

Italy's War on Crime by Marco Fanini

Craxi lashes out against magistrates

The target of his reforms are the officials who "violate the rights" of mafiosi and terrorists.

While the head of the Christian Democratic Party, Italy's "elder statesman" Aldo Moro, was being held captive by the Red Brigades in 1978, then parliamentarian Bettino Craxi and former senator Antonio Landolfi had repeated secret contacts with the leftist professors Franco Piperno and Lanfranco Pace. The Socialist Party politicians were trying to save Moro's life, they later reported to the magistrates investigating the crime.

But more than one doubt remained, and others arose when the several terrorists who had turned state's evidence testified that Piperno is an active member of the Red Brigades and one of the leaders of terrorism.

Today no one dares to interrogate the new prime minister, Bettino Craxi, whose dizzying ascent to the top of the Italian government dates precisely from the death of Moro in May 1978. The magistrates, however, cannot avoid jailing such leaders of Craxi's Socialist Party (PSI) such as ex-Senator Pittella (the chairman of the Health Committee of the Senate!) or indicting figures like former PSI secretary Mancini, his sidekick Landolfi (who financed Piperno's magazine praising the Moro kidnapping), and others.

Craxi has never hidden his annoyance about the magistrates' activities. The minute he got into power he passed a law limiting the power of the magistracy. From Oct. 7 on, the Public Ministry which represents the state in the preliminary investigative phase of the case, can no longer issue arrest

warrants except in exceptional cases.

While Craxi is launching his reforms, uncontested by any party either in the government or in the opposition, the "reddest" investigations of recent years are getting bogged down and buried:

1) The case of the outlawed Propaganda-2 Freemasonic lodge. As soon as Craxi became prime minister, the lodge's Venerable Grand Master Licio Gelli escaped from his prison in Geneva, Switzerland. Parliament's P-2 commission has lost some of its key figures and has sprouted masons.

2) The Bulgarian connection. Judges Palermo and Martella, conducting their probes from northern Italy and Sardinia respectively, had uncovered an incredible drugs-for-arms smuggling operation going on with the complicity of Western and East bloc secret services, or sectors thereof. The killer Ali Agca is a product of that network. But no sooner had Agca admitted that he was backed by Eastern intelligence networks than a "leper" campaign was initiated by the press to discredit his statements, and to accuse him of lying to protect the CIA.

3) The Moro case. The sentence of Judge Abate, recently handed down for the killers of Moro after a lengthy trial, explains nothing. The links of the Red Brigades with dozens of secret services are admitted, but the thesis of a "palace plot" is excluded categorically. All the less do Henry Kissinger's threats to Moro in 1974 have any "relevance to the trial." Perhaps Abate forgot that after Kissinger's threats to

public persons like Ali Bhutto, Carro Blanco, and Salvador Allende, they all wound up assassinated?

4) The probes into terrorism. Of the various "brains" behind Italian terror, Piperno and Pace are at large, their colleague Scalzone conveniently "escaped," and Prof. Toni Negri has become the star of private television. Judges like Pietro Calogero, who first accused Negri of masterminding the Moro murder, have been covered with insults and abandoned by the state. Judges Alessandrini, Galli, and Chinnici, all killed by terrorists, are spinning in their graves.

The most serious episode is the passage of the judicial reform: the public minister is being punished precisely because he represents the state, the state which intervenes, without respect for persons. All the norms of the mini-reform go in the direction dictated by Craxi, which is against the judges: the concentration of the prime minister's power, discipline for the magistrates, the abolition of the term "preventive incarceration," etc. The target is always the judge who allegedly does not respect citizen's rights—the laws of terrorists and mafiosi.

Most serious is the fact that no one has protested Craxi's coup against the magistracy. Practically speaking, only the Milanese judge Armando Spataro reacted, maintaining firmly that "we magistrates express the aspirations of people, the millions of citizens who want a clean-up" in the face of a "massive attack on all the judges, an attack that recalls that of the parties and single politicians and power groups when the magistrates hit their not-so-clean interests."

Is it any wonder if the head of the neo-fascist MSI, Almirante, says he wants to support Craxi and that he wants a Socialist as the next President of the Republic?