

bridge project, but rejected a more ambitious text, in favor of a government formulation which does not mention any deadlines.

“Public works spending between 1996 and 1997 diminished by 6.5% in southern Italy,” said D’Antoni. “This government is happy only when it can say ‘no’ to the Messina Bridge, ‘no’ to the Turin-Lyon and the Milan-Genoa high-speed railway.”

As recently as 1995, Italian unions brought millions of people into the streets, when they mobilized against pension cuts. A general strike today, if D’Antoni’s proposal goes through, would be a similar show of force. Who will be the arbiter of the country’s destiny? Millions of workers or a few hundred Faxisti?

Italians rebel against Clean Hands inquisition

by Umberto Pascali

“If Kenneth Starr lived in Italy, he would be one of the stars of the ‘Clean Hands’ Pool,” wrote Alberto Pasolini Zanelli, Washington correspondent of the Milan-based *Il Giornale*, in a “letter to the editor” to his own newspaper, published on the front page on July 3. “He has the same aggressivity . . . and, above all, the peculiar conviction that . . . it is legitimate to overturn the natural order of the law: Instead of ascertaining that a crime has been committed and looking for the guilty party, one identifies the ‘guilty one’ and, then, goes hunting for crimes that he could have committed; crimes that are supposed to become evidence to corner him. . . . In your editorial the other day, you, dear editor, defined as ‘avenging judges’ some of the Clean Hands’ magistrates. Maybe you did not realize it, but you were drawing the portrait of Kenneth Starr.”

This unusual “letter to the editor” was a symptom of the growing rebellion on the part of many Italians against six years of “legal” destabilization of their nation, and the beheading of the country’s leadership by the “anti-corruption” exploits of the Clean Hands Pool of magistrates. After the recent conviction of opposition leader Silvio Berlusconi (see previous article), demonstrations against the Pool took place in front of the Milan courthouse. A large majority of Italians now declares their opposition to the Milan magistrates, breaking free of the Jacobin demagoguery that trapped them for years in an infantile, populist, and suicidal rage against “corruption in high places.”

The Clean Hands International

The question now is: When will Italians be able to identify and to mobilize against the real plotters against their nation’s

sovereignty? A large enough rebellion in Italy could trigger a broader reaction against the process of undermining of the nation-state that has been launched all over the world—and especially in the United States—using the magic words “fight against corruption.”

Thanks especially to *EIR* and other publications of the LaRouche movement, a growing number of Italians now have an idea of the international control apparatus behind the Clean Hands Pool. They know that Milan prosecutor Antonio Di Pietro explicitly planned an international “Operation Clean Hands,” in which Italy was to be only the first step. They also know about the role of the supranational “anti-corruption” octopus known as Transparency International (TI) and its close connection with the Clean Hands Pool. They know about the role played by Britain’s Prince Philip in the creation of TI. They know that this organization is just the “enforcer” for the main institutions of the international oligarchy, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, from which TI borrowed its leaders, including its chairman, former World Bank executive Peter Eigen.

It was IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus who launched the worldwide “French Revolution” strategy, at a meeting of TI in Paris, calling for ever closer collaboration between the IMF and TI (see “Transparency International: Camdessus Unleashes Anti-Corruption Pimps,” *EIR*, June 12, 1998).

On the other hand, the same forces that brought Italy Operation Clean Hands, are doing everything possible to focus the debate in a narrow, localist way.

Interestingly, one of the images recently used in Italy to attack Clean Hands and its sponsors, is to label them as “Jacobins,” referring to the most extreme faction of the French Revolution that unleashed the Reign of Terror. “The Flight Before the Jacobins” was the title of a recent front-page article in the main Italian daily, *Corriere della Sera*, which denounced the cowardly subservience of most of the political parties to the Pool.

The reaction by the main media supporter of the Pool, the daily *La Repubblica*, was swift and harsh. The paper, edited by Jacobin Eugenio Scalfari and owned by financier Carlo De Benedetti, who is very close to former U.S. President George Bush, countered: “Scrambled Jacobins and Clams Liberal,” trying desperately to be ironical.

It is noteworthy that at the end of June, Bush was in Italy, as the guest of De Benedetti, who organized a semi-secret summit for the former President and the chairman of Merrill Lynch Italia, Reginald Bartholomew, along with key Italian bankers, businessmen, and economists. De Benedetti was indicted for corruption himself, but, uncharacteristically, the “avenging magistrates” were sympathetic to him, and he never saw the inside of a prison, unlike many politicians and industrialists, some of whom died in jail.

Finally, a book is widely circulating in Italy, *The Italian Guillotine, Operation Clean Hands and the Overthrow of*

Italy's First Republic, by Luca Mantovani, the spokesman for Berlusconi's Party, and U.S. diplomat Stanton Burnett. The book was only published in English, outside Italy, because the authors feared trouble from the "avenging judges." Their fears were well-founded, as Stefano Zurlo, a journalist who interviewed the American author of the book, was immediately sued for "defamation" by two of the Pool's magistrates, Gherardo Colombo and Francesco Greco. *EIR* will soon publish a review of the book, which, although very accurate in its description of the Clean Hands phenomenon, gives only very limited attention to the international dimension.

Michael Ledeen enters the fray

The most eerie intervention on the issue of Clean Hands, however, was an article in the *Wall Street Journal, Europe* by Michael Ledeen, an adviser to the U.S. National Security Council during the Reagan administration. Ledeen, known for his book promoting the concept of "Universal Fascism," and for his role as an intermediary with the Iranian government in the Iran-Contra affair, has been involved in many scandals, including that of Italy's Propaganda-2 lodge, the kidnapping and murder of former Prime Minister Aldo Moro, and the plot concerning Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

Ledeen's article, titled "Italy's Incomplete Purge," is a clear attempt to divert the explosive debate into petty localism, and to freeze the ferment provoked by the anti-Pool revolt. Ledeen argues that the manifestation of popular support for Berlusconi is due to the fact that the "purge" was not complete. The "left" has been spared, he complains. Thus, everything is reduced to a local "left vs. right" scenario. The danger that the latent revolt against the "Clean Hands International" would spill out of Italy, maybe even targetting the sinister Transparency International, is to be avoided, in Ledeen's view.

The elements for a real fight against this international conspiracy are all there. For example, certain high-level circles are debating the fact that Transparency International's "bible," the so-called *Source Book*, dedicates particular attention to the office of the independent counsel in the U.S. legal system. Clearly, what makes that office so attractive to TI, is that it constitute a form of very effective "legal" destabilization, through which—for the first time—the President and the highest offices of the U.S. government can be assaulted under a judicial cover.

Ledeen, while painting the Italian events as the result of a little domestic squabble, has very different ideas on the destabilization of the United States. In the July 20 issue of William Buckley's *National Review*, he wrote: "The punishment of the Clintons and their friends is desperately needed, because if we fail to root out corruption, our freedom is placed at risk. . . . The only way to demonstrate this is to bring them down and subject them to public humiliation. . . . Impeachment is the most dramatic and effective way to punish and humiliate Bill Clinton and put us back on the road to virtue."

Egypt, France initiate Mideast peace effort

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The "peace process" in the Middle East has long since not had anything to do with peace. Rather, as Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu has done everything in his power not only to sabotage further progress in Israeli-Palestinian talks, but to tear up the agreements signed by his predecessors at Oslo in 1993. Particularly in the wake of provocations mounted by Netanyahu's government—confiscating Palestinian lands and houses, expanding existing Jewish settlements and starting new ones, declaring the extension of the city limits of Jerusalem, etc., all in direct violation of the peace agreements—parties in the Arab world have recognized the imminent danger that the current situation could degenerate very rapidly into open war.

It has become obvious to all, that either the United States President exert the power he retains, to force through compliance with the agreements, including the "American initiative" for an Israeli partial withdrawal from 13.1% of the occupied territories on the West Bank, or war will result. The reluctance on the part of Washington to use the instruments of pressure it has, among them, withholding \$3 billion in aid to Israel, has thus become an obstacle to peace. Due to the unwillingness of the White House, to buck the lobbies inside the United States behind Netanyahu (especially the "Christian evangelical" fanatics of the Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell stripe, but also certain Hollywood-linked financial groups), the Israeli Prime Minister has maintained his position inside Israel, even despite significant domestic opposition.

Thus, the question, whether the peace process can be restarted, or, less euphemistically, whether war can be averted in the short term, is a question of whether President Clinton will act.

Due to what are perceived as insuperable internal constraints, the White House has engaged the assistance of America's leading ally in the Arab world, Egypt. Having signed a peace treaty with Israel at Camp David in 1978, Egypt is in a position to talk tough with the Israelis. Its relations with the Palestinian Authority and PA leader Yasser Arafat are excellent, and it has been increasingly upgrading and improving its contacts with those officially opposed to the current form of the peace process, such as Iran and Syria.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has taken the lead in denouncing Netanyahu, as the cause for the crisis. During a visit to Paris in May, in an interview with French TV Channel 5, he said that the Israeli government's policy is against peace.