

The Venetian defectors' market: Gorbachov's grand deception

by David Goldman

In a report for the Feb. 6 EIR, the author examined the case of Yuri Lyubimov's invitation to return to the Soviet Union, showing that Lyubimov's swing between East and West showed the underlying collaboration with the Venice-centered European cultural mafia, with the Dostoevskian group around Raisa Gorbachova and the Soviet Cultural Foundation. The following article, excerpted from a more complete account to be published soon in EIR's Special Report on Project Democracy, identifies the individuals in the West responsible for a grand deception operation against Western institutions during the past decade.

In December 1977, the Venetian "Biennale" arts festival devoted its entire effort to "dissidence" in Eastern Europe. The affair brought protests from the Soviet ambassador to Italy, a prolonged wrangle over funding for the festival, and an international scandal. It also established the reputation of Venetian Count Carlo Ripa di Meana, then director of the Biennale, presently European Community Cultural Affairs Commissioner, and a former Communist Party member (until 1956), as the great European anti-communist; it further established Venice as the receiving-station for artistic defectors from the East bloc. Through Venice, Western intelligence services found themselves with a window on the Soviet *nomenklatura*, through the film directors, dancers, and musicians who defected to the West. Directly or indirectly, the Venetian channel brought about the defection of such stellar names as Yuri Lyubimov, theater director; Andreas Tarkovsky, film director; Oleg Bitov, cultural journalist and science-fiction translator; Mstislav Rostropovich, 'cellist and conductor.

The decision of these Soviet cultural figures to flee to the West was, at the time of their defection, heralded in the Western press as a major blow to Soviet prestige. However: Oleg Bitov, who dropped out of sight during the August 1983 "Biennale" film festival in Venice, and reappeared in the arms of British intelligence, is back at his job at *Literaturnaya Gazeta*; Andreas Tarkovsky died in Paris in December 1986, only to be eulogized in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* as a martyr to Soviet bureaucracy; Yuri Lyubimov, after being stripped of

his Soviet citizenship, has been invited back to his old job as director of the Taganka theater; and Rostropovich has been offered concerts in the Soviet Union, along with virtually the entire galaxy of Soviet artists now in the West.

The record indicates that Ripa di Meana sold Western intelligence services a lot of homing pigeons, now in various stages of return to Mother Russia. A narrow interpretation would view the entire business in the light of the October 1985 defection and re-defection of KGB official Vitaly Yurchenko, who apparently defected to American intelligence in Rome, and shortly afterwards, made his way to the Soviet embassy in Washington, and thence back home to Moscow, claiming that the CIA kidnaped and drugged him. The Yurchenko affair surfaced when Secretary of State George Shultz was in Moscow preparing the Reagan-Gorbachov summit meeting.

Although the homing of the defectors has become an important element in building the prestige of "reformer" Gorbachov, the Venice-centered operation has had a much more important, and deadly, purpose, than the mere playing-out of double agents: It is integral to the shaping of Western perceptions concerning the alleged cultural transformation of the Soviet Union. By giving credibility to a set of defectors, whose objection to the Soviet bureaucracy consisted of their criticism of the bureaucracy's lukewarm commitment to Dostoevskian Russian chauvinism, the Venetian operation has misled Western intelligence services concerning the underlying content of alleged Soviet "reforms."

Although the shenanigans associated with various of the defector cases are of more than passing importance, the Venetian program distorted the cultural perspective of Western government agencies, preparing over more than a decade, the farce of Gorbachov's "liberalization."

On the Italian side, the dissidents' market is directed by two groups, respectively, on the "secular" and "Catholic" sides. The first is Count Carlo Ripa di Meana's group inside the Italian Socialist Party; the second is the largest and most powerful Catholic lay organization in Italy, and a growing force in the Catholic Church elsewhere in the world: *Comunione e Liberazione* (Communion and Liberation), and its

political arm, the Movimento Popolare (Popular Movement). These are directed, respectively, by Don Luigi Giussani and European parliamentarian Roberto Formigoni.

Ripa di Meana, a jet-set social figure, is the creature of the old Venetian families who brought Volpi di Misurata to prominence three generations ago, and most particularly, of the Loredan and Foscari families. Two individuals exemplify the way the Venetian families work: Count Alvise Loredan, and Count Antonio Foscari. Loredan has Fascist political sympathies; indeed, he was among the founders of the European National Party in Venice in 1951, representing the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano. In intimate conversation, Loredan expresses contempt for the "poison of democracy," and predicts the collapse of all Western institutions, leading to a new era of spirituality beginning in the Soviet Union. Antonio Foscari, Loredan's intimate friend, went to the political left in Venice, developing such close associations as former Communist Party (PCI) deputy Massimo Cacciari, one of the "swing" figures between the PCI and the terrorist left. Foscari was a member of the Board of Overseers of the Biennale, at the time of Ripa di Meana's 1977 "Biennale of Dissent."

On the American side, the most prominent contact to Ripa di Meana and Formigoni, is former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, now a senior official of U.S. intelligence, as a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB). Kirkpatrick may be considered a charter member of the institutions at the heart of "Project Democracy"; she is a long-term member of the advisory board of the League for Industrial Democracy and a close collaborator of Carl Gershman's Social Democrats U.S.A. That is, she is a colleague of Ripa's in the Socialist International. In this capacity, she joined Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and the AFL-CIO in forming the Coalition for a Democratic Majority in 1972.

In November 1986, Kirkpatrick took part in the "human rights counter-conference" during the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) talks in Vienna. While Secretary of State Shultz met his Russian counterpart, Eduard Shevardnadze, Kirkpatrick, Yuri Lyubimov, and just-released dissidents Anatoly Shcharansky and Yuri Orlov, were at a rival conference sponsored by Ripa di Meana, Roberto Formigoni, and the Sakharov Institute. Within a month, physicist Andrei Sakharov was rehabilitated, and back at his old job making hydrogen bombs, and Lyubimov was negotiating his return.

The Venetian window

Corriere della Sera reported Feb. 19 that at March 20-22 meetings, the Giorgio Cini Foundation would sponsor the principal East-West conference to evaluate the state of East-West cultural exchanges 10 years after the Helsinki accords. These follow an October meeting in Moscow between Italian and Soviet historians. The Cini meetings, *Corriere* says, will

do much to further the Gorbachov reforms.

Giorgio Cini, along with Italo Balbo and others, was one of a handful of leading Venetians who, under the leadership of Count Volpi di Misurata, led the Italian push eastward that culminated in the Sarajevo assassinations of 1914, and (through Gabriele D'Annunzio) controlled Benito Mussolini. These *nouveaux riches* reported to the old families, mainly Loredan, Foscari, and Marcello; descendants of these families still operate as an informal policy-making body, in conjunction with the Benedictine monks of the Monastery of the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore.

The present Count Loredan is an unreconstructed Volpi di Misurata fascist; he argues that the heyday of Venetian revival under Count Volpi, and the cultural cooperation of such figures as D'Annunzio and Malipiero, was undermined by the Allied victory in World War II, and the triumph of rotten democracy. Democracy is the root of all evil, he argues, since it pushes aside the true leaders, the men of talent; now the democratic order is collapsing in apocalyptic fashion, and the result will be a spiritual revival in both East and West. Loredan views the Soviet Empire as a new Byzantine Empire, and compares the Venetian role today to the mediating role of historical Venice between the Byzantine and Holy Roman Empires; he points out that his family was closely intermarried with the Byzantine imperial families. In Venice today, the ideological standard-bearers are not so much the old families as the Benedictines; the current abbot, Don Florian, is an old schoolmate of Loredan.

Venice had a special role, Loredan adds, with respect to developments now under way in the Soviet Union, reflected in the "liberal Soviet poet" Yevgeni Yevtushenko's regular visits to Venice, and particularly Yevtushenko's close friendship with Luigi Nono, another old schoolmate of Loredan. Yevtushenko, Loredan explained, was the principal "traveler" between Moscow and Venice, maintaining close personal ties with the Venetian cultural elite; since then, Yevtushenko has emerged as one of the leading spokesman (e.g., to *Newsweek* magazine) for Gorbachov's *glasnost*.

Soviet artists in general went into dissident status, and tended to merely imitate Western modernism, Loredan continues; but the Venetian festivals gave them a chance to measure themselves against their Western colleagues, and ultimately return to their true, Russian, spiritual roots.

From the Venetian standpoint, the cultural content of the "spiritual revival" in the East will determine the long-term content of the present trend in the Soviet Union. As Loredan noted, the Benedictines of San Giorgio Maggiore, whose monastery sits adjacent to the palatial headquarters of the Cini Foundation, are the long-term planners in the project. The member of the small group of monks responsible for music and related cultural projects, is Father Pellegrino Ernetti, also the national director of the St. Caecilia Association, the official Italian church-music organization. In this capacity, he is closely allied with Cardinal Agostino Casa-

roli, the Vatican's Secretary of State, against Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Sacred Congregation of the Faith.

Ernetti argues that Russian culture, particularly in music, will replace the decadent culture of the West in coming years. Whereas Western musicians have failed to develop a coherent musical language, and modern Western music has splintered into innumerable contending, cacophonous factions, Russian musicians have strong cultural roots, which give them a common identity.

Comunione e Liberazione

As noted, these are the circles who control the relatively upstart jet-set aristocrat Count Carlo Ripa di Meana; indeed, their privileged channels into the Soviet Union, provide Ripa with the stock-and-trade to sell to Western intelligence services.

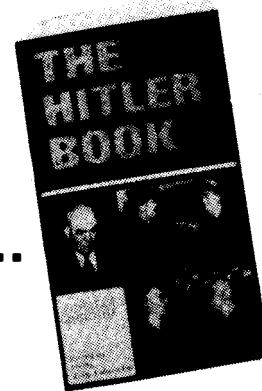
In Italian politics, Ripa's main ally in Eastern matters is the chief of Comunione e Liberazione's political front organization, Movimento Popolare, Roberto Formigoni. Formigoni, a European parliament deputy, works closely with Ripa through the Sakharov Institute. They organized the Nov. 1 intervention in Vienna in context of the CSCE talks, which Jeane Kirkpatrick attended, among others. That political tie is confirmed by both well-informed Venetian sources, as well as ranking officials of Comunione e Liberazione.

CL itself began a major operation to contact Christian and other dissidents in Eastern Europe in 1975, with the founding of the Centro Studi Europa Orientale, and the publication of its review, as well as numerous exchanges with Eastern Europe. The late defector Andreas Tarkovsky's participation in Movimento Popolare's annual August meeting in Rimini, starting in 1980, was only one expression of long-standing and continuous contacts.

Theologically, CL agrees with the "spiritual revival in the East" perspective which motivates the Loredans, Foscari, and the Venetian Benedictines. They believe in long-term rapprochement between the Catholic and Orthodox faiths, because while Protestantism emphasizes individual faith, Catholicism and Orthodoxy emphasize the collectivity, the *corpo* of communicants, the apostolic continuity, the tradition, liturgy, and so forth. Orthodoxy has certain major advantages, according to CL's national director, Maurizio Vitali since it has been "less secularized than Catholicism." Of course, there are theological differences, Vitali adds, but these are of less importance than the sociological similarities.

A major CL objective is to get the Pope to Moscow for the 1988 millenary celebration, in the service of Catholic-Orthodox rapprochement. That is still the subject of hot debate in Italy. During February, for example, the Russian weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published an interview with Poland's Cardinal Glemp, the first interview with the Polish prelate ever released in any East bloc publication. The leading Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* portrayed this as an opening for the Pope to indeed come to Moscow.

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