

three, the Trilaterals concluded: a Catholic pole, which should continue to be represented by a smaller DC; a Socialist pole, which should be constituted by an alliance between the Socialist Party (PSI) and the Communist Party (then the PCI, now the PDS), with the last in a subordinate position; and a "lay" pole, including all the other non-Catholic forces, led by the Republican Party. The Republican Party in Italy is considered the party of "money"—of the banks.

With the collapse of the communist system in 1989-90, evidently the conditions required by the Trilateral Commission started to be realized. The Communist Party started to lose votes, and everybody now expects that with the new elections, it will be overtaken by the Socialist Party. Already, important local governments have been formed in Milan and Brescia (two leading industrial cities in the north of Italy), thanks to some important representatives of the PDS, who decided to join the PSI, thus giving that party enough strength to create governments in coalition with the DC. The PDS is still the second-largest party in Italy.

The DC also started to lose votes, at least in northern Italy, to the advantage of the Lombardy League, also called the North League. As a matter of fact, it was when the Lombardy League in 1990 got some 20% of the votes in local elections, reaching the same percentage as the DC, that President Cossiga started to push openly for a presidential system, directly entering the arena of political discussion, as no other President had done before.

Now President Cossiga is engaged in a fight to prevent the DC from establishing an alliance with the PDS over the issue of institutional reforms. Cossiga has been denouncing the emergence of a new "historical compromise" between the DC and PDS—as at the time of Aldo Moro, the DC leader killed by the Red Brigades after organizing in 1978 a government supported by the PCI, aimed at giving Italy relative independence from American influence (see article p. 46).

A cultural issue

Both the Italian Church and the Vatican have, through their press, criticized Cossiga repeatedly. It is not new for the DC to come under attack from a variety of forces and for it, in order to defend its positions, to call on the support of the communists. What makes the attack particularly violent this time, is that it is happening in a cultural context which is highly degraded, where the principles of morality which go with a Christian vision of life have been largely forgotten by the population. The dominating culture is "lay," consumerist, and hedonistic. It is significant in this regard that Italy now has a fertility rate of approximately 1.3 children per woman: a rate of reproduction well below zero. People prefer to spend their money on new cars, than on children. It is in the context of this new hedonistic culture that the Republican Party entertains the Trilateral Commission's dream, to defeat the Christian Democracy.

Green Queen supports Earth Summit

by Mark Burdman

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has taken the unusual step of issuing a statement, in her own name, supporting the June 1-12 U.N. Conference on the Environment and Development in Brazil, the so-called Earth Summit or Eco-92. The occasion was the March 9 annual Commonwealth Day Message, in which Her Majesty, speaking in her capacity as "Head of the Commonwealth," called on the Commonwealth nations to mobilize to ensure the success of the Rio event.

The Queen's message is inclusively noteworthy because of her explicit endorsement of the concept of "stewardship" of the Earth. This concept has been put forward by the ecologist movement as a gnostic-pagan alternative to the injunction in the Book of Genesis for man to be "fruitful and multiply" and to assert "dominion" over nature. Heretofore, she left such gnostic pronouncements up to her husband, Prince Philip, and to her son Prince Charles. For her to issue such a statement may contain the seeds of a constitutional controversy in the United Kingdom, since the Queen is formally the head of the Church of England and is obliged to uphold the principles of Christianity in that capacity.

That the Queen would so speak, also bespeaks the British



Promoters of the "green" agenda: Queen Elizabeth II with George Bush at the White House, May 1991.

establishment's nervousness that the Earth Summit is shaping up to be a gigantic flop. In the past days and weeks, the nations of the southern hemisphere have been increasingly vocal in denouncing the machinations around the summit as aimed at denying them the right to development and reinforcing the power of northern nations over the South's destiny, in a new "eco-imperialism." Some of the vocal criticisms have come from nations like Malaysia and India, which are themselves members of the Commonwealth.

Economic concerns growing

Another factor which could potentially torpedo the ecological extravaganza is that the issue of economic depression has taken supremacy over that of the environment in many countries, especially in those, including Britain, where elections are being held in the next weeks. While "green" issues were a high-profile subject in Britain as recently as two years ago, none of the main parties competing in the upcoming elections is willing to focus on the subject, when voters are concerned with the wreckage of Britain's economy.

The political panic in the British establishment about the potential collapse of the Rio gathering was further evidenced two days after the Queen's message, in a signed commentary in the London *Times* by Michael Heseltine, British minister of the environment. Sparing no bombast, Heseltine intoned that "the future of our planet will be decided at Rio this summer," and that "Britain is leading the world debate on the environment." He called for the preparations for the summit to be "awe-inspiring," and stressed the "transcending importance" of the Brazil event itself.

Heseltine lauded the instrumental efforts of former British Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whom he characterized as a "scientist," in bringing about the "Montreal Protocol" for phasing out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and for having sounded the alarm about the alleged dangers of "global warming." The British minister patronizingly demanded that the nations of the South overcome their objections and show "firm commitments to action and bring a disciplined approach to bear" in the pre-summit negotiations and at the summit itself. Heseltine made an implicit threat that some giant ecological disaster might have to be concocted to engineer support for the summit: "Does the world need to feel an increasing exposure to danger before it develops a collective sense of purpose?"

Heseltine praised "the brave decision of John Major, who was the first world leader to commit himself to attend the Rio conference in person. . . . Our prime minister will attend the conference in Rio."

In mid-January, in an unusual signed commentary in the London *Observer* weekly, Major had reiterated his commitment to attend the Rio summit. The irony is, by the time June rolls around, it is more than likely that neither he nor Heseltine will still be in power, following Britain's elections on April 9.

Documentation

The following is the text of the Queen's March 9 Commonwealth Day Message 1992:

On this Commonwealth Day I ask you to remember that we share this world with many other living things. The Earth is a gift to us all, whoever we are, wherever we live. We have but one planet and all life on it is interdependent. Our Commonwealth is a partnership of 50 nations and we are responsible for one-third of this planet. We all share the task of ensuring that our world will remain fit for life and capable of sustaining us and those who will come after us.

For too long our natural environment has been taken for granted. It is now only too evident that we have to take serious steps to make certain that we cause no further destruction, nor permanently degrade the very natural resources on which we depend. For example, unless we take action now to halt the rise in global temperatures, rising sea levels will threaten the very existence of several island and low-lying Commonwealth countries.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be held later this year to draw attention to the many environmental problems that we have either inherited or created for ourselves. At this conference, and in many other ways, Commonwealth countries can make significant contributions. Together we represent a wide variety of climatic, landscape, and ecological conditions and we are at all levels of economic and social development. The Commonwealth can truly be described as a cross-section of the contemporary world.

Democratic governments reflect the will of their people. In our system, the views of the individual can be translated into government action, so it is possible for everyone to make a contribution, however large or small, to ensure the future health and vitality of the natural world around us. Bringing about the necessary changes will not be easy, particularly if it involves restraints and sacrifices. But it must be done, and we can all help in one way or another, individually or collectively.

The living world is a God-given heritage and we have to be more responsible in our stewardship of it. We all need air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat, but we must be careful—not selfish or greedy—about the way we exploit scarce natural resources and about the demands we make on the natural environment.

Gradually, we are waking up to the challenges, but we especially need the rising generations to help us take the right decisions and actions now. I ask the young people of the Commonwealth to make themselves aware of the critical problems and issues. There is no time to spare. It is your future that is at stake.