

Do Not Put New Wine Into Old Bottles

by Claudio Celani

Italy has a new Parliament and a new Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi. The coalition led by the media magnate and former premier (2001-06) won the April 13-14 general elections by a 9% margin over his rival, Walter Veltroni, leader of the Democratic Party.

Only four or five factions will be represented in the new Parliament, a revolutionary change, compared with the 29 factions represented in the old one. Remarkably, the “Left-Rainbow” coalition could not get over the 4% barrier for the Chamber of Deputies (8% for the Senate) and will not be represented in the Parliament. The good news is that the Green Party will not be there; the bad news is that several members of the leftist party PRC, who had supported LaRouche’s proposal for a New Bretton Woods, such as Sen. Lidia Menapace and Hon. Gennaro Migliore, are also out. Another major development is that the regional-populist Northern League doubled its votes, becoming the third-largest force.

Constitutional procedures require that the list of ministers be presented to President Giorgio Napolitano, for his approval. But Berlusconi had long since announced that Giulio Tremonti, who supports Lyndon LaRouche’s proposal for a new Bretton Woods system, will be Economics Minister (Treasury, Finance, and Budget). The day after the vote, Berlusconi gave another signal, announcing that European Union commissioner Franco Frattini will become Foreign Minister. Although Tremonti represents a discontinuity in economic policy, Frattini represents continuity in foreign policy.

Tremonti has started a debate on the “end of globalization” and the necessity of a “New Bretton Woods” (see *EIR*, March 28, 2008). In his first TV appearance after the vote, he promised that he will continue the dialogue on such issues with the Left, despite the fact that the Left is no longer represented in the Parliament. *EIR* readers know that Tremonti started that dialogue together with Lyndon LaRouche and PRC representative Alfonso Gianni, in June 2007 in Rome. This led London’s *Financial Times* to attack Tremonti (see box), who answered those threats coming from London on April 16, pointing out that central banks, and not Tremonti, have thrown free-market principles overboard through their ongoing bailout of the system.

Many people have asked Tremonti how it is that an outstanding intellectual such as himself is teaming up with Berlusconi. Tremonti praises Berlusconi’s qualities, but the para-

dox remains, and should be explained.

Generally, Italy's governments are an expression of compromises between national interests and foreign dominance, namely the British-steered EU imperial project. The visible representatives of the latter are called in Italy "I Poteri Forti" (Strong Powers), and include a gallery of personalities from the world of finance, media, academia, and others.

The Poteri Forti control factions in every political party, either directly on their payroll, or through ideology. Sometimes, the dividing line even passes through single individuals, who express such a compromise also in terms of culture.

In the case of Tremonti: He is a professor of finance who started his political career as a socialist, and then joined Berlusconi's party, as many socialists did, after the London-ordered destruction of Italy's constitutional parties in 1992-93.

Berlusconi's case presents a different picture. The *Cavaliere* was selected by an oligarchical faction in 1994, to gather the voters who supported the very same parties the oligarchy had destroyed. The basic impulse behind his Forza Italia party was anti-constitutional and pro-free market. The main influence to that effect has been Berlusconi's buddy Marcello Dell'Utri, his partner in the Publitalia firm, and holder of many secrets about Berlusconi's career.

Dell'Utri, who has been sentenced, acquitted, and sentenced and acquitted again, for Mafia connections, has promoted the career of Alessandra Mussolini, Il Duce's granddaughter, and of fascist editor Giuseppe Ciarrapico, both of whom have now been elected in Berlusconi's party.

Sicilian-born Dell'Utri is also a staunch admirer of Mussolini himself. In 2007, Dell'Utri claimed that he had found Il Duce's lost diaries, and he read passages from the alleged diaries in public events, suggesting that Mussolini deserved the Nobel Peace Prize. Dell'Utri represents the typical British fiction that there was a "good" Mussolini, who became corrupted through his alliance with Hitler.

Another key figure in Berlusconi's system of power and connections is Gianni Letta, Berlusconi's former chief of staff (2001-06), who is currently at Goldman Sachs. Letta is going to play a central role in the next government as well.

The Tremonti Challenge for Berlusconi

Despite his oligarchical connections—and despite his personal character—Berlusconi has to adapt to reality and come to terms with institutional and constituency impulses which are anti-oligarchical: for instance, the pro-development impulses coming from industrial interests, represented by Tremonti.

Tremonti's breakthrough during the election campaign, when he brought out the issues of the New Bretton Woods, protecting trade, and the collapse of globalization, has set the stage for a bipartisan dialogue to address issues of national interest. The government will urgently address several of them: the near-bankruptcy of the national airline Alitalia, the waste-disposal emergency in Naples and, foremost, the re-

construction of purchasing power of Italian families. Berlusconi has listed these issues as the priorities of his government; however, he also said that he will be forced to make "unpopular" choices because of the seriousness of the crisis.

The oligarchy will try to prevent such a bipartisan dialogue: Former President Francesco Cossiga, a British asset, warned that if there is a policy of *larghe intese*—policy agreements among the largest number of parties—this will provoke a backlash among the other parties, and a resurrection of terrorism, similar to the Red Brigades terrorism that was unleashed against Aldo Moro's policy of "large entente" in 1978. Cossiga indicated that the "extraparliamentarization" of the radical Left is a potential for that.

Berlusconi can escape his fate, by learning the lessons of Schiller's "Wallenstein." In foreign policy, a promising sign is that the first foreign head of state who met Berlusconi was Russian President Vladimir Putin. Putin visited Berlusconi's private villa in Sardinia on April 17, on his way back from Libya. This is an important signal against the NATO-British strategy for a Great Eurasian War.

Most important, Berlusconi should support Tremonti's intention to promote a New Bretton Woods, announced in the election campaign and endorsed by a large array of forces.

Financial Times Issues Tremonti Death Threat

Tony Barber, writing in the *Financial Times* online edition April 8, issued a not-so-subtle death threat against Italian economist Giulio Tremonti, under the title "Tremonti and the Serpent's Egg."

Quoting Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." Barber urges free-trade advocates to look at Act II Scene I, where "Brutus, when looking for a reason to justify Caesar's assassination, said that the point wasn't Caesar's actions so far, but the future danger Caesar represented. And therefore, 'think him as a serpents egg/ Which, hatch'd, would as his kind grow mischievous,/ And kill him in the shell.'"

Barber begins by noting that when they first met in 2003, Tremonti was wearing braces (suspenders), smoking a cigar, and looking the part of a finance minister. He lambastes Tremonti's recent book, *Fear and Hope*, which "lashes out at globalisation and condemns the dictatorship of the market," and calls for "a new Bretton Woods." And then Barber ends, "So the message to Tremonti must be: Giulio, wear those braces if you must, but we can't let the serpent's egg of protectionism grow to full size."