

# Fugitive mafia boss apprehended in Sicily

By Albi Surlan

Before Marlon Brando, there were two, real Godfathers, who inspired the famous trilogy and many other gangster stories. The first, "Joe Bananas", died in 2002, but the second, Bernardo Provenzano, was captured in a bunker in Sicily two weeks ago, after a 43 year search.

The "boss of bosses", who earned himself the nickname of "Benny the Tractor" for the frequency with which he mowed people down, was tracked down by following his *pizzini*. These were encrypted letters sent out through his network of

helpers to other, smaller fish in the Sicilian mafia, giving them his orders. He was found in his cove, just outside the notorious town of Corleone, which was littered with codes, letters, and notes for keeping track of his underground empire of extortion and protection.

And it's that last word which is splitting Sicilian public opinion according to age: protection. When "Il Capo" was brought into prison, hundreds of people showed up to insult him, chanting: "We are the real Sicily, you are just a shame". The average age in the crowd however must have been below 30. Many elderly Sicilians, at least the ones that

have been protected by the Mafia in its golden days, are more or less openly, supporting the boss. One fishmonger openly shouted "Viva Provenzano" on tv, claiming that there was no proof against him, and many believe he actually protected businesses and families.

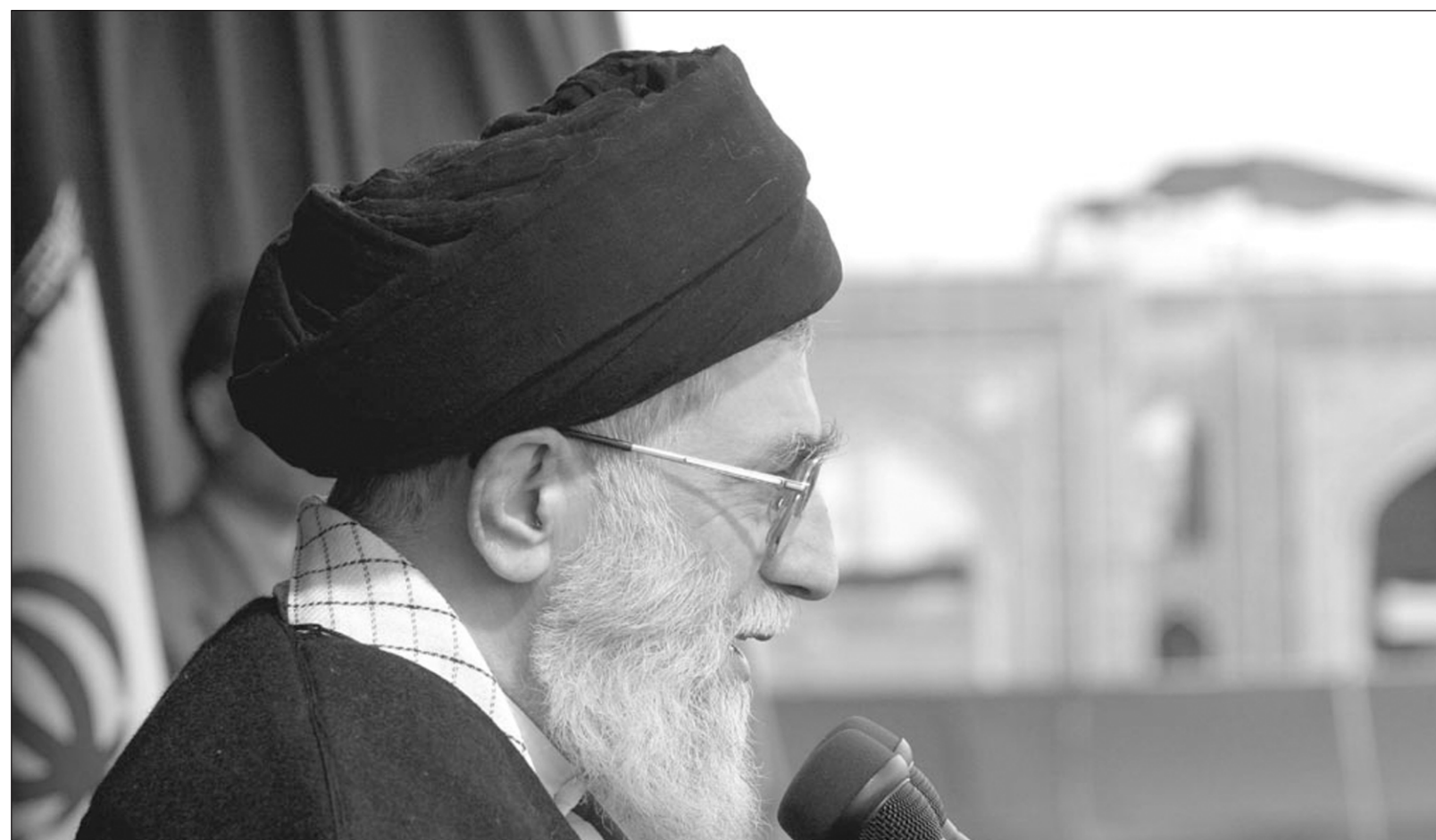
The fact is, while the older generations still seem to support the deeds of this real life godfather, one cannot help think if this is what they actually believe, or if it's what they have to say in front of the cameras. The Mafia is as quick at replacing people as it is at eliminating them, and while a heavy blow, the capture of Provenzano does not destroy the whole infrastructure. The smaller bosses and the *picciotti* who "take care of business" are still active, although in decreasing numbers, and Sicilians know that the government allows for freedom of speech, but the Mafia is hardly as forgiving towards people who criticise its sovereignty. It is only a matter of time before Provenzano is replaced.

Provenzano has been put into isolation until his trial starts, and he has many a crime to answer to; going back to 1963. Contact with the outside world is highly monitored as this man is a mastermind that evaded capture for nearly half a century. Conspiracy theorists have gone wild with the fact that he was caught a few hours after the new, left-wing Italian government was elected. It's thought that he was "protected" by them until they won, and his capture used to promote their first great achievement. This seems unlikely however.

Whatever the speculations, a reign has ended, and no one of Sicily, regardless of age, knows if a new reign is about to begin.

# Iran defiant in face of US machismo

Mike Maiden discusses the American and European Union's fears over increased Iranian nuclear capacity combined with anti-Israeli rhetoric



Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened that if America attacks Iran, US interests around the globe would be harmed

Ali Larijani, Iran's chief negotiator to the International Atomic Energy Agency, warned last Tuesday that Iran would leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if United Nations sanctions were imposed against them. This follows a statement by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian President, which raised fears of a major international stand-

off after revealing on April 11th that Iran had developed enriched uranium. The UN Security Council issued a statement calling on Iran to suspend its enrichment program, in accordance with the demands of the IAEA. The UN expressed disappointment in response to Iran's revelation. President Bush stated that whilst the international world should strive to resolve the situation

diplomatically, if talks fail "all options are on the table." President Ahmadinejad retaliated that Iran would "cut off the hand of any aggressor," a warning to America.

Members of the Security Council first became aware of the Iranian nuclear question in 2002, when the IAEA discovered that the Iranians had been working on a secret enrichment program for

eighteen years. A further shock emerged with revelations by the Pakistani government in 2004 that Dr A Q Khan, head of Pakistan's nuclear weapons research team, had leaked sensitive nuclear information to the Iranians from 1991 onwards. The Iranians have increased suspicion by renegeing on an agreement to permit the IAEA to perform extra inspections, on top of those that the



America fears the combination of nuclear and missile technology

IAEA already conduct. On top of this, the election of President Ahmadinejad has increased tensions with the West. One month after his inauguration in August 2005, he stated that Israel (a close ally of the US) should be "wiped off the map." In his first speech to the UN Security Council, in September 2005, he criticised the policy of pre-emptive strikes on states, seen by many as a condemnation of the invasion of Iraq. The Russians, a member state holding a permanent veto, is unwilling to impose sanctions on Iran. Talks between Western powers in Moscow in April saw Mikhail Kamynin, of the Russian foreign office rule out imposing sanctions.

He said that fears over Iran "cannot be eased through sanctions and use of force." The Russians however, have significant business ties with the Islamic Republic, which sanctions would be sure to sever. China, another veto power, also has links to Iran.

In their defence the Iranians assert that they intend to use nuclear fuel for civilian purposes only. On August 9th 2005, Ayatollah Khamenei issued a Fatwa (an Islamic legal decree), stating that the "production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons are forbidden under Islam." Iran is also a signatory of the NPT, and as such is entitled to enrich uranium for civilian use.

Energy experts estimate that Iran's oil supplies will dry up within one hundred years, and argue that Iran is looking for alternative energy solutions now. They also point to the fact that the Iranians have only managed to achieve a 3.5% enrichment of uranium, adequate for civilian use, but far off the 80% considered necessary to make a nuclear bomb. As yet, the IAEA's inspectors have found no evidence of a nuclear weapons program, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London estimate that it would take from between three to fifteen years for Iran to develop one. The UN called for Israel, who are not signatories of the NPT, to rid themselves of nuclear weapons in June 2004. Israel refused, but no action was taken against them by the Security Council. Muhammad al-Baradai, chief of the IAEA, said that this had caused anger in the region, as it created a "widespread imbalance" of power in the Middle East.

The Iranian standoff comes just one year after North Korea revealed that it had produced nuclear weapons, and was not willing to rejoin the NPT, which it left in 2003. Heavy sanctions have not prevented the North Koreans from acquiring both military and civilian nuclear capacities. China and South Korea have tried to entice the rogue state back to talks with promises of economic aid, primarily through monetary loans. Analysts in The Economist see this as a bad move, arguing it encourages North Korea to rattle the sabre in order to extract more concessions from the international world. After the failures against Saddam in the 1990s and North Korea today, a united front by the Security Council will be essential in dealing with the Iranian question.

# 'Abolition of Parliament Act' censured

By Nick Dingwall

A controversial bill that some have claimed lays the foundations for fascism and Nazism was given its second reading in Parliament last month. The Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill will give ministers power to amend or replace legislation without having to bring a Bill to Parliament.

The man behind this bill is Jim Murphy, Labour MP for East Renfrewshire, and a former president of the National Union of Students. Under his leadership, the NUS abandoned their opposition to the abolition of student grants in line with New Labour education policy.

The new proposals are meant to streamline the process of making new laws: instead of the current sys-

tem of parliamentary debate, a minister will be able to enact a law simply by issuing an 'order'. This is supposed to cut down on bureaucracy and help to update legislation that is perceived to be "outdated, unnecessary or over-complicated."

It will, apparently, help British businesses who have to pay billions each year on regulation. Although similar powers are included in the existing Regulatory Reform Act 2001, they have been described as "too technical and limited" by the Cabinet Office.

So now the government want to remove most of the conditions and safeguards that make the existing bill inefficient, leaving just five clauses that control its use: it cannot be used to impose new taxes or to create a new crime punishable by over two years in prison. Neither can it be used to authorise any forcible

entry, search or seizure, or compel the giving of evidence. The final two clauses limit its use in Scotland and on the functions of the Welsh Assembly.

There are further guidelines that are meant to control its use, such as a requirement that the new provision should not "prevent any person from continuing to exercise any right or freedom which that person might reasonably expect to continue to exercise" and a remarkably vague rule that "the effect of the provision [should be] proportionate to the policy objective."

However, since only the minister involved has to be convinced of the answers, these already fuzzy guidelines could be interpreted as loosely as required.

The powers that the bill provides even extends to altering itself, so ministers could rewrite it to extend

its potential even further and remove its constraints.

As six professors of law from Cambridge University pointed out in a letter to the Times, this bill could potentially be used to sack judges, authorise house arrest, abolish jury trial, rewrite laws on immigration or amend the Magna Carta.

Bizarrely, it has received very little attention in the main-stream press. Proposed the week before debates were held on ID cards, smoking in public places and the glorification of terror, it was drowned out by the weight of comment on these more media-friendly concerns.

But since this bill would enable Labour to pass each of these new laws without debate, perhaps the media should change tact.

Naturally, this Bill has provoked heavy criticism, and has even been

compared to Hitler's Enabling Act 1933 which gave Hitler's cabinet the ability to enact new laws without consulting the Reichstag. Caroline Lucas MEP, speaking at the Green Party conference, dubbed it the "Abolition of Parliament Act", a sentiment that, according to the Times, is echoed by many constitutional experts.

In response to these concerns, Mr Murphy assured Parliament that "the orders will not be used to implement highly controversial reforms." However, a committee of MPs has rejected this assurance and has insisted that the bill must be redrafted to introduce "real restrictions to the government powers," especially since future governments will not be bound by his promise. The bill still needs to pass a second reading and will most likely face opposition from the House of Lords



Reform Bill reaches Parliament

# The Campus Soapbox

Alex Rose

Chair of York Tories

Here's a thought: by the time the next issue of Nouse is published, an average of £258 million pounds - enough to pay for the yearly salaries of over 15,000 N.H.S nurses - will have been illegally siphoned off the European Union's budget, according to an Ernst and Young audit from 2004. Or, put simply, £25,000 by the time you have read this column.

Indeed, this is hardly surprising, given that the E.U.'s own Court of Auditors have rejected the budget owing to financial irregularities for the past eleven consecutive years. However, don't just take my word for it: if you log onto the E.U.'s website (www.eurpopa.eu.int), entry number twenty-one under the heading 'what the European Union does' actually states 'fraud!' In this respect, the best example

of the E.U.'s 'financial probity' regards the case of Commissioner Edith Cresson. Apart from suffering the unfortunate handicap of being French, it transpired that the former Premier had been awarding governmental contracts to her dentist, Rene Berthelot. Naturally, Monsieur Berthelot was totally unqualified for such work, being more accustomed to removing people's teeth; nonetheless, he was paid £125,000. Rather like my dissertation, it seems that his work was not up to scratch, and no-one could find any evidence that he had actually done anything productive.

Moreover, apart from being an Aegean Stables of fraud, corruption and embezzlement, the E.U manages to combine the worst elements of two political creeds: socialism and authoritarianism, culminating in a bossy, 'one size fits all' approach.

For example, the E.U had the audacity to evoke the new powers outlined in the European Constitution immediately, several months before the forthcoming referendum. In doing so, it violated the sacrosanct principle of democracy - that people confer power upon the government, not the other way around.

Consequently, the Constitution was rejected by the French and the Dutch voters, but that did not stop one Commissioner from uttering perhaps the most ridiculous remark in recent political history: 'there are some who want to return to the old intergovernmental way of doing things. To those I say come to Terezin [a Nazi concentration camp] and see where that old road leads.' Apparently, therefore, anyone who believes in accountability and financial probity is a raving Nazi;

God only knows the sort of judgment reserved for unelected, second-rate politicians with no appreciation or understanding of democracy and no respect for European history.

Ultimately, there are no doubt those who will insist that we can work from within the E.U to reform it. To be honest, King Canute had a better chance with the tide; Great Britain's influence constitutes just 29 votes out of 321 in the Council of Ministers. If any further evidence were needed, consider the following words of Romano Prodi following his appointment in 2001 as President of the E.U Commission: 'I have executive powers, for which there is no other name in the world, whether you like it or not, than government.'

How do you vote out an unelected President?