



Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy (The New Cold War History)

By Alessandro Brogi

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Throughout the Cold War, the United States encountered unexpected challenges from Italy and France, two countries with the strongest, and determinedly most anti-American, Communist Parties in Western Europe. Based primarily on new evidence from communist archives in France and Italy, as well as research archives in the United States, Alessandro Brogi's original study reveals how the United States was forced by political opposition within these two core Western countries to reassess its own anticommunist strategies, its image, and the general meaning of American liberal capitalist culture and ideology.

Brogi shows that the resistance to Americanization was a critical test for the French and Italian communists' own legitimacy and existence. Their anti-Americanism was mostly dogmatic and driven by the Soviet Union, but it was also, at crucial times, subtle and ambivalent, nurturing fascination with the American culture of dissent. The staunchly anticommunist United States, Brogi argues, found a successful balance to fighting the communist threat in France and Italy by employing diplomacy and fostering instances of mild dissent in both countries. Ultimately, both the French and Italian communists failed to adapt to the forces of modernization that stemmed both from indigenous factors and from American influence. *Confronting America* illuminates the political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural conflicts behind the U.S.-communist confrontation.

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Review

The book is the winner of the Charles Smith Award, by the Southern Historical Association.

"Alessandro Brogi's impressively researched and convincingly argued book will furnish readers with a comparative dimension from the recent past for today's varieties of anti-Americanism. *Confronting America* is an extraordinary work of scholarship and deserves the highest praise."

--Richard Drake, University of Montana

"This is a genuine tour de force. Brogi shows brilliantly how the powerful Communist Parties of Italy and France threatened American hegemony in postwar Europe and how Washington tried to forge an integrated diplomatic, economic, and cultural response. America emerged victorious in the psychological cold war, however, as a result of spontaneous modernizing, democratic, and self-critical forces within itself."

--Irwin Wall, University of California, Riverside, and author of *The United States and the Making of Postwar France, 1945-1954*

"The struggle that emerged in Western Europe--specifically in France and Italy--with the onset of the Cold War is the subject of this sound and original analysis. Particularly striking is its demonstration of the vigor and efficiency of the communist propaganda operation."

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Brogi masterfully examines US efforts to counter influence of the French and Italian communist parties throughout the Cold War.

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Confronting America adds significantly to our understanding of Washington's successful post-World War II policies in Western Europe and its ability to forge a Western alliance.

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Review

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About the Author

Alessandro Brogi is professor of history at the University of Arkansas.

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