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The Voice of Maria Dolens

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Centenary of the Bell

Sometimes they return

The 47th President of the United States will have exactly (and this is no coincidence) the same name as the 45th: Donald John Trump. This was the clear majority decision of the American electorate on 5 November, contradicting the forecasts of the night before that had predicted a very close contest, along the lines of the one that, four years earlier, had sanctioned Joe Biden's success in favour of the opposite camp. With the traditional geographical 'strongholds' confirmed (the West and the 'Ivy League' to the Democrats, the 'Midwest' to the Republicans), it was above all up to the seven swinging states to make the difference, and they unanimously expressed their preference for the

challenger. In short, as defined effectively by Lucio Caracciolo, it was the so-called 'overlooked America', the one left to itself as it is far from the spotlight, capital investment and tourist flows, that made the difference in the circumstance.

In fact, the ballot box vote ended what can be defined a landslide victory, a global affirmation, considering that, in addition to the White House, from next January the Republicans will also control Congress and the Senate, not to mention the significant success of the popular vote (72 million votes for Donald Trump versus the 67 million cast for Kamala Harris).

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Editor
Marcello Filotei
marcello.filotei@fondazionecampanadeicaduti.org

Enrolled at the ROC, an Italian association for
journalists specializing in Communications n. 35952

PEACE BELL FOUNDATION OF
ROVERETO

Colle di Miravalle - 38068 Rovereto
T. +39 0464.434412 - F. +39 0464.434084
info@fondazioneoperacampana.it
www.fondazioneoperacampana.it

DESIGN

OGP srl
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www.ogp.it

A STORY OF TRENTINI IN THE WORLD

The smell of Berlin

EDITH PICHLER FROM VAL DI NON TO GERMANY

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 Trentini nel Mondo Association, founded in 1957 with the aim of social solidarity and as a tool of aggregation and assistance for Trentino migrants and their descendants. The person we present in this issue is Edith Pichler, originally from Cles, who currently lectures at the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Potsdam.

Berlin has always been a city for young people (not just in terms of age) and has consistently attracted individuals who came because of its unique cultural and social situation. The West Berlin of those years, the ones before the fall of the famous 'wall', was an open, libertarian, seductive city. Thanks to its vibrant social and cultural scene, also supported by federal government funds, it offered spaces for everyone: artists, creatives, and wanderers alike.

The metropolis on the Spree attracted not only rock stars like David Bowie and Lou Reed, directors like Peter Stein and actors like Bruno Ganz, but also young Italians, drawn by the strength of the student movement. It was not an easy city to get to back then. Not only did you have to cross two iconic Cold War borders (BRD-GDR; GDR-West-Berlin) by car or train via the transit corridors from West Germany through the Deutsche Demokratische Republik to West Berlin, but there were no international flights either: the only airlines that flew to West Berlin, again through corridors, were Pan Am, British Airways and Air France.

In the 1980s there was a Rome-Munich rail connection which, if I remember correctly, was called the Alpen-Express. The train had *Kurswagen*, carriages that ran on the Rome-Berlin and Rome-Puttgarden-Stockholm routes. Sometimes, standing at the Trento station, I would read about the destinations of these carriages, distant, unknown, fascinating worlds. *Puttgarden* in particular gave me the sense of something very far north.

And it was in one of these carriages that were added to the Deutsche Reichsbahn trains of the GDR in Munich, the so-called *Transitzüge*, I arrived in Berlin as an au pair. Early in the morning on the outskirts of West-Berlin, the first thing that amazed me were the tiny houses/shacks in the middle of fields, which reminded me of the shantytown in the film *Miracle in Milan*, although



Edith Pichler

they were more 'neat and tidy'. I thought this isn't possible in Germany... and then in the GDR, which claims to be 'the home of the workers', then luckily a fellow traveller from Italy-Berlin clarified for me that they were the *Schrebergarten* huts, those of the communal allotments, which also played a significant recreational role during the period of the wall because of the city's status as an encircled island.



Edith Pichler awarded the Order of the Star of Italy by the Italian Ambassador to Germany, Armando Varricchio

One detail about Berlin that struck me immediately - it was late autumn and the heaters were already on- was a 'smell' in the air: I later discovered it came from the power stations and boilers that used coal. For years I associated Berlin with this smell, which was, a symbol, the identity and the memory of the city for many Italians at the time. But to me it also somehow reminded me of spring in Val di Non - I am in fact originally from Cles - it was the smell in the air when the farmers were burning the brushwood in the fields and this similarity helped me feel less 'out of place'.

After arriving in Berlin, I studied at the Otto-Suhr Institut of the Freie Universität, obtaining my Ph.D. (Dr. Phil.) in Political Science and the national scientific qualification as associate professor for Sociology of Economic and Labour Processes. Since 2011, I have been a lecturer at the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Potsdam (Centre for Citizenship, Social Pluralism and Religious Diversity). Previously, I taught at the Humboldt-Universität in Berlin and was a Visiting Professor at La Sapienza University in Rome. My fields of expertise are emigration, ethnicity, minorities, and I have published numerous essays on the Italian presence in Germany. I am a member of the Rat für Migration, as an expert of the Neodemos Association for Demographic Studies and Social Policy and of Politika - Society for Political Science of South Tyrol (member of the Italian Society for Political Science and the Austrian Society for Political Science). I am a member of the Scientific Committee for the Migrants Foundation *Italians in the World* Report and for the volumes to be published by Donzelli on the History of Italian Emigra-

tion in Europe. I collaborate with the Centro Altreitalie in Turin and the Cser (Centre for Emigration Studies in Rome). Since 2023 I have been vice-president of the Fai (Italian Academic Forum) in Germany.

Thanks to these activities, on 30 October I was awarded the Order of the Star of Italy, in the rank of Officer, by the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella. This is an honour reserved for those who have distinguished themselves in promoting ties with Italy, as the Italian ambassador to Germany, Armando Varricchio, recalled during the award ceremony. 'Edith Pichler,' said the ambassador, 'has been a point of reference in studies on the Italian community in Germany for years. Always managing to combine a scientific and open approach in the analysis of various issues important to the Italian community in Germany, her contribution has helped to better understand the Italians living in this country'.

Meanwhile, during a holiday on the Baltic Sea, I 'discovered' Puttgarden, a small town on the island of Ferhman with a railway terminal for ferry departures to Denmark. Not quite what I had in my mind. It was not a disappointment but rather a downsizing of what I had imagined. And over time, my Berlin dimension has also 'shrunk'... because now one tends to stay and move more and more in one's own *Kiez*, even after the restrictions imposed for the Covid. The transformations that the city is undergoing - especially in the central districts - make it more and more like other cities and less fascinating, and many places, many squares, many locations now appear to belong more to 'others', which is why one perhaps dwells more on what is still 'yours', that is, part of your own Berlin identity, or what you think it is.



Edith Pichler before the award ceremony.



Children's rights in war zones

The Archivio Disarmo International Research Institute recently published in its journal 'IRIAD Review. Peace and Conflict Studies' an in-depth article on children living in areas of ongoing conflict. We are pleased to republish it here, and thank the experts of Archivio Disarmo for their collaboration.

In 2023, nearly half a billion children - or one in five - lived in a war zone and the number of serious violations committed against them increased by 15% in 2023, reaching the highest level in twenty years. This percentage has almost doubled from around 10% of the world's child population in the mid-1990s, while the right of children to protection in conflict continues to be ignored.

The worst situations are in Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian territories.

An average of 31 children were killed or mutilated every day. In a context in which disputes are resolved through military means, military expenditure is bound to reach very high levels: in fact, worldwide, it has reached \$2.4 billion, i.e. more than the entire Italian gross domestic product. This is confirmed by Save the Children in its report *Stop the War on Children: Pathways to Peace*. The study analysed the number of serious violations committed against children in conflicts (killings and mutilations, abductions, sexual violence, recruitment into re-

gular armies and armed groups, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access) and found that more than thirty thousand of these cases occurred in 2023. On a daily basis, the average number of crimes was 86. This figure far exceeds the 2022 figure of 27,638, an average of 76 per day, which was already a record. Unfortunately, these are not just dry statistics; behind these figures lie unimaginable suffering, shattered dreams, grief, and endless destruction.

At the top of the list are the Occupied Palestinian territories, where 8,434 serious violations - a quarter of the total number - were found, an increase of 170% over the previous year. This is followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (with almost four thousand cases, a sharp increase compared to 2022) and Somalia (with over two thousand verified cases, a slight decrease compared to 2022). The largest relative increase in serious violations was in Sudan where cases have increased fivefold since 2022, from 317 to 1,759. The Save the Children analysis also highlighted an alarming number of UN member states that have signed up to less than half of the international legal and policy instruments that guarantee the protection of children in conflict.

'A peaceful childhood is a fundamental part of building peaceful societies,' the organisation concludes. As government leaders and civil society, including activists, survivors and young people, prepare to meet at the first Global Ministerial Conference on Ending Violence Against Children to be held in Colombia next month, this report stresses the urgent need to intensify action to combat violence against children in conflict and build a safer future for them'.



In 2023, more than eleven thousand cases of killing and mutilation of children in conflicts were documented (+31 per cent compared to 2022). More than a third were Palestinian children. Incidents of denial of humanitarian access also reached an all-time high, with over five thousand cases in 2023, 11 times more than a decade ago.

"This report is devastating and leaves no doubt: the world is becoming more and more dangerous for children. In recent years," said Inger Ashing, CEO of Save the Children International, 'globally, we have seen various advances in children's rights and protection, but in the countries at war the situa-

tion is drastically worsening. We are witnessing a continuous increase in global military expenditure, while investment in conflict prevention is declining. This shows that we are focusing on the wrong aspect and the consequences are devastating. The ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Occupied Palestinian territories, Sudan, Ukraine and many other countries have seen a terrible escalation of attacks on children, schools and hospitals: violations that have sparked global outrage, but which have not yet been followed by any real and meaningful commitment to Peace. The States must act'.

Luciano Bertozzi



MUKY'S 'PRESEPI CONTRO'

Until January 6, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm

As every year at this time, the 'Presepi contro' by Wanda Berasi, aka Muky, are on display at the Bell. The exhibition ends on 6 January.

As every year, some of these works are unfortunately particularly topical.

As every year now, for too long, the visitor cannot avoid pausing in front of a 1998 work entitled 'Arafat - Netanyahu. Middle East Peace Talks. Truce of the manhunt'.

The hope is that next year there will no longer be any need to talk about it.



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To be continued from page 1...

The latter is not a foregone conclusion, considering the fact that in 2016, although defeated, Hillary Clinton had garnered more votes than the Republican tycoon. It is a power situation that is only likely to last for two years, as if the mid-term elections follow the established tradition of favouring the opposition, they will help ease the control—truly excessive in this case—exercised by the Grand Old Party over all the country's major institutions.

Here, also due to limited space, we will focus on two main reasons that contributed to what was undoubtedly an unexpected result (and from which by no coincidence the pollsters exited with a bloodied nose). On the one hand, the undoubted (like it or not) leadership exercised by 'candidate Trump', also confirmed by his brave reaction to the assassination attempt on him last July, as opposed to a Democratic rival arising from the belated desistance of seasoned President Biden and not as the result of a reasoned choice, shared by the party. On the other hand, Trump's focus on issues closely tied to the gut concerns of the average American voter, particularly those with lower incomes, such as high inflation, excessive taxation, and the threat (real or even only perceived) of immigration. This is in stark contrast to the

emphasis placed by Harris on undeniably noble issues, such as the protection of civil rights and the defence of the environment which, at the same time, are seen as the prerogative of a minority of the American population, particularly the wealthy and educated segment.

If we were to find a common denominator for the Republican triumph of 5 November, we can identify one in the acronym MAGA (Make America Great Again), the slogan used relentlessly by Trump during his campaign to restore to the United States the characteristics of widespread economic prosperity, credibility, political authority, and internal cohesion that, in his view, had been seriously endangered during Joe Biden's four-year term.

At the present time, however, it is harder to identify what the actual consequences of Trump's return to the White House will be, bombastic, vote-catching declarations aside. His comeback has understandably provoked clear reactions in various countries and governments, which can clearly be interpreted by the various tones used in the congratulatory messages. That said, the inevitable considerations of realpolitik will require all world political leaders to quickly set aside any differing sympathies and establish the best communication channels with the new leadership in Washington. While

awaiting the President's inauguration on 20 January, when the other key figures will be revealed, one standout appointment is that of Elon Musk, owner of X and the world's richest man, who has been entrusted with a role as a reward for his overt allegiance to the winning side. The Department of Government Efficiency has been specially created for him. Other announced appointments, including that of vaccine-sceptic Robert Kennedy Jr. to the Department of Health, have sparked reactions in allied capitals (and, in some cases, even within the United States) ranging from bewilderment to dismay.

On the international stage, and without neglecting other areas (such as the future relations of the United States with the European Union, and NATO), the main questions seem to revolve around the fundamental decisions the new president will make regarding the three main "hotspots" of the planet: Russia/Ukraine and the Middle East because of the two ongoing conflicts, and China, due to the complexity of a bilateral relationship that, beyond the unresolved issue of Taiwan, is also strongly influenced by crucial economic considerations (with tariffs at the forefront). Among the three topics, we align with many analysts in viewing the first as particularly sensitive and timely. This includes Trump's electoral claims about his ability to quickly bring an end to the war between Moscow and Kiev. It is also worth noting the ongoing personal contact he maintained with President Putin, even after the aggression against the neighbouring country in February 2022.

As is widely known, President Zelensky has so far only been able to oppose the undisputed superiority in men and means of the Russian Federation thanks to the massive funding and sophisticated weapon systems provided primarily by the United States (and, in addition, by Europe) during Biden's current term. Against this backdrop, it remains to be seen whether the future president intends to continue handing out aid packages and modern defence means to Zelensky-initiatives that are undoubtedly very costly for the taxpayers of North Carolina or Arizona - instead of concentrating his efforts, as stated in his first public speech after the vote ("we will stop wars"), on ending the conflict in the Donbass and the other regions involved. This last objective would in all likelihood entail Ukraine's very painful renunciation of its territorial integrity, also raising, with the substantial 'free hand' granted to Russia in the area of Eastern Europe, worrying doubts about the security of the entire continent.

However, at this stage, it seems more prudent not to jump to conclusions, keeping in mind—and this is an important reason to hope for a less troubling future than expected—that during his previous term (2017-2021), once in office, Trump showed a clear ability to distinguish pragmatic reality from ideological excesses. Having no other choice, we will therefore have to put him to the test this second time round.

I wish our readers a peaceful Christmas and a pleasant start to 2025, the centenary year of the first chime of Maria Dolens.

Reggente Marco Marsilli, Foundation President



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS - P 13

The era of brotherhood



With the end of World War II, the Bell rang again, but it was only a preview, the official inauguration was still some time away. It was 20 May 1945, in the evening. Don Rossaro had invited the city authorities and representatives of the allied command. In order to hear the hundred chimes in remembrance of the fallen of all wars, including civilians, help was sought from 15 men of the National Union for Aircraft Protection. The young men, accustomed to very different endeavours at that time in history, did not need to be asked twice. They took turns grabbing the clapper and vibrating it by hand on the casing of Maria Dolens with the strength of their arms. Three out of five strings broke during the hundred chimes, but this failed to stop either the applause or the emotion that flowed forth.

Two weeks later, Don Rossaro wrote to Prince Chigi, resuming a correspondence that had been interrupted in July 1943. His tone was rhetorical, his sentiments genuine: "The dawn of Peace has finally lit up this valley of ours (...). Now the sacred Bell stands in all its splendour, admired and vene-

rated, first by German troops, now by Anglo-Saxon troops, who all climbed the rampart to pay her the homage of their devotion. Indescribable difficulties led it to its current state, that is, almost complete restoration, and on May 20th, in the presence of the English Governor and a vast crowd, it rang for the first time, paying its first tribute to the new Fallen of the recent horrendous massacre. Its solemn inauguration, however, will take place in early October, the 20th anniversary of its existence.

But with the end of the war, the new authorities also had to be reckoned with. The National Liberation Committee (CLN) had been formed, and it was not liked by the majority of the population, not least because it had initiated the so-called 'purge processes' provided for by the regulations approved by the first post-insurrection government. Like other Trentino personalities who had held public office during Fascism, Don Rossaro was also summoned by the People's Court. He had to explain his actions as chaplain of the Fascist Militia. The charge was that of taking advantage of the regime for his own personal gain. A direct witness, Va-

lentino Chiocchetti, summed up the episode in a few lines: "He appeared at the trial with no defence counsel, despite many of his friends having offered to defend him. He knew he had done nothing to be ashamed of. The judge asked him: "Fascism benefited you a lot, isn't that so?" He replied: "Yes, it benefited me, giving me the means to help a lot of poor people".

He was acquitted and returned to devote himself to the Bell. The priority was to choose a date for the inauguration. The Master of Ceremonies of the Order of Malta insisted on not focusing on a divisive anniversary like 28 June, the day of the Sarajevo bombing in 1914. The date chosen was 20 April. It was 1946, and after nine years of silence, the Bell officially chimed again, accompanied by the festive ringing of hundreds of children's bells. On the same day, the League of Nations officially disbanded after 26 years of operation, having been effectively replaced on 24 October 1945 by the newly formed United Nations. A coincidence, if coincidences exist. On 26 September, the Bell was officially dedicated to St Francis. A new era began, the era of brotherhood.