

# International Intelligence

---

## ***Stiff sentences for De Benedetti and friends***

Carlo De Benedetti, the chairman of Olivetti Corp., and several leaders of Italy's "Propaganda 2" freemasonic lodge got stiff prison sentences from an Italian judge in April, following their conviction for fraud in the 1982 collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano. De Benedetti, the former Ambrosiano vice chairman, received a sentence of six years and four months, two months more than the prosecutor had asked for. P-2 head Licio Gelli received an 18-year-plus sentence, while P-2 financier Umberto Ortolani received a 19-year sentence. All 33 accused were found guilty by the presiding Milan judge.

Former Banco Ambrosiano chairman Roberto Calvi was not found guilty, because he had already been found hanged on Blackfriars Bridge in London in 1982.

A well-placed Italian observer in London on April 16 suggested that the sentencing may be linked to the current fierce internal political warfare in Italy. "Perhaps the verdict against De Benedetti at this time is not accidental," he said. "He was the major financial backer of [Giorgio] La Malfa's Republican Party."

---

## ***South African President welcomed in Nigeria***

South African President F.W. de Klerk received a warm welcome and a 21-gun salute when he arrived in Nigeria the week of April 20, a visit which South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha described as the high point of his career: "I am amazed. . . . The two giants of Africa have met and married," said Botha, according to Reuters.

Nigerian President Babangida, who is also chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), hailed De Klerk as "at last, someone in South Africa with whom we can do business." In a banquet speech, Babangida said Africa was on the brink of being marginalized in world affairs, but "happily, with a new South Africa, we can start to build, to heal wounds, and to bring to realization the Africa of our dreams." Babangida proposed that the two countries "join our resources

. . . to help bring about a new resurgence in our continent, working in concert with all African countries, for the first time in an all-embracing continental cooperation."

Foreign Minister Botha told reporters that the Nigerians agreed with South Africa's vision of four regional powers—South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Egypt—cooperating to haul Africa out of economic stagnation.

As *EIR* pointed out in an analysis of the South African plan in our July 26, 1991 issue, the key issue in whether such a regional development perspective can succeed, is whether South Africa is prepared to break with the looting policies of the International Monetary Fund, which have wrecked the economies of its poorer neighbors.

---

## ***Pamyat prepares paramilitary units***

The ultra-chauvinist Russian group Pamyat is preparing paramilitary units to "defend" believers who it says are being persecuted by the Russian Orthodox Church, according to a report in the March 24 issue of the *Express Chronicle*, a "dissident" newspaper distributed in Russia and abroad.

---

## ***Ukraine's top cleric won't resign after all***

Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev and all Ukraine has announced that he will not resign, as he had promised to do at a conference of Orthodox bishops earlier in April, reported Reuters on April 17. Filaret said that the resignation pledge had been extracted under duress.

"I was forced at the conference to say that I would ask to be relieved of the post of head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church," Filaret said. "But, having returned to Kiev, I did not submit the request, because at such a difficult time for believers and for the whole Ukrainian people I have no right to do so. I am answerable to God for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church."

Last November, Filaret asked Russian Patriarch Aleksii II for permission to break away from the Russian Orthodox Church,

saying Ukraine could not be fully independent without an independent church. The Moscow authorities have approved limited autonomy for the Ukrainian church, but oppose an outright break. Kiev was the capital of the original Russian state, which adopted Christianity in 988.

---

## ***Will Israel's High Court ban torture?***

The Israeli High Court agreed the week of April 13 to hear a petition against the Shin Beth (secret police) for using torture. Torture is now legal in police interrogations in Israel, when applied against non-Jews. In 1987, the government-appointed Landau Commission condoned the use of "moderate physical pressure" and "non-physical psychological pressure" in interrogating non-Jews for security violations.

According to the Public Committee against Torture, torture is now commonly applied against the roughly 5,000 Palestinians detained annually. Palestinians are confined to closet-like cells and tied in painful positions during the period of interrogation; when interrogated, they are beaten, subjected to electric shocks, and often cigarette burns. Last February, a youth died of a heart attack under torture in a West Bank prison.

---

## ***German minister wants a deal with terrorists***

German Justice Minister Klaus Kinkel is calling for a Colombian-style build-down of the country's anti-terror apparatus. In response to the strange offer of the Baader Meinhof terrorist gang early in April for a cease-fire agreement with the state, Kinkel, a liberal Free Democrat, made an offer for a reduction in anti-terrorist protection measures (bodyguards, etc.) for leading political and business figures.

This, Kinkel claims, would send a signal to the "other side" that the state is willing to enter talks on a cease-fire with the terrorists. The initiative has been criticized by senior anti-terror spokesmen, most prominently by Kurt Rebmann, the former federal prosecutor.

Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters, a Christian Democrat, warned that the terrorists' letter does not mean a reduced threat of terrorist attacks, or that the state should be less alert.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced that the cabinet would take the issue up after the Easter recess.

## ***Bush moves against Libya denounced in Arab states***

The confrontationist course of the Bush administration toward Libya has been denounced in many Arab states, notably including government-tied media in such moderate states as Jordan and Morocco.

The information minister of Jordan, Sharif, called the sanctions against Libya a "regrettable act," and the Amman-based daily *Al Shaab* warned that U.N. policy was building up for an "idiotic and insane U.S. military attack on Libya."

"Sanctions This Spring, War in Autumn?" asked the Moroccan daily *Libération*. Other press in Rabat also attacked the U.S. straitjacket policy toward the Moroccan envoy at the U.N. Security Council. Libyan state radio reported April 15 that the all-Arab union of transport workers has decided to boycott all U.S., British, and French airliners at Arab airports in support of Libya.

## ***After Libya, Burma may be next target***

A call for U.N. action against Burma came in mid-April from the European Community (EC), the Australian government, and Saudi Arabia.

The EC on April 15 called for a worldwide ban on sales of all military equipment to Burma (Myanmar). The same day, Prince Khaled Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz, commander of the Saudi Army contingent of U.N. forces in the Persian Gulf war, recommended that the United Nations use its full weight to pressure Rangoon to take back Muslim nationals who are fleeing Bangladesh. He insisted that the U.N. employ the same resolve it used in opposing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait to solve the Burmese refugee

crisis: "I think the U.N. should do for them just what it did to liberate Kuwait."

But China, meanwhile, made it clear it would not intervene on behalf of Muslims flooding into Bangladesh. In meetings between Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen, Velayati urged Qian "to exploit his good offices with the government in Myanmar [Burma] to stop the banishment of Muslims in that country so that dislodged Muslims can return home," according to the Teheran news agency IRNA.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "We always hope that Myanmar and Bangladesh will, through direct dialogue and conversation, make a proper settlement of the issue that has arisen recently on the boundary of the two countries."

## ***Sharon launches new settlement provocation***

Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has launched a new provocation, preparing the way for 200 homes for settlers in Arab Jerusalem.

Jewish settlers have sought approval from the Israel Antiquities Authority to build 200 homes in the center of an Arab East Jerusalem neighborhood. According to Reuters, the authority said on April 17 that the development, which has Housing Ministry backing, was planned for Silwan, home to 30,000 Palestinians beneath Jerusalem's Old City walls. "They have submitted the plan to us and we are discussing it with the Housing Ministry," said Gideon Avni, authority district archaeologist of Jerusalem.

The plan, which Palestinian residents see as a provocation, is part of an effort by Sharon to house thousands of Jews in populated Arab areas of Jerusalem. Before Sharon took over as housing minister in June 1990, Israel had confined settlement in the Arab half of the city largely to open land outside Arab neighborhoods. Last October, armed settlers seized five houses in Silwan and in one case forced out an Arab family.

The authority could veto the project only if it threatened important archaeological finds, but Avni said it would probably be approved.

● **A U.N. BORDER** demarcation commission has given part of Iraq's only serviceable port and the larger portion of the Rumailah oil field to Kuwait, the April 18 London *Financial Times* reported. In February, the paper warned that the redrawing of the border would be regarded "as an assertion of *jus victoris*, in clear violation of the U.N. principle that the acquisition of territory by war is inadmissible." If the U.N. imposes the changes by force, said the paper, it would only be inviting another war.

● **NAVAL EXERCISES** in the Mediterranean are set for May 6-20, coinciding with the beginning of sanctions against Libya, NATO announced April 15. Last year, U.S. Ambassador to Italy Peter Secchia said that the center of gravity of NATO had shifted from Germany to Italy, because "North Africa is on the other side of Italy." A special NATO intelligence center in Spain has since been established to monitor the threat of Islamic fundamentalism to Europe.

● **THE BILDERBERG** Society has taken the unprecedented step of inviting a large delegation from Russia and eastern Europe to discuss policy issues concerning the region, according to a source tracking the Bilderberg Society meeting scheduled for May 21-24 in Evian, France.

● **RUSSIA** will have its own national armed forces by early May, Lt. Gen. Konstantin Kobets announced in Moscow on April 15. The official date of the formation of the Russian Armed Forces will be May 9, the day the former U.S.S.R. celebrated its victory over Germany and the end of the Second World War in 1945.

● **THE IMMINENT** withdrawal of Russian troops from Armenian territory will create a dangerous situation, as the Armenians are faced with a close collaboration of Turks and Azeris, warned Arman Kirakossian, deputy foreign minister of Armenia, in an interview with the April 16 Austrian daily *Die Presse*.