

by Benedetto Croce. The main point is that only with the help of Venice could the senile cultist kook Newton attain worldwide respect.

Conti was active until mid-century; he died in 1749. In Venice he became the central figure of a salon that was the worthy heir of Ridotto Morosini. This was the sinister coven that called itself the philosophical happy *conversazione* ("la conversazione filosofica e felice") that gathered patrician families like the Emo, the Nani, the Querini, the Memmo, and the Giustinian. These were libertines, freethinkers, Satanists. We are moving toward the world portrayed in Schiller's *Geisterseher*. After Conti's death, the dominant figure was Andrea Memmo, one of the leaders of European Freemasonry.

An agent shared by Memmo with the Morosini family was one Giacomo Casanova, a homosexual who was backed up by a network of lesbians. Venetian oligarchs turned to homosexuality because of their obsession with keeping the family fortune intact by guaranteeing that there would only be one heir to inherit it; by this time more than two-thirds of male nobles, and an even higher percentage of female nobles, never married. Here we have the roots of Henry Kissinger's modern homintern. Casanova's main task was to target the French King Louis XV through his sexual appetites. There is good reason to believe that Louis XV's foreign minister

De Bernis, who carried out the diplomatic revolution of 1756, was an agent of Casanova. One may speculate that Casanova's networks had something to do with the approximately 25 assassination plots against Louis XV. Finally, Louis XV banned Casanova from France with a *lettre de cachet*.

Another agent of this group was Count Cagliostro, a charlatan and mountebank whose targets were Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, whom he destabilized through their own folly in the celebrated Queen's Necklace Affair of 1785. Cagliostro was able to make Louis and especially Marie Antoinette personally hated, a necessary precondition for mass insurrection against them. Emperor Napoleon later said that this operation by Cagliostro had marked the opening phase of the French Revolution of 1789.

### Conti's legacy of evil

Another member of the Conti-Memmo *conversazione* was Giammaria Ortes, who had been taught Newton by Conti personally, as well as by Grandi. Ortes was another defrocked cleric operating as an abbot. Ortes is the author of a manual of Newtonian physics for young aristocrats, including a chapter on electricity which manages to avoid Benjamin Franklin, in the same way that Galileo avoided Kepler. Ortes carried out Conti's program of applying Newtonian methods to the social sciences. This meant that everything had to be expressed in numbers. Ortes was like the constipated mathematician who worked his problem out with a pencil. He produced a calculus on the value of opinions, a calculus of the pleasures and pains of human life, a calculus of the truth of history. This is the model for Jeremy Bentham's felicific or hedonistic calculus and other writings. Using these methods, Ortes posited an absolute upper limit for the human population of the Earth, which he set at 3 billion. This is the first appearance of carrying capacity. Ortes was adamant that there had never been and could never be an improvement in the living standard of the Earth's human population. He argued that government intervention, as supported by the Cammeralist school of Colbert, Franklin, and others, could never do any good. Ortes provided all of the idea-content that is found in Thomas Malthus, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, the two Mills, and the rest of Lord Shelburne's school of British philosophical radicalism in the time after 1763.

Conti has left a commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*, which he interprets as Plato's self-criticism for the mistake of having made ideas themselves the object of philosophical attention. In his *Treatise on Ideas*, Conti writes that the fundamental error of Plato is to attribute real existence to human ideas. All our ideas come from sense perceptions, says Conti.

In 1735 Conti was denounced to the Venetian Inquisition because of his reported religious ideas. Conti was accused of denying the existence of God. True to his factional pedigree, Conti also denied the immortality of the human soul. Conti reportedly said of the soul: "Since it is united with a material

## Correction

Helga Zepp-LaRouche's speech, "Ghost of Martin Heidegger Haunts Cairo Conference," published last week in *EIR*, included an inaccurate reference on p. 21 to "Al Gore's speech in Rio, that he wanted the population to be only 1 billion." Mrs. LaRouche meant to refer to writer Gore Vidal, who in 1988 had stated on German television that "there are 4 billion people too many" in the world. Vidal's genocidal ravings were reported in detail on p. 50 of *EIR* of Oct. 23, 1993.

