

## **SUMMARIES**

### **Uncertainty on the eve of the elections**

by Giacomo Sani

The Italian elections of March 1994 have taken place under extraordinary conditions of uncertainty. In this essay the author pinpoints the most relevant factors that have contributed to create that situation in the months preceding the elections: the change in the electoral rules (and the contradictory effects of an electoral system combining plurality and PR aspects); the de-structuring of the old party system and the emerging of a new one; the increased mobility of public opinion and of the electorate.

Sani then moves on to analyze how this situation of uncertainty has evolved in the crucial months preceding the opening of the electoral campaign and how the complicated game of political alliances has been played by old and new parties producing only at the last minute a relatively firm set of options for the voters.

### **Media, polls and campaign expenditures: the new rules**

by Carlo Fusaro

Four months after the introduction of the new electoral laws for the Senate and the Chamber of deputies, the Italian Parliament passed an entirely new discipline concerning various aspects of political campaigning before national elections: access to media, contribution limitations for candidates, expenditure limitations for both candidates and parties, discipline of

opinion polls during the two weeks before election day, amount of state reimbursement for election expenditures of candidates and parties and so on. In this article the author describes the main contents of the new law and the debate it has raised, also attempting to assess its first implementation during the 1994 electoral campaign.

### **The electoral platforms and the role of mass media**

by Paolo Segatti

This paper deals with the electoral platforms of the major parties in the recent election, the role of the newspapers in shaping the campaign issues and the amount of political information broadcasted by the television system. Analysis of the parties' programs shows, first of all, a general decline of ideology, except in the case of the neo-communist party (Rifondazione comunista). Contrary to the convergence of the economic and the moral issues between the parties in the post-war elections, in the recent campaign emerged a sharp division on the social and economic policy issues. Pds and Ppi (former Dc) valued positively the role of the market and of the private firms in the economic recovery, but stressed the market failure in providing social security for the less advantaged social strata. At the opposite Forza Italia and Lega Nord argued for a market oriented reform of the welfare system. The division line, however, did not separate the centre-right winning coalition from the centre and left parties. The platform of Alleanza Nazionale, which included the post-fascist Msi, was on the economic and welfare issues more anti-market than the Pds's and Ppi's ones. Also on other policy issues the division between the coalitions were not clearly cut. The electoral campaign was characterised by several political issues. The most important ones were the anti-communist, the anti-parties and the anti-establishment appeals of the centre-right coalition. The coverage of the campaign by the national newspapers was centered on the political issues more than on the policy ones. At the local level, however, more attention was given to the policy issues and to the candidates' profile, as emerged from an analysis of some local newspapers. The same analysis confirmed the traditional cultural difference between North and South. Finally the coverage of the electoral

campaign by the television system was wider than in the 1992 and 1987 political elections. The private televisions owned by Mr. Berlusconi dedicated more time to political information than the public television, particularly in the month before the standard four-week electoral campaign. There is some evidence that the private television gave in this period a decisive momentum to Forza Italia, the movement created by Mr. Berlusconi.

## The candidates

by Liborio Mattina

This research on candidates to the Italian political elections of March 1994 has been carried out by a sample representing more than 40 percent of the candidates to be elected through the majority system. The paper shows that the Left-wing, Center and Right-wing coalitions kept control of the candidate selection process mostly because complementary or alternative recruitment channels, as those provided by interest groups, were not activated. The main strategies for candidate recruitment, adopted by the political parties and coalitions, have been three: the self-referent selection, the over representation of representatives of some social groups, the appeal to the «predisposed professions». Left-wing coalition privileged the first strategy, which helps the self-reproduction of professional politicians. Right-wing coalition preferred the second one, which over represented candidates coming from small entrepreneurs and the self-employed sectors. Center coalition relied both on the appeal to the professions, who provide candidates with larger chances to be elected, and to the self-referent selection. More generally, coalitions and political parties combined the three different recruitment strategies with the final result of maintaining among the candidates a large presence of professional politicians, but also favouring a significant renewal of electoral lists by opening the access to parliament to those who never were involved in politics before (50 percent of sample's candidates).

Finally, the essay shows a strict interdependence between the candidates' professional activities and their position regarding the two main political cleavages which emerged during the electoral campaign: on one side, the defence of a pervasive

Welfare State and of dependent workers; on the other, the promotion of a «minimum» state and the prior support to the self-employed sectors.

### **From parties to poles. The politics of electoral alliances.**

by Aldo Di Virgilio

The general elections of March 1994 have been held under new conditions, mainly due to: (a) the new electoral system; (b) the destructuring and transformation of the party system. The essay points out the strategic adaptation of political forces to the new institutional and political conditions. The first section provides an overview of the transition from old to new political parties. The second and third sections deal with the feature which came out as the most important in this electoral competition: the emergence of electoral coalitions competing for plurality representation (3/4 of parliamentary seats according to the new electoral system). As to the politics of electoral coalitions, the analysis focuses on two points of view: the making of electoral alliances and their internal regulation. A national electoral aggregation (the progressive alliance) was easily built up by leftwing parties, led by PDS. On the opposite political side, the creation of an electoral aggregation was more difficult. The puzzle found this solution: two right-wing macroregional coalitions and one national coalition for the centre (Pact for Italy). The new movement founded by Mr. Berlusconi (Forza Italia) was the common partner within the right-wing coalitions: in Northern Italy (Pole of Liberties) with the federalist Northern League; in the South (Pole of Good Government) with the post-fascist National Alliance. The right-wing coalitions were more efficient with the adapting to the new electoral rules. The allocations of constituencies within each coalition depended mainly on: (a) the number of actors, (b) the degree of centralisation of the decision making process, and (c) the scope of agreement. These factors influenced the criterion of regulation within each coalition: the left-side adopted an almost complete proportionalisation of the agreement, the right-side adopted a more efficient compensative criterion, the centre based the agreement according to the regional organizational capacity. A final section gives aggregate data on territorial differences

about both competitive conditions and typological characteristics of candidates.

### **The elections of 1994: the new political space**

by Luca Ricolfi

The essay examines how electoral preferences changed in Italy between 1992 and 1994 general elections, with special interest in changes occurred in last two months before general elections. Data handled are both ecological (at constituency and district level) and individual (panel data).

After a short outline of the process which led the right-wing coalition to the victory, the analysis focuses on two main interpretative issues:

*a)* the eccentricity of the electoral behavior of the Sicilian voter;

*b)* the character of «Forza Italia», the new party which won the general elections.

The main thesis of the paper is that vote for «Forza Italia» is fundamentally a lay and anti-idological choice, and that the last general elections displayed a *new* territorial cleavage which divides North Italy and Sicily on the one side and the rest of the country on the other.

### **Competition in the plurality arena: the electoral origins of the divided parliament**

by Stefano Bartolini and Roberto D'Alimonte

This paper is about the outcome of the elections in the single member districts. The focus is on the explanation of the difference between the results for the House and those for the Senate through the analysis of electoral competitiveness. Two areas of the country have turned out to be absolutely non competitive: the North, won by the conservative coalition, and the Center, won by the progressive coalition. Only the South has shown a significant level of competition. This is particularly true in the vote for the Senate. Marginal seats, which are extremely few in the North and Center, represent a sizable propor-

tion of the southern districts. Fragmentation (number of candidates per district and dispersion of the vote), patterns of competition and within-bloc electoral cohesion are the variables used to explain the results. The paper shows that the leftist coalition, though defeated, has avoided an even worse outcome because of a number of largely contingent factors which have damaged the right.

### **The disproportionality of the new Italian electoral system**

by Alessandro Chiaramonte

The new Italian electoral systems for the election of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate can be examined on a number of dimensions. The purpose of this article is to analyze one of those dimensions: the relationship between seats and votes; and, more specifically, the degree of (dis)proportionality and the weight of each feature of the electoral system in determining it.

The first section deals with the general question of how to measure the disproportionality of different electoral systems, and of mixed system in particular (since the new Italian electoral rules, both in the House and the Senate, are a mix between plurality and proportional representation). Some general observations concerning aggregate disproportionality are presented in the second section. The third and fourth sections examine the seat-vote relationship of each of the two seat allocation levels, respectively the plurality one and the proportional one.

Finally, it is argued that the new Italian electoral systems can be fundamentally classified as (relative) majority systems, but strictly by their outcome. An analysis focused on the deviation from proportionality regards the process by which votes are translated into seats, but disregards other decisive factors intervening before it. Among these factors there are the party and voter strategies, stemming from the manipulability of the electoral rules and the learning process by which political actors assimilate the new rules. In the case of the 1994 Italian election such factors reveal «proportionalization effects» that an index of disproportionality is unable to «capture».

## The new members of parliament

by Luca Verzichelli

This article focuses on the major changes of the political class in Italy produced by the election of 1994. After evaluating the quantitative aspects of the élite renewal, the author describes the main peculiarities of the new Italian MPs, looking at the social and political backgrounds. Some relevant characters are stressed: the decreasing role of the party-local government path to the parliamentary career (even among the parliamentarians of some traditional parties survived to the electoral revolution) and the emergence of a new group of beginner politicians.

The variables useful to explain this process of change are basically two: the impact of the new electoral system and the tremendous consequences of the delegitimation of the old parties (not only the governing ones): the mixed effects of these phenomena determined the emergence of new political actors which show different and totally new models of political recruitment (the Northern League since 1992 and Forza Italia today) but also very relevant process of change in the political recruitment of the traditional parties. In particular, the structural crisis of the Popular Party, new version of the classic Christian Democracy, forced the leaders of this party to a total change of the personnel and of the criteria of selection, erasing in one day the most lasting and powerful sector of the old political class.