



The Conquest of Malaria: Italy, 1900-1962

Professor Frank Snowden

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At the outset of the twentieth century, malaria was Italy's major public health problem. It was the cause of low productivity, poverty, and economic backwardness, while it also stunted literacy, limited political participation, and undermined the army. In this book Frank Snowden recounts how Italy became the world center for the development of malariology as a medical discipline and launched the first national campaign to eradicate the disease.

Snowden traces the early advances, the setbacks of world wars and Fascist dictatorship, and the final victory against malaria after World War II. He shows how the medical and teaching professions helped educate people in their own self-defense and in the process expanded trade unionism, women's consciousness, and civil liberties. He also discusses the antimalarial effort under Mussolini's regime and reveals the shocking details of the German army's intentional release of malaria among Italian civilians—the first and only known example of bioterror in twentieth-century Europe. Comprehensive and enlightening, this history offers important lessons for today's global malaria emergency.

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