

## Giorgio Napolitano



Giorgio Napolitano was born in Naples on June 29th, 1925.

He graduated in law from Naples University in December 1947, with a dissertation on political economy entitled *Il mancato sviluppo industriale del Mezzogiorno dopo l'unità e la legge speciale per Napoli del 1904* (The Failure to Bring about Industrial Development in Southern Italy after Italy's Unification and Special Legislation for Naples in 1904). In 1945-46 he engaged actively in the Student Faculty Councils movement, and was a delegate to the first National University Congress.

In 1942, as an undergraduate in Naples, he joined a group of young anti-Fascists and in 1945 he joined the Italian Communist Party, of which he was a militant and then a leading figure until the Democratic Party of the Left was established.

From the autumn of 1946 to the spring of 1948 he was a member of the Secretariat of the Italian Economic Centre for Southern Italy, chaired by Senator Paratore. He took also an active part for over 10 years in the Movement for the Rebirth of Southern Italy, since its foundation in December 1947.

He was elected to the Chamber of Deputies for the first time in 1953, and with the exception of the 4th Parliament he was a Member of Parliament until 1996, always re-elected in the Naples constituency.

His parliamentary activity began as a member of the Budget and State Holdings Committee, and focused - also in debates on the Floor of the House - on the issues of Southern Italy's development and national economic policy.

In the 8th (from 1981) and 9th Parliaments (until 1986) he chaired the Communist group at the Chamber of Deputies.

During the 1980s his activity focused on international and European policy issues, both as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies and (from 1984 to 1992 and from 1994 to 1996) of the Italian delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly, and also through manifold political and cultural initiatives. As far back as the 1970s he was an active lecturer abroad, visiting International Policy Institutes in the UK and Germany and several US Universities (Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Chicago, Berkeley, SAIS and CSIS in Washington).

From 1989 to 1992 he was a Member of the European Parliament.

On June 3rd 1992, in the 11th Parliament, he was elected Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, and remained in office until the end of that Parliament in April 1994.

During the 12th Parliament he was a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Chairman of the Special Committee on the Reorganisation of Broadcasting Sector.

During the 13th Parliament he served as Minister of the Interior and for the Coordination of Civil Protection in the Prodi Government, from May 1996 to October 1998.

Since 1995 he has been the President of the Italian Council of the European Movement.

From June 1999 to June 2004 he chaired the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

In the 14th Parliament the then Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Pier Ferdinando Casini, appointed him as Chairman of the Foundation of the Chamber of Deputies, an office which he held until the end of that Parliament.

On September 23rd 2005 he was appointed life senator by the President of the Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

On May 10th 2006 he was elected President of the Republic with 543 votes. He was sworn-in on May 15th, 2006.

In acknowledgement of his dedication to the cause of Parliamentary democracy and his contribution to the rapprochement between the Italian Left and European Socialism, in 1997 he was awarded the Leibnitz-Ring International Award in Hannover for his "lifelong" commitment.

In 2004 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Political Science from Bari University.

He contributed in particular to the journal *Società* (Society) and, from 1954 to 1960, to the journal *Cronache meridionali* (Southern Chronicles), with essays on the Mezzogiorno (South of Italy) debate following the Liberation, on the thinking of Guido Dorso, on agricultural reform policies and on Manlio Rossi-Doria's theses on the industrialisation of Southern Italy. In 1962 he published his first book *Movimento operaio e industria di Stato* (Workers' Movement and State Industry), with special reference to the analysis of Pasquale Saraceno.

In 1975 he published the book *Intervista sul PCI* (The Italian Road to Socialism: An Interview by Eric Hobsbawm with Giorgio Napolitano of the Italian Communist Party), which was translated and published in over 10 countries.

In 1979 he wrote *In mezzo al guado* (At Mid-Crossing), about the period of the so-called "democratic solidarity" (from 1976 to 1979), when he acted as spokesperson for the PCI and handled relations with the Andreotti government on economic and trade union issues.

In 1988, in his book *Oltre i vecchi confini* (Beyond Old Boundaries), he addressed the problems that arose in the years of the thaw in relations between East and West, at the time of President Reagan in the USA and President Gorbachev in the USSR.

His work *Al di là del guado: la scelta riformista* (Beyond the Crossing: the Reformist Choice) collects his public addresses from 1986 to 1990.

The book *Europa e America dopo l'89* (Europe and America after 1989), published in 1992, is a collection of lectures he gave in the United States after the fall of the Berlin wall and the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.

In 1994 he published, partly in the form of a personal diary, the book *Dove va la Repubblica - Una transizione incompiuta* (Where the Republic is Heading - An Unfinished Transition), on the period of the 11th Parliament, from his viewpoint as Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies.

In 2002, he published his book *Europa politica* (A Political Europe), at the height of his activity as Chairman of the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

His latest book *Dal PCI al socialismo europeo: un'autobiografia politica* (From the PCI to European Socialism: a Political Autobiography) was published in 2005.