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Regione Emilia-Romagna

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Claudio Bacilieri

IL BRASILE

THE MAN WHO



YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS

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A PADDLE STEAMER IN THE ATLANTIC

Arrigo Levi



GENERATION DJ

Pierfrancesco Pacoda



FA.L

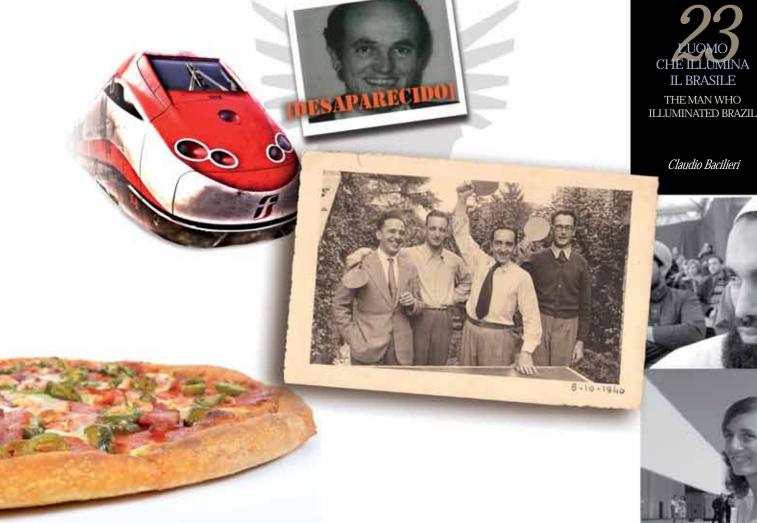


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**LETTERE** 





# THE TRAIN OF DESIRE

by Chiara Vergano

December 14 2008. Among the many events which happened on that day, Wikipedia – the internet community's encyclopaedia - spoke of the actual start of the new Milan-Bologna high speed train route after some trials and inaugural trips. It was a small Copernican revolution in the transport sector

From that date, the Etr 500 Frecciarossa train

connects piazza Duomo and piazza Maggiore with its 34 trips a day on a typical workday, travelling on its "own" train tracks at a speed of up to 300 km/h. It now takes one hour (65 minutes to be exact) to travel from the Emilia-Romagna capital to the Lombardy one. Which is 37 minutes less compared to the previous Eurostar which connected the two cities in 1 hour and 42 minutes. The base price of the ticket to travel comfortably and quickly is ? 56 in first class and ? 39 in second class. And there are discounts and special offers too. We had to wait a long time to cut the tape for the beginning of the Milan-Bologna high speed train. It took 8 years to construct the 182 km of tracks from Lavino to Melegnano. And a lot of money too: 6 billion 916 million Euros, compared to the amount of 5 billion 700 million Euros originally budgeted for, all covered by the State. But at the end the final product was delivered. The FS CEO, Mauro Moretti, says that it is "a type of underground train that will link the biggest cities in Italy". A metro which began functioning during a winter which recorded one of the highest snow falls of the century, and which made the cold white sea view from the window on the train trip from Bologna to Milan vaguely resemble an ex-

perience on the Trans-Siberian. But the comparison starts and ends at the bad weather: while various stretches of the Saint Petersburg-Vladivostok line cross cities and towns. the Bologna-Milan high speed train traverses only the flat land of the Po Valley plains, through the provinces of Milan, Lodi, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena and Bologna, Crossing uninhabited centres to reduce the impact to the surrounding environment and farming land, the route runs parallel to the motorway for about 130 kilometres and for tens of kilometres on the "classic" railway lines. For the moment there are no intermediary stations: in the future, a new station will be built in Mediopadana di Reggio Emilia, four kilometres north of the city and designed by the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava. For now, in addition to the plains, travelling on the high speed train means crossing some imposing infrastructure: the 7 thousand metre long viaduct in Modena and a bridge, again designed by Calatrava, on the motorway. And in Piacenza there is

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a bridge "suspended" over the Po River, with its steel tie bars and support antennas, designed by the architect Mario Paolo Petrangeli. The vicepresident of the European Commission and Transport Minister Antonio Tajani was not shy in enthusing on the route at the end of the inauguration of the Milan-Bologna high speed train route, "which does credit to Italy, workers and all Italian technology" used to produce it, sending a "strong message for the use of less polluting forms of transport, which will allow Europe to grow better". According to Tajani, the new high speed train route is "an integral part of the Berlin-Palermo connection priority project, the number 1 trans-European corridor". Goods, and not only passengers, are also transported along this route. These same goods could use the same high speed train. Indeed, at the moment, the train transports only passengers which, with the new Milan-Bologna high speed train, have actually increased by 11.6% (figures supplied by the FS Group), which makes it a real competitor to its closest rival, the plane, in terms of travelling time and ticket price. Who uses the train? Mainly businessmen, managers, professionals and politicians. Tourists too. But not commuters, those who go from Bologna to Milan everyday for work, and who can't use the high speed train because the first Frecciarossa arrives in Milan in the morning at 9.29, a little late for the general office worker. Paradoxically, it is these very commuters (those people who in some way or another travel from, leave from, or arrive in, Bologna) who have gained less from the high speed train because the famous 182 kilometres of the route do not actually leave exactly from the centre of Milan and don't arrive

exactly in the centre of Bologna. In the Bologna station, the underground tracks for high speed trains are still being built: this means that the Frecciarossa (actually, more than one), even if for just a few kilometres, uses the traditional train tracks when leaving or coming into Bologna, albeit for just a few kilometres. The result is the overuse of the traditional train tracks with a consequent slowing down of "normal" trains. The high speed tracks should be ready in 2011 when all the trains will run as if in some kind of jig-saw: the normal trains on the traditional tracks and the high speed ones on the high speed tracks. With no cross-interference of trains. And the setting will be one of striking beauty, the envy of many: the new Bologna station will be designed by the Japanese architect Arata Isozaki. But 2011 is still a long way away. The next important date to remember is 13 December 2009, on which the Bologna-Florence line will become operative. Expected travel time is about 30 minutes covering 78.5 kilometres and crossing Emilia-Romagna for about 30 kilometres. This route required a lot of work (and money), given that over 90% of it was built in tunnels. Which is another part of the railroad connecting Europe, another piece of the Berlin-Palermo corridor.

## PINOCHET'S "OPERATION CONDOR" by Giorgio Bardeschi and Claudio Bacilieri

The Emilia-Romagna Region has filed a law suit against Alfonso Podlech Michaud, the former military prosecutor from Temuco who is accused of being one of the most vicious torturers during Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile.

74-year-old Podlech is one of the 140 people investigated by the Rome Public Prosecutor's Office which has filed a remand order for the disappearance of 25 desaparecidos of Italian origin.

Incriminated in the "Piano Condor" investigation on the kidnapping and killing of citizens of Italian origin, Podlech, who in his homeland has always enjoyed immunity, even teaching at the Mayor University in Temuco. was arrested on 27 July last year in Madrid, where he was on a stopover on his way to Prague with his wife and grandchildren.

In Spain, in fact, immunity is not applicable and the judge Baltasar Garzón immediately authorised the accused to be turned over to the Italian authorities, which they moved to the Rebibbia prison. Some of Podlech's numerous victims include Omar Venturelli, a former priest originally from Verice in the Modena area, who was a professor of Education at the University of Temuco, and who disappeared days after the Pinochet coup d'état of 11 September 1973. Maria Paz Venturelli. Omar's daughter, has lived in Italy since 1974 and resides in Bologna.

do vou have any memories of your father? "Unfortunately I don't have any direct memories of my father. I was born in 1971, a happy time in Chile's history, when the Unidad Popular government was being experimented. My father disappeared on 4 October 1973 when I was nearly two years of age. For many years my image of him was sketched out only by my mother's stories. In Italy, in 1974, the two of us alone arrived here. And until 21 years of age I met nobody from my father's family". Your father taught education at the University of Temuco. Why did the army consider him a subversive? "My father's political activism was rooted in the studies of philosophers and theologians of the left. He entered the seminary when he was very young to follow his vocation which drove him to help the poor. He took his vows when he was very young and began to officiate in the parish church of a town in the IX Region, Victoria. Our land was an agricultural region, characterised by the great power of the big landowners who, after the victory of the Unidad Popular and the land reform which followed on from that, radically altered their right-wing position which had always distinguished them. There were groups which were also organised militarily, who were prepared to defend their privileges at all costs. These

positions clashed straight away with my fa-

who lav claim to the land to work on". As a parish priest, was any attempt made on vour father's life?

"Two attempts were made on my father and the local Church suspended him and stripped him of his church-hood. He then began to teach education at the Catholic University of Temuco while continuing his political activism for the mapuche and the poor of the town. He was a person who could not pass unobserved, a cultivated intellectual, a leftwing priest, a public political activist. When there was the coup all civil rights were suspended, my father's name was included in banishment lists spread by means of communication inviting "subversives" to present themselves to the local military authorities".

ther's work with the peasants and mapuche

And what did your father do?

"In Temuco the army availed itself of civilians to gather information on people who were considered dangerous. One of these people was the Fiscal militar in Temuco. Alfonso Podlech, My father voluntarily handed himself in to the military authorities, he was imprisoned in isolation in the Temuco prison and was never allowed to be visited by doctors or lawyers, not even my mother, who went to the prison every day to try to see him. My father disappeared the day the "death caravan" came through Temuco, and I'm sure that this was the highly awaited moment by many people in power on the right in our city to take revenge on an inconvenient person".

What is his family's emigration story?

"My great grandparents were peasants in the Modena Apennines, they had a hard life, the same one that they then had in Chile. As my aunt told me, life in the country was all work, they worked from morning to evening, every day. The Venturelli family left in 1904 for Capitan Pastene, a town in the middle of the Araucania woods where, to this day, there is a group of emigrants from Modena. My grandfather Roberto, the youngest of 4 siblings, is the only one born in Chile".

How do feel about the Emilia-Romagna Region filing a civil suit against Podlech?

"The Emilia-Romagna Region's gesture is a fundamentally important institutional act. I am the damaged party, but I am just one person. I hope that my story can help develop the justice process. I feel part of our State, I want it to be a state in which we can boldly state that we do not torture, we do not kill, and we do not make people disappear just because of their ideas. The Region's decision to file a civil suit has a precise significance: as individuals we might support this, but it is the regional institution that believes in these values and defends them with all the tools possible. It is an important gesture which helps make history. Regional resolutions are documents which last over time. This is the reason why I want to say a heartfelt thank you to counsellor Gianluca Borghi who presented the proposal. Podlech is currently in the Rebibbia prison in Rome waiting to be put on trial. The Court of review has denied him house arrest. We're waiting for the prelimi-

nary hearing, which should be soon". You live in Bologna now. Can you tell us about you and your mother's life since the disappearance of your father. "We arrived in Italy in 1974. For a long time we hoped that my father was in some clandestine detention camp and that he was alive. When we found out about the existence of the secret Colina Dignidad camp, which was a plot of land owned by a militarily protected German settlement, and which people had said that live desaparecidos prisoners had been found, we immediately hoped that he was one of them. A lot of time went by, we began two trials for murder and disappearance in Chile. Unfortunately there is still a law in place which protects army personnel who perpetrated crimes in Chile before 1983. For civilians, it's different: there are currently legal proceedings in course against Podlech. But what we should remember is that even though he was the military judge after the coup in Temuco, he was acquitted of all charges. The fact that this man, who was utterly convinced of his impunity, was captured while going to Prague on holidays, has changed the course of the trial against him which has been going on for 10 years now in Italy. The path has been long, I often think that this trial will outlive me. But it is my way in collaborating on the construction of a more democratic and fairer society which can be more liveable for everybody".

#### HIGH QUALITY BOOKS by Franco Giubilei

7 ith its origins in the production of picture VV cards - perhaps the most pop expressive form ever existed - the Panini publishers from Modena has evolved into a publisher of highly refined art books which, for 20 years, alongside publications for children, have covered the whole range of its products. Precisely because of the highly specialised nature of this operation by the Franco Cosimo Panini publishers, they have been able to successfully sail the treacherous sea of Italian publishing, afflicted by a chronic lack of readership and the economic crisis of late, to post good sales results and to place its products on overseas markets too.

We talk to Laura Panini, president and memory bearer for the Modena company: "The decision to publish art books comes from a choice of my father's, who was a very passionate book-lover. The Mirabilia Italiae series, an atlas of our country's masterpieces which is in its 15th volume and is directed by Salvatore Settis, collates everything beautiful which defines Italy in terms of its great monuments, from the Duomo in Modena to the Assisi Basilica, from the San Giovanni Baptistery in Florence to the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua". These precious books, in Italian and English, are ed Kingdom through the specialised bookshop network. A new international project was launched at the last Frankfurt book fair: "The idea of extracting from these books images for other books on particular themes which develop other ideas", Laura Panini explains. "For example, on Assisi, which is the pilot project, we will have a chapter on animals, saints and the life of Francis of Assisi. It's an important book, written in a way to unveil what can't be seen and to explore the unknown elements of a monument. The series should come out in Germany and France at the end of this year". Another art book project that Franco Cosimo Panini has published is another series which its name alone proffers an evocative endeavour: it's called La Biblioteca Impossibile (The Impossible Library) which collects a series of faithful reproductions of the masterpieces of Italian renaissance miniatures. Inaugurated in 1995 with the "Bibbia di Borso d'Este", the series was born from the precise wishes of the founder of the publishing house: "To bring to light miniated codes which nobody had seen since", says Laura Panini. "These are masterpieces from the renaissance, mainly, which ended up in private or overseas collections, which, in any case, can not be viewed". Each code requires a lot of patience, including years of work by highly specialised artisans. The final result is the perfect reproduction of the original published in limited numbers - a few hundred copies - and sold at prices ranging from 6 thousand to 30 thousand Euros. "Each code is a world unto itself requiring enormous know-how and flexibility", added the president. "The people involved include the miniator, the printer, but also the goldsmith and the fine craftsman, all working as a team which changes every time, based on the volume to be reproduced". 50% of these precious works are for the Italian market and the other half for Germany, Austria, Spain and Japan. The second area of Panini's work centres on children's publications, starting with the La Pimpa magazine, with a monthly circulation of 50 thousand copies (it began at 12 thousand in 1994) and the other monthly magazine Giulio coniglio (Giulio the rabbit). Then there is the series of books for small children, "Zerotre", conceived last September for readers under 3 years of age, which the company also hopes to sell in France, Germany and South Korea, and the educational books in the "Come

also distributed in the United States and the Unit-

The final product is the booming school diary market, a characteristically Italian phenomenon, for children from the 3rd grade of elementary school up to the 5th year of secondary school with a print-run, for all of Panini's diaries, of 2 million 200 thousand copies.

nasce" (How it is born) series.

# PIZZA, SPAGHETTI AND CAPPUCCINO

by Saverio Malaspina

Dizza, cappuccino, spaghetti and espresso are the most important Italian words from a historical and cultural perspective which have become a part of the languages of the 27 European Union member states. The survey was conducted by the Dante Alighieri Society over three months (from 5 November 2008 to 5 February 2009) via its website (the results can be read in whole at www.ladante.it), in which almost 10 thousand people chose 10 words out of a list of 100 taken from the Dictionary of Italianisms in the World, which is been produced by linguists Luca Serianni, Lucilla Pizzoli and Leonardo Rossi. The love of Italian cuisine, therefore, is also prominent in the linguistic and cultural field. A look at the final results of the survey strengthens this observation: pizza, cappuccino, spaghetti and espresso are followed by mozzarella and tiramisù, followed by two "intruders", bravo and allegro.

If we look at the results of the survey for each country, it is difficult to identify cases in which the gastronomical hegemony runs second best to words belonging to other sectors. There were, though, some exceptions: the case of Latvia stands out, in which the first five places in the classification are taken up by sonetto, virtuoso, chiaroscuro, quintetto and

Let's look at the results from each country individually: in Austria and Belgium, no surprises, with pizza and cappuccino respectively, even though the preference by the Belgians for dolce vita should be highlighted. Most of the voters in Bulgaria are economists, where surprisingly, banca comes out at the top. Cyprus is the only country which gives a nod to the centenary celebrations of Futurismo, which is the leading term along with dolce vita and espresso. Pianoforte leads the way in the balanced Denmark which won by only a handful of votes.

Estonia takes the economy route, with lotteria, banca and credito as the most voted words. Finland, on the other hand, opts for its passion for Italian gastronomy, with the top seven words being pizza, espresso, cappuccino, lasagne, risotto, spaghetti and mozzarella. France, Germany and Greece sees pizza as the leading word, while in Ireland spaghetti came out first and tiramisu in Lithuania, Apart from the already mentioned anomalous results in the "Lithuania case", Luxembourg should not be ignored, where Chianti, allegro, espresso and lasagne occupy the top votes. Malta unexpectedly voted for gazzetta; in Holland cappuccino came up trumps. No surprises in Poland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Romania. Slovakia. Spain and Hungary with pizza at the top. Sweden has a predilection for espresso, which is also shared by Slovenia, along with banca and allegro. How did Italians vote? If you were expecting something extraordinary, you'll be disappointed: pizza, spaghetti, cappuccino, dolce vita, espresso, affresco, bravo and mozzarella. In the bel paese too - while famous and loved all over the world for its art, fashion, culture, Dante's language, scenery, history and architecture - it is the language associated with cuisine which

takes the podium and which dominates the Italian language, apart from a few allusions to the dolce vita. That is unless we take the Latvian route, but we fear it would be too difficult to make space for a virtuouso sonetto instead of a "margherita" or a plate of spaghetti.

# THE MAN WHO ILLUMINATED BRAZIL

by Claudio Bacilieri

The first light he fell in love with was perhaps the one which his father used to light up a theatre in Bologna. The second – and definitive one – is the one used to illuminate a room to create a harmonious setting. Furio Dominici, born in Bologna on 23 February 1909, is over 100 years old. In Brazil, Dominici is synonymous with lamps. Fancy lamps, Italian and internationally designed. Dominici brought the beauty of light to Brazil.

His father Enrico was an actor, his mother, Ernesta Sutter, was an opera singer of Swiss origin. His father treaded the boards all his life with his own theatre company with whom, as a young man in 1881, Ermete Zacconi, the great Emilian actor, found success through acting with Duse. Two of the father's three sisters were also actresses: Rosina, whose actor-manager, Ettore Petrolino, was one of the highest exponents of variety theatre. And Franca Dominici, the great character actress who acted in many films from 1939 to 1978 and who died at the age of 90 in 1997. Stories within the family tell of the father who married three times and of a woman in Paris who had fallen madly in love with him, and who offered his wife at the time an apartment and an allowance for life to leave her husband. The death of his father ended Enrico's theatrical career. He was 14 years old and had to find a job. He spent 3 years in Libya on military service and upon returning became the representative for the Bologna area for some companies from Murano, the capital of glass art. In 1934 he opened a lighting shop in the centre of Bologna in via Farini 7, across from the historical café Zanarini, which sold not only Murano glass but also refined furnishings. The explosion of the war in 1940 first diminished the shop's business and then closed it completely

The post war period led to an economic crisis accompanied by the cold war, which, in Dominici's eyes, would end up with a third world war. The actor's son had decided he had had enough and loaded boxes and boxes of lamps and Murano glass on a ship headed for Brazil, including the best of Barovier and Toso, Venini and decorative lighting productions from the time. Two other Italians who would go on to become famous travelled with him on the Barão de Jaceguai: Pietro Maria Bardi, the founder of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo, considered the greatest museum in Latin America, and his architect wife Lina

Bo. The first thing Dominici did in Rio de Janeiro in 1946 was stage a beautiful exhibition in the Copacabana Palace where Brazilians, who were used to shopping in bazaars which sold everything, from pans to crystal lamps, marvelled at the small blown-glass cups, bottle-shaped vases and transparent glass candlesticks which, today, are an antique collectors' dream. The next step was opening a shop, not in Rio because he couldn't stand the heat, but in São Paulo.

The year was 1947 and for the first time

Brazilians could gaze at the lamps and objects of design shown in the shop at Rua Xavier de Toledo, the first site of the Dominici Iluminacão Moderna, which then moved to Rua Treze de Maio. The decorative lighting market in Brazil was all his: he imported the pieces from Italy to supply his shops, which in the meantime he had opened two others, until the government, from one day to the next, banned imports. Dominci was not to be discouraged so he opened his own factory producing lamps and sophisticated crystal objects, which soon became the most important one on the country and which supplied and still does - tens of shops in Rio, Bahia, the Minas Gerais, Paraná, Goiás, Rio Grande do Sul and other States. Along with his five designers, Dominici also creates exclusive pieces for hotels, banks and ships.

In the 70s the Studio Dominici, in addition to producing products, again started to import Italian and European objects into Brazil. He opened a new shop in Rio in the Copacabana quarter and three others in São Paulo

quarter and three others in São Paulo. In his shops, we can see and buy, for example, Flos masterpieces, one of the most famous lighting companies in the world founded in 1962 by the Bolognaise Dino Gavina and Cesare Cassina. Italian designer objects were now in the houses of Brazilians. Quality home decoration lighting accomplished the idea that electricity captured by Thomas Edison could become works of art. Objects created by Tiffany Studio or the modernist movements like Bauhaus and De Stijl had already, in their elegance, given light a decorative function. Technology and the introduction of new materials over time refined this trend with the emergence of the "contemporary" style which took the place of the "modernist" one Studio Dominici in Brazil became the point of reference for architects, designers and people with taste, who can see from four to six new designs for decorative lighting each

month in his shops.

Today Studio Dominici is led by the art director Baba Vacao who, in addition to choosing and importing cutting-edge European design, promotes products by young Brazilian designers. In 2007 the Dominici "marca de luminárias" celebrated its 60th year of business with a huge exhibition in the main shop in São Paulo in Alameda Gabriel Monteiro da Silva, which brought together creations by the holy names of design like Philippe Starck or Flávia Pagotti and new protégés like the French Matali Crasset

A Studio collection from 2000 reissued the classics that Furio Dominici had taken with him on the Ocean crossing when, tired of the war, dreamed of illuminating Brazil.

### A PADDLE STREAMER IN THE ATLANTIC

by Arrigo Levi

Arrigo Levi, who was born in 1926 and came from a well-off Jewish family from Modena, experienced racial persecution in 1938, fled to Argentina to find refuge for several years and fought in Israel in defending the new state. Once back in Italy, he embarked on a journalistic career which began with the Unità democratica in Modena and then London's BBC, Il Corriere della Sera, The Times and La Stampa, of which he was the editor. He retraces his formative years from a human and professional perspective in his latest book Un paese non basta, published by Il Mulino (238 pages, 16 euro), which we thank for their permission in allowing us to publish some excerpts in the Readings section of ER. Arrigo Levi has written numerous books, including Rapporto sul Medio Oriente (1998) (Report on the Middle East), Dialoghi sulla fede (2000) (Dialogues on faith), America Latina: memorie e ritorno (2004) (Latin America: memories and returning) and Cinque discorsi fra due secoli (2004) (Five speeches between two centuries). He has also acted as counsellor to Presidents of the Republic Ciampi and Napolitano. We left from Buenos Aires - dad, mum, my sister Paola and I - on 6 May 1946 aboard a French passenger ocean liner, the Campana, which, with the outbreak of war, was in the Buenos Aires port and was being sent back to France. We arrived in Marseille - the city was visibly scarred by bombings during the war, in the port there were the white and rusty skeletons of sunken ships which had been fished out from the sea – on Assumption Day, 28 May. We left straight away for Nice by train, where we stopped for two or three days in a desperate and vain search to change our pesos in one of the big hotels along the Promenade des Anglais, which was full of only Allied soldiers and prostitutes. A fortuitous encounter with two Dominican monks who were travelling with us helped us to find a way to sell the gold case of dad's watch, pay for the hotel and leave again. We had another brief stop in Bordighera. From there we were picked up by a car coming from Modena and got back home on 2 June. 2 June 1946 was the day of the first free elections after Fascism and the referendum which saw the birth of the republic. It was a sunny day. Upon arriving dad was tired but he wanted to go to the polling station before going home. There was a long

queue. There he was reassured: avuchèt al va-

ga pòr a ca', a vutèr al pòl gnir edmatèina

("attorney, you can go home and come back to vote tomorrow morning").

So he went back to vote the day after with the help of people holding him up. He voted for the republic, he who was a long-standing monarchist, against the king who had violated the Statute thereby giving free reign to fascism and the approval of the race laws. For the Constituent Assembly he voted for Concentrazione democratica repubblicana (Republican Democratic Union): it was one of the party's 469 votes in that electoral district compared to 28,016 votes for the Pci (Italian Communist Party), 17,330 for the Dc (Christian Democrats), 15,057 to the Psi (Italian Socialist Party) and 2,512 for Uomo qualunque (Uomo Qualunque Front).

Dad's return was reported in a brief article (all the articles were short, the dailies had two or at most four pages) the day after in the local newspaper l'Unità Democratica, "organ of the Comitato provinciale di liberazione nazionale (provincial National Liberation Committee)"

From his letters sent from Buenos Aires, relatives and friends knew that he had only one regret, not being able to act for the rebirth of the common motherland, for which he had already fought and had only one desire: to go back, go back to the reborn motherland. Italy is now laboriously being reborn and his son has also returned. His old friends, in a show of grateful affection towards attorney Enzo Levi, wish him the best in continuing with his work, which can also contribute to new common objectives, which only the work of honourable men can carry out and defend. The Campana was the first passenger ship leaving Buenos Aires for Europe after the end of the war. Dad was in a hurry to go back to his motherland, not only because he wanted to vote but because he knew his myocarditis left him little time to live and wanted to see Italy and Modena again. He had suffered another terrible heart attack a few days before leaving and spent the whole trip in his cabin lying on his bed and assisted not by my mother who suffered terribly from sea sickness, but by Paola and I Paola with her medical experience (she had a degree in science and had worked in the Anchorena Sanatorium laboratory during the four years in Argentina), knew how to look after him.

A newspaper clipping from the Nacion of 5 May, which I had received in Italy along with some tongue in cheek comments in the first letter sent by two university colleagues, two companeras de lucha, "battle comrades", as we used to call them, announced the departure the day after aboard our ship of the condesa de Castellana with her daughter Diana, some dunques de Cara, prince Charles d'Aremberg and a certain number of other variously famous people. We were travelling in a lower class and never had the chance to meet our more illustrious travellers. But we had access to all the decks on the Campana: mum had discovered the geometrical centre

of the ship, where the rolling and pitching were felt less. We pulled out a deckchair and she managed to survive the trip; actually she got so much better that she even played a few hands of bridge with some other traveller friends, who were other Italian Jews returning to the "homeland". I should point out that of the Jews who had emigrated across the ocean from other European countries, few chose to return immediately after the war: to us Italians it seemed like the most natural of choices: it had not been Italy which had persecuted us, but fascism.

In bridge, like in poker in years past, mum always won. I used to lose but was an audacious and in my opinion, brilliant, player (the attorney Vigevani from Milan simply considered me lucky), based at least on one particular play of which I was particularly proud and which I described in miniscule detail, call for call, in one of the letters which I was to send to my siblings who had stayed in Baires, which I wrote on a typewriter dictated to me by dad. I would then post them in wither Rio de Janeiro or Dakar where we had brief stops, or after our arrival in Europe.

The trip lasted three weeks. We were in a constant state of waiting, almost numbed mentally: maybe because we were suspended between two worlds and two lives, or because of the effect of the sea which was almost always calm and blue with a soft and wet wind blowing, magnificent fiery sunsets and the dolphins and flying fish in front of and behind us. All of us had a different personal history, and a different and unknown future ahead of us. Days were spent waiting for a future which we had problems imagining. Our thoughts were often reflected, with a sense of regret, on the lives we had abandoned in America, and the many uncertainties on the life we were to live upon our arrival, on how we would find Europe after the war. The passengers were from a wide range of nationalities, conversations in Spanish intertwined with conversations in French, or Italian or English. There was a group of German-Swiss people who sang very sad mountain songs the day we crossed the equator. While somebody who called himself a professional actor sang a song in French about the story of a poor black slave taken from his town who was travelling in the hold of a ship who said "Monsieur bon Dieu n'est pas gentil"; until one day he saw some palm trees on the horizon, threw himself in the water and began to swim while saying "Monsieur bon Dieu est trés gentil"; but he didn't have enough strength and drowned while saying "Monsieur bon Dieu n'est pas gentil". The story seemed to us to be full of obscure meanings and while we secretly touched wood, drew us all to tears.

There were also a lot of priests and nuns aboard the ship, young sisters wrapped in white bandages, silent and ultraconservative, whose glances inadvertently fell upon the elegant ladies smoking long cigarettes, some fe-

male passengers whose appearance seemed a little shady and others who were definitely not, and some gracious girls in wind-swept clothes who I called Churros barbaros (in Naples they would be called nu babà).

The nuns would look at them and then withdraw their glances to then gather themselves again. There were two splendid Dominican monks, with flowing white robes, who looked like they had come out of a painting from the 1300s, and old, smiling mother superiors. There were some Italian peasants with superb moustaches, with a face that looked like it was carved. Tall and aristocratic. And there was a huge swarm of children who would race around screaming, or have sack races or egg in spoon races.

In spoon races.

I had a long philosophical discussion with a French priest in the defence of free thought, and I was very pleased with myself. The priest too thought the same thing about himself, I guess, but then, to my great satisfaction, I saw him walking for a long time in silence

Time passed at the speed of twenty kilometres an hour, in a never changing horizon. Arriving at night in Rio, with the collar de luces, the fantastic necklace of lights from the bay sparkling to our left, while our ship slid along the water in absolute silence: it was pure, unforgettable magic. Thoughts about the future vanished in that inertia which is typical of sea travel and in the uncertainty of what we were to find upon our arrival. We would greet each other, comment allez-vous, que tal, how are you, and dogged discussions were had with theories propounded on currency exchange rates in Europe, a Europe which we had difficulty imagining how it really was and which to us seemed distant.

That is, until we were sailing around the African coast during the night between 24 and 35 May after having left Dakar, when the sea became increasingly rougher. The effect on dad was that his pulse increased to 98 beats a minute before the sea and his pulse calmed down again. Somebody explained that we had come encountered the currents of the Strait of Gibraltar, which cut perpendicular-wise. At sunset on the 24th, we saw the horizon and a blue promontory in front of us, which we thought was already Spain, but it wasn't. At dawn on the 25th I went on the bow nobody was there only the sea rising to our right, and the dolphins playing in front of us. I will never forget that hour of anxious waiting which followed. The blue promontorv had become increasingly larger and closer. but it was still Africa. Further on we saw only the sea, the ship stayed facing north, until on the horizon we spotted, right in front of us, a blue line, and we could make out, to our right, in addition to a strip of white dunes, the last African beach, a piece of sea which opened out. We were waiting with other people who had come out wrapped in blankets, and suddenly the ship started to majestically change course, and sharply, to the right, in the shape of a magnificent arch, and from then on all of us felt exhilarated, almost rejoicing. We entered the strait, we were closer to Africa and the white houses in Tangier than the Spanish coast and the multicoloured town of Algeciras, with its beautiful lighthouse. There were two or three white sails before us, the sea became fuller and fuller of boats, steamers and birds.

Two grey English war ships were being inspected. A plane flew over us at a height of twenty metres. The Spanish coast was definitely Europe. Goodbye to endless pampas, never-ending seas of grass. We could see small plots of land divided by straight lines, with different crops and colours, which revealed the ancient agricultural experience of the act of moulding nature. Then we saw precipices, small valleys which went down to the sea and signalled the cliffs of Gibraltar, cement-grey and fortifications, while the forest-green of the African coast slid away to our right. At midday we were told that we had already arrived in the Mediterranean, at 442 nautical miles from Marseille, where we were to arrive at 7 in the morning of the 28th. We were ahead of schedule so we were given a slow cruise along the Spanish coast up to Barcelona, which was so close that we could make out all the monuments in the city which we had left in May four years prior.

That day, the 25 de Mayo, the Argentinian national holiday, many of us sang the national anthem with vigour – Libertad, libertad, libertad – even though I don't think there was one Argentinian amongst us. Even the priests and nuns sang, our hearts were all in a bit of turmoil and a spot of sudden homesickness for the land of refuge which we had left. Dad, mum, Paola and I considered ourselves

Dad, mum, Paola and I considered ourselves only the forefront of our big family. Indeed all of us returned to Italy at various stages, and some even after many years.

The youngest of us seven, Luisa, who was 16 at that time, came back a few months after us and in that brief period of time we saw how much she had changed. When we had left her she was a child and now she was a sprightly young woman. The others followed, but not straight away, as the fear of the breakout of another world war at any time was still present and widespread and – something we may have forgotten – stayed that way for many years after. Some of us who had come back a few months before the Korean war sped back to Argentina, which still seemed to us to be a safe refuge, and came back permanently to Italy only one or two years later.

#### GENERATION DI

by Pierfrancesco Pacoda

He won a Grammy Award last year, the highest musical honour (awarded to Domenico Modugno and Laura Pausini in the past) and Madonna wanted him by her side on her triumphant world tour. His name is Benny Benassi, a musician just over 30 years old, who grew up with the Ar-

over 30 years old, who grew up with the Arci clubs in Reggio Emilia, which he still goes to today and to which he has a close creative relationship.

Benassi is not a pop singer, he is a DJ, one of the protagonists of that impetuous wave of youth in love with electronic music and dance music which, from the middle of the 1980s, saw Reggio Emilia as one of the leading lights in electronic rhythms and sounds which combined the joy of dancing with pushing the boundaries and experimentation.

Their records are not released by multinationals but by small record labels which often identify with the artists and which regularly reach the top positions in the music charts. This happens in England too, the home of youth culture and music. It all started in 1989, when Daniele Davoli, a DJ from Marabù, the historical club in the Reggio Emilia outskirts, rediscovered the Afro-American appeal of Loleatta Halloway's voice, a soul singer, who was unknown of in Italy. He used one of her songs to write, under the Black Box name, a dance track, Ride on Time, which went on to become one of the best selling hits of all time. Now Davoli lives in England, where he is one of the most popular and most interviewed dance music producers. Just like Benassi, who divides him time between lengthy periods in his beloved Reggio and his adopted city New York.

The many leading lights of this scene are in the documentary film Italohouse Story, by the Rimini director Maurizio Clemente, who reconstructed the years between 1984 and 1994 when Italian dance music centred on Reggio Emilia and Rimini was the sound to copy all over the world. To the point that English magazines coined the term Riviera House to describe the uniqueness of that sound which successfully combined the use of modern electronic machines (the first synthesizers) with that typical Italian taste, with a tune.

It is no coincidence that today groups like Klein Mbo from Cervia and Kekkotronics from Forli are considered to be the spiritual fathers of what is called house music, danced to from Paris to Los Angeles.

In the meantime, the "Emilian dance music sound" has changed by adopting marketing tools, but without losing its home grown charm which the world market embraced. The key to its success is based on its firm regional roots in the dance hall scene. It's as though the spirit of popular dance (ballroom dancing) had found in dance music a sort of new opportunity to transform clubs into places for meeting and sharing.

Record labels like Irma Records, for example, have produced sophisticated dance tracks by fusing the tradition of Romagna orchestras with modern disco sounds. While Montefiori Cocktail, the twins from Forli, sons of Germano, the star of the saxophone in the golden era of ballroom dancing (in the 1960s), pay homage in their songs to polkas played by their father along electronic rhythms. Which has made them the most popular young Italian group in Russia, where they go on lengthy tours.

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