

## A Shift In The War Against Terror

Just a week after the terrorist assassination of former Italian Premier Aldo Moro, the investigation of the Moro murder seemed "to have undergone a great qualitative shift," as a Rome daily newspaper put it. An Italian magistrate commented, "We have grabbed the cat by the tail; now we have to hit its head."

The events which prompted these comments were the unexpected appearance last week of former Franciscan priest Silvano Girotto at the trial of terrorist Red Brigades leader Renato Curcio and his cohorts, and the arrest of a key Red Brigades cell in Rome whose front was a printing shop.

Girotto was a Vatican antiterrorist operative who infiltrated the Red Brigades in 1974 and set the trap for Curcio and others to be captured by the police. Since then he has been hiding in France and some unnamed Middle East country, after proterrorist forces in the Italian Interior Ministry blew his cover in an attempt to prevent Curcio's arrest.

The six Red Brigades members arrested could be part of the team that killed Moro.

This sudden shift in Italy's war against terrorism might appear to be a "miracle"; perhaps the government of Premier Giulio Andreotti finally stumbled on the

one piece of evidence it needed to effectively fight terrorism. The truth of the matter is quite different.

The evidence connecting both "right" and "left" subversion to elements within the Interior Ministry (most prominently former Interior Minister Francesco Cossiga, who was just forced to resign), the secret services, and the financial establishment has been known to the Italian Constitutionalist forces for years. The difference now is the wilfully created *political* conditions which have allowed a massive and unprecedented clean-up within the intelligence apparatus, and thereby within the terrorist cells. Cooperating closely with Italian State Intelligence in this effort are the Vatican and French intelligence.

The qualitative political shift was signaled by the forced resignation of Cossiga on May 10. By removing that first obstacle to any successful investigation, Andreotti — who appointed himself acting Interior Minister — was then able to clean 500 agents out of the secret services. These agents were responsible for revealing the identities of crucial informers, for leaking secret information, and for covering up investigations, according to the Italian press. Their dismissal, reported the newspaper *La Stampa* May 23, was a move to clean

### New Structure For The Italian Secret Services

The Italian Parliament approved a new structure for the country's secret services on May 23. The reform was drafted by Premier Andreotti personally over a year ago as the three trials opened against Curcio and the Red Brigades, the plotters in the Borghese coup attempt of 1974, and the perpetrations of the series of bombings in 1969 which launched the terrorists' so-called "strategy of tension."

Only sabotage from Cossiga's Interior Ministry, the Amendola-Napolitano faction in the Communist Party, the Craxi-Lombardi faction in the Socialist Party, and the Agnelli-linked faction within the DC had prevented the reform from going through before now.

The new legislation revokes the use of arbitrary "state security" blocks to serious investigations. Already, Andreotti has used this power to allow for the investigation of the sources which financed the 1974 coup attempt by channeling money to the then-head of the secret services, General Vito Miceli.

The new secret service structure will be formed by one military counterespionage unit — the SISMI — under the responsibility of the Defense Ministry. Together with the SISMI there will be a civil internal security unit — the SISDE — under the responsibility

of the Interior Ministry. There will be an Inter-ministerial Security Commission that, together with Andreotti, will coordinate all intelligence activity.

The point of the new structure is not only to have a better organizational apparatus per se, but to have it under the top-down political control of Andreotti and his closest traditionalist allies. This is the case already in the Defense Ministry, under Attlio Ruffini. While a new Interior Minister has not yet been appointed, the most likely candidate is the current undersecretary, Zamberletti; Zamberletti — who describes himself as a "Gaullist" — is Andreotti's personal candidate. To prevent any operation against his candidate, Andreotti announced that he will not be having any special meeting with the political parties before the nomination, since the appointment of an Interior Minister is the Premier's responsibility. If any opposition develops, said Andreotti, then Zamberletti will be made first undersecretary acting as de facto Minister, while Andreotti remains as official Interior Minister.

Similarly, the president of the Security Commission, is Senator Pennacchini — a long-time close ally of Andreotti and of Andreotti's main supporter within the Christian Democracy Flaminio Piccoli.

up the intelligence community before the new just-approved secret services structure began operating in full.

## 'Father Machinegun' Speaks

*The appearance of Silvano Girotto — known variously as Father Machinegun, Brother Machinegun, and Father Lion — at the Red Brigades trial in Turin May 18 left the Red Brigaders and their lawyers "speechless, open-mouthed, and motionless," reported the Italian press. In his first deposition, Girotto destroyed the "just a sociological phenomenon" line on Curcio's gang by testifying that before he could infiltrate the Red Brigades in 1974 he was screened by a network of "very important people." Furthermore, he pointed out that the Red Brigades were being protected by the Interior Ministry, which fed them not only information on antiterrorist operations, but actually gave marching orders for terrorist operations.*

*Formerly member of the Foreign Legion, a Franciscan priest, and a guerrilla in Bolivia and Chile, Girotto returned to Italy in 1973 with the carefully built-up cover of a Latin American-style "revolutionary priest." After infiltrating the Red Brigades and setting the trap which allowed the Carabinieri to capture Curcio and other Red Brigade leaders, Girotto's cover was blown by Red Brigade sources within the Interior Ministry who unsuccessfully tried to sabotage the arrest of Curcio and his coconspirators. Following this event, Girotto released the following interview to the Italian magazine Panorama on Dec. 12, 1974. Afterwards he vanished from the scene, until French intelligence returned him to the Carabinieri at the appropriate moment two weeks ago.*

*Q: Is it true that you are about to leave Italy?*

*A: Yes... I came back to Italy in November 1973, after several experiences, let's say dense experiences, in Bolivia and Chile. From November 1973 to June 1974 I had no political contacts whatsoever, I did not engage in any political activity...*

*Q: What did you do?*

*A: I spent most of my time writing my memoirs... I was about to submit the manuscript to an editor when *Candido* wrote that I was the head of the Red Brigades... *Candido* published three articles. Finally the police were on my track...*

*Q: And one day the Carabinieri arrived at Potenza Street.*

*A: A Carabinieri captain... He pulled out copies of the articles and asked me: What do you have to say?, and I answered: What should I say? I don't know anything, it's a stupid fabrication... And we began talking.*

*Q: About politics?*

*A: I said what I always thought: that the Red Brigades are dangerous, that the sooner they are caught the better. At this point the captain asked me: Well, if you really have it against them, why don't you lend us a hand in finding them?*

*Q: Wasn't it a problem to contact the Red Brigades?*

*A: Not really. I have a long experience in the underground and developed a smell for these things.*

*Q: How did you establish contact with them?*

*A: I went to a specific area and spread within certain circles the rumor that I was interested in the Red Brigades.*

*Q: What happened then?*

*A: The seed bore fruit some 20 days, maybe a month later. I was invited by a professional whom I did not know to spend an evening at his house and tell him about my experience in (Latin) America. There were other people... Later on, when we were alone, the professional told me: I must talk to you about the Red Brigades. Talk to me how? I asked. Concretely, he said. This was the first link of a series. From one person I was "passed" on to another, and to another, and to another, many meetings... They were evaluating, screening me... A problem emerged at this point. I was talking to very important people, hearing interesting and very serious things...*

*It was not workers at all, those whom I was meeting with... At a certain point I found out things about a magistrate... So, I told the Carabinieri: you must also hear the things that I am hearing. From then on, I went to the meetings with a hidden microphone and the Carabinieri were recording.*

*Q: And where did the meetings take you?*

*A: Finally, I was granted a meeting with Renato Curcio, founder and head of the Red Brigades... It was to be Sunday Aug. 1, at 10:00 a.m. at the Pinerolo station...*

*Q: Was it a long meeting?*

*A: He talked to me for six hours, after which I was muddled... He was a great talker, but with a delirious political line. He told me: "You know, we don't want the revolution at all. We already made the revolution. We are in war..." We talked about everything, including their financing... He told me the history of the Red Brigades up to the Sossi kidnapping... Out of the conversation I gathered the distinct impression that Red Brigades knew too many things. They had privileged information.*

*Q: What kind of information?*

*A: At a later date Curcio told me that they had informers within the Interior Ministry... The second meeting took place Aug. 31... This time they made a concrete proposal that I join the Red Brigades. They needed men, they told me, for the autumn battle.*

*Q: What battle?*

*A: They had crazy plans, I cannot say more. They scheduled me for another meeting in Sept. which was to be decisive. That day I had to go with them... The day arrived and I met Curcio at the same place, but this time I had a hidden microphone and the police cars were ready to come in... I told Curcio I was ready to go, but I had to take my car back to Turin, and they should pick me up there... He left in his car, and I told the Carabinieri that they could unleash the operation... I got there in time to see the epilogue. There were five or six Carabinieri cars. Curcio and Franceschini were arrested... I did not escape to Switzerland, as has been said. I was in Turin. I was hiding, naturally, but I went to the magistrates and talked a lot, from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. It was hard, but there is nothing better than telling the truth.*

*Q: Who was arrested as a result of your action?*

*A: Curcio, Franceschini, Lazagna, and Levati... The organization was hit at its brain...*