

Italian Voters Reject Globalization in Government

by Claudio Celani

The Italian general election results of May 13 offer a lesson, an opportunity, and a danger. The lesson is that in a democracy, there is an iron rule: If you impose globalization policies, you lose the popular mandate. The opportunity is that in the new Parliament, there is a potential for an enlargement of the support for LaRouche's New Bretton Woods program, in concordance with the Pope's campaign in favor of the "common good." The danger is that Silvio Berlusconi, the media magnate who won the elections, plays into the City of London scenario that wants to turn him into an Italian parody of Margaret Thatcher.

On May 13, the center-left coalition which has ruled Italy for the past five years paid the bill for its ominous globalization policies, and was voted out of office. Opposition leader Berlusconi was voted in as the next Prime Minister with a comfortable majority in both houses of Parliament. His "House of Freedoms" coalition won 368 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, against 242 of the "Olive Branch" center-left bloc, thus gaining 52 votes more than the absolute majority. In the Senate, Berlusconi's coalition won 177 against 125 (absolute majority is 158).

The fact that Berlusconi's party gained almost 9% over the 1996 election results, from 20.6% to 29.4%, whereas his coalition partners the National Alliance and Lega Nord lost votes, profiles the result as a personal victory for Berlusconi, and gives him even more power inside the coalition. Particularly dramatic was the loss of the localist Lega Nord, which went from 10.1 to 3.9%, thus falling below the 4% minimum required by Italian electoral law for a party slate to win seats in Parliament. Also the fourth ally, a coalition of the two Christian Democratic parties CCD

and CDU, called "Biancofiore," failed to achieve the 4% threshold.

Government Electoral Tricks Failed

In general, the election showed a strong polarization, with votes going to the two bloc leaders and their parties, and with many groupings with historical tradition, or led by prestigious names, falling below the 4% barrier. This is the case of former Premier Giulio Andreotti, who had attempted to reconstruct a new version of the old Christian Democratic Party, and of Antonio Di Pietro, the Transparency International "anti-corruption" prosecutor who had founded his own party; he not only failed to achieve the 4% national vote, but even lost his own direct-vote race. The same fate was shared by the pro-drugs Radical Party and by the Green Party.

The only party which joined neither bloc, but made it into the Parliament, was the old communist Partito della Rifondazione Comunista (PRC), which won 5%, thus gaining 11 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 3 in the Senate. The PRC result is explained by the fact that it has a demagogic "anti-globalization" stance, which attracts many youth and nostalgic, pro-communist pensioners.

In the "Olive Branch" (incumbent government) coalition, the Social Democratic party fell from 21.1% to 16.6%; Premier candidate Francesco Rutelli's own party, named "La Margherita," gained almost 14.5%, a net gain of almost 5% compared with the same grouping's showing in 1996. This gain is due entirely to the visibility of Rutelli, the former Rome mayor, since La Margherita is a virtual entity born out of electoral opportunity, comprised of various parties with diverse programs and ideologies. Rutelli's personal victory

in the general debacle of the center-left, has entitled him to claim the leadership of the Parliamentary opposition.

Showing the seriousness of the defeat, five outgoing ministers failed to win a direct mandate. Towards the end of election Sunday, when the government-run election headquarters started to receive first data of the debacle, the Rutelli camp apparently played a dirty trick in order to provoke electoral chaos. Due to a 30% reduction in the number of polling places (cost cutting!), and to a high voter turnout (82%), long queues formed in front of polling places. At 10 p.m., polls had to be closed, but in several cities long queues of voters were still waiting to vote.

Interior Minister Enzo Bianco (who was not reelected) then decided to keep polls open, knowing that such a decision bordered on illegality. At the same time, at 11 p.m., the government released results projections that showed Rutelli gaining against Berlusconi, in a head-to-head race. In this situation, some polls were kept open, including those in some large cities such as Rome and Naples. The last voter cast his ballot at 5 A.M. Monday, in a Calabrian town.

On Monday, May 14, international media were already giving out the line that “electoral chaos” in Italy could possibly lead to a recount or to invalidation of the vote. Ultimately, if this was a Florida-style dirty trick, it failed in the face of the inability to manipulate a race which Berlusconi was winning hands down.

The Great Opportunity

During the election campaign, Berlusconi profiled himself as the defender of industrial interests and of the middle class, promising to reduce the tax burden on productive activities and create jobs with an ambitious program of large infrastructural projects. At the same time, he assured the financial community that he would carry out International Monetary Fund-style structural reforms and deregulation policies. It is clear that keeping both promises will be impossible.

At this moment, nobody knows what Berlusconi’s real cards are, and we will begin to see them, starting with the appointment of his cabinet. So far, Berlusconi has indicated only that his Economics Minister will be Giulio Tremonti, who was Finance Minister in the short-lived first Berlusconi cabinet, and who enacted a bill which boosted industrial investments by reducing taxes for firms purchasing new machinery. Tremonti has announced that he will again enact the same law, together with a new bill, whose text has already been presented, which calls for emergency measures to start a series of urgently needed infrastructural projects, including the famous Messina bridge which would connect Sicily to Calabria, the “toe” of the Italian peninsula.

Since, at the same time, Tremonti and Berlusconi have promised (including to the City of London), that they will not expand public expenses and they will cut taxes, a question has to be raised over how such investments will be financed.



Silvio Berlusconi will be the new Italian Prime Minister; the newly elected Parliament represents a great opportunity for Italy to open the door to the New Bretton Woods monetary arrangements.

Nevertheless, the new situation offers a major opportunity, since the new Parliament will seat most of the representatives who, in the previous legislature, undertook Parliamentary initiatives in favor of Lyndon LaRouche’s proposal for a New Bretton Woods reorganization of the world monetary and financial system. In particular, more than 40 Senators, led by Carlo Pedrizzi of National Alliance, and including also members of Forza Italia and CCD-CDU, had introduced a proposition in the Senate in October 2000, calling on the government to organize a conference for a New Bretton Woods monetary system. A similar proposition was introduced to the Senate floor again in March 2001, by another group of eight CCD Senators, led by Sen. Ivo Tarolli, based on the Pope’s “Jubilee Year” exhortations to Catholics.

These Senators, who had been in the Parliamentary opposition, now represent the majority, and clearly have more power to relaunch the initiative. Some of them might even get government posts.

On the other side, both Rep. Bianchi and former Minister Patrizia Toia, two members of the center-left coalition who supported LaRouche’s efforts, were re-elected. Last year,

Rep. Giovanni Bianchi was author of a bill which was unanimously passed by Parliament, through which Italy decided unilaterally to cancel the debt of the poorest countries.

Italy's Special Role

Bianchi's and Toia's efforts, as well as the Pedrizzi-Tarolli initiatives, reflect the impact that the Pope's campaign against globalization has had on the Italian political scene. Of course, Italy plays a special role in the world not only for the potential of its action as a sovereign nation-state, but also because of the tuning of its policy with the Vatican. As a matter of fact, Italian foreign policy and Vatican diplomacy have been identical in the past years.

This special role, which only strengthens Italy as a sovereign nation-state to the extent that the action of the Church is consistent with its Augustinian-Platonic tradition, is clearly a motive for Anglo-American destabilization, as Lyndon LaRouche has noted.

The new phase of attacks was starting already at the close of the election campaign, when the City of London's weekly, *The Economist*, published a cover story on Silvio Berlusconi, entitled "Unfit to Govern Italy." The story, composted out of old allegations against Berlusconi, was then picked up by newspapers in France, Spain, and the United States, building up to a big international media scare story.

Clearly, aspects of Berlusconi's past are questionable, and the very idea that a media tycoon, the richest man in the country who owns all private TV stations, should take over the government, is alien to European political tradition. But interestingly, neither *The Economist*, nor the other media that participated in the campaign, wrote one line of comment on Berlusconi's program. In reality, two months earlier, the *Financial Times* had indicated that the City of London disapproved Berlusconi's ambitious infrastructural program, calling it "dirigistic."

The real target of the attack was the Italian government as such. Anglo-American hostilities against the Italian governments had already started with the outgoing Giuliano Amato cabinet, when U.S. President George W. Bush ostensibly refused to meet or even call Amato after the inauguration of the new U.S. administration. Frictions between Washington and Rome emerged also in the delay of the nomination of the new U.S. ambassador to Italy, a fact which irritated the Italians. While the Bush Administration inaugurated a new policy of confrontation with Russia and China, Italy was leading European negotiations on the Russian foreign debt, culminating in a breakthrough, as Italy, the second-largest creditor nation, agreed to turn Russian debt into credit for investments in Russia. The same proposal is now being considered by Germany.

New 'Strategy of Tension'?

The Economist attack was clearly intended to put pressure on the nation, increasing radicalization and profiling an "en-

emy image" of Berlusconi for the radical left. This is the classical British way of destabilizing the country: a left-right radicalization, which manipulates both left and right, and blocks any bipartisan policy in the interest of the nation. In such a scenario, the Anglo-Americans deploy terror operations. Since 1969, this has been called "the strategy of tension."

The Economist is owned by, among others, the Rothschild interests, the same ones that created George Soros and his Quantum Fund. Thus, *The Economist*'s action stands in continuity with the famous 1992 Soros assault against the Italian lira.

The next major battleground will be the July 23 Group of Eight summit in Genoa. Already, Teddy Goldsmith's and Danielle Mitterrand's "Anarchist International" have announced that they will take over Genoa. Speaking to this reporter, Luca De Fraia, who is leader of the London-centered "drop the debt" campaign and is a member of the coordinating committee for the demonstrations in Genoa, said; "We will be 50, maybe 100,000. They will have to accept this reality and give us the structures."

But Genoa is an older city with a very small historic center. So, all indications are that, in order to guarantee the G-8 meeting, the Berlusconi government will set up a *cordon sanitaire* around the city. And this, the anarchists said, will mean war.

The "anti-globalization" anarchists are a battering ram controlled by the same interests that promote globalization, and their function is to take over and discredit a serious opposition. In Italy, this mob is composed of the old "autonomist" networks, which were part of the terrorist movement in the late 1970s. Eventually, the Autonomia organization was disbanded and its leaders prosecuted, but some of them, such as Oreste Scalzone and Toni Negri, found protection in France, in Danielle Mitterrand's political circles, against Italian extradition requests.

Their networks in Italy organized themselves around so-called "Centri Sociali," which have been politically represented by the PRC. The Centri Sociali have started actively organizing in support of the Mexican insurgency, and have called themselves "Zapatistas." It was a group of Tute Bianche that supplied security for "Subcommander Marcos" during the recent Zapatista march on Mexico City. Generally, in all clashes with police during anarchist "anti-globalization" demonstrations, the Tute Bianche and other mobs supplied by the Italian Centri Sociali play a key role. This mob is now preparing for the great Genoa battle.

Only by exposing the network behind this mob, can the Italian government successfully confront and defuse the threat, including forcing the trade unions and labor-connected sectors of the opposition to isolate the mob. This goes together with a real anti-globalization policy, under the title of the General Welfare, and the New Bretton Woods policy formulated by LaRouche.