

## EIR Feature

# Enrico Mattei, a historical model for today's crisis

by Nora Hamerman

Marking the thirtieth anniversary of the tragic death of Enrico Mattei, the founder of Italy's national hydrocarbons company ENI, an international conference was held in Milan on Nov. 27, 1992, to commemorate the life and work of this great Italian. It was organized by the Schiller-Institut of Germany and *Executive Intelligence Review*, and rather than merely evoking the past, it took up various aspects of Mattei with the aim of identifying lessons for our own era. The challenge in morality and method which various speakers raised could be summed up in the question: "How would a person like Enrico Mattei have acted in the face of an epoch-making crisis like that currently shaking the world, and Italy in particular?"

Mattei's fighting spirit was manifest in a speech at the opening of the academic year at the School of Higher Studies on Hydrocarbons in December 1961, where he said: "We must get rid of the inferiority complex that Italians are good writers, good poets, good singers, good guitarists, and fine people, but they don't have the capacity for great industrial organization."

We present below excerpts from an Italian-language report published by *EIR*'s European affiliate, which collected the speeches and debates of the conference, as well as some speeches by Mattei. The Milan daily *Il Giorno* covered the event with three articles. An article in *L'Avanti*, the Socialist Party paper, cited the appeal of Schiller-Institut president Helga Zepp-LaRouche, "that the investigation into the Mattei case be opened, because the truth about the Mattei case will be crucial for bringing Italy out of its present life and death crisis."

In the seven months since, several events have combined to make *EIR*'s publication of this material especially timely. Italy has been spun several more ratchets down by the assault on its sovereign political and economic institutions. Not only have many of its major postwar political leaders been indicted for corruption; but the exasperated electorate was stampeded into a referendum that approved institutional changes which will only speed up the takeover of the nation by foreign, especially Anglo-American, interests.



*Investigating the real story behind Enrico Mattei's life and tragic death "will be crucial for bringing Italy out of its present life and death crisis," Helga Zepp-LaRouche told a conference on Mattei in Milan, on Nov. 27, 1992. From left: Helga Zepp-LaRouche, president of the Schiller-Institut in Germany; her interpreter, Liliana Celani; Paolo Vitali of the Schiller-Institut; Prof. Nico Perrone, author of a book on the assassination of Mattei.*

Related to this, Italy and many other nations are being subjected to predatory attacks by the international banking fraternity under the banner of indiscriminate privatization. This looting is being pushed throughout eastern Europe and Ibero-America, as well as in industrialized nations like Italy, France, and Germany. *EIR* has played a key role in catalyzing resistance to this in Italy, by publishing an exposé of how Italian bankers and politicians conspired aboard the British royal yacht *Britannia* to sell off the national patrimony for fire-sale prices—an exposé which has been cited by several Italian periodicals and leading political figures.

Yet worldwide, many defenders of the state sector of national economies are only mounting a feeble opposition, by requesting a *slower* rate of turning over public firms to private hands. This is because some public firms, such as those under communist regimes, were so mismanaged that their advocates are at a loss to defend them, especially in today's "pragmatist" climate. Here, the example of Mattei's fight for Italy's energy independence through a national oil company is a most useful model—a fight conducted in tandem with the political independence struggles of many former colonial nations, to whom Mattei extended a hand of cooperation.

Since the recent outrageous bombing attack in Florence on May 26, it seems especially relevant to quote from Mattei's speech in Florence on the anniversary of Italian liberation from the Nazis, April 25, 1961. He said then, in part: "You Florentines are rightly proud of the glorious weeks in which, during 1944, the border of Italy remained on the Arno. . . ."

"Forced on June 4 to evacuate Rome, in angry silence, because the august presence of the Head of Christendom impeded a strenuous armed resistance, the enemy carried its ferocious rage northward, to seek an extreme line of defense, which would slow down the steady march of the regular and voluntary forces of liberation.

"And so Florence found itself on the firing line. The German command immediately realized the impossibility of holding positions besieged by rebel actions and popular resistance, and it turned to the local CLN [national liberation committees] to negotiate an undisturbed passage of its troops. The demand was accompanied by the threat that, in case of denial, the city would become a battlefield.

". . . You responded that no compromise was possible with the enemy; the city, starting Aug. 3, became the center of bitter clashes. . . . Freedom, before being the essence of political life, is an inner virtue, a prerogative of the spirit, which is preserved and made more powerful with incessant vigilance and moral rigor.

"According to the Christian conception there is no freedom without justice, but there is also no true justice without a constant effort at improvement which is manifested in constructive action. It would not be an effective justice which served to crystallize and legitimize an out-of-date and profoundly unjust economic arrangement, because it would be anchored to the tolerance of privileges which are historically unsustainable and even more, morally inadmissible. Whoever stands still, does not honor freedom and does not do justice. . . ."