

National Day of Italy

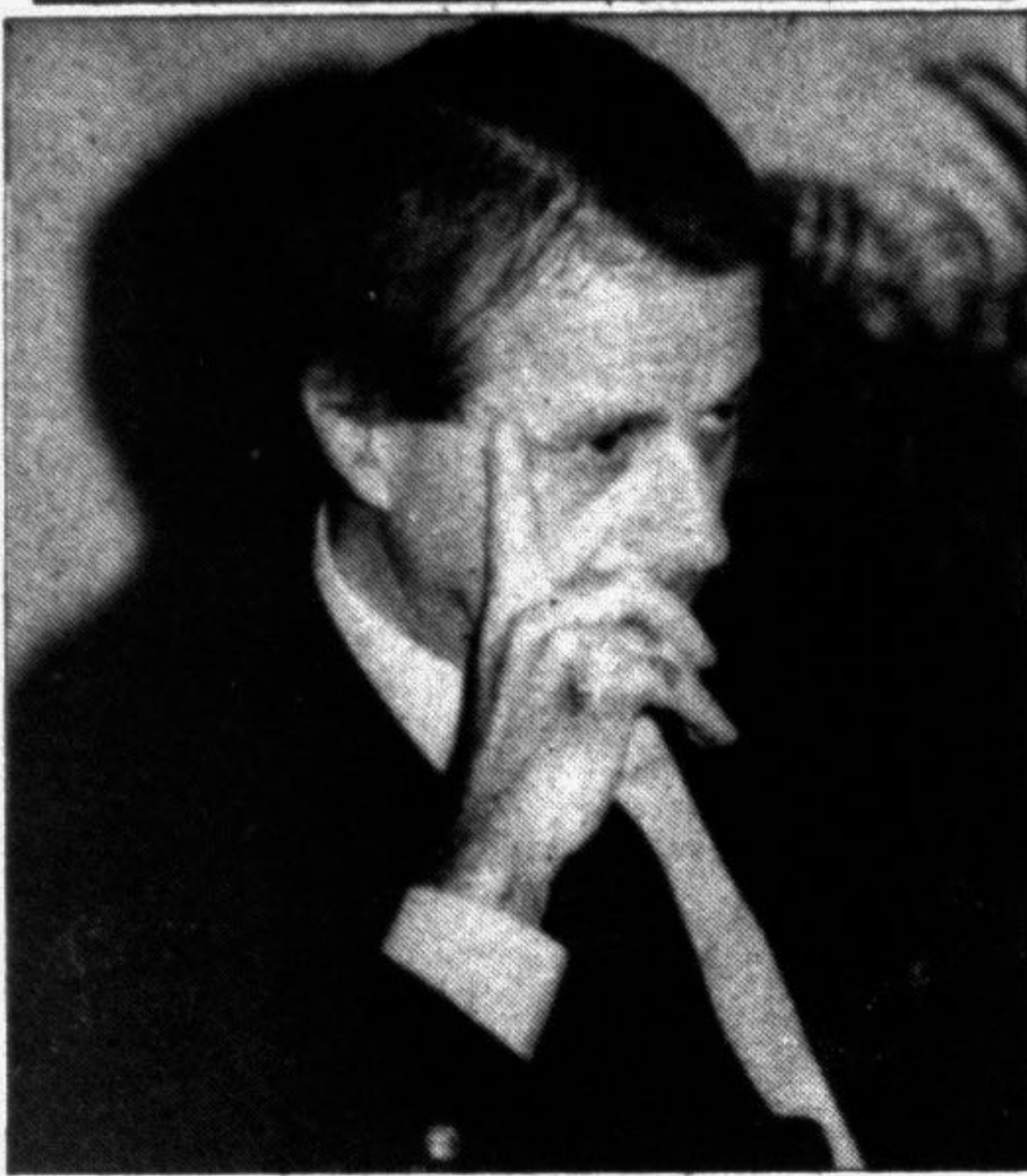
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MESSAGE



Almost half a century ago, Italy, coming out of a destructive war, founded its First Republic that brought to our country pride and satisfaction for a democratic process that allowed extraordinary development and progress — both economic and social.

Italy, half a century ago, was a country looking towards new horizons and ways of expression.

Our civilization was one of the oldest ones, that was able for long time to dominate part of the known world on the basis of amalgamation.

Wherever the "Italics" went they mixed with the local people, accepted the best part of their culture and customs and used them to formulate new principles and ideas, even if they were alien and not according to the system.

Those principles helped to put the basis for a new world that still exists.

Because of the above, on this particular day I feel very much in harmony with this country in which I have worked already for three years.

Bangladesh also is a country of an ancient and fascinating culture. It is also a country that some scholars want to identify with "Gangarides" the ancient country in the Subcontinent where life was beautiful and easy, because plants, grains, food and everything else was available in plentiful and the people had leisure time, free from hassles, to develop art and culture.

Bangladesh also has come out of a destructive war and started with pride in its way towards democracy and self-sufficiency. This process that has been going along for quite a long time will surely increase further our trade exchange and widen our mutual relations of friendship.

Besides the many initiatives that have already taken place in the past, the recent founding of the Bangladesh-Italy Friendship Association is certainly a step towards this goal as it is the new Cultural Agreement which should become operational in the near future.

As our relations are growing stronger I still hope they can further develop in order that my country and Bangladesh can amalgamate in the best tradition as known by the ancient Italics.

Claudio Pacifico

Ambassador of Italy in Bangladesh

The Premises of a New Italian Foreign Policy

by Ludovico Incisa di Camerana

At the beginning of the century Novikov, a Russian sociologist and indomitable and fascinated traveller who had journeyed to the peninsula several times, wondered if Italy still had a mission to accomplish: "Has Italy really fallen as low as they say? Is this country truly doomed to vegetate until the end of time in painful mediocrity? Does it not have any chance to play the same role as the German and Slavic nations in the great framework of European civilization? Indeed does Italy no longer have any mission whatsoever to accomplish among the peoples?"

This last doubt had already emerged some thirty years before Novikov's essay on the mission of Italy, at a time when the occupation of Rome virtually put an end to the struggle for independence, the peninsula was unified and the "Italian question" was finally solved, thus opening the discussion on the international role pertaining to the new, unitary state. And this is precisely what Mommsen, the great German historian of ancient Rome, asked Quintino Sella, the most prominent right-wing leader, in 1871: "What do you plan to do in Rome? This is making us all uneasy: one cannot stay in Rome without having cosmopolitan goals. What do you intend to do?"

The same problem was worrying Italians as well as foreigners. According to some, the miracle of independence should imply the resurrection of Italian supremacy, and Mazzini accordingly assigned to Italy the mission of "universalizing its own life," of offering the world its existential model. Less pretentiously, Sella thought of turning Rome into "the capital of science," while only a few revived the expectations of Cavour who, once in Rome, dreamed he could eventually realize "a new peace of religion, a treaty that will bring to the future fate of human society much greater benefits than the Peace of Westphalia did."

Such grandiose dreams, fostered by the still fresh influence of Gioberti's Primato, were shared even by a practical spirit such as Carlo Cattaneo, who could not resist the attraction exerted by Rome again at the head of Italy,

which seemed to anticipate the return of past glories. Cesare Balbo was virtually alone when he appealed to common sense and demanded: "No more supremacy, no more haughtiness, no more dreams, for the sake of the Lord and of the country."

When Novikov wrote his essay, however, all the great expectations had already been belied by a cruel reality. Italy inaugurated the new century with a per capita income four times lower than Great Britain's and with Europe's highest crime rate. The dream of supremacy was replaced by the prophecy of unstoppable decline. "One of the aspects more frequently cited in order to prove, Italy's decline is its corruption. Pessimists claim that the country is rotten to the bone. First of all, they say, it is the only nation that shows symptoms of disease such as the Camorra and Mafia; furthermore, several loud scandals indicate that the ruling class, and sometimes members of Parliament themselves, have resorted to the most culpable of intrigues in order to obtain money."

Novikov rejects these and other similarly negative arguments defending Italy with might and main. Nonetheless, he expresses basic criticism of Italy's foreign policy. He quotes the words of Costantino Nigra, one of the prominent figures in Italian diplomacy at the time: "without the Triple Alliance Italy would have been a larger Belgium", and radically challenges them: he recalls the wealth and prosperity of that country, whose example is so contemptuously disdained by Nigra, and finds the reasons for his scorn in the fact that "Belgium is a neutral country and cannot conquer anything in Europe." Italy's choice was actually different: "From about 1883 on, the Italian government, instead of wholly devoting itself to fostering the welfare of the nation, was seized by megalomania and decided to play the role of great continental power at all cost. Whence Italy's present-day troubles."

Novikov's suggested remedy consists of a democratic policy that rejects the piling up of expensive armaments in anticipation of aggressive military actions and eases the heavy fiscal burden on the working classes, thus regaining lost

ground in the process of catching up with Europe's richer countries. In Novikov's view, this does not imply that Italy will fold back upon itself. The Russian essayist's advice is against the creation of a colonial empire in Africa, as that continent "will never become a great field for economic activities." Italy must give up "political," i.e., territorial, expansion and aim at "national expansion to be accomplished with the help of merchants, entrepreneurs, business people, in other words, not relying on parasitic officials but on real producers."

Compared with the international trend that Italy actually followed, Novikov's scheme definitely turned out to be the

most suitable and realistic answer to the needs and interests of the country. It is not by accident that, from 1945 on, it has represented, even though there are no specific references, one of the main guidelines for Italy's foreign policy.

After complete defeat in the Second World War aborted, the attempt to prove that, as far as power and expansionism were concerned, "Italy is not a state like the others," the republic's governments were apparently willing to depart from previous foreign policies, adopting a lower profile and giving up the idea of the country's extraordinary mission. There remained, nonetheless, direct links with the past: not only personnel, i.e., instruments,

borrowed from the royal diplomacy but also certain constant factors that, along with their adjustments and updates, may be described as follows:

1) The rejection of neutrality, not only as a prospect plainly incompatible with the geo-political position of the country, but also because, at the end of the 1940s, a resolute option for the Western bloc appeared to be a must for domestic policy in order to reinforce the pluralist political system.

2) The permanent alliance with a predominant power, albeit under much better circumstances than in the past: during the earlier phase, as a matter of fact, Italy faced a problem of imbalance between the need to secure an alliance

with Europe's strongest land power, that is Germany, first through the Triple Alliance and then through the Pact of Steel, and maintaining friendly relations with the strongest maritime power, that is Great Britain; the oscillations of Italy's foreign policy, with its fickleness and about-faces were the result of this imbalance. The dilemma was completely eliminated with the alliance with the United States, militarily as strong on land as it was on sea (obviously without considering its nonconventional capability), and this accounts for the high permanent level of loyalty displayed by Italy within the NATO environment;

3) The attempt to become an actor in the great powers' (Continued on page 9)

ECONOMY

New Horizon: New Concept



IF ...
An accident like the one last February upsets the balance of the ecosystem. What should be done, and how, to restore that balance?

If oil were found in easily accessible places, everything would be smooth sailing. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Oil may be hidden among hard-to-reach folds in the rocks, or in places that are geographically and technologically daunting. This is why the oil industry has had to develop increasingly sophisticated technologies and develop enormous organizational capacities. The depths that can be reached today were unthinkable a few years ago, and oilmen can work everywhere, at sea or in the mountains, in tropical forests or deserts, taking appropriate measures to avoid damaging the environment. Sometimes oil is found in environmentally sensitive and protected zones, or in inhabited, industrial or agricultural areas. And this is practically always the case if it is found in Italy, where nature and history are inextricably entwined. To work efficiently in such circumstances, the oil industry has developed technologies that can be precisely controlled, taking infinite precautions and moving, so to speak, on tiptoe. So it is possible to extract "black gold" in Italy, an essential contribution

to the economy of this country, which depends too heavily on foreign energy supplies. Of course, the operations are not zero-risk: there has been one accident for the 4,300 wells drilled. But sometimes statistics don't tell the whole story. An accident occurred on 28 February last at Trecate, which is situated behind the Ticino National Park, among the rice fields of the Novara region.

The Trecate-Villafortuna oil deposit where the Trecate 24 well was drilled is the biggest of continental Western Europe, with reserves of 150 million barrels and production of 50,000 barrels a day — more than 50% of the oil produced in Italy.

The deposit, which was discovered in 1984 when the Villafortuna well was drilled, lies at a depth of more than 6,000 metres. In the last four years AGIP has invested more than 1,000 billion lire in this field.

The reasons for the accident were being studied: a full understanding of the causes is essential to prevent such an accident from happening again. And when an accident does take place, the first thing to do is to limit the damage:

the second is to rehabilitate the area.

On 28 February 1994, an uncontrolled eruption occurred at the 5,720 metre deep Trecate 24 well. For thirty-six hours, it spurted out atomized oil, with a small content of hydrogen sulfide, methane gas and water. The emergency procedures adopted and the mobilization of the crisis unit succeeded in limiting the damage, the overall amount of which has not yet been quantified.

Various measures were taken to block the uncontrolled outflow of crude. The production levels of the other wells in this field were increased to lower the pressure at Trecate 24. They were difficult hours: the whole area was covered by an oil stratum which settled on land, houses and vehicles and threatened to infiltrate the aquifers. To stop the pollution from spreading, the consortium that superintends the irrigation of this mainly rice-growing area blocked the canals.

But how was the emission controlled? The operation was arduous, but precise. In addition to the lowering of pressure through increased pumping at surrounding wells, a system was put in place whereby a relief well intercepted the flow of oil from Trecate 24, further reducing the pressure and the land round the probe well was made to slide and act

as a stopper. Thirty-six hours after the accident occurred, the outflow ceased.

With the well made safe again, damage assessment began. During the 36-hour emergency, measures were taken to save the oil: 9,000 cubic metres of crude were recovered through suction and pumped on to some thirty tank trucks. Rice grows in soil with low permeability, and this is one of the reasons why, thanks to the timely environmental action taken, the oil would not seep into the aquifers. Continuous monitoring makes it possible to assess the effects of the accident over time. About 5 square kilometres were affected, and biotreated soil would be brought into the area immediately surrounding the well, to speed up the dissolution of the hydrocarbons. For the adjacent area of about 500 hectares, dry crops supported by organic nutrients are and will be used for rehabilitation.

The programme is expected to lead to the recovery of more than 95% of the affected land within a year. Rehabilitation and indemnity measures are already underway, and AGIP has commissioned the Battelle Institute of Geneva to define the pollution of the area, and to direct the methods used to restore the original environment through natural processes, including the speeding up of natural bacterial action.

the same period Universities could be found not only in Salerno and Bologna but also in Reggio Emilia, Modena, Vicenza, Padua, Napoli, Pavia, Piacenza, Arezzo, Roma, Perugia, Pisa, Florence, Siena, Turin, Ferrara.

Now there are 62 public universities in Italy located in all the main cities and in the regions.

Some of the cities have more than one university: Rome for example has five.

There are also about 15 Academies, where art is studied, and about 35 Conservatoires where music is taught, and which grant a diploma equivalent to a degree.

Italian Universities specialize in various subjects though the most important universities cover them all. Usually the small Universities are better equipped to cope with the students and are considered the best.

A recent innovation is the so called "University for Senior Citizens".

People of a certain age, that have gone through the experience of a life of work, can be enrolled in any University even if they do not possess the required curriculum of studies for the right of admission.

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Naples, a Long History

by Fulvio Tessitore

A city like Naples, with its long history that can be traced back to the Magna-Grecia era of ancient Italy: a city like Naples with a geo-political position that makes it one of the poles of gravity of the Mediterranean, that "land-bound sea" whose shores and crossings formed the backdrop to the birth and intermingling of all the Euro-Asian civilisations: it goes without saying that a city like this has had, and will go on having, intense worldwide cultural relations which in the short space available for this piece, can be described only in part.

If, in the early centuries of its history, Naples was one of the western ports of Classical Greece (Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agresti Latio), later, during the High Middle Ages, it became a melting pot where the Greek-Byzantine and Arab-Muslim cultures merged. One example of this cultural cross-fertilisation that springs to mind is the medical schools of Salerno, only a short distance from

Naples, where, thanks to the another "campus stellae" (which corresponded very closely with the Spanish one). This was followed, if we allow for some imaginative contraction of the timescale, by Giovan Battista Vico and Pietro Giannone, who, from a historicist point of view, opened up the historical vivir des vivientes of Spanish Naples to the great European cultural developments of the 17-18th centuries.

In the nineteenth century these varied and turbulent branches of thought produced a second harvest in Naples, through their cross-fertilisation with, on the one hand, French eclecticism and, on the other, German idealism and historicism. (This was the Naples that had been penetrated most deeply by French influences, the Naples of efforts of Costantino Africano. Arabic medical science was introduced in the 11th century. Thus, Campania preceded

Arabised Spain as a Western outpost of Hellenistic-Arab-Muslim scientific knowledge. Some centuries later this ancient tradition flowered again in the Norman-Svevo court of Sicily, and thanks to the great Federico II was enriched through renewed contacts with Italo-Trovanadoric and German culture, and through the project to move the Eurocentric axis of the empire in a more Euro-Mediterranean direction.

The change of emphasis that occurred during the subsequent Angevin period opened in Naples an intense relationship with the Francophone culture of Provence and beyond. This relationship was never abandoned and reached its peak during the reforming 18th century, when Naples was one of the great capitals of the Enlightenment, thanks to the likes of Genovesi, Filangieri and Pagano, intimates of the Philosophes who at the same time were mindful of the native Neapolitan tradition. Which, in the Aragon and Castilian eras, had forged very close links with the turbulent, ambiguous and rich Siglo de oro, so as to become, between the Renaissance and the Baroque, the ideal location for Spaventa and Francesco De

Sanctis, guiding lights of the new flowering of the ancient University (founded during Federico's age, on 5 June 1224).

In our century the role of interpreter, heir and innovator of such a store of rich and complex history was assumed by the brilliant Benedetto Croce, thanks to whom Naples regained its position as one of the great European capitals of culture and of the spirit, especially when the brutalities of Fascism and Nazism forced the values of democracy, free culture, and human civilisation into a position of indomitable resistance.

Today, strong in its own, traditional links with worldwide culture, which in the city have always been viewed as relations between equals, Naples has an opportunity to regain its position as a nerve centre playing a decisive bridging role between Europe (which has been gravitating, especially after German unification and the fall of the Berlin wall, towards the Centre-North) and the other shores of the Mediterranean; this would open anew the history of Europe to "the other face of history", just as necessary for the community of civilised peoples and of peace, and just as glorious.

The writer is Rector of the University of Naples

