

“La costruzione della democrazia in Italia, 1943—64.”

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Patrick McCarthy was a scholar whose interests spanned literature, the politics of post-war Italy, France and Germany, intellectuals and politics, and the political culture of modern Italy. It seemed fitting, therefore, to ask the McCarthy Fund to finance part of the costs of this workshop, which was a notable academic success. John Harper, whose participation in the workshop was something that gave me great pleasure, kindly wrote to me on 25 June to say, “Patrick would have loved it.”

I think he would. For two main reasons. First, the subject matter. We discussed the political economy of the early years of Italian democracy, the role of Christian Democracy, the debates of intellectuals, and the role of Italy in the formative years of the Cold War and of European integration. Second, the fact that SAIS Europe acted as an intellectual hub within Italy. The speakers I brought to Bologna included some of the best-known contemporary political historians in Italy, but also some promising young scholars, who were delighted to have their work recognized by an invitation to SAIS. Like Patrick, I strongly believe that we should not forget that we are based in Italy, and in Europe, and must make ourselves an integral part of the scholarly community around us.

The co-organizer of the workshop was Prof. Daniele Pasquinucci of the University of Siena. Prof. Pasquinucci is one of Italy’s most distinguished historians of European integration. He and I have collaborated on a number of scholarly ventures and formed a strong working relationship. We hope that this workshop will be the first of several (to be hosted by Siena and the University of Rome La Sapienza, as well as SAIS) and will lead to publications in both Italian and English.

The workshop was held in the Penthouse, which had been expertly prepared by Mrs. Nacamu (whose administrative efficiency, as always, was greeted with awe and gratitude by the visiting academics: two asked me if their institutions could “borrow” her) and by our IT team, one of whom, Guido Ruggieri, was present throughout the event. Alessandra worked on the event until the last moment before her holiday and then passed the baton to Barbara Wiza, whom I also thank for her characteristic generosity with her time. One of the great advantages to working at SAIS Europe, as President Daniels recognized during alumni weekend, is that the academic mission is supported by dedicated, highly competent staff. This workshop abundantly demonstrated this observation.

The day began with some short remarks in Italian by Director Plummer, who recalled the career of Patrick at the Bologna Center and particularly thanked the keynote speaker, Prof. Guido Formigoni, who is Dean of the IULM University of Milan and the most authoritative scholar on Italian democracy during the Cold War. Prof. Plummer was seconded by Prof. Justin Frosini, the director of the CCSDD, who gave some brief remarks explaining the CCSDD’s mission. Justin and I intend to make this workshop the first step in a project on “The democratization of Italy.” The workshop thus created an academic synergy not only with colleagues at Italian universities, but with one of SAIS’ own most successful initiatives.

I will spare my readers a detailed account of the different papers (the workshop agenda is attached). Session I, in the morning, contained two papers on the political economy of Italy by Andrea Guiso, of Roma La Sapienza University and by Lucrezia Ranieri, a *dottoranda* in the field of contemporary economic history. The

third paper was by Lucia Bonfreschi, whose most recent work has been on the birth of the Radical Party. All three papers were very lively, as was the discussion, which was magisterially led by John Harper and which featured some keen interventions by Vera Zamagni, whose attendance was, of course, a decided bonus.

Session 2 might easily have gone badly: the first *relatore*, Paolo Acanfora of Roma La Sapienza University, was struck down by Covid on the eve of the event, and the discussant, Michele Marchi of the Ravenna campus of Bologna University, for personal reasons had to intervene on screen. Instead, it went very well. Prof. Marchi did an excellent job of commenting on the two papers presented by Marco Carone, a lawyer from Sicily who is writing his *dottorato di ricerca* at the University of Messina, and by Prof. Frosini – who was able to indulge in his favourite topic of constitutional preambles, and why Italy’s constitution does not have one. Once again, the discussion was lively and well-informed.

After lunch, we had a session dedicated to the work of Rosario Forlenza, associate professor of contemporary history at LUISS University in Rome. Prof. Forlenza has recently published a book called *On the Edge of Democracy: Italy 1943—1948*, with Oxford University Press, and has an article in the *American Historical Review*. Prof. Forlenza is a convinced believer in the virtues of interdisciplinarity and, in particular, thinks historians can learn a lot from the methods, concepts, and approach of political anthropology. His animated presentation led to a spirited debate on this topic.

Session 3 was on the topic of Italy and European Integration. All three papers (by Prof. Pasquinucci, Tommaso Milani, and Andrea Martinez) presented empirical research that was new to most of the workshop attendees and, with the contribution of Andrea Guiso as discussant, a wide-ranging discussion took place that greatly added to participants’ knowledge.

To facilitate discussion, presenters had been asked to circulate 1500-word papers in advance and were given just 10—12 minutes to present their ideas. The idea was to get away from over-lengthy presentations and to ensure that we discussed the pith of each paper. It worked.

Prof. Formigoni concluded with a short address that insightfully integrated his observations on the papers he had heard with a summary of his own ideas. It was perfectly judged – and perfectly timed. The workshop, perhaps uniquely in the history of academia, ended just 10 minutes over time. It had been an intensive day of work and I was delighted to be able to thank all the participants, especially our three *dottorandi*, for their contributions.

I can only thank the McCarthy Fund for part-financing this event. Next spring, in May, I intend to organize a follow-up event on a theme even closer to Patrick’s interests – Italian intellectuals and politics in the early post-war period. By then, I hope other workshops will have been organized elsewhere in Italy and that this event will be seen as a starting point for a coordinated attempt to rethink the history of Italian democratization. This topic matters: across the West democracies are in tumult. Understanding what made our democracies take root and work is a useful step towards understanding why they are working badly now. We can’t understand the present without thoroughly understanding the past. Patrick McCarthy would have been the first to agree.

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