

REGIONE
TOSCANA



TOGETHER AGAINST RACISM

The new Italian Government has immediately shown its true colours with its propaganda based on racial and ethnic discrimination. The main player in this propaganda is the Minister of the Interior, who has been acting with the upsetting and sympathetic silence of his allies.

This propaganda scientifically manipulates and distorts the message being given, it exploits the citizens' anxieties, fears and fragilities, pushing to hate and despise everybody else.

The poor become bad and dangerous, and most importantly, are identified with all foreigners. The slogans used are only apparently new but are unfortunately tied to the darkest events in Italian history.

Senator for life [Liliana Segre](#) survivor of the Birkenau concentration camp, during the debate on the vote of confidence for the new government, uttered the following words: "I refuse to let our democratic civilization be soiled by special laws. If there were any such proposal, I would vehemently fight against it". These words are carved in stone. And what the senator declared is actually happening. Our warning is not an exaggeration. Racial laws do not just come about. They slowly come to the fore, through the identification of so-called "enemies of the people" who then act as scapegoats through the incitement to hatred. Immigrants today are just like the Jews, homosexuals, the Roma and Sinti peoples in the 1930s.

Tuscany has had its share of unbearable loss of human lives caused by ethnic and racial persecution. We had to bear the pain of that wound we wrongly thought had healed through history and democracy.

This is also the reason why in Tuscany, in the last 15 years with the [Treno della Memoria](#) initiative (Memory Train, a trip organized for students who travel by train to Nazi camps) we tried to raise and disseminate awareness on the extermination of minorities in the 1930s and 1940s.

Freedom and democracy, however, must never be taken for granted: they must be conquered and defended day after day.

This is why we cannot just sit and watch.

The time has come for the voices of honest and free people to be heard. We, as individuals and as any social grouping must take to the streets, animate squares and workplaces, party and trade union headquarters, religious and lay associations, we must all start a democratic rebellion.

We must awaken dormant consciences and remind everybody that nobody is immune.

Jewish people, homosexuals, refugees, immigrants, Roma people, they are all equal members of mankind.

Humanity cannot be limited to any race. Race is a venomous word that poisons our country once again.

Eighty years ago, between 22 August (date in which the Manifesto on the Race was published) and 5 September 1938 (day in which Royal Decree 1390, titled "Measures in defense of race" was signed), Italy completely lost its innocence never to regain it again.

Then, as well, nothing came just out of the blue. Between 1935 and 1938, the racist apparatus was put to the test for the first time in Eastern African colonies and through the census of the Jews.

In that circumstance, with the complicity of scientists and intellectuals, fascism trampled humanity.

Today this new form of racism is believed to be a bottom-up process and it spreads its message in an anonymous and pervasive fashion through social media finding ever-growing consensus and acquiescence.

We want to and must be able to offer our communities a democratic, free and credible alternative for a society which must be based on a community model that combines legality and humanity, that fights against hatred and fear by focusing on cohesion and inclusion. We must rebuild a society that breathes new life into the values of our Constitution, and respects rights and duties of every individual; a society where education has a key role and replaces the culture of repression; a society in which, institutions, families and the education system cooperate.

To re-establish civic values instead of leaving individuals to fight a fratricidal war for survival.

The time has come to rally in order to protect our democracy from a familiar threat that we must be able to recognize immediately.

This is why we call on the President of the Republic, on the EU Institutions and on the media to consider how the words used by representatives of the current government are against constitutional principles and we invite the representatives of democratic institutions, parties and social partners to endorse this paper.

Enrico Rossi, President of the Tuscany Region
Dario Nardella, Mayor of Florence

Florence, June 2018

To sign write to the following address:

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