

# 'Imperial' Terrorism Resurfaces in Italy

by Claudio Celani

Amid strategic tensions with the United States government, a wave of terrorism has hit Europe. On the evening of March 19, a terrorist commando assassinated Prof. Marco Biagi, while he was returning to his home in downtown Bologna. Biagi was not a public figure, but insiders knew that he had been adviser to the government on labor policies, and was a co-author of the current "White Book" on labor reform, endorsed by the Berlusconi government and opposed by the Italian labor movement.

Biagi's assassination was claimed by the Red Brigades, a terrorist organization believed to have been extirpated by police actions in the 1980s, which instead resurfaced three years ago. In 1999, while the Italian government was opposing a ground invasion in Kosovo pushed by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, government adviser Massimo D'Antona was assassinated. The weapon used to kill Biagi is the same one used to kill D'Antona. Both murders have been claimed, via e-mail, by the "Red Brigades."

## Regroupment From Outside Italy

Investigators believe that indeed, Italy faces a continuation of the terrorist group that apparently been dismantled more than a decade ago. A few "*irriducibili*" (hardliners) who had escaped abroad, and today would be in their fifties, have apparently been able to reorganize themselves, and even recruit younger disciples, investigators say. It is believed that the head of the terrorist cell is hiding abroad, possibly in France, where more than 100 terrorists found refuge in the past and where political circles associated with the late President François Mitterrand have given them political protection.

However, since the Red Brigades resurfaced in 1999, investigators have been unable to find and arrest a single member. Furthermore, there are mysterious aspects of the Biagi murder that point to high-level complicity. Most astonishingly, the fourth-quarter 2001 report issued by the Italian domestic intelligence agency, SISDE, last year, contained a profile of possible terrorism targets which correspond perfectly to Professor Biagi. The report identified the targets as "officials involved in the reform of labor laws." Despite the warning, nothing was done to restore Biagi's police escort, which had been cancelled in September 2001 due to "budget cuts." Additionally, Biagi had received mysterious telephone threats, which prompted him to demand police protection.

Since it is hardly believable that the Red Brigades would announce their murderous intentions over the phone, it is possible that another source, knowing what was being prepared, delivered such threats in order to prompt a decision to provide Biagi with protection and foil the murder plan. But the protection never came. Even an intervention by Biagi's employer, Labor Minister Maroni, was apparently ineffective.

Biagi was so desperate about it, that he made an appointment with Parliament Chairman Casini, his last chance; he died before the meeting took place. Two men on a motorbike waited beside the door of his house, on March 19. One of them, wearing a helmet, fired a pistol at close range. The two then disappeared. Another terrorist is supposed to have followed Biagi from the train station, where he had arrived from Modena. Police believe that at least 6-7 persons were materially involved in the assault.

Two weeks after the murder, computer expert Michele Landi was found dead, an apparent suicide, in his house on the outskirts of Rome. Landi had worked for the police on the D'Antona case, and was possibly working on the Biagi murder, tracking down evidence from the e-mail messages through which the new Red Brigades claimed the D'Antona and Biagi murders. Police experts immediately said, "This is not a suicide."

Lyndon LaRouche has repeatedly stated, and shown, that there is no "independent" terrorist capability anywhere in the world. All terrorist organizations are expressions either of a state power, or the equivalent of such a power. Therefore, one has to ask: Why the resurgence of terrorism in Italy now? What state power, or equivalent of such power, has an interest in destabilizing the country and making it ungovernable? For the answer, one must locate the Italian role in the current strategic phase, and look at the continuity of terrorism in recent Italian history.

## Clash of Civilizations? No, Thanks

After Sept. 11, Italy, although providing a fleet and a military contingent for the Afghan war, has publicly dissociated itself from the Clash of Civilizations policy. The Italian government has declared its particular opposition to a war against Iraq ("We need a peace policy, and not a new war," said Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi during a visit to Saudi Arabia in early March), and has strengthened its ties with nations the Bush Administration has called the "axis of evil." On Feb. 24-25, Industry Minister Antonio Marzano, leading a high-level business delegation in Iran, told journalists that Italy "pursues another policy," namely a policy of dialogue with Tehran. And Italy was the first foreign nation which Syrian President Bashar Assad visited, on Feb. 20, a few weeks before U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld put his country into the "axis of evil" category.

But most especially the Italian government has been pursuing an independent policy for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on a Marshall Plan proposal which

Berlusconi presented at the European Union summit on March 16. The plan is based on the idea that the only way to build a stable peace in Palestine is to give a perspective of economic development to the region. It involves infrastructure projects worth 6.2 billion euro, aimed at providing 100,000 jobs and economic and scientific cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis. It stresses a deepwater port, able to receive 3 million tons of goods yearly; a highway between Gaza and the West Bank; industrial areas; surface metros across Palestinian cities; a series of scientific parks with laboratories for Israeli and Arab scientists along the Israeli-Palestinian border.

The European Union did not officially adopt the plan, but adopted the principle of it in its final statement. The Italian government has continued organizing for it, including during Berlusconi's visit to Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on April 2. The Italian Parliament, as shown in a meeting of the joint foreign policy committees on April 3, backs the government's Mideast policy by a large majority.

Additionally, a larger international initiative for a "New Bretton Woods conference," to design a new international financial and monetary system, is collecting support in the Italian Senate. Introduced by a group of ten senators on Feb. 27, it had collected 47 signatures by April 3, and there are plans to introduce it into the lower house as well. If one combines the efforts by Italian national institutions with the interventions of the Vatican in the Mideast crisis, one gets the picture.

There is thus more than one reason, for the promoters of the Clash of Civilizations policy to destabilize this major Mediterranean country, which is working as a bridge, not only in geographical sense, between Muslim-dominated North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

The day Biagi was assassinated, former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was in Rome. Kissinger, known for brutal threats, declared in the Italian Senate that it should be "a catastrophe" if a rift in strategic policy should ensue between Europe and the United States. Kissinger declared that the United States will proceed with aggression against Iraq, and will make use of nuclear weapons if necessary—Europe should decide on which side it stands. Kissinger had in 1976 threatened Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro over essentially the same question, in a private meeting. Two years later, Moro was kidnapped and killed by the Red Brigades.

## **A Scenario To Paralyze the Country**

Choosing Biagi as a target, the terrorists have repeated a well-known script from Italy's "strategy of tension" years. In the 1970s, in a period of social unrest and labor strikes, terrorism was used to make Italy ungovernable, by playing into staged left-right polarizations. Biagi was working on proposals for labor market reforms opposed by the labor movement; one of them, concerning the so-called Chapter 18, has provoked the largest trade union mobilization in recent de-

cares and threatened to cast Italy into a long season of social conflict.

Biagi's assassination preceded by a few days a demonstration called by the largest trade union, CGIL, which drew over a million workers, students, and pensioners into the streets of Rome on March 23, in protest against the reform of Chapter 18. Following that show of force, all three national trade unions—CGIL, CISL, and UIL—announced a general strike for April 16. Apparently advised by pro-Thatcherite elements, the government has made Chapter 18 the issue for a political confrontation. It insists that the current Chapter 18, which mandates the judiciary to force employers to rehire workers who are fired "without justification," is an obstacle to expanding employment.

The proposed change—compensating fired workers with a sum of money—is called by the trade unions, probably correctly, a way to introduce labor recycling—replacing older, more skilled labor with younger, less skilled workers at lower pay. The business community is split, but the entrepreneurs of the most productive region of Italy, the Northeast, say that they have the opposite problem: not enough qualified workers to hire. Misplaced focus on Chapter 18, say many observers (even among government ranks), leads only to political and social unrest.

Berlusconi, one of the last leaders to retain an insane admiration for Britain's Lady Margaret Thatcher, seems to have been misadvised into an adventure which could lead, as in Britain, to crushing the trade unions. But Italy is not Great Britain, and Berlusconi might be steering toward his government's destabilization and his own political grave. The assassination of Marco Biagi is evoking the nightmare of the 1970s, with escalating social tensions and terrorist violence.

Today there is no large pro-terrorist movement, with hundreds of clandestine members and thousands of sympathizers, as in the 1970s. But if it is true that these terrorists are a continuation of the "old" Red Brigades—whoever they are, they insist on appearing as such a continuation—then the forces which steer them are possibly the same forces which have steered them in the past. Several trials and parliamentary investigations on terrorism firmly established, that the old Red Brigades were infiltrated by British, Israeli, American, French, and several Italian intelligence services. Especially evident is the role of the "stay-behind" (after World War II) secret military structure called "Gladio" ("The Sword"), and of the British-controlled, secret masonic lodge "Propaganda Two" (P2), on which many articles, books, and movies have been produced.

## **Who Is Behind the Red Brigades?**

One can only even summarize this evidence on the intelligence-level direction of the Red Brigades, at book length. Look at one significant episode of the Moro assassination case, investigated beginning a few years ago under the Parliamentary Committee on Terrorism. Two years ago, Committee



*A huge labor demonstration in Rome on March 23, called by the Italian General Labor Federation. Still larger strike actions are set for April 16 by all three major Italian labor alliances; "Red Brigades" terror assassinations have been reactivated by forces who want to turn Italy's dispute over economic policy, into a destabilization of the nation.*

chairman Giovanni Pellegrino published a book on the Committee's findings and remaining open questions. One section was dedicated entirely to the Moro case.

Whereas the members of the commando that kidnapped and killed Moro have apparently all been captured, sentenced, and jailed, none of them revealed where the "strategic directorate" of the Red Brigades was meeting and who really participated in those meetings. Investigators have found out that the meetings took place in Florence, and they suspect that the real leader of the Red Brigades was never caught. Furthermore, it is not yet known where Moro's real prison in Rome was, and investigators suspect that it could be close to the place where the corpse was delivered, i.e., the Via Caetani. The parliamentary committee chaired by Senator Pellegrino has searched for evidence which connects these two aspects, and points to the active involvement of British and Israeli intelligence structures in the Moro case.

Pellegrino reported that during the two months Moro was being held, Italian military intelligence (SISMI) produced a report indicating that a certain Igor Markevitch, well known to them, could be the "brains" behind the kidnapping. But SISMI decided not to investigate Markevitch further. "The reasons . . . are mysterious," Pellegrini wrote.

Markevitch is an extremely interesting figure. During the war, in Florence, he was a member of the anti-Nazi resistance, but he had also relationships with Wehrmacht officers. After the war, Markevitch "participate[d] in the foundation of the

state of Israel," Pellegrini reported. But he was a strange Zionist: He had a fixation with Wagner, and was, indeed, the first conductor to perform Wagner's music in Israel. Markevitch, Pellegrini continued, "is a man whom intelligence structures of opposing sides could have contacts with, and use his anti-fascist past as a calling card for the Red Brigades."

Senator Pellegrino wanted "that somebody, for instance prosecutors in Rome, seriously and exhaustively investigate such an hypothesis." There is more: Markevitch, who is of noble Russian origins, married a princess from the Italian Caetani family—who own the buildings on and around the Via Caetani, in Rome, where Moro's corpse was delivered, inside a car. The Senator, like many other investigators, thought that Moro's real prison was possibly in Palazzo Caetani itself.

Pellegrini: "I do not think that Markevitch ever lived in that building. In that place, there were others

present who drew our interest. For instance, Hubert Howard, the British intelligence officer who first entered Florence after the liberation from Nazi occupation, and who entrusted Markevitch with the task of drafting radio music programs for liberated Florence. Made an English baronet, Howard then decided to live in Italy, himself married a Caetani—a cousin [by marriage] of Markevitch—and both lived for a long time in the Palazzo Caetani."

Recently when prosecutors in Brescia, northern Italy, again focussed on Markevitch and on his possible role in the Moro case, Pellegrini says, "we of course asked ourselves whether his old Florentine sponsor, who then became his cousin, could be his liaison to Western intelligence services." A collaborator of the Parliament committee searched the Caetani Foundation archive, but found nothing on either Markevitch and Howard. "Our collaborator had the impression that somebody had already been there, since there was not even one press clipping on the intense public life of those two characters."

The combination of the Markevitch-Caetani-Howard connection with the Gladio network, Kissinger's threats, and the French networks that have protected the Italian "anti-globalist" terrorists who fled to France, gives a cross-section of the state-like networks that control and deploy terrorism. With the recent two assassinations, these networks are threatening Italy again today, if they are not quickly exposed and neutralized.