists, educators, and intellectuals from various fields,¹³ united by the will to mold the new generation of 'integral Fascists' invoked by Mussolini, formed by young men

10 Emilio Gentile, *Fascismo: Storia e interpretazione* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2002), 235–264.

11 Emilio Gentile, *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism* (London: Praeger, 2011), 8.

12 Luca La Rovere, 'Totalitarian Pedagogy and the Italian Youth,' in *The 'New Man' in Radical Right Ideology and Practice, 1919–1945*, eds. Jorge Dagnino, Matthew Feldman, and Paul Stocker (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 21.

13 Claudia Mantovani, *Rigenerare la società: L'eugenetica in Italia dalle origini ottocentesche agli anni Trenta* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2004); Francesco Cassata, *Building the New Man: Eugenics, Racial Science and Genetics in Twenty-Century Italy* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011); Lorenzo Benadusi, *The Enemy of the New Man: Homosexuality in Fascist Italy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

'endowed with those virtues which confer on peoples the privilege of primacy in the world'.¹⁴ These aspects have recently been united in the collective volume edited by Patrick Bernhard and Lutz Klinkhammer, which focusses on the totalitarian nature of the program conducted by the Mussolini regime.¹⁵

Building upon the considerable number of studies devoted specifically to the Italian case, Chiurco's perspective may help to underline the evolution of the New Man concept in Fascist culture, within which the expression changed its meaning in response to the changing policies of the regime. Consequently, the prototype New Man sketched by Chiurco in his own writings goes through variations, passing from the black shirt militant, or *squadrista*, to the citizen-soldier and citizen-producer, and then on to the conqueror and colonizer of the second half of the 1930s. Different versions of the same model of Italian citizen, to construct, educate, and preserve from the risk of outside contamination. At the same time, Fascist culture did not passively accept the indications coming from the political power, but actively tried to influence the development of the cultural orientations of the regime.¹⁶ In the case of Chiurco, this activity resulted in an attempt, expressed to Mussolini himself, to draw a parallel between Nazi and Fascist racial legislation. As native of the region of Istria, Chiurco spoke fluent German and followed with great interest, from the early 1930s, the developments of Nazi eugenic theories. However, while showing a certain 'fascination' with the Nazi political and cultural model, he did not limit himself to passively accepting its theories but discussed and reworked the Nazi racial precepts in light of the debate underway in Fascist Italy.

This article will present the development of the concept of New Man in Chiurco's scientific publications and writings in the period between the two world wars, starting with the recognition of the importance of sports medicine in the physical training of the new generation, then moving to the attention paid to the preservation of the so-called Italian race from the danger of external contamination, especially in the colonial context, and concluding with the role of schools and universities in providing a properly Fascist education to young Italians.

14 'Il grande discorso del Duce alla II Assemblea quinquennale del Regime,' *Il Popolo d'Italia*, March 20, 1934.

15 Patrick Bernhard and Lutz Klinkhammer, eds., *L'uomo nuovo del fascismo: La costruzione di un progetto totalitario* (Rome: Viella, 2017).

16 Alessandra Tarquini, *Storia della cultura fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011).

Giorgio Alberto Chiurco: Biographical Profile of an Integral Fascist

Giorgio Alberto Chiurco was born in 1895 in Rovigo d'Istria, at the time a territory of Austria-Hungary. Born into an Italian family with irredentist leanings, Chiurco did not, however, take part in First World War, devoting himself instead to the study of medicine. In December 1918, as a university student in Padua, he made his first approach to the Fascist movement. It was not until the beginning of 1920, after moving to the small city of Siena, in southern Tuscany, that Chiurco became a significant figure in the movement as political secretary of the local *fascio* and commandant of the black shirts in the areas of Siena and Grosseto.

With the onset of the Fascist dictatorship, Chiurco became professor of medicine at the University of Siena, and a scientist at the service of the regime's racial campaign in the 1930s.¹⁷ Moreover, as an army medical officer, he would be a volunteer in all of the wars fought by Fascist Italy: Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, and the Second World War.

Chiurco sat in the Italian Parliament for two sessions, from 1929 to 1939, working primarily on questions involving university education, but also promoting approval of a 1933 bill regarding *Norme sulle assunzione delle donne nelle Amministrazioni dello Stato* [Rules on the recruitment of women in the public administration], which in fact sanctioned the exclusion of women from public employment.¹⁸ Above all, however, Chiurco's name is tied to his writing of a monumental *Storia della rivoluzione fascista* [History of the Fascist Revolution] in five volumes, devoted to the Fascist seizure of power in 1921–1922, and celebrated by Mussolini himself as the official history of the revolutionary period.¹⁹

After the Armistice between Italy and the Allied forces in September 1943, Chiurco remained faithful to Mussolini and signed on to the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* [RSI; Italian Social Republic]. He served as the Republic's Prefect in Siena until July 1944, organizing the fight against the partisan formations in southern Tuscany and ordering the arrest and deportation of Siena's Jews to the Nazi extermination camps. Later, from December 1944 to April 1945, he

17 Simone Duranti, 'Un medico al servizio della campagna razziale: Giorgio Alberto Chiurco,' *Italia Contemporanea* 51, no. 219 (2000): 249–262.

18 Chiara Giorgi, 'L'emarginazione femminile nella pubblica amministrazione tra le due guerre: storie di donne,' in Chiara Giorgi, Guido Melis and Angelo Varni, eds., *L'altra metà dell'impiego: La storia delle donne nell'amministrazione* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2005), 79–98.

19 Giorgio A. Chiurco, *Storia della rivoluzione fascista* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1929). Mussolini himself wrote the preface to the book.

was named Mussolini's representative to the Italian Red Cross, overseeing the health conditions of non-collaborating Italian prisoners in Germany, the so-called *Internati Militari Italiani* [IMI; Italian Military Internees].

Tried after the war as a collaborator and initially sentenced to life in prison, Chiurco would later benefit from the amnesty decreed by the Italian government. In the 1950s, he was named director of the CESPRE [International Social Center for the Study of Precancerous and Premorbid Conditions] at the University of Rome, specializing in the study of tumors and social diseases. At the same time, he returned to political activity in the organizations of the neo-fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano* [MSI; Italian Social Movement], in which he continued to be active, though maintaining a low profile, until his death in 1974.

The New Italian as an Athlete

The militant black shirt or *squadrista*, as Emilio Gentile observed, was the first version of the Fascist myth of the New Man of the 1920s, a 'believer and a combatant for the religion of the fatherland, wholly devoted to fascism, body and soul, champion of virile virtues, civil and military, young, bold, courageous, full of life and enthusiasm, healthy in his instincts and feelings, ready for violence'.²⁰ In full agreement with what Gentile wrote, the ideal model of the black shirt described by Chiurco, distinguished himself as much for his moral qualities as for his physical superiority over his adversaries, of fundamental importance in battles with socialist and communist adversaries. The black shirts, Chiurco wrote in 1921, are 'the elect, the aristocrats of thought and action predestined to command by God and the fatherland'. To guarantee Italy a future of greatness, Chiurco wrote on another occasion, Fascism would have to 'not only see to the moral education of its young militants, but it must ensure their physical development, and their readiness to use offensive and defensive means, giving them training in gymnastics, and a rational physical preparation', so as to instill them with 'readiness of spirit, secure perception, insensitivity to pain, and equilibrium in every action, rendering them capable of fighting and thinking with calm tranquility even in the most grave moments'.²¹

Chiurco would write a book on the physical education of the new generations with the title *L'educazione fisica nello Stato fascista* [Physical education

20 Gentile, *Fascismo*, 247.

21 Giorgio A. Chiurco, 'L'inchiesta fascista sui fatti di Roccastrada,' *L'Era Nuova*, July 30, 1921; 'Fascismo ed educazione fisica,' *La Scure*, June 24, 1922.

in the Fascist state] published in 1935 with the stated objective of illustrating ‘the powerful achievements of the Fascist state in the field of athletics’. Among the fundamental programs of the *Rivoluzione fascista* [Fascist revolution], the author inserted the goal of ‘increasing the moral and physical soundness, energy, and stamina of the youth both in relation to his function as a *citizen-soldier*, and to his *professional training*’.²² The ultimate goal of such training was clear: ‘the physically strong soldier, well trained by means of gymnastics and sport, is useful in battle because he decides the outcome of combat; the weak soldier cannot sustain for long the physical and moral labor of war’.²³ The first part of the book illustrated the regime’s initiatives in the field of sports, with the organization of exhibitions and conferences, the construction of new facilities, and the institution of special organizations. One of the organizations was the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* [ONB; National Balilla Organization], a national government entity instituted in 1926 and entrusted to the direction of the *ex-squadrista* Renato Ricci, with the task of providing for the political, physical, and spiritual training of the new generations. The ONB was comprised of two main formations, the so-called *Balilla*, children age eight to fourteen, and the *Avanguardisti*, young people from fourteen to eighteen years old.²⁴

Starting in 1929, the education of young girls would also be included in the tasks of the ONB, which had thus become, in the words of Chiurco, ‘the base of the Regime’s educational policy, one of the pillars of the Fascist state’, carrying out the ‘grandiose assignment of the regeneration of the race’.²⁵ The work of the party organizations, according to Chiurco, should be assisted by a more active role for sports medicine, understood as ‘state medicine’, comparing the Italian situation with what he had seen in Germany during one of his own research stays there. The Germans, Chiurco argued, had understood the importance of sports medicine since the early 1920s, ‘reorganizing this activity, which they use intensively in the fervor of a sports-based, rapid military training that is meant to enable them to make their principles triumph’.²⁶ While studying at the uni-

22 Giorgio A. Chiurco, *L'educazione fisica nello Stato fascista: Fisiologia e patologia chirurgica dello sport* (Siena: San Bernardino, 1935), 7. Italics in original. On the theme see Patrizia Dogliani, ‘Educazione fisica, sport nella costruzione dell’“uomo nuovo”’, in *L'uomo nuovo del fascismo: La costruzione di un progetto totalitario*, eds. Patrick Bernhard and Lutz Klinkhammer (Rome: Viella, 2017), 143–155.

23 Chiurco, *L'educazione fisica nello Stato fascista*, 282.

24 Carmen Betti, *L'Opera Nazionale Balilla e l'educazione fascista* (Florence: la Nuova Italia, 1984); Luca La Rovere, *Giovinchezza in Marcia: Le organizzazioni giovanili fasciste* (Novara: Editoriale Nuova, 2004).

25 Chiurco, *L'educazione fisica nello Stato fascista*, 36.

26 *Ibid.*, 290.

versities of Munich and Berlin, Chiurco had learned how 'bodily exercises are also important in social medicine'. If, therefore, on the one hand, the structures built by the Italian regime for the training and ranking of young athletes were considered *avant-garde*, what fascinated Chiurco was 'the great passion that the German people have for physical education and for this new way of life, passion, which is a symptom of the great potential energy, which still lives and pulsates in German blood'.²⁷ To raise young people's awareness about the importance of physical training, Chiurco insisted, Italian sports physicians had to follow the athletes both in peace and war, from youth organizations through university and 'after work' organizations. Thus, 'the true activity of control of the sports physician is extended for at least 15 years on 4–6 million combatants', and so 'it must be agreed that no other branch of medicine has greater value in the State and for the State'.²⁸

Along with training for the citizen-soldier, the book also devoted space to the training of the New Woman, she, too, conceived as an essential figure in the process of national regeneration. In this case, Chiurco's position was close to the rather contradictory position of the regime.²⁹ He insisted on the beneficial effects that physical activity could have for Italian women, disagreeing with his colleagues who thought it opportune to prohibit female athletics. In the Fascist state, according to Chiurco, a 'woman cannot be conceived as shut inside her home, removed from all of those forms of activity that are conducted according to hygienic precepts and that are indispensable for the formation of good character, as well as making her a good mother, able to raise healthy and flourishing children'.³⁰

Although promoting female participation in the athletic activities of the regime, Chiurco supported his position by making reference to woman's traditional role as bride, wife, and mother. Far from emancipating that figure, the role of sport was to mold healthy, strong mothers. In this regard, Chiurco's position reflected the influence of another prominent name of Fascist medicine, the powerful endocrinologist Nicola Pende (1880–1970).³¹ According to Pende,

27 Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale [ASMAE; Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation], Carte Fulvio Suvich [FS; Fund Fulvio Suvich], b. 11, Giorgio A. Chiurco, *Relazione culturale-politica del viaggio in Germania*, 25–26.

28 Chiurco, *L'educazione fisica nello Stato fascista*, 290.

29 Victoria De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

30 Chiurco, *L'educazione fisica nello Stato fascista*, 69.

31 Francesco Cassata, 'Biotypology and Eugenics in Fascist Italy', in *The 'New Man' in Radical Right Ideology and Practice, 1919–1945*, eds. Jorge Dagnino, Matthew Feldman, and Paul Stocker (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 44.

it was 'indisputable that the female brain is qualitatively different from the male brain', the reason for which, a 'woman can do everything that male intelligence can do, but up to a certain measure, more than sufficient, however, for the tasks for which woman was created'. He synthesized those tasks as the 'functions of wife and mother and of a tender collaborator understanding of the work of man'.³² Drawing on Pende's studies, Chiurco theorized a natural distribution between female and male functions, on the basis of which 'the function of the woman is primarily reproductive; to remove her from this task by directing her toward mental labor disproportionate to her own forces or to physical labor in the fields or factories is to go against physiological and sociological laws'.³³ A single exception to the rule could be contemplated in 'extremely piteous cases', such as those in which 'a woman alone bears the enormous burden of a whole family'. In such a situation, the woman could be granted access to employment, such as administrative tasks, otherwise believed to be of male pertinence, in so far as 'the exclusion in these cases would mean starting the woman down the easy road of prostitution; that which much be absolutely avoided'.³⁴ This was a conception of female prostitution in line with that of the regime, which considered prostitution irreconcilable with the 'natural' functions of the Italian woman.³⁵

The Peril of Racial Contamination

Contacts between Chiurco and German cultural circles are documented at least from the beginning of the 1930s and can be ascribed to the context of intensifying exchanges between Italian Fascism and German National Socialism.³⁶ In Berlin on a research mission during the summer and autumn of 1932, Chiurco was an attentive observer of the federal elections in November, which opened the way to power for the party of Adolf Hitler. By way of a series of reserved memoranda addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chiurco

32 Nicola Pende, 'Femminilità e cultura femminile,' *Gerarchia* 20, no. 5 (1941): 264–265.

33 Giorgio A. Chiurco, *La sanità delle razze nell'Impero italiano* (Rome: Istituto fascista dell'Africa italiana, 1940), 778–779.

34 Atti Parlamentari [AP; Parliamentary Acts], Camera dei Deputati [Camber of Deputies], Legislatura XXVIII, 1929–1933, doc. 1938-A, *Relazione al disegno di legge 'contenenti norme sulle assunzioni delle donne nelle Amministrazioni dello Stato'*.

35 Bruno P.F. Wanrooij, *Storia del pudore: La questione sessuale in Italia, 1860–1940* (Venice: Marsilio, 1990), 97–131.

36 See Christian Goeschel, *Mussolini and Hitler: The Forging of the Fascist Alliance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), chapter 1.

described the work of 'spiritual renewal' that the National Socialist Party was proposing to undertake in Germany. He expressed appreciation for its character of a 'realist movement par excellence, worshipper of the strong man, forger of the absolute state, defender of the race, that is, of its purity, against intermingling'. As guest of Adolf Dresler, press secretary of the Brown House in Munich, Chiurco had been able to know personally some of the principal leaders of the Nazi Party, and remained impressed by the attention that the movement devoted to youth, 'which much be sound in body and spirit'.³⁷

Chiurco's contacts with Nazi scientific circles continued over the following months, certainly favored by the more general intensification of relationships between Italy and Germany after Hitler's rise to power.³⁸ In April 1934, in Rome, Chiurco married Ruth Elisabeth Ernst, a native of the region of Silesia and the daughter of a noted German pathologist. In describing the ceremony to Mussolini, the groom emphasized the numerous 'titles of merit toward Fascism' of his wife, as attested by the influential director of the surgery clinic of the University of Berlin, Ernst Ferdinand Sauerbruch, appointed counsellor of State by Hitler in person and tried in the postwar for his role in the planning of the final solution.³⁹

Beginning with studies conducted during the campaign in Ethiopia in the mid-1930s, Chiurco concentrated his attention on the problem of race-crossing, viewed by a large part of Italian science as one of the principal threats to the preservation of the race in the wake of the colonial conquests.⁴⁰ Chiurco's approach to the question also considered the theories developed in Germany. In this vein, the book *La sanità delle razze nell'Impero italiano* [The health of the races in the Italian empire], published in 1940, represents an attempt to discuss and develop Nazi eugenic theories, highlighting the points of encounter with what was produced in the same field by Italian science.

The volume is replete with the names of scientists involved in the sadly well-known Aktion T4, the Nazi euthanasia program aimed at the systematic elimination of the disabled, the mentally ill, and the chronically ill.⁴¹ Those studies

37 ASMAE, FS, b. 11, Chiurco, *Relazione culturale-politica*, 11–12.

38 Ponzio, *Shaping the New Man*, 118–137.

39 Archivio Centrale dello Stato [ACS; General Archive of the Italian State], Segreteria Particolare del Duce [SPD; Special Secretary of the Duce], Carteggio Ordinario [CO; Ordinary Correspondence], b. 1188, f. 509.609, from Chiurco to Mussolini, April 8, 1934. About Sauerbruch see Horst H. Freyhofer, *The Nuremberg Medical Trial: The Holocaust and the Origin of the Nuremberg Medical Code* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 153–154.

40 Giorgio Israel and Pietro Nastasi, *Scienza e razza nell'Italia fascista* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998); Roberto Maiocchi, *Scienza italiana e razzismo fascista* (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1998).

41 Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: 'Euthanasia' in Germany, 1900–1945* (Cambridge:

were cited above all in the section devoted to the correlation between recurrences of mental illness and so-called racial communities, featuring a chart of the 'causes of the degradation of civilized races'. This scheme joined socio-cultural factors, such as decreasing birth rate, urbanization, and emancipation of women, already identified in 1928 by the statistician Richard Korherr, to new factors added by Chiurco: hereditary diseases, social pathologies, and racial mixing.⁴² In this way, Chiurco intended to integrate what had been written by the Nazi statistician with some key concepts of Fascist doctrine. Chiurco was not the only one to highlight the points of contact between the two orientations. In 1934, the hygienist Hans Harmsen had also tried to emphasize the elements of convergence and intersections between Italian and German research, demonstrating how, for many contemporaries, the lines of separation were not so marked.⁴³ In this sense, the example of Chiurco confirms what is claimed by scholars such as Michele Sarfatti, according to whom the difference between the Nazi and Fascist racial doctrines were actually less clear compared to how they were presented by their respective regimes.⁴⁴ In Sarfatti's view, this was especially true of the colonial racial practices experimented by Italians in their African possessions, which served as a 'model' for German plans for ethnic settlement and reconstruction in the occupied territories of Eastern Europe during the Second World War.⁴⁵

In the context of the exchanges between the two countries, Chiurco was particularly active in promoting the achievements of Fascism around the theme of colonial racism. The potential dangers deriving from racial mixing would be the central theme of a series of lectures entitled *Sanità in Abissinia durante la Guerra italo-etioptica* [Healthcare in Abyssinia during the Italo-Ethiopian War] delivered by Chiurco in Germany in 1937 at the universities of Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and the Institute for Tropical Diseases in Hamburg. These lectures attracted considerable attention in German scientific circles and were followed by 'high-level local authorities and by outstanding medical personal-

Cambridge University Press, 1994); *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi Medicine and Racial Hygiene*, eds. Aly Götz, Peter Chroust and Christian Pross (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

- 42 Chiurco, *La sanità delle razze nell'Impero italiano*, 960–968. About Richard Korherr, see his *Regresso delle nascite: Morte dei popoli* [Decline of birth: Death of people] (Rome: Libreria del littorio, 1928), published with a preface by Mussolini.
- 43 Patrick Bernhard, 'The Great Divide? Notions of Racism in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: New Answers to an Old Problem,' *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 24, no. 1 (2019): 105.
- 44 Michele Sarfatti, *Le leggi antiebraiche spiegate agli italiani d'oggi* (Turin: Einaudi, 2002).
- 45 Patrick Bernhard, 'Hitler's Africa in the East: Italian Colonialism as a Model for German Planning in Eastern Europe,' *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, no. 1 (2016): 61–90.

ities, in addition to diplomatic and consular representatives, as well as leaders of the respective Italian colonies.⁴⁶ The interest aroused among his German audience is confirmed by the attention with which the press followed the conferences, dedicating articles to them in widely distributed newspapers such as the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* and the *Frankfurter General-Anzeiger*.⁴⁷ In a long letter to Mussolini, Chiurco claimed to have 'demonstrated the misery, incivility, and wretched health conditions of the natives', also making 'mention of the law recently approved by the Fascist government on demographic colonization and the health of the race'. Such statements, Chiurco continued, 'were met with the greatest applause when I added that we can establish a parallel between the German law and the Italian one'. His position with regard to race-crossing was absolutely clear:

Since the Abyssinians are in this sense a grave danger for our people, we must defend ourselves, by creating laws based primarily on the dignity of the race. There must be a clear dividing line between whites and races of color. These declarations deeply touched the soul of the audience which, in the Great Hall of the University of Munich, numbered more than two thousand people.⁴⁸

In 1937, Chiurco proposed similar ideas to the *Terzo Congresso di Studi Coloniali* [Third Congress on Colonial Studies] Rome-Florence, where he concluded his presentation by praising 'the measures introduced by the German government, which prohibit, aside from the matrimonial union of persons affected by disease . . . also the union of Germans with elements of other races'. Referring to his own colonial research, Chiurco believed he was in a position to declare 'that most mixed breeds possess the defects of both races and none of the qualities of the superior race'. Racial intermixing with indigenous populations could, therefore, represent 'a grave danger for our people', from which it was necessary to defend 'ourselves, by creating laws that obligate Italians formally and morally'.⁴⁹

In his previously mentioned letter to Mussolini, Chiurco indicating a possible path to follow. He recommended to the Duce the plan elaborated by

46 *Giornale di Medicina Militare* 85, no. 2 (1937): 226.

47 ACS, SPD, CO, b. 1188, f. 509.609, from Chiurco to Mussolini, February 21, 1937.

48 Ibid.

49 Giorgio A. Chiurco, 'Modo di vita e condizioni sanitarie degli abissini,' in *Atti del Terzo Congresso di Studi Coloniali: Firenze-Roma, 12-17 aprile 1937* (Florence: Istituto Coloniale Fascista, 1937), 398.

the ss medical officer Arthur Gütt, former director of Public Health in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Third Reich. Gütt was part of Hitler's inner circle and the author, in 1933, of the *Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses* [Law for the prevention of hereditarily diseased offspring], which would lay the legal groundwork for the campaign of forced sterilization conducted by the Nazis against invalids and the mentally ill.⁵⁰ During his last German sojourn, Chiurco wrote, he had 'had the occasion to meet my colleague Dott. Arthur Guett, *Ministerialdirektor im Reichministerium des Innern*, who asked me to make a present to Your Excellency his two volumes "*Blutschutz und Ehegesundheitsgesetz*" by Gütt-Linen-Massfeller, and "*Gesetz zur Verhütung erbkranken Nachwuchses*" by Gütt-Rüden-Ruttke'. In those works, the author explained, 'the problem of "race" is discussed, with specific reference to the terms of the law and highlighting the reasons for the prohibition of matrimony between people affected by venereal diseases, infective tuberculosis, mental illnesses'.⁵¹

The correspondence with Mussolini highlights Chiurco's attempt to influence the development of Italian racial orientations, using the German example to promote trends already present in Fascist cultural circles and promoted by leading intellectuals, such as Julius Evola, Giovanni Preziosi and Telesio Interlandi.⁵² This prospect had, however, raised strong resistance from Catholic and moderate scientists. In the words of the historian Claudio Pogliano, 'in Italy, preventive control over candidates for marriage remained an unfulfilled desire for genetic prophylaxis'.⁵³ In any event, in the 1940s Chiurco's theories would move him to support the introduction of a 'race card' as an instrument to protect against the supposed perils of racial intermingling.⁵⁴ The second edition

50 Freyhofer, *The Nuremberg Medical Trial*, 123.

51 ACS, SPD, CO, b. 1188, f. 509.609, from Chiurco to Mussolini, February 21, 1937.

52 Francesco Cassata, "'Guerra all'ebreo': La strategia razzista di Giovanni Preziosi e Julius Evola (1937-1943)"; in *La Repubblica sociale italiana a Desenzano: Giovanni Preziosi e l'Ispettorato generale per la razza*, ed. Michele Sarfatti (Florence: Giuntina, 2008): 45-75; Elisabetta Cassina Wolff, 'Biological Racism and Antisemitism as Intellectual Constructions in Italian Fascism: The Case of Telesio Interlandi and *La difesa della razza*', in *Racial Science in Hitler's New Europe (1938-1945)*, eds. Rory Yeomans and Anton Weiss-Wendt (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 175-199; Peter Staudenmaier, 'Racial Ideology between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: Julius Evola and the Aryan Myth (1933-1943)', *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, no. 3 (2020): 473-491.

53 Claudio Pogliano, 'Scienza e stirpe: Eugenetica in Italia, 1912-1939', *Passato e Presente* 2, no. 5 (1984): 75.

54 Mauro Raspanti, 'I razzismi del fascismo', in *La menzogna della razza: Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'antisemitismo fascista*, ed. Centro Furio Jesi (Bologna: Grafis, 1994), 73-89.

of *La sanità delle razze nell'Impero italiano*, scheduled for 1942 but never published due to the evolution of the war, intended to devote a specific chapter to measures introduced by the regime for the health of the race, as well as a section on 'sterilization' and the 'prophylaxis of hereditary diseases'.⁵⁵

Educating the New Generations

The question of the proper training of the new generations of Italians immediately attracted considerable attention in Fascist political and cultural circles.⁵⁶ Starting in the mid-1920s, Fascist leadership accompanied the construction of the dictatorship with the establishment of a capillary organization for the education and training of youth. The aforementioned *Opera Nazionale Balilla* was joined by other mass organizations tied to the National Fascist Party, such as the *Fasci Giovanili* [Youth Corps] and the *Gruppi Universitari Fascisti* [GUF; Fascist University Groups], made up of university students who were meant to become the country's future leadership.⁵⁷

Primary importance was also attributed to schools and universities, institutions inherited from the liberal state, whose fascistization was considered a priority. For primary and secondary schools, the process underwent a remarkable acceleration in the second half of the 1920s. Reforms were introduced, including the adoption of a single textbook in elementary schools, the introduction of standard Fascistic rituals, careful control of the texts present in school libraries, and a profound revision of scholastic manuals, especially those used to teach history.⁵⁸

Chiurco made his own contribution to the fascistization of the schools and the whole process of youth training. From 1930 to 1934, he published two manuals of Fascist culture for technical school students, structured as compendi-

55 ACS, SPB, CO, b. 1188, f. 509.609, from Chiurco to Nicolò De Cesare, November 16, 1941.

56 Luciano Pazzaglia, 'La formazione dell'uomo nuovo nella strategia pedagogica del fascismo,' in *Chiesa, cultura e educazione in Italia tra le due guerre*, ed. Luciano Pazzaglia (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 2003), 105–146. See also the monographic issue 'Il mito dell'uomo nuovo nel Novecento: L'uso politico dell'educazione,' *Annali di Storia dell'Educazione e delle Istituzioni Scolastiche* 9 (2002).

57 Luca La Rovere, *Storia dei GUF: Organizzazione, politica e miti della gioventù universitaria fascista, 1919–1943* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2004); Simone Duranti, *Lo spirito gregario: I gruppi universitari fascisti tra politica e propaganda, 1930–1940* (Rome: Donzelli, 2008).

58 Jürgen Charnitzky, *Fascismo e scuola: La politica scolastica del regime, 1922–1943* (Florence: la Nuova Italia, 1996).

ums of Italian history and what today would be called 'civics'.⁵⁹ Addressed to a very young audience, these volumes illustrated the Fascist conception of the mass-citizen, who found full self-realization not as a single individual but rather as a member of the community.⁶⁰ Order and discipline became the motus par excellence of Fascist pedagogy. As written by Arnaldo Mussolini, the Duce's brother and most faithful advisor, over the new generations, born and raised under Fascism, there loomed 'the duty to be, in national life, always the first, vigilant against adversaries, ready not only to popularize Fascist postulates, but to weave them into and make them part of everyday life'.⁶¹ The true young Fascist, Chiurco wrote, 'must be in the front line, pure and without reproach', just as the good Italian citizen 'will, and will carry out, before all others, the *duty of order and discipline*'. No society, Chiurco continued, 'can sustain itself without order and without discipline, because the one and the other give rise to *respect for the laws*, the *sentiment of the hierarchy*, and *deference to authority*'.⁶² These duties concerned, in the first place, the realm of the family, that is, 'relationships of spouses between themselves, of parents with their children, and children with their parents'.⁶³ These were then tied to responsibilities toward the community, like those of proper childrearing and instruction, consisting in 'the effort that each must make to improve as much as possible his own intellectual and moral condition; the improvement on which depends the progress of the national society, and which redounds to the advantage of the individual and of society'. There remained, finally, the duty of work, by which 'each component of a national society participates in the fruits of the activities of the other partners. Only a parasite, a thief fails to perform the duty to produce in the interests of others'.⁶⁴ This was the introduction of the producer function of the individual, which was part, in the context of the full realization of the Fascist corporate state, of the individual's status as citizen. For the regime, Chiurco declared, there was, in fact, no 'innate right to vote of men as citizens, but rather the right to vote of men as producers'. Universal male suffrage, 'based on an abstract criterion of capacity', came to be 'replaced by an equally very extensive suffrage which its basis in

59 Giorgio A. Chiurco, *Manuale di cultura fascista* (Naples: Morano Editrice, 1930) and *Elementi di cultura fascista* (Naples: Morano Editrice, 1934).

60 Pazzaglia, 'La formazione dell'uomo nuovo,' 131.

61 Arnaldo Mussolini, 'Il Dovere,' in *Fascismo e civiltà*, ed. Arnaldo Mussolini (Milan: Hoepli, 1937), 134–135.

62 Giorgio A. Chiurco, *Comandamento del fascista: Onestà e disciplina* (Siena: Meini, 1929), 2; Chiurco, *Elementi di cultura fascista*, 94. Italics in original.

63 Chiurco, *Manuale di cultura fascista*, 95.

64 *Ibid.*, 94.

the productive activity of each individual, such that only those who contribute in some way to the creation of the national wealth can be considered electors'.⁶⁵

The 'good reading list of the young Fascist',⁶⁶ also had to include the already mentioned *Storia della rivoluzione fascista*. Indeed, the celebration of the revolutionary period and of the martyrs of Fascism constituted a fundamental element of the civil religion of the regime, which 'aimed to colonize the mind as well as the State'.⁶⁷ Benito Mussolini himself, in his preface to the book, urged that it be read by 'young people of the freshest generations', who

not having undergone the great test [of *squadrisimo*] have only vague notions of it, while it is instead necessary for adolescents to know that in order to give—through the Revolution—to the fatherland the chance for life and power, it took lots of blood. In this way, they will learn to venerate the symbols of the and to respect the veterans who fought in the War and the Revolution, and to feel the beauty and the gravity of the task that is assigned to them: to conserve and transmit the Idea and the institutes of the Revolution.⁶⁸

Many periodicals of the time emphasized the didactic function of the *Storia*, which the historian Carlo Capasso defined 'a veritable school for the new generations, who must feel the same impulse and the same force of will of those who preceded them'.⁶⁹ Even one of the main voices of the anti-Fascist exiles, Palmiro Togliatti's journal *Lo Stato operaio* [The workers' state] called Chiurco's work 'a history of Fascism for members of the balilla', realizing the didactic-propagandistic use that was made of it by the regime.⁷⁰ Thanks to the purposeful action of the propagandistic apparatus of the regime, the *Storia* would become an important text in the social engineering project of the New Fascist

65 Ibid., 36–37.

66 Adolfo Scotto Di Luzio, *L'appropriazione imperfetta: Editori, biblioteche e libri per ragazzi durante il fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), chapter 3.

67 Mabel Berezin, *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 246. In regard to the Fascist political religion see Emilio Gentile, *The Cult of the Lictor: The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

68 Benito Mussolini, 'Invito alla lettura,' in Chiurco, *Storia della rivoluzione fascista*, vol. 1, VII–VIII.

69 Carlo Capasso, 'Storia della rivoluzione fascista di G.A. Chiurco,' *Bibliografia fascista: Rassegna quindicinale a cura dell'Istituto Nazionale Fascista di Cultura* 4, no. 7 (1929): 1–3.

70 S.T., 'Una storia del fascismo ad uso dei balilla,' *Lo Stato Operaio* 3, no. 8 (1929): 706–711.

Man, as well as an ever-present volume on the bookshelves of private and public libraries, reading clubs, universities, and schools of every level and kind.

Chiurco's interest in teaching was not limited, however, to the writing of scholastic manuals, but also involved active participation in the debate on the fascistization of the Italian universities, which began in the mid-1920s. The question was hotly debated in the universities and cultural circles close to the regime, as well as in the GUF.⁷¹ Many of the participants invoked a decisive intervention from on high to move beyond the reform introduced in 1923 by the then minister Giovanni Gentile, which left university institutions what was felt to be excessive autonomy with respect to the political powers.⁷² Whereas university education was considered by the most intransigent voices of Fascism to be the main instrument for training the new leaders of the country. Just as pressing was the question of the purging of faculty members suspected of feeling less than enthusiastic support of the regime or even of harboring anti-Fascist sentiments.

This issue involved Chiurco directly, at the time already teaching at the university in an adjunct role. That very situation may have caused Chiurco to assume an intransigent position within the debate, as he considered the universities as 'radiant hotbeds of the purest faith'. It was necessary, therefore, to treat them 'aristocratically', with interventions aimed at reinforcing the GUF, strengthening student assistance organizations, and instituting new professorships in corporatist law, as well as every other measure aimed at reinforcing the 'Fascist' education of students. The primary danger for the politico-educative function of the universities was the presence of a small minority of faculty members who were anti-Fascist and 'today, ensconced inside their institutes and laboratories, they attend exclusively to science and teaching, convinced that the Mussolini Government has not deprived professors of the regime's supreme cultural institutions of their academic freedom, as long as that freedom does not degenerate into absurd and harmful license'.⁷³ In 1928, Chiurco raised the tone of the debate, joining the chorus of those demanding greater severity in the control of teaching personnel in the schools and universities. Starting from the assumption that 'the Fascist Party card is not sufficient qualification for teaching', he asked that the new university faculty

71 La Rovere, *Storia dei GUF*.

72 Giuseppe Ricuperati, 'Per una storia dell'università italiana da Gentile a Bottai: Appunti e discussioni,' in *L'Università tra Otto e Novecento: I modelli europei e il caso italiano*, ed. Ilaria Porciani (Naples: Jovene, 1994), 311–377.

73 Giorgio A. Chiurco, 'Contributo ai problemi universitari,' *Il Popolo Senese* 4, November 25, 1928.

be chosen by the organizations of Fascist assistants and professors. To obtain concrete results inside the universities, it was necessary to 'take over the competent bodies, taking into account all of those in leadership positions, in the high council of public instruction, in the hiring commissions for university faculty and licensing boards'. Fascism must, by so doing, 'wage an assault against the vital organs of science and once taken and fascistized, let them go about their work'.⁷⁴

The demands of Chiurco and the more intransigent supporters of the fascistization of universities and scholastic institutions were satisfied in part by the introduction of the loyalty oath to Fascism for teaching personnel, introduced in 1929 for elementary school teachers, then extended to middle schools, and, in 1931, also to university professors. It was a provision that was meant to resolve the problem of the political reliability of the world of instruction in favor of Fascism. Instead, as is well known, it actually resulted in the departure of those few teachers who, out of coherence and loyalty to the principle of academic freedom, preferred to leave their positions rather than take the oath.⁷⁵

Conclusion

On December 13, 1955, the political weekly *Il Mondo* carried a long article signed by the anti-Fascist intellectual Ernesto Rossi, dedicated to what was called 'the Chiurco case'. Benefiting from a series of amnesties and the substantial failure of the purge of Fascist university professors, Chiurco was about to resume service at the University of Rome.⁷⁶ Rossi's denunciation echoed that of the communist intellectual Giovanni Berlinguer, who in *L'Unità* had harshly criticized the university reinstatement of Chiurco, 'previously sentenced to death for Fascist crimes'.⁷⁷ The story arrived in the Italian Parliament with a motion

74 Giorgio A. Chiurco, 'Fascistizzazione delle università,' *Archivio fascista di medicina politica* 3, no. 1 (1929): 42–44.

75 Helmut Goetz, *Il giuramento rifiutato: I docenti universitari e il regime fascista* (Florence: la Nuova Italia, 2000); Giorgio Boatti, *Preferirei di no: Le storie dei dodici professori che si opposero a Mussolini* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001).

76 Ernesto Rossi, 'Il caso Chiurco,' *Il Mondo*, December 13, 1955. On the theme see Giovanni Montroni, *La continuità necessaria: Università e professori dal fascismo alla Repubblica* (Florence: Le Monnier, 2016); Mattia Flamigni, *Professori e università di fronte all'epurazione: Dalle ordinanze alleate alla pacificazione, 1943–1948* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2019).

77 Giovanni Berlinguer, 'Lo scandaloso caso del "professor" Chiurco,' *L'Unità*, December 12, 1955.

presented by the communist senators Ambrogio Donini, Emilio Lussu, and Angelina Merlin, who asked to open an investigation to ascertain ‘what interferences have occurred in recent years in favor of a well-known Fascist criminal’. Faced with what was becoming the ‘most scandalous episode of university life in the last decade’, the academic world also rose up, with an open letter signed by Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, Piero Calamandrei, Giuseppe Levi, Natalino Sapegno and other anti-Fascist colleagues, ready to denounce ‘the serious attempt underway to illegally reintegrate Mr. Giorgio Alberto Chiurco into university teaching’.⁷⁸

The former hierarch was therefore reinserted into the university world as director of the aforementioned CESPRES, a center for the study of cancer and social diseases that became, in the 1960s, the reference point of an extensive international network of scientists linked to the extreme right.⁷⁹ Among the members of the center were important figures of Fascist science such as Nicola Pende and the former *squadrista* and university professor Luigi Ajello, but also the oncologist Karl Heinrich Bauer, already active in the Nazi sterilization campaigns of the 1930s, and Francisco Arasa Bernaus, professor at the University of Barcelona, and well-known supporter of the Franco regime. Under the direction of Chiurco, the activity of the center ranged from prevention to statistical analysis, ecology and the study of radiation, with a clinical and quantitative approach, sometimes taking a friendly view of the eugenic theories widespread in those years in Scandinavia.⁸⁰

In any event, Chiurco did not abandon the idea of an obligatory health screening of the population, as a basis for a national census of the public health. Re-proposed during a seminar on *La consultazione prematrimoniale* [Premarital counseling] in 1969, this idea was no longer supported by racial considerations, but rather for its ‘moralizing function’ and as ‘psychosomatic and spiritual control’ function which, according to Chiurco, it could have performed.⁸¹ However, Chiurco’s proposal was not met with much approval, encountering

78 AP, Senato (Senate of the Republic), Legislatura II, CCCXLV seduta, December 2, 1955, 14165. Then, ‘Lo scandalo Chiurco,’ *Il Contemporaneo*, March 17, 1956.

79 Among the works dealing with the transnational dimension of the Italian extreme-right network see: Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Matteo Albanese and Pablo Del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy and the Global Neofascist Network* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016).

80 Borri, *Giorgio Alberto Chiurco*, 269–275.

81 Istituto Italiano di Medicina Sociale, ed., *La consultazione prematrimoniale* (Rome: Loffari, 1969), 15–16.

instead the steadfast opposition of Luigi Gedda, one of the most authoritative voices of Italian Catholic-oriented medical genetics, contrary to the prospect of an obligatory screening.⁸²

Returning to what was stated at the beginning of this article, it can now be confirmed that the figure of Chiurco contributes to our knowledge of the theme of the New Man and, more generally, of Fascism itself. First of all, Chiurco's activity testifies to the participation and fundamental contribution provided by intellectuals and scientists to the policies of the Mussolini regime. The variety of topics covered, ranging from sports medicine to eugenics and educational practices, also highlights the totalitarian ambition of the Fascist anthropological revolution. Secondly, Chiurco was an important player in the transnational exchanges between Italian and German scientific circles, especially around the racial question. His story sheds light on the extent and characteristics of contacts between the two countries, characterized by relations of mutual influence.

Finally, Chiurco's work confirms once again the groundlessness of what David Bidussa and Filippo Focardi have called the 'myth of the good Italian': the idea, long widespread among national public opinion, that racism and anti-semitism were extraneous to Fascism, imported from Nazi Germany. In this perspective, the major representatives of Italian culture, and more generally the population itself, would only formally accept—and intimately reject—the discriminatory policies introduced by the regime.⁸³ This position, although denied by historiography, continues to meet considerable success in the political language of the Italian extreme right: which not only recovers rhetoric and images of the Fascist colonial discourse in its anti-immigration slogans, but proposes a selective memory of the Italian colonial experience, denying its most controversial aspects.⁸⁴ As demonstrated by historiography and as confirmed by the example of Chiurco, the central elements of Fascist racial discourse were not imported—let alone imposed—by external subjects. They were already present in the reflections advanced since the 1920s by intellectu-

82 Cassata, *Building the New Man*, 331.

83 David Bidussa, *Il mito del bravo italiano* (Milan: il Saggiatore, 1994); Filippo Focardi, *Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano: La rimozione delle colpe della seconda guerra mondiale* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2013).

84 Andrea Mammone, 'Se l'onda razzista passa per folklore,' *Reset* 117 (2010): 17–20; Marianna Griffini, 'The Civic Discourse: Representing Immigrants in the Italian Far Right,' in *Approaches to Migration, Language, and Identity*, eds. Anita Auer and Jennifer Thorburn (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021), 133–167.

als involved in the life of the regime, who contributed to the construction of Fascist Italy and actively spread, both at home and abroad, its racist and totalitarian assumptions.

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