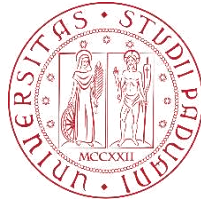


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,

LAW AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



**Master's Degree in
European and Global Studies**

Bologna Massacre, 2nd August 1980.

Operativity of the international picture: Middle-Eastern
dynamics charting leads beyond the Strategy of Tension.

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Ferma con quelle tue mani il treno Palermo-Francoforte

Per la mia commozione, c'è un ragazzo al finestrino

Gli occhi verdi che sembrano di vetro

Corri e ferma quel treno, fallo tornare indietro.

Balla anche per tutti i violenti

Veloci di mano e coi coltelli, accidenti!

Se capissero, vedendoti ballare

Di esser morti da sempre, anche se possono respirare.

ABSTRACT

On 2nd August 1980, a huge explosion hits the waiting room of the second class of the station of the city of Bologna at 10,25 in the morning, together with the hall and the canopy by approximately thirty meters. Directly in front of the waiting area, two wagons of the Ancona-Chiasso train were also struck by the explosion on the first platform. On the following day, all national newspapers expressed the collective upset before this outrageous event, feebly faithful that human negligence could have been blamed for a gas explosion. The Italian citizenship already knew on its own that it was the peak of a violent wave hitting the country in those years and the Strategy of Tension inheritance brought trials' inquiries to accuse extremist right-wing subversion. Notwithstanding, the following research envisages finding room for other plausible interpretations.

The international dynamism of the years 1970s and 1980s, which embraced international terrorist groups' operativity in a phenomenon known as *publicity terrorism*, is considered entitled to a more comprehensive analysis and the present ambition is to inspect other investigative routes to the Bologna Massacre, while taking into consideration the influence of one of the most impacting elements of that decade: Arab-Palestinian ethno-nationalism.

Secular Arab-Palestinian terrorism left a major footprint on the international relations equilibrium since 1967, bringing its regional causes outside the Middle-Eastern borders through a *coercive diplomacy* that cannot be underestimated in one of the most tremendous terrorist events to ever strike Italian history.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Art.52 of the Italian Constitution, “defence of the homeland is the sacred duty of the citizen” and in the name of this defence, the Secret of State represents an interest overriding any other interest that is part of a legal system, as a response to a Reason of State¹.

The history of the Secret of State was deeply rooted in the Cold War dynamics because, at least for the Italian political chairs, it entailed a double balance of interests to weigh: on the one side, the international one, thus namely the one faithful to the Atlantic sets of values and alliances in which Italy was completely inserted since the Second Afterwar, and on the other side, the national obligation to secure the country’s security on different strategic sides.

Relevant was that Italy during the 1970s and 1980s embodied a territorial convergence between several opposite blocs: the Soviet and the Atlantic, the Northern and Southern of the Mediterranean.

Not to mention that the key geographical position made it an attractive dock for illicit transportation and military, political, commercial and spy objectives².

Meanwhile, International Terrorism was targeting Europe in its gunsight shedding light on regional and ethno-nationalist causes taking place outside the European borders. The events of June 1967 enabled Palestinian militants to realise that using brutal violence to spread awareness of their cause beyond the boundaries of both Israeli and Palestinian territory could have been a more effective strategy than diplomatic negotiations and conventional war confrontation.

As a matter of fact, Italian soil has been a hot spot for more or less tragic and violent terrorist incidents, which intertwined the peculiar foreign policy adopted since Aldo Moro's “equidistance policy”,

¹ Gotor, M. (2014). Il segreto di Stato che non c’è: il caso Moro. In Archivi memoria di tutti. Le fonti per la storia delle stragi e del terrorismo (pp. 45-55). Ministero dei Beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo. Direzione generale per gli archivi.

² Ivi, p.51

envisioned to a form of filo-Arabism and vigilance on Middle-Eastern dynamics that diplomatically positioned our country as an Israelian formal ally and a Palestinian supporter simultaneously.

The present analysis envisages investigating one of the hugest violent deeds striking in Italy: on 2nd August 1980, a huge explosion hit the waiting room of the second class of the station of the city of Bologna at 10,25 in the morning, together with the hall and the canopy by approximately thirty metres.

The Massacre of Bologna historically joined the series of violent episodes that the Italian citizenship was the victim of, during a period known as “The Strategy of Tension”, when domestic black and red terrorism, since the 1960s, harmed the country in its social, political and human essence through a level of violence that would have taken time until it could leave the public evaluating lens.

The ambition is the attempt to deconstruct a sort of influential inheritance of violence to draw attention to the comprehensiveness that an evaluation of unapparent international threads may be able to give.

In the first chapter, the endeavour will be to expose the international wave of terrorism that passed over Europe during the 1970s and the 1980s, with specific attention on the impactful role that non-state actors started to embody, bringing with them an alternation of the global system that Western powers took for granted until that moment.

Subsequently, the second chapter is structured to transport the lecture to the narration of the event of 2nd August 1980, through the words, statements and first allegations it had been passed from and to the public opinion in the immediate aftermath of the Massacre.

Alongside this, an analysis of the judicial proceedings made it possible to understand the condemnation process of the right-wing subversive organization of Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari and the complexity of alternative investigative and judicial paths that have been carried out.

The third and last chapter is the main result of the research: an evaluation of substantial documentation collected from the State Central Archive creates the international and European context delineating the hypothesis of interference from the Middle-Eastern regional dynamics through the operativity of specific terrorist groups.

The focus of this alternative narrative centres on the arrest of three members of Autonomia Operaia on the night of 8th November 1979, and, more significantly, the arrest of Abu Anzeh Saleh, an influential P.F.L.P.'s exponent, on 13th November 1979. The Front reacted negatively to these arrests, viewing them as a breach of a secret agreement between the Palestinian Resistance and the Italian state that was meant to protect Italy from terrorist attacks. Consequently, the deduction is constructed on the possibility that the Bologna Massacre was a retaliatory act carried out by a European network affiliated to the P.F.L.P., namely the one led by international terrorist Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, also known as Carlos the Jackal, by means of operativity of ex-members of the German group Revolutionäre Zellen.

The following path is called by the necessity of filling a hole in the historiographic research of events belonging to Italian history that will never leave their footprint. The complexity and meticulousness of the unfolding events stemmed from phenomena, interests, bonds and dynamics that were the mirror of a broader global scenario in which each State Actor was unavoidably enclosed, then reflected in the “domestic walls” of the singular countries and their citizens, even their unchosen destiny.

1. THE STRATEGY OF TENSION: AN INTERNATIONAL FIL ROUGE.

1.1. 1970s – 1980s: Europe under the international gunsight.

It is widely believed and understood that, since the catastrophic events of 11th September 2001, international terrorism is a relatively "new" phenomenon that has rapidly expanded³. On the contrary, the international element in the terrorist deeds taking place in Europe was quite present and constant throughout the decade from 1970 to 1980, with the Cold War background consistently influencing the European authorities' perception and analysis of the phenomenon.

To begin with, we can historically collocate in turbulent years for the international relations system, starting in 1967, a pivotal point of reference following the Arab - Israeli war, until the attack on the Multinational Force in Lebanon in 1982⁴.

More precisely, for reasons of conciseness, we will be concentrating our focus of attention and analysis on this temporal window, taking into account the inheritance of events occurring even before 1967, on which we will carry out a nuanced mention when necessary.

It is interesting to note that since current terrorist organisations rely heavily on the media, some scholars even contend that the United States' 1968 deployment of the first television satellite should be considered one catalyst for the emergence of modern terrorism. With the use of this technology, the news could then be sent virtually and instantly from local studios back to network headquarters⁵.

Those years brought with them a general and encompassing dynamism, on the one side looking at a rebelling push against the bipolar

³ Bald, L., & Di Fabio, L. (2017). Perché indagare la lotta al terrorismo italiano in chiave transnazionale. Nuove ipotesi e percorsi di ricerca. *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, (30, 2), p.2

⁴ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p. 3-7

⁵ LaFree, G., & Dugan, L. (2009). Research on terrorism and countering terrorism. *Crime and Justice*, 38(1), 413-477.

playground represented by Vietnam War contestations and 1968 protests, and on the other side experiencing the positioning of the Soviet power in the Middle East alongside Siria and Egypt and of the American power alongside Israel in 1967. Also, for the Soviet power 1968 was pictured as a challenging and troubling year, since political, economic, and artistic life in Czechoslovakia had a complete rebirth invigorated by internal reforms during the "Prague Spring" that made Moscow concerned about possible consequences⁶.

Related to the Cold War distension process, it was ongoing through superpowers engaging in the bargaining dialogue of the SALT I agreement to limit Anti-Ballistic Missiles.⁷ November 1969 to May 1972 was the first round of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, during which the first agreements to restrict and limit some of their most essential weapons were reached between the US and the USSR⁸.

Nevertheless, the Western side of the confrontation found it particularly difficult to leave behind the bipolar lens when facing international events from those years onwards and this was the case of the perceptive attitudes that have been showing in front of the international terrorist events which took place at the heart of Europe. There existed the belief that diverse manifestations of both domestic and international terrorism were components of a Moscow plot, and it required some time for Western authorities, both American and European, to recognise that the dangers posed to European territory could have distinct political origins⁹.

Similar to Southeast Asia and the Middle East, Europe served as a crucial strategic arena in the struggle between the two superpowers. Beyond being the superpowers' battleground, the continent served as more than just a tactical "hot spot." Leading Western European nations,

⁶ Larres, K. (2009). *A Companion to Europe since 1945.*, p.71

⁷ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa.p.5

⁸ U.S. Department of State, STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS (SALT I). <https://1997-2001.state.gov/www/global/arms/treaties/salt1.html> last access: 1st June 2024.

⁹ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa.p.10-20

especially France, Germany and the U.K., played a crucial role in supporting the U.S. in its fight against communism in Europe and beyond. Although, despite being staunch allies of Washington, these nations frequently disagreed with American strategic goals and, on occasion, were effective in changing American Cold War strategies¹⁰.

The 1970s are generally described as turmoil years, if not the "beginning of our modernity"¹¹. The period known as the "long 1970s" was one of change, starting with the global and social unrest of the late 1960s and lasting until the mid-1980s. This period included two landmark dates, namely 1973 which concerned crises such as the oil shock, the abrupt switch to a floating currency rate regime and the painful withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam, and 1979 when it became impossible to ignore the evidence that an old world was ending. Global events that pointed in that direction included the election of Margaret Thatcher in Britain, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the overthrow of the Shah, the Islamist turn of the Iranian revolution, and a recent, sharp increase in oil prices¹².

There was constant conflict throughout the 1970s between the state-based articulation of the international arena and the growing significance of global forces. It is also essential to comprehend how the Cold War interacts with the processes of "globalisation," since it was once seen to be the central axis around which international relations were structured. The 1970s are mostly remembered as the decade that saw the height and collapse of East-West tensions, the U.S. opening up to China, Washington bidding farewell to Vietnam, and Middle East crises and diplomacy.¹³

Nevertheless, even if bipolarism appeared to be making a comeback during the brief "Second Cold War" in the early 1980s, it was ultimately

¹⁰ Larres, K. (2009). *A Companion to Europe since 1945.*, p.60-61

¹¹ Di Donato, M. (2020). Landslides, shocks, and new global rules: The US and Western Europe in the new international history of the 1970s. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 55(1), 182-205.

¹² *Ivi.*, p.184-185

¹³ *Ivi.*, p.187

discarded within a few years as an organising concept for international politics and some developments whose dynamics went beyond East-West logic began to have a huge impact. Transatlantic problems and the ongoing hostilities between Moscow and its allies served as additional evidence that intra-bloc solidarity was eroding. More generally, when transnational players and global trends entered the picture, the idea that states or at least the most powerful among them, controlled, shaped, and affected the international arena became increasingly questionable¹⁴. It was the sign that we had entered a new phase of international order and dynamics and, given that non-state actors have had such an enormous effect on the world since the 1970s, the need for a new transnational history is an especially fitting reaction¹⁵.

1.1.1. The importance of understanding International Terrorism during the 1970s-1980s.

At this juncture, it is imperative to delve into the Western misinterpretation of the events unfolding across Europe during that period, particularly concerning the activities of international non-state actors. Key Western leaders, driven by distinct political ideologies, often overlooked the nuanced and evolving dynamics within the international sphere. Hence, it becomes paramount to delineate the pivotal role assumed by non-state actors, particularly international terrorists, in shaping the global landscape from that era onwards. A fundamental prerequisite for this endeavour is to grasp the inherently political nature of their operations.

¹⁴Ivi, p. 185

¹⁵ Di Donato, M. (2020). Landslides, shocks, and new global rules: The US and Western Europe in the new international history of the 1970s. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 55(1), 182-205.

According to Martha Crenshaw, one of the most authoritative researchers in the field of International Terrorism, terrorism's apparent effectiveness as a political tool is one of the reasons it is chosen as a method, regardless of whether it is an organization's strategic choice or a way to sustain itself in name of social solidarity and collective identity. In a few words, a witnessing audience is sent a political message by the act of violence itself.¹⁶

Then, assigning accountability to a terrorist organisation or individual is often a difficult and contentious political matter since when it comes to this kind of violent deed, there is always availability of information that is mostly conflicting, unclear, or non-existent¹⁷. Nevertheless, due to the impactful political, social, cultural and economic effects of labelling a terrorist group as such, the comprehension of terrorist leadership, cohesion, and decision-making processes is prominent. These last features may bring with them a complexity to be outlined: at the organizational level, with individuals not directly affiliated to a specific structure on the one hand, and highly organized group with a clearly established chain of command and hierarchy on the other hand, not underestimating the room for groups with loose affiliations and obscure networks that can sometimes only be defined by broad ideological concepts. In addition to this, another leading issue concerns the cohesiveness within one group or the evolution of the same in the form of factions, with spin-off groups and the acknowledgement of differences and the relationship among them.¹⁸

From another perspective, for what at least concerns revolutionary violence, it is important to clearly outline that terrorists are not usually peasants or workers but middle-class intellectuals, students, and

¹⁶ Crenshaw, M., & LaFree, G. (2017). Introduction: The Context for Analyzing Counterterrorism Difficulties—Current Threats and the State of Academic Research. In *Countering Terrorism* (pp. 1–32). Brookings Institution Press.

¹⁷ Crenshaw, M., & LaFree, G. (2017). Who Did It?: The Attribution Dilemma. In *Countering Terrorism* (pp. 131–164). Brookings Institution Press.

¹⁸ Crenshaw, M., & LaFree, G. (2017). Pinning Down an Elusive Adversary: What Is a Terrorist Organization? In *Countering Terrorism* (pp. 99–130). Brookings Institution Press.

professionals who are skilled at articulating sophisticated revolutionary ideologies derived, for instance, from Marxist foundations¹⁹.

Terrorism is politics carried out differently and, consequently, the political nature of terrorism sets it apart from other common criminal behaviours like extortion, hijacking, robbery, and murder since the political climate influences their decision to commit acts of terrorism as opposed to other potential courses of action.

Successively, it is important to keep in mind that with every cycle of violence that repeats, there is the tendency to rediscover terrorism, because we are prone to constantly redefine it to better "fit" with the present-day issues²⁰.

Indeed, when a bigger evil is avoided and a net social gain or benefit results for society, there is the entrance of the *doctrine of necessity*²¹, based on the utilitarian strategy and rationale. In its most basic version, the principle is that when someone breaks the law in order to further good or prevent greater evil, it is unfair to punish them for it.

In other words, in a historic statement before the United Nations in 1974, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Yasser Arafat said, "*One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter.*"²² Thus, there is a tendency to show political leanings by highlighting the differences between terrorist acts that are condemned and those that are defended²³.

The assassinations of political opponents by mediaeval rulers served to intimidate future challengers to the status quo, then it was employed in the early stages of the Russian Revolution when, for instance, Social Revolutionary Party militants killed the German representative to

¹⁹ Midlarsky, M. I., Crenshaw, M., & Yoshida, F. (1980). Why violence spreads: The contagion of international terrorism. *International Studies Quarterly*, 24(2), 262-298.

²⁰ Sick, G. G. (1987). Terrorism: Its Political Uses and Abuses. *SAIS Rev. Int'l Aff.*, 7, 11., p. 12-21

²¹ Cohan, J. A. (2005). Necessity, political violence and terrorism. *Stetson L. Rev.*, 35, 903.

²² LaFree, G., & Dugan, L. (2009). Research on terrorism and countering terrorism. *Crime and Justice*, 38(1), 413-477.

²³ Sick, G. G. (1987). Terrorism: Its Political Uses and Abuses. *SAIS Rev. Int'l Aff.*, 7, 11., p. 26

Russia to cause a global scandal and disgrace the newly elected Bolshevik government²⁴.

The effectiveness of terrorism is often measured by its ability to instill fear within the targeted population. The deliberate targeting and killing of innocent individuals serve to evoke dread and terror, ultimately aiming to draw attention to the terrorists' objectives and coerce others to adhere to a particular political trajectory. Should the terror induced be sufficient to compel the target audience to concede to the terrorists' demands, the perpetrators consider their actions successful.

It is noteworthy that even the mere threat of violence can be perceived as achieving desired outcomes and this aim is also reinforced after a terrorist incident, when the perpetrators usually issue public statements claiming responsibility for the attack, outlining the demands, goals, or mission, and justifying the attack in support of their cause.

Then, the successful goal of Terrorism can range from different forms: the most successful is recorded to be when it persuades a government to change its policy. The past serves as a reminder of governments that have succumbed under the pressure of terrorists, so endorsing terrorism by lending support to the causes that drive it.

However, it is crucial to recognize that not all terrorist attacks are executed with the intention of fulfilling explicit demands; some are undertaken as retaliatory measures against perceived adversaries²⁵. Leaders of the indigenous and ethnonational rights movements frequently and effectively bring up the historical loss of political autonomy, making it relevant; thus, according to the theory of root causes, underlying issues and grievances contribute to understanding the where, how and why of terrorist acts²⁶.

²⁴ Jenkins, B. M., & Johnson, J. (1975). *International terrorism: a chronology, 1968-1974* (p. 0068). Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, p.3.

²⁵ Cohan, J. A. (2005). Necessity, political violence and terrorism. *Stetson L. Rev.*, 35, 903, p.954-956

²⁶ LaFree, G., & Dugan, L. (2009). Research on terrorism and countering terrorism. *Crime and Justice*, 38(1), 413-477.

It is also called a provocative strategy which, based on the principle of modulative social control, involves the first party, terrorists, exerting influence over the second party, government officials, through the third party, the general public, and terrorists applying this tactic believe that the government will collapse due to its growing deviation from the rule of law²⁷.

Within this reasoning, we need an additional and conceptual collocation, referring to the Four Waves theory of Rapoport. Firstly, Rapoport developed his Four Waves Theory in the 1970s, providing a link between political science and history in the study of terrorism.

The author differentiates terrorism into four major waves, which are referred to as cycles, attributed to distinct elements of the historical era under consideration, such as technological modernity, revolutionary ideology, space, time, and unwavering energy propelling the violent act. Then, each wave has a catalyst, defining tactics and resources, and an inevitable decline that gives rise to a new wave²⁸.

Formerly used to define "Anarchist Wave" events, the expression "international terrorism" was resurrected to refer to the "Third, or New Left Wave" phase. To better explain, the psychological prerequisite of the Vietnam War led to the development of many groups throughout Europe which proposed themselves as the mouthpiece of Third World hostility and, in the birth of groups like the Basque Nation and Liberty (ETA), the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the Corsican National Liberation Front (FNLC), and the Irish Republican Army (IRA), radicalism and nationalism were frequently united²⁹.

²⁷ Gibbs, J. P. (1989). Conceptualization of terrorism. *American sociological review*, 329-340.

²⁸ Kaplan, J. (2016). Waves of political terrorism. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, p.1-4.

²⁹ Rapoport, D. C. (2002). The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11. *Anthropetics*, 8(1), 1-11.

Stating this, we reach our central point: certain groups carried out more attacks outside than within their borders: the P.L.O., for instance, was more active within Europe than on the West Bank, and occasionally even more so than many other European organisations combined³⁰.

These are the years of awareness of the winning advantage of using terrorism as an armed strategy: June 1967 was an event which made Palestinian militants understand that conventional war confrontation and diplomatic negotiation were not as successful as could have been *publicity terrorism*, namely the internationalisation of their causes by the use of ruthless violence outside the border of both Palestinian and Israeli territories.

The 1980s will see a continued use of terrorism as a means of expressing political opinions, drawing attention from around the world, and accomplishing specific political objectives. This explains that numerous political, historical, economic and social characteristics are shared by the nations that have experienced high rates of terrorism. Most of them have authoritarian rather than totalitarian governments, or they are true democracies. The majority would be considered contemporary and Western-aligned, with highly urbanised and nearly educated society, industrialised economies and relatively high per capita incomes³¹.

The transition from domestic to global terrorism was the intensification of a national conflict fought abroad for strategic or ideological objectives and the diversity of social, economic and political circumstances across the globe produced a range of reasons for terrorist activities.

In many developing Third World nations, as well as in some contemporary democracies, there were extreme social injustices, unequal economic conditions, political disenfranchisement and differing

³⁰ Ivi., p.5

³¹ Jenkins, B. M. (1980). *Terrorism in the 1980s* (p. 0016). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, p.1-4.

degrees of neo-colonialism that went beyond the crude debates pitting left against right ideologies.³²

As we have already argued, the post-war period saw the upsurge of non-state actors as new emergencies and threats to political stability and national security. For example, France faced the Independence Algerian War in 1962 experiencing firsthand its defeat by the National Liberation Front, which showed the way terrorism can be a winning strategy over a more militarily powerful opponent as the French army.

It was not the only one, since European states, between 1970 and 1980 had to deal with a densely violence-concentrated phase, most of the time within their own borders: in September 1972, eight Palestinians made up a commando who broke into the Munich Olympic village, killing two Israeli athletes and capturing nine more, all of whom perished; in October 1973, a terrorist attack at the Fiumicino Airport in Italy killed thirty-four people; in 1975 the Paris Orly Airport was attacked in two different and close moments, on 13th January and right after six days on 19th January, firstly attacking an Israeli Boeing 707 and a Yugoslav DC-9 and secondly shooting against another Israeli Boeing 707; Wien was the successive victim on 21st December 1975 when seven terrorists entered the general OPEC headquarter bringing with them sixty hostages between ministries and high-level representatives; France, in 1976, returned in the international gunsight when on 27th June an Air France Airbus was hijacked in its way from Tel Aviv to Paris.³³

³² Fuller, C., & ARMY WAR COLL CARLISLE BARRACKS PA. (1986). *Terrorism: Challenge and Response* (p. 0031). US Army War College, p.14-16

³³ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p.21-68.

With the demise of the Cold War and advancements made in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, experts increasingly view the 1970s and 1980s as the "old" paradigm of terrorism³⁴.

The events of 1970 repeatedly illustrated that political fanatics with a limited capability for violence can globally draw attention to terrorist groups and their ideas by employing terrorist techniques.

They can cause global worry and spark incidents that require an international response from national governments: nearly one hundred ambassadors were either kidnapped or killed by terrorists, nearly fifty embassies and consulates were taken, hundreds of attacks were directed on company premises and corporate officials, and we link to those years the birth of the terms "kneecapping" and "letter bomb"³⁵.

As we have mentioned above, an innovative strategy in this wave was surely airline hijacking, of which there have been over a hundred during the '70s. Since foreign landing sites were more accessible to hijacked planes than domestic ones, hijacking acquired an international flavour³⁶.

More specifically, while terrorism was by no means new in the Middle-East, Palestinian militants began to believe that their options for defeating Israel through conventional military force or regaining their homeland through diplomatic negotiation had been cut off as a result of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, as well as the one of Jerusalem. They came to the conclusion that fighting Israel and its allies abroad in a war of terrorist endurance would have benefited them more than any other course of action³⁷. Additionally, there is another essential aspect: internationalization was known from all Arab states. The ability to recognize the exact

³⁴ Copeland, T. (2001). Is the "new terrorism" really new?: An analysis of the new paradigm for terrorism. *Journal of conflict studies*, 21(2), 7-27.

³⁵ Jenkins, B. M. (1980). *Terrorism in the 1980s* (p. 0016). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, p.1.

³⁶ Rapoport, D. C. (2002). The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11. *Anthropoetics*, 8(1), 1-11.

³⁷ Larres, K. (2009). A Companion to Europe since 1945, p.355-357.

responsibility of the attacks was quite far away from the hands of European authorities, above all due to the important fragmentation of the whole Palestinian Resistance, which was the main perpetrator of all the abovementioned attacks. The different compositions of the Resistance were aligned on the use of violence in the Middle-East, but they discovered to have a different view on the exportation of the same in Europe.

In a few words, the diplomatic face of the Umbrella Organization of the P.L.O., Yasser Arafat, accepted the political opportunity of adopting violence exclusively inside the Eastern region, as opposed to other fringes of the organization, such as the ones headed by Abu Nidal, representative of Fatah in Bagdad, suspected of being sponsored by extremist Arab states such as Libya and Iraq.³⁸

We will go back to this important aspect, which was part of the contradictory elements which made it arduous for European cooperation to actively follow the intrinsic and hidden dynamics of the occurrences that interested the Continent in the decade between the 1970s and 1980s.

Indeed, global causes will necessarily be the basis of global waves of terrorism. Although the Vietnam War was somewhat a product of the immediate historical context of the three countries (Vietnam, America, and Cambodia), provoking a direct impact on them, the majority of its worldwide significance was indirect. It became moving for a global generation of radicals and was crucial to shaping their ideology and sense of legitimacy. To them, it was less of an actual occurrence and more of an ideological construct³⁹.

³⁸ Lomellini, V. (2022). *Il «lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p.24-25.

³⁹ Sedgwick, M. (2007). Inspiration and the origins of global waves of terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 30(2), 97-112.

Marxism and other left-wing ideologies, as well as separatist and ethno-nationalism (such as those of the Irish, Basques, and Palestinians), were the main sources of motivation for the "old" terrorists.

Marxist terrorist organisations sought to mobilise the populace through violence to spark a revolution against the capitalist system and ethno-nationalist separatists frequently used a long-term violent tactic intended to drive the "foreign" government out of a particular country. Their goals included either independence for their ethnic group or a merger with another state, thus practically secular orientation. Indeed, those demands were, even if complex, negotiable. They were typically expressed in public in a fairly clear and intelligible manner, and in many cases, there appeared to be an opportunity for discussion or compromise. In order to spread their ideological message, terrorists performed for an audience and asked to participate to get as much exposure as possible for their acts. Moreover, old-style terrorism was heavily sponsored by nation-states.

Terrorists frequently evolved into substitutes for superpowers and middle powers that hoped to impose political change without resorting to force within the framework of the Cold War. For example, it is argued with few doubts that the KGB played a major part in providing supplies, training and assistance to several terrorist groups that were still in operation and while Iraq, Syria, Cuba, and North Korea were all major backers of terrorism, Iran and Libya were the most prominent middle-class sponsors of the same⁴⁰.

To conclude, it is interesting to look at a historical picture of the diffusion of international terrorism in the first segment of the time period 1968-1971 and a contagion as a direct modelling process in the second 1973-1974. There has been a stimulus to question the existence of systematic patterns of infection based on a hierarchy depending on

⁴⁰ Copeland, T. (2001). Is the "new terrorism" really new?: An analysis of the new paradigm for terrorism. *Journal of conflict studies*, 21(2), 7-27.

the diplomatic standing of the state in which terrorism happened because of the increased number of events per unit of time during the 1968–1974 period and considering potential causes of the terrorism imitation, which first appeared in governments with lower diplomatic status. A recurrent event of reference is exemplary: similar to past anti-colonial revolutions, the Vietnam War, characterized by its protracted nature and engagement with both France and the United States, centred on the peasantry. This conflict, owing to its duration and the nature of its participants, attained global significance. Notably, it highlighted the United States as a formidable adversary to revolutionary movements, succeeding European colonial powers. The prolonged struggle rendered the imperialist state vulnerable to the political and military pressures exerted by national liberation movements. Concurrently, a broader erosion of trust in liberal democratic institutions and principles coincided with the escalating appeal of violent political protests, albeit emanating from a minority.

Therefore, Western industrial democracy was already in flux and disarray in 1968 when the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked an El Al flight and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (FAR) killed the U.S. ambassador to Guatemala⁴¹.

1.1.2. Engaging in counterterrorism: European intelligence cooperation.

As a consequence of a new challenging era, heads of state and interior ministries started to develop defensive policies focused on collaboration with other European governments. This strategic shift arose from the recognition that armed violence exerted a widespread impact across

⁴¹ Midlarsky, M. I., Crenshaw, M., & Yoshida, F. (1980). Why violence spreads: The contagion of international terrorism. *International Studies Quarterly*, 24(2), 262-298.

multiple European nations and was often orchestrated on an international scale and analysis of previously undisclosed documents shed light on the perceptions held by secret services concerning the Soviet Union and European Communist parties throughout the duration of the Cold War⁴².

The discussion of cooperation gained prominence on the political agendas of ministries and governments through always more frequent communication and exchange of information, data and know-how between states and European security services⁴³. If the revolutionary fact had been the main topic of discussion amongst the security services in 1968–1969, international terrorism took centre stage starting in 1970⁴⁴.

In particular, the Italian Ministry of the Interior Paolo Emilio Taviani had decided to step in as early as 1965 by arranging a cooperation pact between the security agencies of the six nations inside the ECM (European Common Market), namely Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, then also England, the United States and Switzerland.

Then, the first conferences took place starting in the summer of 1968. It was time for the heads of the security services in the six countries of the EEC, the United States and the United Kingdom to convene periodic meetings to address the issue of violence and the revolutionary reality and it was the beginning of a system of news exchanges about facts, individuals and groups affiliated with organisations committed to

⁴² Di Fabio, L. (2019). Il «Club di Berna» e lo scambio dei saperi tra i Servizi d'intelligence. *Memoria e Ricerca*, 27(2), 239-256.

⁴³ Bald, L., & Di Fabio, L. (2017). Perché indagare la lotta al terrorismo italiano in chiave transnazionale. Nuove ipotesi e percorsi di ricerca. *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, (30, 2), p.1.

⁴⁴ Di Fabio, L. (2019). Il «Club di Berna» e lo scambio dei saperi tra i Servizi d'intelligence. *Memoria e Ricerca*, 27(2), 239-256.

subversion, using telex and regular bilateral and international correspondence⁴⁵.

To expand state control over more territory, law enforcement and intelligence agencies also started exchanging scientific and practical information. Governments of Western nations, particularly Israel, were shocked by the Palestinian Black September Organization's seizure of eleven Israeli athletes in September 1972 during the Olympic Games in Munich and that incident had a profound impact on public opinion regarding the issue of international armed violence.⁴⁶

Nonetheless, it does not seem like the West German authorities underestimated the threat. They rather preferred not to warn the military apparatus, above all those outside Germany. Concerning global radicalism, there were worries about significant risks to both foreign and domestic security posed by radical political organisations that operated abroad and sometimes used violence and terror to further their objectives, alongside the likelihood of perpetration of intervention from right-wing extremist groups and national revolutionaries⁴⁷.

Nonetheless, the death of every hostage was a direct result of the numerous errors made by the German authorities in managing the situation, as they were ill-prepared to mount a successful counterterrorism operation.

As a result, the area of police intervention started to transcend national boundaries. For example, during international events, armed destabilising operations have become more commonplace in what we can refer to as non-lieux, including vehicles like trains and aeroplanes or at connecting points, stations and airports. Consequently, European governments saw that something needed to be done to encourage broader information sharing and technological capacity between

⁴⁵ Ivi, p.244

⁴⁶ Di Fabio, L. (2017). Counterterrorism Cooperation Policy between the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy in the 1970s., p.11

⁴⁷ Di Fabio, L. (2019). Il «Club di Berna» e lo scambio dei saperi tra i Servizi d'intelligence. *Memoria e Ricerca*, 27(2), 239-256. P.248-249

security agencies and police forces, in addition to customary diplomatic channels.

This attempt has been outlined also in the semestral Information and Security Policy Report presented by the President of the Council Forlani in December 1980 to the Italian Parliament: both bilateral and multilateral initiatives for international collaboration were established. In order to identify the threats that Italy's membership in alliances and international organisations was facing, both domestically and internationally, collaborative analyses of issues related to international subversion and espionage were conducted at the multilateral level within institutional components⁴⁸.

They performed this by institutionalizing informal networks of information-sharing which have been subject to different evolution in their denomination but had a similar objective.

The first attempt was the Aja Conference proposing semestral meetings between Ministries of Foreign Affairs, reinforced by a mechanism of coordination denominated COREU (Correspondance Européenne). Consequently, the violence which shocked 1972 encouraged the European Economic Community's Ministries of the Interior to engage in an informal Secret Services Club, the Berne Club, and then the year 1976 saw the creation of the Trevi system (Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and International Violence), the result of the necessity of the Ministries of the Interior and Justice to ensure a structured, institutionalized and politicized response to the emergence of international terrorism and security throughout the coordination of action and implementation at the ministerial and policing level.

⁴⁸ Relazione sulla politica informativa e della sicurezza - semestre 22 maggio - 22 novembre 1980; *Iniziativa*: Forlani Arnaldo, Presidente del Consiglio (I Governo Forlani).
https://legislature.camera.it/chiosco.asp?content=/documenti/documentiParlamentari/ElencoDOC_1_1_2.asp?IdLegislatura=08|660&source=/altre_sezionism/9988/10010/10335/documento.xml.asp, last access: 12st March 2024.

The last one, in fact, was filling a hole in the engagement of the Berne Club, which was efficient in being a binder for security alerts and information and in also being a means of diplomatic bargaining with extra-European countries. At the same time, it succeeded in doing so because of one particular feature: depoliticization of the phenomenon of international terrorism.⁴⁹

In the Italian case, during the first Berne Club reunion, the Italian security services were to receive information from the inside out and forward it to the appropriate national divisions. The Liaison Office was solely intended to be used for receiving reports from within and organising them for distribution to the outside world. Since the Services were already carrying out this duty, the Office was founded within the Security Service at the Viminale.

Regarding the necessity of improving the effectiveness of preventive action, it is important to note that the Munich attack forced the European services to fortify the Kilowatt warning network, which was later supplemented by the Megaton system. This information-sharing network served as a helpful instrument to neutralise any prospective attacks⁵⁰.

Increased collaboration additionally quickened the concurrent de-nationalization process of those identical national establishments.

The process of eroding the sovereign states' previously considerable margins of manoeuvre was expedited by the exchange of information, the establishment of supranational entities and the standardisation of laws and procedures. It was also observed that the information exchanged was abstract, inhomogeneous and fragmented. T

It is sufficient to consider an Italy outraged by the 'Strategy of Tension' slaughter, at least towards the end of the 1960s, and for much of the decade that followed. A lack of ability to produce immediately useful

⁴⁹ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p.60-68.

⁵⁰ Di Fabio, L. (2019). Il «Club di Berna» e lo scambio dei saperi tra i Servizi d'intelligence. *Memoria e Ricerca*, 27(2), 239-256., p.252.

summaries, a diversity of approaches and a long-standing prevalence of a representation of the armed struggle that was largely influenced by the unique *forma mentis* of those who attended the meetings resulted in omissions and discretion in the management of information to be shared with allies⁵¹.

Trevi group was established in Luxembourg on 29th June 1976 to coordinate policing within the EC and combat terrorism, with no inclusion of the European Commission and the European Parliament.

It was structured on a ministerial level, with interior ministers meeting every June and December, with a Trevi senior officials group meeting every May and November and throughout working groups made up of Interior Ministry officials, police officers and security services. The first one called *Working Group 1* was the only one operational and it dealt with the terrorism issue, more specifically aiming: to provide reports on the lessons learned from managing any significant terrorist incident; to share details about their plans for dealing with significant terrorist occurrences, especially at the government level; to improve coordination in the event that multiple nations are involved; to create centralised points of contact for information sharing regarding issues related to international terrorism⁵².

As for the Berne Club, it was about informal meetings, with essential secret prerequisites, so that the first communique for public use was made available in the U.K. in 1989. Reports from state officials were given to Ministers, who then reported to governments. Depending on national customs, national parliaments may or may not be informed, but they had no influence over decisions made⁵³.

One of the biggest issues was likely to be the fact that institutions could not be enough to make intelligence sharing effective. Indeed, in the

⁵¹Baravelli, A., & Di Fabio, L. (2019). La rilevanza della storia dell'antiterrorismo in prospettiva transnazionale. *Memoria e ricerca*, 2(61), 197-204.

⁵² Bunyan, T. (1993). Trevi, Europol and the European state. *Statewatching the new Europe*, 1(1), 1-15.

⁵³ Ivi., p.5

European attempts to institutionally cooperate, in the case of the Berne Club as well as for the Europol formation and the European Union Military Staff, they served a beneficial use in developing technical systems for the exchange of intelligence amongst national authorities. Nevertheless, the main obstacle to effective intelligence-sharing is mistrust, shown in the form of conflicting policy objectives amongst the parties involved in the arrangement.

One may argue that one of the strongest indicators of high levels of mutual trust is the fact that the Member States have established and given over to the EU a degree of authority far larger than that held by any other international organisation. Moreover, there were comparable security threats facing the Member States. In any case, the focus should be on the actual willingness of states to share operational intelligence. There were no regulations inside any of the institutions requiring Member States to exchange intelligence, but contrarily each nation had deliberation over whether or not to share. It appears that the Member States have not shared a great deal of operational intelligence through the Berne Group, but rather, the Group's main purpose was to exchange views regarding practical methods and regulations for combating organised crime and terrorism, as well as to help the participating agencies better comprehend the standpoints of their counterparts.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Walsh, J. I. (2006). Intelligence-sharing in the European Union: institutions are not enough. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44(3), 625-643.

1.2. *The other face of internationalization: transnational ties of red and black Italian terrorism.*

1.2.1. The Strategy of Tension's inheritance of violence.

In the abovementioned section, we have looked at the international terrorism picture. Now it is valid to create a picture of the Italian terrorism scenario and the transnational features it adopted, to see also what the Italian secret services' attention was at the time.

First of all, some clues on the Italian panoramic, since there was an already exhausted and politically complex situation as footprints of a Strategy of Tension in the course.

Paolo Pelizzari reminds us of the importance of recalling the international context when dealing with those years of Italian history⁵⁵ and Senator Pellegrino emphasised the grave consequences of not placing Italian events within the global context of the Cold War.

He asserts that Republican Italy could not have been a “normal state” due to the border condition between the two blocks of the bipolar globe and the understanding of the post-II World War constitutions of all the ruling classes in European countries, both in the West and the East, begins at the national/international nexus, since this connection establishes a twofold allegiance: a national and an international alliance⁵⁶.

According to Senator Pellegrino, at least for the years 1969–1974, an illustration of the two distinct phases of the Strategy of Tension must be provided. Between December 1969, the year of the Piazza Fontana's massacre, and December 1970, the year of the attempted “Bourgeois coup”, it was clear the endeavour of a coup d'état. On the other hand, 1974 was the pivotal year that brought the Strategy of Tension's first

⁵⁵ Pelizzari, P. (2004). Stragi e strategia della tensione. *Italia contemporanea*, 2004(235). p.292.

⁵⁶ Barbagallo, F. (2001). Il doppio Stato, il doppio terrorismo, il caso Moro. *Studi Storici*, 42(1), 127-138.

phase to an end and the significant shift in the global framework was the cause: the U.S. administration's approach to Europe underwent a dramatic shift with the fall of Nixon and Kissinger and right-wing military administrations in Portugal, Spain and Greece fell soon after. Consequently, it could be said that the first phase of the Strategy of Tension ended in 1974. This phase was marked by right-wing coup attempts and the initiative of neo-fascist extremist groups, which were initially associated with state, military and civilian apparatuses, at that moment organising their massacres and terrorist acts primarily targeting the forces and apparatuses impeding their strategy.

The radical right-wing terrorism's birth dates to the late 1960s. This wave was stimulated by the country being the cradle of the largest Communist party operating in democratic Western Europe. This brought the urge to stop communism ideology spanning throughout Italy. Nevertheless, attacks were also targeted at parliamentary democracy, as a weak system and establishment letting all this occur. Their strategy included activities with the purpose of increasing the pressure on the government to address street violence and, in addition to the assassination of specific politicians, bombs targeting large public spaces have also included train derailments and bombs detonating in packed squares. Though it is unclear whether any of the Italian legislative regimes genuinely backed the far right, it seems clear that some members of the intelligence services did⁵⁷.

Indeed, in 1974, according to the former head of Office D of SID (Defence Information Service) statement, it was Andreotti, Minister of Defence, who told the Services that *"they must amend their register"*⁵⁸. Subsequently, corruption and business have taken the role of right-wing terrorism and coup tactics as tools of power and the takeover of media and state apparatuses, together with the marginalisation of the

⁵⁷ Lutz, B. (2019). Global terrorism. Routledge, p. 172-173.

⁵⁸ Barbagallo, F. (2001). Il doppio Stato, il doppio terrorismo, il caso Moro. *Studi Storici*, 42(1), 127-138.

Communist Party and trade unions, were the goals under the P2 Lodge's hands⁵⁹.

Italian Red Brigades began their activities in the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Throughout their campaigns, however, the Italian Red Brigades focused almost entirely on targets associated with the country's political and economic structures. They saw the post-World War II parliamentary democratic system as little more than a resuscitation of the fascist state led by Benito Mussolini. Targets included union members, legislators, judges, corporate executives, police officers and party leaders, among many others. Instead of the socialist system that prevailed in the U.S.S.R. in the 1970s, they aimed to establish the kind of socialism that Lenin advocated for the early years of Russia or the Maoist revolution. The Red Brigades' leaders considered themselves to be at the forefront of the proletariat and this progressive intellectual front was ready to fight the global capitalist system to free the working classes⁶⁰.

Despite being forceful, the first actions were not fatal. As an example, they briefly abducted labour leaders and executives from the more conservative unions as a symbolic act. In other instances, they raised money for their operations by kidnapping. Years later, a reorganisation of the Italian security forces had benefited the Red Brigades' initial endeavours and due to their affiliations with the extreme right and suspicions of plotting a coup against the democratic government, some influential members of the intelligence services were fired. It is in this time frame that Red Brigades enhanced the level of violence and started adopting the kneecapping strategy and the peak was reached in 1978, the same year as the Moro kidnapping.⁶¹ There is then evidence that the Red Brigades received some outside assistance and contacts. Although the dissidents were funded and organised domestically in Italy, there

⁵⁹ Ivi, p.131-133.

⁶⁰ Lutz, B. (2019). Global terrorism. Routledge. P.142

⁶¹ Ivi, p.143-144

were occasional exchanges with nations situated behind the Iron Curtain and Czechoslovakia seems to have acted as the Soviet Union's stand-in in Italy, lending support to the communists through arrangements concerning training, weapons and financing⁶².

The two opposing terrorist forms adopted different methods, targeting different personalities and basing their strategies on diverting ideological structures, while both of them subverting the Italian political and social equilibrium. Nevertheless, the Italian experience demonstrates that it is erroneous to think of the state as a unified entity combating terrorism, especially with regard to right-wing terrorism⁶³. The lack of parliamentary oversight and the executive branch's permanent delegation of authority to the Security Services, top military and interior administration are important points to draw in this context. Additionally, the Republic's material Constitution, which was in effect during the Cold War, allowed politicians, state officials and military personnel to prioritise their allegiance to the Atlantic alliance over the Republican Constitution during that time⁶⁴.

1.2.2. Activation of Italian Secret Services' international eye.

In the previous paragraph, we assessed that terrorism during the 1970s and 1980s could not be identified only within the national frameworks. Beginning in the latter part of the 1970s, knowledge of the fact that terrorism was not limited to local distribution, but also had international connections with foreign armed groups, began to grow

⁶² Ivi, p.145

⁶³ Reiter, H., & Weinbauer, K. (2007). Police and Political Violence in the 1960s and 1970s: Germany and Italy in a Comparative Perspective. *European Review of History—Revue européenne d'Histoire*, 14(3), 373-395.

⁶⁴ Tranfaglia, N. (1998). La strategia della tensione e i due terrorismi. *Studi storici*, 39(4), 989-998.

even in Italy. After an examination of the tactics and plans developed by armed groups across Europe, the security apparatuses started to recognise the issue and created a map of targets they believed to be comparable.

Here there is the need to create a distinction between international and transnational terrorism. The first one is backed and/or sponsored by independent nations, also known as "rogue states." There are several reasons for this, but in general, the goal was to incite an uneven conflict that would be most helpful in undermining the other side in a bipolar world heavily influenced by the Cold War. The second one showed itself as a collaboration between armed extremist groups in Europe and those in the Middle East and South America⁶⁵.

While on the abovementioned paragraph we went through the first kind of terrorism, in this case, we are going to assess the Italian transnational terrorist relationships. Our focus of interest concerns what kind of investigation routes have been tracked and on what kind of dynamics strategies and information exchange were centred, intending to comprehend the clarity of the picture on the political floor. During the presentation of the semestral Information and Security Policy Report by the President of the Council Forlani to the Italian Parliament in December 1980, it has been outlined the topic of international connections as essential within the analysis of the terrorist phenomenon and in the attempt to locate the sources of direct impulses that would give rise to or encourage the terrorist phenomenon. Concerning this, there has always been a perception and awareness of the presence of those international connections, on the risk of practical forms of those links such as training camps, arms exchange, financing, common strategies, and operative cooperation, in addition to the

⁶⁵ Bald, L., & Di Fabio, L. (2017). Perché indagare la lotta al terrorismo italiano in chiave transnazionale. Nuove ipotesi e percorsi di ricerca. *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, (30, 2) p. 7-8

suspect on central sites of coordination as well as sponsorship in foreign countries⁶⁶.

In Italy, if we look at SISMI (The Military Intelligence and Security Service) and SISDE (The Service for Information and Democratic Security) documents it is possible to ascertain that the international dynamics, from the ideological point of view at least, were investigated. Nevertheless, since indications were related to singular episodes, this never brought to the design of international operative hearts of terrorism responsible for formulating plans of strategic terrorist action, assembling forces for the strategic objectives, or managing and directing the executive actions of distinct organisations to function either independently or in concert⁶⁷.

It is encouraging that there was the perception that international terrorism, in all its extrinsic power, cannot be regarded as an element of clandestine and destabilising meddling in the domestic affairs of a specific nation, since it is inextricably linked to the nature and outcome of ongoing international conflicts⁶⁸.

The foreign engagement of SISMI and SISDE was declared to be inspired by a mission to uncover different features of the phenomenon, namely actions of foreigners who have drawn attention from the country due to possible flanking operations, the strategies used by foreign organisations to stay in contact with their members who are functioning

⁶⁶ Relazione sulla politica informativa e della sicurezza - semestre 22 maggio - 22 novembre 1980; *Iniziativa*: Forlani Arnaldo, Presidente del Consiglio (I Governo Forlani) https://legislature.camera.it/chiosco.asp?content=/documenti/documentiParlamentari/ElencoDOC_1_1_2.asp?IdLegislatura=08|660&source=/altre_sezionism/9988/10010/10335/documentoxml.asp, last access: 20th March 2024.

⁶⁷ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica – Appunto SISMI su collegamenti internazionali del terrorismo. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_007DO_01.

⁶⁸ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica - Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica, Collegamenti internazionali del terrorismo italiano – Dicembre 1981. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_020DO_01.

in Europe, and studies on citizens who might be taking part in foreign training programmes.⁶⁹

Regarding Italian black terrorist groups, the key lecture for what concerned the international relationships with foreign individuals or formations was difficult to implement. Nevertheless, within the European geographical framework, German neo-Nazis groups such as the German Action Group and Wehrsportgruppe Hoffman were a reason for concern given their large popularity, their extreme zealotry, and the frequency of extremely serious violent deeds. Similarly, the SISDE confirmed to have consistent clues on the contact between F.A.N.E. elements and Italian neo-fascists who found refuge in France, as part of the strategy of the Federation d'Action Nationale et Européenne of being in close and regular contact with extreme right-wing groups and individuals in Spain, Austria, and Italy to facilitate coordination and unified leadership of the *opposition to the "democratic system."*⁷⁰

More specifically, it is known that the French extremist group forged connections with political and anti-communist organisations such as the National Socialist Union, the Roman Traditional Movement, the National Labour Party and the Organization for the Liberation of Fiume, together with Roman extremist figures (Laganà, Andreani and Socillo) while on trips to Italy in June and July 1980⁷¹.

The history of the relationship between Italian and French extreme-right-wing terrorism could be traced from 1960 to 1984, within a continuous and rooted exchange of ideological, cultural, political, militant and financial resources which did not only represent a bilateral

⁶⁹ RELAZIONE SULLA POLITICA INFORMATIVA E DELLA SICUREZZA - semestre 22 maggio - 22 novembre 1980; *Iniziativa*: FORLANI Arnaldo, PRESIDENTE DEL CONSIGLIO (I Governo Forlani)
https://legislature.camera.it/chiosco.asp?content=/documenti/documentiParlamentari/ElencoDOC_1_1_2.asp?IdLegislatura=08|660&source=/altre_sezionism/9988/10010/10335/documentoxml.asp, last access: 20th March 2024.

⁷⁰ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica - Eversione e terrorismo di estrema destra 08.10.1982. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_019DO_01

⁷¹ Ibid.

bond but was inserted in a broader European network. A “*solidarité militante transnationale*”⁷² was born in the outbreak of the Algerian Independence War during the 1960s, with OAS (Organisation de l’Armée Secrète) French militants finding support and refuge on Italian soil and the present extreme-right-wing embodying the inspiring role of its European companion.

Furthermore, to align the ideological symmetries, it is also noteworthy that pieces signed by well-known Italian radicals or right-wing-addressed pieces were published in the F.A.N.E.-sponsored journal “Notre Europe” and within this path, investigators were drawn to the connection of this one to the Italian publication “Quex,” which was an ideological-strategic bulletin published by right-wing Italian prisoners associated with the neo-fascist revolutionary wing.

As we have mentioned beforehand, information on international ties of the Italian right-wing terrorism at the time was more centred on interpersonal ties, rather than interoperability between groups. Nonetheless, it seemed to have been protagonism on Services’ information regarding paramilitary training camps in Lebanon, where several neo-fascist extremist Italian figures may have joined Christian-Maronite gatherings. This last information has been the topic for several newspapers, most of all within the framework of all the controversial hypotheses over the Bologna bombings. Abu Ayad, one of the major leaders of the Palestinian movement, sustained having adequately notified the Italian Authorities of the presence of five fascists from Bologna in the falangist training camps in Beirut, preparing the attack, as he declared to the Corriere Della Sera’s special correspondent.⁷³ Regarding this last observation, it will be analysed more deeply in the

⁷² Picco, P. (2018). *Liaisons dangereuses: les extrêmes droites en France et en Italie (1960-1984)*. Presses universitaires de Rennes. P. 17-19.

⁷³ Archivio del Corriere della Sera, 04 Marzo 1981. “Vicino a Beirut cinque fascisti bolognesi si addestrano per un <<colpo grosso>>.” <https://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/view.shtml#!/NzovcGFnZXMvcmNzZGF0aWRhY3MxLOAyMTMwMQ%3D%3D> last access: 2nd May 2024.

following chapters, in relation to the broad event of the attack on August the 2nd, 1980.

An additional SISDE document dated in November 1981⁷⁴, highlights that regarding the phenomena of right-wing subversives and potential operational connections between Italian terrorist groups and international parallel organisations, there is little evidence to substantiate this theory. However, it is also true that certain non-European and European nations have harboured and/or encouraged the escape of some radical Italians who were wanted in Italy and the well-known restrictions on extradition for political grounds that are recognised by democratic legal systems and the political solidarity that advantages nations with authoritarian regimes or significant extreme right populations are to be considered for this.

Several in-depth investigations have been conducted quite before and in the wake of the Bologna bombings: four Italian citizens were arrested in Tolon on March 23rd, 1980, ascertaining the relationship with the French subversive organization “Action Dirècte”⁷⁵. Indeed, the presence in France of Italian fugitives sympathizing alongside left-wing terrorism was quite clear for the Italian intelligence services since the end of 1979.⁷⁶ According to the SISDE, the International Centre for Popular Culture, a gathering place for members of Middle Eastern and European subversive organisations such as the Armenians, ETA, IRA, RAF, and PLO, was home to Italian extremists and fugitives in France and it was accepted that the centre might serve as a front for a global terrorist organisation that planned to organise subversive actions throughout Europe and the Middle East. This road was considered due to the presence of Françoise Tucher and Corrado Simioni, two major

⁷⁴ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica - Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica, I rapporti del terrorismo italiano con centrali straniere 03.11.1981. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_018DO_01

⁷⁵ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica - Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica, Collegamenti internazionali del terrorismo italiano – Dicembre 1981. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_020DO_01

⁷⁶ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica – Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica, Attività di estremisti di sinistra italiani in Francia – Agosto 1982. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_005DO_01

exponents of the Hyperion, which according to investigation from the same Italian judiciary authority, had long been a hub for the planning of terrorist acts, to which R.B. figures seem to have been affiliated, and which was also in charge of bringing massive weaponry into Italy.⁷⁷

On European soil, extremist groups had several contact points throughout several countries and France, with no big surprise due to the constant common culture and history with Italy, has been one of the biggest recipients of Italian people affiliated with terrorist groups. According to Italian documents, we also see that Switzerland, Spain, RDF, Austria, and Ireland were territories worth attention.

Czechoslovakia is an additional hub which is interesting to look at, and the Italian Services were aware of that during December 1981, when documents witnessed the movements to the country of exponents of Italian terrorism during the '70s and '80s.⁷⁸ It was acknowledged that Feltrinelli had a wide range of foreign contacts, including residents and officials from Eastern nations in addition to extreme movement representatives. Gian Giacomo Feltrinelli played a major role in establishing connections between the terrorist regions in Italy and the Czechoslovak Republic. He once accompanied Augusto Viel, a Genoese GAP member, who was granted preferential treatment in a tiny villa along with other "guests" after being caught for robbery. A journey that would not have been feasible without the consent of the Czech security authorities, based on information and study provided by Italian security officers⁷⁹.

Indeed, there was an unfolding relationship of different natures of support between the Czech Communist leadership, inclined to materially and financially sustain the Italian companions, favour advantageous contracts with cooperating firms and host refuge to communists from Italian authorities in the afterwards of the war,

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica – Appunto SISMI su collegamenti internazionali del terrorismo. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_007DO_01

⁷⁹ Ibid.

raising the alarm to information services and diplomatic bodies concerning the subversive cooperation in Czech training camps for terrorists.⁸⁰ In addition to this, fear arose in the PCI leadership itself in the threat that the CCPs (the Czechoslovak counterpart) could represent a destabilisation of the broader western panorama and an obstacle to the Italian historical compromise itself, especially after troubling relations between the two parties due to hidden links discovered with R.B. exponents such as Alberto Franceschini, who is reported to have stayed in Czechoslovakia, and the resentment of the Italian party after a reformist process by the Eastern peer.

Salvatore Cacciapuoti, the vice-president of the Central Control Commission, was sent to Prague on Berlinguer's behalf to investigate connections with members of the Red Brigades in September 1974. A year later, following another meeting with Antonio Vavrus, the head of the international section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the findings held by the Italian investigators confirmed the presence of Alberto Franceschini in the territory, as had been previously indicated, along with Fabrizio Pelli, Renato Curcio, and Marco Setti. This information was urged by the same Cacciapuoti to be further investigated by Czechoslovakia as well, given its potential as a target of such subversive collaborations⁸¹.

But based on the remarks of the Director of the Secret Archive, Documentation and Data Protection Department of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, it had to have been a relationship at the level of the secret services. Amidst a questioning by the Czech police as a component of the probe into the abduction and murder of Aldo Moro submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Ordinary Court of Rome, Jan Frolik, director of the Archive, Documentation and Secret Data Protection Department of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech

⁸⁰ Lomellini, V. (2017). *Il mondo della guerra fredda e l'Italia degli anni di piombo*. Florencia, Le Monnier., p. 127-128

⁸¹ Ivi, p.133

Republic, remembers informing an advisor at the Italian Embassy in Prague about documents that contained a caution from the Italian Communist Party to the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party to steer clear of communication with the Red Brigades, to prevent harm to the PCI's reputation⁸². Thus, it is possible to suppose that the international ties of the national subversive groups were not hidden from the public representative eyes and at the same time they were feared by them, being a risk to their popular façade. Then, our concern in these lines is to outline not only the continental relationships between terrorist groups but also their international and extra-European feature. SISDE, at the time, knew the logistic collaboration between Palestinian terrorist groups and Italian subversive groups⁸³. Documents outline information on figures such as Oreste Strano, for having attended Palestinian training camps for guerrillas and Rita Porena, known as a communist cinematographic reporter and affiliated to the P.F.L.P, who similarly seemed to have been part of training in Lebanese camps. Since the 1970s, it has been alleged that representatives of the opposing parties in the Middle East have cautiously approached and offered support and aid to militants belonging to radical left-wing armed groups: to convince the people in the West that it could be the sole defence force in the Mediterranean, Israel would have sought to destabilise the Italian state, while in the banner of class solidarity, the Palestinians would have given revolutionary organisations substantial financial support⁸⁴.

Generally speaking, it is clear from the abovementioned Italian President of the Council's remarks that the services' efforts in foreign activity were quite appreciated. It also appears that there was a

⁸²Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica – Documentazione da parte della Procura della Repubblica presso il Tribunale di Roma alla Commissione parlamentare sul terrorismo in Italia e sulle cause della mancata individuazione dei responsabili delle stragi. Terrorismo di sinistra_XI-XIII_009.003-a

⁸³ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica - Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica, Collegamenti internazionali del terrorismo italiano – Dicembre 1981. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_020DO_01

⁸⁴ Ibid.

continuous and deeper focus on the international context than was widely publicly acknowledged, undoubtedly part of the state secrecy paradigm.

Despite this, the following reasoning will be an attempt to grasp how this international perception of terrorism was then practically implemented, whether it was actually accepted as an investigation path in the occasion of huge terrorist deeds taking place on Italian soil, which the Italian positioning was in front of those international dynamics, whether it was completely and truly unveiled in the aforementioned documents and above all, whether the ideological symmetries between subversive groups throughout Europe were worth the attention or rather they were just an alignment resulting from common social, cultural and political experiences and as a result, whether the focus of information and investigation was completely uncentered.

2. 2ND AUGUST 1980: NARRATION OF THE MASSACRE.

2.1. Through the public machine's eyes.

On Sunday 3rd August 1980, newspapers are all aligned in what their frontpage will narrate. “Massacre”, “hell”, “bloodshed”, and “shock” are the most common substantives used to describe what happened at the Bologna station the day before.

At 10,25 on 2nd August, an extremely violent explosion in the waiting room of the second class of the station caused the collapse of the structures above the first-class waiting room, the hall and the canopy by approximately thirty metres. Directly in front of the waiting area, two wagons of the Ancona-Chiasso train were also struck by the explosion on the first platform, as declared by the judgement of the first stance⁸⁵. Acts of the Bologna provincial command contained telephonic warnings on the claimed responsibility: they went from a N.A.R. (Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari) revendication call to the Compagnia dei Carabinieri di Milano Duomo on 6th August 1980 at h.13.45, coming up beside three signals on 2nd, 4th, 6th and 7th August by a woman voice denying N.A.R. responsibility. A call was directed to the Ansa journalist agency on August 7th at 01.45 from the Turinese N.A.R. column referring to “the last premonition” of the group’s detachment from the Bologna event. Additional claims were those from Red Brigades on 2nd August to the Genoese newspaper “Il Secolo 19^o” and the one on 5th August at 22.20 from the P.F.L.P., justified as an intentional attack directed at a Zionist school⁸⁶.

⁸⁵ Sentenza n. 4/88 emessa in data 11/7/1988 dalla II Corte d'Assise di Bologna nel procedimento penale n. 12/86.

⁸⁶ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero della difesa/Arma dei Carabinieri/Stazione di Bologna (1980) / Comando interregionale Vittorio Veneto. Ufficio OAI0 [1980-1998] /14:Atti del Comando Provinciale di Bologna: rapporti giudiziari sulle operazioni e le attività svolte, intercettazioni telefoniche, accertamenti e indagini su persone segnalate e su richieste dell'autorità giud [...] (1980-1986)/35:stazione fs di Bologna.Strage del 02.08.1980 (1980 set.15)

According to the narration, the emergency response was immediate: witnesses interviewed by journalists say that a few minutes after the explosion ambulances were already at the station square, it is told about a spontaneous and incredibly popular mobilization⁸⁷.

<<Avvenire>> takes a picture of the institutional machine activation⁸⁸. Right after five o'clock in the evening, several cars are already moving out of the government building courtyard, heading for the airport. The Republic's President Sandro Pertini travels from Borgo Panigale to Maggiore Hospital, where many injured people are being treated, then he travels to the prefecture and the explosion site. In the meantime, the Minister of the Interior Rognoni, the public prosecutor Gennaro Messina and Bologna questor Italo Ferrante do not dare say more than "verification is ongoing". In the late evening, a summit will be organized by Bologna and Emilia-Romagna local administrators together with the vice-mayor Gherardi and the presence of city council members, parties' leaders, trade unionists, and members of the Parliament. They remember the long hours, the rescue efforts, the widespread mobilisation, and the demanding work that nurses and doctors performed, then at closed doors with the arrival of PCI regional secretary Guerzoni, the reunion of political and social forces takes place. Generally, the local administration tried to issue all possible emergency measures to ensure the most favourable management of that tremendous situation.

In addition to this, the report of the Parliamentary Committee for Information and Security Services and State Secrecy presented on 30th April 1981, recalls the way the committee immediately reacted to the tragic event by implementing contacts with the government with the aim of following the situation from a close position and obtaining the

⁸⁷ Il Resto del Carlino Bologna, 3 agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access: 5th April 2024.

⁸⁸ Avvenire, 3 agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access:5th April 2024.

hoped reassurances from the Council Presidency⁸⁹. After a few days, the topic was discussed in a meeting in plenary by the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Defence, the Undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council in charge of state security and the technical chiefs of secret services.

Going back to the public perception of the event, there was one precise doubt: the hope that an attack of that nature would not be a man's responsibility, that the human mind could not possibly reach that kind of hate.

<<Il Resto del Carlino>> entitles "*The will of not believing*"⁹⁰: people held onto the theory that the massacre was caused by a gas explosion that escaped from underground pipelines, almost until the very last moment. It was definitely emotionally easier to believe in someone's negligence, in the inattention of the construction, on a missed supervision or in an erroneous activation of the station's machinery. Culprits would have bearded anyway some degree of accountability proportionate to their material or moral responsibilities, even if they were not held accountable for malevolent activities⁹¹.

Unfortunately, <<Avvenire>> well exposed the actual and collective inner awareness: everyone was aware that pipe explosions and restaurant explosions may occur, and that it is far simpler for two plastic-filled luggage to be dropped amid passengers in a busy train station. That is because the Italian population was quite familiar in those years with a "*psychosis of terrorism...even though dozens of neo-*

⁸⁹ Relazione del Comitato Parlamentare per i Servizi di Informazione e Sicurezza e per il Segreto di Stato, per il periodo dal 25 Gennaio 1979 al 30 Aprile 1981. https://legislature.camera.it/dati/leg08/lavori/stampati/pdf/051_005001.pdf, last access: 22nd March 2024.

⁹⁰ Il Resto del Carlino, 3 Agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access: 5th April 2024.

⁹¹ Corriere della Sera, 3 Agosto 1980. Archivio del Corriere della Sera, 3 agosto 1980. https://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/slider_pagine.html#!/03-08-1980/03-08-1980/NobwRADghgtgpmAXGAJIALIMAaMAzAJwHsYkwAGAZgHpyAOagRgE47ycx0iyraGW2YAL7Zw0eGQDWcAJ4B3lgRQd0cAB7oywglpA last access: 20th April 2024.

*fascists and brigades were in jail*⁹². Such a statement from a right-wing-oriented newspaper delineated, on the one side, the fact that the subversive phenomenon was in a certain sense perceived distanced by the political sphere, or at least an attempt to make it seem as such. On the other side, it not only represented a distance but also a frightened awareness of the alleged incapability of containing extra-parliamentary violence.

Regardless, it was not only an Italian rule in those years. One SISDE document from March 1985 listed twenty pages of attacks on trains and railways infrastructures that occurred in several countries in the world. France experienced several failed terrorist deeds in 1974 against the railway line on the Madrid-Paris route claimed by “Autonomous Intervention Groups”, succeeded by the National Youth Front firebomb attack on a train departing for Moscow as a protest for the Olympic games in 1980. Still, a bomb attack occurred against a train on the line of Madrid-Paris in Spain on 28th September 1975. Spain counted 38 train attacks, most of all failed ones, and ETA-claimed, between 1975 and 1984. This attack strategy resulted less frequently inside the Federal Republic of Germany, which seems to have recorded seven attempts of railway attack between 1974 and 1984⁹³.

During the 159th public session of the Senate of the Republic on 4th August 1980, President of the Council Francesco Cossiga pointed out that the expert evidence ended up abstractly considering three hypotheses: the unintentional detonation of a heat or gas supply

⁹² Avvenire, 3 agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access:5th April 2024.

⁹³ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Rapido 904 (1984)/Accertamenti e indagini [1984-1989] / 12: Appunti dal SISDE. Dati provenienti da servizi collegati su attentati ai treni commessi in altre nazioni (1985) / 6: ATTENTATI A TRENI E IMPIANTI FERROVIARI AVVENUTI IN VARI PAESI DEL MONDO (1985 mar.07)

system, the intentional implantation of an explosive device, and the illegal transportation of an explosive that has accidentally deflagrated⁹⁴. Indeed, the deflagration crater developed on the floor of the second-class waiting room, right in the centre of the explosion's impact zone. After clearing away the rubble, workers from the fire department and experts in bomb disposal discovered little pieces of black plastic, likely the remains of the bag hosting the explosive.⁹⁵

Subsequently, another clue grips minds: August 4th would have been the sixth anniversary of the bombing on the Italicus train. As written inside <<Il Resto del Carlino>>, Bologna had already been chosen as the place of a massacre since the Italicus train had to arrive at that precise first platform in 1974, but there was a departure delay in moving the incident to San Benedetto Val di Sambro, causing 12 deaths and 48 injured⁹⁶. As a consequence, there is a resounding question, which one could read on the front page of <<l'Unità>>: *what failed then, happened yesterday morning?*⁹⁷ The suspect gains substance when acknowledging that in the education office registry, there was an order directing the indictments of the offenders along with an order for their arrest. Among them were the fascist Fronte Nazionale Rivoluzionario leader Mario Tuti, and his close companions Luciano Franci, Pietro Malentacchi, and Margherita Luddi.

That is then the most recurrent hypothesis on the immediate moment after the tragedy. <<Unità>> and <<Avanti!>> were respectively entitled “*Almost certain: an atrocious fascist attack*”, and “*The first idea: fascist attack*”.

The certainty was driven by different factors: the coincidence with the Italicus bombing in 1974, the hugeness of the explosions and N.A.R.'s

⁹⁴ 159th seduta pubblica del Senato della Repubblica, 4 Agosto 1980. <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/332314.pdf>, last access: 29th May 2024.

⁹⁵ La Repubblica, 3 Agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access: 5th April 2024.

⁹⁶ Avvenire, 3 Agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access: 5th April 2024.

⁹⁷ L'Unità, 3 Agosto 1980. <https://archivio.unita.news/issue/1980/08/03> last access: 13th April 2024

revendications intertwined with Red Brigades' ones interrupted by denials and confusion. <<La Repubblica>> writes about common features recalling the same "*demon*": among these, the use of trinitrotoluene without a specific target.

In the first stance, the political nature of the attack seems to have very invisible importance, since the very first thought is centred on finding the motivation for such an immense destruction. Nonetheless, <<Corriere Della Sera>> blames governments' weaknesses for not having concretely implemented one of the most essential constitutional legislations, namely the one binding the reconstitution of fascist groups of any kind and the one banning the organisation of associations aiming at violently perpetrate political actions. Above all, as stated in <<Il Resto del Carlino>>, how is it possibly feasible to uncover the responsibilities and the clandestine ties of such subversive groups of different ideologies, when they share the common first objective of demolishing an entire society?

<<La Repubblica>> talks about a sort of temporal exchange between left- and right-wing terrorism, whereby, while one is hidden, the other has space to reappear, akin to a centrally planned scheme with a similar goal.

Nevertheless, in all these similar and expected hypotheses, there are also analytically interesting considerations. <<Il Manifesto>>, on Sunday 3rd August 1980, does not display the same conviction which takes for granted red or black terrorism. It is found something strange and non-sense in this specific extremely violent deed, namely the lack of a motive which could make it possible to link it to a recurring, already known path.

The huge proportion of events reminds of some past ghosts, but those of a different nature: international dynamics that have been referred to in

the moment of Moro kidnapping, *in border countries, on the periphery of empires and petroleum areas*.⁹⁸

On 4th August 1980, there was the reunion of the National Public Order and Security Committee at the Cabinet Office of the Interior Minister Hon. Rognoni and the floor was left to the Police Chief Doc. Coronas. According to his declarations, the matrix was to be regarded as black because the explosives approach was very different from that of red terrorism; it was true that the N.A.R. made and then refuted allegations, nonetheless, there might have been other organisational expressions of the same political colour and he then backed up this assertion with a list of bombings carried out by neo-fascist organisations and with the claim that this accusation originated from a "political-objective" evaluation. Above all, he tackled the unfounded charge that the police and intelligence agencies underestimated the phenomenon of black terrorism. Regardless, the potential for cross-border ties was not ruled out, but solid proof was still sought⁹⁹.

On the same day, there is the 159th public session of the Senate of the Republic, the first immediately afterwards of the Bologna bombing and the one where the President of the Council Cossiga together with other Ministers such as the one of the Interior, of Foreign Affairs, of Justice, and of Infrastructures are at the centre of the parliamentary interrogations from the different political formations. President Cossiga's words revolve around statements of profound grief for victims and their families and economic solidarity for the same, reminding of the need for a more efficient public order, for a targeted conviction against perpetrators and for an engaged action aimed at repairing past errors and at preventing incoming enhanced dangers, all coupled with a constant and recurring exaltation of national law enforcement agencies

⁹⁸ Il Manifesto, 3 agosto 1980. <https://www.bibliotechebologna.it/objects/media-3-agosto-1980-le-prime-pagine-dei-giornali-4b3f40> last access: 7th April 2024.

⁹⁹ Archivio Storico del Senato della Repubblica. Verbale n.6 del comitato Nazionale dell'ordine e della sicurezza pubblica del 4 agosto 1980. Stragi_003FL_02SR_06SS_002UA_01.

and the immediate supportive reaction of all democratic, social and political forces. Nevertheless, the intervention ended with a specific and punctual description of the public machine activation and with no additional information on the potential responsibility, apart from the already recurring hypothesis linked to revendications and strategies, which brought to suspecting over black terrorism, which always turns to the crime of massacre since it is the act that incites fear, anxiety and impetuous feelings.

Nevertheless, even if the subversive right-wing is immediately considered the most acceptable and, maybe, easier culprit, investigations did not target that threat until that moment. As it has been outlined by the same Francesco Cossiga during the public session of the Senate, since 1976 to that date, there had been fewer terrorist attacks attributed to an extreme right-wing matrix than to other subversive organisations, as had been also informed the Committee of Secret services which, according to him, had done considerable work on the extreme right-wing subversion phenomenon in its investigations and in-depth work, gathering a large amount of information on this specific topic, suggesting to the coordinating and services bodies that the data collection and analysis procedure be revised in order to make prevention more practically implementable¹⁰⁰. The solidity of security services and order corps exalted by Cossiga was then similarly counterattacked by Senator Spano, who was not the only one to remember that security policy has identified the turning points for subversion on the left, but it has not been as successful in countering subversion on the right. This argument will be adopted from the opposite sides, on the one hand, to highlight that the attempt to counter left-wing terrorism was successful since workers, trade unions, left-wing movements and left-wing parties had all rejected and combated

¹⁰⁰ Relazione del Comitato Parlamentare per i Servizi di Informazione e Sicurezza e per il Segreto di Stato, per il periodo dal 25 Gennaio 1979 al 30 Aprile 1981. https://legislature.camera.it/dati/leg08/lavori/stampati/pdf/051_005001.pdf, last access: 22nd March 2024.

terrorism in all of its forms, on the other hand, to react considering that it appears that there were some familial ties between this political party and the terrorist core of left-wing groups, given their sense of obligation to disassociate themselves from them.

All attention was then on the national soil. MSI Senator Marchio was, on the other hand, among the most provocative in terms of pretension of answers with regards to international ties of the event, namely waiting for explanations about the productive origin of the presumed bombing device, about the inquiry above the Jordan student Abu Anzeh Saleh (of which we will recall later) and the presumed Libyan training camps hosting red and black Italian terrorists¹⁰¹.

Indeed, there is a periodic recall to international relations, according to Spano's words who highlighted that they need to be made as clear as possible, that it could not serve as a justification for political obligations. It cannot be deemed insignificant that there was occasional contact between domestic terrorists and the manufacturing of weapons and explosives from other nations, in a country where there is a significant tourist trade and an equally significant trafficking in weapons and explosives. The accent was also posed to European cooperation. He argued the need for the genuine cooperation of the state apparatuses of other nations, a cooperation that had to go beyond the sporadic, nearly ritualistic meetings between interior ministers to discuss security policy; rather, it had to be ongoing and permanent, in order to find those responsible for the crimes that occur.

Stanzani, exponent of the Radical Party, refers to *"a concomitance with serious international events which is suspicious, and the sudden change in the apparent and probable origins of the colour is suspicious"*.

Again, according to Senator Perna (Communist Party), foreign terrorist links are regarded as a track that cannot be crossed concretely, that should be cited with an almost legendary mystery, perhaps out of a

¹⁰¹ 159th seduta pubblica del Senato della Repubblica, 4 agosto 1980. <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/332314.pdf>, last access: 29th May 2024.

sense of duty, but never publicly studied to understand its actual operativity and recalling that *“if the government has something to declare, it should”*¹⁰².

2.2. *Trials: the public truth stands on the black terrorism.*

On 4th Monday 1980, <<Unità>> newspaper already entitled *“Sono stati i fascisti”*. An interview on the same page exposed the words of Ugo Pecchioli, head of the State Affairs section. *“But was not black terrorism liquidated?”*, he was asked. The interviewee speaks of government inattention, of an underestimation of the fascist problem, of a strategic infiltration aimed at seizing a moment of crisis in the country in order to destabilise the government apparatus and create bewilderment in collective public opinion. *“Take caution not to accidentally conceal anything closer by staring too far away”*¹⁰³, he added.

On the other hand, the social-democratic secretary Pietro Longo, suggested looking a little bit far away. More precisely, he talked about *“extraordinary interventions”*, moving the attention to the international links of terrorism, then he spoke in the name of its party stating that operative basis should have been found outside the national borders¹⁰⁴. The same newspaper, on 11th January 1987, underlines that perpetrators, inspirers, principals and guardians are for the first time explicitly named in a massacre trial and it is argued about the same people, the same structures and the same environments that were always guaranteed impunity until that moment¹⁰⁵.

According to the Judgement of the First Stance, immediately after the attack, the judicial police began to gather testimonies from witnesses, obtain anonymous statements, investigate accusations made in

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Unità, 4 Agosto 1980. <https://archivio.unita.news/issue/1980/08/04> last access: 13th April 2024

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Unità, 11 Gennaio 1987. <https://archivio.unita.news/issue/1987/01/11> last access: 13th April 2024.

different capitals, investigate any suspicions in Bologna lodging locations and conduct house inspections¹⁰⁶.

Ultimately, the first trial ended up being based on the subsequent elements: a) technical investigations, particularly expert reports on the properties of the explosive used at the station; b) evidence from a variety of written, literal and published documents; c) witness and defendant statements; d) Judicial Police and Secret Services reports and information¹⁰⁷.

More specifically, ideological and programmatic documents with reference to the “configured association”.¹⁰⁸ As an instance, a document dated 15th June 1982 was transmitted to SISDE and SISMI from the Carabinieri General Command as part of the Bologna Massacre’s inquiry. The document was an overview of the subversive right, defined as “*the first neo-fascist monography*”, a sort of manual, organized in sections, outlining the permanent and total characteristics of the war to perpetrate against communism, the programmatic phases of the revolutionary war, but also the attention to the political action and propaganda¹⁰⁹.

Several have been the tracked routes: the Neo-fascist lead, the Lebanese lead, the P2 lodge one and even a Spanish one.

Among the first households to be searched, there was the one of Mario Guido Naldi, a right-wing extremist, where a telephone book and three numbers of the “Quex” newspaper were found together with a letter from Paul Durand, F.A.N.E. member, to Luca de Orazi, containing the connection between Quex and Notre Europe. This seemed relevant to

¹⁰⁶ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

¹⁰⁷ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n°16/90 nel procedimento penale n°32/89 R.Gen., emessa in data 18 luglio 1990.

¹⁰⁸ Sentenza della Suprema Corte di Cassazione a Sezioni Unite Penali del 12 Febbraio 1992.

¹⁰⁹ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero della Difesa/Arma dei Carabinieri/Stazione di Bologna (1980) / Comando Generale/Ufficio Operazioni [1980-2011]/1: Atti dell’Ufficio Operazioni (1980-2011)/559:Indagini sulla “strage di Bologna” del 2 agosto 1980. Acquisizione di documentazione eversiva. (1982 giu.15)

the police's eyes since this brought to the necessity of looking for Naldi and to perquisite also De Orazi's house.

The second attention went towards a debate taking place on 10th July 1980 within the jail's walls that the Supervisory Judge of Padova reported to the Public Prosecutor of Bologna, among Luigi Vettore Presilio, neo-fascist prisoner, and Roberto Rinani, MSI militant in the Venetian sections. According to his words, he had been asked to take part in a huge attack targeting the Judge of Treviso Stiz, which would have been preceded by "*an attack of exceptional gravity that would have filled the pages of newspapers*".¹¹⁰

Then, another piece of the collected information arrived in an excerpt from the interrogation of Massimo Sparti, a Roman criminal with close ties to the subversive right, that was sent to the Investigating Judge by the Rome Public Prosecutor's Office on 26th April 1981, as part of the ongoing procedures for subversive association and armed gang. According to him, Valerio Fioravanti made repeated threats to kill his son, specifically two times: once when he refused to keep bags containing weapons and again in August 1980 when he requested false documents for Francesca Mambro. This second incident happened precisely two days following the slaughter in Bologna. In their conversation, Fioravanti seems to have continued saying that he had disguised himself in Bologna as a German tourist and that he had even had Mambro's hair coloured in case he was caught using false documentation. Sparti presumed these were made-up details since he required that he provided him with both an identity card and a driver's licence on the same day, of which he gave the details but not the numbers¹¹¹.

Colonel Amos Spiazzi received a directive from the SISDE in mid-July 1980 to look into the restructuring of radical right-wing subversive

¹¹⁰ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n°16/90 nel procedimento penale n°32/89 R.Gen., emessa in data 18 luglio 1990.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

groups. He travelled to Rome personally to meet with an informant, a man identified by him as "Ciccio," who belonged to right-wing extra-parliamentary organisations, *Fronte Nazionale* at first and *Ordine Nuovo* then. He told the colonel that an attack of "enormous proportions" was scheduled for early August and claimed that Stefano Delle Chiaie, *Avanguardia Nazionale*'s founder, had given him orders to get weapons and explosives at whatever cost. This material will be found in an extensive report dated 31st July 1980, sent to SISDE, as well as in an interview with <<L'Espresso>> conducted prior to the massacre but released subsequently. Later, on 9th September 1980, Mangiameli was assassinated by Mambro and Fioravanti, creating additional motivation for the accusation against the two for the Massacre¹¹².

Generally, the trial of the first stance was directed through two main investigation knots: the explosion and the crime of libel.

The First Instance Judgement concluded with life sentences for N.A.R. (*Nuclei Armati Rivoluzionari*) leading figures Francesca Mambro and Valerio Fioravanti, Massimiliano Fachini, *Ordine Nuovo* member, and Sergio Picciafuoco, Italian criminal for common crimes, followed by twelve years for Paolo Signorelli, another *Ordine Nuovo* – affiliated, six years for Roberto Rinani, extreme-right militant, ten years for Egidio Giuliani and thirteen for Gilberto Cavallini, both N.A.R. members.

Musumeci Pietro, general and deputy director of SISMI, Belmonte Giuseppe, SISMI official, Paziienza Francesco, SISMI collaborator and Gelli Licio, P2 Lodge main exponent, were sentenced for calumny with terrorist purposes as an aggravating factor.

The investigations towards the extremist extra-parliamentary right-wing environments found themselves coming up beside other leads, judicially proclaimed and then accused as diversion attempts.

¹¹² Archivio dell'Associazione tra i Familiari delle Vittime della Strage della Stazione di Bologna del 2 Agosto 1980. Colloquio tra Amos Spiazzi e Ciccio Mangiameli. https://stragi.it/colloquio_as, last access: 19th April 2024.

Among these, the track indicated at the beginning of September 1980 by Licio Gelli to Elio Cioppa, SISDE functionary, judged the occurring investigative lead as an erroneous calculation which had to be directed, on the contrary, to the international panorama. Subsequently, on 9th January 1981, SISMI Director Gen. Santovito met Francesco Pazienza, Gen. Musumeci and Gen. Notarnicola, chief of the first Division of the Service. The object of the meeting was the exchange of a note announcing the impending execution of a subversive scheme involving bombings of the most vital railway lines. The scheme was created by a “strategic direction” composed of Freda and Ventura, neo-fascist terrorists, and it was executed by Stefano Delle Chiaie's group, using “*F.A.N.E. adherents (including Germans)*”. The bombs appeared to be ready in Italy and planned to be supplied to four or six terrorists, including a German named Horst (Hoffman member) and a Parisian named Philippe (F.A.N.E. member)¹¹³. In the following days, other detailed information was sent to the Carabinieri General Command and UCIGOS, such as a notification from SISMI that, according to sources, the explosives were delivered overnight aboard a train at Ancona. Material would have been transported by such Legrand Raphael and Dimitris Martin and following the delivery, the couriers would have taken a plane from an unidentified stopover back to France. On 13th January a telephone call informed SISMI that the explosive delivery would have occurred carrying a dark bag in Ancona on train No. 514 at about 5.30 a.m. As a consequence, express train 514 Taranto-Milan was the subject of a police operation at the Ancona station; nonetheless, the operation was deemed ineffective, leading to the train's northward continuation.

Following more ineffective inspections in Rimini, at the Bologna airport, where the convoy had arrived at 9.26 a.m., two Alitalia airline tickets were found, registered to Dimitris Martin for the Milan-Munich flight at

¹¹³ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

8 p.m. on 13th January and to Legrand Raphael for the Milan-Paris flight at 6.15 p.m. on the same day. The suitcase contained an automatic hunting rifle and a 'MAB' machine gun, found in a second-class coach. Additionally, eight food cans, each containing six to seven hectolitres of explosive substances were found inside. Nevertheless, no evidence of the person or people who had planned the transportation of the firearms, explosives, tickets and other exhibits could be located. Two days later, the Bologna Public Prosecutor invited the Directors of SISMI and SISDE to send any relevant information about the fact, reports from potential foreign agencies about terrorist activity, the time frame and location of interest and the results of investigations conducted in areas where terrorist activity was suspected.

In the course of the proceedings that followed the discovery of the suitcase, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Imperia conducted several investigations to ascertain the identity of the person or people who established residence in Via Rizzo, 11. The suspicion was that these individuals were collaborators with Giorgio Vale, who was responsible for the assassination of the Carabinieri in Padua in February 1981 and it was asked to obtain from the UCIGOS the original document that established a connection between the events surrounding the discovery of the bomb-laden suitcase and the actions of the occupants of the well-known flat, and the one declaring the basis of which the aforementioned residence in Imperia was reported to be the base of an individual engaged in subversive activities¹¹⁴. In a few words, between May and November 1984, Notarnicola was making his declarations and they concluded that no information, apart from those coming from Musumeci with no explicit indication of his source of information, could be collected, also concerning the apartment in Imperia. Thereafter, arrest warrants were released against Belmonte, Musumeci and Paziienza for aggravating calumny for the attempt to undermine the

¹¹⁴ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

democratic order and secure impunity for those responsible for the Bologna massacre, causing investigations to converge on false international leads¹¹⁵.

The Sentence of Appeal goes with indictment of Gelli, Musumeci, Belmonte, De Felice, Signorelli, Fachini, Delle Chiaie, Tilgher, Ballan, Giorgi for creation and promotion of subversive organization; of Signorelli, Fachini, Rinani, Fioravanti, Mambro, Picciafuoco, Cavallini, Giuliani, Raho, Melioli for armed gang aimed at having carried out past indiscriminate terrorist attacks, such as Feltrinelli library in Padua in 25th July 1980, the specific Bologna bombing and terrorist attacks against people, such Mario Amato in 23rd June 1980.

Additionally, these latter ones were also accused of having specifically directed, carried out, promoted and organized the collocation of the explosive device in the second class's waiting room of the Bologna station. Subsequently, Musumeci, Belmonte, Pazienza and Gelli for abusing their authority and failing to fulfil their obligations as representatives of the SISMI in the public sector, staged a number of subversive crimes, lying to the Chief of Police, the UCIGOS, the General Command of the Weapon, the various P.G. bodies that were required to report the information to the A.G. Bologna and the magistrates who looked into their responsibilities, diverting investigations.¹¹⁶

The Appeal proceedings began on 25th October 1989 and lasted until 18th July 1991. All accused parties declared their innocence and the trial ended with all being acquitted for the massacre crime specifically related to the Bologna event.

The same trial outlined that while facts, events and personalities combined into an accusatory whole may have outlined tenable or even merely suggestive evidentiary paths, the method of reconstructing facts

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n°16/90 nel procedimento penale n°32/89 R.Gen., emessa in data 18 luglio 1990.

becomes even more precarious and uncertain due to the uncertainty surrounding the legitimacy of the connection and reconnection between various events, with the awareness that the facts that were presented to the judge for analysis might not fully capture the scope of noteworthy incidents that occurred during a specific time period, which would eliminate crucial moments from the prosecution's case, either positively or negatively. It continued that the looming danger in such a method of searching for the truth, in the context of criminal proceedings, was lying precisely in the fact of wanting to subject to analysis not single, circumscribed episodes or behaviours, but broader, and indistinct, social or political movements and upheavals, more often the effect of free interpretations rather than precise ascertainment and then use those alleged data, insecure and incomplete, for subsequent passages in the probative process.¹¹⁷

As an example, one of the most investigated and researched fields during the trial has been the one concerning the pre-existing interpersonal relationship between certain subjects thought of being actors of a comprehensive subversive project against the state. Roma was described as the locus operandi of this group's creation which since 1979 reunited a sort of community which, indeed, was believed to include Fioravanti, Mambro, Giuliani and Cavallini.

In February 1992, the Court of Cassation issued another sentence as a request of appealing motives advanced by the General prosecutor of the Republic of Bologna, according to which, the trial had to be remade as lack of "*completeness, correctness and reasonableness*".¹¹⁸

The Appeal Judgment for which an Appeal in Cassation was sought was the one dated 1990, which followed the trial at first instance in 1988. The judge has blamed for not having conducted the necessary, additional and more in-depth study of the circumstances and the

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Motivi del ricorso per Cassazione del Procuratore Generale della Repubblica. 27 maggio 1991.

factual items gathered from which he derived his convictions, while on the contrary, he tended to restrict himself to a synopsis and cursory assessment of the same, lacking a global visualization of the events. Additionally, what had been perceived was a missing precise operative methodology and references have also been made with reference to an erroneous and inadequate analysis of the Fontana Square events of 1969.

The appealed judgement stated that it had to disassociate itself from the ruling of the first instance, arguing that the fact's referability to the field of right-wing subversion did not establish certainty. The presumption that needed to be proven would have conditioned the judicial investigation and the evaluation of the obtained data, influencing the Assize Court's decisions in this regard. The Appeal judges concluded that the First Instance judgement attempted to confirm the existence and recurrence of a terrorist strategy, taking into account a wide range of facts and characters who were variously involved in them, as well as documents and news that were not always secure but were arbitrarily linked together despite their obvious heterogeneity. Additionally, the appeal dealt with assertions that lacked supporting evidence, the evidence's coherence and applicability, the methodological flaws that were purportedly made but were not explicitly addressed, and, lastly, the justifications for the same definitive evaluation of the collected data¹¹⁹.

The Court of Cassation will refer the case to another section of the Court of Assize of Appeal of Bologna for retrial against the same defendants and related offences, which in October 1993 will confirm the sentence of the first appeal of 1988.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

The definitive trial will take place on 23rd November 1995, confirming the right-wing subversive accusation. It judged the evidence linking Fioravanti, Mambro and Picciafuoco to the massacre and other crimes to be sufficient, validating their life sentence and as the first judge had already done, sentenced Gelli, Paziienza, Musumeci, and Belmonte to ten years in jail each for the crime of slander aggravated by terrorism. The investigative path will be considered definitely concluded on 11th April 2007, with the last Cassation Court's trial declaring responsibility for the Bologna Massacre also for Luigi Ciavardini, N.A.R. exponent and minor at the time of the event¹²⁰.

The narrative thread was drawn around the subversive dimension of the Italian environment. It was thought that following the dissolution of "Ordine Nuovo" in 1973 and "Avanguardia Nazionale" in 1976, a new, complex organisational structure emerged that brought together elements of heterogeneous origin and pursued a more radical terrorist strategy. This occurred after the transitory phase that followed these measures, in which only a few autonomous initiatives were manifested by a few reluctant to abandon the old and ambitious coup d'état aims, as underlined by the trials themselves¹²¹. Thus, according to the prosecution, the drawing to follow was the one picturing a Strategy of Tension inheritance, through a large-scale subversive organisation that included members of movements even declared as disbanded.

The abovementioned picture was perfectly resembling the citizenry's expectations and informal accusations directed at the right-wing subversive extra-parliamentary groups, even unveiling a tarnished state apparatus such as the secret services, a detail that seemed in any case coherently metabolised within the conviction of a larger subversive plan.

¹²⁰ Sentenza della Corte Suprema di Cassazione, Sezione Seconda Penale, emessa in data 11 Aprile 2007.

¹²¹ Sentenza Definitiva della Suprema Corte di Cassazione a Sezioni Unite Penali n. 21 n. 19840/95 Reg. Generale, emessa in data 23 Novembre 1995.

2.3. *The Lebanese lead.*

Two days after the issuing of the arrest warrant against Fioravanti, Vale, Diluvio, Alibrandi, Procopio, Brancato and Melioli for armed gang and aggravated subversive association, based on confiscated documents in Rome and specific but not declared witnesses, what occurred on 20th September 1980 was the comparison of one interview that would have been the beginning of a potential new track for investigations.

The interview was also object of a telegram sent by the Italian embassy in Beirut to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome on the same 20th September at 10.44 a.m. with the object "*Abu Ayad's declaration on the link between Falangists and the terrorist attack in Bologna station*"¹²². Abu Ayad was the second-in-command in Arafat's leadership and head of security affairs within the Palestinian Liberation Organization¹²³.

The abovementioned alert was coming from declarations made to the left-wing newspaper <<Al Safir>> and it concerned documents alleged to prove the existence of foreigner training camps run by the Maronite right-wing group known as the "Kataeb" close to Aqura, in Eastern Lebanon. That information seemed to be the witnessing of two right-wing extremists coming from West Germany, in Palestinian hostage, who were themselves involved in a group of thirty to thirty-five individuals, also including Italians and Spaniards.

Additionally, the P.L.O. representative specified that during the course of the training, Italian extremists confessed to their German mates about a project punctually targeting the city of Bologna, due to its left-wing administration and spoke about having even alarmed Italian authorities about the imminent threat. The attempt was annotated as

¹²² Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/ Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988]/ Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986]/ 59: Organizzazione lotta per la Palestina (OLP) (1980-1982)/ 1:Abu Ayad (1980-1981)/ 1:Dichiarazioni di Abu Ayad su rapporti tra falangisti e attentato alla stazione di Bologna (1980 set.19)

¹²³ Terrorism Review, 9 December 1982, CIA FOIA – General CIA Records.

an additional Palestinian intervention aimed at discrediting Italian authorities' incapability.

The sentence in first grade explains the beginning of this investigative track with the same interview, but the one released on the <<Corriere del Ticino>>, where Yasser Arafat's right-hand man declared the same information to the journalist Rita Porena.

At the immediate moment, Chief Public Prosecutor Ugo Sisti was asking for the documents in possession of SISDE, SISMI and CESIS's presidency, regarding the alleged projects carried out by Italian extremists and the adopted inspections. Similarly, the Instructor Judge urged the CESIS to inform SISMI of the necessity to collect information on the two German individuals and possible Italian collaborators¹²⁴.

On 9th October 1980, a reserved note from the SISDE director Gen. Grassini to the Public Prosecutor's office of Bologna mentioned how the remarks claimed to Mr. Salah Khalaf, alias Abu Ayad, appeared to be confirmed by communication with a high-level source who was well-introduced in the Palestinian resistance environment¹²⁵.

Concerning the interview's content, CESIS answered the Prosecutor's request of September 1980 on the successive 31st October, with a note replying that Italian services had never been informed of the imminent threat of an attack targeting the Bologna station as part of an extremist right-wing project and that this assumption was the result of an erroneous translation of the P.L.O. exponent's words, actually intended to express a verb in the future, rather than in the past and this had been presumably confirmed by agencies such as Reuter and Ansa, and from the same Abu Ayad on SISMI's request¹²⁶.

Then, a successive CESIS document reached the Public Prosecutor's office on 1st January 1981, with further details according to which the

¹²⁴Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

involved extremists received training in the use of TNT, plastique and, quite possibly, exogen, among other Western weaponry and explosives. In addition to this, it seemed ascertained that it was an object of discussion in political education classes of the training camps that Italy and Lebanon would have been the most unstable countries due to Soviet influence and the communist threat but plans or specific actions to be carried out in Italian cities were never discussed.

On 7th March 1981, a report from the Carabinieri Operations Unit of Bologna contained the negative outcome of the inspection of the Italian extremists attending training courses in the Lebanese camps and on the presence of a so-called “Alfredo”, already pictured in the prior note as the Italian group leader.

On 16th March 1981, <<Panorama>> magazine revealed the names of the presumed Italian refugees on Lebanese soil: Grilz, Ciro Lai, Alibrandi, Procopio, Sordi, Carlo Pucci, Riccardo Iorio and Roberto Fiore. Furthermore, also the alleged German individuals were declared: Duppner, Hepp, Bergman, and Hamberger. The same names will be confirmed in successive documents, such as the SISMI verification dated 7th August 1981¹²⁷ and Doc. Gentile’s notes after his second travel to Beirut¹²⁸. A common militancy was referred to between Italian militants and German neo-Nazis belonging to the Hoffman organization.¹²⁹

In order to obtain *"further useful elements for the identification of the two Germans, their intermediaries, and the Italian citizens"* who had attended

¹²⁷ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/2-50-6 Attività di natura eversiva e violenta da parte di partiti e movimenti politici estremisti /231: “Bologna 02/08/1980 Strage alla stazione ferroviaria” (1974-1986)/24/A: (1981) /16:AISE 2-50-6 f0231 c0024 A d0486 C.pdf

¹²⁸ Raccolte speciali/Dire Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/ Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988]/ Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986]/ 59: Organizzazione lotta per la Palestina (OLP) (1980-1982)/5:Accertamenti su persone della “falange libanese” operanti in Italia (1981-1982)/1:Appunto sulle informazioni reperite dal giudice istruttore Gentile durante il suo viaggio a Beirut (1981 dic.12)

¹²⁹ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

the Aqoura camp throughout 1980, the Investigating Judge had asked the Committee to get involved with SISMI as early as 7th May 1981. It was advised to act quickly, pointing out that the material had only been sent on 29th April 1981 and had been in the Service's possession since 11th January 1980. The CESIS's response arrived on 9th June 1981, with some rough physical description regarding the Germans after having been presumably questioned by Italian officials in Beirut.

The necessity of going deeper on investigations brought the same Instructor Judge doc. Gentile to head himself to Lebanon between the 22nd and 26th of July 1981. Under Col. Stefano Giovannone's management, the expedition resulted in just a few unproductive interactions between the Instructor Judge and Col. Delfino, a SISMI official and certain personnel from the Phalanx headquarters¹³⁰. The second travel attempt took place on the 18th, 19th and 20th November, resulting in inconclusive research during which Col. Giovannone held French conversations with the deputy chief of the Lebanese police and two P.L.O. members.

On 23rd November 1981, Services' functionaries were received in the Doc. Gentile's office to hear the results of his mission in Beirut.

Several notes were delivered to them, among which requests for major information regarding German individuals backed to their country from Beirut, to make the same Gentile able to recognize himself the one who declared to possess the "backstage" information concerning the Bologna Bombing. In addition to this, documents with object the Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal activity and alleged Israelian trainings in Lebanon were transmitted too, but not attached to the document in our possession¹³¹.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹Raccolte speciali/Dire Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/ Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988]/ Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986]/ 59: Organizzazione lotta per la Palestina (OLP) (1980-1982)/5:Accertamenti su persone della "falange libanese" operanti in Italia (1981-1982)/1:Appunto sulle informazioni reperite dal giudice istruttore Gentile durante il suo viaggio a Beirut (1981 dic.12)

In the trial's document, judges concluded this as part of a manipulative operation, beginning from the fact that that information released from the Services in January 1981, was, actually, already of their knowledge since the first days of November 1980. It was explained how, by other means, it had been possible to learn, by the end of 1980, that several Italian neo-fascists had sought refuge in Lebanon, and how, in a matter of months, a fairly accurate map of the circumstances surrounding the neo-fascists who had received training in the Phalangist camps had been created. It is therefore unexpected to see the range of outcomes: although the Italian judges managed, if not easily, to determine the precise identity of the refugees in Lebanon, neither the Palestinians nor the SISMI, which also possessed a special observatory in Beirut, declared not to know this identity¹³².

The connection between the training programs of Italian extremists in Lebanon territory was then in-depth investigated looking at the potential linking individuals in the Italian territories. Indeed, on 4th August 1981, Doc. Aldo Gentile asked SISMI for urgent information regarding the character of Tawil Camille, with particular attention to his activity in Italy with other Lebanese citizens as part of a connected operativity between Italian right-wing extremists and Lebanese Phalange. Furthermore, the request concerned the frequency rate of training camps for Italian citizens since 1976 and information with regard to those who arrived at Beirut airport and from the Cipro port between 1st April 1980 and 15th July 1980¹³³.

Camille Tawil, representative of the Lebanese Resistance forces in Italy and the European Parliament, was heard on 3rd July 1981. He declared

¹³² Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

¹³³ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/2-50-6 Attività di natura eversiva e violenta da parte di partiti e movimenti politici estremisti /231: "Bologna 02/08/1980 Strage alla stazione ferroviaria" (1974-1986)/24/A: (1981) /9: AISE 2-50-6 f0231 cc0024 A d0484 B.pdf

his representation activity as active since 1979 after the unification of the Christian political forces. From the indicted one's words what is perceived is a role of ideological representation and militancy¹³⁴.

He highlights his connection with the Propaganda Office of Foreign Affairs of the Lebanese Resistance Force within the Kataeb, the social-democratic party, the major political party of that time, with a Christian majority. According to him, his activity did not imply management of military affairs and subsequently anything concerned with training camps and armaments. Nevertheless, there is explicit awareness of the possibility of Italian people entering the freed Lebanese territories with the aim of receiving practical information. Considering this, he underlines that the Lebanese Liberation Movement distances itself from a Nazi or Fascist movement aligned with Italian terrorism and that his presence on Italian soil was part of a propagandistic plan to disseminate the foundation of their cause face the *“military Sino-Palestine military occupation.”*

On 10th August 1981, the Ucigos's director Gaspare De Francisci advanced the requests to the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Bonn as an intermediary of the Italian Minister of the Interior Rognoni, who in turn had been asked the Instructor Advisor of the Court of Bologna.¹³⁵ The object dealt with collaboration from the Federal police authorities in the investigations regarding the movements of the German citizens in Lebanon engaged within the Hoffman group. The same document recalls an already known topic which surely interested past conversations between the two apparatus, since Francisci solicited a response to a past telegram on requested news back to 9th July 1981,

¹³⁴ Raccolte speciali /Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Min difesa/ arma carabinieri/ piazza della loggia 1974 /raggruppamento operativo speciale ROS/ ROS Reparto Anti Eversione [1993-2008]/ 1:Accertamenti su indagini delegate dall'autorità giudiziaria (1993-2008) /2727: trasmissione verbali (2001 mar.17)

¹³⁵ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980) / Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988] / Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986] /Richieste dei giudici istruttori: Giorgio Floridia, Aldo Gentile [1980-1983] / 11: contatti con il Ministero dell'Interno della Germania federale. Richiesta dell'autorità giudiziaria dell'8 luglio 1981 (1981) /11: Soggiorno in Libano dei membri del gruppo Hoffman (1981 set.12)

concerning two German citizens present in a paramilitary camp in Lebanon and arrested at the Frankfurt airport on the previous July 2nd. Then, a kind remark is made in relation to the positive meeting the Ministries of the Interior had on the occasion of the Trevi group on 5th June in the Hague.

German response arrived on 12th September 1981, providing information only for the two arrested Germans, Walter Ulrich Behle and Uwe Johannes Mainka, confirming they had reached the El-Fatah camp in South-Eastern Lebanon and that Behle confirmed his certainty about the Palestinian involvement in 1980 terrorist attacks, in Munich and Bologna. For what concerned intergovernmental cooperation on investigation over the Hoffman group's members, German authorities asked for an explicit formal letter rogatory.¹³⁶

Thus, investigations have been an infinite path of urgent requests with rough and inconclusive information as answers.

Documents in hand to assess the validity of this investigative trail likely need deeper research to understand whether it was part of a Palestinian propaganda campaign to discredit the Phalangist movement within the Lebanese borders and in front of the West.

The aversion between the two factions backs to when, following the 1967 Arab - Israeli War, the Palestinian movement faced and grew at the same time as the internal Lebanese conflict developed.¹³⁷

Even though Lebanon's issues date back to the eighteenth century, they first became apparent in its contemporary form in 1926 when the French enlarged Mount Lebanon to include the surrounding rural areas, resulting in Grand Liban, or the present republic of Lebanon.

¹³⁶ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980) / Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988] / Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986] /Richieste dei giudici istruttori: Giorgio Florida, Aldo Gentile [1980-1983] / 11: contatti con il Ministero dell'Interno della Germania federale. Richiesta dell'autorità giudiziaria dell'8 luglio 1981 (1981) /11: Soggiorno in Libano dei membri del gruppo Hoffman (1981 set.12)

¹³⁷ Farsoun, S. K., & Wingerter, R. B. (1981). The Palestinians in Lebanon. *SAIS Review*, 2(3), 93-106.

Consequently, the country's Muslim population experienced a significant influx of Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims and the proportions of the different sects changed such that the Sunnis were the largest after the Maronites, followed by the Shi'ites. Religion, sect and ethnic differences were fostered by France from the beginning of the mandatory administration, in opposition to Islamic and Arab nationalism. Subsequently, Israeli bombing of Southern Lebanon since the late 1960s has made the situation worse for the region's Shi'ite peasantry, especially since Palestinian resistance has resurfaced there. An estimated forty per cent of Lebanon's rural inhabitants, primarily Sunni and Shi'ite, had been forced from their homes and property by early 1975.¹³⁸

The political and economic crisis led the right-wing forces to become more powerful and support for European interests served as the foundation for the modern Lebanese Right, which is mostly centred in the Maronite population. The Phalangists were a youth group that was modelled after fascist European organisations and was founded as early as 1936 by pro-French Pierre Gemayel, until when during the late 1960s they proliferated in armed militias. The Phalange is fiercely opposed to Palestinians and pan-Arab (or pan-Syrian) nationalists, whose armed presence not only shifted the political balances in favour of but also served as a shield for Lebanese nationalist, leftist and Muslim political forces, later the Lebanese National Movement.¹³⁹

An additional estimated nine thousand trained reservists augment the alleged three thousand men that made up the Lebanese forces' standing army. The Phalange asserted that it had up to forty thousand soldiers in all, including irregulars and militias.

Under Bashir Jumayyil, firstly head of the Lebanese forces, and Phalangist militias' commander secondly, the Phalange developed into a

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

disciplined and powerful military force that ultimately surpassed the influence of the party's political branch.¹⁴⁰

According to the Phalangists, the cause had to be fought for all Christians in the Middle East and beyond, since Lebanon was not just for the Lebanese Christians and tactics implemented by them against Palestinian enemies implied work permit denial, arbitrary arrest, lack of representation, intimidation, no apparent reasonable killing of Palestinian people, and hatred through information manipulation.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that it consisted of an armed militia.

Fascism in Europe had a major influence on the development of the Phalange, at least concerning idealistic ideology, a readiness to resort to force, anticommunism, a large-scale party militia, an attractive organisational structure and an authoritarian leadership. Because the word "Phalange" derives from the ancient Greek word "phalanxes," which refers to a group of soldiers or police officials, it inherently connotes aggression. The fact that the party came before the militia and not the other way around indicates the militant mindset of the Phalange, which was founded as a paramilitary force¹⁴².

Since the 1970s confrontation between Phalangists and Palestinians increased intensely, and Bashir Gemayel saw the P.L.O. as having breached Lebanon's sovereignty, hence his primary goal at the start of the conflict was to forcefully drive them out¹⁴³.

The level of violence increased when Israel invaded the village of Kafar Shūbā, which is located in the Southeast of the country, on 12th - 14th January 1975. One thousand five hundred villagers had to leave their houses as a result of the attack. The Lebanese military's aversion was incited by the intervention of the Popular Front for the Liberation of

¹⁴⁰ Lebanon: The Lebanese Forces Militia, 17 November 1982, CIA FOIA – General CIA Records.

¹⁴¹ Hagopian, E. C. (1983). Redrawing the Map in the Middle East: Phalangist Lebanon and Zionist Israel. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 321-336.

¹⁴² Hutchinson, C. Can the Lebanese Phalange Be Considered a Fascist Movement?. *Undergraduate Journal of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations*, 11, 20-37.

¹⁴³ Ivi., p.28.

Palestine (P.F.L.P.), which launched an offensive on Israel. Indeed, armed conflicts outbreak between P.F.L.P. and the Phalangists and public discreditation was advanced by the Lebanese Phalangist Party against the P.L.O. urging it to restrain the influence of the anarchists within the organization. Subsequently, on 13th April 1975, a bus carrying Palestinians was leaving the Šatīlā camp in Beirut after they had attended a political demonstration sponsored by the PLO. The bus was travelling to Tal az-Zactar when it was attacked by opening a Phalangist fire in the Christian neighbourhood of Ayn ar-Rummāna, resulting in the deaths of twenty-eight P.L.O. members¹⁴⁴.

In the previous sections, throughout the Secret Services documents stating their results on the international relationships of Italian terrorist groups and concerning the specific right-wing terrorism area, there were no proofs of operative coordinated actions or projects. On the other hand, it can be acknowledged the fact that ideological propaganda was on course in a transnational way. As an additional example, the Lebanese citizen Takchi Nohib provided further witness to the Italian Police with reference to her own attempt to disseminate a sensibilization campaign on the question of the Christian Maronites in Lebanon, with the same Camille Tawil's aid. The woman's objective was also comprehensive of a meeting in the city of Rome with the Phalange's Chief Bashir Jumayyil and the Pope and numerous contacts with high-level prelates of the Roman Curia, with Cardinal Rossi specifically. Her words will be a supplementary assertion on the presence of right-wing young extremists in the Phalangists' military training camps¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴⁴ Michalák, T. (2013). The Palestinians and the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon (1975). *Asian and African Studies*, 22(1). P.117-120.

¹⁴⁵ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/ Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988]/ Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986]/Richieste dei giudici istruttori: Giorgio Florida, Aldo Gentile [1980-1983]/10:Richieste dell'autorità giudiziaria di Bologna del 4/8/1981 e 12/8/1981 (1981-1984)/5:LIBANO ESTREMISTI DI DESTRA (1981 ago.11 – 1981 set.25)

On the other hand, the head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Lebanese Resistance Forces, Naoum Farah, during a conference entitled “Lebanon: Resistance for Freedom”, rejects P.L.O.'s accusations recalling a thesis already expressed by the same Bashir Jumayyil, namely the assertion of Palestinian fighters carrying out trainings of black and red Italian terrorists in an antisemitic project.¹⁴⁶

A SID note dated 12th February 1975 details the outcome of a meeting with a certain "Moma". It states that the Palestinian extremists, led by George Habash of the left extremist wing (P.F.L.P.) of the P.L.O. and Abu Ayad, are undoubtedly in contact with the Irish and Italian extremist organisations, the IRA and the Red Brigades. Raggruppamento Centri CS provides a Marconigram to 'Department D' as follows: *A "Moma" source reports that today, in the evening, a secret meeting is scheduled in Beirut, or Damascus, with Palestinian guerrilla leaders belonging to the George Habash and Abu Ayad groups*. Given that the meeting's main focus would have been on the possibility of carrying out a loud gesture in Italy to secure the release of Red Brigades' members who were in custody at the time, it was not unlikely that Italian Red Brigades' members would have been in attendance, according to the source¹⁴⁷.

Throughout the aforementioned documents, it is easy to grasp one central theme: transnational terrorism was surely on its course and Italian national terrorist groups were engaged, at least ideologically, with armed groups abroad. The successive step should be picturing a conceivable propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the Phalangist wing within and outside the Lebanese national borders from the P.L.O. side. The linking element may be searched in Gen. Giovannone, head of the SISMI centre in Beirut, already officially classified as acquiring titles

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Relazione attività svolta – Commissione parlamentare di inchiesta sul rapimento e sulla morte di Aldo Moro. Doc XXIII n°29.
<https://documenti.camera.it/dati/leg17/lavori/documentiparlamentari/IndiceETesti/023/029/INTERO.pdf> last access: 1st May 2024.

of merit with the P.L.O. and a central character in the field of interactions braided into the Middle East chess. The SISMI official was already judicially recognized as engaged in the P.L.O.'s publicity stunt, which implicated the Phalangists in the slaughter in Bologna ¹⁴⁸. Additionally, the figure of the journalist Rita Porena is known for being affiliated with P.F.L.P.¹⁴⁹, if not even a strict collaborator of Italian Secret Services.

The Italian Deputy Chamber, during an urgent interpellation to the Presidency of the Council on 28th July 2005, outlined himself a connection with the Abu Anzeh Saleh situation, P.F.L.P. exponent, expelled from Italy on 2nd March 1974, at SID's request, due to his activity and his consideration as a threat to the Italian government. Then, a memo dated 14th November 1979 from the Security Services stated that he attempted to have the order revoked through PCI members and he subsequently attempted to return to Italy through several channels before being successful in doing so because of Colonel Stefano Giovannone, who served as a guarantor for him¹⁵⁰.

Both figures may have been a tactic and functional string able to translate the strategy into the press and judicial procedure and it should not be surprising if considering the ongoing dynamics part of Italian filo-Arabism politics at the time.

The following chapter will inquire into the potential implication of P.F.L.P., split from the P.L.O. in 1967, in the terrorist event of reference, evaluating it as a potential additional attempt of the Palestinian Resistance Forces to internationalise the regional demand of diplomatic recognition to a Palestinian state. Even though the P.F.L.P embodied the most violent section of the movement, it could be interesting to

¹⁴⁸ Sentenza della II Corte d'Assise di Bologna n. 4/88 nel procedimento penale n. 12/86 R.G.C.A., emessa in data 11 Luglio 1988.

¹⁴⁹ Archivio storico del Senato della Repubblica - Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Democratica, Collegamenti internazionali del terrorismo italiano - Dicembre 1981. MORO-VIII_02SB_020UA_020DO_01

¹⁵⁰ Camera dei Deputati, Atti di controllo e di indirizzo - XIV Legislatura, Seduta del 28 Luglio 2005. <https://leg14.camera.it/dati/leg14/lavori/stenografici/sed664/bintero.pdf> last access: 3rd June 2024.

consider two intertwining paths, carried out through a different method, the propagandistic one for the P.L.O. and the violent one for the P.F.L.P., similarly directed to implement a strategy in the name of the Palestinian regional cause, in the Lebanese territory and outside the broader Middle-Eastern region simultaneously.

Thus, the reasoning brings us to ask whether the Lebanese lead, judicially classified as a diverting path, could be considered a deliberate action framework, inside a formalised, but not institutionalised, dialogue between the Italian state, moreover through its Secret Service, and the Palestinian forces.

In both cases, we are in front of a new modernity that rose during the 1970s, where non-state actors were demonstrating their ability to subvert the international military-diplomatic equilibrium through a chain reaction leading to tangible international crises and making clear that nation-states were no longer the sole historical agents¹⁵¹.

¹⁵¹ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p. 54.

3. THE PALESTINIAN LEAD.

3.1. *Acknowledging the roots: Italian filo-Arabism.*

The repeated emphasis on the U.N.'s critical role in addressing the Middle East conflict and providing assistance to Palestinian refugees during the initial years of the centre-left administrations led by Moro persuaded Italians that their nation should have been involved in diplomatic initiatives to achieve peace in a region of strategic importance for their energy supplies, relations with other Mediterranean countries, and national security¹⁵². The Six Days War in June 1967 outlined a new territorial and political order that resulted in a broader and more organic discussion of the Palestinian problem. A sign of this evolution was the gradual substitution of the term "Palestinian people" for the phrase "Palestinian refugee problem" in international debates, partly due to the P.L.O.'s increased activity.

Aldo Moro took important steps in this process and as Prime Minister agreed with Amintore Fanfani, the former head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that Italy should have paid more attention to the Arab cause in the Middle East conflict, even though in a more vigilant way¹⁵³. In this strategy, tough reactions came from the governments' sustaining parties, especially the laic ones (PRI, PSDI), the right-wing DC, and the communist Party of Nenni, tending towards a filo-Israelian political road and with the fear that the strategy of equidistance could hide an anti-Israelian behaviour¹⁵⁴.

Moro during discussions concerning international political issues moved several times its focus towards the challenging Middle-Eastern

¹⁵² Garzia, I., Monzali, L., & Imperato, F. (Eds.). (2013). Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana dei popoli del Mediterraneo. Besa. p.233

¹⁵³ Ivi, p.236

¹⁵⁴ Ivi, p. 238

situation, which was stagnant in a deep crisis within the framework of international relations since the Suez Crisis of 1956 and then with the Baghdad Uprising of 1958. Between Giovanni Gronchi, the president of the Republic from 1955, Amintore Fanfani, the party secretary before Moro, who led the government and served as Foreign Minister from 1958 until February of the following year, and Enrico Mattei, the president of the National Hydrocarbons Authority, there existed, during this time, a kind of provisional agreement within the Christian Democratic Party. In terms of foreign policy, this brief unity of aim was predicated on openness towards the Middle East and the Arab world¹⁵⁵. The period of the Moro secretariat, which lasted from 1959 to the beginning of 1964, was essentially a five-year period of change for both Italian foreign policy and internal politics which from a domestic political perspective set the stage for the pivot that led to the opening to the left and upset the balances that had existed for around ten years. To better explain, the direction was a policy of comprehension and peace that ought to have demonstrated Italy's capacity and readiness to positively reintegrate into the framework of international relations¹⁵⁶. Aldo Moro has been characterised as a "democratic hero"¹⁵⁷ on three different levels: firstly, in Italy as the leader of a government characterised by communication and reconciliation between politically and culturally disparate forces; secondly, in Europe as the heir and embodiment of significant legal philosophical and social-cultural currents that supported the fight against fascism and Nazism; thirdly, on a global scale, as the preeminent interpreter of a policy with universal values like humanity, equality, freedom, dignity, and citizenship at its core¹⁵⁸. His capacities in bargaining and cooperation have been peculiar in the diplomatic relationships it concluded with

¹⁵⁵ Imperato, F., & Milano, R. (2018). *Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978)*, p.48

¹⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p. 50-51

¹⁵⁷ Alfonsi, A. (Ed.). (2013). *Aldo Moro nella dimensione internazionale. Dalla memoria alla storia*. FrancoAngeli, p.11

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Africa and the Mediterranean, intended to promote stability and overcome the effects of colonialism by means of a robust economic and political endeavour¹⁵⁹.

The 1960s and 1970s have been crucial in the enhancement of this foreign political line and despite 1969 Ghaddafi's rise in the Libyan context, strong commercial ties between Tripoli and Rome resulted in several Italian investments in the North African nation as well as significant Libyan investments in Italian companies, such as the 10% FIAT capital held by the Libyan state¹⁶⁰.

Rome's primary objective was Mediterranean stability from an economic and political perspective and in an effort to save the country from any terrorist threat, the Italian government purposefully overlooked the activities that Palestinian organisations carried out on Italian soil¹⁶¹. Such a stance caused some friction with U.S. officials, who saw the P.L.O. as a terrorist organisation. The Six-Day War in June 1967 was the first occasion that exposed Italy and the United States' conflicting interests: Italy reacted warily, not wanting to jeopardise its access to Middle Eastern petroleum or its relations with the Arab countries, while Washington expressed backing for Israel¹⁶².

Moreover, the support for the Arab-Palestinian cause was unavoidably a supranational matter, at the European level specifically. The Middle East served as the focal point of diplomatic efforts between many international entities following the Second World War, among which there was the European body, which showed interest in the subject on several grounds, including American and Atlantic interests.

It should be noted, however, that the various governments were determined to maintain their influence in the Middle East as strategic and impacting means in the developments of the Cold War, especially

¹⁵⁹ Ivi. p.16

¹⁶⁰ Varsori, Antonio (2016). Italy and the Mediterranean: Between Tradition and New Challenges. *ISPI*, p. 2

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (2020). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State support in the west, Middle East and Latin America*. Bloomsbury Publishing., p.156

the British and French ones, as well as Italy. The first two engaged more firmly in the attempt to be a significant player within the Arab-Israeli negotiation process, while Italy and Spain were initially more extraneous to this, but determined to enter the regional dynamics to ensure themselves the right economic relations' forging¹⁶³.

European Union as a whole drove its interest to the Palestinian cause only after the 1973 oil shock, since until then the Rome Treaties of 1957, which brought to the birth of the European Economic Community, referred to the management of certain extra-European governments but with no specific mentioning of the Middle-Eastern question. In fact, on 6th November 1973, the European Commission issued a statement that formally opened the door to dialogue with the Arab world. This statement demanded that Israel promptly leave the regions it had conquered in 1967, which was a step towards Arab ambitions¹⁶⁴. The cohabitation of the interests of the two counterparts took some time to assume an equilibrium, in which the Europeans were interested in maintaining the appropriate balance in the region to safeguard the regularity of energy supply flows, while the Arabs were interested in securing support for the Palestinian cause¹⁶⁵.

In this regard, the Community attempted to break away from the U.S. strategic alignment in the Middle East, which during those same years, under Kissinger's policy, was not focused on supporting the Palestinian faction. It is evident that neither the U.S. nor the U.S.S.R. were willing to tolerate these independent positions taken by the European nations, much less their meddling with the intricate systems of checks and balances inside the bipolar division's maximum designs¹⁶⁶.

It is worth mentioning that the lack of unity among the member states contributed to the fluctuations in European declarations. For example, while the governments of Germany and Great Britain backed the peace

¹⁶³ Pacifici, F. (2009). I socialisti italiani e la questione mediorientale (1948-1987), p.108-109.

¹⁶⁴ *Ivi*, p.111-113.

¹⁶⁵ *Ivi*, p.116

¹⁶⁶ *Ivi*, p.117

process, the Mediterranean countries, especially the French-Italian axis, were cautious about maintaining their ties with the Palestinians¹⁶⁷.

At the national level, the Committee for Solidarity with Palestinian People (CSPP) was established in Rome in March 1969 as a result of a combined initiative between the Italian Communist Party and the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP). The organisation's mission was to promote Palestinian resistance through public discussions, conferences, film screenings, the gathering of medical resources and exhibitions. This propagandistic support was diffused through the awareness that there was a distinguishing line between “the terrorism of the oppressor” and “terrorism of the oppressed”, being the second an option for the Palestinian people to raise voices for their political rights¹⁶⁸.

It occurred in 1969 and 1970, that the ICP (Italian Communist Party) initiated initial communication with the P.L.O., forming formal ties with Arafat's group. In addition to expressing its solidarity with the Palestinian people, the ICP also backed Israel's right to exist, eased the worries of the party's pro-Israel faction, and applied diplomatic pressure on the P.L.O. to give up armed conflict.

As a consequence, the P.L.O.'s contacts with the ICP strengthened and turned into a diplomatic partnership at the moment when the former rejected terrorist tactics and modified its position¹⁶⁹.

Nonetheless, the Palestinian Resistance must not be recognized in the P.L.O.'s activity and propaganda uniquely. On the contrary, it has never been homogenous as a whole. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation was founded as an umbrella organisation in 1964, gathering together different groups, among which Al-Fatah, the one headed by Yasser

¹⁶⁷ Ivi p. 118.

¹⁶⁸ Falciola, L. (2020). Transnational Relationships between the Italian Revolutionary Left and Palestinian Militants during the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22(4), 31-70., p.38-39.

¹⁶⁹ Ivi, p.39

Arafat¹⁷⁰. This one will then become the diplomatic face of the same organisation, in 1969 until he died in 2004¹⁷¹. As a result of its diverse membership, the P.L.O. has occasionally found it challenging to speak with a fully united voice. Consciously, the P.L.O. has continued to be a secular organisation that appeals to Palestinians who identified as Muslim, Christian, or nonreligious, and the organisation has never emphasised Islam as a crucial component of the group's values¹⁷².

In the aftermath of The Six Days War of 1967, where the Israeli Defence Force decisively defeated the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula, the P.L.O. and its component units opted to resort to terrorism to carry national Palestinian interests beyond their borders.

It should be highlighted that not all terrorist acts have been controlled by the P.L.O., although the P.L.O. has nearly always been held accountable or given credit for terrorist acts.

In fact, different was the action perpetrated by the P.F.L.P., established in 1967 by George Habash, a secular Palestinian revolutionary socialist organisation that combined Arab nationalism with Marxist–Leninist philosophy. It became well-known in the late 1960s and early 1970s for a series of violent assaults, including aircraft hijackings targeting both Israelis and non-Israelis¹⁷³. It is also significant to highlight that operative and strategic differentiation should be designed even within the P.F.L.P. itself, from which in 1968 came out the P.F.L.P.-General Command, a spin-off, headquartered in Syria, which participated in the Palestinian Resistance in South Lebanon throughout the 1970s and 1980s, launching several attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians.

The Palestinian resistance left its sign through the international strings it tried to create, but the P.F.L.P.'s "internationalism" was innate; the

¹⁷⁰ Lutz, B. (2019). *Global terrorism*. Routledge., p. 121

¹⁷¹ Das, S. P. (2022). *Economics of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Measures*. Springer Books., 105.

¹⁷² Lutz, B. (2019). *Global terrorism*. Routledge., p. 122

¹⁷³ Das, S. P. (2022). *Economics of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Measures*. Springer Books., p. 86

group operated overseas with terrorist operations and attempted to establish an active “publicity” throughout the world by selecting the most radical groups abroad and looking for backing for its planned actions¹⁷⁴.

The diplomatic solidity, composure and credibility of the Palestinian Resistance and its cause had to deal with diverse secessionist hugely violent groups. Among those, Abu Nidal was probably the most searched Palestinian terrorism by Israel and Egyptian secret services, hated in the same way as by the P.L.O. itself and condemned to death by Arafat for its intransigence. It was known by Western actors as a piece of the “triumvirate of international terrorism”, that comprehended Wadi Haddad, leader of the P.F.L.P., as successor to George Habash after his death, and Carlos the Jackal, responsible for the terrorist attack in Wien against the OPEC headquarter¹⁷⁵.

As we already mentioned, when Israeli athletes were kidnapped and held captive by the Black September organisation in 1972, the Munich Olympics served as a perfect platform for spreading awareness of the Palestinian cause. The hostage crisis in Munich dominated international headlines for days and everyone was aware of the West Germans' abortive attempt to free the hostages, which claimed the lives of all the Palestinians as well as the Israeli players and trainers.

While some of the actions were particularly huge, such as the simultaneous hijacking of four aeroplanes, with El Al being a frequent target, other actions were attacks against properties of Israeli targets in Western Europe and the United States¹⁷⁶. On 23rd July 1968, three Palestinian militants from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine took control of El Al flight 426, an Israeli national airline operating a Boeing 707 from London's Heathrow Airport to Tel Aviv.

¹⁷⁴ Falcicola, L. (2020). Transnational Relationships between the Italian Revolutionary Left and Palestinian Militants during the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22(4), 31-70., p.42.

¹⁷⁵ PLO terrorist grants rare interview on “Red Brigades”, 18th July 1978. CIA FOIA – General CIA Records.

¹⁷⁶ Lutz, B. (2019). *Global terrorism*. Routledge., p. 123.

The hijacking occurred shortly after the flight left Rome, where it was stopped. Subsequently, terrorists from the P.F.L.P. opened fire on El Al Flight 253, an Israeli national airline, on 26th December, that same year. The aircraft, still a Boeing 707 carrying 48 passengers, was travelling from Tel Aviv to New York with a layover in Paris¹⁷⁷.

The acts of Palestinian terrorism also signalled the start of Moro's career as Foreign Minister. As was previously mentioned, the P.F.L.P. was in charge of all Palestinian activities overseas in 1968–69, beginning on 18th February 1969, with the attack on an El Al aircraft at Zurich airport. A U.S. Trans World Airlines (TWA) aircraft that was travelling from Rome to Lydda was taken over in Damascus on 29th August, of that same year¹⁷⁸.

Every triumph drew in recruits from the Palestinians overseas as well as those residing in the camps for refugees and in addition to this, the Palestinian diaspora brought enhancement of financial assistance for the achievement of successful strikes. The financial inflow from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait eliminated any risk of Palestinian dissident factions within their borders and also silenced opposition from non-monarchical Arab governments like Egypt and Syria. Additionally, the coverage produced empathy for a people without land and brought the Palestinian issue to the attention of the world¹⁷⁹.

Subsequently, nearly all Western security services started to be on high alert following the 1972 Munich assault during the Olympic Games against Israeli athletes. Palestinian terrorism seemed uncontrollably violent and indiscriminate and Israeli retaliation came as a shock and European cities were supposed to be the scene of a protracted conflict. Italy was a member of the North Atlantic alliance, but it also had to deal with an intertwining of violent events, intrinsic to the confrontation

¹⁷⁷ Imperato, F., & Milano, R. (2018). *Fra diplomazia e petrolio. Aldo Moro e la politica italiana in Medio Oriente (1963-1978)*, p. 75-76.

¹⁷⁸ *Ivi*, p.77

¹⁷⁹ Lutz, B. (2019). *Global terrorism*. Routledge, p.123

between Mossad reprisal strikes on Italian territory and Palestinian targets¹⁸⁰.

16th October 1972 brought the first attack on Italian soil, with the execution of the Palestinian poet Abdel Zwaiter from the Mossad, after having been recorded as one of the primary organisers of Palestinian terrorism in Europe. Subsequently, four Arabs were detained on 25th November at Rome's Fiumicino airport while carrying a large number of armaments. They were taken to Cairo and released without any explanation a few hours later. Two Arabs were captured in Rome's centre on 17th June 1973, following the unintentional explosion of the bomb they were transporting inside their automobile, and promptly freed¹⁸¹.

Thus, as it can be assumed, Italy was not only dealing with the violence of a domestic entity but also with the violence of an international entity on domestic soil.

An additional key event was the attack on 17th December 1973 at the Fiumicino Airport by the hand of an Arab-Palestinian commando. The involved aeroplanes were an Air France (flight 142 to Beirut – Damasco, a Lufthansa (flight 303 to Monaco) and a Pan Am (flight 110 to Beirut – Teheran). Twenty-nine people died during the operation of fire against the Pan Am, while another commando took control of the Lufthansa aeroplane with Italian, French, Greek and German hostages on it. This one was diverted to Damasco, where negotiation unsuccessfully started with the French and Italian ambassadors in Syria. Then, it landed in Kuwait where hostages were freed, and terrorists took from local authorities. The operation had been organized by the hands of the ex-Al-Fatah official Abd Al-Ghafur, who since 1972 started to head a secessionist faction of the Resistance group, together with Abu Nidal.

¹⁸⁰Falciola, L. (2020). Transnational Relationships between the Italian Revolutionary Left and Palestinian Militants during the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22(4), 31-70.

¹⁸¹ Ivi, p. 46

The management of the incident ended with the extradition of the terrorist to the P.L.O. in Egypt, from where no more information on the evolution of the process could be collected¹⁸².

3.1.1. Lodo Moro: a silent but operative diplomatic channel.

It was exactly in those years that the Italian government realized the need to flank its foreign Mediterranean policy. Fearing a cycle of escalation, Italian counterterrorism services were unwilling and ill-prepared to confront the Palestinian threat. Then, the most sensible course of action turned out to be one of agreement and indulgence.

A silent but impacting and significantly operating pact seems to have characterized the work of high government profiles and secret services between 1972 and 1973. The agreement gave Palestinian terrorists unrestricted access to weapons and terrorists to Italian soil, as well as immunity, with the addition of the promise from the Italian government that it would support the Palestinian cause globally. The benefit of this cost was the consensus from Palestinians to refrain from attacking Italian targets and citizens¹⁸³. The “*Lodo Moro*” was a sequence of recurrences involving the unlawful and covert release of different Palestinian terrorists for grounds related to State security, with Colonel Giovannone serving as the protagonist. One of them, possibly the most significant, occurred on 31st October 1973, during the Yom Kippur War. Two of the five fedayeen who had been detained at Ostia on 5th September 1973, while they were planning an attack on an El Al Israel Airlines plane at the Fiumicino airport, were freed from prison and sent

¹⁸² Lomellini, V. (2022). *Il «Lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p. 41-44.

¹⁸³ Falciola, L. (2020). Transnational Relationships between the Italian Revolutionary Left and Palestinian Militants during the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22(4), 31-70., p.46

to Libya on the twin-engine Argo 16 aircraft, through to a SID operation ordered by Director Vito Miceli, a close figure to Moro¹⁸⁴.

Since its letters from Red Brigades' hideout, Aldo Moro made broad allusions to talks between the Italian government and Palestinian militants, which had involved the release of prisoners, without going into detail about the parameters of the arrangement, and as a consequence, he made an effort to persuade Italian authorities to coherently negotiate his release by drawing parallels with prior similar operations¹⁸⁵.

*"Dunque, non una, ma più volte, furono liberati con meccanismi vari palestinesi detenuti ed anche condannati, allo scopo di stornare gravi rappresaglie che sarebbero poi state poste in essere, se fosse continuata la detenzione. La minaccia era seria, credibile, anche se meno pienamente apprestata che nel caso nostro. Lo stato di necessità è in entrambi evidente. Uguale il vantaggio dei liberati, ovviamente trasferiti in Paesi Terzi."*¹⁸⁶.

These exact words belonging to the same Christian-Democratic political exponent were the essence of the motivational structure of the Lodo and its urge for Italian security. Indeed, the conclusion of the agreement was not univocal to the Italian secret services' entourage, but its management belongs to the governmental élite itself. It involved the Council Presidency, and the Ministry of the Interior, with Paolo Emilio Taviani in the first moment and Francesco Cossiga subsequently, the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs Mariano Rumor and as it seems, the Republic President Giovanni Leone. Then, it is noteworthy to outline

¹⁸⁴ Gotor, M. (2014). Il segreto di Stato che non c'è: il caso Moro. In Archivi memoria di tutti. Le fonti per la storia delle stragi e del terrorismo (pp. 45-55). Ministero dei Beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo. Direzione generale per gli archivi.

¹⁸⁵ Garzia, I., Monzali, L., & Imperato, F. (Eds.). (2013). *Aldo Moro, l'Italia repubblicana dei popoli del Mediterraneo*. Besa. p.273

¹⁸⁶ Ivi, p.274

that its continuum would have been guaranteed by Giulio Andreotti during its presidency in 1976¹⁸⁷.

The agreement interested predominantly the P.L.O, but also the P.F.L.P. According to Bassam Abu Sharif, a former P.F.L.P. spokesman, he personally arranged the deal in Rome and Beirut with two Italian intelligence officers. Although the terms and conditions of the agreement are not recorded, they were likely a replication of the previous one with the P.L.O. Abu Sharif clarified that before deploying weapons on Italian territory, the P.F.L.P. had been requested to notify Italian intelligence authorities. He added that he was frequently guarded and protected by Italian authorities, but he also acknowledged that Giovannone occasionally voiced dissatisfaction to him regarding the menial services (like passports and lodging) that the P.F.L.P. offered to Italian far-left terrorists¹⁸⁸.

In addition to this, it is important to note that the Lodo was active on more angles. On the one side, with the P.L.O. for what concerned a negotiated status quo equilibrium with the Arab-Palestinian terrorism; on the other side, with the Libyan state that in 1973 until at least 1976 was playing the role of the main interlocutor between Italy and Arab states that engaged in the international terrorism's sponsorship of the Palestinian extremist fringes escaping the control of the same P.L.O., such as Iraq and Syria. Italy had to pay this last benefit by being bling in front of the political assassination on the Italian soil of Libyan citizens opposing the Ghaddafi regime¹⁸⁹.

One significant distinction should not be overestimated in the potentiality of two different Lodo Moro, one with the P.F.L.P. and one with the P.L.O.¹⁹⁰ in which Col. Giovannone was both engaged in the

¹⁸⁷ Lomellini, V. (2022). *Il «Lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p.94

¹⁸⁸ Falciola, L. (2020). Transnational Relationships between the Italian Revolutionary Left and Palestinian Militants during the Cold War. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22(4), 31-70., p.47

¹⁸⁹ Lomellini, V. (2022). *Il «Lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa, p.93

¹⁹⁰ Ivi, p.162.

name of the maintenance of that place of equilibrium in the Middle-Eastern dynamics envisioned by Moro for the foreign policy of the Italian state. Indeed, a telegram dated 18th February 1978 was sent from the Italian Embassy in Beirut, probably from the same Giovannone to the *SISMI* Head of Department, communicating that P.F.L.P. representative and interlocutor George Habash advised him not to leave Beirut due to a likely imminent terrorist activity organized “*in Europa da rappresentanti organizzazione terroristica*”. The communication went on to specify that the Front was reassuring that protection would have been ensured to the Italian country, “*in attuazione confermati impegni miranti escludere nostro paese da piani terroristici.*” In conclusion, “*da non diramare ai servizi collegati OLP Roma.*”¹⁹¹

This warning was then pleased to be passed to the Ministry of the Interior and the linked Services with an additional telegram dated 20th February 1978, to give an alert on the imminence of a potential huge terrorist event on European soil¹⁹².

It appears that the Italian secret service maintained a channel of communication with the P.F.L.P. while attempting to keep it apart from its relationship with the P.L.O. One thing is for sure: by 1980, there was awareness of the fact that *SISMI* had occurring communication with Habash's P.F.L.P. Furthermore, this communication channel suggests positive ties between the P.F.L.P. and *SISMI*'s.¹⁹³ A further document was transmitted from *SISMI* to the General Carabinieri Command on 29th June 1978 Command, where foreign known environments seemed to have warned on the Fatah's project to

¹⁹¹ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Prodi (2008)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/Servizio per le informazioni e la sicurezza militare – *SISMI* (primo versamento)/Roma – 16/03/78. Sequestro on.Aldo Moro. Rivendicato da B.R. Fascicoli nn.1-71 [1978-1987] /66:Roma – 16/03/78. Sequestro on.Aldo Moro. Rivendicato da B.R. Fascicoli nn.66 da n.1582 a n.1612 (1980-1981)/11:Appunto:approfondimenti su quanto riportato in informativa da fonte occasionale estera circa vicenda Moro (manca All.1, tutti gli allegati sono copie) (1980 dic.10)/ 2: All.3: Messaggio: preallarme operazioni terroristiche in Europa (notizia veicolata da George Habbash, rappresentante FPLP) (1978 feb.18)

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (2020). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State support in the west, Middle East and Latin America*. Bloomsbury Publishing. P. 161-162

*“Liquidare definitivamente Abu Nidal et sua organizzazione ritenuta responsabile uccisione elementi OLP in Francia, Gran Bretagna et Kuwait. [...] Non escludesi che Abu Nidal potrebbe intanto attentare at rappresentanti et sedi OLP in Italia analogamente at quanto recentemente tentato in Germania.”*¹⁹⁴

This security strategy was endorsed not only by Italy but there are historiographic elements able to prove that other European countries adopted their own “Lodo Moro” with the Palestinian resistance as part of their counterterrorism policy to the internationalization of the Palestinian cause, such as Switzerland, Austria, France and the Federal German Republic. It is not possible to confirm the existence of those agreements as such, but at least of a submissive attitude towards the terrorists, in the form of a potential “non-aggression pact” from Palestinians as a benefit for FRG and Lufthansa financial aid and of a “politique de sanctuarisation” with France, viewed as a preferential interlocutor within the more moderate Palestinian Resistance, being this the cause of a targeting campaign of the same from the more extremist fringes¹⁹⁵.

The scheme of those agreements was based on the assurance of having the countries secured, at any cost. They entailed specific recurring solutions, convenient for both parties: the Palestinians on the one side and the Western countries on the other, Italy in this case specifically. To make use of a punctual case of reference we should come back to the episode of September 1973 when five Arab terrorists were arrested for the detention of Soviet-produced missiles-launching with an intertwined

¹⁹⁴ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Prodi (2008) /Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/ Servizio per le informazioni e la sicurezza militare – SISMI (secondo versamento) /Divisione CS (controllo e sicurezza) [1973-1998] / 18: Informazioni e segnalazioni su atti terroristici all'estero (1975-2005)/ 38: Messaggio su organizzazione mediorientale (Abu Nidal) ritenuta responsabile di uccisione elementi OLP in Francia e su probabili azioni contro sedi OLP in Italia (1978 giu.29)

¹⁹⁵Ivi, p.52-55

mission between SID and Mossad which led to the uncovering of the failed operation of bringing down an Israeli aeroplane in the Fiumicino airport. Among the five terrorists there was the Libyan Atef Bseiso, figure alongside Salah Khalaf, one of the main followers of the strategy of international exportation of terrorism within the Fatah organization. The Palestinian organization Black September advanced retorsion threats in case the detention of the five terrorists would have not ended on the 25th of September. Several meetings between Italian diplomatic figures such as the counsellor Tallarigo and the second counsellor Di Stefano occurred with the P.L.O. spokesperson in Egypt Said Wasfi Kamal, together with the postponement of the ultimatum.

A missive to the Presidency of the Council of Ministries, concerning the documentation examination of the Diplomatic Counsellor Office dated 24th May 1997 in the context of the judicial proceeding in the Ustica Massacre, cites a note at point “G - fascicolo OLP”, stating:

“Appunto del 26 ottobre 1974 trasmesso con biglietto a firma del capo del SISMI, Ammiraglio Martini, concernente una riunione tenutasi il 25 ottobre 1973 presso il MAE allo scopo di valutare una richiesta pervenuta dal PLO relativa alla liberazione dei detenuti arabi arrestati per i fatti di Ostia e Roma in cambio dell’impegno che nessuna azione dei feddayn si sarebbe ripetuta in Italia.”¹⁹⁶

The episode ended with Kamal reassuring Italy of being secured from future violent terrorist attacks immediately after the five Arabs would have been delivered to the P.L.O. directly to be then processed by the same¹⁹⁷. Two of them, detained in the prison of Viterbo, were freed in

¹⁹⁶ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/ Ustica (1980) / Procedimento 527/84 A [1976-1999] / Deleghie del giudice istruttore Rosario Priore, citazioni [1990-1997] / “Posta ufficio”. Deleghie e decreti del giudice istruttore Rosario Priore [1992-1997] / 997: Atti 12665. Esame della documentazione agli atti dell’Ufficio del Consigliere diplomatico della Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri (1997)

¹⁹⁷ Lomellini, V. (2022). *Il «lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa p.35-37

provisional liberty without an apparent motivation, causing the U.S. embassy's negative reaction in Rome. There was consensus between Moro and Gen. Miceli that releasing the detainees to Ghaddafi was the safest measure and this practice was common to European states in order to avoid the risk of facing retorsion from the terrorists' companions¹⁹⁸.

To sum up, the tendency of the Italian state towards a Middle Eastern policy has had a decisive impact, with operational dynamics directly within its domestic soil. Security was the reason for diplomatic approaches, more or less explicit, more or less secret, through an invisible framework of policies that must necessarily be taken into account when investigating events such as the Bologna massacre, in a historical period in which the Strategy of Tension was not the only one to affect Italian safety.

3.2. The investigative alternative to the black trail.

On 2nd August 1980, a Marconigram to the Centri Raggruppamenti C.S. of Rome arrives requesting activation of the sources with access to the Arab terrorism environment, to acquire all possible information concerning the explosion in Bologna station¹⁹⁹.

Nevertheless, in the paragraphs mentioned above, we have ascertained that the public opinion was appeased, if not relieved, that the responsibility for the Bologna bombing had been found within the environment of the right-wing subversion and that this judicial conclusion was found coherent and perfectly fitting the Italian political context of those years. Nonetheless, we have also analysed how a

¹⁹⁸ Ivi, p.37-38

¹⁹⁹ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/ 1-5 Sabotaggi – Attentati/453:”Strage alla stazione ferroviaria di Bologna – 2 agosto 1980” (1980-1994) /4:AISE RGPT 1-5 f0453 c0001 d0001bis o.pdf

parallel dynamism in the international landscape intertwined with domestic events and the understanding and perception of the same.

The first attempt to advance the investigative root of a judicial hypothesis occurred with law n.9 of 7th May 2002, when the Mitrokhin Commission was established. General Alberico Lo Faso, the director of SISMI Division I, received thirty reports and a letter sent by the British Service on 30th March 1995, from the MI6 officer in Rome, mentioning “top secret”. Subsequently, 261 reports will be received by the SISMI between 30th March 1995 and 18th May 1999, containing information related to events from 1917 and 1988²⁰⁰. Those reports were the result of a special contact that on 24th March 1992 Vasilij Mitrokhin, a retired Russian who had served as the archivist for the first KGB directorate-general, undertook with the employees of the British embassy in a Baltic Republic. The potential defector then started working with the British authorities, who set up Mitrokhin's and his family's deportation to the U.K. in October and November of 1992. Vasilij Mitrokhin delivered ten envelopes filled with more than two thousand files of material that had been collected from the KGB archives, much of it about KGB operations in the U.S²⁰¹.

The Mitrokhin Commission centred its work on the Palestinian investigative trail of the Bologna Bombing around specific points: the identification of Thomas Kram, a German Revolutionary Cells member, in a guest list at a hotel in Bologna on 1st August 1980. Based on this, a scenario of the massacre's motivations and execution differed greatly from the one determined by the judiciary. This was achieved by stressing the existence of a relationship between Kram, Carlos the Jackal and the KGB, by putting forth a "Palestinian lead," which

²⁰⁰Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta presentato dai commissari del centrosinistra, 23 Marzo 2006, p.37. https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/mitrokhindoc.377.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁰¹ Ivi, p.10-11

suggests that the massacre might have been executed in retaliation for Abu Anzeh Saleh's arrest, which had occurred a few months prior²⁰².

On the Parliamentary session of the immediate 4th August 1980, MSI Deputy Michele Marchio requested the President of the Council Francesco Cossiga of investigations over a Jordan student arrested together with Pifano (*Autonomia Operaia's* member) and at the time resident in the city of Bologna, “*where there is a terrorist organisation of Jordanian citizens, who pretend to be eager students.*”²⁰³ He also requested explanation of the country's fabrication of the bombs adopted on the attack and the presumption of terrorist training in Libyan camps from Ghaddafi. In a few words, the focus was the desire to receive more information and content regarding those moving the strings of domestic terrorism²⁰⁴.

Report of the “SEPARAT Group and the context of the 2nd of August 1980 attack”, drafted by the magistrate Lorenzo Matassa and the journalist Gian Paolo Pelizzaro as consultants for the Mitrokhin Commission, was also advanced by the defence in the event of the judicial process against Luigi Ciavardini. As explained in the same, on the night between 7th and 8th November 1979, three members of the *Autonomia Operaia* group, namely Daniele Pifano, Giorgio Baumgartner and Giuseppe Luciano Nieri, are searched in their Peugeot autovector for transporting Soviet-fabricated Strela-2 ground-to-air missiles and arrested on the morning of 8th November²⁰⁵. In the same proceeding, it seems nevertheless to be an incongruence. On November 13th, Abu Anzeh Saleh, Jordan student affiliated with the P.F.L.P., was arrested in his residence in Bologna for having been the guarantor for the delivery of the missiles to the Lebanese-flagged merchant ship “Sidon”. The strange element is that the proceeding names the wrong Palestinian

²⁰² Ivi, p.6

²⁰³ 159th seduta pubblica del Senato della Repubblica, 4 agosto 1980. <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/332314.pdf>, last access: 29th May 2024. P.8486

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Processo a Giorgio Cavallini, Corte d'Assise di Bologna, sentenza n°1/2020, R.G. n°19072/, 9 Gennaio 2020, p.1776- 1778

militant, namely Abu Ayad, also known as Saleh Khalaf, P.L.O. member who was among the protagonists of the Lebanese trail declared as diversion within the judicial process of the Bologna Bombing:

*“A questi arresti [dei membri di Autonomia Operaia] seguì, a Bologna, il 13 novembre successivo quello dell’Abu Ayad (alias Saleh Khalaf e anche alias Abu Iyad) sedicente collaboratore di Gianni Chon, titolare di una ditta di spedizioni di capi di abbigliamento. Abu Ayad alias Saleh Khalaf, militante del FPLP, sarebbe stato il garante per la consegna dei missili, destinati alla resistenza palestinese, alla nave mercantile “Sidon” battente bandiera libanese.”*²⁰⁶

The right name will appear just afterwards:

*“L’11 luglio 1980, il direttore dell’UCIGOS, Gaspare De Francisci, trasmetteva una nota riservata in busta chiusa al direttore del SISDE, Gen.Grassini, nella quale si comunicava che la condanna di Abu Anzeh Saleh aveva determinato reazioni assai negative nell’ambiente dell’FPLP e che non veniva escluso che la stessa organizzazione potesse tentare un’azione ritorsiva nei confronti dell’Italia, ovvero altra azione, diretta in ogni modo alla liberazione del giordano.”*²⁰⁷

The erroneous element will be repeated in the following section, to report the exact words of the trial:

“Sulla base di ciò, la Relazione evidenzia quindi il timore che i Servizi nutrivano, nel mese di luglio 1980, di ritorsioni nei confronti dello Stato italiano da parte del FPLP, anche in considerazione della sorte di Abu Ayad alias Saleh Khalaf, per il quale si poteva prospettare una lunga custodia cautelare e un eventuale inasprimento della condanna, alla luce

²⁰⁶ Ivi, p.1778.

²⁰⁷ Ivi, p.1780.

*delle severe e ragionevoli argomentazioni in punto di diritto che la pubblica accusa aveva svolto nel proprio atto di appello.*²⁰⁸.

It is defended in other circumstances that there was a preoccupation for Palestinian retorsion as part of the Lodo Moro status quo between the Italian state and the Palestinian Resistance, but it was explicitly linked to the arrest against Abu Anzeh Saleh, not Abu Ayad²⁰⁹. This is a quite relevant distinction since the second one has been indicated as one of “Arafat’s chief deputies and the head of the PLO security”²¹⁰, “leader of the radical faction within Fatah”, but still different from the P.F.L.P., of which Abu Anzeh Saleh was a representative in Italy.

It is not blameable the difficulty of keeping ahead of all the personalities object of notes with Arab names and pseudonyms, but the detail probably worthed the mention, at least in understanding the easiness of generalisation caused by the intertwining of different foreign dynamics.

In any case, the 17th November 1979 was the beginning of the trial against the indicted with accusations of owning, introducing and transporting weapons of war into the country. On 10th January 1980, the defence attorney exposed a letter from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, written on the previous 2nd January and traduced from English by the Carabinieri. In this letter, George Habash declared the group’s ownership of the transported missiles, adding that they were aimed only for transporting and even not usable. The letter confirmed the contacts between the P.F.L.P. and Baumgartner who, as a doctor, was active in the medical assistance for Palestinian people and on that occasion was asked from the Front to help with the transportation of some damaged material from the Roma-Pescara highway to Ortona, in Chieti. In the same letter, distance is taken from

²⁰⁸ Ivi, p.1781.

²⁰⁹ Raccolte speciali / Draghi consultazione / Renzi / Presidenza del Consiglio / AISE / Versamento 19.04.2023 / -- VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI / f0003 / AISE TRANCHE SISMI OLP – 163 ATTI - OBL. – VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI f0003 d0113.pdf

²¹⁰ Terrorism Review, 9 December 1982, CIA FOIA – General CIA Records.

Nieri and Pifano, known for being affiliated to the same group of Baumgartner, but not to the activities of the Front. Concerning Abu Anzeh Saleh, he was neglected as the one in charge of receiving the missiles, since it should have been the task of a Palestinian, said to be *“already known from the Italian people for having organized collections of medicines for the Palestinian population”*²¹¹.

On 25th January 1980, each indicted was condemned to seven years of reclusion for detention and transportation of war weapons into Italian territory, with absolution from clandestine introduction for lack of proof. At the Appeal Court of Aquila, on 2nd July 1980, the appeal process reduced the convictions from seven to five years of prison²¹².

From the trial against Saleh, Pifano, Baumgartner and Nieri a fil rouge to the tragic occurrence unfolds throughout the Lodo Moro.

The prosecution against Cavallini argues the mentioned agreement as non-treatable and, more than anything, not concretely able to be demonstrated from a technical-judiciary perspective since the references made by Aldo Moro’s letters to an alleged recurring resolute modus operandi seem to be related to “just factual precedents of hostages exchange [...] to avoid retaliations from Palestinian terrorists”, and since the letters are envisaged to ask for Colonel Giovannone to negotiate with Red Brigades to obtain his freedom, it is taken for granted that *“he makes no illusions to then-crystallised projections for the future.”*²¹³ Thus, the lack of a concretely written agreement made the Lodo Moro supposedly non-existent. As it has been possible to be outlined in the previous chapter, there may have been State secrecy handled not only by the Secret Service’s hands but also by high-level political personalities, if we look, for example, at the missive to the Presidency of the Council of Ministries, concerning the documentation

²¹¹ Processo a Giorgio Cavallini, Corte d’Assise di Bologna, sentenza n°1/2020, R.G. n°19072/, 9 Gennaio 2020, p. 1779-1780

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ivi, p.1786

examination of the Diplomatic Counsellor Office dated 24th May 1997. The forthcoming hypothesis to be explored centres on comprehending the extent to which a potential sequence of operations on 2nd August 1980 corresponded with the activities, terrorist strategies and objectives of individuals who were notably active on the international stage, particularly in Europe. Additionally, the investigation aims to scrutinise the focus of inquiries into these matters and the information possessed by law enforcement and intelligence agencies and to ascertain whether a threat was perceived differently from the narrative presented and upheld in the public domain.

3.2.1. Carlos the Jackal: Group's international operativity.

The attention to the Palestinian lead of investigation is driven across specific personalities: Thomas Kram, Margot Christa Froelich, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez (Carlos the Jackal) and more contextually, Magdalena Kopp (also known as Lily) and Joannes Weinrich (also known as Steve). To give context, documents from SISMI and SISDE, together with those received as results of rogatory from Romania, Hungary, Germany, Great Britain and France helped to reconstruct the operativity of the Carlos Group.²¹⁴

The eldest of three sons born into a prosperous civilian family, Carlos, often known as the Jackal, was born on 12th October 1949 in Caracas, Venezuela. Sanchez started to study chemistry in 1969 at the University of Lumumba in Moscow, but he did not appreciate the university's rigid rules and as he began to engage with the political environment, he

²¹⁴ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta presentato di commissari del centrosinistra, 23 Marzo 2006, p. 263. https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/mitrokhindoc.377.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

developed a keen interest in the narratives shared by his Palestinian classmates concerning their struggle against Israel. Rejected from Lumumba for his frequently violent behaviour, he left for Beirut in 1971 to join the far-left terrorist group the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P.) in Israel. There, he volunteered to fight as a freedom fighter against systems that supported and encouraged world Jewry²¹⁵, by taking part in the activities of Haddad's group, a particularly politicized military body, with a special tendency to internationalisation of the Palestinian cause. Indeed, the Carlos Group had birth aside the crumbling of the Haddad group, between 1976 and 1978. It formed from some ex-Haddad group members, others from the German Revolutionary cells (Revolutionäre Zellen, RZ), some ex-RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion) affiliated and pieces of other extremist groups, such as Switzerland extremists²¹⁶.

With his activity, he attracted the attention of several national securities, above all in Eastern Europe. The Czechoslovak and East German secret police recorded conversations in which they stated that the primary goal of the East European security services was to obtain tactical and technical details regarding the visits Carlos and his companions made within the borders of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, including the passport documents and names they used, the nature of their interactions with the staff of the South Yemeni and Iraqi embassies in Prague, correspondence with foreign terrorist groups, and other details²¹⁷.

²¹⁵ Beke, J. (2023). The system and forms of cooperation between the Hungarian and East German state security services in the Carlos case. *BELÜGYI SZEMLE: A BELÜGYMINISZTERIUM SZAKMAI TUDOMÁNYOS FOLYÓIRATA (2010-)*, 71(1. Ksz), 23-35

²¹⁶ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta presentato dai commissari del centrosinistra, 23 Marzo 2006., p.274 https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/mitrokhindoc.377.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²¹⁷ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (Eds.). (2022). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State Support in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Sphere of Influence*. Bloomsbury Publishing. p.115

Sanchez at some point has been described as a mercenary of those states that, as Roland Jacquard argued in the review <<Le Point>>, are always redundant on their appearance when investigating the backstage of international terrorist attacks. We are talking of Libya, South Yemen and Syria. According to the journalist, he could also be pictured as a sort of “consultant”, surely a trainer for young terrorists, above all those belonging to FARL (Fractions Armées Révolutionnaires Libanaises) and the most extremist and rebel factions of the P.F.L.²¹⁸. In any case, Carlos represented one of the biggest threats to international security, in making concrete the internationalisation of Middle-Eastern terrorism, reaching a sort of “global leadership” in the sector²¹⁹.

Thomas Kram, central in the Palestinian route of the Bologna Bombing, is described as the “number three” of SEPARAT, namely Carlos’ group. Right after the “number two”, Johannes Weinrich, member of Revolutionäre Zellen, right hand and official substitute of the same Ilich Ramirez Sanchez. Weinrich is among the principal mediators for the international relationship of the Group with European terrorist organisations, such as the Spanish ETA, the Greek ELA, the Swiss organisation of Illegal Work, a group born inside Potere Operaio, the German Revolutionary Cells and the Italian Red Brigades.²²⁰

Generally, he had been assigned to oversee the group's operations in the Western environment, he was in charge of organising travel and

²¹⁸ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/2-53 Notizie concernenti atti terroristici / 70:”Terrorismo internazionale” (1974-1986) /50: (1985) /6: AISE 2-53 f0070 c0050 d1258 A.pdf

²¹⁹ Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l’attività d’intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull’attività svolta e sui risultati dell’inchiesta presentato dai commissari del centrosinistra, 23 Marzo 2006., p.276 https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/mitrokhindoc.377.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²²⁰ “Il giallo della strage di Bologna. Ecco le prove della pista araba.”, Il Giornale, 22 ottobre 2007. Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero della Difesa/Arma dei Carabinieri/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/Comando Generale/Ufficio Criminalità organizzata [1980-2008]/1: Atti dell’Ufficio Criminalità organizzata del Comando generale dei Carabinieri [1980-2008] / 30: Articolo di Stampa “Il giallo della strage di Bologna. Ecco le prove della pista araba. (2007 ott.23)

missions, managing some portion of the finances and providing and managing both authentic and fake documentation. Additionally, he took care of the relationships with representatives of the many intelligence services that the Carlos group dealt with, including the intelligence services in Yemen, Syria, Libya and other Arab nations and, in particular, with the intelligence apparatus of the former GDR²²¹.

The effective line to draw here is the international cadre of SEPARAT's group, to understand whether there is the potentiality for interest in carrying out outrageous attacks such as the Bologna Massacre.

Two telegrams from the Italian Embassy in Cairo to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Rome dated 4th ²²² and 6th May ²²³ 1978 had for object the presence of an operable and well-equipped terrorist base in Libya, identifiable through the name "*Ain Al Baida*", near Tripoli, assigned by Ghaddafi to Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, where he would have conducted military training and ideological preparation to international terrorists, among which members of Bader Meinhof Gang and Red Brigades, which may have been entrusted to officials belonging to the Communist Bloc under Czechoslovakian supervision. Carlos himself declared that R.Z. chief Weinrich has "*surely contacts with Red Brigades and First Line*" and admitted the presence in 1976 in Rome of a suitcase with the name of a Responsible for Yemen Culture on it, containing five Thomson Tommy guns, some explosive and handguns destined to be used by R.Z.

²²¹ Allegato A della Seduta n. 98 del 25/1/2007 <https://documenti.camera.it/dati/leg15/lavori/stenografici/sed098/aurg08.htm> last consultation on: 30rd May 2024

²²² Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Prodi (2008)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/Servizio per le informazioni e la sicurezza militare – SISMI (primo versamento)/ Caso Moro. Fascicoli nn.91-97 [1978-1984] / 3: Caso Moro. Fascicolo n.93 da n.195 a n.305 (1978-1979) / 21: Telegrammi (1978) /4: Telegramma: noto terrorista Carlos. Base terroristica in Libia (1978 mag.04)

²²³ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Prodi (2008)/Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri/ Agenzia informazioni e sicurezza esterna – AISE/Servizio per le informazioni e la sicurezza militare – SISMI (primo versamento)/ Caso Moro. Fascicoli nn.91-97 [1978-1984] / 3: Caso Moro. Fascicolo n.93 da n.195 a n.305 (1978-1979) /38: Appunto su presunte basi terroristiche in Libia (1978) /4: Telegramma: noto terrorista "Carlos". Base terroristica in Libia (1978 mag.06)

and given by the P.F.L.P.²²⁴ The document containing this information, a reserved note to the Police Chief on 13th May 2009, was notifying the Central Direction of the Prevention Police regarding the questioning of Carlos, conducted by the Public Prosecutor Enrico Cieri and Vice Questor Antonio Marotta, in the context of the rogatory requested to the judiciary French authorities for the investigations on the Bologna Massacre of 2nd August 1980. The note explained that the aim of the judiciary assistance was reconstructing the operativity picture of German and Palestinian terrorist groups in Italy during the years 1970s and 1980s and the role of Carlos was essential to analyse due to his central role in most of the Palestinian terrorist attacks happened in Europe soil in those years and also for his bond with the Warsaw Pact. In any case, Carlos' words will not bring further advancement in the investigations since he neglected any personal relationship with Thomas Kram and declared that concerning that fact, he had acknowledgement of its occurrence through a report from the R.Z. which told about the presence of a "companion" during the massacre.

In the same document, there is then a precise and punctual summarising of the focal points of the alleged investigative route of the involvement of the Carlos Group as the operative hand of the Palestinian Resistance in the Bologna Bombing: on January 1980 Abu Anzeh Saleh was arrested by Italian authorities in the event of the Ortona missiles; the Front advances retaliatory threats for the condemnation of the member and after refusal of the authorities to cede to their requests, ask for the Carlos terrorist network to strike Italy. Carlos would ask Thomas Kram to operationally conduct the attack, due to his life experience in Italy and his ability in explosives and weapons. Indeed, there is a recording of his presence in Bologna on the

²²⁴ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/Procedimenti penali (CT 2703/77-2250/88) bis [1995-2005] /5:Gruppi terroristici tedeschi e palestinesi. Appunti e note informative (2006-2009)/3:Ramirez Sanchez Ilich 'Carlos', Thomas Kram: operatività gruppi terroristici tedeschi e palestinesi (2009 mag.13)

day of the tragic event and the 2nd of August 1980 is the exact anniversary of the beginning of the trial against Abu Anzeh Saleh and Bologna was his residency city²²⁵.

The international operativity of Carlos has been deeply analysed. Even though the SISMI and SISDE reports (1981) on the global links of Italian terrorist organisations, that were exposed in the first chapter, did not include a focus on the operativity of groups such as Revolutionary Cells or SEPARAT, they covered the object of investigations undertaken within the European Security Services Club²²⁶. Above all, it is firmly argued that Carlos was active in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1970s and 1980s. East Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Warsaw and Sofia, the capital cities of the former Soviet Union, allowed Carlos and his group to conduct terrorist acts and sustain a vast network of extremists²²⁷. The Federal Ministry of the Interior (Federální ministerstvo vnitra, FMV) has allowed for the gradual release of files from the former state security, which were previously unavailable for research on topics like Carlos and his entourage's visits to the CSSR, particularly to Prague.

In May 1978 he was recorded inside copy of a warrant for the arrest of perpetrators of terrorist acts of violence issued by the West German Federal Criminal Police Office, provided by Polish authorities to the Czechoslovak Directorate for Counter-Intelligence in the Fight Against the External Enemy. He was ranked in the 28th place. On 14th May 1979, the Directorate for Passports and Visas FMV placed Carlos on the Index of Undesirable Persons (Index nežádoucích osob, INO) for ten years, based on a proposal by the Fifth Department of the II Directorate FMV. Despite this, he returned to Prague on 4th August 1979, that time as a Yemeni ambassador named "Adil Fawaz Ahmed Kassim." In that

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Lomellini, V. (2023). *La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa. P. 47

²²⁷ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (Eds.). (2022). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State Support in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Sphere of Influence*. Bloomsbury Publishing.p.107

case, an agent of the 5th Department IV Directorate SNB codenamed 'Petr', a receptionist at the Hotel Intercontinental, made it possible to record information from his journey there. Through him, the police could record conversations with two officers of the Romanian secret police Securitate claiming to be Romanian diplomats, Ioa Dobrescu and Sergiu Nitescu, from where it will be heard that members of Carlos' terrorist organisation were being offered training in Romania²²⁸.

On 21st December 1975 ministries of the OPEC countries were reunited at the Wien headquarters, on the occasion of the Iranian proposal to enhance petroleum's price at fifteen dollars per barrel. An international terrorist commando, headed by Ilich Sanchez took sixty hostages, in cooperation with the Revolutionäre Zellen-affiliated Hans Joachim Klein and Gabriele Krocher-Tiedemann. It will be defined as *the "most spectacular terrorist event of the decade"*²²⁹.

Carlos, then, attracted international attention for his terrorist abilities, being part of an alert of the presence of an "*Internazionale terrorista*", bringing together German and Palestinian terrorism, the cooperation between the Palestinian and Japanese Red Army and Carlos' operativity.

Since 1979 Carlos has taken advantage of contacts from the GDR, but from Hungarian authorities too, and presence and sustain from the Warsaw Pact states seemed to be a constant behind his organisation²³⁰. His connections with the KGB started between 1968 and 1970, together with his affiliation to P.F.L.P., under the control of the Cuban secret service by order of the Soviets²³¹. It is hypothesised in a STASI document that Carlos chose to entirely strip the Revolutionary Cells of

²²⁸ Ivi, p.110-111

²²⁹ Lomellini, V. (2023). La diplomazia del terrore: 1967-1989. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa., p.42-43

²³⁰ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta, 15 Marzo 2006, p.274
https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/documentoconclusivo.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²³¹ Ivi, p.275

their autonomy in order to force them to operate exclusively for his organisation. Partially responsible for this is the organization's gradual hiring of whole "cells" led by Boehme, Weinrich, Kram, Albartus, Kopp, and Frohlich²³².

Italian interest in Carlos started in October 2003, when the *Commissione su Terrorismo e Stragi* collected acts transmitted by the French investigating judge Bruguière. To create the operativity picture of the Carlos organization, it has been made use of several documents belonging to the MFS (an acronym for Ministerium für Staatssicherheit) of the German Democratic Republic. Regarding the MFS, this ministerial apparatus comprised several state security services of the former GDR, such as the WA (Hauptverwaltung für Aufklärung) for foreign affairs and the STASI, which was assigned to internal security. This last one's XXII/8 (Abteilung) section was dedicated to investigating the terrorist group around Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, defined through the code name "SEPARAT" and recognized globally through different denominations, such as World or International Revolutionary Organisation or Organisation of International Revolutionaries - ORI, World Revolution, Carlos Group²³³.

Hungarian services also conducted an investigation campaign behind Carlos, whom they denominated as C-79 (C for Carlos and 79 for the beginning of the relationship with the national authorities). Beginning in the summer of 1979, it seems that the Group moved into one or more Budapest apartments, making connections there and operating from Hungarian territory. For each member of the C79 group, the Hungarian service had written down sheets on which it had been recorded all the information, including, for instance, the aliases used occasionally and

²³² Ivi, p.273

²³³ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta, 15 Marzo 2006.p.275-276
https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/documentoconclusivo.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

the time they were taken, the movements made within Hungary along with a description of the places of origin and destination, an overview of the activities completed, and the part the Carlos network played²³⁴.

According to a report prepared by the Hungarian secret service on 8th January 1980, the same discovered handwritten papers indicating that the Carlos group had asked Major Abu Shreah Solem, a Libyan intelligence official, to obtain American weaponry from the Italian black market. The Mitrokhin Commission subsequently treats the firm relationship between the group of Ilich Ramirez Sanchez and the Red Brigades, where the two linking personalities seemed to be Johannes Weinrich on the side, and Giorgio Bellini on the other. Furthermore, a covert perquisition of Carlos made some personal notes come to the fore, disclosing specific names, among which: Alessandro Girardi, Antonio Savasta, Renato Curcio, Valerio Morucci, all Red Brigades' members, and Abu Anzeh Saleh, specified as the contact in the Bologna city²³⁵.

3.2.2. Kram and Frolich: investigative attention behind the RZ group.

Revolutionary Cells have been a particularly active terrorist group in West Germany whose split in the 1970s led to the birth of the International Revolutionary Cells (IRZ), in the form of a terrorist group formed of ex-members of RZ, that emptied its ideological original substance, building and maintaining ties with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Carlos, namely "*oriented to international issues*". Its activity has been recorded as restricted since the death of

²³⁴ Ivi, p.280-281

²³⁵ Ivi, p.282-284

Wadi Haddad in 1978 when there seemed the beginning of a lack of ideological doctrine which made the IRZ “*apolitical terrorists for hire*”²³⁶.

We would then assume that Weinrich, Kram, Kopp and Frolich should be associated with this specific operative organization.

Directing the attention to Thomas Kram specifically, he turned himself to the German authorities on 14th December and placed himself at the disposal of federal magistrates in Karlsruhe. In Germany, he was wanted as an alleged leader of the terrorist organisation Revolutionäre Zellen. Born in Berlin on 18th July 1948, he was known as a “*full member*” of the Carlos Group, with his home in Bochum, according to the Mfs, the State Security Minister of the GDR (STASI) and he seemed to be categorised by the Hungarian Secret Services as a member of the organisation's “German branch,” on par with Weinrich and Christa-Margot Fröhlich²³⁷. In the context of the works of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry concerning the Dossier Mitrokhin and the Italian Intelligence Activity, specifically of the hearing of the Public Prosecutor at the Court of Bologna Doc. Enrico di Nicola and the Deputy Prosecutor of the Republic at the Court of Bologna, Doc. Paolo Giovagnoli, these latter ones specified that the activity of the Public Prosecutor's Office of Bologna in relation to the investigation of the potential involvement of Thomas Kram in the Bologna Bombings should be distinguished into two different chronological phases: the first is from 2001 when all the cognitive work done to confirm the existence of elements of crime was not submitted to the judge for preliminary investigations in the proceedings pertaining to “Atti relativi a Cellule rivoluzionarie tedesche - strage 2 Agosto 1980”. This happened, as declared, due to a lack of usable and concrete sources. The second phase was in 2005 when the magistrature started collecting more pieces

²³⁶ Terrorism Review, 9 December 1982, CIA FOIA – General CIA Records.

²³⁷ Allegato A della Seduta n. 98 del 25/1/2007
<https://documenti.camera.it/dati/leg15/lavori/stenografici/sed098/aurg08.htm> last access: 30rd May 2024

from the Parliamentary interpellations, such as the one advanced by deputies such as Fragalà and La Russa.

On 14th December 2005, the Public Prosecutor's Office of Bologna and the Deputy Public Prosecutor at the Court of Bologna transmitted the complete copy of the file of the criminal procedure n. 788/01 K - reg. mod. 45 with the heading "Atti relativi a Cellule rivoluzionarie tedesche - strage 2 Agosto 1980"., requested by the Commission Mitrokhin on 7th November 2005 and the same Prosecutor's Office opened proceedings against unknown persons n. 7823/2005 R.G²³⁸.

The first information they received in 2001 included Kram's presence on the night between 1st and 2nd August in Bologna and the confirmation that he had checked into the hotel «Centrale», where he had made a precise and unambiguous registration. Additionally, they acknowledged that the German police had alerted the Italian authorities to the Kram's impending arrival and that they were in charge of him. The Italian police, indeed, had inspected Thomas Kram at the border before it arrived in Bologna. That being said, it is a fact that he was in Bologna on the night between the 1st and 2nd of August and in addition to this, other information appeared to make clear the belonging of Kram to the operative group of Carlos and his different journeys in the city of Perugia²³⁹, one of the most animated student centres, together with Florence and Bologna, where Al Fatah intensified its propagandistic activity, intertwined with the filo-Palestinian activism of the Jordan community²⁴⁰.

According to the words of Doc. De Nicola:

“Dopo aver aperto un procedimento come «Atti relativi a», deve fare quella che viene chiamata l'indagine conoscitiva, l'indagine informativa, che

²³⁸ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana - Resoconto stenografico della 82^a seduta martedì 24 Gennaio 2006, p.3-4. <https://www.parlamento.it/823?seduta=680> last access: 12th June 2024.

²³⁹ Ivi, p.4-5

²⁴⁰ Lomellini, V. (2022). Il «Lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa. p. 9

consiste nel cercare di acquisire tutti gli elementi per stabilire se iscrivere o no una notizia di reato che ha bisogno di ulteriori elementi concreti. A tale proposito, tutto questo e' stato fatto, delegando la DIGOS e i Carabinieri. Alla data del 24 aprile la DIGOS ha risposto, senza fornire ulteriori elementi se non quelli che vi ho detto.”²⁴¹

Similarly, Doc. Giovagnoli declared:

“Noi abbiamo chiesto alla polizia se il fatto che Kram fosse a Bologna poteva collegarsi in qualche maniera ad indizi che potessero farci pensare che aveva a che fare con la strage; la polizia (che adesso, alla luce del senno del poi, ci dice che la situazione è diversa) ci ha risposto che Kram era completamente sconosciuto ai loro atti. Per questo motivo, abbiamo archiviato.”²⁴²

Doc. Giovagnoli himself added that the DIGOS communication arrived on 18th April 2001 and passed through a telephone call that Director Rossetto made directly to him and the content, then specified again also by De Nicola, seemed based on the coordination of national territory investigations to trace Hannover-born Gerhauser Adrienne Agathe, a member of Revolutionary Cells, who was missing since 1987 and was sought after globally, being suspected of having a role in a series of bombings and incendiary attacks in Germany between 1986 and 1987²⁴³. The specification intended to highlight the fact that the note suggested a neutral interest in Kram.

Deputy Fragalà argued reminding that on 8th March 2001 Police Chief De Gennaro signed a request for investigation on Kram to the DIGOS of Bologna within the context of news acquiring awareness on information

²⁴¹ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana - Resoconto stenografico della 82^a seduta martedì 24 Gennaio 2006, p.5 <https://www.parlamento.it/823?seduta=680> last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁴² Ivi, p.11

²⁴³ Ibid.

of a terrorist organisation operating throughout Europe under the notorious Carlos, connected to the Soviet Union's Secret Service and the East German STASI, and culprit for committing different massacres around Europe. In this case, the aim was to specify that De Gennaro requested the DIGOS in Bologna to look into a crucial detail for Italian counterterrorism: did the notorious Kram, acting on orders from Carlos and communicating with all the terrorist groups in Europe, really spend the night in Bologna? Once the information was confirmed by the Central Police Station of Bologna, it needed to go through the judge for a preliminary investigation rather than being filed away in the archives, according to Fragalà's critique²⁴⁴.

After the abovementioned note of 18th April 2001, the following dated 24th April 2001 was a confirmation from DIGOS that no additional information could be added to Kram's profile. Nevertheless, Deputy Raisi displayed the information available to that date: Kram supervised the subversive group that was dedicated to committing serious social crimes from 1973 to 1995. The Revolutionary Cells were a group that carried out crimes like dynamite, incendiary and gun attacks to violently disrupt society's equilibrium in what was then West Germany²⁴⁵. All this according to De Nicola was contained in the copy of the precautionary measure order against Kram advanced by the German authorities, which was attached to the same DIGOS note sent to the Public Prosecutor's Office²⁴⁶.

The Public Prosecutor Office of Bologna during its preliminary investigations on the Massacre contacted the German authorities several times for their judiciary assistance, above all concerning the presence of Thomas Kram in the city of Bologna between 1st and 2nd August 1980. In Berlin, investigations have been carried out with the deposition of German citizens Weinrich Joannes, Froelich Margot

²⁴⁴ Ivi, p.12

²⁴⁵ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana - Resoconto stenografico della 82^a seduta martedì 25 Gennaio 2006, p.6

²⁴⁶ Ivi, p.7

Christa, Gerhauser Adrienne Agathe, Rosemarie Gerda, Kram Thomas and Schindler Rudolf between 3rd and 6th June 2008. Successively, between 21st and 22nd October 2008 Kopp Madgalena was heard and copies of the acts of the lawsuit against Weinrich Joannes were acquired between March and April 2009. Jointly, on 23rd and 24th April 2009 the testimony of Ilich Ramirez Sanchez was collected in Paris²⁴⁷. The exam of Procurement of Berlin was aimed at acquiring additional information concerning the relationship between Thomas Kram and the Carlos Group, together with information regarding people connected to this organization or belonging to it. Information used by the German authorities was the one inside the “ASSERVAT 250/251”, 260 paged folders, with acts redacted in Dutch from the member of the “Section XXII” of the ex-DDR State Security Minister (MfS), all concerned with investigations on the person of Thomas Kram between 1977 and 1988. One sheet dated 15th April 1981 inside “Section XXII/8” wrote of Kram as a member of “Revolutionary Cells” and involved in the Carlos grouping activities and defined as “steadily integrated to the group”²⁴⁸. The judiciary proceeding against Thomas Kram and Margherita Frolich for their participation in the Bologna Massacre was, as we have anticipated, opened by the Public Procurement of Bologna in November 2005²⁴⁹ and archived and concluded on 9th February 2015²⁵⁰. As it has been exposed beforehand, the review of the records sent by Jean-Louis Bruguière, the investigating judge of the Paris Tribunal of Grand Instance, regarding the Carlos Group, also contained different

²⁴⁷ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia criminale/Stazione di Bologna (1980) [1980-2013]/Sottofascicoli del fascicolo 123/99003731/13-9-6/80/02 [1980-2013]/ 85: Proc.pen.13225/11 (già 7823/05). Rogatoria per assistenza giudiziaria d parte della Germania per interrogare Magdalena Kopp, Joannes Weinrich, Thomas Kram e Margot Christa Froelich (2012)

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l’attività d’intelligence italiana - Resoconto stenografico della 82^a seduta martedì 24 Gennaio 2006. <https://www.parlamento.it/823?seduta=680> last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁵⁰ Processo a Giorgio Cavallini, Corte d’Assise di Bologna, sentenza n°1/2020, R.G. n°19072/, 9 Gennaio 2020, p.1788.

personalities to be searched on. Among those, Thomas Kram was in the first lines.

The Italian magistrature has been able to collect information on his operativity, together with the one of Frolich, Kopp, Weinrich and Carlos, throughout the deeds acquired from the General Procurement of the Berlin Tribunal during the rogatory occurred between 31st March and 2nd April 2009. The ASSERVAT 250/251 folder declared Thomas Kram's movements during his affiliation with the group, where he seemed to be charged with the role of material provision. Controls reveal the travels he made on 7th and 8th January 1980, the 12th June 1980, 5th and 10th August 1980 in Eastern Germany. In the same period, the group's companions moved throughout the same borders. Weinrich, behind the identity of "*Salibi Jean/Damasco, 1947/as Syrian diplomat*", entered Hungary on 22nd July 1980 and left for Berlin on 5th August 1980, from where he left on 10th August 1980. Magdalena Kopp, under the identity of "*Touma Maryam*" entered the Hungarian territory on 1st August 1980 and left for Berlin on 5th August 1980 until 10th of the same month. Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, under the false identity of "*Khouri Michel*" travelled to Hungary on 1st August 1980, leaving for Bucharest on 18th August 1980²⁵¹. Document "86.2", which refers to the same chronological context, in the paragraph "Sub-section 4. Arms and explosives transportation", unveils information on the transport of weapons from Sanchez and Kopp, from the city of Berlin to Hungary in July 1980.

Indeed, the request for judiciary assistance asked investigation of Kopp, as a person informed of the facts, regarding meetings with Kram in Eastern Berlin between 5th and 10th August 1980, on the information she held to the events of the 2nd of August 1980, on the operativity of

²⁵¹ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia criminale/Stazione di Bologna (1980) [1980-2013]/Sottofascicoli del fascicolo 123/99003731/13-9-6/80/02 [1980-2013]/ 85: Proc.pen.13225/11 (già 7823/05). Rogatoria per assistenza giudiziaria da parte della Germania per interrogare Magdalena Kopp, Joannes Weinrich, Thomas Kram e Margot Christa Froelich (2012)

the Carlos' group, on the Jordan citizen Abu Anzeh Saleh, living in Bologna, and on the delivery of weapons through the Italian territory. The same request is made in relation to the questioning of Weinrich, Frolich (asked also about her presence in Italy between 1979 and 1980, on the episode at the Fiumicino airport on 8th June 1982 and her marriage in jail with the red terrorist Sandro Padula in 1985). Additionally, the request was then obviously made for the questioning of Thomas Kram, specifically for the reasons of his presence in Bologna on the 2nd of August 1980 and on the subsequent 5th of August 1980 in Berlin²⁵².

Regarding Christa Margot Frolich, also registered and known as Heidi, she can be defined as one of the nearest contacts to Thomas Kram, an operative figure inside the terrorist group of Carlos and a leading personality within German-Western Revolutionaries. Attention towards her activity is mostly allegedly linked to the terrorist events striking in France, the one against the "Capitole" train on 29th March 1982, whose responsibility has been given to the group of Carlos for retaliation after the arrest of Magdalena Kopp and Bruno Breguet. She was subsequently arrested at the Fiumicino Airport on 18th June 1982, while carrying a bag full of explosives, coming from Bucharest, through Damasco²⁵³. The explosive was a Pentrite-type, a detonating material of high speed that enters the Semtex composition²⁵⁴. An event which is its dynamics recall the ones of the Bologna Massacre as is assumed from the Palestinian trail's hypothesis.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossiera Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta, 15 Marzo 2006, p.291-292. https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/documentoconclusivo.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁵⁴ Camera dei Deputati, Atti di controllo e di indirizzo - XIV Legislatura, Seduta del 28 Luglio 2005. <https://leg14.camera.it/dati/leg14/lavori/stenografici/sed664/bintero.pdf> last access: 3rd June 2024.

Concerning the feasibility of the attack from Kram, it is worth mentioning some details concerning the technicality of the trains got by Kram on 1st August. The Telex shared by the Frontier Police on the same day in 1980, signed by the Head of the Chiasso border police security office Marotta, states:

“Con treno 307 delle ore 12,08 legali odierne entrato Italia diretto Milano cittadino tedesco KRAM Thomas Michael nato 18.7.1948 Berlino et residente Bochum (Germania), [...]. Predetto iscritto R.F. formula 5 et 6/R est stato sottoposto at perquisizione sotto aspetto doganale con esito negativo. Medesimo est qui giunto con treno n°201 delle ore 10,30 proveniente da Karlsrhue.

Firmato: dirigente Ufficio Sicurezza Chiasso frontiera Marotta.”²⁵⁵

Thus, Kram first got on train 201 from Karlsruhe, at 10,30, to Chiasso, where he was subjected to search, and then from there, he got on train 307, at 12,08 to Milan. The Minority Report of the Mitrokhin Commission reports that he entered Italy at 12,08 from Karlsruhe to Milan, causing the misunderstanding according to which he was searched after 12,08, not being able to arrive in Florence²⁵⁶.

Kram himself, in an interview with the Manifesto on 1st August 2007, stated that he was invited to Milan by an Austrian friend to stay there and then travel to Florence the day after, on 1st August, but he had been searched at the frontier at 12,08, causing a late that made him unable to arrive in Florence but constrained him to stay in a hotel in Bologna²⁵⁷. According to the telegram, there may be some elements worthing deeper scrutiny on the declaration in Kram's alibi.

²⁵⁵ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero della Difesa/Arma dei Carabinieri/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/Comando Generale/Ufficio Criminalità organizzata [1980-2008]/1: Atti dell'Ufficio Criminalità organizzata del Comando generale dei Carabinieri [1980-2008] / 30: Articolo di Stampa “Il giallo della strage di Bologna. Ecco le prove della pista araba. (2007 ott.23)

²⁵⁶ Ivi.

²⁵⁷ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia criminale/Stazione di Bologna (1980) [1980-2013]/Sottofascicoli del fascicolo

Respecting the vigilance that Italian authorities paid on him, relevance should be laid on the information exchanged with the Wiesbaden Interpol on 7th August 1980, containing a request from Italian police for inspection of the figure of Kram, as part of investigations on Bologna:

“Our services in Bologna inform that Kram first name Thomas born 18.7.1948 Berlin residing at Bochum, suspected to belong to German terroristic groups on dated 1.8.80 has stayed at hotel unknown to us. Since above mentioned person during this year has stayed several occasions in Bologna you are kindly requested to inform us of any details about this person in particular reasons of his visit in Bologna, his activities and what kind of circle of friends he has. Furthermore if possible transmit a recent photograph of him.”²⁵⁸

State Central Archive unveiled a further important document to consider, at least in relation to the Italian awareness of the aftermath of the Bologna Bombing. On 8th August 1980 at 20,00 a telegram was dispatched from the Central Police Station of Bologna to the one of Siena, Rome and Turin, pronouncing:

“Nota strage due corrente fonte attendibile segnala quanto segue: [...] attentato presso locale stazione ferrovie stato sarebbe scaturito da riunione avvenuta Zurigo cui avrebbero partecipato esponenti Brigate Rosse, ultra di destra. At riunione avrebbero partecipato Grande Vecchio nonché tra gli altri non identificato lord inglese et probabilmente noto

123/99003731/13-9-6/80/02 [1980-2013]/ 85: Proc.pen.13225/11 (già 7823/05). Rogatoria per assistenza giudiziaria d parte della Germania per interrogare Magdalena Kopp, Joannes Weinrich, Thomas Kram e Margot Christa Froelich (2012)

²⁵⁸ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia criminale/Stazione di Bologna (1980) [1980-2013]/Sottofascicoli del fascicolo 123/99003731/13-9-6/80/02 [1980-2013]/5: Accertamenti sul cittadino tedesco Thomas Kram

*Carlos. Probabilità attentati presso stazioni ferrovie stato Roma et Torino occasione periodo vacanze estive.*²⁵⁹

Then, on 9th August 1980, the Bologna Central police station was informed of documents collected from the German police, answering the above-mentioned questions on Kram. The motive for his stay in Bologna seemed unknown, but it was acknowledged that he managed a library and practised the role of professor. Thomas Kram had been the object of different warnings since 1970, even for minimum activities.

In 1970, for alleged threats to public officials, in 1971 for dissemination of extreme-left documentation, and additionally:

*“3) 1976 quadro inchiesta giudiziaria confronti aderenti gruppo terroristico <<Revolutionäre Zellen>> allora sconosciuti et oggetto mandato cattura; 4) quadro inchiesta giudiziaria at suo carico per sospetto favoreggiamento at gruppo terroristico; [...] 7) 1978 inchiesta giudiziaria quale sospetto appartenente at gruppo terroristico. Per quanto attiene at sua relazioni passate est emerso che medesimo habet avuto contatti con Johannes Weinrich, sabine Eckle et Rudolf Schindler (component del gruppo <<cellule rivoluzionarie>>) e attualmente ricercati in quanto terroristi pericolosi, nonché con alter persone simpatizzanti con le quali est tuttora in rapporti.”*²⁶⁰

The same investigation path resulted to stop in October 1980, with no additional written evidence or reason, according to the search made by the Mitrokhin Commission²⁶¹.

²⁵⁹Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Stazione di Bologna (1980)/ Procedimento penale 344/80 [1980-1988]/ Corrispondenza varia. Accertamenti e istruttoria [1980-1986]/ 20: Cellula toscana di ultra-destra a Siena. Riunione a Zurigo (1980) / 5: INFORMAZIONI (1980 ago.08)

²⁶⁰ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia criminale/Stazione di Bologna (1980) [1980-2013]/Sottofascicoli del fascicolo 123/99003731/13-9-6/80/02 [1980-2013]/5: Accertamenti sul cittadino tedesco Thomas Kram.

²⁶¹ Commissione Parlamentare d’Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l’attività d’intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull’attività svolta e sui risultati dell’inchiesta, 15 Marzo 2006., p. 295

Actually, since 10th November 1979, there is evidence of a personal folder entitled to Thomas Kram, by which he was warned to all Police Central Stations of Italy from internal organs of the Ministry of the Interior²⁶². The Chief of Police sent a copy of the international arrest warrant against Thomas Kram, which was issued by the Federal Court of Germany on 6th December 2000, to the Bologna Police Headquarters on 9th April 2001. This warrant revealed, among other things, that Kram, who had been on the radar of the German police since August 1977, was regarded as a dangerous element for state security as of 7th November 1979. Kram was known to be involved with the Revolutionary Cells, a German terrorist organisation, and to have contacts with subversive groups operating in Italy, necessitating the adoption of several preventive measures against them²⁶³.

Enzo Rasi (Italian Social Movement) intervened in the parliamentary session of 22nd January 2009 in an urgent interpellation on the destruction of the personal folder of the terrorist Thomas Kram, arguing about a series of anomalies in the Kram case:

*“Fino al 1994, nonostante egli avesse sul proprio capo un mandato di cattura internazionale come esponente <<Cellule rivoluzionarie>>, alla banca dati della polizia italiana risultava come estremista di destra.”*²⁶⁴

According to him, documents about him started to present some extraneous elements right after 2nd August 1980, becoming scarcer, and the figure of Kram seemed underestimated by Italian information and police organisms. Undersecretary of State Alfredo Mantovano in the same session was asked to answer. According to him, some documents

https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/documentoconclusivo.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁶² Ivi, p.293

²⁶³ Ivi, p. 294

²⁶⁴ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Ufficio affari legislativi e relazioni parlamentari/ 6: Camera dei deputati. Interpellanza urgente n. 2-00238 dell’On.Rasi Enzo ed altri (PDL) annunciata il 1 dic 2008 (2008-2009).

collected during a proceeding against the ex-state security ministry of the GDR, Erich Miele, enabled the Federal Republic Procurement to study documents concerning ex-GDR and some of those revealed “SEPARAT – Separate Operative Practice” on the International Revolutionary Organization of Ilich Ramirez Sanchez and inside that it could be read that the organisation’s chiefs chose Kram International RZ member to enter the operativity of Carlos’ group²⁶⁵.

In 1979 he was inscribed to the Università degli Studi di Perugia and in the same city he was subjected in November 1979 to a house search where a political German-written document came to the fore.

On 15th January 1980, he returned to Italy to subscribe to an Italian language course at the same university, on 22nd February 1980 he stayed at the Lembo Hotel in Bologna and on 22nd April at the Mazzanti Hotel in Verona. Then, on 3rd May 1980, his name appeared in the “*border section with customs confidential surveillance and search measures.*”²⁶⁶ Mantovano talked about the destruction of a folder assigned to Thomas Kram, the one possessed by the Border Police, the frontier column, whose details were not destructed but rather moved to the database of the police forces, in accordance with the requirements of the Schengen Agreement applied to the Italian borders since 26th October 1997, requiring to suppress the paper documentation. Nevertheless, his name was no more present since 18th November 1995, when the Central Direction of the Prevention Police requested the redraw of the provision and its scheduling as a subversive subject under vigilance. In any case, on 16th February 2001, the dossier containing controls on Kram on 1st August 1980 was destroyed, as a result of the “*legislation on the discarding of archival documents and by the duly constituted commission*”²⁶⁷. The information there contained

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

seems to have been transmitted to other police departments and territorial offices.

This information to Deputy Raisi had extreme importance:

“Soltanto ora, per la prima volta, da un banco del Governo, su informazioni delle autorità di polizia, vengono confermate quelle relazioni che noi avevamo anticipato – ma che qualcuno ha sempre negato- del legame tra Kram e Carlos. Viene confermato che Kram era un esperto di esplosivi. Per troppo tempo si è continuato a dire che Kram era un semplice sbandato e un esponente dell’estrema sinistra di poco conto. [...] Rimane in me l’amarezza per il fatto che la procura di Bologna è andata ad interrogare Kram come persona informata sui fatti. Ricordo a tutti che per molto meno, a Bologna si è svolto un processo indiziario che ha condannato in sede definitiva tre persone, ponendo anche lì un punto fermo della giustizia italiana sulla strage di Bologna.”²⁶⁸

Again, Enzo Raisi in an interpellation dated 1st December 2008, exposed that the suppression of controls at the borders, to start in Italy on 26th October 1997 and to be concluded on 31st March 1998, took place in accordance with all interested confining states. However, the Schengen Agreement did not provide, nor impose, the necessity to destroy personal dossiers on specific personalities under arrest warrants, but rather it requests the end of controls in the internal borders, together with an evolvement of cooperation between police authorities, of the information exchange and the cooperation in extradition. Indeed, on 29th November 1995, Doc. Gianni De Gennaro, Police Vice-Chief at the time, declared that Thomas Kram was still under research, stating *“Please, therefore, maintain the arrest order against the above-mentioned person”*, as requested by GFR²⁶⁹. His name could be revoked from the list of people to be searched since 6th February 1998 after a German

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

Interpol communication²⁷⁰. Taking this under consideration, Deputy Raisi, together with Garagnani, Santelli, Scalia and others, advanced to the Council Presidency of that time, Romano Prodi, questions the nature of the destroyed dossier, the date it happened, the provision under which it happened, whether the government had to authorize that destruction, what kind of provisions he was targeted, whether the destruction interested also dossier dealing information with other alleged terrorist personalities under international arrest warrant.

The day after, on 2nd December 2008, the Presidency of the Council communicated that the Foreign Intelligence and Security Agency and the Internal Intelligence and Security Agency had not been able to dispose of any elements in response to the questions advanced by deputies. The Ministry of Justice denied the presence of dossiers regarding the extradition of Thomas Kram since the extradition request from the GFR did not lead to the actual arrest of the terrorist, adding that the competency for the issue belonged to the Ministry of the Interior²⁷¹.

One might assume that intelligence services and law enforcement organisations in Italy already had information on Thomas Kram and his activities in Bologna. Since 7th August 1980, these bodies had been actively collecting and examining data about him, investigating a path distinct from the one that would have been impacted by right-wing subversion in the years associated with the Strategy of Tension. There was knowledge and awareness of relevant dynamics and personalities on the international scene, potentially also the subject of inter-governmental information exchanges at a European level.

What is being conveyed at the same time seems to be a surpassing of the relevance of such information, to be investigated whether through misperception or deliberate dismissal.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

3.2.3. Abu Anzeh Saleh: an established pattern of retaliation.

The investigative trail trying to unveil the potential involvement of the Carlos Group in the occurrence of the Bologna Bombing is linked to the figure of Abu Anzeh Saleh and, more specifically, to the incident of the missiles in Ortona. Namely, on 8th November 1979, two Soviet-made Sam-7 Strela missile launchers, manufactured in March 1978, were discovered in the custody of three Roman Autonomy militants: Giorgio Baumgartner, Luciano Nieri, and Daniele Pifano. Strela missiles similar to those in Ortona were seized six years earlier in the hideout of the five Arab terrorists arrested in Ostia on 6th September 1973²⁷².

As we have anticipated beforehand, Saleh was arrested on 13th November 1979, all defendants were sentenced to seven years in jail for the offences of unlawful possession and transportation of weapons of war on 25th January 1980, marking the conclusion of the trial. Saleh was detained until 14th August 1981, when the Court of Appeal of Aquila granted him release. This occurred as a result of the Court of Cassation's 8th August 1981 decision, which upheld Saleh's appeal²⁷³.

A report dated 2nd October 1996, concerning *“Contacts and connections at the international level of the Carlos group”* and addressed to the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior, CESIS, the Cabinet of the Ministry of Defence, the General Command of the Carabinieri, the II Department of the Guardia di Finanza and SISDE, apparently highlighted the relationships between Carlos and Abu Anzeh Saleh, according to some found former's annotations. According to the Mitrokhin Commission, this information resulted from an investigation carried out by the Hungarian Secret Services of the ex-regime, that had been shared with the Eastern-German intelligence at the time. As a

²⁷²Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta, 15 Marzo 2006. P.285. https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/documentoconclusivo.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁷³ Ivi, p. 288

result, it could not have been achieved before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989²⁷⁴.

Abu Anzeh Saleh was quite present in the Italian territory and the Italian Services have been aware of this since November 1979 when a SISDE document signed by Gen. Giulio Grassini witnessed that Saleh was a member of the George Habash's P.F.L.P., in charge of the provision of arms and the military operations in Italy. Along with highlighting Saleh's personality in relation to the leader of the Popular Front, Georges Habash, and the Carlos group itself, the civil intelligence service also pointed to the numerous attempts made by Palestinian organisations in those years to carry out spectacular attacks in Europe in an effort to sponsor their activities²⁷⁵.

The question of interest in this context is to understand the retaliation advanced by the P.F.L.P. for the arrest of Abu Anzeh Saleh and the engagement on the operative side of the Carlos Group and Thomas Kram specifically.

On 13th January 1980, the President of the Council Francesco Cossiga received a secret note from the SISMI titled "The Ortona process". The document informed the arrival of a P.F.L.P.'s exponent in Italy concerning the Ortona process, who argued concerning: the extreme rapidness of the process, which made it not possible to adequately formulate the detainees' defence, since the audience was planned for the 16th January 1980, proof of an "*orientamento già acquisito nella colpevolezza degli imputati, in ordine a tutti i reati loro contestati*"; the clarification of the fact that the letter read during the proceedings by

²⁷⁴ Ivi, p. 289

²⁷⁵ Ivi, p. 290

the lawyer Mellini was an attempt from the Front to give first elements of its version²⁷⁶.

From that moment onwards, crucial documents are proof of the attention of the Italian Secret Services concerning this dynamic. The Mitrokhin Commission's Conclusive document states that on 11th July 1980, General Giulio Grassini, the head of SISDE, received a private communication from Prefect Gaspare De Francisci, the then-director of UCIGOS, alerting him that Saleh's conviction had resulted in extremely negative reactions within the P.F.L.P.²⁷⁷

Italian Central Archive unveils a document dated 24th April 1980, sent by SISMI to the Director of the Service with the object "*Threats against Italian interests*".²⁷⁸ The document contained the attached stating:

"Risultato dell'ultimo incontro fra Maestro e il rappresentante del F.P.L.P. durante il quale è stata:

- *Prorogata al 15 maggio la data limite di congelamento delle azioni contro gli interessi italiani;*
- *Ottenuta l'assicurazione che nessun atto violento sarà compiuto contro l'Ambasciata d'Italia a Beirut o contro il suo personale, nè prima nè dopo il 15 maggio;*
- *Meglio definita l'entità delle richieste del F.P.L.P."* ²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ Raccolte speciali / Draghi consultazione / Renzi / Presidenza del Consiglio / AISE / Versamento 19.04.2023 / -- VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI / f0001 / AISE TRANCHE SISMI OLP – 163 ATTI - OBL. – VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI f0001 d0049.pdf

²⁷⁷ Commissione Parlamentare d'Inchiesta concernente il <<Dossier Mitrokhin>> e l'attività d'intelligence italiana. Documento conclusivo sull'attività svolta e sui risultati dell'inchiesta, 15 Marzo 2006, p.291. https://www.parlamento.it/application/xmanager/projects/parlamento/file/commissione_mitrokhin_14leg/documentoconclusivo.pdf last access: 12th June 2024.

²⁷⁸ Raccolte speciali / Draghi consultazione / Renzi / Presidenza del Consiglio / AISE / Versamento 19.04.2023 / -- VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI / f0003 / AISE TRANCHE SISMI OLP – 163 ATTI - OBL. – VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI f0003 d0113.pdf

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

The document then details:

*“Al fine di evitare che dopo il 15 aprile 1980 potessero essere poste in atto operazioni a carattere intimidatorio, è stato ripreso il contatto con l’elemento responsabile del F.P.L.P. Questi, [...] ha reso noto le richieste definitive del <<Fronte>>.”*²⁸⁰

Namely, the Front asks to anticipate, in this case, to June-July the proceeding regarding the S-7 Missiles, instead of the period September-October.

Subsequently, the interest of the Front was the reduction to around four years of the inflicted indictment of the three members of *Autonomia Operaia*, the *“assoluzione per <<insufficienza di prove>> di Abu Anzeh Saleh”*²⁸¹, the end of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Rome’s initiative to indict the defendants for armed gang participation and the destruction of the SAM-7 missiles in front of a representative of the defendants, in addition to a sixty thousand dollars compensation to the Front. Then, it is again reminded that within the date of 15th May 1980, *“improrogabilmente”*, Italian authorities should have given a *“chiara risposta positiva o negativa”*, through the channel of the SISMI²⁸².

The document ends by making clear the intention of the P.F.L.P: if the Italian authorities had negatively welcomed the Front’s requests within the imposed deadline *“la fase di dialogo”* would have been considered overcome in favour of *“l’attuazione di quelle iniziative già reiteratamente sollecitate dalla base e da una parte della dirigenza.”*

According to the source, those actions would have entailed *“operazioni a carattere intimidatorio o di appoggio alla organizzazione degli autonomi, nei cui confronti il <<Fronte>> si sente moralmente impegnato”*.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

The same document contains two additional notes. On 22nd May 1981, the “Collegamento 113” received the order from a certain Ulisse to not accept the requests’ deadline and that there may have been feasibility for the concession of provisional freedom for Abu Anzeh Saleh.

The following note with the object “*minacce contro gli interessi italiani. Questione missile SA-7*” ascertained that the Court of Appeal had refused on 29th May 1981 the request for freedom for Saleh advanced by the defendant’s advocate Edmondo Zappacosta. Taking for granted the negative reaction this would have caused in the Front’s interpretation, there was an indication that “*non si dovrebbe fare più affidamento sulla sospensione delle operazioni terroristiche in Italia e contro interessi e cittadini italiani, decisa dal F.P.L.P. nel 1973*”, considering the potential risks of an imminent retorsion from the same, concerning which the hijacking of an Alitalia “D-10” on a Middle-Eastern or Australian root, could be an option, in addition to the targeting of an Italian Embassy.

The last point of the note highlighted that Italian safety could be ensured by the fact that some of P.F.L.P.’s exponents entered the executive board of the P.L.O., from which a “*responsible attitude*” had been expressed. Nevertheless, an alert was posed on the risk that elements extraneous to the already known Palestinian groups of Resistance could have been hired by the Front to equally perpetrate those malicious activities, once taking into account the fact that the former’s leadership is composed of filo-Libyan members²⁸⁴.

At this moment, more than one thing can be defined as valuable elements: the presence of certain agreed prerogatives between the P.F.L.P. and the Italian authorities, together with the awareness of its effectiveness from part of the same, until the point of threatening a potential retaliation when the Front’s requests were not satisfied.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

In the parliamentary interpellation to the President of the Council, Silvio Berlusconi at the time, on 28th July 2005, presented by the Deputy Fragalà, the Saleh question was raised. After a brief stay in Perugia, Abu Anzeh Saleh had made Bologna his home since the early 1970s when he was apprehended, and the security services claim that Abu Anzeh Saleh was a prominent figure in the P.F.L.P. in Italy and that he concealed his subversive actions behind his studies²⁸⁵.

Some documents, according to the interpellants, reveal that the Secret Services were aware of the personality of Saleh since 2nd March 1974 when he was expelled from Italian soil under SID's request for his propagandistic activities, trying to request PCI's members' aid to be admitted again on 14th November 1979, until Col. Stefano Giovannone decided to propose himself as a guarantee for Saleh.

Giovannone has undoubtedly been a key linking figure in the development of the events and the relationship between the Italian state and the Palestinian Resistance, since the beginning of his role as Moro's envoy in the Middle East²⁸⁶.

It is essential to clarify one element, already previously mentioned: the document of the judicial proceeding against Cavallini in 2017 exposed an evaluation of the Palestinian hypothesis for the occurrence of the Bologna Bombing on 2nd August 1980, in which an additional specification should be advanced:

“Abu Saleh, ha ribadito Sportelli, era il responsabile dell'OLP a Roma <<in diretto contatto con Giovannone>>, il quale si era personalmente, e invano, impegnato per un mite trattamento processuale in suo favore per

²⁸⁵ Camera dei Deputati, Atti di controllo e di indirizzo - XIV Legislatura, Seduta del 28 Luglio 2005. <https://leg14.camera.it/dati/leg14/lavori/stenografici/sed664/bintero.pdf> last access: 3rd June 2024.

²⁸⁶ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (2020). Terrorism in the Cold War: State support in the west, Middle East and Latin America. Bloomsbury Publishing. P. 156

la questione dei missili di Ortona, in quanto i servizi italiani erano preoccupati per le minacce ritorsive da parte dei gruppi palestinesi.”²⁸⁷

But it should be pointed out that Abu Anzeh was not the P.L.O. representative in Italy, but the P.F.L.P. representative, and this distinction should lead to a different perception of the dynamics.

As has been outlined before, the P.L.O. was born as an umbrella organisation containing six different terrorist formations, including Arafat's Fatah and Habash's P.F.L.P. Since 1974, important differences have emerged in the strategic front between the two, from the moment Arafat presented his speech to the United Nations in the same year, introducing himself as the diplomatic face of the Palestinian resistance, in a sort of “terrorist armistice”²⁸⁸ with an explicit desire to seek closeness with Western powers. On the other side, established in 1967 with Syria's assistance, Habash's Palestine Liberation Front (P.F.L.P.) sought to establish a Palestinian state by means of class warfare and revolution against Israel and other Arab nations deemed reactionary, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt²⁸⁹.

The documents presented above outline a context that recalls dynamics that have already taken place: contacts with the Palestinian Resistance, bilaterally and separately with P.L.O. and P.F.L.P., an exponent of the latter arrested on Italian soil, explicit requests accompanied by particularly resented Front reactions and the Italian State's choice of compromises to be reached in order to show its integrity in the more or less secret diplomatic confrontation, which this time led to an initial refusal of requests by the terrorist group, at least before the date of 2nd August 1980.

²⁸⁷ Processo a Giorgio Cavallini, Corte d'Assise di Bologna, sentenza n°1/2020, R.G. n°19072/, 9 Gennaio 2020, p.1791.

²⁸⁸ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (2020). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State support in the west, Middle East and Latin America*. Bloomsbury Publishing. P.158

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

3.2.3.1. The parallelism with the attack at the Capitole, 29th March 1982.

According to reports of 27th January 1976, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez informed a hostage taken during the 1975 OPEC attack that the goal of his further actions would have been to release the Baader-Meinhof anarchists who were being tried in West Germany at the time. The plan called for the seizure of an official of an FRG's allied country²⁹⁰.

A note informing the SISDE, dated 22nd March 1982, reported that on 16th February 1982, the Swiss Breguet Bruno and the German Kopp Magdalena were arrested in Paris for their assumed militancy inside the “Arab Organisation for Armed Struggle - Arm of the Arab Revolution”.

In relation to this, a hand-written retaliatory letter had been personally signed by Carlos, with an explicit request for the release of the two arrested figures within the deadline of thirty days, threatening French objectives²⁹¹.

Subsequently, the document continues:

“Si potrebbe inoltre verificare l'eventualità che Ilich Ramirez Sanchez "alias" Carlos, nel corso dei suoi tentativi diretti alla liberazione del Breguet e della Kopp, possa mettersi in contatto direttamente o indirettamente con le seguenti persone, da lui conosciute durante i suoi precedenti soggiorni in Francia:

[...]

- Abu Anzeh Saleh, nato il 15.8.1949 ad Amman, Jordan, Bologna.

²⁹⁰ Weekly Situation Report on International Terrorism, 27 January 1976, CIA FOIA – General CIA Records.

²⁹¹ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Piazza della Loggia (1974)/ Procedimento penale 91/1997 [1997-2008] /Attività di polizia giudiziaria della DCP. Esecuzione di deleghe della Procura della Repubblica di Brescia [1998-2008]/ Relazione della DCP del 9/6/2000 in esecuzione della delega della Procura della Repubblica di Brescia nel 12/11/1999 [1999-2003] / 4: Fascicoli intestati agli esponenti di ricerca di cui alla delega 12.11.1999 (1936-2000)/ 1: Achilli Michele, deputato PSI (fascicolo DCP) (1970-1999) / 14: APPUNTO (1982 mar.22)

[...]

- *Girardi Alessandro, alias "Alex", alias "Ziad Abou Nidal", nato il 21.5.1946 in Italia.*"²⁹²

Alessandro Girardi has been recorded as a Red Brigades' member inside SEPARAT and one of Carlos' connections in Italy according to a SISMI report of 2nd October 1996. A previous SISDE memorandum of 15th January 1985 described him as a contact of the FARL, Armed Lebanese Fractions, linked to Mohammad El Mansouri. This latter one was subjected to requisition of Semtex explosives, when captured on 6th August 1984, at the border of Trieste while travelling on the Orient Express train from Yugoslavia and stopping at the Opicina station. The same kind of explosive was the one that resulted from the qualitative and commodity appraisal carried out during the investigation of the attack on the 904 train and the one in possession of Margot Christa Frolich when arrested at the Fiumicino Airport on 18th June 1982²⁹³.

On 29th March 1982, around 20,45 a huge explosion hit the second wagon of the Trans Europ Express "Le Capitole" which left Paris at 18,00 with Toulouse as the destination, while transporting thirty-three people. Among those, five have been killed and twenty-eight seriously wounded by an explosive allegedly contained in luggage belonging to none of the passengers. The inquiry exposes the revendications advanced right after the attack made between on 29th and 31st March 1982, going from "Movement pour Carlos", "Internationale Terroriste amie de Carlos", in addition to other groups such as "Bataillon Basque Espagnol", "Black September" and "Peiper France". Additionally, two letters were destined for the City Hall of Marseille from Toulouse

²⁹² Ibid.

referring to Carlos²⁹⁴. Indeed, French attention was quite immediately directed to the potential involvement of this latter one after the retaliation for the arrest of Breguet and Kopp, after being surprised with two five-kilos of grenades of penthrite type and a 9 m/m GP 35 automatic gun. The suspect was reinforced by the already abovementioned letter signed by Carlos with his digital footprints, directed to the Embassy of France in the Hague and addressed to the Ministry of the Interior, where he explicitly demanded their freedom.

These details are enclosed in the document of the French inquiry, part of a request advanced from the French Interpol to the Rome Interpol on 26th February 1985 to receive additional details on the attack on the 904 express train²⁹⁵.

This link was also raised during the interpellation on 28th July 2005. The '904' express train from Naples to Milan blew up in the S. Benedetto Val di Sambro tunnel on 23rd December 1984, right as another train was travelling into the opposite track. Of the numerous passengers on the train, which was especially filled with people returning home for the holidays, seventeen people died and two hundred fifty others were injured²⁹⁶.

The prior year, on 1st January 1983, France was attacked twice, at the St. Charles station in Marseille and on the high-speed train at Tain L'Hermitage and in both events French authorities were more inclined to give investigative room to international tracks and as a result, Carlos had been officially indicted for carrying them out. Also, for the 904 attack the French judiciary was more willing to travel the international

²⁹⁴ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell'Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/Rapido 904 (1984)/Accertamenti e indagini [1984-1989] /11: Corrispondenza Trevi e Interpol (Paesi paralleli). Attentati avvenuti all'estero negli ultimi anni (1985) / 14:RICHIESTA NOTIZIE PRECISE SULL'ATTENTATO RICHIESTE DALLA POLIZIA FRANCESE (1985 mar.12)

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Camera dei Deputati, Atti di controllo e di indirizzo - XIV Legislatura, Seduta del 28 Luglio 2005. <https://leg14.camera.it/dati/leg14/lavori/stenografici/sed664/bintero.pdf> last access: 3rd June 2024.

track after an Islamic Jihad revendication, while Italy consistently followed those advanced by right-wing terrorist groups²⁹⁷.

Returning to the event of the Capitole, the extremely rapid train, sometimes referred to as the “Chirac train”, since utilised by Jacques Chirac, mayor of Paris at the date of the attack and later President of the French Republic, according to Breguet and Kopp’s advocate Jacques Verges, Breguet and Kopp remained mute during the hearing on 22nd April 1982. He consequently unveiled

*that "the French government has violated the existing tacit agreement between European governments and the organisations fighting in the Middle East"*²⁹⁸

by detaining the two and this became clearer with the explicit releasing request advanced by Carlos to the French Interior Minister Deferre, who made the decision to set a firm position and reject any chance of compromise.

On 29th March 1982, one month after Carlos’ letter, the attack on the Capitole train. The following events remind an already known picture: Israeli diplomat Yakov Barsimantov is shot and killed at the doorway of his Paris apartment on 3rd April. Guy Cavallot, a representative of the French Embassy and his expectant spouse Caroline are fatally shot on 16th April in their West Beirut flat. The French press agency in Beirut is bombed on 22nd April. A car carrying a potent explosive charge was detonated just after 9 a.m. on the same day, only minutes before the Kopp and Breguet trial was scheduled to start in Paris, under the headquarters of the pro-Iraqi weekly Al Watan Al Arabi, on rue Marbeuf, not far from the Champs Elysées²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ XIII legislatura – disegni di legge e relazioni – documenti
https://leg13.camera.it/_dati/leg13/lavori/doc/xxiii/064v01t05p02_RS/00000014.pdf
last access: 10th June 2024

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

It is imperative to immediately design specific recurrent elements: a reference to an unwritten agreement between European states and Middle-Eastern groups, in this instance explicitly connected to the Organisation of the Armed Arab Struggle - Arab Revolutionary Arm, led by Carlos; retaliation in response to the detention of two significant members of the group; a refusal to entertain a proposed compromise; and a large-scale, extremely violent, Massacre.

3.2.3.2. Libyan sponsorship's hypothesis.

Middle Eastern Syria, Libya, South Yemen and Iraq were the main state allies of Palestinian terrorist organisations. In several instances, these nations provided terrorists with diplomatic passports, enabling them to travel across borders without hindrance or arrange the shipment of weaponry needed to carry out operations³⁰⁰.

Indeed, within the alleged hypothesis of an operational alternative to the Bologna Massacre, the leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, who at the time also harboured resentment towards the Italians, was purportedly contacted by the P.F.L.P. Gaddafi then made contact with the Organisation of International Revolutionaries, namely the terrorist Carlos Ilich Ramírez Sánchez³⁰¹.

Since the 1970s, Italy has worked to establish predictability and stability in its relations with Libya. After Colonel Gaddafi took over in 1969, Libya turned to various bilateral arrangements in an attempt to stabilise relations after failing to establish itself inside a multilateral European framework. This was especially relevant after the colonial

³⁰⁰ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (Eds.). (2022). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State Support in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Sphere of Influence*. Bloomsbury Publishing. P. 62

³⁰¹ Hänni, A., Riegler, T., & Gasztold, P. (2020). *Terrorism in the Cold War: State support in the west, Middle East and Latin America*. Bloomsbury Publishing. P. 163

ghost reappeared to haunt relations, and the deportation of twenty thousand Italians who had relocated to Libya in 1970 and the seizure of their property as well as of the assets of Italian businesses operating there, were among the first actions of the new government³⁰².

Italy's exports to Libya reached one thousand six hundred billion lire in 1979, up forty-four point four per cent from the previous year, while imports to Libya grew forty-seven point three per cent to two thousand one hundred forty-four billion lire. Italy was Libya's main trading partner and Libya was the peninsula's main oil supply³⁰³.

Nevertheless, uncertainty always added efforts to the Italian attempts to grant the country's security from different perspectives, at least concerning its confrontation with the Libyan regime.

This always entailed a cautious attitude in front of certain precarious dynamics. For instance, on 13th November 1979, the same day of Abu Anzeh Saleh's arrest, a notification was dispatched to the SISMI director communicating the arrival in Rome of Nemre Hammadi, P.L.O. representative in Rome from Beirut, and Farouk Kaddoumi, a founding Fatah-member. The first one was defined as "*message bearer of a letter from Arafat, addressed to President Cossiga, concerning the SA-7 issue*"³⁰⁴. At the point two of the note, it continued:

*"Dai contatti avuti con i vertici palestinesi, risulterebbero responsabilità libiche in merito alla vicenda. [...] Negli ambienti della direzione dell'OLP si vuole che non si dia alcuna divulgazione alle notizie da essi fornite, in considerazione dell'importanza dei rapporti Italia-Libia-OLP."*³⁰⁵

³⁰² Chelotti, N., & Johansson-Nogués, E. (2014). Stable unpredictability?: An assessment of Italian–Libyan relations. In *Italy's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-first Century* (pp. 178-196). Routledge.

³⁰³ L'Espresso, Il ruolo della Libia e di Gheddafi nella strage di Bologna, di Miguel Gotor, 9 luglio 2020. <https://lespresso.it/c/attualita/2020/7/8/il-ruolo-della-libia-e-di-gheddafi-nella-strage-di-bologna/45204> last access: 19th June 2024.

³⁰⁴ Raccolte speciali / Draghi consultazione / Renzi / Presidenza del Consiglio / AISE / Versamento 19.04.2023 / -- VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI / f0001 / AISE TRANCHE SISMI OLP – 163 ATTI - OBL. – VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI f0001 d0024.pdf

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

An immediately subsequent note on the same day informed that the abovementioned letter was not received by Francesco Cossiga, with the assumption resulting from a meeting with the same Kaddoumi, presumably convinced that it would have been “*pericolo per l’OLP accennare ad una eventuale implicazione della Libia.*”³⁰⁶

1980 was a period of enhanced resentment from the Libyan side towards Italy. On the one side, a note dated 28th March 1980 titled “*Rappresentante del S.I. libico in Italia MOUSA SALEM ELHJI.*” was transmitted to Raggruppamento Centri C.S. in Rome, displayed the Libyan indignation for the opposition to the Gaddafi regime in the Italian press and the hospitality offered by a ‘friendly’ state to dissidents of the same regime. As a result, the list of Libyans staying in Italy, together with the list of companies with Libyan nationals as partners, was requested to be able to adopt exhaustive control of them³⁰⁷.

Mousa Salem would then consider it necessary to specify that several consequences would be implemented against the Italian state if it did not comply with these requests, including:

- *“Un taglio alle forniture di petrolio;*
- *Lo smistamento di tutti i libici che hanno bisogno di cure mediche e dei loro accompagnatori verso altri Paesi;*
- *La iscrizione degli studenti libici in università diverse da quelle italiane;*
- *L’addestramento di militari libici presso le FF.AA. di altri Stati;*

³⁰⁶ Raccolte speciali / Draghi consultazione / Renzi / Presidenza del Consiglio / AISE / Versamento 19.04.2023 / -- VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI / f0001 / AISE TRANCHE SISMI OLP – 163 ATTI - OBL. – VICENDA GIOVANNONE OLP – 163 DOCUMENTI f0001 d0025.pdf

³⁰⁷ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/ Ustica (1980) / Procedimento 527/84 A [1976-1999] / Deleghe del giudice istruttore Rosario Priore, citazioni [1990-1997] / “Posta ufficio”. Deleghe e decreti del giudice istruttore Rosario Priore [1992-1997] /1052: Atti 31619. Esame della documentazione relativa all’indiziato Demetrio Cogliandro (1997) / 1: Trasmissione esami documenti indiziato Cogliandro (1997 dic.20) / 6: TRASMISSIONE APPUNTO (1979 ago.13 – 1980 apr.30)

- *Un inasprimento generale di tutti i rapporti fra i due Paesi*.³⁰⁸

An attached note dated 7th August 1979, with the object *“Contatti con i Servizi libici. Posizione marittimi italiani detenuti in Libia”*, where concerning the content diffused through the clandestine periodic *“Saut Libia”* (Libya’s voice), such dissemination *“irrita moltissimo Gheddafi, anche in considerazione che secondo talune voci, che apparivano fondate, sembrava che stessero per essere diffuse 30.000 copie.”*

Subsequently, there was clarification of the scarce relevance of the same diffusion occurring in France, England, Germany and the U.S.A., with the comparison of *“a far greater and very special significance due to the very large Libyan colony present”* in Italy.³⁰⁹

This cannot surely be considered with the intention of designing reasons for implying Libyan involvement in the Bologna Bombing.

In any case, it pictures in a convincing manner the level of vulnerable and precarious stability between the two countries and the level of attention required by the Italian state in view of preserving the level of security.

An examination of documents in the files of the office of the diplomatic advisor to the Presidency of the Council Romano Prodi on 29th May 1997 was sent as part of the criminal proceeding against unknown persons for the Ustica Massacre, from the Instructor Judge Rosario Priore³¹⁰. Within this documentation, there was one message dated 18th November 1980 from the Italian Embassy in Tripoli with the object *“Italy-Libya”*, about a meeting with the ambassador Shahati on the agreement between Italy and Malta.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Raccolte speciali/Direttiva Renzi (2014) /Ministero dell’Interno/Dip della pubblica sicurezza/Direzione centrale della polizia di prevenzione/ Ustica (1980) / Procedimento 527/84 A [1976-1999] / Deleghe del giudice istruttore Rosario Priore, citazioni [1990-1997] / “Posta ufficio”. Deleghe e decreti del giudice istruttore Rosario Priore [1992-1997] / 997: Atti 12665. Esame della documentazione agli atti dell’Ufficio del Consigliere diplomatico della Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri (1997)

The message, from the Italian ambassador of the time, cites:

“In risposta alle considerazioni formulatemi, mi sono limitato assicurare che le avrei trasmesse a Roma, non mancando di rilevare che questa volta comunicazione seguiva i normali vie diplomatiche anziché minacciosa procedura adottata in mese Agosto, le cui ripercussioni in Italia erano state così sfavorevoli.”³¹¹.

The Libyan hypothesis draws a further presumption: the link between the Ustica Massacre and the one in Bologna, through a bond picturing Ghaddafi as the principal³¹².

During that summer of 1980, the Farnesina signed an agreement with the Maltese government of Dom Mintoff on 2nd August 1980, whereby Italy guaranteed the island's neutrality, thereby removing Ghaddafi from any potential control over the strategic Mediterranean landscape. In Valletta, Senator Zamberletti led a delegation that included Ambassador Maurizio Battaglini and Arnaldo Squillante, Head of the Cabinet of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. An additional protocol also required Italy to provide direct financial support to the Maltese budget for 12 million dollars annually³¹³.

A project which initially, in early 1976, implied a multilateral nature, with Italy, France, Libya and Algeria with potentially Western Germany as economic assistance. Nevertheless, in the first months of 1980, the agreement narrowed to the Italian actor³¹⁴.

In the meanwhile, relationships between Malta and Libya were troubling: firstly, a petroleum agreement during the 1970s included oil supply for the Maltese country at subsidised prices within the terms of

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Merlati, M. (2017). Frammenti di storia internazionale. La strage di Ustica e il triangolo Italia-Malta-Libia nell'estate del 1980. *Rivista di Studi e Ricerche sulla criminalità organizzata*, 3(3), 32-51.

³¹³ Ivi, p.35-38

³¹⁴ Ivi, p.39

a multi-year deal. The same in June 1980 faced its end, in addition to diplomatic difficulties on the question of the respective territorial water's delimitation during the spring season of 1980³¹⁵. These altering dynamics intertwined with those concerning Italia-Libya.

Further to Gaddafi's resentment of the critical press, relations between Italy and Libya deteriorated in July 1980 after Libyan patrol boats apprehended nineteen Sicilian fishermen who were on fishing boats and claimed to have violated Libyan waters. Last but not least, in August, an ENI platform operating in the Medina Bank, off the coast of Malta, was intimidated by a Libyan missile-launching frigate. Libya has long claimed exploitation of this oil area³¹⁶.

Giuseppe Zamberletti, Christian-democratic undersecretary for Foreign Affairs in 1980, advanced the hypothesis of the Ustica Massacre as the warning and the Bologna Massacre as the concrete revenge for the flourishing of a Mediterranean panorama putting the Libyan diplomatic appeasement to the test³¹⁷.

Arab States embodied different characters in the phenomenon of International Terrorism, as principals, negotiators and hosting countries for fugitives³¹⁸ and there was the possibility of structured financing under the “National Palestinian Capital”, probably granted by Libya, Syria, Iraq and Egypt to the most extremist terrorist fringes³¹⁹.

As a consequence, the hypothetical nature of this inherent avenue of investigation in the dynamics of international relations involving the Mediterranean certainly deserves its historical unique analysis.

It should be noted that the allusion would focus on a “principal” role, leaving the operation to terrorist organisations financed and hired by

³¹⁵ Ivi, p. 41

³¹⁶ Ranci Ortigosa, C. (2015). *La strage di Ustica nell'opinione pubblica italiana (1980-1992): analisi di un caso politico e mediatico*. P.141

³¹⁷ Ivi., p.143

³¹⁸ Lomellini, V. (2022). *Il «lodo Moro»: Terrorismo e ragion di Stato 1969-1986*. Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa P.28

³¹⁹ Ivi, p.68

the Libyan actor, such as the Carlos Group itself, which, as we have seen, forged links in the service of the so-called 'rogue states', including Libya.

The Middle-Eastern “playing rules” have moulded the European landscape, entering the domestic European political direction in a very impacting manner. With this awareness, the prominent Libyan actor’s role cannot be the object of an incomplete evaluation.

CONCLUSION

It was possible to outline an investigative and historical path to try to give truth to an event always described as belonging to an entirely national entity. On the contrary, the importance of understanding the framework of international relations, especially of the operations of non-state groups, capable of adopting the instrument of terrorism for the benefit of their own diplomatic interests and global representation, was highlighted. Documents have revealed that this was done by the Palestinian Resistance, first with the P.L.O. and later with the F.P.L.P., forcing negotiations even with the most extremist and radical group and making it arduous for Western countries to preserve their firmness in front of violent entities.

The arrest of Abu Anzeh Saleh revealed a stance characterised by demands and threats, highlighting the ongoing dialogues and communications with the Italian state, as well as the adverse reactions and possible retaliations that could result if these demands were refused.

The figure of Thomas Kram and his presence in Bologna would certainly deserve more in-depth research of documents, which so far seem to have expressed the Italian police bodies' awareness of his operations and his connection to a terrorist network, specifically on the information that the Italian Police were able to deliver to the German Interpol on the afterwards of the Massacre on 9th Augusto 1980.

The parallelism with dynamics unfolding in neighbouring European contexts certainly represents an additional enriching element, allowing a wider observation of the phenomenon of the publicity terrorism assimilated by the Palestinian Resistance. In this context, documents suggest that SISMI was aware of those events in 1982 when receiving details of the French inquiry on the Capitole attack.

The operations and international connections concerning the P.F.L.P., the Carlos group and, with a brief hint of analysis, Libya, were the

subject of study and seem to fit clearly into the historical framework of those years.

The Palestinian track to the Bologna Massacre has been set aside by several figures, mainly as a consequence of the rejection of a Lodo Moro that envisaged some sort of agreement. However, it has been elucidated how, despite the lack of written statements, a promise to safeguard Italian territory from Palestinian violence seems to be an element of concrete consideration, even to the point of being instrumentalised in threats made by the Front itself, by the most extremist wing of the Palestinian Resistance, the same wing that saw itself linked to the so-called Rogue States, including Libya itself.

It was then investigated that in the 1970s and 1980s, the attention of European authorities, especially those in the East, followed in the footsteps of the group led by Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, particularly known for his stays in Czechoslovakia, his bases in Libya, the alleged presence of R.B. elements there and his links with the P.F.L.P.

The objective of this research was sought in a drawing on the operational context of international actors involved in the investigative lead to the Bologna Massacre of 2nd August 1980 and how this fitted into the positioning of our own country in the context of international dynamics.

Many other factors should merit in-depth analysis, such as an alleged acquaintance between Abu Anzeh Saleh and the Judge Aldo Gentile, the disappearance of the journalists Toni and De Palo killed in Lebanon in September 1980 by the P.F.L.P. and a deepening of the hypothesis of interference by Libya, also in the context a link between the Bologna and Ustica massacres on 27th June 1980.

Middle Eastern dynamics have definitely been a pivotal element in Italian foreign policy, but as far as it has been possible to define, even the soil within our borders has had to reckon with being the target and object of strategies by groups belonging to the Arab-Palestinian cause. This exceptionality seems to have led the Italian services, but also the

leadership, to take action in order to preserve the security of the state and its citizens, even going against an Atlantic alliance required international allegiances of a different nature. It is necessary to understand whether this has been enough, or whether the power of the State within a pre-constituted international system entails unavoidable limitations.

A historiographical approach to the identification of new potential avenues for historical events of this calibre makes room for new possibilities and understandings, which have hitherto been denied to public awareness.

This is a decisive ambition, but one that deserves to be attempted to offer truth to those who never reached their destination on 2nd August 1980.

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