

ITALIAN POLITICS & SOCIETY

***THE REVIEW OF THE CONFERENCE
GROUP ON ITALIAN POLITICS AND
SOCIETY***

No.61 Fall/Winter 2005



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Italian Politics and Society is published twice yearly, in the spring and fall. Proposed contributions should be sent to Jonathan Hopkin at the above address.

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Executive Secretary/Treasurer: Richard Katz, Johns Hopkins University

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Congrips friends, as the second issue of the 2005 Newsletter is about to go out I would like to take the opportunity to wish a heartfelt 'buon anno' to you and your families. I shall keep this message brief, touching on three points which are very important to me and which I would like to share with you.

Highlights of the 2005 APSA Congrips program. Carol Mershon, outgoing Congrips president, organized our activities quite efficiently. The breakfast business meeting heard Dick Katz' report on Congrips membership and finances which was followed by a discussion of issues and options of how to increase Congrips' external visibility, improve its financial stability, and expand its services to the membership. I am particularly grateful to Judith Katz, who livened our discussion with insightful ideas on fundraising and more; she is a remarkable person indeed. Carol also chaired the main part of the Congrips business meeting. The slate of new officers proposed by the nominating committee was approved: please welcome Daniel Ziblatt (Harvard University) and Simona Piattoni (Universita' di Trento) (serving another term) to the executive committee, and Tony Masi (McGill University) as our vice-president. The highlight of the meeting was the conferring of Congrips' lifetime achievement award to Joe La Palombara. At this point, it was my time to chair the meeting. As one of his former students, Carol shared with us a delightful and moving summary account of Joe's accomplishments. I reminded Joe (though he needed no reminding) that I and Bob (Leonardi) had met him as beginning researchers in Rome in 1976, at his apartment in Trastevere opposite the one owned by Bruno Trentin. During our meeting Joe gave us wonderful introduction on Italian institutions and how to do research in the field in the Italian ministries and Parliament. At the end of the Congrips meeting we remembered with great sadness our dear friend and member Bob Evans, who died so suddenly last July, after having shortly moved from the Johns Hopkins Bologna Center to the American University in Rome.

Fall 2005 events.

Alberta Sbragia, always so totally reliable, was instrumental in lining up Maurizio Carbone as Congrips' new program chair. Now in the Politics Department at the University of Glasgow, Maurizio is a young and active scholar who has already done a terrific job in preparing our Program for the 2006 APSA in Philadelphia on the changing external relations of Italy towards both the EU and the USA. Big news came in the fall, when we heard that Tony Masi, our new Congrips vice-president, was appointed Provost of McGill University. Congratulations, Tony, on behalf of the entire Congrips membership! I am sure many members have sent personal messages to him. Also on behalf of Congrips, in November I shared with Maria, Bob Evans' wife, our participation in the memorial service held for Bob at Johns Hopkins University-Bologna Center.

My thanks and pledge.

I am very honoured that you chose me as the new Congrips president and I want to thank you all very much. I have been with Congrips since its beginning and I am proud to see that it has grown in members and services. A special thank goes out to Carol Mershon, a

talented person and the warmest human being. We worked closely together during her tenure and have become good friends. My pledge is to work as hard as I am able to, and in keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of Congrips to meet the challenge of expanding the membership into the under-represented fields of urban and territorial planning, and sustainable development.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

APSA 2005 ANNUAL MEETING, WASHINGTON DC, 1-4 SEPTEMBER

CONGRIPS once again organized a successful sponsored panel which was well attended. The panel, entitled 'The Politics of Immigration and Diversity: Italy in Comparative Perspective', was chaired by Julia Lynch, with James Hollifield and Eleonora Pasotti acting as discussants.

The following papers were presented:

Art, David. 'Explaining the Regeneration of the MSI/ AN'

(dart@holycross.edu)

Abstract:

This paper uses the case of the MSI to suggest a new theory for the success and failure of far right (or right-wing populist) parties in Western Europe. It argues that far right parties can achieve electoral success when they 1) build on preexisting nationalist subcultures and 2) face a permissive rather than a repressive political cultural environment. The MSI (AN) became a party of government because it possessed the organizational resources to take advantage of a dramatic shift from a repressive to a permissive political-cultural environment when the Italian party system imploded in the early 1990s.

Wong, Aliza. 'Making (the New) Italians: Meridionalism, Race, and Diaspora'

(aliza.wong@ttu.edu)

No abstract available.

Zaslove, Andrej. 'The Politics of Exclusion: Radical Right Populism and the Lega Nord'

(zaslove@hotmail.com)

Abstract:

Immigration is now a contentious political issue in Italy, as in the rest of Western Europe. This paper examines the political and economic context in which Italy has moved from a country of emigration to immigration. I examine how the Lega Nord has successfully mobilized support by adopting La Nouvelle Droite's notion of "the right to difference" -- a discourse that moved away from racial to cultural justifications for exclusion -- within the economic context of post-Fordism, globalization, and the Third Italy. In the second section of the paper, using primary resources such as newspapers, party documents, and interview with Lega political representatives, I examine how the Lega has targeted the "extracomunitari" as a threat to: 1) local, northern, and Italian identity; 2) security and; 3) employment and welfare. In the last section I highlight the similarities between the Lega Nord and other radical right populist parties in countries such as Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, and Norway.

CONGRIPS EXECUTIVE MINUTES OF MEETING AT 2004 APSA

Prepared by: Carol Mershon

Present: Frank Adler, Jonathan Hopkin, Dick Katz, Carol Mershon, Carolyn Warner

Date: Thursday, Sept. 2, 2004, 12:15 p.m.

Carol Mershon welcomed members of the CONGRIPS Executive Committee and called the meeting to order.

Mershon reviewed recent good news and progress with regard to communications. Our e-mail list covers roughly 85% of the ground-mail list. Fil Sabetti and Tony Masi have generously agreed to serve as interim editors at Italian Politics and Society, and we are delighted to welcome Jonathan Hopkin as the new Editor at IPS. Mershon is continuing in efforts to recruit a book review editor. Mershon has now e-mailed four numbers of our brief E-News Bulletins, and it should be straightforward to continue the practice with roughly monthly frequency. Mershon relayed a report from Tony Masi that he is putting a high priority on continuing to revamp and extend our website.

On the topic of awards: Mershon announced that Simona Piattoni, University of Trento, and Alan Zuckerman, Brown University, have agreed to serve on the committee to decide on the graduate student paper prize. The committee will consider graduate student papers of all kinds (published articles, conference papers, even course papers), as long as the papers are nominated by faculty advisors. The deadline for nominations is December 31, 2004. The award will be announced and presented at the 2005 APSA Meetings. The Executive Committee approved an award amount of \$200.00. Announcements of the award competition will be made in IPS and the E-News (and in the APSA general business meeting).

Dick Katz, as Treasurer, led the Committee's discussion of the CONGRIPS dues structure. The key problem is that we need to recruit more dues-paying members out of current ground-mail mailing list. Our paid-up membership stands at roughly 60 (counting a few renewals and new entries at the APSA itself) and the size of our mailing list is just under 200. The Committee agreed that:

- Dick is authorized to work on the details of revisiting the dues structure
- we will exhort payment of dues before the revised dues structure is announced (above all, at the business meeting and in the next E-News)
- depending on the time that IPS goes out to our mailing list, a targeted mailing IPS could provide incentives to renew paid membership; in particular, if IPS is sent out in October, it makes sense to send it to all on the mailing list; but if it goes out in December, IPS should be sent only to paid-up members
- Dick will send out a notice to non-paying people on our mailing list

As part of the treatment of dues, we raised the possibility of differentiated fees for those who receive IPS via ground mail (as opposed to electronic form only). No decision was reached on this matter.

Mershon reiterated Filippo's call for submissions to the Newsletter, which need to be sent to him by Sept. 15, if possible as a Word attachment.

Another topic considered was the possibility of joint panels and other forms of collaboration with Italianists in the UK. Mershon has been in e-mail contact with key people among UK Italianists. We may try to co-sponsor at the 2005 APSA a panel with the PSA Italianists. Committee members brought forward several ideas for 2005 APSA panels, and also discussed longer-range possibilities for panels and conferences. Collaboration with colleagues in Italy and with other country-specific groups entered into the discussion.

Mershon adjourned the meeting at roughly 1:45 p.m.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

POLITICAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF THE UK 56TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

University of Reading, 3-6 April 2006

Panels organized by the Italian Politics Specialist Group:

'Back to the future? The return of "the centre" in Italian politics'

By 2001, bipolarism seemed to have become consolidated in Italy with two relatively stable blocks of centre-left and centre-right having formed and, crucially, for the first time in the history of the Italian Republic, alternated in power with the victory of the centre-left Ulivo in 1996 and that of the centre-right Casa della Libertà in 2001. However these block can also be seen as two weak alliances which often appear little more than enforced 'marriages of convenience'. In this climate of division, proposals to create a new 'house of moderates' or 'large centre' have received increasing attention in public debate, as have moves to return to a proportional electoral system. Consequently, we may question the extent to which the culture of bipolarism has really taken root in Italy and whether it is 'here to stay'. And, if Italy is still in transition and its political blocks and electoral system are still in flux, can we envisage party politics going 'back to the future'?

Panel I:

Alfio Mastropaolo (Università di Torino) 'The centre of attention'.

Mark Donovan (Cardiff University) 'The "centre": between structure and agency. The Italian case'.

Salvatore Lupo (Università di Palermo) 'The centre in historical perspective'.

Panel II:

Aldo Di Virgilio (Università di Bologna): 'From PR to plurality and back: what prospects for the post-Christian Democratic parties?'

Caterina Paolucci (Syracuse University Florence): 'Forza Italia, the DC of the XXI century?'

Donatella Campus (Università di Bologna): 'The Italian Second Republic: The Role of Coalition Leaders in Electoral Campaigns'.

‘Liberty, Security and Identity in contemporary Italian politics – real and imagined threats’

Building on the official theme of the 2006 PSA conference (Liberty, Security and the Challenge for Government) the papers to be presented explore political discussion in contemporary Italy around the themes of liberty, security and identity. Each considers (1) the way in which political competition and debate within and across the political parties has developed around these themes (bearing in mind that they are likely to feature prominently in the forthcoming general election campaign) (2) and the way in which such themes are addressed and conceptualised by the various actors present on the Italian political stage. Thus, certain developments in politics, the economy and society are presented as threats to liberty, security or identity in Italy.

Panel I:

Stefano Fella (Università di Trento) ‘Liberty, Identity and Security in political discourse on immigration in Italy’.

Giovanna Antonia Fois (Università degli Studi di Siena) ‘Is Europe a threat to Italy? Euro-Scepticism in the second Berlusconi Government’.

Paola Mattei (London School of Economics and Political Science) ‘From the Thames to the Tiber: Markets as Rhetorical Instruments and the Italian Welfare State’.

Panel II:

Salvatore Lupo (Università di Palermo) ‘Organised crime between fratricidal competition and attacks on the state’.

Jim Newell (University of Salford) ‘The Sicilian mafia and its links with the state in contemporary Italy’.

Roundtable ‘The 2006 Italian Elections’

The Italian general election will take place on 9 April 2006, the weekend after the Reading PSA Conference. This roundtable will examine the campaigns of the various parties and discuss the possible outcomes for Italian politics of the election.

Participants:

Daniele Albertazzi (Chair), Alfio Mastropaolo, Mark Donovan, Aldo Di Virgilio, James Newell.

Further information at: <http://www.psa.ac.uk/2006/>

**XX CONGRESSO ANNUALE, SOCIETÀ ITALIANA DI SCIENZA POLITICA
(SISP)**

Università di Bologna, settembre 2006

Il congresso annuale della SISP offre l'occasione di esplorare e discutere temi di interesse, prospettive teoriche e metodologiche e risultati di ricerche di scienza politica. Il programma comprende sessioni plenarie, l'Assemblea dei soci e i panels, raggruppati in sezioni tematiche, nei quali i partecipanti presentano e discutono ricerche ed analisi che mirano a un alto livello scientifico.

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SPECIAL ISSUE OF *MODERN ITALY*, Volume 10, No.1, May 2005

Italy under Berlusconi

Guest Editors: Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell

Enough Vaccine? The Berlusconi Years
Duncan McDonnell and Daniele Albertazzi

The Casa delle Libertà: A House of Cards?
Ivo Diamanti and Elisa Lello

The Italian Economy, 2001-2003
Michele Capriati

Much Ado about Little: The Foreign Policy of the Second Berlusconi Government
Osvaldo Croci

Campaigning and Governing: An Analysis of Berlusconi's Rhetorical Leadership
Franca Roncarolo

Too Many Chiefs and Not Enough Indians: The Leadership of the Centre-Left
Gianfranco Pasquino

To order: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/13532944.asp>

De Gasperi through American Eyes: Media and Public Opinion, 1945-53

Steven F. White

Mount Saint Mary's University

“It was indispensable to create a new psychological situation between the United States and Italy--not only with the administration and with Congress--which would already be difficult to convert in an expeditious manner-- but also with American public opinion, which often functions as a tyrannical *padrone* over official actions and decisions in high places.”

--December 1945 diary entry, Alberto Tarchiani, Italian Ambassador to the U.S.

This paper addresses the evolution of American public and media opinion toward Alcide De Gasperi and his political movement during the Trentine statesman's seven and a half years as prime minister (1945-1953). The portrait of the Italian leader which took shape during this period was the work of many hands. Here, we will concentrate on De Gasperi's American image as it gradually came into focus via the columns of three of the nation's leading news publications—the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *Time Magazine*. These publications, along with the *Wall Street Journal* and *Newsweek*, comprised mid-century America's “prestige press,” and were more influential within national governmental circles, including the State Department, than were their journalistic competitors.¹ During this first, volatile decade of the Cold War, America's strategic interests in the Italian peninsula often outstripped the knowledge base on which her politicians and diplomats found themselves operating—a circumstance which opened up space for key players such as *New York Times* columnist Anne O'Hare McCormick² not just to report but also to help shape American foreign policy. This overlapping of the roles of opinion molder and policy maker characterized the “golden

age” of American print journalism, which had originated during the Spanish-American War and culminated during the immediate post-1945 years.³

During the past three decades James Miller and Ennio Di Nolfo have published seminal studies which have grounded the study of Cold War Italo-American diplomatic relationship in major archival collections on both sides of the Atlantic.⁴ But the role of the news media in fanning that relationship for the American public has not yet received the sustained attention it merits. Now such a study-- focusing especially on the figure of De Gasperi--may be profitably undertaken. A younger generation of scholars, including Mario Del Pero, Umberto Gentiloni Silveri and Leopoldo Nuti, have pioneered more nuanced readings of De Gasperi's actions and legacy during the early post-war era. Building on Miller's and Di Nolfo's earlier work, these scholars have begun to disentangle De Gasperi's aims and actions from the Cold War polarities which had portrayed the Trentine statesman as either heroic anti-Communist crusader or American imperialist stooge. Instead, their scholarship has underscored the often cross-cutting political, economic and socio-cultural pressures impinging on Italo-

American relations during the years in question.⁵

Further enriching the international scholarly conversation were a number of conferences and symposia held in Italy in 2004 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of De Gasperi's death.⁶ At one such gathering convened in Trento, Guido Formigoni delivered a suggestive paper entitled "De Gasperi e l'America tra storia e storiografia." In this paper, as in several other recent works, Formigoni has helpfully situated De Gasperi's immediate relationship with his American governmental counterparts within a wider context of political, ideological and cultural presumptions present on the two sides of the Atlantic. Formigoni demonstrates how De Gasperi, Tarchiani and their fellow Italian leaders rapidly schooled themselves in the dispersal of initiative and responsibility for foreign policy built into the American political system. As Tarchiani's opening epigram attests, public and media opinion factored as significant components in the power equation, alongside Big Business, The Church (and other special interests), not to mention the distinct, sometimes rival branches, of the American federal government. Ideologically, too, De Gasperi proved a quick study, selectively appropriating "the method of liberty" and other Anglo-American political tropes and traditions into his own intellectual and rhetorical arsenal. At times, De Gasperi's words and actions represented instances of principled convergence; at other moments, his approach could better be characterized as pragmatic accommodation.⁷

By contrast, Americans were slow to appreciate the plurality of interests and value commitments animating Italian political Catholicism—a protean force including but not limited to the Christian Democratic Party.⁸ Chronically preoccupied with the Red Menace, diplomats devoted surprisingly little attention to the aims and operation of Italy's dominant political party. Indeed, for all of his patience and perspicacity, De Gasperi was never entirely successful in securing unambiguous

American support for himself and his party as constituting an autonomous political force, and not just as talismans of anti-communism. In the case of American policy toward post-Fascist Italy, several additional factors deserve mention in this regard. Up until Italy's 1948 elections, dispatches from the modestly staffed embassy in Rome were largely comprised of synopses of both Italian and English-language media reports. As the decade drew to a close, synopses were increasingly subsumed within embassy staff memoranda. Only in 1951-52 did *Democrazia Cristiana* begin to receive more attention—by which point, ironically, the party had in fact begun to disaggregate into a mélange of competing fiefdoms.⁹

Dubious of the solidity and resilience of republican Italy's political culture and institutions, American policymakers at the Rome embassy and in Washington embraced De Gasperi less for his specific political program than for his tactical savvy and instinct for leadership. A low key but unmistakable mystique arose around the premier as America's indispensable interlocutor. De Gasperi's star reached its apogee in the late 1940s, following the Christian Democrats' unexpectedly strong showing in the April 1948 parliamentary elections. Municipal electoral reversals experienced by the party in 1951 and 1952 tarnished that star. Still, in January of 1952 Ambassador James Dunn continued to assert that "political stability" in Italy depended "on the work of one man—De Gasperi" even while he fretted that the Trentine statesman could "no longer be taken for granted in our calculations."¹⁰ Neither De Gasperi nor--still less--his party colleagues were viewed so favorably by Clare Boothe Luce, who succeeded Dunn as American ambassador in February of 1953. De Gasperi's fall from power five months later only deepened American fears about the capacity of Italy's "democratic" leaders or political forces to roll back the peninsula's continuing Red menace.

The mid-century American diplomatic penchant for embracing single foreign leaders--in Italy and elsewhere--was

reinforced by several wider journalistic and cultural trends. Compared with the soaring Wilsonian rhetoric accompanying U.S. involvement in the First World War, tough-minded reporters and film makers couched America's efforts during the Second World War (especially as victory seemed more assured) with calculated minimalism: it was enough that the G.I.'s "get the job done." Even this kind of understated populism was becoming passé among many opinion makers and commentators. The New Deal crusade on behalf of "the common man" was eroding. In the spring of 1943, Sidney Hook took his fellow leftist writers to task for, as he put it, "mistaking Roosevelt for a program."¹¹ Erstwhile progressives like Walter Lippmann were becoming more and more elitist in their reading of democratic politics.¹² Further to the political center-right, *Time* magazine editor (and husband of Clare) Henry Luce embraced the politics of personality more crassly. Leaders, Luce opined, explained events. The key to interesting and informing his readers about international affairs was to expose the personal tastes and private values of "prominent men."¹³ For her part, Anne O'Hare McCormick won acclaim for an interview technique which, it was said, steered clear of prominent interviewees' political views and focused instead on personality. Like *Time's* editors, McCormick prized a reputation for straightforward "fact-finding."¹⁴ Such journalistic and intellectual proclivities concretized America's quest for international allies: sympathetic foreign individuals were prized over their parties or programs.

Before examining De Gasperi and his American image more closely, several additional observations are in order concerning the pertinence of media and public opinion during the FDR and Truman presidencies. Indicative of FDR's solicitude for public and media opinion was a new initiative launched in 1940 under the aegis of the Office of Governmental Reports. This office formally surveyed editorial opinion from a large number of newspapers from

across the United States. With American involvement in the war two years later, a Public Studies Division was created within the State Department to systematically explore the state of American public opinion (defined chiefly as press and interest group opinion) and convey this to policy-makers. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Time* magazine ranked among the most steadily cited sources in the division's press synopses. In the immediate post war period (between 1946 and 1952), this service's staff grew to between nineteen and twenty-five persons. Under the Eisenhower administration and thereafter, however, the staff would atrophy.¹⁵

More than his predecessor FDR, Harry Truman asserted that, in foreign affairs, it was incumbent on the president to shape public opinion rather than following it.¹⁶ In public, Truman distanced himself from opinion polls. Yet Truman prized letters from ordinary Americans, and he insisted on reading a broad sample of the torrents of mail which deluged him. While he claimed that these letters did not influence his decisions, his staff labored mightily to keep up with the nearly half million domestic letters which Truman received during his presidency. The White House staff went so far as to divide this correspondence into "pros" and "cons" on major domestic and foreign policy issues, ranging from desegregation to the Cold War.

Under both FDR and Truman, Catholic and Vatican interests and sensibilities strongly conditioned American policy in Italy. Within the State Department, Catholic diplomats such as Robert Murphy – as well as sympathetic Protestants like Episcopalian James Dunn – played important roles in formulating and carrying out a prudent, centrist approach to Italian affairs during and immediately following the Second World War. De Gasperi and his countrymen also benefited from the ongoing, if sometime shrill, sympathy of the Vatican, which had steadily pushed for increased relief aid for Italy, and also for a temperate Allied-Italian peace settlement. The National Catholic Welfare

Conference and its energetic general secretary, Monsignor Michael J. Ready—not to mention Cardinal Spellman of New York or other key clerical voices—reinforced Vatican diplomatic pressure in the aforementioned areas.¹⁷ Generally reinforcing the views of the ecclesiastical hierarchy was the reportage and commentary emanating from the American Catholic press, which embraced some 134 local and diocesan papers and 197 periodicals, as well as the weekly “Catholic Hour” based in New York.¹⁸

A longstanding historiographical commonplace has credited Vatican diplomats for “selling” De Gasperi to their American counterparts as their best possible interlocutor during the waning phases of the Second World War. In fact, the Trentine statesman’s earlier affiliation with Luigi Sturzo’s Popular Party, followed by his lengthy absence from the political arena during the Fascist era, tempered the endorsement which Vatican undersecretary of state Domenico Tardini offered to special presidential envoy Myron Taylor in his celebrated secret memorandum of December of 1943.¹⁹ For their part, American policymakers warmed only slowly to De Gasperi and his party as key interlocutors in a post-Fascist Italy. Between 1943 and 1945, many State Department figures anticipated that a centrist lay political party would best respond to American interests and values in the peninsula. In the sensitive area of Italian educational reconstruction, OSS analysts and progressive educators serving with the Allied Military Government quickly and repeatedly butted heads with Italian Catholics, preferring instead to work with representatives of the Italian liberal intelligentsia.²⁰

To De Gasperi, America represented virtual *terra incognita* as he assumed the Italy’s foreign ministership in December, 1944, and then its prime ministership in December, 1945. A native of *Mitteleuropa*, De Gasperi’s extra-Italian interests were decidedly continental. His writings during the late 1920s and 1930s focused on the German-speaking countries, Belgium and

France. True, De Gasperi had penned several columns in the pages of *L’Illustrazione Vaticana* in 1933, praising FDR’s budding New Deal. De Gasperi complimented the American president for avoiding a doctrinaire approach to the problems of the day, and for utilizing varied techniques in trying to bring the United States out of the Depression.²¹

Don Luigi Sturzo, De Gasperi’s erstwhile mentor within the ill-fated Popular Party, possessed a considerably greater familiarity with Anglo-American political culture. Forced into exile in the mid-1920s, Sturzo had spent 16 years in Great Britain, followed by 6 years in the United States. Sturzo had been impressed by the religious pluralism of both nations. But Sturzo’s moody, sometimes mulish temperament undercut his capacity to interpolate between New and Old World political interests and sensibilities. He had not been effective in courting leading American journalists. An attempted collaboration with the liberal Catholic journal *Commonweal* foundered, despite the meditation offered by Mario Einaudi, then a professor at Fordham University.²² Sturzo did manage to exert some influence on *New York Times* correspondent Anne O’Hare McCormick’s appraisal of Italian affairs in 1943 and 1944. McCormick’s views of Sturzo fluctuated, and his name appears infrequently in her postwar reportage from Rome.²³ By contrast, De Gasperi’s combination of personal poise and political adroitness impressed American correspondents as he became better known during the mid-1940s.

Among the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* journalists covering postwar Italian affairs, Anne O’Hare McCormick devoted the greatest attention to De Gasperi. Politically, she may be characterized as a moderate conservative. Three additional, marginally more liberal correspondents whose occasional columns also helped to define De Gasperi in American eyes were Sumner Welles, Stuart Alsop and Walter Lippmann.²⁴

In their coverage of De Gasperi and Italy in the immediate post-war years, these

four commentators combined two basic vantage points. One approach proceeded “from the bottom up,” foregrounding persistent socio-economic hardships—economic stagnation, unemployment, inflation and socio-economic inequality—and calling for some combination of Italian reform initiatives and outside American assistance to blunt *miseria* on the peninsula. Concomitant to this approach was the presumption that communism represented an aberration—a fundamentally “unnatural” affliction to the body politic—whose cure was to be found in an economic expansion fueled by free trade, expanded ownership of land and property, and expanding consumerism,

Alternatively, analyses moved “from the top down,” holding De Gasperi—and to a lesser extent his fellow Christian Democrats—accountable for launching stable and sound political and economic reconstruction. This personalization of Italian politics was gauged extensively, yet almost unconsciously, on the way in which FDR’s charisma and coalition-building guided the United States through its own New Deal forms of “reconstruction” and “stabilization.”²⁵ In personalizing their coverage of De Gasperi in particular, liberal and progressive journalists like Welles and Alsop were most prone to employ FDR as their measuring stick, while the more centrist McCormick also found ways to compare De Gasperi and Truman, especially after the latter’s come-from-behind, “give ‘em hell” re-election of November, 1948.

De Gasperi received particularly favorable coverage as Italy crossed thresholds marking its political and diplomatic “normalization” after the aberrations of the Fascist *ventennio*. One such threshold was the June, 1946 referendum on the institutional question, and the concomitant election of representatives to the Constituent Assembly. Sumner Welles, who had served FDR as assistant secretary of state until 1943, lent his still considerable prestige and influence to the task of introducing De Gasperi to his American readership. Welles highlighted De

Gasperi and Enrico De Nicola, the newly elected provisional president, as “two able patriots,” starting the new Italian Republic out “under favorable political auspices.” “De Gasperi,” Welles added, “has long since proved his political vision and his exceptional statesmanship.”²⁶

A stiffer test of that statesmanship was posed by the harsh peace treaty Italy was forced to sign with the former Allied powers. De Gasperi’s respectful, dignified address of August 10, 1946 following the opening of the peace conference in Paris mollified a number of American observers. As De Gasperi finished his remarks, American Secretary of State James Byrnes (alone among the many diplomats, representing 21 nations, present at the occasion) was moved to shake the Italian premier’s hand. Signed in February 1947, the treaty proved controversial not only in Italy, where it seriously crimped De Gasperi’s own popularity, but also in the United States.²⁷

A month before the treaty ratification, De Gasperi visited the U.S. for the first time, stopping in New York, Cleveland and Washington. The chief goals of his trip were to try to soften the terms of the pending treaty with Italy, and to obtain immediate economic assistance. De Gasperi’s ten-day tour is generally viewed as having been a media “triumph,” prompting as it did the favorable comments of a wide segment of the American press, which normally showed only a limited interest in Italy.²⁸ Engineered originally by media mogul Henry Luce and his wife Clare Boothe Luce, De Gasperi’s tour played to favorable reviews on this side of the Atlantic. Especially noteworthy was the encomium he received from Walter Lippmann—arguably his generation’s most respected journalist and independent political thinker. Lippmann’s January 7, 1947 syndicated column affirmed that “Mr. De Gasperi is no ex-enemy statesman.” Instead, he has been “always our ally and the partisan of the civilization which the war was fought to defend.” Consequently, “our friend” Italy deserved to receive all the aid requested by the Italian leader.²⁹

At the end of his visit, De Gasperi in fact received several forms of American assistance, most notably a check for \$50,000,000. But all was not sweetness and light.

This grant proved highly controversial in some sectors of American public opinion. A lawyer from Massachusetts sent the following vitriolic missive to President Truman in mid-January:

“Dear Mr. President,

Last week I saw in the paper where the Italian Premier departed for home with a Fifty Million Dollar payment by the United States Treasury in his pocket. This is not a loan—but a payment!

Italy not only stabbed France in the back and raped Ethiopia, but Italy was OUR enemy in this war as well. Italy fought us, killed our soldiers, but after long and costly fighting we licked Italy. What has Italy got on us that her Premier can come over here and collect FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS?”³⁰

The author goes on to allude to the income taxes that “hundreds of thousands” of G.I.s and their spouses would have to pay in order to cover that gift.

In the ensuing months, as the Italian economy continued to languish, De Gasperi’s stock declined in the American press. In May, 1947 Sumner Welles reported that

“The Christian Democrats are steadily losing ground. Charges of personal corruption have been brought against some of their leaders. But their loss of popular support is primarily due to Prime Minister De Gasperi’s inability to better economic conditions or to lighten Italy’s peace terms.”³¹

Welles also lectured the Italian government over its failure to communicate greater concern about the economic plight of its people—an error which, implicitly, FDR would not have committed.³²

After a year long lull, De Gasperi and his party reclaimed the American

journalistic spotlight during the run-up to Italy’s climactic April 1948 national parliamentary elections. Once again the Luces played a key role. The April 19, 1948 issue of *Time* featured De Gasperi in its lead story. On the magazine’s cover, his forceful, bespectacled visage was juxtaposed with a giant red octopus closing in on the boot of Italy. Beneath this image, the caption read “Italian premier Alcide De Gasperi--can he cut the Red tentacles?”

The article was unsigned, and was in all likelihood the product of several hands on *Time*’s staff.³³ While Henry Luce’s personal role in the piece is unclear, it intriguingly anticipates hesitations about De Gasperi which would re-emerge during Clare Boothe Luce’s ambassadorship between 1953 and 1956. Entitled “How to Hang On,” the feature article framed the impending contest simplistically as one of opposing manipulative alliances. The Communist chance at victory was attributed not to that party’s anti-Fascist legacy or to the ethical content of its program, but to (among other factors), America’s own bungling: “The U.S. had never effectively advertised the nature or the extensive amount of its help, or the peaceful intentions of its purposes.” The key, in other words, was salesmanship. De Gasperi’s chief virtue in the parliamentary contest was said to be that of “hanging on.” “Whether they liked him or not,” it was around this “tall, lanky man with chilly blue eyes, aggressive nose, a wide, grimly compressed mouth” that all anti-Communists were rallied. The premier’s candid private acknowledgments to supporters that his government would need to step up its social reforms came across in the article more as a sign of weakness than of strength.³⁴

Contrasting with the well-meaning but compromised De Gasperi, Catholic lay activist Luigi Gedda was described as bringing an overdue “positive approach to the campaign. Thanks to Luigi Gedda’s “tireless action,” the Church’s massive lay organization Catholic Action was presented as possessing “the zeal, positive approach and missionary skill that the Christian Democrats lacked.” With premature enthusiasm, the *Time*

article identified Gedda as Catholic Action's head—a post he would only obtain some four years later.

Similar, if more muted, reservations about De Gasperi were voiced in other American press and policymaking circles prior to the April elections. More representative, however, was the kind of positive spin offered by Anne McCormick in a March 1948 column. As she put it,

“De Gasperi has grown notably in office. A modest, unpretentious and naturally quiet man, he manifests unsuspected force in this fateful campaign and has developed into one of the most effective popular speakers in a country where oratory is a commonplace endowment. He has more self-assurance than he had a year ago. Despite overwork and anxiety, his gaunt, sharp-featured face has filled out and his wiry frame, toughened by long practice in mountain-climbing, seems reinvigorated if anything by the challenge of battle. The moderator has turned into a resourceful fighter.”³⁵

Once the national parliamentary returns were in, McCormick, Welles and Lippmann each expressed relief at the defeat of the united Socialist and Communist opposition. But Lippmann fretted that even a coalition of as much as 60-70%, combining the Christian Democrats and the Saragat Socialists with what he somewhat condescendingly refers to as “the Splinter parties,” would not be enough “to govern the country well during the trying years ahead.”³⁶ The key would be to draw additional Socialist support too.

On a more critical note, Lippmann went on to cite a recent Italian dispatch from a fellow liberal journalist Steward Alsop to the effect that

“the US seemed to have given the Italians the impression . . . that we are a ‘reactionary Santa Claus’. The impression needs to be corrected. For unless the non- Communist coalition identifies itself with the

reconstruction of Italy, not merely with antibolshevism and relief, the electoral victory we are celebrating today will gradually become rancid.”³⁷

Particularly important here is the explicit re-evocation of “reconstruction” as a worthy, and still unrealized policy direction for Italy.

Writing in early May, 1948, Stuart Alsop noted De Gasperi's “determination” to overcome “opposition from conservatives in his own party.” “De Gasperi and his advisers,” Alsop continued, “speak of tax reform, land reform, irrigation schemes, plans for the reorganization of the chaotic Italian industry.”³⁸ Here again, the echo is unmistakable of progressive American reportage in the 1930s, supporting the crusading FDR as he fought to create the TVA and other New Deal initiatives.

Where liberal columnists like Lippmann, Welles and Alsop often portrayed De Gasperi as a latter day FDR, McCormick, especially after April 1948, compared De Gasperi to Truman. In a July 1948 piece, McCormick set De Gasperi's personal qualities in the following comparative context:

“Today's political leaders the world over are mostly little men—or men who appear little because the drama they act in is so overwhelming. The curious thing is that democratic countries seem to shy away from men of towering stature. . . . De Gasperi in Italy and Schuman in France weather crises because, people say, they represent ‘a good average.’ In Europe Truman is hardly more than a name, perhaps because he followed the eye-filling figure of Roosevelt as war leader.”³⁹

McCormick's columns of 1948-1951 deftly interweave descriptions of De Gasperi the reconstructor and De Gasperi the stabilizer. A February, 1949 column bearing the title “Coalition Government in Italy is Working” credited De Gasperi for the fact that

“The ‘third force,’ shadowy in France and insubstantial elsewhere, really

exists and rules in Italy. Naturally, it contains many divergent elements. The left wing of the Christian Democrats is more radical than the right wing of the Socialists. There is a good deal of distinctly audible criticism on all sides... But the party is not more an omnibus than the Democratic Party in the United States, and with all the murmurs and factions it works. The transition from dictatorship to democracy and from monarchy to republic proceeds with surprising smoothness because the government governs.”⁴⁰

These lines implicitly recall FDR’s gift for building and sustaining coalitions. The following lines, however, are more Trumanesque in their allusions:

“This is due in no small degree to the unspectacular but effective leadership of Alcide de Gasperi.. The “new men” (governing Italy) are not young men. They are not veterans like Sforza, Orlando, Don Sturzo and a dozen others of the pre-Fascist era who have come back to place their political experience at the service of their country. They are men without political experience like the President and the Prime Minister, who have been pushed to the top almost by accident.”⁴¹

McCormick continues,

“De Gasperi’s policy is patience. He seems to be feeling his way among the explosive problems he has to deal with, but perhaps this wary mine-detecting method is the stabilizing force that holds the country in balance.”⁴²

The most important phrase here is “stabilizing force.”

By the end of the decade, McCormick had begun to temper her portrayal of De Gasperi on ideological as well as personal grounds. In a July 1950 column, she transcended the American analogies which had dominated her earlier reportage, McCormick portrayed De Gasperi, Schuman and Adenauer as

“three of a kind, it is sometimes said, because they belong to the same party--that movement toward the “radical” center which is the only new (European) political phenomenon of the postwar period.”⁴³

These comments bespeak a noteworthy evolution in McCormick’s political thinking and reportorial approach. Over the last decade of her career (she passed away in late May 1954) McCormick gradually transcended the conventional and “safe” emphasis on fact-finding and personality of the mid-1940s. Among other explanations, it seems reasonable to attribute this change to her protracted acquaintance with De Gasperi--part and parcel of her extended first-hand exposure to post-war Roman and Italian society.⁴⁴

McCormick died in late May of 1954, some eleven weeks prior to De Gasperi’s own demise. During the mid-1950s, the *New York Times* devoted little attention to the Trentine statesman’s political party and legacy, focusing instead on the still potent Italian Communist Party.⁴⁵ Still more obsessed with the Red Menace, and increasingly dismissive of the Christian Democrats, was the new American Ambassador to Rome, Clare Boothe Luce. Luce shared McCormick’s Catholic faith, but not sorely lacked the veteran reporter’s personal and professional equanimity. A former Republican congresswoman from Connecticut, Clare Booth Luce and her husband Henry were longstanding and prominent GOP insiders. Despite her diplomatic inexperience and--in view of contemporary biases--her gender, Luce benefited from her own power base in Congress and in the media, and could, when she chose, communicate directly with the White House.⁴⁶

A more detailed treatment of Luce’s ambassadorship falls beyond the scope of the present paper. Suffice to say that her diplomatic dispatches, and still more, her personal notes, reveal a woman who masked her private uncertainties with brash rhetoric and an impatient, improvisational leadership

style. Luce's conversations both with her State Department peers and with Italian diplomatic interlocutors betray great uncertainty as to the capacity of any of De Gasperi's former Christian Democratic lieutenants to succeed him as head of government. In notes taken during a September 1953 colloquy with representatives of the Italian Foreign Office, Luce jotted down concerns about Giuseppe Pella (his timidity) Amintore Fanfani (his youth) and Attilio Piccioni (was he trustworthy?), and then scrawled the questions "who? who? who?"⁴⁷ Nor did Mario Scelba, De Gasperi's tough former Interior Minister and veritable anti-communist "poster boy," stay in her good graces for long. By June of 1955, Luce was forwarding her shrill characterizations of the Christian Democrats as virtual accomplices of the Communists (only an ongoing communist threat, she alleged, could justify ongoing American political and covert favors for the party) to all who would listen, including John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, Eisenhower and even Herbert Hoover.⁴⁸

Having erected a de facto, albeit understated, "cult of personality" around De Gasperi, American policymakers now found themselves adrift, unimpressed by his immediate successors but reticent to consider alternatives.⁴⁹ Through their highly personalized reportage over the preceding decade, American journalists—even those as engaging and relatively well-versed as McCormick—had unwittingly contributed to the United States' fearful, reactive diplomatic stance. And what of the broader American public? While further research needs to be done on this topic, it appears that Ambassador Tarchiani's "tyrannical padrone" had not only been "converted," but cowed. The black bogeyman of Fascism had been supplanted by a red one. Underscoring both specters was the glib impression that Italy remained perilously unruly and politically immature. The loss of De Gasperi's reassuring presence left not only Italians but also their American allies feeling orphaned and adrift.

Endnotes

¹ Bernard Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 136-137. See as well the same author's *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), pp. 117-118.

² In 1942 and 1943, McCormick's participated on the Subcommittee on Political Problems, a key State Department postwar planning body. While a detailed investigation of her committee role remains to be done, she generally joined FDR's Vatican envoy Myron Taylor in recommending moderate positions for post-Fascist Italy. See James Miller *The United States and Italy, 1940-1950. The Politics and Diplomacy of Stabilization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 43-44.

³ George Kennan and his colleagues' policy of anti-communist containment depended on journalistic promulgators, just as U.S. intervention in the Spanish-American War had depended on the jingoistic journalism of the Hearst and Randolph papers. Federica Pinelli and Marco Mariano, *Europa e Stati Uniti secondo il New York Times: la corrispondenza estera di Anne O'Hare McCormick, 1920-1954* (Torino: Otto, 2000), 341.

⁴ Miller, *The United States and Italy, 1940-1950*; Ennio Di Nolfo, *Vaticano e Stati Uniti, 1939-1952. Dalle carte di Myron C. Taylor* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1978). In Miller's persuasive formulation, American policy toward Italy between 1943 and 1950 evolved from an overriding emphasis on "democratic reconstruction" to a growing concern for political and economic "stabilization" in order to contain communism. *The United States and Italy*, pp. 3-7. For British-Italian relations in this same period, see in this regard G. Filippone Thaulero, "L'immagine di De Gasperi e della politica italiana in Gran Bretagna" in AA.VV. *De Gasperi e l'età del centrismo* (Roma: Cinque Lune, 1984), pp. 323-370.

⁵ Mario del Pero, *L'alleato scomodo. Gli USA e la DC negli anni del centrismo (1948-1955)* (Rome: Carocci, 2001) and "American Pressures and their Containment in Italy during the Ambassadorship of Clare Boothe Luce 1953-1956," *Diplomatic History* 28, 3 (June 2004), 407-439; Leopoldo Nuti, "The United States, Italy and the Opening to the Left 1953-1963", *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4,3 (Summer 2002), 35-55; Umberto Gentiloni Silveri's introduction to his *L'Italia e la Nuova Frontiera. Stati Uniti e centro-sinistra 1958-1965* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998).

⁶ In addition to promoting several of these gatherings, the Istituto Luigi Sturzo in Rome also launched a website devoted to the Trentine statesman. A particularly useful component of the site is Umberto Gentiloni Silveri's overview of De Gasperi-related materials held at the U.S. National Archives in College Park, Md.

⁷ Guido Formigoni, "De Gasperi e l'America tra storia e storiografia," *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche* LXXXIV, 2 (2005), 317-320.

⁸ Ibid. See as well Steven F. White, "Christian Democracy versus Pacellian Populism: Rival Forms of Post-War Political Catholicism" in Thomas Kselman, ed., *European Christian Democracy. Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2003), 199-227.

⁹ Impressive in their depth and balance are Llewelyn Thompson's embassy dispatches "Factionalism in the Christian Democratic Party," April 2, 1951, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), RG

59, 765.00/4-251 and "Gedda and the Church in the 1952 Election Campaign," July 11, 1952, RG 59, 765.00/7-1152.

¹⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952-1954*, vol. VI, *Western Europe and Canada*, pp. 1565.

¹¹ Sidney Hook, "The Failure of the Left," *Partisan Review*, X (March/April 1943), 166-175, as cited in Richard Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 22. The same period saw prominent New Deal liberals Henry Wallace and Sumner Welles lose key positions of foreign policymaking positions. Miller, *United States and Italy*, 45-51.

¹² John Diggins, *The Promise of Pragmatism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 331-342.

¹³ James L. Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), p. 171.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42. As Notre Dame University's 1944 Laetare Medalist, she was held up "as a corrective light to men and women of the press who are more concerned with propagandizing and indoctrinating false philosophies than in presenting facts." That same year the National Federation of Press bestowed its first journalistic achievement award upon her, praising her in the following terms: "She never takes notes when interviewing figures of state. She treats them like human beings and does not (underlined in the original) expect information on their political views. She considers an interview valuable only to study personality." *The Ave Maria* Vol 59, No. 16 (April 15, 1944), Box 3, folder General Correspondence, April-June, 1944 and Bertha T. Bless, "Announcement of Recognition," Box 3, folder General Correspondence July-December 1944, Anne O'Hare McCormick Papers, New York Public Library Archives (hereafter AOMP-NYPL).

¹⁵ The Eisenhower administration would cut this staff in half, and by 1965 only three persons were fulfilling this formal function. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy*, p. 45.

¹⁶ 'Forward' by former Truman aide George M. Elsey to D. M. Giangreco and Kathryn Moore, eds., *Dear Harry . . . Truman's Mailroom: 1945-1953* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole, 1999), p. ix.

¹⁷ Prior to the Second World War, the State Department remained an overwhelmingly WASP and Ivy League dominated "club." George Q. Flynn, *Roosevelt and Romanism. Catholics and American Diplomacy, 1937-1945* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood, 1976), pp. xii, 15. During the 1930s, the number of Catholic diplomats began to increase within the American diplomatic corps: see Thomas Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1964), pp. 207-208 and Flynn, *Roosevelt and Romanism*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁸ Flynn, *Roosevelt and Romanism*, p. 4. However, publications like *Catholic World* and *Commonweal* did stray from the Vatican's line on occasion, and to reach out to liberal, sometimes anti-clerical stateside Italian exiles like Gaetano Salvemini and Nicola Chiaromonte; see John Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 392-393.

¹⁹ Formigoni, "De Gasperi e L'America," 319.

²⁰ Formigoni, "De Gasperi e L'America," 318-319; Steven F. White, *Progressive Renaissance: American and the Reconstruction of Italian Education, 1943-1962* (New York: Garland, 1991) and "Carleton Washburne: l'influenza deweyana sulla scuola italiana," *Scuola e Citta'* 40:2 (February, 1989), 49-57.

²¹ Elisa Carrillo, *Alcide de Gasperi: The Long Apprenticeship* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1965), p. 106.

²² Corrado Malandrino, "L'iniziativa sturziana nell'esilio di Jacksonville," in *Luigi Sturzo e la democrazia nella*

prospettiva del terzo millenio. Atti del seminario internazionale, Erice, 7-11 ottobre 2000 (Florence: Olschki, 2004), 197.

²³ For a complimentary late interview with Sturzo, see her *New York Times* column of June 17, 1953 entitled "The Answer to Communism in Italy." Decades earlier, however, the youthful McCormick had been unimpressed by Don Sturzo, contrasted by her with the "dynamic go-getter" Mussolini. See her article published in the *New York Times Magazine*, 17 July, 1921, cit. in Pinelli and Mariano, *Europa e Stati Uniti secondo il New York Times*, p. 47. On Sturzo and McCormick in New York, see Pinelli and Mariano, *Europa e Stati Uniti*, p. 216 and also Sturzo's May 10, 1944 letter to McCormick and the latter's response of May 30, 1944, Box 3, General Correspondence April-June, 1944, AOMP-NYPL.

²⁴ A devout Catholic, born in England but reared in Ohio, McCormick was the first woman to serve on the editorial board of the *New York Times*, and the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for journalism. In contrast to Lippmann, McCormick steadily supported the Truman administration's foreign policy and the west's struggle against "communist tyranny and obscurantism." In Federica Pinelli's words, McCormick embodied "the consensual moderation of American liberalism during the immediate post-war period." Federica Pinelli, "Anne O'Hare McCormick, corrispondente estero del New York Times," *Annali della Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 29 (1995), 555-556. Based in Rome during the early post-war years, McCormick followed Italian politics more closely than did the other three. The proper name "De Gasperi" appeared 80 times in her columns, dating from 1944 and 1954. During this same period, Lippmann referred to De Gasperi by name only seven times, and Sumner Welles only six.

²⁵ The following observation by Alonzo Hamby seems suggestive in this regard: "Twentieth century liberalism required a president with the charisma to dramatize and virtually embody the cause of reform, a political leader who could mobilize a progressive coalition with the sheer force of his personality." By contrast, Hamby notes a tendency among liberal writers to see parliaments as embodiments of special interests and obstructionism. See his *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), p. xvi.

²⁶ "Strict Peace Could Bring Reaction," *Washington Post*, 10 July 1946. See more broadly the summary of U.S. press coverage of the Italian referendum and elections provided in Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: the View from America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) pp. 384-385.

²⁷ See Summary of Press, Radio and Congressional Comment "Public Attitudes toward Ratification of Italian and Satellite Peace Treaties," March 24, 1947, NARA RG 59, Office of Public Opinion Studies, Box 46.

²⁸ Miller, *United States and Italy*, p. 219. See also Perrone's detailed analysis in his *De Gasperi e l'America*, pp. 34-74.

²⁹ "The Long Hard Way," *Washington Post*, 7 January, 1947.

³⁰ Letter, Harold W. Connolly to President Truman, 17 January 1947, reproduced in *Dear Harry*, p. 152.

³¹ Sumner Welles "Problem for American Help," *Washington Post*, 14 May, 1947.

³², *Ibid.*

³³ On *Time's* collective approach to researching and writing articles, and on Luce's general philosophy of management, see Baughman, *Henry R. Luce*, 40-41, 110, 144.

³⁴ *Time*, 19 April, 1948.

³⁵ "A Moderator Turns into a Resourceful Fighter," *The New York Times*, 13 March 1948.

- ³⁶ “On the Italian Election,” *The Washington Post*, 22 April 1948.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ “The Sum and the Parts,” *The Washington Post*, 3 May, 1948.
- ³⁹ “Not Candidates but Policies Count in This Campaign,” *The New York Times*, 12 July, 1948.
- ⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 16 February, 1949
- ⁴¹ Here, of course, McCormick strikingly misrepresents De Gasperi’s political pedigree.
- ⁴² *New York Times*, 16 February, 1949.
- ⁴³ *New York Times*, 7 July, 1950.
- ⁴⁴ One of McCormick’s last interviews with De Gasperi before the latter’s fall from power late July, 1953 took place at De Gasperi’s “modest but charming villa in the hills above the blue stillness of Lake Albano.” *New York Times*, 4 July, 1953. McCormick passed away on May 29, 1954, some eleven weeks before De Gasperi’s death on August 19, 1954.
- ⁴⁵ Heralding this trend was C.L. Sulberger’s lengthy piece “Italian Reds Strive to Rule But Victory Seems Unlikely,” *New York Times*, 14 March, 1954.
- ⁴⁶ Mario Del Pero, “American Pressures and their Containment in Italy,” 415-416.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 422-423; Memorandum of conversation “Luncheon for Vince Barnett,” 8 September 1953, Library of Congress, Claire Boothe Luce Papers, Box 15, folder 19.
- ⁴⁸ Mario Del Pero, “The United States and ‘Psychological Warfare’ in Italy, 1948-1955,” *The Journal of American History* (March 2001), 1325-1326.
- ⁴⁹ The United States’ path forward toward an eventual, begrudging acceptance of the “Opening to the Left” is well covered in Nuti, “The United States, Italy, and the Opening to the Left,” cited in endnote 6.

Mission Italy: On the Front Lines of the Cold War*

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I am writing this brief article at a distance of twenty-five years from the events described in my book “Mission Italy”, which narrates my experiences as U.S. Ambassador in Italy between 1977 and 1981. In these intervening years the world, Italy, and the United States have all changed profoundly. The Cold War is over and the Soviet Union has collapsed. Islamic terrorism has replaced Communism as the principal threat to the Western democracies. A political earthquake has swept away the parties and personalities that dominated the scene during my years in Rome. Following the terrible events of 9/11, the United States has fought wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and is seeking to build an international coalition against the terrorist threat.

In the light of all that has happened, I have often asked myself just what historical significance I should now attach to the events I witnessed in Italy and how, if at all, I should revise the judgments I made then about policies and personalities.

Terrorism, Then and Now

My Ambassadorship coincided with the worst period of terrorism in the history of the Italian state. Ugo La Malfa spoke for many when he declared that Italy was experiencing a “civil war.” Thousands of young people became radicalized at their overcrowded and dysfunctional universities and became true believers in a secular religion of urban warfare as a way to achieve the Marxist-Leninist Utopia. That this could have happened in a democratic

country as advanced and sophisticated as Italy should make us less surprised that a similar frustration in poorly-governed Islamic nations has bred the current crop of fundamentalist killers.

Of course, Italy’s war on terror was a localized phenomenon and was won in the space of a decade, while today’s war on terror is worldwide and may require considerably more time before it is successfully concluded. It is a grave threat to Western civilization because Al Qaeda and its allies, unlike the Red Brigades, are energized by religious frenzy, are suicidal, and seek to achieve mass slaughter, with weapons of mass destruction if they can lay their hands on them. But the Red Brigades and Islamic terrorists have this in common: a totalitarian philosophy, a Utopian goal, and the determination to destroy the Western liberal democratic state. In this respect, the ideological battle, the struggle to preserve our precious heritage of freedom, is not yet over.

America and the PCI

The logical place to begin is with the policy of the Carter Administration toward Eurocommunism in general and the Italian Communist Party in particular. In the mid-1970s, Eurocommunism appeared to American policymakers to be a very real threat. Leonid Brezhnev was putting enormous pressure on Western Europe militarily and politically, with the aim of neutralizing the Continent and detaching it from its alliance with the United States.

Communist parties in France and Portugal as well as Italy seemed poised to enter the government, an outcome which could have aided the Soviet leadership in its grand design. After the strong showing of the PCI in the 1976 elections, Italy seemed to pose the greatest danger.

President Jimmy Carter repeated the clear preference expressed by his predecessors that the PCI not participate in the Italian government, but broke new ground by pledging not to interfere with the free choice of the Italian people by employing measures that had provoked widespread resentment in the past. He also authorized our Rome Embassy to open up a dialogue with the PCI, to grant visas to Italian Communists, and to indicate that our policy toward the PCI would change if the party altered its ideology and its policies. I believe that events in Italy have confirmed the wisdom of that policy, which was not changed by President Ronald Reagan. A few months after Reagan's election, Undersecretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger restated the Carter policy in almost the very same words we had used in our statement of January 12, 1978.¹

For more than three decades after World War II, a central political question was whether the Communists would govern Italy or not. That question, as I saw it, was finally settled in the June 1979 elections, when the PCI lost ground for the first time in history. It had become clear by then that the party lacked a clear identity or strategy and that its period in the Parliamentary Majority in 1978-79, as Aldo Moro predicted to me, would "wear it down." I left Rome at the beginning of 1981 confident that the PCI would continue to lose popular support. In this I was not disappointed.

Why did this happen? Italy was changing, and the PCI was unable to change with it. Its domestic and international policies seemed to ignore the needs of the country as perceived by an increasingly educated Italian electorate. Berlinguer's 1980 speech in front of Mirafiore encouraging the workers to occupy the Fiat plant was a major mistake, as was the

party's intransigent opposition to any change in the *scala mobile*. Throughout my period in Rome, Berlinguer and other PCI leaders were still affirming their fidelity to Marxism-Leninism and praising the achievements of the Soviet Revolution of 1917, while advocating foreign policies that favored Soviet aims and threatened Western interests. The Italian people took note of these facts and voted accordingly.

In December 1981, a few months after I left Rome, Lech Walensa and other leaders of Solidarity were arrested in Poland as a result of Soviet pressure on the Polish government. Berlinguer spoke of the "exhaustion of the propulsive force of the October Revolution," something less than a clear condemnation of a system that was already regarded as a failure by a growing number of people inside the Soviet empire. So tight was the umbilical cord linking the PCI to the Soviet Union that the party could not bring itself until some years later to denounce the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary. Moreover, it eagerly accepted financing from the Soviet Union throughout most of the 1980s.

I had come to my post in Rome determined to keep an open mind about the possibility that Berlinguer might lead his party toward Western social democracy and embrace the security interests of the transatlantic alliance. But as I noted in my narrative, both Francesco Cossiga and Bettino Craxi warned me early on that Berlinguer was going backward rather than forward. Later even Ugo La Malfa, who had fervently hoped for change in the PCI, told me he had become disillusioned with Berlinguer. I had reached similar conclusions myself and was particularly offended by attacks on Carter's human rights policy by PCI spokesmen and by their repeated efforts to persuade the Italian people that the United States was behind the Red Brigades and the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro.

Alessandro Natta, the unimaginative bureaucrat to whom the PCI turned after Berlinguer's death in 1984, had none of Berlinguer's charisma. He proved just as

incapable as Berlinguer of reconciling the party's pro-Soviet and more moderate wings. By 1987 the party had slipped to 26.6 percent of the vote, its level of 1968. Natta's replacement by Achille Occhetto failed to improve the party's fortunes. It was only after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union that the PCI abandoned the Communist faith and transformed itself into the *Partito Democratico di Sinistra*, a transformation that Occhetto belatedly set in motion. Capable young leaders like Massimo d'Alema, Walter Veltroni and Piero Fassino emerged at long last to chart a new course consistent with Western democratic values. I was not surprised that a substantial number of the PCI's "true believers" like Pietro Ingrao, Giancarlo Pajetta and Armando Cossutta voted against the decision to transform the party and that Cossutta created the *Rifondazione Comunista*. I was disappointed, however, that Rifondazione was able to get as much as 5.6 percent of the vote in 1992, compared with 16.1 percent for the PDS. The ability of this hard-line party to command a significant portion of the electorate would be a continuing burden on the center-left.

Many years after I left my post as Ambassador, I had the benefit of a long conversation in Rome with Giorgio Napolitano, whose honesty and wisdom I had come to admire during our secret meetings in the late 1970s. Berlinguer, he told me, was "a tormented person" during my years as Ambassador, "no longer a true believer in the Soviet Union, but not yet prepared to be a social democrat." Berlinguer greatly feared splitting the PCI, a split which would have divided the party much more evenly than the split that occurred in 1990. Napolitano agreed that Berlinguer's appearance at Mirafiore and his opposition to change in the *scala mobile* were evidence of an unduly hard-line view on economic policy, motivated by his concern to secure the PCI's worker base in the face of Craxi's challenge. With characteristic frankness, Napolitano acknowledged that the PCI leaders,

Berlinguer included, "were perfectly well aware that the United States had nothing to do with the Red Brigades," but found it "convenient" to hint at American complicity in order to mobilize the party militants.

The "Earthquake" of 1992-93

While I did foresee the decline of the PCI, I certainly did not anticipate the "earthquake" of 1992-93, which would sweep away all the old political parties, most notably the Christian Democrats and the Socialists. Like many other observers, I had hoped that, with the return of the Socialists to the government in 1980, we would see a period of political stability in Italy, with center-left coalitions pursuing long overdue programs of political and economic reform. Craxi's government of 1983-87 was able to achieve a number of reforms, notably a significant curtailment of the *scala mobile*. But by the late 1980s three factors were at work that would destroy the old party system and abruptly terminate the political careers of most of its leaders, including the dominating figures of Andreotti and Craxi.

The first of these factors, as I saw it, was the growing extent to which the system of "party-ocracy" had become polluted by political patronage, wasteful expenditures, rampant corruption and even organized crime. Our Embassy was aware of these systemic problems in the 1970s, which was a major reason for the "strategy of cooperation" programs designed to improve the performance of Italian democracy, but such problems seemed minor then compared to the terrorism of the Red Brigades and the danger of the PCI's entry into the government. In the 1980s, however, the DC and the PSI were increasingly discredited by the growing scale of the waste and corruption and by the arrogant way they subordinated the national interest in good government to their parties' interests in holding on to power. Fanning the flames of public outrage were the P-2 Masonic Lodge conspiracy, the maxi-trial of the Mafia leaders, the increasingly obvious connection between the DC and the Mafia in Sicily, and

the brutal Mafia murders of the prosecutors Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino.

The second factor that I thought decisive in undermining the old party system was its incompatibility with the economic requirements of Italy's desired place in Europe. At the end of the 1980s, the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty and Italy's decision to put the lira into the narrow EMS exchange rate band meant that the old ways of governing Italy were no longer affordable. Italy's public sector deficit was running at 10 percent of GDP, Italian inflation was rising and economic growth had nearly come to a halt. I remember a dramatic confrontation at the September 1991 Ambrosetti Conference on Lake Como when the best of Italy's economists and business leaders -- Romano Prodi, Franco Reviglio, Beniamino Andreatta, Vittorio Merloni and Cesare Romiti -- attacked the Andreotti-led government of the day with unprecedented bitterness. The words of Romiti still ring in my ears: "We are a sick country. Foreigners have given up on us. Our political leaders refuse to face facts. We must do away with dishonesty in our institutions and public life. The pistols of the Red Brigades have gone, but they have been replaced by the pistols of the Mafia. Some say our system is 'imbastardito,' that it will require a trauma to change it. But we don't want a trauma."

Nevertheless, the trauma was around the corner in the form of the "Clean Hands" investigations of the Milan prosecutors. I have no doubt that the third factor which made those investigations possible and which brought down the old system was the collapse of Communism in Russia and the simultaneous disappearance of the PCI in Italy. Absent a Communist danger in Italy, the Italian people seemed to say, we don't need to support any longer the parties of *malgoverno* simply because they are bulwarks against Communism. As the power of the DC and PSI evaporated, the Milan magistrates felt free at last to prosecute their leaders. I did not see this as a "judicial coup d'etat," as some called it,

though I recognized that some of the prosecutors abused their powers and had political agendas. The fact is that a general house-cleaning was long overdue and the new political climate encouraged judicial activism.

Andreotti and Craxi Revisited

The major victims of the "political earthquake" of 1992-93 were Giulio Andreotti and Bettino Craxi. I was sad that Andreotti suffered the humiliation of a trial in Palermo for collusion with the Mafia as well as a second trial in Perugia for allegedly ordering the murder of the journalist Carmine (Mino) Pecorelli. This was hardly the way that the seven-time Prime Minister who had been in almost every Italian government for over forty years expected to end his political career. Andreotti was acquitted in both trials, but the Mafia murder of Salvo Lima apparently for failing to prevent the Court of Cassation from affirming the maxi-trial convictions was a blow to Andreotti's reputation. It reminded Italians of how deeply Lima, Andreotti's man in Palermo, was involved with the Mafia, and how much Andreotti's DC faction depended on Mafia support.

Andreotti was a brilliant political tactician, ideally suited for the necessary deal-making in the weak coalition governments resulting from the system of proportional representation. His DC colleagues considered him cynical and unprincipled, and prepared on occasion to accept the support of unsavory personalities. As Gerardo Bianco once said, "Andreotti is a genuinely religious and even charitable man, but he has a pessimistic view of human nature and of original sin that allows him to tolerate the presence of people of dubious reputation."² Andreotti's effort to stop the cruise missile deployment, his failure to support Pandolfi's economic plan, his lack of interest in DC renewal, and his cold dismissal of my plea on behalf of Paolo Baffi during the Bank of Italy crisis are explainable by his willingness on occasion to put the pursuit of power ahead of

adherence to principle. But the accusation that he and other DC leaders deliberately failed to rescue Aldo Moro is a charge that I consider totally unfounded. I witnessed the anguish that Andreotti suffered during the Moro tragedy and we know now he was prepared to offer a ransom for Moro's release. He rightly refused to recognize the Red Brigades as a legitimate political force or release some of their members from prison, because such actions would have undermined the public order and provoked mass resignations from the police. It should also be remembered that Andreotti's Minister of Interior, Francesco Cossiga, was devoted to Moro and was heart-broken that he could not save him. I remember vividly that Cossiga always kept a picture of Moro prominently placed on his office wall.

Bettino Craxi, the other principal victim of the "earthquake" of 1992-93, now seems to me a tragic figure, someone to whom history should assign a better place than he now occupies in the popular consciousness. Craxi had the courage and political skills in 1976 to oust the PSI's ineffectual leaders and end his party's subordination to the PCI. His support for the deployment of the Cruise Missiles was crucial to a decision of historic importance. He was right in claiming that the bribery and kickbacks in which his party engaged was an accepted part of the Italian system and that if the PCI was a lesser offender it was only because it could rely on generous financing from the Soviet Union. In this context it was understandable that he would ask me for money from the United States. I only wish he had better understood my reasons for not providing it. In my opinion, Craxi's main offense was in succumbing to the "arrogance of power," accepting the comfortable embrace of the DC in the late 1980s and forgetting the imperative of reforming Italy that lay at the heart of Socialist ideals.

Cossiga and Berlusconi

If both Andreotti and Craxi ended their careers with severely damaged reputations, the third major political leader

in my Italian narrative, Francesco Cossiga, had a happier fate. Succeeding Sandro Pertini as President in 1985, Cossiga decided after several years to use his unique position in the Quirinal Palace to call attention to the failures of the center-left governments and the system of party-ocracy. These Presidential exhortations made him highly controversial, and his subsequent efforts to found "a party of the grand center" came to nothing. Yet I felt he showed courage in denouncing the broken political system, in the same way that he demonstrated courage years earlier in assuming responsibility for the Cruise Missile deployment.

I have mentioned that shortly after my arrival in Rome as Ambassador in 1977, I was informed by our USIS Director in Milan that "someone named Berlusconi" had asked to interview me in his small TV station in a housing development known as *Milano Due*. A man of considerable charm, intelligence, and entrepreneurial skills, Berlusconi understood before anyone else the potential of private television in Italy and by the late 1980s was the richest man in the country. That he received essential help along the way from his friend Bettino Craxi, who legalized private TV networks during his Prime Ministership, should not obscure Berlusconi's remarkable achievement. With the same intuitive genius that brought him success in his business affairs, Berlusconi saw the political vacuum created by the collapse of the old political parties and decided to fill it by launching a new political movement, *Forza Italia*. I watched with surprise as he cobbled together a coalition of *Forza Italia*, reformed neo-Fascists, the center-right splinter of the former DC, and the Northern League and went on to win the national election of 1994. I was no less surprised to see how, after the collapse of his first government in less than a year, he was able to recover and return as Prime Minister as the head of the same coalition in 2001, this time with a secure majority.

To say that Berlusconi has become a controversial figure at home and abroad would be an understatement. He has been prosecuted on charges of bribery and

corruption and his refusal while Prime Minister to relinquish ownership of his three television networks has made him a target of widespread criticism. Although he has increased the flexibility of the labor market and encouraged entrepreneurship, much of his political capital has been spent on his unresolved problems with the judiciary and his conflicts of interest. It is too early to say how history will judge his record as Prime Minister, but it can be said in his favor that he has already changed Italy's political culture in at least two ways: In contrast to many old-style Italian politicians, whose Byzantine formulations seemed mainly addressed to a few political insiders, Berlusconi has spoken to the Italian people in a way they can understand. He has also brought into public life a number of qualified persons from the worlds of business and the professions. These are two positive contributions that are likely to endure even after he leaves the political scene.

Italy now faces a difficult future, in which solid accomplishments are still shadowed by serious unresolved problems. On the economic front, Italy is now in the Eurozone, thanks to the 1992-94 governments of Giuliano Amato and Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, and to Romano Prodi's courageous measures to reduce the fiscal deficit while Prime Minister from 1996-98. Privatization of state enterprises has reduced the scope for political patronage and wasteful expenditure. Consolidation has improved the efficiency of the banking system. Small and medium-scale enterprises still demonstrate the capacity to innovate and conquer world markets. Yet Italy's growth rate and productivity are lagging behind that of other industrial nations, its attractiveness to foreign investors remains low, and the competitive edge of "Made in Italy" manufactured goods is being threatened by low-wage production in China and Eastern Europe. Without serious measures to increase research and development, further liberalize the labor market and reduce the cost of pensions and health care, Italy's economic future is bleak.

As a professor who sees many foreign students in law and business each year at Columbia University, I continue to be impressed by the ability of young Italians, but discouraged that so few of them want to return to their native country to pursue their careers.

The picture is equally uncertain on the political side. On the one hand, the pervasive violence of the Red Brigades in the late 1970s is happily a distant memory. The country has finally achieved a bipartite system with alternations in power by center-right and center-left coalitions. The inclusion in the political game of large portions of the electorate that were previously excluded by reason of their parties' undemocratic heritage is a further positive development. Gianfranco Fini cannot be disqualified because of his youthful membership in the MSI any more than Massimo d'Alema can be disqualified because of his youthful membership in the PCI. The performance in office of both of them has confirmed their democratic credentials. It is also hopeful that the fragments of the old DC contain a new generation of able leaders such as Pier Ferdinando Casini and Marco Follini of the center-right Polo and Enrico Letta of the center-left Ulivo. The problem is that these coalitions are composed of parties with such diverse interests and objectives as to make stable and effective government difficult, if not impossible. Italy still needs to take action on a daunting political agenda -- to complete the elimination of proportional representation, and to either strengthen the powers of the Prime Minister or move to a Presidential system. Italy can no longer afford a long period of *immobilismo*.

Jimmy Carter's Legacy

I have left until last a comment on President Jimmy Carter. His is often described as a failed Presidency, and he has been charged by conservative politicians with having been naïve and weak in his foreign policy. I believe these characterizations to be mistaken. Despite

his electoral defeat, Carter's foreign policy accomplishments were substantial and lasting. He was the first President to say that the Palestinians deserved a "homeland" in a peace treaty that guaranteed Israel's security, and his personal leadership at Camp David in 1979 forced Menachem Began and Anwar Sadat into compromises that made peace possible between Israel and Egypt. He normalized relations with China, pushed through the Panama Canal Treaty over conservative opposition, and achieved limited reductions in strategic arms in the SALT II treaty even while advocating deeper cuts, a policy that both Russia and the United States eventually accepted. He reversed the post-Vietnam decline in US defense spending and modernized US weaponry, notably with the Stealth technology that proved so effective in the first Gulf War. By holding high the banner of human rights, he put the Soviet Union on the ideological defensive, emboldened human rights advocates in Eastern Europe and Latin America, and gave the US moral credibility before the world.

His most under-rated achievement was his successful leadership, with important help from Cossiga and Craxi, in securing NATO's agreement to deploy the Pershing and Cruise Missiles in Europe to offset the intimidating deployment of the Soviet SS-20s. This achievement, which enabled the Reagan Administration to follow through with the actual deployments in the early 1980s, had historic consequences. Mikhail Gorbachev later confessed in his memoirs that the SS-20 deployment by his Soviet predecessors was "an unforgivable adventure," embarked on "in the naïve expectation that Western counter-measures would be impeded by the peace movement." He characterized those counter-measures in the form of the Pershing and Cruise Missiles as "a pistol held to our head," causing him to propose in 1987 the complete elimination of both the SS-20s and the new NATO missiles, a proposal that was promptly agreed to in Geneva. This TNF agreement, in his view, "initiated a genuine disarmament process, creating a security

system that would be based on comprehensive cooperation instead of the threat of mutual destruction." It also "represented the first well-prepared step on our way out of the Cold War, the first harbinger of the new times." After concluding TNF, Gorbachev withdrew Soviet troops from Afghanistan and affirmed at the UN "the legitimate right of every nation to decide its own future," in effect signaling the end of Brezhnev Doctrine.³ The Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet satellites threw off Communist rule and the right of free choice was soon claimed by the oppressed nationalities of the Soviet Union, leading to its break-up at the end of 1991. Robert Gates, CIA Director under President George Bush senior, declared some years later in an all-too-rare tribute: "I believe historians and political observers alike have failed to appreciate the importance of Jimmy Carter's contributions to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War."⁴

When Jimmy Carter left the White house, he did not seek lucrative lectures and corporate board memberships, nor the ease of a comfortable retirement. He created the Carter Center to carry on his unfinished Presidential agenda. With Rosalynn Carter at his side, he has worked in sixty-five countries to combat disease, increase food production, monitor free elections, and promote dialogue between hostile groups. His personal efforts helped to bring about the peaceful departure from power of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the departure of the Cedras military dictatorship from Haiti, and North Korea's agreement to freeze its nuclear weapons program (an agreement unfortunately not kept).

Jimmy Carter had his weaknesses, as all American Presidents and heads of governments do. He did not possess Ronald Reagan's majestic presence or Reagan's capacity to appeal to American pride and patriotism. His modest manner and soft-spoken delivery conveyed to some a weakness of will that was not in his makeup. In a reaction to the "Imperial Presidency" of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, he probably went too far in eschewing the

pompous stagecraft of Presidential power. He disdained the horse-trading and politicking that is often necessary in Washington. His was the misfortune of dealing with Brezhnev instead of Gorbachev, and of being the first American President to confront the new danger of Islamic fundamentalism.

But in his foreign policy, including his policy toward Italy, “potentially the greatest political problem” the United States faced in Europe, President Carter sought to balance power and principle, understanding that principle without power is futile, but that power exercised without principle is not

an acceptable basis for world leadership. As the American people enter a new millennium of unprecedented global challenges, there is much in Carter’s legacy to command our attention and respect.

Endnotes

¹ Interview with *Il Tempo*, May 1, 1981.

² Quoted In Alexander Stille’s *Nella terra degli infedeli* (Mondadori, 1996), p. 402.

³ *Memoirs of Mikhail Gorbachev* (Doubleday, 1995), pp. 443, 444, 445 and 460.

⁴ Quoted in Douglas Brinkley’s *The Unfinished Presidency: Jimmy Carter’s Journey to the Nobel Peace Prize* (Penguin Books, 1999), p. 21.

*This article is drawn from the Epilogue of Richard N. Gardner’s book, *Mission Italy: On the Front Lines of the Cold War*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Proporzionalismo? No! *

Scipione Novelli

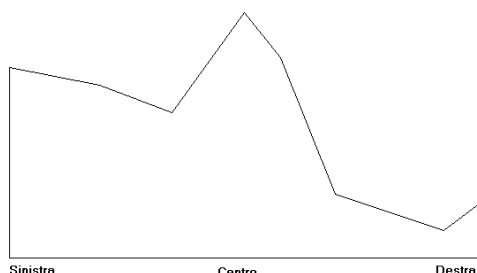
Università Cattolica

In questi giorni del Settembre 2005 è stata presentata la proposta elaborata, nominalmente, dal capo dell'UDC, Follini, per tornare ad un sistema elettorale di tipo proporzionale. Tra l'altro nel pieno delle autentiche convulsioni che stanno affliggendo l'attuale maggioranza parlamentare, ormai divisa su tutto. E che dovrebbe opportunamente, e tempestivamente, scegliere la strada delle elezioni anticipate. Una tale proposta come, in modo sicuramente indubitabile, l'intitolazione di questo scritto fa capire, sarebbe una autentica jattura per il nostro beneamato Paese. Alla insensatezza di tale proposito ostano, da una parte, una mutazione antropologica degli italiani, intervenuta in un periodo storico sorprendentemente brevissimo, e dall'altra la ormai, anch'essa storicamente affermata, come si vedrà poco più sotto, parlando della cosiddetta "difficoltà arroviiana", impossibilità che un sistema di decisioni collettive basato sul principio di maggioranza sia in grado di evitare la ciclicità delle preferenze. Ovvero il fenomeno che fa sì che, date ad esempio tre sole alternative, x , y , z , sia $x > y$, $y > z$, ma anche $z > x$, rendendo quindi impossibile determinare quale sia l'alternativa prescelta. Si osservi che il segno di maggiore ">" va letto come "preferito/a a ...", e non come "maggiore". La inopportunità di tale scelta è già stata quest'anno da me messa in evidenza in un saggio (Novelli 2005a) dedicato alle recenti elezioni regionali, ripubblicato, con i necessari emendamenti, alcuni mesi dopo (Novelli 2005b). Ma in questo momento, forse in ritardo, date le predette convulsioni, ritorno qui sull'argomento, per chiarire come la pretesa

di Follini non fosse solamente un pur potente grimaldello nella sua, peraltro moderata, avversione all'attuale Capo del Governo, ma una autentica, e assolutamente pernicioso per il Paese, scelta di campo. Come dimostrano le recentissime elezioni in Germania che, come ben noto, adotta un sistema elettorale proporzionale, con clausola di sbarramento al 5%, che metterebbe fuori campo l'UDC di Follini. Un sistema quindi indubbiamente più forte di quello suggerito dal segretario della UDC, salvo la questione del premio di maggioranza. Che in Germania non sarebbe scattato, dato che le elezioni non hanno prodotto alcuna immediatamente spendibile maggioranza. Sistema che pure ha portato, adesso che la Germania ha un sistema di tipo pentapartitico, dopo essere stata, lungamente, finché divisa, a due partiti più uno, il liberale, ora cresciuto, credo, di là dalle speranze dei suoi stessi dirigenti. Eppure, sebbene il numero di partiti in Italia sia assai più elevato che in Germania, ancora adesso, che Settembre finisce, a due settimane almeno dalle elezioni, non abbiamo la più pallida idea di quale nuovo governo avrà quel Paese. Bella dimostrazione che quando la frammentazione di opinioni politiche cresce, un sistema elettorale proporzionale, pur corretto, non riesce a determinare un reale vincitore della competizione. Ciò in ragione del fatto che la sua popolazione è distribuita simmetricamente sul continuo sinistra-destra. Come si vedrà immediatamente, cominciando dalla prossima riga di questo scritto. Infatti la prima causa di quella che sarebbe una tremenda regressione del sistema Italia, consiste nel sensazionale, e vedremo non

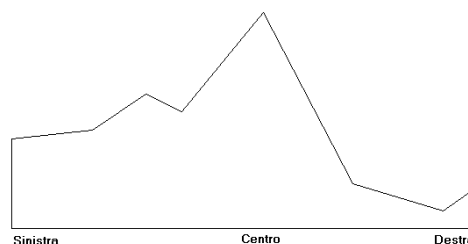
molto più avanti perché, fatto che la distribuzione degli italiani sul continuo sinistra-destra si è radicalmente ribaltata nel giro di solamente una ventina d'anni. Fino al 1975, infatti, gli italiani si distribuivano in modo assolutamente asimmetrico sul più tradizionale *continuum* discriminante in politica. Anche se va subito detto che tale dizione, sinistra-destra, pur essendo nel frattempo diventata subito, appunto, tradizionale, risale solamente alla Rivoluzione francese, quando nella Assemblea, appunto, rivoluzionaria, i moderati Girondini sedettero, rispetto alla presidenza, a destra -ma in realtà a sinistra nella sala- ed i focosi Giacobini, invece, sul fronte opposto, cioè a sinistra. Tale contrapposizione si può far risalire, antropologicamente soltanto, alla contrapposizione, ineliminabile, tra sentimenti egoistici ed altruistici, o solidaristici, nell'animo umano. Tornando all'autocollocazione dei nostri connazionali, fino alla utilizzazione dei materiali della ricerca sulle otto nazioni compiuta da Giovanni Sartori e Giacomo Sani, e la loro, apparentemente definitiva, riaffermazione circa l'asimmetria di collocazione degli italiani sul continuo sinistra-destra, come illustrato nella figura 1 (Sartori e Sani, 1978), gli italiani erano largamente maggioritari sul versante di sinistra.

Figura 1



Tuttavia, già soltanto dieci anni dopo tale ultima rilevazione, nel 1985, la situazione era già mutata, e la chiara dominanza dello schieramento tra il centro e la sinistra veniva inaspettatamente eroso, tanto che la moda secondaria a sinistra era sparita. Il tutto in base ad un sondaggio Demoscopea al quale avevo partecipato personalmente, suggerendo appunto di inserire una domanda sull'autocollocazione politica. Rimaneva invece l'assai più piccola moda sul lato destro. Ma sull'esistenza effettiva di tale moda ci si deve interrogare, dato che era dovuta alla risposta di 17 sui poco più di 2000 interrogati dell'indagine. Ovvero, stante il margine di errore del tre per cento di un simile campione di interviste dirette, faccia a faccia, fatte da intervistatori, e intervistatrici, opportunamente addestrati, risulta che i rispondenti di estrema destra erano molto meno numerosi del margine d'errore stesso, ovviamente pari a sessanta. Già osservando la figura 2 si può valutare quale importante cambiamento avesse interessato gli italiani, solamente in un decennio.

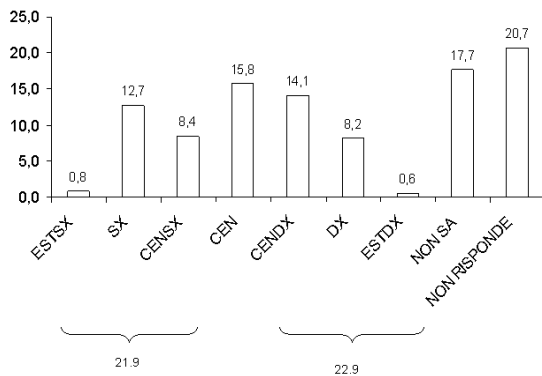
Figura 2



Ma non basta. Passano ancora dieci anni circa e, a cavallo del 1994 e 1995, vengono condotti due altri sondaggi, uno della Doxa ed uno commissionato dall'Istituto Cattaneo di Bologna, che confermano, avvalorando decisamente i risultati del 1985, la allora solamente tendenziale, ma successivamente avvenuta, eguaglianza della collocazione dei nostri concittadini sul continuo sinistra-

destra. Dato che i due sondaggi sono direttamente confrontabili, qui si pubblicano solamente i dati di quello Doxa, nella figura 3.

Figura 3



E' davvero sorprendente che vi sia stato un rovesciamento talmente importante nelle preferenze politiche degli italiani, e soltanto in venti anni, che da un punto di vista squisitamente storico sono un soffio appena. Ma, se riflettiamo solamente un po', ci rendiamo conto che si è trattato realmente di un mutamento di portata epocale. Perché è vero che gli intervistati del 1975 non erano più i medesimi del 1995, essendoci stato un certo ricambio fisico della popolazione. Ma questo è stato, anche se non ho i dati immediati per sostenere questa mia ipotesi, abbastanza modesto, stanti da una parte la accentuata denatalità italiana, già da dieci anni in atto, al momento della prima rilevazione, nonostante che i politici, che sono alieni all'educazione, in senso formale, avendo iniziato la loro carriera quando adolescenti, se ne siano accorti con venti anni di ritardo, e non abbiano ancora preso alcun provvedimento per tentare d'invertire, almeno parzialmente, la tendenza. Dall'altra i progressi della medicina e dell'igiene, nonché dell'alimentazione, che hanno fatto, al contrario, crescere la speranza di vita dei nostri compatrioti, e delle nostre compatriote soprattutto, fino a limiti mediamente impensabili fino a pochi anni fa, e ancora continuano a farla crescere.

Quindi la popolazione dalla quale sono stati scelti, casualmente, i campioni dal 1975 al 1995 non differiva in modo decisivo, quanto a composizione, a seconda delle rilevazioni. Di conseguenza si tratta non solo di un ricambio culturale in funzione dell'età, che fa capire come si sia potuta ripopolare l'area di destra, ma anche di un profondo riorientamento politico di una parte non trascurabile della popolazione. Si tratta quindi di una fenomenologia assai importante, che ancora non è stata opportunamente indagata, come invece si sarebbe dovuto fare.

Va inoltre osservato come la percentuale di mancate risposte, o di "Non so" nella figura 3 è, in modo allarmante, assai superiore a quello registrato in tutte le precedenti rilevazioni, nelle quali l'insieme dei due dati restava sempre al disotto del 10%. Questo è un chiaro segno dell'allarmante, e tuttavia giustificata, disistima nei confronti della classe politica che gli italiani ormai nutrono. Di là da quest'ultima constatazione, da questa situazione di modificazione degli orientamenti, che ha, ripeto ancora, condotto i nostri connazionali ad essere, di fatto, equamente schierati tra centro-sinistra e centro-destra, discende anche una indesiderabile proprietà del sistema politico, ovvero quella di rendere di fatto impossibile alcuna decisività dei processi di decisione collettiva. Che tale proprietà sia desiderabile in un tale sistema è stato messo in luce dai lavori di Douglas H. Bair e Robert A. Pollak (1979-1986), dopo che Kenneth J. Arrow aveva già messo in luce, nel suo teorema (1951), divenuto famoso già in quella sua prima versione, le altre due proprietà desiderabili, quella della razionalità delle scelte, e quella della democraticità, che sarebbe assai meglio definire eguaglianza di potere, tra i decisori, ovvero direttamente i cittadini da un lato, oppure i loro rappresentanti dall'altro. Ora, i due assunti, anche se normalmente si parla di un solo teorema, dimostrati da Arrow non hanno fatto altro che far riscoprire come il sistema di votazione a maggioranza, che anche l'autore ritiene essere il migliore sistema di decisione politica collettiva, generano dei

cicli di preferenza non appena il numero delle alternative in competizione supera le due. Con una probabilità niente affatto trascurabile, se già con tre alternative il 7.8 % delle decisioni è afflitto da ciclicità. Figuriamoci cosa accade quando invece sono sul tappeto dozzine di alternative, cioè di proposte di decisioni, da prendere. E anche un solo attimo di riflessione ci induce a verificare che NON esistono situazioni reali nelle quali le alternative siano soltanto due. Sembrerebbe, ad una persona non troppo riflessiva, che i referendum abbiano soltanto due alternative in gioco, il sì oppure il no. Ma così non è. Infatti un elettore, o eletrice, ha di fronte a sé molte altre alternative. Può astenersi, oppure votare scheda bianca o nulla. Può anche essere costretto ad astenersi, come accade ad esempio ai marinai in navigazione, stante la legge italiana. Quindi le alternative di fronte a ciascuno sono al minimo cinque, se non addirittura sei. Poiché la probabilità di cicli di preferenza non cresce linearmente, ma esponenzialmente, già con poche, reali, alternative ci si trova a dover fare i conti con una ciclicità di fatto sicura, probabilisticamente parlando. Non solo. L'inghippo legato al numero di alternative nelle decisioni prese a maggioranza, era già stato empiricamente individuato negli ultimi decenni del XVIII secolo, in Francia, da Borda e Condorcet, quando tuttavia i loro studi erano stati travolti, e quindi dimenticati, dagli eventi rivoluzionari che in sostanza furono contemporanei agli autori. Come anche Kenneth J. Arrow riconobbe, nella seconda edizione del suo libro, dopo essere stato informato dei loro risultati da un collega. Borda e Condorcet furono appunto dimenticati, sebbene il metodo di voto posizionale ideato dal primo degli autori citati sia stato effettivamente utilizzato dalla Académie Française, cui Borda apparteneva, fino alla sua cancellazione da parte di Napoleone I. Quindi quella di Arrow fu una riscoperta, supportata per di più da una dimostrazione teorematologica.

La copiosissima letteratura che seguì la dimostrazione, nel tentativo di superare quella che da allora in poi si definì la

“difficoltà arrovinata”, grazie anche al fatto che, storicamente, si era da tempo affermata come scienza l'economia politica, tanto negli Stati Uniti quanto in Europa, ha poi individuato anche un altro difetto del metodo di decisione a maggioranza. La suddetta “difficoltà” resta ancora insoluta, nonostante la sterminata letteratura che, specialmente da parte di economisti, è stata dedicata ad essa. In particolare si vede, come molti autori hanno fatto, sempre nel fallito tentativo di superarla, si vede, dicevo, che, quando si indeboliscono gli assiomi o le condizioni di Arrow, appunto nel tentativo di ovviare al problema da lui riscoperto, e quindi si fa uso della sola preferenza stretta, invece di quella debole usata dall'autore nel suo teorema, che include in sé anche l'indifferenza tra alternative, se si adotta la seconda proprietà arrovinata, che coincide con il principio paretiano, ma successivamente si nega l'unanimità dei pareri che ne dovrebbe conseguire, perché in un costituzione reale, che si rivolge a milioni, se non addirittura miliardi di individui, la probabilità di decisioni unanimi si riduce a valori non calcolabili, o quasi, si ottengono, sempre teorematologicamente, costituzioni assolutamente non gradite. Questo perché ci si avvia quindi o alla indifferenza collettiva, ovvero a ritenere tra loro indifferenti ogni possibile coppia di alternative, precludendosi così qualsiasi potenzialità di decisione. Oppure alla cosiddetta “dittatura inversa”, per riprendere un vezzo del linguaggio arrovinato, ovvero all'esistenza di un individuo il cui ordinamento delle preferenze non coincide mai con quello collettivo. Ed è esattamente in particolare l'indifferenza collettiva quella che maggiormente preoccupa, essendo gli italiani, come sopra detto, equamente divisi sul continuo sinistra-destra, che non a caso oggi non viene più utilizzato con la virulenza che andava per la maggiore ancora non moltissimi anni fa. Infatti, quando le forze contrapposte sono di fatto pari, ogni possibilità di decisione viene, sempre di fatto, azzerata. Di conseguenza, è solamente con un sistema di votazione maggioritario, che per la sua stessa natura esalta le piccole

differenze in termini di voti in anche massicce maggioranze in termini di seggi. Quando non accade addirittura, come è avvenuto più d'una volta in Gran Bretagna, si riesce ad avere una maggioranza di seggi pur con un risultato elettorale minoritario. Comunque, ad avere una larga maggioranza di seggi, con un sostanziale pareggio di consensi popolari, noi italiani siamo arrivati nel 2001. Questo perché siamo riusciti a far funzionare, allora, alla sua terza prova soltanto, quel davvero esecrabile intruglio di legge elettorale, da Giovanni Sartori immediatamente, più che ironicamente definito, dal nome del relatore della legge, *Mattarellum*, messo in piedi in tutta fretta dopo il referendum del 1993, da democristiani e socialisti con l'acqua alla gola per asfissia elettorale, oltre che giudiziaria, referendum nel quale gli stessi italiani si erano solamente mostrati ormai insoddisfatti di una legge elettorale di tipo proporzionale, non certo di aver indicato la farraginosa combinazione di quasi tre quarti di seggi assegnati maggioritariamente, e un quarto invece proporzionalmente. Risultato questo contrabbandato dai predetti boccheggianti come emanazione della volontà popolare, grazie a un non inconsueto episodio di lassismo lavorativo ministeriale. Ma questa è evidentemente un'altra questione, che forse potrà valere la pena di esaminare in dettaglio in altra sede.

Naturalmente è la scarsissima, per non dire nulla, capacità della presente classe parlamentare maggioritaria a non rendere soddisfatte le domande che salgono dalla società, essendo tale classe esclusivamente interessata non tanto al bene pubblico, quanto piuttosto alla soddisfazione dei bisogni del loro padrone, termine non a caso usato qui. E, per dire il vero, non è che l'opposizione mostri una globale qualità migliore. In questo modo non si possono valutare le prestazioni, in termini decisionali, che potrebbe offrire la parte maggioritaria del presente, ripeto di nuovo pessimo, sistema elettorale, tuttavia furbescamente adottato dagli italiani che, sempre nel 2001, sono riusciti a far eleggere solo due deputati su 630 dalla parte

proporzionale della legge. Facendo quindi funzionare il sistema elettorale come se fosse maggioritario. Sfortunatamente ad un turno solo. Invece, per una geografia politica, intrigata come quella italiana, una legge a due turni sarebbe indispensabile. Ma non del tipo inopinatamente approntato per le elezioni dirette delle massime cariche istituzionali di livello subnazionale, che mette in lizza al secondo turno solamente i due candidati meglio piazzati nel primo. Dovrebbe invece essere adottata una *ratio* simile a quella che regge la Quinta Repubblica in Francia, ovvero l'ammissione al secondo turno di tutti coloro che abbiano avuto l'equivalente, in termini di voti validi, inizialmente pari al 12.5%, cioè un ottavo, in termini dell'elettorato. Successivamente ridotto al 6.25%, un sedicesimo, quando i francesi si furono anche essi abituati alla per loro largamente, allora, ignorata legge elettorale maggioritaria, dopo il proporzionalismo della Quarta Repubblica. Va in ogni caso naturalmente osservato che l'elettorato, denatalità a parte, è in ogni caso sempre il più stabile dato elettorale, quale che sia il sistema adottato per convertire in voti i seggi. Con una saggia legge a doppio turno, nel primo di questi le tanto diverse anime politiche degli italiani avrebbero la possibilità di mostrare la bandiera, ma sarebbero poi costrette a coalizzarsi nel secondo, pena la perdita di ogni possibilità di vittoria. In questo modo si acquisirebbe la possibilità di avere governi di legislatura, sperabilmente augurandosi che entrino in Parlamento dei personaggi autenticamente votati a provvedere al bene pubblico, e non a quello privato di qualche leader. Il che, assai sfortunatamente, non è garantito da qualsivoglia legge elettorale.

* Un sincero ringraziamento all'amica e collega Maria Megale per aver curato la parte grafica di questo scritto.

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BOOK ESSAY AND REVIEWS

- C.Polecritti** on **G.Brucker's** *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence: Selected Essays*,
P.Messina on **M.Caciagli's** *Regioni d'Europa. Devoluzioni, regionalismi, integrazione europea*,
A. Zaslove on **A.Cento Bull** and **M.Gilbert's** *The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics*, **C.Baccetti** on **M. Degl'Innocenti** *L'avvento della Regione. 1970-1975. Problemi e materiali*, **N.Toloudis** on **I.Favretto's** *The Long Search for a Third Way*,
U.Volli on **P.Ginsborg's** *Silvio Berlusconi - Television, Power and Patrimony*,
M.Brunazzo on **P.Graziano's** *Europeizzazione e politiche pubbliche italiane. Coesione e lavoro a confronto*.

Gene Brucker, *Living on the Edge in Leonardo's Florence: Selected Essays*
Berkeley: University of California Press,
2005, pp. 211, ISBN 0-520-24134-7.

During the last half-century, few fields in European historiography have provided the richness and depth of Florentine studies. One of its greatest practitioners has been Gene Brucker. In the brief (and characteristically modest) introduction to this volume, he chronicles his journey from Illinois farm boy to young WWII soldier entranced by the Mediterranean to dedicated scholar in the archives. The lucid and elegant essays that follow, written over the last decade, cover a broad spectrum of Italian history, from precisely focused studies of Florence to wider views of the Renaissance and beyond.

Brucker explores the machinations of a powerful urban lineage in "The Pope, the Pandolfini, and the Parochiani of S. Martino a Gangalandi (1465)." Aggressive competition over patronage rights in the churches of ancestral villages was a familiar strategy of elites, but the case of San Martino is especially intriguing since it was a benefice held in absentia by the great Leon Battista Alberti. In "Florentine Cathedral Chaplains" Brucker draws upon archival records to illuminate much humbler lives. Despite the

small window of opportunity opened for them by education at the cathedral school, these sons of artisans faced difficult careers, with insecure appointments, burdensome taxes, and unpleasant working conditions (caused, ironically, by the stupendous—and disruptive—building projects of the Quattrocento). Two other Florentine chapters had their genesis as talks to nonspecialists at San Francisco's Museo Italoamericano. One is a deft character sketch of the remarkable Alessandra Strozzi, whose collected letters are one of the most important sources for private life in the fifteenth century. The generation after Alessandra's is discussed in the title essay, a somber elegy to the difficulties faced by Florentines as they struggled to survive in a changing and perilous world.

"Florence Redux," on the other hand, is an insightful tour of the state-of-the-field in Florentine historiography. Although proud of the collective work of his colleagues, Brucker concedes that total immersion in the documents has its critics and its limitations, including the lack of a coherent synthesis, a disinclination to make comparisons with the rest of Italy (although this is beginning to change), and a general absence of theory. Indeed, in the introduction to this volume, he wryly—and unapologetically—confesses his own complete

lack of faith in “theory,” in terms of its practical use by historians.

But this Florentinist does reflect on larger structures and patterns, with felicitous results. In a sweeping overview, he analyzes multiple aspects of “The Italian Renaissance”, beginning with, then countering, Burckhardt’s idealistic vision. He provides a more speculative viewpoint in “The Horseshoe Nail: Structure and Contingency in Medieval and Renaissance Italy,” where he plays with the notion of counterfactual history. For example, the growth of the papal state was not “preordained,” but in fact the product of a series of accidents; Brucker even gives us the tantalizing possibility of a decentralized Catholicism.

“Fede and Fiducia: The Problem of Trust in Italian History, 1300-1500” shows how the achievements of these mercantile cities were supported by a thick bedrock of contracts, oaths, and penalties; however, the concept of “fede” was considerably weaker in the realm of politics and diplomacy.

Of special interest to post-Renaissance scholars are two essays that open up onto an even larger panorama, providing a clear-eyed and judicious view of long-term problems in Italian politics and society. “Civic Traditions in Pre-Modern Italy” is a welcome corrective to Robert Putnam’s thesis on civic culture. Far from privileging the north and center as historic models of cooperation and reciprocity, Brucker argues that, rampant factionalism aside, an intrusive bureaucracy developed from the communal period onwards, with predatory methods “employed by every regime from Sicily to Piedmont.” This invasiveness “created a pernicious legacy for the future—a pervasive and deeply rooted distrust of, and hostility towards the state, its institutions, its operations, and its personnel” (pp. 38-39). Equally sobering is his assessment of the tenuous nature of Italian patriotism. “From Campanilismo to Nationhood” traces the slow and subtle growth of Italian identity within an exploitative and parochial world. Brucker’s fragile hope, in the essay’s conclusion, has yet to be realized: “When at some distant time in the future the inhabitants of Lombardy and Sicily feel that they are brothers, that they belong to the same community, then the terminus of that long and

tortuous route, first charted by Machiavelli, will have been reached” (p. 62).

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Mario Caciagli, *Regioni d’Europa. Devoluzioni, regionalismi, integrazione europea*

Bologna: il Mulino, 2003, pp. 212, ISBN 88-15-09352-4.

Una delle più significative innovazioni degli ultimi decenni che ha accomunato gli Stati europei è costituita senz’altro dalle riforme istituzionali che hanno devoluto poteri e risorse dal centro verso i livelli regionali di governo, cambiando in modo determinante l’architettura centralizzata degli Stati nazionali. Come sottolinea Mario Caciagli, l’emergere del *fait régional* nei Paesi europei ha trovato un maggiore impulso nel processo di integrazione europea che, a partire dal Trattato di Maastricht, con la creazione del Comitato delle Regioni, “ha preso una decisa curvatura regionalista” (p.10).

Il volume presenta un’attenta e documentata analisi del processo di regionalizzazione nei vari Paesi dell’Unione Europea, letto in relazione ad altri due processi paralleli: quello dell’europeizzazione, da un lato, e quello dell’emergere dei regionalismi dall’altro.

A proposito della regionalizzazione, l’analisi di Caciagli mette in luce come, nel XX secolo, si sia verificata una sostanziale convergenza dei modelli di organizzazione degli Stati dell’UE, frutto di devoluzioni che, in varie forme, dal decentramento alla federazione, e pur con tutte le significative differenze da Paese a Paese, hanno portato complessivamente al potenziamento dei livelli regionali di governo in Europa.

La regionalizzazione è stata inoltre ulteriormente potenziata dal processo di europeizzazione, grazie a una crescente consapevolezza dalle stesse regioni di poter giocare un ruolo significativo nella costruzione dello spazio pubblico europeo e dal loro attivismo esercitato attraverso diversi tipi di azioni, come le nuove forme di cooperazione interregionale

transfrontaliera (“integrazione orizzontale”) e la creazione di organismi di rappresentanza e di difesa degli interessi regionali, sia rispetto agli Stati centrali sia all’UE, come per esempio l’Assemblea delle Regioni d’Europa, ma anche gli Uffici di rappresentanza delle regioni a Bruxelles.

Inoltre, alcune *policies* dell’Unione Europea, come le politiche di coesione dei Fondi Strutturali, sono state orientate al potenziamento del livello regionale di *governance* e, al tempo stesso, hanno incentivato le azioni delle regioni europee volte al conseguimento dell’“integrazione verticale”, con l’obiettivo di ottenere dall’UE il riconoscimento di una rappresentanza istituzionale (Comitato delle Regioni).

Le argomentazioni di Caciagli aiutano a concludere che se è possibile sostenere che esiste un rapporto tra regionalizzazione e integrazione europea, è invece più problematico sostenere che il potenziamento dei poteri delle regioni vada di pari passo con il consolidamento del livello sovrastatale europeo di governo e a detrimento del potere degli stati-nazione. Come sottolinea bene l’autore, infatti, la dimensione del Terzo livello può essere intesa come un progetto politico-istituzionale di potenziamento del livello regionale di governo, tuttavia va ricordato che il ruolo politico di un Terzo livello “è ancora tutto in discussione”, mentre “il ruolo istituzionale di un Terzo livello non esiste proprio” (p.113). Allo stesso modo, la dimensione della *multi-level governance* è accettabile come schema interpretativo, utile per analizzare le dinamiche di implementazione di alcune *policies* europee, mentre come teoria politica attraverso cui definire una nuova forma di regolazione politica europea sembra essere, “a dir poco, prematura”.

Spostando l’analisi sull’emergere delle mobilitazioni regionaliste, la seconda parte del volume aiuta a chiarire in modo sintetico ed efficace le relazioni tra il processo di integrazione europea da un lato e, dall’altro, l’emergere dei regionalismi, intesi come riscoperta o affermazione di identità regionali, dotate di un forte sentimento di appartenenza territoriale.

L’analisi delle culture politiche regionali fa emergere un Europa “a macchia di leopardo”, sia

perché “la maggior parte degli stati europei è una somma di antiche piccole patrie” (p.121) che sono state solo in parte omologate dagli Stati nazionali; sia perché, anche dal punto di vista dello schieramento elettorale, i *cleavages* che hanno segnato il territorio continuano a lasciare traccia di sé facendo emergere nei vari Paesi europei zone caratterizzate da subculture politiche territoriali rosse e bianche (o nere). Alla fine del Secolo, la crisi delle subculture politiche territoriali superstiti, sfidate dai processi di secolarizzazione della vita politica e di trasformazioni dell’economia fordista, sembra accentuare in alcuni casi la componente regionalista, finendo con l’attribuire al territorio una valenza decisiva anche per la definizione dell’identità politica, spesso in simbiosi con altri elementi culturali primari, come la lingua e l’etnia.

In questo ambito un posto a parte viene occupato dai partiti regionalisti che, dopo l’emergere del *fait régional*, si sono moltiplicati e si trovano oggi in tutti i Paesi europei, anche in quelli candidati all’adesione. Se può essere utile distinguere, su una scala di minore o maggiore radicalismo delle richieste, tra partiti protezionisti, autonomisti, federalisti, indipendentisti e irredentisti, dal punto di vista del modello organizzativo va ricordato, invece, che ci troviamo di fronte a veri e propri piccoli partiti di integrazione di massa che, tranne in quei pochi casi in cui assumono le posizioni radicali estreme di un “nazionalismo escludente”, tendono in genere a presentarsi come partiti di mediazione e di integrazione fra le classi.

Nelle elezioni europee questi partiti tendono ad ottenere risultati relativamente migliori, anche se l’aspetto di maggiore debolezza resta quello di una debole e frammentata rappresentanza politica degli interessi regionali, che non riesce a trovare espressione in un gruppo parlamentare unitario.

A fronte del grande attivismo sviluppato dalle regioni sulla scena politica europea, forti rimangono infatti le differenze che dividono ancora oggi le regioni tra loro: sul piano istituzionale, in relazione al diverso assetto costituzionale dello Stato a cui appartengono; sul piano demografico e delle dimensioni geografiche; per eredità storiche e robustezza

delle identità locali e, soprattutto, per differenze economiche, tassi di occupazione e livelli produttivi. Così, se è vero che “le regioni forti possono influenzare il loro stato-nazione e avere successo a Bruxelles”, è vero anche che “le regioni deboli hanno bisogno del loro stato-nazione” per essere rappresentate (p.207). Per tali ragioni, più che ad un’Europa delle regioni, si pensa oggi ad un’Europa *con* le regioni, articolata cioè come “una rete, non necessariamente gerarchica, di attori diversi, attori sovrastatali, statali, regionali e locali” (p.211). Un modello architettonico originale, in cui “i soggetti della modernizzazione sopranazionali possono coesistere in modo armonico con i soggetti della tradizione quali sono le regioni” (p.211).

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Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert, *The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics*

Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 204, ISBN 0333750683.

The Lega Nord and the Northern Question in Italian Politics by Anna Cento Bull and Mark Gilbert is more than just an excellent study of the Lega Nord. Bull and Gilbert’s very fine scholarship is also an examination of economy, politics, and culture, while, at the same time serving as a model for researching a political party. The authors, employing what they refer to as a structure/ agency approach, successfully highlight the socio-economic and political context which gave rise to the Lega Nord. Taking the political platform and the ideology of a party and the “voice” of its supporters seriously, they convincingly trace the evolution of the Lega from its conception until the 2001 election.

Chapters One and Three entitled “The Lega Nord and the Crisis of the Italian State” and “The Electorate of the Lega Nord: a socio-economic and Territorial Constituency” represent particularly excellent examples of how to contextualize a political party within its

political and economic environment. Chapter One demonstrates how the Lega successfully attacked the post-war party system through its populist, anti-establishment message, and thereby mobilizing ex-DC voters who were freed up by the fall of communism to vote for a new political party. Chapter Three demonstrates how the economic challenges of the “white” Third Italy, the new motor of the post-Fordist economy, challenged not only the post-war political consensus, but also the political and economic hegemony of Fordism. To be sure, this story has been told before. But clarity and tangible links between culture, economy, politics, and history make their approach refreshing. For example, unlike approaches that reduce post-war Italian politics to mere “horse trading” and “pork barreling”, they correctly point out that not only political corruption, but also the end of Christian Democratic ideology contributed to the success of the Lega. They also give concrete examples of how the socio-economic, cultural, and political make up of the urbanized countryside of the white Third Italy created fertile ground for the party’s ideology and its populism.

The authors present us with an excellent chapter on the various approaches to the study of the Lega. They argue that the dominant approaches to date only get part of the story right. This is due in part to the enigmatic nature of the Lega Nord, but it is also due to the inadequacies of the approaches themselves. Early attempts to classify the Lega as merely a protest party against Rome miss the importance of its ideology. Those who focus on the party as a populist party end up treating supporters too much as an electoral mass, thus not explaining why voters actually support Bossi. Those who treat the party as a new political subculture overlook the ability of the actions and the ideology of the Lega to rework the political imagination. The ethno-regional approach is also not sufficient, since the Lega cannot be classified as a traditional sub-national movement. Finally, the entrepreneurial approach focuses too much on the party as merely an instrumental vote accumulator.

Against the background of the insufficiency of these various approaches, Bull and Gilberts’ structure/ agency approach places the Lega

within its socio-economic context, much like the subcultural approach, while emphasizing the importance of the actions of the party, its leader and its political ideology. This nuanced approach allows them to focus on why the ideas and actions of the party make sense to voters: thus, not writing support off as mere “false-consciousness.”

Although Bull and Gilbert’s approach is to be fully commended, I will disagree with their seemingly reluctance to place the emergence and the evolution of the Lega squarely within the evolution of other radical right populist parties in Europe. The authors do state that for the last ten years, since 1995, the Lega should be considered a radical right party. However, I would argue that the roots of radical right populism reaches further back, and that the evolution of the Lega does not, in fact, differ radically from the evolution of other radical right populist parties. This omission, I would argue, occurs since two points are not sufficiently stressed: 1) There is not enough emphasis on how radical right populism differs from fascism and neo-fascism; 2) The importance of post-war radical right thinkers such as Alain de Benoist and the La Nouvelle Droite are overlooked. This is especially important for linking federalism with the radical right. Alberto Spektorowski, correctly in my opinion, argues that the Lega represents the best example of the political application of the ideas of La Nouvelle Droite (1).

Nevertheless, this study of the Lega should interest Italian and radical right scholar alike. As the authors emphasize, political movements such as the Lega must be taken seriously since they often bring “uncomfortable” political issues to our attention. As “liberals” we may not agree with what or how they say it, but it is important not to write the parties off as mere products and consequences of the work of ideologues who “doop” voters. This is true in Italy and in the rest of Europe.

(1) Alberto Spektorowski’s ‘Ethnoregionalism: The Intellectual New Right and the Lega Nord’, *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. II, no. 3-4, March/June 2003.

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Maurizio Degl’Innocenti, *L’avvento della Regione. 1970-1975. Problemi e materiali.*

Manduria-Bari-Roma: Piero Lacaita Editore, 2004, pp. 362, ISBN 88-88546-48-0.

Com’è noto, in Italia la regionalizzazione dello Stato, voluta dalla Costituzione, è iniziata con venti anni di ritardo ed ha proceduto con notevole lentezza, rimanendo per molti aspetti incompleta anche dopo che, nel 1970, le Regioni erano finalmente nate. Solo a partire dagli anni Novanta il processo di regionalizzazione ha conosciuto una repentina e impreveduta accelerazione (all’interno di un più vasto processo di decentramento dei poteri e di rafforzamento delle Autonomie locali), in conseguenza dell’esplosione del fenomeno leghista, effetto a sua volta della crisi del sistema politico-partitico della Prima Repubblica.

Con questo denso volume, Maurizio Degl’Innocenti, professore di Storia contemporanea all’Università di Siena, ci porta alle origini di quel processo, offrendo al lettore una corposa mole di materiale documentario e una dettagliata analisi del lungo dibattito politico e del tormentato iter istituzionale. I primi due capitoli ricostruiscono le vicende che – dalla discussione tra i partiti in seno all’Assemblea costituente fino all’«accelerazione regionalista» prodotta dai governi di centro-sinistra soprattutto per volontà del PSI – hanno portato, con le elezioni del 6-7 giugno 1970, al varo delle 15 Regioni a statuto ordinario. I capitoli successivi, dal terzo al sesto, analizzano la formazione e la costruzione effettiva della Regione, negli anni cruciali per definirne la fisionomia e che comprendono tutto il corso della prima legislatura (1970-75) e l’avvio della seconda, fino al varo dei decreti presidenziali 616 e 617 del 1977, indispensabili, anche se tardivi, per completare il trasferimento dei poteri statali. Infine, negli ultimi tre capitoli l’autore propone una verifica «a campione» della coerenza tra i propositi dichiarati all’avvio delle Regioni e l’implementazione realizzata. Lo fa prendendo in esame il caso di una sola Regione, la Toscana, della quale ricostruisce, sulla base dei documenti e delle leggi approvate nel primo quinquennio di vita, l’azione di governo effettivamente sviluppata in tre settori caratterizzanti, quali la

programmazione dello sviluppo economico, le società finanziarie regionali e gli interventi per l'ambiente e il territorio.

L'autore distingue tre fasi del lungo processo di formazione della Regione. La prima fase del «cantiere regionale» fu di preparazione, si sviluppò nel corso degli anni Sessanta ed ebbe i suoi momenti cardine, da un lato, nella costituzione dei Comitati regionali per la programmazione economica (CRPE), strumento tecnico consultivo decentrato del Ministero del Bilancio (ministero che fu sempre feudo socialista, nei governi di centro-sinistra: fu soprattutto attraverso l'azione di questi Comitati che la funzione programmatoria divenne uno dei pilastri delle costituende Regioni). Dall'altro, con l'approvazione delle due leggi (108/1968 e 281/1970) che vararono il nuovo ente intermedio e portarono alle prime elezioni regionali. La seconda può essere identificata come la fase costituente vera e propria: dall'entrata in funzione degli organi elettivi all'approvazione degli statuti fino ai decreti di trasferimento delle funzioni da parte dello Stato, nell'aprile del 1972. Le Regioni erano insediate ma non avevano ancora una reale capacità operativa, frenate dalle resistenze della burocrazia ministeriale non meno che di ampi settori della politica nazionale e dello stesso governo. Solo nella terza fase del cantiere, dal 1973 al 1975, le Regioni acquisirono capacità di spesa e divennero concretamente operanti, anche se l'azione effettiva di governo poté dispiegarsi solo con l'avvio della seconda legislatura.

La costruzione delle Regioni a statuto ordinario fu un'operazione politica ed istituzionale segnata da incertezze e contraddizioni, molto travagliata e molto complessa. L'autore polemizza con l'interpretazione «minimalista» (sostenuta da Robert Putnam e da altri) e con quanti considerano l'avvento della Regione soprattutto come un'occasione mancata dai governi di centro-sinistra per introdurre una più adeguata capacità di risposta nel sistema politico italiano. Degl'Innocenti ricorda che le Regioni sono nate deboli non solo per motivi di politica interna (la crisi della formula di governo e le divisioni interne ai partiti) ma soprattutto per cause legate a dinamiche economiche sovranazionali. Le Regioni volevano farsi strumento di una prospettiva di sviluppo e di modernizzazione del

Paese ma, varate con troppo ritardo, quando cominciarono effettivamente ad operare, dopo il 1973, la prospettiva di crescita economica dentro cui erano state pensate era ormai tramontata: la fase cruciale e culminante del loro insediamento «coincise con la svolta epocale determinata dalla crisi energetica e del cosiddetto fordismo, e con la fine ingloriosa della programmazione. Le due premesse fondamentali, sulle quali era fondato il disegno di sviluppo e di riequilibrio territoriale e sociale, vennero meno, mentre ancora si lavorava alla costruzione del nuovo edificio» (p. 334).

In sintesi, il volume risente indubbiamente della disomogeneità del materiale preparatorio utilizzato (segnalata anche dall'autore, nella premessa), ma offre comunque interessanti approfondimenti analitici. Il ricco materiale documentario (in parte mai esplorato prima, come le carte della Direzione del PSI inerenti alle Autonomie regionali, conservate presso la Fondazione Turati) è stimolante e meriterebbe una sintesi interpretativa originale, in particolare, intorno a quelli che l'autore stesso indica come i tre principali nodi tematici sollevati dall'introduzione della rappresentanza regionale nel sistema politico: la nuova dimensione dei rapporti tra centro e periferia, i cambiamenti introdotti nella forma-partito e le questioni legate all'identità e alla prassi amministrativa delle Regioni. Su questi aspetti, a suo parere, non si è finora concentrata a sufficienza l'attenzione degli studiosi e sono ancora troppo poche le analisi valide condotte «su basi sistematiche e comparative».

Infine, il recensore non può esimersi dall'osservare che al volume avrebbero giovato sia una maggiore cura redazionale, ad evitare imprecisioni e refusi (diversi nomi di autori o uomini politici sono sbagliati), che uno snellimento e il taglio di frequenti ripetizioni.

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Ilaria Favretto, *The Long Search for a Third Way: The British Labour Party and the Italian Left Since 1945*. New York:

Palgrave, 2003, pp. 233, ISBN 0-333-97714-9.

Ilaria Favretto has written a rich, well-documented study of the Italian and British socialist parties. Drawing from a series of party papers and publications, electoral data, oral interviews, and archival documents, Favretto weaves a compelling story of the evolution of the British Labour Party and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) from the early postwar years into the 1990s. Her two principal theses are that, first, Labour and the PSI converged on a common political agenda during the 1960s and, second, that the 1990s ushered in a new period of homogenization between Labour and the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) (later renamed the Democrats of the Left—DS). Favretto uses the term “revisionism” to encompass the changes in party positions during these periods.

This book’s greatest strength is its demonstration of what too many contemporary commentators on leftist politics assume but rarely show: that the left has departed from what used to be its historic mission. As the author writes in her conclusion, the modern Labour Party and the PDS/DS now see capitalism as a force to be harnessed and even encouraged, but not overthrown. In this respect, while it may be true that disgruntled leftists exaggerate when they call modern, “Third Way” Labour a variant of Thatcherism, I would have found it more impressive if Favretto had taken the time to demonstrate these differences. Indeed, much of the penultimate section, “Moving to the Center” makes contemporary Labour seem quite bourgeois, if not Thatcherite. The overhaul of Labour’s image that the author describes in this chapter—including the switch from Labour to “New Labour,” more businesslike attire for party elites, more glamorous houses and sets for electoral broadcasts, and a new home for the party congress in middle-class Brighton—suggests a very different way of appealing to voters than the more proletarian images that Labour used to favor.

This matter of party image and philosophy—the heart of Favretto’s book—points to a problem that goes unresolved by the end of the text.

Favretto claims from the outset that her primary methodological assumption is that socialist party revisionism needs to be explained in a manner that accounts for both strategic, “rational actor” considerations and the socialists’ intellectual milieu. Since recent literature deals with “high politics,” this book, which focuses on philosophies and debates around socialism at the expense of electoral competition, is meant as a corrective. While I doubt that the author would disagree with the idea that these two realms of analysis interact with each other, she does not pursue the implications of this claim in a systematic way. To her credit, in the “Moving to the Center” chapter, Favretto provides a discussion of the contemporary changes in working-class political participation and “middle-classisation” in European politics. This chapter provides the clearest demonstration in the entire text of how strategic and socio-economic variables interacted with political ideas. Something like this discussion would have been a useful way to enrich her elaboration of the first thesis.

That being said, Favretto does not let the reader forget that these parties’ convergence in the 1960s and 1990s must be considered alongside the structural differences of the party systems in which they competed. The PSI always had a mighty Communist Party to compete with on the left and the reality of a political system in which coalition government was the norm, while Labour’s competitive environment was shaped by two main opponents and elections in which the winner takes all. The author is wise not to exaggerate the similarities between Labour and the PSI. While both socialist parties were concerned with modernization during the 1950s and 1960s, Labour’s modernity had always had a technocratic tinge to it. Italian socialism, on the other hand, understood modernization as playing economic catch-up with the rest of industrialized Western Europe.

In the end, Favretto’s book is a valuable addition to the literature on the political left in Europe. The author’s comparative perspective and sensitivity to socio-economic context make the revisionisms of the immediate postwar and post-Cold War periods more understandable. For these reasons, along with its conciseness and the richness of the primary data, *The Long Search*

for a Third Way is a welcome contribution to the ongoing debate about the future of socialist politics.

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Paul Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi - Television, Power and Patrimony*,
New York: Verso, 2004, pp. 195, ISBN 1844675416.

Il 26 gennaio del 1994 il tycoon italiano della televisione, Silvio Berlusconi, fa inviare a tutti i mezzi di comunicazione la registrazione video di un suo discorso di nove minuti e ventiquattro secondi, in cui annuncia la sua "discesa in campo". Tre mesi dopo vince le elezioni e diventa presidente del Consiglio dei ministri: apparentemente la più veloce scalata al potere nella storia d'Italia e probabilmente di tutte le democrazie occidentali. In realtà Berlusconi aveva una lunga storia alle spalle, anche di fitti rapporti politici; ma l'evento fu senza dubbio improvviso e anche traumatico per la storia italiana. Da allora sono passati più di undici anni e mezzo, un tempo quasi equivalente all'intera durata del regime nazista in Germania. Ma Berlusconi si presenta ancora come un outsider rispetto al sistema politico e la sua identità risulta ancora difficile da capire per la maggior parte degli osservatori politici internazionali, per non parlare dell'elettorato italiano.

Per questa ragione risulta molto utile il piccolo libro che Paul Ginsborg ha dedicato alla sua biografia (*Silvio Berlusconi - Television, Power and Patrimony*, Verso 2004). I libri su Berlusconi non mancano, ma sono quasi tutti in italiano e hanno una struttura polemica molto esplicita, in genere usando documenti tratti dai vari processi in cui è coinvolto il leader per dimostrarne attività di corruzione politica e giudiziaria, rapporti con la mafia e così via. Ginsborg espone tutti i dubbi e gli episodi non chiariti che gettano gravi sospetti sulla figura di Berlusconi, ma si pone problemi più generali. Cerca cioè di far capire i meccanismi per cui una persona come lui ha preso il controllo della politica italiana, quali sono le conseguenze di

questo fatto per la vita pubblica di un paese avanzato come l'Italia e si chiede se la conquista del potere da parte di un impresario dei media possa realizzarsi anche altrove, come un passaggio caratteristico di un'involuzione postmoderna della democrazia.

Sarebbe inutile guardare il libro di Ginsborg come a un'inchiesta che aggiunge nuove rivelazioni ai numerosi scandali che hanno circondato in questi anni la figura del capo del governo italiano. Piuttosto si tratta di un bilancio, sobrio e documentato: proprio per l'abbondanza delle rivelazioni e degli accertamenti giudiziari che si sono succeduti in questi anni, il riassunto biografico di Ginsborg può risultare molto istruttivo e perfino sconcertante a un lettore non familiare con la politica italiana. Dal punto di vista storico però quel che conta non è tanto che ci facesse un noto e pericoloso capomafia assunto come "stalliere" nella villa di Berlusconi quando già questi era uno degli uomini più ricchi d'Italia o da dove siano venute le risorse che, permettendogli una brillante carriera di costruttore edile, hanno fondato la ricchezza sua e del suo gruppo: risorse nascoste dietro una complicatissima struttura di società, che la magistratura non è mai riuscita a penetrare.

E' più importante capire quali siano state le condizioni che hanno permesso a Berlusconi di costruire il suo potere, se questo potere possa durare e se queste circostanze si possano ripresentare altrove. Per questa ragione sono particolarmente significativi i confronti critici che Ginsborg tenta con altre situazioni che presentano elementi di analogia (per esempio i casi di Bernard Tapie in Francia, del premier thailandese Thaksin Shinawatra, di Rupert Murdoch e del sindaco di New York Mike Bloomberg) e con la storia recente italiana. Interessante anche l'analisi dell'incomprensione e dell'insipienza che ha reso debole l'opposizione. Ne viene fuori con chiarezza che l'anomalia di Berlusconi, il carattere folkloristico di certi suoi comportamenti e quello eticamente e giuridicamente ambiguo di molti altri, la mescolanza continua di azione politica e interesse privato non sono tanto un caso personale isolato quanto il risultato della sovrapposizione di un modello familistico e patrimoniale profondamente radicato nella

società italiana con il cambiamento del ruolo dei mezzi di comunicazione di massa nelle democrazie occidentali.

Oltre che una biografia tradizionale, dunque, sia pur ricca di episodi e aneddoti interessanti e rivelatori, il libro di Ginsburg va letto come un saggio sulla fragilità della democrazia nel nostro tempo. Scritto da un intellettuale impegnato nella politica italiana e certamente avversario politico di Berlusconi, questo lavoro non è però affatto riconducibile polemica politica, anche grazie alla nota competenza storica dell'autore. Nel momento in cui si prospetta la possibilità della fine dell'avventura politica di Berlusconi (ma nessuno potrebbe esserne certo oggi), questo saggio ci invita a non considerarla un caso o un infortunio della democrazia italiana, ma a capire che le sue ragioni restano ben presenti nella società.

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Paolo Graziano, *Europeizzazione e politiche pubbliche italiane. Coesione e lavoro a confronto*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004, pp. 246, ISBN 88-420-6794-6.

During the last years, the concept of Europeanization has been used also in Italy in order to explain the institutional and policy changes which had taken place during the '90s. Unlike political scientists from other countries, Italian scholars tend to use this concept in a generic sense, referring to the influence of the European Union on national politics and policy reforms. Paolo Graziano's book is an exception: he refers to the concept in a more analytic and rigorous way. He defines Europeanization as a "process of supranational institution-building, (formal and informal) rules and public policies at the European level, as well as their *diffusion* in the European national political system" (p.17, emphasis in the original). This is why this book is relevant: it discusses the different definitions of Europeanization, trying to clarify the concept for an Italian reader and "clean" it from redundancies characterizing the international

literature (chapter 1). In so doing, the theoretical framework appears very clear.

The book stems from two assumptions: "adaptive policy pressures will increase in relation to the misfit of the policy taken into account;... in cases of misfit, adaptive pressures will be bigger proportionally to the binding nature of the normative sources of public policy" (p. 187-8). These two assumptions are at the origin of the hypothesis the Author tests with great precision: "in case of policy incongruence and any particularly binding source of the policy under consideration, policy transformation along specific institutional effects is likely; in case the policy nature is not particularly binding, policy absorption with limited institutional effects is likely" (p. 188).

Indeed, Europeanization takes automatically place in any case: "adaptation will depend on the existence of political-institutional and social actors, specific supporting coalitions and «facilitating» formal institutions" (p. 189). The first two factors are the most relevant. In fact, if cohesion policy and labour policy show different degrees of Europeanization, this is also due to the different constellations of actors involved, bigger and stable in the first case, more limited and less stable in the second.

These theoretical elements are paralleled by an articulated research design. Paolo Graziano compares the Europeanization of two policies: cohesion and labour. This choice is not random: the two policies are closely connected. As far as cohesion policy is concerned, there are several political interventions aiming at an improvement of the opportunity for employed and unemployed people. But, if cohesion policy represents a hard law case, labour policy is based on the typical soft law instruments. In his research project, Graziano looks first at the settings (objectives, principles, instruments and procedures) of the two European policies (chapter 2); second, he looks at their impact on the national public policies (chapters 3 and 4); and, finally, he considers their implementation at regional level (chapter 5). For this purpose, Graziano reconstructs the institutional effects of Europeanization in four regions (Basilicata, Calabria, Campania e Puglia), showing the different ways in which this process has been interpreted. Because of the complexity of the

research design, the reading of the book is not always easy. However, the book clearly shows the interconnections between different institutional levels (supranational, national and subnational) as well as the explicative factors accounting for different Europeanization effects. Last (but not the least), it accounts for the impact of Europeanization on institutions in the Italian political system: “strengthening of the periphery (the regions) vis-à-vis the centre (the national government); strengthening of interest groups vis-à-vis political parties; changes in administrative behaviour, which is increasingly devoted to the achievement of a goal more than to the formal validation of administrative acts” (p. 212-3).

Finally, there is a third reason which makes this book particularly interesting: the fact that it is based on rigorous empirical fieldwork. During his research, the Author has interviewed more than fifty officers and European, national and regional interests representatives, producing a huge number of original and relevant information. This makes the book “concrete”, and offers the reader a “view from inside” the institutions affected by a profound and important period of reform.

In conclusion, Paolo Graziano’s book is important for its analytic precision, the ambition of its research design and the synthesis between empirical and theoretical elements. This book is a meaningful contribution to the understanding of the institutional and policy changes which Italy had to cope with during the ’90s. Two questions remains under-investigated: is Europeanization an inevitable process? Is it irreversible? The author deliberately does not answer this question, leaving a new research agenda open. Maybe, Graziano could answer to the first question (contextualising the image widespread even among Italian scholars) of a country constantly obliged to live under the emergence imposed by the *vincolo esterno*.

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