



# The voice of Maria Dolens

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## Kamala, surprise contender

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When presenting the American 'presidential' elections in November (see no. 43 of the online magazine 'Voce') we had introduced a slight 'caveat' with regard to the mathematical certainty that the contest for the White House would feature two octogenarians, with that slight margin of doubt, in all sincerity, referring to the Republican camp. Indeed, we did not think it implausible that, with the numerous trials pending against Donald Trump, a possible conviction could legally preclude him from continuing his campaign, forcing him to desist.

The fact that, on the contrary, the early withdrawal of one of the contenders has ended up in the alignment of the most unsuspected side, that of the Democrats, is 'proof' of how, in politics, nothing can be taken for granted, even in contexts - and the United States is rightfully one of them - where the procedures are planned well in advance and, barring truly exceptional situations, in line with clearly predetermined schedules.

A situation of total unpredictability has characterised the entire path to the nomination of the 47th President of the United States.

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HAPPENING AT THE UN

# Our neighbour's figs

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

**I**t may be a legend, but the story of Marcus Porcius Cato bringing a basket of figs to the Roman Senate and offering them to his colleagues as a ploy to convince them to destroy Carthage remains relevant more than two thousand years later. For those who did not like Latin in high school, it is worth remembering that, according to Pliny the Elder and Plutarch, the famous politician who lived between 234 and 149 B.C. was obsessed with the danger of the Phoenician city, one of the most important Punic colonies in the Mediterranean. It was for this reason that he brought the delicious fruits from overseas and offered them to his colleagues, point-

ing out to them that they were very fresh and free from spoilage due to the journey. Everyone ate, gave thanks, but then had to give in to the pressure from the 'Censor', as they called him. If the figs were fresh, it meant that Carthage was too close, and therefore dangerous, and had to be destroyed. *Carthago delenda est* is the phrase that has remained in history, along with some mixed feelings: on the one hand, there are those who continue to think that it is better to destroy their neighbour because he is a potential threat, on the other hand, there are those who pretend to be unaware that air-raid alarms are constantly sounding a few kilometres from their home.

On the International Day of Peace proclaimed by the United Nations on 21 September each year, it becomes strikingly evident that, in some respects, things have not changed that much since the second century BC. On the one hand, Russia is trying to annihilate its neighbour, considering it a danger. On the other hand, Israel is reacting disproportionately to a violent, cowardly and unjustifiable terrorist attack perpetrated by Hamas. The 'western' world is trying to manage the crises with the weapons of economics and diplomacy, but almost inexorably ends up 'getting used' to the status quo, because the disasters, when seen on television, all



look the same, they are something we have already seen, something 'tolerable', inevitable because they are part of human nature itself.

This may be partly true, but it does not exempt us from following the UN's invitation to commemorate the Day through educational and awareness-raising activities on the theme of dialogue. This year's theme is 'Cultivating a Culture of Peace'. The word 'cultivate' seems particularly appropriate because building societies based on empathy and respect for human rights takes time. Brains need to be 'watered' every day, and neither too much nor too little, to prevent them from drying up or, on the contrary, from being swamped



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by predictability or indifference. It takes constant effort to uproot the roots of violence and to create an environment where justice can flourish. At the Bell of the Fallen we know that this is not easy, in fact it may well be impossible. You cannot always

have everything: there will always be someone brandishing their neighbour's figs and claiming that they are too fresh to be safe, but maybe we can do something better than passively witnessing the 56 conflicts that are active in the world at the moment.

## THERE ARE 56 ACTIVE CONFLICTS IN THE WORLD

There are currently 56 active conflicts in the world, the highest number since the end of World War II. This is the finding of the Global Peace Index report, published in June by the Institute for Economics & Peace. The Index uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators and measures the state of Peace in 163 states and territories considering three areas: the level of security and social protection, the extent of internal and international conflicts, and the degree of militarisation.

Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008. Next to the 'leader' are Ireland, Austria, New Zealand and Singapore. Italy ranks 33rd, ahead of countries such as England, Sweden and Greece. Yemen is tragically in the bottom ranks along with Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan and Ukraine. The gap between the world's most and least peaceful countries is wider today than it has ever been in the last

16 years. Europe is the 'quietest' region and is home to eight of the ten most peaceful countries. The regions of the Middle East and North Africa remain those most affected by conflict.

Out of 163 countries analysed, 97 recorded a worsening of the situation, while 65 reported an improvement. Conflicts, the report points out, are increasingly more internationalised, with 92 countries engaged in wars beyond their own borders. This is the worst data ever recorded since the Index was established in 2008.

The economic impact of global conflicts in 2023 was \$19 billion. In contrast, spending on peacebuilding and peacekeeping amounted to USD 49.6 billion, or less than 0.6% of total military expenditure.

The key to building dialogue in times of conflict and uncertainty, the Report concludes, is 'Positive Peace', defined as the set of attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.

## A STORY OF TRENTINI IN THE WORLD

# Dreams come true

## FROM GAZZADINA TO BUENOS AIRES

We asked some descendants of Trentino emigrants to tell their stories in the first person, emphasising how their origin has directed and influenced them in life. This would not have been possible without the active and friendly cooperation of the Associazione Trentini nel Mondo, founded in 1957 with the aim of social solidarity and as a tool of aggregation and assistance for Trentino migrants and their descendants. In this issue, the character we are presenting is the Argentinian writer Maria Andreolli.

**M**y name is Maria Andreolli, and I was born in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. I am 55 years old, married and mother of André, an 18-year-old teenager. I am one part of the first generation of Trentino people in Argentina so my heart belong to two nations. My father, Rinaldo, always passed on to me his love for those majestic mountains, for polenta, sauerkraut, 'la grappa' and wonderful songs like *La Montanara* or *Quel Mazzolin Di Fiori*.

My father arrived in Argentina in 1948, when he was only 14 years old, together with his widowed father and his two older brothers. Without knowing the language, without having finished high school and with the sadness of having left home, the family settled in the Province of Córdoba. After a few years they moved to Buenos Aires, which is why I spent most of my childhood in the city's Trentino *Circolo* or Social Club. There I learnt Italian, organised events and attended many lunches. I still have some beautiful memories and some very dear friends from that place.

As a believer that dreams come true, I want to share some of my memories, starting with the most recent ones. As a child, I dreamt of getting married on an *estancia* (a farm), surrounded by fields, animals and trees. In 2005, I married Rubén in an *estancia* in San Antonio de Areco, a city considered the capital of Argentine tradition, located in the pampas a hundred kilometres north-west of Buenos Aires, and my father from Trentino had no problem dressing up as a *gaucho*.

From our union our son was born, an event that prompted my father to return to Argentina to cherish time with his grandchildren. He was already retired and wanted to spend more time with his family.

Following my dreams and finding in Rubén a partner in adventure, in 2012 we moved to Balneario Parque Mar Chiquita, a nature reserve in the Province of Buenos Aires. Here, surrounded by nature, I discovered my new passion: writing stories for children. Thus, 2014 saw the birth of *De Duendes y Gaviotas* (Gnomes and Seagulls), a book about love of family, respect for



Maria Andreolli

the environment which teaches that dreams always come true. Other books and anthologies followed. Today *De Duendes y Gaviotas*, thanks to the support of the Associazione Trentini Nel Mondo, has its digital version in Italian.

In 2015, while presenting my second book, the mayor of Mar Chiquita surprised me by appointing me as Ambassador for Tourism and Culture. I became an environmental advocate, working as a volunteer with various organisations. In April 2017, I was called to work as Director of Culture in the municipality, where I was able to create wonderful projects such as the signing



Maria Andreolli with her father Rinaldo on her wedding day

of a cooperation agreement between the San Michele all'Adige Institute and the Nicanor Ezeiza Agricultural School.

In 2020, together with a few friends, we founded a company that produces educational games for children (*Bosque Encantado De Duendes y Gaviotas*), to raise awareness about the environment. Now, my stories are accompanied by a series of products that complement the presentations and workshops held in schools, so that more and more children are aware of the importance of caring for the planet.

My first dream, that of getting to know Trentino, came true in 1990 thanks to the 'Cultural Stay' organised back then by the Autonomous Province of Trento. It was a wonderful experience, of which I treasure great memories. In my memory, I can still hear the voice of Rino Zandonai, director of *Trentini nel Mondo*, telling us the story of Little Red Riding Hood. On that trip another dream of mine came true: visiting Trentino hand in hand with my father.

In March of that same year, my father had returned to Trento after 41 years in Argentina. He only intended to stay for one year, but his love for his homeland kept him there for sixteen years. With him I got to know Gazzadina, 'the Capital of the World', as he called it. We visited the family home, listening to the bells of the Madonna di Caravaggio church, the same way he



Maria Andreolli working as an environmentalist



Maria Andreolli during a presentation of her book *De Duendes y Gaviotas*

listened to them as a child. I met his friends and relatives, who welcomed me like a daughter.

In 1996 in Buenos Aires I graduated as a clothing designer, working for several fashion brands, as a university lecturer and fashion editor for a magazine.

In the winter of 1997, I decided to pursue a new dream: making a trip to Trento to spend Christmas, New Year and my birthday in the snow. I tried to see if it was possible to study at a school in Milan, but it was too costly, so after celebrating my birthday with friends, I went back to Argentina.

Since life always gives us a second chance, my dream of studying in Italy came true many years later. In 2000, I participated in a competition for Mercosur (the common market of South America) designers to study in Montevideo (Uruguay). The 'Mercosur Design Post-graduate programme', organised by the Italian government, offered professionals in the area excellent training. I was selected and studied for a year. In June 2001, with Argentina in economic crisis, I was informed that I had won one of four scholarships for a stay in Italy. I spent fifty days studying and pursuing other, new dreams, such as attending the top fashion schools, participating in international fairs, visiting companies,

experiencing the Venice Carnival, enjoying Rome, Milan, Florence and my own dear Trentino. Back in Buenos Aires, after two months I was called for an interview at the Italian Embassy. The meeting lasted half an hour and the following week, I was already working in the Cooperation Office, in a technical assistance programme for SMEs in the Province of Buenos Aires. I have spent seven years working hard and enjoying great successes.

Today, my love for my origins leads me to be involved in two projects: the first is a novel for adults inspired by my father, which I hope to finish soon. Rinaldo had an incredible life, migrating twice and experiencing his fair share of pain due to his uprooting and an abundance of courage. He was a loving father and tireless companion until his very last day, passing on his values and optimism for life. Thanks to the memories of our long conversations and my chats with my Uncle Luciano and Aunt Carla, I discovered wonderful family stories. I hope that, once published, readers will enjoy it as much as I enjoy writing it.

The other commitment, is the position of vice-president of the *Circolo dei Trentini nel Mondo* of Mar del Plata, which I took on last year when the new Board was elected, with the task of keeping Trentino culture and traditions alive.





*To be continued from page 1...*

Indeed, despite his pronounced physical and intellectual decline, it was frankly unimaginable that the current occupant of the White House would come out of the first televised face-to-face with his challenger 'overwhelmed' beyond repair. Just as it was equally difficult to foresee that, after Biden's renunciation of running for a new term of office, the Democratic Party would immediately rally around the candidature of the current Vice President, discarding the hypothesis (to which two of its 'heavyweights' such as former President Barack Obama and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi seemed to initially lean) of the open convention. To the Democrats' credit, both the consistency of the funding streams and the positive response of the polls, which both rebounded sharply once Biden stepped aside, can also be ascribed to the list of surprises that followed the 'change of rider'.

And the element of surprise increases in the face of Kamala Harris's curriculum vitae which is far from brilliant and, indeed, studded with more than a few personal failures. From her disputed disengagement as Attorney General of California, to the total failure of her participation in the 2020 'primaries' and, finally, her inability to gain visibility and authority in a role that, thankless as it may be, is the second highest office in the world.

Jumping forward in time, we can review our thoughts to mid-August, when this article is being written and delivered for publication. With eighty days to go before the vote, and taking for granted the usual fluctuations in the polls between now and 5 November (today slightly in favour of Harris), a substantial balance emerges between the two rivals. Contrary to many expectations, this shows that Trump has failed to capitalise on the dividends that the admirable display of courage linked to the criminal attack on 13 July (Make America Great Again) could have brought him in terms of increased support from the very loyal MAGA (Make America Great Again) community.

According to commentators, an important factor in the coming months will be the ability of the two contenders to draw the many still undecided voters to their camp, particularly in states considered 'hanging in the balance' (such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia), where the jury is still out.

From this point of view, Kamala Harris, a mix of influential African-American and Asian minorities with a family background to match, has made a precise choice, choosing for the presidential 'ticket' the current governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz, who is close to the left of the party, preferring him to his colleague from Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro, who is more 'centrist' and - as such - more

able (according to some Democrats) to wrest consensus from the 'moderate' Republican sectors. However, the current Vice President will also have age on her side, a not insignificant factor considering the fact that the excessive seniority of the two candidates originally in the running had been a widely shared source of perplexity.

Again on the subject of 'number twos', Trump's choice (made, it should be pointed out, at a time when Biden was still his opponent) seems to expose itself to greater doubts since Ohio Senator J.D. Vance appears to be little more than a - moreover radical - double of himself and not someone capable of promoting convergent and complementary social-political demands, in other words, capable of broadening the consensus base of the 'grand old Party'. A trait he shares with Democrat Walz is that he belongs to the Midwest, the region that had made the difference in the two previous consultations, swinging back and forth - in 2016 for Trump and four years later for Biden.

Having said this, it must be acknowledged that, as is traditional, the positions taken by the leaders of the two camps on domestic policy issues will end up having a very significant impact on the outcome of the US elections, with the immigration issue potentially being the most divisive.

Against a 'classic' backdrop, so to speak, one factor, which can be described as 'anomalous', should not be overlooked, namely President Biden's desire to end his long and honourable public career with more worthy end credits than the embarrassing television appearance at the end of June. What better way to redeem his tarnished image than to devote the last months of his term, with the help of the inexhaustible Secretary of State Antony Blinken and the efficient National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, to finding solutions for the two major international crises at hand? For example, the organisation on the European side of a 'Peace Summit' with representatives from Kiev and Moscow at the same time. For the Middle East, the achievement of a prolonged ceasefire in Gaza could avert both the feared escalation of military actions and consequent retaliations and reprisals and the expansion of the conflict to other states in the region (especially Iran).

Now free from the constraints of re-election, the incumbent president's four-year term would thus be enriched by a result of undeniable political weight, even if only partial or limited to one of the two conflict scenarios. If achieved by 4 November, it would also result - and this is no mean feat - in a definite strengthening of Kamala Harris' electoral prospects.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President





FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS - P 11

# Silent on the rampart

When the 'second' Bell of the Fallen, the one that had just been recast, arrived in Rovereto on 26 May 1940, it was not met by a crowd. And even at its departure from Verona the day before, the crowds in the streets that had always accompanied the symbol of Peace and the memory of those who had fought were not present. But not only that. Despite the solemnity of the moment, the people arriving at Piazza Rosmini to attend the ceremony were shaken by a strong sense of unease. The armies were already marching into Europe and so some of them were probably thinking that their family members would soon risk being among the fallen.

At that moment, Don Rossaro, who had not only conceived that symbol but had also fought to have it made, was caught in a vice: on the one hand there was the physical presence of the Bell with all its meanings of Peace and brotherhood, and on the other the impending tragedy clearly foretold. The 'irrevocable decisions' were about to be announced from the balcony of Piazza Venezia and the fascist tribunes in the city did not miss the opportunity to exploit the event. In his speech, Amilcare Rossi, who had won a gold medal for military valour, assigned the Bell the task of calling the entire Italian people to arms 'to enrich the victorious King's imperial crown with shining new gems'. The speeches by the prefect Italo Foschi and the *podestà* were of comparable rhetorical insignificance. The message sent by Pius XII calling for Peace, was not read out.

In his *Diary*, Don Rossaro reminded himself that most of the phrases spoken on that occasion were inconsistent with the meaning of the Bell, the solemnity of the moment, and the purposes for which it had been designed, cast and then recast a second time. But things were about to go downhill, the 'enlightened minds' thought they could reap huge benefits from a small, perhaps short-lived, almost painless war effort. There was no shortage of applauding crowds, and rhetoricians abounded. This was not how it went, as we know, but although he did not know it, the priest from Rovereto sensed that there was something wrong with the way his creation was being used.

He did not stop, but the cooperation of the authorities was not as full as it had once been. After the consecration, the Bell remained in Piazza Rosmini for about two weeks. On 10 June it was loaded onto a trailer to be transported to the castle. Precisely during that operation, loudspeakers were switched on ready to broadcast 'incisive, masculine, historical' words: the announcement of Italy's entry into the war alongside Hitler's Germany. Eleven days later, two trucks dragged the trailer carrying the Bell to the base of the Malipiero bastion, where it was to be hoisted. The operation lasted until 13 August and was not fully successful. In a temporary location, the symbol of Peace remained silent until the end of the war. 'In its silence,' Don Rossaro noted, 'it witnessed the terrible massacre taking place on the broad front of the Great War, which, like an immense crater, swallowed up monuments, libraries, museums, palaces, and cathedrals, as well as countless human lives. In short, it threatened the collapse of our civilisation'.

