

Why Italy needs a Patriots' movement

by Lilliana Celani

The Italian weekly *L'Espresso* in its March 9 edition drew national attention to the formation of a new movement called the Patriots for Italy, which is dedicated to defending Italy from the Soviet threat, AIDS, and economic collapse. The movement was initiated in February with an open call to all Italians which appeared in the national economic daily *Italia Oggi* (see *EIR*'s "Report from Rome," March 6, 1987).

Quoting the founding statement's warning about the danger of the AIDS plague and of Soviet imperialism, *L'Espresso* writes that "to share these concerns and to sign the call in the name of the ideals of Dante, Leonardo, and Verdi, of the Christian heroism of Saint Francis and Saint Catherine of Siena, and of the noble political passion of the scientists and patriots around Cavour, were 50 people. Among them are some retired officers (including retired general Duilio Fanali, former chief of the defense staff, who was investigated during the Lockheed bribes scandal), and some Christian Democratic politicians (like parliamentarian Salvatore Meleleo and former senator Benedetto Todini, who is currently a provincial councilman)."

We asked several signers of the call why they decided to launch a patriotic movement at this time. Senator Todini, a member of the Christian Democratic party, replied: "I joined the Patriots for Italy, because I share their basic opposition to all imperialisms, and particularly against Soviet imperialism, which does not allow its own leaders to take into consideration the human dignity of other peoples."

Senator Todini does not believe in Gorbachov's so-called reforms: "If there is no renunciation of the basic Soviet ideology, then Gorbachov's reforms are only tactical. The Soviet political system, which has ruled until now with violence, will not change. Only deluded people can imagine that slight cosmetic changes can transform Soviet society. They have freed one scientist, because he was known all over the world, and because they needed to strengthen their regime, but what about the thousands still remaining in the mines, who are forbidden to see their relatives? When the Soviets officially announce an executive order saying that no one can be punished for what he thinks, then we will be able to speak about reforms."

Counterposed to the "ontological" nature of the Soviet

system "that Hegelian Marxism which says that the individual is subordinated to the State, and is only an instrument of the State," Senator Todini said, are those Christian values that made Western civilization possible. "The Christian conception of human dignity is that Man is the center of Creation, and that the State is worthy only if it acts for the common good. This concept has spread now to all of Western society, but at the time of Christ it was an atomic revolution." It is in the name of this concept that the Vatican Commission *Justitia et Pax* recently backed the developing countries against the IMF.

"Our brothers in Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Venezuela," said Fiorella Operto, chairwoman of the Schiller Institute in Italy and one of the signers of the Patriots' call, "should know that Italy is not only the Bank of Italy; there are important groups and institutions which are basing their actions on the pontifical letters *Populorum Progressio* and *Rerum Novarum*. Italy too is facing a bad problem of underdevelopment in the Mezzogiorno, and thanks to its historical, cultural links with Latin America, it is in a key position to explain to other industrialized countries how underdevelopment can be defeated. To be a patriot today means to support Latin America."

No to the zero option

Another signer of the call was Giorgio Prinzi, an engineer and military expert for various Italian magazines, including the General Staff's publications, which have published his articles on Italy's role in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), explained to me what would happen if Italy fell into Gorbachov's "zero option" trap. Using a typical Roman expression, Prinzi said that "Gorbachov's zero option is a *fregatura*, a public relations stunt, aimed at unilateral disarmament of the West in Europe. If the American missiles were withdrawn from Sigonella, the American base in Sicily, nothing could stop the Soviets from using Sicily and the Mediterranean as a logistical base in support of an attack on the ground in Central Europe."

As he wrote in *Rivista Marittima*, the magazine of the General Staff of the Italian Navy, in case of a conflict, the Soviets would first destroy the Italian industrial potential in the Pianura Padana, the northern industrial triangle of Milan, Turin, and Genoa. Then, with "a pincer attack, they would cut all Western naval communications, using their fleet in the Mediterranean, and gaining logistical bases not only in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Libya, but also directly in Sicily, with a blitz attack. They would not even need to conquer all Sicily, it would be enough to take over some airports and fortify them."

This vulnerability of Sicily probably has something to do with why many telephone calls of support came into the offices of the Patriots for Italy from Sicily. Sicilians still remember the Libyan missiles which hit Lampedusa Island, at the time of the American raid against Libya in April 1986.