

"Spanish Civil War" Scenario Plotted to Pull a Fascist Coup in Italy

NATO Capability

The candid appraisals of Brandt and Osgood merely confirm what became obvious to informed political analysts one week ago: that the international Atlanticist faction had made the final decision to move ahead with plans for a NATO coup in Italy to take place within May and no later than June — before the expected early parliamentary elections.

Three coordinated sets of NATO maneuvers are either taking place at this time or will be operational during the month of May. NATO naval maneuvers are going on now in the Mediterranean, run out of Naples under the command of Italian Admiral Tomosouli. They will continue throughout May. Beginning on May 4, land maneuvers code-named Dashing Impact will begin along the Yugoslav border in the crucial Brenner-Trieste area, with U.S. German, Italian and British participation. The elite British counterinsurgent unit which coordinated operations in Northern Ireland, the SAS, was flown into Italy last month to participate in the Italian deployment.

A third NATO maneuver code-named Dawn Patrol is scheduled to begin at approximately the same time, involving a land invasion into the island of Sardinia. Combined, these three NATO "exercises" represent the classical troop deployment required for a successful coup in the Italian peninsula.

As is well known, with the partial exception of the Italian navy, the entire span of Italy's defense apparatus has been groomed by NATO for the exclusive eventuality of deployment against the domestic population for counterinsurgency. Italy's army, air force, military police, and so forth are notoriously useless for fighting foreign wars.

To trigger the climate of "civil war" required as the pretext for general deployment of these NATO troops to enforce a fascist takeover of the state, Italy's innumerable terrorist gangs have been unleashed in full force at the beginning of this month. These gangs — both the outright blackshirt version and the so-called "red" terrorists — were initially created by NATO and have been deployed by NATO over the years as a key counterinsurgent capability. According to the anti-Atlanticist weekly Tempo, Sardinia is the major training ground for fresh terrorist forces.

The terrorist gang responsible for numerous acts of arson and similar violence, Autonomia Operaia ("Worker Autonomy"), announced on April 27 that they would be out in force on May 1 for the giant May Day celebrations, for the express purpose of transforming the worker demonstrations into part of the "revolutionary process for proletarian power" and the "conquest of communist freedom." The official fascist party, the MSI-DN (Italian Social Movement-National Right) also announced that it would hold a provocative assembly in Milan at the same time to commemorate the death of a fascist student last year. Blackshirts from all over Italy flocked to Milan, the country's largest industrial metropolis and major center of both working-class rage and left counterinsurgent activity. The

MSI's ceremony was keyed to provoke bloody confrontations with the "leftist" hoodlum gangs and spark chaos among the enraged workers.

The programmed violence in Milan was also to be used to transform the city into a replica of the police-state conditions in Argentina just prior to the recent military coup. Interior Minister Francesco Cossiga, who is from Sardinia and happens to be the cousin of the Atlanticist chief of the Italian Communist Party Enrico Berlinguer, revealed that the Milan police force and the carabinieri (military police) would be heavily reinforced and put on emergency alert to "discourage" the expected clashes.

An identical scenario was prepared for Rome and other leading cities. By the last days of April, the carabinieri began conducting search and seal operations in the homes of trade union delegates from the giant FIAT complex in Turin, where the most militant sector of the Italian working class is located.

By April 29, 20,000 additional police were deployed into the area of Milan and police helicopters circling all entrances and exits to the city. A fascist provincial councilman was killed; the next day in Rome, a Maoist stabbed in street fights with fascist youth, died in a hospital. As Maoists and fascists slaughtered each other on the streets, the trade unions met with industrialists under the sponsorship of the Interior Ministry to plan the coordination of vigilante squads in all the major plants in collaboration with the cops and management.

The May Day celebrations, which were supposed to develop into major confrontations between workers and the NATO-deployed fascists, fizzled in a number of key cities. Only in Rome did the situation develop according to the plans. Maoist-insitgated riots flared, culminating in a tear gas attack by the police, 40 arrests and some injuries on both sides.

The End of the First Republic

After an extended, virulent destabilization campaign the Italian government finally collapsed on Friday when Premier Aldo Moro issued his resignation, followed on Saturday with the dismissal of Parliament and announcement of early general elections for June by President Leone. Now Italy is without a government and without a parliament, in a state of utter political chaos slated to last until the June elections with at best a weak caretaker government to be put in interim charge by chief of state Leone — provided he stays in office himself.

The situation is much graver than the fall of the government — nearly the 40th such collapse since World War II — would imply. Having reduced the country to complete financial and political bankruptcy, the Atlanticists are now operating to destroy the Italian Republic itself, by staging a constitutional crisis and wrecking the core of political bureaucratic stability.

The Lower Manhattan-engineered scenario has centered in general on incessant scandals against Italy's majority party,

the Christian Democracy (DC), and in particular on a campaign against the Italian President Giovanni Leone. The scandals, together with a financial depression that has squeezed the political kickbacks once forthcoming from U.S. sources to Italian bourgeois politicians dry, have crumbled the internal organic structure of the DC. Since the war, the Christian Democracy has been the mainstay of Italy's government and civil service.

Now, with the attack on the President of the Republic himself, the scandals have led to a full-scale constitutional crisis, cheered on by a chorus in the Italian press vaunting "the end of the First Republic."

Using accusations channeled through the Select Committee on Intelligence of the U.S. Senate (the "Church Committee"), Leone is being accused of corruption while in office. The charge is that an Italian premier, in office between 1968 and 1970, accepted kickbacks from the Lockheed corporation in exchange for Italian government contracts to Lockheed.

As the Turin paper *Stampa Sera* brazenly posed the matter on April 26, Wall Street was offering Italian politicians the "choice" of dissolving parliament for early elections, or having Leone resign. Now that Moro has bowed out, warning of the dangers of a fascist coup d'etat, the pressure on President Leone continues. *Stampa Sera*, which is owned by Wall Street-allied industrialist Agnelli, concluded its April 26 lead coverage of the "ungovernable" Italian political situation with the comment that "from a similar confrontation was born the fascist dictatorship of Chile." A second article discussed the terrorist escalation from the standpoint of provoking a deliberate civil war climate. Meanwhile, the Milan paper *Corriere della Sera*, also allied to Agnelli, called editorially for a "strong man" as the only solution for the country's political chaos.

Fuehrer Agnelli

There is no need to look far for the identity of the "strong man" evoked by *Corriere della Sera*. The French daily *Le Figaro* reported this week that Italy's top Atlanticists, Gianni Agnelli of FIAT, is planning to replace President Leone as

the head of a new coalition party composed of a fusion of small secular parties, all of which have enjoyed heavy American backing since World War II. (Republicans, Liberals, and Social Democrats) Agnelli himself summed up his position in an interview on April 27 with his own newspaper, *La Repubblica*. "We can rule either by consensus or brutality of force" — and, he added consensus has become impossible.

The PCI Question

The issue of staging a NATO coup in Italy has been under intense discussion over the recent period, and has featured as the main agenda item in a number of specially convened international Atlanticist policy sessions during April. The question debated at these meetings was whether the Italian Communist Party (PCI) could be relied upon to enforce Fourth World austerity levels in Italy by legal means. Both at the Rome International Affairs event and at similar meetings at Columbia and Georgetown universities in the U.S., the conclusion was the the PCI's base would make the party leaders ineffective as an Atlanticist tool under such circumstances.

At the Rome meeting, the decision for a coup had effectively already been taken. Agnelli flunkey Piero Bassette did not mince words: "If our Atlantic partners reject the decisions reached by Italian internal processes, that could lead to Chile. Italy could take the road of several models: Vietnam, Chile, Portugal . . . a violent clash may be inevitable."

According to the French press, the decision to give Italy the Latin American treatment — and the Spanish Civil War scenario — has thrown the Italian Communist Party leaders into a raging debate at the highest levels. European Labor Party field reports confirm that the coup threat has, over the past days, dramatically reversed the behavior of the PCI apparat. In Milan, PCI security and union squads who cordoned off thousands of Maoists and fascists from the small May Day demonstration, freely permitted Labor Party organizers to distribute 5,000 copies of a leaflet warning of the immediate danger of a coup.

Exclusive IPS Translation

Italian Paper Confirms: Brandt Threatens NATO Coup in Italy

May 1 (IPS) — The following is a full translation of an article appearing in the April 29 Italian daily *Corriere della Sera* by its Bonn correspondent, Vittorio Brunelli:

Interview to a German Newspaper

Brandt Like Schmidt:
No to "Eurocommunism"

The ex-Chancellor forsees a "new and harsher" American opposition to the entrance of the PCI into the Italian government.

Bonn — The circle has been closed. After his timid opening to the Western communist parties, Willy Brandt (Social Democratic Party Chairman) turned around and aligned himself with the positions of (Secretary of State) Henry Kissinger and (West German) Chancellor (Helmut) Schmidt. Perhaps he could not behave differently: even in the Federal

Republic (of Germany) the problems of internal politics and the reflections on the governmental action of the commitments agreed upon by the Chancellor with the American State Department have priority in regard to the general political question. Besides, Brandt had to end up bending in front of Schmidt, who, right after the defeat of the Social Democrats at the Baden-Wurtemberg elections, had been exhorted to straighten accounts with the party's chief, whom the Christian Democratic opposition suspected of having frontist (pro-popular front) with Communists tendencies.

Therefore, there was no surprise. Brandt expressed himself in an interview to the *Westfälische Rundschau* a West German newspaper dedicated mainly to the Portuguese elections. After rejecting the suspicions of his domestic adversaries as absurd, he answered the question of whether he also agreed with the Americans in criticizing the projected participation of Communists in certain European governments as follows: "Certainly. Even the Chancellor Schmidt