

Italy's Northern League threatens to secede

by Claudio Celani

By this Christmas, there could be two separate Parliaments going into recess in Italy, if the Northern League's "duce" Umberto Bossi puts his money where his mouth is. Bossi has announced that from Dec. 10-15, his party, which swept Northern Italy in local elections held on June 6, will convene to decide whether it is time to withdraw its parliamentary delegation in Rome and establish "the first Parliament of the Republic of Northern Italy." Some observers are dismissing Bossi's threat as pressure to hold early national elections; but Christian Democratic leader Mino Martinazzoli has warned that "Bossi wants to turn history backwards, and when that happens, guns will speak."

Bossi in fact may not carry out his secession threat this time, since the League's opponents in the Parliament may capitulate to his blackmail. But the breakup of Italy as a nation-state has already been decided; now it is only a matter of time. Gianfranco Miglio, the League's chief ideologue, has just released a book where he sets the year 1996 as a deadline for the League's seizure of power and the creation of a "federalist" Italy, splitting the country into three parts: the League-controlled North, the central region around Rome, and the impoverished South. In his book, framed in the form of fictitious chronicles written by several real national figures (including industrialist Giovanni Agnelli and President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro), Miglio explains that the League has nothing else to do than wait and see that the "old system" collapses under a combination of scandals, economic crisis, and fiscal revolt.

It could have been avoided

Many Italians, not only Northern League voters, fatalistically see the breakup of Italy as the inevitable result of an internal dynamic of forces. Nothing could be further from

the truth. It is part of the general destabilization of continental Europe, decided and steered by forces who sit in London and on Wall Street. As a matter of fact, even back in 1946, the British Foreign Office tried to break up Italy, advocating a North-South division similar to the East-West division imposed on Germany. It is not by accident, therefore, that in her recent appearance in Paris, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declared that as far as the British establishment is concerned, there are only four nations in Europe: Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal—i.e., Germany and Italy are not included. Thus, when we follow recent events in Italy, we must keep in mind that just as in 1929, Germany must soon expect a repetition of the Italian "revolution" on its own soil.

The tripartition of Italy had already been decided last summer when the Parliament, working under the government of Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi and molded by scandals and a series of terrorist destabilizations, approved a new election law. The new law changed the mechanism from a purely proportional one into a British system, whereby in each district the winners take all. This automatically ensures that in the next general elections, the League will win by a landslide in northern Italy. The left, represented by the PDS (the former Italian Communist Party) and other forces, will take over central Italy, while traditional parties such as the Christian Democracy (DC) will retain their hold over southern Italy.

Bossi, along with PDS leader Achille Occhetto, are pushing for early elections to be held this coming spring. As Miglio explains in his book, electoral results will not give the League enough strength to form a government, which would probably be run by a DC-PDS coalition. Predictably, such a government would have an inflationary economic poli-

cy, since it would refuse to cut public expenditures and unemployment benefits, and would encourage the fiscal revolt of the middle class through demagogic "tax the rich" sloganeering. But at that point, the League would be called into the government by international pressures as the only force that could guarantee stability to foreign creditors and money markets. As a condition, the League would then demand and obtain a revision of Italy's Constitution, which would make the country's de facto partition de jure.

Still more scandals

Miglio's scenario is now being borne out every day. The push toward early elections was dramatically accelerated in recent weeks by a crescendo of scandals which have hit the last national institutions to have held on to some stability. First, it came out that a high officer of the internal secret service, SISDE, was responsible for having staged a false terrorist attempt, by putting a bomb on a train and then sounding an alarm to the police. Then, three generals of the Army were forced to resign after having been accused of plotting a coup d'état; one of them is also accused of having planned the bombing of the historic Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

The chief accuser, one Donatella Di Rosa, a right-wing extremist and probably a foreign agent, is now in jail, accused by Florentine prosecutors of "disrupting the constitutional order." But for one whole week her story filled the print and electronic media.

Di Rosa's alleged lover General Monticone was a brilliant officer who was chief of the newly created Rapid Deployment Force. His superior, Gen. Biagio Rizzo, was designated successor to the present chief of staff of the Army. The chief of staff himself, General Canino, was the real target from the beginning, because of his public attacks against the U.S.-U.N. policy in Somalia, and because he accused League sympathizers in the military of being "traitors." All these generals have now been dismissed.

Traditional parties witchhunted

But this was nothing compared to what came out of the investigation, opened a few months ago by Rome prosecutors, of secret service officers accused of fund mismanagement. One must say, in parenthesis, that such an investigation would hardly take place in a normal situation; but in Italy, nothing is normal anymore. The SISDE officers were accused of having used secret funds for personal enrichment; and to defend themselves, they accused their superiors, the presiding interior ministers of the last ten years, of having taken similar sums of money. One of them is the current President, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro.

Usually the purpose of an investigation is to prove someone's guilt, and until that is done, the person is presumed to be innocent under the law. But that is in normal times. Since the beginning of the Italian "revolution," the careers of powerful politicians, such as Giulio Andreotti, Bettino Craxi,

Arnaldo Forlani, and Ciriaco De Mita, have been finished in a matter of hours, simply because prosecutors opened investigations on them. In the case of Scalfaro, the implications of a conviction would be far-reaching: The Parliament would be forced to elect a new President, automatically postponing the date for general elections.

For that reason, all traditional political forces have closed their ranks in defense of Scalfaro. The Rome prosecutors have decided to accuse the authors of the revelations of "conspiracy against the presidency," and Scalfaro himself went on television on Nov. 4 to reject the accusations and denounce the accusations as a "destabilization attempt."

Who is pulling the strings of the destabilization? Explanations of internecine fights, such as that Andreotti and Craxi are behind an attempt to blackmail Scalfaro into getting the Parliament to whitewash them from corruption scandals, explain only part of the truth.

More is explained by what happened the day after Scalfaro's television speech. A rumor originated in the City of London that Scalfaro had resigned. Without waiting for confirmation, City brokers in the derivatives market began to sell futures on Italian Treasury bonds. The Milan stock exchange promptly fell by almost 3%.

Who had started the rumor? "The usual people," a banker from First Boston Crédit Suisse told the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera*, meaning those whom one could define as "institutional speculators": Citibank, Rothschild, Goldman Sachs, but above all mega-speculator George Soros. Indeed, last September, at an Aspen Institute seminar in Berlin, Soros delivered a speech on "Prospects for European Disintegration."

The hand of British Freemasonry

Unlike Ciampi, some forces in national institutions have understood that they have to fight back against the real enemy. On Nov. 8, Giuseppe De Gori, representing the Christian Democracy at the trials of the terrorist Red Brigades for the 1978 assassination of former prime minister Aldo Moro (the fourth such trial is just now taking place), held a press conference in London accusing British Freemasonry and the British secret services of being responsible for the Italian destabilization. De Gori, who is also lawyer for Francesco Pazienza, former member of the secret P-2 masonic lodge, accused the British Mother Lodge of having ordered the assassination of banker Roberto Calvi in 1981. Calvi, who was head of the Banco Ambrosiano, Italy's biggest (Catholic) private bank, was found dead, hanging under Blackfriars Bridge in London. Scotland Yard's official verdict of Scotland Yard was "suicide."

That was the beginning, De Gori said, of an assault against Italian Catholic groups which culminated in the recent attack against Giulio Andreotti (accused by the FBI and some mafiosi of Mafia connections). De Gori also said that the MI-5 "knows the truth and is not talking."