

## D'Alema: Who is the new Italian Prime Minister?

Massimo D'Alema comes from a political dynasty. His father was a leader in the Resistance against fascism, a long-standing regional leader, and a member of the national directorate of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Although of Marxist inspiration, the PCI soon abandoned revolutionary strategies in favor of a socialist-reformist approach. The current Italian Constitution is the product of the collaboration of the PCI with the Christian Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, and other, minor members of the anti-fascist coalition that led the Resistance. From his father, who worked many years in the Finance Committee of the Italian Senate, Massimo D'Alema has inherited the idea that politics has to give up ideology when it conflicts with reality.

The younger D'Alema started his political career in the 1970s, when the secretary general of the PCI was Enrico Berlinguer. As leader of the Communist Youth Federation (FGCI), D'Alema had to face a terrorist upsurge in the universities. In 1977, the terrorist movement calling itself the Autonomists took over Italian universities and started shooting moderate leftists who were supporting Berlinguer and Aldo Moro's policy of National Unity, a project for forming a government based on a Communist-Christian Democratic alliance. The Autonomists, and the more famous Red Brigades, accused the PCI of having "betrayed" anti-fascist ideals. D'Alema was successful in marginalizing the Autonomists and preventing sympathy for them from developing inside the FGCI.

After the death of Berlinguer (1984), the PCI underwent a change. After a brief transition under Alessandro Natta, the anti-labor, globalist tendency took over through

new party secretary Achille Occhetto. In 1989, Occhetto took the occasion of dropping the name "Communist" from the party, to complete the shift. The new party was now called Democratic Party of the Left (PDS). While a faction abandoned the PDS and created the Refounded Communist Party (PRC), D'Alema stayed in the PDS as vice-secretary.

When the "Clean Hands" operation, aimed at destroying the constitutional party system, started in 1992, Occhetto saw in it a way to take over the government, and supported it. D'Alema, who represented the internal opposition, had to wait for the failure of Occhetto's strategy. The 1995 elections, in fact, were won by a new conservative party, created at the last minute by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, which filled the vacuum created by the elimination of the moderate parties.

With Occhetto's defeat, D'Alema became secretary general of the PDS. In 1996, he joined the center-left "Olive Tree" alliance, a "third way" solution essentially dictated by the financial markets, which won the general elections. However, D'Alema has never concealed his opposition to the idea of the "third way" and its creator, British Prime Minister Tony Blair. During the most recent Persian Gulf crisis, D'Alema was critical of the fact, for example, that "the only government in the world to support a strike against Iraq is Tony Blair's."

In foreign policy, D'Alema's people in the previous government have generally sought collaboration with the Clinton administration. On the Kosova crisis, they were ready to support a NATO strike without a UN mandate.

Shortly before presenting his new government to Parliament, D'Alema met Pope John Paul II in an official state ceremony. The Pope shook his hand and wished him "good work."

Among the very negative: In the past, D'Alema has supported legalization of "soft" drugs.

budget-balancing, which has amounted to 500 trillion liras in cuts and taxes, had built up a consensus for a policy shift among the nation's elite. From influential industry leaders like Cesare Romiti (formerly with Fiat), to Cardinal Achille Ruini, head of the Italian Catholic Bishops, from labor representatives to even the central bank, a chorus of voices critical of the insane Maastricht parameters and in favor of jobs and investment had become louder and louder. This faction has proposed a jobs-creation policy through infrastructure investment in Italy's impoverished Mezzogiorno—such as, building the bridge across the Messina Strait to connect Sicily to the mainland—in opposition to free-market proponents of job creation through deregulation. The international financial collapse has further motivated the decision by this

faction to get rid of the amateurs and to put politicians back in the driver's seat.

### De Benedetti warns of collapse

A remarkable sign of the panic which has gripped the whole financial community is the way in which Carlo De Benedetti, a known international figure and a pioneer in high-risk derivatives operations, has warned against an inevitable financial collapse, in a commentary in the Italian economic daily *Il Sole-24 Ore*, on Oct. 23. The financial storms of the last months, De Benedetti wrote, are "the prelude to a most serious global crisis." He added, "The most worrying thing . . . is the total lack of leadership which emerged at the last G-7 meeting in Washington. The 'lords' of world