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in cc Miss Savill (WED, FCO)
(who has seen here) (24a)



BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL

via F. Crispi, 122

80122 NAPLES

29 May 1980

(rec'd 6 June)

H of C
Minister
25 JUN 1980

There is some useful stuff here, though the letter is a bit long. Mr Campbell has backed off his firm prediction that the PCI will lose Naples.

Mark Pellew Esq
British Embassy
ROME

cc. Mrs. Coton
Research Dept.
Dear mass.
& for Mrs 24/5/80

M. J. Allen 2/6

NAPLES CONSULAR DISTRICT - BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS 1980

1. Since the last major round of Regional, Provincial and Communal elections in 1975 political trends in the Southern Regional Governments have tended to reflect if not faithfully following events in Rome. In particular PCI muscle flexing following their peak vote in 1976 National Elections evoked numerous crises in parallel with or ahead of those in the capital which appeared to await a national solution before being themselves resolved.

2. The surge in the PCI vote in 1975 also produced what in this traditional Christian Democrat stronghold were completely new phenomena, namely the coming to power of Communist led Giunte in 2 major cities, most importantly in Naples but also in the Italsider town of Taranto. Two provinces, that of Foggia in Puglia and Matera in Lucania were similarly taken over. The questions to which this survey has principally been directed accordingly are:-

a) How much local politics if at all are influenced by movements at the national level and the rider to this, namely to what extent can they be relied upon as indicators of national public opinion?

b) To what extent may the drop in the PCI vote in the 1979 General Election be repeated in Naples and Taranto and with what effects?

3. The answer to (a) must we feel be divided into 2 parts: the first relating to the behaviour of the political parties themselves within the Giunta of local government at all levels; secondly to the degree of influence which national as opposed to local issues may have upon voting patterns. In the first case it is quite clear that with the sole exception of the PCI who withdrew their vote from the majority in all our Regions the parties have shown no overall tendency to follow the lead of their Roman headquarters. For example PSI policy in Catanzaro where the Socialists withdrew from the Giunta in support of Communist ambitions is in sharp contrast with that of Palermo where they sought unsuccessfully to insist upon the formation of an

this is, of course, because the CI are more disciplined than the other parties

MJA

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exclusively DC/PSI Giunta. On the other hand in Puglia and Basilicata the PSI have continued to work in the DC-led giunte and are partners with the PCI in Foggia, Matera, Taranto and Naples. They are in opposition in Campania.

4. In the Sicilian case the new President, D'Acquisto, told the PSI firmly and publicly that he had no intention of abandoning parties (PSDI and PRI) which had loyally supported the previous Matarella regime; furthermore that he had no need to since the DC enjoyed a substantially higher percentage in Sicily than in the country as a whole. This is also true of all the other Regions and is unlikely to change significantly after 8 June; nor do we consider it on the cards that the PSDI will wish to abandon their governing partnerships anywhere in sympathy with their colleagues in the Capital.

5. Regarding voting patterns it should be recorded that with the possible exception of Sicily the climate in which the June 1980 elections are being contested contrasts sharply with that in 1975. Where excitement then prevailed and social gatherings were invariably scenes of lively debate there is now almost total apathy. In Calabria this is perhaps most acute. Cynicism is rife especially about the value of the whole concept of regional government and their own in particular. The latter has, according to local opinion scarcely even tried to tackle the massive problems confronting it. The Prefect of Catanzaro remarked privately and somewhat acidly that the present priority is the erection of a new building in Catanzaro to house the President's office.

6. Where apathy will lead in terms of results is open to speculation. What seems sure is that there will be many blank papers returned and that this will not be principally attributable to the Radical Party's decision to present no lists except in very few isolated cases. It is also likely to induce less interest on the part of voters in the blandishments and programmes of the parties in favour of heightened attention to specifically parochial and personal interests and to individuals thought best able to produce tangible results. This means that in our view clientilismo and "grass root" politics, a PCI preference, will play an even greater role than hitherto. These results will accordingly provide an even less reliable national political barometer, which does not mean however that the parties will not whenever expedient attempt to present them as such.

NAPLES

7. So important is a study of the comparative results in the local elections of 1975 and the national ones of 1976 and 1979



that they are reproduced below. Most importantly they demonstrate the precarious position from which Valenzi's PCI/PSI/PSDI/PRI Giunta has governed for the past 5 years. Secondly, they indicate that if the swing away from the PCI in last year's General Election were to be repeated in June the present coalition would only have 45.5% of the total vote compared with 49.25% in 1975.

	1979		1976		1975		
	Votes	%	Votes	%	Votes	%	Seats
DC	219.408	30,51	220.032	29,9	200.507	28,36	24
PCI	220.557	30,67	300.777	40,9	228.385	32,30	27
PSI	42.617	5,92	35.105	4,8	48.978	6,92	5
PSDI	28.649	3,98	15.557	2,1	49.019	6,93	5
PRI	20.457	2,84	19.283	2,6	21.908	3,10	2
PLI	9.780	1,36	7.662	1,0	14.089	2,00	1
MSI	102.643	14,27	113.910	15,5	130.992	18,35	15
DN	15.011	2,08	-	-	-	-	-
FDUP	9.248	1,28	-	-	-	-	-
DP	-	-	13.512	1,8	10.381	1,47	1
RAD	43.088	5,99	9.170	1,2	-	-	-
altri	1.625	0,2	1.106	0,2	-	-	-

8. Since last year the Mayor's opponents have been emphatic in predicting his overthrow - indeed according to some reports as recently as 30 April the PCI themselves seemed to be resigned to this possibility. Our PCI contacts have however in the past 2 weeks been displaying increased confidence in their ability to at least maintain their 1975 vote. This followed polls taken in the back streets which have shown public opinion giving the present regime, in spite of minimal achievement (blamed of course by the Communists on DC blocking tactics) high marks for stability and integrity.

9. If Neapolitans were less fickle and if the election were being voted purely on the comparative records of present and past administrations the result might be more easily predictable. The PCI campaign supported by the PSI is an effective one and their grass roots organisation is as always highly efficient. There have however been some extraneous factors thrown in which further complicate the issue. Almirante's decision to lead the MSI campaign (he is the party's candidate for Mayor) means that Naples will be subject to plenty of his heady if inane rhetoric which Neapolitans love. It is well known that deserters from the party in 1976 went over the PCI but less certain where they went from there in 1979: secondly, the Radicals who have presented no list here captured in 1979 an astounding 5.9% of the local vote (3% throughout the South). It is by no means clear that a substantial proportion of their supporters will follow Pannella's call for abstention; we have heard reports of disillusionment with what has been described as a "policy of opposition to everything". All



that seems sure is that the disaffected will not give their votes to the Communists. The third and most recent event meriting consideration is the assassination on 19 May of Pino Amato, the DC Regional Assessor for Finance, who was incidentally the first politician to be murdered by terrorists in Naples. If one were to assume that this would have such an effect on the vote as the vicenda Moro did in provincial elections within the Region (but not in Naples) in 1978, the chances of DC gains would look good. That it will have some effect is beyond question but perhaps less than the Christian Democrats hope. Amato's funeral was well attended, the Church full, but popular reaction to his killing was more subdued than at any rate I expected.

10. One final fairly minor but none the less significant change which has taken place is in the pulpits where it seems special support for the DC is no longer in vogue. The faithful are being urged not to vote for an atheist party but by implication there are unnamed lay parties who qualify for the Church's approval. The outcome of the Naples election is thus extremely difficult to predict. All that can perhaps be said is that a close finish is likely and that whichever party emerges ahead, however marginally, will hail the result as a triumph and will receive disproportionate media attention.

TARANTO

11. Both the present situation and the background here are quite different to those in Naples. The 1975 elections gave the PCI a lead over the DC and made the former the largest single party but this did not result immediately in a PCI-led giunta in the municipality. The DC formed a traditional centre-left coalition and ran the city for a year. According to our informants this giunta elaborated a number of useful plans for the city but were unable to implement them for lack of funds. Early in 1976 the PCI leader of the opposition, Giuseppe Cannata, taking advantage of a split on corrente lines within the DC, pressed a vote in the Comune in which part of the DC abstained causing the fall of the giunta. Cannata, who is a forceful personality with a very good standing in his party - he was the local CGIL Secretary for many years before entering politics - quickly rallied the PSI and PSDI forming the Giunta which with PRI support has been in power ever since.

12. Cannata's leadership has been much more effective than Valenzi's in Naples. Taranto is not only much smaller but far easier to manage than Naples. He was also very lucky since shortly after assuming power the "Stammati" Law was passed in Rome providing municipalities across Italy with substantially more funds than they had hitherto enjoyed. His administration was thus able to implement the plans set out by its predecessors without moreover a murmur.



from the opposition who could hardly oppose plans which they themselves had approved. Now Cannata can present the electorate with an impressive record of achievement including a major school, a health centre and numerous other municipal amenities. The PCI need hardly worry that deliberation in local issues will lose them seats on 8 June. They have moreover a solid power base in the work force of Italsider and the ancillary heavy industries and DC campaigners are naturally experiencing difficulty in presenting themselves as a better alternative. All they can do is to argue that the credit for what has happened over the last few years should be more properly given to them.

13. This city however seems to be proving itself an exception in more than one way in that for reasons implicit in the above, outside events seem likely to have more influence on voting patterns than elsewhere. It is virtually certain that the PCI will lose the bourgeois vote which brought it to a peak 42.1% in the 1976 General Election and that the DC in spite of everything may make some small gains for roughly the same reasons as they did all over the South in 1979. I was, for example, told something I have never heard elsewhere - that even the Russian invasion of Afghanistan was having some effect on people's thinking. Far more importantly however the prediction which most people in Taranto except the Communists are making, namely that the latter will lose office, is based not on the possible strength of the party after 8 June but of a likely switch of allegiance by the lay parties back to the DC.

THE ELECTION OF CONSIGLIERI DI QUARTIERE (Ward Elections)

14. The above subject deserves mention since it is completely new on the Italian scene, even though it seems to have aroused little interest outside Naples and Palermo. Few people have any idea how it is going to work. In the 2 big cities however a lot of grass root work is being done in the former by the PCI in pursuit of their wider aims and in the latter by a completely new group on the civic list inspired by Catholic Action. In Sicily, with a year to go before a Regional election, the focus is on the Capital.

15. Palermo is an almost unassailable citadel of the DC in spite of its size with no industry to provide a base for the Communists. The outcome of elections there is accordingly so predictable that there can hardly be any excitement. The arrival on the scene of a new 'party' with a religious base has however given rise to substantial anxiety in the Christian Democrat camp. They have sought an alliance with the new group who have steadfastly refused,



arguing that they are non-political and have no intention of contesting anything beyond the Quartiere. There is a growing belief that their hard work will be rewarded by sweeping successes and that this may tempt them to seek to extend their influence. We are inclined to dismiss this as largely unfounded speculation but it is at least providing interest in what might otherwise be a rather dull scene.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J D Campbell', written in dark ink on a light-colored, textured paper.

J D Campbell

c.c. H M Consul General, Milan
H M Consul, Genoa
H M Consul, Florence