

**Italy and the European Union**, by Federiga Bindi, Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press, 2011, 246 pp., £19.99, ISBN 978-0-8157-0496-6

Italy has played a key role in post-war European integration. *Italy and the European Union* looks back over this history, paying close attention to political actors' historical attitudes towards the foundation and development of the European Community/European Union (EC/EU); the institutional and legislative mechanisms regulating the EU–Italy relationship; and Italian negotiation strategies in 'high' and 'low' EU politics' (p. 1). Throughout the book, Bindi examines the role of Italy as a 'medium-size power' within the EU. Bindi argues that Italy 'can be one of the leading countries in shaping European policies only in the presence of well-defined aims, credible actors, and consistent strategies' (p. 1). However, despite significant progress in certain areas in recent years, Italy remains well short of meeting all three criteria.

After an introductory chapter, Bindi critiques the theoretical framework of European integration studies, and offers an overview of relations between the different member states and the EU in a comparative perspective. Chapters 3 and 4 then examine the attitudes of Italian political parties and Italian public opinion towards European integration, from the 1947 Marshall Plan – which required recipients to establish some form of permanent European organisation – to the recent EU enlargement process.

In the following two chapters, Bindi analyses the relationships between the Italian parliament and the EU (Chapter 5) and the Italian government and the EU (Chapter 6). Here, Bindi highlights the 'Europeanization' of the Italian Parliament in recent years and the complex interplay between different actors within the Italian government in developing Italian EU policy.

Particularly helpful for our understanding of the Italian political context is Chapter 7, which examines regional politics and the range of sub-national interest groups that play a significant role not only in Italy, but also in the EU. As Bindi points out, Italy's five Special Statute Regions, each of which enjoys considerable autonomy in the country, as well as ordinary regions, are all represented in Brussels – as are interest groups related to federations such as Confindustria and big companies such as Fiat and Fininvest.

In Chapters 8 and 9, Bindi considers the dualism between 'high' and 'low' politics, by the first meaning European Council-level negotiations and discussions over the direction of the EU and, by the second, the technical day-to-day debates over policy implementation. These processes are separate and connected at the same time, although scholars normally focus on one or the other. That the two aspects are treated together here is one of the major strengths of the book. Bindi also supplies a much-needed in-depth analysis of Italy's recent European policy. In the final chapter, Bindi suggests how Italy can become a leader within the EU, rather than remaining in the shadows.

*Italy and the European Union* is a well-written, well-structured and theoretically and historically well-informed introduction to Italian–EU relations, written by one of the leading figures in the field. Consequently, it will attract academics, graduates and undergraduates interested in Italian politics, international relations, and European integration studies. The book also serves to set recent developments in Italy (the financial crisis, the fall of Berlusconi and the establishment of the emergency

government led by Mario Monti) in a broader European context. In this sense, it is particularly welcome.

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**Relazioni mafiose. La mafia ai tempi del fascismo**, by Vittorio Coco and Manuela Patti, Rome, XL edizioni, 2010, 224 pp., 13.90 (paperback), ISBN 978-88-6083-040-1

*Relazione mafiose* debunks the myth that Fascism brought order and security to Sicily and demonstrates how the mafia managed to preserve its power during the *ventennio*, disguising itself and relying on the connivance of local and politically influential figures. Although it focuses on the so-called Piana dei Colli, the northern part of the Palermo hinterland, and is restricted to only a few mafia Families (*cosche*), the book nonetheless lends itself to a broader analysis of the mafia phenomenon as a whole, and contributes to our historical understanding of the internal constitution and functioning of the organisation.

At the heart of Coco and Patti's book is a long report on the mafia by the *Ispettorato interprovinciale di pubblica sicurezza per la Sicilia*, dating from 1938. The authors argue that the document, which details mafia activity from 1933, demonstrates that Mussolini's presumptive endeavour to solve the 'Southern Question', and the subsequent legal measures pursued by General Mori up to the end of the 1920s, failed to defeat the mafia. Therefore, their principal aim is to fill a lacuna in the historical record and to controvert the widely held view that the mafia, defeated by Mussolini, was reborn with the arrival of American troops in 1943. The story of the Marasà brothers – three of the most powerful mafiosi of the period, untouched by Mori's repressive campaign – is illuminating in this regard. It reveals that the mafia, despite its basis in agriculture, was already beginning to branch out of the *latifondi* and acquire that political and economic influence which was to worry Sciascia some decades later. Indeed, while it still employed quite primitive forms of threat – its most frequent crime was rustling – the mafia possessed a layered and multi-class structure, which provided the organisation with a respectable mask and the power to divert investigations into its activities.

Coco and Patti emphasise that the charges in the report and the subsequent legal proceedings against named individuals stemmed from confessions made by mafiosi; this was probably the first instance of *pentitismo*, almost 50 years before the anti-mafia maxi trial of the 1980s.

The report, then, clearly deserves to be published and studied. The first part of the book provides a commentary on the document, explaining its uniqueness among several other archival materials, and serves as an introduction to the book's second part, which reproduces police minutes in their entirety, including the names of those under investigation.

Coco and Patti are deeply aware of the vast existing bibliography on the mafia and use this knowledge to provide historical context, to underline the most significant novelties of