

the multiple ways in which members of the popular classes stigmatise the Camorra's presence in their neighbourhoods. Pine goes one step further to examine how participants in the neomelodica scene enter into contact with organised crime and critically negotiate its impact on the industry.

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**Il partito provvisorio. Storia del PSIUP nel lungo Sessantotto italiano**, by Aldo Agosti, Rome–Bari, Laterza, 2013, 296 pp., €25.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-581-0838-3

Aldo Agosti's book concerns the history of one of the lesser-known and least studied post-war Italian political parties: the PSIUP (Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria/Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity). The PSIUP was established in January 1964 by a group of cadres and MPs belonging to the so-called *sinistra socialista*. These were left-wingers from the PSI (Partito Socialista Italiano/Italian Socialist Party) who had rejected the party's decision to endorse the so-called *centrosinistra* and participate in a government coalition with the DC (Democrazia Cristiana/Christian Democrats). The PSIUP lasted just eight and a half years, of which the last two were characterised by a progressive and inexorable decadence. Given its short lifespan and the modest results it achieved in the few elections it fought, the history of the PSIUP would appear to be suitable material for a journal article, or for an essay in an edited collection, rather than for a book. However, Agosti convincingly explains his decision to devote more coverage to this small but pugnacious socialist party by arguing that its history sheds light on a variety of issues with respect to post-war Italian history, in particular *il lungo sessantotto italiano*.

The research is primarily based on the PSIUP's archive, which is analysed here for the first time. Agosti has consulted printed sources too, above all *Mondo Nuovo*, the journal of culture and politics of the PSIUP. As a leading authority on the history of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) – the British historical community probably knows him for his impressive biography of the PCI leader Palmiro Togliatti – it is not surprising that Agosti also quotes frequently from documents held in the PCI archive, housed (along with the PSIUP archive) in the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome.

Agosti argues that the decision by the *sinistra socialista* to split the PSI on the eve of its participation in national government – an opportunity denied to the party since 1947 – was ultimately consistent with the history of the PSI itself. In fact, this was the legacy of the political doctrine known as *massimalismo*. Postulating the refusal of compromises and alliances which would make the party divert, even momentarily, from its ultimate goal to create a socialist society in Italy, *massimalismo* had exerted, since 1919, a continuing fascination on a consistent part of both the party's leadership and its constituency. In its post-war manifestation, *massimalismo* entailed cooperation with the PCI and solidarity with the Eastern European socialist regimes. According to left-wing socialists, these cornerstones would secure the PSI's class nature and save the party from the ever-present temptation of choosing a social democratic option. This explains why the socialist left could not accept to be in government with the DC, an inter-classist party which had cast itself as fundamentally anti-communist.

The PSIUP attracted reasonable, albeit geographically uneven, support at grassroots level in the months following its creation, and around 100 local sections were established. A few well-respected political personalities, such as Emilio Lussu, Vittorio Foa, Dario Valori, Lucio Libertini and the soon to be leader of the party Tullio Vecchiotti were among the founders of the PSIUP. Other famous intellectuals, such as Alberto Asor Rosa, would join the party at some point in the course of its brief history. The presence of these intellectuals and thinkers could have made the PSIUP an ideal environment for political experimentation. This, however, was not the case. In this respect, Agosti claims that the new party was beset by two inherent problems from the outset: the party's authoritarian leadership style, and its dependence on Soviet funding. The former would prevent the PSIUP from fulfilling its putative role as representative of that broad and heterogeneous left-wing archipelago formed in the late 1960s due to disaffection with both mainstream communist and socialist policies. The latter affected the party's autonomy in the crucial matter of foreign policy.

The PSIUP had its moment of glory in the national elections of 1968 when the party won 4.5 per cent of the vote. This was principally due to the disappointment of many socialist militants in the creation in 1966 of the PSU (Partito Socialista Unificato/United Socialist Party), by the PSI and the social democratic PSDI (Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano). The PSIUP's positive electoral result was also, to some extent, the outcome of the fascination exerted by the party's 'ideological rigour' on many students involved in the so-called *contestazione*, namely the student revolts spreading in universities and secondary schools from 1967. Shortly after those elections, however, the PSIUP's credibility suffered a fatal blow when the party's leadership endorsed the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. That improvident decision, following which the PSIUP's militants were given the nickname of *carristi* (tank drivers), was the price paid for Soviet financial support. From 1969, the crisis of the PSIUP became evident: the leadership lacked a clear strategic direction, while at the grassroots level the party was, in Agosti's words, 'lively but fragmented'. The fourth and last congress of the PSIUP, in July 1972, concluded the anomalous existence of this 'temporary party' (*partito provvisorio*), as politician and historian Gaetano Arfé had defined the PSIUP in 1968, and symbolically closed the *lungo sessantotto italiano*. With regard to the PCI–PSIUP relationship, Agosti claims that the PCI opposed the secession of the socialist left from the PSI, judging it counterproductive with respect to the Italian workers movement's interests. The PCI, however, supported the PSIUP once it was established and, after its dissolution, offered political shelter to many former party cadres and militants. Around two-thirds of them chose to join the PCI; others would be among the founders of minor leftist political parties such as the PDUP (Partito di Unità Proletaria/Party of Proletarian Unity) and DP (Democrazia Proletaria/Proletarian Democracy).

The book is very well written and extremely informative. Its principal and perhaps only shortcoming is that it fails to discuss the social impact of PSIUP policy at the local level and provides little information on the party's grassroots organisations. Agosti, though, is aware of these limitations, justifying the lack of coverage on the grounds of insufficient documentary evidence.

*Il partito provvisorio* will be of great interest to researchers in modern Italian history generally and essential reading for those studying Italian post-war party politics.

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