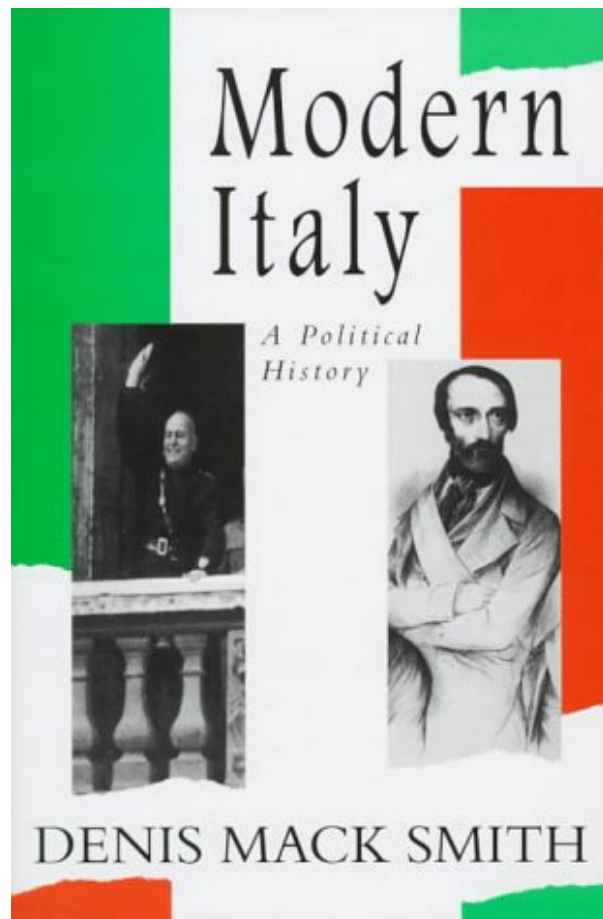


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Modern Italy

A Political History



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A magisterial study that will continue to be the benchmark for political histories of modern Italy. Mack Smith (Oxford Univ.) is considered the foremost historian of modern Italy in the English-speaking world, the author of biographies on Mussolini, Garibaldi, Mazzini and Victor Emanuele, and Cavour. Mack Smith has also written on Italy's unification and its monarchy. First published in 1959, the present work is fully updated (to 1996) and has been substantially rewritten. It is the most comprehensive and accessible study we have of modern Italy. The author is partial to the liberal-conservative tradition, but this in no way prevents him from criticizing the many faults of liberal Italy as it developed after unification: Social and economic problems were exacerbated rather than solved (or even addressed); the virus of nationalism and the myth of a Roman empire were carelessly and recklessly promulgated; and perhaps most dangerous of all, the political elite failed to forge a true civic culture after centuries of foreign and domestic despotism. The recent corruption scandals that have rocked the country and destroyed the old political order had their roots in the immediate postwar period, while we now know that the threat of terrorism was much graver from the shadowy Right than from the more dramatic Left. Mack Smith ends on a note of cautious optimism but the reader might come away a bit more pessimistic. Simply a classic. -- Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

About the Author

Smith is a Fellow of the British Academy and Wolfson College, Oxford and a foreign member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

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This history of modern Italy began in March 1861 when Count Camillo Cavour proclaimed a united Italian kingdom with the goal of creating a prosperous, liberal new power in Europe. For a country whose ancient heritage had placed it at the center of western culture, this late entry into nationhood and rapid reach for power would bring frequent crisis. In this fully revised edition of his classic history of the country, Denis Mack Smith provides a complete and engaging narrative of the fate of Italy from Risorgimento to the present.

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First published in 1958 as *Italy: A Modern History*, the book has been substantially rewritten with a new section on the period after 1945, a new bibliography, new maps, and updated factual appendices. Stylish, clearly written, deeply informed and often controversial, it remains the definitive account for anyone interested in modern Italy.

". . . an extraordinarily good and concise introduction to the scandals that almost destroyed the Italian Republic." --Alexander DeGrand, North Carolina State University

"No one will be surprised that in this new edition Mack Smith recounts the recent history of the Republic up to 1996 with the same shrewd authorial eye, both distant and perceptive, the deep knowledge, and the skill that made the older edition of this book a classic." --Raymond Grew, University of Michigan

Denis Mack Smith is a Fellow of the British Academy and Wolfson College, Oxford, and a foreign member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been awarded a dozen literary prizes in Italy and is a Commendatore of the Italian Order of Merit. Among his recent books are *Italy and Its Monarchy* (1989) and *Mazzini* (1994).

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