

**Italian Intellectuals and International Politics, 1945–1992,**  
 edited by **Alessandra Tarquini and Andrea Guiso, Cham, Palgrave  
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The role of intellectuals in shaping foreign policy during the Cold War has perhaps been underestimated, since such policy is generally seen as strictly related to political parties or institutions. *Italian Intellectuals and International Politics, 1945–1992* offers instead an attempt at analysing in more depth the relationship between intellectuals as a social group and international politics, and particularly the extent to which the former influenced the latter beyond fixed or bipolar views.

Covering nearly 50 years, from the end of the Second World War to the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992, the book looks at a time of intense political changes not only in Italy but also more broadly in Europe's relationships with the rest of the world. The choice of focusing on Italy is fitting: its border position in the Cold War can serve as a magnifying glass on international tensions between Western and Eastern blocs. Given the significant role Italian intellectuals held in public discourse after the fall of the Fascist regime, the book provides a unique and compelling way of addressing the articulation of democratic debates and processes.

Offering a dozen chapters overall, the edited collection is clearly structured around three main sections, focusing on three major political groups deeply embedded in postwar Italian cultural discourse: the Liberal Democrats, the Catholics, and the Socialists and Communists. This choice is convincingly explained in the broad-based informative introduction by editors Tarquini and Guiso: notwithstanding their internal inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies, each group remained distinct in their international positionings. The rationale of including only the most influential actors does exclude right-wing intellectuals, when their inclusion would have made the volume even more well-rounded.

The first section outlines the ambiguities and complexities within the liberal group: particularly striking is Polese Remaggi's lucid essay, which sheds light on the controversial lack of criticism of Mao's oppressive methods shown by the Italian *azionisti* during their visits to China in the 1950s. This was part of a larger project whereby Western intellectuals had to show the Chinese government in a 'progressive' light (p. 36), but it was also, intriguingly, a way to revive anti-fascist discourse with a view to strengthening (economic) collaboration with China. In Bresciani's judicious contribution, though, the anti-fascist stance was deeply anti-totalitarian, as demonstrated by the positions of other *azionisti* towards the Hungarian uprising. The last two essays of this section, focusing more strictly on one journal (Aramini and Cigliani on the reformist Bologna-based *Il Mulino*), or on one intellectual (Caviglia on the pro-European Guido Carli), move away from anti-fascist discourse to look more broadly at how the actors under investigation positioned themselves in pragmatic terms in relation to, respectively, the US and Europe.

The second section focuses on Italian Catholic intellectuals, and demonstrates fully the variety of approaches within the Catholic world, interestingly not always in line with the

orientation of the US. Jumping to 1992, De Giuseppe's chapter opens the section, offering fascinating insights into the key role of Italian Catholics on the issue of indigenous people in Latin America, showing their ability to see indigenous otherness as 'a source of cultural enrichment of the church and the world' (p. 126). The other essays, instead, take a closer look at European policy through the lens of single intellectuals, whose approaches would be topical even in current debates. Ceci's careful examination of Augusto Del Noce's publications reveals the intellectual's commitment to resist Europe's cultural surrender to modern values, which he saw anticipated in the international outlook of the East-West *détente*, whilst Guiso's thorough analysis of Beniamino Andreatta's vision and activity shows the extent to which Europeanism has shaped Italy's international politics, but also the perception of Europe's remedial role in Italy's defective political system.

The third section explores the role of Socialists and Communists, stressing the shifting perspectives within their pro-Soviet approach (the former supposedly neutral, the latter more assertive), and their frequent difficulties in formulating responses to key historical events. The section as a whole follows a stricter chronological order – spanning the first ten years of the Italian Republic through the 1960s and up to the 1980s – and mixes wider overviews and case studies on specific figures: the number of sources and the geographical spread of the contributions is impressive. Tarquini's compelling essay highlights how both Italian Socialists and Communists were unable to elaborate a reflection on anti-Semitism, and how this was mirrored in a changing position in relation to the Arab-Israeli question (with Israel being seen first as a symbol against imperialism, and then as an ally of the US). Scroccu takes a sharper look at the journal *Mondoperaio*, and through comparison with another journal, *Critica sociale*, signals the gradual shift in perspective of Italian Socialists around the decolonisation process in Africa towards a more autonomous position. Analysing Rossana Rossanda's notes of her travels through Spain in the 1960s, Lo Cascio outlines how the journey triggered new reflections on the emblematic anti-fascist struggle of the Spanish Civil War vis-à-vis the consolidation of Francoism. Serventi Longhi looks at the specific angle of trade unions, so far neglected, with his contribution on the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL) showing its persistent institutionalised approach even when the Soviet Union's crisis became more evident with the events unfolding in 1980s Poland. Sorgonà's essay concludes the collection with a focus on PCI intellectuals through the pages of the journal *Rinascita*, exploring the perception of Ronald Regan's presidency, which reflected the intrinsic tensions of intellectuals on the verge of breaking with Marxism.

*Italian Intellectuals and International Politics* provides a wide-ranging overview of intellectual attitudes around and against Cold War dynamics. Far from offering a static picture, the book outlines controversies and contradictions, but also undoubtedly shows how intellectuals of diverse ideologies all contributed to developing (and shifting) foreign policies. Such a breadth of range and scope runs the risk of offering slightly heterogeneous results, but the overall innovative perspective of this contribution lies in its transnational dimension, with most of the essays looking more widely at transnational networks and connections, and crucially how these were articulated, confronted or reshaped within the domestic domain. This represents a stimulating approach that could open up new research in the history of postwar Italy beyond the field of international politics.