

Chapter 10

A Study in Gray:  
The *Affaire Moro* and  
Notes for a Reinterpretation of the  
Cold War and the Nature of Terrorism

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The abduction and assassination in March 1978 of Christian-Democrat statesman Aldo Moro—Italy’s “JFK mystery”—is treated by the managing establishment of collective memory in two different ways. One—the so-called “reductionist” (i.e. anti-conspiratorial) approach takes the whole *affaire* at face value—in other words, it regurgitates the episode through the black-and-white rendition of a crisis-stricken government that, for the length of roughly a decade (the 1970s), became so untiringly sieged by popular grievance that such collective revulsion eventually degenerated into pathological forms such as terrorism. Of these terrorist acts, the elimination of Moro came to represent the epitomic and symbolic climax. Whereas the other—a conspiracy theory of the Left, and a highly popular one (hereafter referred to as “the vulgate”)—imputes the elimination of the statesman to highly sophisticated scheming, ultimately directed by foreign powers (the United States and/or Britain according to a few variants), which were bent on denying Italy any kind of political autonomy. In particular, this script maintains that Anglo-American circles conspired to foil a proto-nationalist alliance, led by Aldo Moro from the Catholic center and by Enrico Berlinguer from the Communist Left, whose common vision would have animated a far-sighted policy of international independence in the Mediterranean basin. Being “reductionism” not worth the critical effort, it is here argued that “the vulgate,” instead, is a myth; that this proto-nationalist alliance was never contemplated. Rather, what seemed to have occurred from 1969 until the early 1980s was an unrelenting attack of different factions (with foreign ramifications) against Italy’s Catholic tenure. One such onslaught appears to have been launched by way of Italian Communism in the late 1970s, and it was in one of the defining episodes of this ruthless fight that Moro came to be “sacrificed.”

## The Chronology of the *Affaire*

March 16, 1978, 9:02 a.m. A commando of the Red Brigades (Brigate Rosse, BR), consisting of 10, possibly 12 individuals,<sup>1</sup> ambushes Moro and his security detail—a total of five men, riding in two cars—in Via Fani, not far from the politico's residence, a middle-class suburb in the north-western corner of the capital. All five bodyguards are slaughtered by a hail of bullets; Moro, miraculously ungrazed, is said to have been extracted from his vehicle and swiftly transferred to a similar one. Escorted by two additional cars, this vehicle vanishes in the early morning traffic and conveys Moro to the hiding place(s).<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter, in the heat of the moment, a new government led by Giulio Andreotti obtains the vote of confidence; among the declared supporters, for the first time in nearly thirty years of the Republic's history, are the Christian-Democrats' relentless enemies of yesteryear: Enrico Berlinguer's Communists. The event—the abduction followed by the Communist rallying to the flag—is sensational, unprecedented. With a phone call to one of Rome's main newspapers, the Red Brigades claim responsibility for the carnage in Via Fani and the abduction of Aldo Moro.

17 March. The BR are silent. There is a massive, conspicuous deployment of police officers in Rome, seen everywhere patrolling the streets and blocking intersections in search of the missing Moro.

18 March. The BR release the first communiqué (in total, nine such proclamations will be issued over the length of the affair): in it, they announce that their hostage will be subjected to a "people's trial."

19–24 March. The searches yield no result. Meanwhile, the government solemnly reiterates its pledge to abide by a stance of unbending non-cooperation vis-à-vis the terrorists (so-called *linea della fermezza*).

25 March. The second communiqué is issued and it features a tirade against the putative ravages of world capitalism. It makes no mention of Moro's health.

29 March. The media are now busy diffusing excerpts from the third communiqué as well as three missives by Moro himself, respectively addressed to his wife, Minister of the Interior Francesco Cossiga, and one of Moro's close aides, Nicola Rana.

4 April. Parliamentary debate corroborates the government's resolve not to give in to any eventual request on the part of the BR. These, in turn, send out their "postmen" to deliver a new document accompanied by a plaintive letter from Moro destined for Benigno Zaccagnini, the secretary of his own party, the Democrazia Cristiana (DC).

10 April. The terrorists guide journalists to their fifth communiqué and another letter from Moro, a bitter one, penned against a former minister and DC colleague

1 To this day many details surrounding the number and identity of the actors as well as of the actual sequence of events remain hazy.

2 Whether the planners of the operation had readied a single hideaway, as maintained by the official narrative, or several, is still a matter of controversy.

of his, Paolo Emilio Taviani. The tone of these letters is increasingly perceived as “desperate.”

11 April. Slowly and peripherally, the wall of “*fermezza*” (no negotiations) appears to be fissuring; voicing their dismay at the coalition’s impassibility, Bettino Craxi’s Socialists, echoed by the green libertarians of the Radical Party, argue overtly that such intransigence may have catastrophic repercussions.

15 April. With the sixth communiqué, the BR announce the closure of the trial. Though they had promised to divulge any embarrassing state secret that might have emerged from Moro’s “interrogation,” no such classified information is mentioned, let alone leaked. Past the customary rounds of revolutionist verbiage, the audience is finally apprised that, for his culpable collusion in the Republic’s exploitative and nefarious deeds, the people’s court has condemned the hostage to death.

18 April. A seventh dispatch surfaces; it informs the public, this time, that Moro has been killed and that his body lies at the bottom of the lake Duchessa in the environs of the city of Rieti, 45 miles to the north-east of Rome. Though the origin of the communiqué is dubious, the authorities nonetheless send a rescue team to the lake, whose divers skim the basin in view of dredging up the body, which, however, is nowhere to be found.

20 April. This queer obituary turns out to be a hoax,<sup>3</sup> which the BR themselves unveil with the guided disclosure of a new *comunicato*. Along with a photograph of Moro holding the front page of a newspaper announcing his death, the authentic seventh communiqué outmatches the *coup de théâtre* at the lake by advancing the possibility of a “prisoners’ swap”: Moro in exchange for 13 imprisoned *brigatisti*. The government is given a 48-hour ultimatum to accept the bargain.

21 April. The secretary of the Socialist Party (the PSI, Partito socialista italiano), Craxi, distances himself ever more conspicuously from the hardliners: emphatically, he demands that a concrete initiative be taken to save Moro’s life.

22 April. In the name of “humanity,” Pope Paul VI implores in an open epistle “the men of the BR” to let Moro go—to go free, that is, the Holy Father underscores, “without conditions.”

3 Not until his mysterious death in 1984 would it be ascertained that the author of the fake was Antonio Chichiarelli, a career delinquent and professional *faussaire* of art (especially of De Chirico’s) associated with Rome’s premier criminal association, la *banda della Magliana*. Chichiarelli is supposed to have been hired for the job by components of the secret services, all the while C. Vitalone—a magistrate and *fedelissimo* of Giulio Andreotti—still claims that the idea of the hoax was his and that he conceived it to flush, confuse and force thereby the BR into making a misstep the government could leverage to its advantage. The plausibility of Vitalone’s rather suspect late, post-factum rationale, not to mention the ways in which it might have been relayed to Chichiarelli, are adjacent facets of yet another unsolved enigma, one of the great many quilting this unbelievable tale. See, e.g., Flamigni, S. 2003. *La tela del ragno. Il delitto Moro*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 288–9.

24 April. The BR admonish in their eighth pronouncement that further “dirty” maneuvers such as the ruse of the lake are bound to compromise any possibility to find an agreement around the prisoners’ exchange.

30 April. Mario Moretti, the commander of the BR, places a phone call to the home of Moro enjoining his family members to pressure the leadership of the DC into finding an immediate and “clarifying” solution to the stalemate.

2 May. Divergences at the top become more strident: knowing that Moro’s hours are numbered, the Socialists upbraid the Christian-Democrats loudly for temporizing. The Communist Party (PCI, Partito comunista italiano), on the other hand, remains utterly inflexible, bent to the last not to cede to the BR’s “vile blackmail.”

5 May. The BR’s ninth statement affirms that, as the margin for maneuver has been entirely used up, they will be “*executing* the sentence.” The inapposite use of the past participle is widely interpreted as the terrorists’ very last aperture for negotiation.

6 May. There appears to be some last-minute, frantic consultation at the summit over the eventuality of releasing one or more political convicts for the life of Moro, but the attempt just as suddenly fizzles out in a puddle of indecisiveness, legalistic quibbling and overall unwillingness to alter a course that appears to have been set two weeks earlier.

9 May. Moro’s machine-gunned body is found in the trunk of an automobile in Via Caetani, in the historical center of the capital.

### *Some Preliminary Considerations*

Here we are, in 2012, discoursing about “security”; global crises; Sino-centric imperialism; the perennially elusive, but academically enticing, “loose networks” of the usual Islamist suspects; or the crazed solo Norse terrorist; the menace from Iran; Afghanistan ... and also the crucial experiences of days past, like, say, the Cold War: chunks of a recent history, which have irremediably flowed past us, and which we aver to have fully, “readily understood.”<sup>4</sup>

The truth is that, as far as the official historiography is concerned, the long and contorted twists of the 45-year-old so-called “Cold War” (ca. 1945–1990) have yet to be arranged in a single, elegant and coherent narrative, which is to say that we have not comprehended a thing about it. That history has yet to be written, *in toto, ab ovo*.

To pretend to utter anything profound about the role of Islamist terror, or terrorism *tout court* in the overall configuration of America’s “War on Terror” without possessing a systematic and historically grounded knowledge of what terrorism was and how it operated in the 1970s is comparable to discussing the performance of a steam engine without any notion of thermodynamics. For example, how can we even aspire to sketch a geopolitical fresco of the beginning

4 Horgan, J. 2005. *The Psychology of Terrorism*. London: Routledge. 31.

of the Third Millennium, if we do not possess a single clue as to the significance and functional meaning of, say, Carlos, the Mogadishu/Schleyer case, the FLQ, the warped schisms of Palestinian partisan organizations, the RAF, the Red Brigades, ETA ... or, indeed, the *fantasque* abduction and murder of Aldo Moro?

This is difficulty #1, namely our “complete ignorance of thermodynamics”: we do not have anything even resembling a condensed primer of the Cold War. We only have the official documents and their academic glosses, which is to say, virtually nothing. Without such knowledge, without an interpretative key and at least a few decisive leaks from the realm of classified information, we are perfectly compassless. This penury forces us, therefore, if write we must, to rely on journalistic collages and/or soporific archival compilations (of official, unrevealing papers). In other words, the reading public is unfailingly sold ... scenarios; it is asked to sit and consume all manners of scripts, “stories,” *fables convenues*. The disjunction between the actual management of political affairs and the image thereof that is fed to us is complete: “their game” is one thing, what we see of it, entirely another. The virtual entirety of what we are given to perceive of the political game is *theatrics*. The *comptes-rendus* of such pantomimes are what we call “history books” (aye, so-styled “non-fiction” books are, more often than not, the most fictional of all): they are screenplays drafted by scribes faithful to the various bastions of what is, in the end, a *monolithic* “Castle” (after Kafka).

This brings us to difficulty #2: i.e. the structure of such screenplays, which is invariably identical across the board regardless of the specific subject. Up to the presidency of Bush Jnr. (2001–2008), which witnessed especially in the aftermath of 9/11 a thunderous re-scripting of history in the key of “patriotism,” Western historiography has been virtually monopolized by a leftist interpretation of world affairs (and despite the Neo-cons, the influence of the Left in U.S. academia remains dominant; in Europe, as Neo-conservatism could not have left any durable footprint, the Left’s quasi-monopoly is still in force). A tested form of division of labor seems to have been at work here for quite some time: the rulers—whom we conventionally subsume under “the Right”—seem to be perfectly content to have left thus far the management of “cultural affairs” and indoctrination to leftist luminaries and publicists. The schematism endorsed thereby propounds a vision according to which the world is equally divided between villains and heroes, and all heroes are basically progressives, i.e. leftists. In this regard, America’s conscience—the usual imperial suspect emerging for this basic hermeneutic application—has had no problem reckoning with her questionable behavior in Mossadegh’s Iran, or even in Vietnam—to cite only two instances that have been given ample exposure in the literature.<sup>5</sup> America’s

<sup>5</sup> For the unseating of Mossadegh, see, e.g., Dorril, S. 2002. *MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty’s Secret Intelligence Service*. New York: Free Press; Kinzer, S. 2008. *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*. New York: Wiley.

honor—that of her (governing) “Right”—was in any case saved. Saved because (1) the skullduggery in Iran could ultimately be imputed to the avid wishes of despicable oil companies; whereas (2) the Vietnam War, whatever the true motives of U.S. intervention, had provided the big, progressive heart of America a splendid, historical occasion to hold to task a brutish administration (Johnson-Nixon) for the brief, yet glorious length of the Season of Love. So with these two passing illustrations, we have already singled out three of the leftist playwright’s stock characters: (1) the evil corporations (America herself does no wrong, by definition); and even if America does wrong, as she did in South-East Asia, it was the exclusive fault of (2) Mephistophelian, meteoric monads such as Henry “Dr. Strangelove” Kissinger, “Tricky Dicky” Nixon, or the blow-hard Texan LBJ. Pitted against these stood: (3) the sane forces of society—incarnated by the heroic Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King, etc.—who made such a show of civil resistance as to give the spectator undying hope in “his country.” In sum, most (leftist) historiography uses the same casting template: an unholy entente of corporate interests<sup>6</sup> and power-hungry mavericks or debauched “Colonels” challenged by an alliance of tribunician patricians (e.g. the Kennedys as the Gracchus brothers), featuring, preferably, the appearance of a token Spartacus (the Campesino, Che Guevara or Martin Luther King). (Again, all of this is here presented by way of example; to argue then that the massive anti-war protest of 1968 was itself entirely piloted from above, would be to digress far beyond the scope of these notes.)

Interestingly—and this is of fundamental significance—throughout the duration of the Cold War, Moscow remained enveloped in a mantle of mysteriousness. Because of difficulty #1, the role of the USSR in “the story” has remained so unfathomable that screenwriters have never been capable of fashioning Soviet or Communist protagonists that were not caricatures. In fact, almost all fiction works of that era, cinematographic and otherwise, are nowadays, with a few notable exceptions (namely Richard Condon’s *The Manchurian Candidate*,<sup>7</sup> and Frankenheimer’s cinematographic adaptation thereof), indigestible.

After 9/11, the art of American scripting changed somewhat, but that is another story, whose analysis in every respect was bound to suffer, yet again, from the orthodox, lacunose treatment of Cold War history.

### *Difficulty #1 in a Nutshell*

Simply put, the Cold War could not have been what we have been told—namely, a stark contraposition between two perfectly antagonistic systems of life, between two opposite spiritual tendencies, as it were—Socialist East vs. Capitalist West. This doctrinal falsehood strikes its roots in the very myth of Bolshevism itself,

<sup>6</sup> On Nixon’s lobbying for Pepsi, see Summers, A. 2000. *The Arrogance of Power. The Secret World of Richard Nixon*. New York: Viking Press. 266.

<sup>7</sup> Condon, R. 1959. *The Manchurian Candidate*. New York: McGraw-Hill.



whose true account, also, awaits a proper, truthful reconstruction. From its very beginning, Soviet Communism has served, at the highest strategic level, Anglo-American hegemonic aspirations—and that was, first of all, in connection with the destruction of Germany. It is a formidable story, fragments of which I have attempted to recount in my *Conjuring Hitler*, and which shows that, essentially, from the Rapallo Treaty of 1922 to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939, by way of Tukhachevsky's execution in 1937 and Stalin's "appeasement" of Nazi Germany in the mid-1930s, this "Soviet enigma" was more than anything an exquisite foil for Britain's anti-German designs.<sup>8</sup> Spiritually, indeed, the "Collectivist East" differed very little from the "Consumerist West"—something the sophisticated fathers of postmodernism, Georges Bataille and Ernst Jünger above all, had understood.<sup>9</sup> Bolshevism was but a form of materialistic society, like ours, yet resting upon an extremely inefficient form of state-capitalism, whose technological recipes were, for the most part, imported from the West. *The need for brutal social control and all manner of bureaucratized violence exercised from within was obviously predicated on the Soviet Union's glaring state of organizational rudimentariness in the face of the enormous geopolitical responsibility, which the West had, so to speak, forced Moscow to undertake.* Nothing more, nothing less. The USSR was, as Anwar Sadat would poignantly aver at a much later phase of the Cold Game, an "imaginary foe": too weak, too poor (relatively to the West), too clumsy, and too *artificial* to be that arch-fiendish, archetypical adversary that was putatively bent on bombing the West out of existence and rebuilding Man from scratch. Evidently, it was all propagandistic bluster.

We would need one of Borges's imaginary *bibliothèques* to canvass every single chapter of the Cold War with a view to debunking the official narrative, and showing that behind the various "crises" (the Korean War, the Rosenbergs,<sup>10</sup> H. D. White<sup>11</sup> and Alger Hiss, Cuba, the U2s, JFK, the arms race, Kim Philby<sup>12</sup> and the spying saga of the "Cambridge Five," Vietnam, Terrorism, détente, Watergate ... all the way to the epilogue with Reagan and Gorbachev) there lay other stratagems, other power struggles. All such crises were not the outcomes of policies more or less tortuously engendered by a principled hostility toward the Soviets, but, rather, maneuvers concealing the imperatives of managing empire

8 Preparata, G. G. 2005. *Conjuring Hitler. How Britain and America Made the Third Reich*. London: Pluto Press.

9 Preparata, G. G. 2011. *The Ideology of Tyranny. The Use of Neo-Gnostic Myth in American Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

10 Radosh, R. and Milton, J. 1997. *The Rosenberg File*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

11 Craig, R. B. 2004. *Treasonable Doubt. The Harry Dexter White Spy Case*. Kansas City: University Press of Kansas.

12 Page, B., Leitch, D. and Knightley, P. 1981. *The Philby Conspiracy*. New York: Ballantine Books.

from Washington over the vassals, with—or eventually without (such would be the dilemma)—the theatric connivance of Soviet Russia’s circus bear. After all, it is inconceivable that there could not have been a tacit U.S./USSR co-management of world affairs (particularly) after Yalta. Especially considering, again, how much weaker one partner (the USSR) was vis-à-vis the other (the United States). This opens a whole new perspective on the problem, whose focus then appears to be, above all, America’s preoccupation with *keeping things together within the Atlantic Alliance while having the USSR as some kind of safety buttress (the indispensable Oriental bugaboo) strategically erected behind the Iron Curtain*. The different approach makes new, interesting room for other key, intermediate players such as Britain, Germany and France, of course, and also Italy, each of whom, quite organically, did bring to the arcane and constraining altars of the Cold Game the fruits of her political volition.

### The Screenplay for Italy

To an observer who takes the trouble to look at the total picture [of contemporary jurisprudence] there appears a huge cloak-and-dagger drama, in which the State acts in many disguises but always as the same invisible person. (Carl Schmitt)<sup>13</sup>

We know it: information does not exist at a certain level. What exists, instead, is the leakage of information. (Mino Pecorelli)<sup>14</sup>

In eight, if not nine, out of ten books devoted to the deep politics of Italy’s First Republic, one is bound to read, worded almost identically, the following story. This we call the “vulgate.”

In the last stages of World War II, it had already been decided at the Anglo-American pie-sharing summits that Italy would be one of America’s spoils: her “aircraft-carrier in the Mediterranean,” not-so-metaphorically speaking.<sup>15</sup> Ever since—and this remains true today—Italy has been a country of “limited sovereignty.” The trouble in 1945—if it ever was one in the strategic sense of the word—was Italy’s *Left*: large (altogether ca. 40 percent), sympathetic to Moscow, and with a hefty progressive axe to grind. From the U.S. viewpoint, something serious had to be done forthwith, especially in view of the political elections of April 1948, which were going to decide the political shape of things to come. So, the Establishment, under close American watch and expert management, regrouped.

13 Schmitt, Carl. 1985. *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 38.

14 Flamigni, Sergio. 2006. *Le idi di marzo. Il delitto Moro secondo Mino Pecorelli*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 22.

15 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. *Segreto di Stato, Le verità da Gladio al Caso Moro*. Torino: Einaudi. 12.



Over the next 10–15 years, multitudes of diehard Fascists (“*Repubblicchini*”) were given security clearance and redeployed not just as politicians or aldermen, but also, more ominously, as fully-armed gang-leaders within a tentacular, ever-expanding, and super-secret network of spies, army generals, shock troops, saboteurs and agents provocateurs.<sup>16</sup> This eldritch, Europe-wide *réseau*—whose central is variously ascribed to NATO<sup>17</sup> (viz. the infamous “Gladio,” presumably created in 1956)<sup>18</sup> and/or a Black International, or to even wider, more submerged and haunting structures such as one phantomatic *Anello* (“the Ring”)<sup>19</sup>—was developed, it was later averred, in view of forestalling a potential invasion of Europe by the Red Army.<sup>20</sup> Of course, the contention sounded implausible; in truth, said the vulgate, the function of these networks was to prevent and neutralize any attempt on the part of the Left to assume power, in any form, at any level. Throughout the 1950s this Neo-Fascist panic, which went by the acronym of FODRIA,<sup>21</sup> inspired Communist publicists with a quotidian supply of alarmist flashes enjoining the working class to beware of the odious plots the Blacks were interminably devising against it.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, it was known that cohorts of *partigiani*—the heroic backbone of war-time anti-Fascist resistance—who acted also as the semi-tolerated, semi-clandestine armed militia of Italy’s Communist Party (PCI), were sharpening their teeth and bayonets, and oiling their machine-guns with an eye to the reckonings of Election Day.<sup>23</sup> But Stalin<sup>24</sup> had enjoined Palmiro Togliatti, the PCI’s unchallenged leader, to lie low, not to provoke, and to keep his “troops” on alert for the exclusive purpose of self-defense.<sup>25</sup> So the aggressors were indisputably the Right-wingers, who lived in perennial fear of

16 Barbacetto, G. 1993. *Il Grande Vecchio. Dodici giudici raccontano le loro inchieste sui grandi misteri d’Italia da Piazza Fontana a Gladio*. Milano: Baldini and Castoldi. 82.

17 Laurent, F. 2006. *Le cabinet noir. Avec François de Grossouvre au cœur de l’Élysée de Mitterrand*. Paris: Albin Michel. 220–224.

18 Galli, G. 2007. *La venerabile trama. La vera storia di Licio Gelli e della P2*. Torino: Lindau. 130–131.

19 Limiti, S. 2009. *L’Anello della Repubblica*. Milano: Chiarelettere.

20 Riva, V. 2002. *Oro da Mosca. I finanziamenti Sovietici al PCI dalla Rivoluzione d’Ottobre al crollo dell’URSS*. Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori. 350; de Simone, A. and Nardiello, V. 2004. *Appunti per un libro nero del comunismo italiano. Dalla resistenza al Dossier Mitrokhin, tutti i crimini nascosti del PCI*. Napoli: Controcorrente. 133–86.

21 “Forze oscure della reazione in agguato” (“Obscure forces of Reaction waiting in ambush”).

22 Cecchini, L. 1987. *Il palazzo dei veleni. Cronaca litigiosa del pentapartito (1981–1987)*. Soveria Mannelli, Catanzaro: Rubettino Editore. 37.

23 Turi, R. 2004. *Gladio Rossa. Una catena di complotti, dal Dopoguerra al Caso Moro*. Venezia: Marsilio. 240.

24 Di Giorgio, L. 1979. *Berlinguer o le ambiguità*. Pisa: Giardini Editore. 29.

25 Finetti, U. 2008. *Togliatti e Amendola. La lotta politica nel PCI, dalla Resistenza al terrorismo*. Milano: Edizioni Ares. 114–20.

losing their oligarchic privilege to the progressive aspirations embodied by the PCI, and, to a minor degree, by the PSI (the Socialists).

Owing to profuse CIA funding, the ceaseless application of the Vatican and the staunchly-conservative Azione Cattolica,<sup>26</sup> the enthusiastically pro-American Mafia in the South,<sup>27</sup> and the ciphered threats of the “Gladiators,” the Right, coalesced around the national-populist core of the DC, eventually won the elections by a reassuring margin, and the danger of a civil conflagration was averted. Togliatti, too, was relieved.<sup>28</sup>

From then on, and throughout the following two decades, Right-wing propaganda, abetted by the United States, kept agitating the scare of a Red uprising. The PCI-PSI opposition was thus forestalled until the early 1960s, when the DC resolved to co-opt the Socialists through a tactical curving to the Left designed to assuage its rightist image at a time it could well afford to do so: the halcyon days of the “Italian boom” (1955–1964). Aldo Moro, as premier of several of these center-Left governments, was the strategist in charge of the operation, which was judged alternatively: either as a rather cynical ploy to declaw the reformist platforms of the Socialists, or as an overly prudent, fully compromissory, yet frank overture to genuine progressive exigencies.<sup>29</sup> Actually it was possibly more the former than the latter, as a red flag was raised in 1967 by the leftist press, which tentatively lifted the curtain on what appears to have been a putschist conatus—the very first of several to come—in 1964. The timing seemed perfectly consequential: as the upswing, owing to a credit crunch, was dampened, the trade unions began re-displaying some of that rambunctiousness that always makes elites twitchy.<sup>30</sup> A “plan” (*Piano Solo*) had then been devised by the commander of the Carabinieri—General Giovanni De Lorenzo—at the instigation of the President of the Republic—the Christian-Democrat and vehement anti-Communist, Antonio Segni—to neutralize the Left through a series of surgical offensives, including the forcible evacuation of PSI and PCI leaders to a prisoners’ camp in Sardinia.<sup>31</sup> The truth of the whole affair has never fully emerged. But the late “confessions” of one its protagonists indicate that this coup, *like all the others that were to follow*,

26 Rumor, P. 2010. *L'altra Europa. Miti, congiure ed enigmi all'ombra dell'unificazione europea*. Verona: Hobby and Work. 84.

27 Marino, G. C. 1998. *Storia della Mafia*. Roma: Newton and Compton Editori. 142–57.

28 Flamini, G. 2005. *L'amico americano. Presenze e interferenze straniere nel terrorismo in Italia*. Roma: Editori Riuniti. 43; Fasanella, G. Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 86.

29 Mosse, G. L. 1979. L'opera di Aldo Moro nella crisi della democrazia parlamentare in occidente, in *L'intelligenza e gli avvenimenti—testi 1959–1978*, edited by A. Moro. Milano: Garzanti. xxv.

30 Addario, N. 1982. *Una crisi di sistema. Economia, classi sociali, e politica in Italia, 1960–1976*. Bari: De Donato. 52–3.

31 Flamigni, S. 2006. 9–10.

was a mere threat,<sup>32</sup> in this case addressed to the Socialists, to moderate their progressive agenda (especially anti-speculative zoning laws).<sup>33</sup> The general menacing charge of the grandstanding, De Lorenzo, was, in fact, most devoted to Moro—and Moro himself eventually proceeded in a parliamentary investigation to cover up the scandal,<sup>34</sup> for the pragmatic sake of republican stability and peace, it was said.<sup>35</sup>

So runs the account of the leftist “vulgate.” To this we may interject the following: whatever the net value of the center-Left, it was too little too late as the chickens would eventually come home to roost in the torrid biennium of 1968–1969. At that point, small-time tactical shifts would prove no longer expedient. The tables had turned. Notoriously, it was a time of significant change, which happened to coincide with the first sizeable quake of the postwar order as it was originally conceived at Bretton Woods in 1944. No longer capable of funding its empire by printing dollars galore, which the ever more industrious Western allies had come to accumulate as reserves ever less willingly (America’s so-called “tearless deficit”), and faced with the certainty of a disastrous defeat in Vietnam, the United States appeared to give way. As America floundered about in search of palliatives that would enable her to weather the storm—which would come, to begin, in the form of détente and the imposition of the U.S. dollar through the threat of competitive devaluations (the “U.S. Treasury-Bill Standard”<sup>36</sup>)—the West at large seemed to have been given some sort of political breather. It seemed as though “the people” had been granted an intermittent recess from vassalage, in which they took to the streets to vent their dissatisfaction, demanding some form of change. In Italy that meant also higher wages, which, indeed, would come. As had been the case for the other parties, yet more surprisingly so, the sudden popular surge caught the Communists unawares; actually, by its novelty and indiscipline, it made them nervous.<sup>37</sup> Electorally, 1968, in fact, gave the PCI *nothing*,<sup>38</sup> but the Party would be quick enough on its feet to capitalize on it and ride the wave of protest with founded expectancy. This, admittedly, was their chance: to reap, as chief opposition party, the easy rents of suddenly manifest, pent-up dissent. And they would, of course, but gradually at first. Doubtless, the situation was chaotic, but the political configuration that was to emerge from the quake of the *autunno caldo* (“hot autumn”) was not yet clear. In 1968–1969, Italy’s economic position

32 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 50–52.

33 Galli, G. 2003. *Il prezzo della democrazia. La carriera politica di Giulio Andreotti*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 74.

34 Moro, A. 1979. 131–5.

35 Cossiga, F. and Cangini, A. 2010. *Fotti il potere. Gli arcana del potere e della natura umana*. Roma: Aliberti Editore. 101. 121–2.

36 Hudson, M. 2002. *Superimperialism. The Origin and Fundamentals of US World Dominance*. London: Pluto Press. 16.

37 Valentini, C. 1997. *Berlinguer, l’eredità difficile*. Roma: Editori Riuniti. 141.

38 Valentini, C. 1997. 178.

was by no means endangered, quite the opposite, in fact: it featured strong exports, solid industrial growth, a pacified labor movement, and a per capita income on a par with Britain's.<sup>39</sup> Productive investment was slacking<sup>40</sup>—the harbinger of serious trouble to come—but all this lay submerged for the time being.

### Piazza Fontana

Then, bombs went off throughout 1969, beginning in Padua, on January 1, with a conflagration near the respective domiciles of the chief of police and the university's president. Successively, Milan, Trieste and Rome witnessed a string of explosions; in fairs, public edifices (the ministry of justice and town hall), movie theaters, and numerous trains all over the country (August). Until mid-November, 200 bombings in total, no victims, a few injuries;<sup>41</sup> no one "messenger" of all such explosive signals could be identified, but, for a few incidents, the authorities had jailed a number of "anarchists."<sup>42</sup>

On December 12, 1969, there were four more explosions, three in Rome, and one, *this time lethal*, in Milan: at Piazza Fontana, 17 people were killed and several scores wounded. At this juncture, things changed. Italy was about to enter her darkest decade—the 1970s, *gli anni di piombo* (the "Years of 'Lead'"). To this day, the dynamics behind Piazza Fontana have remained a mystery. Initially—unsurprisingly, considering their previous arrests for this type of crime—the authorities blamed the attacks on unknown, marginal and highly improbable Milanese anarchists: one of them, Piero Valpreda, a 37-year-old "dancer" and drifter, was initially splashed on the front page as Italy's new "monster." Valpreda was said to belong to a bedraggled coven of bomb-toting maniacs that called itself the circle of "March 22nd."<sup>43</sup> The anarchists' involvement, in connection with what appeared to be blatant provocation on the part of the police led—a few hours after the bombings in Milan—to the detention and subsequent inexplicable death of another anarchist, the train-conductor Giuseppe Pinelli. Pinelli flew out of a window of the fourth floor of Milan's police headquarters. No one has been able to reconstruct the scene. Yet, progressively, "people" began to talk; new "truths" were emerging: for one, the press eventually learned, and revealed, that "March 22nd" was a nest of spies; it was infiltrated by military intelligence, the police and

39 Salvati, M. 1984. *Economia e politica in Italia dal Dopoguerra ad oggi*. Milano: Garzanti. 106.

40 Forte, F. 1974. *Odissea dell'economia italiana. Tra recessione e inflazione*. Roma: Buffetti Editore. 100.

41 Giannuli, A. 2008. *Bombe a inchiostro*. Milano: Rizzoli. 11.

42 Boatti, G. 2009. *Piazza Fontana. 12 dicembre 1969: il giorno dell'innocenza perduta*. Torino: Einaudi. 83.

43 In remembrance of the day which witnessed the beginning of France's popular uprisings of 1968.

... a Nazi-Fascist provocateur.<sup>44</sup> Which connection led to a deeper, and far more disquieting, layer of political complicities.

To resume the narrative of the vulgate, the idea thus suggested itself that these absurd anarchists had been, in fact, framed by young Neo-Fascist fanatics, who had orchestrated the entire bombing set-up. Manipulated by agents of the Italian Services, these blackguards, in turn, were following the instructions of the masterminds of a “Black International,” which allegedly had been given the go-ahead by NATO’s High Command.<sup>45</sup> It appeared beyond a reasonable doubt<sup>46</sup> that these (Neo-)Nazi-Fascist cells led directly to (conspicuous segments of) Italy’s Military Intelligence and the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>47</sup> Judicially, 17 of the *attentati dinamitardi* of 1969 have been undisputedly attributed to the Black cell of the “traditionalist” ideologue Franco Freda.<sup>48</sup> As the story goes, the blueprint for a conservative revolution needed to counter Communism’s new wave of progressivism, freedom and peace was laid out in 1965, in Rome, at a conference sponsored by pro-U.S. military circles. The conference was attended by a variety of arch-conservative personages later implicated in the slaughter of Piazza Fontana.<sup>49</sup> It so seemed that the clandestine anti-Communist squadrons of the 1950s had been resurrected for their original purpose at the proper time.

The intriguing aspect in all this is that five days *prior* to the bombings, on December 7, 1969, British intelligence, behind the façade of *The Observer*, insinuated that a coup molded on the Greek model<sup>50</sup> was afoot in Italy. On December 14, two days *after* the murderous detonation, the same source stated that the coup’s putative leader was Italy’s President, Giuseppe Saragat. Saragat, backed by U.S. President Nixon, was said to be fronting a movement of hidebound Neo-Gaullists that were presently pursuing a “*strategy of tension*.” The dictatorial goal of such a strategy was to declare a state of exception after having fomented a season of anonymous terror.<sup>51</sup> More specifically, *The Observer* intimated that Saragat stood as the catalyst of a military-industrial junta bent on bullying the DC into joining its (Rightist) ranks instead of rerunning a despicable entente with the Socialists, which was tacitly buttressed by the Communists.<sup>52</sup> Sizzling with indignation, Saragat publicly rejoined that, actually, the orchestrators of the massacre were themselves British spies<sup>53</sup>—spies who had conspired with the

44 Boatti, G. 2009. 387.

45 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. *Il segreto di Piazza Fontana*. Milano: Ponte delle Grazie. 58.

46 Fasanella, G. and Pellegrino, G. 2005. *La guerra civile*. Milano: Rizzoli. 64–5.

47 Giannuli, A. 2008. 46.

48 Boatti, G. 2009. 186.

49 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 43.

50 The so-called regime of the “Colonels” 1967–1974.

51 Giannuli, A. 2008. 41–2.

52 Bellini, F. and Bellini, G. 2005. *Il segreto della Repubblica. La verità politica della strage di Piazza Fontana*. Milano: Selene Edizioni. 16–20.

53 Fasanella, G. and Priore, R. 2010. *Intrigo Internazionale*. Milano: Chiarelettere. 33.

cabal of Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, the *richissime* Red editor turned Maecenas of the Marxist-Leninist brigades of the world.<sup>54</sup>

Officially, Italy had to protest, and the Foreign Office to apologize ... but the suggestion was out. Even more interestingly, politicians in-the-know would later aver that those bombs—originally placed by the young “Blacks” behind the anarchist cover—*were not meant to cause any deaths*,<sup>55</sup> *but that an eleventh-hour, surreptitious intervention of American military intelligence*<sup>56</sup> *by way of Germany (NATO)*<sup>57</sup> *so altered the bombs’ timer that blood was deliberately spilled*. Why? In order, so confessed a Black terrorist, to derail the original plan, and propitiate thereby “social peace.” Social peace? How does the vulgate interpret this tangle of information? By leveraging another revelation, according to which there existed two orientations among the conspirators: a traditionally reactionary current, embodied by Saragat’s “American Party,” which only sought to exploit fear, and a maximalist fringe of *golpistas*—the industrial-military handlers of the terrorists—who were willing to take lives. The spilling of blood in Piazza Fontana was thus the contrasted outcome of the ideological divergence within this faction, which, in one form (bloody) or the other (bloodless), was attempting to establish “social peace” through a swerve to the Right, and the concomitant persecution of the Communist Party. How were the Catholic center (the nominal “Left” of the DC) and the reformist Left expected to deport themselves under the state of exception? The answer: by one compromise after another all the way to self-dissolution.<sup>58</sup>

As the story went, after the slaughter, the politicians in collusion with the putschists could not muster the nerve to proclaim the state of emergency, and so on Christmas Eve an “armistice” was swiftly arranged with the moderate center through the patient offices of the usual Aldo Moro, the unchallenged master of negotiation.<sup>59</sup> As a visible result, some (mostly intelligence chiefs)<sup>60</sup> were demoted, others were shuffled around, a few went underground, some rhetoric was toned down, and the truth, of course, was safely filed away.<sup>61</sup> What was evident at this crossroads was that the Christian-Democrats were back at center-stage, as always; and the Communists, for their part, came out strengthened from the shock. They did not stray from the pack: like the “others,” they had initially demonized the anarchists,<sup>62</sup> and were now enthusiastically sleuthing the “*pista nera*”

54 Bellini, F. and Bellini, G. 2005. 21.

55 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 86.

56 Via a commando of four, possibly five, men.

57 Boatti, G. 2009. 269; Cossiga, F. and Cangini, A. 2010. 118; Sceresini, A., Palma, N. and Scandaliato, M. E. 2010. *Piazza Fontana, Noi sapevamo. Golpe e stragi di Stato—Le verità del Generale Maletti*. Roma: Aliberti Editore. 99.

58 Giannuli, A. 2008. 44.

59 Moro served at the time as Foreign Minister.

60 di Giovacchino, R. 2005. *Il libro nero della Prima Repubblica*. Roma: Fazi Editori. 85.

61 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 88, 377, 429, 452–53, 531.

62 Giannuli, A. 2008. 25.



(the Black trail).<sup>63</sup> Speaking of Blacks, interestingly, the legitimate façade of the MSI<sup>64</sup> loomed larger and feistier than usual: after the great commotion, it had risen to ca. 15 percent of the electorate—up by more than five points over its historical average. Altogether, this precarious equilibrium had been tortuously achieved by scapegoating the bomb-throwers (the extra-parliamentarian expendables in this particular episode).<sup>65</sup> Keeping in mind the rising success of the Right after Piazza Fontana, one realizes—as Moro did<sup>66</sup>—that there was something to Italy’s “monarchism” after all, and it was, for the time being, making everything complicated, and unstable.

The connections and secret alliances discussed hitherto were bared in the course of numerous trials, all of which, however, ended with the full acquittal of the several defendants. The system, recites the vulgate, always protects itself. In sum, the Italian screenplay maintains that these ultra-Right-wing disposables had been manipulated by a partnership of Italian and U.S. intelligence on behalf of reactionaries camouflaged in coalitions of the center-Right, again, to pre-empt the mass-appeal of the PCI. In the name of anti-Communism, the *golpistas* were hoping to subvert what they perceived as a patently non-cohesive and increasingly Bolshevized “partito-cracy” and replace it with a strong Presidential Republic—a *V<sup>e</sup> République* Italian style. On the international plane, it seemed, then, that Piazza Fontana marked the high-point of the clash between two adversarial factions: a Nixonian, authoritarian party versus a “Lib-Lab-technocratic” faction led by Britain’s Labour Party and its European Social-Democrat satellites (above all, Germany’s SPD).<sup>67</sup> With the attacks on the press (and other non-descript covert action), the latter had resolved to burn Saragat. According to the vulgate, they did so because they thought that the kind of adventurism he was putatively vouchsafing was not only doomed to failure, but that in this very failure the Communists might find the sterling occasion to fashion themselves as Italy’s last standing bastion of political virtue.<sup>68</sup> An untoward outcome, to be avoided at all costs. Yet this is dubious because Saragat’s small party (the PSDI)<sup>69</sup> had been, at least since 1966,<sup>70</sup> the very protégé of those British Laborite clubs that were now drawing heavy fire upon it. Why? We will attempt to answer the question in the course of the exposition.

63 That is, in pursuit of the Nazi-Fascists.

64 *Movimento sociale italiano*, the party of Mussolini nostalgics, which stood furthest to the Right in the constitutional arc.

65 Giannuli, A. 2008. 145.

66 Moro, A. 1979. 241.

67 Barbagallo, F. 2006. *Enrico Berlinguer*. Roma: Carocci Editore. 128.

68 Bellini, F. and Bellini, G. 2005. 33.

69 Partito social-democratico italiano (approximately 5 to 6 percent of the electoral vote in the 1960s).

70 Casanova, A. G. 1991. *Saragat*. Torino: ERI. 132.

### 1969–1974: The “Black Trail”

Be that as it mysteriously may, the official pose to assume thenceforth was obvious. The DC moderates and the PCI set out to decry publicly and sensationally what they described as an unprecedented “reactionary” assault on the constitutional integrity of the country’s democratic institutions.<sup>71</sup> Black terrorism, nonetheless, continued until 1974, with several other bloody bombing ambushes, amid an escalation of street fights, feuds, and random extremist violence pitting “Reds” vs. “Blacks.” Italy was going the way of Argentina.<sup>72</sup> In this first quinquennium of the leaden years (1969–1974), all in the key of Black subversion, as many as five soon-to-be-aborted coups were spread through the insiders’ grapevine.<sup>73</sup> The vulgate believes each one to have been genuine, and serious. The most famous of these trumpeted conspiracies, which allegedly availed itself of the logistical support of the Sicilian Mafia,<sup>74</sup> was Borghese’s “monarchist” uprising of December 8–9, 1970. A Communist newspaper broke the scoop in March 1971.<sup>75</sup> This coup, recounts the vulgate, was some kind of reloaded sequel to Piazza Fontana: it was planned to seal militarily in the capital what could not be sealed through terror in Milan the previous year. It is said that, in the dead of night, after the “occupation” of a few strategic positions by a handful of Borghese’s men, the final assault was called off at the last minute—it is not clear by whom. The leader himself, Junio Valerio Borghese—once a glorious commander of the Navy’s special forces—had been saved from the post-bellum Fascist-hunt by legendary CIA mastermind James Jesus Angleton and redeployed in the aforementioned gladiatorial nets of anti-Communist subversion during the early 1950s. Angleton was also a godfather to Federico Umberto D’Amato, the chief of the ominous Ufficio Affari Riservati (Uaarr) within the Ministry of the Interior, which the vulgate pinpoints as one of the definitional loci of state-organized terrorism<sup>76</sup> since Piazza Fontana.<sup>77</sup>

Eventually, the assizes would nullify, once more, the inquests launched in those days by few daring magistrates: the *golpe Borghese*, they sentenced, was at best a fancy and a rumor, the rumor of an *opéra bouffe* fantasized by a senile platoon of be-medaled retirees. The vulgate’s intimation in the face of such arrogant verdicts, again, was that the Nixon administration—itsself enthralled by the Gaullist allure—

71 Limiti, S. 2009. 88–9.

72 See, e.g., Lewis, P. H. 2011. *Guerrillas and Generals: The “Dirty War” in Argentina*. New York: Praeger.

73 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 543.

74 Camillo, A. 2004. *Colpo di Stato*. Milano: Rizzoli. 50–55.

75 Flamigni, S. 2005. *Trame atlantiche. Storia della loggia massonica segreta P2*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 44.

76 Of the strategists of (State-) terror, D’Amato was one of those that had to be “transferred” for having become too exposed; see, e.g., Giannuli, A. 2008. 323.

77 Flamigni, S. 2005. 44–5. De Lutiis, G. 2007. *Il Golpe di Via Fani: Protezioni occulte e connivenze internazionali dietro al delitto Moro*. Milano: Sperling and Kupfer. 11.

must have been mulling over the possibility of playing the “Greek trump” for this other Mediterranean country on the verge of socio-political breakdown. When the several attempt(s) to do so failed, the young Neo-Fascist hands—many of whom, feeling betrayed and sacrificed, had suddenly begun to die, or disappear in jail or abroad—engaged in one last vindictive<sup>78</sup> bombing campaign against their former back-stabbing employers in the “Palazzo” (politicians, career officers, intelligence handlers and policemen).<sup>79</sup>

1974 was a critical divide. The timeline corresponded, indeed: the year Nixon was ousted, the Neo-Fascists were beaten back, and the Black bombings ceased altogether. Afterwards, the Establishment, always with an eye to the destruction of Italian Communism, switched tactic. In the three-year transition, with the consummate skill that was its trademark, the DC managed to outmaneuver the MSI,<sup>80</sup> divesting it eventually of the electoral premium and the legitimist petulance it had momentarily acquired in the wake of the bombing season. Now, having disposed of the Neo-Fascist Right—center and (illegal) fringe—with the specter of the “*pista nera*,” the true anti-Communist underground was about to conjure up the “Reds” (i.e. self-styled Communist urban warriors) with the same objective in mind: namely to arm and manipulate squads of such dazed Che Guevara-wannabes with a view to defaming and thwarting Italian Communism.<sup>81</sup> The era of “Red terror” was in the offing. Admittedly, the oligarchs were clever and resourceful, extremely so. Meanwhile, under Ford’s new executive team, the United States vowed officially nevermore to use assassination as a means to altering the political course of nations, as it theretofore had culpably done according to a fresh congressional inquiry (the Pike Commission). It was black on white. Boy-scout’s honor.

### “I Rossi” and Aldo Moro

Perché io credo nella DC; io amo la DC ... (Aldo Moro)<sup>82</sup>

The Red Brigades (Brigate rosse, BR) were born in 1970 from a nucleus of former Communist zealots (young students, party activists, intellectuals, and a minority of working-class desperadoes) and a handful of ex-Catholics *pasionarios*. It was an organism that somewhat resembled Argentina’s ERP (Ejército Revolucionario

78 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 449.

79 Fasanella, G. Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 78.

80 Fiori, G. 1989. *Vita di Enrico Berlinguer*. Bari: Laterza. 221.

81 Willan, P. 1991. *Puppet Masters: The Political Use of Terrorism in Italy*. San Jose: Authors Choice Press. 180.

82 “Because I believe in the DC; I love the DC ...” (From a speech given in Bari, January 31, 1969). Moro, A. 1969. *Una politica per i tempi nuovi*. Roma, Agenzia “Progetto.” 72.

del Pueblo).<sup>83</sup> The beginnings of the BR—i.e. the deeds of the so-called “first generation” of Renato Curcio (Catholic upbringing, formation at the sociology department of the University of Trento) and Alberto Franceschini (former militant of the Federation of the Communist Youth)—were bloodless exploits (incendiary attacks, kidnappings mostly of industrial bosses, hold-ups, propagandistic bravado, and various other acts of provocation), avowedly seeking to jumpstart the accumulated revolutionary potential of the disaffected masses. The “masses” would not respond as the BR would have wished, but there was no doubt that the peaceable voters of the PCI (the vast majority)<sup>84</sup> all harbored an undisguised sympathy for these latter-day Robin Hoods. Interestingly, and we shall return to this, the image—and far more importantly, the electoral weight—of the PCI itself did not suffer as a result of the terrorist bloodletting, quite the opposite.

The BR escalated to the “second phase” when, between March 1972 and December 1973, they carried out four blitz-abductions of “class enemies”: three mid-level corporate officers<sup>85</sup> and a Right-wing trade-unionist. These were hit-and-run kidnaps whose spectacular purpose was to expose the “regime” by diffusing humiliating photographs of the victim’s distress as he stood prostrated at gun-point in front of the terrorists’ insignia. The culmination of this intensifying course of action was reached in April 1974, when Franceschini’s commando executed the abduction of Judge Mario Sossi, a declared enemy of the extra-parliamentarian Left. This was no blitz, however: Sossi was detained *sine die*; meanwhile the BR attempted to project their politics onto the next level by demanding a prisoners’ swap. As the government categorically refused to parley and impeded Sossi’s wife from appearing on television,<sup>86</sup> Franceschini, via his early connections to influential Catholic radicals, managed nonetheless to reach the Vatican, which appeared willing to intercede with Fidel Castro for the extradition of the designated political detainees to Cuba. Even the pope, Paul VI, weighed in the matter, acknowledging explicitly the importance of the Church’s mediation.<sup>87</sup> As it went, it was the Secretary of the PCI, Enrico Berlinguer himself, who sank the whole enterprise by pressuring Fidel Castro to desist, in exchange for 60 FIAT tractors.<sup>88</sup> A phenomenal story. Clearly, it was a vital matter for the PCI to disjoin terrorism from (international) Communism in the collective perception.<sup>89</sup> Despite

83 Bellini, F. and Bellini, G. 2005. 52.

84 Santanché, G. 1978. *La rivoluzione fallita. I “metodi” di Boris Ponomarev in Europa*. Milano: Mursia. 19–20.

85 From Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Sit-Siemens.

86 Valle, A. 2008. *Parole, opere e omissioni. La Chiesa nell’Italia degli anni di piombo*. Milano: Rizzoli. 197.

87 Giovagnoli, A. 2005. *Il caso Moro. Una tragedia repubblicana*. Bologna: Il Mulino. 134.

88 Fasanella, G. Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 142; Valle, A. 2008. 94.

89 Bartali, R. 2009. Il PCI e le Brigate Rosse, in *Le vene aperte del delitto Moro. Terrorismo, PCI, trame e servizi segreti*, edited by S. Sechi. Firenze: Mauro Pagliai Editore. 83.

the tactical miscarriage, Franceschini was immensely satisfied with the PR effect of the operation, so much so that after slipping a few telephone tokens in Sossi's coat pocket to make his call, he dropped the judge in the vicinity of a train station. The rapt had lasted 40 days. The BR were at the summit of their popularity.

It was precisely at this point in time, the spring of 1974, in concomitance with the defeat of the DC on the symbolic issue of the Divorce Law (May) that the fortune of Berlinguer's party took off. In three years, the quota of the PCI would climb from the traditional quarter to more than a third of the electorate. Dented and bruised, the DC suffered the Communist assault, but managed to stay the course. Christian-Democrats and Communists were neck-and-neck: there began anxious talk of a possible Communist "*sorpasso*." Since 1973, Berlinguer, in fact, had been proposing an alliance between Communists and Christian-Democrats,<sup>90</sup> the epochal *compromesso storico* ("Historical Compromise")—a hyper-pragmatic solution dictated by the need to "save" Italy by governing it "together," as it were, for the duration of the crisis. To that effect, Berlinguer called all progressives—*lay and Catholic*—to join forces in a common front against Reaction.

On the other side of the fence, peering from that thicket of inoxidizable DC sphinxes, someone seemed to be listening. No less a personage than Aldo Moro had invited his colleagues since the beginning of 1969 to bestow upon the eager Communists a "strategy of attention." Moro, as everyone knew, was a conservative.<sup>91</sup> He had never liked the Left—the Communists least of all<sup>92</sup>—and the Communists, of course, had never liked him: verily, how could they feel any attraction to what they used to disdain as the "degenerative" symbol of Italy's First Republic?<sup>93</sup> Moreover, no one could have forgotten that Moro had been the tactician-in-chief responsible for engulfing the Socialists in the early 1960s—sundering them, that is, from his personal enemies, the Communists.<sup>94</sup> But Moro was no friend of the Right either: to him, *la destra*, whose cult of violence he proclaimed to loathe,<sup>95</sup> was the "inner demon."<sup>96</sup> And on the personal level, he was incontrovertibly reputed honest and modest—a clean, pious and square Christian-Democrat, by no means assimilable to those other nasty clichés of the DC party boss: either crass, corrupt and retrograde, or quintessentially hypocritical, cagey and cynical. Moro was, or had been, a political adversary all right, but he was decent—the "least implicated of them all."<sup>97</sup>

90 Galloni, G. 2008. *30 anni con Moro*. Roma: Editori Riuniti. 180–181.

91 Cossiga, F. and Cangini, A. 2010. 38–9.

92 Moro, A. 1979. 22.

93 Coppola, A. 1976. *Moro*. Roma: Feltrinelli. 152.

94 Preti, L. 1975. *Il Compromesso Storico. Un problema che divide gli italiani*. Milano: Rusconi. 8–10.

95 Moro, A. 1979. 242.

96 Guerzoni, C. 2008. *Moro*. Palermo: Sellerio Editore. 69–77.

97 The judgement is P. Pasolini's, cited in Sciascia, L. 1972. *L'Affaire Moro*. Milano: Adelphi. 13–14.

So this was the statesman that after the fires of 1968–1969 had undergone some kind of “conversion.”<sup>98</sup> In light of the traumatic upheaval among workers and students, it was high time in his view to effect a “painful, yet fecund operation” of dissent, of “opposition” within the DC itself<sup>99</sup> so as to sensitize the establishment to the pressing exigencies of the times.<sup>100</sup> “Confounding”<sup>101</sup> a number of colleagues, he had thus drifted to the “Left,” *solo* and placidly, in search of a zone of “autonomy” that would have afforded him the lucidity with which to gauge the changing situation. Concomitantly, Pope Paul VI—to whom Moro was extremely close—counterbalanced Moro’s leftward drift with the conservatism<sup>102</sup> of his encyclical *humanae vitae*.<sup>103</sup>

The Left was accustomed to these fissiparous maneuvers. Given the presence of a vast Communist party, which the constraint of the Cold War prevented from governing, the DC, as ruling party, periodically used the numerous “currents” within its fold to give off a diverse and mobile image of itself. Yet, for all that, Moro’s Left-turn and the “strategy of attention” were worthy of the greatest consideration from the Communist standpoint—furthermore, he was known to be pro-Arab.<sup>104</sup> The shift was promising. Indeed, the vulgate relates that while on a mission to Washington as Foreign Minister in 1974, Moro had been “warned.” He had suffered a dressing-down by Henry Kissinger on account of his manifest overtures to the Communists, and some faceless interlocutor at a subsequent reception, *sottovoce*, had threateningly conveyed to the Italian Minister that such a policy was going to be the end of him.<sup>105</sup> Now, just as Moro seemed to be conceiving in his heart a rebellious veering away from Italy’s Atlantic commitments, so was Berlinguer, yet far more formidably, seeking to set his Party and himself free from the shackles of Moscow.<sup>106</sup> In this connection, the world of progressivism would soon be abuzz with slogans downright “heretical,”<sup>107</sup> those of “Euro-communism” (July 1975).<sup>108</sup>

So while Europe’s Communist parties—chiefly those of Italy, France and Spain, all of them, not by accident, Latin, Catholic countries<sup>109</sup>—were beginning to wow world audiences in a synchronized, sensational breach from the hoary

98 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 432.

99 Moro, A. 1979. 214.

100 Moro, A. 1979. 173–6.

101 Mosse, G.L. 1979. lx.

102 On the matter of contraception.

103 Bozzo, G. B. and Tassali, G. 1983. *Aldo Moro, il politico nella crisi, 1962–1973*. Firenze: Sansoni Editore. 320.

104 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 92–3.

105 Flamigni, S. 2003. 82–94.

106 Fiori, G. 1989. 268.

107 Fabien, J. 1985. *La guerre des camarades*. Paris: Olivier Orban. 65.

108 Chiara, V. 1997. 252.

109 Fisichella, D. 1979. *Quel Giano bifronte del PCI, da Togliatti a Berlinguer*. Milano: Editoriale Nuova. 61.



pretensions of a decrepit Soviet Union no longer hip amongst the majority of Western lefties, Italy's law-enforcing apparatus had been busy infiltrating the Red Brigades. There is no controversy on this count: throughout the tenure of Curcio and Franceschini, (the "first" generation), the BR had been permeable as could be, hosting as they did at least four unwelcome "guests" respectively from the Ministry of the Interior (the Uaarr, as usual),<sup>110</sup> civil and military intelligence, and the Carabinieri.<sup>111</sup> Which fact also implied, amongst a variety of disturbing side-reflections, that the group could already have been easily dismantled in 1972, yet was not, deliberately so.<sup>112</sup> It was thanks to one of the Carabinieri's agents—Silvano Girotto, a former juvenile delinquent turned Franciscan priest turned Chilean *guerrillero*, known as "frate Mitra" ("Brother Machine-Gun")<sup>113</sup>—that the BR's old guard was decapitated, or, at least, two-thirds thereof. Rendezvoused by Girotto at a train station of a locality in Piedmont where the Carabinieri lay in ambush, Franceschini and Curcio were apprehended in August 1974. The "other third" of the BR's executive, Mario Moretti, by sheer luck (or possibly forewarned by Ministry of the Interior),<sup>114</sup> managed to elude arrest—on this decisive occasion, as he had on others before.

## Hyperion

There are a great many stories of this country that are passed under silence and will never be clarified on account of some kind of spell ... Some sort of complicity between us and the powers that be that prevent us and them to say what really happened. (Renato Curcio)<sup>115</sup>

Moretti's psycho-sociological template was different from that of the other BR leaders. Neither an intellectual (like Curcio), nor a utopian fugleman (like Franceschini), he was an intransigent with a knack for management, whose inoffensive complexes, bourgeois and Catholic, cast a tame if elusive shadow. His, however, was not exactly an unremarkable profile in that family ties did avail him, when he came to Milan for college education, of the tutelage of an aristocratic household with somber connections to the ultra-Right.<sup>116</sup> After being

110 Fasanella, G. and Franceschini, A. 2004. *Che cosa sono le BR? Le radici, la storia, il presente*. Milano: Rizzoli. 136.

111 Flamigni, S. 2003. 61, 101–3.

112 Fasanella G. and Franceschini, A. 2004. 116.

113 Girotto, S. 2002. *Mi chiamavano Frate Mitra. La prima autobiografia dell'uomo che è stato frate, guerrigliero, testimone contro le BR*. Milano: Edizioni Paoline.

114 De Lutiis, G. 2007. 84.

115 Renato Curcio [cited in Flamigni, S. 2003. 99].

116 Flamigni, S. 2004. *La sfinge delle BR. Delitti, segreti e bugie del capo terrorista Mario Moretti*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 14.

hired by Sit-Siemens and joining the aggressive vanguard of its labor union, he eventually gravitated toward the subversive orbit and came into contact—by which specific channels, is not said—with a mysterious leftist sub-sect known as the “Superclan.” The Superclan’s leading organizer, Corrado Simioni, was even more enigmatic than the congregation itself. The “Simioni mystery” was born in 1963.<sup>117</sup> He was said to have studied theology in Bavaria, and to have been a former militant of the Socialist party, from which he was expelled for reasons hitherto unknown. Some insiders contended he was a CIA asset,<sup>118</sup> while others averred he worked as an informant for the Italian police.<sup>119</sup> In the early days, given a penchant for expensive sports cars, Simioni would be seen driving to BR gatherings in a Ferrari or Maserati to impart these groups of aspiring terrorists the ABC of anti-capitalist subversion. At the time, Franceschini had found the whole vignette weirdly jarring, but tried not to think too much of it.<sup>120</sup> Eventually, as suspicions grew against him, Simioni migrated to Paris (1974), where he would conceal his impenetrable activity behind the façade of an improbable language school named Hyperion (formerly “Agora,” nowadays, “Kiron”), in Quai de la Tournelle 27,<sup>121</sup> with offices in Brussels, Bonn and London.<sup>122</sup> That Simioni would elect the French capital as his sanctuary was not so strange if indeed Paris was, as hinted by Giulio Andreotti himself, the home to the Terrorist International.<sup>123</sup> To this day, no one knows for sure, but the surmise is that Hyperion was a covert station of the CIA, or maybe the KGB or “both.”<sup>124</sup> In any event, Moretti was Simioni’s man from the outset. Simioni died in 2008, swaddled by the sort of discreetness that only true power may dispense, and with a cross of *Chevalier de France* pinned on his shroud. Yes, because he had also been an intimate of France’s popular holy man and self-proclaimed prophet, the Abbé Pierre,<sup>125</sup> who, lo and behold, had a niece married to another Italian with a past of Red terror. Paris did shelter a multitude of such refugees,<sup>126</sup> and would function as a sanctuary for Red terrorists well into the 1980s.<sup>127</sup> To this day, the Hyperion dossier continues to

117 De Lutiis, G. 2007. 47–59.

118 Zupo, G. and Recchia, V. M. 1984. *Operazione Moro. I fili ancora coperti di una trama politica criminale*. Milano: Franco Angeli. 269.

119 Zupo, G. and Recchia, V. M. 1984. 28.

120 Fasanella, G. and Franceschini, A. 2004. 64–5.

121 Zupo, G. and Recchia, V. M. 1984. 266–8.

122 Allainmat, H. and Lecavalier, G. 1987. *Affaires d’État. Des dossiers très spéciaux, 1981–1987*. Paris: Albin Michel. 37.

123 Flamigni, S. 2006. 102.

124 Caruso, A. 2007. *Il lungo intrigo. Dal 1943 a oggi: per una storia segreta d’Italia*. Milano: Longanesi. 259–60.

125 Secular name: Henri Antoine Grouès (1912–2007).

126 Imposimato, F. and Provvisionato, S. 2008. *Doveva morire. Chi ha ucciso Aldo Moro: il giudice dell’inchiesta racconta*. Milano: Chiarelettere. 172.

127 Jacquard, R. 1985. *Les dossiers secrets du terrorisme. Tueurs sans frontières*. Paris: Albin Michel. 223.

mesmerize all those that have attempted to plumb the depths of the Moro *affaire*, replete as this meager dossier is with gaping lacunae constellated by isolated, astounding leads. Most astounding of all is possibly the final entry, according to which, the peculiar duo Simioni/Grouès—the erstwhile Maserati-driving terrorist spin-master and the monastic crusader for communal low-income housing<sup>128</sup>—had been received in a highly-reserved audience by the Pope, John Paul II, in November 1992.<sup>129</sup> On what account, one can only wonder.

With Moretti in command, and all potential rivals of the old guard safely out of the way (courtesy of the Carabinieri),<sup>130</sup> the BR were transformed. The reorganization of the “new BR”<sup>131</sup> was completed by 1975—with near-perfect parallelism to the initial point of the PCI’s historical, three-year acceleration. Moretti’s BR was sanguinary. From 1976 onwards, even beyond 1981—the year of Moretti’s arrest (April)—they would strike like a plague: a hail of murderous shootings, kneecappings, kidnaps; hundreds of attacks in the center-north of the country coordinated by the several “columns” of the organization, all of them inflicted in a state of mounting social psychosis. The BR’s stated ambition? To paraphrase Moretti: to shatter the prospects of a DC–PCI *rapprochement* and steer thereby the PCI to its radical roots by exasperating the contradiction between the revolutionary aspirations of the people (“the base”) and the pusillanimous conservatism of the Communist leadership.<sup>132</sup> *Vaste programme*. To the PCI (and the vulgate), on the other hand, the picture was clear: even though they professed to be hailing from the seedbed of Marxism-Leninism, these repulsive *brigatisti* were frauds, Fascist provokers disguised as comrades.<sup>133</sup> It was patent: they were deviously instigated by Italy’s undying reactionary elites, as always, to smear the integrity of the PCI and, therefore, ruin its chances to save Italy from its villainous aristocracy.

Casting a good look all around, in fact, it was hard to suppress the impression that everything was conspiring against the PCI’s rightful bid to govern the country. The Communists were truly besieged. Not only had they had to fend off the Neo-Fascists, but presently, *on their left*, they also found themselves forced to deflect the insidious provocations of the BR as well as the patient work of heinous harassment woven by the abundantly-funded (by whom?) and fiendish Foucauldian fringe of Toni Negri and *Autonomia Operaia* (the intractable,

128 Falcone, P. 2004. *L'Abbé Pierre. La construction d'une légende*. Villeurbanne: Éditions Golias.

129 Flamigni, S. 2003. 212.

130 Fasanella, G. and Franceschini, A. 2004. 110, 155–9.

131 Galli, G. 1993. *Il partito armato. Gli anni di piombo, 1968–1986*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 125.

132 Moretti, M. cited by Galli, G. in his introduction to Arlati, R. and Magosso, R. 2003. *Le carte di Moro, Perché Tobagi?* Milano: Franco Angeli. 18.

133 Galli, G. 1993. *Storia del PCI. Il Partito Comunista Italiano: Livorno 1921-Rimini 1991*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 265.

chaos-minded segment of the extra-parliamentary Left)<sup>134</sup>—all of them ragingly opposed to the “historical compromise.” Such supplemental defensive effort was, of course, required over and beyond the archetypical fortification against the enduring aversion of the DC’s Right-wingers, behind whom lurked no less a force than the United States itself. And, to top it all off, the PCI had moreover to shield itself as best as it could from the superadded enmity of Moscow, which had taken a sublime dislike to Berlinguer’s breakaway “Euro-communism”—the new brand leftism with a friendlier, Italian, democratic and “pluralistic” visage.<sup>135</sup>

Despite these oceans of adversity, Berlinguer & Associates soldiered on. Their courageous perseverance would pay off. In 1975, at the administrative elections, the PCI jumped to 34.4 percent, gaining almost four points over the polling of 1972. In the political elections of June 1976—a crucial date—the PCI anted up, scoring a remarkable 37.4 percent: the dreaded “passing” (of the DC, which held on to a solid 38 percent) did not occur, but it was close. America and her European loyalists were officially on red alert. Italy, Moro said, had “two winners.” What now? Well, there appeared no choice but to “open” to the PCI in some fashion. The DC thus left the door ajar by contriving a peculiar formula whereby the PCI would be given some posts of institutional prestige, and, de facto, a greatly boosted stake in the legislative and the administrative stock of the country. QED, nodded the PCI: there was no governing without them. In exchange, the PCI forebore from casting a vote of no-confidence against Andreotti’s new, strictly-DC executive. This byzantinism, presumably fished from Moro’s bag-of-tricks, was termed the government of “non-no-confidence,”<sup>136,137</sup> and it inaugurated the so-called season of “National Solidarity” (August 1976). It was somehow understood that this was the first baby step toward the end-goal of the “historical compromise.” Conservatives panicked and the realm of printed matter was soon flooded with books, tracts, pamphlets, essays and articles decrying hysterically a state of Communist siege, which would have dragged Italy into a downward spiral of terror, economic chaos and the progressive and traumatic absorption of the country into the Soviet bloc.

1977, the most violent year of the decade: 1,400 episodes of violence, 23 dead and 38 injured. The BR were on a rampage. National Solidarity, however, proved to be a double-edged sword for the PCI. If, on the one hand, the party saw its democratic legitimization greatly magnified, on the other it was, in fact, held hostage: hostage to Andreotti’s stridently unpopular austerity decrees and hostage to the overall dismal condition of the Italian state. They were all in the same boat, and the boat was sinking. Understandably, the (Communist) “base” was

134 Zupo, G. and Recchia, V. M. 1984. 187–91.

135 Gentiloni, S. U. 2009. *L'Italia sospesa. La crisi degli anni Settanta vista da Washington*. Torino: Einaudi. 123.

136 *Governo della “non-sfiducia.”*

137 Gismondi, A. 1986. *Alle soglie del potere. Storia e cronaca della Solidarietà Nazionale*. Milano: SugarCo Edizioni. 81.

confused.<sup>138</sup> hardcore PCI militants, who lived and voted to run the DC into the ground, were now seeing their leaders consorting with the enemy<sup>139</sup> and begging them, the faithful, to be patient. To what end, they questioned? Was it not obvious that National Solidarity was the DC's kiss of death? What was the PCI gaining from this senseless concession? Indeed. In November 1977, Berlinguer rescinded this questionable contract and caused Andreotti's government to fall. He wanted more. He wanted a better deal;<sup>140</sup> several more months of this diet, and the PCI would have started hemorrhaging votes, this much was evident.

Thus we reach the critical caesura: 1977–1978. Berlinguer, followed by a team of councilors, and Moro, accompanied by a handful of confidants, began to meet repeatedly in a series of frantic and intense super-secret negotiations.<sup>141</sup> Furtively, for a fortnight, they shuttled back and forth from one private apartment to another, at night, bargaining, bearing messages, emendations, proposals and counter-proposals to each other, and cross-arguing some more. And, finally,<sup>142</sup> they agreed on something.<sup>143</sup> They agreed that the new executive, that was scheduled to appear before the Houses on March 16, 1978 for the vote of confidence, was going to be ... a near-perfect replica of its predecessor: Andreotti as Prime Minister, and the usual pack of staunchly anti-Communist ministers in his train. Record has it that when Berlinguer made bold to suggest three names of his liking as ministerial candidates—not Communists, but merely respected, Left-leaning “technicians”—Moro himself refused,<sup>144</sup> even though Andreotti was favorable. Visibly miffed by what seemed an overt “provocation,”<sup>145</sup> Berlinguer suspended the parleys, postponing his fatal decision to the very day of the formal presentation of Andreotti's governmental program. “Then we'll see,” he curtly concluded.

The rest is history. On March 16, Moro was abducted in a spectacular commando operation, which was footed with the murder of his five bodyguards. For nearly two months he would be held captive in the course of what is one of the most twisted political episodes of the 20th century. On 9 May, his body, riddled with bullets, would be found in the trunk of a car parked in an alley not far from the headquarters of the PCI. In the heat of those days, Berlinguer, in a strained and emotionally-laden indictment of the system, unveiled the rationale of the maneuver: it was, he said, to date the most outrageous counter-thrust of

138 Giglio, T. 1982. *Berlinguer o il potere solitario*. Milano: Sperling and Kupfer. 154.

139 Barbagli, M., Corbetta, PierG. and Sechi, S. 1979. *Dentro il PCI*. Bologna: Il Mulino. 15.

140 Chiara, V. 1997. 277.

141 Chiara, V. 1997. 270.

142 On February 16, 1978.

143 La Rocca, F. 2001. *L'eredità perduta. Aldo Moro e la crisi italiana*. Soveria Mannelli, Catanzaro: Rubettino Editore. 145.

144 Finetti, U. 2009. *Storia di Craxi. Miti e realtà della sinistra italiana*. Milano: Boroli Editore. 107–8.

145 Gismondi, A. 1986. 171.

Italy's Right and of its foreign accomplices aimed at swatting the only form of entente—the *compromesso storico*—that could have saved Italy from the abyss. For something truly exceptional had come to pass on that fateful March 16: upon receiving the news of the kidnap, *the PCI had immediately resolved to vote for the government*. For the first time in 30 years (since the ousting in 1947) the Communists had become part of a governmental majority. They had entered a coalition instinctively hostile to them only to abandon it, dejected and disappointed, a little less than a year later. With Moro gone, they had lost their patron-friend in the lion's den; with Moro, gone forever was also the mirage of the "historical compromise." Italy's grand opportunity to become something else, something better—a respectable democracy—was irremediably missed. The vulgate is, in short, Berlinguer's synthesis.<sup>146</sup>

Throughout this indescribable adventure, the "network" had not lain idle, of course—far from it. Not only did it "steer" the fully-infiltrated BR into ramming the left flank of the PCI—and, eliminating Moro himself, of course—but it also foiled from within all judiciary, intelligence and investigative initiatives promoted by the sane portions of the apparatus to locate and free Aldo Moro from terrorist captivity. In 1981, when the scandal of the secret Masonic lodge P2 imploded, Italians discovered that a vast assortment of Italy's chief political, military and intelligence executives—all of them in positions of top responsibility during the Moro ordeal—was affiliated to the lodge. P2 itself was, seemingly, a direct emanation of NATO's most fanatical anti-Communist clubs.<sup>147</sup> All the pieces clicked into place. In June 1979, Italy's subsequent appointment with the electorate, the PCI lost a million and a half votes.

### "The Party with Clean Hands"

The foregoing scenario has all the ingredients of a good movie. First of all, the ambiance: it is dreary and rife with presages of impending tragedy. The narrative is punctuated by long silences, which grow into suggestions of grave, enormous crimes. It is under such gloom and through the mists of Cold War intrigue that we make the acquaintance of our dramatis personae: the heroes, who file in from the left, and the criminals, already on stage, lying in wait on the right. Narratively, scene follows scene in a crescendo of suspense. The tension escalates until it finds

146 Colombo, A. 2008. *Un affare di Stato. Il delitto Moro e la fine della Prima Repubblica*. Milano: Cairo Editore. 52; Satta, V. 2006. *Il caso Moro e i suoi falsi misteri*. Soveria Mannelli, Catanzaro: Rubettino Editore. 401–2.

147 Ganser, D. 2005. *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation GLADIO and Terrorism in Western Europe*. London: Routledge. Ganser, D. 2009. Beyond Democratic Checks and Balances: The "Propaganda Due" Masonic Lodge and the CIA in Italy's First Republic, in *Government of Shadows. Parapolitics and Criminal Sovereignty*, edited by E. Wilson. London: Pluto Press. 256–76.



release in an extraordinary, spectacular stunt: *il sequestro*, the abduction. The theatrics of the kidnapping fuel a second, gripping act. In the finale, all hopes come crashing down; the villains triumph, but the heroes will not have fought in vain—their bravery will be forever remembered, as a testament. The curtain is drawn. But there is still hope. Long live Berlinguer, long live Moro, and long live the Left.

It is a tale of many things, especially of idealism and irredentism, which is incarnated by two upright, proto-nationalist leaders in a “cold” era of blocked, stunted longings: the meek and reflective Moro, the martyr, and the prophet<sup>148</sup> Berlinguer, the David of the Left who had taken on the Goliath of International Oligarchism, both of them victims of a 30-year hideous and murderous conspiracy.

It is a good story.

‘Tis a pity it doesn’t hold water.

Even assuming that all the facts up to Piazza Fontana may be interpreted according to the vulgate, there is one major problem with its script. *And that is the role and behavior of the PCI, and, therefore, of the USSR itself.* We keep finding ourselves butting ceaselessly against difficulty #1. Yes, the oligarchic elites of Anglo-America might very well have been recruiting secret armies *locally* and organizing these super-clandestine organizations such as Gladio for decades in the name of anti-Communism. But why do so if a Russian invasion of Europe was never a realistic possibility? This leads us, therefore, to surmise that all such conspiratorial activity was a gigantic pretext ultimately designed by NATO and its satraps to: (1) mortgage the colony’s resources and; (2) keep under close surveillance eventual *nationalist* pushes within the vassal states—spontaneous motions, that is, which might have rocked the *foreign* order so painstakingly established after 1945. So far so good: this much was safely acknowledged early on even by an intelligence executive of the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>149</sup> Now, the vulgate extends this sensible hypothesis by arguing that in the late 1960s progressives from all walks of life attempted a mutinous merger to free Italy from Russian and American control. Specifically, this meant that each of the two major parties came to split into a servile, conservative faction and its rebellious counterpart. Thus, Moro, in the DC, was faced with the hostility of the powerful pro-American partisans, whereas Berlinguer, to a minor extent, found himself obstructed by the Stalinist diehards of the PCI.

Though suggestive, this entire scenario is a fabrication.

Let us start with Moro, the Church and the putative “*sinistra DC*.” That Moro was a leftist at heart, who began rethinking his position in 1968 and drifted thereafter

<sup>148</sup> Paragreci, S. 2001. *La Guerra delle sinistre. Dal frontismo alla diaspora*. Soveria Mannelli, Catanzaro: Rubettino Editore. 121.

<sup>149</sup> Flamini, G. 2005. 68–9.

toward an entente with the PCI is entirely unsupported by the record. Moro was a skilled politician, five-time Premier, and an operator well-known, despite the fashionable phlegm, for his *tough* pragmatism: a “mystical Machiavelli,” as one Communist leader captioned him. He had been in power for nearly 40 years,<sup>150</sup> and served as a most reliable custodian of the Atlantic order *for 30*.<sup>151</sup> Among the many services rendered, he vouched for Mafia dons (Genco Russo in 1960),<sup>152</sup> showed “understanding” for the United States in Vietnam,<sup>153</sup> and protected each and every secret of the First Republic by deep-sixing all parliamentary inquests and redacting their released transcripts.

1. Gladio. How could Moro have ever been a target of the network, when, if we are to believe Francesco Cossiga,<sup>154</sup> he had been one of the very founders of the organization?<sup>155</sup>
2. “Piano solo.” General De Lorenzo had planned no coup whatsoever in 1964. De Lorenzo did not even believe that a coup was remotely feasible in Italy: too many sleepy generals presiding over too slothful an army, a wholly recalcitrant Church, and no charismatic leader in a war-defeated country.<sup>156</sup> De Lorenzo had merely proffered his uniform to clothe an act of pure intimidation vis-à-vis the Socialists, with which Moro was fully complicit.
3. Kissinger, 1974. The chronicle of the crisis Moro suffered in the United States is far from clear. If it was (and still is) impossible to be Foreign Minister in Italy without Washington’s approval,<sup>157</sup> how could Moro have assumed that office repeatedly from 1969 to 1974, and suffer to boot *public* American reprimands? After that “incident,” it was said that he nearly

150 Since 1939, in fact, when, under Fascism, he was elected president of the federation of young Catholic university students (FUCI). It was through this association that Moro became intimately acquainted with Mgr. Montini, the future Pope Paul VI.

151 Costantini, C. and Moliterno, G. 1976. *Messaggi di fumo. Aldo Moro: i pensieri di un cavallo di razza*. Milano: SugarCo. 11–12, 93.

152 Caruso, A. 2000. *Da cosa nasce cosa. Storia della Mafia dal 1943 a oggi*. Milano: Longanesi and Co. 173.

153 Barnett, R. J. 1983. *The Great Alliance. America, Europe, Japan—Makers of the Post-war World*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 265.

154 F. Cossiga (1928–2010): unquestionably one of the most conspicuous among Christian-Democrat leaders and a symbol of the First Republic. He was in power for 34 years; several times Minister, Premier for the first time in 1980; and elected as Italy’s 43rd president in 1985. It is unanimously recognized that his role, essentially, had been that of Italy’s chief curator of British Interests.

155 Farina, R. 2010. *Cossiga mi ha detto. Il testamento politico di un protagonista della storia italiana del 900*. Venezia: Marsilio. 123.

156 Beltrametti, E. 1975. *Colpo di Stato militare in Italia*. Roma: G. Volpe Editore. 15–104.

157 Cossiga, F. and Cangini, A. 2010. 180.

swooned, and had thereby to foreshorten his visit by taking to his bed as soon as he was back in Rome. He then swore to a close collaborator he would abandon politics for good. Two weeks later, however, he was on his feet, ready to lunge into the forthcoming electoral campaign, which he would conduct aggressively on a strictly anti-PCI platform.<sup>158</sup>

Moro, like all the other DC muckamucks of that epoch (Andreotti, Cossiga, Fanfani, Piccoli, etc.), is utterly undecipherable. Not a single *scholarly* monograph worthy of the appellation is available on the political and cultural importance, if any, of these Christian-Democrat doges.<sup>159</sup> The little we know is that Moro was a hypochondriac suffering from sleeplessness<sup>160</sup> that could not start a car uphill. He loved silk ties,<sup>161</sup> wrist-watches and liquor-doused vanilla ice-cream,<sup>162</sup> was repulsed by germ-oozing pocket change,<sup>163</sup> smoked Muratti and Turmac cigarettes, and feared thunder. Never a crowd-charmer, he was unpopular and generally disliked.<sup>164</sup> “Dr. Divago,” the “anesthetist-in-chief,” they called him. He bored everybody;<sup>165</sup> he forever “temporized,” speaking hours to “complicate everything” and say nothing—nothing which the mortals could fathom. However, what was truly remarkable, according to a doyen of Italian journalism, was how perfectly *lackluster* had been his tenure as Minister—from Education to Foreign Affairs by way of Justice: one shining instance of *aurea mediocritas*.<sup>166</sup> Yet Cossiga said he was “*intelligentissimo*”: therefore, Moro, a man of power, through and through, and one just right for the times. The reason why he could afford to pass off as “clean” was, of course, the reliance on a wingman, Sereno Freato, his fixer, who took care of all the sooty work—such as collecting slush-funds from the CIA, or kickbacks from Italy’s Big Oil cartel (all of it for a good fee, which bought Freato Tuscan estates, Rembrandts, Boccionis, and more).<sup>167</sup>

158 Galli, G. Introduction to Arlati, R. and Magosso, R. 2003. 20–21.

159 Clementi, M. 2009. La memoria difensiva di Aldo Moro, in *Le vene aperte del delitto Moro. Terrorismo, PCI, trame e servizi segreti*, edited by S. Sechi. Firenze: Mauro Pagliai Editore. 39.

160 Bernabei, E. and dell’Arti, G. 1999. *L’uomo di fiducia. I retroscena del potere raccontati da un testimone rimasto dietro le quinte per cinquant’anni*. Milano: Mondadori. 73.

161 Giacobuzzo, G. 2003. *Moro 25 anni dopo. Misteri*. Bari: Palomar. 26, 115–16.

162 Scarrano, M. and De Luca, M. 1985. *Il mandarino è marcio. Terrorismo e cospirazione nel caso Moro*. Roma: Editori Riuniti. 17.

163 Ferrara, G. 2003. *Misteri del caso Moro*. Bolsena: Massari Editore. 8.

164 Zupo, G. and Recchia, V. M. 1984. 9.

165 Gismondi, A. 1986. 61.

166 Pietra, I. 1983. *Moro. Fu vera gloria?* Milano: Garzanti. 8–9.

167 Riva, V. 2002. 423; Flamigni, S. 2006. 185 and 193; Scarrano, M. and De Luca, M. 1985. 44.

At the time of the National Solidarity,<sup>168</sup> the only near-certainty to watchful outsiders was that Moro had been delegated by his *amici* to implement versus the Communists the self-same stratagem he had performed against the Socialists in the 1960s—namely, luring them into the DC swamp, and *slowly wear them down* (i.e. erode their electoral share).<sup>169</sup> If the set-up was blatant to the seasoned publicists of the Left,<sup>170</sup> how could Berlinguer and the master-tacticians of the PCI not have known?<sup>171</sup> How could they not have known it was a *trap*?

Moreover, there was something deeply amiss in Berlinguer's impassioned call to unite in a crusade "*catto-comunista*." Faction-wise, where were these "Christian-Democrats of the Left"? Where were these belligerent Catholics itching to collude with Rome's ultra-disciplined Stalinists?<sup>172</sup> Indeed, the manifest response of the DC to Berlinguer's systematic exposition of the "compromise" in the Party's weekly, *Rinascita*, and all subsequent vocal pleas was, at best, cold. Moro himself, of all people, was, from the start,<sup>173</sup> declaredly inimical to the suggestion of there being elective affinity between his beloved party and the PCI.<sup>174</sup> as said, he founded his 1975 campaign on the categorical rejection of all advances from the Communists.<sup>175</sup> The Vatican, for its part, barring a few insignificant exceptions, was thoroughly unresponsive and uncooperative as well.<sup>176</sup> to the *Osservatore Romano*,<sup>177</sup> the gambit smacked of sheer opportunism.<sup>178</sup> The picture that emerged from this dance was, therefore, odd: it was as if the PCI had cast itself in the vestments of an ardent suitor, whose incessant advances were making no impression whatsoever on the graces of milady DC. Was it a charade? Were they all acting? That they were playing, there is no doubt; but what game exactly?

And now to come to the part of the Italian Communists.  
Absolutely puzzling, to say the least.

Theirs, allegedly, was the party of honesty, high ideals and culture: "the party with clean hands." Truth be told, they sustained that part well. From what is known, it is unanimously agreed that the levels of personal corruption affecting Communist politicians—bosses and rank-and-filers alike—were on a

168 Which began in August 1976 and would end in January 1979.

169 Guerzoni, C. 2008. 98; Galli, G. 2003. 155.

170 Gismondi, A. 1986. 86.

171 di Giulio, F. and Rocco, E. 1979. *Un ministro ombra si confessa*. Milano: Rizzoli. 59.

172 Barbagallo, F. 2006. 168.

173 Autumn 1973.

174 Coppola, A. 1976. 134.

175 Castoldi, L. 1978. *E se Fanfani avesse ragione?* Milano: Everest Edizioni. 71.

176 Fiori, G. 1989. 345–6.

177 The Vatican's official press organ.

178 Faller, U. 1976. *Berlinguer: Il marxismo in doppiopetto*. Milano: Edizioni Everest. 148–9.

scale by no means comparable to those, positively anguishing, prevalent amongst their Christian-Democrat and Socialist equals.<sup>179</sup> Not to mention the leadership *fascinoso* of Enrico Berlinguer, whose sudden ascent from obscurity was in all likelihood the production of hidden great electors.<sup>180</sup> In 1969, when it was certain that Berlinguer would soon take charge, the fuzzy outline of a totally unknown apparatchik<sup>181</sup> was chiseled overnight *from scratch*<sup>182</sup> into the effigy of a latter-day Sufi, a cross between Cola di Rienzo and Gandhi. Ever since “Berlinguer” has become the object of such reverence that to this day no one dares to impugn this sacred icon of Italian politics. As there is not a single penetrating study on Moro’s political legacy, there is not one of the multitudinous biographies of Berlinguer that is not a gushing hagiography.

The Communists had played their part competently and deserved credit for it because they had, indeed, been *co-governing* the country for 30 years (they called it “consociativismo”): how could they not with such numbers behind them? In a nutshell, consociativismo functioned thus: the majority proposed a bill the Communist opposition shot it down and then proceeded to emend it.<sup>183</sup> And for all their self-victimizing moans, Italian Communists had, all in all, an easy life: widely and deeply hooked into the management mazes of communal administrations—including some of Italy’s wealthiest—the PCI could avail itself of an editorial empire, a national TV channel (out of three),<sup>184</sup> the near entirety of the country’s academic establishment, and a glowing constellation of business connections.<sup>185</sup> What besiegement?<sup>186</sup> The open issue, rather, was that, in view of the Catholics’ weakening grip, Berlinguer and his simply wanted more power, or power *tout court*.

The Communists had much going for themselves, yet they failed to seduce all the way. Problematic was first of all their unshakable allegiance to Moscow, of course:<sup>187</sup> now, how can the party of high ideals be so staunchly and bigotedly loyal to a regime so drably undemocratic, inefficient and repressive? Berlinguer himself acknowledged that no Italian laborer would ever want to live in a place like the USSR.<sup>188</sup> The PCI had indeed suffered massive defections after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, as well as strong opposition and more desertions

179 Galli, G. 1991. *Affari di Stato. l’Italia sotterranea, 1943–1990: storia, politica, partiti, corruzioni, misteri, scandali*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 168.

180 Lanucara, A. 1978. *Berlinguer Segreto. Carriera e lotta interna al PCI*. Roma: Talerio. 151.

181 Mafai, M. 1996. *Dimenticare Berlinguer. La sinistra italiana e la tradizione comunista*. Roma: Donzelli. 8–15.

182 Interview of Massimo Caprara in de Simone, A. and Nardiello, V. 2004. 279–80.

183 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 30–32.

184 RAI 3, since 1979.

185 Finetti, U. 2009. 101–2.

186 Fiori, G. 1989. 336.

187 Paragreci, S. 2001. 115.

188 Giglio, T. 1982. 212.

following Brezhnev's crushing of the Czech Spring in 1968. Despite these setbacks, Berlinguer's Party remained dedicated to the Soviet cause, as it would until the very end, in fact—*past the bloody days of Moro*.<sup>189</sup> Vis-à-vis manifest Soviet malfeasance, Berlinguer caviled, protested, distinguished, admonished, and even thundered at times, but the disappointing truth was the PCI was a Russian possession, and for as much as the Communists played up their warm-hearted *italianità* it was clear to all that this was a proprietary affair and that there was only so much Berlinguer could do or say. The USSR *owned* the PCI; I will return to this key issue shortly.

This aspect takes the discussion back to Gladio and the Red Scare in the 1950s. If it was true that enterprises like Gladio were being organized in earnest, it was not less true that the PCI did precious little to mitigate the anxiety that was more or less deceitfully fostered by anti-Soviet propaganda. For Communist propaganda, on the other hand, stayed aggressive, menacing and unyielding throughout this time, and, what is more, the PCI itself, as said, appeared to have harbored paramilitary cells, reliant, like their enemies, on a web of arms caches.<sup>190</sup> The subversive urge of the partisans within "Red Gladio" (or "*Apparato*")<sup>191</sup> was said to be so menacing that between 1950 and 1952 Italian authorities had temporarily readied counter-measures to parry what they perceived as the pangs of a nation-wide Communist uprising. The Americans, too, were alarmed, "but not that much . . ." <sup>192</sup> As for the Communists, it is said they knew of Gladio at least since 1965.<sup>193</sup> Were, then, these cross-alarms of *wholly spurious* Red and Black uprisings part of a coded language wherewith the warring elites signaled to one another, swapping threats and/or warnings? Cossiga, again, suggested obscurely that they were all part of a generalized exchange of "artillery fire,"<sup>194</sup> which is to say, then, that it was all smoke—or, rather, psychological devices, to be primed regularly in order to create the environment (i.e. psychosis) of choice. And, for the little that we know, the same reasoning should apply to the explanation of Italy's five phantasmagoric coups (1970–1974), which an insider described as "farces."<sup>195</sup>

189 Gardner, R. N. 2005. *Mission Italy: On the Front Lines of the Cold War*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield. 238.

190 Finetti, U. 2008. 115.

191 Flamini, G. 2005. 26–7.

192 Riva, V. 2002. 350–353.

193 Satta, V. 2006. 264.

194 Beccaria, A. 2010. *Piccone di Stato. F. Cossiga e i segreti della Repubblica*. Roma: Nutrimenti. 99.

195 For instance, reference is here made to the claim by G. Giannettini—a contractor of Military Intelligence in the late 1960s—that Borghese's coup was a farce staged by Giulio Andreotti. See di Giovacchino, R. 2005. 89.



In this game, how could one conceive an invasion of the European democracies by the forces of the Warsaw Pact and thereby wager on the masochism of the Kremlin, if not by crafting hollywoodesque scenarios of WWII liable to win the favor of audiences already consumed by nuclear angst? And yet Gladio is not a fiction and the gladiators are not understudies. For nearly fifty years [American agents] have operated in the shadow of the Western democracies while the Red Star marched in the streets of the People's Republics in the name of a common destiny: the consolidation of empires. During the Sixties, the Russo-American condominium is fully operative.<sup>196</sup>

In any event, neither militarized faction ever denounced the other *formally*, exposing it in broad daylight before the public with a view to a peaceful resolution in the name of democratic stability. Of course not: because what these simulations were designed to achieve was to reproduce on a reduced, national scale the main tension of the Cold Game. Yet, as posited at the beginning of this section, this was obviously not Anglo-America's plan to neutralize the Left, but rather to subjugate the Italian vassal, period. And—hypothesis number 2—the means employed for the purpose was a simple scheme of *divide-et-impera* applied with *the full complicity of both adversarial parties*: Black gladiators and Red Partisans.<sup>197</sup> The hands might not have been aware, but the cadres on both sides perforce were. Which means that all of them had consciously deceived the whole country for the entire duration of the game.

In this sense, the DC was no more an enemy of Italy or of progressivism than the PCI itself: *both*, coerced by the exigencies of a bigger pretense than they, nullified the country's chances for a better future.

### The Big, Mangy Soviet Bear

The USSR was a giant with feet of clay, and the Communists were perfectly aware of it.<sup>198</sup> Yet, as noted above, its geopolitical valence was of the essence. Vis-à-vis the Soviets, this particular configuration was such that when Italy's powers dealt in Moscow, the Catholics laid the political groundwork, the Liberals took care of (industrial) business,<sup>199</sup> and the PCI—figuring as a fiduciary liaison of sorts—took its “Iron Curtain” cut (customarily of 3 percent). The distribution to the Communist coffers was facilitated by a fluent circuit of offshore accounts coursing from London to Cyprus via Liechtenstein, Vienna and Malta. The fattest,

196 Brozzu-Gentile, J. F. 1994. 210.

197 A. Ronchey cited in Silj, A. 1978. *Brigate Rosse-Stato, lo scontro spettacolo nella regia della stampa quotidiana*. Firenze: Vallecchi. 109. Ronchey, a conservative, chiefly blamed the PCI for Italy's lack of democratic renewal.

198 Bernabei, E. and dell'Arti, G. 1999. 159.

199 Bernabei, E. and dell'Arti, G. 1999. 7.

epochal deals in this context were FIAT's plant of Togliattigrad (1966), which Premier Moro fully endorsed, and ENI's giant pipeline<sup>200</sup> (1969),<sup>201</sup> which Foreign Secretary Moro attempted, instead, to sabotage in every way for fear of seeing the Communists excessively strengthened by it (they would cash in 12 million dollars for their mediation).<sup>202</sup> The United States, oddly but surely, did not seem to have had much to object to any of this; the Italians, since the 1950s, had tranquilly traded with the Russians<sup>203</sup>—as had everybody else, indeed.<sup>204</sup>

This was the situation when Nixon became President. It is no accident that the *anni di piombo* overlapped perfectly with détente: 1970–1979.<sup>205</sup> Those years were “the bottom of some kind of trough”;<sup>206</sup> they were a manifest reflection of the United States' decade-long hegemonic crisis, a time when the superpower had run aground on the shoals of Vietnam and the gold suspension of 1971. As we know, it was not until Reagan's Neoliberal “redress” in the early 1980s that the organizational stalemate would be unblocked. All the socio-cultural friction experienced in the interim throughout the Western block was thus the direct repercussion of this time of *indecision*—especially of its final, and most dramatic quinquennium, which was aptly dubbed the “long vigil.”<sup>207</sup>

The postwar mechanism of imperial exaction, whereby the United States maintained the empire through the export of quality manufactures and the manufacturing of exportable greenbacks, had run its course in the late 1960s. Nixon sought to replace it with a protracted mercantilist skirmish waged against the Europeans, leaderless as ever, whose attrition he would compensate by opening up, on the other hand, a diplomatic triangulation with Russia and China. The tactic yielded the United States significant savings (by scaling down the arms race) and, most importantly, enabled it to keep all three rival blocs in check. However, by having to decrease the pitch of ideological animosity—now that détente was on—especially within a global setting characterized by economic anemia was bound to cause supervisory difficulties over the political drift of the colonies.

However that might have boded for Europe, what is certain is that, thanks to détente, the USSR began to accumulate a fantastic debt versus the West: between 1970 and 1977 it would end up owing upwards of 40 billion dollars and the rest

200 ENI: *Ente Nazionale per gli Idrocarburi*, Italy's Petroleum State Enterprise.

201 The contract was signed two days before the slaughter of Piazza Fontana.

202 Riva, V. 2002. 403–4, 484–95.

203 Galli, G. 1993. *Repubblica delle Nebbie*. Milano: Rusconi. 39.

204 For the mirror image of such transactions in France (namely the role of Jean-Baptiste Doumeng), see, e.g., Robrieux, P. 1982. *Histoire intérieure du Parti Communiste (1972–1982): Du Programme Commun à l'échec historique de Georges Marchais*. Paris: Fayard. 69.

205 Luciani, G. 1977. *Il PCI e il capitalismo occidentale*. Milano: Longanesi. 43.

206 Harbutt, F. J. 2002. *The Cold War Era*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 237.

207 Hart, G. interviewed in Brancoli, R. 1976. *Gli USA e il PCI*. Milano: Garzanti. 124.

of the Eastern bloc roughly three times as much.<sup>208</sup> Much of what the Soviet bear borrowed for was grain: and so it was that the West, along with Argentina (perennially in the clutches of U.S. multinationals),<sup>209</sup> found itself relaxingly feeding the arch-fiendish Communists, whom, discursively, it had solemnly pledged to annihilate. Not only was it incongruous (not to worry), but it was expensive—foolishly so. Was Soviet Russia worth it? Was it a fair price to play the Cold Game? The beauty of this engaging flow-chart was that Italy was in a position of chief responsibility in the whole process—on account of the size of its Communist Party, of course: the West's largest. And for good measure, the PCUS<sup>210</sup> re-channeled, annually, at least five billion dollars to the PCI, essentially earmarked for the pro-Communist press; as far as we know, the last of such payments was wired in November 1980.<sup>211</sup> By 1977, the Italian Republic appeared to be the creditor of roughly a tenth of the entire Soviet foreign liability, and of a smaller fraction of the much heavier indebtedness of the Eastern satellites. It was not all Italy's money: the usurious transfusions from the Allies and the IMF, which she had made a humiliating habit of periodically begging at world summits, were in this fashion conveyed to the Soviets—again, with full American acquiescence. It is difficult to establish percentages—who gave how much—but, doubtless, the Italians were sinking torrents of their own cash into the Communist East without any faith of ever recovering it. Why they did is not hard to guess: seeing at the turn of the 1970s no outlet for the expansion of productive investment in their own saturated economy, which, like that of most other Western partners, sought to preserve corporate profits and social peace (wages) by *inflating* the general price level,<sup>212</sup> the Italians wagered their economic future on the Second World—and there was cheap energy to be had as well.<sup>213</sup> The Italians were not the only ones. France and Germany were in the running too, but for untraceable motives, the competition amongst Europeans for the Socialist markets and the United States' imperial capacity for coordinated oversight were such that Berlinguer and his were in a tremendous rush to finalize.<sup>214</sup> Finalize what? Their *seizure of power*, for as much as *détente* had opened new spaces for inter-European rivalry *it was at home*

208 Massari, R. 2007. *Rapimento Moro e declino della sinistra. L'avvio della mutazione genetica della sinistra (1978–1980)*. Bolsena: Massari Editore. 196. Andre Gunder Frank reports a cumulative debt figure for the USSR between 1971 and 1981 (20 billion) that is half of that quoted by Massari (40 billion), and 60 billion dollars for the Eastern satellites as a whole: Frank, A. G. 1983. *The European Challenge – From Atlantic Alliance to European Entente for Peace and Jobs*. Nottingham: Spokesman. 57, 59.

209 Miller, N. 1989. *Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1959–1987*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 159.

210 The acronym of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

211 Riva, V. 2002. 350, 508.

212 Frank, A. G. 1980. *Crisis in the World Economy*. London: Heinemann. 53.

213 Chenkin, K. 1983. *Andropov. Abbozzo di un ritratto di uno zar*. Milano: Rizzoli. 142.

214 Lanucara, A. 1978. 15–21.

that the pressure to secure a head start was most acute.<sup>215</sup> Hence the progression from mass agitation (1968–1969) to terrorism via political violence: the sequential preamble to civil war, which is quite obviously the superficial expression of the war of the elites.

### Transversal Factions

Which elites? That is the question. Nationality or party affiliation is, as a discriminating category, of no use whatsoever in discerning the contours of the warring factions. For instance, even conceding that the DC (or any political party), by overtly partitioning itself into “Left” (Aldo Moro’s) and “Right” (e.g. Amintore Fanfani’s current, see below), was merely playing “tricks,”<sup>216</sup> it is nonetheless difficult to deny that the deeper lines of allegiance ran along other sorts of tracks. This is admittedly the most forbidding piece of the puzzle not only because to attempt the identification of the actual parties perforce collides with the wall of silence dutifully opposed by the adepts of power, but also because such lines of allegiance could have shifted over time.

We will nevertheless venture the following scenario.

The story according to which Italy’s Catholic Party, the DC, was the wholesale mouthpiece of America’s most retrograde authoritarianism is essentially inaccurate. On account of its centrality to the spiritual management of the Mediterranean zone and (far) beyond, the Church (also via the DC) was in no position to reject the closest of rapports with the postwar ruling entity of the world, namely the Washington–London axis. But even so, trite as it might sound, Anglo-American puritanism is constitutionally alien to, and thus mistrustful of, the Latin/Catholic psyche.<sup>217</sup> And such underlying mistrust,<sup>218</sup> and *incomprehension*,<sup>219</sup> on the part of the Anglo-Americans vis-à-vis the Christian-Democrats, was never truly overcome, despite the multitudinous expressions of financial dependency, scheming collusion, xenophile enthusiasm, and subalternate dealings tying (often tightly) the ones to the others in the context of post-military-defeat. Hence the troubled season.

The desire to dethrone the Catholics from their position of political command can be dated to the mid-1960s, during the Johnson administration, which came to fund profusely a project dubbed “re-suture of the Socialist Party.” The idea

215 G. Amendola cited in Luciani, G. 1977. 175.

216 Di Giorgio, L. 1979. 18–19.

217 Schmitt, C. 1923. *Römischer Katholizismus US und politische Form*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. 27.

218 Beccaria, A. 2010. 99

219 Lanucara, A. 1978. 134.

was to reincorporate into a de-radicalized Socialist Party (ca. 12 percent of the electorate), its former Rightist and unabashedly pro-Atlanticist schismatic wing, the PSDI.<sup>220</sup> This was the 6-percent bastion of our acquaintance Giuseppe Saragat.<sup>221</sup> It was hoped in 1966 that, merged as the new PSU,<sup>222</sup> the two parties could poll several million votes at the political elections of 1969. Then, consolidating its expected gains as a modern, Anglo-Saxon-looking Liberal outfit, the PSU would have gradually upstaged the insufferable Catholics of the DC, some of whom, indeed, were convinced that the labor agitations of 1969 had been methodically orchestrated precisely with a view to setting the scene for the triumph of the PSU and the concomitant fall of the DC. More specifically, the Catholics contended that Saragat had been talked into this plan by the Social-Democrat Helmut Schmidt, who was for the occasion acting as some kind of German consul for an “Anglo-Dutch” Party with deep American ramifications.<sup>223</sup> In any event, nothing came of it, for the Socialists and Social-Democrats, now merged in the PSU, foundered miserably at the elections, polling fewer voices, together, than they had done separately (14.5 vs. 19.9 percent).

But the situation evolved. The Unified Party was torn apart in July 1969 as the Socialists re-became themselves, and Saragat, regaining control of its 6-percent fief, named it Partito Socialista Unitario.<sup>224</sup> It was around this refurbished PSU that, putatively, the conspiracy of Piazza Fontana would revolve. What truly happened? It is hard to say. It could be that the bombing campaign that had raged throughout 1969 had been indeed conducted for the sake of the first PSU. Having that flunked, the Anglo-Dutch patrons of Saragat might have egged him on with a new solution: the proclamation of the state of exception in the aftermath of a more powerful (yet bloodless) deflagration—the putsch, in short. The problem, however, seems that by late 1969 Saragat would no longer have been alone in this. *Trasformisti* to the bone as the Christian-Democrats were, and keen on not losing an ounce of power, they (or an influential segment thereof) must have: (1) joined the conspiratorial bandwagon early on and (2) effected the maneuver so deftly as to have assumed in the course of the preparations their usual strategic preeminence. The faction of the DC Rightists allegedly on board was that of Amintore Fanfani, who was supported by the economic brawn of Eugenio Cefis, the super-boss of ENI<sup>225</sup> and of a squad of financiers, industrialists and oil men such as Carlo Pesenti and Attilio Monti.<sup>226</sup> Cefis was sensed at the time to be preparing his advent as Italian *pontifex* of a

220 Partito social-democratico italiano; the PSDI fissured from the PSI in 1947.

221 Pecorelli, F. and Sommella, R. 1994. *I veleni di “OP.” Le “notizie” riservate di Mino Pecorelli*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni. 61.

222 Partito Socialista Unificato.

223 Bernabei, E. and dell’Arti, G. 1999. 84–6.

224 Engendering a bit of confusion in that the new outfit had the same acronym as the dissolved one (PSU).

225 See note 200.

226 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 546.

grand-duchy of multinationals; for his praetorians, the man had already picked the best Italy had to offer in the way of intelligence and journalism.<sup>227</sup> But there was more: the Neo-Fascists were on board, too. And these do not seem to have played in the affair so marginal and auxiliary a role as the vulgate would suggest.<sup>228</sup> Ideologically, possessed as they were with all manners of anti-Liberal beliefs on sacred hierarchy and the centrality of Eurasia, these circles were bringing to the cauldron spices that could have irreversibly altered the flavor of the mix. Altogether this congeries of forces sought to organize itself into an Italian replica of the operation that brought De Gaulle into power in 1958 (codename “Résurrection”). It is known that the campaign of metropolitan bombings covertly carried out by French Intelligence was instrumental in reaching the objective.<sup>229</sup> Whatever the sum of these heterogeneous forces might have truly amounted to by December 1969, it appears that whoever had sponsored the putsch at the international level had second thoughts about it all and therefore resolved to abort it, *murderously*. After all, it was an established reality that the U.S. Democrats “fretted over the Gaullist model for Europe ... and viewed a stable center-Left government as a barrier to a potential Italian De Gaulle.”<sup>230</sup> This would explain (1) the last-minute dispatch of a NATO commando from Germany to detonate the bombs with the intent of killing innocents, and (2) the provocation of British Intelligence in *The Observer* five days before the slaughter. Saragat was exposed, but the ultimate recipients of the message were probably Fanfani and Cefis. In sum, it so seems: (1) that this putsch was real and had high chances of succeeding<sup>231</sup> and; (2) that it was someone else’s project, which had been turned into something entirely *different* (and acceptable to Nixon), hence the slaughter. As said, the Blacks were scapegoated, and the parallel (false flag) exposure of the anarchists (in addition to the Neo-Fascists) throughout the preparatory bombing phase followed the standard procedure whereby an additional sacrificial layer of expendables affords a cover behind which to regroup and hide higher connivances.<sup>232</sup>

At this juncture, and for the next four years, the DC would attempt to salvage the wreckage, but in vain. It managed to deflate the far Right (of the

227 D’Archangelo, M. and Ricci, T. L. 1993. *Nel nome della P2*. Milano: Edizioni Nuova Italia. 730–731.

228 Anonymous (Freda, F.) 2005. *Piazza Fontana, una vendetta ideologica*. Padova: Edizioni di AR. 25.

229 Brozzu-Gentile, J. F. 1994. *L’Affaire Gladio. Les réseaux secrets américains au cœur du terrorisme en Europe*. Paris: Albin Michel. 223.

230 Di Scala, S. 1988. *Renewing Italian Socialism: Nenni to Craxi*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 124.

231 Saragat would later ruminate (self-servingly) that for as much as he had personally admired De Gaulle, he did not think that a course such as that undertaken by the General in 1958 would have been possible in Italy. Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 444.

232 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 89.



MSI)<sup>233</sup>—small consolation—but Eugenio Cefis’s grand-strategy to harness Italy’s economic growth to a consortium of giant state enterprises, fronted by the chemical pole (his own domain) failed.<sup>234</sup> His direct antagonist,<sup>235</sup> Gianni Agnelli of FIAT, carried the day with a different platform, one no less autocratic and exploitative than Cefis’s, but allegedly axed on seeking an entente with the unions in view of a “global” competitive outlook.<sup>236</sup> Along with Cefis’s empire, came to grief another extremely bold endeavor on the part of a controversial financier,<sup>237</sup> Michele Sindona,<sup>238</sup> to build—some surmised also on behalf of the Vatican<sup>239</sup>—a banking/financial cluster<sup>240</sup> that could rival those of older, established moneyed potentates.<sup>241</sup> It is no coincidence that all such efforts took place in the shadow of the Nixon administration and that, with the latter’s abrupt demise, they, too, sank. Dismissed were also the spies of yesteryear: as James Jesus Angleton was, after a savage fight,<sup>242</sup> thrown out of the CIA in 1974, so fell his protégés, General Vito Miceli<sup>243</sup> of Military Intelligence (a devotee of Moro’s)<sup>244</sup> and, as mentioned above, Federico Umberto D’Amato of the Ministry of the Interior—both of them implicated in Piazza Fontana. Politically, this plausible Neo-Gaullist front appeared to have been definitely vanquished in May 1974 with the referendum on divorce (whose institutionalization it had opposed).

Past the fumes of propaganda, notice, ultimately, how thoroughly *immobile* the PCI had stood throughout this interlude. Not only did its functionaries systematically refrain from questioning the official version or attempt to dig deeper in any direction,<sup>245</sup> but they also kept themselves on the sidelines, untouched by

233 At the political elections of 1972 the MSI polled 8.7 percent; it had garnered nearly 14 percent the previous year.

234 Turani, G. 2004. *La nuova razza padrona*. Milano: Sperling and Kupfer Editori. 99.

235 Addario, N. 1982. 102.

236 Gualtieri, R. 2006. *L'Italia dal 1943 al 1992. DC e PCI nella storia della Repubblica*. Roma: Carocci. 183.

237 Flamigni, S. 2005. 131–86.

238 Guarino, M. 1998. *I mercanti del Vaticano. Affari e scandali: l'industria delle anime*. Milano: Kaos Edizioni.

239 Massimo, T. 1994. *Ladri di democrazia. Dalla P2 a tangenteopoli, il malaffare politico che ha portato alla fine della Repubblica*. Napoli: Tullio Pironti Editore. 53.

240 Gianadelio Maletti interviewed in Sceresini, A., Palma, N. and Scandaliato, M. E. 2010. 224. Vasile, V. 2005. *Michele Sindona, Troppo caffè può far male*. Roma: L'Unità. 20–40.

241 Galli, G. 1991. 166.

242 Limiti, S. 2009. 123–4.

243 Miceli subsequently retired from the Army and continued his political career as an MP for the MSI, the most conservative party of the constitutional arc.

244 Galloni, G. 2008. 158; Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 50; Barbagallo, F. 2006. 204.

245 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 317; Massimo, T. 1994. 30; Massari, R. 2007. 209–10.

any scandal, as if lying in wait, their electoral share barely moving. Significantly, in the second installment of that mysterious warning published in *The Observer*, it was written that the conjurors had underestimated the prudence of the PCI, which, in the crisis, had deported itself as a responsible party for law and order.<sup>246</sup> As a hint dropped from across the Channel, this was a not a sign of hostility, as the vulgate would have it, but the very opposite.

### The PCI's Chance

That of the “dialogue” between the PCI and the Americans is a story entirely to be written, and who knows if one will ever find out the whole truth about it. (Gaddo Melani)<sup>247</sup>

Having successfully leveraged for three years the (farcical) “psychosis of the *golpe*,” “*le trame nere*” (the “Black conspiracies”) and above all, the proverbial corruption of the DC, Berlinguer’s PCI finally pushed forth in the spring of 1974. The shift roughly corresponded to the rise<sup>248</sup> of the Trilateral Commission,<sup>249</sup> of which, incidentally, the aforementioned patron of FIAT, Agnelli, was also an important member. This appears to have been the highly influential group that longed to see Nixon removed from power, holding him responsible for the deplorable conditions prevailing amongst the Western partners as a result of the unrelenting commercial cannonades his administration had fired upon them ever since the end of Bretton Woods in 1971 (e.g. devaluation of the dollar, the oil shock as an instrument of pressure, etc.).<sup>250</sup> Nixon had a vision and motives for doing so, to which we will briefly return in the conclusions, but for the *hic et nunc*, he had raised considerable enmity, which would prove fatal to his presidency.

The Trilateralists, who, in essence were the forefathers of modern-day Globalists, would not come to power, with their presidential shoo-in Jimmy Carter, until 1978. But their strategy for Italy was already perceptible soon after Nixon’s demise: while officialdom kept uttering the ritualistic anti-Communist pronouncements, a reputable portion of the United States’ intelligence, industrial and political circles was openly contemplating the option of putting Berlinguer

246 Bellini, F. and Bellini, G. 2005. 102.

247 Gaddo, M. 1977. *Dal Moro-colore alla Non-sfiducia. Due anni di vita italiana visti dalla porta accanto*. Milano: Edizioni Il Formichiere. 134.

248 1972–1975.

249 Giglio, T. 1982. 125. The initial gatherings of the Trilateral Commission coincided with Berlinguer’s drafting for *Rinascita* of the three famous articles on the historical compromise in the fall of 1973.

250 Frieden, J. 1980. The Trilateral Commission. Economics and Politics in the 1970s, in *Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management*, edited by H. Sklar. Boston: South End Press. 68–85.

and his in charge of the Italian colony. These circles had become convinced of the DC's utter unreliability on the occasion of the divorce referendum.<sup>251</sup> What began thereafter was the usual Cold War pantomime, which featured, on the one hand, the official spokesmen, say, Kissinger, thundering against Italian Communism, and the token Communist lieutenant, on the other, assuring the base that Kissinger's was "not the only voice we [Communists] hear from America."<sup>252</sup> The pantomime was not a mere gimmick: it actually mirrored the clash of views existing within the U.S. establishment over the immediate political fate of Italy, and ultimately over the question of whether it was worthwhile to wage the Cold War at all.

Nothing conveyed the precariousness of the entire setting better than the transitoriness of Gerald Ford's presidency. Indeed, it was through this palliative administration that the first Neo-Cons—names such as Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney<sup>253</sup>—would emerge: operatives that, under Reagan, would contribute to the erasure of the Soviet Union as a world player.<sup>254</sup> In the Trilateral camp, which, instead, was attempting to keep the USSR within the game, it was only consequential that, in 1975, its leaders would address the possibility of doing business with Berlinguer & Co. In principle, no spiritual obstacle militated against it: these Italian Communist leaders were bourgeois, for the most part Anglophiles, and thoroughly pro-capitalist—the Marxist-Leninist pose was just that. The success of the PCI at the regional elections of 1975 only strengthened the Trilateralists in their conviction.<sup>255</sup> There thus began a flurry of pro-PCI studies and papers sponsored by Zbigniew Brzezinski at Columbia University,<sup>256</sup> by the CIA,<sup>257</sup> and by a variety of other well-connected American associations seeking to establish contact with the PCI by inviting its most presentable elements, such as Giorgio Napolitano, to extensive tours of American academia and other posh politico-cultural foundations.<sup>258</sup>

*All of which signified that, de facto, the USSR had put up the PCI for sale.*<sup>259</sup> The Soviets were so bankrupt and desperate to obtain foreign aid that they were willing to sell the Americans the juiciest chunk of the franchise. Allegedly, they had tried to do so before, in 1971, by offering the PCI to Germany's SPD, but the

251 Flamigni, S. 2006. 32.

252 Gismondi, A. 1986. 78.

253 Under Ford, Rumsfeld served as Secretary of Defense and Cheney, succeeding Rumsfeld, as the White House Chief of Staff.

254 And, under G. H. W. Bush Jr., to the post-9/11 strategy of the War on Terror.

255 Albonetti, A. 1978. *Gli Stati Uniti e il PCI. Da Kissinger a Carter*. Roma: Circolo Stato e Libertà. 4.

256 Faller, U. 1976. 160–161, 204.

257 Giglio, T. 1982. 121–5; Satta, V. 2006, 347; Gatti, C. 1990. *Rimanga tra noi. L'America, l'Italia, la "questione comunista": i segreti di 50 anni di storia*. Milano: Leonardo Editore. 141.

258 Barbagallo, F. 2006. 258, 265.

259 Lanucara, A. 1978. 17, 123.

transaction fell through for one vote.<sup>260</sup> Doubtless, this was a splendid opportunity for the Italian Communists. And in 1975 Berlinguer felt power within his grasp. He was ideally placed to make a go of it: (1) his party was worth over a third of the electorate; (2) détente had reached its climax with the Summit of Helsinki;<sup>261</sup> (3) FIAT was backing him up;<sup>262</sup> (4) he had successfully mediated, with stealth, all the agreements that went into making the *Ostpolitik* (acting as confidential emissary between Moscow and Bonn);<sup>263</sup> (5) he could avail himself of (undisclosed) top financial expertise,<sup>264</sup> including that received from his uncle, Stefano Siglienti,<sup>265</sup> who had been the chief of IMI, the banking powerhouse formerly in charge of allocating no less a package than the Marshall Plan funds for Italy<sup>266</sup> and; (6) he now had the Trilateral plus the CIA courting him.

The barometer of situation was given by the PCI's official stance versus Italy's allegiance to NATO: in 1969 the Communists had been vehemently opposed to it; in 1972, the year Berlinguer became Secretary, he began to change his mind;<sup>267</sup> in 1974 he favored it; and in 1976 he went so far as to declare that "NATO could represent even for the forces of the Italian Left a guarantee against Soviet aggression, and a useful shield for building the Socialism of Freedom"(!).<sup>268</sup> What more could the Americans want? To complement duly this phenomenal about-face, he coined inane slogans—"we must be both conservative and revolutionary!"<sup>269</sup>—and made the reformist content of his "historical compromise" as vague and (disappointingly) amorphous as possible.<sup>270</sup>

Euro-Communism—the allegedly *frondiste* push on the part of Southern Europe's Communist Left to break away from the ideological clutches of the Soviets—was officially inaugurated in July 1975.<sup>271</sup> In reality, it was an electoral ruse, fully coordinated with the USSR.<sup>272</sup> Euro-Communism's "refreshing" anti-Soviet jeremiads, which so pleasurably impressed the radical chic, were

260 Bernabei, E. and dell'Arti, G. 1999. 226.

261 Lebec, E. 1997. *Histoire secrète de la diplomatie vaticane*. Paris: Albin Michel. 196.

262 Sklar, H. 1980. 546.

263 Selva, G. 1974. *Brandt: L'Ostpolitik*. Bologna: Cappelli Editore. 152–5.

264 Gismondi, A. 1986. 269.

265 Gracchus. 1974. *Il sistema Sindona. Scandali bancari e manovre politiche nella crisi italiana*. Bari: De Donato Editore. 69.

266 Lanucara, A. 1978. 133.

267 Chiara, V. 1997. 249.

268 Barbagli, M., Corbetta, Pier G. and Sechi, S. 1979. 19–21.

269 Fisichella, D. 1979. 9.

270 Barbagallo, F. 2006. 191. Galli, G. 2007. 264.

271 It will fizzle out in March 1977.

272 Cossiga, F. and Cangini, A. 2010. 251; Santaché, G. 1978. *Una rivoluzione fallita. I "metodi" di Boris Ponomarev in Europa*. Milano: Mursia. 121.

choreographed in Rome (and Paris<sup>273</sup> and Madrid) according to an identical script. The objective was to pilfer centrist (i.e. middle-class) votes from the DC and the Socialists during the interval most auspicious for the task: the late phase of détente (1975–1979)<sup>274</sup>—it was now Musketeers vs. “Moscowteers.”<sup>275</sup> If it worked, Moscow could raise the price, a bit. To Amintore Fanfani, who, semi-retired, had time to pay them a visit, the Chinese plainly explained that the Soviets were devising all such propagandistic artifacts (Euro-Communism, freedom from Moscow, revisionism, etc.) in order to keep their foot in the door: they were but acts of the same “tragi-comedy.”<sup>276</sup> The tragi-comedy would reach its surreal apex in Moscow, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution (November 2, 1977), when the “musketeer” Berlinguer froze in horror the mummies of the Soviet Supreme with a six-and-a-half minute speech extolling the “universal” value of “democracy.”

The chiefs of the Communist Parties are anything but naïve. All in all, they believe in one thing only: that without the help of the Nomenklatura they will not be capable of seizing power in their respective countries ... Contrary to the common opinion diffused in the West, The Soviet Nomenklatura looks with favor upon the coming to power of the Euro-Communists.<sup>277</sup>

This is the crucial transition of our story—crunch time for Berlinguer. In the arm-wrestling match with the Catholics, he was about to cause the demise of the first of National Solidarity government; meanwhile Jimmy Carter was being elected. The contrasts dividing the Americans over the situation in Italy were tangible: it was plain that a part of the administration—the very Trilateralists that had started the process—were still encouraging the Communists. It was no less patent, however, that the hawks, who would storm the White House four years later with Reagan’s conservative jolt, had clout enough to stall all such advances.<sup>278</sup> Being torn internally, the posture of the American establishment was qualified on all corners of the chroniclers’ quad as thoroughly “ambiguous.”<sup>279</sup> Indicative of this state of affairs was the uncomfortable position of the U.S. ambassador in Rome, the Trilateralist Richard N. Gardner. Gardner floundered to prop up the official

273 Lecoœur, A. 1980. *La stratégie du mensonge. Du Kremlin à Georges Marchais*. Paris: Éditions Ramsay. 182.

274 Massari, R. 2007. 178–9.

275 Fabien, J. 1985. 17.

276 Castoldi, L. 1978. 204.

277 Volensky, M. 1980. *Nomenklatura. La classe dominante in Unione Sovietica*. Milano: Longanesi. 398–408.

278 Gardner, R. N. 2005. 22–63, 163.

279 Wolfe, A. 1984. *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat*. Boston: South End Press. 35, 36; Albonetti, A. 1978. 19.

line of his government, which was hostile to the PCI, while the foxes of the DC<sup>280</sup> were certain that he was secretly abetting the cause of Berlinguer. It was precisely at this historical conjunction that the abduction and murder of Aldo Moro were consummated.

### An Anonymous Novel

Before we proceed to the finale of this study, it might be worthwhile to mention that in 1975, Gianfranco Piazzesi, a journalist for the *Corriere della Sera*, had published anonymously a *roman-à-clef*, entitled *Berlinguer e il Professore*, which became a bestseller.<sup>281</sup>

Here is the story. In 1974, Italy's Old Money is frightened by an epidemic of kidnappings, which aggravates the disquiet of an environment already roiled by economic troubles. This epidemic marks the rise of an unforeseen wave of *nouveaux riches*. In response to the kidnaps and the *parvenus*, the representatives of Old Money resolve to import, as private security guards, an army of gurkhas. The only rich man who is neither afraid nor in a fix is Eugenio Cefis, the royal leader of the state chemical enterprise. As the kidnappers are eventually repressed, the old rich seek to rid themselves of the gurkhas, who are no longer useful. On the economic front, Cefis, whom the crowds suspect of putschism, offers the unions the following deal: if the laborers' demands are contained, he is willing to pay their salaries in gold. The Church offers to mediate by offering to stow away all the gurkhas inside isolated churches. Meanwhile, to bridge over Italy's insolvency, the Christian-Democrats beg Washington for a loan, which they intend to secure with the country's artistic patrimony. Kissinger meets DC conservative leader Amintore Fanfani and retorts that the Americans will not advance any money, since they know that the Italians will convey it to the Soviets. Fanfani gives Kissinger the lie by rejoining that everyone knows that the Americans are in cahoots with the Italian Communists. Thereafter, face-to-face with Berlinguer, Fanfani offers to congeal the "the match" sine tempore: this "historical compromise" of yours, he sneers, what is it if not a co-management funded by U.S. dollars? Berlinguer declines the offer and enjoins Fanfani, instead, to play by the following scenario: on a certain day he is to go on TV to announce to the people that, subsequent to the discovery of a putschist conspiracy, he is about to proclaim a state of emergency and assume thereby full powers. Thus, concludes Berlinguer, the Communists will have reached their goal: namely to seize power surreptitiously via a coalition specially assembled by the beleaguered Christian-Democrats under an imaginary state of exception.

<sup>280</sup> Carlo Donat and Giulio Andreotti; see Gardner, R. N. 2005. 77; Satta, V. 2006. 362.

<sup>281</sup> Anonymous (Gianfranco Piazzesi). 1975. *Berlinguer e il professore*. Milano: Rizzoli.



(Easily) decrypted: a rising Liberal and anti-Catholic vanguard (*the nouveaux riches*) is seeking to harness to its agenda the electoral base of the PCI, and the working class (the kidnappers), with a view to toppling the Catholic leadership (Old Money). Feeling baited and blackmailed by organized labor, the old bourgeoisie hires Neo-Fascist thugs (the gurkhas) for self-defense ... and provocation. Cefis oversees the maneuver. After the work is done, the Blacks are buried away in the crypts. Meanwhile, the United States, alienated by the whole business, decides to bet on the Communist horse. The DC tergiversates, but Berlinguer is in a rush to break the stalemate and so plans an “inciting incident” that would clandestinely enable his Party to gain access to the control panel. The United States approves.

### Saying the Ineffable

A political agreement that would introduce the Communist Party in full political solidarity with us is not acceptable in our view [...]. We do know that a most delicate game of foreign policy, which I merely touch on, is afoot. (Aldo Moro)<sup>282</sup>

To return to the vulgate. Was it really the case, then, that all terrorist acts from Piazza Fontana onwards were planned and effected by Blacks (dissembling as Reds since 1974) to derail the PCI? As we have stated above, in 1969, the propagandistic accusation by the conservative milieu that the bombings were inspired by the PCI was *never* made. The conspirators did frame and sacrifice those unlikeliest of all suspects—the anarchists—and when that cover melted, they ditched without afterthought the Neo-Fascists (the “gurkhas”) as well. But the Communists came unscathed out of the whole affair. No organ of the center-Right pointed the finger at them. *The strategy of tension actually boosted the Communists’ institutional legitimacy*,<sup>283</sup> as they increasingly began to assert themselves as the only reliable and righteous force in the constitutional arc. *The Observer*, indeed, had appreciated this much.

Same story with Red terror. According to the vulgate, the putative forces of Reaction—say, the spectral triad of: DC Right-wingers, the CIA, and pro-Fascist Atlantists—secretly armed and manipulated groups such as the BR, and delegated to the complicit Socialists (PSI) the no less covert task of fomenting the extra-parliamentary Left (fronted by Toni Negri and the Foucauldians),<sup>284</sup> both actions being the prongs of a single maneuver aimed at spearing the PCI from its left. Fortunately, the exegetes add, Berlinguer and his lieutenants adroitly dodged the offensive—at least for a time. Admittedly, either the terror-masters were incompetent or the PCI was just too virtuous, or possibly both. But something does not quite add up, because these self-same banaghans of the vulgate affirm

282 From Moro’s last speech, February 28, 1978. Moro, A. 1979. 387.

283 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 14.

284 Fiori, G. 1989. 325–6.

adamantly, following Berlinguer, that the Right was eventually able to sink the *compromesso storico* with a single shot (i.e. the abduction of Moro). They argue that Moro, as the chief, compassionate mediator of the conservative bloc was the only politician capable of ferrying both sides of the “compromise” to a full-blown democratic solution—in other words, that he was irreplaceable. Yet two years of uninterrupted BR-slaughter (1976–1977) had apparently done nothing to compromise the strength of the party. And that is revealing. Actually, the more the BR struck the more votes Berlinguer garnered.<sup>285</sup> Was it just a freak correlation? Were the BR ultimately helping the cause of Berlinguer?<sup>286</sup>

They were—in two ways. The labor of the BR may be configured, in essence, as a psyop, which came to affect the instinctive responses of two different cohorts of the leftist electorate. First, by targeting *exclusively* Christian-Democrat, conservatives and industrial executives,<sup>287</sup> the *brigatisti* were performing some kind of masked-avenger cleansing, which law-abiding and DC-hating PCI voters were intimately relishing yet were too coy to applaud overtly. Second, and most important, by intensifying the level of violence, and enabling thus *Communist* spokespersons to *criminalize* and disown *Communist* terrorism ever more vehemently, Moretti and his gang were de facto legitimizing the PCI and *pushing it further to the center*.<sup>288</sup> And that is exactly where Berlinguer wanted it to be in order to fish the extra votes with which he could “force” the DC to come to an understanding (namely the unrequited advances of the *compromesso storico*).

Otherwise, if it was true that the BR thought Berlinguer a “sellout”<sup>289</sup> and his “revisionism” a sacrilege; if it was true that in the eyes of the *brigatisti* the *embourgeoisement* of the PCI represented the supreme, most insufferable betrayal of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideals, *then it would have been perfectly coherent on their part to maim, ravish and assassinate Communist captains as well*. If it was true, as Moretti would later confess, that he had planned the abduction of Moro to trigger some kind of rupture between the “base” and the leadership of the PCI, well, then, why not kidnap Berlinguer, the hated arch-traitor himself? The “base” did not care a fig about Aldo Moro.

But, could the base be ever expected to riot, massively? It did not in 1969, and it would not take to the streets after the first BR in the early 1970s either, although part of it mutedly cheered for them. By early 1978 it was obvious:

285 Solé, R. 1979. *Le défi terroriste. Leçons italiennes à l'Usage de l'Europe*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. 139, 160; Fisichella, D. 1979. 94.

286 Raufer, X. 1982. *Terrorisme: maintenant la France?* Paris: Éditions Garnier Frères. 145–6.

287 With the notable exception of two Communists, both of them shot in the legs—the journalist Nino Ferrero (September 18, 1977) and Carlo Castellano (November 17, 1977); a senior director of the Ansaldo conglomerate—the BR concentrated their fire upon the conservative bloc.

288 Lanucara, A. 1978. 139.

289 Fasanella, G., Sestrieri, C. and Pellegrino, G. 2000. 31.

no matter how tense the environment, the Italians were, in the final instance, a docile lot. So no revolution for or against Moro; but what if Berlinguer himself had been snatched? One could argue that the ravishment of the party's secretary or of another popular Communist bigwig would have caused, nation-wide, such an upsurge of sympathy that the PCI would have found itself further boosted by the event. But the more veracious supposition is that the spectacle of a Left senselessly cannibalizing itself across the legal divide would have been positively lethal for the quotation of the Party. Had they taken Berlinguer the BR would have so completely disoriented the electorate of the PCI as to have played themselves out of political existence. If Italy's CIA-fueled "puppet-masters" were so diabolically anti-Communist as the vulgate assures they were, *to have the BR sequester, or better, assassinate Berlinguer* could have been, therefore, the perfect (political) crime. It might have killed with one stone all three birds—the PCI's electoral dynamism, the icon Berlinguer, and the not inconsiderable, if modulated, popularity enjoyed by the BR.

Mario Moretti, of course, was deliberately talking stupendous nonsense—as he would most of the time, he, no less a sphinx than his fellow power-brokers at the top. Following the logic of this sub-game, to kidnap Berlinguer was never an option, even though some dubious rumors, circulated by Berlinguer himself, suggest that it had been contemplated.<sup>290</sup> Moro, then, was the chosen victim. Was the public emotionally devastated by the abduction? Not in the least<sup>291</sup>—shocked for certain by the slaughter of the five innocents in Via Fani and by the high profile of the victim, but not intimately touched. And at both extremes of the spectrum, the news of his abduction was actually greeted with gloating ovations.<sup>292</sup> Despite the fluttering of red and white banners in the trademark corteges of the day and other customary displays of civil indignation, not a tear was shed for a member of that class that had concerned itself exclusively with the strict management of the *arcana imperii*. Moro had always made short shrift of popular affection.<sup>293</sup>

Be that as it sorrowfully may, the glossers of the vulgate invest the figure of Moro, notwithstanding his lack of mass-appeal, with capital significance. Not just for standing out as a representative of the old guard that had, like some sort of modern Walter Rathenau,<sup>294</sup> morphed into a pro-Arab, recalcitrant mutineer<sup>295</sup>

290 Pecorelli, F. and Sommella, R. 1994. 215.

291 Arbasino, A. 1978. *In questo Stato*. Milano: Garzanti. 8.

292 For a testimony of the reaction from the Right see Bruni, P. 2008. *Il perduto equilibrio nei giorni tristi di Aldo Moro*. Castrovillari: Il C. 87; and from the Left, Guerzoni, C. 2008. 15.

293 Cossiga, F. and Cangini, A. 2010. 39.

294 Feldbauer, G. 2000. *Agenten, Terror, Staatskomplot. Der Mord an Aldo Moro, Rote Brigaden und CIA*. Köln: Papy Rossa Verlag. 39; Pietra, I. 1983. 179–80.

295 The parallel with Rathenau and his association with the putative existence of a "National Bolshevik" conspiracy—a sort of *compromesso storico avant la lettre*—is literarily suggestive, but wholly unwarranted (for a treatment of that particular episode, see my *Conjuring Hitler*, 112–21).

(against the Atlantic Alliance), but also for being the keeper of a great many filthy and most delicate secrets of the Republic. In short, he had to die; he was too dangerous. If that was the case, the question has been asked before: why run the immense risk and undertake the extraordinary cost of spiriting Moro away in broad daylight, and keeping him captive for two months when there was every reason to believe that the policing apparatus of the state would have been looking for him under every stone with guns drawn? Why not shoot him dead in Via Fani?<sup>296</sup> Second, if Moro's pro-Arab policy was such a nuisance, he should have been discretely removed from his post, as it is generally done, at least four years earlier, when he was still Foreign Minister. Why wait until 1978, when as President of the DC (a purely honorary title) he could do no harm in that sense, and eliminate him to boot in the most convoluted and sensational of manners? And third, why should the reactionary conspirators, who by definition are the most informed of all people, take such indescribable pains merely to extract from their prey information they certainly already possessed?

Clearly, the choice of Moro was not *ad personam*, but strictly instrumental. It was not his individuality that mattered, but his being kidnapped. It was the inciting incident, which had to feature a high-priest of the DC that was needed by the schemers at this critical juncture of Italian politics. But what for?

A number of commentators have remarked that in the aftermath of the kidnap, the position of Berlinguer's PCI presented a striking change from that of the past: of the state they had so vehemently vilified for three decades, the Communists were presently posing as the fiercest, most uncompromising stalwarts—more royalist than the king. Roaring against the BR in the name of National Solidarity, they unleashed in the streets of Rome shortly after the kidnap a presidium of red-clad militants and trade-unionists. Evolving in patterns clearly suggestive of a military drill,<sup>297</sup> they marched as if claiming the governmental perimeter, suddenly thrown in a state of emergency, as their own turf. In parliament, the Neo-Fascists of the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano)—part of the exiguous minority that had refused to vote for the new executive on March 16—grew so frightened by what they trepidatiously decried as a Communist takeover that Vito Miceli,<sup>298</sup> who had thereupon flown to Washington, begged the U.S. cavalry to come to the rescue.<sup>299</sup> Why do so if, as the vulgate still suggests, "America" was allegedly in on the operation?

Equally suspect is the episode of the emergency meeting that took place in the premier's (Giulio Andreotti's) office immediately before the confidence vote, an hour or so after Moro's disappearance. The party secretaries of the traditional allies of the DC were present, along with Berlinguer and his lieutenants. The story

296 Satta, V. 2006. 378. Flamigni, S. 2006. 275. Carr, M. 2006. *Unknown Soldiers. How Terrorism Transformed the Modern World*. London: Profile Book. 156.

297 Fisichella, D. 1979. 96.

298 The former Chief of Military Intelligence (1970–1974), most loyal to Aldo Moro.

299 Feldbauer, G. 2000. 80; Flamigni, S. 2006. 69.

has it that in the tense atmosphere of the room the Communist secretary turned earnestly toward Andreotti and requested that, given the exceptional gravity of the situation, several Communists be given key ministerial posts in the executive soon-to-be sworn in.<sup>300</sup> Andreotti refused. Piazzesi's tale had been prophetic: an inciting incident had indeed occurred, yet it seemed that the Catholics were not holding up their end of the bargain.

But most topsy-turvy of all was the actual dénouement of the whole affair. The mainstream press—with *L'Unità* at the forefront<sup>301</sup>—pounced on the news of the kidnap with truculent libido and fermented it into a symphonic and voyeuristic blast the likes of which the discursive sphere has seldom witnessed since. At first they blared that it was all a Soviet, then a German, conspiracy. On a separate track, they then proceeded to “beatify” the victim: Moro, the foe of yesteryear, was presently depicted as “meek and hieratic,” “a solitary St George slaying the dragon of the BR.”<sup>302</sup> And to render the drama even more grotesque, there were these ghostly “postmen of the BR” that delivered missives and communiqués in abundance, coming and going wherever and however they pleased, always undetected.<sup>303</sup> It was senseless: for so serious an emergency, elementary *raison d'état* demanded that an information shutdown be enforced as stringently as possible. Why did the authorities not impose on papers and newscasts a complete black-out<sup>304</sup> or some form of scrambling, as they did when Sossi had been taken? In fact, the regime not only refrained from muzzling the media, but ratcheted things up, deeming it opportune to give news agents and publicists free rein, full-time, to indulge scandalizing speculations and politological imbrications to paroxysmal heights. It seemed as though the media were shooting a film, which the BR had scripted.<sup>305</sup> Terrorism could not have hoped for a more efficient soundboard.<sup>306</sup> Even *before* the BR would issue their “hallucinating” communiqués, the *Corriere della Sera* titled that the Republic would not be blackmailed, and that there would be no dealing with the terrorists under any circumstances. Which meant that, unless the Special Forces rapidly managed to flush him from the “people's prison,” Moro was doomed. But who had yet heard the *brigatisti* demand ransom or to negotiate anything?<sup>307</sup> In any case, the audiences were informed that this was, beyond any reasonable doubt, a shameful assault on the “historical compromise.” And this was merely the beginning, for this “baroque”<sup>308</sup> insanity would produce one vertiginous

300 Colombo, A. 2008. 53.

301 The press organ of the PCI.

302 Silj, A. 1978. 9–17, 28, 29.

303 Flamigni, S. 2006. 270.

304 Solé, R. 1979. 227.

305 Silj, A. 1978. 43.

306 Girotto, S. 2002. 351.

307 Da Rold, G. 1982. *Da Ottone alla P2. Sei anni di Compromesso Storico al Corriere della Sera*. Milano: SugarCo. 58.

308 Solé, R. 1979. 62.

absurdity after another, such as the surprise that of the “no-negotiations” party, the most inflexible hardliners were the Communists themselves.<sup>309</sup>

Admittedly, the inexplicably counter-intuitive and cynical stance of Berlinguer vis-à-vis Moro’s ordeal and chances of survival is still one of the most perplexing aspects of the mystery. Pro-PCI apologists have promptly excused their hero, protesting that the new hyper-legalistic course of the PCI was leaving its spokespersons no alternative; the Party *had* to defend the State, whatever the cost.

Disingenuous argument. Had not the Liberal press, presently favorable to the Communists,<sup>310</sup> averred that Moro was the pivot of the “compromise”? And now that his life was at stake, his Communist “allies” turned their back on him without a moment’s hesitation, recoiling into what could pass as the stiffest of traitorous behaviors. How could the integrity and the electoral capital of the PCI have in any way suffered if Berlinguer had hinted that he was ready to seek bargaining avenues to save the priceless life of his cherished “partner”? Not only would Berlinguer not lift a finger for Moro, but he would actually wait out the foretold execution with disturbing aloofness.

We have reached a provisional point where we may recapitulate the facts and restate our alternative screenwriting treatment of the events of March 16, 1978.

Between 1975 and late 1977 segments of the U.S. and the USSR must have settled for some kind of pact intended to roll over the lease of the Soviet Union. Some of the main conduits for the purpose unsurprisingly ran through Italy. This makeshift arrangement had determined opponents from the first hour; these would rise and carry the day with the neo-liberal coup (1979–1981), which eventually nullified this late “compromise,” and consequently the geostrategic usefulness of the Soviet Union. In this interval of critical instability, which does reach, in point of fact, as far back as Piazza Fontana (December 1969), ascendant financial/economic interests wishing to unclench the DC’s feudal choke-hold on Italy’s economy were pushing their way to the fore of political decision. It was as if Italy had three levels of bourgeoisie: B1, the traditional Catholic-conservative bloc; B2, the new Liberal-technocratic elite; and B3, the Mafia: B2 came to challenge B1, and B3, coming in the wake of B2, merely sought to advance its interests by scavenging the scraps of the fight.<sup>311</sup> To pre-empt B2 it is likely that B1 invented (or appropriated) the putschist strategy of 1969. The Red Brigades, instead, seem to point to B2: we know that the “first generation” of the BR was closely monitored by the PCI,<sup>312</sup> and that it was presumably funded by an industrial/financial clan of the north, that of Pirelli, Falck and Feltrinelli (“the infernal trio”),<sup>313</sup> which, itself, could have been part of the wider “Anglo-Dutch” faction mentioned earlier.

309 Giovagnoli, A. 2005. 121.

310 Preti, L. 1975. 39.

311 De Lutiis, G. 2007. 220–24.

312 Fasanella, G. and Franceschini, A. 2004. 44.

313 Hallier, J. L. 1991. *Le dandy du grand chemin. Conversations avec Jean-Louis Remilleux*. Paris: Éditions Michel Lafon. 41, 77.



There remains, then, to shed light on Moretti's new BR. There is yet no judicial proof that they "worked for" the PCI, and in support of their independence and impermeability, some claim that they were not infiltrated during the *affaire Moro*,<sup>314</sup> while others have countered that they certainly were, mentioning at least one documented case, which was handled by Military Intelligence.<sup>315</sup> As a further installment of *dezinformatsia* (produced in 1974 by the Carabinieri), it was also rumored that the BR were directed by Czech Intelligence. Rolling cunningly with the canard, the Communists regularly sent to Prague an envoy<sup>316</sup> to "dissuade" the Czech comrades from pursuing such dangerous games,<sup>317</sup> and even five days before Moro's assassination (May 4), one of the PCI's generals made a show of summoning the Czech ambassador to "warn" him that the eventual disclosure of his government's responsibility in the *affaire* might have disastrous consequences.<sup>318</sup>

Proof or no proof, it is difficult not to see that the BR were created, and refitted, to fuel the PCI's "drive toward the center." As stated earlier, what is characteristic of the Italian Communists in this phase is their *attendismo*, their wait-and-see attitude in the war of the Bourgeoisies. It seems as though they watched the duel intently, hoping eventually to get an engagement, an engagement that would arrive in mid-1974, when the first BR were dismantled in view of the escalation. In this sense, the true target of terrorism in the seventies was the DC, and certainly not the PCI, which, in the final analysis had offered itself for hire to overthrow the Catholics. That is why the DC rejected the *compromesso storico* from the first, and selected Moro as commander-in-chief to conduct the great Christian-Democrat army to battle against the historical adversary.<sup>319</sup> As detailed above, the tactic was straightforward: he would attract the PCI "mid-way through the ford" and, as Cossiga put it, proceed to "screw" them.<sup>320</sup> As the international situation evolved (with the geostrategic demise of the USSR), the PCI was expected to lose votes, return irreversibly to the opposition, and die a slow death. Which is exactly what came to pass.

In late 1977, as we saw, Berlinguer & Associates felt strong enough as to dictate to Moro & Friends the terms of a "deal," whose contents may be intuited only through guesswork. Berlinguer was pressed for time, and each faction mistrusted the other *completely*.<sup>321</sup> we may assume that under this "armed truce," *the two factions met to compose their mutually hostile programs into a peculiar arrangement, which the Christian-Democrats thought of scuttling at the first*

314 Satta, V. 2006. 29.

315 Limiti, S. 2009. 183; Flamigni, S. 2003. 190; Scarrano, M. and De Luca, M. 1985. 174.

316 S. Cacciapuoti.

317 Sechi, S. ed. 2009. 109, 164.

318 Imposimato, F. and Provvisionato, S. 2008. 234.

319 Gismondi, A. 1986. 62.

320 Farina, R. 2010. 117.

321 Chiara, V. 1997. 282; Colombo, A. 2008. 64–6.

*suitable opportunity, and the Communists of using, instead, as a springboard into the upper level of government. In any case, appearances had to be saved at all costs. If politics is theatrics, why not turn the occasion into a “gigantic feat of dramatic display,”*<sup>322</sup> *the most memorable of the epoch?*

Why not give the PCI three “technicians” in the new executive of March 1978? If that is all the Communists wanted to say “yes” to Andreotti’s second government of National Solidarity, why not accede to such a trifling request? Why would Moro, allegedly the “friend” of the Left and the greatest of all mediators, veto it? *Could it be, then, that the whole abduction was to be a deception from the outset?* Could it be that it was engineered with the full-spectrum complicity of DC, PCI and the top hierarchy of the intelligence brethren with the objective of causing among the people so disorienting an impression as to distract them entirely from the macroscopic innovation of a Communist presence if not in the executive, at least in the majority? Ideally—like in Piazzesi’s poli-sci-fi dime novel—the incident should have been “painless.”<sup>323</sup> From the start, Berlinguer was aiming to obtain a handful of secondary ministries, though it would have been “stupid” on his part to insist on the request too strongly and too soon (after the abduction): he had to exercise caution not to be seen joining the majority by stepping over five warm bodies.<sup>324</sup> He was hoping he would have achieved that goal, one patient step at a time. It would thus appear that Andreotti double-crossed him immediately. The tug-of-war was on.

What of Moro? Could we possibly imagine that he, too, willingly lent himself to this horrifying mummery? That this “match” with Berlinguer signified so much that Moro would make himself the accessory to the murder of the five innocents deputized to protect him? That he had just been sitting in car, as it turned right on Via Fani, waiting knowingly and impassibly the carnage about to happen? It is unthinkable.

And yet one cannot help brooding over the utter disdain and indifference, with which men of power close to him greeted his suffering and death. It is disquieting on a variety of levels. It is not so much the case with his brothers-in-arms of the DC, or even with Berlinguer, who, when it was all over, confided to a collaborator that he found Moro’s breakdown in the face of death a pathetic display of weakness: “when one assumes the responsibility of leading a great party, committing to the task before millions of people,” he sentenced, “one should be ready for sacrifice, including that of one’s life.”<sup>325</sup> These were certainly not the words of a deferential confederate, let alone of a friend, and there is a tinge of resentment laced with contempt in that judgment which gives pause. More troubling than even these suggestions is an off-the-cuff comment that the then archbishop of Genoa, Cardinal Giuseppe Siri, made to a journalist not long after the event: “Moro got what he

322 Mosse, G. L. 1979. lxix.

323 Bernabei, E. and dell’Arti, G. 1999. 108.

324 Solé, R. 1979. 29.

325 Chiara, V. 1997. 289.

deserved,” snapped Siri, “that is what you get by opening to the Communists.”<sup>326</sup> Now, that is exactly the sort of (arch-conservative) view the leftist vulgate would expect a high prelate to express. Yet it came out too harshly; Siri himself felt it and tried to backtrack. Contempt, again, but why? What makes a leading personality of the Church, of all people, reflexively direct such obloquy at a revered Catholic statesman that had just been conferred the exaltation of State “martyrdom”?<sup>327</sup> Is differing political *opinion* sufficient warrant therefore? Something is out of joint here. We have retraced Moro’s *démarche* in dealing with Berlinguer, and we have all read his somewhat inconclusive yet consistently and unambiguously *polemical* declarations on the spiritual valence of Communism and the eventual bi-party alternance with a reformed PCI.<sup>328</sup> We can safely affirm that neither his *cursus*, nor his overall demeanor versus the Communists, nor his speeches and writings, let alone the eerie and mysterious “letters from the people’s prison”—which say everything and its opposite,<sup>329</sup> too little and too much<sup>330</sup>—form any strong evidence that he was “opening” to the party of Berlinguer. And a cardinal *papabile*, an experienced dignitary like Siri must have surely known this. So, again we ask, why the loathing? So, did Moro actually play with fire and suffer proper retribution? Had he got what he truly deserved?

Poring over the titles and leaders of the foreign press (especially French and German) at the time of the abduction, one cannot help noting the exceptional recurrence of the word “trap”—as in, “Moro fallen victim of his own trap”—and of the suggestion that the whole incident was to manifest benefit of the Communists.<sup>331</sup> On April 24, 1978 *Die Welt* wrote:

To be something more than a simple episode of transformism the “historical compromise” needs to be *cemented* by a terrible or dramatic event, something upon which to construct its mythical ideal, a sort of human sacrifice. This is indeed the sense of Moro’s martyrdom.<sup>332</sup>

But even if one dares to utter the ineffable, there remains in this outlandish landscape to account in some fashion for the epilogue, and even more so for the putative *mise-en-scène* of this incubus of Italy’s First Republic. For if it was one giant deceit, what caused the abrupt turns, the sudden requests for a hostage

326 Valle, A. 2008. 35.

327 Silj, A. 1978. 186.

328 Moro, A. 1979. 269–76, 298, 320, 330–31, 365–9, 372, 384–91.

329 Di Nolfo, E. 1996. *La Repubblica delle speranze e degli inganni: l’Italia dalla caduta del fascismo al crollo della Democrazia Cristiana*. Firenze: Ponte delle Grazie. 495.

330 Pietra, I. 1983. 17.

331 Condoirelli, N. B. 1982. La stampa francese, in *Cultura e politica nell’esperienza di Aldo Moro*, edited by P. Scaramozzino. Milano: Giuffrè Editore. 201–76.

332 Brissa, E. 1982. La stampa tedesco-occidentale in *Cultura e politica nell’esperienza di Aldo Moro*, edited by P. Scaramozzino. Milano: Giuffrè Editore. 289.

swap, the fake seventh communiqué, or the incomprehensible inflexibility of the regime in the face of the no less inflexibly irrational demands of the BR? What prompted Bettino Craxi's PSI to split unexpectedly from the front of intransigence and cast about for a "humanitarian" solution (i.e. an exchange of prisoners to save Moro)? Was this, too, a *coup de théâtre*, a contrivance within a contrivance, staged by the *registi occulti* to signal that the script had changed in the fourth Shakespearean act: that the "deal" with Berlinguer was off and that the PSI had been given the green light to erode the front of National Solidarity through this gambit of simulated compassion? It is possible: the Communists were literally enraged by it. Otherwise known for their mastery of self-restraint, this time they could not contain their wrath at the effrontery of this, they railed, perfectly "ignoble maneuver."<sup>333</sup> It could be that originally the plan was to free Moro after a few weeks in the course of a slam-bang, Swat-team-kaboom rescue operation, Mogadishu-style.<sup>334</sup> Such would have been indubitably a stipulation concerted for the greater benefit of the PCI. But then something must have changed, or, possibly, the double-cross had been contemplated from the beginning. Either way, the switch, which determined Craxi's "defection," decided the death of the hostage. By then, the game had become so contorted, and the tangles of complicity so liable to becoming unthreaded and exposed, that the circus macabre had to be wrapped up as expeditiously as possible. Barring a police rescue, if Moro had been released unharmed by the BR, the outcome would have been embarrassing for the DC, but *disastrous* for the PCI; with Moro dead, the DC earned sympathy and the PCI saved face (barely). For a brief spell, his death did indeed "cement" the compromise.<sup>335</sup>

In the end, Moro and the DC won the match. After nine months or so of a "National Solidarity" built on foundations as damned as these the PCI quit the majority in the wake of a polling and electoral drubbing. Berlinguer had not given up on the "compromise" just yet, but in actuality it was over. The USSR was in Afghanistan, and soon Gorbachev would come to pull the plug on the Soviet show. Not long after the end of National Solidarity, as he addressed his lieutenants in a moment of reflection dedicated to the *affaire* Moro, Berlinguer conceded that he and his "had been overly naïve." Naïveté: the politician's unforgivable sin.<sup>336</sup> From then on it would be a slow decline until Berlinguer's death in 1984 (he was 62)—at which time Red terrorism and the BR almost suddenly vanished. Just another freak correlation? In sum, what had happened was that for a parenthetical

333 Fava, N. 2008. *Aldo Moro, una tragedia aperta*. Roma: Adn Kronos.

334 On October 13, 1977, German Special Forces stormed in Mogadishu's airport a Lufthansa jet originally departed from Mallorca on October 13, 1977 (Flight 181), which had been hijacked by Palestinian terrorists in connection with the abduction of H. M. Schleyer (September 5–October 18, 1977) by the RAF; see, e.g., de Castro, R. and Campos, M. 1977. *Sabbia a Stammheim. Uno spettacolo terrorista*. Torino: Studio Forma Editrice.

335 Finetti, U. 2009. 110.

336 Mafai, M. 1996. 24.

excerpt of the 1970s, the USSR—and its Anglo-American supporters—thought it could buy more time by “social-democratizing” its European appendices—but, then, why have two Socialist parties when only one was “needed”?<sup>337</sup>

For all the glory of 1974–1977, Berlinguer is “distant”<sup>338</sup> these days—as is Moro, having both of them faded from memory like byproducts that only have meaning in the highly confined context of their drab epoch: the late era of the Cold Game. The victory of the DC (and of Craxi’s PSI), however, would prove to be a 10-year long respite, until the post-Berlin winds of 1992 would splinter into pieces the tumbledown Palazzo of the First Republic.

Time after time—I should say periodically—everyone assumes that the DC is scheduled to rendezvous the forces of Reaction with a view to engineering a political swerve, which, by clustering around Communism old and new alliances, would put Italy at the mercy of Communism; and by so doing, would warrant the resort to Fascist dictatorship in order to save Italy from Communist dictatorship. I can safely affirm [...] that this swerve has not happened, nor will it happen, ever. (Aldo Moro, October 24, 1959)<sup>339</sup>

It was not true, as they all said, that the death of Moro dramatically changed history’s course. The BR would go on killing 17 more individuals after him—the power ratios had merely begun to budge. And, nested within tangles of conspiratorial threads, cock-and-bull stories kept circulating such as the one purporting that Moro’s kidnap was the idea of three *commanditaires*: two parliamentarians and an official of the Vatican. In this setting, the assassins that sprayed that hail of bullets with professional precision in Via Fani were actually Carabinieri, who had to cut down the colleagues of the security detail for fear of being recognized. So the hit-men were cops; but the minds of the organization, those, instead, were to be found at the highest echelons of the magistrature. And here was the gem: the Deep Throat that had gone to DC leader Flaminio Piccoli to unbosom himself of such incandescent *mysteria* thereupon proposed to Piccoli that he feigned of being abducted by a commando a “trusted” *brigatisti*. Piccoli was to make a pretense of being kidnapped so that he could be spirited to the HQ of the BR, where he would have had the opportunity to unmask the three mysterious conjurors.<sup>340</sup>

337 Becker, J. J. 1981. *Le Parti Communiste veut-il prendre le pouvoir? La stratégie du PCF de 1930 à nos jours*. Paris: Seuil. 312; *International Herald Tribune*, April 28, 1979 quoted in Frank, A. G. 1980. 150.

338 Mafai, M. 1996. 89.

339 Moro, A. 1979. 237.

340 Story published by *L'Espresso* on February 17, 1979, in Flamigni, S. 2006. 401.

*A Vulgate for Posterity*

Ever since Moro died the way he did, and Berlinguer implicitly conceded defeat, it seems as though the regime settled on a version of the events that was to the satisfaction of the parties involved. This was to be the leftist vulgate: Berlinguer's version. By covering the truth with two inventions—Moro's leftism, and the PCI's victimization—and laying the whole blame for Italy's tribulations on "the CIA" (and lately, to a minor degree, on "the KGB"<sup>341</sup> or "the British"<sup>342</sup>), the Catholics kept the citadel while (the heirs of) the Communists continued to claim moral primacy.

**And to Conclude, Carl Schmitt**

Since the late 1980s, most terrorists have been "amnestied":<sup>343</sup> some have been reintegrated cum laude as sociology professors,<sup>344</sup> others as social workers, and others still have quietly withdrawn to a modest middle-class existence. And, to this day, only a fistful of *irriducibili* is languishing in prison. Piazzesi had seen far on this too: it was the Church that would oversee the process of pacification, and it began in the prisons.<sup>345</sup> Afterwards, it was understood that no one was ever to speak a word of all this (namely Curcio's "oath").<sup>346</sup>

Is this, then, a tale of the so-called "Dual State"?<sup>347</sup> Is the Moro *affaire*, in other words, a further illustration of the principle according to which the political machine of Liberalism is comprised of a legitimate façade—i.e. the institutions—and its illegal flip side? This theory claims that the illegal underground is managed on behalf of the elite by those sectors of the regime logistically contiguous to the liminal zone of criminal activity, namely, the police and the secret services. And this management, in point of fact, consists in recruiting assassins and saboteurs or strikebreakers<sup>348</sup> to muffle any kind of progressive yearning that might, by (mis)-chance, develop in the "legitimate," presentable half of society. This would imply that there is a villain on one side of the spiritual fence and a hero on the other, and that the villain, on average, always manages to crush the hero by turning against him, deceitfully, the violence of the underclass. The (Communist) vulgate is keen

341 Imposimato, F. and Provisionato, S. 2008. 193–244.

342 Cereghino, M. J. and Fasanella, G. 2010. *Il golpe inglese. Da Matteotti a Moro: Le prove della guerra segreta per il controllo del petrolio e dell'Italia*. Milano: Chiarelettere.

343 Pecorelli, M. cited in Flamigni, S. 2006. 295.

344 Namely Prospero Gallinari.

345 Valle, A. 2008. 208–9.

346 See note 115.

347 Cucchiarelli, P. 2009. 419.

348 Foucault, M. 1975. *Surveiller et punir; naissance de la prison*. Paris: Gallimard. 282.



to state that the Christian-Democrats were the henchmen, whereas the Catholics rejoin allusively, if sporadically, that they were the victims, instead. In Veblenian terms,<sup>349</sup> this is to say that whenever the modern agonistic space is disputed by two factions, each posits itself as the non-barbarous and enlightened elite, and by doing so perforce constructs the opponent as the evil, *inimical* mirror image of itself: i.e. as a counter-elite, equally tenacious yet *barbarous*. As such, one accuses the other—either a conservative incumbent or an iconoclastic challenger—of tapping the underworld (barbarous but non-tenacious) with sinister and hostile intent whenever the letter of the law does not reach far enough in this labor of conservative control or of revolutionary reconfiguration. One could proceed with this schema if a proper definition of “conservative” and “iconoclastic” could be had, but the endeavor might prove to be wholly futile considering that, in our case, the political fight took place between two fairly homogeneous groups of Italian bourgeois. Which fact then points to a higher, more encompassing level of allegiance: the supranational dimension.

Three factions were possibly at play here: the (Yankee) traditionalists, the Liberals and the Catholics. Unlike the Liberals of the Trilateral Commission, Nixon’s traditionalists did not seem entirely hostile to the Vatican. The Communists merely figured as hirelings of the Trilateral at a time when the USSR, which owned them, was selling out to hold onto the half of the world it had earned at Stalingrad. To strengthen the empire, Nixon sought to weaken Europe economically while decompressing the game with Russia and opening to China so as to keep every player on its guard. Nixon was an imperial generation ahead of his time: what he foreshadowed was indeed something resembling the scheme of the Euro, by which Russia is kept at bay, and Europe is economically debilitated by the erasure of productive investment<sup>350</sup> and the wreckage of its manufactures by China’s slave-driven export industry.<sup>351</sup>

Ultimately, the *affaire* Moro was a quite circumscribed expression of Cold War dynamics to the extent that the Liberals, having gained the upper hand over the traditionalists for a period of approximately three years (1974–1977), had attempted to challenge the Church by pitting the proxies of the DC versus the Communists. To that effect, as argued in this study, they appear to have also relied, as a matter of course, on fairly classic terroristic methods.

So this was not a story of “dual state” but, more simply, of “dual option,” so to speak, in that both elites,<sup>352</sup> when they came to be split in the middle owing to higher

349 Thorstein, V. 1899. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: A Study of Economic Institutions*. New York: Macmillan. Chapter 9, 212–45.

350 Germany, Europe’s only competitive zone, finances the trade deficits of the weaker partners, which are encouraged thereby to increase their level of indebtedness by selling IOUs not just to Germany but also to the rentiers most interested and vested in the scheme: the United States and the UK.

351 Cotta, A. 2010. *Sortir de l’euro ou mourir à petit feu*. Paris: Plon. 17–28.

352 Scarrano, M. and De Luca, M. 1985. 197.

political pressure, had standard recourse to the “lower depths” for fishing viler sub-species with which to fight their dirty (civil) war. In truth, swathes of enlightened individuals across the middle-class—that is, individuals that are entitled to call “others” “barbarous”—no longer seem to exist. In a postmodern world, what we imbibe, rather, is an undifferentiated mass-culture that has expanded in keeping with the geo-spiritual transformation of the earth as a consequence of Anglo-American domination. Such domination is a direct emanation of the islander’s seafaring mindset, which does not reckon in terms of material boundaries, as the continental psyche does, but of unbounded water- and air-space.<sup>353</sup> Psychically, the deeper projection of the seafarer’s imperial unconscious is a world in which all national divides are effaced, cultural variation annulled, religious worship abjured (and replaced with uniformed devoutness variously accented), and all languages Anglicized so as to make room for the onset of a permanent “global civil war.” Such a metamorphosed battlefield allows Anglo-America to wage war in standardized fashion anywhere in the world, and even, if need be, by instigating populations against their own governments.<sup>354</sup> Accordingly, the martial style, too, has had to adapt to the shift: where nationhood has been obliterated, the deployment of conventional troops gives way to the regular use of *irregulars*: the “*partisans*”—i.e. sappers of the underbrush operating behind enemy lines. Originally conceived in occupied countries as guerrillas with a license to savagery, it was fitting that these partisans, rankless and faceless, would come to swarm the *undifferentiated* bellicose space of the global civil war. From defensive, the partisan has tuned into an aggressive force, which is gradually accumulated in proprietary form by international or supranational centrals. It was thus that these irregulars became the conventional effectives of techno-industrial armies, which the great powers needed to foment a series of “controlled wars.” Given that the partisan is, essentially, a *terrorist*, the level of brutality and devastation characterizing such controlled disorder has greatly intensified.<sup>355</sup>

Carl Schmitt’s pessimistic romance is a fair approximation of the environment in which the *affaire* Moro occurred. One discerns in it the transversal factions, the apodictic primacy of Anglo-America, and the USSR’s standing as comprimario on account of its decidedly inferior “techno-industrial” apparatus. The relevance and importance of the partisan/terrorist is in this context obvious enough. Of course, it was no accident that the American centrals came into close contact and eventually into conflict with the Christian-Democrats, or rather, it was no accident that the

353 Schmitt, C. 1942. *Land und Meer. Eine weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

354 Schmitt, C. 2007. *La guerre civile mondiale. Essais (1943–1978)*. Maisons-Alfort: Éditions èRe. 48. Think, in this connection, of the late mass uprisings, such as the “Arab Spring” (2011), which have been most disingenuously attributed by western propaganda to the allegedly spontaneous, democratic and coalescing powers of social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

355 Schmitt, C. 1962. *Teoria del partigiano*. Milano: Adelphi. 78, 104–5, 130.

DC would, after a war that had hollowed out the geo-spiritual notion of “Italy” of any residual substance, be the sole arbiter of the peninsula’s political destiny: as stewards of the Church, the Christian-Democrats were the representatives of the only other boundless imperium of the West. One, indeed, without divisions, yet endowed with superior psychical might.

