



The Politics of Mental Health in Italy

By Michael Donnelly

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In 1978 Italy passed a deeply radical law closing all its mental health hospitals. This was the culmination of the growth and development of a very strong anti-psychiatry movement which had sprung up in the late 1960's. Both the law, the movement, and its aftermath have been much discussed in Britain, America and other European countries because of the need to reconsider their own mental health care policies, but up to now there has been a lack of reliable literature on which to base the discussion.

The Politics of Mental Health in Italy provides for the first time a scholarly and very balanced account of events and phenomena that have been previously presented in a more idiosyncratic and polemical fashion. Michael Donnelly introduces, documents and comments critically on the three phases of the Italian experience: the late sixties mental health movement; the drafting and passage of the 1978 law; and the aftermath of deinstitutionalisation, which has disappointed its supporters and kept the whole topic at the centre of public debate.

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