

Italy-Spain arrests hit narco-terrorism

by Leonardo Servadio

In a coordinated sweep between Italy and Spain, during the second half of April a dozen persons were arrested in the Italian cities of Ivrea, Turin, Rome, and the Spanish city of Barcelona, accused of ties to the Red Brigades and the assassination of Gen. Licio Giorgeri. Giorgeri was killed in Italy in March for his role in coordinating Italy's role in the Strategic Defense Initiative.

Barcelona is emerging as the operational center of the Italian Red Brigades. The most recent "strategic resolution" distributed by the Red Brigades in Italy, which called for attacks on NATO and especially the SDI, was printed there.

Moreover, some of those arrested, namely Clara Piacenti and the American Ellen Codd, kept in contact with the French terrorist group Direct Action in Barcelona. From some of the documents found on another arrested suspect, Laura Trevisin, who shuttled between Italy and Barcelona, it appears that the activities of the Red Brigades, Direct Action, ETA, and other terrorists are coordinated through Barcelona.

Little is known about the operations being planned by the suspects, but one thing stands out: All of them are connected to drug trade or drug consumption, and the press has started to recognize something that *EIR* has been saying for over 10 years, that drugs and terrorism are one and the same problem, that likely the primary source of money for the terrorists is drugs.

The persons arrested are described as the "new Red Brigades," but some of them do have a history: Giuliana Zucaro, arrested in Turin, and Riccardo D'Este, arrested in Barcelona, were militants of "comontist" and "situationist" groups already in the early 1970s; D'Este seems to have already been under investigation at the time of the Aldo Moro kidnap-murder. In other words, more than a new phenomenon, this is the continuation of the old Red Brigades, or at least a product of the same groups which were the breeding ground for the Red Brigades of the 1970s. The "situationists" were known for theorizing on the marriage between terrorist activities and common criminality, and therefore the drug trade.

Since 1982 at least, as a result of the blows struck against the mafia by various judges operating in Sicily, Barcelona has become the "new Marseille," the preferred port for what

was once called the "French connection" of the mafia and drug trade, for introducing drugs from the Mediterranean into Europe.

Coincidentally, 1982 is the year when the Spanish socialist party, the PSOE, took power in Spain. The gangster Antonio Bardellino, wanted in Italy, was arrested in Barcelona in 1984. The activities of the now "repented" mobster Gaetano Badalamenti were centered in the Barcelona area, when he was arrested.

Bardellino was able to flee, thanks to the complicity of a judge who released him few months after the arrest. The issuance of a new warrant yielded no results since Bardellino quickly disappeared. This episode underlines a certain institutional support for such illegal activities.

In Barcelona, much has been said and written in the press about the Pianelli-Traversa firm, an industry based in Turin with plants in Barcelona. Some have alleged that the firm might have functioned to cover drug traffic and the transfer of money from it. According to the same sources, the firm may also have been a conduit for funds from some groups in the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) to others in the PSOE.

The Moscow angle

The narco-terrorist connection, otherwise well documented to be an asset of the Soviet intelligence services, has become an urgent matter for investigation in Spain. Terrorism in Spain was until recently monopolized by ETA, which operated nearly exclusively in the Basque region and in Madrid. It has spread to other cities, such as Barcelona and Saragossa, where it has claimed several victims this year. In addition, a new form of "mass terrorism" in the style of the German Greenies is emerging: During the many-weeks-long trade union strikes in the city of Reinosa—organized by the trade union Comisiones Obreras (CO), which has a Communist leadership but many Franquist cadres—some groups which were obviously militarily trained attacked the police with rudimentary weapons, like deadly slingshots with metal balls. Two persons have died and several were injured in the resulting clashes.

In the Basque village of Portugalete, on April 25, some militants of the separatist party Herri Batasuna, known as the political front for ETA, burned down the "Casa del pueblo," the PSOE's cultural offices, with Molotov cocktails. The arson caused the death of one PSOE member and seriously injured several others. The PSOE in the Basque region accused Herri Batasuna of being "Nazi" and asked that the party be outlawed.

As in the case of the assassination of General Giorgeri in Italy, which was aimed at undermining Italian participation in the SDI, the Spanish terrorism has a strategic purpose. It aims at pushing this country, which is currently negotiating over whether several strategically important U.S. bases remain on its territory, to close the American bases and pave the way for a split in the Atlantic Alliance.