

Series Six—1975

FINAL RESULTS OF POPE PAUL'S PROBES: NO SUPPORT FOR HIS POLICY OF PLANNED REVOLUTION

Whatever the rumors—and they persist—of his resignation, and whatever the public response to those rumors, it is now quite unfeasible for Paul to contemplate resigning.

First, again, the Conclave. The Eastern Patriarchs will not participate, they answer, in the election of a Roman Pope. Their response mirrors the old Eastern anti-Roman prejudice: "As long as the Bishop of Rome claims sovereignty as a temporal ruler and absolute authority over all the Church, we cannot appear to endorse such an unapostolic and uncatholic position by participating in a Papal election—even as observers." They appear to want the chicken, but are unwilling to hatch the egg.

And, for a great variety of reasons, most Europeans and Americans consulted fear Paul's proposal. Some, because his successor would be another Italian. Some—a surprising number, in fact—want no change in the status quo of Conclave. Some—quite a large minority—are in total disagreement with Paul's theology of the Church, and with his obvious leaning to open every door and window in the Church. "Too much, too fast, in too many directions, with too little thought as to the aftermath," is how one person summarized the gist of the comments.

TRADITIONALIST THREAT GROWS

At the same time, the revolt of Traditionalist Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre is obviously becoming much more,

not less, dangerous. Lefebvre's support is growing around the world. He could possibly even spearhead a revisionist movement throughout the Church, negate many of the changes Paul has already made, and make further development of Paul's plan even more difficult. In volatile times, such a movement could even lead to schism of the Church.

FINANCIAL DISASTER IN THE VATICAN

The Sindona affair, about which Paul had been worried but still hopeful, now has assumed disastrous proportions. Before it is over, the Vatican will, by some reliable estimates, lose well over a billion dollars and much credit in this huge failure that the Italians have come to call *il crack Sindona*. It is now reported to Paul that Michele Sindona is a member of the Masonic order. Villot's advice to Paul is firm and clear: Before our losses go beyond all our power to measure and control, before they turn and destroy us, let us get out of this miserable affair.

It will take another two years before Paul can rearrange everything. Meanwhile, this mess alone makes Paul's resignation impossible for now.

PAUL SHIFTS HIS TACTICS, REMAINS FIRM IN PURPOSE OF REVOLUTION AS HE REVISES CONCLAVE RULES

Having had no encouragement at all for his early probings of 1970 with regard to changing the Conclave system, or for his more recent attempt in 1975 to open up the Papal election in a radical way, Paul contents himself now with getting out a new revision of the old Conclave rules. This much he can do, even over the objections that he knows will come from many quarters.

In his new rules, Paul repeats his edict barring Cardinals of 80 and over from Conclave. He limits the total number of Cardinal Electors to 120. To avoid long Conclave discussions, he sets a limit of three days on voting. If, at the end of three days, voting is fruitless, there is to be one day of prayer and free discussion, then back to voting for another three days, and so on.

One of the chief preoccupations in the new Conclave rules is to exclude interference by any person or group of people outside the Conclave: "There has emerged as more relevant than ever," Paul legislates, "the need to safeguard the election of the Roman Pontiff from external enterprises . . . and the interference of groups and form of pressure characteristic of modern society. . . ." It is forbidden "absolutely," Paul now directs, "to introduce into the Conclave technical instruments of whatsoever kind for the recording, reproduction, or transmission of voices and images. . . ." Conclave officials accompanied by two technicians equipped with electronic detection devices must make periodic checks in order to uncover any bugging devices or any other violations of Conclave secrecy.

Further, Paul abolishes a decree of Julius 2 going back to the early 1500s against buying the Papacy with money or promise of jobs and favors. Paul's new rule means that, while it is still the grave sin of simony to buy votes in order to get oneself elected, the man elected even by such means is nevertheless validly elected and must be accepted. The two rules—one about electronic surveillance, the other about the validity of simoniacal elections—are obviously connected in Paul's mind.

The centerpiece of Paul's new Conclave rules is his reformulation of the very character of the Papal Conclave. Paul has not been able to get an "open" Church by moving directly toward radical change. His new tactic is to stress the localization of the Pope so that the Church at large can be more de-Romanized. The Conclave, Paul asserts, is "the act of a local Church within the Church of Christ." The "local Church" is Saint Peter's in Rome and its Roman diocese. The Conclave is primarily for the election of a new Bishop of *that* local Church, and of the diocese of Rome. That election has been performed for over a thousand years by the Cardinals of the Roman Church. As Bishop of Rome, the new Pope is automatically the successor of Peter who was the first Bishop of Rome. It is in this way that the new Bishop also becomes all that Peter was: Vicar of Jesus and head of Jesus' Church.

Further, "the right to elect the Roman Pontiff belongs solely to the Cardinals of the Roman Church." Paul thus reasserts the privilege of the Romans as the holders of a special deposit of faith, to elect Jesus' representative on this earth.

CONTINUING SPECULATION ABOUT PAUL'S
RESIGNATION AND PRE-CONCLAVE
ELECTIONEERING SPAWNS NEW
POLITICAL INITIATIVES

Paul now realizes that his talk of resignation and of dying, together with the general interest of the Cardinal Electors in the coming Conclave, has set in motion several pre-Conclave enterprises. On the part of some United States Cardinals, there is an initiative—which Paul does not yet understand, except that it is at variance with his own plans—to forge an alliance with Polish and German Cardinals.

There is already a working pact between some Latin Americans and some Eastern European Cardinals. This agreement is sometimes playfully termed the "Latin American—*Ostkardinalaat*" pact.

And there is the New Alliance formed around Cardinal Leo Suenens of Belgium. Its motivation stems from the very Progressivist theologians who have emerged since the Second Vatican Council. It is supported by many Bishops. They, in turn, derive much encouragement from the heads of the major non-Catholic Churches. They would like to open the Church to all sorts of influences—Church government, Church activity, Church doctrine, and Church commitment to solve socio-economic problems.

Of course there are still the Traditionalists, centered mainly in Paul's own house, the Vatican, who lay claim to the allegiance of many Bishops and Cardinals around the world.

All these factions—the American Initiative, the Latin American—*Ostkardinalaat* members, the New Alliance group, and the Traditionalists—share one common trait: opposition to Paul's plan for reform of the Conclave and to Paul's favorite *papabile*, Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli.

*PRE-CONCLAVE ELECTIONEERING
PROCEEDS—"OFFICIAL" LIST OF SUITABLE
CANDIDATES AND POLICY OF NEW POPE
BEING FORMED*

At this point pre-Conclave activity is mainly confined to the higher echelons of Church bureaucracy. It does happen, however, that some ordinary bishop who is head of some powerful regional or national conference has more to do with the choice of the *papabili* than many a Cardinal and many a vested interest in the financial and political worlds. Such a bishop, for instance, is Roger Etchegaray, Bishop of Marseilles. Such also is Archbishop Augustine Casaroli, Vatican expert on Soviet Eastern Europe. Such men exercise considerable power even in the ultimate election of the Pope. The process does not usually extend itself much lower than regional Bishops' Conferences.

The process essentially consists of a leisurely sifting of the names of possible candidates in the light of the issues presented in the *Papers* and *Reports*. For it is issues that decide who can be a viable candidate. The Vatican's Apostolic Delegates (16 of them), Apostolic Nuncios (70 of them), Vicars General (32 of them), local Cardinals residing in countries around the world, plus special emissaries and the permanent Vatican representatives in international organizations, are expected to and do, indeed, find out discreetly the attitudes of the various governments to the various possible candidates for election as Pope.

There are two ways one can become a possible *papabile*: you declare yourself willing and able and desirous to be a candidate and, if elected, to accept the Papacy; or, those who admire you and/or think you suitable decide that you should be on that list.

The list is never officially promulgated or, say, "typed on office stationery." It comes into existence quietly, and mainly by word of mouth. But gradually, without any brouhaha, the names of anywhere from six to ten Cardinals occur and recur whenever the subject of the next Pope's identity comes up for discussion. These are the possible *papabili*.

To go from the status of possible *papabile* to being a

real papabile on the primary list is a subtle process. That primary list is very restricted and, with only a few changes, it will determine most of the voting and politicking within the Conclave itself.

**THE AMERICAN INITIATIVE—AMERICAN
CARDINALS DEEP IN VATICAN POLITICS
FOR FIRST TIME IN CONCLAVE HISTORY**

As far back as 1972, the publication of Paul 6's Encyclical Letter *Octagesima Adveniens*, with its negative attitude toward democracy as we have known it, with its recommendations that men should seek "new democratic structures," and its apparent encouragement of Marxists, started a violent reaction in the United States among prominent churchmen and financial circles. With a Democratic victory at the polls in 1976 already predicted, and with even greater commitment of the Democratic Party in the United States to "social democracy," it was feared that the basic capitalistic character of the United States would be seriously affected if the prestige of a new Pope increasingly supported such a thrust of "social democracy." "Already 43% of the working sector is employed by the U.S. Government," went one report sent to Rome from New York. We are on our way to some form of socialism. Why push farther?"

The so-called American Initiative was born at the end of 1974 but began to take on form only in 1975. It had its origins primarily in the will of the United States Cardinals. At the very least they recognized that a Pope with an inclination to favor socialistic structures for his own reign and for that of his successor would mean policies inimical to the interests of the United States and of the society to which the U.S. Cardinals belong. By 1975 they know that the one central question to be decided about the next Pontificate concerns Marxism, alliance with Marxists, and the attitude of the Church to Marxist governments.

The first aim of the American Initiative is to break the so-called Latin American—*Ostkardinalaat* working pact, the Marxist-oriented bloc. If most Latin American Cardinals and their supporters succeed in forming an alliance with Eastern European Cardinals, the appeal of such a faction in Con-

clave will be enormous. The Latin Americans could then advocate peace and collaboration with Marxists and Marxist governments, and virtually parade the Cardinals from the countries of Eastern Europe already living under Communist rule as quite able to survive and flourish—even collaborate—with Marxist regimes at home. If they can do that, then the Latin Americans and their supporters will have a powerful appeal for Italian Cardinals faced with the possibility of a Communist regime in Italy—not to speak of the French, Spanish, and Portuguese Cardinals, faced with the same possibility in their respective countries. That would bring in all of southern Europe.

Further, the strength of the working pact lies in the Polish Cardinals, and particularly in the prestigious and formidable Cardinal-Primate of Poland, Stefan Wyszyński of Warsaw. He, together with Cardinal Wojtyła of Krakow, has untold influence with the German and Austrian Cardinals. In sympathy they are close to Hungary and Czechoslovakia. That northern bloc together with the Eastern Europeans could form a governing majority in the Conclave. And the Eastern European Cardinals stand high in the estimation of the Asiatic and African Cardinals. If all those should stand together with the Latin Americans, and draw in the southern Europeans as well, there would be an absolute majority to be expected in the Conclave, a majority that would wreck any plans or projects of other groups.

The American decision to break that working pact, therefore, has a definite, an urgent, strategic purpose.

The idea is to detach the Poles—and with them, the Germans—from the Latin American—*Ostcardinalaat* working pact. Cardinal Krol, himself of Polish extraction, extends an invitation to Cardinal Wojtyła to come to the United States on a formal visit. And already Cardinal Krol has started one of those Cardinalial tours that will mark the pre-Conclave electioneering period from now until the Conclave takes place. This one takes him to Poland.

Both *papabili* and Pope-makers among the Cardinals and Bishops now undertake such tours. You will find Cardinals crisscrossing the Atlantic and the Continent of Europe, appearing in Africa, Latin America, and various parts of Asia. Wherever they go, they must go with the complaisance, if not the connivance, of the local Cardinals.

For between brother Cardinals, unwritten but rigid laws forbid them to encroach uninvited or unwelcome on each other's ecclesiastical territory. Other occasions, too, are provided by chance events when an important number of Electors can get together, ostensibly for some ordinary reason, and communicate face-to-face about the pre-Conclave electioneering process and its various twists. The American Cardinals will not be the only ones making crucial strategic visits.

AMERICAN CARDINALS SEEK ALLIANCE WITH EASTERN EUROPEANS AND GERMANS

The deal offered by the Americans is a complex one and their arsenal of arguments is formidable. All the Eastern Europeans and most of the Germans (as well as many Africans and Asiatics) are against the election of a Curial Cardinal, a Roman of the Romans. The Americans, who lean toward that view themselves, advance the idea of a pan-European *papabile*, a candidate chosen from one of the old Christian nations of Europe outside Italy.

The proposal is tempting for both Germans and Poles. The Poles suspect the inclinations of those who have been advocating an alliance with Latin American Cardinals. And the West German Cardinals do not want to see the Russian zone of influence extended further than East Germany.

Others set out to persuade the Poles also that any working alliance with the Latin Americans will result only in a softening of the Church's line toward Marxism. Such a softening would have a very damaging effect on the already harsh rigors that the Church faces in Poland, Czechoslovakia and in the Baltic countries. The Churches there have won some mitigation of persecution because of the previous hardline stance of the Vatican.

There is, in addition, the threat of backlash. The possibility of such an alliance in the Conclave might well polarize all the other factions and unite them behind a really reactionary Traditionalist candidate—and there are still many of those.

Finally, the Americans are in possession of certain reasons of State derived from their associations at home,

reasons which make it imperative that Russia not be any further facilitated in its "Finlandization" of Western Europe. What would happen, they ask the Poles, if the United States really followed a policy of isolationism and hands-off in regard to Western Europe?

As this American Initiative is pursued with success, in Rome Paul 6 and Villot are baffled, each for his own reasons. Paul knows that the genuine tendency of a man like Cooke of New York or Krol of Philadelphia is more Traditionalist (with some Conservative tinges) than anything else. Why then are these two pursuing a pan-European candidate? And both Paul and Villot resent the intrusion of politicking American Cardinals in Northern and Eastern Europe. Paul and Villot share the old Roman horror of the *Anglo-Sassoni* and the policy of divide-and-conquer that has always marked their dealings with Europe for over one hundred and fifty years.

This Papal reaction results in a cooling of relations between Cooke of New York and the Roman authorities. Meanwhile, Cooke and others make no move to heal the breach with Rome, for they suspect that Paul may already be a lame-duck Pope—he may have to resign on his 80th birthday in 1977.

LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH FIGURES COORDINATE "OPEN TO MARXISM" PLAN

Many Latin American Electors have coordinated their Conclave strategies and choices of Papal policy and of Papal candidate under the principle of an open-to-Marxism attitude. They have at their command an infrastructure of priests' councils and organizations of layfolk that runs through most of the major countries of Latin America—Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, and with deep ramifications in Mexico.

The tone of this Latin American infrastructure runs from light pink to deep red—from priests and bishops and layfolk enthusiastic for "democratic socialism," all the way to priests, bishops, and layfolk rooting for outright Marxism—Marxism by any means, fair or foul.

The American Cardinals are kept au courant with all of this.

EUROCOMMUNIST THREAT AFFECTS RIGHT-WING ITALIAN CARDINALS

The rise of the Eurocommunist threat (the possibility that Communists will enter government in significant and even decisive numbers in France, Spain, and Portugal) has begun to work on the hitherto monolithically right-wing Italian Cardinals, and the effect is helped along by the sympathies of those Cardinals who are already "open" to the Marxist dialogue. In particular, Cardinals Pellegrino of Turin and Pironio of the Vatican are disposed to consider the advent of a Communist government in Italy as not the ultimate disaster.

But it is the general trend of affairs at the Vatican that has really begun to divide the Italians. It is an open secret that the bulk of Vatican investments are being put within the North American continent, safely out of the reach of any European disaster. This is a sign of "pulling out" that is not lost on the Cardinals and Bishops in Italy.

There is also the fact that, actually, in the 36 localities where completely Marxist governments rule locally in Italy, there is no real friction between Communists and Catholics. On the contrary, the very twist of public events helps their friendship. Due to the deterioration of the Italian economy, the rising unemployment, the inflation, the soaring prices, the dislocation of public order, the kidnappings, murders, robberies, both the Communists (who stand for strict law and order) and the Catholics (who have no other rule to live by) are drawn together. In fact, they become the joint targets of the neo-anarchist groups and of the terrorist factions that model themselves on the Baader-Meinhoff gang in West Germany.

Besides all this, the Communists in the Italian Parliament have shown themselves to be political "gentlemen"; *borghesi*, in fact. They come to an agreement of *non sfiducia*, the "non no-confidence" pact, with the Democristian Government. This means that the Communists, who command a majority in Parliament, will never introduce a no-confidence motion. And the Communists keep their word. The government, which is a minority government, does not fall thanks to this kept promise of the Communists.

Besides all of these signs and portents that Italian Churchmen see, Archbishop Casaroli, Vatican expert in Communist politics and Vatican Emissary to Russian satellites as well as to Moscow, appears drinking cocktails in the Kremlin and dining in Bulgaria and Prague with Communist officials. It is observed that he has cordial relations with *all* Communist governments in Eastern Europe. Further, Pope Paul himself has not hesitated to receive Russian government representatives and to bow to Russian pressures in matters such as the Mindszenty case, where Paul thrust the Hungarian Cardinal into obscurity at Russian insistence. The mood, all sense, is of certain detente.

An additional and increasingly important factor influencing many Italian Bishops and some Cardinals is the existence of several Italian-born organizations that openly proclaim as their purpose the formation of an alliance between Marxists and Christians. These organizations, begun about seven years ago, have flourished, and now their influence runs through dioceses and universities and professional groups all over Italy.