

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY PROPOSED TO MANAGE ITALIAN AUSTERITY

May 24 (IPS)— The Fiat-allied press in Italy this week promoted guidelines for managing austerity: a German-style *Grosse Koalition* with the Communist Party (PCI) and the trade-union bureaucracy joining the progressive bourgeoisie in a government of national unity to enforce brutal economic controls and lower consumption. The two leading bourgeois dailies *La Stampa* and *Corriere della Sera* and the counterinsurgent pseudo-left weekly *L'Espresso* — all controlled by Fiat chairman Giovanni Agnelli— peddled their interpretation of the pro-divorce vote in the May 12 referendum as a plebiscite for a “new model of development” within a “new Europeanism.” Agnelli expounded these anti-working-class views in person May 20 in a speech before a conference of European management at Turin. There he called upon his audience to take the lead in establishing a new “cultural unity” around the issues of quality of life, decentralization, and “responsibilizing” the working class.

The national leadership of the PCI and its trade-union affiliate the CGIL has totally accepted these zero-growth self-policing austerity plans. While Christian Democratic Premier Rumor openly threatens the Italian population with huge slashes of consumption to head off economic collapse, PCI economists Peggio and Barca find nothing to dispute in Rumor's analysis of the situation, Barca states: “We don't reject the appeal to rigor, on the contrary, we DEMAND rigor!”

Government Bankrupt

Despite the PCI's suicidal policies, Rockefeller and his Italian co-thinkers have a serious political obstacle to surmount quickly. The present center-left coalition is morally bankrupt, tainted with a series of colossal corruption scandals for which the coalition and its supporters have granted themselves an illusory immunity. The biggest bourgeois party, the Christian Democracy (DC) is a shambles since its defeat in the referendum.

Daily headline-grabbing escapades of Central Intelligence Agency countergangs called Clockwork Orange, Red Brigades, and the October 22 band have

further discredited the government's capacity to maintain order. Under the pretext of preventing terrorism, house-to-house searches were carried out in all major Italian cities this week, and the Rome and Milan airports were placed under military control. Meanwhile, the bourgeois press has “leaked” the fact that because of loopholes the much-touted import tax, by which Italy threatened to dismantle the Common Market in order to defend the lira, is not even working!

In the words of PCI/CGIL spokesman Rinaldo Scheda, the present government is hardly capable of “demanding the necessary sacrifices and assuring the trade-offs.” The trade-offs Scheda has in mind are investments in the Mezzogiorno for recycling workers into forced-work jobs in massive Depression public works projects. This program— around which Scheda proposes to mobilize thousands of Italian workers striking this week in food, agriculture, auto, construction and railway sectors— is the Rockefeller plan for delivering a disarmed Italian working class into the hands of Helmut Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing to mold a fascist Europe. The PCI, Rockefeller's delivery boy, would enter or support a “government of national unity” (the *Grosse Koalition* proposed by *L'Espresso*) capable of winning the confidence of workers.

Nueva Solidarieta

But can the PCI control its ranks? Last week the European Labour Committees disrupted the CIA-planned flow of zero growth publicity, programmed terror, and suicidal militancy. The entire first run (20,000 copies) of the Italian-language edition of *New Solidarity* was sold out. *Nuova Solidarieta* gave a powerful new tool to the working class and the left in Italy. The analysis of the Red Brigades, for example, as a CIA-controlled counter gang was reprinted in *Avanti*, the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) daily. *Nuova Solidarieta* was snapped up at party meetings of the PSI and PCI, while significant layers from the PSI, CGIL, and the independent left are openly working with the European Labour Committees.

Symptomatic of the trend is a regional meeting today in Ancona, a Communist stronghold, where PSI, PCI, and the Young Socialists will discuss the Labour Committee united front proposals for fusion power developments and the “Golden Snake” monetary system for Europe.

ZERO GROWTH NATO-STYLE

May 24 (IPS)— NATO Secretary-General Joseph Luns set the tone for zero population growth and zero economic growth earlier this month in a visit to the exposition *Environment 74* held at the Agnelli Foundation in Italy. Besides defense, Luns declared, NATO carries out “an important activity of political consultations and many studies in the scientific and ecology fields.”

NATO's Committee for the Challenges of Modern Life, formed in 1969, met at Turin to examine the progress of its ten ongoing pilot projects. Under the guise of environmental protection, NATO is coordinating these projects to prepare the way for low-intensity military operations.

U.S. notables at the Committee meeting were Russell Train of the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Ambassador to Italy John Volpe, and Undersecretary of Transportation John Barnum. They had a simple message for the Italian and world working class: “If we are to survive we must practice zero population growth and zero economic growth.”

Train's grand solution to the energy crisis would send Italy back to the stone age. He said: “. . . it is obvious that a smaller consumption of energy corresponds to a smaller amount of pollution.” Train was billed as America's “foremost ecologist.”

AMNESTY FOR CRIMINAL CABINET; AUSTERITY FOR ITALIAN PUBLIC

May 24 (IPS) — Italian daily *La Stampa* reports May 19 on the “delicate question of whether to grant amnesty” to all the Cabinet politicians discovered with their hands in the till during the oil and Montedison scandals over the past few months. The government bureaucrats want to erase the past and establish severe standards for the future.

As *La Stampa* warns, the public is already angry that public financing of political parties was rammed through parliament and they will be even more wary and unwilling to accept the imposition of austerity “sacrifices” from the thieving Cabinet.