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**British Consulate General**

Via S. Paolo 7 | 20121 Milan

Telex 31528 Telephone 803442

11/2  
Minister @ 9/6

Some interesting forecasts.

This wd. mean that the PCI wd. lose control of Milan

which wd. become "Centre-Left"

Your reference	11/2
Query ref. no.	780
Date	3 June 1980
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M. E. Pellew  
6/6

M. E. Pellew Esq.,  
British Embassy  
Rome

1. Copy to Miss Savill, WED

2. Enter + pa

pa - WP. 7/6

MP  
9/6

Dear Mark,

The Consul General has asked me to send you the attached reports. There seems to be near unanimity of opinion about election prospects in Milan.

- a) The PCI will lose 4 or 5 per cent compared to 1975. *though the latest developments over the Donat Cattin affair may pull them back a bit.*
- b) The PLI will have a come-back probably doubling its share of the poll. *Yes*
- c) The lion's share of Partito Radicale votes will go to the PSI. *or to abstention*
- d) The PSI is likely to make a slight gain but the significance of its post-electoral role depends on the distribution of the preference vote which the Left, led by Aniasi, is campaigning for strongly in Milan. *Yes*
- e) Abstentions are likely to be more numerous than in 1979 - apathy is widespread.

Yes, but again the Donat Cattin affair may change this a bit.

Yours ever,

Peter

P H P Thompson

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Copy: no Pallew



Huygg

Pol 2/6

Padre Angelo Macchi SJ

The Father Superior of the Jesuit Community of San Fedele is shortly going to the United States for two months. One purpose of his visit is to observe the beginning of the campaign to elect the President. He has been invited to both the main nomination conventions. Most of his previous visits to the United States have coincided with a presidential election. An interesting time to visit America, he said, and he does not expect to find the experience less so on this occasion, even though the contest is to be between "the two worst candidates".

About the election of 8 and 9 June in Italy he had much the same general opinion as the Liberal Party Secretary and the PCI official whom I met on earlier occasion in May. It was an election of national and political rather than local and administrative significance in that it would have a decisive influence on the future course of government - pentagonal or compromesso storico.

Padre Macchi thought the PCI vote would decrease, in comparison with the administrative election in 1975, to much the same extent as it had decreased in 1979 compared to the political election of 1976. The effect this would have on local administrations however depended a good deal on how the PSI (the PCI ally in so many of them) fared and whether its left wing emerged stronger or weaker. In Milan the PSI Left were campaigning strongly - under the leadership of Aniasi. Padre Macchi thought Craxi had probably made a false step by seeking Radical support in exchange for the PSI backing of the Radicals' promotion of ten referendums. There was no guarantee that those who had voted for the Radical Party in 1976 would indeed switch to the PSI, but Craxi had limited his future options by putting the PSI under obligation to Pannella. PSI support for the referendums had not so far advanced their cause. The PSI situation was further complicated by the fact that many of the Craxi supporters had at a local level a vested interest in keeping the PCI in power. This was the case in Milan. Padre Macchi had asked Tognoli, a keen Craxi man, if he would consider remaining Sindaco with Centre Left backing but Tognoli had said he could not become "the Sindaco for all seasons".

Padre Macchi did not entirely agree with the fairly general forecast that the Liberals were going to make a come-back in Milan. Their potential source of renewed support undoubtedly lay among erstwhile DC voters - but the DC had cleverly forestalled defections on the Right by choosing the former Prefect Dr. Libero Mazza to head their list of candidates as an

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independent. Dr. Mazza had been a forthright Prefect and was popular among the more conservative of the Milanese.

clientelismo

The PSDI, whose appeal lay in its being a party of Mr Fix-its, (a building license here, a job there), was making a bid for Catholic sympathies and had succeeded in getting one or two priests, elsewhere in Italy, to give it public support. In Milan it was not likely to get any of the Catholic vote. The defection of three PSDI councillors that had helped to set up the PCI/PSI administration in 1975 was still well remembered.

Peter Thompson  
P H P Thompson  
2.6.1980

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All Italian administrative structures were strongly political. Dr. De Gasperi had this as the main political goal. Upon the extreme depended whether the present government was constitutional and would give place to a Centre "parliament" controlled by the compromised classes.

The probability was that in comparison with 1975 the PCI would lose 4 or 5 per cent. of its share of the vote. But this of itself could not ensure a reversal of the compromise strategy. To be really influential - or to often - with the PSDI, how the PCI would not depend on whether the preference

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HMcC. as balanced & realistic.  
Coby to Mr. Bellini PM 2/6



INF 0493 010/3 - 011/4

Dr. Pierangelo Rossi, Secretary of the Milan branch of the Liberal Party (PLI).

Fifteen years ago the PLI was the third strongest party in Milan, after the DC and PCI. By 1975 its share of the poll had shrunk to 4.6% per cent. There is a fairly general impression that it is going to make a come-back in the elections of 8 and 9 June. Dr Rossi said the general impression was probably correct, though he did not expect the party to attain to the glories of 1965, when it got 17 seats on the city council (the DC got 20 and the PCI 18), or even to do as well as in the European election last year when, in Milan, it secured 10.6% of the total vote.

The decline in the Communist vote in 1979 would encourage potential Liberal voters, who gave support to the DC in the past to keep the Communists out, to return to the party of their natural allegiance. The generally more conservative trend of public opinion was also to the advantage of the PLI.

Two factors, however, were likely to prevent the Liberals from getting the full benefit of these favourable circumstances. One was the existence of three new local independent parties. Only one of them was of real significance, but it was the one that would appeal most to the middle class potential Liberal voter. It was closely modelled on the highly successful local party of Trieste and led by a former sindaco of Milan, Professor Bucalossi, who had in turn given support to the PSI, PSDI, PRI, and PLI. The other factor was that the electorate were satiated with elections, and the number of blank or spoiled voting papers was likely to be even more than the disquietingly high number in 1979. This apathy would tell more against the less well organised and disciplined parties, among them the PLI. The PCI, on the contrary, would suffer least.

All Italian administrative elections were strongly political, Dr Rossi said. But this was the most political of all. Upon its outcome depended whether the present government - a transitional one - would give place to a Centre "pentagonal" coalition or to the compromesso storico.

The probability was that in comparison with 1975 the PCI would lose 4 or 5 per cent of its share of the vote. But this of itself would not ensure a rejection of the compromesso storico. The deciding influence lay - as so often - with the PSI. How the PSI would act depended on whether the preference

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Notes went to its Left or to its Craxian candidates. In Milan Craxi had a small majority in his party, The influence of one of his leading Left wing critics, the Minister of Health and former Sindaco, Aniasi, was, however, strong.

Dr Rossi summed up with the forecast that there was a good chance of both the Milan city and provincial administrations returning to the Centre Left after 9 June. He pointed out (as indeed had a Communist party official to whom I spoke earlier in the month) that the PCI and PSI did not in fact command a majority on the Milan city council after the 1975 election, but were enabled to form an administration through the defection of two DC and three PSDI councillors all but one of whom were rewarded with assessorships.

*Peter Thompson*  
P H P Thompson  
30.5.1980

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