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To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2015.1096537

Published online: 21 Jan 2016.
frustration (diary, 9 and 13 September 1943). In fact, the process was only concluded ten years later. This wartime failure to secure full Italian nationality is crucial: it helps explain why Barnes felt it necessary to go into hiding between 1945 and 1947, as he was undoubtedly aware that the British authorities could have tried him for treason because he remained a British subject in the war.

All in all, this is an important new primary source. There remains a surprising gap in the historiography when it comes to coverage of the wartime role of Major Barnes, especially his activities as a Fascist radio broadcaster, and this diary will enable historians to develop a much better picture of the later phases of his controversial career.

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http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2015.1096536


Antonio Maccanico provides here often-daily summaries of his seven-year stint as President Sandro Pertini’s Secretary General at the Quirinal Palace. The personalities and the existential conditions surrounding these reports are skillfully fleshed out in the array of footnotes provided by Paolo Soddu, the volume’s meticulous editor. The book is exceptional, if not unique, in its illustration of how and in what circumstances those who occupy formal institutions manage to shape and use them.

The charismatic Pertini is widely recognized as having resurrected the office of the presidency at a delicate and opportune moment. His predecessor, Giovanni Leone, had resigned in disgrace in connection with the so-called Lockheed bribery scandal. A few weeks before Pertini’s election, the prime minister, Aldo Moro, had been murdered by the Red Brigades. Terrorists searched city streets, ‘knee-capping’ or executing industrialists, journalists, academics, labor leaders and others. A hero of the Resistance, as was Pertini, was felt to be exactly the type of president the country required.

Pertini could also behave erratically, a key reason why his sponsors placed Maccanico at his side as a stabilizing force. Pertini, who greatly admired Maccanico, was happy to have him as his executive director. The ‘diaries’ explain how and why this arrangement blossomed, over the years, into admirable political leadership — particularly at moments when other terrorist acts, as well as a major political scandal rocked the Republic.

Maccanico would have made a spectacular Grand Vizier in the Age of Byzantium. Instead, he combined his byzantine knowhow with his strong commitment to ‘legal-rational’ norms. Without Maccanico’s sense of the ‘politically possible,’ it is doubtful that Sandro Pertini would be remembered as one of Italy’s most successful heads of state. Any dozen pages of this book will support this appraisal. Not many of Maccanico’s friends, of which I was one, were privy to how much of this image resulted from his handiwork.
The Secretary General met almost daily (preferably one at a time!) with large numbers of persons, not just party leaders or politicians, but those from every walk of life or from every region of the country. He used the intelligence thus accumulated, as well as his storehouse of knowledge, to help implement Pertini’s (as well as some of his own) wishes. When plans went awry, or failed, Maccanico was quick to identify his own failings, and not those of others.

Few persons saw Pertini, without also touching base (before or after) with Maccanico. Few initiatives were ever taken by the president without running them by the Secretary General. The two men inevitably disagreed from time to time; but never so much as to turn Pertini into a stern taskmaster, or Maccanico into a yes-man.

The events described by Maccanico, and contextualized by Soddu, underscore aspects of Italy’s republican history that are of basic scholarly interest. For example, despite what fierce electoral competition among political parties may imply or suggest, the Italian system of governance, at least at the national level, was rather one of pluralistic co-habitation and collaboration. This system included the Communist Party, otherwise excluded by Cold War conditions from formal membership in national coalitions. (See, for example, Enrico Berlinguer’s role in the formation of a government by Francesco Cossiga, [pp. 74–75]).

One of many reasons why both Pertini and Maccanico found Bettino Craxi antipatico was their belief that the latter constituted a menace to this arrangement which had served Italy so well (see, for example, pp. 24, 42, and 442). They were equally concerned that democratic stability was threatened by some Socialist MPs, suspected of collaborating with the terrorists; or that Craxi was maneuvering to weaken the government’s efforts to clarify the enigma of the P2 scandal.

The membership list of this secret Masonic organization, handed to the president, contained the names of several Socialists, as well as similar personalities in politics, business, the military and the professions. The alleged purpose of the P2 was understood to be potentially of great danger to the Republic (see, for example, pp. 89, 129, 143 ff., and 154).

Institutional conditions also facilitated the unusual role played by the Quirinal Palace–and not just during the Pertini presidency. Two aspects of the Italian parliamentary system are involved here. One is that Italian electoral laws have typically not encouraged a sharp reduction in the proliferation of political parties. Only early and briefly in the Republic’s history did a single party (the Christian Democrats) enjoy a parliamentary majority. The other aspect is the relative weakness of the head of government, constitutionally designated not as prime minister but rather as chairman of the Council of Ministers.

In such an institutional setting, governments are inevitably coalitions, and prime ministers (depending on personalities) are rarely able to govern their own cabinets as more than primus inter pares. In that context, an activist president such as Pertini was, and a shrewd and equally activist senior bureaucrat like Antonio Maccanico, were able to play often determinant roles as policy makers, as well as in the rise and fall of national governments.

Maccanico was always careful to guard the president against making the powerful role he played too patent or public, for fear that this might backfire. When the president eluded such control, Maccanico records his own failures in that regard. (Good
examples of how Maccanico dealt with potential problems of this kind are found at pp. 89 ff., 110 ff., and 460 ff.

Two of Maccanico’s political role models were Ugo La Malfa, a Republican, and Giorgio Amendola, a Communist. Maccanico often reflected on these stalwarts of public service and public probity — in particular at those moments when he became dejected about the moral decline of the country’s political class.

Maccanico served Pertini, and Italy, unstintingly and so well because he saw the president as a man who towered above the others who were so lacking in dignity. He says or implies as much many times in the book (for example, p. 79).


Together with an increased interest in post-World War Two Italy, there is an increased interest in the Mediterranean, which, in more recent times, I would submit, dates back in Italy to Vito Teti’s *La razza maledetta* (1993), Franco Cassano’s *Il pensiero meridiano* (1996), and Marta Petrusewicz’s *Come il meridione divenne una questione* (1998), among others, and, here in North America, to Pasquale Verdicchio’s study, *Bound by Distance* (1997), and Graziella Parati’s anthology of migrant writing, *Mediterranean Crossroads* (1999). Bouchard and Ferme’s *Italy and the Mediterranean* is a most welcome addition to this discussion within our US context. Indeed, the pair has also translated and edited an English edition of Cassano’s *Il pensiero meridiano* (*Southern Thought*, 2012), and thus, alongside Verdicchio, for instance, *Italy and the Mediterranean* helps create a more ample field of discussion on how we can, indeed should, re-think the notion of the Mediterranean and, of course, the ever-present topic of Italy’s Southern Question. I refer here, as should be evident, to those works published in the United States and in English.

*Italy and the Mediterranean* proposes to ‘analyze how the peninsula’s Mediterranean positioning has been rethought in a variety of fields from the end of the Cold War to the present’ (p. 2). (The use of the noun ‘peninsula’ as opposed to ‘Italy’ gives me pause. I would have indeed preferred to read here, and elsewhere, Italy, which for me is a much more comprehensive geo-political indicator. When involved in discussions of such topics, sign functions are tantamount to the intended message.) It accomplishes its goal with great success through a series of seven chapters that follow a detailed introduction: Chapter 1, “The Return to the Mediterranean in Contemporary Western Thought: Old Contexts, New Approaches”; Chapter 2, “Interlude: From Discourses on to Discourses from the Italian Mediterranean”; Chapter 3, “Geophilosophies of the Mediterranean: From Massimo Cacciari and Franco Cassano to Mario Alcaro and Beyond”; Chapter 4, “Sounds of Southern Shores: Musical Traditions and Adaptations in the Italian Mediterranean”; Chapter 5, “Screening the