



## *Introduction*

This is a special white paper.

It looks back over twelve years of Chronicles of Ordinary Racism and closes in the midst of the protests that have broken out all over the world at the cry Black Lives Matter.

These pages, as well as the handwritten signs and slogans of the thousands of young people who took the streets, denounce that there is a tight, systemic and perverse interweaving between the wrong words used by those who have power, distorted representations of facts, the violent offenses of those who comment online and the physical racist violence perpetrated individually and in groups - sometimes using the power that comes from their institutional role.

Young people in Minneapolis, like those in Rome, Milan, Bologna and other Italian cities, are telling the world with simplicity and immediacy, that rebelling against inequalities and discrimination is a good and just thing.

They remind us that the most engaging and conscience-motivating battles are those promoted by those who suffer injustice on their own skin.

They give us hope, reminding us that when rights and dignity are violated and trampled shamelessly and with arrogance, indignation can trigger unexpectedly and spontaneously, even without the support of structured organizations.

We needed this spontaneous, widespread, pervasive, in some ways surprising and exciting rebellion.



Because racism is not a virus, it has its roots in the history of the “Belpaese” and is, above all, institutional racism.

We did affirm this already in 2009, when we published our first white paper. And we have repeated it from 2011 onwards, every day on our website [cronachediordinariorazzismo.org](http://cronachediordinariorazzismo.org).

In this fifth report we, once again, bring evidence for this with the analysis of the 7,346 cases of racism we have documented between 1 January 2008 and 31 March 2020 and the twenty-two exemplary stories. As always, framed in a political, social and institutional context that the essays contained in the first part of the book help us to retrace.

To look beyond the decade is important because many tend to ascribe the rise in discriminations and racist violence that took place in our country in particular from 2018 onwards to the success of the propaganda of some illustrious right-wing leaders. Just as, specularly, the momentary crisis of visibility and consensus, has been sufficient to declare in a very hasty manner the end of the spread of the most violent forms of racist propaganda.

The key word in these pages is, therefore, memory.

It is memory that helps us to reconstruct the indissoluble interweaving of migration, migration policies and racism, which has characterised the history of our country since the 1980s. Racism has been accompanied, in recent years, by Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism, but it is mainly migrations and



asylum seeking that have hegemonised the public debate and inspired the most serious physical violence.

It takes much more than the momentary fading of more explicitly discriminatory noise to mark a turning point.

The young people who are demonstrating while we write this introduction are also calling for the rethinking of the political agenda, on languages, on forms of protest and mobilization and on the main lines of the Italian public debate on racism. A reflection that we felt the need to propose starting from the awareness that the great wealth of initiatives and interventions of solidarity scattered throughout the Italian territory are counterbalanced by a still insufficient propensity to network collaboration and a level of analysis that still remains too dependent on the emergencies imposed by institutional policy.

Again, stopping and looking back may perhaps help us in our search for greater clarity, consensus and strength.

The “the knee on the neck civilization”<sup>1</sup> is not a destiny. We can fight it if we recognize in the insults, racist propaganda, institutional discrimination, denied workers’ rights, segregation of camps and detention centres, punches and kicks thrown against “blacks”, “refugees”, foreigners, Jews and Muslims, Roma, Sinti and Camminanti people that we remember in these pages, the darkest signs of an entire economic and social system that is structurally based on the growth of inequalities.

A system that together we can change.

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<sup>1</sup> It is the headline of a good article by Alessandro Portelli, *il manifesto* 14 June 2020.



Before wishing you a good reading, I would like to express my special thanks to all the people who have helped and supported us in these twelve years: to the most experienced activists and researchers, as well as to the many young people who have become more and more passionate about the *Cronache di Ordinario Razzismo* work.

Without their patience, willingness, dedication and perseverance, Lunaria would not have been able to engage so deeply in this daily battle for rights, against privileges, all forms of inequality, discrimination and racism.