

IPS' Barnet Defends Himself

Il Messaggero, Monday, May 16

"He's a CIA agent, the CIA Says So"

by Guido Molto

'Marcus Raskin created the Red Brigades, the NAP and almost every other subversive group which has taken part in the criminal activities which have occurred in Italy from 1969 till today.' This and similar affirmations are contained in a recent article on terrorism in a Milanese weekly. Richard Barnet, who with Marcus Raskin co-directs the Institute for Policy Studies, headquartered in Washington, D.C., was also accused in the article. Therefore, we have asked Mr. Barnet to comment on these clamorous revelations. Barnet, one of the most noted international experts in the field of multinational companies, is in Italy presently for a series of seminars and conferences.

'Strangely,' Barnet says, 'the statements on Marcus Raskin and the Institute for Policy Studies which are contained in the article are identical to those contained in an article by a periodical of the U.S. Labor Committee (sic) a political organization of highly ambiguous funding and a massive budget. They assert they are of the left, but in reality they act otherwise by attacking and defaming leftist and democratic organizations as well as intellectuals like Noam Chomsky. In fact, they never attack rightwing organizations or individuals. In Italy there is a group linked to the U.S. Labor Committee and it is the European Labor Party.'

'Mr. Barnet, the article asserts that your organization is financed by the Rockefeller family, and that it organizes, controls and maintains subversive groups of the right as well as the left for some ten years...'

'Our institute is financed by its members and by small private cultural foundations. It was founded in 1963 and since then our studies and research were never appreciated by the government, by the CIA or the FBI. We criticized the foreign policy of Kennedy; we were strenuous opponents to the Vietnam War. We are on the famous "Enemies of Nixon" list. Besides we have always sought to tighten relations with the democratic forces and organizations of other nations. Above all, this last aspect of our activities, with its ongoing work of counter-information on foreign and economic policy is quite a nuisance to the CIA. The slanders to which we are subjected come from there.'

The CIA, according to Barnet, is served by ambiguous groups like the U.S. Labor Committee ('This group is financed by the Rockefeller family for sure') to discredit organizations like ours both domestically and abroad.'

Richard Barnet could not fathom why an Italian weekly, particularly one which is very close to the Italian Communist Party, evidently published statements so grave without checking the sources. 'It must be treated as a journalistic error. The fact is that another very widely circulated weekly has also published the statements. I am sure that there will be denials. In the U.S. the leaders of the Institute and many famous intellectuals are organizing a campaign against such defamations. This campaign will consist of sending telegrams to the PCI secretary to recommend he pressure the responsible persons for denials. During these days, Barnet has met authoritative exponents of the PCI and the PSI all of whom were shocked by the publication and have guaranteed their interest in this event.'

Terror Scandal Spreads In Italian Press

Avanti, May 13: statement authored by Socialist Party (PSI) leaders Balzamo and Mancini attacking "left fascism:" "It must be said that the party cannot become the mouthpiece of a "left" anticommunism which is replacing the rotten, traditional anticommunism."

Il Giorno, May 14: Communist Party of Italy (PCI) Central Committee document condemning the Radical Party's illegal demonstrations, calling the participants "provocateurs and devastators who wish to destroy the democratic parties, institutions and the Republic... we give them no cover, we do not minimize them. We must realize an immediate alliance between the democratic parties, trade unions, the population and the police..."

Il Popolo, May 14, attacks Radical Party leader Marco Pannella for his role as chief organizer of the demonstrations that resulted in violent clashes between the police and demonstrators, along with Pannella supporters grouped around PSI leader Radice Lombardi, Cicchitto Querci, and UIL head Benvenuto. *Il Popolo* stated that Pannella is "...morally responsible for the death of a bystander... the same must be said for the PSI members Cicchitto, Querci and Benvenuto...for if they continue to exalt the struggle against the State, they will be accomplices to the terrorists."

Il Giorno, May 17, covers a press conference given by the Vice-President of the Italian Chamber of Commerce, Di Giulio at Montecitorio. DiGiulio stated, "The police know the names and addresses of the terrorists and their leaders and can arrest them; the citizens will support the police. (Interior Minister) Cossiga will have an easy task if he will strike...the offices of the terrorists must be searched; the judges will give a thousand search warrants if necessary..."