

This Month's Second Electoral Earthquake in Europe

A disciple of Roger Scruton is about to become Italy's prime minister.



by Bruce Bawer

Asked what he made of the massive leftist losses in elections this month in Sweden and Italy, President Biden paused thoughtfully for a few minutes, wandered out of the room, came back shortly afterwards in a different pair of pants, sat down again, asked for the question to be repeated, and then pronounced sagely: "Well, it looks as if the European left had better learn to start stealing votes like we do!"

Just kidding, of course.

Like the Sweden Democrats (SD), who [triumphed](#) at the polls on September 11, the Brothers of Italy, who won big last Sunday, have been described in the international media as "far-right,"

“hard right,” “extremist,” and even “fascist.” Party boss Giorgia Meloni, [warned](#) the *New York Times* after the election, is “poised to be the country’s first far-right leader since Mussolini.” Or, as the *Guardian* [put it](#), “Italy will now have its most rightwing prime minister since 1945.”

The day before the Italian election, anxious journalists sought comment from Ursula von der Leyen, head of the European Commission, who [reassured](#) them that if things didn’t go “in the right direction” in Italy, she had “tools” with which to respond. In other words, an unelected technocrat – a woman whose extraordinary power over the lives of 450 million people has never been subjected to the vote of a single ordinary citizen – was threatening reprisal if the citizens of a sovereign country chose leaders she didn’t like.

Of course, von der Leyen’s idea of “the right direction” means rule by globalists – the greatest menace to which is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Hence the need to smear champions of liberty as fascists. (Just ask Hillary Clinton, who the other day, apparently having decided that “deplorables” wasn’t quite strong enough, [likened](#) Trump supporters to Nazis.)

To be sure, like SD, the Brothers of Italy have dicey roots. That’s not uncommon in Europe. Meloni herself, when she started her career, was pretty far to the right; she’s since moderated her views. Yet many in the media pretend otherwise. For example, although she fervently supports Ukraine in the current war (“a proud nation that is teaching the world what it is to fight for freedom”), she’s routinely depicted as being cozy with Putin.

Then again, Trump got painted with the same brush. And just as he boiled his cause down to “America First” and SD’s platform essentially amounts to “Sweden First,” Meloni, if you listen to her speeches, is obviously all in for “Italy First.” Like SD, her party is pro-NATO and anti-EU. Like SD, it firmly

opposes mass Muslim immigration. After Sunday's election, an Italian voter [explained](#) his support for Meloni to a CBS News reporter in three words: "Too many immigrants." (Which was followed immediately, on the evening news broadcast, with clips of Mussolini – who, the reporter told us, originated Meloni's motto, "God, Fatherland, and Family.")

Bottom line: Meloni is based. In a 2000 speech at the National Conservatism Conference, she [declared](#) that "our main enemy today is the globalist drift of those who view identity in all its forms to be an evil to be overcome and [who] constantly ask to shift real power away from the people to supernational entities headed by supposedly enlightened elites." During this year's election campaign, she told a crowd of supporters: "Yes to the natural family, no to the LGBT lobby! Yes to sexual identity, no to gender ideology! Yes to the culture of life, no to the abyss of death! No to the violence of Islam, yes to safer borders! No to mass immigration, yes to work for our people!"

Last month, Meloni was [profiled](#) in the *Spectator* by Mussolini biographer Nicholas Farrell. Headline: "Is Giorgia Meloni the Most Dangerous Woman in Europe?" If she opposes illegal immigration, Farrell pointed out, there's good reason for it: "In the past eight years, about 750,000 migrants have crossed the 300 miles of Mediterranean that separate Libya from Sicily – many ferried across by NGO charity vessels on permanent standby." Other issues? Unlike Marine Le Pen, Meloni believes in tax cuts and less government meddling in the economy. During lockdown, she opposed Italy's strict vaccine-passport rules. Abortion? She'd never have one, "but supports Italy's abortion law which permits it on demand up to 90 days." She's big on family, but isn't legally wed to her boyfriend because he's not into marriage.

As for Mussolini, is she a fan? No. Her hero, she told Farrell, is the late, great British philosopher Roger Scruton (1944-2020), who "always knew how to embody the essence of

conservatism as a way of life and never as an ideology.”

A major European country run by a passionate admirer of Roger Scruton? Could Europe – could Italy – possibly be so fortunate? This is a man, take note, who reviled Communism and its lies, cherished liberty, and prized Western civilization. In his 2003 [essay](#) “Why I Became a Conservative,” you can read about how, in May 1968, Scruton, then a visiting student in Paris, was appalled by the student violence – which a friend of his explained by handing him a book by Michel Foucault, who asserted “the right to destroy” as a response to purported bourgeois oppression.

Years later, Foucault’s vile writings would help shape the “woke” culture that now surrounds us. Meanwhile, Scruton would be one of the most eloquent advocates of freedom, order, tradition, and truth. At a time when many Western heads of government – from Biden to Trudeau to Jacinda Ardern – are dastardly, dimwitted apostles of wokeness, the ascent to power in Italy of a smart, energetic, and principled disciple of Roger Scruton is surely an event to celebrate.

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