

PHD Theses – Thèses de doctorat – Doktorarbeiten

Lorenzo MELI, *The Italian Europeanism during the “Age of Crisis”. The contribution of Christian Democrat politicians to the European Commission (1967-1984)*
 – University of Milan

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FIELD: Contemporary History

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This thesis is the result of a project aiming to deepen our understanding of the so-called period of “stagnation” of the European Integration process, and particularly the role of Italian political actors within the EC Commission.

Previous research has mostly focused on the contribution of Italian politicians to earlier periods of European integration. It has also been assumed in previous works that the contribution of Italian actors to European integration between the late 1960s and early 1980s had been more limited.

Through the study of extensive original documentation this thesis has analysed the European commitment of Edoardo Martino, Franco Maria Malfatti, Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza and Lorenzo Natali. The author examined the main personal and institutional archival collections at the Historical Archives of European Union, les Archives Historiques de la Commission Européenne, and Istituto Luigi Sturzo in Rome.

A first issue to note is the centrality of the tasks that are entrusted to these personalities. The “Italians in Brussels” made a decisive contribution to the development of European Integration due to the importance of the portfolios they held: from External Relations (Martino), to the Mediterranean Enlargement (Natali), Environmental Policies (Scarascia) and the same EC Presidency (Malfatti). Equally important is a certain unity of views and attitudes towards the intergovernmental policy-making of the European integration process. Indeed, since the organization of The Hague and Paris Summits and the stabilization of European Council, everyone directed their attention particularly to the broad participation of the Commission to the establishment of the main Common policies (EPC and EMU, for instance) that could have founded the future political unification.

In their view, the intergovernmental developments could have led, on the contrary, to the gradual disappearance of the goal of a Federal union of the EC that was supposed to be prepared by the same EC institutions as the only real heritage of the founders’ original ideas.

Lotte DRIEGHE, *Lomé I revisited: towards a geopolitical intergovernmentalist analysis of the first Lomé Convention between the European Economic Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries by means of an archival study*
– Ghent University

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This thesis studies the dynamics behind the conclusion of the first Lomé Convention, a comprehensive partnership agreement between the EEC and 46 former colonies of EEC member states in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP), signed in 1975. This remarkable agreement, called ‘revolutionary’ and ‘a turning point in history’, has been the subject of numerous studies, providing very different and even contradictory but also inconclusive interpretations. Two issues interfered with the ambition to explain the Lomé I Convention. Firstly, the intra-EEC and intra-ACP dynamics were often overlooked, and secondly, empirical inaccuracies impacted the assumptions and conclusions of studies.

The opening of the archives on the negotiations of the Convention provided a unique opportunity to revisit the formation of the Lomé I Convention and find a more conclusive interpretation of this ‘drawing together of peoples of several continents’. By means of an inductive archival study including research in the Historical Archives of the European Commission (Brussels); Historical Archives of the Council of the EU (Brussels); the Historical archives of the European Union (Florence); the Belgian Diplomatic archive (Brussels) and the British National Archives (Kew), a detailed account of the preferences of the parties, their negotiating positions and the negotiating process is presented. From this an original and comprehensive explanation emerges, while refuting several popular assumptions.

In essence, the first Lomé Convention was the result of intergovernmental and geopolitical dynamics: the preferences of the most powerful states, the UK, France and Germany, determined the outcome of the negotiations. The French and British preferences were mainly based on geopolitical considerations, namely maintaining the relations with former colonies. Economic interests were of secondary importance. The German position, on the other hand, was a combination of ideological and financial preferences, and tempered the French and British geopolitical ambitions.

The most important misconceptions are the result of an underestimation of the UKs role and an overestimation of the ACPs power and unity; the Convention was neither solely a French project nor was it revolutionary; it held the middle ground between the special relationship that France (through the Yaoundé II agreement) and the UK maintained with former colonies. The New International Economic Order discourse, the commodity crises and its acclaimed effect on the negotiating power of ACP countries had little impact on the outcome of the negotiations.