

Report from Italy by Liliana Gorini

Reagan-Gorbachov on Capri?

The proposal has a very interesting background, and even more interesting history.

A letter of invitation for a "pre-summit" on the island of Capri has been sent to President Reagan and to Soviet leader Gorbachov by the mayor of Capri. According to the April 15 German daily *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, "The invitation reminds us that in the beginning of the century, Lenin was in Capri twice, and that John F. Kennedy also visited the island."

A meeting between Soviet Ambassador Lunkow and American Ambassador Maxwell Rabb has already been set up on the island for April 26. The Soviet ambassador confirmed his presence on April 25 and 26 to discuss the proposal. Raab has not yet confirmed to our knowledge, but "comes to Capri every year" at about this time, according to a spokesman for the municipality's tourist bureau.

The same spokesman explained to a journalist that the invitation to a pre-summit in Capri has an interesting background.

"In 1983," he said, "I led a delegation of the municipality of Capri to the Soviet Union, which was received by the Central Committee, and I spoke on Russian TV. We also agreed to have a partnership between Capri and the city of Alustra in Crimea, which is topologically like Capri.

"At that time, we brought up a proposal for a summit in Capri between Reagan and Andropov, who was then the general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. Then, there was the

Korean Airline accident [sic], and we had to drop the proposal for a while. I took it up again six months ago, in a discussion with the Russian and American ambassadors in Rome, who declared their openness to the idea. That's why we sent an official letter of invitation. We are convinced that such a pre-summit in Capri, just to get to know each other, could work out very well."

The spokesman added that the ambassadors' meeting on Capri on April 26 will discuss the details of the pre-summit proposal. "We have important people here every year," he continued, "ministers, heads of state. In 1964 there was an official Soviet delegation led by the number-two man in the Soviet Union at that time, Kirilenko, who unveiled a statue of Lenin here in Capri."

There is also a deeper background to such matters. Capri has indeed hosted important people, who have there planned much more earth-shaking things than a pre-summit.

The reason for Lenin's popularity in the little island, geographically far from the Soviet Union, is that in 1909, it was Capri that gave birth to the first Bolshevik school of "Propaganda and Agitation for Workmen," known ever since as the "School of Capri." In effect, the Russian Revolution was plotted there.

The school, which continued giving classes for more than a year, was

supported by the group of "left Bolsheviks" around A. Bogdanov, Maxim Gorkii, and Anatolii Lunacharskii. The concept of *Proletkult* (proletarian culture) was not invented in Moscow or St. Petersburg, but in Capri, at the school of Soviet propaganda.

Capri was the site of much discussion among Bolshevik leaders over whether religious cults should really be banned in the Soviet republic, or whether "Russia should be loved in its totality." Lenin, as well as Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, and Josef Stalin, took part in the discussions, and left behind them such a large Russian community that a Russian-Italian library was established and assigned in 1914 to Nikolai Lyubarskii, who later on became the Comintern representative in Italy. In the Capri Certosa, there is also an Italo-Russian ethnographic museum.

The large Russian community in Capri used to live as a single family, meeting every evening on the Monte Solaro and staying up all night to listen to the Russian singer Fyodor Chalyapin while they waited for the sun to rise.

During the same period that the upheaval in Russia was being planned, the upheaval in Italy itself was being planned. Collective rites were held on Capri at that time by the "futurists" around Marinetti, the painting movement of Fascist Italy. The "futurists" met in the Grotta Matermania to hold rites to the pagan goddess Mithra (Great Mother, Isis, etc.)—sometimes interrupted by the police, inasmuch as the rites were preparation for human sacrifices to Mithra at the moment of the Sun's rising.

On top of a cliff overlooking such sights is the ancient villa of Tiberius, the Roman emperor under whom Jesus Christ was crucified, and the pontifex maximus of the Mithra cult.