

News and Events

Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe? The London School of Economics Debate on the Current State of Italy

When journalists talk about Italy, they have a tendency to focus their attention on the Prime Minister, his gaffes in public speeches, and scandals, and to dismiss other issues affecting the country. The book, *Italy Today: the Sick Man of Europe*, published by Routledge in February 2010, seeks to fill this gap, providing an English-speaking audience with information about the *Bel Paese* that they will not find in regular newspapers.

On 8 March 2010, *Italy Today's* editors, Dr Andrea Mammone, lecturer in Modern History at Kingston University, and Giuseppe A. Veltri, holder of a grant at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission in Seville, presented their volume at the London School of Economics (LSE). Joining the discussion chaired by Marco Simoni (who contributed to the book) were Simona Milio, associate director of the Economic and Social Cohesion Laboratory at the LSE and author of one of the chapters, and John Peet, European editor of the *Economist*. Examination of Italy's situation might also offer food for thought for those not particularly interested in the country itself; for, as the French scholar Marc Lazar suggested in his *L'Italie à la derive* (Paris: Perrin, 2006), the country has become an interesting laboratory for democracy at large, the issues it faces having a wider, European, significance.

German member of the European Parliament Martin Schulz recently urged Europe to resist Berlusconi and his negative influence on democracy. Schulz had already hit the headlines over a quarrel with the Italian Prime Minister in the European Parliament in 2003 on the very first day of Berlusconi's six-month turn as EU president. On that occasion, Berlusconi had said he should suggest the German MEP, who had criticised him, for the role of *Kapò* in a film that a friend was producing. Berlusconi embarrassed Italy shortly after the election of Barack Obama by hailing him, during a visit to Moscow, as "handsome, young and suntanned". Two weeks later, at a meeting with Angela Merkel in Trieste, Berlusconi played hide-and-seek and called out "Coo-coo!" from behind a monument to

prompt the German Chancellor to turn around. Undoubtedly, Berlusconi offers good press copy with his blunders and jokes.

But Italy's problems are not limited to Berlusconi's lack of diplomacy and sense of the politically appropriate. *Italy Today* digs beneath the surface to explore the structural problems that would persist even if Berlusconi disappeared. Ultimately, the book offers a diagnosis of the malaise affecting the country; and as British historian Paul Corner suggests in the foreword, "Given the right diagnosis, sick men often get better".

A systemic crisis with deep roots

Veltri, who (like Mammone) is originally from the southern region of Calabria but has lived abroad for ten years now, said they came up with the idea of producing *Italy Today* a couple of years ago when comparing coverage of Italy in the press of the country where he was living, to the coverage of Italy in the Italian media. He then realised that the international media devoted their attention entirely to the controversial figure of Silvio Berlusconi instead of exploring issues affecting the country at a deeper level.

Take the example of the mass media. Berlusconi is often criticised for exercising indirect control of state television while also being the owner of a vast private media empire. However, argued Veltri, in Italy there have never been *editori puri* (pure proprietors), entrepreneurs whose exclusive business is that of publishing and who have no interests elsewhere. Media proprietors have always used their publishing activities as a means of exercising the political leverage required to enable them to advance other business interests. A more important issue concerns the way the media inform the Italian public: broadcasters in particular have always been subject to considerable political interference. True, Berlusconi's conflict of interests has undermined the plurality of sources of information, a basic requirement of democracy (leading the independent watchdog organisation, Freedom House, to downgrade Italy's ratings for press freedom from 'Free' to 'Partly Free'). However, this sickness, as Chris Hanretty discusses in his chapter, "The media between market and politics", is chronic and precedes Berlusconi's entry into politics. Limited readership and, thus, limited profitability have prompted industrial groups to invest in loss-making newspapers merely as vehicles for the pursuit of political goals. Hanretty also criticises Italian journalism for being highly auto-referential and difficult to understand. Italian journalists have, he argues, less formal and less specific education than journalists in Britain or Spain. The institutional apparatus of journalism, with the establishment of the doubtfully-constitutional Ordine dei Giornalisti (Order of Journalists) in 1963, is over-developed while the code of conduct regulating journalists' activity is underdeveloped. As regards broadcasters, Hanretty argues that RAI, the publicly-owned television network, has always been subject to *lottizzazione* ('sharing out'), each channel operating under the influence of

one of the main parties. Guaranteeing plurality has led to the abandonment of objective, balanced reporting. Against this background, concludes Hanretty, Berlusconi appears as no less than his counterparts: as a media mogul, he is more interested in politics than profit.

What people do not know about Italy

Many other issues which an English-speaking audience might not be familiar with are discussed in *Italy Today*: the lack of support for families; the underdevelopment of the southern regions, and the rise of organised crime in Calabria, a business worth €35-40 billion a year (£29-34 billion).

It is a common stereotype that Italian families have strong ties, especially when compared to other European countries. But, as Stefania Bernini points out in her chapter, "Family politics, the Catholic Church and the transformation of family life in the Second Republic", the significant social role of families is not underpinned by a policy to support them. Bernini argues that the policy of protecting the family and family values has pitched conservatism against freedom of choice in sexual, emotional and reproductive lifestyles, limiting the expansion of social and civil rights. Bernini also claims that since the collapse of the Christian Democratic Party in January 1994, the Church has used the family as one of the main issues through which it seeks to exert an influence on political matters. While the centre-right parties have sought to uphold the 'traditional family' (i.e. families based on a heterosexual marriage), soon after scandals involving Berlusconi's sexual conduct broke in the spring of 2009, the instrumental way in which the concept of the family was used in political discourse became crystal clear. And as the lifestyle of Italians has changed significantly in recent years, with fewer and fewer couples choosing to have children – Italy has one of the world's lowest fertility rates – and more and more opting for cohabitation rather than marriage, policies allegedly supporting the family have failed to keep up with reality. Bernini denounces the interference of the Catholic Church and questions whether Catholic values should be considered a part of Italian culture to be upheld in law. Finally, she emphasises that political discourse in Italy tends to treat the family as an ideal rather than a social reality, thus denying the experiences of single parents, children born outside wedlock and same sex partners whose rights are skated over.

The image of Italy abroad is also often associated with the mafia. The Sicilian mafia has been known worldwide for a long time now. But it was only after the killing of six people in Duisburg, Germany, in August 2007, as a result of a showdown between two families from San Luca, a village on the Ionian coast near Reggio Calabria, that the international media realised how significant the 'Ndrangheta was. Based in the southern region of Calabria, the 'Ndrangheta had long been considered a marginal phenomenon compared to the Sicilian Cosa Nostra or the Neapolitan Camorra, but it has now emerged as the most powerful criminal

organisation in the world, one whose revenues from illegal activities, local and international, range from €35 to €40 billion a year (£29-34 billion). As Ercole Giap Parini explains in his chapter, "The strongest mafia: 'Ndrangheta made in Calabria", locally the 'Ndrangheta has created a parallel economic system based on unfair competition, control of public contracts and collusion with the public administration and the political class. Internationally, the 'Ndrangheta has been able to maintain strong ties with South American narcos organisations, especially in the importation of cocaine. Although drug trafficking remains a major business for the 'Ndrangheta, Parini points out a recent trend in illegal activities which has been under-reported: the disposal of dangerous industrial waste. In a competitive global economy, he warns, there are more and more companies willing to compromise with criminal organisations to cut the costs of waste disposal. There is no easy solution to the problem of 'Ndrangheta. A combination of political, judicial and social measures seems to be required. But thanks to the current political climate, such action, Parini claims, is not being given the necessary priority.

The existence of groups like 'Ndrangheta has an obvious bearing on the divide between North and South, an issue that has affected Italy since Unification in 1861. Data reported in *Italy Today* by Carlo Carboni, Professor of Economic Sociology at the Università Politecnica delle Marche, show that while southern regions have an average per capita income of roughly €17,000 a year (£14,400), less than that of Portugal, Lombardy, in the North West, is one of the richest regions in Europe. One of the solutions put forward to address the problem and reach the goal of cohesion as required by the EU has been decentralisation, in the form of federalism. However, in the chapter "When politics matters: Federalism, Italian style", Christophe Roux questions whether this might provide a solution for the North-South divide. Referring to the well-known study, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), published by Robert Putnam in 1993, Roux argues that not all regional governments perform well in terms of responsiveness and accountability: it is therefore reasonable to ask why the weakest regions, often affected by clientelism, corruption and inefficiency, might be expected to perform better if given greater autonomy. Moreover, Roux points out that the constitutional reform that expanded regional competencies in 2001 had the effect of increasing legal disputes between the State and the regions, which were often forced to turn to the Constitutional Court to resolve them. On top of that, according to Roux, federalism, which is advocated by the Northern League as a cure-all measure to solve the economic crisis, is not even one of the main issues worrying Italians at the moment.

A struggling economy

A book on the Italian malaise could not leave out the economic situation of the country, one of the most significant of citizens' worries. "After twenty

years of European funding, Italy is still struggling with implementation,” said Simona Milio, presenting the chapter she authored for *Italy Today*. The Sicilian-born researcher explained why, despite being the second largest recipient of European funding, Italy performs so poorly and fails to spend the money it is allocated. Milio’s study focuses on the so-called Structural Funds (SFs), meant for Objective 1 regions, that is, regions lagging behind the EU average in terms of development. The main goal of these funds is to help disadvantaged regions implement projects of sustainable development. Italy’s failure to spend the money it is allocated triggers a vicious circle, as it blocks the allocation of further funds. In her analysis, Milio points out that the success of EU cohesion policy depends heavily on national and regional administrative bodies conforming to the Community’s requirements and procedures. The Mafia, Milio adds, significantly thwarts the allocation of financial aid in Italy. The scholar has also found significant differences between macro-regions, i.e. North, Centre and South, and within macro-regions as well. In southern Italy, for example, she has compared the lower-than-average performing Sicily to the high-performing Basilicata, explaining the difference between the two regions in terms of political interference in the choice of managing authorities and implementing bodies; a series of scattered projects that satisfy clientelistic demands but lack long-term planning; the lack of defined roles of the personnel of administrative bodies, leading to duplication and uncoordinated workloads. Bureaucracy, suggests Milio, needs to be simplified and staff chosen according to merit and qualification. This echoes the observation of Mammone and Veltri in the very first chapter of *Italy Today*. According to a survey carried out by the Luiss University of Rome in 2009, the lack of meritocracy costs each citizen between €1,080 (£914) and €2,671 (£2,260) per year. Again, this is a piece of information that people will not easily find in regular newspapers.

John Peet joined the discussion at the LSE by offering insights into the Italian situation from an outsider’s perspective. He mentioned a study carried out in 2008 by Francesco Grillo, managing director of the management consulting firm Vision and Value, which projected forward the growth in Italy’s Gross Domestic Product for the previous two years and found that, in twenty years, Italy’s economy would be overtaken by Romania. Peet also addressed an issue which is largely missing from the book: the effects of the recession. The journalist said that since Italy’s growth, along with that of Portugal, had been the slowest in recent years, when the recession hit the world’s economy, Italy appeared to be in slightly better shape than countries where the contraction was more visible. Italy’s GDP fell less than that of the UK or Germany. Meanwhile, layoffs have primarily hit younger workers, many of whom still live at home, so the Italian family has lessened the impact of the downturn. However, Italy has not yet adjusted to its loss of the option of devaluing its currency, a tactic it

frequently used in the age of the lira to boost trade and the economy in general.

What were once considered one of the greatest resources of the Italian economy, small family-run businesses, have become a liability. The resilience of family firms, said Peet in agreement with Raoul Minetti, author of the final chapter, "The crisis of family firms and the decline of Italian capitalism", has negatively affected investment in research and development (R&D) and limited the role of merit and competence in hiring practices. In countries such as Britain, where companies are fewer but larger, raising money to invest in R&D is easier. Hence, such companies tend also to be more competitive internationally. This highlights a major related problem, one not discussed in *Italy Today*, but which emerged at the LSE presentation: the judicial system. Peet urged reform, arguing that the slowness of judicial throughput was having significant social and economic consequences including alienating potential investors aware of the cost it might have for their businesses. "I would put a reform of the judicial system at the top of Italy's priorities," said Peet; "but with the current government it seems very unlikely to happen."

The current government and its Prime Minister were much criticised by the British journalist, who blamed them for failing to bring Italy those liberalising structural reforms it desperately needs. The opposition parties, however, do not seem to offer viable alternatives either, according to Peet, describing the centre-left as in a "depressing state".

Social issues such as population aging, male chauvinism, still ingrained in the fabric of society, and low levels of social trust are also significant indicators of Italy's malaise. According to Peet, universities are failing to help increase the productivity of the country. Mammone and Veltri, in their joint introductory chapter, argue that academics, and social scientists in particular, are contributing little to the public debate in Italy, a 'dark shadow' in itself.

A moral crisis

The crisis is not just political and economic however. "It is also a moral and ethical crisis," said Mammone, who specialises in right-wing extremism. In the course of his research, he has examined the 'everyday racism' perpetrated by parties such as the Northern League or the neo-fascist heirs of the Italian Social Movement. According to Mammone, fascism is still alive in Italy, in its collective memory, architecture and politics: the granddaughter of the Duce, Alessandra Mussolini, is now deputy for the People of the Freedom party, which is worrying given the rise of far-right culture and so-called soft-core racism. Daily episodes of intolerance and discrimination; propaganda that blames immigrants for social and economic problems rather than addressing these problems' underlying causes; economic crisis: all these have exacerbated the situation. In an article published in the January-February issue of the cultural magazine

Reset ("Se l'onda razzista passa per folklore", pp. 17-20), Mammone had compared the situation in Italy with the situation in the UK. If in Britain members of Parliament, intellectuals and society at large have risen against a xenophobic party such as the British National Party, in Italy the Northern League, a party defined by many as extreme-right and racist, is widely considered folkloristic, regionalist and too 'soft' to be effectively dangerous. Mammone also criticises what he sees as an acquiescent press, too willing to perpetuate an image of the illegal immigrant as someone who poses as a threat to national values, identity and employment, despite the evidence to the contrary. And when the importance of the work carried out by migrants in Italy is acknowledged, discussion of their presence is too often confined to this dimension – as if they were expected to disappear once the shift came to an end. The portrayal of immigration as a threat linked to crime and poverty has boosted, according to Mammone, a response focussed on security measures, which actually mask racism and xenophobia. As Peet and Dr. Carl Levy (Goldsmiths, University of London) also noted, Italy, a country with a long history of emigration, has not yet developed a model to integrate the migrants that have settled within its borders.

Martina Avanza's chapter "The Northern League and its 'innocuous' xenophobia" offers a plethora of examples of the racism perpetrated by Umberto Bossi's party. Many of the measures proposed by the Northern League have been advertised as ones designed to defend the national identity of both Italians and migrants. That is the case, for instance, with the proposal for separate classes for non-Italian students, who were allegedly slowing down the learning process, or the suggestion that doctors should act as informants when examining illegal migrants. Measures taken with reference to the Roma community, such as the demolition of crumbling camps on the outskirts of Italian cities, have been publicised as good for the Roma themselves. The pretext of acting in the name of the gypsies' wellbeing, argues Avanza, is a means of disguising discrimination. This strategy has proved successful in the long term, as confirmed by the results of the recent regional elections which saw the Northern League win the presidencies of Veneto and Piedmont.

The issue of Roma and Sinti minorities in Italy provides enough material for an entire chapter: in "Gypsies out of Italy!", Nando Sigona explores the key policy initiatives on Roma and Sinti taken since November 2007, when a decree issued by the Government referred to "a nomad emergency". According to Sigona, many politicians appeal to citizens' concerns in seeking to justify discriminatory policies. However, the knowledge people have of the Roma and Sinti communities is extremely poor and based on stereotypes. Their numerically limited presence, in fact, contrasts with their high media profile due to the stigma attached to them. Security measures, including the mapping of nomad camps and the

fingerprinting of their residents, have brought Italy under the scrutiny of international human rights organisations. Officially sanctioning the existence of a security emergency has given extreme-right groups weighty arguments to fuel their racist propaganda and local authorities the legitimisation required to adopt eviction as a tool to deal with the issue.

The press plays an important role too, adds Mammone. "Worryingly," he said, "there is a lack of social sanctioning, both from the media and from society at large, resulting in a shift: the unacceptable is becoming acceptable." The Catholic Church is not spared, either. In relation to migrants, it has often demanded respect for the dignity of the human being; hospitality, and tolerance of the 'other'. However, it has failed to condemn the lack of morality of some politicians because it has thereby obtained the support of parties such as Berlusconi's People of Freedom for the 'traditional family' in opposition to civil partnerships. The Church has often shown more interest in political than pastoral issues. And its attitude towards immigration is often questionable, as Eva Garau argues in her chapter, "The Catholic Church, universal truth and the debate on national identity and immigration". According to Garau, the Church has implemented a model of 'selective solidarity' and in its discourse has often conflated national identity with religious identity, taking for granted, for instance, that all Muslims are foreigners.

Summing up, Mammone quoted Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the Communist Party from 1972 until his death in 1984, who pinpointed morality as the key issue in Italian politics. "The moral question is at the centre of Italy's problems," he said in 1981, thirteen years before Berlusconi's political debut as leader of the centre right. While Italy may well be the sick man of Europe at present, that should not be too discouraging. "Turkey was originally the sick man of Europe," said Peet in his final contribution to the debate. "So things change."

Anna Pitton
Freelance journalist

Conference Group on Italian Politics and Society (CONGRIPS) at the American Political Science Association annual meeting

The 106th annual meeting of the American Political Science Association takes place in Washington DC between 3 and 6 September. The panel being sponsored by the Conference Group on Italian Politics and Society (CONGRIPS) is this year entitled: "The Italian Political System After 2008: Quo Vadis?". The outcome of the 2008 general election seems to have represented something of a watershed in Italian politics. Most obviously, it brought the landslide victory of Silvio Berlusconi, making him one of Europe's most successful politicians of recent decades and giving him a

position of seeming hegemony in Italian politics. Concomitantly, it brought the failure of the centre left and of Veltroni's project for a single party capable on its own of offering a credible alternative to the current incumbents. Third, in bringing an unprecedented concentration of seats on a small number of parties, one led by a prime minister whose control of it has seemed, until recently, near absolute, the election brought to office a government that looked set to be the strongest in the history of the Italian republic. The election, in its aftermath, seemed to invite two major questions. First, it appears reasonable to think that all else equal outcomes with the foregoing characteristics will bring radical changes in the characteristics of governance. In particular, strong government ought to be self-reinforcing owing to the opportunities it provides for 'permanent campaigning' – using support mobilisation as a key resource for governing, while using governing as an instrument to build and sustain support. And it ought therefore to be accompanied by improvement in the actual efficiency and effectiveness of policy outputs and processes of policy making. The second question concerns the great pessimism which the election outcome induced for the prospects of the centre left returning to office at any time in the near future. On the one hand, the failure of the 2008 'go-it-alone' approach made it difficult to envisage any realistic way forward without some kind of alliance strategy. On the other hand, the parties concerned seem to have remained as divided and litigious as ever. So in order to assess the significance of the general election of 2008 and thus the current 'state of play' of Italian politics, two years on, the panelists will address these two broad themes, asking in particular: *Has* the election brought a sea-change in the quality of government in Italy and if so why; if not, why not? What is the current state of the forces of opposition to the centre right and what are their prospects?

Panellists and papers include:

- Alessandro Cagossi (West Virginia University), "Toward the End of Berlusconiism or the Institutionalisation of Berlusconi's Power?"
- Daniele Albertazzi (University of Birmingham), "D'Amore e D'Accordo: Popolo della Libertà (PdL) and Lega Nord (LN) in Government"
- Donatella Campus (University of Bologna), Cristian Vaccari (University of Bologna) and Luigi Ceccarini (University of Urbino) "Political Discussion in Italy Between Mass Media and Ideology: Insights from the 2008 Election"
- James Walston (American University of Rome, Italy) "Berlusconi's Permanent Legacy – The Third Republic?"
- Geoff Lyndon Andrews (The Open University, UK), "The Ideological Crisis of the Italian Left"

For more information, please visit the APSA conference website at: www.apsanet.org/content/65547.cfm

The Italian Politics Specialist Group of the UK Political Studies Association (PSA) and the Società Italiana di Scienza Politica (SISP) Standing Group on Italian Party Transformations in Comparative Perspective at the SISP Annual Conference

The 24th annual conference of SISP takes place in Venice, from 16 to 18 September. This year the PSA's Italian Politics Specialist Group is co-sponsoring, with the Society's Standing Group on Italian Party Transformations in Comparative Perspective a series of panels entitled: "Where's the party? Restructuring, organization and membership". Party change and crisis has been a key theme for political science in recent decades, in particular as regards the capacity of European parties to adapt to a series of new structural challenges. Amongst the indicators presented as highlighting party crisis (and, hence, a crisis of representation) is the changed relationship between parties and territory, with membership and grassroots activity having been shown to be in decline across Western Europe. Put simply, the relationship between parties and their members has changed in terms of what they do within their relationship and how each views the role of the other. In this sense, Italy provides a fascinating case-study of party transformation given the events of the past two decades, which have seen enormous and ongoing changes not only in the composition of the party system itself, but also in how new (or reconverted) parties organise at all levels, how they interact with their members and how, more broadly, party culture, leadership and the public significance of the party have been transformed. The aim of the panels is to examine the above issues primarily in relation to the Italian case. Presenters have therefore been invited to examine (a) the internal life of parties at grassroots level; (b) the roles and interactions of party elites, elected representatives and activists/members; (c) the involvement (or non-involvement) of members in decision-making and candidate selection processes. Organised by Aldo di Virgilio (University of Bologna) and Duncan McDonnell (University of Turin), the panels feature a wide range of presentations including:

- Dario Tuorto (University of Bologna) and Piergiorgio Corbetta (University of Bologna), "Concordanza e discordanza tra orientamenti politici dei genitori e dei figli. Alcune implicazioni dall'analisi dei dati Iffi"

- Laura Sartori (University of Bologna) and Paolo Parigi (Stanford University), “Che cosa è un partito politico? Il partito come network”
- Eugenio Pizzimenti (University of Pisa) and Piero Ignazi (University of Bologna), “L’impatto del finanziamento pubblico sulle organizzazioni di partito: il caso italiano”
- Rosa Mulé (University of Bologna) “La trasformazione dei partiti politici”
- Paola Bordandini (University of Bologna) and Roberto Cartocci (University of Bologna), “Dimensioni della cultura politica italiana”
- Aldo Di Virgilio (University of Bologna) and Daniela Giannetti (University of Bologna), “I nuovi partiti italiani e la selezione dei candidati”.
- Francesco Raniolo (University of Cosenza), “Organizzazione e partecipazione nei partiti italiani. La prospettiva dei delegati”
- Daniele Albertazzi (University of Birmingham) and Duncan McDonnell (University of Birmingham/University of Turin), “Party Fusions and Governing Coalitions: The Pdl and the Lega Nord”
- Antonella Seddone (University of Cagliari) and Fulvio Venturino (University of Cagliari), “Choosing the Leader: The Italian Democratic Party at Polls, 2007 and 2009”
- Luciano M. Fasano (University of Milan), “PD 2007/2009. Analisi della fase genetica di un partito (con alcune considerazioni di ordine teorico sulle dinamiche di trasformazione dei partiti)”
- Sean Mueller (University of Kent at Canterbury), “National, Confederal, Regional, Interlocal? Rescaling Political Parties in the Canton of Glarus, Switzerland”
- Edoardo Bressanelli (European University Institute) and Enrico Calossi (University of Pisa), “Bipolarismo in Italia, bipartitismo in Europa? Incentivi e ostacoli del lungo cammino dei partiti italiani verso il Partito Popolare Europeo e il Partito Socialista Europeo”

For more information, please visit the SISP conference website at: www.sisp.it/convegno

Contemporary Rome: Changing Faces of the Eternal City

Both within and outside Rome’s historic centre, a variety of transformations are currently underway. Recent decades have seen the arrival of large numbers of immigrants, many of whom are becoming permanent residents and are changing the outlook of the city. This new multicultural reality is affecting the arts, Rome’s nightlife, its economy, and neighborhoods. It has also become a highly contested issue in local politics.

Mobility is not restricted to Rome's newcomers and the city is undergoing gentrification, labor market transformations, geographic expansion. Conditions in its peripheries are now the subject of intense study and urban planners are seeking new approaches to developing the city for a sustainable future. The issues of pollution, congestion and calls for decentralization are more urgent than ever. Rome's identity as national capital is also an issue for debate as moves for increased regional autonomy and questions concerning the role of the nation state itself develop. The many ways in which the city of Rome is changing its faces deserve critical attention and analysis. This conference, which will be held at The American University of Rome on 26-27 November 2010, intends to create a forum for such a multidisciplinary dialogue. For information, please contact the organizers: Bjørn Thomassen (bjorn_thomassen@yahoo.co.uk), Cristina Lombardi-Diop (cldiop@yahoo.com), or Isabella Clough Marinaro (isaclomar@gmail.com).