

Italy's crisis and the American potential

by Muriel Mirak

Last week millions of Italians sat aghast in front of their television sets as the 15-year-old daughter of kidnapped Judge Giovanni D'Urso read out delerious mumbo-jumbo contained in a Red Brigades communiqué. The broadcast, which had been organized by the Yippie-style Radical Party, totally undermined the weak-kneed Forlani government and its attempts to take a tough stand against terrorist demands for press and media coverage. Judge D'Urso was released the following day, the Radicals and their Socialist Party (PSI) senior partners predictably cried victory, claiming that their willingness to negotiate with the kidnapers and comply with their demands had saved D'Urso's life.

Immediately after D'Urso's release, many seasoned politicians in Rome began to suspect that the entire kidnapping and tug-of-war response had been staged by the PSI. The underlying question was what effect these developments were to have on the months-long Italian political crisis. Would the D'Urso case so seriously undermine public institutions as to make way for a military takeover? Or would Italian society merely continue its downward slide into anarchy until a prolonged Iran style devolution made NATO intervention inevitable? These questions in turn have become the proper concern of the incoming Reagan administration, as well as of Mr. Reagan's backers in the powerful Italian-American community.

Mussolini without arms

Italy's press has been evaluating the dangers or (depending on the viewpoint) the advantages of a

NATO-backed military coup over the last months. Even the leader of the ruling Christian Democratic party (DC), Flaminio Piccoli, told journalists "someone" was campaigning among military layers in preparation for a classical coup attempt. And the someone in question, all agreed, was Bettino Craxi, general secretary of the small but influential PSI. Craxi had indeed been strengthening his ties with the armed forces through his party colleague Defense Minister Lelio Lagorio and his close associate Chief of Staff General Torrisi. Word had it he had gained considerable political influence over the military wing of the Italian secret services, SISMI, and its head Santovito. Additionally, arms manufacturers in the Brescia steel belt, hurt badly by the Davignon plan for reduced steel production, had been courting Craxi in the hope that his militarization plans would mean new outlets for weapons exports.

But such calculations turned out to be shortsighted. Confidential sources confirmed to *EIR* that rumors of Torrisi's pro-PSI sympathies had been overstated, and that the armed forces as a whole would "hold." The majority of the military officers still look to Giulio Andreotti for leadership, in virtue of his having occupied the defense ministry over the years in many DC governments. And the Carabinieri, the military police essential to a coup scenario, would preserve their republican loyalties without bending to pressures.

The fact is, according to Council on Foreign Relations specialist Stanley Hoffman, that at least one-third of Italy's military, reflecting the electorate as a whole, votes Communist. A coup attempt would therefore split

the military along political lines, leading to outright civil war. For this and related reasons, any coup plot would have to have the approval, if not the active involvement, of NATO's central command in Europe.

Unraveling social fabric

If PSI boss Craxi's military option is premature, he has nonetheless succeeded in pulling apart the threads of the country's institutional life. In the parliamentary debate following Judge D'Urso's release, the government all but acknowledged defeat in face of the Red Brigades onslaught. Prime Minister Forlani, himself a captive of rival DC factions who defer to Craxi, made a clumsy attempt to legitimize the cowardly compromises his coalition had been forced to accept. He claimed that the closing of a high-security prison at Asinara and the transferral of a top jailed terrorist had occurred independently of the Red Brigades' demands for just those measures. As for the press's acquiescence to terrorist demands for coverage of their communiqués, Forlani pleaded the case that "democracy" and "pluralism" required protection of a "free" press.

Craxi and Marco Pannella of the Radical Party answered Forlani's sniveling rationalizations with confidence, declaring their method had won out over the intransigence shown by the Communist Party and part of the DC. The result, as the PCI-controlled daily *Paese Sera* put it, is that Italy now has "two governments": the formal DC-PSI-PSDI-PRI coalition, steered by the "parallel" government of the PSI and Radicals, into acceptance of the Red Brigades as a de facto component of Italian political life.

Other vital social institutions outside the discredited and divided parliament are betraying similar symptoms of structural and moral decay. With the sole exception of the director, all the magistrates at the Central Penal Division in the Justice Ministry signed a call to the nation's journalists asking that they print the Red Brigades' messages. Jail guards and other prison personnel, according to the Milan daily *Il Giornale*, have begun resigning in droves for fear of terrorist attacks against them.

The press itself was hopelessly split, as Radical-Socialist controlled press organs like *Il Messaggero*, *Secolo XIX*, and the PSI daily *Avanti* printed everything the terrorists issued, while all other major papers filled their editorial pages with heart-searching inquiries whether to publish or not. Splits along the same political dividing lines are tearing apart the courts, the trade unions, and the police. Not only the institutions but the very concept of legality and republican constitutionality on which they rest has been ripped to shreds.

What will Reagan do?

Perhaps Italy will not fall under the rule of Argen-

tina-style generals. Perhaps, if the scenario on the lips of most Second International think tanks is played out, Italy will die a slow agonizing death, joining the long list of historical examples of civilizations, once great, that regressed into barbarism and nothingness. Such is the opinion of political scientist Giovanni Sartori in *Corriere della Sera*.

If this is the perception being presented to Ronald Reagan by his foreign policy advisers, he would do well to turn them out of doors at once before they lead him into a deadly foreign policy bind. This is not to underestimate the gravity of Italy's crisis, nor to deny that the devolution process is under way. But there is a way out.

Corriere della Sera recently reminded its readers of the way de Gaulle imposed order in crisis-ridden France with the presidential Fifth Republic. Drawing the parallel with today's Italy, clearly the only statesman up to the task would be the DC's Giulio Andreotti. Provided he won over the state industry and bureaucracy as well as the PCI-controlled labor movement to an economic recovery perspective, he could stabilize the turbulent political and social waters consigning terrorist criminals and their sponsors to justice. Such a policy option has been outlined by Democratic Party economist Lyndon LaRouche in his "heavy lira" proposal for a broad-based tax, currency and credit reform, which the Italian press has been debating on its front pages since an *EIR* seminar publicly presented it over a month ago in Rome.

If the experienced statesman Andreotti is known to look favorably on the LaRouche program, his counterparts in the PCI are rumored to be studying it carefully, comparing it to a similar plan one postwar government tried unsuccessfully to carry out.

The question is Mr. Reagan.

This is the enigma that *Panorama*, a widely read Italian weekly, scrutinized in its last issue in a feature entitled "Reagan's America and Italy." *Panorama* correctly identifies the weight the U.S. has thrown into the balance of Italian politics over the postwar decades, recalling John F. Kennedy's go-ahead to the formation of the first center-left coalition, and Nixon's support for the center-right government of Andreotti in 1972. American Presidents, the record shows, have tended toward support of the largest party, the Catholic DC. But this has changed, the influential weekly continues, particularly as far as Andreotti is concerned. When heading up a government that enjoyed first the passive, then active, support of the PCI from 1976 to 1979, Andreotti was applauded by "some American circles" for having shown himself capable of "taming the PCI"; some hypothesized a U.S. acceptance of full government privileges for the PCI. But, *Panorama* continues, "Suddenly Andreotti's star faded, first with his lukewarm acceptance of the Euromissile decision and then with his

tenacious defense of the PCI in the government." Conclusion? Reagan will definitively kill any hopes of the anti-PCI veto's being overridden and will end up embracing Italy's newest strongman, the PSI's Craxi.

Significantly, *Panorama's* scenario, itself a declaration of political intention on the part of the Socialist and oligarchical banking circles that control its editorial policy, depends on two key factors: Reagan's profiled anticommunism and a leading role for the strongly conservative Italo-American community in the Reagan administration's foreign policy posture. Reagan's choice of ambassador to replace the pro-Socialist Richard Gardner will tell which way the White House winds are blowing.

The danger is that Reagan will respond to a hoked-up "Red threat" in Italy and pursue a politically unsophisticated cold diplomatic war against the PCI and labor movement. If that occurs, he may be induced to abandon the DC and back the unctuous Signor Craxi as the most vicious anti-Communist on the scene. Or he may fall totally into the trap being carefully laid by the Second International and Jesuits to promote a new version of the corrupt center-left coalition, with the Mont Pelerin Society's Fanfani allied to Craxi.

Both scenarios depend on Reagan's being efficiently cornered and harnessed with heavy "anticommunist" blinders. Either scenario would doom Italy. Under the guise of "fighting the Reds," Craxi and/or Fanfani would be carrying to completion the same policy im-

posed by Carter and his man in Rome Gardner. By backing Craxi, Reagan would in effect be ushering in a lawless political formation which has just been handing over the state to the Red Brigades!

With adequate intelligence briefings and timely overtures to the stable politicians in the DC like Andreotti, Mr. Reagan could prove sharper in the international arena than the scenario-spinners think; deft handling of the Andreotti option would earn the White House the powerful support of both Paris and Bonn, on behalf of strengthening Europe economically and politically. It would contribute more to stabilizing the Mediterranean (and by extension the Middle East) than the bogus Rapid Deployment Force. Reagan must, of course, be aware of the particularly warm relations that Mr. Andreotti enjoys with not only the major Arab nations, but, through fancy diplomacy involving the Vatican and the PCI, with the Soviets as well. If Reagan were to play the Andreotti card skillfully, he would be confirming to Moscow that they have a rational and forceful statesman to deal with in the White House.

If on the other hand the new President follows in Carter's reckless footsteps, and acts according to the profile the Eastern Establishment think tanks have drawn up of him (and of the Italo-American community which helped elect him), then a disaster will ensue in Italy. America will lose its precious Mediterranean ally and unleash a destabilization of the European continent that only the Red Brigades could find rewarding.

The embassy question

EIR spoke to three of the contenders for ambassador to Italy last week. Frank Stella, a Republican Party activist and president of the National Italian-American Foundation, believes the U.S. should help develop Italy's Mezzogiorno into "a manufacturing and industrial region comparable to Northern Italy." Mr. Stella believes "nuclear energy is essential to developing Italy's economy." He also thinks countries like West Germany, France, Israel and NATO itself should provide intelligence and anti-terrorist squads to Italy. He strongly opposes negotiating with terrorists.

John Davis Lodge, former Ambassador to Spain and Argentina, describes himself as a "geopolitician" and close friend of Secretary of State Alexander Haig. He thinks "it's safe to assume that the Russians are involved in backing Italian terrorism," doesn't foresee any major foreign investment in reconstructing the earthquake-ravaged area of Italy until terrorism is dealt with, and cites the countries of South America's southern cone as models for dealing with terrorism.

Jeno Paulucci, best known for founding a hugely successful commercial pizza business, is chairman of the National Italian-American Foundation. He says: "The earthquake presents us with a tremendous opportunity for reconstructing the Mezzogiorno. I'm going to call together a meeting of the top ten U.S. multinational companies and tell them about the advantages of investing there." Paulucci agrees with Stella on the questions of nuclear energy and negotiating with terrorists.