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**Political Power and Religious Otherness in the Fascist Era
The Polemic about the Connections between Judaism and Modernist Art and the
Instrumental Use of the Nazi Iconography against “Degenerate Art”**

The aim of this research is to examine anti-Semitic themes during the fascist era in relation to the condemnation of Modernism intended as the result of the negative Jewish influence on cultural life. The paper discusses the reconstruction of the instrumental use of the Nazi iconography against degenerate art in journals sponsored by the fascist regime: *Il Tevere*, *Quadriovio*, *La Difesa della razza*. In 1936 the equivalence between modernism in art and “judaization” became explicit and definitive: rationalism, surrealism, abstractionism, metaphysics and magical realism are Jewish creations. One can immediately see the perspective and imitation of what was happening in Nazi Germany at the origin of the anti-Semitic campaign in Interlandi’s periodicals: fascist intransigence seized the opportunity to import the German model, which thus became its touchstone. In the pages of the journals are to be found illustrations taken from Wolfgang Willrich’s tome (*Säuberung des Kunsttempels*), from Paul Schulze Naumburg’s *Kunst und Rasse* and from the catalogue for the *Entartete Kunst* exhibition. These books not only made a theoretical contribution, but they also defined an iconography of the monstrous and degenerate in modern art. The most hardened contributors to Telesio Interlandi’s periodicals drew on this repertoire of images, publishing them exactly as they were found in the books. It is interesting to note how the same monstrosity that the regime had adopted to represent the deformed inferiority of the impure races is found in the expressions of anti-fascist dissidence. In particular, it is found in the representation of the nude as an object of violence, chosen to testify in an iconographic sense to the abuses of despotic power during the tragic years of the war.