

# Mussolini's policies against ethnic minorities

[Sociology](#), [Identity](#)



Mussolini in Power Treatment of Religious groups in Italy Religion was a vital part of Italian society in the earlier 20th Century, Mussolini himself said that the Pope " represented 400 million people scattered (throughout) the world". This meant that the pope and religion posed a massive influence on Mussolini's rule and exercised a lot of power on all classes.

Mussolini himself was atheist like his father and believed that science was made to prove religion wrong and that Jesus was a madman who had been mistakenly taken for a prophet, however publicly he relied on his image as a deeply religious man who prayed several times a day and who had a Catholic marriage and sent three of his children to communion. Over all Mussolini used religion as a political tool to ensure that he remained in power by appeasing to the population while also using it to appease to Italy's allies by its racial policy.

After Mussolini took over power in 1922 he started suppressing most of the ethnic minorities and political opponents, also using religion as an excuse to get the latter out of the way. People not from the Italian ethnic group were forced out of the Country, further people with foreign first or last names had to change their names into Italian ones to fit the idea of the Roman race that held together. If people were speaking another language than Italian they were forced to speak Italian or an Italian dialect in public. After Mussolini started an alliance with Hitler and Nazi Germany he adopted several laws against Jews.

Jews were not allowed to have certain professions (e. g. Professors, Doctors and Lawyers) nor were they allowed to marry anyone else than Jews. Jews were further discriminated often excluded from work or insulted verbally, but <https://assignbuster.com/mussolinis-policies-against-ethnic-minorities/>

rules were never enforced with violence by Italian authorities. This however changed after Germany invaded Italy in 1943: Nazi Germany applied the same regulations as in Germany; Jews were forced to wear stars in public and were not allowed in certain places in public it is also a time when Jews are exported to Germany to be placed in German concentration camps like Auschwitz.

It is rather interesting that Mussolini ruled Italy for 16 years without any racial laws or any attempt to enforce his political stance through the violence he had used before to get to power, but still discriminating minorities. He wanted the Italian race to recreate the Roman Empire that is the reason why he allied with Germany. He was aware of Germany conquering Europe and believed that Germany's third Reich could unite with the Roman Empire and believed that they were the two dominant races that would ultimately come to obliterate or oppress all others.

Mussolini also had plans to help Italy's economy; he conquered countries in Africa for resources. He was not as racist as some people would think, especially compared to Hitler. He thought black people were less intelligent than white people, but he didn't have a lot of problems with other minority groups. His view did not change for his leadership, but in 1938 he chose to enforce racist laws, in the hope of increasing his power. This backfired and turned out to be his worst decision, political wise, as most Italians were not racist. This caused his support to decrease.

Most Italians did not agree with these policies and started to like and support him less. His support dropped even more when entering the war in 1940, Italians did not agree with this decision. Especially the pope believed that

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this was against the Lateran Act which Mussolini had signed because Jews weren't allowed to have marriages with Christians anymore. Mussolini's main goal was to let religion influence his reign as little as possible even though this was barely possible and many of his plans backfired like his racial policies.

He himself always claimed to be an atheist who loathed religion or as an "outright disbeliever" in private and often shocked people by "calling upon God to strike him dead" although he publicly said that he was Catholic and let his followers believe that he spent large parts of his day in prayer or communication with God, maybe an allusion to Roman ideas that the leader of Italy was a demi-god or in close connection with the gods or God: another proof of his wish to prove Italian dominance.

The vast majority of Italians were still Catholic and he needed the support of the Pope and the Church to ensure that the Catholic society continued to support him. Mussolini hated the church for its authoritarianism but this was more of anger because this authoritarianism clashed with Mussolini's own. As a result of this vast influence of the Pope Mussolini created the Lateran Act in 1929 which was ratified by Pope Pius XI on June the seventh. The Lateran Act stated that the church would keep diplomatic neutrality in foreign affairs and would also give up its land except for the Vatican City to the rule of the Italian government.

In exchange Catholicism would become the only legal state religion of Italy and the church would be allowed to manage all marriages. On top of that the Vatican City would be granted independent statehood and would be under church law and not under Italian law and would get a massive payment as <https://assignbuster.com/mussolinis-policies-against-ethnic-minorities/>

compensation for the lost land. This pact signaled an uneasy alliance with the church, Pope Pius was willing to keep out of Mussolini's way of governing Italy as long as Mussolini guaranteed that he would not try to influence the church and kept communism at bay.

Pope Pius called this deal as a sign that God had been given back to Italy and Italy to God, however this pact was violated by Mussolini several times. For one Mussolini still censored the Catholic newspaper and shortly after the Lateran pact was ratified he confiscated more editions in three months than in the next years, an effort that almost resulted in his excommunication. What Pope Pius saw as another large violation of the treaty was the exportation of Jews to Germany and racism in general, especially because these prohibited marriages between Jews and non-Jews which were interfering with the church's right to manage all marriages.

The exportation and aimed discrimination of Jews was an important change in Mussolini's politics, not only did it result in clashes with the Pope who believed it to be infringing upon the Lateran act, but also because all of a sudden the Fascist party did not only herald the superiority of the Italian race but actively attacked groups which did not fit into their definition of the Roman race.