

Behind the assault on the lira, masonic maneuvers target Italy

by Claudio Celani and Umberto Pascali

The storm that is buffeting Italy is without doubt the most serious in the postwar period. The lira has fallen by 15% since it exited the European Exchange Rate Mechanism on Sept. 13, and its fall continues. The Bank of Italy, after having spent half of its foreign reserves, has now given up its defense completely. National statistics show a picture of virtual bankruptcy. The debt exceeds the Gross Industrial Product: 1,500 trillion liras; the public deficit is more than 10% of the Gross Industrial Product; unemployment is growing. This financial crisis is due to more than a decade of deregulation à la Margaret Thatcher, which brought about a huge state indebtedness by selling state bonds at more than 12% interest.

The crisis is accompanied by foreign destabilizing maneuvers, mostly from the City of London and Wall Street.

The Wall Street investment bank Goldman Sachs, which financially supports both George Bush and Bill Clinton, predicted that the fall of the lira would not stop until it reached the rate of 1,000 liras to the German deutschemark. Before the crisis, the exchange rate was at 740 liras to the mark, and now it is above 900.

This is not the first time that this financial oracle has poked its nose into an Italian crisis. Economic observers have noted that the speculation against the lira started at the very moment that Goldman Sachs announced the weakness of the Italian currency, which was then still part of the European Monetary System. No sooner had Goldman Sachs made its "prediction" than it announced it was establishing an "operational" presence in Italy by opening its first office in Milan. A contradiction? Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the proposals of the senior adviser of Goldman Sachs for Italy, Romano Prodi, who recently suggested that government privatize the three main Italian public banks. Clearly with the lira's rate against the mark at 1,000, holders of the German currency gain quite an advantage over a rate of 740 liras to the mark!

From a political standpoint, it is clear that, in the context of the Anglo-American "new world order," Italy makes the easiest target for attacking continental Europe and breaking a Paris-Bonn-Rome alliance. Wall Street and the City of London are counting on the fact that the present Italian leader-

ship is pinned down by the rigid austerity demands of the European Community presented as a *sine qua non* for re-entry into the European Monetary System, demands which coincide with those of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These demands amount to sending the groups that currently run things in Italy to ride off into their last sunset, and replacing them by people more compliant to the Anglo-American designs.

Spawning revolt

The decision by the government of Prime Minister Giuliano Amato to "find" 93 trillion liras by cutting spending and increasing taxation has caused a kind of revolution. Amato decreed the elimination of health insurance for most Italians (later slightly eased) and a freeze on wages and pensions, as well as several new tax increases. The trade unions naturally declared war, calling for strikes that were more than 90% effective, set to culminate in a general strike on Oct. 13, a level of protest not seen for the last 20 years. The unions are demanding that the government dump its free market policies. They propose their own budget cuts, which will not hit social services. The biggest labor confederation, the CGIL, proposed to slam finance capital with "extraordinary financial measures," such as a moratorium on the public debt, in order to allow for an economic recovery. In itself this would not solve much, and could make things worse, but in the context of an industrial reconstruction plan, as proposed by Lyndon LaRouche, it is the kind of monetary reorganization that helps free resources for investments.

The newspaper of the Italian Liberal Party, *L'Opinione*—considered close to masonic circles—recently ripped into CGIL head Bruno Trentin for proposing that 20% of bank deposits be frozen and turned into a long-term loan to the state. *L'Opinione* compared Trentin's proposal to those of Roberto Formigoni and Vittorio Sbardella, both leaders of the Catholic organization Communion and Liberation and members of Parliament from the dominant Christian Democracy. The two proposed to consolidate the public debt by converting public bonds from short-term to long-term. *L'Opinione* does not explain that these proposals are based on a strong criticism of free market economics, usurious interest

rates, and finance capital, and that they are aimed at forcing a shift toward investment in industrial growth.

These anti-free market ideas are gaining ground not only in the unions but also inside the Christian Democracy and the Party of the Democratic Left, the main opposition party. It is exactly against this convergence on a potentially broad ruling coalition that the Anglo-Americans have deployed all their destabilizing capabilities.

The Anglo-Americans' strong suit is the North League, the separatist movement of Umberto Bossi and Gianfranco Miglio, which has announced a tax revolt, and the intention to split the "rich" north from the "poor" south of Italy, exploiting the opposition to austerity that is radicalizing Italians. The ideology of the League's leadership is exemplified by Miglio's statement that "Hitler made mistakes of style." In the recent local elections in the city of Mantua, in Lombardy, the League tripled its vote to 34%, and the Alpine League, led by Bossi's sister, gained another 7%. The city's former leading party, the Christian Democrats, collapsed to 14%.

According to polls, if a national election were held now, the League would come in first in the north with 30% of the votes. For the first time since the war, the government has postponed 42 other local elections until next year. A reaction by the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Parliament forced the government to call elections for Dec. 13.

The return of P-2

Behind the North League are the masonic groups associated with the Scottish Rite in the U.S. and England—in particular the structure of the secretive Propaganda-2 lodge. The Venerable Master of P-2, Licio Gelli, who spent 10 years in hiding or jailed and was "cleaned up" after Bush's inauguration, openly supports the League and freely pontificates in any newspaper, calling for a coup d'état. "We have long had the conditions for a coup d'état," he told *Europeo* magazine on Sept. 18. "A coup d'état that should eliminate the scum [the political parties] that are robbing us. . . . In reality do you know who represents the only hope for this country adrift? Bossi. If Bossi really gets the tax revolt started, I will join him immediately."

According to recent investigations begun by a prosecutor, Agostino Cordova, in Calabria, in the south, Gelli is in close touch with the very same bosses of organized crime in the south whom the League officially targets as enemies. Gelli has been unable to explain recent transactions of hundreds of billions of liras, which may have been used for destabilizing actions.

Beyond Gelli, the whole masonic network is being activated, eerily reminiscent of the post-Versailles period that preceded Fascism in Italy. In addition to the League, Anglo-American masonry has a candidate who is supposed to replace the whole unruly Christian Democratic leadership: Mario Segni. The son of a former President who was forced to

resign in the 1960s after allegations of attempting a coup, Segni is calling for an "institutional reform" that would suppress political parties and replace them with lobbies. Despite undeniable corruption and many other faults, Italy's parties sometimes do represent the thinking of their constituencies, and the parliamentary system makes it extremely tough to pass the austerity regimes ordered by the IMF. Segni, who suddenly seems able to have at his disposal huge financial resources, is promoting his own mass rallies, and is receiving the support of the P-2-connected media.

Similarly Claudio Martelli, the justice minister, until recently was the loyal henchman of Socialist Party Secretary Bettino Craxi. But Craxi is out of favor with the Anglo-Americans, who "suddenly" discovered that he was corrupt. Martelli, after a U.S. visit in September, where he had long talks with the FBI on the "anti-Mafia fight," became an anti-corruption convert, calling for investigations into his erstwhile mentor. Martelli also distinguished himself in an unprecedented personal attack on magistrate Agostino Cordova, and called for increased cooperation with the FBI to fight the Mafia.

Not least among P-2's assets is to be counted the secretary of the small Republican Party, Giorgio La Malfa, a second-generation agent of the British financial establishment. La Malfa has been calling for a super-government, to include the North League, in order to force through austerity.

Masonry also has its secret assets, mostly terrorism, directed at the movement against IMF austerity. At the end of September during a demonstration of 150,000 in Rome, 500 violent "autonomists" suddenly attacked the protest's leaders. The autonomists, notorious organizations that provoked armed clashes in the streets in the 1970s and '80s, had almost disappeared. This time they were led by the well-known terrorist Franco Pifano, who had previously been arrested while in possession of missiles. In the confrontation that erupted with police, few noted that the officer leading the police was P-2 member Elio Cioppa—the same person who had been involved in a mysterious sabotage of the 1978 effort to find and free kidnaped Christian Democratic party president Aldo Moro. Moro was then killed by the Red Brigades.

The anti-European strategic aim of the masonic offensive was made brutally clear by Prof. Aldo Alessandro Mola, director of the Center for the Study of the History of Masonry, to the magazine *Il Sabato* of Sept. 26. "The conflict opened today is on whether to accept German hegemony or to return to containing this hegemony. Thus we cannot renounce the alliance with the U.S., England, [and] France. For us Germany is and remains the strategic danger." Mola explains: "Italian masonry was reborn in 1945 thanks to Truman. Truman intervened even to ask for the headquarters of the masonry, Palazzo Giustiniani, to be given back. Masonry had lived abroad during Fascism thanks to the money of Italo-American masons like Arturo Di Pietro and Charles Poletti; then we had Frank Gigliotti. What's scandalous in that?"