

MUSSOLINI'S NATION-EMPIRE

Roberta Pergher transforms our understanding of Fascist rule. Examining Fascist Italy's efforts to control the antipodes of its realm – the regions annexed in northern Italy after the First World War and Italy's North African colonies – she shows how the regime struggled to imagine and implement Italian sovereignty over alien territories and peoples. Contrary to the claims of existing scholarship, Fascist settlement policy in these regions was not designed to solve an overpopulation problem, but to bolster Italian claims to rule in an era that prized self-determination and no longer saw imperial claims as self-evident. Professor Pergher explores the character and impact of Fascist settlement policy and the degree to which ordinary Italians participated in and challenged the regime's efforts to Italianize contested territory. Employing models and concepts from the historiography of empire, she shows how Mussolini's territorial aspirations unsettled the boundaries between national and imperial rule.

ROBERTA PERGHER is Assistant Professor of History at Indiana University, where she teaches classes on modern Europe, the history of Empires, the First World War, and Nazi Germany. She has published widely on Italian Fascism, imperial formations, and population settlement. Previously, she taught at the University of Kansas and was a fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41974-1 — Mussolini's Nation-Empire
Roberta Pergher
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

NEW STUDIES IN EUROPEAN HISTORY

Edited by

PETER BALDWIN, University of California, Los Angeles
CHRISTOPHER CLARK, University of Cambridge
JAMES B. COLLINS, Georgetown University
MIA RODRÍGUEZ-SALGADO, London School of Economics and Political
Science
LYNDAL ROPER, University of Oxford
TIMOTHY SNYDER, Yale University

The aim of this series in early modern and modern European history is to publish outstanding works of research, addressed to important themes across a wide geographical range, from southern and central Europe, to Scandinavia and Russia, from the time of the Renaissance to the Second World War. As it develops the series will comprise focused works of wide contextual range and intellectual ambition.

A full list of titles published in the series can be found at:
www.cambridge.org/newstudiesineuropeanhistory.

MUSSOLINI'S NATION-EMPIRE

*Sovereignty and Settlement in Italy's
Borderlands, 1922–1943*

ROBERTA PERGHER

Indiana University, Bloomington



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41974-1 — Mussolini's Nation-Empire
Roberta Pergher
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108419741
DOI: 10.1017/9781108333450

© Roberta Pergher 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-41974-1 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of
URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication
and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41974-1 — Mussolini's Nation-Empire
Roberta Pergher
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To Mark

Contents

<i>List of Maps</i>	page viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction	i
1 The Boundaries of Sovereignty: Italian Rule in Contested Territories	32
2 Settlement and Sovereignty from the Alps to Africa	73
3 Divided by a Common Language: The Regime and the Settlers	117
4 Other Subjects, Other Citizens: The Regime and the Native Populations	161
5 “Inviolable” Borders: Land, People, and the Option Agreement between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy	203
Conclusion: Mussolini’s Nation-Empire	243
<i>Bibliography</i>	254
<i>Index</i>	279

Maps

1	The Italian empire, 1936. Image courtesy of Theresa Quill, Indiana University Libraries. Made with Natural Earth.	<i>page</i> 4
2	Italy's annexed territories, 1920. Image courtesy of Theresa Quill, Indiana University Libraries. Made with Natural Earth.	12
3	Italy's new Libyan provinces, 1939. Image courtesy of Theresa Quill, Indiana University Libraries. Made with Natural Earth.	23

Acknowledgments

This book started life as a dissertation at the University of Michigan. While it has, I hope, come a long way since then, I remain deeply indebted to the classes and discussions I was privileged to participate in, above all the conversations with my committee members: Geoff Eley, Dario Gaggio, Kathleen Canning, and Ann Laura Stoler. Their insightful scholarship and humane voices continue to shape who I aspire to be as a historian. My time at Michigan was enriched by an inspiring cohort of graduate students. I hold a special place in my heart for my dissertation buddies Mia Lee and Marty Lybeck, and for my dear friend Anne Berg, who continues to be a never-ending source of great conversation, good laughs, and extraordinary dinners. The University of Michigan also provided me with important financial support, first as a graduate student and then as a fellow at the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies.

My research could not have happened without the librarians, archivists, and others who gave of their time and shared their knowledge: Erminia Ciccozzi at the Archivio Centrale dello Stato in Rome; Stefania Ruggieri at the Archivio Storico Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri; Marianna Frustaci at the Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale; Nadia Sibilla at the Archivio Storico del Commissariato del Governo per la Provincia di Bolzano; Andrea Di Michele and Christine Roilo at the Archivio Provinciale di Bolzano; Hannes Obermair at the Archivio Municipale di Bolzano; Carla Ghezzi at the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente; Rosanna De Longis at the Biblioteca di Storia Moderna e Contemporanea; and Giovanna Ortu, Edy Eminyan, and Francesco Prestopino at the Associazione Italiana Rimpatriati della Libia. Most crucial of all, though, were the many former settlers and migrants who agreed to be interviewed. In particular, I would like to thank Luigi Manenti and Luigi Bacchiega for opening their homes to me. Thanks, too, to Paolo Squatriti, who led me on a memorable trip to Libya in 2004.

My research also rested on the support of friends in Italy – Roberta Lombardi as well as Giulia Barrera and her mother Fiammetta – who offered a home, good company, and a perspective on life. Giulia, an astute historian of Italian colonialism and archivist extraordinaire, has become an enduring friend and climbing partner. She generously shared her time and expertise, correcting the book manuscript in its final stages with impeccable precision and responding instantly to all my queries.

The project accompanied me as I moved from Michigan to the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton. In Florence, I held a Max Weber Fellowship and had the opportunity to work with Sebastian Conrad and interact with fellow postdocs across the disciplines. In Lawrence, the history department created a welcoming and congenial environment. My colleagues Sheyda Jahanbani, Marta Vicente, and Leslie Tuttle inspired and supported me, and Marta and Sheyda continue to be my sisters in writing. As an Elizabeth and J. Richardson Dilworth Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study, I encountered some truly remarkable scholars and found the time to expand the project.

I finished the book at Indiana University, where I benefited from the wisdom, expertise, and encouragement of many colleagues. I have the good fortune to work alongside a modern Italianist colleague, Carl Ipsen, who has been supportive throughout. My mentor Rebecca Spang consistently guided me with kindness and acumen. Judith Allen has been an enthusiastic and motivating powerhouse. Heartfelt thanks go to Lara Kriegel for serving as the book's "handmaiden" – organizing writing time together, reading the manuscript, and providing unfailing moral support.

I have benefited from many opportunities to give invited talks and participate in conferences and workshops in North America, Europe, and South Africa. I thank the many scholars who gave generous feedback, challenged my findings, and pointed me in new directions. In particular I would like to thank those who read part or all of the manuscript and made invaluable suggestions: Giulia Albanese, Patrick Bernhard, Donald Bloxham, Marcus Payk, and, above all, Lyndal Roper and Nick Stargardt. John Cady has been actively engaged with this project from the beginning, casting his friendly and careful eye over every word of the dissertation and the book manuscript. Sarah Mitchell gave essential help with copy- and line-editing. Theresa Quill, librarian at Indiana University's superb Herman B Wells Library, created the maps. I thank Indiana University Cox Scholar Sean Mentzer for work on the bibliography and Rebecca Carter-Chand for compiling the index with great care. I am also grateful to Michael Watson for his belief in the project, to

Acknowledgments

xi

Cambridge University Press's two anonymous readers for their constructive and helpful suggestions, and to the entire production team for their courtesy, accuracy, and efficiency.

There is no thank you big enough to convey my gratitude to my husband, but I'll try. Thank you, Mark Roseman, for accompanying the manuscript from beginning to end with wit, generosity, and love.