

Italy: Two Provocations With Global Impact

by Claudio Celani

In less than three days, from the evening of Nov. 14 to that of Nov. 17, two provocations attempted to sabotage Italy's leading role in the international fight for a new monetary and financial order, called for in the resolution voted up by the Italian Chamber of Deputies on Sept. 25. The two operations aimed at triggering a left-right political fight in Italy, a conflict among Italian institutions, and a comeback of terrorist violence among so-called "anti-globalist" radical groupings.

On the night of Nov. 14, twenty members of the "Rete Meridionale per il Sud Ribelle," a radical "no-global" (or "new global") organization, were arrested by a prosecutor in Cosenza, on charges of having incited riots at the Naples Global Forum meeting in March 2001, and at the Genoa Group of Eight summit in July of that year. Among those arrested is Francesco Caruso, head of the group. Then on the night of Nov. 17, an appeals court in Perugia handed down a sentence of 24 years' imprisonment for Sen. Giulio Andreotti, several times prime minister and currently editor of the Catholic magazine *30 Days*. The court reversed a previous acquittal of Andreotti for the 1979 murder of journalist Mino Pecorelli.

The two developments seem unconnected, but in reality, are part of a destabilization Italy's role in organizing a New Bretton Woods.

From Florence to Rome

In the aftermath of the nearly unanimous vote of Italy's Deputies for "a new world financial architecture which punishes financial speculation and promotes the real economy," two important institutions, the Catholic Church and the trade unions, moved in October to "kidnap" the Social Forum "anti-globalization" movement from the control of its billionaire moneybags Teddy Goldsmith, terrorist ideologue Toni Negri, and their ilk. It was decided that the European Social Forum rally, scheduled in Florence for the weekend of Nov. 9, should be streamlined to the purpose of prompting a follow-up discussion in the national Parliament on the new financial and monetary reform. In order to do so, it was necessary to prevent the terrorist "Black Bloc" squads from repeating their devastation of Genoa last Summer. This was accomplished at the Nov. 9 demonstration, by a combination of a robust self-defense organization provided by 3,500 trade unionists, and persuading former sympathizers of the Black Bloc to distance themselves from the radical fringes of the movement, and thereby isolating the latter.

Thus, an impressive demonstration against the war in Iraq,

with between a half-million and 1 million people, marched peacefully through the streets of Florence, with no incidents whatsoever. Supporters of that war such as Anglo-American intelligence provocateur, journalist Oriana Fallaci, author of a pamphlet promoting the Clash of Civilizations, were bitterly disappointed; Fallaci lashed out at former trade union leader Sergio Cofferati, who spearheaded the demonstration, comparing him to a modern Napoleon Bonaparte in taking over the "no global" movement.

As a consequence of the Florence demonstration, Parliamentary leaders announced that they would schedule a debate on the issues raised by the event in the near future. Of course, such a debate would be a follow-up and new opening for the New Bretton Woods resolution. This received an exceptional boost on Nov. 14, when Pope John Paul II visited the Italian Parliament, gathered in a joint session of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The Pope had previously visited only one national Parliament, in his native Poland. The speech marked the anniversary of the reconciliation process between the Vatican state and the Italian nation, after the achievement of Italy's national unity in 1860.

Pope: Ask 'What More Italy Can Do'

For the first time, a Pope walked as a guest through those very rooms which, a century and a half ago, were the seat of the Church government institutions. In a speech interrupted by applause 22 times and greeted with standing ovations, the Pope called on Italy to project the "universal values" of its Christian humanist heritage to the world, especially as concerns questions of peace and development. Referring to the "splendid traces which the Christian religion has impressed on the customs and culture of the Italian people," the Pope told Italians to ask "what more Italy can do for the progress of civilization."

First, he said, "in order for its characteristic qualities to be more clearly expressed," the nation "needs to increase its solidarity and internal cohesion." This means a "supportive and generous cooperation in building up the common good of the nation. Such cooperation, however, cannot proceed from reference to the fundamental ethical values inscribed in the very nature of the human person. In this regard, in my Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, I warned of the 'risk of an alliance between democracy and ethical relativism.' " In fact, he explained, "If there exists no ultimate truth to guide and direct political life . . . democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism." The first task of solidarity, the Pope said, is to solve the "continuing grave crisis of unemployment," which must "be able to count, above all, on constant and close attention on the part of public institutions."

"Tragically our hopes for peace are brutally contradicted by the flaring up of chronic conflicts, beginning with the one which has caused so much bloodshed in the Holy Land," the Pope warned, and then, in a clear reference to the drive toward an Iraq war and general Clash of Civilizations, added that

“Italy and the other nations historically rooted in the Christian faith are, in a sense, inherently prepared to open up for humanity new pathways of peace, not by ignoring the danger of present threats, yet not allowing themselves to be imprisoned by a ‘logic’ of conflict incapable of offering real solutions.”

The impact of the Pope’s speech was so great that Senate chairman Marcello Pera, a follower of “ethical relativist” Karl Popper, felt himself prompted to warn against the dangers of cultural relativism, and to emphasize the correspondence between the concept of Reason and Faith. “Mankind is the image of God and has a value in itself, whatever its condition is,” Pera said. The values deriving from this image, “are based by believers upon Revelation, and by non-believers, justified by Reason or Culture. . . . Such rights are established by our fundamental charters.” Western civilization, Pera reminded the Senate, “is born out of Greco-Roman . . . and Judeo-Christian culture. . . . How else to explain modern democracy without the Greek concept of *boulē* [judgment]? How else to explain our free society of solidarist men, without the concept of *agapē*?”

Pera said the Parliament must adopt laws which are measured with “the standard of the ‘common good.’ ”

The Provocations

The echo of such words had just faded, when the Cosenza operation was pulled, followed by the Andreotti sentence in less than 72 hours. In both cases, evidence points to an outside intervention on the relevant judicial bodies. In the Andreotti case, the Anglo-American connection is evident, and the news of the sentence was greeted with shock and rejection across the Italian political spectrum.

In the Cosenza case, the issue was not whether the people arrested were guilty of specific crimes during last year’s Naples and Genoa riots. The timing of the arrests is relevant: just after the Nov. 9 Florence demonstration, in which the radical group led by the arrested Caruso had participated, and “converted” to non-violence. Furthermore, in order to make the provocation more effective, Cosenza’s prosecutors added a conspiracy charge to, among other things, “overthrow the established economic order,” an old criminal law introduced under the Fascist regime of Mussolini. Clearly, the aim of the operation was to split the left, provoking a violent reaction and turning the clock back to the pre-Florence situation.

In the case of the Andreotti sentence, the blow was aimed at the Catholic political world, of which Andreotti is both a symbol and the most prestigious leader. Although 84 years old, Andreotti still plays a role, behind the scenes, especially as concerns Italy’s foreign policy. His connections to the Vatican are well known, as recently confirmed by the warm greetings expressed by the Pope to the Senator during the former’s visit to the Parliament.

Most importantly, Andreotti had been the first signer of the original motion for a New Bretton Woods, presented in the Italian Senate by Sen. Oskar Peterlini.

Sentencing Andreotti for a crime which involves complicity



The outrageous prison sentence handed down to the distinguished Senator and former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti is part of an effort to destabilize Italy’s role in organizing a New Bretton Woods financial-monetary system.

ity with the Mafia, amounts to criminalizing 50 years of post-war political history in Italy, during which Andreotti’s Christian Democratic Party (DC) ruled the country through coalition governments. Many former Christian Democrats are today present in government parties, but also in the opposition: These factions feel the attack was ordered by left-controlled factions in the judiciary, the same ones which led the 1992 “Clean Hands” investigation that led to the destruction of the DC and its coalition partners.

However, in the attack against Andreotti, the Anglo-American hand is visible.

Cosa Nostra and ‘Cosa Loro’—Their Thing

The entire allegation against Andreotti is based on statements by Mafia boss Tommaso Buscetta, now deceased, when under the Federal Witness Protection Program of the U.S. Justice Department. According to Buscetta, Andreotti is supposed to have commissioned the murder of journalist Mino Pecorelli in 1979 (when Andreotti was prime minister) because Pecorelli allegedly threatened to publish pages out of DC leader Aldo Moro’s prison diaries, during his Red Brigades captivity (before they killed him), which would be compromising for Andreotti. Buscetta issued such allegations in April 1993, adding that he was told so by another Mafia boss, Gaetano Badalamenti, an alleged accomplice of Andreotti.

Later, other organized-crime figures from Rome (belonging to the “Magliana gang”), repeated the same allegations and implicated two gangsters as the killers, and Andreotti’s friend Vitalone, a former judge, as middleman. In a second statement, however, delivered in June 1993, Buscetta said that he was “not aware of a request by Andreotti to kill Pecorelli.”

On the basis of such statements, Perugia prosecutors indicted Andreotti and a trial took place. No other evidence was produced. Buscetta’s contradictory statements, as well as the lack of objective evidence, led to the acquittal of all defendants. Furthermore, strange aspects of the case came to light:

First, Buscetta, who had been in “collaboration” with Prosecutor Giovanni Falcone, had never said anything about Andreotti to Falcone. Only in 1993, after Falcone was killed, did Buscetta come out with the Andreotti story. The reason is that Falcone would have never fallen into the trap. In fact, in another case, Falcone had prosecuted for slander, another “*pentito*” (Mafioso turned witness) named Pellegriti, who had “revealed” that Andreotti’s political ally in Sicily, Deputy Salvatore Lima—killed in 1992—was a Mafioso. While rejecting Pellegriti’s allegations, Falcone had hinted at possible “prompters” behind Pellegriti.

Secondly, witness Badalamenti (both Buscetta’s alleged source and Andreotti’s alleged accomplice, and currently in a New Jersey prison) was not produced. The popular jury in the first Perugia trial acquitted Andreotti, Badalamenti, Vitalone, and the two alleged murderers.

The prosecution’s appeal was conducted according to a different procedure: A popular jury was called, but, again, witnesses were not summoned; rather, the evidence “on the record” was reviewed. In such a procedure, if the sitting judge does not properly instruct the jury, it is more difficult to get the full picture. Nevertheless, as Andreotti has reported, the appeal appeared to smoothly follow the path of the first trial—until something happened. On Nov. 15, cancelling the three remaining planned sessions, the judges decided to close the trial and go to sentencing. Though Andreotti did not say so, this looked like outside interference.

Were the judges ordered, or blackmailed, to do so? This could explain why such a stunning sentence was handed down, in which: 1) Reversing the first trial, the appeal court decided to believe only Buscetta, but only Buscetta’s first statements of ten years ago. 2) By sentencing only Andreotti and Badalamenti, and acquitting Vitalone plus the two alleged killers, the court decided not to apply to the latter ones the evidence they applied to Andreotti and Badalamenti. As Andreotti noted the irony, “They sentenced me for a strange murder, for whose execution nobody can be found any more.”

The Perugia appeals court sentence will now be appealed to the Corte di Cassazione, the Supreme Court. It is expected that the appeals court’s “Motivations” will supply a broad base for a successful appeal by Andreotti.

National Denunciations, and Dangers

As expected, the sentence unleashed a wave of reactions. Andreotti received public messages of support from Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi; from the heads of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, Casini and Pera; from the head of the Bishops Conference, Cardinal Ruini; and—extraordinarily—from Italy’s President, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. The main opposition party, the former Italian communist party (DS), which in the past supported the campaign against Andreotti, split into two factions. Its chairman Piero Fassino called for a review of judicial laws concerning the use of Mafia witnesses; but his colleague Luciano Violante, a former prosecutor and head of the DS parliamentary faction, wrote that Andreotti

carries “historical responsibilities” for connections between the Mafia and politics in Sicily. Violante has often been indicated as the string-puller of the “prosecutors’ party” in Italy. The Lega Nord (Northern League), through its leader Umberto Bossi, issued statements indicating satisfaction with the Perugia sentence.

Of course, now the danger is that the judicial “false step” against Andreotti may be used by the government in a partisan way, in what many see as Berlusconi’s own private plan for justice reforms aimed at protecting himself from ongoing investigations. Pointing to this very danger, Andreotti repeated that, despite what happened, he is still confident in the justice system and looks forward to the final judgment in the Supreme Court.

In this hot situation, a powerful element of leadership was given by Amelia Boynton Robinson, the 91-year-old heroine of the American civil rights movement, who joined a Nov. 19 press conference in Rome, called by the “anti-globalization” representatives to protest the Cosenza arrests. In front of national press and television reporters, she told the “no global” leaders to abandon any form of violent protest. The newspapers *Corriere della Sera* and *Liberazione* published prominent articles about her intervention, which surely has had a stabilizing impact. For the longer term, if Italian leaders do not fall into such provocations, they can go ahead with the process, just started, for organizing a new international monetary and financial order.

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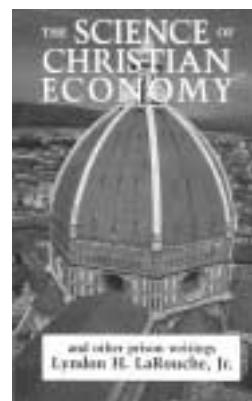
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