

Thirty years later: Who killed Mattei?

From the speech by Raffaele Morini, Association of Christian Partisans, Pavia, the promoter of recent initiatives to reopen the Mattei case.

It was Oct. 27, 1962 when the ENI twin-engine plane exploded in the sky, hurling fragments of the craft over the small territory of Bascapé, and causing the death of Enrico Mattei and his travel companions, the pilot Ernerio Bertuzzi, and William McHale, a *New York Times* journalist.

Of Enrico Mattei, of his genius and his spirit of sacrifice, much has been said in seminars, conferences, economic policy roundtables, via press organs, and on radio and television. But no political party, not even the one in which he was an activist, has ever committed itself to promote an investigation that could identify those responsible for the barbarous act of terrorism, and bring them to justice.

And for Enrico Mattei, who for highly idealistic motives, had refused the short-term well-being of an easy and peaceful life to join the Partisan Formations, becoming, because of his abilities and spirit of sacrifice, deputy commander general of the Corps of Volunteers of Freedom, April 25 [the day of liberation in World War II] was only the first victorious phase of his battle. The rest was yet to come.

Thus it was that, named Extraordinary Commissar of AGIP, with the precise task of liquidating the state oil company, Commander Mattei, supported and sustained by the Partisans, the Resistance, and the anti-fascist press, rebelled against the government's decision, and managed to guide the company to international levels of competitiveness and technical perfection.

He pulled ANIC and Nuova Pignone out of bankruptcy; constituted ENI, SEMI, SAIPEM, and SNAM; and set up vacation centers for workers and seaside and mountain camps for their children. At the entrance of Palazzo Uffici 1 in S. Donato Milanese, he had erected a huge plaque of semiprecious stone, representing in low relief the calvary of a partisan, suggesting that the industry he had created must not ever be separated from the purpose of elevating the living conditions of our people.

Enrico Mattei was not just the president of ENI, but also a parliamentary deputy and a master of politics and honesty.

On the eve of the great electoral contest of April 18, 1948, when the fate of democracy was at stake, Mattei organized a parade of 100,000 Catholic Partisans in Rome, to put the country on guard against the perils of communism, and also to attest that a dictatorship would not get past the Volunteers of Freedom. With all frankness, we must affirm that the Democratic Popular Front [the electoral alliance of Communists and Socialists in 1948], which also sought to install the dictatorship of the proletariat in Italy, lost not because of numerical inferiority of its electors, but because of the fear of winning. . . .

all the time, and a lot of live interest. I protested about the low print-run.

This was in October 1989. But to my surprise I found out that the actual distribution of the book was only half. The other 3,500 copies were kept in a warehouse: "You never know, they might come in handy later, it's good to hold onto them." All right, fine. One month and a half after the book came out in October, at the beginning of December, another strange thing happened. In December books sell like bars of soap, because everyone buys books as gifts, so this is the time when bookstores tend to stock up. Yet in December 1989, one month after the book came out, the publisher recalled some 20-25% of this small ratio of the books which had been distributed, so whoever had bought it, fine, and anyone else could no longer find it.

The next year, in 1990, more copies were called back by the publisher. I was being called on to hold forums all over the place, I was in Vicenza for a month, in Viareggio, all over the country, and all over there were people asking for the book, to see it. Nothing—it no longer existed. The answer

was: "There are none, it is not available, we cannot distribute it."

Mattei steps out of line

I return to our story. So there was this concern by the big oil companies to safeguard their business and this great worry by the United States over the policy of taking distance from the Atlantic Alliance which Mattei was very obviously advancing. This is unmistakably attested to by the documents which I published.

The most alarming document is that of Jan. 10, 1958 on neo-Atlanticism, in which there are 13 pages dedicated to the Mattei affair. Then there is a series of other reports, there are also other facts, which are verified, at the end of the 1950s, and there is the rapprochement, for business and also for political reasons, of Mattei with the Soviet Union at the end of the 1950s. The Soviets had been kept out of trade with western Europe. Mattei went to the Soviet Union. He signed accords to import oil from the Soviet Union, and in exchange for this oil he offered machinery and steel tubing which could