Modern Italy

ISSN: 1353-2944 (Print) 1469-9877 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cmit20

Through partisan eyes: my friendships, literary education, and political encounters in Italy (1956–2013)

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To cite this article: Alexander De Grand (2015) Through partisan eyes: my friendships, literary education, and political encounters in Italy (1956–2013), Modern Italy, 20:4, 444-446, DOI: 10.1080/13532944.2015.1080956

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2015.1080956

Published online: 29 Sep 2015.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1353294400014903 Published online by Cambridge University Press

political parlance and their avulsion from the popular masses. Their political naivety and failure to understand the paramount importance of bridging the divide between the intellectual elites and the popular classes, Cuoco explains, made them incapable of transforming a 'passive revolution' into an 'active' one, leading inevitably to the Republic's downfall. This divide in Cuoco becomes an anthropological distance: '[the] Neapolitan nation was split into two peoples, separated by two centuries in terms of history and two degrees in terms of climate' (p. 91). It is debatable, however, that '[the] Neapolitan republic had shown itself to be lamentably lacking in political realism' (p. xxx). The republicans were acutely aware of what Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel referred to as the 'line of demarcation' that separated the people from the revolutionary elites, and various initiatives attempted to overcome this major obstacle. Cuoco himself recalls the indefatigable efforts of the revolutionaries to legislate and introduce ameliorations. The Republic, however, lasted a mere five months and reforms were never implemented, thus failing to benefit the Neapolitan people.

David Gibbons has skilfully translated this edition. While one can quibble over some of the vocabulary, he has managed to produce a highly accessible text. Additionally, the edition is annotated with helpful explanatory notes, includes a brief résumé of the main events in Cuoco's life, and contains a comprehensive bibliography and index.

The chapters covering the tragic final events of the Republic make sobering reading. Over 100 republicans were condemned to death. Hundreds more suffered life imprisonment, banishment or exile from the kingdom. Despite this hecatomb – which deprived Naples of almost an entire generation of its most promising intellectuals – in 1820–1821 the kingdom was once more the theatre of a revolution and it was again in Naples that an advanced and democratic constitutional experiment took place.

A short review can barely do justice to the complexity and lasting influence of the *Saggio*. Giuseppe Mazzini spoke highly of the ideological significance of the 1799 Neapolitan revolution and the need to educate popular conscience to strive for liberty, equality and independence, while Alessandro Manzoni recognised in Cuoco a precursor of the concepts that liberty was unattainable without national unity and that political unity was a precondition of cultural, economic and social advancement.

Cuoco's political standing and ideas, especially his emphasis on the need to secure popular participation and conscious involvement, still resonate today, and no doubt will continue to nurture academic debate. The *Saggio* has lost none of its poignancy and remains both a classic of Italian historiography and a landmark in the history of political thought.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2015.1101208

Through partisan eyes: my friendships, literary education, and political encounters in Italy (1956–2013), by Frank Rosengarten, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2014, xvii + 207 pp., €29.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-6655-567-4

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1353294400014903 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Frank Rosengarten was an academic of enormous intellectual curiosity; his research subjects and his approach were shaped by his political commitments. He was part of a generation of scholars who were drawn to the study of literature, history and political thought by their engagement with the struggle against Fascism and Nazism. In the Italian context, this meant the antifascist struggle in which the Communist and Socialist parties and the Soviet Union played key roles. If he had lived a bit earlier, he might have been a strong proponent of the united front against the fascist dictatorships. Even during the worst days of the Cold War, Rosengarten held firm to the belief that something positive could emerge out of the Soviet experience. As late as the 1980s he placed his hopes in the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev. This basic political commitment to a US–USSR understanding put him at odds with Cold War America. Despite many disillusionments and his own deep commitment to democratic socialism, he remained faithful to an ideal of peaceful coexistence between the Soviet Union and the United States. In the Italian context, he was drawn to the Italian Communist Party as the best hope for positive social change in Italy. Probably his closest American counterpart was his friend and fellow Gramsci scholar, John Cammett.

This memoir, which seems to have been written when he knew that he was fighting a losing battle with cancer, is an engaging and forthright recounting of his intellectual and political engagements that began in the mid-1950s with his dissertation work on Vasco Pratolini, the Florentine novelist who migrated from a commitment to Fascism in the 1930s to the Resistance and the Communist Party during and after the Second World War. For someone of my generation (I arrived in Italy for dissertation work about 10 years after Rosengarten's first trip) Rosengarten's recollections of what it was like living and doing research in Italy in the late 1950s and 1960s, and the friendly reception that he received from Italian scholars, former members of the Resistance, and ordinary people at whose houses he stayed certainly resonated. Almost naturally, he identified with the struggles to bring about social and political change in Italy and found parallels in the late 1960s between the Italian left and the growing American resistance to the Vietnamese war.

From his work on Pratolini, Rosengarten moved easily to his important research on the anti-fascist press and on Silvio Trentin, the socialist Resistance leader, who operated from his outpost as a bookseller in Toulouse, France. Rosengarten maintained a lifelong friendship with Trentin's children, Giorgio, Franca and Bruno, who were themselves engaged in Italian political life as members of the Italian Communist Party. He also got to know Ada and Paolo Gobetti, Emilio Lussu, Fausto Nitti, and other members of the interwar Justice and Liberty movement. It was one of the nicer attributes of Rosengarten's personality that he seemed to accumulate lasting friendships with each of his projects.

It was not a long leap from Trentin to Antonio Gramsci in the 1980s, whose life and writings occupied Rosengarten off and on for the rest of his life. During the 1980s and early 1990s he was also engaged with the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy, which he helped found, and with the journal *Socialism and Democracy*. Those same years were taken up by trying to understand the meaning of the profound crisis of the Soviet Union and of socialism in general which culminated in the collapse of the USSR and the dissolution of the Italian Communist Party, a move that Rosengarten and many others felt was premature and incomprehensible.

Rosengarten retired from teaching in 1992 but his scholarly life continued, albeit in a surprising new direction. In his mid-sixties, he embarked on a second doctorate in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1353294400014903 Published online by Cambridge University Press

French literature, which he completed eight years later with a dissertation on the writings of the young Marcel Proust. How he managed to move from college professor to graduate student is almost inconceivable. He remained amazingly productive right to the end with books on the Trinidadian thinker C. L. R. James, on the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, and on Antonio Gramsci.

All and all, it was a remarkable life told quite frankly with the good and the bad, mainly a prolonged bout of alcoholism that was cured by joining Alcoholics Anonymous in 1971. It is hard to say how younger historians, or even those of Rosengarten's generation who were not as motivated politically, will receive this memoir. Rosengarten remained committed right up to the end to the values and ideals that he adopted as a young man. He kept the faith and these days that says a lot.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2015.1080956

Mussolini's Dream Factory: Film Stardom in Fascist Italy, by Stephen Gundle, New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2013, 320 pp, £75.00 (hardback), 978-1-78238-244-7

As I ventured into this rich and inspiring book, two images kept coming to mind. The first was an advertisement for the film studios at Cinecittà, in the September 1940 issue of *Cinema*, in which a glamorous woman of colossal proportions – with plucked eyebrows, wavy hair above the shoulders and a fashionable gown both chaste and suggestive – towers over the Studios 'so that Fascist Italy can spread throughout the world more rapidly the light of Rome's civilization'. The second is a moment from the ending of Luchino Visconti's *Bellissima* (1952) in which Anna Magnani – in her husband's arms after a narrow escape from the clutches of fame and corruption – hears the open-air screening in the courtyard outside: '*o senti ni'? Burt Lancaster. Quant'e' simpatico!*' On the one hand, the peculiar and rather disturbing cinematic hybrid of *Marianne* and Leviathan epitomises the Fascist state's control of the industry, not least through its stars; on the other, the inescapable appeal of the film star foregrounds the paradox of fandom and spectatorship as simultaneous suspension of the self and retention of agency.

The success of *Mussolini's Dream Factory* rests not only on Stephen Gundle's intimate understanding of the film industry and its star system, but also on his grasp and care for the role that domesticity plays in fandom. In that particular respect, chapter 4, 'The Public and the Stars', might well form the basis for a work dedicated to spectatorship in Fascist Italy. The ability to manage the complexities of the statestarfan relationship, on the one hand, and of popular culture and history, on the other, sets this book apart from the start. In explaining the genesis of the project, Gundle laments disciplinary conventions and the self-imposed boundaries that have many historians ignore cinema altogether and that, conversely, see many film scholars concentrate on the text as though it existed in

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