

PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE: ITALIAN STYLE WILL THE PCI SEE THE TRAP?

May 9 — The kidnapping April 18 of the Genoese magistrate Mario Sossi by the terrorist Red Brigades unleashed a military reign of terror against the industrially concentrated area of Northern Italy. Political unrest and police mobilizations have continued to escalate. Yesterday, police searched the offices of 50 left groups and a court in Rome gave permission for police to bug left groups. At the same time, meat prices climbed 20 per cent in the wake of the Italian import surcharge. (See IPS, this issue.)

NATO-trained Carabinieri Mobilized

Within hours after the seizure of Sossi, 4,000 Carabinieri supported by helicopters and dogs poured into Genoa, followed by the crack Alpini troops of the Italian Army. The Carabinieri are an elite, independent corps of 86,000 troops specifically trained and equipped by NATO in the post-war period for putting down revolutions. They cordoned off a twenty square kilometer radius of Genoa to conduct interrogations on the street, house-to-house searches, and roundups.

A note arrived from Sossi himself on April 23, with a photo of the magistrate posed before a homemade Red Brigade banner. The state attorney decided to halt the investigations. Three days later, however, he announced that the "truce" would end within 48 hours if the Brigades failed to release Sossi!

Italian SLA

The Red Brigades, Italy's Symbionese Liberation Army, bear the unmistakable thumbprint of a Reesian countergang. With Maoist-sociologist origins and a totally apolitical theory of "systematic violence," the gang emerged in its present form in 1971, linked to the French structuralist-populist Alain Gesimard. They are modelled organizationally on the South American Tupamaros. It is generally known that they are infiltrated by the SID (Italian Military Intelligence).

Terror Spreads Throughout Industrial North

Since the kidnapping, the Red Brigades have helped the Carabinieri in spreading terror from Genoa to the other key nerve centers of the industrial north. During the week, empty stolen cars with loudspeakers turned up broadcasting taped messages about the Sossi kidnapping outside huge factories in Turin, Mestre (Venice) and Milan.

Fascist brigades sprinkled bombs in socialist and communist party locals all around Milan, as well as in Perugia, Rovigo, and Reggio Calabria. An explosion on the Florence-Bologna railway track narrowly missed causing a bloodbath on April 22.

Needing no further cues, the political police (Red Squads) of Milan and Turin mobilized extra patrols and conducted seal-and-search operations throughout the Turin-Milan-Genoa triangle, visiting leftists, stopping cars on the highways, and discovering caches of weapons and explosives. The searches were further justified on the

grounds that the brains of the Red Brigades were operating out of Turin or Milan. The low intensity military operations were even extended to Cosenza, a town in distant Calabria, not accidentally the region of major recruitment to the fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI).

Last week's psywar operations strike at the heart of the traditional areas of Italian Communist Party (PCI) strength, in the regions where the vast majority of Italy's basic industry is located.

As Mussolini recognized in 1922, in order to carry out a military takeover in Italy, it is necessary to neutralize the potential for the PCI to resist in these key regions. Once the northern working class has been immobilized, the lumpen and peasant recruits to the fascist movement from the Mezzogiorno can finish off the job of wiring out any resistance.

The softening-up phase of the psywar operation against the PCI has been going on for months in the crusade atmosphere of the divorce referendum scheduled to break up the whole parliamentary system May 12.

The porno-political weekly *l'Espresso* (controlled by Rockefeller's labile friend G. Agnelli of Fiat) has been waving the specter of a "Gaullist coup" by the pathetic *pappagallo*, Christian Democratic leader Fanfani, before the eyes of a credulous left. This guarantees that a coup will not come from *that* direction.

At the same time, *l'Espresso*, week by week, has been embroidering details on a plot called the *Rosa dei Venti* (Points of the Compass) to restore the post-Mussolinian Nazi regime in north Italy, the Republic of Salo.

The Compass plot was hatched by the NATO psywar office in Verona in collaboration with the SID (Italian military intelligence, controlled by the Carabinieri). They suckered in, among others, a crusty old industrialist, a gaggle of patriotic colonels, and a few "mad bomber" types.

Strangely, the fascist conspiracy did not involve a single member of the fascist Italian Social Movement — except for the SID operative who pulled the strings from outside and is now calmly waiting it out in Paris.

Compass Plot a Cover

Nurturing and then leaking the Compass plot dramatized the NATO-CIA campaign to reform the largely useless, top-heavy Italian army and purge the non-MSI; anti-NATO right-wingers within it. It also served as a cover for the real psywar operation.

Together with the unremitting stream of bombings and escalating MSI goonery, the Compass plot exposures have created a scare target for the Communist Party.

Rockefeller's plans may be to create a situation in which the PCI will accept a temporary emergency military regime to deal with the chaos. This regime would be administered by so-called liberal generals like Portugal's Spínola. The vulnerability of the Communist Party to such psywar ploys has been tragically demonstrated by the enthusiastic reaction of the Soviets to the Spínola coup.

In this context, MSI leader Almirante, speaking in Genoa shortly after the Sossi kidnapping invoked "law and order" against the Red Brigades and the extra-parliamentary left, but he departed from the past policy by *not* naming the PCI — leaving room for the PCI to join the parties of order.