

Italy weighs amnesty for terrorists

by Antonio Gaspari

The return of the fanatical subversive Franco Piperno, sentenced to 10 years in jail after the trial of the underground journal *Metropoli*, and for five years a fugitive from Italian justice in Canada, has given Italy's media another element to add to the debate on shortening the jail terms and even possibly pardoning terrorists.

This debate was officially opened by Christian Democratic parliamentary leader Flaminio Piccoli, who together with the Italian Communist Party's justice expert, Prof. Cesare Salvi, and the Italian Socialist Party's Hon. Salvo Andò, had officially spoken of "clemency measures" toward the members of the "Armed Party" at a conference held at the Foreign Press Association. Both Professor Salvi and Deputy Andò backed Piccoli's proposals on that occasion.

The question is so explosive that almost all the parties have split over the mooted amnesty. In the "pro" camp are found Staiti di Cuddia, a parliamentarian of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI); Red Brigades fugitive Orreste Scalzone; and Emilio Vesce, the former defendant in the *April 7* trial, now Radical Party deputy in parliament. Among the "contros," against the clemency measures, have lined up former Italian President Sandro Pertini, parliamentarian Publio Fiori, Senate chairman Giovanni Spadolini, and all the victims of terrorism.

The debate is so paradoxical that many are asking what lies behind it.

With the "Repented Terrorists Law," the state had already made extraordinary concessions toward persons who, even if they had committed monstrous crimes, are today free (the case of Marco Donat Cattin) or semi-free (the case of Red Brigader Alberto Franceschini).

That law itself was juridically inadmissible, but had been justified by an emergency situation, when the testimony of terrorists willing to turn state's evidence was crucial to locate and shut down the terrorist safehouses. Today, any measure favoring amnesty must be considered not only the result of perverse political games, but a profound attempt to overturn

the constitutional basis of justice in Italy.

We are dealing here with leaders of a self-defined *Armed Party*, whose declared aim is to violently subvert the reigning institutions. This Armed Party would now win political recognition from the Italian state, for which the terrorists' crimes would be susceptible of clemency, as they were conducted for political ends!

This monstrous manipulation is based on the old sociological thesis which claimed that the events that began with the 1968 "youth protest" and led to the shooting war that began in 1969, were to be blamed on the injustices in civil society, injustices which alone prompted young idealists to take up armed struggle.

But only when law enforcement rejected that sociological theory, was there a militarily effective response to the "Strategy of Tension" which claimed hundreds of innocent lives in both blind and targeted terror, and today it would be all the more disastrous for Italy to accept that approach. Piperno and his "Worker Power" organization were in fact indicted in the late 1970s, when Italy's magistrates overthrew the sociological thesis.

We are speaking of the terrorists of both "left" and "right," who have been tried over the years for carrying out the Bank of Agriculture massacre in Milan in 1969, multiple train bombings that murdered hundreds in the 1970s, the kidnap and murder of former Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1976, the 1981 Bologna train station massacre, and countless other kidnappings and murders over the last decade and a half.

The Armed Party

The Armed Party was in fact the outcome of a coordinated action, between indoctrination and the creation of a clandestine apparatus of communist ideology inside the country, and the work of the secret services of certain foreign countries, predominantly the Soviet KGB and GRU (military intelligence). This has been made quite clear by testimony during the proceedings of various terrorist trials.

The initiator of the Armed Party in Italy was the well-known red billionaire, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who died in 1972 while attempting to blow up a power line near Milan. Suspended from the Italian Communist Party as soon as he started organizing terrorist subversive actions, Feltrinelli took his orders straight from Havana and Prague. It was he who financed "Potere Operaio," or Worker Power.

In Zurich he founded an "international office" in the bookstore Eco Libro, which became the headquarters for international coordination of terrorist outfits; ongoing contacts were made with the Baader Meinhof gang of West Germany, the IRA in Northern Ireland, the Basque ETA in Spain, the ultraleft in France, Palestinian terrorist formations, and the exiled Tupamaros of Argentina.

These armed groups held their first summit in Florence in 1971, a meeting sponsored by Worker Power and Feltrinelli. Needless to say, they discussed the military apparatus needed

for the subversion of Europe.

In this regard it is interesting to recall that Feltrinelli himself wrote a letter to Franco Piperno, known as "Saetta" (Arrow), in which he proposed to share between them an underground army of national liberation which would deploy in northern Italy. Piperno considered Feltrinelli, code-named Osvaldo, "one of the few revolutionaries who had undertaken the right road . . . the only correct road toward revolution."

The role of the Soviets was crucial from the beginning. From the middle of the 1960s, the Kremlin started to cast a benign eye on the "adventurers of terrorism"; all the liberation movements and extremist grouplets, even if they were anti-Stalinist or Trotskyist, were encouraged.

According to statements by the military adviser of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Gen. Jan Sejna, now in exile in the West, already in 1964 the Soviet Politburo had decided to increase expenditures for terrorism in the West by 1,000%. The secret services of all the countries of the Communist bloc were committed to the recruitment of spies to be inserted into the terrorist movements. Training camps were set up in various parts of the world.

It was precisely in the camps which the KGB had opened in Karlovy Vary and Doupov, nearly Prague, that Feltrinelli and other Italians such as Red Brigades leaders Curcio, Franceschini, Spazzali, Viale, et al. were trained in the use of weapons and explosives.

Outside forces

It is therefore clear that we are not dealing with some poor youths who got carried away by radical ideas, but with conscious instruments at the service of a plan for violent upheaval, conducted in cahoots with foreign forces inimical to Italy, in the name of an imaginary communist-type revolution.

Even today, Piperno repeated during an interview that he considers himself still a "son of the Italian Communist Party," and Franceschini, who was a member of the Italian Communist Youth Federation, now works as the special correspondent of the bimonthly review *Ora d'Aria*, a publishing venture of ARCI, the Communist-Socialist cultural front, which is supposed to give a voice to prisoners.

It is therefore quite understandable why the Communist Party is interested in amnesty for the terrorists; it is not so clear why Hon. Flaminio Piccoli, often seen in the past as the leader of conservatives in the Christian Democracy, has made himself the promoter of this initiative.

Rumors in political circles have suggested that Piccoli—formerly Christian Democratic Party secretary—is aiming at regaining power both in his own party and in the government, and has found no better means than to propose actions which will curry favor with the Italian Communist Party chief Alessandro Natta as well as with Gorbachov.

Such, it seems, is the climate in Western Europe after the Reagan-Gorbachov summit.

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