Mario Draghi (Lucia Quaglia); the suspension of the economic liberalisation drive (Andrea Boitani); the continuing fiscal decentralisation process (which would culminate in 2009; Massimo Bordignon and Gilberto Turati); the welfare policies of the cabinet (Massimo Baldini and Paolo Bosi); the relatively new issue of civil unions and same-sex marriage (Luigi Ceccarini); and the sense of insecurity shared by a significant part of an ageing middle- and lower class population (Laura Sartori).

Some chapters deserve special attention. Gianfranco Baldini accurately describes how the successful campaign for electoral law referendum weakened the already fragmented and shaky Prodi Cabinet, while the very short life of the 2006 Parliament brought the realisation that the concerns of those who had proposed the referendum were relevant. Mark Donovan dissects the political developments internal to the centre-right camp and explains how Berlusconi was able to reassert his leadership effectively once more. Most effectively, Marc Lazar discusses the birth of the Democratic Party (Pd) in great detail. Read with two years' hindsight, this is a very telling story. Lazar's account proves to be a splendidly clever reflection on the factors that would destroy the seemingly strong Veltroni leadership within 15 months: what Veltroni wanted and announced he intended to do, what he already seemed unable to deliver, how the product of a truly innovative process of development (the Pd) bore the elements of its future crisis (the fact that it was never allowed to choose between the old and the new, albeit pretending to be the newest of the new).

Perhaps Donovan and Onofri have devoted too much attention to at least one of those Italian mirages (the 'Grillo phenomenon': the comedian who tried to set himself up as the leader of an antipolitical movement). Nevertheless, they correctly signal all the doubts that remained at the end of 2007 as to how successful Veltroni's Pd and Berlusconi's similar attempt to integrate the centre-right might prove in following years.

More than two years have passed, and at the dawn of 2010 the picture has changed once more. Veltroni has failed, while the Pd seems to have lost its aspiration to become a cohesive, reformist, modernising political force capable of gaining a parliamentary majority in its own right – its main and most fascinating promise. The 2008 party system, based upon no more than four or five parties, is once again at stake; while the new centre-right Popolo delle Libertà is led by a Berlusconi whose prestige is ever more tainted, with no guarantees of what will happen to the coalition once he can no longer exercise his unifying role. Italy continues to seem like a country permanently on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Once more we see a truth which many tend to overlook: nothing is so hard to change as a national political culture. Where Italy is concerned, the Istituto Cattaneo year after year continues to remind us all of this fact.

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L'intellettuale antisemita, edited by Roberto Chiarini, Venice, Marsilio, 2008, 229 pp., €20.00, ISBN 978-883179635

Roberto Chiarini's volume is one of the latest contributions to the still intense debate over Fascist anti-Semitism. Unlike Joshua Zimmerman's volume (Zimmerman 2005), this

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is not a book with a clear mandate. Zimmerman's volume systematically sets out to refute Renzo De Felice's interpretation of Fascist anti-Semitism – which some scholars have dismissed as 'exculpatory' and, more specifically, untenable under close scrutiny (see Luconi 2004). Chiarini's volume has no such unity of focus.

Contributors to this book reflect every period of the evolving view of Fascist anti-Semitism since 1945. From roughly 1945 to 1961 it was treated as a foreign import that had little support amongst the Italians themselves. The emphasis was on the years of Salò, 1943–1945; the blame for the persecution of the Jews was placed squarely on the Nazi occupiers; and much attention was devoted to those Fascist officials and Italians who in a variety of ways tried to hinder Nazi racial policy. The appearance of De Felice's book in *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo*, 1961 ushered in a new era. De Felice argued that Italian complicity in the persecution of the Jews in Salò could no longer be denied, nor could the deleterious effect of the Race Laws – passed in 1938 – on Italy's Jews. However, he also argued that the Race Laws were not the result of deeply held, Nazi-style, biological racism, either in Mussolini or the Italian people in general. Mussolini adopted the Race Laws for purely political purposes: to strengthen his ties to his Axis ally, and to impose further totalitarian control over Italy. The Italian people, De Felice argued, were soundly against the new racial policy, and subsequently began to lose faith in the Fascist regime. Moreover, the Catholic Church was generally hostile to the new Fascist initiative. In the late 1980s, around the 50th anniversary of the implementation of the Race Laws, scholars began questioning the De Felician consensus. These revisionists have argued, for instance, that there was far more public support for the regime's anti-Semitic policy, and far more home-grown anti-Semitism, than De Felice allowed for; that Mussolini was a longstanding racist; and that the Church was complicit in the persecution of the Jews, either in its silence in the face of the Race Laws or in more overt anti-Semitic acts.

The De Felicians are strongly represented in Chiarini's volume. Giovanni Belardelli, Claudia Mantovani, Alberto Cavaglion and Cristina Baldassini all deny that the origins of the Race Laws can be found in either Mussolini's anti-Semitism or in the anti-Semitism of the Italian people; all agree that the Race Laws derived from Mussolini's domestic and foreign policy needs, and that Italians adhered to them for purely opportunistic reasons. None of them deny the harshness of the Race Laws, but neither do they accept the revisionists' contention that the persecution of the Jews in Italy was comparable to what happened in Germany, as there was no widespread commitment to a biological and exterminationist anti-Semitism. Belardelli and Cavaglion make much of the absence of anti-Semitism from the seminal 'Doctrine of Fascism' prepared by Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini and published in the *Enciclopedia italiana* in 1932, and the fact that Jews in the Fascist Party retained their positions through the 1930s. Both refer to the case of the Jewish *podestà* of Ferrara, Renzo Ravenna – which raises doubts as to how representative his case may have been. Mantovani argues that Italian eugenicists did not share the commitment to a biologically pure race, as their German counterparts did; their endorsement of the 'Manifesto of Race' (July 1938) and adherence to the Race Laws was thus self-serving, and not ideological. Baldassini tries to uphold the De Felician argument through an analysis of key terms (Fascism, Jews, Racism, National Socialism, etc.) in a variety of encyclopedias before 1938 and those published after the Race Laws were adopted. She finds that in the latter group anti-Semitism was deemed a far more integral part of Fascism than in the pre-1938 group; on these fairly weak grounds, she endorses

De Felice's contention that the Race Laws were a significant shift in the state's relations with Italian Jews, and that the cause for the shift had to have been a foreign one.

The revisionists in this volume are represented by Renato Moro, Roberta Cairoli and Annalisa Capristo. These scholars point to the widespread commitment to the Race Laws, either overtly or through acquiescence to them, which reveals a level of indifference to the fate of Italian Jews from 1938 onwards that is deeply troubling. In his analysis of Catholic intellectuals, Moro argues that Catholic anti-Semitism was based on a broad anti-modernism, with the Jews serving as scapegoats for all things modern: from urbanism to industrialism, from liberalism to communism. Though Catholic intellectuals may have been shocked by the biological crudity of the Race Laws, Moro argues, Catholic anti-Semitism predisposed them to accept the new Fascist policy. Cairoli's analysis of women's responses to the Race Laws reveals that there was overwhelming support for them. She argues that the *Fasci femminili* saw the implementation of the Race Laws as a continuation of the broad demographic projects of the regime, from increasing the size of the Italian population to restricting miscegenation in the newly conquered Ethiopian colony – all of which gave a central role to Fascist women. Capristo's analysis of intellectual responses to the Race Laws within the realms of high culture finds few instances of open dissidence. When asked to fill out a questionnaire declaring their religion in 1938 most intellectuals filled them out. Very few refused, and only Benedetto Croce publicly resigned from an institution on the principle that the questionnaire was simply wrong. Giovanni Gentile, whom some historians credit with saving a number of Jews, is held up for particular criticism. Capristo focuses on the fact that Gentile never used his prominent position to speak out against the persecution of the Jews. In fact, she argues, he was perfectly aware of what awaited the Jews deported from Salò, yet he still chose to support the regime and accept the presidency of the *Accademia* when it was reconstituted in the north.

This book attests to the struggle Italians face with the place of the Holocaust in their history. However, the influence of De Felice's arguments is clearly waning. In the face of the mountain of evidence brought to bear by the revisionists regarding the extent of Jewish suffering in Italy after the Race Laws were adopted, what does it matter if Mussolini's adoption of those laws, and Italians' adherence to them, sprang from reasons other than an exterminationist anti-Semitism? Do motives of political expediency and opportunism lessen the effects of the Race Laws on Italy's Jews? Even if there were a number of instances of Italians offering aid to the Jews after 1943, does this lesson the tragedy of those Jews who were rounded up, deported and murdered – or the complicity of the Italians involved in that act?

Since 1945 many nations have struggled over their collective memories of the Second World War. Chiarini's volume clearly shows that Italy's struggle over its memory still goes on.

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Il consumo critico, edited by Luisa Leonini and Roberta Sassatelli, Rome–Bari, Editori Laterza, 2008, 204 pp., €20.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-420-8597-3

Why do citizens choose to adopt alternative patterns of consumption? Despite the interest around a phenomenon of still limited economic impact but significant symbolic breadth, this question has largely remained unanswered. With the aim of filling this gap, a group of Italian sociologists has now intervened with *Il consumo critico* (Critical consumption), a book reflecting on the results of an empirical research based on nearly 130 narrative interviews collected between 2003 and 2006 among different types of 'critical consumers' in Bologna, Milan and Rome.

The book is divided into two parts, preceded by an introduction where the two editors, Leonini and Sassatelli, offer a useful conceptual framework and some quantitative data to set the phenomenon in perspective. The first part of the book, briefly introduced by Paola Rebughini, explores the meanings that critical consumers attach to their practices, both as individuals and as associations' members. Rebughini considers in chapter 1 the case of *Gruppi di acquisto*, small groups of people meeting for collective wholesale purchase from local producers, and of *Bilanci di Giustizia*, networks of families voluntarily practising 'justice budgets', monitoring and confronting their consumption practices. In the second chapter Antonio Famiglietti and Monica Santoro look at the case of *Mani Tese*, an NGO aiming at promoting a new economic order based on justice and sustainability: its evolution is followed looking at its shift from the original Catholic inspiration (in the mid-1960s) to a secular vocation (in the mid-1970s), and from the definition of a more effective operational strategy on assisted areas (in the 1980s) to the increased linkages with pacifism and environmentalism in the last decades. In chapter 3, Famiglietti and Rebughini consider the recent adhesion to critical consumption practices of the *Centri sociali* members, groups formed since the mid-1970s occupying and self-managing abandoned properties in urban peripheries and radically critical of the dominant cultural models of capitalist societies.

The second part of the book, introduced by Sassatelli, investigates the link between critical consumers' behaviour and socialisation processes. In chapter 4, Santoro shows how, notwithstanding the important differences linked to the historical period and the socioeconomic context in which each generation lives, the adoption of responsible consumption styles is influenced by the transmission from parents to children of specific behaviours, practices, concepts and values. In the final chapter, Sassatelli presents the critical consumer as a model of economic actor who is neither 'slave to commerce' nor 'sovereign of the market', but rather aware of the possibility that his/her choices may significantly affect economic and political relations. Leonini sums up the results of the book, reinforcing the argument for which consumption is not only a private fact but also a

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