

## Transportation by Liliana Gorini

### Visentini bankrupting aerospace?

*By the time the notorious finance minister is through, Italy will have lost the basis for contributing to the SDI.*

**I**nternal revenue agents are generally not very popular in Italy, as they are not in the United States. But this time, Finance Minister Bruno Visentini has really gone too far.

He became infamous in January when, against the will of most parties inside the government except for the Communist Party, he imposed a fiscal package aimed at punishing the "more privileged categories," shopkeepers and other self-employed family businessmen, who then started to go bankrupt en masse. The shopkeepers' association estimates that by the end of the year, 1,200,000 shops will have to shut down because they cannot afford to pay 40% of their income to the tax office.

He became doubly infamous due to his introduction of an unconstitutional clause into his fiscal package, "inductive assessments," which imply that a citizen, whatever his tax-statement says, can be taxed for whatever amount spies employed by the tax office assert to be his real income, and that a taxpayer can go to jail on the basis of the mere *suspicion* that he is a tax-evader.

But now Visentini is taking aim at the nation's aerospace industry. On March 30, the economic daily *Il Sole 24 Ore* reported on a national conference of the aerospace industry in Naples. According to *Il Sole*, the Italian aerospace industry, "an industry which is particularly qualified in production and know-how, especially in the Mez-

zogiorno" region in the south, and employs more than 6,000 workers in Campania alone, is now threatened with bankruptcy because Visentini has "discouraged the expansion of the industry" with heavy and unjust fiscal measures which reduce revenues and prevent any investment.

Spokesmen for many of the aerospace firms present at the Naples conference complained about the heavy tax, which "forces them to buy the most expensive liter of gasoline in the world: 2,000 lire [more than \$1]."

The organizer of the conference, Enzo Impronta of the National Pilots' Association (AOPA), explained to *EIR* that the fiscal attack against the aerospace industry, already forced to shorten work hours, is occurring "indirectly," by means of preventing potential buyers from purchasing airplanes. The internal revenue agents determine the income of an airplane owner according to "how many flight hours" he has during the year, and since the income definition is completely excessive, and "also wrong," according to Impronta, "nobody can afford flying or buying airplanes anymore."

The editor of the magazine *Volare*, Franco Giaculli, added that as a result of the Visentini measures, "we have a terrible situation, with 50,000 flying hours less this year and a lot of firms on short time." The absurdity of the situation, as Giaculli emphasized, is that "these are mainly state indus-

tries. So the state, being the owner, is preventing the purchase of the machines it itself produces."

This apparent incongruence finds its explanation if one considers that Finance Minister Bruno Visentini does not work in the interest of the Italian state, but for the private interests of the Venetian oligarchy, which has wanted to rid itself of the encumbrance of the Italian nation-state for more than a century. As president of the Cini Foundation in Venice and former president of the computer giant Olivetti, Visentini views the economic crisis as only an opportunity to impose a "post-industrial" society controlled by the interests behind Olivetti. He has no intention of seeing Italy's economy flourish again as a result of the industrial revolution implicit in the country's participation in the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative.

In point of fact, many of the aerospace firms now under indirect attack by his office, including Aeritalia, Agusta, and Partenavia, build light airplanes for civilian use, but also military craft and acquisition and tracking systems which would be Italy's contribution to the SDI. If Visentini chooses not to oppose the SDI in open political battle, he does quietly attack the industrial base without which Italy could play no role.

That is why Visentini is hitting aerospace so hard, and one can be sure that rather than correcting the apparent "mistake" in calculating the income of airplane owners, Visentini will only increase the financial pressure on these industries, particularly on those which will be assigned to work on defensive systems key to the strategic defense program.

Visentini may indeed be going too far, for in this, he certifies himself to be not only a threat to Italy's economic well-being, but an immediate national security threat.