

Jury acquits Andreotti, in a victory for the Italian nation

by Claudio Celani

On Sept. 24, a few people at the U.S. Department of Justice must have been chewing the rug. A popular jury in the central Italian city of Perugia issued a verdict in a highly political trial: Giulio Andreotti, seven times Italian Prime Minister, was acquitted on the charge of having ordered, in 1979, the murder of journalist Mino Pecorelli. The murder of Pecorelli is one of the many “mysteries” of Italian postwar politics.

Indeed, Pecorelli was a journalist with many connections to intelligence and Freemasonic circles, who is believed to have known the truth behind other “mysteries,” like for instance, the kidnapping and assassination of Aldo Moro, in 1978. Pecorelli used his knowledge to blackmail, probably under orders from a higher puppetmaster, many public figures. Andreotti, Prime Minister at the time of both the Moro and the Pecorelli murders, had been accused of having ordered Pecorelli’s murder to put an end to one such blackmail attempt. The point is, that the allegation stood on very weak feet, namely a string of witnesses all belonging to organized crime. The star witness was Tommaso Buscetta, a U.S. mafioso currently under the DOJ-FBI witness protection program.

The Perugia verdict liquidated, in three minutes, years of effort by a faction in the DOJ permanent bureaucracy, the real controller of Buscetta. The implications, for Italian and U.S. politics, are of fundamental importance. Giulio Andreotti, in fact, has become a symbol for the central role played in postwar Italian politics by the Christian Democratic party (DC), of which, at the moment of his legal prosecution, he was the most prominent leader. The DC ran Italian governments, alone or in coalition, from 1946 to 1994, until its dissolution. The Party has also been a trustworthy U.S. ally in a country which, during the Cold War, was considered a front-line state, both for geographic and political reasons, the latter being the existence of the strongest Communist Party in the West, the PCI, which during the 1970s garnered up to 33% of the popular vote.

The Andreotti trials (besides the one Perugia, Andreotti has been on trial in Palermo for his alleged Mafia association) have split the country right down the middle, between those who believe he was the mastermind of all atrocities, and those who believe that he is a martyr of political persecution. This has created a paradoxical situation, in which a constitutional body (the State Prosecution) demanded a life sentence against him, while another constitutional body (the Parliament) gave him, as in the case of his last foreign policy

speech, a standing ovation.

Sure, Giulio Andreotti, as a seven-time Prime Minister of Italy (his career started in 1946 as personal secretary to DC founder Alcide De Gasperi), several times Defense Minister and Foreign Minister, has many sins to confess, starting with the compromises he made with the International Monetary Fund which have devastated the national productive system. But a comprehensive judgment on both Andreotti and the DC must take into account the fact that Italy has been victim of a “limited sovereignty” system as part of the postwar NATO deals, and that political responsibility for that system (and its consequences, including the use of terrorism and the Mafia) lies more in Washington and London than in Rome. Such an historical judgment cannot be replaced by a court sentence, which avoids the central issue. Seen at a higher level, the Andreotti trials, more than helping the country, have been the expression of an effort to establish a “final solution” to the issue of national sovereignty.

A legal milestone

From a legal standpoint the Perugia verdict is a milestone, because it establishes the absolute value of a fair trial against pressure by so-called “popular opinion.” The case against Andreotti, in fact, would normally have been dismissed in the first place for lack of consistent evidence. Prosecutors presented a case built on statements by organized crime figures, the leading one of them being “star” witness Tommaso Buscetta, a U.S. citizen and a “former” leader of the American branch of Cosa Nostra. Moreover, Buscetta’s statements are “hearsay”; that is, he has reported what others told him. In a normal situation, a judge would have demanded from the Prosecutor that he should do more homework or throw the case in the garbage can. But Italy, especially since 1992, has been dominated in its public life by the whims of a “public opinion” excited by media, which have been skillfully manipulated to force through a process of “deconstruction” of its institutions. Now, the Perugia verdict offers the opportunity for changing things.

The Perugia case against Andreotti was created on the back of another, more spectacular case in Palermo, where the former Italian premier was indicted in March 1993 on the allegation of being the political head of the bloody Sicilian Mafia. The Palermo trial, which is still open (the verdict is expected in the coming weeks), is also built on statements



Former Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti. The trials against him have split the country down the middle—and his acquittal is a defeat not only for his domestic enemies, but for the U.S. Justice Department’s corrupt “permanent bureaucracy.”

by the same witnesses as in the Perugia trial. It is therefore expected that the Perugia verdict will have a definite impact on the Palermo outcome.

To fully appreciate the strategic implications of the Andreotti case, this must be situated in a broader context.

1992: assault against the nation-state

On June 2, 1992, the crème de la crème of the City of London financial oligarchy met on board the royal yacht *Britannia*, off the coast of Civitavecchia, Italy, to discuss with a selection of Italian private and state managers the future big looting, through privatizations, of Italy’s state-owned banks and industries and the complete liberalization of the Italian economy. Speakers at that event, like government official Mario Draghi, stressed that in order to reach that goal, a “fundamental transformation of Italy’s political system” was needed.

In reality, that transformation had already started. In February, an obscure Prosecutor in Milan, Antonio Di Pietro (whose intelligence connections have never been clarified), received a green light to start an investigation called “Clean Hands,” which in a few months would provoke the dissolution of entire political parties. Di Pietro’s main targets would be the Socialist Party (PSI) and the Christian Democracy (DC). This process was helped by a series of other shocks, such as the speculative assault against the Italian lira led by George

Soros in the summer of 1992, an assault that forced almost a 30% devaluation of the Italian currency and its exclusion from the European Exchange Mechanism.

In the meantime, a “Mafia” offensive was activated. On March 10, the Sicilian Christian Democratic leader Salvatore Lima was assassinated by the Mafia. Then, on May 27, the leading anti-Mafia prosecutor, Giovanni Falcone, was blown up in his car on the highway to Palermo. And fifty-six days later, these attacks were followed by the murder of the number-two anti-Mafia prosecutor and close collaborator of Falcone, Paolo Borsellino. In between, a general election in April had seen a severe loss of votes for the DC and the rise of the separatist Lega Nord, which became the largest party in several Northern Italian regions. The electoral result, however, still allowed the formation of a government based on the same five-party coalition centered around the DC and the PSI.

In autumn that year, after the shock of the monetary crisis, the situation was ripe to launch the final assault against the political system, and in particular against the DC and the PSI. The main job was done by the “Clean Hands” investigation led by Di Pietro in Milan. But, whereas a series of corruption charges, amplified by a “trial by media” process, could discredit and completely destroy the PSI, the DC still rallied around Andreotti, against whom it was virtually impossible to find evidence of bribing. So, something else was needed: the Mafia allegations.

In December 1992, the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that the Palermo anti-Mafia investigators (led, after Falcone and Borsellino’s deaths, by an outsider and a non-Sicilian, Giancarlo Caselli), would soon issue a warrant against Andreotti. This occurred a few days later. In March 1993, the warrant became an indictment for no specific crime, but for the general allegation that Andreotti has been for many years the “political referent” (i.e., the protector) of the Sicilian Mafia. At that point, the job was done. Andreotti was isolated. The once powerful DC, with all its leaders eliminated by Clean Hands and now the most prominent of all nailed by Mafia charges, soon split in two, then in three and four small parties. Since then, until the formation of the D’Alema government at the end of 1998, Italian governments have been run by technocrats who implemented all the measures discussed at the *Britannia* meeting.

The main evidence for the Palermo trial against Andreotti comes, again, from Buscetta. Buscetta reported to Prosecutor Caselli and his collaborators that he was told by Sicilian Mafia leaders that Andreotti was the person in Rome who would make sure that trials against Mafia bosses were “adjusted.” When, in 1991, Andreotti “betrayed” the alleged arrangement and one such trial was not adjusted, in revenge, the Mafia killed Andreotti’s lieutenant in Sicily, Salvo Lima.

Buscetta’s statements were corroborated by one, two, many more witnesses, who all have one thing in common: they are all members of the Mafia. Starting in 1993, suddenly tens, hundreds of Mafia members did something which goes

against the nature itself of the Mafia; they started to speak and to “collaborate” with the Justice Ministry. They became the *pentiti* (ones who repented), and enjoyed witness protection. Such a process, amplified by the media, has had a big impact on public opinion, but has little chance in a fair trial, where, as the Perugia trial shows, to indict somebody for severe criminal offense, independent corroborating evidence must be found. No such evidence was found, for instance, for precise circumstances indicated by the *pentiti*, such as meetings in Sicily in which Andreotti was alleged to have participated, etc.

Nevertheless, at the Palermo trial, the prosecution asked for a life sentence for Andreotti.

‘Cosa Nostra’ of the nineties

The Sicilian Mafia has historically been the private army of the landed aristocracy, which has run Sicily in a feudal system since Frederick II until the birth of the Italian nation in 1860. The modern Mafia was brought back in Sicily during World War II by a pro-British faction in the U.S. Armed Forces, centered around the Office of Naval Intelligence. After the war, the Mafia was imposed on the central political power in Rome, as an “ally” against the Communist Party, in a typical unwritten deal, of the same type as the one in which the secret “Stay Behind” structure called “Gladio” was used for ulterior purposes. There is broad evidence that the Mafia

has been used to provide left-wing and right-wing terrorist groups with the necessary expertise and even material backing to carry out political assassinations in the course of the “strategy of tension” started in 1969. During the whole post-war period, the Italian state has had to accept the presence of the Mafia as part of the original Anglo-American deal.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and especially with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, things changed. On one side, NATO did not need the Christian Democracy any more as an internal stonewall against Communism; on the other side, the Sicilian Mafia was reorganized. New leaders came in, new businesses and new markets were opened through eastern Europe. Today, the Sicilian Mafia is an international partner with the Russian Mafia in drug and weapons smuggling. They run, together with the Apulian and the Calabrian Mafia, entire countries like Albania and Montenegro (and now Kosovo), from where smuggling of drugs, cigarettes, and prostitution flows into Italy and western Europe.

The reorganization of the Mafia led to the elimination of old, “expendable” factions, like the one run by Totò Riina, now in jail under the accusation of having ordered the assassination of Falcone and Borsellino. Mafia watchers indicate that in reality, the actual head of the Sicilian Mafia, Bernardo Provenzano, is not even sought by the police.

Such a new scenario was part of the Thatcher-Bush deals to carve up the former Soviet Union. This is the context in which the U.S.-originated Buscetta revelations, brought to the Andreotti trials, must be placed. It is significant that Buscetta spoke only after Falcone and Borsellino were eliminated. They would not have fallen into the trap easily.

It is also significant that Richard Martin, the former U.S. Attorney who has had Buscetta in custody, has connections to Anglo-Italian intelligence circles, through the New York office of the Carnelutti legal firm, of which he is currently a member. The Carnelutti legal firm is the oldest and largest Italian legal firm with a base in London. It was founded by Tito Carnelutti, a close adviser to Fascist Justice Minister Dino Grandi. Carnelutti and Grandi belonged to the pro-monarchic, pro-British faction of Italian Fascism. It was Dino Grandi, under instructions from the King, who led the overthrow of Mussolini in July 1943. After the war, Carnelutti was a collaborator of Antonio Segni, a DC politician and a land-owner from Sardinia, who himself had been close to Grandi at Padua University in the 1930s. Segni was the leader of the most reactionary wing of the DC, and is known for having plotted a military coup d’état in 1963. Segni’s political heritage, after his death, has been taken up by Francesco Cossiga.

Most interestingly, the same Antonio Di Pietro who launched the Clean Hands operation in 1992, is himself connected to the Carnelutti firm through his father-in-law. Today, Di Pietro has become a populist leader, founder of the “Democratic Party” together with technocrat and European Union commissioner Romano Prodi. Di Pietro does not hide his ambitions to become Prime Minister.

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And now?

Andreotti certainly knows what the international background of his legal persecution is. Whether he understands the whole strategic implications of it, and if he wants to fight at the highest level, is not clear. At the beginning, in some interviews, he showed some hints, in stating that his indictment was the product of a plot by the international drug mafia. Afterwards, he made contact with the enemy, in the person of members of the Bush administration, and even Henry Kissinger. Did he do that because he wanted to understand what was happening, or because he wanted to make a deal? This is not clear. Also, it is not clear if Andreotti understood the most important political mistakes he made in the past, which tied him to the wrong policies and the wrong people. For instance, before it became inevitable, Andreotti opposed the reunification of Germany, and his conduct at the negotiations for the Maastricht agreement shows that he backed the Anglo-French geopolitical game for the containment of Germany. He signed the Maastricht treaty, which included IMF-like radical guidelines for the budget policy of member countries. His responsibility in this cannot be underplayed. Had he fought for a different policy, he would have gained bipartisan support in Italy, a circumstance which would have made his legal persecution much more difficult.

To his credit, one must say that, even when he was on trial, Andreotti kept doing political work, especially in foreign policy. With a trip to Israel, Palestine, Syria, and Iran in 1997, he laid the basis for the development of relationships between Tehran and Italy that has broken Tehran's international isolation and opened the doors for cooperation with all EU countries. In the last years, Andreotti has enjoyed extraordinary public support from the Vatican. Last May, the day after the Palermo Prosecution had asked for a life sentence for Andreotti, the Pope demonstratively shook hands with him—and only with him—in a public meeting with international authorities that was broadcast worldwide. At the news of the Perugia verdict, Vatican spokesman Navarro expressed “satisfaction” for the long “expected news.”

The Vatican support to Andreotti reflects a convergence between John Paul II's international diplomacy and Andreotti's foreign policy actions. Andreotti has always been a reliable ally of the Vatican, but especially in the last years, he has intervened more strenuously than ever. For instance, during the NATO war against Serbia, Andreotti went so far as to call for a Parliament vote against the new NATO doctrine. NATO was built as a defensive alliance against the Warsaw Pact, and now it has no formal reason to exist any longer, he said. Now, after the Perugia acquittal, and especially if he is acquitted in Palermo as well, Andreotti has the chance to insist on such issues with renewed credibility. At 80, he can still play an important role: Will he use the last years of his life to prevent Italy from becoming a province of the global British Empire? Andreotti, a devout Christian, must know that this is the only way in which his soul can gain real eternity.

U.S. Postal Service
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT
AND CIRCULATION
Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685

1. *Publication Title:* EIR
2. *Publication No.:* 0273-6314
3. *Filing Date:* September 28, 1999
4. *Issue Frequency:* Weekly except for the second week of July and the last week of December
5. *No. of Issues Published Annually:* 50
6. *Annual Subscription Price:* \$396
7. *Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication:* EIR News Service, Inc., 317 Pennsylvania Ave, SE, 2nd Fl, Washington, D.C. 20003-1148
Contact Person: Stanley Ezrol; *Telephone:* 703-777-9451, x362
8. *Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of Publisher:* EIR News Service, Inc., POB 17390, Washington, DC 20041-0390
9. *Full Names and Complete Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor*
Publisher: EIR News Service, Inc.; POB 17390; Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
Editor: Susan S. Welsh, POB 17390, Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
Managing Editor: Ronald S. Kokinda, John W. Sigerson; POB 17390, Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
10. *Owner:* EIR News Service, Inc., POB 17390, Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
Marjorie Hecht, POB 17390, Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
Nancy B. Spannaus, POB 17390, Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
Webster G. Tarpley, POB 17390, Washington, D.C. 20041-0390
11. *Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities:* None.
12. *Tax Status:* For Completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates: Not Applicable.
13. *Publication Title:* EIR
14. *Issue Date for Circulation Data Below:* 9/10/99
15. *Extent and Nature of Circulation*

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies	17,224	16,900
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation		
(1) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors and Counter Sales	4,116	2,875
(2) Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions	7,231	7,875
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	1,691	1,680
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation	13,038	12,430
d. Free Distribution by Mail	38	40
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail	3,140	2,510
f. Total Free Distribution	3,178	2,550
g. Total Distribution	16,216	14,980
h. Copies Not Distributed		
(1) Office Use, Leftovers, Spoiled	1,008	1,920
(2) Return From News Agents	—	—
i. Total	17,224	16,900
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	80	83

16. Publication of Statement of Ownership. Publication required. Will be printed in the Oct. 8 issue of this publication.
 17. *Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner:*
Susan S. Welsh, Editor 9/28/99
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