

# Aldo Moro and 40 Years of an Idea that Could Not Be Murdered

by Claudio Celani

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## **Il Puzzle Moro (The Moro Puzzle)**

by Giovanni Fasanella.

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April 2—This year marks the 40th anniversary of the kidnapping and murder of Italian statesman Aldo Moro by the terrorist Red Brigades group. Moro's death was a watershed in Italian and Mediterranean politics, with implications for global East-West and North-South relations. After four decades, the truth about Moro's assassination has not yet fully come out. However, the official version, which holds that the motivations for Moro's elimination must be sought in Italian domestic politics, and that the Red Brigades was an entirely "Italian" phenomenon, is slowly but relentlessly crumbling.

In recent years, two factors have done the most to help excavate the truth on the Moro case: the investigations undertaken by journalist and author Giovanni Fasanella and, most recently, the work of the Parliamentary Investigative Committee on the Moro case—the third such committee—which presented its final report on December 15, 2017. Whereas the Committee established that, contrary to "the truth that could be uttered" publicly, Moro's assassins had international connections and support, Fasanella, for his part, has dug out from British and U.S. archives, documents that demonstrate a British, French, American and Soviet Russian mobilization to stop Moro's policy, with the British pulling the string of a "subversive" solution as an alternative to a traditional *coup d'état*.

Fasanella's latest book, *Il Puzzle Moro* (The Moro

Puzzle), which hit the newsstands and bookstores a few days before the March 16 anniversary of Moro's kidnapping, is both a summary of the Committee's conclusions and an update of Fasanella's earlier works, with additional declassified U.S. and British documents also included.

The book also has the merit of describing Moro's strategic policy in greater depth than the simplification offered by mainstream media. Moro's design was not just to "unblock" the Italian political situation by helping the Italian Communist Party to break with Moscow and fully accept Italy's treaty obligations in the Western

Alliance: for such a policy served a larger design to strengthen Italy's natural leadership role in the Mediterranean, using its culture and its industrial potential to favor dialogue and development among all the countries of the Northern African littoral and Southwest Asia.

As Prime Minister in 1963-68, then Foreign Minister 1969-72 and 1973-74, and again Prime Minister 1974-76, Moro had led Italy to play such a leadership role in the Mediterranean, at the same time that French and British colonial powers were surrendering and withdrawing from the newly independent nations of Africa and Southwest Asia. Moro was continuing the policy inaugurated by industrialist Enrico

Mattei, who had established "win-win" economic relations with oil-producing countries, thus projecting a new image of the Italian nation and its leadership born out of the antifascist Resistance.

Fasanella correctly identifies the intellectual matrix of such a policy in the great Pope Paul VI, who had been a mentor of Moro's and of the other young leaders who, during the war, had founded the Christian Demo-





*Paul VI with Colombians, August 1968.*

cratic Party. In 1967, Paul VI issued his encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio*, a milestone in the history of the Catholic Social Doctrine. For the first time, an authoritative document dealt with injustice not just within a society, but among nations, and specifically between North and South.

“In that letter,” Fasanella writes, “the Pope picked up and developed the lines drawn by his predecessor in the Vatican II Council, bringing the social doctrine of the Church to the highest point of its exposure, both of ‘technocracies’ responsible for starvation, and of neo-colonialism. Each word ‘carved’ by Paul VI sounded like a whip-lash (*staffilata*) against rich countries and their establishments: ‘The progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the Church. This is particularly true in the case of those peoples who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance; of those who are seeking a larger share in the benefits of civilization and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are consciously striving for fuller growth.’ And further: ‘Colonizing nations were sometimes concerned with nothing save their own interests, their

own power and their own prestige,’ their oligarchies ‘enjoy the refinements of life,’ whereas oppressed people ‘subsist in living and working conditions unworthy of the human person.’”

The right wing attacked the encyclical as “Marxist,” but Paul VI, writes Fasanella, “offered to developing countries a model that was neither predatory capitalism nor oppressive communism. At the same time he broadened the horizon of the Church, overcoming the narrow European context in which it had thus far operated. The negative reaction in Great Britain and in some American and French circles was understandable: the religious influence of the Vatican in Latin America, Africa, and even in some Asian countries was growing at the same pace as Italy’s economic influence, while the world around was tumultuously changing, and colonial empires had inexorably come to an end.”

In part, using declassified reports and diplomatic wires from UK archives, Fasanella shows that this policy, which Paul VI’s friend and disciple Moro had successfully carried out, was the underlying reason that Great Britain set in motion a plan to stop Moro at any cost, first considering the option of a traditional *coup d’état*, but eventually rejecting that in favor of “another option” which, many elements indicate, was Moro’s assassination.

Since Moro wanted to involve the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in government responsibilities in order to ensure parliamentary support for his policy, the British used this angle to win U.S. support for their plots. But



*Luigi Berlinguer (left) greeting Aldo Moro.*

whereas the United States was primarily concerned that Italy not slide into the Soviet sphere of influence—in particular, this was Henry Kissinger’s obsession—and therefore the U.S. intent was simply to keep the PCI away from power, the British target was Moro himself. Ultimately, the United States favored a strong Italian role in the Mediterranean as long as Italy stayed in NATO.

On the other hand, the French shared the British concern in their effort to turn back the clock of history. Under the pretext of containing the PCI in Italy, a “directorship” of four countries was created in 1974 among the UK, the United States, France, and Germany—the latter for strategic reasons, given its role in NATO—whose leaders would meet secretly, often in the British embassy in Rome, to plot a “solution” to stop what looked like an unstoppable growth of the PCI, which would predictably soon win a general election, and legitimately claim the national government.

Flashback: In September 1978, a few months after the assassination of Moro, the Partito Operaio Europeo (POE), which represented the LaRouche movement in Italy at the time, published a special report entitled *Chi ha ucciso Aldo Moro?* (Who Killed Aldo Moro?), exposing London as the string-puller of Moro’s murder, and identifying the strategic setting and the motivations for the murder in the global fight defined by *Populorum Progressio*.

In our pamphlet, we wrote:

Paul VI’s policy clashed with London in all its essential aspects. When London, through its agents, pushed the U.S. to escalate the Vietnam War, Paul VI launched his pilgrimage for peace in New York, at the United Nations. When the British wanted to exploit the coming economic crisis to crush the Third World under the genocidal policy of the International Monetary Fund, Paul VI answered by appointing new cardinals able to express the needs of the Third World as mirrored in his masterpiece, the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, the manifesto of a new era of economic and cultural development in the former colonies.

At that time, LaRouche’s collaborators did not have access to British archives, and their documents had not yet been declassified. Nevertheless, we were able to precisely identify the apparatus that killed Aldo Moro by locating Moro’s and Paul VI’s fight for development in



*Prime Minister Moro with U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in 1974.*

the continuity of the fight against the oligarchy, represented in modern times by the British Empire. The oligarchical apparatus was visible to anyone who wanted to see it, but political forces and institutions were blinded by the “left-right” game of conventional politics.

The POE dossier contained some flaws, such as, for instance, a wrong assessment of Soviet policy, as well as a misunderstanding of the efforts by some forces in Italy to negotiate with the Red Brigades for Moro’s freedom. In recent decades such aspects have been clarified, thanks to investigations conducted by Fasanella and others. But the POE dossier indicated the right direction to follow, and its insightful work was early acknowledged by the Parliamentary Committees and by serious investigators.

### **Moro and Libya, Malta, Tunisia, Iraq**

*The Moro Puzzle* starts at the end of World War II, when Britain arranged that Italy, although it had joined the Allied Forces in the last phase of the war, should not be admitted to the peace talks and should not be allowed to have a future security and foreign policy of its own.

It was none other than Winston Churchill who explained the British doctrine to the Apostolic Nuncio in Britain in November 1945. Although no longer Prime Minister, Churchill’s role in the British and international establishment was still important. The content of the conversation is found in the U.S. National Archives. Churchill told the Pope’s envoy that the United States and the USSR considered the Italian question to be under “British competence,” thus recognizing a sort of



supervision over the country by London. As Great Britain performed this function, the United States would give “every possible moral and material” support to Rome, “but in the framework of British interests.” As for the Soviet Union, Moscow would “leave Italy totally in peace,” thus doing nothing to help the Italian Communist Party take power.

Within that agreement, Moscow and Washington shared the British reservation: “the only thing that Italy won’t have is a full political freedom” for “many years.” “Political control will be exerted as discretely as possible,” but the Pope should already know that London had some “doubts” about “some left-wing factions in the Christian Democratic party.”

Political events in postwar Italy must be read under the light of that statement. Leaders who threatened to escape such control were eliminated physically, like the industrialist Enrico Mattei, or politically, as was Alcide De Gasperi’s designated successor as leader of the Christian Democratic (DC) party in 1954. (For an extensive treatment of the Mattei case, see: [http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2009/eirv36n22-20090605/eirv36n22-20090605\\_044-mattei\\_and\\_kennedy\\_the\\_strategic.pdf](http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2009/eirv36n22-20090605/eirv36n22-20090605_044-mattei_and_kennedy_the_strategic.pdf)).

“There is a constant in the entire history of Italy as a nation-state, which looks like a curious paradox, if not a real curse: each time that Italy aspires to play a major role on the international scene, the rate of internal squabbling increases and dries out energies, resources, and projects. And ultimately forces you to get back in line,” Fasanella writes.

Nevertheless, with a dirigistic economic policy led by De Gasperi, Mattei and Moro, Italy succeeded in an unprecedented post-war economic recovery and was increasingly playing its natural role of leadership in the Mediterranean. Fasanella cites documents from the British Foreign Office and British diplomats expressing concern about Moro’s foreign policy that attracted countries such as Libya, Egypt and even Malta into what the British saw as a growing “sphere of influence,” at the same time that Britain’s own military bases were being kicked out of those nations.

Moro probably crossed a red line when, in 1966, he reorganized the NATO “Stay Behind” network in Italy. According to Fasanella’s sources, Moro pulled the “Stay Behind” organization (Gladio) out of British con-



*Shattered interior of the Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura, after the bombing of the Piazza Fontana, Milan, 1969.*

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trol, and put it under joint U.S.-Italian control. The British network then created the “Armed Nuclei for the Defense of the State” out of a former Gladio section, under its main asset in Italy, Count Edgardo Sogno Rata del Vallino. Sogno was eventually used for organizing an attempted *coup d'état*—eventually cancelled—and to steer the Red Brigades. Although the Red Brigades terrorist organization was fabricated from radical elements left over from the communist faction of the Resistance, which felt “betrayed” by the constitutional shift adopted by the Communist Party in 1944, British intelligence networks played a role in taking over the organization, directing it in the phase that led to the kidnapping and assassination of Moro. (See: [http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2005/eirv32n03-20050121/eirv32n03-20050121\\_054-the\\_sphinx\\_and\\_the\\_gladiators\\_ho.pdf](http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2005/eirv32n03-20050121/eirv32n03-20050121_054-the_sphinx_and_the_gladiators_ho.pdf))

The terrorist destabilization of Italy started in 1969, with the Milan Piazza Fontana bombings, and ended in 1978 with the assassination of Moro. The British themselves named this phase “the Strategy of Tension.” The fictive or real threat of a right-wing coup was used to create a leftist insurgency, which produced the Red Brigades and other terrorist groups, escalating into the



*The scene of the Aldo Moro kidnapping, where his five bodyguards were killed.*

large insurgency of the “Armed Party” centered around Autonomia Operaia in 1977.

In 1976, the British set up a Committee of 15 Foreign Office and Defense officials, which produced a report considering two options for Italy: either a classical military coup, or, as the fallback option, “support for a different subversive action.” Fasanella had already published the relevant British documents in his book *Il Golpe Inglese* (The British Coup). (See: [http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2011/eirv38n38-20110930/20-24\\_3838.pdf](http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2011/eirv38n38-20110930/20-24_3838.pdf)) In *The Moro Puzzle*, Fasanella brings in new documents which detail how the report was first discussed with the United States and Germany, which opposed a coup, and was then re-drafted to take account of their concerns, but leaving open Option B.

A few months later, Alan Hugh Campbell, the head of the “Fifteen” committee that had drafted the paper, was sent to Rome to replace the British Ambassador, to implement the “different action.”

The “different action” was probably the use of the Red Brigades, said Claudio Signorile in a recent interview. Signorile had been charged by then Socialist leader Bettino Craxi to establish contact with the Red Brigades to negotiate Moro’s freedom.

Moro was kidnapped on March 16 and kept in captivity for 55 days. During those agonizing 55 days, while all political forces officially shared the line that there should be no negotiations with the terrorists, several attempts were

made unofficially to contact the Red Brigades and negotiate Moro’s freedom, including one by Socialist leader Bettino Craxi, and one by Pope Paul VI himself, who had prepared one billion lire (the equivalent of one million euro today) as a ransom. Italy’s President Giovanni Leone was ready to sign a pardon for a jailed terrorist, and on the evening of May 8, everything was ready for Amintore Fanfani, a Christian Democratic (DC) leader and ally of Moro, to intervene at the DC leadership meeting the next day and announce the decision.

Instead, on that morning of May 9, the Red Brigades communicated that they had executed Aldo Moro, and his corpse was to be found in a red Renault 4 in Via Caetani, in the center of Rome—around the corner from both the DC and the PCI headquarters.

Fasanella’s book advances the hypothesis that the negotiations failed because, at one point, a third party came in and “took over” the hostage from the Red Brigades. In previous books, such as *Il Misterioso Intermediario*, Fasanella has detailed the role that Hubert Howard—a British intelligence officer who had married into the aristocratic Caetani family and was living in the Palazzo Caetani in Via Caetani—might have had in that final phase of Moro’s captivity, including giving the assassination order.

In *The Moro Puzzle*, Fasanella reports that in 2008, the late President of Italy, Francesco Cossiga, who was police minister before and during Moro’s kidnapping, revealed to him that NATO had taken over police opera-



*Italian President Francesco Cossiga (left) with Aldo Moro.*

tions during Moro's captivity, fearing that Moro could reveal sensitive NATO secrets to his captors. "NATO took the situation into its hands through special Stay Behind units and through Germany, which at that time was leading the directorate that coordinated Atlantic intelligence services." This was revealed in an official BND (West German intelligence service) document in 1990, which Cossiga had received and forwarded to prosecutors—but only after having deleted mention of the Stay Behind.

One month after its publication, *The Moro Puzzle* is already in its third printing. Fasanella is holding conferences every other day throughout Italy. This is a good sign, and leads one to hope that at some point, this will be reflected in a political shift.

The lessons of history drawn from *The Moro Puzzle* are evident if one looks at contemporary events. Two examples: the war against Libya in 2011, and the Regeni case, which provoked a crisis between Italy and Egypt in 2016.

The Libyan war was launched by then French President Nicolas Sarkozy, backed by the British government, the United States, and NATO, one year after Italy had signed a friendship treaty with Libya, in which Italy recognized its past responsibilities as colonial invader, and committed itself to reparations in the form of major infrastructure. The result of the Anglo-French-American war and the assassination of Qaddafi has been the destruction of the Libyan state and the spreading of terrorism, including Libyan weapons and militias flowing into Syria. Italy not only lost a major trading partner and oil supplier, but has suffered the greatest burden of the wave of refugees.

In Egypt, Italian student Giulio Regeni was found dead in February 2016 in Cairo, and as a result of a campaign by Amnesty International accusing Egyptian President Al-Sisi, the Italian Renzi government withdrew its Ambassador, who was not sent back for more than a year. In fact, Regeni had been set up by his Cambridge University tutor, an anti-Sisi activist, who gave



*The Anglo-French-American-led NATO war against Libya shattered the Libya-Italy friendship treaty.*

Regeni a highly dangerous mission. His body was delivered the same day that a high-level economic delegation from Italy, led by the industry minister, was visiting Cairo, and after ENI, the Italian national oil company, had discovered the largest gas field ever found in the Mediterranean, which would make Egypt self-sufficient in energy.

Italy was pushed out of Libya and out of Egypt, albeit temporarily, but long enough to prevent the possibility of a stabilizing role for Italy in Libya together with Egypt, itself backed by Russia. Although the Italian Ambassador is back in Cairo and some of the mistakes have been exposed, it is still difficult today for Italy to find national unity behind a policy. As

Fasanella wrote, in crucial moments when unity is needed, "the rate of squabbling increases" among political factions. The result of the last general elections is exemplary: No party won a majority, and it seems easier to climb Mount Everest than to find common ground for a coalition.

And yet, the small action undertaken at the end of February by the outgoing Italian government in Abuja, Nigeria, shows the way Italy can rally national support behind a the pursuit of Moro's and Paul VI's design. As a result of years of organizing by the Schiller Institute and this author in particular, a grand design for Africa took its first step when it was announced that, thanks to an Italian grant, the feasibility study for the Transaqua project will finally begin (see [http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/private/2018/2018\\_10-19/2018-10/pdf/06-13\\_4510.pdf](http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/private/2018/2018_10-19/2018-10/pdf/06-13_4510.pdf)).

Although a small step in terms of resources, this decision has great political significance, as international media quickly realized. Italy is the first European nation to take a concrete step in cooperation with China for the development of Africa, in the true spirit of the Belt and Road. This is just the beginning, but the dynamic is unstoppable. As Giovanni Fasanella writes in the conclusion of his book, "history is patient and always takes its revenge."