Elisabetta Bini, *Between Fascism and Democracy: American Interpretations of Gender Roles in Postwar Italy*

The essay analyzes the interpretations offered by the United States of Italy’s transition from Fascism to democracy. It focuses in particular on two sources: the magazine «Life», and the American Association of University Women (AAUW), and argues that they both played an important role in building postwar US internationalism. By placing gender at the center of her analysis, the a. attempts to highlight the analytical importance of the category of gender for the study of international relations, and in particular of the Cold War. «Life» embraced the idea that the US should serve as a model for other countries. It conceptualized the transformation of Italy into a modern democracy as a shift from a form of masculinity characterized by violence and unruliness, associated with Communism, to a strong and determined masculinity, symbolized by the American troops. Furthermore, it interpreted the Marshall Plan as a source of social stability and economic growth. Thanks to American aid, Italy would be able to embrace modernity, symbolized by nuclear families with a male breadwinner and a housewife, living in modern apartments and consuming new forms of leisure activities. On the other hand, the AAUW argued that Italian women had a crucial role to play in the rebuilding of their country. Highlighting the importance of women in the creation of a democratic world, based on peace and on international cooperation, it organized a series of exchanges between Italy and the US, in order to teach Italian women the techniques of democracy. Compared to «Life» the AAUW refused to look at the Italian situation through the lens the Cold War, and conceived of the immediate postwar period as a revolutionary moment, in which women could play a politically decisive role.

Mark Seymour, *Affectionate Condescension: The “Two Cultures” and Anglophone Views of Italy’s Divorce Question (1900-1974)*

This article examines the way the English-language press judged Italy on its treatment of the divorce question in the twentieth century, arguing that the fate of divorce-law proposals came to be seen as a litmus test of the true
nature of Italian culture. The introduction of divorce laws in most of the western world by 1900 was a result of state formation and the corresponding erosion of religious jurisdiction over private life. Although Italy had been the bright star of liberalism in the 1860s, its refusal to introduce a divorce law throughout most of the twentieth century was interpreted as a sign of lurking medievalism. After World War II the continued absence of a divorce law appeared particularly anomalous against the background of extraordinary economic and social progress. The English-language press followed the campaigns to introduce a divorce law in the 1960s with great interest, and when the Italian public affirmed their support for divorce in the referendum of 1974, Italy was finally held to have shed its vestiges of medieval culture and fully embraced progress and modernity.

Giulia Barrera, *Eritrean Women and the Memory of Italian Colonialism: The Story of Frewini*

The article discusses the memories of Italian colonialism in Eritrea by looking at the life history of Frewini, an Eritrean woman born in the early 1920s. Her life history shows that the periodization of decolonization could be gender specific. Moreover, Frewini’s unconventional life history challenges stereotyped images of the colonial relation and shows that individual experience of colonialism changed according to individual’s position in the colonized society. In the introduction, the article discusses how different wars contributed to shape both history and memory of Italian colonialism in Eritrea: Adwa forced the Italians to limit land expropriation and thus limited the conflicts between Italians and Eritreans; WWII caused Italy the loss of her colonies, thus saving Eritrea from the painful conflicts that typically accompanied decolonization in settler colonies; the thirty-year-long liberation war had such a devastating impact on Eritrans’ lives that memories of the pre-war period easily tend to get idealized.