

## ITALIAN OCCUPATION of FIUME and KUPA 1941 – 1942

### *Opera nazionale maternità e infanzia*

The broad brushstrokes of the history of Fiume (later Rijeka) are presented in the introduction in “The AEGEAN ISLANDS and related entities 1912-1942”.

The only healthcare-relevant postage stamps issued by the Italian government were those promoting *Opera nazionale maternità e infanzia* (ONMI) (The National Opera Maternity and Childhood). This was an Italian welfare institution founded 10 December 1925 and aimed at the social assistance of mothers and children. It was modelled on a similar system in Belgium, the National Child Protection Work (1919), but with a fascist philosophical slant. It was mandated with a plethora of functions, ranging from social issues to those classically medical (paediatrics, obstetrics, otorhinolaryngology, dermatosopilopathy and child neuropsychiatry). During WWII, the Opera was forced to renounce its vocation as a specialized body and provide general assistance to a population exhausted by hunger and misery. From the late 1960s, with the creation of the *Servizio sanitario nazionale* (National Health Service), there was a drift of patients, competencies, and legal responsibilities from the OMNI to the NHS, leading to its abolition 31 December 1975.

