### Licio Gelli

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**Licio Gelli** (born in <u>Pistoia</u>, <u>Tuscany</u>, <u>April 21</u>, <u>1919</u>), was the <u>masonic Worshipful Master</u> of the powerful Italian lodge <u>Propaganda Due</u> (P2), involved in <u>Gladio</u>'s "<u>strategy of tension</u>". He has been involved in almost all of the Italian scandals in the past three decades (<u>Tangentopoli</u>, which led to the <u>Mani pulite</u> anti-corruption operation, Gladio "<u>stay-behind</u>" clandestine NATO structure, <u>Banco Ambrosiano</u> scandal, Italian premier <u>Aldo Moro</u>'s 1978 murder, etc.) Gelli was also a member of the <u>Knights of Malta</u>. He now lives under house arrest in his villa in <u>Tuscany</u>.

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# [edit] A Fascist volunteer

During the 1930s, Licio Gelli volunteered for the "Black Shirt" expeditionary forces sent by <u>Mussolini</u> to <u>Spain</u> in support to <u>Francisco Franco</u>, and subsequently became a liaison officer between the Italian

blackshirt government and the <u>Third Reich</u>, with contacts including <u>Hermann Göring</u>; among other things, he operated as an informant for the <u>Gestapo</u>. He participated in the <u>Italian Social Republic</u> with <u>Giorgio Almirante</u>, founder of the <u>neofascist Italian Social Movement</u> (MSI) [1].

# [edit] After World War II

After the <u>Second World War</u>, Gelli purportedly joined the <u>CIA</u>, on the recommendation of the <u>Italian</u> <u>secret service</u>, a hypothesis yet to be verified. However, he was closely connected by <u>Edward Herman</u> to <u>Michael Ledeen</u>, who is thought by many to be a close collaborator or agent of the CIA. In any case, he has been a collaborator of <u>English intelligence agencies</u> and Americans. He joined the neofascist MSI, which gave him a parliamentary immunity.

As headmaster of Propaganda Due, Gelli assumed a major role in <u>Gladio</u>'s "<u>strategy of tension</u>" in Italy starting from the 1969 <u>Piazza Fontana bombing</u>. Gladio was a clandestine "<u>stay-behind</u>" operation sponsored by the CIA and <u>NATO</u> to counter communist influence in Western European countries, which has been involved in terrorist <u>false flags</u> operations in Italy. However, the Gladio affair has been treated, including by the courts, as having no sensible connection with the P2 affair; in 1994, P2 members were acquitted of charges of "conspiracy against the state". Licio Gelli's downfall started with the <u>Banco Ambrosiano</u> scandal, which led to a 1981 police raid on his villa and the discovery of the P2 covered lodge.

### [edit] The 1981 raid & the P2 list

In March 17, 1981, a police raid on his villa in Arezzo, led to the discovery of a famous list of 962 persons, composed of Italian military officers and civil servants involved in Propaganda Due (aka "P2"), a covert lodge of Grande Oriente d'Italia (GOI) masonic organization. The list also included all the heads of all three secret intelligence services, 48 MPs, industrialists, journalists and wealthy people such as the former premier Silvio Berlusconi (at the time not yet in politics) and Vittorio Emanuele, the Savoy pretender to the Italian throne. Police also discovered a "piano di rinascita democratica" ("plan of democratic rebirth"), which detailed a strategy to install an authoritarian government in Italy. On the run, Licio Gelli escaped to Switzerland, where he was arrested on September 13, 1982, trying to withdraw tens of millions of dollars in Geneva, but he escaped from prison. He then fled to South America for four years, before giving himself up in 1987 in Switzerland, which agreed to extradite him, but only on financial charges.

The national scandal that ensued was quite thrilling, given that most of the most delicate charges of the Republic were ruled by Gelli's affiliates. A Parliamentary Commission, directed by <u>Tina Anselmi</u> (of the <u>Christian Democratic party</u>), found no evidence of crimes, but in 1981, the Parliament issued a law banning secret associations in Italy. Gelli was expelled from the *GOI* freemasonry in <u>October 31</u>, 1981.

### [edit] Involvement in Gladio's "strategy of tension" & P2 scandal

In 1970, he was to arrest the President during the failed *Golpe Borghese*.

With <u>Avanguardia Nazionale</u> founder <u>Stefano Delle Chiaie</u> and Francesco Pazienza, a <u>SISMI</u> officer, Licio Gelli has been accused of the 1980 <u>Bologna railway station bombing</u>, which killed 85 persons and injured 200 <sup>[2]</sup>

Gelli has been implicated in <u>Aldo Moro</u>'s murder, since the Italian chief of intelligence, accused of negligence, was a *piduista* (P2 member).

The P2 lodge did undoubtedly have a certain power in Italy, given the public prominence of its members, and many observers still now consider it to be extremely strong. Many people today famous in Italy (starting from the top TV anchor-man Maurizio Costanzo) come from P2. One of those associated with P2 was presumed to be Michele Sindona, a banker with quite clear connections to the Mafia. In 1972, Sindona purchased controlling interest in Long Island's Franklin National Bank. Two years later, the bank collapsed [3]. Convicted in 1980 in the US, "mysterious Michele" was extradited to Italy. Two years later, he was poisoned in his cell while serving a life sentence [4] [5].

### [edit] A meeting with Alexander Haig and Henry Kissinger

According to a November 18, 1990 article by *The Observer*, quoted by <u>Statewatch</u>, "Declassified secret service papers reveal that Ted Shackley, deputy chief of the CIA station in Rome in the 1970's introduced the notorious Licio Gelli – head of the neo-fascist P2 masonic lodge and for years a fugitive in Argentina – to General <u>Alexander Haig</u>, then <u>Nixon</u>'s chief of staff, and later, from 1974 to 1979, NATO Supreme Commander. P2 was a right-wing shadow government, ready to take over Italy, that included four Cabinet Ministers, all three intelligence chiefs, 48 MPs, 160 military officers, bankers, industrialists, top dipomats and the Army Chief of Staff. After meetings between Gelli, Italian military brass and CIA men in the embassy, Gladio was given renewed blessing – and more money – by Haig and the then head of the <u>National Security Council</u>, <u>Henry Kissinger</u>. Just how those and later funds were spent is a key point in the [Casson] investigations." [6]

### [edit] Connections to Argentina's military junta

A fugitive to Argentina for various years, Licio Gelli publicly declared, on repeated occasions, that he was a close friend of <u>Argentina</u>'s leader <u>Juan Peron</u>; although no confirmation ever came from South America; and often affirmed, without ever explicitly explaining why, that this friendship was of real importance for Italy. Several members of the Argentine military junta have been found to be P2

members, such as <u>Raúl Alberto Lastiri</u>, Argentina's interim president from July 13, 1973 until October 12, 1973, <u>Emilio Massera</u>, part of <u>Jorge Videla</u>'s military junta from 1976 to 1978, or <u>José López Rega</u>, the infamous founder of the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance ("Triple A").

#### [edit] 1982 Banco Ambrosiano crash and Roberto Calvi's murder

Licio Gelli was sentenced in 1992 to 18 years and 6 months of prison after being found guilty of fraud concerning the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano in 1982 (a "black hole" of \$1.4 billion was found). Vatican's bank, the *Istituto per le Opere di Religione*, main share-holder of the Banco Ambrosiano, had in return a "black hole" of \$250 million. This sentence was reduced by the Court of Appeal to 12 years.

In 1993, Gelli declared to *La Repubblica*, in reference to the P2 "democratic rebirth plan", that it seemed it was being implemented by <u>Silvio Berlusconi</u>: "Every morning I speak to my conscience and the dialogue calms me down. I look at the country, read the newspaper, and think: "All is becoming a reality little by little, piece by piece. To be truthful, I should have had the copyright to it. Justice, TV, public order. I wrote about this thirty years ago... Berlusconi is an extraordinary man, a man of action. This is what Italy needs: not a man of word, but a man of action".

He talked of many Italian politicians, among whom <u>Fabrizio Cicchito</u> ("I know him well: *è bravo, preparato*"); the "program of reform of justice? that was my plan!"; the reorganization of the TV network, "that's good"...[1]

In 1994, he was acquitted of charges of "conspiracy against the state" as the other less important members of the P2 and he was sentenced to 17 years of prison for libel, financial crimes and possession of secret documents. In April 1998, the *Cour de cassation* confirmed a 12 year sentence for the Ambrosiano crash. He then disappeared on the eve before going to prison, while being on parole. His disappearance was strongly suspected to be the result of being forewarned. Then, finally he was arrested at the French Riviera in Cannes.

Two motions of no confidence were voted by the right-wing opposition against the Justice and the Interior minister, stating that Gelli had benefited from accomplices helping him in his escape. It also made references to secret negotiations which would have allowed him to reappear without going to prison. Police found in his villa \$2M worth in gold ingots [7] [8].

Condemned on December 24, 1996, Gelli obtained the right to be placed under house arrest in 1999 for health reasons. This same year of 1996, his friends nominated him as a candidate to the Nobel Prize 1!

Gelli also faced a three year sentence relating to the P2 Lodge. A few years after the Ambrosiano

scandal, many suspects pointed toward Gelli with reference to his possible involvement in the murder of the Milanese banker Roberto Calvi, aka "God's banker", who had been jailed in the wake of the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano. On July 19, 2005, Gelli was formally indicted by Roman Magistrates for the murder of Roberto Calvi, along with former Mafia boss Giuseppe Calo (aka "Pippo Calo"), businessmen Ernesto Diotallevi and Flavio Carboni, and the later's girlfriend, Manuela Kleinszig. Gelli, in his statement before the court, blamed figures connected with Calvi's work financing the Polish Solidarity movement, allegedly on behalf of the Vatican. He is accused of having provoked Calvi's death in order to punish him for having embezzled money owed to him and the Mafia. The Mafia also wanted to prevent Calvi from revealing how the bank had been used for money laundering.

### [edit] Sicilian Secession?

In 1996, the Italian justice started investigations into a <u>Sicilian</u> project to <u>secede</u> from Italy, conceived starting from 1990 by the Sicilian mafia with Licio Gelli and <u>Libya</u>'s complicity. The 1992 bombings killing anti-mafia judges <u>Giovanni Falcone</u> and <u>Paolo Borsellino</u>, as the 1993 bombings killing 10, have been analyzed as part of such a strategy. These allegations were supported by claims from mafia <u>pentiti</u>, intelligence documents and parliamentary studies. Far-right activists and members of the intelligence agencies were part of the plan, which was to finance the creation of leagues advocating Sicily's secession. Clues about the presence of Libyan secret agents were apparently found.

# [edit] Film

• LICIO GELLI - Poet and Conspirator, Feature Documentary by Gabor Harrach, Italy, USA 2006

### [edit] References

- 1. ^ \( \frac{a}{b} \) \( \frac{c}{c} \) (Italian)""Giustizia, tv, ordine pubblico \( \) finita proprio come dicevo io"", La Repubblica, September 28, 2003.
- 2. ^ (French) "Le chef du gouvernement italien a dû reconnaître son existence", L'Humanité, November 29, 1990.
- 3. <u>^ (English) "Sindona guilty of bank fraud"</u>, *Time magazine*, April 7, 1980.
- 4. ^ (English) "Who killed Calvi?", The Guardian, December 9, 2003.
- 5. ^ (Spanish) "El poder en el mundo después de la "tangente"", Clarín, May 23, 1996.
- 6. ^ (English) Statewatch document
- 7. <u>^ (English)</u> "Pots of Gold", BBC News, September 14, 1998.
- 8. <u>^ (English)</u> "Gelli deported back to Italy", BBC News, October 16, 1998.

# [edit] See also

- Propaganda Due
- Strategy of tension
- Operation Gladio
- Dirty War

# [edit] External links

- Relations of Gelli and Italian freemasonry in the GOI (Grande Oriente d'Italia) site
- Site of italian newspaper "Il Piave" where Gelli writes regularly

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