

Report from Italy by Umberto Pascali

Andreotti being thrown to the wolves

In the fight—which may be to the finish—between the Christian Democrats and the Mafia-connected Communist Party.

It may be the end of the line for Foreign Minister Giulio Andreotti, in the opinion of the great majority of political observers here in Rome. A very intense political fight has erupted in Italy in recent weeks, a fight ignited by the Oct. 4 vote in Parliament, in which 101 members—including some 70 members of the majority party—voted for Andreotti to resign. With only 199 members voting for Andreotti, only the abstention of the 150 Communist Party of Italy (PCI) members saved his career.

Now Andreotti is the target of renewed blows from the East. The PCI reversed itself immediately after the Oct. 4 vote, and requested his resignation—putting this proclaimed “mediator between East and West” in a very delicate position.

The PCI, having carried on a long flirtation with Andreotti, has suddenly discovered that he has been involved in every government scandal since the founding of the Italian Republic. “The moment has arrived to cut all contact with Andreotti,” PCI secretary Alessandro Natta stated to the PCI Directorate on Oct. 10. The document approved by that body reads: “The position of the Honorable Andreotti has become unsustainable. He is the center of involvements that make impossible his holding the office of foreign minister.” On Oct. 15, the PCI, together with minor leftist groups, made a formal parliamentary motion asking for Andreotti’s resignation.

The reason for this drastic shift? The Communists are not just attacking Andreotti. What they (and Moscow) want now is to destabilize the Italian

system, fostering a wave of scandals to create a situation comparable to the Watergate operation in the United States.

The PCI’s target is the Christian Democracy (DC), the party of Andreotti. The foreign minister was clever enough to link his destiny to that of his party, and the DC leadership accepted the axiom that “an attack on Andreotti is an attack on us.” On Oct. 16, leading editor Alfredo Pieroni wrote: “There are many fanning the flames. A similar atmosphere spread in London in June 1963 over the Profumo scandal. . . . That scandal culminated in the collapse of MacMillian [and the Conservative Party]. The end of this scandal may be the disintegration of our republic.”

Andreotti has been deemed expendable by the Soviets and the PCI. On Oct. 12, he was the target of an apparent assassination attempt in Trieste, later revealed to have been made with a toy pistol. Gerardo Deganutti, the criminal who made the attempt, was released from jail a few months ago. “I wanted to scare him,” Deganutti said after his arrest.

Giovanni Galloni, editor of the DC newspaper, wrote that the PCI is using “every means to get a political confrontation.” The Trieste attempt, Galloni said, could never have occurred without the violent atmosphere created by the PCI. The Communist leadership reacted by asserting that it is time for a change of leadership. “Let’s be brutal,” their paper *l’Unita* wrote on Oct. 14. “The government is in agony; it is a non-government. It is the end of the DC power system.”

“The PCI speaks the language of the Red Brigades,” countered Guido Bodrato, vice-secretary of the DC.

Things came to a head Oct. 14, when DC President Flaminio Piccoli declared: “The PCI is attacking in order to impose National Communism on the nation.” And party leader Roberto Mazzotta said: “There is a part of the establishment that intends to use the PCI like their fathers used the Fascist Party—to get rid of the Christian Democracy.”

Guido Bodrato underlined that the aim of these forces is the subversion of the democratic regime and the establishment of a “Second Republic” based on a “government of the technicians,” the exact term used by supermonetarist Bruno Visentini in his call for an austerity regime run by the technocrats.

There is little doubt that Italy will have early elections next spring, in which the PCI, confident of a large majority, could destroy the Christian Democracy. What is new is the unusual determination of the DC to fight, perhaps due to the realization that this could be its last stand. Scandals, kept covert to hold the opposition in check, will be exposed in an all-out battle. The DC Mayor of Palermo, Nello Martellucci, accused by *l’Unita* editor Emanuele Macaluso of being a *mafioso*, hit back. In a letter published in all the non-PCI press, Martellucci wrote: “Macaluso should know what it means to be accused of being a mafioso. On April 27, 1982, Senator Pisano wrote in the magazine *il Candido*: ‘Macaluso is an ambiguous character, linked to the Mafia. He is a dangerous individual, whose very close links with mafia gangs are known, the unchallenged boss of the Sicilian Communists, involved in every Mafia crime bloodying Palermo.’” This was the first exposure in print of Macaluso’s well-known Mafia connections.