

English summary

In the final months of the legislature the Berlusconi government passed two decrees that will have considerable influence on the freedom of research: the creation of a historical archive, separate from the Central State Archive, of the papers of the Presidency of the Council of ministers; and a reform regulating the governing bodies of the national history institutes. Agostino Bistarelli shows how the first measure impairs research in that it breaks the unity of the sources; the second subjects the nomination of the directors of the historical institutes to political choice.

Starting from the Thomas Kroll's research on the aristocratic liberalism in Tuscany, three scholars invited by Simonetta Soldani – Carlo Pazzagli, Luca Mannori and Marco Meriggi – discuss the impact of recent studies of the role in the Risorgimento of social groups close to the nobility, determined to oppose the logic of absolute and bureaucratic monarchy and regain an effective place in the direction of public affairs.

In the Restoration, the essential role assigned to science in the functioning of states during the Napoleonic era was appropriated for itself by the landed elites, the leaders of moderate liberalism. In her study of the congresses of Italian scientists (1839-1847), Mariapia Casalena analyses the birth of an Italian “patriotic” science.

Taking as starting point the condemnation of Cesare Cantù's *Storia Universale*, Maria Iolanda Palazzolo analyses the practices of the Congregation of the *Index librorum prohibitorum* as an instrument of control of the press in the mid. 19th century.

In Uses and Abuses of History section, Stuart Woolf examines the revisionist attack on the antifascist interpretation of fascism and the origins of the Italian republic. In Italy, with the participation of An and the Lega in the Berlusconi governments, politically motivated revisions of the Rsi have reached new levels. The responses of antifascist intellectuals reveal uncertainties about the unity of the Italian nation-state. In the second article, Maurizio Torrini analyses the acts of a congress (*Stato etico e manganello. Giovanni Gentile a sessant'anni dalla morte*), organized by the “Centre for the study and documentation of the historical period of the Italian Social Republic”, founded at Salò in 2003.

The research by Giorgia Manca, based on documents produced by Fascist mail censorship, reconstructs the experience of Italian soldiers in Yugoslavia during the IIww: self representation and the nature of the occupation are portrayed through the correspondents' direct experience.

Has the historiographic issue “Women during National Socialism” at this point become obsolete? Massimiliano Livi tries to provide an answer through a new retrospective reading of the past seasons of study.

Environmental historians have recently engaged in a lively debate about the future developments of their discipline. Wilko Graf von Hardenberg's aim is to introduce readers to the most interesting aspects of this debate.

Following a group of short reviews on the history of fascism, edited by Marco Palla, the issue closes with the Letters section, which includes two brief comments by Enzo Collotti and Stuart Woolf on the “tricks of memory”.