

now held by a Democrat, not a Republican. But that's what Republicans thought would happen after the 1990 Census, and it didn't work out that way." Back then, the Michigan Republican Party chair was Spencer Abraham.

Greg Kaza served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives (1993-1998). He returned to his native Midwest recently after working on Capitol Hill analyzing the voting patterns of members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Letter From Rome

by Alberto Carosa

Al Gore and the Feces-Eater



Vice President Al Gore did not bother to answer the letter in which a dozen or so prominent Italian pro-family leaders, intellectuals, and politicians called for him to withdraw his endorsement of the recent World Gay Pride parade in Rome (see "Letter From Rome," August), but he did respond to a similar message from the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. On June 1, William Donohue, president of the League, sent a letter to Gore asking him to renounce his support for the parade and urging him to demand that the event be moved or delayed, since its venue and timing were chosen to offend the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Italians do not vote in U.S. presidential elections, Americans do, and this time Gore replied. In a letter dated July 3, Gore said that he would not rethink his position. Despite his respect for the Catholic Church, he believed that the larger issue was one of "tolerance." "Just as I will stand by you whenever you are working to fight intolerance on religious grounds, I also believe we need to be tolerant when it comes to sexual orientation as well," wrote Gore.

Donohue replied that his letter to the Vice President was occasioned by the intolerance toward Roman Catholicism displayed by the leaders of the World Gay Pride march. He added that Gore is so wedded to the radical homosexual agenda that he did not bother to com-

ment on what the lesbian president of Circolo Mario Mieli, the main organizer of the event, said of the Pope: "F--- you." In Donohue's opinion, "Gore's letter demonstrates how selective his commitment to tolerance really is."

The parade, held on July 8, featured an impressive lineup of anti-Christian and communist militants. The participants ranged from the heads of the three rumps of the old Italian Communist Party and eco-terrorists to anarcho-communists and Marco Pannella and Emma Bonino, two leaders of the Radical Party and trailblazers of the homosexual-rights movement. High-ranking Muslim and Masonic representatives were also present.

Despite triumphant claims, the march was a flop. Two years of groundwork, virtually unlimited funds, favorable media coverage, and the formal support of a vast array of prominent international figures produced a parade through ancient Rome totaling only 70,000 people, according to the official figure released by Questura di Roma (Rome's police headquarters). The fact that many of the participants were simply fellow travelers meant that the actual number of homosexuals converging on Rome from around the world was much, much lower.

The media's bias could be gauged by their ridiculously inflated crowd estimates, ranging from 200,000 to 500,000. The Reuters online newswire was a notable exception; its report mentioned "thousands of homosexuals" marching through Rome. Even the official figure was probably an exaggeration: Italy's communist-dominated government openly sided with the homosexual activists.

The event's flop infuriated the parade's organizers and their leftist sponsors, who blamed their failure on an anti-parade backlash triggered by grassroots pro-family groups. The secular news-magazine *L'Espresso* reported that the gay-pride march was officially announced in early 2000 amid a calm, debate-free atmosphere, which radically changed within a few months. *L'Espresso* also noted that the confrontation between supporters and opponents of the parade had taken on crusading overtones.

The anti-gay-pride protests were made possible by the Italian parliament's failure to pass a bill outlawing any form of "politically incorrect" opposition under the pretext of fighting discrimination based on "sexual orientation." A Dutch gay-rights group demonstrated how the homosexual lobby will use this type of

legislation, by announcing plans to sue the Pope on the grounds that his harsh comments in the aftermath of a recent international gay-rights demonstration constituted an incitement to hatred and discrimination.

Walter Veltroni, the leader of the communist-rump Left Democrats, has insisted on the need to enforce a law "introducing or extending" the ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation. Veltroni's stance was echoed in even stronger terms by the president of Circolo Mario Mieli. Mario Mieli was a communist and homosexual who committed suicide when he was 31. *Corriere della Sera's* weekly supplement "Sette" has described him as an "intransigent marxist" with "an absolute sense of transgression . . . He wanted to destroy society." *La Repubblica*, a pro-homosexual paper, reports that Mieli's family was compelled to put him in a mental hospital after they found out that, in London (where Mieli had joined the Gay Liberation Front), he used to wear a fur coat with no clothes underneath and ask policemen to let him kiss them.

Mieli's most famous book, *Elementi di critica omosessuale* (1977), stressed, according to the Catholic news agency *Corrispondenza Romana*, "the importance of homosexual liberation as part of human emancipation." Mieli believed that "the full disinhibition of homoerotic tendencies is a prerequisite . . . for the establishment of communism." Mieli even considered as "enemies" those homosexuals who were reluctant to make their private lives public. Moreover, he argued that the triumph of the homosexual agenda would help bring about Marxist revolution: "the gradual liberation of the other suppressed tendencies of Eros will further strengthen the revolutionary movement."

Mieli did not simply propound these theories; he lived them. As *La Repubblica* reported, he toured Italy staging performances in which he "elegantly ate feces with his fingers and then drank his own urine, produced on the spot, in a close-up scene."

Does Gore's support of the gay-pride parade's organizers entail endorsing this "alternative" culinary habit? And does the Vice President agree with what former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell did during her concert in the Tor di Valle horse-racing complex? While singing, she was approached by a white-clad dancer playing the Pope, who knelt down and hugged her hips in a sexual posture.

Halliwell has also made a video in which she appears dressed as a nun. But the former “Ginger Spice” is no longer only a singer: She has been appointed roving U.N. Population Fund Goodwill Ambassador, from which position she promotes safe sex and the wider use of condoms. Does Gore support her innovative approach to diplomacy, insulting and mocking the head of a sovereign state?

Before Americans go to the polls on November 7, they might want to know the Vice President’s answers to these questions.

Alberto Carosa, the editor of *Famiglia Domani* Flash, writes from Rome.

Letter From Rieti

by Andrei Navrozov

Good Help Nowadays



I start this story not at my own desk in the Palazzo Mocenigo, but in a hammock suspended between two graceful pine trees in a place called Oliveto, up in the Sabine Hills, an hour’s drive from Rome. The settlement of a dozen houses is dominated by the Villa Parisi, a medieval *casale* set in a large hillside garden, which some friends from London have taken for a week’s stay. The nearest big town, with a population of 45,830 according to the *44esima edizione della Guida Michelin* found in the rented car, is Rieti, but I did not come here to fret about sightseeing in Northern Lazio. I came here to make jokes, play cards, sleep, drink, and talk about the servants. In England, there is a name for this kind of summer divertissement, which is supposed to take place somewhere beyond the confines of the former Empire, usually in Greece, Spain, or Italy. It is called a villa holiday.

Of course, the arrangements have been made through a London agency, which knows as much about Italy as the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* knows about Russia, and—if such a monster can be imagined—is even more defensively verbose. Accordingly, once the promised luxuries have been paid for in advance, the tenants receive a

descriptive folder of several hundred pages, complete with slightly inaccurate maps and wholly imaginary menus, that boils down to something like this: “Just bring your own bloody towels, buy your own bloody Scotch, stay on the bloody terrace, and for Heaven’s sake don’t bother the servants. They are foreign, and we don’t know what they’re saying.” Consequently, what we are given here is the kitchen equivalent of Vladimir Putin’s autobiography, which may be just as well. Like Byron in Venice, I worry about getting fat.

What do I tell my English friends about the servant problem? That there is a reason why I fell for their idea of the villa holiday, apart from the pleasure of seeing them. Our Stakhanovite nanny and housekeeper of four years, Sandra, who had come with us from London to Rome, and later to Venice, handed in her resignation a few weeks ago. In London, she once chased away an *Evening Standard* reporter, who thought he would take a sentimental photograph of my son playing among the daffodils in Hyde Park, with a softly spoken Russian phrase that means “I’ll rip your mouth.” In Rome, asked what she thought of the Italians, she answered: “They are a noisy and shameless people.” It was in Venice that this loyal, hardworking, and God-fearing woman was finally corrupted, and, of course, it would be hypocritical to blame her: The purple pink light of the setting sun reflecting off the stone façades of the Giudecca is clearly unsuited to the task of vacuuming a child’s bedroom. Like me, poor Sandra realized that what she really wanted was to sit in the café all day and drink Aperol spritzers, and that this great pleasure actually cost very little.

The corruption takes hold of the victim in slow increments, Italian life as a whole only too ready to supply an object lesson at every step. “Buon giorno, Signora!” It would never occur to the average Russian of Sandra’s generation, the last to graduate from Stalin’s university of life, to comment on the weather to a total stranger. “For that we have meteorologists. Ah, you beg to differ? Then you’re probably a Trotskyist spy.” It would never occur to us to address a maid as “Madame.” “What’s that you’re playing at? Bourgeois egalitarianism? In our country people are shot for less.” Indeed, it has taken the death of 100 million of our countrymen to teach the other 100 million to mind their own business, so it would seem that the very least I can

count on there, by way of personal benefit, is a good maid.

But eventually the *bonhomie* routine grinds down the toughest Stakhanovite, and she dissolves in all that wretched civility like powdered sugar. Before you know it, she is no longer an anodized-steel bolt holding together an infinitesimal part of a vast statist machine—such as the employer’s household—but a vulgar Western chatterbox, a nosy know-it-all with a diversity of subjective preoccupations, a “wicked and slothful servant” laboring in the belief that disobedience is a substitute for talent. She has become a person, a citizen, a god.

If individual talent is, as I believe, the only acceptable excuse for democratic delusions of this kind, then Margarita, our cook, represents the Western ideal. Margarita speaks only dialect, with the consequence that when she wants to express the most basic thought—even one so proverbially simple as “different strokes for different folks”—something altogether gorgeous and outlandish, like the San Marco cathedral, emerges from her island brain. “*Ghe se queó*,” she says, rolling up her sleeves to plunge a pair of powerful arms into the colorful chaos of a postprandial sink, “*che ghe piase ciuciar el caenasso*,” meaning, “some people like to lick a lock.” We all adore her, a Venetian to the marrow of her soup bones, in part because her Italian is as bad as ours.

I met her through her husband, a leading fishmonger in the Rialto market who had already won our not inconsiderable custom. Then, one day, my friend Alberto brought over a dozen wild ducks he had shot, still in feather. With that millstone around my neck, in pouring rain—it was some time before the Madonna della Salute, and unless you are a hunter the weather is terrible—I made fruitless rounds of Venice’s butchers, hoping to get them plucked at any price, until finally I came to the Rialto and saw Beppe, in his white apron, presiding over his *banco*. Before I could finish my tale of woe, he swept all the fish remains before him into the gutter with a majestic stroke of a giant blade and, with the same gracefully curved movement, cut the tie that bound the birds together.

It was a kind of European Community nightmare. Feathers flew as far as the eye could see, drifting flirtatiously over the snowy banks of bass and sole. Under the roof of the covered market, a crowd gathered, Venetians and *foresti* in equal numbers. The foreigners spoke in hushed un-