OF PRINCES AND PRIESTS:
Journalism in Italy at the Turn of the 21st Century

by
Rene F. Pollett

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Journalism

School of Journalism and Communication

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
June 7, 2002

© copyright 2002, Rene F. Pollett

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-79777-5

Canada

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research acceptance of the thesis

OF PRINCES AND PRIESTS:
Journalism in Italy at the Turn of the 21st Century

Submitted by Rene F. Pollett
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Journalism

Thesis Supervisor

Director, School of Journalism and Communication

Carleton University
June 7, 2002

Abstract

In 1997, a national news magazine in Italy alleged that the Italian military had been involved in a long list of illegal activities while on a 1993-94 United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia. But rather than investigate the story fully, Italian journalists chose to accept the findings of a poorly funded and weak commission that nothing of concern had occurred. A story of national and international significance was left to fizzle out.

It was indicative of the way many important stories are handled by the Italian press and other media. The reasons for this are many and varied and include a system of laws and regulations in Italy that have resulted in a climate of libel chill and that restrict entry into the profession; a culture that is distrustful of anyone outside the "family" in its many forms; a political system that is closely tied to journalism and whose owners are mostly wealthy politicians; the Roman Catholic Church, which influences coverage of important social, political, and other issues; and the Mafia, which uses the threat of violence to suppress coverage of its activities. The result is a press system that is doing little to serve the Italian people or their democracy.

There are many people who contributed to the inspiration, initiation, and eventual completion of this thesis whom I would like to thank: Sarah Stowe, my grandmother, Dennis Mulcahy, Keith Bonnell, Lisa, Gwen and Evangeline Pollett, David Forbes, Klaus Pohle, my thesis supervisor, Freda Choueiri, Alberto Martinelli, Paul Ginsborg, Jay Rosen, Patrick McCarthy, the staff at the Parliamentary Library in Rome, the many journalists and media watchers who contributed their opinions on the Italian press, politics, and other issues, and Massimo, Rosa, and Patrizia Carrieri, who always patiently answered my questions about all things Italian, e la nonna Italia.

Grazie mille.

OF PRINCES AND PRIESTS:
Journalism in Italy at the Turn of the 21st Century

Table of Contents

Title Page	Page i
Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction	1
End Notes	8
Chapter One	Rules and Regulations
The Written Laws	12
The Order's Rules	21
Getting a Job	25
The Law and the Practice	30
Endnotes	36
Chapter Two	The Influence of Culture
The Show	41
<i>Veline</i> and Press Offices	43
A Climate of Distrust	48
<i>Clientelismo</i>	54
The Family	56
Journalists as Part of the Elite	60
Journalists as Educators	63
The Italian Way of Writing	37
Fearing the Identifiable Other	66
The Show Must Go On	69
Endnotes	72

Chapter Three The Prince's Press

From His Magnificence to His Eminence	77
The 1,500 Readers	85
Journalists and/or Politicians	86
The Political Newsgathering Process	90
The Influence of Foreigners	94
Trust Me	96
Media Manipulation	104
The Non-Reader	107
Anger and the Reasons For It	110
Serving Democracy	114
Endnotes	116

Chapter Four The Business/Political Owners

Owners As Politicians	122
The Rise of the Owner/Politicians	123
Italy's War of the Rose	133
Berlusconi's Problems	137
Ownership Questions	138
The Third Angle of Italy's Press Power Triangle	140
A Tale of Two Papers: The Collapse of <i>L'Unita</i> and <i>L'Indipendente</i>	143
– The Story of <i>L'Unita</i>	144
– <i>L'Indipendente</i>	150
Endnotes	155

Chapter Five The Roman Catholic Church

The History	161
Religion-based Self-Censorship	167
Covering the Church	173
Priests, Politicians and the Press	175
The Church's Waning Power	181
The Internet Pope	188
Endnotes	190

Chapter Five	The Mafia and the Threat of Violence	
The Mafia Exists		195
The Mafia and the Message		205
The Mafia's Control Over the Press		210
Careful Writing		212
Endnotes		217
Conclusion		
The Last of the Untouchable Journalists		222
Hope For the Future		223
The Bottom Line for Democracy		226
The Berlusconi Effect		230
The Future of Journalism		235
Endnotes		237
Bibliography		239
Thesis Interviews		259

Introduction

In the summer of 1997, a story broke in Italy that had much in common with the "Somalia Affair" that had plagued the Canadian military four years earlier. But while the shortcomings of the Canadian military played themselves out, day in and day out, on the front pages of Canadian newspapers and on television screens, the manner in which the Italian version of this story was handled by the media in Italy seemed to epitomize to me, a foreign journalist working in Rome, all that is wrong with the Italian press.

Horrific photographs of a Somali man being tortured by Italian troops were published on the cover and inside pages of the Italian weekly news magazine *Panorama*. Several showed a man lying on the ground while his genitals were being subjected to electric shocks. The soldier who photographed the event, and eventually several other paratroopers, alleged Italian military involvement in numerous illegal activities in Somalia. They claimed that shooting deaths, beatings, incidents of torture, the gang rape of a young woman with a pistol flare, the gang rape of another 20-year-old woman, trafficking in arms, and a long list of other illegal activities had taken place during the 1993-94 United Nations multi-national peacekeeping operation in which Italy participated. It was the same mission that came back to haunt Canadian troops.

In Italy, the story was followed for a few weeks in newspapers until the government announced a commission of inquiry to investigate the allegations. From that point media coverage all but disappeared. The commission announced its findings – that not much had happened in Somalia to be concerned about – on a Friday afternoon in August. It was Italy's month-long national holiday, when an estimated seven million people were in their cars driving to the beaches and much of the rest of the population was thinking about how to get there.¹

As a journalist who has seen and experienced working in the press systems of Canada, Central America, and the Middle East over the last 20 years, I found the way in

which this story was covered disturbing. The events that followed revealed not only a military seemingly bent on covering up its activities in Somalia and a government unwilling to see an investigation to completion, but also a press system that let a story of national and international significance just fizzle out. Alarm bells did not seem to go off in the Italian press about Italian military activities in Somalia as they did when the story of allegations against Canadian troops broke in Canada or when similar accusations were later made in Belgium. When the allegations were finally made in Italy, they were quickly denied here, as they were in Canada, but, more important for this study, there were no press investigations to follow them up. So far, only two people in Italy have been charged in connection with the incidents. In April 2000, an uncommissioned officer was found guilty of a charge relating to the alleged incidents and sentenced to 18 months in prison and fined approximately 30 million lire (about \$21,400 Cdn) for "abuse of power." His case is being appealed and if he does serve time it will likely be one-third of his original sentence. More disturbing is that a second parachutist who came forward with photographs – this time of the alleged gang rape of a young woman with a pistol flare – also faces criminal charges. As often occurs in Italy, the accuser has become the accused and the whisper campaign to de-legitimize this second witness's story has begun.

In Canada, the repercussions of the Somalia Affair are still being felt years after the story of the shooting death of a Somali teenager broke. The airborne regiment has been disbanded and a public inquiry that lasted more than two years resulted in a 2,000-page report that fingered 11 officers for failing to perform their duties. In all, 157 specific recommendations were made for changes in Canada's military, many of which were implemented.² One soldier was convicted of manslaughter and torture, and received a five-year prison sentence, and his company commander was convicted of negligent performance of duty and received a reprimand, a demotion and eventually a three-month sentence. The platoon sergeant involved pleaded guilty to negligent performance of duty

and was dismissed from the forces. It is unlikely any of these recommendations or charges would have resulted had the Canadian media not been unrelenting in its coverage.

The Somalia Affair has also resulted in unyielding media attention on the problems of the entire Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces. Articles on issues ranging from sexual assaults within the forces to the use of food banks by its members continue to surface regularly in the press and other media, and coverage has carried over into other military campaigns involving Canadians. In May 2000, there were calls for an independent commission into NATO air bombings in Kosovo after questions were raised about the possibility Canadian and other allied pilots had unintentionally killed civilians there.³ In June 2000, a Canadian Forces medic told the press that seven years earlier he had reported to military police that young soldiers in Croatia had tried to poison their overly zealous platoon leader.⁴

This is not to say that the press system that operates in Canada is perfect – far from it. But the contrast between how the Somalia Affair has been handled by the Italian press and how similar allegations were dealt with in Canada is striking and instructive. In Italy, there has been little, if any, public or political pressure for a review of its military forces. On the contrary, Marco Gregoretti, the journalist who wrote most of the stories for *Panorama* about Italian troops torturing Somalis, and who won one of Italy's top journalism prizes for his articles, says he was pressured to stop writing about the military by his editors, colleagues, and members of the Italian public.⁵ Journalists in and outside *Panorama* questioned him about why he was writing such articles. And the magazine received numerous letters regarding them, the majority of which were from people outraged because Gregoretti had sullied the image of the parachutists and the Italian forces. When he later tried to arrange a trip to Somalia to interview eyewitnesses to the alleged incidents, the magazine's editors suggested he go on his own time – without the magazine's support.

Gregoretti's frustration with the lack of investigative journalism in Italy is obvious in his tone and expressions. He says Italian journalists are at least partly to blame. Journalists who were in Somalia during the mission have since spoken to him of other atrocities they witnessed carried out by Italian troops, but to date not one has written about what they saw, complained to the authorities, or spoken publicly about them. Why?

"I don't know. For fear, for money, because some of them are connected to the (military) service, because... I don't know. I don't know," Gregoretti said, shaking his head.

Gregoretti is rare among Italian journalists. Not many are willing to become heroes – or martyrs – for a story. Most Italian journalists are willing to let things continue as they always have; to not make waves regardless of what they know or have seen firsthand.

This study will consider the reasons why. The lack of coverage of Italy's Somalia Affair by the Italian press is just one example of the inadequate manner in which the country's press system handles many issues. There are many other examples and the reasons behind the cover-ups and the stories swept under the innumerable rugs in Italy go beyond the journalists themselves.

The rules and regulations – written and unwritten – governing the profession of journalism in Italy, which like those of the country's democratic system were put in place with the best of intentions, have done much to foster a separation of journalism from the very people it is supposed to serve. They have, in fact, created a media elite that is often more concerned with its own privileges than informing the public about the pressing issues of the day. And access to the profession is denied to many who would help broaden the public conversation and enrich Italy's democracy.

The country's culture is also a factor. More than 2000 years of repressive foreign regimes have resulted in a political philosophy that considers little of the rights and

freedoms that a free press requires. History does not necessarily determine the path on which a society will continue – the Second World War, for example, was one of several defining events in Italy's recent past and led to its founding as a democratic republic. But most historians agree that Italians still live in a climate of distrust, where gains of "the family" in its many forms are often more important than those of the community as a whole. Understandably, issues of liberal democracy, so important in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of journalism, have at times been left to the wayside.

This is not to suggest that Italians should be Anglo-Saxons or that their press system should reflect the Anglo-Saxon model. Few, if any, press systems operate perfectly, perhaps least of all that of the British. However, it is generally agreed in Western democracies that freedom of expression is necessary to assure self-fulfillment, to attain the truth, to help secure society's participation in social and political decision-making, and as a means of maintaining a balance between stability and change in society.⁶ And that a free press is a necessary element of freedom of expression.

Article 11(1,2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, of which Italy is a founding member, states:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers.
2. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.

As a signatory to this charter, it can then be assumed that these values hold true for Italy and the Italian people, as they do for the citizens of the other countries in the union. The values outlined in the Charter are values that cross borders and cultures, as is the belief in a free press as an important element of democracy. Where Italian culture comes into play is in how it influences the interaction between the various players in Italy's press and other media.

The political system is another major factor impacting Italian journalism. While constructed to avoid the evils of Fascism after the Second World War, its structure has resulted in a series of coalition governments that have often been unwilling or unable to govern efficiently and effectively. The best of intentions has resulted in governments often made up of politicians beholden to other politicians, coalitions, and businessmen. Italian politics and journalism are inextricably linked. That has been the case since the 1600s and barring some major event it is unlikely to change. For hundreds of years journalism and politics in Italy were practically one and the same thing. Newspapers have developed into biased political soap boxes for their owners and political friends. The Italian public has been all but cut out of the picture.

Of all the citizens of the 15 EU countries, Italians are said to be by far the most unhappy with the way their version of democracy functions. A Eurobarometre study published in April 2000 showed more than 70 per cent of Italians surveyed were either not at all satisfied or were very unsatisfied with the political system.⁷ Greeks were closest in their misery, but at a distant 50 per cent. The Dutch, at the opposite end of the scale, registered almost 80 per cent very satisfied or satisfied with their system. Some political analysts, such as Italian author Joseph LaPalombara, question the importance of these results.

It is time to ask about these and similar public opinion polls – so what?... We should pay more than passing attention to such attitudes only if they can be demonstrated to have a significant impact on the polity.⁸

LaPalombara says the behaviour of Italian citizens should be judged within the space they occupy and explains that Italians avoid direct contact with elected and appointed public officials. They make their approaches through influential individuals or organizations instead. He theorizes that direct contact with public officials does not make citizens more participatory or civic-minded, or more effective. But it must be asked

whether that means the Eurobarometre results should be ignored. Perhaps Italians are dissatisfied simply because of their lack of direct contact with public officials.

As in many Western democracies, big business has also played a big role in the development of the press in Italy. The effects have been and are still being felt in a press that is increasingly being run by businessmen.⁹ It is of major concern because of the historical relationship between business and politics that exists in Italy. Over a period of about 40 years, a system known as *clientelismo* developed in Italy that saw businessmen bound to politicians for contracts in exchange for kickbacks and other forms of support.¹⁰ This system was uncovered in the *Mani Pulite*, or Clean Hands, investigations of the early 1990s, but other than the scars it left on the Italian psyche, its lasting effects now appear to have been minimal. Now extremely wealthy businessmen who are also politicians, as well as media owners and controllers are, in effect, ruling the country.

That billionaire media mogul Silvio Berlusconi was elected prime minister on May 15, 2001, illustrates just how closely the Italian political and media systems are intertwined. It is a situation unprecedented in Western democracy. In no other country does the head of government also control almost all television, and a good portion of its print and other media, along with advertising and other areas that affect journalism. Journalists play a major role in this situation by acting simply as paid employees indebted to the media-owners, instead of as conduits for the issues and concerns of the Italian people.

Another factor hampering the Italian press system is the Roman Catholic Church, which has had a immense influence on Italian life and still wields power in the republic's newsrooms. With approximately 97 per cent of the Italian population being Catholic, the upper echelons of the church still have the ability to influence politicians and the press on many issues. As a result, controversial stories about the church are not being covered and "taboo" issues, such as homosexuality, are rarely discussed. The separation of church and state, and the press is still not complete in Italy.

The Mafia also continues to play a role in repressing press freedom depending on its level of power at any given time. While in the recent past its ability to intimidate journalists is said to have been greater, journalists' cars are still being bombed and the fear of Mafia violence still influences what is or is not written. While many outside Italy may think the Italian *mafioso* is just a stereotype, the reality of the Mafia is much worse than its image. As a result, coverage of the Mafia problem is stifled. A problem that has plagued Italy for far too long is being grossly under-reported and downplayed.

This thesis will show that all these factors have resulted in a lack of complete and correct information, a press system that is unable or restricted in its freedom to write and publish the truth, or what is believed to be the truth, and, most important, a public that is left frustrated by its inability to voice its opinions and ideas through the press. Journalism is considered one of the most prestigious professions in Italy¹ and most Italians believe in freedom of the press as one of the cornerstones of the country's democratic system. As well, Italy's press laws appear almost identical to those of other Western countries. The difference here is in the way journalism is practiced. It is unlike any other press system in the world¹ and is doing little to serve the Italian people or their democracy.

End Notes

¹ Pollett, Rene. "Italy Reopens Somalia Inquiry." Globe and Mail 29 Aug. 1997: A1+.

² DeMont, John, Luke Fisher, and Anthony Wilson-Smith. "Bitter to the End." Macleans 14 July 1997: 12.

³ "Let's Get at the Truth in Kosovo." Globe and Mail. 24 May 2000.

⁴ Sallot, John and Andrew Mitrovica. "Medic Recounts Poisoning Plot." Globe and Mail 1 June 2000.

- ⁵ Marco Gregoretti, Journalist at GQ magazine, Milan. Personal interview, 7 June 2000. Tel 011-39-02-8561-3026.
- ⁶ Emerson, Thomas. Towards a Theory of the First Amendment. New York: Random House, 1966.
- ⁷ "Le inefficienze della Politica" [The Inefficiency of Politics] Il Sole 25 Ore, 28 Oct. 2000:6.
- ⁸ LaPalombara, Joseph. Democracy, Italian Style. New Haven, Connecticut, London: Yale University Press, 1989.
- ⁹ The term businessmen is used throughout this study, instead of businesspeople, because all newspaper owners in Italy are men. Despite the increasing role of women journalists in Italian journalism, they remain mostly in lower level positions.
- ¹⁰ Patrick McCarthy. Professor of Political Science. Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, University of Bologna. Personal interview, 10 Dec. 1999. Tel. 011-39-05-123-2185.
- ¹¹ "Le professioni più ambite: direttore di giornale e giudice." [The profession people are most ambitious for: Newspaper editor and judge]. Corriere della Sera 21 June 2000.

Chapter One

Legislating Journalism in Italy

In Italy, even the law, any law, changes meaning and purpose according to the power of the person who applies it or violates it; taxes tend to become milder and more easily evaded for the powerful and the well-connected... Everything, in short, turns out to be, in the end, not a balancing of legal rights, but a confrontation of pure power.¹

– Italian journalist and author Luigi Barzini.

It's a Friday morning, seven years after the alleged incidents of torture, rape and murder took place in Somalia. In a televised ceremony, the Italian forces are again being honoured, as they have on several occasions in the spring of 2000. President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi inspects the troops and makes a glowing speech about the military's achievements. The uniforms are impeccable, the parade exceptional. All is as it should be for Italy's armed forces, despite the allegations that atrocities have been carried out by Italian troops.

For Italian journalist Marco Gregoretti, the lack of acknowledgment of the military's problems and any visible effort to correct them is not surprising. He's seen the same thing before, and in other areas. It is indicative of the many problems and issues in government, in the military, and in society that are not being properly covered by the Italian press. There is a general avoidance of issues that are considered too sensitive to be scrutinized intensely.

Gregoretti laughs now as he recounts what happened when the prestigious Saint Vincent Prize for Journalism was presented to him by former president Oscar Luigi Scalfaro in the spring of 1998. Gregoretti knew Scalfaro would say a few words to each of the prize recipients and he was anxious to hear what he would say considering the scandal Gregoretti had caused with his articles.

"*Vai avanti giovanotte*," or "continue young man," the former president told him in dramatic style.

Gregoretti was stunned. As head of state and the military, Scalfaro had the power to initiate an investigation, as well as order changes in virtually any aspect of the military's activities. But when the allegations of military wrongdoings first came to light, instead of ordering a parliamentary inquiry with full powers to investigate and make changes, a government commission was established with little power or money. An investigation would occur, but the results would be negligible.

Since writing his exposé on the forces, Gregoretti has left *Panorama* to work for the U.S.-based monthly men's magazine *GQ*. It may seem an odd choice considering his journalism experience, but Gregoretti says, because of its American ownership, Italian *GQ* offers him an opportunity to do in-depth investigative journalism. Since arriving at the magazine he has written about the suspicious death of an Italian paratrooper on Italian soil – a story he says he would not likely have been able to write at *Panorama*. It was basically ignored by all other media.

A brief article in the June 1 edition of *Panorama* regarding the military's stalling of the investigation into the alleged rape and murder of a Somali boy inside the Italian embassy in Mogadishu in 1993 would also likely not have been possible had Gregoretti still been there. Military officials are unwilling to talk to him. Gregoretti's name is mud. He has broken an unwritten rule of Italian journalism. He has dug a little too deeply into an area that is considered off limits – an area many people don't want exposed.

This unwritten rule of journalism is one that seriously affects the way the profession is practiced here because it involves so many areas and affects so many people and their ability to express themselves freely. Journalists feel constrained to write only about certain topics, and when they do write about topics that are considered generally off limits, they often limit themselves in how deeply their inquiry will go.

The effects of this type of censorship are many. While governments all over the world have a certain antipathy to the press, despite their pronouncements of belief in openness and honesty,² a free press plays an important role as a political stabilizer. This is very important in Italy, where coalition governments are the norm. A free press encourages discussion of destabilizing issues and promotes conciliation instead of allowing matters to reach the point of violence.

Another resulting effect of free speech is influence, especially influence on the decisions being made by government officials and other leaders. Without influence on those decisions from society, decisions are often made on behalf of select individuals or small groups, and in many instances, against the interests of the whole of that society. The promotion of a free press and freedom of expression should therefore be made a priority of the government in Italy, as it should in many other countries. Outlining laws and making rules to govern it are not enough. They are, however, the way to start, and Italians have outlined their belief in freedom of expression in much the same way other Western democracies have.

The Written Laws

In general, Italians hold a fundamental belief in their right to go to court. It's not that they're lawsuit crazy in the American sense and are eager to sue almost anyone for any real or perceived wrong. Plus, most Italians are aware that any case may take years to be resolved. Their use of the courts has more to do with the fact that the law makes up a large part of their lives and they want to protect themselves if possible. Most Italians have a copy of the criminal code in their homes – a sign of just how cognizant they are of the law and the possible effects of not knowing their rights and obligations. Even Don Giorgio Costantino, a priest in the Sansperateo Parish of Reggio di Calabria, had binders full of legislation on the shelves behind his desk during a visit there in 1997.³

In *The Search for Good Government*, Filippo Sabetti explains this excessive number of laws as an unintended result of Italy's attempts to put a system of good government into place. The Italian state is not the product of political unity among its people, but a structured means for achieving unity, he says. In effect, when the peninsula was being unified it was felt that political unity had to be imposed on people by means of statutory law, thus the perceived need for so many laws. This unity has occurred, to a certain extent, but the excessive number of laws has carried over into the imposition of political will by law. Democracy in Italy is being defined through government instead of through Italians themselves. Sabetti explains that:

Unfortunately, contemporary Italian political and legal discourse, not unlike that of much of the world, identifies "democracy" with parliamentary government and representative assemblies rather than with the universality of the village and community as the basic human reality.⁴

Journalism too has been affected by this attitude. The profession is governed by numerous law and regulations, and the universality of the village, or individual Italian citizens, is not properly reflected in the press and other media.

Another result of an abundance of laws is an abundance of lawyers. A 1992 report puts Italy in fifth place in the world in terms of the number of law providers operating in the country at 91.99 per 10,000 people.⁵ (Not only lawyers are qualified to provide legal services in Italy.) Interestingly, Vatican City was number one with 3,482.38 per 10,000. France was a distant 14th place, and Germany ranked 30th. The U.S. was in 35th position, Canada in 49th, and the U.K. in 52nd. Lawyers also they made up the highest percentage of graduates of Italian universities in 2000. A total of 6,866 students, or 14.9 per cent of all graduates, received degrees from the faculty of law.⁶

The written laws concerning Italian journalism are not unlike those of other Western democracies. Italians are uncompromising about their right to freedom of expression, a very important democratic value. Following the Second World War and the

collapse of fascism, the new constitution would ensure freedom of expression in Article 21, which states the following:

Everyone has the right to express his own thoughts freely by word (of mouth), in writing, or any other means of diffusion. The press cannot be subject to authorization or censorship.⁷

The word press was meant in a general sense. The intention was apparently not to include the daily newspapers and magazines in this statement. But while the Constitution states that preventive seizure is not permitted, it continues as follows:

In such cases where there is an absolute urgency and intervention in time by the judiciary authority is not possible, confiscation of the periodic press can be carried out by officials of the judiciary police, who must immediately, and never later than 24 hours, make a denunciation to the judiciary authority. If this (authority) does not validate it within the next 24 hours, the confiscation is understood to be revoked and free of any consequences.⁸

So while the Italian Constitution protects freedom of expression in positive terms on one hand, stating unequivocally that the press cannot be censored, it later states that the periodic press – newspapers and magazines – is subject to confiscation. Cases of absolute urgency are not defined.

Article 21 also makes provisions against material that "offends."

Printed publications, spectacles and all other displays that offend against public decency are forbidden. The law will make adequate provisions to prevent and suppress such violations.⁹

Since the advent of private broadcasting, the Italian concept of what is considered decent has changed. When the government networks were the only stations available, programming was family oriented (and in black and white until the mid-1970s). Silvio Berlusconi's scantily clad dancing girls and quiz shows altered that.

Publishers soon followed suit and by the new century there was little that could be bought at the local *edicole*, or newstands, that didn't include some level of pornography on its cover, in its advertising or photographs. And very few were willing to argue against this objectifying of women; some for fear of being branded puritanical or moralistic, considered harsh insults in Italy; others because they saw it as a form of liberalization from past mores.

There is no doubt mass media – especially television – have had a huge impact on Italian culture. Since the introduction in 1951 of single-channel, state television, cultural activities outside the home have steadily decreased.¹⁰ As well, private television in Italy has consistently upped its levels of sensationalism over the last 20 years and print journalists have followed along with this. They have not kept their distance from subjects and have not remained sufficiently objective or critical. One newspaper writer wrote in 1996 that:

On *Italia in Diretta* they don't say 'this woman claims to have benefited from a divine intervention,' but rather 'this woman has benefited from a divine intervention. 'Here lies the difference between journalism and deceit, between culture and ignorance.'¹¹

Italian newspapers have not really filled the void left by television. They have also never really been close to the people. Their readership is low and no strong tradition of reading newspapers exists here. Italian government figures for 1989 showed most people over 65 never read newspapers.¹² Certainly, past illiteracy rates account for much of that. At the end of the Second World War a massive campaign was mounted against illiteracy and the national figure dropped to 14 per cent.¹³ But until the war, Italian was the language of elites in Italy. Most people spoke other languages or dialects. Today 60 per cent of Italians speak Italian.¹⁴

But overall, the basic legal restrictions regarding freedom of expression in Italy appear to be no different from those of Germany, for example. Article 5 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany states:

Everyone shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinion by speech, writing and pictures and freely to inform himself from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by radio and motion pictures are guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.¹⁵

Article 5 also continues with:

These rights are limited by the provisions of the general laws, the provisions of law for the protection of youth, and by the right to inviolability of personal honour.¹⁶

In fact, many Western nations have chosen to outline their freedom of expression laws positively and then follow them up with a list of limitations. The differences lie in how the courts have interpreted these laws, and, more broadly, in the philosophy regarding press freedom of the people of the country in question. In Sweden, for example, explicit press laws are seen as a manifestation and guarantee of press freedom.¹⁷ In Italy, however, it can be said that Article 21 has helped result in an atmosphere that is considered by some to be more severe than "chilly." The idea that newspapers can be seized for up to 24 hours without the permission of a judge or other justice official actually goes against the idea that another Mussolini should never rise again in Italy. For one of the most crucial days in the country's history – the day of Mussolini's so-called March on Rome on October 29, 1922 – *Corriere della Sera* was ordered not to publish for 24 hours. It was then, and is in 2000, Italy's biggest selling newspaper. At the same time, *La Nazione*, of Florence, was forced to print a story saying Mussolini had been invited by the king to form a cabinet. It was not true, but it resulted in easy passage for the troops past the country's biggest garrison on the way to Rome. And *Il Giornale*

d'Italia printed a special edition saying Mussolini had sent what was virtually an ultimatum to the king.¹⁸

Troops could have easily defeated the few fascist squads that had been sent to Rome, but by then the newspapers had effectively demobilized the forces and the Italian people, despite the resistance forces. In light of these events, it is curious that Italians chose to allow those in power to maintain the right to seize or stop the printing of newspapers.

Article 21 presents a clear conflict for Italian journalists and newspaper owners. The result is news that is rarely controversial and journalists who are usually limited to chronicling events as opposed to investigating them. And those few who do risk writing anything outside the prepared news releases can face stiff judgments against them and their papers. Interviews in the verbatim "question-and-answer" style are published every day in Italian newspapers, partly because the papers are under a certain amount of political control, but also because of a fear of lawsuits.

The little investigative journalism that is done here must almost always be backed up by documentation, which usually means getting government documents. A journalist's notes, photographs, and even recorded interviews are not considered enough on which to base a controversial story. More than one Italian politician has been known to lie on tape. But getting documents is often impossible, usually because no one is willing to release or leak them, or because they don't exist.

Recently, however, it seems someone did leak something of importance to the Italian press. In March 2002, the homes, documents, computers, and cellular phones of two journalists of Italy's top-selling newspapers, *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica*, were confiscated after they wrote about a group of terrorists located in Rome believed connected to the September 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. These two journalists, Claudia Fusini and Fiorenza Saranini, were also interrogated for several hours.¹⁹

Having documentation is a good idea, but there are many stories in which the testimony of several sources along with facts could and should be considered a valid base. This necessity for documents is one of the reasons for the common complaint that the news in Italy is always the same. Historians and others complain regularly about their inability to gain access to pre- and even post-Second World War documents from Italian government archives.²⁰ The official version of history is jealously guarded. As one former prime minister put it: "It would not be right to let beautiful legends be discredited by historical criticism."²¹

An example of that type of criticism is the so-called political outing of Guglielmo Marconi, Italy's father of radio and scientific hero of the 20th century. According to documents unearthed by researcher Annalisa Capristo, when Marconi was head of the Academy of Italy he blocked the entry of all Jewish candidates into the prestigious institute beginning in 1930.²² Historians, however, are divided over whether Marconi was an anti-semiter or just too weak to oppose Mussolini's regime. It is true that many past leaders and heads of state of other Western countries have also been declared anti-semiter. Discussion about Winston Churchill's position on Jews has been ongoing since an article written by him appeared in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* in 1920.²³ However, that discussion has not taken 70 years to unearth. Capristo's revelations are rare. It also appears they were not covered by the Italian media. The official version of Marconi's role at the academy remains unscathed.

Journalists do not complain about the lack of access to government documents because they have never really had access to them. Their notion of how democracy operates, in this instance through access to it, is different from that of journalists in other Western countries. In most Western countries, democracy is directly tied to access to government documents. In particular, the Scandinavian model of freedom of the press and democracy is based on this right of access to information. In Italy, however, most journalists have never heard of the idea that ordinary citizens should have the right to

government files. Those interviewed for this thesis were stunned by talk of "Access to Information" laws. Most asked several questions about how it worked, but their usual closing comment was: "It'll never happen here."

In fact, such legislation does exist in Italy. In 1968, Law 15 gave Italians the right to access to provincial and central government documents, but for 22 years little, if any, access was given. In 1990, an attempt by the opposition was made to "revitalize" the old law. However, on its 10th anniversary, in August 2000, access remained impeded by public employees and officials hostile to citizens.²⁴ The ministry of public operations could not provide information on which types of documents could be made available to the public and which could not. Between 1998 and 1999, only one province adopted the regulations, which left 64 without them. And more than 5,000 communities had yet to implement the legislation.²⁵

The role of media as disseminators of information is considered by the government to come under the realm of public service in Italy. As a result, controls over that role have been put in place. Special parliamentary commissions keep watch over Italian press law and administrative organs keep an eye on the information sections of government departments.²⁶ There are no press councils that include community representatives. There are no community editorial boards that monitor individual newspapers.

During the 2000-2001 election campaign, the commissions and the communication department of the Italian government were very critical of how television networks covered events, and politicians on all sides claimed they weren't getting their fair share of air time, which they weren't. With Silvio Berlusconi owning almost all private television in Italy it was obvious who was getting the majority of coverage, and the data backed up those observations. As prime minister now in control of state television, the situation has worsened. In the press, during the campaign, the only real levelling elements were the strength of the left-leaning daily *La Repubblica* and a few other left-wing and communist

papers, which overall gave the impression that the press was providing more balanced coverage.

To be fair, some of the tactics used by Italian journalists also leave much to be desired – again an issue of education. In September 2000, the Swiss Supreme Court found an Italian journalist guilty of impersonating a refugee from Kosovo and fined him 300,000 lire (about \$225 Cdn).²⁷ The journalist was writing a series about refugees for *Corriere della Sera*. The newspaper printed a brief regarding the conviction and the paper's management complained to the Italian Press Federation about the decision. An appeal is expected. A short while later, the journalist received an award for the series in Italy.

Impersonation and falsely identifying oneself are common tactics used among Italian journalists. So much so that it is considered a normal procedure. Marco Gregoretti, the journalist who won a national prize for uncovering Italy's Somalia scandal had no reservations explaining how he had pretended to be the cousin of a soldier to get his story.²⁸ Certainly, it enabled him to be involved in conversations regarding crimes that had been committed by Italian soldiers in Somalia he would likely never have been able to be part of had he identified himself as a journalist. However, it didn't occur to him that there might have been something unethical, if not illegal, about not identifying himself properly.

The journalists' rule book, as well as Italian law, contain some very lofty rules about issues such as journalists' duties, transparency, truth, dignity, and trust between journalists and readers – but most of them were broken or badly bent in the period in which this thesis was written. What this says about how Italian journalists see themselves in society and their role in assisting democracy is that perhaps not all these rules are as important as the books make them out to be here. If there was a greater understanding of the importance of these values for democracy perhaps they would be followed more closely. And it is possible that, as in other segments of society, there are grey areas to be considered amongst these rules and regulations. Italians are generally

thought to flout the law, but in reality they usually follow those laws that are considered rational and fair.²⁹ While journalism law on the surface may appear rational and fair, in the Italian context some of those rules just don't work, especially when controls over the press and other media constrain journalists to break them.

The Order's Rules

In 2000, former Italian prime minister Giulio Andreotti's face went up on billboards all over Italy, but it wasn't part of a political campaign. Instead, the 80-year-old *divo* was part of a testimonial ad campaign for a Diners Club Internet portal. The campaign began shortly after Andreotti was absolved by the courts on charges related to the murder of Italian journalist Mino Pecorelli. The ads quoted him saying ironically that he'd thought he'd seen everything. Andreotti was promptly investigated by the national Order of Journalists.

Despite having been a politician for about 50 years, Andreotti is also a professional journalist and as such must be registered in the *Albo* or registry of the order. And, according to the rules of the order, Italian journalists are not permitted to take part in advertising campaigns. The order eventually decided to keep Andreotti "under observation," but maintained that "the demarcation between information and advertising remain(ed) a fundamental principle of the organization."³⁰ Andreotti, one of several of Italy's "Teflon" men, was off the hook.

This is rare. The order's penalties range from cautions, to suspensions, to outright expulsions from the order, and, theoretically, the profession. The Order of Journalists wields vast power over journalists, but it appears Andreotti wields more.

It is also rare that someone who exhibits journalistic talent, or has had the lifelong ambition of being a journalist, will actually become a journalist in Italy. The order's rules and the laws regarding journalism help make journalism an elite profession. The rules of entry into the Order of Journalists alone are solid evidence of this. Only those who have

passed the order's national exam and are registered in the *Albo* are eligible to be hired as professional journalists and to use the title.

Its rule book, the *Vademecum del Giornalista*, is also evidence of the boundaries of the profession. Although small in format, measuring just 12 x 17 centimetres, it contains more than 500 pages and covers everything Italian journalists in the order can and cannot do.

The order is a product of the post-Second World War period. Italy's main press guidelines came into being on February 8, 1947, when Law 47 was passed. Then on February 6, 1963, Law 69, establishing the *Ordine dei Giornalisti* or Order of Journalists, was introduced. It became law on January 13, 1965.

This system of using a professional order to control who can become a journalist, and their activities after they enter the order, contrasts significantly with other Western systems. The French system, for example, has no press councils and no legal or contractual code of practice that applies to journalists as a whole. Various professional organizations in France have produced their own codes and apply them to their members, but they involve ethical and moral issues, rather than restraints.³¹ The British system has a somewhat ineffectual press council that was established in 1953 only after the threat of legislation.³² Most importantly, neither system controls who can become a journalist.

Having the money, connections, and education to get to the point of entering the order add to the difficulties of entering the profession. It is usually only open to those whose fathers are or were journalists, or those who have the right political affiliations or connections. And then many use the profession as a stepping-stone into another, more lucrative, area – politics.

Journalism in Italy has traditionally been practised by lawyers, politicians, and businessmen. Few people choose journalism as a lifelong career. Until the early 1990s, there was no degree program offered by Italian universities in journalism. In 2000, the leftist Olive Tree coalition government proposed wide-sweeping reforms to education,

which included 104 new two-year specialization degrees, one of which was called Publishing, Multimedia Communication, and Journalism.³³ Under this proposal, all undergraduate degree programs would be reduced to three years in an effort to lower the average age of graduation from 28 years and to decrease the average 7.2 years it was taking students to complete a degree.³⁴ With the election of Berlusconi's right-wing House of Freedoms coalition in 2001, it is unclear whether these changes will be fully implemented.

One is required to have a degree in another field to enter a master of journalism program, usually in political science or economics. These two-year programs are heavily weighted with courses on politics and business. Their cost is approximately \$8,000 Cdn per year – about average for what are considered "perfection" or specialization degrees. Having a graduate degree in journalism is not considered mandatory for those wanting to take the order's exam.

It should also be noted that a master's degree in Italy does not have the same significance as in other Western countries. It is a word taken from the English language. The Italian equivalent, *maestro*, is not used. And master's degrees in virtually any subject were available in Italy at the turn of the century – some with as little as 10 Saturdays of study.

Otherwise, there are several small private schools offering courses in journalism, eight of which are recognized by the Order of Journalists. Anyone with a high school diploma can apply, but the number of spaces is usually restricted. For example, at the Carlo De Martino Institute in Milan, 683 people applied for, paid for, and took an entry exam for the 40 spaces available in 2000. Thirty of those accepted had university degrees while the other 10 were university students.³⁵ It must be asked here whether such institutions are in the business of giving exams or educating students.

In the past, some publications set up their own mini-schools of journalism, with courses lasting several months, in an effort to train staff for their own newsrooms. But by the year 2000, most of these had disappeared. The unfortunate result of this limited

amount of journalism instruction is journalists with too little knowledge or understanding of mass media, journalism ethics, or basic writing and interviewing skills.

Following completion of the journalism program or a degree in another field, or both, would-be journalists are then required to work as apprentices for 18 to 36 months at a daily newspaper or at any other nationally-circulated periodical. Journalists in this *stage*, or work term, are usually poorly paid. Then comes the final professional exam, which involves a written and oral examination of journalism history, political knowledge, media law and writing skills.

Some of the questions on the exam are relatively easy. In fact, considering there are many who take it without having any training or experience in journalism, it should probably be made more difficult. The April 2000 written exam contained two parts: the first consisted of 15 essay questions of which only one had to be answered in a maximum of 30 lines of 60 characters; the second consisted of six other questions, each to be answered in three lines.

The following are some examples of the essay questions:

External Affairs: Public opinion on the Elian Gonzales case is divided in the United States. Illustrate the diplomatic and political implications in the situation regarding the Cuban child.

Crime News: "Disappeared Albanian Child Massacred: Young Man Arrested." Elaborate this story (using the four newspaper articles included).

Fashion: Colours are back, goodbye to black. Fashion rediscovers transparency to exhibit designer-name lingerie.

The second part was more specific to Italian journalism practices. Some examples of questions included:

Which illegal act does one commit who offends someone's reputation?

What is the chain of command in an editorial department?³⁶

Examinations are conducted by a board comprised of five journalists and two judges. The oral exam consists of several questions regarding Italian history, the history of Italian journalism, public opinion issues, journalism techniques, and journalism law and ethics. This is followed by a discussion on a current affairs topic chosen by the candidate and provided to the order at least three days before the examination. At the end of the examination, the candidate is informed of the result of their written exam.³⁷ If the candidate has passed, their name is added to the *Albo*. This allows them to then legally work as a journalist in Italy, to receive a press card giving them discounts, and to pay all the ensuing taxes and fees involved in being a member.

Getting a Job

After a journalist has jumped through all the hoops involved in getting into the profession comes the hardest part of all – getting a job. There are no advertisements in Italian magazines or newspapers requesting applications and resumes, no matter how big the publication. Jobs are usually attained on the basis of whether one's father was a famous journalist; or one is well-positioned politically; whether one has enough favours in the "favour bank," whether one is single; young – usually under 30; male; or whether one is placed deeply enough within a circle of editors and journalists to hear a rumour of a job opening, along with one of the previously mentioned conditions. Experience and education that merit hiring are not necessarily priorities, although they too help. As in many other areas of Italian life, nepotism, and *clientelismo*, or the trading of favours and money, often decide who gets ahead.

Another problem is the competition for jobs – any jobs. In 2000, unemployment averaged about 11 per cent in Italy. In France it was 10 per cent, and in Britain six per cent.³⁸ In southern Italy, it was as much as 30 per cent in some areas. Youth

unemployment in the country overall was high at about 20 per cent. And again, in the south the figure was higher at about 50 per cent.³⁹ Countless people throughout the country are grossly underemployed, wasting their most productive years and their talents in dead-end, but secure jobs.

Because of a history of high unemployment, many Italians seek *un lavoro fisso* or a permanent position – basically a life-time job – and journalism is no exception. Short-term contract positions are frowned on and were unheard of until recently. It is a foreign idea. The idea of giving up a life-time job in order to take another more interesting or challenging position is considered reckless.

One positive result of high unemployment has been an increase in education. If there are few jobs one of the few choices left to young people is to try to better educate themselves for higher level positions. As well, thousands of university students are trying to increase their education as a result of their parents influence. Many shopkeepers, agricultural workers, small entrepreneurs and factory workers have encouraged their children to get a better education than they did. The result is a more individualistic society, and a growing middle class.

This can only bode well for journalism. A better educated society also means one with a greater commitment to civil society, of which the protection of freedom of speech is a core value. It also means journalists who better understand the values outlined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as in the *Vademecum del Giornalista*.

Of concern remains the conflict these young people currently live with – that while they may believe in equality and fairness they know that in the "real world" the realities of *clientelismo*, nepotism, the cult of the old, and other long-standing practices are what will likely get them ahead. Perhaps eventually these problems will work their way out of the system as a result of education. For now its consequence is often a high level of

frustration among those who have on one hand learned the values they are supposed to hold, but on the other have seen that they are not always being fairly and equally applied.

Women, for example, have a particularly difficult time getting into journalism, despite the fact they currently comprise 56.1 per cent of master of journalism graduates. The profession is dominated by men from top to almost the bottom – almost because many women fill the lower ranks of journalism. Part of this comes from the fact that for almost all of the history of Italian journalism women were relegated to the "women's pages." But it also results from the fact that most professions in Italy are dominated by the "old guard." Italy's gerontocracy continues to deny power to younger members of society. One magazine in particular, *Il Venerdì*, a newsmagazine published by, and bundled with, the Friday edition of *La Repubblica*, contains column after column written by older men, with one exception – at the back is a letters-from-the-lovelorn type of column written by a senior woman journalist.

One of the persistent rumours regarding women journalists in Italy is that many of them get their jobs, keep them, or are promoted, because they have provided sex to someone along the way. Women television journalists especially are targets of this type of gossip, likely because of their high visibility. Again, there are no data available regarding this issue at the turn of the century. There are no sexual harassment laws *per se* in Italy. Sexual harassment, if it reaches the point of sexual assault, is dealt with under criminal law, and few cases reach the courtroom. Those cases that do usually have several complainants.

There are, however, signs that sexual harassment within many workplaces is a widespread problem, and that newsrooms are no different. In conversations with women from north to south, the problem was consistently mentioned. One professional women's organization official admitted that she felt embarrassed but obliged to tell foreign women that in Italy a blouse that reveals cleavage increases a candidate's chances of being hired.

Unfortunately, being a woman also decreases one's chance of being hired due to pregnancy-leave laws that require employers to pay benefits.

By the summer of 2001, Italian journalists had begun using the British term "mobbing" to describe psychological violence experienced by workers, and had included sexual harassment under that heading. But the press still made no mention of the problem within the media. It took the rebel journalism Web site *Il Barbiere della Sera* to broach the subject. *Il Barbiere della Sera*, or The Evening Barber, spoofs the name of the best-selling paper *Corriere della Sera*, and is one place where journalists are making public some of the unknown facts about the profession and the powers that be in Italy. In one piece on the site, a male journalist outlined which type of managers are having sex and with whom in Italian newsrooms. Of the four types he listed, all were men in high positions who were taking advantage of women in lower positions who either needed their jobs, were hoping for advancement, were interns hoping to be hired, or were journalists on work terms in anticipation of writing the order's exam.⁴⁰

Il Barbiere often uses humour to get its messages across. In response to the piece written by "Lo Spectatore," or The Spectator, a woman freelancer jokingly wrote that she wouldn't mind it if she was ever lucky enough to be hired for her breasts, as long as it was with the agreement that no one could touch them, and that the editors would let her write in peace. But she also wrote that, considering the goals of impartiality and objectivity were discussed in journalism textbooks, but didn't exist in practice, perhaps sex between management and staff did exist because it wasn't in the textbooks – in which case, she preferred to remain a freelancer.⁴¹

Foreigners also have difficulty entering the journalism profession in Italy. In general, foreigners have difficulty entering any profession here. It was only in 2000 that the government began allowing foreigners to take the exams for public jobs that thousands line up to take in stadiums and other auditoriums here every year. Because journalism positions are rare, the chances of a foreigner attaining one are even more limited.

The Order of Journalists requires that those taking the exam be Italian citizens, but it has a special list for foreigners. It is separate from the regular list and is only applicable to those whose home country has a reciprocal agreement to accept Italian journalists onto their professional order lists, assuming they have them. Foreign journalists seeking political asylum in Italy are also accepted on the foreigner list. Being on that list, however, does not guarantee one of a job. Professional journalists are paid more than those of other categories, and if a position becomes available it is more likely an Italian will get it.

The consequences of these written and unwritten rules for women and foreigners are immense. Not only are the voices of more than half the profession being suppressed, the opportunity for expression of ideas and opinions of a good portion of the population is drastically limited. Journalists have a tendency to report on things they know. In general, coverage of women, foreigners and other minority groups increases in relation to the number of members of those groups operating within the profession. When their numbers are limited, so is coverage of issues that concern them.

As well, through the discussion of issues and offering of opinions comes the truth. Without discussion from all segments of society the truth is limited to the truth of only select members of that society.

Freedom of speech is also a way for people to express their wishes to their government.⁴² This has an enormous impact on a country's democratic system. If that expression is blocked for certain segments of society that means a society is democratic, again, only for certain people.

All in all, journalism in Italy is a tough business. The "everyone" in the phrase "everyone has the right to express his own thoughts freely by word (of mouth), in writing, or any other means of diffusion" in Article 21 of the Italian Constitution did not exactly mean everyone at the turn of this century. The consequences of having so many rules and regulations regarding the practice and profession of journalism are many.

For example, if "everyone" or even just anyone, decided they wanted to start a newspaper to "express their own thoughts" they, or someone they hired, would have to be a member of the Order of Journalists. Although Italian press law purports to have no form of licensing in place this "registration" is required of a person who will take responsibility for any possible offences that might be committed by a publication. Then if that outsider finds someone within the order willing to sign on as the "responsible," they also have to be rich enough to pay for all the licenses and taxes required before publication of the first paper can begin.

This helps explain why an underground press in Italy is virtually non-existent. The only free newspapers being given out on the streets of Italy are the new subway papers published by the big Italian newspaper companies in an effort to block the Swedish-owned and innovative *Metro* newspaper out of the country. Wealth and power play strong roles in press freedom, as in many other areas of Italian life.

By 2001, even the Internet in Italy was on its way to being another controlled medium of information. It had been hoped that the Internet would have been left as a vehicle for free speech for anyone with access to a computer and a server. But a few weeks before the national election, parliament passed a law requiring Web sites publishing news to follow the same rules as the press, i.e. to have a "responsible" who is a member of the Order of Journalists, and to register with the courts. The Italian Order of Journalists spoke out in favour of the legislation.

The Law and the Practice

In Italy, the wheels of justice grind exceedingly slowly. So much so that in the spring of 2000 the Italian government proposed changes to the procedural section of the Italian penal code that would deny the right of appeal for those found guilty of defamation in the press. It was part of a plan to reduce the number of so-called less serious cases that were taking up more court time than was considered necessary. But

there had been no public cry for changes in defamation law – a criminal offence, as well as a civil tort here. The change was an arbitrary one. The problem for the Italian government was that by the end of 2000 a total of more than 116,000 cases were pending in the Italian Court of Appeal. And the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg was once again condemning the Italian justice system for its violations of the right to trial within a reasonable period of time, as it had for several years running.⁴³

Considering it takes on average 16 months for criminal cases to be completed and five years for civil cases here, changes are in order. The Italian courts were found at fault 173 times by the court in Strasbourg in 2000 – the highest number of any European country – and the government was fined heavily for it. Italy's government also made 153 "friendly settlements" with other complainants, and paid damages amounting in the millions of dollars. One case had dragged on for 30 years and eight months, and the complainant received 92 million lire (about \$70,000 Cdn). France was in second place for its violations of Article 6.1 with just 38 guilty findings and nine friendly settlements.⁴⁴

But for anyone concerned about press freedom and civil liberties, the proposal to eliminate appeals for defamation findings was troubling. And for those waiting to see how the story would play out it was even more disturbing – the proposal issue was all but ignored by the Italian press and other media. Only a handful of articles regarding the subject were published in the major newspapers, and there was little, if any, public debate. Civil liberties groups were equally silent. It was as though defamation was not of public concern.

Eight months after the proposal was made the results appeared in a short piece in the financial newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* in its legal section. The right to appeal in defamation cases would be granted only when, in addition to a fine, damages had been awarded.⁴⁵ Journalists all over Italy should have heaved a collective sigh of relief. In Rome alone, between 1988 and 1997, there had been 342 convictions for defamation against journalists, newspapers, and magazines, and damages amounted to 8,096 million

lire (about \$6.1 million Cdn). In 1999, the total amount of damages paid in defamation cases had risen to more than 3,000,000 million lire, (about \$226 million Cdn) and awards were growing.⁴⁶ The International Press Institute (IPI), which publishes an annual report on the state of media around the world, identified the increasing number of legal cases being brought against Italian journalists as one of its main concerns in its 2000 and 1999 reports. It had not been mentioned in previous years.

Also of concern here is the fact that in Italy defamation remains a criminal offence, as it does in several European countries – despite calls for its abolition. However, the frequency of its use as a criminal offence varies, as does the way it is handled. In civil defamation suits in Italy, a guilty finding can be made without the accuser having the burden of proof. Redress can also be obtained here for moral damage when material damage can't be demonstrated. And in civil suits damages can be requested as much as five years after the fact, as opposed to in criminal cases when a limit of only 90 days is allowed.

In some countries the courts have disallowed certain public bodies, such as political parties, officials, and state-owned corporations the right to bring defamation cases on the grounds that elected bodies should be open to public criticism – that they are public bodies and as such cannot be bringing charges against themselves. But in Italy, defamation charges continue to be used.

The IPI noted, "sadly," that another proposal made in December 2000 to cap the amount of damages that could be paid in criminal defamation cases at about \$30,000 Cdn if a "rapid retraction" was made, was completely dropped. It was deemed too risky because it could be considered an admission of guilt in any subsequent civil case. This proposal did not appear in the Italian press.

Only *Panorama* published a story about the rise in the total amount of money being awarded in defamation cases against journalists. Its owner, Silvio Berlusconi, was having his own problems with magistrates. And *Panorama* was subject to the wrath of

Italian magistrates in 2000 when three of its journalists went outside the usual pattern of Mafia reporting and were found guilty of defamation as a result. Andrea Marcenaro, the weekly's now former director, and Giuliano Ferrara, a TV personality/newspaper owner, along with *Panorama's* new director were sentenced to eight, seven, and five months imprisonment respectively, and required to pay fines amounting to 55 million lire (about \$42,000 Cdn) to each of 13 magistrates.⁴⁷ Marcenaro had written an article in 1997 in which he claimed magistrates in Palermo were trying to keep their heads down when it came to the Mafia; they were avoiding Mafia *pentiti*, or informants, in order to avoid the possibility of being accused of collusion with the Mafia by them in the future.⁴⁸ Outside Italy, the IPI again took notice. In its Annual Overview of Europe it called the prison sentences a "clear breach of internationally accepted standards which state that journalists should not be jailed for their reporting." But no news of this international condemnation of the decision was published within the country. The case is being appealed.

Following sentencing, Marcenaro received a two-month suspension by the Order of Journalists and the director of *Panorama* was given a warning.⁴⁹ Support for Marcenaro within the profession was widespread, at least according to a list of notable journalists said to be in support of him that was also published by *Panorama*. But few other publications would go near the story. In August, *Panorama* followed up with three pages of articles on the issue, which included the results of a proposal made by Marcenaro and *Panorama* to the government for legislative reforms to improve the poor relationship between journalists and magistrates. Two suggestions were made: that when a press outlet makes an error it be given the possibility of remedying it by publishing an article or articles giving the story the same level of importance as the original article; or that a special section of the courts, made up of a magistrate, two laypersons and one communications expert, be set up specifically to judge such cases.⁵⁰ To date, nothing has come of these proposals.

Little mention has also been made of a 2001 Italian Supreme Court decision to hold journalists and their papers responsible for reporting the text of interviews in which subjects made declarations considered damaging to the reputation of third parties. The use of quotation marks no longer shields journalists from defamation charges, the same as in English and Canadian law. But in previous cases it had. Paolo Serventi Longhi, president of the Italian Press Federation, expressed concern over the decision, saying he could understand such a law in the case of statements made by average citizens, but, "It seems absurd that the statements made by public figures could result in legal consequences for the interviewer."⁵¹ It was the reverse of a January 1999 decision made by the court. In a case against *La Repubblica*, in which a journalist and then editor-in-chief, Eugenio Scalfari, were charged with defamation, the two were absolved. That case involved an interview published by the paper in which a noted feminist writer had made defamatory comments against the then new president of the Chamber of Deputies, Irene Pivetti.⁵²

In another case that month, the same court found Ferrara (again) guilty of defamation for what it termed gratuitously offensive comments directed at a Naples magistrate published in an interview in the weekly news magazine *L'Espresso*.⁵³

The relationship between Italian journalists and justice officials was becoming more and more strained. By 1999, magistrates were among the most successful of those who brought charges against journalists, followed by politicians. And it was magistrates who received the highest awards in court, the average being 60 million lire (about \$45,000 Cdn), compared with 44 million lire (about \$33,000 Cdn) received by politicians.⁵⁴

Italian journalists are writing much about magistrates, but it is not that they are criticizing them for their judicial decisions. It's that Italian judges have a bad reputation and are therefore a target for journalists. More than one magistrate has been found guilty of accepting bribes, of corruption, or of Mafia collusion. The articles that regularly appear here regarding judges are usually not made in the context of covering a trial, or about judges expressing their fears that too much information is being revealed about suspects

before juries can make their decisions, thus risking the suspects' right to a fair trial. Nor are they regarding judges who are considered interventionists, or activists. The articles that appear in the Italian press are usually regarding the arrests and convictions of magistrates.

Although a comparison of the chill caused by the Mafia with that caused by magistrates would be unfair, by 2001 journalists were also writing only certain types of stories about magistrates – those which usually came from police and justice department news releases, and trials. And by June of 2001, the relationship between journalists and magistrates in southern Italy had become so difficult that a group of journalists and newspaper companies, along with several prominent anti-Mafia spokespersons and organizations, set up a fund to raise money for what it called "the campaign for freedom of the press in the struggle against the Mafia."⁵⁵

In Palermo, 10 of 11 defamation cases in the first six months of 2001 in which journalists were found guilty involved stories regarding connections between the Mafia, business, and politics. In one case, a university instructor wrote an article, published in the anti-Mafia paper *Narcomafie* and later republished in the communist paper *Il Manifesto*, in which he expressed his bewilderment that the new president of the province continued to represent a Mafia suspect in court. He was found guilty of defamation and required to pay 118 million lire in damages (about \$89,000 Cdn). One-fifth of his monthly salary would immediately go towards paying the award as damages in defamation cases in Italy are payable upon the decision being made, instead of on completion of the appeal process.⁵⁶

A journalist for *La Repubblica* seemed on his way to breaking all Italian records for defamation cases with more than 20 complaints and charges under his belt. One complaint, for which he was required to pay a fine of 100 million lire (about \$76,000 Cdn), was for an article regarding the former substitute district attorney for Palermo who was later elected a member of Parliament.⁵⁷

Rita Borsellino, the wife of Mafia-assassinated magistrate and national hero Paolo Borsellino, denounced the lack of public discussion on the number of defamation cases being brought against journalists covering the Mafia saying, "the eloquent silence is descending on these vicissitudes."⁵⁸ And politicians were unwilling to do much to protect journalists and press freedom. During the 2000-2001 election campaign, numerous defamation suits were filed by politicians, many of them by *Forza Italia* leader and then-candidate for prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. And Italian journalists were reluctant to focus attention on the wrongdoings within their own profession. It was extremely rare to read articles regarding journalists who had been found guilty of defamation.

End Notes

¹ Barzini, Luigi. The Italians. London: Penguin Books, 1968.

² Ungar, Sanford J. "The Role of a Free Press in Strengthening Democracy." In Judith Lichtenberg (ed.), Democracy and the Mass Media: A Collection of Essays. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

³ Pollett, Rene. "Reggio di Calabria: Una Bella Citta?" Ocean Drive Sept. 1997: 40-44, 110-11.

⁴ Sabetti, Filippo. The Search for Good Government. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.

⁵ August, Ray. "The Mythical Kingdom of Lawyers" ABA Journal. vol.78, pp. 72-74. September 1992.

⁶ Profilo dei Laureati 2000.[Graduates Profile]. Available at <http://www.almalaurea.it/> and at www.almalaurea.it/stat/profile2000/aggregati_frams.html.

⁷ Carosi, Mario and Perino, Cesare eds. Vademecum del Giornalista. Rome: Stamparoma, 1987.

⁸ Ibid., 1987.

⁹ Ibid., 1987.

¹⁰ Communications and Cultural Consumption. p. 377

¹¹ Michele Serra p. 112. In Ginsborg, Paul. Italy and its Discontents: Family, civil society, state 1980-2001. London : Allen Lane, 2001.

¹² Martinelli, Alberto, Antonio M. Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi. Recent Social Trends in Italy: 1960-1995. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.

¹³ Porter, William E. The Italian Journalist. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983, and Mack Smith, Denis. Modern Italy: A Political History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.

¹⁴ Martinelli, Alberto, et al., 1999.

¹⁵ Karpen, Ulrich. Freedom of the Press in Germany. Roger Errera. ed., in Article 19: Press Law and Practice. London: UNESCO International Centre Against Censorship, March 1993. p. 78.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Lahav, Pnina. Press Law in Modern Democracies. New York and London: Longman, 1985.

¹⁸ Mack Smith, Denis. 1997. p. 321 and Murialdi, Paolo. Storia del giornalismo Italiano [The History of Italian Journalism]. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996. p. 131.

¹⁹ "Islam, fuga notizie: sequestrati cellulare a due croniste" [Islam, scoop: Cell phones of two journalists sequestered]. La Repubblica. March 5, 2002. Online at http://www.repubblica.it/news/ired/ultimora/rep_nazionale_193423.htm

²⁰ Mack Smith, Denis. Cavour and Garibaldi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

²¹ Casalini, Simona. "Lazio, An censura i libri di testo 'Troppo storiografia marxista'" [Lazio, AN (National Alliance Party) Censors Textbooks, 'Too much Marxist Historiography']. La Repubblica. 10 Nov. 2000:25.

²² Carroll, Rory. "Marconi blocked Jews from Il Duce's academy." The Guardian March 19, 2002. Available at www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4376828,00html

- 23 Churchill, Winston S., "Zionism versus Bolshevism" Illustrated Sunday Herald. February 8, 1920. Available at www.ffp.co.uk/bookchapters/WSC/WSCwrote1920.html Story on Churchill.
- 24 Clarich, Marcello. "Trasparenza, compleanno difficile" [Transparency: A Difficult Anniversary]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 14 Aug. 2000:8.
- 25 Clarich, Marcello. "La trasparenza compie 10 anni ma il ministero non é in regola." [Transparency Reaches 10 Years But the Ministry Doesn't Comply]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 14 Aug. 2000:1.
- 26 Nimmo, Dan and Mansfield, Michael W. Government and the News Media: Comparative Dimensions Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1982. p. 47.
- 27 "Il caso finto profugo: condannato giornalista" [The Case of the Fake Refugee: Journalist Convicted]. Corriere della Sera. 2 Sept. 2000.
- 28 Gregoretti, Marco. Personal interview, recorded on micro-cassette. Milan, 7 June 2000.
- 29 Sabetti, Filippo. The Search for Good Government. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.
- 30 "Andreotti testimonial, l'ordine dei giornalisti indaga" [Andreotti's Testimonial. The Order of Journalists Investigates]. La Repubblica. 6 June 2000:29.
- 31 Errera, Roger. "Press Law in France" Article 19: Press Law and Practice. London: UNESCO International Centre Against Censorship, March 1993. pp. 64, 77.
- 32 From Presswise, a UK-based press ethics organization. Available at <http://www.presswise.org.uk/France.htm> and Nicol, Andrei and Bowman, Caroline. "Press Law in the United Kingdom" Article 19: Press Law and Practice. London: UNESCO International Centre Against Censorship, March 1993. p. 172.
- 33 "In arrivo 104 lauree specialistiche: c'è anche giornalismo" [Soon, 104 Specialist Degrees: Including Journalism]. Tabloid. 6 June 2000:32. (Published by the Order of Journalist – Lombardy Region.)
- 34 Profilo dei Laureati 2000. [Graduates Profile] Available at www.almalaurea.it/stat/profile2000/aggregati_frams.html.
- 35 From brochure for the Istituto Carlo De Martino, or the Carlo De Martino Institute, 2000.
- 36 From a copy of the exam dated and stamped 29 April 2000, provided by Franco Abruzzo, president of the Lombardy Council of the Order of Journalists.

- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ "Economic Indicators. Output, Demand and Jobs" The Economist 26 Aug.- 1 Sept. 2000: 96.
- ³⁹ Martinelli, Alberto, et al., 1999.
- ⁴⁰ "Sesso in redazione. E negli uffici stampa?" [Sex in the Newsroom? And in the Press Offices?] 14 May 2001. Available at <http://www.ilbarbieredellasera.com/archivi/trentarighe/trentamag2001.html#sessocandida>
- ⁴¹ "Sesso in redazione? Allora meglio fare la freelance" [Sex in the Newsroom? Then it's Better to be a Freelancer]. 11 May 2001. Available at www.ilbarbieredellasera.com/archivi/trentarighe/trentamag2001.html#sessocandida.
- ⁴² Schauer, Frederick. Free Speech: A philosophical enquiry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. p. 38.
- ⁴³ Foschi, Filippo. "Il ritardo verrà condannato in ritardo" [The Lateness will be Condemned Late]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 25 June 2001:16.
- ⁴⁴ Chamber Judgements Concerning Italy are available through releases made public regularly by the European Court of Human Rights at www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2000/Dec/Dec192000judsepress.htm and other addresses listed by date.
- ⁴⁵ "Sulle condanne per diffamazione tornerò l'appello" [Appeal Returned for Convictions of Defamation]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 15 Nov. 2000.
- ⁴⁶ Marcenaro, Andrea. "E la giudice sentenzià: Pagate quei colleghi" [And the Judge Will Sentence You to: 'Pay Those Colleagues (of mine)']. Panorama. 27 July 2000:46-47.
- ⁴⁷ Marcenaro, Andrea. Panorama. 27 July 2000:46-47.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. 27 July 2000:46-47.
- ⁴⁹ Fasanella, Giovanni. "Vist, si cambi (la legge)" [See, They Change (The Law.)]. Panorama. 10 Aug. 2000:50-52.
- ⁵⁰ Marcenaro, Andrea. "Scegliamo arbitri neutri." [Let's Choose Neutral Arbitrators]. Panorama. 10 Aug. 2000: 51.
- ⁵¹ Morelli, Claudia. "Cronisti, inutile virgolettare" [News Journalists, It is Futile to Use Quotation Marks]. Italia Oggi. 31 May 2001:26, and "L'intervistato difama, il

cronista no." [The Person Interviewed Defames, the News Reporter Doesn't] Tabloid. 6 June 2000:18.

⁵² "Ma con Ferrara la stessa Corte decide diversamente." [But with Ferrara, the Same Court Decides Differently]. Tabloid. 6 June 2000:18.

⁵³ Bellavia, Enrico. "Cosi imbavagliano i giornali." [This is How They Gag the Newspapers]. La Repubblica. 29 June 2001:4

⁵⁴ "Il soldi che lavano l'onore" [The Money that Washes Honour] Il Barbiere della Sera. 2 July 2001. Available at www.ilbarbieredellasera.com

⁵⁵ Ibid. July 2001.

⁵⁶ Bellavia, Enrico. La Repubblica. 29 June 2001:4

Chapter Two

The Influence of Culture

Damned is he who trusts another.

Don't make loans, don't give gifts and don't do good for it will all turn out bad for you.

Everyone thinks of his own good and cheats his companion.

When you see the house of your neighbour on fire, carry water to your own.¹

– Italian Proverbs

According to noted Italian political scientist Alberto Martinelli, three essential institutions have structured Italian culture and society, and provided it with unity and permanence. The family leads the list, followed by the church and political parties.² These, in turn, have had significant impact on the practice of journalism in Italy. There are other cultural factors as well, of course, some of which are more important to journalism than to other segments of society. This chapter will discuss some of these elements, such as the low level of transparency in business and politics, the climate of distrust, the importance of family, and the social hierarchy, as well as their impact on journalism here.

Because journalism reflects the society in which it operates, journalism itself can be considered an element of culture. Media critic and author Jay Rosen calls journalism "an expression of a national culture."³ He says the language, the way it is used, and the feelings it conveys are all part of a nation's culture. This is recorded in the media, in the past primarily in art and architecture, then in books and now in numerous different media. And while in Italy, as in many other countries, it may not be great art, there is certainly an art to the practice of journalism here.

The Show

For centuries, foreigners have been falling in love with the Italian way of life. The country's great treasury of art and architecture, along with its natural beauty are virtually

unmatched anywhere else in the world. Italy has long been a part of the "Grande Tour of Europe" – a necessary part of any northern aristocrat's or wealthy person's education: artists have painted its landscapes and ruins, and countless writers, such as Byron and Goethe, have tried to describe its attractions. Today, part of the country's appeal is that Italians are among the most stylish people on the planet, as is evident by their virtual dominance of the fashion world and the seemingly endless demand for Italian-designed products. In 1995, Italian exports to its top 18 trading partners totalled more than \$231 billion US, making the Italian economy the world's fourth largest.⁴

As well as style, the passion Italians display publicly every day – whether it is in the beckoning cries of produce sellers in the hundreds of outdoor markets, the old men in the coffee bars and piazzas debating the issues of the day, or the young men strutting about in the historic piazzas, wooing potential lovers – is pure theatre.

And then there is soccer. The Italian love of the game is world renowned. It's no wonder Italy's third biggest-selling daily newspaper is *La Gazzetta dello Sport*. Following a weekend of sports, the Monday editions sell an average 619,718 copies.⁵

Showmanship is a large part of the Italian culture. It is one of the elements that make life in Italy so enjoyable and entertaining. But all the fun and games are not the reality of life here. The reality is a lot harsher for many. It's high unemployment, especially among the young; it is poverty, especially in the south and among immigrants; and it is the threat of crime and violence, sometimes random, sometimes by terrorists, and sometimes by the Mafia. The performance often acts as a distraction from the real issues of the day, and it serves the government and other institutions well. A population that is well entertained has less to say about corruption, poverty, crime, and unemployment. It also clouds the real goings on in government and the country's other institutions.

In June 2000, a puzzling story made front-page news in Italian newspapers that for a while helped serve to distract people from a much more pressing issue. The government announced it was proposing legislation that would raise the allowable age of

parents wishing to adopt children from 40 to 45 years older than their adoptive children.⁶ In the past, adoptive parents of a newborn baby could not be more than 40 years old. Now they could be 45. Government officials insisted it was an important move and that the protection of children was uppermost in their minds. But had there been widespread adoptions or attempted adoptions by couples more than 40 years older than their adoptive children? No. Certainly Italian women, like those in many Western countries, are waiting until their careers are established to have children, which is resulting in an increased number of couples seeking to adopt children. Increasing the age of eligibility was predicted – not surprisingly – to add to those numbers. Yet, inexplicably, this story made headlines while a war was being waged by the *Camorra*, the Naples Mafia, following the murder of one of their top bosses. By mid-June, more than 50 people had been killed – many of them innocent bystanders, and some of them children. Police operations were stepped up, but the killings continued. By the end of July, after three innocent bystanders were seriously injured in a shooting at an outdoor market and another businessman was murdered in broad daylight for refusing to pay protection money, police, business and city officials were begging for military intervention. The national press followed the story once the number of killings reached about 50, but articles consisted of not much more than the body count and a short reiteration of how this latest war had begun. It was not only a negation of a city's cry for help, but showed how irresponsible the media could be in not bringing greater attention to this problem. Issues of real significance were being clouded by those of much lesser importance, and on the surface the idea that everything was fine was maintained. In Italy, it seems, the show must always go on.

The *Veline* and Press Offices

The Italian press has helped sustain this show. It has persisted in using old journalism practices that should have been discarded long ago. Award-winning journalist

Marco Gregoretti points to the front page of one of the country's top-selling newspapers and exclaims how boring the papers are.

"There's no news here," he complains. "I only read them because I have to for my work."⁷

He's right. Italian newspapers contain little more than newswire stories from the government-subsidized Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata news service (ANSA) and re-written *veline*, or press releases, from government and party offices, the police and other official sources, especially ISTAT, the Italian government statistics department. Newspapers depend on the *veline* instead of relying on journalists to gather news independently. One can regularly read quotes at the beginning of stories only to figure out three or four lines later that they came from a *velina*, or an official release, and were not actually heard by the journalist. The sources are rarely named, although sometimes they can be deduced. In some instances, the full and unchanged text of the *velina* is printed.

On July 7, 2000, a good example of the widespread use of a particular *velina* was all too evident in an article that appeared in many of the country's top-selling papers. It was about the death of a Roman Catholic nun, allegedly at the hands of three teenage girls.⁸ Each paper told the story of how Sister Maria Laura Mainetti had been stabbed to death while on her knees, her hands folded in prayer, asking God to forgive her attackers. But more important, the newspapers all told the story using the same words.

Each of the papers quoted Sister Mainetti as saying, "*Signore, perdonale*," or "God, forgive them," although obviously none of their journalists had been there to hear her. And each of the articles recited exactly the same story, in the same order, with few exceptions. None of the three suspects had been interviewed by journalists, and no official sources were quoted, although the context of the story suggests the information came from police or justice department press releases. In most Western countries, at a minimum, this type of verbatim copying of a news release would be considered bad journalism and certainly a dangerous practice. In Italy it is the norm.

It is difficult to understand why Italian journalists make such extensive use of news releases. It is not as though they have not been burned by this practice in the past. There have been many such occurrences. For example, journalists and historians have long lamented the handling of the story of the 1969 bombing of the Banca dell'Agricoltura in Piazza Fontana in Milan in which 16 people were killed and 88 injured. At that time, Italy was in the grips of a wave of terrorism, but instead of trying to determine who exactly was responsible for the killings, the press followed the official line of police and other authorities and concentrated on which political element was involved. The police operated on the assumption that left-wing radicals were responsible and the papers, for the most part, accepted that only to realize a few months later that they had been bamboozled by the police press releases and their supposedly reliable inside sources. Ten years later, two neo-Fascists were convicted for the bombing.

As with all issues of culture, the history of Italy must be considered when studying Italian journalism. The *veline* are, in fact, a holdover from the fascist dictatorship of Benito Mussolini, who is said to have been one of the country's best newspaper editors. The word *velina* is the name of the type of the light, onion skin paper he used for his official pronouncements.⁹

By the time Mussolini became head of state, his problem was not so much how to control the Italian press – most newspapers and other media were already under his thumb. Instead, his problem was how to use the press to advance the policies and philosophy of fascism. The answer was to replace the editors of unsympathetic newspapers with Fascist editors. The trusted friends of Mussolini went into the newspaper trade and controlled almost every word that was printed. His son Arnaldo became editor of *Il Popolo d'Italia* [The People of Italy], and the violent gang or squad members – sometimes controlled by Mussolini and sometimes not – replaced local government officials. The *veline* became their daily propaganda vehicle, as did, by extension, the press.

Mussolini then began developing what came to be known as the "Cult of the Duce." He was lionized by journalists, his admirers and those who wanted to advance themselves. Slogans such as "Mussolini is always right" were painted on walls and journalists were obliged to report his speeches in exaggerated terms. Applause was always "ecstatic" or "thunderous." He was fanatical about appearing young, fit and virile. No one was allowed to mention that he was a grandfather or make reference to his birthday. And no photographs were to be published in which he was smiling. Mussolini supposedly excelled at every sport and a best-selling biography written by his mistress, Margherita Sarfatti, depicted him as the reincarnation of the ancient Roman spirit.¹⁰ Mussolini became Italy's consummate showman.

The dictator was also concerned about his image abroad and deported journalists who wrote negatively about him. Journalist and author Luigi Barzini, who worked for *Corriere della Sera* [The Evening Courier] in London during the fascist era, was told by Mussolini not to allude to the world economic crisis, as were all other journalists.¹¹ When Barzini went to Sardinia he was told not to write about bandits and malaria, the island's two biggest problems.

By 1935, Mussolini had established a new ministry of press and propaganda and, in 1937, a ministry of popular culture. Together they provided even more systematic control over the press and other media.¹² This may not be unusual in dictatorships, but it helped condition Italian journalists and the practice of journalism in the future.

The curtain would, of course, eventually fall on Mussolini's performance. In 1938, he met with Hitler and the two dictators decided to harmonize internal and foreign policy. A few months later a ridiculous declaration followed in all newspapers. Written by well-known university professors, it stated that Italians were Nordic Aryans and warned them of the Jewish "peril."¹³ Jews made up only one-tenth of one per cent of the population,¹⁴ and even Mussolini's mistress, who was hanged with him in the end, was Jewish.

In July 1943, when the allied forces landed in Sicily, the show was over. But the legacy Mussolini left to the press – the *veline* and the press control offices – are vehicles of control in use in Italy to this day. The press control offices were the precursor to what are known today simply as press offices, which, despite their name, are not set up to assist the press. If a journalist wants to set up a private interview with a politician or get information on a department's workings, budget figures or statistics, the press offices are not the place to go.¹⁵ That is not their purpose. Instead, their purpose is to produce and distribute *veline* to all media affiliates that are then to be used by journalists and editors to make sure they "got the story right."¹⁶

Italian political scientist and author Roberto Petrognani explains the evils of the press offices as follows:

The particular bureaucratic character that distinguishes (the press offices) often makes a law or regulation prevail over the good sense and respect for the right citizens have to be informed. Certain facts must be discarded, certain others can be referred to only within certain limits, or with some degree of suspicion. And non-compliance with explicit legal admonitions may result in the exclusion of the guilty journal from sources of information.¹⁷

Some of the criticism heard in Italy regarding the press offices might not sound different from what some critics say of government press offices in other Western democracies. But in Italy, press officers write much of the news, which often is not news at all or is information that has been sanitized to the point where its value as public information is debatable. Italian journalists have the option of writing what they heard and saw – and risk being cut off from their sources or their jobs – or writing what the press releases said they saw, making everyone happy. Everyone, that is, but the reader.

It is difficult to grasp why Italian journalists would make extensive use of such biased sources in a time when freedom of the press is considered the backbone of democracy and the Internet has become an international soapbox. But if one goes back to the end of the fascist era, they will note that Mussolini wasn't booed off the stage.

There was no massive public outcry, despite what people might have thought of him privately, and the number of people involved in the resistance – and more importantly for this study, there was no widespread press revolt. Should there have been? In answering this question, it is important to remember that Italian culture and history are vastly different from that of other Western countries. The culture has been shaped by a history of successive foreign invasions and authoritarian regimes, and battles for political and personal gain. Individual rights have not been widely protected and this is reflected in the development of the Italian press. The most that can be said for Mussolini was that the show was entertaining at times. But the origins of the show go back much further than Mussolini.

A Climate of Distrust

If one accepts that culture is based to a significant degree on a country's past then we are halfway to understanding many of Italy's problems. Giuseppe di Lampadusa made several very important observations about Italian society and culture in his book *Gattopardo*, which, in fact, takes its name from an extinct type of leopard, unlike the English version of the book, *The Leopard*.¹⁸ In it, he described the changing political climate in Sicily in 1860, during the period of unification. His hero, Prince Fabrizio Corbera of Salina, was one of the last of the aristocracy, which was then fast declining. When a representative of the new Italian government came calling to offer him a position in the new senate in northern Italy, the prince turned it down, explaining that the new revolutionaries were not the first and likely would not be the last. His famous statement that "If we want things to stay the same, things will have to change" helps illustrate the Italian tradition of surviving the latest regime, whether it be in government or in newspapers.

Not only has the peninsula been subject to countless foreign invasions; many of its foreign rulers have actively promoted discord, conflict and superstition among the people. Added to that are the number of plagues, famines and natural disasters that have occurred here that have greatly contributed to the breakdown of civic society in the past. For example, during the summer of 1348, more than one-third of the entire population of the peninsula died during the Black Death. Recurring epidemics meant a depressed economy for more than a century. In 1630-31, and in 1656-57, the plague struck again, killing about half the population of the cities of central and northern Italy.

The Papal States were for hundreds of years an impediment to unification because they took up most of central Italy and a large stretch of land on the east coast that reached further north than the old capital city of Ravenna. And after unification in 1860, the Roman Catholic Church forbade Italians to vote or be involved in civic politics on threat of excommunication. It also refused to recognize Italy as a country until 1929.

In his book, *Making Democracy Work*, Robert Putnam compares the different civic traditions of the regions of Italy during the implementation of regional governments, which began in 1970.¹⁹ He reaches the conclusion that the presence of neighbourhood associations, sports clubs, choral groups, co-operatives, unions, and other civic groups signal the likelihood of greater mutual trust and co-operation, and that the success or failure of the new regional governments mirrored the patterns of civic activity of almost a century earlier. But some argue that Putnam's theories have neglected to consider other forms of social activity, such as neighbourhood gatherings, medieval celebrations, agricultural co-operatives and the religious processions Italy is also famous for. As well, the lack of competence of some regional officials should be considered.

There is also much evidence that civic traditions are not the only factors influencing participation in civil society.²⁰ Events can drastically alter the course of history, as the Second World War and the *Tangentopoli* scandals of the early 1990s have

in Italy. But, in general, Italians have had good reasons not to trust others or their own governments in recent times.

By the 1940s, the switch from censorship under a Fascist dictator to censorship under the Allied forces was a quick and easy one for the Italian press. After the Allies landed in Sicily, it was a matter of days before they set up their own propaganda machine called the Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB). There was little reaction. Editors were used to censorship, the country was once again occupied by foreign powers and Italy was, after all, still at war. Soon most newspapers were staffed by the PWB with Americans or Englishmen who had been in Italy before.

By that time, anti-fascist and anti-German sentiment was rising fast and many Italians wanted to be part of the resistance effort. But sadly, the newspapers continued to rely on the government *veline* for political news because of "the desire to exercise an objective criticism," according to one ministerial release.²¹ It is a practice that remains in place to this day.

After the war, the new Italian government did not purge the civil service, the police, or the courts, and people who had no knowledge of civil rights remained in place. Newspaper management also was not purged. A few journalists' titles were changed, but were later reinstated.²² And after the Allied occupation, it took just two weeks for the fascist newspaper *Giornale di Sicilia* [Sicily Journal] to resume printing. The owners, the Ardizzone family, published editorials demanding the invaders leave.²³

The failure to purge the government and courts had the effect of quashing much criticism of the government – especially in the press. Many of the fascist laws remained in place long after the war was over and are on the books to this day. In 1957, 550 charges of "defaming state institutions" were laid, which meant serious problems for press freedom.²⁴ This particular law no longer exists, but other similar ones have taken its place. Defamation is a serious business in Italy because honour is so important.

Many Italians were happy at the collapse of Mussolini's regime. His arrest resulted in a huge public celebration. But many Italians have learned how to live with whichever type of governing power is in place at any given time. This has made them a strong, resilient people, but it has also helped make them wary of others. In the shops, the owners stay in front of the cash registers all day for fear of being robbed not only by shoppers and thieves, but by their own employees. In offices, stores, and banks, documents, and paper money are almost always checked to ensure they aren't counterfeit. Italian reporters confirm and reconfirm their stories with other reporters, editors, party officials, and the *veline* partly out of fear their sources will later deny what they said.²⁵ It is not the accuracy of facts that they are checking. They are letting people see or hear the content of stories to ensure they don't contradict the message of the person, department or political party who wrote the press release. It is also done because that's the way it has always been done.

Life in 1950s Italy contrasts sharply with more recent times. Then many more Italians lived in poverty than do today. The Italian economy has gone through remarkable changes, which by 1970 saw incomes rise 134 per cent.²⁶ However, this improvement in lifestyle, as well as education, has not meant that superstitions and cynicism have been completely left behind. Since the 1970s there has been a widespread growth of conspiracy theories – a symptom of lack of trust in society – which newspapers have often helped promote. *Dietrologi*,²⁷ or looking at the inarticulated facts behind the facts, has grown out of a number of events that remain unresolved or completely unexplained for lack of evidence or other reasons. There are many examples: the bombing in Piazza Fontana in Milan in 1969, in which 16 people were killed and 88 injured; the bombing of the Bologna-Munich express in August 1974, in which 12 were killed and 105 injured; and the Christmas bombing of the Naples-Milan train on December 23, 1984, shortly after leaving the Bologna station, which resulted in 15 dead. All of these bombings were believed to have been carried out by ultra left-wing terrorists. But, as with all conspiracy theories,

other suspects have also been named, such as the CIA, the Italian secret service and the anti-communist P2 Masonic Lodge, which in 1981 was found to have numerous journalists as members,²⁸ including popular columnist and TV talk-show host Maurizio Costanzo.²⁹

In Italy, one word signals the start of possibly the most talked-about incident in recent history – Ustica. In 1980, a DC-9 aircraft crashed into the sea near the island of Ustica, north of Sicily, killing all 81 passengers and crew on board. To date, their families have received no explanation of what happened. And mass speculation regarding the plane's disappearance from radar screens and the lack of a call for help has been the stuff of numerous documentaries, books and in June 2000 a live stage performance by actor Marco Paolini based entirely on the possible theories.

Another 20th anniversary, this time of the worst act of terrorism ever to occur in Italy, was marked on August 2, 2000. It was to remember the bombing of the second-class waiting room at the Bologna train station, which resulted in the deaths of 85 people and injuries to more than 200. At the time there was talk of a tank having exploded underneath the station, but those involved in the rescue operation were sure it was a bomb. Later that evening, a black bag with traces of explosives was found in the crater where the waiting room used to be.³⁰ After eight years of speculation, investigation, street protests, and legal battles, four right-wing terrorists were convicted of the bombing and sentenced to life in prison. Two years later their convictions were overturned on appeal.³¹

The memorial ceremony marking the anniversary of the Bologna bombing in 2000 ended in speculation once again. During a speech at the ceremony, then-prime minister Giuliano Amato declared that the state had withheld information about the incident.³² The relatives and friends of those killed in the attack were furious, as was the prime minister at the time of the bombing, Francesco Cossiga. Not only did Amato not elaborate on whatever information he might have had, he opened up many old wounds. And for

what purpose? Likely to promote himself as being in favour of open government in light of his possible candidacy for prime minister in the upcoming election.

This is not to say that politicians in Italy are much interested in opening themselves up to press scrutiny. The Italian idea of open government is very different from that of other Western countries. Access to government documents is greatly restricted and the concept of public official as public servant does not form a part of Italian political or journalistic culture. In fact, the word servant is considered a bit of an insult.

A few days after the ceremony in Bologna the story disappeared from the Italian press. More fingers had been pointed at Amato for his accusation than at any other person, negating any points he might have won among voters. And once again, Italian journalists had let an opportunity slip by to investigate and bring to a conclusion a story that had long plagued its victims and the public.

When asked in an interview why investigative journalism is so rare in Italy, Franco Abruzzo, president of the Lombardy section of the Italian Order of Journalists and a journalist for almost 40 years, at first argued that it isn't.³³ Citing stories written by Italian journalists working outside Italy, and then coverage of the *Tangentopoli* scandals into widespread government kickbacks that began in the early 1990s, he claimed that Italian journalists have done their duty. But the investigations carried out by Italian foreign correspondents he referred to never confronted internal issues and the Clean Hands investigation was carried out by investigating magistrates and only followed by journalists.

"Why does a journalist have to be a hero?" Abruzzo asked when pressed. "You know, it's very sad to ask a person to always be a hero. Woe is the homeland that has need of heroes," he exclaimed dramatically. But finally, after persistent questioning, Abruzzo agreed investigative journalism is all but dead in Italy.

"There used to be (investigative journalism in Italy). It doesn't exist anymore. It is one of the biggest defects of the Italian press. Why (doesn't it exist)? Because of the start of self-censorship, the start of obsequiousness to the powers that be. The directors have interests with – have taken financing from the government, and they stop it."

Clientelismo

A much-discussed element of the political and business culture of Italy, known as *clientelismo*, is also a factor influencing Italian journalism, partly because journalists make up part of the elite class of Italian society that includes politicians and big businessmen. There is no direct English translation for the word. It goes beyond what is known in North America as patronage, mainly because it has been so widespread. Patrick McCarthy, a political science professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies at Bologna University, defines it in his book *The Crisis of the Italian State* as "the attainment and retention of power through the private expropriation of public resources, and through the use of the state to expropriate private resources."³⁴ Or in simpler terms, he says: "Firstly, taking state money and giving it to your friends in return for their votes and for kickbacks. And secondly, and more interestingly, using the power of the state to place a tax on public contracts. This tax is called *tangenti*, and it's so systematic as to constitute a tax."³⁵

The widespread practice of *clientelismo* was finally publicly acknowledged in Milan in 1992 when it was shown that Francesco De Lorenzo, minister of health in the 1989-92 Giulio Andreotti governments, had systematically taken bribes from drug manufacturers seeking to have their products approved for sale by the government. He had also taken a five-per-cent cut on contracts awarded to companies to build new AIDS patient facilities. As the scheme came to light, numerous businessmen and politicians

committed suicide, and graffiti artists wrote *Benvenuti a Tangentopoli*, or Welcome to Bribesville, at the city's entrance.

What was different here from similar scandals in other countries is that *clientelismo* was so organized and endemic to the political system. Firms expected to pay these "taxes" and parties couldn't survive without it. The amounts of money being paid to the parties, and their supporters, was phenomenal.

Within journalism, the acceptance of bribes or kickbacks is still a taboo subject, but there is little doubt it exists. McCarthy says that for years *clientelismo* was used as a device for maintaining power by the Christian Democrats and it extended to almost all aspects of Italian life, "so it would have been amazing had journalism been left out."³⁶

But acknowledgment of this practice within journalism is rare. In 1973, a well-documented example occurred when an investigating magistrate in Genoa discovered the Italian equivalent of the Watergate tapes in the form of a complete record of the contributions made by large industries to politicians and their parties – and bribes paid to journalists who were all named. Interestingly, within three days the story disappeared from the papers.³⁷

In a 1999 interview, a writer who occasionally does freelance work for newspapers and who asked to remain anonymous, stated unequivocally that Italian journalists are well aware there are certain political subjects they are not supposed to write about. And in return for not writing about these subjects, or writing about them in a positive way, journalists are sometimes paid. That payment comes in the form of favours, goods, or money. And if a certain journalist has written for his or her political party's paper for several years she or he may be invited to run for political office in a particular area – and will likely win.

The writer admitted that he had recently received payment for a positive story he wrote about a sporting event. In this case, the payment took the form of season tickets for soccer worth about \$1,400 Cdn.

Abruzzo, of the Italian Order of Journalists, at first denied Italian journalists accept money for writing certain stories, for writing stories a particular way, or for not writing them at all.

"No. The journalists are paid by their *direttore* (editors)," he said.

But after some argument, he admitted three journalists had been struck from the *Albo*, or register, of the Order of Journalists for accepting bribes.

"We, here, say if there is a case like this, they will be expelled," he said. "We have expelled three journalists. We're severe. If we accept the fact that journalists have been paid, they are out of the order. And they can't enter again. I'm sure of this – sure. They are expelled."

He also bemoaned the fact that his office had sent information regarding another such case to the *Procura*, Italy's attorney general's office, a year previously and had yet to receive a response to it.

The acceptance of *tangenti* in the journalism profession goes back about 400 years when journalists were very poorly paid, when they were paid at all. In the late 1970s, that real need for income changed when Italian journalists banded together and forced media owners to sign what would be considered anywhere in the world to be very healthy contracts. But by the late 1990s, the rapidly growing use of freelance and part-time staff may have been causing the problem to rise again.

The Family

The family is a place in which Italians have succeeded in creating an environment of trust. The success of family businesses in Italy, such as that of the Benetton chain, the Agnelli family's Fiat car company, and the Berlusconi family empire, along with thousands of other smaller firms, reflect the importance placed on family. And while

many of the roles played by the Italian family can be considered positive, the opposite is true for some.

The family in Italy has been fiercely patriarchal, which has led to the suppression of the role of women in society, and thus in journalism. According to respected historian and author Paul Ginsborg:

In comparative European terms, Italian women, even though they made great strides in the last two decades of the century, remained among those who had least chance to escape from family constrictions into the official world of work. They were blocked, as we have seen, both by the restricted structures of the Italian labour market and by the limited public care for very young children. There were important sub-national qualifications to be made to this picture, with Emilia-Romagna foremost in attempting to offer an alternative model. Overall, though, Italy occupied a distinctly retrograde place in the diverse worlds of European patriarchy.³⁸

Much has also been written about the strength of the Italian family and Italy's "amoral familism,"³⁹ in which family obligations and interests override those of the rest of society to the point where behaviour is justified in the name of the family – sometimes even illegal behaviour. The traditions of sons "inheriting" their fathers' jobs and of families paying for a son's position illustrate the role of family as job broker – a role which limits competition in society based on merit. This type of nepotism has occurred within the state, as well as business and journalism, often as a way to cope with the Italian bureaucracy.

In fact, the Italian family plays many roles in Italian society that could, and in many cases should, be replaced by other actors. However, in some areas this is changing. Modernization of business practices and outside influences are making competition and merit important elements in the job market. But the aspect of Italian culture that allows jobs to be passed on to sons has carried over into journalism. Many journalists get their jobs this way.

But many younger, well-qualified journalists are also not getting jobs due to what is known as the "cult of the old." While in North America youth culture reigns supreme, in Italy it is usually the middle-aged and older workers who receive good salaries and are respected. Five high-level business managers in their 30s were considered enough of an anomaly in 2000 to merit a four-page spread on their stories in the prestigious *Ventiquattro* magazine.⁴⁰ They all credited their success to the fact they had gone outside Italy to study and gain professional experience in the United States and England. Italy's gerontocracy would not let them enter the higher ranks of business.

In some respects the model of family as provider of security and an area of trust may be outdated, but according to Martinelli, it remains true that Italians pay more attention to their families than their responsibilities outside the family, even if the structure and values of the Italian family are changing.⁴¹

The results of a study on the opinions of 15 to 29 year olds regarding what they consider the most important thing in life help show the level to which the public's frustration with the political system has risen in recent years, and how the family has taken a good share of past support for the political system. In 1983, family was in first place on a list of nine items, and by 1992 its percentage share was 85.6 per cent, followed by friends at 70.6 per cent.⁴² Political commitment, on the other hand, ranked fourth at 43.6 per cent in 1983, and by 1992, it fell to last on the list of nine items, and the percentage of those who felt it was the most important thing in their life had dropped to a meagre 3.7 per cent.

Lack of confidence in public institutions and disrespect for the law are both high in Italy. The country ranks highest in Europe for the number of members of its police forces, with 488 officers per 100,000 people, versus France at 394, Germany at 320, and Britain at 318.⁴³ Certainly part of the reason for such a large police presence has to do with government efforts to stave off high unemployment. But despite the number of

officers, the percentage of solved homicides stands at just 65.11 per cent compared with Germany's 95.2 per cent, Britain's 92 per cent and France's 82.7 per cent.⁴⁴

When people are convicted, sentences are also usually lighter than those of other nations. Some Italians claim this is a good thing because so many innocent people are charged and because so many of the country's prisons are grossly overcrowded. The Italian justice department is actually called the Department of Grace and Justice.

Political scientist and author Filippo Sabetti notes that it is this compassion that has spared the destruction of thousands of illegally built condominiums in Rome.⁴⁵ It is doubtful the families of those killed when the occasional building collapses would feel so thankful for this type of compassion.

Lack of accountability affects journalism in many ways. Stories of importance are under-reported, major scandals are not always pursued, some stories that are revealed are left to fizzle out over time, and some are just never reported. And Italian journalism has been at times just as protective and forgiving of its own "family members" as the traditional family.

For example, in 2000, the Italian press's reaction to foreign press criticism of Romano Prodi, president of the European Union Commission, and former prime minister of Italy, was surprising to outsiders, to say the least. Throughout his political career, Prodi faced many attacks from politicians within the country, but when British, French, Spanish, and German newspapers began questioning his performance in Brussels, Italian journalists rallied to the task of defending him. If the leader of another EU country had been criticized it is likely that country's media would have been quick to jump on the bandwagon. Italian newspapers claimed Prodi was being criticised because he was Italian and therefore a "soft target."⁴⁶ They slammed the British press for trying to undermine Prodi's credibility by scrutinizing his business activities in Italy. The French, German, and Spanish press were blamed for mounting a whisper campaign against Prodi's so-called weak style of leadership. *Corriere della Sera* said that "repeated attacks have not brought

to light one solid fact, one single actual error or act of impropriety by Prodi as President of the Commission."⁴⁷ If Prodi had been involved in any untoward business activities, it would have taken weeks or months to uncover. But instead of following up on what was being said in the foreign press to see if there actually was anything to the stories, the papers immediately used their front-page editorial columns to protect "brother Prodi." Journalists in Italy often protect their own.

Journalists as Part of the Elite

Division of a society into classes depends on one's definition of class and on many other elements, such as income, employment, the accumulation of material goods, and education. And while journalists may not fit into the uppermost echelon of the hierarchy in Italy, they are close to the top. The few wealthiest of families can be placed at the uppermost as Italy's *grande borghesia*.⁴⁸ Next comes the upper middle class, which is made up of entrepreneurs, the upper and middle managers of larger firms, politicians, (although by the late 1990s some politicians were also part of the *grande borghesia*) and professionals, which include journalists.

Part of being a member of this level of society involves the use of titles. Today, few Italians have university degrees compared with the citizens of some neighbouring countries, and acknowledgment of having achieved this level of education is important to many graduates here. More middle and lower class Italians are going to university than ever before in the country's history, but education is still strongly correlated with class origin and family background. Graduates coming from the upper classes greatly outnumber those from the lower.⁴⁹ And with those degrees come titles.

Dottore/Dottoressa refers to those who have any type of university degree, such as a Bachelor of Arts. It is not exclusive to the medical profession or holders of a Ph.D. *Professore* or *Professoressa* is used for any teacher or professor regardless of level.

Members of Parliament are called *Onorevole*, or Your Honour. A lawyer is referred to as *avvocato* and an accountant as *ragioniere*, and all these titles are often used without names attached. Professional journalists enrolled in the Order of Journalists usually have a degree in some field and are therefore referred to as doctors and sometimes as professors or lawyers, depending on their area of expertise.

Titles are something in use in Italy more because of their past than their current importance. However, it's not uncommon to meet barons, dukes and princes today, and these titles do get respect and even provide benefits in many circles. A prince or baron can get away with a lot more uncivilized and irresponsible behaviour than a so-called commoner. In the past, titles were very important in segregating different levels of society. Today it helps segregate journalists from ordinary citizens.

Regardless, Italians generally look up to journalists. In the summer of 1999, shortly after Italian high school students had finished their exams, a survey of students revealed valuable insight not only into the young Italian psyche, but also into how they regard Italian journalists.⁵⁰ When asked what they wanted to be when they grow up, Italian teenagers ranked journalist as their third choice, after actor and supermodel. Why would they choose to be journalists? Likely for the same reasons they chose actor and supermodel. Journalists are seen as being rich and famous – and journalism in Italy is a profession to be revered.

Journalists as Educators

The 1644 publication of John Milton's *Areopagitica*, the famous pamphlet protesting the licensing of printing, and the subsequent abolition of the licensing act in 1694, caused little commotion in Italy; much the same as in other European countries initially. However, its later influence was also minimal here. Today, it receives just a mention in Italian journalism history books. But in the early 1700s two British

newspapers, *The Tatler* (1709) and *The Spectator* (1711), showed Italian and other continental journalists the possibilities of a different and freer type of press. It offered a growing middle class the opportunity to engage in philosophical debate over political and other issues.⁵¹ *The Spectator* even dealt with the individual and the quest for self-awareness and knowledge of the world. It influenced European journalism for the next 50 years.⁵²

In Venice, two papers were especially influenced by *The Spectator*: the *Gazzetta Veneta* [Veneto Gazette] and *L'Osservatore Veneto* [The Veneto Observer].⁵³ These and other papers became key sources for public information on scientific knowledge, different ways of thinking in the Age of Enlightenment and liberal government. Two other papers, *La Frustra* [The Whip] and *Il Caffè* went a little further. Pietro Verri, editor of *Il Caffè*, explained the contents of the paper to readers as "various things, very different, unedited things, things written by different authors, things all directed to the use of the public."⁵⁴ Those things included agricultural techniques, technical and scientific news, and discussion of political and social reforms. The two papers opened up Italian newspapers to a new form of journalism – what is now known in Italy as encyclopedic journalism – and for the next 24 years newspapers were filled with information designed to educate and enlighten the population on issues ranging from working conditions to culture, human rights to economics.

It was an important but brief period of factual, informative, educational, A-to-Z journalism, and it was certainly needed: the legal system was in chaos, much of the land was owned by the nobility and the church, and many of the people who worked it lived in poverty and ignorance, and were guided mostly by superstition.⁵⁵ But while its informational and educational content were of great value for a while, the encyclopedic press also helped establish the role of the journalist as educator in Italy. It assisted in separating the press from the people, and stopped being their voice. The public conversation stalled.

While probably not realizing it, Jay Rosen, in discussing the necessity for conversation in a republic, aptly describes the resulting problem in Italy's press system.

(T)he task of the press is to encourage the conversation of the culture – not to pre-empted it or substitute it or supply it with information as a seer from afar. Rather, the press maintains and enhances the conversation of the culture, becomes one voice in that conversation, amplifies the conversation outward, and helps it along by bringing forward the information that the conversation itself demands.⁵⁶

Encyclopedic journalism has, for the most part, died out in Italy. But this form of press, which put journalists on a pedestal as educators, also had another effect in Italy: it helped establish the belief among journalists that they were more intelligent than the people they were supposedly writing for. Underestimating readers is a mistake the Italian press has long made. Too much of Italian journalism is unimportant trivia about celebrities, movie stars and soccer players. Indeed, Italy's best-selling magazine is not one of its two national news magazines, but the television program guide *TV Sorrisi e Canzoni* [TV Smiles and Songs] that sells an average 1,612,371 copies weekly.⁵⁷ It helps that the language used in these publications is easier to understand than that found in newspapers.

The Italian Way of Writing

In 1825-27, Alessandro Manzoni published what would become one of the most influential novels in Italian history.⁵⁸ *I promessi sposi*, or *The Newlywed Promises*, spoke of Italy as a unified nation and the benefits Italians would acquire as a result. It was quickly followed by similar books. Italian authors began writing novels in which Italians were depicted as military heroes who had ousted the French and the Saracens. The patriotic work of author Monaldo Leopardi was considered so threatening it was confiscated by the Austrian and Piedmontese rulers for fear it would lead to a revolt.

Exiled priest Vincenzo Gioberti went even further in 1843 with his book *On the Moral and Civil Pre-eminence of the Italians* in which he claimed Italians should rule all of Europe.⁵⁹ While all these books were mostly romantic fantasies, they did serve a useful purpose – they acted as a vehicle to publicize political theories and philosophies, and got some people thinking about a united Italy.⁶⁰

But while this idea of Italian superiority may have been just the boost some people needed to get the peninsula moving towards nationhood, it also helped result in an Italian press that appears somewhat less than humble. Much of Italian journalism is written in a way that is often incomprehensible. Basically, Italian journalistic writing style (as well as its TV talk-show rhetoric) has been based largely on the theory that bigger is better. The bigger the words, and the longer the sentences, the more clever the writer is thought to be, and the more he will impress his editors, political party big-wigs, and supposedly the readers. In many publications, articles are sprinkled with flowery words, words only party insiders would understand, words journalists have invented by joining words together, or by changing verbs to nouns, or vice-versa.

For example, on April 18, 2000, an editorial written by Eugenio Scalfari – one of Italy's top journalists and the founder of the left-of-centre "journalists' newspaper" *La Repubblica* – was published on the front page and began with a sentence that consisted of no less than 71 words.

Foreign words – especially English words in recent years – are finding their way into journalists' copy, and not always with the English meaning. For example, the use of the term "baby killer" in Italy does not mean the killer of a baby or babies. It means a young person who is a hired killer – young meaning anyone under 40. It is not uncommon for foreign words to be used to describe something unpleasant. Take the word *vendetta*, for example. But a good example of a translation missing its mark, and the inability or unwillingness of Italian journalists to explain this term, occurred in July 2000 when Italian politicians and journalists began debating whether the country should enact conflict-of-

interest laws, patterned after those that exist in England, for politicians and other government officials.⁶¹ In this instance, the term conflict of interest – unknown by Italians – was directly translated into Italian from the English to *conflitto di interessi*, but with very telling results. A street poll conducted by the daily *Metro* newspaper showed those surveyed were either uncertain or had no idea what it meant.⁶²

"Who knows (what conflict of interest means)? I think it has something to do with the work of politicians. I think it's right (to put a law in place) because they make enough money already," 26-year-old labourer Mauro Marchione told *Metro*.

Giovanna Sioli, a 52-year-old merchant, said she'd heard something about conflict of interest, but wasn't sure whether it was right.

"Today, there are lots of things that don't work. Either you remake everything (the entire political system) or you have to forget it."

Thirty-six year-old merchant Stefano D'Amore voiced the opinion of many Italians with his response: "No, I don't know what it is. I'm not very attuned to the discourse. I don't follow politics."

The press continued to use the term regardless.

Maurizio Dardano politely describes Italian political journalistic style as "dense" in his book *Il Linguaggio dei Giornali Italiani*, or *The Language of Italian Newspapers*.⁶³ But in addition to the language used, determining who wrote an article is often a problem – again an issue of transparency. Partisan papers especially have a tendency to leave articles unsigned or to leave only the initials of the writer, or an abbreviation of their name at the end. So do some of the others, such as Italy's leading financial newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* [The Sun 24 Hours]. The use of pseudonyms makes it unclear to the reader who is writing the article and, as a result, what motive they might have for writing it. In Italy, understanding a writer's background can often be as important as understanding what they've written.

On August 2, 2000, journalists at *La Repubblica* astutely identified one such writer whose motives were at a minimum questionable.⁶⁴ The newspaper pointed out that a recent article published in the Agnelli family's right-wing newspaper *La Stampa* [The Press], in which then-prime minister Giuliano Amato was said to be "old news," was actually written by former prime minister Bettino Craxi's son Bobo. In the article, Bobo Craxi wrote that while Amato may not have the style of Forza Italia party leader Silvio Berlusconi, he has enough resources to keep "the boat" or coalition going during an election campaign, and to survive when everyone else around him has drowned. The article was signed with the initials E.D.j., which stands for Edmond Dantes Jr. in honour of Bobo Craxi's father who used the pseudonym Edmond Dantes many years ago when he wrote for *Avanti!* before becoming head of the Italian socialist party and prime minister in 1983.

Craxi's story is one of a meteoric climb to the top, with a subsequent crash and burn. But Craxi survived almost four years in office as one of Italy's longest running prime ministers. He was eventually interrogated by the courts on 170 counts of criminal behaviour. By fleeing to Tunisia, he escaped two long prison sentences for accepting *tangenti* or illegal commissions from the national petroleum and insurance consortium, as well as the Milan subway system. While in Tunisia, he was found guilty in *absentia* and continued to pester newspaper editors and politicians for several years with faxes. In 1995, two international warrants for his arrest were issued and Craxi was formally declared a fugitive from justice. Bettino Craxi died of a heart attack in Hammamet in January 2000 with his family still proclaiming his innocence.

But who would know the *La Stampa* article was written by Craxi's son? Certainly no average reader. Transparency in Italian journalism is a rare thing. Bobo went on to run successfully for political office in the spring of 2000.

Fearing the Identifiable Other

Another element of Italian culture that affects this country's journalism is the way in which foreigners are viewed. Despite the success of the Italian firm United Colors of Benetton and its message of racial acceptance, Italians have generally not been very welcoming to immigrants – and neither have Italian journalists. Foreigners, especially visible minorities, are often distrusted, partly due to the fact Italy has traditionally been a country people moved away from – not to – but also because of the way they have been treated in the media.

The wave of Albanian immigration to Italy in 1991 quickly illustrated to Europe and the rest of the world how unprepared Italy was, and still is largely, for any kind of mass influx of immigrants, be it physically, culturally, or in terms of government policies. Because of its lax immigration policies, Italy is considered not only an easy place to relocate to, but the easiest point in which to enter Europe. Italy hosts more illegal than legal non-EU residents. One estimate puts the number of illegal immigrants in Italy in 1993 at slightly more than 500,000, but the situation in Eastern Europe and some Mediterranean and African countries has worsened since then, and in 2000 immigrants continued to land on Italy's shores on an almost daily basis.

On an individual level, Italians are very open with foreigners, especially where it is uncommon to see foreigners and where immigration is associated with the desire for new experiences.⁶⁵ Kindness to strangers and those in weaker or lesser positions in society also forms a part of the Catholic code of values. However, by 1990, a census survey found more than half of Italy's immigrants had major problems getting enough to eat, a place to live, a job, and were having difficulties with the language.⁶⁶ For example, advertisements for apartments for rent frequently state "no foreigners." These problems have had two major consequences: a social degeneration of immigrants and increased intolerance on the part Italians towards immigrants, which a number of groups and political parties have used to gain support.

In the summer of 2000, another survey – this time of 1,004 foreigners – showed more than 88 per cent believed Italians are racist.⁶⁷ Nineteen per cent blamed it on the ignorance of Italians and 11 per cent blamed it on alarmist views published by newspapers and shown on television. Of major concern is that nationality is stressed in media reports on crime, and in newspapers the individual's country of origin almost always appears in the headlines. The belief in foreigners as bad has been passed on through journalists.

An example of a particularly inflammatory story appeared in the July 20, 2000, edition of *La Repubblica*. "300,000 signatures against foreigners" appeared above an article regarding a proposal by the right-wing Northern League to change Italian immigration law in light of the acceptance of 63,000 immigrants – Italy's full quota for 2000 – just six months into the year. The 300,000 signatures were from two separate petitions, which Northern League leader Umberto Bossi claimed showed the Italian people did not want immigrants. Perhaps such a story would have been okay had it also included the views of immigrants on this petition, but it didn't. The journalist who wrote the story did not seek out the other side of the story, and no follow up story from the perspective of foreigners was published.

With journalism being a closed shop here, unless one has Italian citizenship, entry into the professional order of journalists is extremely difficult. While surnames may not be a scientific way of determining nationality in many countries, it is obvious from the names published in the Italian press that the vast majority of its journalists are Italian. Of the journalists seen on television, to date only one is a visible minority, and the often heard, but highly debatable comment about him is that he was hired because he is a black North African.⁶⁸

As a result of the absence of foreign journalists in the Italian press, foreigners have almost no voice. Their stories, when told, are told by Italians, and sometimes with abysmal results. To date, there have been no studies on whether crimes committed by

foreigners are over-reported, but many Italians tend to look on Albanians, North Africans, Asians, and other foreigners as people with the tendency to commit crimes. They are usually portrayed in the press as drug dealers, prostitutes, and members of organized crime, when research shows foreigners are more often the victims of social and judicial discrimination.⁶⁹ Their image is so bad here it prompted one bishop to state publicly that it was lucky the five suspects in the sexual assault and brutal murder by fire of an eight-year-old girl in August 2000 were Italian, instead of foreigners. Otherwise, public reaction to the crime would have been much worse.⁷⁰

This view of foreigners as "the enemy within" or "the other" is a reaction to many events and issues that have yet to be resolved in Italy. The lack of extensive journalism education, and a lack of understanding of the importance of allowing as many different voices as possible to be heard in the media, are two major problems. Italians may be quick to criticise themselves. However, they are loathe to accept criticism from foreigners. The political system's lack of definitive immigration policies just adds to these concerns.

The Show Must Go On

The Italian peninsula has had a long and tumultuous past, and now, as successive coalition governments collapse, and scandals become public, the public has in many ways continued to turn inward knowing they can rely on themselves, their families, and the other networks of assistance they have set up. It is within this climate that modern Italian journalism has developed.

But should Italian press culture be any different from that of the rest of Italian culture? In some ways it is, but overall, it can be said that the Italy is either not willing or able to have its "Vietnam." It's not that there haven't been enough scandals to cause a review of the Italian military; the list is long. In 1995, 22 officers were charged with allegedly receiving bribes for contracts, and as many as 2,500 military personnel were eventually investigated for corruption. In 1997, an officer was charged in the sexual

assault and murder of a Somali boy in the Italian embassy in Mogadishu. Then came the Somalia photos of torture and rape, which were followed by more accusations of torture and illegal activities in an officer's diary. In 1999, there was the accusation of murder against six parachutists in the death of one of their fellow servicemen, along with claims of racism and racist hazing rituals within the military.

But Italians have yet to move into the later stages of correcting these and other problems. They have designed a constitution specifically with the idea of eliminating the possibility of another Mussolini ever coming to power again, yet they have elected billionaire media mogul Silvio Berlusconi a second time, despite his criminal convictions and the fact he is now, once again, in a position of direct conflict of interest due to his vast media and other holdings.

Tangentopoli came as close to being a full-out scandal with tangible results as Italians were willing to allow. But by 2000, it seems many of the lessons of *tangentopoli* have been forgotten. Many of its heroes have been cast aside or their images tarnished.

Perhaps Italians feel there is just too much to fix at this time. By the time *Tangentopoli* was at its height, in 1993, the country's political system was in chaos. Four senior cabinet members were forced to resign along with Craxi, who was then general-secretary of the socialist party – the highest position in Italian political parties. The party was found to be virtually in control of Italy's petrochemical monopoly and held a Swiss bank account containing \$7 million US suspected of being connected to the collapse of the Ambrosiano bank. Heads of large companies came forward admitting that they too had been "forced" to pay huge sums of money to obtain government contracts. The number of investigations, charges, and the time and money involved in processing them in Italy's already overloaded court system threatened to destroy the system.

Or perhaps it's as Joseph LaPalombara states:

In Italy, the clarification of political problems and the establishment of clear-cut choices regarding them remains fundamentally erosive to national unity.

Indeed, such practice is alien to the national character! The republic is still on its feet because, unlike the French, who worship at the altar of Reason, the Italians never believed that Reason, especially in politics, is anything more than a blunt tool. Italian national unity and indeed democracy itself have managed to sink roots in highly improbably soil because so much about power relationships – rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities – remains ambiguous.⁷¹

Italy's foremost political philosopher Norberto Bobbio claims there are three theories of the state: the state as a force, the state as a focus of collective and inherited morality, and the state as guarantor of universal rights. He says Italian political thought is based on the first two, and the third is consistently impugned.⁷²

What that means is that the underlying principle guiding thinking is that the rights of the individual are not always considered as important as those of the community or the state. This is seen every day in the newspapers through the lack of stories about real people. Italian newspapers tell the stories of large and privileged groups.

Or perhaps the problem is as Gregoretti puts it. Italians know that when they blow the whistle it's likely to come back on them.⁷³ When a soldier who had photos of illegal activities within the military agreed to meet with him, it was on the condition that the meeting be held at a train station where the soldier showed up dressed up as a homeless street person. The soldier was afraid Gregoretti had brought the military police with him and wanted to check the journalist out before identifying himself.

Taking on the problems in other sections of Italian society seems almost impossible at this point, but slowly, it is occurring. In the summer of 2000, it was revealed that vast numbers of law students had been paying for the answers to exams.⁷⁴ And it was students who blew the whistle. These revelations were soon followed by accusations that some had been forced to pay for passing grades. Investigations began and arrests were made.

Panorama magazine went further, listing the high percentages of students who had passed the exams in 12 different professions in 1998 – including journalists at 91.4 per

cent.⁷⁵ *Panorama's* revelations regarding journalism exams were not printed elsewhere, nor followed up by any other publication. Nor were the investigations into the paying for passing grades. But these stories did illustrate how the effects of education on Italy's culture are growing, and that can only be positive for journalism.

End Notes

- ¹ Tullio-Altan, Carlo. La nostra Italia. [Our Italy]. Milan: Feltronelli, 1986.
- ² Martinelli, Alberto, Antonio M. Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi. Recent Social Trends in Italy: 1960-1995. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- ³ Rosen, Jay. From personal E-mail correspondence, May 28, 2002.
- ⁴ Richards, Charles. The New Italians. London: Penguin Books. 1995. p. 23. Also, the 1999 state budget allocated 31,900,000m lire, or about \$25.5 billion Cdn., to defense, according to the Europea World Yearbook, 1999. Also see the U.S. Defense Department's Web site for a comparison of the amounts spent per GDP by many countries at defense.link.mil/pubs/allied_contrib98/b-5.html.
- ⁵ Prima Comunicazione, April 1999 - March 2000.
- ⁶ "Adozioni, scontro sulla legge" [Adoptions: disagreement regarding the law] La Repubblica, 3 June, 2000: 1, 13.
- ⁷ Marco Gregoretti, personal interview, Milan, 7 June 2000.
- ⁸ La Repubblica 7 July 2000, Corriere della Sera, and Il Messaggero.
- ⁹ Mancini, Paolo. "Between Trust and Suspicion: How political journalists solve the dilemma." European Journal of Communication. 8(1) (1993): 33-51.
- ¹⁰ Duggan, Christopher. A Concise History of Italy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- ¹¹ Barzini, Luigi. The Italians. London: Penguin Books, 1964.
- ¹² Duggan, Christopher. 1994.

- ¹³ Mack Smith, Denis. Modern Italy: A Political History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 1997.
- ¹⁵ My own naïve attempts to get an interview with Italy's then-education minister Luigi Berlinguer, in 1997, for a column I was writing on youth unemployment was a colossal, and now laughable, exercise in futility.
- ¹⁶ Mancini, Paolo. 1993.
- ¹⁷ Petrognani, Robert. "Freedom of Information in Italy: Restraints and Problems" in Government and News Media: Comparative Dimensions. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press. 1982, p. 43.
- ¹⁸ Lampadusa, Giuseppe Tomasi di. The Leopard. Trans. Archibald Colquhoun. New York: Pantheon, 1960.
- ¹⁹ Putnam, Robert D. Making Democracy Work. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- ²⁰ Ungar, Sanford J. "The Role of a Free Press in Strengthening Democracy." In Judith Lichtenberg (ed.), Democracy and the Mass Media: A Collection of Essays. 1990, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ²¹ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.
- ²² Porter, William E. 1983.
- ²³ Murialdi, Paolo. 1996.
- ²⁴ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.
- ²⁵ Mancini, Paolo. 1993.
- ²⁶ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.
- ²⁷ Richards, Charles. 1995.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 1995.
- ²⁹ Ginsborg, Paul. Italy and its Discontents: Family, civil society, state 1980-2001. London : Allen Lane, 2001.
- ³⁰ Marozzi, Marco "La bomba alla stazione: Bologna, vent'anni dopo" [The bomb at the station: Bologna 20 years after] La Repubblica, 30 July 2000: 22.

- ³¹ Richards, Charles. 1995.
- ³² Luzi, Gianluca "Scontro sulle stragi tra Cossiga e Amato" [Clash regarding the massacres between Cossiga and Amato] La Repubblica, 4 Aug. 2000: 6.
- ³³ Abruzzo, Franco. Personal interview, Milan, 8 June 2000.
- ³⁴ McCarthy, Patrick. The Crisis of the Italian State. 1997. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- ³⁵ McCarthy, Patrick. Professor of Political Science at the Johns Hopkins School at the University of Bologna, and author of The Crisis of the Italian State. Personal interview on Dec. 17, 1999 at Bologna, Italy. On micro-cassette.
- ³⁶ McCarthy, Patrick. Personal interview, 10 Dec. 1999.
- ³⁷ Porter, William E. 1983.
- ³⁸ Ginsborg, Paul. 2001.
- ³⁹ Putnam, Robert D. Making Democracy Work. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, and in Sabetti, Filippo. The Search for Good Government: Understanding the Paradox of Italian Democracy. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000. Also in LaPalombara, Joseph. Democracy Italian style. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987.
- ⁴⁰ Bongiovanni, Masimo. "La Guerra dei trentenni [The War of the Thirty-year-olds]". Ventiquattro No. 8, 2000: 80-85.
- ⁴¹ Martinelli, Alberto, et al., 1999.
- ⁴² Ibid., 1999.
- ⁴³ Stancanelli, Bianca. "Ecco dov'è il killer delle indagini" [Look where the killer of investigations is.] Panorama 17 Aug. 2000: 58.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., Stancanelli, 17 Aug. 2000.
- ⁴⁵ Sabetti, Filippo. The Search for Good Government: Understanding the Paradox of Italian Democracy. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.
- ⁴⁶ "Italy Defends Prodi." The Times, London. 7 April 2000.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 7 April 2000.

- ⁴⁸ Ginsborg, Paul, 200 p. 39.
- ⁴⁹ Martinelli, Alberto, et al., 1999. Also see Almalaurea.it/stat/profilo99/compressivo.html.
- ⁵⁰ RAI Tre Television, 5 July 1999.
- ⁵¹ Farinelli, Giuseppe, Ermanno Paccagnini, Giovanni Santambrogio, and Angela Ida Villa. Storia del Giornalismo Italiano: Dalle origini ai giorni nostri. [The History of Italian Journalism: From its origins to our times.] Torino: UTET Libreria s.r.l., 1997, and in Murialdi, Paolo. Storia del Giornalismo Italiano. [The History of Italian Journalism] Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996.
- ⁵² Ibid., 1997.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 1997.
- ⁵⁴ Murialdi, Paolo. 1996.
- ⁵⁵ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.
- ⁵⁶ Rosen, Jay. "A Republic, If you Can Keep It": Liberty and Public Life in the Age of Glasnost" In James Carey: A Critical Reader. Eds. Eve Styrer Munson and Catherine A. Warren. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- ⁵⁷ Circulation figures are from April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2000 as reported by the Italian media magazine Prima Comunicazione [First Communication] July-August 2000 ed.
- ⁵⁸ Mack Smith, Denis. 1997.
- ⁵⁹ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 1994.
- ⁶¹ "Legge sul conflitto di interessi: Veltroni tende la mano al Polo." [Law regarding conflict of interest: Veltroni gives a hand to POLO. La Repubblica, 30 July 2000: 6.
- ⁶² "Tre Risposte" [Three Responses]. Metro 26 July 2000: 17.
- ⁶³ Dardano, Maurizio. Il Linguaggio dei Giornale Italiani. [The Language of Italian Newspapers]. Rome, Bari: Editori Laterza, 1973.
- ⁶⁴ "Bobo Craxi usa lo pseudonimo del padre" [Bobo Craxi uses father's pseudonym] La Repubblica, 2 August 2000: 18.

- ⁶⁵ Pollini, Gabriele. "L'appartenenza soci-territoriale e mutamento culturale." [Socio-territorial membership and cultural change.] In Vincenzo Cesareo (ed.), La cultura dell'Italia contemporanea. (pp.185-222). Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli. 1990.
- ⁶⁶ Gatti, Umberto, Daniela Malfatti and Alfredo Verde. "Minorities, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Italy." In Ineke Haen Marshall (Ed.), Minorities Migrants, and Crime (pp. 110-129). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997.
- ⁶⁷ "Immigrati tra due identità ma il futuro si chiama Italia" [Immigrants between two identities, but the future is called Italy.] La Repubblica, 30 Aug. 2000: 12.
- ⁶⁸ Fidel Imango is a highly professional news anchor on the state-funded RAI 3 television network.
- ⁶⁹ Gatti, Umberto, et al., 1997.
- ⁷⁰ "Per fortuna non sono immigrati" [Luckily, they aren't immigrants] La Repubblica, 26 Aug, 2000: 4.
- ⁷¹ LaPalombara, Joseph. Democracy, Italian Style. New Haven, Connecticut, London: Yale University Press, 1989.
- ⁷² In Pollini, Gabriele. "L'appartenenza soci-territoriale e mutamento culturale." [Socio-territorial membership and cultural change.] In Vincenzo Cesareo (ed.), La cultura dell'Italia contemporanea. (pp.185-222). Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli. 1990.
- ⁷³ Gregoretti, Marco. Personal interview, June 7, 2000.
- ⁷⁴ Galdo, Antonio. "Il Grande Bluff" [The Big Bluff] Panorama 10 Aug. 2000: 32.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 10 Aug. 2000: 32.

Chapter Three

The Prince's Press

And here comes in the question whether it is better to be loved rather than feared, or feared rather than loved. It might perhaps be answered that we should wish to be both; but since love and fear can hardly exist together, if we must choose between them, it is far safer to be feared than loved. For of men it may generally be affirmed that they are thankless, fickle, false, studious to avoid danger, greedy of gain, devoted to you while you are able to confer benefits upon them, and ready, as I said before, while danger is distant, to shed their blood, and sacrifice their property, their lives, and their children for you; but in the hour of need they turn against you.

— Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1513.

From His Magnificence to His Eminence

An incredible event in the history of Western democracy occurred in Italy in the spring of 2001. Italians went to the polls to elect a new government and in the process effectively gave over control of most of their mass media system to one man – their new prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. It was an astounding coup for the billionaire businessman and his second chance at the top job. It was also a tremendous setback for those interested in freedom of expression in the country, but discussion of the conflict of interest presented by Berlusconi's media empire was largely avoided. While outsiders shook their heads in amazement and asked what could have possibly led Italians to allow such a dangerous situation to go unchecked, Italians seemed to go about their business as usual, hoping for the best.

The reasons for their decision to elect such a man are numerous – not the least of which is the way journalists covered the campaign. The path to the prime minister's office is paved with biased reporting by journalists who believe they are beholden to their media owners and see Berlusconi as just the next on a long list of *padre padrone* or father/masters. Throughout the 2000-2001 campaign, much of their work was, to say the

least, not objective. It was never made clear to Italians exactly what kind of threat to their democracy this so-called self-made man presents.

In 2000, Berlusconi's Fininvest company controlled almost all private television in Italy; Mondadori Printing, the country's largest book publishing company, along with its chain of bookstores; *Panorama*, the highly-influential and top-selling weekly political news magazine, and many other magazines; *Il Giornale*, a daily newspaper that ranks fifth in national circulation; Publitalia, an advertising firm that controls most of the advertising money in Italy and is also a big player in several other European countries; a film company; a video-store chain; an Internet firm; part of a bank; a chain of insurance companies; a large supermarket chain; and numerous other businesses and media interests in and outside the country.

After May 13, 2001, Berlusconi could add the three state-owned television networks to the list of companies under his control, giving him almost full command over the most commonly used form of mass communication in the country. As of that day, it was virtually impossible to get out of bed in the morning without consuming, purchasing, or in some way using a Fininvest product – yet few Italians were aware of it.

In 1996, Alexander Stille put the threat in American terms in an article for the *New York Times Magazine*.

Imagine if a real estate mogul along the lines of Donald Trump also owned CBS, NBC, the FOX network, Paramount Pictures, *Newsweek*, Random House, Condé Nast, The Los Angeles Times, HBO, the Dallas Cowboys, Wal-Mart stores, Aetna Insurance, Loews Theaters and Fidelity Investments, and had the political clout of Bill Clinton or Newt Gingrich, and you get an idea of the long shadow Berlusconi casts on Italian life.¹

Since 1996, Berlusconi has only lengthened that shadow. In 1999, *Forbes* magazine listed his value at \$8 billion US and in 2000 at \$12.8 billion US, making him the richest man in Italy, and the fourteenth-richest person in the world. Berlusconi has used

his money and, more importantly for this study, his considerable media holdings for enormous political gain. There is no doubting now that he used his media – especially television, but also his press operations – to become prime minister in 1994.² And he did the same again in the 2000-2001 electoral campaign. He sees nothing wrong with being media mogul and prime minister all rolled into one.

In 1996, when confronted by a foreign journalist with the idea that the revamping of state television and the public pension system might present a conflict for the majority owner of private television and a large insurance firm, Berlusconi reacted "with surprise and indignation."³ It was precisely at that time that his Forza Italia (Come On Italy!) party was trying to push through an amendment to the budget worth more than \$400 million US to his Fininvest company. It fell through, but a similar bill regarding tax abatement for Berlusconi's pay-TV channel was passed.

At the time, a Fininvest executive said that Berlusconi simply didn't understand the concept of conflict of interest. When told that Harold Macmillan had sold off his publishing interests when he became prime minister of Britain, Berlusconi's response was, "Why?"⁴

In 2000-2001, Berlusconi also wasn't exactly open with Italians about his financial situation. He used the image of a self-made billionaire to promote himself, but his magazine *Panorama* had designer Giorgio Armani on the cover as the person who declared the most income in Italy in November 1999, giving Armani the appearance of being the richest person in the country.⁵ Inside, Berlusconi ranked a humble fourteenth, claiming income of about 14.7 billion lire, or approximately \$9.8 million Cdn. Other publications took the Italian tax department news releases a step further, with headlines such as "Armani is the Richest in Italy."⁶

Panorama is Italy's top-selling weekly news/politics magazine and is highly influential. In reality, it consists of a mix of cross-promotion of Fininvest products and productions, translated articles from top English-language magazines often not identified

as such, and right-wing propaganda. Its only saving grace is that its competition, *L'Espresso*, contains so much anti-Berlusconi propaganda it's annoying to read.

As in his first campaign in 1994, Berlusconi's youthful photographs were everywhere in 2000-2001, but especially in his media. Cover photos of him on *Panorama* were slightly out of focus. Wrinkles were erased and he appeared trim and fit. He was pictured in casual clothes, instead of a suit, with a sweater draped over his shoulders. In most photographs it looked as though he was about to go sailing.

His appearance became so altered during this latest campaign that, by the fall of 2000, the few opposition papers and magazines that exist in Italy began to poke fun at his advancing hairline and snappy slogans. It was eerily reminiscent of Mussolini's propaganda campaigns in which the Fascist dictator ordered that all photos make him appear youthful.

And, oddly, Berlusconi also seemed to have held onto the same ideas as those he proposed in the early 1990s. In a blatantly self-promoting interview published in the November 9, 2000, edition of *Panorama* entitled, "I Promise: I Will Create a Revolution," Berlusconi spoke of his commitment to freedom of the press. He explained that he had decided to "work in the world of the press" with his newspaper *Il Giornale*, which had been launched during a "climate of ideological intimidation put in place in those years of the left." It was a bizarre statement to make, especially considering how many times he had denied having any control whatsoever over the newspaper purportedly run by his brother.

"I can declare in all consciousness that freedom (of the press) has been the main reason for my life in work and in politics," he stated. Idro Montanelli, the founder of *Il Giornale*, who left after Berlusconi took over the paper, would have a very different opinion.

Using rhetoric that harked back to the Cold War years, Berlusconi's 2000-2001 agenda again included fighting the forces of communism. This, despite the fact that most Italian communists have moved to the centre-left since the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

"(If it hadn't been for me blocking the way of the Italian left, who knows how long our country would have survived an institutional situation characterized by a grave lack of liberty and democracy, and today we would be outside the European (Union) and of numerous international consortiums," he boasted in *Panorama*.

All this communist bashing might be understandable if communism actually posed a threat to the country. And even if it did, the Italian version of communism was never as harsh as that of the Soviet Union or China. A lot of Italian communists are wealthy intellectuals with an idealistic bent.

Berlusconi himself seems to be suffering from some sort of "Sally Field syndrome." In both the *New York Times Magazine* interview of 1996 and a *Financial Times* interview in 2000 he said he wanted the confidence, the affection, the love, and respect of the people. Stille, in ending his article, quoted Berlusconi saying:

"You don't understand," (Berlusconi) said as our talk came to an end, and he leaned back wearily on the white couch in his living room, as if gathering his strength for one final attempt to make me see the light. "I have achieved everything in life a man can hope for – I have nothing left to gain personally," he said, suddenly coiling his body forward. "I have had this extraordinary, unique experience, and I want to make a contribution to the nation. I know how to create; I know how to lead people; I know how to make people love me."⁷

It seems unbelievable that the political system has been unable to control Berlusconi's widespread ownership of media or to legislate against it. Patrick McCarthy says it is because the Italian political system has never been strong enough to block him.⁸

Berlusconi's rise to power began in the late 1980s with the help of former prime minister Bettino Craxi, who made use of Berlusconi to advance his own situation and then wound up having to support him. Berlusconi began to be looked on favourably by the

Italian public in the early 1990s, when a growing and better-educated middle class began to sense that successive corrupt governments, controlled by the Christian Democratic party (DC) over a period of 45 years, were actually holding back the country economically. By then Mafia murders stood at more than 500 per year,⁹ and a fifth of the population was receiving pensions – many of them unwarranted. Pensions were often being used as a form of bribe or vote guarantee. The average age of a pensioner in Italy was just 58,¹⁰ and in some areas, 10 per cent of the population was collecting disability pensions, many for dubious reasons. In Italy, this system of *clientelismo* worked to the benefit of both politicians and their "clients." Even today, in many towns, "baby pensioners," as they are called, can be seen loitering around the central piazzas, too young and too fit to not be working.¹¹

The DC governed Italy for most of its post-Second World War history, but eventually its system of *clientelismo* broke down – although never completely. The public coffers were running out of money and the growing business- and middle-classes were getting fed up with the bureaucracy. The 1980s saw an economic boom, which for a while caused some political optimism. Terrorism had died down, and in 1981, another former journalist, Giovanni Spadolini, became the first non-DC prime minister since 1945. Spadolini's coalition wouldn't hold, and at the next election Socialist party secretary Bettino Craxi became prime minister of one of the longest-running governments in Italian post-war history.

Political optimism abounded as Italians felt they had finally broken away from DC governments, but that optimism did not last long either. The Craxi government's attempts at financial restraint were not enough, and by 1992 public debt stood at 120 per cent of GDP.¹³ In 1992, a scandal broke revealing that several members of Milan's city council, which was made up mostly of Socialist Party members, had been accepting kickbacks. Craxi, too, was implicated in other schemes. Who would fill the void at the right?

In January 1994, Berlusconi, the supposed self-made man, founded his own party called Forza Italia. The word *forza* is a commonly used term of encouragement and is a cheer often heard at national soccer games. Many people, including journalists, got caught up in the hype about the man who had risen from cruise-ship crooner to real estate developer, to media mogul, to political leader. He was seen as a political outsider and hopes abounded that he could solve problems previous politicians hadn't. He even promised a million new jobs.¹²

That hope, coupled with widespread disillusionment in the political and business classes, led to a splintering of the electorate, which helped Berlusconi's party capture 21 per cent of the vote in the March 1994 general election, and his coalition more than 42 per cent. In 2001, the figure would rise slightly to about 44 per cent.

The Italian press, which has an interesting habit of giving politicians nicknames, at first dubbed Berlusconi his *Emittenza*, which is a play on his role as a TV network owner emitting signals and the title Eminence given to Catholic cardinals. His latest nickname is *Cavaliere*, which means Knight and is short for Knight of Labour, a title bestowed on him by the state in recognition of his work as a businessman. These are on top of his other titles, such as his Parliamentary title *Onorevole*, or His Honour, and *Presidente*, as he is entitled to be called as head of the Fininvest company. Then there was his habit during his first term in office of calling himself "the anointed of God," which should have triggered some concern, but apparently was not enough.¹³

Once in power, Berlusconi proved as ruthless as the rest. He did not divest himself of his media concerns and set about trying to protect himself and his Fininvest company from investigating magistrates. He appointed party faithful to the three state-owned RAI TV networks and claimed state television had no right to criticize acts of government.¹⁴ It was not much different from what viewers saw during the 2000-2001 campaign when Berlusconi claimed the RAI was not providing balanced coverage of him and his coalition on state television. In fact, Berlusconi received much more air time than

his opponent Francesco Rutelli.¹⁵ In addition to that, following the release of a book about his alleged Mafia ties,¹⁶ he published a 125-page book called *Una vita italiana*, or An Italian Life, about his life. He sent it free of charge to all Italian households. It featured many photos of Berlusconi and his family and friends – some of whom were under investigation by the justice department. It also included his horoscope.

In the final month of the first Berlusconi government, it was announced that the prime minister was under investigation for using false accounting practises in his Fininvest company. Other charges have followed, including obstruction of justice, and tax evasion. Several of the charges have been overturned on appeal, but the investigations and charges have continued into his second term in office.

Berlusconi was incredulous in an interview with *Newsweek* magazine after that eight-month reign collapsed, saying that opposition to an elected government was "a denial of popular wishes and therefore a negation of democracy."¹⁷ His idea of democratic government was that he had been elected; therefore he should govern – despite his party having received the support of less than one-quarter of voters.

Considering Italians' first experience with Berlusconi as prime minister it seems odd that they would re-elect him. But when all is said and done, perhaps it is not so surprising. First, the only real option was a disorganised left, which, while in office, had not made as many changes as Italians had hoped they would, nor as fast as they should have. Second, Berlusconi offered the promise of a strong leadership – something many older Italians are used to and believe is necessary to make changes. Third, and perhaps most important, was a media system incapable of clearly and objectively explaining the options available to voters, what the results of their decisions would be, and the importance of making an informed choice. These are just three reasons. There are others. But as far as the press is concerned, the reality is that the majority of Italian newspaper journalists, and those of other media, couldn't be trusted to properly cover the election for

readers. They were covering it for themselves and their political parties, friends, and cronies.

The 1,500 Readers

A foreigner travelling in Italy would think Italians have an insatiable interest in politics. Almost every day, the front-page headlines shout crisis, reform or referendum from the *edicole*, Italy's characteristic and ubiquitous newsstands. Political news dominates all other news in this country, and barring a sensational crime, natural disaster, or a few below-the-fold briefs, it can continue in the leading newspapers for as many as seven or eight pages before other news even gets a mention. But ask Italians whether they read the political news, or better yet understand and can explain it, and you usually get a resounding no. This is because political news in Italy is not really meant for general readers. Instead, it is being written for, and read by, an elite political group.

This group consists mainly of the politically active from the governing and opposition political parties who want to keep up to date on the leaders' positions and strategies,¹⁸ and to plan their own strategies. As many as 100 political parties are active in Italy at the same time. As a result, Italian political journalism is an elaborate form of communication between all these political elites. The rest of the readers are made up of those who feel some obligation to support their party's paper or those few who want to keep up with the political discourse.

A 1959 magazine article written by political journalist Enzo Forcella outlined in a startlingly frank manner just how elite Italian political news is. Entitled *1,500 Readers – Confessions of a Political Journalist*, Forcella's analysis is important in understanding how Italian politics is covered and how Italian journalists and politicians work together.

A political journalist in our country can count on around 1,500 readers: the ministers and undersecretaries (all of them), the members of parliament (some of them), the leaders of the political parties, trade union officials, high prelates, and some industrialists who want to appear informed. The rest do not count, even

though the paper sells 300,000 copies. First of all, it has not been established that ordinary readers read the first page of their papers, and in any case their influence is minimal. The whole system is based on the rapport between the political journalist and this group of privileged readers. If we lose sight of this factor, we cannot understand the most characteristic aspect of our political journalism, perhaps of Italian politics in general: the feeling of talk within the family, with protagonists who have known each other since childhood, given to repartee, speaking a language full of illusions and, even when they dislike each other, wishing each other well. One speaks only for one's own pleasure, of course, as if a paying public did not exist.¹⁹

At first glance Forcella's "confession" that Italian journalists are part of "the family" seems almost humorous. But it is a very accurate description of how the Italian political press operates, even today. The number of actual readers may be higher now, but the article explains that Italian journalists are not separate from politicians, but make up part of a select group of political actors. Their relationship is more like that of brothers than foes. Italian political journalists do not see themselves as having a "watchdog" role, as being "the eyes and ears of the public," or acting as a "mirror of society." This was especially noticeable during the 2000-2001 election, as next to none of the coverage involved interviews or discussion that was citizen led.

Of special note is Forcella's description of the treatment of the public, as if it "did not exist," including his comment that "in any case their influence is minimal." This is the mind-set of Italian political journalists. Italian newspapers are not written in the interest of the public.

Journalists and/or Politicians

There's a fine line between being a political journalist and being a politician in Italy. Italian political journalists usually hold definite political-ideological positions and are often card-carrying party members. The newspapers they work for have very strong political leanings or are full-out partisan papers, and the people they report on have

political positions. This makes understanding political journalism difficult because it means Italian political journalists have an agenda other than informing the public or being a conduit for the "conversation of mankind."

While Italian professional journalists are well paid, Italian politicians are better paid and have more perks and power. Therefore, in some instances journalists may be looking for politicians to help improve their situations when they are writing about politics.

Competition between newspapers for political news is not based on whether one paper got the story first; it is based on the way it has been interpreted and whether a particular party's officials agree with the position.

All this makes for some interesting dynamics between political journalists and the politicians they are covering. Italian political journalists must develop relationships with politicians based on a trust that they will not skew their subjects' messages,²⁰ which occasionally occurs in such a politicized environment. If both the reporter and the politician are of the same political party, this is not usually a problem. But if they are not, trust becomes an issue for both. To try to allay these concerns, Italian journalists and politicians work on setting up and maintaining relationships with each other, especially if the journalist works for one of the leading newspapers. In that case, the politician may seek even out the journalist.

Italian political scientist Paolo Mancini's analysis of the relationship between Italian political journalists and politicians makes the interesting observation that this relationship quite often becomes confused with friendship, or what he calls political parallelism.²¹ He compares these relationships with those between U.S. journalists and politicians; what has been called a symbiotic relationship. However, there is a substantial difference between these two press systems. Most American journalists have learned not to take the information fed to them by politicians and they maintain a certain distance between themselves and those they are covering. The days of Timothy Crouse's *Boys on*

the Bus are long gone. Even Crouse wrote that by 1968 political journalism had changed, and reporters were no longer willing to report on the material provided for them by party staffers by the campaign of that year.²² The Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal changed drastically the way the U.S. media operates.

Conversely, in Italy there are few, if any, Woodward and Bernstein's investigating government corruption or even attempting to sniff out a good story and break away from the pack. The idea of a political journalist being leaked something newsworthy in the halls of Montecitorio, the House of Deputies, and scurrying off, lips sealed, is unheard of. There are no political news scoops – almost no investigative journalism to speak of. As a result, the role of uncovering scandals has fallen to the investigating magistrates within the justice system.

In the early 1990s, investigating magistrates managed to gain some independence from the political system and became virtually the only ones willing to confront Italian politicians and make public corrupt activities. In the spring of 1993, when they broke the scandal to beat all scandals – *Tangentopoli* – the corruption was found to be so widespread it resulted in the jailing of approximately 1,000 politicians (mostly Christian Democrat and Socialist party members) and businesspeople, and the investigation of another thousand. Journalists mainly just trailed along behind them.

Tangentopoli, or Bribesville, headlined the newspapers for months, but no journalist had uncovered how corrupt the system had become. Two Milanese investigating magistrates, Antonio Di Pietro and Francesco Saverio Borelli, had opened the Pandora's box of bribes and became the instant heroes of millions of Italians.

By 2000, it was as though the magistrates had become investigative journalists and the journalists had become lawyers defending briefs, according to *Financial Times* correspondent James Blitz; those briefs being the news releases sent out by the magistrates, the police departments, and the political parties.²³

News releases, verbatim interviews provided by the press offices of political leaders wanting to make a point, and agency wire copy not identified as such make up the majority of the copy in Italian newspapers – meaning Italian political journalism is bland and safe. After these, the only forms of writing left in the newspapers are commentary and interpretation, but leaving columnists to do the work of pushing ahead the public agenda rarely works. And the work of Italian political columnists cannot be considered investigative in any sense. They only comment on news that has already been published.

It appears there are perhaps two effective means of voicing public opinion in Italy: political cartoons and television comedy, and they came under heavy criticism, and even censorship, during the 2000-2001 election campaign. (another is the Internet, but that too became regulated in 2001) In North America, political cartoons are considered commentary, but in Italy they are often a reflection of what has gone on as told to the cartoonists by the journalists who dare not write it – which was why one of the most significant lawsuits filed against an Italian newspaper in recent years is of importance. It is that of former prime minister Massimo D'Alema against cartoonist Giorgio Forattini, who in a series of cartoons represented D'Alema as his moustache.²⁴

The cartoonist had initially drawn a cartoon depicting the police knocking at D'Alema's door, with D'Alema inside erasing the names of politicians and journalists from a list of 200 supposed ex-KGB spies. The list was part of a document called the Mitrokhin dossier, which magistrates announced they were investigating in the fall of 1999. After two years, it was decided nine Italians and 10 Russians, one of whom died in 2000, had been involved with the KGB during the Cold War. None of the suspects were journalists, and to date no charges have been laid.²⁵

D'Alema took Forattini to court over the cartoons and from that point on D'Alema could not be depicted in his drawings, so D'Alema was replaced by the mustache. Journalists may have been thinking D'Alema was covering up the names of people on the so-called list of spies, but no journalist would write it.

The Political Newsgathering Process

Aside from news releases, political news is also gathered on the steps or in the hallways of Montecitorio, and other government buildings. After a group of reporters interviews a politician, they usually discuss what was said to confirm whether they "got it right" and ensure everyone is in agreement. The information is evaluated, commented on, and interpreted.²⁶ If the reporter was alone with a politician, others ask what was said and the information is shared. Pack journalism has been taken to new heights in Italy.

A comparison of a day's line-up of stories in the two major Italian newspapers usually shows that virtually all of the articles in the Internal News, Political News, and *Cronica*, or Crime/Chronicles sections are the same, and those that were missed by either of the papers are usually included the next day. Investigative, or even just different news items are extremely rare.

After a scrum is over, the news goes through several other controls: traditional party sources and editors, to ensure the story is in line with the paper's political slant and, of course, it's checked against the news release. It rarely matters if the journalist saw or heard something else. It doesn't matter if the journalist received other information or a "scoop." The journalist's interpretation of the story is usually subverted into what the paper's editor, owner or party want to see published.

The other sources of political news are confidential talk by party insiders, information supplied by political friends, and gossip. Not much news is gathered by private interview. So, needless to say, when a politician invites a journalist to dinner she or he doesn't have much choice but to go.²⁷ If they don't, they risk being cut out of the news "family." Only those journalists who have developed a long and trusting relationship with political leaders are granted interviews, and then only when the politician has a message he wants to get out. The same journalists follow the same politicians all the time – even during election campaigns.

But by far the most appalling practise in Italian political journalism is that of allowing politicians to review journalists' copy before it is published. Every night before the major papers go to press, political journalists receive phone calls from prominent politicians wanting to hear what has been written about them or have the articles faxed to them.²⁸ The list of those with the power to hear and censor is long and includes the leaders of most of the many major political parties, as well as other prominent figures, such as heads of organizations, and even university professors. In the fall of 2000, as Francesco Rutelli moved from the position of mayor of Rome to candidate for prime minister for the left, he was placed on the list at *Corriere della Sera*.²⁹

This is not to say that some Italian political journalists don't recognize the practice of allowing politicians to control their copy amounts to censorship. Many claim, however, that they are hard-pressed to do anything about it. The power to decide who gets to vet news copy is in the hands of editors who are often closely tied to the parties and their leaders, and come from the "old school" of Italian journalism. And in the partisan papers, it is expected that politicians are in control of the message.

Gianna Fregonara, a 30-year-old political journalist who has worked at *Corriere della Sera* for 10 years, said younger journalists like her are against allowing politicians to read their copy, but that editors feel bound to allow it. But she doesn't consider it a bad policy.

The problem is that often these interviews are not very important in terms of the grand scheme of things for the newspaper. It's not like a weakness of the paper. The real problem is that I have other colleagues that read them (before they are published) on principle. So then the politicians start to say, "Then it isn't true that we can't read the articles because John read it for me at the other newspaper." So then the boss says ah... oh. Understand? This is the situation.³⁰

Basically, unless the story is a rare scoop that the editors have decided they don't want made known before going to print, journalists can read the articles to those requesting it. Perhaps Fregonara's choice of the word "principle" is poor. Journalists think

that because they read their articles to one politician they should read them to all. They believe it makes this practice fair.

Fregonara says she tries to avoid reading her articles to politicians but makes exceptions when she feels they are justified, such as when she knows the politician well, when the party he or she works for is aligned with the paper, or when she doesn't think there's anything controversial about them, and the story isn't important enough to warrant her concern. She noted there are some politicians who are "truly terrible" to journalists who don't read their articles to them. They can be verbally abusive and, more importantly, can cut journalists off from valuable sources.

Reading the articles before publication is part of the tradition and culture of Italian journalism, she said, adding that breaking that tradition will probably require more journalism education and the eventual promotion of younger journalists into management positions. A greater separation between politicians and journalists would also be helpful. But forceful politicians are not only to blame for this state of affairs. This "tradition" is also the result of a long history of unethical journalism. What journalists write in Italy doesn't always reflect what is said. Politicians regularly complain that what they said did not appear in newspaper articles the next day, and they usually demand a list of journalist's questions be sent to them before granting an interview.

Financial Times correspondent James Blitz said that before an exclusive interview with Silvio Berlusconi, published in the London-based newspaper in the fall of 2000, he, too, had to send a list of questions to the Forza Italia leader, although he said he didn't necessarily stick to the list.³¹

Blitz has seen the results of this process on more than one occasion. He said he was astonished that during an interview with a leading figure in the Italian government a journalist from the financial newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* who was also present took barely any notes, and did not record the interview. He was even more surprised when the next day *Il Sole 24 Ore* published an almost verbatim interview, even if the politician's

responses were not all exactly in the same order. To Blitz it was obvious that the politician's version of the interview had been faxed to the journalist, or his editor, and reprinted.

On many occasions, Blitz said, he has also noticed the difference between stories he's written about Italian prime ministers and those written by Italian political journalists. Quotes he used were different from the crisp one-liners the Italian newspapers printed. Again, the only possible explanation is that the quotes were faxed to the Italian journalists by the party press offices.

Blitz also said he is constantly having to fight requests from those interviewed to have the article faxed to them before publication. And Italian politicians, he noted, can be very nasty to journalists.

I've been screamed at down the telephone. I'm nearly always screamed at down the telephone. Whenever I interview anybody it never comes out the way they want it. They cannot understand that we are not devoting a whole page of the *Financial Times* to a verbatim interview with them.³²

But Italian newspapers do, and almost every day. It at least has the effect of breaking up the walls of copy. Blitz calls these verbatim interviews a sort of game, and says they are, in a way, a type of favour to politicians who have a message they want expressed.

I think what happens is that political leaders, especially the prime minister and the leading figures in government, effectively book space in newspapers. I think it's that bad. They are totally in control. It's quite extraordinary.³³

That means Italian journalists also don't challenge politicians on issues of importance to the public. For example, in the fall of 2000, when licenses for third-generation telephone services, worth between \$20-\$30 billion US, were being auctioned off, not a single Italian newspaper took the Italian government to task for botching the

deal by offering five licenses to just six companies. When one company pulled out of the auction, the other companies could almost name their own price, and the government lost a lot of money and face over it because of foreign press criticism of the mess.³⁴ The story was then weakly followed by the Italian press. The majority of their coverage was actually coverage of what the foreign press was saying – a practice that makes the job of foreign correspondent in Italy much more difficult than in other Western countries, according to Blitz – and very different.

I suppose it's particularly striking if you're a British journalist. We have a very aggressive press in Britain; we have very aggressive television interviewing. Politicians have been decimated in Britain, but they are barely touched in this country – the (Italian) political class has not been seriously challenged in any way. It remains the most self-referential, self-obsessed political class in Europe.

I think the real issue is the attitude of the entire Italian press to the sort of mutual acceptance that these are the rules of the game; they're never going to rock the boat; they're never going to do too much.³⁵

The Influence of Foreigners

Italian politicians spend a lot of time following what is written about them in the foreign press, which makes those who write for a select number of foreign newspapers and magazines sold in Italy certainly more powerful than Italian journalists. Italian politicians seem to have more regard for foreign opinion than for that of their own citizenry and want to look good outside the country – especially in the rest of the European Union and in the United States. Italian politicians know they can lead Italian political journalists, but the foreign press is not so malleable. The *Financial Times*, *Le Monde*, *The Economist*, and the *International Herald Tribune* have become required reading for Italian political leaders as a result.

There are historic reasons for this, aside from the fact foreign journalists are practically the only ones doing any real investigative work in Italy. The actions of foreign

governments have influenced the politics of Italy for centuries; especially those of France, Austria and Serbia, its nearest neighbours. For most of Italy's history, its 7,500 kilometres of coastline presented a great threat; hence its concern about naval powers such as France and Britain, its ties to these countries, and their influence.

In 1789, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen was proclaimed, and Article 11 of the declaration put on paper the right to free speech, as well as the right to freely write and publish. Together, the French Revolution, the Declaration, and Napoleon shook up the press of Western Europe, Italy included. The enactment of the First Amendment to the Constitution in the United States two years later increased Italian curiosity about the possibility of new rights and freedoms.³⁶ Space for political news began to gain ground.

Napoleon's invasion of Italy in 1796 added to the northern Italian interest in all things French. A puppet "Kingdom of Italy" was formed in the north with Milan as its capital. Upon Napoleon's entry into the city, newspapers began springing up, and within three years Milan became the newspaper centre of Italy publishing about 40 newspapers. It wouldn't last long. These papers left the old forms behind and journalists openly criticized the new institutions created by the French.³⁷ As a result, in 1799, all newspapers hostile to Napoleon and his regime were suppressed.³⁸ And after just one year in power, Napoleon gave the order that only 12 copies of each newspaper could be printed. By 1803 all were under the control of a censor.

Italy's first real attempt at political journalism ended quickly, and Napoleon was forced by the Austrians to leave the peninsula in August 1799. The divided Italy went back into the hands of the old foreign aristocratic rulers.⁸³ Then the only newspaper that contained political news was the *Gazzetta privilegiata di Venezia* [The Privileged Gazette of Venice], the official newspaper of that city's ruling regime.³⁹

The Italian press had, in effect, been bypassed by three major press freedom events: Milton's *Areopagitica*, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the

Citizen, and the U.S. First Amendment: there were, and still are, no Italian equivalents to these great documents. Certainly street news of the new liberalism, and of the new age Europe was entering could not be contained, but Italians would have to wait until the mid-1800s to gain the freedoms the French and the English had acquired much earlier.

During the 2000-2001 campaign, the foreign press was reviled by many Italian politicians – especially Berlusconi. Every excuse imaginable for the negative coverage Berlusconi received from foreign journalists was made, including that the foreign press was leftist (including the right-wing *Economist*) and that foreign journalists had gotten together to conspire to eliminate his chances of becoming prime minister. It was laughable to any outsider. The Italian press on occasion published translated portions of the foreign press reports, which led Italy's so-called king, Gianni Agnelli, to come to Berlusconi's rescue exclaiming that Italy was not a "Banana Republic."⁴⁰ After that, things settled down, and Berlusconi was soon after elected.

Trust Me

Trust, or rather a lack of trust, is a problem that has existed between Italian journalists and the citizenry for a long time – as it has between Italian politicians and the people. Italians have repeatedly been swept up in the slogans and heroic images of politicians such as Berlusconi only to have their hopes destroyed again and again. And Italian political journalists have, for the most part, gone along with the show. How Italian politics and journalism came to be so exclusive and intertwined is, like many things in Italy, largely due to history and culture, as is the great divide that has been created between these "brothers" and the people they should be representing. The word should is of importance here. Italian journalists and politicians don't even claim to be representing the people. It is not part of the tradition of Italian journalism or politics to act for the citizenry, and barring some colossal event, it is unlikely that will change. A nation raised

on the writings of Machiavelli is not about to start espousing the traditions of English liberal democracy overnight – but nor should it.

In *The Machievalli Legacy: Essays in Italian Political Thought*, Joseph V. Femia asks: "Where are Italy's great liberal thinkers? Where are Italy's equivalents of Locke? of Tocqueville? of Madison? of John Stuart Mill?"⁴¹ But Italy's great thinkers (and there are many of them) had other, more pressing concerns, such as basic survival, and the unification of a country made up of many vastly different peoples, cultural traditions and languages. As a result, much more of Machiavelli's dark pessimism has survived in Italy than one would expect.

For example, when Carlo Tullio-Altan spelled out the motivation for going into politics in Italy he did it in these rather blunt terms.

(T)he only motive for participating in the management of the community is through power, either by fraud or violence, to obtain advantages for the management of the family/business, exclusively substituting that of society.⁴²

It seems sinister, but Italian political journalism has evolved pretty much along the same lines. Journalistic practices during the last five centuries have led to a form of political journalism different from any other in the Western world.

Some say political journalism began in Italy in the early 1500s when political news, written on paper, started being sent long distances on a regular basis.⁴³ During this period came the rapid development of the postal system, and the nobility began sending *notizie* or news to each other.⁴⁴ *The Prince*, Machiavelli's famous instruction manual on how to ruthlessly acquire and maintain political power, was written in 1513 and published in 1527, after his death. By Machiavelli's time, Italy had united into 12 regions, down from the 80 city-states that had existed previously. But the regions still maintained their different weights and measures, coinage, traditions, legal systems, and dialects.

Soon princes and ambassadors began sending daily notices. The hunger for news reached down into the lower classes as well, and hand-written or printed weekly notices began to be sold from the first Italian "newsrooms" or sent by courier to the homes and workplaces of buyers. The tone of these two or four-page newspapers was not overly political. Their main selling point was the *cronaca nera* or news of the worse crimes of the day, and the punishments meted out to offenders.⁴⁵

Around 1563, a similar newspaper was launched in Venice. This hand-written paper sold for one gazeta, which was the name for a silver coin of the period, and is where the word gazette originates.⁴⁶ But all of these early 15 x 23 cm newspapers were heavily censored. The activities of the presses and journalists were subordinate to the ruling regime, as they were in the rest of Europe at that time. Newspapers were compiled by clerks, other trusted employees of the courts, or governments, and princes and members of the courts were quick to include any independent news publishers in their circles in order to influence or control the papers, as well as offer "financial assistance" to the reputable or "dangerously intelligent."⁴⁷

By the mid 1800s, economist Count Camillo Benso di Cavour, had brought bribery of the press to a high level.⁴⁸ Cavour is today considered the most important, effective, and certainly one of the most manipulative politicians in modern Italian history. He used the press to his own political advantage, and was one of Italy's first writers to use journalism as a stepping-stone into politics. He and other followers of moderate Cesare Balbo, who preached orderly reform under a monarchy,⁴⁹ founded the newspaper *Il Risorgimento* [The Renaissance].

Cavour was cast into the spotlight in 1848 when a famous article of his was published on the eve of a northern revolt against Austrian rule. Cavour and his revolutionary friends called on King Carlo Alberto to march with them into Lombardy. The result of the revolution was a disastrous defeat, but Cavour was by then on his way

up the political ladder. By 1850, he had become a cabinet minister in the Piedmontese government, and by 1852 prime minister – all the while continuing his journalism career.

Odd though it may seem, Cavour was not fluent in Italian, but in French, and had to have all his articles translated. Up until then speaking Italian was considered unacceptable in Turin society, but that didn't stop him from spreading his political theories through the press.⁵⁰ Paris was so important to Cavour he spent exorbitant amounts of money bribing the French foreign press. His handouts from the public coffers reached such high amounts that in May 1860 Interior Minister Luigi Carlo Farini complained in a letter to the Governor of Naples that the "subsidies" had exhausted his Estimates.⁵¹

As a politician, Cavour was shrewd and believed, like many other Italian politicians, that private life and public life had separate moral codes. He wrote, "If you must resort to extraordinary means, then adopt them as energetically as possible, so that the grandeur of your aim may make up for the hateful methods you employ, so that your government will not appear ridiculous as well as odious."⁵² It was politics and journalism in true Machiavellian style.

Cavour's not-so-private war with newspaperman and revolutionary Giuseppe Mazzini drove him to drastic measures; especially for someone who claimed to believe in freedom of expression. Mazzini founded newspaper after newspaper, and Cavour considered him his greatest enemy. Mazzini was eventually expelled from Italy, France, and Switzerland, and wound up in London where he spent the rest of his life writing newspapers and pamphlets for distribution in Italy and England.⁵³

When the last surviving republican newspaper was going to extreme lengths not to be shut down, Cavour tried to bribe the printer to stop its publication, then ordered the authorities to force the editor into bankruptcy by confiscating all copies of the newspaper as often as possible.

After Mazzini's death in 1872, when he was no longer a threat, he was recognized as a true Italian hero. But Mazzini's style heralded the beginning of a widespread and dominating political press in Italy. For many, this was a sign that Italians were maturing politically, but it also signalled the start of an ugly, combative type of journalism in Italy.⁵⁴ The problem now is that it has yet to disappear. While in most Western countries a full-fledged partisan press has all but vanished, the Italian press has clung to this way of thinking. In the U.S. and Canada, most people would be hard-pressed to identify which newspapers follow which parties. Newspaper editors and journalists normally pride themselves on being as objective as possible. In Italy, almost all the papers are blatantly biased, to the point where they are often laughable, disgraceful, or just plain unreadable. For Cavour's part, aside from his manipulation of the press, his biggest and possibly most damaging effect on political journalism was his introduction of it as a way to enter politics. From his time on, it seems the profession has been viewed by many in Italy as a way to move up in the world. Today, the number of established career journalists who haven't gone into politics can be counted on one hand, and many of Italy's most successful politicians have at one time been newspaper editors or journalists, including Gramsci, Nenni, Mussolini, Spadolini, Veltroni, D'Alema, and Giulio Andreotti to name a few.⁵⁵

Cavour's policy of using bribery and kickbacks in the press has also continued, although it is said to have decreased, and those incidents that are exposed now are covered up quickly. In September 2000, however, it was revealed that consulting contracts were passed from politicians to journalists when the Italian Court of Accounts released the news that Rome's mayor Francesco Rutelli, who just a few hours earlier had also been named the left's new candidate for prime minister, had been found guilty of hiring consultants "with scant professionalism," and giving them workloads without specific tasks and results expected of them.⁵⁶ A total of 35 people had been hired by the city, at a cost of just over 3.3 billion lire (about \$2.2 million Cdn). Contracts made by Rutelli's

office were said to add up to 1.3 billion lire (about \$867,000 Cdn) and among them were contracts for four journalists.

Italian journalists explained that the contracts were perfectly above board because those hired did not have full-time positions as journalists. Rutelli explained away the court's findings saying that since he had entered office hundreds of legal complaints had been made against him – a claim that's not too surprising in lawsuit-crazy Italy. Rutelli complained that the court had taken seriously a complaint made by members of the *Alleanze nazionale* party, Italy's far right and former Fascist party, and said dozens of other cities, provinces, and regions were doing the same thing⁵⁷ – which was true, of course, but that didn't make his actions legal or ethical.

Along with their findings against Rutelli, the court released information detailing the handouts of jobs to friends and relatives of politicians from the northern Alps to the tip of the peninsula in Sicily. In some cases politicians and public administrators had created "entire parallel structures."⁵⁸ In the province of Bolzano, the list of "collaborators" filled more than 270 pages, and hundreds of thousands of lire had been spent on "photographic and journalistic services." Rutelli appealed the decision against him and the case has yet to be decided, but his lamenting of the "*Tangentopoli* of the Masses" just a month earlier seemed much emptier than it had when initially expressed.⁵⁹ Once again, Italians had been let down by one of their political leaders and the story soon disappeared.

In November 2000, Vittorio Feltri, editor in chief of the newspaper *Libero*, in a front-page editorial criticizing the Order of Journalists, revealed a list of some of the types of favours and payments Italian journalists have received, claiming the order has always kept not just one eye, but two, closed to the problem.

The history of our journalism is filled with thieves, spies, rascals, people that take dictation and are under the stick, people that in exchange for writing well of someone have received apartments as gifts, people that use information to gain money from the stock market, people and lowlifes, poor souls and criminals.⁶⁰

Certainly, most journalists in the *Albo* make enough money now not to need bribes, and younger journalists seem even less open to talking about it. But they also overlook the innumerable freebies, food and other perks doled out to them. As members of the Order of Journalists, they are entitled to a membership card, which gives them discounts on travel, excuses them from paying at highway toll booths, and results in discounts on many items they purchase and, of course, the special treatment they seem to feel they deserve for being journalists.

In November 1999, Journalist Andrea Amato wrote a humorous, but eye-opening four-page article for the Italian *GQ* magazine on how to live well on freebies for a full 24 hours, much of it with the help of fake journalist's business cards he printed from a cheap subway business card machine. He didn't even need the official card to get into receptions, movie screenings, and other exclusive gatherings.⁶¹

In late September 2000, the benefits and favours being passed between journalists and politicians were also made very clear following an incident involving former *La Repubblica* journalist Gad Lerner and the justice department's efforts to combat pedophilia. Just 100 days into his new position as news director of the RAI Uno state-owned television network, a story mistakenly aired on the main 8 p.m. newscast about a joint Italian/Russian operation to arrest those selling child pornography on the Internet and to shut down their Web sites.⁶² It contained photographs and videotape of children that had appeared on the sites and in some of the videos that had been seized during the police investigation. Viewers were shocked and protested. Lerner inserted a personal apology into the same newscast a few minutes later, but it was too late to save him.

It was not, however, too late for Lerner to start making accusations about political interference in all three state-run networks. Lerner resigned and went on television with the bitter accusation that the president of the government commission that oversees the RAI networks had tried to use his political influence to force Lerner to hire someone

during a lunch meeting shortly after he had assumed his position. Lerner reached dramatically into his pocket and pulled out a piece of paper, as he claimed the president of the commission had done during their meeting, and quoted him as saying, "Here is the name of someone to *sistemare*,"⁶³ or system-ize, which means to put in order in Italy. In most instances, this means giving someone a full-time "job for life" in a high-paying position, whether or not they are qualified for it. Lerner didn't say whether he actually hired the person, or for which job, but if the technical quality of the RAI newscasts is any indication, the three networks are full of these *raccomandati*, as they are known. Sometimes those hired are related to the person making the order. Sometimes they are someone owed a favour.

To "suggest" someone for a job is not an uncommon practise in Italy, but it is not often openly discussed. *Raccomandazione* have been in use for hundreds of years here, but it is recognized as one of the major causes of inefficiency, low productivity, and many of the country's other labour, business and bureaucratic problems, as well as the extreme frustration of many people trying to get positions they are entitled to, and a massive brain drain to other countries. The *raccomandazione* is not the same as a reference commonly found on most North American resumes. It is often an order to give someone a job.

Lerner's accusation was not a surprise to most. But it confirmed once more to the Italian public that *raccomandazione* still persist in Italian journalism and politics, and that a journalist's abilities and experience don't necessarily count. It also begged the question: why hadn't Lerner made his accusation of the *raccomandazione* public before the child pornography tapes aired?

A few days after the Lerner incident, an article appeared in *Corriere della Sera* suggesting the centre-left had found its next candidate for MP in Lerner, and that journalists were placing bets on which party he would go with.⁶⁴ In 2001, he would wind up as news director of the only television network outside Berlusconi's control, La 7. It

would soon collapse due to financial difficulties. But Lerner is still young, and his career is far from over.

It should be noted that not all journalists consider the use of *raccomandazione* unethical. A few of the journalists interviewed for this study mentioned the possibility of gaining political positions as a result of their political "relationships." Stefano Marroni, one of *La Repubblica's* top political journalists, made no bones about being identified by his political party affiliation and admitted it was one of the reasons he got where he is.⁶⁵ A more experienced and perhaps better-connected journalist, he shrugged off questions about it saying that, basically, in a politicized press that's the way things work.

Media Manipulation

The development of the Italian press has been fraught with problems – many of which persist. From its beginnings, it has been seen either as an evil that could cause public disorder and violence or as a tool to be used to manipulate the public. The fragmentation of the peninsula, the Reformation, the Inquisition, severe ecclesiastical censorship, the Catholic Church's indexing of prohibited books (including *The Prince*), and many other factors have made a free press difficult.⁶⁶

By the early 1600s, virtually all Italian newspapers were organs of the privileged who either paid off a trusted journalist and printer they knew would only print what they sanctioned in what was often the only newspaper available in their city – or they set up their own printing operations with salaried workers. At this point, it can be said that modern Italian political journalism was born. It is a combination of these two types of newspaper operations that exists today. Since the ousting of Italy's monarchy following the Second World War, the princes have become the politicians whose parties have their own papers, and the few so-called independent papers belong to wealthy industrialists, which are also heavily controlled by politics.

Massimo D'Alema, a journalist who made the switch to politician a few years ago and rose to prime minister in 1998, provides a good example of how Italian politicians manipulate the media. D'Alema went from being editor at *L'Unita*, a Communist party paper, to party secretary of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra* (PDS), or the Democratic Party of the Left, the former communist party, to leader of Italy's first left-wing government after the collapse of Romano Prodi's Olive Tree coalition. But despite his past life as a newspaper editor, D'Alema's honeymoon with the press was quickly over, and he made his feelings clear about political journalism early on. As party secretary, D'Alema announced in 1996 that he would no longer do interviews with the press and would only speak to the public on television. Interestingly, he gave his reasons in an interview with journalist Lucia Annunziata published in the monthly publishing trade magazine *Prima Comunicazione*.

Because all the newspapers are party newspapers, all are in the game for someone: for certain interests, for certain powers. They are always at the service of some cause; more those undeclared. Those (papers) are not just dangerous instruments but are disquieting. The bottom line is that freedom of information does not exist, the power of information does not exist in the same way that the powers of control and of influence do. The truth is that the press plays a part of a sole mechanism of power; it plays the part of the oligarchy of economic and political powers. The newspapers are not against power, they are a piece of the power. And like them they are above all unreliable. This is a structural element of political information in Italy in a measure that does not exist in other countries.⁶⁷

D'Alema's analysis of the press is striking for its total condemnation of Italian political journalism, especially since he is a classic example of the card-carrying journalist-turned-politician. But he was one of the few left-wing politicians to have risen to the top and at the time most of the journalists covering him were from a strong right-wing dominated press. Some of his anger may simply have been sour grapes, but it seems D'Alema thought he could carry the power over words he held as editor into political office.

Eventually, D'Alema's solution to the press problem was the Friday news conference, which he instituted in 1999 and all media outlets attended. Somewhere along the way (and not surprisingly) he changed his mind about cutting off print journalists completely. Viewers could watch clips from the press conference on television, all had access to the same information and press releases, and could write basically the same story from it – and they did. It was an easy and manipulative solution.

But for a journalist trying to get a private interview, or even a few comments on the telephone, it meant hours of extra work, even for comments a competent press officer should have been able to pass on. D'Alema was, for a while, in control. So much so that on the day the Italian armed forces joined NATO forces in the war in Bosnia in 1999, he was shown on television walking with an entourage of journalists in a small Italian village discussing some obscure and mundane matter.

It was astounding considering the public outcry against Italy becoming involved in the war. Yet not one question was asked about the war by the journalists shown walking alongside D'Alema. When questioned about it, many Italians just laughed and said that if a journalist had asked about Italy's role in Bosnia she or he would have been out of a job in the morning. The response seems exaggerated, but McCarthy says in the partisan papers, and in papers owned by people who care about the political slant, firings do occur.⁶⁸ However, usually journalists have been conditioned by the newsroom culture and the political culture that exists throughout Italy not to let it get that far.

There the journalists know. You don't have to tell them. There are certain things you are not supposed to say and in return for not saying them they are paid. If they said them they'd be fired.⁶⁹

It should be noted here that Lucia Annunziata, the journalist who conducted the interview with D'Alema for *Prima Comunicazione* – and one of the very few women journalists to rise to the level of management in Italy – in a later interview described her

friendship with D'Alema.⁷⁰ She denied he had helped her in her career, but at a minimum it begs the question: how did she get the interview if D'Alema refused to speak to the press? The answer can only be that Annunziata is part of the political "family."

In the autumn of 2000, after his political defeat and a summer of sailing his 15-metre yacht, D'Alema was back in the papers – this time as a columnist. But not in the left-wing newspaper *L'Unita*. It had shut down in the summer. D'Alema's position within the PDS was fuzzy. By mid-November the party was struggling to find a way to have him elected party president. His welcome back into the journalism fold, however, was obvious by the astounding 67 inches of column space written by him and published in the Rome broadsheet *Il Messaggero*. His article started above the fold on page one and finished by taking up almost half of page nine.⁷¹ After the shutdown of *L'Unita*, it was unclear where he'd wind up, but one thing was sure: in Italy, old politicians never die, they don't resign, and they don't fade away. They hang onto positions within the party because eventually they will get their turn in the top job.

And they rarely make full-out attacks against their political "enemies" either. They can't when coalitions regularly make and break governments. Since the end of the Second World War, Italy has had 38 prime ministers, most averaging less than 10 months in office, and many have staged repeat performances. At the end of 2000 D'Alema was back as party secretary.

The Non-Reader

Is it any wonder readers are confused when journalists go from being journalists to being politicians, back to being journalists again, and then politicians again? Simply understanding their language is difficult enough for outsiders. In fact, the way in which political news is written shows just how exclusive Italian political journalism and politics are. Political news is one of the most difficult types of writing to understand in the

country. Sentences are long and convoluted – even more than in the news section.

Acronyms are written as words beginning with capital letters and are never given in their full form. Readers are expected to know which group, association, union or party is being talked about.

Political news sections are filled with what can only be called an insider's form of language. It is, simply put, Italian political jargon. Words only those within the political elite would know are used and sometimes invented. Basically, any journalist or politician with a knack for stringing several words together and adding a suitable suffix to it can create a new word. In one instance, a journalist at a Christian Democrat newspaper went so far as to describe the weekly magazine *L'Espresso* as *radicalautomobilisticodivorzista*, which supposedly was a derogatory term meaning it was radical, had ties to the FIAT car company family, the Agnelli's, and was in favour of divorce legislation.⁷²

Also confusing is the lack of historical context in stories. That one paragraph or even line, inserted at about the third paragraph or even at the end of an article, that would indicate to readers what has gone on before is invariably missing. For example, a March 2000 article in *La Repubblica* regarding a television debate between D'Alema and Berlusconi said nothing of the reason for the debate – the spring 2001 election.⁷³ Readers are expected to know what has happened in the past, what is going to happen in the future, and why the current story is of importance. If the average reader misses a day or two of political news, they wind up feeling lost in the latest machinations, and catching up is a formidable task.

The design of Italian political news sections is also heavy. Almost all the front pages of Italian newspapers consist of two heavy political opinion pieces down the right and left-hand sides, with a political story and a small photo in the centre. Below that, some papers run a political cartoon, a recent addition, obviously made to try to lighten things up a bit. But even that can be confusing if the reader has not been following the discourse. When Forcella wrote, "First of all, it has not been established that ordinary

readers read the first page of their papers" he wasn't kidding. Most have no reason to. Italians who are buying newspapers are doing so for other things, such as the movie listings or the soccer results.

Below the fold are other political articles, perhaps a news article or two, and sometimes another opinion piece – almost all of which continue on the inside pages. One newspaper, *Il Foglio* [The Sheet], runs a daily wall of copy on its front page and is void of photos, illustrations, and even headlines big enough to break up the articles. In fact, most Italian newspapers look like a description of Canadian newspapers taken from the turn of the last century.⁷⁴

The two political opinions pieces on the front pages are a leftover from the *pastone*, or big ball of dough, which was, for a long time, a feature of Italian political journalism that especially excluded and confused those outside the famous "1,500." This indigestible piece was usually in the form of a large article on the first page in which political speeches, commentary, press office releases, and opinions were all kneaded together by an editor or expert commentator into a form that reflected the paper's (and its party's) political stance.⁷⁵

According to William E. Porter, author of *The Italian Journalist*, there was a skeleton of fact in the *pastone*, but it was often trivial. He noted with some humour that it contained "a great deal of elaboration which can be read at almost as many levels as Symbolist poetry."⁷⁶ The *pastone*, which Maurizio Dardano called "an Italian invention,"⁷⁷ could probably have passed for analysis except that the language used was unintelligible to the average reader.

Today, it is said that the *pastone* in its original form no longer exists in most papers, but that is debatable. Depending on the journalist, the analysis and commentary that remains can be close in style and is often as unreadable – especially that of older journalists, and in Italy some journalists work into their 80s and 90s. The columns may

be heavier on opinion and lighter on the *veline*, or news releases, but no matter how you slice it, the *pastone* has survived.

Anger and the Reasons for It

Politics may baffle, but it also brings out other emotions in the general reader, such as apathy, betrayal, disgust, anger, even hatred. Not much is said about these feelings other than the occasional passing comment, such as that made by the Italian "Big Brother" TV show participant Cristina Plevani in 2000. Plevani, 28, in a list of the things she hates most, said she "despises all male politicians."⁷⁸ Her use of the word "despise" may seem extreme, but when speaking of politicians it is, for the most part, a given in Italy that people would feel so strongly in light of the country's history of corrupt politicians.

It is also not surprising her anger was directed at male politicians. In Italy, the vast majority of politicians are male. Of the 945 politicians at the national level in the fall of 2000 only 97 were women.⁷⁹ And following the May 2001 election, the number dropped to 87, or 9.2 per cent.⁸⁰ The average in other European countries is 20.6 per cent.⁸¹

Of all the citizens of the 15 EU countries, Italians are by far the most unhappy with the way their version of democracy functions, as discussed earlier. A Eurobarometer study published in April 2000 showed more than 70 per cent of Italians surveyed were either not at all satisfied or were very unsatisfied with the political system.⁸² In 1979, in a valiant attempt to understand and analyse why most Italians don't read newspapers Italian psychoanalyst Franco Fornari conducted a study using four randomly selected non-readers.⁸³ Despite the small sampling used, his research went far beyond the usual reader's survey. Fornari found that the complaints made by the four subjects he interviewed, whose education levels ranged from high-school to PhD level, were typical of those made by non-readers in many Western countries: that newspapers are filled with bad news; that they are boring; that they don't affect or reflect the readers' lives; and they

contain nothing new. But on closer examination their ideas about newspapers – and especially Italian political journalism – illustrate the distance between political journalists and politicians, and the people of Italy.

The subjects' main complaint was that people are cut out of the political decision-making process: hence the idea that newspapers don't affect readers' lives. All four expressed concern that the political discourse was being carried on by the political parties without any injection of opinion by the readers. Carlo, a 39-year-old university professor, stated that newspapers should be instruments for providing information on the decision-making process, including the reasons behind the final decisions being made on behalf of citizens. He accurately summarized non-readers as feeling cut out of the process and "*presi per il culo*" or, roughly translated, taken by the ass.⁸⁴

Sergio, a 38-year-old advertising agency art director, directly and clearly identified Italian political journalism as a cycle of crises in government and meetings between political leaders, and said, "I've never read: 'Oh, finally we've reached an agreement and can do something constructive.'"⁸⁵

Fornari surmised that Italian newspapers constantly developed readers' anxiety over impending decisions only to never see them resolved. But being informed about the decisions isn't enough. Many Italians have become non-readers because of their anxiety over the decisions being made, frustration at their inability to participate in the decision-making process, their lack of tolerance for the amount of time it takes to reach political decisions, or even their fear of participating in the process.

Newspapers in Italy are not just a financial choice; they are also a political one. One's political stripe is often identified by the paper one reads, or even just by the paper one carries. Simply purchasing a newspaper in Italy is a political act. Even Fornari's opinion appears tainted. He stated that if all newspapers, or organs of information, are connected with political parties one must think that they are, in fact, normal. Normal perhaps in Italy.

A more recent example of the lack of regard Italian newspapers have for their readers (as well as the state of journalism ethics in Italy) was the October 10, 2000, publishing of a photograph on the front page of *Il Manifesto*, Italy's communist newspaper, which showed a Palestinian trying to shield himself from Israeli fire by covering his head with his hands. The original photo, published the same day in *Corriere della Sera*, showed two other men in the same photo hurling rocks at their unseen enemies. *Il Manifesto* erased the two other men, neglecting to say so. It also neglected to cite the source of the photo, which unfortunately is a common practice in Italian newspapers.

Readers protested and comedians on one of Berlusconi's channels lampooned the paper on television. The next day *Il Manifesto* editors admitted they had manipulated the photo, and reprinted the original, but there was no apology made to readers.⁸⁶ Editors only offered the excuse that the two men eliminated from the photo, in their opinion, ruined a good picture and didn't add anything to the story it was trying to tell. They claimed the act was not an indication of their political stand on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but eliminating the two stone-throwers made the Palestinian man appear much more vulnerable. It was a sad day for journalism in Italy.

This type of manipulation of photos (and readers) is indicative of the lack of journalism training in Italy. Because the photo came from a wire service, it should have been obvious there was a good chance other newspapers would use the same photo. But the editors at *Il Manifesto* didn't consider that their readers might also be reading other newspapers. They underestimate them. Plus, the manner in which they responded to the protests was unprofessional. They made light of the incident instead of accepting that they had made a gross error. Most newspaper editors would have published an apology and called it just that. The explanation that appeared in *Il Manifesto* was called "The Photo."⁸⁷

In 2000, the FNSI, the national union of Italian journalists, commissioned a study on why "young" Italians between the ages of 17 and 35 aren't reading newspapers.⁸⁸ This time, the study was also not done by a mass communication specialist, but by a sociologist. Again those surveyed were distrusting of newspapers, saying they doubted the honesty of journalists. They repeated their previously unheeded complaint of too many pages dedicated to politics and frivolous news. Televideo, a system that allows television viewers who subscribe to punch up weather, sports results and other data on their TV screens, was the stated medium of choice, next to television. Those surveyed said Televideo was up to date and/or live, concise, and clear. They also said they didn't need to use a dictionary to watch it as they sometimes do to read a newspaper.

They were speaking honestly and literally when they said they needed to use a dictionary to read Italian newspapers. Sometimes words are long, particular to a certain field or profession, and not commonly used. And nowhere in Italy does a newspaper like *USA Today* exist. Clear, concise, quick information with headlines that say exactly what the articles are about are just not available. As well, there is no tabloid market as there is in England, other European countries and North America.

Competition between the press and television is extremely fierce in Italy – much more so than in North America. Indeed, it is impossible to discuss one without at least mentioning the other. But the competition here has nothing to do with breaking stories. Italian newspapers have been gradually moving their deadlines later into the evening in order to ensure they haven't missed anything that appears on the late-night television newscasts.⁸⁹ The idea that newspapers should be breaking news on a daily basis in order to try to combat competition from television and maintain their readers doesn't seem to have dawned on Italian newspaper editors.

After midnight, as soon as the papers are available, the television networks put the front pages on the air. In what makes for terrible visuals, a news presenter sits behind a desk and, with a highlighter, goes over what the papers are headlining. It's a throwback to

the days when many Italians couldn't afford newspapers, and in the ever slow-to-change world of Italian television, it has yet to be eliminated.

Serving Democracy

The relationship between brothers may not be the ultimate Italian relationship that the mother-son relationship is, but brothers, while they may occasionally quarrel, will not usually do each other serious harm. Such is the relationship between Italian politicians and journalists. Each is after their own little sphere of power – politicians within their parties, and journalists within their papers, and sometimes within the parties as well.

When the Italian government discussed changing adoption legislation in the summer of 2000, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, the press did not seek out parents of adoptive children to ask their opinions. Only a few letters from concerned parents appeared in the papers regarding the issue. And later in the year, when politicians talked about making fingerprinting of all foreigners in Italy mandatory, no immigrants were interviewed for their thoughts on the subject. Should they have been? Not if one considers the form of political journalism in use in Italy.

Despite all the press releases put out by the press offices, oddly enough, there is no publicly minded agenda in Italy being communicated by politicians in newspapers. There is little talk of concrete improvements specifically for the people, and the idea of public or media pressure is almost non-existent. Numerous surveys, as well as referendum and election results, illustrate that the citizenry is frustrated by a political system that doesn't work, and has few effective means in which to express that frustration. The Italian electorate doesn't vote directly for the people who govern. The president, the prime minister, and the regional and provincial presidents, are all selected by other politicians.⁹⁰ Italians vote for their local representatives, who, depending on their party affiliation, form part of a coalition that chooses its head. Letters from the public are printed in some

newspapers, but not a lot of space is devoted to the seemingly never-ending tales of bureaucratic black holes, injustices, and medical nightmares suffered by the Italian people.

As well, there are no well-spelled-out campaign platforms – just pie-in-the-sky promises and slogans. During the 2000-2001 election campaign, Forza Italia leader Berlusconi put together what he called his "Contract with Italians,"⁹¹ but few were really convinced he would keep those promises. They just hoped that he would. It's unlikely he would be held accountable for them; there are no state of the union, or state of the republic, speeches to update citizens on what has or hasn't been done.

Media commentator Michael Schudson in his book *The Power of News* considers news as a form of culture called public knowledge, and writes that in Italy the framework used to convey that public knowledge is the publishing or broadcasting of the positions of political party leaders, as opposed to the American model which presents politics as government or electioneering. He states that as long as information is publicly available, "even if few people bother to read or watch the news,"⁹² politicians must at least act as if the public is paying attention.

But what Schudson doesn't realize is that the language and form used to present that news in Italy excludes the general public. It does not question politicians or hold them accountable for their actions, and therefore cannot be seen as serving democracy. In fact, often Italian politicians act as if the public does not exist at all.

Noted Italian political scientist Alberto Martinelli goes even further to say that Italian journalism, along with several other factors, has "conspired against diffusion of a modern culture based on democracy."

(I)nstead of being educational, the public debate has been extremely ideological. The lack of independence of journalists has been blamed for contributing to the insufficient growth of a civic culture based on individual rights and duties.⁹³

In a country where political upheaval is entrenched in the constitution merely presenting the positions of politicians is not enough. The press and other media must be even more informative and vigilant than in other Western countries. Sadly, they aren't.

End Notes

- ¹ Stille, Alexander. "The World's Greatest Salesman." New York Times Magazine, 17 March 1996: 26-29.
- ² Eli Noam Television in Europe Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press. 1991, and Mack Smith, Denis. 1997.
- ³ Stille, Alexander. 17 March 1996.
- ⁴ Ibid., 17 March 1996.
- ⁵ "Paperoni d'Italia [The Scrooge McDuck's of Italy]" Panorama 9 Nov. 2000:1.
- ⁶ "La programmazione televisiva" [Television Programming] Metro, 29 Sept. 2000: 1.
- ⁷ Stille, Alexander. 17 March 1996.
- ⁸ Personal interview with Patrick McCarthy, Professor of Political Science at the John Hopkins School at the University of Bologna, and author of "The Crisis of the Italian State" on Dec. 17, 1999 at Bologna, Italy.
- ⁹ Mack Smith, Denis, 1997.
- ¹⁰ Niada, Marco. "Montanelli: una buona ricetta. [Montanelli: A Good Recipe]" Il Sole 24 Ore 14 Feb. 2001:5.
- ¹¹ Pollett, Rene. "Reggio di Calabria: A Beautiful City?" Ocean Drive Sept. 1997: 40-44,110-11.
- ¹² Duggan, Christopher. A Concise History of Italy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- ¹³ Ibid., 1994.
- ¹⁴ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.

- ¹⁵ "Par condicio, la conferma in tv c'è più Polo che Ulivo [Level Playing field Law, The Confirmation: There's More Polo than Ulivo on TV]" La Repubblica 27 March 2001.
- ¹⁶ Travaglio, Marco and Veltri, Elio. L'Odore dei Soldi [The Smell of Money] Milan: Editori Riuniti, 2001.
- ¹⁷ Duggan, Christopher. 1994.
- ¹⁸ Porter, William E. The Italian Journalist. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.
- ¹⁹ Forcella, Enzo. In Porter, William E. The Italian Journalist. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.
- ²⁰ Mancini, Paolo. "Between Trust and Suspicion: How political journalists solve the dilemma." European Journal of Communication. Vol. 8, 1993: 33-51.
- ²¹ Ibid., 1993.
- ²² Crouse, Timothy. The Boys on the Bus. New York: Random House, 1973.
- ²³ Personal interview with James Blitz, 31 Oct. 2000.
- ²⁴ "Pace fra D'Alema e Forattini" [Peace between D'Alema and Forattini]. La Repubblica 30 March 2001.
- ²⁵ "Dossier Mitrokhin, dopo 2 anni indagati solo i funzionari." [Mitrokhin Dossier, Only Public Officials Investigated.] La Repubblica 10 July 2001.
- ²⁶ Mancini, Paolo. 1993.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 1993.
- ²⁸ Personal interview with Gianna Fregonara, political journalist at *Corriere della Sera*. From a micro-cassette taped interview held on October 25, 2000, in Rome. Confirmed by Alberto Martinelli, head of the Political Science Department at Milan University and political candidate in the 2001 election during a taped interview there on 18 Oct. 2000 in Milan.
- ²⁹ Gianna Fregonara, political journalist at *Corriere della Sera*, covered prime ministerial candidate Francesco Rutelli during the 2000-2001 campaign.
- ³⁰ Ibid., Oct. 25, 2000.

- ³¹ Personal interview with James Blitz, correspondent for the Financial Times. Recorded in Rome, Italy on 31 Oct., 2000 on micro-cassette.
- ³² Ibid., 31 Oct. 2000.
- ³³ Ibid., 31 Oct. 2000.
- ³⁴ "Going, going, oops!" The Economist 28 Oct. 2000.
- ³⁵ Personal interview with James Blitz, 31 Oct. 2000.
- ³⁶ Murialdi, Paolo. 1996.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 1996.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 1996.
- ³⁹ Farinelli et al., 1997.
- ⁴⁰ "Agnelli: 'Non siamo la repubblica delle banane'"[Agnelli: We are Not a Banana Republic]. La Repubblica 3 May 2001.
- ⁴¹ Femia, Joseph V. The Machiavellian Legacy: Essays in Italian political thought. London: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- ⁴² Tullio-Altan, Carlo. La nostra Italia. [Our Italy]. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1986.
- ⁴³ Farinelli, Giuseppe, Ermanno Paccagnini, Giovanni Santambrogio and Angela Ida Villa. Storia del Giornalismo Italiano: Dalle Origini ai Giorni Nostri. [The History of Italian Journalism: From its Origins to Our Times]. Turin: UTET, 1997.
- ⁴⁴ Farinelli et al., 1997.
- ⁴⁵ Murialdi, Paolo. 1996.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 1996.
- ⁴⁷ Porter, William E., 1983.
- ⁴⁸ Murialdi, Paolo. 1996.
- ⁴⁹ Farinelli et al., 1997.
- ⁵⁰ Mack Smith, Denis. 1997.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 1997.

- 52 Ibid., 1997.
- 53 Clark, Martin. Modern Italy:1871-1995. London, New York:Longman, 1996.
- 54 Farinelli et al., 1997.
- 55 Clark, Martin. 1996
- 56 Roncone, Fabrizio. "Giornalisti, avvocati, sindacalisti: ecco i 35 finiti sotto accusa." [Journalists, lawyers, union officials: here are the 35 accused.] Corriere della Sera 28 Sept. 2000.
- 57 Roncone, Fabrizio. "La Corte dei Conti condanna il sindaco"[The Court of Accounts Condemns the Mayor] Corriere della Sera 27 Sept. 2000.
- 58 "Le consulenze d'oro per parenti e amici" [The Golden Consultancies for Relatives and Friends]. Il Sole 24 Ore 9 Oct. 2000:1 and Fiorentino, Waldimaro. "Provincia di Bolzano: La Lista dei collaboratori occupa oltre 270 pagine" [The Province of Bolzano: The List of Collaborators Occupies More Than 270 Pages] Il Sole 24 Ore 9 Oct 2000: 5.
- 59 Calabresi, Mario. "Rutelli: 'Combattiamo la Tangentopoli di massa'" [Rutelli: We Will Fight the Tangentopoli of the Masses] La Repubblica 4 Aug. 2000: 5.
- 60 Feltri, Vittorio. "Feltri radiato, vittoria dei pedofili" [Fetri Expelled: The Pedophiles Victory] Libero 22 Nov. 2000: 1.
- 61 Amato, Andrea. "Vivi gratis!" [Live For Free!]. GO Italia November 1999:117-122.
- 62 Lerner: "'Lascio il Tg1' e denuncia attacchi politici" ['I'm Leaving Tg1' And Denounce the Political Attacks] La Repubblica 10 Oct. 2000.
- 63 Ibid., 10 Oct. 2000.
- 64 Di Vico, Dario. "E ora per l'ex direttore spunta un futuro da deputato" [And Now for the Ex-director Sprouts a Future as MP] Corriere della Sera 2 Oct. 2000: 9.
- 65 Personal interview with Stefan Marroni, political journalist at *La Repubblica* who covered Silvio Berlusconi during 2000-2001 campaign, Rome, 24 Oct. 2000. On micro-cassette.
- 66 Murialdi, Paolo, 1996.
- 67 Annunziata, Lucia. "Parlo Solo alla Tivu" [I Only Speak on TV] Prima Comunicazione. Dec. 1995. No. 247.

- ⁶⁸ Personal interview with Patrick McCarthy, Dec. 17, 1999.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., Dec. 17, 1999.
- ⁷⁰ Brunetti, Umberto. "La Ragazza." [The Girl] Prima Comunicazione. Jan. 1999. No. 281.
- ⁷¹ D'Alema, Massimo. "Violenza razzista, c'è chi la coltiva" [Violent Racism: There are those who cultivate it] Il Messaggero. 25 Sept. 2000: 1, 9.
- ⁷² Porter, William E., 1983.
- ⁷³ Buzzanca, Silvio. "Berlusconi-D'Alema, duello Tv" [Berlusconi-D'Alema: Duel on TV] La Repubblica 22 March 2000: 22.
- ⁷⁴ Kesterton, W.H. A History of Journalism in Canada. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1967.
- ⁷⁵ Nimmo, Dan and Mansfield, Michael W. Government and the News Media: Comparative dimensions. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1982.
- ⁷⁶ Porter, William E., 1983.
- ⁷⁷ Dardano, Maurizio. Il Linguaggio dei Giornale Italiani. [The Language of Italian Newspapers]. Rome, Bari: Editori Laterza, 1973.
- ⁷⁸ The TV show *Grande Fratelli*, or Big Brother as it is known in English-speaking countries, aired on the Mediaset - Canale 5 network in the fall/winter season 2000. Plevani's comment was published in Il Giornale 15 Sept. 2000: 31.
- ⁷⁹ Tavella, Paola. "Donne sull'orlo di una campagna elettorale" [Women on the Brink of an Electoral Campaign] Io Donna, 14 Oct. 2000: 97-102.
- ⁸⁰ Tonelli, Matteo. "È un Parlamento sempre meno rosa" [It's a Parliament that's Always Less Pink] La Repubblica 5 May 2001.
- ⁸¹ Nava Massimo. "Funzionano le norme di parità da Jospin [Jospin's Equality Law Functioning] Corriere della Sera 27 March 2001.
- ⁸² "Le inefficienze della Politica" [The Inefficiency of Politics] Il Sole 25 Ore, 28 Oct. 2000:6.
- ⁸³ Fornari, Franco. "Psycoanalisi del non-lettore" [Psychoanalyses of the Non-Reader]. In Il giornale e il non-lettore [The Newspaper and the Non-Reader] Florence: Sansoni, 1981.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 1981.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1981.

⁸⁶ "La foto" [The Photo] Il Manifesto 11 Oct. 2000:11.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 11 Oct. 2000:11.

⁸⁸ Fontanarosa, Aldo. "I giovani alla ricerca di un 'giornale amico.'" [The Young Look for a Friendly Newspaper.] La Repubblica. 4 Nov. 2000: 32.

⁸⁹ Personal interview with Gianna Fregonara, October 25, 2000.

⁹⁰ Spotts, Frederic and Wieser, Theodor. Italy: A Difficult Democracy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁹¹ Available at www.bengodi.org/berlusconi/contratto.htm.

⁹² Schudson, Michael. The Power of News. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

⁹³ Martinelli, Alberto, Antonio M. Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi. Recent Social Trends in Italy: 1960-1995. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.

Chapter Four

The Business/Political Owners

In Italy, the rule has long been that, without the support of a political party and a major industrial group, the life of a newspaper will be 'nasty, brutish, and short.'

– Antony Shugaar¹

Owners As Politicians

In the past, the launch of a new newspaper in Italy has usually been the result of the birth of a new political party, the splintering of a coalition, or an election campaign. Most of these papers soon collapsed after the elections were over, having been published specifically for political purposes. But that was not the case in the year 2000. Despite an election in the spring of 2001, and at least a year of campaigning, (with governments often collapsing and re-forming in Italy, it's difficult to tell when campaigns actually begin) only a handful of newspapers were launched in 2000, and only one was of note nationally. The Milan paper *Libero* got some attention, mainly because its eccentric publisher was suspended from the Order of Journalists. The business of owning a newspaper is changing in Italy.

On the surface it appeared to be a positive change in terms of a greater separation of politics and journalism and, therefore, a supposed increase in press freedom. Partisan papers were closing and the new papers were being run by businessmen. But the issue of press ownership in Italy is more complex than it appears because of the historical relationship between industry and politics in this country. The Italian government has for many years been rife with *clientelismo*, and big business has been a large part of the problem. Contracts – especially in the area of public works – have been awarded to business owners in exchange for large kickbacks that have gone into the pockets of politicians and their parties.² And newspaper owners have historically been willing to use

their papers for the advancement of their other interests, including those political. While this relationship also exists in other countries, the problem in Italy today is that newspaper owners have gone one step further – now many of them are also powerful, high-level politicians.

Most disconcerting is that Senator for Life Gianni Agnelli and the new prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, own two of the country's biggest corporations and control its most important media. As a result of these and other businessman-politician owners, self-censorship is rampant in Italian journalism. In Italy, the idea that the public has the right to a free press is widespread, but the reality of the situation is greatly misunderstood by the public and journalists alike.

The clash between the corporate culture and the culture of journalism being discussed in North America, has really never existed in Italy. The American public's nightmare that media will be controlled by powerful, faceless, and ultimately uncontrollable entities³ is the reality in Italy, with one exception – Italians know the faces well.

The Rise of the Owner/Politicians

In recent years, individual and family-owned newspapers have, one by one, been disappearing in Italy, and only wealthy industrialists can now afford to buy them or start them up. It is a new phenomenon. For many years, one positive aspect of Italian newspaper ownership was that chains were not a characteristic feature of the industry. That made it difficult for the industrial owners to buy big blocks of newspapers in one fell swoop. But that has changed. It is very rare now that new newspaper owners concern themselves only with newspapers. They are almost always the owners of much larger enterprises that have nothing to do with journalism. In 2000, the three most powerful

newspaper publishers in Italy were also the owners of massive business empires: the Agnelli dynasty, the Berlusconi empire, and the De Benedetti Group.

Piero Ottone, a long-time journalist and author of several books on journalism in Italy, explained the problem of business ownership in terms of its effect on press freedom in his book *Prayer or Brothel: The History of Italian Journalism* as follows:

The real trouble is that a press controlled by industry doesn't have, and can't have, full independence in the face of the political world, nor in the face of the economic world. Journalists know that industry editors are industry first and then editors: that first come the primary interests of industries, and the success of their industries. The conflicting state with politicians' power can harm businesses and their owners; who (I'm saying Gianni Agnelli) by their governing nature, prefer to have a good rapport with the ministers. The result is that the general climate or the dominant atmosphere is determined by considerations outside journalism. A press controlled by industry will never mature and is never free.⁴

Ottone's criticism, particularly of Agnelli, is even more disturbing in light of the fact that Agnelli is a Senator For Life, and that by mid-2000, more than one-quarter of the Italian dailies market was owned by Fiat-Gemina. This company is controlled by the Agnelli family of the Fiat automobile empire, and is headed by Gianni Agnelli.

Comments made about Agnelli are an indication of the influence he wields. Italians occasionally talk about the country not being run by the government, and certainly not by the people, but by the Agnelli's. Some say the Agnelli's are Italy's "royal family," and they are often compared to the Kennedys in the United States.

In a foreword to an interview in the publishing trade magazine *Prima Comunicazione*, journalist Umberto Brunetti gives some interesting insight into how Agnelli is regarded by Italian journalists. He writes that Agnelli is easily the most famous person in Italy. With tongue in cheek, Brunetti calls Agnelli "the beloved king to which the House of Savoy had not conceded," referring to Italy's exiled monarchy.⁵ And while outsiders may not consider Agnelli more famous than Silvio Berlusconi or the Pope, Agnelli has been making decisions that affect the country a lot longer than them and has

amassed an incredible amount of power over the years. The people and businesses who depend on the decisions he makes, either directly or indirectly, number in the hundreds of thousands.

Agnelli's press holdings and influence are impressive. At the turn of the century, the Agnelli family owned *La Stampa*, which ranked fourth in newspaper sales at 394,737; *Gazzetta dello Sport lunedì*, the top-selling Monday sports paper in Italy and third overall at 614,978; and the *Gazzetta dello Sport*, which sold an average 420,180 on Tuesdays to Saturdays. The family also owns Publikompass, one of Italy's biggest newspaper advertising companies, and is the major shareholder in the finance company that holds 100 per cent of the RCS publishing house, of which *Corriere della Sera* is a part. The *Corriere* has been Italy's most popular daily for many years, and had an average daily circulation of 702,919 in 2000.⁶ It marked its 125th anniversary in 2001.

Agnelli also has considerable influence over the editors of some of the newspapers he doesn't own because of his ability to impress and pressure owners and party officials throughout the country. Agnelli carries more than enough weight to make or break most of them financially and politically, if he so chooses.

He decides directly, of course, who will be the editor-in-chief of *La Stampa*, only slightly indirectly the head of *Corriere della Sera*, Italy's biggest selling newspaper, and he exerts great influence over the editor-in-chief and publishers of the Rome paper *Il Messaggero*, as well as the important financial paper *Il Sole 24 Ore*. As a result, Agnelli has a huge impact on Italian journalism since these papers make up the backbone of the industry. Only *La Repubblica* is said to be outside his realm of influence,⁷ and even that was debatable with the appointment of its latest publisher Ezio Mauro, former editor-in-chief of *La Stampa*.

But of major concern is Agnelli's political power. His political allies include most, if not all, the leaders of right or centre-right parties, such as former prime minister Giulio Andreotti, and the current prime minister, Berlusconi. And Agnelli runs his newspapers

with his company's political and business interests in mind. His political friends don't have to worry about getting bad press from his newspapers because his employees follow his instructions – as direct or indirect as they may appear. Agnelli maintains what he considers a hands-off approach to the papers he owns, but he makes sure Italy's major papers are not in the hands of anyone who might criticise his business or political interests. In one instance, he even made the son of a Fiat manager the head of a daily newspaper.

Italian journalism has had a few years head start on many other countries in regards to corporate/political ownership of the press. Here, by the 1990s, the big industrial owners had already moved to the forefront. In 1996, when U.S. journalists began questioning what Disney's takeover of Capital Cities/ABC might mean to the profession,⁸ Italian journalists were already up to their necks in Fiat and Mediaset "synergies." In Italy, it just wasn't seen as a problem to the extent it might have been in other Western countries. In fact, until Berlusconi decided to run for prime minister, his cross-media ownership wasn't even identified as a major issue in Italy. And soon after, Italians came to accept that a politician could own three major networks, a successful newspaper, an important weekly newsmagazine, and a major publishing house. Cross-ownership has made these businessmen/politicians even more influential, and the result is a lack of unbiased and objective political and business coverage in Italy that is staggering.

Part of the attraction of owning newspapers in Italy is the prestige associated with it – *bella figura*. The status of being *L'avvocato*, or The Lawyer as Agnelli is nicknamed, wouldn't be complete without his being owner of at least one major newspaper. Being a newspaper mogul goes along with the Italian idea of being a business tycoon and head of a family dynasty, as much as Berlusconi's ownership of the soccer club AC Milan, and the Agnelli's ownership of Juventus. The occasional celebrity tidbits offered up by the papers, such as the rumour that Agnelli sends his suitcases by Federal Express whenever he flies, only add to that image. But Agnelli and Berlusconi are not the only ones who care

about *bella figura*. Numerous other newspaper owners, including those of partisan papers, come under the same heading. In Italy, vanity's name is newspaper owner.

Part of the acceptance of cross-media ownership in Italy has to do with the business culture. Italian businessmen don't usually concern themselves with the idea of different departments of their businesses or of their companies working together in order to make better products and bigger profits. And journalists don't worry about being good team members, either. They aren't concerned that managers from subsidiaries owned by the owner of their paper will come in and meet with newspaper managers to discuss what the papers should or could be doing – they don't have to. It is understood that all employees are basically at the beck and call of the owner, whether the employee be workers or management, journalist or non-journalist, says *Panorama* columnist and former Italian ambassador to the USSR, Sergio Romano.

If Ted Turner were to run for president (when he still owned CNN), the news staff of CNN would immediately face a major concern. They would be worried that the quality of their primary product – news – might be contaminated and compromised. Unfortunately, Italian journalism does not enjoy this sort of tradition. Italian journalism does not even consider this to be a problem. Italian journalists feel they are at the service of their boss.⁹

By 2000, cross-promotion within the Italian media had reached an extreme level. Media owned by Italian industrialists – especially those belonging to Berlusconi – were used extensively for that purpose. Without the seemingly endless promotion of Mediaset's Big Brother television show in 2000, in every form of medium owned by Berlusconi, it is unlikely it would have had near as many viewers as it did. Entertainment is often passed off as news, raising some serious concerns about how far Italian journalists are willing to go in order to stay in favour with their employers. There are few if any borders between news and promotion on either the Mediaset or state-owned networks, or in many of the business-owned newspapers and magazines.

Berlusconi's ownership of so many different means of print media is alarming because of the sheer vastness of all his media interests and his position now as head of the government. *Il Giornale* is a daily newspaper that ranked sixth in national circulation in 2000.¹⁰ *Panorama* is the number-one ranked weekly newsmagazine with a circulation of 588,036.¹¹ He controls both.

Berlusconi's fortune is said to be the 14th richest person in the world, which puts him way ahead of Agnelli, who ranks 73rd.¹² But it can still be argued Agnelli, at 80 years of age, wields more power than Berlusconi because Italian culture bestows so much power on the elderly, because Berlusconi is still considered a young upstart by some, and because the Agnelli empire's influence is so widespread and has been around so much longer.

Berlusconi has used his press operations extensively to advance his political career, as discussed earlier.¹³ In fact, he could be called a media magnate who doubles as prime minister. In 2000, three notable examples of his use of media came to light. The first involved the newspaper *Il Giornale*, still in the name of his brother Paolo. In December, members of the European Council met in Nice, France, and then-prime minister Giuliano Amato attended on behalf of the Italian government. Amato, who was having sciatic nerve problems, arrived at the meeting in a wheelchair. This resulted in the headline in *Il Giornale* the next day that "Italy Arrives and the Summit Bursts Out Laughing."¹⁴ It wasn't true, of course.

Amato was uncharacteristically furious and at a media conference the next day told journalists he expected Berlusconi was to blame. He said the headline reminded him of those of the 1930s, and although he didn't use the word Fascist, the reference was clear. Amato, in his typically dry, contemplative manner, accused Berlusconi of trying to delegitimize his political adversaries – a serious accusation in Italy.

Il Giornale editor Maurizio Belpietro responded by accusing Amato of trying to create controversy during the election campaign. Paolo Berlusconi said his brother had

nothing to do with the story or the newspaper and that Amato was trying to falsely accuse Silvio of using the paper for political ends. Silvio Berlusconi did not respond to the accusation.¹⁵

But whether Silvio Berlusconi had a direct hand in the story or not, he is in control of the newspaper because his relatives know exactly what he wants to see in the paper. Italian society is very patriarchal. Many of Berlusconi's relatives help run his empire. And in the Italian culture, perhaps more than in any other Western country, the family takes care of its own, especially if a well-paying job and the possibility of further advancement – with the chance of being handed the reins of that empire – depend on it.

Another example of Berlusconi's use of the media involved election advertising. Political advertising on television and in newspapers was supposedly banned in Italy during the 2000-2001 election. But during the fall of 2000, the Italian government began running public service advertisements on television – all of which ended with the name of the Italian government department responsible. The government had changed its social services program and was announcing the advantages for families included in the new legislation. Berlusconi protested loudly, claiming the ads amounted to government propaganda during an election campaign. He vowed to pull them off his television networks – and did – insisting the three state channels do the same. After investigating the complaints of Berlusconi and other opposition members, the Italian Communication Authority, the state body that oversees television operations, announced that it did not appreciate Berlusconi's campaign to have the ads banned. But it also said that the government should be more careful in how it uses public service advertising and that such advertising should only be used to provide information.¹⁶ The ads were not ordered off the air, but the government pulled them anyway. Meanwhile, the authority also pointed out that, in fact, no public body exists to distinguish between information and propaganda in Italy. In effect, any politician could buy air time, using taxpayers money, and use it in any manner he or she wished.

But behind Berlusconi's complaining lay the indisputable truth that despite his having consistently denied any control over his television empire, that control remains in place. That the right-wing House of Freedoms coalition continues to oppose any control over Berlusconi's use of his media holdings, or that the then-governing Olive Tree coalition was unable to enact conflict of interest legislation with enough clout to control his ownership, are discouraging aspects of Italian politics. That many members of parliament, along with much of the population, believe Berlusconi can self-regulate his involvement in Italian media is incredibly naïve. And Berlusconi continues to use his image as a victim of the Italian justice system and the left to his advantage.

A third example of Berlusconi's misuse of the media was revealed in the simple calculation of the amount of air time he received on his three Mediaset channels in the year 2000 compared with that of his two main political competitors, former leftist prime minister Massimo D'Alema and the left's candidate for prime minister, Francesco Rutelli. Berlusconi received approximately 40 hours of air time compared with about four hours each for D'Alema and Rutelli.¹⁷ In effect, D'Alema and Rutelli had been all but banned from Berlusconi's networks. The situation was better on the state-owned RAI networks, but Berlusconi still had more air time there than all other politicians. And when the air time of the two television systems was combined, Berlusconi came out way ahead of the competition with a whopping 54 hours compared with D'Alema's 12.5 and Rutelli's nine.¹⁸

Another incident in late 2000 brought to light an interesting form of influence Berlusconi has over journalists who work for him. Aside from the relentless praise heaped on Berlusconi by some of his Mediaset's TV news presenters, concerns were raised in November about political talk show host Bruno Vespa, who has a highly rated political talk show on the state's RAI Uno network, is a columnist for Berlusconi's weekly magazine, and had his latest book regarding the election campaign published by Berlusconi's publishing house. Months before the election, it was said that Vespa, while

an effective host, had an obvious political slant in the direction of Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, and that it was time another voice was heard.¹⁹ Nothing came of the discussion until December when Vespa went to air with a show wholly dedicated to Berlusconi. Berlusconi, who refused to participate in a one-on-one televised debate with Rutelli, had a pre-recorded, edited show on state television with 2.5 million spectators all to himself, and no one to challenge him, thanks to Vespa. Not only did he have journalists on his own networks and in his other media praising and defending him, he had also managed to do the same on state television.

All sides were stunned. During the almost one-and-a-half-hour show, Berlusconi went over a map of the country explaining the projects he planned to complete once he became prime minister. And Vespa barely questioned – much less challenged – him on any of them. When he did manage to get a question in, Berlusconi usually cut him off.

The next day, the opposition had a field day, as did Vespa's bosses at the state-owned networks. RAI administrator Vittorio Emiliani called Vespa an able and expert journalist, but added: "The colour of his sail is obviously blue: the blue of Forza Italia."²⁰ Mauro Paissan, of the Italian Green party, said the episode would enter into journalism manuals as an example of how not to conduct political television shows.²¹

Vincenzo Vita, the undersecretary of communication, was indignant. "What happened yesterday evening during Bruno Vespa's show, with the incredible interruptions and the successive points made by Berlusconi, has no precedent in the history of the RAI," he said. "The public service is an essential reference for the communication system, and for its pluralism. It would be good if this were not repeated. What happened is truly disconcerting."²²

Berlusconi's response was to complain that 12 minutes had been cut out of the show and that Vespa had asked too many petty political questions.

Vespa shot back at his critics a few weeks later with a column in Berlusconi's *Panorama* magazine in which he actually interviewed himself in Q-and-A style.²³ The

first question he asked himself was why his leftist colleagues and other television critics were against him. The answer: "Because I'm not dead." He also asked himself if he had galactic-sized ambitions, to which he responded no, that his dream was to do his job "without having to watch my back every day." It was an absurd, but interesting, spectacle because it was so self-serving and indicative of how willing *Panorama*, i.e. Berlusconi, was to give Vespa a platform on which to defend himself.

It also showed how little concern *Panorama's* owner and editors felt for the magazine's readers who might have wanted to read an interview with Vespa, conducted by another journalist, that at least had the appearance of being objective.

The parliamentary commission that oversees television in Italy said it would put off discussion of Vespa's show until January 2001, but by mid-2001 no statement had been made.²⁴ The story, like so many others in Italy, was effectively laid to rest.

Since Berlusconi's election, coverage of his plans and ideas have become a regular feature in *Panorama*. His political and business pals also make up much of the photos and copy in the magazine. It cannot be said that coverage of him on his TV networks has changed drastically considering they were so saturated with his image before the election as to make his networks programming almost unwatchable. To date, the changes seem very subtle; extensive video of him smiling and walking near the Parliament houses surrounded by bodyguards and other coalition members.

Coverage of a G-8 summit held in Genoa in July 2001 hinted at the possible future of freedom of the press and other media in Italy. Berlusconi's newspaper, *Il Giornale*, published extensive copy in favour of police actions against protesters there.²⁵ Berlusconi himself made the excuse in both his and the state-owned media that the summit location and security had been set up by the previous government and he, therefore, couldn't be blamed directly for the violence and the death of a young Italian protester. This despite the fact that by then he had been in office for two months and could have easily given the

order that there be no excessive force used at the summit. Berlusconi appeared to be extending his tentacles into state-owned media.

Much of the violence on the streets of Genoa was not covered. Two directors of the RAI networks claimed much videotape of police brutality had not been broadcast due to political pressure, but their story received little attention and appeared only in the left-wing press. More than a week after the incident new video was being put on the air on the RAI networks.

More importantly, most Italians were unaware of the true extent of the police violence, and many accepted Berlusconi's excuses for it and his reasoning that it was necessary. The only way to gauge whether events were being reported accurately was to follow both the Italian and the foreign media, and that would entail access to it and the ability to understand other languages. Few Italians were doing so.

One example of such an incident was a report by Reuters and the Associated Press news agencies that journalists, camera operators and photographers who had covered the summit protests had been ordered to hand over their photos, audio tape, and videotape to Italian justice officials investigating the incidents of violence.²⁶ They protested such a totalitarian move. In the Italian press, the story that appeared had justice officials kindly requesting the material. It was extremely disquieting in that it seemed from this point forward Italians might not have access to full and complete information, and would thus be unable to judge whether the actions of their new leader were justified on this and future issues.

Italy's War of the Rose

How Berlusconi managed to rise to the level of billionaire media mogul and Prime Minister is a question many ask. The story goes back to the late 1980s when Berlusconi swung a deal that would instantly catapult him into the media big leagues in Italy. It

would come to be known as the "War of the Rose,"²⁷ named after the symbol – a single red rose – used by the founder of the Mondadori publishing and advertising empire, Arnoldo Mondadori, for his company. And it may hold the key to diffusing his media power once again.

In 1989, Mondadori bought *L'Espresso*, the influential weekly newsmagazine. It was already part owner of the country's second-biggest selling newspaper, *La Repubblica*. But company president, Mario Formenton, wasn't well. He had developed cancer and before a failed kidney transplant operation in Paris told his wife Cristina that if he were to die she should sell everything and get out of the business. Formenton did not survive the surgery.

Berlusconi already had his foot in the Mondadori door since his purchase of the family's failing television network Retequattro. Over a quiet lunch with Cristina, he asked her if he could buy a small portion of the shares of Mondadori in return for the favour. In a move that stunned Italian business and politics, Cristina agreed to sell all her shares in Mondadori to Berlusconi, instead of to Mario's long-time friend and *La Repubblica* co-owner De Benedetti, or any number of other interested parties.²⁸ Mass media in Italy would never be the same.

The situation was intolerable, as well embarrassing. But Berlusconi didn't care: he had become a full-fledged media mogul. It seemed he could do as he pleased. Berlusconi's political friends, however, were starting to feel the pressure of the situation. They knew he had pushed the envelope too far, but were at a loss about how to do something about it. Carlo Caracciolo, another of the owners of *La Repubblica*, came up with a solution. He got in touch with some other media owners and politicians and asked for a meeting of all parties involved. Senator Andreotti agreed to the idea and called it a "mediation."²⁹ Perhaps he, then-prime minister Craxi, Berlusconi, and his allies knew they had gone too far this time. Even for Italy, they had superseded the limits of acceptability. In Berlusconi's case, a more likely scenario was that he simply feared Mondadori, his

crowning jewel, would collapse, along with his other media businesses if they weren't soon under his complete control.³⁰ By then most of Berlusconi's publishing concerns had been sequestered by the judiciary in the *Tangentopoli* investigations.

Berlusconi agreed to sell *L'Espresso*, *La Repubblica*, and the local papers owned by the company Finetil. Carlo De Benedetti would become main shareholder in this new group, and Caracciolo would be a minor shareholder and president.

The "War of the Rose" was over, and the accord reached that June day would remain in effect through 2000 and beyond. But as a result, all the major newspapers in Italy wound up in the hands of right-wing industrial or financial groups, and Berlusconi came out on top. For Italian politicians the circle was closed. They had the control they wanted over the major papers in the Italian press through their businessmen friends.

The problem then was not that the owners and heads of these industries and banking firms were calling newspaper editors every day to ensure the papers were promoting their interests. That would be too obvious. Instead, the problem was that editors were chosen by owners with their business and political interests in mind. And the owners political interests were growing.

There have been a few exceptions to this rule, but they haven't lasted long. Independent owners have all but disappeared in Italy. Indro Montanelli was one of those exceptions – for a time. The Italian journalism icon remained editor-in-chief of *Il Giornale* after Berlusconi bought it and continued to criticize the Craxi government. Montanelli's reputation was so great he was considered untouchable. Berlusconi felt he couldn't give him instructions, advice, or recommendations on how to run the newspaper, and he couldn't say when he didn't like an article.

In 1994, when Berlusconi announced he would run for political office, Montanelli disapproved and sought to dissuade him. Berlusconi, like many big business owners in Italy at the time, was under investigation by Italian magistrates. In a short time, he had become one of the richest men in Europe. However, now his friends and protectors who

had been in office were also under investigation. In order to protect his interests, Berlusconi's only options were to give up his holdings or run for political office. Craxi supported the idea and before going into hiding in Tunisia suggested Berlusconi start a new political party. After all, Berlusconi had all the media covered, including the press. Montanelli could not stand in the way of his victory.

It was the last straw for Montanelli. He left the paper he had established 20 years earlier, proving that even with the most famous and respected editor in the country at the helm of a newspaper, the owner inevitably has the last say. *Il Giornale* became the organ of Berlusconi's new Forza Italia party, both in language and look.³¹ Montanelli started his own paper *Il Voce*, but it closed after just 13 months. Eventually, he agreed to work for *Corriere della Sera*, answering readers' letters in a daily column.

The opposite occurred at *Panorama* when it passed into Berlusconi's hands. Rinaldi left almost immediately, saying that if he stayed he would head a weekly Berlusconi probably wouldn't like and, "after all, Berlusconi was the editor."³² He couldn't run a magazine according to Berlusconi's wishes. Eventually, he became editor-in-chief of *L'Espresso*.

La Repubblica and *L'Espresso* soon came to be identified as anti-Berlusconi, and *Il Giornale* and *Panorama* as pro-Berlusconi. They were narrow and dismal themes on which to base newspapers and magazines, but ones that have remained to this day. After shifting their loyalties from Andreotti to Craxi, many Italian journalists sided with Berlusconi. It was yet another missed opportunity for the press, which could have seized the moment to give voice to Italian sentiments on what kind of future they wanted for the country. But Italian newspapers have rarely been the voice of the people.

Panorama in 2001 is an omnibus magazine, containing more than 350 pages filled with cross-promotional articles for other Fininvest products, and other advertising. *L'Espresso*, instead, became an anti-Berlusconi crusader. Berlusconi-bashing has become

its *raison du etre*. In effect, not one of the magazines and newspapers is being written with Italian readers in mind.

Ottone says the Italian press presents a "distorted notebook" to the public for two reasons: ideological prejudice and the lack of investigation.³³ Stories are written with the journalists' and/or their bosses' prejudices in mind. These prejudices result in a lack of research, documentation, investigation and a lack of courage because the results may be different from the prejudiced original view of the story. When journalists do go out to do interviews it is often with the pre-arranged story in mind.

For example, during the 1996 election, journalists and newspaper readers thought Umberto Bossi and his party, the Northern League, were politically dead. All it would have taken was a trip to the area and a few conversations with people to know that wasn't true.³⁴ But that didn't happen. During the 2001 election campaign, Bossi toned down his separatist and racist rhetoric, and he and his party have gone on to form a part of Berlusconi's second coalition government. He has pushed for a role in deciding immigration policy, but has so far only managed to head up the decentralization ministry.

Ottone, too, is guilty in helping present that "distorted notebook." In his writings about the Italian press he rarely paints Scalfari as being a major political power in the Italian press at the same level as Agnelli or Berlusconi. And he does not fully explain his own position within Gruppo Espresso. In fact, Ottone writes columns for *La Repubblica*, its weekly magazine *Il Venerdì* and for *L'Espresso*, and is an administrative consultant for *L'Espresso*. In reading articles, columns, or in any other type of journalism in Italy, once again it is important to be aware of the background of the person who is writing.

Berlusconi's Problems

Despite all Berlusconi's business victories – and his election as prime minister – all is not roses for the tycoon. Berlusconi's legal problems are mounting, both in and outside

the country. As of mid-2001, there were still seven cases pending against him and his businesses either under investigation or in the courts.³⁵ The charges ranged from corruption, to bribing financial police and judges, to tax fraud, to breach of antitrust laws.

At the beginning of 2001, charges were postponed against his brother Paolo, the supposed owner of *Il Giornale*, of falsifying budget documents and embezzlement regarding the purchase of a real estate firm, and the case has still not gone to court. Investigating magistrate Francesco Greco also announced then that a five-year investigation into Fininvest was finished and that 26 people would be charged, including Berlusconi, his brother Paolo, and his cousin Giancarlo Foscale, president of the Mediaset television network.³⁶ During mediation, Berlusconi's lawyers proposed a three-month sentence be converted into administrative sanctions. But for prosecutors it was not enough, and the case was scheduled for trial.³⁷

Outside the country, during a visit to Spain in February 2001 to try to drum up support for his prime ministerial candidacy, a prosecutor there called on European Union officials to strip Berlusconi of his parliamentary immunity. Berlusconi is also suspected of six tax offences and six forgery cases relating to his television station in that country.³⁸

But the justice system in Italy moves very slowly. A case beginning in 2000 would take, on average, five years to reach appeal.³⁹ So far three of the charges against him have been thrown out of court due to the Italian statute of limitations and one charge has been dropped due to an amnesty.⁴⁰ And with Berlusconi promising a revamping of the entire justice system, postponement of his legal problems seems likely.

Ownership Questions

Berlusconi's media activities began to be questioned as far back as 1985 when his holding company Fininvest acquired the television networks Italia 1 and Rete 3, which were added to his own network Canale 5.⁴¹ In a rare move, opposition parties joined

forces to try to push through the country's first-ever media anti-trust bill, which would have limited Berlusconi's control of newspaper circulation to 16 per cent. But the legislation collapsed.⁴² It was disappointing but not surprising considering the difficulties Italian coalitions have just holding governments together.

Following Berlusconi's election as prime minister in 1994, the media mogul came under fire again. Anti-trust legislation required him to give up some of his holdings, but Berlusconi stalled, calling for a group of three men, two of whom were associated with his media holdings, to investigate and report back on their findings.⁴³ He has since done the same following his election in 2001, although this time the "three wise men" appear to be detached from Berlusconi. It was a way to avoid having to deal with the glaring conflict of interest then, at least until he was sure his coalition would hold. And considering that Italians are willing to accept this conflict, it is a good way for him to deal with it now.

In 1994, Berlusconi also signed some of his newspaper holdings over to his brother Paolo, where they remain. And he had legislation quickly passed prohibiting anyone accused of corruption and extortion from being held without bail. It was not a moment too soon. Paolo Berlusconi and another official of Fininvest were arrested a short time later on suspicion of corruption.⁴⁴ Questions about Berlusconi's dealings, and diminishing support for his party, made for difficult times, and he resigned after just seven months in power. It seems doubtful at this point in time that the same thing will happen again.

Coverage of these charges and court proceedings in Italy is almost non-existent. Certainly on his television networks it is absent, and whether that will be the same on the state-owned networks seems likely as well. At most, legal charges against him were briefly read on the air in the past. In some newspapers, such as *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica*, they appeared as briefs. They were not published in the Berlusconi-owned publications. Only by seeking out information in the few far-left or anti-Berlusconi publications could more detailed information be found. But it should be noted

that most Italians were not interested in reading about the legal troubles of their smiling leader. Many Italians feel the charges against Berlusconi are unjustified and have bought his story that he is a victim of leftist magistrates. And during the 2000-2001 campaign, he was the only one they believe offered hope for change.

The Third Angle of Italy's Press Power Triangle

The third press power in Italy at the turn of the century was the De Benedetti media group, known as Gruppo Espresso. It owned the left-of-centre newspaper *La Repubblica*, along with the weekly political/news magazine *L'Espresso*, three other magazines, three radio stations and 16 local newspapers. *La Repubblica* is its most influential publication with an average daily circulation of 635,048 copies, making it Italy's second-biggest selling daily.⁴⁵ It is a relative newcomer to the Italian media business, having been launched in 1975, and its closest competition is the much older *Corriere della Sera*.

De Benedetti, although not a politician, helped launch *La Repubblica* financially and continues to maintain financial control over the paper, along with minor shareholder Carlo Caracciolo. Eugenio Scalfari, editor-in-chief for many years, is also not the leader of a political party, or a Senator For Life, but his and Caracciolo's combined political influence is important because of the way they have used *La Repubblica* as a source of power – Scalfari, most of all. How they came to be the third angle in Italy's press power triangle helps explain the current mess the Italian press finds itself in.

Talk of starting *La Repubblica* began around 1974 when Caracciolo, who owned a small publishing company called Editoriale Espresso, and Scalfari, decided to join forces.⁴⁶ Editoriale Espresso's weekly magazine *L'Espresso* was always battling the party in power. Its ally then was the publishing giant Mondadori, then being run by Giorgio Mondadori. Giorgio wanted a newspaper and was willing to listen to Scalfari who

wanted to start a paper of a "higher level" politically and Scalfari's pitch was that it would be a newspaper people would buy as their second paper, alongside the local paper. And having no local news and no sports, it would be in competition with *Corriere della Sera* – the established paper of the right. In mid-January 1976, *La Repubblica* launched in the format of *Le Monde*. It was then Italy's only tabloid-size paper and had photographs and graphics that were big and varied, unlike the staid Italian broadsheets that were top heavy with copy and had few illustrations or photos. But after two years, *La Repubblica's* circulation had reached only 70,000 copies. Problems were said to have included the Caracciolo-Scalfari partnership. It was one newspaper with two bosses.

Soon, however, Scalfari moved into the lead position at *La Repubblica*. It was he who ran the paper, proposed changes and investments, and decided who to hire, what kind of supplements to include with the paper, and what kind of promotions to run. His role was eventually so great at the paper that he became known as "*Padre Padrone*."⁴⁷

Scalfari's dream was to beat *Corriere della Sera* in circulation. In order to do so, it wasn't long before *La Repubblica* became completely different from *Le Monde*. Sports and local news sections were included and Scalfari began to fight the massive political class of the Christian Democratic party. At the time, and even in 2000, many believed *La Repubblica* was a communist paper, although a more accurate definition of the paper's political stance would probably have been leftist and anti-establishment.

Scalfari was convinced the Christian Democrats would use the threat of communism to fight much-needed reforms and he was right. Even in the 2000-2001 campaign, Berlusconi continued to use the communist bogeyman to try to convince people to vote for him.

Scalfari created a newspaper that tried to encompass all the parties of the left.⁴⁸ But Craxi's socialist party tried to pass a law against newspapers that had the support of more than one political party or ideology, which was, in effect, a direct attack on *La Repubblica*. However, other newspapers spoke out for freedom of the press and the

socialists backed off. It seems odd that a socialist government would try to quash a leftist paper, but after the Christian Democrats, Craxi and his version of socialism were Scalfari's new target.

At one point, Scalfari considered running for political office, but he soon decided against it. He had no qualms, however, about giving political advice to ministers, MPs, party secretaries, or any other political player. In a way, he played at being a politician without a post. He used the paper, but, most importantly, it did not supply readers with objective factual information. Scalfari never believed in aiming for objective journalism as journalists did in other countries, such as the United States and Britain. The idea of separating news from opinion in newspapers was, in his view, a mistake.

Instead, Scalfari was free to do what he wanted and wrote scathing columns about politicians and their activities or lack thereof.⁴⁹ Though left leaning, *La Repubblica* also favoured its owners' interests. When De Benedetti decided to try to take controlling interest in the Société Générale de Belgique, *La Repubblica* ran the news on the front page with a large headline calling him the "King of Belgium." This may have been partly due to *La Repubblica's* style of exaggerating, but it was also a result of Benedetti's friendship with Scalfari. When the deal fell apart it left De Benedetti with egg on his face.⁵⁰

Writers at *La Repubblica* tried to create an atmosphere, describe an event, and bring the reader to the climax of the story, often because many of them had been magazine writers and the paper had the history of *L'Espresso* behind it. Articles were colourful, controversial, and interesting. The newspaper was successful as a result – at least for a while. By 1978, the paper was being sold in seven Italian cities, and by 1993, the Friday edition, with its supplements, sold more than one million copies. It wouldn't last. Total newspaper circulation in Italy stood at almost seven million in 1990, its highest level ever, but by 1994 it had dropped to 6.5 million, and in 2000 stood at 5.6 million including the sports papers – 4.8 million without them.⁵¹ And *La Repubblica* suffered losses along with the rest.

In 1996, Scalfari, then 72, stepped down as head of *La Repubblica* saying the machine could operate on its own by then, but he continues to write for the paper. His lengthy columns still run on the front page, in the paper's weekly magazine, and in *L'Espresso*. In typical "*padre padrone*" fashion, he announced then that not one man, but three vice-directors would take his place. He said the paper should change: tone down the language used; print more letters from readers, and give more space to the right.⁵² But the three vice-directors couldn't work together, and soon Scalfari reverted back to being the boss.

Months later, at a meeting between Scalfari, De Benedetto and Caracciolo, Scalfari suggested Ezio Mauro, then editor-in-chief of *La Stampa*, as the possible new head of *La Repubblica*. Mauro agreed to the move – after getting the go ahead from Gianni Agnelli. Agnelli was reportedly shocked. He said he had expected Mauro to stay at *La Stampa* for at least 10 or 15 years.⁵³ He reluctantly let Mauro go, saying, "You don't delay letting someone go who wants to go, just as you don't delay letting a girlfriend go who wants to go."⁵⁴ It was an odd choice for Scalfari. And Agnelli, once again, had a hand in who would head another of Italy's top newspapers, and this time one of the left.

No one can say how much, if any, control or influence Agnelli has over Mauro. At the end of 2000, in an interview about his appointment, Mauro claimed the paper had changed: that it was no longer a place for gossip, speculation, and innuendo.⁵⁵ In reality, there was little evidence things were any different. Speculation continued to be a technique used often by *La Repubblica* journalists. A few days after Mauro's claim was published, yet another article was published that began with the word maybe.⁵⁶

A Tale of Two Papers: The Collapse of *L'Unita* and *L'Indipendente*

Shugaar's observation that newspapers in Italy cannot survive without the support of both a political party and an industrial group was never better illustrated than

in the examples of *L'Unita* and *L'Indipendente*. While these two dailies were very different in terms of their histories and political positions, and their rise and fall, they are noteworthy for the fact that they both collapsed according to Shugaar's rule. The businessmen-politician owners are the element that allows for the survival of newspapers here. And Shugaar is correct that without both of these elements; in *L'Unita's* case the lack of businessmen and for *L'Indipendente* a political party's support, they could not continue to operate.

The story of *L'Unita*

Problems at *L'Unita* [The Unity] were a long time coming, but certainly not a long time recognized. Founded in 1924 by Antonio Gramsci, Italy's leading Marxist theorist, the communist party paper was always the top-selling of Italy's partisan papers. In 1925, during a strike by metalworkers, its circulation quickly jumped to an astounding 40,000 copies. It was the newspaper of choice of communist farm workers and labourers.⁵⁷

The paper struggled through the Fascist years, when it was repeatedly shut down, but it always managed to resurface. In 1948, following the Second World War, only six party papers remained in existence in Italy, but *L'Unita* hung in there, and by the early 1980s, *L'Unita* was a success story. It was the only partisan paper to sell 400,000 copies. The rest struggled along. *Il Manifesto* became the paper of Italy's few remaining communists, as did *Liberazione*, another paper of the far left, but neither of them would achieve the circulation of *L'Unita*, even if it was sometimes given away or used to wrap fish.

L'Unita's early success was based on it being a paper filled with idealistic and radical ideas. It, like the other partisan papers, included general stories that appeared in the mainstream press, but eventually *L'Unita* began to excel in propaganda. *L'Unita* became famous for the language it used; Ottone described it as "the other side of the

moon."⁵⁸ Americans were warmongers; the middle class were reactionaries; and business owners were *padroni* who starved the people. Stalin was – at least until 1956 – the benefactor of humanity; Russia was paradise; and the United States was hell.

L'Unita had its enemies. Gianni Agnelli openly admits having used *La Stampa* to try to decimate the newspaper. In the 1960s, in order to combat the Italian Communist Party and the leftist newspaper, *La Stampa* became extremely sensational. This was, by then, *L'Unita's* strength among its readers. *La Stampa's* readers complained about the change, but Agnelli proudly says it was how his paper caused a drop in the circulation of *L'Unita*.⁵⁹

By the 1980s, the paper's motto was basically not to let facts get in the way of a good story. The Italian press had entered an era of sensationalism, but *L'Unita* surpassed the rest, especially with its March 1982 story about an agreement between the Christian Democrats and the *Camorra*, the Naples Mafia, to obtain the freedom of a city councillor from Naples who had been kidnapped by a terrorist group.⁶⁰ It was a great story, except that none of it was true. The information had come from another journalist and had been greatly exaggerated. The Communist party immediately apologized to its readers and the journalist was fired. But few commentators bothered to discuss the issue and what it meant for Italian journalists.

In the 1980s, a then-unrecognised threat to the papers began to arise. Television had been moving into Italian homes on a vast scale, and taking the place of newspapers, radio and conversation as the people's most reliable source of news and opinion. The competition between television and newspapers in Italy became fierce. Unfortunately, neither television nor newspapers in Italy seemed to have recognised that they are just two sources of information seeking the same audience. And they have not sought to distinguish themselves from each other since then.

The number of those reading newspapers also appears to be continuing to decrease. A 1998 study by ISTAT showed only 57.8 per cent of those surveyed said

they had read a newspaper in the previous week – 3.5 per cent less than in 1997.⁶¹ One almost never sees newspapers left on buses or in the subways in Italy.

In 2000, other than newspapers Italians are also not reading much else. During the month of June 2000, less than 30 per cent of Italians between the ages of 16 and 65 had read at least one book. In Europe, only the Portuguese read less at about 23 per cent. In Germany, the figure was about 70 per cent, in Canada 66 per cent, and in the United States 64 per cent.⁶²

As a result, newspapers are not very profitable in Italy. In comparison with other Western countries, circulation has never been high. The greatest circulation to date was reached in 1969, when an average of almost eight million daily newspapers were sold.⁶³ By 1996, circulation had dropped to just 5.96 million copies per mid-week day. What that means is only about 10 per cent of Italy's estimated population of 57.2 million was buying newspapers then, compared with 23 per cent in France and 33 per cent in Britain.⁶⁴

In the 1990s, the battle for readers became so fierce that newspapers were willing to do almost anything. One tactic attempted was called by the English word gadget, and it would continue to be used into 2001. Oddly enough, it was *L'Unita* that led the way. In 1994, *L'Unita* was facing a disastrous deficit. Some said the figure was as high as 400 billion lire or about \$286 million Cdn. Walter Veltroni, its editor then, came up with two ideas to try to save the paper. First, was a series of figurines of famous soccer players of the past 30 years, which it would include with the paper for a small price increase; second, was the restructuring of the operation. In soccer-crazy Italy, the plan worked – for a while.

In January 1995, *L'Unita* took the idea one step further, offering the videocassette of the film *Last Tango In Paris* with every copy of the Saturday newspaper for a little more than \$4 Cdn. In September of the same year, it offered a whole series of Hollywood films, such as *The Graduate* and *Easy Rider*. Sales tripled and then quadrupled.⁶⁵

Veltroni, the son of a journalist, would go on to become minister of culture, secretary of the Democratic Party of the Left, and in 2001 was elected mayor of Rome. Yet another journalist had made the transition to successful politician.

The other papers, and the two weekly news magazines, soon joined in the gadget game by offering readers other videocassettes. Then items such as music CDs, CD-Roms, dictionaries, and special serial inserts, such as a very successful How-To computer manual series and an Atlas series, were added. In 2001, newsstands were still covered with publications packaged in clear plastic with everything from toys, to cheese knives, to miniature teddy bears. News was no longer just news – it was now entertainment, education, and the chance to buy something you wanted at a low price. In effect, the newspaper had become the gadget's gadget.⁶⁶ Newspapers were not providing basic information regarding politics and news, which considering the troublesome type of democratic system Italy has should have been their priority. But even the gadgets couldn't save *L'Unita*.

Party leaders, like the industry owners, seek the prestige of having a newspaper – again, *bella figura* plays a role in newspaper ownership. But party leaders and editors at *L'Unita* were a bit ignorant about the newspaper business. They and other partisan newspaper owners seemed unaware that the party press had been all but died in the rest of the Western world. Or perhaps it was just that the newspapers provided a convenient outlet where the party could reward faithful workers with jobs.

The Italian partisan press has been subsidized by the government since 1918, when reformist Emanuele Modigliani proposed that "all the powers by definition had to be public and controllable."⁶⁷ Those were times when the writers and, more important, the backers of newspapers, were often unknown entities.

But regardless of its subsidies, in 1997, *L'Unita* experienced its first strike. Circulation was down 24 per cent over the previous year and management was actually planning the privatization and reorganization of the paper, which would inevitably lead to

dismissals. *Il Manifesto* had lost 18 per cent of its readers over the same period and circulation at *Liberazione* had dropped from 20,000 to a mere 12,000. There, 32 journalists and 12 typesetters were about to be struck from the payroll.⁶⁸ This two-day strike was unprecedented considering these were organisations that were supposed to be championing the rights of the worker. It would not be the last protest at *L'Unita*.

By 1998, the state was subsidizing 37 newspapers with approximately \$161 million Cdn. Most were produced by special interest and language minority groups. However, *L'Unita* was at the front of the line in terms of the amount of money it received from the state.

The Prime Minister's Office controls subsidies for newspapers in Italy through the General Directorate for Information, Publishing and Literary and Scientific Property. The state shares the costs of newsprint for newspapers and magazines, depending on their contents. It also supports the publication of newspapers and periodicals abroad, the work of the press agencies, modernization and financial restructuring of enterprises, operation of broadcasting enterprises, press and information services, and the production of documentation for foreign audiences. In addition, the press also benefits from reduced postal rates, and public sector businesses are obliged to spend at least 50 per cent of their publicity budgets on press advertising.⁶⁹

L'Unita received nearly double what the second biggest beneficiary of subsidies was receiving in 1998. But even the approximately \$9.4 million Cdn. in state money,⁷⁰ and \$286,000 Cdn. in donations collected in half a day at the end of July 2000 couldn't keep the paper afloat.⁷¹ When *L'Unita* closed in the summer of 2000, it had 123 journalists on staff, along with about 80 other writers and editors – an incredible number for any newspaper.

At the end of July, Daniele Segre, director of a film on the last days of *L'Unita*, said the offices of the paper had become the set of the ugliest film he had ever made. In an

editorial that appeared on the *L'Unita* Web site the day after the paper's collapse he wrote:

Something's happening, and the film that is being finished this evening in the offices of *L'Unita* (that continues its necessary work on the Internet) would like to be a witness. It wants to recount the anxiety of a divided left incapable of reacting to new times: a left made up of strange characters who, with grave improvisations and superficiality, are squandering an important patrimony of civility and democracy. I believe that they have to react with a great sense of responsibility and courage because the time left, I remind you again, is very short. It seems the time has come to resume contact with reality and with the problems of the people, and to stop with the futile and shameful little theatre of television.⁷²

L'Unita's Internet site did not last long. It too was shut down by the paper's liquidators. Other newspapers, out of a sense of solidarity, duty, and perhaps fear that someday they would be in the same position, published a section of *L'Unita* for several weeks. But eventually, the demonstrations and demands for assistance died down.

In August, editors and party officials were saying the paper would be re-launched in September. In October, the date promised was November, and only 44 journalists and 35 writers and editors would remain – some 120 people would lose their jobs. In December, at the premiere of Segre's film *2 Macelli Street*, (*Italy: The Left Without L'Unita*), then-party secretary and former *L'Unita* editor Veltroni announced the paper would be in newsstands again at the end of January 2001, but it was not to be. At the end of January, the date would be pushed ahead again – this time to March. Finally, at the end of that month it was re-launched and its Web site was reopened.⁷³ *L'Unita's* future, however, is still questionable. Many of its readers have moved on.

L'Unita folded for several reasons, the main two being that its payroll was too large and not enough readers were buying it. By July 2000, its circulation had dropped to below 50,000.⁷⁴ Most articles written at the time of the paper's collapse were about deficits or politics. Editorials about the newspaper spoke of the lack of direction among

the Italian left being a major cause, which to a certain extent was true. It seemed incredible that the paper couldn't survive considering the size of its subsidy, that it was the organ of the governing coalition, and two of its top leaders – one a former prime minister – were once editors.

But the issue became political, instead of factual, as often occurs in Italy. A story that should have been based on numbers and facts was turned into a political farce. No one was willing to write about the fact that the paper was not selling enough advertising and that its costs were too high. Nor were they writing anything about the fact that their readers had outgrown the out-dated style of *L'Unita*, and that party leaders had found other, more effective means of communicating with the public. Not only did supporters want to read about the party and its leaders' opinions: they wanted information, and they were going to other sources to get it. Television, the more moderate, centre-left newspaper *La Repubblica*, the weekly magazine *L'Espresso*, and to a much lesser extent, the Internet, were all to gain from *L'Unita's* mistakes. By mid-2001, of a list of 36 countries, Italy ranked twentieth for its percentage of Internet users with just 30 per cent compared to Canada in fourth place and the United States in fifth.⁷⁵ The reasons for this low acceptance level varies: from culture; to an aging population; to expense.

Now that the newspaper has re-launched, its continuation is in doubt. *L'Unita's* circulation has not been revealed. And, again, its owners are politicians; it still has no industrial backing. It remains to be seen whether the right-wing Berlusconi government will be willing to continue paying such huge subsidies, especially to a newspaper that is run by his opposition.

L'Indipendente

Another important newspaper – one that disappeared in the 1990s – was *L'Indipendente*. This daily newspaper was launched in northern Italy in November 1991 by Ricardo Franco Levi. It was started with \$30 million US by Guido Roberto

Vitale, brother of Random House CEO Alberto Vitale, and a group of northern Italian investors. But what separates *L'Indipendente* from the rest of Italy's dailies is that it was the first newspaper to attempt to break Shugaar's political/industrial ownership rule and be truly independent. It would fail, but its attempt was laudable.

L'Indipendente's style was patterned after some of the British newspapers' more factual and informative style of reporting – something that did not exist then in Italy then and does not exist to this day. Levi described the paper's aims as follows:

The idea was to found a quality newspaper, which Italy does not really have. In Italy, newspapers are aimed simultaneously at university professors and taxi drivers. We wanted to split that target, and we also wanted to separate news from opinion, something not usually done in Italy. And we wanted to be rigorously independent, as the masthead suggested.⁷⁶

Despite its initial success, Levi was perhaps a little too idealistic for the paper's investors. And when circulation declined from an initial 200,000 to an estimated 15,000 in less than three months, the investors scrapped the experiment and the paper was taken over by political and business interests.⁷⁷ Levi was fired and replaced by Vittorio Feltri who had a reputation for saving publications on the verge of collapse and of making alliances with political figures. Feltri had worked for a period at *Corriere della Sera* and had most recently come from the weekly *L'Europeo* whose staff had gone on strike for a month when he was named editor.

At the time, the separatist Northern League, and its outspoken leader Umberto Bossi, were making headway in northern Italy. They railed against political corruption, the heavy taxes the north paid to Rome, and the "parasitic" south. Some of their rhetoric was racist and anti-Semitic, but the Northern League was gaining in popularity, and Feltri latched onto that. The paper became the mouthpiece of the league and circulation climbed to about 100,000 in six months.⁷⁸ The paper's name fit in well with the Northern League's

ideas of a northern Italy independent of Rome and southern Italy. Many of its elected politicians were independents.

But why did *L'Indipendente* fail as a relatively factual newspaper? Certainly, the times were a factor, as was the fact Italians had never seen such a paper and were slow to adjust to the change. As well, investors were not willing to wait for them to adjust. *L'Indipendente's* lack of identity was also a major problem, according to Alessandra Ravetta, editor and owner of the publishing trade monthly *Prima Comunicazione*.

Levi produced a sterile paper, with no gossip. In the end, the paper became so independent it had no identity. Then Feltri came in, and he was a different sort of person. He is a force of nature, very bright, and he just happens to be crusading on the same wavelength as the League.⁷⁹

Feltri also wouldn't last long at *L'Indipendente*. When *Il Giornale* lost Indro Montanelli, Berlusconi quickly hired Feltri, who changed the paper into a more aggressive one that even published the occasional scoop. Feltri recognized who *Il Giornale's* readers were – mainly anti-communists. As a result, that paper's sales actually increased after the departure of the legendary Montanelli.⁸⁰

L'Indipendente also went through a series of editors. But even with the help of business and the support of the Northern League party, by 1999 the paper had collapsed. Some of its readers had shifted with Feltri to *Il Giornale* and to the Northern League's new official organ, *La Padania*. It was Italy's second-most subsidized paper in 1998, receiving about \$5.6 million Cdn. from the government.⁸¹ Others went to the more centre-right *Corriere della Sera* or to other competing media.

Manuela Colin, who studied *L'Indipendente's* problems at the University of Bologna and was granted access to the paper's offices and staff for six months in 1994, concludes that several problems occurring simultaneously caused the paper's demise.⁸² Because of the lack of history and tradition within the newspaper its "personality" was closely connected to that of the publisher. *L'Indipendente* had four publishers during its

short, three-year life, all of whom were very different from each other. As a result, *L'Indipendente* experienced several identity crises, which its new readers weren't willing to tolerate.

The newspaper was also a victim of the times, says Colin. The early 1990s saw officials of most Italian institutions quaking in their boots with the investigation of the vast corruption of the system. *L'Indipendente* was not independent of those times and could even be said to have been an emblem of them, she says.⁸³ As the leaders of Italian society were investigated and charged, or cleared, so were the newspaper owners, publishers, editors, and journalists. For once, everyone was switching jobs. But changes at *L'Indipendente* meant a loss of identity, and with that a loss of readers.

L'Indipendente's last publisher, Lucio Lami, was hired in March 1996, when the Northern League was still the paper's party. But the paper was, as he put it, languishing.⁸⁴ The possibility existed to re-launch the newspaper, according to the *L'Indipendente* administrators, because of a new advertising contract made with the government-controlled advertising agency Mmp. But it was not to be. A legal battle between the old Northern League editor and the new editor degenerated, and the editorial staff went on strike because it hadn't been paid.

In the end, the paper didn't collapse because of internal problems. The last straw was Mmp's decision not to honour its advertising agreement with the paper if it didn't continue to be the League's official organ, giving it some guarantee of reader support. It was as if the contract had been with the Bossi's political party – not with the paper. The paper died because a state agency would not provide advertising for it unless it had a political party's guarantee behind it. In effect, the state was controlling which party papers would be funded and which would not – or which would survive and which would not. And as a result, *L'Indipendente* could not fulfill both criteria of Shugaar's rule; it could not keep a political and a big business owner at the same time.

Lami's criticism of the business and political partnership that controls the Italian press was harsh.

Today's newspapers, transformed into organs of communication (instead of information), have characteristics completely different from those in the past. They are products of industries devoted to completely different activities (from journalism) that use the papers as weapons against those who govern, and of banks that use the public's savings on behalf of the parties, subsidizing newspapers that are always in debt but are agreeable to whoever is in charge at the time.

In Italy, true capitalism does not exist, just a class of high-level businessmen that live on state contracts or by its protective measures, exactly as in the times of fascism. As a result, the papers have been intentionally transformed from organs of information into organs of persuasion, such that today they provide messages clearly or in code. It is merchandising communication more than information, and it engages in battles that appear moralistic but, in reality, only look to the destruction of the political adversary, or to placate the first sneeze of Power.⁸⁵

Lami also criticized Italian journalists. He claimed all the reasons given for the problems in the Italian press – the invasion of television, the ever-growing competition of the Internet, and the declining attention span of readers – are only excuses, and that the crisis of the Italian press is not part of a universal media crisis. Instead, he said it is a crisis with strictly national characteristics and precedes the advent of television – it is political and even moral in nature. It is "the abjuration of independence and morality on the part of journalists themselves."⁸⁶

In November 2000, a brief appeared in *Panorama* magazine stating that *L'Indipendente* would be re-launched in January 2001. This time, instead of being owned by businessmen it would be owned by Italo Bocchino, a member of parliament for the National Alliance party – Italy's former fascist party.⁸⁷ But in 2001 *L'Indipendente* was nowhere in sight.

End notes

- ¹ Shugaar, Antony. "What, No Strings? The Italian Tradition and L'Indipendente." Columbia Journalism Review. Nov./Dec.1993. Available at www.cjr.org/year/93/6/italy.asp.
- ² Spotts, Frederic and Wieser, Theodor. Italy: A Difficult Democracy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. p. 6.
- ³ "The Real Dangers of Conglomerate Control" Columbia Journalism Review. March/April 1997. Available at www.cjr.org/year/97/2/danger.asp
- ⁴ Ottone, Piero. Pregheira o Bordello: Storia del giornalismo italiano [Prayer or Brothel: The History of Italian Journalism] Milan: Teadue. 1998, P. 430.
- ⁵ Brunetti, Umberto. "La cucciolata" [The Litter] Prima Comunicazione. Sept. 1999.
- ⁶ "Stampa/I Quotidiani" [Press/The Dailies] Prima Comunicazione, Sept. 2000:164.
- ⁷ Ottone. 1998. p. 433.
- ⁸ Hiday, Neil. "The Megamedia Are the Message" Columbia Journalism Review. Oct. 1995. Available at www.cjr.org/ and "The Real Dangers of Conglomerate Control" Columbia Journalism Review. March/April 1997. Available at www.cjr.org/year/97/2/danger.asp
- ⁹ Shugaar. July/Aug. 1994.
- ¹⁰ "Stampa/Quotidiani" [Press/The Dailies] Prima Comunicazione, December 2000: 196. Period Sept. 1999 to August 2000.
- ¹¹ Ibid., December 2000.
- ¹² From Forbes Magazine online. World's Richest People list. Available at www.forbes.com.
- ¹³ Smith, Denis Mack. Modern Italy: A Political History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. P. 488
- ¹⁴ Luzi, Gianluca. "Amato accusa Berlusconi" [Amato Accuses Berlusconi]. La Repubblica. 11 Dec. 2000: 9.
- ¹⁵ "Un articolo del 'Giornale' fa infuriare Amato" [An Article in Giornale Angers Amato]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 9 Dec. 2000:3

- ¹⁶ "Per l'Autorità Banfi non viola la par condicio" [For the Authority Banfi Doesn't Violate the Level Playing Field Rules] La Repubblica. 2 Dec. 2000:4.
- ¹⁷ Caviglia, Stefano. "Zaccaria: 'Per Berlusconi un anno da record sul video'" [Zaccaria: A Record Year for Berlusconi on Video] La Repubblica. 16 Feb. 2001:16.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 16 Feb. 2001:16.
- ¹⁹ Conti, Paolo. "Vespa é bravo ma guarda al Polo" [Vespa is Good, But Watches the Polo Coalition]. Corriere della Sera. 6 Nov. 2000.
- ²⁰ Fontanarosa, Aldo. "Bruno è abile ed esperto ma la sua divisa è azzurra" [Bruno is Able and an Expert, But His Uniform is Blue]. La Repubblica. 20 Dec. 2000:8.
- ²¹ Mele, Marco. "'Porta a porta,' Ulivo all'attacco di Vespa" ['Door to Door,' Olive Tree Coalition Attacks Vespa]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 20 Dec. 2000:8.
- ²² "La Sinistra contro Vespa: 'Puntata indegna per la tv'" [The Left Against Vespa: 'Disgraceful Episode for TV']. La Repubblica. 19 Dec. 2000.
- ²³ Vespa, Bruno. "Vespa a Vespa: perchè ce l'hanno con lei?" [Vespa to Vespa: Why are They Against You?] Panorama. 22 Feb. 2001: 56-57.
- ²⁴ Di Caro, Paolo. "Il Cavaliere contesta la trasmissione: troppe domande su temi da teatrino della politica" [The Cavaliere Contests the Show: Too Many Questions on Subjects in the Little Theatre of Politics] Corriere della Sera. 21 Dec. 2000.
- ²⁵ "La Polizia Paga, I teppisti no" [The Police Pay, The Hooligans Don't]. Il Giornale 3 Aug. 2001:1.
- ²⁶ "Media Ordered to Aid G8 Probe" Globe and Mail 2 Aug. 2001:A14.
- ²⁷ Ottone, Piero. La Guerra della Rosa [The War of the Rose]. Milan: Longanesi, 1990.
- ²⁸ Ottone, Piero. 1998, p. 389.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 1998, p. 361.
- ³⁰ Ottone, Piero. 1990. p.187.
- ³¹ Farinelli et al., 1997. p. 457.
- ³² Ottone, Piero. 1998. pps. 455-56.
- ³³ Ibid., 1998. p. 477.

- ³⁴ Ibid., 1998. pps. 478-9.
- ³⁵ "An Italian Story." The Economist. 28 April to 4 May 2001. pps.21-24.
- ³⁶ Biondani, Paolo. "Conti Fininvest, Berlusconi verso il processo" [Fininvest Accounts, Berlusconi Nears Trial]. Corriere della Sera. 30 Jan. 2001.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 30 Jan. 2001.
- ³⁸ Lau, Debra. "Forbes Faces" Forbes.com. Available at www.forbes.com/2001/02/16/16/021facescan.html
- ³⁹ Galluzzo, Marco. "Cinque anni per una sentenza d'appello" [Five Years for an Appeal Decision]. Corriere della Sera. 11 Jan. 2001, and "Diritti umane: Italia condannata a Strasburgo" [Human Rights: Italy Condemned at Strasburg] La Repubblica. 11 April, 2000.
- ⁴⁰ "The Charge Sheet." The Economist 28 April to 4 May 2001. Pps.21-24.
- ⁴¹ Werba, Hank. "Italo Pubcaster Beats the Odds" Variety. 6 Dec.1989.
- ⁴² Richards, Charles. The New Italians. Penguin
- ⁴³ Shugaar. July/Aug. 1994.
- ⁴⁴ Rinaldi, Claudio. "Dalla tv alla giustizia: i trucchi del Cavaliere" [From TV to Justice: The Tricks of The Knight]. La Repubblica. 7 Oct. 2000: 16.
- ⁴⁵ "Stampa/Quotidiani" [Press/The Dailies]. Prima Comunicazione. Dec. 2000:196.
- ⁴⁶ Ottone. 1998. p. 341.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.1998. p. 353.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.1998. p. 354.
- ⁴⁹ Ottone. 1998. p.356.
- ⁵⁰ Ottone. 1998. p. 438.
- ⁵¹ "Stampa/Quotidiani" [Press/The Dailies]. Prima Comunicazione. Dec. 2000:196.
- ⁵² Ibid., 1998. p. 487.
- ⁵³ Brunetti, Umberto. "La cucciolata" [The Litter of Children]. Prima Comunicazione. Sept. 1999.

- ⁵⁴ Ottone. 1998. p. 489.
- ⁵⁵ Lanza, Cesare. "La mia Repubblica" [My Repubblica]. Panorama. 18 Jan. 2001:52-54.
- ⁵⁶ Coen, Leonardo. "Ginevra, É in fin di vita la 'Regina di maggio'" [Geneva: The 'Queen of May' is Dying]. La Repubblica. 27 Jan. 2001:27.
- ⁵⁷ Farnelli et al. 1997. p. 267.
- ⁵⁸ Ottone. 1998. p. 153.
- ⁵⁹ Brunetti, Umberto. Sept. 1999.
- ⁶⁰ Farnelli, et al. p. 386
- ⁶¹ Reggio, Mario. "Tempo libero? Una Noia." [Free Time? A Bore]. La Repubblica. 12 Aug. 2000: 24.
- ⁶² "Cos'è un libro? Non lo conosco." [What is a book? I don't know] Panorama. 6 July 2000: 141.
- ⁶³ Martinelli, Alberto, et al., 1999.
- ⁶⁴ UNESCO Statistical Yearbook. New York: UNESCO Publishing and Bernan Press, 1999.
- ⁶⁵ Farinelli, Giuseppe, Ermanno Paccagnini, Giovanni Santambrogio, and Angela Ida Villa. Storia del Giornalismo Italiano: Dalle origini ai giorni nostri. [The History of Italian Journalism: From its Origins to Our Times] Torino: UTET, 1997. p. 480.
- ⁶⁶ Lami, Lucio. Giornalismo all'Italiana [Journalism Italian Style] Milan: Edizioni Ares, 1997. p. 12.
- ⁶⁷ Murialdi, Paolo. 1996.
- ⁶⁸ "Italian Left Journalists Strike" Associated Press. 19 Nov. 1997. Available at www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/014.html.
- ⁶⁹ Information regarding Italian government press subsidies is available at <http://www.culturelink.org/culpol/italy.html>.
- ⁷⁰ Naso, Lello. "Stretta sui giornale di partito" [Tightening of the Party Newspapers] Il Sole 24 Ore. 21 Nov. 2000:16.

- ⁷¹ Fontanarosa, Aldo. "L'ultimo numero dell'Unità" [The Last Edition of L'Unità] La Repubblica. 30 July, 2000:8.
- ⁷² Segre, Daniele. "L'Editoriale del giorno" [Editorial of the Day] L'Unità Online. From www.unita.it 31 July 2000. Printed copy available on request.
- ⁷³ "Dopo otto mesi di silenzio torna in edicola l'Unità [After Eight Months, L'Unità Returns to the News Stands] La Repubblica 27 March, 2001.
- ⁷⁴ Fasanella, Giovanni. "Un banchiere rosso all'Unità con la benedizione di Prodi" [A Red Banker at L'Unità, with the Blessing of Prodi] Panorama 21 July 2000.
- ⁷⁵ Naso, Lello. "Nei portali news su misura per i clienti." [News Portals Made-to-Measure For Clients]. Il Sole 24 Ore. Nov. 7, 2000:17.
- ⁷⁶ Shugaar. Nov./Dec. 1993.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., Nov./Dec.1993.
- ⁷⁸ Farnelli et al. p. 346.
- ⁷⁹ Shugaar. Nov./Dec. 1993
- ⁸⁰ Farnelli et al. p. 347.
- ⁸¹ Naso, Lello. 21 Nov. 2000:16.
- ⁸² Colin, Manuela. L'Indipendente: storia ed organizzazione di un quotidiano italiano. [The Independent: The History and Organization of an Italian Daily.] Bachelor of Arts Thesis. University of Bologna, 1997.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 1997.
- ⁸⁴ Lami. 1997. p. 12.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 1997. pps. 81-82.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 1997. p. 85.
- ⁸⁷ 'L'Indipendente a gennaio in edicola' [L'Indipendente in News Stands in January] Panorama. 30 Nov. 2000:26.

Chapter Five

The Roman Catholic Church

The simple must not speak. This book would have justified the idea that the tongue of the simple is the vehicle of wisdom. This had to be prevented, which I have done. You say I am the Devil, but it is not true: I have been the hand of God.¹

– From *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco

An interesting aspect of the relationship between the press in Italy and the Roman Catholic Church is that often when events of any significance occur, a Vatican spokesman somehow gets quoted. For example, when former prime minister Giulio Andreotti was acquitted of charges of having ordered the assassination of a journalist in 1999, Vatican spokesmen were quoted in newspapers throughout the country as being satisfied with the outcome. In most Western countries when a politician is acquitted of major criminal charges no one from the Roman Catholic Church – or any church for that matter – is quoted. But in Italy questions of crime, politics, health, even television quiz shows are considered fair game for comment by the Vatican and the secular press seems only too willing to publish or republish its views.

There are numerous reasons for this. One of the most important is tradition. For centuries the church has used the written word as a propaganda vehicle. It has denied access to books, documents and other printed forms of information to keep the majority of Italy's citizens, as well as those of other countries, in darkness. Church officials have also used written language as a weapon against its enemies – real or perceived. It is against this backdrop of a lengthy and mostly negative history of the relationship between the church and press that the influence of today's Roman Catholic Church on the modern Italian media should be considered.

The weight of history on the shoulders of Italians, including Italian journalists, must also be considered, especially since the church's history makes up a considerable

portion of that weight. One cannot understand Italy and Italians without understanding the effect the Roman Catholic Church has had, and continues to have, on the country and its people, even though that has lessened in recent years. Marshall McLuhan, a convert to Catholicism in his 20s, believed the character of every society – its food, clothing, arts, and amusements – are ultimately determined by its religion.³ Conversely, one also cannot understand the character of the Roman Catholic Church, or at least the Vatican, unless one understands its connection to Italian culture and history.

While Italians have increasingly been distancing themselves from political parties in the last decade, as many as 97 per cent of citizens continued to identify themselves as Roman Catholics in the Jubilee year 2000.⁴ And “the church,” as it is called in Italy, remained a force in journalism, often due to self-censorship of journalists.

The History

Church censorship of written documents is believed to have begun as early as the year 150 when an unauthenticated history of the life of the Apostle Paul, called the *Acta Pauli*, was condemned and prohibited in an edict issued by the Council of Ephesus.⁵ Many such edicts followed over the centuries that warned those who read prohibited material against their ruinous influence. Those who were involved in the production, circulation, or reading of banned literature were branded as heretics and faced the possible confiscation of their property, imprisonment, excommunication, or death. Something as mild as an essay written in 1256 by William of Saint-Amour of Paris, which criticized the church and its treatment of the orders of friars living on alms, was ordered burned within six days or the holders of copies would face excommunication.⁶

Through the centuries, those working on behalf of the church felt they were, of course, doing God’s work. The Roman Catholic Church was infallible and better the loss of one soul than those of a thousand due to heresy. And so many believe today. For

hundreds of years the Catholic clergy's influence in Italy has been pervasive and far-reaching, especially in the area of education. For approximately 15 centuries, most teaching in the country was carried out orally by priests and the majority of books that existed before the press were to be found in monasteries, meaning most students were required to enter the clergy if they wanted to continue their studies. Even in the first few universities founded in Europe in the 13th century, such as the University of Bologna, much instruction was carried out by priests. This was not unlike the situation in many other European countries, but the influence of the church has been greatly diminished elsewhere. In Italy, it has also seen some decline recently. Education has undergone two significant periods of reform – in the 1970s and the early 1990s. However, some instruction here today is still carried out by the clergy and its influence is still widespread. Throughout much of the peninsula's history, the church has taught that it is not to be questioned, but accepted, even if what is learned is not applied in life, says Thomas J. Reese, a political scientist, Jesuit priest, and author.⁷ As it was the clergy who developed Italy's education system and dominated thought in much of Italy for so long, one could easily argue that Italian life and education are a product of the Vatican. In the decades following the Second World War, according to Paul Ginsborg,

The Church, as a result of its dominant cultural longevity and by means of the Christian Democrat hold upon the state, was the very essence of institutional authority, both political and moral. The culture it preached vis-à-vis authority was fundamentally that of submission and docility, accompanied by the unparalleled virtues of meditation, which all too easily slipped into clientelism.⁸

By the 1990s, many lay theologians teaching Catholic doctrine outside Italy were finding themselves in conflict with the church hierarchy in Rome over theological teachings. The Vatican took it upon itself to discipline and silence these possible traitors of doctrine often by punishing or firing them.⁹

Many clergy, theologians, and teachers have spoken out against this censoring of thought. Millions throughout Europe have signed petitions against it, but to little avail. Their names have only been added to the Vatican files.¹⁰ By the beginning of the new century, a stream of books and essays were being produced outside Italy by many who were seeking a more open church or by those who had left the church.

It was, ironically enough, the invention of the printing press in the 15th century that caused the bureaucracy of Rome's curia to become so powerful and centralized. With the printed word comes records, and records mean files. By 2000, the Vatican's bureaucracy had grown to include more than 3,000 people, a sizeable number considering individual parishes and churches also have their own bureaucracies.

Initially, as with many inventions, including the Internet, it was thought that God had placed the printing press at the disposal of the church in order to help spread its doctrine. The church funded many presses in order to increase the number of copies of approved works.¹¹ It was not until about 75 years after the invention of the Gutenberg press, when the leaders of the Protestant Reformation began using the presses to spread their "heresies," that Roman Catholic officials began to realize how dangerous the presses could actually be. Thousands of tracts, called flying leaves, were printed on the Wittenberg presses and carried the words of Martin Luther and other reformers so many more people than the 150,000 who could fit into St. Peter's Square in Rome.¹² It took until almost the middle of the 16th century for Catholic writers to start writing their arguments against the Reformation for the people. Before then they had been writing only for the priests and scholars who were supposed to teach and explain them to everyone else.¹³

The church's propaganda activities increased in the 16th century, but its message was not of peace and forgiveness, as in recent years. Instead, it spoke out against revolution, freedom and equality.¹⁴ The church underestimated the ability of the Italian people to understand complex issues and make decisions for themselves. It would not be

the last time they would do so. Roman Catholic officials soon put in place a system of censorship so that only books that had been read and approved by ecclesiastical examiners could be printed. It was the beginning of a long series of Papal Indexes on censorship that began in 1559 and ended only in 1899 with a total of 42 lists of prohibited books and documents.¹⁵

According to author George Haven Putnam, it is difficult to ascertain how effective the Indexes were outside the Papal States, which, depending on the period, covered much of central and northern Italy.¹⁶ Outside the Papal States other bodies, such as the Spanish Inquisition, and the theology faculty of the University of Paris, and in some instances political rulers, also had a hand in issuing indexes. Gradually, the job was given to the clerics in Catholic countries, and the work of compiling the Papal Indexes was eventually assigned to a body called the Congregation of the Index, which was still operating as late as 1906. In 1864 – three years after the Italian State had been proclaimed – the pope's encyclical *Quanta cura*, which included a Syllabus of Errors, suggested that freedom of discussion would corrupt the soul. Religious tolerance, freedom of conscience and the press, and the validity of secularist legislation were all condemned. The syllabus aroused some indignation as well as an outburst of anti-clericalism, but church censorship continued.¹⁷

In the year 2000, Italians' reverence for the Roman Catholic Church was sometimes dependent on how close one was to Rome. T-shirts that depicted Pope John Paul II smoking marijuana were not sold in Rome, but could be found in the markets of Florence and Bologna. It should be noted, however, that the printed words on those T-shirts were in English, not Italian.

There was some printing of unapproved books going on while the Catholic states existed: at least enough to be feared or warned against. And in some instances, public burnings of books had the reverse effect intended and acted as publicity, resulting in an increase in their circulation.¹⁸ But in those states where the mechanisms for censorship

were most effective – Spain and Italy – the production of literature was reduced and along with it intellectual life. Galileo and Da Vinci were two scientists who managed to produce masterpieces in the fields of science and art, but both ran afoul of the church. Galileo was excommunicated, a punishment which was only recently lifted.

Putnam concludes that:

The theory upon which the censorship of the Church was based is incompatible with the natural and complete development of the literary potentialities of a people and interferes with the production of higher literature in direct proportion to the effectiveness with which it may be applied.²⁰

This theory can be applied today if one considers the amount of finger-pointing on the part of the church that goes on in modern Italy – especially in the church's own press. And it can be argued that self-censorship, as a result of tradition and the church's almost constant negative reaction to everyday issues in modern Italian life, along with other factors, has had, and continues to have, the effect of interfering with the social development of the Italian people.

Throughout the last century, the church press has managed to produce newspapers and magazines that rival the popular press in some ways. And before the invention of the telegraph the church press even surpassed the lay and political press because of its access to news from other countries brought by numerous and frequent visitors and delegations. With time, however, even censorship of the Vatican's own press has become more strict. Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) deliberately concentrated power at the top in Rome, altering Canon Law to his and later popes' benefit. Under Canon 1386.I, priests were no longer permitted to publish books, or edit or contribute to newspapers, journals, magazines, or reviews, without permission of the local bishop. Other changes meant each diocese would have its own censor who was required to make a special profession of faith and ensure what was written and published was in agreement with the Councils of the Church and the Holy See.²¹ The pope, by being the only person with the

right to nominate bishops, had in effect made himself the chief censor of all that was written within the church.

Outside, the church had long before begun using its influence to affect Italian political life. For many years after the fall of the papal walls, it used the faithful under its guidance to construct a block of voters with which it was able to strike deals with politicians, similar to that constructed in some other countries. In 1919, the church organized the first Catholic political party in Italy, called the *Partito Popolare Italiano* or the Italian Popular Party. It was run by Catholics and had a religious-based program, although it should be noted that Christian conduct was not a major part of its politicians' philosophy.²² It was the start of a long period of church involvement in the Italian body politic.

In 1929, the Vatican finally recognized Italy officially as a result of negotiations with the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. In his never-ending quest for respectability, Mussolini managed to settle the "Roman question," making a deal with Vatican officials that involved restoring some of its properties and paying compensation for others taken between 1860 and 1870. With the signing of the Lateran Pacts, he restored crucifixes in some public places, set aside money to repair many of the churches damaged or destroyed during the First World War, and made religious instruction compulsory in elementary schools.

Catholic Action, the Church's lay organization, was allowed to continue, so long as it kept out of politics. The Catholic student organization FUCI also continued to function and became the training ground for many of the post-war Christian Democratic party leaders. The banning in 1928 of the Catholic Boy Scouts, which rivalled the fascist youth organizations, was seen as a setback, but in general the Church hierarchy was on Mussolini's side.²³ In the end, neither side had lost face in the settling of this long-running dispute.

Mussolini went on to use the Lateran Pacts to win a so-called plebiscite giving his regime some degree of legitimacy, with the clergy giving active support to Fascist party officials. The pope went so far as to call Mussolini “the man sent by providence.”²⁴

As discussed earlier, censorship of the press reached an extreme level in Italy during fascism. New newspapers were banned, but the church’s main newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano* [The Roman Observer] was kept on the list of papers permitted to be published. Newspaper publishers were called to a meeting in the fall of 1928 in which they were reminded that “in a totalitarian regime... the press is an element of this regime, a force at the service of this regime,” and that “Italian journalism is free because it serves only one cause and one regime. It is free because under Regime law it can operate, and that the operation – functions of control, of criticism, of propulsion ” are “an orchestra” in which “the *the* is in common.”²⁵ No one ever said fascist rhetoric made sense, but the message was made clear to publishers that they were not free to print what they liked.

Also during the Second World War, Pope Pius XII's alleged lack of comment, let alone protest, regarding the extermination of Jews and other atrocities ordered by Hitler during the Second World War has been written about by several authors in recent years, but this criticism has not appeared in the Italian press.

Religion-based Self-Censorship

Since the Second World War, press freedom in Italy has been dependent mainly on who holds political power, and political power has been almost exclusively in the hands of the church-backed Christian Democratic Party, or DC. As a result, a climate of censorship has come to be accepted by many Italians and Italian journalists. By 2000, that climate included a reluctance on the part of journalists to write stories that were critical of the church.

Generally, there are numerous reasons for self-censorship in the media: pressure from sources in and outside the newsroom, the lack of a robust newsroom culture, fear of violence, fear of legal action, fear of a loss of story sources and the potential career damage, fear of embarrassment, fear that a story is too complicated, boring or is unwanted by the market, for financial or material gain, because of respect or awe of a source, lack of experience and/or education, peer pressure, and tradition.

Tradition is one of the major reasons for self-censorship in Italy, but respect for the church and a lack of education and experience are also important. Self-censorship in regards to the church is best illustrated by the number of negative stories that appear in other countries that are either unpublished in the Italian press or are reported as foreign events not involving the church in Italy.

A startling example of this type of under-reporting occurred when a three-part series on AIDS in the priesthood in the United States was published by the *Kansas City Star* in January 2000 that claimed priests in that country were dying of AIDS at a rate at least four times that of the general population.²⁶ The series received widespread attention in the United States, Canada, England, and other countries. In all, 20 articles, letters, columns, and opinion pieces on the issue appeared in the *Star* in 2000 – but nothing appeared in Italy at the time, mainly because the series examined two church and cultural taboos: the sexuality of priests and homosexuality. When AIDS is reported in the Italian press it is usually about the number of immigrants with the disease,²⁷ or statistical stories that have been reported elsewhere.²⁸

A full six months after the *Kansas City Star* series, a related story finally appeared in Italy in the weekly political/news magazine *Panorama*. Journalist Milly Gualteroni interviewed two priests who were operating two centres in Italy to “cure” homosexuals within the priesthood.²⁹ No mention was made about the number of priests with AIDS in Italy or how it compared with the disease in the general population.

Ten months after the *Kansas City Star* series, *Panorama* published a short question-and-answer piece with a priest who had counselled several Italian priests with AIDS. In it, the 71-year-old priest denied AIDS was as widespread in Italy as in the United States. He added that, in his experience, those Italian priests who did have AIDS were heterosexuals who had contracted the disease from prostitutes.³⁰ Again, there were no numbers and homosexuality stayed in the closet.

The two articles appeared on page 72 and 78, respectively. The first article appeared to have been written because of an interview with one of the priests in a Berlusconi-backed newspaper, which it promoted in the article. Much of what *Panorama* publishes is cross-promotional articles for other Fininvest publications or products. The second article appeared simultaneously with the release of a book by the company's biggest competitor. It recounted the story of an Italian priest with AIDS and seemed to be an attempt to scoop the book's story. Regardless, the two articles and the book went unnoticed by the rest of the Italian press and media, as well as the Italian public. The rule of secrecy was broken; some listened, but few heard – or wanted to hear – and by the end of 2000 the story had disappeared.

Meanwhile, the story had only gotten bigger in the U.S. By November, evidence from death certificates showed the number of priests who had died of AIDS there was higher than originally thought.

Another disturbing example of under-reported news was the March 2001 series in the U.S.-based *National Catholic Reporter* that alleged sexual abuse of nuns by priests in 23 countries – many of them in the developing world, and some in Italy.³¹ The articles were based on several reports, some recent and others that had been around as long as seven years. They had been presented in Rome to various Catholic bodies, such as the Council of Sixteen, which is made up of the Union of Superiors General, the International Union of Superiors General, and the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, the Vatican office that oversees religious life. The issue was

also raised at a Rome congress of 250 Benedictine abbots. As well, Eduardo Cardinal Martinez, prefect of the Congregation for Religious Life, and his officials were briefed on the problem.

One of the many incidents of abuse described in the NCR report involved the testimony of a superior of a community of sisters in one country who was approached by priests requesting that sisters be made available for them for sex. When the superior refused, the priests explained that if the sisters were not provided they would have to go to the village to find women and therefore might get AIDS.

Another incident involved a community of nuns, many of whom were found to be pregnant during the same period.

The revelations merited only one article in each of Italy's two biggest-selling newspapers. The daily *La Repubblica* journalist Marco Politi wrote one story about the incidents in the NCR report.³² The accompanying story on the same page was about major Italian companies sending their top managers to monasteries for their spiritual health. *Corriere della Sera* ran one article as well, but buried it in its back pages. It opted to put a story regarding the pope's trip to Ukraine on the front page.

On the other side of the world, reaction to the NCR report in North America was swift and damning. Columns, opinion pieces, letters and other related articles appeared in most newspapers. In Canada, Joanna Manning, a former nun and author of the book *Is the Pope Catholic?* was quick to outline the problems in an opinion piece published in *The Globe and Mail*. Citing the Winter Report into the sexual abuse of children by priests at Mount Cashel, in St. John's, Newfoundland, she wrote:

... the rigid hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church accords overweening power to the clergy without any mechanisms for accountability. Secondly, church influence in education results in the inculcation of sexism and deference to male authority from an early age. Then there is a whole slew of problems associated with mandatory celibacy, which is compounded by the immature sexual and emotional development of many priests. And finally, it states, there has been a reluctance to implement the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-

65), which tried to alleviate the loneliness and isolation experienced by priests by giving the people more responsibility for running the Church. True in Canada. True in Africa as well. But the recommendations of the Winter commission's report have been consigned to oblivion, and reform in the Church in general has ground to a halt. The morale of Catholic clergy is at an all-time low and the cynicism of lay Catholics deepens. How much longer can Rome ignore the rumblings and cage the canaries? ³³

Manning makes two important points that apply to Italian journalists and Italians in general. First, most of them have also experienced the “rigid hierarchical structure” and “overweening power” of the clergy because they have grown up in Italy and are Catholic. Second, many have learned “deference to male (clerical) authority.” Why should Italian journalists be any different from other Italian Catholics when it comes to respecting and bending to pressure from church officials? The answer is that they are not.

Despite the many stories that have been published in Canada and the U.S. about the abuse of minors by priests – and the subsequent lawsuits – similar stories involving Italian priests were ignored in Italy in 2000. It was not that such incidents weren't occurring here. Italians occasionally joke sarcastically about abusive priests or knowingly lift an eyebrow when the possibility is mentioned, but public discussion of the issue remains taboo.

One of the very few stories regarding an Italian priest's abuses that appeared in Italy did not appear in the mainstream press or on television, but on the Internet. In November 2000, the Italian news Web site *Il Nuovo*, published the story of a priest who had been sent on a mission to India after having been accused of sexually assaulting as many as five young girls at a centre for children in Milan. The unnamed priest had been arrested on re-entry into Italy and was awaiting sentencing.³⁴ The story was not picked up by any other Italian publication or by television, by far the medium of choice in Italy. Because it appeared only on the Internet, the chances of it having been seen by Italians were minimal. At the end of 2000, only 15 per cent of the Italian population used the

Internet, compared with 30 per cent in France, 37 per cent in Germany, and 60 per cent in Canada, according to a study conducted by Ipsos Reid.³⁵ The chances of them having logged on to *Il Nuovo* and having actually read that particular story during the few hours that it was available online were miniscule.

Lack of a robust newsroom culture, combined with a lack of experience and/or education usually affects young journalists more than older ones,³⁶ and because most journalists in Italy are older this should not be a major concern. However, when tradition is combined with a lack of journalism education and a newsroom culture that is not lively and inquisitive, it becomes a problem. In Italy, there is a select group of journalists that cover the Vatican. They are made up of those journalists who have managed to gain the trust of Vatican officials after many interviews and much time. They have usually covered the Vatican for many years, either in the mainstream or religious press, and actually have a title. They are known as "Vaticanists."

There are few of these Vaticanists. The most notable one in Italy in 2000 was Marco Politi, a journalist at the daily newspaper *La Repubblica* and co-author with Washington journalist Carl Bernstein of *His Holiness*, a book about John Paul II's impact on modern history. By 2001, Politi had been covering the papacy for 25 years. He is a very skilled writer and has spent a lot of time cultivating his Vatican sources.

The style of writing Politi uses in *La Repubblica* often makes it seem as though his articles were painstakingly written. His words are very carefully chosen and there are no maybes or sensational phrases used. In effect, journalists such as Politi are softening or reshaping their copy to make it more palatable for their sources, editors and perhaps even for some of their readers.

The majority of Politi's sources are also foreigners. The fear of losing sources inside the Vatican is very real for Vaticanists. In some ways this means his stories can be considered under-reporting for fear of potential career damage, for respect, due to peer pressure, and possibly other reasons. But again, using foreign sources does protect him

and the local church in a way. Again, these stories can be seen as foreign issues involving the church outside Italy.

Tradition is an issue here too in that the Vatican does not have a tradition of being open with the press. It is one of the major problems journalists have in covering the church.

Covering the Church

One of the problems within the Roman Catholic clergy not mentioned by Manning is the culture of secrecy that exists within the Vatican itself. There is a verse that has made rounds of the Vatican bureaucracy – secretly, of course, – that sums it up quite well:

Don't think
If you think, don't speak
If you think, and you speak, don't write.
If you think, and you speak, and you write, don't sign your name.
If you think, and you speak, and you write, and if you sign your name,
don't be surprised.³⁷

Loyalty to the pope and church teachings is the first commandment for those working in the Vatican. That means never criticizing papal decisions. Vatican bureaucrats are considered to be “working for Jesus Christ who is working through the pope.”³⁸ That means journalists have an especially difficult time trying to cover church issues. Even those who are enemies of the Vatican refuse to criticize it to outsiders.³⁹ Much like the rest of Italian culture, it is extremely important for those inside the Vatican to never lose face.⁴⁰ And like the press offices of Italian politicians and their parties, the Vatican press office is not set up to facilitate interviews and help promote the Vatican's views through the mass media. It is set up mostly to write and send out press releases. In fact, media interviews with high-ranking Vatican clergy and other officials are rare. Simple requests

by photographers to take photos of artwork in the Vatican Museums usually take months to be approved.⁴¹ And for some reason, media are divided into two groups by the Vatican: electronic media and photographers are dealt with by the Council for Social Communications, while print journalists are dealt with by the Vatican press office.⁴²

As Marshall McLuhan explained in a letter written in 1971, “The church is so entirely a matter of communication that like fish that know nothing of water, Christians have no adequate awareness of communication.”⁴³

Sometimes, official press conferences are held during special gatherings, such as the synods. It took until 1994 for the opening presentation to the synod to be televised, but it was only for the press – not publicly – and requests for space to conduct interviews in a room near the synodal hall were denied. Reporters had to wait outside the Vatican gates and try to interview delegates as they came outside.⁴⁴

All synods are closed to the media and public, except for the official ceremonies. In recent years, more text from these meetings has been released, but getting anyone to comment on it is difficult. At the 1994 African synod, the English-language press spokesman was so concerned about protecting himself that he tape-recorded his presentation to avoid being incorrectly quoted – and being challenged later by higher officials.⁴⁵ At a spring 2001 consistory, only the foreign press reported that some cardinals were disgruntled at the lack of “collegiality,” the code word for democracy. Only after it was reported by the foreign press did it get re-reported in the Italian press. However, yet again, it was covered as what foreigners were saying.

Vatican officials have perhaps an even greater fear of the media than they do of insiders leaking secrets. They generally believe they will not be treated fairly by journalists. This is probably not an unreasonable fear considering the reputation Italian journalists have for exaggerating and manipulating news, and the number of foreign press journalists that reside in Rome and have no ties to the Roman Catholic faith. In reality,

however, Vatican officials and employees have little to fear from Italian journalists, again, because it goes against tradition to report negatively on them.

Priests, Politicians and the Press

Considering how long Italian priests and politicians have shared and competed for political power, it is not surprising that the church would eventually seek to combine and solidify that power in the new Italian republic. In 1943, a group of organizations that included the Catholic *Partito Popolare*, and Catholic trade unions and professional associations, which had vast memberships and influence in that period, joined forces to found the Italian Christian Democratic party. By 1946, Giulio Andreotti was given the key position of under-secretary to the prime minister after a chance meeting with a Vatican employee and soon-to-be prime minister Alcide De Gasperi. It was one of the most powerful jobs in the government. He became a junior minister in 1947 and went on to lead or hold major cabinet posts in 30 different governments. And he would go on to become one of the most powerful and regressive forces in Italian history.

Andreotti may be considered in some ways the quintessential Italian journalist. He easily made the jump from journalist to politician and has maintained his status as a professional journalist throughout his career. His is an Italian and Catholic philosophy; a view that in the grand scheme of things individuals can make little difference.

"She (Andreotti's mother) brought me up in the Catholic wisdom of the Roman populace never to over dramatize things, everything sorts itself out in time, keep a certain distance from things in life, not many things are really important," he once said.⁴⁶

He was wrong. His delay in making hard decisions and his minimizing of Italy's problems eventually resulted in a political class that rivalled some of the Third World's worst and a public debt that was the highest in Europe. And for someone who claimed to be such a devout Catholic, Andreotti had some very suspicious friends, such as Michele Sindona, the Mafia financier with Vatican connections, and Roberto Calvi, boss of the

Ambrosiano bank.⁴⁷ This bank, also known as the priests' bank, collapsed owing more than \$1 billion US to a number of Panamanian and Liechtenstein shell companies owned by the Vatican's *Istituto per le Opere di Religione*, or Institute for Religious Works (IOR).⁴⁸

Andreotti and the church used each other, but the deal wouldn't last. The banking and corruption scandals of the early 1990s made sure of that. There are still many in the Vatican who hope the Christian Democratic party can be reformed and revived.⁴⁹ Other countries in Europe, of course, also have powerful Christian Democratic movements and governments. What sets Italy apart is that the influence of the church has not been diminished as much as it has in other countries. Indeed, Italy has seen a pope who has taken an increasingly aggressive role in domestic Italian politics.

Certainly much praise has been given to *papa* Wojtyla, as he is called in Italy, for his role in the fall of communism in Poland. But the church attempted to play a major role in the 2001 national elections in Italy by trying to use the press to launch a platform based on Catholic teachings. Priests may not have directly ordered Catholics to vote for a particular party, as they have in the past, but it was made very clear – mostly through the press – what and who the faithful should be voting for.

While it is difficult to say exactly when the campaign leading up to the May 2001 elections began, by the summer of 2000, the church's involvement was front and centre in many Italian newspapers. The pope and several cardinals and bishops were speaking out on almost every issue confronting Italian society. And much of what was said was negative.

The first real signs of church interference became evident in May 2002 when plans began to be publicized for the first-ever Gay Pride Parade to be held in Rome that July. Although Gay Pride parades have been held in other countries for more than 30 years, Italian homosexuals had remained all but hidden from public view. It was decided among homosexual and gay rights groups that the start of the century should signal a new

openness. But for the Roman Catholic Church, the year 2000 was the year it celebrated 2000 years of Christianity and the two could never be celebrated together. Church officials and the head of the Jubilee committee spoke out sharply against every possible aspect of the parade, calling it disrespectful, ostentatious, mocking, and a dangerous security risk.⁵⁰ The Church decided to verbally attack the planned parade route because it was scheduled to pass a church, all of which was front-page news.

Politicians were feeling the strain and were unsure which side to take. The neo-fascist, right and centre-right parties predictably spoke out against the parade, calling for it to be cancelled. No shock there. But then-prime minister Giuliano Amato made the error of agreeing that such a display was “inopportune” during the Jubilee year, adding that “unfortunately” it couldn’t be cancelled because the Italian constitution guarantees the right to public expression. He had bowed to pressure from the church. He too had spoken out against it.

Ironically, Amato’s comments had the effect of galvanizing support for the parade. Even Amato’s wife said she didn’t agree with her husband. The parade went off without a hitch with thousands of supporters actively involved and virtually no negative reaction on the part of Romans. Instead of being an angry demonstration against the church, it was a colourful and festive celebration.

By mid-summer, the pope had taken up the cause of Italian prisoners who stay in grossly overcrowded cells and had begun protesting their plight. He called for an act of clemency for many of those who were imprisoned but that meant a political decision Italian politicians were reluctant to take.⁵¹ They had seen the effect such a proposal had had on Silvio Berlusconi’s first government, aiding in its collapse. Berlusconi had tried to have many of the businessmen convicted in the *Tangentopoli* scandals freed. This time, the pope’s appeal fell on deaf ears with some even suggesting he was playing politics on the backs of prisoners. Again, it was all recorded on the front pages of Italian newspapers.

The pope was just beginning. The next seven months saw a lengthy progression of headlines and front pages dedicated to the church's criticisms. The archbishop of Bologna called for the government to control immigration, allowing only Catholics into the country.⁵² Stem cell research was declared a danger to humanity.⁵³ The Vatican urged pharmacists and doctors not to prescribe a new morning-after pill, despite another version having been used by some 25,000 Italian women. Camillo Cardinal Ruini, president of the Episcopal Conference, challenged Health Minister Umberto Veronesi calling it a chemical abortion. Veronesi countered with the argument that life did not begin at the point in which the morning-after pill is used, and that all EU citizens are entitled to the same medical care whether they live in Lisbon or Palermo.⁵⁴ The European Union, as on many occasions, provided a good argument for lay thinking.

The church's own press, especially its daily newspapers *L'Avvenire* and *L'Osservatore Romano*, and its weekly magazine *Famiglia Cristiana*, not surprisingly, struck out fiercely against a long inventory of societal wrongs. *L'Avvenire*, is a daily published by the Italian Episcopal Conference since 1968, following other Catholic newspapers. It is known as the bishops' newspaper and is one of the better-designed papers in Italy, using colour on its front, unlike most other Italian dailies. It contains mostly columns and news articles that interest the faithful and a smattering of local, international and crime news. For a national newspaper, its circulation is low at 246,000,⁵⁵ but some of the non-religious dailies publish stories about what was written in it, so its messages receive wide circulation. Notable was its advertising company, Mondadori Pubblicità, which is part of Berlusconi's Fininvest empire.

In 2000, *L'Avvenire's* bishops/columnists condemned fast food for its "lack of a sharing aspect, its reflection of an individual relationship between mankind and God as established by Luther, its complete forgetfulness of the sacred aspect of food..." McDonald's, in particular, was accused of providing fast food that satisfies hunger as quickly as possible so people can do other things.⁵⁶ Disney was also in the line of fire for

its dolls, gnomes, little angels, and other toys, and for giving a false view of life as opposed to the “real life: joys, pains, dramas, and conflicts.” Disney products have only recently begun to be marketed in Italy. Halloween was judged to be harmful, although it was not a widely celebrated event in Italy. There were many more people in attendance at *Carnevale*, or Mardi Gras.

These criticisms, along with the church’s usual finger-pointing at couples living together, abortion, homosexuality, and vulgar television, made up much of the copy in the church press in 2000, and was re-reported in the secular press. Interestingly, the Constitutional Court also finally decided to scrap the article in Italy’s penal code that called for a year’s imprisonment for those who publicly “show scorn for the Catholic religion.”⁵⁷ This appeared as a brief in a few papers.

L’Osservatore Romano was more solemn in its criticism, probably more because of its style than anything else. It is a large broadsheet that has been compared to the former *Pravda*. It is filled with papal speeches, Vatican documents, approved commentary, and numerous large photos of the pope, which are reminiscent of some Middle Eastern newspapers in which daily photos of the local sheiks are obligatory. *L’Osservatore* has no advertising and its circulation figures are not released publicly. But they are said to be declining, as are those of most Italian newspapers. It is printed daily in Italian, weekly in Spanish, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and monthly in Polish. And because it does not publish anything that is not from official sources it fails as a source of up-to-date news.

By autumn, however, it too had joined in the political debate, calling the campaign a “a sad and disquieting display” that showed “a body politic with few ideas and the inability to fly high.” It joined then prime minister Amato in calling for party leaders to lower their abusive tones.⁵⁸ Once again, this was all re-reported in the mainstream press.

Founded on Christmas Day in 1931,⁵⁹ *Famiglia Cristiana* has the second-highest circulation of a weekly magazine in Italy with 863,115 copies.⁶⁰ Its distribution on

Sundays outside churches, in religious bookstores and through co-operatives are the main reasons for its success. The only magazine that surpasses it is the weekly TV guide *Sorrisi e Canzoni* with almost double the sales, which says something about Italian preferences. In an attempt to try to combat *Sorrisi e Canzoni*'s popularity, the TV listings are also included in *Famiglia Cristiana*, but with church-sanctioned program suggestions included. *Famiglia Cristiana*'s circulation is also declining, and has led it to join the list of "gadget" sellers – those who include detergent samples and other items with their publications in an attempt to sell more copies.

Famiglia Cristiana's saving graces are its controversial commentaries and coverage of church and political/social issues. And it must be said that the *L'Avvenire* and *Famiglia Cristiana* at a minimum provide a welcome break sometimes from the gossipy copy and blatantly sexist advertising found in most other Italian publications. Italian advertising is self-regulating and ad agencies use the concept "sex sells" almost to the exclusion of all other methods of promotion.

However, *Famiglia Cristiana* is unfailing in its promotion of the nuclear family. The majority of images and photographs used in it contain the slighter taller darker husband next to the fair-haired wife and one or two blond children – the church's and Italian culture's image of the perfect family.

By January 2001, after months of passing judgment on the election campaign, the church press was backtracking. It denied it was choosing sides and trying to tell Italians who to vote for as it had done so many times in the past. It claimed it had attacked both the left and the right. The coalition of left-wing candidate Francesco Rutelli had been blamed for its liberal views and Silvio Berlusconi's coalition had been mildly accused of being presumptuous in claiming to have won the election before Italians had cast their ballots. Berlusconi's coalition was said to have been considering a review of Italy's abortion law, but it was unclear whether that was left-wing fear mongering, an attempt by the right to gain the Catholic and anti-abortion vote, or wishful thinking on the part of the

church. By then, however, many politicians had had enough of being criticized by the church and the publisher of *L'Avvenire* was obliged to speak out claiming the paper was "honestly independent."⁶¹

Some politicians then went to the paper's rescue, saying it had a right to criticize politicians and Italian society on moral issues. Clerics also jumped to defend it, saying the church's press was only identifying problems and that "at least the bishops had pushed the importance of plurality in political choices, which is much different than the unified vision that the principal actors, who were supposed to inspire the body politic, were maintaining."⁶² All in all, it could be said that the election was a disappointing illustration of how petty the struggle between politicians and priests to gain power had become and how willing Italian journalists were to follow their squabbling.

The Church's Waning Power

Despite its persistence in the public eye, the church's power is waning. In reality, the beginning of the end of the era of church political dominance in Italy came on Sept. 20, 1870, when troops breached the defences of the papal state at Porta Pia. From then on, the Catholic clergy refused to take notice of the changing times and has paid dearly for it ever since. It forbade Catholics to vote or hold office in the new Italian state causing many Italians to go against their faith. It also stopped many good Italian politicians from becoming involved in the new government of Italy. Relations between the church and the anti-clerics who dominated the early governments were severely damaged.

Some believe the church did the right thing by banning voting and was just trying to protect itself. But the church had failed to keep in step with the people who make up its numbers. It had lost touch.

It took 100 years for another big blow to be made against church authority. In 1970, the Italian Parliament passed a law legalizing divorce. It was the culmination of a four-year campaign by the League for the Institution of Divorce, which mobilized the

middle class into action. Divorce was, and still is, contrary to church doctrine and to the policies of the DC, but together they failed. Four years later, a referendum on whether the divorce law should be repealed saw nearly 60 per cent of voters choosing to retain it and a turnout of 88 per cent.⁶³ The period also saw a sharp decline in church attendance, from almost 70 per cent of adults in 1956 to 35 per cent in 1972.⁶⁴

Again in 1974, the Italian Catholic press was struck with an unexpected side blow. The church was producing so many magazines, newspapers, journals, bulletins and newsletters that the postal system was overwhelmed. Italian mayors decried the fact that the religious press was actually blocking the distribution of regular correspondence, so a law was passed requiring the religious press to pay regular postal rates.

The result was an uproar in the Catholic press. Its headlines screamed of the continuing de-Christianisation of the country, and articles spoke of a vast plan of persecution. Many publications chose to beg for donations from the public in their pages, using painful images and promises of “abundant blessings, intercessions, prayers, graces,” and other undertakings by the church.⁶⁵ The surprising result was widespread public criticism, and the number of church publications declined.

Then in 1981, the referendum legalizing abortion was passed into law by an overwhelming majority, dealing yet another blow to the church's power. Only 33 per cent of the Italian population shared the Polish pope's view that abortion should be illegal.⁶⁶ This too struck at the heart of Catholic teachings. Italian society was becoming more individualistic, more liberal, and more democratic. The referendum outcome remains a sore spot for the pope to this day.

In fact, it seems that throughout his pontificate women have been a problem for the pope. The Western media has continued to report on his refusal to allow women freedom of choice on abortion or about his ban on women priests. In both instances, he has been accused of backwardness and insensitivity to the needs and aspirations of modern women. According to Bernstein and Politi, the pope met these charges with

annoyance. When he read them in summaries of news reports "he dismissed them with a twitch of his eyebrows."⁶⁷

Not long after he became pope, when a woman journalist asked him about the ordination of women, he shot back with: "The Virgin preferred to stand at the foot of the cross."⁶⁸

More recently, when the war in Bosnia began, the pope declared himself against abortions for Bosnian Muslim women who had been raped by Serbian soldiers. Author Dacia Maraini called on Italian women to withhold the 0.8 per cent of their taxes they could specify should go to the church for charitable works. She condemned what she called the "misogynist" church, and pointed out that since the legalization of abortion in Italy the number of abortions had gone down by about 12 per cent.⁶⁹ Where were Italy's female journalists during all this? The few that exist weren't writing about this or other related issues.

One prominent woman journalist who stepped down from her position as a columnist in 2000 said in an interview that the only issue she hadn't written about was incest – and that she had received innumerable letters from victims. For some unexplained reason she had chosen not to give them a voice.

Women seeking to conceive children in their 40s to 60s, known as "grandmother-mothers" in Italy, provoked a furious reaction from the clergy. Catholic theologians predicted it would result in the creation of orphans, but doctors rejected the accusation outright as hypocrisy. "The Church is against the pill, it is against abortion, and now it is against having children. The Church is obscurantist" one noted doctor said.⁷⁰ Many Italians were gradually coming to the same conclusion. The list of church failures, as well as its finger-pointing, goes on.

After the collapse of the DC, politicians took another chunk out of the church's armour. Socialist Prime Minister Bettino Craxi took to resolving most of the outstanding issues of the Lateran Accords and in the process radically changed the relationship

between the church, the state and society. Religious instruction in Italian schools was no longer compulsory, and marriages had to include a civil element, meaning the church had to incorporate a legal element into marriage ceremonies.

Most importantly, from 1990 the church had to be self-financing, meaning the state would no longer pay priests' salaries. It was a difficult change for a church used to depending on government support. Instead, the state allowed 0.8 per cent of taxes be directed to either the Roman Catholic Church, for religious or charitable organizations, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Assembly of God or the state. Church officials soon went about organizing large sentimental advertising campaigns during tax time to try to convince Italians to direct their contribution to the church.

But the real humbling of the church was yet to come. In 1992, during the period in which the *Tangentopoli* scandals exposed hundreds of cases of bribery and corruption, it was shown that some clerics were also involved – a shocking revelation for most Catholics. Mino Martinazzoli was chosen to lead the DC. In response to numerous charges regarding illegal party funding he declared: "I believe robbery is always immoral but the violation of laws on the financing of political parties is not theft. It is an irregularity which we have made a crime with penal sanctions."⁷¹ Martinazzoli was not thought badly of for this statement. Neither was Silvio Berlusconi for a similar statement he made two weeks before the 2001 election when he declared his offshore companies were good places to put his money in order to avoid paying taxes.⁷² Italians almost expect their politicians to be immoral or corrupt, but not their priests. And unfortunately, it became obvious that Italian clerics were not immune from this way of doing "business."

One very enterprising Italian journalist went from one end of the country to the other pretending to be a penitent in order to test the attitudes of the clergy. He chose churches most frequented by politicians and business. Kneeling in the confession box, he admitted complicity in the *Tangentopoli* scandals and would specifically use the word *tangenti*, or bribes. He confessed to having accepted and solicited party contributions

from leading industrialists in return for contracts. Only one of 47 priests invited him to make a full confession before he was prepared to grant full absolution.

One Milanese priest said: "If we're only talking about a few million lire (a few thousand dollars Cdn) I wouldn't bother the judges." Others gave him absolution for accepting two to three billion lire (about \$2 million Cdn) telling him to say three *Ave Marias* and three *Pater Nosters* and to give alms to the next beggar he saw.⁷³

The Italian press has reported on enough of these types of events for people to realize the church's problems. But it has stopped short of carrying out any real investigative work into the church. In 2000, the Italian press did, however, give space to outsiders wanting to make some criticism of the church and the pope. Foreigners and the foreign press are often used to make observations and criticisms about Italy that Italians won't, can't, or don't want to make. It is a form of under-reporting of the church. For example, Spanish pop singer Tonino Carotone, who became popular in Italy that year, was reported calling the Vatican a dictatorship with the pope as its leader.

"The pope is a very rich dictator. The Vatican defends the death penalty in cases of war, attacks gays and defends the powerful," Carotone was reported saying in *La Repubblica*, swearing he would never perform in the Vatican.⁷⁴ It is unlikely he would be invited in light of his colourful lyrics and the suggestive use of mannequins in his video.

Also interesting was the suggestion that the pope should retire, which was also re-reported with much interest by the Italian press. In January, German Archbishop Karl Lehmann, head of that country's Episcopal Conference, was reported to have asked that the pope step down in light of his medical problems.⁷⁵ But voluntary retirement for a pope is unheard of, at least in the church's recent history.

Many Italians have seen and heard the pope since he was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, and all would agree his condition has deteriorated. On Dec. 25, 1995, television viewers from around the world were shocked when the pope had to interrupt his Christmas sermon, being broadcast live from the window of his study, because of a

sudden fit of wretching.⁷⁶ And at midnight on New Year's eve 1999, when he made his address to the crowd gathered in St. Peter's Square to celebrate the new millennium, his voice was so slurred he could not be understood.⁷⁷ Italians found it difficult, if not impossible, to understand which language he was speaking even though he was speaking Italian. Most people left the event feeling saddened and concerned for him, almost wishing he would resign. But no Italian would suggest publicly that he step down. Instead, they let an outsider do it for them. And soon the backtracking in the press began. Lehmann claimed he had been misquoted and that he had never suggested the pope was incapable of doing his job. The church denied it was even under consideration. German Church officials had had it made crystal clear to them that the pope was not going to let poor health stop him from heading the church, even if secretly he may have wished to retire to a monastery in Poland. Re-reporting what the foreign press had reported in this instance was a way of deflecting criticism onto foreign journalists.

Pope John Paul II went on to preside over one of the biggest events in the church's history – the celebration of the year 2000 Jubilee. In all, 3,400 religious ceremonies in connection with the Jubilee would be held in Rome throughout the year. For many Romans, the event meant year-round traffic jams and an over-crowded public transit system in an already overwhelmed street system. Approximately 25 million tourists and pilgrims visited Rome in 2000 – eight million more than is usual. Most Romans left the city whenever possible.

For the church, it was a time for the reawakening of values, and of repentance and forgiveness of past failures. Stories in the press regarding the negative effects of the seemingly endless list of celebrations, processions, and concerts were rare. There was a Jubilee day for every category of person – including journalists.

The foreign press predicted chaos. "In the Inferno of Rome" read a headline in the French paper *Le Point*. "The Eternal City is Not Ready" said the *Sunday Telegraph* of London. They were right. Rome was not prepared for the onslaught of eight million extra

tourists. Transportation systems were not completed. Housing costs skyrocketed. Parking was more than its usual nightmare experience. The Italian press at the end of the year claimed the Jubilee had been a grand success, yet much of the public works that had been started were not completed until 2001, and some of it stands incomplete to this day. Some Romans spoke out about the unfinished subway stations and parking lots, yet few linked the Jubilee celebrations to the fact housing costs in Rome had double, tripled and quadrupled in some places. One person who did speak of the Jubilee as a spiritual flop was philosopher and Forza Italia MP Lucio Colletti. "The Jubilee? Just a phenomenon of the masses, vacuous and artificial, that paralysed Rome for a year," he said.⁷⁸ Colletti even went so far as to criticize the Vatican's exuberant take on the youth celebrations at Tor Vergata, just outside Rome, where an estimated two million teenagers gathered in the August heat. He pointed out that the morning after the event, boxes of condoms were collected at the site along with the tons of other garbage left behind.

He was one of about three people in Italy who voiced what most Romans thought but dare not say publicly – that when Catholics pay heed to the church it is out of formal respect, but they conduct themselves on the basis of their own principles. In private, Romans were comparing the event to Woodstock. Concerts are held every summer in Italy's beautiful piazzas, and are attended by thousands. Had the "international star" at the Youth Jubilee been Sting, and the event been promoted for a year, perhaps the result would probably have been the same.

Most of the pope's visits outside the country have been considered similar successes, with the pope's popularity ratings rising during these trips. In 1995, a visit to the United States drew millions of Catholics and non-Catholics, and caused an outpouring of adoration from the media.⁷⁹

The effects these visits have had on people in poorer countries and countries where human rights violations are excessive, however, cannot be discounted. Neither can the effect the medium of television has had on millions of people who saw the images of

the skiing and the hiking pope in past years. In print the pope can almost say what he wants, at least in Italy, where the press is still influenced by the church. That influence is waning, but it is still greater than in any other country in the West. And with the medium of television, the pope has also learned control. No one wants to give the pope bad coverage.

As Bernstein and Politi put it in regards to the pope's U.S. visit:

On the TV screen, as the pope and (Vatican spokesman) Navarro-Valls well understood, glory would invariably overshadow problems, emotion would overwhelm insight. Any uncomfortable questions from print reporters would be drowned out.⁸⁰

The Internet Pope

In 1999, Eric McLuhan predicted a Vatican Council III would take place in the near future. He was not wrong in thinking it was necessary, especially considering the many remarks made by his father Marshall McLuhan over the years about the church's need to respond to societal changes as a result of the computer. The idea of the church revisiting how it communicates its message is a good one. Eric wrote:

The purpose of this third Council will, like that of Vatican Council II, also be pastoral and will be to respond to the current assault on our society by the computer. It will have to deal with shedding the bureaucratic and administrative apparatus that the Church accumulated in response to the alphabet and to print. Something more like the Eastern Church may be in the offing: there will still be a magisterium and a doctrinal authority and a Pope, but no longer a Rome, that is, no longer a centralized bureaucracy.⁸¹

But the likelihood of a Vatican Council III happening in the near future now seems slim. Gradually technology is creeping into the Vatican, however, as was also evident by the ringing of a cellular telephone during a gathering of bishops in Rome in May 2001. The operations of the Vatican have also been altered by airmail, telephone, fax machines, jet planes, television, and computers. And much of the Vatican bureaucracy is now

controlled in computer files instead of paper ones. In 1995, the Vatican opened its own home page at www.vatican.va, and until October 1999, when hackers became too much of a problem, the pope even had a public E-mail address.⁸² But the exchange of paper for diskettes has not meant a greater openness with the faithful or with journalists.

McLuhan's vision of a technologically equipped Church involved the idea of the Internet as a democratic tool; of priests and parishioners all over the world having a say in determining church activities. In a 1970 interview he said:

In terms of say a computer technology, we are heading for cottage economies, where the most important industrial activities can be carried on in any little shack anywhere on the globe. That is, the most important designs and the most important activities can be programmed by individuals in the most remote areas. In that sense, Christianity – in a centralized, administrative, bureaucratic form – is certainly irrelevant.⁸³

In order for this democratic vision to be achieved it must also include greater openness with the media. However, the atmosphere of secrecy currently in place in the Vatican does not allow for a more democratic Church to exist. The Catholic Church has not acknowledged that freedom of expression and democracy must exist hand in hand within its doors. Instead, it has spent much time and energy trying to influence politics and halt progress. It has tried to maintain the *status quo*, mainly out of a fear of change and a fear of loss of power.

What church officials don't seem to realize is that greater openness can help create a greater understanding of the Catholic faith for Italians. And Italian journalists can do much to dispel the growing distrust among Catholics – if given the chance. Then, instead of reporting on what foreigners are saying, or under-reporting issues of real importance to the Church and Italian society, journalists could help create a new, more relevant, and inclusive Church, perhaps more like that hoped for after Vatican II.

End Notes

- ¹ Eco, Umberto. The Name of the Rose. Trans. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. and Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd. London: Vintage, 1998. P. 478.
- ² Reference to quotation by Gore Vidal in Richards, Charles. The New Italians. London: Penguin, 1995. page 26
- ³ McLuhan, Marshall. (Eds. McLuhan, Eric and Szklarek, Jacek.) The Medium and the Light. Toronto: Stoddart, 1999. P. 16 From a letter to his mother.
- ⁴ Martinelli, Alberto, Antonio M. Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi. Recent Social Trends in Italy: 1960-1995. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- ⁵ Putnam, George Haven. The Censorship of the Church of Rome. Vol. 1. New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1967. p1.
- ⁶ Ibid., 1967. p. 24
- ⁷ Reese, Thomas. J. Inside the Vatican. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998. p. 261?
- ⁸ Ginsborg, Paul. Italy and its Discontents: 1980-2001. London Allen Lane, 2001.
- ⁹ Ibid., 1998. pps. 248-9.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 1998. p. 252.
- ¹¹ Putnam, George Haven. 1967. p. 2
- ¹² Ibid., 1967. p. 2, 11.
- ¹³ Ibid., 1967. p. 44
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 1967. p. 2
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 1967. p. 3.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 1967. p. 4
- ¹⁷ Smith, Denis Mack. Modern Italy: A Political History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. p. 85.
- ¹⁸ Putnam, George Haven. 1967.

- 19 Ibid., 1967. p. 45.
- 20 Ibid., 1967. p. 48. quote
- 21 Cornwell, John. Hitler's Pope. London: Viking, 1999. p. 43-44.
- 22 Duggan, Christopher. A Concise History of Italy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 195
- 23 Ibid., 1994. p. 226-27.
- 24 Ibid., 1994. p. 227.
- 25 Farinelli, Giuseppe, Ermanno Paccagnini, Giovanni Santambrogio, and Angela Ida Villa. "Storia del giornalismo Italiano: Dalle origini ai giorni nostri" [The History of Italian Journalism: From its Origins to Our Times]. Turin:UTET, 1997. p. 288.
- 26 Thomas, Judy L. "AIDS in the Priesthood." Kansas City Star. Three-part series: 30 Jan. 2000: A1, 18, 19; 30 Jan. 2000: A1, 8; 1 Feb. 2000: A1, 9. Available through archive search at www.kcstar.com/newslibrary using the key words priests and aids.
- 27 "In Italia troppi bimbi sieropositivi" [Too Many Children Zero Positive in Italy]. La Repubblica. 27 Nov. 2000: 25.
- 28 "AIDS tre milioni di vittime nel 2000" [Three Million AIDS Victims in 2000]. La Repubblica. 29 Nov. 2000: 28.
- 29 Gualteroni, Milly. "le cliniche segrete per prete diversi" [The Secret Clinics for Priests Who Are Different]. Panorama. 22 June 2000:72-73, 75.
- 30 Amadori, Giacomo. "Prete e aids: vi racconto l'ultimo tabù" [Priests and AIDS: We Tell You of the Latest Taboo]. Panorama. 30 Nov. 2000: 78-79.
- 31 Allen, John L. Jr. and Schaeffer, Pamela. "Reports of Abuse." National Catholic Reporter. 23 March 2001. Available at www.natcath.com.
- 32 Politi, Marco. "Suore molestate e violentate: un rapporto accusa i sacerdoti" [Sisters Molested and Sexually Assaulted: A Report Accuses Priests]. La Repubblica. 20 March 2001: 29.
- 33 Manning, Joanna. "Sins of the Fathers." The Globe and Mail. 29 March 2001.A3.
- 34 Piscitelli,Olga. "Prete pedofilo" [Pedophile Priest]. Il Nuovo. 27 Nov. 2000. www.ilnuovo.it

- 35 "Internet Usage Growth Year-Over-Year." Table. Available at www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/pdf/mro10515_it.pdf
- 36 Kohut Andrew. " Self-censorship: Counting the Ways." Columbia Journalism Review May/June 2000.
- 37 Reese, Thomas J. 1998. p. 164.
- 38 Ibid., 1998. p. 165
- 39 Ibid., 1998. p. 165
- 40 Ibid., 1998. p. 166.
- 41 From a conversation with National Geographic magazine photographer James L. Stanfield on or about 31 Oct. 1997.
- 42 Reese, Thomas J. 1998. p. 138.
- 43 McLuhan, Marshall. (Eds. McLuhan, Eric and Szklarek, Jacek.) The Medium and the Light. Toronto: Stoddart, 1999. p. xxi. From a letter to Kristin Popik dated 28 May 1971, in the National Archives of Canada Collection.
- 44 Reese, Thomas J. 1998. p. 63.
- 45 Ibid., 1998. p. 63.
- 46 Richards, Charles. *The New Italians*. London: Penguin, 1995. p. 5.
- 47 Ibid., 1995. p. 6.
- 48 Ibid., 1995. p. 6.
- 49 Reese, Thomas J. 1998. p. 272.
- 50 La Rocco, Orazio. "Monsignor Com'astri: 'Ma non basta. Bisogna annullarlo'" [Monsignor Com'astri: 'But it's not Enough. They Need to Annul It']. La Repubblica. 25 May 2000:2.
- 51 Galluzzo, Marco. "L'appello del Papa non sbocca l'indulto.[The Pope's Appeal Doesn't Result in Pardons]". Corriere della Sera. 6 Nov. 2000.
- 52 "Biffi: 'Noi cristiani giudicati intolleranti solo perché non siamo omologati'" [Cardinal Biffi: 'We Christians are Judged Intollerant Just Because We're Not Like the Rest']. Corriere della Sera. 30 Oct. 2000.

- 53 Accattoli, Luigi. "Il Papa: biogenetica un pericolo per l'umanità" [The Pope: Biogenetics a Danger for Humanity]. Corriere della Sera 10 Nov. 2000.
- 54 "Pillola, scontro Riuni-Veronesi" [The Pill: Clash Between Cardinal Ruini and Health Minister Veronesi]. La Repubblica. 2 Nov. 2000.
- 55 "Stampa/I Quotidiani [Press/The Dailies]" Prima Comunicazione, Dec. 2000:196.
- 56 "Ecco il nuovo vademecum per il cattolico" [Here is the New Vademecum for the Catholic]. Corriere della Sera. 13 Nov. 2000.
- 57 "L'offesa all religione non è più reato" [Offending Religion No Longer Illegal]. Il Nuovo. 20 Nov. 2000.
- 58 Zuccolini, Roberto. "L'Osservatore Romano; c'è un clima di rissa che allontana I cittadini" [L'Osservatore Romano: There's a Climate of Brawling That is Distancing Citizens]. Corriere della Sera. 28 Nov. 2000.
- 59 Capuano, Carlo. La stampa cattolica in Italia. Palermo: Sellerio, 1982. p. 59.
- 60 "Stampa/I Quotidiani. [Press/The Dailies]." Table. Prima Comunicazione. Dec. 2000:196.
- 61 "Elezioni, il giornali dei vescovi: non tifiamo, Polo presuntuoso" [Election, The Bishops' Newspapers: We're Not Fans, Berlusconi's Polo Coalition is Presumptuous]. Corriere della Sera. 15 Jan. 2001.
- 62 "Rutelli-vescovi, il caso è chiuso [Rutelli to Bishops, the Case is Closed]." La Repubblica. 11 Jan. 2001: 23.
- 63 Smith, Denis Mack. 1997. p. 457.
- 64 Duggan, Christopher. 1998. p. 274.
- 65 Capuano, Carlo. 1982. pps. 13-14.
- 66 Smith, Denis Mack. 1997. p 469.
- 67 Bernstein, Carl and Politi, Marco. His Holiness: John Paul II and the history of our time. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. p. 513.
- 68 Ibid., 1996. p. 183.
- 69 Richards, Charles. 1995. p. 62.
- 70 Ibid., 1995. p. 143.

- ⁷¹ Richards, Charles. 1995. p. 61.
- ⁷² "Società estere legittime, utili per pagare meno tasse. [Foreign Companies are Legal; Useful for Paying Less Taxes]." Il Sole 24 Ore. 4 May 2001: 8.
- ⁷³ Richards, Charles. 1995. p. 62.
- ⁷⁴ "Musica: Carotone. 'Il Papa è un dittatore' [Music: Carotone. 'The Pope is a Dictator]." La Repubblica. 19 July 2000.
- ⁷⁵ Accattoli, Luigi. "Il Papa è malato, potrebbe dimettersi [The Pope is Ill, Could Resign]." Corriere della Sera. 10 Jan. 2000:15
- ⁷⁶ Bernstein, Carl and Politi, Marco. 1996. p. 531.
- ⁷⁷ Pollett, Rene. "Well-wishers Greet Weary Pope at Vatican." The Ottawa Citizen. 1 Jan. 2000: A5.
- ⁷⁸ La Rocca, Orazio. "E' stato solo immagine: la fede è un'altra cosa [It Was Just Image: Faith is Another Thing]." La Repubblica. 5 Jan. 2001: 8.
- ⁷⁹ Bernstein, Carl and Politi, Marco. 1996. p. 534.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 1996. p. 400.
- ⁸¹ McLuhan, Eric. In the introduction to The Medium and the Light. McLuhan, Marshall. (Eds. McLuhan, Eric and Szklarek, Jacek.) Toronto: Stoddart, 1999. p. xxvii.
- ⁸² Bartoloni, Bruno. "La sfida degli hackers al sito vaticano" [The Challenge of Hackers on the Vatican Website] Corriere della Sera. 29 Dec. 1999.
- ⁸³ McLuhan, Marshall. 1999. p. xxviii

Chapter Six

The Mafia and the Threat of Violence

"La mafia: non esiste." [The Mafia: it doesn't exist.]

– The age-old response to questions about the Mafia in Italy.

The Mafia Exists

It's easy to be swept up in the beauty of southern Italy's Mediterranean scenery, especially for the first-time visitor. White rock cliffs jut out over turquoise waters; palm trees line the old streets of its cities. Tanned young people scoot around on *motorini* in the endless sunshine, and lemon trees fill the air with their pungent perfume. It seems like a paradise on earth. But the longer one stays, and the more one listens to and watches the local people, the more disconcerting it becomes. There's a deep and persistent undercurrent of oppression and violence here.

In the province of Reggio Calabria, the first clue that something is not right is the sight of heavily armed police officers talking to passengers as they descend from the train in the railway station in Locri. Then there is the talk on the radio of the small businessman whose car exploded in the middle of the town of Reggio Calabria. And finally, there are the large newspaper posters that say a woman and her son were gunned down on their front steps shortly after enjoying an ice cream cone at a nearby ice cream shop. "*Donna assassinato. Moglia di pentito,*"¹ reads the headline. "Woman assassinated. Wife of a Mafia turncoat." This is the real southern Italy: the one tourists you don't see in the travel brochures; the one the Italian press tries to report on but does so sparingly because of the threat of violence.

The three main Mafia groups in southern Italy, and the less-recognized organized crime groups throughout the rest of the country, play a considerable role in curtailing

press freedom mainly using one method – fear. The level of their ability to use fear depends on how much power they wield in any given period. In the 1990s, their ability to intimidate journalists was said by some to have declined, but there was still the occasional brief that told of a journalist's cars being bombed, and the fear of Mafia violence still influenced what was being written or, more often, caused stories not to be written. By the turn of the century, reporting on the Mafia had been reduced to just three types of stories: those reporting the crimes committed by the Mafia; those reporting the arrests of *Mafiosi*; and those reporting the convictions or deaths of famous Mafia figures. Almost no other type of Mafia coverage existed.

Information regarding Mafia murders, shootings and arrests are usually taken from police reports, and the convictions of *Mafiosi* from justice department releases or from attendance at major trials. Reporting on the Mafia usually only skims the surface of its activities. For example, in 2000 there was no reporting on the *Mafiosi* involvement in money laundering via major world stock markets, the Internet and through offshore companies, or on the proffering of other services payable with virtual money. The so-called New Economy had been infiltrated by the New Mafia, but most Italians were unaware of it. And little on the Italian Mafia's links to emerging Mafia from other countries, or its effects on individual Italians was being covered. Victims of the Mafia's criminal activities are rarely interviewed. While many outside Italy thought the Italian *Mafioso* was just a Hollywood stereotype, the reality was much worse.

On March 21, 1997, an estimated 10,000 people gathered in Niscemi, Sicily, to remember those killed by the Mafia. According to Sergio Lepri, a director of the Italian news agency ANSA for 31 years, a total of 360 people had met their deaths at the hands of the Mafia over the last 50 years.² That may be a conservative estimate. *The Economist* magazine reported an ambiguous "several thousand" killed in Mafia-related incidents in Sicily alone between 1983 and 1993.³ What is clear is that whatever the number, the slain included both men and women, magistrates and police officers, politicians and civil

servants, innocent bystanders, children, babies – and journalists. And on that spring day in 1997, the names of the 360 victims were read out one by one after another over the loudspeaker. It took five hours to read them all.

There are no statistics available on how many journalists have been killed by the Italian Mafia. Estimates range from the tens to the hundreds. Many of their deaths are unsolved and some of their bodies have never been found, so their names are not on the lists of those killed by *Mafiosi*. The Journalists Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, lists just four names of journalists killed by the Mafia, yet some of Italy's most famous cases of assassinated journalists are not listed.⁴ Mauro De Mauro, who disappeared September 16, 1970, is ignored, as is Mauro Rostagno, who was killed September 25, 1988.

To understand how the Mafia uses fear to control the Italian press, a basic understanding of the history of organized crime in Italy is necessary. The Mafia goes back a long way, especially in southern Italy, and is the result of the struggle between rich and poor in the region. After the unification of Italy in 1860, "*signori*" were created to assure order in the south. The old aristocracy and the rich emerging bourgeoisie, who were often absent from their vast estates in southern Italy, often used these local men to protect their land and belongings from the more numerous peasants who were starting to exert their rights in the new Italy. The organization of these local controllers eventually reached the point where a code developed among them with one precise regulation: secrecy, or the *omerta*, as it is known in Italian.⁵ *Mafiosi* were "men of honour" and "courageous and valiant men" that "didn't have a fly on their nose," as they say in Italian.⁶ They wanted and demanded respect and did not follow the law, but saw personally to matters of justice.

The *Mafiosi* seized their moment to rise above the level of local enforcers following the Second World War. The country was in a state of great change: the body politic was undergoing a re-organization; the great land holdings were being divided; and much physical reconstruction was being done throughout Italy after the damage suffered

in the war. But, also important was that a lot of money was being spread around. In exchange for delivering the vote to the Christian Democrats, the *Mafiosi* gained participation in the management of state financing designated to the south.⁷ In a way, the Mafia filled a vacuum that the state had left open for it. Without being disturbed, it would continue and expand its illegal activities, bypass the justice system, and, in effect, become a sort of state within a state. Along the way, it gained a kind of respect, but it was one based on fear rather than honour.

By the 1960s, the Mafia controlled much of small and medium business in Sicily and its extortion and contraband cigarette smuggling operations experienced a boom. It was during this period that 24-year-old journalist Cosimo Cristina was assassinated after writing about the connection between the local Mafia and the upper middle class of Termini Imerese, near Palermo.

Cristina's body was found near railway tracks and his death was almost immediately pronounced a suicide by the investigating magistrate, despite the injuries he'd suffered, and the threats he had received by telephone and in person. One of the threats had even been recorded, according to Giovanni Cappuzzo, his partner in the new and independent newspaper they had launched together.⁸ Cristina was found with the left side of his head cut off and numerous cuts and bruises over the rest of his body. No autopsy was ordered and no funeral service was held, the local priests having decided Cristina's death was an "act of insanity."⁹

Six years later, an autopsy was finally performed after much pressure from Cristina's family, friends and colleagues, but the conclusion reached was again that he had committed suicide. The two forensic pathologists involved decided Cristina's injuries were sustained when he was run over by a train. However, a third pathologist, after re-examining the autopsy report stated that homicide could not be ruled out and that the autopsy had not been carried out on a scientific basis.¹⁰

Cristina's case is one of the most unsettling of the many journalists who have been murdered by the Italian Mafia because of his young age, the whisper campaign that followed his killing, and the extent to which people ignored what he had published in his newspaper. Piece by piece, Cristina had reconstructed the reasons behind a series of killings that had occurred three years earlier. He had identified the person responsible, demanding he be brought to justice.

By the 1970s, the Mafia's activities had grown from enforcement and cigarette smuggling to the international trafficking of illegal drugs. It had become the world's biggest provider of heroine for North America and of hashish for Europe. The profits were enormous and eventually this meant the Mafia had to find ways to invest and protect this money. This meant moving into other areas of business – legitimate and otherwise.

The 1970s were particularly violent, as described by Tim Shawcross and Martin Young in their book *Men of Honour*, regarding Italy and the U.S.'s most famous *pentito*, or Mafia member turned informant, Tommaso Bruschetta.

There is no doubt that the narcotics trade has altered the Sicilian and American Mafia. Although it became the Mafia's most lucrative enterprise, it has also generated more murder, violence and betrayal than any other criminal activity. As the profits spiralled, so did the need to protect them, hence the assassination of the "illustrious Corpses."¹¹

Aside from the Sicilian Mafia organization *Cosa nostra*, (which translates literally as Our Thing), three other groups are identifiable by name: the *Camorra* in Naples; the *'ndrangheta* in Calabria, which is believed to have taken its name from the Greek word *andragathia*, meaning manliness; and the New United Holy Crown of Puglia, in the heel of Italy. It was at the beginning of this period, in September 1970, that the 49-year-old journalist Mauro De Mauro disappeared.¹² De Mauro was working for the newspaper *L'Ora* and also wrote occasionally for *Il Giorno*, of Milan, and for Reuters. He was an experienced journalist who wrote extensively about the Mafia and is said to have had

several sources within the organization. At the time of his disappearance, he was investigating the death of Enrico Mattei, president of ENI, the state petroleum company. De Mauro told colleagues that he had discovered the scoop "that would make all Italy tremble."¹³ Five weeks after he went missing, the telephone operator at the Regional Assembly of Sicily received a phone call saying De Mauro was dead and where his body could be found. The carabinieri police went to the location, but there was no body, and De Mauro's disappearance went unsolved.

It took testimony from Bruschetta in 1991 for the Substitute Prosecutor of Palermo to formally declare that *Cosa nostra* was involved in De Mauro's death, and to reopen the investigation. But it yielded few results.

In January 2001, another Mafia boss giving evidence to investigators told them he knew who had killed De Mauro, why, and where his body was buried. Altofonte boss Francesco Di Carlo claimed De Mauro had discovered that Fascist Prince Junio Valerio Borghese was planning a coup attempt, and that he had secured the support of the Sicilian Mafia for it.¹⁵ The story ran for just one day. No other reports followed in the press. Nothing was published regarding whether De Mauro's body had been found.

In the 1980s, the Swiss press started reporting that the Mafia was behind some of its big banking and pharmaceutical industries. The Italian press followed with its reporting on justice department investigations into the Ambrosiano bank scandal. But by then, the Mafia had gained so many political allies, and was so wealthy and violent that it started eliminating the high-level people who got in its way. The victims included Boris Giuliano, head of the mobile police squad of Palermo; anti-Mafia Judge Paolo Borsellino; Emanuele Basile, captain of the carabinieri police force; and the famous journalist and playwright Giuseppe Fava.

Fava, at the age of 59, was assassinated with five shots to the head from a gun with a silencer in 1984.¹⁶ He had just parked his car in the parking lot of a theatre where his granddaughter had a small part in a play. When police arrived at the theatre, instead of

preserving the crime scene, they took Fava's body to the local hospital to await the investigating magistrate. Any evidence that might have been found in the parking lot was destroyed.¹⁷

Like Cristina, Fava owned a newspaper and was relentless in his pursuit of the Mafia in Catania, on Sicily's east coast. He made a particular point of denouncing the collusion between the local Mafia, the P2 Masonic Lodge and four local *cavalieri del lavoro*, or Knights of Labour, a title given by the state to men in public recognition of their work. To others, they were known as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.¹⁸ Fava had also long opposed the installation of a U.S. atomic missile launch site in Sicily, which would make Sicilians a potential target in any conflict involving Europe or the U.S. Several local businessmen would profit from constructing the site.¹⁹

Following countless editorials and exposés on local scandals and mafia operations – including reports on the 250 murders in Catania between 1980 and 1981 – a letter threatening Fava with death arrived at the newspaper. Then a small bomb was sent to the paper, damaging the entrance to the offices. No one was injured. It was a warning that Fava accepted but did not heed.

A Mafia *pentito* later told justice officials that Fava had actually escaped three murder attempts during December 1984. The fourth was fatal. He also testified that anyone and everyone who could have testified against Fava's killers had been paid off.²¹

Then the classic smear campaign against Fava began. He was accused of being an extortionist, and was said to have been killed by the jealous husband of a lover. The rumours started with small talk in the local coffee shops, a few restaurants and offices, and ended with speculative articles in a few papers and finally in the city's main newspaper.²² The words had the effect of discrediting Fava.

Next, it was said that because the gun used to kill him was of low calibre and easily available the shooting must have been of a "private nature."²³ The Sicilian Mafia is known for its use of high-powered weaponry. This was followed by the opinion of a ballistics

expert that the gun used to kill Fava did not have a silencer. The case became more confused, but again no one investigating it took the time to go back over what Fava had written, and, more important, about whom.

Other Mafia *pentiti* wrote letters about or "confessed" their involvement in the killing, and as a result, Francesco Giammuso, of the Santapaolo Mafia, was eventually found guilty and sentenced to life in prison for the murder of Fava. He was freed in May 2001, but was arrested again and returned to prison by the Court of Appeal.²⁴

During an interrogation in 1993, *pentito* Maurizio Avola claimed that the Mafia had planned to kill Fava's son on the ninth anniversary of the murder. Claudio Fava was by then a journalist, writer, politician, and one of the country's most public anti-Mafia campaign figures. Avola said the killing was to take place on the same spot where his father had died, during a memorial service for him. But the considerable police presence there that night foiled their plans.²⁵

Another case is that of Guiseppe (Beppe) Alfano, the Catania correspondent for *La Sicilia*, who was shot to death in 1993, at 48 years of age. He had uncovered a scandal involving a group of *Mafiosi*, local politicians and the operators of a private social assistance association that had been taking government funding and using it for their own purposes.²⁶ Alfano had long written about the evils of the Mafia, especially in regards to young people. He denounced the Mafia and local politicians for allowing children to run the streets with nothing to do, making them easy prey for *Mafiosi* looking for younger members to fill their ranks, do their dirty work, or to become their customers. In the early 1990s, many teenagers and young adults were killed or went missing in the heroin wars in that city. When a Mafia cemetery was discovered and several of the bodies of those missing were found, Alfano denounced the "unheard of ferocity" in which they were killed.²⁷ In one spot, two youths had been found beaten to death, lying in a pool of blood and brains, their arms and legs tied together behind them.

When the social assistance centre was shut down and those responsible were arrested, charged, and convicted, Alfano was given credit for it by the judge.²⁸ From then on he knew his days were numbered. Alfano told friends and colleagues he expected to die in December 1992.²⁹ Instead, the Mafia waited until January 8, 1993. He had just picked up his wife in his car and they had driven home. She got out of the car and suddenly he shouted at her to run to the house and lock herself inside. He pulled out of the driveway and sped away. Not long after, the family heard police sirens. Then they received a phone call from his newspaper. Alfano was dead.³⁰

Following an investigation involving the testimony of numerous *pentiti*, three *Mafiosi* were charged with the murder of Alfano. One was convicted and sentenced to 21 years in prison. The other two were acquitted. But on appeal, another of the three charged was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison.³¹

The case of Carmine "Mino" Pecorelli, a journalist who was shot to death in Rome in March 1979, also warrants discussion here because his case remains unsolved. In the years since his death, Pecorelli's name has been destroyed with talk in the press and in political and social circles of his having been a blackmailing journalist and the editor of a scandal sheet. The de-legitimization of Pecorelli has been complete.

As the head of a newspaper called *Op*, Pecorelli is said to have blackmailed many politicians, threatening to print damaging articles about them.³² But whether Pecorelli was a blackmailer or not, he had many high level sources in and outside the government, some of whom would leak stories to him in order to damage their opponents and settle scores. And his information was often reliable.

The investigation into Pecorelli's death went nowhere until 1993 when Italian prosecutors got to meet with Tommaso Buscetta in the U.S. Buscetta was then, and would remain until his death from cancer in April 2000, in the U.S. witness protection program. He was responsible for the convictions of many *Mafiosi*, and revealed many of the secrets of the Mafia for the first time. He accused seven-time prime minister and

Senator for Life Giulio Andreotti of having commissioned the Mafia murder of Pecorelli. Andreotti was said to have strong ties with the Sicilian Mafia and it was through them that his party, the Christian Democratic party, stayed in power there for so long. Other *pentiti* followed with similar accusations regarding Andreotti's involvement in Pecorelli's death.

At the time, Pecorelli was also said to have been the only person, aside from anti-terrorism boss General Carlo Alberto Della Chiesa, (also murdered by the Mafia), to have read the notes written by former prime minister Aldo Moro during his time in captivity.³³ Moro was kidnapped in the spring of 1978 and his five bodyguards killed by the Italian terrorist group, the Red Brigade. Two months later Moro was found dead in the back of a vehicle parked in the centre of Rome. At the time of Pecorelli's death, it was suspected he had threatened to use damaging information regarding Andreotti, possibly about his Mafia connections, in the notes.

It has never been proven that Andreotti commissioned the murder of Pecorelli. In fact, in September 1999, Andreotti was acquitted of charges that he had asked the Mafia to get rid of Pecorelli. After the decision, Andreotti said he was satisfied that the justice system had functioned properly and that it would again. He was scheduled to face further charges in the future regarding his involvement with the Mafia in Palermo.³⁴ Pecorelli's sister, Rosita, said she, too, still had faith in the justice system, but also believed the vast quantity of evidence collected against Andreotti. The verdict is being appealed.³⁵

The public, 20 years after Pecorelli's killing, seemed ambivalent. Many people seemed to think he got what he deserved, and in print his name was almost always preceded by the words "blackmailing journalist."

While Cristina was one of those journalists whose age and inexperience combined to make him vulnerable to the Mafia, it cannot be said that Fava, De Mauro and Pecorelli were unaware of the danger they were in. But the pattern that emerges in the majority of Mafia assassinations of journalists is as follows: journalists write damaging stories about

the Mafia or those closely associated to it; they all, for various reasons, choose to ignore or don't recognize the first and second warnings they receive to stop writing such stories; and after their deaths they are subjects of a whisper campaign to discredit them. In many instances, the cases remain unsolved, as they do in many Mafia killings.

By the year 2000, not many Italian journalists were willing to follow that pattern – and understandably so. Those journalists who have managed to get inside the Mafia in some way and gain access to inside information are in most cases those who have been killed. Often they have been younger journalists, anxious to expose corruption and too naïve to understand it can mean death. Or they have been older, experienced and famous journalists, like Fava, who have either deduced a situation or have had information passed along to them because they are well known, and they have been unwilling to just let it go.

The Mafia and the Message

The threat of violence has long been used by *Mafiosi* to stop journalists from writing stories about them. It usually takes much provocation in the form of a series of articles or one very damaging article before any serious action is taken, but the threat is always there. That threat usually comes as a verbal warning first; then some action is taken that serves as a second warning, such as the bombing of the journalist's car or the burning of her or his home. If those warnings aren't heeded, and the journalist persists, the risk of physical danger sharply increases, in many cases leading to death.

A stunning example of this type of second warning appeared on the late-night television news in Italy in July 1999. A newspaper journalist based in Reggio Calabria, who had written about the Mafia for *La Gazzetta del sud*, based in Messina, a short distance across the Strait of Messina in Sicily, returned to his condominium one evening after work, parked his jeep under the building, and went upstairs to his home. Then his jeep blew up. No one was injured, but the message was received – and not only by him.

Although the audience watching the videotape that appeared on television that night was relatively small, it still numbered in the thousands.

However, the following day, news of the incident did not appear in Italian newspapers. The number of people it should have reached was drastically limited. Why wasn't the story published? It's highly unlikely the Mafia's grip reaches into all of Italy's approximately 80 newspapers. It's more likely the incident was not considered worthy of much coverage because it is so common.³⁶ However, 15 months later, the story was followed up in the papers when the same journalist was arrested on a charge of criminal association, along with numerous other high-ranking citizens and politicians from Calabria all arrested on Mafia-related charges. Anti-Mafia investigating magistrates alleged that he had written a series of articles in which he had tried to discredit the local hospital manager in order to attempt to have him removed and replaced by another manager at the disposal of a local construction giant accused of being a *Mafioso*. The hospital was soon to undergo reconstruction valued in the billions of lire.³⁷

In this instance, the journalist involved was not the only one among those arrested to have received a warning from the Mafia to stay in line. The investigation into the connection between Calabria's health department and the *'ndrangheta* had actually begun in February 1999 when the car of the director general of the hospital unit was intentionally torched.³⁸ But regardless of whether the journalist and other officials had been intimidated into acting on behalf of the Mafia or not, they were still charged. Mafia association in Italy is considered a serious crime. It's just that for those being threatened by the Mafia, the prospect of possible jail time is less serious than the alternative.

Another similar incident that resulted in a tiny brief on page 24 of *La Repubblica* in January 2001 involved journalist Maria Concetta Goldini, the Gela correspondent for the daily *La Sicilia*, based in Catania, Sicily. Goldini's car was stolen, taken to the historic centre of Gela and then set on fire. Goldini, 37, said she had no idea why she had been targeted. She had been reporting on Gela for about 10 years.

"Certainly doing this kind of work in a city like this you have to account for the fact that sooner or later something like this is going to happen. But today I came to work as I usually do, and I wasn't concerned about anything. And there were other colleagues with me from the editorial staff," she said.³⁹

Either Goldini was trying to cover up her suspicions out of fear or she honestly didn't understand the warning. Sometimes it takes time for the motivation behind these warnings to be made clear. Goldini claimed she hadn't written anything that would have attracted Mafia attention, but perhaps she had unknowingly touched on an issue that was somehow connected to the Mafia.

Gela, on Sicily's south coast, is far enough away from Rome for *La Repubblica* to publish a brief about Goldini's story without having to worry about it too much. It is also one of many towns notorious for its Mafia activities. Gela was the site of another act of violence directed against a journalist about 10 years earlier. Donata Calabrese was assassinated there after having found flowers on her car.⁴⁰ The flowers were not the gift of an admirer. Rather, they were the foreshadowing of her funeral. Unfortunately, she did not heed the warning.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify the control the Mafia has over the Italian press. Even official figures regarding the Mafia are sketchy at best. Too much of the Mafia's activities go unreported to the police. In general, crime in Italy has been rising steadily in the past 30 years. In 1999, for example, the latest year for which data is available, 12 banks and post offices (Italian post offices offer many of the same services as banks), 241 businesses and 676 homes were robbed every day.⁴¹ In 1998, reported frauds had reached 60,000, up almost 90 per cent from 1990, although again, it may be that more people were willing to report them in the late 1990s than in the past due to recent government attempts to assist Mafia victims. In 1995, it was estimated that as many as half of Italian shopkeepers paid *pizzi*, or protection money, to *Mafiosi*,⁴² and by 2000, the new slogan of extortionists was, "Pay a little by having all pay."⁴³

Mafia killings were down from 719 in 1991 to 208 in 1998⁴⁴ and "excellent cadavers" were fewer by far in the year 2000. But in southern Italy, 17 people per month were still being assassinated by organized criminals.⁴⁵ And in Sicily, Calabria, Puglia, and Campania, extortion, explosions, and intentionally set fires were all on the rise. During the 2000-2001 election campaign, several buildings in cities in the centre and north of Italy were targets for bombings, including that of the communist newspaper *Il Manifesto* in Rome. In that incident, a suspected terrorist was arrested.

The Mafia also uses the press as a messenger, sending ransom notes and making telephone calls to newspaper editors regarding kidnapping victims.⁴⁶ In some parts of Italy, kidnapping is considered a good source of income. In 1995, journalist and author Charles Richards described the Calabria "industrial triangle" of San Luca, Natile, and Plati as the kidnap capital of the country, saying "their victims or their families have led to a resource transfer from the North to the South of proportions that any social engineer would be proud of."⁴⁷

In reality, kidnappings occur throughout Italy. Sardinia was the site of a much-publicized kidnapping in late 1997, as was Rome early in 2001. In these instances, the cases received much attention, likely because the daughters of a high-level and wealthy businessman and banker respectively were held for ransom, and both sets of kidnappers were captured, charged, and convicted relatively quickly – one of whom was a woman of 63.

But in the year 2000 alone, the list of those kidnapped whose stories received virtually no coverage included: a 15-year-old girl in Turin; the son of a transport company owner in Basiglio; a high-level bank employee and his children in Rome; a bank director and his family in Sardinia; a jeweller in Milan; and the wife and son of another jeweller in Rome. The reasons why these kidnappings weren't covered vary. Some were never heard of because they were so "average," and some because ransoms were paid, which, incidentally, is illegal in Italy in a weak effort on the part of the government to try to stop

kidnappings. Others got little press because they were resolved, or were fake, or because those involved feared further reprisals on the part of their kidnappers, who in some instances were Mafia members.

The Mafia also uses the media to get its messages across to its own. In June 2000, a 48-year-old dentist in Caltanissetta, in southeast Sicily, was arrested and accused of being a Mafia boss and of having used two private radio stations to broadcast instructions and messages to Mafia members.⁴⁸ Thirty-four other people were also arrested in connection with the operation. The language the dentist used on the radio was said to have been in code and included information on Mafia meetings and instructions to Mafia figures in hiding. News of the arrest was reported in a brief in the back of national newspapers and had been taken from a police press release.

The most well-publicized Mafia message of the 1990s was that sent to the famous columnist and late-night TV talk show host Maurizio Costanzo. In 1993, Costanzo's car was blown up near the theatre in Rome where his nightly show is produced. Costanzo's show is considered required viewing for anyone interested in current events in Italy. He had long been a critic of the Mafia, often interviewing anti-Mafia judges and Mafia informers on his program. He was even said to have transformed the show into a "little forge of denunciations,"⁴⁹ but that stopped after the bombing. The Mafia was no longer mentioned by Costanzo. From May to August of that year, five car bombs in Rome, Florence and Milan left 10 people dead and dozens injured. Florence's Uffizi art gallery and some of its priceless artwork was damaged, as was the pope's own church at San Giovanni in Laterano, and the San Giorgio in Velabro, after he criticized the Mafia earlier in the year. A Palermo priest who had been an outspoken opponent of the Mafia was also shot.

Investigators said the bombings had been ordered by the Mafia to show its strength after the January arrest of its "boss of bosses" Salvatore Totó Riina.⁵⁰ Some said the church bombings were a sign the Mafia was angry that its so-called non-belligerent

accord with many priests was crumbling.⁵¹ Fewer and fewer priests were willing to absolve *Mafiosi* in the confession boxes or conduct their funerals.

The Uffizi bombing could only be explained as a strike against what Italians consider most precious – their art and architecture. But whether these were the messages the Mafia was trying to convey is still not completely clear. The Mafia works in mysterious ways. Sometimes it takes weeks, sometimes years, but eventually the message is usually understood. As Calabria journalist Roberto Isa flatly puts it, "It's almost impossible to understand how they move. The Mafia calculates everything. You cannot escape the pistol of the Mafia."⁵² Isa writes for a travel magazine.

The Mafia's Control Over the Press

The killing of innocent bystanders by the Mafia is common in Italy. Extensive and in-depth reporting of it is not. One such victim was Giuseppe Grandolfo, 39, killed in 2000 in Bari, on Italy's southeast coast. He was playing cards in a coffee bar when he was shot to death. The intended victim was a local Mafia boss, also in the bar at the time. He was injured in the shooting, but no one in the bar admitted having seen anything.⁵³ The resulting press report was a brief.

Another victim was 73-year-old pensioner Ferdinando Chiaretti, who was walking along the main street in Strongoli, in southern Italy, when he was shot down in cold blood.⁵⁴ Three suspected *Mafiosi* on the street were also killed. The shots had been fired in the midst of hundreds of people, and in the presence of a police officers in a nearby van who gave chase. The killers managed to escape, injuring several officers during their getaway. Again, this death of a passer-by was reported in a brief.

One of the saddest Mafia shooting in 2000 occurred in November in Naples when Valentina Terracciano was killed in her uncle's flower shop. This shooting received widespread press coverage, likely because of the Valentina's age: she was just two years

old.⁵⁵ The child was in the shop with her parents when two men entered claiming they wanted the money in the cash register. In fact, their objective was to kill the child's father, who was allegedly involved with the Naples *Camorra*. Five shots were fired, two of which mistakenly struck Valentina in the head. Other shots injured both her parents. The two men involved in the shooting were found dead near Rome a few days later: killed by their associates because they had botched the shooting. The Mafia boss suspected of ordering the killing was captured two months later when he came out of hiding to visit a dentist.⁵⁶

This time the press covered the events as they unfolded. It helped that they unfolded rapidly. But the greater story of the enormous Mafia problem in Naples, the reasons for it, and its effects, went virtually untold.

For an outsider, it's difficult to understand how this kind of death and destruction of lives can continue. Lepri said ANSA's Palermo office was "one of the most active, despite the difficulty working, and the personal risk that all staff were under." Even he admitted it was not easy to understand why the Mafia continued to have such a grip on the people.⁵⁷

But this grip has a long history and has reached as high as the upper levels of the Italian government, and most people would rather ignore it. In a national opinion poll taken in 1962, one third of the Italian population said they had never heard of the Mafia and another third said they only knew of its name.⁵⁸ That same year, the government commissioned a parliamentary inquiry into the Mafia, but the central powers continued to ignore the Mafia or denied its existence.⁵⁹ Fernando Tambroni, Italy's interior minister between 1955 and 1959 and prime minister in 1960, refused to consider the crimes of the Mafia as being different from other crimes. Historian and author Denis Mack Smith described events in the subsequent years as follows:

After many years of investigation, successive parliamentary commissions continued to produce voluminous majority and minority reports from which it is

clear that *Mafiosi* could rely on collusion with some politicians and judges, thereby securing their own immunity from prosecution. But the substance of these reports never received much publicity. Some outspoken members of parliament were conveniently assassinated after they tried to insist on greater outspokenness over Mafia crimes, and it had already been learned that any over-inquisitive journalist might simply disappear without trace.⁶⁰

In the late 1990s, when people were asked about the Mafia in their hometowns, there were few who were open to discussing that either. The reply was often the same. "The Mafia? The Mafia doesn't exist in my town." There are no recent polls or surveys like the one done in 1962 to show how widespread this sentiment is now. But after the Mafia maxi-trials that began in the mid-1980s it was foolish to deny the Mafia's existence, even though many still did. It is true that in some towns and cities in southern Italy, the Mafia doesn't exist, but in many it does. It also exists in towns and cities throughout central and northern Italy, although its hold on ordinary people is not as strong, and its operations are less obvious. People have less of a history of Mafia dominance and more options for protection from the Mafia in the north.

But how could this head-in-the-sand attitude continue into the year 2000? Again, fear is the main reason. Part of it is also disdain for the idea that their hometowns and cities may be in the clutches of the Mafia and the image problem that goes with that. Another is reluctance to recognize a problem many consider too big to resolve – again due to fear. Mafia victims feel isolated and their voices are rarely heard in the media. Their stories are not being told.

Careful Writing

While the Mafia has on many occasions murdered journalists to stop them from writing about its criminal activities, it has often had enough control over the press not to have to go that far. On many occasions it has been obvious that the Mafia has a tight hold

on a newspaper's owners and editors. Stories that have a Mafia connection are usually written in very veiled fashion. Sometimes, the astute reader can only understand the meaning by reading between the lines.

In a rare and very carefully worded report on the difficulties involved in doing business in southern Italy by the financial paper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, the city of Gela was given as an example of a place where the threat of the Mafia has made it difficult to attract investment.⁶¹ The journalist used a discussion on "security issues" to explain the problem. However, he did go as far as to say that in Gioia Tauro, not far from the toe of the boot of Italy, businesspeople were so afraid of the 11 families, or clans, that make up the Piana Mafia group there that they refuse to speak to journalists about it.

"Here nobody wants to be a hero," was the only comment made by one businessman.⁶² Gioia Tauro Mayor Giorgio Del Torrione said the *'ndrangheta* made up only one per cent of the population of Calabria. He didn't discuss the percentage of the population affected by it, and his was one of just two direct references to the Mafia in the entire package.

The report was an example of how difficult it is to cover the Mafia problem, in addition to showing its reach. Only by reading into the story could one understand what the journalist was trying to say – that despite all the money invested in the south by the Italian government and the European Union, the Mafia is blocking economic development there.

Mafia influence over the press was perhaps best illustrated during the first of the famous Mafia "maxi-trials" in Sicily, according to journalist and author Alexander Stille. These Mafia trials began in 1985 and ended with guilty verdicts for 344 defendants totalling 2,665 years in prison. Before and during the first trial, Palermo's leading newspaper *Il Giornale di Sicilia* sharply criticized the process for its high cost, the disruption of citizens' sleep due to police sirens and the fears of the neighbours of Mafia prosecutors that they might be in danger of becoming innocent bombing victims because

of their proximity to these national heroes.⁶³ This was all while students were demonstrating in support of the trial and school children were writing to the newspaper in defence of the two prosecuting attorneys. Stille says that instead of supporting the magistrates' efforts, the paper held the odd position that the Mafia's position was equally defensible.⁶⁴

By the 1980s, the Mafia moved on to trying to control the government by killing those that got in the way of its operations and making sure those who replaced them were on side. The list of those who stood up against the Mafia and died for it is lengthy: Sicily's regional president Piersanti Mattarella; the regional secretary of the PCI party, Pio La Torre; the Prefect of Palermo, General Alberto Dalla Chiesa, and others. These kinds of killings of politicians, judges, police officials, journalists, and other well-known people are known as "excellent" killings in Italian, in reference to the high level of respectability and public visibility of the victims. Two of the Mafia's most "excellent cadavers" were those of anti-Mafia judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino.

On May 23, 1992, Falcone, his wife and three bodyguards were killed when their car exploded on route from the airport to Palermo. The bomb used was so powerful it destroyed a portion of the highway. Two months later, Borsellino and five bodyguards were also killed by an explosion as he arrived for a Sunday visit with his mother in the centre of Palermo. These two assassinations were a massive wake up call for the Italian people, and the importance of the demonstrations that followed was not overlooked by the press. ANSA produced a total of 8,727 news articles that year. It would take six years for Italy's principle news wire service to come close to that number again.⁶⁵ But again, the majority of these stories were from police and magistrates' investigations, the arrests, and the trials of Mafia figures. And sadly, since then stories about events commemorating their deaths have received little but a mention in the press. For example, on May 23, 2001, hundreds gathered at the "Falcone tree" in Palermo, a site where Mafia victims and those involved in the fight against the Mafia unite annually.⁶⁶ This was the

ninth anniversary of the death of Falcone and his wife and bodyguards, but the event did not get national news coverage, let alone international.

All this is not to say that the Mafia has won the war. The police and courts have gone a long way towards making life extremely difficult for Mafia bosses and those who cooperate with them, to the point where most bosses now live in hiding and are known as *latitante* or fugitives. And as a result of new laws, hundreds of Mafia members have renounced the Mafia and given evidence against their bosses. In 2000 alone, the Court of Appeal of Palermo sentenced 116 people to life in prison,⁶⁷ many of them for Mafia-related crimes.

Women especially have been active in the fight against the Mafia. A monthly newspaper and association, called *Mezzocielo*, or Half Sky, was established by seven women in Palermo in 1991 specifically for the purposes of combating the Mafia and giving solidarity to its victims.⁶⁸ Sadly, it has received little support, and in 2000, due to financial difficulties, was forced to begin publishing on a bi-monthly basis.

In April 2000, a new national anti-Mafia magazine was launched focused specifically on *Cosa Nostra* and the organized crime groups connected to it throughout Italy. Its director, Giorgio Dongiovanni, in a statement regarding the launch of *Antimafia Duemila*, or Anti-Mafia 2000, explained that the political forces had "lowered their guard," and that the magazine's staff intended to sustain and support the investigating magistrates, police forces and all those fighting the Mafia, because of the difficulties they have working within the justice system.⁶⁹

Antimafia Duemila contains a range of stories on anti-Mafia issues such as: the most wanted Mafia fugitives; denunciations made on behalf of anti-Mafia groups; appeals for assistance in the fight against the Mafia, such as that made for freedom of the press in the struggle against the Mafia as a result of the increase in defamation cases being brought against journalists as discussed in Chapter One; and letters from readers. The magazine is not listed in Italy's publishing trade magazine *Prima Comunicazione* and is not available

at newsstands throughout the country. But its circulation is about 10,000, according to one of its editors,⁷⁰ and its Web site is filled with up-to-date articles, information, and links.

As a direct result of a statement by UN vice-secretary Pino Arlacchi, at the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime in Palermo in December 2000, that the Sicilian Mafia had been almost eliminated, another Web site was set up called *Mafianews*.⁷¹ Its two Roman operators, Angelo Costanzo and Mirella Olivari, promised to provide visitors to its site with the latest news regarding the fight against the Mafia and electronically distribute information to help form an anti-Mafia culture.

The opinion that has been asserted in these past few years that the Mafia is almost at its end is as dangerous as that which prevailed during the years of Mafia-political interaction: that the Mafia doesn't exist, and is just a journalistic invention. For this reason, it is indispensable to maintain the Mafia phenomenon under strict observation and to support the struggle against the Mafia. *Mafianews* wants to be an instrument of information for those who think the struggle against the Mafia is a political and social priority.⁷²

The *Mafianews* Web site contains mostly articles from other publications, lists of anti-Mafia literature, and links to other anti-Mafia organizations. However, the latest articles on the site are dated June 2000.

Whether either of these publications – print or electronic – will survive for very long remains to be seen. Most, if not all of them, were struggling in 2001. But the grassroots protests against the Mafia have grown. The public will exists to continue the war against the Mafia. Some people are even still willing to become martyrs for the cause. But unfortunately, few of the efforts of these people get national attention, and almost none internationally. And journalists are hard pressed to do more than they already are because of the threat of violence against them. They also seem to have been desensitized by Mafia violence.

There was little coverage of the May 2002 story of a Sicilian judge's ruling that there were no grounds for charging Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and Marcello Dell'Utri, a Senator in Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, with complicity on the murders of the two top anti-Mafi judges Falcone and Borsellino. Dell'Utri remains on trial, however, for Mafia collusion and an appeal against a not guilty finding against Senator Giulio Andreotti for Mafia collusion is still underway.⁷³

Since political will has always been the deciding factor in whether an anti-Mafia battle has been won or not it will be interesting to see how Berlusconi reacts now to the calls of those interested in continuing this fight, especially in light of additional accusations levelled against him of having financed his business empire with Mafia money.⁷⁴

End Notes

¹ Front-page headline on *Il Giornale di Calabria* in Pollett, Rene. Ocean Drive. Sept. 1997.

² Lepri, Sergio. Dentro le notizie. [Inside the News]. Florence: Monnier, 1997. P. 149.

³ "Cosa Nosta, continued." The Economist. Special section: A survey of Italy. 7-13 July 2001:16.

⁴ Pratellesi, Marco. "Ma il 'Muro della memoria' dimentica Castelegno e Tobago" [But the 'Memorial Wall' Has Forgotten Castelegno and Tobago.] Quotidiano.net. 29Aug. 1999. Available at www.quotidiano.monrif.net/char/un_quotidiano_in_classe:/234903:/2001/05/18.

⁵ Lepri, Sergio. 1997.

⁶ Ibid., p. 151.

⁷ Ibid., p. 150

⁸ Mirone, Luciano. Gli insabbiati. [Those Buried in the Sand]. Rome: Castelveccchi, 1999.

⁹ Ibid., 1999. p. 12.

- ¹⁰ Ibid., 1999. p. 28.
- ¹¹ Shawcross, Tim and Young, Martin. 1987. Men of Honour. London: Collins P. 307
- ¹² Mirone, Luciano. 1999. p. 7.
- ¹³ Bolzoni, Attilio and Viviano, Francesco. "De Mauro venne ucciso perche sapeva del golpe" [De Mauro Killed Because He Knew About the Strike] La Repubblica 26 Jan. 2001.
- ¹⁴ Mirone, Luciano. 1999. p. 77.
- ¹⁵ Bolzoni, Attilio and Viviano, Francesco. La Repubblica 26 Jan. 2001.
- ¹⁶ Mirone, Luciano. 1999. p. 169.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 1999. pps. 202-203.
- ¹⁸ Stille, Alexander. 1995. Excellent Cadavers. New York: Vintage Books. p. 71
- ¹⁹ Mirone, Luciano. 1999. p. 183.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 1999. p. 196.
- ²¹ Ibid., 1999. p. 197.
- ²² Ibid., 1999. p. 204-205.
- ²³ Ibid., 1999. p. 204.
- ²⁴ "Il killer del giornalista Fava liberato e subito dopo rapidity in carcere" [The Journalist Fava's Killer Freed and Quickly Sent Back to Prison] Corriere della Sera 15 May 2001.
- ²⁵ Mirone, Luciano. 1999. p. 211.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 1999. pps. 233-234.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 1999. p. 231.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 1999. p. 241.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 1999. p. 242.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 1999. p. 220.

- ³¹ Ibid., 1999. p. 250.
- ³² Stille, Alexander. 1995. p. 395.
- ³³ Cowell, Alan. "Italy Re-examines 1978 Moro Slaying." New York Times. 7 Nov. 1993:13.
- ³⁴ "Delitto Pecorelli, Andreotti assolto"[Pecorelli Murder, Andreotti Absolved] La Repubblica. 24 Sept. 1999.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 24 Sept. 1999.
- ³⁶ McCarthy, Patrick. Professor of Political Science. Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, University of Bologna. Personal interview. 10 December 1999.
- ³⁷ Macri, Carol. "Appalti Asi, arresti in Calabria" [ASI Contracts, Arrests in Calabria]. Corriere della Sera 8 Nov. 2000.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 8 Nov. 2000.
- ³⁹ "Bruciata l'automobile a una cronista di Gela" [Gela Journalist's Car Burned.] La Repubblica 16 Jan. 2001:24
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 16 Jan. 2001.
- ⁴¹ Galluzzo, Marco. "Il Censis: la criminalità ostacola la ripresa economica" [Italian Statistics Dept.: Criminal Activities Block Economic Recovery] Corriere della Sera 3 March 2000.
- ⁴² Richards, Charles. The New Italians. London: Penguin Books, 1995. p. 223.
- ⁴³ Bianconi, Giovanni. "Estorsioni, aumentano le vittime." [Extortion, Victims Increasing.] Corriere della Sera 11 Nov. 2000.
- ⁴⁴ Galluzzo, Marco. 3 March 2000.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 3 March 2000.
- ⁴⁶ Nimmo, Dan and Mansfield, Michael W. Government and the News Media: Comparative dimensions. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1982. p. 41.
- ⁴⁷ Richards, Charles. 1995. p. 93.

- 48 "Messaggi mafiosi attraverso la radio." [Mafia Messages Transmitted By Radio.] La Repubblica 29 June 2001: 25 and "Mafia e appalti, 35 arresti all'alba." [Mafia and Contracts, 35 Arrested at Dawn.] Il Giornale di Sicilia 28 June 2001.
- 49 La Licata, Francesco. "Cosa Nostra ha punito lo show con Madonia." [Cosa Nostra Has Punished the Show With Madonia.] La Stampa 15 May 1993: 3.
- 50 Tagliabue, John. "Bombings Laid to Mafia War on Italy and Church." New York Times. 15 July 1994: A8.
- 51 Ibid., 15 July 1994.
- 52 Pollett, Rene. "Reggio di Calabria: Una Bella Città?" Ocean Drive Sept. 1997: 40-44, 110-11.
- 53 Buonavoglia, Roberto. "Ucciso per errore, nel locale nessuno ha visto" [Killed by Mistake. In the Bar, No One Saw It]. Corriere della Sera 12 March 2000.
- 54 "Agguato tra la folla, ucciso anche un passante" [Ambushed Among the Crowd, Passerby Also Killed]. Corriere della Sera 27 Feb. 2000.
- 55 "Per l'omicidio di Valentina arrestato il presunto mandante" [Man Suspected of Ordering the Murder of Valentina Arrested]. La Repubblica 19 Jan. 2001.
- 56 Ibid., 19 Jan. 2001.
- 57 Lepri, Sergio. 1997. P. 150.
- 58 Smith, Denis Mack. Modern Italy: A Political History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. p. 463.
- 59 Lepri, Sergio. 1997. P. 150
- 60 Smith, Denis Mack, 1997. P. 463
- 61 Centorrino, Mario. "La mafia si mimetizza fra le imprese" [The mafia camouflaged between businesses]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 25 June 2001: Special section, p. xxv.
- 62 "Gioia Tauro senza difese" [Gioia Tauro Defenseless]. Il Sole 24 Ore 25 June 2001: Special section, p. xxv.
- 63 Stille, Alexander. 1995. p. 178.
- 64 Ibid., 1995. p 179.
- 65 Lepri, Sergio. 1997. p. 149.

- ⁶⁶ "Un albero per non dimenticare" [A Tree to Remind Us]. Il Giornale di Sicilia 23 May 2001.
- ⁶⁷ Calabro, Maria Antonietta. "Ecco tutte le cifre sul mercato di essere umani" [Here are all the Numbers of the Market of Human Beings]. Corriere della Sera 15 Dec. 2000.
- ⁶⁸ See www.comune.modena.it/associazioni/avanguard/bollettario/reviste/schede/mezzicielo.html
- ⁶⁹ See www.antimafiaduemila.com/siamo.html
- ⁷⁰ From e-mail correspondence with *Antimafia duemila* Editor Marco Capella. 10 Aug. 2001.
- ⁷¹ See www.mafianews.net/chisiamo.html
- ⁷² Ibid., at www.mafianews.net/chisiamo.html
- ⁷³ "Cosy Comfort for *Cosa Nostra*" The Economist. May 18-24, 2002:51.
- ⁷⁴ Veltri, Elio and Travaglio, Marco L'odore dei soldi [The Smell of Money]. Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2001.

Conclusion

*I'm convinced that he will govern without disciplined troops, with much corruption.*¹

– Phrase cut from a March 1, 2001 RAI Uno state television interview with journalist Idro Montanelli.

The Last of the Untouchable Journalists

On March 1, 2001, during the spring election campaign, Italy's most famous and respected newspaper journalist and author Idro Montanelli, was interviewed on television regarding his thoughts on the upcoming election by Enzo Biagi, an equally famous television journalist, columnist, and author. Montanelli was frank in his appraisal of the leading candidate, Silvio Berlusconi, and of the Italian people. He said he hoped Berlusconi would win the election. "Why?" Biagi asked. "Because Berlusconi is one of those sicknesses that they cure with a vaccine," Montanelli replied. "And to recuperate from Berlusconi you need a good dose of the Berlusconi vaccine. You need to see him in power."²

Montanelli comments came back to haunt him. In the following few weeks, he received numerous threatening phone calls and finally a letter containing vulgar warnings and insults arrived for him at the restaurant where he regularly ate lunch.

It was not the first time someone tried to shoot this Italian messenger: in 1937, Montanelli was expelled from an early version of the Order of Journalists for his articles about the Spanish Civil War; he was arrested during fascism after writing about Mussolini's extramarital affairs; he was sentenced to death by the Nazis in Germany and managed to escape back to Italy in the mid-1940s; and he was shot in the legs three times by a member of the Red Brigade terrorist group in 1977. Montanelli spoke out publicly against this latest intimidation and received much public support as a result. He was one

journalist who could speak and write openly and honestly about events in Italy, and be respected and even revered for it. For the past few years he came perhaps as close as an Italian journalist could to giving readers a voice in his *stanza*, or "room," in *Corriere della Sera* from which he responded to their letters. And he, unlike others, refused the offer of the title "Senatore for Life." Montanelli could not be bought.

Sadly, he was probably also the last "untouchable" in the Italian press. On July 22, 2001, at the age of 92, Montanelli wrote his last article – his own obituary – which was published on the front page of *Corriere della Sera* the next day. Who will take his place? Certainly, no one within the Italian press has the same standing as Montanelli. And there is no one on the horizon who can replace him. Not even Biagi can be as direct. At least one of Biagi's state television interviews during the 2000-2001 election campaign was censored, and in much of his reporting, information is communicated between the lines or through a closing proverb.

Biagi explained why Montanelli was a master of the profession on the day of his death, saying, "The reader was his real *padrone*. And when he saw the over powerfulness of certain characters he always battled them, trying to represent the voice of those who couldn't speak."³

Hope For the Future

This is not say there is no hope that someone might emerge from the ranks of the tens of thousands of journalists in Italy to allow the reader to be the *padrone* again. There is always hope. Some rebellious journalists were already making their way onto the Internet in the late 1990s. Two sites in particular were starting to gain attention. The news site *Il Nuovo*, or The New, was reporting faster than almost all other media, and sometimes on events and people no other media would cover, including Mafia and crime news. The names of journalists and sources were often absent, but likely more for their

protection than any other reason. It even managed to stay up and running during a national journalists strike. *Il Barbiere della Sera* was acting as a place where journalists could discuss publicly exactly what was happening within the profession, as well as analyse issues and events. In some instances it used humour to do so, but it often cut through the political hogwash like a knife.

Unfortunately, the number of people who actually have access to the Internet is still an important one. Low Internet usage remains a problem, despite the massive advertising campaigns by big media owners in all media to try to encourage Internet use. A scant numbers of people outside the wealthy, privileged classes have access to this new information source.

Other news sites also went up in the early rush to try to gain users, but by 2001 many of them had collapsed for financial and other reasons. Within a short time, the big newspapers began dominating Internet news. *La Repubblica* had the most successful news site with 577,286 hits in September 2000 alone.⁴ It, along with sites such as that of *Corriere della Sera* and *Il Sole 24 Ore*, had the financial power and the recognition factor to help them dominate Italian news on the Internet.

There were no rules when these sites went up. The Internet was an open medium for anyone who had the time and money for computer equipment to set up a site. But by 2000, the Italian government, the Order of Journalists, and the unions were trying to find ways of controlling and thus restricting its use. The government moved to require registration for certain types of sites, and the order and unions started classifying Internet journalists and journalism sites, and applying their rules and regulations to them.⁵

But otherwise, cracks were appearing in support for the Order of Journalists. In January 1996, Italian Radical Party representative Marco Pannello claimed the party had collected 550,000 signatures on the streets of Italy from people in favour of abolishing the Order of Journalists. Franco Abruzzo, president of the Lombardy Council of the order, got busy writing speeches (and delivering them in front of newly-registered journalists) on

why the order must continue to exist. Ostensibly, the main reason was because of the insufficient training of Italian journalists, but issues of public trust in the profession, pensions, and unemployment also entered into his arguments.⁶ Then, following the expulsion of *Libero* newspaper director Vittorio Feltri from the order in 2000, doubts were raised about whether he had been ousted because he was well known – that Feltri was being used as an example to try to quieten discontent among professional journalists. This, at least, led one columnist to finally question whether it made sense to have such an order in a world where information was supposed to be essential and realizable by all.⁷ And, finally, of the numerous journalists interviewed for this thesis, not one said they were in favour of the order and some said it should be scrapped outright.

Many of the country's 27 professional orders were coming under fire in 2000 by a younger generation fed up with the innumerable rules and regulations that help make up the Italian bureaucracy. Those in favour of its controls increased according to their number of years in the profession, according to at least one survey. Criticism was specifically aimed at older officials within the orders seeking to keep their positions for long periods.⁸

But would individual Italian journalists be willing to publicly denounce the order in numbers big enough to make a difference? Not likely, or at least not yet. Orders, associations and other types of organizations form an important part of the culture of protection of "the family" in Italy. To step out of line means risking the wrath of any number of sources, including other journalists. In some ways, there really is safety in numbers in Italy.

The orders and their codes of professional behaviour were set up to control the professions by those within them, to try to make their positions more secure in an insecure country, and for their prestige or *bella figura* aspect. But by its mere existence, the Order of Journalists acts as a measure to block public criticism and sanctions, and ensure only certain people can become journalists. It has eliminated "the real *padrone*," in

effect, saying that members of the general public are not qualified to judge journalists or to even be journalists. Again, the roles of journalist as educator, and as those being on a higher level than average citizens, come into play.

The existence of the order, in reality, breaks one of the country's most important precepts; that of not excluding anyone from the right to express their own thoughts freely by word (of mouth), in writing, or any other means of diffusion, as stated in Article 21. With that, it can also be argued that it also breaks Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states the following:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.⁹

The order is providing much "interference."

The Bottom Line for Democracy

Overall, if one considers Schudson's list of "goals a media system dedicated to democracy might aspire to," Italian journalists have fallen far short of their task. First, he writes that "the media should provide citizens fair and full information so they can make sound decisions as citizens."¹⁰ But in 2000, the Italian press was made up almost entirely of partisan papers, which did not have the mandate of providing objective political news or even attempting to appear objective. In order to understand events here a reader has to decide which political party and paper to support and trust their version of events, or buy several newspapers and compare the articles with the hope that out of all of them some truth will emerge. That is, again, if they can get past the language used.

Their only other option is to just stop following the political discourse – which is what they continue to do in ever greater numbers.

Schudson continues his list as follows:

"2. The news media should provide coherent frameworks to help citizens comprehend the complex political universe."

In effect, they should explain the news. But again, considering the language and lack of context of most political news in Italy this goal is also not being achieved.

"3. The media should serve as common carriers of the perspectives of varied groups in society."

Unfortunately, Italian political journalists don't consider themselves regular or average citizens. They have more privileges and power than the average Italian. And writing about the average Italian means having to talk to them, and have some empathy for them. There is little of that happening.

"4. The news media should provide the quantity and quality of news that people want; that is, the market should be the criterion for the production of news."

If one considers the percentage of Italians who read newspapers, and their reasons for not reading, it appears that is also not occurring. Plus, the press is heavily subsidized by the government, which has effectively removed most market forces.

"5. The media should represent the public and speak for and to the public interest in order to hold government accountable."

Because of the accepted form of political journalism in Italy – talk between political elites – the press in Italy cannot be said to be representing the public. The idea of a "watch-dog" role does not exist here.

"6. The news media should evoke empathy and provide deep understanding so that citizens at large can appreciate the situation of other human beings; notably non-elites."

Without reporting on non-elites when covering political news empathy is not possible. In North America some may lament the fact that working-class journalists are being replaced by well-educated journalists, but at least they have a better grasp of the

importance of free and diverse types of speech and that is more desirable than being replaced by elitist journalists whose main interest is in furthering their careers.

"7. The news media should provide a forum for dialogue among citizens that not only informs democratic decision making but is, as a process, an element in it."

This is clearly not occurring in Italian journalism. The media is not providing enough unbiased information to allow people to make intelligent decisions. The forum of newspapers was available almost exclusively to politicians even though, like Schudson, Alberto Martinelli doubts the Italian newspapers were having much influence politically anyway, although for different reasons.

(N)ewspapers don't have a big political influence in the sense of their capacity to modify the preference of Italians because they publish for a public that is autonomous and capable of deciding their own preferences. They're (for people) more cultured, more interested in politics. It's more difficult to sway those who have the autonomy to judge. In the second place, newspapers are often bought by people who already hold a political position. At most, they can reinforce the convictions of those who are already buying.¹¹

With these types of practices Italian journalists have separated themselves from the public, leaving Italian citizens without a widely diffused form of public discussion on important issues. The "marketplace of ideas" concept espoused by writers from Milton in the 1600s to Schudson in 1995 is rarely seen in the Italian press. Journalists are not providing that public space necessary to bring new ideas to an audience bigger than that of the lone voice in the piazza or Forcella's 1,500 readers.

As a result, an undercurrent of anger and powerlessness can be felt in Italy, and Italian journalists play a big role in this problem. It has led to the establishment of the League for the Defense of Democracy by Paul Ginsborg in Florence. Not all issues can be appropriately dealt with in the piazza. They could, however, at least be discussed in

newspapers in an open and inclusive manner. And they could result in enough public pressure to force politicians to move forward.

Many Italians have actually given up trying to make a difference because of their inability to be heard. The never-ending bureaucratic battles of Italian life are more than enough to drain away the energy needed to fight to make changes happen in government. Instead of using the press they've turned to other methods of demonstration, such as the boycotting of referendums. Although generally Italians elections see high turnouts at the polls, low turnouts for several of the country's referendums in recent years have been utilized to get a mass message across to politicians. Several referendums have had to be annulled due to low voter turnout. While referendums are one of the direct ways private citizens can have input into government, to outsiders these annulled referendums may seem like a wasted opportunity to make change. But citizens being given long lists of sometimes trivial matters to decide on are rightfully fed up with politicians who are unable to make good and fair decisions. As well, there's the high cost of holding referendums. Boycotting referendums is one of the few ways people can be heard. High voter turnout during the 2001 election was for other reasons, a main one of which was the hope that this time a politician might actually keep some of his promises.

Unfortunately, violence is another way in which some people have chosen to make their voices heard. The recent murder of an economics professor and consultant to the Berlusconi government on labour reform allegedly perpetrated by a member of the Red Brigade is one of many examples of such violence. His death is not the first. There are numerous reasons for this type of violence, but certainly the inability of people opposed to the type of massive reform Berlusconi is planning is one.

Another effect of such an ambivalent press and political system is a turning inward of average citizens to family and friends for a "system" that can be depended on.

But despite the seemingly endless crises that are recorded by the newspapers, the country is moving "confusingly and painfully toward a modern democracy," according to

Martinelli.¹² It's just that it's been with little help from politicians. They have not done near enough to try to remedy the constitutional problems that plague Italy. And Italian journalists have, for the most part, just gone along with them. In the type of democracy that exists in Italy, the press should be especially informant and vigilant, yet it isn't.

In 1925, Mario Borsa, editor-in-chief of *La libertà di stampa* [Freedom of the Press], in a final effort to arouse the press before Mussolini took over as dictator of Italy, wrote: "The Italian press – with few honourable exceptions – has deserted the field; you have betrayed your mission."¹³ It doesn't seem far from the situation that exists today.

The Berlusconi Effect

The justice system in Italy is expected to undergo vast changes in the new century for numerous reasons; more than just the slowness of court procedures, as discussed in Chapter One. During and after the *Tangentopoli* scandals of the early 1990s, the justice and political institutions were in almost constant conflict; mainly because so many politicians had been involved in illegal activities, but also due to the politicizing of the system that appointed judges and magistrates. Many people identified judges by their political party affiliations; if not always publicly, then certainly in private. But during that period, the power of investigating magistrates surpassed that of politicians as the country's political class was almost completely destroyed. By the turn of the century, politicians wanted to regain that power, which they claimed had been entrusted to them democratically by the people.

Silvio Berlusconi's election campaign promises package included a vow to clean up the justice system if elected. Before, during, and after the election, he was quick to say that he was a victim of unjust persecution by Italian judges. His argument was questionable considering how many senior officials of his companies were arrested on charges such as tax evasion, collusion with the Mafia and attempting to corrupt the

judiciary, and he was facing numerous court proceedings for charges such as corruption, false accounting, and bribing a judge.¹⁴ But considering so many Italians had also suffered under the gavel, many of them wanted to believe him.

For most of the 1990s, changes to the justice system had been proposed and shelved, re-proposed and re-shelved. Those that were realized were designed more to try to discourage citizens from using the courts, and were not about ensuring justice. The idea of disallowing appeals in defamation cases was just one example.

Lawyers were proposing new forms of conflict resolution that included centres of justice where citizens could go for "alternative dispute resolution" before or hopefully instead of heading to the law courts. Politicians had for many years agreed in concept to this idea, but had not provided the legislation or funding for them to go ahead.¹⁵ In all, most reforms had been piecemeal and not part of an organized restructuring plan. Again, it was hoped that Berlusconi's newly named House of Freedoms coalition would change that.

But was a truly reformed justice system possible? And would it result in better legislation to protect the rights of citizens to information that is unbiased, or at least less influenced by politics and business? It seems unlikely. For several years, Berlusconi's name has been written in the opening line of reports on Italy made by virtually every press freedom organization in the world. The conflict of interest that existed between his media and political interests was very unsettling by the late 1990s and downright outrageous by 2001.

During the 2000-2001 election campaign he dealt with the issue in true showman style. At first he promised to resolve the problem within a set period of time. Next, he claimed the issue would have to be resolved by two of his eldest children, who were said to be running the Berlusconi media empire. Then he said it was possible his media interests would be sold. A few weeks later, he announced they wouldn't. Finally, after his election, he promised the issue would be dealt with by his 100th day in office with the

assistance of yet another set of "three wise men" appointed to analyse the issue. It was the same story he had given during his first election campaign, and by the 100th day nothing had changed. Political journalists marked the day, but none of them talked to average Italians about what they thought of it – about whether their faith in their new leader was shaken.

Cleverly, Berlusconi's statements were made over a long enough period of time for public attention to be distracted from them by other important issues. And as of May 2001, Berlusconi, as prime minister, effectively controlled 90 per cent of Italy's national television, and a good portion of other media, along with his business holdings. The business-political partnership crisis in the Italian media had reached its pinnacle, and where Berlusconi didn't fill the role as commander others like him did. It was unthinkable.

One of the major problems many media analysts have with this kind of large-scale media ownership is that it often leads to cost-cutting. But in Italy it is unlikely media productions can get any cheaper. Most television programming is made up of old Hollywood and Italian films, quiz shows, cartoons, and talk shows. And newspapers, for several years, have been hiring only "collaborators" and freelancers, instead of permanent staff. That also means that Italian media aren't getting any kind of diversity. Sources and variation in information are being reduced. Basically, the same stories, using the same people, and the same *veline*, are being told on five national networks, in a major national weekly magazine, in a major newspaper and on the Internet, and none of them objectively. The cross-promotion and frivolous info-tainment reached an astounding level by 2001. It was rare that real news would stretch to more than 20 minutes in television newscasts.

By the time of the G-8 Summit in Genoa in July 2001, changes were already creeping into the state-run networks' coverage. Directors were quietly protesting that videotapes of police violence against demonstrators on the streets of Genoa were not making it to air. They had nothing to lose in talking. They would soon be replaced

anyway. But to be on the safe side, they weren't exactly shouting it from the rooftops. Who knew who their next *padrone* would be? And it was unclear that any rooftop denunciations would have been covered if they had occurred.

On Berlusconi's networks, the new prime minister was front and centre, and in *Panorama* and *Il Giornale*, he always shown in a positive light. Lengthy articles were written about him and his ideas. This was not very different from before the election, but now articles were reaching new lengths and heights. And when *Il Cavaliere* didn't want to comment on an issue, he simply didn't. Aside from *La Repubblica* and a few other leftist newspapers, all were hailing the new leader.

In describing the dangers of media concentration, Alison Harcourt and Stefaan Verhulst, in an Oxford University study on European approaches to media ownership, were clear on how it allows media owners what they called an "unwieldy heightened influence on public opinion." Theirs is an especially interesting comment in light of the G-8 summit coverage.

More specifically, an owner's opinion may be integral at certain points in time: i.e. when the market status quo (in which the owner has a key interest in maintaining) is threatened, or in times of social unrest. The media gives an owner potential power to influence public opinion in his favour, and prevent counter views from reaching the general public. In principle, this could conform to the principles of freedom of speech. However, as concentration could lead to only this voice being heard, it could have negative consequences for external and internal pluralism.¹⁶

One might question how this situation could have evolved legally. One of the reasons is that Italy's Broadcasting Act of August 6, 1990, basically implemented the 1989 EU Television Without Frontiers Directive, and confirmed the status quo in the country – a duopoly controlled by Berlusconi and the state at that time. And the New Media Act, Number 249, of July 1997 has allowed the same media ownership limits as the old act, and is expected to be relaxed in order to allow greater media convergence.

Changes to the 1981 Press Act are also expected – again in order to allow greater concentration of press ownership and cross-media ownership. If these changes are approved, Berlusconi will then be allowed to increase his press and other media operations even further.

But aside from the legal and business issues, the moral aspect of mass communication in Italy needs to be addressed. Much of this thesis has dealt with the presentation of the facts and figures regarding the press and other media here in order to try to create some understanding of the peculiarity of the situation that the Italian press and people find themselves in. Many factors have combined to make responsible, open journalism difficult here. Too many interests have joined forces to deny the average, hard-working citizen the means to tell their story, express their ideas, and their personalities. All the laws, orders, declarations, instruction, and codes of ethics in all the libraries and universities in the country have no meaning if those who own and work within the media don't follow them. But Italian cultural norms and philosophical thinking don't require that they be followed to the letter. Can a real democracy exist under these conditions? And as Antonio Pasquali put it: "Can real democracy exist if journalism is not under its control?"¹⁷ In other words, if journalism exists to serve special interests rather than the people can true democracy prevail? As has been pointed out by many, the answer is no. That is why freedom of the press is constitutionally protected in most countries. In Italy, those principles have been subverted by a press that is more interested in speaking to the people than for the people.

Suppression of means of expression in the media has also resulted in a society that sometimes seems stuck in the past. New ideas are not being bounced around in a public forum to the extent that they should be. Today, telling one's neighbour of a brilliant idea to fix a widespread problem is not going to do much good. That idea must be communicated to thousands. But the lack of access to a means to publicize such ideas means that problem is not going to get fixed. If anything, it is going to persist or even

worsen. Many researchers and scientists in many fields leave the country, not only for increased opportunities or money, but for academic freedom.

This helps account for the success of so many Italian politicians who promise change. The Italian people are anxious for change and will cling to almost anyone (or anything – such as the EU) who gives them hope of providing it, including those who have made such promises in the past and have broken them.

Unfortunately, the situation that existed during the 1990 War of the Rose no longer exists here. Craxi is dead, Andreotti's power is waning, as was shown in his dismal election results, and Berlusconi's legal problems are no match for his political power. Berlusconi is older now, more experienced, richer by far than anyone else in the country, and he is having his second shot at being prime minister. The only person who could possibly rein him in is Gianni Agnelli, but even he came to Berlusconi's defense during attacks by the foreign press during the election campaign, claiming Italy was not a "Banana Republic." Another "mediation," such as that brokered by Andreotti and others 12 years ago is unlikely to occur.

Most disturbing of all is that at the beginning of this new century there seems to be no one left who is willing to stand up and say, "No, this cannot be." Not a single journalist protested the day Silvio Berlusconi was elected.

The Future of Journalism

Aside from the growing discontent among journalists with the Order of Journalism, and the advances made on Internet news Web sites, there is also hope for the future of journalism in Italy due to the fact that journalism education is increasing – with and without the order's help. Mandatory attendance of *stagi* or work terms, common in so many other Western countries, are becoming the norm in Italian journalism schools, even if they are still rare in other schools. And journalists are starting to recognize the

dangerous role Italian big business is playing in the profession. A conference on "The Publishing Business and Freedom of The Press" was organized by the national order in Rome in February 2001.¹⁸

For women in journalism, as well as in other professions, the possibility of changes in workplace legislation is encouraging because of European Union intervention. In January 2002, a proposed modification in the 1976 directive covering equality in the workplace was expected to require employers ensure a workplace free of harassment.¹⁹ And the EU was also checking into the operations of member nation orders to try to stimulate the circulation of professionals and establish qualification benchmarks that could be recognizable throughout the continent.²⁰

The European Union remained one of Italians' main hopes for direct improvements to their lives. But in relation to the media, it may be a misplaced hope. The EU has done little to control media owners in the past. It has been more concerned with issues of freedom of media development than concentration of ownership, and it has virtually ignored the impact of converging media.²¹ The EC's mandate is more economic than moral. The title of its main directive on broadcasting is "Television Without Frontiers."

Most encouraging of all is that Italian citizens appear to truly want change. In a Eurobarometer survey, conducted by the European Commission in 2000, more than 70 per cent of Italians polled said they thought it was very important that the European Union play a role in their daily lives in order to change the future. Only the Greeks and the Portuguese ranked higher. And 61 per cent of Italians polled said they trusted the European Commission, compared to the 46 per cent average throughout the EU.²²

These signs indicate that there is a light at the end of what some consider a dark tunnel. At this point in time Italian journalism is doing little to serve the Italian people or their democracy, but in some ways journalists are heading in the right direction. The Italian people, however, are way ahead of them. Their desire for change, their push for changes in the professional orders and the justice system, and the overall move to better

educate themselves can only improve conditions for a more liberal journalism here. Perhaps with the next generation of journalists the profession will begin serving the people and their democracy, rather than being a captive of politicians, business, the church, and other elements of society.

End Notes

- ¹ "Enzo Biagi denuncia: Beretta mi ha fatto tagliare due frasi" [Enzo Biagi Denounces: Beretta Made Me Cut Two Phrases]. La Repubblica. 28 March 2001:8.
- ² "Berlusconi? Un piazzista che trascina con false promesse" [Berlusconi? A Piazza Speaker Who Enthrals with False Promises]. La Repubblica. 2 March 2001.
- ³ Medail, Cesare. "Enzo Biagi: 'Non aveva padroni. Se sbagliava chiedeva scusa'" [Enzo Biagi. 'He Had No Padroni. If He Erred He Asked for Forgiveness']. Corriere della Sera. 23 July 2001:3
- ⁴ Caravita, Giuseppe. "Un pianeta chiamato Internet" [A Planet Called Internet]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 18 July 2001: New Economy, 1.
- ⁵ Antion, Vittorio. "Ma i giudici non salvano i giornali on-line" [But the Judges Don't Save On-line Newspapers]. Italia Oggi. 19 April 2001:28.
- ⁶ Abruzzo, Franco. "Perchè l'Ordine dei Giornalisti deve vivere" [Why the Order of Journalists Must Live] Available at www.odg.mi.it/circolo/assembly96.htm.
- ⁷ Zeno Zencovich, Vincenzo. "I torti di Feltri e i dubbi sull'Ordine" [The Torts of Feltri and Doubts About the Order]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 22 Nov. 2000:6.
- ⁸ "Ordini a 'gradimento ridotto' tra praticanti e giovani iscritti" [Orders at 'Reduced Ranking' Among Interns and Young Professionals]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 28 Nov. 2000: 27.
- ⁹ United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.
- ¹⁰ Schudson, Michael. The Power of News. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

- ¹¹ Personal interview with Alberto Martinelli, head of the Political Science Department at the University of Milan and a candidate in the 2001 election. Taped interview on 18 Oct. 2000 in Milan.
- ¹² Personal interview with Alberto Martinelli, 18 Oct. 2000.
- ¹³ Murialdi, Paolo, 1996, 129.
- ¹⁴ "An Italian Story" The Economist, 28 April 2001:21-24.
- ¹⁵ Greco, Francesco. (National president of the Italian Association of Young Lawyers) "Nuovo governo al banco di prova" [New Government at the Bench]. Italia Oggi, 24 May 2001:47.
- ¹⁶ Harcourt, Alison and Verhulst, Stefaan. Project CNTRY985886, Support for Regulation and Transparency of Media Ownership and Concentration – Russia. A Study of European Approaches to Media Ownership. Oxford University. Available at www.medialaw.r/e_pages/laws/ero_union/e-conc.htm.
- ¹⁷ Pasquali, Antonio. "The Moral Dimension of Communicating" In Clifford Christians and Michael Traber eds. Communicating Ethics and Universal Values. London: Sage Publications, 1997. pp.245.4
- ¹⁸ "Giornalisti a convegno sulla qualità dell'informazione" [Journalists to Meet on Quality of Information]. Italia Oggi, 15 Feb. 2001:22.
- ¹⁹ Cerretelli, Adriana. "Chi 'molesta' ora rischierà di più" [Those who 'Molest' Will Now Risk More]. Il Sole 24 Ore, 12 June 2001.
- ²⁰ Martinelli, Niccolò. "La UE lancia il check-up degli Ordini" [The UE Launches a Check-up of the Orders]. Il Sole 24 Ore, 10 July 2001: 27.
- ²¹ Hitchens, Leslie P. "The European Community and the Regulation of Media Ownership and Control: Possibilities for pluralism" In Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. Media in Global Context. London: Arnold, 1997. pp. 207-218.
- ²² "Berlusconi or Brussels" The Economist, 19 May 2001:34.

Bibliography

Please note that the first section contains those documents in which the author's name is given, while the second includes those without a named author.

Abruzzo, Franco. "Perchè l'Ordine dei Giornalisti deve vivere" [Why the Order of Journalists Must Live] Available at www.odg.mi.it/circolo/assembly96.htm.

Accattoli, Luigi. "Il Papa è malato, potrebbe dimettersi [The Pope is Ill, Could Resign]." Corriere della Sera. 10 Jan. 2000:15

Accattoli, Luigi. "Il Papa: biogenetica un pericolo per l'umanità" [The Pope: Biogenetics a Danger for Humanity]. Corriere della Sera 10 Nov. 2000.

Allen, John L. Jr. and Schaeffer, Pamela. "Reports of Abuse." National Catholic Reporter. 23 March 2001. Available at www.natcath.com.

Almond, Gabriel A. and Verba, Sidney. eds. The Civic Culture Revisited. Sage: Newbury Park, London, New Delhi. 1989.

Amadori, Giacomo. "Prete e aids: vi racconto l'ultimo tabù" [Priests and AIDS: We Tell You of the Latest Taboo]. Panorama. 30 Nov. 2000: 78-79.

Antion, Vittorio. "Ma i giudici non salvano i giornali on-line" [But the Judges Don't Save On-line Newspapers]. Italia Oggi. 19 April 2001:28.

August, Ray. "The Mythical Kingdom of Lawyers" ABA Journal. vol.78, pp. 72-74. September 1992.

Barber, Lionel and Blitz, James. "Berlusconi's Return." Financial Times. 16 Oct. 2000.

Bartoloni, Bruno. "La sfida degli hackers al sito vaticano" [The Challenge of Hackers on the Vatican Website] Corriere della Sera. 29 Dec. 1999.

Barzini, Luigi. The Italians. London: Penguin Books, 1968.

Bellavia, Enrico. "Così imbavagliano i giornali." [This is How They Gag the Newspapers]. La Repubblica. 29 June 2001:4

Bernstein, Carl and Politi, Marco. His Holiness: John Paul II and the history of our time. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. p. 513.

Bertolotto, Eleonora. "Un altro morto di camorra e oggi Amato va a Napoli. [Another killed by the Camorra and today Amato goes to Naples]." La Repubblica, 30 July 2000.

- Bianconi, Giovanni. "Estorsioni, aumentano le vittime." [Extortion, Victims Increasing.] Corriere della Sera 11 Nov. 2000.
- Biondani, Paolo. "Conti Fininvest, Berlusconi verso il processo" [Fininvest Accounts, Berlusconi Nears Trial]. Corriere della Sera. 30 Jan. 2001.
- Bisso, Marino and Massimo Lugli. "Ecco i razzisti per noia croci celtiche e tifo untrà" [Here are the Racists due to Boredom: celtic crosses, and super fans]. La Repubblica. 22 March 2000: 10.
- Bolzoni, Attilio and Viviano, Francesco. "Quella cittadella del foro costruita dai 'padrini' [That Forum Citadel Built by 'padrini']". Corriere della Sera 14 Dec. 2000.
- Bolzoni, Attilio and Viviano, Francesco. "De Mauro venne ucciso perche sapeva del golpe" [De Mauro Killed Because He Knew About the Strike] La Repubblica 26 Jan. 2001.
- Bongiovanni, Masimo. "La Guerra dei trentenni [The War of the Thirty-year-olds]". Ventiquattro No. 8, 2000: 80-85.
- Brambilla, Carlo. "'Proteggete I vostri figli' Feltri pubblica le liste ['Protect Your Children' Feltri Publishes the List]". La Repubblica. 24 Aug. 2000:4.
- Brunetti, Umberto. "La cucciolata" [The Litter] Prima Comunicazione. Sept. 1999.
- Buonavoglia, Roberto. "Ucciso per errore, nel locale nessuno ha visto" [Killed by Mistake. In the Bar, No One Saw It]. Corriere della Sera 12 March 2000.
- Burba, Elisabetta. "Il silenzio dei non innocenti" [The silence of those not innocent]. Panorama 1 June 2000: 77.
- Calabrà, Maria Antonietta. "Conferenza Onu, scontro nel fronte antimafia [UN Conference, Disagreement Regarding Anti-mafia Front]". Corriere della Sera. 13 Dec. 2000.
- Calabresi, Mario. "Rutelli: 'Combattiamo la Tangentopoli di massa'" [Rutelli: "We'll fight the Bribesville of the masses"] La Repubblica, 4 Aug. 2000: 5.
- Calabro, Maria Antonietta. "Ecco tutte le cifre sul mercato di essere umani" [Here are all the Numbers of the Market of Human Beings]. Corriere della Sera 15 Dec. 2000.
- Canepa, Madela. "Pubblicità, nel 2001 crescita del 11% [Advertising: 11% Growth in 2001]". Il Sole 24 Ore. 5 Feb. 2001: 39.
- Capuano, Carlo. La stampa cattolica in Italia. Palermo: Sellerio, 1982. p. 59.

- Caravita, Giuseppe. "Un pianeta chiamato Internet" [A Planet Called Internet]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 18 July 2001: New Economy, 1.
- Carlucci, Antonio. "Far carriera col sesso [Build a Career with Sex]." L'Espresso. 13 July 2000:84-92.
- Carosi, Mario and Perino, Cesare eds. Vademecum del Giornalista. Rome: Stamparoma, 1987.
- Casalini, Simona. "Lazio, An censura i libri di testo 'Troppo storiografia marxista'" [Lazio, AN (National Alliance Party) Censors Textbooks, 'Too much Marxist Historiography']. La Repubblica. 10 Nov. 2000:25.
- Caviglia, Stefano. "Zaccaria: 'Per Berlusconi un anno da record sul video'" [Zaccaria: A Record Year for Berlusconi on Video] La Repubblica. 16 Feb. 2001:16.
- Centorrino, Mario. "La mafia si mimetizza fra le imprese" [The mafia camouflaged between businesses]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 25 June 2001:Special section, p. xxv.
- Cerretelli, Adriana. "Chi 'molesta' ora rischierà di più" [Those who 'Molest' Will Now Risk More]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 12 June 2001.
- Christians, Clifford and Traber, Michael. Communications Ethics and Universal Values. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage, 1997.
- Cillis, Lucio. "E Armani il più ricco d'Italia. [Armani is the Richest in Italy]." La Repubblica. 3 Nov. 2000: 40.
- Cillis, Lucio. "Cambiano gli ordini professionali [Professional Orders Changing]." La Repubblica. 10 Nov. 2000:52.
- Cimino, Marta. Mezzogiorno July 1992. Available at www.tam-tam.com/artsiebert.htm.
- Cella, Sergio. Profilo Storico del Giornalismo nelle Venezia. [Historic Profile of the Journalism of Venice]. Padova: Liviana Editrice, 1974.
- Churchill, Winston S., "Zionism versus Bolshevism" Illustrated Sunday Herald. February 8, 1920. Available at www.ffp.co.uk/bookchapters/WSC/WSCwrote1920.html
- Clarich, Marcello. "La trasparenza compie 10 anni ma il ministero non è in regola." [Transparency Reaches 10 Years But the Ministry Doesn't Comply]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 14 Aug. 2000:1.
- Clarich, Marcello. "Trasparenza, compleanno difficile" [Transparency: A Difficult

- Anniversary]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 14 Aug. 2000:8.
- Coen, Leonardo. "Ginevra, É in fin di vita la 'Regina di maggio'" [Geneva: The 'Queen of May' is Dying]. La Repubblica. 27 Jan. 2001:27.
- Colin, Manuela. L'Indipendente: storia ed organizzazione di un quotidiano italiano. [The Independent: The History and Organization of an Italian Daily.] Bachelor of Arts Thesis. University of Bologna, 1997.
- Conti, Paolo. "Vespa é bravo ma guarda al Polo" [Vespa is Good, But Watches the Polo Coalition]. Corriere della Sera. 6 Nov. 2000.
- Cornwell, John. Hitler's Pope. London: Viking, 1999. p. 43-44.
- Cowell, Alan. "Italy Re-examines 1978 Moro Slaying." New York Times. 7 Nov. 1993:13.
- Dardano, Maurizio. Il Linguaggio dei Giornale Italiani. [The Language of Italian Newspapers]. Rome, Bari: Editori Laterza, 1973.
- Di Caro, Paolo. "Il Cavaliere contesta la trasmissione: troppe domande su temi da teatrino della politica" [The Cavaliere Contests the Show: Too Many Questions on Subjects in the Little Theatre of Politics] Corriere della Sera. 21 Dec. 2000.
- Di Palma, Giuseppe. Surviving Without Governing. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.
- Di Vico, Dario. "E ora per l'ex direttore spunta un futuro da deputato.[And Now for the Ex-director Sprouts a Future as MP]." Corriere della Sera. 2 Oct. 2000: 9.
- Duggan, Christopher. A Concise History of Italy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 195
- Eco, Umberto. The Name of the Rose. Trans. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. and Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd. London: Vintage, 1998. P. 478.
- Emerson, Thomas. Towards a Theory of the First Amendment. New York: Random House, 1966.
- Errera, Roger. "Press Law in France" Article 19: Press Law and Practice. London: UNESCO International Centre Against Censorship, March 1993. pp. 64, 77.
- Falcone, Anna and Falcone, Maria. Letter. "Noi, sorelle di Falcone e la mafia sparita.[We, the Sisters of Falcone and the Mafia that has Disappeared]." Letter. Corriere della Sera. 15 Dec. 2000.

Falleri, Gino and Signoretti. "Ordine interregionale Lazio e Molise" [Interregional order: Lazio and Molise]. In Carosi, Mario. et al. Vademecum del Giornalista Associazione Rome:Stampa Romana, 1987. p. 429.

Farinelli, Giuseppe, Ermanno Paccagnini, Giovanni Santambrogio, and Angela Ida Villa. Storia del Giornalismo Italiano: Dalle origini ai giorni nostri. [The History of Italian Journalism: From its origins to our times.] Torino: UTET Libreria s.r.l., 1997.

Fasanella, Giovanni. "Visto, si cambi (la legge)" [See, They Change (The Law.)]. Panorama. 10 Aug. 2000:50-52.

Fasanella, Giovanni. "Un banchiere rosso all'Unita con la benedizione di Prodi" [A Red Banker at L'Unita, with the Blessing of Prodi] Panorama 21 July 2000.

Femia, Joseph. The Machiavellian Legacy: Essays in Italian political thought. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Fontanarosa, Aldo. "I giovani alla ricerca di un 'giornale amico' [The Young Look for a 'Friendly Newspaper']". La Repubblica. 4 Nov. 2000: 32.

Fontanarosa, Aldo. "L'ultimo numero dell'Unita" [The Last Edition of L'Unita] La Repubblica. 30 July, 2000:8.

Fontanarosa, Aldo. "Bruno è abile ed esperto ma la sua divisa è azzurra" [Bruno is Able and an Expert, But His Uniform is Blue]. La Repubblica. 20 Dec. 2000:8.

Foschi, Filippo. "Il ritardo verrà condannato in ritardo" [The Lateness will be Condemned Late]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 25 June 2001:16.

Galdo, Antonio. "Il Grande Bluff [The Big Bluff]." Panorama 10 Aug. 2000:30-36.

Galdo, Antonio. "Walesa? E un leader cecoslovacco [Walesa? He's a Czechoslovakian leader]." Panorama. 10 Aug. 2000:34.

Gallo, Giuliano. "Lascio per l'assalto ipocritica dei politici. [I'm Leaving Because of the Hypocritical Attack by Politicians]." Corriere della Sera. 2 Oct.2000: 9.

Galluzzo, Marco. "Cinque anni per una sentenza d'appello [Five Years for an Appeal Decision]." Corriere della Sera. 11 Jan. 2001.

Galluzzo, Marco. "L'appello del Papa non sbocca l'indulto.[The Pope's Appeal Doesn't Result in Pardons]". Corriere della Sera. 6 Nov. 2000.

- Galluzzo, Marco. "Il Censis: la criminalità ostacola la ripresa economica" [Italian Statistics Dept.: Criminal Activities Block Economic Recovery] Corriere della Sera 3 March 2000.
- Gatti, Umberto, Daniela Malfatti and Alfredo Verde. "Minorities, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Italy." In Ineke Haen Marshall (Ed.), Minorities Migrants, and Crime (pp. 110-129). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Ginori, Anais. "Non me sono una spia: Dirè le mie ragioni.[I Am Not a Spy: I Will State My Reasons]." La Repubblica, 19 Oct. 2000:10.
- Gerald, J. Edward. The Social Responsibility of the Press. Minneapolis: University of Minnesapolis Press., 1963.
- Ginsborg, Paul. Italy and its Discontents: 1980-2001. London Allen Lane, 2001.
- Greco, Francesco.(National president of the Italian Association of Young Lawyers) "Nuovo governo al banco di prova" [New Government at the Bench]. Italia Oggi. 24 May 2001:47.
- Gualteroni, Milly. "le cliniche segrete per prete diversi" [The Secret Clinics for Priests Who Are Different]. Panorama. 22 June 2000:72-73, 75.
- Hachen, William A. The World News Prism: Changing media, clashing ideologies. 2nd ed. Ames: Iowa State University Press. 1987.
- Harcourt, Alison and Verhulst, Stefaan. Project CNTRY985886, Support for Regulation and Transparency of Media Ownership and Concentration – Russia. A Study of European Approaches to Media Ownership. Oxford University. Available at www.medialaw.r/e_pages/laws/ero_union/e-conc.htm.
- Hiday, Neil. "The Megamedia Are the Message" Columbia Journalism Review. Oct. 1995.Available at www.cjr.org/ and "The Real Dangers of Conglomerate Control" Columbia Journalism Review. March/April 1997. Available at www.cjr.org/year/97/2/danger.asp
- Hine, David. Governing Italy: The politics of bargained pluralism. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Hitchens, Leslie P. "The European Community and the Regulation of Media Ownership and Control: Possibilities for pluralism" In Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. Media in Global Context. London: Arnold, 1997. pp. 207-218.
- Innis, Harold A. The Bias of Communication. Toronto: University of toronto Press, 1951.

- Karpen, Ulrich. Freedom of the Press in Germany. Roger Errera. ed., in Article 19: Press Law and Practice. London: UNESCO International Centre Against Censorship, March 1993. p. 78.
- Koser, Khalid et al. The New Migration in Europe. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Lahav, Pnina, ed. Press Law in Modern Democracies. Boston: Longman, 1985.
- La Licata, Francesco. "Cosa Nostra ha punito lo show con Madonna." [Cosa Nostra Has Punished the Show With Madonna.] La Stampa. 15 May 1993: 3.
- Lami, Lucio. Giornalismo all'Italiana [Journalism Italian Style] Milan: Edizioni Ares, 1997. p. 12.
- Lampadusa, Giuseppe Tomasi di. The Leopard. Trans. Archibald Colquhoun. New York: Pantheon, 1960.
- Lanna, Luciano. "Lo prometto: Faró una rivoluzione." [I Promise: I Will Create a Revolution]. Panorama, 9 Nov. 2000:52-57.
- Lanza, Cesare. "La mia Repubblica" [My Repubblica]. Panorama. 18 Jan. 2001:52-54.
- LaPalombara, Joseph. Democracy, Italian Style. New Haven, Connecticut, London: Yale University Press, 1989.
- La Rocca, Orazio. "E' stato solo immagine: la fede è un'altra cosa [It Was Just Image: Faith is Another Thing]." La Repubblica. 5 Jan. 2001: 8.
- La Rocco, Orazio. "Monsignor Com'astri: 'Ma non basta. Bisogna annullarlo'" [Monsignor Com'astri: 'But it's not Enough. They Need to Annul It']. La Repubblica. 25 May 2000:2.
- Lau, Debra. "Forbes Faces" Forbes.com. Available at www.forbes.com/2001/02/16/16/021facescan.html
- Lellis Stefania Di. "La 'denuncia ai palestinesi: 'Noi siamo vostri amici, non vi danneggiamo. [The Denunciation Made to the Palestinians: 'We are Your Friends, We Won't Damage You]." La Repubblica, 19 Oct. 2000:11.
- Lepri, Sergio. Dentro le notizie. [Inside the News]. Florence: Monnier, 1997. P. 149.
- Lichtenberg, Judith (ed.) Democracy and Mass Media. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Luzi, Gianluca "Scontro sulle stragi tra Cossiga e Amato" [Clash regarding the massacres between Cossiga and Amato] La Repubblica, 4 Aug. 2000: 6.

- Luzi, Gianluca. "Amato accusa Berlusconi" [Amato Accuses Berlusconi]. La Repubblica. 11 Dec. 2000: 9.
- Machiavelli, Nicolò. The Prince. New York: Dover Publications, 1992.
- Mack Smith, Denis. Cavour and Garibaldi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Mack Smith, Denis. Modern Italy: A Political History. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Macri, Carol. "Appalti Asi, arresti in Calabria" [ASI Contracts, Arrests in Calabria]. Corriere della Sera 8 Nov. 2000.
- Marcenaro, Andrea. "E la giudice sentenzià: Pagate quei colleghi" [And the Judge Will Sentence You to: 'Pay Those Colleagues (of mine)']. Panorama. 27 July 2000:46-47.
- Mancini, Paolo. "Between Trust and Suspicion: How political journalists solve the dilemma." European Journal of Communication. 8(1) (1993).
- Manning, Joanna. "Sins of the Fathers." The Globe and Mail. 29 March 2001.A3.
- Marcenaro, Andrea. "Scegliamo arbitri neutri." [Let's Choose Neutral Arbitrators]. Panorama. 10 Aug. 2000: 51.
- Marcenaro, Andrea. Panorama. 27 July 2000:46-47.
- Marozzi, Marco "La bomba alla stazione: Bologna, vent'anni dopo" [The bomb at the station: Bologna 20 years after] La Repubblica. 30 July 2000: 22.
- Martinelli, Alberto, Antonio M. Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi. Recent Social Trends in Italy: 1960-1995. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.
- Martinelli, Niccolò. "La UE lancia il check-up degli Ordini" [The UE Launches a Check-up of the Orders]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 10 July 2001: 27.
- Matteis, Giantomaso de. "La camorra spara tra la folla, terrore al mercato, tre feriti [The Camorra shoots among the crowd: Terror in the market, three injured]." La Repubblica. 26 July 2000.
- McCarthy, Patrick. The Crisis of the Italian State. 1997. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- McLuhan, Eric. In the introduction to The Medium and the Light. McLuhan, Marshall. (Eds. McLuhan, Eric and Szklarek, Jacek.) Toronto: Stoddart, 1999. p. xxvii.

McLuhan, Marshall. (Eds. McLuhan, Eric and Szklarek, Jacek.) The Medium and the Light. Toronto: Stoddart, 1999. p. xxi. From a letter to Kristin Popik dated 28 May 1971, in the National Archives of Canada Collection.

Medail, Cesare. "Enzo Biagi: 'Non aveva padroni. Se sbagliava chiedeva scusa'" [Enzo Biagi. 'He Had No Padroni. If He Erred He Asked for Forgiveness']. Corriere della Sera. 23 July 2001:3.

Mele, Marco. "'Porta a porta,' Ulivo all'attacco di Vespa" ['Door to Door,' Olive Tree Coalition Attacks Vespa]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 20 Dec. 2000:8.

Mele, Marco. "Il multiplex schiaccia le piccole sale [The Multiplex Crushes the Small Cinema]." Il Sole 24 Ore. 19 Dec. 2000:21.

Miceli, Renato. "Superlatitante della Camorra: In manette il boss Nuovoletta, condannato per il delitto Siani [Super-Camorra Mafioso in Hiding: Boss Nuovoletta in Handcuffs, Condemned for Siani Crime]." Corriere della Sera. 17 May 2001.

Mill, John Stuart. On Liberty and Other Essays. Oxford World Classics series, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mirone, Luciano. Gli insabbiati. [Those Buried in the Sand]. Rome: Castelvechi, 1999.

Morelli, Claudia. "Cronisti, inutile virgolettare" [News Journalists, It is Futile to Use Quotation Marks]. Italia Oggi. 31 May 2001:26, and "L'intervistato difama, il cronista no." [The Person Interviewed Defames, the News Reporter Doesn't] Tabloid. 6 June 2000:18.

Morino, Marco. "Effetto supermercati sulla carta stampa" [The Effect of Supermarkets on the Press] Il Sole 24 Ore. 21 Nov. 2000: 16.

Murialdi, Paolo. Storia del giornalismo Italiano [The History of Italian Journalism]. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996.

Murialdi, Paolo. La Stampa Italiana: dalla Liberazione alla crisi di fine secolo. [The Italian Press: From Liberation to the End of the Century] Rome, Bari: Editori Laterza, 1998.

Naso, Lello. "Il balzo dei nuovi periodici" [The Rise of the New Periodicals] Il Sole 24 Ore. 13 Feb. 2001:19.

Naso, Lello. "Nei portali news su misura per i clienti" [News Portals Made-to-Measure For Clients]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 7 Nov. 2000:17.

Naso, Lello. "Stretta sui giornale di partito" [Tightening of the Party Newspapers] Il Sole 24 Ore. 21 Nov. 2000:16.

- Nimmo, Dan and Mansfield, Michael W. Government and the News Media: Comparative Dimensions Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1982.
- Ottone, Piero. Pregheira o Bordello: Storia del giornalismo italiano [Prayer or Brothel: The History of Italian Journalism] Milan: Teadue. 1998, P. 430.
- Ottone, Piero. La Guerra della Rosa [The War of the Rose]. Milan: Longanesi, 1990.
- Pace, Alessandro. "Constitutional Protection of Freedom of Expression in Italy" European Review of Public Law 2. Summer (1990): 71-113.
- Pasquali, Antonio. "The Moral Dimension of Communicating" In Clifford Christians and Michael Traber eds. Communicating Ethics and Universal Values. London: Sage Publications, 1997.
- Petrognani, Robert. "Freedom of Information in Italy: Restraints and Problems" in Government and News Media: Comparative Dimensions. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press. 1982.
- Piscitelli, Olga. "Prete pedofilo" [Pedophile Priest]. Il Nuovo. 27 Nov. 2000. www.ilnuovo.it
- Pollett, Rene. "Reggio di Calabria: Una Bella Citta?" Ocean Drive Sept. 1997: 40-44, 110-11.
- Pollett, Rene. "Well-wishers Greet Weary Pope at Vatican." The Ottawa Citizen. 1 Jan. 2000: A5.
- Pollett, Rene. "Reggio di Calabria: A Beautiful City?" Ocean Drive Sept. 1997: 40-44, 110- 11.
- Pollini, Gabriele. "L'appartenenza soci-territoriale e mutamento culturale." [Socio-territorial membership and cultural change.] In Vincenzo Cesareo (ed.), La cultura dell'Italia contemporanea. (pp.185-222). Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli. 1990.
- Politi, Marco. "Poca voglia di religione, diminuiscono i praticanti [Little Want for Religion, Those Who Practise Diminishing]." La Repubblica. 23 Dec. 2000:24.
- Politi, Marco. "Suore molestate e violentate: un rapporto accusa i sacerdoti" [Sisters Molested and Sexually Assaulted: A Report Accuses Priests]. La Repubblica. 20 March 2001: 29.
- Porter, William E. The Italian Journalist. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983.

- Pratellesi, Marco. "Ma il 'Muro della memoria' dimentica Castelegno e Tobago" [But the 'Memorial Wall' Has Forgotten Castelegno and Tobago.] Quotidiano.net. 29 Aug. 1999. Available at www.quotidiano.monrif.net/char/un_quotidiano_in_classe:/234903:/2001/05/18.
- Pullella, Philip. "Former Italian PM Andreotti acquitted in killing of muck-racking journalist." Puglia, Italy: Reuters News Agency. The Globe and Mail. 25 Sept. 1999: A11.
- Putnam, George Haven. The Censorship of the Church of Rome. Vol. 1. New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1967. p1.
- Putnam, Robert D. Making Democracy Work. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Reese, Thomas. J. Inside the Vatican. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998. p. 261?
- Reggio, Mario. "Tempo libero? Una Noia." [Free Time? A Bore]. La Repubblica. 12 Aug. 2000: 24.
- Richards, Charles. The New Italians. London: Penguin Books, 1995.
- Rinaldi, Claudio. "Dalla tv alla giustizia: i trucchi del Cavaliere. [From TV to Justice: The Tricks of The Knight]." La Repubblica. 7 Oct. 2000: 16.
- Carroll, Rory. "Marconi blocked Jews from Il Duce's academy." The Guardian March 19, 2002. Available at www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4376828,00html
- Rosen, Jay. "A Republic, If you Can Keep It": Liberty and Public Life in the Age of Glasnost" In James Carey: A Critical Reader. Eds. Eve Styrer Munson and Catherine A. Warren. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Sabetti, Filippo. The Search for Good Government. Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000.
- Sani, Giancomo. The Political Culture of Italy: Continuity and Change. 1980. In The Civic Culture Revisited. Eds. Almond, Gabriel A. and Verba, Sidney. Sage: Newbury Park, London, New Delhi. 1989.
- Sannucci, Corrado. "Georgia, il paese dei sequestri [Georgia, the Country of Kidnappings]." La Repubblica. 30 May 2001:1,13.

- Schauer, Frederick. Free Speech: A philosophical enquiry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Schudson, Michael. The Power of News. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Schultz, David A. (ed.) It's Show Time: Media, Politics and Popular Culture. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.
- Scobie, William. "Berlusconi Baulked in TV Drama." The Observer. 25 March 1990.
- Segre, Daniele. "L'Editoriale del giorno" [Editorial of the Day] L'Unita Online. From www.unita.it 31 July 2000. Printed copy available on request.
- Shawcross, Tim and Young, Martin. Men of Honour: Confessions of Tommaso Buscetta. London: Collins, 1987.
- Shugaar, Antony. Italy's New Hall of Mirrors: Berlusconi's Media Cover Berlusconi. Columbia Journalism Review. July/Aug. 1994. Available at www.cjr.org/year/94/4/italy.asp.
- Shugaar, Antony. "What, No Strings? The Italian Tradition and L'Indipendente." Columbia Journalism Review. Nov./Dec. 1993. Available at www.cjr.org/year/93/6/italy.asp.
- Siebert, Renate. "Le donne, la mafia [The Women, the Mafia]." Il Saggiatore. 1994. Reprinted from Alajmo, 1993: 5 and available at www.tam-tam.com/artsiebert.htm.
- Silvo, Vittoria. "D'Antonio é deluso ma non molla. [D'Antonio Deluded But Doesn't Give Up]." La Repubblica. 15 May 2001: 14
- Spotts, Frederic and Wieser, Theodor. Italy: A Difficult Democracy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. p. 6.
- Stancanelli, Bianca. "Ecco dov'è il killer delle indagini" [Look where the killer of investigations is.] Panorama. 17 Aug. 2000: 58.
- Stille, Alexander. 1995. Excellent Cadavers. New York: Vintage Books. p. 71
- Swanson, David L. and Mancini, Paolo eds. Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences. Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 1996.
- Tagliabue, John. "Bombings Laid to Mafia War on Italy and Church." New York Times. 15 July 1994: A8.

Thomas, Judy L. "AIDS in the Priesthood." Kansas City Star. Three-part series: 30 Jan. 2000: A1, 18, 19; 30 Jan. 2000: A1, 8; 1 Feb. 2000: A1, 9. Available through archive search at www.kcstar.com/newslibrary using the key words priests and aids.

Tullio-Altan, Carlo. La nostra Italia. [Our Italy]. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1986.

Ungar, Sanford J. "The Role of a Free Press in Strengthening Democracy." In Judith Lichtenberg (ed.), Democracy and the Mass Media: A Collection of Essays. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Vellaccio, Lydia and Maurice Elston. Teach Yourself Italian. Teach Yourself series. London: Hodder Headline Plc., 1999.

Veltri, Elio and Travaglio, Marco L'odore dei soldi [The Smell of Money]. Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2001.

Vespa, Bruno. "Vespa a Vespa: perchè ce l'hanno con lei?" [Vespa to Vespa: Why are They Against You?] Panorama. 22 Feb. 2001: 56-57.

Vidal, Gore. In Richards, Charles. The New Italians. London: Penguin, 1995. page 26. Reference to quotation.

Werba, Hank. "Italo Pubcaster Beats the Odds." Variety. 6 Dec. 1989.

Wright, Robert. The Moral Animal. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Zeno Zencovich, Vincenzo. "I torti di Feltri e i dubbi sull'Ordine" [The Torts of Feltri and Doubts About the Order]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 22 Nov. 2000:6.

Zuccolini, Roberto. "L'Osservatore Romano; c'è un clima di rissa che allontana i cittadini" [L'Osservatore Romano: There's a Climate of Brawling That is Distancing Citizens]. Corriere della Sera. 28 Nov. 2000.

"Adozioni, scontro sulla legge" [Adoptions: disagreement regarding the law] La Repubblica, 3 June, 2000: 1, 13.

"Agguato tra la folla, ucciso anche un passante" [Ambushed Among the Crowd, Passerby Also Killed]. Corriere della Sera 27 Feb. 2000.

"Agnelli controcorrente: 'Più competitivi di prima' [Agnelli Against the Current: 'More Businesses Competitive Than in the Past']." La Repubblica. 14 Dec. 2000: 32.

"Agrigento: muore a 11 anni sotto i colpi della mafia [Agrigento: Dead at 11 Under the Strike of the Mafia]." La Repubblica. 22 April 1999.

"AIDS tre milioni di vittime nel 2000" [Three Million AIDS Victims in 2000]. La Repubblica. 29 Nov. 2000: 28.

Almalaurea.it/stat/profilo99/compressivo.html.

"Andreotti testimonial: L'ordine dei giornalisti indaga [Andreotti's Testimonial: The Order of Journalists Investigates]." La Repubblica, 6 June 2000:29.

"An Italian Story" The Economist. 28 April 2001:21-24.

"Annuario degli iscritti 2000. Ordine dei Giornalisti, Consiglio regionale della Lombardia. [Annual List of Those Inscribed in the Order. Order of Journalists, Regional Council of Lombardy]." Milan: Stem Editoriale, 1999. p. 85.

Antimafia Duemila. Available at www.antimafiaduemila.com/siamo.html

"Appello per la Libertà di Stampa nella Lotta Contro la Mafia [Appeal For Freedom of the Press in the Battle Against the Mafia]." Antimafia Duemila. March 2000. Available at www.antimafiaduemila.com/

"Berlusconi e Previti: chiesto il rinvio a giudizio per il 'lodo Mondadori' [Berlusconi and Previti: Ask for a Continuance of Trial for 'Mondadori Arbitration']". Corriere della Sera. 15 Nov. 1999.

"Berlusconi or Brussels" The Economist. 19 May 2001:34.

"Berlusconi? Un piazzista che trascina con false promesse" [Berlusconi? A Piazza Speaker Who Enthralls with False Promises]. La Repubblica. 2 March 2001.

"Biffi: 'Noi cristiani giudicati intolleranti solo perché non siamo omologati'" [Cardinal Biffi: 'We Christians are Judged Intolerant Just Because We're Not Like the Rest']. Corriere della Sera. 30 Oct. 2000.

"Bis col 'Corriere!' [Encore with Corriere]." Panorama 27 July 2000:47.

"Bobo Craxi usa lo pseudonimo del padre" [Bobo Craxi uses father's pseudonym] La Repubblica, 2 August 2000: 18.

Brochure for the Istituto Carlo De Martino, or the Carlo De Martino Institute, 2000.

"Bruciata l'automobile a una cronista di Gela" [Gela Journalist's Car Burned.] La Repubblica 16 Jan. 2001:24

- "Burocrati all'università per essere comprensibili [Bureaucrats go to university to be understandable]. Il Sole 24 Ore, 12 Sept. 2000: 23.
- "Cosa Nosta, continued." The Economist. Special section: A survey of Italy. 7-13 July 2001:16.
- "Così é un libro? Non lo conosco.[What is a book? I don't know]." Panorama, 6 July 2000: 141.
- "Cuffaro, i lenzuoli e le donne [Cuffaro, the Bedsheets and the Women]." La Repubblica. 13 June 2000.
- "Delitto Pecorelli, Andreotti assolto"[Pecorelli Murder, Andreotti Absolved] La Repubblica. 24 Sept. 1999.
- "Dieci minuti di applausi per l'eroe antimafia. Commuove la storia di Impastato. Lo sceneggiatore Fava: i clan lo ucciderebbero ancora [Ten minutes of Applause for the Antimafia Heroes. Moved by the story of Impastato. Screenplay writer Fava: We'll defeat the Clan Yet]." Corriere della Sera 23 March 2000.
- "Dimmi dove abiti, ti dico come stai [Tell Me Where You Live and I'll Tell You How You Are]." Il Venerdì 20 July 2001: 23.
- "Di Pietro denuncia Berlusconi e Mediaset. [Di Pietro Makes a Legal Complaint Against Berlusconi and Mediaset.]" La Repubblica. 18 July 2000.
- "Diritti umane: Italia condannata a Strasburgo [Human Rights: Italy Condemned at Strasburg]." La Repubblica. 11 April, 2000.
- "Donna uccisa. Moglia di pentito [Woman Murdered. Wife of a Mafia Informer]" Il Giornale di Calabria in Pollett, Rene. Ocean Drive. Sept. 1997.
- "Dopo otto mesi di silenzio torna in edicola l'Unità [After Eight Months, L'Unita Returns to the News Stands] La Repubblica 27 March, 2001.
- "Ecco il nuovo vademecum per il cattolico" [Here is the New Vademecum for the Catholic]. Corriere della Sera. 13 Nov. 2000.
- "Economic Indicators. Output, Demand and Jobs" The Economist 26 Aug.- 1 Sept. 2000: 96.
- "Elezioni, il giornali dei vescovi: non tifiamo, Polo presuntuoso" [Election, The Bishops' Newspapers: We're Not Fans, Berlusconi's Polo Coalition is Presumptuous]. Corriere della Sera. 15 Jan. 2001.

"Enzo Biagi denuncia: Beretta mi ha fatto tagliare due frasi" [Enzo Biagi Denounces: Beretta Made Me Cut Two Phrases]. La Repubblica. 28 March 2001:8.

European Court of Human Rights. Chamber Judgements listed by date at www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2000/Dec/Dec192000judsepress.htm

"Feltri radiato dall'Albo [Feltri expelled from the Album]." Il Nuovo. 21 Nov. 2000 at 14:02. Available at www.IINuovo.it.

Galileo. The story of Galileo's life is available at the Institute and Museum of the History of Science, located in Florence, and at their Web site: <http://galileo.imss.firenze.it/museo/b/egalilg.html>.

"Gioia Tauro senza difese" [Gioia Tauro Defenseless]. Il Sole 24 Ore 25 June 2001: Special section, p. xxv.

"Giornalisti a convegno sulla qualità dell'informazione" [Journalists to Meet on Quality of Information]. Italia Oggi. 15 Feb. 2001:22.

"Guerra di mafia a Gela, quattro morti in due giorni [Mafia War in Gela, Four Killed in Two days]." La Repubblica. 23 July 1999.

"Il caso finto profugo: condannato giornalista" [The Case of the Fake Refugee: Journalist Convicted]. Corriere della Sera. 2 Sept. 2000.

"Il killer del giornalista Fava liberato e subito dopo rispedito in carcere [The Killer of Journalist Fava Freed and Soon After sent Back to Prison]." Corriere della Sera. 23 March 2000.

"Il soldi che lavano l'onore" [The Money that Washes Honour] Il Barbiere della Sera. 2 July 2001. Available at www.ilbarbieredellasera.com

"Immagini di pedofilia su Libero: Feltri radiato dall'albo dei giornalisti [Images of Pedophilia in Libero: Feltri Expelled From the Registry of Journalists]." Available at <http://www.quotidiano.monrif.net/art/2000/11/21/1526529>.

"Immigrati tra due identità ma il futuro si chiama Italia" [Immigrants between two identities, but the future is called Italy.] La Repubblica. 30 Aug. 2000: 12.

"In Appello Carnevale condannato a 6 anni" [Carnevale condemned to six years in appeal]. La Repubblica. 29 June 2001

"In arrivo 104 lauree specialistiche: c'è anche giornalismo" [Soon, 104 Specialist Degrees: Including Journalism]. Tabloid. 6 June 2000:32. (Published by the Order of Journalists – Lombardy Region.)

- "In redeazione si fa sesso, ecomme [In the Newsroom They Have Sex, And How].'" Il Barbiere della Sera 8 May 2001. Available at <http://www.ilbarbieredellasera.com/archivi/trentarighe/trentamag2001.html#giornalstiricci>.
- "Internet Usage Growth Year-Over-Year." Table. Available at www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/pdf/mro10515_it.pdf
- "In Italia troppi bimbi sieropositivi" [Too Many Children Zero Positive in Italy]. La Repubblica. 27 Nov. 2000: 25.
- "Islam, fuga notizie: sequestrati cellulare a due croniste" [Islam, scoop: Cell phones of two journalists sequestered]. La Repubblica. March 5, 2002. Online at http://www.repubblica.it/news/ired/ultimora/rep_nazionale_193423.htm
- Italian government press subsidies. Available at <http://www.culturelink/org/culpol/italy.html>.
- "Italian Left Journalists Strike" Associated Press. 19 Nov. 1997. Available at www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/62/014.html.
- "Italy Defends Prodi." The Times, London. 7 April 2000.
- Italy, Introductory Survey. Europa World Yearbook. Vol. 1. London: Europa Publications Limited, 1999. p 1902.
- "La Polizia Paga, I teppisti no" [The Police Pay, The Hooligans Don't]. Il Giornale 3 Aug. 2001:1.
- "La pubblicità in crescita del 15%. [Advertising Grows by 15%]." Il Sole 24 Ore. 17 Jan. 2001:9.
- "La Sinistra contro Vespa: 'Puntata indegna per la tv'" [The Left Against Vespa: 'Disgraceful Episode for TV']. La Repubblica. 19 Dec. 2000.
- "La sinistra difende la Rai della vergogna. [The Left Defends the Shame of RAI]." Il Tempo. 29 Sept. 2000: 1-3.
- "'Libereremo le energie per rifare l'Italia' ['We Will Free the Energies in Order to Remake Italy']". Il Sole 24 Ore 10 May 2001: 9.
- "L'Indipendente a gennaio in edicola [L'Indipendente in News Stands in January]" Panorama. 30 Nov. 2000:26.
- "L'intervistato difama, il cronista no [The Person Interviewed Defames, the News Reporter Doesn't]." Tabloid. 6 June 2000:18.

"L'Istat: italiani, popolo di mammoni che abita in città invivibili" [ISTAT: Italians, mamma's boys who live in the unliveable city] Corriere della sera. 27 March 2000.

"Legge sul conflitto di interessi: Veltroni tende la mano al Polo [Law regarding conflict of interest: Veltroni gives a hand to POLO]." La Repubblica, 30 July 2000: 6.

"'L'odore dei soldi'" di Travaglio e Veltri è andato a ruba dopo il "lancio" di Satyricon. [L'Odore dei soldi' by Travaglio e Veltri Sold Out After Being Launched on Satyricon]." La Repubblica. 15 March 2001.

"L'offesa all religione non è più reato" [Offending Religion No Longer Illegal]. Il Nuovo. 20 Nov. 2000.

"Ma con Ferrara la stessa Corte decise diversamente." [But with Ferrara, the Same Court Decides Differently]. Tabloid. 6 June 2000:18.

"Mafia, affair su Internet 'Wall Street solo l'inizio' [Mafia, Business on the Internet. 'Wall Street is Just the Beginning']". La Repubblica. 16 June 2000.

"Mafia e appalti, 35 arresti all'alba. Da due radio messaggi ai latitanti [Mafia and contracts, 35 arrested at dawn. From two radio messages to mafiosi in hiding]." Il Giornale di Sicilia. 28 June 2001

Mezzocielo. Available at www.comune.modena.it/associazioni/avanguar/bollettario/reviste/schede/mezzicielo.html

Mafia News. Available at www.mafianews.net/chisiamo.html

Maurizio Costanzo Show. Canale 5, Rome. 8 Feb. 2001.

"Media Ordered to Aid G8 Probe" Globe and Mail 2 Aug. 2001:A14.

"Mica sono un pungiball! [I'm Not a Punching Bag]." Prima Comunicazione. Dec. 1999. Available at www.italian.it/primacomunicazione/dicembre99/aucci.html.

"Messaggi mafiosi attraverso la radio." [Mafia Messages Transmitted By Radio.] La Repubblica 29 June 2001: 25 and "Mafia e appalti, 35 arresti all'alba." [Mafia and Contracts, 35 Arrested at Dawn.] Il Giornale di Sicilia 28 June 2001.

"Musica: Carotone. 'Il Papa è un dittatore' [Music: Carotone. 'The Pope is a Dictator']." La Repubblica. 19 July 2000.

"Napoli, assassinato boss di 17 anni [Naples: 17-year-old Mafia Boss Assassinated]." La Repubblica, 12 Feb. 2001.

Order of Journalists Exam. Dated and stamped 29 April 2000, provided by Franco

Real Dangers of Conglomerate Control, The. Columbia Journalism Review. March/April 1997. Available at www.cjr.org/year/97/2/danger.asp

Report of the European Television Task Force, The. "Europe 2000: What Kind of Television." Manchester: The European Institute for the Media. 1988.

"Rutelli-vescovi, il caso è chiuso [Rutelli to Bishops, the Case is Closed]." La Repubblica. 11 Jan. 2001: 23.

Sesso in redazione? Allora meglio fare la freelance" [Sex in the Newsroom? Then it's Better to be a Freelancer]. 11 May 2001. Available at www.ilbarbieredellasera.com/archivi/trentarighe/trentamag2001.html#sessocandida.

"Sesso in redazione. E negli uffici stampa?" [Sex in the Newsroom? And in the Press Offices?] 14 May 2001. Available at <http://www.ilbarbieredellasera.com/archivi/trentarighe/trentamag2001.html#sessocandida>

"Sintesi degli studi Fieg e Deloitte Touche sulla stampa in Italia [Synthesis of Studies on the Press in Italy By FIEG (association of Italian newspaper owners) and Deloitte Touche]". Available at www.Fieg.it.

"Società estere legittime, utili per pagare meno tasse.[Foreign Companies are Legal; Useful for Paying Less Taxes]." Il Sole 24 Ore. 4 May 2001: 8.

"Stampa/I Quotidiani. [Press/The Dailies]" Table. Prima Comunicazione July-August 2000: 32.

"Stampa/I Quotidiani" [Press/The Dailies]" Table. Prima Comunicazione, Sept. 2000:164.

"Stampa/I Quotidiani. [Press/The Dailies]" Table. Prima Comunicazione, Dec. 2000:196.

"Stampa/ I Settimanali" [Press/The Weeklies] Prima Comunicazione. Dec. 2000:197.

"Subito devoluzion e 'codici' [Decentralization and 'Lawsí Soon]." Il Sole 24 Ore 10 May 2001:9.

"Sulle condanne per diffamazione tornerò l'appello" [Appeal Returned for Convictions of Defamation]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 15 Nov. 2000.

"The Charge Sheet." The Economist 28 April to 4 May 2001. Pps.21-24.

"The Real Dangers of Conglomerate Control" Columbia Journalism Review. March/April 1997. Available at www.cjr.org/year/97/2/danger.asp

"Tre Risposte [Three Responses]." Metro 26 July 2000: 17.

Abruzzo, president of the Lombardy Council of the Order of Journalists.

"Ordini a 'gradimento ridotto' tra praticanti e giovani iscritti" [Orders at 'Reduced Ranking' Among Interns and Young Professionals]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 28 Nov. 2000: 27.

"Per fortuna non sono immigrati" [Luckily, they aren't immigrants] La Repubblica. 26 Aug. 2000: 4.

"Per l'Autorità Banfi non viola la par condicio" [For the Authority Banfi Doesn't Violate the Level Playing Field Rules] La Repubblica. 2 Dec. 2000:4.

"Per l'omicidio di Valentina arrestato il presunto mandante" [Man Suspected of Ordering the Murder of Valentina Arrested]. La Repubblica 19 Jan. 2001.

"Pillola, scontro Riuni-Veronesi" [The Pill: Clash Between Cardinal Ruini and Health Minister Veronesi]. La Repubblica. 2 Nov. 2000.

"Politica debole, cala la tensione antimafia [Politicians weak, antiafia tensions rising]." Corriere della Sera. 24 May 2000.

"Presidenza D'Alema, l'appello di Veltroni divide i Ds [The Presidency of D'Alema, The Appeal of Veltroni Divides the DS (Democratic Sinistra, or the Democratic Party of the Left)]." Corriere della Sera. 11 Nov. 2000.

"Press Law in the United Kingdom" Article 19: Press Law and Practice. London: UNESCO International Centre Against Censorship, March 1993. p. 172.

Presswise, a UK-based press ethics organization. Available at <http://www.presswise.org.uk/France.htm> and Nicol, Andrei and Bowman, Caroline.

Prima Comunicazione [First Communication], April 1999 - March 2000.

Prima Comunicazione [First Communication], July-August 2000.

Profilo dei Laureati 2000.[Graduates Profile]. Available at <http://www.alma laurea.it/> and at www.alma laurea.it/stat/profile2000/ aggregati_frams.html.

"Puglia, Torna L'emergenza: Sbarcati Piu di 200 Profugi. [Puglia, The Emergency Returns: More than 200 refugees disembark]." La Repubblica. 29 Nov. 1999. Available at <http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/ sbarchi/sbarchi/sbarchi.html>.

RAI Tre TV news. Third of three Italian state television channels. Rome, July 5, 1999.

RAI Uno TV news. One of three Italian state television channels, Rome, June 23, 2000 10:30 a.m. newscast.

"Un albero per non dimenticare" [A Tree to Remind Us]. Il Giornale di Sicilia 23 May 2001.

"Un articolo del 'Giornale' fa infuriare Amato" [An Article in Giornale Angers Amato]. Il Sole 24 Ore. 9 Dec. 2000:3

UN, International Trade Statistics Yearbook, Europa World Yearbook, 1999.

"Una maxipiantagione di marijuana, sequestrata nella Medellin siciliana [A Giant Marijuana Plantation, Sequestered in the 'Medellin' Sicilian]." La Repubblica. 9 July 2001: 15.

UNESCO Statistical Yearbook. New York: UNESCO Publishing and Bernan Press, 1999.

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

U.S. Defense Department's Web site for a comparison of the amounts spent per GDP by many countries at defense.link.mil/pubs/allied_contrib98/b-5.html.

"Venezia: esplosione in due garage a Chioggia [Venice: Explosion in Two Garages in Chioggia]." Corriere della Sera. 12 Feb. 2000.

"World's Richest People" Forbes Magazine. Available online at www.forbes.com.

Thesis Interviews

Many more people than those listed below were interviewed or contributed information for this thesis, but because my work on this subject began in 1997, long before the idea for the thesis was conceived, they are not cited. As well, some names have not been cited for the purpose of protecting those interviewed.

Abruzzo, Franco. Personal interview, Milan, 8 June 2000.

Blitz, James. Correspondent for the *Financial Times* of London. Personal interview conducted in Rome on October 31, 2000. On micro-cassette.

Capella, Marco. Editor of *Animafia Duemila*. E-mail correspondence, August 10, 2001.

Colin, Manuela. Journalist who studied *L'Indipendente* and wrote a Bachelor of Arts thesis entitled "L'Indipendente: storia ed organizzazione di un quotidiano italiano" [The Independent: The History and Organization of an Italian Daily]. University of Bologna, 1997. E-mail interview, 2000.

Fregonara, Gianna. Personal interview with Gianna Fregonara, political journalist at *Corriere della Sera* who covered prime ministerial candidate Francesco Rutelli during the 2000-2001 election campaign. Taped interview conducted on October 25, 2000, in Rome.

Ginsborg, Paul. E-mail correspondence. May 2002.

Gregoretti, Marco. Journalist at *GQ* magazine, Milan. Personal interview, June 7, 2000.

Marrone, Stefan. Political journalist at *La Repubblica* who covered Silvio Berlusconi during 2000-2001 campaign. Personal interview held in Rome on October 24, 2000. On micro-cassette.

Martinelli, Alberto. Dean of Political Science at Milan University and political candidate in the 2001 election. Personal interview taped recorded on October 18, 2000 in Milan.

McCarthy, Patrick. Personal interview with Patrick McCarthy, Professor of Political Science at the Johns Hopkins School at the University of Bologna, and author of *The Crisis of the Italian State* on Dec. 17, 1999 at Bologna, Italy. On micro-cassette.

Rosen, Jay. Personal E-mail correspondence. May 28, 2002.

Stanfield, James L. National Geographic magazine photographer. Personal conversation on or about 31 Oct. 1997.