



The Enemy of the New Man: Homosexuality in Fascist Italy (George L. Mosse Series)

Lorenzo Benadusi

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In this first in-depth historical study of homosexuality in Fascist Italy, Lorenzo Benadusi brings to light immensely important archival documents regarding the sexual politics of the Italian Fascist regime; he adds new insights to the study of the complex relationships of masculinity, sexuality, and Fascism; he explores the connections between new Fascist values and preexisting Italian traditional and Roman Catholic views on morality; he documents both the Fascist regime's denial of the existence of homosexuality in Italy and its clandestine strategies and motivations for repressing and imprisoning homosexuals; he uncovers the ways that accusations of homosexuality (whether true or false) were used against political and personal enemies; and above all, he shows how homosexuality was deemed the enemy of the Fascist "New Man," an ideal of a virile warrior and dominating husband vigorously devoted to the "political" function of producing children for the Fascist state.

Benadusi investigates the regulation and regimentation of gender in Fascist Italy, and the extent to which, in uneasy concert with the Catholic Church, the regime engaged in the cultural and legal engineering of masculinity and femininity. He cites a wealth of unpublished documents, official speeches, letters, coerced confessions, private letters and diaries, legal documents, and government memos to reveal and analyze how the orders issued by the regime attempted to protect the "integrity of the Italian race." For the first time, documents from the Vatican archives illuminate how the Catholic Church dealt with issues related to homosexuality during the Fascist period in Italy.

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