

Italian Republic implodes, as 'new forces' move in

by Claudio Celani

Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro on Jan. 16 dissolved the Parliament and announced general elections for March 27, thereby declaring the end of the First Italian Republic. For 46 years, from 1948 to 1994, Italy has been ruled uninterruptedly by a coalition led by the Christian Democratic Party (DC), a party inspired by traditional, family-oriented values that guaranteed Italy's firm commitment to the western alliance and ensured a remarkable degree of economic development and prosperity. But the DC and the other established non-communist parties, due to a tremendous economic crisis and devastating corruption scandals, have lost their power—maybe forever—and risk disappearing altogether from the political spectrum. The new Parliament which will be elected in March will be dominated by "new" forces, most of whom express anti-national, free market economic and political interests. Their personnel will be inexperienced, apolitical, and will rely on technocrats to make decisions in any field.

In reality, the new Parliament will not rule anything, and is in danger of impotently overseeing the advance of radical separatist agendas to break up the Italian nation, or of being the transition toward a more authoritarian regime. Some observers, like Carlo Caracciolo, editor of the geopolitical magazine *Limes* and member of a powerful oligarchical family, predicts the emergence of a "Polish-like situation," a victory of the left and a technocratic government. Far from bringing stability, the coming changes in the political landscape will bring greater turbulence. A possible, indeed highly probable, development is the impeachment of President Scalfaro, starting as soon as the elections are over, and the election of a new President who will be no obstacle to a constitutional

reform. Caracciolo indicates that such a President could be Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, a former central banker who is at present head of government.

A new Mussolini or a new Mazzini?

Prof. Giuliano Di Bernardo, head of the Grand Lodge of Italy, the pro-British branch of Freemasonry, agrees that "the situation will remain fluid for at least one more year" and that "the real new Italian leader has not yet emerged." Di Bernardo, who is representative of the emerging, Venice-centered financial-oligarchical powers in Italy, complains that the Northern League, the protest party which electorally dominates northern Italy, is not going to last, because "they do not have an ideology." Di Bernardo is therefore pushing for the emergence of a "new, mystical, national ideology." Di Bernardo does not say it, but he is thinking to a new Mussolini, or a new Mazzini.

Di Bernardo's oligarchical friends, like the De Benedetti and Benetton financial groups, are currently backing the left-wing cartel which is leading the polls for the March 27 election. A contradiction? Not really. Achille Occhetto, the head of the biggest leftist party, has sworn loyalty to the "international markets" in a series of meetings with Anglo-American bankers. Occhetto promised that if his party, the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), goes into the government, he will guarantee "continuity with the budget-balancing policy of Prime Minister Ciampi." Occhetto promised that he would raise no obstacles to the policy of privatizing major state-owned industries. For this, he has been twice publicly endorsed by international speculator George Soros's Italian

partner, broker Isidoro Albertini, in the De Benedetti-owned daily *La Repubblica*.

To beat the leftist bloc, due to the recently approved new electoral law, any party would need at least 35% of the vote. The collapse of the Christian Democracy (which has changed its name to the Italian Popular Party, or PPI) has created a vacuum that could be filled by the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI), which recently won up to 40% in local elections in Rome and Naples. Frenetic attempts to build an alliance between the PPI and the Northern League—quite an incompatible couple—have so far failed, despite the fact that the League has abandoned its radical plan for splitting Italy into three states. Media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, a sort of Italian Ross Perot, has proposed himself as the leader of the “moderate bloc” and has founded a national party called Italy Force (Forza Italia). Berlusconi has a rival in Mario Segni, a former Christian Democrat and a technocrat who is praised by the London *Economist*.

Even if the conservative bloc were to come together against the leftist cartel, they still have to explain to the voters what difference there is in their economic program. From Northern League leader Umberto Bossi to Berlusconi, from Mario Segni to PPI leader Mino Martinazzoli, the “moderate” leaders all sound like clones of Margaret Thatcher, pushing privatization, budget-balancing, and deregulation of the labor market.

What can be done?

Realizing the danger of involution in the Italian political situation, Pope John Paul II made a powerful intervention at the beginning of January, calling on Italians not to forget all the positive achievements of the Catholic party, the Christian Democracy, in postwar Italy. The pope also warned against putting an entire political class on trial, as the media are presently doing, helped by the ongoing trials against political corruption in Milan. The pope called for “unity of Christians in politics,” which has been interpreted as support for the new Popular Party. Earlier, at Christmas, the pope had called for the unity of the country, to counter the separatist plans pushed by the Northern League.

The problem facing the church is that, while it is aware of the crisis hitting Italy due to secularization and the devastating effects of Thatcherite economic policies, yet when it comes to suggesting remedies, church or Catholic leaders lean toward “social policies” like reduction of the work week, in order to create employment for everybody. Such “remedies” are not going to solve the crisis, which requires massive investment in high-technology, capital-intensive projects. The LaRouche movement in Italy, called the Solidarity Movement, has issued a program to create 2 million jobs, through a Hamiltonian credit reform and a large-scale infrastructural plan, and has called for a coalition of national forces on the basis of that program.

A profile of Italy's new political forces

Italian politics has long been noted for its byzantine character, and now, with the proliferation of new parties and the renaming of old ones, it is no surprise that many foreign observers find themselves confused. Here is a thumb-nail sketch of the most important institutions and individuals.

Democratic Party of the Left: The PDS is the heir of the old Italian Communist Party, which even under the late Enrico Berlinguer, who died in 1984, had abandoned revolutionary goals in favor of a pro-western, reformist policy centered on an alliance with Catholic forces. Under Achille Occhetto, the present secretary general, the party underwent a radical change, and its reformist character, based on family-oriented and pro-industrial values, was compromised with the progressive shift toward a radical ecologist, globalist malthusian ideology. After 1989, the party changed its name, at the same time losing its traditionalist faction. The PDS still maintains a reliable trade union base, which, together with middle-class and professional layers, forms its constituency, spread throughout the country. The PDS candidates recently won most local elections in large cities like Turin, Rome, Genoa, and Naples.

Democratic Alliance: A group of intellectuals with no popular base, the Alliance is the instrument for oligarchical control of the PDS. Its leader, Ferdinando Adornato, dictates to Achille Occhetto every step he must take.

Party of Communist Refoundation: This is the “traditionalist” faction which split from the PDS. Usually labelled as “hardline communists” due to the presence of the former pro-Soviet faction in its leadership, headed by Armando Cossutta, the party has a pro-worker policy, opposing deindustrialization and privatization of state-sector industry. It has a strong base in the northern industrial centers, like Turin and Milan, and in the labor movement.

The Network (La Rete): The new party formed by Palermo mayor and former Christian Democrat Leoluca Orlando is a jacobin party which, thanks to its anti-establishment and anti-Mafia campaign, made sweeping electoral gains both in recent local elections. The Network does not have a real program, which means that the party will dissolve as soon as it assumes any government responsibility.

Greens: Like similar groupings in other nations, the Italian Greens are for radical malthusian and environmentalist policies.

Radical Party: The party founded by Marco Pannella and now led by Emma Bonino is for “moral” deregulation of drugs, family, school, and all aspects of social life. It campaigns against the death penalty and for disarmament.

Republican Party: This was the “IMF party” in the old

establishment. It never had a popular base and is not going to survive as a party. Its leader, Giorgio La Malfa, wants to join the left, but has a bad image since he was accused of corruption.

Socialist Party: The PSI is the party most hit by corruption scandals, and has almost disappeared from the electoral map in recent votes. Its leader, Ottaviano Del Turco, wants to dissolve it and join the PDS. The faction led by former Prime Minister Bettino Craxi will not follow him, and is looking for a place in the "moderate" bloc.

Social Democratic Party: The PSDI has consistently been a member of Italy's government coalitions, but today it is not going to survive, and its leaders are looking for a place in the "moderate" bloc.

Christian Democracy: The DC, hit by corruption scandals which many see as steered by international Freemasonry, has dropped many old constituency groups and changed its name to the **Italian Popular Party**, thus going back to the name of the DC's predecessor party founded by Luigi Sturzo in the 1920s. A defensive step, this has two negative connotations: First, the name "Christian" was dropped as a concession to secularization; and second, Sturzo's Popular Party was more oriented toward free market liberal economics than the DC. Sturzo himself, in the postwar period, opposed industrialist Enrico Mattei's strategy of national independence through the state presence in the economy. Mattei's friends in the old DC leadership are all out now. The present head of the PPI is Mino Martinazzoli, but he is soon to be replaced. Candidates for leading the party are Soros's friend Romano Prodi and neo-conservative philosopher Rocco Buttiglione, who recently characterized himself as one who chose "not to be on Saddam's side during the Gulf War." The PPI is expected to receive no more than 10% of the votes in the upcoming election.

Northern League: Dominating northern Italy with an average of 40% of the votes, the League is absent in the rest of the country, and therefore is seeking alliances. Its leader, Umberto Bossi, has recently abandoned the idea of establishing a separatist Northern Republic, maybe as a result of blackmail around an investigation into illegal financing of his party. The League is pushing, however, for considerable fiscal autonomy of regional administrations, a total absence of the state from the economy, and a full deregulation of the labor market. In an interview with *EIR* (see below), the League's number two-man, Roberto Maroni, says that he would not oppose selling Italian industries to speculator George Soros.

Mario Segni: A media product, Segni is a former Christian Democrat and the son of a former President of the Republic. He has led a campaign for the reform of the electoral system that many have described as corresponding to the "Plan of Democratic Rebirth" written by Licio Gelli, head of the famous Propaganda-2 (P-2) secret freemasonic lodge.

Segni is suspected of being a Freemason, but nobody can prove it yet. He recently founded a movement called Pact for Italy. He has been courted both by the left and by the right to run as prime minister. He has not yet decided, though, leaning more toward the "moderate" portion of the political spectrum.

Italian Force: This is the network of "clubs" created by media magnate Silvio Berlusconi. Berlusconi's TV empire is second in the world only to Ted Turner's Cable News Network; he owns three private channels in Italy, one in France, and one in Poland. He owns also a supermarket chain and a construction operation. Berlusconi is not liked by the international financial markets, which dropped the day he announced his entrance into politics. That is probably due to the fact that he does not push for the globalization of the economy as much as everybody else does. Berlusconi is a friend of French President François Mitterrand and of former PSI leader Bettino Craxi. He has been a member of the secret P-2 freemasonic lodge, but he explains that he joined the P-2 only because he had been promised investments in Latin America. Projected electoral results: not more than 10%.

Italian Social Movement: After dramatic electoral growth in recent local elections, especially in Rome and Naples, the MSI changed its name to **National Alliance**. MSI Secretary General Gianfranco Fini is trying to abandon the party's Mussolinian image in favor of a more moderate one; at the same time, his party was favored by the candidacy of the Duce's granddaughter, Alessandra Mussolini, who was almost elected mayor of Naples. Accused of being the last defenders of "statism," the MSI is, like every other party, moving toward free market positions. As for foreign policy, Fini was pro-American until 1989, and takes a pro-Serbian position on the Balkans. The MSI has been ostracized and kept out of the attempts to form a "moderate" coalition. The MSI is viewed by many traditionalist Catholics as the genuine defender of family-centered values.

Interview: Roberto Maroni

'We want a free market and a welfare state'

Mr. Maroni is the number two man in the Northern League, and heads its caucus in Italy's Parliament. He is the closest collaborator and friend of Umberto Bossi, the head of the