

Report from Italy by Umberto Pascali

Venice tries to strike back

The "baptism" of a new oligarchical institution takes place in the ancient oligarchical center.

The ancient Benedictine monastery on the Island of St. George in Venice was the scene on July 12-15 of the "baptizing," as participants put it, of a new institution, Aspen Italy. The choice of verb was presumably intentionally provocative, since Aspen Italy will be devoted to spreading an ancient *pagan* conspiracy against the Judeo-Christian tradition—the Venetian oligarchical model.

The Aspen Institute, which has been leading the drive to decouple Western Europe from the United States, will be right at home in Venice, the city that harbored the enemies of the Italian Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Venetian oligarchist prejudice against Western industrial progress and nation-states is the root of Aspen's "post-industrial society."

Although the sessions were secret, with doors "rigidly" closed, nobody tried to hide the fact that not simply a new branch of Aspen had been launched, but an ambitious attempt to restore the rule of Venice and the Central European oligarchy was being made, played as "new relations with the East without the obligation to respect the expected, official positions." Concretely, that meant a series of proposals to facilitate Russian economic hegemony over Western Europe in the name of new "trade links" with the East bloc.

The Cini Foundation which hosted the meeting was set up by Count Cini, who became rich in the Fascist war buildup of Benito Mussolini. The Cini Foundation is the center of the most important cultural warfare activities of

the Venetian oligarchy. The monastery was surrounded by police and secret service agents, and the few trusted journalists allowed in for less than an hour were forbidden to even use pens.

"Aspen Italy seeks to overcome the outworn models of the Trilateral Commission and of the Italo-American Council, and Venice can become its propelling center, with important extensions toward the Mediterranean, the Third World, the Far East!" The Italian Labor Minister, Gianni De Michelis, just elected vice-chairman of Aspen Italy, was enthusiastic.

De Michelis, a Socialist leader, is proud to be one of the few "real Venetians," married into the nobility of the Most Serene Republic. He used to hobnob with many of the brilliant young professors who were the stars of the Venice salons and then turned out to be controllers of terrorism—like Toni Negri, arrested as a mastermind of the 1978 terrorist murder of former Prime Minister Aldo Moro and now a fugitive in France.

De Michelis is not the only "baptizer" with Moro's skeleton in his closet. The president of Aspen Italy is Italian Senate president Francesco Cossiga, who aspires to be elected President of Italy next year. He is finally readying his comeback after the long silence that followed the Moro murder, when the statesman's widow accused then-Interior Minister Cossiga of failing to save Moro's life.

One invited guest who failed to show was Henry Kissinger—some say because he is still scared about the Moro case, after having made a last-minute escape last year from the ques-

tioning ordered by Judge Ferdinando Imposimato. But "the best of the international political world" and "the protagonists of the world political scene," as the major Italian papers put it, were there: German ex-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, former French Premier Edgar Faure, former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, former British Prime Minister James Callaghan. And, of course, the president of Aspen, U.S. oil magnate Robert O. Anderson.

The most surprising announcement was that among the founding members of Aspen Italy is the vice-president of the Hungarian National Bank, Janos Fekete, one of the top monetary experts of the Communist countries, and author of the proposal for the "transferable ruble" aimed at monetary integration of the East bloc and the West, especially Western Europe. Fekete couldn't make the Venetian meeting, but sent an enthusiastic message.

Other baptizers included: Italian Republican Party head Giorgio La Malfa; the former head of the Carabinieri, Gen. Pietro Corsini; Banca Nazionale del Lavoro president Nerio Nesi; president of ENEA (the electric company) Umberto Colombo; Sergio Berlinguer, a high ranking foreign ministry official from the family of the just-deceased Communist Party secretary; the president of ENI, Franco Reviglio; the head of the foreign division of the Christian Democracy; and FIAT general manager Cesare Romiti.

The institute "will keep an eye on the evolution of the whole Mediterranean area, Africa, and Latin America." Among the foreign members of Aspen Italy's board, besides Fekete, is Uganda's ambassador to the United Nations, Olara Otunnu, who, according to corridor gossip at the Venice meeting, will be the next U.N. secretary general.