

## RIARMO MORALE – SERVIZIO INFORMAZIONI

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Translation of the articles about the national youth assembly held in Vico Equense, province of Naples from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1964.

AN ANSWER TO CRISIS by Paolo Marchetti

The main aim of the assembly is to offer Italy a new kind of man, the one Washington, Moscow and Beijing need, the kind of man that dispenses with the need of division, dictatorship and war.

Italy has an important role in this task, especially for the Mediterranean area. With this new element it can help all the neighbouring countries (Algeria, Tunisia, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt). Italy certainly has a more important message to give than party politics and the one offered by the Cinecittà production of nowadays.

The world is now in a very contradictory situation. There have never been before so many conflicts. Yet at the same time there has never been such a possibility to give enough food to everybody, to eliminate the great division between social groups and to eliminate diseases and the harshness of physical strain. The basic problem is that man does not know how to take advantage of this opportunity.

Even a superficial observer can see that selfishness, greed and cheek are a damaging and negative common denominator in world affairs. We need to bring a cure and provide the elements which are needed to build a different kind of society.

Mankind will never find a balance without being humble enough to accept God's authority in public and private affairs. Christianity is undoubtedly the most revolutionary force in today's world.

Moral Re-Armament is engaged in making the divine element the vital factor in history. About this I can quote the well-known statesman don Luigi Sturzo. He stated that Moral Re-Armament is comparable to the great movements for the progress of Mankind. "It is like fire sent by Heaven to purify Earth" he said. That totally new fire is absolutely necessary in our world which considers itself "Christian and free". We need to start living out the ethical values which belong to our civilization.

Italy is in the centre of one of the greatest contrasts between ideas in modern history. On one side there is militant Marxism, on the other the presence of sizeable Catholic Christian forces.

The national assembly in Vico is an answer to the present crisis of discouragement and defeatism. It points out the way to a solution which consists in people renewed inside. The present crisis is one of corruption, dishonesty and cowardice. But the cure exists.

The most important of the reforms which we consider necessary is to change the basic motives of the various social groups. We are convinced that an effective government must be concerned only with the interest of the people, even facing unpopularity. Industry and the economy must put their forces into backing the rebirth of the creative forces of the Nation and not at the exclusive service of their interests. A purpose is needed for all creative forces. It is a colossal task. It means giving the world a new kind of life, in which there are no more people who exploit and others who are exploited, some who go hungry and others who eat too much, people who hate, people who oppress, people who are devoured by envy. A short time ago Italy celebrated the centenary of its unification. In this time we have had periods of glory and of moral greatness and others of shameful inner fights and defeats.

In all these years of political unity very few men have nourished the hearts of our people with the sense of duty and selflessness which keeps a nation together.

Recently the break-up process has accelerated because of the lack of responsibility of many, high and low, who have misunderstood the gifts of freedom and prosperity. What is needed in this time of crisis is what one of the most authoritative Italian journalists has called "a moral and spiritual centre to inspire society and the State". It is the time to find it if we do not want to lose all.

“LET US MOULD TOMORROW’S ITALY”, youth assembly 22-30 August 1964, the messages:

**Rajmohan Gandhi**, grandson of the Mahatma: “The Italian youth can create such a strong and decisive nation that Italy can tell Washington and Moscow that both can learn the secret for a more modern revolution.

The youth of Italy must prepare itself for the day when they will meet the grandchildren of Khrushchev and of Mao Tse-tung and Johnson’s children, who all need a revolution which resolves their contradictions.”

**Maria Romana Catti De Gasperi**: “I wish your initiative to be successful, because so often it was to the youth, to their trust in the future and to their faith that my father turned in his speeches, and it was especially the youth he thought of when he worked for a future great European motherland, where wars and conflicts would have been put aside through a greater tolerance and a deeper charity”.

**Professor Giordano dell’Amore**, president of Italy’s savings banks: “Unable to participate in this important conference because of previous unavoidable commitments, I give my warm support, congratulate you for your initiative and wish you full success”

**The main speakers:**

Professor Giuseppe Palomba, economic politics chair at the University of Naples: “Progress, development and evolution”.

Monsieur Philippe Mottu, Swiss sociologist: “The challenge of the modern world” and “Europe between Washington and Moscow”.

Dr Andrew Mackay, since 25 years a collaborator of Dr Frank Buchman: “The art of re-shaping the character of men”.

Mrs. Pina Renzi, actress: “The theatre in the ideological age”.

Dr Antonio Alecce, president of the Italian Pharmaceutical Institute, who has held a seminar on Italian industry.

**I HAVE FOUND A WAY TO BUILD A NEW ITALY**, by Antonio Fontana

With a bit of anxiety I walk up the short path that leads to the Sant’Angelo boarding school, location of the assembly. I had no idea what to expect, though I had read carefully the programme which had been sent me. It mentioned daily lectures by eminent speakers, films, plays, competitions, various activities including sport and journalism.

The frankness and the courtesy with which everybody greeted me struck me, as if we had been friends for a long time. Working together we got to know one another better. The assembly was officially opened on the first evening.

From the first hours of the following morning we got down to work, dividing into groups: one took care of the technical needs, another, to which I belonged, took on the press, in order to give the conference a daily paper written by us. A third one saw to the musical activities. Sport included morning gymnastics, basketball and football tournaments, swimming competitions.

In two days the technicians had learnt to use a film projector and the mayor of Vico Equense asked us to show “El Condor” in the town’s main square for the whole population. When he arrived to see the film he was surprised by the turnout. A large public came to the open air theatre built by us to show Peter Howard’s play “The ladder”. The Jesuits on the first row of chairs were the most moved.

The first speaker was Professor Palomba of the University of Naples, who said in his lecture: “Material progress without a progress of the Spirit leads to destruction” and committed himself to fight with us. The Swiss sociologist Mottu put us before the challenge of the modern world, dealing with the problems of the next century and the European problems of nowadays. Miss Rife with the story of her father got us to know a new America. The list could continue, but I prefer to dwell with the most surprising of the lecturers, an industrialist who said that it is possible to pay honest taxes!

Without realizing these days we have grown up and have decided to find a concrete solution of our problems and of those of our country. We met every morning for a friendly exchange of ideas about the thoughts that came to us in a quiet time. And the wonderful thing was that nobody stayed silent, but everybody had something to suggest, and they were brilliant and concrete ideas.

However for a revolution ideas and people are not enough (we had more than the necessary of both). There is a need of resources, and all of us young men gave our contribution, in many cases with sacrifice. But it still was not enough and we must thank the good Lord who has come to our aid by inspiring men to give: the managers of a pasta factory gave some of their production, the Naples Chamber of Commerce and a group of workers in Sicily gave money, as well as the mayor of Vico Equense, who gave some out of his own pocket.

What about the future? We have established three centres, one in the North, one in Naples and one in Sicily. We shall keep in touch through our newspaper, we shall write plays, we shall organize public events and we shall tell the Government that we want to give an answer to bitterness, to corruption and to cynicism. For this purpose we have committed ourselves to put things right in our own lives without delay. We realize that the future of our country depends on us young people and have decided to put all our energy into this revolution.

#### WHAT THE DELEGATES HAVE SAID

Here are some statements by the delegates at the assembly "Let us mould tomorrow's Italy"

*Michele Del Vecchio*, Portici "I belong to a family traditionally engaged in politics, but I was not interested, because I did not find any basis for that activity. Now I know that there is one; it is the absolute moral standards. This basis is going to be the foundation of my ideas".

*Tullio Foschian*, Trieste: "In this assembly I have seen for the first time youth who live together without fighting. I have felt strongly the problem of the relations between the North and the South of Italy. It is not true that there is a problem of the Southern regions, but there is above all the problem of the North which does not want to understand the South. I think that the first purpose of this assembly of ours is to build something which will make the union of these two blocks possible and make Italy into one piece. (unite Italy)

"We have heard that in India Gandhi's grandson has organized a march to get rid of corruption; we could also organize a march through Italy".

*Rodolfo Crisci*, Nola: "Yesterday we heard Padre Lorenzo, who told us about Saint Augustin. One can say that he was the first one, sixteen hundred and forty years ago, to proclaim Moral Re-Armament. We know the life of Saint Augustin, a man with many shortcomings, who at the age of thirty realized that there were other things to be done. I can say that the same has happened to me. I met Moral Re-Armament two years ago at Nola with the Latin-American play "El Condor". I got very enthusiastic, but the enthusiasm soon ended. Then I left for my military service, but I kept thinking about change, a step that I absolutely had to take. Here I have got this will to change".

*Giulio Grecchi*, Milan: "This is a revolution. To make a revolution ideas, men and means are needed. We have found a really formidable idea, the men are here, now we must talk about the means.

"Most of the expenses for this conference have been covered by the fees which we have all paid. To prepare this assembly contributions have been given by institutions and individuals which were convinced about it, among them the Naples Chamber of Commerce. The mayor of Vico Equense has given a contribution out of his own pocket.

"Now we are thinking of what we shall have to do in the next months: we shall need two million lire for the next activities that we have decided to do. Each of us in the last months has given personal contributions. Last March I gave all my savings of one year and I am determined to give all that God asks, so that this idea really gets into the life of our nation. I gave 500,000 lire".