

Italy Begins Return To Nuclear Power

by Claudio Celani

April 15—Twenty-four years after taking the absurd decision to shut down its nuclear power plants, the Italian government has begun the return to nuclear energy. Although success is not assured or the prospects immediate, the move represents a significant crack in the British Malthusian green dictatorship that has been dominating Europe, and thus suppressing prospects for Europe's essential participation in reversing the global economic breakdown. Italy decided that France would be the midwife to its nuclear renaissance.

On April 9, a Franco-Italian meeting was held in Paris, which marked a major step forward. Deals were signed between Italian and French industries and universities for cooperation and joint ventures to build four 1,600-MW nuclear power stations, to be operational by 2020. Four more will follow; the Italian government plans to reach a quota of 25% of nuclear-produced electricity by 2030, to reduce Italy's dependence on foreign oil and gas imports (over 85% currently).

After World War II, Italy was the first continental nation of Europe to produce nuclear power, and in 1964 already had four plants. Italy's program was started by patriot Enrico Mattei, founder of the national energy company ENI. Mattei, while drilling oil and gas in Italy and abroad, understood that the future lay with nuclear energy. In 1956 he founded a nuclear company, AGIP Nucleare, and in 1958 he signed a contract with the British NPPC company for a licence to build a gas-cooled nuclear reactor. After five years, in 1963, a 160-MW plant was operational, but Mattei did not live to see it, having been killed the year before.

In 1986, an insane decision agreed to by all political parties, after a referendum, led to Italy abandoning its nuclear program altogether, and to the even more insane decision to shut down immediately its existing six plants. This decision has cost at least EU35 billion

in direct costs, and EU50 billion more in money spent to buy energy abroad. Italy, today, imports electricity from its European neighbors, partly produced by nuclear plants! Of course, the real losses are much higher, in terms of scientific and industrial know-how.

The agreements with France are intended to regain all the lost capabilities and push the country again on the way towards progress. Italy has chosen France's EPR (European Pressurized Reactor) technology, and a consortium was launched last year between the Electricité de France (EdF) and the Italian electricity company ENEL, which will be the leader of the consortium.

The Italian business daily *Il Sole 24 Ore* published an interview with Areva's CEO Anne Lauvergeon, who described "the nuclear renaissance" as "not a myth but a real tendency." In five years, Areva's orders have increased fivefold, its turnover by 39%, and the company hired 53,000 new people.

Lauvergeon addressed the key issue used by anti-nuclear factions in Italy—waste disposal: "We are able to recycle 96% of the fuel utilized. Therefore, waste represents only 4% of the fuel introduced in the plants. The amount of such residues for France, where civilian use of nuclear energy has existed for 30 years, amounts to the size of an Olympic swimming pool."

Political Battle Ahead

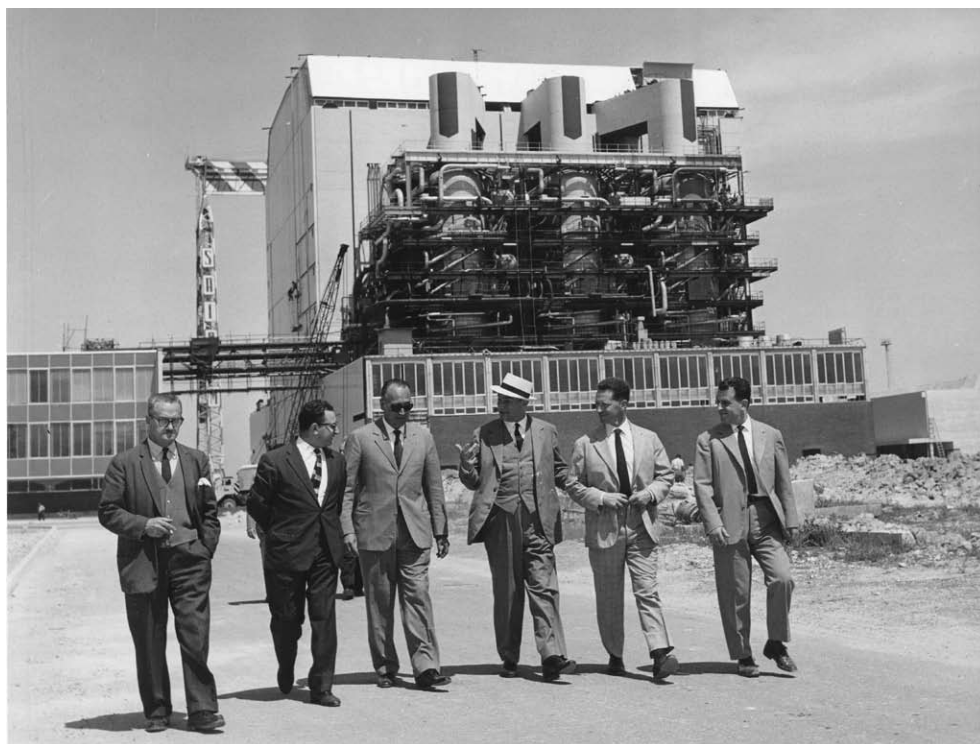
To implement its nuclear power program, the Italian government must win a political and educational battle. Years of mass brainwashing by the green movements of British Royal Consort's Prince Philip have induced a generalized, irrational fear of nuclear technology in the population.

In recent years, as Italians recognized the disadvantages of the nuclear ban on their electricity bills (30% higher on average than other European countries), a shift in favor of a return to nuclear energy had started. But as soon as the government announced its program, and said that a decision must be taken as to *where* to build the four new plants, Prince Philip's new flagellants went on a rampage, terrorizing the population. Greenpeace staged demonstrations at former nuclear sites, where most probably the new plants will be built, raising giant banners reading "Nuclear Emergency," and the popular mood tilted again, albeit with a narrow margin, against nuclear energy.

The leading opposition party, the Democratic Party (DP), has irresponsibly ridden the irrational tide, and its local administrators have issued proclamations banning construction of plants in their backyards. During the recent campaign for regional elections, all governors belonging to the DP proposed bills vetoing the construction of plants in their region. Even governors and gubernatorial candidates of the government coalition, afraid of losing the election, buckled to the hysterical anti-nuclear campaign. The Government-Regional Congress, a body which assembles central government officials and all regional governors, and has a shared jurisdiction on issues such as energy and infrastructure, voted against the nuclear program, with the result that the central government filed a complaint at the Constitutional Court.

But to the citizens' general surprise, the government coalition won a staggering victory in the March 28-29 regional elections, taking four regions from the opposition (see *EIR*, Feb. 19, 2010), and tilting the balance of power in the Government-Regional Congress. Things are now definitely easier for the government, but the problem is not solved. Industry leaders are worried that once more, the enemy could manipulate public opinion and "democratically" re-impose a ban.

In order to avoid that, a general education campaign is needed, which must address the fundamental issue: the paradigm of anti-progress ideology. This can be defeated only if an anti-oligarchical concept of man is adopted as a general approach by the pro-nuclear front. Nuclear energy is good, not only because it is cheaper and therefore industry and consumers will pay less, but because the scientific and technological progress represented by nuclear energy reflects the real anti-entropic



The late Italian industrialist and patriot Enrico Mattei (with hat) initiated the country's nuclear power program. It was completely shut down in 1986, but is now being revived, in a potential breakthrough for Europe.

pic nature of man and the universe. Italian leaders must adopt LaRouche's approach, an anti-entropic view of man and the physical universe, which means not only launching a nuclear program, but a full-fledged program for the development of Italy to promote the Common Good, to develop the creative potential of the entire population.

This means, for instance, government credit for a full-employment program based on high technology-driven investments. In particular, a 10- to 15-year development plan for Italy's relatively backward Mezzogiorno (the South), in terms of modern infrastructure and agro-industrial development. This is impossible under the current European Union system, which deprives Italy, like other member-states, of their sovereignty. The current EU setting endangers even Italy's current modest nuclear program, because it guarantees a financial crisis that will make any investment an impossible enterprise. Therefore, Italy must abandon the European Monetary Union as soon as possible, regain economic sovereignty, and set an example for the other "captive nations" of the EU's supranational bureaucrats.