

A ‘catastrophic consequence’: Fascism’s debate on the legal status of Libyans and the issue of mixed marriages (1938–1939)

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ABSTRACT

This article assesses the role that institutional concern for the possibility of interracial marriages played in the Italian Fascist party’s internal debate regarding the legal status of Libyans in the second half of the 1930s. Following the end of the ‘pacification’ of the Libyan resistance in 1932, Governor Italo Balbo pushed for the region’s demographic colonization and the legal inclusion of the colonial territory and its population within the metropole. In contrast, Fascist Party officials in Rome endorsed starker racial segregation in the colonies based on the racist ideology that permeated the regime after the declaration of the empire in 1936. The legal inclusion of Libyans within the metropolitan body politic touched upon the regime’s most sensitive theme: the need to avoid any promiscuity that could interfere with the racial consciousness of Fascist Italy. This article analyses this dispute through the lens of interracial marriage and concubinage regulations, framing it into the definition of a normative standard of Italian whiteness through the racialization of the colonial Other.

KEYWORDS

Colonial law; mixed marriages; Libya; Italian colonialism; Fascism

Introduction

The legal status of colonized populations within systems of colonial rule has been an indicator of the processes of production of power relations between different social groups at different times and places. Although colonial states were mainly concerned with metropolitan settlers, their administrators had to develop different legal frameworks to interact with the colonized populations. Among the reasons that prompted different responses to the issue of the legal status of the colonized societies, the most relevant included: racial segregation, access to rights, and broad geopolitical aspirations. In the case of the Italian colonial empire, the legal status of the colonized populations assumed various meanings at different times and places. While the Italian colonial administration kept a clear legal separation between Italian citizens and colonized subjects throughout its colonial rule over its Eastern African territories, it adopted an evolving, contradictory strategy for

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Libya.¹ Between 1911 and 1943, the legal status of Libyans changed from a straightforward subjecthood to one of the most inclusive forms of citizenship in global colonial history, only to evolve again into a form of ‘colonial citizenship’ that placed Libyans into a juridical grey area.

Academic scholarship has looked at the questions of citizenship and race in the context of the Italian colonization of Libya and how colonial dynamics of belonging were interlinked with broader Italian, European, and supranational discourses on citizenship.² More recently, a rich body of studies on the connections between colonial regulations of belonging and contemporary citizenship regimes in the Italian context has emerged.³ Building on the vast literature on issues of citizenship and race in the context of Italian Libya, this article aims to connect the legal status of the Libyan population with the primary signifier of production of colonial categories: the regulation of miscegenation or the need to segregate the population along racial lines in order to avoid it.⁴ Although academic scholarship has left the issue of miscegenation in the Libyan context untouched, the sources analysed in this article prove that the possibility of marriage between Italian settlers and Libyans played a role in developing a new legal system status for Libyans in the 1930s.

As the Fascist administration finally managed to repress the anti-colonial resistance that had made the region politically unstable since the landing of the first Italian troops in Tripoli, the colony’s government faced the issue of creating a coherent political regime for Libya. Governor Italo Balbo pushed for the demographic colonization of the now stable territory while coupling it with a juridical annexation of the colony within the metropolitan body politic. In his view, these two policies would allow the development of a long-term plan of ‘Italianization’ of the colony, with the Italian settlers progressively outnumbering the already decimated Libyan population. When it reached its final legislative stages, Balbo’s plan faced the opposition of Mussolini and other party leaders, who steered the ideology of Fascism towards a more racist connotation of the Italian national identity after the birth of the Italian empire in 1936. The debate that emerged around Balbo’s plan was decidedly framed around the need to keep the Libyan and settler populations segregated in order to avoid mixed marriages, as the Fascist government was fostering the racial consciousness of the Italian citizens with particular zeal in the colonies.

This article details the disagreement between Governor Balbo and two top party officials of the Ministry of Italian Africa, who conveyed the position of the Fascist party leadership about the need for racial segregation in the newly born empire. It does so by assessing the relevance of Fascism’s anxiety towards mixed marriages in the development of a demographic colonization plan for Libya and the legal status of the people who inhabited it. As the new settler colony was characterized by complex race and class relations between Libyans and working-class Italian settlers, the regime constructed a clear racial divide between the Italian and local populations, both discursively and juridically. The debate’s analysis relies on historical sources from the Italian institutional archives that preserved the voices of all the protagonists. The historical perspective regarding the concessions and removals of rights for the Libyan population is then put in the context of the late racist ideology of the Fascist regime to assess the role that anxiety toward mixed marriages had in the debate about the juridical status of Libyans in the second half of the 1930s.

The legal status of Libyans and the regulation of mixed intimacies in the colony

For the Italian Fascist government, the colonial enterprise in Africa and the demographic colonization of the conquered territories represented one of the cornerstones of constructing a racially defined Italian national identity. Within this process, the Italian settlers played a crucial role, as they embodied the quintessential rampart of the 'interior frontier' erected to defend the essence of the nation.⁵ Thus, the difference of legal status between the colonized populations and the Italian settlers was essential in creating an ideological and material basis for the segregation of different racial groups in colonial settings. Both Liberal and Fascist colonial administrations imposed a subjecthood status on the East African colonized populations since the onset of Italian domination of the region in 1890. The lack of organized anti-colonial resistance, coupled with a history of racial segregation that dated back to the early years of Liberal Italian colonization, allowed the Fascist administration to enforce and police racial boundaries to defend Italians' racial consciousness. After the conquest of Ethiopia and the birth of the Italian empire, the colonial administration of the region set out to defend the 'interior frontier' in Eastern Africa with particular emphasis as the racist rhetoric of the regime intensified.

Concerning the regions of modern-day Libya, an Italian colony from 1911 to 1943, the socio-legal context proved to be very different from their Eastern African counterparts. Due to political reasons related to quelling anti-colonial resistance and organizing racial hierarchies within the empire, some political rights were conceded to the colonized population, only to be revoked and granted again during a 15-year time span. Until 1936, Libyans were considered to belong to the same 'Mediterranean race' as Italians; as such, laws were enacted to elevate their legal status above Eritrean and Somalian colonial subjects.⁶ This ideological framework was consistent in promulgating the Italian Aegean citizenship for the colonized populations inhabiting the Italian colonies in the Isole Egeo in 1925.⁷ Until the racist shift of 1936 that brought a new 'Aryan' racial characterization to the Italian population, the colonial divide in Libya was not strictly framed on phenotypical racial terms but on racialized differences interpreted in cultural and religious terms. This, in turn, allowed for the promulgation of somewhat inclusive citizenship forms for the Libyan population, at least until Fascism's rise to power.

Notably, after an initial decree that characterized Tripolitanian and Cyrenaican 'natives' as colonial subjects,⁸ the Italian government promulgated two decrees that detailed an inclusive framework for the juridical status of Libyans.⁹ These decrees, called *Statuti* or *Legge Fondamentale per la Tripolitania e la Cirenaica*, formulated a 'colonial citizenship for Tripolitania and Cyrenaica' that entailed civil and political rights for the Libyan population. Most notably, the laws allowed the inhabitants of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica to request and obtain Italian citizenship. Unsurprisingly, the Fascist colonial administration overturned the 1919 *Statuti* in 1927 with a new decree that abolished most of the rights enjoyed by Libyans while boosting the military crackdown of the resistance.¹⁰ Although the Fascist colonial administration continued to use the nominal 'Italian-Libyan citizenship' status for the local population, it practically equated the juridical status of Libyans to the subjecthood of their Eastern African counterparts.

When the Libyan resistance was 'pacified' in 1932, the Fascist government dealt with a more stabilized colonial society, and the debate over the juridical status of the Libyan population became entangled with other ideological motives. A particularly significant reason for reorganizing racial boundaries between settlers and Libyans was the growing anxiety regarding mixed intimacies. Mixed marriages and mixed relationships of a marital nature posed a particularly relevant threat to the segregationist Fascist colonial administration, as they entailed respectively either a legalized or a possibly sentimental characterization of the relationship between Italian settlers and Libyans.¹¹ On the other hand, prostitution was never racially segregated in Fascist Libya. It was often encouraged as a better option to more stable and less objectified relationships such as marriage and concubinage. Relationships that could be characterized by sentimental attachment, such as forms of cohabitation or even legalized unions like marriage, went against the post-1936 Fascist ideology of racial superiority of the Italians vis-à-vis the racialized colonial Other since they entailed a form of emotional equality that defied colonial racial hierarchies.¹²

The use of the regulation of mixed intimacies as an analytical category to identify the Fascist political reasoning behind the engineering of the legal status of the colonized population is new to the Libyan context. While for the Eritrean context, there are in-depth analyses of mixed relationships in both liberal and Fascist eras, together with the relations between the regulation of miscegenation and the juridical discourse, the same cannot be said for colonial Libya.¹³ Regarding the Libyan context, scholars have analysed how the Liberal and Fascist administrations instrumentally used the legal status of Libyans for their political projects and how social relations between Italians and Libyans unfolded across the colonial divide.¹⁴ However, the role that mixed marriages might have played in the debate concerning the latter's juridical inclusion has never been thoroughly analysed. Studies on the Italian empire have mostly downplayed the relevance of mixed intimacies in colonial Libya altogether: 'in the Libyan colonies - as testified by the silences of archives, institutions, and contemporary observers - there was not a consistent and widespread anxiety regarding "mixture" and mixed children as it instead was in Eritrea first and Ethiopia next'.

Moreover, other works have underscored the lack of research on forms of the regulation of miscegenation in the Libyan context: 'there is little to no research on whether the 1937 racial law [which prohibited mixed concubinage in the Eastern African colonies] had any effect in Libya. It seems that it did not because the Arab population was very isolated and did not seek interaction with the Italians'.¹⁵ This article challenges these assumptions by detailing how mixed marriages and their regulation were central factors that shaped the discussion on the future developments of Libya as a settler colony. Ann Stoler wrote that 'what is striking when we look to identify the contours and composition of any particular colonial community is the extent to which control over sexuality and reproduction were at the core of defining colonial privilege and its boundaries'.¹⁶ As this article will show, colonial Libya was no exception.

After the conquest of Ethiopia and the declaration of the birth of the empire in 1936, Fascism opted for a well-documented 'racist shift' in their colonial policies.¹⁷ Such a shift entailed segregationist policies consequential to the new 'Aryan paradigm' regarding the racial identity of Italians. Such a paradigm rested on the unquestionable superiority of the Italian race over its colonial subjects and the need to keep the two social groups

segregated. Within this discursive context, in 1934, the Fascist administration unified the two colonies Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, under the name 'Italian Libya' directed by the efforts of the colony's Governor, Italo Balbo. At a moment when the Fascist elites in Rome were constructing racial segregation as one of the pillars of the new Italian racially-conscious society, Balbo pushed for a plan that put this ideological shift at risk. Mixed marriages stood at the crossroads of these two views, their role in shaping colonial categories and power relations pivotal for the legal status of both the colony and its inhabitants.

Settler colonialism in a new racial paradigm: Italo Balbo's plan

Much has been written about Italo Balbo, a devoted Fascist official, celebrity aviator and at times source of envy and resentment from Mussolini himself.¹⁸ Balbo himself saw his appointment as governor as a sort of 'exile' carried out by Mussolini, who increasingly saw the Ferrarese *gerarca* as a political rival due to his exploits as a transatlantic aviator and reformer of the Italian Air Force. Upon arriving in the colony, Balbo said to his predecessor, 'Dear Badoglio, your sorrow at leaving is nothing compared to mine at arriving'.¹⁹ Disregarding his reserves and complaints, Balbo put himself to work with the energy that made him famous and undertook a series of programmes to develop the now 'pacified' colony from an economic and administrative standpoint. His first goal was to unify Tripolitania and Cyrenaica under a single administrative entity. Such an endeavour had been deemed premature by his predecessors, but Balbo 'overwhelmed [Mussolini] with a flow of words',²⁰ and the dictator gave in to Balbo by issuing the Royal Decree n. 2012 of 3 December 1934, officially creating Italian Libya.

Balbo saw the unification of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as the 'first step towards the annexation of Libya as an Italian province'.²¹ The creation of Italian Libya, coupled with a new ad-hoc legal system that allowed some Libyan men to obtain metropolitan citizenship, seemed to elevate Libyans' legal status as quasi-metropolitan citizens.²² Italian propaganda would eventually call this new colonial era that started in 1934 and peaked with the juridical annexation of Libya as 'the period that saw the most significant concessions in favour of Libyans'.²³ The political annexation of Libya proposed by Balbo, or the 'provincialization' plan, was complementary to the grand scheme of demographic colonization that the governor himself had started through the institution of the *Ente per la colonizzazione della Libia*.²⁴ Balbo saw the significant number of arrivals of Italian settlers, along with a *de jure* assimilationist policy concerning the status of Libyans, as the best way to 'Italianize' the region and make it the empire's stronghold in Northern Africa.²⁵

A letter from Balbo himself, sent in 1938 to the undersecretary of the Ministry of Italian Africa, Attilio Teruzzi, spoke of formally granting Italian citizenship to the Libyan population as a necessary step towards the greater annexation scheme of the region.

With the proclamation of the Libyan territories as provinces of the Kingdom, and with the speeding up and enlargement of our plan of mass demographic colonization of the region, it is necessary, as the only possible solution of the problem [of the juridical status of the natives], to approve the concession of the full citizenship in the terms that were anticipated by myself during the last *Gran Consiglio* [the Colonial Council of Fascism]. [...] Once we

have made Libya into an Italian region, we can only make the Arabs either citizens or slaves. Nobody, I imagine, intends to enslave them; hence, it is necessary to make them full citizens.²⁶

The colonial army had just repressed the rebellion, and the first mass-scale waves of settler colonialism began creating a new colonial environment in which relations of power needed some form of stabilization. The Fascist colonial administrators fought with every means necessary against the contestation of Italian sovereignty by Libyan rebels.²⁷

For these reasons, the process of demographic colonization, as much as Balbo's proposal of annexation, can be seen as a way for the Fascist regime to increase its political grip on the territories. By the end of the 'pacification' of the resistance, the Fascist colonial army had decimated the local population. The vacuum left gave way to the mass of Italian settlers that were to take control over the region and, in Balbo's view, to outnumber Libyans to irrelevance progressively. Although it might seem that Balbo was endorsing a full inclusion of the Libyans within the metropolitan body politic from his letters, it is essential to underline that he still envisioned a form of colonial control over the region. First of all, Balbo intended to concede the 'province' status only to the coastal areas (Tripolitania and Cyrenaica) while maintaining a military-run administration in the southern lands of the colony (Fezzan). Secondly, more populated coastal areas that were to be granted the status of 'province' were still to be ruled by a governor (who happened to be Balbo himself). This provision allowed Balbo to retain the colonial administrative structure and not grant Libya the same status as the metropolitan provinces. Balbo's plan involving the 'provincialization' of Libya and the consequent concession of full citizenship to Libyans must be understood as a strategic move to reaffirm Italian sovereignty over the region.

Even if Balbo appeared to be open to a nominal inclusion of the colonized population within the metropolitan body politic, he never once spoke of equality between the Italian settlers and the Libyan citizens. This stance was particularly unyielding after 1936, with the declaration of the Italian empire and the solidification of the demographic colonization of Libya. Many scholars argued that when a colonial power resorts to settler colonialism, it automatically increases the rhetoric of racial difference between settler and colonized populations.²⁸ This rhetoric results in creating clear boundaries based on Europeans' presumed civilizational and biological superiority. In particular, as the envisioned majority of the new settlers in the Libyan colony belonged to lower socio-economic classes, the need to delineate the racial divide between settlers and locals became particularly pressing. In a colonial context where the constructed differences between settlers and colonized could not be delineated in terms of wealth and social status, the enforcement of strict racial boundaries became essential to the organization of the settler society.

Once the colonial army had sedated the rebellion, the rhetoric of racial difference inherent to settler colonialism, as much as the enforcement of such inequality in legal and political terms, increased dramatically. Mamdani argues that in the context of settler colonialism, 'direct rule meant the reintegration and domination of natives in the institutional context of semiservile and semicapitalist agrarian relations. For the vast majority of natives, that is, for those uncivilised who were excluded from citizenship

rights, direct rule signified an unmediated – centralised – despotism’.²⁹ Although the hammering *propaganda filomusulmana* orchestrated by Balbo attempted to convey all of the advancements brought by the new regime, it is clear that Fascism was establishing a system of direct rule in which the separation between Italians and Libyans was central. For these reasons, despite the explicit instrumental nature of the concessions envisioned by Balbo, a significant portion of the Fascist elites back in Rome were firmly against any formal equation of the white Italian settler population and the racialized Libyans. The characterization of the Fascist ideal of Italian national identity had reached its peak after 1936, and the colonies represented the frontier where such a boundary needed to be enforced resolutely. Any blurring of this separation would have entailed many risks, including dangers for the portrayed racial purity inherent to the Fascist idea of the Italian nation.

The pushback against the Libyan colony’s proposed ‘provincialization’ was framed along the lines of ‘indispensable’ separation. Before analysing the pushback against Balbo’s proposal, however, it is necessary to briefly examine the political discourse regarding race relations within the colonies after the racist turn of the regime in 1936. As a result of the shift in Fascism’s ideological posture, the political discourse regarding the role of the Italian nation in its empire changed. Politicians, intellectuals, and scholars began to conflate the ‘civilising mission’ with the notion of protecting Italians’ racial purity. Within the same year of the declaration of the empire, Giulio Cogni published the first book of Italian racist propaganda, *Il Razzismo*, which called for the ‘defence of our race’, and for ‘the need to bring Rome’s light to the world’.³⁰ Moreover, Cogni argued that the new Fascist, racist ideology was not ‘a doctrine bound to the politics of only one civilization: it has the universal duty of glorifying the highest values of Indo-European civilization’.³¹ As De Donno wrote, ‘during fascism, race ideology and practice, together with the idea of empire, primarily served the purpose of empowering nationalism’.³²

Another particularly telling source on the racist shift that followed the declaration of the empire is a conference report that the professor and political writer Angelo Piccioli wrote in 1938. Piccioli, the superintendent for education in Tripolitania in 1922, was a resolute defender of a form of colonial consciousness that underlined the importance of the ‘civilising responsibility’ of European colonial powers. In this document, written after the ‘racist shift’ of the regime, we can see how the racial characterization of nationalism had taken root in his thought.

Fascism, which gets its most profound meaning in being the most powerful manifestation of the Italian race, with a series of rigorous policies, has proven to give the proper importance to the problem of race in the empire. In the lands conquered by the Italians, Italians need to remain as pure as ever: this is a dogma of undeniable evidence. [...] In those nations with a lack of race consciousness, colonization could not have other results than a dangerous decaying of their ethnic values. For these reasons, the policies adopted by the regime after the conquest [of Ethiopia], policies that prohibit relationships of a marital nature between whites and people of colour, will never be lauded enough.³³

In this source, Piccioli directly engages with many themes touched upon in this article. Initially, he underlines the centrality of racial consciousness in the construction of Fascist nationalism. On a second note, he refers to the actual implementation in the colonies of such racial consciousness that was the seed of cohesive and Fascist

Italian national identity. The decree he refers to is the R.D. n. 880 of 1937, which represents the first explicit policy regarding the prohibition of mixed relationships, and it is unequivocally applied only to the colonies of Italian Eastern Africa.³⁴ Piccioli applauded the decree as the necessary 'political action' that would have strengthened the nation's racial consciousness in the colonies. Indeed, such a measure indisputably drew sharp boundaries between the settler and colonized populations in the place where the racialized Other was at its closest to the 'racially conscious' white Fascist Italian: the colony.

As seen in the sources above, the tropes of the 'Italian Aryan Race' and 'racial consciousness' grew increasingly relevant in the Italian and colonial contexts after 1936.³⁵ Italians did not belong to the 'Mediterranean race' envisioned by anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi anymore, but to the 'Aryan race', albeit still in a 'Mediterranean' inflexion. Within such a new racial paradigm, concern for mixed relationships grew in the empire. It comes as no surprise that such a discursive climate also affected the Libyan context, particularly regarding the debate around Balbo's proposal on the colony's annexation and the juridical inclusion of the Libyan population within the Italian national community. Although the decree that prohibited concubinage in Italian Eastern Africa did not directly address the Libyan context, Balbo's proposal of legal inclusion of the local population provoked concern in the high spheres of the Party. The following section will detail how Fascism's 'racist shift' influenced the debate over the concession of full citizenship to Libyans towards notions of racial purity and the related anxiety regarding the possibility of racially mixed marriages between Italian settlers and Libyans.

Fascism's reaction to the juridical inclusion of Libyans: a catastrophic consequence

It was September 1938 when Italo Balbo submitted his annexation bill to the Ministry of Italian Africa. Expectedly, it collided with Mussolini's new racist paradigm that had found complete realization with the 1938 racial laws.³⁶ Party officials in Rome saw it as 'one of Balbo's many protests against Mussolini's racist policies', as 'to discriminate against the Jews but not against the Libyans made no sense to the fascist hierarchy'.³⁷ Objections came from all over the Party's leadership, as stated by Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano: 'It is easy to recognise here a flat contradiction in our racial policy. The real party men, such as Farinacci, Starace, and Alfieri, do not hesitate to oppose the proposal. Nor do I'.³⁸ Notably, two high officials of the Ministry of Italian Africa, Martino Moreno and Attilio Teruzzi expressed their scepticism toward Balbo's proposal, citing as the main reason against its feasibility the risk of increasing instances of mixed marriages in the colony.

Martino Moreno was the Head of the Department of Political Affairs within the Ministry at the time of Balbo's proposal. A veteran of the Italian colonial administration, Moreno started his career in Tripolitania in 1914 as an expert of Arabic language and culture. After having spent 20 years in the colonies, he returned to Rome in 1934, where he moved up in the ranks of the Ministry until he was promoted to director of the Political Affairs Department. Known for his competence and versatility within the administration, Moreno was one of the most zealous supporters of the racist policy of

the regime in the colonies.³⁹ Given his history in the regime's colonial administration, it does not come as a surprise that Moreno opposed Balbo's bill emphatically. In his written response to Balbo, Moreno detailed several reasons for his opposition to the bill: most were concerned with the administrative downside of the concept. The most relevant, however, involved the issue of racial purity and separation between settlers and Libyans. Moreno's objection directly addressed the issues of anxiety regarding mixed marriages, particularly the gender-framed mixed marriages between Libyan men and Italian women, and the legal boundaries in place to prevent them:

The annexation of the Libyan provinces to the metropole would entail the concession of full Italian citizenship to the Libyans. This fact, in turn, would involve the danger of Libyans being able to marry Italian women, a fact that would be in direct contrast with Mussolini's directive to avoid any racial promiscuity.⁴⁰

Of particular interest in Moreno's words is the direct referral to the gender dynamic that created the biggest threat to Mussolini's instruction to avoid any racial promiscuity. Moreno does not speak of mixed marriages in general terms but specifically of marriages between Italian women and Libyan men. European societies considered women to be the bearers of standards of morality in the colonies,⁴¹ and their increase in number following the beginning of the demographic colonization of Libya certainly caused anxiety for possible mixed relationships with Libyan men. Italian women in the colony were instrumental in creating clear boundaries between the racialized Other and the European 'self', since 'the presence of white women and their safety was repeatedly invoked to clarify racial lines. It coincided with perceived threats to European prestige, increased racial conflict, covert challenges to colonial politics, and outright expressions of nationalist resistance'.⁴² Predictably, Moreno refers to this specific racialized gender dynamic as the only type of marriage that could cause severe fears for the integrity of the nation's racial purity in the colony. Moreno's explicit statement reveals the regime's growing anxiety regarding the swelling numbers of Italian women in the Northern African colony. During the years of anti-colonial resistance, when the Italian population was almost totally comprised of male soldiers, non-segregated prostitution and colonial concubinage were tolerated and even endorsed by both liberal and Fascist administrations.⁴³ With the stabilization of the colony and the arrival of large numbers of Italian civilian settlers that included women, the Fascist regime pushed for a 'moral re-armament' of the Italian settler community to be exerted through the policing of the bodies of white Italian women.

The other objection to the proposed plan of full citizenship for Libyans came from the undersecretary in the Ministry of Italian Africa, soon to become Minister himself, Attilio Teruzzi. Teruzzi was the epitome of the Fascist man, a man who was hard to compete with 'in terms of ambition and roughness'.⁴⁴ He was nominated Governor of Cyrenaica by Mussolini in 1926 given 'the regime's necessity to have a trusted and undoubtedly Fascist man in Cyrenaica at a challenging moment', with anti-colonial resistance rampaging in the colony.⁴⁵ He held the position for two years, considerably speeding up the repression of the rebellion. From Teruzzi's notes, we can learn that he was aware of 'the inevitable violence of the occupation' and that while he advocated for the start of the social and economic development of the colony, he was convinced of the necessity of basing it on the superiority of the colonizers over the colonized.⁴⁶ Teruzzi wrote a

memoir of his time as a Governor titled *Cirenaica Verde*, in which he clarified his stance on the treatment of Libyans.

Contrary to what could be inferred from his opinion on the undeniable inferiority of Libyans, Teruzzi stated that 'I have always thought that it is opportune to use tolerance toward the indigenous and their intimate feelings toward our rule'.⁴⁷ From these words, it is clear that Teruzzi in 1931 had a nuanced view over the Italian colonial rule in Libya, one that acknowledged the complexity of colonial rule while underscoring its centrality 'in renovating the Italian consciousness' vis-à-vis the colonial Other.⁴⁸ In Teruzzi view, colonialism was the primary means to create a racially conscious Italian identity and, at the same time, a complex and nuanced endeavour whose success rested on enlightened management of the colonized populations' prerogatives.

Fast-forward to 1938, and Teruzzi has thoroughly embraced the Party's racist policy. Contrary to what transpired of his opinion on the Libyan population from the pages of *Cirenaica Verde*, Teruzzi is harshly critical of Balbo and his plan. Considered to be 'Balbo's major critic',⁴⁹ Teruzzi showed his disapproval for Balbo's plan in a memo he wrote from his office in Rome. Granting citizenship to Libyans could have a 'catastrophic consequence', besides being in defiance of what the party stood for. More than revealing his shift in attitude and dislike for Balbo, however, Teruzzi's memo is highly telling of anxieties that the regime felt towards the 'promiscuous' legal system that Balbo had in mind.

Balbo's proposal says that 'What we will have in Libya will not be a distinction between the dominators and the dominated, but between Catholic Italians and Muslim Italians, both constitutive elements of the powerful Fascist empire'. These words confirm the project's intent to put Semite Arabs and Aryan Italians on the same juridical level [...]. Giving Italian citizenship to Libyans, besides being an act in defiance of the explicit racist ideology of the regime, could also bring catastrophic consequences, first among them the possibility of marriage between Aryans and Semites.⁵⁰

Teruzzi, like Moreno, refers to the 'explicit racist ideology' of the regime, which had now fully embraced the 'Aryan racist paradigm' with the promulgation of the anti-Semitic *Leggi per la difesa della Razza* (laws for the defence of the race). In Teruzzi's view, the new ideology was in danger of being overlooked if Libyans were able to enjoy a full citizenship status.⁵¹ He argued that the first and most dangerous consequence of such an inclusive act would be the possibility of 'marriage between Aryans and Semites'. Teruzzi refers to the breach of the boundaries that protected that 'racial consciousness' so central in constructing the white, Fascist Italian Self vis-à-vis the racialized colonial Other that had permeated his thought since the times of *Cirenaica Verde*.⁵² Moreover, the referral to 'marriages between Aryans and Semites' points to the complexity of race relations in Libya, where the Jewish community still counted 30,387 members by the eve of World War II.⁵³ The research conducted on the Jewish people of Libya has shown that the mentioned *Leggi per la difesa della Razza* was not enforced until the death of Balbo in 1940.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the memo by Teruzzi shows us how by the end of the 1930s, the Jews of Libya were included in the anxiety for mixed marriages that pervaded the Fascist elites regarding Italian women in the colony. While in previous memos the colonial divide between Italian settlers and Libyans was referred to the Arab majority, by this point, the defence of the

Aryan race from the danger of mixed marriages starts to include the increasingly racialized Jewish community as well.

The words of Moreno and Teruzzi are a product of the previously outlined political discourse on racial purity that permeated the legislation of Fascist Italy and its colonies from 1936. Both officials refused to envision a progressive inclusion of the Libyan population within the Italian national community, as it would be against the new Fascist policy and discourse regarding the racial connotations of the Italian nation. The debate over the concession of citizenship to Libyans coincided with the promulgation of the 1937 decree that prohibited cohabiting relationships between Italians and Eastern African colonial subjects. For the first time, this law spelt out the explicit prohibition of mixed marriages and concubinage in the Italian empire. Even if the decree did not specifically mention Libyan colonial 'citizens', as they were formally one step ahead in the colonial hierarchies of the empire, the memos of Moreno and Teruzzi seem to hint at a *de facto* application of the decree in the Libyan territories as well. Although *de jure* the law was formally applied only to Eastern African colonial subjects, there is no complete certainty whether the 1937 prohibition of mixed relationships of a marital nature was *de facto* enforced in Libya. Both legal scholars of the time and contemporary historians and postcolonial scholars have stated the lack of juridical consensus over its validity in the Northern African colony.⁵⁵ However, it is certain that the fear of mixed marriages was not a prerogative of the Eastern African colonies.⁵⁶ There, the legal conditions of the colonized population were characterized by subjecthood and, therefore, more directly segregated. As the words of Teruzzi and Moreno clearly show, the 'interior frontier' of the Italian race and nation needed protection from risks of miscegenation at all costs, even for the 'more civilised' Libyan 'citizens'. Without a doubt, this provision had priority over the long-term geopolitical project for the region.

Finally, the Italian government issued the bill concerning the 'provincialization' of Libya at the beginning of 1939, and the four administrative subdivisions of Libya (Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, and Derna) went on to become Italian 'provinces', realizing the plan of Balbo at least in its strictly administrative conjugation.⁵⁷ However, given the Fascist Great Council's reluctance to concede a full citizenship status to Libyans, no extension of rights for the local population accompanied the annexation of the territories. The decree created a new 'Italian-Libyan citizenship' that maintained the same juridical status for the Libyans as in the 1927 law and eliminated the possibility for 'worthy' Libyan citizens to obtain metropolitan citizenship. With this new decree, Arab Libyan citizens could only hope for a 'special citizenship' that would combine the social rights of the metropolitan citizenship with the Muslim personal and inheritance status. As for the Jewish population, whose position in the racial hierarchy had always been somewhat interstitial in the colony, no matter what their citizenship was (most held British, French or Libyan citizenship), they increasingly started to experience racial discrimination as envisioned in the 1938 racial laws.⁵⁸

The scholar Angelo Del Boca described the 1939 decree as a 'watered-down' version of Balbo's project.⁵⁹ Giorgio Rochat stated that the law conveyed 'a form of discrimination entirely in line with the racist policy of the regime, which aimed at developing and rewarding the Arab elites without putting them on the same level as the Italian dominators'.⁶⁰ This decree successfully made Libyans foreigners in their land since they formally lived in Italy without being Italian citizens. This new legal context enforced a starker

boundary between settlers and Libyans and consequently attempted to prevent mixed marriages and concubinage without explicitly prohibiting them in the law. As sustained by many jurists of the time, although the law did not mention any racial barrier, 'that does not mean that [Muslims'] access to public rights equals the rights of metropolitan citizens. The limitations for accessing the metropolitan juridical status are intrinsically racially framed. Metropolitan citizenship is, in any case, prohibited for Libyans, precisely for racial reasons'.⁶¹ Balbo's dream of coupling the annexation of Libyan territories with a *de jure* inclusion of the local population as part of a plan of 'Italianization' of the region only became a nominal territorial annexation, a normative incorporation of Libyan territory which did not change the 'colonial citizenship' status of the population. This 'compromise' represented a solution to the debate that realized some of Balbo's aspirations without infringing Mussolini's order to end all racial promiscuity in the colony.

In coherence with past legislation, the Fascist propaganda hailed the territorial annexation and the new legal status for the Libyans as another step in elevating their conditions under the Fascist regime. The propaganda continued to convey the image of a protected colonized population whose social, political, and civil rights were continually improving. However, as written by Bassi, 'the insistence of the propaganda on the new legal status included in the 1939 decree was engineered to hide the will to bestow a positive evolution of the social conditions of the natives in place of the actual regression of their juridical status'.⁶² Even Balbo, who until 1938 'had assumed a dissident position on the racial laws that criticised the overly zealous application of German-style norms',⁶³ finally fell in line with the regime's imperative to keep the two populations as segregated as possible. Balbo's acceptance of the Party's position over the inclusion of the Libyans is evident in this telegram sent to Mussolini only two days after the approval of the decree on 11 January 1939.

I just finished my round of inspections in the new settlers' villages, during which I was able to speak to all settlers of both genders, who were 18-years-old or older [...]. I answered all questions while delineating the guidelines of colonial life. I underlined with particular emphasis the need to categorically avoid any form of promiscuity and familiarity with the Muslim populations.⁶⁴

Balbo sent this telegram in response to a letter that reached him at the beginning of January from the cabinet of Mussolini himself. The telegram urged Balbo to take swift measures regarding the 'concerning' increase in promiscuous relationships between settlers and Libyans that followed the massive flow of Italian settlers in 1938. Balbo complied with the Duce's disposition, having seen his ideas of instrumental inclusion now ultimately defeated by Mussolini's reluctance to endanger the purity of the Italian race in the colonies. He did so by stating in the telegram that the 'interior frontier' protecting the racial purity of the Italian nation was not in danger in his colony.

As its racist rhetoric and practice intensified, the Fascist government adopted new measures to ensure segregation between the 'Italian Aryans' and other racialized populations. Less than six months after the promulgation of the decree that annexed Libya and created the new 'special citizenship', a new law was approved by the Mussolini government: a piece of legislation specifically designed to create clarity on the stark separation between Italians and colonized peoples.⁶⁵ This decree left no room for discussion on its application all over the empire as it stated that 'the metropolitan citizen who engages in a

relationship of marital nature with a native of Italian Africa will be punished with imprisonment for up to five years' (art. 10). It also stated that 'the citizen who, in the territories of Italian Africa, habitually hangs around in the public spaces reserved to the natives, will be punished with imprisonment for up to six months' (art.12). This decree erased any possible doubt or disagreement regarding the application in the Libyan territories of the 1937 law prohibiting mixed relationships of a marital nature in Eastern Africa. With this new law, any 'Aryan' citizen who was found guilty of being engaged in either marriage or concubinage with a 'native of Italian Africa' (including Libya) was harshly punished, thereby formally prohibiting stable mixed relationships in the empire. The racial characterization of the Italian national identity had finally reached its peak. The purity of the Italian nation, particularly in front of the colonial Other, was protected unequivocally by racist legislation that left no room for interpretation.

Conclusion

This article revealed how the Fascist party top officials' anxiety regarding how the possibility of mixed marriages could affect the racial consciousness of Italians played a role in the debate on the juridical inclusion of Libyans in the late 1930s. Before that, concessions given to the Libyan population regarding their juridical status had been consistently instrumental in the evolution of Italian geopolitical plans for the region throughout the Italian colonial control over the Libyan territories (1911–1942). With the 'pacification' of the rebellion and the concurrent start of the demographic colonization of the Libyan territories, the Fascist regime dealt with a more stable colony and a higher number of Italian settlers in its regions. This new context framed a debate internal to the Fascist party on a new legal status for the local population. Such discussion entailed one of the most significant sources of anxiety for the increasingly racially defined Fascist national identity: the fear of miscegenation. While most of the party advocated for more explicit juridical boundaries between the local population and the settlers, Italo Balbo, governor of the newly unified Libyan colony, saw things differently. He advocated for the Libyan territories' annexation to the Italian Kingdom and a juridical inclusion of Libyans as steps towards a long-term plan of Italianization of the colony.

After the conquest of Ethiopia and the Italian empire's birth in 1936, the Fascist regime sharply increased the racist rhetoric regarding the character of the Italian national identity and the status of the colonial subjects of the empire. The new Fascist discourse on the pure 'Italian Aryan Race' pushed stricter legislation to enforce more definite boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized. Between 1937 and 1940, the Fascist administration deployed a vast body of racial laws aimed against Jews in Italy and against the colonized populations in the empire. The climate of increasing racial characterization of the Italian national identity concerning the segregationist colonial policy in Eastern Africa had a great deal of influence over the debate on the concession of metropolitan citizenship to Libyans. This article disclosed how the Fascist officials who were concerned about Balbo's plan illustrated the hypothetical danger of mixed marriages allowed by the equivalence of status between Italians and Libyans. This development was a turn of events that the Fascist colonial administration could not allow whatsoever, as it would have been in direct contrast with the regime's new ideology regarding the racial boundaries of the Italian nation.

In the end, Mussolini's government approved the formal annexation of the Libyan territories at the start of 1939, but the same decree that realized Balbo's 'provincialization' plans also rejected the notion of juridical inclusion of the Libyan population. This article demonstrated how the anxiety regarding possible mixed marriages between Italian settlers and racialized Libyans wielded some influence in dismissing the long-term geopolitical plans of Italianization of the region. This fear of mixed marriages shows the extent to which Fascism gave importance to safeguarding the Italian racial identity the regime had taken so long to foster. With the decree of June 1939, which prohibited mixed marriages and concubinage between Italian 'Aryans' and colonized peoples, the regime extended its legal defence of racial purity to all fields. This final stance underscores the extent to which the racialization of the colonial Other, as much as the exaltation of an ideal standard of Italian 'whiteness' that could not be tainted by miscegenation, was central to Fascism's nationalist political project.

Notes

1. Although the names 'Libya' and 'Libyans' indicated the colonial territories and their populations only after Governor Italo Balbo unified Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan in 1934, in this article they will be used as an overarching term to indicate all populations and territories that fell under Italian rule in the region.
2. Ahmida's work focused on the roles of class, region, tribe and state formation in conditioning Libyans' role in colonial society, including questions of belonging. See: Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *Forgotten Voices: Power and Agency in Colonial and Postcolonial Libya*, New York: Routledge, 2005. Labanca's comprehensive monograph is also worth mentioning as a sweeping view over the contradictions between colonial discourse and practice on the management of colonial societies. See Nicola Labanca, *Oltremare. Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002. On the specific matters of citizenship, subjecthood and belonging in Italian Libya, see Florence Renucci, 'La strumentalizzazione del concetto di cittadinanza in Libia negli anni Trenta', *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno* 33–34, 2005, pp 319–342; Fabrizio De Donno, 'La razza ario-mediterranea: Ideas of Race and Citizenship in Colonial and Fascist Italy, 1885–1941', *Interventions* 8 (3), 2006, pp 394–412; and Gabriele Bassi, 'Il diritto come strumento di politica coloniale nella Libia italiana (1911–1943)', *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno* 47(1), 2018, pp 207–255.
3. Hom's *Empire's Mobius Strip: Historical Echoes in Italy's Crisis of Migration and Detention* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019) masterfully linked Libyans' treatment during colonialism to modern echoes of racism and legal exclusion that characterize modern-day Italy. Pesarini and Tintori have 'critically considered to what extent "race" is at the core of the legislative and discursive foundation of Italian national identity and citizenship'. See Angelica Pesarini and Guido Tintori, 'Mixed Identities in Italy: A Country in Denial', in Z Rocha and P Aspinall (eds), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Mixed Racial and Ethnic Classification*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, pp 349–365. Finally, Pamela Ballinger's *The World Refugees Made Decolonization and the Foundation of Postwar Italy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020) conveyed a comprehensive, critical analysis of colonial citizenship in Libya and its relation to other citizenship regimes in the Italian empire while connecting them to broader discourses and practices that inform legal frameworks remaining in place today.
4. The terms 'miscegenation' and 'mixed' are conceptualized in this article as the coupling of two individuals that are socially understood as belonging to two differently perceived 'races' at a specific time and place.
5. The concept of 'interior frontier', as elaborated by Etienne Balibar based on the definition of the German philosopher Fichte, entails the attempt of nation-states to erect barriers in

- imperial contexts to maintain the imagined purity of the national community when confronted with the colonial Other. See Etienne Balibar, 'Fichte et la frontière intérieure. A propos des Discours à la nation allemande', *Le Cahiers des Fontenay: Philosophie et politique en Allemagne, XVIIIe-XXe Siècle* 59, 1990, pp 57–82.
6. On the 'Mediterranean' and 'Aryan-Mediterranean' Italian racial paradigms see De Donno, 'La razza ario-mediterranea'.
 7. Ballinger, *The World Refugees*, p 140.
 8. R.D. 6 April 1913 n. 315.
 9. *Regio Decreto (R.D.) 1 giugno 1919 n. 931 che approva le norme fondamentali per l'assetto della Tripolitania*, in *Raccolta ufficiale delle leggi e dei decreti del Regno d'Italia*, 1919, vol. 2, pp 1844–1852 and R.D. 31 ottobre n. 2401 *che approva le norme fondamentali per l'assetto della Cirenaica*, ivi, vol. 6.1, pp 5702–5712.
 10. R.D. 26 June 1927 n. 1013.
 11. The expression 'relationship of a marital nature' will be used throughout the article to characterize all the colonial intimate relationships that entailed long-term cohabitation. The expression is a direct referral to the language used by Italian legislators to refer to the many different kinds of concubinage and cohabitation that sprouted in the Italian colonies since the first arrival of Italian colonizers in Eritrea in the 1880s. Notably, as it will be mentioned further on in the article, the expression 'relationships of a marital nature' was used in the two main laws that were aimed at curbing interracial relationships in Eastern Africa (R.D. 19 April 1937-XV n. 880) and then in the whole empire (R.D. 1939-XVII, n. 1004).
 12. Olindo De Napoli, *La prova della razza. Cultura giuridica e razzismo in Italia negli anni Trenta*, Firenze: Le Monnier, 2009, p 78.
 13. On mixed intimacies and their regulation in the Eritrean context, see Barbara Sòrgoni, *Parole e corpi: antropologia, discorso giuridico e politiche sessuali interrazziali nella colonia Eritrea: 1890–1941*, Napoli: Edizioni scientifiche Italiane, 1998; and Giulia Barrera, *Colonial Affairs: Italian Men, Eritrean Women, and the Construction of Racial Hierarchies in Colonial Eritrea (1885–1941)*, Evansville, IL: Diss. Northwestern University, 2002.
 14. Important works on the legal status of Libyans during Italian colonial rule include: Federico Cresti, *Oasi di italianità: la Libia della colonizzazione agraria tra fascismo, guerra e indipendenza (1935–1956)*, Torino: SEI, 1996; Renucci, 'La strumentalizzazione del concetto di cittadinanza'; Federico Cresti, *Non desiderare la terra d'altri: la colonizzazione italiana in Libia*, Roma: Carocci Editore, 2011; Bassi, 'Il diritto come strumento di politica coloniale'.
 15. Roberta Pergher, *Mussolini's Nation-Empire: Sovereignty and Settlement in Italy's Borderlands, 1922–1943*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, p 197.
 16. Ann Laura Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31(1), 1989, p 154.
 17. De Donno, 'La razza ario-mediterranea'; Olindo De Napoli, 'The Origin of the Racist Laws Under Fascism. A Problem of Historiography', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17(1), 2012, pp 106–122.
 18. The biography written by Segrè stands out as the most complete historical account of Balbo's life as a Fascist politician, aviator and colonial governor. See Claudio G Segrè, *Italo Balbo: A Fascist Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
 19. Giovanni De Luna, *Badoglio: un militare al potere*, Milano: Bompiani, 1974.
 20. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p 294.
 21. ASMAI (Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana), Fondo Affari Politici (1934–1955), c. 5, f.30, *Ordinamento politico amministrativo per la Libia: Telegramma di Balbo a Lessona*, February 20, 1936.
 22. *Ordinamento organico per l'amministrazione della Libia*, R.D December 3, 1931, n.2012.
 23. Gaspare Ambrosini, 'Lo statuto dei nativi dell'Algeria e della Libia', in AA.VV. *Scritti giuridici in onore di Santi Romano, Vol. III - Diritto internazionale. Diritto coloniale. Diritto corporativo*, Padova: CEDAM, Casa editrice dott. A. Milani, 1940, p 311.

24. On the demographic colonization plan for Libya, see: Claudio G Segrè, *Fourth Shore: the Italian Colonisation of Libya*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974; and Emanuele Ertola, "'Terra promessa': Migration and Settler Colonialism in Libya, 1911–1970", *Settler Colonial Studies* 7(3), 2016, pp 340–353.
25. By the beginning of the Second World War, over 100,000 Italians settled in Libya thanks to the work of the *Ente*. See Helen Chapin Metz and Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Libya: A Country Study*, Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress: For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O, 1989.
26. ASMAI (Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana), GAB, b. 167, *Cittadinanza ai Libici, Letter*, 21 November 1938.
27. The use of toxic gases and concentration camps by the Italian army in Libya is well documented. See for example: Angelo Del Boca, 'Il colonialismo italiano tra miti, rimozioni, negazioni e inadempienze', *Italia contemporanea* 212, 1998, pp 589–603; and Eric Salerno, *Genocidio in Libia: le atrocità nascoste dell'avventura coloniale italiana (1911–1931)*, Roma Manifesto Libri, 2005.
28. See for example Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; Scott Lauria Morgensen, 'The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now', *Settler Colonial Studies* 1(1), 2011, pp 52–76; and Patrick Wolfe, 'Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native', *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4), 2006, pp 387–409. Patrick Wolfe provides the following definition of settler colonialism, which is extremely apt to describe the Libyan context:

The primary object of settler-colonisation is the land itself rather than the surplus value to be derived from mixing native labour with it. Though, in practice, Indigenous labour was indispensable to Europeans, settler-colonisation is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. The logic of this project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs a range of historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct.

This excerpt is taken from Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*, London: Cassell, 1999, p 163.

29. Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018, p 17.
30. Giulio Cogni, *Il razzismo*, Milano: Bocca, 1937.
31. Cogni, *Il razzismo*, p 5.
32. De Donno, 'La razza ario-mediterranea', p 409.
33. ASMAI (Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana), GAB, b. 70, *La razza e l'Impero*, Angelo Piccioli.
34. 'Conversione in legge del R.D. 19 aprile 1937-XV, n. 880, sulle sanzioni per i rapporti d'indole coniugale tra cittadini e sudditi'. The law established that

The Italian citizen who, in the territory of the Kingdom or of the Colonies, engages in a relationship of marital nature with a subject person of Italian East Africa or a foreigner belonging to a population that has traditions, customs or juridical and social concepts similar to those of the subjects of Italian East Africa, is punished with imprisonment from one year to five years.
35. For a complete analysis of the shifts in the racial connotations of the discourse on the Italian national identity and related policies during Fascism, see De Donno, 'La razza ario-mediterranea'.
36. R.D.L. 5 September 1938 n. 1390 'Provvedimenti per la difesa della razza'.
37. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p 329.
38. Quoted in Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p 329.

39. Chiara Giorgi, 'I funzionari dell'Oltremare: tra autorappresentazione e realtà del governo coloniale', *Le Carte e la Storia* 14(2), 2008, p 198.
40. ASMAI (Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana), Fondo Affari Politici (1934–1955), c. 56, f.36. *Nota di Moreno per il sottosegretario di Stato in risposta ad corrispondenza antecedente riguardo i confini interni della Libia*. April 1938.
41. Anna Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, p 57.
42. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, p 57.
43. On the regulation of colonial concubinage in Italian Libya see my article: Andrea Tarchi, 'Mabruchismo: Concubinage and Colonial Power in Italian Libya (1911–1932)', *Modern Italy*, 2021, pp 1–16.
44. Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1991, p 42.
45. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, p 107.
46. Giorgi, 'I funzionari dell'Oltremare', p 190.
47. Teruzzi, *Cirenaica Verde*, p 48.
48. Teruzzi, *Cirenaica Verde*, p 15.
49. Segrè, *Italo Balbo*, p 315.
50. ASMAI (Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana), GAB, b. 167, *Nota di Teruzzi per il sottosegretario di Stato in risposta ad corrispondenza*. 10 November 1938.
51. R.D. 17 November 1938, n.1728.
52. Teruzzi, *Cirenaica Verde*, p 15.
53. Maurice M Roumani, *The Jews of Libya: Coexistence, Persecution, Resettlement*, Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2008, p 28.
54. On the Jewish population of Libya see: Renzo De Felice, *Ebrei in un paese arabo : gli ebrei nella Libia contemporanea tra colonialismo, nazionalismo arabo e sionismo (1835–1970)*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1978; and Maurice M Roumani, *Gli ebrei di Libia: dalla coesistenza all'esodo*, Roma: Castelvecchi Editore, 2015.
55. The lack of consensus was already highlighted in 1938 by Sertoli Salis, 'Il nuovo satuto libico', in *Il Diritto Fascista* (1938). Donati, in her *A Political History of National Citizenship and Identity in Italy, 1861–1950* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013, p 191), affirms that the law was extended to Libya in 1939, therefore after Moreno's memo. Pergher, in her *Mussolini's Nation-Empire*, p 197, states that there is little to no research on whether the 1937 law had any effect on Libya.
56. In the end, the ambiguities were eliminated by the promulgation of the law 1939-XVII n. 1004, or 'Sanzioni penali per la difesa del prestigio di razza di fronte ai nativi dell'Africa Italiana', which prohibited any type of relationship of a conjugal nature between metropolitan citizens and 'natives' of Italian Africa.
57. R.D. 9 January 1939, n. 70.
58. The citizenship held by the Jewish population living in Libya became an extremely prominent issue in 1942, during the Northern African battles of World War II. The Libyan Jewish community was accused of supporting the British enemy, and consequently Mussolini started his campaign of 'sfollamento', with which the Jewish people of Libya were deported in concentration camps in different locations according to their citizenship.
59. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, p 240.
60. Rochat, Giorgio, *Balbo*. Torino: UTET, 1986, p 263.
61. Sertoli Salis, 'Il nuovo satuto libico', p 40.
62. Bassi, 'Il diritto come strumento di politica coloniale', p 245.
63. Ballinger, *The World Refugees*, p 145.
64. ASMAI (Archivio Storico del Ministero dell'Africa Italiana), GAB, B. 70, *Telegramma n.672 da Balbo per il Duce*. 11 January 1939.
65. R.D. 29 June 1939 n. 1004 *Sanzioni penali per la difesa del prestigio della razza di fronte ai nativi dell'Africa Italiana*.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank my family, partner, and research team for the help and support they provided me during my research. Moreover, I would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for their valuable criticisms of this article's earlier drafts.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by the European Research Council as part of the project 'Regulating Mixed Intimacies in Europe (EUROMIX)' under Grant number 725238.

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