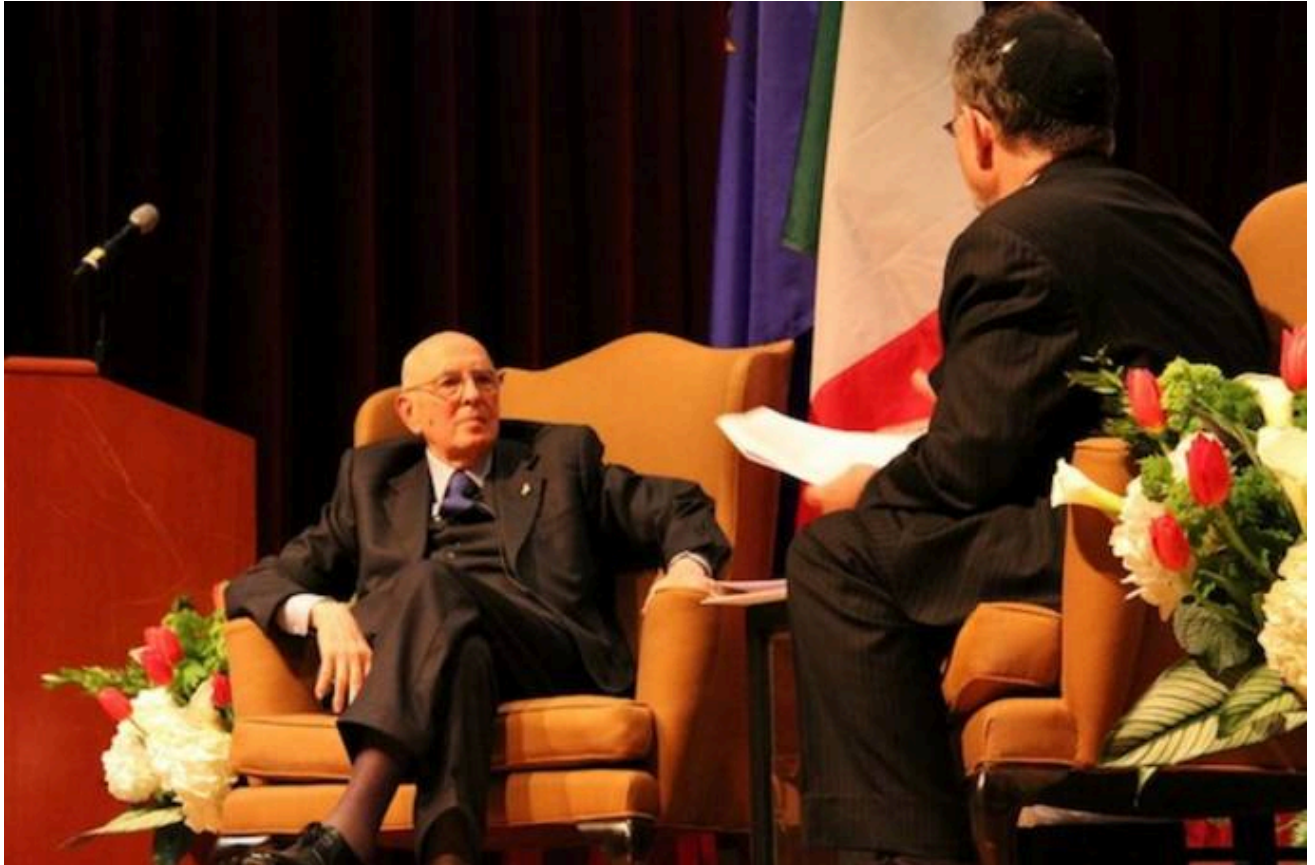


The President Talks About His Italy

Luca Delbello (March 31, 2011)



The President of the Italian Republic Giorgio Napolitano received the Presidential Medal from New York University. The focus was on Italian politics, Libya and the European Union.

“The true problem of Italy is the aptitude of the politics to be divided”.

President Giorgio Napolitano started his special public interview at the [New York University School of Law](#) [2]. The annual debate of the Emile Noël Lecture at the University is usually held by a great personality of the cultural and political world and 2011 was no exception to the rule. The lecture was held by a man who has lived the Italian political history since the beginning of the Republic.

Professor Joseph H.H. Weiler had the honor of hosting the event and discuss with the President about politics, culture and his personal life in front of a crowded and thrilled auditorium.

“This is the legendary Giorgio Napolitano”, “you represent the best of Italy”, professor Weiler



affirmed before starting the discussion. "It's not an easy moment for Italy and for the work of the President of the Republic" he admitted warily.

Napolitano clearly affirmed that the Italian and European political scene is giving him some concerns but it is necessary to deeply understand that the European Union has existed for only 60 years and that the path for completion is still long and complex.

"The biggest problem for Italian politics is the hyper-partisanship that creates a daily guerrilla by making the dialogue impossible and establishing a mutual delegitimization of the political opponents. Italy lives a situation where nobody listens to one another and the risks of serious divisions and strong weakening of the Country are widening."

There was time to deal with the delicate issue regarding the role of the President of the Republic in the Italian parliamentary system. The professor reminded him of some important decisions he has had to make during his time in office, such as the Englaro case, and others that he had to accept, with resignation, such as the appointment of some ministries. "I may give some advice and express my opinion, but if the Prime Minister insists, I can't help but saying that he has full responsibility for his choices, regarding his ministries".

The debate got even more serious when the President criticized the German choice of neutrality, stating that he doesn't comprehend Angela Merkel's decisions about non-intervention in Libya.

"Such choices should not be affected by national elections, political leaders should not pursue surveys, they should serve as a guiding light for citizens".

"We have seen that the main countries of the European Union are divided on the military intervention and that is a really negative issue", Napolitano affirmed, and continued by commenting the landing of the ships in Lampedusa.

"Lampedusa is not only the Italian border, but it is the European border, so the problem is European."

Napolitano even revealed an unusual side, his private one. The President spoke about his passion for art, in particular for the music of Mozart and Beethoven and the theater of Ibsen and Cechov going back in time by telling the New York University audience about the dramatic events he lived through during the Second World War.

The event ended with the awarding of a moved Napolitano who received the Presidential Medal of New York University. The last answer of the President brought laughs and gave a little hope: "Are you optimistic?", "Pessimism is a luxury I can't afford".

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