development and potential of environmental politics in Italy. The work is divided into three sections addressing the inter-relationship between environmentalism and public opinion, Green activism and organisation, and the political manifestations of the ecologist movement. The essays trace the growth of the movement as it rapidly gravitates from a diffuse collection of conservation clubs towards a formal national political structure. As the authors point out, this is an increasingly important new political force with profound implications for the Italian party system, particularly in the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster and the recent successes of the Green Lists (Lista Verde) in the June 1987 election.

According to Melucci’s introduction, the basis of the Green movement lies not only in the reaction to the environmental crisis, but more importantly in a fundamental re-definition of individual and collective needs which has taken place in the last few years. The nature of these new, non-economic priorities conforms closely to Inglehart’s model of inter-generational value change outlined in The Silent Revolution. Although all the authors give largely sympathetic accounts and take the emergence of post-materialist values as self-evident, the book is thoroughly researched and makes liberal use of opinion polls and surveys from well-established sources. Bicocchi’s work, for example, gives a revealing account of the relationship between public opinion and potential and actual voters, while maintaining a clear designation between them.

Lomi’s contribution documents the factors which account for the increased co-operation in the environmental movement and the processes which have been established to co-ordinate further activity. The second section of the book deals with the organisational and political characteristics of the movement at local level, while Fulvio Faglio documents the familial connection. The studies concentrate on the three main environmental bodies in Italy (La Lega per l’Ambiente, Italia Nostra and the WWF), whose members are activists utilised as models for the wider movement. Perhaps the least convincing part of the study is the attempt to differentiate, in the light of increasingly overlapping structures and members, between these sub-cultural groups within the movement, ‘Conservation’, ‘Political Ecology’ and ‘Environmentalism’.

The last chapters are dedicated to the new political dimension presented by the Green List which marks the birth of an institutionalised and legitimised environmental political party in Italy. Clearly, the formation of a Green parliamentary group has fundamental implications for other institutional actors, particularly as the movement evolves towards full party status. Bicocchi’s final essay is perhaps the most revealing, as it offers the informed reader a detailed and comprehensive account of the values, motivations and dynamics of the Greens/nature affinity, which contains many interesting and idiosyncratic features.

From these essays it is clear that the green wave has reached Italy, and presents a powerful challenge to the established parties and institutions. La Sfida Verde is an essential acquisition for students of environmental and Italian politics: it should prove in the basis for a new and exciting body of literature.

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The Roman Catholic Church has been insufficiently studied by political sociologists and political scientists. Yet, it offers a potential research milieu for those interested
in studying the origins of the modern Occident, attention institutions, economic enterprises, and organizational hierarchies based on submission of conscience and intellect to the following of other-ordained rules. In this able and well-written study, Tom Ennis examines a society in which the power of the Roman Catholic church has arguably been greater than in any other liberal democracy. It is a useful read for both political scientists and sociologists of religion.

His book is an excellent supplement to John White’s Church and State in Modern Ireland (1925-79), because Ennis seeks to explain the historical and present fates of the Catholic Church’s contemporary power in Ireland. He first provides a useful summary of the religious behaviour of Irish Catholics, demonstrating the conclusions of surveys on the prevalence of magical superstition and legalistic morality in the Catholic population, and (more importantly) the absence of an ethic of individual responsibility among Irish Catholics. Second, he examines the organisational power of the Catholic Church in Ireland - its famous hierarchy, para-religious lay organisations and diverse parochial education and health administration. If the Republic. Third, he examines the social, economic and political power of the Church, paying special attention to the abortion and divorce referenda of 1983 and 1986 which have been widely interpreted as a response for Catholic and peasant ireland to the over-taxed forces of pluralism and co-operation.

Ennis explains the institutional power of the Catholic Church in Ireland as an essentially nineteenth-century achievement. The ethical identification of the native Irish with the Church had taken place as an equal and opposite reaction to the penal laws, which had expatriated the native Irish following their religion. The Catholic Church’s organisational power stemmed from a deliberate policy of the British imperial state in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century to abandon the attempt at Anglicise the Irish through coercion. The Catholic Church was given state support in pacifying and civilising the native Irish, those importantly in education and social welfare. Ennis correctly notes, the important role played by the Church in building a reformed Irish Catholic rural bourgeoisie with a stake in the imperial order, and as an adulate guide to the social relations in the Irish household in which priest and mother organised propped marriage and permanent celibacy as popular-control mechanisms. The intimate linkages between the stem family system (in which one sold thereby all the land), prolonged marriage, emigration, permanent celibacy, Irish nationality and the Church are all intrinsically and insightful explored in passages which will help to understand a great deal of nineteenth and twentieth century Irish politics and literature - although Ennis does display the sociological vice function of this study in missing a little later digression.

Moreover, Ennis is surely right to assume that the late nineteenth century of Irish Catholicism is drawing to a close. Surprisingly perhaps, the referendum on abortion and divorce demonstrates the validity of his argument. The abortion referendum was an unexpected blow to Catholic restructuring. It showed that liberal judges and the Dublin bourgeoisie would soon instil prochoice and more secular norms into the Irish policy. Although the referendum making abortion unconstitutional was carried by voting as one, 40 per cent of Catholics did not vote even though instructed by the Church to do so, and over 25 per cent of those who did rejected the proposed amendment. The divorce referendum by contrast was pushed by liberals, socialists and feminists, and only 40 per cent voted against marriage laws. Moreover, the divorce referendum’s content and its defeat, seemed to come more to the Church’s surprise in waking rural women’s fears that they would be abandoned without property rights to their feeble husbands if the bill was passed. Earthly material concerns were more important than religious ones in persuading many Irish women that voting for divorce would be like Turkey
voting for Christmas. However, although the tidal waves of modernisation and secularisation now breaking on Irish shores might seem unstoppable, the tenacity, adaptability and sheer organisational power of the Roman Catholic Church should never be underestimated. The longer running Western institution has not survived by mere accident.

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