

5 Construction of a Willing Martyr

5.1 *Opposing Narratives and Representations: Red Brigades Versus Italian State Versus Aldo Moro*

Virtually every one of the first Christian martyrologies reaches its climax in the public arena of the games. These games had the function not only of entertaining, but also of holding together a complex network of political, religious, and social elements of the empire. As Paul Middleton observes, «in the stadium, the power, justice, and glory of the empire were celebrated amid the spectacle of gladiator duels, wild beasts, and the execution of criminals.»¹ The games were thus a form of representation, glorification and celebration of both the political power and the legal system, of both the executive and legal authority. The trials, the fights with beasts, the executions, the tortures inflicted upon the members of the Christian communities can be considered, from this point of view, to be part of this system of practices, which enforced and glorified political authority and the exercise of violence, which were experienced as both legal and legitimate.

Martyrological representations produced by the first Christian communities radically opposed these practices of the glorification and representation of power. The first Christian martyrologies did not refer to a system of rules created and enforced through social or governmental institutions, but to certain ethical norms and values, which were experienced and represented as not identical to the law in force. Since there was no organized and legitimized institution to guarantee these norms and values and the members of the Christian communities radically rejected the legislation and the legitimacy of the authority that enforced and applied the law, one can say that martyrological representations were initially anti-legal. However, what they implicitly or explicitly criticized was often not the legal system as such, but the extra-legal effect of legitimization, challenging the fundamental moral norms and values to which the legal system referred.

Describing the context in which Christian martyrologies emerged in formal terms, we can distinguish between two opposite ways of representing and narrating actions and events related to trials and their punitive, often violent effects. The condition for the emergence of such different represen-

1 Middleton 2011, 58.

tations is the presence of at least two large conflicting groups, one of which controls political and juridical institutions and state apparatuses, while the other does not. The situation can also be described in the following way: there is a context of political struggle between two groups—between individuals who identify themselves with two symbolically and discursively constructed forms of social and/or political community—in which the judicial authority enforced by one group brings to trial one or more of the other group's members. Both groups produce different narratives referring to the actions and events related to the trial. The first narrative has the function of legitimizing the decisions of the juridical authority by referring to law and ethics, while the second one attempts to delegitimize these decisions by highlighting its oppressive and unethical character.

Also in the socio-political context in which the kidnapping, imprisonment, and assassination of Aldo Moro occurred, two fronts were «contending» for legitimacy, which produced and implemented two opposing narratives: on the one hand, in their communiqués the Red Brigades (BR) represented Aldo Moro as the accused in a trial against the «Imperialist State of the Multinationals» (SIM); on the other hand, representatives of the Italian government, of political parties and most parts of the media represented Aldo Moro first as a great statesman who embodied the best virtues and characteristics of a brave and committed politician, then as a hostage at the mercy of his kidnappers, and finally as a martyr who died for the salvation of the Italian Republic. But here the situation is, in a sense, completely overturned, insofar as here was a group, without political legitimacy and which did not refer to an institutionalized legal system, implementing the trial's narrative. Conversely, representatives and supporters of the generally recognized political authority and political groups produced martyrological representations.

The implementation of the trial's narrative by the BR was a result of their self-understanding as the true avant-garde of proletarian revolution as well as part of their propaganda strategy. They understood and represented their actions as part of a legitimate trial, in which not only the behavior of Aldo Moro, but of the representatives of the whole political system was indicted. It is worth mentioning some of the answers given to journalist Giorgio Bocca by those members of the BR who participated in the Fritz operation. The journalist asked them why they decided to kidnap Moro and what were the goals of the operation. Lauro Azzolini suggested one reason—hate for the Christian Democracy (DC)—and three goals: to *convince* the proletariat, through a demonstration of military power and effi-

ciency, that revolution by means of violence was feasible; to *understand*, through the interrogation of Moro, the structures of power; and to obtain the *recognition* of political prisoners.² In other words, for Azzolini the operation was, at the same time, a performance with an appellative function, a means of acquiring otherwise inaccessible knowledge, and a political instrument to force the state to no longer deal with the BR as if they were a group of criminals, but as a legitimate political group.

Other members of the terrorist organization summarized the operation's goal a little differently. The operation's chief, Mario Moretti, emphasized the appellative function of the operation, but minimized the intention of discovering hidden truths or becoming aware of secret information:

Why Moro? Because he was, for almost two decades, the supreme executor of power in Italy, because he was the demiurge of Bourgeois power, present in mediations and in decisive choices. [...] Someone has tried to attribute to us interests and methods of interrogation that we never had. The interrogations were secondary to the action. The important thing for us was not what Moro would have said, but what the imprisonment would have moved, unleashed in the revolutionary area. Do you really believe that we organized an operation of that kind, in which we played our entire organization, to uncover the scandals of the Christian Democracy? They were not really there to be uncovered; all of Italy knew and is aware of them; they are, so to speak, routine, normality.³

Another member of the operation, Valerio Morucci, stressed in particular the objective of obtaining political recognition:

The ideological apparatus of the BR [...] is reduced essentially into two parts, rather a corollary, the SIM and the Second Republic. The SIM or Imperialist State of the Multinationals or global capitalist super-gov-

2 See Bocca 1985, 205–206.

3 Bocca 1985, 206–207; it.: «Perché Moro? Ma perché sua era, da almeno vent'anni, la suprema gestione del potere in Italia, perché era il demiurgo del potere Borghese, presente nelle mediazioni e nelle scelte decisive. [...] Qualcuno ha voluto attribuirci interessi e metodi inquisitori che non abbiamo mai avuto. Gli interrogatori sarebbero stati secondari all'azione. L'importante per noi non era ciò che Moro avrebbe detto, ma ciò che il sequestro avrebbe smosso, scatenato nell'area rivoluzionaria. Le pare che avremmo organizzato una operazione di quel tipo, in cui giocavamo tutta la nostra organizzazione, per scoprire gli scandali democristiani? Ma quelli non erano proprio da scoprire, l'Italia intera conosceva e li conosce, sono, per così dire, routine, normalità.»

ernment, which Moro is the representative of in Italy as a leader of the DC [Christian Democracy]. [...] Starting from the false but dogmatic premise that there is a SIM, everything must follow: Moro is the irreplaceable pivot of the imperialist project, the DC cannot do without him, the other parties cannot do without the DC; so the game is won at the start, the state will be forced to deal, to pay a very high price. The justicialist goal does not exist, the BR do not care to be told off by Moro about the misdeeds of the DC [...]. Moro was not doomed from the start, but the price for his life was the political recognition of the BR by the DC, from the DC in the first place as a guarantor of the SIM and the other parties. [...] What else would the exchange between the political prisoner Moro and some of the political prisoners of the revolutionary area have been if not a political recognition? Not their mere release. That's why the executive rejected the proposals of the Socialists who wanted the release, but reaffirmed the absence of recognition. [...] Pope Paul VI, UN Secretary Waldheim, and Arafat made recognitions of that type, but the BR wanted the recognition of the DC.⁴

It is interesting to note that both Morucci and Moretti excluded a «justicialist» intention, arguing that the goal was not to try Aldo Moro in order to bring out the «misdeeds of the DC». But if this is true, why, in the first communiqué issued by the BR on March 18, 1978, two days after the attack in via Fani, did they explicitly write about a trial against Moro and the DC?

4 Bocca 1985, 206, 220; it.: «L'apparato ideologico delle BR [...] si reduce in sostanza a due punti, anzi a un corollario, il SIM e la Seconda repubblica. Il SIM o stato imperialista delle multinazionali o supergoverno capitalistico mondiale, di cui Moro è il rappresentante in Italia come leader della DC [...]. Partendo dalla premessa falsa ma dogmatica che esiste il SIM, tutto ne deriva: Moro è il perno insostituibile del progetto imperialistico, la DC non può fare a meno di lui, gli altri partiti non possono fare a meno della DC; dunque la partita è vinta in partenza, lo stato sarà costretto a trattare, a pagare un prezzo altissimo. L'obiettivo giustizialista non esiste, alle BR non interessa farsi raccontare da Moro le malefatte della DC. [...] Moro non era condannato in partenza, ma il prezzo della sua vita era il riconoscimento politico delle BR da parte della DC, da lei *in primis* come garante del SIM e degli altri partiti. [...] Che altro se non il riconoscimento politico era lo scambio fra il prigioniero politico Moro e alcuni prigionieri politici dell'area rivoluzionaria? Non la loro semplice scarcerazione. Ecco perché l'esecutivo respinse le proposte dei socialisti che volevano la scarcerazione, mentre riaffermavano il no al riconoscimento. [...] Riconoscimenti di quel tipo di furono da parte del papa, paolo VI, dal segretario dell'ONU, Waldheim, da Arafat, ma le BR volevano quello della DC.»

It is necessary to extend and further deepen the trial against the regime [...]. This is one of the directives by which the Movement of the proletariat Offensive Resistance marches. [...] Let it be clear then that with the capture of Aldo Moro, and the trial in which he will be submitted to a People's Court, we do not intend to «end the match», nor much less to show off a «symbol», but to develop a password by which the entire Movement of Offensive Resistance is already measuring itself, to make it stronger, more mature, more incisive and organized. We intend to mobilize the vastest and most unified armed initiative toward the ultimate development of the class war for communism; to carry the fight to the Imperialist State of the Multinationals; to disarticulate the structures, the projects of the imperialist bourgeoisie by attacking the political-economic-military personnel who are its expression.⁵

What does organizing a trial in order «to develop a password» mean? Behind this militaristic rhetoric lurks the idea of providing an example that the «proletariat» or, more generally, the «people» could imitate. The BR understood themselves as fighting in an avant-garde way, as a sort of proletarian military elite who were «performing» a ritual trial whose main function was to appeal to the people to reinforce and reproduce the same ritual structure of accusation, judgment and execution. They used judicial rhetoric in the (perhaps unconscious) belief that it served to legitimize the use of violence by making it appear as part of the truthful and meaningful revolutionary process of liberation. The paradox of all this is that, to achieve this effect, the BR sought the recognition of the DC, which for them was equivalent to the so-called SIM; they wanted to be recognized as a legitimate, although hostile, political force. In other words, they seemed to believe that only through recognition of their political identity by the state could the performance succeed, appealing to the people, who would finally begin the «ultimate revolution».

5 Brigate Rosse 1978a, 35; it.: «Bisogna estendere e approfondire il processo al regime [...]. È questa una delle direttrici su cui è possibile far marciare il Movimento di Resistenza Proletario Offensivo. [...] Sia chiaro quindi che con la cattura di Aldo Moro, il processo al quale verrà sottoposto da un Tribunale del Popolo, non intendiamo «chiudere la partita» né tanto meno sbandierare un «simbolo», ma sviluppare una parola d'ordine su cui tutto il Movimento di Resistenza Offensivo si sta già misurando, rendendolo più forte, più maturo, più incisivo e più organizzato. Intendiamo mobilitare la più vasta e unitaria iniziativa armata per l'ulteriore crescita della guerra di classe per il comunismo. Portare l'attacco allo Stato Imperialista delle Multinazionali. Disarticolare le strutture, i progetti della borghesia imperialista attaccando il personale politico-economico-militare che ne è l'espressione.»

The BR, by staging a trial and using legal–procedural language in their communiqués, tried to present themselves as a legitimate alternative to state institutions. It was an attempt to reinforce a set of organized and regularized expressions, figures and activities related to official trials, namely one of the central instruments for controlling and punishing an individual's behavior, as a procedure of prefiguration, that is: as an attempt to copy established rhetorical forms and narrative patterns, which historically have proved performatively effective. Although it may seem illogical, the BR tried to replace the state apparatuses by copying and replicating their structures, practices, and semiotic and rhetorical forms. What is significant here is a postscript at the end of the aforementioned first communiqué:

In relation to the trial in Turin, we have already said that the trial, through which a Special Court wants to quash the Communist Revolution, is nothing but a farce. Another trial is taking place in the country, in which the struggles of the proletariat against its imperialist enemy can be seen, which in the development of the Civil War for the construction of a Communist Society, charges and tries the bourgeoisie and its servants. [...] We also consider all the imprisoned communist fighters hostages in the hands of the enemy and we will treat any retaliation or reprisal as what they are: war crimes.⁶

The rhetorical strategy adopted here operates with the distinction falsity/authenticity: the trial in Turin, in which the historical BR leaders were accused, is represented as a «farce», an illegitimate political *mise-en-scène*, and is contrasted to the «real» trial, in which the proletariat accuses and tries the bourgeoisie. The attribution of truthfulness, which was exemplary of their own «trial», is undoubtedly an attempt to increase their performative efficacy through language and rhetoric.

The BR understood the trial against Aldo Moro and the DC as part of a guerrilla strategy pursuing multiple goals. As a general purpose, they wanted to light the spark of the revolution. More concretely, they wanted to interrupt the «long Communist march into the institutions» to affirm the

6 Brigade Rosse 1978a, 36; it.: «Sul processo di Torino. Abbiamo già detto che il processo attraverso il quale un Tribunale Speciale vorrebbe liquidare la Rivoluzione Comunista, non può che essere una farsa. Ben altro processo è in atto nel paese, è quello che vive nelle lotte del proletariato contro il nemico imperialista, che nello svilupparsi della Guerra Civile per la costruzione di una Società Comunista, mette sotto accusa la borghesia e i suoi servi. [...] Riteniamo inoltre tutti i combattenti comunisti imprigionati, ostaggi nelle mani del nemico e sapremo trattare eventuali ritorsioni o rappresaglie per quello che sono: crimini di guerra.»

prospect of the revolutionary fight and lay the groundwork for their own hegemony within the left. Moreover, they wanted to create contradictions within the political forces. The fate of the hostage, Moretti said, depended on the contradictions that would emerge in the political forces, and «the execution of the prisoner was an eventuality that we could not discard» if such contradictions did not emerge, as actually happened in the 55 days of Moro's imprisonment.⁷ According to Barbara Balzerani, another member of the organization, for the BR there was a «war between two opposing armies, that of the state that does not hesitate to kill to maintain the established order and that of the «revolutionary avant-garde» that has decided to respond to the level imposed by power.»⁸ After carrying out many attacks in the previous year, in early 1978, terrorists tried to provoke neo-fascist environments with the murder of two members of the Italian Social Movement (MSI). The violent reaction that ensued seemed to set up a situation of civil war. In a similar way, with the abduction of Moro, they wanted to spread the feeling that Italy was a country in disorder and without a government capable of governing, forcing the DC and other parties to reveal their impotence or to react with authoritarian and anti-democratic measures.⁹

The BR's trial rhetoric was thus inseparably tied to war rhetoric. The trial of Moro and the DC took on the connotation of a war crimes trial. The BR also justified the killing of Moro's five bodyguards with war rhetoric. In various testimonies released later on in prison, they spoke of their concern to avoid killing innocent victims, such as locals, workers or bystanders, but for the bodyguards the discourse was different: «One could object that the life of a policeman is not less worthy than that of a child, but that is another discourse. At that moment, we are at war with the state: the clash is between Moro's bodyguards and us. It is either us or them. If we fail, our comrades die.»¹⁰ De facto, the killing of the bodyguards was

7 Moretti 2000, 117; it.: «L'esecuzione dell'ostaggio era una eventualità che non potevamo scartare.»

8 Balzerani 1998, 74–75; it.: «[...] guerra tra due eserciti contrapposti, quello dello Stato che non esita ad uccidere per mantenere l'ordine costituito e quello dell'«avanguardia rivoluzionaria» che ha deciso di rispondere sul terreno imposto dal potere.»

9 See Giovagnoli 2009, 45.

10 Moretti 2000, 121–122; it.: «Si può obiettare che la vita di un poliziotto non vale meno di quella di un bambino, ma questo è un altro discorso. In quel momento noi con lo stato siamo in guerra: lo scontro è tra noi e la scorta di Moro. O noi o loro. Se sbagliamo muoiono dei compagni.»

not accepted by most of those who, within the worker and student movements and in general within the extra-parliamentary left, had so far sympathized with the BR. As theater director and actor Marco Baliani observed, the 55 days of Moro's captivity were like a «watershed for an entire generation, my generation. It was as though in those days there came to maturity a deep laceration that may have already existed, but only fully manifested itself, became visible, in that moment.»¹¹ This change within the worker and student movements has been well recorded, albeit with a certain amount of rhetoric, by *L'Unità*, who two days after the attack wrote that «people hear that; they know that the assassinated carabinieri and agents are their brothers; they are workers like us. The pain for this scattered blood is deep and authentic among the people.»¹²

Most of the representatives of the state apparatuses and of the government as well as of the majority of the press reacted to the BR's trial narrative by adopting and reinforcing the rhetoric and emplotment strategies which, as we have seen, came to establish themselves as an alternative and opposing way of representing and narrating a trial as early as from the first century AD. We are here faced with a reversal of roles and language games: Aldo Moro became the symbol of the body politic of the wounded nation, the class and the political system on trial, the martyr who suffered and died for the welfare and safety of the Italian Republic. In this martyrological narrative, the BR are portrayed as an evil force, infernal beasts craving only destruction and death.

Both trial and martyrological narratives had different strategies of appellation and of construction of a political community. In fact, the struggle between the two narratives is not only a struggle for the establishment and propagation of a certain image of Moro—martyr vs. politician co-responsible for all the evil that happened in Italy after World War II—but also for the hegemony over the concept of «people» and in general over the idea of the body politic. The discursive effort to establish who the people are and who is the legitimate representative of the people is based on what Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau describe as «constitutive exclusion», by which all particular notions of inclusion are established.¹³ All forms of representa-

11 Baliani 2011, 27.

12 Spriano, Paolo, «La piazza e lo Stato», in: *L'Unità*, 18.3.1978, 1; it.: «La gente lo sente, lo sa che i carabinieri e gli agenti assassinati sono suoi fratelli, sono lavoratori come noi. Il dolore per questo sangue sparso è profondo, autentico in mezzo al popolo.»

13 See Mouffe/Laclau 1986.

tion of political community are based on implicit or explicit lines of demarcation between an inside and an outside. So, when the BR, the political parties, the media, the representatives of government and state institutions make assertions about who the people are, there is always someone who is excluded from this collective identity. As Judith Butler observes,

when the struggle over deciding who belongs to «the people» gets intense, one group opposes its own version of «the people» to those who are outside, those considered to threaten «the people», or to oppose the proposed version of «the people». As a result, we have (a) those who seek to define the people (a group much smaller than the people they seek to define), (b) the people defined (and demarcated) in the course of that discursive wager, (c) the people who are not «the people», and (d) those who are trying to establish that last group as part of the people.¹⁴

This is exactly what happened within the discursive struggle for the hegemony over the representation of the events of spring 1978. The BR tried to define «the people» as the Italian proletariat and themselves as the legitimate revolutionary avant-garde who acted and spoke for this people, by excluding the representatives of the political parties in Parliament, judges, police officers and other employees of the state apparatuses, and in general all members of the so-called bourgeoisie. They did that through performative acts of delimitation, which took the forms of both linguistic and bodily performativity. In fact, the killings of Moro's five bodyguards on March 16 and of Aldo Moro himself on May 9, like so many other political assassinations and bombings, were not (only) military operations, but (especially) performances with which the BR wanted to demarcate themselves from other groups of the parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary left. Their message was: we are the only true revolutionary vanguard, because we not only talk but are willing to and also capable of killing the enemies of the people. And, as we have just seen, they also regarded their actions as examples to be given to the people, that is, as performances with which they appealed to the people to imitate them. From this point of view, the ultimate line of demarcation that defined the BR's idea of who is part of the people and who is excluded, was not primarily the distinction between the working-class and bourgeoisie, but the distinction between those who had the will to act violently and those who did not. But since each performance can be interpreted by the public, other than as intended by the agents of

14 Butler 2015, 4.

the performance itself, the BR issued their communiqués, that is, linguistic performances, through which they tried to represent their actions not as assassinations but as legitimate executions.

On the other side, the government and most of the media operated by defining the BR as an actual and concrete emanation of a permanent and omnipresent danger, a will of violence that threatened the political body of the nation and that could potentially break out at any moment. Within the mythical narrative of the nation-state, Aldo Moro assumed the role of the martyr that is willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the threatened «people». To be willing to use violence to achieve its own ends, the state must assume the monopoly on violence and even be willing to sacrifice its own citizens; the individual body is an expendable commodity for the wellbeing of the political body. Not only were the BR discursively excluded from the body politic, but so was anyone who challenged the hegemonic narrative, even Aldo Moro himself. From the moment he began to write in his letters that the state had to deal with the terrorists, he challenged and criticized a series of ethical and political premises on which nation-state mythology is based. Representatives of the government and institutions as well as the majority of the media responded to this criticism with discursive practices intended to deconstruct and cancel out Moro's political identity, in order to make him appear as an individual reduced to mere life, *de facto* excluding him from the body politic. This argument will be deepened further.

During the 55 days of Moro's captivity, there were some attempts to represent and narrate what was happening in an alternative and subversive way, challenging both the trial and martyrological narratives. In fact, not all the social actors who were involved in this mammoth media spectacularization of the kidnapping, imprisonment and assassination of Aldo Moro aligned themselves with either the rhetoric and emplotment strategies of the BR on the one hand, or those of the political parties, the government and most of the media on the other. What makes the case so interesting is in fact that Aldo Moro himself tried to resist. Leonardo Sciascia wrote that Aldo Moro, before being kidnapped and during his entire political career, used language as a weapon because he was aware of «the Italian and Catholic secret of how to disperse the new into the old, to use every new tool to serve the ancient rules and, mainly, to produce negative knowl-

edge of human nature, in negativity.»¹⁵ Well, after his abduction, stripped of power, Aldo Moro tried to use the old to say something new or at least to subvert what the ruling parties, the government and most of the media were saying. From a formal point of view, Moro's attitude resembles that of Bartleby in Melville's story, which, as we saw in chapter two, is summed up in the formula *I would prefer not to*.¹⁶ In his letters, the Christian Democrat politician used language units and rhetorical forms linked to martyrological and trial narratives in a subversive way, trying to give a different connotation to words like «people», «state», «guilt», «accusation», «judgment», «salvation», and so on. He reinforced semantic and rhetorical elements used in both trial and martyrological narratives, but in a completely different way. He, in some ways, assumed the role of a martyr but held it against those who did not want, or at least did nothing, to save him.

Moro opposed the vision of man and politics that was operative in the national state mythology. He inverted the logic of the «reason of state», arguing that the state and its apparatuses lose all sense, all reason for being, if their actions are not based on the ethical principle of the sanctity of human life. As we saw, he actually supported this conception of the state and of human life in some of his academic writings and political speeches. In the letters he wrote from the «people's prison», he reaffirmed his conviction, attempting not only to save himself, but to subvert and withstand a dangerous ideology, which considers men to be means for political purposes and mere life to be expendable, instead of looking at human life, speaking in Kantian terms, as an end in itself. The words and sentences written by Moro in captivity are like a crack in the wall of the hegemonic representations and narratives of what happened in the spring of 1978; they have operated and still operate as examples and points of departure for a variety of other representations and narratives that seek to react to, criticize and deconstruct the dominant political ideology, the state mythology and doxology.

I identified three different ways of representing and narrating the events of 1978, three different uses of language units and rhetorical forms. All three referred to the same events and emerged within the same general social, cultural and political context, but with different objectives and strategies. All three revolve around the figure of Aldo Moro: Moro as a defen-

15 Sciascia 1978, 34; it.: «Il segreto italiano e cattolico di disperdere il nuovo nel vecchio, di usare ogni nuovo strumento per servire regole antiche e principalmente, di una conoscenza tutta in negativo, in negatività, della natura umana.»

16 See Agamben/Deleuze 2012; Whyte 2009.

dant accused of being the person most responsible for all the evils caused by the capitalist and imperialist bourgeoisie in Italy; Moro as a martyr, to be sacrificed for the safety of the Republic; and finally, Moro as a human being to be saved. The first two of these narratives operate according to mythological narrative mechanisms. They reduce the complexity of reality, they divide humanity by resorting to the dichotomy of good versus evil, they represent history as an eternal fight between state and mankind, between Leviathan and Behemoth. They are similar since they are based on the same ideological paradigms, and they need each other to survive and reproduce. The pseudo-messianic narrative of the BR does nothing more than reverse and reinforce the interpretative and representative patterns of the nation-state mythology, because it absolutizes and substantializes good and evil, conceives violence as the engine of history and the only tool to change it and, above all, understands the human being as an expendable commodity. The BR regarded themselves as the inheritors of the Resistance, as the fighters on the side of the oppressed, but instead they acted, spoke, and wrote reproducing practices and narratives of oppression. Only the third strategy of representation and narration breaks down and completely distances itself from the ideological paradigms and the oppressive practices of nation-state mythology. It is able to offer resistance to the instrumental use of the martyr figure, to the legitimization of violence (both that practiced by the state and by terrorist organizations), and to the absolutization of good and evil because it uses language and rhetorical forms *poetically* (see chapter two). By defining these linguistic and discursive performances as «poetic», I will argue that not only can art and poetry resist hegemonic narratives, but rather that acritic and para-doxological discursive practices, to be effective, must act as *poetry* and thus, in line with the definition given by Agamben, bring to light the historicity of linguistic forms that they use. Aldo Moro's letters, as well as other media and social actors who have been inspired by these letters, operate exactly in this way: they expose and unmask the instrumental use of language, the rhetorical mechanism through which signs and words are hypostatized so that representations of non-discursive facts, events, and actions appear to be absolutely correspond to reality. In other words, they oppose and radically reject hegemonic political discourse through the disempowerment of its rhetorical and linguistic tools and the deconstruction of its paradigms.¹⁷

17 I already mentioned in chapter two that the martyrological narrative pattern was not the only one used to approach and give certain moral, historical and political significance to the events of the spring of 1978. The interpretative model that

5.2 The Image of Moro Before the Kidnapping

Aldo Moro was known, before the BR kidnapped him, especially for his difficult language, which was often incomprehensible to those who were not deep connoisseurs of the jargon used by the political and cultural elite of the country. He was famous for his ability to defend the DC from corruption charges and scandals with very long and exhausting speeches in Parliament. Since the end of the war, the DC leaders and parliamentarians were perpetually involved in scandals.¹⁸ Further, the party was notorious for the so-called strategy of *logoramento* (dragging-out), which consisted in the endless prolongation of parliamentary debates and for holding off legislative action. In 30 years of political supremacy (from the election of the First Republican Parliament in 1948 to 1978) very few significant laws were passed; for the most part, the laws that were successfully passed in Parliament were known as *leggine* (little laws).¹⁹ Moro was one of the most enduring leaders of the DC from the beginning of its supremacy. He was Prime Minister five times (three times from 1964 to 1968 and twice from 1974 to 1976) and held many diverse political positions.²⁰ In this long political career, he constantly played the role of the «defender to the bitter end» of the DC. As observed by Wagner-Pacifi, «where Aldo Moro *was* an archetypical Christian Democrat though was his natural proclivity toward logoramento. Moro's mode of logoramento was linguistic.»²¹

The writer, poet and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini was probably one of the first Italian intellectuals to criticize the instrumental use of language by the DC and in particular by Aldo Moro. In an article published in the *Corriere della Sera* in February 1975, which became popular as the «Article of the Fireflies», he diagnosed the transition from a totally repressive political regime founded on Fascists values—«the continuity between Fascist Fas-

shaped the Moro affair as a conflict between generations, as well as the narrative modality of conspiracy based on the idea that the BR were puppets controlled by obscure international political right-wing forces or a «grand old man», also played a central role.

18 See Wagner-Pacifi 1986, 32.

19 One important reason, among others, for the failure of successful parliamentary legislation was the different interpretation that the two major parties, the PCI and DC, had of the Constitution. See Wagner-Pacifi 1986, 33.

20 National Secretary of the Christian Democracy (1959–1964); Minister of Justice (1955–1957); Minister of Public Education (1957–1959); Minister of Foreign Affairs (1964–1974); President of the National Council of the Christian Democracy (1976–1978).

21 Wagner-Pacifi 1986, 34.

cism and Christian Democratic Fascism is complete and absolute»—to a uniquely and completely capitalist regime. Pasolini argued that the DC had obtained an absolute majority in the 1948 elections through the votes of the peasantry, managed by the Vatican, propagating the same values on which the Fascist regime was already based: «the Church, Fatherland, family, obedience, discipline, order, savings, and morality».²² These values were «real» as they were rooted in the «agricultural and paleo-industrial» Italian culture. This reality, he argued, got lost the moment when these values were transformed into «national values», becoming a form of «atrocious, stupid, and repressive state conformity: the conformity of Fascist power and Christian Democratic power.»²³ Through the industrial homologation, Italians suffered a «mutation» that turned them into «degenerate, ridiculous, monstrous, criminal people». The engine of this mutation is, according to Pasolini, «the power of compulsive consumer behavior».²⁴

The radical criticism that Pasolini moved through the political class is that politicians had not noticed this mutation. It is at this point in his argumentation that the author addressed the «completely new language» used by Moro:

The men of power of the Christian Democracy [...] have not noticed that it [the power] was «different»: incommensurable not only to them, but to all forms of civilization. As always (see Gramsci), one could only notice the symptoms within language. In the phase of transition—namely «during» the disappearance of fireflies—the men of power in the Christian Democracy quite abruptly changed their way of expressing themselves, adopting a completely new language (which is after all as incomprehensible as Latin), especially Aldo Moro, who (for an enigmatic correlation) appears as the least implicated of them all in the

22 Pasolini, Pier Paolo, «Il vuoto del potere», *Corriere della Sera*, 2.2.1975, 1; it.: «[...] la Chiesa, la Patria, la famiglia, l'obbedienza, la disciplina, l'ordine, il risparmio, la moralità.»

23 Pasolini, Pier Paolo, «Il vuoto del potere», *Corriere della Sera*, 2.2.1975, 1; it.: «Nel momento in cui venivano assunti a «valori» nazionali non potevano che perdere ogni realtà, e divenire atroce, stupido, repressivo conformismo di Stato: il conformismo del potere fascista e democristiano.»

24 Pasolini, Pier Paolo, «Il vuoto del potere», *Corriere della Sera*, 2.2.1975, 1; it.: «[...] un popolo degenerato, ridicolo, mostruoso, criminale. [...] il comportamento coatto del potere dei consumi.»

horrible things that have been organized since '69 to the present day, in an attempt, so far formally successful, to still retain power.²⁵

There are at least three important things to highlight. In the first place, Pasolini referred to 1969, the year of the Piazza Fontana bombing, and more or less explicitly suggested that according to him the leaders of the DC were implicated in it. In doing so, he seemed at least to partially consider the possibility of a political conspiracy, aimed at increasing the tension in Italy to ensure the maintenance of power by the ruling class. Pasolini's thesis falls partially into what I have previously called the narrative of conspiracy.²⁶ The hypothesis that some members of the ruling class were implicated in some of the massacres that happened in Italy during the so-called «years of lead» plays a central role in Italy's cultural imaginary. The possible involvement of representatives of political parties, the government, the military, etc. in the Moro case is still the subject of debate in the media and in the new Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry. The Piazza Fontana bombing and the role played during the event by the secret services, the military apparatus and some representatives of the political class—last but

25 Pasolini, Pier Paolo, «Il vuoto del potere», *Corriere della Sera*, 2.2.1975, 1; it.: «Gli uomini del potere democristiani [...] non si sono accorti che esso era «altro»: incommensurabile non solo a loro ma a tutta una forma di civiltà. Come sempre (cfr. Gramsci) solo nella lingua si sono avuti dei sintomi. Nella fase di transizione – ossia «durante» la scomparsa delle lucciole – gli uomini di potere democristiani hanno quasi bruscamente cambiato il loro modo di esprimersi, adottando un linguaggio completamente nuovo (del resto incomprensibile come il latino): specialmente Aldo Moro: cioè (per una enigmatica correlazione) colui che appare come il meno implicato di tutti nelle cose orribili che sono state organizzate dal '69 ad oggi, nel tentativo, finora formalmente riuscito, di conservare comunque il potere.»

26 It should be said, however, that until now what happened in that period still remains unclear and that, in some cases, the involvement of politicians and representatives of the state apparatuses has been proven not only by historians, but also by magistrates. As Anna Cento Bull and Philip Cooke pointedly observe, «there exists very substantial circumstantial evidence pointing in the direction of their [of part of the state apparatuses, especially secret service and parts of the armed forces] involvement in neo-fascist terrorism, at least in the sense of aiding and abetting their subversive activities and/or protecting them from persecution. Another suspicion is that the State did not do everything it could to fight left-wing terrorism, allowing it some space to develop in order to keep the Communist Party at bay, since the latter's gradual path to power was jeopardized by the emergence of revolutionary groups to its left. [...] In short, there are sufficient elements to argue that the behavior of the Italian State in fighting armed terrorism has been relatively opaque and twisted» (Bull/Cooke 2013, xii).

not least by Aldo Moro —are the subject of the Film *ROMANZO DI UNA STRAGE* (Marco Tullio Giordana, IT 2012). As I will highlight and discuss in the seventh chapter, this film traces a *fil rouge*, suggesting a secret, obscure but meaningful interconnection between the bombing of 1969 in Milan and the killing of Aldo Moro in 1978.

Second, Pasolini draws attention to one of the basic premises of this investigation: the importance of the study of language in identifying and understanding historical, social, cultural and ideological transformations. His reference to Gramsci is significant. As the founding member of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), he considers language an ideological battleground. Through a detailed analysis of the use of language, one can understand the functioning of power mechanisms better: «For a literate and not ideological bourgeois, it is important to remember again, with Gramsci, that if the new Italian reality produces a new language, national Italian, the only way to possess it and to make it your own is to know with absolute clarity the national reality that produces it.»²⁷ Pasolini had already analyzed Moro's language in another article, commenting on a speech made by him for the opening of a highway—the *Autostrada del Sole*—that took place in February 1964. He argued that Moro «has instrumentalized the highway's inauguration to make a political appeal to Italians, telling them something politically very sensitive: to cooperate in overcoming the economic situation and work together in theory and in practice, that is, to be willing to accept personal sacrifices.»²⁸ Moro's speech was, in the analysis and critique of Pasolini, the paradigm of an instrumental and «technological» use of language. For the Italian poet and filmmaker, Moro's speech exemplified, within the language of official politicians, a loss of the prevailing reference to Latin and emphatic classicism, which was replaced with a reference to the efficiency of communicative language and technology. Not without a certain amount of irony, in the «Article of the Fireflies» Pasolini pointed out that this new language remained as «incomprehensible» as

27 Pasolini 1991, 23–24; it.: Per un letterato non ideologicamente borghese si tratta di ricordare ancora una volta, con Gramsci, che se la nuova realtà italiana produce una nuova lingua, l'italiano nazionale, l'unico modo per impossessarsene e farlo proprio, è conoscere con assoluta chiarezza quale è e cos'è quella realtà nazionale che lo produce.»

28 Pasolini 1991, 17; it.: «Moro strumentalizza l'inaugurazione dell'autostrada per fare un appello politico agli italiani, raccontando loro un fatto politicamente assai delicato: quello di cooperare al superamento della congiuntura: cooperare idealmente e praticamente, di essere, cioè, disposti ad affrontare dei sacrifici personali.»

Latin. In other words, it was a new national, technical and instrumental language that hid its own ideological function.

The third interesting point is that Pasolini seems to accuse but at the same time also to absolve Aldo Moro, claiming that a) he, more than others, was the demiurge of the new, incomprehensible political language and that b) he was the least implicated among all of the DC leaders in the massacres and cases of corruption that took place in Italy in those years. He seems to be saying that Aldo Moro was the proponent of a language that has the function of concealing the misdeeds of the DC, but that he was not responsible (or at least less so than others) for the misdeeds themselves. This passage assumed an unsuspected significance after the kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro, being quoted and discussed in many articles and other media referring to the Moro case. It has often been quoted by those who advocate the theory of a conspiracy on a national or international scale as well as by those who interpret it as a sort of Pasolinian prophecy.

In *L'affaire Moro*, Leonardo Sciascia called attention to the prophetic character of this article (which is today still the subject of academic studies and debates).²⁹ The Sicilian writer was particularly concerned by the use of the formulation—placed between brackets by Pasolini—«for an enigmatic correlation». According to Sciascia, in this short parenthesis «there is something like the premonition, like the prefiguration of the *Moro affaire*.»³⁰ The thesis, or rather Sciascia's impression, that the Moro case «had already been written», and how that impression is connected to the idea of a prefiguration in Pasolini's article, will be discussed in the seventh chapter.³¹ For the moment, I want to point out how the image of Moro depicted by Pasolini before the kidnapping has affected the perception and representation of Moro after the kidnapping. Sciascia maintained that it is precisely the fact that Moro, especially in the eyes of critics and enemies of the DC, was «the least involved of all» which gave him «the incontestable and actually alleviating authority to speak on behalf of everyone: power along with sacrifice.»³² He suggested that, precisely because Moro was after all an hon-

29 See Didi-Hubermann 2006.

30 Sciascia 1978, 16; it.: «[...] c'è come il presentimento, come la prefigurazione dell'affaire Moro.»

31 Sciascia 1978, 24–25; it.: «Questo racconto [...] [s]i adeguava all'invincibile impressione che l'affaire Moro fosse già stato scritto, che fosse già compiuta opera letteraria, che vivesse ormai in una sua intoccabile perfezione.»

32 Sciascia 1978, 36; it.: «Ma proprio l'essere meno implicato gli dava, su tutti nella Democrazia Cristiana, l'incontrastabile e anzi alleviante autorità di parlare in nome di tutti, potere e insieme sacrificio.»

est politician and not interested in increasing his own personal power, he could be the perfect apologist and defender of the DC's policy. The writer also seemed to suggest that he was kidnapped precisely for this reason. To be the voice of the DC and as such the embodiment of its power made him the natural and perfect target for the terrorist organization.

The importance of Moro as a defender of the DC is clearly visible if one looks at the last speech that he delivered in Parliament. In this speech, he defended two former ministers of the DC, Luigi Gui and Mario Tanassi, from the accusation of being the recipients of bribes linked to the Lockheed scandal. The Lockheed scandal concerned serious cases of corruption that took place in various countries in the 1970s, and in particular the Netherlands, West Germany, Japan and Italy. Between 1975 and 1976, the US Senate Church Committee (which investigated abuses in governmental operations with respect to intelligence activities) discovered a widespread, consolidated system of corruption practices in the export and sale of weapons by the Lockheed Corporation. In Italy, the scandal involved the delivery of Hercules C-130 aircraft, which had been received by the Air Force since 1972. In 1976, many politicians involved in the negotiations were accused of accepting bribes of billions of *lire* to promote the purchase of the aircrafts. In fact, a 1969 letter by Lockheed's lawyer was discovered in February of the same year, in which he reported that two Italian ministers and a certain «Antelope Cobbler» had requested and received bribes. Rome's prosecutor opened a judicial inquiry when the scandal broke in the Italian press; in March Antonio Lefebvre, an Italian agent for Lockheed, and General Duilio Fanali, the head of the Air Force, were arrested. Some prominent politicians were also implicated in the charges, including the former ministers Luigi Gui and Mario Tanassi.

As President of the DC, Moro spoke in Parliament to defend Gui and Tanassi on March 9, 1977, thus exactly a year before the kidnapping. I want to quote here the most significant passages of this speech, in order to enable the reader to get an idea of Moro's language as well as of his role as defender of the DC:

Prejudicial attitudes, rigid accusatory positions and the unavailability of reflection unfortunately characterized, and it hurts to have to recognize that, this debate. [...] In these oratories the prosecution's framework has not occasionally, but intentionally expanded, reaching, beyond the men, the Party who led Italy for thirty years and is still today, albeit its movements toward the left, in a dominant position and with great responsibility. Its power is not an expression of a regime; it comes not from coercion, but by consensus, by the strong awareness in public

opinion of the importance of ensuring values and ways of life and of the unacceptability of certain global alternative proposals. [...] We are accused of creating a square around Mr. Gui [...]. This is not pure opportunity; it is not a calculation, a preliminary closure before a purifying truth is accepted, which is suited to a democracy that needs to have the courage to identify and to correct any deviation. We are instead faced with a procedural step, which requires a yes or no from us to an accusation. [...] We should say that Gui is guilty [...] and similarly we should think about Mr. Tanassi. But we cannot come to recognize this, neither implicitly nor explicitly, because of reasons of conscience. Conscience, I say, and not utility—indeed, the political reason may suggest a dilatory attitude. [...] Even some of us have looked at this liberating perspective. But we have thought a lot about it. It would be like offering, for our party utility, for a Party alibi, a victim to the reason of State. Thinking more deeply, we have given up [this possibility] and we did, as they say, create a square around Gui, because our conviction is [his] innocence, because we only see suspicions and artifices aimed at contesting a life of dignity, which before was never questioned, a life dedicated not to power games, not to party intrigues, but to the cause of democracy and to the State. [...] We find, in this position, the Christian Democracy united and with it we intend to defend the Christian Democracy as a whole. [...] To anyone who wants to globally overwhelm our experience; to anyone who wants to carry out a trial, moral and political, to be celebrated in the squares, as has been said cynically, we respond with the strongest reaction and with an appeal to public opinion that has not recognized in us a historical guilt and has not wanted our strength decreased. We do not accept being considered corrupt, because it is not true. [...] Dear colleagues, you have announced to us the process in the squares, we tell you that we do not will accept being put before trial. If you have minimum wisdom, [...] we firmly say to you to not underestimate the great force of public opinion, which, for more than three decades, found its expression and its defense in the Christian Democracy.³³

33 Moro 1979, 350–354; it.: «Atteggiamenti pregiudiziali, rigide posizioni accusatorie, indisponibilità alla riflessione hanno caratterizzato purtroppo, duole doverlo riconoscere, questo dibattito. [...] In questi oratori poi il quadro dell'accusa si è, non occasionalmente, ma intenzionalmente dilatato, fino a toccare, al di là degli uomini, il Partito che ha guidato per trent'anni l'Italia ed è ancora oggi, pur negli spostamenti di forza verso sinistra, in una posizione dominante e di alta responsabilità. Il suo potere non è un'espressione di regime; non nasce dalla coercizione,

This speech illustrates well the political climate in Italy prior to the Moro kidnapping. In the previous chapter, we saw that Moro—the *grande tessitore*, as Italian political commentators often called him—wanted to bring the PCI into the government without challenging the DC's state system. The intransigent defense of the DC in his last speech in Parliament unequivocally expresses this position and political strategy. Moro made it explicitly clear to the opposition parties, in particular the PCI, that there would be no self-critical attitude among the DC, that no one could threaten the unity of the party and challenge its dominance in Italian politics. Only under these conditions would the alliance with the PCI be possible.³⁴ Moreover, with this speech Moro definitely acquired the DC's internal legitimacy as the party's lawyer.³⁵

ma dal consenso, dalla profonda consapevolezza, nell'opinione pubblica, di importanti valori e modi di vita da garantire e dell'inaccettabilità di talune globali proposte alternative. [...] [C]i si accusa di fare quadrato intorno all'on. Gui [...]. Non si tratta di pura opportunità; non si tratta di un calcolo, di una chiusura pregiudiziale di fronte alla verità da accettare, una verità purificatrice e quindi consona ad una democrazia che deve avere il coraggio di identificare e di correggere ogni deviazione. Noi siamo invece di fronte ad una fase della procedura che richiede da noi un sì od un no ad una accusa. [...] Di coscienza, dico, e non già di utilità, ché anzi forse la ragione politica potrebbe suggerirci un atteggiamento dilatorio. [...] Anche qualcuno di noi avrà guardato a questa prospettiva liberatoria. Ma si è pensato molto. Sarebbe stato come offrire, per la nostra utilità di Partito, per un alibi di Partito, una vittima alla ragione di Stato. Pensandoci appunto più a fondo, vi abbiamo rinunciato ed abbiamo fatto, come si dice, quadrato intorno a Gui, perché la nostra convinzione è l'innocenza, perché vediamo solo sospetti ed artifici rivolti a contestare una vita di mai smentita dignità, una vita dedicata non a giochi di potere, non ad intrighi di partito, ma alla causa della democrazia ed al servizio dello Stato. [...] In questa posizione troviamo unita la Democrazia cristiana ed intendiamo con essa difendere la Democrazia cristiana nel suo insieme. [...] A chiunque voglia travolgere globalmente la nostra esperienza; a chiunque voglia fare un processo, morale e politico, da celebrare, come si è detto cinicamente, nelle piazze, noi rispondiamo con la più ferma reazione e con l'appello all'opinione pubblica che non ha riconosciuto in noi una colpa storica e non ha voluto che la nostra forza fosse diminuita. Non accettiamo di essere considerati dei corrotti, perché non è vero. [...] Onorevoli colleghi, che ci avete preannunciato il processo sulle piazze, vi diciamo che noi non ci faremo processare. Se avete un minimo di saggezza, [...] vi diciamo fermamente di non sottovalutare la grande forza dell'opinione pubblica che, da più di tre decenni, trova nella Democrazia cristiana la sua espressione e la sua difesa.»

34 See Ginsborg 1990, 379.

35 See Formigoni 2016, 320. Interestingly, a year later, in the «Memorial» written in the «people's prison», Moro criticized the position he took in this speech, admit-

This speech also clearly shows how much political language was imbued with trial rhetoric. The body of judgment to which Moro made several references is «public opinion». This expression is used in a similar way to that of «people», but with the difference that it particularly highlights the public dimension of the «people»: public opinion is the expression of the people as the only entity that has the right to observe, evaluate and judge the political parties. The logic underlying the speech is also interesting. As pointed out by Sciascia, Moro's speech contains at least two syllogisms: «the freedom and integrity of the country are intangible; Christian Democracy represents the freedom and integrity of the country; Christian Democracy is intangible» and «the unchanged electoral support shows that the Christian Democrats are not guilty; Mr. Gui is a Christian Democrat; Mr. Gui is not guilty.»³⁶ The real core of the speech is not, however, the innocence of Mr. Gui, but the innocence of the Christian Democrats as a party that represents and defends «public opinion».

The passage in which Moro said that the DC was not willing to offer «a victim to the reason of State» is particularly relevant for this investigation, because it clearly presents elements of (anti-)sacrificial language and rhetoric. In fact, there is considerable similarity between this sentence and another present in Moro's letter to Zaccagnini, written during his imprisonment and published in newspapers on April 25, where he argued that «with its inaction, [...] in the name of reason of State, the state organization condemns [me] to death and without too much thinking about it.»³⁷ In both cases, Aldo Moro asserts individual rights (in the case of Gui, the right to be presumed innocent until proven otherwise; in its own case, the right to life) over alleged national interests.

ting he underestimated «the expectation for justice of large parts of the country» (Moro 1997d, 273).

36 Sciascia 1978, 36; it.: «[...] la libertà e l'integrità del paese sono intangibili; la Democrazia Cristiana rappresenta la libertà e l'integrità del paese; la Democrazia Cristiana è intangibile. Sillogismo da cui rampolla quest'altro: l'immutato consenso elettorale dimostra che la Democrazia Cristiana non ha colpa; l'onorevole Gui è democristiano; l'onorevole Gui non ha colpa.»

37 Moro 2008j, 100; it.: «Con la sua inerzia, [...] in nome della ragion di Stato, l'organizzazione statale condanna a morte e senza troppo pensarci su.»

5.3 16 March 1978: First Reactions to the Kidnapping

On the morning of March 16, Aldo Moro came out of his apartment in via del Forte Trionfale in Rome to go to the Chamber of Deputies, where the ratification debate on the fourth Andreotti government was due to begin. As was his custom, he planned to stop along the way at the Church of Santa Chiara where he prayed every morning before going to Parliament. Wagner-Pacifici observes that «in this daily personal voyage between the institutions of the Church and the State, Moro, representing well his own personal and public history of institutional involvement, embodies the combination that his party claimed to represent on a grander scale.»³⁸ Thus not only did the language he spoke contribute to cementing his image as the symbolic embodiment of the DC, but so did his daily habits.

After the kidnapping and even more so after his death these images changed. Moro's usual route itself acquired a new meaning. If before it exemplified the close relationship between the Church and the Italian State that, since the end of World War II, had always characterized the DC's government policy, from March 16, onwards it could be understood and represented as Moro's path to martyrdom. There is a sort of topological symbolism—the fact that every day Aldo Moro followed a path that started from home (natural family) and, passing by the Church (Christian family), took him to Parliament (political family)—that predisposes Aldo Moro as an ideal subject to be portrayed as a martyr of both the Church and the Italian State.

At about 9 a.m. in via Fani the two cars of Aldo Moro and of his escorts were blocked by a group of terrorists who immediately opened fire, killed the five bodyguards in a few seconds and kidnapped Moro (see figure 1).³⁹ At 9.25 a.m. the second radio network interrupted its programs and aired the first newscast on the attack:

We interrupt broadcasting for dramatic news that sounds incredible and that, although it has not yet officially been confirmed, unfortunately seems to be true. The President of the Christian Democrats, Mr.

³⁸ Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 62.

³⁹ The precise mode of the attack, the operational details, the circumstances of previous and subsequent attacks, the responsibilities, the components of the terrorist fire group, the possible presence of other components extraneous to the BR, and the possibility of collusion and external aid are all aspects of the story debated during the trials, in the parliamentary committees and in journalism, and are still today the subject of great discussion and doubts.

Aldo Moro, was kidnapped a short time ago in Rome by a terrorist group.⁴⁰

The rhetoric of «drama» became a leitmotif of the media's representation of political violence from the very beginning. At 10.10 a.m. a call came to the news agency *Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata* (ANSA) in Rome, claiming the attack was carried out by the BR. «We have kidnapped the president of the DC Aldo Moro and eliminated his bodyguards, Cossiga's leather heads. Signed BR.»⁴¹ Other newsrooms in Turin and Milan received phone calls in which the BR claimed responsibility for the attack and nothing more. As Wagner-Pacifiçi has observed, the «unqualified nature of this acknowledgment» was dramaturgically very effective, because it left room for interpretation about the intentions of the terrorist group.⁴² This undoubtedly facilitated the emergence of the conspiracy narrative.

40 Quoted in Selva/Marcucci 2003, 8–9; it.: «Interrompiamo le trasmissioni per una drammatica notizia che ha dell'incredibile e che, anche se non ha avuto finora una conferma ufficiale, purtroppo sembra sia vera. Il Presidente della Democrazia Cristiana, l'onorevole Aldo Moro, è stato rapito poco fa a Roma da un commando di terroristi.»

41 Quoted in Imperi 2016, 46; it.: «Abbiamo rapito il presidente della DC Aldo Moro ed eliminato la sua guardia del corpo, teste di cuoio di Cossiga. Firmato, Brigate rosse.»

42 Wagner-Pacifiçi 1986, 63.



PICTURE 1: The attack in via Mario Fani, Rome, March 16, 1978. The picture shows the body of one of Aldo Moro's five guards, Raffaele Iozzino, lying on the ground.

In a special edition of the second television network's news program (TG2) at 10.01 a.m., the journalist Giancarlo Cercano informed viewers that in Milan and Turin there were rumors, according to which, the fugitive Mario Moretti, then head of the BR, was connected with foreign intelligence agencies. In the same extraordinary edition, the television presenter Giancarlo Santalmassi reported the hypothesis that there could be links between the BR and the German Red Army Faction (RAF). The next edition of TG2's news broadcast reported that there were suspicions that some members of the RAF may have been active in Italy. In the extraordinary edition of the first television network's news program (TG1), journalist Bruno Vespa noted that «according to preliminary reports, the terrorists used the same technique that was used in Germany against German indus-

trial President, Schleyer.»⁴³ This shows that the hypothesis of an international conspiracy by foreign intelligence services, as well as the possibility of international collaboration between different terrorist groups, spread quickly from the very beginning of the affair. The aforementioned special edition of the TG1 also aired the TV report by journalist Paolo Frajese filmed in via Fani shortly after the ambush. This service, in which the viewer is confronted with the dead bodies of Moro's bodyguards and the cars riddled with bullets, has been shown in almost all the documentaries about the Moro case and has strongly affected the way in which the event has been memorialized visually.

At 10.20 a.m., in an emergency summit the parties of the parliamentary majority agreed to reduce the parliamentary debate times to vote on the fourth Andreotti government. Shortly after, the Unitary Trade Union Federation declared a nationwide general strike to be held in the afternoon in piazza San Giovanni in Rome to publicly express the workers' support for the institutions and the Italian State. An extraordinary council of ministers chaired by Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti established the first steps toward the coordination of all police forces and the army, as well as to convene the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Security (*Comitato interministeriale per la sicurezza*). Meanwhile, Interior Minister Francesco Cossiga established a Technical-Operational Political Committee (*Comitato politico tecnico-operativo*), also called Crisis Management Committee (*Comitato di gestione crisi*), which had the task to arrange an operational plan and to coordinate investigations in the search for the terrorists and the hostage. During the 55 days, each transaction and any information had to come from the Interior Ministry, including communications and outgoing news about the developments in the investigation. The outgoing news, however, was quite sparse and covered by strict secrecy.⁴⁴

Moreover, Cossiga established two other committees: the Committee of Information (*Comitato informazione*) and the Committee of Experts (*Comitato degli esperti*). The first was composed of members of the secret service, police and army and had the task of gathering and coordinating relevant information to identify the kidnappers and to discover where Aldo Moro was being held. The second was a smaller group composed of psychiatrist Franco Ferracuti, psycho-graphologist Giulia Conte Micheli, military

43 Quoted in Imperi 2016, 47; it.: «Secondo le prime ricostruzioni, i terroristi hanno usato la stessa tecnica che è stata usata in Germania contro il presidente industriale tedesco, Schleyer.»

44 See Imperi 2016, 56–57.

strategist Stefano Silvestri and the American adviser and expert on international terrorism Steve Pieczenik. The existence of the Expert Committee only became public in 1981, after the revelations made by Interior Minister Cossiga to the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry.⁴⁵ The committee had the task of trying to influence the press to minimize the effect of the BR's propaganda campaign and, above all, to de-enhance Moro's image.⁴⁶ In a recent publication, Steve Pieczenik said his role in the Committee of Experts was to convince the Italian government to let Moro die, considering it the only way to defeat the BR.⁴⁷

The special editions of the afternoon news broadcast live images of the union demonstration in piazza San Giovanni and the interventions of general secretaries Luciano Lama (*Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* – CGIL), Luigi Macario (*Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori* – CISL) and Giorgio Benvenuto (*Unione Italiana del Lavoro* – UIL). They all strongly condemned the bombing, lined up alongside the institutions and condemned the attack, saying that the BR were «against the people». At the same time, however, they expressed their opposition to any attempt to establish a special and exceptional law and a «police state».⁴⁸ They therefore reacted to some authoritarian ideas shared by conservative circles in Italian politics. In fact, the leader of the Republican Party Ugo La Malfa, speaking the same afternoon in the House of Representatives (*Camera dei Deputati*), represented the situation as a «state of war» and demanded the establishment of «exceptional measures of war». Giorgio Almirante, secretary of the Italian Social Movement (MSI), went so far as to require the replacement of Interior Minister Cossiga with a military official, the promulgation of exceptional laws and the restoration of the death penalty.⁴⁹ The government, however, rejected these proposals. At the Chamber of Deputies, Prime Minister Andreotti stated that the laws that were in force were sufficient and that he was against the introduction of exceptional or extraordinary laws. The proclamation of the state of emergency and the introduction of the death penalty were rejected. It was a conviction shared by most representatives of the political forces that generalized repressive action, the restriction of democratic freedoms, and the suspension of certain rights

45 See Flamigni 1988, 127–156.

46 See Formigoni 2016, 357–358.

47 See Amara 2009.

48 Special edition of the TG2, 17.03 p.m.

49 See Giovagnoli 2009, 46.

would have widened sympathies with the BR, facilitating the civil war they wanted to provoke.⁵⁰

Despite major forces, the government decided not to introduce exceptional laws or to declare a state of emergency or of war; four days after the kidnapping a series of measures hitherto blocked by many opponents were adopted. The Parliament gave the police some of the powers that had been taken away in previous years.⁵¹ In response to these measures, there was a strong fear that citizens' rights would be eroded and lead to a partial suspension of democracy. The *Corriere della Sera*, though accepting the measures, expressed «bitterness» at the measures taken, and the famous constitutionalist Stefano Rodotà criticized them harshly, defining them as «exceptional measures»: «We are scraping the bottom of the barrel [...], we are now moving on the very subtle ridge that divides constitutional legality from the pure and simple use of authoritarian tools.»⁵² The jurist basically argued that the measures decided by the Parliament and which were declared to be not exceptional *de jure* were exceptional *de facto*. Beyond this consideration, it should be pointed out that, from an operational point of view, these measures did not help the police and magistrates to find out where Aldo Moro was being detained or to capture members of the BR at all. Only very slowly was more coordination between the police, Carabinieri and financial guard established. Investigators found it difficult to organize their work, and the newspapers recorded daily examples of errors and delays in the management of investigations. The impression that the investigations did not lead to any concrete results was very widespread.⁵³

Although the terrorists had not yet made any specific request, politicians and journalists had already begun, on March 16, to discuss the hypothesis,

50 See Giovagnoli 2009, 49.

51 The main measures adopted were the following: the provisional arrest of crime suspects for 24 hours; the immediate interrogation of the arrested without the presence of a lawyer if done within one hour; phone interceptions decided by the police without the permission of magistrates for an indefinite time; the abolition of the investigative secret of magistrates and at the request of the Interior Minister; increased penalties for attacks on public facilities; the strengthening of the great judicial sites. See *La Stampa*, «Le misure urgenti decise dal governo entreranno in vigore da mezzanotte», 21.3.1978, 2.

52 Rodotà, Stefano, «Misure eccezionali», *La Repubblica*, 23.3.1978, 1–2; it.: «Si sta raschiando il fondo del barile [...], ci muoviamo ormai sul crinale sottilissimo che divide la legalità costituzionale dal puro e semplice impiego di strumenti autoritari.»

53 See Carbone, Fabrizio, «Prevenire subito», *La Stampa*, 21.3.1978, 1–2; Carraciolo, Lucio, Un'inchiesta che sembra nata morta, *La Repubblica*, 25.3.1978, 4.

which was considered very likely, that the BR would make a request to exchange Moro for some prisoners. During these days, the trial against Renato Curcio, Alberto Franceschini and other members of the first generation of the BR in Turin was proceeding. In the press and in the various parties, the conviction that the BR would ask for the release of their comrades immediately spread quickly. Their first communiqué, which was made public on March 18, would deny these suspicions, but for two days that opportunity was the focus of many discussions. Immediately, the voices opposed to any negotiations prevailed and soon the government, most of the political parties and the established media settled on what was to be called the «line of firmness». We will address the issue of the debate on firmness vs. negotiation in more detail later on. For now, I want to draw attention to the fact that this rhetoric was intrinsically connected to a certain kind of representation of the relationship between the political body, nation-state and democratic government. This connection already emerges in an exemplary manner in a speech given by the Prime Minister on the evening of March, 16. At 8 p.m., live from the seat of the government, television news aired Andreotti's «speech to the country»; I quote here the most significant passages:

The response that has occurred in Parliament [...], but also in the statements of all political groups and the response that has occurred all over the country with massive demonstrations condemning the violence by men from all classes, who left factories, schools, offices, and homes, constitutes a response of solidarity to a concept of republican legality that is not rhetoric. [...] But they must live somewhere, these young people and these men and these women, who, unfortunately, are allowing themselves to be mobilized for criminal acts of this kind. There must be families that, in a not yet irreparable moment, can say a word to them, to make them rethink the sad aggregation which they are engaging in. I think [...] that no one should lose sight of a goal which does not conflict at all with what is called the firmness of the State, which is nothing reactionary, nothing repressive, which is the affirmation of calm ordered life within Italian cities, especially the most troubled. I think we should [...] make a great appeal to the conscience of non-violence. I think that is the worthiest way [...] to respond to

this terrible act, and it is certainly what, many years ago, Aldo Moro taught us and for which he has always fought.⁵⁴

This speech anticipated a discursive strategy that was reproduced and repeated continuously during the 55 days of Moro's imprisonment, and even afterwards. Besides that, it already contained some elements that predispose and facilitate the emergence of the martyrological and sacrificial representations of the political violence of the event, which were soon to emerge and quickly spread in the Italian public space. There are at least two aspects within the rhetorical structure of this speech that well illustrate the way in which the government and most of the media reacted to the kidnapping of Aldo Moro.

First, Andreotti's speech referred to the *response* of the *Parliament*, of all *political groups* and of the *demonstrations* of March, 16 in order to represent Italy as a reunited country. In the Italian State, political parties and ordinary people are represented as a single voice, a single body that gives a *response of solidarity*. Not only do the divisions between the parties disappear, but so do those between political representatives and represented citizens. Moreover, the reference to *men of all classes* has, in particular, the function of making class distinctions—a basic distinction in the rhetoric used by the PC, left-wing media, by extra-parliamentary left-wing political groups as well as by the BR and other terrorist organizations—secondary and irrelevant, since people were faced with «this terrible act». The difference between workers («who had left factories»), housewives, children, pensioners and the unemployed («homes»), students («schools») and workers of the

54 It.: «La risposta che vi è stata in Parlamento [...], ma anche nelle precise affermazioni di tutti i gruppi politici e la risposta che vi è stata in tutto il paese con manifestazioni imponenti di condanna della violenza da parte degli uomini appartenenti a tutte le classi che avevano lasciato le fabbriche, le scuole, gli uffici, le case, costituisce una risposta di solidarietà ad un concetto di legalità repubblicana che non è retorico. [...] Ma vivranno in qualche parte questi giovani o questi uomini o queste donne, purtroppo, che si lasciano mobilitare per azioni criminose di questo genere. Vi saranno delle famiglie che possono in un momento ancora non irreparabile dir loro una parola perché ripensino alla triste aggregazione nella quale si vanno coinvolgendo. Penso [...] che nessuno debba perdere di vista un obiettivo, che non contrasta minimamente con quella che si chiama fermezza dello Stato, la quale non ha niente di reazionario, niente di repressivo, che è l'affermazione della tranquillità di vita nelle città italiane specie quelle più turbate. Io penso che noi dobbiamo [...] fare un grande appello alla coscienza della non violenza. Credo che sia questo il modo più degno [...] di rispondere [...] a questo atto terribile, e certamente è questo che, in anni lontani, Aldo Moro ci ha insegnato ed è questo per il quale si è sempre battuto.»

middle class («office») is cancelled out rhetorically by Andreotti making reference to the response given by «the people» demonstrating in the squares. Such units of identification are replaced immediately with the usual «identity marker» within the DC's rhetoric: the family. In Andreotti's speech, the «great appeal» to the people is, first of all, an appeal to families; there are no more differences between exploiters and the exploited, between the working-class and bourgeoisie, but only families equal to each other.

Secondly, one cannot but note the rhetorical sophistication with which the «firmness of the State» is connected with the aim of ensuring «tranquility in the Italian cities» and the «great appeal to non-violence». The firmness of the state is thus represented as a necessary condition for the safety of Italian society. But the most significant phrase, which reveals great familiarity with a strategic use of language, is the one where the principles of firmness, republican legality and non-violence are represented as something that «Aldo Moro taught» to the Italian people. In relatively few sentences, the Prime Minister, succeeded in creating a link between the policy of firmness (which closed the door to any political negotiations even before the BR made a concrete request), the people's will and Aldo Moro's will. In other words: Aldo Moro was called into action to defend the same policy of firmness that, a little less than two weeks later, he was to criticize in the first of his letters published by newspapers. The most rhetorical and, in terms of performative efficiency, less successful part of the whole speech, however, is another; namely when Andreotti argued that, «the response of solidarity to a concept of republican legality [...] is not rhetoric». Here the Prime Minister took on an almost defensive position, as he foresaw criticism of him being too rhetorical. A strategist of concealment should not explain what he wants to hide: it is as if a thief, whose theft has not yet discovered, was to go to the police saying, «I have not stolen». However, the Prime Minister's speech did two things: it constructed discursively a certain identity for «the people» and attributed a certain willingness to Aldo Moro. The effectiveness of his speech became evident the following day, when most of the newspapers employed analogous strategies of representation.

5.4 Framing «the People» and «the Enemy»: Construction of National Identity

Andreotti's rhetoric was used in many articles that appeared in different newspapers in the first days after the kidnapping. The topic that dominat-

ed the newspapers on March 17 is obviously the ambush in via Fani, which has been addressed in a range of subtopics: the dynamics of the abduction; the killing of Moro's five bodyguards; the debate in Parliament; the quick passing of the new government; the reactions and stances of political parties and of the newly elected government; the supposed intentions, strategy and goals of the BR; the reactions of governments and newspapers from other countries; and the emergency planning of the government. But by far, the most foregrounded subtopic was the half-day national strike held in several Italian cities; in particular, the rhetoric of the «response of the country» dominated the headlines of the front pages:

L'Unità: Instant Response to the Kidnapping of Moro and to the Barbaric Massacre of Five Bodyguards [subheadline]; Extraordinary Democratic Shout—The Italians Stand by in Defense of the Republic—The New Majority Has Been Formed in Parliament [title]; In Many Cities, the Workers Leave the Factories Even Before the Proclamation of the General Strike—Huge Crowds at Demonstrations—Intense Hunting in the Capital for the Terrorist Group (Composed by Many People) Who Attacked the Cars of the President of the DC and of His Bodyguards with Gunfire—One of the Killers Was Speaking German?—A Meticulously Prepared Plan—The Debate in the House—Confidence in the New Government Was Voted on Urgently [headline].⁵⁵

Il Popolo: After the Infamous Assassination of the Bodyguards [subheadline]; Anguish for Moro [title]; Silence From the BR After the First Statement in Which They Claimed Responsibility for the Kidnapping and Murder—Unanimous Sorrow for the Victims of the Ferocious Ambush—The Direction of the DC Reunited Permanently—The Country Reacts As One to This New Serious Challenge to Democratic Institu-

55 *L'Unità*, 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Immediata risposta al rapimento di Moro e al barbaro eccidio di 5 agenti» [subheadline]. Straordinario sussulto democratico – Gli italiani si stringono a difesa della Repubblica – Si è formata in Parlamento la nuova maggioranza [title]. In molte città gli operai abbandonano le fabbriche prima ancora della proclamazione dello sciopero generale – Immense folle alle manifestazioni – Serrata caccia nella capitale al commando (composto da molte persone) che ha assalito a raffiche di mitra le auto del presidente della DC e della scorta – Uno dei killer parlava Tedesco? – Un piano minuziosamente preparato – Il dibattito a Montecitorio – Votata con urgenza la fiducia al nuovo governo [headline].»

tions: General Strike and Large Demonstrations and Marches Throughout Italy—Touching Messages of Solidarity to the Party [headline].⁵⁶

Avanti!: Instant Popular Reaction to the Kidnapping of Moro and the Killing of his Bodyguards [subheadline]; The Country Mobilized Against Sedition [title]. Parliament Reacted by Voting for Confidence in the Government—Millions of Workers Across Italy Demonstrate the Firm Will to Defend the Republic—The Commitment of the Socialist Party—Emotion and Outrage Around the World [headline]; Attack Against Democracy [editorial].⁵⁷

La Stampa: Grave Hours of the Republic for the Bloody Enterprise of the BR [subheadline]; After the Massacre, No Trace of Moro—The Country Has Stood Still: It Says No to Terrorism [title]; The Ambush of the President of the Christian Democrats, Yesterday Morning Shortly After 9 A.M., Committed by a Militarily-Trained Unit—Moro Had Just Left Home in Monte Mario—The Terrorist Group Consisted of 12 People—The Killers Fired More Than 80 Shots at the Bodyguards and Then Dragged the Leader to a Fiat 128 [headline]; There Can Be No Negotiations with Terrorists [editorial].⁵⁸

56 *Il Popolo*, 17.3.1978, 1, it.: «Dopo l'ignobile assassino degli uomini della scorta [subheadline]. Angoscia per Moro [title]. Silenzio delle Brigate Rosse dopo il primo comunicato nel quale rivendicavano le responsabilità del rapimento e della strage – Unanime cordoglio per le vittime del feroce agguato – La direzione della DC riunita in permanenza – Il Paese reagisce compatto a questa nuova gravissima sfida alle istituzioni democratiche: sciopero generale e grandi manifestazioni e cortei in tutta Italia – Commosse testimonianze di solidarietà al Partito [headline].»

57 *Avanti!*, 17.3.1978, 1, it.: «Immediata reazione popolare al rapimento di Moro e all'uccisione degli agenti [subheadline]. Mobilitato il paese contro ogni eversione [title]. Il Parlamento reagisce votando la fiducia al governo – Milioni di lavoratori in tutta Italia manifestano la ferma volontà di difendere la Repubblica – L'impegno del Partito Socialista – Emozione e sdegno in tutto il mondo [headline]. Attentato alla democrazia [editorial].»

58 *La Stampa*, 17.03.978, 1, it.: «Ore gravi della Repubblica per la sanguinosa impresa delle Brigate rosse [subheadline]. Dopo il massacro, nessuna traccia di Moro – Il Paese si è fermato: dice no al terrorismo [title]. L'agguato al presidente della Dc, ieri mattina poco dopo le 9, compiuto da un reparto addestrato militarmente – Moro era appena uscito di casa a Monte Mario – Il commando era di 12 persone – I killers hanno sparato oltre 80 colpi sulla scorta e poi hanno trascinato il leader su una «128» [headline]. Con i terroristi non si tratta [editorial].»

La Repubblica: No News on the DC Leader After the Massacre of His Bodyguards [subheadline]. The Abduction of Moro—Italy Reacted—General Strike, Confidence in the Government [title]. They Have Struck the Heart of the State [editorial].⁵⁹

Corriere della Sera: The Most Serious Political Crime of the Last Thirty Years While the Crisis Was Finishing [subheadline]. Moro Kidnapped, Five Bodyguards Massacred—The Country Rejects the Blackmail of the
«BR» [title]. React with Strength [editorial].⁶⁰

The language and rhetoric used here reveal an incredible similarity and monotony of the reactions of the mass media. All six newspapers put emphasis on the fact that *the country, Italy, Italians* have reacted spontaneously, succinctly, and unanimously. The spectacle of demonstrations received much more attention than the attack in via Fani. As Wagner-Pacifiçi highlights, «the demonstrations were as (if not more) symbolically rich in their presentation as was the kidnapping itself»; the performativity of the concerted bodies and flags in the strikes and demonstrations was used «to attend to the rhetoric and symbolism of solidarity and success.»⁶¹

The newspaper that gave more coverage to the representation of the demonstrations held in Rome, Milan, Turin and Bologna was the official organ of the PCI. In a front-page article in *L'Unità*—accompanied by a photograph shot straight down of the demonstration in Rome—the description of the masses reached an almost epic timbre:

The image that Italy, the working-class, the grand masses of workers, the young people, the students and all the people offered yesterday is—we say it without rhetoric—an image that can be compared only to other grave hours in our recent history, hours in which the popular consciousness knew spontaneously how to respond to the reactionary challenge, even before the trade unions and political parties' appeals

59 *La Repubblica*, 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Nessuna notizia del leader dc dopo la strage della sua scorta [subheadline]. Il rapimento di Moro – L'Italia ha reagito – sciopero generale, fiducia al governo [title]. Hanno colpito il cuore dello Stato [editorial].»

60 *Corriere della Sera*, 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Il più grave crimine politico degli ultimi trent'anni mentre si chiudeva la crisi [subheadline]. Moro rapito, cinque uomini della scorta massacrati – Il Paese rifiuta il ricatto delle «Brigate Rosse» [title]. Reagire con forza [editorial].»

61 Wagner-Pacifiçi 1986, 104–105.

had reached them. There was something that was reminiscent of July 14, 1948, the attempted assassination of Togliatti.⁶²

There is an astonishing similarity between the rhetoric of this article and that in the Prime Minister's speech. Also here, the article (which is unsigned) asserted its own non-rhetoricity. Moreover, several units of identity are listed in a growing climax that begins with the category of the «working-class» and ends with the category of the «people». But in contrast to Andreotti's speech, here the central identity of unity (as pointed out by the repetition) is that of «workers», which appear as the authentic expression of the «people». There is also no reference to employees, to those who work in offices (the bourgeois or middle class). This kind of representation functions according to a slightly different mechanism than that operating in the speech by Andreotti and more generally in the language and rhetoric of the DC. While the family category is formally applicable to each individual—because each one is or was a member of a family—and therefore includes any individual (within the country), the category of worker, at least in Communist jargon, is applicable only to those who work in factories or in the fields. The sum of the families is *quantitatively* the people, while the working-class *exemplifies* the category of people; at the climax of the cited article, the worker becomes the *paradigm* of the people: «A paradigm entails a movement that goes from singularity to singularity and, without leaving singularity, transforms every singular case into an *exemplar* of a general rule. [...] The paradigmatic case [here: the worker] becomes such by suspending and, at the same time, exposing its belonging to a group [here: the people].»⁶³

What is also interesting in the article cited last is the reference to the failed attack on the historic leader and founding member of the PCI, Palmiro Togliatti. The same comparison between the assassination attempt of 1948 and the via Fani attack is proposed in an article on the second page

62 *L'Unità*, «Straordinario sussulto democratico», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «L'immagine che l'Italia, la classe operaia, le grandi masse lavoratrici, i giovani, gli studenti, e tutto il popolo hanno offerto nella giornata di ieri, è – lo diciamo senza retorica – una immagine che trova riscontri soltanto nelle ore gravi della nostra storia recente, quelle nelle quali la coscienza popolare ha saputo reagire alle sfide reazionarie spontaneamente, d'istinto, prima ancora che le giungesse l'appello dei sindacati e dei partiti. C'era qualcosa che ricordava il 14 luglio del 1948, l'attentato a Togliatti.»

63 Agamben 2009, 22, 31.

in the *Corriere della Sera*; here, the journalist Giulio Nascimbeni argued that

[a]lso yesterday, like three decades ago, a shudder traveled through Italy and for a few hours old spirits, old shadows, invaded people's thoughts. [...] [W]ho remembers the events of July 1948, feels the same bewilderment, as if the kidnapping of Moro and the killing of his five bodyguards repurposed the image of an exasperated country that can run all risks and yield to every temptation.⁶⁴

Here again we are facing a prefiguration: a past event is called upon to represent and to make sense of another more recent event. But while in Nascimbeni's article the prefiguration is used to give a kind of tragic representation of the Italian situation, bringing attention to the exasperation of the country and the ever-present danger of «falling into temptation», in the article in *L'Unità* it is used to demonstrate and authenticate the epic ability of the Italian people to respond with courage, instinctively and organically to events of political violence.

Another common element in many articles is the reference to flags in the demonstrations.⁶⁵ Journalist Giancarlo Fossi, in an article on the third page of *La Stampa*, after the usual reference to «workers, employees, women, young people, pensioners, all visibly moved», drew attention to the country's unity, as exemplified by the proximity of the PCI's «flags with sickle and hammer» and DC's «white flags with the crossed shield».⁶⁶ The same reference to «red flags and white banners with the crossed shield» can

64 Nascimbeni, Giulio, «Quando Pallante sparò a Togliatti», *Corriere della Sera*, 17.3.1978, 3; it.: «Anche ieri, come trent'anni fa, un brivido ha percorso l'Italia e per qualche ora vecchi spiriti, vecchie ombre, si sono insinuati ne pensieri della gente. [...] Chi ricorda il luglio del '48 avverte lo stesso smarrimento, come se il rapimento di Moro e l'uccisione dei cinque uomini della sua scorta riproponevano l'immagine di un Paese esasperato che può correre ogni rischio, cedere a ogni tentazione.»

65 See Silj 1978, 20.

66 Fossi, «Giancarlo, Roma: duecentomila lavoratori in piazza – Chiusi negozi e cinema, scioperi revocati», *La Stampa*, 17.3.1978, 3; it.: «Non solo la piazza era completamente gremita, anche le strade di accesso, per centinaia di metri, erano stipate di operai, impiegati, donne, giovani, pensionati, tutti visibilmente commossi, ma esasperati per il susseguirsi di atti criminosi, sempre più gravi, contro la libertà personale e le istituzioni. Molte bandiere rosse con falce e martello, molte le bandiere bianche con lo scudo crociato [...].»

be found in an article in the *Corriere della Sera*.⁶⁷ Also, the organ of the PCI praised the intermingling of red and white flags («Red and white flags are waving in the cold wind on a livid day in March».⁶⁸ The PCI was in the position of having to point out that its electorate had no connection with nor sympathy for the ideology of the BR and that not only Communist leaders such as secretary Enrico Berlinguer, but also the workers publicly condemned the actions of the terrorist group. With the daily references to student demonstrations against violence throughout the early months of 1978, which continued on into the months of Moro's abduction, *L'Unità* attempted to discard any proximity of the student movement to the BR. Interestingly, on the fifth page of *Il Popolo* the photographs of the crowded piazza San Giovanni in Rome only showed white Christian Democrat flags. Also, the headline «The Civil Protest Of the People With the DC» does not highlight the workers' participation.

All these modalities of representation had a precise function: the relegitimization of the political forces. It has been noted that they also had the function of uniting the political forces and, more generally, of presenting the unity and solidarity between the generations, social strata and classes.⁶⁹ Although this is correct, it should also be noted that the two party newspapers *L'Unità* and *Il Popolo* especially worked with different strategies to legitimize their own party, above all through different ways of referring to and framing «the people». Both parties responded to two different crises of legitimacy: on the one hand, the PCI had to defend itself from the accusation that the BR were nothing but the children of the PCI; on the other, the DC had to divert attention from the Lockheed scandal and present itself as the true target of the attack in via Fani.

Not all newspapers took part in this chorus of glorification of the «country's response». The conservative newspaper *Il Giornale* wrote that the demonstration in Rome was not a «politically unitary manifestation».⁷⁰ Also, the journalist Giorgio Bocca, in an article on *La Repubblica* argued that the demonstration in Milan expressed «a general rejection [...] of terrorism [...] and a still strong difficulty in overcoming or settling deep po-

67 *Corriere della Sera*, «All'appello dei sindacati rispondono quindici milioni di Italiani», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Bandiere rosse e vessilli bianchi con lo scudocrociato sventolano sopra la marea di teste.»

68 *L'Unità*, «Straordinario sussulto democratico», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Sventolano al freddo vento di una livida giornata di marzo bandiere bianche e rosse.»

69 See Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 107.

70 Quoted in Silj 1978, 21.

litical differences in the name of a «union sacrée» of antiterrorism.»⁷¹ Bocca's observation is very interesting and also relevant from a theoretical point of view, inasmuch as it draws attention to the fact that the rituality of concerted bodies in the public space was not sufficient to «consecrate» national unification. It is only at the level of linguistic performance, of discursive representation of the demonstrations in the mass media, that this sacralization was successful.⁷² Several intellectuals and journalists harshly criticized the way the media reacted to the kidnapping. Giovanni Testori denounced «the wave of rhetoric that has invaded television and newspapers»⁷³ and Franco Fortini declared that «[t]he eight to nine pages that the newspapers devoted to the event» worried him «more than the abduction itself.»⁷⁴ Journalist Enzo Forcella also acknowledged the problem, but felt the rhetoric necessary in order to «give back to the national community a minimum level of unity and identity, that is, to reconstruct consensus around some common values starting with the fundamental ones of survival and civil coexistence.»⁷⁵

I already highlighted that each discursive construction of collective identity is based on the mechanism of *constitutive exclusion*. Sometimes this exclusion is implicit and only emerges through analytical work, while other times it is explicitly expressed in discursive practices. This is the case with most of the representations of «the people» that appeared in the media in the days following the kidnapping of Moro. Those who were excluded from the national collective identity were obviously the BR. Wagner-Pacifi-ci has observed that the BR were represented along three sets of markers, «three separate, but interacting, oppositional pairs: indigenous versus for-

71 Bocca, Giorgio, «A Milano gli operai tornano in prima fila», *La Repubblica*, 17.3.1978, 9; it.: «[...] un rifiuto generale [...] del terrorismo [...] e una difficoltà per ora forte a superare o a comporre le profonde differenze politiche nel nome dell'«union sacrée» antiterroristica.»

72 Wagner-Pacifi-ci expresses this idea by referring to Victor Turner's theory and terminology: «[...] the predominant framing of the demonstrations was theatrical and not ritual» (Wagner-Pacifi-ci 1986, 111).

73 Quoted in Giovagnoli 2009, 103; it.: «[...] l'ondata di retorica che ha invaso la televisione e i giornali.»

74 Quoted in Giovagnoli 2009, 104; it.: «Le otto-nove pagine che i quotidiani hanno dedicato all'episodio mi preoccupano più del rapimento stesso.»

75 Forcella, Enzo, «Bandiere Rosse, Bandiere Bianche», *La Repubblica*, 24.3.1978, 6; it.: «[...] ridare alla comunità nazionale un minimo di compattezza e d'identità, cioè per ricostruire il consenso attorno ad alcuni valori comuni a cominciare da quelli fondamentali della sopravvivenza e della convivenza civile.»

eign, common criminal versus political criminal, left versus right.»⁷⁶ As I will now demonstrate, the first two of these strategies of representation aimed to exclude the BR from the collective identity of the «Italian people», while the latter aimed to link the BR and their ideology with the political adversary in order to delegitimize it.

In the front-page headline of March 17, *L'Unità* wondered if «One of the Killers Was Speaking German?», implicitly suggesting the possible connection between the BR and the RAF. The hypothesis on foreign interference—namely that the BR had been helped or directed by foreign forces in planning and/or carrying out the attack—made its way especially into the milieu and the press of the radical and extra-parliamentary left. On March 17, the front page of *Il Manifesto* headlined:

The bloody kidnapping of Aldo Moro is the last act of a decade of massacres covered up by the state. Italy has been reduced to a frontier country, a battlefield for secret services and shady interests. Workers who take to the streets want to know where the roots of this degeneration are. But today confidence was given to a government that is the continuity of a past of silence and *omertà* [a code of silence].⁷⁷

Also, *Lotta Continua* claimed that the attack was the result of «an internal logic of international relations between states»⁷⁸ and that there was «a direct interdependence between BR and maneuvers with an international character».⁷⁹ According to the student and worker movements' newspaper, the kidnapping had the function of strengthening the opposite political front, further compacting it with inevitable authoritarian outcomes, justified by a pressing «reason of state». For this reason, arguing that they would never «choose between a murderous State and an identical form of

76 Wagner-Pacifci 1986, 72.

77 *Il Manifesto*, «Il sequestro sanguinoso di Aldo Moro», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Il sequestro sanguinoso di Aldo Moro è l'ultimo atto di un decennio di stragi coperte dallo stato. L'Italia è ridotta a paese di frontiera, campo di avventura di servizi segreti e loschi interessi. Gli operai che scendono in piazza vogliono sapere dove sono le radici di questa degenerazione. Invece oggi si è data la fiducia a un governo che è la continuità di un passato di silenzio e omertà.»

78 *Lotta Continua*, «Rapito Moro, il gioco più pesante e sporco che sia mai stato provato sulla testa dei proletari italiani», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «[...] una logica tutta interna ai rapporti internazionali tra stati.»

79 *Lotta Continua*, «Lo Stato continua», 18.3.1978, 1; it.: «[...] una diretta interdipendenza tra BR e manovre a carattere internazionale.»

terrorism»⁸⁰, the newspaper demanded the opening of negotiations for the liberation of Moro as early as in the first days of the kidnapping. There were also those who understood the actions of the BR as inscribed in the logic of the Cold War conflict. For example, a March 16 editorial by the radio station *Radio Città Futura*, operated by the *Movimento*, affirmed that

Italy has become a country in which maneuvers are being conducted by American and Soviet secret services, and those secret services of dependent countries, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and then, naturally, the Germans and Israelis and Arabs. That is, Italy has essentially become a battlefield in which the secret services are operating with their different interests.⁸¹

It was not only the media of the extra-parliamentary left that made a hypothesis about possible foreign interference. One of the «evidences» used to support or at least make the hypothesis appear plausible was the «efficiency» of the BR in carrying out the attack in via Fani. Several journalists found it suspicious that the BR had fired several shots without hurting Aldo Moro, or that they not only got away with the hostage but had also cut many telephone lines in the area in order to prevent the rapid arrival of the police. In almost all the newspapers' March 17 editions, there was an article that underlined the precision with which the attack was carried out and/or highlighted the similarities with the Schleyer case: «Analogies with the Schleyer Case Pose Troubling Questions»; «Bonn—Overlooking the Hypothesis That German Terrorists Have Also Acted in Rome»; «Bonn—Kidnapped Like Schleyer»; «An Act Recalling the German Schleyer»; «Twelve Killers for a Scientific Massacre»; «The Lightning Ambush».⁸² This and other articles described a number of similarities with the Schleyer case (the technique used in the kidnapping, namely the blocking of the first car with another car; the fact that members of both terrorist organizations were in prison at the time of the attack, etc.) as evidence of the possibility

80 *Lotta Continua*, «Non sarà un nuovo Stammheim», 17.3.1978, 10; it.: «Non saremo costretti a scegliere fra uno Stato omicida e un terrorismo a lui identico.»

81 Quoted in Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 74.

82 *Avanti!*, «Le analogie con il caso Schleyer pongono inquietanti interrogativi», 17.3.1978, 10; *Corriere della Sera*, «Bonn – Si affaccia l'ipotesi che a Roma abbiano agito anche i terroristi tedeschi», 17.3.1978, 7; Sansa, Tito, «Bonn – Rapito come Schleyer», *La Stampa*, 17.3.1978, 4; Cianciullo, Antonio, «Un'azione alla tedesca che ricorda Schleyer», *La Repubblica*, 17.3.1978, 5; Mafai, Miriam, «Dodici killer per un massacro scientifico», *La Repubblica*, 17.3.1978, 1; Spigarelli, Piero, «Il fulmineo agguato», *Il Popolo*, 17.3.1978, 1–2.

of the participation of German terrorists or at least of outside help in the attack (for example, in the form of military preparation in a training camp).

Why were so many journalists not able to imagine that an Italian terrorist organization could organize and execute such an attack? The great connoisseur of Italian culture Leonardo Sciascia gave the best answer to this question: «Of an institute that does not function, of a hospital in which patients are mistreated or in which there is no room, of a late train, of an airplane that does not take off, of a letter never arriving, of a party that fails, the motto is always the exclamation: our things! [...] The BR functions perfectly: but (and the *but* is necessary), they are Italians. They are our thing, whatever the relations they may have with revolutionary sects or foreign secret services.»⁸³ The logic underlying the articles mentioned above is as follows: the via Fani attack was executed with great efficiency; Italian things are inefficient; so the attack must have been organized and carried out under the direction or with the help of foreigners. Oreste Scalzone, a leader of the radical left group Potere Operaio, gave the following explanation on this strategy of exclusion, a strategy that has continued to this day: «The only constant is this obstinate will to find some explanation that proves that the BR are exogenous to this society, to the Italian situation of class contradictions. The very power that terrorism reveals on this type of society—one thinks on its use of information channels—becomes the very source of the argument used to negate its independent, endogenous character.»⁸⁴

The declaration of the exogenous character of the BR was not the only strategy implemented in order to exclude the BR from the collective identity of the «Italian people». The second way of framing the terrorist organization was to declare them «common criminals» or «fanatics». In the aforementioned speech by the Prime Minister Andreotti, the BR are already depicted as «common criminals». The day after, *Il Popolo* described the attack in via Fani as a «ferocious assassination» and «a regurgitation of barbarism, or the face of a new and ancient evil that has been afflicting the country

83 Sciascia 1978, 127–128; it.: «Di un istituto che non funziona, in cui si è maltrattati o in cui non c'è posto, di un treno che ritarda, di un aereo che non parte, di una lettera che non arriva, di una festa che non riesce, il suggello è sempre l'esclamazione: «cose nostre!» [...] Le Brigate rosse funzionano perfettamente: ma (e il *ma* ci vuole) sono italiane. Sono una cosa nostra, quali che siano gli addentellati che possono avere con sette rivoluzionarie o servizi segreti di altri paesi.»

84 Deaglio/Menapace/Scalzone 1978, xxiii.

for centuries: the hate, the perfidy, a cruel and criminal fanaticism.»⁸⁵ The newspaper dedicated the whole fourth page, entitled «Democracy Does Not Give Up» (*Non cede la democrazia*), to the representation of the BR. One of the articles on this page represented the terrorists as «lunatics», «ferocious», «crazy madmen», «murderers», whose actions were nothing more than a «cynical struggle, which is arrogant, inhuman in its ruthlessness, and nourished by deep contempt for human values and life.»⁸⁶ The newspaper also quoted the telegram written by the Pope to Cardinal Poletti, Vicar of Rome, in which Paul VI described the attack as an act of «inhuman ferocity that has affected people generously committed to the fulfillment of their duty, bleeding once again the streets of this city, once a master of civilization, now a helpless witness to barbaric rejuvenation.»⁸⁷ An analogous rhetoric had also already been used on March 17 by *L'Unità*, *Corriere della Sera* and *La Stampa*, in which the BR are regularly described as criminals.

As Alessandro Silj has pointedly noted, this kind of representation was part of a strategy of depoliticization of the BR and the mythicization of the event of political violence:

For years, the problem of the BR had been removed, relegating it to the category of common criminality, madness, or at best, of textures essentially extraneous to the Italian social fabric because they were maneuvered by occult foreign powers. Now Aldo Moro was kidnapped. Referring to the victim, one could not speak only of a political leader, because that would be the equivalent of recognizing the BR's action as a political action, carried out by a political organization [...]. So it becomes a necessity, since the BR are the «monster», to sublimate the figure of Moro and to transform him into a «Hero» and a «Saint». Only in this way can these latest events be brought back to the scenario of ever,

85 Gilmozzi, Marcello, «Una guerra disperata», *Il Popolo*, 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «[...] feroce assassinio, [...] un rigurgito di barbarie, o il volto di un male nuovo ed antico che da secoli travaglia il paese: l'odio, la perfidia, un fanatismo crudele e criminale.»

86 Cavedon, Remigo, «La «svolta» terroristica è nella logica delle BR», *Il Popolo*, 17.3.1978, 4; it.: «[...] squilibrati [...] pazzi furiosi [...] assassini [...] feroci [...]. [...] una lotta cinica, spavalda, inumana nella sua spietatezza, nutrita di profondo disprezzo per i valori umani e la vita.»

87 *Il Popolo*, «Paolo VI: «profondo è il nostro dolore», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «[...] disumana ferocia, che ha colpito persone generosamente impegnate nell'adempimento del proprio dovere, insanguinando ancora una volta le strade di questa città un tempo maestra di civiltà, ora testimone impotente di rinata barbarie.»

which is not political, but mythological, where there is no space for the chiaroscuro and only those who choose a side in the battlefield can have citizenship rights. [This is] [t]he great battle between good and evil.⁸⁸

The process of mythicization thus already began from the beginning of the Moro case. Silj highlights that the public assessment of the BR was dialectically bound up with an assessment of the identity of Moro. The performativity of this mythicization is twofold: on the one hand, it allowed, as we will deepen further, the justification of the «line of firmness», inasmuch as it was impossible to negotiate with monsters and madmen; on the other hand, it reinforced and sustained the myth of a society and a nation in perpetual danger and battling with an absolute enemy, an enemy that has no real political ends, but is just bent on chaos and destruction. Moreover, Silj points out that Moro could not be identified *only* as a political leader, because then the conflict between the Italian State and the BR would have appeared only as a political conflict (and therefore as historical and not metaphysical). For this reason, Moro had to be transformed into a hero and a saint. As I will show later, the sacralization and representation of Moro (more than as a saint and a hero) as a martyr was preceded by a procedure of depoliticization, through which he was excluded from the political sphere, deprived of political identity and his life reduced to mere life.

Not all social actors deployed a strategy aimed at excluding the BR from the political body in order to stress an alleged national unity. For the right of the political spectrum, the BR were nothing but the children of the PCI. Ultraconservative parties referred to the BR as «Communist terrorists».⁸⁹ Similarly, the Minister of Public Education Giovanni Galloni, a member of

88 Silj 1978, 29; it.: «Per anni il problema delle BR era stato rimosso, relegandolo nel novero della criminalità comune, della follia, o nella migliore delle ipotesi di trame essenzialmente estranee al tessuto sociale italiano perché manovrate da occulte centrali straniere. Ora Aldo Moro è stato rapito. Riferendosi alla vittima, non si può parlare soltanto di leader politico, perché ciò equivarrebbe a riconoscere l'azione delle BR come un'azione politica, eseguita da un'organizzazione politica [...]. Ecco dunque la necessità, se le BR sono il «mostro», di sublimare la figura di Moro per farne l'«Eroe» e il «Santo». Soltanto in questo modo è possibile ricondurre gli ultimi avvenimenti nello scenario di sempre, che non è politico, bensì mitologico, in cui non c'è spazio per i chiaroscuri ma può avere diritto di cittadinanza soltanto chi non rifiuta la scelta di campo. La grande tensione fra il bene e il male.»

89 See Morcellini/Avallone 1978, 445.

the DC, raised the issue of the «Stalinism» of the BR.⁹⁰ The attitude of the Communists and the left in general was obviously different. The PCI as well as many people and groups of the extra-parliamentary left claimed that the leftist, international, pro-proletarian position taken by the BR was «nothing but rhetoric». The historian and journalist Leo Valiani, a former Communist, wrote that the problem with these young fanatics was their «lack of political and economic culture» and that «never before has the validity of the historical opposition of the true Marxists and, of course, of Liberal Democrats and Christian Democrats to terrorism been so clearly confirmed.»⁹¹ Valiani thus did not deny the «Italianness» of the BR, nor did he represent them as beasts or crazy people, but considered them to be just too stupid to understand and participate in political life. The exclusion of them from political life goes hand-in-hand with the inclusion of the PCI, the DC and other parties like the Italian Republican Party or the Radical Party within the spectrum of legitimate political actors.

Another very widespread form of representation, especially within the media of the left, was the accusation of Fascism: «the accusation of «Catholic messianism», which had been at the center of the PCI's former critique of the BR, now receded as the «Fascism» of the BR was «discovered» in the mid and late seventies.»⁹² This kind of representation also appeared during the 55 days of Moro's imprisonment, as is perfectly exemplified by the headline of an article in *L'Unità*: «The Language of Freda [a Fascist terrorist] and That of the BR.»⁹³ In short, a part of the right represented the BR as Communists, while a part of the left represented them as Fascists (or, in the case of Valiani, as too stupid for politics). As Wagner-Pacifiçi observes, each one «chose its line of attack on the basis of its own particular sense of the best strategy to use to assert *its own* legitimacy.»⁹⁴ This type of representation, however, remained minor to those who glorified the unity of the country and represented the BR as entities outside of the national political body.

90 See Roggi, Enzo, «La segreteria DC conferma la linea dell'intesa democratica», *L'Unità*, 30.3.1978, 8.

91 Valiani, Leo, «La democrazia ha altre armi per difendersi», *Corriere della Sera*, 20.3.1978, 1; it.: «[...] mancanza di cultura politica ed economica [...]. Mai come in questo caso si conferma la validità dell'opposizione storica degli autentici marxisti e, naturalmente, democratici liberali e dei democratici cristiani al terrorismo.»

92 Wagner-Pacifiçi 1986, 84.

93 *L'Unità*, «Il linguaggio di Freda e quello delle BR», 27.4.1978, 1.

94 Wagner-Pacifiçi 1986, 86.

Sociologist and journalist Francesco Alberoni gave perhaps the most interesting representation of the BR, describing them as a sort of sect of fanatics, which combined Marxist ideology with the religious *topos* of the apocalypse:

There is a revolutionary Marxist nucleus in the country [...]. They dream of a revolutionary apocalypse, from which a proletarian revolution will emerge. It is a theological-religious conception of politics present in Russia before the Revolution, in Spain, in South America, but also in the farthest past. In Italy, this idea has been adopted by some student groups disappointed by the fact that 1968 had no revolutionary outlet, [...] disappointed by the success of a moderate party such as the PCI, [...] by all that has not led to what their ultimate desire is: the bloodbath, the apocalypse from which a new wonderful world should emerge. The BR are the organized point of this army of the apocalypse. The mindset of the terrorists is that of the soldier of an army that fights against all that is earthly. Because for them the world is absolute evil and must be annihilated by the purifying fire of a revolution.⁹⁵

Alberoni excludes the BR from political life by underlining their religious fanaticism. Unlike Valiani, he does not believe that it is their stupidity that prevents them from legitimately participating in political life, but their specific eschatological conception of history. They do not believe in progress and democratic debate, but in the mythical struggle between good and evil that will only be brought to an end in the final battle. If Alberoni is right, we could say that there were two conflicting but only apparently antithetical mythologies, inasmuch as they converge at least on

95 Alberoni, Francesco, «L'esercito dell'apocalisse», *Corriere della Sera*, 19.3.1978, 3; it.: «Esiste nel paese un nucleo marxista rivoluzionario [...]. Essi sognano un'apocalisse rivoluzionaria da cui emergerà poi una rivoluzione proletaria. È una concezione teologico-religiosa della politica presente in Russia prima della Rivoluzione, in Spagna, in Sudamerica, ma che ritroviamo anche nel più lontano passato. Da noi in Italia si è fatta strada in alcuni gruppi studenteschi delusi dal fatto che il 1968 non ha avuto uno sbocco rivoluzionario, [...] delusi dal successo di un partito gradualista come il PCI, [...] da tutto ciò che non ha portato a quello che è il loro ultimo desiderio: il bagno di sangue, l'apocalisse da cui dovrebbe emergere un nuovo mondo meraviglioso. Le Brigate Rosse sono la punta organizzata di questo esercito dell'apocalisse. [...] La mentalità dei terroristi è quella del soldato di un esercito che combatte contro tutto ciò che è terreno. Perché per loro il mondo è il male assoluto e deve essere annientato dal fuoco purificatore della rivoluzione.»

one point: the representation of the conflict as an absolute struggle between good and evil. Just as the death of Aldo Moro was sacralized as a sacrifice for the salvation of the state, violence was sacralized and legitimized by the BR because it was motivated by a political cause that we could call metaphysical, a cause that they experienced as transcending history. The BR «adorned themselves with the sacred vestments of the Resistance fighters [...] as missionaries following their own sacred tradition.»⁹⁶ Once again, we are faced with a prefiguration, namely the legitimization of actions by reference to past actions that have been memorialized and legitimized by history and enjoy general political recognition. Just as violence in the Resistance was legitimated by the necessity of defeating Fascism, revolutionary violence is experienced as legitimated by the necessity of defeating capitalism.

Finally, there is a fourth mode of representation of the BR that cannot be put on the same level as the three previous modes, as it does not follow the mechanism of discursive inclusion/exclusion aimed at creating a national collective identity, but rather wants to draw attention to the problem of identity itself. This is the representation that frames the political conflict as a conflict between generations. The journalist and co-founder of *Il Manifesto* Rossana Rossanda was probably the social actor who most vehemently called attention to the fact that the BR were not at all out of Italian reality. Rossanda used the image, which became famous, of the «family album».⁹⁷ The journalist pointed out that the language and rhetoric of the BR had much in common with those used in the past by PCI militants, particularly during the period of resistance to Fascism. The BR, in fact, used the Resistance's terminology to describe and justify their actions.

Wagner-Pacifiçi describes the Resistance as a root paradigm, which stood for courage undeterred by an invasion, sacrifice, necessary and legitimate violence, and antifascism.⁹⁸ During the 55 days and also after, references to the Resistance were continually made by the PCI, such as for example by Enrico Berlinguer, who the day before Moro's body was found in via

96 Pacifiçi refers here to Denis Donoghue, who has noted that the Irish Republican Army, in a very similar way to the BR, tried to sacralize their own actions by taking «possession of the entire Republican tradition from the Rising of 1798 to the Fenians and the Man of Easter Week in 1916» (Donoghue, Denis, «The Hunger Strikes», *The New York Review of Books*, 22.10.1981, 29, quoted in Wagner-Pacifiçi 1986, 158).

97 Rossanda, Rossana, «L'album di famiglia», *Il Manifesto*, 2.04.1978, 1.

98 Wagner-Pacifiçi 1986, 169–175.

Catani wrote that «the road of unity is the only just road, the only one capable of strengthening democracy, of rendering invincible the Republic born out of the Resistance.»⁹⁹ The BR challenged exactly this kind of representation, in which the democratic and republican state appears the true goal of the Resistance. According to them, the PCI had betrayed the revolutionary spirit of the Resistance by coming to terms with the enemy. They understood themselves as the true heirs of the Resistance, as the brigades of a new resistance. Even the mass movement that they dreamed of was called, in the «Resolution of the Strategic Directorate of the BR» that accompanied the fourth communiqué, the «Proletarian Offensive Movement of Resistance».¹⁰⁰

When Rossanda noticed the similarity between the BR's language and Communist language during and after the war, her goal was not to denounce an alleged link between the PCI and the BR, but rather to put into perspective the political vacuum left by Gramsci's and Togliatti's party, who, after having fought the Christian Democracy as an expression of capitalism for decades, now «no longer knows how to define [it], whether as a friend or an enemy.»¹⁰¹ In other words, the problem at stake was the collective identity not of the nation, but of the left, and more precisely of those who still felt attached to the cause of the struggle against capitalism. The young leftists felt betrayed by the generation of their fathers and mothers, as they idealized the generation of their grandparents and grandmothers, who had fought in the Resistance.¹⁰² To weaken the BR's appellative potential and that of other terrorist organizations, Rossanda argued, the PCI and extra-parliamentary left had to distance themselves from the DC and return to «traditional» values of the anti-capitalist struggle.

The problem of the left's identity crisis found expression in the slogan «neither with the State nor with the BR», which spontaneously emerged on the morning of March 16 at a student meeting at the Faculty of Political Science in Rome, where Aldo Moro was holder of the Chair of Institutions

99 Berlinguer, Enrico, «Berlinguer al popolo e agli elettori», *L'Unità*, 8.05.1978, 1; it.: «[...] la via dell'unità è l'unica giusta, l'unica che può rendere forte la democrazia, invincibile la Repubblica nata dalla Resistenza.»

100 Brigate Rosse 1978f, 95.

101 Rossanda, Rossana, «L'album di famiglia», *Il Manifesto*, 2.03.1978, 1; it.: «[...] non si sa più bene come definire, se avversario o amico.»

102 The theme of the generational conflict had already been introduced by Pasolini in 1973, when the journal *Nuovi Argomenti* described Left Extremism as a rebellion of children against fathers, who rewrote the romance of their grandfathers engaged in Resistance; see Pasolini 1973.

of Law and Criminal Procedure. With this slogan, the students expressed their opposition to the violent methods used by the BR, but at the same time they signaled that they did not want to take the side of the DC, as the PCI did. As *Lotta Continua* wrote in an article entitled «It Will Not Be a New Stammheim» (in reference to the prison where some terrorists of the German *Rote Armee Fraktion* died in 1977), a part of the left did not want «to be forced to choose between a homicidal state and a form of terrorism identical to it.»¹⁰³ In that sense, the students' slogan meant refusal of both terrorist and institutional violence. From this line, the support for the negotiations for the exchange of prisoners and the salvation of Moro would then be developed.

5.5 The Image of the Coming Martyr

Immediately after the attack in via Fani, the image of Moro underwent a transformation. Aldo Moro was no longer represented primarily as one of the most important leaders of the DC, but became the people's leader, the symbol of a wounded nation, attacked by a band of barbarous, ferocious and crazy assassins. He thus ceased to be only a collective figure and became the embodiment of the collective itself.

According to Wagner-Pacifici, in Italy there is nothing like a national collective identity but rather «several different collectivities»; this is the reason why «the «target» [of the attack] was alternately identified as the heart of the State, the Historic Compromise, Democracy, the Christian Democratic Party, the Communist Party, the Republic, the Institutions of the State, and [...] the Mass Media.»¹⁰⁴ Too many divisions along political, religious, cultural, geographical and institutional boundaries, whose roots partly extend deep into history, hinder the formation of a stable national collective identity. Thus, from the beginning, different social actors considered the kidnapping of Aldo Moro an attempt to challenge the different collectives to which they belonged or, more precisely, with which they identified. Many Catholics saw it as a criminal act against the values represented by the DC; others, especially many non-parliamentary radical leftists, saw it as an attempt to delegitimize the student and worker movements. The Communists privately understood the primary target of the BR

103 *Lotta Continua*, «Non sarà un nuovo Stammheim», 17.3.1978, 14; it.: «Non saremo costretti a scegliere tra uno Stato omicida e un terrorismo a lui identico.»

104 Wagner-Pacifici 1986, 89.

to be their delegitimization, while Christian Democrats were convinced that the real target was the DC. But despite these different understandings of the concrete target, both parties publicly presented the attack as an attempt to destroy Italian collectivity. Both party newspapers and independent newspapers, as we have seen, described the target with terms which, in different ways and combinations and with different nuances, all refer to an alleged national collective identity: Italy, country, state, republic, democratic institutions, republican institutions, etc. For a relatively short period of time, namely for the duration of Moro's imprisonment and a little further, different social actors and political groups seemed to put aside ideological conflicts and different visions of politics and society to join in a rhetoric of national unity. Nevertheless, the perception that a certain particular collective, and not the whole nation, had been attacked never completely vanished. This tension between particular collectivities and the concerted construction of national identity, as well as the related forms of representation, determined the way in which the media represented Aldo Moro during his 55-day imprisonment.

The construction of this national identity is intrinsically linked to the transformation of Moro's image into a symbol, the embodiment of collectivity. After March 16, Moro's incomprehensible speeches were reinterpreted as demonstrations of his cultivated and sophisticated legislative work. His strategy of exhausting opponents was transformed into humble patience: «Moro: His Style Is Tolerance» is the title of an article by journalist Enzo Biagi in the March 17 edition of the *Corriere della Sera*.¹⁰⁵ Among the most commonly used adjectives to describe the politician, we find words such as melancholic, stationary, hieratic, honest, thoughtful, mild, lucid, solitary, persuasive, serene, sad, cautious, slow, reticent, contradictory, pessimistic, optimistic, Christian, proud, elusive, tolerant, patient, spiritual. Between March 17 and 21, Italian journalists resorted to almost all of the resources of Italian vocabulary.

The title of the fifth page of the March 17 edition of *La Stampa*, described Moro as «One of the Most Prestigious and Human Figures»¹⁰⁶; on the same page, Stefano Reggiani wrote that

[...] his figure is like his character, an evanescent moment (his closed eyes, his slow pronouncement, which was affected by his disease, as one could see in one of his last appearances on TV); a moment later

105 Biagi, Enzo, «Moro: Il suo stile è la tolleranza», *Corriere della Sera*, 17.3.1978, 3.

106 *La Stampa*, «È una delle figure più prestigiose ed umane», 17.3.1978, 5.

the figure is firm, characterized by the meticulous oratory of the congresses and by the white stain of his hair, as if it would be a predetermined originality.¹⁰⁷

In an article entitled «Aldo Moro Is the «Weaver» of the New Italian Reality» published the next day, the leader of the Italian Republican Party Giovanni Spadolini described Moro as «the most foreign to slogans, to the suggestions of myths or contingent infatuations, among the Christian Democrats.»¹⁰⁸ On March 19, in an editorial entitled «The Assassins Like Judges», the newspaper defined Moro as «one of the great statesman of our time» and expressed the trust that «by the strength of his spirit and the height of his civil and religious faith, he will overcome [the ordeal], even in the fragility of his health and of all that is human, while remaining himself.»¹⁰⁹

La Repubblica gave a lot of coverage to the reactions of Moro's family and of Christian-Democrats, with often dramatic titles like «A Family in Anguish but «with Aldo's Reserve» or «It Is as If They Kidnapped Our Dad», and in the DC in Milan Anger Explodes».¹¹⁰ In an editorial in the March 17 edition, the image of Aldo Moro was not yet transformed. In fact, he was described as a man who

for twenty years represented the DC's democratic continuity. With all his sluggishness, his delays, his mistakes, he is the man who transformed the party from centrism to the alliance with Socialists before,

107 Reggiani, Stefano, «Aldo Moro, lo statista degli equilibri difficili», *La Stampa*, 17.3.1978, 5; it.: «[...] la sua figura è come il suo carattere, un momento evanescente (gli occhi socchiusi, la pronuncia lenta e impacciata dalla malattia come si vide in una delle sue ultime apparizioni in tv, un attimo dopo ferma, inchiodata all'oratoria puntigliosa dei congressi e alla macchia bianca dei capelli, come a una prestabilita originalità.»

108 Spadolini, Giovanni, «Aldo Moro è il «tessitore» della nuova realtà italiana», *La Stampa*, 18.3.1978, 3; it.: «[...] uno dei democristiani più estranei alle parole d'ordine, alle suggestioni dei miti o delle infatuazioni contingenti.»

109 *La Stampa*, «Gli assassini come giudici», 19.3.1978, 1; it.: «È toccata ad Aldo Moro, uno dei grandi statisti del nostro tempo, una prova tremenda, ma alla quale confidiamo che egli, per la forza del suo spirito e per l'altezza della sua fede civile e religiosa, possa sovrastare [una prova tremenda], pur nella fragilità della sua salute e di tutto quanto è umano, rimanendo ogni attimo sé stesso.»

110 Mori, Anna Maria, «Una famiglia nell'angoscia però «col riserbo di Aldo», *La Repubblica*, 17.3.1978, 6; Pansa, Gianpaolo, «È come se avessero rapito nostro padre» e nella DC di Milano esplode la rabbia», *La Repubblica*, 17.3.1978, 7.

and to the parliamentary majority with the PCI today [...]. He is today the hub of a complex yet still uncertain situation, still fluid [...].¹¹¹

Despite Aldo Moro being identified as a DC man, the editorial is entitled «They Have Struck the Heart of the State». Here the tension between Moro as a party representative and as a representative of the whole political body is particularly manifest. The newspaper was able to represent him simultaneously as a symbol of the DC and of the state because, on the one hand, he is identified as the real weaver of the Historic Compromise and, on the other, because since 1948 the DC had ruled interruptedly: Aldo Moro was the DC and the DC was the Italian State.

The Communist hagiography is also very interesting. As Alessandro Silj pointedly notes, Aldo Moro was transformed into «an archangel of democracy whose virtues far surpass the rare mistakes.»¹¹² Although the Communist newspaper did not represent Moro as the embodiment of the nation, it began a campaign of glorification of the politician's virtues. The journalist Mario Meloni, better known under the pseudonym Fortebraccio, in reference to an episode of 1954¹¹³, wrote on the first page of the March 17 edition of *L'Unità*:

We, despite rejecting his invitation, cannot forget, nor have we ever forgotten, with how much delicacy, and with how much regard and even respect, he was able to address us with his authoritative exhortation. And there was, in his words, a profound melancholy and a sort of secret solidarity: we felt that we were in front of a man who understood and in whose mind there was no intent to overpower others.¹¹⁴

111 *La Repubblica*, «Hanno colpito il cuore dello Stato», 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Aldo Moro rappresenta da vent'anni la continuità democratica della DC. Con tutte le sue lentezze, i suoi ritardi, i suoi errori, è l'uomo che ha trasferito il partito dal centrismo all'alleanza coi socialisti prima, e alla maggioranza parlamentare col PCI oggi [...]. È oggi il punto di cerniera di una situazione complessa ancora incerta, ancora fluida [...]»

112 Silj 1978, 31.

113 In 1954, Moro attempted to dissuade the author of the article, who was then his party colleague, from making a hostile statement about the signing of the Treaty of the European Union.

114 Fortebraccio, «Uno che ha capito», *L'Unità*, 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Noi, che pure respingemmo il suo invito, non possiamo dimenticare, né mai abbiamo dimenticato, con quanta delicatezza, e con quanto riguardo e addirittura rispetto seppe rivolgerci la sua pur autorevole esortazione. E c'era, nelle sue parole, anche una malinconia profonda e una sorta di segreta solidarietà: sentimmo che avevamo

The same March 17 edition also published the speech held the day before in Parliament by the secretary of the PCI Enrico Berlinguer, in which he spoke of an «attack carried out with calculated determination against one of the most eminent personalities of Italian politics, against a statesman profoundly committed to the democratic cause.»¹¹⁵ Two days later, in an editorial Berlinguer identified the target of the attack in via Fani to be democracy, rather than the state:

It has been stated that Aldo Moro was abducted to attack a symbol, among the most powerful, of this efforts aimed at preventing political and institutional detachment. But beyond Moro as a person [...] they wanted to attack the whole Italian democracy. [...] It is the greatest conquest of the people that is threatened. [...] The democratic regime and the Italian Constitution are decisive and inalienable achievements of the popular movement.¹¹⁶

Here, the attack on Aldo Moro becomes an attack on the people, on the popular movement that gave birth to democracy. But Berlinguer did not go so far as to identify, as other newspapers did, Aldo Moro with democracy or the Italian State (or both). Moro is represented as being a representative of democracy, not the embodiment of democracy. Evidently, the PCI secretary tried to get rid of those who recognized Moro's status as a symbol of the whole of democracy, to avoid making the DC appear as the political target of the BR. For Berlinguer, the DC was not the true defender of democracy; it was the popular movement.

For the DC's *Il Popolo*, after the kidnap Aldo Moro became the true soul (and mind) of the party as well as the embodiment of the country. Alfredo Vinciguerra described Moro as the «DC's most prestigious leader» and as «the man of State: the political point of reference for the large majority of

di fronte un uomo che capiva e nell'animo del quale non trovava posto alcun sentimento di sopraffazione.»

115 *L'Unità*, «Berlinguer: Assicuriamo al Paese l'impegno unitario e tenace del PCI», 17.3.1978, 1.

116 Berlinguer, «Enrico, Unità e rigore», *L'Unità*, 17.3.1978, 1; it.: «Si è affermato che Aldo Moro è stato rapito proprio per colpire un simbolo, tra i più significativi, di questo sforzo teso a impedire lo scollamento politico e istituzionale. ma al di là della persona di Moro [...] si è voluto colpire l'insieme della democrazia italiana. [...] È la conquista più grande del popolo che viene minacciata. [...] Il regime democratico e la Costituzione italiana sono conquiste decisive e irrinunciabili del movimento popolare.»

Italians.»¹¹⁷ On the same page, another article commented on an article that Moro published in 1977 and in which he wrote about terrorism and violence. The journalist argued that in this article

the portrait of a man, as well as of a politician and a statish, emerges, who, with his own life, has committed himself to the peace and the common good of all citizens, whom he understood not as abstract entities but, in his Christian sensibility, as brothers.¹¹⁸

Two things have to be emphasized about this article. First, it characterizes Moro as someone who devoted his whole life to his political commitment. Moro is represented not simply as a politician that does politics like a job, but someone for whom politics is a vocation. The martyrological representation of his death is somehow anticipated here: precisely because Moro had devoted his life to the common good, he would accept sacrificing himself for the defense of the citizens, the Republic and its democratic institutions. Secondly, the relationship between Moro and the Italian citizens is described in terms of a familial communion. The political body comes to assume an explicit Christian connotation here, since the relationship between the citizens and the politician Aldo Moro is represented as a community of brothers; the Italian State is metaphorically signified as a family.

The media construction of a certain image of Aldo Moro the day after his abduction is entirely centered on his habits, character traits, rhetoric, and political strategy, as well as on his role and function within the DC. They are all constructions of an image in the absence of a real image of Aldo Moro's body. The aesthetic dimension, the corporality of Moro, did not play a decisive role yet. This changed starting from March 18 when television and special newspaper editions published the BR's first communiqué (after the kidnapping), accompanied by a photograph of Moro portrayed in the «people's prison» (see figure 2). The seizure of the Christian Democrat politician and its possible consequences thus became an unequivocal reality. As we saw, the communiqué declared the beginning of the trial of Aldo Moro in front of a «people's court». The photograph of Aldo Moro

117 Vinciguerra, Alfredo, «Come salvare il paese», *Il Popolo*, 17.3.1978, 3; it.: «[...] leader più prestigioso della DC [...]. [...] uomo di Stato: il punto di riferimento politico per la stragrande maggioranza degli italiani.»

118 Giuntella, Paolo, «Così disse condannando la violenza», *Il Popolo*, 17.3.1978, 3; it.: «Ne emerge un ritratto d'uomo, oltre che di politico e di statista, impegnato con la propria vita per la pace e il bene comune di tutti i cittadini, sentiti non come una entità astratta, ma nella sua sensibilità cristiana, come fratelli.»

gave credibility to the communiqué as it proved that Aldo Moro was alive and actually a prisoner of the BR.



PICTURE 2: Aldo Moro in the first Polaroid issued by the Red Brigades.

On March 19, the six papers examined here all dedicated their front-page titles to the news of the diffusion of the photograph. The only exception was the Communist newspaper, which focused on the «emotion» of the citizens during the funeral of the five dead bodyguards held the day before. Only in the sub-headline is it reported that «Criminals Make Contact by

Sending the Photo of Moro». ¹¹⁹ It is also the only newspaper that did not mention the trial in its headline. All six newspapers reproduced the picture, albeit in different sizes: *L'Unità* only reserved 2.8% of the front-page surface for the photograph, while the *Corriere della Sera* reserved 14.1% for it (see figure 3). ¹²⁰ In *L'Unità* Moro's picture appeared under the title «A Tortured Man» and the text at the side emphasized that the newspaper had been «forced to reproduce it [...] out of a chronicle duty», but that it was doing so «with the reproach of someone touching a document handled by professional assassins. These are beasts, who are even hard to compare with Fascists.» ¹²¹ The image of Moro was then commented on as follows:

Look at this photo. It is the image of a man whose kidnappers promise to martyrize him in one of those tragic farces which they call trials in order to prolong the challenge to Italian democracy and the honor of this Republic. ¹²²

The term «martyr» here makes its first explicit appearance. Not surprisingly, after this mention of the coming martyrdom of the Christian Democrat politician, the newspaper explained to the reader who «the people» were:

They dare even, these beasts, to write in their messages the word «people». What have they got to do with the people? The people are good, they are human, they are right. The people gathered yesterday around the coffins of the assassinated policemen and Carabinieri. They ask to be released from terrorist gangs. They want to live and progress in peace. ¹²³

119 *L'Unità*, «Commossi funerali dei cinque assassinati – I criminali si fanno vivi inviando la foto di Moro», 19.3.1978, 1.

120 See Silj 1978, 12.

121 *L'Unità*, «Un uomo torturato», 19.3.1978, 1; it.: «L'animo con cui siamo costretti a riprodurre – per un dovere di cronaca – la foto di Aldo Moro nelle mani dei suoi carcerieri è molto triste. Lo facciamo con il ribrezzo di chi tocca un documento maneggiato da assassini di mestiere. Queste sono belve che è perfino difficile paragonare ai fascisti.»

122 *L'Unità*, «Un uomo torturato», 19.3.1978, 1; it.: «Guardate questa foto. È l'immagine di un uomo che i suoi rapitori si ripromettono di martirizzare, in una di quelle tragiche farse cui danno il nome di processi; e ciò per fare durare più a lungo la sfida alla democrazia italiana e all'onore di questa repubblica.»

123 *L'Unità*, «Un uomo torturato», 19.3.1978, 1; it.: «Osano persino, queste belve, scrivere nei messaggi la parola «popolo». Che cosa c'entrano essi con il popolo? Il popolo è buono, è umano, è giusto. Il popolo si è raccolto ieri intorno alle bare degli agenti e dei carabinieri assassinati. Chiede di essere liberato dalle bande terroristiche. Vuole vivere e progredire in pace.»



PICTURE 3: Front page of the Corriere della Sera, March 19, 1978.

On pages 1, 2, 4, 10 and 11 of *L'Unità*, the «unity of the people» is further underlined with the reproduction of photographs showing the masses that appeared at the funeral or in the vigils held in several Italian cities. The sacrifice of Moro's escort, as well as his coming martyrdom, are, in the

rhetoric adopted by the Communist newspaper, the events around which a united Italy would be reborn. In the *Corriere della Sera* editorial, the martyrological representation is subtler and less obvious, but perhaps for this reason more effective. In fact, the editorialist uses the instrument of prefiguration in such a way that Aldo Moro appears as a modern-day Jesus Christ and his imprisonment as a modern passion:

The camera has reproduced him, in front of the banner of the BR, with that composed and thoughtful expression for which he is known. There is no trace of fear, nor even a burst of pride, of challenge, which is always a way, albeit virile, to suppress and overcome agitation and turmoil. Even a layman can understand that only someone who believes, and who is truly at peace with its conscience, may find the strength to look in such an unmistakable way at those who do not know what they are doing. [...] Moro will need a great deal of courage to maintain, in the coming days, in his photos that will be duly sent to newspapers and television companies, that composite and thoughtful expression. [...] Today the Christian Democrats, like all Italians, can only look at this photo, this highest lesson in dignity, firmness and style.¹²⁴

This article is particularly interesting for three reasons. First, it contains a direct quotation from the Bible through which an analogy between the suffering of Jesus a few moments before dying on the cross and the suffering of Aldo Moro is constructed. Just as Jesus, in Luke's gospel (Luke 23, 34), asks the Father to forgive the Roman soldiers because they do not know what they do, in the photograph's interpretation by editorialist Gianfranco Piazzesi, Aldo Moro seems to ask forgiveness (to whom?) for the BR's actions only through his look and expression. The crucial point of this prefiguration, its strategic function, lies in the fact that everyone

124 Piazzesi, Gianfranco, «Stoica dignità», *Corriere della Sera*, 19.3.1978; 1; it.: «La macchina lo ha riprodotto, dietro lo striscione delle BR, con quella espressione composta e pensosa che più gli è consueta. Non c'è traccia di paura, e neppure un soprassalto di orgoglio, di sfida, che è sempre un modo, seppur virile, di reprimere e di vincere l'agitazione e il turbamento. Proprio un laico può capire che soltanto chi crede, e chi è veramente in pace con la sua coscienza, può trovare la forza di guardare, in quel modo inconfondibile, coloro che non sanno quello che fanno. [...] Moro avrà bisogno di un grandissimo coraggio per mantenere, anche nei prossimi giorni, nelle sue fotografie che saranno fatte puntualmente pervenire ai giornali e alla Tv, quella espressione composta e pensosa. [...] Oggi i democristiani, come tutti gli italiani, possono soltanto guardare a quella fotografia, a quella altissima lezione di dignità, di fermezza e di stile.»

knows the bloody end of Jesus in the Gospel's narrative. With this analogy, Aldo Moro's death is not only anticipated, but is loaded with metaphysical meaning, appearing as something that has already been written and cannot be avoided. In fact—here we come to the second point—for Piazzesi the hostage is able to look at his kidnappers in that way, in the way Jesus looked at his torturers, only because he is a man of faith who is at peace with his conscience and his destiny. The man of faith can look at them this way because he does not fear what he knows will happen. In this representation, Moro seems to commit his spirit to the hands of the Father, as Jesus does in Luke's narrative; here he becomes the true heir of the Christian martyrs. Finally, Piazzesi, by referring to Moro's expression in the photo as the highest lesson in dignity, implicitly appeals to the reader to learn from the martyr, to take him as an example to imitate. The editorial thus reproduces and applies the mechanism of interpellation, which in the third chapter we identified as a central performative force of martyrological narratives: Just as martyrs, through their own death, imitate the Passion of Christ, viewers of martyrdom are called to imitate the martyr, to live and die with the same courage and dignity. We find an analogous representation of Moro as an example to imitate in the pages of *Il Popolo*, where Ruggero Orfei, an important representative of the Christian Associations of Italian Workers (ACLI), writes that «the suffering of Aldo Moro is a collective and national witness, a lesson that no one can evade.»¹²⁵

The representatives of the DC also praised the exemplarity of Moro as a prisoner figure. As *La Stampa* reported, the party vice-secretary Giovanni Galloni said that «it really impressed us to see him with a serene and melancholy look in such difficult circumstances. The impression that we Christian Democrats had [looking at the photograph] is of serenity and greatness of mind.» The image is even interpreted as an appeal to «keep our strength in mind and to be worthy of the firmness and serenity shown by Aldo Moro.»¹²⁶ In other words, for Galloni the image is an appeal to remain firm in the strategy of non-negotiation. The performative force of the image was also stressed by senator Adolfo Sarti, who said that, «if the BR

125 Orfei, Ruggero, «La sofferenza di Aldo Moro è collettiva e una testimonianza nazionale alla cui lezione nessuno deve sottrarsi», *Il Popolo*, 19.3.1978, 4.

126 *La Stampa*, «Emozione, speranza alla sede della DC. Zaccagnini: Moro ne esce esaltato», 19.3.1978, 3; it.: «[...] ci ha veramente impressionato il vederlo con lo sguardo sereno e malinconico in una circostanza tanto difficile. L'impressione che noi democristiani ne abbiamo ricavato, è di serenità e grandezza d'animo. [...] Dobbiamo mantenere la nostra forza d'animo e per essere degni della fermezza e della serenità dimostrata da Aldo Moro.»

were susceptible subjects, they would be annihilated by this image of nobility, by his malicious irony, by his unobtrusive and extraordinary intelligence.»¹²⁷ Finally, the party secretary Benigno Zaccagnini described the photo as «an exaltation of the DC, its function, and an exaltation of Moro's political and moral figure», transforming it into a party icon.¹²⁸

In an article by Lietta Tornabuoni in the *Corriere della Sera*, the photograph is interpreted as a sort of violation of the secrecy and sacredness of the body. In fact, the journalist stresses that Moro «has a very strong sense of privacy. He never took off his jacket in public: the picture that shows him in a shirt already seems a sort of violation, the only pictures of him in a bathrobe, swimsuit or sweater are those of holidays stolen with a long lens; clothes are his natural way of presenting himself.»¹²⁹ The photograph is portrayed as profanation of the political figure of Moro, of his public image, through which he is exposed in his nakedness. Nevertheless, Tornabuoni expresses optimism when she writes that «in prison, if he is left in mental and physical integrity, he can hardly suffer self-deception. In addition to the aid that can give him his religious faith, it is more likely that his powerful Superego will be even strengthened and stimulated by his consciousness of being in an extraordinary situation, by the conviction of the importance that his behavior can have for Christian Democracy and for the Country, by the proud challenge of living up to his self-vision, facing the toughest ordeal.»¹³⁰ Moro's psyche and body, his religious faith and his condition in captivity, his inner convictions and the exceptionality of

127 *La Stampa*, «Emozione, speranza alla sede della DC. Zaccagnini: Moro ne esce esaltato», 19.3.1978, 3; it.: «Se le Brigate rosse fossero soggetti ragionevoli sarebbero annientate da questa immagine, dalla nobiltà di chi vi è ritratto, dalla sua malinconica ironia, dalla sua non occultabile e straordinaria intelligenza.»

128 *La Stampa*, «Emozione, speranza alla sede della DC. Zaccagnini: Moro ne esce esaltato», 19.3.1978, 3; «Mi pare che sia una esaltazione della DC, della sua funzione, e un'esaltazione della figura politica e morale di Moro.»

129 Tornabuoni, Lietta, «Nelle mani delle BR un prigioniero fragile e fortissimo», *Corriere della Sera*, 24.3.1978, 1; it.: «[...] ha un senso molto forte della riservatezza. Non si è mai tolto la giacca in pubblico: la fotografia che lo mostra in camicia è già sembrata una sorta di violazione, le sue uniche immagini in accappatoio, in costume da bagno o in maglione sono quelle delle vacanze rubate con il teleobiettivo; i vestiti sono il suo naturale modo di presentarsi.»

130 Tornabuoni, Lietta, «Nelle mani delle BR un prigioniero fragile e fortissimo», *Corriere della Sera*, 24.3.1978, 1; it.: «Nella prigionia, se gli è lasciata la padronanza mentale e integrità fisica, difficilmente Moro può soffrire di smarrimento di sé. Oltre all'aiuto che può dargli la sua fede religiosa, è più probabile che il suo fortissimo Superego risulti ancora rafforzato e stimolato dalla coscienza di trovarsi in una situazione straordinaria, dalla convinzione dell'importanza che il

being reduced to a mere bodily presence will thus allow him to resist for the good of the country. Though not explicitly mentioned, the rhetoric used leaves little doubt as to what the «toughest ordeal» is: Aldo Moro will have to live up to the figure from which his party takes its name: as Christ on the cross, he will have to face the ordeal of death. Tornabuoni implicitly says what Gustavo Selva and Eugenio Marcucci, in a chronicle of Moro's 55-day imprisonment published in May 1978, explicitly say in the section on Easter Day:

It is a bitter Easter: the tragedy of Moro [...] is a symbolic expression of the condition in which we find our country. After the sacrifice of five servants of the State [...] the most prestigious and best-known political leader of Italy is spending Easter in a «prison of the people» [...]. Aldo Moro will be able to revive with his religious faith the meaning of the Resurrection, a symbol of peace and real liberation even in this terrible ordeal.¹³¹

The newspaper that made the most use of the prefiguration of Christology to represent and narrate the captivity of Moro was *Il Popolo*. On March 21, on page five the newspaper published several interventions by Catholic intellectuals under the overall title «The Courage to Say «No» to Violence—The Strength of Reason». In an article accompanying these interventions, journalist Alfredo Vinciguerra argued that «the wave of violence» in Italy was caused by nihilism, the Feuerbachian conception of mankind, the logic and anthropology of Darwinism and Marxism. To «save the country», the author continued, a secular «sense of duty» would not be enough, since a «new religious sense of life» was needed; indeed, «only a sense of moral order based on the religious, sacred meaning of things and life excludes opportunities for dealing with the cancerous reasons for violence.»¹³² The interventions by Catholic intellectuals echoed the article and described

suo comportamento può avere per la Democrazia cristiana e per il Paese, dalla sfida orgogliosa di mostrarsi all'altezza della propria idea di sé nell'affrontare la prova più difficile.»

- 131 Selva/Marcucci 1978, 33; it.: «È una pasqua amara: la tragedia di Moro [...] è un'espressione emblematica della condizione in cui si trova il nostro paese. Dopo il sacrificio di cinque servitori dello Stato [...] il leader politico più prestigioso e più noto d'Italia trascorre la pasqua in una «prigione del popolo» [...]. Aldo Moro saprà rivivere con la sua fede religiosa il significato della Resurrezione, simbolo di pace e di reale liberazione anche in questa terribile prova.»
- 132 Vinciguerra, Alfredo, «Le mani armate di cuori disarmati», *Il Popolo*, 21.3.1978, 5; it.: «C'è da chiedersi [...] se possa bastare «un nuovo senso del dovere» a salvare questo Paese [...], o se non sia necessario soprattutto un nuovo senso religioso

Moro as the spiritual leader of this religious conception of life and the world. Leone Piccioni, professor of contemporary literature at the University of Rome, wrote that «the serene and firm face of Moro is the symbol of the truth of the Christian message and the freedom that he witnesses», while Romolo Pietrobelli, then National President of *Azione Cattolica*, argued for the necessity of being «able to re-emerge with force and sacrifice for a reconstruction [of the values that are at the bottom of civil consciousness], which are increasingly needed: the civil values of freedom, democracy, consistency, tolerance, discretion, that in Aldo Moro, as they are in a few believing politicians, are accompanied by a deep Christian inspiration.» But the most interesting intervention was that of Francesco Grisi, President of the Italian Writers Free Trade Union, who wrote that

[...] our choice is that the State cannot negotiate with the BR. The painful eventual death of Moro, killed by the BR, signifies the everlasting quality of his testimony in the golden dawn of liberty. Often, immolation precedes the resurrection of the truth. [...] Maybe for Moro there is, yes, the problem of the Communist Party but, above all, there is the problem of the communion of the saints. The discourse is metaphysical, theological, even if it is apparently political and constitutional. In this sense, Moro is a Pascalian intellectual in the line of an outdatedness [*inattualità*] of history. It seems strange that the man who is most involved in our history in Italy is actually the most «disengaged».¹³³

In this article, Moro is already operating in a metaphysical and metahistorical sphere: his anticipated death is transcended into a vague absolute truth and functions as a sort of *rite of passage* from the early world to the commu-

della vita [...]. Solo un ordine morale fondato sul senso religioso, sacrale, delle cose e della vita esclude ogni possibilità di appiglio alle cancerose ragioni della violenza.»

- 133 Grisi, Francesco, «La figura di Moro va al di là del rapporto con la cronaca: il suo discorso è metafisico e teologico», *Il Popolo*, 21.3.1978, 5; it.: «[...] la nostra scelta è che lo Stato non può trattare con i brigatisti rossi. La dolorosa eventuale morte di Moro ucciso dai brigatisti significa la sua perennità di testimonianza nell'albo d'oro della libertà. Spesso la immolazione precede la risurrezione nella verità. [...] Forse per Moro c'è sì il problema del partito comunista ma c'è il problema, soprattutto della comunione dei santi. Il discorso è metafisico, teologico, anche se apparentemente sembra politico e costituzionale. In questo senso, Moro è un intellettuale pascaliano nella linea di una inattualità della storia. Sembra strano che l'uomo che è più impegnato nella nostra storia in Italia sia l'uomo più «disimpegnato».»

nity of the saints in paradise. Here Moro is, therefore, already represented as a *homo sacer*, as someone who, despite still living, is excluded from the sphere of human life and has already begun to participate in the sacred sphere of the community of saints. Moro is already a martyr: the only thing missing to make his martyrdom definitive is the «immolation» that precedes the «resurrection of the truth». Moro is symbolically already in the sacred sphere, but his body is materially still present in the physical, profane world. In order to complete the process from the profane to the sacred, only one thing is missing: he must be killed.

The event's prefiguration as a passion reached its peak on Easter Day. On page four, the *Corriere della Sera* summed up the period of time that had elapsed since the day of the kidnapping in an article titled «Ten Historical Days of Passion».¹³⁴ In this article, it is not so much the terminology nor the rhetorical formulas (except for the title), but rather its structuration in ten sections, summarizing the ten days since the attack in via Fani, which seems to tacitly evoke the idea of a sort of *Via Crucis* of Moro. However, rhetorical excess is achieved in another article by the writer, playwright and art critic Giovanni Testori, which was published on the first page of the same newspaper. Although there is no explicit reference to the abduction of Aldo Moro, the event is clearly the hidden fulcrum on which each phrase and word rotates:

These are the dull, scorching days of hatred; days without visions and without light in the darkness; they are also the days of indifference, which fill the most arid and most disgraceful filth with hatred and darkness. [...] The more the dark [*buio*] and darkness [*tenebra*] increase, the more a society blinded by the chains of profit and, together, by the chains of the private matter of God increase and multiply the impetus towards that indifference; as if profit and material, capitalist secularism and Marxist secularism could not offer to the dark [*buio*] and darkness [*tenebra*] an answer other than their total elusion. [...] What I am trying to say is certainly against the possibility that we will find the strength to pronounce the word we need most. [...] When will we decide to break the chains and to lift the slab of the tomb where we persist in being closed? Hope: this is [...] the word that weeps most under our elusions and our abdications. [...] The difficulty lies in accepting it, in taking it, in bringing it to light, in letting it in-

134 Martinelli, Sergio, «Dieci storici giorni di passione», *Corriere della Sera*, 26.3.1978, 4.

vade us all and entirely. Then from its derelict and moaning tremor, like that of someone who has been forgotten for a long time, [hope] will increase, grow in us and with us, and it will be like the banner that one day rose from the grave where the crucified Son of Man was closed. [...] At a certain point in history, Calvary is no longer negotiable; [...] to ascend it with the hope and love is necessary so that peace and justice will be revealed in the end [...], it is necessary to not abdicate, but to put our life in relation to the supreme Otherness that we have wrecked, insulted and on which we have spat, and that, despite everything and [passing] through the pain, still dare to call us with the words, tears and moanings of betrayed and forgotten righteousness, hope and love.¹³⁵

More than an article from an independent newspaper in 1978, this text appears at times to be an apocryphal of the New Testament. The use of oppositional metaphors such as light and darkness recalls to mind some passages of the First Epistle of John, the fourth of the Catholic epistles, in which the author reminded his addressees that Jesus Christ «is the atoning sacrifice for our sins» (1 John 2:2), that «whoever claims to live in him

135 Testori, Giovanni, «Il bisogno della speranza», *Corriere della Sera*, 26.3.1978, 1-2; it.: «Sono i giorni cupi e roventi dell'odio; i giorni senza sguardi e senza luce nelle tenebre; sono altresì i giorni dell'indifferenza che, dell'odio e delle tenebre, risulta la filiazione più arida e più turpe. [...] Più il buio e le tenebre aumentano, più una società accecata dalle catene del profitto e, insieme, dalle catene della materia privata di Dio accresce e moltiplica le spinte verso quella indifferenza; come se profitto e materia, laicità capitalista e laicità marxista non sapessero offrire al buio e alle tenebre altra risposta che la loro totale elusione. [...] Quello che sto cercando di dire va certo contro la possibilità che si trovi la forza di pronunciare la parola di cui abbiamo più bisogno. [...] Fino a quando non ci decideremo anche noi a rompere le catene e a sollevare la lastra del sepolcro in cui ci ostiniamo a star chiusi? La speranza; è questa [...] la parola che più piange sotto le nostre elusioni e le nostre abdicazioni. [...] La difficoltà sta nell'accettarla, nell'assumerla, nel portarla alla luce, nel lasciarsene investire tutti e interi. Allora dal suo tremito belante e derelitto, come di chi è stato troppo a lungo dimenticato, essa balzerà, crescerà in noi e con noi e sarà come lo stendardo che, un giorno, s'è alzato dalla tomba dove era stato chiuso il figlio crocefisso dell'Uomo. [...] A un certo punto della storia, il calvario non è più rinviabile; [...] per salirlo con la speranza e l'amore necessari affinché alla sua fine s'apra quella pace e quella giustizia [...], bisogna non abdicare, ma porre la nostra vita in relazione a quella suprema Alterità che abbiamo sconciato, sputato e bestemmiato e che, malgrado tutto, proprio attraverso il dolore, osa ancora chiamarci con le parole, le lacrime e i belati della giustizia, della speranza e dell'amore traditi e dimenticati.»

must live as Jesus did» (1 John 2:6), that «darkness is passing and the true light is already shining» and that «anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness» (1 John 2:9). The text also reminded readers that the apocalyptic time had already begun: «this is the last hour, and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know that it is the last hour» (1 John 2:18). Christians know that they live in the last hour, because many antichrists are there, that is, those who deny that «Jesus is the Messiah», that deny «the Father and the Son» (1 John 2:22). The text exhorted to «not love the world» (1 John 2:15) with earthly motives but to love the Father and stresses that «anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister» (1 John 4:21). Similarly, Testori stressed that the days of 1978 were «days of hatred». Testori's antichrists are the liars who, because of their «Marxist» or «capitalist secularism», are concerned only with «profit» and «matter» and deny the «light» that comes from the crucified «Son of Man» (the expression appears 81 times in the Koine Greek of the four Gospels). Days of hatred will come to an end, according to Testori, only when people accept the necessity to live «in relation to the supreme Otherness» and that «Calvary is no longer negotiable». One can hardly not see here a tacit reference to the situation of Moro, who is exhorted to accept the Calvary that will open the doors to the realization of justice and peace. Testori seems to implicitly say that in order to overcome the days of hatred, one must not only live as Jesus, but also be willing to die like Jesus.

In an article published in *Il Popolo*, the Jesuit theologian and political scientist Bartolomeo Sorge wrote explicitly what Testori had only alluded to. In fact, the exhortation to accept martyrdom could hardly be more obvious:

The liberation and salvation of man are realized [...] according to the shocking logic of the Easter event. Christians of all ages bear witness to it. Also today. [...] Like Christ, they are destined to revive the world of the mystery of a death that paradoxically leads to life [...] of a self-sacrifice that even when it is the fruit of obstinate hate becomes a supreme demonstration of love. [...] «It is necessary that the Christ bear these sufferings to enter into his glory» (Luke 24:26). So even today, in the light of Easter, Christians learn what their destiny is. [...] At this Easter of 1978, we need to deepen this meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. [...] One cannot help but suffer with those who weep for the loss of five innocent lives, heroic victims of duty and of absurd barbarism. [...] One cannot help but be worried about the fate of he who is in the hands of unconscionable people, only craving, in the delirium

of lucid madness, to trample and to deconsecrate the values of civic co-existence, to humiliate the dignity of man, to dishearten the State. This Easter reminds us that hatred is defeated at the start, because «the Beast» has already been won by the One who is «the Strongest» (Luke 11:21). [...] By virtue of the «power of resurrection», suffering results in an indomitable moral force [...]. From proof comes the unity of consciousness around the values that must be firmly defended—with life, if necessary—so that the new world that has already begun grows in justice and peace.¹³⁶

Unlike the text by Testori, here the reference to the attack in via Fani and Moro's captivity is explicit. On the Easter Day of 1978, the author reminds Christians that they are called to «bear witness» to «the death that paradoxically leads to life». One can be worried about the situation of Moro but, after all, in the light of Easter Day Christians should know «what their destiny is». So should Moro who, as a Christian, do nothing but accept that his destiny is to sacrifice his life for the defense of «the new world that has already begun». It is the world in which the state guarantees and enables *civic coexistence* and the «dignity of man». But, as the author argues, Christians should not fear this destiny, because they know that «the Beast» has already been defeated. The text does not specify who is «the Beast» and who is «the Strongest», but given the analogical construction, it seems clear

136 Sorse S.J., Bartolomeo, «Potenza della Risurrezione», *Il Popolo*, 26.3.1978, 1; it.: «La liberazione e la salvezza dell'uomo si realizzano [...] secondo la logica sconvolgente dell'evento pasquale. I cristiani di ogni tempo ne rendono testimonianza. Anche oggi. [...] Come Cristo, essi sono destinati a far rivivere dinanzi al mondo il mistero di una morte che paradossalmente porta alla vita, [...] d'un sacrificio di sé che anche quando è frutto d'un odio lucido e ostinato si trasforma in una prova suprema d'amore. [...] «Bisogna che il Cristo sopportasse queste sofferenze per entrare nella sua gloria» (Lc 24.26). Così, anche ai giorni nostri, nella luce di Pasqua il cristiano apprende qual è il suo destino. [...] In questa Pasqua 1978 abbiamo particolare bisogno di approfondire questo significato della morte e della resurrezione di Cristo. [...] Non si può non soffrire con chi piange cinque vite innocenti, vittime eroiche del dovere e d'una barbarie assurda. [...] Non si può non trepidare per la sorte di chi è in mano di gente senza coscienza, bramosa soltanto, nel delirio d'una lucida pazzia, di calpestare e di disacrare i valori d'ogni convivenza civile, di umiliare la dignità dell'uomo, di avvilire lo Stato. Il ritorno di Pasqua ci ricorda [...] che l'odio è sconfitto in partenza, perché «la Bestia» è già stata vinta da Colui che è il «Più-Forte» (cfr. Lc 11, 21). [...] In virtù della «potenza della risurrezione», la sofferenza si traduce in forza morale indomabile [...]. Dalla prova nasce l'unità delle coscienze rette intorno ai valori che è necessario difendere con fermezza – con la vita, se occorre – affinché il nuovo mondo, che è già iniziato, cresca nella giustizia e nella pace.»

who assumes these roles in 1978: the BR are «the Beast», while the Italian State is «the Strongest». The author therefore proposes a sort of theological–political reading of the events through which the BR/Italian State conflict assumes a metaphysical connotation. In the thinking of Carl Schmitt, the Leviathan-state is understood as an absolutely necessary entity to counter the Behemoth-Beast, a satanic and demonic force whose purpose is to destroy society and civil coexistence, to annihilate human dignity and to realize a state of perpetual civil war, of war of all against all.¹³⁷ Only within this mythological and theological–political framework can the death of Aldo Moro appear as absolutely necessary, since his salvation, which could only be achieved by negotiation with «the Beast», would amount to a defeat for the Italian State and a victory for anarchic chaos. Through the use of martyrological prefiguration, the author makes such death appear to be bearable, if not desirable, even for the one who has to die because it is death that paradoxically leads to life.

We have seen so far how, even in the first 10 days after his abduction, a transformation of Moro's image began, through which he was more and more removed from the profane sphere of life and history. Aldo Moro was stylized as the symbol of a nation wounded and threatened by a gang of crazy assassins, beasts and/or fanatics. The conflict between the BR and the Italian State was represented as a perpetual war between good and evil. His imprisonment was prefigured as a passion, which would lead to the salvation of the Italian State and with it of the Italian society. Such representations, as I will discuss in the next chapter, were intrinsically linked to the attempt to justify the line of firmness. The argument that negotiations with the BR would endanger the institutions and national security alone would not have been enough to make Moro's death acceptable. It was necessary to make Moro's sacrifice appear not only as inevitable and necessary, as an event that was part of the divine plan, but as a voluntary decision by Moro himself. But at the end of March 1978, something happened that seriously questioned this kind of representation: the BR issued Aldo Moro's first letter, in which the Christian Democrat politician expressed his preference for negotiation and rejected the «line of firmness». The anti-martyr's

137 See Schmitt 1996, 21–22: «According to Hobbes, the quintessential nature of the state of nature, or the behemoth, is none other than civil war, which can only be prevented by the overarching might of the state, or the leviathan. It follows that one of the monsters, the leviathan «state», continuously holds down the other monster, the behemoth «revolutionary people». [...] the leviathan is «the only corrective» for the behemoth. The absolutism of the state is, accordingly, the oppressor of irrepressible chaos inherent in man.»

voice went against all expectations, requiring a new rhetorical and discursive approach, a new strategy of representation.