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47/1 St Lucia Street, Valletta - Malta  
 Tel: (+0356) 235341 (10 Lines)  
 Tlx: 1462 ECOCRD MW (2 Lines)  
 Fax: (+0356) 220101

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**Italian, Spanish Foreign Ministers in Malta**  
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**THREE KILLED IN WORST DIVING TRAGEDY EVER**

**Remaining two divers' bodies recovered**

Michael Testa

An intensive search for two missing scuba divers produced the expected grim results yesterday when their lifeless bodies were found in a dark underwater pit cave at a depth of 37 metres.

The two young divers, Dr Franklin Polidano, 27, of Msida and 24-year-old dockyard worker Michael Camilleri of Sliema, were in a group of five who went diving off Qawra on Saturday afternoon.

Three of them decided to go into the cave with tragic results. One of them, Dr Sandro Caruana, 25, was recovered dead from the sea late on Saturday but the search for the others was called off as darkness fell, to be resumed at first light yesterday.

Divers from the police Special Assignment Group, the AFM's explosives ordinance disposal unit, and the St John Rescue Corps were assisted by friends of the missing divers who are familiar with the area.

The first to be located was Camilleri, trapped 15 metres inside the narrow underwater tunnel leading to the cave. But the body could not be immediately recovered because silt stirred up by movement reduced visibility to

practically zero.

The operation was resumed after a couple of hours when two divers, Michael Gauci and Shaun Epsom, who are familiar with the cave, volunteered to dive together with the police divers to try to recover the bodies. The divers were linked to each other by rope because of the poor visibility.

Camilleri was brought ashore at noon. Polidano was found further inside and was recovered three hours later.

Friends of the victims described them as experienced divers but also acknowledged that that particular cave was very dangerous because of the silt and its narrow opening.

"I would never go inside there even if I had nowhere else to dive," a diver said while the search was on.

The tragedy is thought to be the worst involving deep water diving.

The ill-fated divers had been accompanied by Warren Scicluna and Gillian Muscat who had not accompanied them in and alerted the police on Saturday when their friends failed to return to the surface.

Mr Scicluna was among many



who anxiously followed the search from shore yesterday but could not say much.

"Leave me alone. It's a tragedy," he said.

Friends of the missing divers showing concern as they wait for news during the search yesterday.

**Italy votes to bury a scandal-tainted order**

Italians voted yesterday in two-day elections that will break half a century of Christian Democrat domination and bury a generation of politicians steeped in the shame of corruption.

Three new alliances of the right, left and centre are battling to replace a governing class swept away by revelations of graft and Mafia collusion in two turbulent

years of scandal.

Up to 80 per cent of the members of the next parliament are expected to be new. None of the five parties which shared in Italy's 52 post-war coalition governments has survived intact.

"These elections are without doubt a decisive moment in the history of our country," President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro said after voting for the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate under Italy's new, mainly first-past-the-post electoral system.

"Ciao, Ciao First Republic," the newspaper *L'Indipendente* proclaimed in a banner headline which summed up the sea change.

But the political roller coaster ride may not be over yet, according to final opinion surveys published two weeks ago.

They suggested a bitter race between media mogul Silvio Berlusconi's frontrunning "Freedom Alliance" and a "Progressives" bloc led by the ex-communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) could end with a hung parliament.

The surveys gave the balance of power to a small centrist pact between reformist Mario Segni and Mino Martinazzoli, leader of the Popular Party which was born from the rump of the once mighty Christian Democrats.

"I hope that Italians have reflected...on the true interests of the country," said Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, a technocrat tipped as possible head of another transitional administration if no bloc wins an outright majority.

Turnout was put at 5 p.m. (1500 GMT) at 32.3 per cent of the 48.5 million electorate, down from 38.9 per cent at the same time in 1992.

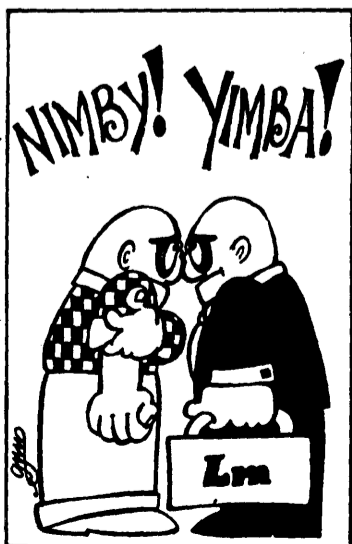
With the sun shining, many of Italy's 48 million voters forgot for the moment their most important elections since 1948 and headed instead for the mountains and the seaside.

They apparently intended to wait until today when polling stations open for a second day to allow observant Jews to vote after Passover festivities.

PDS leader Achille Occhetto, mobbed in a media scrum, was out early to vote. His rival Berlusconi, owner of Europe's largest private television empire, announced he would wait until after dusk today in a show of respect for Italy's Jews.

The battle between Occhetto, who steered Italy's former Communist Party from Marxism to social democracy at the end of the Cold War, and free market

(Continued on back page)



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