

Italy's Fanfani fails to complete his task

by Umberto Pascali in Rome

A general strike of industrial workers paralyzed Italy on Jan. 17. According to many observers, the demonstrations that took place in the major Italian cities were the biggest in the last 20 years. Two hundred thousand workers marched in the streets of Milan, 100,000 in Rome. Large demonstrations also took place in Genoa, Bologna, Naples, and Turin. For many, this atmosphere of mobilization recalled that of 10 or 15 years ago, the period of the "hot autumn" of the trade unions.

But the situation now is quite different. Although the strikes took place without the major violence or clashes some expected, the labor unions in Italy are on the verge of splitting and being wiped out. A few days before the strike, the General Secretary of the Christian Democracy, Ciriaco De Mita, declared: "If someone sees in the demonstrations of these days the beginning of a new '68, he would be mistaken. If I were really thinking we were on the eve of anything, I would think of the eve of 1922"—i.e., the March on Rome of Benito Mussolini.

Despite DeMita's provocative use of the comparison, there is a deep truth in this evaluation. The ferment among Italian workers is an answer to the policy of ferocious austerity enacted by the government of Amintore Fanfani, who obtained the Prime Minister's chair in November after the sudden political defenestration of former Prime Minister Giovanni Spadolini. This was aggravated when the association of Italian industrialists, Confindustria, led by the Fanfani-linked Vittorio Merloni, launched a confrontation with the unions by refusing to discuss the renewal of contracts if the trade unions reject the proposed cutting of the cost of living escalator, one of the last guarantees of the survival of workers' families in the face of escalating inflation. The real reason why Fanfani was put in, as is becoming increasingly evident, was to provoke a situation of social confrontation that would lead to the dissolution of the trade unions and the creation of a hysterical mass anarcho-syndicalist movement to be deployed immediately afterwards in the form of the "peace movement."

This scenario was kicked off with a major restructuring of the terrorist groups. A few weeks ago the imprisoned head of the Red Brigades, Renato Curcio, issued a document claiming that the "struggle" no longer works in the way that it has existed up to now. Now it is necessary for the "revolutionaries" to enter the peace and mass workers' organization en masse to launch mass terrorism, Curcio proclaimed. Shortly thereafter, anarcho-syndicalist groups like Autonomia Operaia (Worker Autonomy) and the recently revived Democrazia Proletaria suddenly became more active.

In the two weeks leading up to Jan. 20, wildcat strikes exploded in many cities from Genoa to Palermo. Many of them were turned into occupations of train stations and highways. On Jan. 5, Interior Minister Virginio Rognoni, under direct orders from Fanfani, called in the three secretaries of Italian trade union confederations to tell them that the strikes had provoked an emergency of the public order. The next day, spurred on by the austerity measures but also by the provocations of the grouplets, wildcat strikes erupted everywhere. Finally, on Jan. 7 violent clashes between workers and police broke out in front of the government headquarters. The whole affair was an artificial set-up: Police had been ordered to attack no matter what happened.

In the meantime the head of the Socialist Party trade union confederation (UIL), Giorgio Benvenuto, declared that it was time to re-think the unity pact among the trade unions, citing the fact that no Socialist trade unionist had been able to speak before workers in the recent period without being forced to flee from a barrage of hostile slogans and rotten eggs. Workers have chosen this way to express their opinion of the support of the Socialist Party for Fanfani's austerity.

The general strike on Jan. 17, was supposed to be the rehearsal for Fanfani's union-busting strategy. In order to preserve "unity" the trade unions had decided that no speech would be held before workers and that the strike had to be "silent." Few workers were expected to participate, and, under those conditions, the anarcho-terrorists were expected to take over. But the unprecedented turnout superseded that scenario, and no grouplet was permitted to do anything.

An impasse with strategic overtones

Now there is a situation of objective "power vacuum," while the workers have shown their determination to resist austerity. This means that Fanfani didn't accomplish his job, despite the fantasies of some leading oligarchist spokesmen, like the president of Assicurazioni Generali di Venezia, the giant Venetian insurance conglomerate, Senator Cesare Merzagora, who had expressed in November his enthusiasm for Fanfani in *Corriere della Sera*. Significantly, in his praise for Fanfani Merzagora stressed that the diminutive Christian Democratic politician does not care at all about "American approval" as his predecessor Spadolini had, especially in his meeting with President Reagan.

Fanfani's austerity package was only a part of the policy

he was supposed to carry out. Well-informed sources in Rome have let it be known that Fanfani is crucial for a medium-term program to split Europe from the United States, in other words, the plan of Soviet chief Yuri Andropov, and Andropov's British co-thinkers. Despite his conservative profile, in fact, the present Prime Minister has always been an advocate of Europe as a "Third Force." After having been a young Fascist intellectual and a professor of Fascist Mysticism, after the war Fanfani joined the leftist current of the Christian Democracy, led by Dossetti, an admirer of the "British model." Dossetti opposed the policy of CD founder Alcide De Gasperi as "too pro-American," and he had close links with Eastern European countries.

In the 1950s the Dossettians had been part of the "peace movement" of that time. Fanfani's closest associate, the mayor of Florence, Giorgio La Pira, was one of the leaders of the so-called "Partisans for Peace" in Italy. This organization, part of the World Peace Council, had international offices in Stockholm and Prague. The other two Italian leaders were Socialist Riccardo Lombardi, a notorious British-Soviet intelligence agent, and Communist Pietro Secchia, more directly linked to KGB forces. Secchia was the first sponsor of terrorist nobleman Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who created the first terrorist structures internationally in the 1960s and practically initiated all the terrorist groups in Italy. The connection of Feltrinelli (who died trying to blow up a power line near Milan in 1972) with Prague and the Soviet Union is also well known in relation to terrorist training facilities.

Fanfani and La Pira always enjoyed the best of relationships with the East. For example, it was La Pira who personally smuggled to the *New York Times* the text of the famous de-Stalinization speech by Khrushchev. La Pira received it in Florence from the hands of the Soviet Ambassador in Rome.

It is also interesting that Fanfani was one of the first Western leaders to meet Andropov, shortly after the Christian Democrat became Prime Minister, stimulating the hopes of the controllers of the peace movement, like professor Adriano Buzzati-Traverso, boss of Venice's Societe-Européenne de Culture (SEC).

Now the big project is falling apart. The new option for the "Venetians" is some kind of understanding between the Christian Democracy and the Italian Communist Party, with the aim of carrying out austerity and doing exactly what Fanfani couldn't do. The General Manager of Olivetti electronics company (a stronghold of the Venetian gang), Carlo De Benedetti, and his associate Bruno Visentini, are currently "testing" Communist Party General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer. Recently in a public debate broadcast by the TV station "Telequattro," De Benedetti asked Berlinguer whether the Communists would be able to carry out the "necessary austerity measures" more efficiently than Fanfani. Berlinguer basically responded: Try me! Since then the Communist leader has not missed a chance to contrast the old-style capitalists with the "enlightened entrepreneurs" like De Benedetti and Visentini.

Nakasone and Reagan to talk baseball bats

by Richard Katz

"Nakasone did what he set out to do," Johns Hopkins Professor Nathaniel Thayer said to *EIR*. Thayer had just met the day before with his old friend, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, soon after the latter's meeting with President Reagan. "Nakasone wanted to establish a personal relationship with the President. He wanted to let people here understand the political problems that arise back home around issues like farm imports, and so forth. And, most of all, he wanted to let people here know that he—and Japan—are not 'the enemy.' He kept using the word 'teammate.'"

In return, Nakasone got what he wanted most: official statements of "appreciation" for his "personal leadership" on defense and trade issues from both President Reagan and U.S. Trade Representative William Brock. To be sure, both statements also insisted Japan must "do more." But Nakasone can still use them to tell opponents at home that he knows how to maintain good ties with the Americans, unlike his predecessor Zenko Suzuki. This, Nakasone hopes, will enable him to ride out the storm of opposition arising from his ties to Lockheed bribery defendant and former Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka.

Aside from aiding Nakasone's political fortunes, it is hard to see exactly what the trip accomplished. The leaders of the two largest economies in the non-communist world spent much of their two hours together deliberating on whether Japan—which already purchases 60 percent of America's beef exports—could manage to buy still more; and whether Nakasone would loosen the stiff regulations that hinder imports of American-made baseball bats. Like his predecessors, Nakasone pleaded with the Americans not to repeat the disaster of the 1930s, when the Depression provoked an all-out trade war that eventually turned into world war.

At one point, Reagan chimed in with a baseball metaphor, recalling his movie portrayal of the legendary pitcher Grover Cleveland Alexander. This sent Japanese officials scurrying to discover the identity of 'Cleveland Alexander.'

Yet, the underlying cause of the increasing bitter trade frictions, what Thayer referred to as "the paramount issue affecting our nations, the fact that the world is in a serious recession," appears to have received very short shrift. At one point in their "broad-ranging" discussion, according to a