

PSI headquarters for a private audience with the new "Il Duce." Not surprisingly, Cesana at Rimini attacked Craxi's main rival: "In reality the DC of De Mita is an unmoving power structure. The Catholic world is reduced to a tank full of votes. The DC is an electoral misunderstanding." Cesana's communiqué spells it out further: CL is opposing "a predetermined political project, which involves, among others, components of the DC who, in their declared cultural accordance with the LaMalfians [Republican Party], see the salvation of the country in the alliance with the PCI [Italian Communist Party]."

So what is the practical result? Vote PSI, suggest the CL ideologists. One of them, Alessandro Banfi, editor of *Il Sabato*, observes: "If we are living in a world that is post-modern and post-ideological, then the single party for all Catholics does not make sense." Cesana hints in the same direction: "Change parties at the moment of the elections? For now it's not part of our strategy, but it's not unthinkable." Another CL ideologue elaborates: "We are like Pius IV, who said he preferred the earthquake (Garibaldi) to the cholera (Cavour)." The subservience to the self-styled Garibaldian Craxi, and the willful rejection of the most positive political leader in recent Italian history (Cavour), could not be clearer.

Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti had appeared at Rimini to tell Communion and Liberation that they could not get engaged to the Socialist Party, since they were already married to the Christian Democracy. But he was fooling nobody, nor did he intend to. Fulsome was the praise of Cardinal Silvestrini: "This is a historic day. What seems like a conflict in reality is a method for encounter, for true unity. Even if the political unity of the Catholics is not a dogma. What counts is coherence with faith, and here at the Meeting I can visibly feel it." This endorsement of splitting the DC caused something of a stir, including in the Vatican. Many were puzzled by a statement issued by Cardinal Silvio Oddi, who noted that while CL is "chomping at the bit," it is galloping, and "galloping in the right direction."

The Italian newspapers found a word for CL's maneuvers: *politicume*, dirty politics. The CEI, the Italian Bishops' Conference, issued a reprimand against CL for their activities. De Mita dismissed them as "hack theologians and beach theologians." But Giussani, Formigoni, and Buttiglione are determined to press on. Their topic for Rimini 1989, if their organization lasts that long? "Socrates, Sherlock Holmes, and Don Juan."

And Don Giussani has new tricks up his sleeve to gain favor in the Secretariat of State. He is one of the promoters of "Lumen 2000," a network of three television satellites which will allegedly make it possible for the Vatican to televise papal messages and other programming to suitably equipped television sets all over the planet. The head office of Lumen 2000 will be in Dallas, Texas. The money comes from certain Dutch charismatic circles.

Background to the News

CL: pornography, Mao, and dirty money

by Webster Tarpley

Communion and Liberation (*Comunione e liberazione*) always presents itself as a rigorous guardian of traditional Catholic virtues. CL leaders like Formigoni and Buttiglione boast that they have taken vows of chastity, and hint that they have kept their virginity intact. These claims of purity and abstinence stand in stark contrast to the cultural atmosphere of the Rimini meeting.

Pornography

One of the stars of that meeting was a certain Franco Branciaroli, noted as one of the leading Italian pornographic actors of the current phase. Branciaroli has made two films with the notorious Tinto Brass, one of the world's leading red lights among erotic and pornographic cineasts. For Tinto Brass, Branciaroli has been the protagonist of "La Chiave" and "Miranda." The stars of these two productions were Stefania Sandrelli and Serena Grandi, respectively. Serena Grandi has predicated her career upon the exhibition of her mammary apparatus, which seems to owe something to art as well as to nature.

Stefania Sandrelli has admitted her participation in sex orgies in the Roman nightclub Number One, which was at the center of a scandal some years back because of cocaine consumption on the premises, especially by senior officials of the Bank of Italy, the nation's central bank. Both films graphically depict a series of squalid sexual encounters. In spite of all this, Branciaroli was presented by CL at Rimini as a member in good standing. When asked by journalists if he had any second thoughts about his erotic roles with Grandi and Sandrelli, Branciaroli answered: "The only mistake I made was not to have actually performed intercourse with both of them. But I am a Catholic, and I could not do it."

Asked what he thought about pornography, he answered: "Look, this was pornography that was more like a good meal. Anyway, I am convinced that the Church is not based only on the sixth and ninth Commandments. . . . But I have to be myself, and I am thinking of complete love, including the

flesh. I believe and I sin, and I am awaiting the Last Judgment. I have faith, and I will be responsible for my desires. But women are just so beautiful.”

Maoism

Among the other pious participants at the Rimini Meeting we also find one Aldo Brandirali, who enjoyed a brief blaze of notoriety in Italy and some other parts of the world in the years after 1968, when he was the charismatic leader of one of the largest Maoist political formations in the Western world, the Italian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), also called *Servire Il Popolo* (Serve the People). In those heady days of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Brandirali officiated at numerous “people’s weddings,” amounting to large-scale fornication somehow legitimized by the spirit of Chairman Mao. Brandirali would be placed by Dante among the procurers in the Inferno. Yet, Brandirali, through the mysterious actions of Don Giussani, is now a member of the national leadership of CL.

Among the other debris of 1968 that washed up on the Rimini beach in time for CL’s meeting was feminist Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, who operated out of Paris in the years before Mao’s red sun declined. Macciocchi attained a kind of literary recognition in certain communist quarters with her highly laudatory study of Antonio Gramsci, the early leader of the Communist Party of Italy, who wrote that it would be necessary to seize control over the culture of a nation like Italy before imposing a communist political dictatorship there. Lately Macciocchi has been the author of a book entitled *Il Portone di bronzo*, which treats of Vatican diplomacy and Western culture, after a fashion. Ugly rumors now circulate alleging that Macciocchi is in illicit intimacy with a high prelate.

In addition to the presence of these luminaries, the Rimini meeting also cast new light on the founding phase of CL. Leading members of this formation like to refer sanctimoniously to themselves as “poor Parsifals” fighting modern, materialistic Italian society, Parsifals who have to make painful sacrifices on the material plane in order to wage their battle of faith and morality. Now it turns out that from the very beginning some years back, the CL weekly *Il Sabato* has been paid for by none other than “Sua Emittenza” Silvio Berlusconi, the man who more than any other has been responsible for the moral and intellectual degradation of Italian television and news media.

Berlusconi’s latest production is a television version of *Valentina*, the radical-chic perverse-pornographic comic strip drawn by Craxi’s friend Guido Crepax of the rotten Milan cultural circles of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI). The state of affairs thus exposed can be roughly compared to a Catholic group in the U.S. relying on financing from Hugh Hefner of *Playboy*, and then claiming to be in a fight with the immoral Establishment.

CL also finds room for former fascists like the Mayor of

Rome, Giubilo. Their entire Rimini meeting was financed by the unsavory businessman Giuseppe Ciarrapico, who calls himself a “CL businessman.”

Oligarchs on parade

Europe 1992 means, among other things, atavistic domination of the continent by the titled feudal nobility. Some leading aristocrats were recently on display in Il Borro, near Arezzo, on the occasion of the wedding of Princess Bianca d’Aosta of the cadet line of the Italian royal house of Aosta with the Venetian Count Giberto Arrivabene Valenti Gonzaga. The princess is the daughter of Prince Amadeo di Savoia-Aosta and of Claudia of Orleans, daughter of the Count of Paris, the Orleanist pretender to the French throne and of the Princess Isabel of Braganza.

The wedding was attended by the 82-year old former Queen of Italy, Maria Jose of Savoy, whose reign lasted little more than the month of May 1946, before she and her late husband Umberto II were ousted by a referendum that created the Italian Republic. Maria Jose was the daughter, and later the sister, of Kings of Belgium. Among the pretenders present were the Count of Paris, Henry of Orleans and his wife, the Duchess of Clermont, King Michael and Queen Anna of Romania, the Bourbon-Sicilia King of Sicily, and King Idris of Libya.

The wedding of Bianca of Aosta was supposed to assume the aspect of a reunion of the Savoy and Savoy-Aosta clans, who have been riven by dissent, backbiting, scandal, and crime. Maria Jose was returning to Italy for only the third time (legally, that is) since the referendum that terminated the monarchy just after the war. She was joined by her three daughters, the Princesses Maria Gabriella, Maria Pia, and Maria Beatrice. Maria Gabriella had with her her daughter, Elisabeth de Balkany. Maria Jose’s son, Prince Vittorio Emanuele and his son, Prince Emanuele Filiberto, were both kept out of Italy by the provision of the constitution that continues to exclude the direct male heirs of the House of Savoy from crossing the frontier legally.

Vittorio Emanuele some years ago shot a tourist on one of the islands near Corsica while on vacation; the description “pistol-packing prince” has stuck, also because Vittorio Emanuele is involved in arms trafficking. For Maria Jose, the absence of her son and heir was the biggest disappointment of the day, even though Vittorio’s wife, Marina Doria, was able to attend.

Caroline of Monaco was there, much sought after by the paparazzi. The Agnelli family, owners of Fiat, were represented by Umberto Agnelli and his wife Countess Allegra Caracciolo. There was also Clara Agnelli and her husband, the Count Nuvoletti, joined by Ira Agnelli Fürstenberg. Archduke Lorenz of Hapsburg represented the imperial house of the Holy Roman Empire. All politicians were rigidly excluded. Maria Pia Vecchi, the wife of former Italian Prime Minister Amintore Fanfani was in attendance, but Amintore

was nowhere to be found. This represented a political decision by the oligarchs to profile themselves against the political class. Duke Amedeo of Aosta told the press: "This is a family gathering, all the more so because no politicians are present."

Maria Jose was clearly on the same line. "I am for all Italians, and for no party," she told a packed press conference. Maria Jose also disavowed any link to monarchism, now represented in Italy by marginal and rapidly aging forces. "No, I am not a monarchist," Maria Jose proclaimed. "I want to be treated just like a normal person."

Now it turns out that from the very beginning, the Communion and Liberation weekly Il Sabato has been paid for by Silvio Berlusconi, the man who is most to blame for the moral and intellectual degradation of Italian TV and news media.

These remarks caused an outburst of rage from among the House of Savoy's old-line monarchist devotees. Maria Jose was at pains to elucidate her original thought: "That phrase of mine has been wrongly interpreted, because only half of it was cited. I only wanted to say that I am not a monarchist because I want to belong to all Italians, without any distinction of political ideas. I feel very close to those who never knew what monarchy was, and to those who did not like it. And I think that it is not a mystery that in 1945, in the referendum between monarchy and republic, I did not vote, and in the elections for the Constituent assembly, I voted for Saragat, that is to say, for a socialist government. But one thing means more to me than any other: I hope that one day the Italians will remember me like a normal person, and not like a queen."

Maria Jose went on to explain that although she has lived in exile in Switzerland for 40 years, she feels very much at home in the Soviet Union and in the People's Republic of China. The Italian press interpreted the absence of the Royal Houses of Great Britain, Spain, and Greece as messages to Duke Amadeo that he must patch up his quarrel with Vittorio Emmanuele, or in terms of more direct dynastic rivalries and resentments. In Italy as elsewhere in Europe, the oligarchs are thus able to take advantage of public disgust with the party politicians of all stripes, hoping thus to prepare dynastic restorations they hope may lie just over the historical horizon in the "post-ideological" future.

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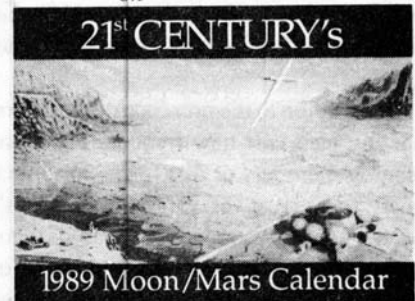
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