



# Modern Italy: A Political History

*Denis Mack Smith*

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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.

For sixty years after 1861 Italy was governed by a liberal oligarchy under a parliamentary constitution. Italy chose the winning side in the First World War, but the enormous costs of victory revealed social tensions and constitutional weaknesses that prepared the way, after 1920, for Europe's first fascist dictatorship.

After the painful civil war that followed World War II, Italy rediscovered liberal democracy, and under a new republican regime became one of the major industrialized countries of the world.

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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