

## ANTI-CAPITALIST DEMONSTRATIONS

# Italy grapples with aftermath of violence

By James Blitz, Alan Beattie and James Harding

As Genoa yesterday began the process of repairing a city ravaged by rock-throwing, riots and graffiti, the Italian authorities and the anti-capitalist demonstrators were coming to terms with a weekend in which violence had tarnished the credibility of both sides.

The industrialised world's leaders left behind a city in which one person had died, 500 had been injured and nearly 200 had been arrested. The Italian government meanwhile will end up spending L100bn (€51m, \$44m) clearing up the devastation.

Feelings of recrimination and regret were aggravated by the midnight raid on Saturday night by Italian police on a building used by the Genoa Social Forum (GSF), the organisers of the demonstrations.

The school building raided by the police was scattered with posters, bandages, leaflets and discarded clothes. Pools of dried and sticky blood lay on the floor, with more blood smeared over walls and radiators. Teams of GSF volunteers were picking through the mess in search of forensic evidence to support an investigation against the police. The raid left the GSF's leaders shocked, outraged and determined to make a political point.

"This was the act of a South American republic," said Vittorio Agnoletto, spokesman for the GSF. "These are not democratic ways of acting. Police did not respect either our civil rights or the constitution."

Mr Agnoletto's criticism received strong backing from Peter Hain, the British minister for Europe, who criticised "the excessive reaction" of the Italian police in the city over the weekend.

In an interview with Sky News in London, Mr Hain said: "The way in which Genoa was managed needs to be examined," adding: "You can't defend the action of the police in shooting and killing someone."

Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's prime minister, also distanced himself from the police operation. But it is unlikely that the events of the weekend will damage his new government or force the resignation of Claudio Scajola, interior minister.

Mr Berlusconi, who won power in a general election two months ago, indicated that he had always disagreed with the choice of Genoa as the summit venue, a venue chosen by the previous centre-left administration.

He emphasised that the entire police operation in the city had been organised by Enzo Bianco, the previous, centre-left interior minister.

The Italian police operation first began to draw criticism on Friday evening following the shooting of a 23-year-old activist, Carlo Giuliani.

The 20 year-old policeman who fired the shot was a member of the *carabinieri's* auxiliary division and is being investigated for homicide by local public prosecutors.

One question being asked was why the Italian police are armed with live rounds rather than rubber bullets in such situations. Another was why the police forces failed to break up the crowd or divert protesters rather than lining up for a pitched battle on the streets.

But the violence had not only spoiled the G8 summit for its Italian hosts. It troubled the lobbyists, non-governmental organisations and political groups that had converged on Genoa to protest peacefully against globalisation, genetically-modified foods, debt in developing countries, the destruction of the environment, global warming and many other issues.

Peaceful groups emphasised yesterday their disgust at street violence and sought to distance themselves from the small minority of people who came to Genoa to fight police and destroy property.

Jamie Drummond, a

spokesman for Drop the Debt, said: "It will be a tragedy if a movement like ours, which is part of the great tradition of non-violent protest of Martin Luther King and Gandhi, is to be undermined by a bunch of thugs. We want our supporters to come [to these events] and they will not if they think they are going to be involved in a riot."

A Christian Aid spokesman said its campaigners had been "bitterly disappointed" not to be able to march after the group decided not to participate in the mass demonstration on Saturday for fear that it would descend into a second day of violence.

However, the movement would not be derailed. "Christian Aid campaigners are a determined and resolute bunch and will not let a small, violent minority deter them from pursuing their cause of debt cancellation."

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**WORLD NEWS**

**GSF's claims of advances of summit disrupted**

Genoa's anti-capitalist demonstrators claim that the G8 summit was disrupted by the police's raid on the GSF building. They say the police used excessive force and that the summit was a failure.

**With groups in a lull**

Protesters in Genoa are in a lull after the weekend of violence. Some groups are still active, but many have disbanded.

**European Commission: US, Canada and China blame**

The European Commission has accused the US, Canada and China of being responsible for the problems in Genoa. It says they are trying to shift the blame onto the European Union.

**Italy: Police say they were provoked**

Italian police say they were provoked by the protesters' actions. They claim that the protesters threw rocks and set fires, which forced them to use force.

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