

# Anti-Catholic oligarchy reinforced after the elections in Italy

by Claudio Celani

When this article reaches the *EIR* subscriber, it will be a few days before the Italian general elections on March 27. We cannot predict who will win the elections, but we can already announce who will lose: the Christian Democratic Party (DC), which has ruled the country since 1946, first alone and then with anti-communist coalition partners. The DC, renamed the Italian Popular Party (PPI), is credited with percentages ranging from 3 to 10% nationally. In the worst case, it could even fail to reach the threshold (4%) necessary to make it into the national Parliament. Main contenders for the victory are the "progressive" bloc centered around the former Communist Party (PDS) and the "moderate" bloc led by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, which includes also "former" neo-fascist MSI (renamed into National Alliance) and "former" separatist Northern League.

In both cases, the influence of the Catholic Church in Italian politics will be dramatically reduced, even if parts of the old DC joined the "moderate" bloc, and despite the fact that the MSI will collect a thick slice of Catholic votes. Although this is the result of the unprecedented economic crisis and of the austerity policies of the recent governments, the change in Italy's political landscape is also a product of foreign manipulation. Leading the assault is a Venice-centered oligarchical group, which is represented by the powerful Assicurazioni Generali international reinsurance cartel, allied to the City of London. In a recent *EIR* article, we identified representatives of this group, such as Olivetti manager Carlo De Benedetti, owner (together with the Caracciolo family) of the largest Italian daily *La Repubblica* and the largest weekly, *L'Espresso*. Other members of the group are former finance minister Bruno Visentini, also a Venetian, and Luciano Benetton, who has recently promoted an organization called "Club of Entrepreneurs" in order to push for a victory of the "progressive" bloc. This week, we run two exclusive interviews with representatives of the group: Marina Salamon, "spokeswoman" of Benetton's club, and Aldo Mariconda, a nephew of Bruno Visentini.

As the reader will see, the Venetian oligarchy is well placed both in the "left" and in the "right" factions of the political spectrum, i.e., they control both sides. The way

they do it, is by controlling the ideology, which is based on variations of a basic theme, called "free market economy." Both Salamon and Mariconda, who ran against each other in recent local elections in Venice, favor a deregulated economy, outside the control of state institutions. They agree that national institutions must be dissolved into a supranational, "globalist" utopia. To carry out their project, they need to demolish the power of national institutions and of political forces representing national interests: hence the idea of "launching" the League phenomenon, a localist political movement, based on ethnic ideology, which collected protest votes in northern Italy thanks to a populist tax-revolt program. The League ideology was launched in conferences sponsored in Venice during the 1970s, and the first League organization was founded in the Veneto region. Chairman of the Northern League (the umbrella organization of all League formations) is Franco Rocchetta, the founder of the Venetian League (Umberto Bossi being the charismatic leader).

One has to read Salamon's and Mariconda's interviews bearing in mind that they are the "visible" aspect of the financial oligarchy, and that their apparent disagreements may be real as long as they reflect alternative choices to implement the same austerity policy. Mariconda admits that the Venetian oligarchy has a "homogeneous" philosophy and that their disagreements are "tactical." The strategic aim is the destruction of the republican Constitution, which will be implemented by introducing forms of so-called federalism, i.e., decentralization of decisions in matters of tax and investment policies.

While Mariconda's assignment has been to "moderate" the League's often wild image, Marina Salamon's assignment is to make sure that the "left," the PDS, abandons old "statist" policies, i.e., protection of the internal market, and opposition to large-scale privatizations, and layoffs. When we asked her a key question, what her group intends to do against financial speculation, Salamon rejected any action by insisting that *all* major industrial companies today are involved in "derivative operations." That is, of course, not true; however, it is true that the Benetton and the Olivetti group are heavily involved in derivatives. Salamon also

avoided answering a question on George Soros: Not accidentally, Soros's main Italian partner is Isidoro Albertini, Italy's number one stockbroker and intimate friend of Carlo De Benedetti.

As we are writing this, a Northern League delegation is in London, invited by Schroeders bank for a "road show" before City bankers. They are undergoing testing to see how good their program will be for international speculators. Last week, the City hosted Achille Occhetto, PDS secretary general, while another PDS leader, Giorgio Napolitano, was meeting with George Soros in New York. The next invited guest of the City is Silvio Berlusconi. After Berlusconi, a delegation of the PPI is expected.

Making fun of such a procession, journalist Filippo Cecarelli wrote in the daily *La Stampa*: "For sure, the tour abroad of Italian politicians, at important moments, confirms with old and not really very noble traditions. Nevertheless, the geographical change of destination is symptomatically newsworthy. For years, according to seemingly immutable schemes, the Italian premier 'had' to make a pilgrimage to the White House, while the DC secretary general 'had' to be received at the Vatican. In a totally mirror fashion, and therefore with the same ritual character, the PCI [Italian Communist Party] secretary general 'had' to go to the Kremlin, to the CPSU secretary general. . . . London was evidently cut out of this historical triangle. . . . In these political trips [England] is the nation of surviving Friedmanite purism . . . dispensing super-free-market notes and visas."

Italian political leaders are propitiating the game-masters of international destabilization. They are blind to the fact that their power is based on a collapsing paper castle, and that Italy's lack of an independent role in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans will contribute to the British geopolitical schemes which are leading to a replay of World War I.

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## Interview: Marina Salamon

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Marina Salamon runs Replay, one of the companies of the Benetton group, which has a large market in Germany as well as Italy, and is the spokesman for the Club of Entrepreneurs, an association of New Age businessmen. Among the club's members are famous names like Luciano Benetton, Paolo Marzotto, Franco De Benedetti (whose brother Carlo did not join because he has legal problems), Averna (bitters), Lino Romano (the head of the Neapolitan businessmen), and Claudio Buzziol (co-owner of Replay with Salamon). Marina Salamon told us she belongs to a very old Venetian oligarchical family, which had a Doge, Salamon di Centranigo, back in 1052, and is not related to the American Salomon family of financiers. The Venetian Salamons never moved out of the island city, nor have they intermarried with other European

houses, in order not to lose their oligarchical privileges. When the Venetian Republic fell at the end of the 18th century they took refuge in Istria, an island in the Tyrrhenian Sea near Capri, and they came back to Italy when the Republic was proclaimed after World War II. Today Marina is in the municipal administration, led by philosopher Massimo Cacciari, which she defines as "beautiful and harmonious," and which has just gotten over the shoals of a referendum which threatened to split the city three ways. Marina's father is the manager of Doxa, Italy's main opinion poll outfit.

The Club of Entrepreneurs has lined up with the left, and Marina, reached on her cellular phone at Rome's Fiumicino airport, explains why, in an interview granted to Claudio Celani on Feb. 8.

**EIR:** How can it be that businessmen are lining up with the left?

**Salamon:** For two basic reasons: Because we need an austerity policy which takes people's needs and solidarity into account, insofar as we say no to the pure free market; secondly, because [Northern League chief Umberto] Bossi and the new right do not represent the market.

**EIR:** Strange that the left could give more assurances to the market than the right.

**Salamon:** No, because in Italy the market has to be created. We have had a protected market up to now, and Berlusconi, who represents the right, has many anti-market forces behind him, such as the PSI [Italian Socialist Party] and the other governing parties.

**EIR:** And on privatizations?

**Salamon:** The left offers all the guarantees.

**EIR:** Even selling the state holdings to George Soros?

**Salamon:** We have to distinguish between what is not strategic, like snack bars, which should be sold of course without any constraints to foreign capital, even if that means facing consequences in terms of immediate job loss (which later would be reabsorbed), and between strategic productive industries like the Nuovo Pignone with high added value, where we need guarantees that the plants should stay in Italy.

**EIR:** How do you see the process of globalization of the financial markets and world economic integration, including the moving of production from North to South?

**Salamon:** I see it as inevitable. We have to think in terms of manufactures like textiles, which will entirely be moved out of Italy, and to keep inside Italy the places of production of ideas.

**EIR:** What do we do with the unemployed?

**Salamon:** We need to take an intelligent new look at the social shock absorbers. A different environmental policy is